

To: Members of the Planning Applications
Committee

Direct ☎ : 0118 9372112

24 May 2022

Your contact is: **Nicky Simpson - Committee Services (nicky.simpson@reading.gov.uk)**

NOTICE OF MEETING - PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE 1 JUNE 2022

A meeting of the Planning Applications Committee will be held on Wednesday, 1 June 2022 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	BOROUGHWIDE	19 - 22
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7. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT - DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICE 2021/22	Information	BOROUGHWIDE	35 - 42
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PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

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9.	211376/FUL & 211407/LBC - 41 MINSTER STREET	Decision	ABBEY	51 - 62
	Proposal (211376)	The proposed development will include installation of a 10m stub tower, 6 no. antennas, 2 no. 300mm dishes, a GPS dish and associated ancillary equipment, alongside the removal of the existing 2.5m stub tower with 6 no. antennas and associated equipment and fixings. (Amended Description)		
	Recommendation	Application Permitted		
	Proposal (211407)	Listed Building Consent for the proposal above.		
	Recommendation	Application Permitted		
10.	211424/FUL - 1A EATON PLACE	Decision	ABBEY	63 - 78
	Proposal	Demolition of existing commercial building (Class E) and erection of residential block comprising of 2 x 1 bed flats (Class C3)		
	Recommendation	Permitted subject to Legal Agreement		
11.	220291/FUL - 2 HOWARD STREET	Decision	ABBEY	79 - 134
	Proposal	Conversion of a single dwelling (Class C3) to a Sui-Generis House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) for 9 persons, and conversion of the existing garage to a cycle and garden store, plus erection of two dormer windows, bin storage and associated enabling internal works and minor external works (re-submission of 211420/FUL)		
	Recommendation	Application Permitted		
12.	220125/LBC - OXFORD ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL, 146 OXFORD ROAD	Decision	ABBEY	135 - 142
	Proposal	Listed Building Consent for proposed works to Oxford Road Community School - repairs and refurbishment to the pitched roof and replacement of bitumen felt covering to a number of small flat roofs.		
	Recommendation	Application Permitted		
13.	211728/OUT - DELLWOOD HOSPITAL LIEBENROOD ROAD	Decision	SOUTHCOTE	143 - 172
	Proposal	Outline application considering access, appearance, layout and scale for the partial demolition, retention and extension of existing building to form a care home (C2 use class) and ancillary accommodation, amended access arrangements, car parking and associated works (landscaping reserved for future consideration)		
	Recommendation	Permitted subject to Legal Agreement		
14.	212061/FUL - RICHFIELD DRIVING RANGE, RICHFIELD AVENUE	Decision	THAMES	173 - 234
	Proposal	The demolition of existing driving range structures and the development of a new three-storey 8 form entry school for years 11 - 16, including a SEND unit and 300 place 6th form (total school capacity of 1500 pupils) including the creation of a new access from Richfield Avenue, new parking area, cycle parking landscaped areas, external play areas, Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and sporting pitches		
	Recommendation	Permitted subject to Legal Agreement		

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Agenda Annex

GUIDE TO PLANNING APPLICATIONS

1. There are many different types of applications processed by the Planning Service and the following codes are used to abbreviate the more common types 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. Officer reports often refer to a matter or situation as being “a material consideration”. The following list tries to explain what these might include:

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

There are also concerns that regulations or case law has established cannot be taken into account. These include:

- 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.

Apartment-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.

Guide to changes to the Use Classes Order in England.

Changes of use within the same class are not development.

Use	Use Class up to 31 August 2020	Use Class from 1 September 2020
Shop - not more than 280sqm mostly selling essential goods, including food and at least 1km from another similar shop	A1	F.2
Shop	A1	E
Financial & professional services (not medical)	A2	E
Café or restaurant	A3	E
Pub, wine bar or drinking establishment	A4	Sui generis
Takeaway	A5	Sui generis
Office other than a use within Class A2	B1a	E
Research & development of products or processes	B1b	E
For any industrial process (which can be carried out in any residential area without causing detriment to the amenity of the area)	B1c	E
Industrial	B2	B2
Storage or distribution	B8	B8
Hotels, boarding & guest houses	C1	C1
Residential institutions	C2	C2
Secure residential institutions	C2a	C2a
Dwelling houses	C3	C3
Small house in multiple occupation 3-6 residents	C4	C4
Clinics, health centres, creches, day nurseries, day centre	D1	E
Schools, non-residential education & training centres, museums, public libraries, public halls, exhibition halls, places of worship, law courts	D1	F.1
Cinemas, theatres, concert halls, bingo halls and dance halls	D2	Sui generis
Gymnasiums, indoor recreations not involving motorised vehicles or firearms	D2	E
Hall or meeting place for the principal use of the local community	D2	F.2
Indoor or outdoor swimming baths, skating rinks, and outdoor sports or recreations not involving motorised vehicles or firearms	D2	F.2

- Present:** Councillor Lovelock (Chair);
Councillors Challenger (Vice-Chair), Carnell, Emberson, Ennis, Leng, McEwan, Page, Robinson, Rowland, Stanford-Beale and J Williams
- Apologies:** Councillors Duveen and R Williams

RESOLVED ITEMS

118. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

119. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Emberson declared a prejudicial interest in Item 132 (220190/REG3 - Various Addresses in Bramshaw Road) on the grounds of predetermination on the basis that she was involved in promoting the scheme as Lead Councillor for Housing.

Councillor Rowland declared a prejudicial interest in Items 127 and 128 (201585/FUL & 20156/ADV - 109A Oxford Road and 200142/FUL - 109B Oxford Road) on the grounds of predetermination. Councillor Rowland lived on Zinzan Street, which joined Oxford Road at the properties.

120. POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS

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

Resolved -

That no site visits be arranged, unless there were any additional applications which the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services considered appropriate.

121. 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

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the following appeal decision in Appendix 3:

200188 - 55 VASTERN ROAD

Demolition of existing structures and erection of a series of buildings ranging in height from 1 to 11 storeys, including residential dwellings (C3 use class) and retail floorspace (A3 use class), together with a new north-south pedestrian link, connecting Christchurch Bridge to Vastern Road.

Virtual Inquiry.

Appeal allowed.

Resolved -

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

122. APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report giving details in Table 1 of four prior approval applications received, and in Table 2 of seven applications for prior approval decided, between 18 February and 18 March 2022.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

123. 40 CHRISTCHURCH ROAD - PROPOSAL TO ADD TO THE LIST OF LOCALLY IMPORTANT BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on a proposal to add 40 Christchurch Road to the list of Locally-Important Buildings and Structures. The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1: Location map
- Appendix 2: Relevant photos and images
- Appendix 3: Proposed Local List text
- Appendix 4: Nomination Form
- Appendix 5: Full response from Property and Valuations team

The report set out the results of consultation on the proposal and an assessment against the criteria in Appendix 2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, concluding with reasons why the building qualified for addition to the Local List.

Resolved - That 40 Christchurch Road be added to the list of Locally-Important Buildings and Structures.

124. PALMER PARK PAVILION AND ASSOCIATED BUILDING - PROPOSAL TO ADD TO THE LIST OF LOCALLY IMPORTANT BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on a proposal to add Palmer Park pavilion and associated building, Wokingham Road to the list of Locally-Important Buildings and Structures. The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix 1: Location map
- Appendix 2: Relevant photos and images
- Appendix 3: Proposed Local List text
- Appendix 4: Nomination Form

The report set out the results of the consultation on the proposal and an assessment against the criteria in Appendix 2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, concluding with reasons why the building qualified for addition to the Local List.

An update report was tabled at the meeting which referred to a petition to reopen the Palmer Park toilets and locally list the three heritage buildings which had been submitted to the Policy Committee (Minute 51 of the meeting held on 13 December 2021 refers). The report also set out a response to the consultation from Park Ward councillors.

Resolved - That Palmer Park Pavilion and associated building and entrance gates, Wokingham Road, be added to the List of Locally-Important Buildings and Structures.

125. STREET NAME PROPOSALS LIST ADDITIONS

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report seeking approval for the name Bobbie Richardson to be added onto the Street Name Proposals List for future allocation.

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The report explained that Bobbie Richardson had been a Southcote Councillor for a number of years and a local campaigner for over thirty years before she had passed away in 2020. An address check had shown that there were no duplicate or similar street names in Reading.

Resolved - That Bobbie Richardson be added to the Street Names Proposals List to be available for selection by Committee for future street name allocation.

126. STREET NAME ASSIGNMENT - REAR OF 57 BAKER STREET

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report asking the Committee to select a name for the development site at the rear of 57 Baker Street. A plan of the site detailing the street layout was attached at Appendix 1.

The report listed three suggested names, two of which related to the photography pioneer William Henry Fox Talbot whose workshop nearby had been the first commercial studios to mass produce photographs from negatives. There was a plaque on the wall next to the site commemorating Fox Talbot.

Resolved - That the development be named Fox Talbot Close.

127. 201585/FUL & 201586/ADV - 109A OXFORD ROAD

Change of use from an estate agent use class E to a restaurant and hot food takeaway sui generis use class.

Further to Minute 79 of the meeting held on 1 December 2021 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 additional details of the noise mitigation and odour extraction installations and had the applicant's Design and Specification For Kitchen Ventilation System attached at Appendix 1. The report also set out the proposed Litter Management Plan and brought to the Committee's attention a petition that had been submitted to the Council at the time of the Committee's previous consideration of the application (Minute 104 of the meeting held on 28 April 2021 refers). The petition was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

It was reported at the meeting that the recommended conditions for application 201585 should be amended to reflect the proposed conditions that had been reported to the Committee at its meeting on 1 December 2021 (Minute 79 refers).

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Objectors Rupert Buckingham (Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association) and Evelyn Williams (Conservation Area Advisory Committee), and Mohammed Raja and Javeria Raja representing the applicant, attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

Resolved -

- (1) That planning permission for application 201585/FUL be granted, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the original report, with the conditions amended to reflect the recommended conditions submitted to the Committee at its meeting on 1 December 2021 (Minute 79 refers), and with an additional informative to specify that any shutters be installed inside the building and not roller shutters outside, as per the requirements of the Conservation Area, and an additional informative to state the requirement to apply for a late night refreshment licence;
- (2) That the litter and waste management plan be agreed in consultation with Ward Councillors;
- (3) That advertising consent for application 201586/ADV be granted, subject to the conditions as recommended in the original report.

(Councillor Rowland declared a prejudicial interest in this Item on the grounds that she lived on Zinzan Street, which joined Oxford Road at the property. She made a statement to the Committee but took no further part in the debate or decision.)

128. 200142/FUL - 109B OXFORD ROAD

Change of use from sui generis (betting shop) to A3 restaurant with ancillary A5 takeaway and replacement shopfront (part retrospective).

It was reported at the meeting that this application had been withdrawn.

129. 200931/FUL - 22A WAYLEN STREET

Conversion of existing storage and distribution use to 1x2 bed dwelling, including upward extension to rear, and associated works.

The Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. The application had been deferred at the meeting held on 2 February 2022 (Minute 103 refers) and the report submitted to that meeting was attached at Appendix 1.

Comments were received and considered.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to grant full planning permission for application 200931/FUL, subject to completion of a S106 legal agreement by 1 July 2022 (unless a later date be agreed by the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the report;

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- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (3) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives recommended.

130. 182252/OUT - 80 CAVERSHAM ROAD

Outline application considering access, landscaping, layout and scale for redevelopment proposal involving the demolition of all existing buildings and structures (Classes B1a & B2) and erection of new buildings ranging between basement and 2 - 24 storeys in height, providing 620 (72 x studio, 196x1, 320x2 & 32x3-bed) residential units (Class C3), office accommodation (Class B1a), flexible ground floor shop (Class A1), financial and professional services (Class A2) or restaurant/café (Class A3) uses, a community centre (Class D1), health centre uses (Class D1) and various works including car parking (94 spaces (70 at basement level)), servicing, public and private open space, landscaping, highways, pedestrian and vehicular access and associated works. This application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement (amended description).

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above proposal. An update report was tabled at the meeting which recommended an additional condition to require submission and approval of Design Codes on a building-by-building basis.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Objector David Neale (Bell Tower Community Association), and the applicant's agent Barry Kitcherside, attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to grant outline planning permission for application 182252/OUT, subject to completion of a S106 legal agreement by 27 April 2022 (unless a later date be agreed by the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the original report;
- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (3) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the original report, with the additional condition as recommended in the update report and an additional informative requiring

community engagement to be carried out prior to the Reserved Matters application and reported in the Reserved Matters submission;

- (4) That Reserved Matters including design, appearance, landscaping, materials, mechanical ventilation, sustainability and energy details and place-based facilities be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee for approval.

131. 220294/REG3 - 1 BEDFORD ROAD

Installation of Interpretation Board on temporary hoarding on boundary to former Central Swimming Pool site facing the Bedford Road.

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. It was reported at the meeting that the standard advertisement conditions referred to in the recommendation were not required for this application. It was also reported that the consultation period would end on 8 April 2022 and that approval would be subject to no substantial objections being received.

Comments were received and considered.

Resolved -

- (1) That, pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, and subject to no substantial objections being received before the end of the consultation period on 8 April 2022, the carrying out of the development 220294/REG3 be authorised;
- (2) That the development be subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended, with the removal of the standard advertisement conditions which were not required.

132. 220190/REG3 - VARIOUS ADDRESSES IN BRAMSHAW ROAD, WIMBORNE GARDENS, THIRLMERE AVE, RINGWOOD ROAD & LYNDHURST ROAD

Property improvement works and Thermal efficiency upgrades to 31 RBC properties. Works to each property will consist of fitting new External Wall insulation, new triple glazed windows and doors, minor roof adaptations, fitting of Air Source Heat pumps, central heating upgrades and associated works. All properties located on the Old Norcot Estate, Reading. Addresses include 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 42, 50, 51, 54, 55, 56, 59, 60, 61, 64, 66, 83, 87, 89 Bramshaw Road. 1, 4, 8 Wimborne Gardens. 158 Thirlmere Ave. 13 Ringwood Road. 61 Lyndhurst Road. 67 Lyndhurst Road. (Part Retrospective)

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting which listed additional plans received, set out one response to the consultation and made an appraisal of information submitted on the siting of Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs). An additional condition regarding ASHPs was recommended.

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 220190/REG3 be authorised, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the original report, with the additional condition as recommended in the update report.

(Councillor Emberson declared a prejudicial interest in the above item, on the basis that she would be involved in promoting the scheme as Lead Councillor for Housing. She made a statement to the Committee but took no further part in the debate or decision.)

133. 211127/REG3 - RANIKHET PRIMARY SCHOOL, SPEY ROAD, TILEHURST

Complete redevelopment of Ranikhet Academy Primary School, comprising construction of a new two form entry, two storey school building, new Multi Use Games Area, Car Parking, playground areas and other landscaped features along with the demolitions of all existing school buildings.

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 clarifications over s106/Unilateral Undertaking and condition triggers and further information on sustainability. An amendment to the proposed Heads of Terms and five amendments to the conditions were recommended.

Comments were received and considered.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to grant full planning permission for application 211127/REG3, subject to completion of a s106 unilateral undertaking by 30 June 2022 (unless a later date be agreed by the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services) to secure the Heads of Terms as set out in the original report and amended by the update report;
- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (3) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the original report and amended by the update report.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 9.34 pm)

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REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
DATE:	1 JUNE 2022		
TITLE:	POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS		
SERVICE:	PLANNING	WARDS:	BOROUGH WIDE
AUTHOR:	Julie Williams	TEL:	0118 9372461
JOB TITLE:	Acting Planning Manager	E-MAIL:	Julie.williams@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To identify those sites where, due to the sensitive or important nature of the proposals, Councillors are advised that a Site Visit would be appropriate before the matter is presented at Committee and to confirm how the visit will be arranged. A list of potential sites is appended to this report with an officer note added to say if recommended for a site visit or not.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION
2.1 That you note this report and confirm if the site or sites indicated on the appended list are to be visited by Councillors.
2.2 Confirm if there are any other sites Councillors consider necessary to visit before reaching a decision on an application.
2.3 Confirm how the site(s) agreed to be visited will be carried out - accompanied by officers or unaccompanied.

3. THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1 Appended to this report is a list of applications received that may be presented to Committee for a decision in due course. Officers will normally indicate if a site would benefit from being visited to inform your decision making or Councillors may request that a site is visited.
- 3.2 A site visit will help if the impact of the proposed development is difficult to visualise from the plans and supporting material or where concerns raised by objectors need to be seen to be better understood.
- 3.3 While officers try to make site visit recommendations before a report comes to Committee sometimes it will become apparent at Committee, during consideration of an application, that Councillors should ask for a deferral to allow a visit to be carried out to assist in reaching the correct decision.

- 3.4 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 to inform decision making.
- 3.5 Unaccompanied site visits can take place when the site can be easily seen from public areas and Councillors can visit 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.
- 3.6 It is also possible for officers to suggest, or Councillors to request, a visit to a completed development to assess its quality.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

4.1 The processing of planning applications contributes to creating a sustainable environment with active communities and helping the economy within the Borough as identified as the themes of the Council's Corporate Plan:

1. Healthy Environments
2. Thriving Communities
3. Inclusive Economy

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. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).

8.2 The Planning Service uses policies to encourage developers to build and use properties responsibly by making efficient use of land and using sustainable materials and building methods. As a team we have also reduced the amount of resources (paper and printing) we use to carry out our work.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The cost of site visits is met through the normal planning service budget and Councillor costs.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Reading Borough Council Planning Code of Conduct.

APPENDIX 1

Potential Site Visit List:

Ward: Emmer Green

Application reference: 220189

Application type: Full Planning Approval

Site address: 205-213 Henley Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 6LJ

Proposal: Demolition of nos. 205-213 Henley Road and rear gardens of nos. 205-209 Henley Road and erection of 2 retirement living apartments blocks (C3 use-age restricted) including communal spaces with supporting car parking, open space landscaping and associated infrastructure. Access into the site from the adjacent development on Henley Road.

Reason for Committee item: Major Application

Ward: Emmer Green

Application reference: 220409

Application type: Full Planning Approval

Site address: Caversham Park, Peppard Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8TZ

Proposal: Redevelopment of Caversham Park for 64 assisted living units (Class C2) for the over 55's through the conversion of Caversham Park House, 64 bed care home (Class C2), 61 age-restricted retirement dwellings, including conversion of the existing buildings Bursars House, The Lodge and 2 Caversham Park Drive (Class C3), 5 market dwellings (Class C3), 28 affordable dwellings (Class C3), and refurbishment and extension of the existing pavilion to provide changing facilities, café/studio and sports provision comprising 2 no. croquet lawns, 2 no. bowling greens, an additional tennis court, refurbishment of the existing tennis court and associated parking and landscaping following

Reason for Committee item: Major Application

Ward: Katesgrove

Application reference: 220244

Application type: Full Planning Approval

Site address: 75-77 London Street, Reading, RG1 4QA

Proposal: Proposed demolition of buildings to rear (Olympia Hall) and erection of 12 flats with associated parking, landscaping and courtyard garden and conversion of ground floor of Nos. 75-77 to 3 flats

Reason for Committee item: Major Application

Ward: Kentwood

Application reference: 220463

Application type: Full Planning Approval

Site address: Unit 8, Stadium Way, Reading, RG30 6BX

Proposal: Change of use of vacant unit to use as an indoor climbing centre (Use Class E(d)), minor amendments to building elevations/entrances, provision of cycle/bin storage and associated works

Reason for Committee item: Major Application

Ward: Park

Application reference: 211714

Application type: Full Planning Approval

Site address: 70-78 Wokingham Road, Reading, RG6 1JL
Proposal: Demolition of hotel and erection of 14 apartments.
Reason for Committee item: Major Application

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
DATE:	1 JUNE 2022		
TITLE:	PLANNING APPEALS		
AUTHOR:	Julie Williams	TEL:	0118 9372461
JOB TITLE:	Planning Manager	E-MAIL:	Julie.Williams@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

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

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

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

3. INFORMATION PROVIDED

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

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 4.1 Defending planning appeals made against planning decisions contributes to producing a sustainable environment and economy within the Borough in accordance with the themes of the Council's Corporate Plan:

2. Thriving Communities
3. Inclusive Economy

5. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 5.2 The Planning Service uses policies to encourage developers to build and use properties responsibly by making efficient use of land and using sustainable materials and building methods. As a team we have also reduced the amount of resources (paper and printing) we use to carry out our work.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 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.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 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.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 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.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 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”.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Planning Appeal Forms and letters from the Planning Inspectorate.

APPENDIX 1

Appeals Lodged:

WARD: TILEHURST
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/21/3288114
CASE NO: 211429/TEL
ADDRESS: "Site Adjacent Prince of Wales PH", St Michaels Road,
Tilehurst, Reading
PROPOSAL: Application for prior notification of proposed development by
telecommunications code systems operators.
CASE OFFICER: Chukwudi Onwudinanti
METHOD: Written Representation
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL
APPEAL LODGED: 24.3.22

WARD: WHITLEY
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/21/3286980
CASE NO: 210125/FUL
ADDRESS: 357 Basingstoke Road, Reading
PROPOSAL: Removal of existing workshop and the erection of a new
workshop
CASE OFFICER: Connie Davis
METHOD: Written Representation
APPEAL TYPE: Appeal against conditions imposed
APPEAL LODGED: 30.3.22

WARD: PARK
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/22/3291549
CASE NO: 210906
ADDRESS: "Alexander House", 205-207 Kings Road, Reading
PROPOSAL: Change of use from office use Class B1a to residential use
Class C3 to create 13 new residential dwellings. These are
created 11 within the roofspace of the building and a further
2 units on Ground and 1st Floor. Prior Notification under Class
O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning
(General Permitted Development) Order 2015.
CASE OFFICER: Jonathan Markwell
METHOD: Written Representation
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL
APPEAL LODGED: 06.05.2022

WARD: EMMER GREEN
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/D/22/3297622
CASE NO: 220149/HOU
ADDRESS: 264 Henley Road, Caversham
PROPOSAL: First floor rear and side extensions, single storey rear extension, new front boundary wall and gates. Alterations to window fenestration.
CASE OFFICER: Beatrice Malama
METHOD: Written Representation
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL
APPEAL LODGED: 4.5.2022

WARD: TILEHURST
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/21/3289234
CASE NO: 211276
ADDRESS: "Land Adjacent", 114-116 School Road, Tilehurst
PROPOSAL: Erection of building to provide ground floor retail unit (Class E) with 4 residential flats above (Class C3)
CASE OFFICER: Connie Davis
METHOD: Written Representation
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL
APPEAL LODGED: 06.05.2022

WARD: KATESGROVE
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/22/3290997
CASE NO: 210069
ADDRESS: 30 Essex Street
PROPOSAL: Change of use of dwelling (Class C3) to house in multiple occupation (Class C4)
CASE OFFICER: David Brett
METHOD: Written Representation
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL
APPEAL LODGED: 12.5.2022

APPENDIX 2

Appeals Decided:

WARD: COLEY
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/21/3278190
CASE NO: 210116
ADDRESS: 66 Berkeley Avenue, Reading
PROPOSAL: Change of Use from Hotel to Health Clinic with associated alterations, new parking and entrance path for clinic.
CASE OFFICER: Ethne Humphreys
METHOD: Written Representation
DECISION: DISMISSED
DATE DETERMINED: 21.3.22

WARD: REDLANDS
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/21/3279894
CASE NO: 210127
ADDRESS: 27 Newcastle Road, Reading
PROPOSAL: Erection of single storey rear extension and rear dormer window to create an 8 person HMO (sui generis).
CASE OFFICER: Nathalie Weekes
METHOD: Written Representation
DECISION: ALLOWED
DATE DETERMINED: 12.4.22

APPEAL FOR COSTS AWARDED TO APPLICANT

WARD: EMMER GREEN
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/21/3289345
CASE NO: 211667
ADDRESS: Land off Venetia Close (rear garden of 49 Kiln Road), Emmer Green, Reading
PROPOSAL: Retrospective application for the erection of a 4 bedroom two storey detached house at land off Venetia Close, pursuant to APP/E0345/W/16/3143453 with altered boundary, access arrangements and dwelling design
CASE OFFICER: Nathalie Weekes
METHOD: Written Representation
DECISION: DISMISSED
DATE DETERMINED: 25.4.22

WARD: CAVERSHAM
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/22/3290550
CASE NO: 211658
ADDRESS: 40 Church Street, Reading
PROPOSAL: Partial conversion of ground floor from flat (Class C3) to commercial use (Class E(a))
CASE OFFICER: Tom Hughes
METHOD: Written Representation
DECISION: DISMISSED
DATE DETERMINED: 12.5.22

APPENDIX 3

Address Index of Planning Officers reports on appeal decisions.

No reports available this time.

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REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
DATE:	1 JUNE 2022		
TITLE:	APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL		
AUTHOR:	Julie Williams & Richard Eatough		
JOB TITLE:	PLANNING MANAGER (acting) & Team Leader	E-MAIL:	Julie.williams@reading.gov.uk Richard.eatough@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Committee of the types of development that can be submitted for Prior Approval and to provide a summary of the applications received and decisions taken in accordance with the prior-approval process as set out in 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 There are a range of development types and changes of use that can be carried out as permitted development but are subject to the developer first notifying the planning authority of the proposal, for it to confirm that “prior approval” is not needed before exercising the permitted development rights. The matters for prior approval vary depending on the type of development and these are set out in full in the relevant Parts in Schedule 2 to the General Permitted Development Order. A local planning authority cannot consider any other matters when determining a prior approval application.
- 3.2 If the decision is that approval is required, further information may be requested by the planning authority in order for it to determine whether approval should be given. The granting of prior approval can result in conditions being attached to the approval. Prior approval can also be refused, in which case an appeal can be made.
- 3.3 The statutory requirements relating to prior approval are much less prescriptive than those relating to planning applications. This is because seeking prior approval is designed to be a light-touch process given that the principle of the development has already been established in the General Permitted Development Order. The government is clear that a local planning authority should not impose unnecessarily onerous requirements on developers should not seek to replicate the planning application system.
- 3.4 However, this means that large development schemes, often involving changes of use to residential, can proceed without meeting many of the adopted planning policies; such as making no contribution towards affordable housing, and the application fees for these “light touch” applications are significantly less than the equivalent planning application fee.
- 3.5 For this reason, at the Planning Applications Committee meeting on 29 May 2013, it was agreed that a report be brought to future meetings 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. It was also requested that an estimate be provided for the “loss” in potential planning fee income.

4 TYPES OF PRIOR APPROVAL APPLICATIONS

4.1 The categories of development requiring prior approval appear in different parts of Schedule 2 of 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. Those that are of most relevance to Reading Borough are summarised as follows:

SCHEDULE 2 - Permitted development rights

PART 1 - Development within the curtilage of a dwelling house

- **Householder development - larger home extensions. Part 2 Class A1.**
- **Householder development - upwards extensions. Part 2 Class AA.**

PART 3 – Changes of use

- **Change of use from A1 shops or A2 financial & professional, betting office, pay day loan shop or casino to A3 restaurants and cafes. Class C.**
- **Change of use from A1 shops or A2 financial & professional, betting office or pay day loan shop to Class D2 assembly & leisure. 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. Class M**
- **Change of use from an amusement arcade or a casino to C3 dwellinghouse & necessary works. Class N**
- **Change of use from B1 office to C3 dwellinghouse Class O*.**
- **Change of use from B8 storage or distribution to C3 dwellinghouse Class P**
- **Change of use from B1(c) light industrial use to C3 dwellinghouse 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. 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. Class R.**
- **Change of use from Agricultural buildings and land to state funded school or registered nursery D1. 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. Class T.**

PART 4 - Temporary buildings and uses

- **Temporary use of buildings for film making for up to 9 months in any 27 month period. Class E**

PART 11 - Heritage & Demolition

- **Demolition of buildings. Class B.**

PART 16 - Communications

- **Development by telecommunications code system operators. Class A**
- **GPDO Part 11.**

Part 20 - Construction of New Dwellinghouses

- **New dwellinghouses on detached blocks of flats Class A**
- **Demolition of buildings and construction of new dwellinghouses in their place.**

- 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. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 6.2 The Planning Service uses policies to encourage developers to build and use properties responsibly by making efficient use of land and using sustainable materials and building methods. As a team we have also reduced the amount of resources (paper and printing) we use to carry out our work.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

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

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 There are no direct implications arising from the proposals.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None arising from this Report.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Since the additional prior notifications were introduced in May 2013 in place of applications for full planning permission, the loss in fee income is now estimated to be £1,814,845.

(Class E (formally office) Prior Approvals - £1,671,610:
Householder Prior Approvals - £87,052:
Retail Prior Approvals - £16,840:
Demolition Prior Approval - £4,331:
Storage Prior Approvals - £5716:
Shop to Restaurant Prior Approval - £6026:
Shop to Leisure Prior Approval - £305:
Light Industrial to Residential - £20,022:
Dwellings on detached block of flats - £2048:
Additional storey on dwellings - £206:
New dwellinghouses on terrace/detached buildings - £128.

Figures since last report

Class E (formally office) Prior Approvals - £15,566:
Householder Prior Approvals - £660

- 10.2 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.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015
- The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) Order 2016.

Table 1 - Applications received since 18th March 2022 to 20th May 2022

Type:	How many received since last report:	Loss in possible fee income:
Householder Prior Approvals	6	£660
Class E Prior Approvals	8	£15,566
Demolition Prior Approval	0	0
Solar Equipment Prior Approval	0	£0
Prior Notification	0	n/a
Shop to Assembly & Leisure Prior Approval	0	0
Telecommunications Prior Approval	4	n/a
Dwellings on detached block of flats	0	0
Householder Additional Storey	0	0
New dwellinghouses on terrace/detached buildings	0	0
TOTAL	18	£16,226

Table 2 - Applications decided since 18th March 2022 to 20th May 2022

Type:	Approved	Refused	Not Required	Withdrawn	Non Determination
Householder Prior Approvals	0	1	4	3	0
Class E Prior Approvals	1	0	0	0	0
Shop to Restaurant Prior Approval	0	0	0	0	0
Demolition Prior Approval	0	0	0	0	0
Solar Equipment Prior Approval	0	0	0	0	0
Prior Notification/ Other	0	0	0	1	0
Shop to Assembly & Leisure Prior Approval	0	0	0	0	0
Telecommunications Prior Approval	0	0	0	0	0
Dwellings on detached block of flats	0	0	0	0	0
Householder Additional Storey	0	0	0	0	0
New dwellinghouses on terrace buildings	0	0	0	0	0
New dwellings on detached building in commercial or mixed use	1	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	2	1	4	4	0

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Agenda Item 7

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
DATE:	1 JUNE 2022		
TITLE:	ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT - DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICE - 2021/22		
SERVICE:	PLANNING	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	JULIE WILLIAMS	TEL:	0118 937 2461 (72461)
JOB TITLE:	DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PLANNING MANAGER	E-MAIL:	Julie.williams@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information on how the Planning Service has performed over the past year in terms of meeting government set targets for dealing with planning applications, success at planning appeals and other measures.
- 1.2 Detail on the types of applications handled and other services provided is also presented for the year 1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the contents of the report be noted.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The existing approach to measuring the performance of Local Planning Authorities (LPA.s), introduced by the Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013, is based on a LPA.s performance on the speed of determining applications and the quality of their decisions. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) collates data from LPA.s to enable performance tables to be published on a quarterly basis. LPA.s are at risk of being designated as “underperforming” if targets are not met over the preceding 24 months. This would allow applicants to have the option of submitting their applications directly to the Planning Inspectorate (who act on behalf of the Secretary of State) for determination.
- 3.2 The criteria for designation as “underperforming” are:
 - a. For applications for major development: less than **60 per cent** of an authority’s decisions made within the statutory determination period or such extended period as has been agreed in writing with the applicant;
 - b. For applications for non-major development: less than **70 per cent** of an authority’s decisions made within the statutory determination period or such extended period as has been agreed in writing with the applicant.
 - c. For applications for both major and non-major development, above which a local planning authority is eligible for designation, is **10 per cent** of an authority’s total number of decisions on applications made during the assessment period being overturned at appeal.

4. PERFORMANCE AGAINST DLUHC TARGETS

Speed

- 4.1 Once a planning application has been validated, the local planning authority should make a decision on the proposal within the statutory time limits set by DLUHC unless a longer period is agreed in writing with the applicant. The statutory time limits are normally 13 weeks for applications for major development (when an application is subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment a 16 week limit applies) and 8 weeks for all other types of development.
- 4.2 However, local planning authorities can agree with the applicant to extend the time limit (sometimes with a Planning Performance Agreement or a simple extension of time) for all types of planning applications, including householder applications. Typically, this has been the route taken in Reading with officers and applicants preferring to negotiate a better outcome than simply refusing a planning application because the time is running out. This also deals with the concept of “the Planning Guarantee” which requires the planning application fee to be refunded to applicants where no decision has been made within 26 weeks, unless a longer period has been agreed in writing between the applicant and the local planning authority. (Regulation 9A of the 2012 Fees Regulations).
- 4.3 The Council’s performance on speed of determination of planning applications as shown in the most recently published (25 March 2022) PS2 (Planning Application Statistics) for performance in 2021/2022 is shown as:
- 86% of major development applications within the statutory determination period or an agreed extended period.
 - 85% of all non-major development applications within the statutory determination period or an agreed extended period.

Quality

- 4.4 It is disappointing that the quality of decisions made by local planning authorities is measured only by the proportion of all decisions on applications that are subsequently overturned at appeal. The threshold for designation on applications for both major and non-major development, above which a local planning authority is eligible for designation, is 10 per cent of an authority’s total number of decisions on applications made during the assessment period being overturned at appeal. We had 4 appeals allowed so performance was 0.5% of all decisions made being overturned.

Overall

- 4.5 I am therefore pleased to report that while this year continued to be a challenge the team have welcomed coming back to the office more often and getting out on site. We have dealt with some very significant major cases and a batch of public inquiries which have engaged and stretched a number of staff to extraordinary levels of work leaving colleagues to help out with cases. It has been a true team effort that has allowed the Planning Service to still perform well and meet DLUHC’s performance criteria.

5. PLANNING APPLICATION PERFORMANCE & INFORMATION ON OTHER SERVICES

- 5.1 The following Table 1 provides a breakdown on the types of planning applications handled with a comparison with preceding years. Previous reports have provided data on the split between applications determined within 8 and 13 weeks and those determined with an extension of time. However, this no longer considered relevant as it clear that going beyond the statutory date is acceptable as long as it is by agreement with the LPA and the applicant.
- 5.2 As can be seen the number of applications decided in 2021/22 has dropped on all types of applications when compared to previous years.

Table 1: Application Performance in 2021/22 compared with previous years.

Description	MCHLG 2019 Target	18-19	19/20	20/21	21/22
Number and Percentage of major applications decided within statutory 13 weeks or an extended period agreed by the applicant.	60%	33 97%	22 100%	15 88%	25/29 86%
Number and Percentage of all other minor applications decided within statutory 8 weeks or an extended period agreed by the applicant.	70%	200 90%	178 86%	150 78%	150/179 84%
Number and Percentage of other applications (including householder applications) decided within statutory 8 weeks or an extended period agreed by the applicant.	70%	652 94%	528 90%	445 89%	471/554 85%
Total decisions issued		885	728	610	762
Number and Percentage of householder applications (not for prior approval) decided within statutory 8 weeks or an extended period agreed by the applicant.	70%	446 94%	342 84%	297 88%	377/438 86%

- 5.3 Table 2 below sets out the number of Prior Approval applications processed and our performance on those applications for householder and office to residential developments. The high performance on these types of application reflects the fact that if prior approval applications are not decided within the prescribed 42 or 56 days approval is given by default.

Table 2: Prior Approval Performance

Indicator	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Number of (and performance on) all Prior Approval applications	90 96% in time	60 96% in time	90 97% in time	99 92% in time
Number of Householder Prior Approvals	59	34	40	44 84% in time
Number of Office to residential Prior Approvals	26	14	17	30 97% in time

- 5.4 The Council also receives requests for pre-application advice, for approval of details required to discharge of conditions attached to planning permissions and for approval of works to trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders and in trees in Conservation Areas. Table 3 shows the number of each type of application received over the last 3 years.

TABLE 3: No. of applications received including those for miscellaneous development management advice or approval.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22

All types of applications	2217	2005	1168	1320
Pre-application advice	180	166	166	134
Approval of details required by condition, ADJ, NMA, EIA SCO and SCR.	450	338	260	299
Works to TPO/CA trees	204	216	246	254
Total	3051	2725	1840	2007

5.5 Applications submitted across the board have reduced in number when compared to previous years apart from those for works to protected trees.

6. PLANNING APPEALS

6.1 The information on appeals (para 4.5 above) shows that performance in defending decisions to refuse continues to be well within target. The following table provides further detail for the past 3 years.

6.2 The appeal performance in terms of appeals dismissed (meaning the reasons for refusing permission were upheld) dropped from last year's rate (from 87% to 79%) but is higher than the 2 previous years. The eOfficer recommendations to refuse permission are scrutinised to ensure the reasons for refusal can be defended. Appeal statements are also checked to ensure that a robust defence of the decision is presented.

TABLE 4: Section 78 Appeals against the refusal of planning permission

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
APPEALS LODGED	41	50	30	26
NUMBER OF APPEAL DECISIONS	37	47	31	19
APPEALS ALLOWED	11 (30%)	11 (23%)	4 (12.9%)	4 (21%)
APPEALS DISMISSED	26 (70%)	35 (75%)	27 (87%)	15 (79%)
SPLIT DECISIONS	0	0	0	0
APPEALS WITHDRAWN	0	1	0	0

7. PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

7.1 The Planning Enforcement Service has one corporate performance indicator, which is to resolve complaints within the relevant target period identified for different types of complaint in the Council's Enforcement Plan. Performance against this indicator for 2021/22 was much improved from 2020/21 with 64% of enforcement complaints being resolved within 13 weeks of receipt against a target of 60%.

7.2 Table 5 below provides more detailed information on cases received and enforcement activity during 2021/22 compared to previous years. During the year the planning enforcement team closed 70 cases of the complaints registered but there is a backlog to close from 2020/2021. Performance is recovering from the covid restrictions and staff shortages when priority was given to visiting rather than the administrative task of closing cases. A new member of staff joined the team in January 2022 and it is expected that the backlog will reduce and the report on enforcement activity by wards will resume.

TABLE 5: Planning Enforcement statistics

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Total number of enforcement cases received	285	228	204	216
No. of cases closed	276	221	33	70
No. of cases on hand at end of year	190	200	367	501
Enforcement notices	6	8	1	0
Planning contravention notices	6	6	1	2
Breach of condition notices	2	0	0	0
Section 215 notices	0	4	0	0
Listed Building Enforcement notice	0	0	0	0
Temp Stop Notice	0	0	0	0
Stop Notice	0	0	0	0
Appeals against enforcement notices	4	3	2	5
New enforcement prosecutions	0	0	0	0

8. PLANNING FEE INCOME

8.1 The following tables show how the income to the planning service has been impacted by the pandemic with a 21% drop in income when compared to the previous year. Year 21/22 shows the fees picking up again with a significant boost in March.

TABLE 6: Approx. planning fees

	19/20 £	20/21 £	21/22 £	% change 20/21 – 21/22
April	86,650	31,290	94,786	+203%
May	68,090	55,834	37,998	-32%
June	73,898	73,320	75,131	+2%
July	63,039	55,461	60,799	+9%
August	60,405	69,795	44,928	-35%
September	45,627	71,376	78,327	+9%
October	59,373	63,048	56,354	-10%
November	76,094	45,485	67,901	+49%
December	181,712	81,210	74,645	-8%
January	72,341	38,380	34,439	-10%
February	95,841	77,794	67,207	-13%
March	37,581	63,280	122,649	+93%
Totals	920,651	726,273	815,164	+12%

TABLE 7: Income and applications submitted broken down by Quarters

19/20	Fee £	Majors	Minors	Others	Total MMO
Q1 April - June	228,638	9	75	170	254
Q2 July - September	169,071	7	71	153	231
Q3 October - December	317,179	11	69	142	222
Q4 January - March	205,763	5	67	155	227
Totals	920,651	32	282	620	934
20/21	Fee £	Majors	Minors	Others	Total MMO
Q1 April - June	160,444	3	53	117	173
Q2 July - September	196,632	7	50	145	202
Q3 October - December	189,743	15	65	161	241
Q4 January - March	179,454	8	69	162	239
Totals	726,273	33	237	585	855
21/22	Fee £	Majors	Minors	Others	Total MMO
Q1 April - June	207,915	6	52	150	206
Q2 July - September	184,054	10	54	170	234
Q3 October - December	198,900	5	38	129	172
Q4 January - March	224,295	7	35	105	147
Totals	815,164	28	179	554	759

9. COMMITMENTS MONITORING

- 9.1 Although not amongst the government-set targets for performance of the Planning service, it is worth also reporting on the results of the annual commitments monitoring exercise, which will be published by the end of May. This monitors the progress of planning permissions for residential and non-residential development and forms the basis for returns on housing delivery to government.

TABLE 8: Results of Commitments Monitoring 2021-22

Type of development	Newly permitted 21-22	Not started at 31/03/22	Under construction at 31/03/22	Completed 21-22
Residential (net change)	2,367 homes		2,519 homes	850 homes
Non-residential floorspace total	47,404 sq m	410,853 sq m	18,234 sq m	8,085 sq m

10. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 10.1 The processing of planning applications contributes to creating a sustainable environment with active communities and helping the economy within the Borough as identified as the themes of the Council's Corporate Plan:

1. Healthy Environments
2. Thriving Communities
3. Inclusive Economy

11. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 11.1 Statutory consultation takes place on planning applications and appeals and this can influence the speed with which applications and appeals are decided. Information on development management performance is publicly available.

12. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

12.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

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

12.2 In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics, it is considered that the development management performance set out in this report has no adverse impacts.

13. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).

13.2 The Planning Service plays a key part in mitigating impacts and adapting building techniques with adopted policies to encourage developers to build and use properties responsibly, by making efficient use of land, using sustainable materials and building methods.

14. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1 The collection and monitoring of performance indicators is a statutory requirement and a requirement of MHCLG. In addition, a number of the work related programmes referred to in this report are mandatory requirements including the determination of planning applications and the preparation of the development plan.

15. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report although we welcome the commitment in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill to increase application fees which will help to better resource the planning service.

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
DATE:	1 JUNE 2022		
TITLE:	LEVELLING-UP AND REGENERATION BILL		
AUTHOR:	Mark Worringham & Julie Williams		
JOB TITLE:	Planning Policy Manager	E-MAIL:	mark.worringham@reading.gov.uk & Julie.williams@reading.gov.uk
	Planning Development Manager		

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 [The Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill](#) received its first reading in the House of Commons on Thursday 12th May following, it is claimed, more than 40,000 responses to the government's 2020 White Paper 'Planning for the Future', and the subsequent inquiry into planning reform by the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide you with a summary of what officers see as the headlines in the Bill and the implications for the planning system generally and more specifically, Reading.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That you note this report.

3. PROPOSED CHANGES

- 3.1 The Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill is a wide-ranging bill, encompassing a number of proposals relating to devolution and regeneration, with significant proposed changes for the planning system. It follows on from both the Levelling Up White Paper, published on 2nd February 2022, but also the Planning White Paper which was published on 6th August 2020, a response to which Planning Applications Committee agreed on 7th October 2020.
- 3.2 The proposed changes to Planning relate to many aspects of the system, including development plans, development management, enforcement, infrastructure funding and heritage. The main changes

are summarised below. A policy paper to accompany the Bill can be found on the gov.uk website¹.

Development plans

3.3 Whilst the Bill takes forward the agenda for planning reform which began with the Planning White Paper, it is notable that the changes proposed do not include most of the more radical proposals from that document. For instance, the proposals for zoning land for growth, regeneration and protection have been dropped, as have suggestions for automatic permissions where they would accord with the development plan. The Bill nonetheless includes very significant proposals for plan-making.

3.4 The most significant changes are summarised below:

- The Bill would change the legal basis for decision-making, a change which impacts on both development management and policy. The first change is that National Development Management Policies are given the same legal status as the development plan in decision-making. The second change is that decisions should be made in line with these policies unless material considerations “strongly” indicate otherwise, thus strengthening the primacy of policy.
- As detailed above, it is proposed that a suite of National Development Management Policies be produced which will apply across England, something that was proposed in the White Paper. These policies would cover matters that apply in most areas, with general heritage protection given as an example, and would therefore reduce the content of local plans. Whilst local planning authorities would be able to include their own development management policies where required, the draft Bill requires that these be in conformity with and not repeat the national policies, meaning that justifying a divergence from national policy through the examination would no longer be possible.
- Spatial Development Strategies to cover more than one authority would be introduced, mirroring the system already in place in London, albeit that these would be prepared on a voluntary basis. They would have development plan status, would cover matters of strategic importance and would be subject to consultation and examination.
- The Local Development Scheme (LDS), which sets out the timetable for producing planning policy, would be replaced by a Local Plan Timetable, with which the authority must comply.
- There is a requirement to prepare a single Local Plan, which means the ability to have more than one Local Plan document in place for a single authority is removed (a Minerals and Waste

¹ [Levelling Up and Regeneration: further information - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

plan is a separate item in the Bill, and not affected by this requirement). Although not specified in the Bill, the expectation that a Local Plan be prepared within 30 months is retained. Regulations would need to follow to set the process out in detail.

- Gateway checks would be introduced whereby the local planning authority would seek advice from a person appointed by the Secretary of State on the Local Plan at stages during production that would need to be prescribed.
- The duty to co-operate in local plan making would be removed and replaced by an 'alignment' test, which would be introduced through national policy.
- There would be a requirement for certain public bodies (still to be prescribed by the Secretary of State) to assist with plan-making upon request by the plan-making authority. This is likely to particularly apply to infrastructure providers.
- Minerals and Waste Plans are included as a separate element within the Bill, with the requirements generally mirroring those for Local Plans, including the preparation of a timetable.
- Supplementary planning documents (SPDs) would be replaced by a new system of supplementary plans. These could only deal with development at specific sites, infrastructure provision, affordable housing or design requirements. These supplementary plans would need to go through an examination process (albeit a process that is lighter-touch than for local plans), and unlike SPDs would have development plan status.
- The Bill contains a requirement that the whole of the authority's area be covered by a design code. This would set the requirements with respect to design across the area. These can be part of the Local Plan or as one or more Supplementary Plans.
- The Secretary of State would be able to appoint a Local Plan Commissioner to investigate and potentially intervene if a local planning authority is failing in Local Plan preparation, or if a Local Plan or Supplementary Plan is considered to be unsatisfactory, and would be able to seek reimbursement from the authority.
- Neighbourhood forums or parish councils would be able to prepare a Neighbourhood Priorities Statement, a document that sets out the priorities for an area without needing to undertake a full Neighbourhood Plan, which would need to be taken into account in preparing the Local Plan.
- The Bill contains a number of powers for the Secretary of State to prescribe matters such as data standards and form and content of Local Plans.

- The requirement to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement, detailing how consultation and engagement would be undertaken on planning documents, would be removed.

Infrastructure delivery

3.5 As proposed in the Planning White Paper, a new Infrastructure Levy is to be introduced through the Bill that would replace the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) across most of England (except for London). Much of the detail would need to be provided through future regulations, but the following represent some important elements:

- It would be a requirement to operate the Levy, as opposed to the current situation where local authorities can choose whether or not to operate CIL.
- The Levy would be set at a local level though a requirement to prepare a Charging Schedule, rather than being set by national government as was the proposal in the White Paper. As for CIL, the Charging Schedule needs to go through an examination process.
- Rather than being based on a charge per square metre of floorspace in different uses, it would be expressed as a proportion of the final gross development value, meaning that it will be difficult to know what the final level of contribution will be until development is complete.
- The Levy would cover affordable housing, currently secured by Section 106 agreements, and when setting Levy rates, authorities will need to consider the desirability of maintaining previous rates of affordable housing supply, with the government having stated that it wishes to see those rates maintained or increased.
- The negotiation around affordable housing would be removed, with local authorities able to require that a certain amount of a development be delivered as on-site affordable housing.
- A charging authority must prepare an Infrastructure Delivery Strategy which sets out how funds collected under the Levy will be used. This Strategy will be subject to independent examination.
- The proportion of CIL to be spent on the local area in which development takes place (which is currently 15% in Reading) and on administration (5%) is expected to be carried across to the new Levy.
- Section 106 agreements would be retained only for the largest sites to secure the provision of on-site in-kind infrastructure.
- An explicit recognition that the Levy will need to be introduced through a ‘test and learn’ process, meaning it is likely to evolve

as experience of operating it develops. This was, in practice, the case with CIL, which underwent a number of amendments to the regulations in the years after it was introduced.

Development management

- 3.6 The Bill includes measures which will allow what is called “a transformation in the use of high-quality data and modern, digital services” across the planning process. It provides for several technical changes to the processes of planning, to make the system work more efficiently and effectively to reduce the administrative burdens felt by local authorities, statutory consultees and others involved in the system.
- 3.7 It should be noted that officers are working with other officers in the Council on a current project to replace the current planning applications registration system with a more responsive system which is better integrated to other Council customer service systems and the project is also investigating opportunities for increased digitisation and customer self-service for Planning.
- 3.8 With regards to planning application fees while the Bill provides for the doubling of fees for retrospective applications it does not include closing the ‘free go’ loophole for second applications, which also dissuades many developers to correctly engage with the Council’s chargeable pre-application advice service.
- 3.9 During a Broadcast by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC), presented by Joanna Averley, Chief Planner and Simon Gallagher, Director of Planning at DLUHC on 12th May, it was noted that they would also be looking to increase the planning application fee charge by 35% for Major applications and 25% for all other types of applications. There was an expectation that the increase would be directed to local planning authorities to help them to deliver the transformation towards a more digitised service.

