

To: Councillor Lovelock (Chair)
Councillors Leng, Carnell, Emberson, Ennis,
Gavin, Hornsby-Smith, Moore, Page,
Robinson, Rowland, J Williams and Yeo

Direct ☎ : 0118 9372303

14 June 2022

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

NOTICE OF MEETING - PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE 22 JUNE 2022

A meeting of the Planning Applications Committee will be held on Wednesday, 22 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	-		To Follow
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	-		
3. QUESTIONS	-		
4. POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS	Decision	BOROUGHWIDE	7 - 8
5. PLANNING APPEALS	Information	BOROUGHWIDE	9 - 18
6. APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL	Information	BOROUGHWIDE	19 - 24
7. OBJECTION TO A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER - TILEHURST ALLOTMENTS	Decision	KENTWOOD	25 - 34
8. GAS WORKS SOCIAL CLUB, GAS WORKS ROAD - PROPOSAL TO ADD TO THE LIST OF LOCALLY IMPORTANT BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES	Decision	ABBEY	35 - 54

PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

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

9. 211441/FUL & 211442/ADV - Decision ABBEY 55 - 84
 OUTSIDE 99 BROAD STREET;
 211443/FUL & 211444/ADV -
 OUTSIDE 6 BROAD STREET;
 211445/FUL & 211446/ADV -
 OUTSIDE 108-113 BROAD STREET;
 211447/FUL & 211448/ADV -
 OUTSIDE 47-48 BROAD STREET;
 211449/FUL & 211450/ADV -
 OUTSIDE 26 WEST STREET;
 211451/FUL & 211452/ADV -
 OUTSIDE 4-5 ST MARY'S BUTTS;
 211453/FUL & 211454/ADV -
 OUTSIDE 164 FRIAR STREET

Proposal Proposed development as a whole seeks the installation of 7no. new Street Hub, incorporating 2no. digital 75" LCD advert screens, plus the removal of associated BT kiosks.
Recommendation Application Permitted

10. 211416/FUL - 4 DOWNSHIRE Decision COLEY 85 - 108
 SQUARE

Proposal Erection of 1 x detached and 2 x semi detached dwellings following demolition of the existing bungalow and detached garage.
Recommendation Permitted subject to Legal Agreement

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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

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
Date:	22 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: None this time.

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

TO:	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
DATE:	22 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 and to meeting the 2018-21 Corporate Plan objective for “Keeping Reading’s environment clean, green and safe”.

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: KATESGROVE
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/22/3291067
CASE NO: 210526
ADDRESS: 220 Elgar Road South, Reading
PROPOSAL: Residential redevelopment comprising demolition of existing single storey building and erection of 18 dwellings together with associated works
CASE OFFICER: Claire Ringwood
METHOD: Written Representation
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL
APPEAL LODGED: 27.05.2022

APPENDIX 2

Appeals Decided:

WARD: REDLANDS
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/X/22/3291832
CASE NO: 191663
ADDRESS: 24 Donnington Gardens, Reading
PROPOSAL: Certificate of Lawfulness of existing use of the property as a 4 person, 4 bedroom HMO (C4 use)
CASE OFFICER: Connie Davis
METHOD: Written Representation
DECISION: ALLOWED
DATE DETERMINED: 25.5.2022

WARD: ABBEY
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/21/3284108
CASE NO: 210478
ADDRESS: "Soane Point", 6-8 Market Place, Reading
PROPOSAL: Change of use of part of the ground floor, part basement, and upper floors from office use Class B1(a) to C3, 144 studio apartments. Prior Notification under Class 0, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015
CASE OFFICER: Matthew Burns
METHOD: Written Representation

DECISION: ALLOWED
DATE DETERMINED: 26.5.2022

WARD: CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS
APPEAL NO: APP/TPO/E0345/8541
CASE NO: 210201
ADDRESS: 11 Ridge Hall Close, Caversham, Reading
PROPOSAL: Fell one Lime tree in the front garden
CASE OFFICER: Sarah Hanson
METHOD: Written Representation
DECISION: DISMISSED
DATE DETERMINED: 10.05.22

WARD: ABBEY
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/21/3288185
CASE NO: 211214
ADDRESS: "County House", 17 Friar Street, Reading
PROPOSAL: Change of use of from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 23 dwellings. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.
CASE OFFICER: Matthew Burns
METHOD: Written Representation
DECISION: DISMISSED
DATE DETERMINED: 07.06.2022

WARD: CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/21/3277933
CASE NO: 200718
ADDRESS: Pumping Station Adjacent, 20 Chazey Road, Caversham,
PROPOSAL: Demolition of former pumping house and new dwelling
CASE OFFICER: Julie Williams
METHOD: Written Representation
DECISION: DISMISSED
DATE DETERMINED: 09.06.2022

APPENDIX 3

Address Index of Planning Officers reports on appeal decisions.

- Pumping Station Adjacent 20 Chazey Road
- 11 Ridge Hall Close

Planning Officers reports on appeal decisions attached.

APPEAL DECISION REPORT

Ward: Caversham Heights

Appeal No: APP/E0345/W/21/3277933

Application Ref: 200718

Address: Pumping Station Adjacent 20 Chazey Road, Caversham, Reading,
Proposal: Demolition of the pumping station and the construction of a new dwelling

Case officer: Julie Williams

Decision level: Delegated. Refused 29 January 2021

Method: Written Representations.

Decision: Appeal dismissed

Date Determined: 9th June 2022

Inspector: LJ O'Brien BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

1. Background

1.1 The appeal site is adjacent to an area of woodland on north side of Chazey Road. The site currently houses a small, single storey, pumping station. The proposal was for the demolition of the pumping station and the construction of a new dwelling.

1.2 There were 4 reasons for refusal and these are summarized as:

- **Size of plot leading to cramped development and impact on the character of the surrounding area;**
- **Impact on the adjoining woodland;**
- **Impact on biodiversity and ecological concerns;**
- **Lack of S106 to secure contribution towards off site affordable housing.**

2. Summary of the decision

2.1 The Inspector considered the main issues to be:

- the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, including the effect on the adjacent Major Landscape Feature; and
- whether or not the proposal would maintain, protect, consolidate, extend or enhance the green network or protect the priority woodland habitat.

2.2 In respect of the Council's case that the proposal would appear cramped and out of character the Inspector agreed that in the context of other properties on Chazey Road the new dwelling would appear visually jarring and "would occupy a significant proportion of the plot and would in this context appear as a cramped addition to the street scene which would fail to assimilate well with the sense of spaciousness which characterises the area".

2.3 On the Council's concerns for the threat to the adjacent woodland the Inspector confirmed that given "the close proximity of the proposed dwelling to the woodland I consider it likely that future pressure [to fell or prune or from invasive species] could be such so as to cause undue harm to the integrity of the woodland. As such, in my view, the proposal would have an adverse effect on the integrity of the woodland."

2.4 On impact on biodiversity, the Inspector noted that the woodland is a priority habitat and a Reading Biodiversity Action Plan habitat and that a green link crosses the site. This means that the woodland is considered to be a significant ecological asset and an important part of Reading's Green Network. The Inspector considered the appellant's case but found in favour of the Council's arguments and decided that

“the cumulative effect of these considerations would, in my view, cause the degradation of the adjacent priority woodland habitat. For these reasons I consider that the proposal would not maintain, protect, consolidate, extend or enhance the green network or protect the priority woodland habitat as required by Policy EN12”.

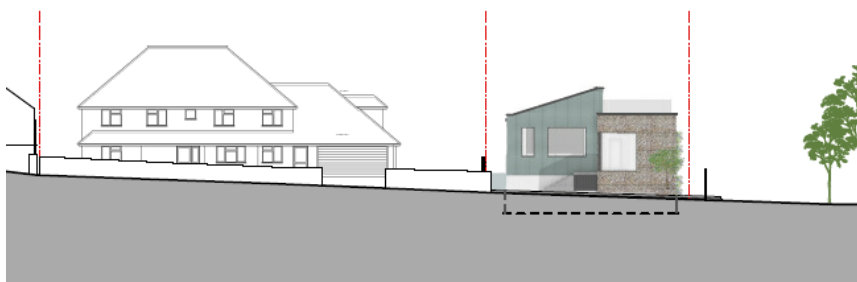
2.5 Overall, the Inspector concluded that all the Council’s reasons for refusal (apart from failure to provide for affordable housing, which was met by submission of an acceptable agreement during the appeal process) were supportable and dismissed the appeal.

3 OFFICER COMMENTS

3.3 Very pleased with the conclusions reached by the Inspector, which was that “the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and would fail to maintain, protect, consolidate, extend or enhance the green network or protect the priority woodland habitat”.

3.4 Officers particularly welcome the reference to National Guidance when it was stated at Para 16. “The development would also fall short of the expectations of The National Planning Policy Framework which promotes the protection and enhancement of sites of biodiversity and expects development to minimise impacts on, and provide net gains, for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures”. This endorses the Council’s policy protection for Biodiversity matters.

LOCATION PLAN



Street scene

Case Officer: Julie Williams

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Appeal No: APP/TPO/E0345/8541
Planning Ref: 210201/TPO
Site: 11 Ridge Hall Close, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7EP
Proposal: Fell one Lime tree in the front garden
Decision level: Delegated
Method: Written Representation
Decision: Appeal Dismissed
Date Determined: 10 May 2022
Inspector: Ian Monger BSc (Hons) MArborA

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Ridge Hall Close properties were developed in the '60s or '70s and a number of trees were retained during the development, the Lime subject to the appeal being one of these. The mature Lime tree is a prominent feature, visible from within much of Ridge Hall Close and can be observed from a number of vantage points both in the locality and along the Thames Promenade to the south as part of the overall tree coverage.
- 1.2 In February 2020, an application to fell the Lime tree was received, with numerous reasons cited: branch drop within the last 12 months; concern about potential harm from the tree as a result of wind exposure; other pruning options not being feasible to address the risk; high target area if failure occurred; the roots causing damage to the drains and driveway; natural nuisance issues (leaf drop & honeydew); inability to install solar panels as they would be blocked by the tree; minimal loss of amenity value from felling of the tree due to other tree coverage; positive benefit to the applicant from felling; tree being too large for its location; trees causes constant stress, worry and anxiety; higher insurance premiums as a result of the tree. The application was supported by various reports and photographs relating to the reasons.
- 1.3 The agent confirmed that there were no arboricultural reasons for the felling, i.e. there were no concerns about the condition of the tree.
- 1.4 Officers carefully considered all the reasons put forward and the documents submitted as supporting evidence for felling and responded to each point in detail. When considering applications to fell, the reasons put forward to support the felling should outweigh the amenity value lost as a result of felling, i.e. on balance felling should be justified. The tree in this case is of very high amenity value and none of the reasons put forward in support of its felling were considered to justify the loss of amenity that would result if the tree were felled.
- 1.5 As arboricultural reasons were not provided in support for felling and the other reasons provided were addressed by the officers, felling was not considered reasonable and was refused on 14th April 2021.

2 SUMMARY OF DECISION

- 2.1 The Inspector considered the main issues to be the effect of the proposed removal of the tree on the character and appearance of the area; and whether sufficient justification has been demonstrated for the proposed felling.
- 2.2 The Inspector addressed all the reasons carefully and agreed that the proposed removal of the tree would result in considerable harm to the character and appearance of the area and insufficient justification has been demonstrated for the proposed felling. The Inspector concluded that:

To sum up, the Council has set out detailed reasons as to why the justification to remove the appeal tree was insufficient because, in the normal course of events, there is a strong

presumption against removal of a mature, protected tree. With any application to remove a protected tree, a balancing exercise needs to be undertaken. The essential need for the works applied for must be weighed against the resultant loss to the amenity of the area. In this case, the proposed removal of the tree would result in considerable harm to the character and appearance of the area and, in my judgement, insufficient justification has been demonstrated for the proposed works.

Accordingly, for the reasons set out above and having considered all matters raised, I conclude that the removal of the tree would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area and the appeal should be dismissed.

The appeal was therefore dismissed.

Assistant Director Planning, Transport & Public Protection Services Comment:

This appeal decision is welcome given that the comments made by the Planning Inspector upheld the amenity value assessment by Officers and that insufficient reasons for felling had been provided. The decision is particularly welcome given the Council's climate emergency declaration and the need to retain trees for their contribution to climate change mitigation and in accordance with policy EN14 and the aims of our adopted Tree Strategy.

Case officer: Sarah Hanson



REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
DATE:	22 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.**
Class ZA

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 £1,829,714.

(Class E (formally office) Prior Approvals - £1,671,610:
Householder Prior Approvals - £87,382:
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 - £14,667.

Figures since last report

Class E (formally office) Prior Approvals - £0:
Householder Prior Approvals - £330:
New dwellinghouses on terrace/detached buildings - £14,539.

- 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 20th May 2022 to 8th June 2022

Type:	How many received since last report:	Loss in possible fee income:
Householder Prior Approvals	3	£330
Class E Prior Approvals	0	0
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	0	n/a
Dwellings on detached block of flats	0	0
Householder Additional Storey	0	0
New dwellinghouses on terrace/detached buildings	1	£14,539
TOTAL	4	£14,869

Table 2 - Applications decided since 20th May 2022 to 8th June 2022

Type:	Approved	Refused	Not Required	Withdrawn	Non Determination
Householder Prior Approvals	0	0	0	0	0
Class E Prior Approvals	0	1	0	1	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	0	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	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	1	0	1	0

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COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 22 JUNE 2022

Ward: Kentwood
Proposal: Objection to a Tree Preservation Order

RECOMMENDATION

That the Tree Preservation Order be confirmed.

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report to Committee an objection to Tree Preservation Order No. 2/22 relating to Tilehurst Allotments, Armour Hill/Kentwood Hill, Reading (copy of TPO plan attached - Appendix 1).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site has been subject to a TPO (24/00) since 2000 which protects 12 individual trees, 2 Groups of trees and 5 Areas of tree (copy of TPO plan attached - Appendix 2).
- 2.2 Officers were made aware of the sale of the land (currently owned by Tilehurst People's Local Charity) by local residents and considerable local concern was raised about potential tree removal - all trees not protected by TPO 24/00 could have legally been removed.
- 2.3 As TPO 24/00 is 22 years old and tree coverage is likely to have changed in that period, it was considered appropriate to serve an Area TPO to protect all trees until an appropriate time when a replacement, more specific and up-to-date TPO could be made. Area TPO 2/22 was therefore served on 9 March 2022.

3. RESULT OF CONSULTATION

- 3.1 An objection to the Tree Preservation Order has been made by the Chairman (Mr Cairns) of the Tilehurst People's Local Charity (TPLC) who own the land, based on the following:
 - 1) Concern that the TPO has not been served to all interested parties, i.e. adjacent landowners, all individual licensees of the allotment plots and tenant of the builder's yard or 'Depot' off Kentwood Hill
 - 2) An existing TPO (24/00) is already in place which cannot be considered by RBC to be in any way deficient or inappropriate as it was not varied or revoked in 2014 when RBC issued its first 'Call For [Development] Sites'; neither in 2017 - when RBC re-issued its 'Call for [Development] Sites'; nor in 2019 - when the Reading Local Plan strengthened planning policy around trees, and at the same time designated WR3s and WR3t to be sites suitable for residential

development; and not in 2021 when the new RBC Tree Strategy was produced

- 3) The TPO is neither 'necessary or expedient' (with reference to objective 5 of the Tree Strategy) - it is not 'necessary' as there is already a TPO in place.
- 4) Abuse of TPOs as a campaigning weapon - *"TPLC considers that RBC may have acceded to the entreaties of campaigners - who are lobbying and seeking to abuse all possible mechanisms in order to thwart or disrupt the sale of TPLC's land - rather than allowing the normal planning process to take place, with its statutory environmental impact assessment. In our role as "Trustees for the Poor" of West Reading, Tilehurst, Holybrook and Theale, TPLC deprecates the use of such tactics, which are potentially at great cost to local people in financial hardship"*
- 5) Significance of the Local Plan - the Local Plan includes various designations within the land covered by the TPO: The allotments area is designated as Local Green Space; Sites WR3s (land off Kentwood Hill) and WR3t (land off Armour Hill) were designated as being suitable for residential development. Specimen development layouts had been submitted for consideration by the RBC Planning Department following the 'Call For Sites' in 2014 and 2017, and the 'Withies' (located between the allotments and the development sites) was identified as an Area of Biodiversity Interest. To impose a new TPO covering the allotments area is an anomalous step, as the trees in that area are primarily fruit trees, or else are covered by the existing TPO 24/00; inclusion of the Withies area is an unwarranted step, as the area is covered by the existing TPO 24/00, and to include the two development sites (WR3s and WR3t) seems to be at odds with their designation in the Local Plan, given that the existing TPO 24/00 had identified only a handful of individual trees of significance within those sites, and any planning application would automatically encompass a statutory Environmental Impact Assessment.
- 6) Amenity Value - Any amenity value of the TPLC land was not deemed sufficient to preclude the Local Plan from designating sites WR3s and WR3t as suitable for residential development; Relatively few trees on the land covered by the new TPO are currently visible from public places such as Kentwood Hill, Armour Hill and Armour Road. Any visibility of trees from the allotments area does not contribute to their amenity value as the allotments are only legally accessible to TPLC's licensees, and not to the general public. The lack of public visibility of trees is demonstrated by the fact that campaigners who are opposed to the sale or development of TPLC's land have had to resort to the use of a camera-equipped 'spy-drone' flying at great height over TPLC's private land. TPLC therefore disputes any assertion that the trees on its private land provide significant amenity value to the general community.
- 7) Common Aspects Of Amenity / Community Value - The Land Property and Development Board of RBC has recently confirmed its decision to refuse to list the land covered by the new TPO as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). In its robust rebuttal of the ACV Nomination, TPLC demonstrated the lack of open public access to its land and the lack of open public use of its land. As the area covered

by the TPO is considered not to have any significant 'Community Value', then even stronger evidence would be necessary to justify the evaluation of any 'Amenity Value'.

- 8) Impact on sale of the land - The issuing of a new TPO has effectively pre-empted and complicated any planning application by, and any TPO-related discussions with, a future developer of the site. The purpose of the land sale is to raise essential capital to fund the Charity's grant-making activity. The urgency of removing the blanket TPO is not because the resultant delays to the sale of the land would harm any business interests (since the Trustees and Clerk who run the Charity are all unpaid volunteers, and the Charity has no shareholders). The urgency arises out of the harm that would be caused to local residents of Reading, Tilehurst and Theale who are in financial need, hardship and distress - by delaying grant payments to them. The continued existence of the blanket TPO will cause unnecessary delay to the sale of land, resulting in significant lost income to the Charity, and depriving the poor of grants to the value of £5,000 to £10,000 for each week of delay.
- 9) Lack of prior consultation - It is disappointing that the new TPO was imposed by RBC without any prior consultation with TPLC. We would have preferred to be '*working better with you*'.

3.2 An objection to the Tree Preservation Order being confirmed in its current form and made permanent has also been made by Aspect Arboricultural Ltd on behalf of TPLC based on the following:

- 1) Lack of public amenity
- 2) Given that the site contains a number of individual trees, a more established wooded area, alongside parcels of young establishing scrub, in this instance it is appropriate for the tree stock to be considered as separate cohorts when making the TPO (as was done for TPO 24/00) as opposed to an Area TPO.
- 3) An assessment using industry recognised guidance 'Tree Evaluation Method for Preservation Orders' (TEMPO) - which takes into account 1) Amenity - condition, retention span, Relative public visibility, other special factors and 2) Expediency, based on the treat to the trees - gives a total score that does not warrant inclusion in a TPO.
- 4) The TPO in its current form is both inappropriate and indefensible - we would recommend that Reading Borough Council make it in a more refined format and extend an offer to meet onsite, and discuss the variation of the order to afford protection to only those trees which warrant this recognition

3.2 In response to the objections of both parties, Officers have the following comments:

- 1) Service of TPO to interested parties - There is only one Land Registry title for this area of land and no leasehold titles to suggest that there are any occupiers/tenants/interested parties for that piece of land other than the owners of the land. The land is identified as '*Allotment Gardens and Recreation Ground on the North side of Kentwood Hill*' and there are no buildings/depots registered on the land, so there would be no way of RBC knowing that anyone else was using/occupying the land.

There is also no postal address or postcode associated with this land in order for any documents to be sent. The registered owners of the land are 'THE OFFICIAL FOR CHARITIES of P.O. Box 2802, Reading, RG30 4GE on behalf of the trustees of The Poor of the Parish of Tilehurst.' (Tilehurst Poor's Land Charity/Tilehurst People's Local Charity) who were served. If there are tenants/occupiers using the land and TPLC cannot advise how these tenants/occupiers can be contacted, TPLC should be making their tenants aware of the order and passing on the information to them and details of how they can make comments/object if they wish to. The same would apply for the allotment holders - unless each of the allotments was registered and RBC had the address of each holder to send information to, we can only serve the owner of the land, who should then pass the information on.

However, officers can confirm that a copy of the TPO was posted to Mr Hague (tenant of the builders yard) at his Kentwood Hill address on 13 April 2020. In addition, officers have evidence that a copy of the TPO, with confirmation of the objection period, was emailed out to allotment holders on 14 March 2022 and that notices were put on the allotment information boards. At the same time as sending a copy of the TPO to TPLC, a copy was also posted to the adjoining landowners.

Officers are satisfied that they have complied with Regulation 5 of The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012 with respect to service of the TPO.

