

To: Councillor Maskell (Chair)
Councillors Rowland, Brock, Emberson,
Gavin, Hopper, McEwan, Page, Robinson,
DP Singh, Vickers, J Williams and
R Williams

Direct ☎ : 0118 9372303

27 November 2018

Your contact is: **Simon Hill (Committee Services) simon.hill@reading.gov.uk**

NOTICE OF MEETING - PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE 5 DECEMBER 2018

A meeting of the Planning Applications Committee will be held on Wednesday, 5 December 2018 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

AGENDA	ACTION	WARDS AFFECTED	PAGE NO
1. MINUTES	Decision		5 - 12
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	Decision		
3. QUESTIONS	Information		
4. POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS	Decision		13 - 18
5. PLANNING APPEALS	Information		19 - 34
6. APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL	Information		35 - 44
7. VEHICLE PARKING - ST PATRICK'S HALL INQUIRY	Decision	CHURCH	45 - 46

PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE DETERMINED

8. 181652/REG3 & 181653/REG3 - FORMER READING FAMILY CENTRE, NORTH STREET	Decision	ABBEY	47 - 62
---	----------	-------	---------

CIVIC OFFICES EMERGENCY EVACUATION: If an alarm sounds, leave by the nearest fire exit quickly and calmly and assemble on the corner of Bridge Street and Fobney Street. You will be advised when it is safe to re-enter the building.

Proposal Outline - erection of a 2.5, 3.5 and 4.5 storey building comprising 47 apartments (including 30 per cent affordable housing) in a mix of one, two and three-bedroom units. Landscaping, cycle and car parking with associated works (all matters reserved except layout and means of access).

Recommendation Permitted subject to Legal Agreement

Proposal Outline - erection of a 2.5, 3.5 and 4.5 storey building comprising 47 apartments for affordable housing in a mix of one, two and three-bedroom units. Landscaping, cycle & car parking with associated works (all matters reserved except layout and means of access).

Recommendation Permitted subject to Legal Agreement

9. 181448/REG3 - RIVERSLEY COURT, Decision MINSTER 63 - 70
205 WENSLEY ROAD

Proposal Single storey detached prefabricated water storage and treatment plant room

Recommendation Application Permitted

10. 181555/FUL - GROVELANDS Decision NORCOT 71 - 118
BAPTIST CHURCH, OXFORD ROAD

Proposal Demolition of existing chapel and church hall. Redevelopment of the site to provide a three storey mixed use development comprising of community halls and ancillary accommodation at ground floor level, 2 x one bedroom flats, 6 x two bedroom flats and 2 x three bedroom flats at the upper floor levels, all with associated external amenity space, car parking and cycle storage.

Recommendation Permitted subject to Legal Agreement

11. 180698/FUL - 448A BASINGSTOKE Decision WHITLEY 119 - 178
ROAD

Proposal Change of Use of 448a Basingstoke Road to a mixed B1 (a) (1735sqm including 72sqm of new mezzanine) /A3 (128sqm) /D1 (724sqm) use, with glazing to replace roller door (amended).

Recommendation Application Refused

12. 181059/FUL - UNIT 1, ACRE ROAD Decision WHITLEY 179 - 188

Proposal Change of use from storage and distribution (Class B8) to a flexible Class B2/B8 use.

Recommendation Application Permitted

WEBCASTING NOTICE

Please note that this meeting may be filmed for live and/or subsequent broadcast via the Council's website. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed. You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during a webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

Members of the public seated in the public gallery will not ordinarily be filmed by the automated camera system. However, please be aware that by moving forward of the pillar, or in the unlikely event of a technical malfunction or other unforeseen circumstances, your image may be captured. **Therefore, by entering the meeting room, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.**

Members of the public who participate in the meeting will be able to speak at an on-camera or off-camera microphone, according to their preference.

Please speak to a member of staff if you have any queries or concerns.

This page is intentionally left blank

Present: Councillor Maskell (Chair);

Councillors Brock, Emberson, McEwan, Page, Robinson, Rowland, DP Singh, Vickers, J Williams and R Williams.

Apologies: Councillors Gavin and Hopper.

RESOLVED ITEMS

36. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to moving Councillor Emberson from the list of those present to the list of those who had sent apologies.

37. SITE VISITS

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted, at the meeting, a schedule of applications to be considered at future meetings of the Committee to enable Councillors to decide which sites, if any, they wished to visit prior to determining the relevant applications.

Resolved -

That the under-mentioned applications, together with any additional applications which the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services might consider appropriate, be the subject of unaccompanied site visits:

181652 & 181653 - FORMER READING FAMILY CENTRE, NORTH STREET

Outline - erection of a 2.5, 3.5 and 4.5 storey building comprising 47 apartments (including 30 per cent affordable housing) in a mix of one, two and three-bedroom units. Landscaping, cycle and car parking with associated works (all matters reserved except layout and means of access).

181290 - UNIT 16, NORTH STREET

Demolition of existing two storey building (Class B1) and erection of a seven storey building to provide 10 (2x1 & 8x2-bed) residential units (Class C3) at third to sixth floor level, office (Class B1a) at first and second floor level, and associated ground floor car parking, bin storage and cycle parking.

38. PLANNING APPEALS

(i) New Appeals

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a schedule giving details of notification received from the Planning Inspectorate regarding four planning appeals, the method of determination for which she had already expressed a preference in accordance with delegated powers, which was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

(ii) Appeals Recently Determined

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted details of three decisions that had been made by the Secretary of State, or by an Inspector appointed for the purpose, which were attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

(iii) Reports on Appeal Decisions

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the following appeal decisions in Appendix 3:

171014/FUL - 28 WOKINGHAM ROAD

Construction of 9 dwellings (flats) for multiple occupation (Class C4), accommodating 27 bedrooms with associated 7 parking spaces, bicycle store, motorbike store and bin stores with bins collection point and landscaping. Demolition of existing former petrol station building with canopy.

Written Representations.

Appeal dismissed.

171893/FUL - THE FORMER WOODLEY ARMS PH, WALDECK STREET

Erection of two buildings to accommodate a total of 38 student units of accommodation, including parking, amenity space and landscaping, following demolition of existing former public house.

Written Representations.

Appeal allowed.

Resolved -

- (1) That the new appeals, as set out in Appendix 1, be noted;
- (2) That the outcome of the recently determined appeals, as set out in Appendix 2, be noted;
- (3) That the report on the appeal decisions set out in Appendix 3 be noted.

39. APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report giving details in Table 1 of seven pending prior approval applications, and in Table 2 of eight applications for prior approval decided between 28 September and 24 October 2018.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

40. OBJECTION TO A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER AT 6 WAYLEN STREET

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on an objection to Tree Preservation Order (TPO) 6/18 relating to a Sycamore tree at 6 Waylen Street. A copy of the TPO plan was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that a Section 211 Notice had been received in May 2018 to fell the sycamore tree, which had been required as the tree was in the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area. In assessing the proposed felling, officers had determined that the healthy, mature Sycamore was worthy of a TPO, which had been served on 20 June 2018. An application to fell the tree had been submitted during the current TPO objection period by the neighbour at 5 Russell Street (Nags Head Public House) and this had been refused.

An objection to the TPO had been made by Future Tree on behalf of the Landlord of the Nags Head Public House at 5 Russell Street, details of which were set out in the report, along with officers' comments on the objection.

That report concluded that it was considered that the TPO should be confirmed as the objector had no legal interest in the wall and was not affected by it, so the objection was not appropriate.

Resolved - That the Tree Preservation Order be confirmed.

41. STREET NAME ASSIGNMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT AT FORMER BATTLE HOSPITAL SITE OFF PORTMAN WAY

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report asking the Committee to agree a street name for Road A in a development site at the former Battle Hospital site off Portman Way. A plan of the site was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report stated that a proposed name of Nightingale had been suggested by the developer after a former NHS building close to the site and officers had taken a further two names from the approved street names list to increase the options for consultation. During the consultation, Councillor Hacker had suggested Anderson and Seacole as names of women with an important place in medical history. A member of the public had suggested the name Walford, who had been a senior medical officer of the Reading Union. The report recommended that if Walford was not chosen for the site, it should be added to the approved street names list.

The report stated that, if none of the proposed names were considered suitable, the Committee should select an alternative from the Approved Street Names List which was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

Resolved -

- (1) That the name Nightingale be used for Road A;
- (2) That the name Walford be added to the approved Street Names Proposals List.

42. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Committee considered reports by the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services.

Resolved -

- (1) That, subject to the conditions now approved, permission be **granted** under planning legislation and, where appropriate, under the Advertisement Regulations, as follows:

181276/FUL - KINGS MEADOW, NAPIER ROAD

Temporary Change of the use for up to 45 days in a calendar year, to change from Class D2 Assembly & Leisure to Christmas Party Events at Kings Meadow, with the site being restored to its former conditions at, or before 2.00pm on the 31st December 2018.

Granted as recommended.

Temporary conditional planning permission and informatives as recommended.

Comments received and considered.

181365/HOU - 31 WINDERMERE ROAD

Revised proposals for the part single and part double storey side and rear extensions to existing dwelling. (Resubmission of 180784).

An update report was tabled at the meeting which gave details of boundary issues, including an amended plan showing the boundaries, and of a further letter of representation, setting out officer notes on the comments in the letter. It recommended an amendment to Condition 3.

Granted as recommended.

Conditional planning permission and informatives as recommended, with Condition 3 amended to include amended elevational drawing KHWind31:006 Rev. E.

Comments and objections received and considered.

181552/HOU - 11 MORLAIS, EMMER GREEN

Proposed single storey rear extension.

Granted as recommended.

Conditional planning permission and informatives as recommended.

Comments received and considered.

181518/FUL - IMPERIUM, IMPERIAL WAY, WORTON GRANGE

Change of use of 2nd floor (2658sqm GIA) to a flexible use comprising either: Office (Class B1a); or a mixed use consisting of office (B1a) and training and commercial conference facilities (Sui Generis) and physical works to replace high level glazing with louvres and install plant on the roof space. (amended)

An update report was tabled at the meeting which set out further information regarding car parking and drainage and recommended an additional condition requiring a pre-occupation car parking management plan.

Granted as recommended.

Conditional planning permission and informatives as recommended in the original report, with an additional condition requiring a pre-occupation car parking management plan as recommended in the update report.

Comments received and considered.

(2) That consideration of the following applications be **deferred** for the reason indicated:

181469/LBC - SOUTHCOTE LODGE, BURGHFIELD ROAD

Replacement of existing timber sliding sash windows with new white uPVC double glazed sliding sash windows to match in style and size and to be installed into the various existing opening apertures of the Grade II Listed Building.

Deferred for further information on the age of the existing windows and to see examples of the proposed uPVC windows for comparison.

Supporters Mrs Barbara Chowns, Frances Distin and Mrs Isabel Johnstone, and Ward Councillor John Ennis, attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

(3) That, subject to the requirements indicated, the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services be **authorised to determine** the following applications under planning legislation:

180624/FUL - 57 BAKER STREET

Erection of two 2/3 storey buildings to provide 9 (2x2-bed and 7x3- bed) residential units (Class C3), 9 parking spaces, landscaping and associated works.

It was reported at the meeting that an additional informative was recommended regarding the trees close to the eastern Jesse Terrace boundary, detailing the expectation that, once the arboricultural method statement and tree protection plan had been received, these trees would be retained and managed.

The issue of planning permission to be dependent on the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement by 21 November 2018 (unless a later date be agreed by the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services), to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the report.

In the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services be authorised to refuse permission.

Conditional planning permission and informatives as recommended, with an additional informative regarding retention and management of the trees close to the eastern boundary.

Additional pre-occupation condition regarding the security, use and management of the gated entrance.

Comments and objections received and considered.

180683/FUL - LAND ADJACENT TO 300 KINGS ROAD

Construction of a part five part three storey building of 14 residential apartments (C3) and associated undercroft car parking.

An update report was tabled at the meeting which set out details of two further letters of objection that had been received, with officer comments, and had appended floor plans of the adjacent building 286 Kings Road with and without approved windows to the east elevation.

Officers reported at the meeting that a further extension of the time for completion of the Section 106 agreement until 7 December 2018 had been agreed with the applicant and recommended that an additional Head of Terms be added to the Section 106 agreement such that, in the event that the on-site affordable housing units were not taken up, a financial contribution of an equivalent amount would be secured.

The issue of planning permission to be dependent on the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement by 7 December 2018 (unless a later date be agreed by the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services), to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the original report, plus an additional Head of Terms to secure a financial contribution of an equivalent amount if on-site affordable housing units were not taken up.

In the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services be authorised to refuse permission.

Conditional planning permission and informatives as recommended in the original report.

Comments and objections received and considered.

Matt Taylor, objector on behalf of the adjacent building's landowner/developer, and the applicant's agent Mark Bassett, attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

- (4) That, pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, the **carrying out of the following developments be authorised**, subject to the conditions now specified:

180752/REG3 - WAR MEMORIAL, READING CREMATORIUM AND CEMETERY, 55
ALL HALLOWS ROAD, CAVERSHAM

Extension to cemetery to provide an additional 1376 burial plots.

Granted as recommended.

Conditional permission and informatives as recommended.

Comments and objections received and considered.

Objectors Matthew Loveday and Terry Schofield attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

(Councillor Brock declared an interest in this item, left the meeting and took no part in the debate or decision. Nature of interest: Councillor Brock was the Lead Councillor for Corporate and Consumer Services and this application by the Council fell within his portfolio.)

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.17 pm).

This page is intentionally left blank

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
DATE:	5 DECEMBER 2018	AGENDA ITEM:	4
TITLE:	POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS		
SERVICE:	PLANNING	WARDS:	BOROUGH WIDE
AUTHOR:	KIARAN ROUGHAN	TEL:	0118 9374530
JOB TITLE:	PLANNING MANAGER	E-MAIL:	kiaran.roughan@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To identify those sites where, due to the sensitive or important nature of the proposals, Councillors are advised that a Site Visit might be appropriate before the meeting of the next Committee (or at a future date) and to confirm how the visit will be arranged.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That you resolve to visit the sites which will be identified by officers in a paper in the update Agenda on the day of the forthcoming Planning Applications Committee and confirm if there are any other sites Councillors consider necessary to visit before reaching a decision on an application.
- 2.2 That you confirm how the site will be visited, unaccompanied or accompanied, and if accompanied agree the site visit date and time.

3. THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The potential list of agenda items submitted since the last meeting of the Planning Applications Committee will be provided with the update Agenda on the day of forthcoming Planning Applications Committee. Where appropriate, I will identify those applications that I feel warrant a site visit by the Committee prior to formal consideration of the proposals.
- 3.2 Councillors may also request a site visit to other sites on that list if they consider it relevant to their ability to reach a decision on the application.
- 3.3 Officers may also recommend a site visit if they intend to report a normally delegated application to the Committee for a decision.
- 3.4 A site visit may also be proposed in connection with a planning enforcement issue which is before the Committee for consideration.

- 3.5 Site visits in the above circumstances should all take place in advance of a Committee decision and should only be used where the expected benefit is substantial.
- 3.6 A site visit is only likely to be necessary if the impact of the proposed development is difficult to visualise from the plans and any supporting material including photographs taken by officers (although, if this is the case, additional illustrative material should have been requested); or, there is a good reason why the comments of the applicant and objectors cannot be expressed adequately in writing; or, the proposal is particularly contentious.
- 3.7 Accompanied site visits consist of an arranged inspection by a viewing Committee, with officers in attendance and by arrangement with the applicant or their agent. Applicants and objectors however will have no right to speak but may observe the process and answer questions when asked. The visit is an information gathering opportunity and not a decision making forum.
- 3.8 Recently Councillors have expressed a preference to carry out unaccompanied site visits, where the site is easily viewable from public areas, to enable them to visit the site when convenient to them. In these instances the case officer will provide a briefing note on the application and the main issues to be considered by Councillors when visiting the site.
- 3.9 There may also be occasions where officers or Councillors request a post completion site visit in order to review the quality or impact of a particular development.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 4.1 Planning services contribute to producing a sustainable environment and economy within the Borough and to meeting the 2015 -18 Corporate Plan objective for “Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active.” Under the heading, Neighbourhoods, the Corporate Plan aims to improve the physical environment - the cleanliness of our streets, places for children to play, green spaces, how we feel about our neighbourhood and whether we feel safe, have a sense of community and get on with our neighbours.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 5.1 Statutory neighbour consultation takes place on planning applications.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 Officers when assessing an application and when making a recommendation to the Committee, will have regard to its duties Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, to have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None arising from this report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The cost of site visits is met through the normal planning service budget.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Reading Borough Council Planning Code of Conduct.

Local Safety Practice 2013 Planning Applications Committee site visits.

This page is intentionally left blank

Applications for Committee Determination since previous Committee Report**Printed: 30 November 2018****Ward:** Abbey**Application reference:** 181822**Application type:** Regulation 3 Planning Approval**Site address:** Land Between Thames Valley Business Park and, Napier Road, Reading**Proposal:** Construction of a segregated fast-track public transport, pedestrian and cycle bridge and viaduct, comprising concrete bridge structure supported by concrete columns, steel beams and reinforced soil embankment, together with new footway links and existing footway alterations, junction improvements and landscaping.**Reason for Committee item:** Major Development**Ward:** Abbey**Application reference:** 181902**Application type:** Regulation 3 Planning Approval**Site address:** Tyrell Court and Padley Court, The Dell, Reading**Proposal:** Conversion of 4 redundant garages (3 in Tyrrel Court and 1 in Padley Court) to form 4 x one bedroom flats**Reason for Committee item:** RBC application**Ward:** Caversham**Application reference:** 180499**Application type:** Full Planning Approval**Site address:** St Martins Precinct, Church Street, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire**Proposal:** Application for full planning permission for the development of a 5 storey mixed use scheme comprising 16 residential apartments (1x studio, 9 x 1 bedroom, 6 x 2 bedroom), a Cinema / Leisure facility (Use Class D2) and retail and restaurant units (Use Class A1 and Use Class A3).**Reason for Committee item:** Major Development**Ward:** Church**Application reference:** 181899**Application type:** Full Planning Approval**Site address:** Leighton Park School, Shinfield Road, Reading, RG2 7ED**Proposal:** Erection of two storey sports facility with external viewing gallery and associated parking**Reason for Committee item:** Major Development**Ward:** Katesgrove**Application reference:** 181849**Application type:** Full Planning Approval**Site address:** Former Car Park, East Street, Reading, RG1 4QH**Proposal:** Erection of a part 4 part 5 storey building (plus basement) to provide 135 units of purpose built student accommodation and associated facilities (Sui Generis), landscaping and access**Reason for Committee item:** Major Development**Ward:** Katesgrove**Application reference:** 181855**Application type:** Regulation 3 Planning Approval**Site address:** 125 Basingstoke Road, Reading**Proposal:** Conversion of redundant storage area to create a three-bedroom apartment**Reason for Committee item:** RBC application

Applications for Committee Determination since previous Committee Report

Printed: 01 January 0001

Ward: Minster

Application reference: 181853

Application type: Regulation 3 Planning Approval

Site address: 72 Brunswick Street, Reading

Proposal: Conversion of redundant bin store, laundry and cycle storage area to create a one-bedroom apartment; new refuse and cycle storage facilities and soft landscaping

Reason for Committee item: RBC application

Ward: Minster

Application reference: 181854

Application type: Regulation 3 Planning Approval

Site address: 80 Brunswick Street, Reading

Proposal: Conversion of redundant bin store, laundry and cycle storage area to create a one-bedroom apartment, new refuse and cycle storage facilities and soft landscaping

Reason for Committee item: RBC application

Ward: Peppard

Application reference: 182005

Application type: Full Planning Approval

Site address: 26 Woods Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 6NA

Proposal: Erecting a 3 Bedroom Detached House. Resubmission of 181118

Reason for Committee item: Previous application was a committee item

Agenda Item 5

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
DATE:	5 DECEMBER 2018	AGENDA ITEM:	5
TITLE:	PLANNING APPEALS		
AUTHOR:	KIARAN ROUGHAN	TEL:	0118 9374530
JOB TITLE:	PLANNING MANAGER	E-MAIL:	Kiaran.roughan@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report notifications received from the Planning Inspectorate on the status of various planning appeals.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That you note the appeals received and the method of determination as listed in Appendix 1 of this report.
- 2.2 That you note the appeals decided as listed in Appendix 2 of this report.
- 2.3 That you note the Planning Officers reports on appeal decisions provided in Appendix 3 of this report.

3. INFORMATION PROVIDED

- 3.1 Please see Appendix 1 of this report for new appeals lodged since the last committee.
- 3.2 Please see Appendix 2 of this report for new appeals decided since the last committee.
- 3.3 Please see Appendix 3 of this report for new Planning Officers reports on appeal decisions since the last committee.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 4.1 Defending planning appeals made against planning decisions contributes to producing a sustainable environment and economy within the Borough and to meeting the 2015 -18 Corporate Plan objective for “Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active.”

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

5.1 Planning decisions are made in accordance with adopted local development plan policies, which have been adopted by the Council following public consultation. Statutory consultation also takes place on planning applications and appeals and this can have bearing on the decision reached by the Secretary of State and his Inspectors. Copies of appeal decisions are held on the public Planning Register.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 Where appropriate the Council will refer in its appeal case to matters connected to its duties Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, to have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Public Inquiries are normally the only types of appeal that involve the use of legal representation. Only applicants have the right to appeal against refusal or non-determination and there is no right for a third party to appeal a planning decision.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Public Inquiries and Informal Hearings are more expensive in terms of officer and appellant time than the Written Representations method. Either party can be liable to awards of costs. Guidance is provided in Circular 03/2009 “Cost Awards in Appeals and other Planning Proceedings”.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 Planning Appeal Forms and letters from the Planning Inspectorate.

APPENDIX 1

Appeals Lodged: None

APPENDIX 2

Appeals Decided:

WARD: KATESGROVE
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/18/3199747
CASE NO: 172118
ADDRESS: 40 Silver Street
PROPOSAL: Demolition of existing building and erection of a part 3 and part 4 storey (plus basement level) building to provide 62 studio rooms (sui generis use class) with associated ancillary space and landscaping works.
CASE OFFICER: Alison Amoah
METHOD: Written Representation
DECISION: Dismissed
DATE DETERMINED: 29.10.2018

WARD: BATTLE
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/18/3200081
CASE NO: 171719
ADDRESS: 39 Brunswick Hill
PROPOSAL: Erection of part two/part three storey building containing 10 no. apartments with parking at rear following demolition of existing buildings.
CASE OFFICER: Richard Eatough
METHOD: Written Representation
DECISION: Dismissed
DATE DETERMINED: 14.11.2018

WARD: REDLANDS
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/18/3198514
CASE NO: 171954
ADDRESS: 3-5 Craven Road
PROPOSAL: Demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment to form 25 Retirement Living units (C3 use) for older persons with communal facilities, parking and associated landscaping.
CASE OFFICER: Stephen Vigar
METHOD: Hearing
DECISION: Dismissed
DATE DETERMINED: 16.11.2018

WARD: TILEHURST
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/D/18/3212433
CASE NO: 181086
ADDRESS: 300 The Meadway, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4PB
PROPOSAL: Single storey front, side and rear extension
CASE OFFICER: Tom Hughes
METHOD: Written Representation
DECISION: Dismissed
DATE DETERMINED: 20.11.2018

APPENDIX 3

Address Index of Planning Officers reports on appeal decisions.

- 40 Silver Street
- 39 Brunswick Hill
- 3-5 Craven Road

Planning Officers reports on appeal decisions attached.

Ward: Katesgrove

Appeal No: APP/E0345/W/18/3199747

Planning Ref: 172118

Site: 40 Silver Street

Proposal: Demolition of existing building and erection of a part 3 and part 4 storey (plus basement level) building to provide 62 studio rooms (sui generis use class) with associated ancillary space and landscaping works.

Decision level: Committee

Method: Written Representation

Decision: Appeal dismissed

Date Determined: 29th October 2018

Inspector: Nicola Davies BA DipTP MRTPI

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The application was determined by Planning Applications Committee on 7th February 2018 and refused planning permission on 9th February 2018. The site was last occupied by an industrial building and used for commercial hire of plant and tools and lies to the south of the town centre in an area where there is a mixture of uses and on a key road leading out of the town centre.
- 1.2 The planning application was refused for 4 reasons relating to poor design and character; loss of amenity to neighbours; failing to contribute to a mixed and balanced community and failing to enter into a S106 agreement and these were identified as the main issues by the Inspector.

2 SUMMARY OF DECISION

Design & Character

- 2.1 The Inspector noted that “despite the existing commercial building to the south of the appeal site, the development along this part of Silver Street has an overall domestic appearance”. In this context the modern design and size of the proposed development “would appear as a discordant development within the context of this streetscene”.
- 2.2 The appellant and the Council disagreed on the merit of the courtyard garden, which the Council found to be too small and overlooked to be pleasant to use. The Inspector agreed with the Council by stating “ I consider it would be an oppressive space due to the sense of being enclosed by tall built development. I find it would also be an unpleasant outdoor place for occupiers as they would experience the overwhelming sense of being observed whilst using this space. Consequently, the constrained nature of the proposed courtyard leads me to conclude that the development would also be an overdevelopment of this site”.
- 2.3 The Inspector concluded on this matter that the proposal would be contrary to Policy CS7 and NPPF paragraph 124 by being harmful to the character and appearance of the area and failing to create high quality buildings and places.

Amenity

- 2.4 The Inspector identified that due to the height and position of the new buildings the proposed development would be dominant on the outlook for neighbours to the north of the site. The findings of the appellant’s Daylight and Sunlight Study were noted but this did not allay her concerns with the orientation and large size of the development compared to existing properties which the Inspector considered would “cast a shadow over these neighbouring developments for part of the day. This would be likely to make the outdoor living environments for the existing occupiers gloomier”. These neighbours would also feel overlooked from the large windows facing into the courtyard area.

2.5 The appellant tried to infer that because there had been only 4 objections from the 59 households consulted this suggested “a considerable degree of acceptance of the scheme from the majority of near neighbours”. The Inspector accepted the Council’s case that when making decisions on new development we are required to consider the living conditions of existing neighbours and the wider public interest. The Inspector concluded that the development would be harmful to neighbours, contrary to Policy DM4.

Mixed and Balanced Community

2.3 The Inspector accepted the Council’s argument that this development, in the context of permitted schemes for student accommodation in the area, would fail to provide a mixed and balanced community. The Inspector also noted the Council’s concerns that development for student housing would prevent a potential housing site being used to meet the immediate general housing need and that for affordable housing and on this basis concluded that the development failed against Policy CS15.

Conclusion

2.4 An acceptable Unilateral Undertaking was submitted to address the 106 legal agreement reason for refusal but this did not outweigh the problems found by the Inspector with the development as proposed. The appeal was therefore dismissed.

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services Comment:

Officers are very pleased with the Inspector’s conclusions on this appeal. The site would clearly benefit from being redeveloped but this application tried to get too much on the site with consequential harm identified in the design, to the appearance of the street and to the amenities of new occupiers and existing neighbours.



Case Officer: Julie Williams

APPEAL REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5 DECEMBER 2018

Ward: Battle

Appeal No: APP/E0345/W/18/3200081

Planning Ref: 171719/FUL

Site: 39 Brunswick Hill, Reading, RG1 7YU

Proposal: Erection of part two/part three storey building containing 10 no. apartments with parking at rear following demolition of existing buildings.

Decision level: Committee decision on 7/03/2018

Method: Written representations

Decision: Appeal Dismissed

Date Determined: 14 November 2018

Inspector: Patrick Whelan BA (Hons) Dip Arch MA MSc ARB RIBA RTPI

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The application site extends to some 0.14 hectares (25 metre frontage/width, 56 metre depth, equating to 1400 square metres in area) and comprises a substantial 2.5 storey plus partial basement Edwardian detached house on the west side of Brunswick Hill.
- 1.2 The site has had two previous applications refused for a development involving the demolition of the dwelling at 39 Brunswick Hill (05/00886/OUT and 891317/891318).
- 1.3 On 7 March 2018, Planning Applications Committee agreed with the officer recommendation to refuse the planning permission for the following reasons (summarised):
 - The proposal fails to incorporate an appropriate mix of dwellings based on the scale of the development;
 - The scheme is inappropriate within the streetscene, and would fail to create a safe and secure environment;
 - The ground floor front, South flat would have a poor living environment
 - The application fails to secure a s106 agreement for the provision of an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) or to adequately provide for the required Traffic Regulation Order (TRO); and
 - It has not been proven to the Local Planning Authority that the development is unable to sustain a financial contribution toward affordable housing.

2 SUMMARY OF DECISION

- 2.1 The Inspector considered that the main issues in the appeal were:
 - the contribution of the existing building and the merits of the replacement building on the character and appearance of the area;
 - whether the proposal would provide an appropriate mix of dwelling size and type;
 - whether it should make provision for affordable housing and a construction-phase employment and skills plan;
 - whether it would provide acceptable living conditions for future occupiers, with particular regard to light and outlook in the southernmost ground floor flat to the front; and

- whether it would be able to provide suitable access to the parking area.
- 2.2 In terms of loss of the building, the Inspector considered that the materials and architectural language of the existing dwelling make passing reference to the Victorian houses further down the street and around the corner, but “...*the idiosyncratic arrangement of its architectural elements, and the exuberance of its scale distinguish it from them*”. The Inspector considered that the architectural significance of the undesignated heritage asset was a material consideration in the appeal and this weighed against the proposal.
- 2.3 In relation to the impact on the character and appearance of the area, the Inspector remarked that decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to the local character and history, and be distinctive and visually attractive as a result of good architecture. He noted that adopted policies CS7, CS33, DM10 and DM11 seek development of high quality design which maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area, reinforces local distinctiveness including protecting the historic environment, and ensures that outdoor areas are appropriately related to main entrances. He considered that the proposed replacement building would be uncharacteristically long, bulky at its flank and lacking in articulation; the large roof area lacked the rhythm of its neighbours; the entrance would be uncharacteristic in its ancillary location; the effects of its massing would be uncharacteristically great which would be incompatible with the closer grained-scale and detail of the houses beside it. Further, he found it incomparable to the architectural quality and heritage interest of the existing building on the site, whose loss would not be mitigated.
- 2.4 In relation to mix of dwelling size and type, the Inspector considered that there was no evidence the site could not facilitate an alternative scheme with a greater mix, and that the current proposal would not provide an appropriate mix of dwelling size and type in accordance with Policy DM5. The Inspector noted that houses are preferred under Policy DM5 and that the area is isolated from other flat developments, and that Policy DM5 as applied requires a mix of dwellings primarily including family dwellings in the form of houses.
- 2.5 In terms of affordable housing, the Inspector concluded that there was no evidence to suggest that the Appellant has not clearly demonstrated the circumstances to justify the lack of affordable housing provision. As such, the Inspector determined that there was no conflict with Policy DM6.
- 2.6 In relation to a construction-phases employment and skills plan (ESP), the Inspector agreed that the Appellant was required under Policy CS9 to provide an ESP or, a financial contribution via an executed unilateral undertaking, and the lack of such provision was therefore in conflict with Policy CS9.
- 2.7 In relation to living conditions, the Inspector found that although the bin store and front garden wall would result in an outlook which would be obscured from the Southernmost ground floor flat, he considered that the living would nonetheless have sufficient aspect and openings to provide an acceptable living condition for future occupiers. He concluded that there was no conflict with Policy DM4.
- 2.8 With regard to the changes required to highway markings, the Inspector considered that although an amendment to the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) would be required to secure access to the development, a Grampian-type condition on an approval would overcome the Council’s objection.

2.9 Overall, the Inspector concluded that the loss of the heritage asset, the inappropriate design, the inappropriate mix of dwelling sizes and types, and the absence of a contribution/ provision of an employment and skills plan outweighed the benefits of providing additional housing units which had acceptable living environments and suitable off-street parking.

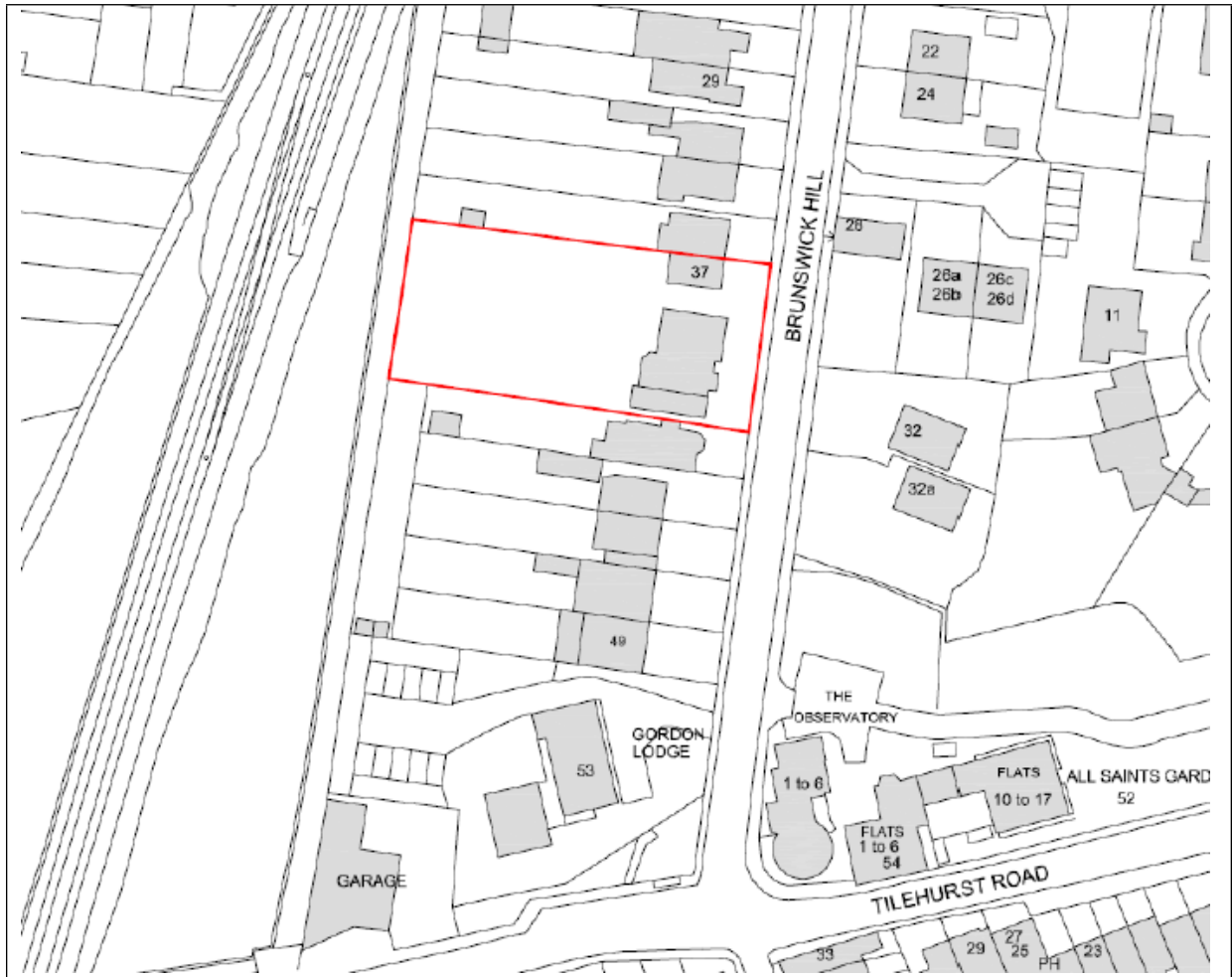
Comment:

A pleasing decision which validates the Council's design concerns for this development. Although not meeting the requirements for local listing status, the National Planning Policy Framework allows for the consideration of a building as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in a planning decision, because of its general heritage interest. The decision also notes that the Inspector was minded to accept later alterations to the design which included decorative brick features and changes to the side entrance, but these clearly did not sway him from the design concerns he identified.

It is also pleasing that the Inspector agreed that there was no justification for not providing houses and three-bedroom dwellings on site, which is characteristic of this residential area.

On affordable housing, your officers are content with the conclusions reached by the Inspector and are confident that this does not prejudice officers' ability to secure affordable housing on other sites.

Although officers are concerned that a condition requiring a TRO may not pass the legal test and be a 'Grampian' condition, being a condition that requires work on land that is not controlled by the applicant, as the land in question is within the control of the local authority (highway authority) the Inspector believed that this would not be the case.



APPEAL REPORT

Ward: Redlands

Appeal No: APP/E0345/W/18/3198514

Planning Ref: 171954/FUL

Site: 3-5 Craven Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5LE

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment to form 25 Retirement Living units (C3 use) for older persons with communal facilities, parking and associated landscaping.

Decision level: Committee (7 February 2018)

Method: Hearing

Decision: Appeal dismissed

Dates Appeal Determined: 16 November 2018

Inspector: G D Grindey MSc MRTPI Tech. Cert. Arb

SUMMARY OF DECISION

The site is located at the roundabout junction of Craven Road and Erleigh Road to the south east of the town centre and opposite the Royal Berkshire Hospital site. The site contains 3 Craven Road, which is Locally Listed in recognition of its local heritage significance. Other buildings include 5 Craven Road and a large single storey temporary building. The site is being used for healthcare provision by the NHS.

The Inspector found the main issues in this appeal to be: (i) whether the loss of the non-designated heritage asset, taking into account its significance, is outweighed by the planning benefits of the scheme; (ii) whether the scheme, by reason of its scale and footprint, would have a detrimental impact on the character & appearance of the area; (iii) whether the proposal would result in harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of no 7 Craven Road, with particular regard to privacy & overlooking; (iv) whether the loss of a street tree would be outweighed by the planning benefits of the scheme and (v) whether the proposal makes adequate provision for affordable housing.

i) On the heritage matter, the Inspector agreed with the Council's decision to Locally List the building "*given the quality of the building and notability of the work of Joseph Morris in Reading*" and found this approach "*entirely consistent with national advice*".

Although in poor decorative condition, the Inspector considered that number 3 retained the essential original design details as originally built and could be refurbished and repaired; "*all the fabric is there*". The Inspector noted the polychromatic brickwork and its similarity to other architectural detailing in surrounding streets. "*This is its significance as heritage asset; no 3 possesses highly typical architectural features of this period in Reading's history, development and growth. Of further significance is the unique connection to Joseph Morris, the leading local architect of the day. This attribute is specific to this building, as his home, (with unusual records of domestic alterations he made) so the heritage significance is more than just the surviving fabric and detailing; I find that the building and its history does enrich and enliven the area as Historic England says of locally listed buildings.*"

Noting the proposed complete demolition of the buildings, the Inspector found the scale of harm to be considerable and irreversible. The scheme would fail to

protect the historic environment and adversely affect the historic asset contrary to Policies CS33 and CS7.

The Inspector considered the benefits of the scheme as part of the balanced approach required by the NPPF. These included the delivery of specialised accommodation for older persons, which the Inspector gave considerable weight. The freeing-up of under-occupied homes; provision of a safe, less lonely environment; and the economic benefits to the town were considered, but given limited weight as these are not exclusive to the appeal scheme.

ii) In terms of the character of the area, the Inspector found the villas at 3 and 5 Craven Road to be attractive and well-proportioned, forming a strong street frontage which is typical of the area "*(even with their current shabby state)*". The Inspector agreed with the Council that the width and depth of the proposed building would give the impression of a bulky and dominant mass, "*out of scale with the best of the local character.*" The density of the development was found to be excessive given the desirability of maintaining the area's prevailing lower density suburban villa character. The Inspector found overall that that the proposals would materially harm the character and appearance of the area.

iii) In terms of neighbouring amenity, the Inspector found that large areas of glazing, main entrance, and balconies, proposed for the three storey southern elevation would face directly towards number 7 Craven Road and that this would be harmful to the amenity of this neighbour and contrary to policy. The Inspector noted that "*considerable care should be taken when inserting new development into an established residential area*".

iv) With regard to the street tree the Inspector found that "*A common sense view is that the loss of the street tree Lime is to be regretted from a public viewpoint, its replacement elsewhere within the street is not certain because a trial pit would have to be dug to check the location of underground services. Its loss could, in time, be partially compensated for with the additional planting proposed. Most of the new planting would be visible from public viewpoints and would contribute to the leafy street scene, but they would not be 'street trees'*". The Inspector concluded that the loss of the street tree would be contrary to Policy CS38 and would not accord with the Council's adopted Tree Strategy.

v) The question of whether the proposal makes adequate provision for affordable housing was considered. The Inspector noted that National Planning Policy Guidance states that the role for 'viability assessment' is primarily at plan making stage. With this in mind, the Inspector also noted the up-to-date review of residential development viability which supports emerging Local Plan Policy H3 and which concludes that the 30% affordable housing targets are viable. The Inspector found this to be an "*important consideration*". Against this background. The Inspector heard viability submissions from both parties. The key issues were the calculation of the Existing Use Value of the site and the question of what would be a reasonable premium above the EUV "*to provide a reasonable incentive to bring forward the land for development while allowing a sufficient contribution to comply with policy requirements*". The Council argued a 10% premium was appropriate whereas the Appellant argued 20%. The Inspector found the Council's lower premium to be preferable given the poor

decorative condition of the buildings, their unsuitability for commercial use, and the uncertainty over the potential for a higher value alternative use.

