

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

Direct ☎ : 0118 9372303

3 December 2019

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

### NOTICE OF MEETING - PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE 11 DECEMBER 2019

A meeting of the Planning Applications Committee will be held on Wednesday, 11 December 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 - 18  |
| 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST                  | -           |                |         |
| 3. QUESTIONS                                 | -           |                |         |
| 4. POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS | Decision    |                | 19 - 22 |
| 5. PLANNING APPEALS                          | Information |                | 23 - 26 |
| 6. APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL           | Information |                | 27 - 36 |

### PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

|    |   |  |       |         |
|----|---|--|-------|---------|
| 7. | 191088/FUL - CROWNE PLAZA READING, RICHFIELD AVENUE | Decision   | ABBEY | 37 - 86 |
|    | Proposal  | Redevelopment of former Crowne Plaza Hotel car park and construction of new 132-bed hotel (Use Class C1), with associated access, car parking and landscaping. |       |         |
|    | Recommendation                                      | Application Refused  |       |         |

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|-----|--|----------|-------------|-----------|
| 8.  | 190760/FUL & 190929/FUL - 76<br>CHRISTCHURCH ROAD  | Decision | CHURCH      | 87 - 114  |
|     | <p><b>Proposal</b>                      190760 - Change of use ground, first and second floor of A2 (Bank) to A5 on the ground floor, and on first and second floor from A2 to C4 HMO. Part- retrospective application for flat roof rear dormer.</p> <p>   190929 - Change of use of 1st and 2nd floors from bank (Class A2) to C4 HMO. Part-retrospective application for flat roof rear dormer.</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b>           Applications Permitted</p> |          |             |           |
| 9.  | 191677/REG3 - MAPLEDURHAM<br>PLAYING FIELDS, UPPER<br>WOODCOTE ROAD, CAVERSHAM   | Decision | MAPLEDURHAM | 115 - 126 |
|     | <p><b>Proposal</b>                      Refurbishment and single storey front rear and side extensions to the pavilion building</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b>           Application Permitted</p>   |          |             |           |
| 10. | 191396/LBC - SOUTHCOTE LODGE,<br>BURGHFIELD ROAD   | Decision | SOUTHCOTE   | 127 - 138 |
|     | <p><b>Proposal</b>                      Replacement of existing timber sliding sash windows with new white uPVC double-glazed sliding sash windows within existing window openings in Grade II Listed Building (resubmission of 181469).</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b>           Application Refused</p>  |          |             |           |

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# KEY TO CODING OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS Annex

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**).
  - 1.3 The following codes are used to abbreviate the type of permission sought:
    - FUL - Full detailed planning permission for development or change of use
    - OUT - Principal of developing a site or changing a use
    - REM - Detailed matters "reserved matters" - for permission following approval of an outline planning application.
    - HOU - Applications for works to domestic houses
    - ADV - Advertisement consent
    - APC - Approval of details required by planning conditions
    - VAR - Significant change to a planning permission previously granted
    - NMA - Insignificant change to a planning permission previously granted
    - ADJ - Consultation from neighbouring authority on application in their area
    - LBC - Works to or around a Listed Building
    - CLE - A certificate to confirm what the existing use of a property is
    - CLP - A certificate to confirm that a proposed use or development does not require planning permission to be applied for.
    - REG3 - Indicates that the application has been submitted by the Local Authority.
2. The following is a key to existing officers with their direct dial telephone numbers.

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

# Material planning considerations

Material planning considerations can include (but are not limited to):

- Overlooking/loss of privacy
- Loss of daylight/sunlight or overshadowing
- Scale and dominance
- Layout and density of buildings
- Appearance and design of development and materials proposed
- Disabled persons' access
- Highway safety
- Traffic and parking issues
- Drainage and flood risk
- Noise, dust, fumes etc
- Impact on character or appearance of area
- Effect on listed buildings and conservation areas
- Effect on trees and wildlife/nature conservation
- Impact on the community and other services
- Economic impact and sustainability
- Government policy
- Proposals in the Local Plan
- Previous planning decisions (including appeal decisions)
- Archaeology

Concerns that cannot be taken into account:

- Who the applicant is/the applicant's background
- Loss of views
- Loss of property value
- Loss of trade or increased competition
- Strength or volume of local opposition
- Construction noise/disturbance during development
- Fears of damage to property
- Maintenance of property
- Boundary disputes, covenants or other property rights
- Rights of way and ownerships disputes over rights of way
- Personal circumstances

## Glossary of usual terms

**Affordable housing** - Housing provided below market price to meet identified needs.

**Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)** - Area where air quality levels need to be managed.

**Apart-hotel** - A use providing basic facilities for self-sufficient living with the amenities of a hotel. Generally classed as C1 (hotels) for planning purposes.

**Article 4 Direction** - A direction which can be made by the Council to remove normal permitted development rights.

**BREEAM** - A widely used means of reviewing and improving the environmental performance of generally commercial developments (industrial, retail etc).

**Brownfield Land** - previously developed land.

**Brown roof** - A roof surfaced with a broken substrate, e.g. broken bricks.

**Building line** - The general line along a street beyond which no buildings project.

**Bulky goods** - Large products requiring shopping trips to be made by car: e.g. DIY or furniture.

**CIL** - Community Infrastructure Levy. Local authorities in England and Wales levy a charge on new development to be spent on infrastructure to support the development of the area.

**Classified Highway Network** - The network of main roads, consisting of A, B and C roads.

**Conservation Area** - areas of special architectural or historic interest designated by the local authority. As designated heritage assets the preservation and enhancement of the area carries great weight in planning permission decisions.

**Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Competent Authority** - The Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1999 (COMAH) and their amendments 2005, are the enforcing



regulations within the United Kingdom. They are applicable to any establishment storing or otherwise handling large quantities of industrial chemicals of a hazardous nature. Types of establishments include chemical warehousing, chemical production facilities and some distributors.

**Dormer Window** - Located in the roof of a building, it projects or extends out through the roof, often providing space internally.

**Dwelling**- A single housing unit - a house, flat, maisonette etc.

**Evening Economy** A term for the business activities, particularly those used by the public, which take place in the evening such as pubs, clubs, restaurants and arts/cultural uses.

**Flood Risk Assessment** - A requirement at planning application stage to demonstrate how flood risk will be managed.

**Flood Zones** - The Environment Agency designates flood zones to reflect the differing risks of flooding. Flood Zone 1 is low probability, Flood Zone 2 is medium probability, Flood Zone 3a is high probability and Flood Zone 3b is functional floodplain.

**Granny annexe** - A self-contained area within a dwelling house/ the curtilage of a dwelling house but without all the facilities to be self contained and is therefore dependent on the main house for some functions. It will usually be occupied by a relative.

**Green roof** - A roof with vegetation on top of an impermeable membrane.

**Gross floor area** - Total floor area of the house, including all floors and garage, measured externally.

**Hazardous Substances Consent** - Consent required for the presence on, over, or under land of any hazardous substance in excess of controlled quantity.

**Historic Parks and Gardens** - Parks and gardens of special historic interest, designated by English Heritage.

**Housing Association** - An independent not-for-profit body that provides low-cost "affordable housing" to meet specific housing needs.

**Infrastructure** - The basic services and facilities needed for the smooth running of a community.

**Lifetime Home** - A home which is sufficiently adaptable to allow people to remain in the home despite changing circumstances such as age or disability.

**Listed building** - Buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Consent is required before works that might affect their character or appearance can be undertaken. They are divided into Grades I, II and II\*, with I being of exceptional interest.

**Local Plan** - The main planning document for a District or Borough.

**Luminance** - A measure of the luminous intensity of light, usually measured in candelas per square metre.

**Major Landscape Feature** - these are identified and protected in the Local Plan for being of local significance for their visual and amenity value

**Public realm** - the space between and within buildings that is publicly accessible, including streets, squares, forecourts, parks and open spaces whether publicly or privately owned.

**Scheduled Ancient Monument** - Specified nationally important archaeological sites.

**Section 106 agreement** - A legally binding agreement or obligation entered into by the local authority and a land developer over an issue related to a planning application, under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

**Sequential approach** A method of considering and ranking the suitability of sites for development, so that one type of site is considered before another. Different sequential approaches are applied to different uses.

**Sui Generis** - A use not specifically defined in the use classes order (2004) - planning permission is always needed to change from a sui generis use.

**Sustainable development** - Development to improve quality of life and protect the environment in balance with the local economy, for now and future generations.

**Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS)** - This term is taken to cover the whole range of sustainable approaches to surface water drainage management.

**Tree Preservation Order (TPO)** - An order made by a local planning authority in respect of trees and woodlands. The principal effect of a TPO is to prohibit the cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage or wilful destruction of trees without the LPA's consent.

The table below summarises the permitted changes of use as of 25 May 2019. The table simplifies the complex legislation and should be read as a guide only.

| From   | To   |
|--|--|
| <b>A1</b> (shops)  | <b>A2</b><br><b>A3</b> up to 150m <sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval<br><b>B1</b> up to 500m <sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval<br><b>C3</b> up to 150m <sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval<br><b>D2</b> up to 200m <sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval and only if the premises was in A1 use on 5th December 2013<br>A <b>mixed use</b> comprising an A1 or A2 use and up to two flats may also be permitted subject to meeting certain conditions |
| <b>A2</b> (professional and financial services) when premises have a display window at ground level, but excluding betting offices or pay day loan shops | <b>A1</b><br><b>A3</b> up to 150m <sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval<br><b>B1</b> up to 500m <sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval<br><b>C3</b> up to 150m <sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval<br><b>D2</b> subject to Prior Approval and only if the premises was in A2 use on 5th December 2013<br>A <b>mixed use</b> comprising an A1 or A2 use and up to two flats may also be permitted subject to meeting certain conditions                             |
| <b>A3</b> (restaurants and cafes)  | <b>A1</b> or <b>A2</b>   |
| <b>A4</b> (drinking establishments)  | <b>A4</b> drinking establishment with A3 (restaurants and cafes)   |
| <b>A4</b> (drinking establishment) with <b>A3</b> (restaurants and cafes)  | <b>A4</b> (drinking establishments)  |
| <b>A5</b> (hot food takeaways)   | <b>A1</b> or <b>A2</b> or <b>A3</b><br><b>B1</b> up to 500m <sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval<br><b>C3</b>  |
| <b>B1</b> (business)   | <b>B8</b> up to 500m <sup>2</sup>  |
| <b>B2</b> (general industrial)   | <b>B1</b><br><b>B8</b> up to 500m <sup>2</sup>   |
| <b>B8</b> (storage and distribution)   | <b>B1</b> up to 500m <sup>2</sup><br><b>C3</b> (subject to prior approval)   |
| <b>C3</b> (dwellinghouses)   | <b>C4</b> (small houses in multiple occupation)  |
| <b>C4</b> (small houses in multiple occupation)  | <b>C3</b> (dwellinghouses)   |
| <b>Sui Generis</b> (casinos)   | <b>D2</b><br><b>A3</b> only if existing building is under 150m <sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval<br><b>C3</b> up to 150m <sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval.  |
| <b>Sui Generis</b> (betting offices and pay day loan shops)  | <b>A1</b><br><b>A2</b><br><b>A3</b> up to 150m <sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval<br><b>B1</b> up to 500m <sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval<br><b>C3</b> up to 150m <sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval<br>A <b>mixed use</b> comprising a betting office or a pay day loan shop, or an A1 or A2 use and up to two flats may also be permitted subject to meeting certain conditions.<br><b>D2</b>   |

| <b>From</b>                                 | <b>To</b>  |
|---|--|
| <b>Sui Generis</b> (laundrette)             | <b>B1</b> up to 500m <sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval                                      |
|   | <b>C3</b> up to 150m <sup>2</sup> and subject to Prior Approval                                      |
| <b>Sui Generis</b> (agricultural buildings) | <b>A1, A2, A3, B1, B8, C1, C3, D2</b> , all subject to meeting relevant criteria and Prior Approval. |

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**Present:** Councillor McKenna (Chair);

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

### RESOLVED ITEMS

#### 74. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### 75. 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.

**Resolved -**

- (1) 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:

**191396/LBC - SOUTHCOTE LODGE, BURGHFIELD ROAD**

Replacement of existing timber sliding sash windows with new white uPVC double-glazed sliding sash windows within existing window openings in Grade II Listed Building (resubmission of 181469).

**191144/FUL - 49A-51A GEORGE STREET**

Residential development for a total of six dwellings (net increase of 4 dwellings), comprising re-modelling of 49A and 51A George Street, two storey and single storey rear extensions, rear dormer windows and external alterations to form four apartments and demolition of existing warehouse and construction of two apartments.

- (2) 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 unaccompanied site visits:

**191634/FUL - HAMILTON CENTRE, 135 BULMERSHE ROAD**

Conversion of Hamilton Centre into 2 storey Special Educational Needs College for 11 - 18 yr olds. Project also includes a 500m2 new build extension, car parking, landscaping and multi use sports area.

(or accompanied if necessary, in consultation with the Chair and Ward Councillors)

**191176/OUT - THE WOODLEY ARMS PH, WALDECK STREET**

Outline application considering access, appearance, layout and scale involving demolition of former public house (Class A4) and erection of 2 x 3-storey buildings to provide in total 38 purpose-built co-living units (Sui Generis), 10 vehicle spaces, shared external communal space and associated works.

**76. 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 five 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 three decisions that had been made by the Secretary of State, or by an Inspector appointed for the purpose, which were attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

**(iii) Reports on Appeal Decisions**

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.

**77. APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL**

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report giving details in Table 1 of seven pending prior approval applications, and in Table 2 of seven applications for prior approval decided between 27 September and 1 November 2019.

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

**78. PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT - DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICE - QUARTERS 1 & 2 2019/20**

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report setting out details of performance in development management (applications, appeals, enforcement and associated services) for Quarter 1 (April - June) and Quarter 2 (July - September) of 2019/20.

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

#### **79. ADOPTION OF THE READING BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN**

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the adoption of a new Reading Borough Local Plan. Appendix 1 to the report listed the replacement of policies in previous development plan documents.

The Council had been working on the production of a new comprehensive Local Plan for Reading, to set out policies and proposals up to 2036, and the Local Plan had been adopted at Council on 4 November 2019. The Local Plan would therefore be the main consideration for planning applications determined from that date, and the existing development plans would cease to apply: the Core Strategy (adopted 2008 and amended 2015); Reading Central Area Action Plan (adopted 2009) and the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (adopted 2012, amended 2015).

The report summarised the implications of this for decision-making and Appendix 1 listed the policies from the previous development plan documents and identified if and how that policy had been replaced in the new Local Plan. It explained that, where a policy was listed as a replacement, it meant that it covered the same issue, but did not necessarily mean that it had the same approach.

**Resolved -** That the adoption of the Reading Borough Local Plan and the replacement of the existing Development Plan Documents be noted.

#### **80. 190627/FUL - GAS HOLDER, ALEXANDER TURNER CLOSE**

Demolition of existing buildings and Gas Holder and the erection of new buildings ranging between 2 and 9 storeys in height, providing 130 residential units (Class C3) with associated access, car parking, landscaping and open space.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting which addressed affordable housing and ecology matters, proposed additional heads of terms and conditions and amended the recommendation accordingly. It set out amendments to the original report to reflect the final adopted wording within the Reading Borough Local Plan and to correct errors. It also clarified the requirements of the Construction Method Statement condition and had appended two plans and a visual of the new pedestrian connection to the footbridge over the River Kennet. It was reported at the meeting that a late written objection had been received relating to lack of engagement from the applicant, but these matters had been addressed in the original report.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Objectors Joanna Brown, Shivraj Hawaldar, Joseph Jones and Daniel Shockley, and the applicant's agent Karen Charles, attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application, and the planning case officer summarised a representation from an objector who had not been able to attend the meeting.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to grant full planning permission subject to outstanding sustainability (carbon off-setting) matters being satisfactorily resolved and completion of a S106 legal agreement by 4 December 2019 (unless a later date be agreed by the Deputy 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;
- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Deputy 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 amendments and additions recommended in the update report, and an additional condition requiring the submission of a scheme for the retention of the cast iron pipe on site and its incorporation in the development;
- (4) That the Construction and Demolition Management Plan be approved in consultation with Ward Councillors and the Environment Agency;
- (5) That the Traffic Management Sub-Committee be asked to review the access to, and use and future status of, Gas Works Road, Kenavon Drive and the adjacent roads, and the pressure on the Forbury Road roundabout.

**81. 191086/FUL - UNIT 16, NORTH STREET**

Redevelopment of site to provide 295sqm of office space (Class B1(a) and 6no. 1-bed apartments and 4no. 2-bed apartments (Class C3) including cycle and bin storage.

The Executive Director for 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 green wall and proposed the securing of a management plan for the green wall as an additional head of terms. It also corrected a typographical error in the original report.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to grant full planning permission for application 191096/FUL



subject to completion of a S106 legal agreement by 30 November 2019 (unless a later date be agreed by the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the original report and the additional Head of Terms set out in the update report;

- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Deputy 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.

**82. 191482/FUL - BACK OF BEYOND PH, 108 KINGS ROAD**

Alterations to existing and new boundary treatment along Bembridge Place, to facilitate dual use of the service yard as a service yard/beer garden, and associated works.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting, which corrected a typographical error in Condition 5 in the original report.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

**Resolved -**

That planning permission for application 191482/FUL be granted, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the original report, with Condition 5 amended as set out in the update report.

**83. 191341/REG3 - SUN STREET COMMUNITY CENTRE, SUN STREET**

Erection of a new boundary fence to an existing crèche play area.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. It was reported at the meeting that the application site was in Park ward, not Abbey ward as stated in the report.

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 191341/REG3 be authorised, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended.

**84. 191632/REG3 - VARIOUS TOWN CENTRE LOCATIONS**

Retention of existing non-illuminated direction, place identification, other feature signs and interpretation panels within public pedestrian areas in Reading town centre and the Abbey Quarter on a permanent basis. Additional directional signage on a permanent basis.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting which set out comments received from Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee and 'Terry's Reading Walkabout'.

Comments were received and considered.

**Resolved -** That advertisement consent for application 191632/ADV be granted, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended.

**85. 190760/FUL & 190929/FUL - 76 CHRISTCHURCH ROAD**

190760/FUL Proposal: Change of use ground, first and second floor of A2 (Bank) to A5 on the ground floor, and on first and second floor from A2 to C4 HMO. Part-retrospective application for flat roof rear dormer.

190929/FUL Proposal: Change of use of 1st and 2nd floors from bank (Class A2) to C4 HMO. Part-retrospective application for flat roof rear dormer.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above applications. An update report was tabled at the meeting giving details of additional representations made, clarifying differences between the proposals by showing site plans and recommending an additional condition for a litter management strategy.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Objectors Robert Cox, Jessica Di Luccio and Jenny Halstead, the applicant Mr Chima and his agent Jeff Asemi attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

(Councillor McEwan declared a prejudicial interest in this item on the grounds of predetermination, made a statement as Ward Councillor then left the room and took no part in the debate or decision. Nature of interest: Councillor McEwan had been contacted by interested parties and had formed a predetermined view on the applications.)

**Resolved -**

That consideration of applications 190760/FUL and 190929/FUL be deferred, in order for more information to be provided on the reasons for an application for 60 Christchurch Road being refused planning permission and being dismissed at appeal, the different planning uses in the area, the intended fate of the ground floor in 190929/FUL which was currently A2 (not subject to change of use in this application) and the relevant considerations regarding planning applications for Houses in Multiple Occupation in this area.

**86. 190591/FUL - 127A LOVEROCK ROAD**

Demolition of 2 number existing single storey buildings, removal of telecoms plant. Replacement with new single unit for B1c, B2 and B8 use classes with ancillary offices including associated service areas, car parking and landscaping. Modified access onto Wigmore Lane.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. It was reported at the meeting that the application site was in Kentwood ward, not Whitley ward as stated in the report.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to grant full planning permission for application 190591/FUL subject to completion of a Section 106 legal agreement by 27 November 2019 (unless a later date be agreed by the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services) 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 Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (3) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended.

**87. 190702/REG3 - LAND TO THE REAR OF 51 TO 65 WENSLEY ROAD**

Erection of two 2 bed dwellings (Class C3).

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting that gave details of amenity for nearby occupiers and corrected typographical errors in the original report.

Comments were received and considered.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to grant full planning permission for application 190702/REG3 subject to completion of a unilateral undertaking legal agreement by 30 November 2019 (unless a later date be agreed by the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services) 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 Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to refuse permission;

- (3) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended.

**88. 190087/FUL - LAND AT AUTUMN CLOSE, EMMER GREEN**

Construction of a 4-bedroom dwelling, garage, and associated works

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

Comments and objections were received and considered.

**Resolved -**

That application 190087/FUL be refused for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development, by reason of size, detailed design, materials and layout would fail to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area contrary to Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm), and Policy H11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019;
2. The proposed development, by reason of its bulk, scale, and massing and proximity to adjoining properties would be overbearing to, and result in a loss of privacy and outlook for existing residents contrary to Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019;
3. The proposed development, by reason of its lack of an acceptable contribution towards the provision of Affordable Housing, and in the subsequent absence of a completed legal agreement to secure an acceptable contribution towards the provision of Affordable Housing, including an obligation for Affordable Housing to be applied on a cumulative basis should the building subsequently be extended/alterd (to create further units) or units sub-divided, fails to contribute adequately to the housing needs of Reading Borough, contrary to policy H3 (Affordable Housing) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, and the Council's Adopted Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2013.

**89. 191396/LBC - SOUTHCOTE LODGE, BURGHFIELD ROAD**

Replacement of existing timber sliding sash windows with new white uPVC double-glazed sliding sash windows within existing window openings in Grade II Listed Building (resubmission of 181469).

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting giving details of a further objection received and amending the recommendation to reflect the adopted Local Plan.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

**Resolved -**

That consideration of application 191396/LBC be deferred for a site visit and to look at materials.

**90. 190890/FUL - UNIT 6, PROCTOR END SOUTH**

Change of use of unit from retail (Class A1) to gym (Class D2) and insertion of 1,105sqm GIA mezzanine floor.

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

Comments were received and considered.

**Resolved -**

That planning permission for application 180890/FUL be granted, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended.

**91. 190705/REG3 - LAND ADJACENT 4 CAMELFORD CLOSE**

Erection of detached 3 storey 4 bed dwelling.

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

Comments and objections were received and considered.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to grant full planning permission for application 190705/REG3 subject to completion of a unilateral undertaking legal agreement by 10 January 2020 (unless a later date be agreed by the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services) 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 Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (3) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 9.40 pm)



## 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>11 DECEMBER 2019</b>                          |                |                                      |
| <b>TITLE:</b>     | <b>POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS</b> |                |                                      |
| <b>SERVICE:</b>   | <b>PLANNING</b>                                  | <b>WARDS:</b>  | <b>BOROUGH WIDE</b>                  |
| <b>AUTHOR:</b>    | <b>JULIE WILLIAMS</b>                            | <b>TEL:</b>    | <b>0118 9372461</b>                  |
| <b>JOB TITLE:</b> | <b>ACTING PLANNING MANAGER</b>                   | <b>E-MAIL:</b> | <b>Julie.williams@reading.gov.uk</b> |

#### 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 The purpose of the planning service is to support the delivery of economic and sustainable growth while providing appropriate regulation to secure an attractive and safe town. We do this by maintaining planning performance and developing policy and systems to secure sustainable development. This contributes to the following priorities in the Corporate Plan 2018-21:
- Securing the economic success of Reading;
  - Improving access to decent housing to meet local needs;
  - Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe;
  - Promoting great education, leisure and cultural opportunities for people in Reading.

#### **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>11 DECEMBER 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: BATTLE  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/19/3237799  
CASE NO: 190522  
ADDRESS: 39 Brunswick Hill  
PROPOSAL: Erection of new building containing 9 no. apartments with parking at rear following demolition of existing buildings  
CASE OFFICER: Brian Conlon  
METHOD: Written Representation  
APPEAL TYPE: Refusal of Planning Permission  
APPEAL LODGED: 4.11.2019

WARD: ABBEY  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/C/19/3233919  
CASE NO: 190046  
ADDRESS: 4 Zinzan Street  
PROPOSAL: Without planning permission and within the last four years the application of exterior cladding to the Northern (side) elevation of the building on the Land using materials which are unsympathetic to the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area  
CASE OFFICER: Chris Beard  
METHOD: Written Representation  
APPEAL TYPE: Enforcement Expediency  
APPEAL LODGED: 8.11.2019

WARD: REDLANDS  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/X/18/3219538  
CASE NO: 180154  
ADDRESS: 44 Addington Road  
PROPOSAL: Certificate of lawfulness for the existing use of the first floor of the building as a one bedroom flat  
CASE OFFICER: Connie Davis  
METHOD: Written Representation  
APPEAL TYPE: Refuse Lawful Certificate  
APPEAL LODGED: 8.11.2019

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Appeals Decided:**

WARD: PEPPARD  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/D/19/3236122  
CASE NO: 190885  
ADDRESS: 267 Peppard Road  
PROPOSAL: Roof alteration to existing extension  
CASE OFFICER:  
METHOD: Householder written representation  
DECISION: DISMISSED  
DATE DETERMINED: 20.11.2019

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 Davies  
METHOD: Written Representation  
DECISION: DISMISSED  
DATE DETERMINED: 25.11.2019

WARD: WHITLEY  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/D/19/3235069  
CASE NO: 190487  
ADDRESS: 235 Basingstoke Road  
PROPOSAL: Two storey side extension and single storey rear extension  
CASE OFFICER: Connie Davies  
METHOD: Householder written Representation  
DECISION: DISMISSED  
DATE DETERMINED: 25.11.2019

## **APPENDIX 3**

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

**No reports available this time**

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

|            |  |         |  |
|------------|--|---------|--|
| TO:        | PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE            |         |  |
| DATE:      | 11 DECEMBER 2019                           |         |  |
| TITLE:     | APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL            |         |  |
| AUTHOR:    | JULIE WILLIAMS & RICHARD EATOUGH           |         |  |
| JOB TITLE: | PLANNING MANAGER<br>(ACTING) & TEAM LEADER | E-MAIL: | <a href="mailto:Julie.williams@reading.gov.uk">Julie.williams@reading.gov.uk</a><br><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 Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (GPDO 2015) as amended.