- 2) The existing TPO (24/00) & expediency of TPO 2/22 - TPO 24/00 was served on 12 September 2000, so over 21 years ago. The condition of trees can change considerably over that time period; trees can be lost, and existing trees can become worthy of inclusion within a TPO. The review of existing TPOs can be prompted by a number of things, but mainly as a result of potential development. Reviews of large numbers of TPOs as a result of planning policy changes or the adoption of new documents, such as the Tree Strategy, is not feasible within RBC's limited resources.

The service of an Area TPO, as a temporary measure, to ensure all trees now worthy of inclusion in a TPO are retained for the immediate future was considered expedient in this instance. The objection from TPLC confirms that TPLC are selling the areas of land allocated for housing, so concern about potential pre-emptive felling is reasonable. Government guidance [[Tree Preservation Orders and trees in conservation areas - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)] states that:

'In some cases the authority may believe that certain trees are at risk as a result of development pressures and may consider, where this is in the interests of amenity, that it is expedient to make an Order. Authorities can also consider other sources of risks to trees with significant amenity value. For example, changes in property ownership and intentions to fell trees are not always known in advance, so it may sometimes be appropriate to proactively make Orders as a precaution'.

In addition, officers are advised by Aspect Arboriculture that they have been employed by the potential purchaser to deal with any required permissions under the TPO for clearance of 'scrub' for surveying purposes ahead of development proposals. This further supports the serving of the Area TPO in order to ensure clearance is justified via a tree works application.

Officer reference to the Area TPO being ‘temporary’ is the intention, with replacement by a more specific and up-to-date TPO at an appropriate stage. Given the evident intention for the allocated sites (included in the TPO Area) to be developed, the ‘appropriate’ time will be when development is approved and built. At that stage, it will be confirmed, through the planning process, which trees are retained, hence which are to be included in the replacement TPO. This is normal procedure and has been adopted on other sites in the Borough, such as the former BBC Caversham Park and Reading Golf Club; the latter also having an earlier, more specific TPO. If a more specific TPO were done now, it would result in limited RBC time and resources being wasted, as a second replacement TPO would be needed at a later date to reflect new development and take account of any trees lost through the development process. Officers do not therefore intend to accept the invitation to meet on site to amend the TPO at this point in time.

- 3) Abuse of TPOs as a campaigning weapon - whilst officers are aware of local concern about the sale of the land, RBC officers make recommendation for decisions to its Committee based on appropriate consideration of the law, which officers have done in this case
- 4) Significance of the Local Plan - The presence of sites WR3s (land off Kentwood Hill) and WR3t (land off Armour Hill), designated as being suitable for residential development, are acknowledged (see Appendix 3). The presence of the TPO does not change this or prevent development proposals from coming forward or ultimately being approved. Trees are a material consideration, taken in the ‘planning balance’ regardless of the site, and the specific criteria for allocation of both WR3s and WR3t are clear that adverse impacts on important trees should be avoided.

The potential need for an Environment Impact Assessment as part of any future development is not considered relevant to the TPO process.

The specific allocation of areas for residential development, within a wider area, does not prevent development being proposed to incorporate parts of that wider area. The extension of the Area TPO outside the allocated sites is therefore reasonable and can be reviewed at an appropriate time.

The above two points are both demonstrated on the Reading Golf Club site in Kidmore End Road. This was subject to a more specific TPO (served in 2002), following which an Area TPO was served in 2018 when the club was potentially being sold for development. Only part of that site is allocated in the Local Plan for development, however proposals came forward to include the whole site (within the RBC borough boundary) and was subsequently approved (211843/OUT). The presence of the Area TPO did not prevent development and the development extended outside the allocated land.

- 5) Amenity value - When considering whether (a) tree(s) is/are worthy of inclusion within a TPO, the first criteria we assess is that of amenity value. Government guidance [[Tree Preservation Orders and trees in conservation areas - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)] in relation to ‘amenity’ states the following:

“‘Amenity’ is not defined in law, so authorities need to exercise judgment when deciding whether it is within their powers to make an Order.

Orders should be used to protect selected trees and woodlands if their removal would have a significant negative impact on the local environment and its enjoyment by the public. Before authorities make or confirm an Order they should be able to show that protection would bring a reasonable degree of public benefit in the present or future”.

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

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

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

It is accepted that each individual tree on the land will not be a specimen and that each tree is unlikely to be appreciated as an individual in visibility terms. This is partly reflected in TPO 24/00 which lists some trees individually but others as Groups and some as Areas. Part of the land falls within the ‘West Reading Wooded Ridgeline’ - a designated Major Landscape Feature under Policy EN13 of the Local Plan. This recognises the value of this landscape feature, characterised by its amenity value, largely as a result of its collective tree cover.

When viewed by the passing public on Armour Hill and Kentwood Hill, the land has an overall green, treed appearance, provide amenity value to the street scene.

The site will be viewable and provide amenity value to those residents living adjacent to the land.

In view of the above, officers are satisfied that the TPO is warranted in terms of amenity.

It should also be remembered that ‘amenity’ is not the only consideration when determining whether a TPO is expedient. The nature conservation value of the land on which the trees sit can also be considered. Officers are aware that there is badger and bat activity on site, and fully expect there will be nesting birds. This adds to the value of the vegetation as a whole.

- 6) Common Aspects Of Amenity / Community Value - The decision by RBC to refuse to list the land covered by the new TPO as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) is not considered relevant to the expediency of the TPO. Amenity value is discussed above.
- 7) Impact on sale of the land - under Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, trees are a material consideration in planning proposals, regardless of their TPO status; a point that developers will be aware of. In addition, the allocation text for both the Kentwood Hill and Armour Hill sites states that development should, “..avoid adverse impacts on important trees”, which include but are not limited to those protected by TPO. The presence of an Area TPO will not change the approach to any planning proposals that come forward insofar as officers will consider the Arboricultural Reports put forward to support proposals and aim to retain only those trees whose retention is appropriate, in view of their condition, and in the planning balance. As mentioned above, Aspect Arboriculture have been employed by the potential purchaser to deal with any required permissions under the TPO for clearance of ‘scrub’ for surveying purposes ahead of development

proposals hence the TPO does not appear to have halted development considerations.

- 8) Lack of prior consultation - this is normal procedure for sites to be developed and prevents pre-emptive felling of trees whose retention might have otherwise been discussed and agreed.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 Officers consider that an Area TPO is warranted due to the age of TPO 24/00, the intention to sell the land and the intended development proposals. A more specific TPO can be made at a later stage to replace the Area TPO, but the Area TPO should be confirmed in order to protect all trees in the meantime and until development proposals are determined and implemented. The recommendation is therefore to confirm the TPO.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None.

7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None.

8. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

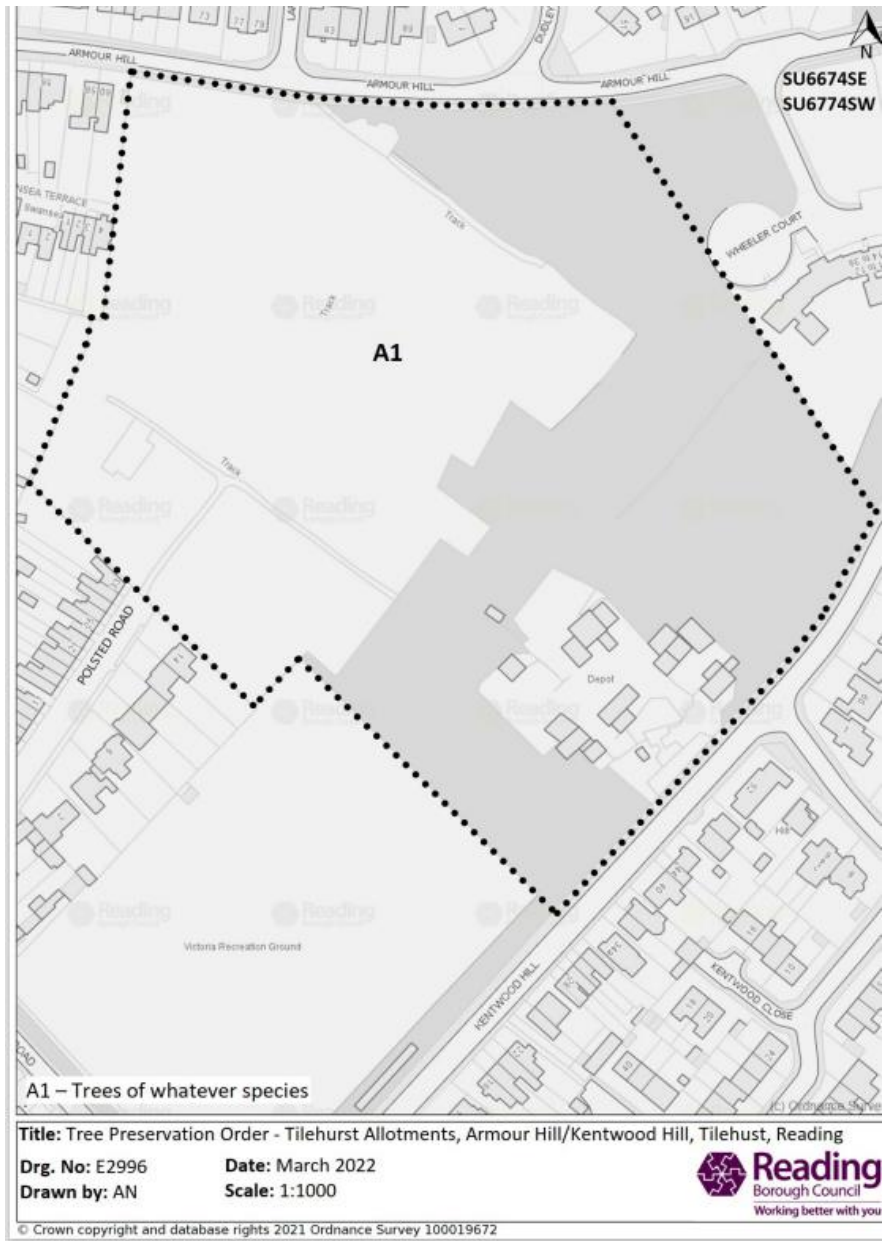
- 8.1 The aim of the TPO's is to secure trees of high amenity value for present and future generations to enjoy. Trees also have high environmental benefits through their absorption of polluted air and creation of wildlife habitats.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

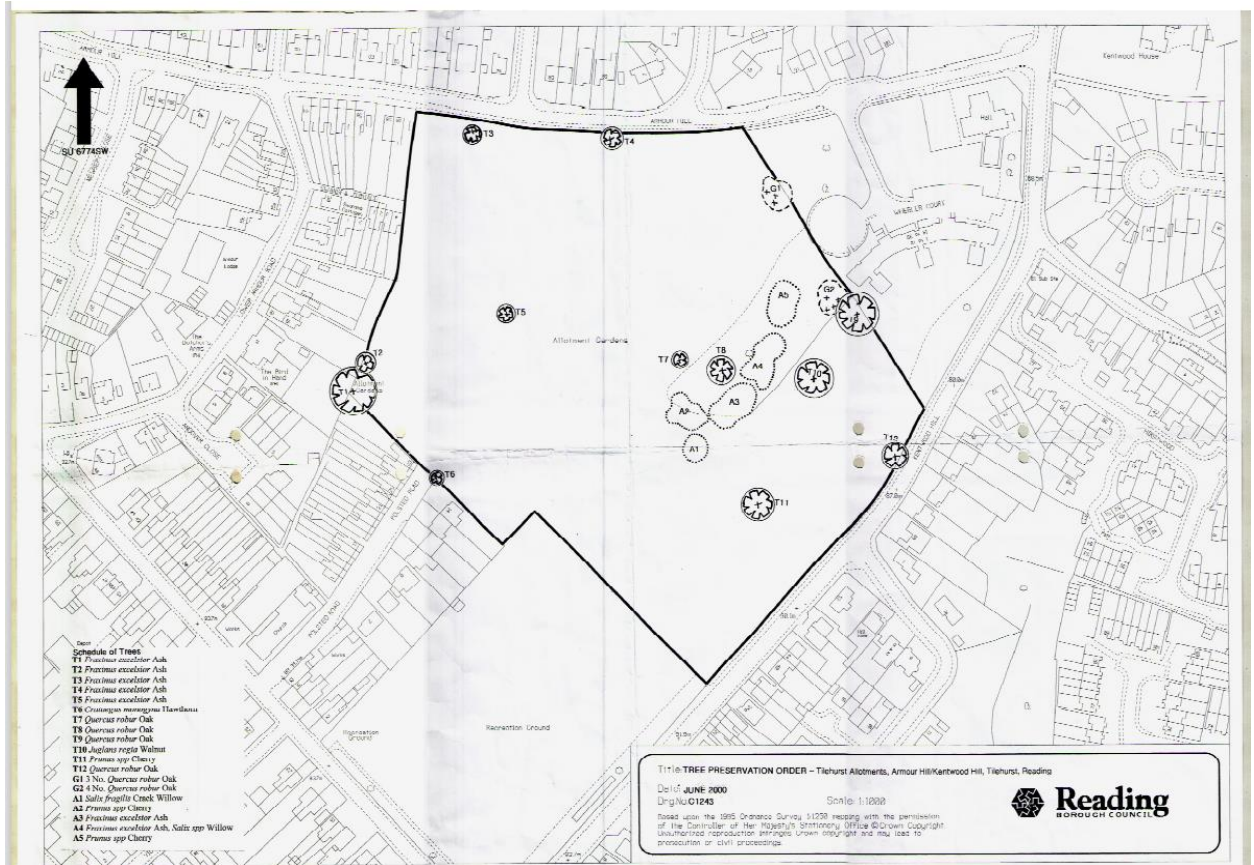
- 9.1 Register of Tree Preservation Orders
- 9.2 Plan of TPO 2/22, relating to Tilehurst Allotments, Armour Hill / Kentwood Hill, Reading (Appendix 1)
- 9.3 Plan of TPO 24/00, relating to Tilehurst Allotments, Armour Hill / Kentwood Hill, Reading (Appendix 2)
- 9.4 Local Plan Extract (Appendix 3)

Officer: Sarah Hanson

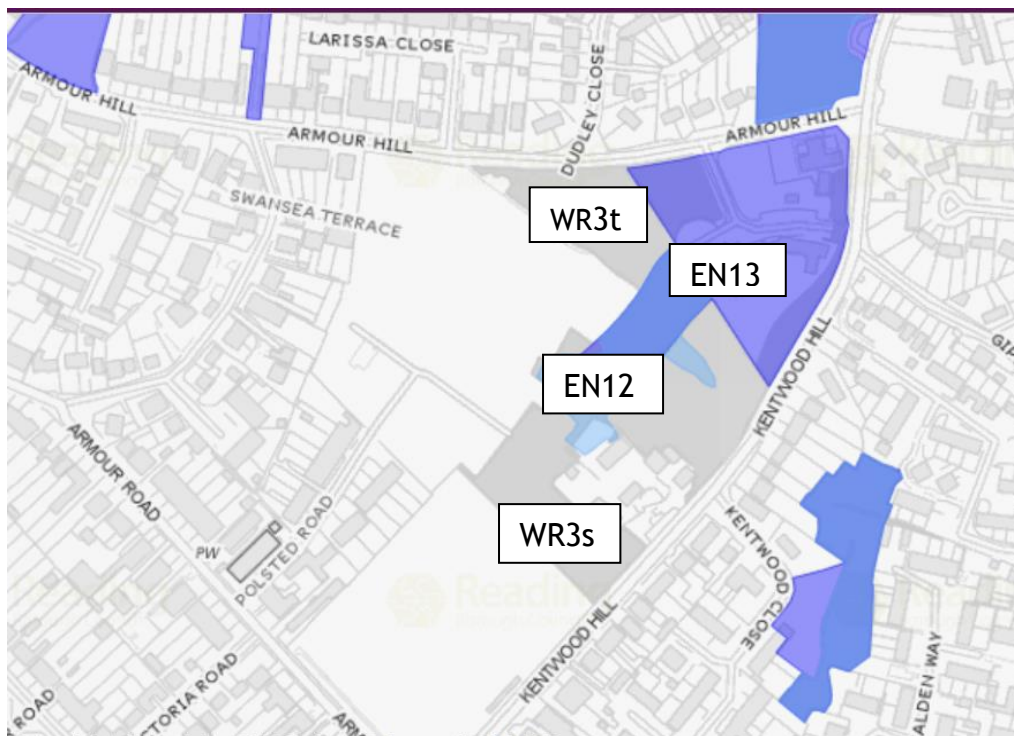
Appendix 1 - TPO 2/22



Appendix 2 - TPO 24/00



Appendix 3 - Local plan allocated residential development sites, Biodiversity Opportunity Area (EN12) and Major Landscape Feature (EN13)



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COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 22nd June 2022

Ward: Abbey

Address: Gas Works Social Club, Gas Works Road, Reading

Proposal: To add the Gas Works Social Club to List of Locally-Important Buildings and Structures

RECOMMENDATION

That Gas Works Social Club, Gas Works Road, Reading be added to the List of Locally-Important Buildings and Structures.

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To report on a proposal to add Gas Works Social Club, Reading to the List of Locally-Important Buildings and Structures.
- 1.2 Appendices:
 - Appendix 1: Location map
 - Appendix 2: Relevant photos and images
 - Appendix 3: Proposed Local List text
 - Appendix 4: Nomination form

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Reading Borough Council maintains a List of Locally-Important Buildings and Structures ('the Local List'). Its purpose is to recognise the buildings and structures which do not meet the criteria for national listing but, are nonetheless significant to the heritage of the local area. It was agreed by Planning Applications Committee on 2nd December 2020 that decisions on additions to the Local List should be made at PAC.
- 2.2 A nomination was received on 17th January 2022, to add Gas Works Social Club, Gas Works Road, Reading to the Local List. Consultations have been carried out in accordance with the agreed process, and this report sets out the recommended action.
- 2.3 Gas Works Social Club comprises a small group of buildings of different ages but, all are from within the period 1840-1913. They are located on the northern edge of Gas Works Road, next to the Kennet and Avon Canal. It was the distribution and services part of the Gasworks.
- 2.4 The nomination form, received for the building and illustrations in Annexure 3, identifies the significance of the building as follows:

“ The buildings on the site are of different ages but all are from within the period 1840-1913.

On the northern edge of the site by the side of the Kennet the ground floor of the social club dates from approximately the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The original purpose and the use is not known.

A plan of 1892 marks it as containing an engine house, boiler house and a pump room as part of the gas works site which included an old and an in-use retort house. It was briefly, in the early 1890s, in use as a showroom where appliances for hire were displayed before the showroom moved to town centre premises and, by 1905, the corner of Friar Street and Cross Street.

In 1895 it was an industrial building. It was extended in 1912 and by then was already in use as a workmen’s club (ref iv and vii). The different ages can be seen in the fabric of the building when seen from the opposite bank of the Kennet. There is a detailed description of the works to be carried out and the materials to be used by the builder Francis Newberry in a tender to Reading Gas Company dated August 1912. The Gas Governor house was according to the lintel over the door built in 1903 (image 12). The date of the wall in front of the site with gateposts is currently unknown but it would seem likely that it dates from c. 1900 at the latest. The design of the top of the gatepost is intriguing and we considered whether it might be gas related but were unconvinced. The left hand gate post has been demolished since 2017.

What can be seen from the 3 maps (Figs 1 to 4), is that a building existed on the site of the social club by 1877. The Goad map of 1895 indicates that this was a one storey building of the same shape as in 1877 marked ‘Eng.’ on the left and ‘pump’ and ‘tank over’ on the right. The dark square in the building is probably a chimney. By 1929 most of the building is two storeys as now and it was being used as a workmen’s club. A one storey governor house is on the north side of Gas Works Road.

3. RESULTS OF CONSULTATION

3.1 The following were consulted on the proposed addition to the Local List:

- Landowner
- Abbey ward councillors;
- Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee;
- Reading Civic Society;
- Kennet and Brunel Community Association and Newtown GLOBE (local community groups).

3.2 A response was received from Reading Civic Society.

3.3 Reading Civic Society

Support the proposal to add to the Local List in hope that a good use may be found.

3.4 Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee made the initial nomination and therefore did not make any comment on the proposal for local listing.

4. ASSESSMENT

4.0.1 The proposal to add a building or structure to the Local List should be considered against the criteria in Appendix 2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (adopted 2019).

4.1 Exclusions

4.1.1 The Local Plan specifies that a building should not be considered for the Local List where it is already part of a conservation area, scheduled monument or subject to an Article 4 direction relating to historic or architectural interest. Gas Works Social Club is not within any of these existing designations and can therefore be considered against the other criteria.

4.2 General principles

4.2.1 The buildings on the site date from within the period 1840-1913 and therefore need to be considered against the following general principle:

b. 1840 - 1913: Any building, structure or group of buildings that is/are of clearly-defined significance in the local context and where elements that contribute to its/their heritage significance remain substantially complete.

4.2.2 The ground floor of the social club dates from approximately the third quarter of the nineteenth century. A plan of 1892 marks it as containing an engine house, boiler house and a pump room as part of the gas works site which included an old and an in-use retort house. It was briefly, in the early 1890s, in use as a showroom where appliances for hire were displayed before the showroom moved to town centre premises and, by 1905, the corner of Friar Street and Cross Street. In 1895 it was an industrial building. It was extended in 1912 and by then was already in use as a workmen's club.

