

To: Councillor Lovelock (Chair)  
Councillors Yeo, Cresswell, Davies,  
Emberson, Ennis, Gavin, Goss, Hornsby-  
Smith, Leng, Moore, Robinson, Rowland  
and Williams

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28 November 2023

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

**NOTICE OF MEETING - PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE 6 DECEMBER 2023**

A meeting of the Planning Applications Committee will be held on Wednesday, 6 December 2023 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
<b><u>KEY TO CODING</u></b>			
1. MINUTES	-		9 - 16
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	-		
3. QUESTIONS	-		
4. POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS	Decision	BOROUGHWIDE	17 - 20
5. PLANNING APPEALS	Information	BOROUGHWIDE	21 - 26
6. APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL	Information	BOROUGHWIDE	27 - 32
7. OBJECTION TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER 5/23 RELATING TO 65-83 GROVE ROAD, EMMER GREEN	Decision	CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS	33 - 40
8. LOCAL LISTING - THE RESTORATION PUBLIC HOUSE	Decision	KENTWOOD	41 - 54

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED**

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9.	231464/FUL - UNITS 49, 50 & 52, BROAD STREET MALL	Decision	ABBEY	55 - 70
	<b>Proposal</b>	Amalgamation of units 49- 50 and 52, change of use from Use Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) to sui generis use (family entertainment centre) and external alterations on Queens walk frontage.		
	<b>Recommendation</b>	Application Permitted		
10.	221880/FUL & 221881/LBC - 23-24 MARKET PLACE	Decision	ABBEY	71 - 104
	<b>Proposal</b>	221881/LBC - Internal and external alterations including new ventilation outlets to rear elevation associated with proposed change of use of first, second and third floors from Class E to 5 lats (C3 use) under planning application ref. 221880 221880/FUL - Change of use of first, second and third floors from Class E to 4 x 1 bed flats and 1 x 2 bed flats (C3 use)		
	<b>Recommendation</b>	221881/LBC - Application Permitted 221880/FUL - Permitted subject to Legal Agreement		
11.	221345/OUT - CURZON CLUB, 362 OXFORD ROAD	Decision	BATTLE	105 - 124
	<b>Proposal</b>	Outline Applicaiton for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of a building of up to five storeys containing 30 flats, ground floor retail space and associated parking, with landscaping reserved.		
	<b>Recommendation</b>	Application Permitted		
12.	230613/REG3 - AMETHYST LANE	Decision	SOUTHCOTE	125 - 144



**Proposal** Demolition and redevelopment of the Site at Amethyst Lane to deliver a new respite care facility alongside 17 new houses, soft and hard landscaping, parking and ancillary works

**Recommendation** Permitted subject to Legal Agreement

13. 230612/REG3 - DWYER ROAD Decision SOUTHCOTE 145 - 168

**Proposal** Redevelopment of the Site at Dwyer Road to deliver 30 new dwellings, alongside new access, soft and hard landscaping, parking and ancillary works

**Recommendation** Permitted subject to Legal Agreement

14. 230953/FUL - UNITS 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11 BRUNEL RETAIL PARK, ROSE KILN LANE Decision WHITLEY 169 - 198

**Proposal** Amalgamation and change of use of Units 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 from Class E to Class B8; installation of mezzanine floorspace; associated external works including reconfiguration of car park and cycle parking and landscaping works.

**Recommendation** Application Permitted

15. 231581/ADJ - TOB1, EARLEY GATE, WHITEKNIGHTS CAMPUS, UNIVERSITY OF READING Decision OUT OF BOROUGH 199 - 200

**Proposal** Full planning application for the erection of the headquarters building of European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECWMF) with access parking and landscaping, following demolition of existing buildings.

**Recommendation** Observations sent

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# GUIDE TO PLANNING APPLICATIONS Agenda Annex

1. There are many different types of applications processed by the Planning Service and the following codes are used to abbreviate the more common types of permission sought:
  - FUL - Full detailed planning permission for development or change of use
  - OUT - Principal of developing a site or changing a use
  - REM - Detailed matters “reserved matters” - for permission following approval of an outline planning application.
  - HOU - Applications for works to domestic houses
  - ADV - Advertisement consent
  - APC - Approval of details required by planning conditions
  - VAR - Significant change to a planning permission previously granted
  - NMA - Insignificant change to a planning permission previously granted
  - ADJ - Consultation from neighbouring authority on application in their area
  - LBC - Works to or around a Listed Building
  - CLE - A certificate to confirm what the existing use of a property is
  - CLP - A certificate to confirm that a proposed use or development does not require planning permission to be applied for.
  - REG3 - Indicates that the application has been submitted by the Local Authority.

2. Officer reports often refer to a matter or situation as being “a material consideration”. The following list tries to explain what these might include:

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

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

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

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

# Glossary of usual terms

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

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

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

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

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

**Brownfield Land** - previously developed land.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Competent Authority** - The Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1999 (COMAH) and their amendments 2005, are the enforcing regulations within the United Kingdom. They are applicable to any establishment storing or otherwise handling large quantities of industrial chemicals of a hazardous nature. Types of establishments include chemical warehousing, chemical production facilities and some distributors.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Guide to changes to the Use Classes Order in England.

Changes of use within the same class are not development.

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

**Present:** Councillor Lovelock (Chair);  
Councillors Yeo (Vice-Chair), Cresswell, Davies, Emberson, Ennis, Gavin, Goss, Hornsby-Smith, Leng, Moore, Robinson, Rowland and Williams

### RESOLVED ITEMS

#### 48. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### 49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Emberson declared an interest in Item 61 on the grounds of predetermination as she was Lead Councillor for Housing.

Councillor Ennis declared an interest in Item 61 on the grounds of predetermination as he had been Lead Councillor for Adult Social Care.

#### 50. POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS

The Committee considered a report setting out a schedule of applications to be considered at future meetings of the Committee to enable Councillors to decide which sites, if any, they wished to visit prior to determining the relevant applications. The report also listed previously agreed site visits which were yet to take place.

It was reported at the meeting that the previously agreed accompanied site visits to Amethyst Lane and Dwyer Road would be held on 30 November 2023.

#### Resolved -

That the following application be the subject of an accompanied site visit:

#### **231495/REG3 – CIVIC OFFICES, BRIDGE STREET**

Proposals to extend the Reading Borough Council Offices on Bridge Street to enable the accommodation of the relocated Reading Central Library function, currently on Kings Road, Reading, and provide an enhanced Customer Services reception. Site is currently use class E, proposal to co-locate with library – use class F1.

#### 51. PLANNING APPEALS

The Committee received a report on notifications received from the Planning Inspectorate on planning appeals registered with them or decisions made and providing summary reports on appeal decisions of interest to the Committee.

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 1 NOVEMBER 2023

Appendix 1 to the report set out details of four new appeals lodged since the last Committee. There were no listed appeals decided in Appendix 2 and no reports on appeal decisions in Appendix 3.

**Resolved** – That the new appeals, as set out in Appendix 1, be noted.

### 52. APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL

The Committee received a report on the types of development that could be submitted for Prior Approval and providing a summary of 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. Table 1 set out two prior approval applications received, and Table 2 set out three applications for prior approval decided, between 26 September and 19 October 2023.

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

### 53. SECOND QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT - PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL

The Committee received a report on the work and performance of the Planning Development Management team and Building Control team for the second quarter of 2023/2024 (July to September 2023) with comparison to previous years.

It was reported at the meeting that the performance figures in Table 1A for Quarter 2 that had been marked to be advised at the time of writing the report were 100% for Major, 83% for Minor, 88% for Others (including householders) and 87% overall.

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

### 54. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT - PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

The Committee received a report on the work and performance of the Planning Enforcement team for the first six months of 2023/2024 (April to September 2023). The report had appended the Planning Enforcement Plan at Appendix 1 and examples of enforcement cases that officers were currently investigating at Appendix 2. The Committee considered Appendix 2 at the end of the meeting after excluding the press and public.

**Resolved** -

- (1) That, pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of Appendix 2 as it was likely that there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to that Act;
- (2) That the report be noted.



(Exempt information for Appendix 2 as defined in Paragraph 6)

**55. STREET NAME ASSIGNMENT AT FORMER READING GOLF CLUB, KIDMORE END ROAD, EMMER GREEN**

In accordance with Section 100B (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair had agreed that this item be considered as a matter of urgency, on the grounds that there were serious repercussions for the developer should the naming of the streets be further delayed to the December Planning Applications Committee.

Further to Minute 40 of the previous meeting, the Committee considered a report which explained that at the 4 October 2023 meeting it had been decided that Councillors would be invited to make alternative nominations to the list presented at that meeting for the naming of streets at the former Reading Golf Course site located at Emmer Green, off Kidmore End Road, for officers to check these for acceptability. The final selected names, following consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, the Lead Councillors for Planning & Assets and for Climate Strategy & Transport and Ward Councillors, would then come back to the Committee to be agreed.

A plan of the site detailing the road layout was attached in Appendix 1. Nine names were needed for streets in the development. Three names had been agreed at the previous meeting (The Fairway, Fox Crescent and Barnes Road) and six additional names were required. The list of nominations received from Councillors was attached at Appendix 2, with 11 names in the first half of the list (A) which had been checked and met the recommended guidance in the GeoPlace Data Entry Conventions and Best Practice for Addresses. The eight names in the second half (B) were names that did not meet the guidance, mostly for duplicating street names found elsewhere in the Borough.

In order to meet the Service Level Agreement arrangements with the developer, the report sought agreement that the approval of the final names should be delegated to the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, the Lead Councillor for Planning & Assets and the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy & Transport and Ward Councillors, without the need to come back to the Committee.

**Resolved –**

That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, the Lead Councillor for Planning & Assets and the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy & Transport and Ward Councillors, be authorised to approve six further new names in addition to the three street names agreed at the Committee meeting on 4 October 2023 for the former Reading Golf Course site, without the need to come back to the Committee.

**56. 201104/FUL - 10 EATON PLACE**

Demolition of the existing building and redevelopment of the site to provide a residential building of up to 5 storeys (Use Class C3) and associated public realm improvements.

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 1 NOVEMBER 2023

The Committee considered a report on the above application.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Objector Steven Stanton and the applicant's agent Tasha Bullen attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

### **Resolved –**

That application 201104/FUL be refused planning permission for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development by reason of its design, layout and proximity to the adjacent The Butler public house would result in an unacceptable degree of noise and disturbance to future occupiers arising from the public house use with consequent harm to their amenity. Furthermore, the proposal would result in overbearing effects and loss of privacy to the adjacent public house and would be likely to result in unreasonable noise restrictions being placed on the adjacent public house use. As such the proposal is contrary to Policies CR6, CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and para 187 of the NPPF 2023.
2. The proposed development, by reason of its excessive scale, cramped layout and unsympathetic arrangement in relation to the adjacent Grade II listed The Butler public house, would fail to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area within which it is located, would harm the setting of the neighbouring listed building and would not represent a comprehensive approach to the development of the sub area. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policies CR2, CR12, CC7 and EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
3. In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure provision of affordable housing or an equivalent financial contribution, the proposal fails to contribute adequately to the housing needs of Reading Borough. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies H3 (Affordable Housing) and CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the Council's Adopted Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2021.
4. In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure provision of a construction phase employment skills and training plan or equivalent financial contribution, a carbon off-setting contribution and private refuse collection arrangements for the development, the proposals fail to adequately contribute to local labour and training needs, fail to achieve zero carbon homes standards and fail to provide adequate refuse storage and collection arrangements for the proposed development, contrary to Policies CC5 (Waste Minimisation and Storage), CC9 (Securing Infrastructure), H5 (Standards for New Housing), TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters) and the adopted Employment Skills and Training Supplementary Planning Document

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 1 NOVEMBER 2023

2013, Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document 2019 and Planning Obligations Under Section 106 Supplementary Planning Document 2015.

### 57. 211626/FUL - LAND TO THE REAR OF 303-315 OXFORD ROAD

Demolition of existing garage block and car repair garage and erection of flatted development comprising 13 apartments and E(g) office building together with parking, access and associated works.

The Committee considered a report on the above application.

Comments were received and considered.

#### **Resolved –**

- (1) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to grant planning permission for application 230319/FUL, subject to the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement by 15 December 2023 (unless a later date be agreed by the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the report;
- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (3) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives recommended, with condition 12 (regarding the two EV charging points) amended to require the infrastructure to be in place for future increases in EV charging points and condition 33 amended to ensure that the PV and air source heat pumps were provided pre-commencement apart from demolition works.

### 58. 221345/FUL - CURZON CLUB, 362 OXFORD ROAD

Outline Application for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of a building of up to five storeys containing 30 flats, ground floor retail space and associated parking, with landscaping reserved.

The Committee considered a report on the above application.

Ward Councillor Wendy Griffith attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

#### **Resolved –**

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 1 NOVEMBER 2023

That consideration of application 221345/OUT be deferred for further discussions with the developer regarding the possibility of including a space for community use within the development.

### 59. 230398/REG3 - 99 HARTLAND ROAD

Single storey extension to a three bedroom residential property.

The Committee considered a report on the above application.

Comments were received and considered.

#### **Resolved –**

That, pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, the carrying out of the development 230398/REG3 be authorised, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the report.

### 60. 230279/REG3 - THE WILLOWS, 2 HEXHAM ROAD

Full planning application for the erection of a building containing a day centre providing social care services (Use Class E(f)) and 42 residential units including specialist housing (Use Class C3) with landscaping, car parking and access.

The Committee considered a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting which provided information regarding additional Transport and Highways comments and proposing an additional item in the Heads of Terms to require a s278 agreement to provide the layby parking and new access arrangements for the site, additional conditions and informatives and an amendment to Condition 6.

Comments and one objection were received and considered.

#### **Resolved –**

- (1) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement by 1 February 2024 (unless a later date be agreed by the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the original report, with the additional item as set out in the update report;
- (2) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to refuse permission;
- (3) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the original report, with the additions and amendments set out in the update report.

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 1 NOVEMBER 2023

(Councillor Emberson declared an interest in this item on the grounds of predetermination as she was Lead Councillor for Housing. She left the meeting and took no part in the debate or decision).

(Councillor Ennis declared an interest in this item on the grounds of predetermination as he had been Lead Councillor for Adult Social Care. He left the meeting and took no part in the debate or decision).

### **61. 231130/FUL - KINGS MEADOW, NAPIER ROAD**

Temporary change of use for up to 45 days in the calendar year, to change from class D2 to Christmas Party Events and Sporting Activities at Kings Meadow, with the site being restored to its former condition on or before 14:00hrs on 31/12/2023.

The Committee considered a report on the above application.

Comments were received and considered.

#### **Resolved –**

That planning permission be granted for application 231130/FUL, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the report

(The meeting started at 6.40 pm and closed at 9.22 pm)

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## Planning Applications Committee

06 December 2023



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
*Working better with you*

<b>Title</b>	<b>POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS</b>
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a decision
<b>Report status</b>	Public report
<b>Report author</b>	Julie Williams, Development Manager (Planning & Building Control)
<b>Lead Councillor</b>	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
<b>Corporate priority</b>	Not applicable, but still requires a decision
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. note this report and confirm if the site(s) indicated on the appended list are to be visited by Councillors.</li> <li>2. confirm if there are other sites Councillors wish to visit before reaching a decision on an application.</li> <li>3. confirm if the site(s) agreed to be visited will be arranged and accompanied by officers or unaccompanied with a briefing note provided by the case officer.</li> </ol>

### 1. Executive Summary

- 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 with a note added to say if recommended for a site visit or not.

### 2. The Proposal

- 2.1. A site visit helps if a proposed development and context is difficult to visualise from the plans and supporting material or to better understand concerns or questions raised by a proposal.
- 2.2. Appendix 1 of this report provides a list of applications received that may be presented to Committee for a decision in due course. Officers will try to indicate in advance if visiting a site to inform your decision making is recommended. Also, Councillors can request that a site is visited by Committee in advance of consideration of the proposal.
- 2.3. However, on occasion, it is only during consideration of a report on a planning application that it becomes apparent that Councillors would benefit from visiting a site to assist in reaching the correct decision. In these instances, Officers or Councillors may request a deferral to allow a visit to be carried out.
- 2.4. Accompanied site visits are appropriate when access to private land is necessary to appreciate matters raised. These visits will be arranged and attended by officers on the designated date and time. Applicants and objectors may observe the process and answer questions when asked but lobbying is discouraged. A site visit is an information gathering opportunity to inform decision making.
- 2.5. Unaccompanied site visits are appropriate when the site can be easily seen from public areas and allow Councillors to visit when convenient to them. In these instances, the

case officer will provide a briefing note on the application and the main issues to assist when visiting the site.

2.6. It is also possible for officers to suggest, or Councillors to request, a visit to a completed development to assess its quality.

2.7. Appendix 2 sets out a list of application sites that have been agreed to be visited at previous committee meetings but are still to be arranged.

### **3. Contribution to Strategic Aims**

4.1 The processing of planning applications contributes to creating a healthy environment with thriving communities and helping the economy within the Borough, identified as the themes of the Council's Corporate Plan.

### **4. Environmental and Climate Implications**

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

4.2. 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.

### **5. Community Engagement**

5.1. Statutory neighbour consultation takes place on planning applications.

### **6. Equality Implications**

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

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

6.2. It is considered that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to the decision on whether sites need to be visited by Planning Application Committee. The decision will not have a differential impact on people with the protected characteristics of; age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) or sexual orientation.

### **7. Legal Implications**

7.1. None arising from this report.

### **8. Financial Implications**

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

### **9. Timetable for Implementation**

9.1. Site visits are normally scheduled for the Thursday prior to committee. Planning Administration team sends out notification emails when a site visit is arranged.

### **10. Background Papers**

10.1. There are none.



## Appendices

### 1. Potential Site Visit List:

**Ward:** Thames

**Application reference:** 231494

**Application type:** Regulation 3 Planning Approval

**Site address:** Thameside Primary School, Harley Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4

8DB

**Proposal:** Retrospective retention of existing demountable 1 storey modular classrooms and temporary permission to further retain the modular unit for 5 years and minor associated works

Reason for Committee item: Reg3 Application

### 2. Previously Agreed Site Visits with date requested:

- 230613 - Amethyst Lane – accompanied agreed by PAC 21.06.23
- 230612 - Dwyer Road – accompanied agreed by PAC 21.06.23
- 230745 - "Great Brighams Mead", Vastern Road – accompanied agreed by PAC 06.09.23
- 231041 - Portman Road – unaccompanied agreed by PAC 06.09.23
- 231495 – Civic Offices – accompanied agreed by PAC 01.11.23

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## Planning Applications Committee

06 December 2023



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
*Working better with you*

<b>Title</b>	<b>PLANNING APPEALS</b>
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To note the report for information
<b>Report status</b>	Public report
<b>Report author</b>	Julie Williams, Development Manager (Planning & Building Control)
<b>Lead Councillor</b>	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
<b>Corporate priority</b>	Inclusive Economy
<b>Recommendations</b>	The Committee is asked: 1. To note the report.

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. To advise Committee on notifications received from the Planning Inspectorate on planning appeals registered with them or decision made and to provide summary reports on appeal decisions of interest the Planning Applications Committee.

### 2. Information provided

- 2.1. Please see Appendix 1 of this report for new appeals lodged since the last committee.
- 2.2. Please see Appendix 2 of this report for appeals decided since the last committee.
- 2.3. Please see Appendix 3 of this report for new Planning Officers reports on those appeal decisions of interest to this committee.

### 3. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 3.1. Defending planning appeals made against planning decisions 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.

### 4. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 4.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 4.2. 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

### 5. Community Engagement

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

## **6. Equality Implications**

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

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

6.2. It is considered that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to the decision on whether sites need to be visited by Planning Application Committee. The decision will not have a differential impact on people with the protected characteristics of; age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) or sexual orientation.

## **7. Legal Implications**

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

## **8. Financial Implications**

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

## **9. Timetable for Implementation**

9.1. Not applicable.

## **10. Background Papers**

10.1. There are none.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Appeals Lodged:**

WARD: REDLANDS  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/23/3323732  
CASE NO: 220123/FUL  
ADDRESS: 9 Eldon Square, Reading  
PROPOSAL: Demolition of existing garages and car port, followed by construction of one detached three-bedroom, 1.5 storey detached dwelling, with associated car parking, cycle and bin storage.

CASE OFFICER: Nicola Taplin  
METHOD: Written Representation  
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL  
APPEAL LODGED: 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023

WARD: REDLANDS  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/Y/23/3323751  
CASE NO: 220124/LBC  
ADDRESS: 9 Eldon Square, Reading  
PROPOSAL: Demolition of existing garages and car port, followed by construction of one detached three-bedroom, 1.5 storey detached dwelling, with associated car parking, cycle and bin storage.

CASE OFFICER: Nicola Taplin  
METHOD: Written Representation  
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL OF LISTED BUILDING CONSENT  
APPEAL LODGED: 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023

WARD: BATTLE  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/23/3325238  
CASE NO: 221038/FUL  
ADDRESS: 37 Hilcot Road  
PROPOSAL: Demolition of existing building and erection of three new residential dwellings (C3 Use Class).

CASE OFFICER: Nathalie Weekes  
METHOD: Written Representation  
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL  
APPEAL LODGED: 19th October 2023

WARD: KATESGROVE  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/23/3315618  
CASE NO: 220258  
ADDRESS: 220 Elgar Road South  
PROPOSAL: Residential redevelopment comprising demolition of existing single storey building and erection of 16 dwellings together with associated works (re-submission of application 210526)

CASE OFFICER: Jonathan Markwell  
METHOD: Written Representation  
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL  
APPEAL LODGED: 13th September 2023

WARD: KATESGROVE  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/Z/23/3326490  
CASE NO: 230533  
ADDRESS: "Highway Verge", Junction of the A33 and Rose Kiln Lane, Reading  
PROPOSAL: Single leg freestanding advertising structure featuring two internally illuminated sequential display screens

CASE OFFICER: Gary Miles  
METHOD: Written Representation  
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL  
APPEAL LODGED: 05<sup>th</sup> October 2023

WARD: PARK  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/23/3324013  
CASE NO: 221399  
ADDRESS: 2 Adelaide Road, Reading, Berkshire  
PROPOSAL: Application for the Demolition of buildings and construction of new dwellinghouses in their place. To construct a one bedroom detached dwelling 64sqm GIA over two storeys. Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Schedule 2, Part 20, Class ZA

CASE OFFICER: Sian Hickey  
METHOD: Written Representation  
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL OF Demolition of buildings and construction of new dwelling houses  
APPEAL LODGED: 26<sup>TH</sup> October 2023

WARD: NORCOT  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/23/3327397  
CASE NO: 230011  
ADDRESS: "Site to East of", 121 Cockney Hill, Tilehurst, Reading  
PROPOSAL: Application for prior notification of proposed installation of an H3G 15m street pole and three additional equipment cabinets by telecommunications code systems operators (amended)

CASE OFFICER: Ryan Allen  
METHOD: Written Representation  
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL  
APPEAL LODGED: 14.11.2023

WARD: CAVERSHAM  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/23/3327407  
CASE NO: 230313  
ADDRESS: Site at Junction of Henley Road and Donegal Close, Caversham,  
PROPOSAL: Application for prior notification of proposed installation of an H3G 15m street pole and three additional equipment cabinets by telecommunications code systems operators (amended)

CASE OFFICER: Ryan Allen  
METHOD: Written Representation  
APPEAL TYPE: REFUSAL  
APPEAL LODGED: 14.11.2023

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Appeals Decided:**

WARD: EMMER GREEN  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/23/3319651  
CASE NO: 230071  
ADDRESS: Street Works", Caversham Park Road, Caversham, Reading  
PROPOSAL: Proposed 5G telecoms installation: H3G 20m street pole and additional equipment cabinets  
CASE OFFICER: Nicola Taplin

METHOD: Written Representation  
DECISION: DISMISSED  
DATE DETERMINED: 08.11.2023

WARD: WHITLEY  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/23/3320395  
CASE NO: 221795  
ADDRESS: 10 Foxhays Road, Reading  
PROPOSAL: End of terrace 2 storey 3 bedroom dwelling  
CASE OFFICER: David Brett  
METHOD: Written Representation  
DECISION: DISMISSED  
DATE DETERMINED: 13.11.2023

WARD: BATTLE  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/22/3310834  
CASE NO: 220776  
ADDRESS: "Land at", 362 Oxford Road, Reading  
PROPOSAL: Erection of a mixed-use development comprising of two commercial units on the ground floor (157.5 sqm), 26 residential units, associated landscaping, car and cycle parking.  
CASE OFFICER: Tom Bradfield  
METHOD: Written Representation  
DECISION: ALLOWED  
DATE DETERMINED: 08.11.2023

### **APPENDIX 3**

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

- None

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## hPlanning Applications Committee



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
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**06 December 2023**

<b>Title</b>	<b>APPLICATIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL</b>
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To note the report for information
<b>Report status</b>	Public report
<b>Report author</b>	Julie Williams, Development Manager (Planning & Building Control)
<b>Lead Councillor</b>	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
<b>Corporate priority</b>	Inclusive Economy
<b>Recommendations</b>	The Committee is asked: 1. To note the report.

### 1. Executive Summary

- 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. Prior Approval

- 2.1. 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.
- 2.2. 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
- 2.3. 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.
- 2.4. 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 contributing towards affordable housing, and the application fees for these “light touch” applications are significantly less than the equivalent planning application fee.
- 2.5. 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 provide 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 a rolling estimate be provided for the possible loss in planning fee income.

### 3. 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. Estimates of the equivalent planning application fees are provided.
- 4.3 The planning considerations to be taken into account when deciding each of these types of application are specified in more detail in the GDPO. In some cases the LPA first needs 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 appeals on prior-approval decisions will be included elsewhere in the agenda.

#### **4. Contribution to strategic aims**

- 4.1. 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 contribute to the strategic aims of the Council.
- 4.2. However, the permitted development prior approval process allows the LPA to consider a limited range of matters in determination of the application. These are: transport and highways impacts of the development, contamination risks on the site, flooding risks on the site, impacts of noise from commercial premises on the intended occupiers of the development and the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses. Officers will refuse to grant approval or will seek conditions in those cases where a proposal fails to satisfy on these matters thereby contributing to the themes of the Corporate Plan.

#### **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 encourages developers to build and use properties responsibly by making efficient use of land and using sustainable materials and building methods. The Prior Approval process facilitates the re-use of existing buildings and in most cases the refurbishment will be required to comply with current building regulations which seek improved thermal performance of buildings.

#### **6. Community Engagement**

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

#### **7. Equality Implications**

- 7.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 7.2. There are no direct implications arising from the proposals.

#### **8. Legal Implications**

- 8.1. None arising from this Report.

## **9. Financial Implications**

- 9.1. Since the additional prior notifications were introduced in May 2013 in place of applications for full planning permission, the loss in fee income is now estimated to be £1,884,185.

(Class E (formally office) Prior Approvals - £1,700,794

Householder Prior Approvals - £91,410

Retail Prior Approvals - £16,840:

Demolition Prior Approval - £6,623

Storage Prior Approvals - £5716:

Shop to Restaurant/Leisure Prior Approval - £6331;

Light Industrial to Residential - £20,022:

Dwellings on detached block of flats - £2048:

Additional storey on dwellings - £206:

New dwellinghouses on terrace/detached buildings - £17,483.

Demolition of buildings and construction of new dwelling - £128;

Prior approval to mixed use including flats - £2484.

### **Figures since last report:**

Class E (formerly office) Prior Approvals - £700

- 9.2. However, it should be noted that the prior approval application assessment process is simpler than 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. Finally, it should not be assumed that if the prior approval process did not exist that planning applications for the proposed developments would come forward instead.

## **10. Timetable for Implementation**

- 10.1. Not applicable.

## **11. Background Papers**

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

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

## Appendices

**Table 1 - Applications received since 19 October 2023 to 23 November 2023**

Type:	How many received since last report:	Loss in possible fee income:
Householder Prior Approvals	3	£288
Class E Prior Approvals	0	£
Demolition Prior Approval	1	£462
Solar Equipment Prior Approval	0	n/a
Prior Notification	0	n/a
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	0	0
Demolition of buildings and construction of new dwelling	0	0
Prior approval to mixed use including flats	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>£</b>

**Table 2 - Applications decided since 19 October 2023 to 23 November 2023**

Type:	Approved	Refused	Not Required	Withdrawn	Non Determination
Householder Prior Approvals	1	0	1	0	0
Class E Prior Approvals	3	0	0	0	0
Demolition Prior Approval	0	0	0	0	0
Solar Equipment Prior Approval	1	0	0	0	0
Prior Notification/ Other	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 dwellings on terrace buildings or New dwellings on detached buildings	0	0	0	0	0
Demolition of buildings and construction of new dwelling	0	0	0	0	0
Prior approval to mixed use including flats	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

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## Planning Applications Committee

6 December 2023



Reading

Borough Council

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Working better with you

<b>Title</b>	<b>OBJECTION TO TREE PRESERVATION ORDER 5/23 RELATING TO 65-83 GROVE ROAD, EMMER GREEN, READING</b>
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a decision
<b>Report status</b>	Public report
<b>Report author</b>	Sarah Hanson, Natural Environment Officer
<b>Lead councillor</b>	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
<b>Corporate priority</b>	Healthy Environment
<b>Recommendations</b>	The Committee is asked: 1. To agree that the Tree Preservation Order should be confirmed

### 1. Executive summary

- 1.1. To report to Committee on an objection to Tree Preservation Order 5/23 relating to one Sycamore on Council land at 65-83 Grove Road (copy of TPO plan attached – Appendix 1). Officer photographs are provided in Appendix 2.

### 2. Policy context

- 2.1. The Council’s new Corporate Plan has established three themes for the years 2022/25. These themes are:
  - Healthy Environment
  - Thriving Communities
  - Inclusive Economy
- 2.2. These themes are underpinned by “Our Foundations” explaining the ways we work at the Council:
  - People first
  - Digital transformation
  - Building self-reliance
  - Getting the best value
  - Collaborating with others
- 2.3. Full details of the Council’s Corporate Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the [Council’s website](#). These priorities and the Corporate Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 Several complaints were received by Streetscene from Emmer Green Kindergarten at 85 Grove Road relating to the Sycamore tree in question since 2019, assumed to be since the time the Kindergarten was started.

Streetscene have responded to requests to prune the tree to alleviate the concerns raised and did so in July 2022 and March 2023. Despite the pruning, concerns continued relating to nuisance caused by the tree, as set out in a complaint letter to Streetscene, received on 13 June 2023, in which it was suggested by the owner of the Kindergarten that the tree be pollarded - they were advised this would not be good arboricultural practice for the tree hence would not be acceptable.

2.2 In the complaint to Streetscene, the complainant made it clear that if the Council did not prune the tree to their satisfaction that they would hire a tree surgeon to prune the tree back to the boundary, which they acknowledged would make the tree unstable. Given this, a TPO was considered appropriate to protect the tree from such harmful works and this was served on 19 July 2023.

### **3. Result of consultation**

3.1 Objections were initially raised via several emails from the owner of the Emmer Green Kindergarten at 85 Grove Road. Following an Officer visit on 23 October, the objections were formalised in a letter of 24 October, listing the following concerns:

- The council have abused their position of power in relation to placing a TPO on the tree due to a complaint made by myself in relation to the problems we have with the tree and for simply requesting the canopy is cut right back to the boundary or pollard.
- The tree causes damp in the toddler playroom within the nursery where the tree severely overhangs the building. This is due to the fact that the tree prevents natural daylight into the room and the canopy overhangs the roof of the nursery building. This is detrimental to the health and wellbeing of children under five.
- The tree causes issues with severe bird poo during the summer months where birds nest and sit directly above the nursery outdoor play area. This poses a problem in terms of the health and wellbeing of children under five years of age. Again, this is detrimental to the health and wellbeing of children under five as well as posing a risk of bird flu of which there have been a few reported cases of transmission to humans in recent years.
- A complaint was made by a parent to Ofsted in 2021 who subsequently wrote to me to request that children are not exposed to health risks in relation to bird poo. Should Ofsted inspect the premises and find an issue with bird poo we will fail an inspection and therefore place 104 children's nursery places at risk of closure and a loss of 40 council funded childcare places significant to the government's childcare agenda March 2023.
- The roots and trunk of the tree encroach on the nursery land causing an issue with a trip hazard in the event of needing the evacuate the building in an emergency from the back of the property.
- I would request that the health and wellbeing of children under five, where outdoor play is significant to their health and wellbeing, is considered in relation to a final decision to the TPO on this tree. I fail to understand why the council have only now decided to place this TPO on the tree when prior to 2023 this tree was not considered



worthy of a TPO. This would indicate that the council has been in a position to abuse their position of power where complaints are made and this is more the case than any issue relating to the biodiversity of the tree and significant local importance this tree provides. At no point has anyone asked the council to fully remove the tree but to remove the level of canopy to prevent the above issues arising.

#### **4. Conclusion and recommendation**

4.1 In relation to the concerns raised, Officers have the following response:

- Officers have followed normal procedure in determining whether a TPO was warranted. The Sycamore is a healthy, mature specimen of high amenity value contributing to the tree coverage in the area and it is worthy of a Tree Preservation Order – for clarity (in response to the objectors query) the tree has not suddenly become worthy of a TPO but a TPO has become necessary. As with other large canopy trees, it provides multiple environmental benefits to the locality and as a naturalised species, it supports significant biodiversity. The tree is a mature specimen that has not previously been pollarded. Pollarding the tree now would create large wounds, prone to decay and would go against all good arboricultural practice, resulting in harm to the future health and amenity value of the tree and an additional management burden for the Council. The tree is a public asset and as such it is appropriate for decisions on management to take that into account. The request to pollard is effectively asking the Council to cause /allow significant harm to a public asset and reduce the canopy cover of the area contrary to the aims of our adopted Tree Strategy and climate emergency declaration.
- The nuisance factors relating to damp and bird droppings were discussed on site when Officers visited the Kindergarten to discuss the concerns with the objector. It was evident that pruning carried out by Streetscene has effectively cut out the corner of the crown already that was overhanging the baby's play area, which is the area of most concern. During the site meeting, additional, minor pruning was identified consisting of the removal of 3 minor branches overhanging the baby's play area, crown lifting to provide greater clearance above the building and the removal of a small, poor form Cherry also overhanging the baby's play area. It was agreed on site with the objector that these works would resolve the concerns and Streetscene have agreed to carry these out, with the works planned for 6 December 2023. These works can be seen in the photographs in appendix 2.
- The base of the trunk of the tree does extend through the bottom of the boundary fence onto the Kindergarten land, however, this is marginal and not considered to present any blockage of the side access. Issues with roots were not raised during the officer's visit and accumulation of debris in the access did not make root issues evident and in any case, pruning of the crown, as requested, would not resolve any such matter.

4.2 Pruning has already been carried out and additional pruning agreed to alleviate the concerns raised. Significant work in the form of pruning the entire crown back to the boundary or pollarding would go against good arboricultural practice as it would be harmful to the health and amenity value of the tree. Without a TPO, the former could be carried out under common

law. The presence of the TPO prevents detrimental works to this high amenity, Council owned tree and therefore it is recommended that the TPO be confirmed.

## **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. Equality impact assessment**

- 7.1 None required.

## **8. Contribution to strategic aims**

- 8.1 The aim of the TPOs is to secure trees of high amenity value for present and future generations to enjoy. Trees have multiple environmental benefits creating cleaner, greener and more attractive places to live. This contributes to creating a healthy environment as identified as one of the themes of the Council's Corporate Plan. See Section 2 of this report for more information.

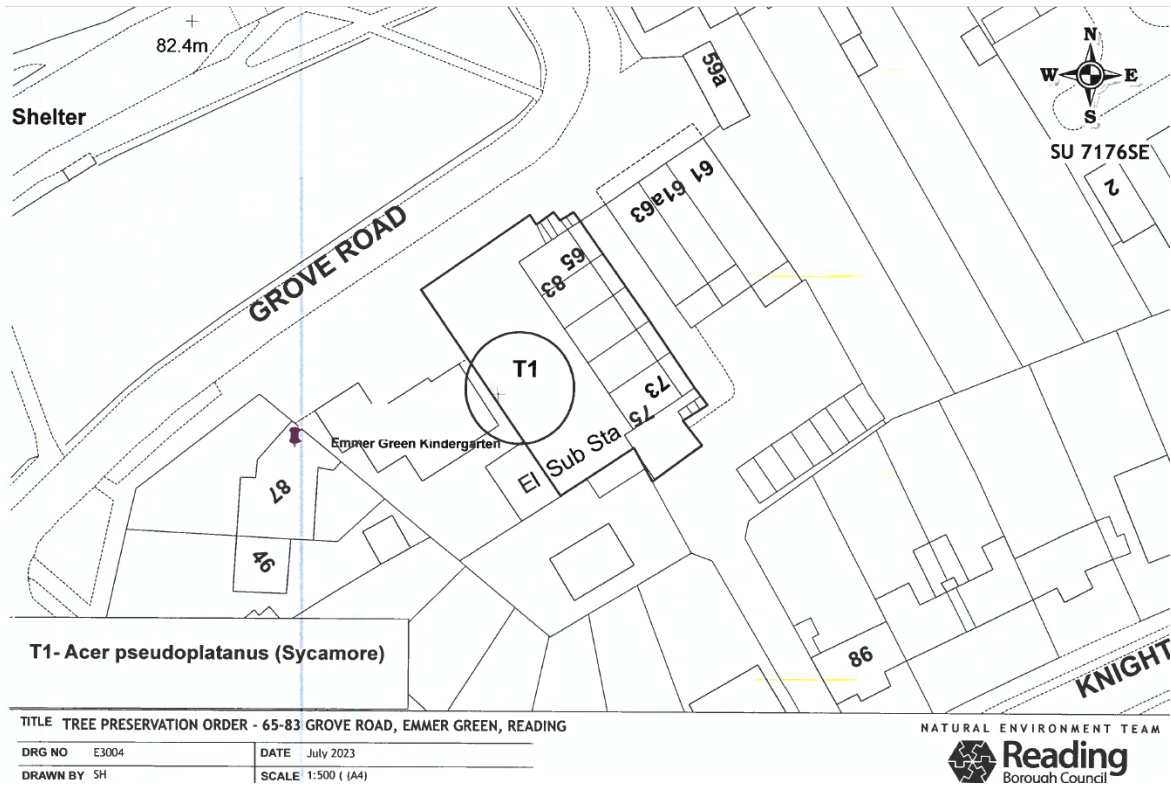
## **9. Environmental & Climate implications**

- 9.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 9.2 Trees have multiple environmental benefits that include flood alleviation, wildlife benefits, air pollution mitigation and air cooling. The proposed works are not expected to substantially impact the trees' contribution to these multiple environmental benefits

## **10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- 10.1 Register of Tree Preservation Orders

Appendix 1 - TPO 5/23 (plan)



**Appendix 2 - Officer photographs**

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**Viewed from Grove Road**



**Viewed from play area at the rear**



**Pruning done thus far**





**Additional pruning identified:**  
**Three Minor branches to be removed (left, red arrows);**  
**One small tree to be removed (right, yellow arrow)**

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## Planning Applications Committee



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
*Working better with you*

**06 December 2023**

<b>Title</b>	<b>LOCAL LISTING REPORT - The Restoration Public House</b>
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a decision
<b>Report status</b>	Public report
<b>Report author</b>	Burcu Can Cetin, Conservation Officer
<b>Lead Councillor</b>	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
<b>Corporate priority</b>	Healthy Environment
<b>Ward</b>	Kentwood
<b>Address</b>	928 Oxford Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 6TJ
<b>Recommendations</b>	The Committee is asked: 1. To agree that the Restoration Public House be added to the List of Locally Important Buildings and Structures

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. To report on a proposal to add the Restoration Public House to the List of Locally-Important Buildings and Structures. The report identifies the building as of local historical and architectural importance and makes an assessment based on the Council’s published Local List criteria of entries to the list.

