

To: Councillor McKenna (Chair)  
Councillors Sokale, Carnell, Duveen, Ennis,  
Lovelock, Rowland, McEwan, Page,  
Robinson, DP Singh, Stanford-Beale,  
J Williams and R Williams

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27 August 2019

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

**NOTICE OF MEETING - PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE 4 SEPTEMBER 2019**

A meeting of the Planning Applications Committee will be held on Wednesday, 4 September 2019 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	-		9 - 22
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	-		
3. QUESTIONS	-		
4. POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS	Decision		23 - 26
5. PLANNING APPEALS	Information	BOROUGHWIDE	27 - 38
6. APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL	Information	BOROUGHWIDE	39 - 52
7. OBJECTION TO A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER 25 HIGHDOWN HILL ROAD	Decision	PEPPARD	53 - 60
8. PROPOSED WORKS (RETROSPECTIVE) TO TREES AT THE FORMER WHITLEY LIBRARY, NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE	Decision	CHURCH	61 - 64

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**PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED**

<b>9.</b>	<b>190809/FUL - THAMES QUARTER, KINGS MEADOW ROAD</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>ABBEY</b>	<b>65 - 120</b>
	<b>Proposal</b>	Erection of a part 13-storey, part 23 storey building comprising 335 apartments in a mix of studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom and three- bedroom units, residents' lounges, tech-hub, dining room, and cinema room, various rooftop outdoor amenity spaces, concierge/reception with coffee meeting area, gym, residents' storage facilities, post room, ancillary back-of-house facilities, 335 secure cycle parking spaces, car parking spaces, landscaping, and associated works (revision to planning permission 162166 dated 23/11/2017)(Part Retrospective)		
	<b>Recommendation</b>	Application Permitted		
<b>10.</b>	<b>190522/FUL - 39 BRUNSWICK HILL</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>BATTLE</b>	<b>121 - 144</b>
	<b>Proposal</b>	Erection of new building containing 9 no. apartments with parking at rear following demolition of existing buildings.		
	<b>Recommendation</b>	Permitted subject to Legal Agreement		
<b>11.</b>	<b>190449/FUL - 40-68 SILVER STREET</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>KATESGROVE</b>	<b>145 - 188</b>
	<b>Proposal</b>	Erection of part 1, part 2 and part 4 storey (plus basement level) buildings to provide 79 student studio rooms (sui generis use class) with associated ancillary space and landscaping works.		
	<b>Recommendation</b>	Application Refused		
<b>12.</b>	<b>181377/REG3 - NORCOT COMMUNITY CENTRE, TILEHURST</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>KENTWOOD</b>	<b>189 - 206</b>
	<b>Proposal</b>	Amended Description: Erection of a three storey building comprising 18 (8x1 and 10x2 bed) residential units (Use Class C3) with associated bin and cycle storage, a 96.4sqm (NIA) building for community use (Use Class D1), vehicle parking, landscaping and associated works.		
	<b>Recommendation</b>	Permitted subject to Legal Agreement		
<b>13.</b>	<b>190936/LBC - YEOMANRY HOUSE, CASTLE HILL</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>MINSTER</b>	<b>207 - 212</b>
	<b>Proposal</b>	Part demolition and rebuilding north boundary wall and localised repair to loose and cracked brickwork.		
	<b>Recommendation</b>	Application Permitted		
<b>14.</b>	<b>190788/FUL - JUNCTION 11, SOUTH SIDE OF M4</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>WHITLEY</b>	<b>213 - 220</b>
	<b>Proposal</b>	Installation of a 20M monopole, supporting 6 No. antennas, 4 No. equipment cabinets, the removal of the existing 17.5M monopole and its 3 No. antennas and 4No. equipment cabinets and ancillary development.		
	<b>Recommendation</b>	Application Permitted		
<b>15.</b>	<b>190948/FUL - CORNER OF ACRE ROAD/A33 TERRANOVA SITE</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>WHITLEY</b>	<b>221 - 228</b>

<b>Proposal</b>	Removal and replacement of the existing 17.5 metre high monopole and 3 No. antennas with an upgraded 20 metre high lattice tower and 6No. upgraded antennas, the relocation of 1 No. dish to be located on the new tower, the installation of 8 No. equipment cabinets located at ground level in the compound, and ancillary development thereto.
<b>Recommendation</b>	Application Permitted

**16.** 190858/REG3 - LAND WEST OF LONGWATER AVENUE (GREEN PARK RAILWAY STATION), GREEN PARK      Decision      WHITLEY      229 - 246

<b>Proposal</b>	Construction of a building comprising ticket hall, public conveniences, staff facilities and ancillary retail provision to serve the proposed Green Park railway station development, including associated signage
<b>Recommendation</b>	Application Permitted

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## KEY TO CODING OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

1. Planning application reference numbers are made up of 2 parts.
  - 1.1 The number begins with the year e.g. **19**
  - 1.2 This is followed by a consecutive number, showing what number the application is in any year (e.g. **190128**).
  
2. The following is a key to existing officers with their direct dial telephone numbers.

<b>GF1</b>	-	Giorgio Framalico	9372604
<b>JW6</b>	-	Julie Williams	9372461
<b>RJE</b>	-	Richard Eatough	9373338
<b>JPM</b>	-	Jonathan Markwell	9372458
<b>SDV</b>	-	Steve Vigar	9372980
<b>CJB</b>	-	Christopher Beard	9372430
<b>SGH</b>	-	Stephen Hammond	9374424
<b>MDW</b>	-	Mark Worringham	9373337
<b>AJA</b>	-	Alison Amoah	9372286
<b>SEH</b>	-	Sarah Hanson	9372440
<b>BXP</b>	-	Boja Petkovic	9372352
<b>MJB</b>	-	Matthew Burns	9373625
<b>EH1</b>	-	Ethne Humphreys	9374085
<b>SKB</b>	-	Sarah Burr	9374227
<b>TRH</b>	-	Tom Hughes	9374150
<b>SFB</b>	-	Susanna Bedford	9372023
<b>NW2</b>	-	Nathalie Weekes	9374237
<b>TF1</b>	-	Tom French	9374068
<b>CD3</b>	-	Connie Davis	9372413
<b>AS9</b>	-	Anthony Scholes	9374729
<b>JO1</b>	-	James Overall	9374532
<b>BC2</b>	-	Brian Conlon	9373859
<b>JPS</b>	-	James Schofield	9374656

**GUIDE TO USE CLASSES ORDER**  
and Permitted Changes of Use (England)

Use Classes (Amendment) Order 2005	Use Classes Order 1972	Description	General Permitted Development (Amendment) Order 2005
<b>A1</b> Shops	Class I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shops, retail warehouses, hairdressers, undertakers, travel and ticket agencies, post offices, dry cleaners, internet cafes, etc.</li> <li>Pet shops, cat-meat shops, tripe shops, sandwich bars</li> <li>Showrooms, domestic hire shops, funeral directors</li> </ul>	No permitted changes
<b>A2</b> Financial and Professional Services	Class II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Banks, building societies, estate and employment agencies</li> <li>Professional and financial services, betting offices</li> </ul>	Permitted change to A1 <i>where a ground floor display window exists</i>
<b>A3</b> Restaurants and Cafes		Restaurants, snack bars, cafes	Permitted change to A1 or A2
<b>A4</b> Drinking Establishments		Pubs and bars	Permitted change to A1, A2 or A3
<b>A5</b> Hot Food Take-Aways		Take-Aways	Permitted change to A1, A2 or A3
<b>Sui Generis</b>		Shops selling and/or displaying motor vehicles, retail warehouse clubs, laundrettes, taxi or vehicle hire businesses, amusement centres, petrol filling stations	No permitted change
<b>B1</b> Business	Class II  Class III	(a) Offices, not within A2 (b) Research and development, studios, laboratories, high tech (c) Light industry	Permitted change to B8 <i>where no more than 235m</i>
<b>B2</b> General industry	Class IV-IX	General industry	Permitted change to B1 or B8 <i>B8 limited to no more than 235m</i>
<b>B8</b> Storage or Distribution	Class X	Wholesale warehouse, distribution centres, repositories	Permitted change to B1 <i>where no more than 235m</i>
<b>Sui Generis</b>		Any work registrable under the Alkali, etc. Works Regulation Act, 1906	No permitted change
<b>C1</b> Hotels	Class XI	Hotels, boarding and guest houses	No permitted change
<b>C2</b> Residential Institutions	Class XII Class XIV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential schools and colleges</li> <li>Hospitals and convalescent/nursing homes</li> </ul>	No permitted change
<b>C2A</b> Secure residential institutions		Prisons, young offenders institutions, detention centres, secure training centres, custody centres, short-term holding centres, secure hospitals, secure local authority accommodation or use as military barracks.	No permitted change
<b>C3</b> Dwelling houses		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single occupancy or single households (in the family sense);</li> <li>No more than six residents living as a single household where care is provided;</li> <li>No more than six residents living as a single household where the building is managed by a local housing authority, a registered social landlord, a police authority, a fire authority, or a health service body.</li> </ul>	Permitted to change to C4
<b>C4</b> Houses in multiple occupation		Use of a dwellinghouse by between three and six residents, who do not form a single household (in the family sense) and share basic facilities (toilet, bathroom or kitchen).	Permitted to change to C3
<b>Sui Generis</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>House in multiple occupation with more than six residents</li> <li>Hostel</li> </ul>	No permitted change

<b>D1</b> Non-Residential Institutions	Class XIII	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Places of worship, church halls</li> <li>• Clinics, health centres, creches, day nurseries, consulting rooms</li> <li>• Museums, public halls, libraries, art galleries, exhibition halls</li> <li>• Non-residential education and training centres</li> </ul>	No permitted change
	Class XV		
	Class XVI		
<b>D2</b> Assembly and Leisure	Class XVII	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cinemas, music and concert halls</li> <li>• Dance, sports halls, swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums</li> <li>• Other indoor and outdoor sports and leisure uses, bingo halls, casinos</li> </ul>	No permitted change
	Class XVIII		
<b>Sui Generis</b>	Class XVII	Theatres, nightclubs	No permitted change

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**Present:** Councillor McKenna (Chair);  
Councillors Sokale (Vice-Chair), Carnell, Lovelock, Rowland, McEwan, Page, Robinson, Stanford-Beale, J Williams and R Williams

**Apologies:** Councillors Duveen, Ennis and DP Singh

### RESOLVED ITEMS

#### 24. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### 25. QUESTIONS

The following question was asked by Boyd Butler:

##### 5G Base Stations

Will Reading Borough Council follow other cities across the world in delaying the roll-out of hundreds of powerful phased array 5G base stations across the borough, because of the thousands of studies proving that 5G is dangerous to the health of residents and living creatures?

**REPLY** by the Chair of the Planning Applications Committee (Councillor McKenna):

Mr Butler thank you for your question. However, I do not feel that Planning Committee is the most appropriate place to fully address the context of your question. This is a quasi-judicial committee that must act within the rather strict framework of published guidance operating underneath current UK legislation.

The relevant guidance in this case (amongst a number of others) is the electronic communications code published by Ofcom in December 2017 (which took effect under The Communications Act 2003) and the revised National Planning Policy Framework published by the Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP as Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government 19 February 2019.

However that said, I can provide the reassurance that Reading Borough Council have already escalated our own concerns about 5G delivery, via the Superfast Berkshire Broadband Project. This is the body taking a Digital Infrastructure Delivery role collectively across Berkshire on behalf of all six Unitary authorities. We have received assurances, that both Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) are not only aware of these concerns, but that the Government has committed (as 5G continues to develop) to working with Public Health

England's Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards (CRCE) in order to monitor available evidence.

In an attempt to be of further help I will refer you to the following sources of information, which may be useful in explaining both the context within which planning committees across this country are compelled to act and the government's current thinking as to safety concerns and policy framework.

**Planning committees** - this question was asked in Parliament 02 April 2019

"To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of Permitted Development Rights in allowing installation of infrastructure to develop the (a) existing and (b) proposed 5G mobile phone network."

**Answered 08 April 2019**

"We published the revised National Planning Policy Framework in 2018, setting out national planning policies for supporting high quality communications in England. **These include that the planning policies and decisions of local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, such as 5G.**

We have also introduced a range of permitted development rights to support the delivery of mobile infrastructure, including legislating for higher masts in 2016, whilst also protecting local amenity.

We hope that these measures will be used by industry, alongside proactive engagement with the planning system, to ensure delivery of 5G. However, we will keep planning regulations under review."

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-02/239975/>

**Overview of the wider policy framework**

The House of Commons have published a 34 page 5G briefing paper on the 22nd of February 2019 which may be useful to you:

<https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7883>

**Safety concerns** -This question asked in Parliament 21 May 2019

"To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to undertake (a) health-and-safety research and (b) a risk assessments before 5G is adopted in a localised test area."

**Answered 29 May 2019**

"Public Health England (PHE) has published a webpage about exposure to the radio waves from mobile phone base stations, including those for 5G networks, at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phone-base-stations-radio-waves-and-health/mobile-phone-base-stations-radio-waves-and-health>

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This explains the health-related reviews and assessments have been performed, as well as the practical measures that are in place to protect public health.

PHE advises that the guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) should be adopted and there is no convincing evidence that radio wave exposures below the ICNIRP guideline levels cause adverse health effects. The guidelines apply to exposures at frequencies up to 300 GHz, well above the maximum few tens of GHz frequencies anticipated for use by 5G systems.

Health and safety legislation requires companies deploying and operating communication networks to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments, as well as to put in place measures to reduce the identified risks so far as reasonably practicable. In controlling risks arising from radio wave exposure, the Health and Safety Executive refer to compliance with the ICNIRP guidelines. Industry has committed to comply with the international guidelines and to provide certificates of compliance with planning applications for base stations.

PHE continues to monitor the health-related evidence applicable to radio waves, including in relation to base stations, and is committed to updating its advice as required."

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-05-21/256912/>

Regarding the petition launched in Jan 2019 signed by 32,454 people asking;

"Launch an independent enquiry into the health and safety risks of 5G.

As wireless companies prepare to launch the next generation of service, there are new questions about the possible health risks. The National Toxicology Program study "was just an indicator that more and better research is needed."

A government response was published 19 March 2019.

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/233707>

I trust this answer has been helpful to you.

### **26. POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS**

The Executive Director for Economic Growth 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.

It was proposed at the meeting that the application at 39 Brunswick Hill be the subject of an accompanied site visit.

**Resolved -**

That the under-mentioned applications, together with any additional applications which the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services might consider appropriate, be the subject of accompanied site visits:

**190835 - 199-203 HENLEY ROAD AND LAND TO THE REAR OF 205-207 HENLEY ROAD, CAVERSHAM**

Demolition of 199-203 Henley Road and erection of part four, part three and part two storey 82 unit residential care home building (C2 use class) with associated external structures, access from Henley Road, car parking and landscaping.

**190522/FUL - 39 BRUNSWICK HILL**

Erection of new building containing 9 no. apartments with parking at rear following demolition of existing buildings.

**27. PLANNING APPEALS**

**(i) New Appeals**

The Executive Director for Economic Growth 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 Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted details of five 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**

There were no reports on appeal decisions.

**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.

**28. APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL**

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report giving details in Table 1 of sixteen pending prior approval applications, and in Table 2 of two applications for prior approval decided between 13 June and 4 July 2019.

**Resolved -** That the report be noted.

**29. PROPOSED FELLING OF ONE MULBERRY TREE AT 44 FIRCROFT CLOSE, READING**

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the proposed felling of one Mulberry tree at 44 Fircroft Close (Tree T1 of Tree Protection Order (TPO) 100/01). A copy of the TPO plan was attached to the report at Appendix 1, and photographs of the tree were attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The report explained that the proposal was to fell the mature Mulberry tree located to the front of the property, due to recent and historical major branch failure leaving the tree unsafe given its location adjacent to a public path. Officers had visited the tree on a number of occasions, following branch failure in October 2017 and more recently in June 2019. The structural integrity of the remaining tree was now highly questionable as a result of the historical branch loss and weight of the remaining main limbs leaving them liable to failure. The extensive reduction work that would be required to address the hazard now presented by the tree would result in the tree's amenity value being affected to the point that it would no longer be worthy of inclusion in the TPO.

The report concluded that the proposed felling was considered a reasonable course of action given the historic branch failure and unacceptable risk the tree now presented, and therefore recommended that it be approved. If agreed, a replacement planting condition would be attached to the approval for a replacement tree in the same location.

**Resolved -** That the proposed felling be approved.

**30. OBJECTION TO A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER AT 1, 3, 5, 5A, 7 & 9 ARCTIC HOUSE AND LIME HOUSE, GRASS HILL**

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on two objections to Tree Preservation Order (TPO) No. 3/19 relating to 1, 3, 5, 5a, 7, 9, Arctic House & Lime House, Grass Hill. A copy of the TPO plan was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that it had been discovered in late 2018 that the TPO covering the east side of Grass Hill and part of St Peters Avenue (TPO 115/08) had unfortunately never been confirmed, and the trees had therefore not been protected. In December 2018 a temporary Area TPO had been served on the Grass Hill and St Peters Hill properties to protect all trees until a survey could be carried out, which had subsequently identified individuals, groups and one small woodland area worthy of long-term inclusion in a TPO. A more specific TPO had then been served on 29 May 2019 - reference 3/19.

Objections to the TPO had been made by the residents of 7 and 9 Grass Hill, details of which were set out in the report, along with officers' comments on the objections.

The report explained that the Grass Hill area was characteristically treed in nature, with all trees contributing to this and the tree lined ridge along the Warren. None of the objections raised were considered to be valid reasons for omitting trees from the TPO,

and it was therefore recommended that the TPO be confirmed, but with the replacement of the woodland classification with two individually specified Ash trees within the area.

At the invitation of the Chair, Ward Councillor David Stevens addressed the Committee on this item.

**Resolved -** That the Tree Preservation Order be confirmed with the replacement of W1 woodland with two individually specified Ash trees.

### 31. STREET NAME ASSIGNMENT - FORMER TOYS R US / HOMEBASE SITE

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report asking the Committee to select street names for the development located on the Former Toys R Us/ Homebase Site off of Kenavon Drive. A plan of the site detailing the street layout was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report noted that the development would have a large number of dwellings, commercial units and four new streets. The developer had suggested five names for the site relating to the Huntley and Palmers factory, which were listed in the report. Officers had added four additional options relating to Huntley and Palmer biscuit types.

**Resolved -** That the streets be named as follows:

- Street A - Palmer;
- Street B - Carraway;
- Street C - Filbert;
- Street D - Joseph Huntley.

### 32. 181930/FUL - 29-35 STATION ROAD

Demolition of the existing vacant 6-storey retail and office building and erection of a replacement basement and part 4, part 22 (with rooftop plant above) storey building to provide flexible retail (Class A1, A2 or A3) use at part ground floor level, a 135-bedroom hotel (Class C1) at 1st to 16th floors and offices (Class B1a) at 17th to 21st floors, associated servicing from Garrard Street and other associated works (amended description).

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting which recommended an additional condition on archaeology and clarified the inclusion of public realm landscaping materials within the proposed conditions.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to grant full planning permission subject to completion of a

S106 legal agreement by 14 August 2019 (unless a later date be agreed by the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the original report;

- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (3) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives recommended in the original report, with the additional condition recommended in the update report;
- (4) That officers, in consultation with Ward Councillors and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, approach the applicant to discuss the proposed name of the development.

### 33. 182054/FUL - 20 HOSIER STREET

Demolition of all existing structures, erection of a part 7, part 8 storey building for use as 101 bed Hotel (Class C1 Use) at Ground - 8th Floor and Restaurant with ancillary Bar (Class A3/A4 Use) at ground floor, with means of access, servicing and associated works

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting which stated that the applicant had formally agreed the financial sum of £97,000 for Public Realm improvements to Hosier Street to be secured via the S106 Legal Agreement, had agreed to amend the description to clarify that the bar use was ancillary to the restaurant, and had also submitted details of opening hours and a draft Crime Prevention Standards document. The report proposed an amendment to the proposed Heads of Terms, an amended condition regarding hours of opening and other additional conditions.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Objector Diana McAllister, and Chris Beard and Gary Lewis representing the applicant, attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

#### Resolved -

- (1) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement by 9 September 2019 (unless a later date be agreed by the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the original report, with the amendment as set out in the update report;
- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to refuse permission;

- (3) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives recommended in the original report, with the amended and additional conditions recommended in the update report;
- (4) That external materials be approved in consultation with Ward Councillors and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee.

**34. 190650/FUL - GREYFRIARS CHURCH, FRIAR STREET**

Demolition of the existing western foyer, and replacement with a larger glazed foyer area and other internal works; and single storey rear extension to no's 2 and 4 Sackville Street to link the church to these buildings, and the change of use of the premises from Sui Generis (Counselling services offices) to Class D1 use (non-residential institution - public worship or religious instruction), and changes to external parking and landscaping.

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting which explained that Reading Civic Society supported the application and clarified that the Council's Heritage Consultant had been consulted during the application process.

Comments were received and considered.

**Resolved -**

That planning permission for application 190650/FUL be granted, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the original report.

**35. 190441/VAR, 190442/VAR, 190465/REM, 190466/REM - STATION HILL**

**190441/VAR:**

Outline application (pursuant to section 73 of the Town & Country Act 1990) for mixed use redevelopment of the site through the demolition and alteration of existing buildings and erection of new buildings & structures to provide Offices (Use Class B1), a range of town centre uses including retail and related uses (Use Class A1-A5) leisure (Use Class D2) and residential units, associated infrastructure, public realm works and ancillary development (all matters reserved) as permitted by planning permission 151427 granted on 26 July 2016 (which itself was an application under S73 to vary planning permission 130436 granted on 9 January 2015) but without complying with Conditions 3, 5, 7, 8, 17, 19, 54 and 57 in respect of Plot F 'Station Hill'.

**190442/VAR:**

Outline application with all matters reserved for mixed use redevelopment of Plot E of the Station Hill site and neighbouring Telecom House site (48 to 51 Friar Street & 4 to 20 Garrard Street) to comprise the demolition of existing buildings and erection of new buildings/ structures to provide residential units, a range of town centre uses including retail and related uses (Use Class A1 - A5), associated infrastructure, public realm works



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and ancillary development but without complying with Conditions 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 16, 17, 21, 37 and 50.

### **190465/REM:**

Application for the approval of reserved matters (access, scale, appearance, layout and landscaping) for Plot E within the development site known as Station Hill submitted pursuant to Outline Planning Permission ref. 190442, and submission of details for approval pursuant to Conditions attached to that permission. The proposals comprise the construction of a 12 storey building (plus basement storey) containing 370 Build to Rent residential units (Use Class C3), 1,151sqm (GEA) of flexible retail floorspace (Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5), cycle storage, car parking, servicing, plant areas, landscaping, new public realm and other associated works (amended description).

### **190466/REM:**

Application for approval of reserved matters (access, scale, appearance, layout and landscaping) for Plot F within the development site known as Station Hill submitted pursuant to Outline Planning Permission ref. 190441, and submission of details for approval pursuant to Conditions attached to that permission. The proposals comprise construction of a 12 storey (plus basement storey) building containing 168 Build to Rent residential units (Use Class C3), 390sqm (GEA) of flexible retail floorspace (Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, D2), 656sqm (GEA) of leisure floorspace (Use Class D1 or D2), cycle storage, car parking, servicing, plant areas, landscaping, new public realm and other associated works (amended description).

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above applications. An update report was tabled at the meeting which set out information on energy, wind, and ecology, and had appended a statement from the applicant on energy and a full list of submitted drawings. The report proposed additional s106 Head of Terms and amended conditions for applications 190441/VAR and 190442/VAR, relating to energy supply and sustainability/environmental performance. The report also amended the recommendation for applications 190465/REM and 190466/REM to clarify that the Reserved Matters approval could only be granted after the s73 permissions (decision notices) had been issued.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

It was proposed by the Chair and agreed by the Committee that Standing Order 36A 3 c) be suspended during discussion of this item, in order to invite the agent to address the Committee and answer questions from the Committee, despite no public speakers having registered to speak.

At the invitation of the Chair, the agents xx and yyy and Councillor Barnett-Ward addressed the Committee on this application.

### **Resolved -**

- (1) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to grant planning permission for applications 190441/VAR

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 17 JULY 2019

(Plot F & Northern Site) and 190442/VAR (Plot E), subject to the completion of Section 106 agreements by 1 August 2019 (unless a later date be agreed by the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the original report and the additional Heads of Terms set out in the update report, and further subject to the outstanding wind and microclimate matters being satisfactorily resolved with these matters being delegated to the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services to assess and determine;

- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (3) That planning permissions be subject to the conditions and informatives recommended in the original report, with the amended conditions set out in the update report;
- (4) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to grant reserved matters approval for applications 190465/REM and 190466/REM, following the grant of s73 outline planning permission for applications 190441/VAR and 190442/VAR, and subject to the conditions and informatives set out in the original report;
- (5) That the Head of Legal Services and Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to make such changes to the conditions and obligations, as might reasonably be required in order to complete/issue the permissions/approvals.

### **36. 190522/FUL - 39 BRUNSWICK HILL**

Erection of new building containing 9 no. apartments with parking at rear following demolition of existing buildings

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting which set out additional consultation responses received from the Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee and Reading Civic Society and summarised other additional objections received. The report also set out information on affordable housing and recommended amendments to the proposed Heads of Terms and an additional condition regarding the unit mix.

It was proposed at the meeting that a site visit be carried out.

**Resolved -**

That consideration of the application be deferred for a site visit.

### **37. 190704/REG3 - LAND ADJACENT 72 WENTWORTH AVENUE**

Construction of 2 no. two-bed dwellings and associated parking, landscaping and access.

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the completion of a unilateral undertaking legal agreement by 27 July 2019 (unless the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services agreed a later date) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the report;
- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (3) That planning permission be granted subject to the conditions and informatives recommended in the report.

**38. 190357/HOU - 10 PEGS GREEN CLOSE**

Two storey side/rear extension and single storey front and rear extensions, loft conversion with new dormer window and 2 Velux windows.

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. Attached to the report at Appendix A was the report on the application submitted to the meeting held on 26 June 2019, at which consideration of the application had been deferred for a site visit.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Objectors Annie Gedye and Ashley Cooper, and the applicant Aishah Akhtar, attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the application be refused;
- (2) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to finalise the reason(s) for refusal, to incorporate the following issues raised by the Committee: impact on the amenity of no. 9 Pegs Green Close, the impact of the unneighbourly boundary with no. 8 Pegs Green Close, harmful impact on the character and appearance of the Close generally caused by overdevelopment of the site, and the visual impact of

hardstanding for parking on the front garden contrary to adopted development plan policies.

**39. 190160/FUL - "ALEXANDER HOUSE", 205-207 KINGS ROAD**

Demolition of existing office building and construction of new 182 bed student accommodation development, over 7 storeys of accommodation plus lower ground floor, together with ancillary landscaping, parking and amenity space.

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting which set out information on consultation responses and affordable housing. The report recommended amendments to the proposed reasons for refusal regarding affordable housing.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

**Resolved -**

That the application be refused for the following reasons, with the informatives set out in the report:

1. It has not been clearly demonstrated how this proposal for purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) meets an identified need that cannot be met on those identified sites within the Emerging Local Plan allocated for student accommodation or on those sequentially preferable sites. Alexander House is a specifically allocated housing site within the Emerging Local Plan required to meet the Borough's identified housing needs. Its loss to an alternative use has not been justified and would further reduce the Council's ability to meet its general and affordable housing need within its own boundaries. The proposal therefore does not comply with Policy H12 and Policy ER1g of the Emerging Local Plan and conflicts with the aims of the NPPF.
2. In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure a construction phase Employment and Skills Plan and use of the living accommodation to be occupied as student accommodation (Sui Generis) only, the proposal will not mitigate its impact on the social and economic infrastructure of the Borough, contrary to Policies CS3 and CS9 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015), Policy DM3 of the Reading Borough LDF Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015) and the Council's Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents on Employment, Skills & Training (2013) and Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015).

**40. 182214/FUL - 45 UPPER REDLANDS ROAD**

Erection of 4 dwellinghouses and accesses with associated landscaping and parking.

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 17 JULY 2019

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. Attached to the report at Appendix A was the report on the application submitted to the meeting held on 26 June 2019, at which consideration of the application had been deferred for a site visit. An update report was tabled at the meeting which amended the proposed date for completion of a s106 legal agreement, and set out comments from the Council's Conservation and Heritage Consultant on the most up-to-date plans with an amended condition.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Objectors David Cooper, Anoushka Henderson and Mike Thomas, the agent Andy Meader, and Ward Councillors Tony Jones and Jamie Whitham, attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

### Resolved -

- (1) That the application be refused;
- (2) That the Head of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised, in consultation with Ward Councillors and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, to finalise the reasons for refusal, to incorporate the following issues raised by the Committee: the impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and setting of Listed Buildings through the loss of the brick garden boundary walls and open garden space between the buildings, and the lack of affordable housing contribution.

### 41. 190808/REG3 - DENTON COURT, HEXHAM ROAD

Various external and internal refurbishments including the complete replacement of non-loadbearing elevations to the front and rear including insulation, windows and doors; the replacement of gutters, fascia and soffits; and internally, the installation of new kitchens and bathrooms

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application.

Comments were received and considered.

### Resolved -

That, pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, the carrying out of the development 190808 at Denton Court be authorised, subject to the conditions and informatives recommended in the report.

### 42. 190434/FUL - LAND TO THE REAR OF 27 - 43 BLENHEIM ROAD CAVERSHAM

Erection of 3 dwellings with parking, landscaping and access from Blenheim Road.

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 17 JULY 2019

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting which gave details of the agreed contribution to affordable housing, set out information on the vehicular access arrangements onto Blenheim Road, attached swept path analysis drawings, and corrected some errors in the original report. The report recommended updated Heads of Terms for the proposed Section 106 Agreement.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Ward Councillor David Stevens attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

### **Resolved -**

- (1) That the application be refused;
- (2) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services, in consultation with Ward Councillors and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, be authorised to finalise the reasons for refusal, to incorporate the following issues raised by the Committee: the loss of the woodland TPO and impact on biodiversity; highway safety concerns with the proposed access road; overdevelopment, and the lack of a s106 legal agreement for the affordable housing contribution.

### **43. PLANNING ENFORCEMENT QUARTERLY UPDATE**

This item was not considered.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 11.04 pm)

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

<b>TO:</b>	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
<b>Date:</b>	4 SEPTEMBER 2019		
<b>TITLE:</b>	POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS		
<b>SERVICE:</b>	PLANNING	<b>WARDS:</b>	BOROUGH WIDE
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	JULIE WILLIAMS	<b>TEL:</b>	0118 9372461
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	PLANNING MANAGER	<b>E-MAIL:</b>	Julie.williams@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.

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## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

<b>TO:</b>	<b>PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>4 SEPTEMBER 2019</b>		
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>PLANNING APPEALS</b>		
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	<b>JULIE WILLIAMS</b>	<b>TEL:</b>	<b>0118 9372461</b>
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	<b>PLANNING MANAGER</b>	<b>E-MAIL:</b>	<b>Julie.williams@reading.gov.uk</b>

#### 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:

WARD: NORCOT  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/19/3220213  
CASE NO: 180849  
ADDRESS: Land adjacent to Thorpe House, Colliers Way  
PROPOSAL: Outline application for residential redevelopment to provide a maximum of 14 dwelling units. Demolition of dwelling at 16 Kirton Close to provide access. (Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale reserved for future consideration).  
CASE OFFICER: James Overall  
METHOD: Written Representation  
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL OUTLINE PERMISSION  
APPEAL LODGED: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2019

WARD: ABBEY  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/Z/18/3200937  
CASE NO: 180032/LBC and 171080/ADV  
ADDRESS: 16 Queen Victoria St  
PROPOSAL: Retrospective application for externally illuminated fascia and projecting sign. Reverse applied digitally printed graphics.  
CASE OFFICER: Ethne Hymphreys  
METHOD: Written Representation  
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL  
APPEAL LODGED: 18th July 2019

WARD: SOUTHCOTE  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/19/3231881  
CASE NO: 190148  
ADDRESS: land adj. to the Horncastle, 208 Bath Road  
PROPOSAL: Application under s.73. Erection of one four bedroom dwelling at the rear of the Horncastle public house on New Lane Hill. Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 162366.  
CASE OFFICER: Connie Davis  
METHOD: Written Representation  
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL  
APPEAL LODGED: 29<sup>th</sup> July 2019

WARD: ABBEY  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/19/3232415  
CASE NO: 182090  
ADDRESS: 80 Oxford Road  
PROPOSAL: Proposed single storey rear extension, erection of pergola (retrospective) and the change of use of rear garden of A3 unit to a shisha bar (Sui Generis).  
  
CASE OFFICER: Connie Davis  
METHOD: Written Representation  
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL  
APPEAL LODGED: 13<sup>th</sup> August 2019

WARD: MINSTER  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/19/3233269  
CASE NO: 181846  
ADDRESS: 35 Dover Street  
PROPOSAL: Proposal for first floor extension to form a 2-bed flat to replace the existing balustrade/parapet wall, shed and entrance cupola, together with associated revisions to landscaping and access  
  
CASE OFFICER: James Overall  
METHOD: Written Representation  
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL  
APPEAL LODGED: 02/08/2019

WARD: SOUTHCOTE  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/19/3234479  
CASE NO: 182095  
ADDRESS: 15 Haywood Way  
PROPOSAL: Retrospective planning permission for the change of use of a 6-bedroom HMO (C4 class) to a 7-bedroom HMO (Sui Generis) for a maximum of 7 professionals.  
  
CASE OFFICER: James Overall  
METHOD: Written Representation  
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL  
APPEAL LODGED: 20/08/2019

## APPENDIX 2

### Appeals Decided:

WARD: ABBEY  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/D/19/3228362  
CASE NO: 190062  
ADDRESS: 30 Addison Road, Reading  
PROPOSAL: Retrospective application for a single storey rear extension to create a new bathroom and WC at the rear of existing building.  
CASE OFFICER: Natalie Weeks  
METHOD: Written Representation  
DECISION: DISMISSED  
DATE DETERMINED: 18.07.2019

WARD: ABBEY  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/18/3209051  
CASE NO: 180876  
ADDRESS: Battle Inn Public House 2 Bedford Road  
PROPOSAL: Demolition of public house (A4 use class) and erection of a part five/part four/part two storey building containing a single A1/A2/A3 use class unit at ground floor and 6 self-contained flats (C3 use class) above (3 x 1 bed, 2 x 2 bed and 1 x 1 bed units)  
CASE OFFICER: James Overall  
METHOD: Informal Hearing  
DECISION: ALLOWED  
DATE DETERMINED: 25<sup>th</sup> July 2019

WARD: PEPPARD  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/19/3226790  
CASE NO: 181869  
ADDRESS: 149 Chiltern Road  
PROPOSAL: Erection of a new 3 bedroom two storey detached house with garage and extensions and alterations to the existing bungalow to form an enlarged two storey dwelling  
CASE OFFICER: Matthew Burns  
METHOD: Written Representation  
DECISION: DISMISSED  
DATE DETERMINED: 25<sup>th</sup> July 2019

WARD: NORCOT  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/19/3222030  
CASE NO: 181953  
ADDRESS: The Post Office 180 Wantage Road  
PROPOSAL: External alterations to existing outbuilding  
CASE OFFICER: Anthony Scholes  
METHOD: Written Representation  
DECISION: DISMISSED  
DATE DETERMINED: 25<sup>th</sup> July 2019  
APPLICANTS APPEAL FOR COSTS WAS DISMISSED

WARD: THAMES  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/D/19/3225582  
CASE NO: 190007  
ADDRESS: 3 Cawsam Gardens, Caversham, Reading  
PROPOSAL: Two storey side extension. Resubmission of 180396  
CASE OFFICER: Connie Davis  
METHOD: Written Representation  
DECISION: ALLOWED  
DATE DETERMINED: 30<sup>TH</sup> July 2019  
APPLICANTS APPEAL FOR COSTS WAS DISMISSED

WARD: THAMES  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/D/19/3231186  
CASE NO: 181674  
ADDRESS: 35a St Peters Avenue, Caversham, Reading  
PROPOSAL: Proposed first floor front/side extension with open porch below  
CASE OFFICER: Tom French  
METHOD: Written Representation  
DECISION: DISMISSED  
DATE DETERMINED: 14<sup>th</sup> August 2019

WARD: PEPPARD  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/19/3224844  
CASE NO: 181573  
ADDRESS: 4a Woods Road, Caversham, Reading  
PROPOSAL: Erect 1 pair of semi-detached & 1 no detached dwelling at rear of 4a and 5 Woods Road. Demolish No 5 Woods Road & replace with new detached dwelling. Provide new access.  
CASE OFFICER: Susanna Bedford  
METHOD: Written Representation  
DECISION: DISMISSED  
DATE DETERMINED: 14<sup>th</sup> August 2019



### **APPENDIX 3**

**Address Index of Planning Officers reports on appeal decisions.**

- Battle Inn Public House 2 Bedford Road

**Planning Officers reports on appeal decisions attached.**

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**Ward:** Abbey

**Appeal No:** APP/0345/W/18/3209051

**Planning Ref:** 180876

**Site:** Battle Inn Public House 2 Bedford Road

**Proposal:** Demolition of public house (A4 use class) and erection of a part five/part four/part two storey building containing a single A1/A2/A3 use class unit at ground floor and 6 self-contained flats (C3 use class) above (3 x 1 bed, 2 x 2 bed and 1 x 1 bed units)

**Decision level:** Non-Determination Appeal

**Method:** Hearing

**Decision:** Appeal allowed (with a S106 legal agreement)

**Date Determined:** 25<sup>th</sup> July 2019 (Hearing held on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2019)

**Inspector:** Rory MacLeod MA MRTPI

## 1 BACKGROUND

1.1 The site relates to an existing two storey (plus rooms in the roof space) vacant pub building located on the junction of Bedford Road and Oxford Road. To the south, on the opposite side of Oxford Road, is a terrace of three and four storey Grade II listed buildings (no.s 149-169) whilst to the west, on the opposite side of Bedford Road, there is another three storey Grade II listed building (120-122 Oxford Road). The site is also located directly to the north of the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area the boundary of which runs along the middle of Oxford Road.

1.2 The planning application sought permission for demolition of the public house (A4 use class) and erection of a part five/part four/part two storey building containing a single A1/A2/A3 use class unit at ground floor and 6 self-contained flats (C3 use class).

1.3 The Applicant lodged an appeal with the Planning Inspectorate against the Local Planning Authority's (LPA's) non-determination of the application on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2018. As part of the application, the applicant submitted and paid for a viability appraisal review by the LPA to justify a zero/nil non policy compliant affordable housing offer. The applicant was advised that the viability review process would be likely to take the application beyond the target determination date (as with the majority of cases where a viability review is required) but was not prepared to wait for the viability review to be completed or agree an extension of time for determination of the application, hence the non-determination appeal was submitted.

1.4 An officer report to Planning Applications Committee in May 2019 set out that had the LPA had the opportunity to determine the application it would have been refused for the following two reasons:

- 1. The proposal by way of its bulk and in particular its four storey massing directly on the Bedford Road frontage together with its block like form and roof design is considered to be a significant overdevelopment of the site which would appear as a visually dominant and incongruous addition to the Bedford Road and Oxford Road street-scene. The proposal would fail to adequately address the corner location of the site as it turns to Bedford Road and its forward siting and massing is considered to be harmful to and to fails to preserve the setting of the adjacent Russell*

*Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area. It is considered the proposal would be contrary to policies CS7, CS33 and RC5.*

*2. In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure acceptable Affordable Housing provision, the proposal fails to contribute adequately to the housing needs of Reading Borough and the need to provide sustainable and inclusive mixed and balanced communities. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy DM6 of the Reading Borough LDF Sites and Detailed Policies Document (altered 2015), and Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2013.*

## **2 SUMMARY OF DECISION**

- 2.1 Reason for refusal no.2 with regard to affordable housing was resolved between the Appellant and the LPA in preparation of the appeal documentation with the signing of a unilateral undertaking legal agreement to secure a contribution of £45,320 towards the provision of off-site affordable housing within the Borough.
- 2.2 In respect of reason for refusal no.1 the Inspector considered that the redevelopment of the vacant site would enable improvements to be made to the site's current poor appearance and the proposal's siting, massing and design would be acceptable in relation to the character and appearance of the area.
- 2.3 In terms of the impact on adjacent heritage assets the Inspector considered that the proposal would not harm the significance of the listed buildings near to the site and that it would have a neutral effect on the mixed character of Oxford Road and Bedford Road within which the significance is experienced and therefore would preserve their setting. Similarly the Inspector considered that the proposal would have only a very limited effect on the setting of the conservation area opposite the site. Making reference to paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that 'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use', he found that this limited impact would be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal in the form of the provision of 6 housing units in a sustainable location and the provision of a contribution towards providing off-site affordable housing elsewhere within the Borough.

## **3 CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 In the Inspector's concluding remarks he set out that the proposal's siting, massing and design would have an acceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area, and any limited adverse effects on the significance of heritage assets in the vicinity of the site would be greatly outweighed by the proposal's public benefits. For these reasons and having regard to all other matters raised the Inspector concluded that the appeal should be allowed subject to conditions.

## **4 OFFICER COMMENTS:**

- 4.1 Officers are satisfied that the reason for refusal regarding affordable housing was satisfactorily resolved with the Appellant during preparation for the appeal with the signing of a unilateral undertaking legal agreement to secure a financial contribution towards the

provision of off-site affordable housing within the Borough. However, Officers are very disappointed with the Inspector's findings in respect of the impact of the proposal upon the Bedford Road and Oxford Road street-scene and the setting of the adjacent Russell Street/Caste Hill conservation area.

4.2 Officers are particularly concerned regarding a condition the Inspector has applied to require drawings showing the detailed design and final appearance of walls and the roof to be submitted and approved in writing the LPA prior to the commencement of development. Officers are of the opinion that the detailed design of these elements is fundamental to the consideration of the development and its impact upon the character and appearance of the street-scene and adjacent heritage assets and therefore should not be subject to revision/change once permission has been granted. Moreover, if the detailed design of these elements is not considered appropriate on the plans submitted for consideration under the planning application then permission should not have been granted. Officers have written to the Planning Inspectorate for clarification on this matter.

#### LOCATION PLAN



Case Officer: Matt Burns

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## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

<b>TO:</b>	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
<b>DATE:</b>	4 SEPTEMBER 2019		
<b>TITLE:</b>	APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL		
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	JULIE WILLIAMS & RICHARD EATOUGH		
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	PLANNING MANAGER (ACTING) & TEAM LEADER	<b>E-MAIL:</b>	<a href="mailto:Julie.williams@reading.gov.uk">Julie.williams@reading.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Richard.eatough@reading.gov.uk">Richard.eatough@reading.gov.uk</a>

#### 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 £1,202,282.

(Office Prior Approvals - £1,102,283: Householder Prior Approvals - £73,412: Retail Prior Approvals - £9868: Demolition Prior Approval - £2135: Storage Prior Approvals - £5716: Shop to Restaurant Prior Approval - £3574: Shop to Leisure Prior Approval - £305: Light Industrial to Residential - £4890)

### *Figures since last report*

Office Prior Approvals - £13206: Householder Prior Approvals - £1030

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 @ 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2019

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	191222	101 Linden Road, Reading, RG2 7EJ	Church	Rear extension measuring 6.0m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.6m, and 2.6m in height to eaves level.	25/07/2019	04/09/2019		£206
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	191158	86 Kenilworth Avenue, Reading, RG30 3DW	Southcote	Rear extension measuring 6m in depth, with a maximum height of 3m, and 2.7m in height to eaves level.	12/07/2019	22/08/2019		£206
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	191211	9 Kintbury Walk, Reading, RG30 3HE	Southcote	Rear extension measuring 5 metres in depth, with a maximum height of 4 metres and 3 metres in height to eaves level.	24/07/2019	03/09/2019		£206
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	191352	22 Conisboro Avenue, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7JB	Thames	Rear extension measuring 3.275m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.265m, and 2.8m in height to eaves level.	14/08/2019	24/09/2019		£206
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	191212	457 Basingstoke Road, Reading, RG2 0JF	Whitley	Rear extension measuring 6.0m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.0m, and 3.0m in height to eaves level.	24/07/2019	03/09/2019		£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	191221	Dukesbridge Chambers, 1 Duke Street, Reading	Abbey	Change of use of building from Class B1(a) (Offices) to Class C3 (Dwellinghouses) to comprise 25 dwellings (13 x Studio, 11 x 1 bed and 1 x 2 bed).	25/07/2019	19/09/2019		£11454
Office use to dwelling house - Class O, Part 1 GPDO 2015	191335	Equity House, 29 Whitley Street, Reading, RG2 OEG	Katesgrove	Change of use of first and second floors from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwellinghouses) to comprise 4 residential units.	12/08/2019	07/10/2019		£1752

## Retail Prior Approvals applications pending

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Comments	Equivalent planning application fee
Retail Prior Approval	190871	133 Caversham Road, Reading, RG1 8AS	Abbey	Change of from retail (A1) to 2 x 1 bed dwelling (C3).	29/05/2019	26/07/2019		£828
Retail Prior Approval	190952	265 Oxford Road, Reading	Battle	Change of use of ground floor from Class A5 (Hot food takeaways) to C3 (dwelling houses)to comprise 2 X 1-bedroom flats.	14/06/2019	09/08/2019		£828

### Light Industrial to Residential pending

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Comments	Equivalent planning application fee
Prior Notification	191330	Onc House, 68 St Johns Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5AL	Caversham	Notification of Prior Approval for a Change of use from Class B1(c) (Light Industrial) to C3 (dwellinghouses) to comprise 6 x flats.	08/08/2019	08/10/2019		<b>£2676</b>

### Telecommunications Prior Approval applications pending

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Comments
Telecommunications Notification - Prior Approval	190789	Land At Mere oak Busway, Basingstoke Road, Shinfield, Reading, RG7 1NR	Whitley	Application for Prior Notification of proposed development by telecommunications code system operators - Part 16 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 for installation of a 20m Monopole, supporting 6 no. antennas, 3 no. equipment cabinets and a meter cabinet and development ancillary thereto.	14/05/2019	09/07/2019	

Shop to Restaurant Prior Approval applications pending

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Target Determination Date	Comments	Equivalent planning application fee
Shop, Financial, Betting, Pay day, Casino to Restaurant/Cafe - Class C	191187	38b Church Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AU	Caversham	Notification of Prior Approval for a Change Of Use from Retail, betting office or pay day loan shop or casino (Class A1 (shops) or Class A2 (financial and professional services)) to restaurant or cafe (Class A3).	05/07/2019	16/09/2019		£462
Shop, Financial, Betting, Pay day, Casino to Restaurant/Cafe - Class C	191263	140-142 Wokingham Road, Reading, RG6 1JL	Park	Notification of Prior Approval for a Change Of Use from Retail, betting office or pay day loan shop or casino (Class A1 (shops) or Class A2 (financial and professional services)) to restaurant or cafe (Class A3).	02/08/2019	27/09/2019		£462

Storage to Residential Prior Approval applications pending - None

Shop to Assembly & Leisure Prior Approval applications pending - None

Demolition Prior Approval applications pending - None

Prior Notification applications pending - None

Solar Equipment Prior Approval applications pending - None

Table 2 - Prior-approval applications decided 4 July 2019 to 22 August 2019

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	191122	4 Denbeigh Place, Reading, RG1 8QE	Abbey	Rear extension measuring 3.65m in depth, with a maximum height of 2.85m, and 2.8m in height to eaves level.	09/07/2019	19/08/2019	Prior Approval NOT REQUIRED
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	190907	162 Belmont Road, Reading, RG30 2UX	Battle	Rear extension measuring 5.05m in depth, with a maximum height of 2.02m, and 2.8m in height to eaves level.	06/06/2019	16/07/2019	Prior Approval NOT REQUIRED
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	190861	79 Norcot Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6BP	Kentwood	Rear extension measuring 6m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.6m, and 2.4m in height to eaves level.	29/05/2019	09/07/2019	Prior Approval Notification - Refusal
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	190873	25 Bulmershe Road, Reading, RG1 5RH	Park	Rear extension measuring 2m and 5.9m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.4m and 3m in height to eaves level.	30/05/2019	11/07/2019	Application Withdrawn

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Decision Date	Decision
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	190922	16 Norris Road, Reading, RG6 1NJ	Park	Rear extension measuring 6m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.6m, and 2.4m in height to eaves level.	10/06/2019	16/07/2019	Prior Approval NOT REQUIRED
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	190982	123 Wykeham Road, Reading, RG6 1PP	Park	Rear extension measuring 4.0m in depth, with a maximum height of 4.0m, and 2.5m in height to eaves level.	19/06/2019	26/07/2019	Application Permitted
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	191046	27 Honey End Lane, Reading, RG30 4EL	Southcote	Rear extension measuring 3.5m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.61m, and 2.6m in height to eaves level.	27/06/2019	06/08/2019	Prior Approval NOT REQUIRED
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	191150	27 Hatford Road, Reading, RG30 3JA	Southcote	Rear extension measuring 4 metres in depth, with a maximum height of 4 metres and 2.75 metres in height to eaves level.	12/07/2019	21/08/2019	Prior Approval NOT REQUIRED

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Decision Date	Decision
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	191158	86 Kenilworth Avenue, Reading, RG30 3DW	Southcote	Rear extension measuring 6m in depth, with a maximum height of 3m, and 2.7m in height to eaves level.	12/07/2019	22/08/2019	Application Permitted
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	191224	26 Conisboro Avenue, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7JB	Thames	Rear extension measuring 3.275m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.265m, and 2.8m in height to eaves level.	25/07/2019	14/08/2019	Application Withdrawn
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	191352	22 Conisboro Avenue, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7JB	Thames	Rear extension measuring 3.275m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.265m, and 2.8m in height to eaves level.	14/08/2019	14/08/2019	Application Withdrawn
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	190923	147 St Michaels Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4SB	Tilehurst	Rear extension measuring 4.5 metres in depth, with a maximum height of 3.7 metres and 2.6 metres in height to eaves level.	11/06/2019	24/07/2019	Application Permitted



Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Decision Date	Decision
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	191062	87 Mayfair, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4RB	Tilehurst	Rear extension measuring 3.1m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.02m, and 2.6m in height to eaves level.	01/07/2019	09/08/2019	Application Withdrawn
Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015	190967	86 Whitley Wood Lane, Reading, RG2 8PP	Whitley	Rear extension measuring 3.9m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.3m, and 2.2m in height to eaves level.	17/06/2019	25/07/2019	Application Permitted

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	190965	10 Southern Court, South Street, Reading, RG1 4QS	Katesgrove	Change of use from offices (Class B1(a)) to 16 residential units (Class C3).	14/06/2019	09/08/2019	Prior Approval Notification - Approval
Office use to dwelling house - Class O, Part 1 GPDO 2015	190838	2a Armour Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 6HT	Kentwood	Change of use from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 1 dwelling.	22/05/2019	16/07/2019	Application Refused

### Retail to Residential applications decided

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Decision Date	Decision
Retail Prior Approval	190871	133 Caversham Road, Reading, RG1 8AS	Abbey	Change of from retail (A1) to 2 x 1 bed dwelling (C3).	29/05/2019	20/08/2019	Application Withdrawn
Retail Prior Approval	190952	265 Oxford Road, Reading	Battle	Change of use of ground floor from Class A5 (Hot food takeaways)) to C3 (dwelling houses)to comprise 2 X 1-bedroom flats.	14/06/2019	09/08/2019	Permitted Development
Retail Prior Approval	191003	19 Gosbrook Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8BT	Caversham	Notification of Prior Approval for a Change Of Use from Class A2 (financial and professional services) to Class B1 (Offices).	17/06/2019	13/08/2019	Application Withdrawn

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### Solar Equipment Prior Approval applications decided

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Decision Date	Decision
Solar equip - S2 P14 Class J	191009	Reading Bus Garage, 26-90 Great Knollys Street, Reading, RG1 7HH	Abbey	Notification for prior approval for the Installation of Solar PV	14/06/2019	09/08/2019	Prior Approval Notification - Refusal

Prior Notification applications decided - None

Application type	Application reference number	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Decision Date	Decision
Prior Notification	190782	Land to rear of 8 Prospect Street, Reading	Battle	Notification of Prior Approval for a Change Of Use from Premises in Light Industrial Use (Class B1(c) and any land within its curtilage to Dwelling houses (Class C3). The proposed development comprises the change of use from Light Industrial (B1(c) to Residential (C3), converting 160sqm of building into 5 dwellings.	14/05/2019	04/07/2019	Prior Approval Notification - Approval
Prior Notification	191058	Onc House, 68 St Johns Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5AL	Caversham	Notification of Prior Approval for a Change of use from Class B1(c) (Light Industrial) to C3 (dwellinghouses) to comprise 8 x flats.	28/06/2019	21/08/2019	Application Withdrawn

**Telecommunications Prior Approval applications decided - None**

**Shop to Assembly & Leisure Prior Approval applications decided - None**

**Storage to Residential Prior Approval applications decided - None**

**Demolition Prior Approval applications decided - None**

**Shop to Restaurant Prior Approval applications decided - None**

## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 4 SEPTEMBER 2019  
TITLE: OBJECTION TO A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER 25 HIGHDOWN HILL ROAD,  
READING

Ward: Peppard

### RECOMMENDATION

That the Tree Preservation Order be confirmed with the inclusion of T2 Larch.