4.2.3 The original layout of the industrial buildings has been retained. The 19th / early 20th century structures show an important development of the provision of gas services to Reading itself. It is therefore considered that the buildings fulfil the criteria for the period of 1840-1913.

4.3 Significance

4.3.1 To be added to the Local List, a building or structure must fulfil at least one of the defined significance criteria, which fall into two categories - historic interest and architectural interest. These are assessed below.

Historic Interest

a. Historical Association

i. The building or structure has a well authenticated historical association with a notable person(s) or event.

ii. The building or structure has a prolonged and direct association with figures or events of local interest.

- 4.3.2 The nominated site is significant as a physical reminder of the facilities associated with the provision of gas supply and would have served the adjacent Huntley & Palmers biscuit factory, its employees and the general community of Reading.
- 4.3.3 The remaining buildings of site have a clear connection with figures and events of local interest.
- 4.3.4 John Okey-Taylor (1825-1918), chair of the Reading Gas Company was an important local figure. A 1905 press report on the opening of the new offices and showrooms at the corner of Friar Street and Cross Street listed among his many achievements. There are more details in Annexure 4, of his exploits. He was “... *one of Reading’s most notable men of the present day. He has been intimately associated with the public life of the town in years gone by and is one of the few remaining of our citizens who link the present municipal and public institutions of the town with the past*”

b. Social Importance

The building or structure has played an influential role in the development of an area or the life of one of Reading’s communities. Such buildings/structures may include places of worship, schools, community buildings, places of employment, public houses and memorials which formed a focal point or played a key social role.

- 4.3.4 The Gas Works Social Club comprises the remnants of the gas works in this location, which was a significant place of employment.

c. Industrial Importance

The building or structure clearly relates to traditional or historic industrial processes or important businesses or the products of such industrial processes or businesses in the history of Reading or are intact industrial structures, for example bridges.

- 4.3.5 The 1903 Governor House supported the Reading Gas Company’s distribution gas mains. A governor regulates and reduces gas pressure between the gas production plant and the consumer network. The building contained a gas distributing cylinder and three governors for Reading town centre and western district, the eastern district and Caversham. The group of buildings therefore clearly fulfils this criterion.

Architectural Interest

a. Sense of place

- i. The building or structure is representative of a style that is characteristic of Reading.*

- 4.3.6 It is considered that buildings on the site fulfils this criterion, as examples of late 19th and early 20th century industrial architecture, a time at which Reading was significantly expanding as a result of its industrial development.

b. Innovation and virtuosity

- i. The building or structure has a noteworthy quality of workmanship and materials.*

ii. The building or structure is the work of a notable local/national architect/engineer/builder.

4.3.7 The architect for the Governor House could be Willcocks & Greenaway as their name is on a plan that highlights the building although the description of the records only mentions offices. Willcocks & Greenaway were in partnership between 1919-1931. Willcocks was the architect for Arthur Hill baths (1911) and with Greenaway worked on the restoration of Watlington House (1929/31). However, there is not sufficient certainty around this to demonstrate compliance with the criterion.

iii. The building or structure shows innovation in materials, technique, architectural style or engineering.

4.3.8 It is not considered that Gas Works Social Club fulfils this criterion.

c. Group value

i. The buildings/structures form a group which as a whole has a unified architectural or historic value to the local area.

4.3.9 The two buildings on the site together with the boundary walls form an identifiable industrial group linked with the bridge over the Kennet (image 4). Together with the gasworks bridge constructed 20 years earlier to access the new gas works, down river at King's Mead, they are the only physical remain of gas production in Reading. The last gas holder has now been dismantled so that the site can be developed for housing.

4.4 Conclusion of assessment

4.4.1 The Gas Works Social Club qualifies for addition to the Local List because it:

- Is not within a conservation area, scheduled monument or area subject to an Article 4 direction relating to historic or architectural interest;
- Dates from between 1840 and 1913 and the elements that contribute to a high level of significance in the local context remain substantially complete.
- Contributes to the heritage of the Borough in terms of its historical association;
- Contributes to the heritage of the Borough in terms of its social importance;
- Contributes to the heritage of the Borough in terms of its industrial importance;
- Contributes to the heritage of the Borough in terms of its sense of place; and
- Contributes to the heritage of the Borough in terms of its group value.

4.4.2 A description of the significance of the building for inclusion in the Local List is included in Appendix 3.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Local listing of buildings and structures, where it leads to the retention of those buildings or structures, can help to address the climate emergency by negating the need for demolition and new development, which are processes that use significant amounts of energy and result in emissions. Kings Road Garden provides an area of green space and landscaping within a high-density urban environment and therefore contributes strongly to the environment of the area.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 It is not expected that there will be any significant adverse impacts on specific groups due to race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age or religious belief as a result of the recommendations of this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

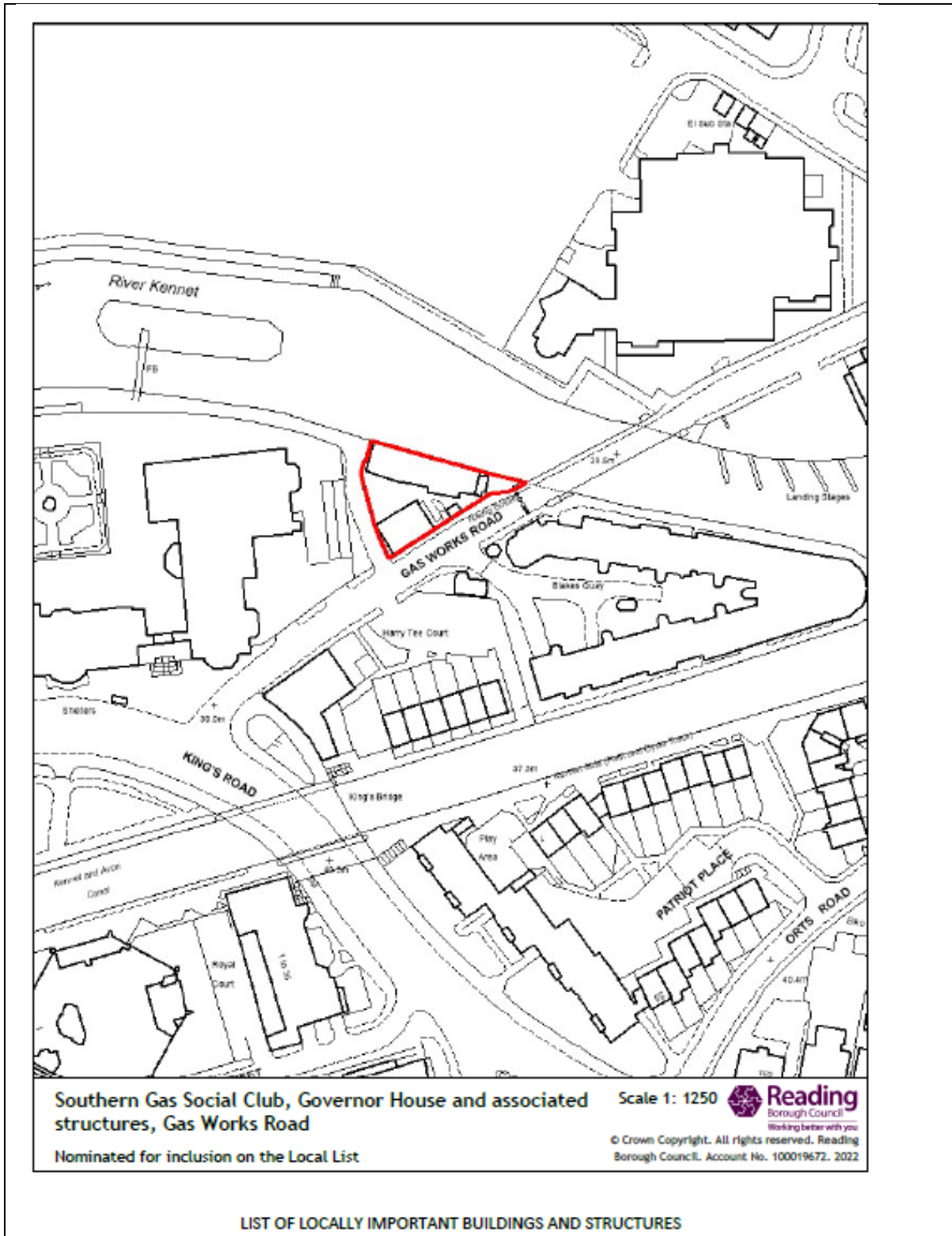
- 8.1 Addition to the Local List is not a statutory process, and there are no legal implications of the recommendations of this report.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Consideration of this nomination and any resulting amendments to the Local List will be accommodated within existing budgets.

Bruce Edgar, Conservation and Urban Design Officer

APPENDIX 1: LOCATION PLAN



APPENDIX 2: RELEVANT PHOTOGRAPHS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1: Extract from OS map surveyed 1877 (National Library of Scotland).
The site is outside the Huntley and Palmer, Biscuit factory.

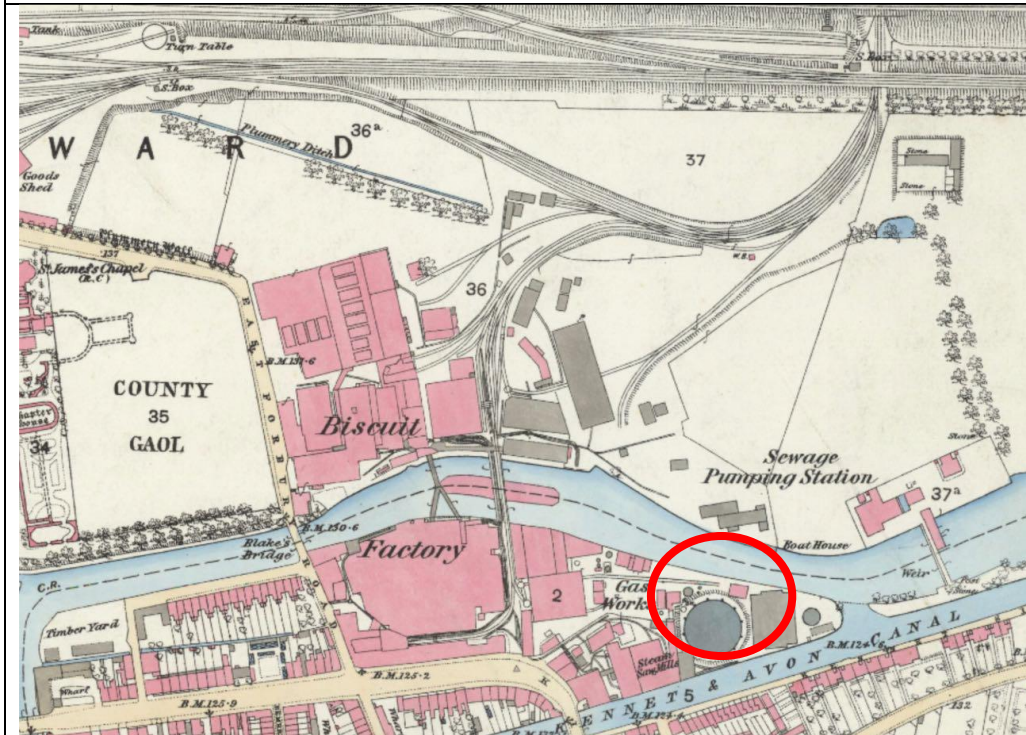


Fig. 2: Extract from Goddard insurance map 1895 (Reading Borough Libraries)



Fig. 3: Plaque over the door of the Gas Governor House (2018)
(Jo Alexander-Jones)



Fig. 4: Extract from Goad insurance map 1929 (Reading Borough Libraries).

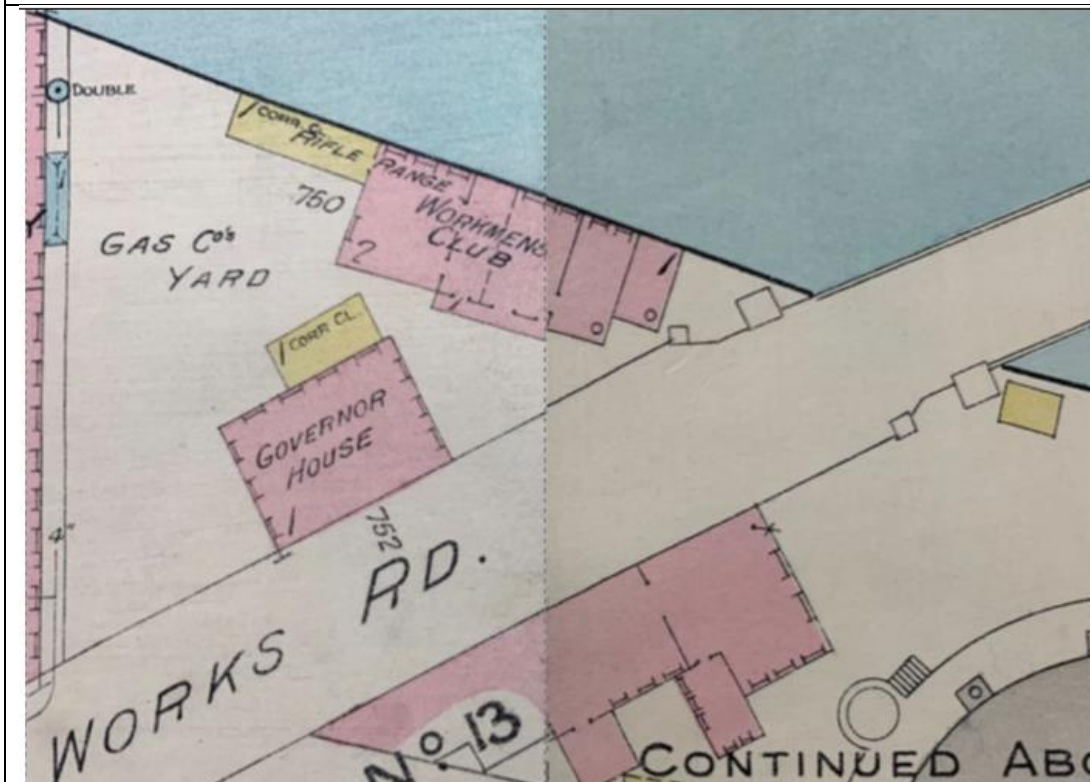


Fig. 5: Inside the Governor House showing district governors and valves.
From Reading Gas Company: A Retrospective - Douglas H Helps (1912)



Fig. 6: Southern Gas Social Club, view across, Kennet Canal Bridge, from the east.
(RBC - April 2022.)



Fig. 7: Southern Gas Social Club, view of the site towards the west down Gas Works Road. (RBC - April 2022.)



Fig. 8: Southern Gas Social Club, on the left of Gas Works Road. Apart from the Huntley & Palmer Building (on the right), it is the last remaining 19th century buildings in the area, along the Kennet Canal. (RBC - April 2022.)



Fig. 9: Southern Gas Social Club, on the left.
(RBC - April 2022.)

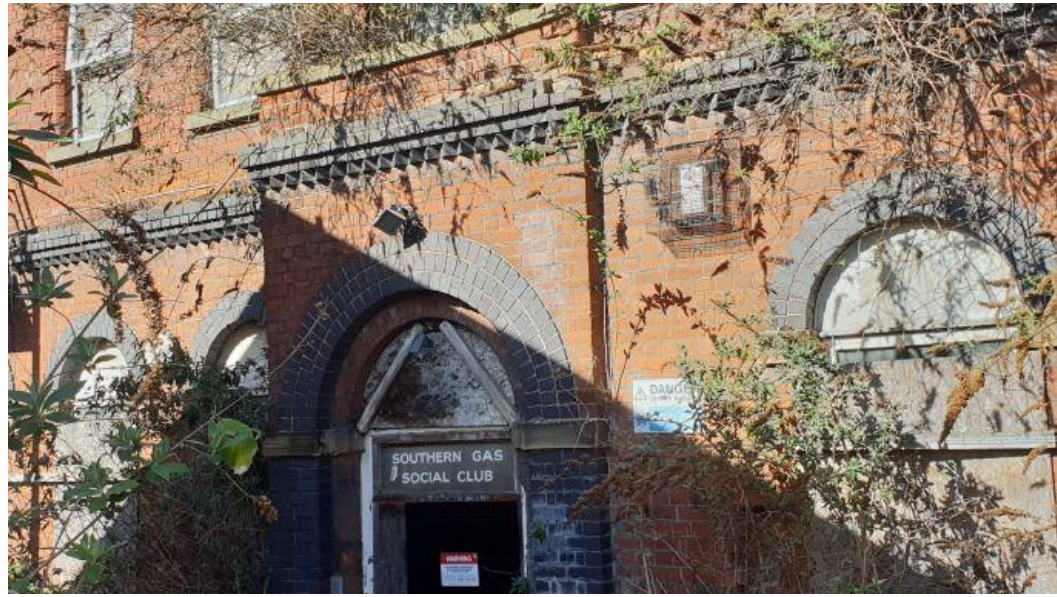


Fig. 10: Southern Gas Social Club, on the right. Governor House on the left.
(RBC - April 2022.)



Fig. 11: Gas Governor House.
(RBC - April 2022.)



APPENDIX 3: PROPOSED LOCAL LIST TEXT

Summary of Former Southern Gas Social Club, governor house and associated structures local listing nomination

The buildings on the site are of different ages but all are from within the period 1840-1913. The social club was in use until c. 1993. In 1862 the Reading Gas Light Company and the Reading Union Gas Company merged. The social club and governor house are on part of the original gas production site for the Reading Union Gas Company, between the arms of Kennet & Avon Canal next to Huntley & Palmers factory.

One of the industrial buildings on the site, dating from at least the third quarter of the nineteenth century, was converted into a social club to which in 1912 a second storey was added and other improvements made to mark the 50th anniversary of the company. The work was carried out by local builder Francis Newberry using as many recycled materials as possible e.g. slates. Arches and overhanging courses in best blue Staffordshire brick and blue brick were used to match the existing building.

The Gas Governor House, closest to Gas Works Road, was built in 1903 to replace an older building on the other side of the road. The building has a more utilitarian appearance than the social club. The walls only use one colour of red brick but hidden under the modern white cladding around parapet is a band of black moulded bricks. The lintel over the door states 'Erected 1903, J Okey Taylor, JP chairman. Douglas R Helps, Engineer'. The architects could have been Willcocks & Greenaway who were in partnership between 1919-1931. Willcocks was the architect for Arthur Hill baths (1911) and with Greenaway worked on the restoration of Watlington House (1929/31).

The two buildings on the site, the boundary walls and the bridge over the Kennet constructed to access the new gas works down river at King's Mead, are the only physical remain of gas production in Reading. The last gas holder at King's Mead has now been dismantled so that the site can be developed for housing. Other industrial heritage in the area includes the locally listed former Huntley & Palmers Social Club building and the cluster of Grade II listed buildings and structures associated with Blakes Lock Sewage Pumping Station.

APPENDIX 4: NOMINATION FORM

Address of building/structure: Southern Gas Social Club and Governor House and associated structures Gas Works Road

Postcode of building/structure: RG1 3EE

Owner of building (if known): In 1862 the Reading Gas Light Company and the Reading Union Gas Company merged. The social club and governor house are on part of the original gas production site for the Reading Union Gas Company,

Age of building: (b) 1840 - 1913: any building, structure or group of buildings that is/are substantially complete and unaltered and of definite significance

Please provide comments or further explanation of above: The buildings on the site are of different ages but all are from within the period 1840-1913, (see Figs. 1-3 for maps and keystone). On the northern edge of the site by the side of the Kennet the ground floor of the social club dates from approximately the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The original purpose and the use is not known. A plan of 1892 marks it as containing an engine house, boiler house and a pump room as part of the gas works site which included an old and an in-use retort house. It was briefly, in the early 1890s, in use as a showroom where appliances for hire were displayed before the showroom moved to town centre premises and, by 1905, the corner of Friar Street and Cross Street. In 1895 it was an industrial building. It was extended in 1912 and by then was already in use as a workmen's club.

The different ages can be seen in the fabric of the building when seen from the opposite bank of the Kennet. There is a detailed description of the works to be carried out and the materials to be used by the builder Francis Newberry in a tender to Reading Gas Company dated August 1912 (ref iv). The Gas Governor house was according to the lintel over the door built in 1903 (Fig. 2). The date of the wall in front of the site with gateposts is currently unknown but it would seem likely that it dates from c. 1900 at the latest. The design of the top of the gatepost is intriguing and we considered whether it might be gas related but were unconvinced. The left hand gate post has been demolished since 2017.