Environmental outcomes reports

- 3.10 Current methods of assessing the environmental impact of proposals and plans, using Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA, which for plans usually takes the form of Sustainability Appraisal) would be replaced by Environmental Outcomes Reports, which assesses the impacts of plans and proposals on specified outcomes. The detail is yet to be outlined, with the Bill mainly giving the Secretary of State powers to make regulations regarding this proposal.

Heritage

- 3.11 The Bill would make some changes regarding heritage. These include:
- Ensuring that the statutory duty to have regard to the preservation of listed buildings and conservation areas also

applies to other assets including scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens and world heritage sites.

- Temporary stop notices for unauthorised works to listed buildings are introduced.
- Removal of the right to claim for compensation where a Building Preservation Notice is in effect.
- Introduction of a statutory duty to hold an up-to-date Historic Environment Record.

Enforcement

3.12 The Bill seeks to introduce measures to ensure that planning enforcement works effectively by:

- Extending the period for taking enforcement action to ten years in all cases - currently changes to residential use and new structures gain immunity from enforcement action after 4 years;
- introducing enforcement warning notices;
- increasing fines associated with certain planning breaches;
- doubling fees for retrospective applications;
- extending the time period for temporary stop notices from 28 to 56 days;
- giving the Planning Inspectorate the power to dismiss certain enforcement appeals where the appellant causes undue delay;
- The scope for appeals against enforcement notices will be tightened so that there is only one opportunity to obtain planning permission retrospectively; and
- Enabling temporary relief to be given for enforcement action against prescribed planning conditions, where it is necessary to lift constraints on operations (e.g. for construction and delivery times).

Other matters

3.11 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill covers a wide range of matters, many of which do not relate to the planning system directly. These are not dealt with in depth here, but some of the matters covered include:

- Measures around devolution and combined authorities;
- Provision for locally-led Urban Development Corporations;
- Changes to compulsory purchase;
- Powers to instigate high street rental auctions of vacant properties;
- Making existing temporary measures for pavement licensing permanent;
- Various market reform measures including a discretionary council tax premium on second and empty homes of up to 100%; and
- Notification requirements for amending street names.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 The Bill is expected to receive royal assent in 2024, so changes to the system will take some time to come into effect. In the meantime, the government is planning a number of consultations on detailed elements of the Bill, including:
- Technical consultations on the Infrastructure Levy, compulsory purchase and quality standards for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects;
 - The proposal for Environmental Outcomes Reports (to replace Environmental Impact Assessments);
 - Planning fees;
 - The vision for the new version of the National Planning Policy Framework and the national development management policies.
- 4.2 Future reports will be brought to the relevant committee setting out the Council's response to these consultations when they take place.
- 4.3 There will also be further detail on transitional arrangements, but the government has stated that progress on plan-making should continue in the meantime.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The operation of the planning system in Reading contributes to the following priorities in the Corporate Plan 2022/25:
- Healthy environment;
 - Thriving communities;
 - Inclusive economy.
- 5.2 The changes proposed within the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill will affect how the planning system in Reading is to address those priorities, but much of the detail to understand the implications is dependent on regulations or additional provisions that will need to be subject to future consultation.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The implications for the environment and the response to the climate emergency will largely depend on the detail of the proposals and how they will operate. Many of the environmental and climate elements in the Reading Borough Local Plan are in the general development management policies, and, under the proposed new planning system, development management policies would be set at national level. Therefore, the implications would depend on the content of those policies, which will be subject to further consultation.
- 6.2 The proposals for Environmental Outcomes Reports will change the way that environmental impacts are assessed and reported for both

development proposals and development plans. Again, the detail of how these will operate is yet to be established.

- 6.3 It is worth noting that, as currently drafted, there would be a statutory requirement for the development plan to ensure that development and the use of land contributes to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 In terms of policy, the requirement to consult the local community and take account of the responses is retained within the Bill, but the detail of how this will operate is largely passed onto future regulations, which, among other elements, will identify the main consultation stages. The existing requirement to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement would be removed.

- 7.2 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.

8. EQUALITY ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The equalities impacts of the Bill still need to be formally assessed. There are no equalities implications of the recommended actions of this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill forms draft primary legislation that would include making amendments to legislation such as the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 It has not been possible to fully assess the financial implications of the measures proposed in the Bill.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Planning for the Future - Planning White Paper (August 2020) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907647/MHCLG-Planning-Consultation.pdf
- Changes to the Current Planning System Consultation (August 2020) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907215/200805_Changes_to_the_current_planning_system_FINAL_version.pdf

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 01 JUNE 2022

Ward: Abbey

App No.: 211376/FUL & 211407/LBC

Address: 41 Minster Street, Reading, RG1 2JB

Proposal: The proposed development will include installation of a 10m stub tower, 6 no. antennas, 2 no. 300mm dishes, a GPS dish and associated ancillary equipment, alongside the removal of the existing 2.5m stub tower with 6 no. antennas and associated equipment and fixings.

Applicant: McCarthy

Date received (211376/FUL): 20/08/2021

Date received (211407/LBC): 25/08/2021

Date validated: 25/08/2021

8-week target decision date: 20/10/2021

Extension of time date: 10/06/2022

RECOMMENDATION

211376/FUL

Grant Full Planning Permission

CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE

1. Full - time limit - three years
2. Standard approved plans condition
3. Materials as applied for
4. Noise Levels of Plant/Equipment Restricted

INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE

1. Standard positive and proactive informative.
2. Listed Building Consent ref. 211407 relates to this permission

211407/LBC

Grant Listed Building Consent

CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE

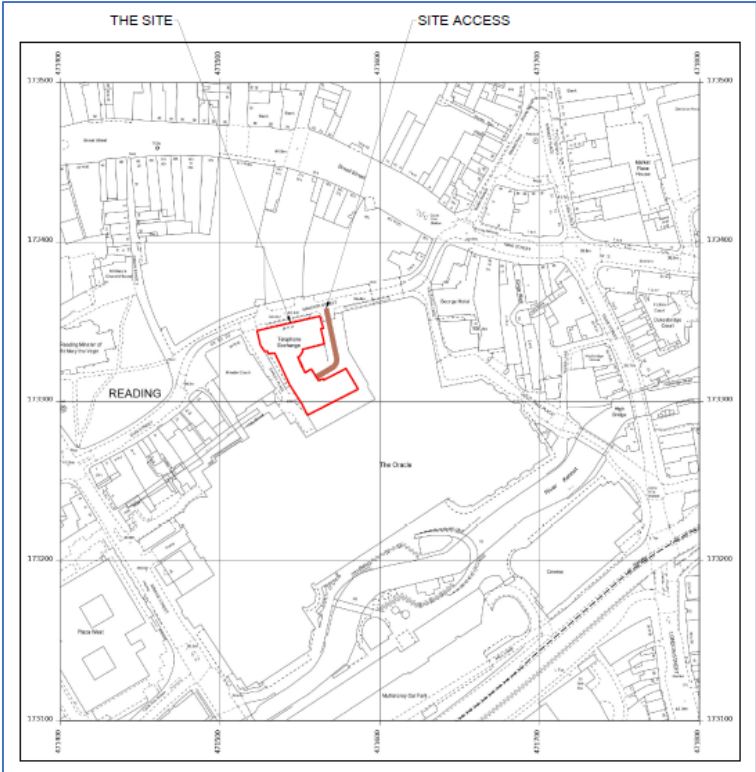
1. Full - time limit - three years
2. Standard approved plans condition
3. Materials as applied for
4. No other works approved

INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE

1. Standard positive and proactive informative.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The proposal site is a Telephone Exchange at 41 Minster Street. The Telephone Exchange is a Grade II Listed Building (listing 1302939). While the listing specifically refers to the Telephone Exchange, the address on the listing is 41-45 Minster Street. The listing describes Telephone Exchange, 41-45 Minster Street as:
 - 1.2 “MINSTER STREET 1. 5128 (South Side) No 41 to 45 (consec) (Telephone Exchange) SU 7173 SE 3/131A 26.7.73. II 2. Circa 1900. Architect Leonard Aloysius Stokes (a Voysey/Lethaby follower who had married Miss Gane daughter of the General Manager of the National Telephone Company). His aim was to develop a British style of architecture, free from revivals of past styles. The building consequently appears somewhat plain. 3 storeys of red brick with stone dressings in an attenuated Georgian style. Concealed roof. 5 bays wide, the end bays project slightly. To right is door with cornice and lunette window above. To left a window treated in a similar runner. Centre 3 bays divided by chamfered piers supporting cornice at 2nd floor level. Large windows between on each floor, 6 windows on 2nd floor. Single sash windows in breaks.”
- 1.3 The proposal site is within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). It is outside a Conservation Area (CA), but adjacent to St Mary’s Butts / Castle Street CA and close to Market Place/London St CA too.
- 1.4 An existing telecommunications base is located to the roof of 41 Minster Street. The telecoms base is a shared site between two operators.



Location Plan

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application seeks full planning permission and associated Listed Building Consent for the removal of six existing antennas and internal equipment

cabinets located within the existing rooftop cabin, with the installation of six new antennas, and eight cabinets and associated ancillary works thereto.

- 2.2 The proposed upgrades are designed improve existing 2G, 3G and 4G services, as well as introduce 5G technology to cater for current and future customer needs. The upgraded infrastructure will provide high mobile download speeds and more reliable, quicker phone connections as well as increase capacity to provide services to a higher number of people at the same time and improved service for the emergency services network. The telecommunications base station is shared by the mobile operators Vodafone and O2.
- 2.3 As the proposed replacement antennas are located on a building more than 15m and is a listed building, the proposed development requires planning permission and listed building consent.
- 2.4 A declaration has been submitted by the applicant confirming compliance with the International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation (ICNIRP) guidelines.
- 2.5 The current application is on the committee agenda because the Council's scheme of delegation requires all applications for new/replacement telecommunications masts to be determined by Planning Applications Committee. The telecommunications base is also within the curtilage of (physically attached to, in this case) a Listed Building.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 Various applications concerning the replacement of windows with louvres. The following applications concern the existing telecommunications base station.
- 3.2 172295/FUL - Upgrade of existing rooftop base station comprising the relocation of an existing antenna and the provision of additional 3 No antennas together with feeder cables, steelworks and ancillary development thereto. - Application permitted on 27/04/2018 (Committee Decision)
- 3.3 172296/LBC - Upgrade of existing rooftop base station comprising the relocation of an existing antenna and the provision of additional 3 No antennas together with feeder cables, steelworks and ancillary development thereto. - Application permitted on 27/04/2018 (Committee Decision)

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 The following addresses were notified of the application by letter:
Conservation & Urban Design Officer
Environmental Protection
Transport Development Control
Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee
- 4.2 Environmental Protection have raised concerns regarding noise arising from the development from cooling equipment. With specific concerns to the living conditions at Minster Court, west of the proposal site. It was recommended that a noise assessment be submitted prior to determination, however, it was also stated that a condition be attached to any approval requiring a noise assessment prior to installation.
- 4.3 Transport Development Control raised no objections to the applications.

- 4.4 The Conservation and Urban Design Officer raised no objections to the application, stating that visual impact of the proposed development is a lesser harm in accordance with paragraph 202 of the NPPF. The development is acceptable given the community benefits in relation to communication.
- 4.5 The site notice for application 211376/FUL was displayed from Wednesday 8th September 2021, expiring on Wednesday 29th September 2021. The site notice for application 211407/LBC was displayed from Wednesday 8th September 2021, expiring on Wednesday 29th September 2021. A press notice was published from Thursday 23rd September 2021, expiring on Thursday 14th October 2021. No responses have been received.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:
- 5.4 National Planning Policy Framework 2021
Part 10 - Supporting high quality communications infrastructure
Part 12 - Achieving well designed places
- 5.5 Reading Borough Local Plan 2019
Policy CC7 Design and the Public Realm
Policy CC8 Safeguarding Amenity
Policy EN1 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
Policy EN3 Enhancement of Conservation Areas
Policy EN15 Air Quality
Policy EN17 Noise Generating Equipment
Policy OU3 Telecommunications Development
Policy CR2 Design in Central Reading
- 5.6 Other documents
St Mary's Butts / Castle Street Conservation Area Appraisal
Market Place/London St Conservation Area Appraisal

6. APPRAISAL

- 6.1 Paragraph 114 of the NPPF 2021 sets out that advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Paragraph 115 states that the number of radio and electronic communications masts, and the sites for such installations, should be kept to a minimum consistent with the needs of consumers, the efficient operation of the network and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion. Use of

existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability (including wireless) should be encouraged.

6.2 Policy OU3 states that proposals for telecommunications development will be permitted provided that:

- They do not have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area or on the significance of a heritage asset;
- The apparatus will be sited and designed to minimise its visual impact by the use of innovative design solutions such as lamp column 'swap-outs' or concealment/ camouflage options; and
- Alternative sites and site-sharing options have been fully investigated and it has been demonstrated that no preferable alternative sites are potentially available which would result in a development that would be less visually intrusive.

Impact on Visual Amenity, Historic Character of the Listed Building and setting of the Conservation Area

6.3 Paragraph 202 of the NPPF 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."

6.4 In addition to Policy OU3 as set out above, Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks that all development is of high design quality which maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the surrounding area with respect to issues such as scale, height, massing and landscape impact.

6.5 Policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan states; "Applications which affect Listed Buildings will not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where appropriate, their settings."

6.6 The proposals relate to the upgrade of an existing rooftop telecommunications base station and mast and therefore the key assessment is the additional visual impact of the proposed replacement equipment.

6.7 The most significant physical alteration to the roof of 41 Minster Street is the replacement stub tower. The existing roof top stub tower to be upgraded is 2.5m in height but incorporates large antennas which effectively results in a structure of 5m in height. The replacement stub tower is to be sited in the same location as the existing stub tower, however the maximum height of the replacement stub tower would be 10m.



Fig 1. Existing rooftop equipment to 41 Minster Street as viewed from the roof of Holy Brook Car Park.



Fig 2. Existing rooftop equipment to 41 Minster Street as viewed from ground level on Minster Street.

6.8 Despite the increase in height and width, the stub tower would still be located central to the roof of 41 Minster Street and would not be readily visible from Minster Street or surrounding roads. The proposed stub tower would only be visible from very specific views, such as through the car park to the east of 41 Minster Street, from the rooftop of Holy Brook car park, and from the Minster Street pedestrian access to the Oracle shopping centre.



Fig 3. 41 Minster Street as viewed from ground level on Minster Street.



Fig 4. Existing rooftop equipment to 41 Minster Street as viewed from the walkway from Gun Street/Minster Street to The Oracle Shopping Centre.

- 6.9 In this context the additional/replacement equipment would be viewed in the setting of the existing, more significant roof top equipment, and the proposals are not considered to result in any material harm to surrounding visual amenity or the setting of the adjacent St Marys Butts/Caste Street Conservation Area.
- 6.10 The applications have been discussed with the Conservation & Urban Design Officer. The increase in height and width of the proposed sub tower from existing is acknowledged, however, given the fact the building is surrounded by other modern buildings, this single mast will have “lesser harm” but in accordance with paragraph 202 of the NPPF, the development is considered to be acceptable given the community benefits in relation to communication and the less than substantial harm of the development to the heritage asset.
- 6.11 Overall, the proposed base station upgrade is not considered to have an adverse impact on the elements which contribute to the special architectural, setting, and historic interest of the Grade II Listed Building or the character and appearance of the surrounding area in accordance with Policies CC7, EN1 and EN3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Alternative Sites

- 6.12 Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states that; *“The number of radio and electronic communications masts, and the sites for such installations, should be kept to a minimum consistent with the needs of consumers, the efficient operation of the network and providing reasonable capacity for future expansion. Use of existing masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications capability (including wireless) should be encouraged. Where new sites are required (such as for new 5G networks, or for connected transport and smart city applications), equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.”*
- 6.13 The proposal would accord with the requirements of the Paragraph 115 of the NPPF and Policy OU3 in that the works propose an upgrade to an existing telecommunications base station as opposed to creating a new base station in an alternative and non-established location.
- 6.14 The supporting information submitted with the application does provide details of two alternative sites with reasons why these options were discarded with the proposed development to 41 Minster Street being the preferred choice. The preferred choice in this instance was to upgrade an existing telecommunications site.
- 6.15 Given the minimal additional visual impact of the development, Officers are of the opinion that the re-use and upgrade of an existing established site is the preferred approach. It is acknowledged that the surrounding area is heavily constrained in alternative site options given the proximity to Conservation Areas. In this instance it is considered that the upgrade of an existing shared site is preferable to a proliferation of additional masts and/or base stations.

Noise arising from development

- 6.16 Environmental Protection raised concerns with regards to noise arising from the development, specifically with noise generated from cooling equipment. Therefore, a noise assessment was requested to confirm the impact of the proposed development on the living conditions of nearby residents. In particular

those residing at the serviced apartments to the west of the application site at Minster Court.

- 6.17 A noise assessment was submitted and concluded that the potential noise impacts of the fixed plant installation on the closest residential receptors will not exceed the assessment criteria (BS:4142 assessment) and will be significantly below both the background sound level and existing ambient noise levels.
- 6.18 The noise assessment submitted has been reviewed by Environmental Protection with the conclusions agreed. The development is therefore considered in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan with regards to noise and disturbance, subject to condition restricting the noise levels of the proposed equipment to at least 10dB below the pre-existing background sound level.

Other matters

- 6.19 Paragraph 118 of the NPPF states that “*Local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds. They should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for the telecommunications system, or determine health safeguards if the proposal meets International Commission guidelines for public exposure*”. The requirement is also outlined in the supporting text to Policy OU3.
- 6.20 The applicant has provided an International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation (ICNIRP) certificate to support this planning application. This certifies that the proposed development would be in full compliance with the ICNIRP guidelines. The ICNIRP guidelines are the most up-to-date and relevant tool to ascertain the acceptability of telecommunications development within the planning process. Paragraph 118 of the NPPF goes on to state that Local Planning Authorities should not substitute their own “opinion” on health issues for that expressed by ICNIRP.
- 6.21 As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of health-related issues.

Equalities impact assessment

- 6.22 In determining this application, the Committee is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender/sex, or sexual orientation. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there will be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposed development/works are considered to be acceptable in the context of national and local planning policy and other material considerations as set out in this report.

- 7.2 As discussed in the main body of the report the notable public benefits of the proposals include providing improved network coverage for nearby residents and the emergency services network, together with the fact that the proposals are for an upgrade of an existing telecommunications base stations that is shared between operators, reducing the potential for new telecommunication base stations and masts to be established elsewhere in this locality. It is considered that these benefits outweigh the visual impact of the base station upgrade works upon the setting of the surrounding area.
- 7.3 The proposals are considered to accord with Policies CC7, CC8, OU3, EN1, EN3 and EN17 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 as assessed above. It is therefore recommended that approval be granted, subject to the recommended conditions.

Drawings Considered:

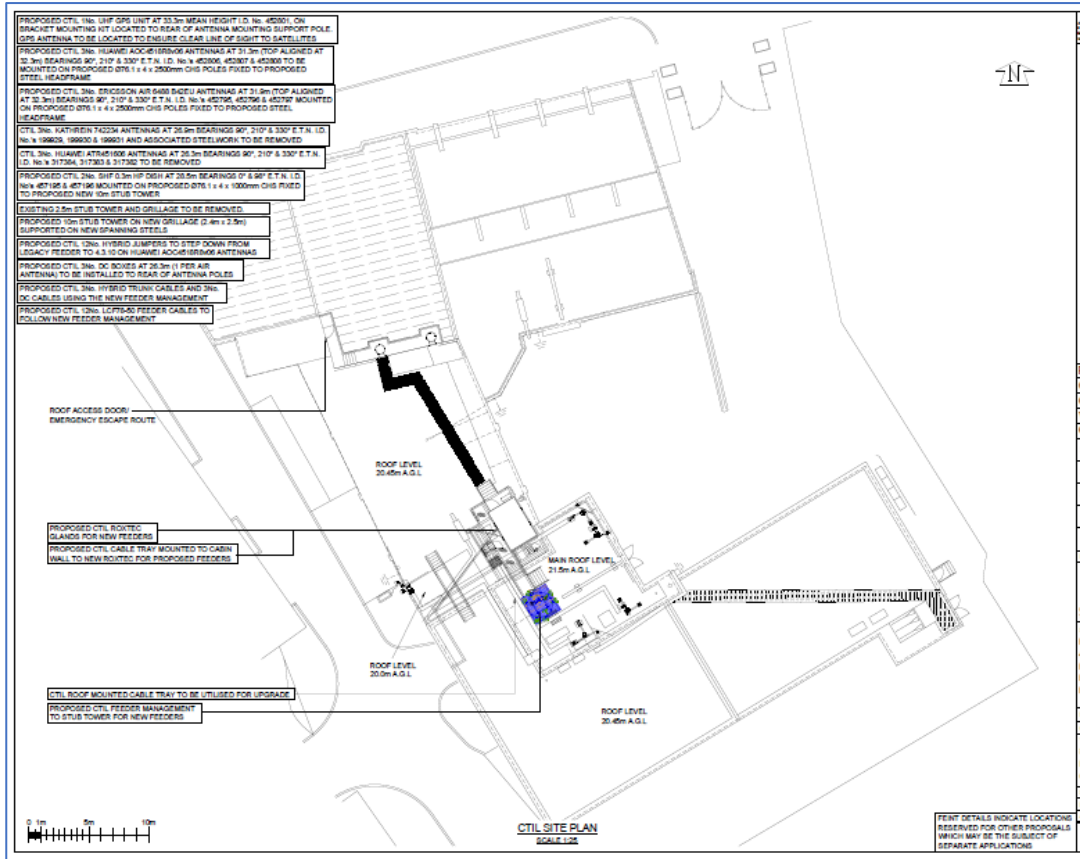
- Location Plan - 167370-00-004-ML003 Rev 3
- Legal Plan - 167370-00-010-ML003 Rev 3
- Antenna Schedule Proposed CTIL - 167370-22-151-ML022 Rev 22
- Supplementary Information - Reading Central ATE (including Heritage Statement)
- Declaration of Conformity Public RF Exposure Guidelines
- Cabin Plan Proposed CTIL - 167370-22-101-MD022 Rev 22

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 20th August 2021

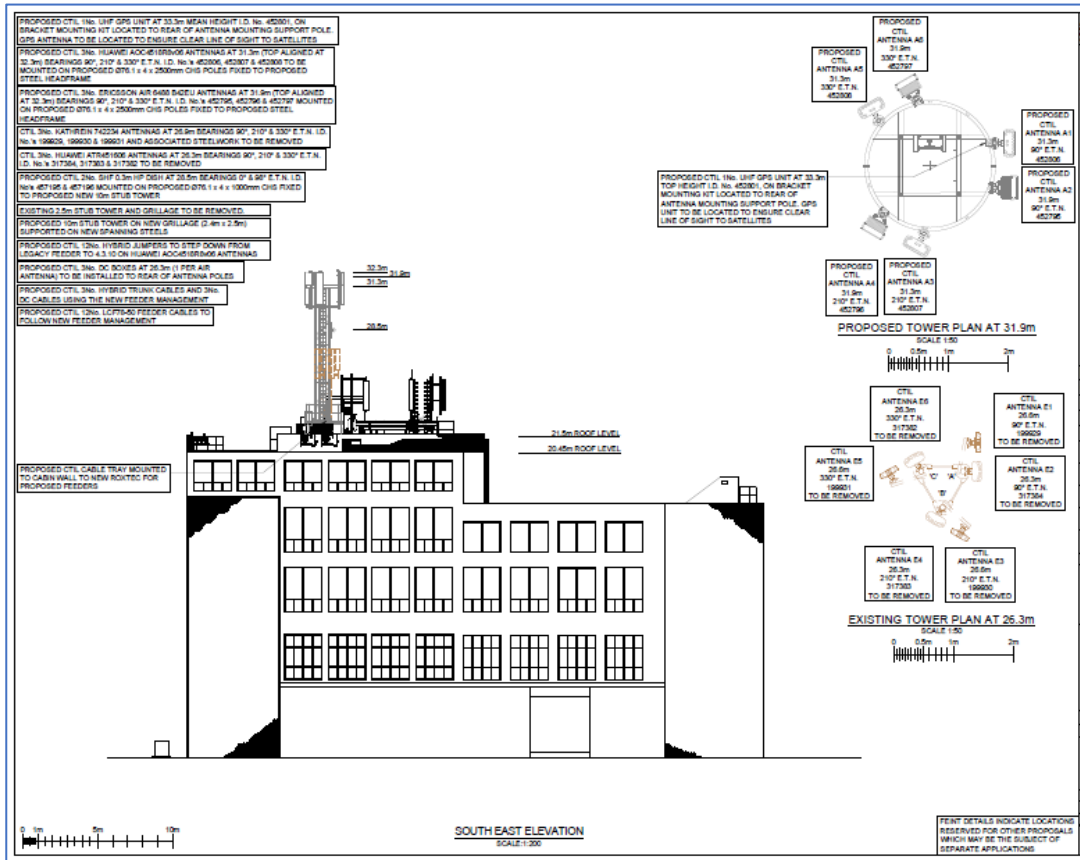
- 41 Minster Street Reading Noise Impact Assessment - A4609/N/01
- Received by the Local Planning Authority on 9th May 2022

Case Officer: David Brett

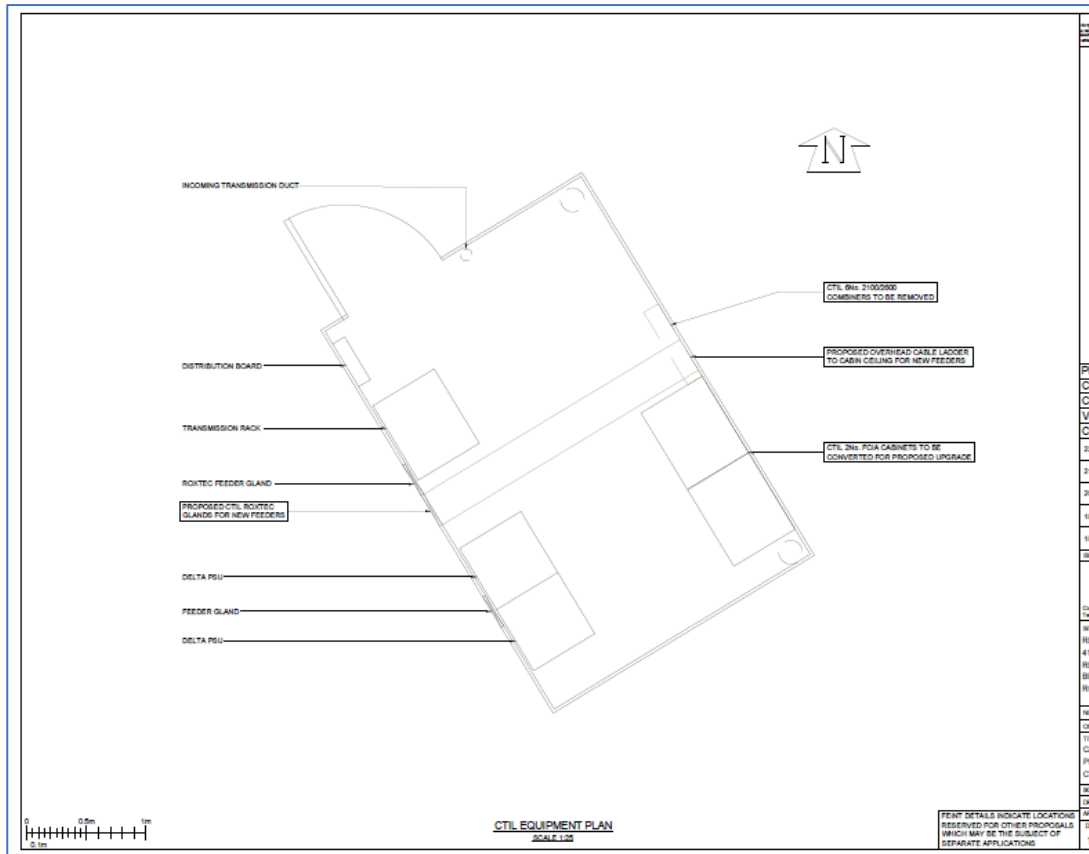
Appendix: Plans and Google Street View Images



Proposed Site Plan



Proposed East Elevation



Proposed Cabin Plan



View of the application site from Castle Street. Google Street view image captured in July 2021.



View of the application site from corner of Hoiser Street and St Mary's Butts. Google Street view image captured in May 2019.

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 1st JUNE 2022

Ward: Abbey

App No: 211424/FUL

Address: 1a Eaton Place, Reading, RG1 7LP

Proposal: Demolition of existing commercial building (Class E) and erection of residential block comprising of 2 x 1 bed flats (Class C3)

Applicant: Jim Townsend & Co

Extended Target Date: 08/06/22

RECOMMENDATION

Delegate to Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to completion of a S106 legal agreement or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the legal agreement not be completed by 1st September 2022 (unless officers on behalf of the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement). The legal agreement to secure the following:

- an Affordable Housing contribution of £17,666.00 towards affordable housing in the Borough in accordance with Policy H3 Index-linked from the date of permission, to be paid on commencement of the development
- A contribution of £1,800.00 towards off-site tree planting with location to be determined in due course by Council Officers

Conditions to include:

1. Standard Time Limit
2. Approved Plans
3. Materials as specified, with Flemish bond brickwork
4. **[Pre-commencement]** Construction Method Statement (to be submitted)
5. **[Pre-commencement]** Cycle Parking
6. Refuse and Recycling (as specified)
7. Access closure with reinstatement
8. **[Pre-commencement]** SAP Assessment (Design)
9. SAP Assessment (as built)
10. **[Pre-commencement]** Noise Assessment to be submitted
11. Hours of construction
12. No bonfires
13. No parking permits to be issued
14. Landscaping (to be approved)

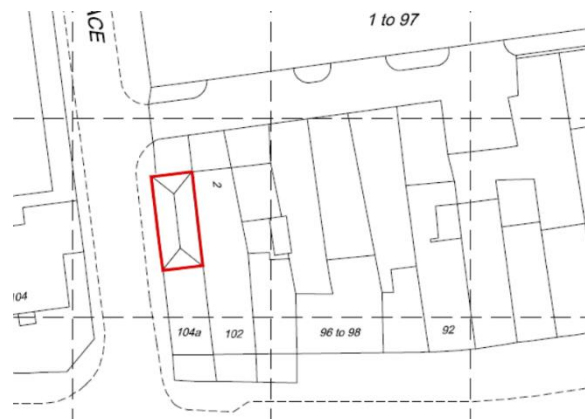
Informatives to include:

1. Terms
2. Building Control
3. Complaints about construction and demolition
4. Encroachment
5. Highways

6. CIL
7. The arrangement and cost of any relocation of telegraph pole and lamp column will met by the applicant/developer
8. S106 agreement
9. Pre-commencement conditions agreed by applicant
10. No parking permits
11. Positive and Proactive working

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site comprises of a single storey office on the eastern side of Eaton Place, behind 104 Oxford Road. The office was formerly used by a residential letting agent and has been vacant since September 2020. Historical maps show that a building has been on this site since the 1970s.
- 1.2 To the north is Chatham Street and Mayer House, part of Chatham Place, a residential block of flats. To the South are commercial premises along the Oxford Road.
- 1.3 The property is not Listed; however, it is within the Castle Hill/ Russell Street/ Oxford Road Conservation Area, High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) and Air Quality Management Area. The Grade II Listed Royal Meteorological Society building is located to the west of the site, on the opposite side of Eaton Place.
- 1.4 This application was called in to Planning Applications Committee for determination by Councillor Page over concerns that the dwellings would not be provided with amenity space along with servicing requirements.



Site Location Plan



Image of the site

2. PROPOSAL

2.1 Planning permission is sought for the demolition of the existing single storey office and replacement with a two-storey building comprising of two x one-bedroom residential apartments. The building will measure 6.8 metres in height, 11.7m in width and 5.2m in depth. The proposal is a car free development.

2.2 Documents/ Information submitted:

Drawing no.

BA0175 11 B - proposed Floor Plans
Received 13th May 2022

Materials Rev A - 10th February 2022
Received 11th February 2022

BA0175 12 A - Proposed Elevations
Received 19th January 2022

BA0175 14 A - Site & Location Plans
Received 9th November 2022

Air Quality Assessment prepared by Redmore Environmental, reference 5025r1 dated 29th October 2021
Received 8th November 2021

Planning Design and Access Statement
Heritage Statement rev.00
BA0175 10 - Existing Plans & Elevations
Transport Technical Note prepared by Stuart Michael Associates
Application Form
CIL Form

Received 27th August 2021

2.3 The applicant has considered the suggested pre-commencement planning conditions and has confirmed acceptance of these should planning permission be granted.

2.4 The development would be liable to pay a Community Infrastructure Levy at the current rate of £156.24 per sqm.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 None.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 Internal Consultees

Transport - No objection subject to conditions

Environmental Protection - No objections subject to condition

Natural Environment - No objections subject to a condition to secure planting on adjacent highways land

Reading Borough Council Conservation and Urban Design Officer - No comment received

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) - No comment received

Waste Operations - No comment received

4.2 External Consultation

4.3 The following addresses were formally notified of the application in writing on 09/11/21:

2 Eaton Court
102, 104, 104a Oxford Road

4.4 In addition, a site notice was displayed between 11th November 2021 - 2nd December 2021.

4.5 1 representation (objection) was received which related to the following matters:

- Guttering to the rear of the property and rainwater not draining properly and causing damp
- Building work causing damage to foundations leading to subsidence
- Adequate distance to be left so as not to disturb the property foundations
- Window at the top of property becoming blocked affecting light and view to rear
- Air vents and overflow pipes are located on the back wall of the property and access is required to function and for maintenance issues that may arise

Case officer comment: The above will be addressed within the report.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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

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.

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.

5.2 National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

5.3 Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
CC3: Adaption to Climate Change
CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
CC7: Design and the Public Realm
CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
CC9: Securing Infrastructure
H1: Provision of Housing
H2: Density and Mix
H3: Affordable Housing
H5: Standards for New Housing
H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
H11: Development of Private Residential Gardens
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
EN1: Enhancement of the Historic Environment
EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas
EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland
EN15: Air Quality
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
EM3: Loss of Employment Land
CR1: Definition of Central Reading
CR2: Design in Central Reading
CR6: Living in Central Reading

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

- Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
- Revised Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)
- Planning Obligations Under S106, April (2015)
- Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2021)
- Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy (2020)

- Russell Street/ Castle Hill/ Oxford Road Conservation Area Appraisal (2020)

6. APPRAISAL

6.1 The main issues for consideration are:

- a) Principle of Development
- b) Design and impact on the character of the conservation area
- c) Impact on existing and future occupiers
- d) Amenity Space
- e) Transport matters
- f) The Natural Environment
- g) Environmental Health matters
- h) Sustainability
- i) Affordable Housing, S106 and CIL obligations

a) Principle of Development

6.2 The NPPF states that LPAs should “encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value”. The NPPF definition of ‘previously developed land’ excludes private residential gardens in built up areas.

6.3 Therefore, the priority for development should be on previously developed land, in particular vacant and derelict sites and buildings. However, that does not mean that the development of private residential garden land is unacceptable in principle, rather that previously developed land should be the first choice for housing development.

6.4 The proposal would see the loss of a single storey lettings agency office. However, given the site is not located with the Office Core, it considered the loss of the office would result in a substantial loss of quality employment land. Furthermore, given it has been vacant since 2020 this proposal would bring the site back in to an appropriate and needed use. The benefits of this within the wider Conservation Area setting will be discussed later in the report. The existing building is not considered of any architectural or historical interest as it has the appearance of temporary portacabin.

6.5 With regard to the principle of the proposed use, from purely a land use perspective, it is considered that a proposal to introduce two additional residential units in an established mixed/residential area would comply with the principles of Policy H1 which seeks the provision of an additional 689 new homes per year between 2013 - 2036. As such, the development would be contributing to meeting the housing needs within the borough.

6.6 As such, the principle of demolishing the existing office and replacement building containing two residential flats is accepted.

b) Design and impact on heritage assets and character of the area

Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) states: All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.

Policy EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) states: *Historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced.*

Policy EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas) states: *The special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Positive consideration will be given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas.*

- 6.7 The existing building which is to be demolished is considered to provide little contribution to the character to its surrounding conservation area or the setting of the Grade II Listed building. Both policies EN1 and EN3 state that development should enhance character and setting of heritage assets.
- 6.8 The application site lies on the edge of the Conservation Area, with the remainder of Eaton Place not being included in the designation. Furthermore, the site is located on a narrow street with less footfall than other parts of the Conservation Area. As such, its prominence within the Conservation Area is more limited. Nevertheless the scheme offers a new, higher quality building which is considered to add visual interest to the Conservation Area, and views into it. To the west of the site is the Georgian Grade II Listed Royal Meteorological Society Building (104 Oxford Road) which is separated by a distance of 10.2m. The proposal therefore has the opportunity to enhance the setting of the Listed Building also.
- 6.9 As such, the principle of introducing a replacement building to the Conservation Area/ setting of the Listed Building is considered positive, but this is subject to a suitable quality design and finish that positive enhances the heritage assets.
- 6.10 Section 7 of the Russell Street/ Castle Hill/ Oxford Road Conservation Area Appraisal notes that in November 2018, the Conservation Area was listed on Historic England's Register of Heritage at Risk. One of primary reasons for its inclusion was the ongoing loss of character through the degradation of the housing stock. Other negative features included the presence of waste bins on pavements and loss of architectural detailing and original features such as windows and doors.
- 6.11 The proposed building would be larger than that which currently exists, namely it would be two storey. However, buildings in the vicinity are generally two or more storeys, with the scale of that proposed comparable to those fronting Oxford Road (ie. no. 104/102). It would have a hipped roof which integrates with the design of properties to the south. As such, the general bulk and scale would not be considered an intrusive addition to the surrounding heritage assets.
- 6.12 Materials have been sensitively selected to integrate with surroundings, with Michelmersh Hampshire Stock Red brick and grey slate tiles. It shall be conditioned that Flemish bond brickwork shall be carried out, to further integrate with surrounding buildings (the Listed Building, and those fronting Oxford Road). During the course of the application, the proposed window and doors were also amended so as not to incorporate upvc, but rather make these wooden, given the commentary on these matters within the Conservation Area Appraisal. The proposal also sees waste provision being contained within the site; another positive element of the design in response to the negative features identified in the appraisal. These details

aim to provide new housing stock that enhances the Conservation Area, given the acknowledged degradation and loss of features and detailing.

- 6.13 The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policies CC7, EN1 and EN3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019). Whilst officers acknowledge the site is also located within the designated High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ), given the nature of the development (residential) rather than commercial, and that the site is on the edge of the HSHAZ, leading into Chatham Place (which is not within the HSHAZ or Conservation Area) it is not considered the development would generate a high additional footfall or be a prominent feature of the street scene given Eaton Place is a side road. As such, a financial contribution towards the HSHAZ scheme is not considered justified in this instance.

c) **Impact on Existing and Future Occupiers**

Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) is concerned with preventing significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties, including in terms of privacy and overlooking, loss of daylight and visual dominance, amongst other impacts.

Existing Occupiers

- 6.14 The neighbouring properties potentially most affected by the development are those adjoining the site which are 2 Eaton Place and 102/104 Oxford Road to the east and south respectively.

102 Oxford Road and 2 Eaton Place

- 6.15 102 Oxford Road is in use as a shop at ground floor level, with residential above. The shop also has a rear entrance (which has the address of 2 Eaton Place). At ground floor, the proposed building would not extend forward of the building line with 2 Eaton Place. As such, the side elevation of the building would be level with the front elevation of the commercial unit. For this reason, and given the site is not in residential use, there would not be considered substantial harm to this neighbour in terms of loss of light and privacy.

- 6.16 Windows of the upper floors of 102 Oxford Road would not experience a reduced level of light and outlook compared to the existing situation. The existing rear extension of 104 Oxford Road projects past first floor windows of no. 102 and so this proposed development would not introduce a new obstruction or result in a substantial level of additional harm compared to the existing configuration. This neighbouring site does not have any open rear space due to the shop expanding the entire depth of the site and so the development would not be considered overbearing.

104 Oxford Road

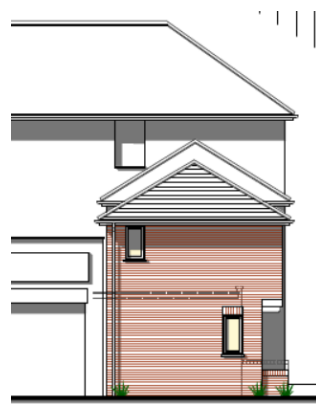
- 6.17 This building is in use as a pharmacy. As part of the consultation period, concern was raised over the following matters due to the close proximity of the new building to this neighbour:

- Guttering to the rear of the property and rainwater not draining properly and causing damp
- Building work causing damage to foundations leading to subsidence

- Adequate distance to be left so as not to disturb the property foundations
- Window at the top of property becoming blocked affecting light and view to rear
- Air vents and overflow pipes are located on the back wall of the property and access is required to function and for maintenance issues that may arise

6.18 Guttering and damage to foundations are matters that would be dealt with via the subsequent Building Regulations application, should planning permission be issued, and are not material consideration. Maintenance of air vents is also not a material planning consideration. Nevertheless, an informative will be attached reminding the applicant of this matter.

6.19 Impact to the first-floor rear window of the chemist is a material planning consideration. The building would be lower in height than the existing rear projection and so would not be built in front of the windows. Therefore, it is not considered development would result in a loss of light to the window, nor would it be visually overbearing.



Elevation (North Elevation)

6.20 It is not considered that any other windows on this property would be adversely affected due to the existing site's configuration.

6.21 As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in relation to neighbours, in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

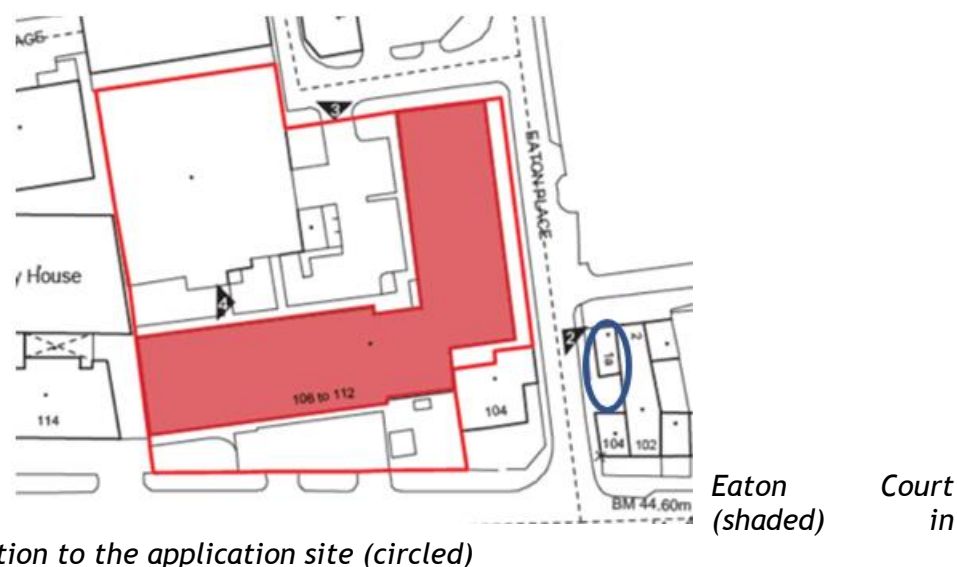
Future Occupiers

6.22 The development would see the creation of 2 x 1-bedroom residential flats. The flat situated at ground floor would have a floor area of 30 sqm. The first floor flat would have a floor area of 45 sqm. The National Prescribed Space Standards, as outlined in Policy H5, state that the minimum size of a 1-bedroom dwelling is 37 sqm, should the dwelling have a shower room rather than bathroom. However, also within Policy H5 it recognizes that town centre accommodation (which this is as the site falls within the central core) may not always meet space standards. In paragraph 4.4.41 of Policy H5 it states:

However, it is considered that there is a distinction between what counts as adequate internal space within the centre of Reading and elsewhere. The expectations of those choosing to live in the centre of Reading, in terms of both internal and external space, as well as issues such as noise, tend to be different to those in other parts of the Borough. In addition, in central Reading, applying the space standard could have the effect of reducing the ability of the area to make its expected portion of the housing need, as many existing developments, including

some that are well-regarded, would not have gone ahead in their current form were the space standard in force.

- 6.23 It is clear that the proposed ground floor flat would fall short of the national space standards by 7 sqm, whilst the first floor flat exceeding the standards. However, given the site is within central Reading, coupled with the other identified benefits of the scheme, such as the visual improvements to the Conservation Area, this is on balance considered acceptable.
- 6.24 All habitable rooms would be served by adequate light with sufficient windows for outlook. Officers acknowledge that there is a pending application, reference 210639, for the redevelopment of Eaton Court. The neighbouring proposal comprises of the demolition and residential-led mixed use redevelopment to provide three buildings comprising 131 residential units (Use Class C3) and flexible commercial floorspace. Facing Eaton Place, the development would be 3 / 4 stories which is an increase in height compared to the current Eaton Court building. However, given the proposed units under this application will face onto the Listed Royal Meteorological Society rather than the Eaton Court development, the occupiers of the proposed development would still enjoy an adequate access to light and outlook as the relationship between the developments is not direct. This is shown on the site plan below:



- 6.25 As such, the proposal, is considered acceptable in terms of Policies H1, H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

d) Amenity Space

- 6.26 Policy H10 aims to secure 25 sqm of amenity space per 1 or 2 bedroom flats. No private amenity space is provided for either flat as part of the scheme. Whilst this is a shortcoming of the proposal, officers acknowledge that this is a town centre location where amenity space sizes do not strictly apply as they would elsewhere in the Borough. Within Policy H10 (paragraph 4.4.83) it states that: *'Flats in central Reading will not require the same amount of outdoor space as houses in other parts of Reading, and the sites are usually more constrained in any case. This is because often the needs of residents within central Reading can be different to those of the rest of the Borough. Flats in central Reading are less likely to attract families, and*

the ability to walk to public open space nearby reduces the need for private open space.'

6.27 The site is located a 20 minute walk to Christchurch Meadows, 13 minute walk to Forbury Gardens and a 10 minute walk to Victoria Park playground. On balance, given the town centre location and accessibility to town centre areas of public open space, the proposal is considered acceptable in this regard, and when considered in relation to the other positive elements of the scheme.

6.28 The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in relation to Policy H10 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

e) Transport Matters

6.29 Eaton Place forms a junction with Chatham Street which in turn forms a junction with Oxford Road (A329) which is a main Transport corridor and a red route 'no stopping' corridor.

6.30 The site is located within the Zone 2, the primary core area but on the periphery of the central core area which is an area at the very heart of Reading Borough, consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments, with limited residential. This area is well served by rail and bus links and also contains the largest proportion of public car parking spaces. The site is within a 5-10 minute walk of Reading's primary shopping area.

6.31 The submitted Design and Access Statement states that no parking is proposed at the site due to its sustainable location. A Car Club operates in the vicinity of the site, the closest Co Wheels vehicle to the site is located along Oxford Road. Given the close proximity of the site to the town centre and option of a car club, it can be confirmed by Transport Officers that a car free development can be accepted in this instance.

6.32 There are extensive parking restrictions, preventing unauthorized parking in the area as well as the operation of the Council's Residential Parking Permit Scheme; the appropriate conditions and informatives would be applied if planning permission was granted to prevent the future occupiers of the site from obtaining visitor or parking permits for the surrounding residential areas. This will ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area.

6.33 There is a lamp column located directly outside the site which will be required to be relocated as a result of the development. Any costs related to the relocation of the column would be fully met by the applicant and will require the appropriate licenses. This will be reminded to the applicant via an informative.

6.34 There is currently a dropped kerb leading to an area of hard standing currently used for parking. This will no longer be required and therefore will need to be reinstated and realigned with the footway. A condition will be applied to this effect and any works undertaken on any part of the Public Highway will require a license from the Highways Department. This will also be reminded to the applicant via an informative.

6.35 Cycle storage has been provided in accordance with the Council's Parking Standards and Design SPD which states each 1 bed unit should be provided with 1 storage space (rounded up from 0.5). Submitted plans illustrates a cycle storage area however

Sheffield stands have not been illustrated but this can be secured via condition to ensure that the correct cycle stands are provided.