#### 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 £1,221,674.

(Office Prior Approvals - £1,114,373: Householder Prior Approvals - £74,072: Retail Prior Approvals - £10,696: Demolition Prior Approval - £2135: Storage Prior Approvals - £5716: Shop to Restaurant Prior Approval - £3574: Shop to Leisure Prior Approval - £305: Light Industrial to Residential - £10,704)

*Figures since last report*

Office Prior Approvals - £0: Householder Prior Approvals - £330

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 @ 27<sup>th</sup> November 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 | 191765                       | 96 Dawlish Road, Reading, RG2 7SG            | Whitley   | Rear extension measuring 6.0m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.0m, and 2.4m in height to eaves level. | 04/11/2019    | 15/12/2019                |          | £110                                |
| Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015 | 191774                       | 18 Hampden Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5ED | Caversham | Rear extension measuring 3.8m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.34m and 2.8m in height to eaves level. | 05/11/2019    | 16/12/2019                |          | £110                                |
| Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015 | 191768                       | 18 Hampden Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5ED | Caversham | Rear extension measuring 6m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.87m and 3m in height to eaves level.     | 04/11/2019    | 15/12/2019                |          | £110                                |

**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 | 191646                       | 16a Bridge Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AA | Caversham | Change of use from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 2no. 2-bed flats. | 11/10/2019    | 06/12/2019                |          | £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 | 191782                       | Land to rear of 8 Prospect Street, Reading, RG1 7YG | 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 part of building into 5 dwellings. | 05/11/2019    | 01/01/2020                |          | £2214                               |

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## 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 MereOak Busway, Basingstoke Road, Shinfield, Reading, RG7 1NR | Whitley | 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 - None

Retail Prior Approvals applications pending -None

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 1 November 2019 to 27 November 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 | 191577                       | 25 Mason Street, Reading, RG1 7PD    | Battle | Rear extension measuring 4.6m in depth, with a maximum height of 2.77m (parapet wall height 3.15m) and 2.4m in height to eaves level. | 26/09/2019    | 15/11/2019    | Application Permitted |
| Householder Prior Approval - Class A, Part 1 GPDO 2015 | 191669                       | 27 Tamarisk Avenue, Reading, RG2 8JB | Church | Rear extension measuring 4.5m in depth, with a maximum height of 3.6m and 2.8m in height to eaves level.                              | 17/10/2019    | 12/11/2019    | Application Withdrawn |

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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 | 191513                       | 1 St Giles Court, Southampton Street, Reading | Katesgrove | Change of use of building from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 5 x 1-bedroom flats. | 18/09/2019    | 15/11/2019    | Prior Approval Notification - Approval |

| Application type   | Application reference number | Address  | Ward  | Proposal   | Date Received | Decision Date | Decision                               |
|--|------------------------------|--|-------|--|---------------|---------------|--|
| Office use to dwelling house - Class O, Part 1 GPDO 2015 | 191520                       | 1-2 Wesley Gate, Queens Road, Reading, RG1 4AP | Abbey | Change of use of building from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 15 flats. | 20/09/2019    | 13/11/2019    | Prior Approval Notification - Approval |

#### Light Industrial to Residential applications decided

| Application type   | Application reference number | Address  | Ward      | Proposal  | Date Received | Decision Date | Decision                              |
|--------------------|------------------------------|--|-----------|---|---------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| Prior Notification | 191617                       | Onc House, 68 St Johns Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5AL | Caversham | Notification of Prior Approval for a Change of use of Southern part of building from Class B1(c) (Light Industrial) to C3 (dwellinghouses) to comprise 8 x flats. | 25/09/2019    | 19/11/2019    | Prior Approval Notification - Refusal |

## Telecommunications Prior Approval applications decided

| Application type                                 | Application reference number | Address                              | Ward     | Proposal  | Date Received | Decision Date | Decision                               |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|---|---------------|---------------|--|
| Telecommunications Notification - Prior Approval | 191434                       | 308-314 Kings Road, Reading, RG1 4HP | Redlands | Installation of 6no. pole mounted antennas, 6no. ERS modules, 1no. GPS module, 2no. transmission dishes and ancillary equipment to rooftop. Removal of 3no. existing antennas | 02/09/2019    | 01/11/2019    | Prior Approval Notification - Approval |

Retail to Residential applications decided - None

Shop to Assembly & Leisure Prior Approval applications decided - None

Demolition Prior Approval applications decided - None

Shop to Restaurant Prior Approval applications decided - None

Solar Equipment Prior Approval applications decided - None

Prior Notification applications decided - None

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## COMMITTEE REPORT

**BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**  
**READING BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: December 11<sup>th</sup> 2019**

**Ward:** Abbey

**App No.:** 191088

**Address:** Crowne Plaza Reading, Richfield Avenue, Reading, RG1 8BD

**Proposal:** Redevelopment of former Crowne Plaza Hotel car park and construction of new 132-bed hotel (Use Class C1), with associated access, car parking and landscaping.

**Applicant:** RBH Hospitality Management

**Deadline:** 02/10/2019

**Extended Deadline:** 13/12/2019

**Planning Guarantee 26 week target:** 1/1/2020

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

#### **Refusal:**

- 1) The layout does not comply with the Local Planning Authority's standards in respect of vehicle parking. This could result in on-street parking/reversing movements on Richfield Avenue, and Thames Side Promenade, adversely affecting road safety and the flow of traffic, in conflict with Reading Borough Local Plan Policies TR5 and TR3.
- 2) Insufficient information has been submitted with the planning application to enable the highways, traffic and transportation implications of the proposed development to be fully assessed. From the information submitted, it is considered that the additional traffic likely to be generated by the proposal would adversely affect the safety and flow of users of the existing road network within Reading, contrary to Reading Borough Local Plan Policies CC6, TR1 and TR3.
- 3) The proposed development does not comply with the Local Planning Authority's standards as no dedicated servicing has been provided, which will impact on the proposed car park causing potential conflict between vehicles and pedestrians, which would conflict with Reading Borough Local Plan Policy TR3.
- 4) The design is not considered to be of a high quality which responds positively to the context, and would not maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area. Its height and massing would be detrimental to the designated Thames Valley Major Landscape Feature (MLF), by virtue of being a dominant feature within that local landscape, especially with regard to the resultant cumulative effect with existing adjacent buildings, and the views across the MLF, in particular from the north, especially from the St. Peter's Conservation Area, contrary to policy CC7, EN5, EN7, EN11 and EN13.
- 5) Insufficient information has been submitted to establish whether there is ground gas at this site, which could pose a significant risk to end users of the proposed development, and which would be contrary to Reading

Borough Local Plan Policy EN16.

- 6) The supporting information identifies that the proposed scheme could only achieve a 'Very Good' BREEAM rating compared to the 'Excellent' rating required by adopted Policy CC2. It is not considered that sufficient evidence has been presented to demonstrate clearly why policy compliance could not be achieved. The proposal would therefore fail to demonstrate that it would maximise benefits with respect to tackling climate change in conflict with Reading Local Plan Policy CC2 and the aims of Reading Borough Council's Climate Change Strategy.
- 7) In the absence of a completed Section 106 legal agreement to secure contributions towards employment, skills and training; an upgraded pedestrian crossing; public realm; an occupancy restriction to restrict the occupancy for each hotel room to a maximum of 3 months by the same occupier, with no minimum period of occupation; and the proposed gym to remain ancillary to the use as a hotel, the proposal:
  - a) Fails to adequately contribute to the employment, skills or training needs of local people with associated socio-economic harm, contrary to policy CC9, and the Employment, Skills and Training SPD (2013)
  - b) Fails to adequately contribute to the infrastructure for the increased pedestrian movement to and from the site with associated harm to pedestrian safety, contrary to Policy TR3.
  - c) Fails to adequately contribute to the provision of additional public realm infrastructure with associated harm in accessing adequate leisure facilities within the Thames parks, contrary to Policy EN11 and Reading Borough Council Thames Parks Plan.
  - d) Fails to restrict the occupancy to hotel use with ancillary gym with associated potential differing impacts compared to those assessed, contrary to policy CR6.

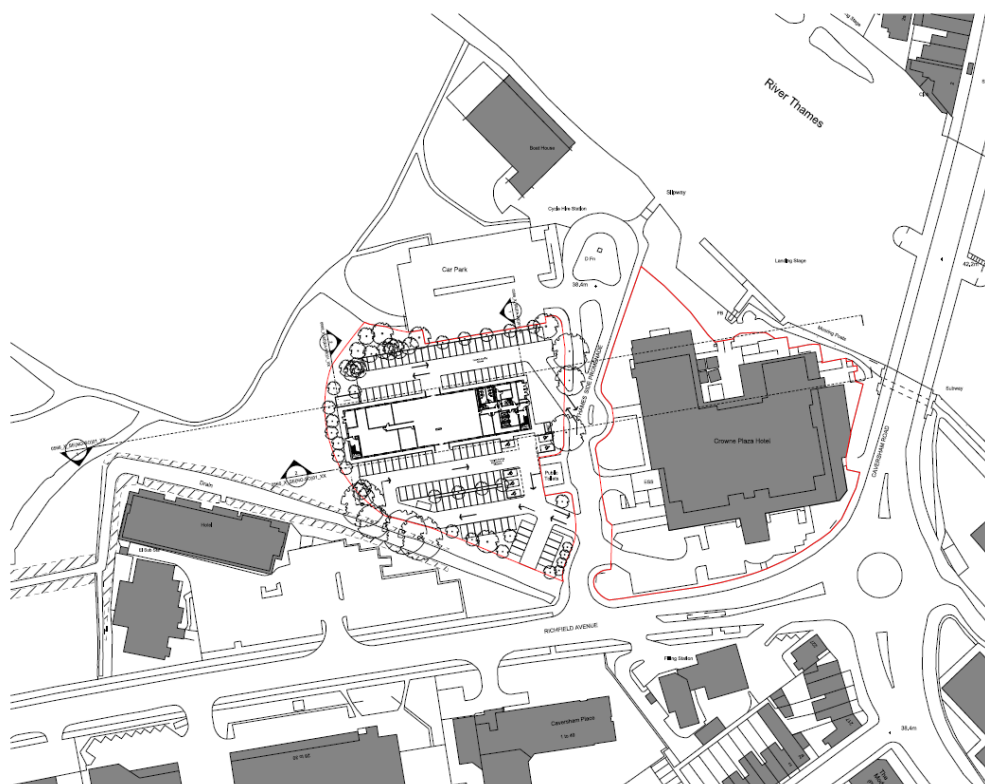
**Informatives:**

- 1) Positive & Proactive
- 2) Plans assessed

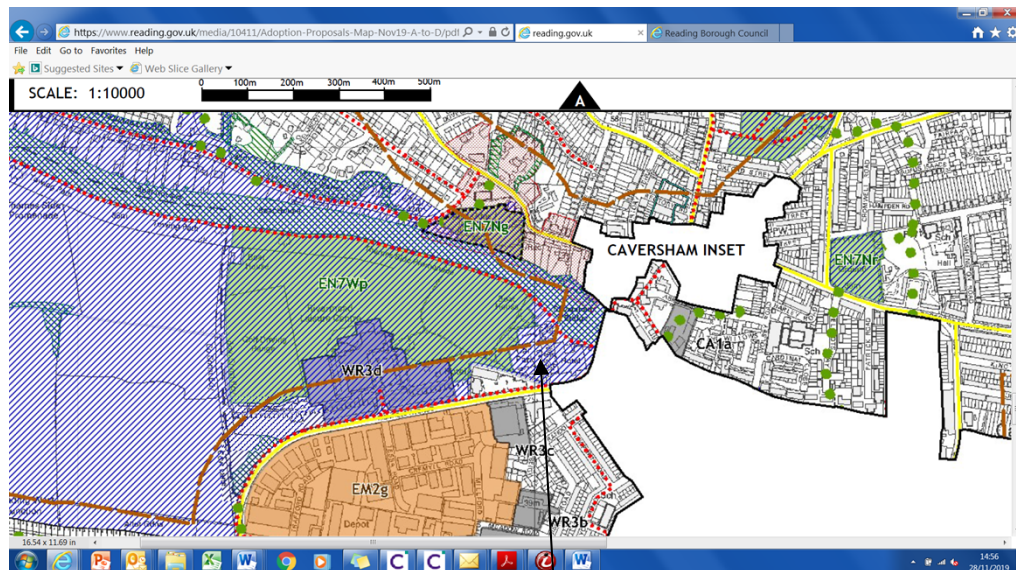
## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The site is located on the northern side of Richfield Avenue between the Crowne Plaza Hotel (next to Caversham Bridge) and The Toby Carvery/Premier Inn. It comprises a relatively flat private car park of the Crowne Plaza Hotel, which has a barrier controlled entrance and is ca. 0.11ha. in area. The submitted location plan, shown below, identifies two red lines, one around the Crowne Plaza Hotel and its immediate curtilage, and one around the existing car park; the application site.
- 1.2 Access to the site is provided via the Thames Side Promenade, which also provides access to the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Reading Rowing Club boat house, public car park, and the River Thames.
- 1.3 The site is bordered by mature trees and there are trees within the car park itself which are protected under TPO (118/09).

- 1.4 Further west is the Rivermead Leisure Centre and a large area of open space.
- 1.5 The surrounding area is of mixed uses comprising hotels, other commercial premises and residential, of a range of styles of design and ages of building. These are mostly at three storeys or fewer, although the residential block on the opposite side of Richfield Avenue extends to four storeys.
- 1.6 Further north is Caversham Court Gardens, which is a Grade II listed registered park and garden and this along with other parts of Caversham adjacent to the River, are within the recently extended St. Peter's Conservation Area.
- 1.7 The site itself is within the Air Quality Management Area (Policy EN15), Flood Risk Zone 2 (Policy EN18), and within the Major Landscape Feature under (Policy EN13). It is also adjacent to the Local Green Space and Public Open Space Policy EN7 - EN7Wp - Rivermead and Thameside Promenade, and just outside the central core (town centre boundary shown white on the extract from the Proposals Map below - to the east of the site).



**Site Location Plan**



The application site



Aerial view (edged yellow)

## 2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal is for a 132 bed hotel within a five storey building comprising a reception area, café/breakfast area, a small gym and associated back of house facilities.
- 2.2 It would be orientated east-west and would be located centrally within the car park area.
- 2.3 The remaining car parking would provide 118 car parking spaces (including 6 disabled spaces) and 6 cycle spaces.
- 2.4 The supporting information also identifies that it would be the intention of the proposed hotel to benefit from access to facilities

at the existing Crowne Plaza hotel. It would be orientated east-west and would be located centrally within the car park area.

2.5 Submitted Plans and Documentation received 4<sup>th</sup> July 2019, unless otherwise stated (including amended details):

- Site Location Plan - Drawing no: 0566\_X\_GA (XX) 01\_XX Rev J
- Ground Floor Plan - Drawing no: 0566\_X\_GA (00) 01\_XX Rev G
- First Floor Plan - Drawing no: 0566\_X\_GA (01) 01\_XX Rev B
- Second Floor Plan - Drawing no: 0566\_X\_GA (02) 01\_XX Rev B
- Third Floor Plan - Drawing no: 0566\_X\_GA (03) 01\_XX Rev B
- Fourth Floor Plan - Drawing no: 0566\_X\_GA (04) 01\_XX Rev B
- Roof Plan - Drawing no: 0566\_X\_GA (RF) 01\_XX
- Site Plan - Drawing no: 0566\_X\_GA (XX) 02\_XX Rev F
- North and South Site Elevation - Drawing no: 0566\_X\_SE (NO-SO) 01\_XX Rev E
- North and South Site Elevation - Drawing no: 0566\_X\_GE (NO-SO) 01\_XX Rev C
- East and West Side Elevations - Drawing no: 0566\_X\_SE (EA-WE) 01\_XX Rev C
- East and West Elevations - Drawing no: 0566\_X\_GE (EA-WE) 01\_XX Rev C
- Landscape Planting Plan - Drawing no: SY19-185-LPP-19-01 Rev B, received 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019
- Landscape Planting Strategy, dated March 2019, ref: SY19-185-LPS-19-02B, prepared by Squires Young Landscape Architecture, received 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019
- Air Quality Assessment, document ref: 3163r, dated and received 14<sup>th</sup> October 2019
- Addendum to Transport Assessment: Junction Modelling Note, dated August 2019, document ref: NO8/183733, prepared by Vectos, received 21<sup>st</sup> August 2019
- Arboricultural Method Statement, dated September 2019, document ref: SY19-185-AMS-19-01C, prepared by Squires Young Landscape Architecture, received 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019
- BREEAM Statement, Issue one 4/5/18, prepared by MRB Energy and Sustainability
- Car Park Management Plan, dated July 2019, prepared by Vectos
- Delivery and Servicing Plan, dated July 2019, prepared by Vectos
- Desk Study Assessment Report, dated June 2018, document ref: TM/C3932/7633, prepared by Brownfield Solutions Ltd
- External Lighting Design Rev 1, received 5<sup>th</sup> August 2019
- [Lighting Locations] - Drawing no: 0688\_X\_GA (XX) 02\_XX Rev F, received 5<sup>th</sup> August 2019
- Lighting Design, received 5<sup>th</sup> August 2019
- Lighting Details, received 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019
- Lighting Layout, Revision 4, received 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019
- Planning - Design and Access Statement- Revised scheme, prepared by Studio Anyo
- Planning Statement, dated July 2019, document ref: AKH/17/04763, prepared by Rapleys

- Response note to Natural Environment Comments, received 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019
- Sequential Site Assessment, dated July 2019, document re: AKH/JR/17-04763
- Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy, dated June 2019, ref: IMA-17-113, prepared by IMA Transport Planning
- Sustainability Report, Rev 4 June 2019, prepared by Steve Moseley Ltd
- Topographical Survey - Drawing no: 18980-200-01T
- Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment, dated June 2018, document ref: 2824-RE-01 Rev P1, prepared by Allen Pyke, received 5<sup>th</sup> August 2019
- Tree Survey report and Tree Constraints Plan and Arboricultural Impact Assessment, dated March 2019, document ref: SY19-185-TSR-19-01. Prepared by Squires Young Landscape Architecture
- Travel Plan, dated July 2019, prepared by Vectos
- Transport Assessment, prepared by Vectos

#### 2.6 *Community Infrastructure levy (CIL):*

In relation to the Community Infrastructure Levy, the applicant has duly completed a CIL liability form with the submission. The estimated amount of CIL chargeable from the proposed scheme would be £754,394 based on £148.24 (2019 indexed figure) per sqm of Gross Internal Area (GIA).

### 3. **PLANNING HISTORY**

**172330/PREAPP** - Proposal to develop a new 132-bed hotel comprising ground and 4 upper storeys with a flat roof. Superseded by the submission of application 181056 25/6/18.

Issues raised however were as follows:

- Sequential tests would be required with respect to town centre and flood risk.
- Height too dominant and exacerbated by the ground floor being higher because of flood issues.
- Needs to be less visually intrusive within the MLF and alongside the existing hotels (cumulative impact).
- It would be visible on all sides and therefore the back of house proposed at each ends requires careful consideration.
- There would be overlooking to other existing hotels.
- Materials would need to be of good quality.
- Transport and parking issues.
- Unacceptable loss of all TPO trees.
- Wildlife friendly lighting and biodiversity enhancements.
- S106 obligations would be required for Employment, Skills and Training, highways (crossing point - Richfield Avenue) and towards the public realm



**181056/FUL** - Redevelopment of former Crowne Plaza Hotel car park and construction of new 132-bed hotel (Use Class C1), with associated access, car parking and landscaping - Withdrawn 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018.

Issues raised, however, were as follows (email from officer to agent 12/9/18):

- Environment Agency objection that the flood risk assessment was not acceptable.
- The proposal is the same as at pre-application and officers considered that the height would be overly dominant within the Major Landscape Feature, and alongside the existing hotels (cumulative impact).
- There has been no change to the ends of the building. The officer view was that it was not an innovative design in the context of the MLF, the river, and opposite the historic Caversham Court Gardens
- Brick and vertical emphasis was considered acceptable.
- Objection from transport - southern access does is unsuitable, the proposal does not meet parking standards, insufficient info submitted to assess the transportation implications of the development and it does not comply with servicing standards.
- Loss of a TPO Plane tree is not acceptable. Substantial tree planting has been proposed, which in principle would address the issue of tree loss and screening.
- S106 obligations would be required for Employment, Skills and Training, highways (crossing point - Richfield Avenue) and towards the public realm.

Further pre-application discussions took place during early 2019 and matters of design, flooding, transport modelling, revised landscaping scheme were discussed.

In terms of the Existing Crowne Plaza Hotel the relevant history is as follows:

**85/TP/873** - Hotel complex, rowing club, leisure centre site - Approved 10/1/1986

**86/TP/174** - Hotel complex, rowing club, leisure centre site - Approved 10/4/1986

**86/TP/1175** - Erection of single storey building to provide a restaurant with associated café and bar facilities, car parking, loading facilities, access and landscaping on land at Richfield Avenue, Caversham, Reading - refused 12/2/1987

**89/00498/FUL (890310)** - Extension to existing banqueting suite. Approved 14/6/1989.

**04/00631/FUL (040940)** - Ground floor extensions to hotel to provide an extended office area, a new lobby entrance, a new indoor swimming pool and changing facilities, a new restaurant and meeting rooms. Conversion of existing public house to provide additional conference and meeting room facilities and conversion of existing meeting rooms to provide seven additional bedrooms. Approved 20/12/2004.

**05/00033/FUL (050500)** - Installation of perimeter fencing and security lighting to existing hotel car park. Approved 21/3/2005.

**05/002457/FUL (050275)** - Installation of air-conditioning condenser units. Approved 12/5/2005.

**05/00683/FUL (050277)** - New access ramp, entrance doors and minor extensions to front of existing hotel. Approved 22/08/2005.

**05/01265/FUL (050864)** - Conversion of existing roof space/plant rooms to form 10 new guest bedrooms. Approved 11/1/2006.

**05/91266/FUL (050121)** - Infill existing steps and replace existing handrails and paving to external terraces. Approved 11/1/2006.

**09/00054/FUL (090329)** - Erection of T shaped pontoon at the river side of the Crowne Plaza Hotel and change of use of land for the permanent mooring of the vessel, Windrush, for guest accommodation ancillary to the use of the hotel. Approved 6/5/2009.

#### **4. CONSULTATIONS**

##### **4.1 Statutory**

###### **Environment Agency**

No objection subject to conditions, without which they would object due to the proposal's adverse impact on the environment. Their recommended conditions are: submission of a remediation strategy for ground contamination; the submission and approval of a verification report demonstrating the completion of the approved remediation strategy; no drainage systems for the infiltration of surface water are to be permitted; and no piling using penetrative methods shall be carried out other than with the written consent of the LPA.

###### ***Advice to Local Planning Authority***

The proposed development falls within Flood Zone 2, which is land defined in the [planning practice guidance](#) as being at risk of flooding. We have produced a series of standard comments for local planning authorities and planning applicants to refer to on 'lower risk' development proposals. These comments replace direct case-by-case consultation with us. Your proposal falls within this category.



These standard comments are known as Flood Risk Standing Advice (FRSA). They can be viewed at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessment-for-planningapplications#when-to-follow-standing-advice>.

We recommend that you view our standing advice in full before submitting the required information as part of your planning application. The local planning authority will then determine whether flood risk has been considered in line with FRSA recommendations.

#### *Other matters*

It is not within our remit to comment on landfill gas issues with respect to human health or explosion risk. The Environmental Health Department at the Local Authority will comment on these risks.

#### *Advice to Applicant*

All sewage or trade effluent should be discharged to the foul sewer if available subject to the approval of Thames Water Utilities or its sewerage agent.

## **4.2 Non-statutory**

### **Berkshire Archaeology**

Berkshire Archaeology advised on a similar application for this site (Planning Application 181056) and we re-iterate our previous advice as follows.

There are archaeological implications from this proposed development. Although there are no known heritage assets within the application site, it lies within an area of archaeological potential by virtue of its location on the floodplain of the River Thames within the archaeologically-rich Middle Thames Valley. This is exemplified by large scale excavations in the 1980s at Thames Valley Park, which recorded a Mesolithic (8,000 - 6,000 BC) flint scatter, a Late Neolithic (3,000 - 2,500 BC) pit, an Early Bronze Age (2,000 BC) inhumation burial and a Middle Iron Age (500 - 200 BC) settlement enclosure, which was occupied into the Roman period. Indications of the archaeological potential of the application site are provided by the discovery of a small hoard of Early Roman coins on the south side of the River Thames, when Caversham Bridge was constructed in 1926, and Bronze Age and Roman axe heads, dredged from the River Thames, just north of the site.

Although this is a modest site in terms of area, there are no indications it has previously been developed beyond superficial hard standings. Previous suggestions of former gravel workings followed by landfill are not evidenced by the site investigations report (Brownfield Solutions Ltd, June 2018) submitted with this application.

On this basis, the site has an archaeological potential and investigation would be appropriate but can be undertaken post-consent and secured by a suitably worded condition. This is in accordance with Paragraph 141 of the NPPF which states that local planning authorities should *‘require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible’*. A condition requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological field evaluation in accordance with a written scheme of investigation prior to development taking place is recommended as the site lies in an area of archaeological potential.

It would be appropriate for the programme of archaeological work to commence with exploratory field evaluation, which will establish if there are any areas of archaeological interest that require further investigation either prior to or during development and which will be subject to a mitigation strategy for agreement with the local planning authority setting out the details of the further investigation. If no areas of archaeological interest are identified, no further investigation will be sought.

#### **Conservation Consultant**

Comments to follow in an update report.

#### **Ecology**

The application site comprises a car park associated with Crowne Plaza where it is proposed to build a 132 bed-hotel with associated access, car parking and landscaping. The site comprises hardstanding area with scattered trees and is neighboured by a grassland field to the west, the Crowne Plaza hotel to the east, and the Reading Rowing Club bordering the River Thames to the north. A similar application (181056) was submitted previously and our response remains unchanged.

Considering the type of habitats present on the site, it is unlikely that the site is of great significance to any protected species. However, a number of trees are to be felled as results of the works, as such, to ensure that the risk to protected wildlife remains minimal, any vegetation removal should be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season. This should be conditioned to ensure that no birds are disturb or harm during the development - wording is given below.

In addition, considering the site’s connection to valuable wildlife habitat and in accordance with paragraph 175 of the NPPF which states that “opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged” a condition should be set to ensure that enhancements for wildlife (to include bird and bat boxes

and wildlife-friendly planting) are provided within the new development. Wording is given below.

No objections subject to conditions - trees where birds may nest to be cleared outside the bird nesting season; details of biodiversity enhancements to be submitted and approved.

### **Environmental Protection & Nuisance**

#### ***Noise generating development***

Applications which include noise generating plant (air conditioning, air handling plant, kitchen extraction) when there are nearby noise sensitive receptors should be accompanied by an acoustic assessment carried out in accordance with BS4142:2014 methodology.

A noise assessment has not been submitted with the application and therefore I cannot determine the likely noise impact of the proposal and whether the proposals are acceptable. As the plant is proposed to be inside a plant room, it should be acceptable to deal with this matter via condition (noise assessment to be submitted).

#### ***Kitchen Extraction - odour***

In addition to concerns about noise (as discussed above), cooking odour is often a significant problem in commercial kitchens and therefore the applicants must provide an assessment of the likelihood of odours based on the proposed cuisine and a statement of how the proposals will ensure that odour nuisance will be prevented. Reference must be made to the Defra Guidance on the Control of Odour and Noise from Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Systems (January 2005).

A condition could be attached to consent, however it is possible that the criteria cannot be met with the plant specifications proposed in this application and a new application may need to be made at a later date for alternative plant / location.

#### ***Air Quality - Increased emissions***

Reading has declared a significant area of the borough as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) for the exceedance of both the hourly and annual mean objectives for nitrogen dioxide. In addition to this recent epidemiologic studies have shown that there is no safe level for the exposure to particulate matter PM10.

The proposed development (likely to generate traffic) is located within or adjacent to an air quality management area and has the potential to increase emissions. An assessment and/or mitigation measures should be provided as part of the application.

Mitigation against increased emissions:

- Travel Plans - a travel plan is a set of measures aimed at reducing single occupancy car use, it is important that the effectiveness of the plan is considered

- Mitigation through design, improved air flow around development, alternative plant
- Parking - consider reducing number of parking spaces, graduated permit schemes based on euro standards, allocated parking for car clubs / low emission vehicles
- Provision of electric charging bays or low emission fuelling points
- Development / promotion of car clubs
- Provision of cycling facilities / residents cycles
- Improvements to local public transport

It may be appropriate in some circumstances for the developer to fund mitigating measures elsewhere to offset any increase in local pollutant emissions as a consequence of the proposed development. This may be achieved through the use of a s.106 agreement, which may in some circumstances involve the direct funding of a specific scheme or measure, however, it is likely that in most cases to be in the form of a contribution to the costs of the monitoring network and / or air quality action plan.

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.

An air quality action plan has been implemented to try and reduce levels of NO<sub>2</sub> in this area. The proposed development will lead to a significant increase in vehicle movements directly conflicting with the RBC air quality action plan.

It is therefore necessary for the applicant to demonstrate through an air quality assessment and/or mitigation plan how it intends to reduce the impact of the proposed development.

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.

#### *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.

The development lies on the site of an historic landfill site which has the potential to have caused contaminated land and which we know generates landfill gas, and the proposed development is a sensitive land use.

The 'phase 1' desk study submitted identifies that a phase 2 site investigation is necessary including ground gas monitoring and risk assessment.

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.

Recommended conditions are required to ensure that future occupants are not put at undue risk from contamination.

It should be noted that there is a potential for significant ground gas risk at this site therefore ideally the ground gas monitoring and risk assessment would be carried out prior to permission being given in case the risk from ground gas requires the development to be significantly altered from the plans submitted, or even concludes that the site is not suitable for development.

