

## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 7<sup>th</sup> February 2018

ITEM NO. 16

Ward: Whitley  
App No.: 171971/FUL  
Address: 1 Darwin Close, Reading.  
Proposal: Demolition of existing building and erection of two storey building for Class B1 and Class B8 uses with associated parking and hardstanding.  
Applicant: The White Partnership  
Date valid: 10<sup>th</sup> November 2017  
Major Application Target decision date: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018  
26-Week date: 11<sup>th</sup> May 2018

### RECOMMENDATION

Delegate to the Head of Planning & Regulatory Services to:

- (i) GRANT Full Planning Permission, subject to the satisfactory completion of a S.106 legal agreement or  
(ii) to REFUSE permission should the legal agreement not be completed by the 07/03/2018 unless a later date is agreed by the Head of Planning Development & Regulatory Services.  
The S106 legal agreement to secure:

Employment Skills and Training Plan to meet the requirements of the Council's Employment Skills and Training SPD (2013) relating to the construction and operational (end user) phases of the development. The plan to be submitted to the Council at least one month before works commencing.

OR

Equivalent financial contributions towards Employment Skills and Training of £5,227 (construction phase), payment to be index-linked and made at least one month before works commencing, and £8,888 (end user phase) payment to be index-linked and made at least one month prior to first occupation.

### CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE:

1. Time limit
2. Approved plans
3. Materials details as submitted.
4. Landscaping details-
5. Landscaping implementation
6. Landscaping replacement for 5 years.
7. Boundary treatments (including details of security fencing).
8. Vehicle parking space provided in accordance with approved plans
9. Vehicle access provided in accordance with approved plans
10. Bicycle parking - plans to be approved
11. Delivery and Servicing Plan
12. Development in accordance with approved Construction Method Statement
13. External lighting- details to be submitted and approved.
14. Development in accordance with SuDs details submitted

15. Hours of working - construction and demolition phase
16. Contaminated land
17. BREEAM Very Good status requirement
18. Noise assessment for plant and equipment
19. Bonfires

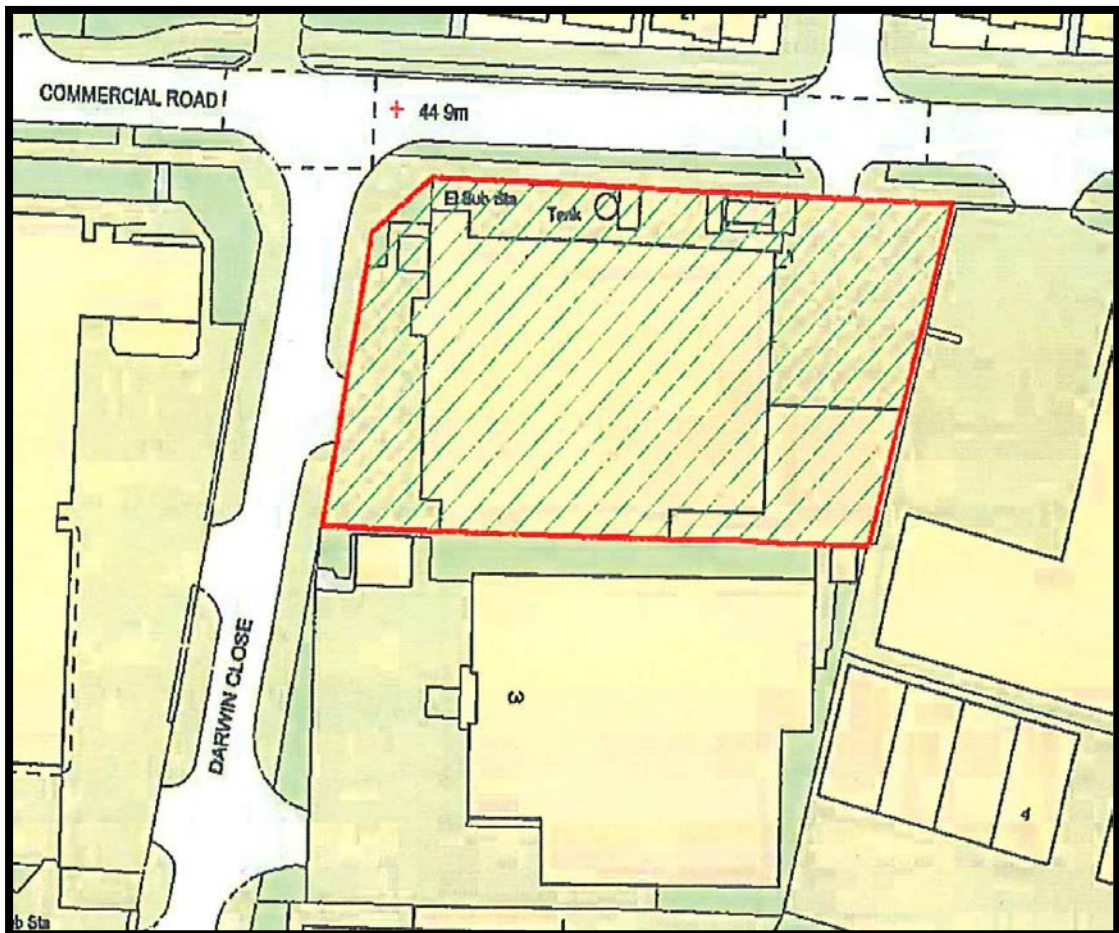
#### INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE

1. Policy informative.
2. Terms and conditions.
3. Damage to highway - Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980.
4. Best practices measures to keep noise levels down; including 'white noise' reversing alarms and the turning off of HGV engines when not in use.
5. Positive and pro-active.
6. Section 106

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Site and surrounding area

- 1.1 The application site is as shown on the plan below. The application site extends to approximately 0.3ha and is currently occupied by a building with a footprint of some 1,627sqm. It contains office floorspace at first floor level. The premises have been in use until July 2017 as a commercial laundry cleaning business, a Sui Generis use. This land is designated as a core employment area within the Reading Local Plan.



Location Plan (not to scale)

1.2 Directly to the north of the site on Commercial Road is the Kennet Island housing development comprising mainly 2 and 3 storey blocks of houses and flats. To the west side across Darwin Close is a 6-storey office block, immediately to the south side is a 2-storey printing office and various retail warehouse units to the south on Darwin Close

1.3 The site is accessed from both Commercial Road and Darwin Close.

## 2 PROPOSAL

2.1 The development proposal is for the redevelopment of an existing vacant industrial unit (2,025m<sup>2</sup>) on land on the corner of Darwin Close/Commercial Road and erection of a two-storey building for Class B1 and Class B8 uses with some ancillary office space on the first floor.

2.2 The total GFA of the proposed development is 2,291m<sup>2</sup> resulting in a net increase of 266m<sup>2</sup> of B1(c)/B8 use on the site.

### Detailed breakdown

- Ground Floor: 1,400 sqm
- First Floor: 891 sqm

2.3 The specific proposed use of the proposed building will be for the assembly of roller shutters and the fit out of offices, together with associated storage and ancillary office space.

2.4 The proposed building will utilise the existing access points to the site off Darwin Close and Commercial Road. 15 new car parking bays, 7 van bays, lorry loading bays and 10 cycle spaces are proposed.

2.5 Following concerns raised by the Council's Natural Environment Officer regarding the removal of mature conifer trees along Commercial Road within the site, which were considered to provide useful screening of the industrial buildings from the residential properties on Kennet Island, amended plans were submitted. The amended plans provide for some replacement tree planting in the same location.

## 3 The application is supported by the following documents and plans

- Planning, Design and Access Statement
- Ecological Appraisal
- Drainage Strategy Report
- Phase I Site Appraisal (Geo-Environmental Assessment)
- Transport Statement
- Noise Assessment
- Sustainability Statement
- Air Quality Assessment
- Existing and Proposed Plans

3.1 There was no pre-application discussion between the applicant and officers.

## 4 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 911008 - Change of use from industrial to general laundry use with new external storage facilities and 28m high flume. Permitted May 1991

## 5 CONSULTATIONS

### Non-statutory

- 5.1 RBC Transport Strategy - No objection to the proposal subject to conditions on parking spaces, cycle storage and compliance with submitted construction method statement.
- 5.2 RBC Environmental Protection - No objection subject to conditions to deal with potential noise, light, land contamination and air quality issues.
- 5.3 RBC Natural Environment (Trees) - Following submission of amended plans, raises no objection subject to conditions.
- 5.4 Reading UK CIC - No objection subject to provision of an acceptable Employment Skills Plan.
- 5.5 RBC Transport Strategy (SUDs) - No objection subject to conditions requiring the implementation of the approved Drainage Strategy.

## 6 Public consultation

A site notice was displayed and consultation letters were sent to properties adjoining the application site.

No letters were received following the public consultation.

## 7 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 7.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

- 7.2 National planning policy guidance:

- Chapter 1 (Building a Strong, Competitive Economy)
- Chapter 4 (Promoting Sustainable Transport)
- Chapter 7 (Requiring Good Design)
- Chapter 10 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change)
- Chapter 11 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment)

- 7.3 Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2008) policies:

- CS1 (Sustainable Construction and Design)
- CS2 (Waste Minimisation)
- CS4 (Accessibility and the Intensity of Development)
- CS5 (Inclusive Access)
- CS7 (Design and the Public Realm)
- CS9 (Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities)
- CS10 (Location of Employment Development)
- CS13 (Impact of Employment Development)
- CS20 (Implementation of The Reading Transport Strategy)
- CS22 (Transport Assessments)
- CS24 (Car/Cycle Parking)
- CS34 (Pollution and Water Resources)
- CS35 (Flooding)

7.4 Reading Borough Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012) policies:

- DM1 (Adaptation to Climate Change)
- DM2 (Decentralised Energy)
- DM3 (Infrastructure Planning)
- DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity)
- DM11 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters)
- DM17 (Tree Planting)
- SA1 (South Reading Development Principles)
- SA12d (Bennet Road)

7.5 Other relevant local planning documents:

- Employment Skills and Training SPD (April 2013);
- Revised Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Planning Obligation under s106 (Nov 2013);
- Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (Oct 2011), and
- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (July 2011).