### 2. Policy context

- 2.1. The Council’s new Corporate Plan has established three themes for the years 2022/25. These themes are:
- Healthy Environment
  - Thriving Communities
  - Inclusive Economy
- 2.2. These themes are underpinned by “Our Foundations” explaining the ways we work at the Council:
- People first
  - Digital transformation
  - Building self-reliance
  - Getting the best value
  - Collaborating with others
- 2.3. Full details of the Council’s Corporate Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the [Council’s website](#). These priorities and the Corporate Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.
- 2.4. 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.

- 2.5. The criteria for considering additions to the Local List are set out in Appendix 2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (adopted 2019).

### **3. The proposal**

- 3.1. A nomination was received on 9 August 2023 to add the Restoration Public House to the Local List. Consultations have been carried out in accordance with the agreed process, and this report sets out the recommended action.
- 3.2. The nominated heritage item is a two-storey brick-faced public house situated on the north of Oxford Road, as opposed to the 1920s suburban development of the Norcot Estate in Tilehurst, which it is historically associated with. Having an asymmetrical façade under a steeply pitched hipped roof with plain tiles and simple design chimneys, the building is dominated by the frontispiece with a semi-circular arch gable in the eaves and Tuscan order style mouldings at window and door surrounds on the ground floor. Overall, the pub's architecture shows the influence of Arts and Crafts and Neo-Georgian styles in its general design and classical references in detail.
- 3.3. The nomination form received for the building identifies the significance of the building as follows:
- 3.4. Principle for Selection for the Local List - (c) 1914 - 1939: any building, structure or group of buildings that is/are substantially complete and unaltered and of a high level of significance:

*The (now closed) Restoration Public House was built in 1928. It was originally known as The Bell and changed its name in 1989. The public house and row of shops to the west serviced residential properties to the south that were built on the Norcot Estate following the First World War. The pub was renovated in 1989 but remains substantially unchanged. The architecture has been described as '1930s roadhouse' and it is reminiscent of some examples of the time albeit within a more urban setting. It is a two-storey red brick building with a central projecting block and two side blocks with bar entrances. Slightly darker red bricks are used across the façade beneath the first floor windows and as quoins. It has a tiled hipped roof. The central pediment above the first floor windows and the decorative use of columns suggest grandeur.*

Historic Interest – (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:

*The public house was built to serve the growing community of Norcot along the Oxford Road. The area was part of Tilehurst until 1911 when, along with Caversham, it was absorbed into the Borough of Reading. As such it is an important part of the history and expansion of the Reading urban area. The public house was a place for social gatherings from the time it opened until its closure in the 2010s. As well as darts and bar billiard teams, it also held musical events over the years. It was opened as an H & G Simonds house, later part of Courage and remained so until 1977 when it became an Ind Coope pub. At the time of the renaming and refurbishment in 1989 it was owned by Halls of Oxford. The 1989 works were criticised by regulars who were '...worried that it could be turned into a yuppies' wine bar'. A 300 signature petition was organised by Andre Goswell who told the Reading Post 'It could do with a bit of redecoration, but we like it as it is. We don't want it changed.' 'The brewery owners said that they wanted to improve the pub for existing customers.' [Reading Evening Post 4 April 1989].*

Architectural Interest – (b) Innovation and Virtuosity: (ii) The building or structure is the work of a notable local or national architect/engineer/builder:

*The architecture of the Restoration has many similarities with the smaller Bird in Hand in Lower Armour Road and so it is possible that it was designed by H & G Simonds in house architects department.*



Architectural Interest – (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:

*The public house was built at about the same time as the adjacent row of shops which also served the local community. The similarity in late 1920s/early 1930s architecture is apparent and they make a pleasing group on the north side of this section of Oxford Road.*

(ii) The buildings/structures are an example of deliberate town planning from before 1947:

*The Norcot Housing Estate was built on 45 acres of land acquired from the trustees of the late Sir Walter Palmer to erect '300 houses for the working classes' to meet the post First World War demand for housing in the town and the country as a whole. At the time that the acquisition was proposed in 1919 was not felt necessary to provide the incoming residents with '...sundry establishments, churches, chapels, public halls etc.' due to the proximity to Reading. [Reading Observer 4 October 1919] Over time things changed and facilities including public houses were required. In relation to the public house, Albert Blake the first landlord, gave notice to the authorities that he was applying to move his licence to sell alcohol from The Bell on Church Street (off London Street) and transfer it to the new pub being erected on Oxford Road. [Reading Standard 21 January 1928] The pub and shops were strategically located opposite the junction with Selborne Gardens.*

#### **4. Consultations**

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

- Raj Singh Hargun and Gurjant Singh Hargun (landowner);
- Kentwood Ward councillors;
- Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee;
- Reading Civic Society;
- Tilehurst GLOBE;
- Tilehurst Residents' and Community Association; and
- West Reading Together.

4.2. Response was received from Reading Civic Society.

4.3. Reading Civic Society

*Interesting to see this be nominated. It is a tricky one.*

*We are under no illusions that it would be a pub ever again. Having recently stopped to walk past the building, and the nearby shops, I note none of them are thriving. It is all a long way from when the shops and the pub building served the local community (ref the nomination form). However together with this building they are very much symbolic of their time.*

*As ever the challenge is finding a suitable use for the building if it is added to the Local List. I have noted on passing (fore and back to Waitrose) that the upper floor is certainly occupied, presumably by squatters (if that is the right term these days), and indeed the externals of the upper floor windows appear to have been painted.*

*Looking forward we would encourage a use for housing as that seems to be achievable practically, without a massive amount of work/ costs and with the least impact on the building. The owner doing a "fancy" development would hardly be encouraged by the presence of the car wash centre next door, which adds not a thing to the street, and the industrial estate behind.*

*If approved it will be the only LL in that “area” of West Reading. It right that LL is not just for very visible buildings in the town centre.*

*The RCS view is that it is worthy of consideration for adding to the Local List.*

*So bottom line. Supported.*

- 4.4. No response has been received from ward councillors.
- 4.5. No response has been received from the landowner.
- 4.6. Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee advised that they made the initial nomination and therefore, did not make any further comment on the proposal for local listing.
- 4.7. No response has been received from the community groups.

## **5. Assessment**

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).

### **5.1. Exclusions**

- 5.1.1 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. The Restoration Public House is not within any of these existing designations and can therefore be considered against the other criteria.

### **5.2. General principles**

- 5.2.1 The Restoration Public House dates from the 1920s and therefore, needs to be considered against the following general principle:

*c. 1914 - 1939: Any building, structure or group of buildings where the elements that contribute to a high level of significance in the local context remain substantially complete.*

- 5.2.2 The Restoration Public House, whilst little information has been gathered about its history, appears named ‘The Bell’ on the Ordnance Survey map of 1931-1932, confirming the date of 1928 on the nomination file. It is a fine example of a typical suburban inter-war pub constructed on a main road, forming a prominent building against the monotony of architecture of the Norcot Estate development. The Restoration Public House is notable that the building’s original scale, proportions, design, and the neo-Georgian / neoclassical style ornaments on its exterior have not been changed through large-scale additions or alterations. The recent removal of the original timber windows and internal alterations of 1989 is considered minimal and reversible; the building remains largely complete and intact.

### **5.3. Significance**

- 5.3.1 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.*

- 5.3.2 The Restoration Public House is not considered to fulfil this criterion.

#### *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.*

- 5.3.3 The most conspicuous feature of the Restoration Public House is its being the centre of the social life of the 1920s and 1930s new housing development in Tilehurst, which was taken into the borough in 1911. It was built on the extended major arterial, Oxford Road, and opened as an H. & G. Simonds Ltd, the historic brewing company of Reading, to serve vast populations. In the form of a larger public house to provide refreshments, food other than alcohol, recreation opportunities, and games to all members of the community; the Restoration has been a social base of gatherings, darts and billiard games and music events until its closure in the 2010s.

#### *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.*

- 5.3.4 The Restoration Public House is not considered to fulfil this criterion.

#### *Architectural Interest*

##### *a. Sense of place*

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

- 5.3.5 The Restoration Public House is not considered to fulfil this criterion.

##### *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.*

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

- 5.3.6 Whilst the design of the public house is referred (by the nomination file) to H & G Simonds in-house architects and the Restoration Pub has very similar architectural features to another pub, the Bird in Hand, as the 1950s being active years of the architect's department of the brewery estate and the building is not known as the work of notable architect, this could not be confirmed. Therefore, this criterion is not met.

##### *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.*

*ii. The buildings/structures are an example of deliberate town planning from before 1947.*

- 5.3.7 On a larger scale, the public house is further connected to the 1920s and 1930s garden suburb and garden city movements, which had a deep influence on low-rise housing, more irregular layouts often incorporating cul-de-sacs and closes, green spaces and gardens and large estates built in considerable quantities following the Housing Act of 1919. It was created along with the shopping parade, at 930-940 Oxford Road, of the same architectural style, constituting a group value of prominence within the streetscape, and it was situated between the railway line to the north and the Norcot Housing Estate to the south, reflecting characteristics of the typical inter-war pub and needs of the local community. As such, the Restoration Public House makes a

considerable contribution to the suburban townscape of Reading and gives Oxford Road a distinctive character.

#### **5.4. Conclusion of assessment**

5.4.1 The Restoration Public House 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 1914 and 1939 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 social importance;
- Contributes to the heritage of the Borough in terms of its group value.

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

### **6. Contribution to strategic aims**

6.1. Local listing of buildings and structures helps to achieve the Healthy Environment theme of the Corporate Plan, by helping to retain those buildings that contribute towards making Reading a more attractive place to live and connect Reading's residents to the town's past.

### **7. Environmental and climate implications**

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

7.2. 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. However, in the long-term, it can be more difficult to achieve high levels of energy performance in older buildings than in new builds. There are therefore potentially either positive or negative effects, and schemes will need to be assessed at the application stage in terms of their compliance with the Council's policies.

### **8. Community engagement**

8.1. Details of the consultation carried out are set out in section 4 of this report. The scope of consultation to be carried out on proposals for addition to the Local List was part of the local listing process agreed by Planning Applications Committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 (Minute 56 refers).

### **9. Equality impact assessment**

9.1. 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.

### **10. Other relevant considerations**

10.1 None of this report.

### **11. Legal implications**

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

### **12. Financial implications**

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

**13. Timetable for implementation**

13.1. Not applicable.

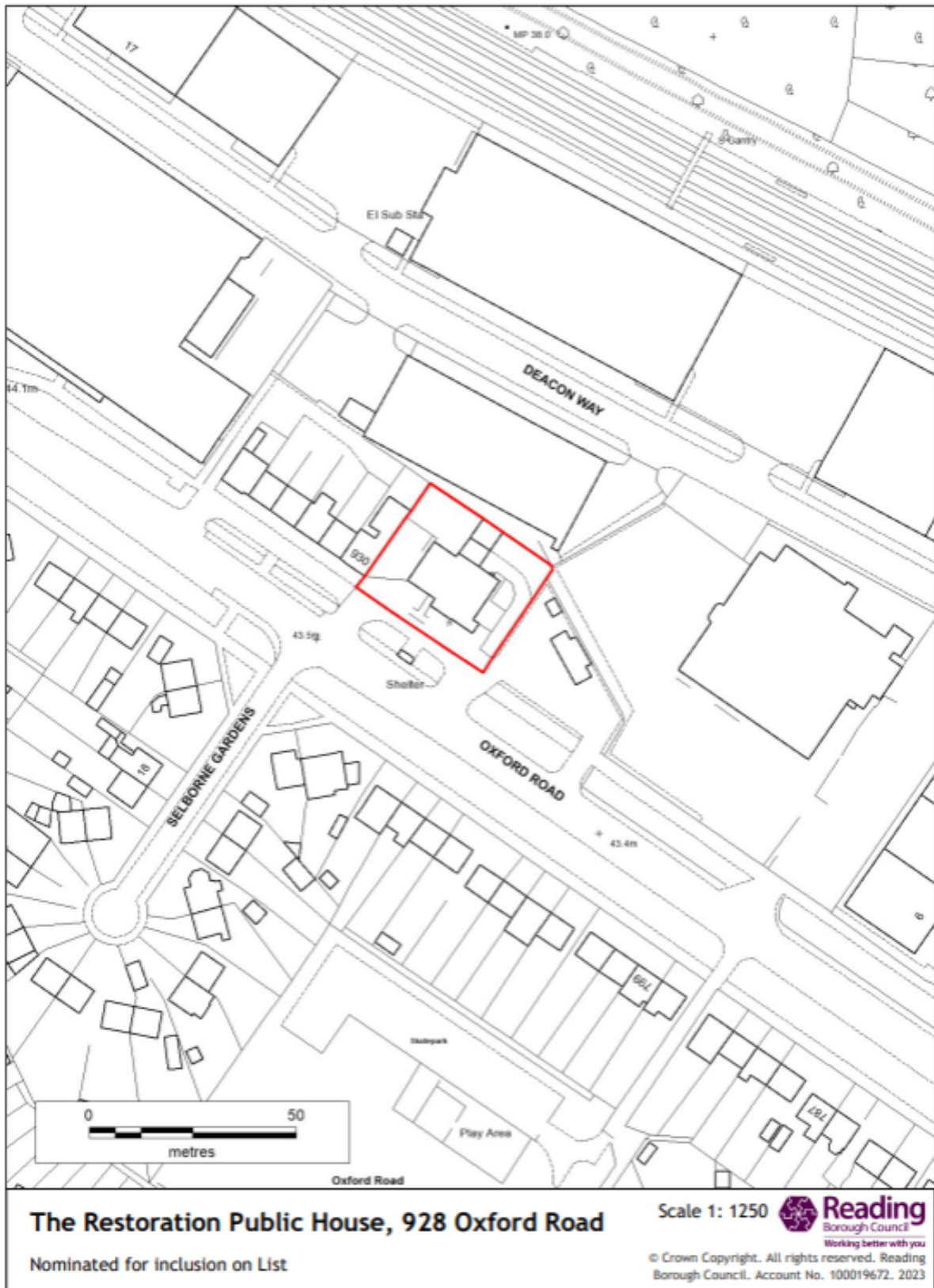
**14. Background papers**

14.1. There are none.

**Appendices**

1. **Location map**
2. **Relevant photos and illustrations**
3. **Nomination form**
4. **Proposed local list text**

## Appendix 1: Location plan





**Appendix 2: Relevant photos and illustrations**

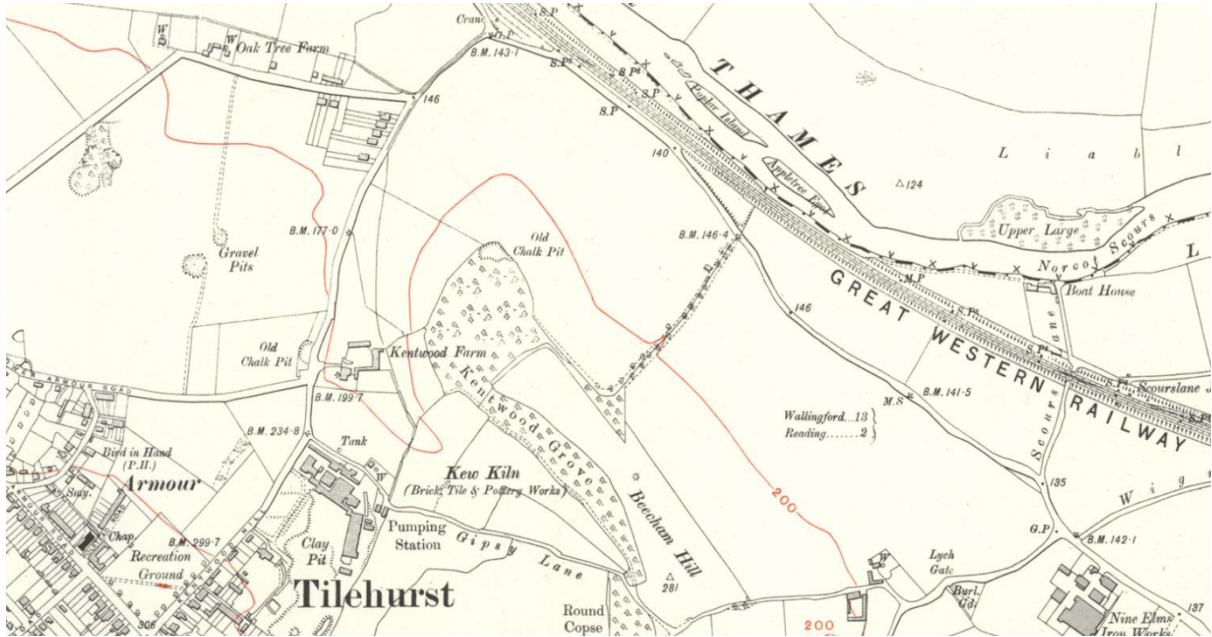


*View of the Restoration Public House in 2009, Google Streetview*



*View of the Restoration Public House in 2021, Google Streetview*





Ordnance Survey Map of 1914



Ordnance Survey Map of 1931-1932 (published in 1934), the public house circled in red



Street view of the Restoration Public House and adjacent shopping parade, 2019





*Aerial View of the Restoration Public House*



*Old Photograph of the Bird in Hand, from <https://tilehurstmemories.org.uk/>*

## Appendix 3: Nomination form

### Nomination information

**Address of building/structure:** The Restoration Public House  
928 Oxford Road

**Postcode of building/structure:** RG30 6TJ

**Owner of building (if known):**

**Age of building:** (c) 1914 - 1939: any building, structure or group of buildings that is/are substantially complete and unaltered and of a high level of significance

**Please provide comments or further explanation of above:** The (now closed) Restoration Public House was built in 1928. It was originally known as The Bell and changed its name in 1989.

The public house and row of shops to the west serviced residential properties to the south that were built on the Norcot Estate following the First World War.

The pub was renovated in 1989 but remains substantially unchanged. The architecture has been described as '1930s roadhouse' and it is reminiscent of some examples of the time albeit within a more urban setting. It is a two-storey red brick building with a central projecting block and two side blocks with bar entrances. Slightly darker red bricks are used across the façade beneath the first floor windows and as quoins. It has a tiled hipped roof. The central pediment above the first floor windows and the decorative use of columns suggest grandeur.

**The building or structure has a well authenticated historical association with a notable person(s) or event:** No

**Please provide further comments or explanation:**

**The building or structure has a prolonged and direct association with figures or events of local interest:** No

**Please provide further comments or explanation:**

**The building or structure has played an influential role in the development of an area or the life of one of Reading's communities:** Yes

**Please provide further comments or explanation:** The public house was built to serve the growing community of Norcot along the Oxford Road. The area was part of Tilehurst until 1911 when, along with Caversham, it was absorbed into the Borough of Reading. As such it is an important part of the history and expansion of the Reading urban area.

The public house was a place for social gatherings from the time it opened until its closure in the 2010s. As well as darts and bar billiard teams, it also held musical events over the years.

It was opened as an H & G Simonds house, later part of Courage and remained so until 1977 when it became an Ind Coope pub. At the time of the renaming and refurbishment in 1989 it was owned by Halls of Oxford.

The 1989 works were criticised by regulars who were '...worried that it could be turned into a yuppies' wine bar. A 300 signature petition was organised by Andre Goswell who told the Reading Post 'It could do with a bit of redecoration, but we like it as it is. We don't want it changed. The brewery owners said that they wanted to improve the pub for existing customers.' [Reading Evening Post 4 April 1989].

**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:** No

**Please provide further comments or explanation:**

**The building or structure is representative of a style that is characteristic of Reading:** No

**Please provide further comments or explanation:**

**The building or structure has a noteworthy quality of workmanship and materials:** No



**Please provide further comments or explanation:**

**The building or structure is the work of a notable local or national architect/engineer/builder:** Yes

**Please provide further comments or explanation:** The architecture of the Restoration has many similarities with the smaller Bird in Hand in Lower Armour Road and so it is possible that it was designed by H & G Simonds in house architects department.

**The building or structure shows innovation in materials, technique, architectural style or engineering:** No

**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 public house was built at about the same time as the adjacent row of shops which also served the local community. The similarity in late 1920s/early 1930s architecture is apparent and they make a pleasing group on the north side of this section of Oxford Road.

**The buildings/structures are an example of deliberate town planning from before 1947:** Yes

**Please provide further comments or explanation:** The Norcot Housing Estate was built on 45 acres of land acquired from the trustees of the late Sir Walter Palmer to erect '300 houses for the working classes' to meet the post First World War demand for housing in the town and the country as a whole. At the time that the acquisition was proposed in 1919 was not felt necessary to provide the incoming residents with '...sundry establishments, churches, chapels, public halls etc.' due to the proximity to Reading. [Reading Observer 4 October 1919]

Over time things changed and facilities including public houses were required. In relation to the public house, Albert Blake the first landlord, gave notice to the authorities that he was applying to move his licence to sell alcohol from The Bell on Church Street (off London Street) and transfer it to the new pub being erected on Oxford Road. [Reading Standard 21 January 1928]

The pub and shops were strategically located opposite the junction with Selborne Gardens.

**Please upload any evidence you have assembled that help to make the case as to why the building or structure fulfils the above criteria:** Restoration APPENDIX 1.docx, Restoration APPENDIX 2.docx

**Please briefly describe the relevance of the evidence you have attached:** 1. Local newspaper references as cited in the text.

2. John Dearing, David Cliffe and Evelyn Williams. Abbot Cook to Zero Degrees. An A to Z of Reading's Pubs & Breweries.

3. Emily Cole for Historic England (2015). The Urban and Suburban Public House in Inter-war England 1918-1939.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/reports/4-2015>

4. Maps – Appendix 1

5. Images - Appendix 2

**Please provide any additional comments that you would like to make in support of adding this building or structure to the Local List:** It is not realistic to expect that The Restoration can ever re-open as a public house. Its importance and significance in the local community from the time it opened in 1928 to when it closed, as well as its pleasing between the wars pub architecture make it worthy of protection by being placed on the local list.

The Historic England publication (see references) was undertaken in part because of the need to protect public houses of this period. The Appendix lists some examples from Reading, not all of which survive today e.g. The Four Horseshoes on Basingstoke Road. Unlike some of those pubs the Restoration was a completely new site and is worthy of recognition for its unique contribution to the fabric of Reading community life.

**Date of nomination:** 09/08/2023

### **Appendix 3: Proposed local list text**

A fine example of an Inter-War period public house built in 1928. The pub has two storeys, brick walls in Flemish bond and a hipped roof with plain tiles. Use of classical details, the projected frontispiece with a semi-circular arch gable in the eaves and Tuscan order style moulding at the door and window surrounds on the ground floor, and asymmetrical façade, plain and well-proportioned design with clear forms point to the Neo-Georgian architecture with a possible influence of Arts and Crafts.

The most conspicuous feature of the Restoration Public House is its being the centre of the social life of the 1920s new housing development in suburban Reading, shaping a collective experience and memory of 'communal value'. It was built on the extended major arterial, Oxford Road, and opened as an H. & G. Simonds Ltd, the historic brewing company of Reading, to serve vast populations. In the form of a 'roadhouse' to provide refreshments, food other than alcohol, recreation opportunities, and games to all community members, the Restoration was a social base of gatherings, darts, billiard games and music events until its closure in the 2010s.

On a larger scale, the Restoration Public House contributes considerably to the suburban townscape of Reading and gives Oxford Road a distinctive character. It is directly connected to the 1920s and 1930s 'garden suburb' and 'garden city movements', which had a deep influence on low-rise housing, more irregular layouts often incorporating cul-de-sacs and closes, green spaces, gardens and large estates built in considerable quantities following the Housing Act of 1919. It was created along with the shopping parade at Nos 930 to 940, of the same architectural style, constituting a 'group value' of prominence within the streetscape, and it was situated between the railway line to the north and the Norcot Housing Estate to the south, reflecting characteristics of the typical inter-war pub and needs of the local community.

**06 December 2023**



**Reading**  
 Borough Council  
 Working better with you

<b>Title</b>	<b>PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT</b>
<b>Ward</b>	Abbey
<b>Planning Application Reference:</b>	231464/FUL
<b>Site Address:</b>	Units 49, 50, 52 Broad Street Mall
<b>Proposed Development</b>	Amalgamation of units 49- 50 and 52, change of use from Use Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) to sui generis use (family entertainment centre) and external alterations on Queens walk frontage.
<b>Applicant</b>	FunBox Entertainment UK Ltd
<b>Report author</b>	Nathalie Weekes
<b>Deadline:</b>	6 December 2023
<b>Recommendations</b>	Grant planning permission, subject to conditions as follows:
<b>Conditions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Time Limit (Standard)</li> <li>2. Approved Plans</li> <li>3. Materials As Specified</li> <li>4. No mechanical plant shall be installed until a noise assessment of the proposed mechanical plant has been submitted to and approved by the Council.</li> <li>5. No external extraction system shall be installed until details of an odour assessment and a detailed odour management plan to include scale plans, odour control specifications and a maintenance plan have been submitted and approved by the Council.</li> <li>6. Transport - Delivery and Servicing Plan for basement level access only to be submitted and approved prior to occupation.</li> <li>7. Prior to commencement a Construction Method Statement to be agreed.</li> <li>8. Details of street furniture to be submitted and approved prior to occupation.</li> <li>9. Implementation prior to first operation and retention of the Operational Management Plan, Planning Potential, August 2023, as received 12 October 2023</li> <li>10. Hours of Operation (Sunday to Tuesday: 10:00- 22:30, Last food order: 22:00 Wednesday 10:00-23:30, Last food order: 23:00 Thursday to Saturday: 10:00-00:30 Last food order: 00:00)</li> </ol>

	12. Prior to occupation submission and approval of any external lighting to be placed on the external elevation on Queens Walk.
<b>Informatives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Terms and conditions</li> <li>2. Complaints about construction</li> <li>3. Encroachment</li> <li>4. Building Regulations approval may be required</li> <li>5. Highways Act</li> <li>6. Nuisance Law</li> <li>7. Licences required, premises licence and street pavement licence</li> <li>8. Requirement for advert consent</li> <li>9. CIL</li> <li>10. Positive and proactive - approval</li> </ol>

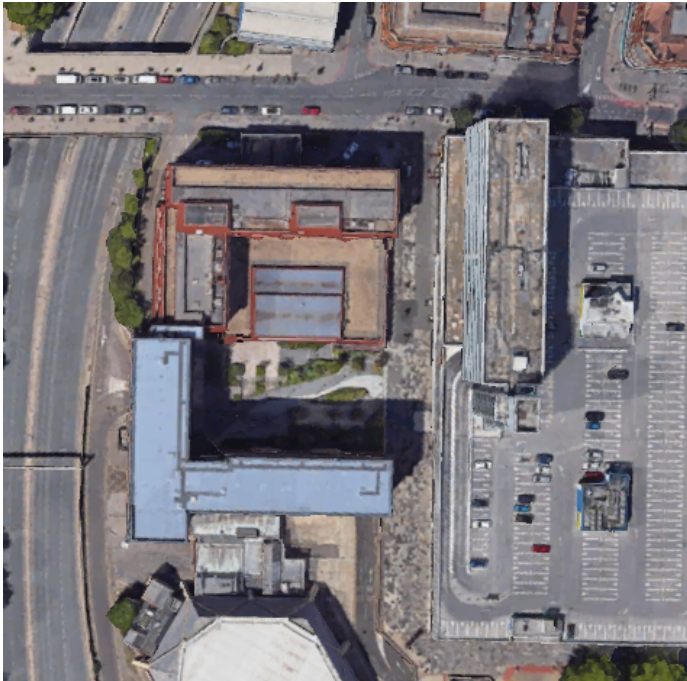
## 1. Executive summary

- 1.1. This report explains the proposal submitted by FunBox Entertainment UK Ltd for the reuse of three vacant shop units, requiring the amalgamation of units 49- 50 and 52, in the Broad Street Mall for a change of use from Use Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) to sui generis use as a family entertainment centre, with external alterations on the Queens Walk frontage to create a new entrance. Both units have external elevations that face Queens Walk and contain basement and ground floor areas. The proposal also includes installation of internal kitchen extract flue to provide an on-site cafe, and internal alterations associated with the new use.
- 1.2. The proposal is considered to contribute positively to the provision of leisure, culture and tourism in central Reading to attract a wide range of people into the centre and to complement existing uses within the vicinity. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

## 2. Introduction and site description

- 2.1. The application is referred to Committee at the request of Cllr Rowland. This application is also reported to Planning Applications Committee as it relates to change of use of over 1000m<sup>2</sup> of floor space and is therefore constitutes a 'Major' application.
- 2.2. The site lies within the West Side Major Opportunity Area, as identified in the Reading Borough Local Plan. This scheme is compatible with the future redevelopment for Broad Street Mall and will form part of the immediate short term works to maintain the vitality of the Broad Street Mall. Broad Street Mall consists of various units with differing uses, including retail, leisure, and food and drink outlets.
- 2.3. The site is located within the Reading Central Area, the Primary Shopping Area and Office core, as designated in the Local Plan. Additionally it is noted that the site falls with the Cumulative Impact Area designated by Reading Borough Council as Licensing Authority. This seeks to monitor the significant number of licensed premises concentrated in one area to avoid an increase in anti-social behaviour. The units are sited across from student accommodation, hotel and is in close proximity to The Biscuit Factory, Spinners Crazy Golf and Bowling and The Hexagon theatre. The Broad Street Mall multi storey car park and Reading Business Centre are sited above the units.

Site location plan:



### 3. The Proposal

- 3.1. The application seeks full planning permission for amalgamation of Units 49, 50 and 52 (Class E) to a single unit (total 1138 sqm over all floors) and change of use to form a family entertainment centre (Sui Generis use) with external alterations on the Queens Walk frontage and associated internal alterations.
- 3.2. The proposed use of the unit falls under sui generis (ie. a unique planning use, not falling into the grouped Use Classes of the Use Classes Order), providing a new leisure and interactive entertainment provision for all ages from children to adults, with a focus on family activities and games. The applicant advises that the proposed maximum capacity of the venue will be around 400 persons. Proposed activities include: Duckpin bowling, Electronic games rooms, Derby champion, Interactive sports games, Augmented reality darts, Remote control cars, Supercar stimulator, virtual reality, carnival skills games, American pool, and Skee-ball Games. The focus will be on entertainment, although soft

- toy grabs are proposed as part of the offering. No over-18 gambling machines such as fixed odds betting, fruit machine style games or coin pushers are proposed. After 21:00hrs, a responsible adult will be required to accompany anyone under the age of 18 on the premises. Food and beverages will also be sold. Outside café-style seating is proposed which will improve activity within Queens Walk and encourage greater use of the area. The premises will be cashless and operate on a card-based payment system.
- 3.3. New matt black powder coated double doors with a fan light and a black aluminium glazed shopfront is proposed on the Queens Walk frontage to replace the existing door. The revised access door will be moved forwards in line with the façade to remove a recessed area along Queens Walk.
  - 3.4. Relevant licences will be required separately. An alcohol licence has been granted subject to condition and a pavement licence has been submitted for consideration for outside seating to be placed on Queens Walk.
  - 3.5. An Operational Management Plan has been submitted outlining operational, noise mitigation, dispersal and security measures.
  - 3.6. Premises opening hours are proposed as (Sunday to Tuesday: 10:00- 22:30, Last food order: 22:00 Wednesday 10:00-23:30, Last food order: 23:00 Thursday to Saturday: 10:00-00:30 Last food order: 00:00).
  - 3.7. The applicant has specified that servicing of the unit will be as the current situation with all servicing via the basement. Therefore vehicular servicing movements remain via the basement access and the centralised basement refuse management area will be utilised.
  - 3.8. An application for advertisement consent will be submitted separately.
  - 3.9. Submitted plans and documentation:
    - 23/7079 Application letter, Planning potential, 11 October 2023
    - 3056-001(1) – Location Plan
    - 3056-002(1) – Block Plan
    - 3056-003(1) – Elevations as Existing
    - 3056-004(1) – Basement as Existing
    - 3056-005(1) – Ground Floor as Existing
    - 3056-006(2) – Shopfront Alterations
    - 3056-007(1) – Basement as Proposed
    - 3056-008(2) – Proposed Ground Floor
    - 3056-009(2) – Proposed Machine Plan
    - 3056-011(1) – Landlords Services
    - 12854.RP01.NAR.0 Rev 2, Noise Assessment Report, RBA Acoustics, 12 September 2023
    - Operational Management Plan, Planning Potential, August 2023
    - Brochure, Communications Potential, October 2023
    - 7079 Planning statement, Planning Potential, Urban Fun, October 2023
    - SOL\_23\_S094\_PLN Issue 3, Energy Statemen, SOL environment, September 2023
    - SOL\_23\_S094\_PLN Issue 2, Sustainability Statement, SOL environment, September 2023



Construction Management Plan, Urban Fun, DMU designs Architectural Services Ltd, 28 September 2023

CIL

As received 12 October 2023

Supplementary note on the nature of proposed use, Planning Potential, 7 November 2023

As received 8 November 2023

LP1001232 Reading Borough Council Premises Licence

Indicative visuals

Construction Management Plan Update 02 Issue, Urban Fun, DMU designs Architectural Services Ltd, 21 November 2023

3056-205 (1) Trading Deliveries

3056-204 (1) Parking Bays

As received 21 November 2023

3056-206(1) CCTV

As received 23 November 2023

#### **4. Planning history**

- 4.1. Formerly known as The Butts Centre, the Mall opened in 1971 and has had numerous permissions granted over the years. Recent applications for major redevelopment of the Broad Street Mall have been determined and are set out below:
- 4.2. Application ref. 182137 – Construction of three residential buildings ranging in height from 5 to 20 storeys above Broad Street Mall (Site E to provide 42 units, Site B to provide up to 134 Units and Site A to provide up to 148 units) and provision of a podium level amenity area, construction of a 16 storey building on South Court comprising ground and first floor retail and residential over upper floors (Site C to provide up to 98 units), creation of ground floor retail units fronting Dusseldorf Way and ground floor retail fronting Queens Walk, and all necessary enabling and alteration works required – planning permission granted 6th December 2021.
- 4.3. Application ref. 180823 – Subdivision of three-storey retail unit and change of use to form 1x retail unit at part basement / part ground floor, 2x flexible retail or restaurant units at ground floor level, and 2x assembly & leisure units (1 at part basement / part ground floor & 1 at part ground / part first floor level) together with shared access and means of escape, associated replacement shopfront works and associated external alterations on Oxford Road and Queens Walk frontages – planning permission granted 13th September 2018.

#### **5. Consultations**

##### 5.1. Non-Statutory

- 5.1.1. **RBC Environmental Protection** – No objections subject to conditions. As long as the dispersal management plan is put in place as detailed in the assessment then the impacts of noise from the use should be acceptable. Noise arising from development and odour and noise re kitchen extraction: these matters can be addressed by condition requiring details to be submitted and approved prior to development commencing or prior to any additional mechanical plant being installed. Works are proposed to be internal. A new application may need to be made at a later date for alternative plant / location.

Recommended Condition

BS4142 Noise assessment – to be submitted

No mechanical plant shall be installed until a noise assessment of the proposed mechanical plant has been submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The assessment shall be carried out for in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 methodology. The predicted specific sound level (LAeq,TR) (with reference to BS:4142) as measured at a point 1 metre external to the nearest noise-sensitive facade shall be at least 10dB below the pre-existing background sound level, LA90,T when all plant/equipment (or any part of it) is in operation. The predicted rating level, LAr,Tr (specific sound level plus any adjustment for the characteristic features of the sound) as measured at a point 1 metre external to the nearest noise-sensitive façade (habitable window of a dwelling) shall not exceed the pre-existing background sound level, LA90,T when all plant/equipment (or any part of it) is in operation. The plant shall thereafter only be installed in accordance with the assessment and shall thereafter be maintained so that it operates to the same standard.

#### Construction and demolition phases

We have concerns about potential noise associated with the construction (and demolition) of the proposed development and possible adverse impact on nearby residents (and businesses), particularly as the CMS submitted with the application mentions carrying out noisy works at night – this may impact residents at Queens Court.

#### Construction Method statement

No development shall commence on site, including any works of demolition, until a site specific Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Statement shall provide for

- a) Provisions to be made for the control of noise coming from the site during demolition and construction; [EP REQUIREMENT]

The measures within the approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the demolition and construction period unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and in the interests of protecting the amenity of local land uses or neighbouring residents, the character of the area and highway safety in accordance with Policy CC8 and TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

*Officer note: Due to the proposed flexible layout of the internal uses it is considered reasonable that the condition can be worded to secure details prior to any extraction equipment being installed.*

- 5.1.2. **RBC Transport Strategy** - Additional information has been requested regarding servicing of the unit prior to determination of the application. An agreed construction management statement would be required as a condition. There is no objection in principle to the proposal. The units have previously been occupied by retail stores and as such would have generated significant levels of movement much of which would have been ancillary to the wider town centre area. The proposed use will generate no greater levels of movement than the existing use much of which would also be undertaken outside of the peak travel periods. The Highway Authority are therefore happy that no further assessment in relation to trip generation is required.

Given that the site is located within the town centre area and would generate no increased demand for car or cycle parking I am happy that the visitor provision in the town centre can be utilised as per the existing retail uses. Staff cycle parking has been provided within the basement and this is deemed acceptable.

Condition proposed

DC10 Delivery and Servicing Plan

Prior to occupation of the development details on the management of delivery and servicing vehicles accessing the development site and the anticipated number of vehicle trips associated with delivery and servicing vehicles for the development shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. Thereafter deliveries and servicing will be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interest of the safety and convenience of all highway users in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS24 and Sites and Detailed Policies Document Policy DM12.