#### 1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report to Committee an objection to Tree Preservation Order No. 9/19 relating to 25 Highdown Hill Road, Reading (copy of TPO plan attached - Appendix 1).

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Following the pruning of one of the trees by a neighbour, a TPO was requested on a Larch tree at 25 Highdown Hill Road by the owner. Officers assessed the tree and considered this, along with a Pine within the rear garden, to be worthy of a TPO. A TPO was served on 25 June 2019.

#### 3. RESULT OF CONSULTATION

- 3.1 An objection to T2 Larch has been made by 5 Eric Avenue based on the following concerns:

##### Objection on the Grounds of Safety

The lowest branch overhanging the garden of 3 & 5 Eric Avenue is currently a serious safety hazard which needs to be made safe as soon as possible. Prior to the tree preservation order being in place, on 12th May 2019, numerous incomplete cuts were made during pruning of this branch. The pruning was not completed due to aggression from the owners of 25 Highdown Hill Road. This is a large branch, where this is considerable risk of it falling from a not inconsiderable height with the possibility to cause injury or harm.

T2 sheds small branches, cones, needles and a large amount of debris on to the lawn of both 3 and 5 Eric Avenue. There is the constant potential for small branches/debris to fall on a person or small child causing injury. Ongoing pruning is required to reduce this risk.

A huge number of cones are dropped by the tree. These cones are small and become embedded in the lawn. It is therefore not possible to rake or collect 100% of cones dropped. As such when the lawn is mowed, the mower blade regularly lifts the cones and they not only damage the blade but also represent a hazard as they can be ejected towards persons, or small children playing in the garden, causing injury or harm. Again, ongoing pruning is required to reduce this risk.

##### Objection on the Grounds of Low Amenity Value

Referring Government guidance:

T2 is a non-native species, it has no rarity value, no cultural value and no historic value. These factors should all be considered in assessing amenity value.

T2 is not visible from Reading Golf Club. T2 is primarily only visible to residents, from the rear of 25, 23, 21 & 19 Highdown Hill Road and 3 & 5 Eric Avenue. T2 is visible from an extremely limited number of public spaces, spaces which are not frequented by the wider population of Reading, Caversham or even Emmer Green. It can therefore not have significant amenity value, which is a requirement of the guidance for selecting trees on which to place a TPO. The general public have only a fleeting view of T2 if viewing directly between the addresses listed above. This fleeting view of T2 does not warrant the order. Again, in the absence of a TPO there is no risk of trees being felled, pruned or damaged in ways which would have a significant impact on the amenity of the area. Hence a TPO is not warranted.

The order does not provide any benefit, present or future to the general public and offers no interest of amenity. This contradicts Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Section 198.

*"If it appears to a local planning authority that it is expedient in the interests of amenity to make provision for the preservation of trees or woodlands in their area, they may for that purpose make an order with respect to such trees, groups of trees or woodlands as may be specified in the order."*

Further T2 offers exceedingly limited contribution to the dense treeline. From the limited aspects where it is visible, which per the above excludes the entirety of the golf course, T2 is back dropped by far larger, native species. Should it be removed the overall landscape would not noticeably change, ergo it cannot have a significant impact on the amenity value of the area and therefore a TPO is not justified.

#### Objection on the Grounds of Not Notably Complementing the Treeline of Reading Golf Club

The order states T2 complements "the tree line within the adjacent Reading Golf Club land". Per the above T2 is not visible from the grounds of Reading Golf Club, and visible on an extremely limited basis from the surrounding neighbourhood. On the basis that the tree cannot be seen, the argument it complements the treeline is redundant.

The trees forming said "tree line within the adjacent Reading Golf Club land" are protected by TPO 4/18. T2 does not provide a notable or substantial contribution to said tree line to warrant this order 9/19.

TPO 4/18 is in place to protect said tree line and further TPOs for the same intention are not justified or necessary.

#### Objection on the Grounds of Contravening the Tree Strategy for Reading

T2 is a non-native species and does not add any greater diversity of local wildlife than other neighbouring trees. As per the TREE STRATEGY FOR READING • JUNE 2010 section 3.7 Wildlife/Biodiversity;

*"Native species support a greater diversity of wildlife than non-native species. Native species should be planted in preference to non-native species where appropriate."*

The requirement for an additional order to support the Reading Golf Club tree line when there is an existing order (4/18 A1) in place is in contradiction with the guidance provided in Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy regarding prudence of TPO applications and priorities. As per the TREE STRATEGY FOR READING • JUNE 2010 section 3.4.2;

*"The preparation, serving and subsequent administration of Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) is resource intensive. Making additional orders*

*year on year adds to the resources needed to administer complaints and applications for works or felling. The Local Authority needs to be more prudent about making TPO's and determine priorities for such protection. The Tree Strategy will help in determining those priorities."*

Considering that T2 is a non-native tree and the RBC tree strategy statement above regarding priorities for TPO application, the requirement for the 9/19 TPO is justifiably questionable.

- 3.2 In response to the objection from 5 Eric Avenue, Officers have the following comments:

Objection in respect of Tree T2 (Larch) on the Grounds of Safety

The objection refers to concerns relating to both 3 & 5 Eric Avenue. Officers have received no objections directly from No. 3 or any indication from the owner, or within the objection, that the objector is speaking on their behalf. As such, it is appropriate for Officers to only consider the objection as being from 5 Eric Avenue in relation to concerns about garden / safety.

Officers are aware that the tree owner was concerned about the level of work being carried out by the objector, hence acted to halt the work. If branches have been left in a condition that requires further work there are two options 1) the objector can provide evidence that the branches are 'imminently dangerous', which if agreed means that works can be undertaken to make them safe without formal approval from the Council or 2) if not deemed as 'imminently dangerous' then an application seeking consent to carry out necessary work can be submitted.

Mature trees will shed small scale debris such as cones, needles and small branches. This is an inevitable consequence of living with trees and would not be a valid reason to permit the removal of an otherwise healthy tree or to omit such a tree from a Tree Preservation Order. Nor could it be sufficient justification to carry out inappropriate pruning work contrary to tree management best practice and which could be potentially harmful to a tree's health. The concerns raised could not be eliminated until the tree is felled or by pruning the whole crown back to the objector's boundary line, which would detrimentally affect the appearance of the tree and produce multiple wounds, each being an entry point for pathogens. The tree in question only overhangs a small portion of the objector's garden therefore is it not considered that the nuisance or potential risk is so severe that the tree should not be protected.

A tree is the responsibility of the owner who should make sure that it does not pose an unacceptable risk to persons or property. This would require regular inspections and addressing foreseeable, unacceptable risk. Officers suggest that natural debris would not be considered as an unacceptable risk hence common sense safety precautions would be more appropriate, e.g. avoiding activity under the tree (and those overhanging from the Golf course) in high winds and the avoidance of mowing in the presence of small children; children being deemed as unable to make appropriate risk assessments.

Objection in respect of Tree T2 Larch on the Grounds of Low Amenity

In relation to species, rarity and other values such as historical and cultural can make a TPO more prudent, however Officers do not place significant

weight on a tree's species when determining whether it is suitable for inclusion in a TPO.

It is appreciated that the tree, when viewed from Eric Avenue and Highdown Hill Road forms part of the tree line (within Reading Golf Course), however it is under different ownership and can be identified as an individual.

Government guidance in relation to 'amenity' states the following:

*“‘Amenity’ is not defined in law, so authorities need to exercise judgment when deciding whether it is within their powers to make an Order. Orders should be used to protect selected trees and woodlands if their removal would have a significant negative impact on the local environment and its enjoyment by the public. Before authorities make or confirm an Order they should be able to show that protection would bring a reasonable degree of public benefit in the present or future”.*

In terms of 'visibility', Government advice goes on to say:

*‘The trees, or at least part of them, should normally be visible from a public place, such as a road or footpath, or accessible by the public’.*

It was established in the case of Wilkson Properties Ltd Vs Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea (Royal Courts of Justice Case No: CO/2334/2010 dated 13/01/2011) that collective 'private' views of a tree(s) constitute a 'public' view.

Given the above and that the tree in question is a continuation of the tree line at Reading Golf Club, the Council is satisfied that there is sufficient amenity value to warrant a TPO.

#### Objection in respect of Tree T2 Larch on the Grounds of Not Notably Complementing the Treeline of Reading Golf Club

The points given above in relation to amenity would also apply to this specific objection.

The Larch (and Pine) contributes to the treed nature of the area. The presence of a TPO on adjacent trees within the Golf Club land does not mean that the Council should automatically reject requests for TPOs on any adjacent trees.

#### Objection in respect of Tree T2 Larch on the Grounds of Contravening the Tree Strategy for Reading

Whilst not a native tree, the Larch was introduced in the early 1600s so has a long association with the UK. The seeds of Larch are eaten by a number of birds and the caterpillars of many moths feed on the foliage so whilst not native it does have wildlife value.

Since the Tree Strategy was adopted in 2010 thinking has moved on and whilst native trees do support a greater diversity of wildlife, the inclusion of non-native trees for both climate change resistance and pest and disease resistance also forms an important part of a tree population.

The Council has recently declared a Climate Emergency and as such, the retention and planting of trees has become more important. The



expediency of serving a TPO is always carefully considered due to limited resources. Where a TPO is requested and the tree is deemed to have sufficient amenity value and is under threat of inappropriate pruning from a third party, a TPO is considered expedient hence justifies resources being used.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The Larch can be identified as an individual tree but also contributes to the treed nature of the locality, along with the Pine in the same garden. None of the objections raised are considered to be valid reasons for omitting the tree from the TPO for the reasons provided and the tree is under threat of inappropriate pruning by the objector. It is therefore recommended that the TPO be confirmed with the inclusion of T2 Larch.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Preparing, serving confirmation and contravention of TPO's are services dealt with by the Council's Legal Section.

#### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1.1 Administrative.

#### **7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 In assessing objections to TPOs, officers will have regard to Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, 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 In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the making of this TPO.

#### **8. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

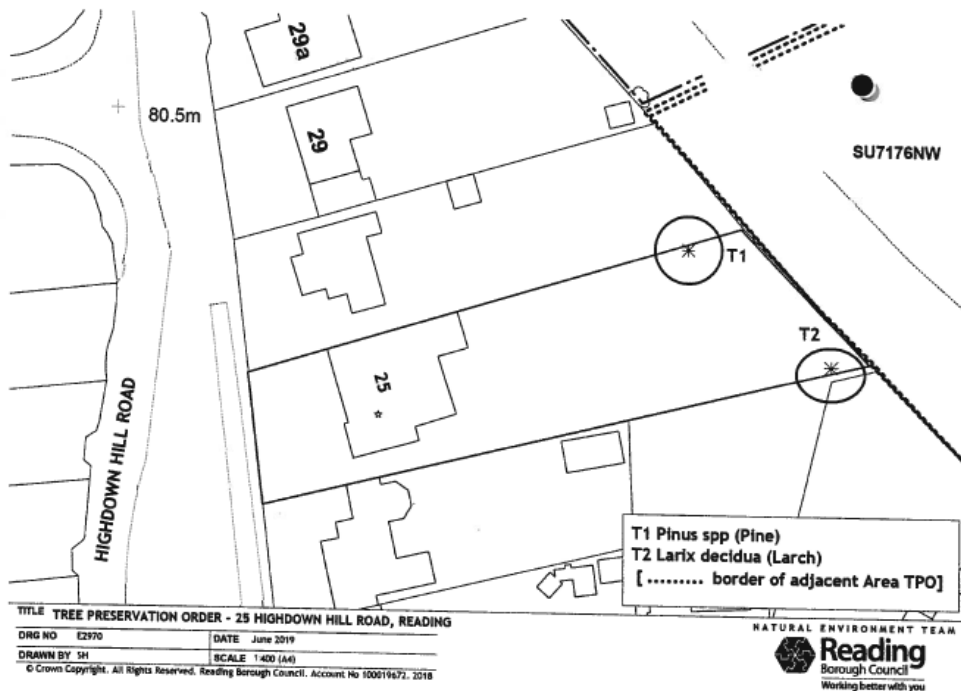
- 8.1 The aim of the TPOs is to secure trees of high amenity value for present and future generations to enjoy. Trees also have high environmental benefits through their absorption of polluted air and creation of wildlife habitats.

#### **9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- 9.1 Planning Section's Tree Preservation Order Directory
- 9.2 Register of Tree Preservation Orders
- 9.3 Plan of TPO 9/19 relating to 25 Highdown Hill Road, Reading (Appendix 1)

Officer: Sarah Hanson

Appendix 1 - TPO plan



Location of 5 Eric Avenue  
 in relation to 25 Highdown  
 Hill Road

Appendix 2 - Photos



T2 Larch



T1 Pine (left) and T2 Larch (right) as viewed from Eric Avenue (tree line to the rear is within Reading Golf Club and protected by a TPO)

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## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 4 SEPTEMBER 2019  
TITLE: PROPOSED WORKS (RETROSPECTIVE) TO TREES AT THE FORMER WHITLEY LIBRARY, NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, READING

Ward: Church

### RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed tree works be retrospectively approved.

#### 1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report to and seek retrospective approval from Committee for works to Council maintained trees at the former Whitley Library, Northumberland Avenue, Reading subject to TPO 9/18 (TPO plan attached - Appendix 1).

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The premises were vacated in 2018 and at the request of the Council's Valuation section, trees on the site were surveyed to identify any worthy of inclusion in a TPO.
- 2.2 Officers identified four trees on the frontage worthy of protection and with agreement from Valuation, a TPO was served on 5 September 2018.
- 2.3 The Council's Tree Officer in Parks was asked for advice on appropriate works to the trees by Facilities Management and made several recommendations. Unfortunately neither party was aware of, or checked, the new TPO status of the trees hence the works were carried out without first obtaining approval.

#### 3. APPLICATION PROCESS

- 3.1 As the Council-maintained trees in question are subject to a Tree Preservation Order, a formal application is required for these works to be approved.
- 3.2 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires applications for works to Council owned or maintained trees to be decided by a Committee of the Council which is not responsible for managing the land to which the application relates.
- 3.3 The law also requires a public notice to be displayed for at least 21 days giving details of the proposed works and contact details for any comments to be sent. However, as the application is retrospective in this case, a Notice was not displayed.

#### **4. PROPOSED WORKS**

4.1 The application (reference 191242) seeks retrospective approval for the following works:

- T2-T5 Cherry - crown lift to provide clearance for pedestrians and to remove branches that help to hide anti-social behaviour.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATION**

5.1 The works proposed (and carried out) are not considered to be harmful to the trees' appearance or future health and are reasonable works in order to appropriately manage the trees for the reasons stated. Had an application been submitted seeking approval for the works, this would have been given. It is therefore recommended that the works be retrospectively approved to regularise the situation.

#### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Preparing, serving confirmation and contravention of TPOs are services dealt with by the Council's Legal Section.

6.2 Applications for works to Council owned TPO trees are to be decided by a Committee and one which is not responsible for managing the land to which the application relates.

#### **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Administrative.

#### **8. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 In determining this application the Committee is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include 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 proposed tree works.

In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the tree works.

#### **9. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The aim of TPOs is to secure trees of high amenity value for present and future generations to enjoy. Trees also have high environmental benefits through their absorption of polluted air, creation of wildlife habitats, reduction of surface water runoff and flooding caused by heavy rain, provision of shelter and shading and reduction of noise. The Council's adopted Tree Strategy highlights the importance of the use of TPOs in the retention and protection of important trees in the Borough. Policy CS38 of the Council's Core Strategy relating to Trees, Hedges and Woodlands also reinforces the need to continue making new and retaining existing Tree Preservation Orders.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

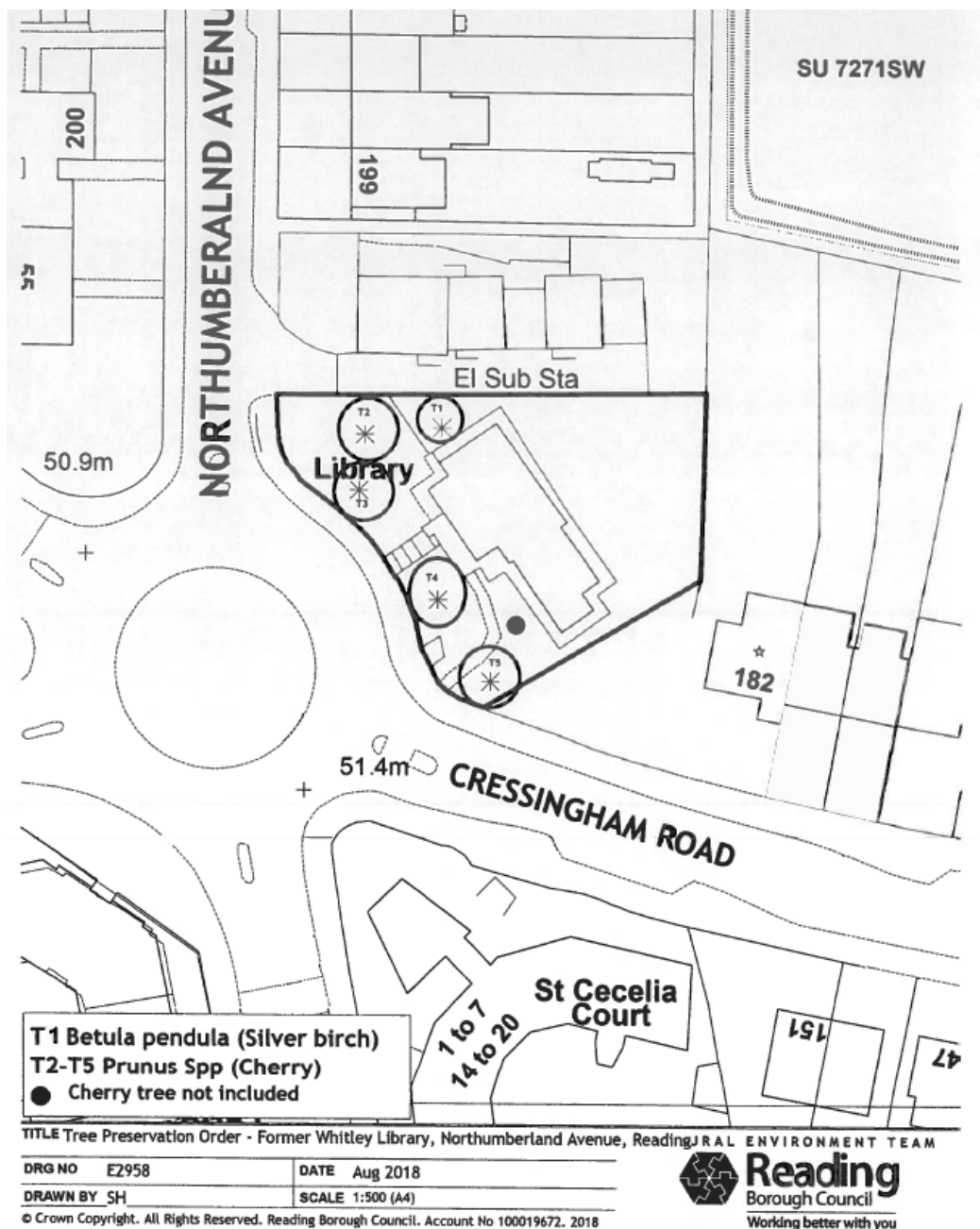
10.1 Planning Section's Tree Preservation Order Directory

10.2 Register of Tree Preservation Orders

10.3 Plan for TPO 9/18 relating to the former Whitley Library, Northumberland Avenue, Reading (Appendix 1)

Officer: Sarah Hanson

Appendix 1



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## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 4 SEPTEMBER 2019

**Ward:** Abbey

**App No.:** 190809

**Address:** Thames Quarter, Kings Meadow Road, Reading (AKA Former Cooper BMW, Kings Meadow Road, Reading)

**Proposal:** Erection of a part 13-storey, part 23 storey building comprising 335 apartments in a mix of studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom units; residents' lounges, tech-hub, dining room, and cinema room; various rooftop outdoor amenity spaces; concierge/reception with coffee meeting area; residents' storage facilities; postroom; ancillary back-of-house facilities; 335 secure cycle parking spaces; car parking spaces; landscaping; and associated works (revision to planning permission 162166 dated 23/11/2017) (Part Retrospective)

**Applicant:** MG RPF Limited Partnership Thames Quarter Ltd and Lochailort Thames Quarter Ltd

**Date received:** 20 May 2019

**13 Week target decision date:** 19 August 2019

### RECOMMENDATION:

Delegate to Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services to:

- (i) **GRANT** full planning permission subject to completion of a S106 legal agreement and satisfactory wind/microclimate verification; or
- (ii) to **REFUSE** permission should the legal agreement not be completed by 06/09/19 (unless officers on behalf of the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement).

The legal agreement to secure the following:

#### **Affordable Housing:**

Summary of Affordable Housing Heads of Terms:

- The applicant has acquired a surrogate site at North Street for market value and has transferred the land to the Council as an Affordable Housing provider for £nil with planning consent for 47 affordable housing units;
- The applicant will identify and enter into a contract to secure one or more further Surrogate Sites for the provision of an additional 54 affordable dwellings, obtain a suitable planning permission for residential development and transfer the site (or sites) to an Affordable Housing provider. The land will be gifted at nil consideration.
- If the 54 additional affordable dwellings are provided solely as plots with planning permission, a construction contribution of £55,000 per plot will be payable to the Council, totalling up to £2.97m.

- Alternatively, the applicant will enter into a construction contract to deliver and dispose of the affordable dwellings to an Affordable Housing provider in which case the construction contribution sum will be not payable;
- In all instances, If less than 54 plots are provided, a top-up contribution of £105,000 per missing plot will be paid to the Council;
- In the event that no further surrogates are provided within 12 months of first occupation of the development, a Commuted Sum of £5,670,000 will be payable in full to the Council;
- All contributions would be index-linked from the date of the Section 106 agreement.

#### Summary of other Heads of Terms:

- **Submission, approval and undertaking of a construction period Employment and Skills Plan (ESP)** by the developer, or otherwise the payment of amount in lieu, in accordance with the calculation as per the Council's adopted Employment, Training and Skills SPD towards RBC/Reading UK CIC and its partner organisations in delivering training places elsewhere (Policies: CS9, CS13 DM3);
- **Contribution of £100,000 for the submission, approval and implementation of an environmental improvement scheme to the Vastern Road railway underpass** index-linked from the date of 162166 permission and payable prior to first occupation of the development (Policies: CS9, DM3, RC14);
- **£127,620 towards improvements towards path upgrades and associated works in Kings Meadow**, index-linked from the date of 162166 permission and payable prior to first occupation of the development. (Policies: CS9, DM3);
- **Provision of land to an agreed standard within the development of part of the safeguarded route for Phase 2 of the East Reading Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Route**, as per plan agreed with the Council. (Policies: CS9, DM3, CS21, DM12);
- **£86,700 towards the delivery a new signalised pedestrian/cycle crossing** index-linked from the date of 162166 permission and payable prior to first occupation of the development (layout as shown on approved Drawing 5277.027 Rev C.) (Policies: CS9, DM3, CS21, DM12);
- **The establishment of an on-site car club for three vehicles, via an agreed car club provider to the value of not less than £46,915**, index-linked form the date of 162166 permission and payable prior to first occupation of the development. Commitment to a three vehicle car club, initially, rising to a four-vehicle car club if demand requires/exists (Policies: CS9, DM3, CS23);
- **Provision and operation of a residential travel plan** no later than first occupation of the first residential unit. (Policies: CS9, DM3, CS23).

And the following conditions to include:

1. Commencement time limit (A)
2. Revised list of drawings for approval (C)
3. Hard and soft landscaping details (B)
4. Landscaping implemented as per the previously-approved details (B)
5. Landscaping maintenance period (A)
6. Landscaping management plan to be approved (A)
7. Remediation scheme (B)
9. Remediation timetable (B)
9. Unexpected contamination (A)
10. Land gas investigation (B)
11. Land gas protection measures (B)
12. Land gas validation report (A)
13. Piling details (B)
14. Foul & surface water drainage strategy (B)
15. Archaeological investigation (B)
16. Demolition Method Statement (B)
17. Construction Management Method Statement (B)
18. Limited construction working hours (A)
19. No materials to be burnt onsite (A)
20. Previously-approved materials to be used (B)
21. SUDS management and maintenance (A)
22. Details of ground floor laminated glass (A)
23. Security features to be approved (A)
24. 10% Part M(2) units to be identified (A)
25. Communal area extract facilities (A)
26. Bird nesting features to be approved (A)
27. Mechanical ventilation & heat recovery to be approved (A)
28. Acoustic glazing to be installed (A)
29. External lighting to be approved (A)
30. Temporary surfacing schedule of works (A)
31. Sprinklers to be fitted (A)
32. Development completed in accordance with the Flood Risk Assessment (A)
33. Accessibility of communal facilities (A)
34. Council to be notified of each postal address (A)
35. Residents informed of non-eligibility for parking permits (A)
36. Noise assessment of mechanical plant required (A)
37. Service vehicle strategy to be approved (A)
38. Parking space provision/maximum (A)
39. Refuse storage facilities to be provided (A)
40. Cycle parking facilities to be provided (A)
41. Development completed in accordance with the Sustainability Strategy (A)
42. Emissions reduction certification to be submitted (A)
43. Lifts to be provided and retained in working order (A)
44. No Building Maintenance Units permitted (A)

Informatives:

1. Positive and Proactive Statement
2. Works affecting highways
3. Sound insulation
4. Section 106 Legal Agreement
5. Clarification over pre-commencement conditions
6. CIL
7. Party Wall Act

- 8. Building Control
- 9. Terms and Conditions
- 10. Network Rail
- 11. Thames water

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Planning Application Committee (PAC) will be aware that application 162166 for 315 build-to-rent units is currently under construction on site and officers can report that at the time of writing all groundworks have been completed and the building's concrete frame is currently under construction. The tower element's lift core has reached its full height and the concrete floor decks are currently being cast floor-by-floor, currently at level 09.
- 1.2 This application constitutes a revised scheme from that recently refused at PAC on 24 April 2019 (182196). The previously refused application sought consent for a similar scheme to that approved in nature, except included the insertion of an additional storey to accommodate 23 additional apartments on the lower block 'benchmark' element.
- 1.3 This revised application now brought before committee seeks 20 additional units when compared to that of the previously approved scheme and 3 units less than the refused scheme. Furthermore, officers have negotiated the introduction of grey cladding to parts of the northern and eastern elevation. A more detailed description of the proposal and planning history is undertaken in section 3 and 4 of this report. In addition, and as reported in the item's recommendation, there is a significantly adjusted affordable housing contribution. This is covered in more detail in section 6(iii).

## **2. SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1 The application site is a narrow piece of land (former Coopers BMW garage) adjacent to the north embankment of the Bristol-Paddington railway line at the edge of central Reading. Vastern Road roundabout lies to the west at the junction of Vastern Road, George Street (Reading Bridge) and Kings Meadow Road. Prior to work commencing on application 162166, the site was occupied by a temporary car park following the demolition of the dealership in 2016.



Photo 1: View southeast from Vastern Road roundabout (18<sup>th</sup> June 2019 Conlon).

- 2.2 The application site is an identified site in the Reading Central Area Action Plan (the RCAAP, 2009) as Site RC1h (Napier Road Junction) for a single landmark building for residential use, B1 office use, or a mixed use for both.

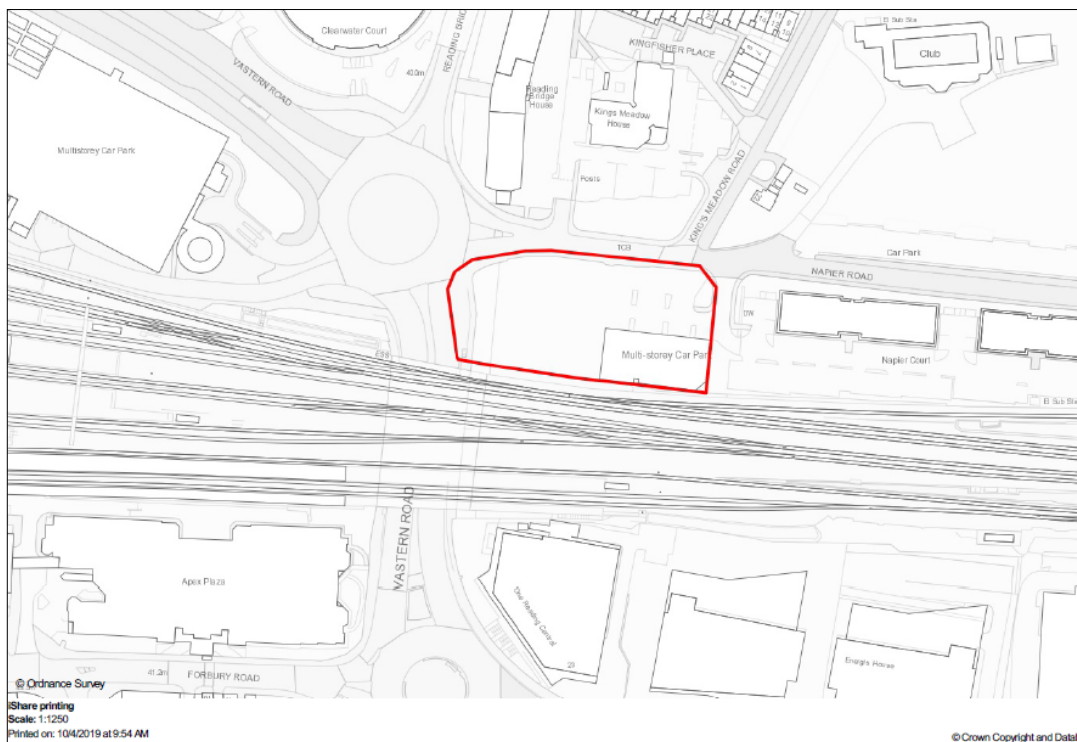


Fig 1: Location plan (not to scale)

### 3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This application seeks part retrospective full planning permission for a **revised** scheme to provide 335 dwellings to be let long-term under Build-to-Rent (BTR) tenure. This constitutes 20 additional apartments to that provided by the **approved** scheme 162166 and 3 apartments less than the recently **refused** scheme 182196.
- 3.2 The building would continue to consist of two sections. A ‘benchmark’ horizontal residential block at 13 storeys and a ‘landmark’ vertical 23-storey residential tower at the western end closest to the roundabout and the town centre. The key differences between this and the refused scheme is that the benchmark element would now have a partial additional storey inserted (an increase from 12 storey to partial 13 storey), with the “haunch” of the building (where the benchmark element abuts the southern elevation of the tower), reduced to remain identical to that approved under 162166 when viewed from the west (see Fig 2 below).



Fig 2: West elevation. APPROVED scheme (left), REVISED scheme (right) (not to scale)

- 3.3 The other key physical change between the refused scheme and this revised scheme is the introduction of grey cladding to parts of the northern and eastern elevation (see Fig 3 and 4 below).



Fig 3: Northern and eastern elevation REFUSED scheme (not to scale)



Fig 4: Northern and eastern elevation REVISED scheme (not to scale)

- 3.4 The proposal continues to leave an area to the north and west frontage for landscaping/public realm and to accommodate future highway improvements at the end of Kings Meadow Road as part of the East Reading MRT route.
- 3.5 Should the Committee resolve to grant permission, any necessary conditions and the S106 agreement would need to be carefully worded to reflect the part-retrospective nature of the current proposal as the end result would be two planning permissions capable of being implemented.

**4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 Relevant planning history since 2014 is as follows:

140700	Request for a pre-application scoping meeting	Two initial scoping meetings were held with the applicant in late 2013 and early 2014. Following the second scoping meeting, officers produced a note for the developer, advising of locations for views analysis to be undertaken. In the same note, concerns were raised for the inconsistency of the emerging proposal with adopted planning policy and officer advice at that time was that a development of circa. 15 storeys would be more appropriate.
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141815	Screening opinion request	Opinion provided 8 December 2014, advising that the development would not be subject to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations.
150120	Full planning application	Demolition of all existing onsite buildings and structures, including remediation, 352 new homes in a mix of sizes in three new buildings up to 28 storeys in height, reception, concierge, library, clubroom, community rooms, business centre, residents' fitness centre, residents' storage and associated other ancillary community uses, Up to 523 sqm of commercial floorspace (Use Classes A1, A2, A3, B1 or D1) in 2 units, 308 cycle parking spaces, 118 car parking spaces including four car-club spaces and private residents' storage, access and service access, outdoor amenity space and landscaping.  REFUSED 22 May 2015 for 12 reasons
160012	Demolition prior approval	Application for prior notification of proposed demolition (of car showroom).  PRIOR APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED 15 April 2016
160236	Full planning application	Part retrospective change of use to public car park for temporary three year period.  PLANNING PERMISSION GRANTED 24 May 2016 Temporary permission until 24 May 2019. Implemented
162166	Full planning application	Erection of a part 12 storey, part 23 storey building comprising 315 apartments in a mix of studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom and 3-bedroom units; residents' lounges, tech-hub, dining room, and cinema room, various rooftop outdoor amenity spaces, concierge/reception with coffee meeting area, residents' storage facilities, postroom, ancillary back-of-house facilities, 315 secure cycle parking spaces, 49 car parking spaces, landscaping, and associated works. Demolition of existing multi-storey car park.  PLANNING PERMISSION GRANTED WITH s106 AGREEMENT (23/11/17)
181438/APC 181537/NMA	Various	Various applications for non-material amendments and approval of details reserved by condition, pursuant to 162166. Currently under consideration.



181858/APC		
180329/NMA		
180423/APC		
182196/FUL	Full planning application	Erection of a part 13-storey, part 23 storey building comprising 338 apartments in a mix of studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom units, residents' lounges, tech-hub, dining room, and cinema room, various rooftop outdoor amenity spaces, concierge/reception with coffee meeting area, gym, residents' storage facilities, postroom, ancillary back-of-house facilities, 338 secure cycle parking spaces, car parking spaces, landscaping, and associated works (revision to planning permission 162166 dated 23/11/2017) (Part Retrospective).  PLANNING PERMISSION REFUSED (24/04/19)

4.2 Since the decision to refuse 182196, Officers have been working positively and proactively with the developer to explore possible solutions to those issues previously identified. In accordance with Para 38 of the NPPF and in light of the advance stage of construction on site, the Council has actively sought to work proactively with the developer to secure a form of development which will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.

## 5. CONSULTATIONS

### (i) Statutory:

#### 5.1 Environment Agency

As with applications 162166 and 182196 no objections are raised subject to conditions and informatives being applied, which principally relate to contaminated land.

*[Officer comment: relevant contaminated land conditions have already been discharged in implementing permission 162166.]*

### (ii) Non-statutory:

#### 5.2 RBC Transport Strategy

##### Access

Vehicular access to the site is to be retained via the existing access road from Napier Road. This road previously served the former Cooper BMW garage site and the adjacent Napier Court Business units. Refuse and servicing areas are provided within the ground floor design. Swept Path analysis has been undertaken using to demonstrate that service vehicles can access these areas and adequately manoeuvre in order to exit the site in forward gear.

The Council's Waste Operations department assessed the bin storage provision as part of the consented scheme. Refuse collection will be managed from the loading bay on the ground floor of the building with the management company presenting bins to the collection point. As per the consented scheme, the full management details should be combined into a waste management plan secured by condition. This will ensure the future occupiers/management of the site are party to what is in the waste management plan so that they comply with the agreed processes.

A secondary access point is proposed on the northern facade of the building to provide secure, direct access to the secure cycle parking area from Kings Meadow Road.

Pedestrian access is to be located on the western facade of the building fronting onto the existing footways on the A329.

### *Parking*

The site is located on the boundary of Zone 1 and Zone 2 of the parking SPD and given the close proximity to the Town Centre and Railway Station the requirements of Zone 1 have been used. The required parking provision is 0.5 spaces per unit equating to 167 parking spaces and a provision of 49 spaces at 0.14 spaces per unit has been provided. 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.

Kings Meadow Road and the surrounding road network all have parking restrictions preventing on-street parking, therefore, any overflow in parking would not affect the flow of traffic on the classified road network. Kings Meadow Road does not fall within a Resident's Permit Zone and the residents will not be eligible to apply for a Residents Parking Permit.

Given the location of public car parks in the vicinity and parking restrictions on the adjacent roads, it is considered that the reduction in the residential provision on site will not lead to on street parking being detrimental to road safety and is acceptable.

The availability of a car club on site provides an alternative to residents to owning a car, especially when living in a town centre location. The consented scheme secured the provision for 4 car club spaces with 3 vehicles initially, expandable to 4 vehicles subject to demand, which formed part of the proposed Travel Plan measures. The revised scheme continues to make this commitment and forms part of the Framework Residential Travel Plan. The location of the car club spaces is conditioned for a plan to be submitted and approved prior to first occupation of the development.

The Council's 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." The location of the Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points is conditioned for a plan to be submitted and approved prior to first occupation of the development.

Parking is to be provided on site within the Podium structure. The car park and ramp design complies with recommended design guidance for underground car parks. However, a minimum of 3 disabled spaces must be provided within the site. The location of the disabled parking spaces is conditioned for a plan to be submitted and approved prior to first occupation of the development to ensure the provision meets the Council's Standards.

The development proposes 335 secure cycle parking spaces which exceeds the Council's standards of 0.5 spaces per 1/2 bedroom flat. The main cycle store is accessed from Kings Meadow Road on the northern facade of the building via a levelled access.

### *Landscaping*

The Design and Access Statement states that the changes proposed within this application do not affect the site layout, masterplan, public realm design, terraces, or the hard and soft landscape strategies. Although the landscaping condition was approved under application no. 180423 on 9th July 2019, this is still subject to Highway plans being submitted to address the S278/38 requirements. Therefore with this in mind, I would suggest a condition that requires a final landscaping scheme to be submitted prior to occupation.

Section 7 of the consented Transport Assessment under application no. 162166 detailed mitigation measures including transport contributions towards the funding of a new signalised pedestrian / cycle crossing on Kings Meadow Road and a Residential Travel Plan. The area of land on the southern side of Kings Meadow Road is to be transferred to the Council to ensure that any infrastructure associated with the proposed signal crossing is located Public Highway land. These measures are considered robust enough to accommodate for the additional 20 units proposed.

The scheme will continue to facilitate the provision of the Mass Rapid Transport improvements across the front of the site although the scheme will not be progressed at the current time. The approved Landscape General Arrangement Ground Floor plan (151638-STL-XX-00-DR-L-ZZZZ-09000 PL08) demonstrates the existing footway along Kings Meadow Road will be retained. However, the applicant is requested to submit the approved revision PL11 as noted above.

As per the approved scheme, pedestrian & cyclist access rights should be secured via a S35 agreement along the northern and western façade of the building to ensure there is a continuous footway link from Vastern Road to Napier Road.

The landscaping proposals will require a S142 licence which permits the occupier or the owner of any premises adjoining the highway to plant and maintain, or to retain and maintain, trees, shrubs, plants or grass on the highway.

### *Traffic Generation*

The proposed development will result in 20 additional units compared to the consented 315 unit scheme but there is no increase in parking provision. To assess the impact of the additional units, the TRICS trip generation used for the consented scheme has been updated to account for the additional units.

The proposed additional 20 units will result in 3 additional two way trips in the AM Peak and 2 additional two way trips in the PM peak. This is a negligible increase in trips compared to the consented scheme and would have no material impact the local highway network.

#### *Travel Plan*

In order to mitigate the impact of the development, a Residential Travel Plan will be implemented as part of the development. Travel Plans are used to initiate modal shift away from the private car and towards more sustainable modes. The Travel Plan would be monitored annually over a 5 year period.

#### *S.106 heads of terms*

S106 Heads of Term as per previous application 162166.

#### *Conditions*

The conditions applied to the previous application 162166 should be secured. Condition numbers 4, 17, 18, 22, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41 & 42 specifically relate to transport/highway/drainage matters and should be secured for this application if approved.

*[Officer comment -No further information is required and transport matters are adequately dealt with subject to relevant and necessary planning conditions.*

### **5.3 Lead Flood Authority (RBC Highways)**

Reviewed the SuDs proposal further following the additional information and can confirm no objections to the proposal subject to the following condition:

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. The sustainable drainage scheme shall be managed and maintained thereafter in accordance with the agreed management and maintenance plan. In accordance with NPPF Paragraphs 163 and 164, Core Strategy Policy CS1 and Sites and Detail Polices document Policy DM1

*[Officer comment - The submitted SuDS proposals remain identical to both previous applications and are deemed acceptable subject to conditions to secure the implementation and future maintenance and management of the SuDS scheme in accordance with a timetable to be submitted.*

### **5.4 RBC Environmental Protection (EP)**

Comments on this proposal are the same as for the previous consented scheme and subsequent applications to discharge conditions. Most of the details submitted pursuant to conditions attached to 162166 continue to be acceptable and have been submitted again in support of the current proposal.

- A noise mitigation scheme for the flats
- A noise assessment is required from plant
- Air quality to the development is considered to be acceptable
- Contaminated and land gas remediation

- Construction-related controls (noise/dust).

The Council's Environmental Health Team confirm that the only outstanding query relates to noise ingress through ventilation air intake vents in the façade and whether the vents will be acoustically treated. This is currently being discussed with the applicant and is capable of being dealt with by condition, as with approved application 162166.

### **5.5 RBC Valuers**

The Council's Valuer and appointed external consultants have been working extensively with officers and the applicant in order to examine the revised affordable housing offer. The findings and conclusions of these negotiations are summarised in the Affordable Housing section 6(iii) in the main body of the report.

### **5.6 RBC Leisure**

We have already secured a financial contribution of £120,000 for a number of landscape improvements and enhancements to nearby View Island and Kings Meadow. This equates to £380.95 per unit. Given that this application is seeking approval for an additional 20 residential units, to make the development acceptable in planning terms, it is entirely appropriate to request an increase in the level of the leisure contribution. We are therefore requesting an additional £380.95 for each of the 20 units, making a total £7,619 and a grand total of £127,619. Contributions from developers are essential in providing the capital expenditure required to enhance areas of public open space.

The Open Spaces Strategy outlines the Council's approach to management of and investment in recreational public open spaces. Whilst Reading's overall amount of public open space is in line with the national guidelines, it is unevenly distributed across the Borough and in particular there is a shortfall in and around the town centre. The strategy therefore seeks to strengthen existing protection given to open space and bring about additional provision and improvements to cater for the increased demand as a consequence of a rising population.

Further, the Council's Core Strategy Policy CS9 sets out the objectives of securing infrastructure, services, resources and amenities to ensure that developments are both sustainable and that they contribute to the proper planning of the area. It also provides the basis for justifying infrastructure provision as part of development proposals.

We believe that for a development of 335 units the total of £127,619 is very fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind and necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms. It is also directly related to the development and will be used on further infrastructure and enhancements at Kings Meadow which is immediately opposite the development site.

*[Officer comment - Following agreement with the developer, this updated amount will be integrated into the overall s106 agreement and is reported in the agreed Heads of Terms]*

### **5.7 RBC Planning (Natural Environment) (Tree Officer)**

Fundamentally the proposal is acceptable as the changes do not affect landscape provision. Separate comments/queries can be raised with regard to any subsequent discharge of landscaping condition, as the case with condition 3 attached to approved application 162166.

#### **5.8 RBC Ecologist**

It is not clear whether, by providing the three documents - a 3D plan showing oblongs presumably the location of swift bricks, a generic document from the RSPB about peregrine platforms and a generic document from the RSPB about Swift Bricks - the applicant is trying to negate the need for Condition 27 (Biodiversity Enhancements) of planning consent 162166 being carried over to this application.

*Condition 27 reads as follows: "No development above slab level shall take place until details of bird nesting features have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include a peregrine platform and 10 (ten) bricks or other features suitable for use by swifts. The bird nesting features shall thereafter be installed as per the approved details and retained for their intended use thereafter."*

However the submitted details would not be sufficient to demonstrate compliance with the above as there are no details of the type of bricks to be installed nor why the location has been chosen. As such, either further details should be submitted (to comprise a report by a suitably qualified ecologist setting out what bird nesting features will be installed where) or the condition above (slightly re-worded as the building is now above slab height) should be attached to any new consent.

*[Officer comment - Following agreement with the developer, an updated condition will be attached which requires compliance prior to first occupation to resolve any outstanding ecology matters]*

#### **5.9 RBC Sustainability Team**

No response received to date.

*[Officer comment - As there is no change to the energy and sustainability strategies produced with this application, the Sustainability Team's concurrence with the approach taken by the applicant remain applicable.]*

#### **5.10 Berkshire Archaeology:**

As you will be aware, we corresponded in May 2019 about this site but, for completeness sake, I can confirm that the archaeological aspects of this development site have previously been addressed and therefore no action is required in relation to this application as regards the buried archaeological heritage.

#### **5.11 Historic England**

The application should be assessed against National and local policy guidance and on the basis of Reading's own specialist conservation advice.

#### **5.12 RBC Emergency Planning Manager**

No response received. Comment on 162166 was that risk of the building itself being a target for terrorist attack is low, but proximity to bomb blast of the Station is a risk. Suggests laminated glass for areas facing the station.

*[Officer comment - This could be a condition of any approval, as previously agreed].*

#### **5.13 Civil Aviation Authority**

No response received.

#### **5.14 Wokingham Borough Council**

I refer to your consultation request registered on 4 June 2019. I can confirm that the Local Planning Authority raises no objection to the proposal and trust the application will be considered in accordance with the relevant planning policies.

#### **5.15 South Oxfordshire District Council**

No response received.

#### **5.16 Reading Civic Society**

No response received.

#### **5.17 Crime Prevention Design Advisor (Thames Valley Police):**

No response received.

*[Officer comment - Comment on 162166 was that has a number of concerns with this complicated development, but advises that a comprehensive security strategy (secured by condition) could overcome this. This remains the case.]*

#### **5.18 Network Rail**

Drainage and boundary informatives.

*[Officer comment - As with both previous applications, the majority of the concerns raised relate to the safe functioning of the railway and are largely a matter to be resolved between the respective landowners. The applicant is aware of these points, which could form an Informative on any permission].*

#### **5.19 Crossrail**

The implications of the Crossrail proposals for the application have been considered and I write to inform you that Crossrail Limited advises the Local Planning Authority that the proposed development could impact nearby railway infrastructure. Crossrail therefore, advises the Applicant contact Network Rail (Lynsey.Wheater@networkrail.co.uk) regarding the proposed scheme and its proximity to the operational railway.

#### **5.20 Caversham GLOBE**

No response received.

#### **5.21 Reading UK CIC**

No response received.

#### **5.22 RBC Waste Manager**

No response received.

#### **5.23 Thames Water**

No objection raised subject to informatives, but also (consistent with 162166) requests that conditions be attached to any planning permission to secure upgrades to foul sewerage infrastructure and drinking water supply; and to control foundation piling works close to water infrastructure. Dealt with under the water Act 2011.

#### **Public consultation**

5.24 Site notices were displayed onto the Napier Road roundabout frontage to the site. Letters were also sent to all those residents consulted as part of the previous application and all previous objectors.

5.25 3 letters of objection were received and have been summarised as follows:

- This proposed development will not ameliorate the substantial objections to its forerunner (application no. 162166) relating to:
  - Traffic movements
  - ugliness
  - potential for anti-social activities
  - The type of accommodation will cater for speculative rentier clientele
  - No solution to Reading's urgent need to heal the social fabric.
- Application appears structurally no different to 182196 other than additional financial incentives and affordable housing allocations.
- Also no additional cycle or car parking has been provided for the additional 50 residents.
- The consented scheme is already large enough, and very overbearing on neighbouring structures.
- It will be visually prominent from Kings Meadow park.
- An additional floor will make it even more disruptive to the views from the park;
- It will not really add any aesthetic value to the scheme as a whole.
- Consented scheme has a better balance between the benchmark and landmark tower.
- The additional floor will erode the elegance of the landmark tower.

### **6. RELEVANT POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

6.1 A starting point for any consideration is Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This requires proposals to 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' and the three key objectives in achieving sustainable development'.

6.2 Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that the Local Planning Authority shall have 'special regard' to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

6.3 In terms of impact of development on the setting of a scheduled monument, securing the preservation of the monument 'within an appropriate setting' as required by national policy is solely a matter for the planning system. Whether any particular development within the setting of a scheduled monument will have an adverse impact on its significance is a matter of professional judgement. It will depend upon such variables as the nature, extent and design of the development proposed, the characteristics of the monument in question, its relationship to other monuments in the vicinity, its current landscape setting and its contribution to our understanding and appreciation of the monument.

6.4 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)

The following NPPF chapters are the most relevant (others apply to a lesser extent):

- 2. Achieving sustainable development
- 4. Decision-making
- 5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
- 11. Making effective use of land
- 12. Achieving well-designed places
- 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

6.5 Other Government Guidance which is a material consideration

Historic England Advice Note 4: Tall Buildings (2015)  
DCLG: Accelerating Housing Supply and Increasing Tenant Choice in the Private Rented Sector: A Build to Rent Guide for Local Authorities (2015)  
Government National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) suite (including specific chapter on Build to Rent (13 September 2018)

6.6 Reading Borough Local Development Framework: Core Strategy (January 2008) (as amended 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)
- CS8 (Waterspaces)
- CS9 (Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities)
- CS10 (Location of Employment Development)

CS11 (Use of Land for Alternative Uses)  
 CS15 (Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix  
 CS16 (Affordable Housing) including update to policy, 2015  
 CS20 (Implementation of The Reading Transport Strategy (Local Transport Plan 2006-2011))  
 CS21 (Major Transport Projects)  
 CS22 (Transport Assessments)  
 CS23 (Sustainable Travel and Travel Plans)  
 CS24 (Car/Cycle Parking)  
 CS25 (Scale and Location of Retail, Leisure and Culture Development)  
 CS26 (Network and Hierarchy of Centres)  
 CS29 (Provision of Open Space)  
 CS33 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment)  
 CS34 (Pollution and Water Resources)  
 CS35 (Flooding)  
 CS36 (Biodiversity and Geology)  
 CS37 (Major Landscape Features and Strategic Open Space)  
 CS38 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands)

6.7 Reading Borough Local Development Framework: Reading Central Area Action Plan (RCAAP) (2009)

RC1 (Development in the Station/River Major Opportunity Area). The site is identified in the RCAAP as site RC1h Napier Road Junction  
 RC5 (Design in the Centre)  
 RC6 (Definition of the Centre)  
 RC9 (Living in the Centre)  
 RC10 (Active Frontages)  
 RC13 (Tall Buildings) (the site is at the eastern extremity of the RC13a Station Area Cluster)  
 RC14 (Public Realm)

6.8 Reading Borough Local Development Framework: Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012) (as amended 2015)

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

6.9 Reading Borough Submission Draft Local Plan 2018

The examination process included a set of public hearings. These hearings took place between 25th September and 5th October at the Town Hall, Blagrove Street. The Inspector has provided a Post Hearing Advice Note in respect of a number of issues arising during the examination which is available to view at <http://www.reading.gov.uk/localplanexamination> (document ref EI 014).

CC1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC2: Sustainable Design And Construction  
 CC3: Adaptation To Climate Change  
 CC4: Decentralised Energy  
 CC5: Waste Minimisation And Storage  
 CC6: Accessibility And The Intensity Of Development  
 CC7: Design And The Public Realm  
 CC8: Safeguarding Amenity  
 CC9: Securing Infrastructure  
 EN1: Protection And Enhancement Of The Historic Environment  
 EN2: Areas Of Archaeological Significance  
 EN3: Enhancement Of Conservation Areas  
 EN5: Protection Of Significant Views With Heritage Interest  
 EN6: New Development In A Historic Context  
 EN7: Local Green Space And Public Open Space  
 EN9: Provision Of Open Space  
 EN10: Access To Open Space  
 EN12: Biodiversity And The Green Network  
 EN13: Major Landscape Features And Areas Of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
 EN14: Trees, Hedges And Woodland  
 EN15: Air Quality  
 EN16: Pollution And Water Resources  
 EN17: Noise Generating Equipment  
 EN18: Flooding And Drainage  
 EM1: Provision Of Employment  
 H1: Provision Of Housing  
 H2: Density And Mix  
 H3: Affordable Housing  
 H4: Build To Rent Schemes  
 H5: Standards For New Housing  
 H10: Private And Communal Outdoor Space  
 TR1: Achieving The Transport Strategy  
 TR2: Major Transport Projects  
 TR3: Access, Traffic And Highway-Related Matters  
 TR4: Cycle Routes And Facilities  
 TR5: Car And Cycle Parking And Electric Vehicle Charging  
 CR1: Definition Of Central Reading  
 CR2: Design In Central Reading  
 CR3: Public Realm In Central Reading  
 CR6: Living In Central Reading  
 CR10: Tall Buildings  
 CR11: Station/River Major Opportunity Area

#### 6.10 Supplementary Planning Documents

Reading Station Area Framework (RSAF) (2010)  
 Sustainable Design and Construction (July 2011)  
 Parking Standards and Design (October 2011)  
 Employment, Skills and Training (April 2013)  
 Affordable Housing (July 2013)  
 Planning Obligations under S.106 (April 2015)

#### 6.11 Other Reading Borough Council corporate documents

Tall Buildings Strategy 2008  
Tall Buildings Strategy Update Note 2018  
Reading Open Space Strategy (2007)  
Reading Tree Strategy 2010  
Local Transport Plan 3: Strategy 2011-2026 (2011)

## 7. APPRAISAL

7.1 The revised current proposal is essentially the same scheme as the approved scheme 162166, which is currently at an advanced stage of construction, except for the additional 20 units located on a partial new floor, a revised approach to the east and north elevational treatment and a revised affordable housing offer. Therefore, similar to the previous committee report, in the interests of brevity this report will focus on the main issues, which are considered to be:

- (i) Principle of development
- (ii) External appearance
- (iii) Affordable Housing and Housing Need
- (iv) Other matters

### (i) Principle of Development

7.2 This revised proposal continues to propose a high density Build to Rent (BTR) scheme in exactly the same position as the previous approval (162166). The principle difference between them is the addition of a partial storey to the benchmark element, taking it from a consented 12 residential storeys to partial 13 storeys. Unlike the recently refused scheme for an entire 13 storey benchmark element, the 13<sup>th</sup> floor of the revised scheme no longer wraps around the landmark tower and is reduced to be identical to the approved scheme when viewed from the west elevation (see Fig 2). The first matter to consider is therefore the policy basis for assessing the additional ‘partial storey’ and whether this would comply with the Council’s tall building policies in principle.

