

UPDATE REPORT:

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ITEM NO. 8

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 18 July 2018

Ward: Abbey

App No.: 180800/FUL

Address: Broad Street Mall, Broad Street, Reading

Proposal: Erection of a temporary three-storey building (constructed using shipping containers and timber frames/cladding) to create a mixed-use Urban Market comprising Shop, Restaurant/Cafe, Bar and Hot Food Takeaway Uses (Class A1/A3/A4 Use), including shared circulation and external seating spaces; refuse store, cycle parking and associated works. (Amended description).

RECOMMENDATION:

REFUSE for reasons as set out in the main Agenda report.

1. ADDITIONAL RESPONSE FROM CRIME PREVENTION DESIGN ADVISOR

1.1 The CPDA already supports the RBC Licensing objection in the main report, but has also now raised the following four design issues relating to the application, with officer responses are in *italics*:

- Access /egress in the north east corner creates a concealed area; this should be omitted by bringing the entrance forward flush with unit S4. *This could be covered by condition*
- Additional information as to who has access to the double doors leading off this space will be required. *It appears that BSM security would patrol the area, but not clear that the doorway would be manned. The applicant has advised that these connecting doors would be closed to coincide with the Mall's closing times*
- No information regarding the proposed lighting has been provided, asks that detailed lighting plans be submitted and approved prior to planning permission being granted. *This could be covered by condition*
- This location lacks any active frontage. Where an area lacks natural surveillance, formal surveillance (CCTV) will be required. From the plans provided I cannot identify if CCTV will be incorporated, or if this will be monitors or simply recording. I therefore ask that detailed plans identifying CCTV system be submitted and approved prior to planning application being approved. *Noted, but this lack of natural surveillance indicates to officers a fundamental concern with the design, which officers do not feel can be accepted by using CCTV.*

1.2 The CPDA has also sought the views of the Police's Licensing Officer, who also objects to the application and raises similar views to RBC Licensing, in that the application would not comply with Licensing's Cumulative Impact Policy (CIP) Statement and increase the concentration of late-night drinking in the town centre, without sufficient evidence of any exceptional circumstances to indicate otherwise.

2. LETTER FROM APPLICANT SENT TO PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- 2.1 Committee Members will have seen the letter of 13 July from the applicant and for information, the letter is appended to this updated report. The CGI image referred to is the one already provided in the report on the main Agenda. Officers would like to add some commentary to the points made in the letter.
- 2.2 At point 3, it is stated that A4 uses would be 'contained'. Your officers feel that this is the opposite to what should occur, if the development is to be, as the applicant describes it, "*...a vibrant mix of local independent retailers and traders...*". Interested independent retailers are mentioned. It is not clear how these would be accommodated, though, as the layout and form of the proposal appears geared towards A3/A4 use, rather than A1.
- 2.3 It should be noted the containers themselves are small and officers would not anticipate uses being solely 'contained' within them. Given the floorspaces involved, A3 uses may even have trouble operating from within them were a bar area to be introduced as well. Officers have considered the ability to condition that it is the containers only themselves which would be covered by any permission, but the size of the units and potential ability of enforcement against any such approach would seem to suggest that this would be unworkable.
- 2.4 The applicant advises in their letter that A4 bars would comprise, "*...a minority of the scheme (34% by area) of approximately 81 sq.m*". 81 sq.m. would be the area of a reasonable local convenience shop, or the same area as about three double garages. However, this assumes that the A4 would only take place within these units. These units on the second floor are typically around 14 sq.m. This is therefore roughly the size of a single garage. As discussed above, it is considered unlikely that such a floorspace would function viably within such a small area and it would appear that the intention is for patrons to 'spill out' onto the terrace deck. If minded to approve, Members may wish to consider whether they would wish to condition the containers only to be subject to the retail/A4 uses and not the deck area (and for which levels), but officers would advise that such a restriction need not extend to, say A3 uses.
- 2.5 RBC Licensing also query the provision of 'standing tables' shown on the submitted Second Floor Plan as these tend to indicate a bar, not a restaurant. The normal (sitting) tables shown are 60cm deep. This is not indicating a generous dining environment.
- 2.6 The applicant has asked that plans presented on the architect's website should not be relied on because they do not form part of the application. The plan below/overleaf is taken from the architect's website for 'The Yard'. Notwithstanding that it does not form part of the application, Members may wish to note the following.
- 2.7 Unit S2 appears very small (only 6.25 sq.m.) and officers question if this would be viable unit at all. The architect's website plan calls this a 'Store'. The applicant says that this would be a retail unit.