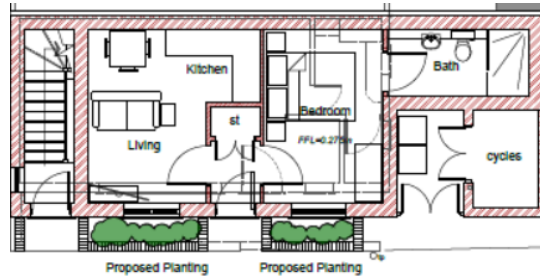
- 6.36 A bin storage area has been illustrated on plans within the boundary of the site, however these are behind a low-level gate to ensure they are kept within the site so as not to obstruct the footpath. Bins will be presented for on the necessary day for collection by residents which is considered acceptable by Transport Officers.
- 6.37 Given the sites location a Construction Method Statement would be required and this will be secured via a pre-commencement condition.
- 6.38 Subject to conditions, the proposal is considered acceptable from a Highways and Transport perspective, compliant with Policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

f) **The Natural Environment**

i) *Trees*

Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) states that: *New development shall make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site, particularly on the street frontage, or off-site in appropriate situations, to improve the level of tree coverage within the Borough, to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which a site is located, to provide for biodiversity and to contribute to measures to reduce carbon and adapt to climate change. Measures must be in place to ensure that these trees are adequately maintained.*

- 6.39 Given the site is located within a Conservation Area, Air Quality Management Area, a low canopy cover Ward and within the Oxford Road High Street Heritage Action Zone, it is considered that sufficient landscaping should be provided as part of the application, despite the town centre location. During the course of the application, it was discussed as to whether landscaping could be provided on a patch of vacant highways land adjacent to the application site. A trial hole was dug, however concluded that landscaping could not be provided in this location due to the services below ground. As such, a contribution of £1,800.00 will be secured via S106 legal agreement to secure off-site planting elsewhere in Abbey Ward. This will secure the location and create a tree pit as close to the application site as possible, and to supply, plant, guard and maintain the tree. The exact location of this planting is still yet to be decided between Council Officers, but suggestions include a location in Oxford Road, or a large, canopied tree towards the IDR/A33. A Wellingtonia tree has been suggested as a possible species for a 'landmark' tree, however, the precise site context will inform the eventual species chosen.
- 6.40 In addition to the financial contribution, small green planting areas have been shown on the proposed plans, as shown below; further detail on this proposed planting will be secured via condition.



6.41 The proposal is supported in terms of landscaping, as agreed by the Council’s Natural Environment Officer, and so is considered acceptable in relation to Policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and the Council’s Tree Strategy (2020).

g) Environmental Protection matters

Air Quality

6.42 An air quality assessment was provided as part of the application and was reviewed by Environmental Protection officers. It was concluded that that the levels of pollutants at the property are unlikely to be above objective limit values therefore no further assessment or mitigation is required. As such, the proposed development is considered acceptable in relation to Policy EN15 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Noise

6.43 Officers acknowledge that the site is located in close proximity of a number of commercial uses which could cause noise disturbance to the new occupiers of the dwellings. As such, a pre-commencement condition will be attached requiring a noise assessment to be submitted to ensure that the exposure to noise is reasonable in line with Policy EN16 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

h) Sustainability

6.44 In line with Policies H5, CC2 and CC3 the following sustainability measures will be secured by condition to meet sustainability policies:

- Higher water efficiency standards of 110 litres per person per day; and
- A 19% improvement over building regulations energy requirements

i) Affordable Housing, S106

6.45 Policy H3 requires that ‘...on sites of 1-4 dwellings, a financial contribution will be made that will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough’. This policy would need to be taken into account in any submission and appropriate S106 contributions would be sought.

6.46 The agent has provided details of 3 valuations and based on these, an agreed Affordable Housing contribution figure would be £17,666.00. The applicant has agreed to pay this policy compliant contribution.

6.47 As such, the proposal is therefore acceptable in relation to Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the Council’s Adopted Affordable Housing

Supplementary Planning Document 2021 subject to the completion of the S106 legal agreement.

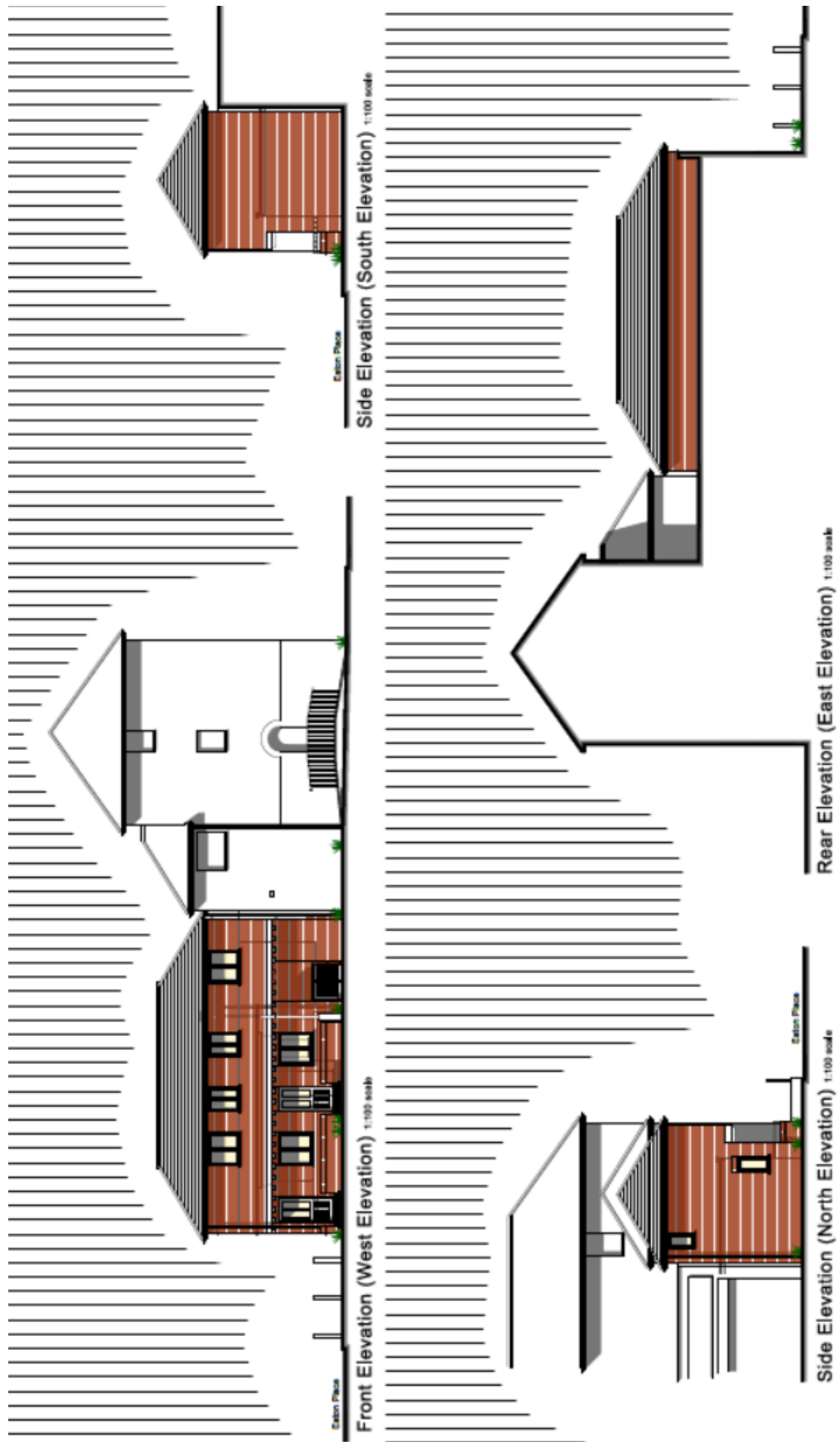
Equalities Impact

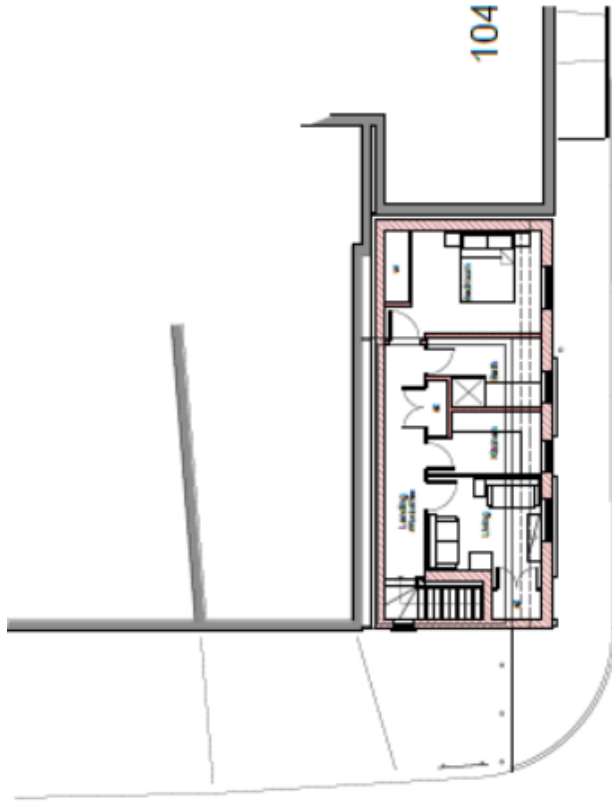
In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics including age and disability. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups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

7. CONCLUSION

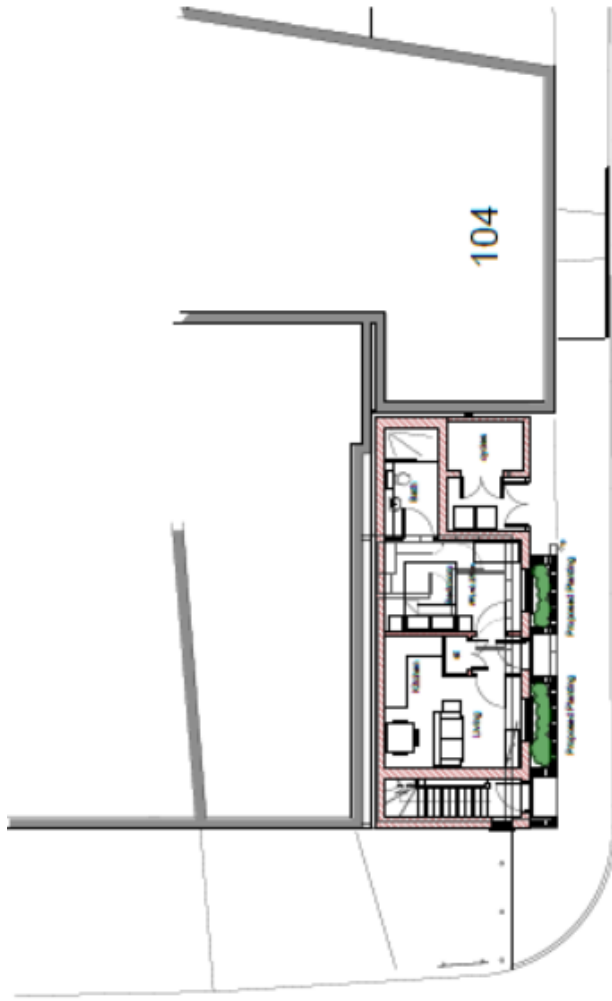
- 7.1 The proposal has been carefully considered in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019). Whilst there are shortcomings of the scheme, such as the lack of amenity space, these are considered to be outweighed by the benefits of the scheme given the town centre location. The planning application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions and the completion of a S106 legal agreement for an affordable housing and off-site tree contribution.

Case Officer: Connie Davis





Eaton Place



Eaton Place

COMMITTEE REPORT

**BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 1 June 2022**

Ward: Abbey

App No.: 220291/FUL

Address: 2 Howard Street, Reading

Proposal: Conversion of a single dwelling (Class C3) to a Sui-Generis House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) for 9 persons, and conversion of the existing garage to a cycle and garden store, plus erection of two dormer windows, bin storage and associated enabling internal works and minor external works (re-submission of 211420/FUL).

Applicant: Gravitas Property Limited

Minor Application: 8 week target decision date: 25th April 2022

Extended of time date: 8th June 2022

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT planning permission subject to conditions and informatives.

CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE:

1. TL1 - Full - time limit - three years;
2. Approved Drawings;
3. Pre-commencement submission and approval of materials for external works including window and door details;
4. Cycle Parking (as specified);
5. Bin Storage (details to be submitted);
6. Prior to first occupation HMO parking permits (notification to LPA);
7. Prior to first occupation HMO parking permits (notification to occupants);
8. Communal areas marked on the approved plans to be retained for communal use at all times;
9. The HMO use at ground, first and second floors hereby approved shall be restricted to nine single occupancy bedrooms;
10. The garage building shall be retained for storage, including cycle storage ancillary to the use of the dwelling as a large HMO and shall not be used for further residential living accommodation;
11. The area laid as garden shall be retained as private garden with existing vegetation to be retained and shall not be converted into parking areas or areas of hardstanding;
12. Prior to occupation an HMO management plan to be submitted and approved and thereafter complied with;
13. Pre-commencement submission and approval of details of hard and soft landscaping details, including details of the front hedge;
14. Removal of pd rights for extensions, including in roof, hardstanding and outbuildings;
15. Hours of construction;
16. No burning on site;
17. Conversion to comply with design principles regarding sustainability;
18. Obscure glazing to en-suite bathroom to Bedroom 4; and

19. Conversion in accordance with Acoustic Design Statement

INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE:

- Terms and Conditions
- Building Regulations
- No entitlement to parking permits
- HMO Management Plan
- Housing Act
- Highways
- Additional information regarding bins
- Positive and Proactive
- Pre-commencement conditions agreed by agent
- Separate HMO licence required

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site is a two storey end of terrace property with basement and attic accommodation located on the west side of Howard Street. The plot is relatively large and the property has a rear conservatory and extension linking to a garage/workshop structure in the garden. There is a small lawn area at the front of the site, bound by hedging and palisade fencing, with gated access to the north of the building to the rear garden.
- 1.2 Whilst No.2 Howard Street is not listed, Nos. 4 and 4a, to the south are Grade II listed. No.101 Oxford Road, to the north of the site, is also Grade II listed.
- 1.3 The site is within the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area and the subject property is identified as a Building of Townscape Merit within the Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 1.4 Paragraph 6.3.4 of the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Conservation Area Appraisal (2020) notes the following in respect of No.2 Howard Street:
- “2 Howard Street dates from c.1850-70s and is an attractive single family home of substantial size with a well-tended front garden that lends itself positively to the street scene.”
- Paragraph 6.3.8 of the appraisal notes:
- “2 Howard Street, Circa 1850-1870. A fine, well-cared for single family home with intact detailing and interiors.”
- 1.5 The site is not within the Article 4 Direction Area, which restricts the permitted change of use from C3 dwellinghouse to C4 small House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).
- 1.6 The site is also within an Air Quality Management Area.
- 1.7 The application was called in to Planning Applications Committee by Councillor Page.

Location Plan



Aerial View



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The proposal is for the change of use from a C3 dwelling to a 9-person (9 bedroom) HMO and conversion of existing garage/workshop to a cycle store and garden store with bin storage, associated enabling internal works and minor external works.

- 2.2 The proposal includes replacing the existing flat roof rear dormer window with two smaller pitch roof dormer windows. It is also proposed to replace the conservatory with a single storey rear extension. The materials for the new elements would match those of the host property.
- 2.3 Each HMO bedroom would have an en-suite bathroom and there would be a kitchen/dining area and separate living area.
- 2.4 The following plans and supporting documents were submitted on 1st March 2022:

Drawing No: P100 - Site Location
Drawing No: P101 - Block Plan
Drawing No: P102 - Existing & Proposed Site Plans
Drawing No: P103 - Proposed Site Plan
Drawing No: P104 - Existing Basement & Ground Floor Plans
Drawing No: P105 - Existing First & Second Floor Plans
Drawing No: P106 - Proposed Basement & Ground Floor Plans
Drawing No: P107 - Proposed First & Second Floor Plans
Drawing No: P108 - Existing & Proposed Roof Plans
Drawing No: P109 - Existing Elevations
Drawing No: P110 - Proposed Elevations
Acoustic Design Statement
Internal Daylight Assessment
Design, Heritage and Access Statement

The following amended plans were submitted on 28th April 2022:

Drawing No: P103A - Proposed Site Plan
Drawing No: P111 - Proposed Bin Storage

The following amended plan was submitted on 18th May 2022:

Drawing No: P106 A - Proposed Basement & Ground Floor Plans

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 211420/FUL - Conversion of single dwelling (class C3) to Sui-Generis House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) for 9 persons, and conversion of the existing garage to bike and bin store, plus erection of two dormer windows and associated enabling internal works and minor external works (amended description). Refused by Planning Applications Committee on 12th January 2022.

This planning application was refused for the reason that the proposed location of the communal ground floor lounge, kitchen and dining room over two of the bedrooms was considered to be an inappropriate 'stacking' arrangement which would result in an unacceptable level of harm to residential amenity for occupants in these basement bedrooms. The committee report and update report for this application are attached at the end of this report.

- 3.2 Other nearby sites:

4 Howard Street

210568/FUL: Conversion of single dwelling (class C3) to Sui-Generis House in

multiple occupation (HMO) for 8 persons. Pending Consideration.

4a Howard Street

161375/FUL and 161376/LBC: Change of use from 8 bedroom house in multiple occupation (HMO) (Sui Generis) to 10 bedroom HMO (Sui Generis) to include internal changes, demolition of existing rear projection and erection of basement and single storey rear extensions. Permitted.

160550/FUL and 160551/LBC: Change of use from 8 bedroom house in multiple occupation (HMO) (Sui Generis) to 9 bedroom HMO (Sui Generis) to include internal changes, demolition of existing rear projection and erection of single storey rear extension. Permitted.

11/00489/FUL: Conversion of dwelling to 1 x 2 bed flat and 2 x 1 bed flats. Permitted.

11/00490/LBC: Listed Building Consent for internal and external alterations to convert one dwelling to 2 x 2 bed and 2 x 1 bed flats and erection of ground and basement rear extension. Permitted.

4. CONSULTATIONS

(i) Statutory

4.1 None.

(ii) Non-statutory

4.2 **Conservation and Urban Design Officer** - No comments received.

4.3 **Transport** - No objection subject to conditions and informatives, discussed below.

4.4 **Environmental Protection** - No objection subject to conditions relating to hours of work; no burning on site; and bin storage.

4.5 **Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC)** - Full comments are detailed at the end of this report but in conclusion, there are no objections in heritage terms to the exterior works, subject to minor conditions relating to choice of materials, using timber framed windows and doors, and reinstating the front hedge and fencing. The character and setting of the conservation area, have been considered in this latest scheme. The proposed works will not have a greater impact than already exists on the adjacent listed buildings.

4.6 **Waste Services Manager** - the capacity would be 1x240 litre general waste, at least 1x240 litre recycling and either 23 litre caddy or 180 litre food waste bin. The location of these within the property are not an issue as each bin would need to be presented on the highway for collection. There are additional responsibilities for HMO license holders regarding bins. If this capacity is not sufficient (for general waste) then additional measures may need to be put in place [*Officer Note: this additional information has been included as an informative and has also been forwarded to the applicants agent*].

(iii) Public/ local consultation and comments received

4.7 4 Howard Street, 3, 5 and 7 Zinzan Street and 101, 103 and 105 Oxford Road were notified of the applications by letter. A site notice was also displayed at the application site.

4.8 No neighbour letters of representation have been received.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that 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”. The relevant sections of the NPPF are:

National Policy - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development

Section 9 - Promoting Sustainable Transport

Section 11 - Making Effective Use of Land

Section 12 - Achieving Well-Designed Places

Section 14 - Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

Section 16 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

5.2 Section 66(1) 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.

5.3 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.

5.4 Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

National Planning Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction

CC3: Adaption to Climate Change

CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

CC9: Securing Infrastructure

EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas

EN6: New Development in a Historic Context
EN15: Air Quality
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
H5: Standards for New Housing
H8: Residential Conversions
H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

5.5 Supplementary Planning Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Residential Conversions (2013)
Affordable Housing SPD (2021)
Revised SPD on Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2019)
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)

5.6 Other relevant documentation / guidance / legislation

Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area Appraisal 2020
Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (Historic England, 2016)
Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking (Historic England, 2015a)
Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2015b)
Principles of Conservation (Historic England, 2008)
Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings (British Standards Publication BS 7913:2013, 2015)
National Design Guide: Planning practice for beautiful, enduring and successful places (2019)

6. APPRAISAL

Introduction

6.1 For conversions to residential the main planning policy is: Policy H8 (Residential Conversions), which states that: *‘Proposals to convert buildings into self-contained flats or for multiple occupation will be assessed against the impact on the amenity and character of the surrounding area, particularly in terms of intensification of activity, loss of privacy, loss of external amenity space, the provision and location of adequate on-site car parking and the treatment of bin storage areas and other related servicing. Proposals to convert properties into self-contained flats or for multiple occupation will only be acceptable where:*

- *The proposal respects the physical character of the area in terms of scale, location, materials and design, the arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features;*

- *The proposal would not, either individually or cumulatively, unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant loss of single family housing;*

- *There are no unacceptable adverse impacts to residents of the scheme or surrounding properties arising from noise and disturbance in terms of the number and layout of units proposed and the proximity to other properties;*
- *There is no inappropriate stacking and location of rooms between units;*
- *Bin and cycle storage is of an appropriate size and standard for the units proposed and should be located at ground floor level with easy access; and*
- *The resulting property or properties would provide adequate internal floorspace and headroom for residents.'*

Policy H8 continues:

'Additionally, in the case of sui generis houses in multiple occupation (HMOs):

- *The property to be converted measures more than 120 square metres gross;*
- *There is sufficient communal space.'*

6.2 Along with the relevant adopted local planning policies, the appraisal of the application has been assessed against the adopted Residential Conversions SPD (2013), which provides further detail for the adopted policies. Section A of the SPD, deals with the 'General Assessment of all Conversions' (i.e. from C3 dwellinghouses to flats or HMOs (both small C4 use and sui generis HMOs). Section B specifically covers the assessment of applications for HMOs within the area covered by the Article 4 Direction. Albeit not located within an area covered by the Article 4 Direction, this application has been considered against both sections.

Main considerations:

The main issues to be considered are:

- i) Principle of development: Size requirements and whether the property results in unduly diluting or harming a mixed and sustainable community;
- ii) The impact on amenity of existing and future residents of the property and neighbouring properties;
- iii) Design considerations and impact on the Conservation Area and other heritage assets;
- iv) Car/ Cycle Parking;
- v) Bin Storage;
- vi) Sustainability; and
- vii) Other Matters

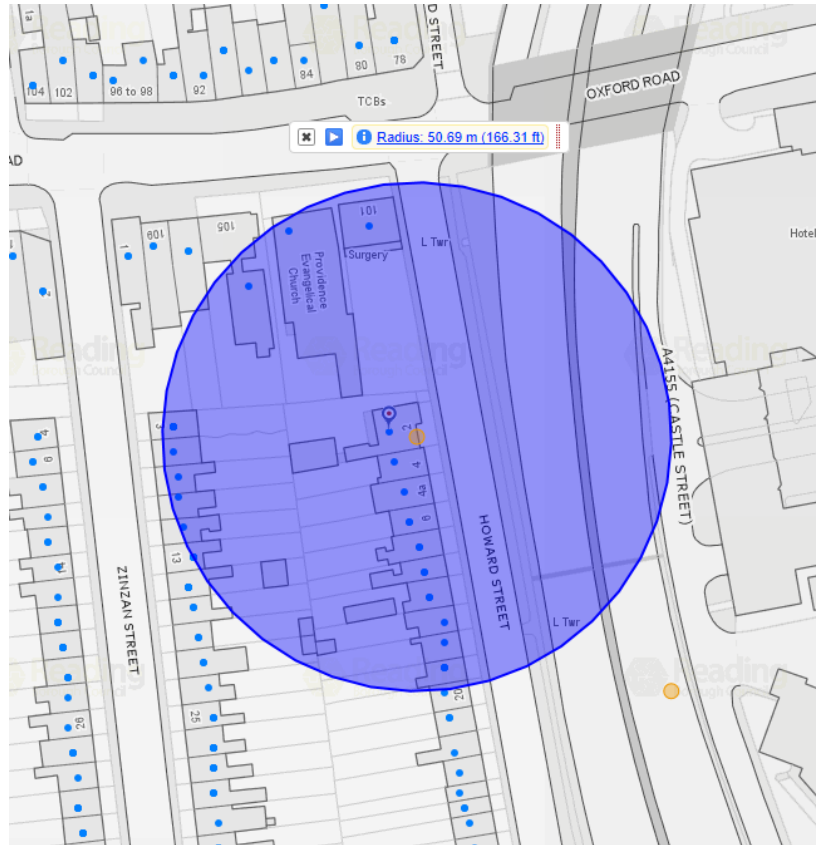
(i) **Principle of development: Size requirements and whether the property result in unduly diluting or harming a mixed and sustainable community**

6.3 In terms of whether a property is suitable to be converted to a large HMO, Policy H8 (Residential Conversions) and the Residential Conversion SPD requires the property to have a gross floor area in excess of 120m² when measured externally. The property meets this requirement and therefore the conversion into a large HMO is acceptable in principle.

6.4 Further assessment as to whether a property is suitable for conversion is whether such a conversion would result in unduly diluting or harming a mixed

and sustainable community. This is assessed using the ‘tipping point’ calculation.

- 6.5 The SPD identifies that 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 states 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).
- 6.6 Further to this, it is noted that the site lies outside of the Borough’s Article 4 Direction area, wherein HMO developments are more strictly controlled. In this respect, Policy H8 only refers to use of the 25% threshold inside these areas. However, the SPD, (para 4.2) explains that this calculation is to be applied to changes of use from C3 dwellinghouses to large Sui Generis HMOs anywhere in the Borough. Specifically, in respect of large *sui generis* HMOs the policy guidance does refer to the need to comply with the 25% threshold both within and outside Article 4 areas. Taking this guidance but noting the absence of such requirements in the overarching Policy H8 it is considered that the 25% threshold represents a good ‘rule of thumb’ for testing whether the proposal would unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community and as such this calculation has been undertaken by officers.
- 6.7 The concentration of HMOs in the area surrounding the application site has previously been calculated under planning application 211420/FUL and 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, data on property websites, and data held by the Enforcement Team, has been used.



6.8 The total number of residential properties within the 50m radius, including the application site, has been calculated as 41. At the time of this assessment the total number of properties in HMO use, using the above sources of data, is estimated to be 5 (excluding the application site) and therefore the overall percentage is calculated as 12.2% which is below the threshold of a maximum of 25%. If the application site were to become an HMO this would push the percentage to 14.63% and would remain below the threshold of a maximum of 25%. In this regard, the proposal is not considered to unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant loss of single-family housing. Therefore, the principle of the conversion of the application property to a 9 person large Sui Generis HMO is therefore considered acceptable subject to meeting other policy requirements below.

(ii) **The impact on amenity of existing and future residents of the property and neighbouring properties**

6.9 The Residential Conversions SPD sets out a number of checklist items which provide further detail related to adopted Policies CC8, H8 and H10 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

6.10 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) requires development to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for 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.

6.11 Policy H8 (Residential Conversions) requires that there are no unacceptable adverse impacts to residents of the scheme or surrounding properties arising

from noise and disturbance in terms of the number and layout of units proposed and the proximity to other properties.

- 6.12 Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) deals specifically with private and communal space and requires such space to allow for sitting out, children's play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, drying space.

Impact on amenity of existing and future residents of the property

Room Sizes

- 6.13 The SPD states, "Where the cooking facilities are provided in a separate room, each bedroom must be a minimum of:
- 6.5 square metres if occupied by one person;
 - 10.5 square metres if occupied by two persons".
- 6.14 The bedrooms are proposed for one person and there is a separate communal kitchen/dining area (and separate communal living area discussed below). The kitchen/dining area is shown as 23.9sqm and the smallest bedroom (no.3 on the ground floor) is 12.2sqm with the majority of bedrooms far larger than this and all have en-suite bathrooms. All the proposed bedrooms (and kitchen area) are acceptable in terms of size and occupancy of the HMO will be restricted by condition.

Communal Space

- 6.15 The SPD identifies that the amount of communal space that is considered appropriate in a large HMO would be dependent on the number and size of bedrooms. The standard set out is for one communal room for every 4-6 bedrooms depending on the size of the bedroom. The scheme provides for two communal areas on the ground floor with a total area of 40.3sqm comprising a kitchen/dining room (23.9sqm) and a separate living area (16.4sqm) with seating for 9 persons. Furthermore, there will be bike storage areas for future occupiers and a separate garden room area which could be used for extra storage if required. As above, all the bedrooms are of a good size and the communal space is considered to be of an acceptable size and layout to accommodate residents. Therefore, the overall level of communal provision is considered acceptable. A condition is recommended to ensure that the communal areas are retained for communal use only.

Amenity Space

- 6.16 The application includes a good size rear garden area of 202sqm and the scheme includes hard and soft landscaping as well as soft landscaping to the front of the site. A condition is recommended for the approval of hard and soft landscaping details to ensure appropriate planting, including hedge planting to the front of the site, along with biodiversity gains are provided. Plans also show bike and garden storage within the existing garage structure and as such no further outbuildings are required within the main garden area. Given the size and nature of the communal garden area, which is considered to provide sufficient space for functional communal space and sitting out and given the site's central location close to public recreation and leisure facilities, this is considered to be in accordance with Policy H10.

External windows

- 6.17 All habitable rooms would benefit from external windows. The two basement

bedrooms would be served by large front and rear lightwells providing an acceptable degree of daylighting to these rooms and which has been demonstrated in the submitted Internal Daylight Assessment. Furthermore, the head height of the two bedrooms in the basement (2.3m) is acceptable.

Layout/Stacking of Rooms

- 6.18 The Council's House Conversions SPD seeks to avoid layouts which locate living rooms, bathrooms and kitchens, next to, above, or below, proposed or neighbouring bedrooms. The applicant has now amended the internal layout from that previously refused under application 211420/FUL and the communal living and dining area has been relocated to the opposite side of the property so that bedrooms on the ground floor are above bedrooms in the basement. This revised layout has increased the size of the proposed kitchen/dining area. Bedrooms 6 and 7 are over the communal living spaces but the applicant has provided an Acoustic Design Statement which concludes that the conversion will provide adequate sound insulation between the communal areas and bedrooms above. A condition is recommended to ensure the conversion adheres to this document. Officers are therefore satisfied that the proposed layout is acceptable in terms of its impact on existing and future occupiers and is in accordance with Policies CC8 and H8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Impact on neighbouring properties

Privacy and Overlooking/Overbearing Impacts

- 6.19 The two proposed dormer windows would face down the application site garden and any views towards the garden of 4 Howard Street would be at an oblique angle. It is not considered that there would be any significant material loss of privacy over and above the existing dormer window such to raise concern. Given the scale and position of the dormer windows, they will not result in any overbearing effects to any neighbouring property. Similarly, given the position of the single storey rear extension, this is not considered to result in any material overbearing effects over and above the current situation.

Noise and Disturbance and Pollution

- 6.20 The level of noise and disturbance from nine people is unlikely to be significantly harmful to the residents of adjoining properties, additional nuisance is controlled by civil enforcement (police) and statutory nuisance legislation (Environmental Health). A condition is recommended requiring the submission and approval of a management agreement, which among other matters includes the requirement to set out how noise within and outside the property will be managed.

iii) Design considerations and impact on conservation area and other heritage assets

- 6.21 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks to ensure that new development enhances and preserves the local character. Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) states that the design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity.

- 6.22 The site lies within the Castle Hill/Russell Street/ Oxford Road Conservation Area and as such there is a duty imposed by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requiring decision makers to have special regards to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the

character or appearance of a Conservation Area. This is reflected in Policy EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) which states that historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced and Policy EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas) which states that the special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced and that development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. The Council will, therefore, have regard to both the quality of the townscape and the quality and interest of the area, rather than solely that of the individual building.

- 6.23 Whilst 2 Howard Street is not listed, it is identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal as a Building of Townscape Merit and is therefore reasonable to consider this to be a non-designated heritage asset. Furthermore, 4 and 4a Howard Street are listed buildings. As such there is also a duty imposed by Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requiring decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving its setting or any features of special architectural historic interest which it possesses. This is also reflected in Policy EN1.
- 6.24 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF 2021 states that decisions should ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment.
- 6.25 Paragraph 199 of the NPPF 2021 details 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.
- 6.26 The recently published National Design Guidance 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'.
- 6.27 Given the nature of the proposals, there would be no increase in the footprint of the property. In fact, following the replacement of the existing conservatory with a single storey rear extension there would be a slight reduction in the footprint. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the building as having well-intact interiors and the building has largely been well maintained. The building is not listed and as such there is little planning protection over interior alterations generally. However, it is noted that the proposals would not require a high degree of harmful change as the proposed HMO use would, by its nature, fit within existing internal spaces preserving the existing plan-form and would not require significant other alteration as shown on the proposed plans.
- 6.28 The proposed single storey rear extension would remain a subservient addition to the main property. Comprising red brick and painted timber doors that would match the host property, this is considered to be an improvement

on the existing uPVC conservatory. The rear extension would also allow for the reinstatement of the basement level window and allow increased daylight into the basement area than achieved at present.

- 6.29 Two pitched roof dormer windows are proposed which are not considered excessive in scale and would neatly align with the windows below. They would be set well below the main roof ridge, sitting comfortably within the roof slope and they are not considered to result in any harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area nor the setting of the adjacent listed building. Indeed, the dormer windows would replace the existing single dormer window that is currently considered to be visually discordant. In this respect, the proposed dormer windows are considered to result in a visual benefit to the building and character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 6.30 The existing rear garage structure is now proposed to be for cycle storage and garden storage (following the relocation of bin storage) and the existing windows are to be replaced with timber louvred doors.
- 6.31 Overall, it is considered that the proposed external works would not result in any detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area or the setting of the nearby listed buildings. The proposals, which include refurbishment works, are considered to provide some enhancement to the appearance of this non-designated heritage asset. As the existing fence to the front is to be retained, and new hedging will be required under the landscaping condition above, officers consider the request to re-instate the original fencing goes beyond the scope of this application. To ensure design quality however, conditions are recommended above requiring the submission of external material details including all new window and doors. In design terms the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies CC7, EN1, EN3 and H10.

iv) **Car/Cycle parking**

- 6.32 The site is located within Zone 2 for accessibility as identified in the Council's Parking and Design SPD, the primary core area but on the periphery of the central core area which lies at the heart of Reading Borough, consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments with good transport hubs.
- 6.33 In accordance with the SPD, an HMO property would be required to provide 0.25 car parking spaces per room. No off-road parking is to be provided with this proposal. However, given the close proximity to the town centre and good transport links this is considered acceptable in this instance. Future occupiers would not be automatically entitled to resident or parking permits for the surrounding residential streets where parking is under considerable pressure. This would ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area. Conditions and an informative are included in the Recommendation above regarding a restriction on the entitlement to parking permits for existing and future schemes in the area.
- 6.34 In accordance with the SPD, cycle storage for an HMO should be provided at a ratio of 0.5 secure cycle storage spaces for each letting room, in the form of Sheffield type stands within a lockable store. 6 Sheffield stands (12 spaces) are proposed in the existing garage structure which exceeds the required

provision and is acceptable. A compliance condition is recommended to ensure that this facility is provided and retained for bicycle parking at all times.

v) **Bin Storage**

- 6.35 Policy H8 requires that bin storage is of an appropriate size and to which there is easy access. Bins were originally proposed to be stored in the existing garage structure in the rear garden however, amended plans have been submitted which have relocated the bins to the side of the property and therefore closer to the bin collection point. Environmental Protection have advised that bin stores need to be vermin proof and a condition is recommended for details of the bin store to be submitted for approval. The amended plans ensure bin capacity is compliant with the Council's Waste Services Managers requirements and the bins will be located behind an existing 1.5m high gate and presented onto the path of the property on collection day.
- 6.36 The recommended condition for the management plan agreement will include for management of the disposal of waste. Given that the bins will be located behind the front gate and closer to the collection point and will prevent the harmful clutter of bins, which is normally an indicator of large HMO use, there is not considered to be any detrimental impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area (or setting of the adjacent listed building) and nor would it raise amenity concerns for residents. The condition recommended will ensure this facility is provided and retained.

vi) **Sustainability**

- 6.37 Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction), supported by the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD seeks the proposal, as a 'creation of new residential units through conversion', to comply with BREEAM Level of 'Very Good'. Policy CC2 also requires new development to reduce the consumption of resources and materials by using designs and site layouts which use *"energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change"*.
- 6.38 Policy CC3 (Adaption to Climate Change) requires that all developments demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. Supporting text in paragraph 4.1.8 states that *"The design of developments therefore needs to more carefully consider matters such as shading, insulation and ventilation, surface water runoff and storage and the use of appropriate tree and other planting."*
- 6.39 Further to the above, it is acknowledged that the proposals, are largely a refurbishment proposal of an older, characterful building, and change of use of an existing building do not neatly align with the standard BREEAM requirements. Instead, the applicant is proposing sustainability enhancements to support the application including energy efficient lighting; energy efficient fixtures/fittings (water heating and water management); soft landscaping.
- 6.40 Officers are satisfied that in this specific instance and with regard to the site context and nature of the scheme, that the proposals will allow the building

to perform in an improved way to meet current sustainability policy expectations and the improvements will be secured by condition. As such, the proposal is considered to comply with Policies CC2 and CC3.

vii) Other Matters

Equality Impact

- 6.41 In determining these applications, the Committee is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

Community Infrastructure Levy

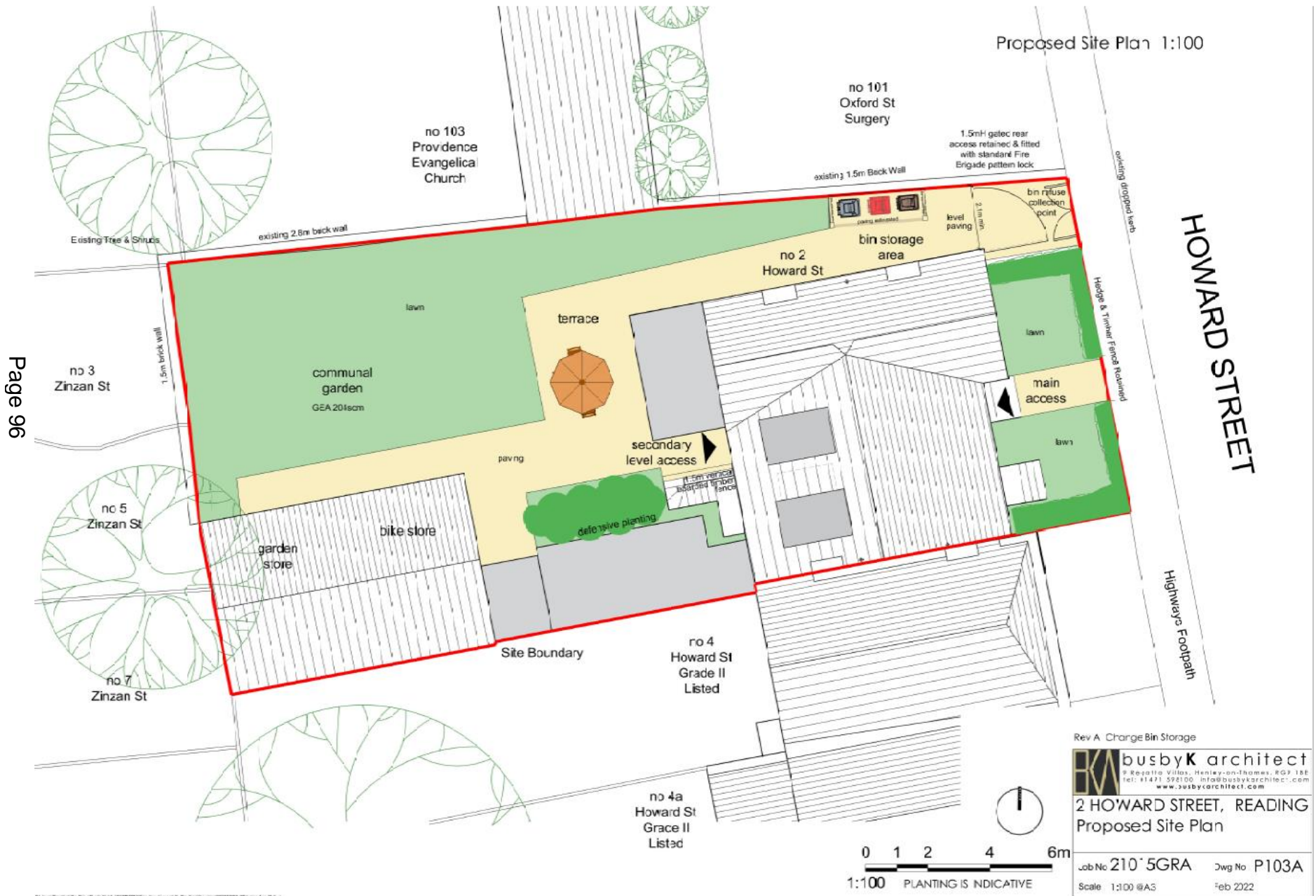
- 6.42 The proposal does not result in increased residential floorspace above 100sqm and as it does not create a new dwelling the proposed development is not CIL liable.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposal has been considered in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
- 7.2 The proposal to convert the property from a C3 dwellinghouse to large HMO is not considered to unduly dilute or harm the surrounding area and will ensure that this remains a mixed and sustainable community. In addition to this, it is considered that the proposal will not have any detrimental impact on amenity of future residents or existing residents of nearby properties, and nor will the proposals have any detrimental effect upon the character of the property as a Building of Townscape Merit or character and appearance of the Conservation Area or other nearby heritage assets.
- 7.3 Officers have worked positively and proactively with the applicant on this scheme, and the amendments provided by the applicant to overcome previous concerns raised with the scheme are considered to satisfactorily address policy issues and, overall, officers consider this to be a supportable scheme. It is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions and informatives as above.

Case Officer: Claire Ringwood

Proposed Site Plan 1:100



Page 96

HOWARD STREET

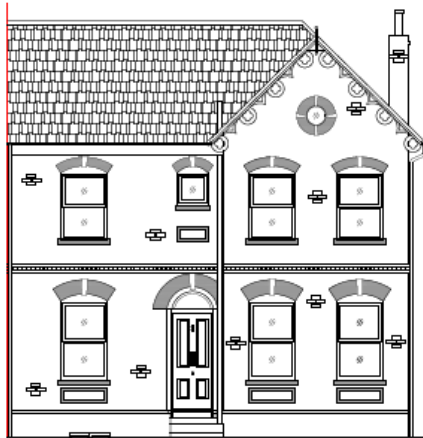
Rev A Charge Bin Storage

busbyK architect
 2 Regatta Villas, Henley-on-Thames, RG7 1BE
 Tel: 01491 592100, info@busbykarchitect.com
 www.busbykarchitect.com

2 HOWARD STREET, READING
 Proposed Site Plan

Job No 210'5GRA Dwg No P103A
 Scale 1:100 @A3 Feb 2022

0 1 2 4 6m
 1:100 PLANTING IS INDICATIVE



Proposed Street Elevation (East)



Proposed Side Elevation (North)

Schedule of Proposed Finishes

Roof- Blue/grey slate with ceramic ridge tile as existing. Roof to rear single storey, single ply lead effect membrane. Roof to existing garage and workshop profiled metal as existing. Dormer cheeks and arched roof- lead effect single ply membrane.

Walls- Red brick to match existing. Walls to existing garage and workshop as existing. Garage door infill to be horizontal timber cladding to match existing.

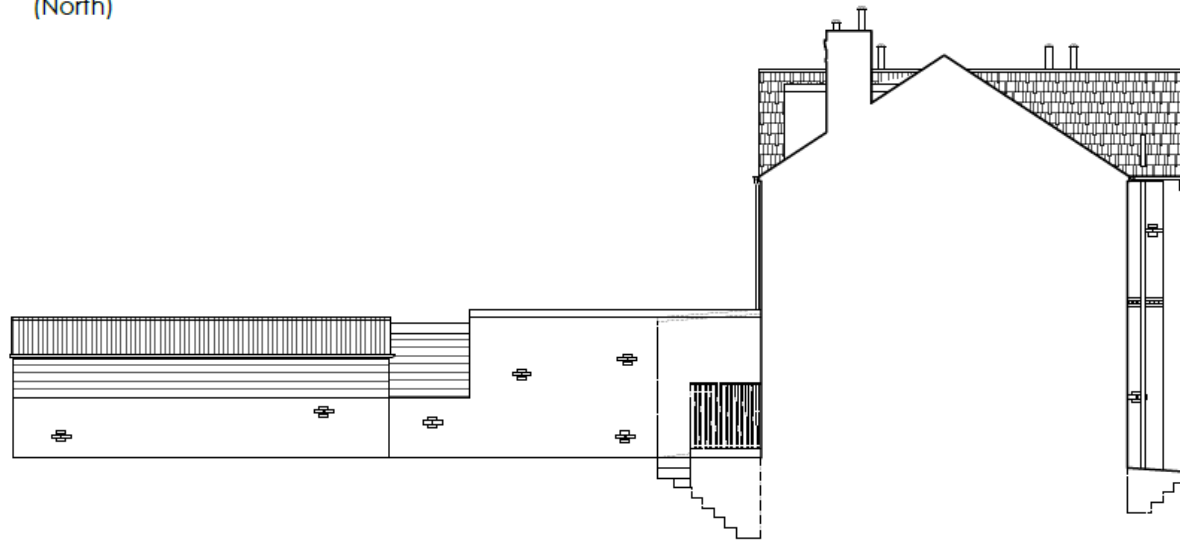
Windows- As existing timber sash to be retained. New windows to be timber casement with double glazed units.

Doors- Painted timber to match existing with double glazed units. Garden, bikes and lin stores to be bowed.

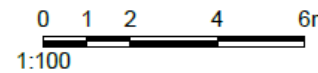
Rainwater Goods- Black round section to match existing.