In conclusion the Inspector determined that the scheme would remove a locally listed building of typical architectural detailing, which enlivens the street scene and which has unique links to a leading local architect; it would harm the character and appearance of the area including the loss of a healthy street tree; it would harm the living conditions of nearby occupiers in no 7 and would fail to deliver appropriate affordable housing. Importantly the Inspector stated that her conclusions on any single issue (i) to (v) would be sufficient to dismiss the appeal.

HPDRS COMMENTS ON THE DECISION:

This decision is very welcome as it justifies the Council's approach in seeking to protect the locally listed building and is a good example of applying a balanced approach to decision-taking. It also confirms the Council's approach to applying policies which seek to preserve the character of Reading, including the protection of existing trees.

The decision explains the importance of seeking to protect the amenity of neighbours when accommodating new development.

The Inspector's reasoning provides useful support to the Council's approach to securing affordable housing through planning decisions.

The full decision is available to view at:

http://planning.reading.gov.uk/fastweb_PL/welcome.asp using ref. 171954

Case Officer: Steve Vigar



Site Photograph



Proposed Site Layout Plan



Computer Generated Images - Existing and Proposed
View South from roundabout



Existing View 5



Visualisation Mockup 5

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
DATE:	5 DECEMBER 2018	AGENDA ITEM:	6
TITLE:	APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL		
AUTHOR:	JULIE WILLIAMS & RICHARD EATOUGH		
JOB TITLE:	AREA TEAM LEADERS	E-MAIL:	Julie.williams@reading.gov.uk Richard.eatough@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Committee of new applications and decisions relating to applications for prior-approval under the amended Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (GPDO 2015).

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That you note the report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At your meeting on 29 May 2013 a report was presented which introduced new permitted development rights and additional requirements for prior approval from the local planning authority for certain categories of permitted development. It was agreed then that a report be brought to future meetings for information and to include details of applications received for prior approval, those pending a decision and those applications which have been decided since the last Committee date.

4 TYPES OF PRIOR APPROVAL APPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The categories of development requiring prior approval under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015, or amended by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England)(Amendment) Order 2016 that are of most relevance to Reading Borough are summarised as follows:

- **Householder development - single storey rear extensions.** GPDO Part 1, Class A1(g-k).
- **Change of use from A1 shops or A2 financial & professional, betting office, pay day loan shop or casino to A3 restaurants and cafes.** GPDO Part 3 Class C.
- **Change of use from A1 shops or A2 financial & professional, betting office or pay day loan shop to Class D2 assembly & leisure.** GPDO Part 3 Class J.
- **Change of use from A1 shops or A2 financial and professional or a mixed use of A1 or A2 with dwellinghouse to Class C3 dwellinghouse.** GPDO Part 3 Class M*
- **Change of use from an amusement arcade or a casino to C3 dwellinghouse & necessary works.** GPDO Part 3 Class N
- **Change of use from B1 office to C3 dwellinghouse** GPDO Part 3, Class O*.
- **Change of use from B8 storage or distribution to C3 dwellinghouse** GPDO Part 3, Class P

- Change of use from B1(c) light industrial use to C3 dwellinghouse GPDO Part 3, Class PA*
- Change of use from agricultural buildings and land to Class C3 dwellinghouses and building operations reasonably necessary to convert the building to the C3 use. GPDO Part 3 Class Q.
- Change of use of 150 sq m or more of an agricultural building (and any land within its curtilage) to flexible use within classes A1, A2, A3, B1, B8, C1 and D2. GPDO Part 3 Class R.
- Change of use from Agricultural buildings and land to state funded school or registered nursery D1. GPDO Part 3 Class S.
- Change of use from B1 (business), C1 (hotels), C2 (residential institutions), C2A (secure residential institutions and D2 (assembly and leisure) to state funded school D1. GPDO Part 3 Class T.
- Temporary use of buildings for film making for up to 9 months in any 27 month period. GPDO Part 4 Class E
- Development under local or private Acts and Orders (e.g. Railways Clauses Consolidation Act 1845). GPDO Part 18.
- Development by telecommunications code system operators. GPDO Part 16.
- Demolition of buildings. GPDO Part 11.

4.2 Those applications for Prior Approval received and yet to be decided are set out in the appended Table 1 and those applications which have been decided are set out in the appended Table 2. The applications are grouped by type of prior approval application. Information on what the estimated equivalent planning application fees would be is provided.

4.3 It should be borne in mind that the planning considerations to be taken into account in deciding each of these types of application are specified in more detail in the GDPO. In some cases the LPA will first need to confirm whether or not prior approval is required before going on to decide the application on its planning merits where prior approval is required.

4.4 Details of any appeals on prior-approval decision will be included elsewhere in the agenda.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 Changes of use brought about through the prior approval process are beyond the control or influence of the Council's adopted policies and Supplementary Planning Documents. Therefore it is not possible to confirm how or if these schemes will contribute to the strategic aims of the Council.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 Statutory consultation takes place in connection with applications for prior-approval as specified in the Order discussed above.

7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Where appropriate the Council must have regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, to have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7.2 There are no direct implications arising from the proposals.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None arising from this Report.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Since the additional prior notifications were introduced in May 2013 in place of applications for full planning permission, the loss in fee income is estimated to be £1,034,866

(Office Prior Approvals - £952,187: Householder Prior Approvals - £65,584:
Retail Prior Approvals - £6556: Demolition Prior Approval - £2135: Storage Prior Approvals - £5350: Shop to Restaurant Prior Approval - £2650: Shop to Leisure Prior Approval - £305)

Figures since last report

Office Prior Approvals - £8490: Householder Prior Approvals - £1236

9.2 However it should be borne in mind that the prior notification application assessment process is simpler than would have been the case for full planning permission and the cost to the Council of determining applications for prior approval is therefore proportionately lower. It should also be noted that the fee for full planning applications varies by type and scale of development and does not necessarily equate to the cost of determining them.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015

Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England)(Amendment) Order 2016.

Table 1 - Prior-approval applications pending @ 21 November 2018

Application type CLASS A - Householder

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Comments	Equivalent planning application fee
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	181922	62a South View Avenue, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5AJ	Caversham	Rear extension measuring 5m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.6m, and 3m in height to eaves level.	06/11/2018	17/12/2018		£206
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	181897	18 Thicket Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4TY	Tilehurst	Rear extension measuring 4m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.2m, and 2.2m in height to eaves level.	31/10/2018	11/12/2018		£206
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	181873	32 Landrake Crescent, Reading, RG2 8AJ	Whitley	Rear extension measuring 6.0m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.15m, and 2.9m in height to eaves level.	29/10/2018	09/12/2018		£206
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	181923	3 Farrowdene Road, Reading, RG2 8SD	Whitley	Rear extension measuring 4m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.3m, and 2.4m in height to eaves level.	06/11/2018	17/12/2018		£206

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Comments	Equivalent planning application fee
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	181942	24 Yelverton Road, Reading, RG2 7SU	Whitley	Rear extension measuring 4m in depth, with a maximum height of 2.9m, and 2.85m in height to eaves level.	06/11/2018	20/12/2018		£206
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	181993	24 Brayford Road, Reading, RG2 8LT	Whitley	Rear extension measuring 6m in depth, with a maximum height of 4m, and 3m in height to eaves level.	12/11/2018	23/12/2018		£206

Office to Residential Prior Approval applications pending

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Comments	Equivalent planning application fee
Office use to dwelling house - Class O, Part 1 GPDO 2015	181685	179a Oxford Road, Reading	Abbey	Change of use of first floor from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 1 studio flat.	24/09/2018	04/12/2018		£366
Office use to dwelling house - Class O, Part 1 GPDO 2015	181949	24 Eldon Road, Reading, RG1 4DL	Abbey	Change of use from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise four self contained residential apartments comprising 1 x 2 bed flat and 3 x 1 bed flats.	08/11/2018	03/01/2019		£1290

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Comments	Equivalent planning application fee
Office use to dwelling house - Class O, Part 1 GPDO 2015	181943	3 Aveley Walk, Reading	Katesgrove	Change of use of ground floor from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise of 1 x 1 bedroom flat.	07/11/2018	03/01/2019		£366
Office use to dwelling house - Class O, Part 1 GPDO 2015	182027	10 Southern Court, South Street, Reading, RG1 4QS	Katesgrove	Change of use from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise of 16 Residential units.	16/11/2018	14/01/2019		£6834

Demolition Prior Approval applications pending

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Comments
Demolition Prior Approval	180725	40 Silver Street, Reading, RG1 2ST	Katesgrove	Application for prior notification of proposed demolition.	01/05/2018	29/05/2018	

Retail Prior Approvals applications pending - None

Prior Notification applications pending - None

Shop to Assembly & Leisure Prior Approval applications pending - None

Telecommunications Prior Approval applications pending - None

Storage to Residential Prior Approval applications pending - None

Shop to Restaurant Prior Approval applications pending - None

Table 2 - Prior-approval applications decided 24 October 2018 to 21 November 2018

Application type CLASS A - Householder

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Decision Date	Decision
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	181732	24 Crown Street, Reading, RG1 2SE	Katesgrove	Rear extension measuring 5.6m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.41m, and 2.6m in height to eaves level.	03/10/2018	01/11/2018	Prior Approval NOT REQUIRED
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	181802	1 Links Drive, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4YT	Norcot	Rear extension measuring 4.5m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.7m, and 2.7m in height to eaves level.	16/10/2018	05/11/2018	Application Withdrawn
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	181630	19 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, RG2 7PS	Redlands	Rear extension measuring 6m in depth, with a maximum height of 3m, and 3m in height to eaves level.	17/09/2018	30/10/2018	Prior Approval Notification - Refusal
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	181645	370 The Meadway, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4NX	Tilehurst	Rear extension measuring 3.7m in depth, with a maximum height of 2.873m, and 2.1m in height to eaves level.	19/09/2018	24/10/2018	Prior Approval NOT REQUIRED

Office to Residential Prior Approval applications decided

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Decision Date	Decision
Office use to dwelling house - Class O, Part 1 GPDO 2015	181643	Cadogan House, Rose Kiln Lane, Reading, RG2 0HP	Minster	Change of use of office building from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 39 residential units.	18/09/2018	09/11/2018	Prior Approval Notification - Approval

Retail to Residential applications decided

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Decision Date	Decision
Retail Prior Approval	181836	23 Victoria Street, Reading	Redlands	Change of use of the ground floor from Class A1 (shops) to C3 (dwellinghouses) to form a single dwelling.	23/10/2018	20/11/2018	Application Withdrawn

Shop to Restaurant Prior Approval applications decided

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Decision Date	Decision
Shop, Financial, Betting, Pay day, Casino to Restaurant/ Cafe - Class C	172101	219a London Road, Reading, RG1 3NY	Park	Notification of Prior Approval for a Change of Use from Shops (A1) to Restaurant (A3).	22/11/2017	12/11/2018	Prior Approval Notification - Refusal

Prior Notification applications decided - None

Telecommunications Prior Approval applications decided - None

Demolition Prior Approval applications decided - None

Storage to Residential Prior Approval applications decided - None

Shop to Assembly & Leisure Prior Approval applications decided - None

This page is intentionally left blank

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
DATE:	5 DECEMBER 2018	AGENDA ITEM:	7
TITLE:	VEHICLE PARKING - St. PATRICK'S HALL INQUIRY		
SERVICE:	PLANNING	WARDS:	CHURCH
LEAD OFFICER:	STEVE VIGAR	TEL:	0118 937 2980
JOB TITLE:	PRINCIPAL PLANNING OFFICER	E-MAIL:	Stephen.vigar@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of new evidence and legal advice received since the original decision to refuse planning permission 172045/FUL, in respect of the vehicle parking impacts of the proposal.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

That the Local Planning Authority agrees not to maintain reason for refusal number 2 of refused planning permission 172045 in relation to planning appeal reference APP/E0345/W/18/3209702 (Public Inquiry).

Reason 2 reads as follows:

“The proposed development, by reason of the increase in residential accommodation and lack of parking provision, would lead to unacceptable additional pressure on parking on surrounding streets. As such the proposal is contrary to Policies CS20 and CS24 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy and national policy contained within the NPPF and associated Planning Practice Guidance.”

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Planning Applications Committee refused planning permission under reference 172045/FUL on 7 February 2018. The application description was *“Construction of 836 new student bedrooms, a cafeteria/bar, bin and bike stores, sub-station and energy centre, together with a new access link and landscaping. Demolition of the existing student accommodation block at New*

Court, the SETS building, the warden's house, no. 4 Sherfield Drive, the reception and common room, (resubmission of application ref. 161182)."

- 3.2 The officer recommendation was to approve the application subject to conditions and S106 legal agreement.
- 3.3 The applicant, the University of Reading, has subsequently submitted an appeal against the refusal to the Secretary of State, which is to be dealt with by way of a Public Inquiry, starting on 19 March 2019.

4. APPRAISAL

Transport Consultant Advice

- 4.1 Officers are currently involved in preparing the Council's case for the Inquiry. Transport consultants have been commissioned to deal with the parking reason for refusal. They have reviewed the matter and have undertaken further parking surveys on behalf of the Council using best practice methodology. The transport consultant has advised that the parking situation has changed materially since the decision was made by Planning Applications Committee. In particular, parking restrictions have been introduced along Northcourt Avenue in the area adjacent to the appeal site and these are being enforced. They have materially reduced previous issues related to on-street parking in Northcourt Avenue. In addition the recent survey work confirms that sufficient capacity exists both within the site and on street to accommodate anticipated parking associated with the appeal scheme.
- 4.2 As a result, the Council is not currently in a position to maintain a positive case on reason for refusal 2. The Council has appointed a barrister to represent it at the Inquiry. The barrister's advice is that if the Council *does* maintain the reason for refusal but fails to offer a positive case the Council will be at risk of paying the Appellant's costs in relation to the parking matter. He therefore advises that on the basis of the current evidence the Council should agree *not* to maintain the parking reason for refusal at the Inquiry. The Council's Planning Lawyer agrees with this advice.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 For the reasons set out above, it is recommended that the Local Planning Authority agrees not to maintain reason for refusal number 2 in respect of vehicle parking when presenting the Council's case at planning appeal reference APP/E0345/W/18/3209702 (Public Inquiry).

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5 December 2018

ITEM NO. 8

Ward: Abbey

App Nos.: 181652/REG3 & 181653/REG3

Address: Former Reading Family Centre, North Street/Weldale Street, Reading

Proposals:

181652/REG3: Outline - erection of a 2.5, 3.5 and 4.5 storey building comprising 47 apartments (including 30 per cent affordable housing) in a mix of one, two and three-bedroom units. Landscaping, cycle and car parking with associated works (all matters reserved except layout and means of access).

181653/REG3: Outline - erection of a 2.5, 3.5 and 4.5 storey building comprising 47 apartments for affordable housing in a mix of one, two and three-bedroom units. Landscaping, cycle & car parking with associated works (all matters reserved except layout and means of access).

Applicant: Lochailort Thames Quarter Ltd.

Date received: 10 October 2018

Major Application 13 week target decision date: 9 January 2019.

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to the completion of (a) satisfactory Section 106 legal agreement(s) (Heads of Terms for each application as set out below), delegate to the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services (HPDRS) to GRANT planning permission by 9 January 2019, but otherwise the REFUSE planning permission, unless the HPDRS gives his approval to any extension of time to allow this/these agreements to be completed.

181652/REG3:

1. The development shall provide no more and no less than 47 units
2. Not less than 30% of the units hereby permitted shall be provided as social-rented affordable housing (unit split to be to LH Authority approval). All units to be provided/transferred to the Council/Registered Housing Provider no later than first occupation of any open market unit. All units to be used only as affordable housing in perpetuity.
3. Car club contribution (level to be advised)
4. Provision of a construction phase Employment and Skills Plan, or payment in lieu (level to be advised)

181653/REG3:

1. The development shall provide no more and no less than 47 units
2. Not less than 100% of the units hereby permitted shall be provided as social-rented affordable housing (unit split to be to LH Authority approval). All units to be provided/transferred to the Council/Registered Housing Provider no later than substantial completion of the development. All units to be used only as affordable housing in perpetuity.
3. Car club contribution (level to be advised)
4. Provision of a construction phase Employment and Skills Plan, or payment in lieu (level to be advised)

Conditions (pertinent to both applications) to include:

1. TL1 Three year time limit
2. Outline matters to be approved
3. Outline matters time limit
4. AP1 Approved plans
5. 3D Parameter plan controls: as shown on supplied plans
6. Submission of materials (including window noise suppression details)
7. Submission of a ventilation strategy (reason: for ventilation, given noise strategy requires closed windows to achieve suitable internal noise levels)
8. CO2 No commencement before submission of a Construction Method Statement
9. No commencement before submission and approval of a Security Strategy, implementation before first occupation
10. L1 Landscaping scheme, include native species, permeable paving
11. Landscaping: implementation (std)
12. Landscaping: maintenance/replacement within five years if failed
13. Contaminated land 1: site characterisation
14. Contaminated land 2: remediation report
15. Contaminated land 3: implementation
16. Contaminated land 4: unforeseen contamination
17. Constructed in accordance with noise report
18. SUDS 1
19. SUDS 2
20. NStd Provision of an electric vehicle charging point
21. DC1 Vehicle parking in accordance with approved plans
22. DC2 Vehicle access in accordance with approved plans
23. DC5 Cycle parking
24. DC5 Bin storage
25. DC7 Parking permits 1
26. DC8 Parking permits 2
27. Sustainability measures: written evidence that at least 50% of the dwellings/development to achieve at least a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as per Part L of Building Regulations (2013).

Informatives (pertinent to both applications):

- Positive and proactive
- Terms and conditions
- Discharging conditions
- No parking permits
- S59 Highways Act

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site is rectangular and extends to 0.23 hectares and currently vacant, except for some informal parking occurring on an area of hardstanding, scrub and trees. The site sits on the North-West corner of the T-junction of Weldale Street with North Street and falls gently from South to North. It contains trees towards the Southern and Western boundaries (including a mature Norway Maple in the South-East corner), scrub and hardstanding. To the South of the site is Stratheden Place, a residential cul-de-sac of flats and houses. To the South-East is the Iceland/Wickes site, which has recently gained planning permission for a residential redevelopment. To the West is Burford Court, a three storey housing association scheme, which is set down into its site, such that it appears much lower

onto the frontage of Weldale Street. To the North of the site is an ambulance station. On the opposite side of North Street to the East are industrial units (Nos. 12-14 and 16. There is a current planning application for a residential redevelopment of No. 16, ref. 181290/FUL which is currently pending and is expected to reported to your January meeting).

- 1.2 The site has previously been in use as the Berkshire County Council social services facility and was more recently the temporary location for what is now the Civitas Academy, which has since re-located to a permanent site on Great Knollys Street. The site is allocated for residential purposes in the adopted RCAAP as site RC4b for residential development of 25-40 dwellings.

The red line area of these planning applications



2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Two very similar outline planning applications have been submitted. 181652 proposes a policy compliant level of affordable housing (i.e. 30% on-site) ('the 30% scheme') and 181653 is for 100% affordable housing ('the 100% scheme').
- 2.2 Both of these applications propose a varied height block of a maximum of 4½ storeys, with a 3½ storey element westwards of Weldale Street and then down to 2½ storeys to the site edges in a mix of one, two and three-bedroom units. Landscaping, cycle and car parking with associated works. The application is in Outline, with matters of Layout (siting) and Means of Access being applied for and therefore matters of Scale, Appearance and Landscaping would be reserved for later approval, were either scheme to be pursued.
- 2.3 These applications are approximately the same, although one would supply 30% affordable housing (i.e. a CS15 policy compliant level); and the other is for 100% affordable housing, which would normally indicate that it would be developed by a Registered Provider or Council-provided scheme.
- 2.4 The applications have been submitted in accordance with the s106 planning obligations on Lochailort, the then owner/developer of the Thames Quarter scheme (permission 162166/FUL to provide 315 dwellings, currently under construction by others on the former Cooper Reading BMW site, Kings Meadow Road). That

development contains no on-site affordable provision, however, the Section 106 agreement requires the submission of these applications in order to ascertain the value of the site and prove its capacity/suitability as a ‘surrogate’ affordable housing scheme. The amount of units the site can produce also has a bearing on the amount the developer must pay the Council for every unit in default of the 56 units which the Thames Quarter development is expected to provide by this surrogate site. In reality, neither of these schemes is likely to be built out, but an approval would allow the developer to discharge their requirements and for the site to be transferred to a Registered Provider who will design and build a suitable scheme, to meet the housing needs of the Borough.

Proposed site layout



2.5 These applications are being reported to your meeting because they are in the Major category. Members should also note that although these are outline applications, the Council also has an interest in these applications and therefore they have been noted as ‘REG3’ applications.

2.6 Supporting information with the applications includes:

- Design and Access Statement
- Planning Statement
- CGI views (indicative)
- Sections through the building and indicative floorplates
- Tree survey/site survey
- Indicative landscaping plans
- Noise statement
- Air quality statement
- Sustainability statement
- Geotechnical report of survey
- SUDS strategy
- CIL form

3. PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 A planning history search of the site for the last 30 years has produced the table below:

Application ref.	Description	Decision
880059/FUL	[various alterations to Reading Family Centre]	PERMISSION 8/2/1989
141626/REG3	A new temporary school of modular construction, single storey and flat roofed. New fencing and gates to site perimeter. New hardstanding for car and cycle parking, and pupil hard play.	PERMISSION 7/1/2015
150603/APPCON	Application for approval of details reserved by condition. (141626)	CONDITIONS DISCHARGED 8/6/2015

3.2 Following the removal of the temporary school, the site is considered to have a 'nil' planning use. These planning applications have been the subject of pre-application discussions with your officers for approximately one year.

4. CONSULTATIONS

RBC Transport Strategy: subject to the development contributing towards providing a car club, an electric vehicle charging point and various conditions (conditions set out in the Recommendation above), no objections are raised.

The **RBC Natural Environment Team (Tree Officer)** advises that tree issues were discussed at length during pre-application discussions and it was agreed that the felling of all trees, except the Norway Maple on the corner, would be acceptable due to various issues with the trees, providing that sufficient information on protecting the single tree and a mitigating planting scheme was submitted. However, her initial response is that the proposals are lacking. At the time of writing, the applicant is seeking to provide further information on these points, (see the Landscaping and Amenity section below for a full discussion).

The **RBC Ecologist** advises that this is an urban area and the site comprises hardstanding (in the centre of the site, where previously was a building), a car park at the eastern end, and a strip of trees along the south boundary and scrub. As such, it is considered unlikely that the proposals will affect bats or other protected species and there are therefore no objections on ecological grounds.

RBC Head of Asset Management (Valuers): has noted the submission of the applications in relation to the requirements of the s106 agreement of the Thames Quarter scheme.

RBC Housing Development Manager: no objections in principle. There is clearly limited detail as to how the 30% affordable application would work (in terms of split by property size or practically within the block) - both of which would need to be resolved as part of any S106. The 100% affordable proposal allows this to be the 'surrogate' affordable housing site for Thames Quarter. The eventual development of the site for affordable purposes may ultimately not look like this proposal, but would reflect the Borough's housing priorities.

The **RBC SUDS Manager** advises that the proposed SuDs scheme is acceptable in principle, subject to conditions.

RBC Environmental Protection has raised concerns for the noise environment, which stems from noise from the ambulance station, although closing the windows would allow for suitable noise mitigation, although a ventilation system would therefore be required by condition. Further conditions are requested for a CMS, standard hours of working and no bonfires. A response on the Geotechnical Report is awaited and will be reported to your meeting.

The **Thames Valley Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor (CPDA)** advises that this edge of town centre area and the way the layout is shown raises some detailed concerns about the development. See Design section of the Appraisal below.

The Reading **Design Review Panel** reviewed this scheme on two occasions (January 2018 and September 2018). Whilst the general massing and form was considered to be supportable, the Panel had concerns with some of the design detail. The Panel's thoughts are summarised in the Design section of the Appraisal below.

Public consultation

Four site notices were displayed around the perimeter of the site. One response has been received to date but any further responses that are received will be reported to your meeting.

One local resident has asked whether the established trees on the site shall be preserved.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 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. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

5.2 The application has been assessed against the following policies:

5.3 National

National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF (2018)

Planning Policy Guidance - PPG (2014 onwards)

5.4 Reading Borough Local Development Framework - Adopted Core Strategy (2008) (Altered 2015)

- CS1 Sustainable Construction and Design
- CS2 Waste Minimisation
- CS3 Social Inclusion and Diversity
- CS4 Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
- CS5 Inclusive Access
- CS7 Design and the Public Realm
- CS9 Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities
- CS14 Provision of housing
- CS15 Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix
- CS16 Affordable Housing
- CS20 Implementation of the Reading Transport Strategy
- CS22 Transport Assessments
- CS23 Sustainable Travel and Travel Plans
- CS24 Car / Cycle Parking
- CS32 Impacts on Community Facilities
- CS34 Pollution and Water Resources

- CS35 Flooding
- CS36 Biodiversity and Geology
- CS38 Trees, Hedges and Woodlands

5.5 Reading Central Area Action Plan (2009)

- RC4b Other opportunity sites: Reading Family Centre, North Street
- RC5 Design in the Centre
- RC9 Living in the Centre

5.6 Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012) (Altered 2015)

- SD1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- DM1 Adaptation to Climate Change
- DM2 Decentralised Energy
- DM3 Infrastructure Planning
- DM4 Safeguarding Amenity
- DM5 Housing Mix
- DM10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space
- DM12 Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters
- DM18 Tree Planting
- DM19 Air Quality

New Local Plan (Draft Reading Borough Local Plan): site is also identified as CR14b FORMER READING FAMILY CENTRE, NORTH STREET.

5.7 Reading Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents

- Affordable Housing SPD (2013)
- Employment, Skills and Training SPD (2013)
- Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)
- Revised SPD on Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)
- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2011)

5.8 Other relevant documentation

- Reading Tree Strategy (2010)
- DCLG Technical housing standards - nationally described space standard (2015)

6. APPRAISAL

6.1 The main issues are considered to be:

- (i) Principle of a residential use
- (ii) Design (proposed and indicative)
- (iii) Landscaping and amenity spaces
- (iv) Layout, pattern of development and neighbour amenity
- (v) Amenity of the residential units
- (vi) Transport
- (vii) Affordable housing considerations
- (viii) Sustainability

(i) Principle of a residential use

6.2 Although the site has historically been in community-type uses over an extended period, these have now ceased and the temporary school has now been provided a

short distance away on its permanent site. The site is also allocated in both the RCAAP and the emerging local plan for residential redevelopment. These documents give broad unit delivery ranges, but officers identify no conflicts with the applications in terms of Policy CS31, Policy RC4b or emerging Policy CR14b. The sections below examine the proposal in terms of its acceptability in design terms.

(ii) Design (proposed and indicative)

- 6.3 As the Proposal section above explains, neither of these applications are likely to be realised; nevertheless it is important that a full and comprehensive planning assessment is made and if resolving to grant planning permission, the Committee must be satisfied that all aspects of these proposals are acceptable and this firstly needs to be in terms of unit numbers which can be accommodated; but also various details, to ensure that there is no 'slip' of these numbers. Any such slippage would affect the value of the site, which these applications are designed to gauge.
- 6.4 In these outline applications, matters of 'Layout' and 'Access' are being specifically applied for only. This means the building footprint, external layouts and the way in which the development is serviced by car access, cycle access and pedestrian access. Matters of Appearance, Scale and Landscaping would be reserved for later approval (if pursuing either scheme).
- 6.5 In terms of Layout, the building has an L-shaped footprint, with a concave/inward curve towards the junction of Weldale Street and North Street to allow the retention of the Maple tree. The frontal building line reflects that of Burford Court on Weldale Street and on North Street, the building is set back some eight metres, to allow for parking spaces, paths and landscaping. The blocks then extend along the road frontages. In general terms, this is considered to be an efficient and also logical layout, allowing front entrance and frontal defensible amenity space, but also a shared communal garden to the rear.
- 6.6 This site is on the edge of the town centre, with the high/dense Chatham Place development in close proximity and the future redevelopment of the former Iceland/Wickes site likely to result in a transformation of the area from one with a retail/commercial feel to a more intensive, urban, residential feel. The proposed block nearest Stratheden Place in the Iceland/Wickes development would be five storeys and flat-roofed, although then steps up further East to eight storeys. The designation of the application site as an RCAAP 'opportunity site' is a reflection of the need for this site to make its contribution to this urbanisation. The purpose of these applications is then to provide an appropriate scale of development.
- 6.7 The RCAAP allocation for site RC4b is between 25-40 units, but this is a guideline range only. In seeking to achieving this number of units (47), the applicant has been asked to provide a certain level of detail to demonstrate suitability of building massing and form.
- 6.8 The overall massing is taller towards the junction and then steps down towards the site edges West and North, to allow a suitable transition with Burford Court (which is lower) and the ambulance station (roughly equivalent to two storeys). On the North Street elevation, efforts have been made for the development to work with the site levels and although the floorplates are level, the northerly element appears to be at a lower level.
- 6.9 In terms of Scale, whilst this is not being specifically applied for in these outline applications, it is important that a suitable indication of a density/massing is provided. Indicative elevations are provided which show a building which has four storeys plus accommodation in the roof (with rooflights/dormers) at its highest

point towards the junction. Along Weldale Street, the massing drops to four storeys, then 3.5 storeys, then two storeys and finally, a large bin/bike store. On the north Street frontage, the massing drops to 3.5 storeys nearest the ambulance station.

- 6.10 A contemporary design solution is indicated, although of course, it would be for the Reserved Matter of Appearance to secure this. Nonetheless and despite the Design Panel's reservations about this approach, officers feel that the strong residential entrances, clear levels definitions and traditional materials are all appropriate to this rather transitional residential area. Whilst Burford Court and Stratheden Place are established residential brick developments, proposals are yet to materialise on the former Iceland/Wickes site and the realisation of any residential redevelopment on land to the North and East of the site may be some time away. Officers feel that the indicative design philosophy is strong enough, but equally, the building envelope could allow for a more traditional approach (possibly echoing the Victorian terraced streets further West), if that was considered more appropriate. The Design Panel's view was that although the overall design concept was supportable, in their view the design was blend of traditional and contemporary which in their view does not work. Your officers disagree and are content that such a design solution - subject to good-quality materials and design finish - has the ability produce a suitable building.
- 6.11 One aspect of the design which has concerned both your officers is the depth of the development and the shape of the roof. The development footprint extends deep within the site and this will be noticeable from the flank elevations. There is also a large expanse of 'crown' (flat-topped) roof. However, officers consider that given emerging developments and care with the eventual design - such as the appearance of regular hipped/pitched roofs in the indicative images - it will be possible to minimise the impact of these aspects of the development from public views and such a development would make good use of urban land. The Design Panel also commented that whilst what was being shown indicatively looked supportable, controls such as parameter plans would also provide certainty over the building form and officers agree that such controls are required. Conditions could be proposed and these should 'lock' the development in three planes: height, depth and width, in order to secure control over the eventual building envelope and comply with the adopted design policies.

(iii) Landscaping and amenity spaces

- 6.12 Landscaping is not being applied for and is shown indicatively, including a communal garden to the rear. However, the applications still need to be able to demonstrate a suitable situation can be achieved and the basis for a landscaping arrangement.
- 6.13 The site currently contains trees which are mostly sited along the southern boundary. Most of these are in the lower categories (C and D) although the Norway Maple on the Corner is considered to be a Category A/B tree and in the view of your officers and the Tree Officer, worthy of preservation and inclusion into any redevelopment scheme. However, officers are aware that this is a significant site feature and the Design Panel's advice was that this tree should be removed.
- 6.14 The applicant has however, taken your officers' advice and sought to include the Norway Maple in these proposals and although the Design Panel consider this to be a rather convoluted arrangement, has sought to provide the crescent towards the junction in order. This also provides a suitable setting for the tree and also a welcome semi-private residents' space within the development and to the benefit of the character of the area, which is currently quite hard-surfaced.

- 6.15 Given the location of the proposed siting of the block, it is unlikely that any other of the trees on site could be accommodated. Stratheden Place opposite contains a reasonable level of defensible space and as a point of principle, the landscaping of the development should aim to provide a similar arrangement, in order to mitigate what will be a sizeable residential block. It will therefore be important to show the principles of a workable landscaping arrangement. An indicative landscaping arrangement has been shown. This consists of a communal garden to the rear and to the West, and more formal/functional landscaped areas towards the road frontages.
- 6.16 At the time of writing, the applicant has submitted a Landscape Concept plan which shows updated survey/rooting information as well as indicative proposals for replacement/additional planting, which will help inform the landscaping Reserved Matters application. Also, for completeness an updated proposed site layout plan is attached, amended to omit the trees which are to be removed in order to avoid any confusion. An updated response from the Tree Officer is awaited on these recent submissions and will be reported to your meeting.

(iv) Layout, pattern of development and neighbour amenity

- 6.17 The Layout being applied for is proposing quite a bulky building footprint and it is important that the outlooks provided in these residential units would provide/maintain existing and future residential amenity levels to these units and adjoining areas.
- 6.18 To the west of the site is Burford Court, a three storey flatted development, which is unusual in that it has many Easterly outlooks at close proximity (4-5 metres of the boundary with the application site) and so in effect, it significantly borrows outlook from over the application site, at first and second floors. Notwithstanding this, the building footprint is showing window to window separation distances of some 16 metres, with the opportunity for landscaping and the bin/cycle store to provide further protection.
- 6.19 To the North of the site is the present ambulance station, which is in use. This is not an allocated site in either the RCAAP or the emerging local plan, but were it to come forward at a later date, it may be a suitable brownfield site for residential development. The Northerly outlooks of the block allow some 13 metres distance to the boundary, which is considered suitable in terms of providing a suitable outlook which would allow that land to potentially provide a reasonable residential relationship.
- 6.20 The land to the East, opposite on North Street is currently industrial in nature, although envisaged to come forward for residential development at some point as allocated in the RCAAP and the emerging Local Plan. The proposal is some 8 metres from the back of the pavement, meaning that a suitable street set-back would be produced, were there to be residential opposite.
- 6.21 To the South of the site is Stratheden Place. Residential outlooks from this 2.5 storey development are more towards its Western end and are typically four metres from the back of the footway. The development proposes a similar set-back and this will provide a suitable balance of development across the streetscene, with outlooks some 18 metres window to window, which is considered to be an acceptable relationship.
- 6.22 In summary, officers are satisfied that the Layout being applied for can deliver an acceptable level of privacy in accord with Policy DM4.

(v) Amenity of the residential units

- 6.23 In approving Layout only and not Scale, were the Committee to approve these applications, it would need to be satisfied that in doing so, the outline application approval would be capable of providing suitable internal accommodation for the envisaged 47 units. There are a number of areas where the application has sought to provide clarity of the approach.
- 6.24 The application is supplied with indicative floorplans. These show a suggested layout for accommodation across all floors of the development which indicates that a certain level of design detail has been undertaken. These show a range of unit shapes and sizes of flats over the floors and in the main, these indicate a good size and spread of units, with an indicative mix of 32% one-bed, 57% two-bed and 11% three-bed units, which complies with the targets in Policy RC9. A typical floorplan shows that unit sizes are compliant with the National Minimum Technical Standards: Nationally Described Space Standards.
- 6.25 One area of concern for the Design Panel was the style of the roof form and window openings and they were concerned for the outlooks and headroom in the roof-level accommodation. To address this, indicative sections have been produced to show that living spaces would be suitable. These units have a mix of rooflights and dormers, which would provide acceptable outlook.
- 6.26 A daylight/sunlight study has not been undertaken, but the development would seem to be able to provide the majority of units with good levels of natural light. The worst units for natural light levels are going to be on the inside of the curve of the crescent section of the block, but then the windows are north-westerly facing (rather than North only). The unit next to that, to the west, would have a northerly single aspect only, but the indicative plans show that treatments such as inclusion of a bay window can maximise further light penetration. Sizes of window openings could also be maximised/adjusted. Overall, there is clearly a balance between the ability of this site to deliver housing units in an efficient manner and the inevitability that this will mean that a limited number of units are less than ideal in terms of outlook and light levels; but your officers consider this balance to appear to be suitable in this instance and compliant with Policy DM4.
- 6.27 RBC Environmental Protection agrees that air quality for the flats is not of concern in this locality, but has raised concerns for the noise environment, which primarily stems from noise from the ambulance station, although the submitted noise report and subsequent information confirms that closing the windows would allow for suitable noise mitigation. However, in relying on this, a mechanical ventilation system would therefore be required and a condition is advised.
- 6.28 The CPDA has raised a number of points about the indicative design. Her points include concerns for linked cores and corridors, secure communal entrances, lack of detail on secure site boundaries, secure post systems, access controls, servicing issues. Officers are not aware that any of these could not be overcome at a later stage and recommend a condition for a security strategy in the usual way, to meet Policy CS7.
- 6.29 In summary, officers are content that 47 dwellings can be accommodated satisfactorily within the envelope of the building envisaged and a Reserved Matters application could deliver acceptable accommodation to satisfy adopted design policies and standards including CS7, RC4 and RC9.

(vi) Transport

- 6.30 The site is in an accessible location to the wets of Reading centre. In accordance with the adopted Parking SPD, the development would be required to provide 1 parking space per 1-2 bedroom dwelling and 1.5 space per 3 bedroom dwelling. The applications include a total of 8 parking spaces located on the eastern boundary of the site with all spaces facing directly out onto North Street. The proposed parking provision is therefore below the Council's requirements. However, the Council's adopted standards state that a lower provision is acceptable if the site is within a sustainable location and providing a lower provision of parking will not lead to highway safety issues as a result. Accordingly, a survey of the existing car parking restrictions in vicinity of the site has been submitted.
- 6.31 North Street and the surrounding road network all have parking restrictions preventing on-street parking. The Highway Authority agrees that the site is sustainable and accessible and there are adequate on-street parking controls, therefore a lower parking standard is considered appropriate. Future residents of the development would not be eligible for a Residents Parking Permit. The parking conditions and informative would be applied if this application is approved.
- 6.32 The Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD states that developments of more than 10 residential units in the town centre area should provide or support a car club on the site, or demonstrate that the development will have access to and the use of a car club on a nearby site. The applicant's Transport Statement does not provide any detail regarding the provision or access to a car club. Given that the development has a reduced parking provision, car clubs allow members access to cars and reduce the need to own a car themselves. Officers advise that a contribution is likely to be required and details of this and the amount will be set out in the Update Report. The applicant is amenable to this provision in principle.
- 6.33 The Council's current Local Transport Plan 3 Strategy 2011 - 2026 includes policies for investing in new infrastructure to improve connections throughout and beyond Reading which include a network of publicly-available Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points to encourage and enable low carbon or low energy travel choices for private and public transport. Policy TR5 of the emerging Local Plan also states that, "*Within communal car parks for residential or non-residential developments of at least 10 spaces, 10% of spaces should provide an active charging point.*" In view of this, the development must provide at least 1x Electric Vehicle (EV) charging point to promote the use of renewable electric vehicles at time of build and a condition is advised.
- 6.34 In terms of traffic generation, the trip rates for the approved Weldale Street (Iceland/Wickes) redevelopment has been used. The proposed development of 47 housing units is likely to generate some 7 two-way movements during the AM peak and some 5 two-way movements during the PM peak. The addition of this number of trips will have no material impact on the surrounding highway network and is considered acceptable.
- 6.35 The Highway Authority has sought confirmation of the adequacy of the bin store, but this is a detailed matter which could be left to a later application. The cycle parking provision shown indicatively is considered by officers' to perhaps be an over-provision (at one space/unit) but again, this can be left to later approval.
- 6.36 Subject to confirmation and securing the car club contribution, the development is suitable in transport terms and complies with adopted transport policies, including CS4, CS20, CS24 and DM12.