- **Tall buildings policy**

7.3 Tall buildings policy for the Station Cluster (which includes the application site), originate from the Tall Buildings Strategy (2008) and are identified in the Reading Central Area Action Plan (RCAAP) (particularly Policies RC1 and RC13) and are supplemented with more detailed guidance in the Reading Station Area Framework (RSAF), adopted in 2010. The Tall Buildings Strategy Update 2018, submitted in evidence to the Local Plan examination, sits alongside the original 2008 Tall Buildings Strategy.

7.4 The NPPF expressly supports the Council’s approach in setting a clear design vision and expectations as set out in the RSAF and underpinned by relevant Development Plan policies. Para. 125 states “*Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area’s defining characteristics. Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development*”.

- 7.5 Para 126 continues: *“To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, plans or supplementary planning documents should use visual tools such as design guides and codes. These provide a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design. However their level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified.”*
- 7.6 In terms of local policy, the RCAAP RC1(h) site allocation envisages a dense, large scale development, and this is carried forward in the Submission Draft Local Plan 2018 which shows an indicative development potential for this site of 200-300 dwellings, plus some commercial (draft Policy CR11h). Therefore, the removal of the present building and the redevelopment of the site more intensively is accepted in principle, which was also acknowledged when determining the extant permission 162166 and continues to be case in the assessment of this current revised application.
- 7.7 The RBC Tall Buildings Strategy (2008) (a background paper to the RCAAP), and the 2018 Update Note identify a cluster of tall buildings around the station where the tallest buildings are intended to command the dominant position in the cluster for the Reading skyline. The eastern and western tall building zones identify point markers, such as The Blade and Kings Point (now ‘Verto’) in the east and Fountain House and Chatham Place in the west. In this way, the skyline of the town is considered balanced and the appropriate scale or build-up of scale can be attributed to the locations of the greatest importance and sustainability.
- 7.8 In the RSAF, the aspirations for heights are set out in Chapter 6 entitled, Density, Mass and Height. The application site is earmarked for “Medium-High Density” (Figure 6.7) (as opposed to “Very High” for the more central sites in the tall building cluster around the Station) and suitable for a “Local Landmark” building (Figure 6.8) (as opposed to other sites which are identified as suitable for a more prominent “District Landmark”). Therefore, the RSAF provides useful and specific advice on the required function of the landmark at this location. Figure 6.10 of the RSAF SPD provides the suggested relative heights in the Central Area (entitled “tall building location guidance”) and indicates that a lower overall height would be appropriate for this site, which is at the eastern extremity of the RSAF area. The RSAF clearly indicates that in height and density terms, this site is to be developed at a significantly smaller scale than the tallest buildings which would be sited immediately adjacent to the station.
- 7.9 As with previous Committee reports, it is worth noting the scale of other tall building proposals/permissions in the Central Area. This comparison now includes Reading Bridge House on George Street, which was not included previously when considering the refused scheme and is included given its proximity to the site, role in transitioning to the river and the fact it is an important contextual feature in considering the relative height of any revised proposal:

Site	Height (max.)	Comment/status
Plot C, ‘Station Hill 3’	109-128m AOD	OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION,

		not commenced. (the height is a range due to the parameters set by the outline planning permission)
29-35 Station Road (adjacent to Station Hill)	121m AOD	Current application 181930
<b>Thames Quarter</b>	<b>111.7 AOD</b>	<b>Permission granted under 162166 and under construction.</b>
Reading Bridge House on George Street	73.5m AOD	Existing
80 Caversham Road 'Royal Mail site'	123.18m AOD	Current application 182252.
Thames Tower	103.3m AOD	PERMISSION, completed (with roof extension)
Chatham Place	102.5m AOD	PERMISSION, completed
Kings Point/Verto	94.1m AOD	PERMISSION, completed

- 7.10 Whilst exceptions may exist to the general rule that heights should reduce with distance from the station, these would need to be carefully controlled. Paragraph 6.26 of the RSAF states that: *“Landmark buildings may exceptionally ‘puncture’ the benchmark heights [8 storeys on this site, as set out in the RSAF, Figure 6.8] and the general ‘dome’ massing pattern in order to create emphasis and to mark important places. It is not envisaged that every potential landmark location in Figure 6.9 will necessarily provide a landmark building”*. The specific ‘landmark’ element of the current proposal (23 storey tower) continues to be the same height as that approved under 162166 and is considered acceptable in this regard.
- 7.11 As concluded in the planning assessment of application 162166, the development opportunity of this site is considered to be for a single local landmark building which will need to show deference/subservience to the height of the buildings at the centre of the Station Area Cluster. This approach still has merit.
- 7.12 Both the approved tower element and lower benchmark element of the development are classified as ‘tall buildings’ in terms of the definition in Policy RC13 (23 and 12 residential storeys) and would continue to retain this status under this revised application (23 and 13 residential storeys respectively). The sections below review the revised application scheme in terms of the various requirements of the policy, where relevant.
- 7.13 It has been established through the previous approval and subsequent assessment that a tall building on this site is unlikely to comply with the ‘normal’ criteria in Policy CS7, in terms of the effect on local character. Whilst tall buildings are generally an exception to the prevailing character and represent a new direction for the townscape in character terms, the status of this site is unchanged in a policy sense and careful consideration is required to ascertain whether any additional harm is caused by the increase in the benchmark element. Policy CS7 requires development to maintain and enhance the character of the area of Reading within which it is located. The Committee report for approved application 162166 clearly describes the more low-key character existing around the application site. Policy CS7 should therefore also be read in the context of other

specific tall buildings policies which facilitate the step-change in scale; i.e. Policies RC1, RC13, the RSAF and emerging policy in the Draft Local Plan.

- 7.14 The previous contention of the applicant under refused application 182196 was that there is no discernible difference between a 12 storey and a 13 storey lower block and that no significant adverse harm would be caused to the Benchmark Height of this area of Reading and therefore the skyline of the Reading Central Area. However, the Reading Station Area Framework sets clear guidelines for height and massing and states in paras 6.22-6.25:

*“6.22 The benchmark height is the general recommended height for each area. The benchmark height is defined in commercial storeys, not metres and does not exceed ten storeys because this is the point at which tall building controls and design guidance applies. As a general rule, 10 commercial storeys equate to 12 residential storeys.*

*6.23 Benchmark heights may be modified upwards in order to realise certain urban design or other major planning benefits, or where applicants have demonstrated convincingly that the potential impact of higher buildings on the surroundings can be mitigated.*

*6.24 Benchmark heights are not guarantees and may be modified downwards where it becomes clear that proposed buildings will harm residential amenity or affect the setting of listed buildings, important views or open spaces.*

*6.25 There is a general presumption that benchmark heights should grade back to the established heights in the surrounding areas.”*

- 7.15 The approved ‘benchmark’ element of the proposed building was already at the maximum 12 domestic storey recommended height set by the RSAF and Policy RC13. The proposed revised scheme sees this exceeded partially when viewed from the north, east and south elevation. The RSAF is clear that benchmarks are based on “storeys” rather than “metres”.
- 7.16 As a starting point, the now-proposed 13 storey lower element continues to exceed these criteria and would not comply with the guidance in the RSAF. The current proposed exceedance in both the general 10/12 storey guide and the 8 (commercial) storey site specific guide and therefore continues to conflict with these aspirations in policy terms.
- 7.17 As made clear in the previous committee report for the refuse scheme, a slavish adherence to policy is not always appropriate. The guidance in the RSAF notes that Benchmark heights may be modified to achieve certain urban design or other major planning benefits, or where applicants have demonstrated convincingly that the potential impact of higher buildings on the surroundings can be mitigated. As this is a new application and other changes have been made to the overall proposal, this discretion as permissible by the RSAF is important. It remains appropriate for the Council to consider the level of harm generated by any conflict, and weigh this in the overall planning balance as advocated by the NPPF, with due regard also had to the advanced stage of implementation of the approved scheme and its status as a material fall-back position.

- 7.18 Significant weight continues to be afforded to the Council’s tall buildings policies, in ensuring that the new character of any such development is of benefit to the town. Read together, the Development Plan and supplementary guidance in the Reading Station Area Framework (RSAF) provide an appropriate framework within which the question of appropriate intensity and scale can be evaluated.
- 7.19 In this instance, there remains a conflict with the strategy for benchmark heights in this peripheral, edge of centre location. The increase of the agreed benchmark element would be at odds with the carefully-presented adopted strategy to ensure that these important ‘benchmark’ structures do not start to loom in these locations, thereby blurring the distinction between tall buildings and the surrounding skyline. This conclusion is independent of any detailed assessment as to the impact of the additional partial storey in this location when considered against the approved scheme under construction which will be undertaken in a later section of this report (6(ii) Visual impact).
- 7.20 Therefore in conclusion, the principle of bringing this site forward for the BTR development in this location is already approved and accepted. If the Council now accepts the partial increase in height and mass of the proposed development this departure from the guidance needs to be weighed against other material planning considerations as will be considered further as part of the overall ‘Planning Balance’ below.
- **Density and efficient use of land**
- 7.21 The NPPF 2019 in para 118(c) ‘Planning policies and decisions’ states that LPAs, *“...should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land.”*
- 7.22 As a new requirement and with greater emphasis within the updated 2019 Framework, this has been put forward as added justification to support the increased quantum of development on this site. Officers can confirm that this NPPF objective remains consistent with existing Local Plan policy and guidance which already supports high-density tall building on this site, for instance Policies CS4, CS15, RC1 and RC13, as supported by the RSAF. Therefore, despite any arguments to the contrary, the Development Plan is not considered to be inconsistent or out-of-date in this regard and remains the starting point for decision making as per s.38(6) of the Act and as confirmed by para 12 of the NPPF itself.
- 7.23 Officers have previously advised that the approved scheme currently under construction already exhibits a significant uplift on the average density of residential development in the area, and could not reasonably be described as ‘failing to make efficient use of land’ as referred to in Para 123 of the NPPF. 335 dwellings on a 0.5 hectare site results in 167.5 dwellings per hectare which continues to be in excess of the minimum density of 70 dwelling per hectare for town centre sites set by Policy CS15 and also the emerging Policy H2 which suggests a minimum of 100 dph in the centre. The RSAF refers to ‘plot ratios’ as a measure of density (floor area relative to plot size) which in the case of the current proposal would remain at 6:1 or 600% (similar to that of the previously approved scheme). Fig. 6.7 of the RSAF itself suggests a “medium-high” density for the application site (“medium” is defined as 200 to 500% or 2:1 to 5:1, with “high” being 500 to 1000% or 5:1 to 10:1). The proposed density therefore remains within



the “high” density rather than “medium” density range. There is no material change to this intended density as proposed as part of this revised scheme.

- 7.24 In light of the above, the Council do not consider that this ‘renewed emphasis’ on efficient use of land within the updated NPPF justifies (in isolation) the increased density created by the additional 20 units, especially in such circumstances where higher than prevailing density is already encouraged and allowed for within adopted local policy in the Development Plan and through the consented scheme itself (as is the case here). It is therefore considered that as the approved permission already complies with the ‘substantial weight’ afforded by the NPPF to increased densities. The further increase in the density (albeit marginally) is not itself considered to translate into any substantially greater material benefit in the overall planning balance.

(ii) **Visual impact**

- 7.25 This revised application has actively sought to overcome the previous primary design-related refusal reason of application 182196. As described earlier in this report, this revised application resets the haunch of the building (adjacent to the tower element) back to that which was previously approved as this seeks to specifically address the concern raised by the Council to the impact upon the Napier Road street scene. Importantly from an aesthetic and proportional perspective, the revised scheme also now see the introduction of grey cladding to the eastern-most recessed bay of the northern elevation and on the eastern-most bay wrapped around the corner onto the eastern elevation in an attempt to positively influence the perceived proportions of the building.

- 7.26 As part of this revised application, detailed massing assessments, elevational comparison studies and accurate visual representations (AVRs) were also provided. Furthermore, the Council took the additional opportunity to obtain independent design input from the Council’s Design Review Panel and commission the Building Research Establishment (BRE) to independently verify the conclusions contained within the daylight/sunlight and microclimate reports submitted by the applicant. These revised proposals, additional information and further detailed analysis constitutes positive steps as a direct consequence of the Council’s decision to refuse the previous scheme.

- **Surrounding Townscape**

- 7.27 Both the approved scheme, refused scheme and this revised scheme include the 23 storey local ‘landmark’ tower at the western end of the site. As visible from site photographs, this part of the is substantially under construction as can be seen from those photos included within this report. The height, design and primacy of this tower is the single most important feature of the overall building, and ultimately informs how this building (whether as part of the approved scheme or this revised scheme) is primarily perceived in context to the town itself. There have been no changes in policy or the site context to suggest a different approach to the landmark tower under this revised application and as such this element of the scheme remains acceptable.

- 7.28 In turning to the benchmark building, the officer assessment of this part of the approved scheme stated previously: *“The benchmark building is the lower building and its height has been primarily dictated by the prevailing heights of the surrounding built form, for instance the Forbury Place development. In*

*proportion, the tower is roughly twice the height of the tower and in your officers' opinion - as has also been voiced in design reviews - anything less would appear proportionally to be too squat. Therefore, the design proposes a benchmark height 'city-block' building and this surrounds the tower. The architectural detail, discussed further below, seeks to distinguish the two distinct design elements. Officers are therefore content that the massing complies with the RC1h designation for the site as amplified by the RSAF, which require a single tall building."*

- 7.29 Policy RC1(vi) continues to require "Development in the Station/River Major Opportunity Area" to "Give careful consideration to the areas of transition to low and medium density residential and protect and, where appropriate, enhance the setting of listed buildings;" Para 6.13 of the RCAAP states that, "...schemes in these areas should take account of the fact that there are areas of low-rise housing fringing the area, and this should be reflected in the design of schemes, both in terms of the effect on character of the area and on the amenity of residents."
- 7.30 It is clear from previous assessments, one of the primary reference points for considering the height of the benchmark element are those buildings constructed on Forbury Road on the opposite side of the railway track to the south. We can now benefit from more accurately considering the building now under construction. So whilst recognising previous comparisons made with the benchmark height of 1, 2 & 3 The Forbury (the Forbury buildings), as mentioned earlier in this report, comparisons can and should also be made between the revised proposal and those buildings which lie directly to the north, namely Reading Bridge House on George Street, and Kings Meadow House (occupying land between the site itself and the River Thames). Importantly from a visual impact perspective, both these buildings front the same shared public realm (Kings Meadow, George Street as the application site and both share a visually similar slab level to that of the application site.



Photo 2: View north from Forbury Road roundabout with Reading Bridge House in view.

7.31 In acknowledging the marginal difference a 4m increase would constitute between the approved and revised scheme and when comparisons are made between existing tall buildings at The Forbury and Reading Bridge House (See Photo 2 above), it must be recognised that the elevated railway line runs between both sites and therefore the relative height of the benchmark to the ground level would not be read as plainly as would be illustrated on the section below (Fig 2). This does not change the resultant height of the benchmark element, merely ameliorates the perceived impact when taken in context to those buildings which actually surround the site, rather than from plan form as illustrated.

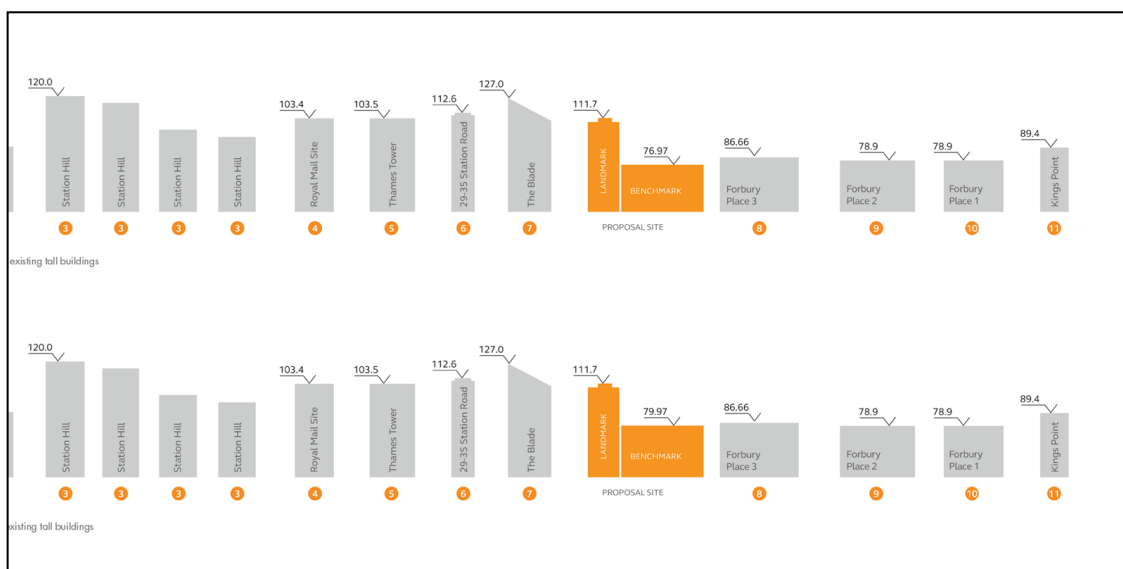


Fig 2: Comparison diagram from Design and Access Statement (Approved scheme top 76.57m AOD, revised scheme bottom 79.97m AOD).

7.32 Whilst useful, the above comparison in Fig 2 (as included in the developer’s Design and Access Statement), only considers the revised benchmark height with tall buildings which lie to the south of the railway line. As described, it is appropriate for officers to also consider the benchmark height of the revised proposal against Reading Bridge House (visible in both Photo 1 and Photo 2) and the previously-approved development at the former Royal Mail site to the west. These comparative buildings are indicated in table 2 below, along with a comparison with this revised proposal:

Thames Quarter approved benchmark height to parapet:	71.4m AOD
Thames Quarter proposed benchmark height to parapet:	74.4m AOD
Reading Bridge House height:	73.5m AOD
Royal Mail approved height:	103.4m AOD

**Table 2:** Additional height comparison to the north and west.



**Fig 3:** Aerial view along Napier Road of approved scheme (CGI).

7.33 This additional information validates the officer’s view that the revised benchmark height would not be visually isolated for a number of vantage points, and as shown below in a number of AVR’s submitted with this revised application. Given the scale and height of existing buildings to the north which lie on a similar slab level, the magnitude of effect previously suggested from the west, through the increase in the benchmark element is not considered to represent any significant harm by virtue of the fact the ‘haunch of the building’ now retains the original intended primacy of the landmark tower (Fig 4 below), but also as a consequence of the evident scale of built form in the vicinity, framing the development at the end of Vastern Road roundabout.



**Fig 4:** AVR from Vastern Road (Camera position between Norman Place and Reading Station Car Park) showing Reading Bridge House.

- 7.34 As noted in both previous committee reports, the Forbury Buildings to the south are set on higher ground than the application site. A key question therefore continues to be how are these buildings and the application site *experienced* within the townscape relative to their surroundings, and not just in medium-distance views within the town. It remains the case the revised scheme needs to respect local topography if it is to continue to respond as appropriately to its context as the approved scheme. This is reflected in the RSAF which gives guidance on relating buildings to topography: *“The [Station] area marks a bluff or low hill with the ground rising from the Thames flood plain to the east, north and west. Building heights can mirror this topography. Conversely, lower buildings are to be encouraged on the lower ground.”* This approach avoids a hypothetical situation whereby buildings lower in the valley rise to the same height as those upslope, which would otherwise result in the valley bottom being occupied by disproportionately large and oppressive buildings.
- 7.35 The Forbury buildings have an adjacent road level of between 41.37m and 41.45m AOD whilst the Thames Quarter would continue to have a Ground floor level of 38.8m AOD. In this respect it continues to be recognised that the relative height and massing of the 13 storey benchmark element of the revised application would therefore be greater than that of buildings that rise to a broadly comparable height AOD (sea level) on Forbury Road, but based on the context of each building, they all are set at a greater height than street level.

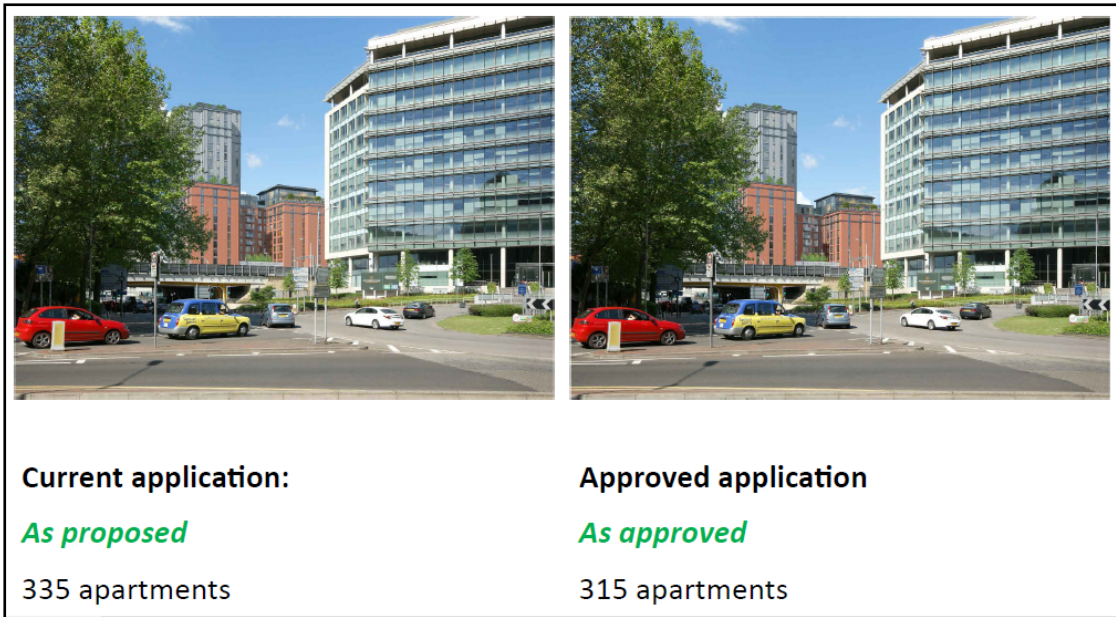


Fig 5: AVR from Rising Sun Pub (Camera position outside the Rising Sun Pub at the Forbury Road and Vastern Road roundabout)

7.36 In viewing the site from surrounding vantage points and considering this point specifically, in context to the Forbury buildings and existing Reading Bridge House, there already exists an overwhelming sense of scale in this part town, thereby effectively reducing quite considerably any natural perception of the existing topography of the area as described within the RSAF. Rather, man made interventions like the elevated railway embankment and railway underpass (See Fig 5 and Photo 2), the elevated street level of George Street when crossing Reading Bridge (photo 3 below), and views along Vastern Road, create a series of varied artificial horizons from a variety of ‘street levels’ at varying AODs for which the revised benchmark element would ultimately be read against.

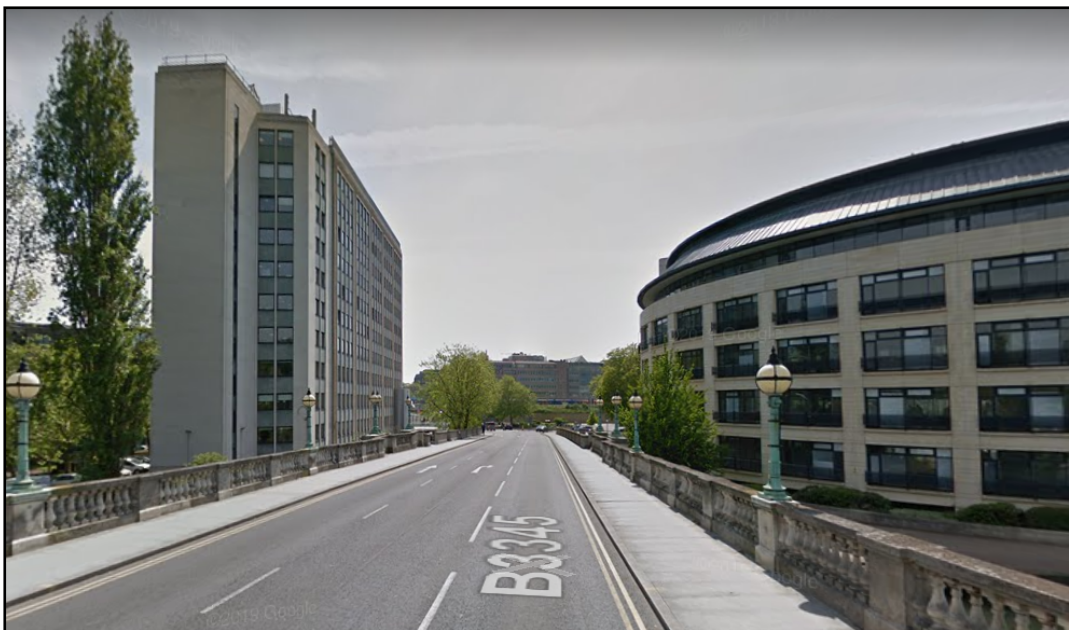


Photo 3: Elevated street level of Reading Bridge (Google May 2019)

7.37 In this regard, for the Council to be able to materially demonstrate that this revised scheme causes substantially more visual harm or creates a greater

obstruction of any defined view of high amenity value, continues to be fine balanced.

- 7.38 The refused scheme reasoned that the previous proposal would fail to address the transition *to low and medium density residential and other domestic scale buildings* to the north of the site. The scheme also did not benefit any additional ‘mitigation’ within the new enlarged design to suggest a different approach, contrary to para 6.23 of the RSAF. A submitted building heights survey plan (which was not submitted with the previous application) shows that, in terms of stepping-down, as one moves from Thames Quarter northwards to the River Thames, the scale of development would diminishes accordingly in an appropriate manner (see Table 3 below).

Thames Quarter proposed benchmark height to parapet:	74.4m AOD
Reading Bridge House height:	73.5m AOD
Clearwater Court (Thames Water offices) height:	68.1m AOD
Kings Meadow House (Environment Agency offices) height:	60.2m AOD

Table 3: Northern stepdown comparison.

- 7.39 This additional information demonstrates that the scale of buildings to the north of the site is not as domestic in scale as previously suggested (based upon the information available to officers at the time), and importantly the revised scheme would retain an appropriate transition to lower density development to the north before the natural landscape feature of the River Thames (See Fig 6 below).



Fig 6: Aerial view looking north towards those buildings listed in Table 3 (Application site highlighted in yellow) (Google May 2019)

- 7.40 This verifies to Officers that the marginal increase in the benchmark height at Thames Quarter would not significantly affect or run contrary to the prevailing

transition of building heights away from the town centre, but rather as Fig 4 and Fig 5 show, continue match the setting of the approved scheme in the street scene particularly in the context of both those buildings at Forbury Place and Reading Bridge House beyond.

- 7.41 In terms of additional mitigation, aside from to the reduction in built form to the west elevation, officers worked with the applicants architects to secure the addition of grey cladding to the eastern and northern elevation of the proposed benchmark element. To a lesser extent, the developer has also increased the financial contributions towards improvements at Kings Meadow Park, which can include additional tree planting should any specific close-range viewpoint be considered to benefit from additional mitigation.
- 7.42 To conclude, whilst the proposed height of the benchmark building remains largely as submitted in the refused application, material changes have been made to the scheme along with the provision of additional information to allow those concerns previously identified to be considered in much greater detail. This has allowed officers the opportunity to reappraise whether the revised proposal would overtly conflict with the site's topographic constraints, specifically, the valley location and is rising upwards to match the height of buildings located on higher ground). In this respect, it is considered that overall massing of building will remain largely unchanged and the revised scheme will be equally imposing and dominant as the approved, especially when viewed in context to those other dominant buildings in the immediate street scene to the north.
- 7.43 However, in light of the above, whilst the scale of the overall building will continue to be equally apparent as the approved scheme, informed by AVRs included within this report and the submission, there is no longer any substantive evidence to demonstrate that the insertion of the partial additional storey to the benchmark element causes as great a level of harm to the surrounding townscape as was previously concluded under the refused application.

- **Design and proportions**

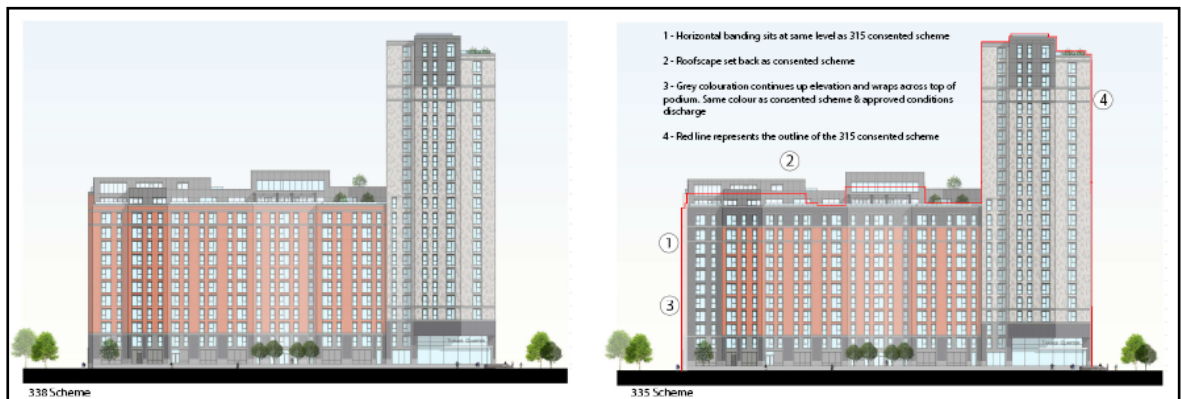
- 7.44 To begin with, it must be recognised that the overall design of the building has not changed. The building is still made up of two distinct elements, both with agreed horizontal and vertical emphasise respectively, with an indicative material pallet shown matching that of the approved scheme notwithstanding the additional grey cladding to certain recesses on two elevations, which was a utilised feature at podium level.
- 7.45 As identified under the approved application, the form of the tall (landmark) tower was considered to be elegant with any harm that may occur considered to be comparatively limited. On balance, it was reasoned that the proportions of the approved scheme (when considered in the context of views and townscape) were supportable, largely on the basis of the elegance of the tower.
- 7.46 It continues to be the case that the revised proposal retains the strong vertical emphasis of the tower 'landmark' element, noted as a slender, vertical, elegant structure punctuating the skyline; discernible as purposefully distinct from a fundamentally subservient lower element sitting alongside. Under the refused application, it was the officer's view that the proposed upwards creep of the benchmark element unbalanced the proportions of the building and would appear to exceed a tipping point visually, reducing the visual primacy and Landmark



qualities of the tower by a reduction in the subservience of the benchmark element and 'suffocating' the tower in visual terms, thereby making it appear squat. This is in essence the starting point in considering the changes between the approved scheme and the now revised scheme.

- 7.47 The previous refusal identified two key concerns. Firstly harm to the elegance and vertical emphasis of the tower identified previously by obscuring its lower storeys, and secondly the overall mass of the building as a whole becoming more apparent.
- 7.48 In order to inform whether the two elements would continue to sit side-by-side as distinct, separate elements, or instead merge to form a monolithic mass as previously concluded, officers have taken the opportunity to seek independent design input from the Council's Design Review Panel (DRP) in addition to extensive internal design scrutiny of this revised proposal. This was especially important as the previous committee report made clear that this aspect of the scheme was a matter of quite fine detail, and as such an objective assessment of the two schemes would now be vital in order to inform whether the revised proposal does in fact now continue to cause more, the same, or less harm than the refused scheme; and whether any differences between the approved scheme and this revised scheme, when taking account of all matters raised, is sufficient enough to now to withhold permission.
- 7.49 The Council recognise the importance of ensuring the lower element retains its relative subservience of the current approval. Failure to do so under the previous application resulted in the schemes ultimate resistance.
- 7.50 In considering the revised scheme, the Council's Design Review Panel recognised that the design, form, massing etc. of the proposal have not fundamentally changed, except for the additional partial storey to the benchmark element. The Panel made clear that any observations on the fundamentals of the approved design beyond the differences between the approved and schemes was essentially not possible given that the approved scheme is substantially under construction. Consequently comments made by the panel were restricted and almost solely in relation to aesthetics and the opportunities open to the council and applicant to influence the proportion of the building in a positive way. Also, it was agreed that the subjective interpretation of the elevations (read in two-dimensions) and fine margins of change meant that that the panel were unable to definitively answer whether moving further away from the approved would be an improvement or not.
- 7.51 The panel did recognise that the loss of 3 units from the refused scheme was a key factor and critical to the success of this compromise by adding an additional storey. The panel also confirmed to the council that the introduction of different rendered materials was a well-practiced architectural technique which had the ability to positively change the proportion of the building in a way which could allow the additional partial storey to be successfully accommodated. The panel also suggested that, whilst not critical, the introductions of grey cladding elements may visually aid the building's proportions. This reinforced the views made under previous reports that this was a matter of very fine detail.
- 7.52 At the DRP meeting, the applicant's architect presented elevational drawings to show selected revisions to numbers of stories and materials choices in order to overcome concern expressed in the previous refusal.

- 7.53 In first considering the west elevation and the view from Vastern Road and roundabout (which is recognised as a key view of the proposal from the town centre side), the panel considered carefully the reduced the height of the benchmark to match the approved scheme through the removal of the haunch element where it adjoins the tower element (made possible through the loss of 3 units from that refused). The panel agreed this was a successful revision that restored/increased the primacy of the tower, improving its proportions in relation to the benchmark and vice versa. Officers agree with this conclusion and in noting previous concern expressed by the loss of primacy of the tower element, consider this an improvement which largely overcomes previous concerns raised from this elevation and the Vastern Road direction.
- 7.54 Whilst not crucial to the scheme overall, the introduction of grey cladding to the eastern-most recessed bay of the northern elevation was considered to successfully emphasise its recessed nature and shortened the perceived width of the overall benchmark element when viewed in elevation form. Equally, the horizontal use of grey cladding on the proposed partial additional floor, allows the additional height to be read as part of the recessed grey roof scape elements. This can be seen clearly below in Fig 7 below.



**Fig 7:** Northern elevational comparison - refused (left) and revised (right)

- 7.55 On the eastern elevation facing Kings Meadow, grey cladding was added to the eastern-most bay wrapping around the corner onto the eastern elevation. This was considered to provide much improved definition between the recessed grey element and red brick principle façade, giving the latter an increased vertical emphasis which reflects the main tower element in the background (See Fig 8 below).



**Fig 8:** Northern elevational comparison - refused (left) and revised (right)

7.56 The panel recognised these changes aided the proportions of the benchmark element visually, translating into a subtle change in the appearance of the revised scheme when viewed from afar. This independent design review of the revised scheme provided a positive validation that those valid concerns raised with the previously-refused scheme, and whilst remaining finely balanced, verified that those previous concerns expressed with regard to the increased perception of bulk and massing have been partly mitigated from a proportional and design perspective through the revisions secured.

7.57 In terms of architectural *detail* the architectural treatment of the vertical tower and the lower ‘horizontal’ element were considered important in order to distinguish between the two distinct design elements. Officers at the present time have not approved the design details (brickwork and other façade detailing etc.) and as important components of the overall design in their role differentiating between the lower and tower elements, such details can appropriately be dealt with pursuant to conditions and subject to assessment and negotiation.

- **Views**

7.58 As noted under the previous assessment of application 162166 and indicated above, the development would be evidently present in the majority of views identified as being affected. Having identified harm resulting from the proposed scale of building previously, it followed that this harm will be compounded due to the visibility of the building, particularly within mid and short-range views from surrounding vantage points. However, as explored above and with the benefit of additional information and material impact on such views is largely realised to be less than substantial.

- **Visual impact conclusion**

7.59 Based on the above assessment, it is now reasoned that whilst the proposal does little to step down in height towards the adjacent lower buildings to the south (Forbury Place), it would remain consistent with those other larger buildings to the

north as the town transitions to the river. To therefore conclude the proposal remains completely contrary to Policy CS13 is no longer the case. The revised proposal is not considered to cause any substantial harm to Reading's skyline as demonstrated by the AVRs and the building would continue to retain the same level of dominance and overbearing on persons experiencing the building at street level as that with the approved scheme.

- 7.60 It is concluded that whilst views of the building largely unchanged from a range of distances and vantage points, the darker grey cladding would successful alter the building's proportions to minimise the marginal vertical increase in height of the benchmark element when viewed from those few vantage point that exist from afar.
- 7.61 Policy RC13 requires tall buildings to create safe, pleasant and attractive spaces around them and avoid detrimental impacts on the public realm. As explained above and as concluded in the daylight and microclimate sections below, the marginal increase in scale of the benchmark element is not considered to unacceptably impact on these specific policy objectives.
- 7.62 Whilst the increase in scale of the building relative to that approved under application 162166 continues to suggest a building already at the limits of acceptable scale, officers can confirm that the insertion of this partial additional floor is considered to cause less visual harm than the additional floor of the recently refused scheme. Specifically, the revisions secured and mitigation provided through material changes to visually maintain the agreed proportions of the building and additional information, now verifies to officers that the additional storey can be accommodated without any significant change in the building's relationship to the surrounding townscape.
- 7.63 On the basis of the above assessment, and with due regard to the individual site circumstances, it is therefore considered that whilst resisted in principle, the height and massing of the proposal no longer results in an overriding conflict with the aims of Policies CS7, RC5, RC1 RC13.

**(iii) Affordable Housing and housing need**

- 7.64 Policy CS16 (Affordable Housing) as revised in 2015, sets a requirement that 30% of all housing within relevant major developments shall be affordable. This requirement is also supported by the Council's adopted SPD, 'Affordable Housing'.
- 7.65 By way of background, application 162166 was initially submitted with 0% Affordable Housing. It was agreed at that time and in the absence of specific local policy to the contrary, that a Build To Rent (BTR) model was not conducive to accommodating Affordable Housing on site due to site-specific design and viability issues; but that an agreed surrogate site could be secured to provide the equivalent contribution of 18% affordable housing units, but as building land only, not completed units. This was provided together with a 'top-up' contribution and deferred payment mechanism in the previous S106, where that surrogate site could not achieve all the Affordable Housing provision required.
- 7.66 This baseline position is a material consideration to the assessment of the current application as the earlier planning permission has been implemented and outline planning permissions related to the contractual obligations in the s106 attached to

permission 162166 have also now been granted for development on the surrogate site, planning applications 181652/OUT and 181653/OUT.

- 7.67 The revised package as negotiated as part of this revised planning application proposes to substantially improve this agreed position, but in lieu of a top-up amount, the applicant is proposing a second surrogate site.
- 7.68 This is a complicated and large scale BTR proposal, and considerable work has been undertaken by the Council’s viability consultants to confirm the like for like comparison of the package. This can be summarised as follows.
- 7.69 Upon submission of this revised application, the applicant’s initial offer provided land for 101 affordable units, together with cash contributions in line with the approach agreed in the previous S106 agreement. This constituted a like-for-like offer, and the 101 units were considered to amount to 30.1% affordable housing delivery ( $101 \div 335 = 30.1\%$ ) when the previous methodology that was accepted in the Committee Report of the approved scheme was adopted (including the use of £105,000 per unit for missing units).
- 7.70 Following further discussions between the applicant and the council, a revised offer was negotiated which is broken in two scenarios providing either a single surrogate site (Weldale Street) and an affordable housing commuted sum of £8.1m, or 2 surrogate sites (Weldale Street + an additional site) and an affordable housing commuted sum of £5m.
- 7.71 The figure of £8.1m would be the total cash payment to be made if no additional surrogate site is provided. The £5.0m figure applies if two surrogate sites are provided.
- 7.72 The applicant’s latest offer, which now includes three parts, all of which will be included within the S106 Agreement, is as follows

<b>Option 1</b> <u>Land plus construction payment</u>	<b>Option 2</b> <u>Cash payment in lieu (No additional surrogate site found)</u>	<b>Option 3</b> <u>Cash payment in lieu (No additional surrogate site found)</u>
Weldale street land provided	Weldale street land provided	Weldale Street land provided
Additional surrogate land provided at £Nil consideration.	54 completed affordable units provided on surrogate site and sold to an Affordable Housing Provider	No additional surrogate site
Construction contribution of £55,000 per plot for all 54 plots	No cash payment in lieu	£5,670,000 cash payment in lieu ( $54 \times £105,000$ )
<b>£8,070,000 TOTAL</b>	<b>£5.1m TOTAL (plus 54 completed units delivered by a Registered Provider or Reading Borough Council)</b>	<b>£8.07m TOTAL</b>

- 7.73 The Council’s external valuer has concluded that this current offer can be considered reasonable in the context of both the Council’s need for affordable housing and also the previous Committee Report for the site’s extant consent (162166).

- 7.74 Officers welcome the current offer in that it provides a substantial upfront level of affordable housing delivery, which from the council's perspective compensates for the lack of a post-construction viability review mechanism. This strong upfront offer, and the security of the cash contributions (i.e. the 'construction contribution'), indicates that this is an acceptable offer, which is 'overprovision' in the sense that it is more than can viably be delivered based on present-day costs and values.
- 7.75 The £105,000 payment for any 'missing' affordable unit established in the previous Committee Report establishes an acceptable cash contribution for a single unit of affordable housing delivery within the context of the original viability position. In the absence of a council policy for calculating payments-in-lieu, it remains sensible to maintain this approach for this specific development, against the back drop of the original viability submission. Based on these specific site circumstances and the work previously undertaken, this is not considered prejudicial nor creates an undesirable precedent for payment-in-lieu calculations on other sites, as this relates specifically to this specific situation involving delivery of a combination of affordable housing land and commuted sum. The approved scheme's S106 requires a combination of land and commuted sum to be provided by the applicant to the council. Whilst this is a complicated delivery approach, it is considered to comply with the council's planning policy of cascading from on-site provision and therefore accepted in this regard.
- 7.76 Therefore in summary, the relative merits of this now enhanced package result in a significant improvement in the affordable housing offer above and beyond the current approved package secured under application 162166. Despite an element of uncertainty surrounding any affordable housing offer given assumptions, land values and the economic climate, the scheme is delivering the equivalent of 101 affordable units, and if we were to calculate the affordable housing percentage on the basis of the 335 units within the Thames Quarter building itself, this would give affordable housing delivery of 30%. This is a significant material planning benefit which weighs in favour of this revised scheme.

(iv) **Other Matters**

- **Existing and emerging policy on Build to Rent**

- 7.77 Government Policy is set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG accompanies the NPPF) at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/build-to-rent>. Build to Rent is defined in the NPPF Glossary as "*Build to Rent: Purpose built housing that is typically 100% rented out. It can form part of a wider multi-tenure development comprising either flats or houses, but should be on the same site and/or contiguous with the main development. Schemes will usually offer longer tenancy agreements of three years or more, and will typically be professionally managed stock in single ownership and management control.*"
- 7.78 The guide at national level is for 20% of the dwellings to be Affordable Housing (Affordable Private Rent tenure) on site unless a commuted payment or other form of provision is agreed with the LPA.
- 7.79 The process for managing affordable private rent units should also be set out in the Section 106 agreement. This would set out the parameters of the lettings agreement, the rent levels, apportionment of the homes across the development, a management and service agreement, and a marketing agreement setting out how

their availability is to be publicised. The national guidance addresses the question of eligibility criteria for occupants and recommends a 3 year minimum tenancy.

v.80 Policy H4 in the emerging Draft Local Plan specifically deals with Build to Rent Schemes. It is considered that this policy can be given weight given the advanced stage of the new Local Plan. The initial findings of the Local Plan Inspector require the council to provide more evidence on the appropriateness of the proposed 30 year Build to Rent tenure requirement (and the Rent with Confidence Standards). This implies that other aspects of the policy in respect of Affordable Housing and quality of accommodation and standards of design have been deemed to be acceptable as per the previously approved and implemented application.

- **Landscaping**

7.81 Discussions over appropriate landscaping of the road frontages and the interrelationship with proposed and future (MRT etc) highway works continue to be ongoing. It remains the case that all outstanding landscaping and highways-related matters are capable of being dealt with by way of conditions and a s106 agreement, as with approved application 162166.

- **Amenity of future occupiers**

7.82 Whilst the density of the development would marginally increase under the current proposals, there is no indication that the quality of the internal areas, verified daylight/sunlight or access to outdoor amenity space would change. These aspects remain acceptable as described previously under 162166. Policies DM4 and DM10 continue to apply.

- **Effect on heritage assets**

7.83 As with 162166, officers have considered the effects on all Heritage Assets which may be adversely affected by the application in consultation with Historic England. Historic England advises that the Local Planning Authority can assess this and does not wish to comment.

7.84 There are many listed buildings whose settings could potentially be affected, but most are too distant from the application site. The nearest Listed Building is the Kings Meadow Baths (Grade II) and although a 4% increase in additional height would be presented to the Baths, continuing to create some significant overshadowing near to it, this would not directly affect the Listed Building. Given that the development is some 100 metres away and mature trees which provide screening for most of the year stand between, the revised development would not overshadow the baths and the general setting within Kings Meadow would remain largely unchanged. Overall, officers are satisfied that any harm to the setting of the Baths which may occur would increase as a result of the increased massing proposed but would not increase to such an extent as to suggest a switch from the “less than substantial” level identified previously to “substantial harm” within the terms of paragraphs 195 and 196 of the NPPF. The level of harm remains “less than substantial” within the terms of Policy CS33 and the NPPF’s guidance regarding the effects on Heritage Assets.

7.85 Similarly, effects on the prison (Grade II) the Abbey Ruins (Scheduled Ancient Monument) and the Forbury Gardens (a Registered Garden) would be less than substantial harm. Clear views from both Forbury Gardens and Caversham Court Gardens (again Registered) are not possible, due to tree cover and the scale of the

proposal. Whilst the development would be seen from views from St. Lawrence' s Church (Grade I), there would be a limited impact on its setting, given that the tower would just be visible over the lower eastern element of the church. Views out of the Market Place (Conservation Area) would be largely unaltered, although the presence of the tower would be discernible.

7.86 It is considered that impacts on heritage assets remain reasonable (less than substantial) and that giving the impacts on their settings and views considerable importance and weight would not be so significant as to override the policy aims which seek a dense development on this site, incorporating a 'local landmark'. The proposal therefore complies with the requirements of Section 66 and 72 of the Town and Country (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and officers consider the statutory duties of the council in this regard have been satisfactorily discharged.

- **Mitigation of wind speed/turbulence**

7.87 Approved application 162166 was supported by a wind/microclimate study to support the submitted design. This document was reviewed by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) on behalf of the Council. Following detailed discussions, BRE was able to advise that the proposed wind conditions would be safe within the whole of the development (street level and on the elevated terraces) and appeared to be suitable for the intended usage of the site, subject to various caveats.

7.88 With regard to the current scheme, the applicant has submitted a statement from their microclimate consultant confirming that *"At ground level, the key factors dictating the wind conditions are consistent between both previous and revised designs. Therefore, the wind microclimate is expected to remain unchanged.*

*At the elevated levels, the majority of locations are expected to remain comfortable for outdoor seating purposes, with the tested mitigation measures in place. A minor deterioration of wind conditions could potentially occur at one or two elevated terrace locations, where the wind comfort criteria for long-term sitting in summer may be exceeded. However, the wind conditions are still expected to be tolerable for sedentary recreational activities".*

7.89 These outputs have again been tested by the BRE, an independent body for the LPA. At the time of writing, BRE conclusions have not been received and any recommendation has been worded accordingly subject to satisfactory outcomes.

- **Suitable levels of daylighting and sunlight**

7.90 Similarly BRE was previously instructed to assess daylight and sunlight on behalf of the council in respect of approved application 162166. They advised at that time that the compliance rate for daylight provision to the proposed flats would be high, compared to the majority of flats in urban areas. Obstructions to light entering the flats would be minimal due to the avoidance (and removal) of balconies and the most obstructed flats are the lower flats in the Level 03 courtyards.

7.91 No significant issues of overbearing, glare, etc. were identified. Although impacts on Kings Meadow have not been modelled, the BRE did not raise any concerns for this. Given the above, although there will be limited instances where light penetration to flats is not substantial, the scheme was considered to be acceptable indicates no conflict is identified with policies RC1, RC5, RC13 and DM4.



7.92 A revised daylight report has been submitted for the current proposal. This concludes that, *“The proposed scheme has been carefully designed to safeguard daylight amenity to the surrounding residential properties. Predominantly the reductions do not exceed 20%, which the BRE Guide states will be unnoticeable. The small handful of windows which experience reductions greater than this only do so by 25-28%, which are minor derogations from BRE Guidance and certainly not uncommon within urban areas. On planning balance these minor derogations from the BRE Guide are considered acceptable under the circumstances”*.

7.93 Officers have now had the opportunity to request BRE verification of this report given the increase in height and massing proposed. Verification confirms that whilst there would be a slight increase in impact on neighbouring properties, this would be minor adverse for one window/room of 22 Kings Meadow, and within the BRE guidelines in all cases for Kingfisher Place. Any loss of direct sunlight to Kings Meadow Park has not been assessed; however, based on previous assessment of a taller proposed building on the same site, the impact would be expected to be within the BRE guidelines. This revised scheme is also not considered to significantly change sunlight provision to the open areas of the development. The areas to the north of the development which might receive less sunlight would already receive very little sunlight in the previous version. The amenity areas to the south would be largely unaffected by the changes. We would not expect this analysis to be repeated. It has therefore been demonstrated that a suitable daylight and sunlight environment will continue to be achieved both within and surrounding the development.

- **Residential mix**

7.94 Whilst application 162166 was suitable in terms of mix, this revised scheme must contribute to providing choice of housing unit sizes and thereby mixed communities in the town centre. The proposed mix reflects the proportions of that previously proposed and is as follows:

Studio - 36 units  
One bed - 112 units  
Two bed - 169 units  
Three bed - 18 units

- **Residential outlook**

7.95 Outlook from the dwellings is generally good, with many units being dual-aspect. The easterly elevation includes side windows overlooking Napier Court. When considering the previous application 162166, officers concluded on balance that although the relationship with Napier Court was not ideal due to future development potential, it was not harmful enough to warrant a refusal of permission as causing conflict with Policy DM4. There is no evidence to suggest a different approach with the current scheme despite an increase in storey height of the benchmark element.

- **Air quality and noise**

7.96 The air quality assessment submitted with the application shows that at some heights, the air quality is above national objective levels for Nitrogen Dioxide and this is primarily due to proximity to the railway line.

7.97 The mitigation proposed to protect future occupants in internal spaces is for Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery (MVHR) units to be installed with the intakes at a sufficient height to provide clean air and a condition is recommended. All windows would also be openable. 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. The design of the MVHR units is still being considered by the Council's Environmental Health Officers and it is recommended that as with 162166 a condition be attached to any consent to secure the precise design of ventilation etc and ensure that the glazing and ventilation recommendations of the noise assessment will be followed, to comply with policies RC9, CS34 and DM4.

- **Flood risk and drainage**

7.98 The RC1h site allocation in the RCAAP requires that an acceptable dry access scheme must form part of any development on this site. The site was also included in the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).

7.99 In determining this application, the Council must ensure that the sequential test is satisfied. The first stage of the sequential test has been satisfied as the site is allocated in the Development Plan. The extent of the Sequential Test is therefore limited to the siting of development *within* the site itself which has largely been established under recent permission 162166.

7.100 As with 162166 it is considered that suitable confirmation of safe access during a flood and other usual good practice flooding controls has been demonstrated and the development poses no additional flooding risks in accordance with the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy CS35.

7.101 With regard to drainage, the Council as Lead Local Flood Authority has reviewed the SuDs proposal further following the additional information submitted as part of this revised application and raise no objections to the proposal subject to a Sustainable Drainage condition ensuring the site has been completed in accordance with the submitted and approved details. The sustainable drainage scheme shall be managed and maintained thereafter in accordance with the agreed management and maintenance plan.

- **Ground conditions**

7.102 Ground contamination and remediation requirements have been dealt with during the initial construction works associated with implementation of permission 162166. No further action is required as part of this revised application except ensuring any ongoing requirements and monitoring previously agreed continues to be carried through to any new permission issued.