Proposed Rear Elevation (West)



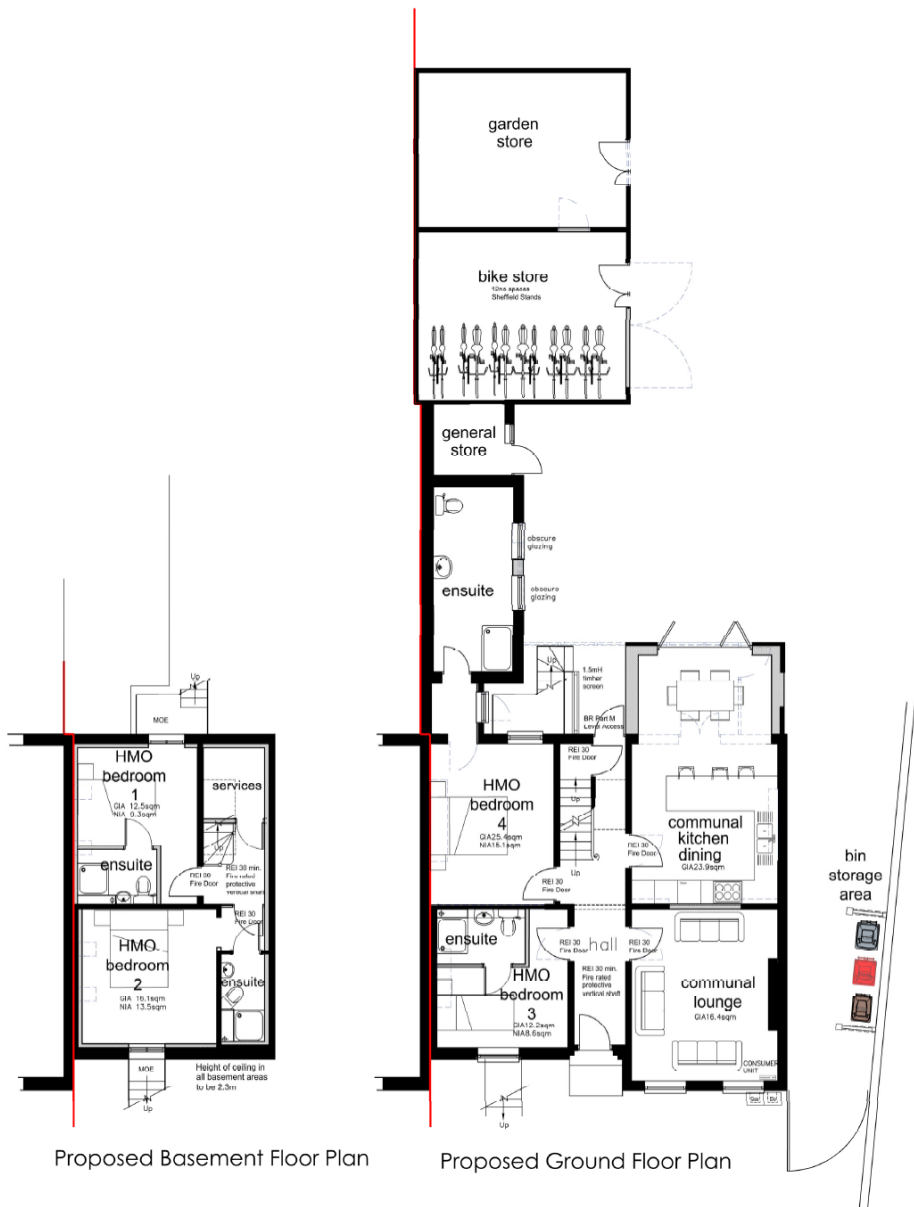
Proposed Party Wall Elevation (South)



busbyK architect
 9 Regatta Villas, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 1BT
 tel: 01493 598100 info@busbykarchitect.com
 www.busbykarchitect.com

2 HOWARD STREET, READING
 Proposed Elevations

Job No 21015GRA Dwg No P110
 Scale 1:100 @A3 Feb 2022



Proposed Basement Floor Plan

Proposed Ground Floor Plan

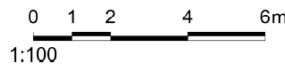
REV A MAY 2022 LPA REQUESTS

busbyK architect
 2 Regatta Villas, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 1BE
 Tel: 01491 898100 info@busbykarchitect.com
 www.busbykarchitect.com

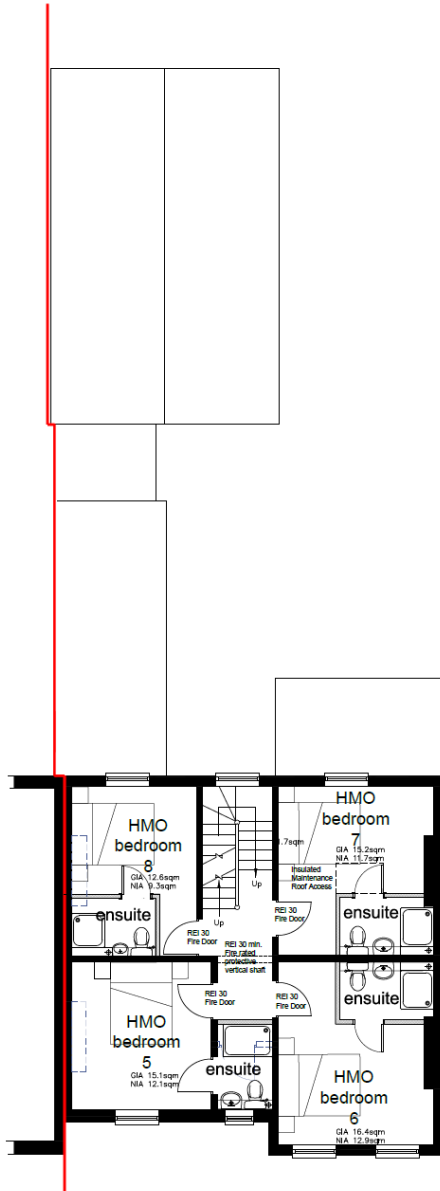
2 HOWARD STREET, READING
Proposed Basement
& Ground Floor Plans

Job No 21015GRA Dwg No P106A

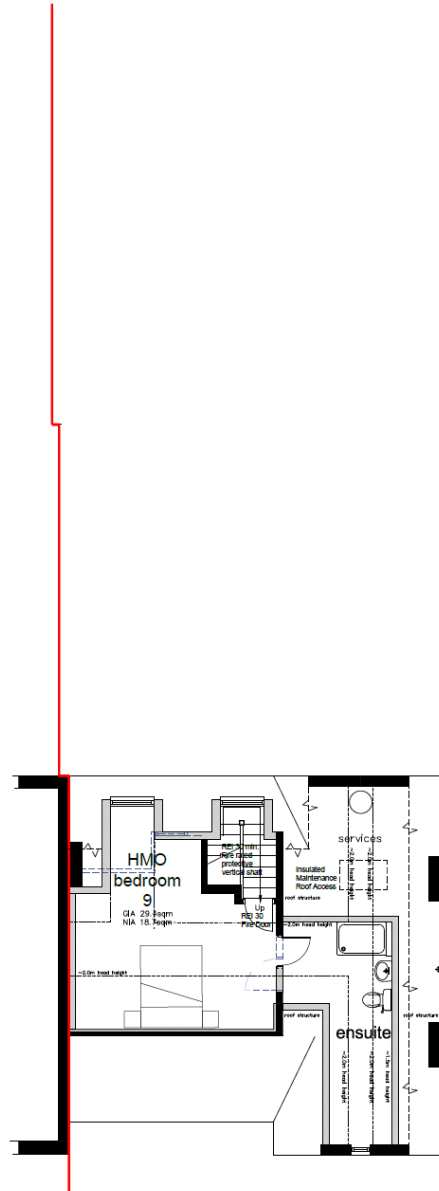
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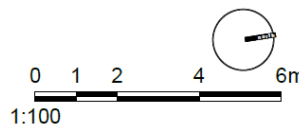
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Proposed First Floor Plan



Proposed Second Floor Plan

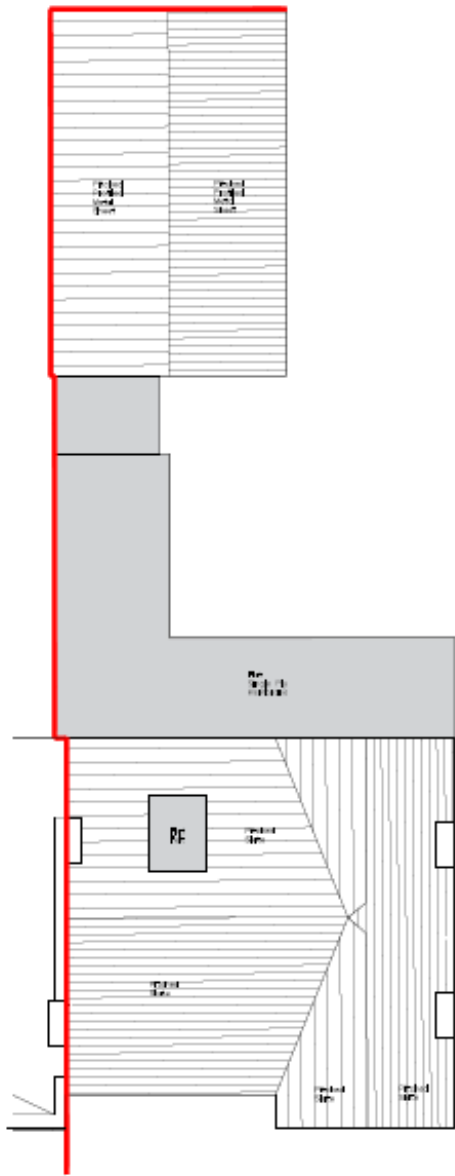


busbyK architect
 9 Regatta Villas, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 1BE
 tel: 01491 598100 info@busbykarchitect.com
 www.busbykarchitect.com

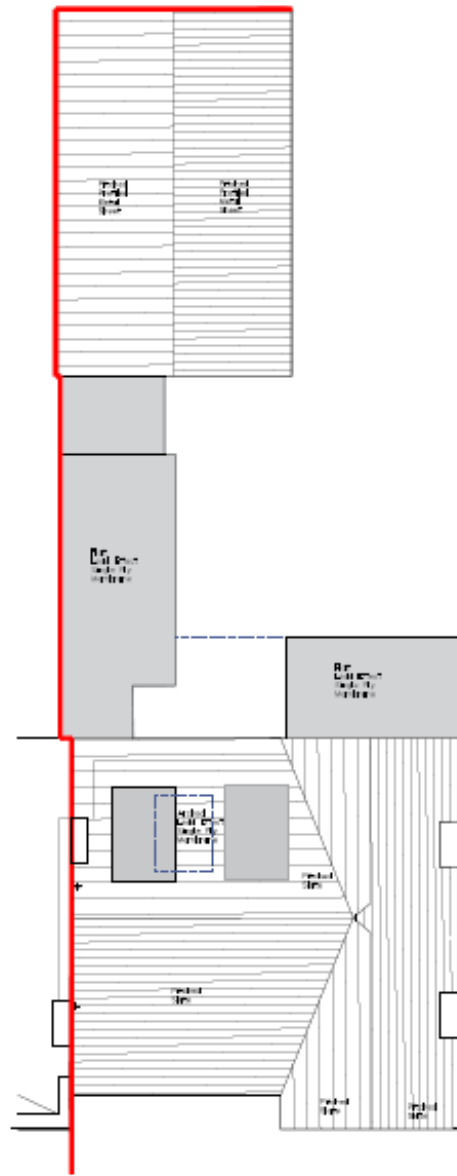
2 HOWARD STREET, READING
 Proposed First
 & Second Floor Plans

Job No 21015GRA Dwg No P107
 Scale 1:100 @A3 Feb 2022

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Existing Roof Plan



Proposed Roof Plan

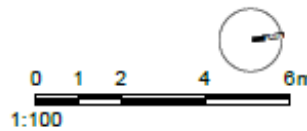
Rev A Change dormers Oct 21

busbyK architect
 7 Regatta Villas, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 1BB
 Tel: 01491 598188 info@busbykarchitect.com
 www.busbykarchitect.com

2 HOWARD STREET, READING
Existing & Proposed Roof Plans

Job No 21015GRA Dwg No P108

Scale 1:100 @A3 Feb 2022

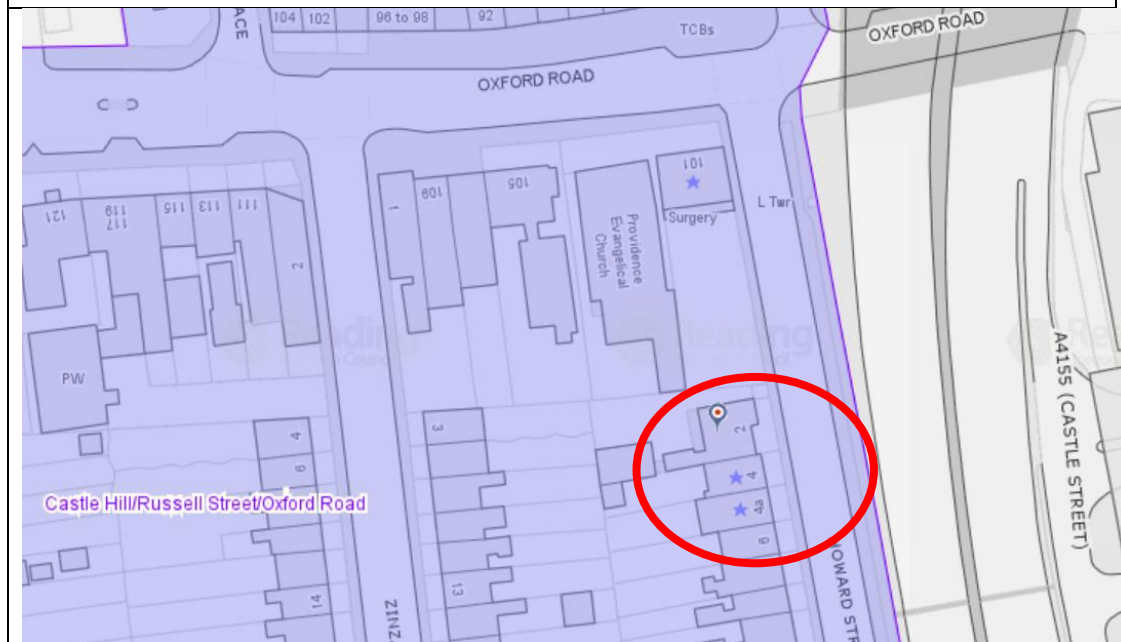


<http://www.planningportal.co.uk/permissions/permissions/permissions/permissions/permissions/>

Conservation & Urban Design Officer comments

Site location

Fig 1: GIS map showing host building which is in a conservation area, circled in RED, a Grade II, Listed Building. It is in between 3 listed Grade II, buildings. Kent House (4 & 4A Howard Street), to the south and 101 Oxford Road, to the north.



Historic England website notes.

1. Statutory Address: KENT HOUSE, 4 AND 4A, Howard Street, Reading.
Heritage Category: Listed Building Grade: II.
List Entry Number: 1113495

“HOWARD STREET 1. 5128 Nos 4 and 4A (Kent House) SU 7173 SW 2/501 II 2. Early C19. The best in a terrace of pleasant late Georgian houses. 3 storeys. Red brick. Ground floor rendered (No 4 channelled). String over ground floor. Cornice and blocking course. Concealed roof. 2 bays each, glazing bar sash windows except for modern casements on 1st floor of No 4A. Ground floor windows off centre, arched in recesses. Round headed entrances with recessed doors.”
(Listing NGR: SU7101173324)

2. Statutory Address: ROX BOROUGH HOUSE, 101 Oxford Street, Reading.
Heritage Category: Listed Building Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1113545

“OXFORD ROAD (South Side) 1. 5128 No 101 (Rox Borough House) SU 7175 SW 2/537 II GV 2. Circa 1859. 2 storeys, symmetrical. Red brick on basement with 1st floor stone cill band and wood block eaves cornice to slate roof. Coped gables with kneelers. End chimneys. 3 windows on 1st floor, 2 on ground-floor, glazing bar sashes; architrave surrounds and bracketed cornices on ground floor. Steps to 4 panel door, rectangular over-light. Basement openings have cast iron guards with honeysuckle ornament. Plain verandah at back. Brick flanking walls with stone cope and modern rails.”

Background

2 Howard Street dates from c.1850-70s and is an attractive single family home of substantial size with a well-tended front garden that lends itself positively to the street scene. The character of Howard Street is set by the avenue of trees, which provide a vital barrier between the street and the IDR, important boundary treatments comprising decorative cast iron railings, and interesting vistas over the town centre and beyond. The hedges along the street are a part of the original domestic character of the conservation area.



Conservation comments

The property is identified as a Building of Townscape merit in the conservation area character appraisal. It is a former mid-19th century, Georgian style, 2/3 storey brick family home. In relation to planning constraints only exterior works and the impact on the street can be assessed. The owner had recently applied for a similar scheme but it was refused, (211420). This new application (220291), has been developed in consultation with Council planners, to address certain aspects of design, which there were concerns with.

The conservation area has been placed on the Historic England - Heritage at Risk register. One of the issues is the number of HMOs, but this is a planning issue. The applicant has worked with Council's planner, on a number of planners issues, including the placement of bins and garden design.

Overall, there are no objections in heritage terms to the exterior works, subject to minor conditions relating to choice of materials, using timber framed windows and doors, and reinstating the front hedge and fencing. The character and setting of the conservation area, have been considered in this latest scheme. The proposed works will not have a greater impact than already exists on the adjacent listed buildings.

Planning Constraints

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- Grade II, Listed Building in a Conservation Area.

- Section 16(2) requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.
- Section 72 (1) 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.

National Planning Policy and Guidance

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - Section 16
- National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Council - Local Plan 2019

- St Mary's Butts Conservation Area / Castle Street
- Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
- Policy EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas
- Policy EN4: Locally Important Heritage Assets

Other guidance

- Historic England Good Practice Guide Note Number 2: managing significance in decision-taking.
- Principles of Conservation (Historic England, 2008)
- Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings (British Standards Publication BS 7913:2013, 2015)

Relevance of NPPF in assessing application

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>

Conclusion

It is recommended for **Approval**, with conditions;

1. all new windows and doors to be timber framed and generally match existing details;
2. a standard material condition in regard to materials and finishes;
3. that the original hedge and fence be reinstated and maintained.

Reason: The proposal is better than the previous application 211420, and considered to be relatively neutral and an enhancement of the exterior envelope in NPPF terms, subject to conditions, improving the street appearance. So overall, on balance the application is deemed to comply with Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as Council's Local Plan policies: EN1, EN4 and EN6.

Prepared by:

Bruce Edgar, IHBC, M.Phil (Architectural History), M.PIA, M.ICOMOS (UK), B.Arch
Conservation & Urban Design Officer
Reading Borough Council

You may find the following useful for your response:

- No objections
- No objections subject to conditions attached
- Clarification required - see attached
- Object - see above

ANNEXURE A

GENERAL CONSERVATION PLANNING BACKGROUND - ADVICE & NOTES

PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990.

With respect to Planning Applications and Listed Building consents, the applicable statutory provisions are:

- Section 16(2) which regards listed building consent for any works;
- Section 66(1) the determination of applications

These Sections state that when determining applications, the local planning authority or the Secretary of State, *'shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting of any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'*.

LEGISLATIVE AND PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990.

Section 66(1), in the determination of applications affecting the setting of a Listed Building, 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.'

Recent legal cases relating to issues of the setting of listed buildings have established that under section 70(3) the general power to grant planning permission under section 70(1) is expressly subject to sections 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

This means that under Sections 16 and 66 of the Act authorities considering applications for planning permission for works which affect a listed building must have special regard to certain matters, including the desirability of preserving the setting of the Listed Building.

CONSERVATION AREA

Section 69 of the Act imposes a duty on local planning authorities to designate as Conservation Areas any *'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'*.

Recent legal cases have established that under section 70(3) the general power to grant planning permission under section 70(1) is expressly subject to section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. **Section 72(1) provides that the local authority has a statutory duty that:**

'with respect of any building or other land in a conservation area.....special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.'

LEGISLATIVE AND PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF), 2021

In March 2012, the Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and it has had a number of updates, the latest in 2021.

The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and a key dimension of *'sustainability'* is defined as *'...protecting and enhancing our...historic environment'* (DCLG et al, 2018).

The glossary annexed to the NPPF defines the setting of a heritage asset as:

“The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.”

Factors for consideration. It is recommended that a Heritage Statement, accompany any applications to address NPPF (paragraph 194):

“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.”

NPPF SECTION 16. CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

The NPPF states, local planning authorities should take into account, the following paragraphs.

Paragraph 189 states:

“Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value (66). These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations (67).”

Paragraph 197 states:

“In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- 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.*

Paragraph 198 states:

” In considering any applications to remove or alter a historic statue, plaque, memorial or monument (whether listed or not), local planning authorities should have regard to the importance of their retention in situ and, where appropriate, of explaining their historic and social context rather than removal.

Considering potential impacts

Paragraph 199 states:

“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.”

Paragraph 200 states:

Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) *Grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*
- b) *assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly Exceptional.*

Paragraph 201 states:

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.*

Paragraph 202 states:

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.

Paragraph 203 states:

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Paragraph 204 states:

Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

Paragraph 205 states:

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 (69). However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

Paragraph 206 states:

Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

Paragraph 207 states:

Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution

to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 200 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 201, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

Paragraph 208 states:

Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disadvantages of departing from those policies.

Planning Practice Guide (PPG)

The Planning Practice Guide (PPG) (2014) clarifies this additional requirement under ‘What is the main legislative framework for planning and the historic environment?’ where it states that:

“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.” (See ID 18a-002-20140306)

Reading Borough Planning Policies

The Reading Local Plan Adopted 2019 is the document that contains the policies for how Reading will develop up to 2036, which is the end date of the plan. It replaces the three previous development plan documents - the Core Strategy (adopted 2008, amended 2015), Reading Central Area Action Plan (adopted 2009) and Sites and Detailed Policies Document (adopted 2012, amended 2015). It identifies the amount of development that will take place, the areas and sites where development is expected to be accommodated, and where it will be restricted, and sets out policies for how planning applications will be decided. Reading, has launched a 2050 vision for the town as a smart and sustainable city by 2050. The vision entails:

6. Maintain and enhance the historic, built and natural environment of the Borough through investment and high quality design, and capitalise on these assets to contribute to quality of life and economic success;

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

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;*
- *Conservation Areas;*
- *Scheduled Monuments;*
- *Historic parks and gardens; and*
- *Other features with local or national significance, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and assets on the Local List.*

All proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits.

Applications which affect Listed Buildings will not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where appropriate, their settings.

Applications which affect Historic Parks and Gardens will safeguard features which form an integral part of the special character or appearance of the park or garden. 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.

Applications which affect, or have the potential to affect, the significant features of heritage assets should be justified by a Heritage Statement.

The Council will monitor buildings and other heritage assets at risk through neglect, decay or other threats, proactively seeking solutions for assets at risk including consideration of appropriate development schemes that will ensure the repair and maintenance of the asset, and, as a last resort, using its statutory powers.

Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect or of damage to a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.

EN4: LOCALLY IMPORTANT HERITAGE ASSETS

Development proposals that affect locally important heritage assets will demonstrate that development conserves architectural, archaeological or historical significance which may include the appearance, character and setting of the asset.

Planning permission may be granted in cases where a proposal could result in harm to or loss of a locally important heritage asset only where it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development significantly outweigh the asset's significance. Where it is accepted by the Local Planning Authority that retention is not important, recording of the heritage asset should be undertaken and submitted alongside development proposals. Replacement buildings should draw upon heritage elements of the previous design, incorporating historical qualities that made the previous building significant. This may include appearance, scale and architectural quality.

HISTORIC ENGLAND GOOD PRACTICE ADVICE & BRITISH STANDARDS

Historic England has produced new guidance on the interpretation and implementation of the NPPF and PPG with regard to the historic environment in the form of:

- Historic England *Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (Historic England, 2016);
- Historic Environment *Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking* (Historic England, 2015a);
- Historic Environment *Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* (Historic England, 2015b); and
- Historic England *Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 4: Tall Buildings* (Historic England, 2015c).
- Principles of Conservation (Historic England, 2008)
- Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings (British Standards Pub. BS 7913:2013, 2015)

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ITEM NO.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 12 January 2022

Ward: Abbey

App No.: 211420/FUL

Address: 2 Howard Street, Reading

Proposal: Conversion of single dwelling (class C3) to Sui-Generis House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) for 9 persons, and conversion of the existing garage to bike and bin store, plus erection of two dormer windows and associated enabling internal works and minor external works (amended description)

Applicant: C/O Agent

Minor Application: 8 week target decision date: 9th November 2021

Extended of time date: 14th January 2022

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT planning permission subject to conditions and informatives.

CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE:

1. TL1 - Full - time limit - three years.
2. Approved Drawings.
3. Pre-commencement submission and approval of materials for external works including window and roof details.
4. Cycle storage as specified.
5. Bin storage as specified.
6. Prior to first occupation HMO parking permits (notification to LPA).
7. Prior to first occupation HMO parking permits (notification to occupants).
8. Communal areas marked as social rooms on the approved plans to be retained for communal use at all times.
9. Prior to first occupation submission and approval of noise insulation between basement bedrooms and ground floor communal areas.
10. The HMO use at ground, first and second floors hereby approved shall be restricted to nine single occupancy bedrooms.
11. The garage building shall be retained for storage, including bin and cycle storage ancillary to the use of the dwelling as a large HMO and shall not be used for further residential living accommodation.
12. The area laid as garden shall be retained for private garden with existing vegetation to be retained and shall not be converted into parking areas or areas of hardstanding.
13. Prior to occupation an HMO management plan to be submitted and approved and thereafter complied with.
14. Pre-commencement submission and approval of details of hard and soft landscaping details.
15. Removal of pd rights for extensions, including in roof, hardstanding and outbuildings.
16. Hours of construction (std).

17. Conversion to comply with submitted sustainability strategy.
18. No burning on site.

INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE:

- Terms and Conditions
- Building Regulations
- No entitlement to parking permits
- Fire safety requirements
- Requirements of the Housing Act
- Highways
- Contact Waste Team to ensure correct number of bins is provided.
- Positive and Proactive
- Pre-commencement conditions agreed by applicant/agent
- HMO expectations informative
- Separate HMO licence required

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.2 The application site is a two storey end of terrace property with basement and attic accommodation located on the west side of Howard Street. The plot is relatively large and the property has a rear conservatory and extension linking to a garage/workshop structure in the garden. There is a small lawn area at the front of the site, bound by hedging and palisade fencing, with gated access to the north of the building to the rear garden.
- 1.2 Whilst No.2 Howard Street is not listed, Nos. 4 and 4a, to the south are Grade II listed. No.101 Oxford Road, to the north of the site, is also Grade II listed.
- 1.3 The site is within the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area and the subject property is identified as a Building of Townscape Merit within the Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 1.4 Paragraph 6.3.4 of the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Conservation Area Appraisal (2020) notes the following in respect of No.2 Howard Street:

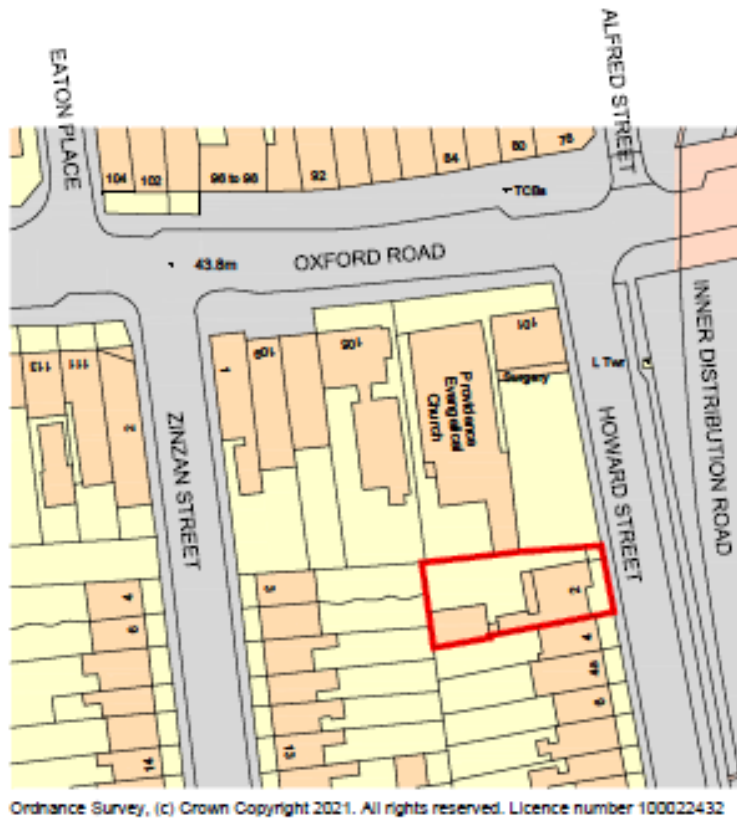
“2 Howard Street dates from c.1850-70s and is an attractive single family home of substantial size with a well-tended front garden that lends itself positively to the street scene.”

Paragraph 6.3.8 of the appraisal notes:

“2 Howard Street, Circa 1850-1870. A fine, well-cared for single family home with intact detailing and interiors.”
- 1.5 The site is not within the Article 4 Direction Area, which restricts the permitted change of use from C3 dwellinghouse to C4 small House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).
- 1.6 The site is also within an Air Quality Management Area.

- 1.7 The application was called in by Councillor Page due to concern over the proposed HMO use.

Location Plan



Aerial View



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The proposal was originally for the change of use from a C3 dwelling to 9-person (9 bedroom) HMO and conversion of existing garage/workshop to separate self-contained flat. The applicant was advised that this was considered to result in an over-intensive use of the site (and potential unacceptable subdivision of the plot) and revised plans were received omitting the conversion of the garage/workshop to self-contained flat and as such the description of development changed to confirm that just the house is proposed for use as a 9-person HMO with the garage retained for bicycle and bin storage.
- 2.2 The proposals include replacing the existing flat roof rear dormer window with two smaller pitch roof dormer windows. It is also proposed to replace the conservatory with a single storey rear extension. The materials for the new elements would match those of the host property.
- 2.3 Each HMO bedroom would have an en-suite bathroom and there would be a kitchen/dining area and separate living area.
- 2.4 The following plans and supporting documents were submitted with the application:

Location Plan PO1

Existing Basement and Ground Floor Plans PO4

Existing First and Second Floor Plans PO5

Existing Elevations PO8

Received 27th August 2021

Design, Heritage and Access Statement

Received 14th September 2021

Further to discussion with the agent, amended plans were submitted which removed the self-contained flat from the garage and instead proposed this space for the use of bike and bin storage. Revised plans also replaced the single flat roof dormer window with two smaller pitched roof dormer windows and plans also showed indicative soft landscaping.

Proposed Block Plan PO2B

Existing and Proposed Site Plans PO3B

Proposed Basement and Ground Floor Plans PO6B

Proposed Elevations PO9B

Proposed Site Plan P10B

Received 23rd November 2021

Proposed First and Second Floor Plans P07A

Received 8th December 2021

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 None for No.2 Howard Street.

3.2 Other nearby sites:

4 Howard Street

210568/FUL: Conversion of single dwelling (class C3) to Sui-Generis House in multiple occupation (HMO) for 8 persons. Pending Consideration.

4a Howard Street

161375/FUL and 161376/LBC: Change of use from 8 bedroom house in multiple occupation (HMO) (Sui Generis) to 10 bedroom HMO (Sui Generis) to include internal changes, demolition of existing rear projection and erection of basement and single storey rear extensions. Permitted.

160550/FUL and 160551/LBC: Change of use from 8 bedroom house in multiple occupation (HMO) (Sui Generis) to 9 bedroom HMO (Sui Generis) to include internal changes, demolition of existing rear projection and erection of single storey rear extension. Permitted.

11-00489-FUL: Conversion of dwelling to 1 x 2 bed flat and 2 x 1 bed flats. Permitted.

11-00490-LBC: Listed Building Consent for internal and external alterations to convert one dwelling to 2 x 2 bed and 2 x 1 bed flats and erection of ground and basement rear extension. Permitted.

4. CONSULTATIONS

(iv) Statutory

4.1 None.

(v) Non-statutory

4.2 **Conservation and Urban Design Officer** - No comments received.

4.3 **Transport** - No objection subject to conditions and informatives, discussed below.

4.4 **Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC)** - No comments received.

(vi) Public/ local consultation and comments received

4.5 No. 4 Howard Street, 3, 5 and 7 Zinzan Street and 101, 103 and 105 Oxford Road were notified of the applications by letter. A site notice was also displayed at the application site and a press notice provided.

4.6 No neighbour letters of representation have been received.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that 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”. The relevant sections of the NPPF are:

National Policy - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development

Section 9 - Promoting Sustainable Transport

Section 11 - Making Effective Use of Land

Section 12 - Achieving Well-Designed Places

Section 14 - Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

Section 16 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

5.2 Section 66(1) 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.

5.3 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.

5.4 Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

National Planning Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction

CC3: Adaption to Climate Change

CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage

CC7: Design and the Public Realm
CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
CC9: Securing Infrastructure
EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas
EN6: New Development in a Historic Context
EN15: Air Quality
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
H5: Standards for New Housing
H8: Residential Conversions
H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

5.5 Supplementary Planning Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Residential Conversions (2013)
Affordable Housing SPD (2021)
Revised SPD on Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2019)
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)

5.6 Other relevant documentation / guidance / legislation

Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area Appraisal 2020
Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (Historic England, 2016)
Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking (Historic England, 2015a)
Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2015b)
Principles of Conservation (Historic England, 2008)
Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings (British Standards Publication BS 7913:2013, 2015)
National Design Guide: Planning practice for beautiful, enduring and successful places (2019)

6. APPRAISAL

Introduction

- 6.1 For conversions to residential the main planning policy is: Policy H8 (Residential Conversions), which states that: *‘Proposals to convert buildings into self-contained flats or for multiple occupation will be assessed against the impact on the amenity and character of the surrounding area, particularly in terms of intensification of activity, loss of privacy, loss of external amenity space, the provision and location of adequate on-site car parking and the treatment of bin storage areas and other related servicing.*

Proposals to convert properties into self-contained flats or for multiple occupation will only be acceptable where:

- *The proposal respects the physical character of the area in terms of scale, location, materials and design, the arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features;*
- *The proposal would not, either individually or cumulatively, unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant loss of single family housing;*
- *There are no unacceptable adverse impacts to residents of the scheme or surrounding properties arising from noise and disturbance in terms of the number and layout of units proposed and the proximity to other properties;*
- *There is no inappropriate stacking and location of rooms between units;*
- *Bin and cycle storage is of an appropriate size and standard for the units proposed and should be located at ground floor level with easy access; and*
- *The resulting property or properties would provide adequate internal floorspace and headroom for residents.'*

Policy H8 continues:

'Additionally, in the case of sui generis houses in multiple occupation (HMOs):

- *The property to be converted measures more than 120 square metres gross;*
- *There is sufficient communal space.'*

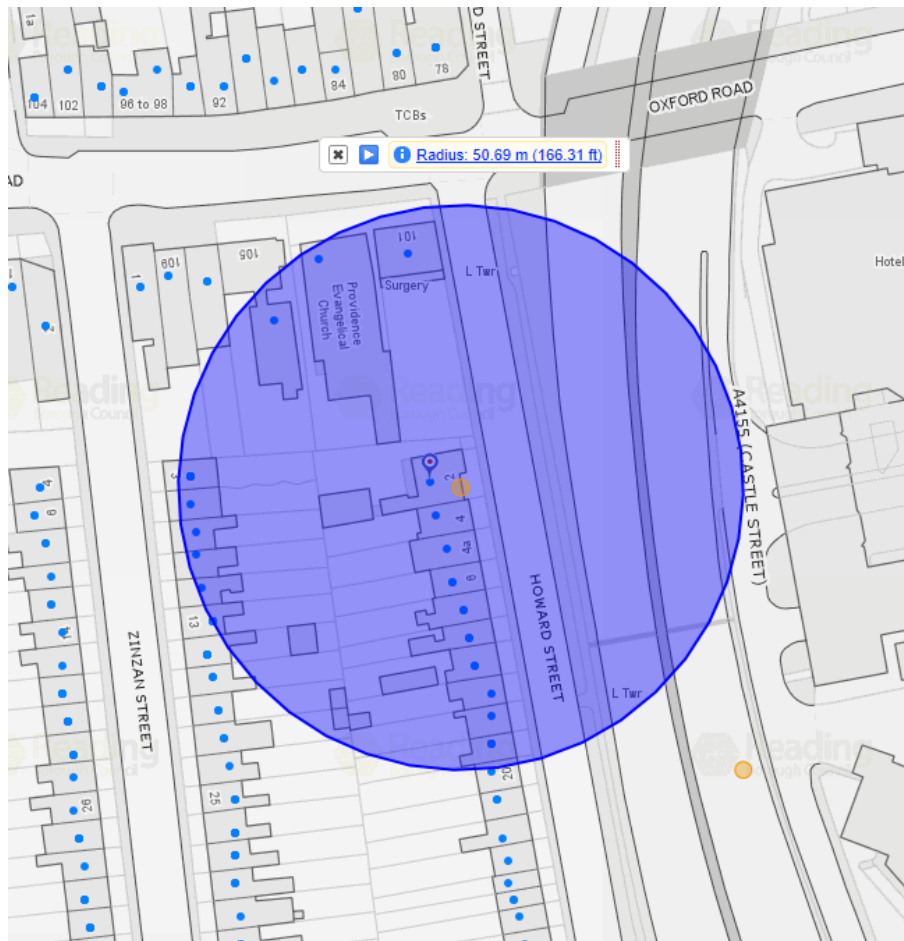
6.2 Along with the relevant adopted local planning policies, the appraisal of the application has been assessed against the adopted Residential Conversions SPD (2013), which provides further detail for the adopted policies. Section A of the SPD, deals with the 'General Assessment of all Conversions' (i.e. from C3 dwellinghouses to flats or HMOs (both small C4 use and sui generis HMOs). Section B specifically covers the assessment of applications for HMOs within the area covered by the Article 4 Direction. Albeit not located within an area covered by the Article 4 Direction, this application has been considered against both sections.

Main considerations:

The main issues to be considered are:

- i) Principle of development: Size requirements and whether the property results in unduly diluting or harming a mixed and sustainable community
 - ii) The impact on amenity of future occupiers and existing residents of nearby properties
 - iii) Design considerations and impact on the Conservation Area and other heritage assets
 - iv) Car/ cycle parking
 - v) Bin storage
 - vi) Sustainability
- (i) **Principle of development: Size requirements and whether the property result in unduly diluting or harming a mixed and sustainable community**

- 6.3 In terms of whether a property is suitable to be converted to a large HMO, Policy H8 (Residential Conversions) and the Residential Conversion SPD requires the property to have a gross floor area in excess of 120m² when measured externally. The property meets this requirement and therefore the conversion into a large HMO is acceptable in principle.
- 6.4 Further assessment as to whether a property is suitable for conversion is whether such a conversion would result in unduly diluting or harming a mixed and sustainable community. This is assessed using the ‘tipping point’ calculation.
- 6.5 The SPD identifies that 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 states 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).*
- 6.6 Further to this, it is noted that the site lies outside of the Borough’s Article 4 Direction area, wherein HMO developments are more strictly controlled. In this respect, Policy H8 only refers to use of the 25% threshold inside these areas. However, the SPD, (para 4.2) explains that this calculation is to be applied to changes of use from C3 dwellinghouses to large Sui Generis HMOs anywhere in the Borough. Specifically, in respect of large *sui generis* HMOs the policy guidance does refer to the need to comply with the 25% threshold both within and outside Article 4 areas. Taking this guidance but noting the absence of such requirements in the overarching Policy H8 it is considered that the 25% threshold represents a good ‘rule of thumb’ for testing whether the proposal would unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community and as such this calculation has been undertaken by officers.
- 6.7 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, data on property websites, and data held by the Enforcement Team, has been used.



6.8 The total number of properties within the 50m radius, including the application site, has been calculated as twenty-three. At the time of this assessment the total number of properties in HMO use, using the above sources of data, is estimated to be four (excluding the application site) and therefore the overall percentage is calculated as 17.39% which is below the threshold of a maximum of 25%. If the application site were to become an HMO this would push the percentage to 21.74% and would remain below the threshold of a maximum of 25%. In this regard, , the proposals are not considered unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant loss of single-family housing. Therefore, the principle of the conversion of the application property to a 9 person large Sui Generis HMO is therefore considered acceptable subject to meeting other policy requirements below.

(ii) **The impact on amenity of proposed and existing residents of nearby properties**

6.9 The Residential Conversions SPD sets out a number of checklist items which provide further detail related to adopted Policies CC8, H8 and H10 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

6.10 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) requires development to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential

properties or unacceptable living conditions for 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.

- 6.11 Policy H8 (Residential Conversions) requires that there are no unacceptable adverse impacts to residents of the scheme or surrounding properties arising from noise and disturbance in terms of the number and layout of units proposed and the proximity to other properties.
- 6.12 Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) deals specifically with private and communal space and requires such space to allow for sitting out, children's play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, drying space.

Room Sizes

- 6.13 The SPD states, *"Where the cooking facilities are provided in a separate room, each bedroom must be a minimum of:*
- *6.5 square metres if occupied by one person;*
 - *10.5 square metres if occupied by two persons"*.
- 6.14 The bedrooms are proposed for one person and there is a separate communal kitchen/dining area (and separate communal living area discussed below). The kitchen/dining area is shown as 19.1sqm and the smallest bedroom (no.8 on the first floor) is 12sqm with the majority of bedrooms far larger than this and all have en-suite bathrooms. All the proposed bedrooms (and kitchen area) are acceptable in terms of size and occupancy of the HMO will be restricted by condition.

Communal Space

- 6.15 The SPD identifies that the amount of communal space that is considered appropriate in a large HMO would be dependent on the number and size of bedrooms. The standard set out is for one communal room for every 4-6 bedrooms depending on the size of the bedroom. The amended scheme provides for two communal areas on the ground floor with a total area of 31.3sqm comprising a kitchen/dining room (19.1sqm) and a separate living area (12.2sqm) with seating for 9 persons. Furthermore, there will be bike and bin storage areas for future occupiers and a separate garden room area which could be used for extra storage if required. As above, all the bedrooms are of a good size and the communal space is considered to be of an acceptable size and layout to accommodate residents. Therefore, the overall level of communal provision is considered acceptable. A condition is recommended to ensure that the communal areas are retained for communal use only.

Amenity Space

- 6.16 The application includes a good size rear garden area of 204m² and amended plans indicate hard and soft landscaping as well as soft landscaping to the front of the site. Plans also show bike and bin storage within the existing garage structure and as such no further outbuildings are required. Given the size and nature of the communal garden area, which is considered to provide sufficient space for functional communal space and sitting out and given the site's central location close to public recreation and leisure facilities, this is considered to be in accordance with Policy H10.

External windows

- 6.17 All habitable rooms would benefit from external windows. The two basement bedrooms would be served by large front and rear lightwells providing an acceptable degree of daylighting to these rooms. Furthermore, the head height of the two bedrooms in the basement (2.3m) is acceptable.

Layout/Stacking of Rooms

- 6.18 The Council's House Conversions SPD seeks to avoid layouts which locate living rooms, bathrooms and kitchens, next to, above, or below, proposed or neighbouring bedrooms. The layout largely achieves this with only the communal kitchen/dining/living room located above the basement units. The remainder of the rooms are stacked appropriately. The development would likely require additional internal insulation to ensure basement bedrooms are protected from noise and to comply with building regulations and a condition requiring details of how this will be achieved to safeguard residential amenity will be required prior to commencement of the development.

Privacy and Overlooking/Overbearing Impacts

- 6.19 The two proposed dormer windows would face down the application site garden and any views towards the garden of No.4 Howard Street would be at an oblique angle. It is not considered that there would be any significant material loss of privacy over and above the existing dormer window such to raise concern. Given the scale and position of the dormer windows, they will not result in any overbearing effects to any neighbouring property. Similarly, given the position of the single storey rear extension, this is not considered to result in any material overbearing effects over and above the current situation.

Noise and Disturbance and Pollution

- 6.20 The level of noise and disturbance from nine people is unlikely to be significantly harmful to the residents of adjoining properties, additional nuisance is controlled by civil enforcement (police) and statutory nuisance legislation (Environmental Health). A condition is recommended requiring the submission and approval of a management agreement, which among other matters includes the requirement to set out how noise within and outside the property will be managed.

(iii) **Design considerations and impact on conservation area and other heritage assets**

- 6.21 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks to ensure that new development enhances and preserves the local character. Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) states that the design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity.
- 6.22 The site lies within the Castle Hill/Russell Street/ Oxford Road Conservation Area and as such there is a duty imposed by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requiring decision makers to have special regards to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. This is reflected in Policy EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) which states that historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced and Policy EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas) which states that the special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced and that development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. The Council will, therefore, have regard to both the quality of the townscape and the quality and interest of the area, rather than solely that of the individual building.
- 6.23 Whilst No.2 Howard Street is not listed, it is identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal as a Building of Townscape Merit and is therefore reasonable to consider this to be a non-designated heritage asset. Furthermore, No.4 (and 4a) Howard Street is a listed building. As such there is also a duty imposed by Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requiring decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving its setting or any features of special architectural historic interest which it possesses. This is also reflected in Policy EN1.
- 6.24 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF 2021 states that decisions should ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment.
- 6.25 Paragraph 199 of the NPPF 2021 details 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.
- 6.26 The recently published National Design Guidance 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’.

- 6.27 Given the nature of the proposals, there would be no increase in the footprint of the property. In fact, following the replacement of the existing conservatory with single storey rear extension there would be a slight reduction in the footprint. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the building as having well-intact interiors and the building has largely been well maintained. The building is not listed and as such there is little planning protection over interior alterations generally. However, it is noted that the proposals would not require a high degree of harmful change as the proposed HMO use would by its nature fit within existing internal spaces preserving the existing plan-form and would not require significant other alteration as shown on the proposed plans.
- 6.28 The proposed single storey rear extension would remain a subservient addition to the main property. Comprising red brick, white timber sash windows and slate roof, that would match the host property, this is considered to be an improvement on the existing uPVC conservatory. The rear extension would also allow for the reinstatement of the basement level window and allow increased daylight into the basement area than achieved at present.
- 6.29 Concern was originally raised by the case officer that the proposed flat roof rear ‘box dormer’ window would, due to its scale and design, fail to satisfactorily integrate with the character of the host property or preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Revised plans were received replacing the dormer window with two smaller pitched roof dormer windows. These revised dormer windows would not be excessive in scale and would neatly align with the windows below. They would be set well below the main roof ridge, sitting comfortably within the roof slope and they are not considered to result in any harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area nor the setting of the adjacent listed building. Indeed, the dormer windows would replace the existing single dormer window that is currently considered to be visually discordant. In this respect, the proposed dormer windows are considered to result in a visual benefit to the building and character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 6.30 The proposals include the renovation of the existing rear garage structure, which includes replacing the corrugated galvanised steel tin roof with slate to match the main building and replacing the existing timber walls with fire retardant treated vertical timber boarding. This is considered to improve the overall character and appearance of this structure.

- 6.31 Further to revised plans omitting the originally proposed self-contained flat from the scheme, the garage structure is instead now proposed to be for bin and cycle storage, rather than requiring a separate structure for storage within the garden. This is considered to be an efficient use of the land/existing structure and will prevent the harmful clutter of bins, which is normally an indicator of large HMO use.
- 6.32 Overall, it is considered that the proposed external works would not result in any detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area or the setting of the nearby listed buildings. The proposals, which include refurbishment works, are considered to provide some enhancement to the appearance of this non-designated heritage asset. To ensure design quality, conditions are recommended above requiring the submission of external material details including window details. In design terms the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies CC7, EN1, EN3 and H10.

iv) **Car/Cycle parking**

- 6.34 The site is located within Zone 2 for accessibility as identified in the Council's Parking and Design SPD, the primary core area but on the periphery of the central core area which lies at the heart of Reading Borough, consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments with good transport hubs.
- 6.35 In accordance with the SPD, an HMO property would be required to provide 0.25 car parking spaces per room. No off-road parking is to be provided with this proposal. However, given the close proximity to the town centre and good transport links this is considered acceptable in this instance. Future occupiers would not be automatically entitled to resident or parking permits for the surrounding residential streets where parking is under considerable pressure. This would ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area. Conditions and an informative are included in the Recommendation above regarding a restriction on the entitlement to parking permits for existing and future schemes in the area.
- 6.36 In accordance with the SPD, cycle storage for an HMO should be provided at a ratio of 0.5 secure cycle storage spaces for each letting room, in the form of Sheffield type stands within a lockable store. 12 Sheffield stands are proposed in the existing garage structure which exceeds the required provision and is acceptable. A compliance condition is recommended to ensure that this facility is provided and retained for bicycle parking at all times.

v) **Bin Storage**

6.37 Policy H8 requires that bin storage is of an appropriate size and to which there is easy access. Bins are proposed to be stored in the existing garage in the rear garden, which is acceptable. Bins will be moved to the front side of the property on collection day. The recommended condition for the management plan agreement will include for management of the disposal of waste. Given that the bins would be stored within an existing structure (which in itself is proposed to be refurbished) this is not considered to result in any detrimental impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area (or setting of the adjacent listed building) and nor would it raise amenity concerns for residents. A condition is recommended to ensure this facility is provided and retained. An informative is included to advise contacting the Council's Refuse and recycling Team to ensure the correct capacity of bins is provided.

vi) **Sustainability**

6.38 Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction), supported by the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD seeks the proposal, as a 'creation of new residential units through conversion', to comply with BREEAM Level of 'Very Good'. Policy CC2 also requires new development to reduce the consumption of resources and materials by using designs and site layouts which use *"energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change"*.

6.39 Policy CC3 (Adaption to Climate Change) requires that all developments demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. Supporting text in para 4.1.8 states that *"The design of developments therefore needs to more carefully consider matters such as shading, insulation and ventilation, surface water runoff and storage and the use of appropriate tree and other planting."*

6.40 Further to the above, it is acknowledged that the proposals, as largely a refurbishment proposal of an older, characterful building, and change of use of an existing building, do not neatly align with the standard BREEAM requirements. Instead, the applicant is proposing sustainability enhancements to support the application including: energy efficient lighting; energy efficient fixtures/fittings (water heating and water management); soft landscaping.

6.41 Officers are satisfied that in this specific instance and with regard to the site context and nature of the scheme, that the proposals will allow the building to perform in an improved way to meet current sustainability policy expectations and the improvements will be secured by condition. As such, the proposal is considered to comply with Policies CC2 and CC3.

Equality Impact

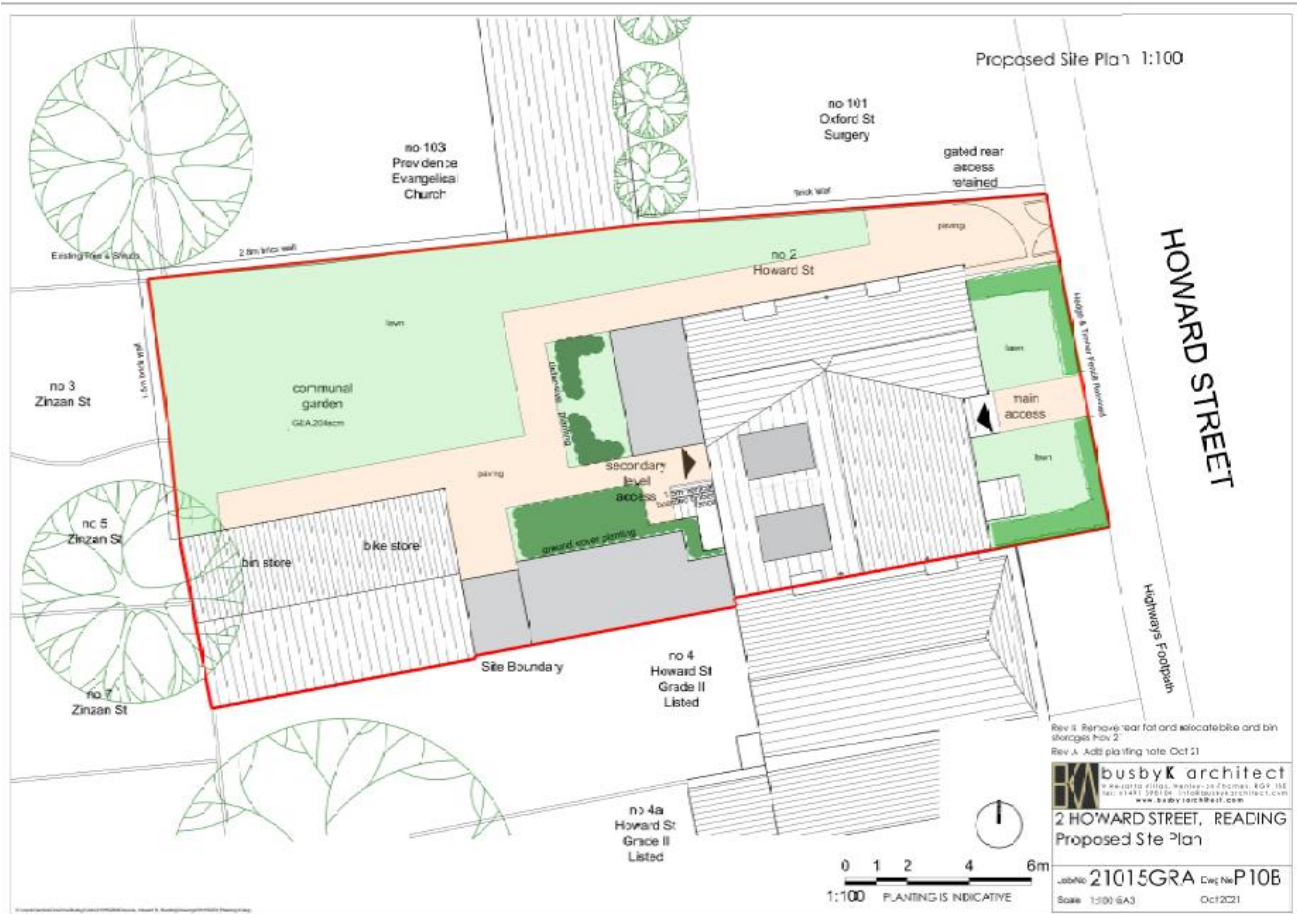
- 6.42 In determining these applications, the Committee is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposal has been considered in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
- 7.2 The proposal to convert the property from a C3 dwellinghouse to large HMO is not considered to unduly dilute or harm the surrounding area and will ensure that this remains a mixed and sustainable community. In addition to this, it is considered that the proposal will not have any detrimental impact on amenity of future residents or existing residents of nearby properties, and nor will the proposals have any detrimental effect upon the character of the property as a Building of Townscape Merit or character and appearance of the Conservation Area or other nearby heritage assets.
- 7.3 Officers have worked positively and proactively with the applicant on this scheme, and amendments have been secured, which considered to satisfactorily address policy issues and, overall, officers consider this to be a supportable scheme. It is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions and informatives as above.