Recommended conditions - contamination site characterisation; submission of a remediation scheme; implementation of a remediation scheme; and reported of unexpected contamination. For land gas - site investigation; remediation scheme to be submitted; and remediation scheme to be implemented.

#### *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.

Recommended conditions - Control of Noise and Dust - CMS to be submitted; Hours of Working - construction and demolition phase; no bonfires.

#### *Bin storage - rats*

There is a widespread problem in Reading with rats as the rats are being encouraged by poor waste storage which provides them with a food source. Where developments involve shared bin storage areas - flats and hotels - there is a greater risk of rats being able to access the waste due to holes being chewed in the base of the large wheelie bins or due to occupants or passers not putting waste inside bins, or bins being overfilled. It is therefore important for the bin store to be vermin proof to prevent rats accessing the waste. Recommended condition - Details of bin stores to be submitted and approved.

*Planning Officer note: Following the submission of an Air Quality Assessment EP&N confirmed that the assessment showed a very*

*slight worsening of air quality at receptors and that the development would not cause air quality to be over the objective levels, therefore no mitigation could be requested.*

### **Leisure**

There is just as much need for people staying at hotels to make use of parks and open spaces - whether it is to go for a stroll, jog, kick a football or just to sit and relax. It all puts pressure on existing facilities.

The proposed development is adjacent to Thames Promenade. It is also opposite Caversham Court Gardens. Both these areas are likely to be visited by the occupants of the hotel along with Christchurch Meadows which is also within close proximity to the development.

Before the introduction of CIL payments we had an agreed formula with planners to calculate S106 leisure contributions. Allowing for breaks in occupancy (say 75% occupancy) and for the fact that not all guests will use the parks/gardens (say half of them will), the formula was as follows:  $.75\% \times .50\% \times £2,100 = £787.50$  per room. In this instance, accepting that CIL payments will be liable, we would also be looking to secure a S106 leisure contribution to infrastructure improvements within the vicinity of the development. If the formula above was used this would equate to £103,950. However, we would be requesting £50,000 which we believe is 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.”

It is clear that the new guests of the hotel will make use of our nearby facilities and so investment must be made to extend/enhance those facilities close to the development site to cater for the increased strain/usage arising from this development. This is not a simple case that CIL funding can be used for this purpose as it becomes diluted to fund a number of Council priorities. It is as a matter of direct compensation to mitigate the impact of the development on our facilities and to make the application acceptable in planning terms. All new developments, be it residential, retail, office or hotel must play a part in contributing to the proper planning of the area.

*Planning Officer note: the agent queried the requirement for leisure contributes as part of any S106 agreement. Further information was provided by the Officer in an email dated 4<sup>th</sup> October 2019. No further response was received on this matter. Details are included in the S106 section below.*

### **Natural Environment**

As you will be aware, planning discussions on the proposal for a hotel have been ongoing over the last 2-3 years.

As is indicated in submissions, the site is subject to Tree Preservation Order 118/09 which includes 11 Alder trees within the car park itself as well as additional Plane trees adjacent to the Highway. The site is within an area of less than 10% tree canopy cover and is on a route identified in Reading's Tree Strategy as being important for tree planting and retention hence there need to be appropriate planting to both mitigate any tree loss and provide a net gain in tree number.

In addition, as the proposed hotel will be visible from Thames Promenade (a Major Landscape Feature and Important Area of Open Space), we need to ensure that appropriate soft landscaping to screen the hotel is provided to avoid a detrimental impact from Thames Prom and that the design is appropriate to the setting.

With reference to:

- Tree Survey, Tree Constraints Plan and Arboricultural Impact Assessment document dated March 2019
- Arboricultural Method Statement dated June 2019
- Landscape Planting Plan SY19-185-LPP-19-01 dated 15.6.19
- Landscape Planting Strategy dated March 2019
- Site Plan Rev F
- Site Plan Rev F showing lighting locations

As is confirmed within the AIA, the proposal will result in the loss of all 11 TPO Alder trees. However, given their condition and level of tree planting proposed, their removal would be acceptable, providing that replacement/enhancement is provided in the redevelopment.

It is confirmed that a total of 15 trees are to be felled and 31 new trees planted resulting in a net gain of 16 trees, which is in accordance with the aims of our Tree Strategy to increase canopy cover.

The landscaping is generally acceptable and the landscaper should be commended in including elements not regularly seen, e.g. biodegradable tree ties, use of tree suppliers with appropriate biosecurity rules and incorporation of Biochar in the tree pits. There are just a few queries which I think can be easily remedied either prior to a decision to avoid pre-commencement conditions or could be secured via condition.

The proposed new species are acceptable and have evolved over discussions with the applicant/landscaper. I would suggest that the applicant/landscaper confirm the soil type in relation to the Pin Oak as it is unlikely to survive if the soil is alkaline. I would also comment that the Taxodium was chosen for its good autumn colour and consistency with tree planting in Thames Prom rather than to 'improve biodiversity' as is indicated in the Landscape Planting Strategy.

I note from the Planting Strategy that the Ilex hedge is to be maintained at 1m high. Confirmation of maintenance height for the Prunus hedge is required which should be at a height useful for screening the car park but to avoid visibility issues when exiting the car park.

I note that tree pit specifications have been included on the Landscape Planting Plan. It is necessary to review the proposed tree pits on the north side (GBU 2018) against the location of the attenuation tank as shown on the NPPF Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy Schematic Drainage Layout included at the end of the Arb Method Statement. The tree pit design appears to indicate that root cells will be incorporated under the adjacent car park spaces adjacent to the trees to provide a rooting environment. However, the attenuation tank is shown as extending right up to the edge of the car park hence conflicts with the tree pit provision. This matter needs to be resolved prior to a decision.

In relation to the tree pits on the southern side of the hotel (within the car park, GBU 2013), I note that this is indicated as a continuous trench pit which is very positive. To confirm this, I would ask that the extent of the root cell area be shown on the Planting Plan. I have concerns, however, that lighting will conflict with this - see comment below.

In relation to the other trees, it would be prudent to identify those trees adjacent to hard surfaces and/or services and for an appropriate root barrier to be specified in the tree pits (for soft areas) and the position of barrier locations shown on the Planting Plan.

In relation to the maintenance notes, there is one point that requires amendment. Currently it is stated that: *'Plant failures On each visit note should be taken of any dead or missing plants and these replaced before the end of the five year period'*. This should be amended to: *'Plant failures On each visit note should be taken of any dead or missing plants and these replaced in the next planting season'*.

The Arboricultural Method Statement is unfortunately not sufficient to be an approved document. There are elements missing that were included in the Arb Impact Assessment but not carried into the AMS, e.g. arb supervision and a tree protection plan. In addition, the AMS should include a specification for all ground works within RPAs and clearly state the depth of cellular confinement system to be used. The AMS could be secured by condition if there is inadequate time to amend this.

With reference to the lighting locations shown, these appear to have little regard for new trees on the north boundary or within the car park south of the hotel; lights (which I assume are lighting columns)



being proposed in the same location as new trees in several places. Lighting locations should be midway between trees to minimise future conflict. As indicated above, the tree pits for the car park trees south of the hotel are indicating as being a continuous trench pit. Therefore, confirmation that the electricity cable route for lighting is mutually inclusive is required, i.e. that the electricity cables will be fed through the tree pits and that easy, future access is possible along with confirmation of how the lighting column bases will be incorporated within the tree pit.

The location of all service routes will need to be submitted for approval, which could be secured by condition (with the exception of the drainage layout) and should obviously avoid RPAs of retained trees and locations of new trees.

In conclusion, I have no objections to the principle of the development, however there are a number of issues to address, as detailed above.

*Planning Officer note: Further information was provided during the course of the application, i.e. amended Landscape Strategy, Planting Plan, AMS and lighting details, which addressed the majority of issues. Following officer advice to the agent that the application would be recommended for refusal they were advised by their client to do no more work on the project at this time.*

### **SUDS**

The proposed SuDs details comply with National Guidance and therefore are deemed acceptable in principle. The applicant would however need to get approval by the LLFA to connect into the Reading Borough drainage system located to the south of the application site. Full details would however need to be dealt with by way of a condition.

### ***Transport***

The development proposes to construct a new 132 bed hotel with associated car parking. The footprint of the new hotel will remove a portion of the existing car parking and the remaining car parking on-site will be shared amongst guests of the proposed hotel, the existing Crowne Plaza hotel and restaurant / health club users at the Crowne Plaza.

This proposal has been the subject of a previous planning application 181056 which was withdrawn.

The hotel will provide some on-site facilities for the use of hotel guests including a meeting room, breakfast room and fitness room. The proposed hotel will not provide any ancillary facilities to non-guests.

It is firstly noted that the redline plan only includes that area of the application site itself, however the implications of the development include the Crown Plaza Hotel as it reduces the parking provision for that use and determines how it will operate in the future. The red line should therefore be extended to include the wider site.

A Transport Statement has been submitted to accompany the application and I comment on this as follows:

#### Access

Access to the site is to be gained from the priority junction on Richfield Avenue to which in principle is acceptable given the proposed reduction in car parking.

The TS states at paragraph 2.13 that 'it is generally accepted that there is significant potential for walking to replace the car for short journeys, particularly those under 2km' however IHT document Providing for Journeys on Foot stipulates the following as acceptable walking distances:

|                      | Town Centres | Commuting /<br>School Sight<br>Seeing | Elsewhere |
|----------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Desirable            | 200m         | 500m                                  | 400m      |
| Acceptable           | 400m         | 1000m                                 | 800m      |
| Preferred<br>Maximum | 800m         | 2000m                                 | 1200m     |

Given that pedestrians would be walking with bags / cases and the potential destination would be the Town Centre the maximum walking distance should be 800m. Although the site would be beyond this distance bus routes are located within close proximity of the site which would allow access to within 400m of the site.

At the pre application stage it was identified that the proposal will increase the pedestrian movement to and from the application site and therefore will increase the number of pedestrians crossing at the Richfield Avenue pedestrian crossing which requires upgrading. Given that the full impacts of the development have not been assessed as I will comment on further in the next section I am unable to determine at this stage whether a contribution will be sought towards this upgrade.

Pedestrian and vehicle access to the site will be provided via Thames Side Promenade. A second vehicle / pedestrian access will replace the current southern pedestrian-only access point. Both of the vehicle access junctions will permit two-way movements (entry and exit).

The submitted plans identify the visibility splays for each and although the northern access includes a visibility splay that is

obstructed by a tree. This is an existing situation and in fact the visibility splay could be taken to the central island given the flows are split by the island which would result in a compliant visibility splay, given this the visibility splays have been deemed acceptable.

#### Trip Generation

The site currently comprises a private car park for the use of Crowne Plaza hotel guests and staff. Accordingly, whilst the site is not considered to generate any trips as a standalone site, it is an ancillary facility to the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The applicant has stated that for the purposes of a robust trip assessment, no trips will be associated with the existing uses on-site.

As stated at the pre-application stage it is envisaged that the proposal will reduce vehicle movements to and from the site, given that the overall parking as currently presented is reduced, however the Transport Statement should fully assess the vehicle impact including the taxi drop off / pick demand that would be generated by the development. As if the existing use is not assessed and the trip generation identifies increased trip generation then the following junctions will require assessment:

Caversham Road / Caversham Bridge / Richfield Avenue Roundabout  
Caversham Bridge / Church Road / Church Street signalised junction  
Caversham Road / Vastern Road roundabout

These junctions are heavily congested at the peak times and the Highway Authority cannot agree to any further vehicle movements through these junctions if they are already over capacity.

The assessment that has been undertaken of the trip generation has been undertaken using the Trip Rate Information Computer system (TRICS). TRICS is the national standard system of trip generation and analysis in the UK and Ireland, and is used as an integral and essential part of the Transport Assessment process. It is a database system, which allows its users to establish potential levels of trip generation for a wide range of development and location scenarios, and is widely used as part of the planning application process by both developer consultants and local authorities and is accepted by Inspectors as a valid way to ascertain likely trip generation. I am therefore happy that this is an acceptable approach.

However, I have reviewed the site's selected and those example sites identified as comparisons are those that were included within the initial Transport Statement for the withdrawn 2018 scheme and some of those were discounted as they included sites located within the Town Centre, Edge of Town Centre and Suburban areas. As previously stated, using sites from all 3 of these locations is contrary to the TRICS Good Practice Guide.

I previously undertook my own assessment of TRICS and provided this to the applicant which had subsequently agreed. However, given that the trip rates proposed by the applicant would generate a worst case scenario, I am happy that these can be included within the assessment. The actual number of movements that would be generated are as follows:

**Table 5.2: Proposed Site Trips per Mode (Weekday)**

|                                       | AM Peak (0800-0900) |     |     | PM Peak (1700-1800) |     |     |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|-----|-----|---------------------|-----|-----|
|                                       | Arr                 | Dep | Tot | Arr                 | Dep | Tot |
| <b>Total Person Trips (All Modes)</b> | 21                  | 48  | 69  | 32                  | 17  | 50  |
| <b>Vehicle Trips</b>                  | 12                  | 24  | 36  | 17                  | 8   | 25  |
| <b>Taxi Trips</b>                     | 2                   | 2   | 4   | 2                   | 1   | 3   |

The applicant undertook Manual Classified Count (MCC) surveys on Thursday 4th July between 07:00-10:00 and 16:00-19:00 to record turning movements and vehicle queues at the three junctions in the study network.

The total existing vehicle movements at the three junctions were counted and it was determined that the AM and PM peak hours were 07:00-08:00 and 18:00-19:00 respectively. These are not the usual peak periods but given they represent a worst case assessment for development I am happy that these periods are assessed.

Whilst the proposed development would generate more vehicle trips in the hours 08:00-09:00 and 16:00-17:00; when the development flows were added to the existing flows it was clear that the combined peak hours remained 07:00-08:00 and 18:00-19:00.

The Developer of the proposed hotel has indicated that should planning consent be granted in 2019, it is the intention that the hotel would be completed and occupied in 2021. Accordingly, 2021 has been used by the applicant as the future baseline year for traffic assessment purposes. However, the future baseline year could be just over one year from consent being granted and therefore a future base year of 2022 should be used.

The vehicle trips associated with the proposed development have been distributed based on the survey undertaken at the junction of Richfield Avenue and Thameside Promenade. The turning movements at this junction are associated with the Crowne Plaza hotel and the public car park and it is considered that the future traffic distribution at this junction will not change as a result of the proposed development.

Beyond this junction, proposed development trips have been distributed based on the observed turning proportions at each junction according to the 2019 MCC survey. This is deemed acceptable.

The assessments on each junction have been undertaken based on the above and I comment on each junction assessment as follows:

The assessment for the Vastern Road / Caversham Road roundabout has been undertaken on the basis that this is a 3 arm roundabout when it is in fact a 4 arm roundabout. The assessment must therefore be rerun to include the fourth arm of the junction.

It is noted that the 2021 assessment with committed development results in the Caversham Road / Caversham Bridge / Richfield Avenue / Waterman Place Roundabout exceeded capacity in the AM and PM peak periods and the development worsens this further. The applicant has stated that the largest percentage change / increase in either peak hour is 1.03% and as such, it is considered that the impact of the proposed development on the junction is not significant. However, given that the junction has already exceeded capacity any increase is significant as it will have a direct impact on the operation of the junction.

This is identified within the NPPG at Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 42-013-20140306, which states:

*Local planning authorities must make a judgement as to whether a development proposal would generate significant amounts of movement on a case by case basis (ie **significance may be a lower threshold where road capacity is already stretched** or a higher threshold for a development in an area of high public transport accessibility).*

The Bridge St / Church Rd / Church St signalised Junction is approaching capacity but does not exceed it and the queue lengths are not detrimentally impacted. I am therefore happy that the assessment of this junction is acceptable.

However until the Vastern Road / Caversham Road roundabout has been acceptably assessed I am unable to determine the full impacts of the development on the surrounding Highway Network.

#### Car Parking

The proposed car park is to be reduced from 200 spaces to 118 which are to be shared between the two hotels. However, when reviewing the submitted plans it is noted that only 116 parking spaces have been illustrated. It is noted that additional car parking is currently located to the front of the existing Crowne Plaza Hotel and the car park management plan identifies this provision to be 22 which is to be retained for the use of the existing hotel. However, if this parking is to be retained then drawings should be submitted to identify this parking especially as it has been referred to within the TA.

The site is situated within Zone 2 of RBC's zonal car Parking Standards and Design SPD which relates to a maximum car parking standard of 0.5 spaces per bedroom. When both hotels are considered as a single entity, the maximum number of car parking spaces which can be provided is 127 spaces for the hotels. The proposed parking provision indicates 118 spaces which would fall short of this provision.

A car parking occupancy survey was undertaken between Thursday 13th to Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2018 at the Crowne Plaza Private Car Park west of Thameside Promenade and the Crowne Plaza Private Car Park east of Thameside Promenade. In summary, the results of this survey concluded that the existing demand for car parking in the Crowne Plaza hotel main car park has a peak occupancy of 101 car parking spaces (60%) on a Saturday at 16:00 with an overnight occupancy of 71 spaces (43%).

This existing demand for parking is also in excess of the proposed provision and also makes no reference as to whether a conference / meeting / wedding etc. was being held at the facility and if so what capacity the event held. If no such event was being hosted then the survey would not represent a worst case scenario and additional car parking would have been utilised.

As well as the facilities mentioned above the existing Crowne Plaza Hotel also provides ancillary uses including restaurant, gym, spa, etc. which are available to the general public and as a result the parking demand for these uses should be assessed. In relation to the health club and restaurant car uses the Council's Parking Standards and Design SPD would recommend the maximum standards:

- A3 restaurant 1 parking space per 7.5 sqm
- D2 health 1 space per 35 sqm.

Although the parking provision for each of the above uses has been identified a detailed assessment has not been undertaken. The applicant has stipulated that 20 car parking spaces are to be shared between the above land uses and they will be signed for the use of Health Club members and Restaurant users only.

In principle I am happy to accept a flexible approach to parking demand but before this can be agreed in this case a thorough assessment must be undertaken to establish that sufficient parking is provided and that the land uses peak demands do not conflict. This could be undertaken by provided TRICS data for comparable sites and resultant car park accumulation data. The assessment to date is just an assumption and therefore cannot be accepted.

Also, as stated during the pre-application for the 2018 application, the actual 2018 application and the informal pre-application discussions for this application the assessment should include the existing provision of meetings, conferences and weddings etc. but as

part of this application no reference is made as to how much parking would be provided for this use. The Council's Parking Standards and Design SPD states that the 'ancillary facilities such as restaurants, bars and conference areas will be treated as A3/ D2 uses when available to non-residents, the site is currently provided with a parking provision that would accommodate these uses and is now being removed without any assessment. Given the types of events that could be held at the site a provision of parking must be retained and dedicated for this use.

A Car Park Management Plan has also been submitted to accompany the planning application and this states at Paragraph 2.7 that 'no opportunities exist nearby for on-street overnight parking without a resident's permit', however parking is unrestricted on the northern side of Caversham Road between 6pm and 7am and on the southern side is permitted between 4.30pm and 9.15am. There is therefore the possibility of on street parking within close proximity of the application site.

It was also noted when assessing the sites within TRICS that those hotels that have no car parking still generate significant levels of vehicular movement and demand for parking. The site is located adjacent to a public car park that is provided for the public to use the surrounding facilities. However, given the close proximity it is highly likely that customers / visitors to the adjacent hotels will fully utilise this car park especially if an insufficient level of parking is provided on site.

As part of the September 2018 car parking survey for the application site, the Thameside Promenade Public Pay and Display Car Park was also assessed by the applicant and it was shown that the car park had a peak occupancy of 95% (62 cars parked in 65 spaces) at 11:00-12:00 on a Saturday which then reduced throughout the rest of the survey period. The overnight accumulation of the public car park was 15% (10 cars parked in 65 spaces) meaning 55 parking spaces were available.

Signage within the Thameside Promenade Public Pay and Display Car Park informs users that additional parking is available at the Rivermead Leisure Centre which is circa 400m to the west of Thameside Promenade.

A car parking occupancy survey of the Rivermead Leisure Centre Public Car Park was also undertaken by the applicant in April 2019 and took place over 48 hours. The survey identified the peak occupancy occurred at 10:15 on a Wednesday with 167 vehicles parked. The car park typically provides 515 parking spaces however during the survey, an area of parking was temporarily closed meaning 302 spaces were available. This equates to a parking occupancy of 32% when the car park has all spaces available or 55% at the time of the survey. The overnight occupancy of the car park was 0%.

Finally, the parking occupancy of Caversham Road was surveyed during the September 2018 surveys and demonstrated that the overnight demand for car parking was 45% which resulted in 12 available car parking spaces.

In summary, two car parking surveys have been undertaken of the public car parking opportunities available locally and it has been demonstrated that there is capacity available in the Thameside Promenade Public Pay and Display Car Park and / or the Rivermead Leisure Centre Public Pay and Display Car Park.

The applicant has continued to state that these car parks could accommodate any potential overspill resulting from the creation of a new hotel, assuming there is no change in the travel behaviour amongst hotel guests.

Although it is stated that the proposals do not permit staff parking on-site and the proposed management of parking on-site through pre-booking car parking will further reduce the potential for any car parking overspill locally, this is not a view shared with the Highway Authority. Reducing car parking which is clearly required as identified within the applicants assessment will lead to overspill parking which is not acceptable and does not comply with the NPPG which at Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 42-003-20140306 states:

*Travel Plans are long-term management strategies for integrating proposals for sustainable travel into the planning process. They are based on evidence of the anticipated transport impacts of development and set measures to promote and encourage sustainable travel (such as promoting walking and cycling). They should not, however, be used as an excuse for unfairly penalising drivers and cutting provision for cars in a way that is unsustainable and could have negative impacts on the surrounding streets.*

It continues at Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 42-008-20140306 to state:

*While Travel Plans are intended to promote the most sustainable forms of transport, such as active travel, they should not be used to justify penalising motorists - for instance through higher parking charges, tougher enforcement or reduced parking provision (which can simply lead to more on street parking). Nor should they be used to justify aggressive traffic calming measures, such as speed humps.*

*Maximum parking standards can lead to poor quality development and congested streets, local planning authorities should seek to ensure parking provision is appropriate to the*



***needs of the development and not reduced below a level that could be considered reasonable.***

*Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements should reflect the important role that appropriate parking facilities can play in rejuvenating local shops, high streets and town centres.*

The parking assessment is contrary to the above advice and is therefore wholly unacceptable. Although the hotels will manage the parking of their own car parks they should also be providing sufficient levels to ensure overspill does not occur but the applicant is actively highlighting these parking areas as suitable alternatives which also includes on street parking.

As a result the proposal is likely to lead in an increase in on street parking in the surrounding area and therefore cannot be accepted.

The proposal includes the provision of a new access / egress into the car park from Thames Side Promenade and the existing access is to be altered creating two separate car parks the northern car park with 50 spaces (only 48 illustrated) and the southern with 68 spaces. It was requested at the pre-application stage for the 2018 withdrawn application that it should be clarified how the car park will be managed to ensure that unnecessary internal movements are avoided looking for parking between these three locations. This has not been provided with the allocation of the existing hotel being 58 and the proposed hotel provided with 63, the location of these spaces should be allocated on a revised plan and should ensure that vehicles are not required to travel between each car park searching for a space. This provision would require either the existing Crowne Plaza hotel to be spread over both of the new car parks as well as the existing car park to the frontage or the provision of both hotels being spread over two car parks, the car parks should therefore be redistributed so as to provide the correct level of parking for each hotel within each parking area.

In accordance with the emerging Local Plan communal car parks for residential or non-residential developments of at least 10 spaces should provide at least 10% of spaces with an active charging point. A revised plan should be provided illustrating the location of these charging points.

RBC cycle parking standards require a minimum provision of 1 cycle parking space per 6 staff. 6 sheltered and secure cycle parking spaces will be provided on site for guests and staff and located within the car park of the hotel. The full details of the cycle store have not been indicated but I am happy for this to be dealt with by way of a condition.

#### Servicing

Refuse collection and servicing will take place within the site, taking access from Thames Side Promenade. Refuse collection will be undertaken by private collection services.

The largest vehicle anticipated to make regular trips to the site is a 10m rigid delivery vehicle. The swept path analysis for a 10.0m rigid delivery vehicle and Refuse Vehicle has been referred to by the applicant within the TA but no tracking drawings have been submitted to accompany the application. I am therefore unable to identify whether the servicing arrangements are acceptable.

I have also reviewed the submitted Servicing Management Plan and this identifies the following typical servicing arrangements for the proposed hotel:

**Table 3.1: Typical Daily Servicing Arrangements**

| Delivery                                   | Frequency                           | Vehicle   | Dwell Time                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Linen Deliveries                           | 6 deliveries / collections per week | Largest vehicle to be used would be a 7.5t Rigid                            | Typically less than 20 minutes |
| Consumables (Food / Housekeeping Supplies) | 2 deliveries per week               | Typically delivered by a Transit-style van or a Rigid vehicle of circa 8.5m | Typically less than 30 minutes |
| Refuse Collection                          | 2 collections per week              | Local Authority Vehicle (9.86m long)  | Typically 5 minutes            |

On several occasions during the week car parking spaces will be inaccessible and the proposed one-way system through the car park will be obstructed as a result of a waiting delivery / servicing vehicle. I refer to my pre-application comments and those on the 2018 withdrawn scheme that stated that *‘dedicated servicing is required for the proposed hotel given that the servicing area for the existing Crowne Plaza Hotel is located directly adjacent to the hotel on the opposite side of the Thames Side Promenade to that of this development’*. This is also highlighted at Paragraph 1.7 of the submitted TS.

Dedicated servicing has not been provided which will impact on the effectiveness of the proposed car park causing potential conflict between vehicles and pedestrians.

As a result of the incomplete assessment undertaken I object to the proposed development on the following grounds.

#### Reasons for Refusal

The layout does not comply with the Local Planning Authority’s standards in respect of vehicle parking. This could result in on-street parking/reversing movements on Caversham Road, adversely

affecting road safety and the flow of traffic, and in conflict with Core Strategy Policy CS24 and Sites and Detailed Policies document Policy DM12.

Insufficient information has been submitted with the planning application to enable the highways, traffic and transportation implications of the proposed development to be fully assessed. From the information submitted, it is considered that the additional traffic likely to be generated by the proposal would adversely affect the safety and flow of users of the existing road network within Reading, contrary to Policies CS4, CS20 and CS22 of the Adopted Reading Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies document Policy DM12.

The proposed development does not comply with the Local Planning Authority's standards in respect of servicing and, as a result, is in conflict with Sites and Detailed Policies Document Policy DM12.

#### **4.3 Public**

81 no. addresses were consulted, i.e. those who commented on the withdrawn application 181056.

Also Premier Inn, Toby Inn, and the Reading Rowing Club were consulted.

A site notice was displayed. 50 no. objections and 1 no. support were received and issues raised in objections are summarised as follows:

- Detrimental effect on parking, especially the public car park used by the Rowing Club, walkers, etc.
- Insufficient parking to serve the development and existing hotel.
- Additional hotel bedrooms not needed.
- Increased congestion in the area.
- Design is ugly and would detract from the beautiful riverside setting.
- It would have a negative visual impact.
- Would increase flood risk.
- Overdevelopment of the site.
- Increased pollution.
- New developments should be self-sufficient in terms of energy.
- Would detract from character and important views.
- The proposed building is overbearing in the context of the Thames Promenade and the Rivermead open space. It would be the tallest in Richfield Avenue and would set a bad precedent for taller buildings in a low-rise area.
- The design is incongruous with existing buildings in the area.

The supporter regards the application as an excellent opportunity for development to bring much needed revenue to the Town.

Caversham And District Residents' Association (CADRA)

CADRA previously objected to application 181056 on the same site, on grounds relating to the visual impact of a building of this bulk in this location and its effect on parking and air pollution. This previous objection is attached for reference and I have also posted the following comments to the Council's Planning Website.