(vii) Affordable Housing considerations

- 6.37 The 30% affordable housing scheme (181652) is proposing a policy-compliant provision, therefore this application would produce an acceptable affordable housing of 14 on-site units, which would meet Policy CS16 and the Affordable Housing SPD. The 100% affordable scheme would also be policy compliant, but would also be capable of meeting the requirements as the surrogate site to the Thames Quarter scheme/permission. These aspects are a significant benefit of these applications and although they are unlikely to ultimately be delivered, they should nonetheless weigh positively in the planning judgement for these applications.

(viii) Sustainability

- 6.38 Members will be aware that although the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) no longer applies, a sustainability statement is required and has been submitted for consideration. This covers a variety of sustainability related matters and sets out the proposed strategy. A 'fabric-first' approach has been adopted, not relying on additional technical solutions (such as PV arrays) or user systems, both of which can alter the overall effectiveness of the systems, but rather focusing on maximising passive energy use and thermal insulation and reducing water consumption.
- 6.39 The applicant advises that the following conditions have been addressed through measures as described: Energy Efficiency and Energy Conservation; b) Water Conservation; c) Flood Risk; d) Adaptation to climate change; e) Surface Water; and f) Low Carbon Technologies.
- 6.40 By complying with Part F and Part L1A 2013, measures will be in place to mitigate the risk of overheating. The build specification used will reduce energy demand across the site, through the use of a good fabric specification and high efficiency services. Also measures will be taken to minimise water consumption by complying with Building Regulations Part G requirements and providing water butts to all dwellings.
- 6.41 The above approach is considered to be acceptable in principle, with the standard condition securing written evidence that at least 50% of the dwellings/development will achieve at least a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as per Part L of the Building Regulations (2013).
- 6.42 Officers are content that the applicant has acceptably demonstrated that the applications accord with the principles of policies CS1, DM1 and DM2. In order to ensure that the measures stipulated within the Energy Strategy are actually implemented in practice, a compliance condition will be included on the decision notice (in addition to the sustainability condition).

Other matters

- 6.43 The proposed SuDs scheme is confirmed as being acceptable in principle subject to the conditions to meet Policy CS35.
- 6.44 The applicant's geotechnical report has highlighted the possibility of contaminants on the site and accordingly the Council's Environmental Protection Team is requesting the usual conditions to apply, in order to comply with Policy CS34.
- 6.45 No specific ecological measures have been advised by the Council's ecologist, however, native species to encourage natural habitats could be incorporated into the eventual landscaping scheme.

- 6.46 The 100% affordable scheme would qualify for social housing relief, meaning no CIL would be payable. The level for the 30% scheme will be checked and set out in the Update Report.
- 6.47 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 that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular application.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 These applications are required to demonstrate a suitable residential development which makes good use of this allocated housing site.
- 7.2 As a surrogate site for affordable housing - which is the site's likely eventual function - the applications have adequately demonstrated to your officers' satisfaction that either an affordable or open-market (30% policy compliant) development of 47 units can be delivered and this is a significant benefit provided by these applications.
- 7.3 The siting and building envelope for such a scheme is considered to be suitable, with any gaps in control to be supplemented by parameter plan conditions.
- 7.4 There were detailed design concerns from the Design Review Panel to this scheme but officers are content that a Reserved Matters application approving the Appearance of a development would produce a suitable development.

Case Officer: Richard Eatough

Plans: TBC



This page is intentionally left blank

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5th December 2018

ITEM NO. 9

Ward: Minster

App No.: 181448/REG3

Site Address: Riversley Court, 205 Wensley Road, Reading

Proposal: Single storey detached prefabricated water storage and treatment plant room

Applicant: Reading Borough Council

Date valid: 30th August 2018

Target Determination Date: 25th October 2018 (agreed extension to 7th December 2018)

RECOMMENDATION:

GRANT Full Planning Permission subject to conditions:

Conditions:

1. Time limit for implementation
2. Materials
3. Approved plans
4. Fence Details
5. Landscaping - Details to be submitted including 2 replacement trees
6. Landscaping Implementation
7. Landscaping Maintenance
8. Arboricultural Method Statement
9. Construction Management Statement

Informatives:

1. Terms and conditions
2. Building control
3. Encroachment
4. Thames Water Build Over Agreement
5. Positive and proactive

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application relates to land to the north west of the Riversley Court block of flats, adjacent the car park serving these flats.
- 1.2 This minor application is reported to Planning Applications Committee as Reading Borough Council is the applicant.

Location Plan (Not to scale)



2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal seeks planning permission for a single storey detached pre-fabricated outbuilding to serve a water storage and treatment plant room. It would be located next to the existing cold water booster plant room. It would measure 4.2m in width and 9.5m in depth. The roof would be flat, at a height of 3.2m.
- 2.2 The proposals also incorporate fencing (timber and metal) along the west side of the structure, with proposed planting in front of the fencing.
- 2.3 To facilitate the structure, it is proposed to remove an Oak tree.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 None relevant.

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 Public consultation
The occupiers of the flats at Wensley Court, Riverseley Court and Irving Court have been notified of the application and a site notice has also been displayed at the site.
- 4.2 No neighbour letters of representation received.

- 4.3 RBC Transport: No objection subject to condition (CMS).
- 4.4 Natural Environment/Parks: Concerns originally raised about the loss of the Oak Tree. However, upon further inspection, its retention was not considered critical. No objection subject to replacement tree planting and landscaping conditions.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

5.1 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 Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the Reading Local Development Framework 'Core Strategy' 2008 (Altered 2015) and 'Sites and Detailed Policies Document' 2012 (Altered 2015).

5.2 The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National Planning Policy Framework (2018)
National Planning Policy Guidance (2014 onwards)

Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2008) Policies

CS7: Design and the Public Realm
CS28: Loss of Open Space
CS38: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands

Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012) Policies:

DM4: Safeguarding Amenity
DM12: Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters
DM18: Tree Planting

6. APPRAISAL

Design, impact on the host dwelling, character of the area and street scene

- 6.1 The proposal is considered in the context of any impact on the character of the existing residential blocks and the estate as a whole, the adjacent park and the public footpath which runs through the area.
- 6.2 The proposed structure would have a similar footprint to the existing plant room. Whilst it would be slightly higher, it would remain single storey and with a flat roof to minimise the bulk and to reflect the existing plant room. It is recognised that the structure would be located close to the public footpath which goes through the site and, as such, would be highly visible. In this respect, fencing is proposed to partially screen the development and it is considered that soft landscaping, as indicated, would be appropriate to soften the appearance of the development which could be secured by way of a suitably worded condition. Taking into account the existing outbuilding and its relationship with the character of the surrounding area, the proposal is not considered inappropriate.
- 6.3 Whilst the site is not allocated as designated open space, Policy CS28 states that this (non designation) does not imply that other areas of open space or recreational land serve no purpose and need less protection from development. As above, the proposal would be close to the footpath and adjacent play area. It is considered that the proposed replacement tree planting and soft landscaping would help to minimise the impact of the development but also soften the

appearance of the existing structure, also close to the footpath. In the context of its location on the periphery of the recreational area it is not considered to result in any unacceptable harm.

- 6.4 Given the above, and with regards to the current context, it is not considered that the proposal would have any adverse effect on the character and appearance of the existing residential blocks and the wider estate as a whole, or the character of the adjacent pathway and play area such to warrant a refusal.
- 6.5 The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policies CS7 and CS28 of the Core Strategy 2008 (altered 2015) and Policy DM9 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (altered 2015).

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

- 6.6 Given the position, scale and nature of the proposed structure there would be no material loss of amenity to any neighbouring property.
- 6.7 It is unlikely that any additional noise would result than from the use of the structure than at present and no significant harm to neighbouring occupiers in terms of noise or disturbance is considered to be caused.
- 6.8 The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (altered 2015).

Impact on the Natural Environment

- 6.9 Concerns were originally raised about the removal of an Oak tree to facilitate the proposals. However, upon further inspection, the condition of the tree was recognised to be poor and not worthy of retention in this instance. The applicant submitted its reason for the proposed location (ease of installation and for the visual impact that the new structure would have) and also submitted an Arboricultural Report. The Council's Tree Officer confirmed that there was no objection to the loss of the tree, subject to replacement tree planting which could be secured by way of a suitably worded condition. On this basis, it is considered that these measures outweigh any harm resulting from the loss of the tree and there are no landscape objections to the proposal.
- 6.10 The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policies CS7 and CS36 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (altered 2015).

Impact on Parking/Highways

- 6.11 Given the nature of the proposal, there would be no impact on parking arrangements or impact on other road users. No transport objection subject to submission of a Construction Method Statement prior to commencement of works.
- 6.12 The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DM12 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (altered 2015).

Other Issues

- 6.13 In relation to planning conditions, in line with section 100ZA(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act (as amended), which came into force on 01/10/18, discussions have been undertaken with the applicant regarding pre-commencement

conditions. The applicant has formally agreed to the recommended pre-commencement conditions via return email on 22/11/18.
Equalities Act

- 6.14 Finally, in terms of equality, 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 that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular application.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposals are considered to be acceptable within the context of national and local planning policies, as detailed in the appraisal above. As such, full planning permission is recommended for approval, subject to the recommended conditions.

Plans:

Drawing No: Location Plan RDG PL A 0101

Drawing No: Site Plan RDG PL A 0102

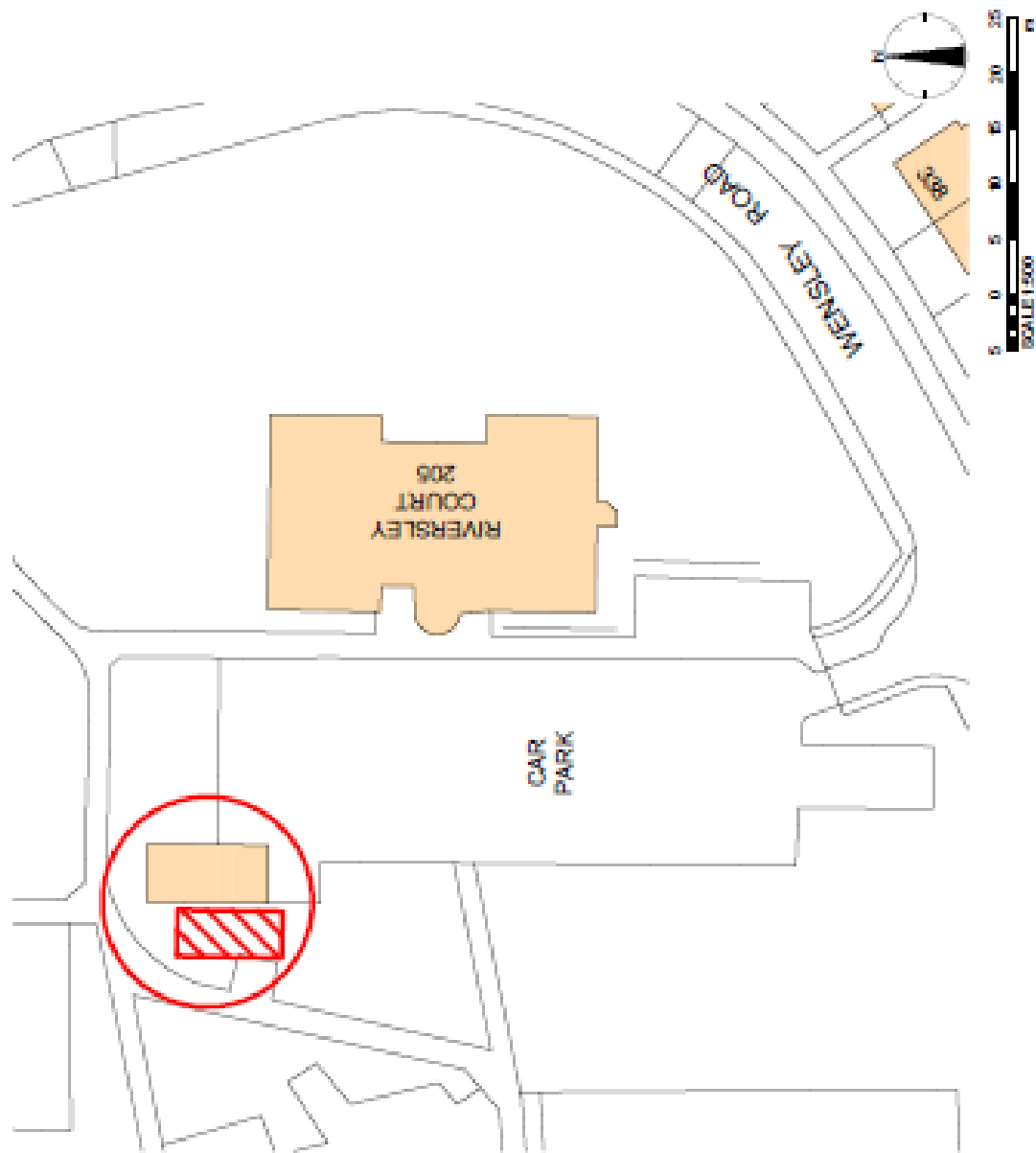
Received 16th August 2018

Drawing No: Existing and Proposed Layout Plans RDG PL A 104 Rev A

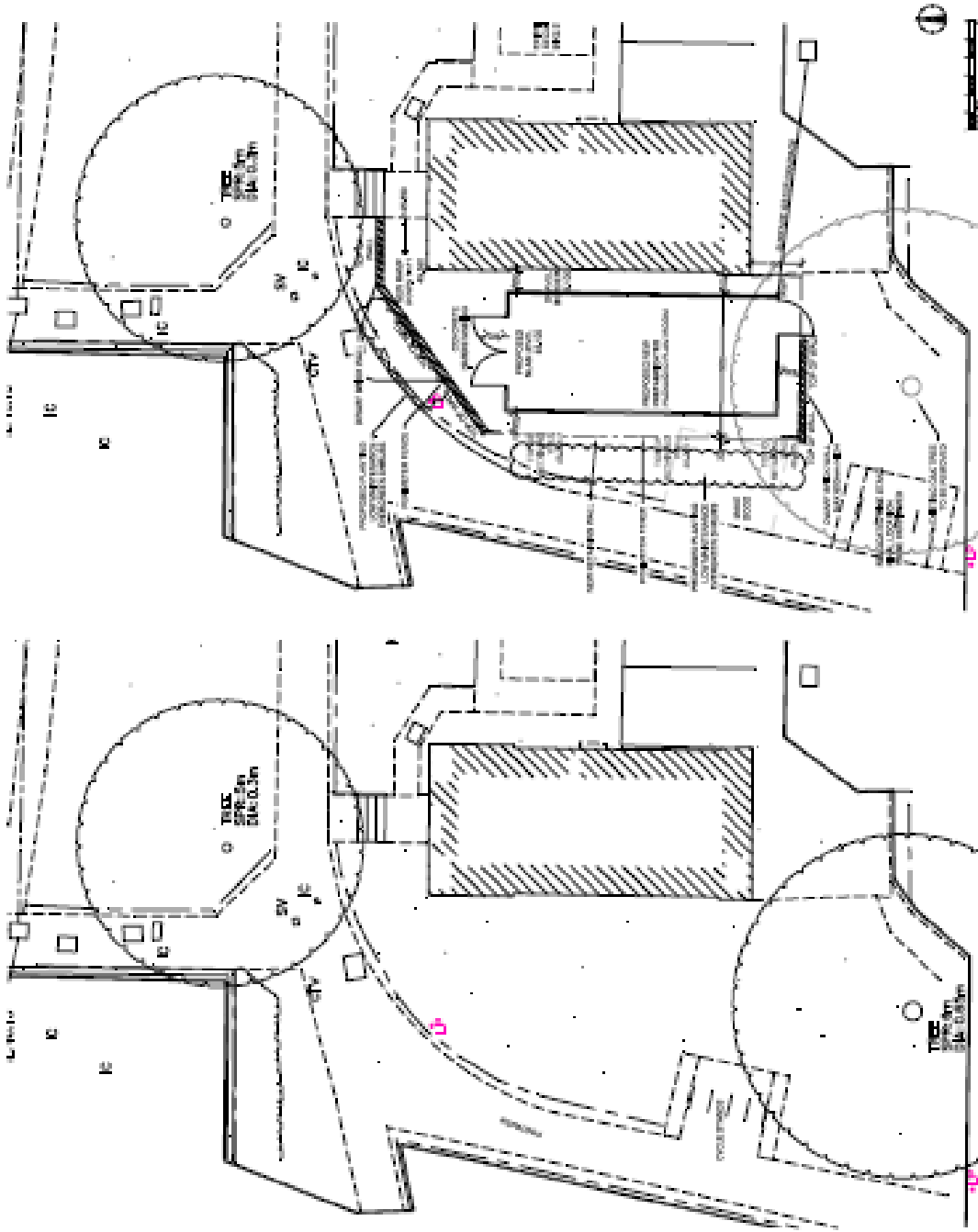
Drawing No: Existing and Proposed Elevations RDG PL A 103 Rev A

Received 11th November 2018

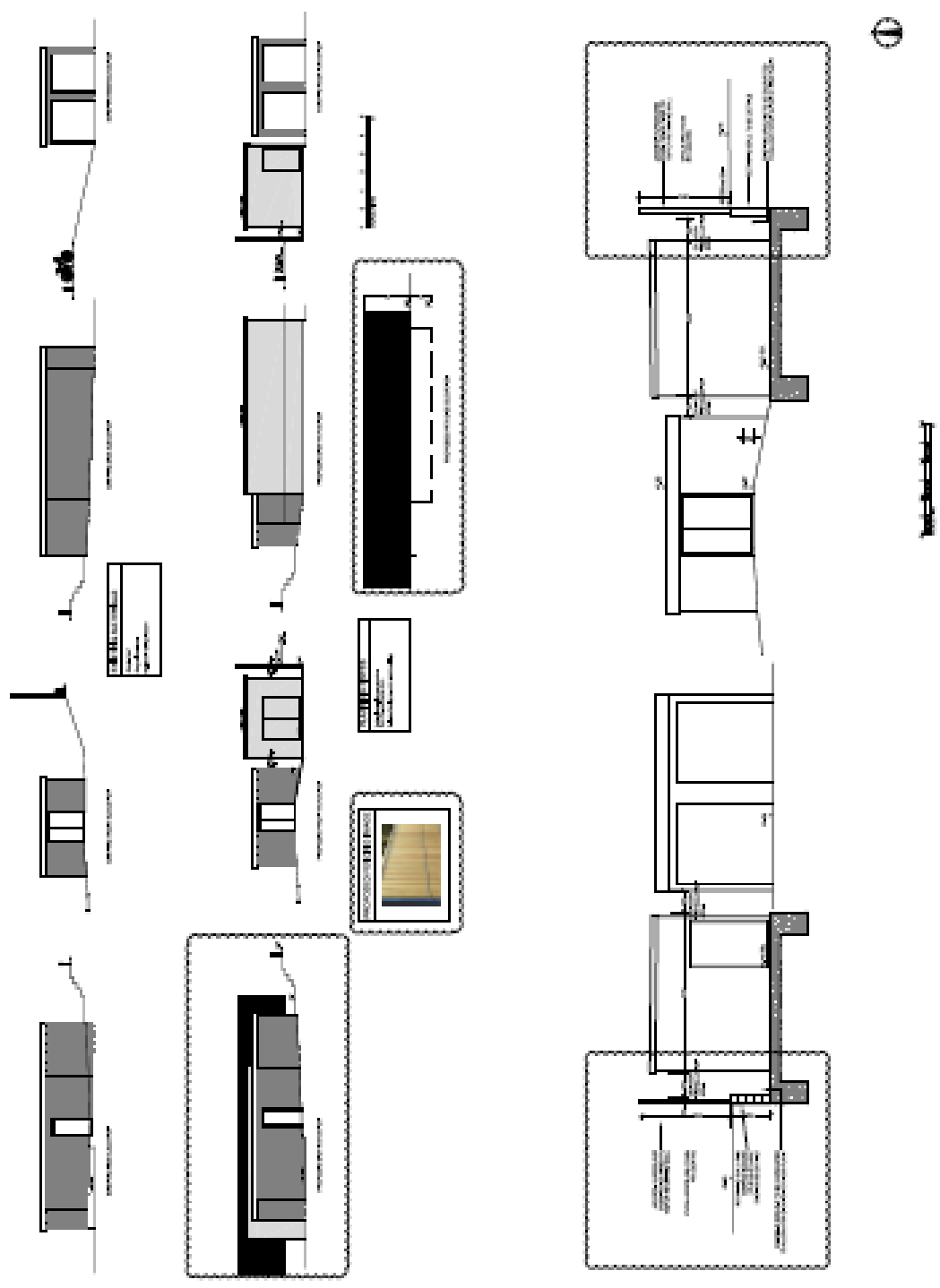
Case Officer: Ethne Humphreys



Proposed Site Plan



Existing and Proposed Layout



Existing and Proposed Elevations

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5th December 2018

ITEM NO. 10

Ward: Norcot

App No.: 181555/FUL

Address: Grovelands Baptist Church, 553 Oxford Road, Reading

Proposal: Demolition of existing chapel and church hall. Redevelopment of the site to provide a three storey mixed use development comprising of community halls and ancillary accommodation at ground floor level, 2 x one bedroom flats, 6 x two bedroom flats and 2 x three bedroom flats at the upper floor levels, all with associated external amenity space, car parking and cycle storage.

Applicant: The Trustees of the Gate

Date application valid: 1st September 2018

Major Application 13 week target: 1st December 2018

Extended deadline: 21st December 2018

Planning Guarantee 26 week target: 2nd March 2019

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Planning Permission subject to conditions and informatives and subject to the satisfactory completion of a S.106 legal agreement.

or

REFUSE permission should the legal agreement not be completed by the 21st December 2018 unless a later date is agreed by the Head of Planning Development & Regulatory Services.

The Section 106 Legal Agreement to secure the following:

Affordable Housing

- On- site - first floor - Unit 1 - 2 bed - affordable rent; Unit 2 - 1 bed - affordable rent; Unit 5 - 3 bed - shared ownership
- Cascade mechanism to ensure that there is a default mechanism of a financial contribution should neither a registered provider nor RBC wish to take on the affordable housing units in the scheme.

Transport

- Parking provision - 6 no. spaces to be provided at the Wilson Road site (171087)

Employment, Skills and Training

- Financial contribution of £2,295 towards Construction Skills

GRANT Planning Permission subject to conditions and informatives

CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE:

- 1) Standard Time Limit
- 2) Approved Plans
- 3) Materials and details to be approved
- 4) Detailed elevational plans at 1: 20 scale to be submitted to and approved prior to construction.
- 5) L2a - Landscaping - When details need to be submitted for approval
- 6) L2b - Landscaping implementation
- 7) L3 - Standard Landscaping Maintenance
- 8) Noise -The specific sound level of the plant/equipment hereby approved, LAeqr, Tr

as measured at a point 1 metre external to sensitive facades, shall be at least 10dB below the existing background sound level

- 9) Implementation of approved noise mitigation scheme
- 10) Hours of community use to be 8.00am to 23:00 Monday-Saturday and 10:00 to 21:00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays
- 11) Amplified sound levels within the community space to not exceed 80dB.
- 12) Assessment of contamination.
- 13) Submission of contamination remediation scheme.
- 14) Implementation of approved remediation scheme.
- 15) Reporting of unexpected contamination.
- 16) CMS including control of noise and dust.
- 17) The hours of noisy construction, demolition and associated deliveries shall be restricted to the hours of 08:00hrs to 18:00hrs Mondays to Fridays, and 09:00hrs to 13:00hrs on Saturdays, and not at any time on Sundays and Bank or Statutory Holidays.
- 18) No materials or green waste produced as a result of the clearance of the site, demolition works or construction works associated with the development hereby approved shall be burnt on site.
- 19) DC1 - Vehicle parking space provided in accordance with approved plans
- 20) DC3 - Bicycle parking space provided in accordance with approved plans
- 21) DC6 -Bin storage
- 22) DC7 & DC8 - Parking permits
- 23) Visibility splays to be provided before development
- 24) Car parking management plan prior to occupation
- 25) *Sustainable Drainage* - No development shall take place until details of the design, implementation, maintenance and management plan of the sustainable drainage scheme have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.
- 26) *Sustainable Drainage* - No building / dwelling hereby permitted shall be occupied until the sustainable drainage scheme for the site has been completed in accordance with the submitted and approved details.

INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE:

- 1) Terms and conditions.
- 2) Building control approval.
- 3) Encroachment.
- 4) Highways
- 5) Parking permits
- 6) Pre-Commencement conditions.
- 7) CIL- chargeable.
- 8) Positive and proactive.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site known as Grovelands Chapel and the Gate Oxford Road Centre, is situated on the corner of Oxford Road and Wilson Road. The existing main chapel was built in 1899. A smaller hall is situated in the south east corner of the site with the remaining area comprising hardstanding used for car parking. The site area comprises 0.07 hectare.
- 1.2 The site is used by 'The Gate'¹ as a resource centre for hosting church groups and other events.

¹ Formerly known as Reading Community Church, formed in 2005 from the merger of two local Baptist Union affiliated churches, Tilehurst Free Church and Grovelands Christian Fellowship.



Photo taken from opposite side of Oxford Road of Wilson Road junction



Rear of the site



Rear elevation of church



Wilson Road

- 1.3 Alongside the previous refused scheme (171086) the applicant submitted a further application for the land between 2-4 Wilson Road (171087), currently a piece of derelict land between the terraces on Wilson Road (photo above) and the rear of premises on Oxford Road. The Wilson Road site application has not yet been determined, but officers are minded to approve that scheme and the affordable housing contribution has been agreed in principle, subject to the completion of the S106 legal agreement. As the Wilson Road site is not a major application the decision can be undertaken under delegated authority. The Wilson Road site is intended to provide some of the parking provision for the application site and therefore there would need to be a clause in the S106 legal agreements linking the two sites together.
- 1.4 The surrounding area comprises a mix of commercial and residential properties including Victorian terraces and terraces of commercial uses at ground floor with residential above. Immediately to the south of the site there is a new terrace of three 2 storey dwellings.
- 1.5 On the plan below the application site is shown edged red and 2-4 Wilson Road (171087) edged blue.



2.0 PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 Since the applicant obtained planning consent in 2013 at the application site (lapsed permission 12/01577/FUL) the 'Gate' has embarked on a strategic review of their buildings across a number of sites. Church services are now held at their Meadway site and it is the aim that that site will become the central core facility for the Gate; work is progressing on developing a design/ proposal for it. Alongside this it is intended that the application site be redeveloped to retain community space as well as creating residential development. The applicant states in their Design and Access Statement that *"If planning consent is granted for the proposed development at Oxford Road, the proceeds will help the Church maintain its community presence at Oxford Road, as well as help fund the proposed building works at the Meadway site. Both sites will provide significant community assets to serve the local communities for years to come"*.
- 2.2 The applicant engaged in pre-application work with RBC seeking to agree design principles. Pre-application meetings were held in April and July 2018 and a presentation was made to the Design Review Panel on 7th June 2018, and subsequent amended details were provided to the DRP via email. Further details are set out in section 6 below.
- 2.3 The applicant also held a public consultation event with invitations delivered to four hundred properties in the surrounding streets as well as personal invites to all those who objected to the previous application living further afield, all local councillors, and the Reading Civic Society. The applicant posed three key questions on feedback forms as follows:
- 1) Do you have any comments on the proposals?
 - 2) Are there any aspects of the design you think should be addressed?
 - 3) Do you think any issues may arise from the proposals?
- 2.4 Comments received are summarised in the Design and Access Statement (DAS), and the applicant sets out elements included in this planning submission in response including:
- Existing bell tower to be refurbished and incorporated into the corner tower design
 - Reference to existing church features used as a concept in the final design
 - Gables option elevations developed
 - Contrasting red brick colours emphasised in the final design
- 2.5 Further details are set out in the DAS.
- 2.6 Car parking and affordable housing principles were also agreed at pre-application stage with RBC's Housing and Transport teams.
- 2.7 It is proposed to demolish the existing buildings on the church site and to replace it with a new building which includes the following:
- A nursery for up to 26 no. 2-4 year olds run by a social enterprise arm of the church called 'Love Your Community'
 - 370 sqm community facilities on the ground floor comprising 3 no. meeting halls (Halls 1 & 2 for use by the nursery during nursery hours - up to 24 no. 2-4 year olds and 4 no. staff), kitchen within the main foyer, 2 no. staff rooms and a manager's office. The Church intends to run a community café in the foyer space.

- Rear outdoor soft play area for the nursery to be screened from the car park.
- 10 flats over floors one and two with 3 affordable housing units - 2x3 beds; 6x 2beds, and 2x1 beds as follows:

First Floor

- Unit 1 - 2 bed 3 person - 62sqm (affordable unit)
- Unit 2 - 1 bed 2 person- 50sqm (affordable unit)
- Unit 3 - 2 bed 4 person- 70sqm
- Unit 4 - 2 bed 4 person - 75sqm
- Unit 5 - 3 bed 6 person - 100sqm (affordable unit)

Second Floor

- Unit 6 - 2 bed 3 person - 62sqm
- Unit 7 - 1 bed 2 person- 50sqm
- Unit 8 - 2 bed 4 person- 70sqm
- Unit 9 - 2 bed 4 person - 75sqm
- Unit 10 - 3 bed 6 person - 100sqm

- 11 car parking spaces (4 residential and 7 community/nursery use) (remainder of residential parking, 6no. spaces, to be provided at the Wilson Road site)
- 11 cycle parking spaces (Allocated to the residential units of the application site and the Wilson Road site)

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 2.8 The proposed scheme would generate in the region of £121, 661 (CIL), based on £147.29 (2018 indexed figure) per sqm of GIA.
- 2.9 The following plans and supporting documents have been assessed:

Received 3rd September 2018 (unless otherwise stated):

- Location Plan - Drawing no: 100
- Site Block Plan - Drawing no: 101B
- Existing Site Plan and Floor Plans Survey - Drawing no: 120
- Existing Elevations Survey - Drawing no:130
- Proposed Elevations North and West - Drawing no: 160D
- Proposed Elevations South and East - Drawing no: 161C
- Ground Floor Plan as Proposed - Drawing no: 150F, received 30th October 2018
- First Floor Plan as Proposed - Drawing no:151D
- Second Floor Plan as Proposed - Drawing no: 152D
- Roof Plan as Proposed - Drawing no: 154B
- Proposed 3D View at Junction of Wilson Road and Oxford Road - Drawing no: 140C
- Proposed Surface Water Drainage Plan - Drawing no: 170A

Other Documents received 3rd September 2018 (unless otherwise stated):

- Affordable Housing Statement, prepared by CPL Chartered Architects, Revision A - 30th August 2018
- Air Quality Assessment, Document ref: P2894.2.1. prepared by agb Environmental, dated 16th June 2017
- Bat Survey report, document ref: P2894.1.0, prepared by agb Environmental, dated 30th June 2017
- BREAAAM 2018 Pre-Assessment, prepared by MES Building Solutions, dated 23rd August 2018

- CIL form, Revision A, received 12th November 2018
- Design and Access Statement, prepared by CPL Chartered Architects, Rev B, received 12th November 2018
- Energy and Sustainability Statement, prepared by MES Building Solution, dated 28th August 2018
- Environmental Noise Assessment V2, document ref: M3956, prepared by Ian Sharland Ltd, dated 29th August 2018
- Heritage Statement, prepared by CPL Chartered Architects, Revision B dated 10th October 2018, received 17th October 2018
- Phase 1 Geoenvironmental Desk Study Report, document reference: 17.06-004, prepared by Listers Geo, dated June 2017
- Planning Statement, prepared by CPL Chartered Architects, Revision B, received 12th November 2018
- Transport Statement, document ref 8170569/MB/DW/002 Issue 1, prepared by Glanville, dated 20th June 2017

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1

06/00885/FUL (060558) - Rear extensions and alterations for church use - Approved 18/9/2006 - this allowed for alterations and extensions to the existing building in order to provide additional space to accommodate the existing congregation and its associated ministry, and to enable the church to increase the scope and range of its community facilities such as the youth programme, crèche and toddler facilities. The scheme involved subdividing the building internally to provide two additional floors and to also extend the building to the rear.

08/01571/PREAPP (081722) - Pre-application advice was sought in 2008 to demolish the existing structures and replace them with a new three-storey community facility together with three residential units to be occupied by people working in the community facility - Obs sent -23/12/08

An application was made to English Heritage at that time to list the existing church, but due to the significant alteration of the interior they concluded that it was not of "special interest at national level", and did not meet the high threshold of national significance required for listing."

11/01189/FUL (111475) - Demolition of the existing church buildings, construction of a new 3 storey church building to accommodate worship/meeting rooms, offices, café and 2 retail outlets. Attached residential accommodation comprising 1x 1 bed and 1x 2 bed and 1x studio flat - Refused 19/10/11

This was considered by Planning Applications Committee in October 2011 and was refused planning permission for the following reasons:

- 1) *By virtue of the proposed footprint, height, massing and lack of set back from neighbouring properties the proposed development would appear cramped and overly dominant within the streetscene. The high eaves and vertical emphasis further result in the development sitting uncomfortably with the neighbouring properties and it is therefore considered a contrived and discordant feature within the street scene.*
- 2) *The proposed development will have an unacceptable overbearing impact on the neighbouring terrace at 543-551 Oxford Road and by virtue of the raised terrace will cause overlooking and a loss of privacy.*

- 3) *The layout fails to provide sufficient car parking spaces and does not therefore comply with the Local Planning Authority's standards in respect of vehicle parking. This could result in on-street parking/reversing movements on Wilson Road, adversely affecting road safety and the flow of traffic.*
- 4) *By virtue of the foregoing reasons for refusal, which find the design and appearance of the replacement buildings unacceptable the proposed development has failed to justify the loss of the locally important historic building.*
- 5) *The proposed development does not comply with the Local Planning Authority's standards in respect of secure cycle storage provision.*
- 6) *As a result of the proposed gates being set back just 3.5 metres from the boundary vehicles will have to wait in the carriageway which is unacceptable.*
- 7) *In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure contributions towards transport (Reading Urban Area Package), local recreation/leisure and education infrastructure improvements and affordable housing the proposal fails to deal with its direct impact.*

12/01577/FUL (121716) - Demolition of the existing church buildings, construction of a new 3 storey church building to accommodate worship/meeting rooms, offices, café and 2 retail outlets. Attached residential accommodation comprising 1x 1 bed and 1x 2 bed and 1x studio flat (Resubmission of 11/01189/FUL) - Approved 8/4/13

This permission was subject to a S106 legal agreement, which included parking provision on the Wilson Road site.

160926/PREAPP - Mixed use community/commercial and residential development - Obs sent 19/5/16.

This pre-app was based on a proposal for shops, café, 3 meeting rooms, 1 bed flat at ground floor, 4 no. 2bed flats at first floor and 4 no. 2 bed flats and 1 no. 1 bed flat at second floor. This was to be the same footprint and identical elevations to the approved scheme (12/01577/FUL). This proposal included for Wilson Road to be for housing.

Advice provided was that the principle of the number of units would only be acceptable if there was clear justification and evidence for the significant reduction in the community benefits of the scheme; proposed parking provision would be well below council standards, and it was strongly advised that any scheme made use of the plot on Wilson Road for parking. It was advised that an approach to retaining and reusing some of the distinctive features of the church would be welcomed, as had been required under condition on the approved scheme (12/01577/FUL); an assessment of air and noise would be required as well as a bat survey.

171086/ FUL - Demolition of existing church buildings and redevelopment of the site to provide a four storey mixed use development comprised of community halls and ancillary accommodation at ground floor level, car parking and 2 x one bedroom flats and 10 x two bedroom flats at the upper floor levels - Refused 27/2/18

This was considered by Planning Applications Committee in February 2018 and was refused planning permission for the following reasons:

1. *The design is not considered to provide a high quality replacement building which responds positively to the context and would not maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area. Its height and massing are inappropriate within the area, overly dominant and overbearing, with a top-heavy appearance,*

alien features such as the open 'grid' façade, and a top floor considered too tall proportionally compared to the main façade contrary to policy CS7.

2. The proposed height and mass of the building along Wilson Road is considered overly dominant within the streetscene, and would not relate well to the neighbouring residential properties contrary to policy CS7.

3. The raised terraces at upper floors to the rear would cause overlooking and the perception of overlooking, and loss of privacy, for surrounding residential properties, and will introduce amenity space at a height uncharacteristic in this area contrary to policy DM4.

4. By virtue of the unacceptability of the design and appearance of the replacement building, the proposed development has failed to justify the loss of the locally important historic building contrary to policy CS33.

5. In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure contributions towards employment, skills and training, and securing affordable housing of an appropriate tenure, and 6 no. car parking spaces from the site at land between 2-4 Wilson Road, the proposal;

- fails to contribute adequately to the housing needs of Reading Borough and the need to provide sustainable, inclusive mixed and balanced communities, contrary to policies CS15, DM6 and NPPF,*
- fails to provide adequate parking provision and therefore controls over the development's parking and highway impacts, contrary to policies CS20, CS24 and DM12, and*
- fails to adequately contribute to the employment, skills or training needs of local people with associated socioeconomic harm, contrary to policies CS3, CS9, DM3 and the Employment, Skills and Training SPD (2013).*

4.0 CONSULTATIONS

(i) Statutory

4.1 None

(ii) Non-statutory

Ecology

4.2 The bat survey report (Agb Environmental, June 2017) has been undertaken to an appropriate standard and details the results of a preliminary roost assessment survey and one dusk emergence and one dawn re-entry surveys carried out in June. The report states that no bats emerged or re-entered the buildings and concluded that they are unlikely to host roosting bats. As such, since bats and other protected species are very unlikely to be affected by the proposals, there are no objections to this application on ecology grounds.

RBC - Environmental Protection and Nuisance

4.3 Noise impact on development - A noise assessment should be submitted in support of applications for new residential proposed in noisy areas. The noise assessment will be assessed against the recommendations for internal noise levels within dwellings and external noise levels within gardens / balconies in accordance with BS 8233:2014 and WHO guidelines for Community Noise. The report should identify any mitigation measures that are necessary to ensure that the recommended standard is

met. Where appropriate, the noise assessment data should also include noise events (L_AMax) and the design should aim to prevent noise levels from noise events exceeding 45dB within bedrooms at night. Noise levels above 45dB are linked with sleep disturbance.

- 4.4 The noise assessment submitted shows that the recommended standard for internal noise can be met, if the recommendations from the assessment are incorporated into the design. It is recommended that a condition be attached to consent to ensure that the glazing (and ventilation) recommendations of the noise assessment (and air quality assessment, where relevant) will be followed, or that alternative but equally or more effective glazing and ventilation will be used.
- 4.5 Noise generating development -
(i) *Plant noise* - Applications which include noise generating plant when there are nearby noise sensitive receptors should be accompanied by an acoustic assessment carried out in accordance with BS4142:2014 methodology.
- 4.6 The noise assessment submitted has been carried out in accordance with BS4142:2014 and the methodology has been correctly applied. The assessment concludes that the specific noise level of the proposed plant will not exceed -10dB below the background noise and the rating level does not exceed the background noise so adverse impact on the local noise climate is unlikely. The applicants have not provided details of the actual proposed plant or predicted noise levels and the noise assessment simply identified the noise limit of 37dB based on the daytime background noise level of 47dB. It is assumed from the noise assessment that plant is not expected to operate between 23:00hrs and 07:00hrs? Whilst it is preferable to have actual plant details upfront, if you are minded to consent without this, I would recommend a condition.
- 4.7 (ii) *Community centre use* - The ground floor is proposed for community use. The noise assessment for transmission of noise from this use on the residential dwellings is based on noise levels of 80dB (the sound level of shouting). I am not sure the extent of community uses planned to be held there but restricting hours of use to 08:00hrs to 23:00hrs is recommended as well as restricting amplified music sound levels to not exceed 80dB would be a good catch all whilst allowing the community centre flexibility of use.
- 4.8 Air Quality - The air quality assessment concludes that there will be no increased exposure as the levels at the site are predicted to fall below action levels.
- 4.9 Contaminated Land - Where development is proposed, the developer is responsible for ensuring that development is safe for the intended purpose or can be made so by remedial action. A phase 1 assessment has been submitted which concludes that a phase 2 assessment is necessary. 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. Conditions are recommended to ensure that future occupants are not put at undue risk from contamination.
- 4.10 Construction and demolition phases - We have concerns about potential noise, dust and bonfires associated with the construction (and demolition) of the proposed development and possible adverse impact on nearby residents (and businesses). Fires during construction and demolition can impact on air quality and cause harm to residential amenity. Burning of waste on site could be considered to be harmful to the aims of environmental sustainability. Conditions are recommended.