8 **APPRAISAL**

8.1 The main issues for consideration are:

- Principle of development;
- Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
- Impact on amenity;
- Transport implications;
- Sustainable Urban Drainage system
- Trees and Ecology;
- Other considerations.
- Skills and training
- Equality

i) Principle of development

8.2 The site is located in South West Reading in an area identified within the Core Strategy as appropriate for additional employment development. Core Strategy CS10 highlights that major employment uses, including industrial, storage and distribution must be directed to the A33 corridor. The site lies within designated Core Employment Area SA12d; Bennet Road where the location for industrial and warehouse uses as proposed is considered acceptable. The proposal intends to bring the site back to employment use in accordance with this policy. In addition the NPPF seeks to ensure the building of a strong, competitive economy. The principle of the proposed use is therefore considered acceptable subject to assessment of the development impact in terms of visual and residential amenity, transport implications, landscaping, drainage and sustainability.

ii) Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area

8.3 Core Strategy Policy CS7 requires that all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area in which it is located. The proposal is for a two-storey warehouse/industrial building, the layout and scale of which have been influenced by the existing building footprint and the scale and size of surrounding buildings. As highlighted within the submitted Planning, Design and Access Statement, the majority of the surrounding buildings are either two-storey or three-storey, and therefore the proposed building will be entirely appropriate for this location.

8.4 The proposed building is to be constructed of a steel frame with metal sheet cladding, glazing and a brickwork plinth along the base. It would be modern in appearance and

would be an improvement when compared to the existing tired dated buildings on the site, which are to be demolished. The redevelopment will improve the visual outlook for occupiers of residential properties opposite the site on Commercial Road, with the proposed tree planting providing partial screening to the building. In terms of design, size, scale and appearance the proposed building is considered to accord with policy CS7 and the NPPF.

#### iii) Impact on amenity

- 8.5 The proposed development would be close to the residential development at Kennet Island, across Commercial Road. The Council's Environmental Protection Officer has indicated that complaints have been received previously about noise disturbance from deliveries at the site when it was previously operating as a laundry. To mitigate the impact of noise on nearby receptors, the Officer has recommended a condition be imposed controlling late night and early morning deliveries associated with the future development. In addition, a condition would also be added requiring submission of noise assessment details in accordance with BS4141:2014 methodology for plant and equipment prior to installation.
- 8.6 The development lies on the site of an historic engineering works which has the potential to have caused contaminated land. A phase 1 desk study has been undertaken and recommends that a further intrusive phase 2 investigations is undertaken. The Council's Environmental Protection Officer has recommended that the Investigation must be carried out by a suitably qualified person to ensure that the site is suitable for the proposed use or can be made so by remedial action. As such a condition would be added requiring the phase 2 investigations to ensure that future occupants are not put at undue risk from contamination.
- 8.7 To prevent potential noise, dust and bonfires associated with the construction (and demolition) of the proposed development and possible adverse impact on nearby residents (and businesses), the Council's Environmental Protection Officer has recommended appropriate conditions. It should be noted that acceptable details of noise and dust control have been submitted as part of a Construction Method Statement. With the conditions in place, it is considered the development would not be detrimental to the amenities of the adjoining properties.
- 8.8 In terms of any potential impact on residential amenity, and subject to adherence to the recommended conditions, the proposed development therefore complies with Core Strategy Policy CS34 and with SDPD Policy DM4.

#### iv) Transport implications

##### Parking

- 8.9 RBC Transport has assessed the proposals and concluded that the proposals are acceptable in transport terms. The site is located within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. In accordance with the adopted SPD, the development would be required a parking provision of 1 space per 100m<sup>2</sup> equating to 22 parking spaces.
- 8.10 Currently the site can accommodate 8 parking spaces in an informal arrangement. Revised plans submitted provide a total of 16 parking spaces. RBC Transport notes that Darwin Close and the surrounding road network are restricted by 'No Waiting' (DYL) restrictions which maintain visibility splays at junctions, therefore, a small shortfall in parking is acceptable. In addition the current proposals provide a higher ratio of on-site parking than the current use; therefore, overall the development will not increase the

demand for on-street parking over and above the existing levels associated with the current use. RBC Transport has assessed the amended parking layout and considered it acceptable as it now provides adequate manoeuvrability for cars approaching the parking spaces at a 45-degree angle.