5.1.3 **RBC Licensing** – There are no objections from the Licensing Team.

5.1.4 **RBC Waste services** – No comments received at time of writing the report

5.1.5 **R.E.D.A.** – No objection.

5.1.6 **Thames Valley Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor** – No comments received at time of writing the report.

5.1.7 **RBC CCTV Officer** – No comments received at time of writing the report.

*Case Officer Comment: There are two existing cameras in the area that cover areas of Hosier Street and the Hexagon. Additional CCTV provision at the site is a requirement of the premises licence.*

Site notices were displayed for the required notice period on the exterior of the unit.

No representations had been received at the time of writing.

## 6. Legal context

6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12). 7.2

6.2 In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

6.3 Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

### Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

Policies:

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

CC9: Securing Infrastructure

CR1: Definition of Central Reading

CR12: West Side Major Opportunity Area

CR2: Design in Central Reading

CR3: Public Realm in Central Reading

CR4: Leisure, Culture and Tourism in Central Reading  
CR5: Drinking Establishments in Central Reading  
CR12d: Broad Street Mall  
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources  
EN17: Noise Generating Equipment  
OU1: New and Existing Community Facilities  
OU5: Shopfronts and Cash Machines  
RL1: Network and Hierarchy of Centres  
RL2: Scale and Location of Retail, Leisure and Culture Development  
TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy  
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

Supplementary Planning Documents:  
Design Guide to Shopfronts SPD (2022)  
Employment, Skills and Training SPD adopted April (2013)  
Minster Quarter Area Development Framework adopted December (2018)

## 7 Appraisal

7.1 The main considerations are:

- I. **Compatibility with planning policy and wider regeneration of the Area**
- II. **Impact on local amenity**
- III. **Design and the Public Realm**
- IV. **Transport**
- V. **Other Matters**

### **I Compatibility with planning policy and wider regeneration of the Area**

- 7.2 Paragraph 86 of the NPPF (2023) states that planning policies and decisions should define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability. The glossary of the NPPF details that main town centre uses include retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); and leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls). A family entertainment centre would therefore constitute an appropriate town centre use as set out in national policy. Many of the uses suitable in a central location fall under Class E use whereas an amusement arcade, or centre of funfair, retail warehouse club or similar uses would fall under a Sui generis use.
- 7.3 Reading Local Plan Policy RL1 seeks to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of centres, as well as widen the range of uses whilst Policy RL3 outlines appropriate 'centre uses' which include certain sui generis uses such as amusement arcades. Policy CR1 also seeks to promote retail development whilst supporting other town centre uses within the wider Central Core area. The proposed sui generis leisure use would be an appropriate town centre uses in this location. Whilst the proposals would also accord with Policies RL2, CR4 and CR5 which seek to locate new Leisure, Culture and Tourism facilities within the Town Centre.
- 7.4 The proposal will result in the re-use of vacant units within the Mall and it is not considered to result in an excessive clustering of leisure-type uses within one area of the town due to the diversity of leisure activities proposed and the wider benefit of a family entertainment centre attraction, that will appeal to a range of age groups and abilities. Policy CR4 states that '*leisure, cultural and tourism uses that would attract a wide range of people into the centre will be encouraged.*' and furthermore that, '*Leisure and entertainment uses that would contribute to the 18-hour economy will be encouraged, and*

*existing uses maintained. This should include a range of different, yet complementary evening and night-time economy uses to cater for all sections of Reading's community, and offer alternative activities to drinking."*

- 7.5 The Local Plan does deal with the perceived proliferation of betting shops and payday loan companies under Policy RL4 (Betting Shops and Payday Loan Companies), but the family entertainment centre - which will not include gambling - does not fall under the definition of a betting shop or payday loan company.
- 7.6 The change from Class E to sui generis will not result in a loss of commercial provision at Broad Street Mall. The New Look clothing store closed in 2018 and the remaining unit was used temporarily as a Covid vaccination centre, however the units have largely remained vacant. The previous use for a short term fixed period as a vaccination centre in response to the Covid crisis is not considered to have changed the established (lawful) planning use of the site from retail to a community/medical use. A replacement medical or community use is not therefore required in this instance and no conflict with Policy OU1 is identified. There is also still a good variety of Class E commercial provision within the shopping centre and a number of other units remain vacant. Broad Street Mall has the capacity, operational logistics, resources and a central location with good transport links to accommodate customers to the site.
- 7.7 The family entertainment centre is considered to be an appropriate use due to the changing nature of 'high streets' with a greater emphasis and focus on leisure provision.

## **II Impact on local amenity**

- 7.8 There are no residential dwellings in the immediate vicinity of the application site at present, however it is sited opposite the Penta hotel and the Queens Court student accommodation and these uses are considered to be susceptible to noise and disturbance, although not as sensitive as residential. Policies CR5 and CC8 seeks to protect the amenity of existing and future occupiers in terms of privacy, light, overbearing, noise and disturbance, lighting, vibration, small and crime and safety. With regard to existing commercial units and proposal for future residential units (proposed on top of the existing Mall structure) the building envelope is not sought to be altered and therefore the potential for any overbearing or loss of light is limited and there are no concerns in this respect.
- 7.9 The impact of the proposed food and beverage elements and associated activity has also been carefully considered as the site falls within the Council's Cumulative Impact Policy Area. Upright vertical drinking establishments are the most likely driver of anti-social behaviour and crime and disorder with potential to affect the amenities of surrounding residential occupiers. Following detailed discussions with RBC Licensing, officers have no objection to the scheme, as the beverage/drinks element will be ancillary to the gaming and activity use of the site as a whole.
- 7.10 Environmental Protection officers are also satisfied, subject to recommended conditions, that the site specific impacts of mechanical plant within the proposed development on any nearby occupiers (and future occupiers) can be suitably mitigated.
- 7.11 On the basis of the conditions outlined above, officers are satisfied that the proposal could be satisfactorily mitigated to prevent any undue noise and disturbance to surrounding occupiers and future nearby residential uses and would accord with Policies CC8, EN16 and EN17.

## **III Design and the Public Realm**

- 7.12 The proposals are considered to regenerate the existing elevation to Queens Walk with the proposed enlarged entrance and external seating creating an active frontage to Queens Walk, with open views from Queens Walk into the unit. This fulfils the aims of various local plan policies and the desire in the Minster Quarter brief to enliven this pedestrianised street, particularly as the previous retail use did not have an entrance onto Queens Walk.

- 7.13 Street furniture is sought in relation to the proposed use in the form of external seating and a smoking area; and associated litter-bins and canvas barriers, etc. This street furniture is subject to a street pavement licence and is considered to have no adverse visual impact and is considered to enliven Queens Walk. These structures will need to be secured or retracted when the operation ceases to trade in the evening to avoid such equipment being used for anti-social activity. This can be controlled by condition.
- 7.14 In design terms, the proposal is considered to accord with Policies CC7 and CR2.

#### **IV Transport**

- 7.15 The Highway Authority has no objection in principle to a change of use of this nature as the majority of customer trips will be linked trips to the town centre. Regarding servicing, the units to be amalgamated have existing basement servicing arrangements. The proposal is to be serviced by stairs and a newly created service lift in the centre of the site, to access the existing basement servicing area of the Mall. The use is compatible to the centre and complies with policies CC6. Officers advise that the proposal is considered to comply with policies CC6, TR5 and TR3.

#### **V Other matters**

##### **CCTV**

- 8.15 A separate Premises Licence has been approved for the use/operator, which contains conditions relating to the provision and ongoing maintenance of CCTV surveillance both within the premises and along the frontage. The conditions also require the presence of CCTV surveillance to be advertised on site. A planning condition to require CCTV would therefore be considered a duplication.

##### **Community Infrastructure Levy**

- 8.16 The proposal constitutes a chargeable development however Reading Borough Council charges CIL in respect of development for "All other chargeable developments Borough wide at £0". Also as the proposal is to be provided solely via change of use of existing floor space then, if the applicant can demonstrate that the building has been in use for a continuous period of 6 months at any time within the last 36 months then the liability would again default to £0.

##### **Employment Skills and Training**

- 8.17 Policy CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) requires that employment development should provide mitigation measures in line with its impacts on labour and skills. The proposal relates to a change of use of over 1000sq.m. The relevant EST SPD (page 11) indicates that the need for an EST plan technically applies to commercial major applications of a gross internal area of 1,000 sq.m. or greater. However, there is essentially no new construction work and it is considered that the size and nature of the proposed change of use from Class E to sui generis use within an existing shopping centre will generate physical works akin to a shop 'fit out' where internal elements would not normally have required planning permission. Moreover, both the nature of those jobs to perform the fit-out and the end jobs in the family entertainment centre (30-40 full and part-time jobs) are the kinds of jobs which the Borough is seeking in any event. Officers have consulted R.E.D.A. who do not object to the proposal and agree that these jobs are welcome, hence officers advise that an Employment and Skills and Training Plan is not required in this instance.

## **9. Equality implications**

- 9.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 9.2 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.

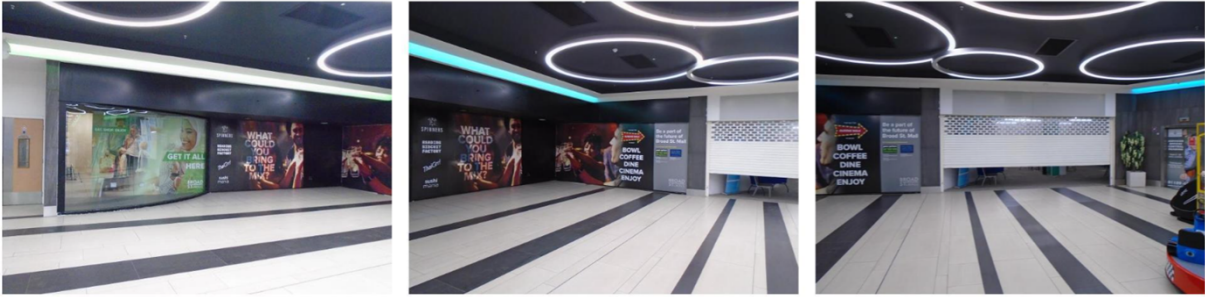
## **10. Conclusion**

- 10.1 As with all applications considered by the Local Planning Authority, the application is required to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as per Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 10.2 Officers consider that the proposal complies with the policies in the Local Plan. Having gone through this process officers consider that the proposed works are acceptable both in terms of the sui generis use class proposed and for the associated works required for the family entertainment centre.
- 10.3 This application is recommended for approval for Planning Permission subject to the recommended conditions.

# Plans

## 1. Existing Elevations

Inside Broad Street Mall



Entrance from Queens Walk



## 2. Proposed Elevations



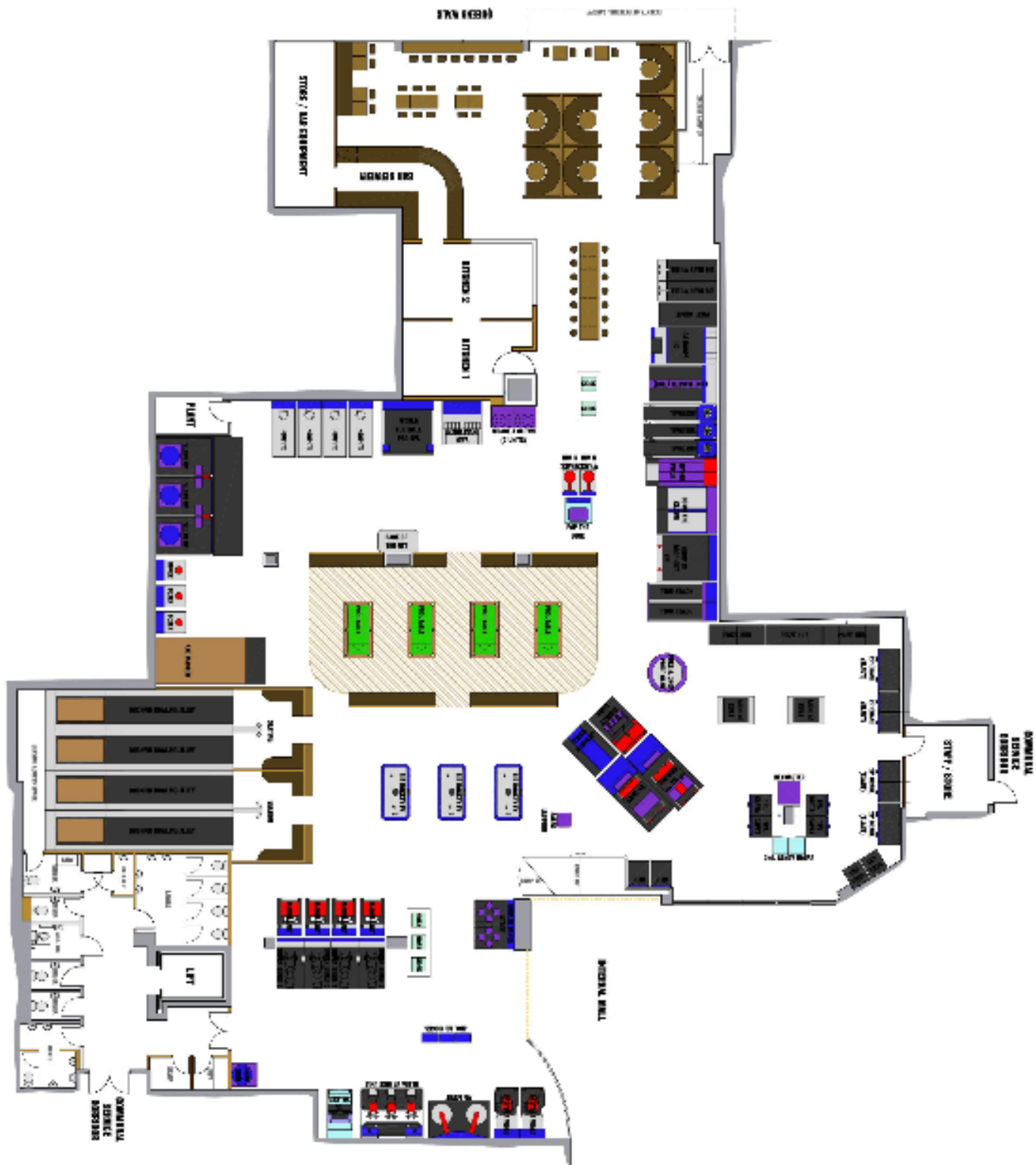


**Units 49/50 & 52 Broad Street Mall, Reading:  
Indicative Visuals**

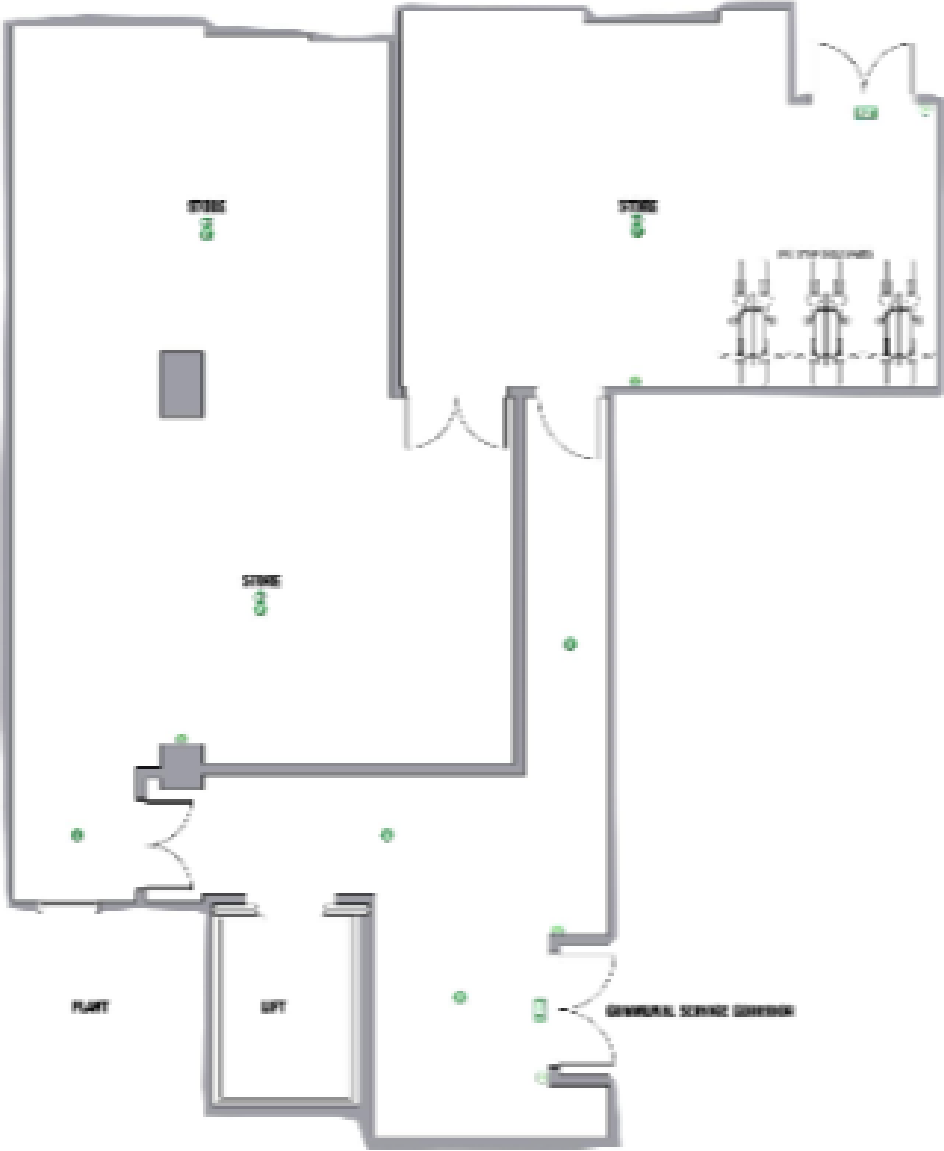


Indicative visual of the proposed new frontage on Queens Walk, with outdoor seating (subject to a separate pavement license)

### 3. Proposed Ground Floor Plan



5. Basement as proposed



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06 December 2023



<b>Title</b>	<b>PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT</b>
<b>Ward</b>	Abbey
<b>Planning Application Reference:</b>	221880FUL & 221881LBC
<b>Site Address:</b>	23-24 Market Place Reading
<b>Proposed Development</b>	<p>221880FUL - Change of use of first, second and third floors from Class E to 4 x 1 bed flats and 1 x 2 bed flats (C3 use)</p> <p>221881LBC - Internal and external alterations including new ventilation outlets to rear elevation associated with proposed change of use of first, second and third floors from Class E to 5 flats (C3 use) under planning application ref. 221880</p>
<b>Applicant</b>	Sykes Capital Ltd
<b>Report author</b>	Matt Burns - Principal Planning Officer
<b>Deadline:</b>	Originally 29 <sup>th</sup> March 2023, but an extension of time has been agreed with the applicant until 5 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
<b>Recommendation</b>	<p>221880FUL - Delegate to the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (AD PTPPS) to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to the satisfactory completion of a Section 106 legal agreement or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the Section 106 legal agreement not be completed by the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2024 (unless officers on behalf of the AD PTPPS agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement).</p> <p>221881LBC – Grant Listed Building Consent subject to conditions and informatives.</p>
<b>S106 Terms</b>	<p>To include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To secure an <b>affordable housing contribution</b> (amount to be confirmed in an Update Report) towards the provision of Affordable Housing within the Borough of Reading. Payable prior to first occupation and index-</li> </ol>

	<p>linked from the date of permission.</p> <p>2. To secure <b>private waste collection arrangements</b> for the development for all waste streams (general waste, recycling and food waste), including collection of waste directly from the communal bin store on a weekly basis and a stipulation that no bins are to be kept on the public highway at any time.</p> <p>In order for Officers to work efficiently and effectively, it is suggested that minor changes to the Heads of Terms and details of the legal agreement during the negotiations, where necessary, are delegated to officers.</p>
<p>Conditions</p>	<p>To include:</p> <p><u>221880FUL</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Time Limit – 3 years.</li> <li>2. Approved plans.</li> <li>3. Compliance condition – dwelling mix only as approved.</li> <li>4. Pre-commencement submission and approval of a construction method statement</li> <li>5. Standard hours of construction: 0800 to 1800hrs Monday to Friday, 0800 to 1300hrs Saturdays and no working on Sundays and Bank Holidays</li> <li>6. No burning of waste on site</li> <li>7. Pre-occupation provision of cycle storage</li> <li>8. Pre-occupation provision of bin store</li> <li>9. Compliance condition – management of bin store in accordance with waste management statement</li> <li>10. Pre-occupation implementation of noise mitigation measures</li> <li>11. Pre-commencement submission and approval of details of details of separating floor insulation between the first floor flat and existing ground floor commercial use</li> <li>12. Pre-commencement submission and approval of design stage BREEAM as built certification for Very Good standard</li> <li>13. Pre-occupation submission and approval of BREEAM as built certification</li> <li>14. Parking permits – prohibition on entitlement to parking permits for occupiers of all residential units</li> <li>15. Pre-commencement submission of details of louvre panel for bin store</li> </ol>

	<p><u>221881LBC</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Time limit Listed Building Consent – standard 3 years</li> <li>2. Approved Plans</li> <li>3. Pre-commencement submission and approval of details of secondary glazing</li> <li>4. Pre-commencement submission of material samples (including louvre panel to first floor bin store and new third floor level rear window)</li> <li>5. Pre-commencement submission and approval of methodology for installation of insulation between ground and first floor level of the building</li> <li>6. Retention of all other features of historic and architectural interest unless referred to on approved plans</li> </ol>
<p><b>Informatives</b></p>	<p>To include:</p> <p><u>221880FUL</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Building Regulations approval required</li> <li>2. Terms and conditions</li> <li>3. Positive and Proactive Statement</li> <li>4. Complaints about construction</li> <li>5. Damage to the highway</li> <li>6. Highways</li> <li>7. Noise between residential properties – sound insulation of any building</li> <li>8. Related section 106 Legal Agreement</li> <li>9. Related listed building consent</li> <li>10. Pre-commencement conditions</li> <li>11. CIL</li> <li>12. Parking permits</li> </ol> <p><u>2218801LBC</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Terms and conditions</li> <li>2. Positive and Proactive Statement</li> <li>3. Related planning permission</li> <li>4. Pre-commencement conditions</li> </ol>

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The proposal is recommended for approval subject to a legal agreement and conditions as set out above.

1.2 The proposals would see re-use and conversion of a vacant Grade II listed building to provide new residential accommodation in a sustainable town centre location, whilst contributing to meeting the Borough's identified housing need. The proposals would provide for an acceptable standard of accommodation for future occupiers and would not adversely impact on exiting surrounding occupiers. Notably the proposals would provide a policy compliant contribution towards affordable housing provision elsewhere with the Borough and it is considered that the application demonstrates that the proposed conversion works could be undertaken in a manner which would not materially impact upon the appearance or significance of the Listed Building, which would be preserved.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The application site relates to a four-storey building with a curved façade, with basement, on the corner of Market Place and Friar Street, near Town Hall Square.



*Site Location Plan*

2.2 The basement and ground floor of the building is in use as a hot food takeaway premises (sui generis use), which was given planning permission in July 2022 (ref. 211961). The first, second and third floors of the building are in office use (Class E (g) (i) use).



- 2.3 The building is Grade II Listed, the listing notes a number of features to the building frontage including bath stone ashlar (now rendered) exterior, moulded coping to parapet, slate roof and Doric pilasters above ground floor level. The listing notes that the building has a more recent shopfront, but it has been undertaken in a sympathetic and high-quality style and has the appearance of ashlar surrounds and wooden window-framing.
- 2.4 The site is located within the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area and is sited opposite the Grade I Listed St Laurence's Church, Grade II and II\* Listed Museum and Town Hall buildings as well as a series of other Grade II listed buildings within Market Place, including no.s 25-34 which adjoin the application building to the south. The adjoining building to the north of the application site at no. 175 Friar Street is identified as a building of townscape merit within the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 2.5 Surrounding buildings are within a mix of commercial uses, a number of which are currently vacant. Nearby buildings have extant planning permission and prior approval for residential use. No.s 27-32 Market Place, which is next door but one to the site to south, have planning permission and listed building consent for conversion of the upper floors (ref. 220546FUL & 220547LBC) to 8 flats. No. s 173-174 and 175 Friar Street which directly adjoin the site to the north were granted prior approval for conversion to residential flats (ref. 220577 and 220579) in June 2022.
- 2.6 The application site is located within the Central area, Central Core, Office Core and Primary Shopping Area of the town centre as defined by Policy CR1 of the Reading Local Plan 2019. The building is also located within a Primary Frontage as designated by Policy CR7. The site is within an air quality management area (AQMA), an area of archaeological potential and within the Abbey Quarter area as defined by Policy CR15.



*Photographs of the application site from Market Place and Town Hall Square*

- 2.7 The applications have been called to Planning Applications Committee by Abbey Ward Councillor (and Mayor) Tony Page due to concerns regarding bin storage and collection arrangements.

### **3 PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 Full planning permission is sought for change of use of the first, second and third floors of the building from Class E (offices) to 4 x 1 bed flats and 1 x 2 bed flats (C3 use) and Listed Building Consent for associated works.
- 3.2 The flats would be accessed via an existing ground floor entrance door to the east elevation of the building which leads directly to a staircase to the upper floors of the building. A communal bin store for the development is proposed at first floor level.
- 3.3 The application does not relate to or seek any change of use or physical alterations to the ground floor of the building which is currently in hot food takeaway use (sui generis use class).
- 3.4 The building is Grade II Listed and an application for listed building consent has also been submitted for minor internal and external alterations to the building to facilitate the proposed change of use.
- 3.5 The alterations proposed include:
- Strip out of the existing office fit out, soft furnishings and finishes throughout the first, second and third floors.

- Removal of the existing office air conditioning systems and suspended ceiling.
- New partition walls to create lobby areas at first, second and third floor level to create a hallway for the new flats.
- New compartment floors to replace the existing suspended ceilings with an independently framed fire and acoustic suspended ceiling system.
- New timber stud partitions to create room separation.
- New bathrooms and kitchens to each flat utilising existing drainage runs and with extract ventilation running through the suspended ceilings to exit on the rear elevation.
- New extract vents to external of rear elevation to serve the proposed ventilation system.
- Redecoration like for like of the existing windows
- Addition of secondary glazing internally to all existing windows.
- Removal of modern rear external staircase and doors and in filling with like for like brickwork and smaller sympathetic window openings

3.6 The proposals do not seek to make any external alterations or additions to the existing principal front elevation of the building which fronts on to Market Place.

3.7 Amended plans were submitted during the consideration of the application following officers' concerns raised regarding the proposed unit mix. The amendments changed the proposed unit mix from 6 x 1-bedroom units to the now proposed 4 x 1-bedroom units and 1 x 2-bedroom units.

3.8 Submitted Plans and Documentation:

- Drawing ref. PL-07 Rev E – Proposed Ground and First Floor Plans
- Drawing ref. PL-07 Rev C – Proposed Second and Third Floor Plans  
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023
- Drawing ref. PL-13 Rev C – Proposed Rear Elevation  
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2023
- Drawing ref. PL-01 – Location Plan
- Drawing ref. PL-09 – Existing Front Elevation
- Drawing ref. PL-11 – Existing Side Elevation
- Drawing ref. PL-05 – Existing Ground and First Floor Plans
- Drawing ref. PL-06 – Existing Second and Third Floor Plans

- Drawing ref. PL-03 – Existing and Proposed Block Plan
- Drawing ref. PL-14 – Proposed Side Elevation
- Drawing ref. PL-17 – Proposed Floor and Wall Upgrades
- Rockwool Separating Floor specification  
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022
  
- RF Environmental Air Quality Assessment ref. RFE-0480-22-01-02-AQ
- Jostec Noise Survey Report Including Assessment of Scheme of Noise Insulation Measures for Mixed Use Development at 23-24 Market Place, Reading ref. 2265102  
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2023
  
- Jostec BS4142:2014-A1:2019 and BS8233:2014 Noise Assessment of 23-24 Market Place, Reading ref. 22651  
Received by the Local Planning Authority 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023
  
- Letter from Sykes Capital ref. Proposed Bin Store Management – 23-24 Market Place, Reading, RG1 2DE dated 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023  
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023
  
- RF Environmental Odour Assessment ref. RFE-0515-23-01-02 AQ Final  
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2023
  
- Heritage Fusion Heritage Statement ref. 23-24 Market Place, Reading, RG1 2DE
- GypWall Quiet Twin frame high performance acoustic wall system specification
- Brink Excellent 180 – Heat Recovery Ventilation specification  
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022
  
- The Keen Partnership Design & Access Statement  
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023

### 3.9 Community Infrastructure levy (CIL):

Based upon the floor area of the proposed development the expected levy due would be £39,994, albeit this figure is possible this figure could decrease if the applicant can demonstrate that the existing building has

been use for a continuous period of 6 months within the last 3 years, in that case the levy would not apply to the development.

#### **4 PLANNING HISTORY**

##### Application Site

900802 - Front: fascia signs, box signs (window) and plaque (door)  
Flank: logo, sign and plaque (door) – Application permitted on 14/02/1991

900803 – Signage on frontage and flank of premises – Application permitted on 14/02/1991

900941 - Internal alterations of a three-storey office block with basement – Application permitted on 14/02/1991

050125 - Changes to ground floor windows and doors, front and rear elevations; including replacement of rear basement fire exit door. Changes to floor levels, ground floor only, internal alterations. – Application permitted on 19/01/2006

050655 - Replace all windows on front elevation and enlarge ground floor windows. At the rear replace an existing window and enlarge the opening replace existing doors at ground and basement levels. – Application permitted on 19/01/2006

050978 - Temporary change of use to A1 (Charity Shop) whilst preserving existing A2 use (financial and professional services) – Application permitted on 12/08/2005

051250 - Halo illuminated fascia sign to ground floor level; 2 no. projecting signs to each side of fascia. – Application permitted on 22/02/2006

060137 - Additional signage to existing high-level sign and removal of existing light box and replace with name plate – Split decision 20/11/2006

060566 - Signs and advertisements on side elevation – Application refused on 02/05/2006

060591 - Signs and advertisements on side elevation – Split decision 02/05/2006

060692 - Additional signage to existing high-level sign and removal of existing light box and replace with name plate – Application withdrawn

071218 – Advertising to the street level office – Application permitted on 15/11/2007

071219 - Install two projecting and one fascia sign (divided into 3 no. groups of internally illuminated lettering) – Application permitted on 04/10/2007

211961 - Retrospective change of use of ground floor and basement from Class Ec (Professional Services) to Hot Food Takeaway (Sui Generis) and minor internal and external alterations associated with the change of use including new kitchen extract system and vent opening to rear door – Application permitted on 13/07/2022

211962 - Minor internal and external alterations associated with change of use from Class Ec (Professional Services) to Hot Food Takeaway (Sui Generis Use) including new kitchen extract system and air vent opening to rear door – Application permitted on 13/07/2022

221202 - Externally illuminated fascia sign, two externally illuminated projecting signs and 5 wall lights – Application permitted on 09/02/2023

221410 - Listed building consent for an externally illuminated fascia sign and two externally illuminated projecting signs. – Application permitted on 09/02/2023

## **5 CONSULTATIONS**

- 5.1 RBC Transport – No objection subject to conditions to secure submission and approval of a construction method statement, provision of cycle storage arrangements as proposed and to advise future occupiers that they would not be automatically entitled to an on-street parking permit. A section 106 obligation is also required to secure private refuse collection arrangements for the development.
- 5.2 RBC Environmental Protection – No objection subject to conditions to secure implementation of the development in accordance with the noise mitigation measure set out within the submitted noise impact assessment report and limitation of construction hours to standard working hours (0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday, 0800 to 1300 Saturdays and no working on Sundays or Bank Holidays).

- 5.3 RBC Waste – Raise concern with the location of the bin store in terms of odour and management and indicate that the location of the proposed bin store at first floor level would not be suitable for Local Authority Waste collection arrangements.
- 5.4 RBC Conservation Officer – The proposals would result in minimal and negligible impact on the Listed Building and would cause no harm to the settings of other nearby Listed Buildings nor to the character and appearance of the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area. No objection subject to conditions to secure details of the proposed louvre panel to the rear elevation, details of replacement brickwork and full details of all secondary glazing
- 5.5 Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) – Do not wish to comment.

*Public*

- 5.6 The following properties were notified of the applications by letter:
- No.s 173,175, 176 Friar Street
  - No. 25-26 Market Place
- 5.7 Site notices advertising the applications were also displayed at the application site on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2023.
- 5.8 No letters of representation have been received in relation to either application.

**6. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

- 6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states at Paragraph 11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”.
- 6.2 Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

6.3 Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

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

- CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
- CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
- CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
- CC7: Design and the Public Realm
- CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
- CC9: Securing Infrastructure
- EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
- EN2: Areas of Archaeological Significance
- EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas
- EN6: New Development in a Historic Context
- EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
- EN15: Air Quality
- EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
- EN17: Noise Generating Equipment
- H1: Provision of Housing
- H2: Density and Mix
- H3: Affordable Housing
- H5: Standards for New Housing
- H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
- TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy
- TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
- TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
- CR1: Definition of Central Reading
- CR2: Design in Central Reading
- CR6: Living in Central Reading

6.5 Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:

- Affordable Housing SPD (2021)
- Employment Skills and Training SPD (2013)
- Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)
- Planning Obligations under Section 106 SPD (2015)

6.6 Other Relevant Documentation:



- Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)
- Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (March 2021)
- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking (Historic England, 2015)
- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 (2nd Edition)
- The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2017)
- Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance (Historic England 2008)
- Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings (British Standards Pub. BS 7913:2013, 2015)

## 7 APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are:

- Land use principles
- Development density, unit mix and affordable housing
- Design considerations and effect on character and heritage
- Amenity Matters
- Transport
- Natural Environment
- Sustainability
- Other Matters

### Land use principles

- 7.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (2023) encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land) and seeks that all housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 7.2 The existing upper floors of the building consist of vacant former office space. Loss of office accommodation must be considered against Policy EM3 (Loss of Employment Land) which states that in locations such as the application site, which are outside of the Core Employment Areas, loss of employment land will be assessed against a range of criteria including accessibility (including access to the strategic road network), viability of continued use as employment and impact on character and amenity of the area, surplus of similar accommodation elsewhere, need for other uses and whether or not the proposals would result in a

piecemeal loss of employment land where there is scope for a more comprehensive approach.

- 7.3 Whilst the site is located conveniently for access to public transport, it is clear that other larger purpose-built office sites outside of the town centre benefit from more convenient access to the strategic road network. In addition to this the office accommodation within the building has remained vacant for some time, whilst the small and convoluted nature of the accommodation is also not considered readily compatible with a modern office environment. Given the above and the availability of other larger purpose-built office sites elsewhere within the Borough the principle of the loss of the existing office use is considered to comply with Policy EM3.
- 7.4 In terms of the proposed residential use of the upper floors of the building; the accessibility of the site, located within the Reading Central Area as defined by the Reading Local Plan (2019), is considered acceptable for the proposed development in accordance with Policy CC6 (Accessibility and Intensity of Development) whilst the provision of new housing would align with the broad objectives of Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) in assisting in meeting the annual housing targets.

#### Unit mix and Affordable Housing

- 7.5 The five flats that are proposed would consists of 4 x 1-bedroom flats and 1 x 2-bedroom flat. Policy CR6 (Living in Central Reading) does not specify a specific mix criteria other than for larger town centre developments of 15 dwellings or more. More generally the policy requires that residential developments within the town centre contribute towards a mix of different sized units. Officers' view is that the small number of units proposed and lack of a specific mix requirement for this size of development is such that the unit mix proposed is considered to be satisfactory.
- 7.6 In terms of affordable housing, Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) states that development proposals of between 5 and 9 dwellings a financial contribution will be made that will enable the equivalent of 20% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere within the Borough. The Applicant has agreed to provide a policy complaint contribution in this respect (amount to be confirmed in an Update Report) which would be secured by way of a section 106 legal agreement with the contribution payable in full prior to occupation of the first dwelling.

## Design considerations and effect on character and heritage

- 7.7 Paragraph 199 of the NPPF states that “Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.”
- 7.8 Policy EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) states that heritage assets, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced. The policy goes on to state that proposals should seek to avoid harm to heritage assets in the first instance but that any harm identified would require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits. The policy also states that in respect of listed buildings development proposals should not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special character or historical interest. Policy EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas) seeks that the special interest and character of such areas is conserved and enhanced.
- 7.9 In terms of general design approach, Policies CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) and CR2 (Design in Central Reading) seek that all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area within which it is located.
- 7.10 The application is accompanied by a heritage statement which identifies that the principal significance of the grade II listed building relates to the details and features found to its front elevation on to Market Place, primarily above first floor level, given the ground floor shopfront has been subject to a modern replacement, albeit one which is sympathetic in style.



*Principal front elevation of the grade II listed building*

7.11 Whilst displaying timber sash windows and some good quality brick detailing, the rear elevation of the building is of less significance and has an overall more utilitarian appearance with modern plant equipment and services in connection with the ground floor commercial use present, as well as a modern full height metal external spiral staircase. The rear elevations of neighbouring buildings either side display similar utilitarian and functional appearances with this area having a 'back of house' character.



Rear elevation of the building

- 7.12 Internally the building has over time previously been subject to substantial alterations which have largely stripped the building of any semblance of a historic compartmental layout or other features, aside from timber sash windows to the front and rear elevations. The current layout is of open plan office accommodation at first, second and third floor level with modern partitions, hanging ceilings and office fittings present.



*Photographs of existing office layout of upper floor of the building*

- 7.13 The proposals to convert the upper floors of the building to flats seek minimal external alterations to the listed building. Notably no changes to the principal front façade are proposed whilst the existing ground floor entrance door to the offices from the north elevation of the building would be retained and used as the access for the proposed flats. In this respect the principal feature of the listed building, in terms of its significance, would remain unaltered.
- 7.14 It is proposed to make minor openings in the less significant rear elevation of the building to provide outlets for the proposed mechanical ventilation and extract plant equipment for the proposed flats. Four small openings, each the size of a single brick, are proposed at first, second and third floor level in order to provide the necessary exit points for the ventilation. Given the small size of the intrusions proposed for ventilation purposes these are not considered to result in any material harm to the appearance or significance of the Listed Building.
- 7.15 A single existing modern rear door at first floor level, which currently provides access to the external spiral staircase at this level of the building, is also proposed to be replaced with a single louvre panel which would provide ventilation to the proposed bin store. A similar modern rear door is to be removed at second floor level and infilled with brickwork to match existing and a similar rear door at third floor level is to be removed and replaced with a timber sash window reflecting the style and proportion of existing windows to the rear of the building. The proposed replacement of these modern door openings to the rear

elevation with smaller openings and sympathetic materials is again not considered to materially impact on the significance of the listed building. Notably the applications also propose to remove the modern external spiral staircase from the rear elevation of the building which it is considered would result in minor enhancement to the appearance of the rear of the listed building. A condition is recommended to be attached to the permission and listed building consent to secure samples of all materials, which would ensure the replacement brickwork needed to infill the rear elevation, where the doors would be removed and new openings provided, would match existing and that details of the louvre window need to be submitted and approved.