The building or structure has a well authenticated historical association with a notable person(s) or event: Yes

The building or structure has a prolonged and direct association with figures or events of local interest: Yes

In 1862 the Reading Gas Light Company and the Reading Union Gas Company merged. The social club and governor house are on part of the original gas production site for the Reading Union Gas Company,

Please provide further comments or explanation: John Okey-Taylor (1825-1918), chair of the Reading Gas Company was an important local figure. A 1905 press report on the opening of the new offices and showrooms at the corner of Friar Street and Cross Street listed among his many achievements (ref v):

- “.. one of Reading's most notable men of the present day. He has been intimately associated with the public life of the town in years gone by and is one of the few remaining of our citizens who link the present municipal and public institutions of the town with the past”

- Native of Reading, born in 1825• Vice-Chairman and then Chairman of Board of Guardians. During his term of office, the workhouse on the Oxford Road was built.
- Chair of joint Committee of Corporation and the Guardians to assess provisions with respect to new Assessment Act[Poor Rate Assessment and Collection Act 1869]
- 1855 took seat on Corporation - Abbey Ward• Involved in the acquisition of the site containing Abbey Gateway and Abbey ruins for the municipality and treasurer of the acquisition fund• Supervised excavation of Abbey ruins using the spoil to create Chestnut Walk and surrounding roads using unemployed workers to give them some income.
- “..it is to him we owe the business-like manner in which accounts are presented to the Council...”
- 1862 elected Mayor of Reading
- 10 March 1863 delivered first public congratulations to Prince & Princess of Wales (Edward VII) on their marriage when they stopped at Reading Station on their way to Osborne House
- Chairman of the Waterworks Committee until 1876• Governor of Reading School, and instrumental when Mayor in reviving the school from having only 1 pupil. He, along with two others, drafted the new charitable scheme that establish new constitutions for Reading and Kendrick schools
- Involved in governorship and management of Blue Coat and Green Girls’ schools
- Life Governor of University College, Reading
- Governor of Royal Berks Hospital

The building or structure has played an influential role in the development of an area or the life of one of Readings communities: Yes

Please provide further comments or explanation: The workmen’s club later became the Southern Gas Social Club and remained in use until c1993 (ref viii).

The building or structure clearly relates to traditional or historic industrial processes or important businesses or the products of such industrial processes or businesses in the history of Reading or are intact industrial structures, for example bridges: Yes

Please provide further comments or explanation: The 1903 Governor House supported the Reading Gas Company’s distribution gas mains. A governor regulates and reduces gas pressure between the gas production plant and the consumer network (ref i & Fig. 4).

The lintel over the door states ‘Erected 1903, J Okey Taylor, JP chairman. Douglas R Helps, Engineer’ (Fig. 2). The building contained a gas distributing cylinder and three governors for Reading town centre and western district, the eastern district and Caversham. It was designed by the company’s engineer and manager Douglas Helps although the architects may have been Willcocks & Greenaway. On the northern edge of the site by the side of the Kennet is an older building with a ground floor dating from approximately the third quarter of the nineteenth century The original purpose and the use is not known. In 1895 it was an industrial building. It was extended in 1912 for use as a workmen’s club when an additional floor was added and it had: a reading room on the ground floor; on the first floor a mess room with cooking facilities, showers, baths, wash basins and lavatories with constant hot water; a games room with a rifle range (ref vi).

Background to the Reading Gas Company and the site of the buildings (refs i & ii) The Reading Gas Company was formed on 30 June 1862 as an amalgamation of the Reading Gas Light Company and the Reading Union Gas Company. J Okey Taylor was the first chairman and had been chairman of the Reading Union Gas Company. He remained chairman until his death.

The Reading Union Gas Company's original gas production site was by the Kennet & Avon canal next to Huntley & Palmers biscuit factory, whereas the Reading Gas Light Company had premises in Gas Lane, off Bridge Street. In 1880 land at King's Mead was acquired where a new gas works was built. In order to reach the new gas works, Gasworks Road and the bridge over the Kennet were constructed 1881-82.

The building or structure is representative of a style that is characteristic of Reading:
No - The building is a unique Industrial building for the distribution of Gas.

Please provide further comments or explanation:

The building or structure has a noteworthy quality of workmanship and materials: Yes

Please provide further comments or explanation: The workmen's club was extended in 1912 to mark the 50 years Jubilee of the gas company. A press report of the event states that at the same time the stoker's lobby was extended by Messrs Collier and Catley. In the mess room a marble commemoration slab was unveiled by Mr Okey-Taylor. Each of the 260 employees received a bonus according to the length of their service and those with more than five years also received a brochure containing a retrospect of the company written by the engineer [this was 'Reading Gas Company: A Retrospective -Douglas H Helps 1912' ref vi] (ref vii). Francis Newberry's 1912 tender for the work to extend the social club is very specific (ref iv). The slates were to be taken off the roof and any old materials were to be used again after being passed by the engineer. Two chimneys were to be built as well as WCs and urinal requiring excavations.

- external facings, old and new, were to have 'neat black weather pointing' similar to the adjacent governor house. (Figs. 8 & 9)
- All brickwork English bond
- Arches and overhanging courses in best blue Staffordshire brick and blue brick to be used wherever necessary to match the existing building
- Two new arches for a window to the bathroom
- New double swing doors
- Old slates to be used on the river side which means that these slates could be about 150 years old now.
- New Bangor Penryhn slates to be used on the road side
- Parapet wall stone coping to be re-used• Stone window sills to 11 new windows to match original
- Riverside sills to be red splayed bricks
- Internal fittings, cupboards etc described. The dentillation on the front entrance and string course between the ground and second floors matches that on the Gas Works Road bridge (Fig. 8). Douglas Helps was appointed the Reading Gas Company's Engineer and Manager in March 1903 and in October a large Governor House was erected and the old one on the opposite side of Gas Works Road was dismantled (ref vi).

- The lintel over the door states ‘Erected 1903, J Okey Taylor, JP chairman. Douglas R Helps, Engineer. The building has a more utilitarian appearance than the social club. The walls only use one colour of red brick but hidden under the modern white cladding around parapet is a band of black moulded bricks. This can be seen where there is a hole in the cladding. It is not very easy to see and there may be a cornice as well. The floor and the walls below window level were tiled. An internal inspection would be required to see if any of this remains.

The building or structure is the work of a notable local or national architect/engineer/builder: See notes below.

Please provide further comments or explanation: The architect for the Governor House could be Willcocks & Greenaway as their name is on a plan that highlights the building although the description of the records only mentions offices (Appendix 2). Willcocks & Greenaway were in partnership between 1919-1931. Willcocks was the architect for Arthur Hill baths (1911) and with Greenaway worked on the restoration of Watlington House (1929/31).

The building or structure shows innovation in materials, technique, architectural style or engineering: Yes Interesting range of decorative brickwork, polychromed, dentils etc. Architectural terracotta decorative tile panelling.

Please provide further comments or explanation:

The buildings/structures form a group which as a whole has a unified architectural or historic value to the local area: Yes

Please provide further comments or explanation: The two buildings on the site together with the boundary walls form an identifiable industrial group linked with the bridge over the Kennet (image 4). Together with the gasworks bridge constructed 20 years earlier to access the new gas works, down river at King’s Mead, they are the only physical remain of gas production in Reading. The last gas holder at King’s Mead is (as of January 2021) in the process of being dismantled so that the site can be developed for housing.

The buildings/structures are an example of deliberate town planning from before 1947:
No

Please provide further comments or explanation:

Please upload any evidence you have assembled that help to make the case as to why the building or structure fulfils the above criteria: 1 Goad & OS maps gas works.docx, 2 Plans of gas works site.docx, 3 Images of the Social Club.docx

Please briefly describe the relevance of the evidence you have attached: Appendices 1.OS and Goad maps2. Plans of the site3. Images of the site referred to in the text and others of the buildings and location. References and Bibliography i)Berkshire Industrial Archaeology Group (BIAG) - History of Gas in Berkshire. Berkshire Industrial Archaeology Group <http://biag.org.uk/gas-in-berkshire/>ii)Additional research on the Gas Works Social Club - Jo Alexander-Jones of BIAG iii)Architects and builders - Sidney M Gold A Biographical Dictionary of Architects at Reading iv)August 1912 - Form of Tender Reading Gas Company from Francis Newberry, 292 Kings Rd Reading. Berkshire Record Office D/SG 8/1/3. According to Sidney M Gold, Francis Newberry was a builder. In 1897 there was also an architect F Newberry at 254 Kings Road in 1897.v)Reading Standard 17 June 1905vi)Reading Gas Company: A Retrospective - Douglas H Helps (1912)vii)Reading Standard 10 & 13 July 1912 (with images) - Reading Gas Company's Jubilee viii) Planning officer's report on planning application 160378 12 October 2016 and Get Reading article 'Revamp Unloved Building' 7 June 2013. viii) Planning officer's report on planning application 160378 12 October 2016 and Get Reading article 'Revamp Unloved Building' 7 June 2013

<https://www.getreading.co.uk/news/local-news/revamp-unloved-building-4253389>

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COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 22nd JUNE 2022

Ward: Abbey

App Nos.: 211441/FUL & 211442/ADV; 211443/FUL & 211444/ADV; 211445/FUL & 211446/ADV; 211447/FUL & 211448/ADV; 211449/FUL & 211450/ADV; 211451/FUL & 211452/ADV; 211453/FUL & 211454/ADV

Street Hub (SH) Addresses:

SH 1 - 211441/FUL & 211442/ADV - Outside 99 Broad Street
SH 2 - 211443/FUL & 211444/ADV - Outside 6 Broad Street
SH 3 - 211445/FUL & 211446/ADV - Outside 108-113 Broad Street
SH 4 - 211447/FUL & 211448/ADV - Outside 47-48 Broad Street
SH 5 - 211449/FUL & 211450/ADV - Outside 26 West Street
SH 6 - 211451/FUL & 211452/ADV - Outside 4-5 St Mary's Butts
SH 7 - 211453/FUL & 211454/ADV - Outside 164 Friar Street

Proposals:

Full planning permission for the proposed installation of 1no. new Street Hub, incorporating 2no. digital 75" LCD advert screens, plus the removal of associated BT kiosk(s); and

Advertisement consent for proposed 2no. digital 75" LCD display screens, one on each side of the Street Hub unit.

Description: Proposed development as a whole seeks the installation of 7no. new Street Hub, incorporating 2no. digital 75" LCD advert screens, plus the removal of associated BT kiosks.

Applicant: BT Telecommunications Plc

Date validated: 31st August 2021

Minor applications: 8 week target decision date: 26th October 2021

Extension of time: 22nd July 2022

RECOMMENDATION:

GRANT full planning permission consent for the following applications:

Conditions for Street Hubs 1-7

1. Time Limit
2. In accordance with approved plans
3. Existing ST6 Kiosks to be removed
4. Pavement surrounding Street Hubs to be made good to same condition

Informatives to include:

1. Terms and Conditions
2. Positive and Proactive

3. Works to the highway

GRANT advertisement consent for the following applications:

Conditions for Street Hubs 1-7

1. In accordance with approved plans
2. Standard Advertisement Conditions
3. Luminance not to exceed 250 cd/m² between 17:00 to 06:00 hours
4. Luminance not to exceed 600 cd/m² between 06:01-16:59 hours
5. No works shall commence on site until details and a sample of the micro-louvre film have been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details will include the results of the micro-louvre product testing, a data sheet and a sample of the micro-louvre film. The approved micro-louvre film shall be installed in accordance with the approved details and shall thereafter be maintained so that it operates to the same standard.
REASON: To safeguard the amenities of the surrounding properties and the area generally, in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019. No moving or flashing images
*Final wording to be provided in an update report.
6. No advert displayed for less than 10 seconds
7. Adverts shall not resemble road signs
8. Transitions between adverts to be controlled and no more than 0.1 seconds
9. Black screen or screen freezes if breaks down. No error messages.

Informatives to include:

1. Terms and Conditions
2. Positive and Proactive
3. Works to the highway

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Full planning permission and advertisement consent is sought for the replacement of seven existing ST6 kiosks (public payphones with an illuminated advertising board on the reverse) with seven 'Street Hubs'. The majority of the proposed Street Hubs are located on Broad Street, with replacements also proposed at West Street, Friar Street and St Mary's Butts.
- 1.2 Appendix A contains a map of the proposed Street Hub locations, along with renders of the proposed Street Hubs.

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Planning permission for the removal of existing ST6 kiosks and replacement with Street Hubs is sought as part of BT's Street Hub Strategy which seeks to identify locations with wide pavements, taking into account existing street furniture, so as to avoid undue proliferation where possible. The BT strategy

in their rollout of Street Hubs is to build a network of sites that meet the needs of the public, through a multi-media offer (payphone, localised free wi-fi and advertisements).

- 2.2 The maximum height of a current ST6 kiosk is 2.75m, with a width of 1.35m, and a depth of 0.22m, with an overhang above the payphone of 0.6m. On one side of a ST6 Kiosk is a payphone, with an approx. 80” (2m on the diagonal) illuminated advertisement on the other side.
- 2.3 Street Hubs are equipped with environmental sensors to, for example, measure air quality, noise and traffic. Street Hubs also provide Wi-Fi, 4G and 5G mobile connectivity within 150m of each unit.
- 2.4 The replacement Street Hubs are freestanding structures and are of a broadly similar size and scale to that of the existing ST6 Kiosks to be removed. The maximum height of the Street Hub is 2.94m, with a width of 1.22m, and a depth of 0.22m. The most notable changes in appearance from the existing ST6 kiosks to the Street Hubs are the removal of the overhang and payphone on one side of the structure, which has been relocated to the side of the thin side of the structure. Both sides of the Street Hub structures consist of 75” LCD screens on both sides, for advertisements, which will change every ten seconds or so.
- 2.5 The applicant’s Planning Design and Access Statement states that when comparing the existing ST6 kiosks in terms of size, scale and footprint with the existing Street Hubs, pavement space would be freed up. It is important to point out, however, that one of the replacement Street Hubs is not in an identical location to the related ST6 Kiosk to be removed. This is in reference to the proposed Street Hub located on Friar Street (SH7).
- 2.6 The applications were called in to Planning Applications Committee by Councillor Page.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 Advertisement consent was originally granted for all existing ST6 units. The application details of which are as follows:

Application ref.	Summary description	Location	Decision
111142/ADV	Payphone Kiosk with combined internally illuminated advertising.	Outside 99 Broad Street	Consent 14/06/2011
141087/ADV	Payphone Kiosk with combined internally illuminated advertising.	Outside 6 Broad Street	Consent 06/02/2015
080792/ADV	Payphone Kiosk with combined internally illuminated advertising.	Outside 108-113 Broad Street	Consent 15/08/2008

111389/ADV	Payphone Kiosk with combined internally illuminated advertising.	Outside 47-48 Broad Street	Consent 14/06/2011
080014/ADV	Payphone Kiosk with combined internally illuminated advertising.	Outside 26 West Street	Consent 15/08/2008
080841/ADV	Payphone Kiosk with combined internally illuminated advertising.	Outside 4-5 St Marys Butts	Consent 15/08/2008
111051/ADV	Payphone Kiosk with combined internally illuminated advertising.	Outside 175 Friar Street	Consent 04/05/2011

3.2 Advertisement consent was also granted for various freestanding advertisement units along Broad Street and in the surrounding area by JC Decaux in 2019. Some of these were freestanding, some were part of bus shelters. The most recent of which were granted consent in 2019, although ones in Queen Victoria Street were refused:

Application ref.	Summary description	Location	Decision
181954/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside Thames Tower, 37-45 Station Road	Consent 05/06/19
181955/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside Brunel House, 17-27 Station Road	Consent 05/06/19
181956/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 3-5 Station Road	Consent 05/06/19
181957/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 24-25 Broad Street (Lloyd's Bank)	Consent 10/06/19
181958/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 26-28 Broad Street (HSBC Bank)	Consent 10/06/19
181959/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 123 Broad Street	Refused 05/06/2019
181960/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 12 Broad Street	Withdrawn 20/02/2019
181961/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 23 Broad Street	Withdrawn 02/02/2019
181962/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 108-113 Broad Street	Consent 05/06/2019

181963/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 39 Broad Street	Consent 05/06/2019
181964/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 52 Broad Street	Consent 05/06/2019
181965/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 61-64 Broad Street	Consent 05/06/2019
181966/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 31 Queen Victoria Street	Refused 05/06/2019
181967/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 2 Queen Victoria Street	Refused 05/06/2019
181968/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 116-117 Broad Street	Refused 05/06/2019
190361/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 11 Broad Street	Consent 05/06/2019

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 Thames Valley Police (TVP)/CCTV - Consulted on Street Hubs 1 to 7
- Response received on 28/09/2021 applying to all above applications.
 - o *Existing illuminated freestanding advertisements have been causing surveillance issues due to the glare on CCTV cameras.*
 - o *At the moment we can just about work around what is there, but it is not easy. The glare of existing JC Decaux and Global structures on CCTV cameras has led to inaccurate descriptions mid incident, lost offenders, and not been able to provide high quality evidence on occasion. Adding more ad units, bus shelters, high output shop fronts or BT hubs may further decrease image quality.*
 - o *Any turn down of brightness to the proposed illuminated adverts would be appreciated. Any turn off during peak NTE weekend hours/special nights would also help.*
 - Final comments to be provided in an update report.
- 4.2 Crime Prevention Design Advisor (CPDA) Thames Valley Police - Consulted on Street Hubs 1 to 7
- Response received on 12/10/2021 applying to all above applications.
 - o *Object to the Street Hubs on the grounds of public safety, with significant concerns with the proposals particularly relating to the illuminated advertising screens during hours of darkness. Broad Street, West Street and Friar Street are crowded places because of the number of people occupying the streets day and night, which due*

to the risk posed require additional protection for the public in the form of formal police live-monitored CCTV. Illuminated advertising boards at all of these locations have a significant detrimental impact on our ability to monitor and detect crime utilising our CCTV network.

- *The glare caused by these screens creates problems for CCTV cameras, in that the brightness of the screen creates colour contrasting, darkening and softening of the images, reducing visibility and our ability to identify and monitor individuals. In addition, depending on the advert being displayed, colour casting also affects the ability to identify and describe individuals being monitored.*
 - Response received on 22/12/2021 following discussions between CPDA and the applicant.
 - No objections to Street Hubs 1 to 7 subject to condition ensuring that the units do not negatively impact image capture or operations use of formal surveillance. Should a compromise be identified, the unit must be taken out of service until rectified.
 - Final comments to be provided in an update report.
- 4.3 RBC Transport - Consulted on applications Street Hubs 1 to 7
- Response received on 29/09/2021 applying to all above applications.
 - *No Transport objections raised on these applications subject to conditions controlling adverts.*
- 4.4 RBC Environmental Protection - Consulted on applications Street Hubs 1 to 7
- Response received on 29/09/2021 applying to all above applications.
 - *The light from the screens has the potential to cause loss of amenity to nearby residents. The fact that the screens face down and up the street rather than facing the façade is helpful in reducing the potential for this. From the information submitted, the screens appear compliant with the guidance of the Institute of Lighting Professionals in terms of maximum illuminance and speed of change of the image. It would be preferable if there is the option to further reduce the illumination at a future point should justified complaints be made.*
 - *There is a possibility of the hub causing noise disturbance to residents due to people congregating there at night time or making phone calls at night time. For the hubs closest to residential properties, it may be preferable for them to be turned off after a certain time e.g. 2 am.*
- 4.5 RBC Conservation & Urban Design Officer - Consulted on Street Hubs 2, 3 and 7
- Responses received on 09/06/2022 applying to Street Hub 2 and 3
 - *The proposed works are considered in relation to previous approvals. Although the works are considered to be of “less than substantial*

Harm” to their setting and context to a number of listed buildings and adjacent conservation area, on balance, when assessed in relation the community benefits, under P. 202 under the NPPF, the proposed application is considered acceptable in relation to heritage issues.

- Response received on 09/06/2022 applying to Street Hub 7
 - *The installation of commercial signs and facilities were approved here over 10 years ago. The proposed works are therefore an upgrade of existing services however, it is proposed to relocate the signage post to the west. The planning agent states the HUB location is not in a conservation area. Well technically true, but it is literally only a metre outside however, it will have an impact on the character and setting of the following:*
 - *St Lawrence Church, (Grade I listed building);*
 - *Queen Victoria Statue (listed Grade II); and*
 - *Market Place/London Street conservation area.*
 - *The new signage works proposed are located near the boundary of the Market Place Conservation Area and in front of two 19th century listed buildings. The proposed signage is considered to be of “less than substantial Harm” in NPPF terms.*
 - *However, there a number of considerations in relation to this application:*
 - *What is proposed would fit into the category of like for like replacement or upgrade of existing signage, approved c. 10 years ago in 2010 & 2011;*
 - *When the community benefits are considered under P. 202, of the NPPF, on balance the proposed works are considered acceptable. Further, the current proposal is merely an upgrade of existing advertising that was previously approved;*
 - *The relocation of the signage to the west, is considered an enhance to the conservation area and is further away from the Grade I, St Lawrence Church;*
 - *In regard to the Queen Victoria Statue, the new signage is perpendicular to the existing street facades. When looking at the Statue, from the front, a slim side view will have less impact on the setting, than is currently the case;*
 - *On balance, taking on board the facts, there are no planning objections in regard to heritage.*
 - *The proposed works are considered in relation to previous approvals. Although the works are considered to be of “less than substantial Harm” to their setting and context to a number of listed buildings and adjacent conservation area, on balance, when assessed in relation the community benefits, under P. 202 under the NPPF, the proposed application is considered acceptable in relation to heritage issues.*

- 4.6 Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) - Consulted on Street Hubs 2, 3 and 7
- No response received.
- 4.7 RBC Valuations Team - Consulted on Street Hubs 5 and 7
- No response received.
- 4.8 Public Consultation:
- 4.9 Site notices were displayed at the approximate locations of the proposed screens on 08/09/2021 and 10/09/2021. The consultation period ended on 29/09/2021 and 01/10/2021. Press notices were published from 23/09/2021, expiring on 14/09/2021 for applications 211443/FUL, 211444/ADV, 211445/FUL, 211446/ADV, 211453/FUL and 211454/ADV as these sites are located within or next to Conservation Areas.