#### Access

- 8.11 It is proposed that the access for the development will utilise the existing access from Commercial Road and Darwin Close. An AutoCAD tracking analysis has been undertaken using a Rigid Truck (12.0m), a Light Van (5.9m) and a Large Car (5.079m) to show that the vehicles can enter the site, manoeuvre into bay parking/servicing areas and exit the proposed development safely. Large vehicles servicing the site would reverse into the loading bays as they do currently. The access arrangements are therefore considered acceptable.

#### Vehicle trips

- 8.12 Given the small increase in floor area (266sqm), it is anticipated that the development will result in an increase in daily vehicle trips from the site. However, details submitted illustrate that the development will result in a minimal increase in trips during am and pm peak hours. As such, the development proposals will have a negligible impact on the surrounding highway network.
- 8.13 A minimum of 9 cycle parking spaces will be required for the development which is to be provided within an external store. A condition would be added to ensure further details are submitted to ensure the cycle parking facilities comply with the Council's adopted standard in terms of layout and accessibility.
- 8.14 Submitted details of a Construction Method Statement by Elmcroft are considered acceptable. A condition would be added to ensure that the measures within the approved Construction Method Statement shall be maintained and adhered to throughout the course of the development.

#### v) Sustainable Urban Drainage system (SUDs)

- 8.15 The submitted SuDs proposals have been reviewed by RBC Transport Strategy (Floods lead officer) and are considered acceptable subject to the SUDs being completed in accordance with the submitted and approved details. Therefore, in terms of drainage, the proposal is considered to accord with guidance contained within the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy CS35.

#### vi) Trees and Ecology

- 8.16 Following the submission of amended plans it is noted that replacement tree planting is now included on the Commercial Road frontage (facing the Kennet Island residential site), which is a positive improvement. The Council's Natural Environment Officer concluded that on balance, taking into account the current use of the site, the area in which it sits and required parking provision, the amount of tree planting is acceptable. Appropriate conditions will be added to secure the tree planting and associated landscaping and maintenance.

#### vii) Other Considerations

##### Sustainable Construction and Design

- 8.17 The submitted Sustainability Statement by Patrick Parsons dated September 2017 demonstrates that the proposed building will comply with Part L2A (2013) of Building Regulations. This is considered acceptable. The report highlights that additional procedures, practices, reports and design measures shall be included within the final design and construction which will contribute to achieving a 'Good' BREEAM status.

However, policy requirement is for 'Very Good' status to be achieved and therefore a condition to secure the required BREEAM rate would be added. Subject to this condition, the proposal complies with Policy CS1 and CS2 of the Core Strategy and with the Council's adopted Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (July 2011).

viii) Skills and training

- 8.18 Reading UK CIC has advised that the application site provides exciting opportunities for local employment, training and skills development. This will be of particular relevance to south Reading residents, with a large number of jobs being created which will be within the scope of those with lower skills sets. The scale and scope of the project will provide unique opportunities, and Reading UK CIC would work with the developers on an Employment and Skills Plan (as required under the Employment, Skills and Training Supplementary Planning Document, April 2013) to maximise opportunity of employment for residents, skills development, as well as routes into employment for those currently removed from the jobs market.
- 8.19 An Employment and Skills Plan will need to be secured by S106 agreement, in accordance with the Employment, Skills and Training SPD (2013).
- 8.20 Whilst an actual plan is encouraged, the SPD does allow for financial contributions to be made in lieu of a plan. The proposed S106 allows for either eventuality in accordance with the SPD. The proposal therefore complies with Core Strategy Policies CS3, CS9, CS10 and CS13 and with SDPD Policy DM3 and the Council's Employment Skills and Training SPD.

xi) Equality

- 8.21 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the current application) that the protected groups would have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application.