- 7.16 Internally the proposals seek to form the flats by dividing up the existing open plan layouts of the upper floors of the building. The heritage statement sets out that the flats and circulation corridors/lobbies would be created using reversible partition wall structures to ensure there would be no permanent changes or fixtures to the remaining historic fabric of the listed building. It is also proposed to provide new reversible hanging ceilings to each floor. The existing hanging ceilings hide services routes which sit below the original ceilings. The proposed new hanging ceilings would allow new services required for the flats to follow existing routes and not require intrusion into original ceiling structures. A similar approach is also proposed for fire and sound upgrades to the floor and ceilings of the flats to create a sympathetic void to provide necessary insulation within harm to existing historic floors and ceilings. Full details of all partition walls and hanging ceilings and method of installation would be secured by way of condition.
- 7.17 It is also proposed to install internal secondary glazing to each of the timber sash windows in order to provide necessary thermal and sound insulation for the proposed flats whilst allowing retention of the existing timber sash windows. These timber windows were previously replaced in a sympathetic manner under listed building consent ref. 050655 granted in 2006. Full details of the proposed secondary glazing, including section drawings and method of installation would be secured by way of condition.
- 7.18 The existing interior of the Listed Building has been subject to previous alterations. It is considered that the proposals demonstrate that they would be carried out in a manner which would ensure minimal intrusion into remaining historic fabric is required and such significant installations such as new walls and ceilings would be reversible in nature. It is considered that, subject to the recommended conditions, the proposed conversion works would be carried out in a way which would preserve, and not materially impact on, the significance of the listed building.

Notably with no alterations to the building's principal front elevation proposed. The proposals are considered to comply with Policy EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment).

- 7.19 The impact of the proposed development on the special interest, character and architecture of the surrounding Market Place / London Street Conservation Area must also be considered.
- 7.20 The London Street / Market Place Conservation Area Appraisal defines the features of the conservation area that contribute to its special interest. Those features relevant to the part of the conservation where the application site is located include, presence of one of Reading's three Medieval Churches (St Laurence's), 16th and 17th Century timber framed buildings to Market Place, 19th Century Municipal buildings to Blagrove Street including the Town Hall building and Museum, examples of red, blue and buff brick buildings reflecting Reading's extensive local brickworks and public open space and trees to Town Hall Square and Market Place. Those features found to have a negative impact on the conservation area include the presence modern architecture to Market Place, vacant commercial premises and loss of original architectural features.
- 7.21 As described above the proposals primarily relate to the internal conversion of the building and do not propose any works to the principal Market Place elevation of the building. This elevation of the building is prominent to views from Market Place and Town Hall Square and is considered to be the part of the building which contributes to the architectural interest character and setting of the conservation area. Whilst minor external alterations are proposed to the rear elevation of the building, this elevation of the building does not make a significant contribution to the character and architectural interest of the conservation area due to its more utilitarian character and limited visibility. In this respect, the proposals would not materially impact on the character and special interest of the conservation area, the setting of which would be preserved. The proposals are considered to comply with Policy EN1 and EN3.

#### Amenity Matters

- 7.22 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) states that development should not adversely harm the living environments of existing or new residential properties, including privacy, outlook and daylighting. Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks to create safe and accessible environments. Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) seeks to ensure development is not damaging to the environment and sensitive

receptors by way of pollution. Policy EN15 (Air Quality) specifically seeks to protect existing occupiers from poor quality and EN17 (Noise Generating Equipment) from noise associated with plant equipment. Policy CR6 (Living in Central Reading) requires new residential type development within the defined Reading Central Area to demonstrate how issue of noise and other disturbance from town centre uses have been considered and where necessary mitigated.

#### *Standard of Accommodation*

- 7.23 Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) seeks that new housing outside of the town centre is designed to adhere to the nationally prescribed spaces standards. Whilst the site is located within the town centre, it is welcomed that the application proposes that all of the residential units would meet or exceed the national standards. The flats would have outlook to both the Market Place and the rear of the buildings thereby having dual aspects. All habitable rooms have at least one external window and are considered to be well served in terms of outlook and daylighting.
- 7.26 Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) sets standards for access to suitable private or communal outdoor space for new residential dwellings. The policy acknowledges that flats within central Reading are unlikely to be able to meet these standards in full. Due to the location of the proposed flats, to the upper floors of the building, these dwellings would not be served directly by private or communal amenity space. This situation is not uncommon for town centre developments with the flats being well served by leisure and recreation facilities within the town centre, with Forbury Gardens close by. Given the central location of the site Officers are satisfied that future occupiers of the five flats would be served by suitable access to outdoor space. Furthermore, the addition of balconies to provide amenity space to the flats would very likely involve harmful alterations and intrusion to the Listed Building which would not be supported.

#### *Access*

- 7.27 Access to the flats would be via the existing entrance door from the north elevation of the building from Market Place which is located well in terms of natural surveillance from public areas. The residential units to the upper floors would be accessed only via stairs and it is not proposed to provide lift access given this would necessitate significant intrusions in the building's historic fabric. Given the relatively small number of dwellings proposed and duty to preserve and enhance the



historic significance of the Listed Building, officers accept that fully accessible units cannot be provided to this part of the site.

#### *Noise and Disturbance*

- 7.28 The site is located within the town centre where there are a variety of potential sources of noise disturbance for future occupiers of the flats; including traffic noise from Market Place, Friar Street and The Forbury and that associated with surrounding commercial uses which form part of the night-time economy, including the permitted hot food takeaway use to the ground floor of the application building.
- 7.29 A noise assessment and mitigation scheme has been submitted with the application and a number of noise mitigation measures are proposed, including secondary glazing, mechanical ventilation and additional insulation between the floor of the proposed first floor flat and the existing ground floor hot food takeaway use below. RBC Environmental Protection Officers have reviewed the noise assessment and are satisfied that it has been carried out to an appropriate standard and that subject to implementation of the proposed mitigation measures would ensure that acceptable internal noise levels within the flats would be achieved. Implementation of the proposed noise mitigation measures would be secured by way of condition.
- 7.30 The town centre location of the site is such that even with the proposed noise mitigation measures, noise levels within the flats could exceed recommended levels when windows are open. However, the inclusion of mechanical ventilation would ensure that a fresh supply of air can be maintained even when windows are closed. This aligns with Policy CR6 (Living in Central Reading), the supporting text to which under paragraph 5.3.25 of the Local Plan, states that in some cases, in order for the internal noise levels to be reasonable and not adversely affect health it would be necessary to provide a system of ventilation that entirely removes the necessity to open windows, even in very hot weather.

#### *Air Quality*

- 7.31 The site is located within an air quality management area (AQMA) and an air quality assessment has been submitted with the application. The assessment demonstrates that pollutant levels at the façade of the development are not likely to exceed recommended levels and therefore specific mitigation is not required. RBC Environmental Protection Officers have reviewed the assessment and are satisfied that it has been carried out to an appropriate standard and that the conclusions are

sound. The Environmental Protection Officer notes that the proposed ventilation inlets would be located to the rear of the building, which is recommended, given pollutant levels are higher to the front façade of the building.

### *Odour*

- 7.41 An odour assessment has also been submitted with the application which considers odours from the ground floor hot food takeaway use in the building. Odour mitigation measures were approved when planning permission for the hot food takeaway was granted last year. The odour assessment concludes that these measures are adequate to ensure future occupiers of the flats would not be unduly impacted by cooking odours. RBC Environmental Protection Officers concur with these findings and are satisfied that no further odour mitigation is required.

### *Waste Storage and Collection*

- 7.42 In terms of waste storage arrangements, a communal bin-store room for all the flats is proposed at first floor level within the building and it is proposed that all waste from the flats would be collected directly from the store on a weekly basis by private refuse collector. The initial plans for the development which were for 6 x 1-bedroom flats, did not include a bin store, and proposed that waste would be stored within the flats or in small cupboard at first floor level, from where the management company for the flats would have collected all waste in sacks and then deposited this on the street for collection by RBC waste services once a week. That arrangement was considered to be unacceptable by Officers due to lack of dedicated bin store facilities for the development, contrary to Policy CC5 (Waste Minimisation and Storage), which requires that developments are provided with adequate, well-designed space to facilitate waste storage, reuse, recycling and composting. The arrangement would also not have provided facilities to allow different waste streams to be separated and would have necessitated waste sacks being left on the street for collection, resulting street-clutter to the detriment of the setting of the Listed Building and the quality of views in the conservation area.
- 7.43 Following submission of amended plans for the current scheme of 1 x 2-bedroom and 4 x 1-bedroom flats, a dedicated bin-store room was incorporated at first floor level within the building. RBC Waste Officers have advised that this store is of sufficient size to accommodate the necessary number of bins for all waste streams for each of the flats (general waste, recycling and food waste). To prevent waste sacks from being left on the street, the Applicant has proposed that all waste

streams would be collected on a weekly basis by private contractor who would collect the waste directly from the first-floor bin store. The first-floor location of the bin store means that this would not be suitable for Local Authority waste collection services. Private refuse collection arrangements for the development would be secured as part of the section 106 agreement, which would include stipulations that all waste is collected directly from the store and that no waste sacks or bins are to be deposited on the street outside the site.

- 7.45 Whilst Officers are satisfied with the size of the bin store and that suitable waste collection arrangements can be secured, the location of the store at first floor level is considered to be sub-optimal given the risk of odours. However, given the flats are accessed via a door which leads straight to a staircase, it would not be possible to provide a bin store at ground floor level without future residents having to enter the ground floor hot food takeaway premises, which would introduce a security and safety concern. Furthermore, significant intrusions into the building to provide a store at ground floor level would likely result in harm to the Listed Building. The small rear service yard, which serves the hot food takeaway use, is also not big enough to accommodate a residential bin store and again residents could not access this area without entering the ground floor hot food takeaway premises.
- 7.46 Given the concerns regarding the location of the store the Applicant has provided further information as to how this would be managed and maintained. This includes provision of a ventilation louvre to the window to this room to provide natural ventilation and assist with dispersing odours. The door to the bin store would also be fire door which would seal the store from the common areas when closed. This would assist with dispersion of any odours via the louvre window and away from the first-floor common area circulation corridor and stair core for the building.
- 7.47 A management statement for the store has also been provided which states that all waste would be collected weekly directly from the store by private refuse collections service. The weekly collection arrangements would ensure that waste is not left sitting in the store for long periods. The statement also sets out that all bins within the store would be lined with large sacks which would be removed and replaced weekly in line with collection arrangements to avoid large bins being brought up and down the staircase and to ensure the bin containers remain as clean as possible. It is proposed that the bin store, and all common areas within the development, would be cleaned on a weekly basis by private cleaning contractor for the building.

- 7.48 Given the constraints of the historic building, Officers are satisfied that, by agreeing to secure weekly private refuse collection arrangements by way of a section 106 obligation and ensuring management of the bin store is carried out in accordance with the measures set out in the submitted waste management statement by way of condition, this would provide adequate mitigation to ensure waste collection and management of the bin store would not result in any adverse impacts upon the amenity of future occupiers of the development.

#### *Surrounding Occupiers*

- 7.49 The proposals relate to conversion works and no extensions to the building are proposed and as such impacts on surrounding occupiers are limited. The application building sits within a terrace of properties and is adjoined by no. 25-26 Market Place to the south which is in use as an estate agents with offices above. No. 175 Friar Street adjoins the building to the north, of which the upper floors are office accommodation which has been long term vacant, whilst the ground floor formed part of the former Bristol and West shopping arcade which is has also been long term vacant. The upper floors of no. 175 Friar Street have obtained prior approval consent for change of use to 6 flats (ref. 220577).
- 7.50 The proposed conversion would be served by front windows above ground floor level looking out on to Market Place, and rear windows above ground floor level only looking out on to the existing rear service yard building and no direct or unacceptable relationships with nearby buildings are considered to result. The proposal seeks to provide five flats and does not raise any concerns in terms of the level of the use of the building that is proposed and undue disturbance that would occur from the use of the building as flats to nearby existing occupiers.
- 7.51 Conditions are also recommended to secure submission and approval of a construction method statement to ensure surrounding occupiers are not unduly impacted by noise (and dust) associated with construction works associated with the proposed development and compliance with the Councils standards hours for construction work (0800hrs to 1800hrs Mondays to Fridays, and 0800hrs to 1300hrs on Saturdays, and not at any time on Sundays and Bank or Statutory Holidays).

#### Transport

- 7.52 Policies TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway related matters), TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and

Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development.

- 7.53 The site is located within the Reading Central Area and within Reading's primary shopping area. The site is located within Zone 1 of the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD which is an area at the heart of the Borough, consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments, with limited residential. This area is well served by rail and bus links and also contains the largest proportion of public car parking spaces. Market Place has vehicle access restricted to buses, taxis and permit holders between 07:00-11:00 and 16:00-19:00.
- 7.54 A car free development is proposed and given the extensive parking restrictions in place controlling unauthorised on street parking in the town centre and wide range of public transport options nearby, this is considered to be acceptable by RBC Transport Officers. A condition is recommended to ensure that future occupants of the proposed flats are made aware that they would not be automatically eligible for any resident or visitor parking permits.
- 7.55 In accordance with the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, secure cycle parking should be provided for residential units. However, in this instance a dedicated communal cycle storage facility is not proposed and instead cupboard space has been provided in each flat to allow for storage of a folding cycle. Given the small number of flats proposed, which would be located at first floor level and above, and the lack of reasonably available or accessible space at ground floor to provide a communal store, RBC Transport Officer consider this arrangement to be acceptable.

#### Sustainability

- 7.56 Policy CC3 (Adaption to Climate Change) seeks that proposals should incorporate measures which take account of climate change. Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) seeks that development proposals, including for redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock will be acceptable where the design and layouts use resources efficiently. In this respect the proposal, in converting the existing building is, considered to make good use of this existing resource. Notably the proposals seek to retain the existing characterful timber sash windows but proposed secondary glazing to ensure the thermal capabilities of the building are improved, whilst protecting the character of the listed building.

- 7.57 Policy CC2 also requires that the development to meet a BREEAM very Good Standard and details to confirm this would be secured by way of condition.

#### Natural Environment

- 7.58 Policies CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) and CR2 (Design in Central Reading) seeks to ensure that development is of high design quality and includes landscaping, whilst Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) seeks that all development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and should, wherever possible, provide a net gain for biodiversity.
- 7.59 The application site is entirely covered in built form and does not contain any vegetation or landscaping. The proposals seek change of use of the upper floors of the building and do not seek any significant external alterations or any changes to the roof of the building. Therefore, it is considered that the proposals would not have an adverse impact upon or result in a loss of biodiversity.
- 7.60 Given the constraints of the site, no landscaping or biodiversity enhancements are proposed as part of the development. On constrained town centre sites, where obvious space for such enhancements is not always available, Officers will often seek inclusion of features such as green roofs or bird and bat boxes. However, in this instance, the building is Listed, and addition of such features could not be achieved without impacting, and likely harming, the fabric of the Listed Building. Given the site does not contain any existing landscaping or biodiversity value, Officers view is the benefit of retrofitting such features to this small building in the town centre would not outweigh the harm this would result in, to the historic appearance and fabric of the listed building.
- 7.61 It is considered that the best way for the proposals to present high quality design, as required by Policies CC7 and CR2, is through retention of the existing Listed Building, which contributes positively to the character of the conservation area. Therefore, in this instance, given the constraints of the site, your officers' view is that the absence of landscaping from the proposals is justified.

#### Other

##### *Archaeology*

7.62 Policy EN2 requires that developers should identify and evaluate sites of archaeological significance and that where remains are identified and cannot be preserved 'in situ' they should be properly excavated, investigated and recorded. Whilst there is known potential for below ground archaeological remains in this part of the town centre the proposals relate solely to the upper floors of the building and therefore there is not considered to be any archaeological impact as a result of the proposed development.

#### Equalities Impact

7.63 When determining an application for planning permission the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Paragraph 7.27 of this report discusses the accessibility of the flats, noting that they can only be accessed via stairs. Notwithstanding this, there is no other indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the proposed development.

## **8 CONCLUSION**

8.1 The proposals would see re-use and conversion of the upper floors of a vacant Grade II Listed Building to provide new residential accommodation in a sustainable town centre location, whilst contributing to meeting the Borough's identified housing needs. The proposals would provide for an acceptable standard of accommodation for future occupiers and would not adversely impact on existing surrounding occupiers. Notably the proposals would provide a policy compliant contribution to affordable housing provision elsewhere with the Borough and it is considered that the application demonstrates that the proposed conversion works could be undertaken in a sympathetic manner which would not materially impact upon the appearance or significance of the Listed Building which would be preserved.

8.2 As set out within the report above it is considered that the proposals would comply with the relevant policies of the development plan and when taking into account all material considerations presented with the report the officer recommendation is:

- Grant full planning permission subject to the recommended conditions and completion of a section 106 legal agreement for the recommended obligations) and;

- Grant listed building consent (subject to the recommended conditions)

Case Officer: Mr Matt Burns

**Selection of Proposed Plans shown below:**

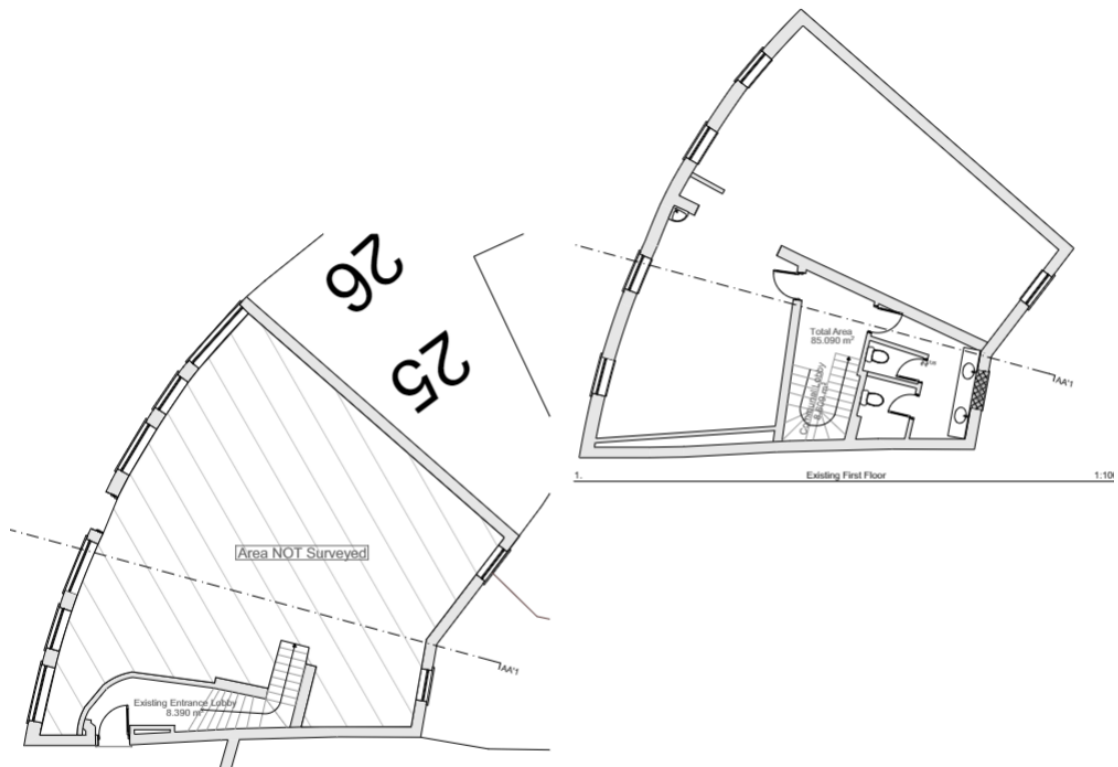
Full selection of plans and documents are viewable on the Council website using the application reference number via the following link:

[http://planning.reading.gov.uk/fastweb\\_PL/welcome.asp](http://planning.reading.gov.uk/fastweb_PL/welcome.asp)

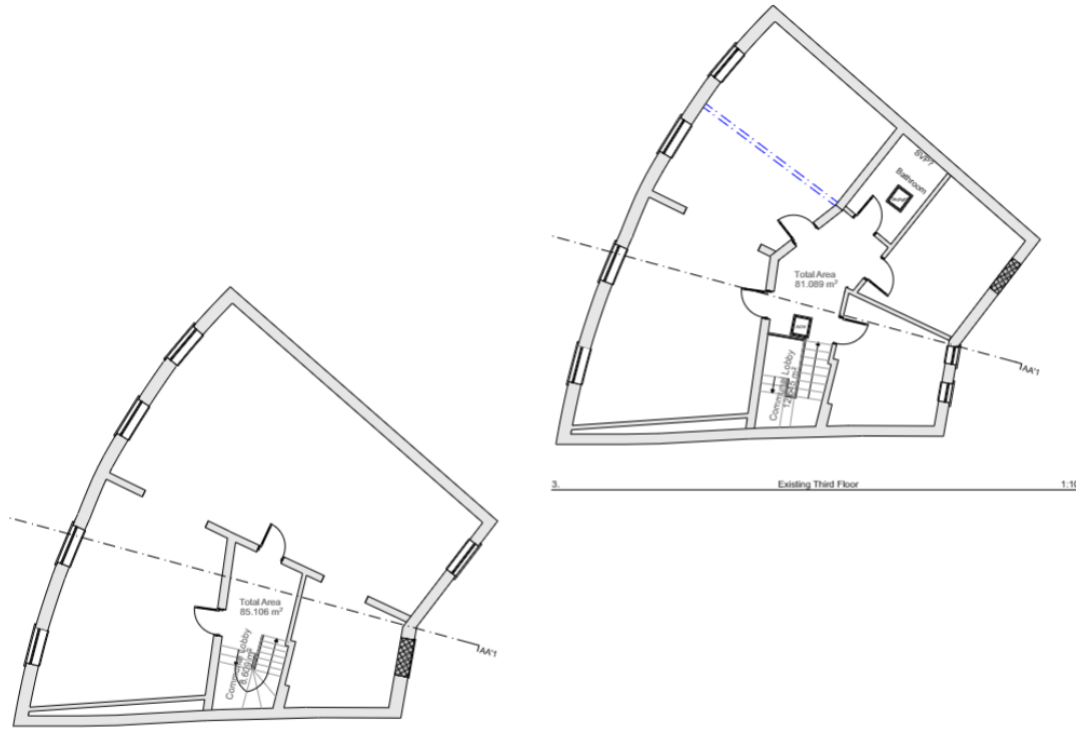


Proposed Block Plan





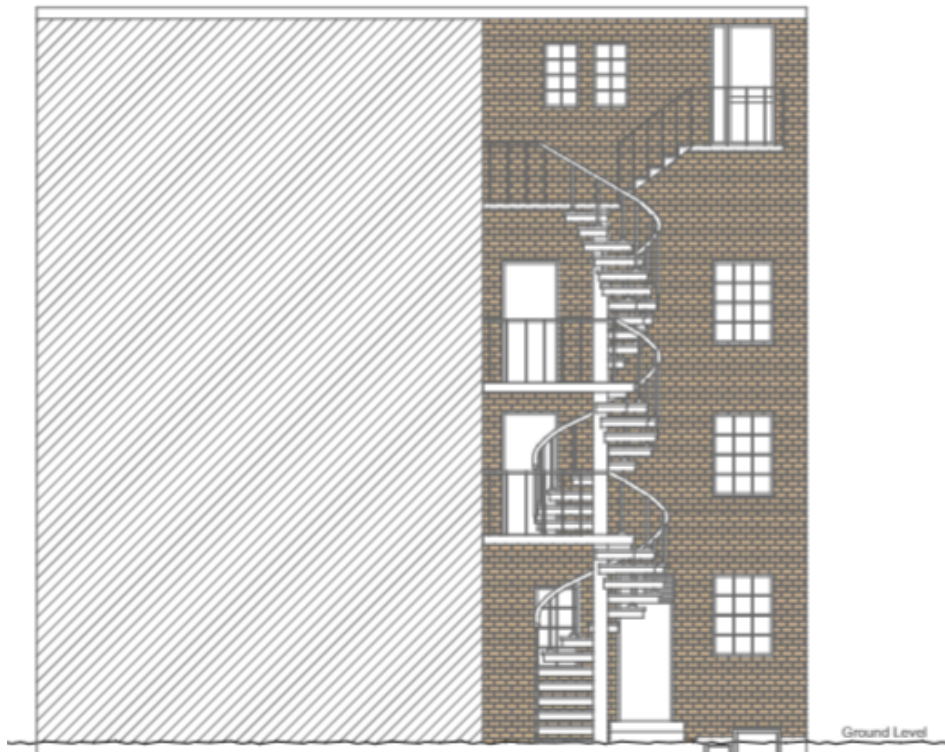
Existing Ground and First Floor Plans



Existing First and Second Floor Plans



Existing Front Elevation



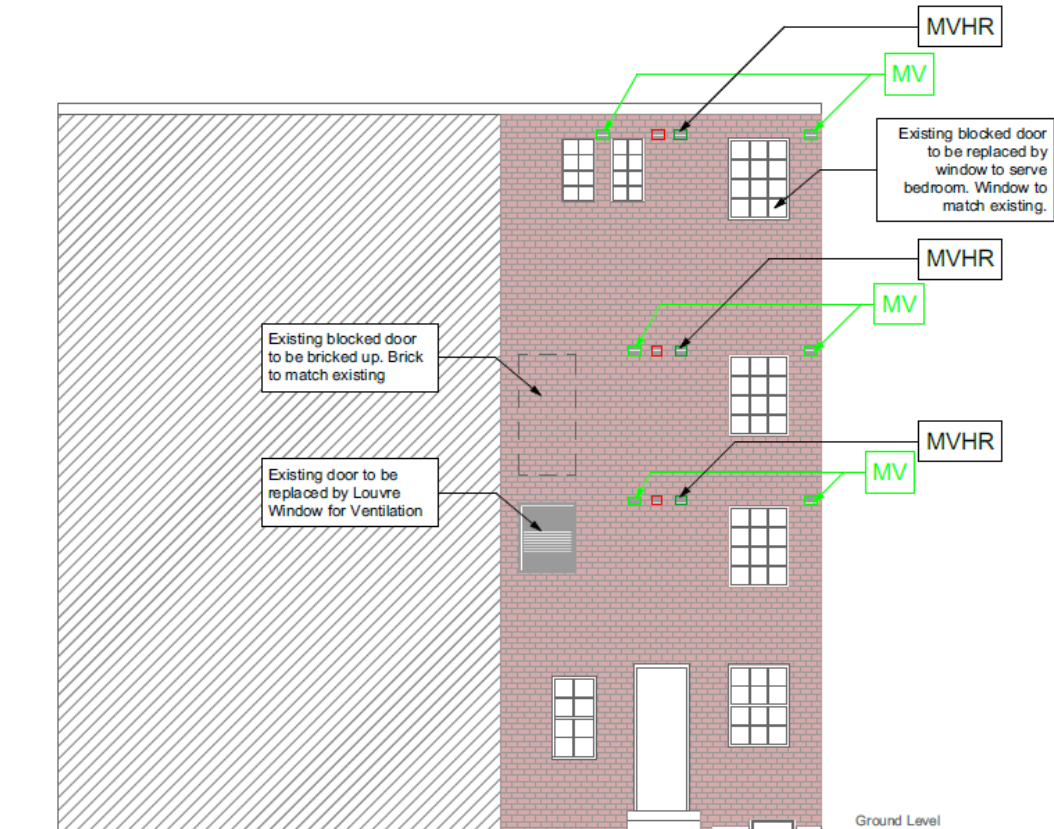
Existing Rear Elevation



## Proposed Ground and First Floor Plans



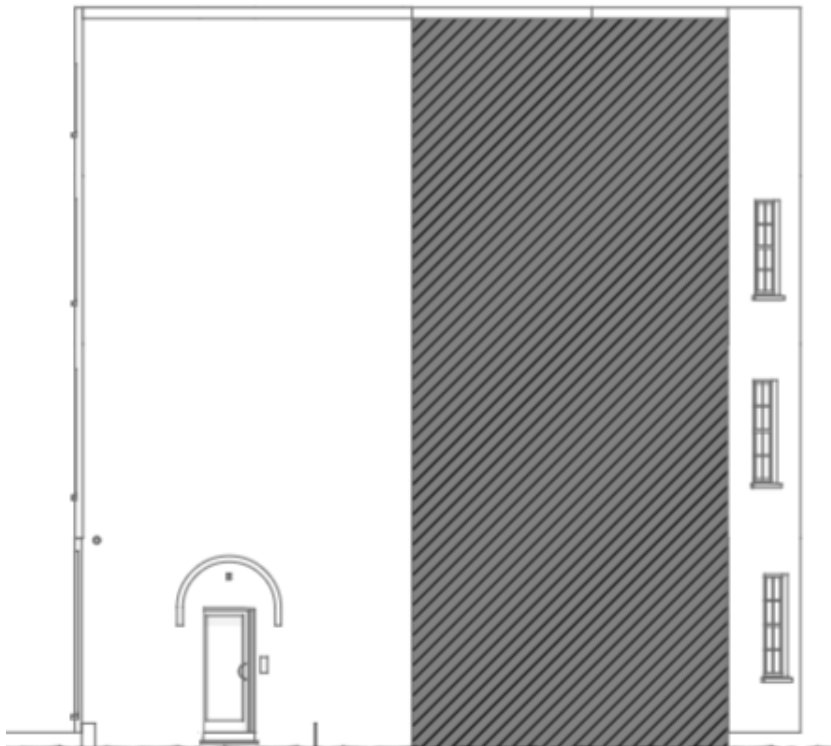
## Proposed First and Second Floor Plans



Proposed Rear Elevation



Proposed Front Elevation



Proposed Side Elevation (West)

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**06 December 2023**



**Reading**  
 Borough Council  
 Working better with you

<b>Title</b>	<b>PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT</b>
<b>Ward</b>	Battle
<b>Planning Application Reference:</b>	221345
<b>Site Address:</b>	Curzon Club, 362 Oxford Road, Reading, RG30 1AQ
<b>Proposed Development</b>	Outline Application for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of a building of up to five storeys containing 30 flats, ground floor retail space and associated parking, with landscaping reserved.
<b>Applicant</b>	City Wide Serviced Apartments Ltd
<b>Report author</b>	Tom Bradfield
<b>Deadline:</b>	27/01/2023
<b>Recommendations</b>	Delegate to the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (AD PTPPS) to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to the satisfactory completion of a Section 106 legal agreement or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the Section 106 legal agreement not be completed by the 1st of February 2024 (unless officers on behalf of the AD PTPPS agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement).
<b>S106 Terms</b>	As per 1 <sup>st</sup> November PAC Report
<b>Conditions</b>	As Per 1 <sup>st</sup> November PAC Report, with the exception of Condition 4, which is amended to widen the use class restriction from Class E to Classes E and F.2, and written in full below.
<b>Informatives</b>	As Per 1 <sup>st</sup> November PAC Report

## 1. Executive summary

- 1.1. The proposal is recommended for approval subject to a legal agreement and conditions as set out above and in the appended report.
- 1.2. The proposal would redevelop a vacant site within a District Centre. It would provide both market housing and policy compliant affordable housing. The proposals would have an appropriate design, ensure that there would be no unacceptable impact on neighbouring properties and provide suitable accommodation for future residents. The proposal would have no adverse transport impacts, be acceptable in terms of ecology, biodiversity and sustainability. The application is therefore recommended to the committee for approval.



## **2. Introduction**

- 2.1. Determination of this application was deferred at Planning Applications Committee on 1st November 2023 in order to explore options for securing the possibility of community uses at ground floor level.

## **3. Assessment**

- 3.1. In deferring the application, the Committee asked the applicant to provide further details regarding community use at the site.
- 3.2. The proposal remains the same as presented at Planning Applications Committee in November. The sole amendment is that the ground floor space could be either Class E or Class F.2 of the Use Classes Order, secured by an amended condition to allow for these use classes. The wording would be as follows:

*Notwithstanding the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification), the ground floor commercial unit indicated on the approved plans shall be used either for uses falling under Classes E or F.2 under the above order only and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in the same Use Class of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020, or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification.*

*REASON: Another alternative use of the premises which may otherwise be permitted by virtue of the above Orders could be harmful to the vitality and viability of the local centre, in accordance with adopted Local Plan Policy RL3. Furthermore, alternative uses have not been considered as part of this application, and so control over future changes of use would remain in the LPA's control to ensure that there would be no harm to residential amenity as the result of a change of use, in accordance with adopted Local Plan Policy CC8.*

- 3.3. The proposal was considered acceptable by officers with solely a retail use in this space, and a more flexible condition would allow for community facilities to also be located in this part of the development. This would create an opportunity for community uses to remain on the site, which would be beneficial to the wider community.

## **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1. The officer recommendation remains as per that set out in the November PAC report (attached as appendix 1 to this report), with the amended condition as above.

Case Officer: Thomas Bradfield



01 November 2023



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
Working better with you

<b>Title</b>	<b>PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT</b>
<b>Ward</b>	Battle
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<b>Site Address:</b>	Curzon Club, 362 Oxford Road, Reading, RG30 1AQ
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<b>S106 Terms</b>	<p>To secure <b>affordable housing on site consisting of ten units (30% provision)</b> on site, to be three one bedroom units and four two bedroom units of Reading Affordable Rent and two one bedroom units and one two bedroom units of Shared Ownership. Reading Affordable Rent (RAR) tenure would be capped at 70% of market rent as per published RAR levels.</p> <p>In the event that a Registered (affordable housing) Provider is not secured for the provision of the Affordable Housing on site, the units to be offered to the Council to be provided by the Council as Affordable Housing. <b>In the event that neither a Registered Provider or the Council can come forward to provide Affordable Housing on-site, the developer to pay to the Council a default sum equivalent to 12.5% of the Gross Development Value of the development</b> for provision of Affordable Housing elsewhere in the Borough. To be calculated (the mean average) from two independent RICS valuations to be submitted and agreed by the Council prior to first occupation of any market housing unit. In this event, the sum to be paid prior to first occupation of any market housing unit and index-linked from the date of valuation.</p> <p><b>Zero carbon offset financial contribution of £30,528.</b></p>

	<b>Employment, Skills and Training and Construction financial contribution of £8,000.</b>
<b>Conditions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Full - time limit - three years</li> <li>2. Approved Plans</li> <li>3. Materials (samples to be approved)</li> <li>4. Use Restriction (Class E)</li> <li>5. Detailed Design (Undercroft gate)</li> <li>6. EV Charging Points</li> <li>7. Cycle Parking (pre-commencement)</li> <li>8. Refuse Collection (to be approved)</li> <li>9. Parking Permits 1 (notification to LPA)</li> <li>10. Parking Permits 2 (notification to occupants)</li> <li>11. Vehicle Parking (As Specified)</li> <li>12. Vehicular Access (To Be Approved)</li> <li>13. Construction Method Statement</li> <li>14. Noise Assessment and Mitigation (To be submitted)</li> <li>15. Mechanical Plant (Noise)</li> <li>16. Ventilation and Extraction (To be submitted)</li> <li>17. Contaminated Land Assessment</li> <li>18. Remediation Scheme (To be submitted)</li> <li>19. Remediation Scheme (Implement and Verification)</li> <li>20. Unidentified Contamination</li> <li>21. Hours of Construction/Demolition</li> <li>22. Hours of Deliveries/Waste Collection</li> <li>23. Hours of Opening/Operation</li> <li>24. No Bonfires</li> <li>25. Waste Storage</li> <li>26. Sustainable Drainage (To be approved)</li> <li>27. Sustainable Drainage (As Specified)</li> <li>28. Archaeology</li> <li>29. Biodiversity Enhancements</li> <li>30. Tree Protection Measures</li> <li>31. Green Roofs</li> <li>32. Thames Water – Piling Method Statement</li> <li>33. SAP Assessment – Design Stage</li> <li>34. SAP Assessment – As Built</li> </ol>
<b>Informatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive and Proactive</li> <li>• Pre-commencement conditions</li> <li>• Highways</li> <li>• S106</li> <li>• Terms and Conditions</li> <li>• Building Regulations</li> <li>• Complaints about construction</li> <li>• Encroachment</li> <li>• Contamination</li> <li>• Noise between residential properties</li> <li>• CIL</li> <li>• Parking Permits</li> <li>• Thames Water</li> </ul>

## 1. Executive summary

- 1.1. The proposal is recommended for approval subject to a legal agreement and conditions as set out above.

- 1.2. The proposal would redevelop a vacant site within a District Centre. It would provide both market housing and policy compliant affordable housing. The proposals would have an appropriate design, ensure that there would be no unacceptable impact on neighbouring properties and provide suitable accommodation for future residents. The proposal would have no adverse transport impacts, be acceptable in terms of ecology, biodiversity and sustainability. The application is therefore recommended to the committee for approval.

## 2. Introduction and Site Description

- 2.1. The site is on the north side of Oxford Road and contains a vacant private members club, the Curzon Club. The site has been vacant since 2020 when the club closed due to lack of membership and the need for significant repair works. The building itself is three storeys and faces onto Oxford Road. It is not statutorily or locally listed, and is not within a Conservation Area.
- 2.2. Immediately to the north is a vacant site, which has planning permission for a residential redevelopment of 26 flats (ref. 201391) and has a current pending appeal for a similar scheme. Further north is the West Village residential development. To the east and south are rows of two/three storey terraced properties in a mix of residential and commercial use. To the west is a strip of landscaping with some mature trees, a small shoppers' car park with a row of retail units with residential above beyond, and the pedestrian entrance to the Tesco superstore.
- 2.3. The site is within the Oxford Road West District Centre and an Air Quality Management Area.