The present application 191088 slightly reduces the height of the building and adjusts its location, but these changes do not ameliorate our previous concerns, which focussed on the principle of an hotel of this size in this location rather than its detail. We therefore reiterate our previous objection, for the same reasons: overall height; dominance in the local landscape, especially in views from Caversham Bridge, the Thames Promenade and the recently extended Conservation Area; traffic impact; the risk of parking congestion; and pollution arising from additional traffic.

Notwithstanding those fundamental objections, we recognise the slight reduction in overall height and the simplification of rooftop plant, but suggest careful checking of the lift overrun structure: the Design & Access Statement says this will be 850mm above the predominant roof height but the elevational drawings show the roof height at 16.1m FFL and the lift overrun at 18.1 FFL, a 2m difference. We also feel that the new elevations feel contrived, especially through the addition of a mansard roof and, contrary to the applicants' statement, they do not improve the proposals.

Our key concern is the impact on views from the recently extended Conservation Area, which are referred to in the Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment by Allen Pyke which accompanies the application Para 3.7 quotes the St Peter's Conservation Area Statement as saying that 'Only the churchyard and Caversham Court Gardens have significant views out of the area' and continues by quoting its comments on the attractiveness of the riverside walk, the poor quality of recent building alongside it, and the need for tree planting to ameliorate these. Para 3.20 quotes further from the Conservation Area Statement, while Para 3.9 quotes Local Plan Policy EN2 (Protection of Significant Views of Heritage Interest), which asserts that the view upstream from Caversham Bridge merits special protection.

Para 3.46, in discussing the impact on views from Caversham Court Gardens and the Church, concludes: "Value of the view: High. The view is of good scenic value, from the Conservation Area across the Major Landscape Feature " (i.e. the river).

We feel this Assessment reflects the importance of these views. However, its conclusions are not carried forward to the Design and Access Statement. Page 9 of that Statement contrasts sharply, stating that *"the Conservation Area Appraisal indicates that the development... would have no impact on views into the Conservation*

*Area, with the only potential views toward the site provided from Caversham Court Gardens and Caversham Bridge”.*

This summary is not only at odds with the applicants’ own Assessment but with the Conservation Area Appraisal’s meaning. As CADRA drafted the Appraisal on behalf of the CAAC and the Borough Council, we feel equipped to interpret it. The Assessment’s quoting of the word ‘only’ to imply unimportance is a calculated misinterpretation: in fact the views across the river from these vantage points (and from the Churchyard, which is not mentioned on P 9) are by far the most important in the Conservation Area, were a key factor in its designation, and are reflected in Policy EN2. The proposals would particularly impact on these views in winter, as the trees around the site are deciduous.

## **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) (2019) which states at Paragraph 11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”.

- 5.2 The Development Plan is now in one document - the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019) (RBLP). The relevant policies are:

Policy CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction  
Policy CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change  
Policy CC4: Decentralised Energy  
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 CC9: Securing Infrastructure  
Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment  
Policy EN2: Areas of Archaeological Significance  
Policy EN5: Protection of Significant Views with Heritage Interest  
Policy EN7: Local Green Space and Public Open Space  
Policy EN11: Waterspaces  
Policy EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network  
Policy EN13: Major Landscape Features and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland  
Policy EN15: Air Quality  
Policy EN16: Pollution and Water Resources  
Policy EN17: Noise Generating Equipment  
Policy EN18: Flooding and Drainage  
Policy TR1: Achieving The Transport Strategy

Policy TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters  
 Policy TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities  
 Policy TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging  
 Policy RL2: Scale and Location of Retail, Leisure and Culture Development  
 Policy RL5: Impact of Main Town Centre Uses  
 Policy CR4: Leisure, Culture and Tourism in Central Reading

- 5.3 Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:
- Sustainable Design and Construction (April 2011)
  - Revised Parking Standards and Design (October 2011)
  - Planning Obligations Under Section 106 (April 2015)
  - Employment, Skills and Training (April 2013)
- 5.4 Other relevant documents are:
- National Design Guide: Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places (Oct, 2019)
  - NPPG: Flood Risk and Coastal Change (March 2014); Town Centres and Retail (July 2019)

## 6. APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are:

- Principle of development
- Design considerations and the effect on the Major Landscape Feature
- Transport
- Landscaping
- Sustainability
- Environmental Matters - Air Quality, Flood Risk, Contamination
- S106
- Equalities impact

### Principle of Development

- 6.1 The application site is not allocated for the proposed use and to determine whether the principle of use is acceptable requires assessment as to whether the site is sequentially preferable (i) in terms of the proposal for a main centre use located outside of the defined town centre; and (ii) in terms of flood risk.

### ***Relationship to town centre***

- 6.2 In terms of town centres, Section 7 of the NPPF: Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres, states that “*Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation*” (para 85). It goes on to state that:

*86. Local planning authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up-to-date plan. Main town centre uses should be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations; and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period) should out of centre sites be considered.*

*87. When considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites which are well connected to the town centre. Applicants and local planning authorities should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale, so that opportunities to utilise suitable town centre or edge of centre<sup>1</sup> sites are fully explored.*

- 6.3 The RBLP includes Policy RL2: Scale and Location of Retail, Leisure and Culture. This reiterates the requirements of national policy requiring main town centre retail, leisure and culture over 2,500sqm (net gain) to take place in the centre of Reading. *“Where a need for additional development has been identified, and no sites are available in or adjoin the centre of Reading or other defined centres, a sequential approach should be adopted to identifying alternative sites.”*
- 6.4 Policy RL5: Impact of Main Town Centre Uses confirms that proposals for more than 1000sqm (gross) of new or additional floorspace for main town centre uses in an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre location should demonstrate that there will be no significant adverse impact on existing centres.
- 6.5 The proposal is outside the town centre and beyond what is defined as ‘edge of centre’ under the NPPF. Therefore, it needs to be demonstrated that the application site is sequentially preferable to those within the town centre, and that the proposed site is an accessible location, well connected to the town centre (NPPF, 2019 - Para 85 (e)).
- 6.6 The applicant has submitted a Sequential Site Assessment and this includes consideration of the potential suitability, viability and availability of potential alternative sequentially preferable sites, to accommodate the proposed hotel development.
- 6.7 The submitted Assessment identifies the scope of the assessment (set out in a pre-application email to the Council on 29/3/2018 and agreed) as follows:

*Area of search - The applicant has identified market demand for a hotel in the north of Reading’s central area. Accordingly, the*

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<sup>1</sup> Defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as within 300m of a town centre boundary (excluding retail). The application site is ca550m from the town centre boundary measured along Caversham Road.

*catchment area is location-specific to Reading's central area and the site must be in a short distance of the central core to enable hotel visitors to utilise the town centre for leisure and work purposes. Therefore, the search for alternative sites will concentrate on sequentially preferable sites within and on the edge of Reading town centre.*

*Flexibility - The proposed scheme comprises a five-storey hotel with 132 hotel rooms and is considered appropriate to serve market demand in this location. The number of rooms is not flexible in this instance in the context of the applicant's commercial requirements; however, having regard to flexibility, it would be possible in theory to vary the size of the site needed to accommodate this scale of development depending on the number of storeys the site could feasibly accommodate.*

*Site parameters - Any potential site must also be of an adequate size to accommodate the proposed hotel with dedicated parking provision in accordance with the Council's maximum standards, along with a visual presence from a main road. Reading has different maximum parking standards for zone 1 and zone 2 owing to the availability of transport links in the central area and the need to discourage on site parking. On this basis, the minimum site area used for the purposes of the assessment having regard to flexibility is calculated to be 0.2 ha (0.5 acres) in parking zone 1 and 0.3 ha (0.7 acres) in parking zone 2.*

- 6.8 In summary the following parameters were agreed with the Council
- A location within, or on the edge of, Reading central area;
  - A minimum site area of 0.2 ha in parking zone 1 and 0.3 ha in parking zone 2;
  - Prominent roadside location; and
  - A topographically flat site.
- 6.9 Six sites were assessed, including No. 1 Reading, 29 Station Road (Ref: 181930) as requested by the case officer as part of a pre-application meeting in February 2019. 20 Hosier Street (ref: 182054) was also identified, but was discounted by the applicant as being too small within the above agreed parameters.
- 6.10 Paragraph 11 of the NPPG - Town Centres and Retail (July 2019) includes a checklist of considerations that should be taken into account in determining whether a proposal complies with the sequential test (*bold emphasis by Case Officer*):
- *With due regard to the requirement to demonstrate **flexibility**, has the **suitability** of more central sites to accommodate the proposal been considered? Where the proposal would be located in an edge of centre or out of centre location, preference should be given to **accessible** sites that are well connected to the town*



*centre. It is important to set out any associated reasoning clearly.*

- *Is there scope for **flexibility** in the format and/or scale of the proposal? It is not necessary to demonstrate that a potential town centre or edge of centre site can accommodate precisely the scale and form of development being proposed, but rather to consider what contribution more central sites are able to make individually to accommodate the proposal.*
- *If there are no suitable sequentially preferable locations, the sequential test is passed.*

6.11 Paragraph 12 highlights that *“Use of the sequential test should recognise that certain main town centre uses have particular market and locational requirements which mean that they may only be accommodated in specific locations. Robust justification will need to be provided where this is the case, and land ownership does not provide such a justification.”* And Paragraph 13 that *“..as promoting new development on town centre locations can be more expensive and complicated than building elsewhere, local planning authorities need to be realistic and flexible in applying the test.”*

6.12 The applicant’s submitted Assessment identifies that the applicant’s construction methods, i.e. a modular construction method whereby hotel rooms are built and furnished off-site and assembled on-site has been included as a relevant consideration as part of the application of the sequential assessment. This, it is stated, is because this construction method is integral to the viability of the business model and informs the number of rooms that the market can support in a particular location. This is identified as the reason why conversion of an existing building or the demolition of a building is not viable, and only vacant or low intensively used land could be used for the proposed development.

6.13 In terms of deliverability, the Assessment has focussed on sites available on a freehold basis for purchase by the applicant and available for development within the next 6 months.

6.14 Based on the above identified criteria the following sites were assessed as to whether they were available, suitable and viable:

- Abattoirs Road
- Hills Meadow Car Park, George Street
- Site allocation - Reading Prison
- Site allocation - North of Station
- Site allocation - Hosier Street; and
- No.1 Reading, 29 Station Road

6.15 Having reviewed the Assessment, Officers consider that it has been undertaken to a reasonable standard and complies with the requirements of national and local policy. It demonstrates that each of the sites assessed would not be sequentially preferable when

assessed in the context of the agreed criteria as set out above, for reasons relating to availability, size, configuration and or location (suitability), and viability. The application site is considered to be accessible and well connected to the town centre, and therefore Officers are satisfied that the town centre sequential test has been passed.

### ***Flooding***

- 6.16 The application site is located in Flood Risk Zone 2 - Medium Probability of flooding, and national policy, as defined in NPPF in section 14: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change, states that *“Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.”*
- 6.17 A Sequential Test is to be applied to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding. If there are **reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding then the proposed development should not be permitted.**
- 6.18 The NPPG on Flood Risk and Coastal Change provides further detail on the Sequential Test. Paragraph 33 requires the area to which to apply the Sequential Test should be defined by local circumstances and relate to the catchment for the type of development proposed. Also when applying the Sequential Test the guidance states that *“... a pragmatic approach on the availability of alternatives should be taken.”*
- 6.19 It is for the Local Planning Authority to decide on whether the Sequential Test has been passed and needs to be satisfied that proposed development would be safe and would not lead to increased flooding elsewhere.
- 6.20 The submitted Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) identifies that a search for sites has been undertaken across the whole of Reading Borough area. In selecting reasonably comparable sites the applicant has used sites identified within their town centre retail sequential test, those within the Council’s Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (attracting a lower or similar flood risk). The applicant also searched land use marketing search engines and further reviewed sites which would meet former Reading Central Area Policy RC7: Leisure, Culture and Tourism in the Centre, and Sites and Detailed Policies Document Policy SA10: Other Sites for Leisure Development. These returned no other identified or comparable sites.
- 6.21 The submitted Sequential Test identifies that there are no sequentially preferable sites and officers consider that the

assessment has been undertaken in accordance with national policy and guidance requirements.

- 6.22 With respect to the flood risk and town centre/leisure sequential tests, and the pre-agreed criteria for site selection, it is considered that the overall sequential tests have been met. However, it should be noted that the inclusion of viability issues relating to the applicant's specific construction approach for the hotel, using modular construction, is not considered to be relevant. The Government guidance on sequential tests does allow for consideration of viability issues, but is not explicit that this relates to specific construction methods an applicant chooses to use. If the proposal had been acceptable in other regards, which the following assessment identifies it is not, further detail on viability would have been requested by officers.

#### **Design Considerations and the Effect on the Major Landscape Feature**

- 6.23 The NPPF (Para 124) sets out that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. The recently published National Design Guide identifies 10 key components for good design and of particular note is the characteristic of 'Context' and it states that *"well-designed new development responds positively to the features of the site itself and the surrounding context beyond the site boundary. It should enhance positive qualities and improve negative ones."* Additionally there is specific reference to 'views inwards and outwards'.
- 6.24 Policy CC7 requires all development to be *"of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located."* The components of design include: Layout: Urban structure and urban grain; Landscape; Density and mix; Scale: height and massing; and Architectural detail and materials.
- 6.25 Of specific relevance to consideration of design is that the proposed site is within the Thames Valley designated Major Landscape Feature (MLP under Policy EN13), in close proximity to the River Thames (Waterspaces Policy EN11) and adjacent to the Local Green Space of the Rivermead and Thameside Promenade (EN7Wp).
- 6.26 Policy EN13 states that *"Planning permission will not be granted for any development that would detract from the character or appearance of a Major Landscape Feature."* The supporting text states that the policy *"does not rule out development in or close to these areas, but seeks to ensure that development only takes place where it can preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the feature."*
- 6.27 Under Policy EN11 there is the requirement for water spaces to be protected, enhanced and that *"there will be no adverse impact on*

*the function and setting of any watercourse and its associated corridor”.*

6.28 Policy EN7 identifies that proposals would not be permitted that *“erode their [Local Green Space’s] quality through insensitive adjacent development....”*.

6.29 The previous withdrawn scheme (ref. 181056), as shown below, would have been refused, because it was considered overly dominant in height in particular with regard to the MLF. The elevations were not considered to be of high quality and lacked an innovative design, both as a building in its own right, but also in its context within the MLF, the River and the wider environs which include Caversham Court Gardens, a Grade II Listed Registered Park and Garden, and the St. Peter’s Conservation Area.



NORTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION



6.30 The proposed design as shown below includes the following amendments:

- The height has been reduced by ca 2.3m by removing and relocating roof top plant to the ground floor.
- The introduction of a mansard roof.
- More variation in proposed materials to include: Ground to second floor brick faced with vertical windows, above this a horizontal band of copper and glazing, and a mansard roof with slate finish.



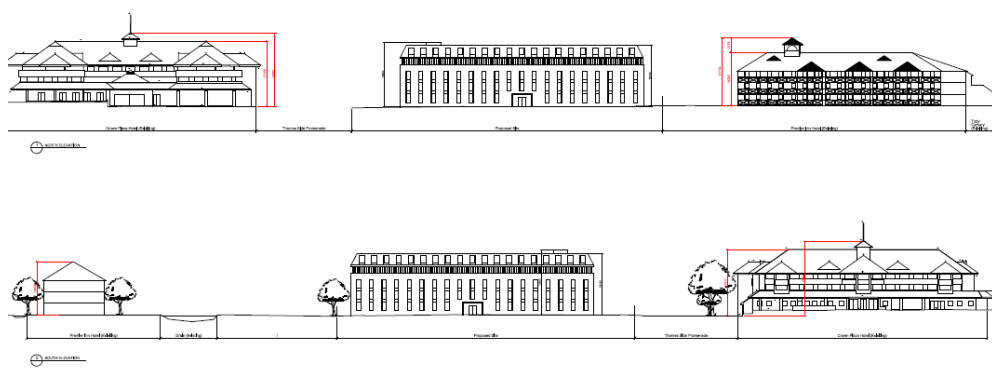
SOUTH ELEVATION - Current Scheme



WEST ELEVATION - Current Scheme



- 6.31 The supporting text to Policy EN13 (MLF) states *“The extent to which new development prevents or minimises the visual impact on major landscape features and other landscape values is largely dependent on the location, design and scale of proposals.”*
- 6.32 Although the siting and footprint within the site itself are considered acceptable in themselves, the overall height, and design of the elevations and roofscape, are not considered to offer an attractive addition to this location. The elevations appear in your officers’ opinion, austere and fortress-like.
- 6.33 Officers accept that although the surrounding buildings are of their time they do at least have some consistency in terms of pitched roof forms and gable features (see below), which assist in reducing the overall bulk of the buildings within the context. They also offer some visual interest, especially through some articulation of the elevations themselves.

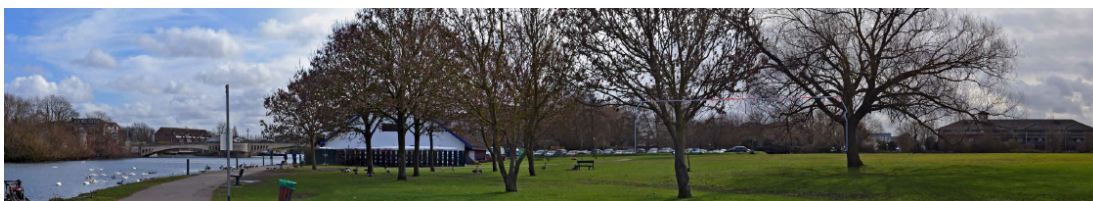


- 6.34 The proposed building is in contrast to the adjacent buildings. It is a simple rectangular form, as the previous application, but with the addition of an overly-extended mansard roof, which has a minimal, if not almost the opposite effect, in achieving a reduction in the bulk of the building, and appears as a rather contrived roof form, which does not relate well to surrounding buildings. Although the height has been reduced the eaves are high compared to adjacent buildings.
- 6.35 The proposed materials of brick, recessed copper banding and slate roof are acceptable, but these on their own are not considered sufficient to create a visually interesting building or to mitigate the shortcomings of the architecture.
- 6.36 It appears as if the applicant is being constrained in design terms both by the overall quantum of rooms they state is required to make the site viable, but also the construction model they use, i.e. a modular form fabricated off site. The proposed construction approach seems to be having the effect of hindering the applicant's ability to devise a visually interesting development. Even if the proposed scheme were acceptable overall it might simply not be possible to achieve this quantum of development, whilst satisfying overall design requirements.
- 6.37 The applicant submitted a Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA), which includes an assessment of the landscape elements which make up the site and its surrounding context and the potential effects of the proposed scheme on the sensitivity of the landscape /townspace and visual amenity and the significance of any effects.
- 6.38 Included in the TVIA, there is a section on the Berkshire Landscape Character Area Assessment (2003) as the site lies within the Character Area B3: Reading Thames. That Assessment refers to "*the majority of the character area being within the urban fringe of Reading, and that the area is visually and physically intruded by urban fringe uses creating a landscape of poor-moderate character and declining condition.*" It suggests that "*the overall strategy should be to conserve and restore and, where possible enhance the landscape for the benefit of recreational uses*".



- 6.39 As part of para 3.1 of the TVIA it acknowledges that *“The most sensitive visual receptors are those experiencing direct views towards the site from within the Major Landscape Feature; from the Thames Promenade; from Caversham Bridge and from within St Peters Conservation Area immediately north of the Thames.”* Para. 3.46 of the TVIA states that *“The site and its features make no notable contribution to these views.”* However, the TVIA also recognises that the view from the St. Peter’s Conservation Area (CA) is of good scenic value across the MLF and that *“elements that make up the view would be difficult to restore without substantial detriment to the overall view.”* This is important to note especially in the context of Policy EN1, which states that *“Development will not detract from the enjoyment, layout, design, character, appearance, features or setting of the park or garden, key views out from the park, or prejudice its future restoration.”* [officer emphasis]
- 6.40 The TVIA concludes that on completion of the scheme there would be *“no deterioration or improvement of the view.”* (Para. 5.19). Even if it is accepted that the site currently makes no specific contribution to the view, in its current form as a car park it is considered it has limited detrimental effect on the MLF. This is because at present you do not perceive it and it just appears as part of the view which terminates in the trees, which surround the site. It must surely be the case that development of the site would be detrimental to the wider MLF, in particular the view from the Conservation Area, and indeed would not conserve, restore or enhance the landscape. This view is supported by CADRA who drafted the Conservation Area Appraisal on behalf of the CAAC and the Council.
- 6.41 The TVIA includes wireline images of the proposed scheme from different viewpoints. Some of these are included below and it is the opinion of officers that despite the reduction in height from the withdrawn scheme these still demonstrate that the proposed building would be visually prominent.





- 6.42 Although amendments have been made in comparison to the withdrawn scheme with respect to height, by lowering the building, and seeking to reduce the building mass with a crown/ mansard type roof, it is not considered that these changes have achieved a good quality design. The form is very simple, and is considered to be visually harmful, irrespective of materials proposed. From the information presented within the TVIA it is also considered that the building would still appear as a dominant feature within the designated area of the MLF, and would have a detrimental effect on views across the MLF.
- 6.43 The recommendation above therefore includes a reason for refusal related to the scale and mass of the building, overall design and the resultant detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the MLF and on views across it from the St. Peter's Conservation Area including from Caversham Bridge, The Thames Promenade, and Caversham Court Gardens.

### Transport

- 6.44 The proposed scheme is located on part of the site of the existing Crowne Plaza car park accessed from the west side of Thames Promenade. The proposal includes two access points to the car park. The existing car park currently provides 200 spaces. Following the redevelopment, it would provide 118 spaces (including 6 disabled spaces) - 50 spaces within the northern car park, and 68 within the southern car park). Taxi drop off/collection would take place within the southern car park. 6 cycle spaces are also proposed.
- 6.45 It is proposed that the car parking spaces of the proposed hotel (118) and existing Crowne Plaza Hotel (22 bays) (which has 122 bedrooms, meeting rooms which can cater for up to 445 delegates, a healthclub and spa) would be shared, with car park management combined for the two sites. The submitted transport information sets out that the remaining car parking areas will be allocated as follows:
- The Restaurant and Health Club guests (within Crowne Plaza) - 20 spaces;



- Crowne Plaza Hotel guests - 58 spaces and
  - New hotel guests- 62 spaces
- 6.46 The Car Park Management Plan identifies a number of measures:
- Guests would be required to pre-book a parking space;
  - Details would be on the website of options for sustainable travel to the hotel, and location of public car parks;
  - Guests who had not pre-booked a car parking space, would be redirected towards a public car park in Reading upon arrival;
  - Signage would be provided within the car park stating that the car park is solely for the use of guests who had reserved a car parking space;
  - Car parking enforcement measures would be implemented; and
  - Ongoing monitoring of the measures set out in the car parking management plan.
- 6.47 A Travel Plan has been submitted which relates to staff and guests for both hotels.
- 6.48 A car parking occupancy survey was undertaken by the applicant and concludes that nearby public car parks would have capacity to accommodate any overspill and that it was reasonable to state that hotel guests would not attempt to park on street, and combined with not permitting staff to park on site would reduce car parking over-spill locally.
- 6.49 Additionally the Transport assessment concludes that the development would result in a negligible increase in total person trips undertaken during the local transport network peak hour, and it is not considered that it would result in a significant impact on the operation of the local highway network nor impact severely on the capacity of the public transport networks.
- 6.50 Refuse collection would take place within the site and with regard to delivery and serving this is proposed to be shared with the Crowne Plaza within their land ownership.
- 6.51 Many of the objections received, however, include concern over the total proposed parking provision and the likely overspill into the adjacent public car park by hotel users, specifically that at Thames Side Promenade. It is considered that any additional use of this car park by hotel users would have a significant detrimental effect on users of the Rowing Club and the public, as recreational users of the Thames Promenade, and visitors to Caversham Court Gardens (this is the closest public car park).
- 6.52 Although some amendments have been made to the previous withdrawn scheme with respect to access and further information submitted, this is insufficient to address fundamental transport concerns. Having reviewed the submitted information Transport, as

set out in detail in section 4 above, still conclude that the proposal would not be acceptable because:

- It would not comply with vehicle parking standards (Policy TR5);
- There is insufficient information to enable the traffic and transport implications to be fully assessed (Policies CC6, TR1 and TR3); and
- It would not comply with relevant servicing standards (Policy TR3).

6.53 Therefore the recommendation above includes transport reasons for refusal.

6.54 Additionally, it should be noted that as well as servicing arrangements, for which a specific reason for refusal is recommended, proposed parking and travel plan measures are proposed to be shared with Crowne Plaza. Had the scheme been acceptable overall, including clearly demonstrating that such measures would be acceptable, then a specific mechanism for their control through a S106 legal agreement would have been required. However, at present there is an overriding transport objection, with a reason for refusal based on insufficient information.

#### Landscaping

6.55 The application site is subject to a TPO, which includes 11 Alder trees and Plane trees adjacent to the Highway and is in an area of less than 10% tree canopy cover and is on a route that Reading's Tree Strategy identifies as being important for trees.

6.56 The submitted information confirms that the proposal would result in the loss of all the TPO Alder trees, but due to their condition and the proposed net gain of 16 trees, the Natural Environment Officer considers their removal to be acceptable. In comparison to the withdrawn scheme, three Plane trees, outside, but adjacent to the site, also protected, are to be retained. The scheme also includes for a comprehensive landscaping scheme which will include additional boundary hedging and planting within the site.

6.57 There were some minor adjustments required, as set out in the consultation section above, to the overall landscaping scheme and associated details, which have largely been addressed. However, following officers advising the agent that the application would be recommended for refusal, the applicant instructed the agent to undertake no further work. These matters are, however, not sufficient to warrant a reason for refusal.

6.58 The proposal is therefore considered to accord with relevant Policies, CC7, EN7, EN13 & EN14 and the aims of the Reading Tree Strategy to increase canopy cover, with respect to landscaping matters

### Sustainability

- 6.59 The Adopted Local Plan includes a number of policies CC2, CC3, and CC4, which require the reduction of consumption of resources and materials, the use of energy, and the associated emission of greenhouse gases that contribute towards climate change. Policy CC2 specifically requires non-residential major developments to meet an 'Excellent' BREEAM standard, where possible. Policy CC4 states that *"Any development of more than 20 dwellings and/ or non-residential development of over 1,000 sq m shall consider the inclusion of decentralised energy provision, within the site, unless it can be demonstrated that the scheme is not suitable, feasible or viable for this form of energy provision."*
- 6.60 The submitted BREEAM Statement and BREEAM Pre-assessment conclude that the proposed scheme could achieve *"59.52% of credits" "which exceeds the 55% threshold to achieve a BREEAM new construction Other Buildings 2018 Very Good rating."* *"It is requested that the BREEAM Very Good target with a minimum score of 55% is acceptable for this development due to the additional difficulty of compliance against the New Construction 2018 scheme."*
- 6.61 This falls well below the new RBLP policy requirement of 70% and although Policy CC2 does acknowledge that for some uses such as industrial uses, warehouses and schools it might be more difficult to meet these standards. In cases where it might be more difficult to achieve this standard then *"developments must demonstrate that the standard to be achieved is the highest possible for the development, and at a minimum meets the BREEAM 'Very Good' standard."* It is not clear why a new hotel development, which is a new-build development, could not achieve this standard, and the issue appears to be the construction quality standard to be used in the modular system. It is therefore recommended that this forms one of the reasons for refusal.
- 6.62 Notwithstanding the above, it should be noted that the proposed scheme would adopt a number of energy efficiency and demand reduction measures and would also incorporate facilities for decentralised energy with Combined Heat and Power (CHP) to meet the hot water requirements for the hotel. Air source heat pumps would be incorporated as a source of renewable energy through meeting a proportion of the heating and cooling demand.

### Environmental matters

- 6.63 *Air quality:* the site is located within an Air Quality Management Area (Policy EN15), and there was an original objection from Environmental Protection and Nuisance (EP&N), because of the potential for the proposed development to increase emissions. However, further to the submission of an Air Quality Assessment EP&N confirmed that there would be a very limited increase in

emissions and this would not take emissions over the objective level for nitrogen dioxide and no mitigation would be required.

