

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT CULTURE & SPORT
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 22 April 2009

ITEM NO.

Ward: Whitley

App No.: 09/00347/FUL

Address: Green Park Railway Station, Green Park

Proposal: Construction of new access road, car park, landscaping proposals and associated works to be implemented in conjunction with planning permission 07/01108/FUL

Applicant: Prudential Assurance Company Limited.

Date received: 4 March 2009

Major Application: 13 week target decision date: 3 June 2009

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to receipt of no substantive objection from the Environment Agency, GRANT permission.

CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE

NSTD - The approved access road and car park shall only be used for the purposes of providing access to, and car parking for, the Green Park station approved under application reference: 07/01108/FUL.

NSTD - The approved access road and car park shall cease to be used once the permanent access to and parking for the Green Park Station approved under application reference 07/01275/OUT is implemented or within 8 years of this consent, whichever is the sooner.

NSTD - Station not to be used until car parking has been provided

NSTD - Station not to be used until access road has been provided

NSTD - Station not to be used until details of access control systems onto Smallmead Road and Kybes Lane have been approved and implemented

C5 - Construction Method Statement - to be submitted

NSTD - Details of size position and location of security cameras

NSTD - Control of construction site noise

NSTD - Control of construction site dust

AR1 - Programme of archaeological work

INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE

1. Compliance with development plan policies
2. Compliance with approved plans & details
3. All vehicular traffic to use the A33 and Green Park access roads, and not any residential streets in the Whitley area (including Basingstoke Road)

1. INTRODUCTION

The application site is located to the north-west of the Green Park Business Park, adjacent to the main railway line linking Reading and Basingstoke. To the east of the site is an area, Green Park Village, for which an application for a mixed use development of 737 residential units, commercial facilities, community facilities including a one-form entry primary school, and office space has recently been approved (07/01275/OUT). To the north of the site is the Smallmead landfill site, which is due to be restored to a dome grassed area. To the west of the site is land within West Berkshire previously used for minerals extraction.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The application proposes the erection of a temporary access road and a temporary car park (With 204 spaces) to serve the Green Park station development. It is envisaged that the road and car park would be required for a period of between 5 - 7 years.

Consent was granted 14 December 2007 for the construction of a new railway station, bus interchange, decked park and ride facility, short stay car park, taxi drop off, disabled parking facility, access road, landscaping and associated works (07/01108/FUL). The station platforms and concourse are actually situated within West Berkshire; consent was granted by West Berkshire District Council for the station development 30 January 2008.

Consent is due to be issued imminently for the Green Park Village (GPV) Development (07/01275/OUT), which includes 737 residential units, 16,000 sqm office development, a community hub, a one form entry primary school, engineering and infrastructure works, including remodelling of the lake. A large part of the permanent access road to the station from Longwater Avenue was approved under this consent. The access road and car park proposed by this application are different and are required on a temporary basis to enable delivery of the station and interchange in advance of the permanent access being implemented. The already approved access and other works require substantial engineering operations, particularly the remodelling of the lake, and would be undertaken in the future as part of the GPV consent.

The applicant's supporting statement confirms that the development proposed in this application will enable the station and interchange to be operational by July 2010.

The application, if approved, would effectively allow for phased construction of the development (the Station and Interchange as Phase 1 and the Permanent Car Park as Phase 2). The applicants therefore also wish to vary conditions attached to the original station consent to allow for a phased discharge of conditions. This application, 09/00349/VARIAT, is considered elsewhere on this agenda.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 00/00612/OUT - Erection of a railway station with road access, bus turning, parking and associated works - Granted 10/01/2001.