RBC - Housing Strategy

- 4.11 The offer of 2 units (1x1bed and 1x 2bed) at affordable rents and a 3rd (1x3bed) for shared ownership is acceptable, subject to including the standard cascade clause into the S106 for a commuted sum, should registered providers not agree to take on a couple flats in a shared block.

RBC - Natural Environment

- 4.12 The concern with the 2017 application was the lack of landscaping on the Oxford Road frontage in view of the road being identified as being a 'treed corridor' in our Tree Strategy and the also the general lack of landscaping in view of the site being in a 10% or less canopy cover area, as identified in our Tree Strategy.
- 4.13 I note, with reference to the Design & Access Statement Rev A - August 2018 and Ground Floor Plan as Proposed RCC.17 / 150 E, that landscaping has been incorporated at the rear of the site and within planters on the Oxford Road and Wilson Road frontages. Given the site constraints, the use of planters is the only feasible option, hence the landscaping principles are acceptable. I therefore have no objections subject to conditions - landscaping details to be submitted; landscaping implementation; and landscaping maintenance.
- 4.14 In terms of justifying a pre-commencement condition, it is important in this case due to the importance of the need for landscaping, i.e. we need to ensure the implementation of the landscaping has been considered at an early stage particularly as the construction of planters will be carried out alongside building construction

RBC - Transport

- 4.15 *Planning Officer note:* The following comments are the final ones from Transport. These followed the submission of an amended ground floor plan to widen the car park access to 4.1m; residents' cycle store width widened to 3.1m internally; and 6m manoeuvre zone in front of parking space 1, which has resulted in the creation of another small cycle store under the communal stair for community/nursery use so that nursery/community cycle provision is increased from 5 spaces to 6.
- 4.16 The proposed development consists of a mixed-use development located at the two closely related sites 553 Oxford Road and land between 2 and 4 Wilson Road (171087), Reading, this proposal is a resubmission of 171086.
- 4.17 This application comprises of the following:

Oxford Road site

- Community Hall 98-142m² Gross Floor Area (GFA)
- x6 Two Bed Flats
- x2 One Bed Flats
- x2 three bed flats
- Nursery for up to 24 Two to Four Year Old Children and Four Staff, with Flexible Pick Up and Drop Off Time
- 11 Car Parking Spaces (4 residential and 7 nursery / community uses)
- 11 Cycle Parking Spaces (Allocated to the Residential Units of Both Sites)

Wilson Road site

- x1 Two Bed House
- x3 One Bed Flats
- 7 Car Parking Spaces (Including 6 Allocated to Oxford Road Flats), and
- 4 Cycle Parking Spaces (Allocated to the Community Hall and the Nursery).

- 4.18 The Wilson Road site is the subject of a separate planning application reference 171087. *Planning Officer note: as referred to above that proposal is considered to be acceptable and officers are minded to approve that scheme. That site and the application site would be linked via a Section 106 legal agreement for the parking provision.*
- 4.19 A Transport Statement has been submitted to accompany this planning application and given the level of development this has been deemed appropriate, I comment on this as follows:
- Access
- 4.20 The Oxford Road site proposes a new entrance location that was accepted as part of the consented scheme, this access is a minimum of 4.1m in width and so it is sufficient for two-way movement.
- 4.21 The existing footway crossover will be removed, and the footway brought up to full height. However, in reviewing the changes it has been identified that a speed hump is located within proximity to the existing and proposed vehicular access on Wilson Road. A revised drawing has therefore been submitted adjusting the location of the proposed access so that it does not conflict with the location of the speed hump and this is deemed acceptable.
- 4.22 A revised drawing will be required illustrating the visibility splay given the relocation of the access but I am happy for this to be dealt with by way of a condition given that it would be an improvement to the north over the current arrangement. Visibility to the south would be reduced but Wilson Road is one-way and therefore would not have a detrimental impact on Highway safety.
- 4.23 In line with the previous assessment the visibility splay would need to be 2.4 x 25m with a 20mph speed limit as set out in Manual for Streets. The drawings in Appendix C of the Transport Statement previously illustrated the visibility splay going through a wall / planter, any revised visibility splay is likely to be outside of this wall / planter but if not the wall and planting will need to be less than 600mm in height and is included within the condition referenced above.
- Trip Rate and Traffic Generation
- 4.24 The applicant has used TRICS which is the national standard system of trip generation and analysis in the UK and Ireland, and is used as an integral and essential part of the Transport Assessment process. It is a database system, which allows its users to establish potential levels of trip generation for a wide range of development and location scenarios, and is widely used as part of the planning application process by both developer consultants and local authorities and is accepted by Inspectors as a valid way to ascertain likely trip generation.
- 4.25 The Oxford Road site is currently occupied by a church and therefore the net traffic generation of the proposals would be the traffic generated by the new development minus the traffic generated by the existing church. However to provide a robust assessment the following will simply consider the traffic predicted to be generated by the proposed development.
- 4.26 It has been noted that the community use has been based on a floor area of 145m² which is the maximum floor space available and removes the nursery floor area. It has also been noted that not all of the sites selected from TRICS are comparable in that they are provided with an increased parking provision. I have as a result undertaken my own assessment and this would reduce the level of trips compared to

that presented by the applicant. As a result I am happy that the trip rates provided are a robust assessment.

- 4.27 The sites selected for the nursery use are not all representative of the application site but following my own assessment the results are similar and therefore I am happy to accept those submitted by the applicant.
- 4.28 The trip rates for the privately owned flats are acceptable and represent an accurate reflection of what level of traffic generation would be generated for that use.
- 4.29 The number of vehicle trips that would be generated in the peak hours would approximately 16 in total and it should also be noted that this takes account of no reduction in trips that could have been generated by the existing use. Overall this is not a material increase and within the daily fluctuations on the network and given bullet point 3 of paragraph 32 of the NPPF which states proposals should only be refused on transport grounds if the residual cumulative impacts are severe, a refusal on traffic generation grounds would be hard to defend at an appeal.

Parking

- 4.30 The car and cycle parking standards relevant to the development are provided in Reading Borough Local Development Framework Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document Final Adopted 31st October 2011.
- 4.31 The car parking standards adopt a zonal approach to parking provision. The development, which is the subject of this application, is located in Zone 2 Primary Core Area. The relevant car parking standards are reproduced below.

Table 1: RBC Car Parking Provision Strategy

Land Use	Parking Provision
Housing – 1 Bed	0
Housing – 2 Bed	1 Per Unit (Required)
Housing – 3 Bed	2 Per Unit (Required)
Community Use	1 Per 20 m2 (Maximum)
D1 Day Nurseries with Flexible Pick Up and Drop Off Time	1 Per 3 FTE Staff Plus (Maximum)

- 4.32 The above standards suggest that the development should provide the following car parking:
- Residential: 10 car parking spaces
 - Community Hall: 7 car parking spaces, and
 - Nursery: 1 car parking space for staff and 2 for parents.
- 4.33 The following section sets out how this parking demand is met by each of the components of the development.

Residential

- 4.34 Two car parking spaces will be allocated to each of the 3-Bed residential units, one in the case of each of the 2-Bed residential units. No parking spaces are provided for the 1-bed flats. It is noted that the 2-Bed residential units within the Oxford Road site will have allocated parking spaces within the adjacent Wilson Road site,

equating to 6 spaces. The 3-bed residential units located on the Oxford Road site will be provided with the required number of 4 spaces on the application site. Overall this equates to a parking demand of 10 spaces and has been deemed acceptable given that the applicant has agreed that the future residents of the development would not be eligible to apply for residents' parking permits.

Nursery

- 4.35 One car parking space will be allocated for staff of the nursery in compliance with the above standard and one space will be allocated for parents. The standard suggests that the nursery would generate the demand for two parent parking spaces to facilitate the drop off and pick up of children. The remaining demand for one parent parking space for drop off and pick up would be met by the existing short term parking bays (max 30 minute stay) adjacent to the site on Oxford Road or the bays located along Wilson Road. This level of additional short term parking demand would not have a noticeable effect on parking supply and as such the provision of 2 spaces has been deemed acceptable.

Community Hall

- 4.36 The community hall is relatively small at 98-142m² (depending on configuration) and it is anticipated that it will be used mainly by local residents. The site is in a highly sustainable location and therefore visitors to the site will be able to walk, cycle or travel to the by public transport. As such, it is anticipated that the actual parking demand will be below the seven spaces suggested by the standard assuming halls 1, 2 and 3 are joined together.
- 4.37 Notwithstanding the above assessment identifying that parking demand is likely to be below the seven spaces suggested by the standard, assuming halls 1, 2 and 3 are joined together, the following assessment will consider how a parking demand for up to seven cars would be met.
- 4.38 The users of the community hall would have use of five allocated spaces. During the day, it is stated that residual users would be permitted to use the residents' parking spaces within the site, however this cannot be accepted as this is likely to result in conflict. Any residential parking should be retained solely for residents. However, during the day when the nursery is in use this would reduce the usable hall space to 98m² and therefore the parking demand would reduce to 5 spaces which is being proposed, the proposal therefore does not require the sharing of spaces during the day.
- 4.39 In the evenings, residual users of the community hall would be able to use the two spaces allocated to the nursery totalling the 7 spaces required to meet the Councils parking standards.
- 4.40 The above therefore guarantees a car parking allocation of the following:
- 7 dedicated spaces for the community hall/nursery;
 - 1 space per unit for 6, two bed units i.e. 6 residential spaces;
 - 2 spaces per unit for 2, 3 bed units i.e. 4 residential spaces; and
 - The remaining one-bed units would be car free.
- 4.41 This ensures that the parking for the community hall / nursery and the residential complies with Policy. However, given that the parking allocation is spread over two sites the proposal will require the provision of a car park management plan but I am happy for this to be dealt with by way of a condition.

- 4.42 The development site is located in an area designated as a Residents Parking Permit Area. Under the Borough's current parking standards, this proposal would generate additional pressure for parking in the area. Therefore there should be an assumption that any future occupants of the flats will not be issued with resident parking permits.
- 4.43 The car parking layout has been updated and I can confirm that this now complies with Policy.
- 4.44 The Transport Statement has stated that the development will require a provision of cycle parking that complies with the following:

Table 2: RBC Cycle Parking Standards

Land Use	Standard
Day nursery	1 per 2 FTE staff
D1 Places of Worship/ Church Hall	1 per 50 m2
Flat 1/2 bed	0.5 per 1 flat
House 2/3 bed	2 per 1 house

- 4.45 The standards suggest that the development should provide the following cycle parking spaces:
- Residential: 8 cycle parking spaces
 - Community Hall: 3 cycle parking spaces, and
 - Nursery: 2 cycle parking spaces.
- 4.46 The development provides six secure covered cycle parking spaces dedicated for the residential use and six cycle parking spaces for the nursery and the community hall within the Oxford Road site. Four secure covered cycle parking spaces will also be dedicated for the residential use within the Wilson Road site. This provision is in excess of the Councils standards and therefore complies with Policy.
- 4.47 The cycle parking layout complies with standards and therefore is acceptable.
- 4.48 Refuse can be collected from Wilson Road with refuse collection areas located within 15m of the carriageway. The refuse doors open out but this is not over the Public Highway so is deemed acceptable. However, it should be confirmed through the Waste Management Department whether the number of bins illustrated is sufficient to serve the development.
- 4.49 In the circumstances there are no transport objections subject to conditions - CMS, vehicle parking spaces provided in accordance with approved plans, Bicycle parking space provided in accordance with approved plans, bin storage, no entitlement to parking permits, visibility splays before occupation, car parking management plan.

(iii) Public/ local consultation and comments received

- 4.50 Notification letters were sent to 2-20 Wilson Road (even), 1c Wilson Road 543-555 Oxford Road (odd), 500-510 Oxford Road (even), 2-12 (even) Wantage Road, and all previous respondents to the refused application 171086 (totalling a further 33 households), a notice in the press and a site notice displayed. 18 responses were received, including 7 no. in support.

Comments are summarised as follows (full responses are available to view on line, via RBC website):

Parking issues

- Cause excessive congestion in an already congested area.
- 10 residences and only 4 parking spaces for residents! How on earth is that going to work without conflict?
- I do not believe the parking and transport plans will adequately deal with the issues having a nursery, community use and residential use of the building will cause to existing residents.

Design/ Loss of Building

- English Heritage recognises this as a beautiful building built by a famous Reading architect. Something like this can NEVER be replaced.
- The overall look of the building is now in keeping with the existing building. The inclusion of the existing bell tower will be a great asset, giving a continued history.
- The new building will be able to contain all sorts of new life, not least the proposed nursery school for which there is a need in Reading of quality nursery provision.
- The new plans are attractive, functional and will be a great asset to the local community.
- The level of anti-social behaviour taking place in the rear car park of the chapel, is causing distress to local residents. By re-developing this site the opportunity for a small minority to engage in such behaviour is removed. Wilson Road deserves better.
- Support request for local listing made by Reading Civic Society.
- This is a unique heritage building which fits within the context of the local area. We would expect that, if at the end of its useful life as a church, it would be adapted for an alternative use rather than demolished.
- A very large residential development and the mass of the proposed building will dominate the road.
- The installation of balconies on Wilson Road side is objected to, they are out of keeping with all other neighbouring residential properties and will feel like they are overhanging the road, and would not complement the pre-1914 streetscape.
- Appreciate the pointed gables and the bell tower on the North elevation of the main building, but can there be some more imagination involved, to make an attractive and fitting design? I hate to lose an eccentric historical building - some style is required for its replacement.
- While the Design and Access Statement goes into a considerable level of detail of townscape impacts, there does not appear to be any specific assessment in the application of the heritage impacts of the loss of the existing building as a non-designated heritage asset in its own right, and of its proposed replacement on the settings of nearby listed buildings.
- The design of the proposed building neither justifies the loss of the existing building, nor does it provide a building of high quality design that is respectful of its local context.
- Although, smaller than previous application, the proposal is still too imposing - far larger than surrounding buildings and its block multi floor structure is very different to existing sloping roof of church.
- The existing chapel is described as handsome and well-composed by English Heritage. They also say "The quality of the chapel's exterior and the local standing of its architect give it considerable significance in the Reading context" As such, to destroy the building any replacement has a high architectural expectation. The proposed structure echoes only the most basic

architectural details and clumsily adds the existing bell to the corner of the site. While I welcome efforts to retain the character of the building I feel that this design falls considerably short of what would be needed to justify destruction of the current landmark building.

- The current design from the north elevation addresses previous issues with scale and style.
- The west elevation (Wilson Road) continues to be overbearing and out of scale with surrounding properties. While the gable end mirrors the current structure, the additional bulk of the proposed building dwarfs surrounding buildings and is further accentuated by the addition of balconies. It is requested that this additional element is removed or at the very least reduced in scale (reduction of a storey and reduction of depth) to transition more appropriately into the street scene.
- Replacement with a building which, while more sympathetic to the character of the surrounding area than the previous application 171086, still has major design faults,
- From a sustainability perspective, object to the demolition and replacement rather than re-purposing and re-using an existing building.
- The building would have been listed if not for the loss of the internal features.
- Built of red/brown brick with a steep, red-tiled gabled roof, with varied fenestration including two arrangements of windows which give the impression of 'Venetian'-style windows, also a low square tower with a cupola. The building fits into its context of late-Victorian and Edwardian neighbours and enhances the streetscape without unduly dominating the surrounding houses.
- There are not many buildings in this Arts and Crafts style in Reading, compared to our Georgian and Victorian legacy, and to lose such a significant example would be a disaster in heritage terms.

Affordable housing

- While affordable housing proposed appears to comply nominally with RBC policy, it is unclear whether a RSL would be willing to partner with the Church in the development of the small number of affordable units proposed. This would in my view need to be justified by confirmation by a RSL. It may be that, for any otherwise acceptable scheme, a larger proportion of the overall residential units to be provided would need to be designated as affordable, for a RSL to be able to partner with the Church as developer.

Impact on residential amenity

- Will residents have access to the garden space that leads off the nursery?
- Balcony proposals risk overlooking of neighbours.
- The rear of the proposed building continues to overlook private gardens of properties on Wantage and Wilson Roads. It is requested that oriel windows are added to maintain the current privacy of these spaces.
- The DAS states that the living rooms/balconies [northern elevation] have been designed with perforated metal balustrades which allow diffuse light to penetrate whilst obscuring views into living rooms. These would not get much light anyway and to have it diffused through a metal screen would make them even darker. Are they fit for purpose?

Community Use

- I believe it will have a positive effect on the local community.
- There is an indication that the community spaces are a benefit to the local area. Why is the current hall not opened as a community space?
- There are no sleeping areas in the nursery. If this is a true nursery, it would need more than two toilets and a proper changing area.

Other

- Loss of a church is racist against Catholics.
- This appears to be a much better use for the space. As a former resident of the Oxford Road I can see how such plans would be better for the community around it.
- More flats are not needed in this location.
- The plans show the existing church hall backing on to an outbuilding. This is in fact an occupied flat and will therefore be impacted by noise from car parking and use of the nursery outside space.

- 4.51 The applicant provided specific responses to some points raised by objectors as follows. They also provided a specific letter response to the Civic Society's objection letter (both letters are included in Appendix 1 below):

"Whilst we had considered the impact on setting of the nearby listed buildings, we hadn't previously included this in the Heritage Statement and this wasn't raised by the heritage team for the last application. For completeness, we have added this to our Heritage Statement [see Heritage Statement revision B]

As far as I'm aware it is not a planning requirement to have confirmation of partnership from an RSL. The scheme complies with affordable housing policy and RBC housing team has confirmed as much.

We have comprehensively engaged with RBC on the matter of design and we submitted the application only once we had your [without prejudice] confirmation that the 'proposed scheme appears to respond positively to previous concerns and as an overall approach I consider it to be satisfactory'.

Regardless of ...opinion on appearance of the new design as a justification (or otherwise) of loss of the chapel, in the wider context of the NPPF and local policy, decisions should be in favour of sustainable development. The D&A and Heritage Statements set out the various and significant benefits offered by the development, which in addition to the contextually appropriate design which is of similar scale, form and materiality to the chapel, and makes historical reference to important chapel features (including retention of the bell tower) all help outweigh the loss of the non-designated heritage asset."

5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 5.1 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.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Planning Practice Guidance - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment
(Feb 2018)

Reading Borough Local Development Framework - Core Strategy (2008, altered 2015)
CS1 (Sustainable Construction and Design)
CS3 (Social Inclusion and Diversity)
CS4 (Accessibility and Intensity of Development)
CS7 (Design and the public realm)
CS9 (Infrastructure, Services, Resources & Amenities)

CS14 (Provision of Housing)
CS15 (Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix)
CS20 (Implementation of Reading's Transport Strategy)
CS24 (Car/Cycle Parking)
CS31 (Additional and Existing Community Facilities)
CS33 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment)
CS34 (Pollution and Water Resources)
CS36 (Biodiversity and Geology)

Reading Borough Local Development Framework - Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2008, altered 2015)

Policy SD1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)
Policy DM1 (Adaption to Climate Change)
Policy DM3 (Infrastructure)
Policy DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity)
Policy DM6 (Affordable Housing)
Policy DM10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space)
Policy DM12 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters)
Policy DM19 (Air Quality)

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Revised Sustainable Design and Construction (2011)
Affordable Housing (2013)
Planning Obligations under S106 (2015)
Employment, Skills and Training (2013)

Other Documents

Berkshire (including South Bucks Strategic Housing Market Assessment) Berkshire Authorities and Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership, Final Report, February 2016, prepared by G. L. Hearn
Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standards (2015), DCLG
Local Heritage Listing: Historic England Advice Note 7 (May 2016), Historic England

6.0 APPRAISAL

Main considerations:

The main issues to be considered are:

- i) Principle of Uses
- ii) Design and Appearance
- iii) Loss of Undesignated Heritage Asset
- iv) Density and Mix of Housing
- v) Residential Amenity
- vi) Transport Issues
- vii) Environmental Matters
- viii) Sustainability
- ix) Section 106

(i) Principle of Uses

6.1 The principle of the proposed community and residential uses for the site are considered acceptable.

6.2 The ground floor of the church is currently in use as a community facility and the proposed ground floor would be a new community facility of 370m² in gross internal floor area, the same floor area as existing. The Design and Access Statement states

that “ *The design of the community space has a flexible layout, with sliding folding partitions, enabling the size of spaces to be controlled to suit end user needs and to accommodate several small groups using the space concurrently or one larger group. In addition to the three hall spaces, an entrance foyer/cafe area provides a welcoming main entrance/hub and is served by a kitchen.*” The community use is therefore considered to meet policy requirements under policy CS31.

6.3 In terms of the proposed flats, the provision of housing would accord with policy CS14. It is a sustainable location well served by a choice of means of travel with much pedestrian and bus traffic along Oxford Road.

6.4 However, the proposal also needs to satisfy other policy considerations related to design, in the context of the loss of an undesignated heritage asset, traffic, mix, affordable housing, and infrastructure requirements, which are discussed below.

(ii) **Design and Appearance**

6.5 Since the previous refused scheme (171086) the applicant has worked with RBC officers to develop a more appropriately designed scheme, with draft options being presented to the Design Review Panel and being consulted on with the public prior to formal submission (as detailed in the Design and Access Statement section 1.04).

6.6 At the previous planning committee it was agreed that the loss of the historic building could be justified provided that the replacement building:

- is of a high quality design which responds positively to its context and enhances the character of the area
- is of appropriate height, mass and appearance
- avoids overlooking and loss of amenity/privacy to neighbouring properties

6.7 Notwithstanding the issue of whether the loss of the building is justified, which is addressed in section (iii) below, in policy terms (NPPF and CS7) any proposal needs to be of a high standard of design that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area within which it is located.

6.8 The existing building (elevation below) is considered to be prominent and distinctive with red brick construction, which is in keeping with other buildings in the surrounding area including Brock Barracks.



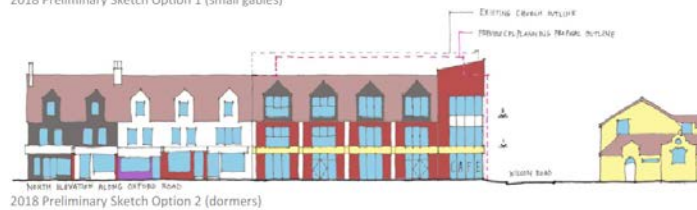
6.9 The existing building has a 2 storey ground floor space with eaves at 5 metres high in line with the top of the first floor windows of adjoining properties on Oxford

Road. The roof is steeply pitched with a maximum height of 11.8 metres, just over 2m higher than the adjacent terrace. The appearance of the building is dominated by its roofscape.

- 6.10 The existing building is in line with the adjacent terrace of shops, save for a small projection of the gable feature and bell tower and the low railings which wrap round the site along Oxford Road and Wilson Road.
- 6.11 The refused scheme (171086 - image below) was considered to be in stark contrast to the existing character and appearance of the surrounding area leading to reasons for refusal relating in broad terms to height and mass, as set out in section 3 above.



- 6.12 Although amendments were made to materials, amenity space, balconies, overall mass and landscaping, these were not sufficient to remove the fundamental concerns at the time.
- 6.13 The proposed scheme has resulted from iterations developed over the past months which have been reviewed by the Design Review Panel and officers. The applicant has presented in detail in the DAS how they consider the proposed scheme responds to matters raised through this process. The design development of the Oxford Road frontage is shown in the elevation images below (as set out in the DAS).



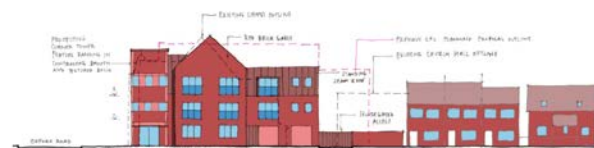
- 6.14 The proposed building has taken features which are evident in the existing building and interpreted these in a modern way, whilst retaining the traditional references in terms of the gables, tower, and the proposed materials.
- 6.15 The proposed building is at the same height as the existing terrace of shops/residential on Oxford Road, however officers advised the applicant that a prominent corner would be acceptable to give the proposed scheme dominance in the streetscene and to retain it as a landmark site. This is considered to have been achieved with the use of a taller angular tower, which steps out from the rest of the façade and creates a hierarchy of form.
- 6.16 Further to comments at the consultation event the existing cupola and bell tower are proposed to be incorporated within this tower, to retain this key element of the existing building. The Civic Society considers the tower too dominant and that the cupola and bell tower would be like a 'pimple'. Officer opinion however is that a smaller tower would not create a feature, as was intended, and its function would be very different to that of the existing building. The use of cupola and bell tower is intended as a reference to the existing rather than a replication of it, and the relationship between the two will be different.
- 6.17 The proposed floor levels and window positions on Oxford Road are considered to tie in effectively with the existing adjoining terraces of commercial/ residential uses, and the proposed smaller gable features along Oxford Road are also considered to be sympathetic to the existing pitched dormers of the existing adjoining buildings.
- 6.18 In terms of the Wilson Road elevation the refused scheme was considered to be too large and too high and was overbearing when viewed alongside the domestic, largely two storey dwellings, of Wilson Road. The design development of this elevation is shown below (as in the DAS).



2017 Planning application design – houses to the south (right) were un-built at time of application



2018 Preliminary Sketch Option 1 (small gables) – mass reduced, greater separation from houses on Wilson Rd



2018 Preliminary Sketch Option 3 – large gable, square tower, roof design relates to houses



2018 Planning Design (large gable as per chapel, square tower with retained bell, roof form steps down)

- 6.19 The proposed scheme is significantly smaller in depth/ proximity to existing buildings on Wilson Road and lower in height than the refused scheme. Although still 3 storeys along this elevation it is considered that the separation between this and the existing dwellings on Wilson Road of some 10m would be sufficient to not create an overbearing scheme. As a corner plot a larger scale of form compared to adjacent buildings is considered to be acceptable.
- 6.20 The form is also enhanced (compared to the refused scheme) through the shape and size of windows, materials and pitched/hipped roof form.
- 6.21 The materials proposed are clay facing brickwork with contrasting brickwork, using a mixture of brick bonds and projecting brick banding and header courses to create a range of depth and texture. These materials reflect the existing prominent ones in the area. A metal, standing seam roof has been selected to fit with the tone and colour of slate roofs, but provide flexibility for roof form.
- 6.22 An image of the proposed scheme is shown below.



- 6.23 There are limited opportunities for landscaping and public realm, however by using the building line of the existing properties on Oxford Road, but with a slight change of angle, as is the case with the existing building, small areas of public realm have been created through the use of planters to the front and rear of the site. The Natural Environment officer has confirmed that due to the site constraints that the use of planters is the only feasible option and is acceptable, subject to conditions.
- 6.24 It is considered that the proposed scheme does enhance the character and appearance of the area in accordance with policy CS7 and NPPF. The quality of materials will be important and a condition is recommended for the submission and approval of these prior to development as well as more detailed drawings of the elevations.
- (iii) Loss of Non-Designated Heritage Asset
- 6.25 The building is not nationally listed, and although English Heritage (as was) commented (2009) that *"the quality of the chapel's exterior and the local standing of its architect give it considerable significance in the Reading context"*, they also stated that *"while of local interest for its pleasing elevations, the external architectural quality is not sufficiently high to outweigh the loss of the interior"*.

- 6.26 Since the refusal of the previous scheme in February 2018 the application site has been locally listed and therefore is now a non-designated heritage asset; this took place during the application process. Local listing provides no additional planning controls, but its conservation as a non-designated heritage asset is an objective of the NPPF and a material planning consideration when determining the outcome of a planning application. It should be noted that at the time of assessing the previous scheme the existing building was already being considered as a locally important historic building and this has now been formalised into local listing.
- 6.27 The NPPF and policy CS33 gives a presumption in favour of their conservation and their loss requires appropriate and proportionate justification. Advice in the Historic England advice note (2016) states that *"In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."* In other words it needs to be assessed whether the loss of the non-designated heritage asset, taking into account its significance², is outweighed by the planning benefits of the scheme.
- 6.28 Significance is defined in the NPPF glossary as *"the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting."* The local listing for the application site, which uses the criterion in section 9.1 of the SDPD, identifies that the building dating from 1840-1913 is substantially complete and unaltered, and has historic and architectural interest (Local listing included at Appendix 3).
- 6.29 Para 184 of the NPPF states that heritage assets *"...should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations"* At present the church is contributing very little to the quality of life of residents, and although its loss would have a detrimental effect on the overall significance there are a number of positive benefits to the proposed scheme, which are considered to outweigh the loss. Although predating the local listing, the previous permission in 2013, which included demolition of the buildings, is a material consideration.
- 6.30 Officers made it clear during the course of the previous refused application that in order to justify the building's replacement, any new building would need to be of a high design quality that maintains a landmark/ feature while successfully integrating with the streetscene. The previous scheme was not considered to achieve this. Therefore, there was not a sufficient benefit to outweigh the harm resulting from the loss of the existing building and hence it was refused. However, it was accepted at the previous committee (Feb 2018) that the loss of the historic building could be justified provided that the replacement building:
- is of a high quality design which responds positively to its context and enhances the character of the area;
 - is of appropriate height, mass and appearance;
 - avoids overlooking and loss of amenity/privacy to neighbouring properties.
- 6.31 It is considered that the proposed building would be of a high design quality, as addressed above, and would have an appropriate mass and height, making a positive

² The significance of a heritage asset is the sum of its archaeological, architectural, historic, and artistic interest

contribution to the local character and distinctiveness of the area and would have prominence in the local context, but without dominating neighbouring properties.

- 6.32 The proposed scheme would reflect the scale, proportion, form and materiality of the existing building, making historical reference to it including the retention of the cupola and bell tower, and re-using some of the stained glass for internal glazed screens. Through further discussion with the applicant they have also proposed re-using the date stone and giving consideration to re-using the existing stone course and stone window jamb, mullion and transom sections provided that the stonework is of adequate quantity/ quality for use in a meaningful, not piecemeal way. The wider setting would not be detrimentally affected and the proposed materials would be sympathetic to the existing.
- 6.33 Para 185 of the NPPF *"refers to the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation."* Paragraph 14 of the National Planning Practice Guidance Chapter on 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment', states that *"disrepair and damage and their impact on viability can be a material consideration in deciding an application"*. Paragraph 15 states *"If there is a range of alternative viable uses, the optimum use is the one likely to cause the least harm to the significance of the asset"* In this instance, however, the applicants have advised that there is no viable option to enable the building to be re-used in a sustainable way. This is a material consideration in the overall planning balance.
- 6.34 From a viability perspective:
- To refurbish the existing buildings for community use only, which would require bringing it up to current building regulation requirements, would be cost prohibitive. Even if there were new residential development at first floor, as a means to subsidise the development, these units would reduce the amount of community space at the ground floor, in order to accommodate stairs and a lift. In addition they would be less energy efficient than new build and would require significant alterations to the building fabric to achieve adequate daylight and ventilation.
 - To create a more substantial scheme, comparable to the application proposal, would require enabling development in the form of major extensions and alterations, which would in themselves affect the significance of the building.
- 6.35 The current building does not offer an efficient use of this brownfield site as its current form and condition severely limits how the building can be used. The applicant has confirmed that it is currently used two evenings a week for church fellowship/ prayer meetings and they have provided further details of the specific safety concerns/ issue with the building, which prohibits its use for the range of community uses and nursery that the proposed scheme is offering. These are summarised as follows:

Safety

1. The plasterwork is deteriorating due to damp, and has been falling off the walls.
2. A few years ago the front porch roof caved in. This has been rectified but it is understood that an underlying structural issue causes risk of this happening again.
3. Falling roof tiles from the main roof have caused the modern suspended ceiling tiles to collapse/fall. The church has continued to repair roof tiles however the

issue persists. Without a wholesale refurbishment of the entire roof, this will continue to happen and the cost of such works has been prohibitively expensive. The issues with the main roof cause regular water ingress. Despite roof maintenance, certain parts of the building suffer from water ingress whenever it rains.

Quality of environment

4. Despite regular investment and maintenance, the heating system is inadequate and regularly breaks down. Even when the heating system works, it is inefficient as the building does not retain heat due to the un-insulated nature of the solid masonry walls, floor and roof. The cost of replacement of the heating system would only be worthwhile if the building fabric were thermally upgraded, which is prohibitively expensive.
5. The relationship of the outdoor areas to the internal hall is not practical given stepped access and not practical as a play space due to lack of natural surveillance from inside the building.
6. The kitchen is not compliant with modern day environmental health standards and if upgraded would be too small for a number of the intended standards.
7. The quality of natural light is poor in certain spaces.
8. Ventilation and thus air quality is poor.

Accessibility

9. The building does not contain disabled toilet facilities. The space constraints of the existing structure prevent adaptation of the existing sanitary facilities to provide accessible toilet accommodation.
10. The building does not have level access throughout.
11. Existing doors (weights and clear widths) and clear widths of circulation spaces are not suitable for wheelchair users or those with limited mobility. They do not comply with modern standards and could not easily be adapted without costly structural alterations.

Lack of flexibility of hall space

12. The main chapel space is one large volume. This makes it impractical for smaller groups in terms of heating, privacy, lighting and acoustics, and the applicant has advised that it is not practical to subdivide the space due to limited fire exits and all ancillary accommodation being on one side of the building. Therefore it is not practical for the building to be used by multiple groups concurrently.

6.36 At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development, supported at local level with the SDPD policy SD1. Achieving this is through securing net gains across key objectives. With regard to the social objective the proposed scheme would provide a number of new affordable homes to lifetime standards, many of which would be suitable for family accommodation. It would provide a flexible and enhanced community space, in accordance with Policy CS31, including a drop-in café, which would contribute to meeting the community's social well-being.

6.37 As part of this community space there would be a new nursery to be run by the applicant's social outreach arm: 'Love your Community'. The applicant also intends to offer the following community groups/uses. The applicant has advised that these are already run successfully by the church at another one of its sites:

1. Toddler group for mums/carers and toddlers
2. Afterschool clubs
3. Parenting Course
4. Marriage Course

5. CAP (Christians Against Poverty) Course - which is a course which teaches people budgeting skills and to help get in control of their finances and prevent debt
 6. The community spaces would be available to hire by a wide range of public groups/uses, such as children's parties, craft groups etc
 7. The church has a history of partnership with the borough council to provide services for community benefit. If planning approval is granted the church will actively pursue continued partnership to help the council with service provision in the Oxford Road area, using the new building.
- 6.38 The use of the site, incorporating residential development, would assist in making the site safer as there would be a greater level of natural surveillance of the external space, which according to a response to the public consultation currently has problems with anti-social behaviour.
- 6.39 The proposed scheme would contribute to the environmental objective through making effective use of land, increasing the range of uses and developing a more energy efficient building.
- 6.40 The applicant has been open about their changed requirements since the lapsed permission, with their Meadway site becoming the focus for church and community facilities. They have identified the need to develop a viable scheme at Oxford Road, to contribute to their wider community aims including at the Meadway, but also with the intention of enhancing the application site to give it an improved function and role in the local community. The applicant has worked with officers since the refused scheme to develop an acceptable scheme, which has addressed design, amenity, affordable housing, and transport concerns. It is considered that the benefits offered by the proposed scheme, in addition to the sensitive design, as described above, being material to the planning balance, are sufficient to outweigh the loss of the non-designated heritage asset.
- (iv) **Density and Mix of Housing**
- 6.41 Policy CS15 states that density and mix of residential development within the Borough includes being informed by an assessment of the characteristics of the area in which it is located and its current and future level of accessibility. It goes on to state that developments should provide an appropriate range of housing opportunities in terms of a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures, in accordance with the findings of a housing market assessment. The mix of dwellings should include an appropriate proportion of units designed to the Lifetime Homes standard.
- 6.42 The most recent SHMA states that the focus for new market housing provision will be on two and three bedroom properties. The application site is in a highly accessible location and there is a mix of units in the locality. The proposal has a density of 121 dwellings per ha, which is akin to town centre density. As a corner site, which can have some prominence, and in a district centre, and to make effective use of the site a higher density is considered acceptable. In this instance the proposal is predominantly for two bedroom flats (6 of the 10 proposed), providing the potential of family accommodation and to Lifetime Home standards. The proposed density is considered acceptable.
- (v) **Residential Amenity**
- 6.43 Despite amendments to the previous scheme (171086) during the application period there were still concerns over the penthouse terrace at third floor and balconies at second floor. The reasons for refusal therefore included amenity related reasons

because it was considered that these elements would have a detrimental effect on the privacy of neighbouring properties from overlooking.

- 6.44 The proposed scheme has no rear balconies and no terraces, and rear facing windows at First and Second Floors (Unit 1 & 6 - those closest to Wilson Road properties) are proposed as oriel windows.
- 6.45 With regard to rear facing windows for Units 5 and 10 these are at almost 19m away from the boundary with the rear garden of the recently built houses (under permission ref: 160180). These windows serve bedrooms or bathrooms, and not considered as habitable rooms and in any case are considered to be at a sufficient distance from neighbouring gardens to not lead to a significant detrimental effect on overlooking and loss of privacy.
- 6.46 There is one balcony proposed per unit and these are on the Oxford Road and Wilson Road Elevations only. Issues have been raised through consultation regarding their design and amenity, but these are not uncommon features of flats, and are considered to afford some amenity space to the units according with policy DM10. The proposed perforated metal balustrade, which allows light to penetrate, but obscures views, are considered to minimise the overall visibility into the units including from passing buses. However, the applicant has been asked to present further options, with regard to size and materials, which will be provided in an update report.
- 6.47 The proposed room sizes and overall flat dimensions would meet, and for some units exceed, the National Space Standards (DCLG).

(vi) Transport Issues

- 6.48 During the course of the previous application the Transport team liaised with the applicant to secure an amended layout and number of spaces to serve the proposed scheme and the Wilson Road site (171087).
- 6.49 Transport has confirmed, as detailed in the consultation section that, with regard to transport, the scheme is acceptable, subject to a number of conditions as included above. The proposed parking scheme at Oxford Road provides for:

- 7 dedicated spaces for the community hall/nursery; and
- 4 residential spaces (to serve the three bed units)

- 6.50 This combined with 7 no. residential spaces at Wilson Road Site is considered acceptable and would satisfy the requirements of Policy CS24, and DM12.

(vii) Environmental Matters

- 6.51 With regard to air quality the submitted Air Quality Assessment identifies that the impacts due to emissions from local road traffic on the air quality for proposed residents are shown to be acceptable at the worst-case locations assessed, with concentrations being below the air quality objectives at all of the receptors. No mitigation is therefore proposed. This has been confirmed as acceptable by the Environmental Protection and Nuisance Officer.
- 6.52 In terms of noise, a detailed assessment was submitted, and the officer has confirmed that subject to suitable conditions the proposal would be acceptable in this regard.

6.53 To assess if the site is contaminated a phase 1 assessment has been submitted which concludes that a phase 2 assessment is necessary. Conditions are recommended to ensure that future occupants are not put at undue risk from contamination.

6.54 The proposed scheme is therefore considered to accord with policies CS34 and DM19.

(viii) Sustainability

6.55 Policy CS1 (Sustainable Construction and Design) and the Council's SPD 'Sustainable Design and Construction' sets out the policy position with regards to sustainability. It applies to proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, depending on the extent of the alterations to a building.

6.56 The applicant has submitted a BREEAM pre-assessment report demonstrating that community provision could meet BREEAM score of 65.64% (Very Good), which accords with Policy CS1.

6.57 A number of sustainable construction strategies are proposed to be incorporated into the design and construction including minimum standards relating to energy and water use. The proposed approach would be a fabric first approach which ensures an energy efficient building that is not totally reliant on renewable energy to achieve a reduction in emission in accordance with requirements of policies CS1 and CS2. The Energy and Sustainability Statement identifies a reduction in emissions (when compared to a Building Regulations baseline) of 23%.

(ix) Section 106

6.58 The proposed affordable housing provision is three of the 10 units, which would be policy compliant with DM6, i.e. 30% of the units.

6.59 Affordable housing policy seeks that the affordable housing mix should reflect the overall mix of the scheme. The affordable units are proposed to be one x1 bed, one x2 bed and one x3 bed. RBC's Housing Strategy Team has confirmed that the proposed size of the affordable units would be consistent with the overall size of units across the scheme.

6.60 The previous scheme included for 100% of the units to be shared ownership and the applicant was advised that the units should include for some affordable rent. The proposed scheme includes for two of the three units to be affordable rent, which Housing Strategy has confirmed is acceptable.