- **Noise generation from the development**

7.103 This major development is likely to include noise-generating plant. An acoustic assessment would need to be submitted for such, carried out in accordance with BS4142:2014 methodology. Noise impacts during construction would be managed with a Construction Method Statement. This was dealt with by condition under 162166 and the current scheme would ensure the same approach is continued as agreed.

- **Sustainability and energy**

7.104 As with 162166, overall, officers are satisfied that the development is capable of meeting and exceeding the Building Regulations and is being designed with energy considerations in mind. It is advised that any permission should be subject to a condition to seek that the build takes place in accordance with the energy/sustainability statements and supplementary letter supplied, in order to meet the policy and SPD objectives.

7.105 The Council's adopted suite of sustainability policies is CS1, DM1 and DM2 and the Council's revised SPD on Sustainable Design and Construction.

- **Building maintenance arrangements**

7.106 The application includes a building management framework report which indicates that upper floors will be cleaned via abseil and not building maintenance units (BMUs). This will ensure that there will be no unsightly cleaning apparatus on the roof of the building and a condition can confirm this. This addresses one of the criteria of Policy RC13.

- **Fire safety**

7.107 As with 162166 although fire safety within buildings is not a material planning consideration (it is dealt with under The Building Regulations), should the application be approved, for completeness officers would recommend additional information in terms of a fire strategy and fire resistance as part of a specific planning condition.

- **Transport matters**

*MRT*

7.108 The NPPF requires development plans to set out opportunities for ensuring modal shift to more sustainable travel modes and protecting land for strategic transport projects (paragraphs 35 and 41). In relation to this site, this is reflected in Core Strategy policies CS20 which requires implementation of the Reading Transport Strategy, CS21 which seeks the realisation of major transport projects and RCAAP Policy RC1 which requires land to be safeguarded for mass rapid transit infrastructure. The RCAAP plan (Figure 6.2) shows the site on the MRT route, with a transit stop. Furthermore, point iv) of Policy RC1 requires that development in the Station/River Major Opportunity Area will safeguard land which is needed for mass rapid transit (MRT) routes and stops. The tall buildings policy, RC13, includes reference to such developments coming forward in a 'coordinated manner', which indicates the strategic transport requirements applicable to the realisation of these sites. Officers note that the MRT remains a strategic objective in published policy. The recent refusal of the scheme by Wokingham Borough Council does not alter this and providing land for potential future schemes remains appropriate and a key priority for the council.

7.109 The layout of the application provides land within the application site to allow an additional lane for the MRT and a land swap has now been separately been formally agreed with the council (as landowner). The proposal allows for a pedestrian crossing of Kings Meadow Road and the provision of an adjusted pedestrian route, segregated from the main highway.

## *Parking*

7.110 Given the highly accessible nature of the site, the parking level continues to be acceptable. Standard conditions that no parking permits will be issued to residents would be applied. The site is very accessible to the north station entrance and the town centre and the applicant has signalled a willingness to provide an onsite car club, although further detail is required as per Transport comments in the consultation section above (Section 5).

7.111 Overall, officers are satisfied that the development is suitable in terms of the way it has been designed to accommodate the wider strategic requirements of the MRT route, the maintenance of pedestrian ‘desire lines’ and safety, adequate parking with thought given to sustainable modes of transport and suitable servicing. The physical aspect of the proposals therefore remain compliant with policies CS4, CS20, CS21 and CS22, Policy DM12 and the Parking and Design SPD, as well as the Council’s broader stated aspirations for MRT and public parking (the S106 agreement obligations are dealt with separately above).

- **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

7.112 The development would be liable for CIL due to the amount of new floorspace proposed. The Council’s CIL charging schedule sets a base rate of £120 per square metre for residential floorspace, including student accommodation. The rate is index linked and the current rate for 2019 is £148.24 per square metre.

7.113 The new floorspace proposed is 30,106 sqm. The estimated basic CIL charge would therefore be £4,462,913.44. As with the previous application, the new CIL is likely to be reduced by the original demolished floor area which was agreed to be 1928.52 sqm. This would result in an amended CIL charge of £4,177,029.64 .

7.114 This gives an indication of the likely CIL outcomes but is without prejudice to further examination of the CIL application by the Council.

- **Other S.106 requirements**

7.115 The applicant has previously agreed to a land swap to facilitate the MRT route along Napier Road, for which any updated S106 will equally require. Furthermore, based on 162166 the following updated terms would be required as planning obligations to be secured by S106 agreement for this revised application:

- (i) £ 127,620 towards improvements to Kings Meadow park (commensurate with previous contribution secured under 162166 and necessary to mitigate the increased use of the park anticipated as a direct result of the development);
- (ii) £100,000 commuted sum towards improvements to the Vastern Road railway underpass (index linked from date of 162166 permission);
- (iii) To carry forward the Employment & Skills Plan that has been agreed in discussion with Reading CIC and the Local Planning Authority;
- (iv) £86,700 towards a new signalised pedestrian crossing on Kings Meadow Road (index linked from date of 162166 permission);
- (v) An initial capital cost of £46,915 to establish an on-site car club of three vehicles (index linked from date of 162166 permission) part of our Framework Travel Plan delivered as an obligation rather than a financial contribution to the Local Planning Authority.

- **Equalities Act and accessibility**

- 7.116 The application explains the approach to accessibility in the DAS. Inclusive design is to be part of the brief to all designers involved in the scheme. This includes:
- setting out suitable levels and gradients across the site
  - relating the building to local transport infrastructure
  - access to the landscaping, architecture and the accommodation provided with all areas of external paving having a smooth, walkable surface.
  - considerations of the Building Regulations Part M, BS 8300 and best practice.
  - designated disabled parking bays will be located in close proximity to the main core from within the car park.
  - the main lobby will have disabled access toilets and a concierge desk designed in accordance with Part M.
  - designated flats will be wheelchair adaptable to meet the specific requirements of residents.
  - passenger lifts are sized for wheelchair users and stairs are suitable for ambulant disabled people and corridors and doorways are widened.
- 7.117 Attention will need to be paid to the external elements under consideration of hard landscaping details via conditions. A further condition should be added for the retention/provision of adaptable units, in order to meet Policy CS5. As with all taller building proposals, it is important that all lifts function at all times and this should also be subject to a condition.
- 7.118 In determining this application, the LPA is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, 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 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.

## **8. Conclusion and Overall Planning Balance**

- 8.1 Officers concluded that in terms of massing, height and responding to local context, the previous approved application was supported as the scheme successfully modulated the bulk of a large, high-density development for the site. The recently refused application was viewed as a retrograde step in design terms, as the additional storey was considered to unacceptably accentuate the presence of the benchmark element, reducing the primacy of the landmark tower.
- 8.2 With regard to this revised proposal, officers recognise that the increased height and mass of the proposed development would conflict with Development Plan policy and associated guidance and would depart from the established objectives and aspirations for tall buildings as set out in these. As described above, this policy conflict weighs against the revised scheme in principle.
- 8.3 However, guidance within the RSAF notes that such benchmark heights may be modified to achieve certain urban design or other major planning benefits, or where applicants have demonstrated convincingly that the potential impact of higher buildings on the surroundings can be mitigated.

- 8.4 Whilst technically increasing the ‘benchmark’ level further in terms of the impact on views within and around the town and effects on the skyline, it has been adequately verified that this increase does not translate into any significant harm when viewed in context of all surrounding buildings, perceived topography and man-made interventions close to the site. The increased benchmark continues to maintain the primacy of the taller element of the scheme by virtue of the reduction in three units to the western elevation. In this regard, the revised scheme is no longer considered to compete visually with the slenderness of the tower as was the case with the refused scheme.
- 8.5 On the northern and eastern elevation of the benchmark element, the introduction of grey cladding is considered to effectively shorten the perceived width of the overall benchmark element, so that the additional floor is read as part of the recessed grey roofscape element. This also serves to downplay the monolithic scale of the proposal. The application also now demonstrates that the proposal would be suitable in terms of daylight/sunlight.
- 8.6 Of equal importance to any overall assessment is the revised affordable housing position which has been secured as a consequence of the additional units provided. The affordable housing contribution is therefore substantially improved, constituting a material change in the overall proposal and bringing about policy compliant additional benefits in terms of affordable housing provision.
- 8.7 As described in Section 6, applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. As recognised, there is a conflict over the increase in storey height, however compliance is achieved with wider design and visual impact policies. At a national level, the NPPF continues to constitute guidance, which the LPA must have regard to. Whilst the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making, it is an important material consideration in this determination.
- 8.8 The NPPF requires the Council to approach decision-taking in a positive way, to foster the delivery of sustainable development. The three overarching objectives to achieving sustainable development are defined in the NPPF as economic, social and environmental objectives.
- 8.9 The NPPF specifically states that LPAs may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed. In this respect it is necessary to consider the relevant weight to afford to the overall economic, social and environmental objectives of this revised proposal in any balance.
- 8.10 The proposal continues to provide clear economic benefits. It is acknowledged that development in this location would assist in boosting the housing market and contributing to the local and wider economy of the Borough, both directly and indirectly. As established under the previous approval, 315 units would contribute to the ongoing vitality and viability of the town centre. The increased occupancy generated by 20 additional units would bring about added investment into the town centre, maintaining a significant number of construction jobs and maintaining previously agreed commitments to onsite apprenticeships and other construction-related training through a Construction Employment & Skills Plan. The development would continue to create 16 jobs in the onsite management and maintenance of

the BTR product. This revised scheme would therefore continue to fulfil an equally important economic role as with the approved application.

- 8.11 With regard to social objectives, the proposal continues to provide benefits in terms of the proposed BTR housing model as set out in national policy and guidance and emerging policy H4 in the Draft Local Plan. The benefits derived from the BTR product are not considered to substantially change with the increase in 20 additional units, with this revised scheme providing much the same benefit as that of the approved. However, there are material benefits in terms of the principle of an additional 20 dwellings being provided and their contribution to maintaining the Council's current housing land supply position against a backdrop of national policy seeking to boost the supply of new houses. Other social benefits include a new and enhanced pedestrian crossing, Employment Skills and Training, public transport (MRT) and an exemplary fire strategy.
- 8.12 As described in detail in Section 6(iii) of this report, this revised scheme now provides a substantially enhanced affordable housing offer when compared to that of the approved scheme. In absolute terms, the scheme will deliver an additional 54 affordable units when compared with the extant scheme 162166, therefore equating to a 12% increase in overall like-for-like provision. Careful scrutiny by external valuers and council officers confirm the revised proposal now delivers an equivalent level of affordable housing contributions that better meet the policy objectives of CS16 and draft Policy H4. This is considered a significant social benefit which is afforded substantial weight in the overall planning balance.
- 8.13 With regard to environmental objectives, the approved and implemented development has already facilitated the ongoing remediation of a contaminated, brownfield site, whilst the revised scheme will continue to deliver a net biodiversity gain through the provision of targeted habitat enhancements. New tree planting in the public realm (to be considered and approved at a later stage) would provide landscape enhancements, whilst a financial contribution towards environmental enhancements at the Vastern Road underpass continued to be a key benefit included as part of this proposal.
- 8.14 The question to be asked is whether this revised proposal causes more, the same, or less harm than the refused scheme; and whether the difference between the approved and this revised scheme is insufficient enough now to overcome the previous reasons for refusal?
- 8.15 The revised design, amended external elevations and additional information provided verify a reduction in the level of visual harm caused by the revised proposal when considered against the refused scheme. In addition, the substantially increased affordable housing contribution is considered a substantial benefit which is now considered to outweigh the identified tall building policy conflict. Officers are now of the view that these identified material considerations, including those set out in the NPPF and in terms of the direct benefits of the proposal, outweigh the harm previously identified through the marginal increase in the perceived bulk/massing of the benchmark element. It is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted subject to conditions as recommended, a S106 legal agreement for those matters identified in section (iv) of this report and satisfactory receipt of wind/microclimate verification from BRE.

Case Officer: Brian Conlon

Drawings - Selection Only. Full set available at <http://planning.reading.gov.uk/>

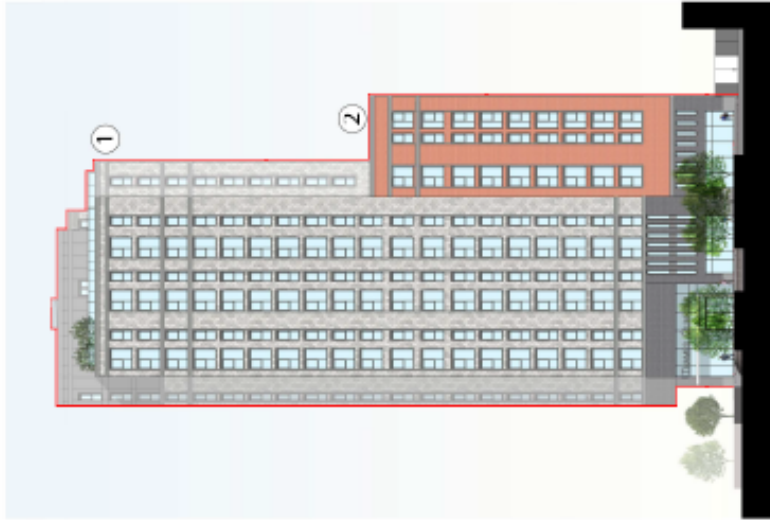


15

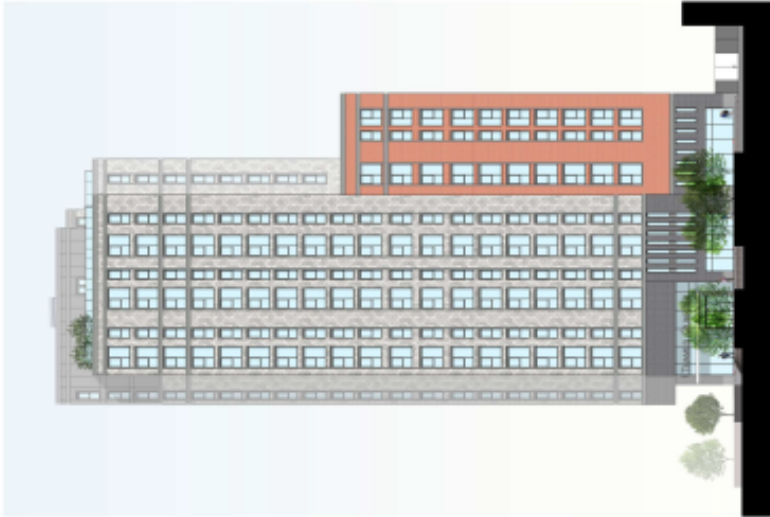
Comparison diagram from Design and Access Statement



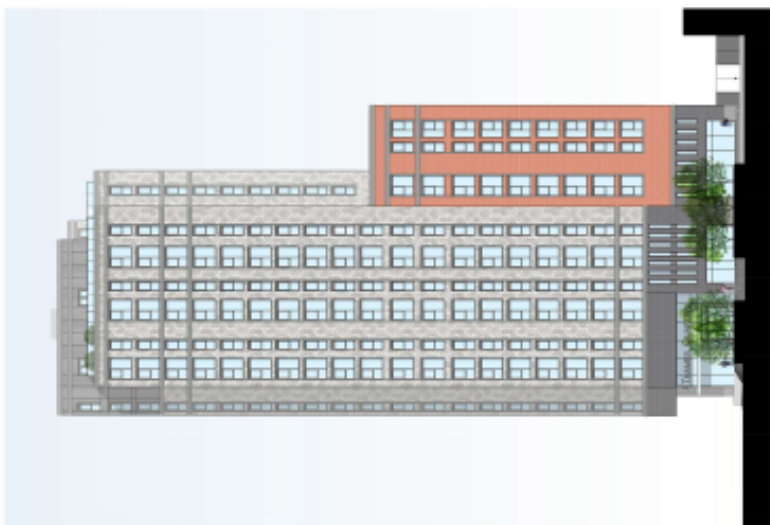
- 1 - Red line represents outline of the 315 consented scheme
- 2 - Identical to consented 315 scheme



335 Scheme



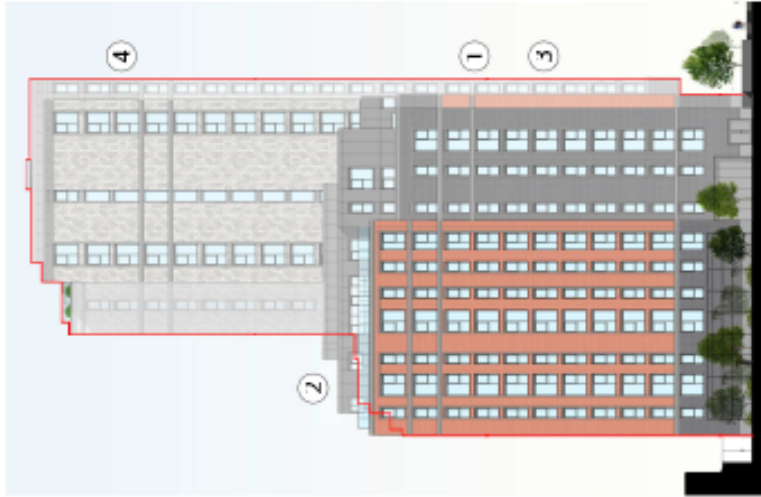
338 Scheme



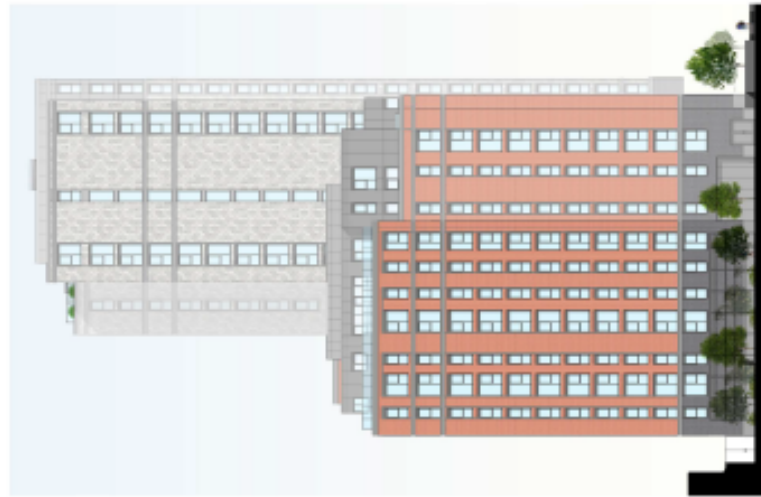
Consented 315 Scheme

West Elevation Comparison image provided by Applicant.

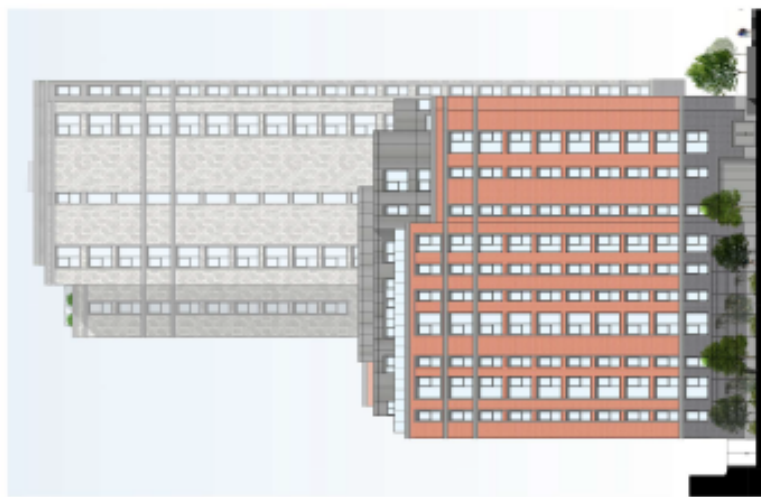
- 1 - Horizontal banding sits at same level as 315 consented scheme
- 2 - Roofscape set back as consented scheme
- 3 - Grey colouration continues up elevation and wraps across top of podium. Same colour as consented scheme & approved conditions discharge
- 4 - Red line represents the outline of the 315 consented scheme



335 Scheme



335 Scheme



Consented 315 Scheme

East Elevation Comparison image provided by Applicant.



Consented 315 Scheme



338 Scheme



335 Scheme

- 1 - Horizontal banding sits at same level as 315 consented scheme
- 2 - Roofscape set back as consented scheme
- 3 - Grey colouration continues up elevation and wraps across top of podium. Same colour as consented scheme & approved conditions discharge
- 4 - Red line represents the outline of the 315 consented scheme

North Elevation

Proposed North Elevation Comparison image provided by Applicant (to Kings Meadow Road)



Proposed North Elevation (to Kings Meadow Road) (Not to scale).



① East Elevation  
1:200

Proposed East Elevation (to Vastern Road roundabout) (Not to scale).



① West Elevation - NMA  
1:300

Proposed West Elevation (From Vastern Road) (Not to scale).



Proposed South Elevation (Not to scale).







## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 4 SEPTEMBER 2019

**Ward:** Battle

**App No.:** 190522

**Address:** 39 Brunswick Hill

**Proposal:** Erection of new building containing 9 no. apartments with parking at rear following demolition of existing buildings

**Applicant:** Mr Eric Benjamin

**Date received:** 27 March (valid 27 March 2019)

**8 week target decision date:** 6 Sept 2019

### RECOMMENDATION:

Delegate to Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services to:

GRANT Full Planning Permission with appropriate conditions and informatives, subject to the satisfactory completion of a S106 legal agreement by 19th July 2019 to secure a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) amount £5,000

OR

REFUSE permission should the S106 agreement not be completed by 6th Sept 2019, unless the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services agrees to a later date for completion of the agreement to be able to grant permission.

Conditions to include:

1. Time limit for implementation (3 years)
2. Approved plans
3. Sample of materials to be provided prior to construction
4. Hard/soft landscaping scheme including boundary treatment
5. Landscaping implementation
6. Landscaping maintenance/replacement
7. Biodiversity enhancements
8. Access control strategy in accordance with Secured by Design
9. Parking permits 1
10. Parking permits 2
11. Bicycle parking space provided in accordance with approved plans
12. Vehicle access provided in accordance with approved plans
13. Vehicle parking space provided in accordance with approved plans
14. Construction Method Statement
15. Hours of Working - Construction and demolition phase
16. Noise assessment
17. Refuse Storage
18. No Bonfires

Informatives to include:

1. Positive and Proactive Statement

2. Terms and conditions
3. Need for Building Regulations approval
4. Construction nuisance informative
5. No Parking Permits
6. Highways
7. Building Regulations Approved Document E

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This planning application was reported to the 17 July 2019 Planning Applications Committee, when the Committee resolved to defer considering the application to allow time for members to carry out undertake an accompanied site visit. That report is provided at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 Two addition letters of objection have been received. The contents of which are summarised as follows:
  - This is a very old and attractive building, one of the nicest on the street. It is a large house and could be redeveloped into flats without demolition of the structure.
  - I live downhill from 39 at 33 and the new building would seriously overlook my back garden.
- 1.3 No new material planning considerations have been raised since the 17 July committee and there have been no changes in relevant policy or guidance. Consequently there is no change to the original officer recommendation.

**Case officer:** Brian Conlon

## APPENDIX 1

### COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTORATE FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ITEM NO.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 17th July 2019

Ward: Battle

App No.: 190522

Address: 39 Brunswick Hill

Proposal: Erection of new building containing 9 no. apartments with parking at rear following demolition of existing buildings

Applicant: Mr Eric Benjamin

Date received: 27 March (valid 27 March 2019)

8 week target decision date: 19 July 2019

#### RECOMMENDATION:

Delegate to Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services to:

GRANT Full Planning Permission with appropriate conditions and informatives, subject to the satisfactory completion of a S106 legal agreement by 19th July 2019 to secure a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) amount £5,000

OR

REFUSE permission should the S106 agreement not be completed by 19th July 2019, unless the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services agrees to a later date for completion of the agreement to be able to grant permission.

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4. Hard/soft landscaping scheme including boundary treatment
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15. Hours of Working - Construction and demolition phase
16. Noise assessment
17. Refuse Storage
18. No Bonfires

Informatives to include:

1. Positive and Proactive Statement
2. Terms and conditions
3. Need for Building Regulations approval
4. Construction nuisance informative
5. No Parking Permits
6. Highways
7. Building Regulations Approved Document E

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application relates to the redevelopment of a residential plot, containing a substantial 2.5 storey Edwardian detached house on the west side of Brunswick Hill, a residential road running north from Tilehurst Road. The site is 0.14 hectares, with a 25 metre frontage and 56 metre depth, equating to 1400 square metres in area).
- 1.2 Brunswick Hill slopes downhill from south to north, and contains a variety of types and sizes of dwellings, though they are predominantly of two storey. Opposite the application site is a gap in the street scene where the houses are set down at a lower level from the road. There has been some more modern infill in the road, including number 35 adjacent to the application site.
- 1.2 Number 39 has a three storey gable on the front elevation and a two and a half storey element on its southern side. It is a grand property in a 'Queen Anne Revival' style and dates from the early Twentieth Century. Internally, the property is largely unaltered, although the previous application site visit in 2017 found evidence of informal subdivision to create a separate accommodation over the basement and part of the ground floor.
- 1.3 There is a single storey detached garage on the northern side of the dwelling (probably original or of similar age to the property itself) and this is also in partially separate residential use as a dwelling/artist's studio, although there is no kitchen or bathroom, these facilities being shared with the tenanted unit in the basement/ground floor of the main house.
- 1.5 The property has a large rear garden that backs on to vegetated railway land, and beyond, the railway, which is sunk into a cutting at this point with the pedestrian slope down to Reading West station. The garden has a brick wall running down the North, East (front) and South sides and a wooden fence on its Western frontage towards the railway. The garden is mature and a mix of lawn, vegetable garden and shrubs and some fruit trees.



Fig 1: Location plan (not to scale)



Fig 2: Front elevation

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 1.3 This submission follows refused application 171719 and the dismissed appeal ref: APP/E0345/W/18/3200081.
- 1.4 Application 171719 sought permission to demolish the existing house and garage, and its replacement with a new two/three storey building comprising 10 flats with

parking at the rear. This current proposal directly seeks to overcome those identified reasons for refusal.

The original reasons for refusal of application 171719 were as follows:

**1. 'Mix and range of dwellings'**

*The development proposes 20% three-bedroom units only and is a flatted development only. This would fail to produce a proposal where the majority of the units are larger three-bedroom units or a proposal where the majority are houses, where such accommodation is the greatest identified area of need in the Borough. The application therefore proposes an unacceptable mix and inappropriate range of dwelling types, which is also contrary to the character of the dwelling types in the immediate area, these being predominantly single family dwellings, contrary to Policy CS15 (Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix) of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy (2008, as altered 2015) and policies DM5 (Housing Mix) and DM11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens) of the Reading Borough LDF Site and Detailed Policies Document (2012, as altered 2015).*

**2. 'Character and appearance'**

*The design of the proposal is considered to respond insensitively to the immediate streetscene and pattern of development by producing an overly-wide frontage and overly-extended flank walls; by failing to respond adequately to the topography of the site; failing to include design features which are characteristic of Brunswick Hill; and by producing a design which would fail to produce a safe and secure environment. For these reasons, the proposal does not respond positively to the local context or maintain or enhance the local character and appearance of this part of Reading, nor sufficiently justify the loss of the existing building (a non-designated Heritage Asset) contrary to policies CS7 (Design and the Public Realm) and CS33 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy (2008, as altered 2015) and policies DM10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) and DM11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens) of the Reading Borough LDF Site and Detailed Policies Document (2012, as altered 2015).*

**3. 'Amenity of future occupiers'**

*The windows to all three rooms in the ground floor flat (front, south), which is sunk into the southern bank at this point so as to be a semi-basement unit, will be surrounded at relatively close quarters by high walls. In the absence of suitable information to conclude otherwise, it is considered that this flat will experience very poor access to daylight, possibly no access to sunlight, visual dominance and overbearing and a lack of a suitable outlook. The above situation is indicating that the development will provide an unacceptably significant detrimental effect on the living environment of this residential unit, contrary to Policy DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity) of the Reading Borough LDF Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, as altered 2015).*

**4. 'Failure to provide for S106 (ESP & TRO)'**

*As submitted, the application has failed to provide a completed Section 106 legal agreement/unilateral undertaking in order to secure a construction phase Employment and Skills Plan (ESP), or to adequately provide for the required Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to amend parking restrictions in the Controlled Parking Zone on Brunswick Hill to allow the creation of a vehicular access. For these reasons, the proposal is contrary to policies CS9 (Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities) and CS13 (Impact of Employment Development) of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy (2008, as altered 2015) and policies DM3 (Infrastructure Planning) and DM12 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters) of the Reading Borough LDF Site and Detailed Policies Document (2012, as altered 2015). The proposal also fails to comply with the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Documents: Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011); Employment, Skills and Training (2013); and Section 106 Planning Obligations 2015.*

2.3 In his concluding remarks in the appeal decision letter, the Inspector stated:

*“the development would provide 10 dwellings to local housing supply, with acceptable living conditions for future occupiers and adequate provision for off-street parking. However, this is outweighed by the loss of the heritage asset, the harm to the character and appearance of the area, the inappropriate mix of dwelling size and type, and its lack of provision for an employment and skills plan or alternative contribution, which is in clear conflict with the policies of the development plan. For the reasons given above, and taking account of all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.”*

2.4 This application has been called-in for Committee determination by the request of the Ward Member. Members previously visited the site on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018 when considering application 171719.

### 3. PROPOSAL

3.1 This proposal seeks permission for the erection of a replacement building containing 9 no. apartments with parking at rear following demolition of existing building and its garage.

3.2 The proposed units comprise of 4 x 1-bed and 5 x 2-bed units. No affordable housing is proposed on the basis of the viability of this scheme.

### 4. PLANNING HISTORY

171719	Erection of part two/part three storey building containing 10 no. apartments with parking at rear following demolition of existing buildings.	Refused 07/03/2018  (Appeal APP/E0345/W/18/3200081 dismissed 14 November 2018)
05/00886/OUT	demolition of nos 35-39 and erection of 4no townhouses	Refused 1/11/2005.

891317/891318	demolition of existing house and garage, construction of 10 flats with associated car parking	Refused 18/5/1989.
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## 5. CONSULTATIONS

### RBC Transport:

The site is located on the western side of Brunswick Hill which is in close proximity to frequent bus services travelling along Tilehurst Road. The proposals include the demolition of the existing building and erection of a new building containing 9 no. apartments with parking at rear. The scheme will provide 4 x 1-bed and 5 x 2-bed and 12 parking spaces.

The proposed flats will be accessed from Brunswick Hill via the existing access which will be widened to 4.8m to facilitate two-way vehicular traffic for a distance of 10m into the site. It should be noted that an access width of 4.1m would be acceptable (to facilitate two-way traffic) although visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m should be submitted if this is to be considered.

A driveway is proposed on the northern side of the building, leading to a parking courtyard, comprising of 12no. parking spaces. The site is situated within a designated Resident Permit Holders zone and a permit holders only bay currently runs across the site frontage terminating just before the existing access. A shared use bay commences from this point across the vehicular access.

The proposed widening of the access would require changes to the residents parking and shared use parking bays. This process involves changes to the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) which will require approval by the Traffic Management Sub Committee (TSUB) and will be subject to statutory consultation. Given TRO's are under separate legislation to the Planning Act there is a possibility they may not be approved. However, any costs associated with the changes to the TRO and on-street signage and markings would have to be paid upfront by the applicant before commencement on site. The costs associated with this process are in the region of £5,000 which should be secured with the S106 agreement.

Further, as illustrated on the site plan, the lamp column adjacent to the existing access would need to be relocated. The applicant should be aware that they would be liable for any costs associated with relocating the lamp column (separate to the costs associated with the changes to the parking regulations) and that these works should be undertaken with the Council's approved contractor SSE before the any works associated access is implemented.

The applicant should be advised that the future residents of the properties would not be entitled to apply for a residents parking permit for the surrounding residential streets where parking is under considerable pressure. This will ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area.

In respect of parking provision, the development would be required to provide a parking provision of 1 space per 1-2 bedroom flat plus 1 space for visitor parking.



The development provides a total of 12 parking spaces which complies with Council's adopted parking standards. The proposed parking layout is acceptable.

In accordance with the Council's Parking Standards and Design SPD, a minimum provision of 6 cycle parking spaces should be provided. The site layout provides for secure cycle storage to the rear of the building adjacent to the access road which provides convenient access.

The bin store is conveniently located at the front of the site which will provide easy access for refuse collection.

A Construction Method Statement will be required given the significant remodelling of the site proposed within this application. The proposed work should be in accordance with the Borough's Guidance Notes for Activities on the Public Highway. Before construction starts on site, the applicant must commence the TRO process which will aid the construction process.

In principle, there are no transport objections subject to conditions and S106 requirements.

#### **RBC Planning Natural Environment Team**

There are no objections to the tree removals as the proposed landscaping includes replacements which mitigate their loss. We will however require details listed in the conditions below.

One of the trees to be planted will need to fulfil the requirements to replant a previously removed beech tree protected by TPO 105/05 removed in 2014. This will need to be another beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) planted as close to the position of the original tree as practicable to provide it with sufficient future space to reach maturity without interfering with access or light.

#### **RBC Ecologist**

The application site comprises a detached dwelling where it is proposed to demolish the building and construct 9 apartments. A previous application was refused for non-ecology related reasons.

The bat survey report (Arbeco, September 2017) has been undertaken to an appropriate standard and concludes that the building does not have any features suitable for use by roosting bats. Although the survey was carried out in 2017, it is considered unlikely that the condition of the building has significantly change since and as such, the results of the survey are still considered to be valid.

The site backs on to a railway corridor, with connected gardens with trees to the north and south and a line of trees 40m southeast. Since the site is connected to habitat of good ecological value, in accordance with paragraph 175 of the NPPF, opportunities for wildlife - including bird and bat boxes and wildlife-friendly planting - should be incorporated into the development.

Overall, subject to the condition below, there are no objections to this application on ecological grounds.

#### **Berkshire Archaeology**

Having reviewed the documentation submitted with this application, I can confirm that there are no concerns as regards the buried archaeological heritage and no further action is therefore required. Berkshire Archaeology's advice is consistent with that offered in relation to the previous similar proposal for this site (Application 171719).

## **RBC Environmental Protection**

### Environmental Protection concerns

- Noise impact on development
- Noise transmission between dwellings
- Air Quality impact - increased exposure / new receptors
- Construction and Demolition phase

### Noise impact on development

A noise assessment has been submitted which specifies the noise insulation performance that will be required for the glazing etc. No scheme has yet been submitted demonstrating that what is proposed will meet the performance requirements, therefore I recommend the following condition, which may need rewording given they have already complied with the assessment part.

### Sound Insulation from External Noise

No development shall take place until a detailed scheme, informed by an assessment of the current noise environment, for protecting the dwellings from the external noise environment of the area has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme itself shall be designed, specified and constructed so that the sound insulation performance of the structure and the layout of the dwellings are such that the indoor ambient noise levels do not exceed the values detailed in Table 4 of BS 8233:2014. Where opening windows will lead to an internal noise level increase of 5 dBA or greater above BS 8233:2014 recommended internal levels, the scheme shall include provision of alternative mechanical ventilation with minimum performance equivalent to a mechanical heat recovery (MVHR) system with cool air bypass as an alternative means of cooling and ventilation. Noise from the system should not result in BS8233 internal levels being exceeded. Thereafter, the development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved scheme which shall be completed before any part of the accommodation hereby approved is occupied, unless the Local Planning Authority otherwise agrees in writing.

Reason: to protect the amenity of future occupants of the proposed development.

Noise between residential properties - sound insulation of any building

### Informative

To minimise the disturbance by noise of future residential occupiers of the flats and its effect on neighbouring residents, residential accommodation must be designed and constructed or converted so as to achieve the insulation requirements set out in Building Regulations Approved Document E.

### Air Quality - Increased exposure

I have reviewed the air quality assessment submitted with the application, which concludes that no mitigation is required as part of the development.

I consider that there are no conditions required regarding air quality.

#### 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.

#### **Reading Civic Society (RCS)**

No comments received.

#### **Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC)**

No comments received.

#### **RBC Heritage Consultant**

No. 39 Brunswick Hill is a well-constructed two-and-a-half storey Edwardian building, following a relatively common form of red brick with stone dressings; the building includes some grey brick diaper work patterning. The building has a modest villa style with a bay window, oriel window and stone mullioned windows. Architecturally the building is not considered to be especially noteworthy except in relation to surrounding buildings which are generally modern or inter-war buildings of lesser quality.

The building was proposed for local listing in 2017. As a building from the early 1900s, it would fit within the 1840 - 1913 time period which requires that any building, structure or group of buildings that is/are substantially complete and unaltered and of definite significance. The building is of good-quality, well-built and detailed and highly serviceable, no doubt with many years left in the structure. However, it is not considered to be achieve the architectural and historic criteria necessary for local listing.

As a result the building was acknowledged to be of good-quality, well-built and detailed and highly serviceable, but did not achieve the architectural and historic criteria necessary to merit local listing.

#### Appeal 171719 (APP/E0345/W/18/3200081)

The above application was refused and went to appeal. In the decision letter, the Inspector acknowledged the view of the Council's dismissal of the building for local listing, describing it as large Edwardian villa with little in its form, siting, landscape or plot arrangement that makes it remarkable.

In the Inspector's view, the building has more than sufficient architectural significance to have been a material consideration in determining the appeal and

that under the NPPF a balanced judgement had to be made, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

In those circumstances, the Inspector concluded that the total loss of the heritage asset would have conflicted with Policy CS33 of the Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy adopted 2008 (CS) which protects the historic environment and seeks its enhancement which weighed against the proposal.

### Proposals

The proposed development would provide 9 dwellings and off-street parking.

As concluded in the appeal decision APP/E0345/W/18/3200081 however, this is partly outweighed by the loss of the heritage asset which conflict with the policy CS33 of the development plan. Therefore, this harm should be a balanced against any public benefits in the planning balance according to paragraph 197 which states that:

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. 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.

### **Thames Valley Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor**

No objections subject to following observations relating to:

- Rear court parking areas;
- Boundary Treatments;
- Apartment Mail delivery/residential security;
- Physical Security;
- Creation of secure communal lobbies;
- Bin and cycle store doors;
- Residential door Sets;

And condition relating to:

- Access control strategy

### **External Surveyors (acting for RBC Valuers)**

Satisfied that the overall viability assessment is reasonable, and agree with the conclusion that the scheme, based on present-day costs and values, cannot viably make any contributions towards affordable housing.

### **Public consultation**

Letters were sent to neighbouring properties on Brunswick Hill and a site notice was displayed at the front of the property. 5 responses were received from 2 separate addresses. These are summarised as follows:

- Loss of a characterful and historical building
- New development will look odd in the middle of a street;
- Development will cause more congestion and increased traffic;
- Off road parking facility will take away more permit parking spaces;
- Development will add to sewerage and drainage pressures;
- Overlooking of gardens of nearby houses;
- Additional traffic will cause safety and parking problems

## 6. RELEVANT POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 6.1 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'.

The following policies and documents are relevant:

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Feb 2019)

Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development

Section 4 - Decision-making

Section 5 - Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Section 8 - Promoting healthy and safe communities

Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport

Section 11 - Making effective use of land

Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places

Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

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

CS1: Sustainable Construction and Design

CS4: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

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

CS17: Protecting the Existing Housing Stock

CS24: Car/Cycle Parking

CS27: Maintaining the Retail Character of Centres

CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

CS34: Pollution and Water Resources

CS35: Flooding

CS36: Biodiversity and Geology

CS38

### Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, altered 2015)

SD1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

DM1: Adaptation to climate change

DM4: Safeguarding amenity

DM5: Housing mix  
DM6: Affordable housing  
DM10: Private and communal outdoor space  
DM11: Development of private residential garden land  
DM12: Access, traffic and highway-related matters

Emerging Local Plan - Submission Draft Reading Borough Local Plan (March 2018)  
Reading's Draft Local Plan has been subject to Examination by the Secretary of State and is likely to be adopted by early 2019 at which point the policies will fully apply. <http://www.reading.gov.uk/newlocalplan>

#### Supplementary Planning Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)  
Revised Sustainable Design and Construction (2011)  
Revised S106 Planning Obligations (2013)  
Affordable Housing (2013)

#### Other material guidance and legislation

National Planning Practice Guidance (2019)  
Section 72 of the Town and Country (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990  
The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations (Amended 2015)  
Department for Transport Manual for Streets  
Department for Transport Manual for Streets 2  
Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standard, DCLG, 2015

## 7. APPRAISAL

7.1 The main issues raised by this planning application are:

- (i) Principle of development
- (ii) Design and impact on the character of the area
- (iii) Amenity of future occupiers
- (iv) Impact on neighbouring properties
- (v) Transport and parking
- (vi) Affordable Housing
- (vii) Other matters

### **(i) Principle of development**

7.2 The application site currently contains a large detached Edwardian property within residential use. The extent of the current accommodation is such that it would only be suitable for a very large family or subdivision as appears to be the case currently, albeit this is somewhat informal. The proposed development would provide 9 dwellings in a range of unit sizes (1 and 2 bedroom flats) in a sustainable location. In making best use of the land available and meeting an established need for housing, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy CS14 (Provision of Housing).

#### *Dwelling mix and type*

- 7.3 Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy indicates that the appropriate density and mix will be informed by assessing the characteristics including land uses in the area; the level of accessibility; the requirements for good design; and the need to minimise environmental impacts, including impacts on adjoining occupiers. Policy DM5 expands upon this, requiring that for developments of 10 or more dwellings outside the central area and defined district and local centres, over 50% of dwellings shall be of 3 bedrooms or more and the majority of dwellings will be in the form of houses rather than flats.
- 7.4 In concluding that the previous scheme would not provide an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes and types in accordance with Policy DM5 (Refusal Reason 1), the Inspector specifically made reference to the fact that were the scheme to contain one fewer dwelling, then the requirements of Policy DM5 would no longer apply. As this revised proposal is now for 9 dwellings (and therefore below the threshold of 10), the dwelling mix requirement of Policy DM5 is no longer applicable and the mix of 1 and 2 bedroom units is no longer contrary to policy.
- 7.5 In accepting there is no longer any policy requirement to provide a specific mix of dwellings, there remains the need for Officers to consider the type of dwellings proposed (flats) and whether their introduction into an area predominantly characterised by single family dwellings is acceptable.
- 7.6 Whilst the area is composed mainly of single family dwellings, it is acknowledged that more recent flatted schemes have been permitted and implemented along the street. The existing property, whilst substantial, was already witnessed to have been partially subdivided into separate units of accommodation under the previous planning application. Therefore, in all likelihood, should the Council have received a formal planning application to convert the existing property into flats, then it is unlikely the principle of conversion to flats would have been found unacceptable given the specific size of the plot, scale of the existing building and little demonstrable harm to the established character or appearance of the area. Notwithstanding a requirement to meet technical standards for conversions, the principle of introducing flats within a single building on this site is likely to be acceptable.

#### *Sustainable development*

- 7.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and this is reflected in SDPD Policy SD1. This should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. It is therefore necessary for the LPA to again consider carefully to what degree this revised proposal would meet the sustainable development goals of the NPPF and the development plan in terms of their economic, social and environmental role.
- 7.7 The economic role of the NPPF requires proposals to contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy. The social role requires planning to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities and states that it should create a high quality built environment. The environmental role states that the natural built and historic environment should be protected and enhanced and should mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- 7.8 This proposal would undoubtedly contribute to the local economy through the actual construction and fit-out of 9 dwellings, or through construction trade for

local businesses and suppliers, or by future occupants. The redevelopment of this site would also have a 'positive' social aspect through the increase in supply and mix of dwellings within the area, supported by paragraph 59 which encourages LPA's support the Government's objective to 'boost significantly the supply of housing'.

- 7.9 The NPPF also encourages the effective use of land by reusing sites which have been previously developed (brownfield land). Such residential development could reasonably be expected to demonstrate a degree of inherent sustainability through compliance with Building Regulations' standards and therefore is considered to perform a positive environmental role as required by the NPPF.

**(ii) Design and impact on the character of the area**

- 7.10 Central in this current assessment (as with previous application 171719), is whether the existing building merits retention and then secondly whether the proposed replacement development is of sufficient quality to provide a development which is suitably reflective of the character of Brunswick Hill.

- 7.11 The Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) and Reading Civic Society (RCS) objected to the original application for demolition and replacement. It was felt that not only was the building a notable structure in the streetscene of Brunswick Hill, but because of its largely unaltered condition was worthy of local listing. Since the previous application, the property remains unaltered and its status as 'unlisted' remains.

- 7.12 The RCS also felt that its importance is also central to the Brunswick Hill streetscene/area, which should be protected and plans to do this will be significantly harmed by the loss of this key property.

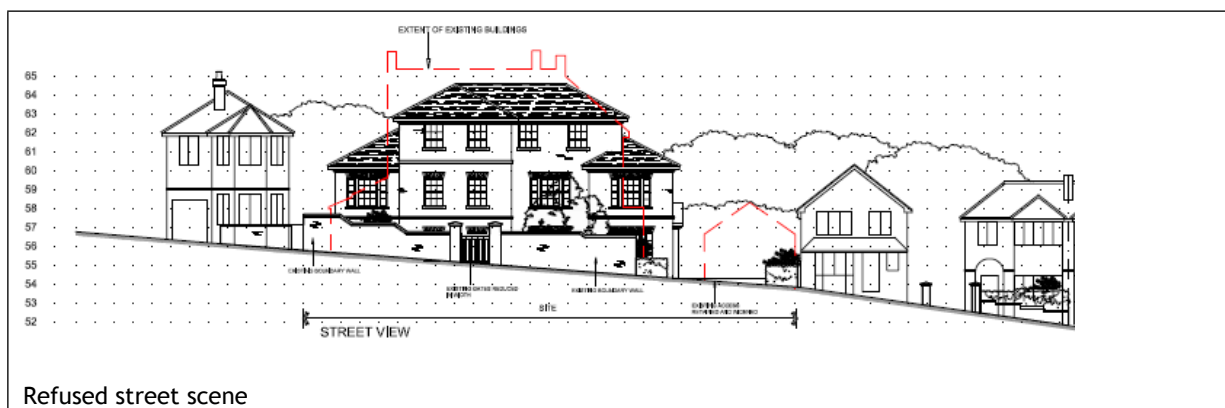
- 7.13 In seeking updated comments from the Council's Heritage Consultant, it remains the case that the building does not meet the Council's adopted selection criteria for a Locally Listed Building. Being a relatively young Edwardian building (circa. 1906) of a pleasing but relatively common 'Queen Anne Revival' style, it is considered to have limited historical or other architectural interest, reliant upon its localised townscape value. For these reasons, Officers remain of the view that the locally listing selection criteria continue not to be met. Its status therefore, is of a non-designated Heritage Asset?

- 7.14 Therefore, providing that the proposal complies with other adopted planning policies, there remains no in-principle objection to a residential redevelopment of the site involving the loss of the existing property.

- 7.15 The Inspector acknowledged and accepted the Council's discounting of the building for local listing, describing it as a "*large Edwardian villa with little in its form, siting, landscape or plot arrangement that makes it remarkable*". Nonetheless in the Inspector's view, the building was considered to have more than sufficient architectural significance to be a material consideration in determining the appeal and that under the NPPF a balanced judgement had to be made, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. In establishing whether there is an inappropriate loss of an 'undesigned heritage asset' under this revised application as required by the NPPF and Policy CS33, Officers must consider the proposed replacement and its appropriateness within the context of the area.



- 7.16 A detailed Heritage Statement has been submitted with this revised application and covers these matters in detail. It also must be recognised that the design has been notably revised since the previous application and appeal, in responding to feedback received from both Officers and the Inspector.
- 7.17 Firstly, the scale of the building has been reduced, with either wing recessed, preventing the appearance of a single mass of built form across the developed part of the frontage. The building has also been reduced to 2½ storey in height with a ridge height that is now lower than the existing building which occupies the site and the earlier refused scheme (including its eaves height). The proposal now includes a steeper roof pitch (drawn from the existing building), meaning that that the proposal is effectively reads as the same storey height as the existing building, as opposed to the full three storeys, which was an identified shortcoming of the previous scheme.
- 7.18 Finally, the replacement building is now considered to be of a more ‘high quality’ traditional appearance, making greater use of more appropriate design and fenestration features which draw on the key characteristics displayed by the existing building. These were identified by the Inspector as: *“a distinctive, curved oriel window, a four-centred arch over the entrance, stone dressings around openings, and a background of crisp, red brick in which diapering and bands are picked out in blue headers”*.
- 7.19 The revised design has actively responded to the Inspector’s criticism of the previous scheme that properties along the street, *“share a generally consistent eaves height, stepping down the hill. The higher eaves of the proposal would step upwards from its neighbour up the hill, rather than downwards”*. As a result of the ridge and eaves height being set lower than those of the existing building, the scheme now effectively ‘steps down’ the street when viewed alongside Nos.41 & 35 (Fig 3 below).



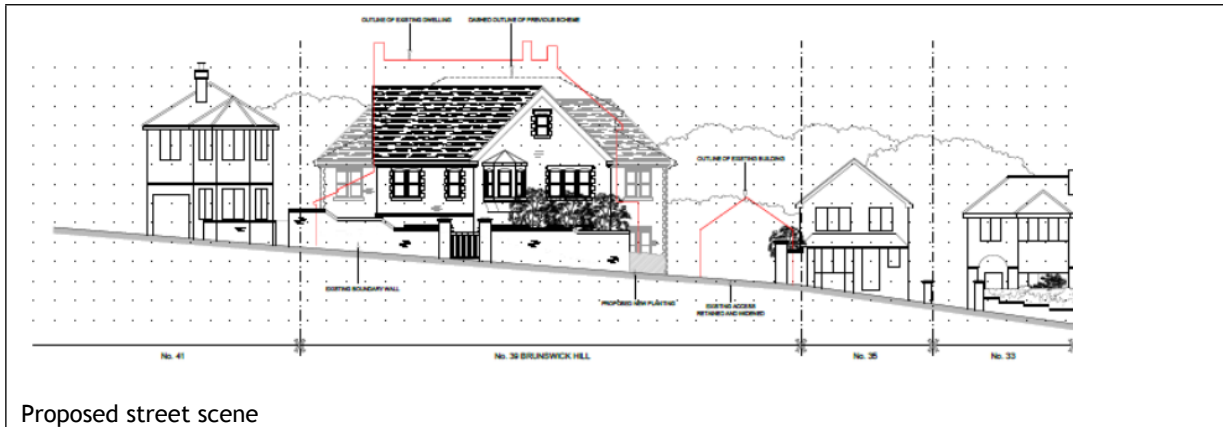


Fig 3: Comparison street scene (Not to scale)

7.20 Overall, the revised roof form together with increased articulation, the provision of a narrower building frontage and staggered side elevations, results in a building that is notably less ‘bulky’ and more architecturally sensitive than the refused scheme, especially when viewed views down the hill and from the adjoining Conservation Area.

7.21 Nonetheless, Officers remain of the view that the current building (a non-designated heritage asset) does make a positive contribution to both the street scene and in part, views experienced into and out of the Downshire Square Conservation Area, however for the reasons set out above, the proposal now represents a substantial improvement on that previously refused. Specific materials can be carefully controlled and therefore there remains (as established under 171719) nothing to suggest that the general architectural theme proposed would be out of keeping with the prevailing character of the area.

7.22 In accepting the scheme will result in the loss of a ‘non-designated heritage asset’, the established position that the building does not meet the criteria for inclusion on the local list and the fact there would be no in principle objection to a residential redevelopment of the site as established under 171719, the replacement building is now considered to largely, if not entirely to mitigate this loss of the existing building when carefully applying the ‘balanced judgement’ required by paragraph 197 of the NPPF. This position will be considered in the overall conclusion, and weighed against those identified ‘public benefits’ of the scheme (as set out in the remainder of the report).

**(iii) Amenity of future occupiers**

7.23 Despite Council refusal Reason 3, the Inspector previously found that there would be no conflict with the need to safeguard the amenity of future occupiers. The revised internal layout of all proposed flats would continue to be satisfactory, the majority of which are now duel-aspect, either having a primary outlook over the front or a rear garden. The site plan is not clear on exactly whether the rear garden is to be communal or private to the ground floor flats only, but the amount of amenity space available is sufficient and can be controlled by condition. Sound control measures required by current Building Regulations along with stacking of same rooms prevent any harm in this regard. Outlook from each flat and attainable light levels are also acceptable too. Therefore the revised scheme is considered to comply with Policy DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity) and overcome former Reason for Refusal 3.

**(iv) Impact on neighbouring properties**

7.24 This development is likely to cause two main areas of impact for neighbouring properties: the effects of the increase in scale of the building and additional disturbance caused by the increased intensity of residential use.

7.25 As described in the section above, the issue is the massing and in particular, the scale and massing of the building has been revised since the previous refusal. However, the impacts upon neighbours are largely unchanged from the previous submission. No. 41 to the south has a rear extension and the submitted plans indicate that no habitable room windows would be adversely affected, with a 45 degree angle maintained. On the northern side, it is recognised that No. 35 would experience a degree of overbearing from the development, especially as the new building would be to the south of this property. However, similar to the refused scheme, there would continue to be a 6.5 metre intervening gap to allow the rear access drive, creating a sufficient setback to prevent any significant harm in terms of loss of daylight and sunlight to habitable rooms. This is further mitigated by the reduced ridge and eaves height.