- 03/01514/OUT - Erection of a railway station with road access, bus turning, parking and associated works (renewal of application number 00/00612/OUT) - Application permitted 04/06/2004.
- 07/01108/FUL - Construction of a new railway station, bus interchange, decked park and ride facility, short stay car park, taxi drop off, disabled parking facility, access road, landscaping and associated works - Application permitted 14/12/2007.
- 07/01156/WBKADJ - Construction of a new railway station including 5-car platforms, footbridge, lift, concourse, disabled access provision, engineering works including diversion of existing drainage ditch to the west of the railway line and associated works - Application withdrawn.
- 07/01594/WBKADJ - Construction of a new railway station including 5 car platforms, footbridge, lift, concourse, disabled access provision, engineering works including diversion of existing drainage ditch to the West of the railway line and associated works - Observations sent 10/01/2008.
- 07/01275/OUT - (Green Park Village) A planning application for mixed-use development comprising:
 "Phase 1 (submitted in full with no matters reserved and as defined on Plan Ref. PA-P1-002): the construction of housing - 46 houses and 22 apartments (Class C3), local retail (Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5), management suite, village hall, engineering and infrastructure works including reconfiguration of the lake, lakeside access, car parking, pedestrian and cycle routes, services and infrastructure, landscaping and other associated works; and
 Subsequent phases (submitted in outline with all matters reserved except for details of the main access proposals): the construction of housing - 669 dwellings (Class C3), extra care housing with ancillary community uses (Class C2), 16,000 square metres office space (Class B1), one-form entry primary school including nursery (Class D1), health surgery (Class D1), sports pitches, children's play facilities, engineering and infrastructure works including reconfiguration of the lake and vehicular access, lakeside access, car parking, pedestrian and cycle routes, services and infrastructure, landscaping and other associated works." *Application permitted.*

4. CONSULTATIONS

(i) Statutory consultation

Environment Agency:

Any comments will be provided in an update report at your meeting.

(ii) Non statutory consultation

South East England Regional Assembly:

The Assembly commented on the original application for the station, and has no substantive comments to make on this application.

Transport Strategy:

Given the importance of the new station to the public transport infrastructure in South Reading and the inclusion of the station in the Local Transport Plan, Structure Plan and part of the Growth Points package it is imperative that access to the interchange is achieved.

The temporary access road will be 7.3 metres wide, with a 2 metre wide footway and this design criteria is in accordance with the DfT document "The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges" and can accommodate two buses passing each other. The junction with Longwater Avenue is adequate to accommodate the predicted traffic flows from the Station.

The existing industrial units located to the east of the existing lake and currently accessed from Kybes Lane via Smallmead Road will remain. The lease states that they can access their buildings from Smallmead Road and this will remain with their access road crossing the new station access road. However the existing barrier control on Smallmead Road will be relocated to ensure that the general public cannot achieve access to Green Park and the Station. This is acceptable.

The station access road will also have a link directly on to Kybes Lane in the vicinity of the station. This will have access control via Automatic Number Plate Recognition Cameras and the only vehicles able to use it will be vehicles transferring guests between the Kirtons Farm Cophorne Hotel and the station. This is acceptable, as it will encourage guests to come to the Hotel by public transport. No details have been provided of the control system, but this can be covered by a condition.

The location of the temporary car park is acceptable and will ensure the development has the requisite number of parking spaces.

Environmental Health:

Conditions suggested in relation to noise, air quality and bonfires.

Leisure:

No objection to the application.

Landscaping:

The landscaping principles proposed are generally acceptable.

Ecology:

Conditions suggested in relation to protection of the lake from pollution during construction, grass snakes and breeding birds.

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust:

No comments received to date.

Natural England:

No comments received to date.

British Waterways:

No comments to make.

Crime Prevention Officer:

The applicants have liaised with the Crime Prevention Officer from the British Transport Police, and his suggestions as set out within the Design and access Statement are fully supported.

Archaeology:

Condition suggested.

West Berkshire District Council:

No comments received to date.

Wokingham Borough Council:

No comments received to date.