- 6.64 **Flood Risk:** Para 163 of the NPPF requires that when determining applications LPAs should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere this is also set out within RBLP policy EN18. Development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding (having passed the sequential test) where it can be demonstrated that:

- a) within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location;
- b) the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient;
- c) it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate;
- d) any residual risk can be safely managed; and
- e) safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan.

- 6.65 The site is in Flood Zone 2 and the submitted FRA identifies that a safe access and evacuation route would be achievable within the site boundary and beyond via Richfield Avenue. The proposed finished floor level would be at 38.75m AOD, which is above the flood level of 38.65m AOD, which is 1 in 100 year flood event plus a 25% climate change allowance. The FRA includes the calculation of the greenfield runoff rate for the development site and the estimated run-off from the current car park. A proposed drainage strategy is presented which seeks to provide a significant improvement over the current site performance such that the site would be closer to greenfield performance. The assessment identifies the implementation of a SUDS, which had the overall proposed development been considered acceptable, would have been managed through conditions. The proposed scheme would accord with relevant national and local flood risk policies.

- 6.66 **Contamination:** Policy EN16 states that *“development will only be permitted on land affected by contamination where it is demonstrated that the contamination and land gas can be satisfactorily managed or remediated so that it is suitable for the proposed end use and will not impact on the groundwater environment, human health, buildings and the wider environment, during demolition and construction phases as well as during the future use of the site.”*

- 6.67 The submitted Phase 1 contamination report identified that according to EA records the site is located on a former landfill site, which was active between 1970 and 1979. Such a site could be a source of a range of contaminants, with the potential for ground gas, which would pose a high level of risk to end users of the site. The

report therefore recommends that intrusive site investigations are undertaken to confirm and investigate the preliminary findings.

- 6.68 Both the EA and RBC's Environmental Protection and Nuisance Team (EP&N) recommend contamination related conditions to fully characterise the site, identify remediation measures and implement such measures, prior to development.
- 6.69 With respect to land gas, however, although EP&N suggest similar conditions to those for contamination, they highlight that ideally such monitoring and risk assessment should be carried out prior to permission being granted because the results could require development to be significantly altered or conclude that it is not suitable for development. As insufficient detail is currently available to determine whether the site would be suitable for development from a land gas perspective the recommendation includes a reason for refusal on this basis.

#### **Section 106**

- 6.70 In addition to Community Infrastructure Levy, and in accordance with Policy CC9, the following S106 obligations would be sought:
- Public realm improvements - £50k towards public realm
  - Employment Skills and Training Plan or contribution for both construction and end user.
  - Transport contribution - to be advised in the Update Report
  - Occupancy restrictions - not for more than 3 months by the same occupier; no minimum period of occupation.
- 6.71 Although the Planning Statement acknowledges and agrees with the principle of a number of the above obligations, no final position was reached during the course of the application. Indeed the agent did not consider that a contribution towards the public realm was necessary or required. Officers provided further justification via email on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2019 as follows:

*The proposed hotel would be adjacent to a part of the Thames Parks, i.e. the promenade and associated facilities by the River, and there would be future hotel guests who would use the Thames Parks with the resulting direct increase in use and demand for provision such as seating, lighting, bins, tables, etc. There would, therefore, be a direct impact specifically arising from the development, and therefore, additional infrastructure is required.*

*The current CIL and S106 framework, which you highlight [agent], does allow for leisure contributions to be sought where outdoor recreation would directly serve a new development and where improvements would be necessitated by the development including those in close proximity to a site. It is considered that a specific contribution towards S106 to enhance the current facilities would be necessary to make the scheme acceptable and the proposed £50k would be directly related in kind and scale to the proposed scheme.*

*This would be based on a modest contribution for the number of people assumed to use the proposal over the lifetime of the scheme (132 bed hotel, assuming 75% occupancy per year, and 50% of those people using the facilities around the hotel).*

*It is not unusual for developments to pay for Section 106 contributions alongside their required CIL payments particularly where there is little or no outdoor leisure facilities on site. Some examples of schemes where leisure contributions have been secured, since the introduction of CIL, where developers also had CIL contributions to make, are as follows:*

**180319** - Portman Road - Application for 211 dwellings with associated access, cycle path provision, parking, landscaping and open space provision, following demolition of existing buildings (amended description). - £160K - improvements to the Portman Road NEAP

**180358** - Bristol & West Arcade - Demolition of vacant former Bristol & West Arcade (173 - 175 Friar Street) and erection of an eight storey mixed -use building (plus basement) to provide 35 residential units, 4,208 sqm of B1 office floorspace, and 5 retail units (A1/A2/A3), demolition of rear parts of 29 - 31 and 32 Market Place, the change of use of the retained units at 27 - 28, 29 - 31/32 Market Place at first, second and third floors to provide 8 residential units, change of use at ground and basement level of 32 Market Place from A2 to flexible retail use (A1/A2/A3), retention of 260.4 sqm of A4 use at ground and basement at 29-31 Market Place, change of use at ground and basement of 27 - 28 Market Place to flexible retail use (A1/A2/A3), and associated internal and external works to the Listed Buildings, landscaping, refuse, plant, cycle stores and substation at basement level - £43k Forbury Gardens.

**151914** - Worton Grange - A Hybrid application seeking outline planning permission for the development of up to 175 new homes, including affordable housing(with all matters reserved apart from access), and full planning permission for the development of 12 commercial units in flexible use within Classes B1(c),B2 and B8,two car showrooms with MOT and servicing(Sui Generis), three retail warehouse units (Class A1),120 bed hotel (Class C1),pub with restaurant facility (Class A4),coffee shop (Class A1), restaurant (Class A3), and bank (Class A2). New vehicular access from Basingstoke Road and Imperial Way. Bus stop facilities, hard and soft landscaping and other ancillary development(Summarised Description) - £139K - improvements to Whitley Wood Recreation Ground.

*It is therefore considered necessary to secure S106 for specific enhancements to the provision of the Thames Parks in the vicinity of the proposed hotel, particularly in the context of the types of*

*projects that CIL have been used for by the Council, and where there is little or no outdoor leisure provision on site.*

The lack of an agreed Section 106 agreement therefore forms another recommended reason for refusal as set out above.

#### **Equalities Impact**

- 6.72 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and whether 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.
- 6.73 Policy CC7 specifically states that design should “*Address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them, including providing suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily.*” Although access into the building, the ground floor and upper floor communal areas appear, from the submitted information, to be accessible to all, it is not clearly evident from the details shown on the floor plans, labelled as ‘typical room’ as to whether these would be able to accommodate wheelchair users. This will be checked further and reported in an update. If it is shown that a reasonable proportion of rooms would not be capable of access by wheelchair users then this could lead to a further reason for refusal. This would be because, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics, it would not have been demonstrated that the layout would not have an adverse impact.

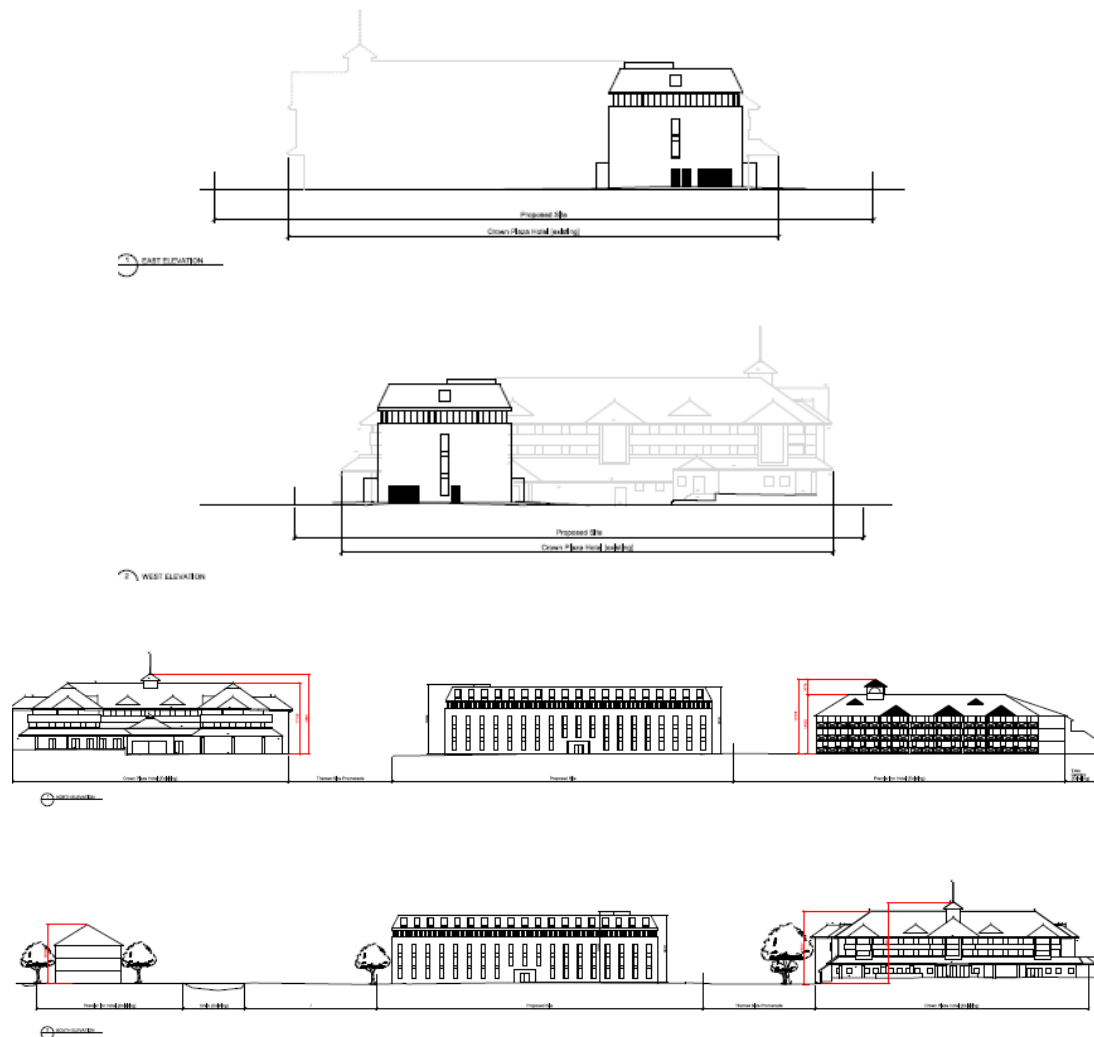
## **7 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The issues above have been communicated to the applicant, who has elected not to withdraw the application. This proposal has been carefully considered in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, and supplementary planning documents. Despite officers working positively and proactively with the applicant on this scheme, there are significant areas which remain unresolved and for the reasons set out in the above report, a refusal of permission is recommended.

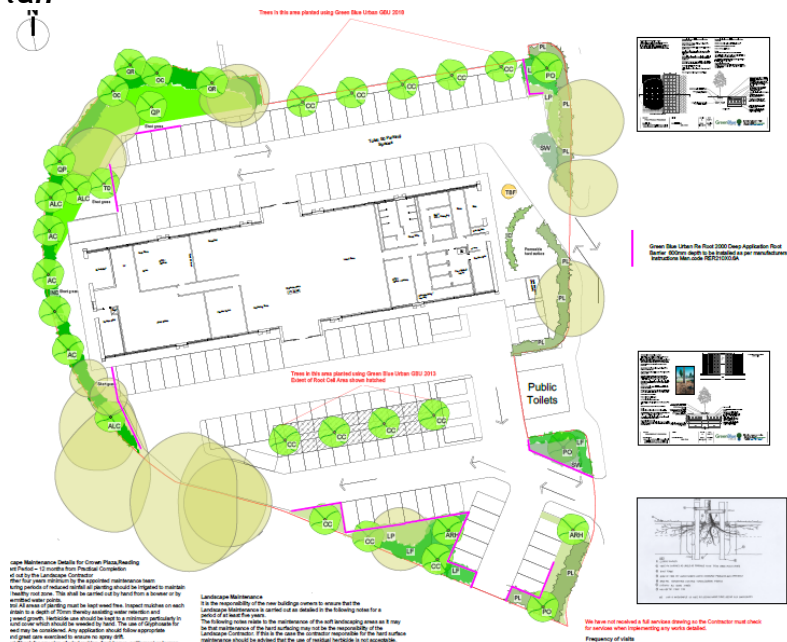
Case Officer: Alison Amoah

## APPENDIX 1: PLANS

### Elevations

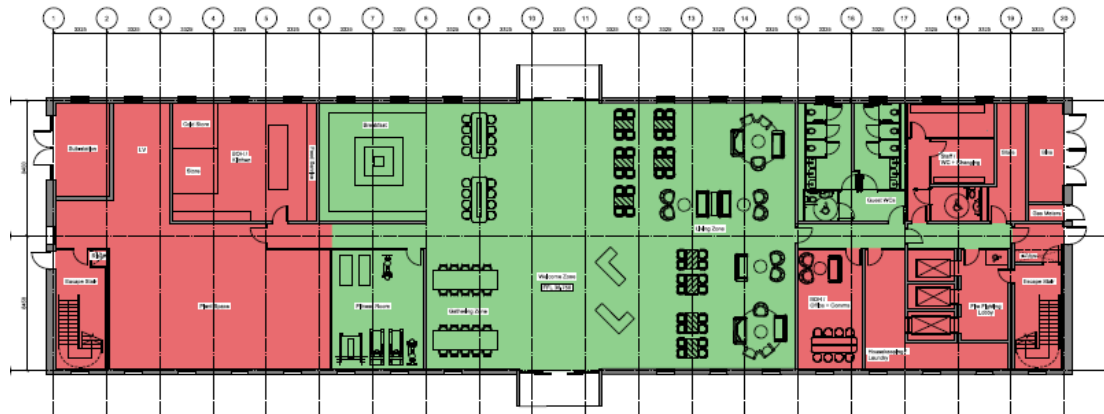


### Planting Plan

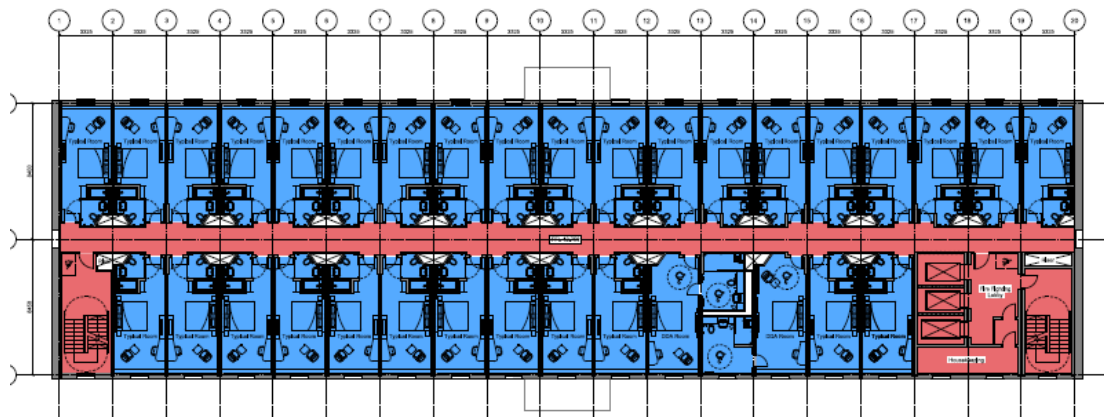




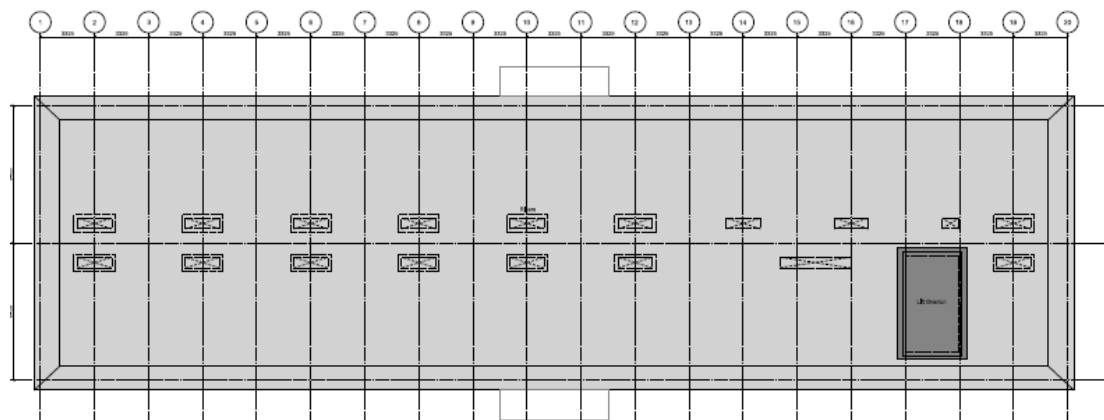
## Ground Floor Plan



## First through to Fourth Floor Plan



## Roof Plan



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## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019

Ward: Church

App No: 190760/FUL & 190929/FUL

Address: 76 Christchurch Road, Reading

**190760/FUL Proposal:** Change of use ground, first and second floor of A2 (Bank) to A5 on the ground floor, and on first and second floor from A2 to C4 HMO. Part-retrospective application for flat roof rear dormer.

**190929/FUL Proposal:** Change of use of 1st and 2nd floors from bank (Class A2) to C4 HMO. Part-retrospective application for flat roof rear dormer.

**Applicant:** Rytdak Ltd

**Date validated:**

**190760/FUL:** 17/6/2019

**190929/FUL:** 23/7/2019

**Application:** 8 week target decision date:

**190760/FUL:** 17/6/2019

**190929/FUL:** 23/7/2019

**Extension of time:** Agreed for 20 December 2019 (both applications)

### 190760/ FUL and 190929/FUL - RECOMMENDATION

Grant Full Planning Permission, subject to the following conditions and informatives as per the main report (appendix 1).

#### 1. Introduction

1.1 When these applications were considered at the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2019 Planning Applications Committee (PAC) a number of queries were raised by members, which resulted in the application being deferred. Officers were asked to clarify the following:

- Context of the previous refusal of planning permission and dismissal at appeal of a planning application to change the use of no.60 Christchurch Road;
- Clarification of the different use classes relevant to retail areas and confirmation of the current uses within the centre;
- Clarification on Article 4 area relevance and rules for HMOs;
- Potential to bring discharge of conditions (8,9,10, and 11) to PAC;
- Clarification of eventual fate of ground floor unit under application 190929;
- More detail on a litter management strategy;

1.2 An additional representation was received during the period from November PAC to the writing of this report, the comments are summarised as:

- Concerns and comments on use classifications for uses in parade of shops;

- Comments on article 4 direction, HMO proportion in area, and licensing for other HMOs.
- 1.3 The points raised in this representation will be addressed, which have already been raised by other neighbours, will be covered by this report and are contained within the appended committee report and update report.
- 2. 60 Christchurch Road - context of previous application (181571)**
- 2.1 Application 181571/FUL was validated on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2018. The application was for the change of use of the ground floor unit (A1 - Laundromat) to A3 (Café/Restaurant). So a different proposal to the current application 190760 for 76 Christchurch Road, which is for the change of use of the ground floor unit from A2 (Financial and professional) to A5 (Hot food takeaway), and thus are not directly comparable.
- 2.2 The application at 60 Christchurch Road was assessed under the previous local development framework. The application was refused by officers (on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2019) as it failed to meet the policy requirements of the time. A subsequent appeal was lodged (APP/E0345/W/19/3228388) which was dismissed on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2019.
- 2.3 Superseded Policy DM13 required that:
- (i) Within the Key Frontages (identified on the Proposals Map), development involving a net loss of A1 retail to other 'centre uses' will only be permitted where:*
- *There would be no more than 3 consecutive units which are not in A1 retail use; and*
  - *The proportion of the total length of the Key Frontage within the centre that is in A1 retail use would exceed the relevant proportion..."*
- For Christchurch Road this is 50%.
- 2.4 The proposed change of use for 60 Christchurch Road to A3 use would have resulted in 4 consecutive units (No. 66, 64, 62 and 60) being in non-A1 use and therefore failed this part of the policy. In addition the proportion of the total length of the Key Frontage in A1 use would have reduced from 56.2% to 49.5%, i.e. below 50%.
- 2.5 It was on this basis that the Inspector dismissed the appeal although noting that the proposed development would not fail the new Local Plan policy.
- 2.6 The new Local Plan Policy RL3, is different to Policy DM13 and reads:
- a) Within the Key Frontages (identified on the Proposals Map), development involving a net loss of A1 retail or A2 financial and professional to other 'centre uses' will only be permitted where:*
- *There would be no more than 3 consecutive units which are not in A1 or A2 retail use; and*
  - *The proportion of the total length of the Key Frontage within the centre that is in A1 or A2 use would exceed the relevant proportion..."*
- For Christchurch Road this is 60%.
- 2.7 For clarity, that the superseded policy DM13 and the new Policy RL3 and the differences are highlighted below:

| Superseded Policy (DM13)   | Current Policy (RL3)  |
|--|---|
| <p>a) <i>Within the Key Frontages (identified on the Proposals Map), development involving a net loss of A1 retail to other ‘centre uses’ will only be permitted where:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>There would be no more than 3 consecutive units which are not in A1 retail use; and</i></li> <li><i>The proportion of the total length of the Key Frontage within the centre that is in A1 use would exceed the relevant proportion below:</i></li> </ul> <p>Christchurch Road Local Centre: 50%</p> | <p>b) <i>Within the Key Frontages (identified on the Proposals Map), development involving a net loss of A1 retail or A2 financial and professional to other ‘centre uses’ will only be permitted where:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>There would be no more than 3 consecutive units which are not in A1 or A2 retail use; and</i></li> <li><i>The proportion of the total length of the Key Frontage within the centre that is in A1 or A2 use would exceed the relevant proportion below:</i></li> </ul> <p>Christchurch Road Local Centre: 60%</p> |

- 2.8 This policy change of grouping A1 uses with A2 uses acknowledges that these uses can now interchange use as “permitted development” without planning permission being granted. It makes a difference to how we assess impact on the retail offer.

### 3. Use classes clarification

- 3.1 Members expressed concerns over the classification of certain uses based on the ability of patrons to take food away from the premise (either hot or cold). The table below provides the definition of the uses and reference to sale of food highlighted:

| <i>Use Class</i> | <i>Definition</i>  |
|------------------|--|
| A1 (Shops)       | <p>Use for all or any of the following purposes–</p> <p><b>(a) for the retail sale of goods other than hot food,</b></p> <p>(b) as a post office,</p> <p>(c) for the sale of tickets or as a travel agency,</p> <p><b>(d) for the sale of sandwiches or other cold food for consumption off the premises,</b></p> <p>(e) for hairdressing,</p> <p>(f) for the direction of funerals,</p> <p>(g) for the display of goods for sale,</p> <p>(h) for the hiring out of domestic or personal goods or articles,</p> <p>(i) for the washing or cleaning of clothes or fabrics on the premises,</p> <p>(j) for the reception of goods to be washed, cleaned or repaired,</p> <p><b>(k) as an internet café;</b> where the primary purpose of the premises is to provide facilities for enabling members of the public to access the internet</p> <p>Where the sale, display or service is to visiting members of</p> |

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
|                                 | the public.   |
| A2 (Financial and professional) | Use for the provision of –<br>(a) financial services, or<br>(b) professional services (other than health or medical services), or<br>(c) any other services which it is appropriate to provide in a shopping area, where the services are provided principally to visiting members of the public. |
| A3 (Restaurants and Cafes)      | <b>Use for the sale of food and drink for consumption on the premises. (officer note; Many A3 uses have ancillary take-away service too)</b>  |
| A4 (Drinking Establishment)     | <b>Use as a public house, wine-bar or other drinking establishment (officer note: Many pubs also sell food).</b>  |
| A5 (Hot food takeaways)         | <b>Use for the sale of hot food for consumption off the premises.</b>   |

- 3.2 It is often difficult to establish when the sale of food tips the balance between one use class or another. The definitions provided above are a starting point, and any use must be assessed with reference to the level of fact and degree to determine its predominant use and therefore its use class order (UCO) designation. As per noteworthy appeal decisions for Costa café's (T/APP/C/97/X5210/648273 & T/APP/X5210/A/97/289548/P6) the Inspectorate concluded that:

*“A significant volume of warmed through food is sold for consumption on and off the premises. However, the food that is dealt with in that manner is clearly subordinate to the much greater range of cold food displayed for sale. Moreover the food which is warmed through is prepared in its semi-finished state off the premises. I do not consider that the sale of this item of hot food for consumption on and off the premises takes the premises out of a Class A1...”*

- 3.3 In the light of the above discussion and definitions, Gregg's at 80 Christchurch Road is considered predominantly an A1 use whereas the only dedicated hot-food takeaway (A5) use currently within the centre is the Domino's pizza.

#### 4. Currents uses within Christchurch Road local centre

- 4.1 A number of queries have been raised in relation to the use class of a number of premises within the local centre. Some members and local residents have commented that the Today's Local has some hot food for takeaway and sales. However, the predominant use remains A1 retail. As such, the length of the frontage and its uses, including a running total of A1 and A2 uses is included in the table below and shown on the appended plan.

#### Existing Frontage uses and percentage

| Address  | Use Class             | Total Length | Percentage of frontage |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| 56 Christchurch Road                           | A1 (Heating showroom) | 7.1m         | 9.3%                   |
| 60 Christchurch Road                           | A1 (Dry Cleaners)     | 5.1m         | 6.6%                   |
| 62 Christchurch Road                           | A3 (Sizzling Spice)   | 5.3m         | 6.9%                   |
| 64 Christchurch Road                           | A5 (Domino's)         | 5.1m         | 6.6%                   |
| 66 Christchurch Road                           | A2 (Adam's Estates)   | 5.1m         | 6.6%                   |
| 68 Christchurch Road                           | A1 (Lloyd's Pharmacy) | 5.1m         | 6.6%                   |
| 70 Christchurch Road                           | A1 (Costcutter)       | 5.3m         | 6.9%                   |
| 72-74 Christchurch Rd                          | A1 (Today's Local)    | 12.2m        | 15.9%                  |
| 76 Christchurch Road                           | A2 (vacant NatWest)   | 6.1m         | 7.9%                   |
| 78 Christchurch Road                           | A2 (Cintra Estates)   | 6m           | 7.8%                   |
| 80 Christchurch Road                           | A3 (KungFu Kitchen)   | 5.7m         | 7.7%                   |
| 82 Christchurch Road                           | A1 (Greggs)           | 3.6m         | 6%                     |
| 2 Northcourt Avenue                            | A1 (Barbers)          | 3.3m         | 4.7%                   |
| Total Length of Centre                         |                       | 75m          | 60% RL3                |
| Total Proportion of A1 & A2 in centre          |                       | 60.2m        | 78.7%                  |
| Total Proportion of A5 properties in centre    |                       |              | 8.7%                   |
| Total Proportion adjusted with proposed A5 use |                       |              | 70.7%                  |
|  |                       |              |                        |

## 5. Assessment of current proposal

- 5.1 It is important to note that within the context of the superseded LDF, the proposal would have not failed Policy DM13 (Vitality and Viability of Smaller Centres). This is due to the fact that the current use of no. 76 Christchurch Road is in A2 use. Policy DM13 required that the percentage of uses within the primary frontage be greater than 50% which is currently the case. A change of use from A2 to any other 'centre use' would therefore have been acceptable under policy DM13 as it would not have had a detrimental impact in terms of the vitality and viability of this centre as defined by this policy.
- 5.2 Under current policy RL3, the assessment criteria to determine whether a change of use would have an effect on the viability and vitality of the centre is the loss of *both* A1 and A2 uses as above. As such, the loss of A2 units would have the potential to affect the mix of uses within the centre. The proposed development would maintain 70.7% of the frontage being within A1 and A2 usage. As per the main report, the proposed development would therefore be acceptable.