Case Officer: Ethne Humphreys

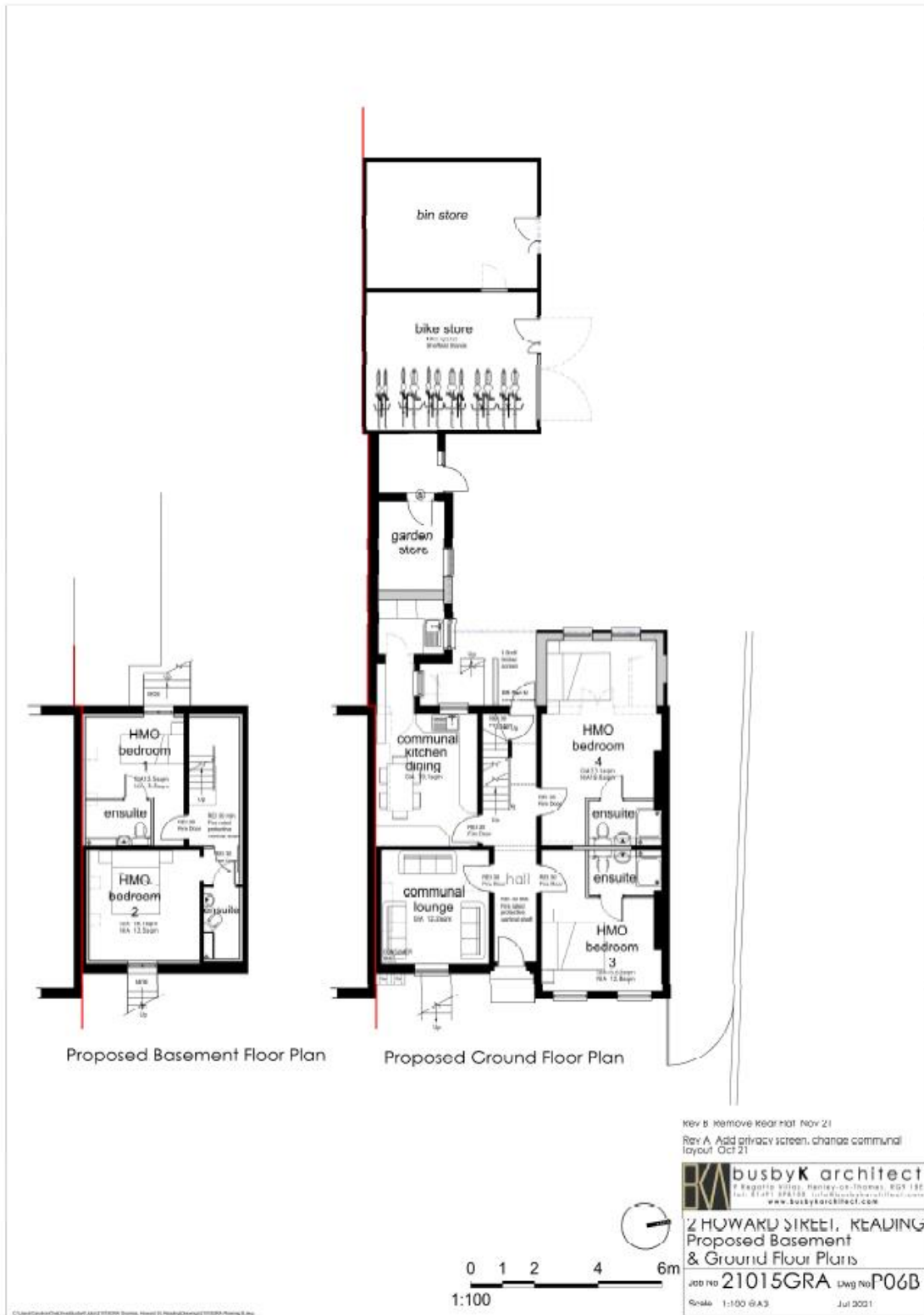
Application Drawings



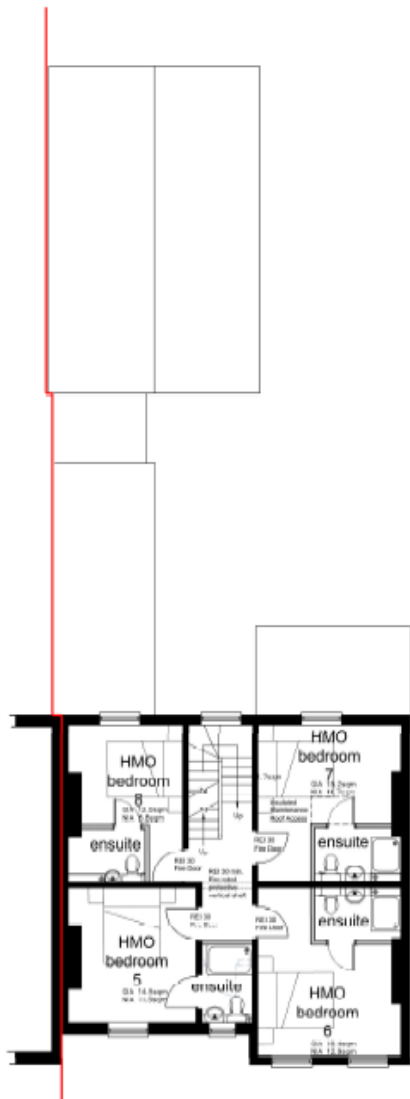
Proposed Site Plan



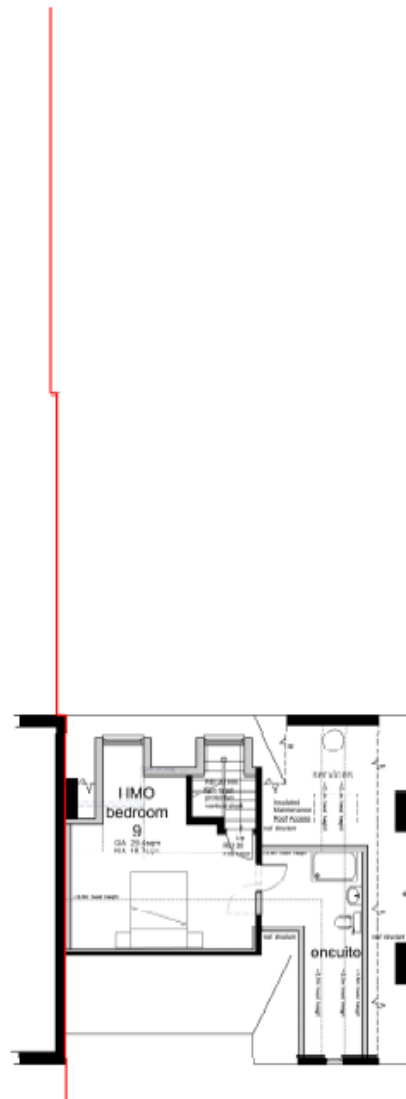
Proposed Elevations



Proposed Basement and Ground Floor Plans



Proposed First Floor Plan



Proposed Second Floor Plan

Rev A Change doors Oct 21

busbyK architect
 7 Regatta Villas, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 1SE
 Tel: 01491 299133 Email: busbyk@busbykarchitect.com
 www.busbykarchitect.com

2 HOWARD STREET, READING
 Proposed First
 & Second Floor Plans
 Job No 21015GRA Dwg No P07A
 Scale 1:100 GA3 Iss 0001

0 1 2 4 6m
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Proposed First and Second Floor Plans



Existing Roof Plan

Proposed Roof Plan

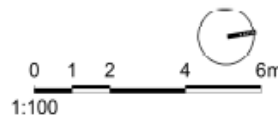
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busbyK architect
 2 Regatta Way, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 1BE
 Tel: 01491 898188, info@busbykarchitect.com
 www.busbykarchitect.com

2 HOWARD STREET, READING
 Existing & Proposed Roof
 Plans

JOB NO 21015GRA DWG NO P10A

Scale 1:100 GA3 Aug 2021



Existing and Proposed Roof Plans

UPDATE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES READING BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 12 th January 2022	ITEM NO. Page no:
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Ward: Abbey

App No: 211420/FUL

Address: 2 Howard Street, Reading

Proposal: Conversion of single dwelling (class C3) to Sui-Generis House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) for 9 persons, and conversion of the existing garage to bike and bin store, plus erection of two dormer windows and associated enabling internal works and minor external works (amended description)

Applicant: C/O Agent

Minor Application: 8 week target decision date: 9th November 2021

Extended of time date: 14th January 2022

RECOMMENDATION:

GRANT Planning Permission subject to conditions and informatives as per the main report

1. Clarification and corrections regarding the threshold calculation
 - 1.1 Since the publication of the main report, officers would wish to provide further clarification in respect of the threshold calculation. Specifically, how the number of properties within the 50 metre radius calculation are arrived at, and the estimated number of properties currently within lawful HMO use within that radius.
 - 1.2 It has been confirmed by the Council's Planning Policy Manager that when undertaking the calculation, it is the number of *residential* properties within the 50m radius that should be counted and not solely the number of buildings.
 - 1.3 The calculation the 50m radius should include buildings or parts of buildings that fall within the radius and all dwellings contained within those buildings but should not include plots where the building within that plot falls outside the radius; i.e where only garden areas fall within the radius, as per paragraph 5.31 of the SPD. Any wholly non-residential buildings are not included within the calculation.
 - 1.4 When counting the number of HMOs within the 50m radius, it is acknowledged that it is an estimate and not a definitive determination of all properties within the radius. However, the calculation is based on best available information. Paragraph 5.41 of the SPD states that, "*it is emphasised that it will not be possible to guarantee a 100% accurate count in all cases*". Further to this, in terms of where there is uncertainty about whether or not a property is an HMO, paragraph 5.41 of the SPD concludes "*Where there is significant doubt as to whether a property is an HMO, it will not be counted towards the threshold*".

- 1.5 With regard to the above, there is an error in paragraph 6.8 of the main agenda report. The total number of properties within the 50m radius, including the application site, was originally counted as 23. However, this was based on the number of buildings within the measured circle. Following confirmation that the calculation should in fact be based upon the number of residential dwellings within the 50m vicinity, the baseline figure is actually calculated as 42.
- 1.6 It is also confirmed that the number of existing lawful HMO properties within the 50m radius is 5 and not 4 as stated in paragraph 6.8 of the main agenda report.
- 1.7 Given the above, the calculation has been undertaken again and paragraph 6.8 of the main agenda report is corrected as follows:

“The total number of properties within the 50m radius, including the application site, has been calculated as ~~twenty-three~~ **forty-one**. At the time of this assessment the total number of properties in HMO use, using the above sources of data, is estimated to be ~~four~~ **five** (excluding the application site) and therefore the overall percentage is calculated as ~~17.39%~~ **12.2%** which is below the threshold of a maximum of 25%. If the application site were to become an HMO this would push the percentage to ~~21.74%~~ **14.63%** and would remain below the threshold of a maximum of 25%. In this regard, the proposals are not considered unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant loss of single-family housing. Therefore, the principle of the conversion of the application property to a 9 person large Sui Generis HMO is therefore considered acceptable subject to meeting other policy requirements below.”

- 1.8 The above clarification does not materially change the assessment of the scheme as discussed within the main agenda report and the conclusions therefore remain as published.

2. Landscaping

- 2.1 The proposed site plan shows indicative soft landscaping, including hedging to be provided at the front of the site. The applicant has confirmed in an email received 11th January 2022 that they are happy to provide mixed species hedging and other biodiversity and landscaping improvements to improve the overall biodiversity of the site. A mixed species hedge would allow for a net gain in biodiversity which is considered a benefit of the scheme. A pre-commencement condition requiring submission and approval of hard and soft landscaping is recommended in the main agenda report, which will secure this detail.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The officer recommendation remains to grant planning permission subject to the conditions and informatives as outlined in the main report.

Case Officer: Ethne Humphreys

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COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 1st June 2022

Ward: Abbey

App No.: 220125/LBC

Address: Oxford Road Primary School, 146 Oxford Road, Reading, RG1 7PJ

Proposal: Listed Building Consent for proposed works to Oxford Road Community School - repairs and refurbishment to the pitched roof and replacement of bitumen felt covering to a number of small flat roofs.

Applicant: Reading Borough Council

Deadline: 27/04/2022 - Extension of time agreed

RECOMMENDATION:

GRANT Listed Building Consent.

Conditions:

1. LB1 - Time Limit Listed Building (works)
2. LB2 - Approved Plans
3. MLC - Listed Building Materials (to be submitted and approved)

Informatives:

1. IF1 - Positive and Proactive
2. IF5 - Terms and Conditions
3. Any additional works affecting fabric of listed building will require listed building consent
4. Bats

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Oxford Road Primary School is located on the northern side of Oxford Road at the junction of Oxford Road and George Street. The property is a two story Grade II Listed building built of redbrick with a tiled pitched roof and a number of small bituminous felt flat roofs. Within the site's immediate surrounding area are residential properties of various forms. The site is located within Castle Street/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area and an Air quality Management area. There are a number of trees within the side boundary however these are not subject to Tree Preservation Order.

1.2 The Listing description for Oxford Road Primary School is as follows:

“An impressive group of buildings set behind contemporary wall and railings. Built in 1880-3 by Morris and Stallwood extended by Stallwood in 1894 they form a homogenous architectural group and a fine example of educational history. Red brick, red brick and tile dressings, tile roofs and ridge cresting. Two buildings, later linked by corridor. Attached perimeter wall and railings to Oxford Road elevation. Brick parapet wall and square piers with faceted caps. Cast iron railings and gates of paired shafts with trefoil heads above small quatrefoil panels, alternate with rectangular panels with spiral”.

- 1.3 The Castle Street/Russell Street/Oxford Road Area Appraisal note describes Oxford Road Primary School as a striking well maintained Grade II Listed building which provides a positive and active focal point for the surrounding neighborhood. The building has retained its original wooden windows and railings.
- 1.4 This application has been referred to committee as the proposed works are for a Council-own application.
- 1.5 The site location plan is as shown below:

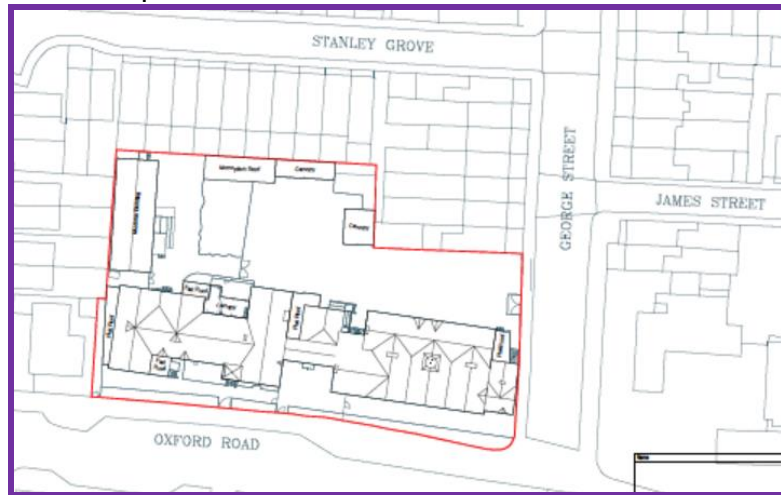


Figure 1: Location Plan (not to scale)

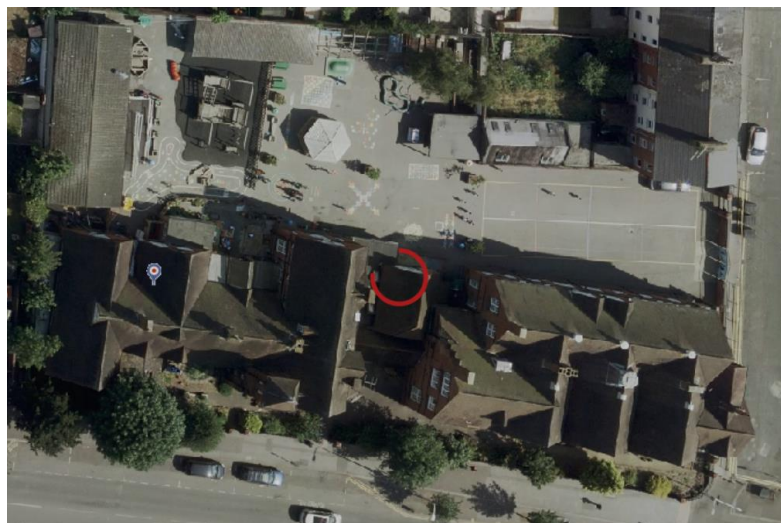


Figure 2: Oxford Road Primary School Aerial View

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The pitched roof currently has a large number of slipped or missing tiles. Previous repair works have been done to the roof. The decorative ridge tiles are damaged in a number of locations and some replacement with modern (non-matching) tiles has already taken place. The tile hung tympana (decorative area) to the gables appear in relevantly good condition, compared to the rest of the roof. Where the loft space is accessible there is remains of a previous underlay below tiles in very poor condition, possibly a straw and plaster torching. Continuation of emergency patch repairs would be uneconomical and risk water damage to the structure below. The felt flat roof above the boiler room and toilets on

west elevation has reached the end of their expected life. The boiler room roof also has significant vegetation, evidence of cracking to the felt and damage to lead flashings, possibly by vandals attempting to steal the material.

- 2.2 Accordingly, Listed Building Consent is sought for the proposed repairs and refurbishment of the pitched roof and replacement of bitumen felt covering to a number of small flat roofs. No other alterations are being proposed as part of the application.
- 2.3 The following plans and supporting documents were submitted as part of this application:

Location Plan E04948-O-001
Received 27th January 2022

Existing West Elevation Rev A
Existing South Elevation Rev A
Existing North Elevation Rev A
Existing East Elevation Rev A
Site Plan E04948-O-002
Existing Roof Make up Rev A E04948-O-003
Proposed Roof Make up Rev A E04948-O-004
Received 3rd March 2022

Oxford Road Community School Design and Access Statement
Received 23rd March 2022

Oxford Road Community School Bat Survey Report dated September 2021
Received 3rd May 2022

- 2.4 Community Infrastructure levy (CIL): The proposal is not CIL liable

3. PLANNING HISTORY

060462 - To provide an access ramp for disabled persons at rear of building
- Permitted - 14/ 3/2007

061145 - To provide an access ramp for disabled persons - permitted - 14/
3/2007

090867 - Pre-application advice for proposed works to listed building to
accord with the requirements of the Fire Officer - 14/ 9/2009

120186 - Erection of temporary modular classroom on Great Knolly Street,
recreation ground and associated play space - 26/ 6/2012

121622 - Provision of 1 temporary Classroom / Nursery Unit and associated
external works (annex to Oxford Road Primary School) - permitted - 19/
7/2012

940140 - Replacement temporary building (kitchen and dining room).
Regulation 3 - permitted - 17/ 5/1994

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 Historic England - No comments received at the time of reporting.
- 4.2 RBC Conservation and Urban Design Officer - No concerns were raised regarding the proposed works and as such no objections.
- 4.3 RBC Ecology - A bat survey report was requested and this was submitted by the agent on 3rd May 2022. Having reviewed the report, RBC ecologists were satisfied that the survey had been undertaken to an appropriate standard and concludes that the proposed works would be unlikely to affect bats. Therefore there are no objections to this application on ecological grounds.
- 4.4 Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee - No comments received
- 4.5 **Public**

Adjoining properties at Foxglove Gardens, George Street, Stanley Grove, and Oxford Road were notified of the application by letter. A site notice was also sent to the agent to be displayed at the application site.

No letters of representation have been received.

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 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.
- 5.3 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”.
- 5.3 In addition, the following national and local planning policies and guidance are relevant to this application:

National Planning Policy Framework 2021 - Section 16 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment
National Planning Guidance 2014 onwards

5.4 Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019):

- CC7: Design and the Public Realm
- EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

5.5 Other Relevant documentation/guidance/legislation

Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area Appraisal
(2020)

Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 1:
Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (Historic
England, 2016)

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2:
Managing Significance in Decision-Taking (Historic England, 2015a)
Principles of Conservation (Historic England, 2008)
Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings (British
Standards Publication BS 7913:2013, 2015).

6 APPRAISAL

The application is assessed in terms of the following:

- Design and impact on setting of the heritage assets

Design and impact on setting of the heritage assets

- 6.1 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) requires that all development must be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is situated.
- 6.2 The building is a Grade II Listed building and lies within the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area as such there is a duty imposed by Section 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requiring decision makers to have special regard to the desirability to preserve heritage assets in terms of setting, special architectural historic interests as well as preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.
- 6.3 The proposed roof works would involve the following:
- 6.3.1 Pitched Roofs
- Careful removal of existing tiles including ridge tiles and hip tiles along with mortar from ridges / verges.
 - The removed tiles will be sorted, and any re-usable tiles stored for re-use.
 - Tile hung tympana to the gables will be inspected and if there are signs of 'nail sickness' then the tiles will be numbered and removed for re-use.
 - If necessary, to remove tile hung tympana to replace fixings they will be reinstated using the number system on removal to maintain original appearance.
 - Existing lead work to valleys and flashings will be removed and sent for recycling.
 - Features such as cupolas and vent stacks will be retained in place and protected.
 - Existing cast gutter and downpipes if sound will be cleaned and painted.
 - UPVC rainwater goods and any defective cast will be replaced with new matching cast iron. Wherever possible existing gutter brackets will be re-used if sound.
 - A new tiled roof covering will be installed with a mixture of retained and replacement tiles, replacement tiles being mixed in. Ridge tiles will be fixed with lime mortar.
 - New lead will be installed to valleys, flashings and other detailing. (Code 6 to valley gutters, Code 5 for Chimney flashings & Code 4 for step flashings

& soakers).

- While access is available, any repairs required to masonry chimneys or timber work will be completed. This will be accessed once access obtained.
- A breathable sarking felt, and new timber battens will be installed to all pitched roofs.
- Where insulation has already been added above suspended ceilings no new insulation will be added.
- In portions of the building where vaulted ceilings remain, insulation will be added following the guidance of Historic England guide (HEAG070 Insulating Pitched Roofs at Rafter Level). Mineral wool insulation will be placed between the rafters and above ceilings. A breathable vapour control barrier will be placed over the rafters and a counter batten added above the vapour control layer to ensure adequate ventilation space.

6.3.2 Proposed works on the flat roofs

- Strip up and remove existing felt covering and lead.
- Install new insulation to current Building Regulations. Forming gutters in roof surface where features e.g., windows prevent
- 150mm upstand.
- Install new reinforced bitumen membrane
- Install Ublifex Lead Alternative Flashing, due to ease of access to low level flat roofs, there is a high probability of lead theft from this area.

6.4 The above schedule of works is considered to be generally satisfactory. The proposed works would be limited to the roof. The proposal would utilise salvaged roof tiles and other roofing materials. In cases where this would not be possible, the use of a like for like replacement materials is proposed. However, to ensure that the proposed replacement materials match the existing ones, samples will be required to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. A condition to secure this is recommended.

6.5 Whilst the use of bituminous flat roofing is a generally poor quality buildings material, these are for limited parts of the building and are essentially a like-for-like replacement. The use of a lead substitute for these low-level elements is acceptable in this instance, given the susceptibility to theft.

6.6 No other part of the building would be affected by the proposal and thus no harm to the internal or external of the listed building. In addition, the proposed works would preserve the character and setting/views of the Conservation Area within which the building is located.

6.7 In light of the above, it is considered that the proposed works would not have detrimental impact on the setting or character of the listed building and conservation area within which it is located, and the proposal therefore complies with the requirements of Section 66 and 72 of the Town and Country (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the statutory duties of the Council in this regard have been discharged.

Other matters

6.8 Whilst bats are not a relevant planning consideration to this LBC application, the applicant was advised to undertake a bat survey as this was

considered prudent advice, where bats are a protected species and the works involve extensive works to a historic roof. The study has found no evidence of bats and the ecologist is satisfied with the standard of the study. The works are to be conducted to a building which is also within a Conservation Area, however, impacts on the Conservation Area are not relevant to a LBC application.

Equalities Impact

6.9 When determining an application for planning permission 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 as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this 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 proposed development.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 The proposed roof repairs and refurbishment have been carefully considered in the context of national and local planning policy and guidance and other supplementary planning documents and have been found to be acceptable. Therefore, the listed building consent application is recommended for approval subject to conditions detailed above.

Case Officer: Beatrice Malama

Plans considered:

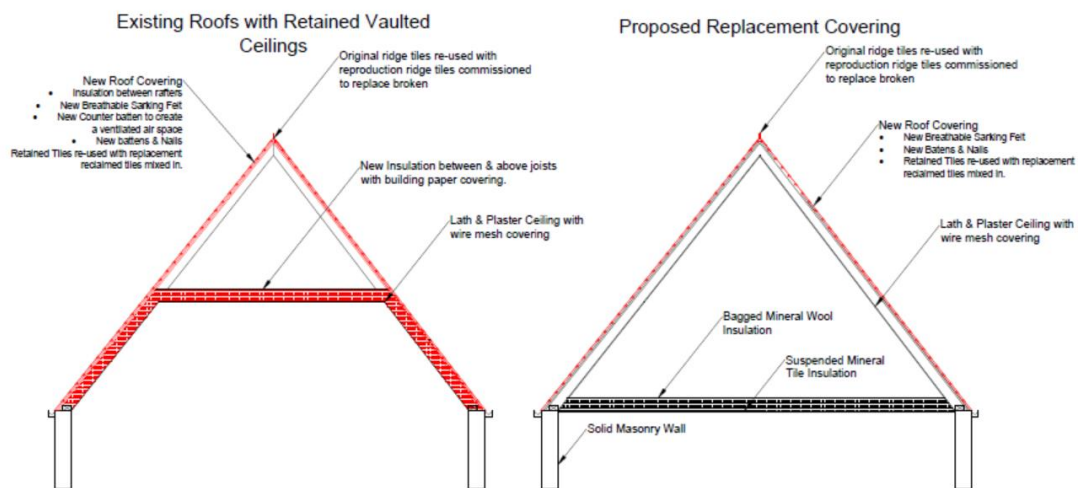


Figure 3: Proposed Roof Makeup

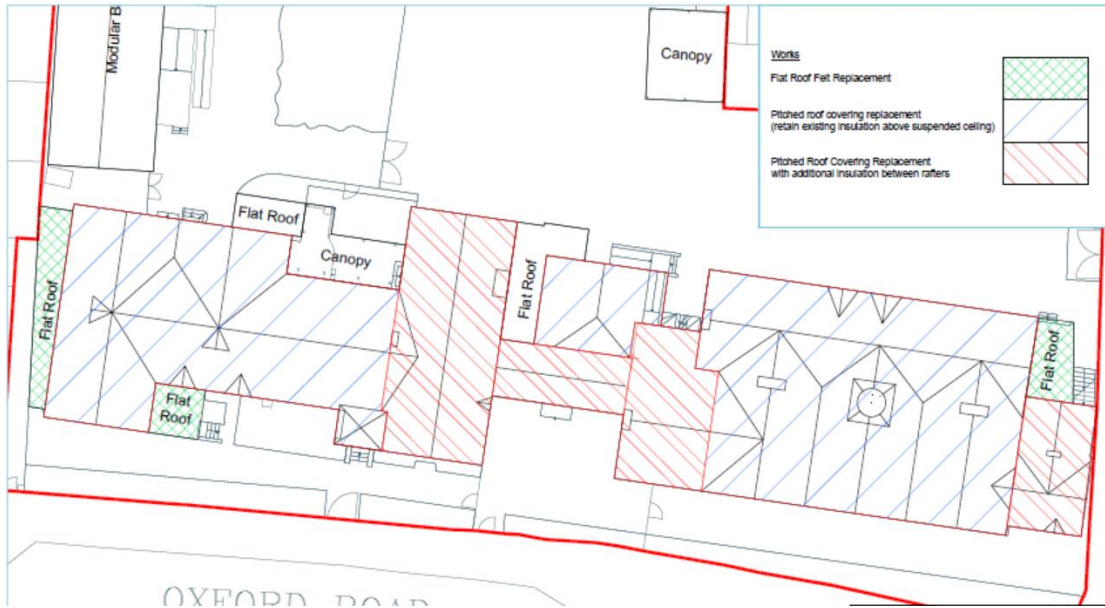


Figure 4: Proposed Roof works (not to scale)

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 1 June 2022

Ward: Southcote
App No.: 211728/OUT
Address: Dellwood Hospital Liebenrood Road
Proposal: Outline application considering access, appearance, layout and scale for the partial demolition, conversion and extension of existing building to form a care home (C2 use class) and ancillary accommodation, amended access arrangements, car parking and associated works (landscaping reserved for future consideration).
Applicant: Montpelier Estates Ltd
Major Application: - Decision date: 01/07/2022 (Extension of Time)

RECOMMENDATION

Delegate to Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to completion of a S106 legal agreement or (ii) REFUSE permission should the legal agreement not be completed by 01/07/2022 (unless officers on behalf of the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement). The legal agreement to secure the following:

- An Employment Skills and Training Plan (construction phase)
- Use of the development as a C2 care home only

And the following conditions to include:

1. Outline Time Limit - Reserved Matters to be submitted with 3 years
2. Outline Time Limit - Development to commence within 3 years or 2 years from date of approval of reserved matters
3. Outline Reserved Matters - Prior to commencement of development reserved matters in respect of landscaping to be submitted and approved
4. Outline Principles - Reserved Matters in respect of landscape to accord with principles shown in approved plans and documents
5. Approved Plans - Development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans only
6. Pre-Commencement - details of all external materials to be submitted to and approved by the LPA
7. Pre-Commencement - submission and approval of a Construction Method Statement (also including noise and dust measures)
8. Pre-Occupation - provision of vehicle parking spaces
9. Pre-Occupation - provision of vehicular access
10. Pre-Occupation - access closure with reinstatement
11. Pre-Occupation - submission, approval and provision of cycle parking
12. Pre-Occupation - submission and approval of refuse store details
13. Pre-Occupation - submission, approval and implementation of a scheme for 2 electric vehicle charging points
14. Pre-Commencement - submission, approval and implementation of Arboricultural Method Statement

15. Delivery and Servicing Hours (08:00hrs to 19:00hrs only)
16. Plant noise assessment to be submitted and approved prior to installation of any mechanical plant equipment
17. Pre-Occupation - implementation of odour control strategy
18. Reporting of Unexpected Contamination
19. Construction and/demolition standard hours (08:00hrs to 18:00hrs Mondays to Fridays, and 09:00hrs to 13:00hrs on Saturdays, and not at any time on Sundays and Bank or Statutory Holidays)
20. Pre-Occupation - submission, approval and implementation of an external lighting scheme
21. Pre-Occupation - provision of all internal and external communal areas; retention thereafter
22. Pre-Commencement - BREEAM pre-estimator report to achieve a level of Very Good (minimum score of 61.76%)
23. Pre-Occupation - BREEAM completion certificate
24. Pre-Commencement - submission and approval of a scheme of decentralised energy provision
25. Pre-Occupation provision of all lifts and retention thereafter
26. All on-site facilities to operate as ancillary to the C2 Care Home use only
27. Pre-Commencement - submission, approval and implantation of a Natural England Licence for work impacting bats
28. Pre-Occupation submission and approval of a plaque to commemorate the nurse Freda Holland

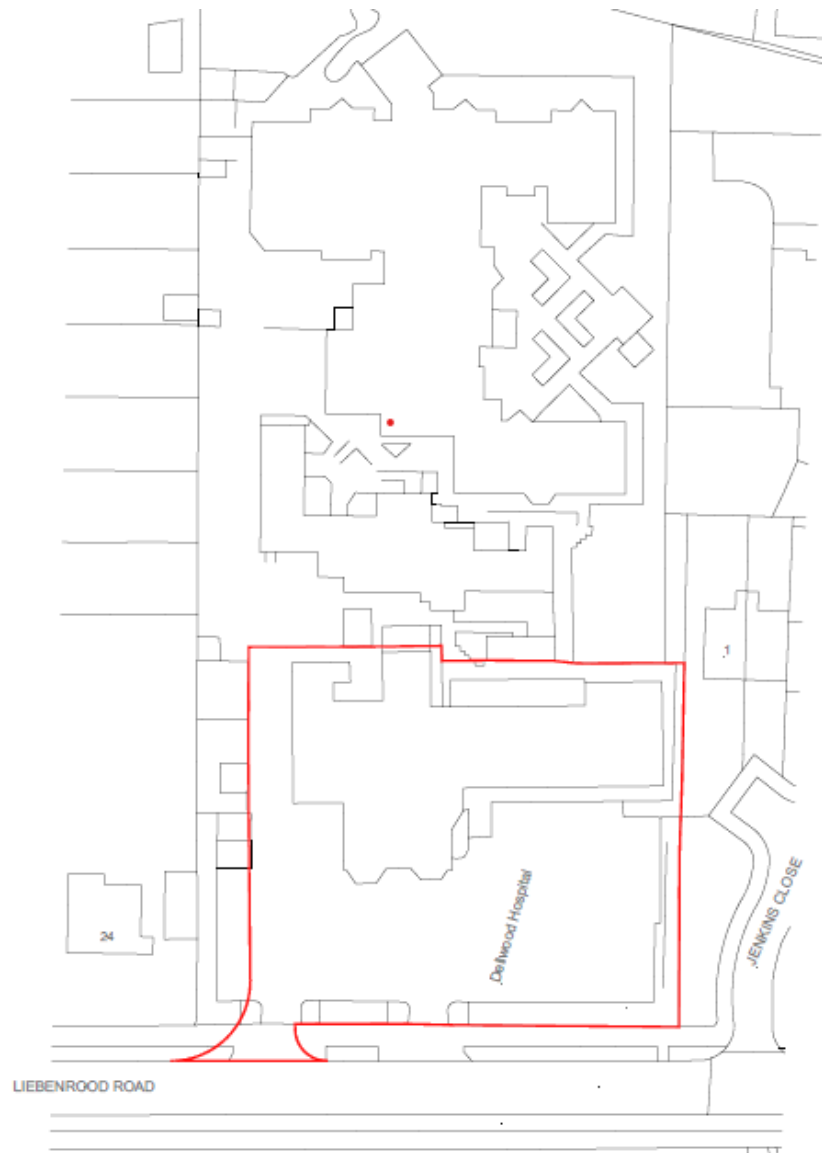
Informatives to include:

1. Positive and Proactive Statement
2. S106 Legal Agreement
3. CIL (not liable)
4. Terms and conditions
5. Building Regulations
6. Pre-commencement conditions
8. Constriction Nuisance

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site relates to the former Dellwood Community Hospital on the east side of Liebenrood Road. To the front of the building is the hospital car park accessed from Liebenrood Road with the current building set back 20m from the road frontage. To the rear (east) of the building, the remainder of the site is The Duchess of Kent Hospice. To the west of the site on the opposite side of Dellwood Road is Prospect Park which is Grade II listed on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. To the north of the site are residential properties along Liebenrood Road whilst to the south is Jenkins Close, a residential cul de sac.
- 1.2 The existing Hospital building is a two and a half storey Victorian building built in the late 1890's. The building incorporates a number of different terracotta details, red-faced brickwork, and overlapping geometric patterned clay wall tiles in the two large feature front gable roof projections that face Liebenrood Road. The building's windows comprise large stone cills and string courses and there are two large, two-storey feature bay windows to the front elevation. The building was converted into a Community Hospital and Maternity Home in 1920.

- 1.3 The hospital was the scene of a catastrophic fire on Easter Sunday in April 1954 where 13 babies sadly died. Nurse Freda Holland was awarded the George Cross for her efforts in saving the lives of some of the babies at the hospital. Understandably the building retains a strong link to the Reading community given its shared history and the fact that a substantial number of people were born there may still live locally.
- 1.4 A large unsympathetic two storey side and single storey side extensions were added to the building in the 1970's and the building continued in a health-related use as a GP surgery for the elderly up until 2005 when it was closed by the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group who declared the site surplus to requirements. The site has been vacant ever since and the service was relocated to nearby Prospect Park Hospital. The Applicant has since acquired the site from NHS Property Services. Whilst the interior of the building has been subject to significant remodelling over the years the exterior of the building remains substantially intact.
- 1.5 The Heritage Statement submitted with the application identifies that the building was one of the first properties built on Liebenrood Road. The Statement sets out that the building, by way of its external appearance (described above) and historic community association, with long history of use as a local medical/maternity facility and given it is likely a substantial proportion of the local community were born in the building) is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. Officers and the Council's Conservation and Urban Design Officer agree with this assessment of the building.
- 1.6 Paragraph 39 of the Historic Environment section of the National Planning Practice Guide (NPPG) sets out that non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.
- 1.7 A previous outline planning application at the site (ref. 210275) for a care home development which proposed demolition of the entirety of the existing building and replacement with a new build development was withdrawn following Officer concerns regarding the complete loss of the non-designated heritage asset.
- 1.8 The planning application is subject to determination by Planning Applications Committee because it is a Major category development.



Site Location Plan



View of Hospital building from Liebenrood Road



Front Elevation

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The proposal has been submitted as an Outline planning application with the only reserved matter being Landscaping.
- 2.2 The following matters are therefore required to be considered and subject to determination within this application (as defined in paragraph 006 of The National Planning Practice Guide):

Means of access - the accessibility to and within the site, for vehicles, cycles and pedestrians in terms of the positioning and treatment of access and circulation routes and how these fit into the surrounding access network

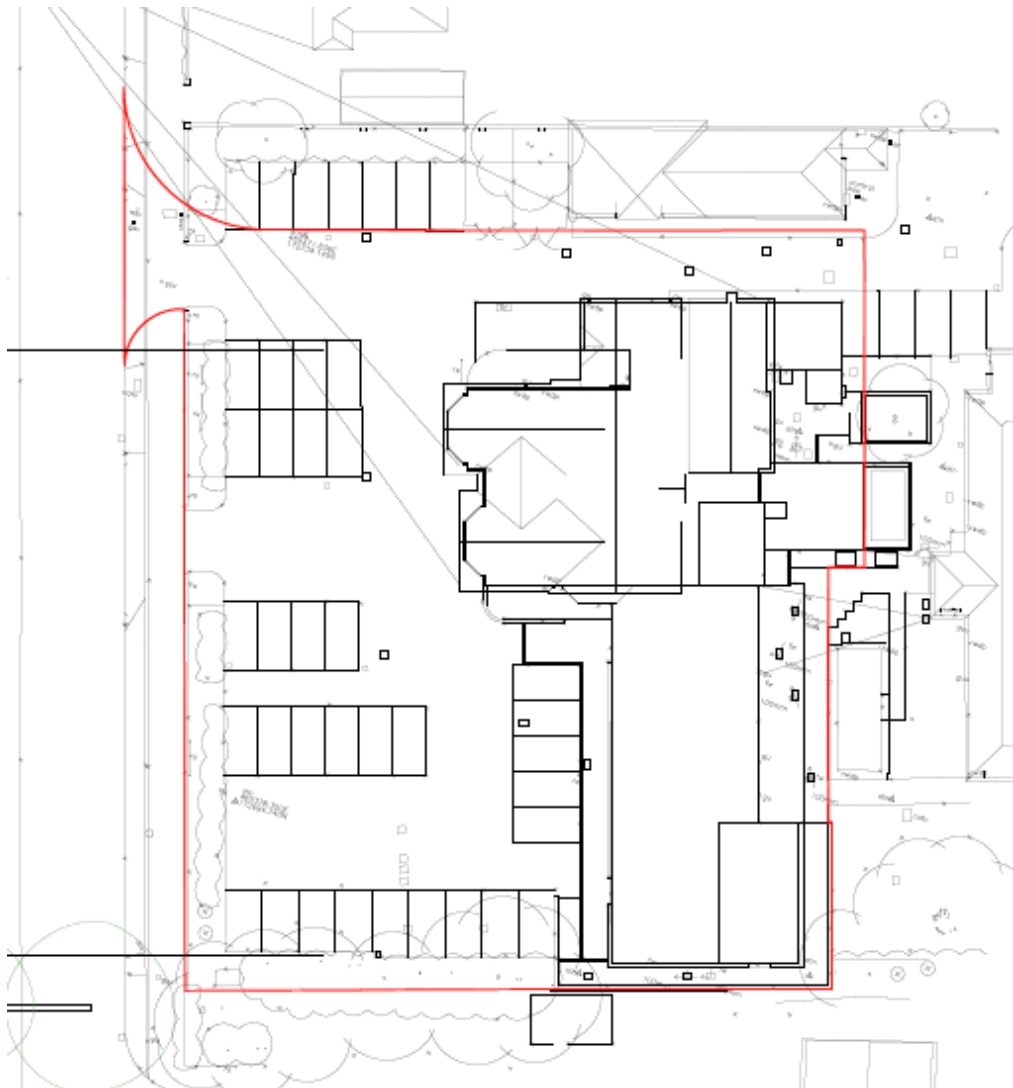
Appearance - the aspects of a building or place within the development which determine the visual impression the building or place makes, including the external built form of the development, its architecture, materials, decoration, lighting, colour and texture.

Layout - the way in which buildings, routes and open spaces within the development are provided, situated and orientated in relation to each other and to buildings and spaces outside the development

Scale - the height, width and length of each building proposed within the development in relation to its surrounding

- 2.3 The proposal is for partial demolition, conversion and extension of the existing building to form a 56-bed care home (C2 use class) and ancillary accommodation, amended access arrangements, car parking and associated works. The proposed care home would be capable of providing care to residents of all dependency levels, including those with higher dependency, who require nursing care or dementia care within a specialist unit designed to cater for their needs.

- 2.4 The proposed development incorporates retention of the original Victorian portion of the existing building and demolition of the large 1970's single storey side extension to the southern elevation of the building and two storey side extension to the north elevation. By way of proposed extension, it is proposed to add an 'L-shaped' three storey extension to the southern elevation which would extend 23m towards the southern boundary of the site with Jenkins Close and then project forwards 27m towards Liebenrood Road. A 6.2m wide and 17.5m deep three storey side element is also proposed to the north (side) and east rear elevation which incorporates an under-croft car park are accessed from the existing access way from Liebenrood Road which runs along the northern boundary of the site.



Existing Site Plan



Proposed Site Plan and Indicative Landscaping

- 2.5 The existing Victorian part of the building to be retained would house the communal facilities and day spaces of the care home with all residents' rooms and care facilities to be located within the proposed new-build extensions. The care home will be arranged over three floors with roof space used for staff facilities and ancillary spaces. In addition to the 56 en-suite bedrooms proposed there would be drug stores, assisted bathing facilities, disabled toilet facilities and communal day spaces on each floor. Communal day spaces are proposed along the western elevation along with terraces at first and second floor to allow views over Prospect Park. Ancillary bar, bistro, and hair/beauty salon facilities are also proposed at ground floor level. The development is proposed to be fully accessible and DDA compliant with lifts to serve all floors and step-free access across the ground floor of the building. Ancillary staff facilities are proposed in a small basement area to the extension.
- 2.6 In terms of appearance the extensions are proposed to reflect the architectural style and materiality of the Victorian building to be retained with roof gables, use of red brick, hanging tiles, sash windows, chimneys and red tile roofs. Soft landscaping and tree planting are proposed to the site frontage with Liebenrood Road and also to the southern site boundary with Jenkins Close. Access to the site would be retained from Liebenrood Road with a 13-space car park to the front of the site. A further 5 under-croft parking spaces would be located to the rear of the

site accessed via the existing accessway along the north boundary of the site. An enclosed bin store is proposed adjacent to the parking at the back of the building alongside facilities enabling bins to be wheeled out on collection day.

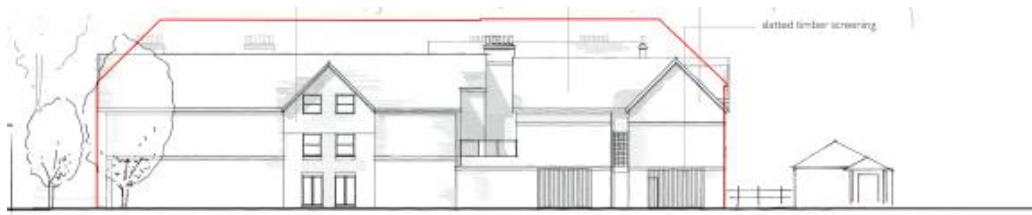
- 2.7 A central landscaped area is to be created separating the retained building with the new southern wing extension. This would provide a focus for the bistro and to the day spaces allowing movement out from these areas into the garden. Additional areas of landscaping are to be provided to the south of the building adjacent to Jenkins Close including new tree planting to replace those lost through the development. Footpaths are suitable for wheelchairs and walking frames with frequent areas to stop and rest.
- 2.8 Officers have worked with the Applicant during the course of the current application to secure reductions in the bulk and massing of the proposed extensions. The comparative visuals below show the scheme as originally submitted and as now proposed following submission of amended plans.



Scheme as originally proposed



Scheme as Amended which is under consideration within this report



Proposed Elevations showing reduction in massing following submission of amended plans

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 969022 - Residential development for 9 dwellings (social housing) - Granted
- 3.2 980225 - Replace existing external fire escape and form new internal fire escape stair. Fire precautions work to existing building - Granted
- 3.3 990236 - Single storey extension to the rear of the building to create a quiet sitting area for patients and relatives - Granted
- 3.4 111209 - Proposed siting of a new portacabin for 5 years - Granted
- 3.5 120438 - Single storey front and side extensions - Granted

- 3.6 191257 - Retain and amend the existing site access to provide an entrance of 8m in width to facilitate vehicular movements both accessing and exiting the site - Granted.
- 3.7 201275 - Outline application considering access, appearance, layout and scale involving demolition of existing hospital building (Class C2) and erection of a three-storey elderly care home facility (Class C2) including ancillary office / administration facilities, amenity space and associated car parking (landscaping reserved for future consideration) - Withdrawn

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 RBC Transport - No objection. Recommend conditions to secure pre-commencement submission and approval of a construction method statement, pre-occupation implementation of proposed access arrangements, vehicular car parking, cycle parking and refuse collection arrangements and submission and approval of a scheme of electric vehicle charging points.
- 4.2 RBC Environmental Protection - No objection. Recommend conditions to control delivery hours (0800 to 1900), submission and approval of a plant noise assessment, implementation of proposed odour controls, submission and approval of an external lighting scheme, submission and approval of a construction method statement, control of construction hours (0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday and 0900 to 1300 Saturdays and no working on Sundays or Bank Holidays), submission and approval of bin store details to ensure appropriate pest control measures and a condition to monitor and report any unexpected contamination.
- 4.3 RBC Consultant Ecologist - No objection. Recommend a condition to secure submission and approval of a licence for development works affecting bats from Natural England.
- 4.4 RBC Natural Environment - No objection. Recommend conditions to secure submission and approval of a final arboricultural method statement and a detailed hard and soft landscaping scheme.
- 4.5 RBC Conservation and Urban Design - No objection following submission of amended plans.

The current design has been created over the past year and in consultation with the Architects. Initially it was proposed to demolish the main original hospital building. It is considered to be a Non-Designated Heritage Asset and as such its demolition is a material consideration under the NPPF. Now the architects and developer have reassessed their plans for the site and have created a design that incorporates the original hospital building into the new scheme. The current proposal is supported in regard to conservation issues.

- 4.6 Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC)/Civic Society - No objection. Support the proposals.

Reading CAAC supported the original outline application to partially demolish Dellwood Community Hospital and extend Victorian 'Dellwood', subsequently used as Dellwood Maternity Home, for use as a care home. The comments below relate to the changes made in the amended plans submitted in March 2022.

We note that the reconfiguration presented in the revised plans has enabled an increase in room count from 53 to 56 (55 in withdrawn application).

The new plans are an improvement as they remove what we considered to be the visually weakest element of the original design, the gables and roofs of the southern block.

We liked the 'modern' styling of the originally proposed southern wing of the care home in the original plans which clearly differentiated it from the Victorian Dellwood. The proposed mirroring of Dellwood in the new wing does not work as well. Consideration should be given the arrangement of the windows of the public rooms facing the park and changing them to a larger and more modern format (as in the original plans). A variation in brick colour for this wing (as in the original plans), rather than trying to match the original Dellwood colour, would also enhance the distinction. These two changes would strike a balance between the original and revised plans.

Finally, we are still unclear whether the doorway of old Dellwood is to be glazed or bricked up and the materials to be used.

Reading CAAC support this application which is a considerable improvement on the withdrawn application as it retains Dellwood and has a much improved and less dominating layout on the site. The current proposal has a neutral impact on listed Prospect Park on the other side of Liebenrood Road.