6.61 It is recommended that the S106 include the cascade mechanism, which allows for a default affordable housing financial contribution should a registered provider not take up the proposed units within the scheme.

6.62 The applicant is expected to make contributions in line with the requirements of policy CS9, DM3 and the Employment, Skills and Training SPD. The applicant has confirmed a contribution towards Construction Skills of £2,295 in accordance with the calculation in the SPD.

(x) Equality

6.63 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.

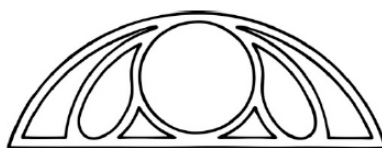
- 6.64 The proposals would allow improved access for disabled members of the community and would be lifetime homes compliant. It would also improve access for parents and children to nursery facilities. It would provide disabled parking spaces. Otherwise, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or would have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application.
- 6.65 In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics, it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The reasons for refusal of the previous scheme (171086) are considered to have been overcome. The scheme is considered to be a high quality design with positive benefits which outweigh the loss of the undesignated heritage asset. Subject to conditions and informatives, recommended above, it is considered to accord with relevant policies.

Case Officer: Alison Amoah

APPENDIX 1: CIVIC SOCIETY CONSULTATION RESPONSE & AGENT'S RESPONSE



READING CIVIC SOCIETY

as from: 69 Baker Street, Reading, RG1 7XY

28 October 2018

Ms A Amoah
Planning Department
Reading Borough Council
Civic Centre
Bridge Street
READING
RG1 2LU

Dear Ms Amoah

Re: **Planning Application 181555 – Grovelands Baptist Church, Oxford Road, RG30 1HJ**

We wish to object to this application on the following grounds:

- a) the loss of a good Arts and Crafts building, with historic significance to the area, which contributes a great deal to the streetscape of Oxford Road,
- b) the replacement of a local church and community space by a block of flats with a smaller community space,
- c) replacement with a building which, while more sympathetic to the character of the surrounding area than the previous application 171086, still has major design faults,
- d) sustainability – demolition and replacement rather than re-purposing and re-using an existing building.

Loss of existing church building, a heritage asset

English Heritage's assessment of this building (03.12.09) was very complimentary:

"The former Grovelands Chapel is a handsome and well-composed building, the work of a leading local architect who used the emerging vocabulary of Arts and Crafts and Free Classical motifs with assurance and flair. The squat tower, which even with its eccentric cupola is still considerably lower than the main roof-ridge, gives a firm emphasis to the corner site whilst suggesting an unpretentious homeliness appropriate to the informality of Baptist churchmanship."

"The quality of the chapel's exterior and the local standing of its architect give it considerable significance in the Reading context, *[my underlining]* but the interior is now much too altered to be of special interest at national level."

In other words this building would have been listed if not for the loss of the internal features.

Grovelands Baptist Church is built of red/brown brick with a steep, red-tiled gabled roof, with varied fenestration including two arrangements of windows which give the impression of 'Venetian'-style windows, also a low square tower with a cupola. The building fits into its context of late-Victorian and Edwardian neighbours and enhances the streetscape without unduly dominating the surrounding houses.

READING CIVIC SOCIETY

2
28 October 2018
Ms A Amoah

The planning officer's recommendation for the refusal of a previous application to demolish and replace this building (111475, PAC Meeting 12.10.11) emphasises in Clauses 6.14 to 6.22 that **the chapel is an undesignated Heritage asset worthy of retention and that it has a landmark quality.**

The historic significance arises from the chapel (1899) being part of the early development of the western end of Oxford Road, emerging from a mission hall (1879) built by the brothers AW and MJ Sutton to serve Brock Barracks (1877). A daughter of E P Collier was married in the church and, thus, it has connections both to the Suttons Seeds family and to the local Colliers brickworks.

It is also worth mentioning that there are not many buildings in this Arts and Crafts style in Reading, compared to our Georgian and Victorian legacy, and to lose such a significant example would be a disaster in heritage terms.

Loss of community space

A previously permitted lapsed application 121716 to demolish the existing church building proposed, as a replacement, a purpose-built new church, with ancillary community uses, amounting to 1115m² of community space and only a very small proportion of residential provision, 213m², in addition. The *extended provision for community use* was seen at that time to outweigh the "harm done" resulting from the loss of the original heritage building.

The current application, 181555, no longer includes a new church on this site and significantly reduces the amount of community space to 350m², with the rest of the development being a block of 10 flats.

Following the reasoning for the previous permitted decision, this proposed development would not outweigh the "harm done" resulting from the loss of the original church building.

Proposed replacement building and design considerations

The proposed building, according to the images in the DAS, appears to be more in character with its neighbours than the previous refused design (171086) in that gables have been included on the front elevation and red brick has been used.

However, this corner site is very visible and the well-loved existing building is a landmark which sits comfortably in the streetscape with a lot of its merit lying in the well-designed proportionality of the building. This proposal would not attain the high quality of design required to replace it.

We would particularly note concerns with:

1) Bell-tower

It is a good idea to echo this feature of the existing building *but* the proposed corner tower is much bigger than the existing one which stops well below the roofline, and the proposed tower is a much more solid and over-dominant presence at the corner of Oxford Road and Wilson Road (DAS Rev A August 2018). It is also a good idea to include the existing **cupola** to the bell-tower *but*, again, the size of the proposed corner tower is a problem as it diminishes the cupola which was in proportion to the existing bell-tower but, in the proposed drawings, looks like a pimple on top.

.../3

READING CIVIC SOCIETY

3
28 October 2018
Ms A Amoah

2) Balconies

There are several reasons why balconies are wrong in this context:

- a) they do not fit with the existing buildings in this part of Oxford Road, I can't think of any others in the vicinity;
- b) on the front elevation they are forward of the existing building line – a better solution if there are to be balconies would be for them to be inset rather than sticking out like open drawers;
- c) the top deck of the double-decker buses, which stop at the bus stop immediately in front of this building, would be on a level with the balconies on the first floor – not a very good prospect for the inhabitants;
- d) the front elevation is north facing, the cooler, darker side of the building, so not ideal for a balcony – might get away with them on the Wilson Road side for evening sun;
- e) noise and pollution from traffic and other sources on the busy Oxford Road would not encourage anyone to use these balconies as a place to sit.

On page 10 of the DAS, the applicants address privacy for the future residents of the proposed building and state that with reference to concerns raised at the public consultation event regarding privacy from passing buses, the living rooms/balconies have been designed with perforated metal balustrades which allow diffuse light to penetrate whilst obscuring views into living rooms. We would note that these rooms on the Oxford Road north elevation would not get much light anyway and to have it diffused through a metal screen would make them even darker. Are they fit for purpose?

Sustainability

It is a generally accepted principle that it is more beneficial to retain, refurbish and re-purpose buildings rather than demolish them and replace them with new buildings.

Bearing the above point in mind, we are still of the opinion that the existing building should not be demolished but should be refurbished and re-used.

Yours sincerely

A rectangular area where the signature of Richard Bennett has been redacted with a solid black box.

Richard Bennett
Chairman



CIP|L Chartered Architects

9 November 2018

Mr Richard Bennett
Reading Civic Society
69 Baker Street
Reading
RG1 7XY

Re: Proposed Redevelopment at Grovelands Chapel, 553 Oxford Road, planning application reference: 181555

Dear Mr Bennett,

I refer to your letter dated 28 October 2018 on behalf of Reading Civic Society regarding the above planning application.

Firstly, thank you for attending the public consultation event on 18 July '18 at Grovelands Chapel. The purpose of the event was to engage with local neighbours, councillors and interest groups, such as Reading Civic Society. Our discussions with you on the day were very constructive and we were pleased to record your comments which were subsequently used to help finalise the planning design. You kindly completed a feedback form setting out your comments and a copy is appended to this letter for ease of reference.

We therefore refer to your comments from the public consultation event as well as the points raised in your letter of 28th October.

1. Reading Civic Society Comments from Public Consultation Event dated 18 July 2018

1.1 *'Materials and scale are now more in keeping with the streetscape of Oxford Road and the area generally. Significant Improvement over previous design'*

We have finalised the design on the basis of your favoured design approach and we are pleased this meets with your approval.

1.2 *'We like the square tower – echo existing building and possibility of keeping the bell tower.'*

The planning application design includes the square tower and the refurbished and re-used bell tower as suggested and we are pleased this meets with your approval.

1.3. *'Re the gables we have a preference for Option 3 in full rather than the mix of Option 2 (Ox. Rd) and 3. It echoes the original whilst avoiding pastiche.'*

The planning application design has been finalised on the basis of your favoured design approach.

1.4 *'Demonstrate in the planning application why the building has to be demolished'*

1



C|P|L Chartered Architects

Justification for demolition has been clearly set out in the submitted Heritage Statement, Design and Access and Planning Statements as requested. I have summarised the justification for demolition in my Conclusion below.

1.5 'Large windows at first floor level on Oxford Road – view in from top floor of buses'

Perforated metal balustrades (in lieu of glass previously proposed) were added to the design to meet this point. Regardless, the matter raised is common for many residential properties in urban areas and future residents have means to control privacy, i.e. blinds. The scheme does not differ from existing housing in the vicinity in this regard.

1.6 'Think about doing something clever with the stained glass'

We have given this some careful thought, however, though the existing stain glass window does not offer the thermal or acoustic performance required to meet the planning policy requirements for sustainability and avoidance of noise disturbance we would accept a planning condition stipulating the reuse of the stain glass window internally.

2. Reading Civic Society Comments of Letter dated 28 October 2018

You have now objected on the following grounds:

2.1 'the loss of a good Arts and Crafts building, with historic significance to the area, which contributes a great deal to the streetscape of Oxford Road'

Please refer to the submitted Heritage, Planning and Design and Access Statements which demonstrate why the loss of the building is justified.

2.2 'the replacement of a local church and community space by a block of flats with a smaller community space'

- The amount of new community space is equal to the amount of existing community space.
- The quality of the new community space will be far superior to the existing space in terms of accessibility, flexibility, natural light and energy efficiency.
- The flats provide much needed residential accommodation to help meet Reading's housing needs.
- The residential accommodation is required to cross-subsidise the community element. The provision of the community space is not financially viable without the residential development. (You will appreciate that the applicant is a charity)
- The proposals will provide valuable family dwellings and affordable housing.
- The church no longer uses Grovelands Chapel as a place of worship. It holds its Sunday services at 384 The Meadway; hence the previous planning approval featuring a larger amount of community space is no longer appropriate or financially viable. The Meadway site is to be redeveloped and this redevelopment will provide an overall nett gain in community space in West Reading. The redevelopment at the Meadway is not financially viable without planning approval for the proposed scheme at Grovelands Chapel.



CIPIL Chartered Architects

2.3 'replacement with a building which, while more sympathetic to the character of the surrounding area than the previous application 171086, still has major design faults'

We understand that by 'design faults' you refer to the appearance of the bell tower and balconies upon which you have previously commented favourably in the consultation exercise. Views on the architectural design and appearance of new proposals tend to be somewhat subjective in nature and comment has been obtained from Reading Borough Council's Design Review Panel which is comprised of a team of Architects to provide peer review of design quality and aesthetic matters. The designs have been presented several times to the design review panel, the planning officer and at the public consultation event and the current design takes on board comments resulting from the extensive engagement carried out. However:

- The prominence of the cupola is a technical detail. It can be made more visible by raising the roof level of the tower without adjusting the height of the tower parapet. We agree this would be beneficial and have updated the design to suit.
- Balconies provide the benefit of outdoor amenity, which is still a benefit even for north facing aspect.
- Balconies are an accepted feature of most modern residential designs and are considered appropriate even in areas far more urban than Oxford Road.
- There are several examples of flat blocks along Oxford Road and nearby that feature balconies, including facing Oxford Road. (Examples are appended to this letter for ease of reference.)
- You suggest 'a better solution if there are to be balconies would be for them to be inset' yet you also raise concern over natural light. Inset balconies would reduce daylight levels.
- Outdoor amenity space for modern housing is strongly encouraged in planning policy and is generally considered to be good practice.

2.4 'Sustainability: It is a generally accepted principle that it is more beneficial to retain, refurbish and re-purpose buildings rather than demolish them and replace them with new buildings.'

Retention of the existing building is unfortunately not feasible for the reasons outlined in the application. A new building will also be more energy efficient, a point reiterated by the specialist sustainability consultants employed by the church. Sustainability is also fundamentally linked to efficient use of prime brownfield urban sites with good transport links. New build provides a far more efficient means of developing the site sustainably and creating a good level of residential density.

3. Conclusion

It is acknowledged that the chapel has some architectural merit externally. This is noted in the assessment by English Heritage appended to the Heritage Statement. CPL Chartered Architects has a national reputation for ecclesiastical architectural projects and we have spent 25 years conserving and enhancing Listed church buildings and heritage assets. However, heritage considerations must be balanced with other planning considerations, a point emphasised clearly on page 5 of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which cites economic and social objectives alongside environmental objectives. Furthermore, the prevailing undercurrent of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is that of sustainable development. The NPPF states that;

3



CIPIL Chartered Architects

'Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.' (NPPF paragraph 11)

The key facts relating to this planning application may be summarised as follows:

1. Grovelands Chapel is in a poor state of repair and suffers from several significant building fabric issues. The Church has been unable to offer the building for community use (besides church use) for several years due to its poor state and cost of repairs.
2. The cost to refurbish the building has been investigated, is prohibitively expensive and would not result in the flexible, light and environmentally sustainable spaces that will be offered by the proposed new community space.
3. The applicant has consulted widely on the proposals and prepared a revised design to take into account the responses received, including those of the Reading Civic Society.
4. In order to provide the new community space at Oxford Road, ten on site residential units are required to cross subsidise the community element and to avoid the building falling into a further state of disrepair.
5. The proposals retain an equal amount of community space, but of higher community benefit, compared to the existing building. The new community space will be light, airy, accessible, flexible and energy efficient.
6. The proposals provide new much needed family housing and affordable housing.
7. The proposals provide a new nursery and cafe space for the local community.
8. The proposals mitigate issues on site relating to antisocial behaviour and vandalism.
9. The proposals help fund valuable new community facilities at the Church's other site at The Meadway thus resulting in a significant nett gain of community space in West Reading.
10. The design of the new building responds positively to its context, makes reference to the key architectural features of the existing chapel and has been judged by Reading Borough Council in pre-application correspondence to be of an acceptable appearance, scale, mass, layout and design quality.

It is therefore concluded that the benefits of the proposed redevelopment and the quality of the design outweigh the loss of the heritage asset.

Yours sincerely,



Daniel Almond
BArch (Hons), MArch, PGDip (MPL Arch), ARB

cc Cllr Tony Page
Ms Alison Amoah
Mrs Maureen Atkins (The Gate)



CIPIL

Chartered Architects, Property Consultants & Designers

First Floor Unit A3, Chaucer Business Park, Dilttons Road, Polegate, East Sussex, BN26 6QH
T: 01323 416900 E: admin@cplarchitects.co.uk www.cplarchitects.co.uk

CIPIL Chartered Architects

Examples of nearby residential buildings with balconies facing the main road and large living room windows on bus routes (copyright google)



Oxford Road flats 500m west of Grovelands Chapel featuring large first floor windows and Juliet balconies facing Oxford Road



Oxford Road flats 850m west of Grovelands Chapel featuring balconies on Oxford Road



Curzon Street/Battle Square residential development 200m east of Grovelands Chapel featuring large balconies and windows facing the main road



PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENT - FEEDBACK FORM

REDEVELOPMENT OF GROVELANDS CHAPEL, OXFORD RD, READING. July 2018

Think about doing something clever with the stained glass

1.	Do you have any comments on the proposals? Please write any comments here 1. Materials + scale are now more in keeping with street scape of Oxford Rd + the area generally. Significant improvement over previous design. 2. Parking problems in Wilso Rd appear to have been resolved with RBC.	YES/NO
2.	Are there any aspects of the design you think should be addressed? Please write any comments here • We like the square tower - echo existing building + possibility of keeping the bell tower • Re the gables, we have a preference for option 3 in full rather than the mix of option 2 (Ox. Rd) + 3 - it echoes the original whilst avoiding pastiche.	YES/NO
3.	Do you think any issues may arise from the proposals? Please write any comments here 1) Demands made in the planning application why the building has to be demolished. 2) Large windows at first floor level? on Oxford Road - view in from top floor of bus.	YES/NO
4.	Contact Details (optional) Name & Address: Richard + Alisa Bennell Reading Core Society Telephone/Email: [REDACTED]	

THANK YOU FOR COMING ALONG TODAY

APPENDIX 2: PLANS AND ELEVATIONS

Oxford Road - 171086



20/07/18 REV 0 Updated design / new planning application
 21/11/17 REV A Updated following DA comments

date	project name	project number	drawing number
21/11/17	553 OXFORD ROAD READING MIXED USED DEVELOPMENT	RCC.17	/101B
scale	drawing title		
1:500	SITE BLOCK PLAN		
drawn			
DA			



COMMUNITY & RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
 553 OXFORD ROAD READING

GROUND FLOOR PLAN AS PROPOSED

date	scale
21/11/17	1:100
drawn	
DA	PW

RCC.17 /150 G

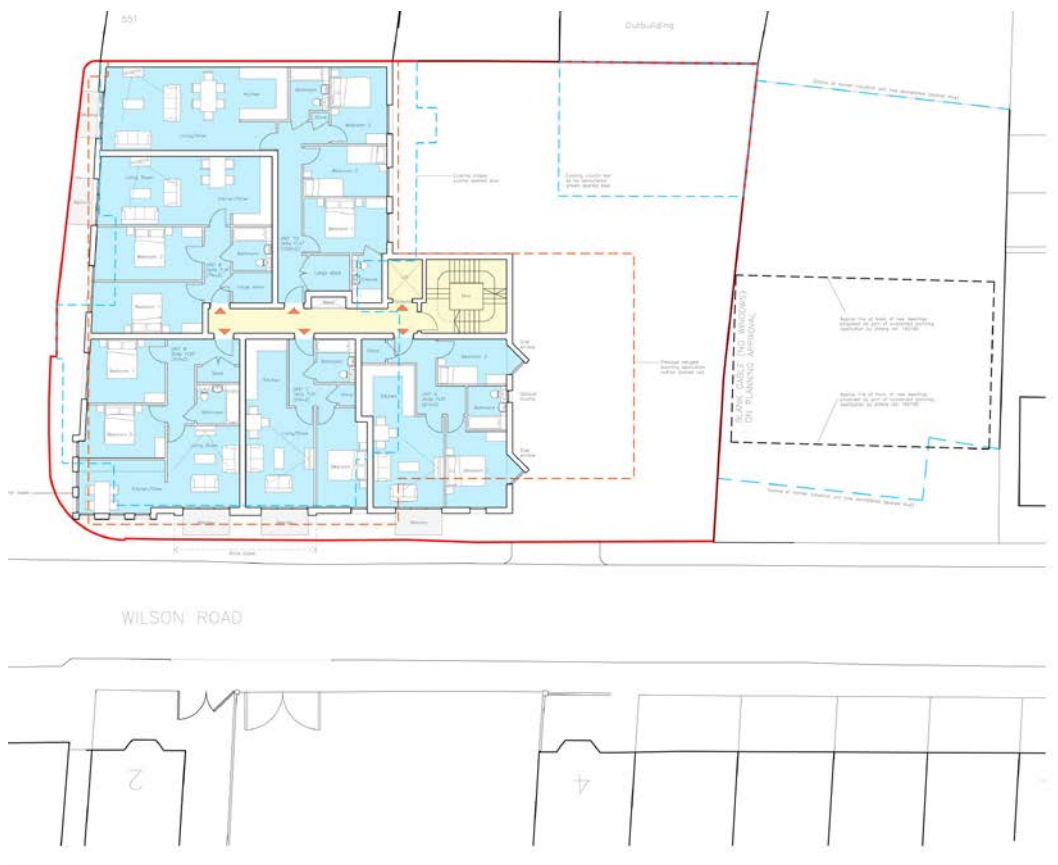






Chartered Architects, Project Consultants and Designers
 100-102 High Street, London, EC2A 4DF
 Tel: 020 7460 1000 Fax: 020 7460 1001

PROJECT
COMMUNITY & RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
553 OXFORD ROAD
READING

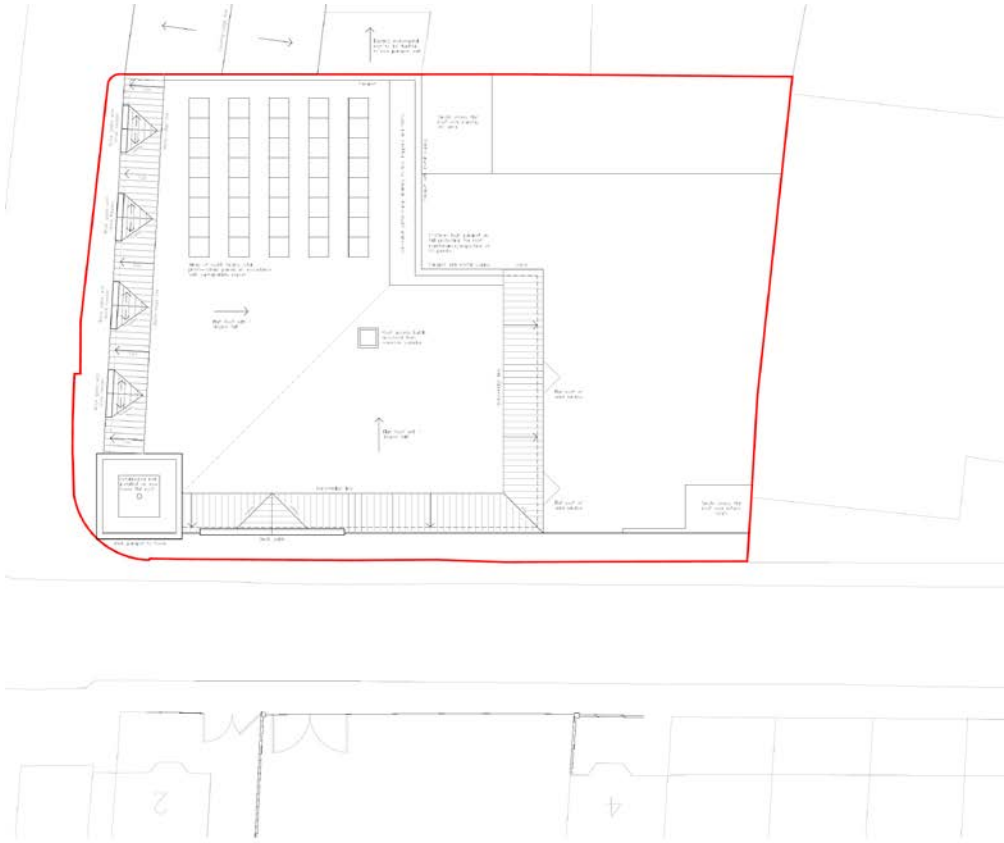
PROPOSED
FIRST FLOOR PLAN
AS PROPOSED

Chartered Architects, Project Consultants and Designers
 100-102 High Street, London, EC2A 4DF
 Tel: 020 7460 1000 Fax: 020 7460 1001

PROJECT
COMMUNITY & RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
553 OXFORD ROAD
READING

PROPOSED
SECOND FLOOR PLAN
AS PROPOSED



Approved: 19/06/2017
 Date: 19/06/2017
 Scale: 1/500



Chartered Architects, Property Consultants and Designers
 100-110 Newbury Road, White Hart Terrace, Reading RG2 2JN
 Tel: 0118 9511111 Fax: 0118 9511112 Email: info@cpl.co.uk

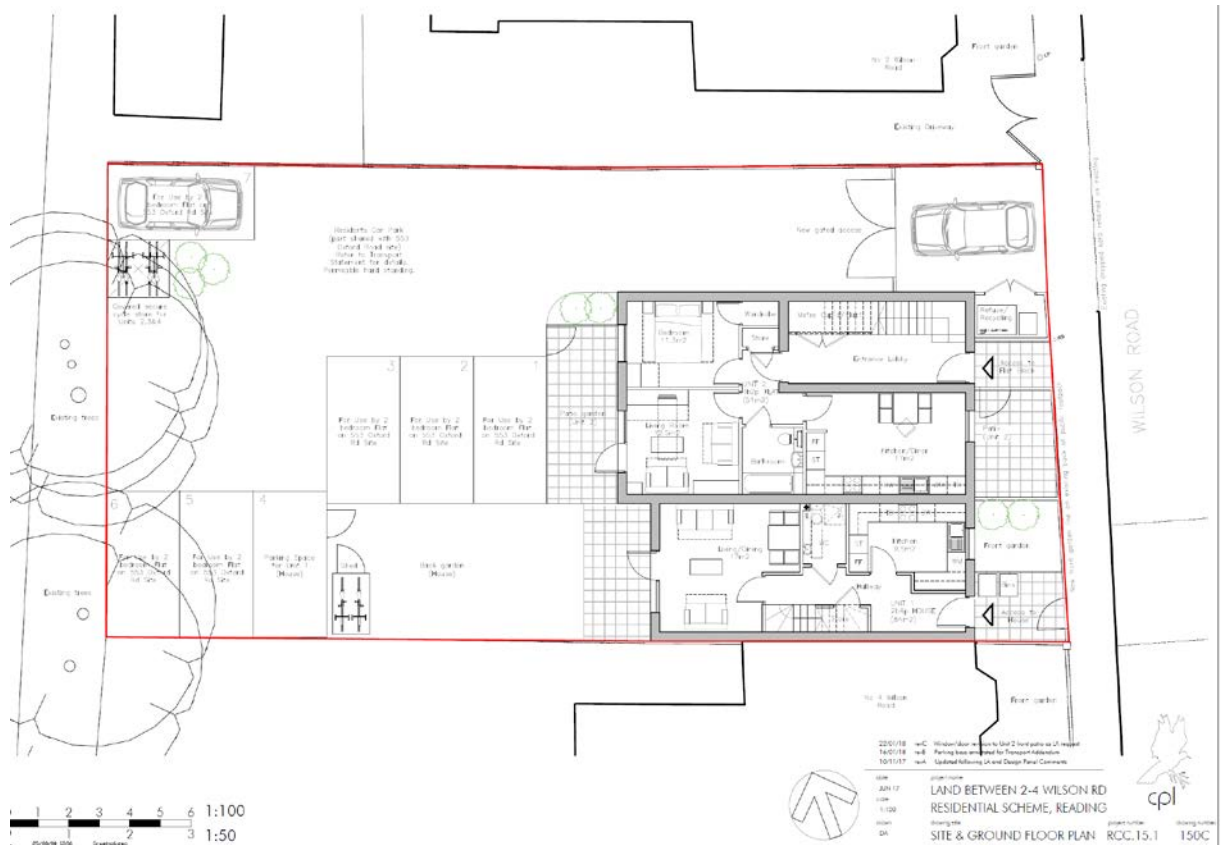
**COMMUNITY & RESIDENTIAL
 DEVELOPMENT
 553 OXFORD ROAD
 READING**

Drawing No:
**ROOF PLAN
 AS PROPOSED**

	DATE	SCALE
	JUNE 2017	1:100
	DATE	SCALE
DA	PW	

Drawing No: **RCC.17 /154 B**

Wilson Road - 171087 - PARKING LAYOUT



APPENDIX 3: LOCAL LISTING LETTER (sent via email)



The Baptist Union Corporation Ltd
PO Box 44
129 Broadway
Didcot
Oxfordshire
OX11 8RT

Your contact is: Alison Amoah, Planning

Giorgio Framalitto
Head of Planning, Development
& Regulatory Services

Civic Offices, Reading, RG1 2LU

☎ 0118 937 3787

Our Ref: Grovelands Church LL

Direct: ☎ 0118 937 2286

e-mail: Alison.amoah@reading.gov.uk

23rd November 2018

Dear Ms Sanderson,

NOTIFICATION THAT GROVELANDS CHURCH AT 553 OXFORD ROAD, READING, RG30 1HJ HAS BEEN ADDED TO THE LIST OF LOCALLY IMPORTANT BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES OF LOCAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

I write to formally notify you, as the owner of the building, that Grovelands Church has been added to Reading Borough's List of Locally Important Buildings and Structures in recognition of its local heritage significance. This follows a request from the Reading Civic Society.

This building meets the adopted criteria for adding buildings or structures to the list of buildings or structures with local heritage significance as set out in the Council's Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (altered 2015).

In summary Grovelands Chapel:

- Has a well authenticated historical association with a notable person (s) or event.
- Has played an influential role in the development of an area or the life of one of Reading's communities.
- Has a noteworthy quality of workmanship and materials
- Is the work of a notable local/national architect/engineer/builder.
- Shows innovation in materials, technique, architectural style or engineering.
- Has prominence and landmark quality that is fundamental to the sense of place of the locality.

Reasoning

Historic Interest

Historical Association

The Architect, William Roland Howell, was a prominent figure in borough and county life, serving on Reading Council from 1911 to 1930 (including a stint as

Mayor between 1921 and 1922), as Chairman of the Berkshire Society of Architects from 1922, and as Superintendent of Works for Berkshire from 1924.

The founders of the 1879 mission hall were Arthur Warwick (1854 -1925) and Martin John Sutton (Arthur Warwick), partners in Reading firm Suttons Seeds. William Lansbury and John Lawson Forfeitt were both Suttons employees who became Baptist missionaries in the Congo. In 1893 W L Forfeitt married Anne Maria Collier, daughter of Samuel J Collier.

Collier's brickworks moved to Grovelands from Coley in 1870. It is more than possible that the bricks for Grovelands chapel came from Collier's Grovelands brickworks.

The builders were Collier & Catley.

Social Importance

The development of the western end of Reading's Oxford Road began in 1877 with the construction of the Brock Barracks, one of a large number of new military 'depots' established under the provisions of the Registration of the Forces Act of 1871, which aimed to encourage infantry recruitment by allowing soldiers to serve in their own county regiment rather than being drafted further afield. There was at that time no church in the area, and in 1879 two Anglican laymen, the brothers Arthur Warwick and Martin John Sutton, founded a mission hall in Grovelands Road East (now Wilson Road) as a place of worship and virtuous recreation for the soldiers. A few years later this operation was taken over by Reading's long-established Baptist community.

Over the next two decades the area between the barracks and the town centre was developed for housing, mainly modest working-class terraces in a grid of small streets on either side of Oxford Road. By the end of the century the original corrugated-iron mission hall became hopelessly inadequate for the district's vastly expanded population, and funds were raised by Reading's five Baptist congregations, as well as among the other Christian denominations, for a permanent building. In 1896 a plot of land was acquired across the street from the old site, and designs obtained from the architect WR Howell, a partner in the Reading-based firm of Cooper and Howell, for a new chapel to seat 450 worshippers. In March 1899 AW Sutton laid the foundation stone, and the chapel opened in October of the same year, having cost around £2,700 to build. Its fittings included an open tiled baptistery, a central feature of Baptist worship.

A three day bazaar was held at the Town Hall from Tuesday 24 October 1899 onwards, to raise money to reduce the debt on the chapel.

The building, now known as the Reading Community Church (now The Gate), has remained in religious use ever since.

Architectural Interest

Innovation and Virtuosity

The site comprises two buildings: the main chapel of 1899 at the corner of Oxford Road and Wilson Road, and a smaller hall to the south, probably built as a Sunday school. The building itself is of red brown brick with terracotta dressings in an Arts and Crafts-influenced Free Renaissance style, and tiled roofs.

A steep gabled roof of red tile covers the main worship space. The east gable end adjoins a neighbouring house, while on the exposed west gable, above a range of four small two-light windows, is a 'Venetian window' motif composed of a three-light mullion-and-transom window flanked by single transomed lights and surmounted by a blind semi-circular tympanum with a moulded keystone.

A projecting transept-like wing on the north front displays a similar motif, this time comprising three cross-windows beneath an egg-and-dart cornice, above which is a semi-circular window resembling a fanlight. Also on this elevation is the round-arched entrance porch, with battered upper walls and a swept parapet, within which a datestone records the foundation of the new church in 1899. To the right of this is a low square tower, its upper stage similar to that of the porch but topped by a lead-covered timber cupola.

The smaller hall, to the rear of the main building, is a simple rectangular building, built like the church of red brick with a steep tiled roof, with two segment-headed doorways and four-light timber casement windows with glazing bars. The single-cell interior, now stripped down and modern, contains no features of note.

The high quality exterior of the former chapel is a stark contrast to the interior, where almost all original features have been removed by the church. In consequence the building was not accepted by Historic England (English Heritage as was) as being of national importance, but of "local interest for its pleasing architectural quality" and "the quality of the chapel's exterior and the local standing of its architect give it considerable significance in the Reading context". An extract of their assessment from 2009 is as follows:

"The former Grovelands Chapel is a handsome and well-composed building, the work of a leading local architect who used the emerging vocabulary of Arts and Crafts and Free Classical motifs with assurance and flair. Repeated motifs, such as the variants on the 'Venetian window' device in the north and west gables, or the battered pilasters and swept parapets that crown the north porch and tower, tie the design together and bring unity to its disparate elements. The squat tower, which even with its eccentric cupola is still considerably lower than the main roof-ridge, gives a firm emphasis to the corner site whilst suggesting an unpretentious homeliness appropriate to the informality of Baptist churchmanship.

The quality of the exterior is in stark contrast to the denuded state of the interior. Virtually all the original fittings - which would typically have included fixed pews, a communion table and a large central pulpit - have been removed, and the tiled baptistery mentioned in contemporary accounts has been either floored over or filled in completely. The arrangement of windows at the west end suggests that there may have been a gallery here; if so, this too has been removed, perhaps at the same time that the open roof was filled in with the present suspended ceiling, which transforms the proportions of the space and conceals the large gable windows. Aside from the latter and the internal lobby doors, the original stained glass has all been removed.

The simple, hall-like interiors of Nonconformist churches tend, much more than their Anglican equivalents, to rely for their interest on the completeness of their fixtures and fittings. Here, that interest has been almost completely lost. The quality of the chapel's exterior and the local standing of its architect give it

considerable significance in the Reading context, but the interior is now much too altered to be of special interest at national level."

The architect William Roland Howell (1867-1940) was born in Reading and lived and worked there for most of his life. By 1882 he was articled with the Reading practice of Cooper, Son and Millar; he received extra artistic training at the Reading School of Art (1882-1887). After becoming ARIBA in 1890 he went into partnership with the son of his former employer - John Omer Cooper, a prominent local Baptist. Between 1891-1905 Cooper and Howell became well known as one of the leading firms of architects in the district. He bought out his partner and setting up in independent practice in 1905. Its successor practice continued to trade as Howell Freeman and Batten until the 1980s.

He was responsible for a number of buildings in Reading, from his monumental Gothic Art Gallery and Library extension to the Town Hall (facing Valpy Street) 1897 and other municipal buildings of 1894-7 through to a faience-clad Art Nouveau shop-front of 1905 at 8 High Street (both listed at Grade II) which was Jacksons's former Boot Shop and is now used by Oxfam. He also designed numerous schools, factories, banks, hospital buildings, public houses and private houses in and around the town. William Roland Howell was a prominent figure in borough and county life, serving on Reading Council.

The building is in an Arts and Crafts Style, a period running from c 1880-1910. Other similarly influenced buildings in Reading, such as Caversham Library, are more flowing in style whereas Grovelands has an almost early Glasgow School feel to it. Reading Civic Society considers, to the best of their knowledge, that the building is unique in Reading. It is noted also that the windows do not have painted frames, the brick appears to come right to the glass, which seems an appropriately economic design.

Townscape Value

The building is a very prominent structure on Oxford Road and has considerable presence. The views from the West are particularly striking. The terracotta building with its marked bell tower, with the cupola, make a very distinctive and distinguished mark in this part of Reading surrounded as it is by modest terraced properties.

Conclusion/ Notes:

Based on evidence currently available, there is definite architectural significance with the church dating from 1840 - 1913 and being substantially complete and unaltered, excluding the interior. This significance is focussed on the exterior of the buildings.

The buildings are the work of a notable local architect showing virtuosity and innovation in the design technique and architectural style, noteworthy quality of workmanship, and materials. The main building has townscape value as a Landmark building.

The site has historical importance (significance) because of its historic associations with the important local architect, William Roland Howell as well as with Arthur Warwick and Martin John Sutton of Suttons Seeds.

The social importance (significance) has more to do with the site as a whole as the building has been influential in the life of one of Reading's communities as a place of worship and played a key social role.

Future development proposals should conserve the non-designated heritage asset in a manner appropriate to its significance (NPPF para 184).

Please find attached a general information sheet regarding the local listing of a building or structure. There is a period of six weeks beginning with the date of this letter during which you may notify the local planning authority of any reason why you believe the building should not have been locally listed.

Comments can be made in writing to me at the email or postal addresses above. Any comments received will be considered and you will be notified of any revision to the decision to locally list the building.

Yours sincerely,

Alison Amoah
Principal Planning Officer

Building/ structure identification:
Grid reference: E 469442 N 173700
Buildings within red line on plan below

Cc: Steve Hicks, RBC Valuation Section
Giorgio Framalico, RBC Head of Planning Development and Regulatory Services
Evelyn Williams, Reading Conservation Advisory Committee
Richard Bennet, Reading Civic Society
Norcot Ward Councillors, Reading

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ITEM NO. 11

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5th December 2018

Ward: Whitley

App No.: 180698

App Type: FULL

Address: 448a Basingstoke Road

Proposal: Change of Use of 448a Basingstoke Road to a mixed B1 (a) (1735sqm including 72sqm of new mezzanine) /A3 (128sqm) /D1 (1724sqm) use, with glazing to replace roller door (amended)

Applicant: Reading Family Church

Date valid: 26th April 2018

Minor Application: 8 week target decision date: 21st June 2018

Agreed Extension of time date: 21st December 2018

Planning Guarantee: 26 week date: 25th October 2018

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE full planning permission for the following reason:

1. The proximity of the adjacent five LPG tanks, ethanol tank and finished aerosol products (totalling ca 190 tonnes) at 452 Basingstoke Road (P&G - a COMAH site) would pose a significant and serious risk to the proposed development with respect to public safety contrary to NPPF (Para.95), Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, altered 2015) Policy DM20, and National Planning Practice Guidance - Handling Development Proposals around Hazardous Installations.
2. In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure off-site provision for additional parking it fails to provide adequate parking provision and therefore controls over the development's parking and highway impacts, contrary to policies CS9, CS20, CS24, DM3, and DM12.

Informatives to include:

3. IF1 Positive and Proactive Working - refusal
4. Refused plans

1. FURTHER INFORMATION

- 1.1 The application was originally considered by Planning Applications Committee in September 2018 (original report and update included at Appendix A) and the decision was a resolution to grant subject to a S106 legal agreement, conditions and informatives. However, as the HSE had 'advised against' the proposed scheme there was a requirement for the Council to notify the HSE and to provide 21 days for the HSE to decide whether to submit a formal request to the Secretary of State (SoS) to consider a call-in of the application for SoS determination.
- 1.2 Before the end of that 21 day period (7-28th September 2018) the HSE provided a letter (as included at Appendix B) setting out that they have serious concerns with regard to this proposed scheme and that it meets more than one of the HSE's published criteria which they use to decide whether to request that the SoS call-in an application. HSE consider its role is fully discharged when they consider that the LPA is acting in full understanding of the HSE's advice and of the consequences to public safety that could follow. Having read the previous officer reports they were

unconvinced that the planning committee members “fully understood the seriousness of HSE’s advice given the nature of the proposed development and the risks from a major accident at the neighbouring Gillette UK Ltd Site.”