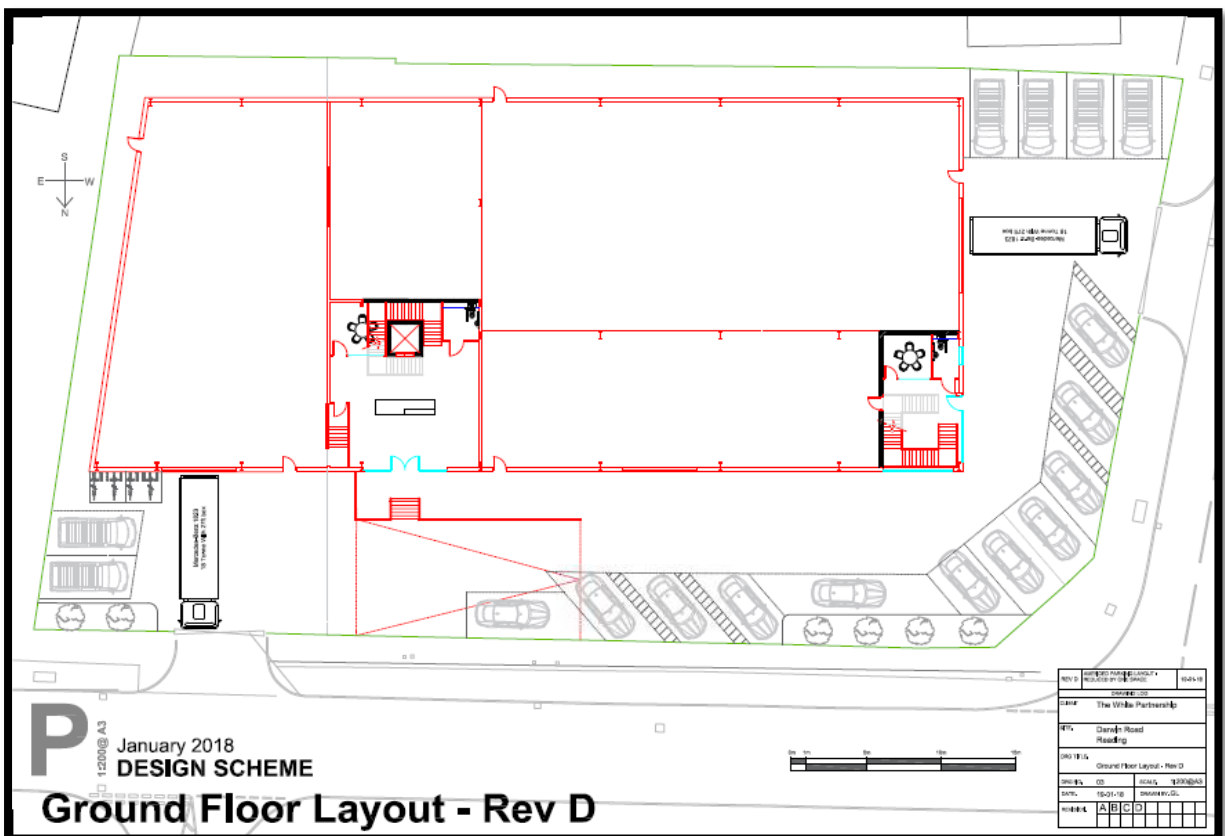
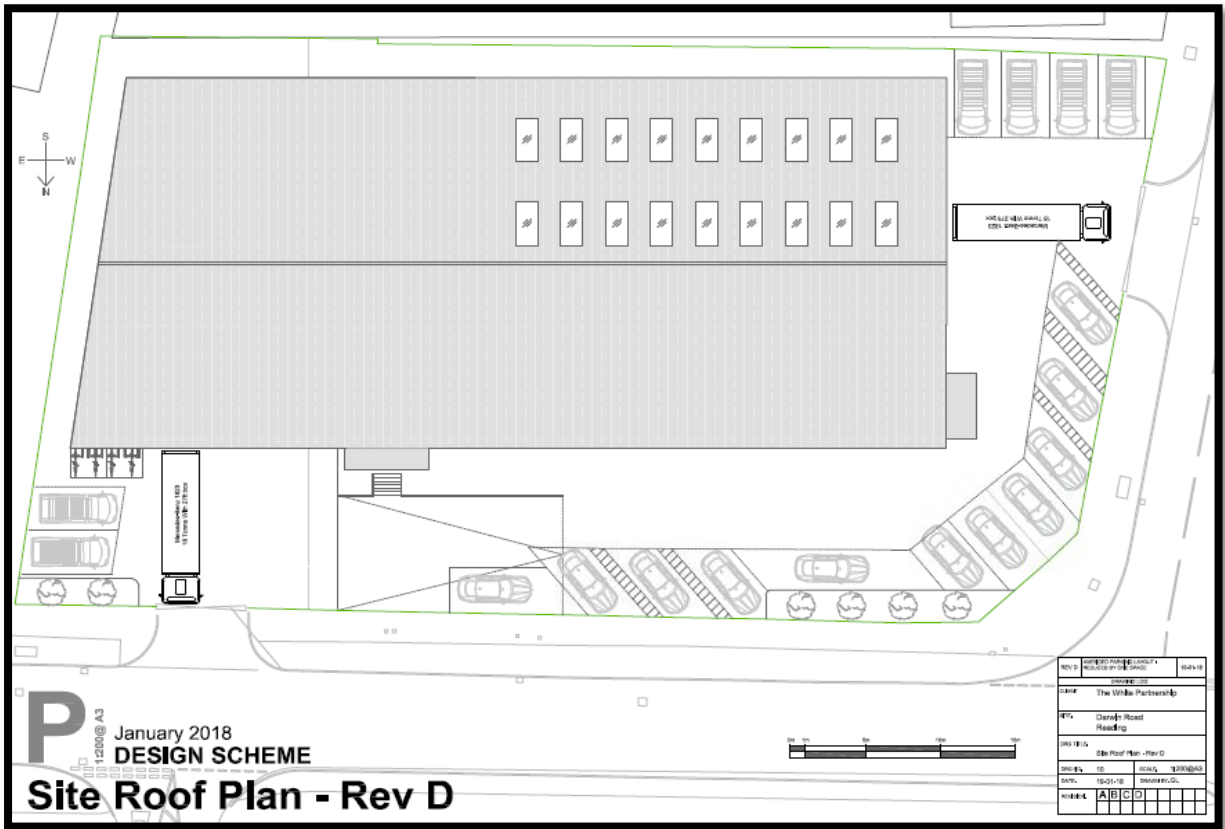
**CONCLUSION**