7.26 The development will result in additional residential activity over the present situation, with additional comings and goings and access to and use of the parking area. This may be noticeable from surrounding properties and will be most acutely felt by the occupants of No. 35, where long lengths of the common boundary will change from garden to hard-surfacing. But No. 35 has a long garden itself, and there remains sufficient space within the plot to accommodate the access road and it is not considered nine dwellings would result in a substantial number of sustained vehicle movements or uncharacteristic uses at unsocial hours. Officers remain of the view that the residential amenity to No. 35 would not be significantly harmed in any way which would justify refusal.

**(v) Transport and parking**

7.27 There are no objections to this planning application from the Highway Authority. The development would necessitate a widening of the access, moving a lamp-post, adjusting the parking zone, and removal of rights to parking permits, all of which could be controlled by conditions or obligations. The parking level shown is suitable for the intended development and location. However, the Highway Authority's approval is dependent on the development securing a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) which would be needed to remove part of the residents parking area in order to provide the access into the site. There is generous space available on site for required cycle/bin stores and the application includes potentially suitable arrangements for such.

**(vi) Affordable Housing**

7.28 The applicant has provided an affordable housing viability statement which indicates that the development cannot sustain a contribution towards affordable housing. The Council's Valuer has independently verified this position and therefore it would be unreasonable for the Local Planning Authority to insist upon affordable housing as part of this development.

**(vii) Other matters**

### *Sustainability*

- 7.29 Such residential development could reasonably be expected to demonstrate a degree of inherent sustainability through compliance with up-to-date energy efficiency and Building Regulations standards. There is no requirement for on-site energy generation for this scale of development. Officers are content that the Council's sustainability policies can be achieved via condition.

### *Bats*

- 7.30 The Council's ecologist is content with the conclusions of the bat survey and does not raise issue with the development, providing that ecological enhancements are provided, which would be secured via condition to comply with Policy CS36.

### *SuDS*

- 7.31 Given the size of the site, adequate sustainable drainage is able to be secured by condition in order to ensure implementation.

### *Noise impacts*

- 7.32 The site is within the Air Quality Management Area and railway land abuts the western (far) end of the garden. RBC Environmental Protection is satisfied that noise/vibration and air quality reports have been undertaken to suitable standards and that the development would be acceptable, subject to conditions on ventilation and window specifications. Other environmental conditions would be required in respect of the construction phase, were a permission to be considered.

### *Archaeology*

- 7.33 Berkshire Archaeology advises that there are no archaeological issues with this application. Given that the proposals are located partially over the current building footprint, which has a basement, the remaining area of new impact is considered small scale.

### *Equality Act*

- 7.34 In determining this application, the Committee 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 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.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 In responding directly to the previous appeal dismissal, this revised scheme has been reduced to 9 dwellings and has undergone a number of design improvements.
- 8.2 As this revised proposal is now below the Policy DM5 threshold of 10 dwellings, the dwelling the proposed mix of 1 and 2 bedroom units is now acceptable. Furthermore, the type of units (flats) are considered an appropriate form of accommodation in this particular location, ensuring compliance with Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy, thereby satisfactorily overcoming Reason for Refusal 1.
- 8.3 Whilst Officers accept the scheme will result in the loss of a 'non-designated heritage asset', the revised design of the replacement building is now considered to largely mitigate this loss of the existing building. When carefully applying the 'balanced judgement' required by paragraph 197 of the NPPF and weighing the building's loss against those identified 'public benefits', the improved design of the replacement, the addition of 8 sustainably located dwellings which meet an identified need along with the inherent improvements in the buildings overall sustainability, are considered to sufficiently outweigh the harm caused by the building's loss. The scheme is therefore compliant with the NPPF and Policy CS33 of the Core Strategy, and is considered to adequately overcome Reason for Refusal 2.
- 8.4 Finally, the scheme now provides for satisfactory amenity of future occupiers in accordance Policy DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity), thereby overcoming Reason for Refusal 3, and no longer requires a S106 to secure an Employment Skills Plan as required by Reason 4.
- 8.5 In light of the above and with due regard to all matters raised, the replacement building and overall planning merits of this development are now considered to outweigh the identified harm caused through loss of the existing building. Accordingly, Officers are of the view that the proposal is acceptable, and on-balance, recommend that this application be approved subject to conditions and necessary planning obligations.

**Case Officer:** Brian Conlon

### 9. Plans and Documents

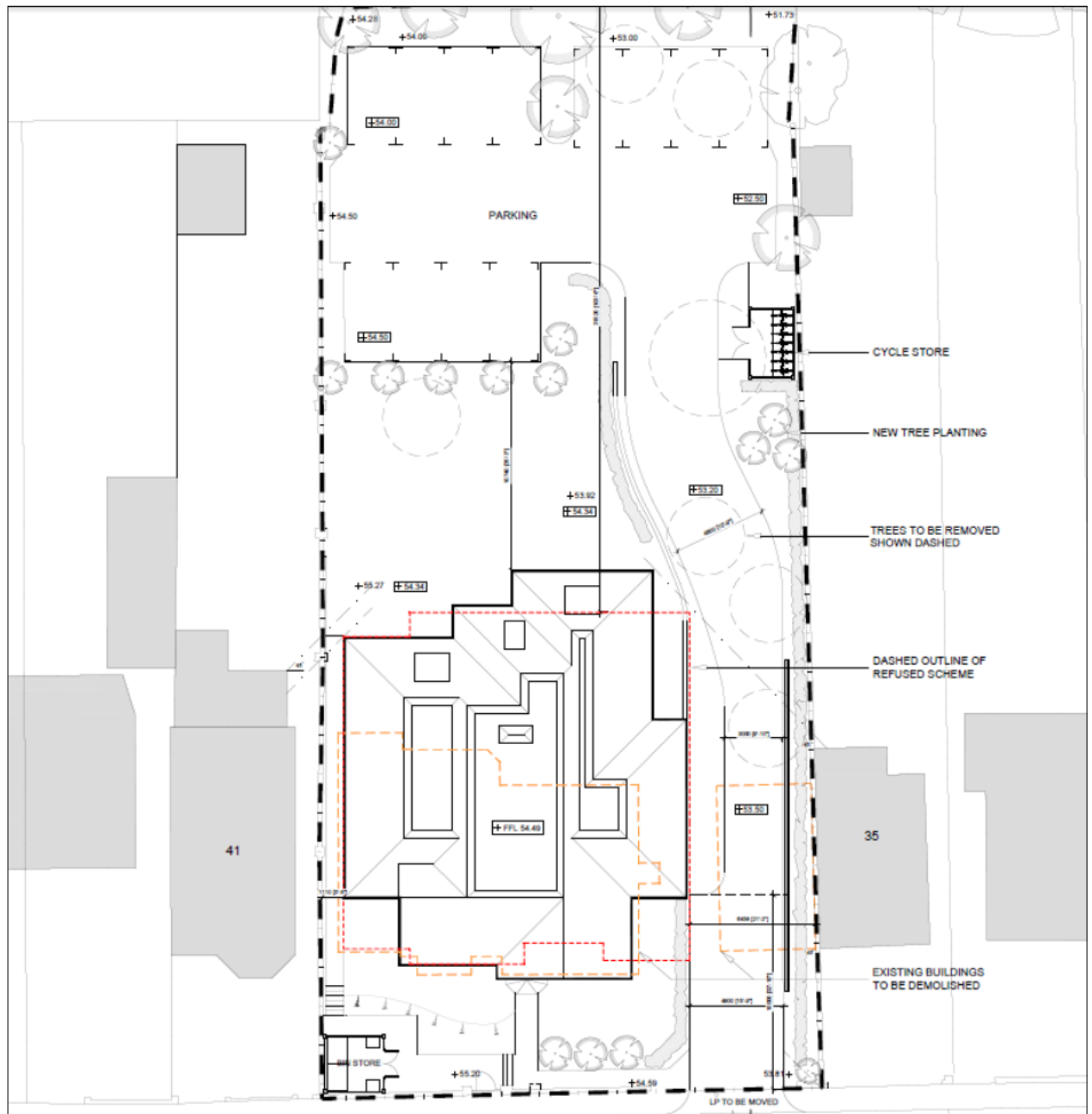


Fig 4: Site Layout Plan (Not to scale)

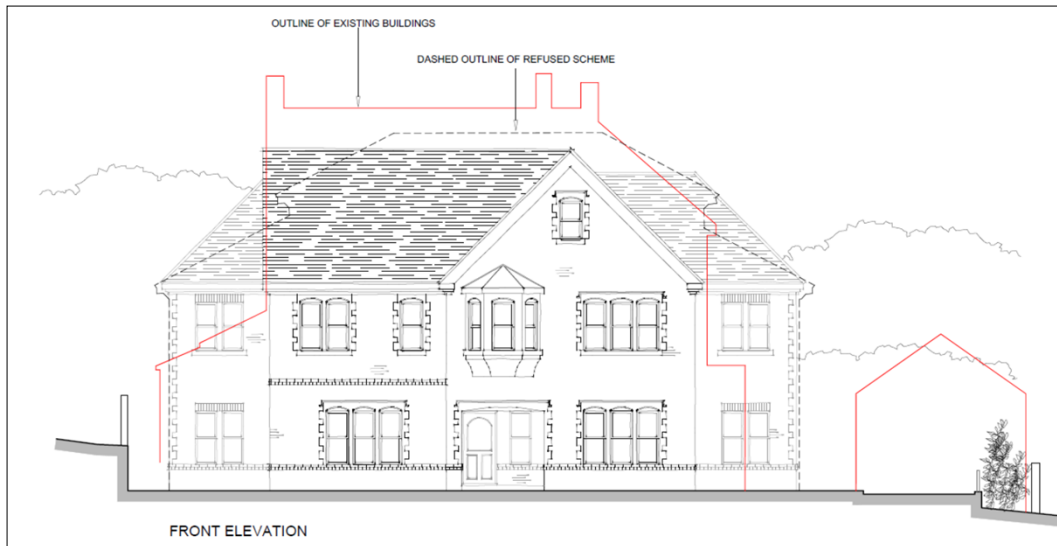


Fig 5: Front elevation proposed (Not to scale)

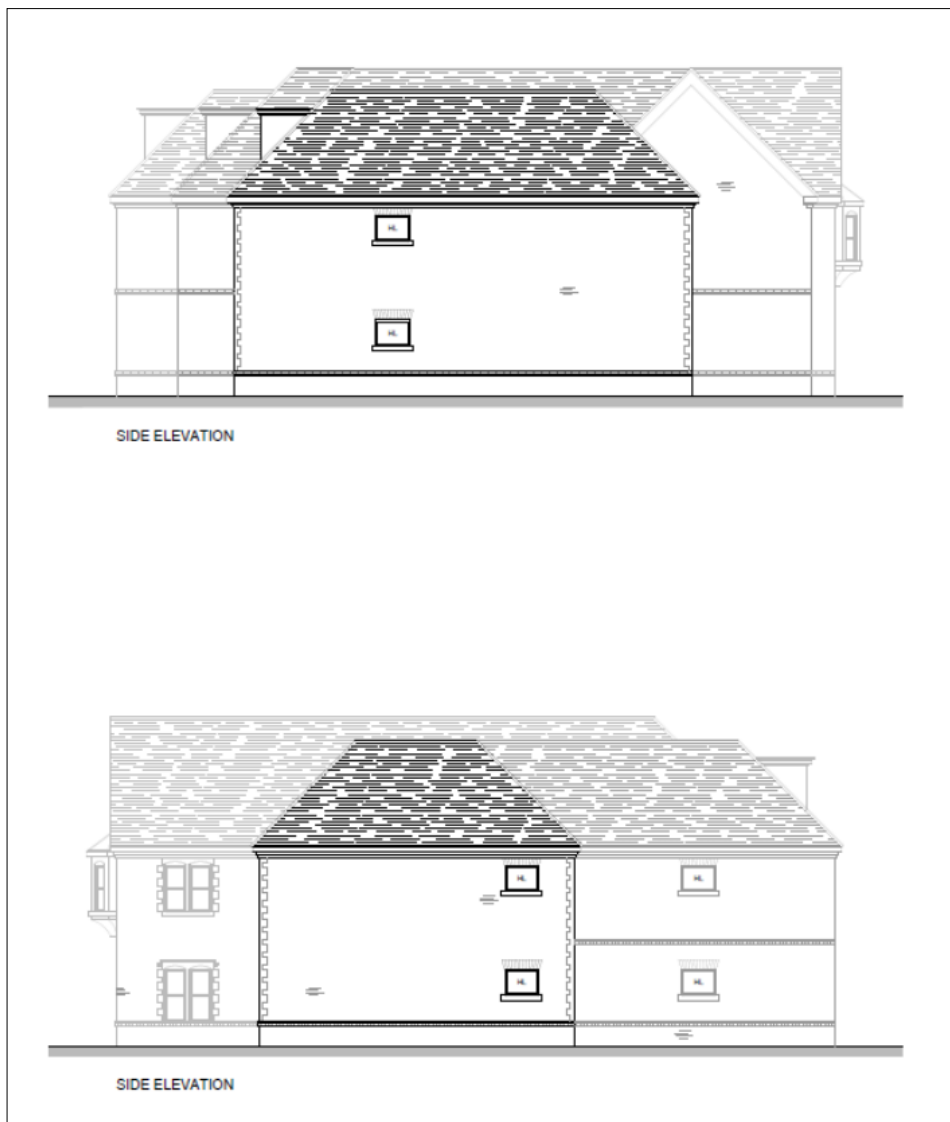


Fig 6: Front elevation proposed (Not to scale)



Fig 7: Aerial view (Google maps 2019)



## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 4 SEPTEMBER 2019

**Ward:** Katesgrove

**App No.:** 190449/FUL

**Address:** 40-68 Silver Street

**Proposal:** Erection of part 1, part 2 and part 4 storey (plus basement level) buildings to provide 79 student studio rooms (sui generis use class) with associated ancillary space and landscaping works.

**Applicant:** Silver Street Developments Ltd

**Date validated:** 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019

**Major Application:** 13 week target decision: 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019

**26 week Planning Guarantee:** 17<sup>th</sup> September 2019

### RECOMMENDATION

**REFUSE** Full Planning Permission for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development, due to the combination of the bulk and height of Block A, the spacing between Block A and B, and the dominating design including development on three sides of the plot, would result in the site appearing over developed and a harmful addition to the streetscene, of detriment to the character and appearance of the area. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy CS7 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy and para. 17 of the NPPF.
2. The proposed development, due to the height, position and bulk (of Block A in particular), will result in the loss of amenity for neighbouring residents through overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of light and noise and disturbance arising from the use of this small site to accommodate 79 students. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy DM4 of the Reading Borough Sites and Detailed Policies Document.
3. The proposed development, due to the relationship between the Blocks and the overall layout and movement through the site, will result in detriment to the amenity of proposed residents in terms of how they would experience the external courtyard space and internal space through overlooking, loss of privacy and noise and disturbance. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy DM4 of the Reading Borough Sites and Detailed Policies Document.
4. The proposed development would lead to a concentration of student accommodation in this area that would detrimentally impact on the lives of adjoining occupiers and would fail to provide a mixed and balanced community contrary to the aims of Policy CS15, NPPF para.50 and emerging Policy H12.
5. It has not been clearly demonstrated how this proposal for Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) demonstrates an identified need that cannot be met on those identified sites within the Emerging Local Plan allocated for student accommodation or on those sequentially preferable sites. Its loss to student accommodation would further reduce the Council's ability to meet its housing need within its own boundaries. The proposal therefore does not comply with Policy H12 of the Emerging Local Plan and conflicts with the aims of the NPPF.

6. Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that the scheme would be appropriate in the Air Quality Management Area and is therefore contrary to Policy CS34 of the Reading Borough Core Strategy and Policy DM19 of the Reading Borough Sites and Detailed Policies Document.
7. The layout does not comply with the Local Planning Authority's standards in respect of vehicle parking which could result in on-street parking on Silver Street during the arrivals and departure period at the beginning and end of term. This would adversely affect road safety and the flow of traffic in conflict with Core Strategy Policy CS24 and Sites and Detailed Policies Document Policy DM12.
8. In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure:
  - i) an acceptable mitigation plan or equivalent contribution towards the provision of Employment, Skills and Training for the construction phase of the development,
  - ii) a travel plan and highway alterations,
  - iii) a restriction on occupancy to students only,
  - iv) implementation of the student accommodation management plan,the proposal fails to provide adequate controls over the use of the development, including its highways and other travel impacts, contrary to Policies DM4, DM12, CS20, CS22, CS23 and CS24 and the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD 2011. The proposal also fails to contribute adequately to the employment, skills or training needs of local people with associated socio-economic harm, contrary to Policies CS3, CS9, DM3 and the Employment Skills and Training SPD (2013).

#### **INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE**

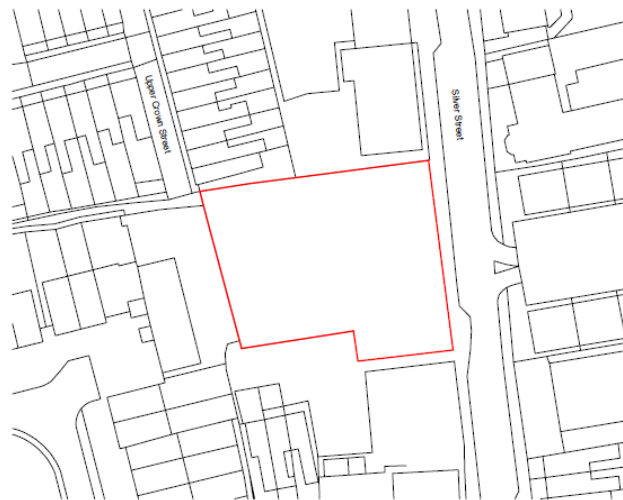
1. IF1 Positive and Proactive Working - refusal
2. Refused plans

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The application site is on the western side of Silver Street. The site was previously occupied by two buildings, now demolished. At 40 Silver Street this was a tall single storey commercial building of 610m<sup>2</sup> with 3 no. pitched roofs, the former HSS light industrial warehouse. This had been vacant for a number of years and largely filled the site. At 62-68 Silver Street was a further 2 storey I-shaped building formerly in commercial use, also vacant for a number of years, which was granted permission in 2012 for 16 student flats (now lapsed - 110915).
- 1.2 The plot is ca. 36m wide to the frontage, and at its deepest 41.2m. Former 62-68 Silver Street was ca 18.2m deep, and creates an-I-shape to the plot, with the gardens serving Hawk Cottages, located immediately to the rear and side of the application site.
- 1.3 To the west of the site is Rimaud House, which is a 3 no. storey residential block at an elevated position approximately 2m higher than the application site. At the north-west, the site immediately adjoins no 69 Upper Crown Street, indeed part of the northern flank wall of the former commercial building formed part of the southern boundary of that property. Immediately to the north is a flatted scheme called Platinum Apartments which is 2.5 storeys with a third floor of accommodation in the roof, which has private amenity space and parking to the rear (west).

- 1.4 Former 40 Silver Street was set back from the highway edge by just over 7m in contrast to surrounding buildings, which are set much closer to the highway edge.
- 1.5 Formerly the vehicular access to the site was from Silver Street via two dropped kerbs at either end of the site's frontage. Pedestrian access is also via the site's frontage on Silver Street. There is existing parking to the front (7 no. spaces) and a layby by the road. Silver Street is a one way street, with vehicles passing in a north to south direction.
- 1.6 The area is predominantly residential with a mix of traditional terraces and semis, but there are some commercial premises in the area. There is no one single prevailing architectural style which characterises the area, but the majority of the buildings are traditional brick and tile construction. There are a range of different building styles, heights, ages of property and materials, with large scale modern flat blocks located north of the site towards the town centre, and around the site 3-4 storey flats, 2-3 storey courtyard offices (Windsor Square) and to the south 2-3 storey Victorian terraces.
- 1.7 Opposite the site a recently permitted student scheme for 60 units is under construction and will be of a modern appearance.
- 1.8 The site lies within an area that has less than 10% tree canopy cover as identified within the Council's adopted Tree Strategy and within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) (Policy DM19) and area of Archaeological Potential as identified within the Council's Sites and Detailed Policies Proposals Map.

*Location plan not to scale*



## 2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Full Planning Permission is sought for the erection of part 1, part 2 and part 4 storey (plus basement level) buildings to provide 79 student studio rooms (sui generis use) with associated ancillary space and landscaping works. This follows the refusal of a scheme at 40 Silver Street for 62 student studios and the subsequent purchase of the adjoining site 62-68 Silver Street.

- 2.2 The scheme would create an 'N' shaped development with two main wings (Blocks A & B) running roughly parallel to each other between 15.1 metres and 12.2 metres apart, with the taller Block A at on the Silver Street frontage. The two wings would be connected by a single storey block with basement and ground floor level links on the northern boundary of the site.
- 2.3 The proposed external surfaces are shown to be fair faced brick, brick sills, standing seam zinc roof and aluminium window frames.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 2.4 The development would be liable for the Community Infrastructure Levy, and if permission were to be granted a CIL of total floor space is £363,040 (based on original submission of 2449sqm) would be charged to the total floor area of the proposed building.
- 2.5 The following plans and supporting documents have been assessed:

*Received 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019 (unless otherwise stated):*

- Existing Location Plan - Drawing no: PL\_003
- Existing Site Plan - Drawing no: 10\_005
- Proposed Site Plan - Drawing no: PL\_004
- Lower Ground Floor Plan - Drawing no: PL\_200
- Ground Floor Plan - Drawing no: PL\_201
- 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Plan - Drawing no: PL\_202
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Plan - Drawing no: PL\_203
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Plan - Drawing no: PL\_204
- Roof Plan - Drawing no: PL\_205
- Elevations Sheet 1 - Drawing no: PL\_206
- Elevations Sheet 2 - Drawing no: PL\_207
- Elevations Sheet 3 - Drawing no: PL\_208
- Elevations Sheet 4 - Drawing no: PL\_209
- Section [A] - Drawing no: PL\_212
- Block B Section - Drawing: PL\_214
- Landscape Layout - Drawing no: 102 Rev B
- Solar Study - Drawing no: PL\_210
- Street Elevation - Silver Street - Drawing no: PL\_213

*Other Documents:*

- Area Schedules - PL\_216
- Daylight and Sunlight Study, dated February 2019, prepared by Delva Palman Redler
- Design and Access Statement, Version 1.6 dated March 2019, prepared by OEA
- Drainage Strategy, doc ref: 1227-002-003, dated 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019, prepared by Westlakes Engineering
- Purpose Built Student Accommodation Management Plan, dated March 2019, prepared by Morlet Properties Ltd
- Landscape Design Sketchbook, Issue 1 dated February 2019, prepared by TPM Landscape
- Planning & Heritage Statement, dated March 2019, prepared by GW Planning
- Room Schedule - PL\_308

- Additional Supporting Statement - Need for Student Housing, prepared by GW Planning, received 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019

***Amended plans as received 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019 (unless otherwise stated)***

- Lower Ground Floor Plan - Drawing no: PL\_200 Rev A
- Ground Floor Plan - Drawing no: PL\_201 Rev A
- 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Plan - Drawing no: PL\_202 Rev A
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Plan - Drawing no: PL\_203 Rev A
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Plan - Drawing no: PL\_204 Rev A
- Roof Plan - Drawing no: PL\_205 Rev A
- Elevations Sheet 1 - Drawing no: PL\_206 Rev A
- Elevations Sheet 2 - Drawing no: PL\_207 Rev A
- Elevations Sheet 3 - Drawing no: PL\_208 Rev A
- Elevations Sheet 4 - Drawing no: PL\_209 Rev A
- Section [A] - Drawing no: PL\_212 Rev A
- Lower Ground Floor - Landscape Layout - Drawing no: 102 Rev A
- Solar Study - Drawing no: PL\_210 Rev A
- Street Elevation - Silver Street - Drawing no: PL\_213 Rev A
- Ground Floor Landscape Layout - Drawing no: 103 Rev D

***Other Documents:***

- Design and Access Statement, Version 1.6 dated May 2019, prepared by OEA, received 24<sup>th</sup> May 2019
- Room Schedule - PL\_308, received 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019

### 3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

40 Silver Street

150885/FUL - The proposed redevelopment of 40 Silver Street, demolition of existing light industrial building and erection of 14 flats (8x2bed & 6x1 bed, including 14 parking spaces and landscaping - Approved 21/3/16

162232/PREAPP - Student accommodation comprising 67 studio rooms with ancillary areas. Total floor space 2432m<sup>2</sup> - Observations sent 20/3/17

172218/FUL - 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 - Refused 9/2/18. Reasons:

*"1. The proposed development due to the height and bulk of Block A, the cramped layout between the blocks and the dominating design would result in the site appearing over developed and a harmful addition to the streetscene, of detriment to the character and appearance of the area. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy CS7 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy and para. 17 of the NPPF.*

*2. The proposed development due to the height, position and bulk (of Block A in particular) will result in the loss of amenity for neighbouring residents through overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of light and noise and disturbance arising from the use of this small site to accommodate 62 students. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy DM4 of the Reading Borough Sites and Detailed Policies Document.*

3. *The proposed development would lead to a concentration of student accommodation in this area that would detrimentally impact on the lives of adjoining occupiers and would fail to provide a mixed and balanced community contrary to the aims of Policy CS15, NPPF para.50 and emerging Policy H12.*

4. *In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure:*

*i) an acceptable mitigation plan or equivalent contribution towards the provision of Employment, Skills and Training for the construction phase of the development,*

*ii) a contribution of £5,000 towards the changes to the parking restrictions to facilitate access into the development,*

*iii) a travel plan and highway alterations,*

*iv) a restriction on occupancy to students only, and*

*v) implementation of the student accommodation management plan;*

*the proposal fails to provide adequate controls over the use of the development, including its highways and other travel impacts, contrary to Policies DM4, DM12, CS20, CS22, CS23 and CS24 and the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD 2011. The proposal also fails to contribute adequately 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)."*

This was appealed - Ref: APP/E0345/W/3199747 - Dismissed 29/10/18

**180725/DEM** - Application for prior notification of proposed demolition - Given 25/2/19

**182150/PREAPP** - Erection of a three storey (plus basement level) building to provide student studio rooms. Approx 1700m<sup>2</sup> GEA. Comments from Design Review Panel provided 1/2/19 and other consultee comments 8/3/19

62-68 Silver Street

**04/01465/FUL (041374)** - Renovation and extension of existing building to provide 4 flats and a ground floor B1(a) office - Refused 2/2/2005

**06/00708/FUL (061413)** - Renovation and extension of existing building to provide 4 flats and B1(a) office on ground and first floor - Approved, subject to S106 legal agreement, 10/8/2006

**11/01016/PREAPP (111690)** - Pre-application advice for conversion to student accommodation - Observations sent 7/9/2011

**11/01917/FUL (110915)** - Renovation and extension of existing building to provide student accommodation (16 no. self-contained rooms) - Approved, subject to S106 legal agreement, 28/09/2012

**171165/FUL** - Conversion of existing building to residential use plus additional two floor of accommodation to provide 6no. two bedroom flats plus parking, cycle storage and bin storage - Withdrawn 20/3/19 (on submission of current application 190449)

**190242/DEM** - Application for prior notification of proposed demolition - Given 17/3/19

79 Silver Street - student site on opposite side of Silver Street

**170785/FUL** - Demolition of existing building and erection of a part 3 and part 4 storey (plus basement level) building to provide 56 student studio rooms (sui generis use class) with associated ancillary services and landscaping works - Approved, subject to S106 legal agreement, 10/1/2018

**180075/VAR** - Demolition of existing building and erection of a part 3 and part 4 storey (plus basement level) building to provide 56 student studio rooms (sui generis use class) with associated ancillary services and landscaping works without complying with condition 2 (approved plans) of planning permission 170685 to introduce a larger basement area to allow an increase to 61 student studio rooms - Approved, subject to S106 legal agreement, 21/6/2018

**181150/NMA** - Non-Material Amendment to planning consent 180075 for changes to approved plans at -1 level to allow for the merging of 2 studios in to 1 flat and new studio flat in place of sub-station. No additional rooms provided - Agreed 6/8/2018

**181819/NMA** - Non-Material Amendment to planning consent 180075 VAR for changes to approved plans to allow the building to be clad in part brick/part render. - Agreed 14/11/2018

**191023/NMA** - Non-material amendment to planning application 180075 for changes to positioning of approved roof windows - Agreed 15/8/2019.

#### 4. CONSULTATIONS

(i) Statutory

4.1 No statutory consultations were required given the nature of the application.

(ii) Non-statutory

*RBC - Ecology*

4.2 The application site comprises a workshop and commercial building where it is proposed to demolish the buildings and construct 79 student studio rooms [*comments were received prior to the demolition of both buildings*]. A similar application (172118) was previously refused - there had been no ecology-related objections. In addition, an application for prior notification of demolition of 62-68 Silver Street Reading (190242; part of the current application site) did not face any ecology-related objections, provided the timing of the demolition was restricted to ensure that nesting birds (particularly swifts) were not harmed during the works.

4.3 The habitats on and surrounding the site are of poor suitability for use by bats or other protected species. However, Silver Street hosts a large population of swifts which nest under the eaves of the houses. Swifts are in decline and are listed as "Amber" on the Birds of Conservation Concern list (<https://www.bto.org/science/monitoring/psob>), in part due to the loss of and lack of nesting sites. As such, and in accordance with paragraph 175 of the NPPF and Policy CS36 of the Core Strategy, opportunities to enhance the site for swifts should be provided.

- 4.4 Overall, subject to the recommended condition (biodiversity enhancements) and informative (re nesting birds - *Planning Officer note: this is no longer relevant as the buildings have now been demolished*) there are no objections to this application on ecological grounds.

***Environmental Protection & Nuisance***

- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 Where appropriate, the noise assessment data should also include noise events (L<sub>AMax</sub>) 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.

*Internal noise criteria (taken from BS8233:2014)*

Room	Design criteria	Upper limit
Bedrooms (23:00 to 07:00)	<30dB LAeq,8hour	
Living rooms (07:00 - 23:00)	<35dB LAeq,16hour	
Gardens & Balconies	<50dB LAeq,T	<55dB LAeq,T

- 4.7 As a noise assessment has not been submitted and the proposed development is by a busy road, I recommend a condition is attached to any consent requiring a noise assessment to be submitted prior to commencement of development and any approved mitigation measures implemented prior to occupation to show that recommended noise levels in the table above can be met. The noise assessment will need to identify the external noise levels impacting on the proposed site.
- 4.8 Noise mitigation is likely to focus on the weak point in the structure; glazing. Given that the acoustic integrity would be compromised should the windows be opened, ventilation details must also be provided, where mitigation relies on closed windows. Ventilation measures should be selected which do not allow unacceptable noise ingress and should provide sufficient ventilation to avoid the need to open windows in hot weather, however non-openable windows are not considered an acceptable solution due to the impact on living standards. Noise assessment condition recommended and an informative re insulation.
- 4.9 Air Quality - Increased exposure - The proposed development is located within an air quality management area that we have identified with monitoring as being a pollution hot-spot (likely to breach the EU limit value for NO<sub>2</sub>) and introduces new exposure / receptors. An assessment and/or mitigation measures should be provided as part of the application.
- 4.10 The applicant will need to demonstrate sufficient mitigation measures are implemented to protect the residents from the effects of poor air quality.
- 4.11 Where the development involves converting an existing building and allowing a buffer zone is not an option then it may be that other mitigation can be applied. In the first instance this would be to implement measures to



reduce the level at the facade of the property by creating a barrier between the property and the carriageway, such as close boarded fencing or planting vegetation.

- 4.12 If this is not possible then locating habitable rooms away from the source of pollution or the use of mechanical ventilation with the inlet on the clean side of the property may be acceptable. This list of potential measures is by no means an exhaustive list.
- 4.13 Mitigation against increased exposure:
- Mechanical ventilation - inlets from the 'clean' side of the development, long term maintenance needs to be addressed
  - Buffer zones - consider increasing distance of the building façade from very busy roads
  - Habitable rooms - consider placing stairwells, corridors and bathrooms on the façade fronting pollution source
  - Mixed use - locate any sensitive uses on higher floors, allowing commercial use on lower elevations
  - Balconies - consider avoiding use in areas of exceedence, especially on ground and first floor level
  - Non-opening front windows - this should only be considered in certain circumstances, needs to be balanced against loss of freedom for future occupants
- 4.14 Reading Borough Council's Air Quality Policy DM19 requires that developments have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality through design, mitigation and where required planning obligations to be used to help improve local air quality.
- 4.15 Until an [assessment and / or mitigation plan] has been submitted and approved by the Environmental Protection Team it is impossible to determine whether the proposed development is appropriate for the proposed location, therefore until the above has been received I would recommend refusal on air quality grounds or a condition.
- 4.16 Contaminated Land - Where development is proposed, the developer is responsible for ensuring that development is safe and suitable for use for the intended purpose or can be made so by remedial action.
- 4.17 The development lies on the site of an historic works which has the potential to have caused contaminated land and the proposed development is a sensitive land use.
- 4.18 Ideally a 'phase 1' desk study should be submitted with applications for developments on sites with potentially contamination to give an indication as to the likely risks and to determine whether further investigation is necessary.
- 4.19 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.
- 4.20 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 to control noise and dust during construction, hours of work and no bonfires during construction are recommended.

***RBC Natural Environment***

- 4.21 I note that the scheme proposes street tree planting, i.e. within the RBC highway, as opposed to tree planting within the frontage. As previously advised, including trees within the red line should be the default position but IF they can demonstrate that for whatever reason this is not feasible then a contribution on Council land could be appropriate. I cannot see anything in the submissions to explain why trees could not be accommodated within the site. This is required to demonstrate why this site is a special case in order to separate it from any other development where the applicant might seek off-site planting in order to maximise their footprint.
- 4.22 Assuming an appropriate argument is presented to agree the principle of off-site planting, we would obviously need to check whether planting on the Council pavement is practically possible, i.e. are services (above or below) in the way. It does not appear that parking is proposed hence visibility splays Vs trees would not be a concern.
- 4.23 No decision on the application should be made before it is confirmed whether planting is feasible. Liaison with Highways / Parks will be necessary and investigations made; an in principle 'planting is acceptable subject to services' would not be appropriate in case planting cannot then not be done. IF planting is possible on RBC and land AND it's been accepted that agreeing a contribution for off-site planting is reasonable in this case, then it will be acceptable. Input over the costs to be secured within a \$106 will have to be determined and should incorporate a high specification hard landscape tree pit for each tree. Further advice can be given at a later stage.
- 4.24 Conditions will be required to secure landscaping submission, approval, implementation, maintenance and replacement.
- 4.25 ***Planning Officer note:*** Highways confirmed that there would not be enough space to plant trees within RBC pavement. Further Comments from the applicant were as follows: *"The preference for highway trees in this case are because: 1. To maximise amenity courtyard space within the scheme (response to previous RBC objection re proportions); 2. To provide appropriate building line with respect to buildings either side which are further forward; and 3. To best achieve boulevard appearance in relation to other trees to S on Mount Pleasant"*
- 4.26 The Natural Environment Officer responded:
- 1) Courtyard space will be one for you to decide what is more important, particularly if trees can't be planted in the pavement.
  - 2) Historic building line of No. 40 is set back and we said from the beginning to use this as an advantage to allow for tree planting. Again, I don't know how important it is in planning terms for the new build to

respect the building line of the adjacent properties as opposed to the historic building line of the site.

- 3) Given the sporadic planting down Silver Street and the not insignificant distance between the site and nearest street trees, I don't think that tree planting in the pavement can be argued as visually necessary.

4.27 **Planning Officer note:** Amended plans were submitted by the applicant and further consultation undertaken. Further comments from Natural Environment were as follows:

4.28 With reference to Ground Floor - Landscape Layout 103 D: Whilst the inclusion of trees on the frontage is obviously positive, showing these on a plan is not sufficient alone to determine whether and what is feasible. I think it is important for the applicant to show us how trees can be incorporated by providing information on how sufficient underground rooting environment will be provided, confirming the above ground space (distance between trunk locations and front elevation) and confirming what species they consider could be provided - I note the indication of 'small, ornamental' trees on the frontage, multi-stem in form. It may be more appropriate, given the width available to have single stem (with a clear stem of 2.5m) planted to avoid overhanging issues. Confirmation of the space available would help determine what species could reasonably be planted.

#### **SUDS**

4.29 No objection.

#### **RBC Transport**

4.30 This application enquiry is for the erection of part 1, part 2 and part 4 storey (plus basement level) buildings to provide 79 student studio rooms (sui generis use class) with associated ancillary space and landscaping works. A similar proposal was considered under application no. 172118 which was refused in February 2018 and dismissed at appeal in October 2018.

4.31 The application site is outside the town centre area but is within close proximity to frequent premier bus routes that run to and from the town centre and Reading University. The site is therefore accessible to good public transport links, town centre services and employment areas.

4.32 The A327 Silver Street is part of the "A" road network carrying between 9,000 and 10,000 vehicles a day. Silver Street has "No Waiting" parking restrictions (DYL) preventing on-street parking and peak hour loading bans between 8.15-9.15am and 4.00-6.15pm.

4.33 The site is located in Zone 2, Primary Core Area, of the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD. This zone directly surrounds the Central Core Area and extends to walking distances of 2 kilometres from the centre of Reading. The parking standards set for Halls of Residence located in this zone are 1 space per FTE member of staff and no requirements for students, however, there are no adopted parking standards for student accommodation which are provided "off campus" and operate as independent providers of higher education accommodation. Therefore, an application of this type is likely to be considered on its own merits considering local circumstances including access to public transport provisions and the availability of parking and on-street regulations.

- 4.34 It is indicated that the site will be managed in conjunction with the recently approved scheme by the same developer at 79 Silver Street. The management of the two student housing schemes at 79 and 40-68 Silver Street site will involve a single (full time) employee working across these two sites. The employee will have some support from nominated student wardens (typically older/ postgraduate students) living within each site. Staff parking would be accommodated at 79 Silver Street.
- 4.35 No on-site parking is proposed and students will not be permitted to bring cars to the site under the terms of the tenancy agreement. It is stated that the off-street parking spaces being provided at no. 79 will allow for limited and controlled use by those working at or maintaining either of the sites and will also be utilised (in a closely programmed manner) for loading/unloading by students at start and end of term.
- 4.36 However, the combined total of students rooms at 79 and 40-68 Silver Street site will equate to 115 students rooms and I am not satisfied that the provision of 3 parking spaces at 79 Silver Street provides the level of parking required to accommodate the demand during the arrival /departure periods at the start and end of the academic year. The information submitted provides very little clarity over how many students would be able to arrive at the site at any one time. I am concerned that management plan states that *"pre-planned arrangements will mostly be programmed on Sundays when access pressures on Silver Street are lowest and some availability of on street parking can be anticipated"*. This provides no assurance that the loading and unloading procedure can be fully accommodated within the site boundary of 79 Silver Street, therefore, the development is required to provide parking spaces within the site as per the recommendation in my pre-application response.
- 4.37 A layby currently runs across the site frontage and there are currently two access points which are protected by "No Waiting" parking restrictions (DYL). The layby is currently unregulated and there are no guarantees that any on-street car parking will be available during the arrival/ departure period. The applicants have indicated that they would fund any appropriate revisions to on-street waiting and loading restrictions along the site frontage. However, given Traffic Regulations Orders are under separate legislation to the Planning Act, there can be no guarantee that any changes to the parking regulations would be approved.
- 4.38 On-street refuse collection will occur and a designated refuse store is provided at ground floor level. It is envisaged that the refuse vehicle will park on the highway, and management staff bring bins to the front of the development and return the empty ones to the store. A designated holding area has been identified within the site and within 6m of the highway for bins awaiting collection.
- 4.39 The development will be required to produce a Travel Plan to encourage safe, healthy and sustainable travel options. A framework Travel Plan has been outlined within the Student Management Plan which includes;
- The appointment of a travel Plan co-ordinator which will be funded for a period of five years after first occupation of the site.

- Provision of sustainable travel packs to all residents including bus network and cycle network maps
  - Restrictions in tenancy agreement for ownership of car in Reading
  - Annual student travel surveys
  - Monitoring of cycle parking provisions
- 4.40 The full travel plan should be submitted 3 months after occupation so that full survey data can be provided of residents.
- 4.41 In accordance with the Council's Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide 1 cycle parking space per 3 staff and 1 space per 5 students. Cycle storage should be in the form of a lockable covered store. The location of the cycle store is conveniently situated in relation to the building entrance. Broxap galvanised heavy duty Sheffield cycle stands are proposed. The proposed location is acceptable, however, we require detailed plans confirming that the cycle parking provision meets the Council's adopted standards in terms of layout. I am, however, happy for this to be dealt with by way of a condition.
- 4.42 I note that the scheme proposes street tree planting, i.e. within the RBC highway, as opposed to tree planting within the frontage. It is unclear from the plans submitted why trees could not be accommodated within the site which has been raised by the Council's Tree Officer. The proposed planting may impact on services located below the footway and may reduce the footway width below an acceptable width. I note this has been referred to the Highways department for further comment.
- 4.43 The applicant should be aware that there would be significant transport implications constructing the proposed building in this prominent location. Any full application would be conditioned to ensure a Construction Method Statement is submitted and approved before any works commence on-site.
- 4.44 Please ask the applicants agent to submit suitably amended plans / information to address the above points prior to determining the application.
- 4.45 Transport recommended the following reason for refusal:

The layout does not comply with the Local Planning Authority's standards in respect of vehicle parking which could result in on-street parking Silver Street during the arrivals and departure period at the beginning and end of term. This would adversely affect road safety and the flow of traffic, and in conflict with Core Strategy Policy CS24 and Sites and Detailed Policies document Policy DM12.

- 4.46 **Planning officer note:** The agent responded with the following comments:  
*"I am somewhat surprised by the strength of the Highways concern focused on the issue of student arrivals/ departures. The amount of traffic arising from this scheme will be very low and closely controlled by on-site management, with a number of factors limiting the amounts in this particular case;*
- a. *The accommodation will be let on a full year basis (unlike many on campus University Halls which have to be vacated to allow for conference use during University vacations). The accommodation will*

be particularly attractive to those types of student (including many overseas and post graduate students) who do not return to a parental UK home address during university vacations. Indeed in some instances students who like the accommodation may choose to stay for the duration of their University attendance in which case their move in and move out could be 3 or more years apart.

- b. The existing traffic orders in front of the building include 2 sections of double yellow lines, each of which precludes waiting but allows for loading/ unloading outside peak hours. In these circumstances the proposal is not in fact dependant on any change to traffic orders in order to demonstrate the existence of 2 immediately adjacent on street spaces which allow for loading/ unloading. The applicants are not therefore reliant on the success of any traffic orders changes. They do however volunteer to fund the removal of redundant footway crossings and rationalisation of the parking/ loading provisions in front of the building in such a manner as RBC may feel most appropriate. Loading bays could be formalised if considered necessary for such low/ very occasional loading events.
- c. Vehicle use in connection with arrivals/ departures of students will be programmed by the site management on a 'timed slot' basis and spread over a number of days (which can be discussed and agreed with the highway authority). To quantify this for 79 students we would estimate that the peak unloading events would focus on 2 weeks in late September with a preference for weekend slots. It is reasonable to assume that around 20% of student residents could either be already present (from previous years) or arriving with limited luggage and no need of a car (eg foreign students or students relocating very locally on foot from other accommodation within walking distance). This leaves 63 students arriving over 2 weeks with a peak day (which can be defined by management) of no more than (say) around 15 student arrivals/ vehicle trips. Allowing 30 minutes timed slots a single parking or loading space can however be used for 16 arrivals over 8 hours per day at weekends or (if weekday off peak hours 10am-4pm and 7-9pm are added) for up to 224 arrivals over 14 days which equates to 1.6 times the actual combined capacity (140) of the 79 and 40 Silver Street schemes. End of year loading tends to be less concentrated in terms of timing and end/start of term moves in/out are likely to involve only around half the numbers of start/end academic year events. In the circumstances the applicants can be very confident that the 3 off street spaces available at 79 and the existing on-street highway arrangements are more than capable of accommodating student moves in/out for both sites (subject to suitable management to define arrival slots).
- d. In the case of the application site on Silver Street the practical effects on highway flow of the very occasional access needs of non-car use student housing are likely to be less than when 40 Silver Street was in active use as an equipment hire shop involving pick-up and drop of daily hired equipment with much of this during morning and evening peak traffic hours.
- e. Many existing smaller University Halls in other towns/ cities (including for example many of the Oxford, Cambridge and Central London Colleges) operate successfully in locations with nil off street parking and where the highways context is one of much greater highway pressures/ constraints than those evident on Silver Street. Annual and in many cases termly loading is successfully arranged and pro-actively managed by accommodation managers working with highway authorities to minimise effects on other activities. In Oxford for example this

*includes the issue of time specific passes to enter and load within otherwise pedestrianised and/or "loading time limited" areas.*

- f. *If purpose built and managed student accommodation (PBMSO) is not allowed in sustainable locations such as Silver Street students will not disappear - in practice they will have to find other accommodation within the private housing market. Much of this is offered to students as Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMO). Some smaller non-HMO flats available in the mainstream housing rental market will also be occupied by students in practice. In both cases (unlike PBMSO) student car use throughout the year is possible with these types of accommodation so parking/ highway effects including effects on existing residents' parking availability are likely to be very much more significant and effectively unmanaged other than by normal highway authority powers. As a very direct example if PBMSO is refused at Silver Street there is a very strong possibility (given the accessibility to the University) that students would be deflected to other HMO or private rental accommodation in close vicinity to Silver Street/ Mount Pleasant with potentially greater effects on highway flows than a closely managed PBMSO.*

4.47 *Transport responded as follows:*

"All new developments for student accommodation outside of the town centre are required to provide operational parking spaces within the site to accommodate the arrival and departure periods. The previously refused application ref 172118 included the provision of 3 parking spaces set into the building frontage in a similar arrangement to the approved development at 79 Silver Street. Subsequently, the agent was advised that the development would need to include operational spaces in the pre-application response emailed on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

The combined total of students rooms at 79 and 40-68 Silver Street site will equate to 115 students rooms. The agent has estimated that 20% of student residents could either be already present (from previous years) or arriving with limited luggage and no need of a car (eg foreign students or students relocating very locally on foot from other accommodation within walking distance), leaving in the region of 92 students arriving across the 2 sites.

The A327 Silver Street is part of the "A" road network carrying between 9,000 and 10,000 vehicles a day. Students arriving by car are likely to have a personal belonging that cannot be unloaded in one trip. Therefore, there will be multiple trips back and forth across a busy road. This is likely to cause delay to the loading/unloading process or more likely result in vehicles pulling up as close of possible to building entrance whilst the unloading process occurs. Given the limited number of spaces at 79 Silver Street, any delays to the arrival process will result in drivers looking for an alternative location to park. Silver Street is a one-way road, therefore, if there if the operational spaces are full, drivers may slow down or pull over and wait for a space to become available to avoid the one-way system.

The agent has indicated [*in a further email as included in Appendix 1*] that if Block A is moved away from Platinum Apartments it may be possible to provide an off-street bay and I would suggest that this should be investigated further."

(iii) Public/ local consultation and comments received

4.48 58 properties were consulted by neighbour consultation letter. A site notice was displayed. Five objections were received from residents living in Platinum Apartments, Stirling House, and Upper Crown Street as follows:

- 1) This area is becoming heavily overdeveloped, with new flats being built and existing student areas already present. This is not pleasant for existing residents of the area and provides no benefit to the current community.

There is not the appropriate infrastructure, parking spaces, stores etc. to facilitate a substantial increase to the population of this street.

There have already been complaints made about anti-social behaviour, littering and vomit in the streets attributed to the current student population of the area, and I would like this behaviour to decline rather than increase, so I am highlighting these issues and displaying my public objection against this planning application.

- 2) Currently, the surrounding apartment buildings comprise of a number of young families and professional workers who both rent and own their property. Adding further student accommodation to the area will be wholly inappropriate. There is already vast amount of development in the area, with student accommodation at Crown Street a couple of minutes walk away. In addition, Silver Street Developments Ltd (the applicant) already has planning permission for student accommodation at 79 Silver Street, just across the road from the proposed site.

According to the Sunlight and Daylight Survey, submitted with the plans, our living room has been incorrectly marked as our bedroom and vice versa. Our living room is a large and open plan living space, directly facing the proposed site, with a large bay 3-window arrangement, designed to catch the light. This room is a unique selling point, somewhere we spend most of our time (when not at work), and having a 4 storey building directly opposite will substantially reduce the amount of light we have during the day. The Survey does not accurately depict what effect the proposed buildings will have on the surrounding properties and their measurements are not taken from precise points.

If student accommodation (HMO), is allowed to be put in place here, this is likely to cause local residents significant disturbance, due to the potentially unsociable hours that will be kept by the tenants. There is already an issue with antisocial behaviour, due to other student accommodation nearby and Silver Street's proximity to the town centre. Those currently living in the area are mainly working professionals and young families, who do not want to be kept awake at night or woken up in the middle of the night.

Our flat in particular faces in the direction of the proposed site, with the only available windows opening onto the main road and towards the proposed site. This means that any increased noise levels and



antisocial behaviour will be amplified greatly during the summer months when windows are open; leaving us with little choice but to consider keeping our windows closed during the hotter months.

The sheer number of rooms being proposed could be quite imposing considering the current environment and surrounding buildings that already exist in the area, in addition this type of accommodation could encourage crowds to gather outside of the buildings and the surrounding area, which will reduce our privacy and could pose a potential security/criminal risk.

Accommodations of this nature creates transient communities, causing parking problems for those already in the area (and their visitors), along with associated anti-social behaviour, increased foot traffic and late hours kept by those who may be attracted to accommodation of this nature. As a result, this sort of accommodation is like to discourage other working professionals or young families to the area, which is the general demographic here.

Value of local property is likely to decrease significantly if the proposed plans are accepted and acted upon, as noted above. Due to the nature of those already living in the area, having a property like this is likely to reduce attractiveness of the area to other working professionals and young families alike and may even force those renting to look elsewhere, resulting in loss of renting potential for those who own and rent the flats, not to mention any owners who are considering selling their flat, only to find that the value has dropped.

Parking in the area is already a major commodity. Those making this application appear to have given very little thought as to how anyone living in the block(s) of 79 rooms is going to park their cars.

- 3) Last year alone over 2,000 additional beds were provided for students in Reading. Numbers of students coming to University this year are 650 less, (drop in birth rate) and 650 who would have come from Europe. Currently there are around 2,500 beds in student houses with NO tenants from 1st July 2019. So why approve another 79 student bedrooms? There is no longer the demand for additional student accommodation in Reading. This is also a small site where 79 units is a significant over development. We need housing for families, not for students.
- 4) The recent approval upon appeal of 61 studios at 79 Silver St will provide enough student "activity, life and vitality" for the neighbourhood's permanent residents. (Developer's Design Statement Section 2.8).

The approval of a further 79 student studios directly opposite at nos 40-68 will bisect and transform the lower end of Silver St into a student enclave. This outcome would contradict the GW Developer's statement which advocates "a dispersal of managed student accommodation developments." (Developer's Design Statement Section 2.8).

Silver St is predominately made up of houses and flats which are occupied by single people, families and professionals. The social and work schedules of the Street's permanent residents differ from those of a transient student population. The character and atmosphere of the street will change with all the additional comings and goings and the term time activity and holiday down time fluctuations.

The developer brushes aside the 2017 revised Reading Development plan which is awaiting approval and is no doubt anxious for a speedy decision based upon the now out of date 2008 strategy (revised in 2015). In the 2017 document the SHMA (Strategic Housing Market Assessment) advocated there was not a need for significant new student accommodation (H12).

Furthermore in Section 9.2 "The Strategy for East Reading" the areas of tension between the University and surrounding areas are acknowledged and that these need careful management. It advocates a solution: "to support purpose built accommodation on established university sites." This recommendation reduces the need for students to travel and allows "key sites elsewhere" to "deliver much needed general housing." Both nos 40 and 60-68 Silver Street previously had permissions to build 14 and 6 flats respectively; in keeping with the predominately residential locality. By opting for one bed studio accommodation the out of town developer avoids having to fulfill any local housing planning obligations and regulations.

The developer argues that by providing managed student accommodation it would free some multiple occupancy houses for local families' use. The high specification of the proposed development will attract affluent students who would have opted for more expensive better appointed accommodation with or without this development. The HMO type student accommodation will still be in demand for those students on a tight budget. Even the university in its response to 2017 plan acknowledges that student studio developments near the city centre charging in the region of £185 to £296 per week are not the solution for affordable accommodation and are beyond the means of the average UK student living on a maintenance loan capped at £8700 (Reading Borough Local Plan Public Examination Issue 7 Housing Barton Willmore September 2018).

On the submitted plans (p16 Developer's Design Document) Block A has been compared to the highest and widest dimensions of Platinum Apts thereby ignoring the smaller block which is adjacent to the proposed development. Page 19 details the transference of Block B's upper storey to form a 4<sup>th</sup> floor in the roof of Block A. This arrangement overpowers the adjacent lower section of Platinum Apts and is a case of overdevelopment. To create an optical illusion that Block A does not dwarf the neighbouring Platinum Apts, each computer image has been created at a flattering angle taken from the prospective of the other side of Silver Street approximately opposite to the Platinum Apts' entrance. The 3 storey Rimald House and the lower section of Platinum Apts are similar in height; yet Platinum Apts is not afforded the same design considerations. The sombre grey leaden exterior appearance of Block A's 4<sup>th</sup> floor roof

level and its large boxy "Victorian chimney shaped" dormers are not in keeping with the adjacent Hiatt Close's and the lower block of Platinum Apts traditional roof lines. The roof level dominates Block A's frontage and makes it appear top heavy.