Public consultation

4.7 A planning application site notice was displayed at the site on 3rd November 2021 and the following properties were notified of the application by letter:

- 1 to 22 Dorchester Court
- 2 to 16 Kearsley Road (evens only)
- Flats 1 to 6 no. 18 Liebenrood Road
- 24 to 30 Liebenrood Road (evens only)
- 1 to 12 Jenkins Close
- The Maples Resource Centre Amethyst Lane
- Dellwood Community Hospital 22 Liebenrood Road

4.8 Seven letters of objection have been received raising the following points:

- Concern about loss of on-site car parking spaces and provision of insufficient on-site parking for all staff and visitors resulting in an increase in on-street parking on surrounding roads which are already busy resulting in obstructions and highway safety hazards
- Use of public transport by residents as envisaged in the supporting Transport Statement is not realistic
- Overlooking and loss of privacy to nearby existing surrounding dwellings particularly flats at Dorchester Court
- Lack of appropriate on-site cycle parking and electric vehicle charging points

4.9 The Sue Ryder Duchess of Kent Hospice to the rear of the site have also submitted comments on the application and whilst supportive of the principle of the proposed development they have raised similar parking concerns to those outlined above as well as seeking assurance from the Applicant that agreement for retention of adequate signage for the Hospice to the Liebenrood Road frontage. (*Officer Comment - new/amended signage provision would be a civil matter between neighbouring landowners and also subject to separate advertisement regulations which may require an application for advertisement consent*)

- 4.10 The Applicant also carried out their own public consultation exercise prior to submission of the planning application in form of a leaflet drop to existing nearby residential and commercial properties.

5 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

5.1 National and Local Policy

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

National Planning Policy Framework (2021) sections:

- 2 Achieving Sustainable Development
- 5 Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes
- 9 Promoting Sustainable Transport
- 11 Making Effective Use of Land
- 12 Achieving Well Design Places
- 15 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
- 16 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

5.2 Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

Policy CC1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)

Policy CC2 (Sustainable Construction and Design)

Policy CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change)

Policy CC4 (Decentralised Energy)

Policy CC6 (Accessibility and Intensity of Development)

Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)

Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)

Policy H6 (Accommodation for Vulnerable People)

Policy EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment)

Policy EN4 (Locally Important Heritage Assets)

Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green network)

Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland)

Policy EN15 (Air Quality)

Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources)

Policy EN17 (Noise Generating Equipment)

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 OU1 (New and Existing Community Facilities)

5.3 Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

Employment, Skills and Training (2013)

Planning Obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (2015)

Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy (2020)

6 APPRAISAL

The main issues in the consideration of this application are:

- Principle of development
- Layout, Design and Appearance
- Residential Amenity

- Transport Matters
- Natural Environment
- Other Considerations

Principle of the Development

- 6.1 The proposed development is to provide a care home facility to cater for people of all dependency levels, including those with higher dependency, who require nursing care or dementia care within a specialist unit designed to cater for their needs.
- 6.2 The proposed redevelopment of the site would align with the general principles of the NPPF which states that the use of previously developed land, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist. The application site is not an allocated site for development with the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
- 6.3 Policy H6 (Accommodation for Vulnerable People) allows development providing specialist accommodation for vulnerable people to address identified needs, including accommodation that enables occupants to live as independently as possible, particularly older people and people with physical disabilities.
- 6.4 The supporting text to Policy H6 sets out that Reading is facing a range of housing needs over the coming years, and it is vital to recognise some of the more complex needs that should be taken account of specifically in future provision. Whilst some of these derive from an ageing population (for instance, the amount of people in Reading aged over 65 is expected to increase by more than 60% to 203685), they also emerge from the fact that many people with existing needs are in poor or unsuitable accommodation. Groups covered by this section include elderly people, people with learning or physical disabilities, people with mental health problems, young people at risk, children, people with a drug or alcohol problem, ex-offenders, homeless people, asylum seekers and people fleeing domestic violence. The provision of the proposed care home facility to cater for people of all dependency levels, including those with higher dependency, who require nursing care or dementia care is therefore considered to meet an identified need.
- 6.5 Policy H6 goes on to state that development for specialist accommodation for vulnerable people will fulfil the following criteria (officer comments in *italics*):
- Developments will, where possible, locate accommodation close to, or incorporate, relevant community facilities, such as healthcare services, or day care for elderly people; *(the proposals incorporate a number of on-site facilities/services including drug stores, assisted bathing facilities, disabled toilet facilities, communal day spaces on each floor and ancillary bar, bistro, and hair/beauty salon facilities)*
 - Where development would result in a loss of general housing, it must meet identified needs in the most up-to-date Housing Strategy and be able to accommodate at least an equivalent number of people; *(the proposals would not result in the loss of housing)*
 - Larger developments will include adequate provision for ambulance access; *(Access retained from Liebenrood Road)*
 - Development will incorporate areas of green space, which are particularly important for many groups of vulnerable people; *(Communal landscaped courtyard green space areas proposed with the development - this is an*

outline planning application with matters of landscaping reserved for consideration at a later date)

- Developments within residential areas will be designed to respect the residential character of their surroundings; and *(proposed design is considered acceptable in the context of the existing site and surrounding area - see Layout, Design and Appearance section of this report)*

- Where a development requires a new physical link between buildings and where the gaps between buildings form part of the character of a street, the need for a linkage must be clearly demonstrated, and must avoid negative impacts on the character of the street *((proposed design is considered acceptable in the context of the existing site and surrounding area - see Layout, Design and Appearance section of this report)*

6.6 The proposal seeks to provide residential care home accommodation under the C2 use class (Use for the provision of residential accommodation and care to people in need of care). The supporting information submitted as part of the application provides details about the nature of the use proposed and states that:

- The Applicant, 'Montpelier Estates' was founded in 1996 and specialise in designing and delivering nursing and residential homes, health centres, surgeries, hospitals and independent hospitals. Montpelier are founded on the principle that good quality therapeutic design supports the delivery of high-quality healthcare and leads to more positive outcomes for patients, families and carers. Since inception Montpelier has provided over 500 secure hospital beds, over 1,000 nursing beds and 200 rehabilitation and other specialist service beds.
- The care home would provide specialist care for vulnerable people of all dependency levels, including those with higher dependency, who require nursing care or dementia care within a specialist unit designed to cater for their needs
- The care home will meet a variety of elderly needs and will enable residents to stay for varied lengths of time with 24/7 medical care if required.
- The proposed development would offer access to a range of communal facilities including drug stores, assisted bathing facilities, disabled toilet facilities, communal day spaces on each floor and ancillary bar, bistro, and hair/beauty salon facilities for residents.
- The proposed care home would be fully accessible with level access across the ground floor and lift access to upper floors within.
- The care home would be served by 55-60 full time equivalent staff and 56 residents at capacity, however only 20-22 staff will be on site at any one time.
- Significant outside green space is proposed for residents.

6.7 Based on the above information with regard to the nature of the proposed care home use, how it would operate, and the range and level of care offered, Officers are satisfied that the proposed use would fall within the C2 planning use class. It

is proposed to secure this use in practice by way of a section 106 legal agreement which will secure a range of matters associated with the proposed use:

- Class C2 use only
- Not to permit any of the accommodation to be sold / disposed of / occupied / otherwise used as Class C3 dwellinghouses at any time
- To provide a copy of a written log of current occupiers and associated details within 10 working days of a written request from the Council.

- 6.8 The terms of the s106 agreement would ensure that the development could only operate as a Class C2 residential care home use only. It is considered pertinent to specify that the development shall not be occupied/sold/disposed of or otherwise used as Class C3 dwellinghouses at any time given the subtle differences between the two use classes and differing requirements of a Class C3 use. Notably the nature of accommodation proposed would not be considered to offer a standard of residential amenity suitable for C3 use, whilst a C3 use would also be subject to requirements to provide affordable housing (either on-site or by way of a financial contribution towards off-site provision of affordable housing elsewhere within the Borough) unlike the proposed C2 use. It should be noted that the application seeks permission for C2 use only and not C2A (Secure Residential Institutions). Provision of a C2A secure institution would likely require additional external and internal works to provide a secure facility which would be unlikely to be acceptable given the heritage sensitivities of the building and site. Therefore, a restriction of the development to C2 use only is considered to be further justified in this respect.
- 6.9 With the above elements secured via legal agreement, it is considered that the nature of the use will be suitably managed. It is noted that there is no prescribed requirement relating to the age of future occupiers. Officers consider that there is no overriding planning policy requirement to restrict the age of occupiers in this instance. More specifically, the February 2016 Strategic Housing Market Assessment demonstrates that housing need exists for specialist accommodation across all age groups. Moreover, it is also considered that officers are applying due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 by not restricting the age of occupiers in this instance.
- 6.10 The proposed development includes a range of on-site facilities including restaurant, laundry, and staff offices dedicated to residents and staff and as such they are ancillary to the care home use. As set out in Policy H6 such ancillary facilities to accommodation for vulnerable people are not required to fulfil the location tests in national and local planning policy. A condition is recommended to ensure the on-site facilities included within the development remain ancillary to the proposed C2 care home use and these facilities cannot operate as independent standalone businesses. This is to mitigate against any potential increase in vehicle movements and disturbance to neighbour amenity if these facilities began to operate independently.
- 6.11 Also of relevance is Policy OU1 (Additional and Existing Community Facilities) states that proposals for new, extended or improved community facilities will be acceptable, particularly where this will involve the co-location of facilities on a single site. The application site was most recently in use as a doctor's surgery but has been vacant since 2005. The proposals would replace the previous vacant community use with a new community use and would be located directly adjacent to an existing health care use (Hospice) which is considered to accord with Policy OU1.

- 6.12 Subject to the terms of the section 106 agreement referred to above the principle of a care home on the site is considered acceptable and would accord with Policies H6 and OU1.
- 6.13 The site has historically been in healthcare related uses, but the proposals have the potential to intensify this use within what is a predominantly residential area. Whilst the principle of the continued healthcare use is considered to be acceptable the potential intensification of this use proposed by the care home needs to be considered. The impact in terms of additional built form and users of the site on the surrounding area will be covered in the following sections of this report.

Layout, Design and Appearance

- 6.14 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) states that all development must be of high design quality that maintains the character and appearance of the area within which it is located including layout, landscape, density, scale and architectural detail and materials.
- 6.15 As set out in the Introduction section of this report the existing building is considered, by way of its appearance and historic association with the community, to be a non-designated heritage asset. Paragraph 203 of the NPPF sets out that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 6.16 Policy EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) states that development proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings. Policy EN4 (Locally Important Heritage Assets) states that development proposals that affect locally important heritage assets will demonstrate that development conserves architectural, archaeological or historical significance which may include the appearance, character and setting of the asset. Planning permission may be granted in cases where a proposal could result in harm to or loss of a locally important heritage asset only where it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development significantly outweigh the asset's significance.
- 6.17 Following discussions with Officers in relation to the previously withdrawn application for a care home on the site (ref. 201275) the proposed development seeks to retain the original historic portion of the Victorian building. The original portion of the building displays external features which contribute to the building's pleasant aesthetic, grandeur and historic significance including roof gables, use of red brick, hanging tile sash windows, projecting bays, chimneys and red tile roofs. The proposed demolition of the modern unsympathetic extensions, which are not fit for purpose for continued health care use of the site or for the proposed care home use, is not considered harmful to the building's heritage significance. These extensions are not considered to have architectural merit and ultimately detract from the merit of the appearance and character of the original portion of the building.
- 6.18 The heritage statement submitted with the application sets out that the original retained portion of the building would be subject to restoration works as part of the proposed development to ensure it is fit for purpose for the proposed use. This would include, whilst considered to be in good order generally, replacement roof

tiles, lead flashings, windows, doors and other joinery where required. Reinstatement of matching brickwork and pointing following removal of modern extensions is also proposed as well as retention and restoration (where required) or external cast iron rainwater goods and waste pipes. Conditions are recommended to secure detail of this external restoration/reinstatement works.

- 6.19 The heritage statement also evidences that the building is in a poor condition internally with lack of ventilation meaning damp has taken effect and original staircases, fireplaces and chimney breasts having been removed previously whilst the addition of previous modern extensions, electrical and other services has further eroded elements of the building's original fabric. As such it is proposed to strip out the internals of the building back to the brick structure and provide fit for purposes accommodation to adhere to current building regulation and care standards.
- 6.20 Officers welcome retention and restoration of the original portion of the non-designated heritage asset which is considered to contribute positively to the character and visual amenity of the surrounding area. Key to the assessment of the application is also the form of the proposed extensions to the building and their impact on the significance of the non-designated heritage asset but also the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 6.21 The proposed L shaped extension to southern flank elevation of the building would reflect the footprint of the existing single storey 1970's side extension to be demolished. Notably the extension would not adjoin the original south elevation of the building but rather would connect to the host building via the rear part of the proposed new extensions. Whilst the extension is proposed to be of greater massing, at three storeys, its height would remain below that of the host original building, which whilst two storey contains significantly greater floor to ceiling heights than modern buildings. Whilst this extension is significant and creates a new wing of accommodation that is larger than the original part of the building to be retained, the application site itself is large with much of the space currently taken up by the frontage car park visible from Liebenrood Road and with the original part of the building to be retained sited in the north-east corner of the site only. Despite the significant scale of the proposed southern flank extension, it would be sited such that there would be a 5m separation to the southern flank boundary with Jenkins Close and similarly despite the significant forward projection of the extension a 6.5m set back from Liebenrood Road would be provided.
- 6.22 The L shaped layout of the extension would also provide relief to the host building to be retained in terms of its setting through provision of a 9m wide area of soft landscaping between the north flank elevation of the new wing and southern flank elevation of the existing building.
- 6.23 The three-storey element of the extension to the north and rear elevation of the building would similarly reflect the general layout of the existing extensions to the building to be removed which are between three and single storey in scale. Again, whilst the proposed extension would be of greater massing this would retain a subservient relationship to the core original part of the building to be retained.
- 6.24 In design terms the proposed extensions have been designed to reflect the architectural style and materiality of the original Victorian element of the building to be retained. The proposals include gable pitched roofs, use of red brick and tile hanging sash windows, red tile roofs and chimneys which are considered to

integrate well with the existing building and to present a building of high-quality design when viewed from the surrounding area.

- 6.25 Comments from the Conservation Area Advisory Committee have queried what will happen to the original front door of the building. The Applicant has confirmed that whilst the new main entrance to the building would be to the front of the northern extension to the building the original front door would be retained and would not be bricked up or replaced. Comments in respect of the use of contrasting colour brickwork to the original building are noted and exact specifications would be secured by way of condition.
- 6.26 In overall design terms, it is considered that the proposed extensions would sit comfortably within the parameters of the site and allow for provision of significant areas of soft landscaping, tree planting and green space within the development. Whilst soft landscaping details are a reserved matter for consideration at a later date the site in its current form is entirely covered in hardstanding and the provision of soft landscaping and tree planting on the site as indicated in principle on the proposed plans, particularly to the Liebenrood Road street scene is a benefit of the development and an enhancement to the character of the surrounding area. Car parking currently spans the full width of the area to the front of the existing building and site frontage and the proposed reduction in spaces and addition of soft landscaping and tree planting is considered to be a significant enhancement to the Liebenrood Road street-scene. Whilst the proposed extensions are a significant increase in massing compared to the existing situation it is considered that they retain a suitable level of subservience to the original building.
- 6.27 It is considered that the continued historic healthcare related use of the site, retention of the original part of the Victorian building, subservient form of the extensions, together with the proposed sympathetic and high-quality design and increase in on-site landscaping and tree planting would ensure the development preserves the significance of the host non-designated heritage asset and would maintain and enhance the character of the surrounding area. A condition is recommended to secure provision of a plaque on the building in memory of nurse Freda Holland's heroic actions following the fire at the former hospital in 1954.
- 6.28 The proposals are not considered to materially impact on the setting of the Grade II listed Prospect Park located on the opposite side of Liebenrood Road. Notably the grade II listed Mansion House located centrally within the park is located over 500m from the application site such that there is considered to be no direct impact on the setting of this building. There are developments of a variety of styles found around the extensive perimeter of the park. There would only be direct visibility of the proposed development from the eastern boundary of the park along Liebenrood Road where the proposed extensions would respect the general building line to this part of the street and would not project any closer to the park or road frontage. The proposals are considered to present a design of suitable scale and design quality which together with the reduction in frontage car parking and scope to enhance the soft landscaping and tree planting provision on the site, it is considered that the proposals would not materially impact upon the setting of the park.
- 6.29 The proposals are considered to accord with Policies CC7, EN1 and EN4.

Residential Amenity

- 6.30 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) seeks that development proposals should safeguard the amenity of both existing and future occupiers and Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) seeks that development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment and sensitive receptors in terms of pollution. Policy EN15 (Air Quality) seeks to protect from the impacts of poor air quality.

Future Occupiers

- 6.31 For future occupiers of the proposed units, it is considered that a high quality of accommodation will be provided. Each of the proposed rooms offers en-suite accommodation and all units would be provided with good levels of outlook, daylighting and privacy. The rooms sizes proposed are slightly smaller than the average studio flat and whilst the Local Planning Authority does not have adopted room sizes for care home accommodation, residents would benefit from a wide range of on-site communal facilities and open space which would be a significant benefit and contribute to the overall quality of accommodation on offer. The extensive landscaped grounds and communal garden areas are also considered to be a significant benefit of the quality of accommodation on offer. It is considered reasonable to include a condition detailing that all communal areas will be ready for use at the time of first occupation and thereafter retained.

Surrounding Occupiers

- 6.32 The closest residential occupiers to the proposed development are no. 1 Jenkins Close to the south and no. 24 Liebenrood Road to the north. The southern flank wall of the proposed extension would be positioned 5.5m from the boundary with the front driveway of no.1 Jenkins Close and 9m from dwelling. Officers consider this separation would be sufficient to prevent any undue overbearing impact of the proposed extension whilst additional tree planting is also indicated along this boundary (albeit landscaping is a reserved matter). Furthermore, the proposed extension would be located to the front of the adjacent dwelling such that any relationship between facing care home bedroom windows on the southern flank elevation of the extension would be at an angle and this together with the separation distance is not considered to result in a relationship where any undue overlooking or loss of privacy would occur.
- 6.33 The north flank elevation of the extension would be set 12m from the side boundary with the rear garden of no. 24 Liebenrood Road. Whilst this elevation again incorporates windows to care home bedrooms, the separation distance is considered sufficient to prevent any undue overbearing impact from the extension and given the direct relationship between any windows would be with the rearmost part of the adjacent garden no undue overlooking or loss of privacy is considered to result.
- 6.34 The range of facilities on offer to residents of the care home is such that there would be regular deliveries to the development. Environmental Protection Officers have raised concern that this may result in noise disturbance to existing and future residential occupiers and therefore delivery hours are recommended to be controlled via condition to take place only between 0800-1900 only.
- 6.35 On-site kitchen facilities would also be provided. An odour assessment in relation to kitchen activities and the proposed ventilation and extraction measures has been submitted as part of the application and Environmental Protection Officers have confirmed that the measures proposed would be sufficient to prevent any

undue kitchen odours adversely affecting surrounding occupiers, implementation of which would be secured by condition. A condition is also proposed ensure that any additional extraction or other plant equipment cannot be installed until a noise assessment has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, to prevent any harmful noise impact to surrounding occupiers.

- 6.36 Environmental Protection Officers have also raised concern about the impacts of external lighting associated with the proposed development and impact on surrounding occupiers. As such a condition is recommended to secure submission and approval of an external lighting scheme.
- 6.37 An internal bin store for the proposed development is proposed at ground floor level within the under-croft car park access from the accessway along the north boundary of the site from Liebenrood Road. A condition is recommended to require further details of the proposed bin storage area to be submitted to ensure this is designed and managed in a way that prevents vermin and pests accessing the bins.
- 6.38 Conditions are also recommended to secure submission and approval of a construction method statement to ensure existing occupiers are not adversely impact upon by construction noise and dust, while further conditions are proposed to control construction hours (08:00hrs to 18:00hrs Mondays to Fridays, and 09:00hrs to 13:00hrs on Saturdays, and not at any time on Sundays and Bank or Statutory Holidays) and to prevent burning of construction waste on site.
- 6.39 A condition to secure a construction method statement for control of construction noise and dust is also recommended to ensure implementation of the proposed development does not adversely impact on existing surrounding occupiers. Given the historic medical use of the site a condition is also proposed for monitoring and reporting of any contamination identified during the construction process and provision submission and approval of a contamination remediation scheme if required.
- 6.40 Subject to the recommended conditions the proposals are considered to accord with Policies EN15, EN16 and CC8.

Transport Matters

- 6.41 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 relates matters relating to development.
- 6.42 Liebenrood Road is a classified Road and is a main transport corridor. The site is located within Zone 3, secondary Core Area, but close to the borders of zone 2 of the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. Typically, these areas are within 400m of a Reading Buses high frequency 'Premier Route', which provides high quality bus routes to and from Reading town centre and other local centre facilities.
- 6.43 Planning permission ref. 191257 was approved for a new shared access to the site for vehicles and pedestrians which is also to be shared with the hospice facilities to the rear. The current proposals seek to utilise this revised access for the proposed car home development replacing the existing separate entrance and exit points to the site. The proposed access is already subject to a separate planning permission and is considered to be acceptable for the proposed care home use. A condition is

recommended to secure full implementation of the access prior to occupation of the care home. The accessway to the Hospice to the rear along the northern boundary of the site would be retained as existing.

- 6.44 In accordance with the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD the required parking standard for C2 development is 1 car parking space per full time equivalent staff and 1 per 4 residents. The existing site contains 34 parking spaces to the site frontage on Liebenrood Road. The proposed development would result in the overall reduction of parking with 18 spaces proposed which is a net loss of 15 spaces. A Transport Statement has been submitted in support of the application which sets out that it is expected that 20-22 staff would be on site at the busiest times during the morning shift and based on a 56-room proposal, 13 spaces would be required for the residents. 20 spaces would be required for 20 full time staff. The submitted Transport Statement sets out that residents would not be provided with car parking at the development due to the level of care required whilst many of the staff would work on a part time basis. A trip rate assessment has also been carried out and submitted for the proposed development based on a typical care home operation which estimates a demand for 14 spaces (including parking for visitors). RBC Transport Officers are satisfied that the trip rate assessment has been carried out to an appropriate standard and that the 18-spaces proposed are sufficient to accommodate the needs of the care home in this instance. Transport Officers have confirmed that the dimensions and layout of the parking spaces are acceptable and provision of all the spaces prior to occupation of the care home would be secured by way of condition.
- 6.45 In accordance with Policy TR5 the proposed development would incorporate two electric vehicle charging points. Full detail and implementation of which would be secured by way of condition.
- 6.46 In terms of cycle parking facilities the proposed development is required to provide one space per three full time equivalent staff members (7 spaces based upon a maximum of 20 staff on site at busiest times). Two covered and secure cycle store areas are proposed within the development at ground floor level to accommodate 10 cycle spaces which exceeds the Council standards and is considered acceptable. Full details of the layout of the cycle spaces would be secured by way of planning
- 6.47 Tracking diagrams have been submitted with the plans which indicate that servicing and refuse collection can be undertaken safely within the site with sufficient space for vehicles to turn.
- 6.48 A condition is recommended to secure the submission of a construction method statement prior to commencement of development to ensure the construction is undertaken in a manner which does not result in undue disturbance upon the local transport network.
- 6.49 Subject to the recommended conditions the proposals are considered to accord with Policies TR1, TR3 and TR5.

Natural Environment

- 6.50 Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) seeks that development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and should provide for a net gain of biodiversity wherever possible by protecting, enhancing and incorporating features of biodiversity on and adjacent to development sites and by providing new tree planting and wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements wherever practicable. Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) states that individual trees,

groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance, and Reading's vegetation cover will be extended. Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) sets out that good design should incorporate appropriate landscaping.

Trees and Landscaping

- 6.51 The existing site whilst largely surfaced in landscaping does contain some existing trees and hedgerow located around the site boundary. There are eighteen trees/hedgerows on or directly adjacent to the site boundary and one notable group of shrubs. None of the trees are not subject of TPO's and nor is the site located within a Conservation Area, however the site is located within an area of strong green character including Prospect Park.
- 6.52 A Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) has been submitted with the application. This identifies that the highest quality trees are two limes located just outside the southern site boundary on the grassed verge of Jenkins Close. The Tree Survey classifies these as category 'B' trees which are trees of moderate quality. These are considered to be a significant feature within the wider Liebenrood Road landscape in keeping with the limes on the eastern boundary of Prospect Park and are to be retained as part of the proposed development. The RBC Natural Environment Officer is satisfied that he submitted Arboricultural Method Statement demonstrates suitable mitigation to ensure these trees would be protected during construction of the proposed development.
- 6.53 All other trees on the site are classified as C category trees (trees of low quality) or U category trees (trees of a quality that is not suitable for retention). Five trees, a hedgerow and a group of shrubs are proposed to be removed from the site to accommodate the proposed development. The RBC Natural Environment Officer notes that whilst these features are not considered to have arboricultural value in their own right they do as a collective add to the positive canopy coverage and green character of the area. However, it is noted that there is significant potential within the site to increase the level of tree planting and green coverage over and above the existing situation.
- 6.54 Whilst this is an outline planning application and landscaping is a reserved matter for consideration at a later date, indicative landscaping proposals have been provided which indicate new tree planting to the Liebenrood Road frontage and to the southern boundary with Jenkins Close. Officers are content that there is sufficient scope to provide an acceptable degree of landscaping under the reserved matter and that based on the indicative details submitted would be able to achieve an enhancement in terms of tree canopy coverage, particularly to the Liebenrood Road frontage.
- 6.55 Subject to a condition to secure a final Arboricultural Method Statement and securing landscaping details a reserved matters the proposals are considered to accord with Policies EN14 and CC7.

Ecology

- 6.56 The bat survey report submitted with the application identifies that the building hosts two bat roosts (a common pipistrelle day roost and a brown long eared day roost). It is therefore very likely that the proposed works would disturb roosting bats. The report contains a number of mitigation measures including good practice measures for working around bats and provision of four bat boxes integrated into the

new development and one tree mounted bat box. Given the development has the potential to impact on bats a licence for development works affecting bats will need to be obtained from Natural England prior to commencement of any works which would further detail mitigation measures in line with the provisions of the Habitat Regulations. Therefore, the RBC Ecological Adviser recommends that a condition is applied to secure submission and approval of a licence from Natural England prior to commence me to works on site. On this basis the proposals are considered to accord with Policy EN12.

Other Considerations

Sustainability

- 6.57 Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) states that all major non-residential development (non C3 uses) are required to meet a BREEAM Excellent standard where possible. Policy CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change) states that all new development should be designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. Policy CC4 (Decentralised Energy) seeks that major category development should consider the inclusion of decentralised energy provision or connection to existing decentralised energy provision where this is present in the vicinity of an application site.
- 6.58 A Sustainability Statement has been submitted with the application. This sets out that the development is projected to achieve a BREEAM Very Good Standard (score of 61.79%). Whilst this is below the Excellent Standard (score of 70%) sought by Policy CC2 the report sets out that this is principally as a result of the retention of the original Victorian element of the building) which due to its age and structure means the development falls down on a number of scoring elements of BREEAM such as thermal efficiency which would require significant intervention to original building fabric to overcome. Officers have worked with the Applicant to secure a scheme which retains the original part of the building which as set out earlier in this report is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. Any further intrusion or removal of original fabric would likely be harmful to the buildings historic character and heritage significance. The development would also still score well in BREEAM terms being well above the minimum score for Very Good Standard (55%). In overall terms Officers consider that the development strikes the appropriate balance between sustainability of design construction and preservation of a heritage asset.
- 6.59 The Sustainability Statement also sets out that the development would include a number of measures to adapt to climate change including energy efficient lighting, building materials, maximising access to daylight to all rooms which are well served by natural light and natural ventilation as well as provision of landscaped grounds, tree planting and a scheme of Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) which would align with the requirements of Policy CC3 in providing a development which considers adaptation to climate change.
- 6.60 The Sustainability Statement also considers provision of decentralised energy provision within the proposed development. This notes that there is not an existing decentralised source nearby that the development can connect to but sets out that the development would have the capability to provide an on-site decentralised energy provision in the form of photovoltaic panels, combined heat and power or air source heat pumps. A condition is recommend to secure full details of a scheme of decentralised energy provision.

- 6.61 The development is proposed to be fully accessible and disabled access compliant with lifts to serve all floors and step free access across the ground floor of the building.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 6.62 The Council's Community Infrastructure (CIL) charging schedule sets out that care homes are not liable for CIL.

Employment, Skills and Training

- 6.63 In accordance Policy CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) and the Council's Employment, Skills and Training Supplementary Planning Document the developer is required to provide for a Construction Employment and Skills Plan which identifies and promotes employment opportunities generated by the proposed development, or other developments within Reading, for the construction phase of the proposed development. This or an equivalent financial contribution in accordance with the adopted SPD is to be secured within the S106 legal agreement.

Representations

- 6.64 Issues raised in representation letters from third parties have been addressed within the report above.

Equality

- 6.65 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 as identified in the Act 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.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposed development is considered acceptable in principle and in respect of design, layout and character of the area, transport matters, landscape, ecology, residential amenity and other matters.
- 7.2 Concerns have been raised in representations regarding intensification of the use of the site in providing a care home in what is a primarily residential location. However, it is considered that the nature of the proposed use, layout of the development with scope for enhanced soft landscaping and tree planting on what is a large site, together with the site's sustainable location in terms of transport would ensure the continued health care use of the site could be carried out without undue additional disturbance to surrounding residential occupiers.
- 7.3 The development is considered to adhere to the relevant policies of the Development Plan as set out in the appraisal section of this report above. The application is therefore recommended for approval, subject to conditions and completion of a section 106 legal agreement.
- 7.4 Officers conclude that the proposals would preserve the historic character and significance of the host building, a non-designated heritage asset. However, if the

alterations and extensions proposed to facilitate the development were found to result in any overall harm to the significance of the building or setting of Prospect Park then Officers consider this would amount to no more than less than substantial harm in accordance with paragraph 203 of the NPPF and it is considered that the public benefits of the development would outweigh this.

7.5 The public benefits of the proposed development are considered to include:

- The provision of a 56-bed care home which meets an identified local need and the demands of an ageing population;
- Economic benefits through a range of employment opportunities and have wider positive spin-off effects to the local economy representing a significant level of investment;
- The scale, massing, design and proposed materials reflect the local vernacular;
- Increase in soft landscaping and tree planting across the site;
- A substantial investment into the site, safeguarding the long-term viability of the building as a non-designated heritage asset and removal of unsympathetic and substandard extensions that detract from the heritage value of the original building;
- Preventing any further decline and damage to the building, bringing it back into productive use; and
- Continued evolution of the site for its historic healthcare related uses.

Case Officer: Matt Burns

Plans and Documents Considered:

Drawing no.s

- 200 - P6 - Proposed Site Plan
 - 204 - P1 - Proposed Floor Plan - Basement
 - 205 - P1 - Proposed Floor Plan - Ground Floor
 - 206 - P1 - Proposed Floor Plan - First Floor
 - 207 - P1 - Proposed Floor Plan - Second Floor
 - 208 - P1 - Proposed Roof Plan
 - 303 - P1 - Proposed Sections
 - 302 - D1 - Proposed Elevations with Previous Application Line
- Received by the Local Planning Authority on 18th March 2022

- 300 - P7 - Proposed Elevations
 - 301 - P4 - Proposed Elevations Colour
- Received by the Local Planning Authority on 27th April 2022

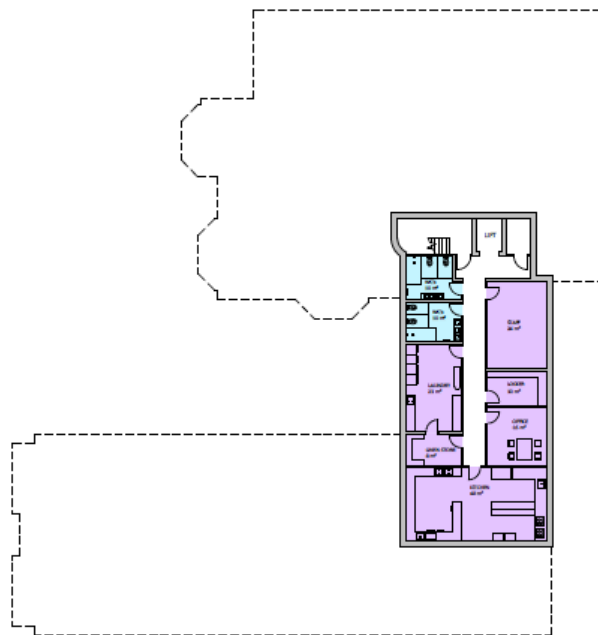
- Existing First Floor Plan ref. 19016/F01/202
- Existing Ground Floor Plan ref. 19016/F01/201
- Existing Second Floor Plan ref. 19016/F01/203
- Existing Elevations ref. 19016/F01/EL01

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 29th October 2021

- Design and Access Statement - March 2022
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 18th March 2022
- Advanced Arboriculture letter ref. TH/B085/1021
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 4th May 2022
- Spectrum Kitchen Vent Technical Specification
- Airclean Activated Carbon Filters Specification
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 10th May 2022
- Hydrock MRB Sustainability Statement ref. S397 Issue 5
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 23rd March 2022
- DTA Transport Assessment ref. SJT/RT 22075-01f dated 12th November 2021
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 12th November 2021
- Inacoustic Noise Assessment for Planning ref. 21-149 dated 14th April 2022
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 14th April 2022
- Planning and Heritage Statement - Q+A Planning Ltd
- Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy - Baker Hall Ltd
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal - Ramboll
- Daytime Roost Inspection - Lockhart Garratt
- Bat Survey Report and Mitigation Strategy - Windrush Ecology
- Utilities Search - Groundwise Searches
- Phase 1 Ground Investigation Report
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 21st October 2021



Proposed Site Plan



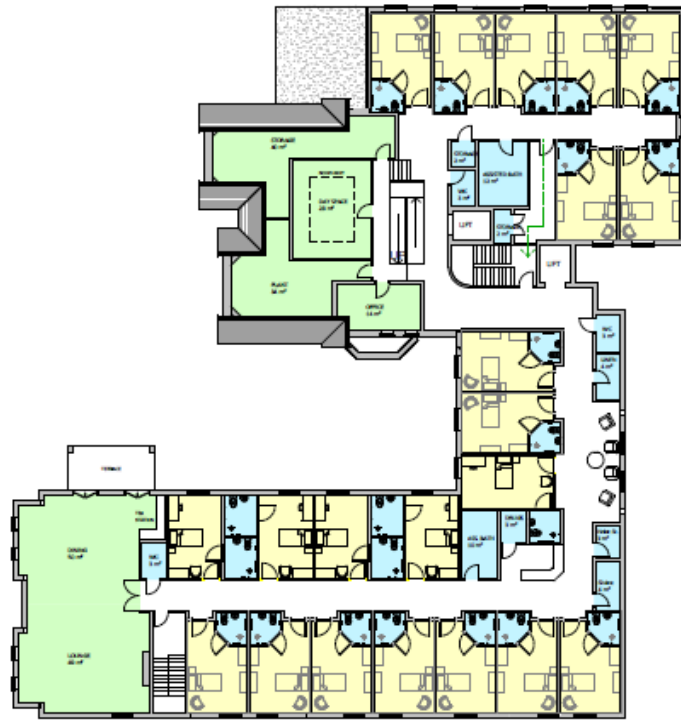
Proposed Basement Plan



Proposed Ground Floor Plan



Proposed First Floor Plan



Proposed Second Floor Plan



Proposed Elevations and Street-Scene



Proposed Visual from Liebenrood Road

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 1 June 2022

Ward: Thames

App No.: 212061

Address: Richfield Driving Range, Richfield Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8EQ

Proposal: The demolition of existing driving range structures and the development of a new three-storey 8 form entry school for years 11 - 16, including a SEND unit and 300 place 6th form (total school capacity of 1500 pupils) including the creation of a new access from Richfield Avenue, new parking area, cycle parking landscaped areas, external play areas, Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and sporting pitches

Applicant: Bowmer & Kirkland

Deadline: 23 May 2022 Extended to 30 June 2022

RECOMMENDATION:

Delegate to the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (AD PTPS) to (i) GRANT planning permission subject to the satisfactory completion of a S106 legal agreement in the form of a unilateral undertaking or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the legal agreement not be completed by 30 June 2022 (unless officers on behalf of the AD PTPS agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement).

The S106 legal agreement to include a minimum of the following:

- Secure a S278/38 Agreement for the construction of a Tiger Crossing on Richfield Avenue (to allow cyclists as well as pedestrians to cross safely).
- £5,000 towards a Traffic Regulation Order for alterations to the parking restrictions along the Caversham Road frontage of the site.
- To ensure an access and egress for large vehicles to access land to the south of the car park
- £200,000 towards widening / improving pedestrian / cycle routes on the north and south sides of Richfield Avenue
- Employment, Skills and Training - The production, implementation and monitoring of an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) for the Construction and End User phases of the development. In the event that the developer chooses not to provide either ESP themselves then a financial contribution commuted sum of £26,107.50 for the Construction ESP and £7,832.25 for the End User ESP (calculated using the SPD formula in relation to both the construction and end user phases) will be secured in lieu of an ESP.

CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE:

1. Implementation within 3 yrs
2. Development in accordance with Approved Plans
3. Materials as specified with samples to be approved
4. Development in accordance with Flood Risk Assessment
5. Implementation of Approved Land Gas Remediation Scheme

6. Submission and Verification of contamination remediation
7. Long term monitoring and maintenance of contamination remediation
8. Actions on finding contamination not previously identified
9. Restrictions on penetrative piling
10. Mechanical plant noise mitigation to be approved
11. Odour Management details to be approved
12. Requirement for Air Quality mitigation plan
13. Full Details of all External Lighting to be approved
14. Floodlighting of External Sports Areas details to be approved
15. Construction Methods as submitted and approved
16. Hours of Construction limitations
17. No burning of construction waste
18. Refuse and recycling bin stores
19. Interim BREEAM Certificate (Pre-Commencement)
20. Final BREEAM Certification (Occupation)
21. SuDS Strategy for approval
22. Vehicle Parking provided as approved
23. Vehicle access provided as approved
24. Bicycle Parking provided as approved
25. Details of EV Charging Points and provision as approved
26. Provision of visibility splays prior to occupation
27. Visibility splays to be kept free of obstructions
28. Travel Plan provided and approved
29. Travel Plan review
30. Roads to be provided in accordance with approved plans
31. Details of hard and soft landscaping to be submitted and implemented as approved
32. Boundary treatment to be implemented as approved
33. Landscape Management Plan to be submitted and implemented as approved
34. Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan to be submitted and implemented as approved
35. Construction environmental management plan (CEMP: Biodiversity) (Pre commencement)
36. Ecological enhancements
37. Vegetation clearance to avoid bird nesting season (March-August)
38. Rivermead Ditch enhancement and management plan
39. Community Use Agreement

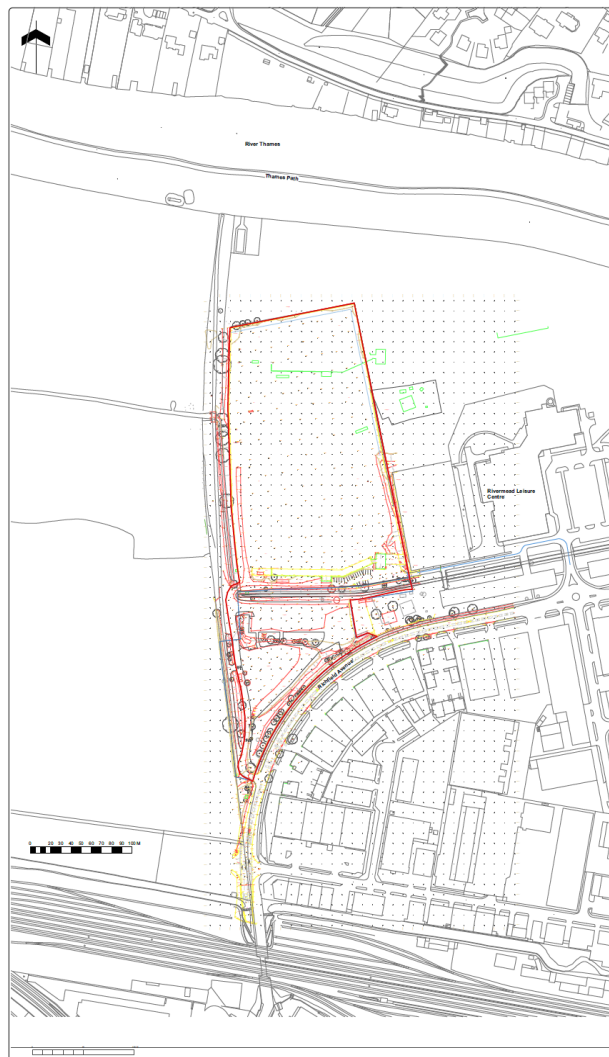
INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE:

1. IF5 - Terms and Conditions
2. IF6 - Building Regulations
3. IF2 - Pre-Commencement Conditions
4. I11 - CIL Not Chargeable
5. IF4 - S106
6. IF3 - Highways
7. I29 - Access Construction
8. IF7 - Complaints about Construction
9. IF8 - Encroachment
10. Thames Water informatives
11. IF1 - Positive & Proactive

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The application site is approximately 5.53 hectares and comprises the former Leaderboard Golf Centre. It is owned by Reading Borough Council.
- 1.2 The application site is relatively level. Between 1970 and 1979 the site was used as a household and commercial landfill site. By 2002 it was in use as a golf driving range but this use ceased some years ago. It was also recently used as a laser clay shooting range.
- 1.3 The site is located to the south of Thameside Promenade and the River Thames, to the north of Richfield Avenue and east of Cow Lane and Cow Lane Bridge. To the south of the site is a large commercial/industrial area. To the east is Rivermead Leisure Centre.
- 1.4 To the west is the main site of the annual Reading Festival which is used as farmland throughout the remainder of the year. The southern triangular parcel of the site is used by Festival Republic for access and logistics to the main festival site while the north of the site towards the Thames is used for camping. Access to the Caversham Bridge Garden centre, which is located to the south-east of the site is also provided through the southern triangle.
- 1.5 The proposal comprises the demolition of the existing driving range structures and the development of a new 8 form entry school for years 11-16 including a new Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) unit and 300 place Sixth Form plus associated highways and landscaping works. The school will be operated on behalf of the Local Education Authority by the Maiden Erlegh Trust, who operate other schools within the area.
- 1.6 There is an identified and pressing need for additional secondary school places within the local area. The Report 'School Place Planning' (Brighter Futures for Children, June 2019) outlines requirements to ensure sufficiency of places within Reading and confirms the urgent need for the provision of a new secondary school. 'Bulge Classes' (with their associated costs) at secondary school level were identified as being required from 2019 to cope with the deficit in school places ahead of the new secondary school being brought forward. The report identified the limited ability of schools to accept bulge classes and also the inability of Reading's neighbours to accept more Reading pupils was also identified. As pupils move through the system, this will also affect post 16 and sixth form provision.
- 1.7 Insufficient provision of SEND facilities was also identified.
- 1.8 The provision of a new secondary school is required to reduce the need for out-borough provision creating a budget saving and enabling pupils to be educated within the Reading community.

- 1.9 The scheme considered in the planning application is being delivered through the Department for Education's (DfE) Off-Site Framework which focuses on the delivery of new schools through Modern Methods of Construction.
- 1.10 Detailed pre-application discussions have taken place for the masterplanning of this site as part of the wider Rivermead Area between Greenwich Leisure Limited, Reading Borough Council, Festival Republic and the DfE (who have appointed Bowmer and Kirkland (the applicant) as the main contractor for the proposed development).
- 1.11 The site is within the Thames Valley Major Landscape Area designation (Policy EN13) and within designated Local Green Space (Policy EN7). It is also within an Air Quality Management Area (Policy EN15) and in Flood Zones 2 and 3.
- 1.12 The application is referred to committee as it is a 'major' development.



Site Boundary Plan



Aerial Photo (source: River Academy DAS)



Northern Boundary with River Thames beyond (source: River Academy DAS)

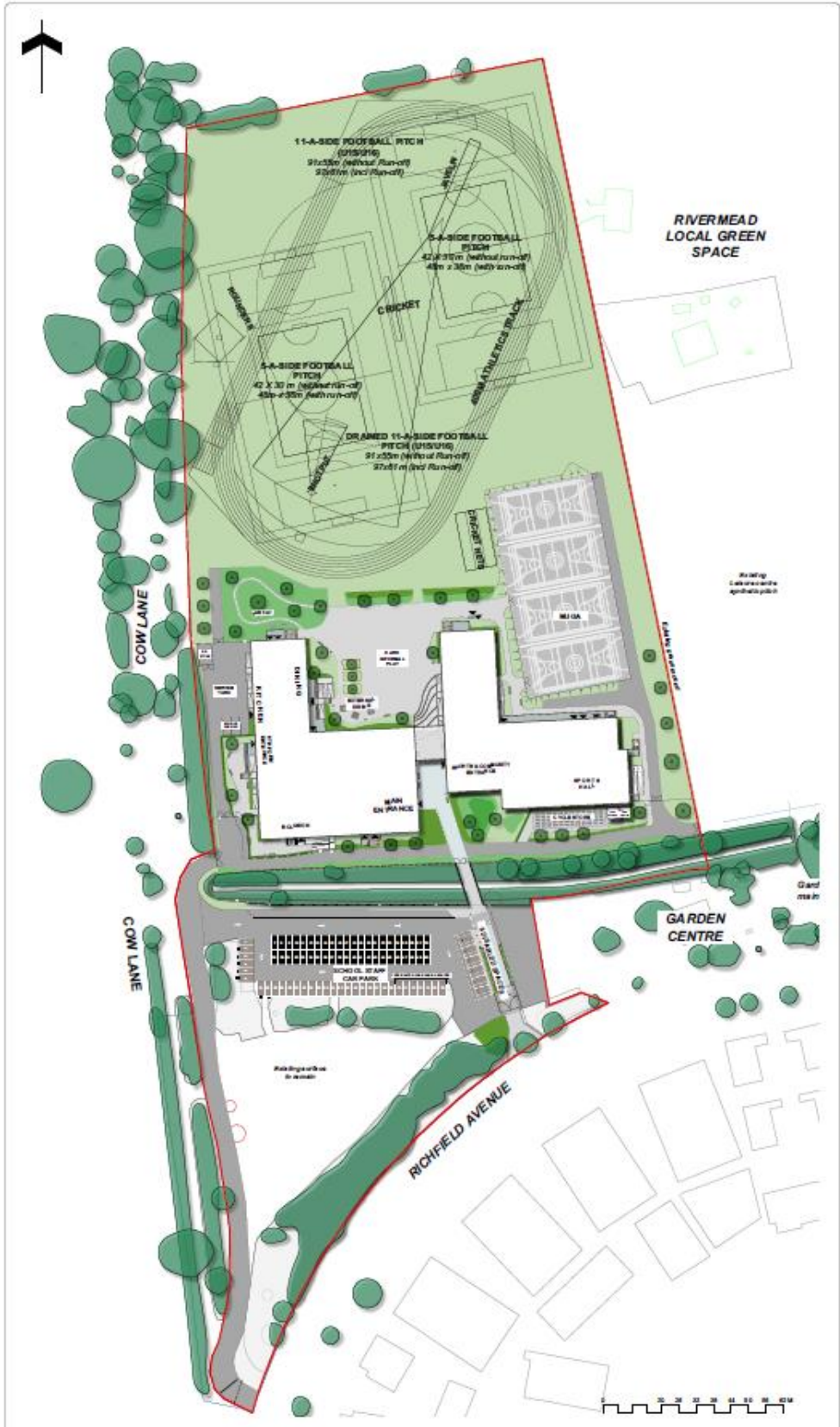
2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Full planning permission is sought for a new three-storey 8 form entry school for years 11 - 16, including a dedicated self-contained Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) unit.
- 2.2 The proposed secondary school will operate as “The River Academy” in reference to its riverside location and will accommodate 1,200 pupils aged between 11 to 16 years old and 300 sixth form students.



Elevated view of the main approach from the south and arrival from Richfield Avenue (source: River Academy DAS)

- 2.3 The proposed development is part two and part three storey in height totalling 11,333 sq m (GEA) of new floorspace. The main teaching accommodation is in the west and centre of the site and the sports block in a wing to the east. The buildings are arranged to the north of a watercourse which crosses the site east-west and a pedestrian bridge is provided to access the main school from Richfield Avenue. Car parking is provided to the south of the main buildings and sports pitches and areas of open space including a student courtyard is located in the north of the site closest to the River Thames.
- 2.4 The new school will employ 156 no. (FTE) members of staff. 82 no. car parking spaces, including 6 no. accessible parking spaces, will be provided within the parking area to the south of the proposed new school buildings. 120 no. cycle parking spaces will be provided on site and 8 no. Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP) will be provided.
- 2.5 Vehicular access to the site is proposed to be from the existing access point on Richfield Avenue, and via an improved existing access track, which runs parallel and to the east of Cow Lane.
- 2.6 Pedestrian access is from Richfield Avenue; a route marked with fencing and bollards through the car park over the new bridge passing over the watercourse crossing the site from east-west. Pupils and visitors will be led to the main entrance; sixth form pupils have their own private entrance to the west of the building, which is accessible through a controlled gate



Site Masterplan

- 2.7 The main school buildings are proposed to be clad in a light brick slip system at ground floor with the upper floors treated with cladding panels in a deep grey. Accentuation in the form of coloured cladding panels have been included to emphasise key areas such as the main student entrance and windows. Glazing and doors are framed in a light silvery finish.