## 6. Article 4 direction and HMO rules

- 6.1 The proposed development is not located within the Article 4 Direction Area restricting small HMOs and therefore there is no requirement for the proposed development to be assessed in the light of this Direction.
- 6.2 Queries have been raised about the licensing of other HMOs within the area. HMOs require a license under legislation from late 2018 where they are for 5 or more persons. As HMOs are licensed under separate legislation this concern is not a material planning consideration.

- 6.3 The Residential Conversions SPD identifies that within areas covered by an Article 4 direction, the ‘tipping point is when the concentration of HMOs becomes over dominant and the community is no longer considered to be mixed and sustainable.’ The SPD defines that “planning permission will not normally be granted where the proportion of HMOs will result in HMOs representing 25% or more of the residential properties within a circle of 50m radius measured from the application site” (para. 5.43).
- 6.4 Whilst not located within an area covered by an Article 4 direction, the concentration of HMOs in the area surrounding the application site has been calculated as a percentage of the total estimated number of existing HMOs (C4 or sui generis) against the total number of residential properties, i.e. those falling with C3, C4 or sui generis HMO use. Available data from Environmental Health, Council Tax, extant (unimplemented) permissions for HMOs, and data on sites such as Rightmove, and data held by the Enforcement Team, has been used. The total number of applicable properties within the 50m radius, has been calculated as 36. The total number of properties within either C4 or sui generis HMO use, using the above sources of data, is estimated to be 8. Therefore the overall percentage is calculated as 22%, which is below the threshold of a 25%. Following the proposed change of use, this proportion would increase to 25.7% of the applicable properties.
- 6.5 Whilst slightly exceeding the threshold contained within the Council’s SPG for such conversions, it must be recognised that the existing property is not currently in C3 use as a single dwelling house but as an A2 (financial and professional, and any change of use would not result in a loss of an existing family dwelling or consequently any reduction in the number of single family dwellings in the area, for which the policy seeks to prevent. Furthermore, the property is not located within an area covered by an Article 4 direction and therefore this is purely a useful exercise in considering the composition of the area.
- 6.6 Therefore, given the specific arterial and transient nature of Christchurch Road and the existing high proportion non-residential uses found within the search radius (including commercial premises), it is considered that the proposal would not have a significantly detrimental impact on the existing character or composition of the immediate area.
- 7. Future discharge of conditions application**
- 7.1 It is appropriate and accepted practice for some applications to discharge planning conditions to be subject to consultation with Councillors or reported to and decided by PAC.
- 8. Application 190929**
- 8.1 Under application 190929 the property would remain in A2 use at ground floor. Other properties within the centre (such as Adams estates and Cintra Estates) operate as A2 within the ground floor only with residential uses above, as such there would be no concern from Officers in granting application 190929 and maintaining the ground floor as A2. It is not known who the intended occupant would be.

**9. Litter management strategy**



- 9.1 Officers have recommended a condition to require the A5 operator confirms how they would ensure that there is no associated litter emanating from the resultant takeaway use. Measures we would be looking for include provision of waste bins outside the takeaway for patrons, an undertaking to litter pick within the area on a regular basis, advice to patrons and minimising the amount of packaging used. Details submitted to satisfy the condition could be subject to consultation with ward Councillors or referred back to PAC.

Case officer: Anthony Scholes

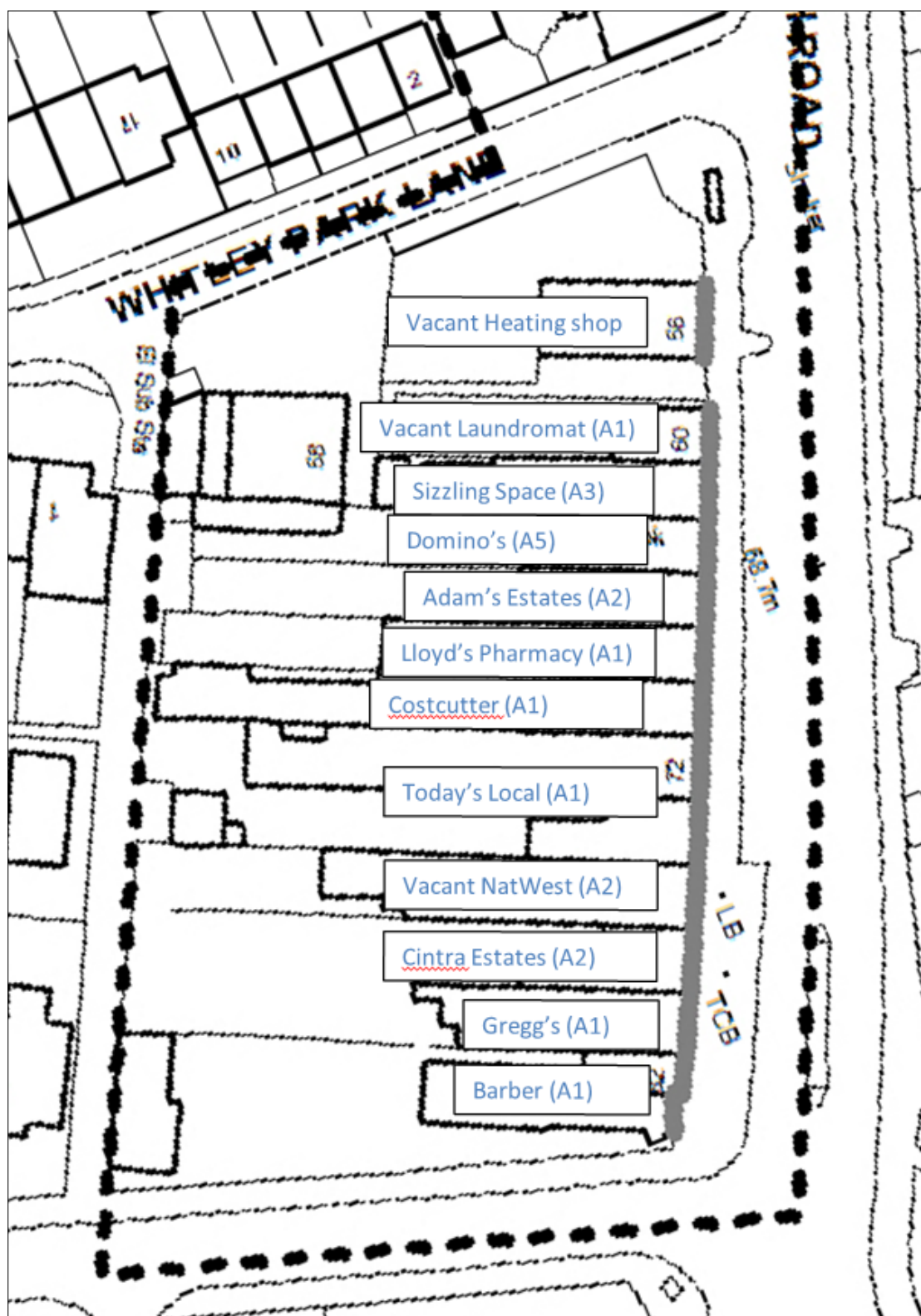


Figure 1 - Map showing layout of 'designated frontage' within the centre

## COMMITTEE REPORT

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| BY THE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES<br>READING BOROUGH COUNCIL<br>PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 13 <sup>th</sup> November 2019 | ITEM NO. |
|--|----------|

**Ward:** Church

**App No:** 190760/FUL & 190929/FUL

**Address:** 76 Christchurch Road, Reading

**190760/FUL Proposal:** Change of use ground, first and second floor of A2 (Bank) to A5 on the ground floor, and on first and second floor from A2 to C4 HMO. Part-retrospective application for flat roof rear dormer.

**190929/FUL Proposal:** Change of use of 1st and 2nd floors from bank (Class A2) to C4 HMO. Part-retrospective application for flat roof rear dormer.

**Applicant:** Rytdak Ltd

**Date validated:**

**190760/FUL:** 17/6/2019

**190929/FUL:** 23/7/2019

**Application:** 8 week target decision date:

**190760/FUL:** 17/6/2019

**190929/FUL:** 23/7/2019

**Extension of time:** Agreed for 30 November 2019 (both applications)

**190760/ FUL - RECOMMENDATION**

**Grant Full Planning Permission, subject to the following conditions.**

Conditions

1. Standard 3 Year Time Limit
2. Approved Plans
3. Materials to match
4. Hours of operation (1200 - 2300 all days)
5. Pre-occupation details of bicycle parking
6. Vehicle parking in accordance with approved plans
7. Pre-occupation details of bin stores
8. Pre-commencement details of ventilation and acoustic assessment
9. Mitigation measures in accordance with Noise Assessment
10. Pre-commencement details of odour management and extraction details
11. Litter management plan - Including restricted hours for such collection
12. Delivery and servicing plan
13. Pre-commencement details of permeable hard surfacing and boundary treatments
14. Parking permits - advising council of new address
15. Parking permits - advising occupiers of no availability of parking permits
16. No use of flat roof - PD Restriction

Informatives

1. Building Regulations
2. Positive and Proactive
3. Highways Act

4. Pre-commencement conditions
5. Bonfires
6. Terms and Conditions
7. CIL
8. HMO maximum occupancy and licensing requirements

#### **190929/ FUL - RECOMMENDATION**

**Grant Full Planning Permission, subject to the following conditions.**

1. Standard 3 Year Time Limit
2. Approved Plans
3. Pre-occupation details of bicycle parking
4. Vehicle parking in accordance with approved plans
5. Pre-occupation details of bin stores
6. Mitigation measures in accordance with Noise Assessment
7. Pre-occupation HMO Management plan to be submitted
8. Parking permits - advising council of new address
9. Parking permits - advising occupiers of no availability of parking permits
10. No use of flat roof - PD Restriction

#### **Informatives**

1. Building Regulations
2. Positive and Proactive
3. Highways Act
4. Pre-commencement conditions
5. Bonfires
6. Terms and Conditions
7. CIL
8. HMO maximum occupancy and licensing requirements

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The application site is a part 1 storey, 2 storey and 3 storey mid terrace building. It is a vacant A2 (financial institution) within the Christchurch Road Local Centre. The surrounding area is a mix of commercial and residential premises, with residential above the adjacent commercial premises.
- 1.2 Parking is within a shared, unrestricted on-street section in front of the commercial premises. In addition, the rear of the site is accessible via a private lane.
- 1.3 These applications have been called in to Planning Applications Committee by Ward Councillor's, citing concerns raised by local community.
- 1.4 At the time of the site visit, the frontage of the site (and adjoining site) was shrouded by scaffold for what appeared to be maintenance works.



Figure 2 - Location Plan - the site



Figure 3 - Aerial Image

## **2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **190760/FUL**

1. Change of use of the ground floor from A2 (bank) to A5 (hot food takeaway) with part demolition of the single storey rear extension; car parking, bin storage, and cycle parking to the rear; landscaping to the rear; a part-retrospective application for full width flat roof rear dormer. Change of use of first and second floor from A2 (Bank) to C4 (House in multiple occupation) (HMO)).
2. This application does not include any physical changes to the shop front and any changes will require separate planning approval and/or advertisement consent.

### **190929/FUL**

3. Change of use of first and second floor from A2 (Bank) to C4 (HMO)
4. For both applications, the proposal would make the first and second floor a small C4 HMO (4 rooms, in addition to bathroom and kitchen/ communal space shown on first and second floors plan.
5. Both proposals include the provision of a rear facing full width flat roof dormer window to ensure sufficient head heights within the second floor.
6. Access to the residential unit would be both from the front and the rear, with a door on the Christchurch Road frontage adjacent to the existing ATM, and an external staircase to the rear accessed from the parking/servicing area off the private lane.
7. In each proposal, the existing external access stairs from the rear would be unchanged, although the single storey rear extension as currently existing would be retained under application 190929.
8. Each application would include parking to the rear of the site, with 3 parking spaces proposed as part on application 190760, and 2 parking spaces to the very rear of the site as part of application 190929.
9. Submitted Plans and Documentation:

### **190760/FUL**

- Drawing No: A-1200 Rev A Car park & Bin Store
- Drawing No: A-1130 Rev A Proposed elevations (A5 on ground floor)
- Drawing No: A-1030 Rev A Proposed plans (A5 on ground floor)
- Drawing No: A-1100 Rev A - Existing Elevations
- Drawing No: A-1010 Rev A - Existing plans
- Drawing No: A-1000 Rev A - Site Location Plan & Block Plan
- CIL form
- Application forms

As received 10 May 2019

- Planning Statement
- Drawing No: A-1200 Rev A Car park & Bin Store
- Noise Assessment Ref - 20190621\_4471\_ENS\_01
- Drawing No: A-1000 Rev B - Site Location Plan & Block Plan
- Drawing No: A-1200 Rev C Car park & Bin Store

As received 23 July 2019

- Amended Planning Statement
- Drawing No: A-1200 Rev E Car park & Bin Store
- Drawing No: A-1000 Rev C - Site Location Plan & Block Plan

As received 9 September 2019

- Amended Noise Assessment Ref - 20190621\_4471\_NIA\_01

As received 23 October 2019

### **190929/FUL**

- CIL form
- Application forms
- Drawing No: A-1120 Rev A Proposed apartment elevations
- Drawing No: A-1010 Rev A - Existing plans

As received 12 June 2019

- Drawing No: A-1200 Rev A Car park & Bin Store
- Drawing No: A-1000 Rev B Site Location and Block Plan

As received 13 September 2019

- Drawing No: A-1020 Rev B - Proposed plans

As received 23 October 2019

## **3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

None applicable on-site.

60 Christchurch Road - 181571/FUL - Change of use of ground floor to Class A3 café/restaurant, part single, part two-storey rear extension, changes to shopfront and kitchen extract equipment on rear flat roof and increase of first and second floor flat to create small HMO. REFUSED, DISMISSED at appeal Ref: APP/E0345/W/19/3228388. *Officer Note: Relevant due to the differences between LDF and the new, to be adopted local plan (2019).*

## **4. CONSULTATIONS**

### **RBC Environmental Protection**

- 4.1 No objections subject to conditions and informatives.

### **RBC Transport**

- 4.2 No objections subject to conditions and informatives.

### **RBC Licensing**

- 4.3 No objections subject to conditions and informatives.

## 5. Public Consultation:

- 5.1 Letters have been sent to adjoining properties, a site notice was erected following amendments to the site location plan (including adjoining property owned by applicant for access) on 17 September 2019.
- 5.2 A number of representation have been received, and can be summarised as below:
- No formal notice originally erected. *Officer Note: Applicants are sent a site notice, although no statutory requirement to erect a site notice for this type of application, a site notice was erected following amendments to site plan*
  - No consultation on amended plans. *Officer note: as per the first point above*
  - Noise
  - Impacts to highway safety - users, deliveries, delivery vehicles, parking
  - Litter and antisocial behaviour.
  - Rats associated with waste storage
  - Noise impacts
  - Concentration of takeaway uses in centre
  - Trade waste disposal
  - Mix of dwelling in the area
  - Cooking Odour impacts
  - Impacts on adjoining conservation area
  - Errors/inaccuracies in planning statement

## 6. RELEVANT PLANNING 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'.
- 6.2 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 a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.
- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:



## NPPF

### Section 7: Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres

#### Core Strategy (2008, altered 2015)

CS1: Sustainable Construction and Design  
CS2: Waste Minimisation  
CS5: Inclusive Access  
CS7: Design and the Public Realm  
CS9: Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities  
CS14: Provision of Housing  
CS24: Car / Cycle parking  
CS26: Network and Hierarchy of Centres  
CS27: Maintaining the Retail Character of Centres  
CS34: Pollution and Water Resources

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

SD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
DM1: Adaptation to Climate Change  
DM2: Decentralised Energy  
DM3: Infrastructure Planning  
DM4: Safeguarding Amenity  
DM6: Affordable Housing  
DM10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space  
DM12: Access, Traffic and Highway-related Matters  
DM13: Vitality and Viability of Smaller Centres  
DM19: Air Quality  
DM20: Hazardous Installations  
DM23: Shopfronts  
SA15: District and Local Centres

#### Supplementary Planning Document (SPDs)

Affordable Housing SPD, 2013  
Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD, 2011  
Planning Obligations under Section 106, 2015  
Sustainable Design and Construction, 2011

#### **Reading Borough Submission Draft Local Plan 2018**

The New Reading Borough Local Plan is proposed to be adopted by the Council on 4 November 2019 so the following Policies will supersede those listed above.

#### Reading Borough Local Plan (Expected Adoption November 2019)

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  
CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity  
 CC9: Securing Infrastructure  
 H1: Provision of Housing  
 H3: Affordable Housing  
 H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space  
 TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy  
 TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters  
 TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging  
 EN15: Air Quality  
 EN16: Pollution and Water Resources  
 EN17: Noise Generating Equipment  
 RL1: Network and Hierarchy of Centres  
 RL3: Vitality and Viability of Smaller Centres  
 OU2: Hazardous Installations  
 OU5: Shopfronts and Cash Machines

## 7. APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are:

- Effect on the Local Centre - Principle of development
- Amenity of Existing and Proposed Residents
- Design
- Transport
- Community infrastructure levy & Affordable Housing
- Equalities impact

### Effect on the Local Centre - Principle of development

- 7.1 The application site is within the Local Centre of Christchurch Road as defined within Policy RL1, which states that “the vitality and viability of these centres should be maintained and enhanced.” Policy RL3 provides further detail with regard to the balance of uses within specific centres. This requires that:

*“Within the Key Frontages (identified on the Proposals Map), development involving a net loss of A1 retail or A2 financial and professional to other ‘centre uses’ will only be permitted where:*

- *There would be no more than 3 consecutive units which are not in A1 or A2 retail use; and*
- *The proportion of the total length of the Key Frontage within the centre that is in A1 or A2 use would exceed the relevant proportion...*
  - *Christchurch Road - 60%”*

*And*

*Within district, major local and local centres, development will be permitted provided that:*

- *There would be no more than 2 consecutive A5 takeaways, and no more than 30% of the length of the Key Frontage would be in takeaway use;*

- ... on upper floors, other uses including residential will be acceptable; and ...
- ... at ground floor new development should provide some 'centre uses'

- 7.2 A recent planning appeal against refusal of a conversion of an A1 unit to A3 at no.60 Christchurch Road (above), was recently refused due to the application being assessed against the Core Strategy (2008, altered 2015) and the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, altered 2015), which had differing requirements on uses within the key frontage. In this instance, the number of units resulting from that approval would have been more than the 50% guidance for A1 units within the frontage and as such was refused and this reason for refusal was upheld at appeal. The Inspector in this case assessed the application, and in relation to the emerging local plan stated "I have given relevant emerging policies limited weight in my consideration of this appeal." With the adoption of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 however these policies are now given full weight
- 7.3 The site is located within the key frontages as identified on the proposals map, which includes even no's 56-82 inclusive (i.e. not including the Queen's Head Public House). Policy RL3 outlines all 'centre uses' which includes A5 (takeaways). The proposed use would result in a loss of an A2 use and would re-provide another 'centre use'.
- 7.4 The proposed change of use at the application site to A5 would be adjacent to an A2 use (Cintra Estates), and an A1 use (Today's Local), as such would not result in more than 2 consecutive A5 takeaways. The change of use would make the development site the second A5 takeaway use within the centre (the other being Domino's), making the total length of the Christchurch Road Local Centre 14.6% being in A5 use (based on physical length of each building).
- 7.5 In addition, the overall proportion of uses within A1 and A2 use, currently at 78.7% would only fall to 70.7%, well in excess of the 60% target as outlined above.
- 7.6 The conversion of the first and second floor to use as a small HMO would accord with conversion policy and could benefit from permitted development rights if the ground floor remained in either A2 or A1 use.

#### **Amenity of Existing and Proposed Residents**

- 7.7 A number of amenity issues have been raised through public consultation related to matters set out under Policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity. This policy states that "Development will 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 effects of a development;
- Harm to outlook;
- Noise and disturbance;
- Artificial lighting;
- Vibration;
- Dust and fumes;
- Smell;
- Crime and safety; or
- Wind, where the proposals involve new development of more than 8 storeys.

As well as immediate impacts, other aspects to which this policy applies will include matters such as hours of operation of businesses, and effects of traffic movements, particularly of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs). Proposals which would generate regular movements of HGVs on residential roads will not be acceptable.”

- 7.8 The proposed ground floor change of use from A2 to A5 is within a Local centre where there are existing A3 and A5 premises and shops. The issues raised by local residents are that the addition of a further A5 use would have a significant detrimental effect on amenity. Although responses indicate that there are issues with existing premises with respect to noise and disturbance, anti-social behaviour and litter, it is not considered that the addition of one unit would be so significantly different to the existing situation and it is not likely that a reason for refusal on this basis would be possible to defend at appeal.
- 7.9 The Environmental Protection officer commented that the following was not sufficiently addressed in the original submission:
- Odour and noise from kitchen extraction;
  - Noise impact on development (from plant equipment, and commercial premises in vicinity)
- 7.10 The applicant has submitted an amended noise impact assessment detailing adequate mitigation measures to ensure sufficient internal noise standards for future residents living above, and would be secured by condition. A condition will also be attached to ensure any plant equipment meets these requirements.
- 7.11 In the appeal decision mentioned above, the Inspector concluded in that case, as the applicant was not yet aware of the future operators requirements a detailed odour assessment may not be practical at this time. The Inspector was content that a planning condition could be applied to satisfactorily guard against the potential odour nuisance. As such, this stance would be reasonable given the lack of details as to what the kitchen equipment would be. All environmental protection conditions are detailed in the appendix below.
- 7.12 It is likely that the amount of waste which would be generated from an A5 use would be greater than for an A2 (bank) and the nature of the waste

would of course be different. There is a bin storage area shown to the rear of the premises, accessed from the rear of the site, and it would appear sufficient space to also provide for bins associated with both the residential use above and the takeaway use, and details of bin storage arrangements will be required by condition, prior to occupation.

- 7.13 The proposed development proposes a single bin storage area for both the commercial and residential use. The Council's waste guidelines recommend that bin storage areas are separated for the different uses, to ensure that household waste is not disposed in commercial waste bins. The overall proposed storage capacity is considered sufficient, and would comply with Policy CC5: Waste Minimisation and the Council's Waste Management Guidelines. Officers are satisfied that the recommended conditions to require a HMO management plan and a waste management plan to ensure waste is managed appropriately (for both uses) including pick-up times for commercial waste, and to ensure appropriate subdivision of the bin storage area (i.e. separate gates/areas for each area) provide adequate reassurance in this matter.
- 7.14 The proposed scheme includes demolition of part of the single storey rear extension. This would allow for the vehicle parking, bin storage, and bicycle storage accessed from the private lane to the rear. A number of properties within the row of shops are currently serviced by this lane. As such, the addition of one would not significantly change the existing situation.
- 7.15 The external rear access is to be retained but altered for application 190760. The new use as a HMO is considered to have fewer movements associated with it than a business use. As such, it would not be significantly harmful to existing residents above other shops.
- 7.16 A number of concerns are related to the use as HMO, and the suitability of the size of the unit. The kitchen/ communal area is a good size. All bedrooms would benefit from an external window as does the proposed communal space. In addition, all bedrooms are in excess of the minimum requirements under the Council's adopted SPD, and as such it would be considered acceptable to provide only one communal area/kitchen.
- 7.17 There is no external amenity space, but this is not uncommon for residential uses above shops and this location is very close to the public open space of Cintra Park and open spaces at the University grounds, and is therefore considered acceptable in this regard. Subject to conditions the residential element of the scheme would be considered acceptable and in accord with Policy CC8. To ensure residential amenity of adjacent residential properties is not adversely affected, a condition will be attached restricting the use of the flat roof portion as private amenity space.

#### **Design**

- 7.18 The scheme does not include any physical alterations to the shop front. The applicant has also advised that the ATM is to be retained as part of any

future works, as mentioned above, any future proposed changes would require full planning permission, and any advertisements would require permission.

- 7.19 To the rear, application no. 190760 includes the part demolition of the single storey rear extension. This would facilitate the creation of 4 no. parking spaces to the rear of the site, and the provision of a combing bicycle and waste store. These changes include the removal of the boundary wall between the subject site (no.76) and the adjoining site (no.78) which is owned by the applicant. Materials will be required to match for works to re-instate the rear wall as proposed for application 190760.
- 7.20 Although the adjoining site is not within the application site boundary (red line plan) as the site is in control of the applicant, a condition can be attached to ensure the rear of no.78 is kept clear to enable cars to enter and exit the site.
- 7.21 The applicant has also confirmed by e-mail that this submission seeks part-retrospective consent for the construction of a full-width flat roof dormer. This would ensure all aspects of the building for which the use relates would benefit from planning permission.
- 7.22 In this instance, the proposed flat roof dormer would resemble that of a permitted development dormer, being no higher than the ridge height of the roof it is attached, maintains the guttering, includes materials similar to the roofing materials of the original dwelling. The dormer would not meet the requirements of the Council's 'Design guide to house extensions' which would generally seek to design a dormer with a commensurate roof shape. In this instance, although the dormer is bulky, the incongruous nature of dormer windows within the vicinity, and distance between other residential properties, this combined with the limited view of the dormer from the public realm, it is not considered that this would be significantly harmful to amount to a reason for refusal.
- 7.23 No details have been provided as to the type or scale of hard standing to the rear or details of means of enclosure for the bin/bike store. A condition is recommended to have details provided prior to commencement of development (demolition) to ensure an acceptable level of permeable paving is provided.
- 7.24 The proposals are therefore considered to accord with Policy CC7.

#### **Transport**

- 7.25 The proposed development would include 4no. parking spaces to the rear. All properties in this row of shops have shared rights of access over the private lane.

- 7.26 Application 190929 would not require changes to access (over the adjoining land) nor would it increase the space currently available for parking of vehicles. As such two vehicle spaces could be utilised for the site.
- 7.27 The intensification of the access to provide 2 additional car parking spaces would not be significantly greater than the existing use of the private road to the rear of the site. Therefore the proposed development would comply with Reading's Transport Policies.

#### **Community Infrastructure Levy & Affordable Housing**

- 7.28 The proposal does not result in any additional floor space that would be CIL chargeable.
- 7.29 The development would not be required to contribute toward affordable housing in the Borough as the change of use to residential would be restricted to the existing building.

#### **Equalities Impact**

- 7.30 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. 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.
- 7.31 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 This proposal has been carefully considered in the context of the Reading Borough Council Local Plan (expected adoption November 2019), and supplementary planning documents. The proposed development is considered appropriate within the current policy context, and it is recommended that approval be granted subject to the above mentioned conditions and informatives.

### **9. RECOMMENDATION**

**GRANT subject to conditions**

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes

1. No mechanical plant shall be installed until a noise assessment of the proposed mechanical plant has been submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The assessment shall be carried out for in accordance with BS4142:2014 methodology. The predicted specific sound level (LAeq,TR) (with reference to BS:4142) as measured at a point 1 metre external to the nearest noise-sensitive facade shall be at least 10dB below the pre-existing background sound level, LA90,T when all plant/equipment (or any part of it) is in operation. The predicted rating level, LAr,Tr (specific sound level plus any adjustment for the characteristic features of the sound) as measured at a point 1 metre external to the nearest noise-sensitive facade (habitable window of a dwelling) shall not exceed the pre-existing background sound level, LA90,T when all plant/equipment (or any part of it) is in operation. The plant shall thereafter only be installed in accordance with the assessment and shall thereafter be maintained so that it operates to the same standard.