The baseline used for the light survey is the refused application for 79 studios on no 40 Silver St instead of what was on the site prior to development. Even using this baseline, Flat 1 Platinum Apts' kitchen window fails to meet the guidelines as it is overshadowed by the height and depth of Block A.

The lack of a "Smoking Policy" on site raises the possibility of the noise and nuisance of smokers congregating outside the proposed entrance near Platinum Apts. A centralized entrance would resolve the issue and would distance the development's neighbours from day to day comings and goings and any potential noisy incidents at unsociable hours. It would relieve the need to liaise with the sites' management over unruly behaviour and would leave neighbours free to enjoy their leisure time. A central entrance would also be more in line with no 79 which would be practical as the two developments are to share facilities.

The plan indicates that the uncovered refuse area for the 79 studios will run along the boundary wall near Flat 1 Platinum Apt's kitchen and bathroom windows. To avoid noise, odour and potential vermin infestations it would be better if this could be situated in an enclosed facility towards the middle of the development similar to the Platinum Apts' arrangement. If doors opened on to the street there would be no need for the bins to be left out waiting collection. It is questionable if the existing store and collection area are large enough. The noises from the coming and goings of the student cyclists could also be minimized if the cycle store was also moved near a central entrance.

The absence of cycle lanes in Silver Street raises road safety issues. The time quoted by the developer to reach the Whiteknight campus entrance uses Silver St. Cyclists already use the pavement to avoid the narrower stretches of the street, parked cars and fast moving traffic. This puts pedestrians especially children entering and exiting the nearby school and the elderly at risk. The danger is increased when cyclists speed the wrong way down the one way street gathering momentum on the sloping pavements. An increase in cyclist numbers will exacerbate the issue.

The development's high specification will attract affluent students who are more likely to have a car. How the management team will identify any lease infringements is unclear. Furthermore, car ownership and the legal parking thereof away from the site will not contravene any laws; therefore the legalities and enforcement of terminating offenders' tenancies will be questionable. Street parking is already at a premium in Katesgrove for council tax- paying residents without any additional demands. The arrangements for 140 students moving in "mostly" on two consecutive Sundays, with only three car parking spaces at no 79 and the chance that one of the on street spaces may become vacant are unrealistic and inadequate. The process will cause inconvenience to the permanent residents and

will result in the unauthorized use of their parking facilities. No consideration has been given to how the traffic quickly picks up once it is clear of the London Street junction, Silver St's one way status, or its use by buses and by emergency vehicles. At the end of the academic year students will leave when their course finishes which will lead to ad hoc pick-ups.

The sites at nos 40 and 60-68 should be used to alleviate the local housing shortage and to maintain the character of the Silver St neighbourhood. Enough is enough; and 61 students are more than enough for Lower Silver St to accommodate.

One further objection was received following consultation on the amended plans along with one maintained objection (as no. 2 above):

- 1) Once again the sunlight studies have been done on a neighbouring property which faces the opposite way to my house [69 Upper Crown Street]. I have three windows which directly get sunlight from this side of the house; which will not if I have flats there. I also do not see the pre agreed wall between my property and flats, I have made various comments that this development should not compromise my security.
- 2) Having read through those amendments, I believe our original objections to this application would still be relevant as the amendments appear to be only cosmetic in nature.

## 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. 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 local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019)  
Chapter 5 - Delivering a Wide Choice of High Quality Homes

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

Policy CS1 (Sustainable Construction and Design)  
Policy CS2 (Waste Minimisation)  
Policy CS3 (Social Inclusion and Diversity)  
Policy CS4 (Accessibility and Intensity of Development)  
Policy CS5 (Inclusive Access)  
Policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm)  
Policy CS9 (Infrastructure, Services, Resources & Amenities)  
Policy CS11 (Use of Employment Land for Alternative Uses)  
Policy CS14 (Provision of Housing)  
Policy CS15 (Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix)  
Policy CS20 (Implementation of Reading's Transport Strategy)

Policy CS23 (Sustainable Travel and Travel Plans)  
Policy CS24 (Car/Cycle Parking)  
Policy CS34 (Pollution and Water Resources)  
Policy CS36 (Biodiversity and Geology)  
Policy CS28 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland)

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 DM10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space)  
Policy DM12 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters)  
Policy DM18 (Tree Planting)  
Policy DM19 (Air Quality)  
Policy SA14 (Cycle Routes)

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)

Submission Draft Reading Local Plan (March 2018)

Policy CC1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)  
Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction)  
Policy CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change)  
Policy CC5 (Waste Minimisation and Storage)  
Policy CC6 (Accessibility and the Intensity of Development)  
Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)  
Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)  
Policy EN2 (Areas of Archaeological Significance)  
Policy EN15 (Air Quality)  
Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources)  
Policy EN10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space)  
Policy H12 (Student Accommodation)  
Policy TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-related Matters)  
Policy TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging)

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
- Local Plan Background Paper (EV002), March 2018
- Council Response to Issue 7: Housing (EC009), September 2018
- University of Reading Response to Issue 7: Housing (EP017), September 2018
- University of Reading Statement of Common Ground (EC042), November 2018 [including Accommodation Strategy Part 1 - Gap Analysis July 2018-2028, prepared by Cushman & Wakefield; and Campus Capacity Study, prepared by Barton Willmore]
- Reading Borough Local Plan Consultation on Main Modifications (EM001) June 2019

Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standards (2015), DCLG  
Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: a guide to good practice (BR 209), P. Littlefair, BRE, 2011  
Waste Management Guidelines for Property Developers, Reading Borough Council

## 6.0 APPRAISAL

6.1 The main issues to be considered are:

- (i) Principle of use/location
- (ii) Design quality
- (iii) Density and mix
- (iv) Impact on amenities of adjoining occupiers and future tenants
- (v) Highways and transport issues
- (vi) Landscape
- (vii) Other (S106, CIL, noise, air quality, drainage)

6.2 (i) Principle of use/location  
The location of the site is dominated by residential uses with some business, commercial and community uses. It is an accessible location on the edge of the town centre and the redevelopment of this brownfield site would represent a sustainable development and an effective reuse of the site. This would accord with national and local policies, in particular Paragraph 11 of the NPPF, which sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, Core Strategy Policy CS14, and Sites and Detailed Policies Document Policy SD1.

6.3 Since the previous student scheme was refused (172118) the site has been subject of demolition, so is now a cleared site. However, its previous use was commercial, but with no viable commercial user having come forward over a period of many years. Core Strategy Policy CS11 sets out that when assessing proposals outside of the Core Employment Areas, which would result in a loss of employment land, that the following criteria need to be considered: (i) is it accessible by a choice of means of transport?; (ii) would its continued employment use be viable?; (iii) is there a surplus of similar sites?; (iv) would continued employment use detrimentally affect the amenity and character of the area?; (v) is the need for alternative uses stronger than for retention?; (vi) would the proposal result in a piecemeal loss of employment land?. The principle of the loss of the commercial use for residential use was accepted with the granting of planning permission for application 150885/FUL (40 Silver Street) and student housing (16 units) at 62-68 Silver Street (11/01917/FUL).

6.4 At present there is no adopted policy relating to the location or provision of student accommodation. However, the draft Local Plan includes Policy H12: Student Accommodation, which states that:

*"New student accommodation will be provided on or adjacent to existing further or higher education campuses, or as an extension or reconfiguration of existing student accommodation. There will be a presumption against proposals for new student accommodation on other sites unless it can be*

*clearly demonstrated how the proposal meets a need that cannot be met on the above sites."*

- 6.5 As this policy is at an advanced stage, because the Plan has been the subject of Examination, and the consultation on Main Modifications ended in July of this year, it is considered to have sufficient weight and is therefore, material when assessing the proposal. This approach accords with paragraph 48 of the NPPF.
- 6.6 The emerging policy contains a clear presumption against proposals for new purpose built student accommodation (PBSA) unless it can be clearly demonstrated how such a proposal would meet a need that could not be met on the identified sites in the Local Plan or sequentially preferable sites. The application site is not considered to be a site which forms an extension of existing student accommodation, and therefore, the applicant was invited to submit a statement of need.
- 6.7 The submitted statement focusses on figures of need both current and future, as identified from evidence and background papers presented by the University of Reading for the Reading Borough Local Plan Examination, as well as more generic data from other sources.
- 6.8 As background, for the Local Plan examination hearings in September and October of 2018, the University of Reading (UoR) submitted 'Accommodation Strategy Part 1 - Gap Analysis July 2018-2028, prepared by Cushman & Wakefield; and Campus Capacity Study, prepared by Barton Willmore. The Gap Analysis identified that 5,015 students in 2017/18 academic year as the overall number of students in all years requiring accommodation but not housed in PBSA. This was understood by the LPA, and was established at examination. However, this did not detail any accommodation preference and therefore did not necessarily mean that 5,000 students would move into a PBSA if such accommodation were hypothetically made available, and which has since been confirmed by the UoR. The UoR subsequently confirmed in May that they do not have any further figures around preference other than where the 'first year guarantee' applies e.g. a guarantee to house first year students in PBSA upon enrolment.
- 6.9 The Council's position as set out in the Reading Borough Local Plan Background Paper (March 2018 and the Statement of Common Ground (agreed between UoR and the Council, November 2018) is that the substantial increase in purpose-built student accommodation in recent years is broadly similar to the reported and predicted increase in the SHMA between 2010 and 2018 of around 2,900 students. The Council, however, also recognises an existing level of need for student accommodation of around 1,000 bedspaces, which relates to the first year guarantee need for bedspaces. The Statement of Common Ground includes a recognition of this existing level of need, which subsequently led to a proposed main modification to Local Plan paragraph 4.4.96 to state:

*"More recent evidence from the University indicates that this growth, underpinned by changes to the tuition fee system and the removal of student number controls, has indeed generated a need for new accommodation. In 2016/17, 74% of students were from outside the South East, and 28% were from outside the UK, and these groups are particularly reliant on student accommodation. There is current shortfall in University*

*accommodation of around 1,000 bed spaces for first year students and, across all years of study, for 2017/18, 5,000 students were not housed in purpose built student accommodation."*

- 6.10 Officers are of the view that the shortfall of 1,000 bedspaces to meet the first year guarantee, is at present, the closest thing the Council has to an evidenced level of need, and that there are opportunities to accommodate this level of need on locations compliant with Policy H12.
- 6.11 The LPA had very serious concerns about the UoR's estimate of growth in student numbers from 16,000 in 2017/18 to 21,000 in 2028, as presented at the Local Plan Examination. Such concerns were set out in Appendix 2a of the Statement of Common Ground. Officers do not agree that it has been clearly demonstrated that the figure of 5,000 students represents the level of existing 'need' and are of the view that these growth figures are untested and hugely ambitious. However, even if the assumptions that underpin this level of growth are accurate, such growth would require a significant amount of University expansion, which, according to the Local Plan, would in turn need to be considered against whether it could be supported by appropriate levels of student accommodation. Also, as set out in the Statement of Common Ground (Appendix 2A), it is considered that such growth would have implications far beyond accommodation needs, including transport infrastructure, the provision of services and facilities, pressures on the natural and historic environment and impacts on existing communities.
- 6.12 As well as issues relating to need, although the application site is not a specific allocated housing site, its development for alternative uses to housing, would reduce the Council's ability to meet its own housing need, thereby conflicting with policies CS14 and emerging policy H1. Also, unlike a housing site, provision of PBSA does little to meet the Borough's identified need for affordable housing, in conflict with policy CS6, and emerging policy H3.
- 6.13 The applicant's submitted Statement of Need identifies that the provision of private sector student accommodation can help to free up other accommodation occupied by students, such as HMOs. It is considered, however, but this would be dependent on whether such accommodation was priced at a level to offer a genuine alternative. No clear evidence has been presented by the applicant to show that this would be the case, and indeed there is information to suggest that the PBSA, which has been delivered in the Borough so far (mainly central Reading), are between £185 and £296 per week. This pricing reflects the high-specification accommodation, featuring self-contained studio units, and which is out of the price range of the average student. As a comparison, in a recent online search of available data on property websites, those properties advertised as student friendly HMOs within the University area of Reading, were priced from ca £90 pppw up to ca £156 pppw, the latter being the better quality with ensuites. ,
- 6.14 The Statement of Common Ground echoes this concern for whilst the UoR considers that the PBSA does widen choice it is not affordable to many of their students in need of accommodation, and that a partnership arrangement may be needed to resolve the issue. This is why the following sentence was agreed in the Statement of Common Ground, to be added to Local Plan paragraph 4.4.95.



*“The Council particularly recognises the benefits of purpose-built student accommodation where there is a partnership arrangement with a further or higher education institution and where it offers accommodation that meets the needs of students in terms of facilities, convenience to places of study and in terms of the cost of accommodation.”*

- 6.15 No information has been submitted alongside the planning application which deals with issues such as rental levels, and whether there will be any arrangement in place with the UoR.
- 6.16 It is therefore not accepted that the evidence presented by the applicant demonstrates that the application site would meet a need that cannot be met on those identified sites within the Emerging Local Plan allocated for student accommodation. The majority of these are located in close proximity to the Whiteknights Campus, or on sequentially preferable sites. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not comply with Policy H12 of the Emerging Local Plan and conflicts with the aims of the NPPF.
- 6.17 It is concluded therefore, that the principle of the use of the site for student housing would not be acceptable. The proposal is further assessed below with regard to its compliance with existing adopted policies relating to the character of the area, quality of the layout and design, residential amenities and transport.
- (ii) **Design quality**
- 6.18 Policy CS7 requires that all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form, including: -
- Layout: urban structure and urban grain;
  - Landscape;
  - Density and mix;
  - Scale: height and massing; and
  - Architectural detail and materials.
- 6.19 The scheme will be assessed to ensure that the development proposed makes a positive contribution to a number of urban design objectives. This part of the report will look at the layout, scale and architectural detail of the proposed scheme.
- 6.20 The amended proposed scheme is a ‘n’ shaped building, comprising a block to the rear of the site with 2 storeys plus basement (Block B), a northern link building with one storey plus basement, and a frontage building to Silver Street (Block A).
- 6.21 With respect to the height and appearance in the streetscene Block A is proposed with a mono-pitched roof, with inset flat roofed dormers. The overall design is groups of projecting sections with corresponding dormers above, with a variation in building line to break up the mass of the frontage. The proposal is for a contemporary appearance using fair faced brick, feature recessed panels, brick cills, standing seam zinc roof and aluminium windows and ventilation louvres.

- 6.22 The maximum height of this building would be 12.2m above ground level, when viewed from Silver Street, which compares to Platinum Apartments to the north (right), at 10.2m, and Heiatt Close to the south (left), at 11.0m.



*Proposed Silver Street elevation*

- 6.23 This compares to the refused scheme, which was 13m at its maximum height as shown below (*please note that the refused scheme was considered in the context of 62-68 (left of elevation), which was still in existence, and not part of the application site area, at that time*).



*Refused elevation - Silver Street*

- 6.24 Following the previous refusal which included a reason which referenced the height of Block A, the applicant sought pre-application advice (182150) through the presentation of a draft scheme to Reading's Design Review Panel (DRP) in January 2019, as shown below.



*Pre-application elevation to Silver Street*

- 6.25 This proposed reducing the number of storeys above ground to 3 no., equating to a maximum height of 11m. This DRP considered sat *“extremely comfortably within the visualisations provided, in fact to the frontage the Panel considered an additional storey could be achieved. The mono-pitch roof form should be revisited come what may as it provides an unnecessarily elevated ridge line”*. This led to the applicant increasing the number of storeys back to 4no. above ground level for the submission scheme. A further review by the DRP held in April 2019, confirmed that this was acceptable in principle, subject to reducing the pitched roof

height to drop the overall height, which the amended proposal (as shown above) does.

- 6.26 Officers consider that although the proposed design is more contemporary than existing neighbouring buildings, because of the refinements of the front elevation, which includes removal of the undercroft parking to bring built form to the ground, in combination with the triplet projections, that the appearance is more acceptable than the refused scheme. There are still concerns, as raised by the DRP regarding the choice of proposed materials, and *“whether this ties strongly to the brick foundries historically prevalent in the area”*, but this could be addressed through a suitably worded condition.
- 6.27 More fundamentally however, although the proposed scheme is considered to be an improvement on the refused scheme, it is not considered that the changes have gone far enough in addressing the relationship with Platinum Apartments, discussed further in the amenity section below.
- 6.28 One suggestion by officers, and highlighted in the committee report for the refused scheme, was to reduce the bulk by using a similar design approach as was used with the approved 79 Silver Street opposite, but this was not reflected in the amended scheme.



- 6.29 Additionally, one of the key issues with the respect to the refused scheme was that the combination of the heights of Block A and Block B and their proximity to each other would lead to a cramped appearance, resulting in the site appearing overdeveloped. This issue was borne out by the Inspector into the appeal who considered the proposed courtyard to be oppressive and that the constrained nature of the proposed courtyard led the Inspector to conclude that the development would also be an overdevelopment of the site.
- 6.30 Amendments have been made to the scheme, which reduce the overall height of the rear building B by removing one storey (as advised by DRP and during pre-application discussions), whilst adding a storey to Block A, and by moving the buildings slightly further apart as can be seen on the plans and images below. DRP considered that the amended roof form of Block B *“looks much more in keeping with the surrounding context”* and the dropped roof level would *“allow increased light into the courtyard”* :



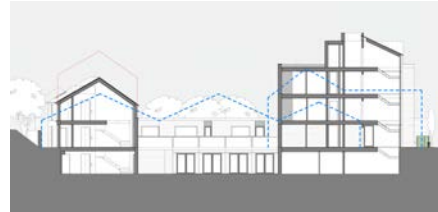
*Refused Scheme - Lower Ground Plan*



*Proposed - Lower Ground Plan*



*Refused Scheme - Section*



*Proposed Scheme - Section*

- 6.31 Officers consider that while the overall distance between the blocks is improved they are still considered to be too close to each other and would still result in an oppressive space, especially because of the scale of Block A.
- 6.32 In addition officers are still not convinced by the inclusion of the northern link section, which is considered to add to the overall feel of an overdeveloped and hemmed in site. Officers provided advice in this regard and during pre-application discussions in January 2019 and the DRP suggested the removal of units from the northern edge of the courtyard. Further exacerbating this is that units previously shown at lower ground level have now been shifted to the ground floor level of this link.
- 6.33 It should be noted that there have been changes to elevation details and proportions, which have responded positively to matters raised by DRP (full comments Appendix 2) and in particular officers now consider that Block B is acceptable in its design and overall scale and massing.



*Refused - Block B from courtyard*



*Proposed - Block B from courtyard*



6.34 The rear of Block A has also been simplified.



6.35 In conclusion, however, although there have been improvements to the overall design, scale, massing and layout of the scheme it is still considered to be an overdevelopment of the site. The proposed height of Block A and its appearance in itself are an improvement as compared to the refused scheme. However, its overall scale and mass, in the context of the streetscene, combined with its proximity to Block B and the link building, means that it will be read as one. The proximity to surrounding existing buildings, all contribute to failing to secure a high quality design required by Policy CS7 and harm the character and appearance of the area.

(iii) **Density and mix**

6.36 Developments should provide an appropriate range of housing opportunities in terms of a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures to accord with NPPF and local policy DM5, and should include for providing for the housing needs of students.

6.37 However, Policy CS15 sets out that an:  
*“appropriate density and mix of residential development within the Borough will be informed by: -*  
• *An assessment of the characteristics, including the mix of uses of the area in which it is located;*  
• *Its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport, as defined in Policy CS4;*  
• *The need to achieve high quality design in accordance with Policy CS7; and*  
• *The need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.”*

6.38 As set out above the proposed scheme has not demonstrated that there is a need for student accommodation which meets the requirements of emerging policy DM12, and therefore the overall principle of the scheme is not acceptable.

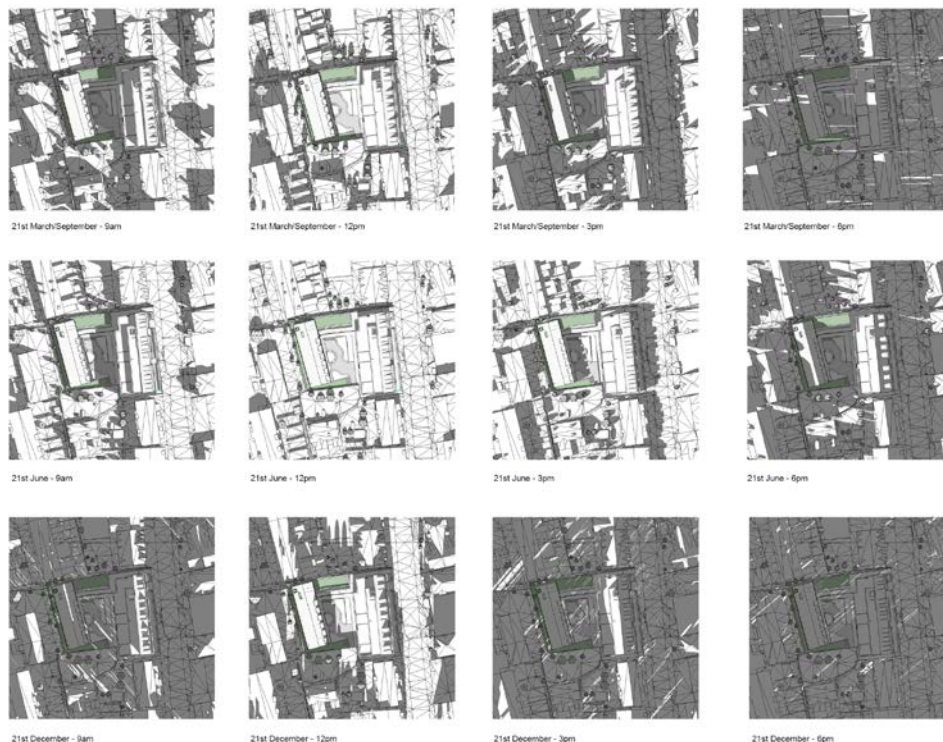
6.39 However, even if a density of 564 dwellings were acceptable (not unusual for an edge of centre scheme), and subject to other policy considerations being met, there would still be an ongoing concern at the potential concentration of student accommodation in this area. Combined with No. 79 Silver Street opposite (60 units), and 99 student rooms to the north of Crown Street, the scheme would detrimentally impact the lives of adjoining occupiers. This is an issue also raised through neighbour consultation as documented above. By failing to provide a mixed and balanced community the scheme would be contrary to Policy CS15, NPPF para.50 and emerging Policy H12.

- (iv) Impact on amenities of adjoining occupiers and future tenants
- 6.40 Policy DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity) states that development should not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties in terms of privacy and overlooking, access to sunlight and daylight, visual dominance and overbearing, noise and disturbance, artificial lighting, crime and safety. Policies CS7 and CS15 also refer to the need to ensure that the amenities of neighbours are not significantly harmed.
- 6.41 One of the previous reasons for refusal was that the height, position and bulk would result in a loss of amenity to neighbouring residents through overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of light, and noise and disturbance arising from the use of the small site for 62 students. The Inspector into the previous appeal supported the majority of these amenity concerns, and considered that the proposed development would create “the sense of being hemmed in by built development” and would be likely to “make the outdoor living environments for the existing occupiers gloomier”.
- 6.42 There have been some amendments to the scheme with respect to seeking to improve amenity for surrounding and proposed residents including:
- Reduction in a unit at third floor (top) closest to Platinum Apartments and reducing the depth of Block A units at third floor level to improve daylight/sunlight levels and reduce the bulk when viewed from neighbouring buildings.
  - Reduction in the height of Block B.
  - Removing lower ground floor units on the northern link.
  - Moving the blocks further apart.
  - Introducing defensible space in front of lower ground floor units, and ground floor northern link units.
- 6.43 Despite the amendments to the refused scheme it is still considered that the overall height and mass of new buildings, at part 4 storeys, with buildings on three sides, and proximity to boundaries, would have a detrimental effect on nearby residents who would find their outlook and amenities harmed through loss of privacy, overbearing and loss of light. In particular this would be the residents to the north of the site in Upper Crown Street and Platinum House. A number of objections have been received which focus on such issues.
- 6.44 The changes made to reduce the height of Block B has improved the situation in this part of the site, but the addition of studios at the ground floor on the northern link, and the retained proximity of the units on the northern end of Block A, continue to present a scheme, which is considered to be too overbearing and too dense for the plot, which would still be dominant in the outlook from internal living spaces and gardens. The upper studio accommodation, specifically within Block A at second and third floors would be close to the northern boundary of the site, which would be likely to invade the privacy of adjoining occupiers.
- 6.45 The purchasing of the adjacent site since the refusal provided the opportunity to present a less dense scheme, however the proposal would still bring 79 students to a small site. This would not only create a significant detrimental effect to neighbouring amenity with regard to the level of noise and disturbance from outside use and the general comings and

goings, but would also provide a poor level of amenity for the proposed residents. In particular, the proximity of the blocks would reduce the potential for the outside space to provide an effective quality of space in terms of user experience, especially since this is an area through and around which students would access rooms. Although the central courtyard provides a better ratio of space per student than the previous scheme, it is still considered inadequate for the proposed 79 students, and would still feel cramped, overlooked and dominated by the mass of buildings. Occupiers of the space would still experience *"the overwhelming sense of being observed whilst using this space."* (Inspector into the previous refusal).

6.46 The submitted Daylight & Sunlight Study analyses the impact of the proposed development against a baseline of the former buildings and the refused scheme (172118). This confirms that the properties most impacted would be 69 Upper Crown Street and the south facing units in Platinum Apartments. Of the 10 rooms (a total of 19 windows) tested in these specific properties that were tested overlooking the site 4 rooms would suffer an adverse impact and in 2 cases an over 40% reduction in daylight is anticipated. Although this is an improvement on the refused scheme, this, in combination with other amenity concerns, is considered to be unacceptable.

6.47 The submitted solar study also shows (see below) that even on June 21<sup>st</sup> that the courtyard space would, for large parts of the day, be wholly or partially in the shade, which would contribute to it not being a quality amenity space.



6.48 The location of the bin and bicycle store areas close to the Platinum Apartments on the ground floor would not only be unpleasant for those residents in terms of noise and disturbance arising from the activity of use, and potential odours, but also for the studio located on the thoroughfare

from the main entrance. This unit would be surrounded by service space, and as the front door would open directly onto the main entrance space it would be noisy. The applicant has advised that this room would be designated for the on-site warden, who would be well placed to *observe and control student behaviour with 'eyes on the street entrance point'*. This is not considered a suitable justification for this unit.

- 6.49 In conclusion the proposed scheme is not considered to have sufficiently resolved amenity concerns. The siting of the buildings are still considered to be too close to the properties on the northern side, and to each other, and too densely developed a plot, with resultant detrimental amenity issues both within and around the site contrary to policies DM4, CS7 and CS15.

(v) Highways and transport issues

- 6.50 The transport comments are provided in full above. Transport have objected to the scheme based on the level of off-road parking spaces, proposed, to be shared with the site opposite (no. 79), and the level of parking required to accommodate the demand during the arrival and departure periods at the start and end of the academic year. It is considered that the proposal would adversely affect road safety and flow of traffic. A number of neighbour respondents also refer to such concerns.

- 6.51 Transport also require details of the cycle parking provision in terms of layout, but this could be dealt with by way of a condition.

- 6.52 The applicant responded to Transport with further clarification as to how the proposal could work, however Transport still consider that the scheme would not comply with relevant transport policy. A reason for refusal is included regarding vehicle parking along with a refusal reason related to a lack of S106 obligations which includes with respect to a Student Travel Plan and payment towards road restriction works.

(vi) Landscape

- 6.53 During the course of the application Block A was moved back to re-incorporate trees within the site along Silver Street, which had initially been shown within the highway, which the Natural Environment officer considers positive. There are a number of questions about the detail of the proposed landscaping to which the applicant has not yet responded. However, there is no fundamental objection to the landscape scheme as proposed. This aspect of the proposal would be acceptable subject to conditions to ensure the landscaping is carried out as proposed and to secure additional detail.

(vii) Other (S106, drainage, equalities)  
S106 planning obligations

- 6.54 Had the planning application been found acceptable negotiations for a S106 legal agreement would have progressed to secure:
- i) an acceptable mitigation plan or equivalent contribution towards the provision of Employment, Skills and Training for the construction phase of the development,
  - ii) a travel plan and highway alterations
  - iii) a restriction on occupancy to students only,
  - iv) implementation of the student accommodation management plan,
- The absence of such an agreement is recommended as a reason for refusal of planning permission.



#### Drainage

- 6.55 The sustainable drainage details submitted have been assessed and confirmed to be acceptable.

#### Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.56 In determining this application the Committee is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. 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.

### **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The purchasing of the adjacent site since the refused scheme provided the opportunity to develop a less dense scheme, however, it appears, albeit that adjustments have been made, that the scheme overall has blocks which are still too close together, and to surrounding neighbours, and at too high a density. A pre-application scheme was considered by the Design Review Panel in January 2019 and then the submission scheme in April, however, the changes made are not considered to have gone far enough to address the fundamental concerns regarding overall, scale, mass and proximity to neighbouring properties with resultant detrimental amenity issues.
- 7.2 The Officer advised the applicant that the overall quantum of development needed to be reduced so that there would be better spacing between the proposed buildings and especially the properties to the north. In particular it was suggested that the northern link block be removed and also units within Block A to assist with improving the overall proposal. The applicant has suggested some further amendments that could be made, which are documented in Appendix 1, however these are not considered to be sufficient to remove the objections to the proposal, and in particular the specific policy objection regarding the need for student accommodation.
- 7.3 The proposed development is not considered to comply with the relevant Development Plan Policies as assessed above. It is therefore recommended that it should be refused planning permission for failing to provide an acceptable design, for leading to a loss of amenity for neighbours and future tenants, for failing to provide for a mixed and balanced community and for the absence of a S106 legal agreement.

Case Officer: Alison Amoah

APPENDIX 1: EMAIL FROM AGENT WITH SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS - received 9/8/19

We are entirely willing to make further detailed adjustments to the scheme if this can secure a recommendation for approval. I am not clear however that there is much we can do that would satisfy all the matters you schedule.

I would take the opportunity to comment as follows in respect of your numbered points;

1. Relationship between block A and block B

In comparison to the previous appeal scheme the height of block B is now a storey lower (two stories now was then three above ground), and the depth of both Blocks A and B has been reduced. These changes have in my view significantly reduced the sense of enclosure that was the subject of the comments by the inspector that you quote. As you know the rear elevation of Block A was simplified following Design Review Panel comment and in the process this has slightly reduced the courtyard again at lower levels. We are willing to reverse this adjustment/ adjust the Block A rooms facing into the courtyard again if this would assist? Or if courtyard width is at the margin of acceptability we could consider a slight further reduction in the overall depth of Block A (further reduce room sizes/ numbers whilst keeping a central corridor layout). We could also consider reducing the frontage set back from Silver Street for Block A and thus widen the courtyard -there is a precedent of the adjacent Jubilee apartments which are at back of footway. Another and very simple possibility is to move block B closer to the rear site boundary reducing the landscape behind it (and possibly deleting corridor windows). Any or all of these possibilities can be explored if the width of the courtyard per se is critical to you. However in our view the proportions of the courtyard are now attractive from a student experience viewpoint and the landscaping to both the street and rear frontages of the site as proposed is worth having.

2. Relationship to neighbouring properties

In respect of Platinum Apartments and comparing to the appeal scheme Block A has been reduced in depth and the scheme is cut back at 3<sup>rd</sup> floor level. The distance between block A and the rear corner of Platinum Apartments has increased. The overall effect is to reduce the effects of block A in terms of daylight/ sunlight and outlook especially on the rear elevation of Platinum Apartments and on the parking area behind.

In terms of the outlook from all the properties to the North of the site the reduction of the height of Block B by one storey has significantly increased the available sky view for neighbours.

Block A on the frontage is now proposed at similar height to Platinum apartments. The proposed 'link' at one storey and the proposed Block B at two storeys above ground levels are now no more bulky or dominant in views from neighbours than the previous commercial premises were.

Overall we believe the current proposals have made a significant response to mitigate the inspectors appeal comments in respect of neighbour effects.

3. Design/ Height/ Layout

We are willing to consider stepping Block A away from Platinum Apartments although in streetscene terms this would open up a gap between buildings where a

continuity of frontage relationship as proposed would seem preferable. If necessary to secure a recommendation for approval we could introduce parking bays in a gap. We are also willing to delete the Northernmost ground floor studio although we consider that this will not be unattractive to use (effectively similar to other ground floor frontage studios in having a street facing window) and would work particularly well in locating the resident student warden by the building entrance where information for and oversight of the students on site can be readily provided.

4. Natural Environment

We agree that tree planting choice will need careful consideration to suit the limited space and are entirely willing to discuss this in more detail. This issue can be controlled by condition. It would have been our preference to achieve proper 'boulevard' tree planting with street trees comparable to those introduced by RBC within the highway further along the street to the South but highways opposition to street trees on front of our site has required us to bring them back into the scheme boundary where they will necessarily be smaller ornamental species. Maybe a better solution (at my clients expense) could be to have a couple of trees in 'pavement build outs' into the carriageway between parking bays if your transportation colleagues could accept this?

5. Transport Comments

I made a response in May justifying the arrangements as proposed. I understand that a further response/ comment on this from your Transport colleagues is awaited. As above if Block A is moved away from Platinum Apartments it may be possible to provide an off-street bay should this be seen as absolutely necessary.

Our overall position in respect of Transport is that this is a no-car student scheme which will operate in conjunction with no.79 (we can confirm this by condition or S106) sharing the manager based there. As such there is no need for off street parking for any daily needs of the proposal. The very infrequent events of student start and end of year arrival/ departure would be programmed and supervised at off peak traffic times and using the off street parking bays available at 79 (as well as available on street parking in front of the site itself).

The site currently has three pavement crossings into it (two for 40 and one for 62-68) with associated 'no parking' zones across the entries. These will be removed as a consequence of development thus allowing extra parking (or servicing) bays to be available on the street frontage. It is a matter for the highway authority as to whether this freed space is used for additional on street parking, for defined servicing, or for street trees. My clients are willing to fund any necessary costs of any of these that the planning/ highway authority consider appropriate.

6. Need

It is a fallacy to plan on the assumption that only first year students 'need' Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA). All students need a home and in practice it is evident across the UK that when there is a choice available between PBSA and market rental (in practice often HMO) properties a growing proportion of upper years students will choose the qualities, support and 'all-inclusive' budgeting of PBSA accommodation. In any case the growing overall need for accommodation for upper years students must be factored into Reading's housing provision numbers whether as additional PBSA or as additional general housing allocations. From a planning viewpoint PBSA is a particularly effective way to use land with relatively intensive accommodation often in or close to town centres where associated

economic benefits are evident. PBSA provides management standards and control of student behaviours.

Experience in cities where higher levels of PBSA have been sought and achieved by planning authorities is that there is associated reduction in student pressures and in several cases 'destudentification' of older existing residential streets. This generally involves a reduction in student demand for HMO and other homes releasing private rental and home purchase availability (often at lowered prices) for other residents.

The proposal is for a premium PBSA scheme close to the Town Centre. There is a strong market demand for such housing, notably from overseas (particularly Chinese) students, from postgraduates and other older students. The student homes would be in a highly sustainable location. It is not the role of planning to preclude the choice of such accommodation from students. We can provide information in respect of proposed rental levels should you require but I am unclear how this would be relevant to planning?

My clients are in dialogue with the University of Reading and will ensure that the scheme fully meets the University's quality standards and can be scheduled as available approved accommodation accordingly. They note however that the University has a commercial role in providing student accommodation which is not always quite the same thing as its strategic wish to ensure the growth and attractiveness of the University. In these circumstances it would be anti-competitive and inappropriate for the Local Planning Authority to require that only those PBSA schemes that are on University Land or promoted with a formal partnership involving the University should be allowed.

I would be grateful if you will draw the Committee's attention to the above responses when this application comes before them in September.

## APPENDIX 2: DESIGN REVIEW PANEL RESPONSES - received 30/4/19

### **Site**

#### Overall Height + Street Scene:

An additional storey has been added to Silver St, the DRP are generally comfortable with the principle of the additional storey, however would like to see the pitched roof reduced in height even more than shown currently to drop the height of the form.

The corner junction of the brick parapet and gable edge should be reduced by creating a continuous brick parapet line around the building. The gable face could be set back slightly and clad in the roofing material to make this corner less jarring.

The panel discussed that the amended roof form of Block B looks much more in keeping with the surrounding context. The dropped roof level will allow increased light in the courtyard particularly in the afternoon/ evening.

Comments were made by the DRP regarding the revisited bays which are considered to be slightly more muddled than the previous design on Block A with the initial triplet concept lost. Perhaps revisiting the widths of the windows and openings will help this elevation appear better proportioned alongside reviewing the widths of the bays to ensure they are all consistent in width. The treatment of the glazing should also remain consistent on both stair cases.

### **Building**

#### Staggered Rear Building Line Block A:

The building steps back minimally on several levels which results in an over complicated rear facade to block A. More thought needs to be given to this and simplifying the number of setbacks on this elevation while still allowing enough light into the space should be considered.

The shift in the building plan on Block A is not necessary, a cleaner elevation will be created along the street and courtyard elevations if this all aligns. This will give more spacing back to the rear courtyard if the central section of the shift moves towards the street to line up with the end portions. All the studios on ground floor can terrace back on block A in the same line giving back more space to the central courtyard.

The angled windows looking onto the courtyard bring another concept into the scheme, and although overlooking needs to be considered creating these in a brick material would reduce the number of materials and ideas being introduced across the back elevation.

The distance between Block A and B within the courtyard is 12m<sup>2</sup> at the smallest point and increases to 15m<sup>2</sup> as this widens when the building steps away in section from the lower ground floor. As Block B has now been reduced in height, this distance between the two blocks is deemed sufficient.

## Design Approach

Removal of Studios at Lower Ground:

The removal of the studios on the northern boundary replaced by common room areas onto the external amenity space will activate this area much more and connect with the courtyard.

Careful thought needs to be given so that there is separation (defensible planting and level changes) between the student rooms and the public the courtyard at lower ground floor. In a similar way to how a house is separated from a street, the people using the courtyard should not be able to walk up to or sit directly outside student's bedrooms.

On the north west corner at Lower Ground floor the externally accessed studio next to the stair and amenity area is poor quality design and should be removed. As it sits under a walkway + canopy at lower ground level there will be poor light levels into the space. Additionally there is no defensible space separating the studio from what is main thoroughfare within the building.

Additional student rooms have been added onto the link at ground floor level. As a form, these studios create a block on the link visually connecting Blocks A and B. The link may be more legible if these studios are read as a separated form (set apart from A +B) which pop out of this link level.

The way these studios are accessed needs to be considered (similar to the comment on lower ground floor area) so there is adequate defensible planting and separation from the main thoroughfare directly outside the rooms, perhaps via a gate and a recessed shared entrance. Decreasing the number of studios along this link may help.

The studios in this area should be internally planned so bathrooms are moved to the back of the space to increase light levels and open areas around the windows, top lighting will further increase light in these spaces.

The DRP suggested the corner studio adjacent to the front entrance and accessed off the main lobby will need to be removed or significantly reconsidered as this as is fully surrounded by service spaces (service zone for bins/bikes) and the front door opens directly onto the main entrance space in the building which will be noisy.

The DRP commented that the long external corridor adjacent to the common room space needs to be reviewed as this will have no passive surveillance and although this is an enclosed development won't feel safe. Perhaps some glazing to the common room into this zone could be introduced.

**APPENDIX 3: PLANS**



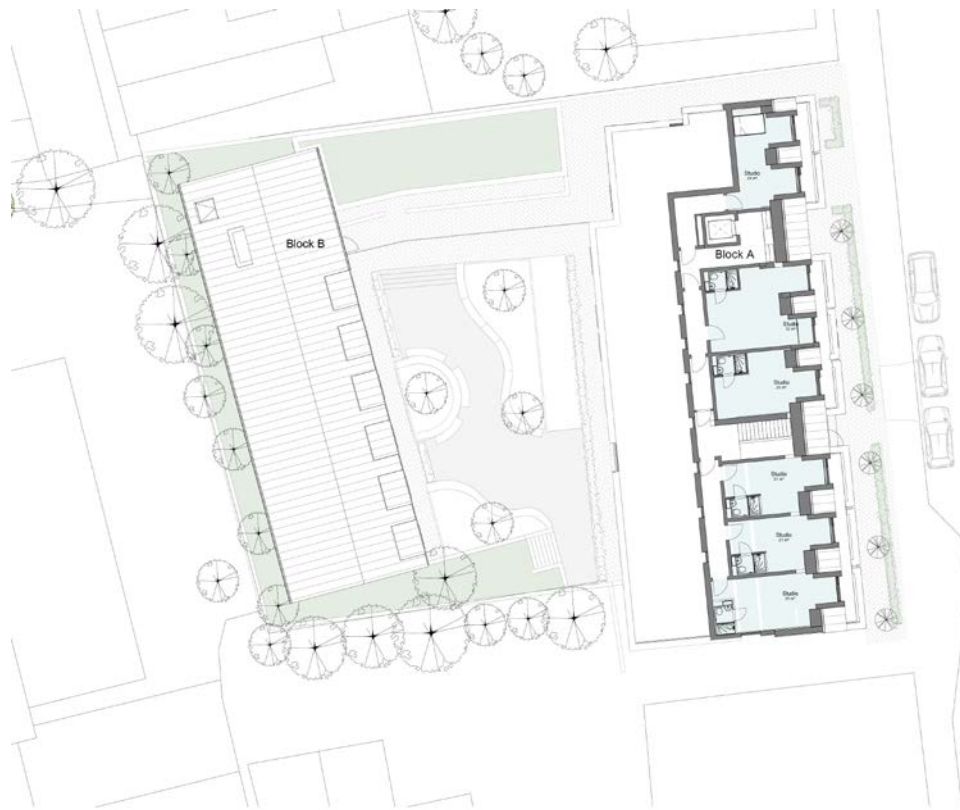
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Level 3  
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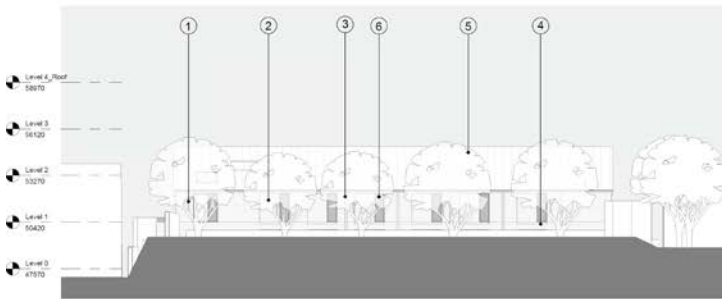
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2 Street Elevation - Silver Street long elevation  
1 : 200



1 Street Elevation - Silver Street  
1 : 100



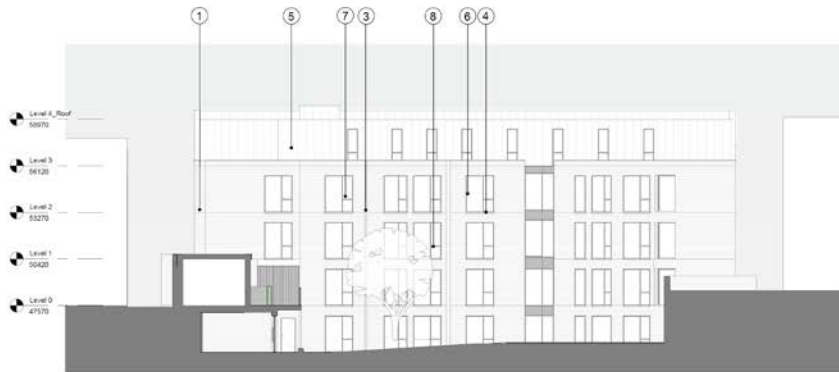
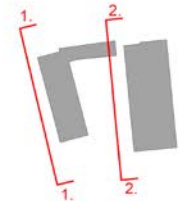
1 Elevation 4 - Block B West  
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Notes:  
 All dimensions are in millimetres unless stated otherwise. No 2D  
 dimensions are shown. All dimensions to be checked on site.  
 The information contained herein is for information only.  
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 The information is provided as a guide only and is not to be used for  
 construction or other purposes.  
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 property of the architect and shall remain the property of the architect.

**External Finishes**

Ref.	Description
1.	Fair Faced Brick
2.	Feature/recessed Brick Panel
3.	Recessed Joint in Brick
4.	Brick Cill
5.	Standing Seam Zinc Roof
6.	PPC Aluminium Window
7.	PPC Aluminium Ventilation Louvres
8.	Glazed Balustrade



2 Elevation 2 - Block A Courtyard  
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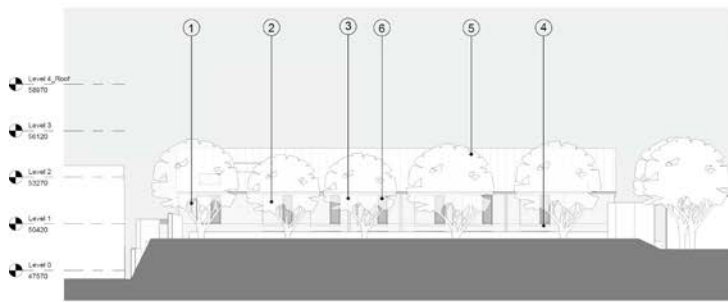
**PLANNING**



**Silver St  
Developments L**

CREC  
 CONSULTING ENGINEERS ARCHITECTS  
 100/101 St Albans Road, St Albans, QLD 4010  
 Phone: (07) 3377 1111  
 Fax: (07) 3377 1112  
 Email: info@crec.com.au

Project No.	Elevations - Sheet 1
Site No.	42-68 Silver Street, Reading
Scale	As indicated @ A1
Date	15/04/17
Drawn by	PL_200



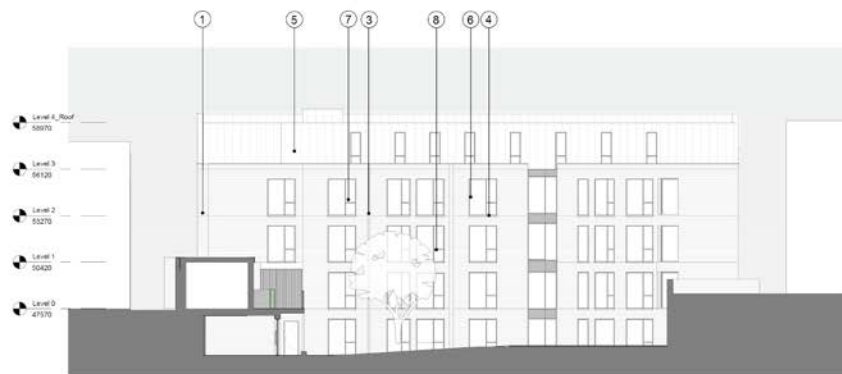
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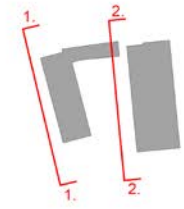
**External Finishes**

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2.	Feature/recessed Brick Panel
3.	Recessed Joint in Brick
4.	Brick Cill
5.	Standing Seam Zinc Roof
6.	PPC Aluminium Window
7.	PPC Aluminium Ventilation Louvres
8.	Glazed Balustrade

**Notes:**  
 All dimensions and materials unless stated otherwise. See 2D  
 for construction details. All dimensions to be checked on site.  
 The drawings are for information only and are not to be used for  
 construction. All dimensions to be checked on site.  
 The drawings are for information only and are not to be used for  
 construction. All dimensions to be checked on site.  
 The drawings are for information only and are not to be used for  
 construction. All dimensions to be checked on site.



2 Elevation 2 - Block A Courtyard  
1 : 100



**PLANNING**

**Silver St Developments Ltd**  
 40-68 Silver Street, Reading  
 1006417  
 PL\_200



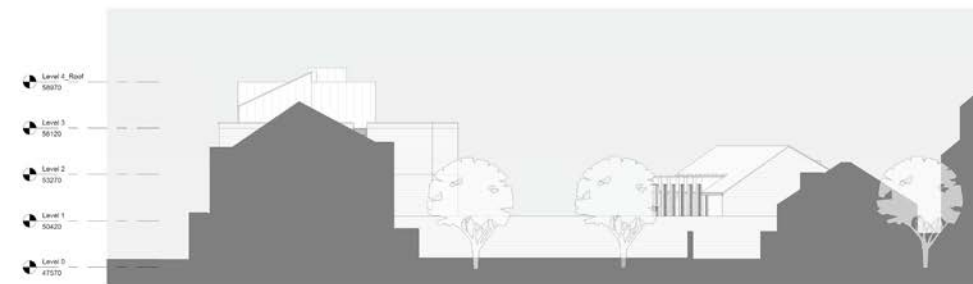
5 Elevation 5 - South  
1 : 100



**External Finishes**

Ref.	Description
1.	Fair Faced Brick
2.	Feature/recessed Brick Panel
3.	Recessed Joint in Brick
4.	Brick Cill
5.	Standing Seam Zinc Roof
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8.	Glazed Balustrade

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 The drawings are for information only and are not to be used for  
 construction. All dimensions to be checked on site.



6 Elevation 6 - North  
1 : 100

**PLANNING**

**Silver St Developments Ltd**  
 40-68 Silver Street, Reading  
 1006417  
 PL\_200

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## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 4 SEPTEMBER 2019

**Ward:** Kentwood

**App No.:** 181377/REG3

**Address:** Norcot Community Centre, Tilehurst, Reading

**Proposal:** Erection of a three storey building comprising 18 (8x1 and 10x2 bed) residential units (Use Class C3) with associated bin and cycle storage, a 96.4sqm (NIA) building for community use (Use Class D1), vehicle parking, landscaping and associated works.

**Applicant:** Reading Borough Council

**Date valid:** 13/08/2018

**Major Application**

**13-week target decision date:** Originally 12/11/2018

**Agreed Extension date:** 31/10/2019

**26-Week date:** 11/02/2019

## RECOMMENDATION

Delegate to Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to completion of a unilateral undertaking legal agreement or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the legal agreement not be completed by the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019 (unless the assessing officer on behalf of the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services agrees to a later date for completion of the legal agreement). The legal agreement to secure the following:

1. 18 residential units as social rent affordable housing units in perpetuity
2. Employment Skills Plan for the construction phase of the residential development in accordance with the Council's SPD, to be submitted and approved at least one month prior to works commencing.

## CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE:

1. Full - time limit - three years
2. Approved Drawings
3. Details and samples of all materials to be used externally. Prior to commencement.
4. Construction Method Statement. Prior to commencement.
5. Bicycle parking plan to be submitted and approved. Prior to commencement.
6. Vehicle parking spaces in accordance with approved plans. Prior to occupation.
7. Vehicle access provided and lamp relocated in accordance with approved plans. Prior to occupation.
8. Bin storage provided in accordance with approved plans. Prior to occupation.
9. Details of car parking space allocation for residents and visitors. Prior to occupation.
10. Sustainable Drainage Scheme. Prior to commencement.
11. Sustainable Drainage Implementation. Prior to occupation.
12. Contaminated Land - site characterisation. Prior to commencement.
13. Contaminated Land - submission of remediation scheme. Prior to commencement.
14. Contaminated Land - implementation of approved remediation. Pre construction.
15. Contaminated Land - reporting of unexpected contamination.
16. Land gas site investigation. Prior to commencement.
17. Control of noise and Dust - CMS to be submitted prior to commencement.

18. Hours of working - construction and demolition.
19. No Bonfires.
20. Archaeological programme of work. Prior to commencement.
21. Nesting for birds.
22. Lighting scheme. Prior to commencement.
23. Biodiversity enhancements. Prior to commencement.
24. Development in accordance with the approved Arboricultural Method Statement.
22. Details of hard and soft landscaping scheme. Prior to commencement.
25. Implementation of approved hard and soft landscaping details.
26. Landscaping maintenance for 5 years.
27. Details of boundary treatments to be submitted and approved. Prior to commencement
28. Noise assessment to be submitted. Prior to commencement.
29. Only the areas specified as external terraces shall be used for such purposes and no other flat roofed areas shall be used as external terraces without permission from the local planning authority.
30. Restrict community use to D1.

**INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE:**

1. Terms and conditions.
2. Building regulations.
3. A section 106 legal agreement relates to this permission.
4. Pre-Commencement conditions
5. Encroachment
6. Access construction
7. Damage to the highway
8. Works affecting the highway
9. Relocation of lamp column
10. Environmental protection information regarding the control of nuisance during construction and demolition.
11. Positive and proactive.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This site, as illustrated on the location plan below, is approximately over 1.0 ha in area and is located to the west of Lyndhurst Road. The irregular shape site is located in a residential area and is surrounded by residential dwellings on all sides - the gardens of Weald Rise and Thirlmere Avenue to the west and north west, a two storey block of flats to the north east and Lyndhurst Road and Ringwood Road to the south east. The site is accessed from Lyndhurst Road and is occupied by an existing building - the Norcot Youth and Community Centre with an associated area of hardstanding for car parking.1.
- 1.2 The site is owned by Reading Borough Council.
- 1.3 The application is being reported to your meeting because it is within the Major category. Members should also note that the Council also has an interest in this application and therefore it has been noted as a 'REG3' application.
- 1.4 The site in relation to the wider area is shown below, together with a site photograph and aerial view.

