

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

6 DECEMBER 2023

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

AGENDA ITEM	ACTION	WARDS AFFECTED	PAGE NO
<u>UPDATE AGENDA</u>			
9.	231464/FUL - UNITS 49, 50 & 52, BROAD STREET MALL	Decision	ABBEY 5 - 8
10.	221880/FUL & 221881/LBC - 23-24 MARKET PLACE	Decision	ABBEY 9 - 10
12.	230613/REG3 - AMETHYST LANE	Decision	SOUTHCOTE 11 - 14
13.	230612/REG3 - DWYER ROAD	Decision	SOUTHCOTE 15 - 16
14.	230953/FUL - UNITS 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11 BRUNEL RETAIL PARK, ROSE KILN LANE	Decision	WHITLEY 17 - 22
15.	231581/ADJ - TOB1, EARLEY GATE, WHITEKNIGHTS CAMPUS, UNIVERSITY OF READING	Decision	OUT OF BOROUGH 23 - 34

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Agenda Annex

UPDATE SHEET AND ORDER OF CONSIDERATION

Planning Applications Committee - 6 December 2023

Applications Without Public Speaking

Item No.	9 Page 55	Ward	Abbey
Application Number	231464		
Application type	Full Planning Approval		
Address	Units 49, 50 & 52, Broad Street Mall, Reading, RG1 7QE		
Planning Officer presenting	Nathalie Weekes		*UPDATE*
Item No.	10 Page 71	Ward	Abbey
Application Number	221880/221881		
Application type	Full Planning Approval/Listed Building Consent		
Address	23-24 Market Place, Reading, RG1 2DE		
Planning Officer presenting	Matthew Burns		*UPDATE*
Item No.	11 Page 105	Ward	Battle
Application Number	221345		
Application type	Outline Planning Approval		
Address	Curzon Club, 362 Oxford Road, Reading, RG30 1AQ		
Planning Officer presenting	Tom Bradfield		
Item No.	12 Page 125	Ward	Southcote
Application Number	230613		
Application type	Regulation 3 Planning Approval		
Address	Amethyst Lane, Reading		
Planning Officer presenting	Nicola Taplin		*UPDATE*
Item No.	13 Page 145	Ward	Southcote
Application Number	230612		
Application type	Regulation 3 Planning Approval		
Address	Dwyer Road, Reading		
Planning Officer presenting	Ethne Humphreys		*UPDATE*
Item No.	14 Page 169	Ward	Whitley
Application Number	230953		
Application type	Full Planning Approval		
Address	Units 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 Brunel Retail Park		
Planning Officer presenting	Alison Amoah		*UPDATE*
Item No.	15 Page 199	Ward	Out of Borough
Application Number	231581		
Application type	Adjacent Authority Consultation		
Address	Earley Gate, Whiteknights Campus, University of Reading,		
Planning Officer presenting	Tom Bradfield		*UPDATE*

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06 December 2023



Reading

Borough Council

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Title	PLANNING APPLICATION UPDATE REPORT
Ward	Abbey
Planning Application Reference:	231464
Site Address:	Units 49, 50, 52 Broad Street Mall, Reading
Proposed Development	Amalgamation of units 49- 50 and 52, change of use from Use Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) to sui generis use (family entertainment centre) and external alterations on Queens walk frontage
Applicant	FunBox Entertainment UK Ltd
Report author	Nathalie Weekes. Senior Planning Officer
Recommendation	As per main agenda report
S106 Terms	N/A
Conditions	As per main report with amendments to conditions below - - -
Informatives	As per main report and additional informatives below

RECOMMENDATION:

As per the main agenda report but with the following amendments to the recommended conditions and Informatives:

- 4.. No **external** mechanical plant shall be installed until a noise assessment of the proposed mechanical plant has been submitted to and approved by the Council.
6. Transport - Delivery and Servicing Plan for basement level access only ~~to be submitted and approved prior to occupation.~~ as specified.
7. ~~Prior to commencement a~~ Construction Method Statement ~~to be agreed~~ as specified.
8. ~~Details of street furniture to be submitted and approved prior to occupation~~

10. Hours of Operation (Sunday to Tuesday: 10:00- 22:30, ~~Last food order: 22:00~~ Wednesday 10:00-23:30, ~~Last food order: 23:00~~ Thursday to Saturday: 10:00-00:30 ~~Last food order: 00:00~~)

1. Recommended Conditions

- 1.1 Proposed Condition 4 (mechanical plant) is amended to apply specifically to any external changes proposed and to require relevant details prior to installation. This is to clarify the wording of the conditions, and would still require additional details to be provided for approval prior to installation.
- 1.2 Proposed Conditions 6 and 7 (Delivery and servicing and Construction management Statement) are amended following additional information submitted to the Council, not available at the time of writing the Planning Committee report, which have now been approved by the RBC Transport and Environmental Protection teams and are now amended to restrictive-type conditions, for the development to be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.
- 1.3 Proposed Condition 8 (Street furniture) has been removed as a street (pavement) licence application has been submitted to the Council which is currently under consideration. Thus it is considered an unnecessary duplication and instead can be retained as a planning informative.
- 1.4 Proposed condition 10. (Hours of Opening) has been revised to state the hours of opening and to avoid any confusion.
- 1.5 All pre-commencement conditions have been agreed with the Applicant.