- 2.8 Unit S4 is labelled 'performance stage' and the 18 rectangles in front of it are labelled 'deck chairs'. The applicant is asking you to disregard this notation from the architect's website. Unit S5 is labelled 'cocktail bar' (12.5 sq.m.). There is a large clear space, some three times bigger than the unit itself in front of it. Again, you are being asked to ignore this.
- 2.9 Unit S6 on the submitted plans is a long bar (7.5m length) with the long side open to the north (to the roof terrace). The only intention of this unit would seem to be to serve drinks onto the terrace, as there is no area within the container(s) except the bar and the bar store. The architect's coloured CGI visualisation leads your officers to believe that the primary purpose of the terrace desk is as a performance/outdoor entertainment and bar space.
- 2.10 The CGI shows an over-counter window running across Unit S6 and then the open terrace sides either side, therefore the animation of the second floor being exposed to Hosier Street/Dusseldorf Way is of bars only. Stair 1 and Stair 2 allow easy by-passing of the retail areas, to access the roof terrace. In fact, if you were shopping on the ground floor and wanted to access the second floor on foot, you would have to physically exit the building to access either of the stair cores. This is further indication to officers that the second floor is a physically contained area and not a *vibrant mix of local independent retailers and traders*.

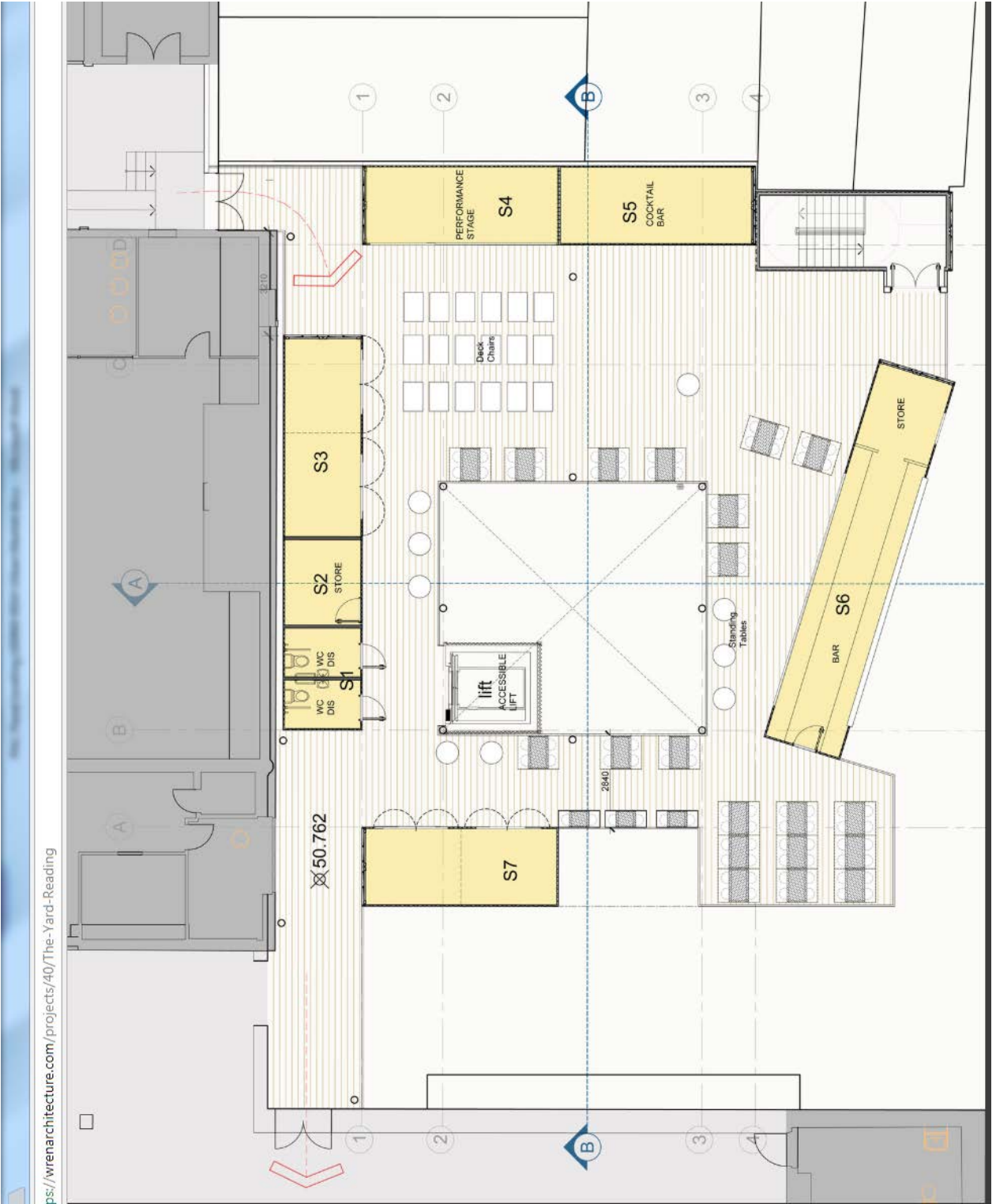
3. FURTHER CLARIFICATIONS

- 2.11 Whilst the architect's website mentions that there would be connections to the basement for various community and cultural purposes, the applicant advises that the connections via this application are for servicing only.
- 2.12 Officers advise that whilst a decision needs to be taken on the submitted application plans and material, it is interesting to note the indications given to areas of the application site on the applicant's architect's website and Members may decide to take a view on these aspects.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Overall, officers are not satisfied with the information provided by the applicant and continue to recommend refusal of this application for the two reasons set out in the main Agenda report.

Case Officer: Richard Eatough



ps://wrenarchitecture.com/projects/40/The-Yard-Reading

13 July 2018

To all Members of the Planning Applications Committee
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

Dear Councillor

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE 18 JULY 2018
ITEM 8 – SOUTH COURT, BROAD STREET MALL, BROAD STREET, READING
APPLICATION NO. 180800**

I am writing to you regarding our application for temporary planning permission for a three storey Urban Market, due to be considered by the Committee on 18 July 2018.

As background, we acquired Broad Street Mall in August 2015 and we have invested in the region of £3 million in refurbishing and upgrading the existing centre. We have also spent around £2 million upgrading the Fountain House offices on Queens Walk. We bought Broad Street Mall as a long term investment. We regard it as a key part of Reading town centre providing local shops and services and leisure uses to compliment the town centre's attractiveness.

The proposals for a temporary Urban Market are a key aspect in regenerating Broad Street Mall and the Hosier Street area enhancing footfall and repositioning the centre to provide a distinct offer to compete with the likes of Bracknell, Oxford and Slough who have ambitious town centre improvement programmes. This will constitute a further £1 million investment and catalyst for our wider masterplan vision for substantial further development.