Location Plan (not to scale)



Site aerial view



## 2.0 PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The proposal seeks full planning permission for residential development comprising 18 flats, new community space, communal courtyard garden and associated parking following demolition of the existing building.
  - 2.3 The development will provide a mix of dwellings consisting of 8 x 1-bed flats and 10 x 2-bed flats. All the dwellings are proposed to be retained as affordable units.
  - 2.4 The proposed community use element would be 96m<sup>2</sup> in size (use class D1).
  - 2.5 19 parking spaces are proposed and landscaping will be provided along the residential perimeter and within the site to soften the impact of the development.
  - 2.6 Amended plans were submitted during the course of determination of the application to address concerns raised by the officers regarding the overall scale, bulk and massing of the development.
  - 2.7 Reading Borough Council is the landowner and applicant in this instance, with this being one of a series of sites being brought forward to deliver affordable housing in the borough.
  - 2.8 In relation to the community infrastructure levy, the applicant has duly completed a CIL liability form with the submission. As per the CIL charging schedule this proposal will attract a charge of £14,675.76 (99 x the 2019 CIL rate for residential developments). However, the CIL form suggests that the applicant will be seeking social housing relief, which would result in the CIL charge being £0.
  - 2.9 The application is supported by the following documents and plans:
    - Drawing No: 7870\_PL101\_rev A Location Plan
    - Drawing No: 7870\_PL102\_rev D Rendered Site Plan
    - Drawing No: 7870\_PL103\_rev C Roof Plan
    - Drawing No: 7870\_PL104\_rev C Proposed Ground Floor
    - Drawing No: 7870\_PL105\_rev C Proposed First and Second Floor
    - Drawing No: 7870\_PL107\_rev C Proposed South East and North East Elevations
    - Drawing No: 7870\_PL108\_rev B Proposed North West and South West Elevations
    - Drawing No: 7870\_PL109\_rev C Proposed Sections A-A, B-B and C-C
    - Drawing No: 7870\_PL110\_rev C Artist Impression from Lyndhurst Road
    - Drawing No: 7870\_PL111\_rev B Areas for CIL CalculationsReceived 03/06/2019
- Design and Access Statement (DAS) including Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)  
Received 03/06/2019
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal  
Bat Survey  
Archaeological Desk Based Assessment  
Drainage Strategy  
Received 06/08/2018
- Arboricultural Report  
Received 05/08/2019



- 2.10 In accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and the provisions of the NPPF, the applicant engaged in pre-application discussions with the Council. These discussions were not conclusive at the time of submission of the application and discussions have subsequently continued throughout the extended determination period of the application.
- 2.11 The applicant has undertaken community consultation in the form of a newsletter delivered to local residents and current users of the community centre on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2018. Following feedback from members of the public the scheme was amended and a second flyer distributed 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018. Furthermore an exhibition of the proposals was held at the community centre 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018 - all of which is detailed within the submitted Planning Statement.

### **3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

050722 Erection of Youth Centre. Permitted

940835 Incorporation of land within Norcot Community Centre for use as a car park and erection of perimeter fencing. Permitted

### **4. CONSULTATIONS**

Non-statutory

RBC Transport Strategy - Further to revised plans, no objection subject to conditions and informatives.

Environmental Protection - No objection subject to conditions to deal with potential noise, and land contamination issues.

RBC Consultant Ecologist - Further to revised plans, no objection subject to conditions

RBC Natural Environment - Further to revised plans, no objection subject to conditions.

RBC SUDS Officer - No objection subject to conditions

RBC Housing - Specify full support for the proposals as a RBC New Build Scheme that will be 100% affordable.

RBC Archaeology - No objection subject to condition.

Thames Water - Response received identifying that the site potentially has minor public sewers within three metres of the proposed building work. As Thames Water do not have confirmation of the exact drainage arrangements for this property, we'll contact the applicant or agent for further information. We'll ask them to enter into a build over agreement if the work is within three metres of a public sewer or one metre of a lateral drain. This could be an approved build over agreement or, if the property owner meets all of the criteria required in our online questionnaire, a self-certified agreement.

Public consultation:

The application was advertised in the local press as a major development. A site notice was also posted around the site and properties adjoining the site were consulted on this application.

As a result of the consultations 3 letters were received highlighting the following:

- Highway safety and capacity on Lyndhurst Road
- Lack of parking
- Noise of the new build

## 5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

National and Local Policy

- National Planning Policy Guidance (2014 onwards)
- National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy Document, 2008, 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 CS5 (Inclusive Access)
- Policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm)
- Policy CS9 (Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities)
- Policy CS14 (Provision of Housing)
- Policy CS15 (Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix)
- Policy CS16 (Affordable Housing)
- Policy CS20 (Implementation of the Reading Transport Strategy)
- Policy CS22 (Transport Assessments)
- Policy CS24 (Car/Cycle Parking)
- Policy CS29 (Provision of Open Space)
- Policy CS30 (Access to Open Space)
- Policy CS34 (Pollution and Water Resources)
- Policy CS36 (Biodiversity and Geology)
- Policy CS38 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands)

Sites and Detailed Policies Document, (SDPD), 2008,2015

- Policy DM1 (Adaption to Climate Change)
- Policy DM2 (Decentralised Energy)
- Policy DM3 (Infrastructure Planning)
- Policy DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity)
- Policy DM5 (Housing Mix)
- Policy DM10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space)
- Policy DM12 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters)
- Policy DM16 (Provision of Open Space)
- Policy DM18 (Tree Planting)

Relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

- Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
- Sustainable Design and Construction (2011)
- Employment, Skills and Training (2013)
- Affordable Housing SPD (2015)
- Statement of Community Involvement (2014)

- Revised SPD on Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)

## 6. APPRAISAL

### Principle of development and land use considerations, including provision of affordable housing

- 6.1 The proposals would result in the loss of the vacant Norcot Youth and Community Centre, which is approximately 151m<sup>2</sup> in size, and which forms the first consideration in establishing the principle of any redevelopment proposal at the site. In this respect, Policy CS31 applies. The proposals include a 96.4m<sup>2</sup> community use building which would offer improved and more efficient modern facilities for the local community to use.
- 6.2 Further to the above, the site is included in the Submission Draft Local Plan (March 2018) as a site allocated for residential development (13-20 dwellings) and replacement community use - which the current scheme proposes - Site Allocation WR3q.
- 6.3 The provision of 18 residential units would assist the Borough in meeting its annual and plan period housing targets, in line with Policy CS14 and emerging policy. Accordingly, the land use principles at the site are considered to be established.
- 6.4 The applicant has also stated that the 18 units proposed would all be socially-rented affordable housing units. As such, the 100% on-site provision of affordable housing is strongly welcomed as a tangible planning benefit of the proposal. Furthermore, it carries weight when applying a critical planning balance in the consideration of the application as a whole (when considered against elements such as the layout/urban grain and amenity impacts for neighbour considerations discussed below. To be policy compliant 30% of the 18 units should be secured via a unilateral undertaking legal agreement to be socially-rented affordable housing units in perpetuity.
- 6.5 With regard to the mix of units proposed, the scheme seeks to create 8x1 bed units and 10x2 bed units which is considered a suitable and appropriate mix in this instance. Indeed, the mix has been proposed in conjunction with advice from RBC Housing officers, who outline that the greatest present need for affordable accommodation is for 2 bed units. The proposal, set within the context of the size and nature of the site, therefore seeks to assist meeting the greatest housing needs in the Borough. The density of development is also considered suitable, with the proposal making an efficient use of the space/land.
- 6.6 The site is located in an area that has access to public transport and is within a residential area served by a wide range of facilities. As such the principle of the development is considered to accord with the provisions of Core Strategy CS14 that seeks to promote the provision of housing in such sustainable locations and the NPPF's core theme of 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.
- 6.7 Given the nature of the land ownership (as specified in the introduction section above) a unilateral undertaking (rather than a Section 106) legal agreement will be drafted. This will secure the units as socially-rented affordable housing. It is considered that the obligation would comply with the National Planning Policy Framework and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in that it would be: i) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, ii) directly related to the

development and iii) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

Scale, appearance and design

- 6.8 Policy CS7 requires development proposals to contribute positively to the character of the area of Reading within which they are located.
- 6.9 Considering first the demolition of the existing building. It is not listed and nor is the site within a conservation area. The building, although modest in appearance, is of no particular architectural merit to warrant its retention in its own right. Within this context there is no in-principle objection to the demolition of the building in design terms, subject to its replacement being appropriate in all other aspects as detailed below.
- 6.10 In terms of the scale and massing of the proposed building, at three storeys (with single storey wing to the north east) it is acknowledged to be of a greater scale than the existing building, significantly increasing the scale and prominence of built form within the site. However, the scheme has been designed to work with the site's topography to limit the impact of the height when experienced from adjacent properties. The site naturally slopes from Thirlmere Avenue away towards Lyndhurst Road and the development has been designed to cut into the site from the existing access level on Lyndhurst Road resulting in the building being set down slightly below the gardens on Thirlmere Avenue. Given the context of the surrounding area, which comprises a range of building styles, types/ages, uses and heights, coupled with the distances to neighbouring properties and that the building would be set in to the site, there is considered to be sufficient scope for the site to incorporate a building of the proposed scale and form. When seen from all nearby vantage points the proposed scale and design approach, although different to the existing and nearby buildings, is not considered to be inappropriate. However, officers consider that the proposed massing is the maximum permissible at the site, owing to the surrounding area characteristics and ensuring appropriate balance of amenity space, parking spaces, access and landscaping to number of dwellings.
- 6.11 Turning to consider the appearance of the proposed building, the dominant brickwork and flat roof design could make it appear somewhat 'heavy' in appearance. However, the flat roof design reinforces the contemporary character of the proposed development. The emphasis on the vertical alignment of windows within facades is considered to bring some sense of order and rhythm to the development. This approach is reinforced by the use of inset brick panels to visually group the windows. It is considered that the interplay between the brickwork, glazing and balconies adds liveliness and helps to soften the mass of the building. The balconies 'wrapped' in timber fins also add some visual interest to the building.
- 6.12 The primary materials consist of red brick, to be used as plain brickwork and as inset panels of textured brick achieved through a laying pattern to add some variation to the design. Dark grey brick is proposed to identify the communal residential entrances and timber cladding is proposed to differentiate the community space. The choice of materials and vertical elevational treatment is considered to help soften the institutional appearance and be more homely. However, the success of the scheme from a design perspective will be dependent on the quality and finished appearance of the exact materials. As such, it is considered necessary to apply a condition for samples of all facing materials to be submitted / approved prior to the commencement of works. It is noted that the design is very similar to the recently approved and under construction development at Conwy Close, the Council's flagship affordable housing project.

- 6.13 To further soften the appearance of the development, soft landscaping is proposed, to include a new tree to the front entrance courtyard, planting running alongside the building and adjacent ground floor apartments and a courtyard garden.
- 6.14 The principle of the demolition of the existing building is justified and the proposed replacement building is considered appropriate in design, subject to the aforementioned materials condition. This is in line with Policy CS7.

#### Amenity of Surrounding Occupiers

- 6.15 Policy DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, 2015) seeks to protect the amenity of existing and future occupiers. Policy CS34 of the Core Strategy (2008, 2015) seeks to protect and mitigate development from pollution.
- 6.16 With regard to visual dominance, it is fully acknowledged that for occupiers of neighbouring properties the proposal represents a far larger neighbouring building in comparison with the existing. It is considered that the proposed scheme has taken a number of steps to maintain a suitable level of amenity for current/future occupiers of neighbouring properties. The overall height has been reduced from 4 to 3 storeys, with the flat roof further reducing the height of the building. Furthermore, the building would be 'set down' in the slope, helping to minimise the height alongside existing neighbouring properties. The 'H' shaped layout of the building also helps to minimise its impact. Given the distances to nearby properties, no material loss of light or overbearing impact is considered to arise.
- 6.17 In terms of privacy and overlooking matters, the increase in residential accommodation at the site means there will inevitably be increased opportunities for loss of privacy/overlooking for existing neighbours. It is noted that the proposals include a number of balconies; however, these are not considered to be of a size/nature to result in any significant loss of privacy, and the depth of the nearby gardens to the northwest and south east and west of the site helps to downplay any impact. The building meets the 20m back to back distance between dwellings referenced within Policy DM4 as usually being appropriate, (albeit there is also reference in the supporting text that individual site circumstances may enable dwellings to be closer without a detrimental effect on privacy) to nearby properties. In addition, new trees and planting will provide some screening along the north west boundary. Given this, and the distances to nearby properties, no significant material loss of privacy impact is considered to arise.
- 6.18 It is also important to recognised that as the units proposed are flats, and not single dwellinghouses, they will not have the benefit of permitted development rights. As such, this provides a further degree of comfort to nearby occupiers, as future occupiers of the proposed units would need to formally apply for planning permission for any future extensions/alterations. In addition, the lighting details recommended for ecological reasons to be secured via condition, would also protect the amenity of nearby occupiers.
- 6.19 Furthermore in relation to all nearby occupiers in the area, amenity during the implementation of the permission will be secured via the construction method statement measures, as secured via pre-commencement condition. In overall terms the proposals are therefore considered to comply with policy DM4 and relevant elements of policy CS34.

#### Standard of Residential Accommodation

- 6.20 Policy DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, 2015) seeks that new development should not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of new residential properties. Policy CS34 of the Core Strategy (2008, 2015) seeks to protect and mitigate development from pollution. Policy DM10 seeks that new residential development is proposed with appropriate usable private or communal amenity space.
- 6.21 The internal space standards and room layouts for the proposed dwellings and flats are considered appropriate and meet the National Technical Housing Standards. Whilst single aspect, the development as a whole is considered to provide an adequate level of outlook and daylighting for future occupiers. In terms of overlooking between the proposed units, the layout of the building has been designed to ensure future occupiers will not suffer from a loss of privacy from other units within the scheme itself. Conveniently located cycle and waste storage facilities are incorporated within the scheme. Level access is provided to the ground floor apartments (and refuse and bike stores) and the community centre element has level access from the car park.
- 6.22 Given that a community use space is proposed there is a concern that noise generated by users of the community space could impact on future residents of the proposed development and residents nearby. The proposed community use element would be relatively small scale in the context of the overall scheme; indeed, it is proposed to be a facility serving residents in the immediate local vicinity. A noise mitigation scheme and facilities management plan should be submitted to include suitable measures designed to protect occupants from noise and other nuisances. This will be secured by way of suitably worded conditions.
- 6.23 Appropriate internal noise insulation between future neighbour occupiers of the proposed development would be secured under Building Regulations requirements.
- 6.24 A private communal courtyard garden is proposed for use by all residents of the development, which will have defensible planting and a path around the perimeter of the building, transitioning into a soft landscaping/grassed area. All ground floor apartments will have access to their own private patio area, with provision of private balconies for the upper units. It is not unusual for flatted developments to have limited outdoor amenity. Given this, and the proximity to nearby public recreation facilities, the proposed development is not considered to be unacceptable in terms of amenity space provision and no conflict with Policy DM10 is considered to arise. The development overlooking the communal area brings a sense of natural surveillance.
- 6.25 The development lies within the 250m buffer zone of 2 historic landfill sites which has the potential to have caused contaminated land and the proposed development is a sensitive land use.
- 6.26 In terms of contaminated land, Environmental Protection colleagues recommend the standard four-stage conditions to ensure that the possible presence of contamination is thoroughly investigated and removed/mitigated if necessary (3 of the conditions are pre-commencement) to ensure that future occupants of the development are not put at undue risk from contamination.
- 6.27 The proposed development is considered to provide a suitable standard of accommodation for future occupiers and subject to the above recommended conditions would accord with Policies DM4 and CS34.

### Transport Issues

- 6.28 Policies DM12 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012, 2015 and CS20 and CS24 of the Core Strategy seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking related matters relating to development.
- 6.29 The proposals will utilise the existing access point from Lyndhurst Road in a revised layout.
- 6.30 However, it should be noted that this section of Lyndhurst Road is not adopted highway although it is in the ownership of Reading Borough Council.
- 6.31 There is an existing lamp column located on the footway to the front of the site which forms part of the highway lighting strategy. The applicant has confirmed that the lamp column will be relocated to a suitable alternative location to be secured by condition and agreed with the Council's Highway department. These works must be undertaken with the Council's approved contractor before any works associated with access is implemented. The applicant would be liable for all costs associated with relocating the lamp column.
- 6.32 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 Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide parking provision of 1.5 parking spaces per 1-2 bedroom flat and 1 space per 16sqm of D1 community use.
- 6.33 The Council's residential parking standards have been revised to minimum / required standards and are therefore in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states among other things that parking provision should be based on local car ownership levels. The Government response to the NPPF revisions published on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2018 states;
- 6.34 *"The approach to parking standards remains that minimum or maximum standards may be set locally, but with maximum standards requiring particular justification, considering the effect that limits on spaces can have on on-street parking."*
- 6.35 The plans illustrate that there will be 19 parking spaces which is below the Council's adopted standards. The applicant has confirmed that the development is intended to provide 100% affordable housing. Therefore, in line with the NPPF, a review of the car ownership levels for social housing within the immediate area has been interrogated which indicate that the car ownership levels are in the region of 0.76 spaces per unit. This would equate to 14 parking spaces.
- 6.36 The community building (floor area of the useable hall) equates to a maximum standard of 5 parking spaces. In order for this mixed use development to be acceptable in parking terms, a minimum of 5 parking spaces should be allocated to the proposed community use whilst providing 14 residential parking spaces in line with car ownership levels. In terms of visitor parking for the residential element, it is acceptable for the visitor provision to be shared with the community use. However, the proposed site plan must allocate the 5 parking spaces for the community use to ensure these spaces are retained for visitors to the community building. A car park allocation plan can be covered by way of a suitably worded condition. A total of 2 disabled spaces will be provided within the site located close to the residential and community use entrances.

- 6.37 A concrete retaining wall is illustrated on the ground floor plan which runs adjacent a adopted public footway leading to Thirlmere Avenue. The applicant has confirmed that the retaining wall is contained within the redline boundary of the site and will not impact upon the public footpath.
- 6.38 The amount of bins needed for 18 flats would be 4 x 1100 litre refuse bins and 4 x 1100 litre recycling bins for a fortnightly collection which has been accommodated within the ground floor layout. The applicant has confirmed that the Council's Waste department was consulted at pre-application stage and the location of the proposed bins stores were deemed acceptable given that refuse vehicles will have to reverse in excess of 12m.
- 6.39 In accordance with the adopted Parking SPD, the development is required to provide a minimum of 0.5 cycle parking spaces for each residential unit in a conveniently located, lockable, covered store plus 1 space per 50m<sup>2</sup> for the community use. This equates to a minimum of provision of 11 cycle parking spaces.
- 6.40 It is noted that 4no. external cycle parking spaces for the community building have been provided but confirmation is required regarding provision for the residential dwellings. A minimum of 9 cycle parking spaces must be provided for the residential use within a secure, lockable store. It is considered that this can be dealt with by way of a suitable worded condition.
- 6.41 The proposal is considered to accord with Policies CS20 and CS24 and Policy DM12.

#### Impact on Natural Environment

- 6.42 Policy CS7 seeks that development is of high design quality and maintains and enhances the character of the area in which it is located including landscaping. Policy CS36 seeks that development should retain, protect and incorporate feature of biodiversity and Policies CS38 and DM18 seek that the Borough's vegetation cover be extended.
- 6.43 The Council's Tree Officer has confirmed that there are no objections to the proposals subject to conditions securing tree protection and landscaping.
- 6.44 Overall, officers have assessed the submitted details and concluded that subject to conditions, the landscaping proposals would enhance the proposed development and protect the ecology of the area. The proposals would therefore accord with SDPD policy DM18, and Core Strategy policies CS36 and CS38.

#### Ecology

- 6.45 The Council's Ecologist considers that the preliminary ecological appraisal report has have been undertaken to an appropriate standard. The report states that the scrub areas are likely to be used by nesting birds in the breeding season and may be used by foraging bats. As such, it is recommended that any vegetation removal should be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (May-August inclusive) and a wildlife friendly lighting scheme should be submitted to ensure that the risk of impact upon birds is minimal. This can be secured by way of suitably worded conditions.
- 6.46 Further to the above, the report states that the existing building possesses a number of features suitable for use by roosting bats and was assess having low potential for roosting bats. The Council's Ecologist considers the findings acceptable, and that the proposals would be unlikely to affect roosting bats.



6.47 The recommended conditions would secure the biodiversity interests of the site in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS36.

#### Sustainability

6.48 Policies CS1 and DM1 seek that proposals should incorporate measures which take account of climate change. The applicant has made reference to this in the planning statement, demonstrating that a number of sustainability and energy efficient measures are proposed as part of the application including use of mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR), installation of photo voltaic or combined photo voltaic and solar thermal panels and low flush toilets. The photovoltaic panels located to the roof of the building would enable the development to off-set the target 20% CO2 emissions as referred to in Policy CS1. Details of photovoltaics and their installation can be secured by way of a suitably worded condition.

6.49 The application also includes a suitable scheme for Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) compliance with which can again be secured by way of a suitable worded condition.

6.50 Such measures, together with the landscaping and cycle provisions of the scheme means it is considered to comply with Policies CS1 and DM1.

#### Archaeology

6.51 An Archaeological desk based assessment was submitted with the application, concluding that a moderate potential for prehistoric remains, a low potential for Roman through to medieval remains and a moderate potential for post-medieval remains. Berkshire Archaeology have confirmed that as the site has undergone significant past impacts, this will have reduced - but not entirely removed - any buried remains that might have survived within the site. Investigation to establish the presence of any remains associated with the earthwork to the east of the area will be required, but Berkshire Archaeology have confirmed that this can be dealt with by way of a suitably worded condition.

6.52 The proposals would therefore accord with Policy CS33.

#### Employment, Skills and Training

6.53 In accordance with Reading Borough Core Strategy Policies CS9: Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities and CS13: Impact of Employment Development and the Council's SPD 'Employment, Skills and Training' the developer is required to provide for a Construction Employment and Skills Plan which identifies and promotes employment opportunities generated by the proposed development, or other developments within west Reading, for the construction phase of the proposed development. Sometimes this requires a payment to Reading UK CiC, the Council's partner, to prepare the plan usually payable at least 1 month prior to implementation and index linked from the date of issue of planning permission. The applicant will need to discuss with Reading UK CiC about how their own plan works and this will be secured within the S106 legal agreement to be signed with Council.

#### Other Matters Raised in Representation

6.54 All material considerations covered in the above report.

#### Equality

6.55 In determining this application the Committee is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation.

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

**7. CONCLUSION**

7.1 The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in the context of national and local planning policy and other material considerations as set out in the appraisal above. As such the application is recommended for approval, subject to the recommended conditions and completion of the Legal Agreement.

Case Officer - Ethne Humphreys

Plans (not to scale):



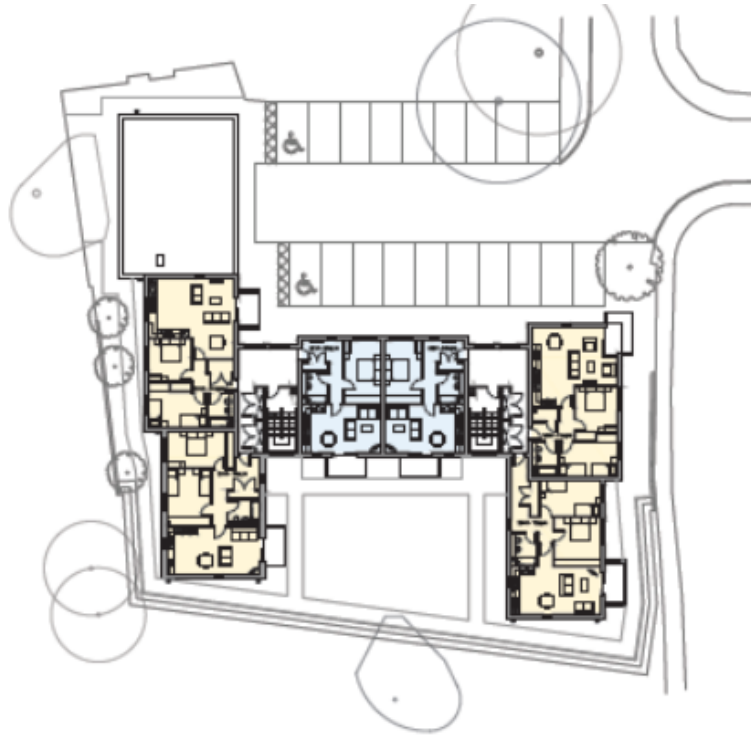
Location Plan



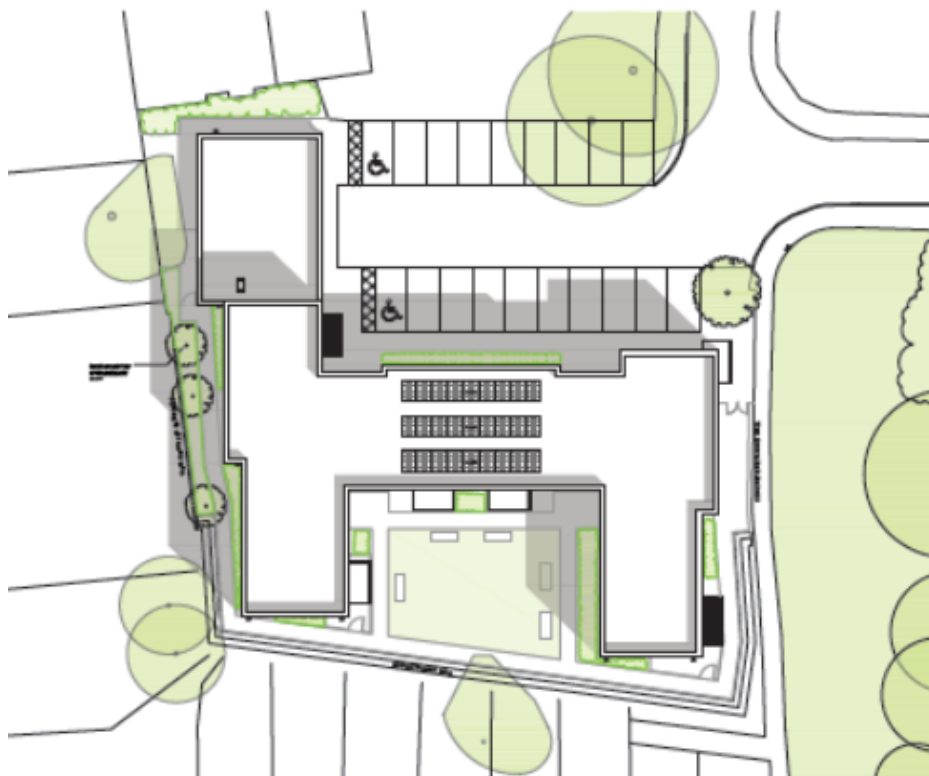
Proposed Site Plan



Proposed Ground Floor Plan



Proposed First and Second Floor Plans



Proposed Roof Plan



Proposed South East and North East Elevations



North West Elevation



South West Courtyard Elevation

Proposed North West and South West Elevations



Proposed Sections



Artists Impression from Lyndhurst Road

## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 4<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2019

**Ward:** Minster

**Application No.:** 190936/LBC

**Address:** Yeomanry House, Castle Hill

**Proposal:** Part demolition and rebuilding north boundary wall and localised repair to loose and cracked brickwork

**Applicant:** Reading Borough Council

**Date received:** 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019

**Application target decision date:** 7<sup>th</sup> August 2019

**Agreed extension of time:** 9<sup>th</sup> September 2019

### RECOMMENDATION

#### GRANT Listed Building Consent

##### Conditions:

1. Three year LBC consent
2. Approved plans
3. Materials and method of workmanship (bond, mortar strike) to match the existing

##### Informatives

1. Terms and conditions
2. Positive and proactive
3. Tree Preservation Order
4. Applicant to seek relevant Licence from the Highway Authority for works which affect the footway.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Yeomanry House is located on the southern side of Castle Hill at the Coley Avenue and Bath Road junction and contains a Grade II listed Georgian property. The site is within the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area and an Air Quality Management Area. The trees on site are subject to Tree Preservation Order 5/17. The site is currently vacant but was the former Council's Registration and Bereavement Service. The Berkshire Records Office is located to the west of the site.

## 2. PROPOSAL

2.1 Listed Building Consent is sought to repair and replace sections of the northern boundary wall which face on to Castle Hill. The wall has fallen in to disrepair which has been aggravated by lack of 'movement joints' and weathering. The wall itself is not listed however the curtilage of the Listed Building is covered as part of the Listed structure.

- 2.2 Full planning permission is not required for the works due to these not constituting 'development'. This is because the wall is being repaired/ re-built like-for-like.
- 2.3 Work is proposed to be carried out on a 35m length of the wall, starting where the wall abuts the boundary wall of residential block of Ridgeborough Court.
- 2.4 The 35m of wall is split in to 13 panels (see plan 2006 (L) 006 Proposed Elevations), with each panel of the wall being slightly taller than the previous due to the ascending topography as you move east to west.
- 2.5 Approximately 14m of the wall is proposed to be rebuilt with red-facing brick and lime mortar to match the existing wall. Hairline cracks in the wall to be repointed and loose brickwork is also to be repaired.
- 2.6 The works are to be carried out by Reading Borough Council and as this is a Council-own application, this proposal is being reported to your meeting.

### **3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

190722/LBC - Use of building as a day nursery. Internal and external alterations - Pending Consideration

### **4. CONSULTATIONS**

#### **4.1 Reading Borough Council Heritage Consultant**

No objections.

#### **4.2 Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC)**

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee supports the repair and rebuilding work on the boundary wall with two caveats:

1. The garden and the trees in the grounds of Yeomanry House are a significant feature within the setting of the listed building and its setting within the conservation area. We would like to be assured that there is a plan in place to minimise and mitigate the impact of the work on trees which may be contributing to the damage to the wall.

2. Assurance that a plan is in place for further investigation should any archaeological interest be discovered during the work.

**Officer comment:** The protection of protected trees by way of a condition is beyond the scope of a Listed Building Consent application. However an informative would be attached to the Listed Building Consent to remind the applicant to have due care to the trees within the vicinity when carrying out the works.

An informative relating to archaeology is not considered to be necessary given the response from Berkshire Archaeology stated below.

#### **4.3 Berkshire Archaeology**



Yeomanry House is in an area of archaeological interest, although investigations in 1998 in advance of the construction of the Berkshire Record Office to the rear and side of Yeomanry House did not reveal any archaeological remains. The proposal to part demolish, part repair the northern boundary wall, which is of recent origin, on the Castle Hill frontage is very modest as regards its archaeological impacts. On this basis no archaeological response is merited in this instance and no further action is therefore required as regards the buried archaeological heritage.

#### **4.4 Public consultation**

A site notice was displayed at the site. The time consultation period closed on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2019. The proposal was also advertised in the local newspaper.

4.5 No comments have been received.

### **5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

5.1 Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

5.2 In accordance with Part 13 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990 (as amended) where a local planning authority requires listed building consent for the demolition, alterations or extension of a listed building in their area or conservation area consent for the demolition of a building within a conservation area in their area, the authority shall make application to the Secretary of State for that consent.

5.3 This application has been assessed against the following policies:

#### **National**

National Planning Policy Framework  
National Planning Practice Guidance

**Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2008, 2015)**

CS7 - Design and the Public Realm  
CS33 - Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

### **6. APPRAISAL**

6.1 **Effect on the Historic Character of the Listed Building and the setting on Heritage Assets**

6.2 The existing wall is a modern curtilage wall, which appears to have a partial retaining function. Its appearance is relatively neutral in the conservation area and in the context of the setting/curtilage of the Listed Building. It is not considered that the repairing and rebuilding of sections of the wall will be harmful to the setting of the Listed Yeomanry House, or the wider Castle Hill/ Russell Street conservation area. As well as improving the safety of the wall,

the maintenance works are also considered to enhance the appearance and setting of these heritage assets and therefore be compliant with Policy CS33.

6.3 The overall height, width and depth of the wall will not differ from the existing. Materials have also been selected to match those of the existing wall. As such, the works would not be considered out of keeping with the surrounding area and are therefore compliant with Policy CS7.

## **7. EQUALITY**

7.1 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, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the current application) that the protected groups would have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

8.1 The proposal is considered acceptable given the current poor status of the wall. Materials have been sensitively selected to match the existing and the works are therefore compliant with design policies.

8.2 In addition the maintenance works are considered to enhance the setting of the listed Yeomanry House, wider Castle Hill/ Russell Street conservation area and the street scene generally.

Case officer: Connie Davis

Plans considered:

2006 (L) 001A - Location Plan  
2006 (L) 002 - Block Plan  
2006 (L) 003 - Existing Plan  
2006 (L) 004 - Existing Elevations  
2006 (L) 005 - Proposed Plan/ Section  
2006 (L) 006 - Proposed Elevations

Received 13<sup>th</sup> June 2019



Horizontal displacement at movement joint.



Horizontal crack for repair.

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## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 4th SEPTEMBER 2019

Ward: Whitley

App No.: 190788/FUL

Address: JUNCTION 11, SOUTH SIDE OF M4, READING, RG7 1NR

Proposal: Installation of a 20M monopole, supporting 6 No. antennas, 4 No. equipment cabinets, the removal of the existing 17.5M monopole and its 3 No. antennas and 4No. equipment cabinets and ancillary development.

Applicant: EE Uk Ltd

Date validated: 28 May 2019

8 week target decision date: 23 July 2019

Extension of time date: 13 September 2019

## RECOMMENDATION

Grant Full Planning Permission

### CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE

1. Full - time limit - three years
2. Standard approved plans condition
3. Existing monopole and equipment to be removed and site made good

### INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE

1. Standard positive and proactive informative.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

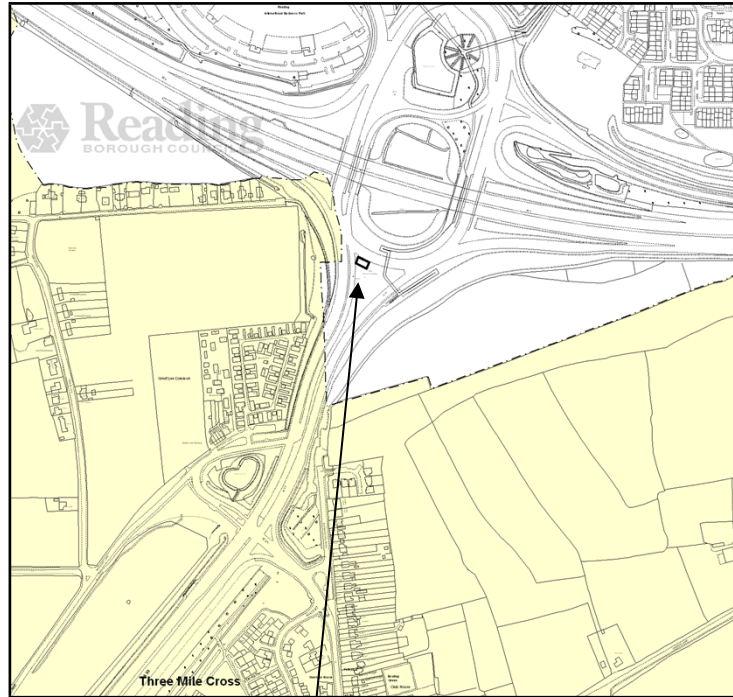
1.1 The site is located upon the grass verge at Junction 11, off the M4. Three Mile Cross Interchange lies adjacent, with Reading International Business Park some 314m to the North West and the M4 115m to the North. Worton Grange Industrial Estate is situated to the North West.

1.2 This application is presented to this committee because the determination of planning applications for telecommunication masts is not delegated to officers.

## 2. PROPOSAL

2.1 The proposed development is for a replacement mast sited immediately adjacent to an existing mast, which is to be removed.

2.2 The proposed works involve removal of the existing mast and associated cabinets and their replacement with a new mast and new shared cabinets close by.



Application site

2.3 The supporting statement submitted as part of the application explains that:

Section 5 of the NPPF sets out the Government’s general overview regarding supporting high quality communications infrastructure, recognising that advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth. The use of existing sites is considered to provide the optimum solution and accordingly the proposed site upgrade should be viewed positively. As such, no alternative locations were sought in this instance.

The proposed increase in height is the minimum capable of providing the technological improvements sought. It is imperative that support is given to the introduction of 5G technology as this will allow networks to be able to handle more data and connect more devices simultaneously at much faster speeds than is possible using the existing technology. This will enable places to remain competitive in and will support the Government’s ambition for the UK to become a world leader in 5G technology.

2.2 In support of the application the following was submitted:-

- 002 - Location plan
- 100 - Existing site plan
- 150 - Existing elevations
- 215 Rev D - Proposed configuration
- 265 Rev D - Proposed Elevation
- ICNIRP certificate

2.3 The applicant has demonstrated the site selection process as part of the application showing a sequential approach and reasoning for discounting

other existing sites in the nearby area which could also provide the required level of coverage.

- 2.4 The ICNIRP certificate submitted by the applicant confirms compliance with the International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation (ICNIRP) guidelines.

**3. PLANNING HISTORY**

**161217** - Installation of 17.5 metre high 'Phase 5' monopole telecommunications mast and ground level equipment cabinet, and associated development. Removal of existing 15 metre high monopole. Planning Approved - 12/09/2016

**160640** - Replacement of 15m high monopole with new 15m high phase 4 monopole with shrouded antennas. Installation of 1 no. additional equipment cabinet. Planning Approved - 25/05/2016

**150742** - Replacement of the existing 12m telecommunications monopole with a new 20m monopole. Installation of 1 no. new 300mm dish antenna & 1 no. equipment cabinet, and ancillary works. Planning Approved - 25/06/2015

**4. CONSULTATIONS**

4.1 Statutory:

- Wokingham Borough Council - No response received.

4.2 Non-statutory:

- Transport Development Control - No objections to the increased height of the telecommunications mast.

4.3 Public consultation:

- Site notices were displayed on the verge of the A33 - No representations were received.

**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 Full Planning Permission has been applied for as the development exceeds permitted development rights under Class A, Part 16 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

- 5.3 The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

5.4 National Planning Policy Framework

Part 5 - Supporting high quality communications infrastructure

Part 7 - Requiring good design

- 5.5 Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2008, 2015)

## CS7 (Design and the Public Realm)

- 5.6 Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, 2015)  
SD1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)  
DM21 (Telecommunications Development)

### 6. APPRAISAL

- 6.1 Policy DM21 states that proposals for telecommunications development will be permitted provided that:
- They do not have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area;
  - The apparatus will be sited and designed so as to minimise its visual impact by the use of innovative design solutions such as lamp column ‘swap-outs’ or concealment/camouflage options; and
  - Alternative sites and site-sharing options have been fully investigated and it has been demonstrated that upgrading the existing site is the preferable option.

#### *Impact on Visual Amenity*

- 6.2 The proposal involves the removal of an existing 17 metre monopole and its replacement with a 20 metre monopole with 6 antenna. The proposal includes replacing existing equipment cabinets. The proposed monopole would be significantly taller than the existing structure and taller than surrounding streetlights and other highway structures.

- 6.3 The mast would be visible from the adjacent road where it would appear as a prominent feature. It would also be capable of being viewed from residential areas but this would be from some distance away due to the large expanse of road system in-between. The mast would be seen primarily within the context of the large and visually dominant motorway junction and associated structures. The increase in height compared to the existing mast is not considered to be harmful within the context described above.

#### *Alternative Sites*

- 6.4 The pre-application review confirmed that full consideration has been given to alternative sites and existing masts in the vicinity. However, the proposed location and design were considered to provide the optimum solution in this instance. The proposed combined technical solution to upgrading the site is to be in the form of a replacement mast sited immediately adjacent to the existing mast, which is to be removed.

- 6.5 The re-use of existing sites, such as that currently proposed, is in accordance with paragraph 43 of the NPPF and is within the spirit of Sites and Detailed Policies Document Policy DM21 which encourages the replacement of one highway structure with another to minimise the visual impact. On this basis, and taking into account the lack of visual harm identified above, it is considered that an alternative site is not required for the proposed development.

#### *Equalities impact assessment*

- 6.6 In determining this application the Committee is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender,



sexual orientation. 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.



**View of site with masts and lampposts to the South of Three Mile Cross Interchange**

#### *Health considerations*

- 6.7 Members will be aware that there is some public concern arising from 5G technologies and you are referred to the Minutes from the 17<sup>th</sup> July Planning Applications Committee, which record the response given by the Chair to a question asked on this matter. Public Health England's (PHE) webpage discusses exposure to the radio waves from mobile phone base stations, including those for 5G networks, via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phone-base-stations-radio-waves-and-health/mobile-phone-base-stations-radio-waves-and-health>


- 6.8 Health and safety legislation requires companies deploying and operating communication networks to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments, as well as to put in place measures to reduce the identified risks so far as reasonably practicable. In controlling risks arising from radio wave exposure, the Health and Safety Executive refer to compliance with the ICNIRP guidelines. Industry has committed to comply with the international guidelines and to provide certificates of compliance with planning applications for base stations. The applicant has provided an appropriate certificate of compliance so officers are satisfied in this regard.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The proposal is considered to comply with Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy (2008, 2015), Policy DM21 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, 2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework as assessed above. It is therefore recommended that approval be granted, subject to suitable conditions.

**Case Officer: Tom Hughes**

**NOTES:**  
 1. ALL DIMENSIONS IN MM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.  
 DIRECTIONS TO SITE

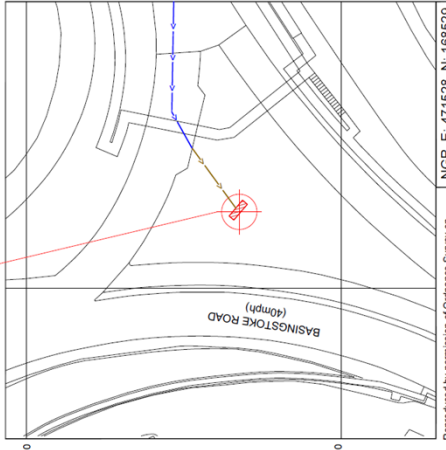


MBNL	ATAP	Planning	D
M004	MBNL	ATAP	Planning
M003	MBNL	ATAP	Planning
M002	MBNL	ATAP	Planning
M001	MBNL	ATAP	Planning

**MBNL**  
 Mark Bevan, Thomas Town, Station Road, Reading, RG1 1LX  
 info@beaconcomms.co.uk

**BEACONCOMMS**  
 MARK BEVAN, THOMAS TOWN, STATION ROAD, READING, RG1 1LX  
 info@beaconcomms.co.uk

Site Name: JUNC 11 STREETWORKS 2  
 Site ID: 1107647  
 Address: JUNC 11 SOUTH SIDE OF M4 READING RG7 1NR  
 Title: 002 SITE LOCATION PLAN  
 Project: ATAP  
 Purpose of Plan: GENERAL ARRANGEMENT  
 IE Code: 25739  
 MBNL Code: RDG049A  
 Master/Summary No: 1107647\_RDG049\_25739\_M004  
 Scale: D




SITE LOCATION  
 68600  
 68500  
 271500  
 BASINGSSTOKE ROAD (dmp)

NGR E: 471528 N: 108529

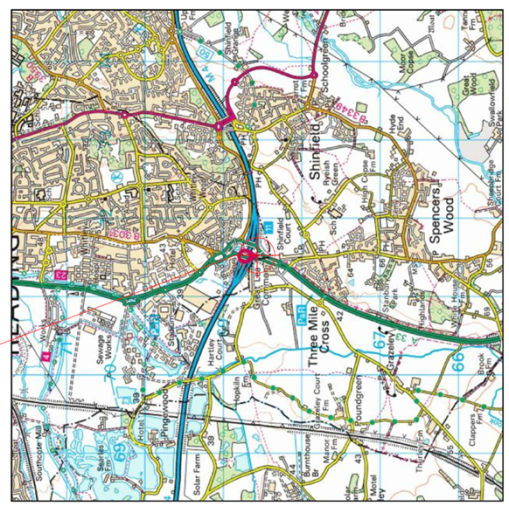
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**SITE LOCATION PLAN**  
 SCALE 1:1250



GOOGLE MAPS QR CODE


GOOGLE MAP - <https://goo.gl/maps/SbxKdYy0DX22>  
 GOOGLE STREETVIEW - <https://goo.gl/maps/NwERos4BYK52>



SITE LOCATION

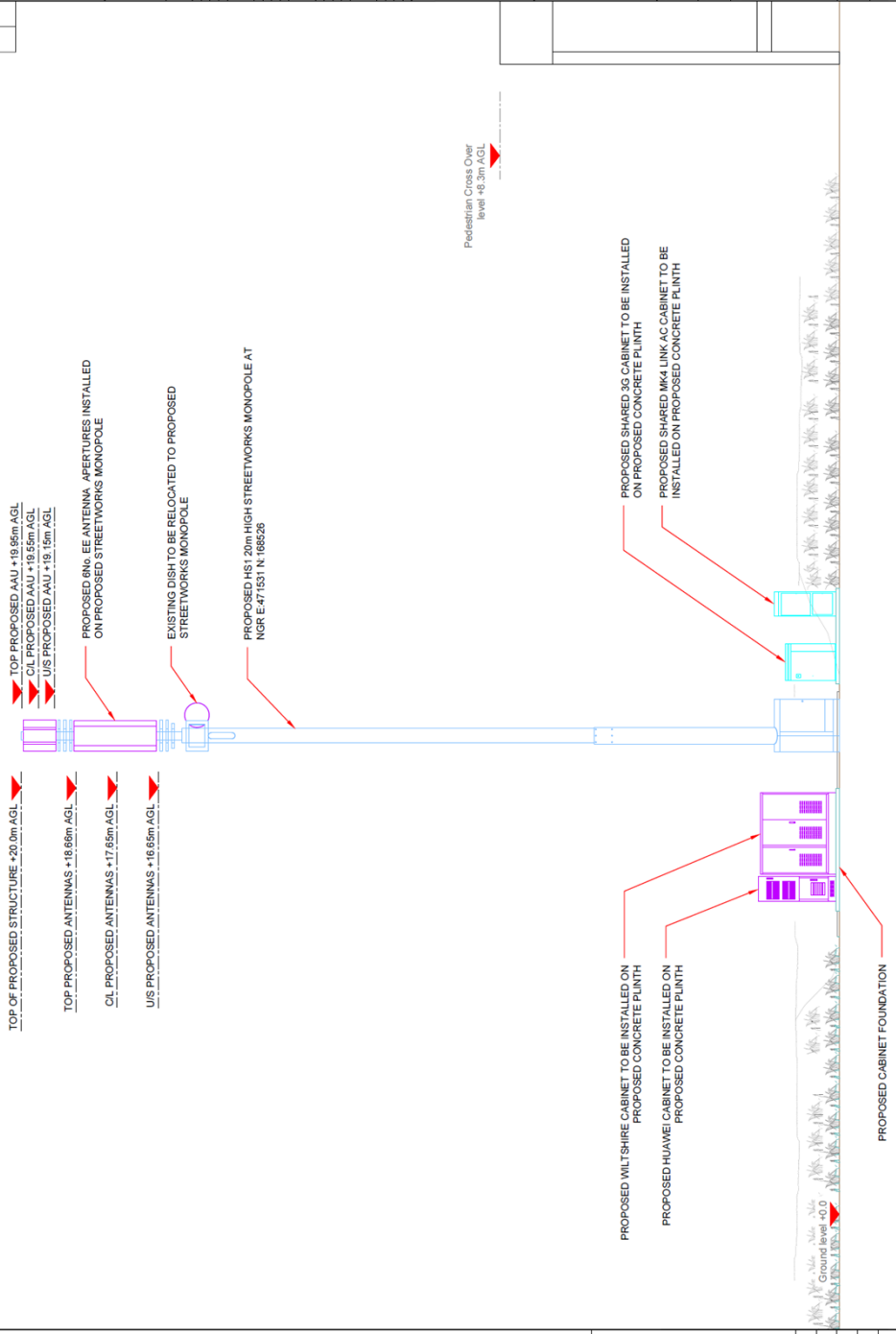
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**SITE AREA PLAN**  
 SCALE 1:50,000



**SITE PHOTOGRAPH**

Area	Height
A1	20'
A2	20'
B1	20'
B2	20'
C1	20'
C2	20'



**PROPOSED ELEVATION**  
Scale 1:100

MARK	DESCRIPTION	STATUS	DATE	BY	CHKD
M004	MBNL	ATAP	Planning	D	
M003	MBNL	ATAP	Planning	C	
M002	MBNL	ATAP	Planning	B	
M001	MBNL	ATAP	Planning	A	

**MBNL**  
Mobile Broadband Network Limited  
Sixth Floor, Thames Tower, Emerson Road, Reading, RG1 1UX

**BEACONCOMMS**  
UNIT 8 PTT'S CLAVE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, TAVISTOCK, DEVON, PL19 9PW  
sales@beaconcomms.co.uk Tel: +44 (0)1822 416610

Site Name: JUNC 11 STREETWORKS 2  
Site ID: 1107647

Address: JUNC 11  
SOUTH SIDE OF M4  
READING  
RG7 1NR

Title: 265 MAX CONFIGURATION ELEVATION  
Project: ATAP

Purpose of Issue: GENERAL ARRANGEMENT	
EE Ref ID: 25739	MBNL Ref ID: RDG049A
Customer Reference: 1107647_RDG049_25739_M004	Issue: D

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## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 4th SEPTEMBER 2019

**Ward:** Whitley

**App No.:** 190948/FUL

**Address:** Corner of Acre Road/A33 Terranova site, RG2 0SU

**Proposal:** Removal and replacement of the existing 17.5 metre high monopole and 3No. antennas with an upgraded 20 metre high lattice tower and 6No. upgraded antennas, the relocation of 1No. dish to be located on the new tower, the installation of 8No. equipment cabinets located at ground level in the compound, and ancillary development thereto.

**Applicant:** EE Uk Ltd

**Date validated:** 13 June 2019

**8 week target decision date:** 8 August 2019

**Extension of time date:** 13 September 2019

## RECOMMENDATION

Grant Full Planning Permission

## CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE

1. Full - time limit - three years
2. Standard approved plans condition
3. Existing monopole and equipment to be removed and site made good

## INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE

1. Standard positive and proactive informative.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The site is a gated compound on the corner of A33 and Acre Road in an industrial area of Reading. To the west of the A33 lies Reading Gate Retail Park and the Madjeski Stadium, whilst to the east is the extensive industrial area of the Basingstoke Road Core Employment Area. The A33 is a key north/south arterial route into and out of the urban core of Reading from the M4 motorway and Basingstoke. This road carries significant amounts of traffic and dominates the immediate area with its dual carriageway, high amounts of traffic and is flanked either side large scale commercial buildings. The site does not fall within a Conservation Area and the site is not within the curtilage of a listed building.

1.2 This application is presented to this committee because the determination of planning applications for telecommunication masts is not delegated to officers.

## 2. PROPOSAL

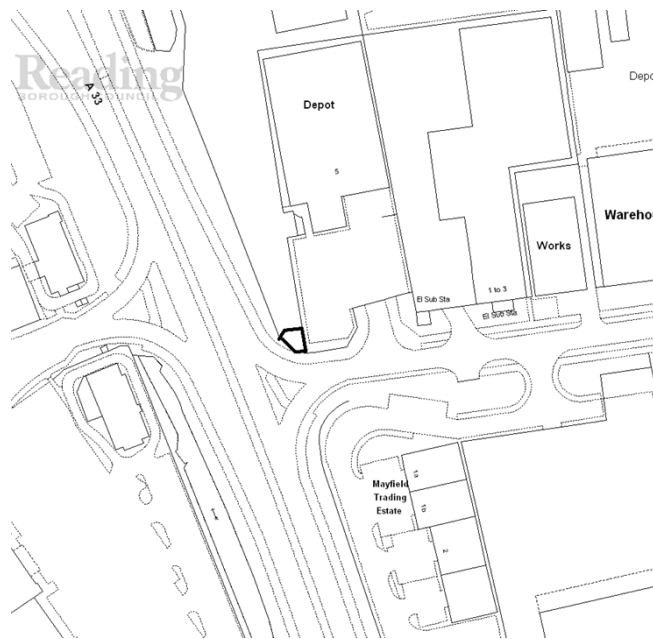
3.1 The existing 17.5 metre high Phase 5 monopole is unable to support the increased size of the antennas. It is necessary to increase the height of the apparatus as the upgraded antennas are larger and cannot sit at the existing height. A new 20 metre high lattice tower is proposed to hold the upgraded antennas at the required height. The 6No. antennas are required to provide 5G coverage to the area.

2.2 In support of the application the following was submitted:-

Drawings no. 1107576 - 002, 100, 150, 215, 265 - E

- Application forms
- Planning Statement (including design and access statement)
- ICNIRP certificate
- 5G and Future Technology document
- Connected Growth Manual - Digital Infrastructure document

2.3 The ICNIRP certificate submitted by the applicant confirms compliance with the International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation (ICNIRP) guidelines.