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) (2021) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.
- 5.2 Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 requires the Local Planning Authority to exercise its powers under these regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety taking into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material; and any other relevant factors. Regulation 3 states that factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural, or similar interest.
- 5.3 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 National Planning Policy Framework (2021)
Part 10: Supporting High Quality Communications
Part 12: Achieving well designed places
Part 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment
- 5.4 National Planning Practice Guidance
Advertisements

- 5.5 Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted 2019)
CC7: Design and the Public Realm
CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas
EN4: Locally Important Heritage Assets
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
OU3: Telecommunications Development
OU4: Advertisements
CR3: Public Realm in Central Reading

5.6 Market Place/London Street Conservation Area Appraisal

6. APPRAISAL

- a) Policy Context
- b) Design and Access
- c) Safeguarding Amenity

a) Policy Context

- 6.1 The principle of the replacement of Street Hubs is generally accepted by virtue of the existence of the ST6 kiosks that they would be replacing. The proposed Street Hubs will be assessed; however, it is necessary to determine whether or not any additional impacts would materially and adversely harm the character and appearance of the public realm or compromise public safety. Some of the Street Hubs are also located within or close to the Market Place Conservation Area or may have the ability to affect the setting of Listed Buildings or Buildings of Townscape Merit. Accordingly, these structures will be assessed against policies CC7, CC8, EN1, EN3 and EN4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.
- 6.2 The proposed Street Hubs have Wi-Fi, 4G/5G mobile network connectivity capabilities. Therefore, the proposed development is considered against Policy OU3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The proposed Street Hubs can largely be considered as ‘swap-outs’ of the existing ST6 Kiosks, in accordance with Policy OU3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.
- 6.3 Regarding public safety and radiowave emissions, the applicant has provided an International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation (ICNIRP) certificate to support these planning applications. 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 (2021) goes on to state that Local

Planning Authorities should not set health safeguards different from the International Commission guidelines for public exposure.

- 6.4 As 75” LCD advertisement screens are proposed to both faces of the Street Hubs, the proposed structures will be assessed against Policy OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. It is acknowledged that the ST6 structures to be replaced have an illuminated advertisement screen on one side.

b) Design and Access

- 6.5 In the case for Street Hubs 1 to 6, these are all to replace existing ST6 kiosks in an identical location. Therefore, use of the proposal site as a payphone with advertisement has already been established. The proposed Street Hubs will face the same direction as the existing ST6 kiosks that they are replacing. The size and scale of the proposed Street Hub structure is very similar to that of the existing ST6 kiosks.

- 6.6 Two 75” LCD advertisement screens are proposed on both sides of the Street Hub structure as opposed to the one illuminated advertising screen to the existing ST6 kiosks. The additional advertisement screen in this instance is not considered to worsen the existing situation within the locations proposed for Street Hubs 1 to 6 as the presence of advertisement screens has already been established. In this instance, it is considered that an existing largely blank façade (payphone side of the ST6 Kiosk) would be replaced with an LCD advertisement screen. The additional screen would not disrupt views or movement due to the presence of the existing ST6 Kiosk it is replacing, as existing advertisement screens are already in place within all proposed locations for the Street Hubs.

Street Hubs 1 (Outside 99 Broad Street) and 4 (Outside 47-48 Broad Street)

- 6.7 Street Hubs 1 and 4 are both located along Broad Street, are located within a pedestrianised part of the town centre. The slightly reduced width of the Street Hubs compared to the existing ST6 kiosks will free up space along a busy high street for pedestrian movement. It is noted that the side-mounted ‘tablet’-style interface, which serves as the payphone and charge station associated with the Street Hub, would not unduly disrupt pedestrian movement in all cases.

- 6.8 In accordance with Policy CC7, the proposed Street Hubs are not considered to harm the character and appearance of the public realm. The presence of these structures has already been established; therefore, the proposed replacement Street Hubs are not an intrusive addition to the street scene by virtue of their size, scale and appearance.

Street Hubs 5 (Outside 26 West Street) and 6 (Outside 4-5 St Mary’s Butts)

- 6.9 Street Hubs 5 and 4 are both located close to the junction of Broad Street, Oxford Road, West Street and St Marys Butts are located close to busy town centre roads with frequent vehicle traffic. The positions of these two Street Hub units will not affect public safety, interrupt any visibility splays, or impede pedestrian flow given that Street Hubs are to replace existing SK6 units.
- 6.10 In accordance with Policy CC7, the proposed Street Hubs are not considered to harm the character and appearance of the public realm. The presence of these structures has already been established; therefore, the proposed replacement Street Hubs are not an intrusive addition to the street scene by virtue of their size, scale and appearance.

Street Hub 2 - Outside 6 Broad Street

- 6.11 With regard to the Street Hub proposed outside of 6 Broad Street, within the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area, the proposed Street Hub is not considered to harm the setting of the Conservation Area or nearby Listed Buildings and Buildings of Townscape Merit. The presence of an advertisement screen and payphone structure in this locality has already been established due to the presence of the previously approved SK6 unit. The additional advertisement screen to the locality is not considered harmful to the significantly worsen the existing arrangement at the site.
- 6.12 As discussed with the Council's Conservation & Urban Design Officer, the presence of a structure the size, scale and appearance of that proposed has already been established by the existing ST6 kiosk. It is noted that the public benefits of the proposal outweigh the visual harm of the Street Hub in this instance and is considered an upgrade of an existing structure. With the additional advertisements screen consider to be of "less than substantial harm". Therefore, the proposed Street Hub (SH 2) is considered in accordance with Policies EN1, EN3 and EN4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Street Hub 3 - Outside 108-113 Broad Street

- 6.13 Listed Buildings are located directly north of the Street Hub proposed outside of 108-113 Broad Street (John Lewis and EE), these include 26-28 Broad Street (HSBC) and 24 Broad Street (Lloyds Bank). The presence of an advertisement screen and payphone structure in this locality has already been established due to the presence of the previously approved SK6 unit. The proposed Street Hub is not considered to harm the setting of the nearby Listed Buildings. The additional advertisement screen to the locality is not considered harmful to the significantly worsen the existing arrangement at the site.
- 6.14 As discussed with the Council's Conservation & Urban Design Officer, the presence of a structure the size, scale and appearance of that proposed has

already been established by the existing ST6 kiosk. It is noted that the public benefits of the proposal outweigh the visual harm of the Street Hub in this instance and is considered an upgrade of an existing structure. With the additional advertisements screen considered to be of “less than substantial harm”. Therefore, the proposed Street Hub (SH 2) is considered in accordance with Policies EN1, EN3 and EN4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Street Hub 7 - Outside 164 Friar Street

- 6.15 Due to the replacement Street Hub outside of the Marks & Spencer Food Hall along Friar Street not being in the same location as the existing ST6 kiosk to be removed, it is considered appropriate to assess whether the Street Hub is proposed in an appropriate location.
- 6.16 The proposed Street Hub is located between Bristol and West Arcade and Marks & Spencer (Friar Street entrance), approximately 25m east of the existing ST6 kiosk. The justification for this provided by the applicant is that this location would be more in keeping with the immediate street scene and improve pedestrian manoeuvrability along a part-pedestrianised area.
- 6.17 Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed Street Hub would be located away from St. Lawrence’s Church, which is a Grade I Listed church, the proposed Street Hub would be closer to the Grade II Listed Queen Victoria Jubilee Statue. In both instances, the existing ST6 kiosk and the proposed Street Hub are on the edge of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area.
- 6.18 As discussed with the Council’s Conservation & Urban Design Officer, the proposed Street Hub when viewed from Blagrove Street would be side on, presenting the 0.22m wide side elevation of the proposed structure. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed Street Hub would not significantly harm the setting of the Grade II listed statue, or views into and within of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area.
- 6.19 The presence of a structure the size of the Street Hub within this section of Friar Street has been established by virtue of the existing ST6 Kiosk. It is considered that the proposed Street Hub, against the backdrop of the Marks & Spencer Food Hall, would appear no more out of place than the existing ST6 Kiosk and other street furniture within this area, such as the nearby cycle hire station. With regards to access and pedestrian movement implications; Transport Development Control have confirmed that the Street Hub would not affect public safety or interrupt visibility splays or impede pedestrian flow.
- 6.20 It is considered that there would not be a net increase in street clutter as the development proposes the removal of the existing ST6 Kiosk and installation of the similarly sized Street Hub. Therefore, the proposed Street Hub (SH 7)

is considered in accordance with Policies EN1, EN3 and EN4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

- 6.21 It is considered appropriate to condition the removal of the existing ST6 Kiosks SH 7. In all other cases, these are direct 1:1 swap-outs of existing freestanding kiosks.

c) Safeguarding Amenity

- 6.22 Policy OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan requires adverts within Conservation Areas to respect or enhance the area and respect the key features of the special historic interest. Advertisements will also not reduce visibility for users of the highway or accesses onto the highway. Illuminated adverts will also not detract from the amenity of the area or present a safety hazard to highway users.

- 6.23 Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan also states that; *“Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of (among other criteria):*

- (...)
- *Noise and disturbance*
- *Artificial Lighting*
- (...)
- *Crime and Safety”*

Crime and Safety

- 6.24 As set out under the advertisement regulations, factors relevant to public safety include highway safety and whether the adverts would block the view of CCTV cameras, or whether illumination from advertisement would cause glare on such cameras.

- 6.25 Concerns have been raised by the Thames Valley Police CCTV Team and the Crime Prevention Design Advisor regarding brightness of the illuminated adverts and the impact this has on surveillance cameras, more specifically during hours of darkness. The issue of glare from freestanding advertisement structures on the high street arose from the installation of digital advertisement screens in 2019 (see planning history).

- 6.26 The brightness of existing freestanding advertisement screens within the town centre has led to detrimental impacts on the image capture quality of the existing CCTV cameras. This is of a particular concern in an area of Reading that has seen large scale public disorder incidents, and as stated in the initial response from the CPDA; “Broad Street, West Street and Friar Street are areas within Reading town centre that create significant demand

on policing in terms of incidents, particularly during The Night Time Economy”.

- 6.27 Rather than dealing with any potential issues after the freestanding advertisement screens have been installed, it is considered necessary to have appropriate measures in place to address the surveillance concerns with the proposed Street Hubs prior to any approval in accordance with Policies CC7 and CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.
- 6.28 All the proposed Street Hubs are of particular concern based on the existing arrangement with the ST6 Units aside from SH4, which is considered unlikely to cause glaring issues to CCTV cameras.
- 6.29 Broad Street, West Street and Friar Street are areas within the town centre of Reading with heavy footfall during daylight hours and hours of darkness. Due to the high level of occupancy within these streets, additional protection is in place in the form of police monitored live CCTV cameras. It has been identified by Thames Valley Police that over the last few years, illuminated advertisements combined with brightly lit shopfronts have been diminishing the quality of footage captured on CCTV cameras during hours of darkness.
- 6.30 The Thames Valley Police CCTV Team provided still images of CCTV camera footage demonstrating the effect that the glare from illuminated adverts is having on the picture quality of CCTV footage. The glare from the illuminated adverts contrasts the colours, darkens and softens the image. For instance, in instances where TVP are tracking a situation, cameras have had to automatically adjust to the change in light levels, moving from dark area to a very brightly lit area. This has led to instances where inaccurate descriptions of suspects and offenders.
- 6.31 The Thames Valley Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor (CPDA) therefore initially objected to the proposed Street Hubs, which consist of two 75” LCD screens. The Thames Valley Police CCTV Team have stated that any turn down of the brightness from the proposed 75” LCD screens would be appreciated.
- 6.32 Discussions subsequently took place between the CPDA, Reading CCTV, the agent, and the LPA to address the concerns regarding the impact of the glare from the illuminated screens on the picture quality of CCTV cameras. Possible solutions included the use of micro-louvre film to obscure the glare from the Street Hubs to the CCTV cameras, or the attachment of physical shrouds to the Street Hubs.
- 6.33 Following these discussions, the agent investigated the used of micro-louvre film to obscure the glare from CCTV cameras and has provided a demonstration of how this solution could work in practice. The purpose of the micro-louvre film is to restrict the viewing angle of the screen, whereby when moving left, right, up or down past a certain angle, the image becomes

almost completely obscured. The micro-louvre film would be installed at the point of manufacture and would have a no noticeable impact on the appearance of the Street Hubs.



Fig 1. Straight on view of the anti-glare film.

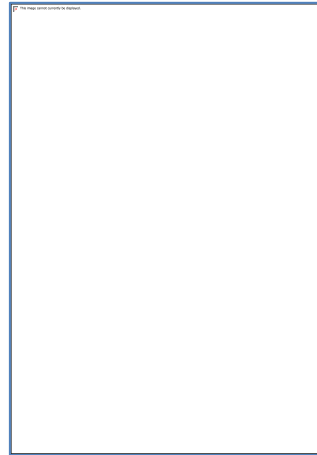


Fig 2. View looking down at the anti-glare film.



Fig 3. View from a side angle of the anti-glare film.

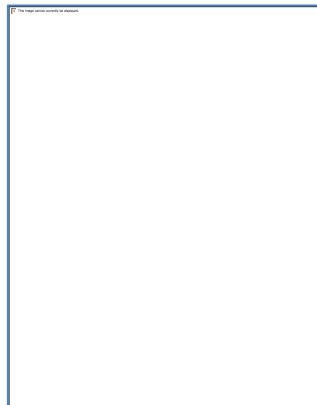


Fig 4. View looking up at the anti-glare film.

- 6.34 The micro-louvre film and its application to the Street Hubs is still, however, in the testing phase. The applicant is engaging with a variety of solutions to develop a bespoke solution due to the screen size and the specific viewing angles that need to be restricted in relation to the position of the CCTV cameras.
- 6.35 The applicant has agreed to a condition requiring the details of the micro-louvre film to be submitted and approved by the LPA via a pre-commencement condition. This is to confirm the details of the proposed mitigation in consultation with the CPDA and the CCTV Team. It is anticipated that the final wording of the pre-commencement condition will be provided in an update report.
- 6.36 The applicant's Product Team also considered the option of a physical shroud; however, the micro-louvre film solution was considered a more appropriate

solution as the product is tried and tested on other products. The absence of a physical should also means that less weight and bulk is added to the proposed Street Hubs.

Artificial Lighting, Noise and Disturbance

- 6.37 As per the comments from Environmental Protection; concerns have been raised regarding the impact of the brightness from the advertisement screens on nearby residents, and noise generated from people congregating at the Street Hubs or making phone calls at night.
- 6.38 With regards to artificial lighting; the illuminated advertisement screens to all of the existing ST6 Kiosks were approved subject to condition that the maximum luminance of the signs should not exceed 450 cd/m². Due to the issues caused by the illuminated advertisements on the ST6 Kiosks, it is considered appropriate to further restrict the luminance of the advertisement screens proposed to the Street Hubs. The nearby JC Decaux structures, which were approved in 2019 (see section 3 of this report), were approved subject to condition that the maximum luminance of the signs should not exceed 250 cd/m² during hours of darkness between 17:00 and 06:00 hours. It is considered appropriate to restrict the luminance of the Street Hub advertisement screens to be on parity with the JC Decaux advertisement screens approved in 2019.
- 6.39 It is acknowledged that the proposed Street Hubs have illuminated adverts on both sides, as opposed to the ST6 Kiosks. As a result, an additional light source is proposed. The illuminated advert proposed to each structure of a Street Hub is not considered to significantly worsen the existing arrangement within their respective locations given the existing presence of an illuminated advert within these and the fact that the luminance levels will be further restricted during hours of darkness, via condition.
- 6.40 In forming a decision for these applications, weight is given to the presence previously approved ST6 Kiosk structures which consist of illuminated adverts on one side, a payphone on the other, and the presence of existing illuminated adverts to shopfronts along Broad Street, West Street, Friar Street and St. Mary's Butts. The proposed Street Hubs are not considered to worsen the existing arrangement in terms of artificial light and noise.

7 Equality

- 7.1 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age 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. The proposal is specifically to address the needs of a disabled person.

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Six of the seven Street Hubs proposed are located in the same location as the existing ST6 Kiosks and are of a similar size and scale of the existing kiosks. The proposed Street Hubs represent a zero increase in street clutter due to the removal of the existing ST6 Kiosks.
- 8.2 In the instance where the proposed Street Hub (SH 7) is located in a different location to that of the ST6 Kiosk its replacing, the proposed location is considered appropriate and not harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 8.3 The concerns from the Thames Valley Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor and Reading CCTV regarding the luminance levels of the proposed Street Hubs is considered to have been suitably addressed by way of condition. The luminance levels during hours of darkness for each Street Hub will be secured via condition, restricting each screen on the Street Hubs to 250 cd/m² between 17:00 and 06:00. This is a further reduction from the approved luminance levels of the advertisement screens to the existing ST6 Kiosks, where were restricted at 450 cd/m². This is also consistent with the conditions applied to the nearby JC Decaux advertisement screens, which were approved in 2019.

Case Officer: David Brett

Documents considered:

Received for all applications for full planning permission and advertisement consent:

- Street Hub Anti-Social Behaviour Management Plan
- Street Hub Proposal Renders 2021
- Street Hubs Beyond Connection (Product Statement - v1.0 | February 2021
- Conformity with ICNIRP Public Exposure Guidelines (“ICNIRP”)
- Professional Lighting Guide 05 - The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements

Received on 31st August 2021

- Applicant Statement regarding the brightness of the advertisement displays to the proposed Street Hubs

Received on 21st December 2021

Application specific documents:

SH 1 - 211441/FUL & 211442/ADV - Outside 99 Broad Street

- Site Location Maps - 001 Rev A
- Proposed Site Plan - 002 Rev A
- Existing and Proposed Elevations - 003 Rev A
- Planning, Design and Access Statement - READ003

Received on 31st August 2021

SH 2 - 211443/FUL & 211444/ADV - Outside 6 Broad Street

- Site Location Maps - 001 Rev A
- Proposed Site Plan - 002 Rev A
- Existing and Proposed Elevations - 003 Rev A
- Planning, Design and Access Statement - READ001a

Received on 31st August 2021

SH 3 - 211445/FUL & 211446/ADV - Outside 108-113 Broad Street

- Site Location Maps - 001 Rev A
- Proposed Site Plan - 002 Rev A
- Existing and Proposed Elevations - 003 Rev A
- Planning, Design and Access Statement - READ002

Received on 31st August 2021

SH 4 - 211447/FUL & 211448/ADV - Outside 47-48 Broad Street

- Site Location Maps - 001 Rev A
- Proposed Site Plan - 002 Rev A
- Existing and Proposed Elevations - 003 Rev A
- Planning, Design and Access Statement - READ004a

Received on 31st August 2021

SH 5 - 211449/FUL & 211450/ADV - Outside 26 West Street

- Site Location Maps - 001 Rev A
- Proposed Site Plan - 002 Rev A
- Existing and Proposed Elevations - 003 Rev A
- Planning, Design and Access Statement - READ005

Received on 31st August 2021

SH 6 - 211451/FUL & 211452/ADV - Outside 4-5 St Mary's Butts

- Site Location Maps - 001 Rev A
- Proposed Site Plan - 002 Rev A
- Existing and Proposed Elevations - 003 Rev A
- Planning, Design and Access Statement - READ006

Received on 31st August 2021

SH 7 - 211453/FUL & 211454/ADV - Outside 164 Friar Street

- Site Location Maps - 001 Rev A
- Proposed Site Plan - 002 Rev A
- Existing and Proposed Elevations - 003 Rev A
- Planning, Design and Access Statement - READ007b

Received on 31st August 2021

Appendix 1 - Street Hub map, Proposals and Site Photos

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BT Street Hubs – Appendix 1



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Proposed BT Street Hub Locations
 Scale at A3: 1:1250
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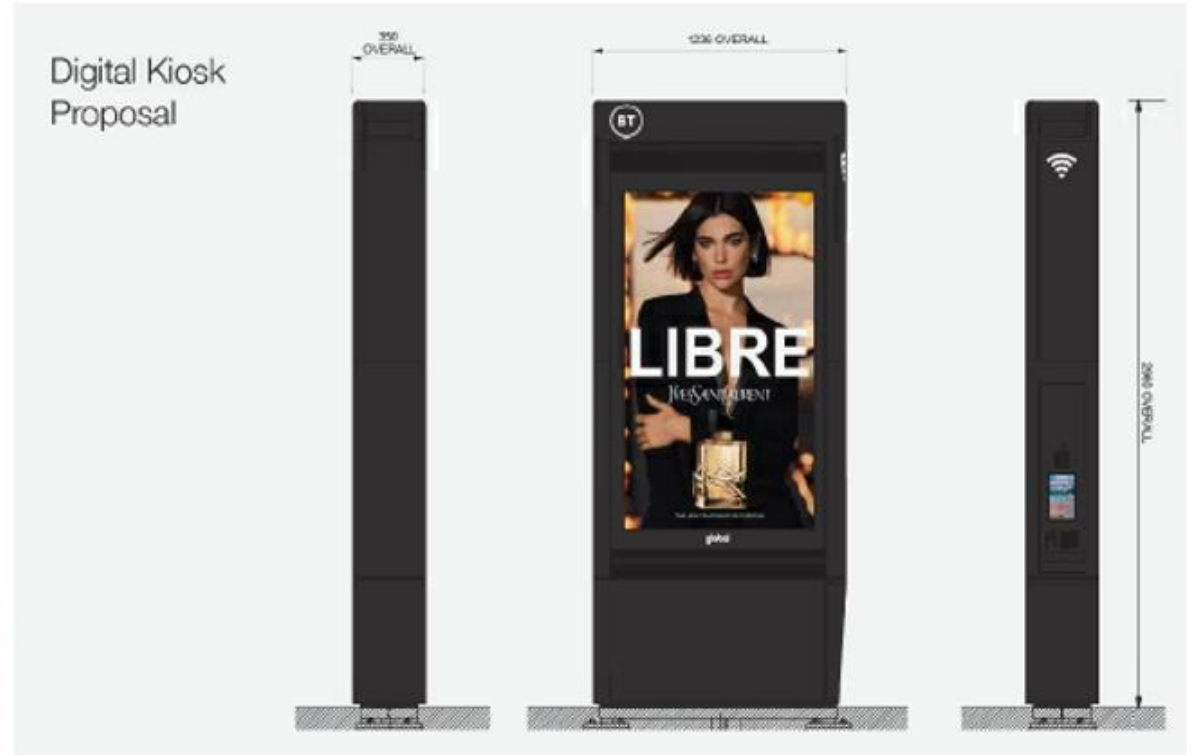
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Street Hubs (click for details)	Applications
SH 1	211441/FUL 211442/ADV
SH 2	211441/FUL 211442/ADV
SH 3	211441/FUL 211442/ADV
SH 4	211441/FUL 211442/ADV
SH 5	211441/FUL 211442/ADV
SH 6	211441/FUL 211442/ADV
SH 7	211441/FUL 211442/ADV