2. Additional information update

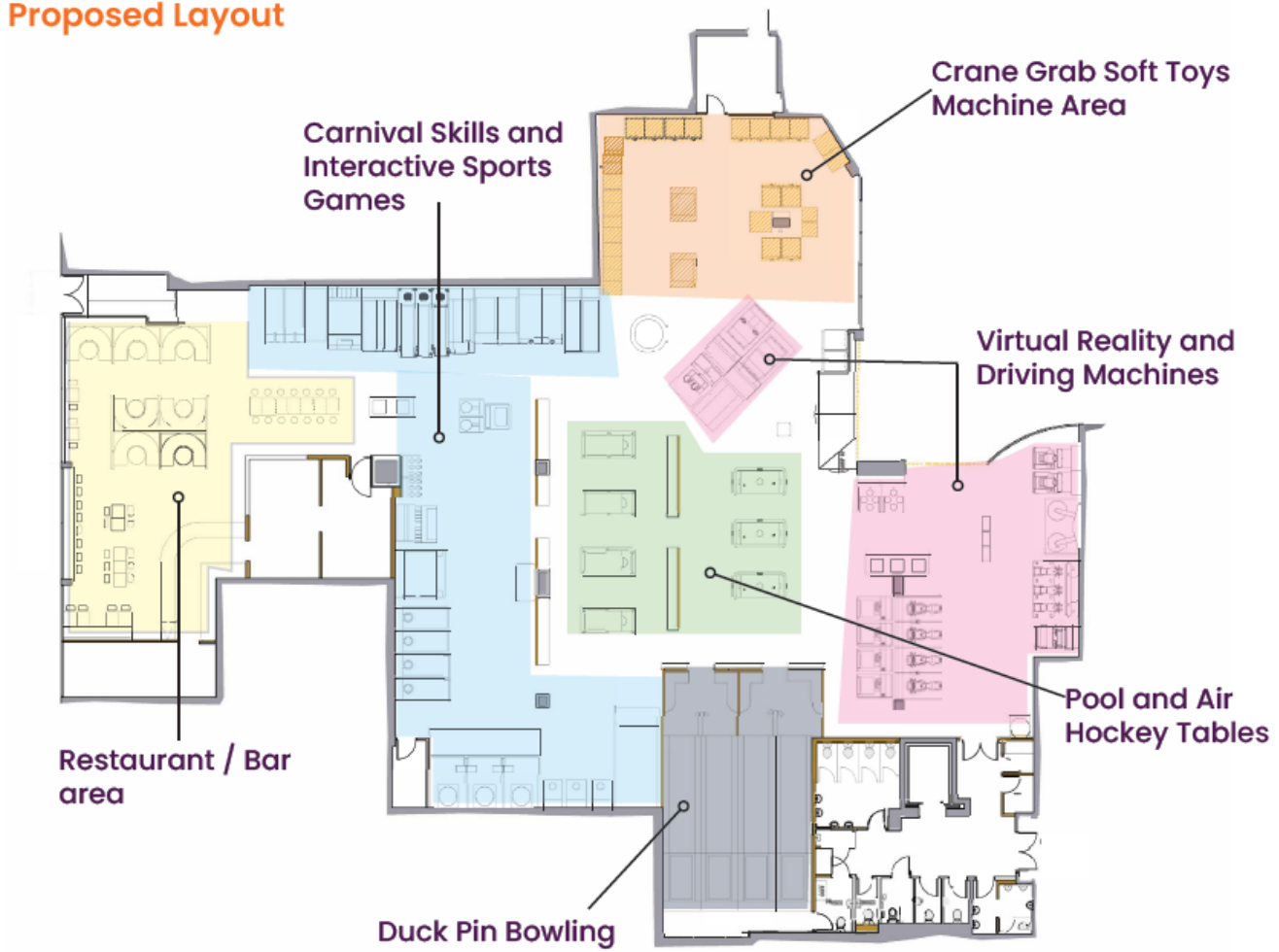
- 2.1 A pavement licence has been granted for external seating.
- 2.2 Application 231742/ADV has been submitted for advertisement consent relating to the proposed use, although at the time of writing this application is invalid.