Location plan

## 3. PLANNING HISTORY

150204 - The upgrade of an existing site, comprising of the swap out and relocation of the existing 16.7m monopole for a 17.5m monopole located 3 metres to the south west of the existing monopole, the removal of the existing MHA cabinet and installation of a pogona cabinet measuring 1230 x 400 x 1032mm at ground level, and associated development. Granted 30/4/15

## 4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 Statutory:

None

4.2 Non-statutory:

- Transport Development Control - No objections to the increased height of the telecommunications mast.
- 4.3 Public consultation:
- Site notices were displayed and 5 Acre Road notified by letter. No representations received.

## 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 Full Planning Permission has been applied for as the development exceeds permitted development rights under Class A, Part 16 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.
- 5.3 The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:
- 5.4 National Planning Policy Framework  
Part 5 - Supporting high quality communications infrastructure  
Part 7 - Requiring good design
- 5.5 Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2008, 2015)  
CS7 (Design and the Public Realm)
- 5.6 Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, 2015)  
SD1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)  
DM21 (Telecommunications Development)

## 6. APPRAISAL

- 6.1 Policy DM21 states that proposals for telecommunications development will be permitted provided that:
- They do not have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area;
  - The apparatus will be sited and designed so as to minimise its visual impact by the use of innovative design solutions such as lamp column 'swap-outs' or concealment/camouflage options; and
  - Alternative sites and site-sharing options have been fully investigated and it has been demonstrated that upgrading the existing site is the preferable option.

### *Impact on Visual Amenity*

- 6.2 The proposal involves the removal of an existing 17.5 metre monopole and its replacement with a 20 metre high lattice tower with 6 antenna. It would have an appearance more similar to a pylon than a lamppost. This has been reduced from the 25 metre high structure originally proposed at pre-application stage. The proposal also includes replacing existing equipment cabinets and dish. The proposed lattice tower would be taller than the

existing structure and taller than surrounding streetlights and other highway structures.

- 6.3 However, the site is only visible from the adjacent busy commercial roads and the replacement tower and apparatus would be seen in this context - it is not in a visually-sensitive location. The increase in height compared to the existing mast is therefore not considered to be visually harmful.

#### *Alternative Sites*

- 6.4 The pre-application review confirmed that as the proposal is to secure an upgrade to the existing equipment the proposed location provided the optimum solution. The re-use of existing sites, such as that currently proposed, is in accordance with paragraph 43 of the NPPF and is within the spirit of Sites and Detailed Policies Document Policy DM21 which encourages the replacement of one structure with another to minimise visual impact. On this basis, and taking into account the lack of visual harm identified above, it is considered that an alternative site is not preferable for the proposed development.

#### *Equalities impact assessment*

- 6.6 In determining this application the Committee is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation. 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.

#### *Health considerations*

- 6.7 Members will be aware that there is some public concern arising from 5G technologies and you are referred to the Minutes from the 17<sup>th</sup> July Planning Applications Committee, which record the response given by the Chair to a question asked on this matter. Public Health England's (PHE) webpage discusses exposure to the radio waves from mobile phone base stations, including those for 5G networks, via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phone-base-stations-radio-waves-and-health/mobile-phone-base-stations-radio-waves-and-health>

- 6.8 Health and safety legislation requires companies deploying and operating communication networks to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments, as well as to put in place measures to reduce the identified risks so far as reasonably practicable. In controlling risks arising from radio wave exposure, the Health and Safety Executive refer to compliance with the ICNIRP guidelines. Industry has committed to comply with the international guidelines and to provide certificates of compliance with planning applications for base stations. The applicant has provided an appropriate certificate of compliance so officers are satisfied in this regard.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The proposal is considered to comply with Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy (2008, 2015), Policy DM21 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document



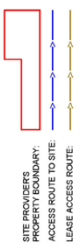
(2012, 2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework as assessed above. It is therefore recommended that approval be granted, subject to suitable conditions.

**Case Officer: Brian Conlon**



View of site looking north.

**NOTES:**  
 1. ALL DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETERS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.  
 DIRECTIONS TO SITE: The postcode is correct but directs you to the 1st access to the site is via Bennet Road of Ayr Road, through the crane yard to the compound.



Mode	MBNL	ATAP	Planning	Mode
M004	MBNL	ATAP	Planning	D
M005	MBNL	ATAP	Planning	C
M002	MBNL	ATAP	Planning	B
M001	MBNL	ATAP	Planning	A

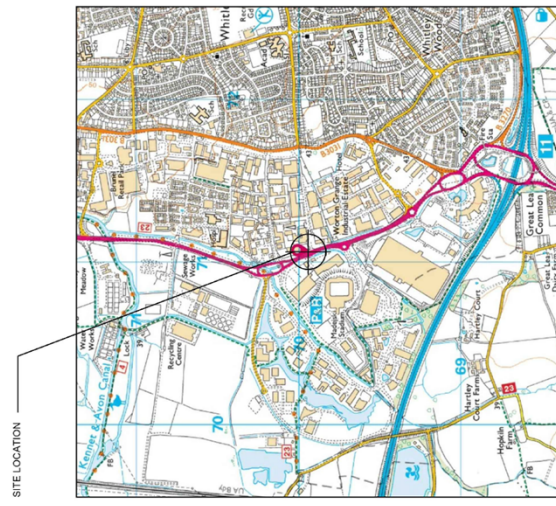


Mobile Broadband Network Limited  
 5th Floor, Thames Tower, Batten Road Reading, RG1 1LX



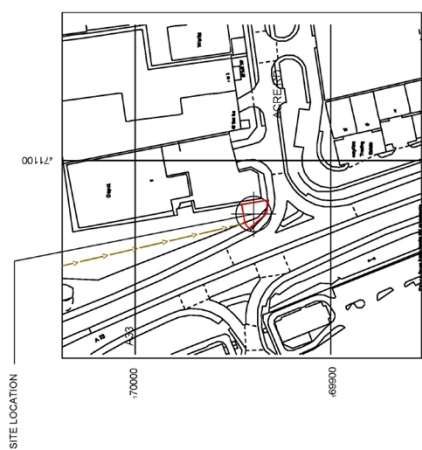
UNIT 15 FITTS CLAVIE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, FAIRWOOD, DEWON, PL19 9WV  
 Tel: +44 (0)1825 416510  
 info@beaconcomms.co.uk

Site Name:	TERRANOVA HOUSE
Site ID:	1107576
Address:	BENNET ROAD READING RG2 0RJ
Title:	002 SITE LOCATION PLAN
Page:	ATAP
Page of 10:	GENERAL ARRANGEMENT
Doc Ref:	25668
Doc Code:	RDG042
Master Drawing No.:	1107576_RDG042_25668_RG1433_M004
Sheet:	RG1433
Drawn:	D



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SITE AREA PLAN  
 SCALE 1:50,000



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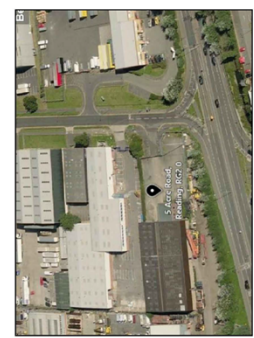
SITE LOCATION PLAN  
 SCALE 1:1250



GOOGLE MAPS QR CODE

GOOGLE MAP - <https://goo.gl/maps/yMBdcZMFp9E2>

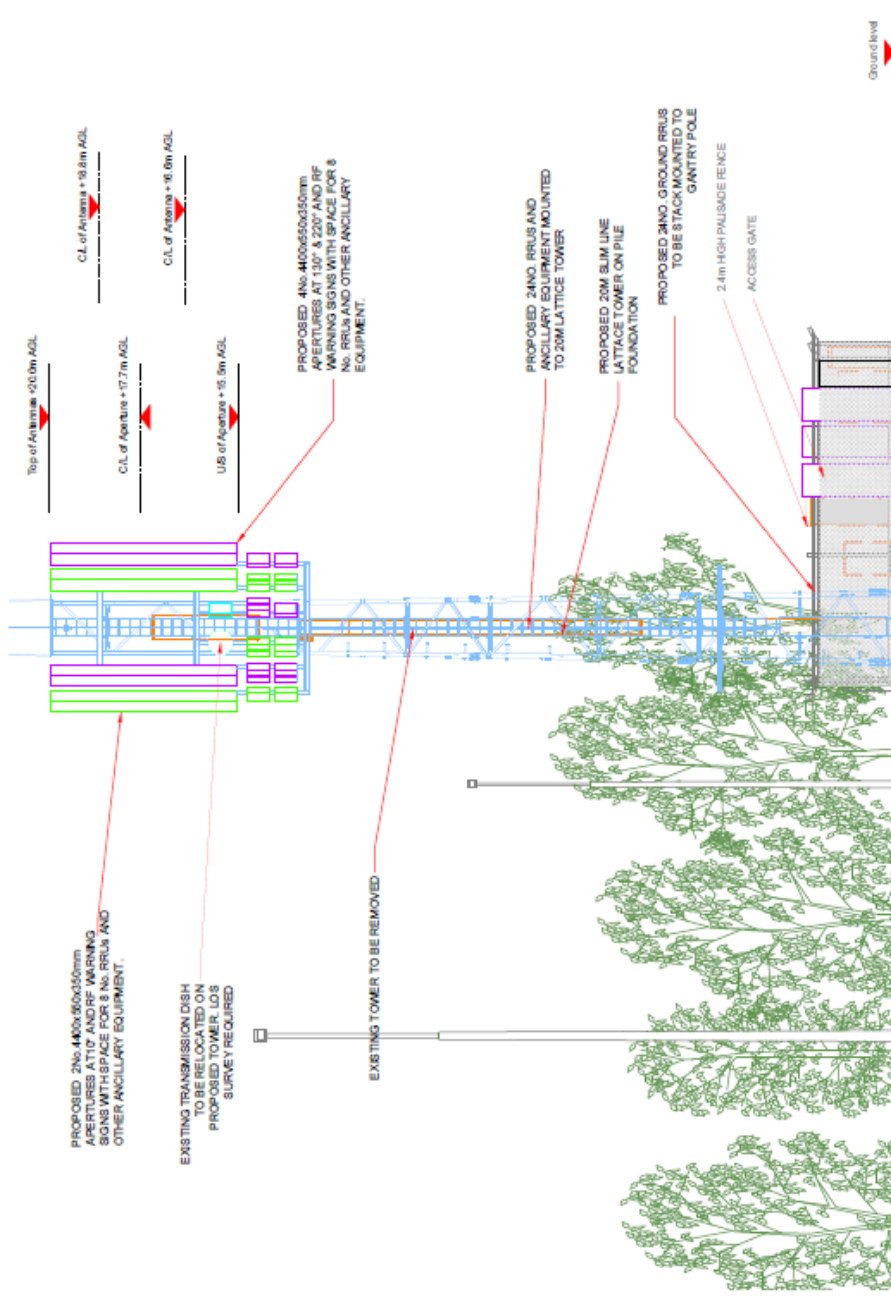
GOOGLE STREETVIEW - <https://goo.gl/maps/iRTmJX8T73c82>



SITE PHOTOGRAPH



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**PROPOSED MAX CONFIGURATION ELEVATION**  
Scale 1:100

NO.	DESCRIPTION	STATUS	DATE
01	ISSUED FOR PERMIT	FOR REVIEW	10/10/2023
02	REVISED PER COMMENTS	FOR REVIEW	10/10/2023
03	REVISED PER COMMENTS	FOR REVIEW	10/10/2023
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100	REVISED PER COMMENTS	FOR REVIEW	10/10/2023



100 BENTLEY DRIVE, SUITE 101  
100 BENTLEY DRIVE, SUITE 101  
100 BENTLEY DRIVE, SUITE 101



UNIT 13 PTE CLAVE INDUSTRIAL STATE TARIFFED DRIVE, BUNDRY  
1107576\_RDG042\_25668\_R01433\_M005

PROJECT: TERRANOVA HOUSE  
SITE ID: 1107576  
ADDRESS: BENNETT ROAD, READING, RG2 0RJ

265 MAX CONFIGURATION ELEVATION AT AP

GENERAL ARRANGEMENT	
SCALE: 1:100	DATE: 10/10/2023
PROJECT NO: 25668	RDG042
CLIENT: TERRANOVA HOUSE	RG1433
PROJECT NAME: 1107576_RDG042_25668_R01433_M005	DATE: 10/10/2023
DESIGNER: MBNL	ENGINEER: E

## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 4<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2019

**Ward:** Whitley

**App No.:** 190858/REG3

**Address:** Land West of Longwater Avenue (Green Park Railway Station), Green Park  
**Proposal:** Construction of a building comprising ticket hall, public conveniences, staff facilities and ancillary retail provision to serve the proposed Green Park railway station development, including associated signage.

**Applicant:** Reading Borough Council - Highways and Transport

**Date received:** 28<sup>th</sup> May 2019

**Minor Application:** 8 week target decision date: 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019

**Extended deadline:** 13<sup>th</sup> September 2019

**Planning Guarantee date:** 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019

### RECOMMENDATION - 190858

**GRANT** Planning Permission subject to conditions and informatives.

#### **CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE:**

1. TL1 - Time limit (5 years)
2. Approved plans
3. Materials to be submitted
4. Submission and approval of boundary treatments.
5. Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP: Biodiversity) to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.
6. CMS including control of noise and dust, hours of working, culverts.
7. No piling using penetrative methods.
8. Sustainable Drainage - submission and approval of a drainage design in consultation with the Network Rail Asset Protection Engineer.
9. Sustainable Drainage - pre-occupation completion of scheme in accordance with the submitted and approved details.
10. Submission and approval of details of covered bicycle storage.
11. Submission and approval of site security measures to be agreed in consultation with British Transport Police.
12. Submission and approval of bin storage details.
13. Any previously unidentified contamination to be reported to the Local Authority. An assessment of the contamination and where necessary a remediation scheme to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and implemented thereafter.
14. Submission and approval of a scheme to protect against land gas and implementation thereafter.
15. Submission and approval of a tree/ landscape protection scheme for the approved landscaping to the south (as approved under 171259/APPCON) and implementation of such during construction of the station hereby approved.
16. No burning of waste on site.
17. In accordance with the approved Lighting Statement.

#### **INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE:**

1. Terms and conditions

2. Building Regulations approval

3. Network Rail informatives:

Excavations/ Earthworks - All excavations / earthworks carried out in the vicinity of Network Rail's property / structures must be designed and executed such that no interference with the integrity of that property / structure can occur. If temporary compounds are to be located adjacent to the operational railway, these should be included in a method statement for approval by Network Rail. Prior to commencement of works, full details of excavations and earthworks to be carried out near the railway undertaker's boundary fence should be submitted for approval of the Local Planning Authority acting in consultation with the railway undertaker and the works shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved details. Where development may affect the railway, consultation with the Asset Protection Engineer should be undertaken.

Plant, Scaffolding and Cranes - Any scaffold which is to be constructed adjacent to the railway must be erected in such a manner that, at no time will any poles or cranes over-sail or fall onto the railway. All plant and scaffolding must be positioned, that in the event of failure, it will not fall on to Network Rail land.

Party Wall - Where works are proposed adjacent to the railway it may be necessary to serve the appropriate notices on Network Rail and their tenants under the Party Wall etc Act 1996. Developers should consult with Network Rail at an early stage of the preparation of details of their development on Party Wall matters.

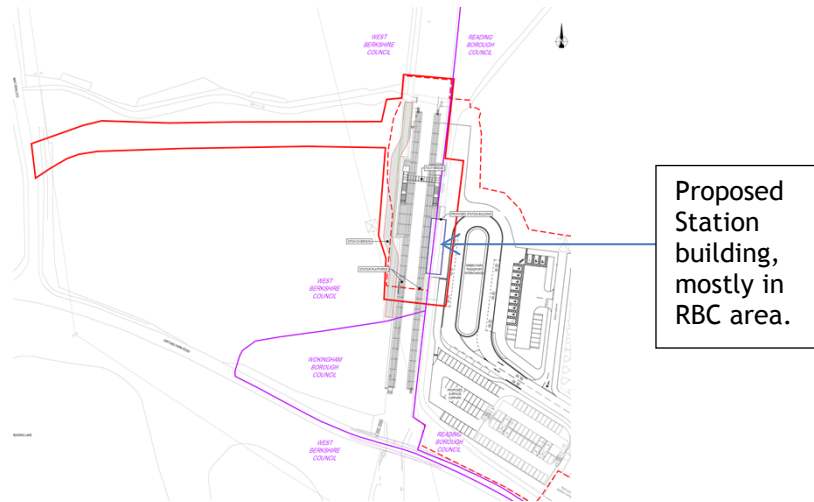
The applicant is reminded that any works close to the Network Rail boundary, and any excavation works are also covered by the Party Wall Act of 1996. Should any foundations, any excavations or any part of the building encroachment onto Network Rail land then the applicant would need to serve notice on Network Rail and they would be liable for costs. An applicant cannot access Network Rail land without permission (via the Asset Protection Team) and in addition to any costs under the Party Wall Act, the applicant would also be liable for all Network Rail site supervision costs whilst works are undertaken. No works in these circumstances are to commence without the approval of the Network Rail Asset Protection Engineer.

In order to mitigate the risks detailed above, the Developer should contact the Network Rail's Asset Protection Western Team well in advance of mobilising on site or commencing any works. The initial point of contact is [assetprotectionwestern@networkrail.co.uk](mailto:assetprotectionwestern@networkrail.co.uk). The department will provide all necessary Engineering support subject to a Basic Asset Protection Agreement.

4. Positive & Proactive

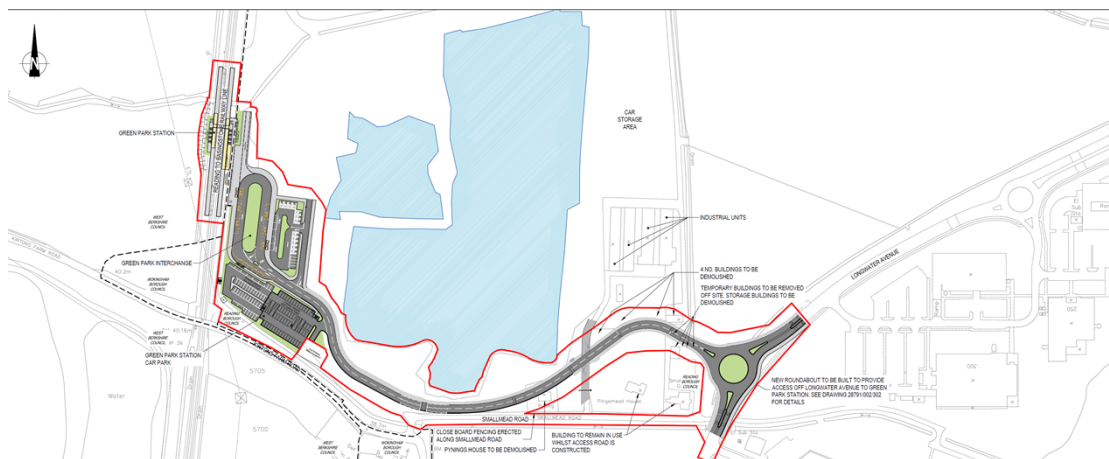
## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The overall site area, including that part within West Berkshire Council area, is 0.73 ha, and is located to the west of Green Park Village, a mixed use development of residential, community facilities including a one-form entry primary school, small scale retail, and open space. To the north of the site is the former Smallmead landfill site, now capped, and to the west of the site is land within West Berkshire previously used for minerals extraction. The overall redline area takes in land on and adjacent to the main railway line linking Reading and Basingstoke.



**Location Plan - not to scale**

1.2 The application is made on behalf of Reading Borough Council Highways and Transport Section, and the total application area includes land within West Berkshire and Reading Borough Areas. Duplicate applications have been submitted to both Councils, but it is for each Council to determine the application within their administrative boundaries (it should be noted that West Berkshire Council determined their application (ref: 19/01468) under delegated powers, and approved it on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2019). As the redline plan needed to include connections to the highway it includes elements of the overall station and interchange already approved by RBC and West Berkshire, i.e. railway track, station platforms and overbridge. The submitted application relates to the station building, the majority of which is within RBC area, and a small slither in West Berkshire. The interchange itself was originally approved under planning permission 141944/REG3, subsequently amended under 171305/NMA, and the original overall block plan for which is shown below.



**Not to scale**

## 2.0 PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

2.1 The consented scheme (141944) for: ‘Construction of a new Railway Station, bus interchange, multi-storey car park (park and rise facility), short stay car park, taxi drop-off, disabled parking facility, station access road from Longwater Avenue, landscaping and associated works’, was approved on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2015. The station platforms and concourse are situated within West Berkshire and consent

was granted by West Berkshire District Council for the station development under their ref: 14/03289/COMIND.

- 2.2 Works are underway to implement the current consented scheme, with interchange enabling works nearing completion, and preparatory rail works due to commence in October 2019. All Interchange pre-commencement conditions have been discharged. The station interchange works are due to be completed early 2020 and will be followed later in the year by the full completion of the scheme.
- 2.3 A subsequent planning permission was applied for to relocate the proposed station a little further south and this revised planning application was granted by West Berkshire Council (Ref: 18/01451/COMIND) and Wokingham Borough Council (Ref: 181514). That revised application did not include the proposed station building.
- 2.4 The original permission included an indicative building location and suggested imagery, but it was the intention that the building design would be worked up for submission later on, which is the subject of this current application. Condition 20 below, was attached to the original permission:

*20. No phase or part of the development shall commence until details of waiting room facilities, ticket machines, Real Time Passenger Information system and bus shelters or taxi shelters relevant to that phase or part of the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The respective facilities shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the first use of the relevant phase or part of the development and maintained as such thereafter.*

*Reason: To ensure the provision of a sustainable and convenient station facility. Core Strategy CS23: Sustainable Travel and Travel Plans.*

- 2.5 Notwithstanding the terms of this condition, given the detail required for the station building, the option has been taken to apply for full planning permission for the works. The new station building will be one part the overall development of a new travel hub serving Green Park and the surrounding area comprising:
  - New car parking facilities
  - Public road transport interchange
  - Cycle parking
  - Passenger drop-off point
  - Footbridge with lifts for track crossing
  - Platform / waiting / canopy provision, and associated 'out of hours' access / egress provision for high volume passenger flow.
- 2.6 The proposal is for a single storey station building of 30m by 8.5m to be accessed from the interchange. It will accommodate an open ticket and enquiry desk, secure ticket office, staff rest and toilet facilities, male and female toilets, 2 no. accessible/baby change facilities, self-service ticket machines and ancillary retail provision. The signage above the entrance canopy 'Reading Green Park', which will constitute internally illuminated letters on spacers, is also included in the submission, although separate advertisement consent would be required for this.
- 2.7 The building will be situated between the rear of the proposed east platform and the proposed interchange development and is positioned at one end of a diagonal route that crosses Green Park and links the station to the Madejski Stadium.



2.8 The following plans and supporting documents have been assessed:

***Received 29<sup>th</sup> May 2019 (unless otherwise stated):***

- Site Context Plan Station Building - Drawing no: 36382/2002/SK80 Rev B, received 7<sup>th</sup> June 2019
- General Arrangement - Drawing no: 17-013/01 Rev K [includes platform elevation, floor plan, and entrance elevation]
- 3D Model Base Drawing and Roof Plan - Drawing no: 17-013/02 Rev E
- 3D images of proposed station approach, platform view and aerial view
- Accessible Spaces to Station Building Route - Drawing no: 36382/2002/SK086, received 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2019

***Other Documents received 29<sup>th</sup> May 2019 (unless otherwise stated):***

- Covering letter prepared by PBA, dated 28<sup>th</sup> May 2019
- Design and Access and Planning Statement, Vo1, dated 25<sup>th</sup> February 2019, prepared by Quadra Bec Ltd
- Flood Risk Assessment, Doc ref: 36382/4001, dated April 2019 [and appendices], prepared by PBA
- Lighting Statement for Planning, Doc ref: 158989-ARP-RG-BD-RP-Z-000002 Rev P01, dated 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019, prepared by Arup
- Utility Statement, Doc ref: 158989-ARP-RG-BD-RP-Z-000001 Rev P01, dated 15<sup>th</sup> April 2019, prepared by Arup

The application is being reported to committee because it has been submitted by the Council's Transportation Services Team.

### 3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- **00/00612/OUT** - Erection of a railway station with road access, bus turning, parking and associated works - Granted 10/01/2001.
- **03/01514/OUT** - Erection of a railway station with road access, bus turning, parking and associated works (renewal of application number 00/00612/OUT) - Application permitted 04/06/2004.
- **07/01108/FUL** - Construction of a new railway station, bus interchange, decked park and ride facility, short stay car park, taxi drop off, disabled parking facility, access road, landscaping and associated works - Application permitted 14/12/2007.
- **07/01156/WBKADJ** - Construction of a new railway station including 5-car platforms, footbridge, lift, concourse, disabled access provision, engineering works including diversion of existing drainage ditch to the west of the railway line and associated works - Application withdrawn.
- **07/01594/WBKADJ** - Construction of a new railway station including 5 car platforms, footbridge, lift, concourse, disabled access provision, engineering works including diversion of existing drainage ditch to the West of the railway line and associated works - Observations sent 10/01/2008.
- **07/01275/OUT** - (Green Park Village) A planning application for mixed-use development comprising:  
"Phase 1 (submitted in full with no matters reserved and as defined on Plan Ref. PA-P1-002): the construction of housing - 46 houses and 22 apartments

(Class C3), local retail (Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5), management suite, village hall, engineering and infrastructure works including reconfiguration of the lake, lakeside access, car parking, pedestrian and cycle routes, services and infrastructure, landscaping and other associated works; and Subsequent phases (submitted in outline with all matters reserved except for details of the main access proposals): the construction of housing - 669 dwellings (Class C3), extra care housing with ancillary community uses (Class C2), 16,000 square metres office space (Class B1), one-form entry primary school including nursery (Class D1), health surgery (Class D1), sports pitches, children's play facilities, engineering and infrastructure works including reconfiguration of the lake and vehicular access, lakeside access, car parking, pedestrian and cycle routes, services and infrastructure, landscaping and other associated works." Application Permitted.

- **09/00347/FUL** - Construction of new access road, car park, landscaping proposals and associated works to be implemented in conjunction with planning permission 07/01108/FUL. Application Permitted.
- **09/00349/VARIAT** - Construction of a new railway station, bus interchange, decked park and ride facility, short stay car park, taxi drop off, disabled parking facility, access road, landscaping and associated works without complying with conditions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 28, 29, 31 and 32 of Planning Application Reference: 07/01108/FUL, with alternative conditions imposed to allow for a phased discharge of the alternative conditions. Application Permitted.
- **09/01494/VARIAT** - Construction of a new railway station, bus interchange, decked park and ride facility, short stay car park, taxi drop off, disabled parking facility, access road, landscaping and associated works without complying with conditions 13 and 34 of Planning Application Reference 09/00349/VARIAT.
- **10/01461/OUT** - (Green Park Village) A planning application for mixed-use development.
- **10/01905/FUL** - Construction of a new railway Station, bus interchange, decked park and ride facility, short-stay car park, taxi drop off, disabled parking facility, access road, landscaping and associated works. Permitted 14<sup>th</sup> December 2010
- **10/02048/ADJ** Application for renewal of planning permission 07/02570/COMIND - Construction of a new railway station including 5-car platforms, footbridge, lift, concourse, disabled access provision, engineering works including diversion of existing drainage ditch to the west of the railway line and associated works. Permitted January 2011
- **141944/REG 3** - Construction of a new Railway Station, bus interchange, multi-storey car park (park and rise facility), short stay car park, taxi drop-off, disable parking facility, station access road from Longwater Avenue, landscaping and associated works - Approved xxxxx
- **150254/FUL/OOB** - Construction of a new Railway Station, bus interchange, multi-storey car park (park and rise facility), short stay car park, taxi drop-off, disable parking facility, station access road from Longwater Avenue, landscaping and associated works.

- A number of approval of conditions with respect to the interchange only approved during 2017 and 2018 (170011, 171064, 171258, 171262, 171261, 171259)
- **171305/NMA** - Application for a non-material amendment to the proposed interchange layout following a grant of planning permission 141944 - Agreed 11/1/18
- **1801451/COMIND & 181514** - Applications in West Berkshire and Wokingham areas to shift station on west side of track further south.
- **181979/PREAPP** - Pre-application advice for new station building at proposed Green Park Station with regard to design, layout and appearance of new building only. - obs sent 10/6/19
- **19/01468/FUL** - Construction of a building comprising ticket hall, public conveniences, staff facilities and ancillary retail provision to serve the proposed Green Park railway station development, including associated signage -Approved 16/8/19 - West Berkshire application under delegated powers.

#### 4.0 CONSULTATIONS

##### (i) Statutory consultation

###### *Environment Agency*

- 4.1 The site lie within Flood Zones 1 and 2 in accordance with our flood map for planning. The site also lies within a secondary and principal aquifer. The past uses of this site include a landfill and a railway.
- 4.2 *Advice to LPA - Sequential test* - In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 158, development should not be permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower probability of flooding. It is for you to determine if the Sequential Test has to be applied and whether or not there are other sites available at lower flood risk as required by the Sequential Test in the National Planning Policy Framework. Our flood risk standing advice reminds you of this and provides advice on how to do this.
- 4.3 We have **no objections** to the proposed development subject to the following condition being imposed on any planning permission granted. Without this condition, the proposed development on this site poses an unacceptable risk to the environment and we would wish to object to this application:
- Condition: Piling using penetrative methods shall not be carried out other than with the written consent of the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. Reasons: To ensure that the proposed development does not harm groundwater resources in line with paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework.*
- 4.4 *Advice to applicant and LPA for piling condition* - No information has been supplied with this application about the proposed foundation design for this building. Should piling be the chosen foundation solution then the potential for

piles to create pathways for contamination from the landfills in the area to migrate into the Chalk (Principal Aquifer) at depth under this site should be considered. Any deep foundations used should terminate within the clay of the Lambeth Group that protects the Chalk in this location.

- 4.5 *Advice to applicant and LPA - Surface water drainage and foul drainage* We are pleased to see that surface water drainage from this development site will be via a lined drainage system that will discharge to an existing watercourse and that the foul drainage will go to the main sewer. We don't want to see any surface water drainage infiltration to ground or discharge of foul to ground as this could cause pollution of the groundwater aquifer.

(ii) **Non statutory consultation**

***RBC Access Officer***

- 4.6 The following are the issues raised via the Access and Disabilities Working Group (attended by the Planning Officer on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2019), with corresponding comments from RBC Transport or from GWR:

- **Outside toilets are prone to vandalism; anyone can buy the relevant fobs.**  
*Transport response: The original design was for an internal toilet. GWR requested the toilet to be with outside access.*
- **The disabled toilet is too small; could access be from the inside too?**  
*Transport response: We have previously discussed the difficulties of having 2 accesses into the toilet, particularly when the station building is closed. Additionally, having 2 accesses would require an increase to the toilet footprint, which is not achievable. The accessible cubicle is 2.2m x 1.93m and is larger than the standard shown in the Building Regulations' Approved Document B : Diagram 18 (2.2m x 1.5m). We are not aware of any standards that dictate whether the WC should have internal/external access. Its location and access should be associated with normal use of buildings and the entrance or waiting area within (or around therefore) of the building.*
- **Please provide details of the lift size and compliance with relevant standards**  
*Transport response: The lift is a 'through lift' with internal dimensions of 1600mmx1600mm. This is in excess of a type 2 lift noted in the Technical Specifications for Interoperability: Persons with Reduce Mobility.. The lifts comply with the guidance set out in the DfT Code of Practice for Accessible Stations.*
- **How many blue badge spaces will there be and could a drawing be provided to show the accessible route from them to the station entrance?**  
*Transport response: 12 accessible spaces will be provided. The attached drawing shows the route [Accessible Spaces to Station Building Route - Drawing no: 36382/2002/SK086, received 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2019] to the station entrance. In accordance with the DfT Code of Practice for Accessible Stations, seating will be provided along the route between the accessible car park and station entrance.*
- **The height of ticket booth can be a problem if not manned. Request for ticket machines to be installed that can be accessed by all.**  
*Planning Officer note: GWR Deputy Mobility & Inclusion Manager was contacted and responded as follows on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019:*

*"We do not have such a facility at any of our stations and not aware of one on the UK network. The main issue with this, is to make a ticket machine accessible for one person, it can often be to the detriment to another*

person. For example, changing the colour contrast may help one customer, but result in another not being able to use the machine.

The ticket machines currently provided have to comply with the Government's design standards. These can be found on the below link, the section on ticket machines is section N2, p131: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/425977/design-standards-accessible-stations.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425977/design-standards-accessible-stations.pdf)

These are industry standards and are designed to help make the machines as accessible as possible to the majority. However, there will be individuals who fall outside this scope unfortunately. They also help to provide consistency across the network. There are also only two main providers of the ticket machines, and therefore we are limited to what is on offer from these suppliers.

It is outlined in the standards that "At unstaffed stations, where vending machines are relied upon for ticketing, an alternative means of ticketing, accessible to visually impaired passengers, shall always be available (for example, permitting purchasing either on the train or at the destination.)"

At GWR, our policy is that if you are unable to buy a ticket from the facilities provided, you are able to purchase the full array of ticket options from the train manager or the destination station at no penalty."

- **Is it possible to make the toilet Changing Places?**  
*Transport response: This would require a much larger footprint for the toilet. We are aware of Government funding / push for Changing Places provision but this is not currently a mandatory requirement for stations of this size / category.*
- **There was concern that if the station were not manned the whole time then there would be no one to help people on and off trains.**  
*Planning Officer note - this would require a response from GWR, but is considered to relate to operational matters rather than design-specific matters, the latter can be considered through the planning process.*

### **Ecology**

- 4.7 This application is for the provision of a new station building. Only part of the site is located within Reading Borough. Unmitigated, the clearance of the site could have an adverse impact on wildlife, such as reptiles and nesting birds, and as such it is recommended that a condition is set to ensure a Construction Environmental Management Plan is produced (and implemented) and that wildlife is not harmed.

### **RBC Landscaping**

- 4.8 I have compared the approved planting plan (approved under 171259) with the proposed drawing and the location of the proposed station building does not affect the landscaping approved, the station building being north of the proposed landscape strip, with the surrounding landscape provision being indicatively shown on the aerial photo provided. I therefore have no objections to the proposals. Depending on the phasing of build and landscaping, it would be prudent to consider protection of the landscaping to the south during construction, if it is in place when the station building is constructed. An appropriately worded condition will be required.

### **Network Rail**

- 4.9 *Planning Officer note: Joint response to West Berkshire and Reading BC:* Whilst there is no objection in principle to this proposal I give below my comments and requirements for the safe operation of the railway and the protection of Network Rail's adjoining land. Please can you add a condition to any approval granted for the paragraph which is emboldened.
- 4.10 **Drainage** - Soakaways, as a means of storm/surface water disposal must not be constructed near/within 20 metres of Network Rail's boundary or at any point which could adversely affect the stability of Network Rail's property. Storm/surface water must not be discharged onto Network Rail's property or into Network Rail's culverts or drains. Suitable drainage or other works must be provided and maintained by the Developer to prevent surface water flows or run-off onto Network Rail's property. Proper provision must be made to accept and continue drainage discharging from Network Rail's property. Suitable foul drainage must be provided separate from Network Rail's existing drainage. Once water enters a pipe it becomes a controlled source and as such no water should be discharged in the direction of the railway.
- 4.11 **Full details of the drainage plans are to be submitted for approval to the Network Rail Asset Protection Engineer. No works are to commence on site on any drainage plans without the approval of the Network Rail Asset Protection Engineer.**
- 4.12 The following should be included on any approval granted as informatives: -
1. **Excavations/ Earthworks** - All excavations / earthworks carried out in the vicinity of Network Rail's property / structures must be designed and executed such that no interference with the integrity of that property / structure can occur. If temporary compounds are to be located adjacent to the operational railway, these should be included in a method statement for approval by Network Rail. Prior to commencement of works, full details of excavations and earthworks to be carried out near the railway undertaker's boundary fence should be submitted for approval of the Local Planning Authority acting in consultation with the railway undertaker and the works shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved details. Where development may affect the railway, consultation with the Asset Protection Engineer should be undertaken.
  2. **Plant, Scaffolding and Cranes** - Any scaffold which is to be constructed adjacent to the railway must be erected in such a manner that, at no time will any poles or cranes over-sail or fall onto the railway. All plant and scaffolding must be positioned, that in the event of failure, it will not fall on to Network Rail land.
  3. **Party Wall** - Where works are proposed adjacent to the railway it may be necessary to serve the appropriate notices on Network Rail and their tenants under the Party Wall etc Act 1996. Developers should consult with Network Rail at an early stage of the preparation of details of their development on Party Wall matters.

The applicant is reminded that any works close to the Network Rail boundary, and any excavation works are also covered by the Party Wall Act of 1996. Should any foundations, any excavations or any part of the building encroachment onto Network Rail land then the applicant would need to serve notice on Network Rail and they would be liable for costs. An

applicant cannot access Network Rail land without permission (via the Asset Protection Team) and in addition to any costs under the Party Wall Act, the applicant would also be liable for all Network Rail site supervision costs whilst works are undertaken. No works in these circumstances are to commence without the approval of the Network Rail Asset Protection Engineer.

In order to mitigate the risks detailed above, the Developer should contact the Network Rail's Asset Protection Western Team well in advance of mobilising on site or commencing any works. The initial point of contact is [assetprotectionwestern@networkrail.co.uk](mailto:assetprotectionwestern@networkrail.co.uk). The department will provide all necessary Engineering support subject to a Basic Asset Protection Agreement.

***Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR)***

- 4.13 The scale and location of the proposed development is such that ONR do not advise against this application unless the emergency planners at 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 (REPPPIR) 2001 state that, in their opinion, the proposed development cannot be accommodated within their off-site emergency planning arrangements.

***SUDs***

- 4.14 The SuDs proposal has been deemed acceptable subject to conditions.

***RBC Transport***

- 4.15 This application is for the new Green Park Station which will result in the existing large business park and subsequent consented residential development being able to have direct access to the rail network. The station has had planning permission in the past but this proposal looks to alter the design of the station.
- 4.16 Access to the station is not to be altered as part of the scheme with the same pedestrian and vehicular routes retained. Therefore I have no objections to the proposals.

***West Berkshire Council***

- 4.17 The application made to West Berkshire is currently invalid [at time of sending] so our full consultation has yet to take place. The Ward Member, Burghfield Parish Council and the Highways department have been consulted as part of this out of district consultation, but no comments have so far been received. At this stage West Berkshire has no comments to make on the out of district consultation without prejudice to our own consideration of the planning application submitted to us.

***Wokingham Borough Council***

- 4.18 No objection to the proposal and trust the application will be considered in accordance with the relevant planning policies.

**(iii) Public/local consultation and comments received**

- 4.19 A site notice was displayed. Berkeley Homes, and Green Park Business Park (Deloitte on behalf of Mapletree). Two responses were received as follows:

- No cover for the bike stands? Can we please consider combining transport methods and thinking how to make both methods as comfortable as possible. I would suggest increasing the size of the cycle stands, and at least covering them so the bikes and seats are protected from the rain?
- I broadly support the proposal to build a station at Green Park. However, access to the station, and certainly parking for the station, appears to be only available for people arriving from the east side of the railway. With the upcoming demolition of the NCP in Garrard St, and a general desire to reduce car travel in Reading, should travellers not be welcome from the western side of the railway? Green Park is already grid-locked in the evening rush hour, and access from Junction 11 is poor in the morning, and a lot further in terms of miles and pollution, from areas like Burghfield. We are already forced to travel the long way to reach Green Park for access to the facilities - why the station as well? Would be nice for something sensible to be built, which considers local residents to the west - is that asking too much?

## 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

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

Policy CS1 (Sustainable Construction and Design)  
 Policy CS2 (Waste Minimisation)  
 Policy CS3 (Social Inclusion and Diversity)  
 Policy CS4 (Accessibility and Intensity of Development)  
 Policy CS5 (Inclusive Access)  
 Policy CS6 (Settlement Boundary)  
 Policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm)  
 Policy CS20 (Implementation of Reading's Transport Strategy)  
 Policy CS21 (Major Transport Projects)  
 Policy CS24 (Car/Cycle Parking)  
 Policy CS34 (Pollution and Water Resources)  
 Policy CS35 (Flooding)  
 Policy CS36 (Biodiversity and Geology)  
 Policy CS38 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland)

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 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)



## 6.0 APPRAISAL

### Main considerations:

The main issues to be considered are:

- i) Principle of Development
- ii) Design, Layout and Appearance
- iii) Access
- iv) Other matters: SUDs, Flooding, Cycle Storage and Equality.

### (i) Principle of Development

- 6.1 The principle of the proposed station building in this location was established by the granting of the previous planning permissions for a station and interchange on the wider site and is identified in the Sites and Detailed Policies Document as a key piece of infrastructure required to support the level of growth envisaged over the plan period in the Borough (Section 16 - Implementation - Infrastructure Delivery Plan). Emerging Reading Borough Local Plan Policy TR2 specifically identifies Green Park Station as a major transport project for which priority should be given and land safeguarded.

### ii) Design, Layout and Appearance

- 6.2 Policy CS7 requires that all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form, including: -
- Layout: urban structure and urban grain;
  - Landscape;
  - Density and mix;
  - Scale: height and massing; and
  - Architectural detail and materials.
- 6.3 The submitted Design and Access Statement (DAS) states that the design and layout of the station has largely been determined by passenger flow rates at peak periods of normal use, and much of the technical and spatial provision in respect of this is set out in national guidance as follows:
- GWR Design Guide
  - Department for Transport 'Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations'
  - Network Rail 'Inclusive Design Guidance - Family Facilities'
- 6.4 In addition the DAS refers to the need for the station building to be able to be a *"sign-post that can attract passengers from a distance" which is "... a key driver for the aesthetic consideration of the station building, whilst ease of cleaning and maintenance is a key design driver from the operator's perspective..."*
- 6.5 Therefore, a simple rectilinear building form has been chosen with a recessed main entrance, with a slim cantilevered canopy over. There is an 'out-of-hours' entrance, which is set to one side and recessed behind the main elevation of the station building, which will be steel sectioned sliding gates and fencing panels of 2.4m tall. A tall glazed screen element provides partial views into and through the building in both directions.



6.6 The overall scale of the building would be 5m high (eaves similar to a two storey house), which means that in its context it would not be dominating, but would be sufficiently tall to make it visible within its setting. However, it is not considered that this would have any detrimental effect on views to and from the adjacent countryside.

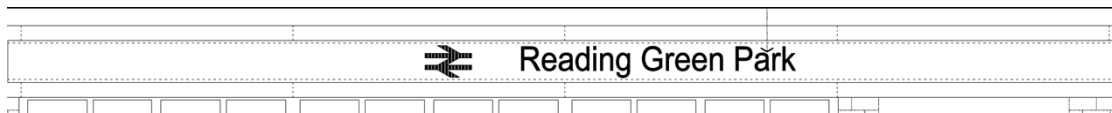


6.7 The materials palette proposed is simple with proposed fairface ‘Bathstone’ masonry block for the main elevations (which contain 20% recycled content), with pale grey panelled fascia and canopy, and standing seam aluminium roofing system, suitable for future installation of PV panels. This is intended to reflect the colours being used in GPV and is influenced by the commercial buildings within Green Park Business Park.

6.8 With respect to security of design the DAS highlights that the station building, as part of the overall station facility, has been the subject of review by the British Transport Police. The measures incorporated include CCTV, appropriate illumination and security fencing, the latter as open vertical bar type, so as to allow full visibility through the fencing and gates.

6.9 As set out in the committee report for the original permission in order for the overall station to achieve rail industry technical approval, the station is required to meet the latest security and antiterrorism provisions, with CCTV provision being accessed by Transport Police. It is proposed to have two separate CCTV systems. The station CCTV would be managed by GWR and British Transport Police and that for the interchange by RBC. The original overall permission (141944) included a specific condition (19) which relates to security cameras and other security measures. A similar condition is recommended.

6.10 As part of the overall scheme, there will be a station name sign on the front entrance canopy which would feature individual internally illuminated letters on spacers. The proposed signage would benefit from deemed advertisement consent Class 1 being a functional sign displayed by a public transport operator. This also applies to information or directional signs such as timetables and safety signs.



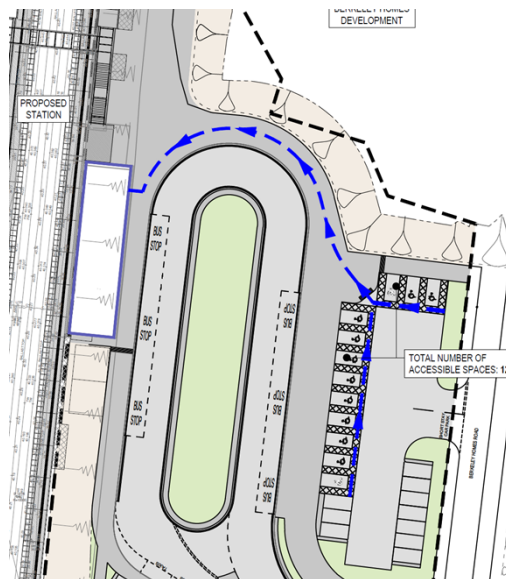
6.11 In terms of landscaping this specific proposal for the station building does not include further landscaping over and above that previously approved under the wider station permission (141944), and is therefore considered acceptable to Natural Environment officer, subject to a condition requiring protection of approved landscaping.

6.12 Officers are satisfied that the overall design of the building will appear as a contemporary and appropriate addition to the wider Green Park and complies with Policy CS7.

**(iii) Access**

6.13 Policy CS5 requires that *“All buildings should be located, sited and designed to provide suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily.”*

6.14 The building has been designed in accordance with Network Rail guidance and Building Regulations standards with respect to inclusive access. The DAS identifies that the surface approach to the station will be generally flat and suitable for wheelchair access and ambulant access. Clarification was also provided regarding the safe route from blue badge spaces to the entrance of the building shown below.



6.15 Automatic doors give access to the building with low counter sections of the enquiry desk and hearing loop provision. A number of matters were raised by the Access and Disabilities Working Group and the responses are set out in para 4.6 above. A number of the concerns related to matters which are operational in nature and therefore not part of the remit of assessing this application. Officers are satisfied that the application strikes the correct balance on these issues and that Policy CS5 is complied with.

**(iii) Other Matters**

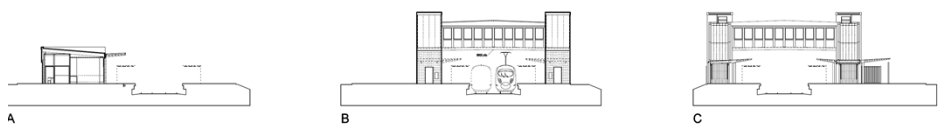
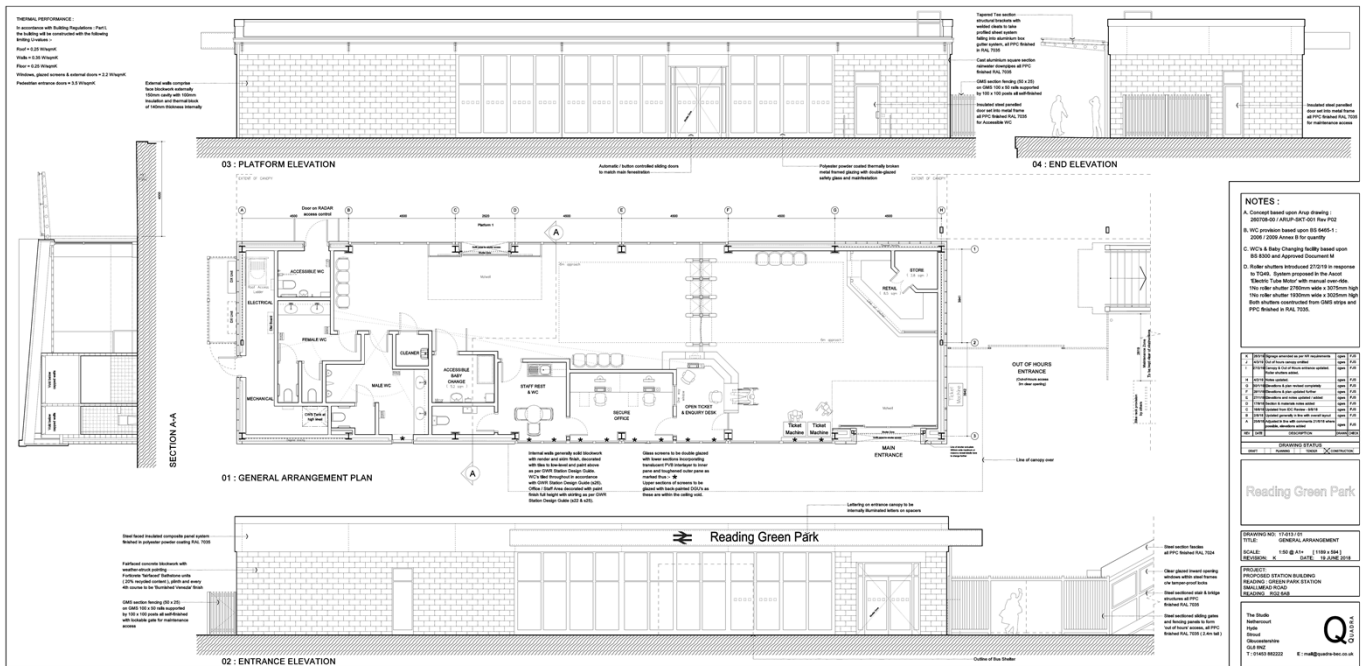
- 6.16 *SUDS* - The Utility Statement identifies that the surface water drainage will be directed from the building into a new system being installed as part of the interchange works. Conditions are attached requiring the submission and approval of drainage design, which is to be approved in consultation with Network Rail.
- 6.17 *Flooding* - The proposed building is in Flood Zone 1 (at the least risk of experiencing a flood event), however, the FRA states that the “proposed station floor levels will be set at a minimum of at the level of the approved platform that range between levels of 41.0m AOD, and 41.5m AOD. This is a minimum of 1580mm above the worst case modelled 1 in 1000 annual probability flood level.” The Environment Agency has confirmed that they have no objection on flooding grounds and therefore the scheme complies with Policy CS35. It should be noted that the wider Green Park Station Development was assessed under the original application against the Sequential and Exception tests and were considered to have been passed.
- 6.18 *Cycle storage* - Responding to a comment raised through consultation a condition is recommended requiring the submission and approval of covered bicycle storage.
- 6.19 *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, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. The design of the building has been developed in accordance with relevant inclusive access requirements both within relevant train station guidance, network rail guidance, but also those within Building Regulations. It is considered that the matters raised through the course of the application have been adequately addressed, and that there will be no significant detrimental effects with regard to protected groups in relation to the proposed scheme.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

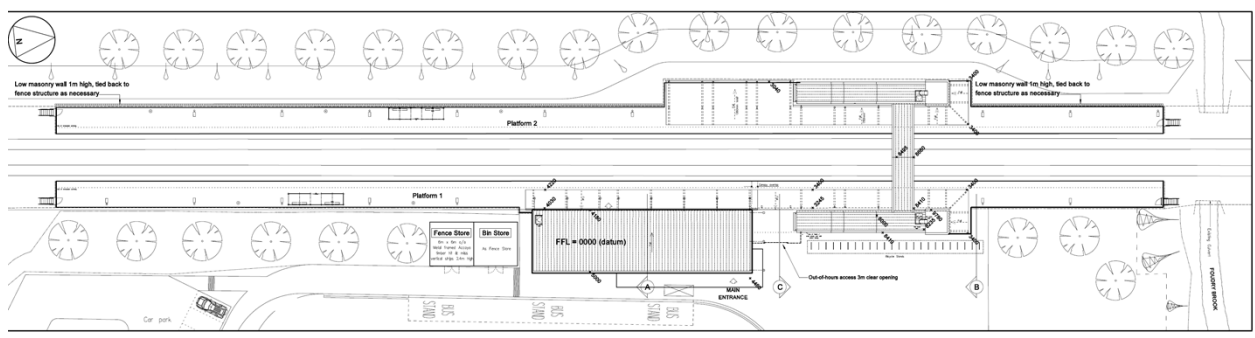
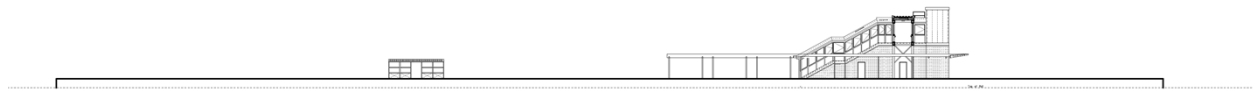
- 7.1 The proposed station building forms part of the wider Green Park Station interchange and is considered to be of an appropriate scale and design to serve the new station and the wider development of Green Park Village and is considered to comply with all relevant policies. It is recommended for approval subject to conditions and informatives.

**Case Officer: Alison Amoah**

# APPENDIX 1: PLANS AND ELEVATIONS



WORKING SECTIONS



AREA OF MODEL BASE & ROOF PLAN