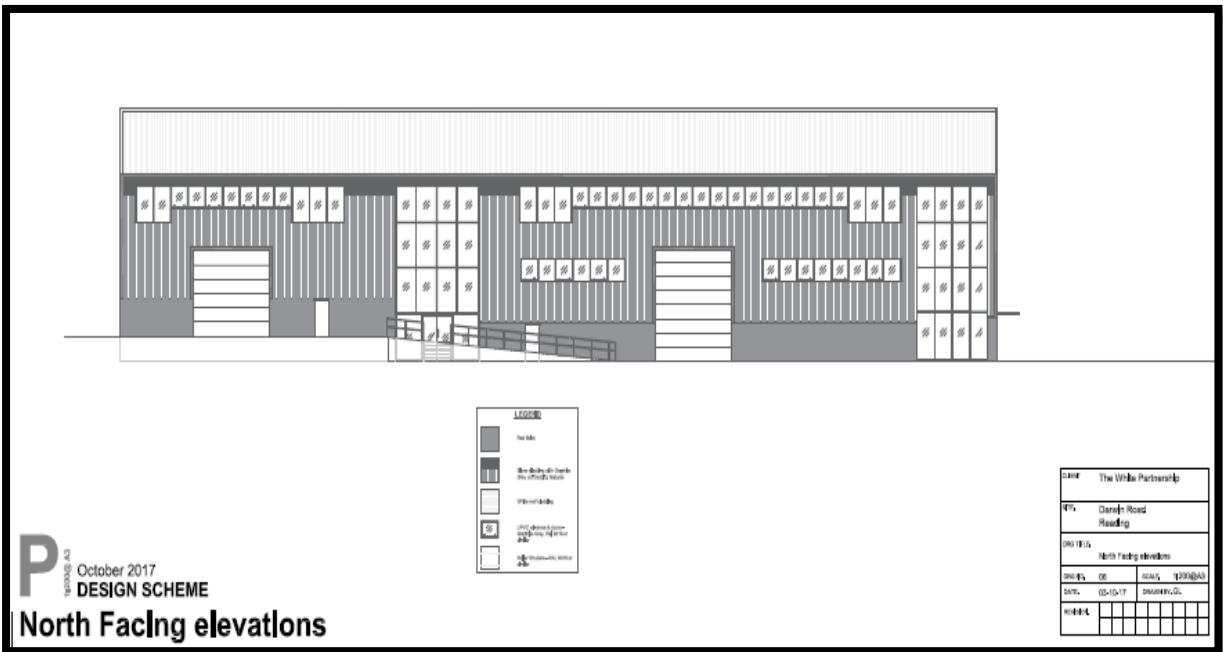
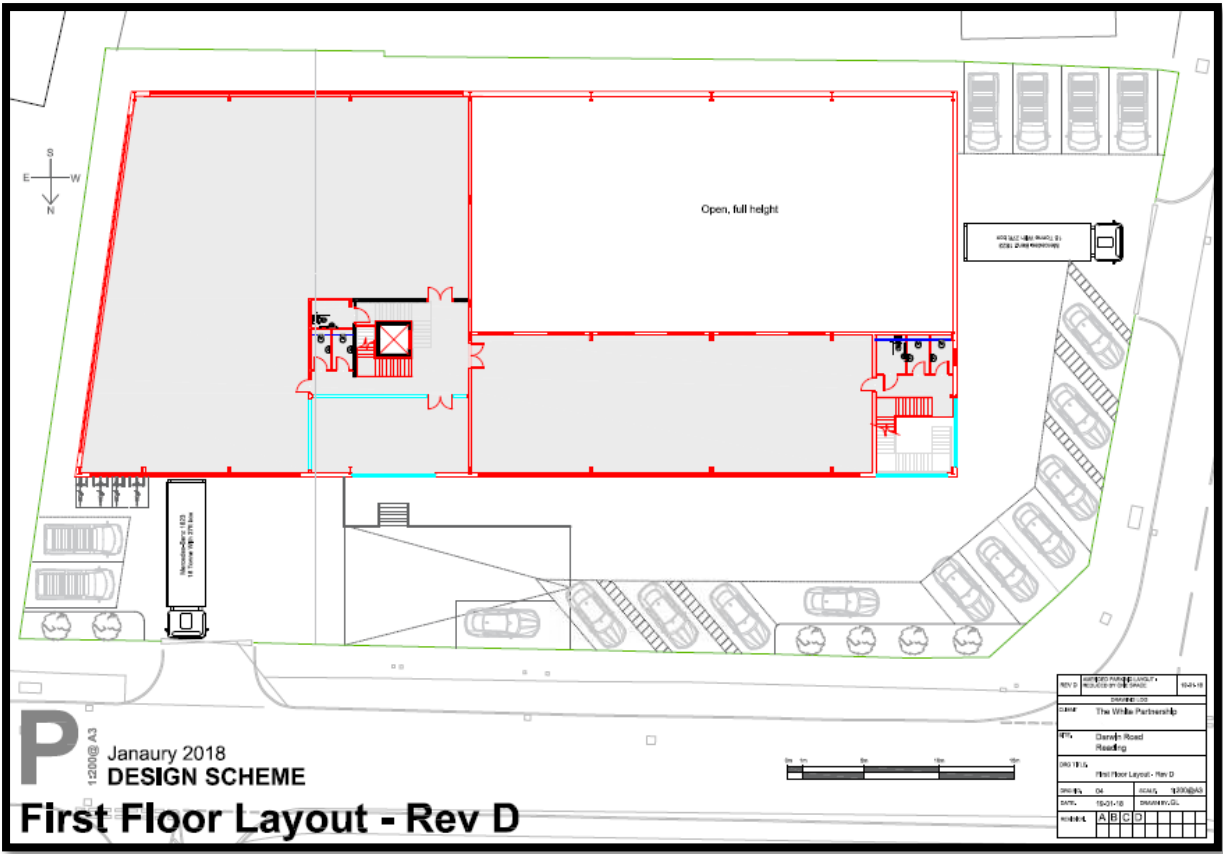
- 8.22 The development proposed is considered to be acceptable in the context of national and local planning policy and other material considerations as set out in this report. As such the application is recommended for approval, subject recommended conditions and a s106 legal agreement to secure financial contributions to local Employment Skills.