- 1.3 At that time the HSE had not made a formal request to the SoS, but in the letter strongly advised that officers “remit this planning application back to your planning committee with the added benefit of HSE’s additional advice and information contained in this letter.”
- 1.4 Following receipt of that letter officers from the HSE were invited to provide further information in a face-to-face-meeting and to present the information in a separate meeting with the applicants. These meetings were held on Friday 12th October 2018.
- 1.5 At the meeting the HSE provided further detail on:
 - The types of incidents that occur at COMAH sites;
 - The specific concerns related to:
 - (i) The proximity of the application site to Proctor & Gamble (P&G) located wholly within the HSE’s inner zone, the most hazardous of the three zones, which comprise the HSE’s consultation distance for P&G.
 - (ii) The vulnerability of the proposed users and the number of people who could be on site at any one time in comparison to the existing permitted B1 (a) and (c) use.
- 1.6 The HSE’s policy advice¹ categorises development into one of four sensitivity levels combined with the output of risk assessment of potential major hazards, and provides a set of zones. In the inner zone (as shown in Appendix 1 of Appendix B), there is an allowance for low density commercial development of less than 100 persons at work in a building of two stories or fewer in height. Although risk control measures are in place for COMAH sites the residual risk of a major accident, which remains after all reasonably practicable health and safety measures have been put in place, is what the HSE assesses.
- 1.7 The HSE’s view is that someone who is employed will understand the level of risk, be of working age, fit and healthy, and will practice drills, and that the level of risk to an employee would be less than that for members of the public.
- 1.8 The HSE further explained that the risks from the immediately adjacent five large LPG tanks and an LPG road tanker off-loading area and bulk ethanol tank (also finished aerosol products) ca 190 tonnes in operation, include tank failure as well as spillages, which could occur during filling (further detail is included in the letter in Appendix C).
- 1.9 Proctor and Gamble has advised that the core delivery times for the tankers are between 7:00 and 18:00 Monday to Friday, but there are occasions when a delivery may be necessary in the evening up to 22:00 and also during the daytime of Saturdays and Sundays, due to operational requirements.
- 1.10 In the meeting with the HSE, RBC officers explored whether it would be possible to make changes to the scheme, in addition to the proposed condition controlling the external activities in the car park of the application site, which would make the scheme acceptable. Officer suggestions of amendments included: limiting the numbers/ days/ times of use so that this would restrict the numbers of people during tanker delivery time; linking the alarm system of the application site to that of P&G; and development of protection/ ‘walls’ around the tanks. However, the HSE

¹ <http://www.hse.gov.uk/landuseplanning/methodology.pdf>

reiterated that they would only not 'advise against' the development if it were amended to comply with sensitivity Level 1 uses. The HSE letter in Appendix C below is clear that the uses as proposed would have to be located beyond the middle consultation zone.

- 1.11 Due to the significant issues being raised it was agreed by officers that the application should be brought back to committee to provide further information to councillors and give the opportunity for HSE to present material and be available for questions.
- 1.12 A further letter has been submitted by the HSE, which is attached at Appendix C. This includes details of the layout of the P&G site and its relationship to the application site; the severe consequences of a failure of a COMAH site, and HSE's advice with regard to vulnerable and sensitive groups, who would comprise many of the users of the proposed site.
- 1.13 Officers are of the view that the issues which the HSE have raised are a material consideration and the risks they have identified are considered to be substantial enough to warrant changing the recommendation to refusal.
- 1.14 Councillors are advised that if you are minded to still approve the proposed scheme then the HSE has stated that because it meets more than one of their published criteria, and is therefore of serious public safety concern, they will write to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Planning Case Work Unit to request that the SoS 'calls in' the case. They highlight (in their letter of 22nd November - Appendix C) that *"this is an exceptional course of action for the HSE"* who have *"only requested call in on 7 occasions in the last 35 years"*.

APPENDIX A: SEPTEMBER 2018 COMMITTEE REPORT & UPDATE REPORT

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ITEM NO. 17

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5th September 2018

Ward: Whitley

App No.: 180698

App Type: FULL

Address: 448a Basingstoke Road

Proposal: Change of Use of 448a Basingstoke Road to a mixed B1 (a) (1735sqm including 72sqm of new mezzanine) /A3 (128sqm) /D1 (1724sqm) use, with glazing to replace roller door (amended)

Applicant: Reading Family Church

Date valid: 26th April 2018

Minor Application: 8 week target decision date: 21st June 2018

Agreed Extension of time date: 25th October 2018

Planning Guarantee: 26 week date: 25th October 2018

RECOMMENDATIONS

Under Section 9 paragraph 72 of the online Planning Practice Guidance on Hazardous Substances - Handling development proposals around hazardous installations, published by the Department for Communities and Local Government, if the Council is minded to approve the scheme against HSE advise then this requires a local planning authority to give HSE advance notice, and allow 21 days from that notice for HSE to consider whether to request that the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, or Welsh Ministers, call-in the application for their own determination.

Subject to no call-in under the above requirement delegate to the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services to

- **GRANT** Planning Permission subject to conditions and informatives and subject to the satisfactory completion of a S.106 legal agreement

or

- **REFUSE** permission should the legal agreement not be completed by the 25th October 2018 unless a later date is agreed by the Head of Planning Development & Regulatory Services.

THE SECTION 106 LEGAL AGREEMENT TO SECURE THE FOLLOWING:

Transport:

- Off-site provision for additional parking - The applicant has agreed a licence with Ultima Properties Ltd, which provides for the use of up to 266 additional parking spaces on Sundays and on agreed other Christian festival days for a period of 5 years. Upon expiration of this agreement the applicant is required to secure a new agreement or arrange adequate alternative parking facilities, details of which must be submitted and approved by the planning authority.

CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE:

- 1) Standard Time Limit
- 2) Approved Plans

- 3) Materials
- 4) DC1 Vehicle parking space provided in accordance with approved plans
- 5) DC5 Bicycle parking - plans to be approved
- 6) Car Parking Management Plan prior to occupation
- 7) Travel Plan - A full travel plan must be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority within 6 months of occupation of the building.
- 8) Travel Plan Implementation - The aims of the approved Travel Plan shall be notified to all existing and new members
- 9) Travel Plan Review - No later than one year following the first occupation of the site (and every year for five years, until the site is established), an annual review of the Travel Plan for a period of 5 years from occupation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- 10) Details of bin storage to be approved prior to occupation.
- 11) The existing landscaping is to be retained.
- 12) Hours of use of the D1 and A3 uses to be 7:00 until 23:00 Monday-Friday, Sunday and public holidays and from 8:00 until 24:00 on Saturdays.
- 13) No amplified sound or music shall be played at the premises outside the following times: 8:00 until 24:00 on Saturdays and 8:00 to 23:00 for the remainder of the week.
- 14) The total area of floor space for B1 (a) use, as shown the approved plans, to be retained for such use at all times.
- 15) ESP - training/ employment outputs delivery document to be prepared with Reading (UK) CIC
- 16) The external parts of the site, within the site area, are to be controlled in the following way:
 - Designated smoking area around the northern side of the building - furthest away from the P&G building
 - No smoking zone within 20metres of the shared fence with P&G
 - No fireworks in the car park
 - No naked flames, or burning of rubbish on site
 - No BBQ's burning wood, charcoal, briquets or anything similar
 - No transfer of petrol or diesel in the car park
 - Gas fired barbeques and hog roasts to be located a minimum of 20m from the shared fence with P&G and portable firefighting equipment to be available for use

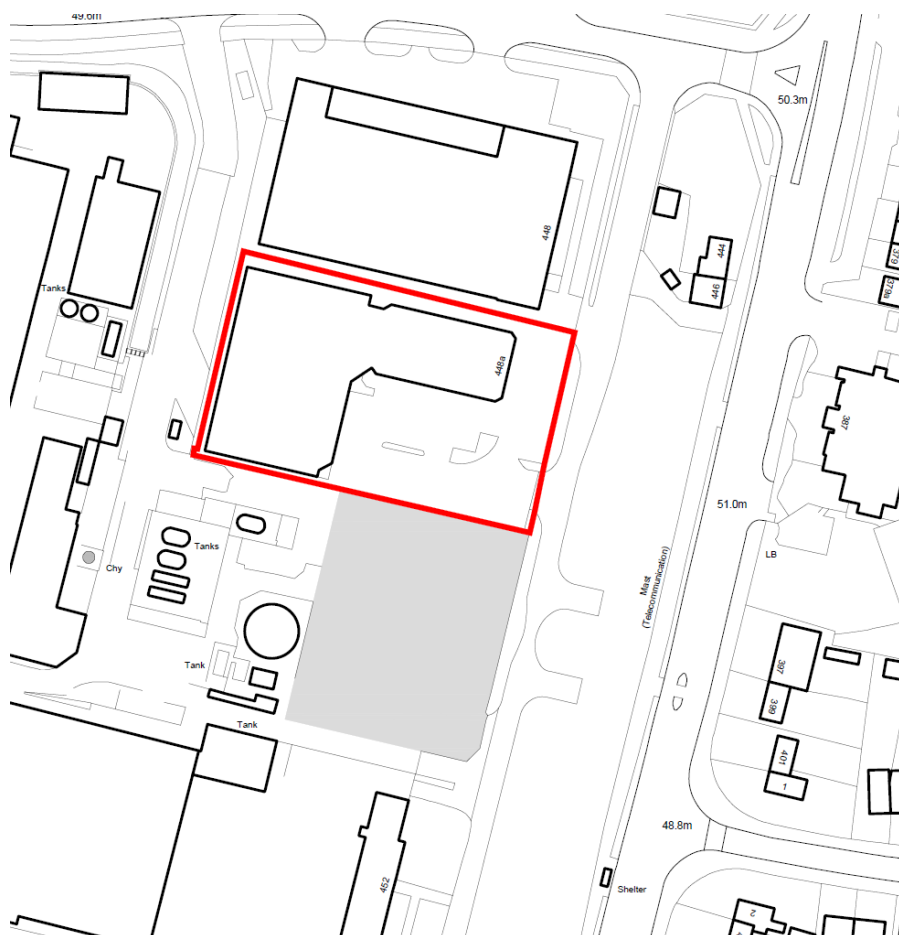
INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE:

- (ii) Terms and conditions.
- (iii) Building control approval.
- (iv) Pre-Commencement conditions.
- (v) No burning on site
- (vi) The applicant to liaise with Proctor and Gamble regarding appropriate measures to include in the Church's evacuation plan in the event of a gas leak emergency event at the P&G site
- (vii) S106
- (viii) CIL- not chargeable
- (ix) Positive and proactive.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The 0.38 ha site is occupied by an l-shaped commercial building and lies on the west side of Basingstoke Road. The former use was open plan offices within the front wing and assembly/ R&D/offices and ancillary storage (totalling ca2500sqm) within the rear. It is over 2 floors, but with a void above the assembly area. It was built in the late 1980s, with 50 no. car parking spaces. For the last 20 years it has been used by Ultima Business Solutions Ltd for office, research and development and assembly with ancillary storage (within B1 use class (a-c)). At present Reading Family Church is leasing some of the building for office and meeting space.

1.2 The site is located immediately north of the Proctor and Gamble site (former Gillette) which is a COMAH² site, and to the south of a two storey building (Fiscal Technologies - software development company). To the west are commercial buildings, part of the South Basingstoke Road industrial area. The nearest residential properties are 444 and 446 Basingstoke Road on the west side of Basingstoke Road with the residential areas of Whitley further east. . The site is reached directly off an access road, which is parallel to Basingstoke Road, and runs off Manor Farm Road to the north. There is no access from the south along the access road in front of the building.



Location Plan

- 1.3 The site lies within the Core Employment Area (Policy SA12), is within an Air Quality Management Area (Policy DM19), and an area of potential contamination.
- 1.4 Pre-application advice was sought and the applicant was advised that the loss of employment floorspace would not comply with policy as it would dilute the employment area and could lead to difficulties in letting other neighbouring employment premises. They were also advised that consideration should be given to whether the employment related church activities could be operated from this site and the place of worship elsewhere.

² COMAH= Control of Major Accidents and Hazards – regulated by EA and HSE - P&G have LPG tanks just south of the boundary with the application site.

- 1.5 The proposal is a development comprising a material change of use of floor area in excess of 1000sq.m so is a Major application as defined by the General Development Management Order (2015).

2.0 PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The proposal is for the change of use of the B1 premises to a mix of B1 (a) (offices), D1 and A3, for the Reading Family Church, which has in the region of 500-600 regular participants and is a well-established local Charity and Christian faith organisation. The proposal is to bring all the Church activities together onto one main site with the addition of a 72sqm mezzanine:

Ground Floor:

B1(a) - 888sqm

D1 - 724sqm (worship space/ events/ community space/ rehearsal space/ private meeting space and a youth hall)

A3 - 128sqm (community café)

First Floor:

B1(a) - 847sqm (small business units, church administration offices, including 72sqm new mezzanine office above the proposed café)

- 2.2 The application form refers to a proposed estimated maximum of 60 no. full-time employees comprising the following:
- Ca 40 workstations on the first floor for the small business let
 - 10-12 people employed by the Church - Church leadership and management, buildings facilities manager, caretaker, administrator, graphic designer, youth worker, kids worker, events manager, 2x interns, group leaders and trainers)
 - Ca 2-3 staff in the A3 café
- 2.3 The following plans and supporting information have been considered:

Received 26th April 2018:

- Location Plan - Drawing no: 899/01LOC Rev A
- Block Plan - Drawing no: 899/02 Rev C
- Existing Ground Floor Plan - Drawing no: 899/03 Rev B
- Existing First Floor Plan - Drawing no: 899/04 Rev A
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan - Drawing no: 899/05 Rev B
- Proposed First Floor Plan - Drawing no: 899/06 Rev B
- Proposed Visual Impressions - Drawing no: 899/07 Rev A
- Existing and Proposed Area for each use - [unnumbered and unlabelled drawing]

Other documentation:

- Design, Access and Planning Statement (and appendices - including Outline Travel Plan), prepared by Red Kite Development Consultancy, April 2018
- Other Building Options Considered by the Church
- Sales Details (marketing information) for 448A Basingstoke Road
- Letter from Sharps Commercial dated 22nd November 2017
- Brochure about Reading Family Church
- CIL Additional Information Requirement Form

Received 15th June 2018:

- Existing Entrance [Plan and Elevation] - Drawing no: 899/10

- Proposed Entrance (Plan and Elevation] - Drawing no: 899/11

Received 7th August 2018:

- Fire Evacuation Plan
- Transport Plan
- Example weekly timetable of use and numbers

Received 9th August 2018:

- Application of Adopted Parking Standards to Proposed Scheme at 448A Basingstoke Road, prepared by Red Kite Development consultancy
- Response to RBC Transport's initial comments
- Plan of off-site car parking

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 83/TP/707 - Erection of a light industrial building with ancillary offices - Approved 20th February 1984. This included the condition that *“the total floor area for office or research and development purposes shall not exceed 5000sqft for each use and any such use shall at all times be ancillary to the use of the remainder of the site for light industrial purposes.”*

4. CONSULTATIONS

(i) Statutory

COMAH (EA and HSE)

- 4.1 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is a statutory consultee for certain developments within the Consultation Distance of Major Hazard Sites/ pipelines. This consultation, which is for such a development and also within at least one Consultation Distance, has been considered using HSE's Land Use Planning Methodology. The assessment indicates that the risk of harm to people at the proposed development is such that HSE's advice is that there are sufficient reasons, on safety grounds, for advising against the granting of planning permission in this case.
- 4.2 Major hazard sites/pipelines are subject to the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, which specifically includes provisions for the protection of the public. However, the possibility remains that a major accident could occur at an installation and that this could have serious consequences for people in the vicinity. Although the likelihood of a major accident occurring is small, it is felt prudent for planning purposes to consider the risks to people in the vicinity of the hazardous installation. Where hazardous substances consent has been granted (by the Hazardous Substances Authority), then the maximum quantity of hazardous substance that is permitted to be on site is used as the basis of HSE's assessment.
- 4.3 *Planning Officer note:* The Officer sought clarification as to whether the 'advise against' response related to the nature of the proposed scheme, the proposed numbers of people who might use the site or both. Clarity was sought as to why the existing/ previous use of the site for B1, with up to 150 employees, would be considered differently to the proposal with regard to risk. The HSE responded as follows:

“HSE's advice was determined by a combination of the consultation zone where the development was located and the sensitivity level of the proposed development. This is assessed for each individual development type. An 'Advise Against' response for any single development type will dominate HSE's overall consultation.

Development type:

*Workplace - Sensitivity Level (SL) 2 within an Inner Zone = Advise Against
Indoor Use by Public - SL 2 within an Inner Zone = Advise Against
Institutional Accommodation and Education - SL 3 within an Inner Zone = Advise Against.*

In determining its advice, HSE does not take into account any existing use which a site may have, or any existing developments in the surrounding area. Although originally, HSE (through PADHI+) did take the existing use of a site into account when providing advice on a proposed development, this was removed in March 2008 following a review of HSE's land use planning methodology. That review identified that taking the existing use of a site into account could result in HSE not advising against developments which were clearly incompatible with the residual risks posed by a major hazard site.”

4.4 EA - Consulted, but no response received at the time of writing

(ii) Non-Statutory

Environmental Protection and Nuisance

4.5 The applicants indicate that noise nuisance is unlikely and from looking at the proximity of the site to residents, nuisance does indeed appear unlikely. Additionally, the applicant proposes measures to prevent disturbance to local residents (6.19 of the D&A Statement). I therefore have no objections to the proposed change of use.

Emergency Planning - RBC

4.6 No comments/ issues.

ONR

4.7 I have consulted with the emergency planners within West Berkshire Council, which is responsible for the preparation of the Burghfield off-site emergency plan required by the Radiation Emergency Preparedness and Public Information Regulations (REPPiR) 2001. They have provided adequate assurance that the proposed development can be accommodated within their off-site emergency planning arrangements. The proposed development does not present a significant external hazard to the safety of the nuclear site. Therefore, ONR does not advise against this development.

Reading UK CIC

4.8 Thank you for asking for my comments on the change of use application, which I note is from an existing employment site (B1 use including office, light industrial and R&D) to a mix of B1 office, D1 (church, community) and A3 (community café).

4.9 While the loss of employment space is always of concern (particularly in south Reading where there is a real need for good quality, permanent job opportunities) I note that this change of use could potentially bring additional benefits to the community. This would be in terms not just of community spaces, but also Reading Family Church's expressed interest in delivering training, supported employment projects and creating a variety of new jobs on the site - as well as much needed start-up work spaces.

- 4.10 If the Borough Council is minded to support the application I would suggest, to ensure these good intentions are given every chance of success, that a formal agreement is developed with Reading Family Church. This could provide a framework for the delivery of training and employment support. Ideally this would cover content and timescale, and link the Family Church with other community organisations and agencies already delivering programmes in south Reading. I believe this would provide a good basis for delivering *sustainable and worthwhile* projects for the benefit local residents.
- 4.11 As the Borough's delivery partner for Employment and Skills Plans, Reading UK would of course be happy to provide any necessary guidance and information to Reading Family Church if required.

Transport -RBC

- 4.12 Transport initially commented and requested additional information as follows to support the parking provision for the weekday/evening and Saturday uses:
- Information regarding the maximum number of participants/users must be submitted for each of the intended uses at the proposed site.
 - A timetable for the proposed use should also be included to determine the number of users on-site at any one time
 - How the parking spaces will be allocated for the users of the site.
 - Details of how the users would travel to the site. i.e, walk, cycle, public transport, private car. Surveys can be undertaken from existing users (where data is available).
- 4.13 Further to the receipt of additional information Transport's comments were as follows:
- 4.14 "This application is for a change of use to a mixed B1/A3/D1 use to accommodate the Reading Family Church (TRFC) at the former Ultima building at 448a Basingstoke Road. The Reading Family Church (TRFC) is a registered charity and has now grown to a faith community of around 500 people.
- 4.15 To date the varied church activities have been undertaken from a variety of sites in Reading. The applicant requires a single site to create a permanent place of worship, administration and activity centre. The total floorspace is to be enlarged by the addition of a 72m² mezzanine (1735m² of B1 included).
- 4.16 The proposed worship/community/small office use proposed will directly serve the local community and Reading as a whole. It is also stated that the proposed use will continue to provide office floorspace for small firms as well as rooms for groups such as Community Toddler Group, Youth Group, Job Club and a community café.
- 4.17 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 to provide;
- 1 space per 8 fixed seats and/or 1 space per 16msqm open hall
 - 1 space per 50sqm of B1(a) use
 - 1 space per 5sqm of A3 use
- 4.18 However, the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD also states that;

“Where comprehensive and mixed-use development schemes are likely, developers are encouraged to provide shared parking facilities which are likely to generate peak parking levels during different periods of the day”.

- 4.19 The site provides 50 parking spaces which are illustrated on the block plan (Drwg no. 899/02 Rev C). The applicant confirms that the whole site will form a single planning unit and be under a single management, coordinating and controlling parking, safety and out of hours use. Therefore, shared parking facilities are considered acceptable in the context of the proposed uses and peak parking levels on the site.
- 4.20 A comprehensive statement has been produced on behalf of the applicant which assesses the floor area of the proposed uses in detail. The D1 area consists of an open hall of 460sqm with the remainder ancillary small rooms storing furniture and equipment for playgroup, staff kitchen and youth sports. The D1 element of the site will be used for Reading Family Church meetings and services which are mainly undertaken at the weekends and evenings which will generate the largest number of people on the site and the most demand for on-site parking.
- 4.21 The typical Sunday morning church attendance attracts approximately 400 people [Adults 275 and 125 children]. At times when high numbers are on-site (weekend services), all 50 on-site parking spaces will be available. However, it is evident from the congregation size that the demand for parking will outstrip the availability of on-site parking. Therefore, the applicant has agreed a licence with Ultima Properties Ltd which provides for use of up to 266 additional nearby parking spaces on Sundays and on agreed other Christian festival days (Christmas day, Good Friday, Pentecost etc) for a period of 5 years. It is anticipated that this will be extended/renewed when necessary. The applicant is happy to accept a condition that requires them to submit details to confirm that arrangements have been made in a similar way in future years. In principle, this is acceptable but it should form part of the S106 agreement.
- 4.22 The proposed B1 use floor area equates to 1735sqm which is to be divided between church activities, job and other training and advice groups and local small employers/associated charities. It is stated that nearly 75% of the 1735sqm is for training and advice groups which will generate a lower parking demand than typical B1 office use. Therefore, the applicant proposes to allocate 25 parking spaces to the small office suites and 5 spaces to the ground floor classroom area in addition to 5 spaces to the staff/management team.
- 4.23 The hall will also be used for Parent and Toddler groups and after school/holiday clubs which will be run Monday-Friday during the day and will not coincide with the Reading Family Church meetings and services. 20 unallocated parking spaces will be available for the community uses on the site during the daytime period. Given that the community uses will serve the local area, it is expected that these uses provide the best opportunity to promote sustainable travel which should be promoted through the Travel Plan (discussed later in the report).
- 4.24 In terms of the A3 use, the café will be open to passing trade but is more likely to be used by those already on the site for other activities. In view of this, no parking spaces will be allocated to the A3 use and any demand generated by passing trade will need to be accommodated within the 20 unallocated parking spaces. I am happy with this arrangement given the proposed uses on the site.
- 4.25 It should be noted that the B3031 Basingstoke Road and the surrounding highway network all have ‘No Waiting’ (DYL) parking restrictions preventing on-street parking. The access road serving the site is also restricted with ‘No Waiting’ (DYL)

parking restrictions. Penalty Charge Notices are issued by the Council's Civil Enforcement Officers if vehicles are parked illegally, therefore, there is limited opportunity for overspill parking in the local area. However, the applicant must ensure that the parking spaces within the site are appropriately managed and measures are in place during peak time to prevent vehicles travelling directly to the site without a secured parking space. Therefore, it is suggested that a car park management plan is secured by condition which includes a parking allocation plan for the daytime uses.

- 4.26 The applicant is required to produce a Travel Plan which covers all the proposed uses to initiate modal shift away from the private car and towards more sustainable modes. A Travel Plan has been submitted which details all travel modes to and from the site. This does not however include an assessment of how people currently travel to the site, does not include measures to promote alternative modes including car sharing amongst its congregation and does not provide incentives to encourage visitors to travel by foot, cycle and public transport where it is reasonable and practicable to do so. In addition, in order for a Travel Plan to work successfully, a Travel Plan Coordinator should be appointed. They will be the person responsible for the effective implementation of the Travel Plan and the measures it contains, as well updated the Travel Plan as necessary. However, I am happy for this to be dealt with by way of a condition.
- 4.27 In line with promotion of sustainable modes, the development must make provision for secure cycle parking within site. In accordance within the adopted Parking Standards, 1 space per 50sqm should be provided for D1 Places of worship/Church Hall and 1 space per 200m² for B1(a) office use.
- 4.28 The applicant has indicated that 18 cycle parking spaces are available within the site. Short stay spaces are available at the front of the site and staff cycle parking spaces are located at the rear of the building but additional information is required to ensure the provision comply with the Council's standards. However, I am happy to deal with this by condition."
- 4.29 *Planning Officer note:* Transport had no objections subject to conditions, S106 obligations and informatives as set out in the recommendations above.

(iii) Public Consultation

- 4.30 Nos 373-379a (odd), 387 and 397-401 (odd) 444, 446, 448 and 452 Basingstoke Road were consulted and a site notice was displayed. 180 no. support responses were received summarised as follows:
- Support the work of the church and the range of outreach projects that the church offer
 - Excellent track record of Reading Family Church in running, promoting and supporting innovative and much-needed initiatives across a range of groups of people with particular needs e.g. Starting Point (providing mentoring for young people who struggle to gain access to employment).
 - Provide a great community hub and a hub for small business and charities which is needed in this area
 - As council funding for these services are reduced because of government restraints, a community church dedicated to serving the local community and beyond, will be of great benefit to Reading. The community groups offered provide a much needed gap in society with the withdrawal of public services;
 - Would have a positive effect on the local community where there is an increasing need for community space and support in this area.

- There is at present no church easily available for the residents of Green Park, Reading Gateway and Kennet Island and RFC would be accessible for all adults and children from these developments to make use of or be a part of.
- Having a community centre on the doorstep of Kennet Island would be a real asset in terms of distributing emergency food parcels to local people in need
- The purpose of the building would not just be a place of worship, but a place of resource, rest, recovery and transformation for some of the most vulnerable people in our society.
- This church is doing a considerable amount to encourage community cohesion and serving the underprivileged of the local area.
- “In my opinion providing Reading Family Church with change of use is a no brainer. Given that much provision into Whitley, an area of deprivation, is being stopped by the council because of their enforced budget cuts, a change of use provides the church with the ideal opportunity to plug the gaps & give the local community the support it needs and deserves. RFC boasts over 400 members who are committed financially and practically to make a positive impact on the people living in the local area. The possibilities are endless, especially with the church eldership pledging to members who can create and implement innovative ways to support the local community. What’s not to like!”
- “I am particularly excited that this site proposed by the church for their Sunday meeting and mid-week activities will serve a massive number of new houses recently build/being built in the immediate area. With new homes at Kennet Island(1,300), Green Park Village(737), Royal Elm(618) and Reading Gateway(175) not to mention plans to grow Reading South of the M4. I firmly believe that Reading needs more community facilities precisely in this area and Reading Family Church is offering this to the town under this change of use application. Regardless of religion, the church also already serves the town in so many ways.....”

Response from Cllr Ennis: “The Church are inclusive and supportive of working with communities throughout the Reading area and they have been particularly supportive with vulnerable people who need assistance and help. If they were to succeed in their application then this would enhance their work further and help communities which I represent.”

Response from Cllr James: “I would like to support this application by the Reading Family Church to convert the usage of this building. I believe that the use of the building is suitable for the area and will provide benefits to the community, faith group and local businesses. That particular area, close to Kennett Island is not well served by community facilities.

I believe the group will comply with the conditions placed upon them and will be responsible owners of the building. As many of their members live in my ward, I would like to support their application.”

Response from Alok Sharma MP: “I have recently met with Mr Sean Green, founding Pastor of Reading Family Church. At our meeting, Pastor Green informed me of the above planning application submitted by RFC for Change of Use of the building at 448a Basingstoke Road, Reading, based in my constituency. Pastor Green informed me that RFC has been provided with 160 bays for parking which should mitigate any congestion issues at this site. Pastor Green also explained that RFC has projected that the community centre will generate a profit through a coffee shop, with 45 per cent of the profit being used for the community and the remaining 55 per cent being used for office purposes, including a proposed school business centre.

During my time as an MP, I have been impressed with the outreach work the church undertakes and I welcome their aim to invest these profits back into the local community. Also, given that there is a plan to mitigate potential congestion, I am supportive of this planning application.”

4.31 One letter of objection from Procter and Gamble:

“We write on behalf of our client, Procter & Gamble (‘P&G’), to submit representations in relation to the planning application currently pending determination at the above address (Ref: 18/0698). A P&G factory is located directly to the southwest of the proposed application site at 452 Basingstoke Road, as shown by the red line plan appended to this Letter. The site is currently occupied by a subsidiary company, Gillette Management LLC. Current operations on site include manufacturing alongside research and development within laboratory units and office space.

We understand that an application has been made to the Borough Council to change the use of 448a Basingstoke Road from office, research and development purposes (Use Class B1) to a mixed use facility (Use Classes B1/A3/D1), albeit primarily a church. We have reviewed the documents forming and supporting this application to inform this objection.

My client has concerns regarding the proposed change of use from a lightly used warehouse/office to a family church, not least the intensification of the site and the associated increase in levels of people to this location. Our concerns are set out in the following paragraphs.

The P&G factory is identified as a Control of Major Accident Hazards (‘COMAH’) site by Reading Borough Council’s Sites and Detailed Policies Document (‘SDPD’). The HSE consultation zone, as depicted in Figure 1 below, shows that the adjacent site falls within the red circle. As such, consultation with the Health and Safety Executive (‘HSE’) and Environment Agency (‘EA’) is imperative. We request clarification that these statutory bodies have been consulted by the LPA, to ensure the risk to the proposed development has been adequately assessed.

Specifically, Policy DM20 advises against locating development in the vicinity of such sites or pipelines, due to concern over the adverse health and safety risks to the surrounding population and environment. This Policy has, therefore, been explicitly drafted to prevent the eventuality currently being proposed by Reading Family Church.

We consider that the change of use would unacceptably place users at risk of hazardous substances. The operation of a family church would result in increased occupancy compared to its current purpose as a warehouse/office.

The P+G factory is a very sensitive use with flammable substances. In particular, the site’s gas tank control room abuts the boundary, next to which a community café use is proposed. Given the proximity, we are concerned that social activities such as BBQs, firework demonstrations and smoking could put the operation of P+G’s factory at risk, given their flammable substances and sources of ignition. It is therefore considered that the family church would not be a compatible use for the site due to the safety risk.

Moreover, in terms of the principle of the use proposed, the site sits within the Bennet Road Core Employment Area where the loss of employment land, most notably Class B8, is strictly resisted by Policies CS10, CS11 and CS12. The proposed change of use is therefore contrary to this policy, as it would result in a loss of

780sqm of employment land. The proposal would, therefore, be harmful to the economy and would not support the aspirations of the Local Development Framework and the Sustainable Economic Development Strategy.

In addition, there is a road tanker offload operation which takes place in close proximity to the proposed development. This is a pre-existing and essential operation to the site. We have concerns that this process may result in noise complaints from the users of the proposed development, due to the proximity of the scheme.

We therefore object to the change of use of the warehouse at this location. We would be grateful if we were kept informed of this application's progress through to determination. Should the application be reported to Planning Committee, we reserve the right to take the opportunity to present our objection to Members."

- 4.32 *Planning Officer note:* The officer provided further information and this resulted in P&G agreeing that using a means to control the external uses on site would be an acceptable way of making the use more compatible with the P&G site.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 5.1 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. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.
- 5.2 The following national and local planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

Relevant Policies:

National Planning Policy Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy Document (2008, altered 2015).

Policy CS1 (Sustainable Construction and Design)

Policy CS2 (Waste Minimisation)

Policy CS3 (Social Inclusion and Diversity)

Policy CS4 (Accessibility and the Intensity of Development)

Policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm)

Policy CS9 (Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities)

Policy CS10 (Location of Employment Development)

Policy CS11 (Use of Employment Land for Alternative Uses)

Policy CS12 (Maintaining a Variety of Premises)

Policy CS20 (Implementation of Reading's Transport Strategy)

Policy CS22 (Transport Assessments)

Policy CS23 (Sustainable Travel and Travel Plans)

Policy CS24 (Car/Cycle Parking)

Policy CS31 (Additional and Existing Community Facilities)

Policy CS34 (Pollution and Water Resources)

Policy CS38 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland)

Reading Borough Local Development Framework: Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, altered 2015)

Policy SA1 (South Reading Development Principles)

Policy SA2 (South Reading Strategic Development Sites)
Policy SD1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)
Policy DM1 (Adaption to Climate Change)
Policy DM3 (Infrastructure)
Policy DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity)
Policy DM12 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters)
Policy DM18 (Tree Planting)
Policy DM19 (Air Quality)
Policy DM20 (Hazardous Installations)
Policy SA12 (Core Employment Areas)

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Revised Sustainable Design and Construction (2011)
Employment, Skills and Training (2013)
Planning Obligations Under S106, April 2015

Emerging Local Plan - Submission Draft Reading Borough Local Plan (March 2018)

Policy EM3 (Loss of Employment Land)
Policy EM4 (Maintaining a Variety of Premises)
Policy OU1 (New and Existing Community Facilities)

Background evidence to emerging local plan

Reading Employment Area Analysis, March 2018

6. APPRAISAL

6.1 The main issues to be considered are:

- (i) Principle of Development
- (ii) Transport and Accessibility
- (iii) Residential Amenity
- (iv) Environmental Effects
- (v) Design & Appearance
- (vi) Landscape
- (vii) Sustainability
- (viii) Infrastructure Provision (S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy)

(i) Principle of Development

6.2 The site is within the Core Employment Area under Sites and Detailed Policies Document Policy SA12 (SA12c: South of Basingstoke Road). Core Strategy Policy CS11 explicitly states that within the Core Employment Area, the overall level of employment land should be maintained. Proposals that would result in a loss of such uses will not be permitted. The following assessment therefore considers the proposal with regard to whether the benefits of the scheme introduces other material considerations, which would outweigh the loss of some employment use on the site.

6.3 The emerging policy (EM3) in the Submission Draft Reading Borough Local Plan (March 2018) states:

“Where, in exceptional circumstances, it can be demonstrated that a site in a Core Employment Area has no long-term prospect of employment use, a related alternative commercial use or a use ancillary to the employment use may be considered that would not result in a significant reduction in jobs.”

6.4 The supporting text (para 4.13.3) goes on to state that:

“...on some exceptional sites within the CEA, there may not be any long term prospect of re-use or redevelopment for employment, and in these cases it is preferable for a site to be used for an alternative commercial use that complements the area than for it to be vacant in the long-term, for instance five years or more. For example, some of the older industrial areas contain large sites that were tailored to the needs of a specific type of operation that no longer exists or operates in the same way, making it unviable to re-let, either in its existing form or sub-divided, in the long-term. If there is also no long-term prospect of redevelopment of these sites for employment, alternative commercial uses under this policy may be considered.”

6.5 Evidence has been presented by the applicant that the property has been marketed since June 2015 with no interest from B use class users, and that the existing set up of the building does not lend itself to modern business requirements. The building was designed and constructed at a time when companies required high office content warehouse facilities. The submitted letter from Sharps Commercial identifies that that this position has changed over time with companies requiring more traditional high bay warehouse space with up to 10% office space, or the office and warehouse space separate. As is recognised in the emerging policy the application building was tailored to the needs of a specific operator.

6.6 As supporting evidence to the emerging local plan an employment area analysis was undertaken (2018), which included identifying which employment areas are critical to the economy of Reading and the surrounding area and should be protected, and which areas may have potential for release to other uses. The application site is defined in this document as within Plot 1 of Manor Farm with the potential to be released from the Core Employment Area in isolation. However, Plot 1 also includes the Proctor and Gamble (P&G) site (at 452 Basingstoke Road - immediately to the south of the application site). This is recognised as being a major employer, so its loss from the Core Employment Area would have a serious impact on the town, and therefore the whole plot was not identified for release from the Core Employment area. However, the application site is not part of P&G and therefore should not come under the same level of protection.

6.7 The proposal allows for about 2/3rds of the building to be retained for B1 use, including the provision of a suite of flexible office units at first floor for rent to community groups, small start-ups, social enterprises, charities and local businesses etc, which would meet the requirements of Policy CS12, and emerging Policy EM4, in increasing the number of start-up units. 60 full time employees are proposed.

6.8 The remainder of the proposed use would provide significant community benefits both through the provision of community facilities, including a place for Christian worship (proposed for 65 days of the year), but also the benefits generated from the wide range of outreach programmes offered by the church. These include:

- Meetings to support adults with learning difficulties;
- Sure Start Christmas parties;
- Youth group;
- South Reading Churches annual funday
- Food bank with Readifood
- Community Toddler Group
- Parenting courses
- Preparation courses for couples wanting to get married
- Emotional/ spiritual support for couples and individuals

- Advocacy advice group
 - Lunch time club for the elderly/ lonely
 - After School Clubs
 - Holiday Clubs
 - Children’s Saturday Club
 - Schools work to assist in delivering religious education requirements
- 6.9 There are also wider employment related benefits from the Job Club run in partnership with the local job centre and work with 16-24 year old NEETS (‘not in employment, education or training’).
- 6.10 The proposed community uses are supported by Policy CS31 (Additional and Existing Community Facilities), emerging Policy OU1, and National Policy (NPPF Paras 17 & 70), particularly where this will involve co-location of facilities on a single site, and in locations where there is a choice of means of travel. Policy SA1 (South Reading Development Principles) sets out that *“development will contribute to the provision of community services and facilities...”*.
- 6.11 NPPF part 8 ‘Promoting healthy and safe communities’ states in para 92 that to “provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should: a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments...”;
- 6.12 The Sites and Detailed Policies Document specifically sets out issues to be addressed in South Reading and refers to the three Super Output Areas of South Reading falling within the uppermost 5% of deprived areas in England in respect of Education and Skills; and one area falls within the uppermost 10% of deprived areas in England in respect of Income. Overall, Whitley and Church are Reading’s most disadvantaged wards. In addition South Reading presently suffers from shortfalls in various community facilities, in particular within the education sector. These shortfalls add to other deprivation.
- 6.13 The principle of this mixed use, albeit it would involve some loss of employment space, is considered to be acceptable. It would not set a precedent as it is a unique offer, very different to other church schemes previously proposed within the Borough within Core Employment areas, because it would offer a combination of ongoing B1 use, including start-up units, alongside the wider community benefits, which include those activities with wider employment benefits. It is located on the edge of the Core Employment Area, and where the use would not detrimentally effect the ongoing employment use of adjoining sites. It would meet national and local policy aims with regard to providing a community facility and especially as it would be located in a specific area of deprivation of the Borough.
- 6.14 Reading (UK) CIC, the Council’s economic development company, sets out that the scheme “would provide a good basis for delivering sustainable and worthwhile projects for the benefit of local residents”. In particular the start -up spaces are much needed. They advise that a formal employment skills and training agreement is developed with the Church, which would provide a framework for the delivery of training and employment support, and would link the Church with other community organisations and agencies already delivering programmes in south Reading.
- 6.15 It is recommended that conditions are included to ensure that a minimum area of the building is retained for specific uses and that the identified benefits and

existing activities/ outreach work by the Church are secured through a training outputs/ delivery plan to be developed and agreed with Reading (UK) CIC.

(iii) Transport and Accessibility

- 6.16 The applicant has submitted a range of supporting transport information to demonstrate that the proposed mixed use scheme would provide opportunity for shared parking, i.e. that applying maximum parking standards (as adopted) to each use would not be appropriate in this instance. The applicant has indicated that the on-site car park is more than sufficient for the normal usage of the site. In addition a travel plan has been submitted and details provided of a typical week timetable showing the anticipated numbers using the site for different uses and modes of transport used.
- 6.17 It is proposed to allocate 20 spaces for the small office suites, 5 for the church/site activities management team and 5 for café use, leaving the remaining 20 unallocated. It is proposed that church services would be supported with the additional off-site parking with warden directing attendees.
- 6.18 Further to the submission of additional information Transport has raised no objection with respect to relevant policies CS23, CS24 and DM12, subject to recommended conditions for vehicle parking to be provided, bicycle plans to be approved, car parking management plan, travel plan and review. In addition a S106 obligation to ensure the on-going provision of additional off-site parking.
- 6.19 However, the Church has secured, via a private licence agreement with Ultima Properties Ltd, the use of up to 266 additional parking spaces on Sundays and on agreed other non-working days. This is located at Gainsborough House, Manor Farm Road, Reading. Transport has confirmed that as the proposed scheme would rely on this overflow parking that this would need to be secured via a Section 106 agreement. An obligation is included within the recommendation above.