Looking south to school buildings across courtyard

- 2.8 In terms of layout, the ground floor includes the main reception area to the building, dining facilities and a main assembly hall as well the drama and music departments. The 6th form accommodation and SEN cluster are located to the south/west with dedicated circulation and external space. The sports facilities are in the east of the ground floor accommodation. The first floor includes most of the general teaching accommodation grouped into departmental grouping with associated staff and ancillary accommodation. The second floor includes the science department, maths department and art rooms.
- 2.9 Hard and soft landscaping is proposed throughout the site and the provision of sports and play facilities, including seasonal provision for: A Four Court MUGA; no. 2 11 a-side football pitches (containing space for no. 2 five a-side football pitches); Cricket pitch and cricket nets; Space for a 400 athletics track, and other athletics areas. The landscaping proposals include new tree planting; structural planting and the creation of a habitat area; and to retain as much vegetation on site as is possible.
- 2.10 A fencing strategy has been provided to create areas defined as 'secure', with 'controlled access' and 'publicly accessible'; whilst the school is in use the pupils will be located within the secure line. A new 2.4 metre weldmesh perimeter fence will provide a secure site boundary to the external play areas with a 3 metre weldmesh perimeter fence to the MUGA. 1 metre timber post and rail fencing is identified along the south of the main school buildings along the route of the water course which crosses the site in this location and

is identified to ensure the safety of the public. The main area of publicly accessible land is the car park within the southern triangle.

- 2.11 The public parking area to the south of the proposed school buildings will be upgraded to create a new hard-surfaced area and demarcated parking spaces (with permeable paving). The parking area will remain within the ownership and control of Reading Borough Council and will be provided to the school under license. The improvements to the parking area and access will be carried out by the applicant. The school will have operational control of the parking area outside of the period when the Reading Festival will need the site for set up, operations and decommissioning.
- 2.12 The building has been designed to enable secure out-of-hours community use. The eastern side of the building can be secured and made available by the community out of school hours. Areas of the school which are to be made available to the community are the spaces all of the sports facilities including the main hall, activity studio and changing rooms, along with the hygiene room and accessible changing areas. The use of school facilities for out-of-hours community use will also create opportunities for synergy with the adjacent leisure centre.
- 2.13 The new building has been designed to be fully accessible and inclusive with all floors and thresholds level and lift access to all floors. Routes into the buildings will be signed and demarcated appropriately using landscape treatments. All learning spaces will be designed to accessible standards, be appropriately lit, incorporate height-adjustable furniture where required and have acoustic attenuation to meet or exceed necessary standards.
- 2.14 The school will make the playing fields available to Reading Festival for camping (for disabled campers). Provision is made for vehicular access on both the eastern and western side for campers during the Festival period. Pedestrian festival access will be provided through the southern triangle to the south of the main school buildings.
- 2.15 The existing garden centre to the east of the southern triangle also requires access for delivery vehicles throughout the day. A loading bay has been identified with gate access to that business.

The Planning Application

- 2.16 The applicant submitted the following plans and documents on 21 December 2021:
 - Application form
 - CIL form
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Ecology Statement
 - Flood Response Plan

- Flood Risk Assessment
- Landscape Appraisal
- Existing Ground Levels (Drawing no. FS0949-ASO-XX-XX-DR-Y-1100/P01)
- Site Location Plan (FS0949-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0016/P01)
- Environmental Noise Survey Report
- Phase II Geo-Environmental Assessment
- Air Quality Feasibility Assessment - Phase 1
- Construction Environmental Management Plan
- Drainage Statement
- Energy Strategy
- Foul Water Drainage Layout Sheet 1 (Drawing no. FS0949-HEX-XX-XX-DR-C-9202/P03)
- Foul Water Drainage Layout Sheet 2 (Drawing no. FS0949-HEX-XX-XX-DR-C-9203/P03)
- Water Monitoring Strategy
- Reading Borough Open Space Review
- Proposed External Lighting and Security Philosophy Layout (Drawing no. FS0949-CPW-ZZ-XX-DR-E-6300/P05)
- Phase 1 Contaminated Land & Geotechnical Desk Study Report
- Remediation Strategy
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Sequential Assessment
- BREEAM Pre-assessment report
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Surface Water Drainage Layout Sheet 1 (Drawing no. FS0949-HEX-XX-XX-DR-C-9200/P05)
- Surface Water Drainage Layout Sheet 2 (Drawing no. FS0949-HEX-XX-XX-DR-C-9201/P05)
- Utilities and Drainage Survey
- Planning Statement
- Planning and Landscape Drawings
- Travel Plan
- Transport Statement

2.17 Following the submission of the application the following additional information has also been submitted:-

- The following revised and additional plans:-
 - Whole Site Illustrative Masterplan (Drawing no. FS0949-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0027/P03)
 - Landscape General Arrangement Plan (Drawing no. FS0949-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0002/P19)
 - Detailed General Arrangement Plan 1 of 2 (Drawing no. FS0949-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-0028/P03)
 - Detailed General Arrangement Plan 2 of 2 (Drawing no. FS0949-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0029/P03)
 - Detailed General Arrangement Plan 1 of 4 (Drawing no. FS0949-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0003/P08)

- Detailed General Arrangement Plan 2 of 4 (Drawing no. FS0949-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0004/P09)
 - Detailed General Arrangement Plan 3 of 4 (Drawing no. FS0949-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0005/P11)
 - Detailed General Arrangement Plan 4 of 4 (Drawing no. FS0949-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0006/P09)
 - External Lighting Plan (Drawing no. D45008/AE/B)
 - Landscape Illustrative Masterplan (Drawing no. FS0949-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0001/P05)
 - Ground Works and Typical Flood Void Detail (Drawing no. FS0949-JWA-ZZ-00-DR-A-9080/P01)
 - Planting Schedule (Drawing no. FS0949-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0014/P05)
 - Planting Plan (Drawing no. FS0949-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0013/P10)
- 3 Month Diffusion Tube Survey Report (dated February 2022)
 - Contractor's Proposals - Acoustics (dated 1 February 2022)
 - Façade/ Planning Review (dated 15 February 2022)
 - Pedestrian and Cycle Infrastructure Review (dated 29 March 2022)
 - Initial Response to RBC Highways Comments (dated 30 March 2022)
 - Contamination Remediation Strategy (04 April 2022)
 - Arboricultural Impact Assessment (dated 19 April 2022)
 - Response to RBC EHO Comments Project Memo (dated 29 April 2022)
 - Additional Modelling Technical Note and Appendices A-F (dated 10 May 2022)
 - Air Quality Assessment (dated 17 May 2022)
 - Construction Environmental Management Plan (revised 19 May 2022)

2.18 Community Infrastructure levy (CIL): the proposal is CIL liable, but education is not a chargeable use, as set out in the Council's CIL Charging Schedule.

3 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 The Council's online planning application register does not identify any formal applications submitted at the application site. There are several planning applications relating to adjacent land, which are considered relevant to this application:

- **Ref. 212034** - Screening Opinion sought on current proposal. The Local Planning Authority adopted a Screening Opinion to the effect that the development proposed, as per submissions received on 16 December 2021, is not development that is likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its size, nature or location. Accordingly, an

Environmental Statement was not required to accompany the planning application. Issued 7 February 2022.

- **Ref. 201734** - planning permission was granted on 12 April 2021 for a new replacement leisure centre including a 25m 8 lane competition pool and diving, with associated parking and landscaping, followed by the demolition of existing Rivermead Leisure Centre.
- **Ref. 191532** - a planning application was submitted on 23 September 2019 at land adjacent 10 -12 Richfield Avenue for the construction of a garden centre building with a kitchen and WC facilities. A decision is currently pending.

4 CONSULTATIONS

Statutory

Environment Agency

The following is a summary of the response (25 February 2022):-

- 4.1 The application site lies within Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 according to the EA's Flood Map for Planning. This is defined as areas having a medium and high probability of flooding respectively, in accordance with Table 1 'Flood Risk' of the Planning Practice Guidance. The site is also located above a historic landfill, which is a highly contaminative previous use.
- 4.2 The applicant has assessed climate change appropriately with finished floor levels set high enough. Compensation and voids have been provided for mitigation. No losses in any of the bands so level for level compensation. Voids provided for floor levels rather than compensation so we are satisfied with the detail given.
- 4.3 The EA had provided pre-application advice to the applicant and some of the reports or their conclusions submitted with the application had been seen previously. The EA confirmed that it was therefore broadly in agreement with the reports and their conclusions and have no objection to the development from the perspective of groundwater quality.
- 4.4 However, the EA confirm that given the site overlies a historic landfill, monitoring of activities and the impact on water quality will need to be undertaken during the construction phase. Four conditions have therefore been recommended as follows:-
 - To ensure the development is in accordance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment and the following mitigation measures that must be fully implemented before occupation and retained throughout the lifetime of the development:-

- Finished floor levels shall be set no lower than 39.8 metres (AOD).
 - Compensatory storage shall be provided as outlined in the Flood Risk Assessment.
 - Ground beams shall be provided as outlined in Section 3.4 of the Flood Risk Assessment.
- To require a verification report to be provided before occupation to demonstrate that all remediation works have been completed and to demonstrate the effectiveness of that remediation. The report should include results of sampling and monitoring carried out in accordance with an approved verification plan.
 - To require that if, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority) shall be carried out until a remediation strategy detailing how this contamination will be dealt with has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The remediation strategy shall then be implemented as approved.
 - To require that no piling using penetrative methods shall be carried out without the written consent of the local planning authority.

Non-statutory

RBC Development Control Transport

The following is a summary of initial comments issued on 11 February 2022:-

4.5 An objection was issued on the following grounds:

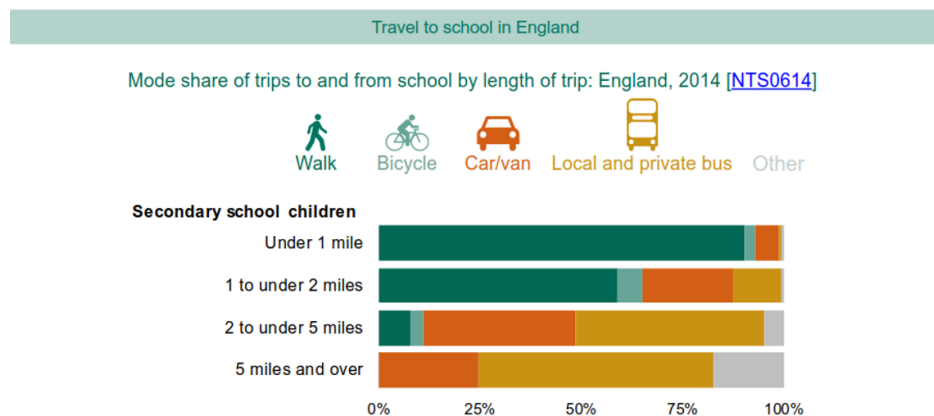
- Insufficient information has been submitted with the planning application to enable the highways, traffic and transportation implications of the proposed development to be fully assessed. From the information submitted, it is considered that the additional traffic likely to be generated by the proposal would adversely affect the safety and flow of users of the existing road network within Reading, contrary to Policies TR1 and TR3 of the Reading Local Plan.
- The proposed layout fails to demonstrate that it complies with the Local Planning Authority's standards in respect of vehicle parking. This could result in on-street parking on the adjacent highway network adversely affecting road safety and the flow of traffic, and in conflict with Policy TR5 of the Reading Local Plan

- The proposed development does not comply with the Local Planning Authority’s standards in respect of cycle and pedestrian access to the site and is in conflict with Reading Local Plan Policy TR4.

4.6 The applicant’s submitted Transport Assessment (‘TA’) had been considered in drawing the above conclusions and a detailed analysis of the following issues was highlighted:-

Traffic Distribution and Analysis

- Model Split and Distribution: concern was expressed that the TA did not define a proposed catchment area for the school and stated that without that the assumptions on traffic distribution were vague and that this had serious implications for the traffic modelling. Further information was requested on the assumptions made in the assessment to allow a detailed review of the analysis in the TA to be undertaken as it appeared to imply that pupils would not be sourced from north of the river which was considered to be implausible. Concern was also expressed at the reliance in the analysis of modal split on Department for Education / National Statistics school census information from 2011 which, given its age, could be unreliable. It was noted that it had been assumed that 19% of pupils would arrive by car; but data from the DfT indicates that the further a pupil lives from a school the greater chance they will use a private car, as detailed in the figure below.



This information shows why the need to clarify the catchment area is important as it shows that as a distance a pupil lives from school increases, the greater the likelihood they will travel by car. The details of the catchment were therefore requested along with the modal split calculated by the distance from the site. In addition, full details of how the calculations have been undertaken were requested. Evidence to justify the assumptions made in relation to staff travel was also requested.

- Baseline Surveys: it was noted that baseline surveys were undertaken on Tuesday 30 November 2021. Since April 2020, the DfT has provided datasets to assist in identifying if surveys undertaken during the Covid pandemic were likely to be representative of pre-pandemic flows. Comparison of these datasets against the baseline surveys for the site have confirmed that the data is considered to be representative of baseline conditions. Traffic modelling has been undertaken of three junctions:-

- Cow Lane / Portman Road / Beresford Road;
- Rivermead Leisure Centre / Richfield Avenue;
- Caversham Road / Caversham Bridge / Richfield Avenue.

It was confirmed that the applicant had also been asked to model Caversham Bridge / St Peters Hill / Prospect Street traffic signals during pre-application discussions but this had been omitted and should be undertaken. Concern was also expressed that the modelling runs had been undertaken assuming the school opening hours would be 9:30 to 15:30; but no other school within Reading operates these times. Further justification of the proposed school day was requested; and if it is proposed to be 09:30 to 15:30 a Section 106 agreement will have to be agreed which states the school day (tutor sessions, assemblies, classes) will not commence earlier than 09:30. Notwithstanding this further analysis is required of the implications of issues such as before school and after school activities. It was noted that the distribution figures indicated that parents would be dropping off within the school car park, even though no on site drop off area is identified provided. If it is envisaged that parents would instead utilise the 30 minute drop off within the adjacent Rivermead Leisure Centre it is noted that the assessment does not identify any vehicles associated with the school entering or leaving the leisure centre drop off areas. Information on drop offs is therefore required. Additional monitoring is finally required for the Caversham Road / Richfield Avenue roundabout which does not appear to be showing representative results. Site observations on this roundabout taken during peak periods in the morning and afternoon between 15:00 and 17:00 do not show the roundabout operating within the conditions identified in the TA. An examination of the geometry of all junctions should also be provided (including plans).

Sustainable Transport Provision

- It was noted that the Institute of Highways and Transportation (IHT) has prepared several guidance documents that provide advice with respect to the provision of sustainable travel in conjunction with new developments. Within these documents it is suggested that: most people will walk to a destination that is

less than one mile; the bicycle is a potential mode of transport for all journeys under five miles; and walking distances to bus stops should not exceed 400 metres, with people being prepared to walk twice as far to rail stations. The nearest bus stops served by regular bus services are on the Caversham Road, 750 metres from the entrance to the school and along the Oxford Road, 1,200 metres from the school entrance, which are in excess of the bus walking distances recommended by the IHT. Given these distances the pedestrian routes will need to be safe for pedestrians and the footways along Richfield Avenue do not meet the latest requirements, with regards pedestrian safety. The footways at the various access points and junctions are poorly laid out with no tactile paving or drop kerbs provided as shown in the photographs below.



Due to the significant increase in pedestrians it is identified that these footways should be significantly improved and comply with the latest requirements for cycleways detailed within LTN 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design. The proposed formal Tiger Crossing over Richfield Avenue was identified to be in the wrong location and it was stated that this should be provided as close as possible to the school pedestrian access to benefit pedestrians walking from both directions. It was also noted that the assessment shows 27% of pupils (405) will travel to the school by bus, which equates to five full buses. The existing bus services along Caversham Road and Oxford Road are approaching capacity at peak times and therefore analysis of bus capacity is required to determine if this increase in bus patronage can be accommodated. The access road will pass along Cow Lane which is a Public Footway 17 on the definitive map. The proposals provided no details of how this footway will be re provided following the construction of the access road and how pedestrian safety will be maintained.

Car Parking and Drop Off

- Clarification is requested on pupil drop off. The submitted plans show School Keep Markings across the site entrance which is the incorrect use of the marking as detailed within paragraph 13.28 of Chapter 3 of the Traffic Signs Manual. A Traffic Regulation Order will be required on Richfield Avenue to prevent loading

between 8am and 10am and 3pm and 6pm to ensure that issues of congestion and delays do not arise associated with waiting parents dropping off or collecting children. Further calculation of staff parking needs are required and justification for the number provided as the scheme currently includes 82 parking spaces for 156 staff.

Servicing and Swept Analysis

- The swept path analysis provided within the TA was not complete as it did not include the access road. The analysis was requested ensuring that consideration is given to refuse vehicles (where these need to access the car park), HGVs accessing the Garden Centre and a full 56 seater coach. Vehicles need to be shown entering and egressing from Richfield Avenue. Deliveries to the Garden Centre need to be clarified: no accessways or delivery areas have been shown, it is considered detrimental to safety to have articulated vehicles passing through a school car park and across the main pedestrian access; and no mitigation measures have been detailed to show how pedestrians will have priority over goods vehicles.-

The following is a summary of comments issued on 25 April 2022:-

- 4.7 Following the provision of additional information on 20 March 2022 by the applicant additional comments were provided by RBC Development Control Transport. The additional information covered Traffic and Distribution, Sustainable Transport Provision, Car Parking and Drop off, Servicing Provision and pedestrian and cycle infrastructure review. The following additional comments were provided:-

Traffic and Distribution

- The revised modelling had not been provided but the proposed pupil catchment area and mode share, junction geometry and proposed modal share and proposed distribution of staff was accepted provided that the potential for staff to live within other suburbs of Reading was included in the analysis.

Sustainable Transport Provision

- The proposed Tiger Crossing has been repositioned as close as possible to the entrance to the school as previously requested. The crossing should be provided under a Section 278 agreement, which should include the provision of Stage 2,3 and 4 Safety Audits. Bus Capacity Assessment was still to be received. A detailed analysis of the pedestrian / cycleway within the area has been undertaken within the second Technical Note submitted. It was not accepted that the conclusions regarding

provision along Portman Road, Cow Lane and Beresford Road from the west (where 65% of the pupils will travel from) is acceptable. It is considered that the footway / cycleway should be widened to ensure it is 3 metres to the new Tiger Crossing by the school main entrance (extending the existing 3 metre width at Cow Lane). A similar conclusion is reached in relation to the provision from Caversham Road to the school as the proposals will result in a significant increase in pedestrian and cyclists. The shared cycleway on the south side of Richfield Avenue should be widened from Caversham Road to the new Tiger Crossing. Both requests are to ensure compliance with standards.

Swept Path Analysis

- The revised swept path analysis is acceptable, although a coach is still required to cross the land to the south which is currently used to store construction vehicles. It is assumed that this use will cease when the school is operational and, if not, then a S106 obligation should be entered to ensure a clear route through this part of the site is maintained at all times. Concern remains regarding deliveries to the Garden Centre that will need to be through the school car park (even if these avoid school peak periods there are no guarantees). Therefore if no alternative route is available, deliveries to the Garden Centre should not occur between the hours of 8am and 4.30pm on days the school is operational.

Summary and Conclusions

- The original holding objection is maintained until revised traffic modelling and bus capacity assessments have been submitted and approved. However and following the information submitted the following S106 / S278 Heads of Terms were confirmed:-
 - To design and construct the Tiger Crossing as detailed on the submitted drawings and in accordance with the requirements of the Highway Authority, including the submission of Stage 2,3 and 4 Road Safety Audits.
 - To design and construct the Site Access including the provision of a new footway along the western side of the carriageway as detailed on the submitted drawings in accordance with the requirements of the Highway Authority, including the submission of Stage 2,3 and 4 Road Safety Audits.
 - Widening the existing footway / cycleway on the south side of Richfield Avenue to 3 metres from Cardiff Road to Caversham Road. Drawings to be submitted and approved before construction commences on site.

- An access route should be maintained for large vehicles egressing the land to the south of the proposed car park at all times.
- An obligation to prevent deliveries to the Garden Centre occurring between the hours of 08:00 to 16:30 on all days the school is open.

The following is a summary of comments issued on 18 May 2022:-

- 4.8 Additional traffic junction modelling was issued by the applicant on 10 May 2022 providing analysis of three junctions between 08:00 and 10:00 and 15:00 and 17:00:-
- Beresford Road / Portman Road / Cow Lane, Mini Roundabout.
 - Richfield Avenue / Caversham Road Roundabout.
 - Bridge Street / Church Street / Church Road signalised junction.
- 4.9 The modelling was completed using the ‘Junctions 10’ modelling which expressed the relationship between traffic flow and capacity of priority controlled junctions as a ratio (the ‘Ratio of Flow to Capacity’). The program predicts the anticipated queue lengths and delays that are likely to occur at the junction. It also includes a further performance measurement which correlates the length of the delay experienced by arriving vehicles to a scale that is referred to as the ‘Level of Service’ which gives a measure between ‘Free Flow’ where vehicles have complete freedom to manoeuvre and ‘Forced or Breakdown Flow’ which is the point at which demand exceeds capacity.
- 4.10 The review of the additional information provided has been considered as follows:-

Trip Distribution

- Before the modelling was undertaken the distribution of trips had been agreed based on the likely catchment area of school for pupils and travel to work census data for staff. The peak period increase in traffic flows generated by the school on the network are summarised in the table 1 below, noting the schools opening hours are proposed to be 09.30 to 15.30 and therefore the total flows cover the full 120 minute periods. The flows are based on baseline surveys obtained in autumn 2021 and assume that the school is expected to reach capacity in 2028. Given the close proximity of the Caversham Road / Richfield Avenue roundabout with the Church Street / Bridge Street / Church Road signals, both junctions have been modelled together; this is because the junctions are interlinked with queues from the signalised junction affecting the capacity of the roundabout

Link	Morning Peak (08.00 to 10.00)	Afternoon Peak (15.00-17.00)
Portman Road (Eastbound)	64	41
Portman Road (Westbound)	41	64
Beresford Road (Northbound)	93	77
Beresford Road (Southbound)	77	93
Cow Lane (Northbound)	157	119
Cow Lane (Southbound)	119	157
Richfield Avenue (Caversham Road to Rivermead Roundabout) (Eastbound)	61	101
Richfield Avenue (Caversham Road to Rivermead Roundabout) (Westbound)	101	61
Caversham Bridge (Northbound)	61	73
Caversham Bridge (Southbound)	73	61
Caversham Road (Southbound)	0	28
Caversham Road (Northbound)	28	0

- The results for each junction are provided in Annex 2 of this report for completeness and the conclusions can be summarised as follows:-

Beresford Road / Portman Road / Cow Lane, Mini Roundabout:-

- AM Peak: even with development between 8am and 9am the implications are minimal but between 09:00 and 09:45 the extra vehicle movements generated by the parent drop off results show all arms being significantly over capacity. The greatest impact is on Beresford Road which exceeds capacity between 09:00 and 09:30, while Portman Road has unstable flow or exceeds capacity for a significant greater proportion of the morning peak period.
- PM Peak: vehicles departing the site have the greatest impact on the Cow Lane and Beresford Road approaches, but capacity is exceeding in all scenarios. While the vehicle trips from the school slightly exacerbate the situation, the junction is over capacity. For both the peak periods, it may be possible to add an extra lane approach on the Beresford Road and Cow Lane approaches as occurs on the Portman Road approach to separate the two turning flows. However, the cost of the works will have to take into consideration any implications with regards the viability of the School.

Richfield Avenue / Caversham Road Roundabout:-

- AM and PM Peaks: the Caversham Bridge and Caversham Road arms of the roundabout are at capacity in all scenarios. The queue lengths for the later years scenarios do not represent the queue lengths actually to be expected, as once a junction has passed theoretical capacity the model starts to behave erratically and queue lengths grow exponentially even through

the predicted traffic does not. Queues on Caversham Road are a result of queues backing back over the bridge from the Church Street / Bridge Street traffic signals and the increase of right turners from the Caversham Bridge into Richfield Avenue. As the junction is already at theoretical capacity the additional vehicular movements are unlikely to result in a severe impact and are within the daily fluctuations one would expect to see on a congested network.

Bridge Street / Church Street / Church Road

- AM Peak: the Bridge Street arm of the junction is at theoretical capacity in all scenarios during the AM peak. The Church Road and Church Street arms remain under theoretical capacity for a significant proportion of the AM peak, only reaching capacity after the normal peak period of 8am to 9am between 9.15am and 9.45am, which coincides with the school opening time.
- PM Peak: the junction is already at capacity in the afternoon period and as with the roundabout at Caversham Road / Richfield Avenue, the queue lengths for the later years scenarios do not represent the queue lengths actually to be expected, as once a junction has passed theoretical capacity the model starts to behave erratically and queue lengths grow exponentially even though the predicted traffic does not.
- The response also comments on the model used noting that the Junctions 10 modelling cannot pick up the implications of pass by and linked trips which are likely to occur given not all vehicle trips will be primary trips. Linked trips are where a journey was already on the network but diverts to pass by another destination, which is a common occurrence with schools where a parent may be on the way to their place of employment. Similarly, a pass by trip is where a vehicle would be travelling by the destination anyway and therefore if the vehicle stops at the school, it is not a new vehicle trip on the network. Therefore, the modelling undertaken is very much a worse case scenario.
- It is noted that given the limitations of Junctions 10, to replicate queues on the network a Vissim model would be required of the local network, including Vastern Road and Reading Bridges. While this would represent queues more realistically, it will also show that the existing network is and will be approaching capacity in all scenarios. While the school will result in an increase in vehicle movements, this has to be taken into context with the expected increase in background vehicle growth which the DfT TEMPRO program expects will likely occur. Therefore, in isolation, the vehicle movements generated by the school is unlikely to have a severe impact on the network.

Sustainable Travel

- The response reconfirms that it is imperative that cycle improvements are undertaken to ensure the infrastructure can accommodate the predicted pedestrian and cyclists movements to the school and ensure trips transfer from vehicular to active travel modes, to lessen the impact on the highway network.
- The information submitted by the applicant in May 2022 included a detailed analysis of the implications of the predicted 324 pupils who will travel to site by bus, utilising the latest pre pandemic bus patronage surveys. The bus surveys count the number of passengers heading into the town centre in the morning peak between 07:30 and 09:00 and therefore, which is when the majority of pupils will be on a bus, given the nearest bus stops on the Oxford Road are one kilometre away and Caversham Road 650 metres away. The assumptions and analysis are robust and will result in 214 passengers on the Oxford Road corridor services resulting in there still being circa 10% of seated capacity remaining and 110 passengers on services from Caversham resulting in there still being circa 20% of seated capacity remaining. It is therefore concluded that the additional patronage on services will not have a severe impact on their operation.

4.11 **Planning Officer note:** the applicant has provided the key information requested in the original February 2022 holding objection response. The limitations of the modelling software used to analyse nearby junctions has been noted but the use of more comprehensive software would not result in a different conclusion to that reached. Some additional information is required in the form of HGV access for deliveries across the car park and detailed design of the Tiger Crossing will be required and these can be secured via planning conditions and the s106 agreement. The holding objection has therefore been lifted subject to the satisfactory discharge of conditions and obligations as noted.

Reading Borough Natural Environment

4.12 The Arboricultural Impact Assessment dated 6 March 2021 from SJ Stephens submitted with the application was rejected for being out of date. An up to date assessment and landscaping plan was requested.

Trees

4.13 With reference to the revised Arboricultural Impact Assessment dated 10 May 2022 from SJ Stephens Associates, I can confirm that this satisfactorily responds to the points in my memo of 9 May and demonstrates that development is acceptable subject to securing an arboricultural method statement via condition L7.

- 4.14 I note, in relation to the trees immediately adjacent to the northern boundary line that the intention is to cut back as necessary - this is reiterated on the Landscape GA plan. I hope that this will not detrimentally impact the health or appearance of the trees - they are conifers so excessive cutting back will not look great.

Landscaping

- 4.15 With reference to the submitted landscaping plans and schedules, in terms of fencing, I note that FS0949-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0007 Fencing General Arrangement Plan-S2-P07 includes a 2.4m weld mesh fencing around the perimeter. No mammal gaps are provided and would seem appropriate, albeit I'll leave GS Ecology to confirm. As no new fencing plan has been provided, I assume either GS Ecology are happy or they haven't commented.
- 4.16 There is a lack of clarity over the removal of some trees, those being T30, T30a & T30b. These are shown to be retained on the AIA with some surrounding/adjacent trees to be removed. However, the Landscape General Arrangement Plan appears to show the removal of T30a & T30b. I will assume this is just a plan 'typo' as they are shown to be retained on the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan.
- 4.17 I previously questioned whether trees could be included at the north end of the field in the north-west or north-east corner - these have not been included and with no explanation. One or the other would be welcome.
- 4.18 With reference to the Planting plan and schedule, I note the inclusion on one evergreen species (*Pinus sylvestris*), which is positive along with either native or wildlife friendly species as required. I previously mentioned that new tree planting should meet the diversity aim of 30:20:10 ratio (Family:genus:species). The current planting schedule does not meet this, specifically at species level. However, final landscaping can be secured to consider this address other matters within this memo.
- 4.19 The majority of trees are ultimately large (some wider spreading than others) so in that respect is positive. However, I would question the feasibility of some of the trees shown given the ultimate size making their long-term retention unlikely in such proximity to the building, e.g. the proposed *Liriodendron* on the west elevation of the Sports hall & northern elevation of the main building and the *Carpinus* on the east elevation of the main building. Tree planting locations should use the 'right tree in the right place' principle to allow sufficient space for the tree to grown to its full potential. This will need to be considered in the final landscape plans. I would also welcome reasoning as to why new trees have not been proposed on the south side of the staff car park where existing trees are to be removed.

- 4.20 The information submitted thus far shows that sufficient landscaping, including tree planting, could be accommodated and the final details will have to be secured via condition. In conclusion the development is acceptable subject to conditions L2 (landscape etc), L3 (boundary treatment), L4 (Landscape management plan) and L7 (Arb Method Statement).

Reading Borough Ecology

- 4.21 **Habitat:**
Habitats comprise buildings, bare ground and hardstanding with small areas of tall ruderal vegetation, earth banks, hedgerows and scattered trees. These habitats are not priority habitats and will not be a constraint to the proposals.
- 4.22 **The watercourse:**
A ditch runs east to west within the site and then north up the western boundary of the site boundary. The report states that: “The ditch / watercourse through the site has the potential to offer some higher ecological value as small watercourses are often functional parts of ecological networks, and as habitats in their own right. There is some risk that construction activity could adversely affect this ditch. No plans have been developed for the proposed school layout; however, the ditch crosses the site and there is a risk that this would need to be diverted or culverted, which would represent a negative impact to biodiversity”.
- 4.23 It is not proposed to culvert the ditch but pollution control measures will need to put in place to avoid material entering the watercourse both during and after construction. This should be included in the Construction Environmental Management Plan for Biodiversity (CEMP: Biodiversity) which should be secured via a planning condition. The watercourse is polluted, overgrown by trees and shrubs and full of rubbish. It used to contain Japanese knotweed but there is no mention of this in the ecology report. The development provides an opportunity to enhance this ditch, by creating a more varied channel, desilting and reprofiling, and removing rubbish and dense vegetation. It is recommended that a condition is set to ensure that the ditch is enhanced in line with policy EN11.
- 4.24 Policy EN11 also reads “Where development in the vicinity of watercourses is acceptable, it will:- [...] Be set at least ten metres back from the watercourse wherever practicable and appropriate to protect its biodiversity significance;” The access road along the east of the site and the car park to the south of the ditch appear to be closer than 10m to the top of the ditch and this element of the scheme does not appear to comply with policy EN11.
- 4.25 **Roosting Bats**
The trees and the building (an open structure comprising brick and timber with an unlined corrugated metal roof) are considered

unsuitable for use by roosting bats, and no bats or signs of bats were observed during the survey. As such, the risk of the proposals adversely affecting bats is considered to be minimal.

4.26 Lighting

Paragraph 185 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on nature conservation. Lighting can have an adverse impact on wildlife and excessive lighting can adversely affect species groups such as bats and birds. It is also one of the reasons for a significant reduction in invertebrate numbers. The stream wildlife corridor within the site and to the west of the site (alongside Cow Lane) are likely to be used by foraging and commuting bats and other nocturnal wildlife. As such, lighting in and around these areas should be kept to a minimum. The Proposed External Lighting and Security Philosophy Layout (CPWP, ref FS0949-CPW-ZZ-XX-DR-E-6300) shows the lighting levels averaging 10 lux (twilight is 1 lux). These levels need to be reduced (or modified via use of cowls and hoods) so that light does not spill onto these wildlife corridors. A condition to achieve this should be set.

4.27 Ecological impacts during construction

In the absence of mitigation the proposals could affect the following species and habitat: ▪ Nesting birds in trees, buildings and scrubby areas. ▪ Watercourse to the south and west of the site - ▪ Badgers (there is a sett nearby) ▪ Other terrestrial foraging animals e.g. foxes and hedgehogs ▪ Small numbers of common species of reptiles and amphibians (such as common frog and slow worm). These should be included in a CEMP: Biodiversity secured via planning condition.

4.28 Biodiversity enhancements

It is a pity that no significant enhancements, such as a green roof, are proposed. However, should the application be approved it is recommended that a condition be set to ensure that a wildlife friendly landscaping scheme is implemented and that ecological enhancements are provided. Wording is given below. Conditions Should planning permission be granted it is recommended that the conditions below are set.

Reading Borough Environmental Protection

Noise generation

4.29 Comments received noted that in terms of noise generating development that the noise assessment submitted with the application proposes noise limits for any plant to be installed. The limits proposed are acceptable. Once the plant has been selected then a further assessment should be submitted to demonstrate that the limits are met.

4.30 In addition, a noise assessment will be required for the MUGA, and other outdoor playing fields to ensure that there will not be an

unacceptable impact on amenity due to noise from these uses. Ideally this should be submitted prior to approval to ensure that the layout and any mitigation required regarding noise from the MUGA etc. are taken into account in the plans. Conditions were recommended.

Kitchen Extraction - odour

- 4.31 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 EMAQ guidance on the Control of Odour and Noise from Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Systems (Sept 2018) or the (withdrawn) DEFRA version (Jan 2005).

Air Quality - Increased exposure

- 4.32 The proposed development is located within an air quality management area that we have identified with monitoring as being a pollution hot-spot (may breach the EU limit value for NO₂) and introduces new exposure / receptors. An assessment and/or mitigation measures should be provided as part of the application.
- 4.33 The initial assessment submitted showed that air pollution monitoring has been installed to assess the exposure of the school attendees to potentially poor air quality. A further assessment was required to be submitted as a condition confirming the results and any mitigation required.

Air Quality - Increased emissions

- 4.34 Reading has declared a significant area of the borough as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) for the exceedence 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 (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀).
- 4.35 The proposed development is located within or adjacent to an air quality management area and has the potential to increase emissions. An assessment should be provided as part of the application.
- 4.36 Where any increase in emissions is identified a mitigation scheme must be submitted. The mitigation scheme must quantify the emissions saving that it will bring about, in order to prove that the detrimental effect of the development can be offset.
- 4.37 Mitigation against increased emissions:
- Provision of cycling facilities / residents cycles
 - 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
 - Improvements to local public transport
 - 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
- 4.38 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 or be in the form of a contribution to the costs of the monitoring network and / or air quality action plan.
- 4.39 Reading Borough Council's Air Quality Policy EN15 requires that developments have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality through design, mitigation and where required planning obligations to be used to help improve local air quality.
- 4.40 Until an assessment and 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. (see para 4.57 below).

Contaminated Land

- 4.41 The development lies on the site of an historic landfill which has the potential to have caused contaminated land. The proposal may introduce new pollutant linkages between contaminated land and sensitive receptors at the site.
- 4.42 The developer is responsible for ensuring that development is safe and suitable for use for the intended purpose or can be made so by remedial action.
- 4.43 A contaminated land assessment and remediation plan have been submitted to give an indication as to the likely risks and to determine whether the site although further work is required as the precise remediation measures are yet to be determined for each element of the development. The general approach sounds acceptable.
- 4.44 Only an initial ground gas risk assessment has been submitted so far, with further monitoring and a detailed remediation strategy proposed to be carried out.

- 4.45 See recommended conditions below, these are required to ensure that future occupants are not put at undue risk from contamination.

Light

- 4.46 I have concerns about any proposed flood-lighting of the MUGA and other sports pitches resulting in loss of amenity to nearby residents. Insufficient information has been provided in order for me to assess whether the proposed lighting scheme is likely to adversely impact on nearby residents.
- 4.47 More details should be submitted by way of a condition. This information should include a layout plan with beam orientation and a schedule of equipment in the design (luminaire type; mounting height; aiming angles and luminaire profiles) and an isolux contour map to show light spill levels (down to 2 lux if operating between 23:00 and 07:00, or down to 10 lux if operating only between 07:00 and 23:00). The plans should neighbouring buildings so that the predicted impact on them can be assessed. The applicants should demonstrate that light levels will not exceed the relevant guidance lux levels specified in the table below. Information should also show how glare will be controlled.

Environmental Zone - Brightness	Light trespass (into windows) Ev [Lux]	
	Pre-curfew (before 23:00hrs)	Post-curfew (after 23:00hrs)
E3 - Suburban	10	2
E4 - Urban	25	5

Institute of Lighting Professionals : Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light GN01:2011

Construction and demolition phases

- 4.48 The measures within the proposed CMS are largely acceptable however there are a few items that also need to be covered, these could be added to the existing CMS prior to approval.

Bin storage - rats

- 4.49 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 large bin storage areas 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. A condition is recommended.

Further information provided

- 4.50 The following is a summary of comments issued on 2 March 2022 following the submission by the applicant of an updated Construction Environmental Management Plan and Air Quality Monitoring.

- 4.51 It was confirmed that the documents are acceptable and would no longer be recommending conditions requiring an air quality exposure assessment, nor CMS requirements for white noise and pest control. For clarity, an air quality assessment of the impact ON air quality will still be required.
- 4.52 The following is a summary of comments issued on 5 May 2022 following the submission by the application of further information on the remediation strategy and associated documents;

No further queries on remediation strategy. Some minor concerns about the maintenance plan but these can be dealt with once the long term maintenance plan has been drafted and submitted. It is agreed that a condition is needed to secure a long term maintenance plan (in addition to the validation report).

- 4.53 **Planning Officer Note:** No further outstanding issues that cannot be addressed through planning conditions and these have been identified in the recommended list.

Reading Design Review Panel Comments

- 4.54 The model plan achieves an improved road elevation but creates two northern facing courtyards. The design seems to have resulted in less sunlight on the spaces created north of the school buildings.
- 4.55 The location of the buildings in the southern area of the site with drained playing fields in the northern areas seemed appropriate given the flood risk associated with the site. There should be no risk to children using the playing fields from contamination under the site associated with previous land infill that occupied this area.
- 4.56 To accommodate flood risk the building has been set on elevated ground beams allowing flood waters to occupy the space below the ground floor concrete slab. Details on how rabbits, foxes, stagnant water can be prevented from being left in the space should be provided.
- 4.57 It is not clear how taller spaces within the buildings can be created using a prefabricated system without using steel members. It is not clear how the precast concrete floor was supported.
- 4.58 The choice of external cladding materials and their muted colours could have been examined further with perhaps a more colourful treatment the result.
- 4.59 The presentation had many high quality images but there was no elevation of view from the River Thames and beyond to the north which might have a significant aspect of the impact of the building in the wider setting.

- 4.60 It achieves a Very Good BREEAM rating which was disappointing given the technology of the proposed system of prefabricated material being used.
- 4.61 The external planting and landscaping did not achieve much more than providing a decorative setting for the building and alternative methods of rainwater disposal (syphonic internal system) into swales and water retaining areas was not explored, to generate more diverse habitats. This proposal should offer a biodiversity net gain and we encourage the applicant to consider the use of the Biodiversity Planning Toolkit.
- 4.62 It was disappointing to hear that the heating will be by gas boilers rather than heat pumps (although they can be installed at a later time apparently) from the first moment. The interior spaces were provided with sophisticated control systems and low energy fittings and design approach which is not seen on the exterior appearance.
- 4.63 There was little external manifestation of alternative energy strategies, such as solar and wind, which is again disappointing. The elevations were understated and might be improved with greater variation, modelling and coloured materials.
- 4.64 The travel infrastructure needs further thought thereby avoiding/reducing congestion on the southern Riverfield Avenue and its wider connections to Reading. Is the inclusion of 120 cycle spaces ambitious enough?
- 4.65 Does the access to the building provide enough opportunities for groups outside the school community?
- 4.66 Although the sports facilities to the east are separately accessible from the front entrance courtyard there is no separate/alternative provision for the arts and performance areas to the west, can this be improved?
- 4.67 ***Planning Officer note:*** further information has been provided by the applicant in response to comments covering colours, materials and the void under the building. Matters are capable of being addressed through planning conditions and these have been identified in the recommended list.

Reading UK CIC

- 4.68 Reading UK CIC, which acts as the Economic Development Company for Reading, advise that under the Council's Employment Skills and Training SPD the applicant is required to commit to a local Employment and Skills Plan (ESP), or financial contribution for employment and training projects in the borough. Whether this is a formal plan or a financial contribution, it shall be secured via unilateral undertaking/legal agreement. This is in respect of the

construction phase only, owing to the nature of the proposed scheme (education provision).

- 4.69 **Planning Officer note:** addressed through the proposed s106 Agreement.

Reading Borough LLFA

The following is a summary of comments issued on 17 May 2022

- 4.70 Clarification is required on the greenfield run off rate assumed within the flood risk assessment which appears inconsistent. The run off also does not include the run off rate associated with areas of retained greenfield and the filter drains to the east of the site and the north of the ditch which are not connected to the wider drainage network. The application does not appear to comply with DEFRA standards. Further information is also required on the drainage system that relates to the car park and the sports pitch.
- 4.71 **Planning Officer note:** additional information was provided for review on 19 May 2022 which responds to all queries raised. The information has been confirmed to be satisfactory and relevant conditions recommended.

Reading Borough Leisure

- 4.72 No comments provided. To be reported in an update if comments are received ahead of committee.

Reading Borough Waste

- 4.73 No comments provided. To be reported in an update if comments are received ahead of committee.

Reading Borough Education

- 4.74 No comments provided. To be reported in an update if comments are received ahead of committee.

Reading Borough Emergency Planner

- 4.75 No comments provided. To be reported in an update if comments are received ahead of committee.

Reading Borough Sustainable Development

- 4.76 No comments provided. To be reported in an update if comments are received ahead of committee.

Public/ local consultation and comments received

- 4.77 Letters were sent to residents and businesses (a total of 210) along and to the south of Richfield Avenue and along the Warren to the north of the Thames. Site Notices were displayed along Richfield Avenue and Thameside Promenade from 8 January 2022. A Press Notice was also published.
- 4.78 **Planning Officer note:** A summary of the representations (2 with objections, one in support and one observation) received is provided below:
- Impact on traffic
 - Health and safety concerns of pupils so close to the river
 - Pressure on businesses in the local area
 - Carbon footprint
 - Landscaping and views
 - Ensuring community access to sports facilities is formally secured

Caversham and District Residents Association

- 4.79 It is very disappointing that a development of this scale, providing education for our young people, pays so little attention to the opportunities to reduce its carbon footprint and meet the needs of the climate emergency. There seems no reference to energy measures of any kind. The transport plan should be far more ambitious to avoid congestion, pollution and impact on climate change. 120 cycles spaces for 1500 pupils is grossly inadequate. Safe cycle routes from the North, South and West to reach Richfield Avenue should be considered. There is no reference to discussion with Reading Buses and potential provision of a bus stop nearer the school. The landscape appraisal gives inadequate representation of the impact on views towards the school, including from St Peters Conservation Area. Tree planting to screen the school is insufficient and should be increased to soften the views of the school. Community access to sports facilities is welcome but should be formally secured.

Maiden Erlegh Trust

- 4.80 Support for a much-needed new secondary school to serve the north and west of Reading. The Trust's application to establish this new school was submitted in association with Reading Borough Council and supported by a basic need business case that recognises the shortage of secondary school places in the Borough. School Place Planning data indicates that the Borough will be short of 12 forms of entry (360 places) by 2025 and this is based upon the numbers of current primary school age children occupying places in the Borough's primary schools. The proposed school will be an 8 form entry intake (240 places) as it is assumed that some primary school children will

move to the Independent sector as they transition to secondary school, and parental choice will mean some children will access school places outside of Reading Borough. The data indicates that an 8 form entry intake will ensure sufficiency of secondary school places within the Borough over the place planning period. When considering the proposed location of the new school, the Local Authority conducted significant due diligence on a number of locations, and the Rivermead site was deemed optimal and proposed to the Department for Education. The Department for Education has conducted further significant due diligence of the proposed site and deem this location appropriate for the establishment of what will become River Academy. The proposed site is not without its logistical challenges, but considerable efforts have gone into collaboratively finding solutions to these issues. As a result, Maiden Erlegh Trust wholeheartedly support the need for this new school in Reading Borough, and lend its support for this planning application.

Caversham Globe

- 4.81 It is disappointing that the proposed development appears to do the bare minimum to meet current environmental criteria. It is hoped that the architects would review the proposal and add a green roof particularly considering its proximity to the river. If there is not a green roof then solar panels on the roof would be a suitable addition. The landscaping also appears to be disappointing. There should be more trees to screen the buildings. As part of previous planning permission for this location it was agreed that there should be hedging around the outside of the fencing of the driving range. This hedging provides natural habitat for a significant amount of wildlife in this location (birds and rabbits in particular). The hedgerow also provides a natural sound barrier for residents. As such the hedgerow on the outside perimeter of the fencing must be maintained and the few gaps in the hedgerow should be planted with similar hedging. It is also disappointing that the number of cycle spaces appear to be so limited. 120 bike spaces for 1500+ pupils does not appear to be anywhere near enough if pupils are to be encouraged to cycle to school to help meet RBC's climate change plans. (For reference 75% of Dutch children cycle to school which would suggest up to 1,125 bike spaces could be required in the future.) It is also concerning that the proposed site sits within a flood zone. It would appear obvious that to reduce risk of flooding floodplains should not be developed upon. In particular grass should not be replaced with tarmac in such locations. The shortage of potential sites in Reading for such a school is understood. Thus, if this land is to be developed upon then this proposal should do the maximum possible in terms of environmental mitigation given the location of the site, rather than the minimum.

Unit 5 Richfield Place 12 Richfield Avenue

- 4.82 This is already a busy route in the morning and adding more traffic is going to cause so many more issues. Is it also a good idea to have a school near a river - concern over health and safety of pupils so close to the river and the fact it is so close to a very busy road. Also concern of the pressure it will put on businesses in the local area.

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) (2021) which states at Paragraph 11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”. The relevant sections of the NPPF are:-

National Policy

- 5.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):-

Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development

Section 6 - Building a Strong Competitive Economy

Section 8 - Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities

Section 9 - Promoting Sustainable Transport

Section 11 - Making Effective Use of Land

Section 12 - Achieving Well-Designed Places

Section 14 - Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

Section 15 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Section 16 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Adopted Reading Borough Local Plan - November 2019

- 5.3 The development plan for this Local Planning Authority is the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019). The relevant policies are:

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction

CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change

CC4: Decentralised Energy

CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage

CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

CC9: Securing Infrastructure

EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

EN2: Areas of Archaeological Significance

EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas

EN4: Locally Important Heritage Assets

EN5: Protection of Significant Views with Heritage Interest

EN6: New Development in a Historic Context
EN7: Local Green Space and Public Open Space
EN8: Undesignated Open Space
EN9: Provision of Open Space
EN10: Access to Open Space
EN11: Waterspaces
EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
EN13: Major Landscape Features and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland
EN15: Air Quality
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
EN17: Noise Generating Equipment
EN18: Flooding and Drainage
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
OU1: New and Existing Community Facilities

Supplementary Planning Guidance/ Documents

- Employment, Skills and Training (April 2013)
- Sustainable Design and Construction (December 2019)
- Revised Parking Standards and Design (October 2011)
- Planning Obligations Under Section 106 (April 2015)

Other Relevant Documents

- Tree Strategy (2020)

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 It is considered that the proposal does not fall within Schedule 1 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as updated¹) (hereafter referred to as the EIA Regulations 2017). However, the proposal falls within the description at paragraph 10(b) of Schedule 2 as an ‘urban development project’ and exceeds the threshold of the site area being 5 hectares in column 2. Therefore, the Council considers the proposal to be ‘Schedule 2 development’ within the meaning of the EIA Regulations 2017.

6.2 The Council has therefore considered if the proposed development is likely to have significant effects on the environment. In determining such effects, the Council has considered the criteria for screening Schedule 2 development set out in Schedule 3 of the Regulations.

¹ The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017; updated by the Town and Country Planning and Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)(Amendment) Regulations 2018 - SI 2018/695

These are the characteristics of the development, its location and the types and characteristics of the potential impact. Based upon the description of the development and the information provided in the applicants screening request (Ref. 212034 received on 16 December 2021) it is concluded that the development, while being Major in size and lying adjacent to the River Thames within the locally designated Thames Valley Major Landscape Feature and near to potential biodiversity sites, would not introduce a significant change to the site appearance or lead to potentially harmful effects on the environment.

- 6.3 On the basis of the above, the Council considers that the development proposed is not development that is likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its size, nature or location and therefore **it is not EIA development and an Environmental Statement is not required.**
- 6.4 A screening request was requested by the applicant on 16 December and the Council's screening opinion was issued on 7 February 2022 to confirm that an Environmental Statement is not required.