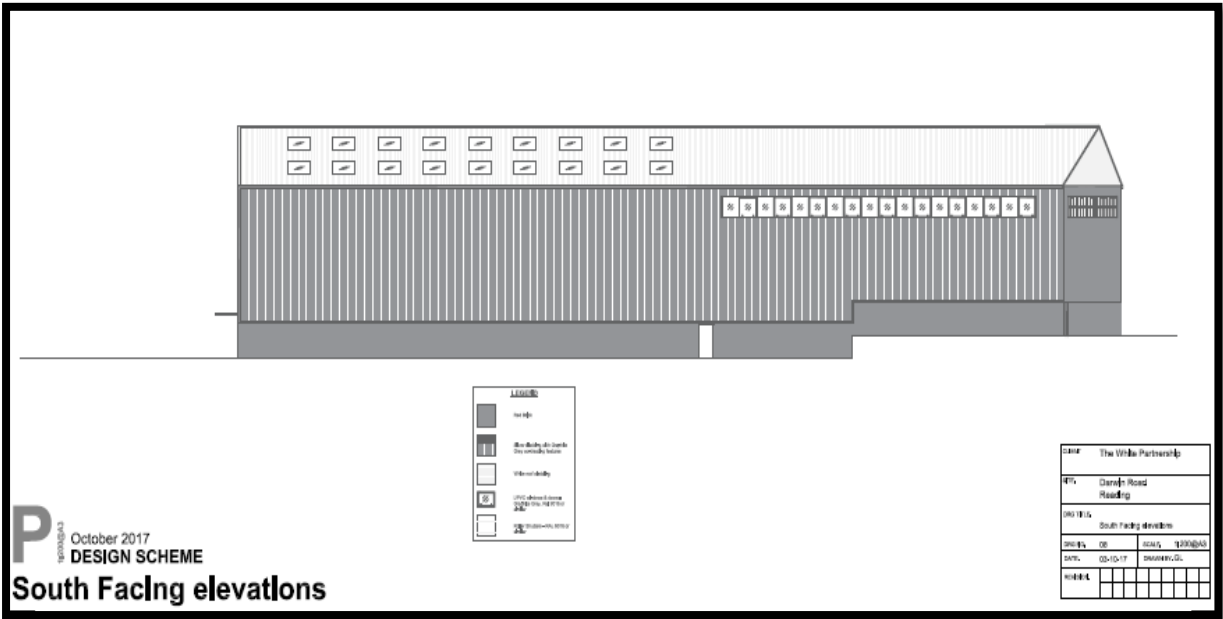
Case Officer: Ralph Chakadya



PLANS (all plans not to scale)







