

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 4th March 2020

Ward: Abbey

App No.: 191841

Address: House of Fraser, The Oracle, Bridge Street, Reading, RG1 2AS

Proposal: Subdivision of three-storey retail unit (Class A1) and change of use to form: 1x flexible retail/restaurant/bar unit (Class A1/A3/A4), 1x flexible retail/restaurant unit (Class A1/A3) and 1x assembly and leisure unit (Class D2) at Riverside level; 1x retail unit (Class A1) and 1x assembly and leisure unit (Class D2) at lower ground level; 1x retail unit (Class A1) at upper ground level, together with alterations to the Riverside frontage and associated plant, car parking and external alterations at car park levels.

Applicant: The Oracle Shopping Centre Ltd

Deadline: Originally 14/02/2020, but an extension of time for the determination of the application has been agreed until 25/03/2020.

RECOMMENDATION:

Delegate to Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to completion of a S106 legal agreement or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the legal agreement not be completed by 25/03/2020 (unless officers on behalf of the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement). The legal agreement to secure the following:

- An Employment Skills and Training Plan (construction phase and end user phase)

And the following conditions to include:

1. Time Limit - 3 years
2. Approved plans
3. Pre-commencement (barring demolition) details of all external materials to be submitted to the LPA (and sample details to be provided on site) and approved in writing with the LPA. Approved details to be retained on site until the work has been completed. This shall specifically include details of laminated anti shatter glass.
4. Prior to the first occupation of any Class D2 unit, the vehicular parking spaces (including disabled parking spaces) shall be installed and ready for use (in accordance with the approved plans).
5. Prior to the first occupation of any Class A1/3/4 unit, the cycle parking spaces shall be installed and ready for use (in accordance with the approved plans).
6. Prior to the first occupation of any Class D2 unit, the EV charging points shall be installed and ready for use (in accordance with the approved plans).
7. Prior to first occupation of the Class A1/3/4 unit, a Delivery and Servicing Plan shall be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority.
8. Pre-commencement (including demolition) demolition and construction method statement, specifically including noise, pollutant control and tree protection measures;
9. No mechanical plant serving any use (a) Class A1/A3/A4 unit at Riverside level; b) Class A1/A3 unit at Riverside level; c) Class D2 unit at Riverside level; d) Class A1 unit at lower ground level; e) Class D2 unit at lower ground level; f) Class A1 unit at upper ground level) to be installed until a noise assessment of the proposed mechanical plant has been submitted and approved by the Local Planning

Authority.