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 The main matters to be considered are:

- **Principle of development and effect on the Thames Valley Major Landscape Area and Local Green Space**
- **Design considerations**
- **Transport and Parking**
- **Landscape and Trees**
- **Sustainability**
- **Environmental Matters - contamination, flood risk, air quality and noise**
- **Other Issues raised in consultation**
- **Equalities impact**

Principle of Development and effect on the Major Landscape Area and Local Green Space

- 7.2 Policy CC1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan requires a positive approach to development proposals that reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which lies at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 7.3 It goes on to state that *“Planning applications that accord with the policies in the development planwill be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.....”*
- 7.4 A large proportion of the application site is situated within the Rivermead and Thameside Promenade area of Local Green Space

(LGS) (Policy EN7Wp). Policy EN7 offers significant protection to LGS and Public Open Space (POS) noting that proposals that would result in the loss of any of these areas, erode their quality through insensitive adjacent development or jeopardise their use or enjoyment by the public, will not be permitted. As a result of its location, the Rivermead and Thameside Promenade LGS is a valuable area of open space at the heart of Reading used for communities to the north and south of the river. Its use is primarily for informal recreation but also includes more formal resources including those accessing the river for water-based activities as well as the formal uses afforded by the Rivermead Leisure Centre immediately adjacent to the application site.

- 7.5 However, it is important to note that Policy EN7 is specifically worded to protect the unnecessary loss of areas that are accessible to the public and makes an important distinction between areas of unrestricted and restricted public access (e.g. a park V a school playing field). In this regard, the most recent use of the application site as a golf driving range and laser clay shooting range restricted public access for safety reasons.
- 7.6 Effectively, and whilst the site is within the area of LGS, the application site has always functioned as a managed sports facility rather than as any sort of publicly accessible green space or park. The proposed community use of the sports facilities offered by the school will ensure a continuation of this use. Other land outside of the application site and within the Rivermead and Thameside Promenade is currently, and has been historically, accessible and used by members of the public and clearly fulfils its intended LGS designated within the Local Plan.
- 7.7 The Open Space Review that accompanies the application notes that although the proposed school buildings and the MUGA would result in the reduction of 1.1 ha land associated with a defined LGS / Other Sports Facilities open space typology the reduction only represents 6.6% of the total defined LGS / open space typology site area (16.8 ha).
- 7.8 The community use of the school sports facilities outside of school hours is emphasised in the application. The building has been designed so that the eastern side of the building can be closed off securely and used by the community out of hours. This includes all of the sports facilities including the main hall, activity studio and changing rooms, along with the hygiene room and accessible changing.



View of MUGAs and playing fields

- 7.9 Therefore, whilst the proposal will result in the loss of a notable amount of designated LGS and to a certain extent alter the way the public perceive the remaining LGS, the actual loss of this particular part of the LGS is unlikely to fundamentally affect the overall status or way in which the remainder of the Rivermead and Thameside Promenade is enjoyed by members of the public. Plus, the site will remain in managed accessible use for members of the public. It is therefore concluded that the overall intention of Policy EN7 to prevent loss or jeopardise the use of areas of LGS is not compromised by the application proposal.
- 7.10 Consideration has also been given to whether any other policies are more applicable and/or whether any material planning considerations are applicable in accordance with the requirements of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the NPPF.
- 7.11 Policy OU1 ‘New and Existing Community Facilities’ is clear in its support for new, extended or improved community facilities. This policy is important in that it identifies the Council’s parameters in assessing such facilities over the plan period. The policy states that *“Where a proposal for a new school meets a clear need, and it would otherwise accord with national and local policy, it will be acceptable on sites identified for residential or other development.”* Importantly this policy goes onto recognise that the on-site intensification of some facilities (particularly schools) may result in the loss of some open areas.
- 7.12 This policy also acknowledges the competing priorities of meeting educational need within the borough against existing and proposed social and environmental commitments. Any such assessment of a new secondary school on this land would more directly engage the requirements of this policy than Policy EN7. This policy is also set against the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the clear support at national level for authorities like Reading to actively seek to meet the day-to-day needs of their residents.

7.13 Turning to the key economic, social and environmental aspects of the presumption in favour of sustainable development, the following issues are relevant:-

- **Economic** - the proposal would contribute to and encourage associated economic activity within Reading through the construction works, ongoing operation and management of the school and new employment opportunities (circa. 156 FTE staff are envisaged to be employed by the school);
- **Social** - the proposal is a clear response to a Borough wide need for additional school places. Paragraph 94 of the NPPF emphasises the importance of a Local Authority having sufficient choice of school places to meet the needs of existing communities. It goes on to say that, "*Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement and to development that will widen choice in education*".
In particular LPAs should give 'great weight' to the need to create, expand or alter schools through planning applications. Paragraph 121 of the NPPF supports the needs for LPAs to make more effective use of sites that provide community services such as schools, provided this maintains or improves the quality of service provision and access to open space. The use of the school facilities by the community is also a key enhancement.
- **Environment** - the land at the former Leaderboard Golf Range is not recognised as currently having any substantial environmental value in terms of biodiversity and the proposals have the potential to enhance this value through a comprehensive landscape strategy, landscape and ecological management as well as sustainability and energy efficiency. This is considered further below.

7.14 Overall, it is considered that the above merits associated with the proposal in the planning balance outweigh the small percentage of inaccessible LGS that would be lost and the principle of development is acceptable. As recognised by representations received, it will be important to ensure that the community use operates effectively and this can be secured through appropriate planning conditions.

Design considerations

7.15 The NPPF states that "*Good Design is a key aspect of sustainable development*" (para. 126) and that development that is not good design should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design.

7.16 Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan sets out the importance of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.

- 7.17 The application proposals have been considered by the DRP and detailed comments have been provided covering layout, built form, appearance and other environmental aspects of the proposals.
- 7.18 The proposed site is within the Thames Valley designated Major Landscape Feature (MLF under Policy EN13) and as noted above, a large proportion of the site located within the Rivermead and Thameside Promenade area of Local Green Space (Policy EN7Wp).
- 7.19 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 goes on to state that *“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”*. It also notes 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”*.
- 7.20 Policy EN7 identifies that proposals will not be permitted that *“erode their [Local Green Space’s] quality through insensitive adjacent development....”*.
- 7.21 The submission includes a Design and Access Statement. This sets out how the proposed development has been designed to adhere with the above policies. In particular, it highlights how the proposed school has been purposely located at the southern area of the site aligned with the existing (and to be redeveloped) leisure centre buildings in order to protect the open space character to the north of the site close to the river. In addition, significant landscaping is proposed as well as regular maintenance which in turn will enhance the quality of open space on the site and ensure its appearance is kept up.
- 7.22 The Design and Access Statement also outlines that the form and mass of the building is to a certain degree a result of designing the building to the brief set by the DfE for the school and also responding to the key site constraints - it is effectively a modern ‘functional’ design approach. Careful consideration has been given to effective circulation around the building and also the pupil experience of the buildings. Design emphasis has been placed on key features like the entrance and the sports hall and the external appearance and colour palette aims to present an ‘aspirational’ image.
- 7.23 A Landscape and Visual Assessment also accompanies the application. The Visual Assessment identifies a number of locations of potential significance in the immediate and surrounding area to the proposed school. It highlights that significant vegetation acts to obscure extensive views of the site - including from elevated areas north of the river, south of the river in areas like Prospect Park and from

Chazey Wood. Views that do exist are likely only through breaks in vegetation. Overall, these demonstrate that the proposals will not detract from the character or appearance of the Thames Valley Major Landscape Feature, due to the distance of the proposed buildings from important visual receptors, lack of intervisibility due to distance and intervening trees and vegetation.

- 7.24 The proposals described comprise a mainly three storey structure which will not create an overly overbearing visual impact in the surrounding area; it also relates well to the adjacent Rivermead leisure centre. The buildings have been designed with a strong entrance focus point and incorporates design features such as coloured panels to add interest. Conditions have been identified to require samples of the materials to be used to be provided for approval to ensure that these are of high quality prior to their installation.
- 7.25 Landscaping and tree planting within the site is protected and retained where possible. A landscaping and planting strategy has been provided by the applicant and conditions have been identified to ensure that these maximise the potential to enhance the landscape character of the site.
- 7.26 Considering the above, the design of the proposed development is considered to ensure an appropriately functional and appropriate response to the site and the proposed development and avoid adverse impacts on the surrounding area.

Transport and Parking

- 7.27 Policy TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters) states that in determining proposals involving new or altered access onto the transport network, consideration will be given to the effect on safety, congestion and the environment. Development will only be permitted where:
- Access and works to the highway comply with the adopted Transport Authority standards
 - The development would not have a material detrimental impact on the transport network
 - The proposals would not be detrimental to the safety of uses of the transport network including pedestrians and cyclists
 - The proposals would not generate regular HGV movements on unsuitable roads.
- 7.28 Proposals which involve a material increase in the use of an existing site access will not be acceptable if they would be likely to result in the encouragement of the use of the network for short local trips or compromise the safe movement and free flow of traffic on the network or the safe use of the road.
- 7.29 Policy TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities states that developments will

be expected to make full use of opportunities to improve access for cyclists to, from and within the development and to integrate cycling through the provision of new facilities.

- 7.30 Policy TR4 requires that development does not detrimentally affect an identified cycle route. Where opportunities exist, improvements to that route, including the provision of connecting routes, and/or cycling facilities will be sought within developments or through planning contributions.
- 7.31 Policy TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging states that development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport and 10 % of the car parking spaces should be provided with electric vehicle charging points.
- 7.32 The closest bus stop to the site is located along Richfield Avenue which is approximately 250m east from the site. This stop is served by the 42, 42a and 60a, F10, F11 and F12. It should be noted that the 42a only runs in the evening and the 60a on Sundays. There are also two other bus stops located further east along Caversham Road approximately 750m from the site. These bus stops serve an additional three routes. The nearest National Rail station to the site is Reading West, located approximately 1km (12- minutes' walk) south of the site.
- 7.33 The site will be accessed from Richfield Avenue by Cow Lane, which in this location is a public footway. A total of 82 car parking spaces are proposed of which six shall be for blue badge holders.
- 7.34 A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan accompany the planning application. A range of issues were raised during the determination of the application in relation to the modelling that formed the basis of the assessment; and therefore the reliability of the outcomes. The assessment has been extensively supplemented and whilst limitations with the modelling technique used by the applicant has been raised, it is concluded that the same conclusion would be reached in terms of the impact on the local highway, pedestrian and cycle network and therefore the conclusions now reached can be relied upon.
- 7.35 Of particular focus has been the assumptions on which the assessment has been based and the applicant has supplied additional information covering the likely catchment area for pupils and staff including distance from the site. Given the location of the school, it is likely that pupils will be sourced from the west and north of the borough at a distance of up to 3 miles from the school with staff coming from a broader catchment and potentially including suburbs surrounding Reading. This has been taken into account in the revised assessment and in providing an understanding of which vehicular, pedestrian and cycle routes most likely to be used by those travelling

to and from the school. Consideration has also been given to the likely hours at which pupils, staff and parents will be travelling to and from the site.

- 7.36 From a vehicular perspective, the local highway network, and particularly junctions analysed to the east of the site, are already at or beyond capacity at key times when pupils, staff and parents collecting or dropping off pupils are likely to be travelling to and from the school. The assessment has shown that, nonetheless, the addition of the school traffic to the network, based on the assumptions drawn on likely catchment, are unlikely to make a material difference to the levels of congestion at the key junctions analysed. A Traffic Regulation Order is proposed to introduce parking restrictions and prevent further adverse impacts from parents waiting to collect pupils during key times.
- 7.37 A focus has been given on promoting alternative modes of travel to the school and discussions with the applicant during the course of the application has led to additional measures being identified for delivery through a s106 agreement to improve pedestrian and cycle facilities in the vicinity of the school to encourage travel by these means as well as ensuring that impact on existing facilities does not occur. The facilities include a new Tiger Crossing on Richfield Avenue and £200,000 towards widening pedestrian and cycle routes on the north and south of Richfield Avenue.
- 7.38 Information provided by the applicant has shown that bus services can accommodate the additional passengers.
- 7.39 The applicant has provided a Travel Plan and this will be developed and monitored to ensure that it works to further promote the use of alternative modes of travel to the school.
- 7.40 Detailed consideration has been given to car parking provision proposed within the site. The number of spaces meet standards and are therefore considered appropriate when balanced with other measures to encourage staff to travel by alternate means to the site. Particular consideration has been given to ensure that large vehicles can effectively access and egress including coaches which may be required for school trips, delivery vehicles accessing the existing Garden Centre to the south of the school and vehicles using the site during the Reading Festival. Information has been provided to demonstrate that adequate access and egress can be provided and appropriate set down, loading and delivery facilities are included within the proposals.
- 7.41 The development provides electric vehicle charging points and cycling parking facilities within standards and are considered adequate.
- 7.42 On balance, and with the additional information and mitigation

measures identified during the course of determination of the application, the application is considered consistent with policy.

Landscape, Trees and Ecology

- 7.43 Policy EN12 states that, for all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and should provide for a net gain in biodiversity wherever possible. Development should also protect and wherever enhance features of biodiversity interest on and adjacent to sites and provide new tree planting, wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements. The policy also states that permission will not be granted for sites forming part of the Green Network where this could fragment the overall network; new development should demonstrate how the location and type of green space, landscaping and water features provided have been arranged to maintain or link into the existing Green Network and contribute to its consolidation.
- 7.44 Policy EN14 requires new development “...make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site ... to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which a site is located, to provide for biodiversity and to contribute to measures to reduce carbon and adapt to climate change”.
- 7.45 The site is not located and does not contain any sites with biodiversity interest and is not covered by any Tree Preservation Orders. However, as it forms part of the Local Green Space (as described under this report under ‘Principle of Development’) it is relevant to ensure that it serves the function of stitching the Green Network together.
- 7.46 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been submitted with the application with an updated version provided during determination due to concerns raised regarding the age of the survey. A number of low/ moderate quality trees/ tree groups are proposed to be removed in order to facilitate the development. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment concludes that the impact of the development on existing trees will be minimal. It also sets out a number of mitigation measures.
- 7.47 The landscaping proposals includes the planting of 39 new trees and new areas of hedgerows on the site. This is consistent with Policy EN14. Further information has been requested by the Natural Environment Team during the determination process with a focus on the species to be planted and confirmation that these are appropriate for this site. Confirmation of these details can be confirmed via planning condition.
- 7.48 The application is also accompanied by an Ecological Assessment. There are no statutorily designated sites near the site; and the nearest non-statutory locally designated sites within 1000 metres are

the Warren Woodlands Complex Local Wildlife Site and Cow Lane Depot Local Wildlife Site. Ecology surveys show the site is not of ecological value; with an area of largely bare ground to the south and larger rougher amenity grassland with hardstanding and open fronted buildings bounded by hedgerows to the north. A small stream runs east to west.

7.49 The site has a moderate potential for supporting foraging badgers although no badger setts have been noted. The existing structures on the site are of negligible suitability for bats and the on-site trees are of low suitability for bats. The site has negligible potential for dormice, water vole and otter and a low potential for supporting reptiles or amphibians. The site has, however, high potential for supporting breeding birds.

7.50 The ecological assessment outlines that:

- there will be no impacts to the Local Wildlife Sites;
- the on-site habitats directly impacted are all of lower ecological value and are of negligible ecological value beyond the site level;
- The loss of amenity grassland from the site, in relation to the habitats present in the surrounding area is not considered significant given the extensive higher quality badger foraging habitat in the parkland to the north and the pastures to the west;
- The survey identified that there is a low potential for some of the ivy-clad trees to support bat roosts. If present, works to fell these would result in the destruction of any roosts and potentially direct harm (killing or injury) to any bats that may be present at the time of the works;
- The impacts of this at this site would be considered to be low due to the general low quality of the habitat; nevertheless, measures should be implemented to minimise this as far as possible; and
- The scale of any habitat loss would not be significant given the availability of more extensive habitat in the wider environment, particularly the parkland to the north and the open pastures / hedgerows to the west.

7.51 The applicant has outlined a range of landscape and ecological mitigation and enhancement measures which include avoiding bird breeding seasons, protecting tree roots, biodiversity enhancements and future management. All of these measures can be secured via planning condition.

7.52 Overall, the proposal is considered acceptable in landscape, ecology and arboricultural terms subject to the suggested planning conditions.

Sustainability

- 7.53 Following the declaration by the Council of a climate emergency and an increased focus on the consequence and responses to climate change, the importance of all aspects of sustainability are taking on a greater focus in the planning process. It is important that the Council's commitment to sustainability is placed at the heart of the local decision-making process especially on significant social infrastructure projects such as schools.
- 7.54 There are several sustainability policies within the local plan which are relevant to the new development.
- 7.55 The overarching sustainability Policy CC2 requires all major non-residential developments to meet the most up-to-date BREEAM 'Excellent' standards, where possible. The explanatory text, however, recognises that for some types of development, including schools, it can be more difficult to meet these standards. However where this is the case, it is important that information is provided to demonstrate that the sustainability standard to be achieved is the highest possible for the relevant development type and at a minimum meets BREEAM 'Very Good'.
- 7.56 Policy CC3 requires that all developments demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change.
- 7.57 Policy CC4 requires any non-residential development over "1,000 sqm to 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".
- 7.58 Policy CC5 requires minimisation of waste during construction and the life of the development.
- 7.59 The application is accompanied by an Energy Statement. This states that the proposed school has been designed to meet exemplar design standards for education buildings based upon the DfE briefing document, known as the Output Specification (OS). There is no existing district heating network in the vicinity of the site, however, provision has been made to allow for future connection to a district heating network should this be provided. The inclusion of 8 electric vehicle charging bays would contribute to reducing carbon emissions.
- 7.60 The design requirements set by the DfE (e.g. modular design etc.) mean that certain BREEAM credits cannot be secured in this instance. The application explains that a 'fabric first' approach has been adopted focusing on high levels of insulation and air tightness which reduces heat loss from the buildings. The costs associated with the decontamination of this heavily contaminated site also limit the potential to incorporate new technology.

- 7.61 Consequently, the proposed development has been identified as likely to meet BREEAM 'Very Good' standards when the assessments are carried out prior to construction and then prior to the school opening. An assessment provided with the application submission concluded a score of 55.1% was achievable but the applicant has since clarified that the development is likely to achieve a BREEAM standard between 60-65%².
- 7.62 It is also recognised that new opportunities to improve the credits may emerge as development moves forward. Planning conditions have therefore been identified which will require the applicant to justify the credit achieved and why a higher standard is not achievable.
- 7.63 To conclude, the development does not meet the aspirational BREEAM Excellent standard specified by Policy CC2 but the applicant has provided explanation to justify why this cannot be achieved on this unique site. Notwithstanding, planning conditions have been specified which will require the highest rating possible to be achieved by the applicant. On balance, the development is therefore considered acceptable in sustainability terms.

Environmental Matters - contamination, flood risk, air quality and noise

Contaminated Land

- 7.64 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.
- 7.65 The NPPF places weight on the value of using brownfield land and supports opportunities to remediate contaminated land.
- 7.66 It is highly relevant that the application site is heavily contaminated due to the use of the site between 1970 and 1979 as a landfill. A contaminated land assessment and remediation plan have been submitted to give an indication as to the likely risks. A range of identified sources of contamination have been identified which could impact on human health and the environment.
- 7.67 Further work is required as the precise remediation measures are yet to be determined for each element of the development. However, the Environmental Protection Team note that the general approach to be acceptable, subject to conditions.

² The BREEAM ratings are as follows: <10% - unclassified; >10% - acceptable; >25% - pass; >40% - good; >55% - very good; >70% - excellent; >85% - outstanding

7.68 In addition to the above and in response to comments from Reading EHO and the DRP the applicant subsequently submitted a Contamination Remediation Strategy, which provides details of remediation and measures which are to be undertaken to ensure that the site and development is suitable for the end users. As a result, the Environmental Health Officer has no further comments on the remediation strategy, subject to various conditions being secured including for a long term maintenance plan.

Flood Risk

7.69 Policy EN18 requires development to be directed to areas as the lowest risk of flooding in the first instance, following the Sequential and Exception Test set out in the NPPF. This site is located within Flood Zone's 2/3 which are the areas of highest risk of flooding. No buildings are proposed to be located within the area designated as Flood Zone 3.

7.70 The building has been designed to mitigate risks of flooding onsite and elsewhere. The design of the school building and external site levels have taken the risks of flooding into account and will create additional compensatory flood volumes on the site during a flood event. Additional design measures will aim to achieve safe site and buildings for operation. The school building has been elevated with floor levels above critical flood levels and voids beneath the building have been created to accommodate additional flood storage volume.

7.71 A Flood Risk Assessment, a Drainage Strategy and a Flood Response Plan have been provided with the application. The Flood Risk Assessment concludes that the proposed school development at the site:

- Is suitable in the location proposed and will be adequately flood resilient;
- Is unlikely to place additional persons at risk of flooding through implementation of a bespoke (separate) Flood Response Plan and will offer a safe means of access and egress; and
- Is unlikely to increase flood risk elsewhere as a result of the proposed development through the loss of floodplain storage, impedance of flood flows or increase in surface water runoff.

7.72 In addition, a Sequential Assessment accompanies the application due to the site's location within Flood Zone 2/3. It does not identify any sites that are sequentially preferable, available and deliverable to the application site.

7.73 The Environment Agency are broadly in agreement with the reports and their conclusions and have no objection to the development in relation to flood risk. Given the site overlies a historic landfill, monitoring of activities and their impact on water quality will need to be undertaken during the construction phase, therefore conditions

with regards to this have been requested.

- 7.74 Additional information has been provided relating to the drainage of the site to clarify conclusions reached in the drainage strategy. Planning conditions have been identified to require matters to be fully satisfied and if further concerns are raised by the LLFA prior to committee this will be identified in an update report.

Air Quality

- 7.75 Policy EN15 of the Local Plan requires developments to “*have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality*”.
- 7.76 Various areas of Reading have been designated as Air Quality Management Areas. The southern end of the proposed development site falls within this AQMA. The proposed development will introduce additional traffic movements onto roads within the AQMA.
- 7.77 An Air Quality Assessment has been submitted with the application, as well as an updated assessment including further details on vehicular movements. An updated Air Quality Assessment has modelled transport emissions on links affected by generated traffic, including areas of known poor air quality, e.g. Prospect Street. The scope of the assessment was agreed between the applicant and the Environmental Health Department, prior to the completion of the updated Air Quality Assessment.
- 7.78 The updated Air Quality Assessment concluded that air quality at the site was acceptable for the introduction of the intended use as a secondary school. The qualitative assessment of construction activities has confirmed that the impact arising from dust is considered to be low. Regarding transport emissions associated with the development has shown that NO₂ and particulate emissions are within air quality objectives at all locations assessed. In other words the overall impact of the development is shown to be negligible with the range of measures described in this report implemented such as a Travel Plan, improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure and management of construction activities.
- 7.79 A Construction Environment Management Plan and Air Quality Monitoring strategy were submitted during the determination period. The Environmental Protection Team confirmed that these were acceptable but have asked for an air quality assessment of the impact on air quality as a planning condition.

Noise

- 7.80 Key policies include CC8 which states that development must “*not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties...*” and EN17 which notes “*where noise*

generating equipment is proposed, the noise source specific⁶¹ level (plant noise level) should be at least 10dBA below the existing background level as measured at the nearest noise sensitive receptor seek to protect existing and future amenity”.

- 7.81 The site’s location surrounded by green space to the north, the existing Rivermead Leisure Centre to the east, warehouse units to the south and farmland to the west means there are no residential properties in the immediate area. The closest homes are located along The Warren located some distance way on the north side of the River Thames.
- 7.82 The noise assessment submitted with the application proposes noise limits for any plant to be installed. The Environmental Protection Team have confirmed that the limits proposed are acceptable.
- 7.83 Initially the Environmental Protection Team raised concerns about possible floodlighting of the MUGA and other sports pitches which could facilitate long periods of use of the facilities and result in a loss of amenity to nearby residents from light and noise. In response to this further information was submitted which concluded that the proposed lighting scheme and noise from students is unlikely to adversely impact on nearby residents.
- 7.84 For the above reasons, neighbouring amenity impacts of the proposal are considered to be acceptable, and the proposal consistent with the aforementioned policies, subject to conditions of planning permission.

Other Issues

Economic Development

- 7.85 It is a key priority of the Council to maximise employment opportunities for local people during both the construction and operation of development and has adopted an Employment, Skills and Training Supplementary Planning Document (April 2013). A s106 Agreement will be required for this development to secure local employment opportunities and this is consistent with the requirements of the SPD.

Need for the School in this Location

- 7.86 Section 14(1) of the Education Act 1996 requires that a local education authority must provide sufficient primary and secondary education facilities within their area.
- 7.87 There is a pressing need for secondary school places within the local area due in a large part to population growth. This report summarised the findings from the 2019 report prepared by Reading Borough Council’s Brighter Futures for Children and which confirms

the need for a new secondary school in the area. The development of the application site for the secondary school was originally envisaged for a 2021 opening and the need for the school remains pressing.

- 7.88 Reading has a higher density of built form than the rest of Berkshire, with a significant amount of the borough developed with urban and suburban development. The supply of land suitable for a new secondary school in Reading is limited as a result of the density of existing development and other constraints. The application site has been identified as meeting the requirements for a new secondary school defined by the DfE in terms of size, etc (notable the DfE's BB103 Standards which require a minimum site of 2.3ha and a maximum site of 8.4ha).
- 7.89 Consideration has also been given to the fact that there is a dominance of secondary schools within the south and east of the Borough and a qualitative bias with many of these schools rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted. There is a corresponding undersupply of secondary schools within the west of the borough. The application site is in the north west of the borough and in an area which displays an undersupply of secondary school provision.
- 7.90 Alongside the Flood Risk Assessment a detailed sequential assessment was undertaken to consider if alternative locations exist where the school could be provided and no other sites were located. This is therefore the only site in which this proposal can be provided.

Equalities Impact

- 7.91 When determining an application for planning permission the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The planning application confirms that the new buildings have been designed to be fully accessible and inclusive. All spaces in the new building will be accessible to all; the floors and thresholds are level and there is a lift serving both floors. The design proposals have been developed with reference to Approved Document Part M (AD-M), the DfE Building Bulletin 91 'Access for Disabled People to School Buildings', Building Bulletin 102 'Designing for disabled children and children with special educational needs' and BS8300:2018 'Design of an Accessible and Inclusive Built Environment.'
- 7.92 Consideration has been given to acoustic design as it has been shown that poor acoustics can have a significant negative impact on the educational development of children. Whilst adults can make guesses at words missed, children often find it harder to do so, and so wherever possible improvements will be made to the room acoustics, including sound insulation between spaces (airborne and impact), reverberation within teaching and study spaces and adequate sound absorption for corridors, stairwells and entrance halls.

- 7.93 Colour contrast will be used to define areas and highlight differences where appropriate. An inclusive design needs to consider all disabilities, and the design will cater for the visually impaired, those with poor manual dexterity and physical disabilities.
- 7.94 Other good practice measures identified within the application submission include full level access to all areas; Part M compliant doorways; generation circulation widths; appropriate shower, changing and WC facilities; induction loops where required; accessible car parking spaces close to the main entrance; and use of signage. All learning spaces will also be designed to accessible standards, be appropriately lit and incorporate height-adjustable furniture where required. The buildings are designed with appropriate refuges to allow for managed and assisted evacuation. All refuge areas will feature an alert and intercom link.
- 7.95 Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics, it is considered that there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

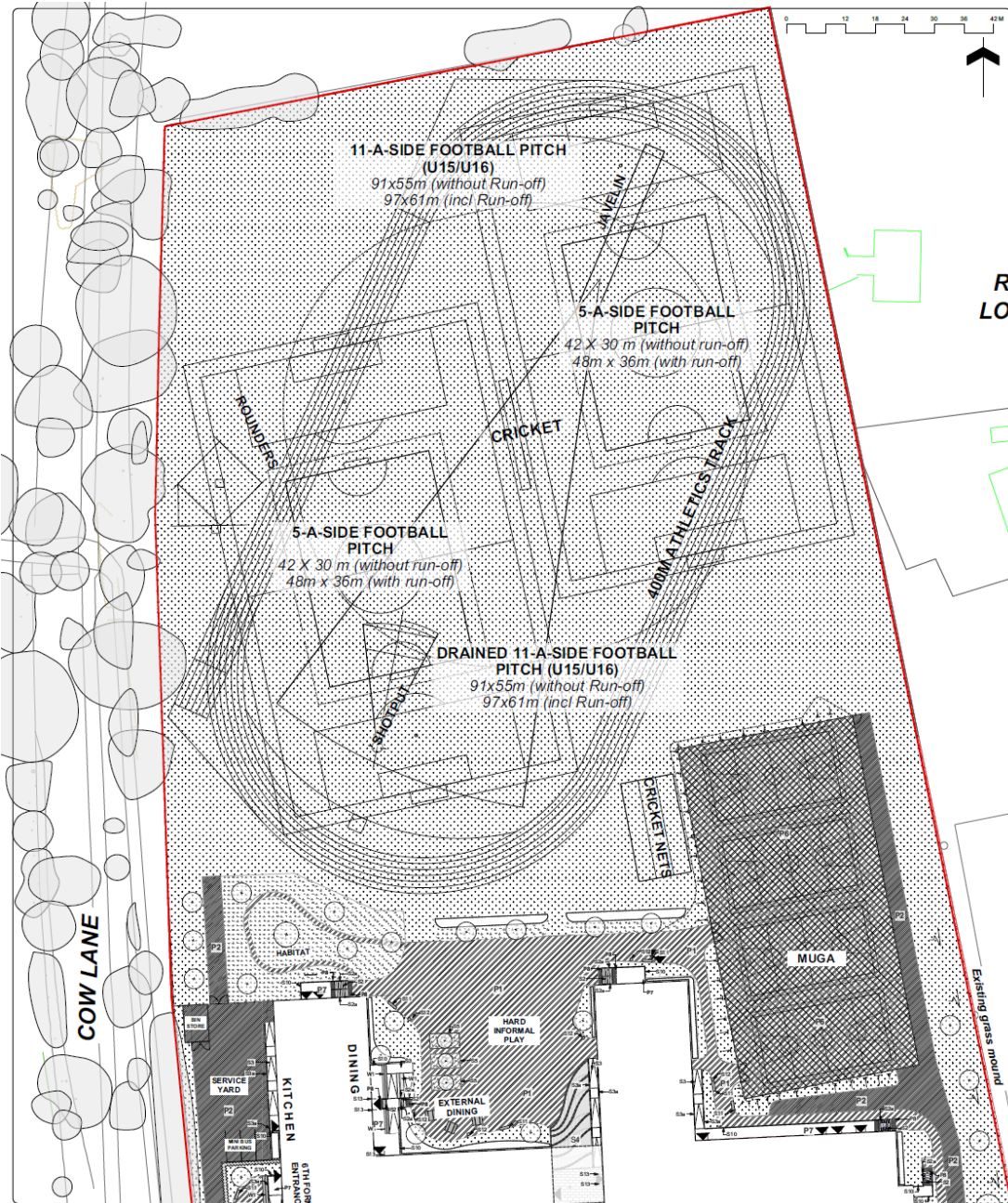
8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This proposal has been carefully considered in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and supplementary planning documents. The proposal will provide an new secondary school for Reading; the need for this having been identified in a report commissioned by the Borough Council in 2019. The borough has an obligation to provide sufficient education facilities at both primary and secondary level.
- 8.2 There is limited secondary school provision in the north and west of the borough and this is the only site available which meets the various requirements identified by the DfE for new schools of this nature. The development will ensure the decontamination and remediation of the site which remains contaminated from its use as a landfill in the 1970s.
- 8.3 The site is within the Thames Valley Major Landscape Area designation and within designated Local Green Space where development is generally unacceptable if it affects the open character of the designation. The buildings have been orientated towards the south of the site, close to Richfield Avenue, to retain as much open character as possible. The value of this site in terms of its contribution to the Local Green Space due to its previous semi-private use as a golf driving range means that the development as a secondary school has been shown to be consistent with the requirements of policy. The proposal also includes community use of the school facilities outside of school hours and will be used by Festival users during the Reading festival.

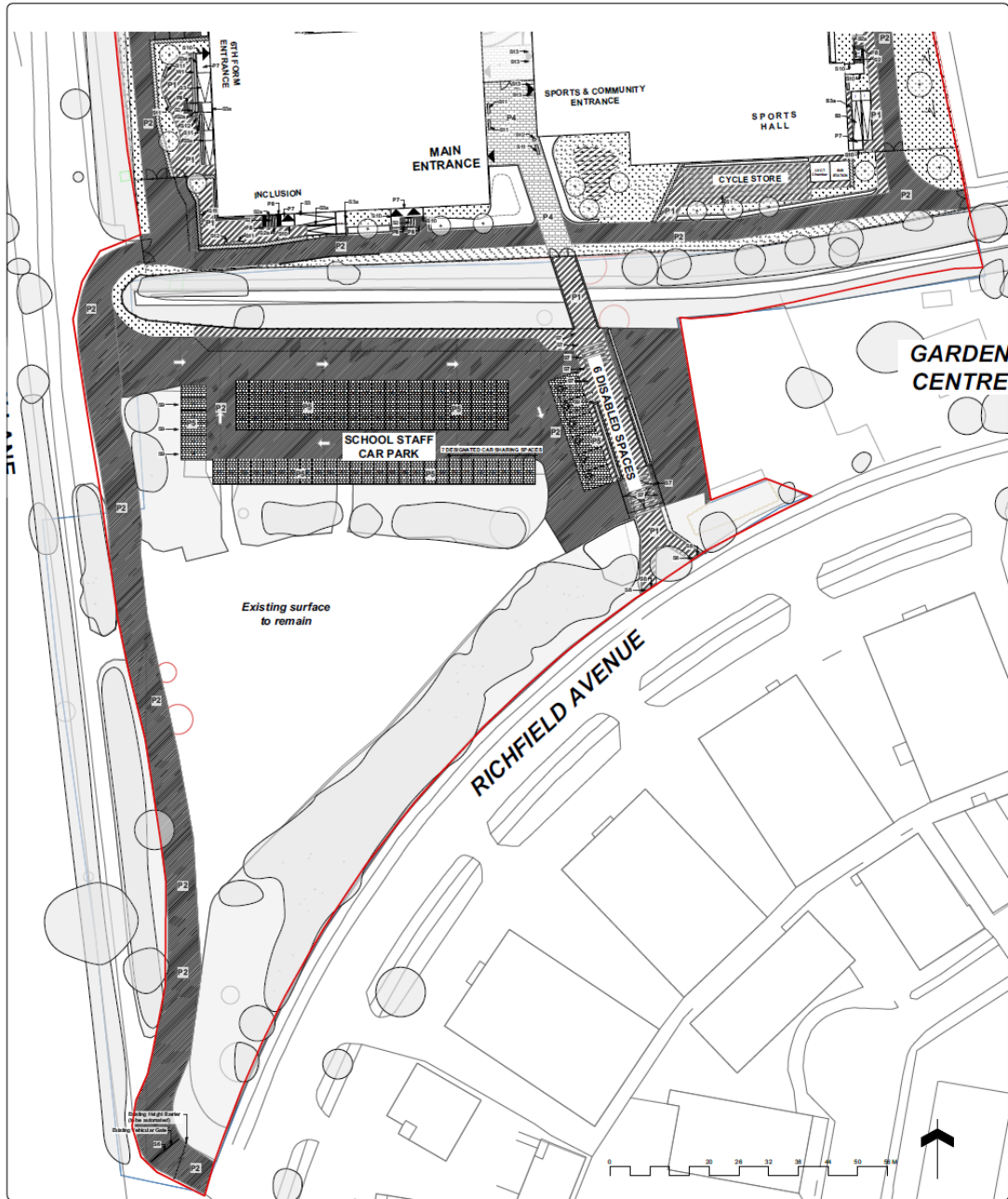
- 8.4 The design and orientation of buildings has been carefully considered and developed to be both functional but also respectful of its location. The building design includes features of architectural interest which are appropriate for its use. An updated comprehensive landscape strategy has been brought forward to satisfy initial officer concerns, including extensive additional tree provision and this will be continue to be developed with the applicant, as part of meeting planning conditions with a future management strategy as the site is brought forward.
- 8.5 From a sustainability perspective, the building meets a BREEAM 'Very Good' rating and work will continue with the applicant to maximise credits as the building is brought forward.
- 8.6 Significant transport analysis has been carried out and reviewed to understand transport impacts and potential mitigation to ensure that the site does not create an adverse impact on the local highways network and that future users are encouraged to use modes other than the private car. Mitigation has been put in place to ensure that the site, which is in Flood Zone 2/3, does not give rise to flood risk to future users and other uses off-site - this includes raising the building above maximum flood levels. Conditions are proposed to ensure that air quality, noise, lighting and contamination risks do not impact on local amenity during either construction or operation.
- 8.7 Measures are also identified to encourage local employment and maximise the economic benefit from the development.
- 8.8 Officers have worked positively and proactively with the applicant on the scheme and amendments have been secured during the course of determination of the application which are considered to satisfactorily address policy issues. Officers therefore consider the scheme to be acceptable, that accords with relevant national and local policy and can be supported. The planning application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions and a s106 agreement as detailed above.

Case Officer: Julie Williams

**ANNEX 1
PLANS**



General Layout - Northern areas of the Application Site



General Layout - southern areas of applications site



Layout of Sports pitches (winter and summer)

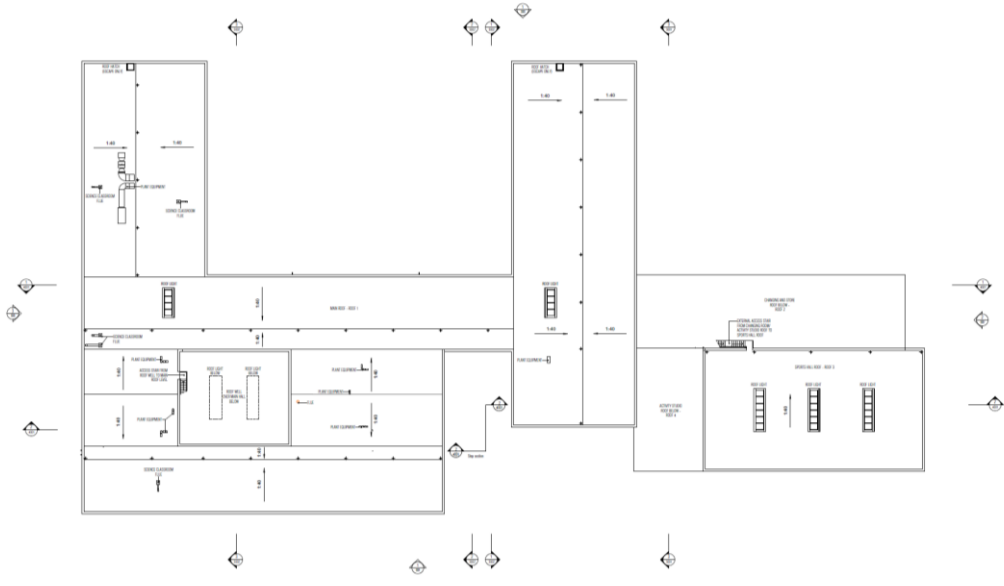




First Floor Layout



Second Floor Layout



Roof Layout



Cross Sections



ANNEX 2

Additional junction modelling provided in the Hexa Consulting Technical Note dated 10 May 2022

Junctions 10 Level Of Service (LoS) scale summarised in the table below as follows:-

- LoS A: Free Flow - Primarily free-flow operation with vehicles having almost complete freedom to manoeuvre;
- LoS B: Reasonably Free Flow - Reasonable free-flow conditions with vehicles having slightly restricted freedom to manoeuvre;
- LoS C: Stable Flow - Stable operation but freedom to manoeuvre is restricted;
- LoS D: Approaching Unstable Flow - Borders on unstable flow with freedom to manoeuvre severely limited;
- LoS E: Unstable Flow - Traffic flow is very unstable and approaching capacity; and,
- LoS F: Forced or Breakdown Flow - The point at which demand exceeds capacity.

Table 1: Beresford Road / Portman Road / Cow Lane - AM Peak Period

Time	2021 Base		2028 Base		2028 Base plus Development	
	RFC	LoS	RFC	Los	RFC	Los
Portman Road Arm						
08:00-08:15	0.721	B	0.776	B	0.815	C
08:15-08:30	0.734	B	0.791	C	0.893	D
08:30-08:45	0.938	D	1.012	F	1.057	F
08:45-09:00	0.734	C	0.790	D	0.791	E
09:00-09:15	0.833	C	0.896	D	0.950	E
09:15-09:30	0.879	D	0.951	E	1.121	F
09:30-09:45	0.794	C	0.857	D	0.918	F
09:45-10:00	0.777	C	0.836	D	0.841	F
Beresford Road Arm						
08:00-08:15	0.435	B	0.484	C	0.530	C
08:15-08:30	0.530	C	0.600	C	0.839	E
08:30-08:45	0.554	C	0.627	C	0.679	D
08:45-09:00	0.770	D	0.868	E	0.868	E
09:00-09:15	0.815	E	0.932	F	1.139	F
09:15-09:30	0.609	C	0.692	E	1.241	F
09:30-09:45	0.482	C	0.542	C	0.599	F
09:45-10:00	0.505	C	0.576	C	0.576	D
Cow Lane Arm						
08:00-08:15	0.571	A	0.616	B	0.616	B
08:15-08:30	0.660	B	0.712	C	0.820	C
08:30-08:45	0.641	B	0.692	B	0.689	C
08:45-09:00	0.717	C	0.779	C	0.783	C
09:00-09:15	0.760	C	0.821	C	0.931	E
09:15-09:30	0.693	C	0.951	E	1.074	F
09:30-09:45	0.624	B	0.675	B	0.678	E
09:45-10:00	0.802	C	0.867	D	0.875	D

Table 2 - Beresford Road / Portman Road / Cow Lane - PM Peak Period

Time	2021 Base		2028 Base		2028 Base plus Development	
	RFC	LoS	RFC	Los	RFC	Los
Portman Road Arm						
15:00-15:15	0.654	A	0.703	B	0.703	B
15:15-15:30	0.715	B	0.770	C	0.878	C
15:30-15:45	0.753	B	0.810	C	0.923	E
15:45-16:00	0.780	C	0.841	C	0.861	D
16:00-16:15	0.820	C	0.886	D	0.894	D
16:15-16:30	0.760	C	0.821	C	0.828	C
16:30-16:45	0.761	B	0.819	C	0.877	D
16:45-17:00	0.782	C	0.843	C	0.855	D
Beresford Road Arm						
15:00-15:15	0.903	F	0.987	F	0.987	F
15:15-15:30	0.787	F	0.881	F	1.172	F
15:30-15:45	0.821	F	0.960	F	1.223	F
15:45-16:00	0.763	E	0.863	F	0.831	F
16:00-16:15	0.868	F	0.933	F	0.935	F
16:15-16:30	0.781	E	0.852	F	0.877	F
16:30-16:45	0.868	F	0.947	F	1.054	F
16:45-17:00	0.752	E	0.836	F	0.818	F
Cow Lane Arm						
15:00-15:15	1.026	F	1.109	F	1.109	F
15:15-15:30	0.880	F	0.952	F	1.179	F
15:30-15:45	0.875	E	0.946	F	1.172	F
15:45-16:00	0.942	F	1.021	F	1.022	F
16:00-16:15	1.061	F	1.152	F	1.152	F
16:15-16:30	0.882	F	0.959	F	1.023	F
16:30-16:45	0.963	F	1.045	F	1.227	F
16:45-17:00	1.011	F	1.097	F	1.161	F

Table 3: Richfield Avenue / Caversham Road Roundabout - AM Peak Period

Time	2021 Base		2028 Base		2028 Base plus Development	
	Delay (s)	LoS	Delay (s)	Los	Delay (s)	Los
Caversham Bridge Arm						
08:00-08:15	15	C	14	B	14	B
08:15-08:30	78	F	51	F	1467	F
08:30-08:45	141	F	122	F	1735	F
08:45-09:00	24	C	28	D	786	F
09:00-09:15	16	C	21	C	1607	F
09:15-09:30	74	F	70	F	1467	F
09:30-09:45	30	D	78	F	1262	F
09:45-10:00	27	D	60	F	842	F
Caversham Road Arm						
08:00-08:15	8	A	61	F	68	F
08:15-08:30	112	F	619	F	631	F
08:30-08:45	230	F	1262	F	1312	F
08:45-09:00	340	F	1948	F	2027	F
09:00-09:15	393	F	2079	F	2246	F
09:15-09:30	354	F	1728	F	1817	F
09:30-09:45	231	F	1352	F	1358	F
09:45-10:00	194	F	860	F	864	F
Richfield Avenue Arm						
08:00-08:15	18	C	18	C	18	C
08:15-08:30	15	C	16	C	16	C
08:30-08:45	26	D	20	C	18	C
08:45-09:00	18	C	18	C	18	B
09:00-09:15	21	C	18	C	18	C
09:15-09:30	20	C	15	C	14	B
09:30-09:45	45	E	50	E	47	E
09:45-10:00	33	D	47	E	56	F

Table 4 - Richfield Avenue / Caversham Road Roundabout - PM Peak Period

Time	2021 Base		2028 Base		2028 Base plus Development	
	Delay (s)	LoS	Delay (s)	Los	Delay (s)	Los
Caversham Bridge Arm						
15:00-15:15	19	C	25	D	13	B
15:15-15:30	21	C	22	C	2366	F
15:30-15:45	36	E	36	E	4417	F
15:45-16:00	177	F	164	F	4049	F
16:00-16:15	183	F	198	F	3089	F
16:15-16:30	87	F	102	F	2220	F
16:30-16:45	129	F	97	F	1500	F
16:45-17:00	146	F	100	F	876	F
Caversham Road Arm						
15:00-15:15	4	A	6	A	5	A
15:15-15:30	23	C	48	E	49	E
15:30-15:45	119	F	180	F	572	F
15:45-16:00	195	F	312	F	328	F
16:00-16:15	271	F	426	F	453	F
16:15-16:30	592	F	802	F	846	F
16:30-16:45	596	F	846	F	906	F
16:45-17:00	280	F	456	F	504	F
Richfield Avenue Arm						
15:00-15:15	20	C	21	C	12	B
15:15-15:30	20	C	22	C	26	D
15:30-15:45	31	D	16	D	38	E
15:45-16:00	32	D	33	D	39	E
16:00-16:15	42	E	46	E	45	E
16:15-16:30	35	E	46	E	44	E
16:30-16:45	28	C	26	D	21	C
16:45-17:00	60	F	51	F	47	E

Table 5: Bridge Street / Church Street / Church Road - AM Peak Period

Time	2021 Base		2028 Base		2028 Base plus Development	
	Delay (s)	LoS	Delay (s)	Los	Delay (s)	Los
Church Street Arm						
08:00-08:15	68	E	20	B	20	B
08:15-08:30	74	E	20	B	20	B
08:30-08:45	49	D	18	B	18	B
08:45-09:00	49	D	19	B	46	D
09:00-09:15	50	D	18	B	18	B
09:15-09:30	52	D	18	B	18	B
09:30-09:45	54	D	20	C	19	B
09:45-10:00	50	D	21	C	20	C
Bridge Street Arm						
08:00-08:15	75	E	116	F	120	F
08:15-08:30	129	F	215	F	214	F
08:30-08:45	132	F	207	F	207	F
08:45-09:00	127	F	200	F	200	F
09:00-09:15	147	F	242	F	243	F
09:15-09:30	143	F	205	F	207	F
09:30-09:45	128	F	212	F	215	F
09:45-10:00	123	F	197	F	196	F
Church Road Arm						
08:00-08:15	20	B	51	D	54	D
08:15-08:30	17	B	52	D	49	D
08:30-08:45	19	B	42	D	41	D
08:45-09:00	20	B	47	D	50	D
09:00-09:15	18	B	46	D	49	D
09:15-09:30	16	B	24	C	24	C
09:30-09:45	20	C	80	E	80	F
09:45-10:00	20	B	134	F	124	F

Table 6: Bridge Street / Church Street / Church Road - PM Peak Period

Time	2021 Base		2028 Base		2028 Base plus Development	
	Delay (s)	LoS	Delay (s)	Los	Delay (s)	Los
Church Street Arm						
15:00-15:15	80	E	82	F	0	A
15:15-15:30	79	E	80	F	71	E
15:30-15:45	50	D	50	D	50	D
15:45-16:00	69	E	70	E	71	E
16:00-16:15	61	E	61	E	61	E
16:15-16:30	67	E	69	E	69	E
16:30-16:45	79	E	79	E	79	E
16:45-17:00	76	E	78	E	77	E
Bridge Street Arm						
15:00-15:15	65	E	79	E	76	E
15:15-15:30	122	F	137	F	136	F
15:30-15:45	148	F	152	F	152	F
15:45-16:00	129	F	128	F	129	F
16:00-16:15	153	F	153	F	153	F
16:15-16:30	148	F	148	F	148	F
16:30-16:45	129	F	128	F	128	F
16:45-17:00	119	F	110	F	111	F
Church Road Arm						
15:00-15:15	140	F	177	F	176	F
15:15-15:30	395	F	524	F	518	F
15:30-15:45	639	F	850	F	841	F
15:45-16:00	904	F	1204	F	1192	F
16:00-16:15	1181	F	1576	F	1563	F
16:15-16:30	1382	F	1829	F	1812	F
16:30-16:45	1464	F	1736	F	1734	F
16:45-17:00	899	F	899	F	900	F