BT Street Hub
Proposal Renders
2021



mono#

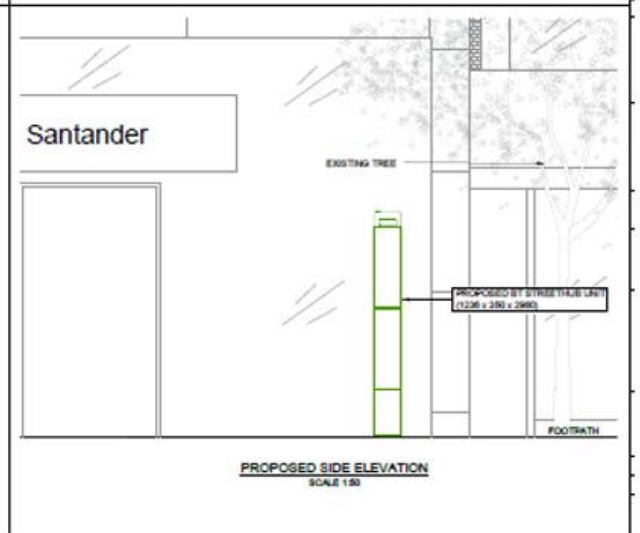
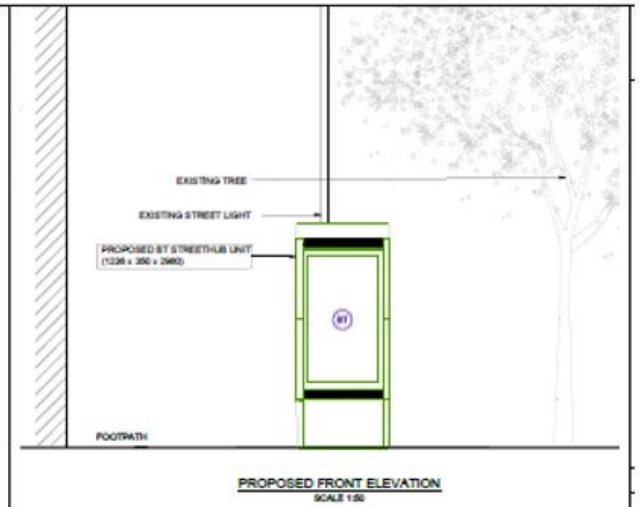
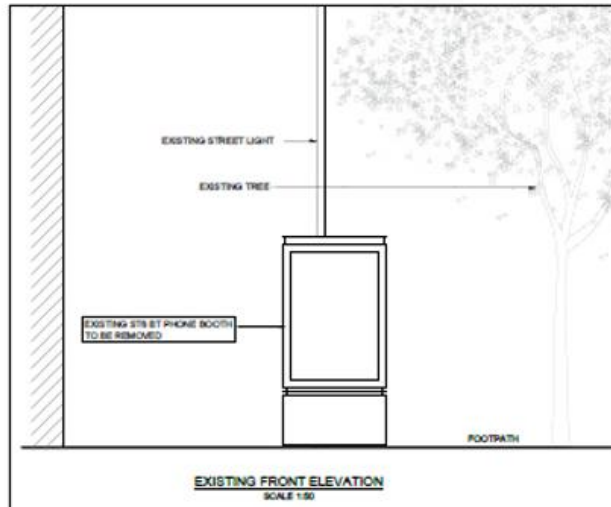
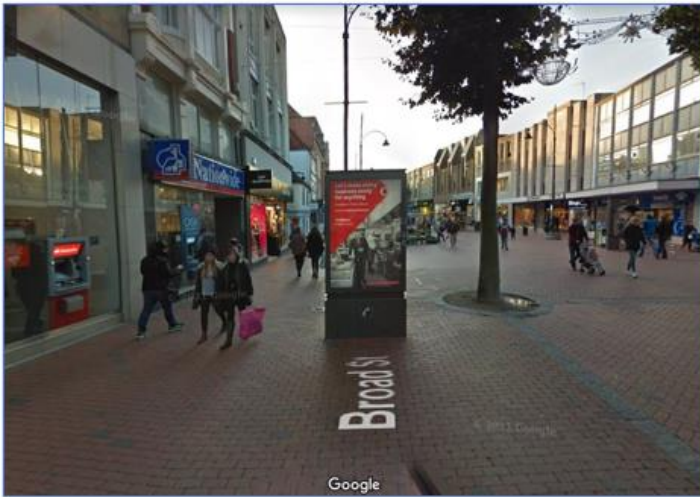


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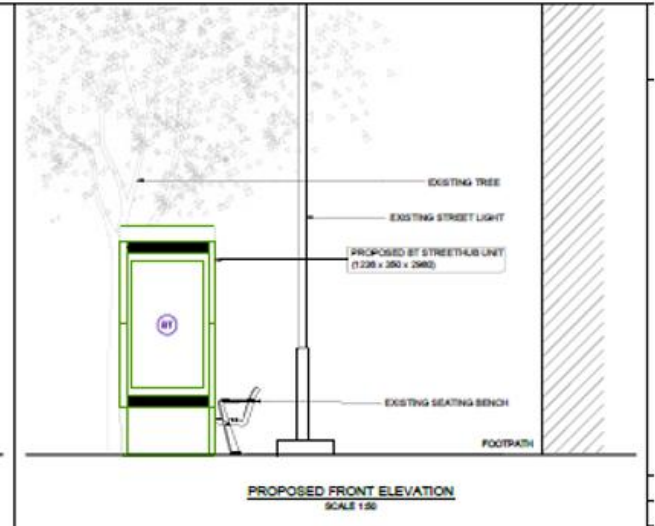
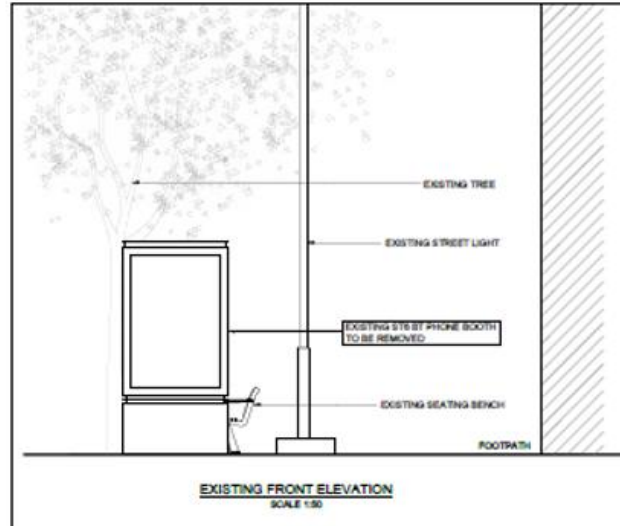
SH 1 - 211441/FUL & 211442/ADV - Outside 99 Broad Street

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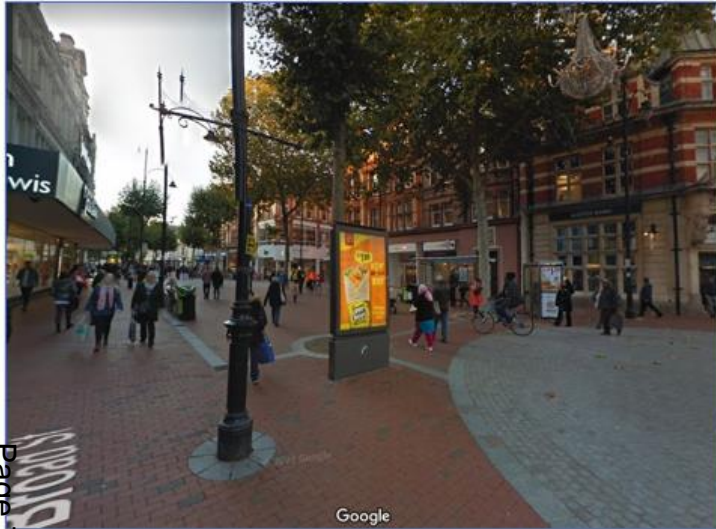
SH 2 - 211443/FUL & 211444/ADV - Outside 6 Broad Street

[Back to Map](#)

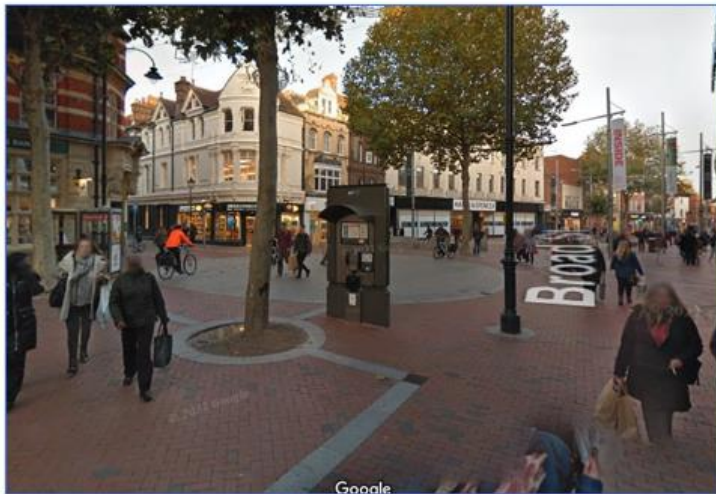


SH 3 - 211445/FUL & 211446/ADV - Outside 108-113 Broad Street

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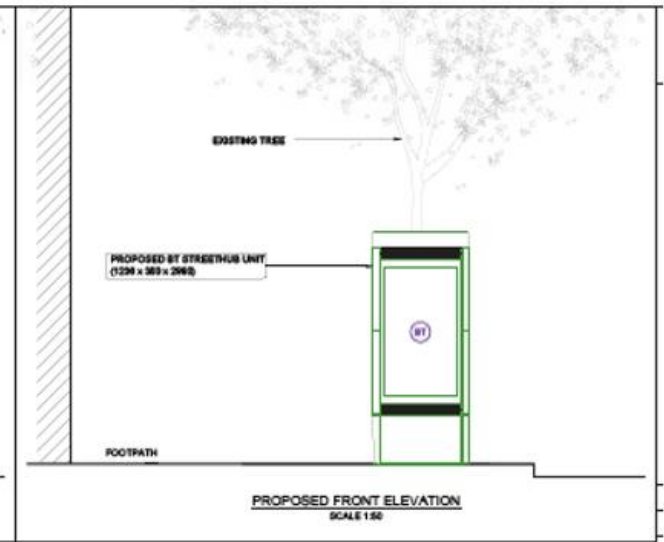
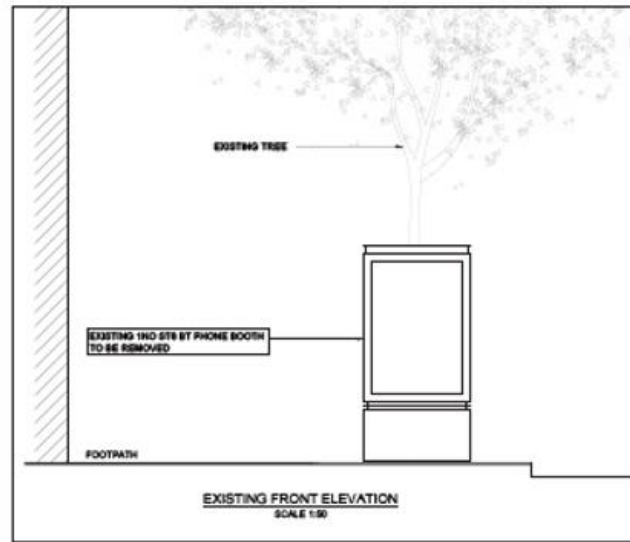
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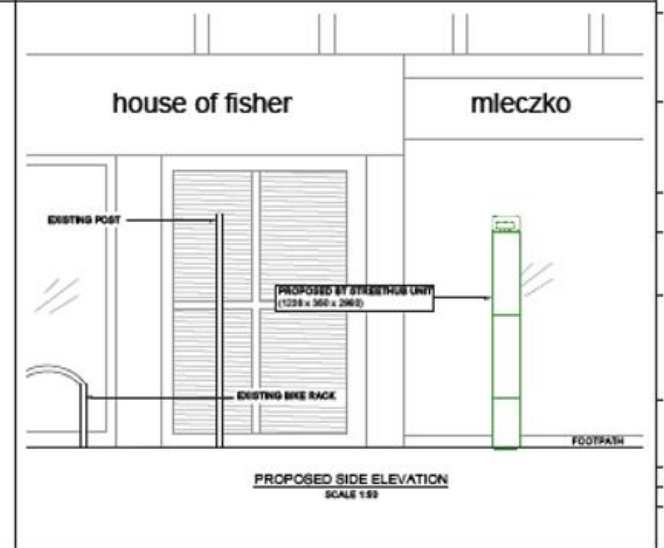
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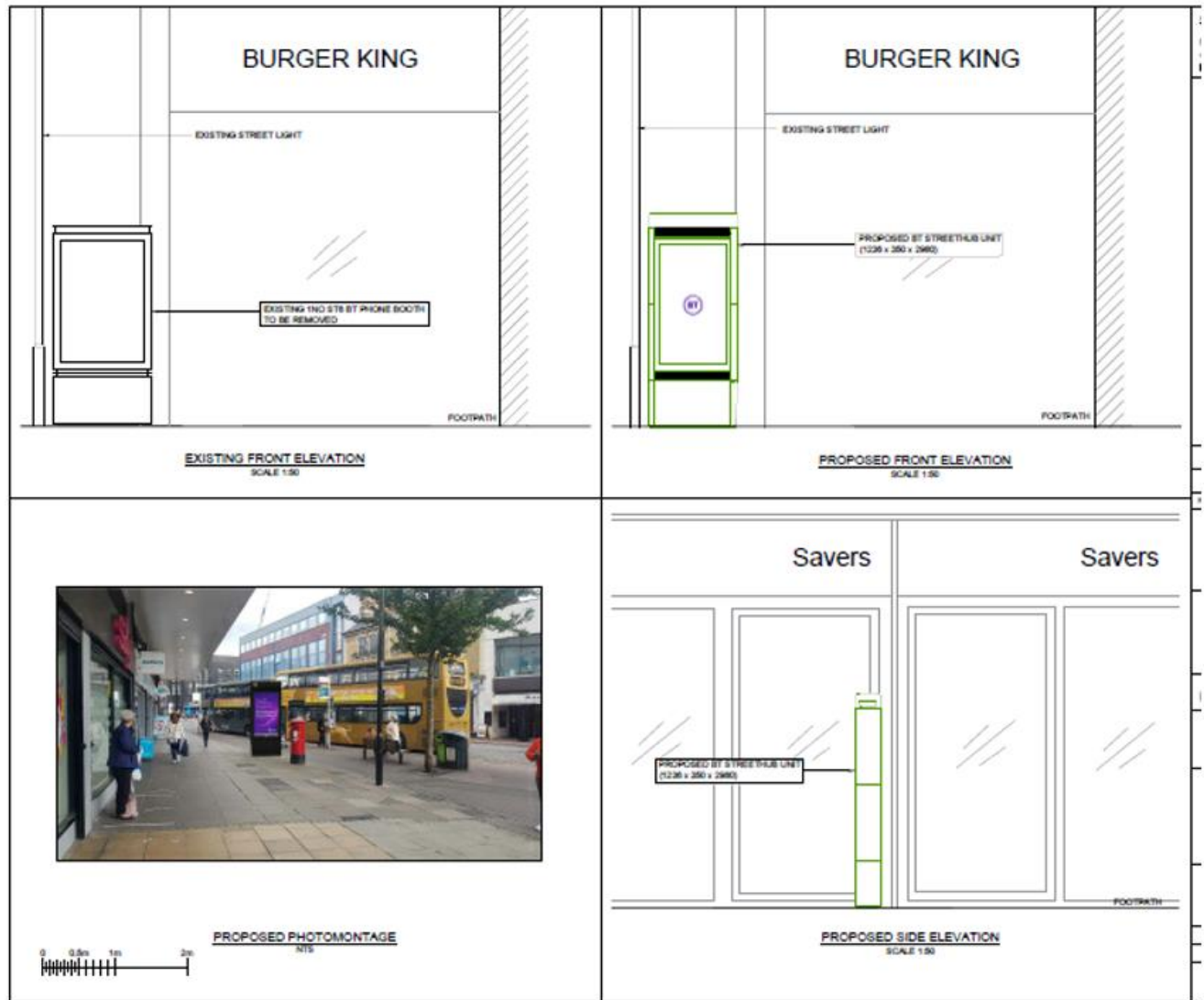


PROPOSED PHOTOMONTAGE
NTS



SH 6 - 211451/FUL & 211452/ADV - Outside 4-5 St Mary's Butts

[Back to Map](#)

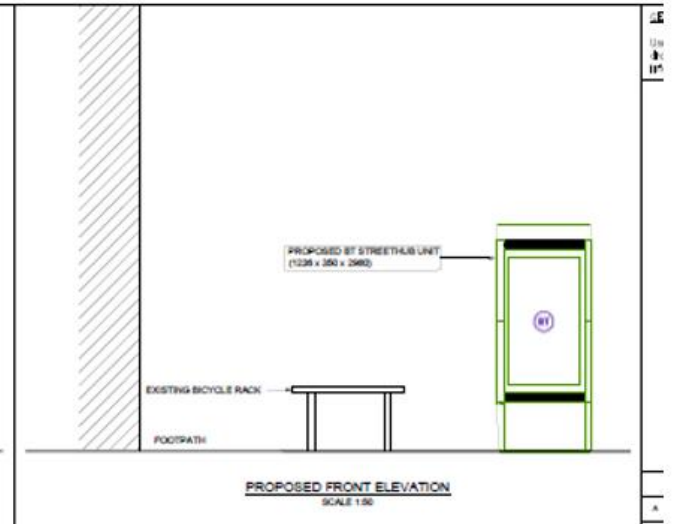
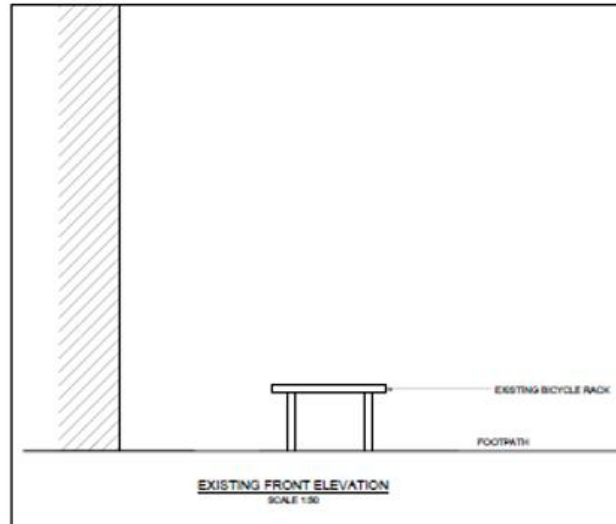


BT Street Hubs – Appendix 1
 SH 7 - 211453/FUL & 211454/ADV - Outside 164 Friar Street

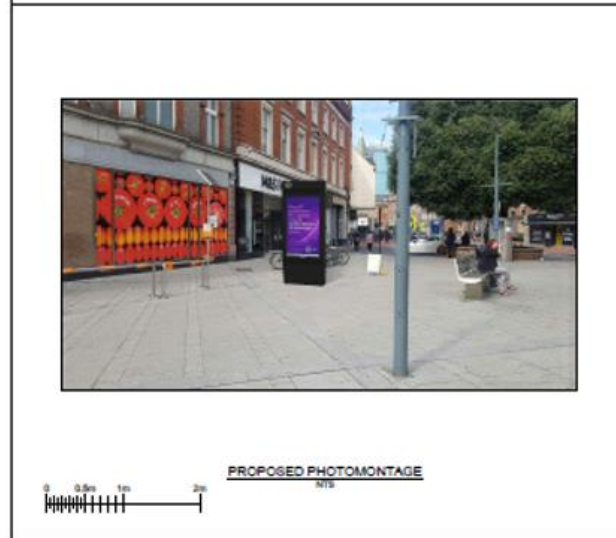
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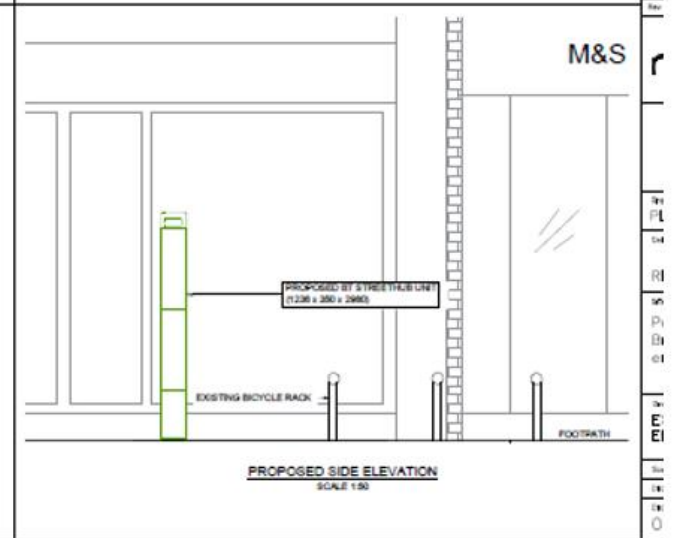
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PROPOSED PHOTOMONTAGE
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Site Photos -
General high street
photos of Broad
Street



COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 22 June 2022

Ward: Coley

Application No: 211416/FUL

Address: 4 Downshire Square, Reading

Proposal: Erection of 1 x detached and 2 x semi detached dwellings following demolition of the existing bungalow and detached garage.