(iv) Residential Amenity

- 6.20 The applicant has advised that the proposed scheme would typically attract 400 people on a Sunday morning service and in the evening ca 80 people. During weekdays the maximum number of people using the site would fluctuate depending on the specific timetable of activities, but would be unlikely to exceed 108 at any one time, which is below the maximum number when Ultima was using the site.
- 6.21 The maximum number would increase on weekends in association with hiring out of the space for events and church services. The proposed uses would be from 9am to 10pm Monday-Fridays, Sundays and Bank Holidays and 8am-11pm on Saturdays.
- 6.22 The key guiding policies regarding amenity are set out in Policy DM4: Safeguarding Amenity, which identifies a number of matters which would affect amenity. The one of specific relevance in this case is noise and disturbance.
- 6.23 The nearest residential properties are 40m away (at their nearest point) from the site and are 'sandwiched' between the Basingstoke Road and the access road serving the site and adjacent commercial premises (off Manor Farm Road). There is clearly background noise from the traffic using the main arterial route and movements along Manor Farm Road. This is evident for seven days a week with a range of commercial premises on Basingstoke Road open all week as well as journeys within the wider network. It is not considered that there would significant additional disturbance created by transport movements to and from the site.

- 6.24 Conditions are recommended to restrict the hours of use and to ensure no amplified music outside certain hours.
- (iv) **Environmental Effects**
- 6.25 This site is identified as potential contaminated land, but the proposal does not include for any ground or enabling works which could bring receptors into contact with contaminants. There is no objection on these grounds from Environmental Protection and Nuisance.
- 6.26 The site is located in the outer zone of AWE Burghfield and adjacent to Proctor and Gamble (P&G) a top tier COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards) site. In accordance with Policy DM20, ONR, and the COMAH authority (EA and HSE) were consulted.
- 6.27 Policy DM20: Hazardous Installations states that “...development in the vicinity of hazardous sites or pipelines, will not be permitted unless it has been satisfactorily demonstrated that the amount, type and location of hazardous substances would not pose adverse health and safety risks to the surrounding population and environment; and that any necessary special precautions to limit other potential societal risks to acceptable degrees would be put in place prior to the development commencing.”
- 6.28 An ‘advise against’ response was received from HSE. They advised that the method of assessment, which changed after March 2008, does not take into account existing land uses. In other words if a new employment site were being proposed on the application site their response would also be advise against. The current objection seems to suggest that it was acceptable for ca 170 people to work adjacent to the COMAH site without risk, whereas the proposed use with occasional higher numbers on site would be at risk.
- 6.29 It is considered relevant to note that in 2009 when P&G sought hazardous substances consent for the increased storage of LPG from 152 tonnes to 319 tonnes (09/00867/HAZARD) that the HSE concluded that the risks to surrounding population, arising from the proposed operations would be so small that there were no significant reasons on safety grounds for refusing the consent. The EA also advised that the proposal would have a low environmental risk and raised no objection to the proposal.
- 6.30 P&G, as the operators of the COMAH site, and controlled through a range of legislation, initially objected to the proposal based on the following:
- The change of use would unacceptably place users at risk of hazardous substances. The operation of a family church would result in increased occupancy compared to its current purpose as a warehouse/office.
 - The P+G factory is a very sensitive use with flammable substances. In particular, the site’s gas tank control room abuts the boundary. Concerned that social activities such as BBQs, firework demonstrations and smoking could put the operation of P+G’s factory at risk, given their flammable substances and sources of ignition. It is therefore considered that the family church would not be a compatible use for the site due to the safety risk.
 - The proposal is contrary to policies CS10, 11 and C12 as it would result in the loss of 780sqm of employment land. The proposal would, therefore, be harmful to the economy and would not support the aspirations of the Local Development Framework and the Sustainable Economic Development Strategy.

- There is a road tanker offload operation which takes place in close proximity to the proposed development. This is a pre-existing and essential operation to the site. We have concerns that this process may result in noise complaints from the users of the proposed development, due to the proximity of the scheme.
- 6.31 The officer entered into dialogue with P&G's agent and provided further information some of which resulted from discussions with the applicant's agent.
- 6.32 The following is a response to the issues raised. The lawful use of the site is B1 (a-c), which has unrestricted occupancy. The previous user had around 170 permanent members of staff plus visitors, with the potential capacity for more. The proposed development would, for the majority of the time have fewer people on site than the previous use. This also needs to be considered in the context of surrounding permissions, which have significantly increased the number of residences and commercial premises within the relevant COMAH consultation zones, and for which HSE has not advised against.
- 6.33 In addition to this P&G have a responsibility to manage their site and are controlled under relevant COMAH legislation, however no precautions are required for adjoining land in other ownership. Applying the HSE's advice for the proposed scheme would effectively sterilise the area or limit the use of other land in the identified employment area. The HSE and EA responses to the 2009 Hazard Substances Consent, as referred to above, indicate that the risks for surrounding land uses is minimal.
- 6.34 Safety Legislation for COMAH sites is enforced by HSE and P&G accept that this should reduce the risk of an accident to a low level, but it does not eliminate the hazard completely and therefore some risk remains. However, the same would be true, for example, of fire risk. The point is that the main risks are controlled within the P&G site itself. Of note is that applicant has advised that the current owner of the site and former occupier for over 20 years (Ultima) was never notified at any time that the storage tanks at P&G presented any danger to 448a, nor that there should be any limitations to on-site activities, nor any suggestion to review risk factors for their long established workforce.
- 6.35 Using the HSE's own risk criteria, the proposed use as a workplace would fall below the 100 people threshold. With regard to the community use, HSE's concern over large community spaces (i.e. over 250sqm) is related to the expectation that a larger space might lead to difficulties in coordinating emergency evacuation. The applicant has advised that as the proposal site would be under single management this would mean that if the community space were in use, the remainder of the building would be empty, apart from site management/security responsible for ensuring safe evacuation in any incident.
- 6.36 Through further discussion with P&G it was determined that P&G's main concern was the potential for uncontrolled external activities, which they considered would take place in association with the proposed use. It should be noted that the existing permitted use had kitchen facilities and there was no restriction on smoking outside. Indeed the smoking area was by the boundary shared with the P&G site.
- 6.37 The applicant has confirmed that they do not propose to hold outdoor activities, apart from the occasional gas bbq or hog roast, and have developed a detailed evacuation plan for the building, and agree to a recommended condition to control the use of the outdoor space. P&G have confirmed that they consider controlling the external activity would be an acceptable way to make the use more compatible with their site, and the planning officer liaised with them regarding the

recommended condition wording, which they confirmed was suitable. An informative is also recommended advising the applicant to liaise with P&G regarding any measures to include in the evacuation plan in the event of a gas leak emergency event at the P&G site.

- 6.38 Therefore, it is considered that the difference between the residual risks of the existing and proposed use would not be significant and indeed there would be the opportunity to reduce the risk, achieved through the proposed control of activity in the outside areas, which is not the case at present.

(v) Design & Appearance

- 6.39 The proposals include limited changes to the external appearance of the existing buildings. These would include the removal of the roller-shutter door and replacement with double storey height glazing and new entrance door into the church entrance/ community café, and a canopy over the existing entrance. The proposed design and materials would be acceptable and would accord with Policy CS7.

(vi) Sustainability

- 6.40 In line with Policy CS1, the proposal should seek to incorporate sustainable construction and design features. The agent has confirmed that “as the applicants refurbish areas of the building it will be brought up to modern standards. The building is already double glazed and has adequate insulation in the walls and roof. It is proposed to:
- Replace inefficient boilers and heating systems with modern low energy equivalents.
 - Decondition the old air conditioning system as per legal requirements.
 - Where possible installing Air Source Heat Pumps for heating and cooling office areas.
 - Install building management systems (BMS) to control heating and lighting in the occupied areas of the building and prevent wasted energy in unoccupied areas.
 - Replace the lights with highly efficient LED lighting
 - Install new systems to reduce water usage in the toilets and installation of small local hot water heaters to reduce long hot water pipe runs and the risk of waterborne disease.

- 6.41 Such works are considered to meet policy requirements.

(vii) Infrastructure Provision (Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy)

- 6.42 The proposed scheme requires overflow parking spaces on an adhoc basis and the recommendation includes for a S106 legal agreement which includes this obligation.
- 6.43 The development would involve the creation of additional floorspace, which would be liable for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). However, there is no charge for B1 use within this location, therefore the scheme would not be chargeable.

(viii) Equality

- 6.44 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. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the current application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application.

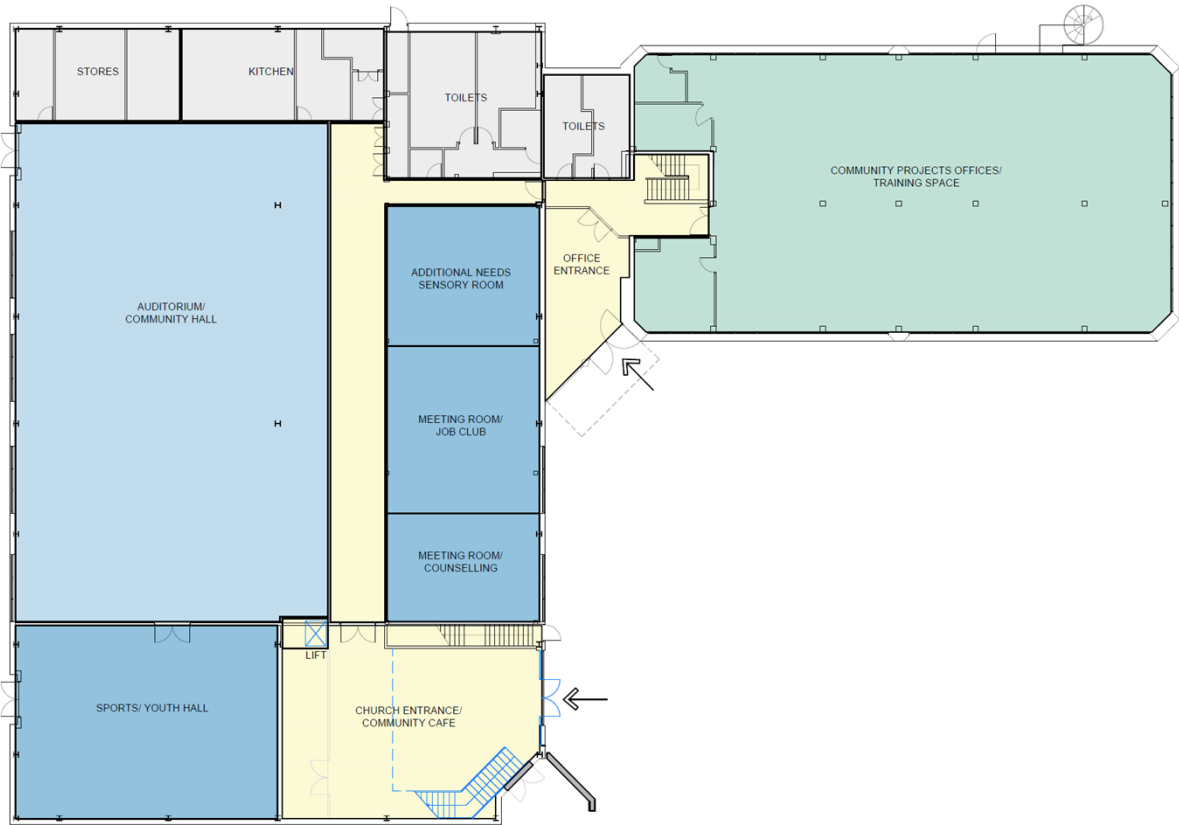
- 6.45 In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development, and indeed the proposal includes for community outreach projects which specifically benefit the key equality protected characteristics including age and disability. Appropriate consideration has been given to those with disabilities using the proposed facilities.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Although the site would involve the loss of some employment floor space, which is contrary to adopted local policy, the significant community benefits, combined with the retained employment uses are considered to outweigh this loss. The application is therefore recommended for approval as set out in the Recommendation on the first page of this report.

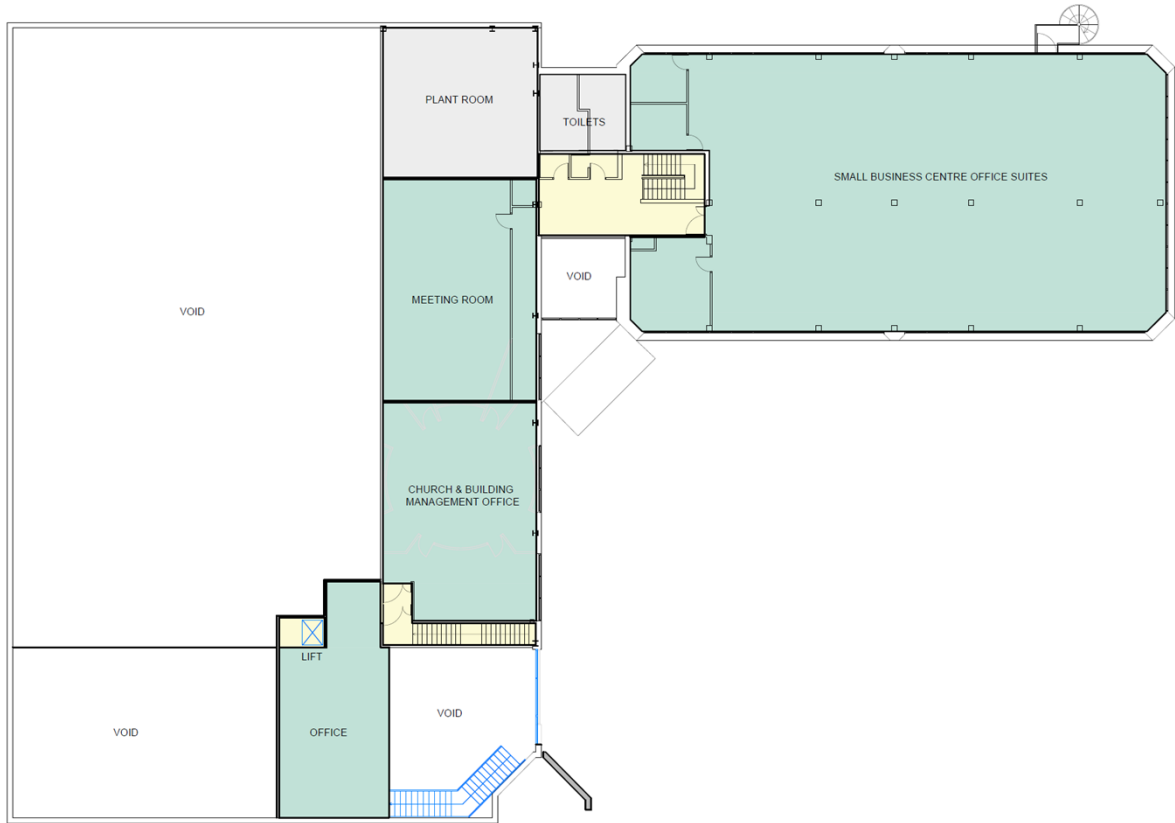
Case Officer: Alison Amoah

APPENDIX 1 - PLANS



PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN

23.11.17 Amended following client comments A
20.04.18 Minor amendments B



PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN

23.11.17 Amended following client comments | A
 20.04.18 Minor amendments | B

UPDATE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5th September 2018

ITEM NO. 17

Ward: Whitley

App No.: 180698

App Type: FULL

Address: 448a Basingstoke Road

Proposal: Change of Use of 448a Basingstoke Road to a mixed B1 (a) (1735sqm including 72sqm of new mezzanine) /A3 (128sqm) /D1 (724sqm) use, with glazing to replace roller door (amended)

Applicant: Reading Family Church

Date valid: 26th April 2018

Minor Application: 8 week target decision date: 21st June 2018

Agreed Extension of time date: 25th October 2018

Planning Guarantee: 26 week date: 25th October 2018

RECOMMENDATIONS

As on the main report, but with the following amendment to the S106 Heads of Terms:

THE SECTION 106 LEGAL AGREEMENT TO SECURE THE FOLLOWING:

Amended - Transport:

- Off-site provision for additional parking - The applicant has agreed a licence with Ultima Properties Ltd, which provides for the use of up to 266 additional parking spaces on Sundays and on agreed other Christian festival days for a period of 5 years. Upon expiration of this agreement or early termination, the applicant is required to:

Option a) Secure a new agreement or arrange for adequate alternative parking facilities for a minimum of 100 no. parking spaces, details of which must be submitted and approved by the local planning authority within 6months prior to expiry of the licence, or the applicant to present evidence that additional off-site parking is no longer required and for this to be approved in writing by the LPA. In the event that this is not the case, or not sufficiently demonstrated to the LPA then proceed to Option b)

Option b) A revocation or discontinuance order to be implemented by the LPA which would restrict the overall use of the site. Under option b) it would be specified that the applicant accepts that they would not be entitled to statutory compensation under the 1990 Act.

1. TRANSPORT UPDATE

- 1.1 Further to matters raised by RBC's Legal Officer it has been agreed with the Applicant that an amended recommended S106 Heads of Terms for off-site parking provision be included. Essentially, this is to ensure that should there not be the availability of off-site parking at the end of the licence period with Ultima that there are mechanisms in place to either provide alternative off-site parking, or that the Applicant demonstrates that the additional number of spaces is no longer required, or if neither of these obligations can be met, for the Local Planning Authority to have the provision to place restrictions on the use.

- 1.2 The proposed minimum off-site additional parking provision, of 100 no. spaces, is based on the aggregated figure when the Council's maximum parking standards per use is applied. Although it is accepted that there is likely to be some shared use of the car park between the proposed use classes, until there is further data evidence on actual use available to the contrary, it is considered prudent to apply the maximum standards.



Health and Safety
Executive

Reading Borough Council

Civic Centre

Bridge Street

Reading RG1 2LU

By e mail only

Date: 27 September 2018

HSE Ref.: 4.2.1.6486.

Your Ref.: 180698

Chemicals, Explosives and
Microbiological Hazards Division

Stuart Reston

Statutory and Commercial Land
Use Planning Advice

1.2 Redgrave Court

Merton Road

Bootle

L20 7HS

Tel: 02030283860

stuart.reston@hse.gov.uk

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/>

Head of Unit

Dr Jim Neilson

For the attention of Alison Amoah

Dear Ms Amoah

**Land Use Planning Consultation with Health and Safety Executive
Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure)
(England) Order 2015**

Planning application: 180698/FUL – 448A BASINGSTOKE ROAD

**Change of Use of 448a Basingstoke Road to a mixed B1 (a) (1735sqm
including 72sqm of new mezzanine) /A3 (128sqm) /D1 (724sqm) use, with
glazing to replace roller door (amended).**

1. Thank you for your email of 7 September 2018 advising HSE that Reading Borough Council is minded to grant planning permission for application 180698/FUL, which HSE advised against, and giving HSE 21 days' notice in which to consider whether or not to request that the Secretary of State call-in the application for his own determination, in accordance with paragraph 072 of the Planning Practice Guidance on handling development proposals around hazardous installations.

Summary

2. HSE has serious concerns in this case. The case potentially meets more than one of HSE's published criteria used in deciding to request that the Secretary of State call-in an application. See http://www.hse.gov.uk/foi/internalops/hid_circs/technical_general/spc-tech-gen-49.htm

3. We have reviewed the planning officer's report and the draft minutes of the planning committee and we are unconvinced that your planning committee members fully understood the seriousness of HSE's advice given the nature of the proposed development and the risks from a major accident at the neighbouring Gillette UK Ltd Site.

4. We strongly advise you to remit this planning application back to your planning committee with the added benefit of HSE's additional advice and information contained in this letter. I or a colleague would be happy to attend the planning committee meeting to explain our advice in more detail.

5. If your council was to subsequently refuse planning permission, HSE would provide the necessary support in the event of an appeal.

Introduction

6. HSE is a statutory consultee for developments in the vicinity of major hazard sites and major accident hazard pipelines by virtue of Article 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The proposed development lies within the HSE consultation distance of a major hazard establishment, Gillette (UK) Ltd.

7. HSE provides its land use planning (LUP) advice to enable your Planning Authority to comply with the objective of Article 13 of EC Directive 2012/18/EU, (the Seveso III Directive – see addendum). Its objective is to control proposed development around designated sites that would increase the risk or consequences of a major accident. As explained in paragraph 072 of the Planning Practice Guidance on handling development proposals around hazardous installations, HSE

normally considers its role to be discharged when it is satisfied that the Planning Authority is acting in full understanding of HSE's LUP advice received and of the consequences to public safety that could follow.

8. As also explained in that paragraph, HSE will consider recommending call-in only in cases of exceptional concern or where important policy or safety issues are at stake.

The Hazardous Installation

9. The proposed development is located wholly within HSE's inner zone, the most hazardous of the three zones that comprise HSE's consultation distance for Gillette UK Ltd. (Appendix 1) Gillette UK Ltd has Planning (Hazardous Substances) Consent (HSC) for 319te of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) in large bulk tanks and aerosol storage in trailers. The site is subject to the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 2015.

10. The site received deemed HSC in 1993 for 152te of LPG. Approximately 75te is stored in four tanks in total (2 x 28te and 2 x 10 te) all adjacent to 448a Basingstoke Road. In 2009 the HSC was increased to 319te, to accommodate aerosol storage in trailers. The risks from major accidents associated with aerosol storage are much lower than for bulk storage and consequently the increase in risk from the additional aerosol storage did not increase the off-site risk. HSE, therefore, did not advise against the increase in consent storage. Nevertheless, the risks from the bulk storage remained and the consultation zones were predominantly unchanged. The increase in the risk from the aerosol storage was small and away from the proposed development and does not contribute to the risk at the development. It does not follow that the existing risks from the bulk storage were small as that risk is associated with the deemed HSC granted in 1993.

11. The proposed development is immediately adjacent to four large tanks storing LPG and an LPG road tanker off-loading area. Should a major accident occur, HSE's assessment is that a major fire and subsequent explosion would most likely lead to occupants of the neighbouring premises (448a Basingstoke Road) being killed.

HSE's Land use planning advice

12. HSE's land use planning advice is delivered through its Web App (<https://pa.hsl.gov.uk/>) made available to all Local Planning Authorities and developers. It uses HSE's published methodology <http://www.hse.gov.uk/landuseplanning/methodology.pdf> which categorises development into one of four sensitivity level which combined with the output of a risk assessment of potential major accident hazards provides a set of zones which determines the advice.

13. The proposed development is wholly within the inner zone and at its closest is approximately 9m from the nearest tank.

14. HSE's methodology provides further detail on sensitivity level development. **HSE's policy is to advise against all development within an inner zone apart from sensitivity level 1 (SL1) development.** HSE is mindful of the need to use land for some purpose and so does not advise against the granting of planning permission for SL1 development which includes low density employment use defined as less than 100 persons at work in a building two stories or less in height.

15. HSE categorises this development as partly employment SL1 use, primarily indoor use by the public (SL2) and a significant element of SL3 for vulnerable and sensitive groups. There are distinctive elements of this development that the applicant has outlined in their supporting information and described within para 6.8 of the planning officer's report. HSE consider the activities reported in para 4.3 of the planning officer's report to be representative of sensitivity level 3 (SL3) development.

Para 4.3

The remainder of the proposed use would provide significant community benefits both through the provision of community facilities, including a place for Christian worship (proposed for 65 days of the year), but also the benefits generated from the wide range of outreach programmes offered by the church. These include:

- *Meetings to support adults with learning difficulties;*

- *Sure Start Christmas parties;*
- *Youth group;*
- *South Reading Churches annual funday*
- *Food bank with Readifood*
- *Community Toddler Group*
- *Parenting courses*
- *Preparation courses for couples wanting to get married*
- *Emotional/ spiritual support for couples and individuals*
- *Advocacy advice group*
- *Lunch time club for the elderly/ lonely*
- *After School Clubs*
- *Holiday Clubs*
- *Children's Saturday Club*
- *Schools work to assist in delivering religious education requirements*

Conclusion

16. HSE's advice is that the proposed development is highly incompatible with location within the inner zone of a major hazard installation. HSE strongly recommends that you remit the case back to your planning committee to reconsider their decision. HSE will, on request, attend the committee meeting and explain our advice.

17. HSE requests that you do not grant permission at this point but consider options available to you. We will continue to give our full consideration on whether to request for the case to be called-in which will be informed by your response to our letter and subsequent actions and decisions on this case.

18. Whilst HSE is mindful of the views expressed in Chapter 5 of the First Report of the Advisory Committee on Major Hazards (ACMH) and Chapter 4 of the Second Report of ACMH which stated that:

"... the siting of developments should remain a matter for planning authorities to determine, since the safety implications, however important, could not be divorced from other planning considerations." and

"... local authorities are well placed to take proper account of the full range of local factors, including safety issues, which are relevant to a planning decision."

HSE strongly requests that the decision to grant permission is re-considered by your council in the light of this additional advice.

19. If your council was to subsequently refuse planning permission HSE would provide the necessary support in the event of an appeal.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Reston
Head of Statutory and Commercial Land Use Planning Advice Team

cc: Mr J Birch, CEMHD 5C, Bootle
Mr D Bryant, CEMHD3D, Ashford
Mr Giorgio Framaliccio, Reading Borough Council

ADDENDUM

Land use planning requirements of the Seveso III Directive

Article 13 of the Directive requires land-use planning controls to apply to all establishments within the scope of the Directive; this includes major accident hazard pipelines:

1. *"Member States shall ensure that the objectives of preventing major accidents and limiting the consequences of such accidents are taken into account in their land-use planning and/or other relevant policies. They shall pursue these objectives through controls on:*

a. the siting of new establishments;

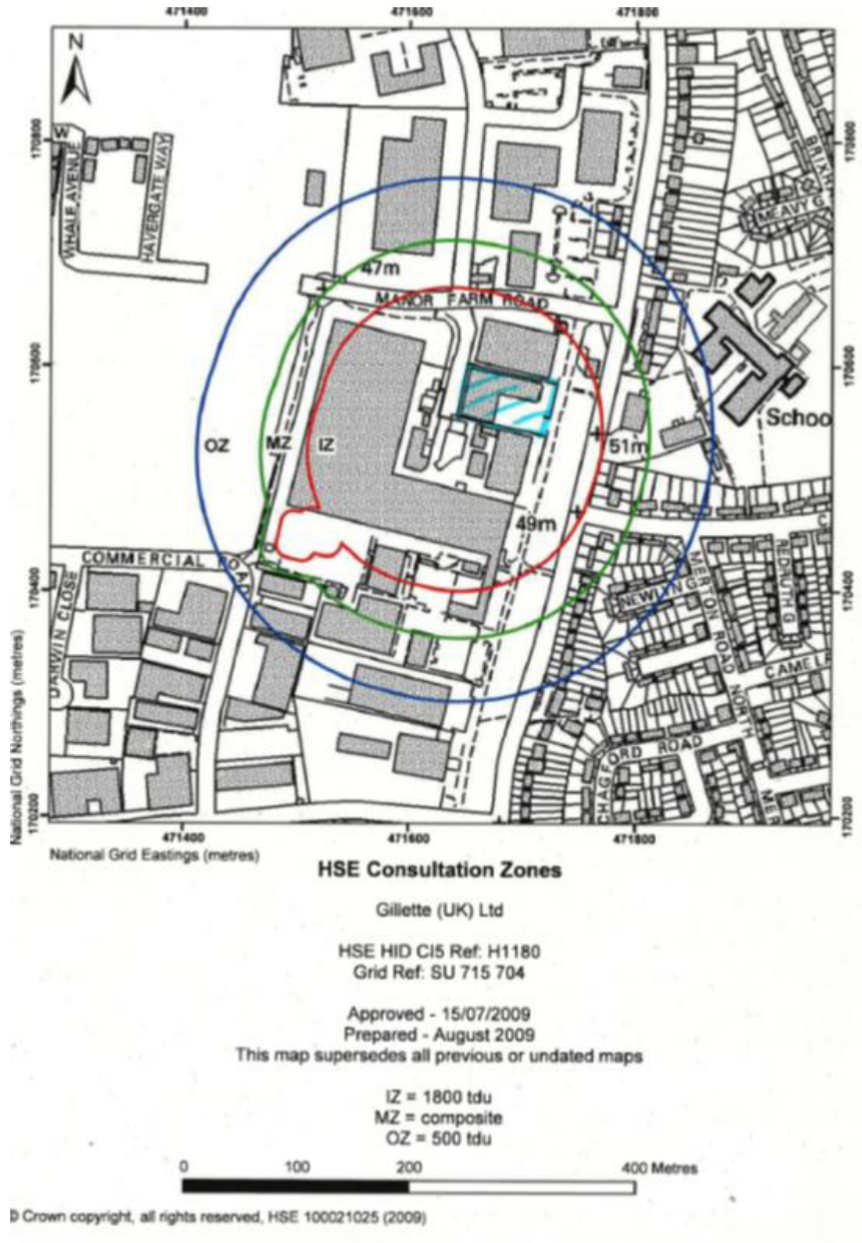
b. modifications to existing establishments covered by Article 11;

c. new developments such as transport links, locations frequented by the public and residential areas in the vicinity of existing establishments, where the siting or developments are such as to increase the risk or consequences of a major accident.

Member States shall ensure that their land use and/or other relevant policies and the procedures for implementing those policies take account of the need, in the long-term, to maintain appropriate distances between establishments covered by this Directive and residential areas, areas of public use and areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest, and, in the case of existing establishments, of the need for additional technical measures in accordance with Article 5 so as not to increase the risks to people.

2. *Member States shall ensure that all competent authorities and planning authorities responsible for decisions in this area set up appropriate consultation procedures to facilitate implementation of the policies established under paragraph 1. The procedures shall be designed to ensure that technical advice is available, either on a case-by-case or on a generic basis, when decisions are taken."*

Appendix 1 HSE Consultation Zones for Gillette UK Ltd.





Reading Borough Council

Civic Centre

Bridge Street

Reading RG1 2LU

By e mail only

Date: 22 November 2018

HSE Ref.: 4.2.1.6486.

Your Ref.: 180698

Chemicals, Explosives and
Microbiological Hazards Division

Stuart Reston

Statutory and Commercial Land
Use Planning Advice

1.2 Redgrave Court

Merton Road

Bootle

L20 7HS

Tel: 02030283860

stuart.reston@hse.gov.uk

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/>

Head of Unit

Dr Jim Neilson

For the attention of Alison Amoah

Dear Ms Amoah

**Land Use Planning Consultation with Health and Safety Executive
Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure)
(England) Order 2015**

Planning application: 180698/FUL – 448A BASINGSTOKE ROAD

**Change of Use of 448a Basingstoke Road to a mixed B1 (a) (1735sqm
including 72sqm of new mezzanine) /A3 (128sqm) /D1 (724sqm) use, with
glazing to replace roller door (amended).**

Introduction

1. Thank you for informing us of your Council's intention to resubmit application 180698/FUL to your planning committee on 5th December 2018. Thank you also for your offer of 5 minutes slot to address the committee. Please would you consider

allocating HSE a longer time, for example 15 minutes? HSE believe it is critical that your committee understand our advice in reaching their decision for case 180698/FUL. It is extremely rare for HSE to attend planning committees to explain our advice and I will be travelling from Liverpool which I hope illustrates the importance and seriousness of our concerns. I and my colleague Janet Hanson will be available to answer questions from your committee as best we can.

2. This letter provides further advice to my letter of 27 September 2018 and briefing that I and Ms Hanson provided to you at your offices on 12 October 2018. I hope this will be helpful in explaining HSE's serious concerns should the development go ahead.

National and local policies for Hazardous Substances and development control

3. It is important to note HSE is the Government's designated body for the provision of public safety advice on proposed development in the vicinity of major accident hazards. Our independent and impartial advice is provided to enable planning authorities, like yourselves, to comply with the land use planning recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Major Hazards and obligations of EU Directive 2012/18/EU (the Seveso III Directive). The objective is to enable your Planning Authority to comply with the objective of Article 13 of EC Directive 2012/18/EU, (the Seveso III Directive – see addendum). Its objective is to control proposed development around designated sites that would increase the risk or consequences of a major accident.

4. HSE's advice follows the National Planning Practice Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance¹ on handling development proposals around hazardous installations. The aim of the advice is to keep inappropriate development away from major hazard sites and major accident hazard pipelines. This is captured in your council's Core Strategy Objective 2, planning policy DM20 and subsequent paragraphs 10.1.6 and 10.1.7 within the Reading Borough Local Development

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hazardous-substances#Handling-development-proposals-around-hazardous-installations>

Framework published Sites and Detailed Policy Document, alteration adopted 27th January 2015.

Major Hazard Installation – Gillette UK Ltd.

5. The proposed development is located wholly within HSE's inner zone, the most hazardous of the three zones that comprise HSE's consultation distance for the aerosol manufacturer; Gillette UK Ltd. (Proctor & Gamble) (Figures 1 to 3) Gillette UK Ltd has Planning (Hazardous Substances) Consent (HSC) for 319Te of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) in large bulk tanks and aerosol storage in trailers. The site is also subject to the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 2015 (COMAH).

6. In my letter to you of 27 September 2018, I explained that HSE did not advise against the 2009 increase in hazardous substances consent because that related to an increase storage of LPG in finished aerosols at a location further away from the proposed development site. The risks from the bulk storage remain unchanged from the 1992 deemed consent.

7. I can clarify that the site has five (not four as previously advised) large LPG tanks, a road tanker off-loading area, bulk ethanol tank and finished aerosol products which totals c190Te in operation. The site would have to reduce its inventory to less than 50Te to be out of scope of COMAH and to less than 25Te for planning controls not to apply. The storage is in regular use with multiple deliveries of LPG by road tanker per week.

Major hazards and risks from Gillette UK Ltd.

8. Although risk control measures are in place on major hazard establishments, there remains a likelihood that a major accident with catastrophic consequences could still happen at any time amongst the 869 COMAH sites in Great Britain. It is this residual risk that HSE assesses and displays in the form of three consultation zones. The zones specific for Gillette UK Ltd are shown in figure 1.

9. The inner zone is the highest area of risk and should a major accident occur the fire and/or explosion would most likely lead to occupants of the proposed Reading Family Church premises (448a Basingstoke Road) being killed.

10. HSE assesses the consequences of a representative worst-case major accident to inform its consultation zones. The red line in figure 1 represents the

distance at which the thermal radiation from a fire and explosion would lead to at least 50% fatalities of a normal population located outdoors. All persons located within the fireball radius are assumed to be killed, which includes the whole of the building at 448a Basingstoke Road.

11. There are a range of other likely foreseeable major accidents at Gillette UK Ltd. If LPG escaped and ignited from the fixed plant or during the regular transfers from road tanker, the building at 448a Basingstoke Road could be engulfed by the subsequent fire or at least ignite spontaneously (possibly over an entire elevation) from the thermal radiation. People both inside or outside would most likely be unable to escape without receiving a lethal dose of thermal radiation.

12. Figure 4 provides an illustration of the type of the fire and explosion should a major accident occur at Gillette UK Ltd. The event is known as a 'BLEVE' (Boiling Liquid Expanding Vapour Explosion) of a 2 tonne LPG tank. The larger tanks at Gillette UK Ltd can hold up to 28Te.

The proposed development site and HSE's land use planning public safety advice

13. HSE's land use planning advice methodology is published on our web site <http://www.hse.gov.uk/landuseplanning/methodology.pdf> and we have used this to provide our advice in this case.

14. The proposed development is approximately 10m from the nearest tank. HSE's policy is to advise against granting of planning permission for all proposals except Sensitivity Level (SL) 1 development (low density industrial, car parking, etc) within the inner zone because of the high level of risk there. The Reading Family Church is SL3, the second highest level in HSE's scheme.

15. As I noted in my letter of 27 September 2018, there are distinctive elements of proposal 1806968/FUL that are for sensitive and vulnerable groups, for example; meetings to support adults with learning disabilities, lunchtime clubs for the elderly, after school clubs, holiday clubs, children's Saturday clubs, community toddler groups, etc.

16. For HSE not to advise against planning permission for a development with such sensitive and vulnerable occupants, it would need to be located at least 155m away from the tank/transfer area, i.e. beyond HSE's middle zone

17. HSE's advice is based on consideration of a single representative worst-case event. In addition, there will be other smaller events such as jet fires from pipework failures that have the potential for serious harm at the development location.

Members of the public, sensitive developments and employees

18. HSE's advice reflects society's expectation that vulnerable and sensitive groups such as the young, the elderly and others who may also be difficult to organise in an emergency are afforded greater protection. This applies similarly to proposed developments where people may be unfamiliar with their surroundings or which may result in many people in one place at the same time.

19. HSE does not advise against low density work places (defined as less than 100 persons at work in a building two stories or less in height) within the inner zone of major hazards. This reflects that HSE is mindful of the need to use land for some beneficial purpose. It seems reasonable to permit small manufacturing units and the like where the individual risk to workers from major accidents is low compared to the risks from general work activity. The approach also accepts that these would be developments where occupants would tend to be fit and healthy and could be organised easily for emergency action. Members of the public will at most be present in small numbers and often only for a short time in any day.

Consideration of a request for call-in by the SoS for MHCLG

20. HSE's published criteria for deciding whether or not to request that the Secretary of State call-in an application are available at http://www.hse.gov.uk/foi/internalops/hid_circs/technical_general/spc-tech-gen-49.htm

21. HSE has given full consideration to application 180698/FUL and have decided it meets more than one of our published criteria and is therefore of serious public safety concern. We will be writing to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Planning Case Work Unit to request that the SoS 'calls in' this case

should your council remain minded to grant permission at their committee on 5th December 2018.

22. This is an exceptional course of action for HSE. We have only requested call in on 7 occasions in the last 35 years (noting we are consulted on approximately 3000 planning applications per year across Great Britain).