## 3. The proposal

- 3.1. This application seeks to demolish the existing building on site and erect a part four, part five and part six storey building containing a 125sqm retail unit, parking and servicing at ground floor with 30 residential units at upper floors. The unit mix would be as follows:

Type	Market	Affordable	Total
1 bedroom flat	8	5	13 (43%)

<b>2 bedroom flat</b>	12	5	17 (57%)
<b>Total</b>	20 (70%)	10 (30%)	30 (100%)

- 3.2. The tenure split for the affordable housing would be 70% Reading Affordable Rent (four 2 bedroom units and three 1 bedroom units) and 30% Shared Ownership (one 2 bedroom unit and two 1 bedroom units).
- 3.3. 15 car parking spaces would be provided at ground floor, alongside cycle parking, waste and recycling storage, servicing and plant. This would be accessed through an undercroft from Oxford Road.
- 3.4. The proposal includes rooftop amenity space, green roofs and solar panels at roof level behind a parapet.
- 3.5. The application is for an Outline Planning Permission, with landscaping reserved. Given landscaping is the only reserved matter, and there is no landscaping within the site other than green roofs and the roof terrace, in this case the proposals are tantamount to a full application.
- 3.6. An unaccompanied site visit briefing note was produced and issued prior to committee.
- 3.7. The applicant has submitted the following documents for consideration:
  - Planning and Affordable Housing Statement
  - Air Quality Assessment
  - Contaminated Land Statement
  - Ecology Statement
  - Daylight/Sunlight Report
  - Fire Strategy
  - Noise Impact Assessment
  - External Daylight Study
  - 3D Visuals
  - FRA and SUDS Statement
  - Energy Assessment
  - Energy & Sustainability Report
  - Transport Statement
  - Design & Access Statement
  - Existing and Proposed Drawings

#### 4. Planning history

<b>221005</b>	Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed Demolition of Building. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Schedule 2, Part 11, Class B
	<b>Prior Approval Granted 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023</b>

#### 5. Consultations

- 5.1. The following consultation responses were received from statutory and internal consultees:

##### ***RBC Transport***

- 5.2. The Transport Strategy team raised some concerns regarding the access width, which originally was 3m wide. This has been amended to 4.8m wide, and is now considered

acceptable. The provision of car parking would be below the Council's standards, but would be acceptable as the site has good access to public transport and on-street restrictions would limit overspill. Cycle storage would be acceptable. Conditions relating to Parking Permits, CMS, EV charging points and refuse & recycling were requested.

#### ***RBC Housing Development***

- 5.3. The Housing Development Team appreciate the 30% affordable housing offer, and have confirmed that the tenure mix and unit mix is acceptable and policy compliant.

#### ***RBC Waste & Recycling***

- 5.4. No objection to the proposals

#### ***RBC Environmental Protection***

- 5.5. No objections subject to conditions relating to noise, air quality, contaminated land, bin storage and construction management plan.

#### ***RBC Ecology***

- 5.6. The submitted ecology information is acceptable and demonstrates that there are no bats present. Conditions relating to biodiversity enhancements and green roofs requested.

#### ***RBC SUDS***

- 5.7. Proposed scheme is acceptable in principle, subject to conditions.

#### ***Thames Water***

- 5.8. No objection subject to a condition relating to piling and several informatives.

#### ***Public Consultation***

- 5.9. 179 neighbouring properties were consulted by letter and two site notices were displayed at the application site, one in front of the building on Oxford Road, and one adjacent to the car park.

- 5.10. One response was received and raised the below points:

- There are too many flats in Reading
- No more development should be approved until sales agreed for existing vacant dwellings

## **6. Legal context**

- 6.1. 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.

- 6.2. 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) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

- 6.3. In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

- 6.4. Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

## National Policy – National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023

Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development  
Section 4 - Decision Making  
Section 5 - Delivering a sufficient supply of homes  
Section 6 - Building a strong, competitive economy  
Section 8 - Promoting healthy and safe communities  
Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport  
Section 11 - Making Effective Use of Land  
Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places  
Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

### Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

Policies:

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  
EN2: Areas of Archaeological Significance  
EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network  
EN15: Air Quality  
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources  
EN17: Noise Generating Equipment  
H1: Provision of Housing  
H2: Density and Mix  
H3: Affordable Housing  
H5: Standards for New Housing  
H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space  
RL6: Protection of Leisure Facilities and Public Houses  
TR1 Achieving the Transport Strategy  
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters  
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

#### Supplementary Planning Documents

Affordable Housing (2021)  
Planning Obligations under S106 (April 2015)  
Sustainable Design and Construction (Dec 2019)  
Employment, Skills and Training (2013)  
Parking Standards and Design (2011)

## 7. Appraisal

7.1. The main considerations are:

- Principle of Development
- Design, Character and Appearance of the Area
- Neighbour Amenity
- Future Residents Amenity
- Unit Mix and Affordable Housing
- Transport
- Ecology
- Sustainability
- S106 Legal Agreement

### ***Principle of Development***

- 7.2. The NPPF and Local Plan seek to make best use of previously developed land within built up areas.
- 7.3. The proposal would redevelop a vacant brownfield site in a sustainable location to create a mix of uses. The retail use at ground floor level would be appropriate given the site's location within a District Centre. Residential use would be acceptable at upper floors in this mixed-use area.

### ***Loss of existing use***

- 7.4. Local Plan Policy RL6 relates to leisure facilities and public houses, and resists their loss.
- 7.5. Given the site was last in use over three years ago as a private members club (*sui generis*), it would not fall within the types of uses protected by policy RL6. Although the use itself is not protected by policy, the building would have been available for hire for parties or other functions, which would now be lost. There are other facilities nearby which could provide alternative community functions, such as the Oxford Road Community Centre or nearby public houses such as the White Eagle or Royal Albion. There are also multiple places of worship with function spaces nearby, and Battle Library.
- 7.6. The site has been out of use for over three years, and the building is not in a good state of repair. Significant repair costs were a large part of the reason for the closure of the club several years ago, combined with dwindling memberships and the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic. Given the club has not been reopened or taken on by an alternative provider, and there are alternative venues nearby, it is considered that the loss of the use would be acceptable. location.
- 7.7. Furthermore, in February 2023, Prior Approval was granted for the building's demolition under reference 221005.

### ***Loss of the building***

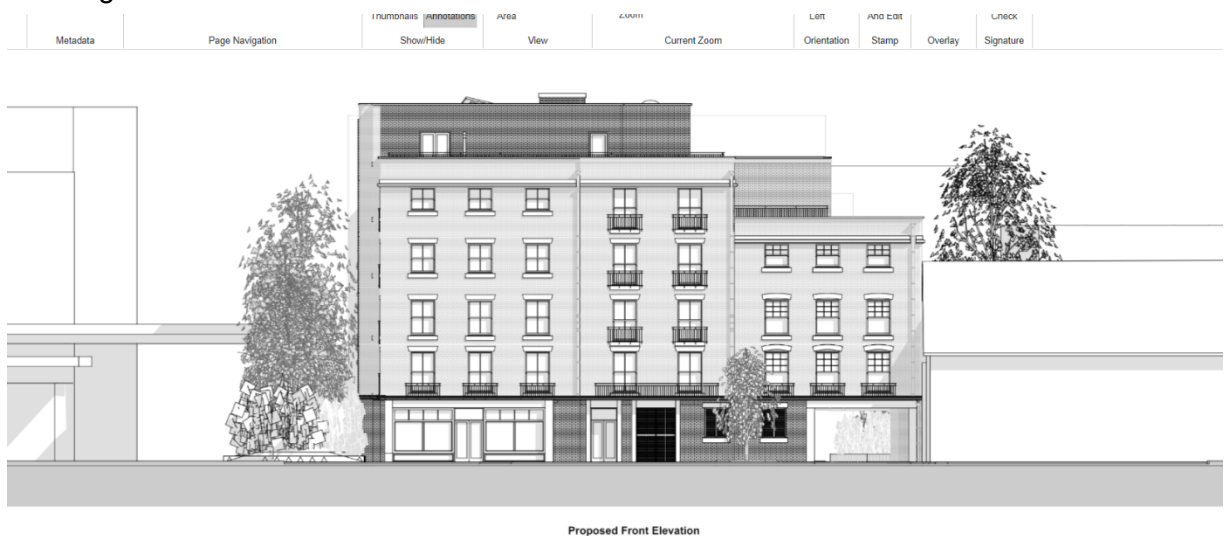
- 7.8. The NPPF 2023 requires decisions to have regard to the significance of non-designated heritage assets, and for a balanced judgement to be made which has regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 7.9. The existing building is not Listed, Locally Listed or within a Conservation Area. It is an attractive building, and does provide some benefit to the street scene in this part of Oxford Road. However, given the building is not protected, and benefits from Prior Approval for its demolition, the loss of the building would not be likely to outweigh the benefits of the proposed redevelopment of the site.
- 7.10. Overall, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle, subject to detailed assessment as below.

### ***Design, Character and Appearance of the Area***

- 7.11. Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) states that "all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area". The NPPF in paragraph 130 c) states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments "are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)".
- 7.12. The proposal would result in the demolition of the existing building. Whilst the existing building has some design merit, it is not a designated heritage asset, and its conversion would not be practicable to secure the density of development that this site could support. Its loss would be outweighed by the significant benefits of the proposed scheme. Furthermore, Prior Approval has been granted for its demolition.
- 7.13. The proposal would be set at the corner of Oxford Road and the wide pedestrian entrance into Curzon Street and the supermarket on Moultsford Mews. It is a prominent corner

location on Oxford Road, which is readily visible, particularly when travelling west to east, given the gap in built form comprising the shoppers' car park and landscaped area between the site and Cholsey House to the west. It would serve as an entry point into the more densely developed site to the north, which extends to between five and eight storeys in height, alongside the supermarket.

- 7.14. Along the Oxford Road frontage, the building would be four storeys at the eastern end, rising to five storeys on the corner before stepping up again to six storeys towards the northern side of the site. The massing would relate well to both the larger development to the north and the smaller scale buildings along Oxford Road due to its stepped profile, whilst still providing a strong corner building which turns the corner. A common theme in Reading, and in particular on Oxford Road, is the prominence of corner buildings, be it through a different design, roof pitch or a larger scale. The proposal would represent a modern interpretation of this, and the scale would provide a bookend to the row of buildings which continue to the east of the site.



- 7.15. The building would be reminiscent of a Victorian style, with varied window styles and strong vertical façades. It would have a flat roof, with brick banding and an active frontage at ground floor level through the inclusion of a retail unit. The use of alternating brick types and the varied fenestration size and types links to the varied style of buildings present along Oxford Road. The proposal would provide a prominent, interesting end point to the row of buildings which continue to the east, and through the stepped form and verticality of the facades would provide a suitable corner building.
- 7.16. The proposals have evolved through the application process, with a reduction in height, changes to the roof forms and an introduction of different brick styles. The current proposal would bring the historic and varied nature of this part of Oxford Road together to create a modern addition to the street scene, which would be an appropriate addition.
- 7.17. Overall, the proposal would be acceptable in terms of its design, scale and massing, and would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

### ***Neighbour Amenity***

- 7.18. Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 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.
- 7.19. The closest residential use is directly to the east, at 350a Oxford Road (Location 1 on the below plan). This property has four windows facing south, directly towards the rear of 350 Oxford Road. There are residential uses directly opposite the site on the south side of Oxford Road (Location 2), and to the west in the Cholsey House flats (Location 3) on the other side of the car parking area over the shops. To the north of the site is the vacant land which does has permission for redevelopment for residential, but as yet this has not



been implemented (Location 4). The below plan identifies these locations, and is taken from the submitted Daylight and Sunlight Assessment.



- 7.20. The proposal would be set away from the eastern boundary by approximately 5m at the closest point. The proposed building would step back further from this boundary the further north it goes. The proposal would be of a size, scale and in a position that would not result in any harm to the most immediate neighbour through the creation of a sense of enclosure or an overbearing presence. To the north, the building would be set off from the boundary by 3m, and would be positioned to ensure that there would be no harm to future development at the adjacent site through a sense of enclosure or overbearing presence.
- 7.21. The applicant has submitted a daylight/sunlight study which shows that there would be a reduction in daylight and sunlight to the windows at the neighbouring property to the east (number 350a), it would not likely be noticeable and would comply with the relevant Building Research Establishment (BRE) guidance. The assessment also took into account windows of properties on the south side of Oxford Road and at Cholsey House and concluded that there would be no harm.
- 7.22. The assessment identified that there would be some impact on the windows at the proposed development to the north (permitted but not yet constructed), given the relatively unrestricted view these windows would enjoy. The assessment concluded that although these windows would be affected, there would only be a minor adverse impact, according to the BRE guidance.
- 7.23. The proposals would have windows which face north towards the currently undeveloped site. The applicants have amended the scheme to ensure that these windows would either be obscure glazed or be angled to ensure that there is no direct overlooking. Furthermore,

privacy screening is proposed on the balconies on the northern boundary to prevent overlooking. It is not considered that there would be any loss of privacy for neighbouring residents, either current or future.

- 7.24. The proposals would not result in any harm to neighbour’s living conditions, and would therefore accord with Local Plan Policy CC8.

***Future Residents’ Amenity***

- 7.25. Local Plan Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) states that new build housing will need to comply with the nationally prescribed space standards. Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) requires dwellings to be provide with functional private or communal open space where possible. Local Plan Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) requires that homes should also have adequate natural light, outlook and privacy.
- 7.26. The units in the proposal would all meet the floorspace standards, and many would benefit from private amenity space. Communal amenity space would also be provided at roof level.
- 7.27. The units would all benefit from adequate daylight and sunlight, and given the position of the building, orientation of windows and position of balconies, would ensure adequate privacy for future residents.
- 7.28. The proposal has demonstrated that there would be no noise or disturbance between the uses on site through submission of a noise impact assessment, and conditions are recommended to secure mitigation where necessary.
- 7.29. The proposal has also demonstrated that there would be no harm to future residents as a result of air quality through the submission of an Air Quality Assessment. Conditions are recommended to secure relevant mitigation measures.
- 7.30. Overall, officers consider that the proposal would provide suitable future living conditions for residents on a suitable development site within a District Centre, and is therefore considered to comply with the Local Plan policies above.

***Unit Mix and Affordable Housing***

- 7.31. Local Plan Policy H2 states that wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting the needs for the mix of housing set out in figure 4.6 of the Local Plan, in particular for family homes.
- 7.32. The proposal would provide 30 units at the following mix:

<b>Type</b>	<b>Market</b>	<b>Affordable</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1 bedroom flat</b>	8	5	13 (43%)
<b>2 bedroom flat</b>	12	5	17 (57%)
<b>Total</b>	20 (70%)	10 (30%)	30 (100%)

- 7.33. The proposal would provide a good mix of unit sizes within a District Centre, with a slightly higher percentage of larger two bedroom units. Three bedroom units are not required by Policy H2 within Local Centres, and so this higher proportion of two bedroom units is welcomed. This would be in accordance with Local Plan Policy H2.
- 7.34. Local Plan Policy H3 requires development to make an appropriate contribution towards affordable housing to meet the needs of Reading Borough. For a development of this size, 30% of the total dwellings are expected to be provided as affordable housing. If proposals fall short of the policy, then the developer should clearly demonstrate the circumstances justifying a lower contribution through an open-book viability assessment.

- 7.35. The proposal would provide a policy compliant level of on-site affordable housing, with an acceptable mix and slightly higher proportion of Reading Affordable Rent units. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable.

### ***Transport***

- 7.36. Policy TR1 of the Local Plan requires developments to promote and improve sustainable transport. Policy TR3 states that consideration will be given to the effect of a new development on safety, congestion and the environment. Proposals should provide acceptable access to the site and ensure that there would not be a detrimental impact on the functioning and safety of the transport network.
- 7.37. The current site has a vehicle access from Oxford Road, which would be retained, as well as a small car park to the side/rear of the building.
- 7.38. The site fronts Oxford Road, which is a designated “Red Route” no stopping corridor, and has parking restrictions along the majority of its length. The site is well served by buses and is within walking distance of Reading West station.
- 7.39. The proposal would provide vehicle access directly from Oxford Road, via a 4.8m wide access point, using the same location as the existing access. This is considered acceptable in transport terms, and would provide adequate space for vehicles to safely enter and exit the site.
- 7.40. The proposal would provide 15 car parking spaces, which is below the Council’s adopted Parking Standards. Given the site is well served by public transport and the surrounding roads have significant on-street restrictions, the under-provision of car parking spaces is acceptable in this instance. Future residents would be restricted from parking permits by condition.
- 7.41. The proposal would provide adequate levels of cycle parking and EV charging points within the basement parking area.
- 7.42. The proposal would include waste and recycling storage within the basement level, with direct access from Oxford Road. There is an existing loading bay on Oxford Road outside the site, which has historically been used by waste and recycling collection vehicles to collect bins from the Curzon Club, and it is proposed that this would continue. The Waste and Recycling team had no objections to this arrangement.
- 7.43. Overall, the proposals would represent an appropriate development in transport terms, and it would comply with the Local Plan.

### ***Ecology & Landscaping***

- 7.44. Policy EN12 seeks to protect existing green space, ensure that there would be no net loss of biodiversity, and where possible to demonstrate that there is a net gain for biodiversity.
- 7.45. The proposal is accompanied by an ecological survey which demonstrates that there would be no impact on existing species at the site. The site currently has no vegetation or trees. The proposal would introduce green roofs and a landscaped communal roof garden, which would significantly improve the ecological offer. There would be no ground-level landscaped areas within the site. Given the relatively constrained nature of the application site within a District Centre, the current lack of landscaping within the site, the immediately adjacent mature landscaped area, proximity to West Village Park to the north, the provision of a commercial unit at ground floor and the introduction of greening at roof level, it is considered that the proposal would be acceptable in this regard.
- 7.46. Several conditions are recommended to ensure that the proposals would provide landscaping details, the installation of swift bricks and details of green roofs is carried out to ensure adequate biodiversity net gain on site.

### ***Sustainability***

- 7.47. Local Plan Policy H5 'Standards for New Housing' seeks that all new-build housing is built to high design standards. In particular, new housing should adhere to, water efficiency standards in excess of the Building Regulations, zero carbon homes standards (for major schemes), Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) and Policy CC3 (Adaption to Climate Change) seeks that development proposals incorporate measures which take account of climate change.
- 7.48. An energy and sustainability statement was submitted as part of the application. This demonstrates that the proposal would not meet zero carbon targets, but would achieve a 41.88% improvement above the carbon emissions level required by the Building Regulations. through higher fabric standards and the low carbon and renewable energy systems, namely photovoltaic panels and air source heat pumps.
- 7.49. The Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD states in paragraph 3.11 that "in achieving Zero Carbon Homes for major residential developments, the preference is that new build residential of ten or more dwellings will achieve a true carbon neutral development on-site. If this is not achievable, it must achieve a minimum of 35% improvement in regulated emissions over the Target Emissions Rate in the 2013 Building Regulations, plus a Section 106 contribution of £1,800 per remaining tonne towards carbon offsetting within the Borough (calculated as £60/tonne over a 30 year period."
- 7.50. Residual emissions would be offset with a carbon offset payment of £1,800 per tonne, in accordance with Policy H5 and the SPD. This contribution would be £30,528.
- 7.51. Although it is unfortunate that the proposed development cannot achieve Zero Carbon, the submitted Sustainability Statement demonstrates that the development achieves a 35% improvement along with a carbon offsetting in the form of a financial contribution, which will be secured through a S106 legal agreement. Officers are therefore satisfied that the development would be policy compliant in this regard.
- 7.52. Policy EN18 requires all major developments to incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) with runoff rates aiming to reflect greenfield conditions and, in any case, must be no greater than the existing conditions of the site. The applicant has submitted a Surface Water Drainage Strategy which demonstrates that the proposed drainage rate would be a reduction when compared against the Brownfield runoff rate and provides a pipe network to the attenuation tank. As such, the proposal complies with Policy EN18 and is considered acceptable subject to the conditions recommended above.

### ***Legal Agreement***

- 7.53. The overarching infrastructure Policy CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) allows for necessary contributions to be secured to ensure that the impacts of a scheme are properly mitigated. The following obligations would be sought and as set out in the recommendation above:
- To secure affordable housing on site consisting of ten units (30% provision) on site, to be three one bedroom units and four two bedroom units of Reading Affordable Rent and two one bedroom units and one two bedroom units of Shared Ownership. Reading Affordable Rent (RAR) tenure would be capped at 70% of market rent as per published RAR levels.
  - In the event that a Registered (affordable housing) Provider is not secured for the provision of the Affordable Housing on site, the units to be offered to the Council to be provided by the Council as Affordable Housing. In the event that neither a Registered Provider or the Council can come forward to provide Affordable Housing on-site, the developer to pay to the Council a default sum equivalent to 12.5% of the Gross Development Value of the development for provision of Affordable Housing elsewhere in the Borough. To be calculated (the mean average) from two independent RICS valuations to be submitted and agreed by the Council prior to first occupation of any market housing unit. In this event, the sum to be paid prior to first occupation of any market housing unit and index-linked from the date of valuation.

- Zero carbon offset financial contribution of £30,528.
- Employment, Skills and Training and Construction financial contribution of £8,000.

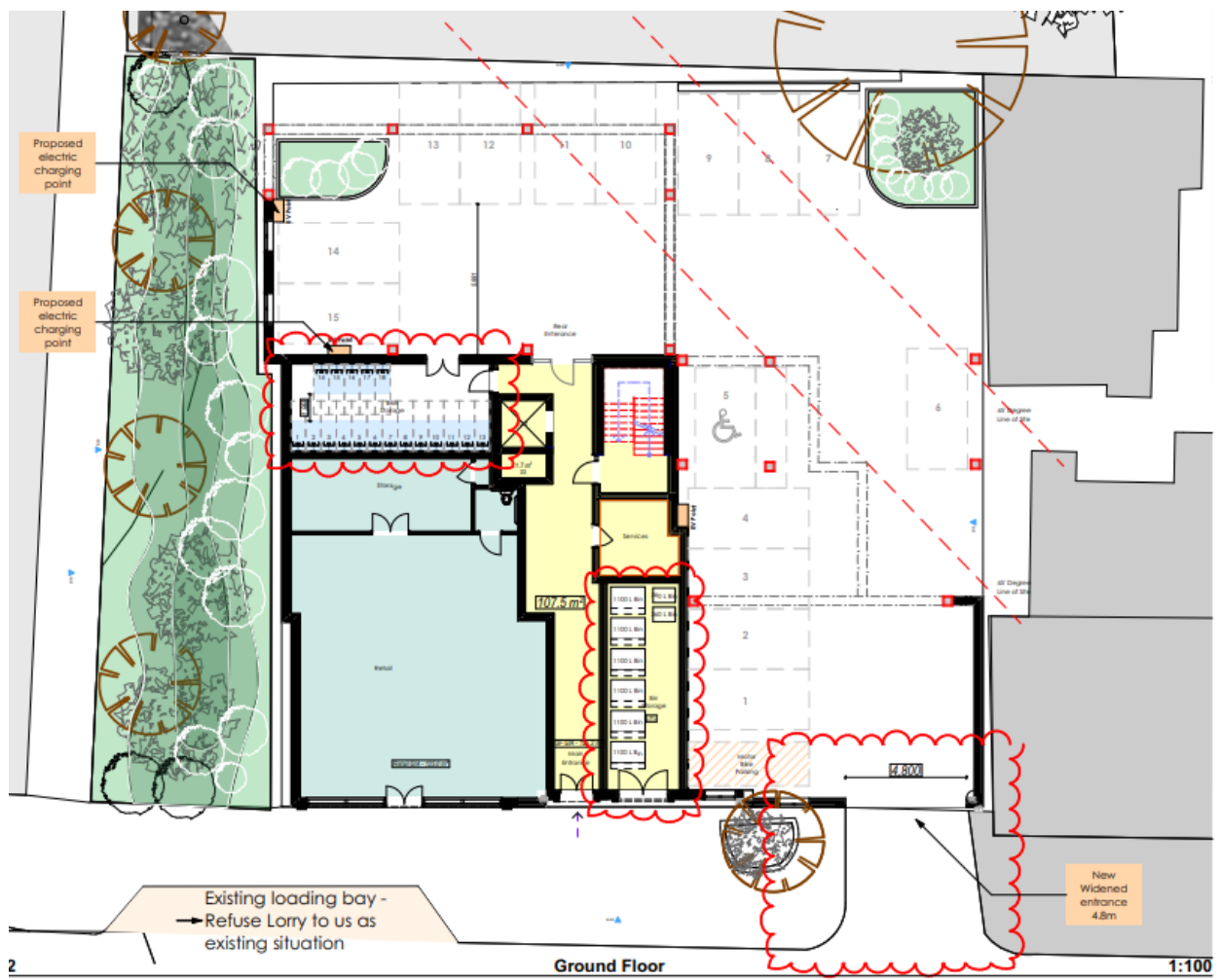
## **8. Equality implications**

- 8.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 8.2. 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

## **9. Conclusion & planning balance**

- 9.1 As with all applications considered by the Local Planning Authority, the application is required to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as per Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 9.2 When determining a planning application, the planning balance must be applied. The proposal would provide 30 residential units, with a policy compliant affordable housing offer, which carries significant weight, as well as a retail unit within a District Centre and a well designed building which would complement the character and appearance of the area. The proposals would have an appropriate level of car and cycle parking, acceptable servicing arrangements and would meet requirements with regards noise and air quality. There would be some minor adverse impacts to neighbour's living conditions, the loss of the use, the building and a lack of ground floor level landscaping. However, given the significant benefits of the proposal, most notably the provision of high quality housing and a policy compliant Affordable Housing offer, it is considered that the proposals would, on balance, be acceptable.
- 9.3 Officers have applied a suitable planning balance when reaching this conclusion. As such, this application is recommended for Approval.

## Appendix – Selected Plans and Elevations



**Proposed Ground Floor Layout**



First, second and third floor layouts (showing proposed building to the north under ref. 201391)



Proposed Front Elevations (Street and close up)





Proposed Western Elevation (top showing proposed development at adjacent site under ref. 201391)



CGI views





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06 December 2023



Reading

Borough Council

Working better with you

<b>Title</b>	<b>PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT</b>
<b>Ward</b>	Southcote
<b>Planning Application Reference:</b>	230613
<b>Site Address:</b>	Amethyst Lane, Reading
<b>Proposed Development</b>	Demolition and redevelopment of the Site at Amethyst Lane to deliver a new respite care facility alongside 17 new houses, soft and hard landscaping, parking and ancillary works.
<b>Applicant</b>	Reading Borough Council
<b>Report author</b>	Nicola Taplin
<b>Deadline:</b>	28/07/2023
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>Subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Confirmation of receipt of satisfactory arrangements in relation to the Sustainable Urban Drainage System; and</li> <li>(ii) Confirmation of satisfactory on-site, off-site or a combination arrangement in terms of Bio-diversity Net Gain (BNG);</li> </ul> <p>Delegate to the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (AD PTPPS) to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to the satisfactory completion of a Section 106 legal agreement (unilateral undertaking) or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the Section 106 legal agreement not be completed by 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 (unless officers on behalf of the AD PTPPS agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement).</p>
<b>S106 Terms</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To secure affordable housing on site consisting of 100% of the units on site to be Reading Affordable Rent (RAR)tenure, which would be capped at 70% of market rent as per published RAR levels.</li> <li>2. Employment, Skills and Training Plan for the construction stage of development, or a financial contribution in accordance with the calculations as set out in the Employment, Skills and Training Supplementary Planning Document (2013).</li> </ol> <p>Contribution towards monitoring costs plus a separate commitment to pay the Council's reasonable legal costs in connection with the proposed Legal Agreement will be payable whether or not the Agreement is completed.</p> <p>Any unexpended contributions to be repaid within ten years beginning</p>

	<p>with the start of the Financial Year after the final (including phased contributions) obligation payment for each obligation is received. In accordance with Policy CC9.</p> <p>All financial contributions index-linked from the date of permission.</p> <p>In order for officers to work efficiently and effectively, it is suggested that minor changes to the Heads of Terms and details of the legal agreement during the negotiations, where necessary, are delegated to officers.</p>
<p><b>Conditions</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Full - time limit - three years</li> <li>2. Approved Plans</li> <li>3. Materials (samples to be approved prior to commencement of above ground works)</li> <li>4. Housing mix to be retained</li> <li>5. Use Restriction of respite centre to Class E(f) (creches, nurseries, day centres) only</li> <li>6. Provision of access and parking including lockable bollard</li> <li>7. EV Charging Points (pre-commencement)</li> <li>8. Cycle Parking (pre-commencement) (both uses)</li> <li>9. Refuse details for respite centre (to be approved prior to occupation)</li> <li>10. Construction Method Statement (pre-commencement)</li> <li>11. Noise Mitigation for mechanical plant (as specified)</li> <li>12. Noise Mitigation Scheme (internal) (to be submitted prior to above ground works)</li> <li>13. Contaminated Land Assessment</li> <li>14. Remediation Scheme (To be submitted prior to commencement)</li> <li>15. Remediation Scheme (Implement and Verification)</li> <li>16. Unidentified Contamination</li> <li>17. Hours of Construction/Demolition (standard)</li> <li>18. No Bonfires</li> <li>19. Submission of lighting scheme</li> <li>20. Waste Storage for residential (pre-occupation)</li> <li>21. Biodiversity Enhancements</li> <li>22. Arboricultural Monitoring Scheme (to be approved)</li> <li>23. Hard and Soft Landscaping</li> <li>24. Submission of boundary treatments with maximum height of 1.6m (pre-occupation)</li> <li>25. Details of Green Roofs (pre-commencement)</li> <li>26. Off Site Tree Planting Scheme</li> <li>27. SAP Assessment – Design Stage</li> <li>28. SAP Assessment – As Built</li> <li>29. Submission of heat pump and PV details (including noise characteristics)</li> </ol>
<p><b>Informatives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive and Proactive</li> <li>• Pre-commencement conditions</li> <li>• Highways</li> <li>• Terms and Conditions</li> <li>• Building Regulations</li> <li>• Complaints about construction</li> <li>• Encroachment</li> <li>• Contamination</li> <li>• Noise between residential properties</li> </ul>

## 1. Executive summary

- 1.1. Subject to satisfactory confirmations in respect of sustainable drainage and ecology, the proposal is recommended for approval subject to a legal agreement and conditions as set out above.
- 1.2. The proposal would successfully redevelop a previously developed site which is currently vacant. It would provide a policy compliant affordable family housing offer (in fact it would deliver all the houses as affordable), as well as a replacement respite care facility. The proposals would have an appropriate design, ensure that there would be no unacceptable impact on neighbouring properties and provide suitable accommodation for future residents.
- 1.3. Officers have identified some harm with the proposals, which is discussed in detail within the report. However, when balanced against the benefits of the scheme, including all the units being family sized housing – for which there is a critical need within the Borough – the proposal is considered acceptable in the planning balance.
- 1.4. The application is therefore recommended to the Planning Applications Committee for approval.

## 2. Introduction and Site Description

- 2.1 The site contains a now vacant Day Centre facility consisting of two building at the northern end of Amethyst Lane, which is a cul-de-sac accessed from Liebenroad Road. The existing buildings are between one and two storeys in height and cover much of the site. There are some trees on site, particularly around the edges, but the majority of the open parts of the site are hardstanding with the exception of a larger area in the western part of the site. The surrounding area is primarily residential, with a mixture of two and three storey houses and flats. Prospect Park is in close proximity to the site, within one minute walking distance. The site is allocated for residential use in the Local Plan under policy WR3n.



Figure 1 – Site location Plan (Not to scale)

## 3 The proposal

- 3.1 The proposal is for the demolition of the existing buildings and redevelopment of the site at Amethyst Lane to deliver a new respite care facility alongside 17 new houses, soft and hard landscaping, parking and ancillary works. To the south and at the entrance a replacement single storey respite centre is proposed with access fronting Amethyst Lane. The proposal includes a new street, with 17 homes arranged within three terraces to the east and west facing each other and a further terrace located to the north. The



application is being reported to Planning Applications Committee as this is a Council-own application.



Figure 2 – Proposed Site Plan (Not to scale)



Figure 3 – Applicant's visualisation of the proposed scheme  
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3.2 The applicant has submitted the following documents for consideration:

RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0101- Proposed Site Plan Rev L  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0110 - Proposed Roof Plan Rev A  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_210 - Proposed Respite Centre Plan Rev K  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_211 - Proposed Respite Centre Roof Plan Rev C  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_250 - Proposed Elevation - Block A Rev C  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_251 - Proposed Elevation - Block B Rev C  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_252 - Proposed Elevation - Block C Rev C  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_253- Proposed Elevation - Block D - Sheet 1 Rev C  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_254 - Proposed Elevation - Block D - Sheet 2 Rev C  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_301- Proposed Unit Plan - 3B5PH Type B Rev E  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_302 - Proposed Unit Plan - 3B6PH Type A Rev E  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_303 - Proposed Unit Plan - 4B7PH Type A Rev E  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_304 - Proposed Unit Plan - 4B7PH Type C  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_600 - House Type 4B8PH Type C 3B5PH Type B  
Elevation / Sections Rev A  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_601 - House Type 3B6PH Type A 4B8PH Type A  
Elevation / Sections Rev A  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_602 - Respite Centre Elevation / Sections Rev A  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_SC\_0010 - Schedule of Accommodation Rev G  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_SC\_0011 – Room Schedule Rev A

- Planning Statement
- Archaeological Assessment
- Contaminated Land Statement
- Ecology Statement & BNG Report
- Drainage Strategy
- Lighting Strategy
- Daylight/Sunlight Report
- Refuse and Waste Strategy
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Daylight/Sunlight Study
- 3D Visuals
- Energy Assessment
- Energy & Sustainability Report
- Design & Access Statement
- Utilities Statement
- Transport Assessment
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Arboricultural Method Statement

#### **4 Planning history**

There is no relevant historical planning history, however, pre-application advice was sought before submission of this planning application.

At the time of writing, application 231591/DEM has been submitted for the separate ability to demolish (only) the buildings on site. The status of this application is currently under consideration and is anticipated to be dealt with by officers under delegated powers.

#### **5 Consultations**

5.1 The following consultation responses were received from statutory and internal consultees:

### ***RBC Transport***

- 5.2 The Transport Strategy Team have been discussing concerns raised over shortfall in parking for the respite centre. Agreement has been reached in terms of the provision of 6 spaces (to include disabled parking bay and mini-bus parking) and at the time of writing, amended plans are due to be submitted to secure this provision. With regard to the parking layout and number of parking spaces for the residential units, the Transport Team have advised that the provision (one space per dwelling) is acceptable. Conditions to secure CMS, cycle parking details, access and vehicle parking to be provided.

### ***RBC SUDS Manager (Lead Local Flood Authority)***

The SUDS Manager has been discussing the details of the SUDS with the applicant's specialist flooding adviser and is satisfied that this technical matter could be resolved and delegated authority is sought to finalise these details.

### ***RBC Waste & Recycling***

- 5.3 The Council's Environmental Health Officer has requested details of the waste and recycling provision. Amended plans have been submitted which detail the provision of acceptable waste and recycling provision.

### ***RBC Environmental Protection***

- 5.4 No objection subject to recommended conditions relating to noise, air quality, land contamination, bin storage, hours of construction and a CMS. Discussed below.

### ***RBC Ecology***

- 5.5 Further to revisions, no objection subject to conditions relating to ecological enhancements and obligation to secure off-site tree planting. Discussed below.

### ***RBC Natural Environment***

- 5.6 A number of issues were raised relating to tree protection measures, landscaping and SUDS. The Council's Natural Environment Officer has advised that following the submission of amended details, sufficient principles have been provided in order that the application is supported in tree & landscape terms subject to the imposition of conditions.

### **Public Consultation**

- 5.7 Notification letters were sent to nearby occupiers on 6 June 2023. Site notices were displayed.

Dellwood Community Hospital, 22 Liebenrood Road, Reading, RG30 2DX  
10 Parkhurst Drive, Reading, RG30 2BG  
Various addresses, Tamar Court, Amethyst Lane  
37 Ashdene Gardens, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 2EP  
59 Ashdene Gardens, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 2EP  
5 Jenkins Close, Reading, RG30 2EQ  
1 Jenkins Close, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 2EQ

Two responses were received and raised the below points:

- Concerns about construction noise and disturbance
- Parking concerns
- Concerns raised about possible linking of development to Jenkins Close. ***Officer comment: the application proposal does not include an access to Jenkins Close.***

## **6 Legal and Planning Policy context**



- 6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) – among them the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as ‘the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).
- 6.2 In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).
- 6.3 Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

**National Policy – National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023**

Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development  
 Section 4 – Decision Making  
 Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes  
 Section 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy  
 Section 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities  
 Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport  
 Section 11 – Making Effective Use of Land  
 Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places  
 Section 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change  
 Section 15.- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

**National Planning Policy Guidance (2014 onwards)**

**Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019) policies are:**

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
 CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction  
 CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change  
 CC4: Decentralised Energy  
 CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage  
 CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development  
 CC7: Design and the Public Realm  
 CC8: Safeguarding Amenity  
 CC9: Securing Infrastructure  
 EN9: Provision of Open Space  
 EN10: Access to Open Space  
 EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network  
 EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland  
 EN15: Air Quality  
 EN16: Pollution and Water Resources  
 EN17: Noise Generating Equipment  
 EN18: Flooding and Drainage  
 EM3: Loss of Employment Land  
 H1: Provision of Housing  
 H2: Density and Mix  
 H3: Affordable Housing  
 H5: Standards for New Housing  
 H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space  
 H14: Suburban Renewal and Regeneration  
 OU1: New and Existing Community Facilities  
 TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy  
 TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters  
 TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities  
 TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

WR3n: Amethyst Lane

RBC Supplementary Planning Documents

Affordable Housing (2021)  
Planning Obligations under S106 (2015)  
Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)  
Employment, Skills and Training (2013)  
Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Other relevant documentation

Reading Tree Strategy (2021)  
Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (2021)  
The National Design Guide (2019)  
The National Model Design Code (2021)  
Adult Social Care Asset Review and Capital Strategy (approved by Policy Committee 8 January 2021)

## 7 Appraisal

7.1 The main considerations are:

- Land Use Considerations
- Provision of Affordable Housing and Unit Mix
- Design Considerations – Layout, Scale and Appearance
- Residential Amenity
- Impact on Parking/Highways
- Natural Environment – Trees and Landscaping
- Ecology
- Sustainability and Energy
- Sustainable Drainage Systems
- Environmental Protection Matters – Contaminated Land
- Legal Agreement

### Land Use Considerations

7.2 Policy CC1 (Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development) requires a positive approach to development proposals that reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which lies at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). To achieve sustainable development a proposal needs to meet economic, social and environmental objectives.

7.3 A key Government objective is to significantly boost the supply of new homes (Section 5 of the NPPF) and the local housing requirement as set out within Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) which confirms that there is a pressing need for additional housing in Reading and the surrounding area.