3. Email sent to members of the Planning Applications Committee

- 3.1 The applicant has emailed an information pack to councillors. The information pack document contains a summary of information submitted as part of the planning application including: an indicative image of the proposed new entrance on Queens Walk, a summary of the proposed use as a family entertainment centre, activities to be provided, actions to be taken to comply with the premises licence and how the frontage along Queens Walk will become more active. A proposed internal layout plan has been provided and is attached to this update report as Appendix 1. Details of the Operation Management Plan and security measures to manage the business operation, steps to avoid any negative noise impact for neighbour amenity, the provision of CCTV, servicing and delivery and the benefits of the change of use to the leisure offering within Reading are also outlined.
- 3.2

Appendix 1

Proposed Layout



Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

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06 December 2023



Title	PLANNING APPLICATION UPDATE REPORT
Ward	Abbey
Planning Application Reference:	221880/FUL & 221881/LBC
Site Address:	23-24 Market Place, Reading
Proposed Development	<p>221880FUL - Change of use of first, second and third floors from Class E to 4 x 1 bed flats and 1 x 2 bed flats (C3 use)</p> <p>221881LBC - Internal and external alterations including new ventilation outlets to rear elevation associated with proposed change of use of first, second and third floors from Class E to 5 flats (C3 use) under planning application ref. 221880</p>
Applicant	Sykes Capital Ltd
Report author	Matt Burns, Principal Planning Officer
Deadline:	Originally 29 th March 2023, but an extension of time has been agreed with the applicant until 5 th January 2024
Recommendation	As per main report
S106 Terms	<p>To include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To secure an affordable housing contribution of £82,250 towards the provision of Affordable Housing within the Borough of Reading. Payable prior to first occupation and index-linked from the date of permission. 2. To secure private waste collection arrangements for the development for all waste streams (general waste, recycling and food waste), including collection of waste directly from the communal bin store on a weekly basis and a stipulation that no bins are to be kept on the public highway at any time. <p>In order for officers to work efficiently and effectively, it is suggested that minor changes to the Heads of Terms and details of the legal agreement during the negotiations, where necessary, are delegated to officers.</p>

Conditions	As per main report
Informatives	As per main report

1. Affordable Housing

- 1.1. Paragraph 7.6 of the main agenda report sets out that the Applicant has agreed to provide a policy complaint contribution towards affordable housing provision within the Borough. Officers can now confirm that this equates to a contribution of £82,250, which would be secured by way of a section 106 legal agreement, with the contribution to be paid in full prior to occupation of the first dwelling.

2. Conditions

- 2.1 Officers can confirm that all the recommended pre-commencement conditions have been agreed with the Applicant in accordance with section 100ZA of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning (Pre-commencement Conditions) Regulations 2018 (as amended).

Case Officer: Matt Burns

06 December 2023



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Title	PLANNING APPLICATION UPDATE REPORT
Ward	Southcote
Planning Application Reference:	230613
Site Address:	Amethyst Lane, Reading
Proposed Development	Demolition and redevelopment of the Site at Amethyst Lane to deliver a new respite care facility alongside 17 new houses, soft and hard landscaping, parking and ancillary works.
Applicant	Reading Borough Council
Report author	Nicola Taplin Senior Planning Officer
Recommendation	<p>RECOMMENDATION AMENDED TO:</p> <p>Subject to confirmation of satisfactory on-site, off-site or a combination arrangement in terms of Bio-diversity Net Gain (BNG);</p> <p>Delegate to the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (AD PTPPS) to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to the satisfactory completion of a Section 106 legal agreement (unilateral undertaking) or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the Section 106 legal agreement not be completed by 1st February 2024 (unless officers on behalf of the AD PTPPS agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement).</p> <p>Otherwise, as per the main agenda report.</p>
S106 Terms	As per main report and updated HoT below
Conditions	<p>As per main report and additional conditions below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DC1 VEHICLE PARKING (AS SPECIFIED) 2. DC3 VEHICULAR ACCESS (AS SPECIFIED) 3. DC10 ACCESS CLOSURE WITH REINSTATEMENT 4. DC17 CAR PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN 5. SU7 SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE (TO BE APPROVED) 6. SU8 SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE 7. ROADS AND FOOTWAYS TO BE PROVIDED (AS SPECIFIED)

Informatives	As per main report and additional informatives below
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1 SUDS

- 1.1 With regards to the Revised Drainage Strategy, the Council's SUDS Manager has confirmed there is no objection to the application, as the scheme includes swales and permeable paving as well as attenuation storage to slow the surface water down from reaching the Thames Water sewer. The drainage strategy advises that the proposed run-off would achieve a significant reduction from the current run-off rate but this has not been confirmed as part of this strategy. The SUDS Manager is however, content with the strategy and recommends that a condition is attached to secure the submission of an updated drainage strategy to confirm this run-off rate.

2 Ecology

- 2.1 The Recommendation and paragraph 7.4 of the Main report advise that The Biodiversity Net Gain calculation is being considered further and is currently in the process of being re-calculated.
- 2.2 At the time of writing this Update Report, officers have received the updated report which concludes that through the landscape/planting proposals on the site and planting urban trees within the local area the proposed development at Amethyst Lane will result in a net biodiversity area gain of 0.33 'biodiversity units', which represents an 10.74% increase in habitat area and an increase in linear habitats of 0.74 biodiversity units, which represents a 78.08% increase in linear habitats. The report advises that the proposals will lead to the removal of hardstanding, scrub and modified grassland on-site, but a gain of habitats that includes species-rich neutral grassland, as well as the retention of some of the linear features, including native hedgerows with trees and lines of trees. The proposed development will also create additional native hedges and planting of new trees on site and plant 140 small or 16 medium or 95 small and 5 medium urban trees off-site within the local area. The updated report has sent to the Council's ecologist for comment. It is not known if a response will be available in time for your meeting, accordingly, it remains that delegated authority is sought to resolve this matter, as per the main agenda report recommendation.