You may recall you granted consent for a similar proposal following the receipt of further information to clarify the nature of the intended uses on 17 January 2018 (Ref. 171230/FUL).

I wanted to take this opportunity to reassure you on specific aspects of the proposal to address some concerns raised in the officers' report to Committee, as follows: -

1. Since our initial planning permission was granted in January 2018 we have received significant interest and enthusiasm from local traders and retailers in taking space in the proposals including from Warings Bakery, Tilehurst Village Butchers, Vintage Roots, Mortimer Chocolate, Village Made Cheese, Rebel Rides, Tamp Culture and a number of barbers and hair dressers.
2. Fundamentally the Urban Market is a Class A1 retail proposal where we expect the overwhelming proportion of uses to be retail sales. To compliment these independent traders we are seeking an element of Class A3 restaurant and A4 drinking establishment to encourage shoppers to dwell; the concept being to provide an experience for an afternoon out where you might eat, drink and shop, all in the town centre.



3. We do not propose a "vertical drinking establishment". We propose a vibrant mix of local independent retailers and traders who would occupy small outlets created by converting and adapting shipping containers. We proposed to restrict any Class A4 drinking establishment use to be located only on the second floor level which is clearly contained, identifiable and distinct from the ground floor shopping centre entrance and Hosier Street. This comprises a minority of the scheme (34% by area) of approximately 81 sq.m. However, we do anticipate Class A1 retail use on the second floor as well.
4. We have supported the Council in addressing anti-social behaviour issues in this area including by acquiring the former Eva's nightclub and reaching agreement to terminate the lease and close the premises. We have made an application to demolish the nightclub which we intend to carry out once we have secured your approval to do so.
5. The Urban Market is proposed to be managed by our team who run Broad Street Mall. We want to provide activity and generate footfall to enliven this part of the town centre in a safe and outward facing environment. It is intended as a wide retail offer and not focussed on drinking. We have already prepared a management and operations plan which has been submitted to the Council for approval under the January 2018 permission.
6. I am enclosing a copy of the computer visualisation that we have produced (included in the officer's report at paragraph 6.22) showing the frontage to Hosier Street. We feel this is inviting, permeable and outward looking and provides surveillance to the street. It is in our interests as owners and operators of Broad Street Mall to encourage footfall on Hosier Street and draw people into the Mall.

We are investing in Reading and to progress our plans for the improvement of Broad Street Mall and its environs working in partnership with the Council.

I hope that you can support our application for temporary consent so that we can continue this programme enlivening, enhancing and diversifying the town centre retail offer.

Yours faithfully

PP: S. Jones
Gary Lewis
Managing Director
Moorgarth Group Limited

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