7.4 The site is allocated for residential use within the Local Plan, under allocation WR3n, which states:

*Development for residential. Site size: 0.57 ha 32-48 dwellings*

*Development should:*

- *Ensure appropriate back-to-back separation from existing residential*
- *Take account of the potential impact on water infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*

7.5 The proposal would provide 17 houses and also includes a respite centre. Whilst a respite centre use is not included within the allocation, there is a demonstrable need for this type of accommodation, and given the previous use of the site, it is considered to be an

appropriate element of the proposal. The relocation of the Respite Centre formed part of the Adult Social Care Asset Review and Capital Strategy approved by Policy Committee on 18th January 2021. The respite service provides regulated activity which necessitates a requirement to be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Initial engagement took place with CQC in summer 2021 to discuss the provision of respite services at Hexham Road. CQC raised some concerns about the size, setting and layout of the building. They felt that it deviated from guidance for Services for Autistic People and People with a Learning Disability (Right Support, Right Care, Right Culture), as the proposal also included a day service and sheltered accommodation on the same site. They described this as having a ‘campus feel’ which in their view was not aligned to best practice in the guidance. The respite facility is therefore proposed to be located at Amethyst Lane on the site of the former respite centre. The provision of a respite centre reduces the number of residential units which the allocation site is able to provide, but would represent an effective use of the land for an appropriate use. The proposed residential accommodation schedule is as follows:

Block	3B5P	3B6P	4B8P	Total
Block A	4		4	8
Block B		4	1	5
Block C		2	2	4
Total	4	6	7	17
%	24%	35%	41%	100%

Figure 4 – Residential Accommodation Schedule

#### *Principle of Housing and Respite Centre*

- 7.6 The proposed development, providing 17 residential units on previously developed land, would contribute towards meeting the Council’s housing need requirements in accordance with Policy H1. Given the above, the principle of providing residential accommodation at the site is supported by the site allocation. The provision of a respite centre was not envisaged in the allocation. However, the Local Plan makes specific reference to such opportunities, as they arise (at paragraph 7.3.15, the supporting text to Policy WR3):

*“On some sites identified for housing, there may be potential for community uses, such as meeting spaces, healthcare or education to be provided which have not been anticipated by this plan. There may also be potential for specialist housing provision for specific groups, outside the C3 dwellinghouse use class. This could potentially reduce the amount of housing which could be provided on specific sites. Depending on other policies in the plan, this can be appropriate, provided that it does not harm the chances of delivering sufficient housing to meet the targets set out in local policy -his decision will be informed by the most up-to-date housing housing trajectory”.*

- 7.6a The Planning Policy Manager advises that the latest available (2021-22) Annual Monitoring Report confirms that as a Borough, Reading will be over-delivering against Policy H1 over the plan period. The proposal is considered to represent a valuable development opportunity which can positively contribute to meeting the Borough’s ongoing housing need, but given the general positive situation with regard to meeting overall housing numbers, the opportunity of realising/retaining a respite centre is appropriate in principle, subject to other planning considerations below.

#### **Provision of Affordable Housing and Unit Mix**

##### *Affordable Housing*

- 7.7 Affordable Housing is a key identified priority within the Borough. Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) seeks to ensure that development proposals of more than 10 dwellings should provide the equivalent of 30% on-site provision of affordable housing.
- 7.8 It is relevant to note that affordable housing in the borough can only be secured through s106 legal agreements.
- 7.9 The applicant has confirmed that 100% of the homes would be social rent affordable (Reading Affordable Rent) 3 and 4 bed housing units which significantly exceeds the 30% on-site policy requirement. The proposed provision of an 100% affordable housing scheme would be significantly more than the Policy H3 30% on site affordable housing requirement. As such, any provision above the required 30% amount would be considered to be an additional planning benefit of the proposals, in the assessment of the overall planning balance for the scheme as a whole. It follows that, where proposals conflict with other policies in the plan, securing a higher percentage can be justified in order to outweigh other areas of harm identified.
- 7.10 In this instance, officers consider that there are a number of factors which justify a higher than 30% affordable housing requirement. As set out elsewhere in this report, there are some areas of harm arising from the proposals, which officers consider need to be mitigated. These include shorter/smaller garden sizes and shortfall in open space and landscaped areas within the site.
- 7.11 It is not possible to provide an exact amount of affordable housing that would outweigh the harm. However, securing the proposed 100% affordable housing, well in excess of the policy minimum, would carry significant weight given the critical need for affordable housing in the Borough and the existing shortfall in provision. This remains to be weighed in the overall planning balance at the end of this report.

#### *Unit Mix*

- 7.12 Policy H2 (Density and Mix) identifies that wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting identified needs in respect of housing mix, and in particular, for family homes of 3 or more bedrooms. The Policy seeks that at least 50% of the homes outside centres will be 3 bedrooms or larger.
- 7.13 The proposal would exceed this by providing 10 three-bedroom houses and 7 four-bedroom houses, meaning 100% of the overall mix is 3 bed or larger and the proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy H2 in this respect. The overall mix would address the critical need for housing across Reading, including a sizeable amount of 4 bedroom properties. This is considered to be a key benefit of the proposed development, providing family sized housing to meet identified housing needs. The proposed mix of dwellings will be secured by way of condition.

#### **Design Considerations – Layout, Scale and Appearance**

- 7.13 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks to ensure that new development enhances and preserves the local character. The policy places importance on the layout of the urban structure and urban grain, stipulating that development should respond positively to the local context and create safe and accessible environments. The policy requires, “...*high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located*”.
- 7.14 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF 2023 details that decisions should ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment.

- 7.15 The National Design Guidance identifies 10 key components for good design and of particular note is the characteristic of 'Context' and it states that, "*well designed new development responds positively to the features of the site itself and the surrounding context beyond the site boundary. It should enhance positive qualities and improve negative ones.*" Additionally, there is specific reference to 'views inwards and outwards'.

#### *Demolition*

- 7.16 In relation to the demolition of the existing buildings at the site, these are not considered to be of any architectural merit to warrant their retention either individually or cumulatively. Their loss would not result in any harm to the character and appearance of the area, providing they are replaced with buildings of high-quality design. Demolition is, therefore, considered acceptable subject to the proposed replacement buildings being suitable in design and related matters detailed below.

#### *Layout and Scale*

- 7.17 The scale and layout of the proposal is the result of detailed discussions at pre-application and application stage. The application proposal as originally submitted was for 21 dwellings. During the course of the application, this has been reduced to 17 dwellings. The current proposal includes the reduction in the number of units in block A by 4; Block B has been moved 2m east; Block C moved 1.5m west and the reconfiguration of pedestrian movement, planting and parking which improves legibility across the site. The reduction in number of units was considered necessary to allow for better quality private amenity spaces for each dwelling and to introduce a better arrangement of streets and spaces, and improve soft landscaping as well as achieving a less cramped appearance overall. Whilst the overall arrangement would appear of a compact, intimate cul-de-sac, such arrangements are not uncommon in this area of the Borough and suitable levels of amenity would be achieved.

ly proposed layout





Proposed layout

7.18 The respite centre would be single storey only. The houses would generally be 2 storeys in height with 3 storey townhouses located on gable ends at the centre of the site to minimise their impact. The respite centre has a ridge height of 5.35m in height, the two storey houses have a pitched ridge height of 8.7m in height and the 3 storey houses have a flat roof of 9.6m in height. The 2 storey houses are proposed to have pitched roofs, creating more surface area for PV (photovoltaic array) provision, and allowing 'book ends' at the termination of the terraces. Flat roofs are proposed in order to reduce the overall massing of the 3 storey elements, and also to maximise the opportunity for biodiverse green roofs. Height is used to create articulated roof lines across the terraces.

7.19 The proposed low rise respite centre will be sited to the south of the site. The building is proposed to be constructed from brick with a number of pitched roofs linked by flat roofs. The building must be single storey to maximise the usability of accommodation for the users. It would provide to provide wheelchair accessible bedrooms (x6), communal spaces and associated ancillary spaces. The applicant has carried out extensive engagement with the RBC Adult Care and Health Team and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) which has informed the design development of the respite care facility, in order to ensure it will meet the needs of building users and management.

7.20 It is considered that the proposed layout has successfully maximised the use of the site, whilst ensuring that the proposal includes sufficient distances between buildings and that the areas between buildings have been suitably designed to integrate vehicle parking whilst maintaining a pleasant residential environment. The proposed dwellings, when seen from all nearby vantage points, are considered to acceptably respond to its context and the constraints of the site in terms of their scale and appearance. The overall design

of the development is considered to create a pleasant, unified scheme, with the proposal considered to provide a good balance between site density and an appropriate layout and landscaping.

### *Appearance*

- 7.21 The houses would be modern, energy-efficient terraces in a contemporary style and the architectural focus has been on maximising useability and energy efficiency with the family end users in mind.
- 7.22 The respite centre is considered to sit comfortably within the site, relating to the scale of the adjacent development to the south and west.
- 7.23 In overall terms, the proposed scheme is considered to represent good quality design that will enhance the character and appearance of the area and which will successfully integrate into the surrounding area. The proposed scale of the new buildings at 1, 2 and 3 storeys would sit comfortably within the surrounding context and the palette of materials would be appropriate. However, to ensure the design quality, it is considered reasonable and appropriate to secure further details of all external materials will be secured via condition, including the provision of sample panel on site prior to commencement, to guarantee the design quality of the scheme in accordance with Policy CC7.

### **Residential Amenity**

- 7.24 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) of the Local Plan 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.
- 7.25 Officers originally raised concerns about the proximity of Block B to the rear garden of No. 12 Jenkins Close and the resultant impact upon outlook and privacy to the occupants of that property. The amended plan has increased the distance to the rear boundary which forms the side boundary of 12 Jenkins Close. The garden depth proposed is 8.5m (6.5m as originally proposed). Officers consider that the relationship of the first-floor bedroom windows to the rear of houses in Block B, at a distance of 8.5m from the boundary, with an intervening boundary fence, is not an atypical relationship in this locality. The Silver Birch tree along this boundary will aid in the sense of screening in summer months. It is considered, on balance, that the proposal would not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity to the occupants of 12 Jenkins Close. The layout, separation distances and orientation of the proposed buildings, as amended, within the site would avoid overbearing effects or unacceptable loss of privacy to properties surrounding the site.
- 7.26 The terraces within Blocks B and C would achieve a front-to-front separation distance of 16.5m. The flank to front separation distance of Block B and with Block A would be 16.9m. In overall terms, the scale and position of the proposed buildings would also ensure that there would be no increased sense of overbearing or enclosure. The proposals would have no unacceptable impact on the living conditions of future occupiers in accordance with Policy CC8.

### *Standard of Accommodation for Future Occupiers*

- 7.28 In addition to Policy CC8 above, policies H5 (Standards for New Housing) and H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) also apply. Policy H5 states that new build housing will need to comply with the nationally prescribed space standards. Policy H10 sets out that, *“Dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space wherever possible, that allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children’s play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space. Houses will be provided with private outdoor space whereas flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens.”*



- 7.29 All dwellings would meet the nationally described space standards (as outlined in Policy H5) for the type of dwelling/number of bedrooms and the internal layout of the proposed units are arranged so as to create a suitable standard of living accommodation for future occupiers. It is considered that all dwellings would generally have good levels of outlook.
- 7.30 All the proposed houses would have their own private outdoor garden of modest but sufficient size which would offer a reasonable standard of amenity for future occupiers as well as providing welcome greenery within the site. Officers originally raised concerns about the quality and scale of the rear gardens. The amended scheme has allowed for more spacious gardens for all the proposed homes. The range of garden sizes has expanded from 31.8sqm to 83.0 sqm, as outlined in the May 2023 submission, to now range from 53.9 sqm to 114.7 sqm. It is considered reasonable and necessary in this case to impose a condition to restrict the height of boundary fencing of rear gardens, given the relatively modest depth of the rear gardens to ensure outlook from rear facing rooms is not compromised by the boundary treatments and to maximise light penetration to the gardens. Furthermore, the applicant has provided a daylight/sunlight report within the application. The report demonstrates that there have been significant improvements in the amount of sunlight available on the ground for the external amenity spaces in the revised scheme.

### **Impact on Parking/Highways**

- 7.31 Policies TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway related matters), TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) of the Local Plan seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development.

#### *Car Parking Provision*

- 7.32 The Council's Transport Officer has been in discussions with the applicants and amended plans are due to be submitted to provide 17 car parking spaces for the residential units (1 for each dwelling); and 3 spaces plus 2 disabled spaces and a mini bus space to the front of the respite centre, one additional space to the side of the respite centre and 1 space to the rear for deliveries. The space to the side, adjacent to the residential parking, will be secured by way of a lockable bollard. The Council's Transport Officer has confirmed that the layout is acceptable. An assessment of the car parking data provided shows that this level of provision would be acceptable to serve future residents and respite centre given the nature of the site and the location of the development.

#### *Access*

- 7.33 Vehicular access to the residential element of the site will be taken from a continuation of Amethyst Lane. The properties will be accessed from an internal road that routes north-south through the site. The entrance to the small car parking area for the respite centre will be from the existing section of Amethyst Lane. The Council's Transport Officer has confirmed that the access arrangements are considered acceptable.

#### *Cycle Parking Provision*

- 7.34 Cycle parking provision is to be provided in line with requirements in the Reading Borough Council Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD. The standard for 3 and 4 bed dwellings is for 2 spaces. It is proposed that these spaces will be provided for each property in a covered lockable store within the boundary of each property. The Council's Transport Officer has confirmed that this is acceptable subject to a condition specifying the exact type of cycle storage. The respite centre cycle provision will be provided in accordance with local standards which equates to 3 spaces.

#### *Construction*

7.35 A condition requiring a Construction Method Statement (CMS) will be attached to any approval, requiring submission and approval before any works commence on-site to regulate the amenity effects of construction. As well as demonstrating a commitment to ensuring the number of HGV movements are managed and controlled, the CMS must demonstrate that appropriate measures will be implemented to ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists on the road network around the construction site.

7.36 Servicing, waste and recycling storage would be appropriately located.

#### **Natural Environment - Trees and Landscaping**

7.37 Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) seeks to extend the Borough's vegetation cover and that development should make provision for tree planting whilst Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks proposal should include appropriate landscaping. Proposals should demonstrate an appropriate level of greening and/or net gain in the tree number.

7.38 The application is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment which identified fifteen individual trees and ten groups of trees. An Arboricultural Method Statement is also submitted. The Council's Natural Environment Officer has requested the retention of tree T5, a Norway maple, located in the south east corner of the site adjacent to the access road (a B category tree). The revised plans confirm the removal of this tree which is an identified harm which is considered in the planning balance as discussed above. The Council's Natural Environment Officer has raised some concerns with regard to issues of clarity with the submitted Arboricultural Method Statement and officers consider it reasonable to secure an appropriate Arboricultural Method Statement via condition. Further details relating to soil and tree pit details have been submitted and are considered acceptable.

7.39 A landscape plan has been submitted with the application. This includes the provision of a total of 43 new trees on site. The Council's Natural Environment Officer has confirmed that the principles of the proposed landscape layout and planting, particularly trees, are considered acceptable. Detailed clarification is required within the AMS, the landscape maintenance arrangements and detailed specifications of the green roof and turf. A pre-commencement landscaping condition is recommended which will secure planting details to include the species, maintenance, and management schedule. Officers are satisfied that the overall scheme is acceptable in principle, subject to clarification of these points and therefore complies with policies CS7 and EN14.

#### **Ecology**

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

7.41 In this instance, it is considered likely that in terms of the calculation base, the site should be regarded as 'brownfield'/previously developed. The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Metric therefore seeks that on sites such as this, the necessary increase in biodiversity is under normal circumstances, to be required on site. In this instance and at the time of writing, the compact nature of the site is meaning that the applicant may need to at least partly off-set the need for BNG in an off-site location.

7.42 The Biodiversity Net Gain calculation is being considered further and is currently in the process of being re-calculated. Officers consider that it is likely that there are no feasible options for delivering full net gain on the site and officers will therefore update the Committee on this matter in the Update Report.

- 7.44 A condition is also recommended to be attached by the Ecologist to ensure that a wildlife friendly lighting scheme is provided so that excessive or poorly designed lighting does not affect bats, given proximity to tree canopy areas in Prospect Park.

### **Sustainability and Energy**

- 7.45 Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) and Policy CC3 (Adaption to Climate Change) seeks that development proposals incorporate measures which take account of climate change. Policy CC4 (Decentralised Energy) seeks that developments of more than 20 dwellings should consider the inclusion of combined heat and power plant (CHP) or other form of decentralised energy provision.
- 7.46 Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) and the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019) identify that, as a minimum, new dwellings should achieve 35% improvement in regulated emissions over the Target Emissions Rate (TER) in the 2013 Building Regulations, with financial contribution required to off-set any remaining carbon emissions to zero.
- 7.47 In bringing this proposal forward, the applicant (RBC Housing) has been clear that minimising energy consumption and carbon emissions for the benefit of the residents was a high design priority for the houses.
- 7.48 An energy and sustainability assessment was submitted as part of the application. This demonstrates that the proposal would meet zero carbon targets, and be a 'Passivhaus' design through higher fabric standards and the low carbon and renewable energy systems, namely photovoltaic panels and air source heat pumps. Details of these additions are to be secured by way of conditions.
- 7.49 Officers are satisfied that the proposals demonstrate a good standard of energy sustainability and, subject to conditions, the development accords with relevant policy in this regard.

### **Sustainable Drainage Systems**

- 7.50 Policy EN18 (Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems) requires all major developments to incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) with runoff rates aiming to reflect greenfield conditions and, in any case, must be no greater than the existing conditions of the site.
- 7.51 The applicant has submitted a revised Surface Water Drainage Strategy. However, this does not yet demonstrate that run-off rates and method of attenuation would be acceptable. Discussions are on-going in this respect and there is no evidence to suggest that this technical matter could not be resolved and at this time delegated authority is sought to finalise details. It is also noted that part of allocation WR3n includes that the capacity of Thames Water to be able to service the site is to be taken into account. An update on this matter is being sought and will be set out in the Update Report.

### **Environmental Protection Matters**

#### *Contaminated Land*

- 7.52 Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) required that developments on land affected by contamination can be satisfactorily managed or remediated against so that it is suitable for the proposed use.
- 7.53 A contaminated land desk study has been submitted with the application. This concludes that further intrusive investigation is necessary to confirm the risk levels from

contamination. The Council's Environmental Protection officer recommends the standard four-stage conditions to ensure that the possible presence of contamination is thoroughly investigated and removed/mitigated if necessary (3 of the conditions are pre-commencement). In accordance with Policy EN16.

### Noise

- 7.53a Should any external mechanical plant be required, a noise assessment will be required. This includes the provision of heat pumps. A condition is recommended.

### **S106 Legal Agreement (Unilateral Undertaking)**

- 7.54 The majority of elements to be secured via s106 legal agreement, as per the Recommendation at the outset of this report, have already been detailed in earlier sections of this report. One matter not explicitly referenced is the requirement to secure an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) for the Construction phases of the development. This is required in line with Policy CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) and the Employment, Skills and Training SPD. It is not yet known whether this will take the form of an actual ESP to be progressed by them on site, or payment of an equivalent financial contribution, as per the SPD formula. The legal agreement will be worded flexibly to enable either eventuality.
- 7.55 It is considered that the obligations referred to in the Recommendation would comply with the National Planning Policy Framework and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in that it would be: i) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, ii) directly related to the development and iii) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. These Head of Terms has been agreed by the applicant and a S106 Legal Agreement is in the process of being prepared to secure this contribution.

## **8 Equality implications**

9

- 9.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 9.2 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. Furthermore, the proposal would be a positive addition to Reading in terms of its use and the complementary nature of the uses.

## **10 Conclusion & Planning Balance**

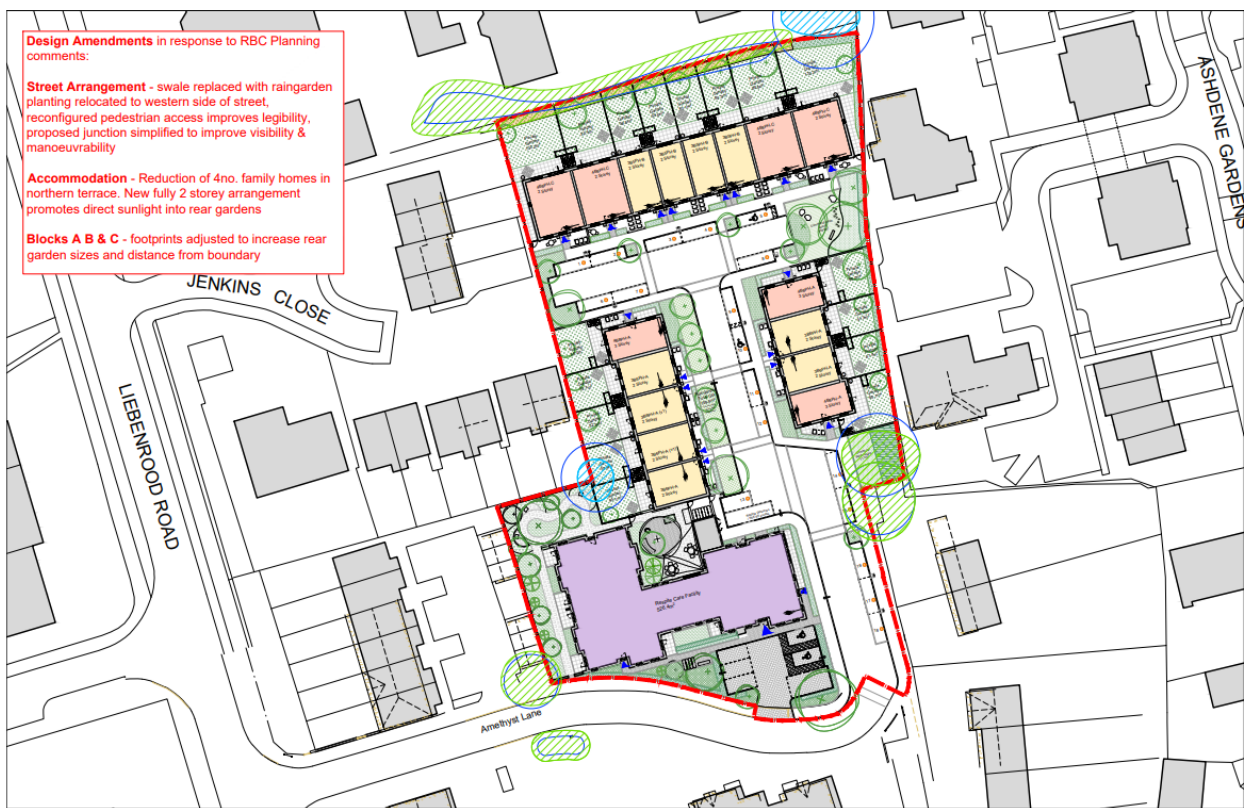
- 9.1 As with all applications considered by the Local Planning Authority, the application is required to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as per Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 9.2 Officers consider that there are substantial benefits in providing family sized accommodation on this site along with the provision of a replacement respite centre. The report does identify elements of harm, largely with respect to the modest private amenity space provision, loss of a category B tree, slight shortfall in car parking spaces and space needed to provide the ideal amount of tree planting and landscaping within the site. There

is a general concern that the proposals result in a tight layout of the site. This harm should therefore be considered against the benefits of the scheme.

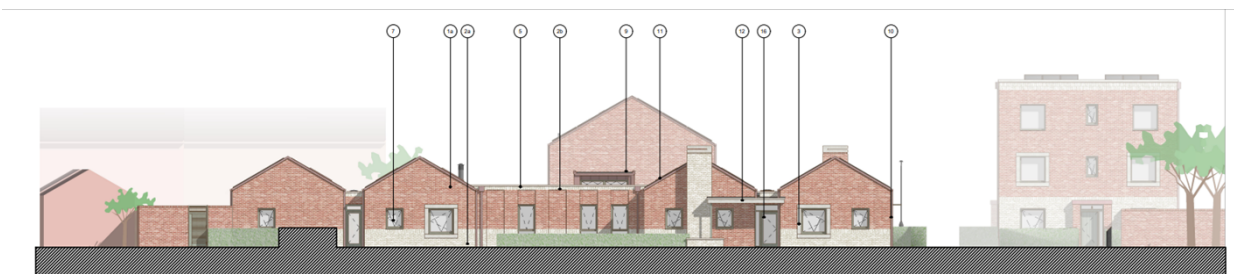
9.3 A significant benefit is the proposed 100% affordable family-sized housing for which there is a critical need within the Borough. This, your officers advise, clearly outweighs the areas of harm identified. As such, it is necessary to secure all the dwellings as affordable housing. There is also a benefit of providing a replacement respite centre and a development scheme that demonstrates a good standard of energy sustainability.

9.4 On the basis of the above assessment, the application is recommended for Approval, subject to the recommendation above to include conditions, submission of further information relating to SUDS, BNG and satisfactory completion of the legal agreement.

**Selected Plans:**



Proposed site Plan



South Elevation 1

Proposed Respite centre



South Elevation 1

Proposed Block A



East Elevation 1

Proposed Block B



Proposed Block C



06 December 2023



Reading

Borough Council

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Working better with you

<b>Title</b>	<b>PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT</b>
<b>Ward</b>	Southcote
<b>Planning Application Reference:</b>	230612
<b>Site Address:</b>	Former Alice Burrows, Dwyer Road, Reading
<b>Proposed Development</b>	Redevelopment of the Site at Dwyer Road to deliver 30 new dwellings, alongside new access, soft and hard landscaping, parking and ancillary works
<b>Applicant</b>	Reading Borough Council
<b>Report author</b>	Ethne Humphreys
<b>Deadline:</b>	31/01/2024
<b>Recommendations</b>	Delegate to the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (AD PTPPS) to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to the satisfactory completion of a Section 106 legal agreement and receipt of satisfactory SuDS strategy or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the Section 106 legal agreement not be completed and satisfactory SuDS strategy not be received by the 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2024 (unless officers on behalf of the AD PTPPS agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement).
<b>S106 Terms</b>	<p><b>Affordable Housing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To secure all 30 dwellings as affordable housing, social rent tenure, in perpetuity.</li> </ul> <p><b>Employment Skills and Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To secure a construction phase Employment Skills and Training Plan or equivalent financial contribution. As calculated in the Council's Employment Skills and Training SPD (2013) – payable on commencement</li> </ul> <p><b>Off-site Tree Planting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To secure a biodiversity compensation scheme to comprise sufficient off-site planting for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) purposes to be delivered elsewhere in the Borough to include timetable for implementation – to be submitted and approved prior to commencement</li> </ul> <p>All financial contributions index-linked from the date of permission.</p>
<b>Eh1Conditions include</b> <b>to</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Full - time limit - three years</li> <li>2. Approved Plans</li> <li>3. Pre-commencement details of all external materials to be submitted and approved</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Pre-commencement Construction Method Statement (including EP based matters) to be submitted and approved</li> <li>5. Provision of vehicle parking as shown prior to first occupation</li> <li>6. Provision of vehicular access, carriageway and footways as shown prior to first occupation</li> <li>7. Pre-occupation submission and approval of cycle parking</li> <li>8. Pre-occupation submission and approval of EV charging point scheme details</li> <li>9. Provision of refuse and recycling storage facilities prior to first occupation</li> <li>10. Pre-occupation submission and approval of measures to prevent pests and vermin accessing bin stores</li> <li>11. Noise Assessment – Mechanical Plant</li> <li>12. Pre-commencement Contaminated Land Assessment to be submitted and approved</li> <li>13. Pre-commencement Remediation Scheme to be submitted and approved</li> <li>14. Remediation Scheme (Implement and Verification)</li> <li>15. Reporting of Unidentified Contamination at any time</li> <li>16. Pre-commencement landscaping (including green roof details) to be submitted and approved</li> <li>17. Pre-commencement landscape management plan to be submitted and approved</li> <li>18. Pre-occupation boundary treatments to be submitted and approved</li> <li>19. Off-site tree planting scheme</li> <li>20. Pre-commencement Arboricultural Method Statement to be submitted and approved</li> <li>21. Compliance condition relating to hours of construction works</li> <li>22. Compliance condition relating to no burning of materials or green waste on site</li> <li>23. Pre-commencement submission of and approval of habitat enhancement measures</li> <li>24. Pre-commencement badger set survey to be submitted and approved</li> <li>25. Compliance condition relating to protecting nesting birds</li> <li>26. Flat roof areas not to be used as roof terraces unless where specified on the approved plans</li> <li>27. Dwelling Mix restriction</li> <li>28. Pre-commencement submission and approval of Sustainable Drainage Strategy to integrate with tree planting and other landscaping</li> <li>29. Compliance condition for SuDS approved in condition above to be completed prior to first occupation of any part of the development and managed/maintained thereafter</li> <li>30. SAP Assessment – Major – Design Stage</li> <li>31. SAP Assessment – Major – As Built</li> <li>32. Compliance condition obscure glazing to upper floor windows west elevation block A</li> <li>33. Details of balcony privacy screenings to be submitted and approved</li> <li>34. PD Restriction Class A, B, D and E</li> </ol> <p>Delegate to ADPTPPS to make such minor changes to the conditions Heads of Terms and details of the legal agreement as may be reasonably required to issue the permission.</p>
<b>Informatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive and Proactive</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-commencement conditions</li> <li>• Highways</li> <li>• Terms and Conditions</li> <li>• Building Regulations</li> <li>• Complaints about construction</li> <li>• Encroachment</li> <li>• Contamination</li> <li>• Noise between residential properties</li> <li>• CIL</li> </ul>
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## 1. Executive summary

- 1.1. The proposal would provide family sized affordable housing units on a previously developed site, which is currently vacant. The proposals would have an appropriate visual design and would provide suitable accommodation for future residents. The sustainability credentials of the proposal are a particularly welcomed feature. Through revisions during the course of the application, the on-site biodiversity enhancements have been maximised as far as reasonably possible, with off-site compensation also contributing to achieving an overall biodiversity net gain.
- 1.2. The assessment has identified elements of harm with the proposals, which is discussed in detail within the report. However, when balanced against the benefits of the scheme, including 100% family sized housing – for which there is a critical need within the Borough – the proposal is considered acceptable in the planning balance.
- 1.3. The application is therefore recommended to the Planning Applications Committee for approval, subject to further satisfactory information relating to SuDS, completion of the legal agreement and the conditions as set out above.

## 2. Introduction and Site Description

- 2.1 The site relates to land to the north of Dwyer Road. The site comprises land that was previously occupied by the now-demolished Alice Burrows care home and is lies vacant. The site is bound by Appleford Road to the west, Burghfield Road to the east, Dwyer Road to the south and residential dwellings to the north. Opposite the Site to the south fronting Dwyer Road is a small area of Greenfield land with some landscaping.
- 2.2 The surrounding area is predominantly residential. Charles Clore Court to the north of the site comprises a predominantly four storey block fronting Burghfield Road with vehicular access from Appleford Road. The block drops to two storeys closest to the Site. The predominant building height of other dwellings on Dwyer Road and Appleford Road is two storeys, and four storeys along Burghfield Road.
- 2.3 Vehicular access to the site is currently provided from both Appleford Road and Dwyer Road via simple priority junctions.
- 2.4 There are several trees that exist on the permitter of the site, including individual TPOs and a group TPO in the north west corner of the site.
- 2.5 The site allocated under Policy WR3p (Alice Burrow Home, Dwyer Road) which states:
 

*“Development for residential and/or residential care.  
Development should:*

  - *Be accessed from Appleford Road only;*
  - *Avoid adverse effects on important trees including those protected by TPO;*
  - *Take account of the potential impact on wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required; and*
  - *Take account of potential archaeological significance.*

*Site size: 0.48 ha 18-27 dwellings or an equivalent number of residential care bedspaces”*

- 2.6 This application is reported to the Planning Applications Committee because it is a Council's own (Regulation 3) development, as well as being a 'major' development.
- 2.7 The site in relation to the wider urban area is shown below, together with an aerial view.



Location Plan (not to scale)



Aerial View (not to scale)

### 3. The Proposal

- 3.1 The application seeks permission for the redevelopment of the site to provide 30 new homes, alongside new access, soft landscaping and parking.
- 3.2 The proposal would comprise 1 x 4 storey building site to the north of the site, a part 2 part 3 storey terraced row site to the middle of the site and 3 x 3 storey buildings site to the south of the site adjacent Dwyer Road.
- 3.3 The scheme proposes 100% on-site affordable housing and 50% of the units would have 3+ bedrooms.

1 Bedroom Flats	15
3 Bedroom Houses	8
4 Bedroom House	6
5 Bedroom House	1
TOTAL	30 Units

- 3.4 24 car parking spaces are proposed, including 2 disabled bays and access would be from Appleford Road.

#### *Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)*

- 3.5 The proposed residential units are specified as being affordable housing, the applicant has stipulated that CIL relief will be sought. If relief is given, the CIL liability would then be £zero.
- 3.6 The applicant has submitted the following drawings and documents for consideration:

RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0001 - Site Location Plan-REV B  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0002 - Existing Site Plan-REV B  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0100 - Proposed Site Plan-REV O  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0110 - Proposed Roof Plan-REV C  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0150 - Proposed Street Elevations-Rev B  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0200 - Block A Ground Floor-REV H  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0201 - Block A First Floor-REV H  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0202 - Block A Second Floor-REV C  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0203 - Block A Third Floor-REV C  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0204 - Block A Roof Plan-REV E  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0250 - Proposed Elevations - Block A-REV D  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0251 - Proposed Elevations - Block B-REV D  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0252 - Proposed Elevations - Block C-REV D  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0301 - Dwelling Type - 3B5PH Type B-REV F  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0302 - Dwelling Type - 4B8PH Type A-REV F  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0303 - Dwelling Type - 4B8PH Type B Sheet 1-REV E  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0304 - Dwelling Type - 4B8PH Type B Sheet 2-REV E  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0305 - Dwelling Type - 5B10PH Type A Sheet 1-REV E  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0306 - Dwelling Type - 5B10PH Type A Sheet 2-REV E  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0307 - Dwelling Type - 4B8PH Type D-REV –  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0310 - Dwelling Type - 1B2PF Type A-REV F  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0311 - Dwelling Type - 1B2PF Type B-REV F  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0312 - Dwelling Type - 1B2PF Type C-REV E

RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0600 - Detailed Sections and Elevations - 3B5PH Type B  
4B8PH Type A-REV B  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0601 - Detailed Sections and Elevations - 4B8PH Type B-REV  
A  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0602 - Detailed Sections and Elevations - 5B10PH Type A-REV  
A  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0603 - Detailed Sections and Elevations - Block A Apartment  
Sheet 1-REV B

RBC-DRR\_HTA-A\_DR\_0604 - Detailed Sections and Elevations - Block A Apartment Sheet 2-REV A  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-L\_DR-0904\_Illustrative Landscape Masterplan  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-L\_DR\_8900\_Tree Pit Details  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-L\_DR-0900\_Tree retention and removal  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-L\_DR-0901\_Soil Plan  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-L\_DR-0902\_Landscape Planting Plan  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-L\_DR-0903\_Landscape Hardworks Plan  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-L\_DR-0904\_Illustrative Landscape Masterplan  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-L\_RP-0001\_Landscape Maintenance Strategy  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-L\_SH\_001\_Landscape Maintenance Schedule\_Appendix to Landscape Maintenance Strategy  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-L\_SH\_002\_Soft Landscape Schedule  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-L\_SH\_003\_Hard Landscape Schedule  
RBC-DRR\_HTA-L\_SH-004\_Tree Ratio Schedule

Design & Access Statement	RBC-DRR_HTA-A_RP010 - DAS	May 2023
Design & Access Statement Addendum	RBC-DRR_HTA-A_RP_0102 - DAS Addendum	November 2023
Arboricultural Assessment	Impact rt-mme-158951B-02-RevC_(AIA)_DRR_ISSUE	November 2023
Arboricultural Statement	Method rt-mme-160031-01-RevC_(AMS)_DRR_ISSUE	November 2023
Preliminary Assessment	Ecological ADAS PEA (updated) Dwyer Road Reading Borough Council.MPT69105-846 v 02	23 January 2023
GTLA survey	ADAS_Dwyer Road_GLTA_MPT69105-846 (00)	22 March 2023
Reptile Survey	ADAS Dwyer Road Reptile Survey Report	12 May 2023
Badger Survey	ADAS_Badger report_Dwyer Road_MPT69105-846 (00)	22 March 2023
Biodiversity Assessment	Net Gain ADAS_MPT69105-856(01)_Dwyer Road_BNG Report	10 November 2023
Daylight, Sunlight & Overshadowing Assessment	RBC-DRR_HTA-S_Dwyer Road_0500_Detailed DSO studies 20042023	April 2023
Daylight, Sunlight & Overshadowing Assessment Addendum	RBC-DRR_Post Planning Amendment TN - DSO	2 November 2023
Energy and Overheating Assessment	RBC-DRR_HTA-S_0500 Dwyer Road Energy and Overheating Assessment 18042023	April 2023
Energy and Overheating Assessment	RBC-DRR_Post Planning Amendment_TN-Energy Addendum	2 November 2023

Sustainability Statement	RBC-DRR_HTA-S_0501 Dwyer Road Sustainability Statement 18042023	April 2023
Noise Impact Assessment	R9941-1 Rev 1 Dwyer Road Reading - Noise Assessment	18 April 2023
Planning Statement (incl. Affordable Housing Statement)	RBC-DRR- Planning Statement_230518	May 2023
Planning Statement Addendum	RBC-DRR- Planning Statement Addendum- November 2023 Final	November 2023
Statement of Community Involvement	RBC-DRR_HTA-A_RP011 - SCI	May 2023
Phase 2 Ground Investigation Interpretative Report	26888-HYD-XX-XX-RP- GE-1001	1 June 2023
Sustainable Drainage Systems Proposal	DWY-HYD-XX-XX-RP-C- 7000-P04	21 April 2023
Transport Assessment	26888-HYD-XX-XX-RP- TP-4001 P03	25 April 2023
Travel Plan	26888-HYD-XX-XX-RP- TP-6001 P03	25 April 2023
Transport Statement Addendum	26888-HYD-XX-XX-RP- TP-4002-P01 - TS Addendum	30 October 2023
Utilities Statement	26888-HYD-ZZ-ZZ-RP- ME-0005 - Utilities Report - R01	24 February 2023

#### **4 Planning history**

- 4.1 150317/REG3 Signage informing the proposed future use of the site mounted to Hoarding

#### **5. Consultations**

##### ***RBC Housing***

- 5.1 This proposal has been prepared in conjunction with the Council's Housing Team who are supportive of the scheme.

##### ***RBC Transport***

- 5.2 Further to revised plans, concerns raised over shortfall in visitor parking. Parking layout and number of parking spaces acceptable. Conditions to secure CMS, cycle parking details, access and vehicle parking to be provided as shown. Discussed below.

##### ***RBC Waste & Recycling***

- 5.3 Further information was requested relating to the collection of waste and recycling, which was provided and would be secured by condition.

##### ***RBC Environmental Protection***

- 5.4 No objection subject to a variety of conditions relating to noise, air quality, land contamination, bin storage, hours of construction and a CMS. Discussed below.