3 Additional Consultation Responses:

Transport & Highways Comments

- 3.1 Following the submission of the revised plans detailing an additional parking space for the respite centre, the Council's Transport Officer has confirmed that there are no transport / Highway objections subject to the imposition of the conditions listed below.

Consultation Responses

- 3.2 Officers note that the main report in paragraph 5.7 details incorrectly that two letters of objection were received. By way of correction to the main report, 4 letters of objection have been received. In addition to the concerns raised by consultees set out in the main report, concerns have been raised about the provision of 100% affordable housing proposed as a single tenure which would not provide a demographically and socio-economically varied neighbourhood. Officers consider that any provision above the required 30% amount would be considered to be an additional planning benefit of the proposals, in the assessment of the overall planning balance for the scheme as a whole and the provision of affordable housing contributes positively to the balance of tenures of accommodation in the Borough.
- 3.3 Concerns have also been raised by objectors in respect of the substandard parking provision for the respite centre. Officers are satisfied that the revised plans address the parking concerns for the respite centre. Concerns are also raised in terms of additional pressure for parking by future residents along Amethyst Lane which is currently unrestricted. The Council's Highways Officer has advised that the proposed development includes a car parking provision of one space per unit which would be in excess of the predicted car ownership figures for affordable housing in this part of the Borough and therefore this has been deemed acceptable as it complies with local and national policy requirements.

1. Additional Conditions and Informatives

Additional conditions attached as follows:

1. DC1 VEHICLE PARKING (AS SPECIFIED)
2. DC3 VEHICULAR ACCESS (AS SPECIFIED)
3. DC6 CYCLE PARKING (TO BE APPROVED)
4. DC10 ACCESS CLOSURE WITH REINSTATEMENT
5. DC17 CAR PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN (respite centre)
6. DC24 EV CHARGING POINTS
7. SU7 SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE (TO BE APPROVED)
8. SU8 SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE (IMPLEMENTATION)

2. Additional Plans submitted:

- RBC-ALR_HTA-L_DR_0904_Illustrative Landscape Masterplan-REV B
- RBC-ALR_HTA-L_DR_0903_Landscape Hardworks Plan-REV F
- RBC-ALR_HTA-A_DR_0211 - Proposed Respite Centre Roof Plan-REV F.

- RBC-ALR_HTA-A_DR_0210 - Proposed Respite Centre Plan-REV O
- RBC-ALR_HTA-A_DR_0110 - Proposed Roof Plan-REV C.pdf
- RBC-ALR_HTA-A_DR_0101 - Proposed Site Plan-REV P
- RBC-ALR_HTA-L-DIS-Planning_241123.pd
- RBC-ALR_HTA-A-DIS_Planning Amends_241123
- Revised Drainage Strategy
- Revised Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment - 1051939/MPT69105-824(00) dated 4 December 2023.

06 December 2023



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Title	PLANNING APPLICATION UPDATE REPORT
Ward	Southcote
Planning Application Reference:	230612
Site Address:	Former Alice Burrows, Dwyer Road, Reading
Proposed Development	Redevelopment of the Site at Dwyer Road to deliver 30 new dwellings, alongside new access, soft and hard landscaping, parking and ancillary works
Applicant	Reading Borough Council
Report author	Ethne Humphreys
Recommendation	As per main report
S106 Terms	As per main report
Conditions	As per main report
Informatives	As per main report

RECOMMENDATION:

As per the main agenda report

- 1. Further Natural Environment, Ecology and SuDs matters**
 - 1.1 Further to revised plans and details received during the course of the application, an updated response has been received from the Council's Natural Environment Officer.
 - 1.2 In short, information relating to root barriers, soil volume provision, tree pit details, diversity mix and irrigation for green roofs is acceptable.
 - 1.3 Further details are required in respect of mulched areas (to be consistent on all relevant plans) and boundary treatments; this will be secured via condition. The Arboricultural Method Statement required changes to be made (relating to pruning, no-dig areas, construction walls with RPAs, monitoring requirements) which has not been undertaken and this will also be secured via condition.

- 1.4 In relation to off-site tree planting, the applicant contacted the Council's Parks Team 29th November to discuss trees numbers and locations. These matters remain to be resolved as part of the S106 legal agreement – with careful consideration in terms of where the trees will be located – within close proximity to the site as a priority and then spreading further in the Reading Borough. The Council's Ecologist is satisfied that a biodiversity net gain will be achieved.
- 1.5 Further SuDs information was received 4th December. The Council's LLFA Officer has confirmed that this is acceptable subject to links into the green infrastructure (tree pits etc). It remains that delegated authority is sought to resolve this matter, as per the main agenda report recommendation.