Applicant: Finerain Developments Ltd

Application target decision date: Originally 21/10/21. An extension of time has been agreed until 22 September 2022.

RECOMMENDATION

Delegate to Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (AD PTPS) Head of Planning, Development 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 22nd September 2022 (unless officers on behalf of AD PTPS agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement). The legal agreement to secure the following

- a financial contribution of £149,600 towards affordable housing in the Borough in accordance with Policy H3 index-linked from the date of permission, to be paid prior to first occupation as per Affordable Housing SPD
- contract for redevelopment of the site to be agreed prior to demolition of the existing building.

Conditions to include:

1. Standard Time Limit
2. Approved Plans
3. Submission and approval of materials for external materials including: all brick, cladding, glazing, window frames/cills/surrounds/doors, guttering and boundary treatments (pre-commencement)
4. Construction Method Statement (to include no burning on site) (pre-commencement)
5. Vehicle parking (as specified)
6. Vehicle access details (as specified)
7. Access closure with reinstatement
8. Cycle parking details to be submitted (pre-commencement)
9. Refuse and recycling (as specified)
10. Details of Electric vehicle charging point to be submitted (prior to occupation)
11. Vegetation to be removed outside of the bird nesting season (compliance)
12. Details of biodiversity enhancements, to include integral bird and or bat boxes, tiles or bricks on and around the new buildings, and a native and wildlife friendly landscaping including mammal gaps to be submitted (pre-commencement)

13. Hard and soft landscaping details (to include boundary treatment details) to be submitted (pre-commencement)
14. Arboricultural Method Statement (as specified)
15. Removal of Permitted Development rights: Class A, B and E Part 1, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 Permitted Development Rights
16. Removal of Permitted Development Rights: no new openings
17. Obscurely glazed first and second floor windows north elevation of detached dwelling
18. Use of flat roof areas restricted (compliance)
19. Retention of railings (compliance)
20. SAP energy assessment Design Stage (pre-commencement)
21. SAP energy assessment As Built (prior to occupation)
22. Hours of construction (compliance)
23. Mix not to be altered (compliance)
24. Removal of Permitted Development Rights: no change of use to C4 HMO

Informatives to include:

1. Terms and conditions
2. Building Regulations
3. Complaints about construction and demolition
4. Encroachment
5. Access construction
6. Highways
7. Do not damage the verge
8. CIL
9. S106 agreement
10. No entitlement to parking permits
11. Pre-commencement conditions agreed by applicant
12. Positive and Proactive

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The site relates to a detached chalet bungalow located on the eastern side of Downshire Square. The property has a large (wide) rear garden and detached garage to the south east of the site. It is one of the widest plots in this part of Downshire Square.
- 1.2 The area is predominantly residential, featuring large detached and semi-detached properties although No.9 (opposite) is used as a care home and the Grade II listed All Saints Church is to the north at the top of the Downshire Square Road. There is a wide variety of design styles.
- 1.3 No.6 Downshire Square to the north is a detached 2 storey dwelling house with accommodation in the roof space. All Saints Court to the south consists of 2 buildings at 3 storey comprising 6 town house dwellings.

- 1.4 The site is within the Downshire Square Conservation Area. The Downshire Square Conservation Area appraisal describes the Conservation Area as a tightly-drawn, essentially Victorian/Edwardian suburb, containing a wide variety of house types with a spacious character.
- 1.5 The site is located within an Air Quality Management Area.
- 1.6 The application was called in to Planning Applications Committee for determination by ward Councillor Terry in light of neighbours' concern about the impact of the proposal on amenity and parking.
- 1.7 The site in relation to the wider urban area is shown below, together with a site photograph.

Site Location Plan (not to scale)



Site photographs - front of site



2. PROPOSALS

2.1 Full planning permission is sought for the erection of 1 x detached and 2 x semi detached dwellings following demolition of the existing bungalow and detached garage. This would comprise a square, 2.5 storey detached house with front gable to the north of the site and a pair of 2.5 storey townhouses to the south of the site. Small dormer windows are proposed on the rear roofslope of each dwelling as well as single storey rear additions.

2.2 The materials would include:

Plot 1

Plain tile roof

Red/orange brick

White render

Plots 2 and 3

Plain tile roof

Flemish bond brickwork, red/orange

2.3 Two vehicle parking spaces, to include electric vehicle charging points, are proposed per dwelling (six in total).

2.4 The proposals include indicative soft landscaping and replacement tree planting.

2.5 During the course of the application the vehicular parking arrangements and tree reports have been slightly revised following officer feedback. Some additional revisions have also been made to the proposals to include replacement of rooflights with small dormer windows, lowering of eaves height of the 2 x semi detached dwellings, replacement of glazed gable with a normal gable and a window and omission of front balconies.

2.6 Supporting documents/information submitted:

Proposed Site Plan 02-12 P5

Received 13th June 2022

Proposed Street Scene 05-20 P3
Received 22nd March 2022

Proposed Front Elevations 05-10 P3
Proposed Rear Elevations 05-11 P3
Proposed Side Elevations 05-12 P3
Proposed Sections 04-10 P3
Received 16th March 2022

Proposed Ground Floor Plan 03-10 P3
Proposed First Floor Plan 03-11 P3
Proposed Second Floor Plan 03-12 P3
Received 5th May 2022

Proposed Landscaping Plan 02-16 P5
Proposed Highway Plan 02-15 P5
Arboricultural Impact Assessment Rev A prepared by SJ Stephens Associates report
date 23rd May 2022
Received 25th May 2022

Location Plan 02-00
Design and Access and Heritage Statement ref 430b dated August 2021
Bat Roost Assessment prepared by Derek Finnie Associates
Received 26th August 2021

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 200571/FUL - Demolition of existing dwelling house and large detached garage and erection of new building comprising of 3 townhouses and 2 flats. The application was refused 17th July 2020 under delegated powers and dismissed at appeal 27th April 2021. The application was refused for the following reasons:
- 1) The proposed development, due to its overall scale relative to plot size would be overly prominent within its context and would fail to preserve the spacious character of the site which currently contributes positively to the visual amenity of the street. For these reasons, the proposed development would result in an overdevelopment of the site that would not respect the prevailing pattern of development and would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the street scene and wider Downshire Square Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy CC7, H11, EN1, EN3, and EN6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
 - 2) The proposed development, due to its detailed design and use of materials, combined with the overall scale, bulk and massing, would appear as an inappropriate and unsympathetic development that would not be of a sufficient high quality design that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area, nor the wider Downshire Square Conservation Area. This would therefore be contrary to Policies CC7, EN1, EN3, and EN6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

- 3) The proposed vehicular parking 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/reversing movements on Downshire Square, adversely affecting road safety and the flow of traffic, and in conflict with Policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
 - 4) The application, by virtue of the proposed driveway access, fails to demonstrate that the proposal will not result in the permanent loss of space for a street tree on the frontage, thereby reducing the number of potentially large canopied trees in the area which contribute to the verdant character of the Downshire Square Conservation Area and canopy cover of the Borough, contrary to Policies C7, EN3 and EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
 - 5) In the absence of sufficient information being submitted at application stage and in the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure a resultant acceptable contribution towards the provision of Affordable Housing, the proposal fails to contribute adequately to the housing needs of Reading Borough, contrary to Policy H3 and CC9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the Council's Adopted Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2013.
- 3.2 191358/FUL - Erection of new building comprising 9 flats following demolition of existing bungalow and detached garage. Refused.

4. CONSULTATIONS

i) Conservation and Urban Design Officer (CUDO)

4.1 No objection received.

ii) RBC Transport

4.2 Further to revised information, no objection subject to conditions to include submission and approval of a construction method statement, cycle parking details and electric vehicle charging point details as detailed with the appraisal section of this report.

iii) RBC Environmental Health - Environmental Protection (EP)

4.3 No objection, subject to conditions to include submission and approval of a construction method statement including details of noise and dust controls, vermin control measures for the bin store, adherence to standard construction working hours and to ensure no waste is burned on site.

iv) Natural environment (trees)

4.4 Further to revised information, no objection, subject to a condition to secure submission and approval of a scheme of hard and soft landscaping, as detailed within the appraisal section of this report.

v) **Natural environment (ecology)**

4.5 No objection, subject to conditions to secure submission of a scheme for the installation of four swift boxes within the proposed development.

v) **Public consultation**

4.6 Notification letters were sent to nearby occupiers on Downshire Square, Brownlow Road, All Saints Court and Maitland Road. A site notice was displayed and a press notice was published.

4.7 8 letters of representation received (including 1 instance of 2 responses being received from separate occupiers of the same address) objecting with the following concerns:

- overdevelopment of the site
- not in keeping with character of area/conservation area
- loss of bungalow itself
- loss of light and privacy
- increased traffic and parking
- loss of wildlife
- covenant on site

4.8 Upon receipt of revised plans, a further 14-day re-consultation period was undertaken with the same neighbouring properties and consultees. 10 letters of representation received (including 2 instances of 2 responses being received from separate occupiers of the same address) objecting but with no new concerns that had not previously been raised.

The Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) have also commented on the application and object for the following reasons:

- loss of bungalow would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area
- possible historic associations with a notable family of Reading business people
- street elevation railings should be retained
- overdevelopment of the site, reducing amenity for neighbours and future occupiers
- discordant elements introduced: first floor balconies, glazed gable on detached property
- parking arrangements will result in noise and pollution
- better design solution would be to retain and extend existing bungalow

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 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 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 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

5.4 The relevant sections of the NPPF are:

Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development
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 15 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
Section 16 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

5.5 Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
CC7: Design and the Public Realm
CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas
EN6: New Development in a Historic Environment
EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland
EN15: Air Quality
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
H1: Provision of Housing
H2: Density and Mix
H3: Affordable Housing
H5: Standards for New Housing

H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

5.6 Supplementary Planning Documents

Affordable Housing SPD (2021)

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)

Revised SPD on Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)

5.7 Other relevant guidance

Downshire Square Conservation Area Appraisal (2009)

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)

Reading Tree Strategy (2021)

Biodiversity Action Plan (2021)

National Design Guide: Planning practice for beautiful, enduring and successful places (2019)

6. APPRAISAL

6.1 The main issues are considered to be:

- Principle of development and land use considerations
- Demolition, scale, appearance, design and effect on heritage assets
- Natural Environment matters - Trees, landscaping and ecology
Residential amenity for nearby occupiers
- Quality of accommodation for future occupiers
- Transport/parking matters
- Natural Environment matters - Trees, landscaping and ecology
- Sustainability
- Affordable Housing, S106

Principle of development and land use considerations

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.

6.3 Therefore, it is clear that 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 Council's LDF Policy H11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens) makes clear that new residential development that involves land within the curtilage of private residential gardens will be acceptable where:

- 1) It makes a positive contribution to the character of the area;
- 2) The site is of an adequate size to accommodate the development;
- 3) The proposal has a suitable access;
- 4) The proposal would not lead to an unacceptable tandem development;
- 5) The design minimises the exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas;
- 6) It does not cause detrimental impact on residential amenities;
- 7) The emphasis is on the provision of family housing;
- 8) There is no adverse impact on biodiversity, and
- 9) The proposal does not prejudice the development of a wider area.

6.5 Therefore, while the proposed site is not 'previously developed land', the principle of redevelopment is considered acceptable providing the criteria outlined in Policies H11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens) and H2 (Density and Mix) are met.

6.6 With regard to the principle of the proposed use, from purely a land use perspective, a proposal to introduce three residential units in this sustainable location would comply with the broad objectives of Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) by contributing towards meeting the housing needs within the borough. Furthermore, in terms of the housing mix (size of units), the principle of providing family sized accommodation is welcomed. A compliance condition is recommended to secure the mix proposed to ensure that the proposed development provides the range of housing opportunities required by Policy H2.

Demolition, scale, appearance, design and effect on heritage assets

6.7 Policies CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) and H11 (Development of Private and Residential Gardens) both seek to ensure that new development enhances and preserves the local character.

6.8 The site lies within the Downshire Square 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.

6.9 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. Policy EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas) seeks that development proposals preserve and enhance the special character of conservation areas.

- 6.10 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.
- 6.11 The Downshire Square Conservation Area appraisal describes the Conservation Area as a tightly-drawn, essentially Victorian/Edwardian suburb, containing a wide variety of house types and architectural styles. It further notes that properties within the core of the area front streets of some width (reflecting their formal planned layout), with street trees adding character and a spacious feel to the area. The Conservation Area appraisal also notes how properties are set back from the back edge of the pavement, contributing to spacious character.
- 6.12 The site is a sizeable plot, with a broad frontage along Downshire Square and, as noted above, it is one of the wider plots in the Downshire Square Conservation Area. It is acknowledged that, as existing, No.4 Downshire Square is somewhat of an anomaly within the street scene, being the only bungalow within the immediate area. It is noted that the Inspector for the 200571 appeal which was dismissed, did not raise any objection to the loss of the bungalow itself. That said, its diminutive scale is unobtrusive within the street scene and the bungalow does not detract from the character of the area. Demolition within the conservation area is therefore considered appropriate subject to the proposed replacement buildings(s) being suitable in design and related terms, as discussed below.
- 6.13 Further to the above, this permission includes the demolition of an unlisted building in the conservation area. However, officers are concerned that demolition of the bungalow without subsequent rebuilding would leave an unsightly gap within the conservation area. As such, a clause within the s106 agreement will require a contract for the redevelopment to have been entered in to and agreed with the local planning authority prior to demolition, to secure the rebuilding of the proposal within this report. The aim of this would be to reduce the risk of an unsightly gap being left within the street for any significant length of time prior to redevelopment.
- 6.14 Refused application 200571 was for 5 flats contained within a three storey building occupying nearly the full of the width of the plot. The building was substantially wider and deeper than its immediate neighbours and sited a substantial amount of built form towards the front of the site. It also involved significant projection of built form forward of All Saints Court to the south. Overall, the proposed building was considered to result in a visually jarring and unacceptably prominent feature that would appear cramped and overdeveloped within the site constraints.
- 6.15 The current scheme is for 3 dwellings comprising two buildings - a detached house and pair of semis. Both buildings would have a lower height than previously proposed and with greater gaps to the side boundaries - as well as a gap between

the two proposed buildings themselves. The scale and layout now proposed has been improved to reflect the prevailing spacing of buildings within the wider conservation area and would preserve the sense of spaciousness which characterises the area and which was a concern previously.



Layout refused/dismissed, ref: 200571



Current proposed layout

- 6.16 The proposed detached house would be no higher than No.6 Downshire Square to the north and the proposed semi detached pair would be no higher than All Saints Court to the south. The third storey is largely contained within the roof space with the eaves line broadly reflecting that of neighbouring buildings either side. When seen from all nearby vantage points the proposed size of the buildings would fit comfortably within the prevailing scale of the street. The areas of soft landscaping and tree planting within the development would provide a spacious feel in keeping with the character of the area. However, officers also acknowledge and consider that the proposed scale and layout is at the maximum permissible at the site, and any larger would start to impact negatively in character terms.

- 6.17 In terms of the detailed design of the proposals, appearance and choice of materials, the applicant has intentionally selected elements from nearby buildings within the design such as the brickwork and gable features and it is considered that the appearance would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the conservation area. The rhythm of the street scene would be maintained, with, as above, design cues taken from nearby properties, including the size and positioning of windows and doors as well as unobtrusive rear dormer windows and small scale single storey elements.

- 6.18 The success of the scheme will also be dependent on the quality and finishing materials. As such, it is considered necessary to secure a condition for samples of all facing materials to be submitted/approved prior to commencement of works to ensure high quality finishes are to be used.



Front elevation refused ref 200571



Current proposed front elevation

6.19 The proposals seek to retain the original railings at the front of the site, the preservation of which is welcomed and appropriate and will be secured via condition. The proposed brick boundary wall and railings would be in keeping with the wider area.

6.20 The overall design approach is considered to be suitable and appropriate within the context of the street scene and wider conservation area. The proposals are considered to have overcome the reasons for dismissal of the appeal for the previous application (ref. 200571) in design and heritage terms. The proposals are considered to accord with Policies CC7, EN1, EN3, EN6 and H10.

Natural Environment - trees, landscaping and ecology

6.21 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks that development is of high design quality and maintains and enhances the character of the area in which it is located including landscaping. Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands) requires new development to make provision for tree retention and planting. Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and The Green Network) requires that new development should provide a net gain for biodiversity where possible and should incorporate biodiversity features into proposals where practical.

6.22 Since application 200571 was dismissed at appeal, a new street tree (lime) has been planted and the proposed design and site layout includes the retention of this street tree. This tree will grow to positively contribute to the character of the street and wider conservation area its retention is welcomed and appropriate.

6.23 An indicative landscaping plan has been provided which includes provision of 8 new trees, an overall net gain of trees on the site, which is appropriate. The proposal also includes landscaped garden areas and soft landscaping along the frontage. The Council's Natural Environment Officer has confirmed that the new trees, given their location and spacing provided, will have the potential to grow to medium sized crowns, which will improve the street scene and the canopy cover in the area. A pre-commencement landscaping condition is recommended which will secure planting details to include the species, maintenance and management schedule.

6.24 The Council's Natural Environment Officer has confirmed that the information provided demonstrates that the development could be carried out without harm to retained trees and such measures will be secured by way of condition.

6.25 A bat survey report has been submitted with the application and the Council's Ecologist considers that this has been undertaken to an appropriate standard. The

report concludes that the risk of the proposal adversely affecting bats is minimal as the building is unlikely to host roosting bats and this conclusion is agreed with by the Council's Ecologist.

- 6.26 In accordance with paragraph 180 of the NPPF, which states that "*opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged*", a condition is recommended to ensure that enhancements for wildlife are provided within the new development. This will include bird and bat boxes on the proposed buildings and it will also be appropriate to ensure that mammal gaps around the boundary are provided and this will also be secured by way of condition.
- 6.27 In natural environment terms, it is considered that landscaping and biodiversity enhancements will be significant and will serve to preserve the spacious and well-treed character of the conservation area as well as improving the ecology of the site. As such, the proposals are acceptable on tree/landscape and ecological grounds and it is considered that the previous reason for refusal has been overcome and the proposals are compliance with Policies CC7, EN12 and EN14.

Amenity for nearby occupiers

- 6.28 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) requires developments to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing properties in terms of: Privacy and overlooking; Access to sunlight and daylight; Visual dominance and overbearing; Harm to outlook; Noise and disturbance; Artificial lighting; Vibration; Dust and fumes; Smell; and Crime and safety.
- 6.29 In respect of visual dominance, outlook and overbearing matters, it is acknowledged that for existing nearby occupiers, the context will undoubtedly change as a result of the proposed development.
- 6.30 In relation to No.6 Downshire Square, to the north west of the site, the proposed building would not project forward of this property. Whilst it would project past the rear elevation of No.6 this would be for a modest depth at two storey - and would not breach a 45 degree line to the nearest habitable rear window of No.6. The flat roof of the single storey rear element would help to minimise the impact and given the distance of approximately 1.4m to the common boundary, this is not considered to result in any significant material overbearing effects to the occupiers of this property. There are two upper floor windows on the flank elevation of No.6. The first floor window is a secondary bedroom window with an alternative source of light and the second floor window serves a bedroom within the roof accommodation. Given the position of the proposed building which would be set back within the plot relative to this window, the neighbouring window in question would look across the roof slope and would retain reasonable views of the sky and retain reasonable levels suitable daylight. Whilst clearly visible it is not considered to result in any significant material loss of light or overbearing effects such to warrant a refusal on this basis. The proposed windows on the north west flank elevation to serve a staircase are shown on the plans to be obscurely glazed, which will be secured by way of a suitably worded condition to prevent any material loss of privacy.