##### ***RBC Ecology***

5.5 Further to revisions, no objection subject to conditions relating to nesting birds, badger setts, ecological enhancements and obligation to secure off-site tree planting. Discussed below.

***RBC Natural Environment***

5.6 Further to revisions, no objection subject to conditions securing arboricultural method statement, landscaping, boundary treatments and obligation to secure off-site tree planting. Discussed below.

***Public Consultation***

5.7 Nearby neighbouring properties were consulted by letter and site notices were displayed at the application site.

5.8 Four letters of representation received (from two properties), with the issues raised being summarised as:

- Insufficient car parking spaces
- Height along Dwyer Road out of keeping with area
- Overdevelopment of site
- Lack of EV charging points

**6. Legal and Planning Policy context**

6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) – among them the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as ‘the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

6.2 In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

6.3 Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

**National Policy**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023

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

- 2. Achieving sustainable development
- 4. Decision-making
- 5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
- 9. Promoting sustainable transport
- 11. Making effective use of land
- 12. Achieving well-designed places
- 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

National Planning Policy Guidance (2014 onwards)

Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019) policies are:

- CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
- CC4: Decentralised Energy
- CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
- CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
- CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity  
CC9: Securing Infrastructure  
EN9: Provision of Open Space  
EN10: Access to Open Space  
EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network  
EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland  
EN15: Air Quality  
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources  
EN17: Noise Generating Equipment  
EN18: Flooding and Drainage  
H1: Provision of Housing  
H2: Density and Mix  
H3: Affordable Housing  
H5: Standards for New Housing  
H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space  
TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy  
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters  
TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities  
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging  
WR3p: Alice Burrows Home, Dwyer Road

#### RBC Supplementary Planning Documents

Affordable Housing (2021)  
Planning Obligations under S106 (2015)  
Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)  
Employment, Skills and Training (2013)  
Parking Standards and Design (2011)

#### Other relevant documentation

Reading Tree Strategy (2021)  
Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (2021)  
The National Design Guide (2019)  
The National Model Design Code (2021)

## **7. Appraisal**

7.1 The main considerations are:

- Land Use Considerations
- Provision of Affordable Housing and Unit Mix
- Design Considerations – Layout, Scale and Appearance
- Residential Amenity
- Impact on Parking/Highways
- Trees and Landscaping
- Ecology
- Sustainability and Energy
- Sustainable Drainage Systems
- Environmental Protection Matters – Contaminated Land
- Legal Agreement

### **Land Use Considerations**

7.2 Policy CC1 (Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development) requires a positive approach to development proposals that reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which lies at the heart of the National Planning Policy (NPPF). To achieve sustainable development a proposal needs to meet economic, social and environmental objectives. It is considered that a proposal for new housing would contribute to providing sufficient land for housing, a range of homes and would make effective use of land.

- 7.3 Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) confirms that there is a pressing need for additional housing in Reading and the surrounding area.
- 7.4 The former Alice Burrows care home has been demolished. The wider principle of re-development of this site is established under Local Plan housing allocation Policy WR3p (Alice Burrow Home, Dwyer Road) which allocates the site for residential development as follows:

*“Development for residential and/or residential care.*

*Development should:*

- *Be accessed from Appleford Road only;*
- *Avoid adverse effects on important trees including those protected by TPO;*
- *Take account of the potential impact on wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required; and*
- *Take account of potential archaeological significance.*

*Site size: 0.48 ha 18-27 dwellings or an equivalent number of residential care bedspaces”*

*Principle of Housing*

- 7.5 The proposed development, providing 30 residential units on previously developed land, would contribute towards meeting the Council’s housing need requirements in accordance with Policy H1. Given the above, the principle of providing residential accommodation at the site is supported by the site allocation. The proposal is considered to represent a valuable development opportunity which can positively contribute to meeting the Borough’s ongoing housing need.

### **Provision of Affordable Housing and Unit Mix**

*Affordable Housing*

- 7.6 Affordable Housing is a key identified priority within the Borough. Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) seeks to ensure that development proposals of more than 10 dwellings should provide 30% affordable housing, preferably on site.
- 7.7 In terms of affordable housing, the applicant has been clear from the outset of the application that the proposals would deliver 100% affordable housing on site. This will be in the form of 30 social rent affordable (Reading Affordable Rent) housing units.
- 7.8 It is relevant to note that affordable housing in the borough is generally secured through legal agreement and legal agreements can only secure what is reasonably required to make a development acceptable in planning terms under Section 122 of Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010.
- 7.9 The proposed provision of an 100% affordable housing scheme would be significantly more than the Policy H3 30% on site affordable housing requirement. As such, any provision above the required 30% amount would be considered to be an additional planning benefit of the proposals, in the assessment of the overall planning balance for the scheme as a whole. It follows that, where proposals conflict with other policies in the plan, securing a higher percentage can be justified in order to outweigh other areas of harm identified.
- 7.10 In this instance, there are considered to be a number of factors which justify a higher than 30% affordable housing requirement. As set out elsewhere in this report, there are some areas of harm arising from the proposals, which officers consider need to be mitigated. These include a shortfall in visitor parking, shorter garden sizes and shortfall in open space and landscaped areas within the site.
- 7.11 It is not possible to provide an exact amount of affordable housing that would outweigh the harm. However securing the proposed 100% affordable housing, well in excess of the policy minimum, would carry significant weight given the critical need for affordable housing in the Borough and the existing shortfall in provision. This remains to be weighed in the overall planning balance at the end of this report.



*Unit Mix*

- 7.12 Policy H2 (Density and Mix) identifies that wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting identified needs in respect of housing mix, and in particular, for family homes of 3 or more bedrooms. The Policy seeks that at least 50% of the homes (outside town, district and local centres) will be 3 bed or larger.
- 7.13 The proposal would provide 15 one-bedroom flats, 8 three-bedroom houses, 6 four-bedroom houses and 1 five-bedroom house. This equates to 50% of the overall mix being of 3 bed or larger and the proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy H2 in this respect. The overall mix would provide a variety of unit sizes and types and at social rent which would address the need for housing across Reading. This is considered to be a key benefit of the proposed development - providing family sized housing to meet identified housing needs. The proposed mix of dwellings will be secured by way of condition.

**Design Considerations – Layout, Scale and Appearance**

- 7.14 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks to ensure that new development enhances and preserves the local character. The policy places importance on the layout of the urban structure and urban grain, stipulating that development should respond positively to the local context and create safe and accessible environments. The policy requires a “high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located”.
- 7.15 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF 2023 details that decisions should ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment.
- 7.17 The National Design Guidance identifies 10 key components for good design and of particular note is the characteristic of ‘Context’ and it states that “well designed new development responds positively to the features of the site itself and the surrounding context beyond the site boundary. It should enhance positive qualities and improve negative ones.”

*Layout and Scale*

- 7.18 The scale and layout of the proposal is the result of detailed discussions at application stage. The layout as originally submitted was not supportable, due to excessive and overdominant road layout and parking areas which led to the houses and residential spaces appearing cramped with very small back gardens, associated privacy issues and overall a poorly considered arrangement for future residents.
- 7.19 Discussions were held with the applicant during the course of the application, and revised plans were received reducing the width of the road and reconfiguring the parking layout, increasing the distance between houses and increasing garden sizes. As a consequence one house was removed from the terrace. The changes allow for a better arrangement of streets and spaces, as well as achieving a less cramped layout and improved appearance overall.

Original Proposed Layout

Revised Proposed Layout



- 7.20 The surrounding area largely comprises 2 storey terraced rows and 2 storey semi detached properties to the east, south and west of the site. Immediately to the north, is the 4 storey Charles Clore Court care home development, with 4 storey buildings continuing beyond. The character of the area is mixed with no one style of development predominating.
- 7.21 The proposals comprise a 4 storey block of flats to the north of the site adjacent to Charles Clore Court, a part 2 part 3 storey terraced row sited to the middle of the site, and 5 x 3 storey houses to the south, adjacent Dwyer Road.
- 7.22 The proposed 4 storey block would be read in conjunction with the larger scale 4 storey buildings to the north, whilst the lower 2 and 3 storey buildings would provide an acceptable transition to the residential scale to the east, south and west. The proposed buildings are not considered to appear excessively large within the context of the site and the surrounding area. Elements of single storey form would help to minimise bulk and the mass of the frontage buildings would be sufficiently set back from the Dwyer Road frontage to provide sufficient relief to the scale of the buildings. Given the change in levels across the site, the scale of buildings would acceptably respond to this as can be seen below:



- 7.23 It is considered that, further to revisions made, the layout has adequately maximised the development potential of the site. The existing mixed character of development in the area perhaps allows for a new, higher density, character to be created.
- 7.24 An area of green space is proposed to the south west corner of the site, adjacent Appleford Road and Dwyer Road. This would help to soften the proposals. However, it is apparent that this is driven by the root protection area of existing tree to be retained and would serve more as an area of landscaping than an area of open space that might serve future residents. The lack of meaningful open space and space for landscaping and tree planting within the scheme is indicative of a degree of crampedness which remains within

the proposals – an area of harm which remains to be considered in the overall planning balance at the end of this report.

#### *Appearance*

- 7.25 The proposed buildings would all have flat roofs with regular fenestration and brick detailing. The flat roofs would assist in minimising the mass of the buildings and would also allow for the incorporation of green roofs and solar panels, to assist in the sustainability and ecology of the site.
- 7.26 The buildings would largely be finished in red brick with elements of light grey brick proposed. This would complement the main brick, providing a slightly more contemporary approach, adding a richness to the finished appearance and adding visual interest. The proposals would represent a modern design which marries traditional features with functional buildings which would relate well to the immediate area.
- 7.27 In overall terms, and despite the concerns over crampedness referred to above, the appearance of the proposed buildings would represent good quality design that will enhance the character and appearance of the area, and which will assist in integrating into the surrounding area and the palette of materials would be appropriate. However, to ensure the design quality, it is considered reasonable and appropriate to secure further details of all external materials via condition prior to commencement, to guarantee the design quality of the scheme. In accordance with Policy CC7.

#### **Residential Amenity**

- 7.28 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 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.

#### *Impact on neighbouring Amenity*

- 7.29 The site has residential properties to the north, east and west. The properties to the east and west along Burghfield Road and Appleford Road respectively are located more than 20m from the proposed buildings. It is not considered that there would be any harm to these properties through loss of light, privacy or the increase in scale on the site.
- 7.30 The neighbouring properties most affected by the proposals are No's 141 and 143 Appleford Road a pair of semis to the north west of the site and Charles Clore Court a 4 storey block comprising a care home to the north.
- 7.31 In relation to No's 141 and 143 Appleford Road, the proposed block of flats, at its closest point, would be located a distance of approximately 6m to the rear gardens and 15.4m to the houses themselves. Whilst clearly visible to occupiers of these properties, given the siting of the block to the south east of No.143, no significant material overbearing impacts are considered to arise. Upper floor windows are proposed on the flank elevation facing towards No.143. Given these would be secondary windows to the proposed units, these could be obscurely glazed so as not to result in a loss of privacy. Given this, combined with their small scale, no significant material loss of privacy is considered to arise. Given the position of balconies on the north elevation of the block of flats, it would be appropriate to have some screening from the balcony closest to the rear of No's 141 and 143 Appleford Road. This will be secured via condition.
- 7.32 There would be a distance of approximately 10m from the proposed block of flats to Charles Clore Court at its closest point. Given the siting and orientation of the proposed block of flats, whilst visible, no overbearing effects are considered to arise. Upper floor balconies are proposed on the north elevation facing towards Charles Clore Court. There are windows on the upper floors of the flank elevation of Charles Clore Court. However, as these serve bathrooms and are obscurely glazed, no material loss of privacy is considered to arise.
- 7.33 Shadowing models have been presented which show that given the orientation, scale and design of the proposals, there would be no significant adverse impact as a result of

overshadowing. Similarly, a Daylight/Sunlight report has also been submitted, which demonstrates to officers' satisfaction that there would be no significant unacceptable impact on neighbour's living conditions.

- 7.34 Overall, the proposals would ensure that there would be no significant material harm to neighbour's living conditions, in accordance with Local Plan Policy CC8.

#### *Amenity of Future Occupiers*

- 7.35 In addition to Policy CC8 above, Policies H5 (Standards for New Housing) and H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) also apply. Policy H5 states that new build housing will need to comply with the nationally prescribed space standards. Policy H10 sets out that *"Dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space wherever possible, that allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children's play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space. Houses will be provided with private outdoor space whereas flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens."*

- 7.36 All dwellings would meet the nationally described space standards (as outlined in Policy H5) for the type of dwelling/number of bedrooms and the internal layout of the proposed units are arranged so as to create a suitable standard of living accommodation for future occupiers. It is considered that all dwellings would have good levels of light and outlook.

- 7.37 All units are considered to be provided with adequate levels of privacy. There would be a front-to-front distance between the block of flats and the terraced row of 13.6m which is considered adequate to prevent any undue overlooking. There would be a distance of at least 18m from the rear of the terraced row to the rear two storey elements of the houses fronting Dwyer Road. Whilst this falls just short of the 20m back-to-back separation distance recommended in Policy CC8, the windows have been positioned carefully such that there would be no material loss of privacy.

- 7.38 All the proposed houses would have their own private outdoor garden amenity space. The size of these spaces has increased during the course of the application, further to concerns raised about the quality and scale of the gardens. The amended scheme allows for more spacious gardens, albeit the gardens to the houses fronting Dwyer Road offer width over depth. Whilst there remain concerns about the depth of gardens, they are not considered to be so unduly small to compromise the quality of accommodation for future occupiers.

- 7.39 The flats would have access to communal outdoor space to the rear, as well as benefitting from their own balcony areas.

- 7.40 Overall, officers consider that the proposal would provide suitable future living conditions for residents and is therefore considered to comply with the Local Plan policies above.

#### **Impact on Parking/Highways**

- 7.41 Policies TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway related matters), TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking related matters relating to development.

#### *Car Parking Provision*

- 7.42 24 car parking spaces are proposed across the site, arranged in a mix of parallel and perpendicular parking bays. The Council's Transport Officer has confirmed that the layout is acceptable. An assessment of the car parking data provided shows that this level of provision would be acceptable to serve future residents given the nature of the site and the location of the development. However, based on the Parking SPD, a visitor parking bay should also be provided within the site. Given the constraints of the site and the desirability of providing larger gardens and a less highways-dominated streetscene, there is insufficient space to provide an additional parking bay within the site. The shortfall of one visitor parking bay will be weighed up in the planning balance at the end of this report.

#### **Access**

- 7.43 Vehicle access to the new street is proposed off Appleford Road to the west of the site. The Council's Transport Officer has confirmed that this acceptable, that the design and visibility splays are compliant, and the access would not result in any harm to highway safety.
- 7.44 The new houses fronting Dwyer Road would have direct access with driveways/crossovers provided which is acceptable. There is a bus shelter within the visibility splays of the driveways to the homes fronting Dwyer Road; however, the Council's Transport Officer does not consider this to represent an issue given the design of the shelter and frequency of traffic movements to and from driveways.

#### *Cycle Parking Provision*

- 7.45 The proposed cycle parking provision includes for 8 cycle spaces for the 15 one-two bedrooms units which complies with the Parking SPD. The spaces would be located within a store equipped with Sheffield stands. Whilst this is acceptable, full details of the store are proposed to be secured via condition to ensure that it is fully covered and lockable.
- 7.46 The houses across the site would be provided with on plot cycle stores that allow for two cycle parking spaces per unit which complies with the Parking SPD.

#### *Construction*

- 7.47 A condition requiring a Construction Method Statement (CMS) will be attached to any approval, requiring submission and approval before any works commence on-site to regulate the amenity effects of construction. As well as demonstrating a commitment to ensuring the number of HGV movements are managed and controlled, the CMS must demonstrate that appropriate measures will be implemented to ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists on the road network around the construction site.

#### *Waste and Servicing*

- 7.48 Servicing, waste and recycling storage would be appropriately located within the curtilage of the dwellings with a collection point provided on street to ensure that bins are presented in a suitable location on collection day to minimise waste collection vehicle reversing movements. The bin store in the flats would be appropriately located internally at ground floor.
- 7.49 Overall, the proposals would represent an appropriate development in transport terms and would largely comply with the Local Plan. As above, the shortfall of visitor parking will form part of the overall planning balance.

#### **Trees and Landscaping**

- 7.50 Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) seeks to extend the Borough's vegetation cover and that development should make provision for tree planting whilst Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks proposal should include appropriate landscaping. Proposals should demonstrate an appropriate level of greening and/or net gain in the tree number.
- 7.51 With regard to trees shown to be retained, the Council's Natural Environment Officer has confirmed that there are no concerns about the impact of the development to existing trees, subject to securing an appropriate Arboricultural Method Statement via condition. Further details relating to soil and tree pit details, and service routes are required, which are also proposed to be secured by way of condition.
- 7.52 Further to the above, a landscape masterplan has been submitted with the application. This includes the provision of 43 new trees on site. The Council's Natural Environment Officer has confirmed that the principles of landscape layout and planting, particularly trees, are considered acceptable. A pre-commencement landscaping condition is recommended which will secure planting details to include the species, maintenance, and management schedule.

7.53 There is a lack of planting along the southern boundary. Whilst disappointing, this is due to a lack of meaningful space for tree planting, as discussed above. As well as the 43 on site trees proposed, the applicant is also proposing to fund the planting of off-site street trees on RBC land. Discussions are still taking place as to the number of trees and proposed locations. Further information in this respect will be provided by way of an update report to Committee. In general terms this step is welcomed by officers and this will be secured as part of the Unilateral Undertaking.

### **Ecology**

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

7.55 The proposal is accompanied by an ecological report which demonstrates that there would be no impact on existing species at the site. Conditions are proposed to be attached to ensure that site clearance is to be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season. A pre-commencement badger sett survey condition is also proposed, as there was previously a badger set on the site, since disused.

7.56 The Biodiversity Net Gain calculation shows that in the absence of off-site mitigation the proposal would result in a net loss of Habitat Units using the DEFRA 4 metric. The applicant has held discussions with the Council's Ecologist and it has been agreed that there are no feasible options for delivering a net gain on the site. As such, and as above, off site trees are proposed on RBC land which would deliver a net gain in habitat units. As above, Officers will continue to discuss tree numbers and more precise locations with the applicant and any further clarification will be report by way of update report.

7.57 It should be noted that using street trees to offset the loss of the grassland habitat does not strictly accord with the trading rules set out in the DEFRA guidance. However, in this instance, the Council's Ecologist considers that this approach is acceptable as the planting of street trees would be a significant benefit for wildlife in Reading and would be in accordance with the Tree Strategy. Subject to a planning obligation requiring the application to deliver street trees, the proposal would comply with Policy EN12.

7.58 Further to the above, the Ecology report includes a number of ecological enhancements including wildlife friendly planting, bat and bird boxes and mammal gaps. Full specifications of bird and bat boxes showing the locations and elevations will be secured via suitably worded conditions. Green roofs are also proposed which is welcomed, and full details including planting and ongoing maintenance will be secured via suitably worded conditions.

### **Sustainability and Energy**

7.59 Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) and Policy CC3 (Adaption to Climate Change) seeks that development proposals incorporate measures which take account of climate change. Policy CC4 (Decentralised Energy) seeks that developments of more than 20 dwellings should consider the inclusion of combined heat and power plant (CHP) or other form of decentralised energy provision.

7.60 Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) and the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019) identify that, as a minimum, new dwellings should achieve 35% improvement in regulated emissions over the Target Emissions Rate (TER) in the 2013 Building Regulations, with financial contribution required to off-set any remaining carbon emissions to zero.

7.61 In bringing this proposal forward, the applicant (RBC Housing in this case) has been clear that minimising energy consumption and carbon emissions for the benefit of the residents was a high design priority for the houses.

- 7.62 An energy and sustainability assessment was submitted as part of the application. This demonstrates that the proposal would meet zero carbon targets and be a 'Passivhaus' design through higher fabric standards and the low carbon and renewable energy systems, namely photovoltaic panels and air source heat pumps. Details of these additions are to be secured by way of conditions.
- 7.63 Officers are satisfied that the proposals demonstrate a good standard of energy sustainability and, subject to conditions, the development accords with relevant policy in this regard.

#### **Sustainable Drainage Systems**

- 7.64 Policy EN18 (Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems) requires all major developments to incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) with runoff rates aiming to reflect greenfield conditions and, in any case, must be no greater than the existing conditions of the site.
- 7.65 The applicant has submitted a revised Surface Water Drainage Strategy. However, this does not yet demonstrate that run-off rates and method of attenuation would be acceptable, as required, and this is in the process of being updated. The applicant has indicated that drainage can be designed in conjunction with soft landscaping – connecting tree planting pits with proposed soakaways so that trees and smaller plants could filter surface water within the site which would be appropriate. Discussions are on-going in this respect and there is no evidence to suggest that this technical matter could not be resolved and delegated authority is sought to finalise details. Final details of all elements of the strategy would be secured via condition. Conditions will also secure a timetable for implementation and details of management and maintenance of the scheme.

#### **Environmental Protection Matters**

##### *Contaminated Land*

- 7.66 Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) required that developments on land affected by contamination can be satisfactorily managed or remediated against so that it is suitable for the proposed use.
- 7.67 A contaminated land desk study has been submitted with the application. This concludes that further intrusive investigation is necessary to confirm the risk levels from contamination. The Council's Environmental Protection officer recommends the standard four-stage conditions to ensure that the possible presence of contamination is thoroughly investigated and removed/mitigated if necessary (3 of the conditions are pre-commencement). In accordance with Policy EN16.

#### **S106 Legal Agreement/Unilateral Undertaking**

- 7.68 The vast majority of elements to be secured via s106 legal agreement, as per the Recommendation at the outset of this report, have already been detailed in earlier sections of this report. One matter not explicitly referenced is the requirement to secure an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) for the Construction phases of the development. This is required in line with Policy CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) and the Employment, Skills and Training SPD. It is not yet known whether this will take the form of an actual ESP to be progressed by them on site, or payment of an equivalent financial contribution, as per the SPD formula. The legal agreement will be worded flexibly to enable either eventuality.
- 7.69 It is considered that the obligations referred to in the Recommendation would comply with the National Planning Policy Framework and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in that it would be: i) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, ii) directly related to the development and iii) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. These Head of Terms has been agreed by the applicant and a S106 Legal Agreement is in the process of being prepared to secure this contribution.

#### **8. Equality implications**

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

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

8.2 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. Furthermore, the proposal would be a positive addition to Reading in terms of its use and the complementary nature of the uses.

## **9 Conclusion & planning balance**

9.1 As with all applications considered by the Local Planning Authority, the application is required to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as per Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

9.2 As noted in the above assessment, there are clear benefits in providing family sized accommodation on this site. The report does identify elements of harm, largely due to the lack of open space, slight shortfall in car parking spaces and insufficient space to provide a suitable standard of tree planting and landscaping within the site. There is a general concern that the proposals result in a degree of crampedness and overdevelopment of the site. This harm should therefore be considered against the benefits of the scheme.

9.3 A clear benefit is the proposed 100% affordable family-sized housing for which there is a critical need within the Borough. It is considered that in this instance this clearly outweighs the areas of harm identified. As such, it is necessary to secure all the dwellings as affordable housing.

9.4 On the basis of the above assessment, the application is recommended for Approval, subject to the recommendation above to include conditions, submission of further information relating to SuDs and completion of legal agreement.

Selection of proposed plans shown here:



**Design Amendments** in response to RBC Planning comments:

**Mews Street & Parking** - reduced in width, on site turning removed, parking rearranged as mix of parallel and perpendicular bays, substation relocated adjacent to building and relocation of car parking to Appleford Road

**Block A** - footprint location adjusted to aid reduction in setting out of mews street

**Block B** - terrace reduced in size by 1no. 3B5PH-B, footprint location adjusted to increase rear garden size and back to back distances, mix of dwelling types adjusted. Ground floor FFL amended to accord with revised civils design. Stepped approach required for 4no. homes (including 1no. with alternative level access).



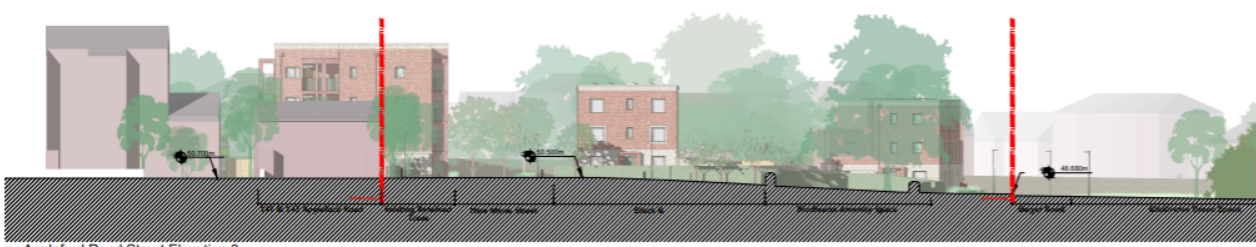
**Proposed Site Plan**



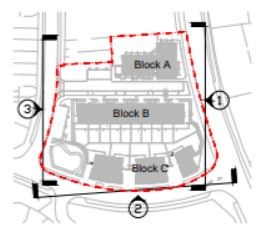
Burghfield Road Street Elevation 1  
1:200



Dwyer Road Street Elevation 2  
1:200



Appleford Road Street Elevation 3  
1:200



Elevation Key Plan  
1:1000

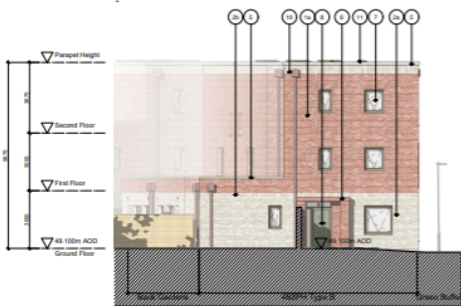
### Proposed Street Scenes



South Elevation 1



North Elevation 2



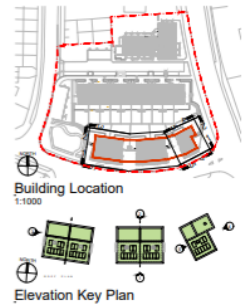
West Elevation 3



East Elevation 4



West Elevation 5



### Proposed Dwyer Road Elevations

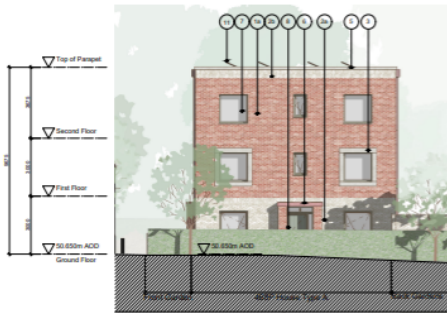




North Elevation 1



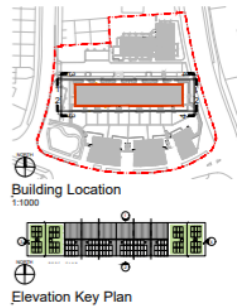
South Elevation 2



West Elevation 3



East Elevation 4



**Proposed Terraced Row Elevations**



West Elevation 3

East Elevation 4

North Section/Elevation 5



South Elevation 1

North Elevation 2

Building Location  
1:1000

Elevation Key Plan

## Proposed Flatted Block Elevations

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**06 December 2023**



<b>Title</b>	<b>PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT</b>
<b>Ward</b>	Whitley
<b>Planning Application Reference:</b>	230953/FUL
<b>Site Address:</b>	Brunel Retail Park, Rose Kiln Lane, Reading
<b>Proposed Development</b>	Amalgamation and change of use of Units 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 from Class E to Class B8; installation of mezzanine floorspace; associated external works including reconfiguration of car park and cycle parking and landscaping works.
<b>Applicant</b>	MCTGF Trustee 1 Ltd & MCTGF Trustee 2 Ltd
<b>Report author</b>	Alison Amoah - Principal Planning Officer
<b>Deadline:</b>	Original deadline 6 <sup>th</sup> October 2023, but an extension of time has been agreed with the applicant until 8 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
<b>Recommendation</b>	GRANT full planning permission.
<b>Conditions</b>	<p>To Include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Time Limit 3 years</li> <li>2. Approved Plans</li> <li>3. Compliance condition relating to materials as on approved plans</li> <li>4. Pre-occupation provision of all energy measures set out in the Sustainability and Energy Statement hereby approved.</li> <li>5. Pre-occupation photovoltaic array details to be submitted and approved.</li> <li>6. Pre-commencement submission and approval of a Sustainable Drainage Strategy.</li> <li>7. Pre-occupation provision of Sustainable Drainage Strategy.</li> <li>8. Compliance condition relating to restricting the use to B8 self-storage only (and no other use within the B8 Use Class).</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Pre-occupation provision of approved vehicle parking.</li> <li>10. Pre-occupation provision of approved vehicle access.</li> <li>11. Pre-occupation provision of approved cycle parking.</li> <li>12. Pre-occupation EVCP (electric vehicle charging points) layout and detailed specification to be submitted and approved.</li> <li>13. Pre-commencement (including demolition) demolition and construction method statement (including Transport and EP based requirements) to be submitted and approved.</li> <li>14. Compliance condition relating to hours of demolition/construction works (0800-1800hrs Mondays to Fridays and 0800-1300hrs Saturdays, and not at any time on Sundays and Bank or Statutory Holidays)</li> <li>15. Compliance condition relating to no burning of materials or green waste on site.</li> <li>16. Pre-commencement submission of a contamination assessment including land gas.</li> <li>17. Pre-commencement submission and approval of a remediation strategy.</li> <li>18. Pre-occupation submission and approval of a remediation validation report.</li> <li>19. Compliance condition relating to discovery of any unidentified contaminated land.</li> <li>20. No mechanical plant to be installed unless a noise assessment and mitigation scheme has been submitted and approved.</li> <li>21. Pre-occupation provision of approved landscaping scheme.</li> <li>22. Compliance condition relating to adherence to the approved Tree Report</li> <li>23. Compliance condition that no vegetation clearance shall take place during the bird nesting season.</li> <li>24. No external lighting to be installed, unless details, including how any lighting will not adversely impact wildlife, have been submitted and approved.</li> </ol> <p>All pre-commencement conditions have been agreed with the Applicant.</p>
<p><b>Informatives</b></p>	<p>To include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Terms</li> <li>2. Building Regulations approval required</li> <li>3. Damage to the highway</li> </ol>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Works affecting highways</li> <li>5. Pre-commencement conditions</li> <li>6. Complaints about construction</li> <li>7. Community Infrastructure Levy</li> <li>8. Positive and Proactive Statement</li> </ul>
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**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

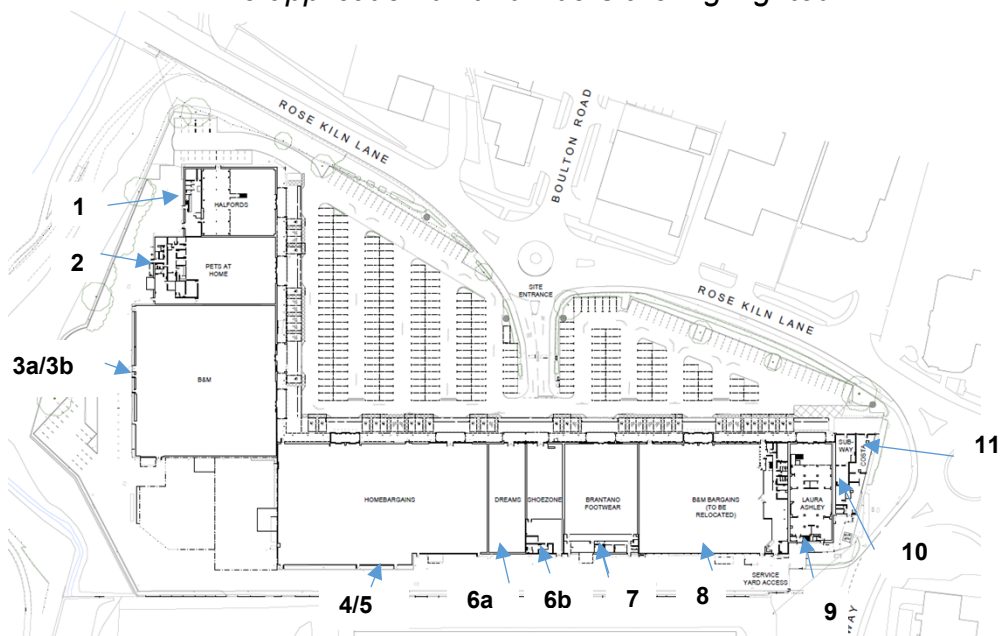
- 1.1 The proposal is recommended for approval subject to the conditions set out above.
  
- 1.2 The proposal relates to part of Brunel Retail Park, and is to amalgamate Units 7-11, which, apart from Unit 11 are currently vacant, to enable their commercial use for B8 self-storage, which would be a use suitable within this wider commercial area. The proposed B8 storage use would have no unacceptable impact on neighbouring properties and would have no adverse transport impacts, which would conflict with the use of the remaining retail units. There are no significant detrimental effects of the proposal, and it is considered that it accords with adopted policies and is recommended to you for approval.

**2. INTRODUCTION**

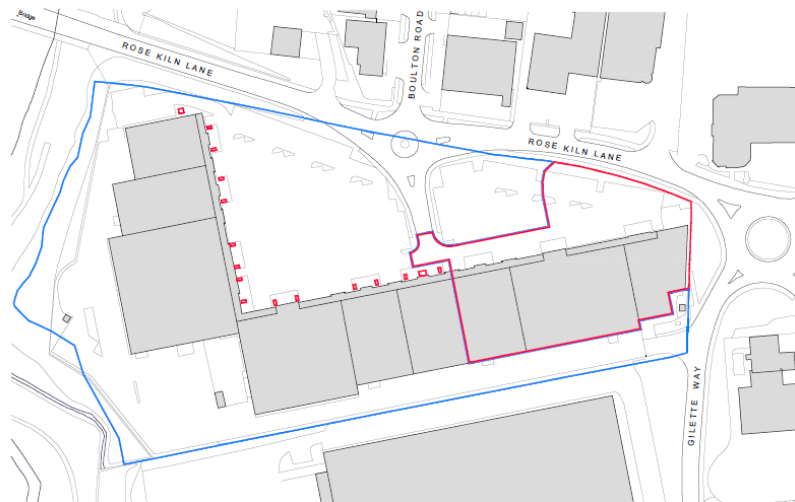
- 2.1 Brunel Retail Park is an established retail park of 3.5 hectares on Rose Kiln Lane, located to the east of the A33. The overall Retail Park currently has 14,755sqm of gross internal floorspace (including mezzanine) and is comprised of a total of 13 no. units with units occupied by Halfords (Unit 1), Pets at Home (Unit 2), B&M (Units 3a&3b), Home Bargains (Units 4&5), Dreams (Unit 6a), and Costa (Unit 11) and the remaining 5 no. units being vacant (see below plan). It is accessed via Rose Kiln Lane, via a 4-arm roundabout junction with a total of 451 car parking spaces to the front, a service area to the rear, the latter accessed from Gillette Way to the south-east. Immediately to the north and south is a mix of industrial units, and to the east, the Morrisons superstore. To the south-west is the Kennet Island residential area with the closest residential receptors approximately 200m to the south-west on Greenham Avenue.

Unit number	Old Number as referenced in earlier permissions	Unit as	Occupier	Ground Floorspace	Mezzanine Floorspace
1	11		Halfords	701	341
2	10		Pets at Home	935	
3a	8/9		Relocated B&M	1,202	
3b	8/9		Relocated B&M	1,212	600
4	6/7		Home Bargains	1,868	1,538
5	5		Home Bargains	931	
6a	4		Vacant	467	339
6b	4		Vacant	459	
7	3		Vacant	937	
8	1/2		Vacant (formerly B&M)	1,897	275
9	1/2		Vacant (formerly Laura Ashley)	460	354
10	N/A		Vacant (formerly Subway)	94	
11	N/A		Costa Coffee	165	
			<b>Floorspace</b>	<b>11,328</b>	<b>3,447</b>

*The application unit numbers are highlighted*



*Brunel Retail Park Occupiers*



*Site Location Plan*



*Photographs of the application site as existing (TPO tree – right image)*

- 2.2 The application site comprises Units 7,8, 9, 10 and 11 and currently measures 0.65ha and includes 4,182sqm GIA at ground floor and 659sqm at mezzanine level. The schedule of floorspace is as above.
- 2.3 The Brunel Retail Park was originally granted planning permission for A1 non-food retail units retail (now under Class E) in 1994 with conditions limiting the goods which could be sold, limiting the number of units selling clothing and footwear, and the range of minimum size of units, applied at the time for the purpose of protecting retail centres and the Reading Centre.
- 2.4 Since that time there have been a number of planning permissions granted, including: extensions; new units; variation of conditions to vary the range of goods which could be sold form specific units and the

number of units selling specific goods; new mezzanines; and amalgamation of units.

2.5 In 2021 two permissions were granted to provide flexible options for the ongoing use of the retail park. 201853 was a phased permission to allow for complete redevelopment of the Retail Park for 2 no. industrial units and 201842 for the continued use of the western end of the existing Retail Park (Units 1-6a) in the event that only Phase 1 (1 industrial unit) were built. The latter permission includes greater flexibility, with conditions to allow the following uses (within Class E):

- E(a) Display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food;
- E(b) Sale of food and drink for consumption (mostly) on the premises;
- E(c) Provision of: E(c)(i) Financial services; E(c)(iii) Other appropriate services in a commercial, business or service locality; and
- E(d) Indoor sport, recreation or fitness (not involving motorised vehicles or firearms).

2.6 That permission also includes conditions widening the range of goods which could be sold from any retail units (within Class E (a), but also some restrictions on the number of retained units which could sell specific goods. These permissions have not been implemented to date.

2.7 Following these permissions two further permissions were granted in 2022 which have facilitated the letting of Units 4 and 5 to Home Bargains (220145/FUL) and B&M to relocate to a bigger unit (Units 3a & 3b – 220110/NMA). These permissions dealt with the occupiers' requirements in terms of user restrictions and allowing a wider range of goods.

2.8 The application site includes an area of contaminated land (Policy EN16); is just to the north of the 'Land North of Manor Farm Road Major Opportunity Area' (Policy SR2); just west of the Whitley District Centre (Policy RL1); just south of the Core Employment Area 'North of Basingstoke Road' (Policy EM2e). Rose Kiln Lane is a Classified Road (Policy TR3) and there is a Tree Protection Order (TPO) TPO 118/05 at the eastern end of the site along the Rose Kiln Lane frontage.

2.9 The application is a 'major' development (a change of use over 1,000 sq.m.) and, therefore, referred to the Planning Applications Committee.