Case Officer: Ethne Humphreys

06 December 2023



Title	PLANNING APPLICATION UPDATE REPORT
Ward	Whitley
Planning Application Reference:	230953/FUL
Site Address:	Brunel Retail Park, Rose Kiln Lane, Reading
Proposed Development	Amalgamation and change of use of Units 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 from Class E to Class B8; installation of mezzanine floorspace; associated external works including reconfiguration of car park and cycle parking and landscaping works.
Applicant	MCTGF Trustee 1 Ltd & MCTGF Trustee 2 Ltd
Report author	Alison Amoah - Principal Planning Officer
Recommendation	As per main report
Conditions	As per main report and two additional conditions nos. 25-26 25. Pre-occupation submission and approval of signage to restrict access to vehicles over 3.5 tonnes to the front from Rose Kiln Lane. 26. Compliance – restricting the use of the front access via Rose Kiln Lane to vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes maximum.
Informatives	As per main report

1. Amended Site Layout

- 1.1 Since the submission of the main report and following on from Paragraphs 5.24 and 7.9-7.14, with regard to the access to the proposed B8 storage unit for HGVs from the front via Rose Kiln Lane, there has been further internal officer discussion. It has been agreed that Light Goods Vehicles only should be able to access the parking to the front via Rose Kiln Lane (i.e. vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes). Heavy Goods Vehicles would use the existing service area to the rear, accessible from Gillette Way. This is to ensure ongoing pedestrian and vehicular safety

to the front for customers of the retail park units. An amended Site Plan and Ground Floor Plan have been submitted¹ (extracts as below) which include amendments to the front layout, which have removed the proposed large turning area and the retention of road alignments, which would seek to limit access to vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes (ie. a maximum of small box-type vans).

- 1.2 Following receipt of these amended plans, officers raised concerns that the applicant was proposing a completely enclosed yard to the front (north) of the unit, for security purposes. Officers have advised that this is not acceptable as it would appear to divorce the area from the remainder of the retail park and prevent through-access by pedestrians, particularly towards the Morrisons superstore. The applicant is understood to be preparing further amended plans to remove all notation of gates and fencing, which officers hope to be able to present to your meeting on 6th December.
- 1.3 The existing kerb radii, on the access road, would be maintained as it is currently. As a result of the amended layout the proposed car parking for the B8 self-storage would be 30 no. car parking spaces compared to 13 no. as set out in paragraph 3.2 of the main report. A new demarcated HGV lay-by is shown to the rear of the unit (accessed from Gillette Way).
- 1.4 In order to further control the size of vehicles accessing the front of the site, two further conditions are recommended to restrict access to vehicles over 3.5 tonnes to the front via Rose Kiln Lane. These are within the Recommendation above and would be conditions 25 and 26.

2. Amended Floorspace

- 2.1 The applicant has advised that there were some errors in the original existing and proposed floor space figures. The revised existing floor space table, as originally included in Paragraph 2.2 of the main report, is included below. The overall existing floor space (ground floor and mezzanine) is 14,768sqm, compared to 14,755sqm as originally set out in paragraph 2.1 of the main report. This has no differing effect with respect to the assessment undertaken:

¹ Drawing no: 2418-P01 – H, dated 6/4/23 – Site Plan as Proposed, received 4th December 2023 and Drawing no: 2418-P02 – H, dated 6/4/23 – Ground Floor Plan as Proposed, dated 6/4/23, received 4th December 2023 – to be further amended to remove all forms of enclosure.

Unit number	Old Unit Number as referenced in earlier permissions	Unit as	Occupier	Ground Floorspace	Mezzanine Floorspace
1	11		Halfords	701	341
2	10		Pets at Home	935	
3a	8/9		Relocated B&M	1,202	
3b	8/9		Relocated B&M	1,212	600
4	6/7		Home Bargains	1,868	1,538
5	5		Home Bargains	931	
6a	4		Vacant	467	339
6b	4		Vacant	459	
7	3		Vacant (formerly Brantano)	910	
8	½		Vacant (formerly B&M)	1,885	303
9	½		Vacant (formerly Laura Ashley)	458	362
10	N/A		Vacant (formerly Subway)	94	
11	N/A		Costa Coffee	163	
			Floorspace	11,285	3,483

2.2 The proposed mezzanine floorspace figure is now 3305sqm compared to 3725sqm as originally set out in paragraph 3.1 of the main report. The proposed ground floor floorspace figure has not changed and is 3606sqm.

Case Officer: Alison Amoah

Amended Proposed Site Plan – to be further amended to remove all forms of enclosure (as currently marked A-B, B-C, C-D and D-E)



Amended Proposed Ground Floor Plan - to be further amended to remove all forms of enclosure



Mc
BF

NOTE:
LANDSCAPE
REFER

1. ALL WORK TO BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LATEST EDITIONS OF THE BRITISH STANDARDS INSTITUTION (BSI) STANDARDS.
2. ALL WORK TO BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LATEST EDITIONS OF THE BRITISH STANDARDS INSTITUTION (BSI) STANDARDS.
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06 December 2023