(iii) Public/local consultation and comments received

The following addresses were notified:

- Longwater Avenue: 100, 200-250, 350.
- Brook Drive: 100, 200, 250, 300, 350, 400.
- South Oak Way: 100, 200, 220, 240, 250, 300, 400, 500.
- Shooters Way: Madejski Stadium, Royal Berkshire Conference Centre, Radio House.
- Smallmead Road: Pingemead Business Estate (all), Pingemead House.
- Island Road: Reading Sewage Treatment Works.
- A33 Relief Road: Reading Gate Retail Park (all).

No responses received.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Guidance

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1)

Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport (PPG13)

Regional Planning Policy Guidance

Draft Regional Spatial Strategy - The South East Plan (RPG9)

Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016

Policy T1 (Transport Strategy)

Policy T3 (Development of the Strategic Transport Network)

Policy EN8 (Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation)

Replacement Minerals Plan for Berkshire 2001

Policy 26 (Safeguarded Rail Depot Sites)

Reading Borough Local Plan 1991 - 2006 'Saved' Policies

CUD 14 (Standards of Design in Development)

NE 5 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands)

NE 6 (Protecting Wildlife Habitats and Natural Features on or Adjoining Development Sites)

Policy NE 7 (Creative Nature Conservation)
TRN 13 (Off Street Servicing)

Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy Document 2008.

Policy CS1 (Sustainable Construction and Design)
Policy CS4 (Accessibility)
Policy CS5 (Inclusive Access)
Policy CS7 (Design)
Policy CS21 (Major Transport Projects)
Policy CS24 (Car/Cycle Parking)
Policy CS34 (Pollution and Water Resources)
Policy CS35 (Flooding)

Reading Local Transport Plan 2006-2011

Chapter 6 (Southern Area Action Plan)
Chapter 11 (Major Schemes)

6. APPRAISAL

Main considerations

(i) Principle of Development

The principle of development has been established by the grant of various planning consents for station developments on this site, most recently 07/01108/FUL. The development proposed by this application would allow the station and interchange to be delivered earlier than would be the case if the GPV access road were relied upon for access to the station; the application is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle.

It is proposed that the development is conditioned so as to only be used in connection with the Green Park station consent, and that the development approved by this application shall cease to be used within 8 years or once the permanent access and car parking approved under the Green Park Village consent are implemented, if earlier.

(ii) Highways and Parking Issues

In terms of vehicular movements, whilst the proposed development will generate vehicular movements through use of the access road and car park for the station, these are likely to be vehicular movements that would already be on the network; the interchange (facilitated by this application) will result in the length of these vehicular journey's substantially decreasing as the drivers transfer to the train for the majority of their journey. Given this, the station development, including the access and car park sought under this consent, will not have a material affect on traffic flows in the vicinity of the site. Furthermore, the station would be of benefit to Green Park, as it would enhance the already good existing public transport facilities, and allow for the provision of a marshalling route to allow direct access to the Madejski Stadium, making it more attractive for supporters to arrive to games at the stadium by train.

The single storey car park would contain 204 parking spaces, which is consistent with the number of spaces as originally approved under the 2007 station consent, and is considered appropriate to serve the station. The access to, and internal layout of, the car park is considered to be acceptable.

The access road is of a sufficient width to accommodate passing buses, and has a sufficiently wide footway (2m). The road would also include a vehicular access onto Kybes Lane. This would be a controlled access, used by vehicles transferring guests between the station and the Copthorne Hotel. This would allow guests using the hotel to use public transport, and is considered to be acceptable. Details of the controlled access system are proposed to be conditioned.

(iii) Amenity of neighbouring occupiers

The closest part of the development would be part of the access road located approximately 30m from the closest current residential dwellings (a terrace of three house by the junction of Smallmead Road and Kirtons Farm Road, within West Berkshire), and these properties are currently vacant and under the ownership of the applicant. Otherwise, the development is a significant distance from any residential occupiers, notwithstanding the forthcoming residential development at GPV.