### **3 PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 The applicant has undertaken a review of future occupation options for Units 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, all of which are vacant apart from Unit 11, which is currently occupied by Costa. The submitted Planning Statement explains that there has been interest from self-storage operators (Class B8) and this application is seeking permission to facilitate this use. It would involve amalgamating these 5 units, including a mezzanine of up to 3,725sqm and some minimal external changes as summarised as following:

Northwest (front) Elevation

- Spandrel infill behind entrance doors;
- 2 no. roller shutter doors; and
- New single means of escape door with side panel.

Southeast (rear) Elevation

- New single means of escape door with side panel
- New aluminium window; and
- Existing double service doors removed and infilled with cladding to match.

East (side) Elevation

- New aluminium window; and
- Existing cladding removed and replaced with new shopfront and integrated door and glazed spandrel panels.

- 3.2 The proposed scheme would also involve the reconfiguration of the existing car and cycle parking, and this would result in the reduction of the number of car parking spaces of the overall Retail Park from 396 to 372. The B8 self-storage unit would have 13 no. spaces. The total number of cycle parking spaces would be reduced to 38 no. for the rest of the Retail Park and would be redistributed across the site (as can be seen on the location plan above). The proposal site would have 16 no. cycle spaces.
- 3.3 The amalgamated unit would be accessed via the existing roundabout from Rose Kiln Lane and there would be an amended layout to the front of the unit for HGV access. The parking and delivery vehicles up to 7.5 tonne would be to the front and would be enclosed by fencing and accessible via proposed vehicular and pedestrian gates. HGV access would be from the rear. Servicing for the remaining retail units would continue as per the existing arrangements.
- 3.4 One tree to the northern boundary would require removal along with a small length of hedging. Six new trees are proposed around the site along with shrub and hedge planting.

3.5 This proposal is an alternative strategy to an application being considered, and pending determination (ref: 231142), which seeks to amalgamate units 6b-9 and extend the range of goods which could be sold.

3.6 Submitted Plans and Documentation:

- Drawing no: 2418-LP01-C, dated 6/4/23 – Site Location Plan, received 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023
- Drawing no: 2418-X01-D - Site Plan as Existing received 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2023
- Drawing no: 2418-X02-B, dated 6/4/23 – Ground Floor Plan as Existing, received 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023
- Drawing no: 2418-X03-A, dated 3/4/23 – First Floor Plans as Existing, received 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023
- Drawing no: 2418-X04-A, dated 6/4/23 - Elevations as Existing, received 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023
- Drawing no: 2418-P01 – E, dated 6/4/23 – Site Plan as Proposed, received 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023
- Drawing no: 2418-P02 – E, dated 6/4/23 – Ground Floor Plan as Proposed, received 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023
- Drawing no: 2418-P03 – A, dated 6/4/23 – First Floor Plan as Proposed, received 14<sup>th</sup> August 2023
- Drawing no: 2418-P05 – A, dated 14/6/23 – Roof Plan as Proposed, received 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023
- Drawing no: 2418-P04 – B, dated 6/4/23 – Elevations as Proposed, received 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023
- Drawing no: A6103-03 Rev C – Landscaping Scheme, received 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023
- Drawing no: BRN-HDR-XX-XX-DR-C-102301 Rev P01 – Drainage Layout Within the Red Boundary, received 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023
- Drawing no: BRN-HDR-XX-XX-DR-C-102302 Rev P01 – Drainage Layout and Overall Existing Network, received 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023
- Planning Statement, within letter dated 7<sup>th</sup> July prepared by Quod, received 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023
- Sustainability and Energy Statement Including a BREEAM Scoping Review Rev B, dated 20/6/23, prepared by Envision, received 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023
- Letter from Envision, 'Clarifications to Sustainability and Energy Statement Incorporating a BREEAM Scoping Review , Brunel Retail Park', dated and received 24<sup>th</sup> November 2023

- Tree Survey Report [including and AIA and AMS] Rev A, dated 29/6/23, Report ref: A6103, prepared by Encon Associates, received 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023
- Transport Statement, prepared by TPP Consulting, received 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023
- Travel Plan, prepared by TPP Consulting, received 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023
- Technical Note: Drainage Statement, Ref: TN002, dated September 2023, prepared by HDR, received 28<sup>th</sup> September 2023
- Biodiversity Net Gain Report, Ref: 9352.BNGReport.vf, dated October 2023, prepared by Ecology Solutions, received 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023
- Biodiversity Metric Calculation 4.0, received 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023
- Response to Comments Raised by Highways in Relation to Planning Application 23/0953, by TTP Consulting, received 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023

### 3.7 Community Infrastructure levy (CIL):

In relation to the community infrastructure levy, the applicant has duly completed a CIL liability form with the submission. The development would not be CIL liable as the new build element would be less than 100 sq.m. gross internal floor area.

## 4 **PLANNING HISTORY**

The following includes some of the main decisions at the Retail Park.

**94/00443/FD** (940948) - Erection of Non-Food Retail Warehouses (A1) with ancillary service area & car parking for 510 cars – Approved 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1994

**04/01113/FUL** (041089)– Extension to Unit 8 [*as previously numbered*] and refurbishment of existing retail park including the re-cladding of existing park, the erection of four advertising totem stands and the erection of new entrance features to the units - Approved subject to a S106 legal agreement 14<sup>th</sup> December 2004

**11/00431/FUL** (110118)– Minor alterations to elevations and internal works to create two new units and reconfiguration of car park – Approved 12<sup>th</sup> May 2011 [*N.B. Units 3A and 3B as now numbered*]

**11/00967/VARIAT** (110655) – Minor alterations to elevations and internal works to create two new units and reconfiguration of car park without complying with condition 5 of planning permission 11/00431/FUL – Approved 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2011

**11/00673/VARIAT** (111326)– Erection of non-food retail warehouses (A1) with ancillary service areas and car parking for 510 cars without complying with conditions 12 and 14 of planning permission 94/0443/FD– Approved 5<sup>th</sup> October 2011

**131106/VAR** – Variation of planning permission 94/00443/FD to exclude Unit 1-2 (PC World) Brunel Retail Park, Rose Kiln Lane, Reading, RG2 0HS from complying with conditions 12 and 14– Approved 18<sup>th</sup> October 2013

**131743/FUL** – Erection of two new units for use within Class A1 and / or A3, alterations to the wider site and car park layout and associated works. Approved – 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014

**201842/FUL** - Continued use of Units 1, 2, 3a, 3b, 4, 5 and 6a within Class E providing a ground floor area of 11,329 square metres following consolidation of the Retail – Approved 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021

**201853/FUL** - Demolition of existing buildings. erection of 2no. buildings for use within Classes E(g)(iii), B2 and B8, along with access and servicing arrangements, car parking, landscaping and associated works – Approved 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021

**220110/NMA** - Minor amendment to conditions 12 & 14 of planning permission 131106 to change the range of goods being sold in units 3A, 3B and 7 (formerly Units 8/9 and 3 respectively) – Agreed 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022

**220145/FUL** – Continued use of Units 4 and 5 within use class E(a) – Approved 25<sup>th</sup> July 2022 – *this included extending the range of goods which could be sold including: food and drink, household goods, toys and games, health and beauty products including medicines and baby products.*

**231142/FUL** - Continued use of Units 6b, 7, 8, 9 in Class E(a), installation of sprinkler tank, pump house and trolley bay, reconfiguration of car parking area and associated works (amended) – Pending determination – *N.B. This represents an alternative strategy for part of the Retail Park.*

## **5 CONSULTATIONS**

- 5.1 RBC Transport – The original comments were as follows with areas to address in italics. Further information was subsequently amended to respond to the matters raised and is set out in paragraph 5.24 below:



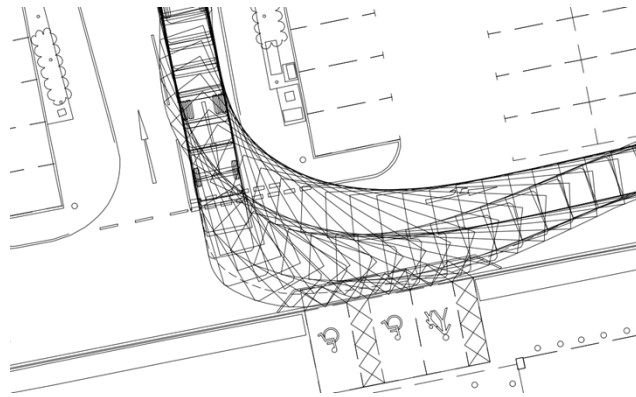
- 5.2 The units are currently vacant apart from Unit 11 which is occupied by Costa Coffee. To the east is the remainder of the Retail Park (i.e. Units 1, 2, 3a, 3b, 4, 5 and 6) is now fully occupied.
- 5.3 Access to the customer car park is taken from Rose Kiln Lane via a 4-arm roundabout junction, with access to the service yard taken via a priority-controlled junction on Gillette Way. There is currently parking for up to approximately 396 vehicles, split each side of the principal access way.
- 5.4 The surrounding area is predominantly commercial in nature with a large warehouse to the south, a Morrisons supermarket with petrol filling station to the east and predominantly industrial units to the north and north-east. The River Kennet runs in a broadly north-south orientation to the west of the Park, with the closest residential properties (at Kennet Island) located southwest of the aforementioned warehouse.
- 5.5 The A33 which runs in a north-south orientation to the west of the River Kennet is one of the primary routes into and out of Reading town centre from the M4 to the south, with open land to the west of the road.

#### Development Proposals

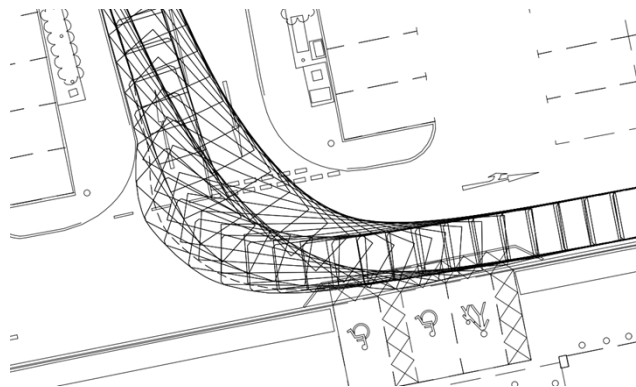
- 5.6 Units 7 to 11 which are the subject of this application currently have a combined gross floor area of 4,175sqm. The proposals would result in the loss of 4,175sqm of retail floorspace to be replaced by 6,879sqm of Class B8 Self-Storage floorspace including the installation of an additional mezzanine level.

#### Vehicle Access Arrangements

- 5.7 The amalgamated unit will be accessed via the existing access arrangement via Rose Kiln Lane.
- 5.8 The Transport Statement states that the proposed layout will facilitate HGV access to the front of the self-storage unit via the car park, however, it is stated that relatively few HGV deliveries are expected.
- 5.9 Tracking diagrams have been submitted demonstrating a 16.5m HGV entering the site via Rose Kiln Lane and navigating the internal road network. However, the tracking diagrams do indicate that a delivery vehicle would come into conflict with the kerb radii on the junction within the site and requires the full width of the internal road to make the manoeuvre. *Therefore, an updated tracking drawing should be provided confirming that this manoeuvre can take place without any conflicts occurring.*



5.10 The image below illustrates a 16.5m HGV exiting the site. It demonstrates that articulated vehicles exiting the site overruns the entry land requiring vehicles entering the retail park to stop and wait on the approach into the site. Typically, the type of vehicles associated with the proposed self-storage land use would be Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs) or domestic vehicles, therefore, the frequency of conflict occurring would be low. *However, the applicant is requested to address these points and quantify the number of HGV vehicle movements (anticipated).*



5.11 Servicing for the existing retail units at the wider retail park will be as per the existing arrangement and undertaken from the rear service yard via a priority-controlled junction on Gillette Way. *Given that servicing facilities already exist from the service yard, it would seem appropriate that HGV vehicles servicing the self-storage unit could undertake these activities from the rear as per the existing arrangements. This would eliminate the need for HGV vehicles to enter the retail park from the customer entrance off Rose Kiln Lane and reduce potential conflict at the junctions. The applicant is requested to address this point.*

Parking

5.12 Policy TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan states that development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport. Local parking standards are set

out in the RBC, Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which takes into account the accessibility of the site.

- 5.13 The site is located within the Zone 3, the Secondary Core Area and the required parking standards are as follows;
- Non-Food Retail: a maximum of 1 space per 30sqm GFA;
  - Class B8: a maximum of 1 space per 150sqm GFA.
- 5.14 There are currently a total of 396 parking spaces within the retail park including 367 spaces in the car park and 29 spaces in the service yard. The provision includes 26 disabled spaces and 18 reserved for parents with small children.
- 5.15 The proposals include a reconfiguration of the car park to the east of the access road which results in a loss of 24 parking spaces reducing the overall number of spaces to 372 of which 330 are for retail customers and 29 in the service yard. The provision includes 19 reserved for disabled badge holders and 16 for parents with small children. Based on 10,580 sqm of retained retail floor area, the proposed parking provision for the retail element is acceptable.
- 5.16 *The proposed self-storage unit will have a total of 13no. car parking space equating to a ratio of 1 space per 500sqm which is below the Council's adopted Parking standards for B8 use. Justification or user evidence is therefore requested to demonstrate that the proposed parking provision for the proposed B8 self storage use is acceptable and will meet the needs to of the development as this has not been provided within the Transport statement.*
- 5.17 In terms of cycle parking, the total level of cycle parking provision at the wider site will be reduced to 38no. spaces and redistributed around the Retail Park. A total of 16 no. cycle spaces are proposed at the front of the unit, in two locations.
- 5.18 *The Council's Policy stipulates that a provision of 10% of parking should be in the form of electric charging bays. Revised drawings are therefore required illustrating the provision of 2 EV charging bays for the self-storage facility.*

#### Trip Generation

- 5.19 The potential change in number of trips associated has been estimated based on trip rate information from the TRICS database, with 4,175sqm

of Retail floorspace being replaced by 6,879sqm of Self Storage floorspace.

- 5.20 The Transport Statement concludes that the proposals would typically result in fewer trips to / from the retail park when compared to the existing permitted use.
- 5.21 However, it is noted that the application has been assessed on the basis of B8 warehousing (self-storage) use. As self-storage use does not generate the same level of vehicle trips, HGV movements, on-site employment and demand for staff parking within a typical B8 warehousing commercial use, *the assessment undertaken is only acceptable from a transport perspective (subject to the points highlighted above) if planning approval is restricted to B8 (self-storage) use only.*
- 5.22 *If the applicant is seeking unrestricted B8 Use Class approval, then the Transport Statement would need to assess the development from a “worst-case” scenario and further assessments will need to be undertaken. Clarification is therefore sought on this point.*

#### Summary

- 5.23 In summary, the applicant is requested to address the points highlighted above before determining this application. Clarification is sought to determine whether planning permission is sought only for the amalgamation and change of use of Units 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 for self-storage purposes or whether the applicant is seeking an unrestricted B8 use class approval.
- 5.24 **Planning Officer note:** Further to amended information received from the applicant, including: Agreement to a condition restricting the unit to B8 self-storage; Amended tracking information and increased kerb radii; Further information re parking levels; and an amended plan to show two EVCP, the Transport Officer confirmed that the scheme would be acceptable. This would be subject to the inclusion of conditions with respect to: restricting the use to B8 self-storage only, the provision of the approved parking, vehicle access and cycle parking pre-occupation; the submission and approval of the EVCP layout and specification and implementation pre-occupation, and pre-commencement construction method statement (CMS).
- 5.25 Ecology Adviser – No objection subject to conditions that no vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season, landscaping details to be submitted and approved and that no external lighting should be installed without prior approval.

- 5.26 RBC Environmental Protection – No objection subject to conditions for the submission and approval of a noise assessment and mitigation scheme if mechanical plant were to be installed, submission and approval of a construction method statement, limitation of construction hours, pre-commencement submission of a Phase 1 contamination assessment, and to monitor the site for any unidentified contamination.
- 5.27 RBC Natural Environment (Trees) – Following initial comments from the Natural Environment (Trees) Officer, the applicant submitted a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment and an amended landscape plan. The Tree Officer confirmed that they have no objection subject to conditions to secure development in accordance with the Tree Survey Report and the approved Landscape Scheme.
- 5.28 RBC SUDS Manager (Local Lead Flood Authority – LLFA) - I have reviewed the attached and in principle I am happy that the proposed scheme will result in a benefit given that the lined permeable paving areas, albeit limited in area, will slow down the flow of surface water into the drainage system. However, it is noted that the submitted drawing only refers to the new parking area whereas the application red line extends to the west and therefore the drainage network contained within the whole red line should be illustrated. The LLFA would also need a drawing illustrating the existing drainage network for the site to ensure this proposal does not have a detrimental impact on wider drainage.
- 5.29 **Planning Officer Note:** Further to the submission of plans to show the drainage strategy for the site area and the overall drainage network the SUDS Officer confirmed acceptability of the proposed scheme subject to conditions requiring the approval of a Sustainable Drainage Strategy and the pre-occupation implementation of the approved strategy.
- 5.30 Thames Water – No response received.

*Public*

- 5.31 The following properties were notified of the application by letter:
- Morrisons Petrol Station
  - Gillette Industries Limited, Gillette Way
  - Trade Team Limited, Gillette Way
  - Octagon Motor CO., Rose Kiln Lane
  - Jemca, Rose Kiln Lane
  - Lex reading, Rose Kilne Lane
  - Lex Toyota, Rose Kilne Lane
  - Winterstoke Tyres, Rose Kiln Lane
  - Kwikfit, Rose Kiln Lane

- MVF, Rose Kiln Lane

Site notices were displayed on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

5.32 No comments have been received.

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

6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states at Paragraph 11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”.

6.2 For this Local Planning Authority the development plan is the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019). The relevant national / local policies / guidance are:

National Planning Policy Framework (2023). The following chapters are the most relevant (others apply to a lesser extent):

- 2. Achieving Sustainable Development
- 4. Decision-making
- 6. Building a Strong Competitive Economy
- 8. Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities
- 9. Promoting Sustainable Transport
- 11. Making Effective Use of Land
- 12. Achieving Well-Designed Places
- 14. Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change
- 15. Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

National Planning Policy Guidance (2014 onwards)

Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019). The relevant policies are:

- CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
- CC4: Decentralised Energy
- CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
- CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

CC7: Design and the Public Realm  
CC8: Safeguarding Amenity  
EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network  
EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland  
EN15: Air Quality  
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources  
EN17: Noise Generating Equipment  
EN18: Flooding and Drainage  
EM1: Provision of Employment Development  
EM2: Location of New Employment Development  
EM4: Maintaining a Variety of Premises  
TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy  
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters  
TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities  
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging  
RL1: Network and Hierarchy of Centres  
RL2: Scale and Location of Retail, Leisure and Culture Development  
RL5: Impact of Main Town Centre Uses  
SR2: Land North of Manor Farm Road Major Opportunity Area

Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:

- Employment Skills and Training SPD (2013)
- Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)
- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)

Other relevant documents:

- Reading Borough Council Tree strategy (2021)

## **7. APPRAISAL**

The main matters to be considered are:

- Land use principles
- Transport/ Parking
- Environmental Matters
- Flood Risk & Drainage
- Natural Environment
- Design Considerations and Effect on Character
- Sustainability
- Equalities impact

## **Land use principles**

- 7.1 Policy CC1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP) requires a positive approach to development that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which lies at the heart of national policy (NPPF).
- 7.2 The three overarching objectives defined in the NPPF, to achieving sustainable development are economic, social and environmental. With regard to the economic role, the proposal would contribute to economic activity through contributing to *“building a strong, responsive and competitive economy”* as defined in the NPPF. This would be through the construction period and bringing the vacant units back into effective use.
- 7.3 The site is an existing retail park, but not within a designated retail centre, located in South Reading. Paragraph 3.2.6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP, 2019) states that South Reading is one of the main parts of the Borough where there are significant sites potentially available for development, particularly in the area close to the A33. It goes on to state that South Reading will be the location to meet much of Reading’s need for new employment floorspace.
- 7.4 Policy EM1 sets out the quantum of new office and industrial/ warehouse development over the Plan period. Policy EM2 identifies the relevant locations for such employment, including industrial and storage and distribution and that these should be in the A33 corridor or in the Core Employment Area. The site is located just to the east of the A33 and falls within the defined ‘Corridor’ and commercial area, and located immediately opposite the Core Employment Area EM2e: North of Basingstoke Road and, therefore, in terms of its specific location is considered to be acceptable in principle. It should also be noted that the principle of a wider B8 (Storage and Distribution) use has been accepted through the approval of planning permission 201853 (July 2021).
- 7.5 The proposal also includes 437 sq.m. ancillary offices and as these would be ancillary to the B8 self-storage use then it is considered that the requirement for a retail sequential test to assess impacts on existing retail centres (in accordance with Para. 86 of NPPF) does not apply in this case.
- 7.6 Officers consider that the proposal would provide a flexible approach to delivering a viable development for the site. It is considered that a B8 storage use option would be acceptable in principle, according with the



NPPF's principles of making effective use of land and the Local Plan's employment policies, including contributing towards warehouse/ industrial floorspace by 2036. It would create some additional local employment opportunities (during the construction phase). The ongoing use would create some employment opportunities, which would be an improvement over the current vacant units.

- 7.7 Although the principle of the use and location are considered acceptable this would be subject to satisfactorily meeting other policy requirements as addressed further below.
- 7.8 Alongside this application is application reference 231142 (to be determined under delegated powers) for an almost identical part of the Retail Park. That proposal would be to retain Units 6b-9 and extend the range of goods which could be sold, in order to accommodate the operator, The Range (housewares retailer). The two applications would create flexibility for the site, with the developer/operator being able to choose to implement either option, but not both.

### **Transport/Parking**

- 7.9 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 related matters relating to development.
- 7.10 A Transport Statement (TS) has been submitted, which considers the potential highway implications arising from the proposed additional mezzanine which the scheme includes as the applicant states that this is likely to be required by any self-storage occupier taking the unit. The assessment has, therefore, assumed a total floorspace of the unit of up to 6,842sqm (3,566 sqm at ground floor level as existing and 3,275 sqm proposed at mezzanine level).
- 7.11 Using the TRICS database system, the TS identifies that based on B8 self-storage there would be fewer vehicle movements than the existing retail units.
- 7.12 As the applicant has agreed to a restricted B8 self-storage use the Transport Officer has confirmed that the layout with HGV movements to the front and the overall car parking provision of 13 spaces for the proposed unit, which is below standard, would be acceptable. Notwithstanding that from a transport perspective it has been demonstrated that HGV movements would be possible to the front, officers consider that in terms of pedestrian safety, in particular, that

HGVs to the front would not be acceptable. The applicant has agreed to submit an amended plan to show an alternative layout to the front, to restrict access for larger vehicles and this will be reported in an update report.

- 7.13 The Transport Officer has confirmed that the reduced parking level for the remaining retail units, a reduction from 397 to 372, based on 10,580sqm of retained retail space, would be sufficient for the continued operation of the Retail Park. The total level of cycle parking, although reduced across the wider site, would include for 16 no. spaces for the proposed self-storage and is considered to be acceptable.
- 7.14 Subject to a condition restricting the use to self-storage and not wider B8 use and other conditions relating to the pre-occupation provision of vehicle access, parking, and EV spaces, and the submission and approval of a Construction Method Statement, the scheme would be acceptable and would accord with Policy TR1, TR3, TR4 and TR5 of the Reading Local Plan (2019).

### **Environmental Matters**

- 7.15 Noise – Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) and EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) require development to not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties. The nearest residential dwellings are within Kennet Island, approximately 85m from the nearest point of the Retail Park, i.e. the western end. In previous comments from Environmental Protection Officer (EPO) it has been confirmed that there are often complaints from residents regarding existing commercial premises, in terms of noise and disturbance created by operational activities at the Retail Park. As the proposal would include fewer HGV units compared to fully occupied retail units, the EPO has confirmed that no mitigation measures would be required, however, a condition is included in the event that mechanical equipment were to be required.
- 7.16 Air Quality – Policy EN15 states that “*Development should have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality.*”. As there would be fewer traffic movements than the existing use (if fully occupied) there would be a slight improvement to air quality.
- 7.17 Contaminated land – Policy EN16 states that “*development will only be permitted on land affected by contamination where it is demonstrated that the contamination and land gas can be satisfactorily managed or remediated so that it is suitable for the proposed end use and will not impact on the groundwater environment, human health, buildings and*

*the wider environment, during demolition and construction phases as well as during the future use of the site.”*

- 7.18 A Phase 1 desk-based study was submitted and assessed as part of the previous application for two new B8 units (ref: 201853) and the study identified that a further land gas risk assessment would be required to ensure that risks to future occupiers would be minimised and remediated. The EPO has confirmed that the scheme would be acceptable with the inclusion of conditions for pre-commencement submission of a contaminated land assessment, the submission and approval of a remediation scheme (if required) and implementation and verification of the remediation scheme and a compliance condition relating to discovery of any unidentified contaminated land.

### **Flood Risk & Drainage**

- 7.19 Local Plan Policy EN18 (Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems) states, *“Development will be directed to areas at lowest risk of flooding in the first instance...”* and *“Wherever possible, development should be designed to reduce flood risk, both on- and off-site. All major developments must incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) as appropriate and in line with the Government’s Technical Standards.....Runoff rates should aim to reflect greenfield conditions and, in any case, must be no greater than the existing conditions of the site.”*
- 7.20 The majority of the overall Retail Park is within Flood Risk Zone 1 (at the lowest risk of flooding) including the application site. A small area of the western part of the overall Retail Park is in Flood Risk 2 (Medium risk).
- 7.21 The submitted Drainage Strategy states that it is proposed to utilise the existing surface water network which would be improved with some additional permeable surfaces to parking spaces (not general servicing area). The surface water runoff from the proposed car park will be collected by permeable pavement and channel drains, conveyed by a gravity network and freely discharged directly into the existing surface water sewer. The proposed network will be designed to ensure zero flooding above ground for the 1:30 year storm, and no flooding of buildings or off-site areas for the 1:100 year plus climate change event.
- 7.22 The SUDs Officer has confirmed that subject to conditions for the pre-commencement submission of approval of a Sustainable Drainage Strategy and the pre-occupation implementation of the approved strategy that the scheme is acceptable and accords with Policy EN18.

## **Natural Environment**

- 7.23 Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) seeks that development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and should provide for a net gain of biodiversity wherever possible by protecting, enhancing and incorporating features of biodiversity on and adjacent to development sites and by providing new tree planting and wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements wherever practicable. Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) states that individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance, and Reading's vegetation cover will be extended. Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) sets out that good design should incorporate appropriate landscaping.
- 7.24 The site currently has landscaped areas to the Rose Kiln and Gillette Way frontages, which includes a protected Plane tree.
- 7.25 The submission includes a Tree Survey Report which confirms that the proposed scheme would include the removal of one Alder tree and some hedgerow, to facilitate the proposed scheme, and the protection of retained trees during construction. The submitted landscaping scheme includes 6 no. new trees along with new hedge and shrub planting.
- 7.26 A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment was also submitted further to consultation comments and confirms that there would be a BNG increase of 49.32% from the proposed scheme, when calculated in accordance with the Biodiversity Metric 4.0.
- 7.27 The Natural Environment (Tree) Officer raised some minor issues with the initial submission and further to an amended Landscaping Scheme and submitted Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, confirmed that the overall scheme would be acceptable and has recommended conditions for pre-occupation provision of the approved landscaping scheme and adherence to the approved Tree Report.
- 7.28 The Ecologist advised that the submitted ecology report for the previous planning application 201853 concluded that there are unlikely to be any adverse impacts on protected species or priority habitats as a result of the development. The site is unlikely to have changed significantly since then. However, as trees and vegetation are likely to be used by nesting birds, they are recommending the inclusion of a condition, included within the recommendation above, to ensure that vegetation clearance would be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (March - August inclusive).





- 7.36 Policy CC5 requires minimisation of waste during construction and the life of the development.
- 7.37 A Sustainability and Energy Statement has been submitted which includes a BREEAM Scoping Note and a Sustainability Checklist (using that from Appendix 1 of the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD).
- 7.38 In order to meet RBC policy requirements, the proposal for a non-residential refurbishment scheme would need to demonstrate BREEAM Excellent or at the least 50% Very Good and 50% Excellent rating. This would be assessed against the BREEAM Refurbishment and Fit Out Standards 2014 (RFO).
- 7.39 The submitted Statement sets out to demonstrate that from a technical standpoint the RFO Standards should not be formally applied. The scope of the applicant's work would be to facilitate the change of use through minor alterations to the external areas, and the envelope and the building structure would be wholly retained. As the applicant would only make minimal interventions in the existing building, including closing up certain existing shop openings and glazing, introducing decorative graphics and the installation of new roller shutter doors and means of escape doors, the applicant's sustainability specialist has advised that these works would not meet "*the thresholds of a Part 11 BREEAM Assessment.*"
- 7.40 As a BREEAM Assessment involves an evidenced based assessment of the design and physical installation of building measures which align with BREEAM technical standards it involves the collation of information available from the design team and contractor. A 4-part BREEAM Assessment would consider elements outside of the control of the applicant and, therefore, it is not possible for this to be completed by the applicant as it would require the evidence of the actual, not illustrative, design and installation of fit out works, in order to complete. The physical measures associated with a tenant's installation would not be available for this speculative development until a tenant were on board and had designed and completed their works. It would be very complex to discharge a BREEAM condition which required tenant input on this basis. It should be noted that the BREEAM RFO has been structured into 4 specifically to enable the focus on the scope of works proposed and, therefore, assessable. The approach presented is consistent with similar principles for approved schemes that RBC has agreed – e.g. House of Fraser Oracle (191841/FUL) and the Broad Street Shopping

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<sup>1</sup> Fabric and Structure; Parts 2, 3 and 4 of BREEAM relate to: Core Services; Local Services & Interior Design respectively.

Mall (190099/FUL) which followed similar principles, whereby the BREEAM assessment was to focus on the Applicant's works alone.

7.41 Officers accept that a formal BREEAM assessment is not possible in this case, however, whilst a formal BREEAM Assessment is not proposed, the Sustainability Statement includes a BREEAM Scoping Review in Appendix 1. This includes assessment of the shell works to demonstrate which elements of BREEAM, undertaken against Part 1 only of the BREEAM RFO, the proposed scheme would therefore align with. A set of measures are then proposed, which would form the basis of a compliance condition and would be in lieu of undertaking a formal BREEAM assessment. A further letter from the Sustainability specialist explains that these measures would align with a BREEAM Very Good rating. These measures are set out as follows:

- Commission a sustainability specialist through the further stages of project design to establish targets and monitor progress in line with the requirements of the BREEAM Framework Man 01.
- Require the main contractor to adopt environmental management principles as recognised by BREEAM Man 03, including monitoring energy and water usage throughout the build and compare the results monthly against targets.
- Register the site with the considerate constructor's scheme (CCS) and achieve good practice standards, ensuring a minimum overall score of 37 out of 45 - The CCS is a voluntary awards programme which involves the main contractor registering the scheme and undergoing audits by a third party against the CCS Standards. A score of 37 is equivalent to 'Very Good' levels of performance.
- Undertake a thermographic survey to assess insulation continuity and repair any significant defects in the existing fabric before handing the building over to the future operator.
- Design all lighting within the scope of the applicants works in line with the relevant CIBSE SSL design codes for LUX and uniformity. Ensure that all lighting is LED and energy efficient in line with current best practices in the non-domestic compliance guide.
- Conduct a durability review and explore options to protect the building from physical damage to include an assessment of the need for physical protection measures to the external areas, including bollards, knee rails and heavy duty doors and implementing the findings in full in line with BREEAM credit Mat 05.
- Conducting a pre refurbishment audit to consider what materials of the existing unit can be removed and recycled, with the objective to promote resource efficiency. The assessment will be conducted by an independent third party to examine the quantity of elements to be



removed from the site (Tonnes), options for on-site reuse and options for offsite reprocessing to ensure that a minimum target of 95% diversion from landfill is achieved in line with the requirements of BREEAM credit Wst 01.

- Ensure that any external lighting which requires repositioning, or replacement is fitted with energy efficient lamps which is controlled via time clock and / or daylight sensors.
- Install a 28.9 KWP PV array on the roof of the building in accordance with the Energy Statement Table 4.7.
- Procure all timber legally and sustainably, in accordance with a sustainable procurement plan.
- Procure materials which have verified Environmental Product Declarations and achieve 36% of the points available in the Mat 03 calculation.

7.42 With respect to energy, however, the Statement does include a whole building energy approach and a proposed energy strategy related to all stages of the refurbishment, including those that the applicant would not be involved in. An applicant is permitted to make assumptions based on a set of published conventions which represent worst case performance levels. The predictive assessment considers the energy performance of the building before and after the change of use based on illustrative fit out specifications for a self-storage operator. Within the Statement it is identified that “*a conservative approach has been taken to the assessment, assuming that the fit out will align with current worst case Building Regulations standards only.*” The proposed 153sqm of PV panels would result in an overall reduction of 42.99% in CO2 emissions, which would equate to a BREEAM Excellent rating for energy efficiency<sup>2</sup>, which is a key policy consideration under Policy CC2. The installation and use of this level of PV is included within the measures to be secured through condition.

7.43 The Statement also clarifies that “*the reuse of the existing building would typically have a lower life-cycle impact in comparison to redevelopment, from the perspective of embodied carbon, waste minimisation and resource depletion.*”

7.44 Officers accept that the proposed scheme and the measures identified within the submitted Sustainability and Energy Statement would demonstrate improvements to the building from a sustainability perspective and would be sufficient to meet sustainability policy requirements within the Local Plan and SPD, subject to conditions requiring the provision of the measures set out in the Sustainability and

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<sup>2</sup> BREEAM ENE01 – Reduction of Energy Use and Carbon Emissions - Achieving 12 out of possible 15 credits

Energy Statement hereby approved, and the submission and approval of further details of the proposed PV.

### **Equalities Impact**

- 7.45 When determining an application for planning permission the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the proposed development.

## **8 CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The proposal would result in repurposing existing retail space for a change of use to B8 self-storage employment floorspace which would accord with national and local policy. This would be in terms of contributing to delivering the required industrial and / or warehouse floorspace of by 2036, as set out in RBLP Policy EN1, and the delivery of economic development supported by the NPPF. It would also meet local economic objectives by providing a storage site and would bring vacant units back into use.
- 8.2 In accordance with the NPPF it would result in sustainable development, utilising previously developed land in a sustainable location.
- 8.3 The proposal would provide additional greening of the site with a net gain in tree planting and improvement to sustainable drainage, and the refurbished building, with the inclusion of PV on the roof, would be set to achieve around 43% savings in annual carbon dioxide emissions.
- 8.4 It is considered that the scheme would address all material matters and that there would be no significant detrimental effects resulting. The application is recommended for approval, subject to the recommended conditions.

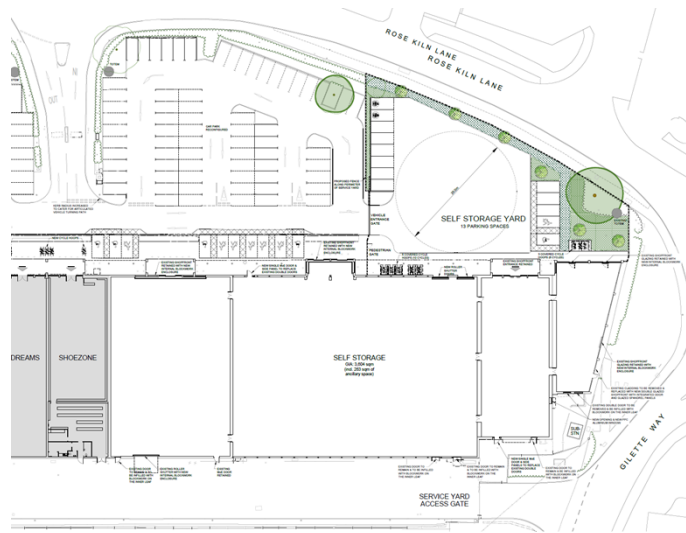
Case Officer: Alison Amoah

**Proposed Plans shown below:**

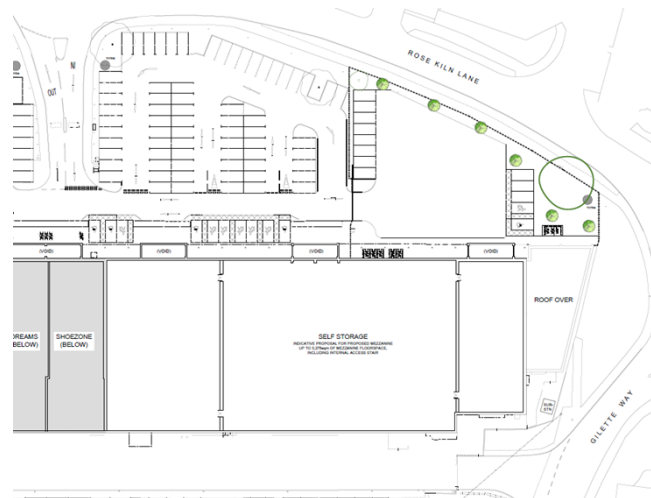
**Proposed Site Plan**



**Proposed Ground Floor Plan**



**Proposed First Floor Plan**



*N.B. Proposed mezzanine – indicative – mezzanine does not require planning permission in itself*

**Proposed Roof Plan**



**06 December 2023**



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
*Working better with you*

<b>Title</b>	<b>PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT</b>
<b>Ward</b>	Outside RBC Boundary
<b>Planning Application Reference:</b>	Our Ref: 231581 Wokingham Borough Council Ref: 232475
<b>Site Address:</b>	Earley Gate, Reading, University Of Reading, , RG6 6EQ
<b>Proposed Development</b>	Full planning application for the erection of the headquarters building of European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECWMF) with access parking and landscaping, following demolition of existing buildings.
<b>Applicant</b>	Government Property Agency
<b>Report author</b>	Tom Bradfield
<b>Recommendations</b>	Delegate to the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (AD PTPPS) to respond to the consultation with officer's comments.

## 1. Executive summary

- 1.1. Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) have consulted Reading Borough Council on the above planning application within Wokingham Borough. Officers are currently considering the potential impacts of the proposal, and will provide additional comments in the update report.

## 2. Assessment

- 2.1. The applicants undertook a pre-application meeting with officers in early 2023, where officers highlighted some concerns regarding various transport matters. Following this, the application was made to WBC in early October, and RBC have been consulted.
- 2.2. The application documents can be viewed on the WBC Website, using the above reference.

## 3. Conclusion

- 3.1. Officers will provide additional comments in the update report regarding RBC's response to the consultation.

Case Officer: Thomas Bradfield

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