Title	PLANNING APPLICATION UPDATE REPORT
Ward	Out of Borough
Planning Application Reference:	RBC Application No.: 231581 WBC Ref. No.: 232475
Site Address:	Earley Gate, Reading, University Of Reading, , RG6 6EQ
Proposed Development	Full planning application for the erection of the headquarters building of European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECWMF) with access parking and landscaping, following demolition of existing buildings.
Applicant	Government Property Agency
Report author	Thomas Bradfield
Recommendation	As below

RECOMMENDATION:

That Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) be informed that Reading Borough Council raises an **OBJECTION** to the proposal on the following transport grounds:,

1. The proposed layout fails to assess the full trip generation impact by the development on the surrounding Highway Network. The Highway Authority are therefore unable to ensure sufficient spare capacity during peak periods to accommodate the proposed development in safety and without delay. As a result it would be in conflict with Policy CC07 of the Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Document (Local Plan and Policy CP6 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy.
2. The proposed development fails to demonstrate that it complies with the Local Planning Authority's standards in respect of vehicle parking and that existing parking on the application site can be removed. This could result in on-street parking surrounding the application site, adversely affecting road safety and the flow of traffic, and in conflict with Policy CC07 of the Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Document (Local Plan and Policy CP6 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy.
3. That WBC is sent a copy of this report, and the appendix, for their information and use.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following receipt of the consultation letter from Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), officers have reviewed the proposals and consider that RBC should object to the proposals on transport grounds.

- 1.2 Given the location of the site, approximately 200m from the Borough boundary, and the nature of the proposals, it is not considered that any other matters would have any adverse impact on RBC, and officers are content that all matters other than transport can be assessed by WBC without any comment from RBC.

2. Transport comments

- 2.1 The Transport team have provided comments which explain officer's position regarding the above proposals. These are attached in full as an Appendix.
- 2.2 The submitted information is not sufficient to allow for a full assessment of the impacts of the proposals. The submission fails to provide accurate or complete data to allow for a full assessment of the trip generation of the proposed use. The accident data is insufficient and fails to take into account the position of certain junctions. There are significant discrepancies in the data and assessment of the existing car parking requirement at the site, which should be re-provided as part of the proposals if it is still required. No parking has been proposed for the ancillary seminar/lecture theatre and meeting facilities, and without details of how these facilities are operated, it is not possible to assess whether this is acceptable.
- 2.3 Taking the above into account the Reading Borough Highway Authority objects to the proposed development for the following reasons:

1. *The proposed layout fails to assess the full trip generation impact by the development on the surrounding Highway Network. The Highway Authority are therefore unable to ensure sufficient spare capacity during peak periods to accommodate the proposed development in safety and without delay. As a result it would be in conflict with Policy CC07 of the Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Document (Local Plan and Policy CP6 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy.*
2. *The proposed development fails to demonstrate that it complies with the Local Planning Authority's standards in respect of vehicle parking and that existing parking on the application site can be removed. This could result in on-street parking surrounding the application site, adversely affecting road safety and the flow of traffic, and in conflict with Policy CC07 of the Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Document (Local Plan and Policy CP6 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy.*

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 Officers recommend that the Planning Applications Committee endorse officer's comments as above and in the appendix.

Case Officer: Thomas Bradfield

Location Plan



1 Site location plan
1 : 1250

Proposed Block Plan



Wider Location Plan Showing RBC Boundary (in blue)

From: (e)Transport Development Control Floor 1 North Rear Civic Offices Bridge Street Reading RG1 2LU
To: Tom Bradfield thomas.bradfield@reading.gov.uk
Date: 30th November 2023
Re: Consultation on Planning Application

Application Number: 231581 (ADJ Ref 232475)

Application Type: Full Planning Approval
Address: Earley Gate Whiteknights Campus University of Reading
Proposal: Full planning application for the erection of the headquarters building of European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) with access parking and landscaping, following demolition of existing buildings

The application site is located in Wokingham Borough just outside of Reading Borough boundary and as such given the potential impact on Highway matters the RBC Highway Authority have been consulted.

Given the scale of the application a Transport Assessment has been submitted and I comment on the aspects impacting Reading as follows:

Accessibility

The proposed location is provided with a good footway network within the University campus, and this is extended externally on the Highway Network surrounding the site. Existing footways allow for various trips to be made on foot and allow for convenient access to public transport and other amenities surrounding the site.

Cycle routes are currently provided to the extremities of the wider University Campus which run in a mainly northwest – southeast direction with an array of cycle routes also provided within the campus providing links in an east – west direction.

Bus services are located on and around the University Campus that provide numerous services into Reading and to the east. Given that the application assessment identifies that a substantial number of staff currently live within Wokingham and Bracknell this should provide an opportunity to encourage staff to utilise the bus services as an alternative mode of travel.

Trip Generation

It should firstly be stated that as part of the pre application comments issued by Reading Borough Council the following information was requested to ensure that the proposal was fully assessed.

Details and operation of the lecture theatre, seminar facilities and the Council Chamber should be clarified in terms of their usage etc to determine whether this should be included within any additional parking and whether this would contribute to an additional number of trips.