23. If your council was to refuse planning permission HSE would provide the necessary support in the event of an appeal.

Conclusion

24. HSE strongly advises that you refuse planning permission for application 180698/FUL.

25. I would be grateful if you would provide a copy of this letter to all planning committee members before the meeting on 5th December 2018.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Reston

Head of Statutory and Commercial Land Use Planning Advice Team

cc: Mr J Birch, CEMHD 5C, Bootle
Mr J Halewood, CEMHD3D,
Ms Janet Hanson, CEMHD3
Mr Giorgio Framaliccio, Reading Borough Council
Mr Mike Hale, MHCLG

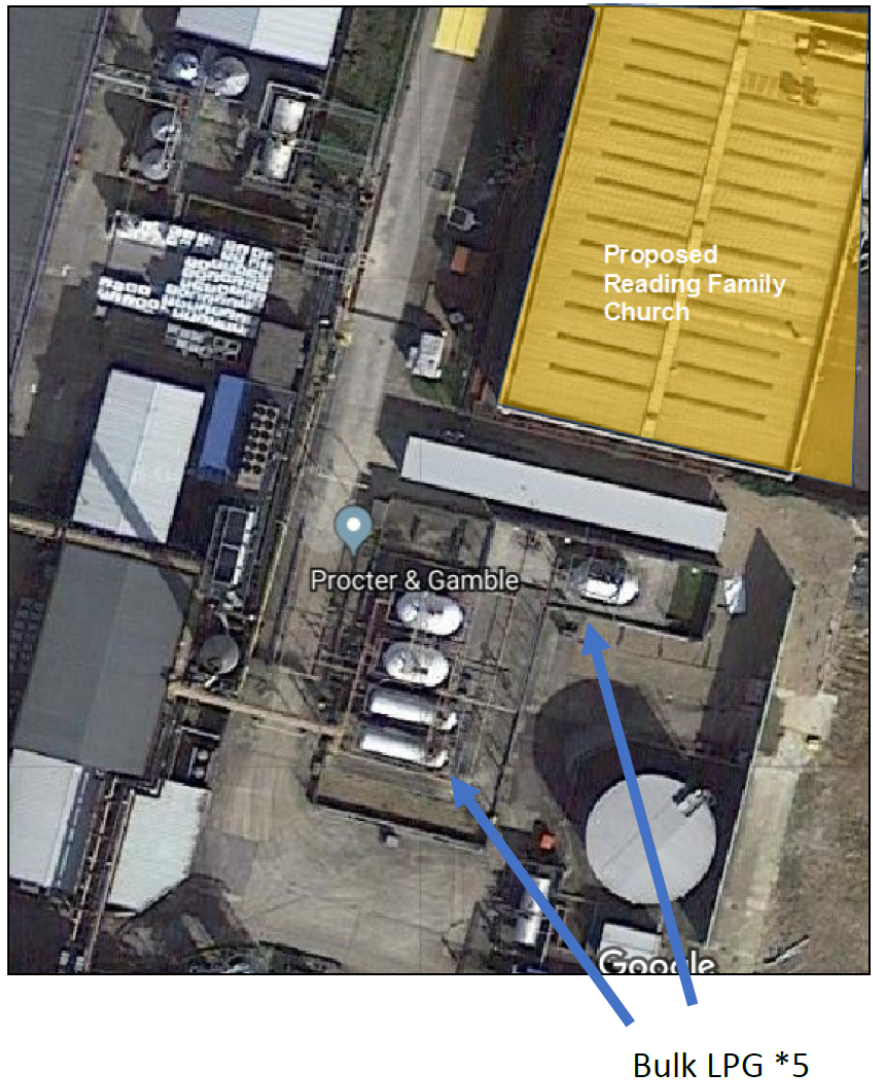


Figure 2. Gillette LPG Tank area and proposed Reading Family Church

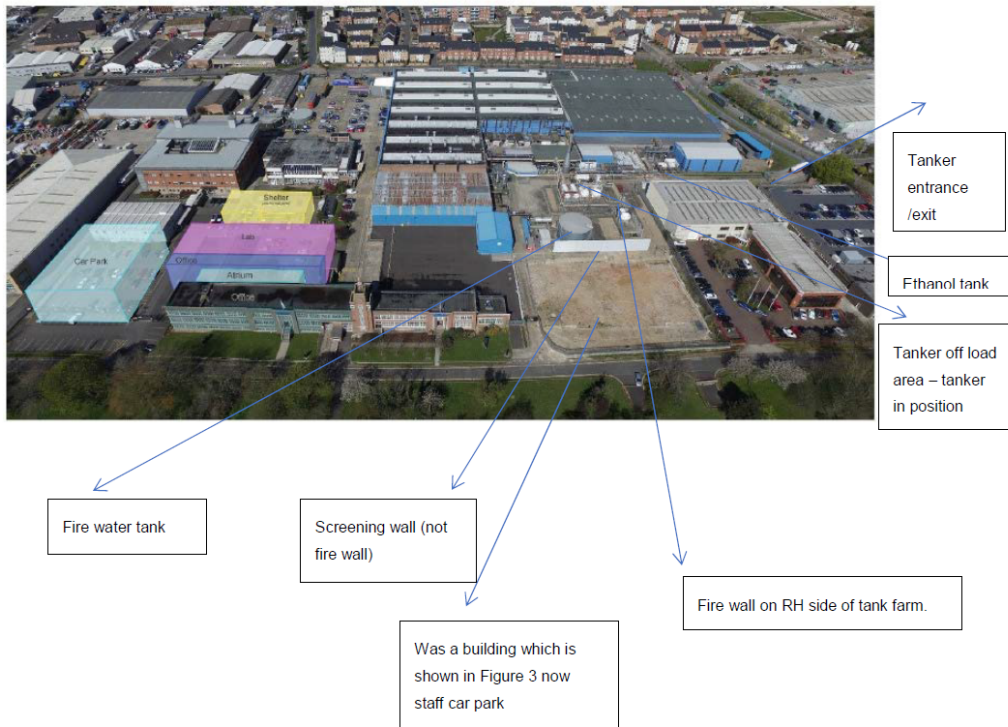
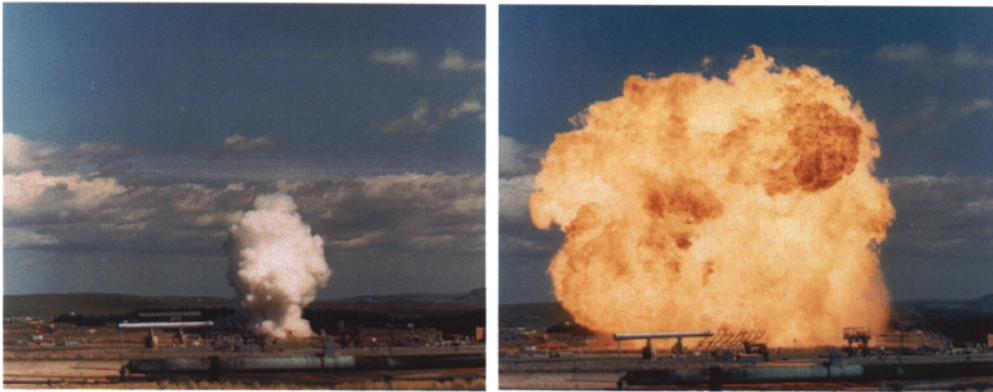


Figure 3. Gillette UK Ltd and LPG Tank area

10

Failure of 2 tonne LPG Tank



Garden Shed



Figure 4. LPG Tank 'BLEVE' 2 Tonne

UPDATE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5th December 2018

ITEM NO. 11

Ward: Whitley

App No.: 180698

App Type: FULL

Address: 448a Basingstoke Road

Proposal: Change of Use of 448a Basingstoke Road to a mixed B1 (a) (1735sqm including 72sqm of new mezzanine) /A3 (128sqm) /D1 (724sqm) use, with glazing to replace roller door (amended)

Applicant: Reading Family Church

Date valid: 26th April 2018

Minor Application: 8 week target decision date: 21st June 2018

Agreed Extension of time date: 21st December 2018

Planning Guarantee: 26 week date: 25th October 2018

RECOMMENDATION

As on main report.

1. ADDITIONAL/ UPDATED INFORMATION

- 1.1 The description was incorrect on the main report and has been amended.
- 1.2 The applicant has submitted a QC opinion (attached at Appendix 1), prepared for Ultima Properties Ltd, the freehold owner of the site, with regard to the HSEs further advice following the committee in September 2018 and the resultant change in the officer recommendation.
- 1.3 As is documented in the main report, officers considered that the further information provided by the HSE was a material consideration and raised significant safety concerns over the proposed use adjacent to the COMAH site (Proctor and Gamble) such that they considered the recommendation should be changed to refusal.
- 1.4 Councillors are advised that on 26th November 2018 (following the completion of the main report) the HSE formally requested the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government SoS consider call-in of this application should the decision be a resolution to grant permission. Therefore, if that were the resolution then the SoS would need to be provided with a period to consider whether to call in the application under S77 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. As there is no formal time period under this section of the Act, officers are suggesting an initial 21 day period. However, councillors should be aware that there are powers for the SoS to issue a stop notice to the LPA to prevent a decision on the planning application from being issued if the SoS has not reached a decision and requires further time to consider the matter.

APPENDIX 1: QC ADVICE FOR ULTIMA PROPERTIES Ltd

448a and 448 BASINGSTOKE ROAD, READING

CHANGE OF USE OF B1 OFFICE BUILDING TO MIXED USE INCLUDING PREMISES FOR READING FAMILY CHURCH

ADVICE

Introduction

1. I am asked to advise Ultima Properties Ltd, the freehold owner of 448 and 448a Basingstoke Road, Reading (“the Properties”), in respect of an application (ref. no. 180698/FUL) for planning permission made by Reading Family Church for the change of use of 448a Basingstoke Road to a mixed B1(a) use (1,735 sq m including 72 sq m of new mezzanine), A3 use (128 sq m) and D1 use (1,724 sq m), with glazing to replace a roller door (“the Planning Application”).
2. The Planning Application was made to Reading Borough Council (“the Council”).
3. The Planning Application was the originally the subject of objection by the neighbouring site operator, Procter and Gamble, who operate the Gillette UK Ltd Site. It then became the subject of objection by the Health and Safety Executive (“HSE”). Those objections were based on the fact that the proposed development at 448a Basingstoke Road would be located within the HSE’s allocated inner zone of the three zones that HSE identify in terms of proximity to existing liquified petroleum gas (“LPG”) held in large bulk tanks on the Gillette Site and areas for aerosol storage in trailers and that site being subject to the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 2015 (“COMAH Regulations 2015”).
4. Procter and Gamble and Gillette UK Ltd subsequently withdrew their objection in light of further information, and proposals to control the proposed use at 448a Basingstoke Road. HSE did not withdraw its objection.
5. The Planning Application was reported to the Council’s Planning Applications Committee on 5 September 2018.

6. The Council's Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services reported the continued objection from the HSE in full.
7. Notwithstanding that objection, the Director recommended that the Committee give the Director delegated powers to grant planning permission, subject to the imposition of conditions and the securing of an agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 ("the 1990 Act") and advance notice to the HSE to consider whether to request the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government ("the Secretary of State") to call-in the application for his own determination.
8. The Council's Committee accepted that recommendation. It granted the necessary power to the Director to grant planning permission subject to those requirements.
9. The Council subsequently gave the requisite notice to the HSE of its intention to grant planning permission, by email dated 7 September 2018. The HSE therefore had 21 days in which to submit any request to the Secretary for State for the application to be called-in. The HSE did not submit any such request. Instead the HSE wrote to the Council by letter dated 27 September 2018 requesting that the Planning Application be referred back to the Council's Planning Applications Committee for reconsideration. This was said to be on the basis that the HSE was "unconvinced that ... planning committee members fully understood the seriousness of HSE's advice given the nature of the proposed development and the risks from a major accident at the neighbouring Gillette UK Ltd Site."
10. It appears that the Planning Application is now to be reported back to the Planning Applications Committee on 5 December 2018. The Director has written a further report. As things stand, the Director is now recommending that planning permission be refused, in light of the HSE continued objection. There is also reference to the absence of a section 106 obligation in respect of parking matters; it is my understanding, however, that the latter reason is capable of resolution by the provision of an appropriate section 106 agreement, as previously anticipated. I am therefore asked to advise on the outstanding HSE objection.
11. For the reasons set out in more detail below, it is my view that:

- (1) There is no basis for HSE's claim that the members of the Planning Applications Committee did not fully understand the seriousness of HSE's previous advice. To the contrary, the Director's previous report set out the HSE's position. The objection was the subject of debate at the meeting. The issue was well-publicised. The Planning Applications Committee members would have been well aware of HSE's position when deciding the Planning Application. Nothing material has changed.
- (2) Moreover, the Planning Applications Committee was entitled to reach the decision it did. It is the Council, as local planning authority, that is required to make a decision on the merits of any planning application in its area, in light of any advice they receive. The HSE's advice is just that – advice; the HSE has no power to dictate the outcome of a planning application. It was for the Committee members to reach their own determination, in light of the development plan and all other material considerations. That is exactly what the Committee did. If the HSE disagreed with that view, it was open to the HSE to request the Secretary of State to call-in the application; but the HSE chose not to do so. There is no proper basis for bringing the matter back in front of the Committee again on the basis of some alleged lack of understanding on the members part.
- (3) In any event, there was nothing surprising, or unreasonable, in the Planning Applications Committee decision. On the evidence - which has not materially changed - the members were entitled to approve the proposed planning application in light of the existing use. In providing their advice, the HSE self-avowedly do not take account of the existing permitted use of a site, with the consequential inherent risks that already exist and are tolerated by the HSE by such use. The HSE only looks at the nature of risk as if the site were unoccupied and a new use being proposed. However, that is clearly not the situation here. 448a Basingstoke Road is an existing premises. It has an existing permitted use. That use enables employees to be present on site, throughout the working day, in greater numbers on average than would regularly be on site under the new proposed use. There is self-evidently a residual risk involved in the premises being located in proximity to the LPG tanks. That risk is already

tolerated by the HSE for the existing use. The HSE is concerned about the proposed change of use in terms of the potential for different and more vulnerable users to be on site. However, the HSE has not quantified, or assessed, the true nature of any additional risk said to arise from that change. The imposition of proposed conditions could only have served to have reduced the risk of an incident actually occurring. The HSE has not identified, or quantified, any material increase in the overall risk from the current use of the site, to the proposed change of use with such conditions imposed. On the face of the submitted evidence, whilst there will be periods when greater numbers of people are on site, and they will be different in composition, overall it could be that the residual risk has in fact decreased on any statistical assessment. If, for example, the buildings have fewer people in them on average across the week than under the existing situation, and the risk of an incident has been reduced, the net change may be either neutral or beneficial. That is not to underestimate the seriousness of the situation if an accident were to occur, nor to acknowledge that the consequences might be more severe if the property were occupied by more people at the time that the incident occurred. It is simply to recognise that risk needs to be assessed in the round. Where the existing risk is already deemed to be tolerable, and tolerated for the existing use, the local planning authority is entitled to reach its own judgment that the residual risk with the proposed use is not unacceptably increased, or in fact is potentially reduced by the proposed conditions and use profile proposed.

- (4) The Committee is still required to make its own decision. On the evidence, it is entitled to resolve to grant planning permission for the proposed development, just as it did before, in the absence of evidence from the HSE that the residual risk has materially increased with the proposed use. It would then be up to the HSE to decide whether or not to request a call-in application. The HSE is not obliged to make any such request. Even if it is made, the Secretary of State is not obliged to accept any such request. In any event, precedent indicates that even where such requests have previously been made and accepted, the Secretary of State may well still allow the grant of planning permission in any event. One such well-known example was the case of redevelopment of the Oval Cricket Ground in London, where the Secretary of

State granted planning permission for the development to proceed, notwithstanding the HSE's objection concerning the proximity of the development to much larger gas holders in the vicinity.

Factual Background

12. The property at 448 Basingstoke Road, Reading was developed as a factory building in the 1950s. The property at 448a Basingstoke Road was developed as B1 building in the 1980s. Both provide good quality 2 storey buildings, with accompanying private car-parking, for the existing uses.
13. The Council will be well aware of the past history of use of these buildings. Indeed, the HSE's own photographs - showing the location of the relevant gas tanks - show the existing buildings in busy use, with the car-park of the two buildings virtually full.
14. The property at 448 Basingstoke Road is occupied by tenants and Ultima Business Solutions. It is in existing B1/B8 use. It is not the subject of any current planning application. It currently accommodates approximately 120 staff on site.
15. The property at 448A Basingstoke Road was previously occupied by Ultima Business Solutions who had around 170 staff on site. That actual employment use has been continual until very recently, when Ultima Business Solutions relocated to nearby larger premises in April 2017. The site was then offered for sale by local property agents.
16. There remains an extant use for B1 purposes which means that the building can continue to house employers and employees in large numbers throughout the day (as it has done in the past). There is no restriction on the occupancy of the building. The past employment use had 170 permanent employees, plus visitors to the site. The Council recognise that it had the potential capacity for more. It seems to me that this must be the relevant benchmark against which to consider the nature of any risk associated with the proposed use.
17. In addition, I understand both employment and residential permissions and uses exist in the immediate vicinity within the relevant COMAH zones without previous objection.

18. The operator of the Gillette Site will, of course, be required to continue operating that site safely and in accordance with the COMAG legislation.
19. I am instructed that the current freehold owners occupied 448a Basingstoke Road for more than 20 years, without ever being advised that the property was in a risk zone. That is helpful context in understanding that whatever the nature of the existing risk, it is not of such a nature that the HSE, the adjoining owner, or the local planning authority, has ever thought it necessary to inform the owners and occupiers of 448a Basingstoke Road about.
20. I am also instructed that the building has kitchen facilities, and Ultima had an outdoor smoking zone for use by its employees on the boundary with the neighbouring site, which the owners of the Gillette factory knew about and on which they have never commented.
21. It is clear that the current Planning Application offers the potential for some of the residual risks that existing in the use of 448a Basingstoke Road to be reduced in practice, by the imposition of appropriate conditions which may address these sort of activities. The Planning Application therefore offers potential opportunities for the risk of any hazardous incident occurred to be reduced, even though the existing risks are clearly considered to be tolerable.
22. As a result of the offer of sale of the building at 448a Basingstoke Road, Reading Family Church (RFC) expressed interest in the site and terms have been agreed with the owner for RFC's occupation.
23. RFC has consequently submitted the Planning Application for its proposed change of use of the building for a mixed use, including a range of community facing activities (community café, teaching/training areas for job-seekers and similar, Food Bank collection point, mother and toddler groups etc), together with a hall for Church meetings and RFC administration offices.
24. The Council has accepted the principle of the proposed change of use away from employment purposes. I am instructed that the proposal enjoys widespread public support. This includes specific support from the local Member of Parliament. It is not

difficult to understand why. It is normally difficult under the planning system to retain existing community uses of this kind in most areas. Therefore, the prospect of delivering a new use of this kind is likely to be popular, and to represent a significant benefit in terms of the general planning of the area.

25. The proposal was originally the subject of an objection on behalf of Procter and Gamble, as the operator of the adjoining Gillette Factory site. This identified the need for consultation with the HSE on the basis that it was a COMAH rated facility. The Council duly consulted the HSE.
26. Procter and Gamble subsequently withdrew its objection after further information was provided about the Planning Application and procedures for addressing risk. Procter and Gamble did so on the basis that the local planning authority impose appropriate conditions addressing some of these risks, such as conditions restricting outdoor fires, use of fireworks, and similar activities. Details of evacuation procedures were provided. On this basis alone, it can be seen that the Planning Application in fact offers the potential to secure greater controls over the use of 448a Basingstoke Road than currently exist. It therefore offers the opportunity to implement measures which would introduce controls that should reduce the risk of any incident actually occurring. This does not appear to be recognised by the HSE in its representations.
27. These sort of controls may not, themselves, involve mitigation to reduce the consequences if an incident were to occur (such as an explosion of the type posited by the HSE). However, it is clear that HSE tolerate the existing situation in terms of the risk it poses. In addition, it is difficult to see why such additional measures could not be sought in any event if there were any need to reduce the risk arising from the consequences of an event.. For example, the provision of a fire and/or blast wall structure in between the LPG tanks and the adjacent site at 448a Basingstoke Road does not appear to have been considered. If HSE are in fact concerned about such events, it is not clear why such measures have not been sought and obtained given the existing permitted use of the site at 448a Basingstoke Road and the presence of many people (considerably in excess of 100 persons) on a regular basis.
28. It has been pointed out that the HSE in fact permitted a change to the COMAH consent in 2009 by allowing additional aerosol storage on the site. It is difficult to

reconcile this with the current attitude towards the proposed use, particularly given the opportunities that actually exist on the Planning Application to introduce controls over the use of 448a Basingstoke Road in conjunction with the proposed use.

29. HSE object to the proposed use on the basis of its approach to COMAH. They advised that their method of assessment does not take into account existing uses.
30. As noted above, a report on the Planning Application was prepared and provided to the Planning Applications Committee on 5 September 2018, recommending that the Director be given delegated powers to approve the planning application, subject to conditions, a section 106 agreement and referral to the HSE. The report to the Committee fairly reported the HSE's continued objection and it was the subject of discussion at the Committee meeting itself. . That recommendation was accepted.
31. The Council duly notified the HSE, giving it the ability to request the Secretary of State to call in the application pursuant to the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 and consistent with paragraph 072 of the Planning Practice Guidance. HSE is a statutory consultee pursuant to Article 18 of the 2016 Order because of the COMAH Regulations.
32. The HSE did not make such a request. Instead, by letter dated 27 September 2018 it wrote to the Council stating it was "unconvinced that your planning committee members fully understood the seriousness of HSE's advice." The letter referred once again to the relevant hazardous substances consent for the Gillette Site and the relevant three zones that HSE uses for consultation purposes. It referred to its land use planning advice in this respect and the fact that the proposed development lay within the inner zone, and the HSE regarded the proposed development as involving some development within sensitivity level 1 ("SL1") of its policy. HSE stated it would not advise against the granting of planning permission for SL1 development for low density employment use (eg less than 100 persons at work in a building of two stories or less in height). However, the HSE also considered it to involve development in SL2 – indoor use by the public, and SL3 – use by vulnerable and sensitive groups, in light of the intended use to be made of the building by RFC (including worship and various support groups, with attendance by vulnerable persons

and children). HSE therefore requested that the matter be referred back to committee.

33. This is now being done by the Director, with a new recommendation to refuse permission.

Analysis

34. First, in my view, there is no real basis for HSE's claim that the members of the Planning Applications Committee did not fully understand the seriousness of HSE's previous advice. To the contrary, the Director's previous report set out the HSE's position. The objection was the subject of debate at the meeting. The issue was well-publicised. The Planning Applications Committee members would have been well aware of HSE's position when deciding the Planning Application. Nothing material has changed.

35. Secondly, although the Director has altered his recommendation, I do not know why that has been done. The Planning Applications Committee was entitled to reach the decision it did previously and it would be entitled to reach the same decision again, notwithstanding the HSE's position.

36. It is the Council, as local planning authority, that is required to make a decision on the merits of any planning application in its area, in light of any advice they receive. The HSE's advice is just that – advice; the HSE has no power to dictate the outcome of a planning application.

37. The HSE concede this in both the First and Second Reports of the Advisory Committee on Major Hazards. These identify respectively in Chapter 5 and Chapter 4 (as the HSE latest letter records):

“... the siting of developments should remain a matter for planning authorities to determine, since the safety implications, however important, could not be divorced from other planning considerations”

“... local authorities are well placed to take proper account of the full range of local factors, including safety issues, which are relevant to a planning decision.”

38. However, this principle is underpinned by an even stronger consideration which is applicable here. That is the fact that the HSE's advice is necessarily confined to the necessarily assessment of the proposed use as if there were no existing use permitted on the site. HSE's advice does not factor in the fact that there is an existing permitted use on the site which has continued, and can continue, giving rise to an existing residual risk which is already tolerated. HSE's advice does not recognise this basic point.
39. In such circumstances, it was and remains for the Committee members to reach their own determination, in light of the development plan and all other material considerations, as to what to do. That is exactly what the Committee did previously. It is what the Committee is entitled to do again. If the HSE disagreed with that view, it was open to the HSE to request the Secretary of State to call-in the application; but the HSE chose not to do so. There is no proper basis for bringing the matter back in front of the Committee again on the basis of some alleged lack of understanding on the members part.
40. Thirdly, I do not consider there to be anything surprising, or unreasonable, in the Planning Applications Committee decision. On the evidence - which has not materially changed - the members were entitled to approve the proposed planning application **in light of the existing use**. In providing their advice, the HSE self-avowedly do not take account of the existing permitted use of a site, with the consequential inherent risks that already exist and are tolerated by the HSE by such use. The HSE only looks at the nature of risk as if the site were unoccupied and new use being proposed. However, that is clearly not the situation here. 448a Basingstoke Road is an existing premises. It has an existing permitted use. That use enables employees to be present on site, throughout the working day, in greater numbers on average than would regularly be on site under the new proposed use.
41. There is self-evidently a residual risk involved in the premises being located in proximity to the LPG tanks. However, that risk is already tolerated by the HSE for the existing use. That use is an unrestricted office use, pursuant to which 170 employees and visitors have been on the site previously, and the same number or greater could

continue to be in the future. Any reasonable assessment of the proposed use should necessarily consider whether there is in any fact any increase in overall risk associated with the proposed use, and whether any such increase in risk is in fact material. That is not something that the HSE has done.

42. The HSE is concerned about the proposed change of use in terms of the potential for different and more vulnerable users to be on site, but on the application of their planning policy approach which ignores what is already permitted.
43. Consequently, the HSE has not quantified or assessed the true nature of any **additional** risk said to arise from that change.
44. In fact, as I have illustrated above, it seems to me that the imposition of proposed conditions associated with the proposed use (such as restrictions on the currently unrestricted use of outdoor space) can only serve to reduced the risk of an incident actually occurring.
45. The HSE has not identified, or quantified, any material **increase** in the overall risk from the current use of the site, to the proposed change of use with such conditions imposed.
46. On the face of the submitted evidence, whilst there will be periods when greater numbers of people are on site (for example when the church use is occurring), and users will be different in composition (including children), overall it may well be that the residual risk of an incident, and the effects of an incident, has in fact decreased on any statistical assessment.
47. If, for example, the buildings have fewer people in them on average across the week than under the existing situation (where the buildings would be likely to be occupied by 170 employees plus visitors for substantial proportions of the day), and the risk of an incident has been reduced, the net change in risk may, statistically, be either neutral or beneficial. Risk is usually capable of statistical assessment by application of relevant mathematical formula.
48. That is not to underestimate the seriousness of the situation if an accident were in fact to occur. No one disputes that. Nor is to fail to acknowledge that the consequences might be more severe if the property happened to be occupied by more people at the

time that the incident occurred, or more vulnerable people. It is simply to recognise that risk needs to be assessed in the round. Overall the net chance of a risk eventuating, coupled with the potential consequences depending upon the numbers more likely to be on site (based on an averaging process) may in fact have reduced.

49. Where the existing risk is already deemed to be tolerable and tolerated for the existing use, it seems to me that the local planning authority is entitled to reach its own judgment; and it is entitled to reach a judgment that the residual risk with the proposed use is not unacceptably increased, or in fact is potentially reduced by the proposed conditions and use profile proposed.
50. In this respect, conditions on the proposed use which reduce the potential for an incident to occur (eg restrictions on outdoor space use), or which mitigate the potential consequences if an incident were to occur (eg evacuation plans, or potentially conditions imposed on fire/blast breaks), are all potentially relevant in justifying such a judgment.
51. Accordingly, I consider that the Committee is still required to make its own decision. On the evidence, it seems to me it remains entitled to resolve to grant planning permission for the proposed development, just as it did before, in the absence of evidence from the HSE that the residual risk has materially increased with the proposed use.
52. In these circumstances, it would then be up to the HSE to decide whether or not to request a call-in application. The HSE is not obliged to make any such request. Even if it is made, the Secretary of State is not obliged to accept any such request. In any event, precedent indicates that even where such requests have previously been made and accepted, the Secretary of State may well still allow the grant of planning permission in any event.
53. One such well-known example was the case of redevelopment of the Oval Cricket Ground in London, where the Secretary of State granted planning permission for the development to proceed, notwithstanding the HSE's objection concerning the proximity of the development to much larger gas holders in the vicinity. The development was the redevelopment of part of the pavilion end of the cricket ground,

with the replacement of the Surrey Tavern and Lock, Laker and Peter May stands and other minor buildings with a new plaza, a six-storey stand incorporating 1,830 additional spectator seats, and other facilities including a hotel. The new development was proposed next to what HSE regarded as a major hazards site, namely the Kennington gasholder station, which is placed in the top-tier of COMAH sites.

54. HSE strongly opposed the development on the basis that it would involve a significant increase in the numbers of people would be placed in both the inner and middle of HSE's three zones around the gasholders.
55. The relevant local planning authority, Lambeth Council, decided to grant planning permission against HSE's strong advice. HSE obtained a call-in of the application and a planning inquiry was subsequently held. However, notwithstanding HSE's continued objection and evidence, the Inspector recommended the grant of planning permission and the Secretary of State accepted that recommendation and granted the necessary permission. In so doing, both the Inspector and Secretary of State analysed the particular features of the planning application and the risks consequently involved, and they balanced the benefits of the development to the sport of cricket and the economic benefits for the area against the residual risk. HSE accepted, as it states it has always done, that this is a proper judgment to be made by the relevant decision-maker. That was even in circumstances where the COMAH site was in the top-tier of risk, and many more additional people were being placed into the inner zone of concern by the development proposed there, than here.
56. In my view, the same general approach is applicable here as a matter of basic principle. The fact that HSE has objected to the proposed development does not prevent the Council from reaching its own decision to grant planning permission. In so doing, the Council is entitled to look specifically at the application in the context of what is already permitted on site, and to assess any residual risk in that context in a way in which the HSE has clearly not done. The Council is also entitled to take into account the benefits of the proposed development and the social and economic benefits it would provide when considering any residual risk. In so doing, the HSE would properly recognise that these are legitimate judgments for the decision maker to take into account. The approach also demonstrates that the HSE's opinions on such issues are not determinative. The HSE may or may not request a call-in if the Council were to decide

to grant permission. Even if such a request were made, the Secretary of State may decide not to call-in the application. And even if the Secretary of State were to call-in the application, the Secretary of State may well decide to uphold the Council's decision to grant permission.

57. The Council should therefore exercise its own judgment, without considering itself bound to act in accordance with the HSE's stated objection. HSE's stated concern will be fully protected by its ability to request a call-in of the Secretary of State (although it may well choose not to make such a request if satisfied that the Council has decided to grant permission in the knowledge of HSE's objection). The Council should not be reluctant to have the courage of its own previous convictions in this respect, particularly given that the HSE's position does not take into account the existing position and the tolerated risk, nor does the HSE seek to quantify the nature of any material increase in risk. No prejudice is caused to the HSE by the Council resolving to grant planning permission because the HSE can still request a call-in if it sees fit to do so.

58. The Council is therefore entitled to grant permission based on the strong planning merits of what is proposed, and in light of its previous views and judgment on the acceptability of residual risk. If the Council were to do this, I would expect the HSE to think again before requesting any call-in. However, even if it were to make such a request, before acceding to it, I would expect the Secretary of State to adopt the same pragmatic approach that the Council ought to consider as to the question of increased risk based on the existing permitted use, rather than the artificial approach adopted by the HSE of not taking into account that permitted use in its decision-making.

JAMES STRACHAN QC
39 Essex Chambers
London WC2A 1DD

4 December 2018

This page is intentionally left blank

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5th December 2018

ITEM NO. 12

Ward: Whitley

App No: 181059/FUL

Address: Unit 1, Arena Business Park, Acre Road

Proposal: Change of use from storage and distribution to (Class B8) to a flexible Class B2/B8 use

Applicant: South Yorkshire Pensions Authority

Date validated: 03/07/18

Target Date: 21/08/18

Extension agreed to: 07/12/18

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT

Conditions to include:

1. Time limit for implementation
2. Approved plans
3. Vehicle parking
4. Bicycle parking

Informatives to include:

1. Terms and conditions
2. Need for building regulations
3. Encroachment
4. Construction and Demolition subject to Environmental Health
5. Highways
6. Positive and proactive

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The site is located in an established area of industrial, office and commercial uses and is within the defined South of Basingstoke Road Core Employment Area. The closest residential dwellings are located approximately 300m east of the site at Basingstoke Road. The site extends to 1.29ha, south of Acre Road. Acre Business Park is located to the east, with large warehouse buildings located to the north, south and west.

1.2 The site comprises a large warehouse unit (gross internal floor space 6,183 square metres) with a service yard to the west, and extensive parking to the east. Dual access is achieved to Acre Road. The northward and eastward site boundaries are lined by trees subject to preservation orders. At the time of the application the unit is vacant, most recently in use in November 2017 by Booker Cash & Carry (Class B8). The site has recently undergone extensive refurbishment, internally and externally, following the grant of planning permission 172301/FUL.



Site Location Plan

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 Full planning permission is sought for the change of use of the unit from storage and distribution (Class B8) to a flexible Class B2/B8 use. No internal or external changes are proposed to facilitate the change of use. Changes of this nature have recently taken place after the grant of planning permission 172301/FUL in February 2018.
- 2.2 The planning application has been made as the history of the site is unclear, and the determination of the application provides certainty, and to assist in putting a currently vacant unit back into active use. The proposal originally included the option of a Class B1(c) use, though this has been removed from the description of development during the course of the application on the advice of officers.
- 2.3 Following the advice of officers, the bicycle storage approved under application 172301/FUL has been altered, with a further five stands now being proposed. This takes the total on site bicycle parking provision to 18 spaces.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 890234/ADV - Display of signage - Permitted 02/01/90
- 3.2 920197/FUL - Erection of first floor fire exit and two roller shutter doors - Permitted 02/06/92
- 3.3 021490/ADV - Display of signage - Permitted 24/12/02

3.4 172301/FUL - Various external alterations including replacement of front façade, installation of condenser and ventilation grilles, and alterations to parking layout - Permitted 27/02/18

4. CONSULTATIONS

(i) Statutory Consultation

4.1 None.

(ii) Non Statutory Consultation

4.2 Transport Development Control

4.3 To the original proposal, Transport Development Control objected to the proposal on the grounds of insufficient information being supplied to enable the highways, traffic and transportation implications of the proposed development to be fully assessed. It was considered that the additional traffic likely to be generated by the proposal would adversely affect the safety and flow of users of the existing road network. Additionally, the proposed vehicle and bicycle parking failed to demonstrate that they comply with the LPA’s standards.

4.4 Following discussions, the description of development was amended to remove the proposed B1(c) use given the increased level of trips that would have been generated. Accordingly, an amended Transport Statement was provided to reflect this change and Transport Development Control provided the following response:

4.5 The applicant has been unable to count the number of trips generated by the existing use of the site given that this has now closed. It has therefore been agreed through the discussions that a survey from an alternative comparable Booker Warehouse would be acceptable and the site was accepted prior to the survey commencing. It has however been identified that the PM Peak assessment is for the hours of 4pm and 5pm but this is not the PM Peak hour and this should be assessed between the hours of 5pm and 6pm. I have therefore reviewed the survey data for the Booker site and this identifies the following:

	Thursday	Friday
AM Peak 2-way	46	47
PM Peak 2-way	42	21
Total daily flow 2-way	543	501

Table 1 - Surveyed Booker Site in Birmingham

4.6 The survey data therefore identifies an element of flexibility between the trip generation for the site within the PM Peak period, following a review of the opening times for Booker Warehouses these are typical 7am to 5pm with the exception of a Thursday which is until 7pm. Given this the Friday trip rate would be the most likely to assess weekday trips and therefore this should be used.

4.7 The surveyed site has a floor area of 5,500m² while the application site has a floor area of 6,183m², I am therefore happy to factor up the trip rates from the survey data to represent an actual trip rate. This is identified within the table below:

	Thursday	Friday
AM Peak 2-way	52	53
PM Peak 2-way	47	24

Total daily flow 2-way	610	563
------------------------	-----	-----

Table 2 - Surveyed data factored up to 6,183m² for application site

- 4.8 The applicant has stated that the trip rates associated with the proposed uses have been calculated using TRICS which in principle has been deemed acceptable. The TRICS data has been analysed and I note that the following sites are not comparable for the reasons listed below:
 Site ES-02-D-06 - This site is not comparable in terms of car parking provision to the application site
 Site LC-02-D-07 - This site is not comparable in terms of car parking provision to the application site
 Site WO-02-D-01 - This site is not comparable given that it is classified as a B1 use
 Site WO-02-D-02 - This site is not comparable in terms of car parking provision to the application site
 Site WY-02-D-06 - This site is not comparable in terms of car parking provision to the application site

- 4.9 I have therefore removed these sites from the selection and as a result the assessment I have undertaken results in fewer trips to that specified by the applicant. The outcome of my assessment as well as a comparison to the current use is as follows:

	AM Peak	PM Peak	Daily
Trips from Current Booker Site	53	24	563
Proposed B2 Use	52	48	457
Difference	-1	+24	-106

- 4.10 The proposal for a B2 use results in similar flows in the AM Peak, an increase of 24 movements in the PM Peak and a reduction of 106 movements across the whole day. This is not a material increase in the PM Peak and within the daily fluctuations on the network and given paragraph 109 of the NPPF which states proposals should only be refused on transport grounds if the residual cumulative impacts are severe, a refusal on traffic generation grounds would be hard to defend at an appeal.
- 4.11 The current building has a use class as B8 so this could change to another B8 user without planning permission as a result I have not reviewed any Trip Rates within the B8 use class.
- 4.12 The proposed addition of a B2 use will result in an increased demand for car parking. The Councils Parking Standards and Design SPD requires a provision of 1 space per 150m² for B8 uses but a provision of 1 space per 100m² for the proposed B2 use. Based on the floor area provided this would equate to an additional 20 spaces being required or a provision of 62 spaces, however a drawing has been submitted that illustrates the provision of 59 spaces. Given that the Councils standards are maximums the parking provision illustrated is deemed acceptable.
- 4.13 Additional cycle parking is also required in accordance with the Councils Parking Standards and Design SPD, and would need to be in the form of 4 additional cycle spaces. The submitted drawing has identified the provision of 4 Sheffield type stands equating to 8 cycle spaces and this is deemed acceptable in principle. However there does not appear to be sufficient space between the existing and proposed row of stands so that all cycle spaces are therefore accessible, in addition the proposed cycle parking does not appear to be covered. A revised drawing

should therefore be submitted to address the above but given there is sufficient space to accommodate this provision I am happy for this to be dealt with by way of a condition.

- 4.14 In the circumstances there are no transport objections to the proposal subject to conditions.
- 4.15 Neighbouring owners and occupiers at Units C1-C13, Acre Business Park, Acre Road; Units 6, 8 and 10 Worton Drive; Unit 2 Arena Business Park, Acre Road; 4 Acre Road; and Whitbread, Acre Road were consulted by letter. A site notice was displayed. No letters of representation have been received.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework, among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

5.2 The application has been assessed against the following policies:

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework

5.4 Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2008) (altered 2015)

Policy CS4: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

Policy CS5: Inclusive Access

Policy CS7: Design and the Public Realm

Policy CS9: Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities

Policy CS10: Location of Employment Development

Policy CS11: Use of Employment Land for Alternative Uses

Policy CS12: Maintaining a Variety of Premises

Policy CS13: Impact of Employment Development

Policy CS20: Implementation of The Reading Transport Strategy

Policy CS22: Transport Assessments

Policy CS24: Car/Cycle Parking

Policy CS35: Flooding

Policy CS36: Biodiversity and Geology

5.5 Reading Borough Local Development Framework Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012) (altered 2015)

Policy SD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy DM4: Safeguarding Amenity

Policy DM12: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

Policy SA12: Core Employment Areas

5.6 Reading Borough Proposals Map

5.7 Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document (2011)

5.8 Employment, Skills and Training Supplementary Planning Document (2013)

6. APPRAISAL

(i) Principle of change of use

6.1 The application site is located within Core Employment Area SA12c: South of Basingstoke Road. Policy SA12 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document defines the boundaries of Core Employment Areas to allow policies CS10, CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy to be applied. These areas will be the main location for industrial and warehouse uses and there is a general presumption against the loss of employment land in these areas.

6.2 The proposed use is consistent with the range of uses within the Core Employment Area. Additionally, the proposal allows a previously vacant unit to be placed into an active use. On this basis it is considered that the proposal would not result in a loss of employment land and is therefore in accordance with policies CS10, CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy.

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

6.3 The proposal does not include any internal or external alterations. Extensive refurbishment of the site has recently taken place with the works approved by planning permission 172301/FUL. The proposed change of use would not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and is therefore in accordance with Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy.

(iii) Impact on neighbours

6.4 The application site is located within an area of established industrial and commercial activity. The closest residential dwellings are located approximately 300m east of the site at Basingstoke Road. At the time of the application, the unit is currently vacant and the future occupiers are unknown. Noise from plant equipment that has recently been installed on the building is controlled by condition under application 172301/FUL. Any residual noise problems that might occur from any future occupier could be reasonably controlled under separate Environmental Health legislation. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document.

(iv) Transport

6.5 Transport Development Control have assessed the proposal and concluded that the proposal is acceptable. The amended TRICS data supplied establishes that a B2 use in this location would result in 106 fewer trips across the day than the current B8 use. The LPA's parking standard requires a maximum of 62 spaces for the use proposed. 59 vehicle parking spaces have been provided on site, secured by condition to permission 172301/FUL. 18 secure bicycle storage spaces, across two locations, have also been provided on site. This accords with the LPA's standard for a use of this size and is therefore considered to be acceptable. Drawing No: BS-01 Rev. P1 (received 22/11/18) addresses the outstanding information that Transport Development Control required, so no pre-commencement condition is required. The proposal is therefore in accordance with policies CS20 and CS24 of the Core Strategy and Policy DM12 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document.

(v) Flooding

6.6 The site is not located within a flood zone and the proposal does not include any physical alterations to the building or external areas. Officers are therefore satisfied that the proposal is in accordance with Policy CS35 of the Core Strategy.

(vi) Equality

6.7 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics including age and disability. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

(vii) Employment, Skills and Training

6.8 The Employment, Skills and Training Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out the obligations that will be sought from developers at the construction and end user phases of development, contributing towards a range of employment, skills and training measures. Generally, the SPD is applied to all developments. However, more discretion is applied to changes of use where there is no net increase in floor space and/or where some or all of the floor space has been in continuous use for at least 6 months in the 12 months leading up to the submission of the planning application.

6.9 The application is for the change of use of the unit, with no additional floor space proposed. The unit was most recently in use in November 2017 by Booker Cash & Carry. The proposed development does not include any construction phase and the end user is unknown. Based on this information, officers have discussed the requirement for an Employment and Skills Plan with Reading UK CIC. Reading UK CIC advised that in the circumstance, there would not be a requirement for an Employment and Skills Plan. This is due the proposed development relating the change of use of the unit only, there being no known end user and that the unit was in continuous use in the 12 months leading up to the submission of the application. As such, there is no requirement for an Employment and Skills Plan and the proposed development is in accordance with the Employment, Skills and Training Supplementary Planning Document.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The proposed change of use is considered acceptable in the context of national and local planning policy, as set out in this report. The application is recommended for approval on this basis.

8. PLANS

Planning Statement (received 18/06/18)

Site Location (received 18/06/18)

Drawing No: PL-02 Rev. B - Proposed Ground Floor Plan (received 18/06/18)

Drawing No: PL-03 Rev. A - Proposed First Floor Plan (received 18/06/18)

Drawing No: BS-01 Rev. P1 - Proposed Bicycle Storage and Car Park Layout (received 22/11/18)

Case Officer: Tom Hughes

This page is intentionally left blank