REASON: To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises and the area generally, in accordance with Policy CC8 and EN17 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

2. The HMO hereby approved shall not be occupied until, the glazing, ventilation and any other mitigation specified is installed in accordance with the specifications recommended within the Noise Assessment submitted with the application, prepared by Paragon Acoustic Consultants, dated 26/06/2019, document ref: 20190621\_4471\_NIA\_01

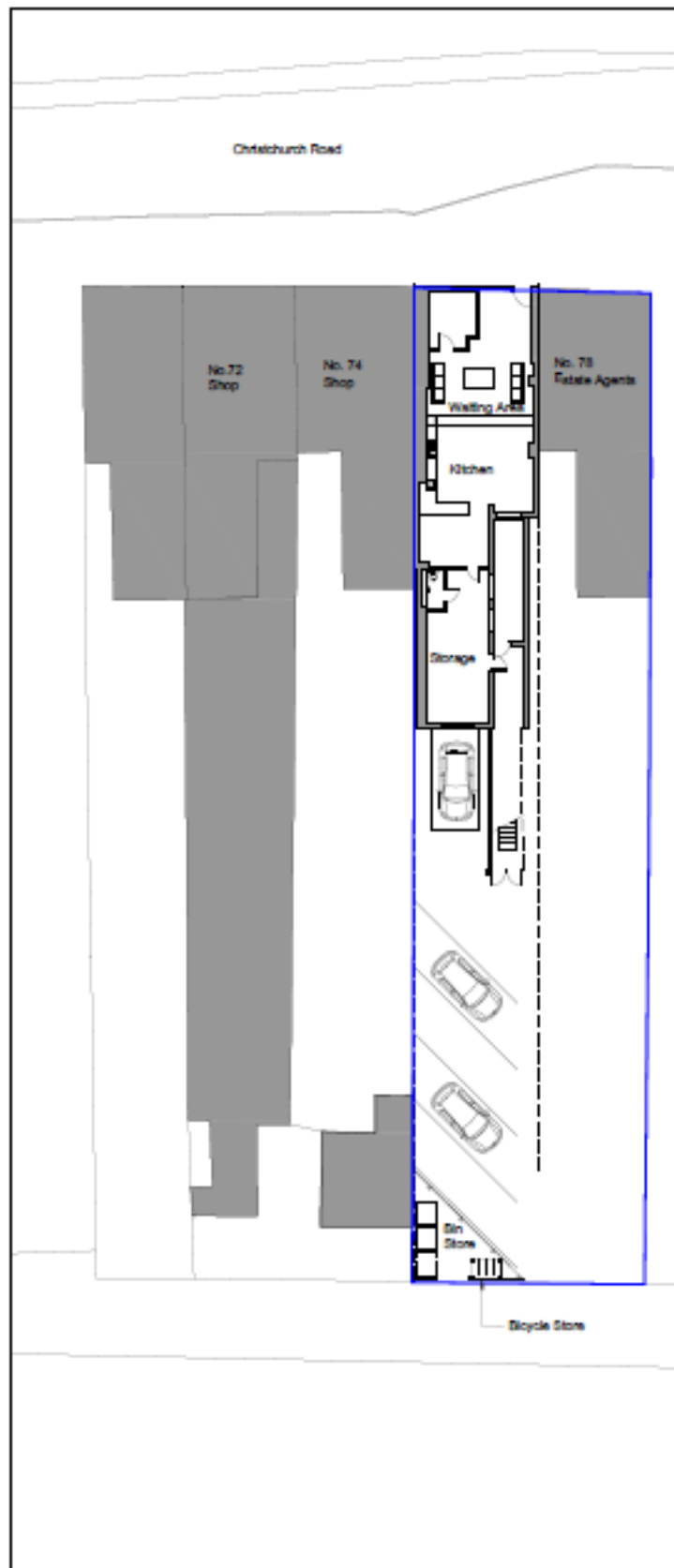
REASON: In order to protect the amenity of future occupants of the proposed development in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

3. No development shall commence on site until an odour assessment has been carried out and a detailed odour management plan to include scaled plans, odour control specifications and a maintenance plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reference shall be made to the DEFRA guidance on the Control of Odour and Noise from Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Systems (Jan 2005) when assessing potential odours and selecting appropriate odour control methods. Thereafter, the development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved scheme unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

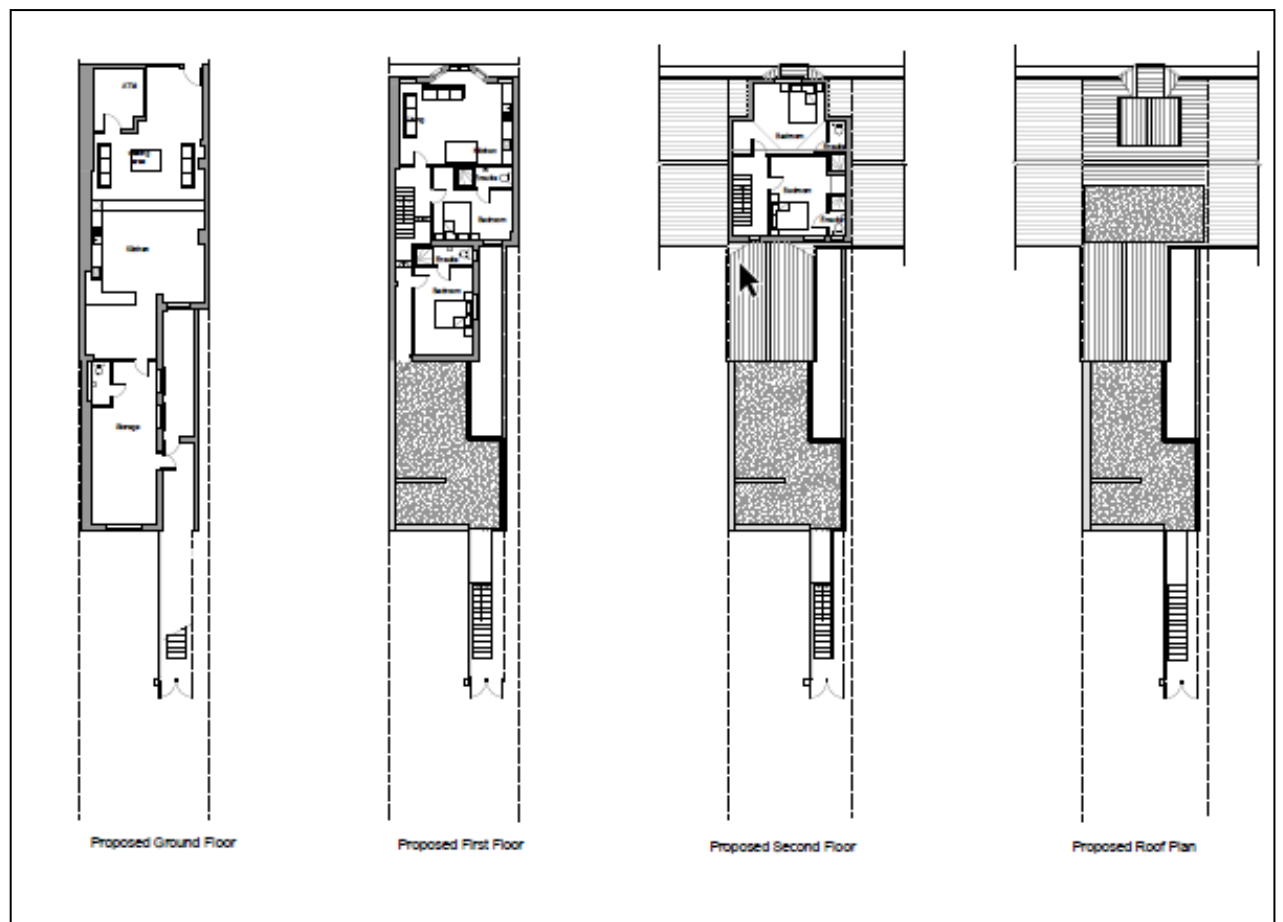
REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and to safeguard the amenity of adjoining properties and to protect the general environment in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.



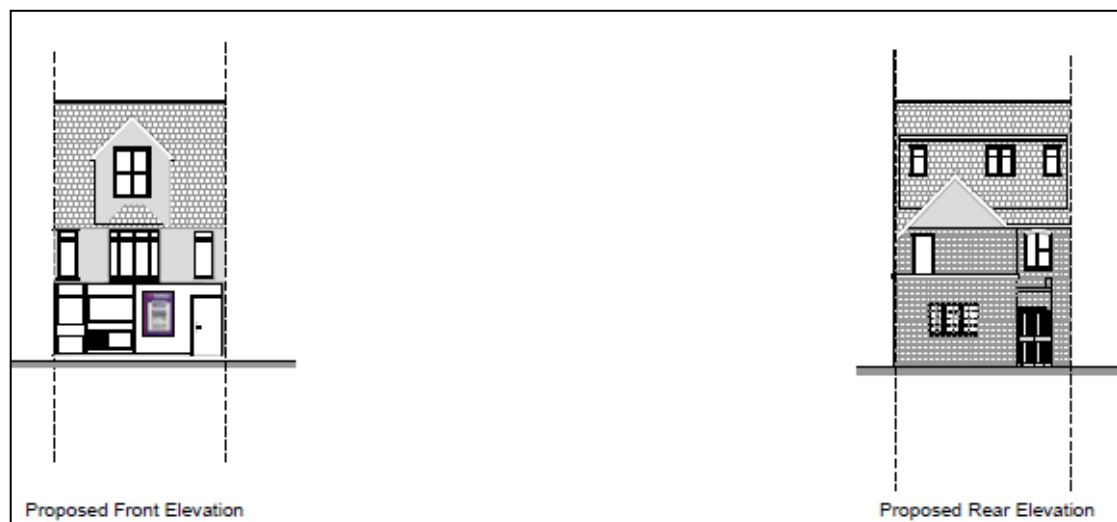
## Plans



Proposed site plan (and GF plan)



Proposed floor plans



Proposed elevations



Floor space calculations (HMO)

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## APPENDIX 2-

### UPDATE REPORT

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| BY THE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES<br>READING BOROUGH COUNCIL<br>PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 13 <sup>th</sup> November 2019 | ITEM NO. |
|--|----------|

Ward: Church

App No: 190760/FUL & 190929/FUL

Address: 76 Christchurch Road, Reading

**190760/FUL Proposal:** Change of use ground, first and second floor of A2 (Bank) to A5 on the ground floor, and on first and second floor from A2 to C4 HMO. Part-retrospective application for flat roof rear dormer.

**190929/FUL Proposal:** Change of use of 1st and 2nd floors from bank (Class A2) to C4 HMO. Part-retrospective application for flat roof rear dormer.

### RECOMMENDATION:

Grant, as per the main agenda report with an additional condition for a litter management strategy (for application 190760 - ground floor change of use from A2 to A5).

### 10. ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIONS MADE

- 1.1 Following the publishing of the committee agenda and associated report, a number of additional letters of representation have been received.
- 1.2 Several letters have outlined their support for the application - these can be summarised as:
- Bringing vacant unit back into use
  - Less people working at the unit would reduce its impact.

While two letters were received objecting to the proposal:

- Objection despite compliance with policies

- 1.3 Councillor Pearce is unable to attend the meeting, and has provided the following comment in relation to the proposal:

*“As one of the local Councillors for the Ward in which this application sits I would like to express my concern at this application and urge committee members to refuse.*

*There is strong resident feeling in the local area around this application and the wider area in general. Concerns about other, similar local takeaway establishments were expressed earlier this year when there was another planning application, and the same issues apply here.*

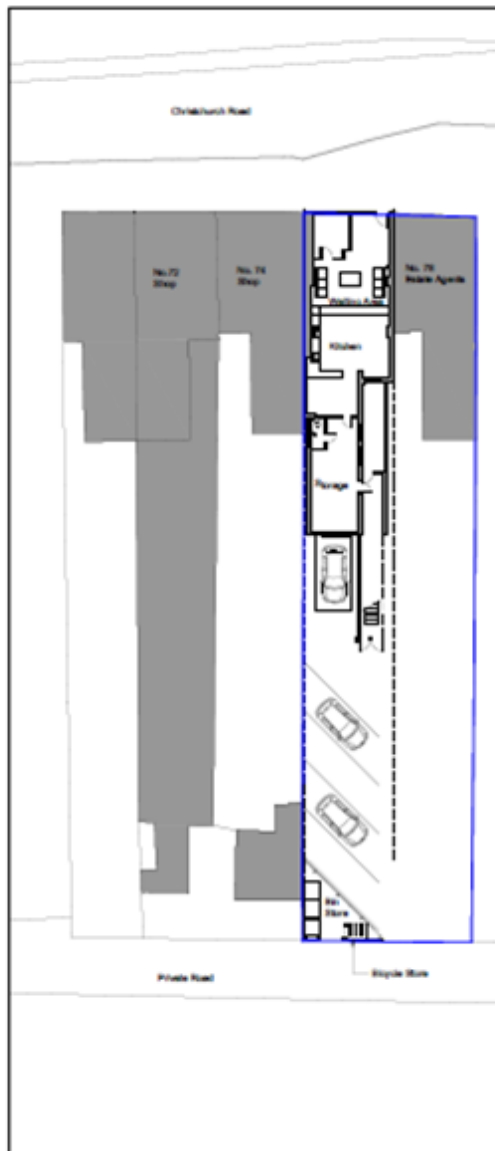
*These row of shops are historic in nature and architecture, and have in the past provided local amenities for varying parts of the*

*community. The scope and target of these shops appear to be narrowing, to the detriment of many in the local community.*

*Local residents are concerned with the noise and disturbance that increased deliveries will cause, the parking issues in front and near the shops will be exacerbated, and there is the obvious potential of an increase in anti-social behaviour which is already an issue residents have raised with me.”*

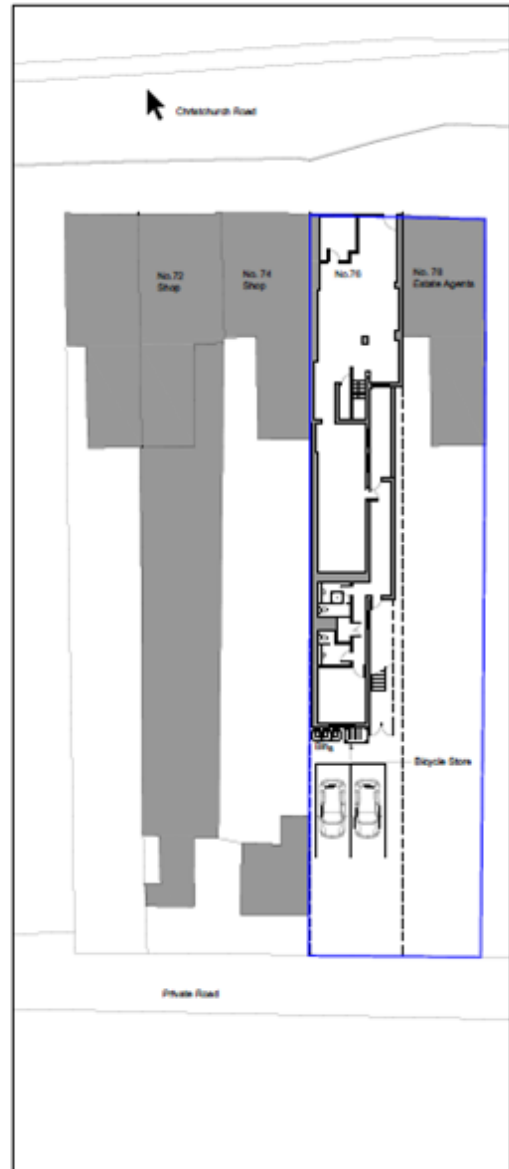
- 1.4 For clarity, applications 190760 and 190929 differ in that 190929 retains the single storey building to the rear as shown on plans below.
- 1.5 In addition, the original report did not include a condition relating to a litter management strategy which is commonly attached to takeaway uses. As such, an additional condition is recommended as above.

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes



Landscape Plan of Development  
SCALE 1:200

190760/FUL – Proposed Site Plan



Landscape Plan of Development  
SCALE 1:200

190929/FUL – Proposed Site Plan

## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019

Ward: Mapledurham

App No.: 191677

Address: Mapledurham Playing Fields, Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading

Proposal: Refurbishment and single storey front rear and side extensions to the pavilion building

Applicant: Reading Borough Council

Target Decision Date: 13<sup>th</sup> December 2019

### RECOMMENDATION:

**GRANT** full planning permission subject to the following conditions:

#### Conditions

1. Standard time limit for planning permission - 3 years.
2. Development to be carried out in accordance with approved plans
3. Pre-commencement submission and approval of materials details
4. Pre-commencement implementation of protection measures for hedgerow
5. Pre-occupation implementation of replacement tree planting
6. Landscaping maintenance (replacement planting within 5 years)
7. Pre-commencement submission and approval of endoscope bat survey
8. No installation of additional plant unless details submitted and agreed with the LPA
9. Standard Construction Hours

#### Informatives

1. Positive and proactive requirement
2. Terms and conditions
3. Pre-commencement conditions
4. Fee for conditions discharge
5. CIL
6. Building Regulations approval required

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site comprises the existing pavilion building at Mapledurham Playing Fields. The pavilion contains a central hall with a raised pitched roof over with adjoining flat roof elements on either end which provide changing rooms, a kitchen, toilets and storage facilities.
- 1.2 The building is located at the northern end of the playing fields, close to the access driveway from Upper Woodcote Road. In front (north) of the building is an area of car parking, to the east are tennis courts, and to the south and west are areas of grass playing field and the site of the recently permitted new primary school (ref. 182200/VARIAT).
- 1.3 The closest neighbouring residential properties are houses on Hewett Close, Little Woodcote Close and Knowle Close that back onto the playing fields.

- 1.5 The application has been referred to the Committee for a decision because the applicant is Reading Borough Council.



*Site Location Plan*

## 2. PROPOSAL

2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for refurbishment of the pavilion building and single storey front rear and side extensions to the existing single storey pavilion building. Permission was given in 2013 for extensions to the pavilion (ref. 130613), which were part implemented in that extensions to the east of the building for the tennis club were undertaken. That permission is not proposed to be completed, as the changes now required to upgrade the pavilion differ significantly from the 2013 approval and hence the requirement for this fresh planning application.

2.2 The proposed extensions and refurbishment works include:

- A 28m<sup>2</sup> single storey front extension to the north elevation of the building, adjacent to the existing car park area, to provide a new main entrance lobby and office area for the pavilion.
- A 10m<sup>2</sup> single storey front extension to the north elevation of the building, adjacent to the proposed new entrance, to form two referee changing rooms and disabled accessible toilet.
- The existing main entrance lobby area is to be re-built to the same footprint to provide a store area.
- Two existing changing rooms in the north east corner of the building are proposed to be converted to two meeting rooms. Four new front windows are proposed to provide daylighting.
- An existing meeting room, two store rooms and a WC are to be converted to form two football changing rooms. A 22m<sup>2</sup> side extension



is also proposed to the west flank elevation of the building to provide dedicated shower and toilet facilities for the changing rooms.

- An 18m<sup>2</sup> single storey rear extension to the rear south west corner of the building to provide two store rooms.
- A 25m<sup>2</sup> single storey rear extension to the existing kitchen to the south east corner of the building.
- Conversion of the existing referee changing facilities in the eastern part of the building to provide enlarged female toilet facilities.
- Replacement of the existing low-pitch pavilion roof with a trussed gabled pitched roof, overlaid with goosewing grey cladding with wood grain feature to gable ends.
- Replacement doors to hall area to the rear (south) elevation of the building.

2.3 It is intended that the works would be carried out in two phases with the first phase to include the proposed internal refurbishments and reconfiguration together with the 10m<sup>2</sup> front extension to provide referee changing rooms and 22m<sup>2</sup> side extension to the west side of the pavilion to provide the toilet and shower facilities for the relocation changing rooms. The second phase of the works would entail the remaining extensions to the building. This application seeks planning permission for all the proposed works. A DAS, tree report and bat survey accompany this application.

#### 2.4 Community Infrastructure levy (CIL):

The applicant has completed a CIL liability form with the submission. In this instance the development would not be chargeable for CIL due to the pavilion being under a D1 (non-residential institutions) use class.

### 3. PLANNING HISTORY

| Ref    | Description  | Decision                       |
|--------|--|--------------------------------|
| 890904 | Single storey flat roof extension to the pavilion's changing rooms   | Granted                        |
| 930614 | Creation of a tennis court   | Granted                        |
| 940439 | Erection of floodlighting to two tennis courts   | Refused                        |
| 981046 | Provision of floodlighting to two tennis courts  | Refused - allowed on appeal    |
| 130613 | Replacement and extension of roof, installation of new roof lights and construction of a veranda on east elevation / permitted | Granted. Partially implemented |
| 171023 | The Heights Primary School construction  | Granted                        |
| 182200 | A minor material amendment to planning permission ref. 171023  | Granted                        |
| 190240 | Landscaping works to Mapledurham playing fields  | Granted                        |
| 182140 | New floodlights to the existing tennis courts  | Granted                        |

### 4. CONSULTATIONS

#### 4.1 Statutory

Sport England - No objection.

## 4.2 Non-statutory

RBC Natural Environment - No objections, subject to conditions to secure the replacement tree planting and measures to protect existing vegetation.

RBC Ecology - No objection, subject to a condition to require an endoscope bat survey to be submitted and approved by the LPA prior to the commencement of works.

RBC Transport - Comments to be provided in an update report.

RBC Leisure - No objection.

## 4.3 Public

No.s 1-7 Little Woodcote Close, 28-29 Hewett Avenue, 3-9 Hewett Close and 2-4 Knowle Close were notified of the application by letter. Two site notices were also displayed at the application site (one outside the pavilion building and one at the entrance to the playing fields from Upper Woodcote Road) on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

At the time of writing this report no letters of representation have been received. The closing date for comments is 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019 and details of any representations received will be provided in an update report.

## 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) which states at Paragraph 11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”.

5.2 For this Local Planning Authority the development plan is now in one document - the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019), which fully replaces the Core Strategy, the Sites and Detailed Policies Document and the Reading Central Area Action Plan. The relevant policies are:

- CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
- CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
- CC7: Design and the Public Realm
- CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
- EN7: Local Green Space and Public Open Space
- EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
- EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland
- EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
- TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy
- TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
- TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities
- TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

## 6. APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are:

#### **Principle of development**

- 6.1 Mapledurham playing fields is a designated area of public open space under Policy EN7Nn (Local Green Space and Public Open Space). This policy protects designated open space from development that would result in loss of the open space, which would erode the quality of the open space through insensitive adjacent development or which would jeopardise the use or enjoyment of the open space by the public. Policy OU1 (New and Existing Community Facilities) supports proposals for the improvement of existing community facilities.
- 6.2 The proposed extensions are minor in scale and predominantly 'infill' in nature. There would be loss of a narrow 2m wide strip of playing field land to the west side of the pavilion to accommodate the extension to provide the toilet and shower facilities for the relocated changing rooms. This area currently forms part of an informal access to the playing fields from the community car parking to the north of the pavilion and a new more formal vehicle and pedestrian access route is being provided in this location as part of the planning permission for the new primary school in the north west corner of the playing fields. The proposed extension would not intrude upon this access.
- 6.3 To the south elevation of the building, small kitchen and store room extensions would utilise land that currently forms the patio area to the pavilion and is hard surfaced. The car park area to the north of the pavilion does not form part of the designated open space such that the front entrance and reference changing room extensions would have no impact in this respect. In the context of the site as a whole the proposals would result in loss of only a very small area of playing fields which would be confined to the areas immediately adjacent to the existing pavilion building. The small areas of land to be lost would not impact on sports pitch provision within the playing fields nor do officers consider would result in loss of any land that would jeopardise the use or enjoyment of the Mapledurham playing field open space by the public.
- 6.4 Sport England is a statutory consultee for any planning application impacting on playing fields. Having assessed the proposals Sport England raises no objection to the application and states that, *'the proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field, and does not affect the quantity or quality of playing pitches or otherwise adversely affect their use.'*
- 6.5 The proposed works are not sought to expand the facilities on offer at the pavilion or an intensification of its use, rather they seek to refurbish and improve the current facilities and level of provision. There would be no material loss of playing field or open space and the extensions are considered to have been sensitively designed in terms of their location and modest scale. It is considered that the improved facilities at the pavilion would enhance the use and enjoyment of the playing fields by the public and would therefore comply with Policies EN7Nn and OU1.

#### **Design considerations and effect on character**

- 6.6 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) aims to preserve or enhance the character of the area in which a development is located.
- 6.7 It is considered the proposed alterations and extensions would enhance the appearance of the building, notably through the addition of pitched roofs over existing flat roof sections to give the building a more cohesive appearance. The proposed extensions are considered to be sensitively designed and located and their modest scale is such that they integrate well with the existing pavilion building. The proposed pitched roof sections are to be finished with goosewing grey coloured cladding with a wood grain feature to the gable ends. Submission and approval of samples/exact specifications of the all external finishes to the roof, and facing brick/cladding for the walls as well as window and doors is recommended to be secured by condition.
- 6.8 The proposals are considered to accord with Policy CC7.

#### **Impact on residential amenity**

- 6.9 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) seeks that development proposals safeguard the amenity of surrounding occupiers. Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) seeks that new development does not have any adverse impacts in terms of pollution.
- 6.10 The proposals are for relatively minor extensions to the existing building. The proposed works would enhance the existing facilities and are not considered to facilitate any significant intensification of the use of the pavilion.
- 6.11 The nearest residential dwellings to the pavilion are located 30m to the north beyond the existing car park area at Little Woodcote Close and 40m to the east beyond the existing tennis courts at Knowle Close. It is not considered that the proposals would be detrimental to the residential amenity or outlook of these surrounding occupiers. An existing flue to the roof of the building is to be increased in height to reflect the proposed new pitched roof but no additional plant equipment is proposed. A condition is recommended to require that details of any additional plant equipment are submitted to and agreed with the Local Planning Authority prior to installation, in order to control noise effects of any air-conditioning or similar equipment.
- 6.12 The proposals are considered to accord with Policies CC8 and EN16.

#### **Natural Environment**

- 6.13 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) requires that development maintains and enhances the character of the area in which it is located including landscaping. Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) seeks that development should retain, protect and incorporate feature of biodiversity. Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands) states that development should protect existing vegetation and make provision for new planting.
- 6.14 The only existing trees affected upon by the proposals are two Norway Maples adjacent to the front (north) elevation of the building. The trees have been surveyed and found to be in poor condition and as part of the

application it is proposed to replace both trees with two Scots Pines. The replacement trees are to be in same location as existing. The Natural Environment Officer is satisfied with the proposed replacement planting and planting methodologies proposed, implementation of which is recommended to be secured by condition.

- 6.15, There is also potential that construction works to the rear (south) of the pavilion could impact on a hedgerow located along the western boundary of the adjacent tennis courts. Details of protection measures in the form of Heras fencing have been submitted. Subject to a condition to secure implementation of the protection measures, the Natural Environment Officer is satisfied that the hedgerow would be adequately protected.
- 6.16 The proposals involve works to the roof of the existing building which given its location, on a playing field with trees nearby, has the potential to host bats. A bat survey has been submitted as part of the application which identified that the building does have potential for roosting bats, however no evidence of the presence of bats was found. Given the proposed extensions could affect the areas of the roof with potential to host bats, the submitted survey recommends that an endoscope survey of the relevant areas of the building is undertaken prior to starting works and that if bats are found, then no construction works shall commence until a qualified ecologist has advised further as to how/when works can proceed. Details of this are recommended to be secured by way of condition.
- 6.17 Subject to the conditions indicated, the proposal are considered to accord with policies CC7, EN12, and EN14.

### **Transport**

- 6.18 Policies TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters), TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking-related matters relating to development.
- 6.19 The proposed refurbishment works will re-provide the existing facilities within the pavilion. It is not proposed to provide significant additional facilities or capacity that would result in an intensification of the use of the building. The pavilion is accessible by pedestrians and cyclists from Upper Woodcote Road and surrounding local roads by footpaths into and through the playing fields. There is an existing community car park to the north of the pavilion which caters for its use.
- 6.20 The existing car park is being improved as part of the works for the new primary school in the north west corner of the site and this works will also re-provide the existing cycle stands at the front of the pavilion.
- 6.21 Comments from RBC Transport and any recommended conditions will be provided in an update report.

### **Sustainability**

- 6.22 Policies CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) and CC3 (Adaption to Climate Change) seek that the design of buildings uses energy, water, materials and other resources efficiently and takes into account the effects

of climate change. Applications for this level of this development are required to meet the BREEAM 'Very Good' standard under Policy CC2. It is clear from the proposals that despite a significant upgrade to the building fabric, this level will not be reached. Your officers are seeking a full explanation of the improvements and expect to be able to recommend in an update report why achievement of this policy aim is not appropriate in this instance.