It is evident from the trip generation assessment that this only takes account of the staff trips and as such without the above assessment the Reading Borough Highway Authority are unable to determine whether the proposed assessment is in fact acceptable. The additional facilities could still have a significant impact on the Highway

Network whether attendees travel by their own vehicle or by taxi / coach etc. it is therefore essential that this is included within any assessment.

It is noted that the Transport Assessment states at 5.16 that *'the postcode data for the existing ECMWF staff was provided to WBC allowing the WBC modelling team to input the distribution into their model. The postcode data was plotted using GIS and overlaid on the WSTM zone plan that was provided by WBC'*. This data should be provided for review given that Table 2.1 states that 37% of trips are to Wokingham 8.5% Oxfordshire and 2.5% Bracknell totalling 136 trips all of which are likely to utilise the A329 Wokingham Road (West Bound) / B3350 Church Road / A329 Wokingham Road (East Bound) / B3350 Wilderness Road Signalised Junction however, the junction assessment has only indicated that 13 trips in the AM peak and 2 in the PM peak will occur at this junction.

Alongside the data requested above it would therefore need to be confirmed that no errors have occurred, or it is accepted by the applicant and Wokingham Borough Councils modelling team that drivers will avoid those congested main routes and junctions utilising lesser roads to undertake their commuting journey instead. Further to this it is noted that links off Wilderness Road have been assessed but no links off of Whiteknights Road have been included within this assessment. The applicant should therefore undertake a further assessment to identify what impact the development will have on the roads linking Whiteknights Road and Wokingham Road.

The applicant has undertaken a detailed junction assessment of the Whiteknights Road / Wilderness Road junction that has identified extensive queues along Wilderness Road in both directions however it must be acknowledged that given the proximity of this junction to the A329 Wokingham Road (West Bound) / B3350 Church Road / A329 Wokingham Road (East Bound) / B3350 Wilderness Road Signalised Junction that much of the queue from the north will in fact travel back through the signalised junction with Wokingham Road.

Given the above Reading Borough Highway Authority request that the A329 Wokingham Road (West Bound) / B3350 Church Road / A329 Wokingham Road (East Bound) / B3350 Wilderness Road Signalised Junction is fully assessed.

Any assessment should include an updated trip analysis associated with the data related to the lecture/seminar facilities and only once the trip distribution has been assessed by Reading Borough Council.

Until the above is undertaken the applicant has not fully assessed the impact of the development on the Highway Network within reading and as such the application would be unacceptable in that regard.

Accident Data

The applicant has undertaken an assessment of accidents within the vicinity of the site, and this has identified that there is a cluster of accidents at the A329 Wokingham Road and Holmes Road junction. It is noted that every other cluster location has been provided with an explanation regarding the accidents but this has not been provided in relation to this location.

This cluster includes 4 accidents in a 2 ½ year period 3 of which involve vehicles colliding with cyclists with a causation of the driver failing to look properly.

It is also noted that a cluster of accidents have occurred at the A329 Wokingham Road (West Bound) / B3350 Church Road / A329 Wokingham Road (East Bound) / B3350

Wilderness Road Signalised Junction which is partly located within Reading Borough. This cluster involves 5 accidents since Oct 2017.

It is claimed at Paragraph 3.86 of the Transport Assessment that *'all five collisions were a result of human carelessness, as opposed to issues with the highway network, including disobeying automatic traffic signals, failure to look before manoeuvring and incorrect use of pedestrian crossing facilities. These collisions do not indicate highway safety issues at this location'*. However, the applicant has not assessed the junction to ascertain whether there are in fact any issues with the design of the junction. It could be claimed that the human errors leading to the accidents could be as a result of capacity issues at the junctions leading to drivers undertaking manoeuvres without fully assessing their surroundings in order to travel through the junction as quickly as possible.

The proposed junction assessments identify that the vehicle movements in the area will only increase, and this is likely to result in an increase in accidents at these locations. This is noted when the accident data at the A329 Wokingham Road (West Bound) / B3350 Church Road / A329 Wokingham Road (East Bound) / B3350 Wilderness Road Signalised Junction is reviewed alongside Department for Transport Annual Average Daily Flows data. As you extend back in 5-year segments for both the accident data and the DfT AADF data it is clear that as the traffic flow increases so does the number of accidents. This clearly identifies that any increased flows within this junction will result in the likelihood of increased accidents.

Access

All vehicles accessing the relocated ECMWF facility will access the University Campus via Earley Gate from Whiteknights Road, this junction is not located within Reading Borough but is located directly adjacent. The applicant has undertaken a detailed assessment for this junction and has identified that following development it remains well within capacity and therefore it is deemed acceptable.

Car Parking

The application site currently accommodates the University's School of Arts Building and local private businesses, not associated with the University. There are 146 parking spaces associated with these existing uses. These buildings and car parking spaces will be removed, allowing the new ECMWF building to be built in their place. There are 216 car parking spaces associated with the relocated ECMWF building, all of which are allocated for ECMWF staff and visitors only.