- 6.31 In relation to All Saints Court, to the south east of the site, the proposed houses would not project past either the front or rear building line and would not breach a 45 degree line to the nearest habitable room window. The roof would be hipped away from the boundary to minimise the impact and given this and the distance of approximately 2.5m between the two buildings, whilst visible it is not considered to result in any materially harmful overbearing effects. There are two upper floor windows on the flank elevation of All Saints Court. Both these windows serve a stairwell. The proposed windows on the south east flank elevation of the southern townhouse are shown on the plans to be obscurely glazed, which will be secured by way of a suitably worded condition to prevent any material loss of privacy.
- 6.32 In relation to the properties to the rear of the site (8, 10 and 12 Downshire Square), the increase in building size from the single storey bungalow to a two and half storey building will make a change to the outlook for these existing properties. However, with the back-to-back distance of approximately 22m from the rear of the proposed building to the rear of these properties this is not going to result in any material loss of light or have an overbearing impact. Similarly, given the aforementioned distance between buildings - which is greater than the 20m back-to-back distance recommended in Policy CC8 - the proposals are not considered to result in any significant material loss of privacy - and, indeed, would be a similar relationship as that between the adjacent properties to No.4 and the dwellings to the rear of them.
- 6.33 It is noted that adverse impact on neighbouring amenity did not form a reason for refusal of application 200571 and nor did the Inspector raise any concern in this respect.
- 6.34 In terms of noise, vibrations, dust and fume considerations, it is considered that both during the construction phase, and subsequently, the proposals will be acceptable subject to a variety of conditions for any permission. A construction method statement will therefore be secured via condition and is required from a highway safety perspective too. Officers consider that no significantly harmful amenity impacts would occur, subject to conditions and in compliance with Policy CC8 in particular.

Quality of accommodation for future occupiers

- 6.35 Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) seeks that all new build housing is built to high standards. Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) seeks to protect future occupiers from the impacts of pollution and Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) seeks that residential developments are provided with adequate private or communal outdoor amenity space.
- 6.36 It is considered that the proposals will provide an overall good standard of accommodation throughout with fairly regular shaped rooms providing suitable outlook, natural lighting and ventilation. Internally, the floor spaces will largely comply with the space standards as set out in Policy H5. Whilst the actual useable floorspace of bedrooms 1 (as annotated) to the semi detached dwellings may fall

minimally below the space standards, given these are fourth bedrooms this is not considered to be unacceptable and it is considered that the dwellings will still provide for an adequate standard of accommodation for future occupiers.

- 6.37 There will be no upper floor windows on the flank elevations of the buildings facing each other and this will be secured by way of a suitably worded condition so as not to result in any material loss of privacy.
- 6.38 Each dwelling will have its own garden, made up of both patio and garden area. Whilst smaller than some of the garden sizes in the area, they would, overall, not be too dissimilar in size (in terms of depth or width) to the garden sizes of All Saints Court to the south east and so would not be out of character with the immediate area. The gardens areas considered to be well designed with space for suitable sitting-out areas and associated functions and in this context it is considered that although the gardens will not be as expansive as those to the north and east this, this in itself is not considered to be sufficient grounds to resist the proposals. The plans also include conveniently located cycle and waste storage facilities.
- 6.39 It is noted that the amount of garden space did not form a reason for refusal of application 200571 and nor did the Inspector raise any concern in this respect.
- 6.40 In order to help ensure future residents maintain sufficient amenity space (and to protect neighbouring amenity) and to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area, it is proposed to remove Permitted Development (PD) rights in relation to Class A (enlargement improvement or alteration), B (roof additions), Class C (rooflights) and Class E (outbuildings).
- 6.41 Therefore, the proposal is considered to provide an overall suitable standard of accommodation, within the context of the constraints of the site and in accordance with Policies H5 and H10 in particular.

Transport/parking matters

- 6.42 Policies TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy), TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development.
- 6.43 The site is located within Zone 2, Primary Core Area of the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. This zone directly surrounds the Central Core Area of the borough and extends to walking distances of 2 kilometres from the centre of Reading. Typically, this zone is well served by public transport, with buses continuing either into or out of the Central Core Area via this zone. The site is in a sustainable location close to a number of bus routes.
- 6.44 In accordance with the SPD, the development is required to provide 2 parking spaces for each dwelling. The proposals will provide 2 parking spaces for each dwelling, which will also include an electric vehicle charging point for each dwelling as required by Policy TR5 which is acceptable.

- 6.45 Some initial concerns were raised in relation to the suitability of the parking area from a manoeuvrability perspective (possible instances of there being insufficient widths/depths, causing difficulties for access and egress). Accordingly, during the course of the application, tracking diagrams have been submitted to illustrate the ability to access and egress the parking spaces, and this is now considered acceptable.
- 6.46 A plan demonstrating visibility splays was also provided during the course of the application, given the proposed new access. The Council's Transport Officer is satisfied that the required visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m can be achieved. The proposals also demonstrate an acceptable width of the access (minimum 4.2m wide) to allow vehicles to pass one another whilst entering and exiting the site.
- 6.47 The development is required to provide 2 cycle parking spaces per dwelling. Cycle storage for each dwelling has been shown on the proposed block plan and further details regarding the design and specification will be secured via condition.
- 6.48 Two central bin collection points adjacent to the access point are provided which will allow for kerb side collection which is acceptable.
- 6.49 The local concern raised in respect of parking demand is noted. However, as above, the proposals provide an acceptable level of parking for the proposed units within the site when assessed against policy and SPD and therefore there is no policy reason to expect parking to spill over on to the public highway. Downshire Square itself is not within a controlled parking zone. Streets beyond are controlled in this way and an informative will be attached to any permission advising future occupants of the new dwellings that they will not be automatically entitled to a residents or visitors parking permit.
- 6.50 Officers advise that there are no transport objections to the proposed development subject to conditions and informatives and the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies TR1, TR3 and TR5 and the SPD.

Sustainability

- 6.51 No specific information has been submitted in relation to the sustainability of the proposed development. However, the proposals include electric vehicle charging points for each dwelling and additional tree planting which is welcomed
- 6.52 Notwithstanding, Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) requires that all new build housing integrate additional measures for sustainability. In light of this conditions are recommended to ensure the development meets the following requirements:
- Higher water efficiency standards of 110 litres per person per day; and
 - A 19% improvement over building regulations energy requirements

- 6.53 Although secured by planning condition, these new requirements will be controlled through the Building Regulations. Confirmation of compliance will need to be submitted to the LPA to discharge the condition.

Affordable Housing, S106

- 6.54 Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) 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'*.
- 6.55 The proposal seeks to create 2 additional units (1 of the 3 proposed units would be classified as a replacement dwelling for the existing bungalow, leaving a requirement for a contribution of a net increase of 2 residential units at the site).
- 6.56 The applicant has provided details of three independent valuations of overall Gross Development Value (GDV) of the proposed development and based on these and using the calculation within the Affordable Housing SPD, the Affordable Housing contribution figure will be £149,600.00 as a financial contribution which will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the borough in accordance with policy requirements. This will be secured via S106 Legal Agreement.
- 6.57 As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in relation to Policy H3 and the Council's adopted Affordable Housing SPD 2021 subject to the completion of a S106 Legal Agreement to secure the contribution.

Other matters

CIL

- 6.59 The proposal will be a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liable development. The applicant has provided the CIL Additional Information Form. Based on the information provided by the applicant and the 2022 CIL rate, this is estimated to amount to £42,731.64 (537m² of the proposals - 263.m² (bungalow and garage to be demolished) x £120 per m² x 2022 indexation (£156.24)). An informative will be attached to the decision notice to advise the applicant of their responsibilities in this respect.

Other matters raised in representations (not covered above)

- 6.59 All material considerations discussed in the above report. Responses to other matters raised in neighbour representation (officer comment in bold and italic):
- 6.60 Concern that there is a covenant on the site that restricts development. ***Any restrictive covenants are not a material planning consideration.***
- 6.61 Concern that the properties will become Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). ***The proposal is for Class C3 residential units (no indication of HMOs being proposed). If permission was granted and material changes were made to the scheme the applicants would need to apply for permission to these changes; these would then be assessed on their own merits. It is also recommended that***

Permitted Development right to change to Class C4 HMO are removed on the basis that the application is specifically for Class C3 and compliance with the criteria and design requirements for HMOS set out under Policy H8 (Residential Conversions) has not been demonstrated.

- 6.62 Concern raised about flooding. *The site is not in an area identified as being at risk of flooding and the proposal is not considered to represent an unacceptable flood risk to future occupiers.*

Pre-Commencement Conditions

- 6.63 Pre-commencement conditions - In line with section 100ZA(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act (as amended) discussions are being undertaken with the applicant regarding pre-commencement conditions. To be advised in an update report.
- 6.64 Equality - In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular application.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This proposal has been considered in the context of the previous appeal dismissal on the site and the relevant Development Plan Policies, National Policy and Guidance and other material considerations as set out within the report. The proposal is considered to be well-designed and would preserve the character and appearance of the Downshire Square Conservation Area. Matters to do with residential amenity, parking and the natural environment are satisfactorily addressed in the above report. Furthermore, the proposals would provide a suitable provision towards meeting the needs for affordable housing in the Borough.
- 7.2 Officers have worked positively and proactively with the applicant on this scheme, with amendments secured which are considered to satisfactorily address various design issues and overall officers considered this to be a supportable scheme, which accords with relevant and national policy. The recommendation is therefore to grant full planning permission subject to the conditions and the completion of a S106 legal agreement as detailed above.

Case Officer: Ethne Humphreys

Drawings:



Proposed Site Plan



Finishes Plot 1 1. Blue tile roof 2. Light grey brickwork 3. Dark grey window frames 4. White render 5. Red stone walls	Plot 2 & 3 1. Flax tile roof 2. Terracotta brickwork 3. White render 4. Flax tile roof with terracotta tiles 5. Red stone walls 6. Brickwork & render	colony RIBA 430002-16 PS Ma 22 Planning 130a A3 St JB 0115 950 0000 www.colonyarchitects.com	RIBA Chartered Practitioner Colony Architects Ltd. The White House, Ramsey Court, 144 Oldfield Lane, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1JH 0206 250 0000 www.colonyarchitects.com
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Proposed Front Elevations



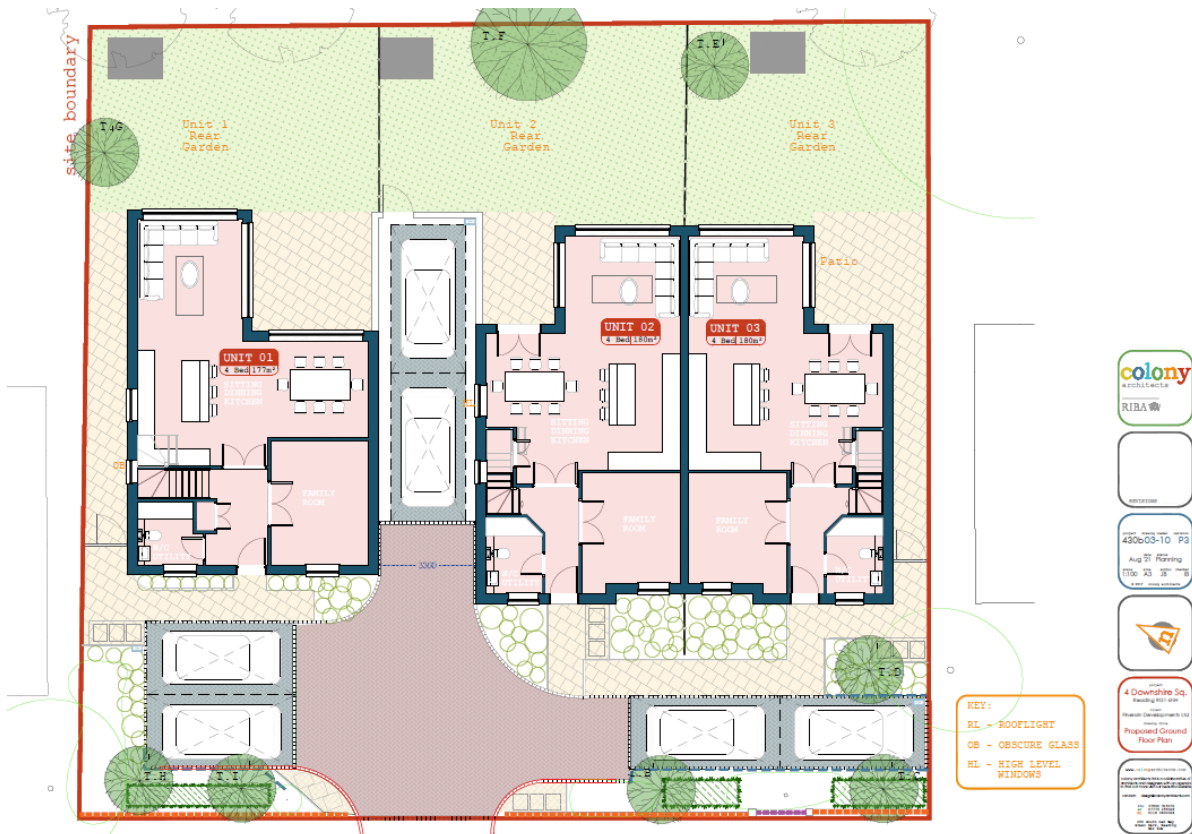
			Project: 2, Church Lane, 201, Reading RG1 1AA	
Collaborating with: Flinstra Developments Ltd			Drawing Name: Rear Elevation As Proposed	
Job: 430b	Drawing: 05-11	Revision: P3	Date: 09/2020	Status: Finalising
Drawn By: JF			Checked By: JS	Colony Architects Ltd, The Old Mill, Abbey Court, Tisbury, Wiltshire, SP13 5JF Tel: 01249 860 006 www.colonyarchitects.com info@colonyarchitects.com

Proposed Rear Elevations

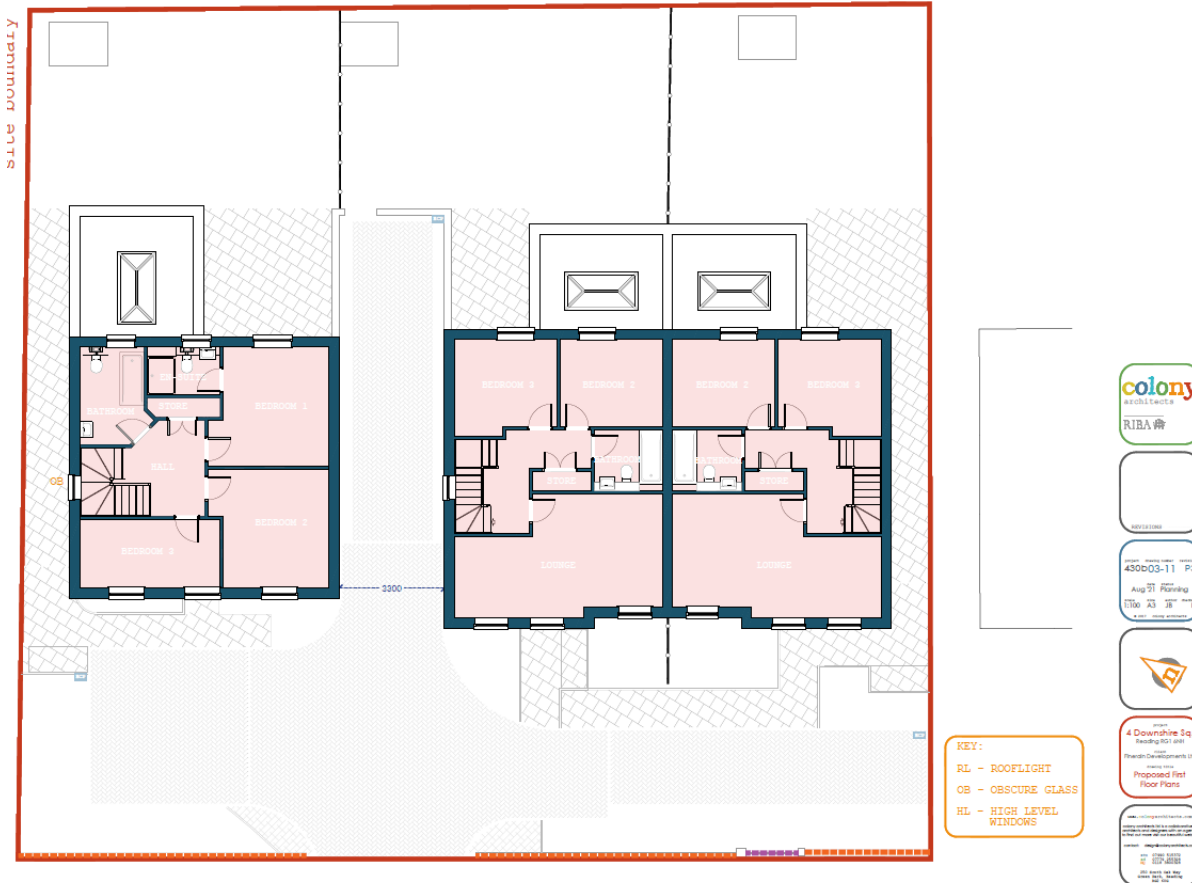


			Project: 2, Church Lane, 201, Reading RG1 1AA	
Collaborating with: Flinstra Developments Ltd			Drawing Name: Rear Elevation As Proposed	
Job: 430b	Drawing: 05-20	Revision: P3	Date: 08/2020	Status: Finalising
Drawn By: JF			Checked By: JS	Colony Architects Ltd, The Old Mill, Abbey Court, Tisbury, Wiltshire, SP13 5JF Tel: 01249 860 006 www.colonyarchitects.com info@colonyarchitects.com

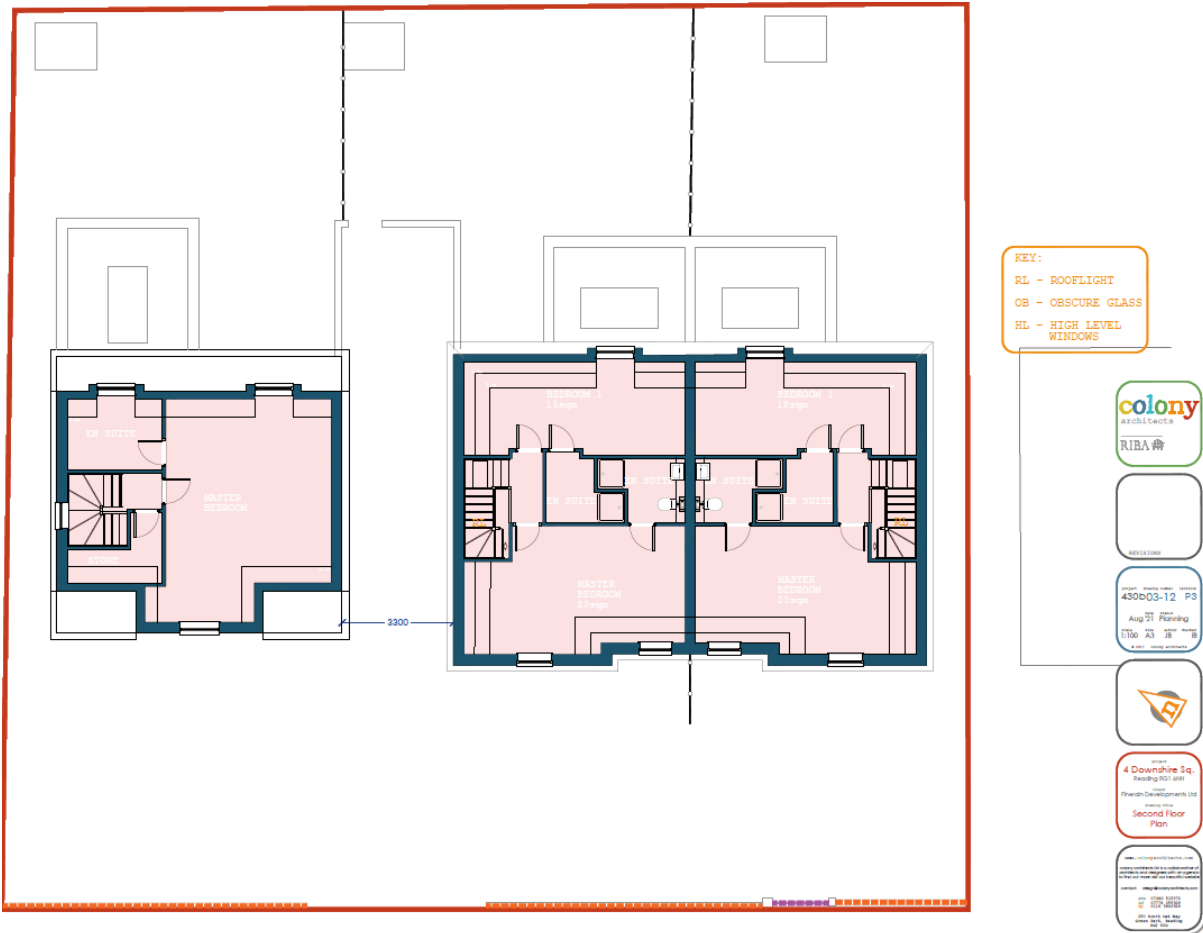
Proposed Street Scene



Proposed Ground Floor Plan



Proposed First floor Plan



Proposed Second Floor Plan

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