### **Equalities Impact and Accessibility**

- 6.25 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. 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. Therefore, In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development. The extension and refurbishment of the pavilion will improve the current arrangements by providing two disabled-accessible WC facilities, one with a wet room and the other to include a baby changing facilities. The existing outside areas/approaches are maintained as accessible and there would continue to be no step changes within the extended building. The proposals are therefore considered to accord with the principles of Policy CC6.

## **7 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 This proposal has been carefully considered in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan and the recommendation is to grant full planning permission subject to the conditions set out in the recommendation box at the top of this report.

**Case Officer:** Matt Burns

### Plans and documents submitted:

Drawing ref.3042/307 Rev B - Site Location Plan

Drawing ref.3042/300 Rev A - Existing Ground Floor Plan with Vehicular Access Zone

Drawing ref.3042/303 Rev E - Proposed Ground Floor plan

Planning and Design Statement - Mapledurham Playing Fields Pavilion Works

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019

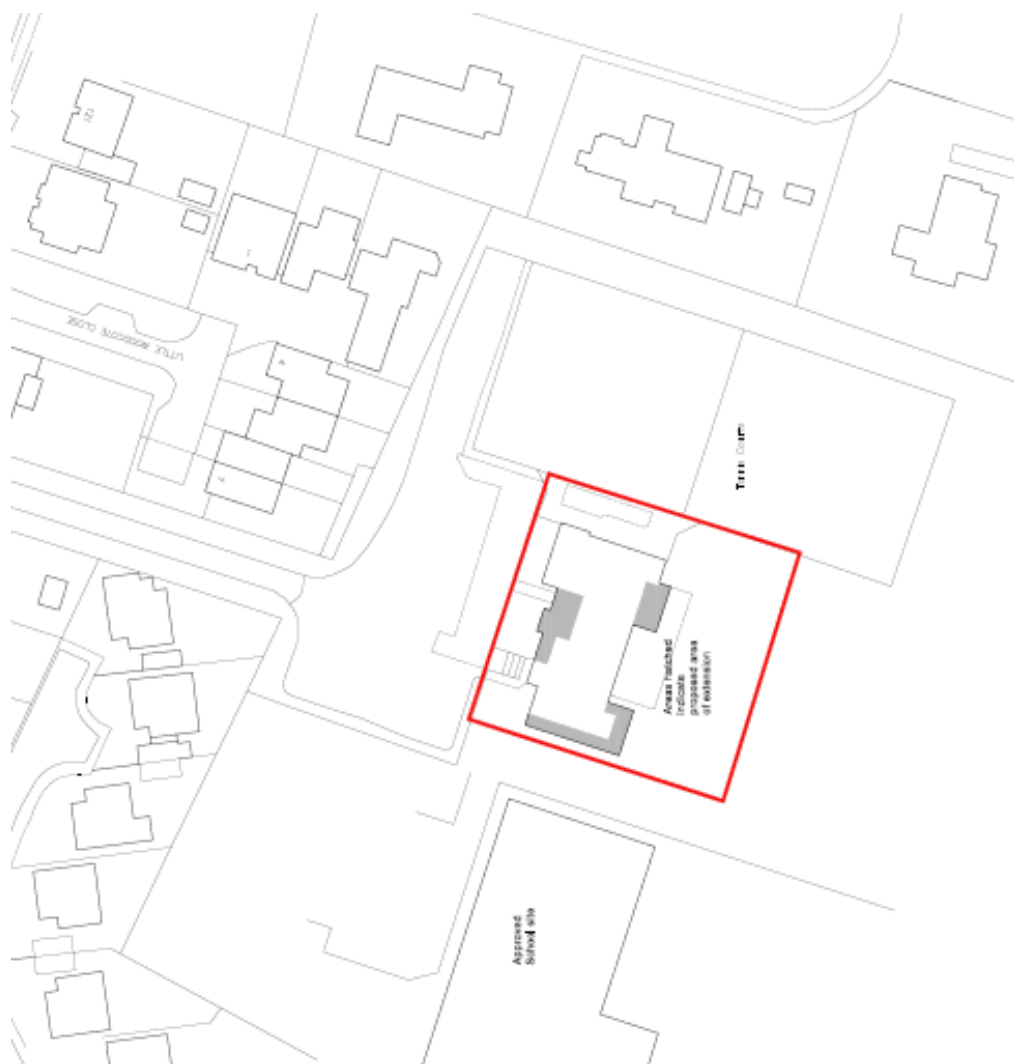
Drawing ref.3042/306 Rev D - Proposed Elevations

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019

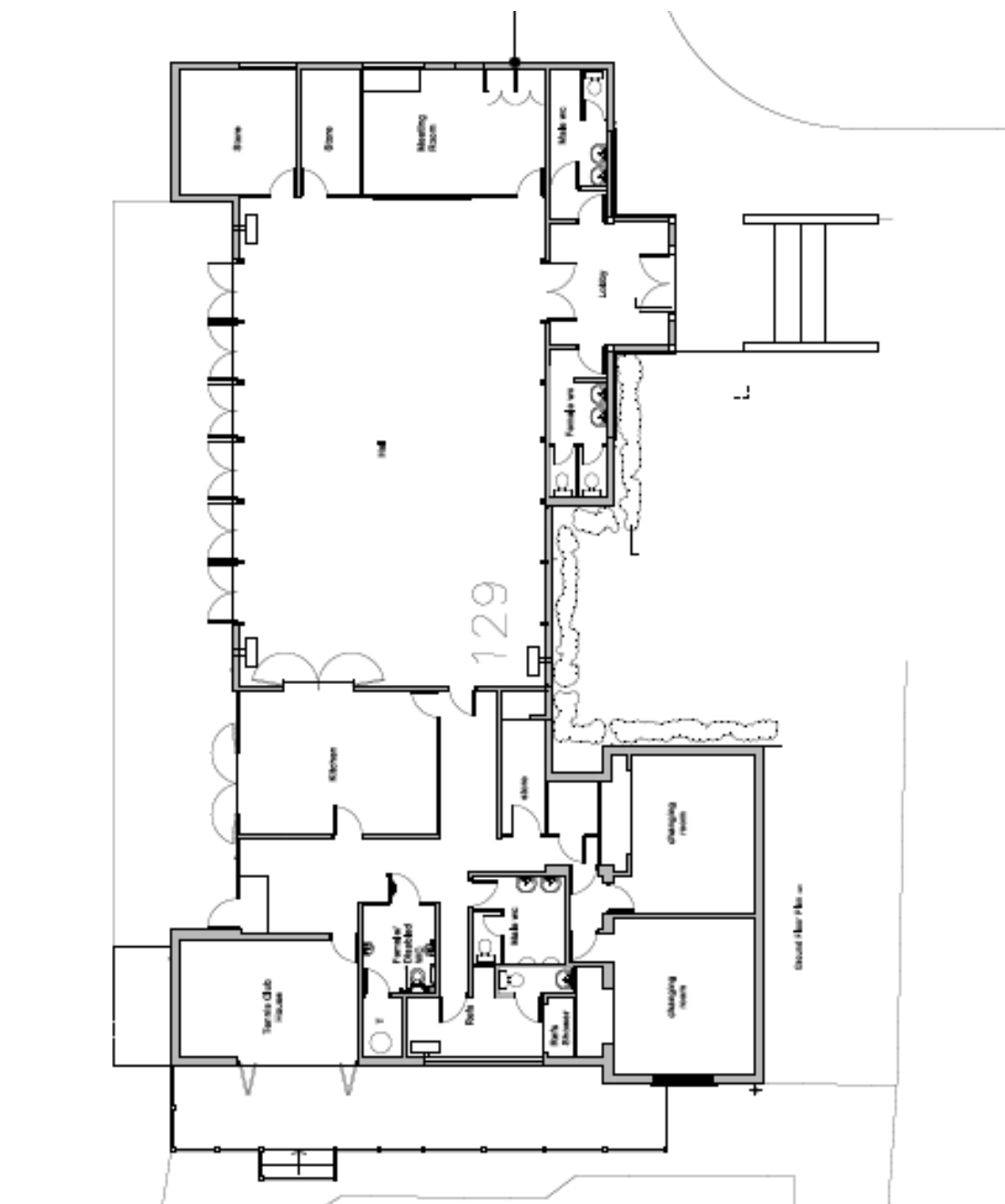
Arboricultural Statement - Mapledurham Playing Fields Pavilion Works

John Wenman Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment ref. R2416/a

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2019

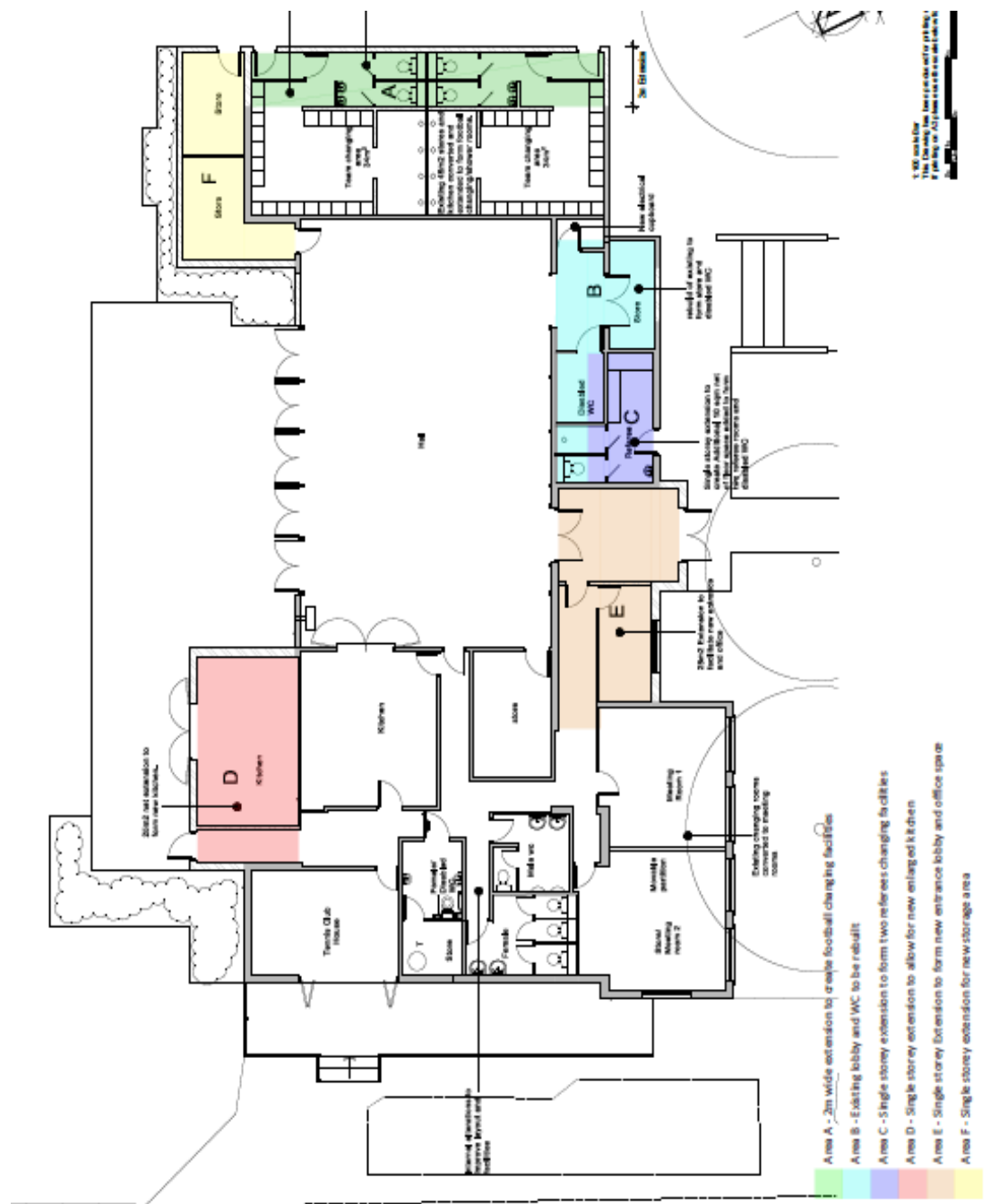


Proposed Site Plan



Existing floor plan





Proposed floor plan

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## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019

**Ward:** Southcote

**App No.:** 191396/LBC

**Address:** Southcote Lodge, Burghfield Road, Reading, RG30 3NE

**Proposal:** Replacement of existing timber sliding sash windows with new white uPVC double-glazed sliding sash windows within existing window openings in Grade II Listed Building (resubmission of 181469).

**Applicant:** S Holmes, Housing 21

**Date validated:** 23 August 2019

**8 week target decision date:** 18 October 2019

### RECOMMENDATION

Refuse Listed Building Consent for the following reason:

1. The proposed changes would result in substantial harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the Listed Building and features of special interest, notably the windows, contrary to the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national policy contained within the NPPF and associated practice guidance and Policies EN1 and CC7, of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

### INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE

1. Standard positive and proactive informative.
2. Refused drawings

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Southcote Lodge and garden walls to east and west are Grade II Listed, entry number 1321955. The list description reads as follows:

*"Mid C18, incorporating parts of earlier building. Rectangular main block, 3 1/2 storeys to south, 2 1/2 storeys with flanking 2 storey wings to north. Entrance (north) front: main block silver grey brick with red window dressings. Modern, central dormer. Glazing bar sash windows, 3 on 1st floor and C19 glazed porch across ground floor between wings. Red brick wings projecting 2 windows (blind) in depth and with 1 hipped dormer each and 1 window at north end. Old tile roof. Flanking curved garden walls forming one side of small oval court. South side: originally 5 window front. Now has 5 window mid C19 full height bay to left. Half glazed late C18 door to garden with bracketed hood, stone steps. Interior: a number of good contemporary features (fireplaces and plasterwork, and staircase) retained. A good house and the house of John Blagrave (mathematician). To west is an 8 foot brick wall with chamfered capping about 50 yds long and returned to south along road. Partly C18, see one brick with grafitto "E B 1720"."*

- 1.2 This case was originally on the agenda for 13<sup>th</sup> November Planning Applications Committee. The application was not discussed at that meeting and was deferred instead for a site visit on 5 December.



**Site Location Plan**



**Site Photograph - rear elevation to garden**

## 2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Listed Building Consent is sought for the removal of the existing timber sliding sash windows and replacement with uPVC sliding sash windows of similar frame design.

### *Submitted drawings*

0/6474/18-00  
0/6474/18-01  
0/6474/18-02  
0/6474/18-03  
0/6474/18-04  
0/6474/18-05  
0/6474/18-06  
0/6474/18-07  
0/6474/18-08  
0/6474/18-09  
0/6474/18-010  
0/6474/18-11

### *Supporting Documents*

Planning, Design and Access Statement ref. 6474

## 3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 161486/PRE - Pre-application Enquiry for “Replacement of existing windows with UPVC to match style and existing fenestration”. Observations were sent on 19 January 2017 summarised as: *“The replacement of the existing timber sash windows with new uPVC windows is not considered acceptable and would be likely to be refused Listed Building Consent. It is recommended that refurbishment, weather stripping and/or secondary glazing are considered in order to preserve the special interest of the Listed Building.”*
- 3.2 181469/LBC - Replacement of existing timber sliding sash windows with new white uPVC double glazed sliding sash windows to match in style and size and to be installed into the various existing opening apertures of the Grade II Listed Building. Withdrawn 1 April 2019.

## 4. CONSULTATIONS

### 4.1 RBC Historic Buildings Consultant

The Council’s Historic Buildings Consultant visited the site under recent application 181469/LBC and provided detailed comments at that time. It has been confirmed that these remain valid and are incorporated into the appraisal section of this report. The conclusion is *“Refusal is recommended for this application as the proposed changes would be substantially harmful to the special architectural and historic interest of the Listed Buildings and features of special interest, notably the windows. This would be contrary to the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the planning policy in the NPPF, the PPG and Reading Borough Planning Policies.”*

### 4.2 Public consultation:

Letters were sent to addresses surrounding the site. A site notice was displayed on Burghfield Road opposite the site entrance.

One comment was received from a resident of Kenilworth Avenue as follows:

*“To change the windows to modern UPVC would completely change the character of this building which is a grade II listed building. The existing windows are serviceable and could be changed retaining the character of the building. The proposed profile of the UPVC does not take in to account the limited recess available to fit them. this again would change the character of the outlook of the building.”*

A letter of objection has been received from the Reading Civic Society, the main text of which reads as follows:

*“Reading Civic Society notes that the sashes in place probably date from the 1980s. It agrees that they appear to be appropriate replicas and have not had an adverse impact on the look of the building.*

*The sashes in place should also be in reasonably good condition and probably have 100 years life in them if maintained, if not longer. There is no such assurance with PVC which has a relatively short life of 10-20 years and themselves bring issues.*

*We therefore object most strongly to this most inappropriate proposal to replace wooden sash windows with PVC replacements. The look of the building would inevitably be harmed in a major way. As your report suggests no assurance could be taken that carrying out such work would not adversely impact other elements of the building.*

*You have rightly guided the committee that the priority should be to repair / refurbish should any sashes be in a bad way. It is, I suggest, worth emphasising as part of the decision that should any of the individual sashes required to be replaced (should they be beyond practical repair which will ensure them being in good condition for the long term) then LBC is required for this (i.e. a replacement is not a repair!). I raise this as builders appear to have a very limited understanding of when LBC is required and frequently guide building owners incorrectly.*

*We also agree that significant improvements in the efficiency of the working of the windows, and their thermal efficiency, can be achieved by weather strips which have a reasonably long life. In addition Secondary glazing is also possible but major work might be required.*

*So maintain properly, paint regularly and install weather strips and that will not only maintain the look of the building but will probably be significantly cheaper than the proposed PVC horrors.*

*It is difficult to understand this PVC madness. How can we ban PVC window salesmen from going anywhere near listed buildings I wonder?”*

## **5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

- 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 a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.
- 5.2 Section 66(1) states that: “in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning

*authority, or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State 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.”*

- 5.3 The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2018

National Planning Practice Guidance 2018

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 (adopted on 4 November 2019)

CC7 Design and the Public Realm

EN1 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

Other Guidance

Historic England ‘Traditional Windows Their Care, Repair and Upgrading’ (2017)

## 6. APPRAISAL

- 6.1 Before considering the merits of this particular proposal it is important to consider the legal and policy context. The decision on a Listed Building Consent application, is governed by different legislation than with an application for planning permission.

*Legal*

- 6.2 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 architectural or historic interest which it possesses*”.

- 6.3 In the 2014 case of East Northamptonshire District Council v. Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (known as the ‘Barnwell Manor’ case) the Court of Appeal held that decision-makers should give ‘considerable importance and weight’ to the desirability of preserving listed building or its setting as directed by the Act.

*National Policy*

- 6.4 The NPPF (2019) (paragraph 189) requires that:

*“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.”*

*Paragraph 191 states:*



- 6.5 *Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.*
- 6.6 Paragraph 192 of the NPPF states that, local planning authorities should take into account:
- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
  - b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
  - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*
- 6.7 Paragraph 193 states that:
- “When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance”*
- 6.8 Paragraph 195 states that:
- “Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*
- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
  - b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
  - c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
  - d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.”*

6.9 Paragraph 196 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.”*

6.10 Guidance on the implementation of the NPPF is provided in Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

*“In addition to the normal planning framework set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.....the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides specific protection for buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest.*

*Any decisions relating to listed buildings and their settings and conservation areas must address the statutory considerations of the Planning (Listed Buildings and*



Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (see in particular sections 16, 66 and 72) as well as satisfying the relevant policies within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Plan.” (paragraph ID 18a-002-20140306)

- 6.11 The PPG states under ‘Why is ‘significance’ important in decision-taking?’ that:

*“Heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals.”*

- 6.12 Under the discussion of ‘How to assess if there is substantial harm?’ the PPG offers:

*“What matters in assessing if a proposal causes substantial harm is the impact on the significance of the heritage asset. As the National Planning Policy Framework makes clear, significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”*

#### *Local Policy*

- 6.14 Paragraph 4.10 of the Local Plan Adoption Report (see Part 1 of the 13<sup>th</sup> November PAC agenda) confirms that: *“The new Local Plan also includes a much stronger emphasis on heritage. The previous documents contained one development management policy on heritage assets, but did not provide a particularly positive approach. There are now six policies on aspects of the heritage of Reading, which include much more proactive proposals for enhancing assets and taking account of heritage in new development.”* This is reflected in Policy EN1 which states that *“Historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced. This will include: Listed Buildings...”*
- 6.15 Paragraph 4.2.1 of the Local Plan 2018 states that *“Reading’s unique heritage will be at the heart of the town’s identity and will be highly visible, valued and accessible by those who live in, work in or visit the town. It will enrich Reading’s communities and enable them to interact with, and celebrate, the town’s history and historic assets.”* Para. 4.2.2 continues *“The role of the Local Plan is to proactively conserve and enhance the historic environment and promote its enjoyment. This entails recognition of the value of historic features that are desirable for retention, ensuring that the most valued townscapes and landscapes (e.g. those with national and international designations) are given the highest level of protection and other locally valued assets are recognised, retained and enhanced wherever possible”.*

#### *Other Guidance*

- 6.16 Historic England publication ‘Traditional Windows Their Care, Repair and Upgrading (2017)’ explains that *“The loss of traditional windows from our older buildings poses one of the major threats to our heritage”* and continues, under the heading *“Why are plastic (PVC-u) windows unsuitable?”*, as follows: *“The different appearance and character of PVC-u windows compared to historic windows is highly likely to make them unsuitable for older buildings, particularly those that are listed or in conservation areas. PVC-u is short for Poly Vinyl Chloride unplasticised and these windows are assembled from factory-made components designed for rigidity, thermal performance and ease of production. Their design, detailing and operation make them look different to traditional windows.*

*Manufacturers have been unable to replicate the sections/glazing bars used in most timber and steel windows due to the limited strength of the material and the additional weight of the secondary glazing units. (pp 6-7)."*

- 6.17 Where replacement is justified, the HE publication states that: *"The replacement window should match the form, detailing and operation of the window to be copied. It will be necessary for the maker of the new window to accurately copy the profiles of all the window components including head, jambs and cill of the frame and the stiles rails and glazing bars of the sashes or casements... Unfortunately, in many cases replacement products that claim to match historic designs do not do so. Exact reproduction is possible, and many firms of builders, carpenters or joiners can provide a bespoke service for timber windows."* (section 5.1).
- 6.18 Note that the advice above does not entertain the possibility of a plastic window and the advice of the HE publication in section 5.2 envisages the precise opposite of what is currently proposed (i.e. it assumes that there may be circumstances where a harmful plastic window may exist and it would be desirable to replace it with something more suitable): *"Where a window that diminishes the significance of the building, such as a PVCu window or an 'off the peg' timber window of an inappropriate pattern, is to be replaced the new window should be designed to be in keeping with the period and architectural style of the building. It may be possible to base the design on windows that survive elsewhere in the building or it may be necessary to look for examples in other buildings of the same period and style close by."*
- 6.19 It is clear from this advice that Historic England do not consider that replacement of timber windows in a listed building with a plastic version would be acceptable.

#### *Discussion*

- 6.20 The existing windows along the front elevation of Southcote Lodge are vertical sliding sashes with glazing bars in a six-over-six pattern with a three-over-six pattern at the second floor. The sash windows are consistent with the age of the building in terms of their style, detailing, construction using good quality timber joinery, and single-glazed.
- 6.21 Whilst the windows in the (1989) extensions to the Listed Building include uPVC windows, timber windows have been retained throughout the principal Listed Building. The contribution of timber windows to the overall character and special interest of the Listed Building is considered to be significant.
- 6.22 As a general rule, windows in historic buildings should be repaired, or if beyond repair should be replaced 'like for like' (see HE advice above). The existing windows should be retained, unless they are obviously inappropriate or in very poor condition. If new windows are to be accepted (due to the existing being beyond repair), it is important that their design, scale and proportion should be sympathetic to the character of the building. The thickness and moulding of glazing bars, the size and arrangement of panes and other details should be appropriate to the date of the building or to the date when the window aperture was made. In particular, for reasons of strength the thickness of frame members tends to be greater in plastic windows than in traditional timber ones (see HE advice above).

- 6.23 It appears from a review of historic photographs that many windows were replaced at the time the building was converted in the 1980s. However it is apparent that the windows are very good replica timber sliding sash which follow a traditional design and use historic construction techniques (in accordance with HE advice - see above). The existing windows are therefore considered to preserve the character of the listed building. The fact that most windows are not original does lend some support to the principle of further replacement where it could be shown to be necessary as part of responsible maintenance of the building over time. However it does not add any support to replacement windows which do not replicate the original character, and does not support wholesale replacement of windows, as many are not at the end of their serviceable life and could be appropriately refurbished as part of a heritage-focussed scheme of maintenance.
- 6.24 Replacing timber sash windows with double-glazed uPVC windows would harm the significance of the Grade II Listed Building in terms of its aesthetic value and evidential value. This is because, despite the statement on the drawings that the detailing of the replacement windows would match the existing in all respects, there would remain the fundamental difference in the materials used. The difference in the use of a plastic for the replacement windows would be visually obvious, as demonstrated by the surrounding windows within the (1989) extensions. It is also apparent that the fine detailing of the existing sash windows, in terms of their glazing bars, thickness and mouldings, could not be reproduced in uPVC. It is apparent that uPVC factory-made facsimiles of historic windows would detract from the aesthetic value and therefore the significance of the Listed Building.
- 6.25 The submitted drawings state that *“no other construction works will involve the grade II listed building apart from associated repairs in fitting the new windows”*. However that this cannot be known for certain without a more detailed survey of the building or a more detailed design for the windows and a schedule of works being provided. Timber windows have a different construction from plastic and sometimes perform a structural function. Additional works involving lintels, cills and surrounding brickwork may be required in order fit the proposed plastic frames. This would cause additional harm to the historic fabric of the listed building.
- 6.26 In replacing timber sash windows with double-glazed uPVC windows, the applicant would substantially harm the significance of the Grade II Listed Building in terms of its aesthetic value and evidential value. Under the principles of the NPPF, applicants must be able to justify any harm to Listed Buildings and no justification has been provided, or can be envisaged for installation of unnecessary and historically inappropriate plastic windows.
- 6.27 The applicant’s aspirations for improving the air tightness and thermal performance of the building are noted. It is considered that this does not necessitate removal of the existing windows. Weather stripping and draught proofing are visually more innocuous changes as well as thermally efficient and cost-effective. Secondary glazing in a removable inner frame is another acceptable option for some windows. It is relevant to note that English Heritage, following tests on timber sash window by Glasgow Caledonian University, reported in their 2009 publication *Research into The Thermal Performance of Windows: Timber Sash Windows* that:
- *“There are major opportunities for improving the thermal performance of existing windows by relatively simple methods, including traditional curtains, blinds and shutters.*

- *There is a good potential for improvement from draught proofing, with air infiltration through the repaired and draught proofed window being somewhat less than through a standard trickle ventilator.*
- *There is potential for further improvement where secondary glazing with a low-emissivity coating is used as well. This gives good performance in the daytime, and better still at night when curtains, blinds and shutters can be closed.* (English Heritage, 2009, *Research into The Thermal Performance of Windows: Timber Sash Windows*). (These findings are also referred to in the Historic England publication *Traditional Windows Their Care, Repair and Upgrading* (2017)).

## 7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 It is considered that substantial harm would occur to the heritage significance of the listed building as a result of the proposed changes to the windows, which are an important feature of the historic building. Approval of the proposed works would be contrary to adopted development plan policy, national policy and guidance, and would be in clear conflict with the statutory duty on the Council to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building and its features of special interest.
- 7.2 The applicant is encouraged to enter into discussions with the Council to explore the possibility of a scheme of replica replacement windows, or refurbishment of existing, as appropriate.

Case Officer: Steve Vigar

Drawings (selection only) - Full details at:  
[http://planning.reading.gov.uk/fastweb\\_PL/welcome.asp](http://planning.reading.gov.uk/fastweb_PL/welcome.asp)







Rear Bay