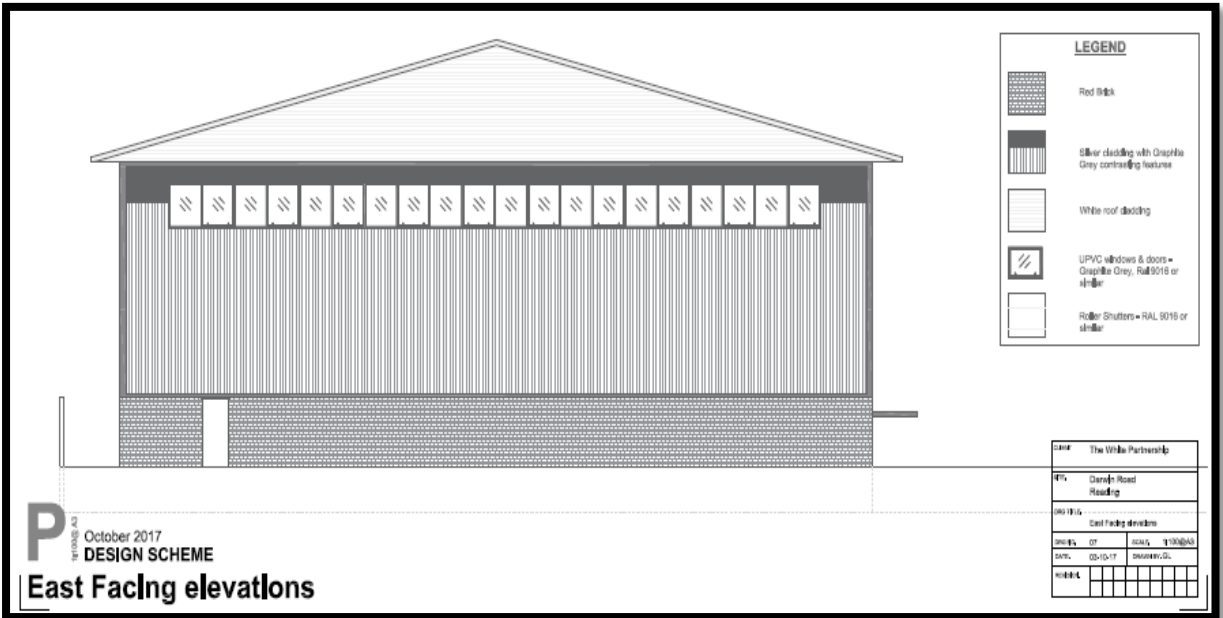
**P** October 2017  
 DESIGN SCHEME

**South Facing elevatlons**

**LEGEND**

- Red Brick
- Silver cladding with Graphite Gray contrasting features
- White roof cladding
- UPVC windows & doors = Graphite Gray, RAL 9016 or silver
- Roller Shutters = RAL 9016 or silver

CLIENT	The White Partnership		
PROJECT	Danebury Road Reading		
DATE	South Facing elevatlons		
DATE	08	DATE	10/20/17
DATE	02-10-17	DATE	02/20/17
NO			




**P** October 2017  
 DESIGN SCHEME

**East Facing elevatlons**

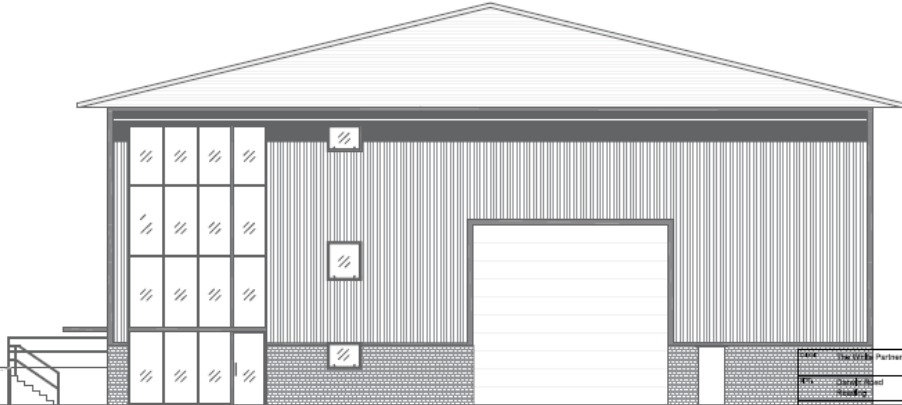
**LEGEND**

- Red Brick
- Silver cladding with Graphite Gray contrasting features
- White roof cladding
- UPVC windows & doors = Graphite Gray, RAL 9016 or silver
- Roller Shutters = RAL 9016 or silver

CLIENT	The White Partnership		
PROJECT	Danebury Road Reading		
DATE	East Facing elevatlons		
DATE	08	DATE	10/20/17
DATE	02-10-17	DATE	02/20/17
NO			

-  Red Brick
-  Silver cladding with Graphite Grey contrasting feature
-  White roof cladding
-  UPVC windows & doors - Graphite Grey, RAL 9016 or similar
-  Roller Shutters - RAL 9016 or similar

300mm high fence



**P** October 2017  
DESIGN SCHEME  
**West Facing elevations**

Proposed West facing elevation

Client	The Oryza Partnership
Architect	Design Point Building
Project No.	West Facing elevations
Scale	1:50
Date	02/10/17
Drawn by	02/10/17
Checked by	02/10/17
Approved by	02/10/17