Paragraph 4.23 of the Transport Assessment has stated that *'the tenants / local businesses previously located at the site have relocated elsewhere. Consequently, the cars parked on site associated with these uses are no longer there'*. It continues at Paragraph 4.24 to state that *'the University's School of Arts Building has relocated to the former Central Kitchen CPU building located immediately north of Pepper Lane, approximately 1.2km south west of the new ECMWF building. There was a planning application associated with that relocation. This application was accompanied by a Transport Statement, which set out how parking for the relocated Arts Building was to be accommodated'*.

However, the applicant has not undertaken a detailed assessment to justify that this parking was in fact only utilised by the uses no longer operating from the application site especially given that extensive retained buildings are located adjacent to the application site.

It is further stated at Paragraph 4.25 of the Transport Assessment that *'On the basis, previous commercial tenants have moved off site, and parking requirements for the School of Arts Building have been addressed separately, there is no direct requirement to relocate any parking displaced as part of this proposal. However, the University will bring forward separate proposals to provide the 146 existing parking spaces elsewhere on the campus as part of its transport strategy'*. However, this would appear to be a clear admission that this parking is in fact required in some form and should it be necessary to be re-provided then it should form part of this planning application. In addition to this it is acknowledged that the applicant has not undertaken any reduction in trips associated with the existing use when assessing the trip generation for the proposed development. This is a standard methodology to accurately assess the impact of the development and therefore this is further confirmation that the existing vehicle movements associated with this parking will be retained.

Having visited the application site it was noted that car parking is continually taking place on the application site even though the applicant has confirmed that the uses associated with the buildings have been relocated. Please see the photos below confirming this.





If the applicant wishes to prove that this parking does not need to be re-provided then a car parking survey of the application site should be undertaken to identify the exact use of the site. Any parking taking place should therefore be included within any redevelopment of the application site.

Given that some areas of the Reading Highway network are currently unrestricted that could facilitate overspill parking the application should ensure that this does not occur by including any existing parking currently in use with the development proposals.

In relation to the proposed car parking provision the applicant has stated at Paragraph 4.29 that *'the level of car parking provided onsite was agreed with highway officers at both WBC and RBC during scoping. Full details on this are included within the scoping report and post application comments included within Appendix 2'*. However, it is noted that RBC comments have not been included within the aforementioned Appendix, but the comments provided on this matter to the applicant as part of the pre application discussions are detailed below:

Details and operation of the lecture theatre, seminar facilities and the Council Chamber should be clarified in terms of their usage etc to determine whether this should be

included within any additional parking and whether this would contribute to an additional number of trips.

The proposed car parking for the office use is in excess of the Reading Borough standards but is in line with existing parking demand at the current ECMWF facility. The parking for the main use is therefore deemed acceptable. However, until an assessment/clarification has been provided for the ancillary seminar / meeting facilities detailed above I am unable to confirm whether sufficient car parking is provided.

In principle the proposed development provides for parking marginally in excess of Reading Borough Council requirements for the main day to day uses on the site and as such is deemed acceptable however no parking has been proposed for the ancillary seminar / meeting facilities. The Reading Borough Highway Authority are unable to determine whether the proposal is provided with sufficient parking until full details and operation of the lecture theatre, seminar facilities and the Council Chamber are clarified by the applicant.

As explained at Paragraph 3.1.2 of the Planning Statement *'the facility will communicate the core values of the occupier and will provide an office space together with ancillary accommodation including a large lecture theatre, catering facilities, meeting facilities and ECMWF council chamber'*. Although I appreciate that following COVID meetings have changed with numerous people connecting online instead of attending in person the Transport Assessment does confirm that the lecture theatre will accommodate 220 seats; the ECMWF council chamber will seat up to 132 persons and other seminar facilities will be provided depending on the exact usage of the facilities this could result in a significant increase in parking demand.

Before it can be accepted that attendees will travel by way of public transport, taxis, coaches etc it would need to be confirmed whether the facilities will be made available to the wider public for external use and whether there are similar facilities at the existing site and if so how this has operated.

If no additional information is provided the Highway Authority would require additional car parking to be provided in line with the Councils parking standards that stipulates a requirement for 1 space per 7.5 seats that would require an additional 47 parking spaces alongside any additional requirement for the seminar facilities. Capacity of these facilities would need to be provided by the applicant.

At present the planning application has failed to justify that no parking associated with the proposed meeting facilities on the site would not result in overspill parking on the Reading Borough Council Highway network and as such the proposed application is unacceptable in that regard.

Taking the above into account the Reading Borough Highway Authority objects to the proposed development for the following reasons:

The proposed layout fails to assess the full trip generation impact by the development on the surrounding Highway Network. The Highway Authority are therefore unable to ensure sufficient spare capacity during peak periods to accommodate the proposed development in safety and without delay. As a result it would be in conflict with Policy CC07 of the Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Document (Local Plan and Policy CP6 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy).

The proposed development fails to demonstrate that it complies with the Local Planning Authority's standards in respect of vehicle parking and that existing parking on the application site can be removed. This could result in on-street parking

surrounding the application site, adversely affecting road safety and the flow of traffic, and in conflict with Policy CC07 of the Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Document (Local Plan and Policy CP6 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy.

Darren Cook
Transport Development Control Manager

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