In terms of impact upon other users, there are small-scale commercial units close to the site which would remain until GPV was developed, with major office units located within Green Park. It is not considered that the access road or car park would have a detrimental impact upon their amenity, but is in fact more likely to be of benefit to them in terms of accessibility as a result of the station and interchange.

(iv) Appearance and Landscaping

The application proposes an access road and car park, and as such the appearance of the development would be largely functional. However, the application includes proposed landscaping treatment at the junction with Longwater Avenue in a form consistent with the high quality landscaping evident within Green Park. Dense buffer planting is proposed where the road runs close to the edge of the existing lake to prevent access to the water.

Given the temporary nature of the car park, tree planting is not considered to be practical or necessary. However, the applicant proposes to seed areas adjacent to the car park with a wildflower mix, which is considered to be appropriate.

(v) Lighting and Security

A plan showing details of lighting has been submitted for consideration. Within the car park area, a total of 20 No. 8m high 90 watt lamps are proposed within and surrounding the car park, ensuring that this area would be sufficiently well lit to encourage use of the car park and discourage crime. Lighting is also shown along the access road, ensuring that the development would not be unacceptable in terms of vehicular and pedestrian safety.

The applicant has proposed the introduction of CCTV through site, including number plate recognition technology. Details of the proposed CCTV are suggested as a condition for further submission. The applicants also confirm that the site would be monitored by the existing 24 hour Green Park security, including patrols. There is therefore no objection to the development on security grounds.

(vi) Flooding

The applicant has submitted a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) along with the application, stating that the station will be built on land raised to above the 1:1000 year flood zone. The Environment Agency (EA) previously withdrew a holding objection to the approved station application, however, no response to this current application has been received to date. An update with any substantive response from the EA will be provided at your meeting.

The site currently lies largely in Flood Zone 2 (Medium Probability), but partly in Zone 3b (Functional Floodplain). Proposed works would raise the land to Zone 1 (Low Probability). In terms of the Sequential Test under PPS25, a transport interchange, of which this access road and car park ultimately form part of, is considered to fall under the definition of 'essential transport infrastructure', which PPS25 identifies as being appropriate within Flood Zone 2. For this type of development within Flood Zone 3b the Exception Test is required. For this Test to be passed, the development must (i) provide wider sustainability benefits, (ii) be on previously developed land or there must be no reasonable alternative sites on previously developed land, and (iii) a FRA must demonstrate that the development will be safe, and where possible reduce flood risk. The development is considered to clearly comply with (i) and (iii), and the Environment Agency's comments are awaited on (ii); however, the FRA submitted with the main station application in 2007 was accepted by the EA to demonstrate that the development would be safe.

7. CONCLUSION

The application would go towards securing delivery of the station, which is specifically referred to as being important within the Core Strategy and Local Transport Plan. The application is considered towards helping achieve sustainable development through provision of the station, and is acceptable in terms of the number of parking spaces proposed. The appearance, landscaping and security of the proposed development are considered to be acceptable. Subject to the receipt of satisfactory comments from the Environment agency, the application is recommended for approval.

It should be noted that as condition 10 remains attached to the approved station permission, 07/01108/FUL, the details of the proposed access roads need to be approved under that consent in order to implement the station permission.

Plans:

11321/1035/001 Rev D - Location Plan

11321/1035/002 Rev B - Site Plan

11321/1035/005 Rev A - Car Park Layout

11321/1035/011 Rev B - Access Road - Plan and Long Section

11321/1035/012 Rev B - Access Road - Cross Section
11321/1035/013 Rev A - Access Road - Geometric Layout
11321/1035/014 Rev A - Access Road & Car Park - Lighting Details
11321/1035/021 - 025 Rev A - Phasing Plans
C348-001 Rev A - Temporary Landscaping Works
C348-002 - Access Road - Cross Section
C348-004 Rev B - Landscape Proposals

Case Officer: Justin Turvey