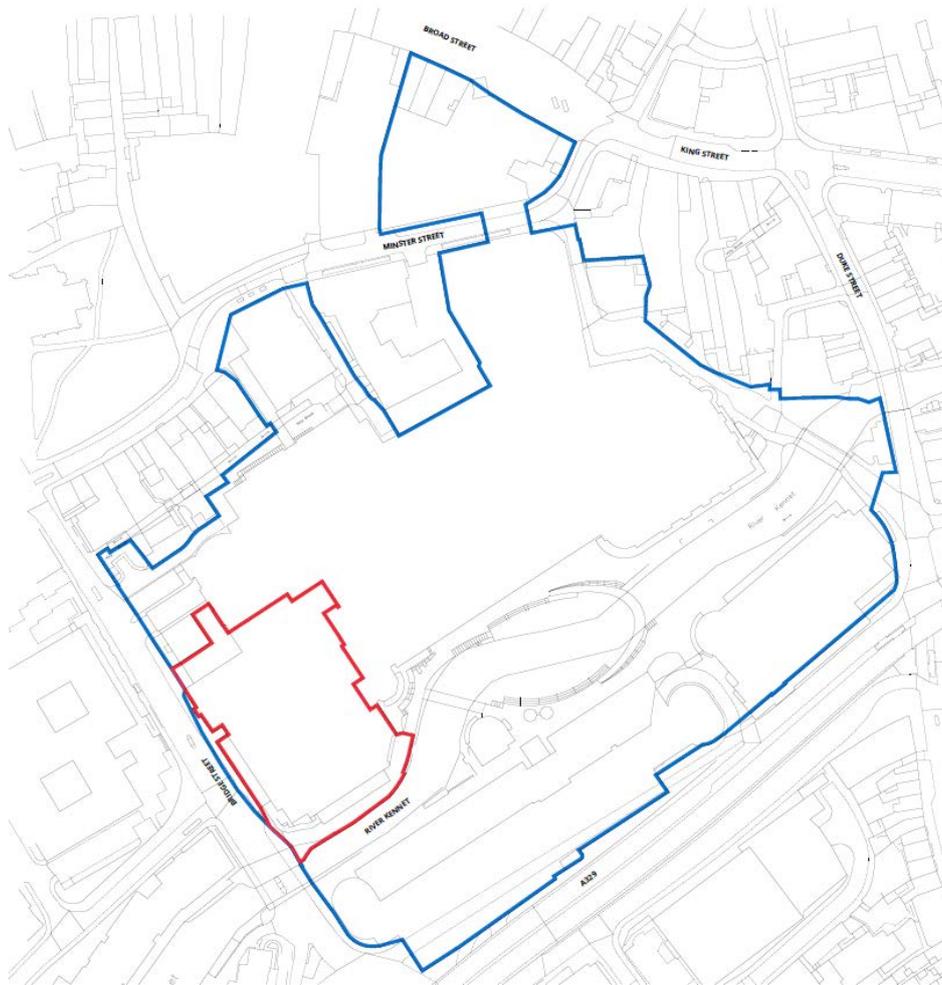
10. Pre-occupation (of Class D2 gym use only) noise (including specific reference to structure borne noise) assessment
11. No kitchen extraction system serving any use (a) Class A1/A3/A4 unit at Riverside level; b) Class A1/A3 unit at Riverside level; c) Class D2 unit at Riverside level; d) Class A1 unit at lower ground level; e) Class D2 unit at lower ground level; f) Class A1 unit at upper ground level) to be installed until an odour assessment has been carried out and a detailed odour management plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
12. Compliance condition relating to hours of demolition/construction works
13. No development (barring demolition) shall commence on site until a comprehensive scheme of hard and soft landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The subsequently approved hard and soft landscaping scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of the Class A1/3/4 unit or in accordance with a timetable approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
14. Protective measures, including fencing, ground protection, supervision and working procedures shall be carried out in accordance with the Arboricultural Report and Method Statement hereby approved.
15. Prior to the first occupation of any Riverside or lower ground floor unit hereby approved, submission and approval of a report to demonstrate the sustainability / energy measures denoted in submissions by Envision have been installed and achieved at the site.
16. Hours of use compliance condition - Monday to Saturday 08:00hours - 00:00 hours; Sunday, Bank Holidays and other statutory holidays 08:00 hours - 23:00 hours relating to the following units: a) Class A1/A3/A4 unit at Riverside level; b) Class A1/A3 unit at Riverside level; c) Class D2 unit at Riverside level; d) Class D2 unit at lower ground level. To clarify, no hours of use restrictions are proposed for either the Class A1 unit at lower ground level or the Class A1 unit at upper ground level.
17. Compliance condition for the Riverside level Food Hall to be implemented in accordance with the Operational Management Plan hereby approved (including no more than 20% of the GIA floorspace of the Food Hall be a Class A4 bar servery area - 20% of 1514.8sqm = 302.96sqm)
18. Compliance condition for the Riverside level unit(s) retaining 'active window displays' (both Riverside and Bridge Street elevations at 'Riverside level').
19. Prior to the first occupation of the Class A1/3/4 unit, details of formal surveillance measures (e.g. CCTV), on the Bridge Street elevation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Informatives:

1. Positive and Proactive Statement
2. Works affecting highways
3. Section 106 Legal Agreement
4. Flexible use of Class A1/A3 and A1/A3/A4 unit (s) for 10 years
5. Possible need for future separate advertisement consent
6. Clarification over pre-commencement conditions
7. No burning of waste on site
8. CIL
9. Party Wall Act
10. Building Control
11. Terms and Conditions

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site comprises the existing House of Fraser unit and corresponding parking areas above, in the south-west corner of the wider Oracle Shopping Centre area. The House of Fraser unit (which itself already incorporates ancillary Café Nero and Yo Sushi units) fronts onto the Riverside and Bridge Street, as well as including entrances within the shopping centre itself at Riverside, lower ground and upper ground floor level (with lifts / escalators providing direct access to the car parking above. The size of the application site boundary is specified as 0.4 hectares, with the wider Oracle site much larger in area.
- 1.2 The application site is subject to the following site constraints / designations:
- Inside the primary shopping area
 - Inside the central core
 - The Riverside elevation is a designated primary frontage in Central Reading
 - Within flood zone 1 and on the edge of Flood Zone 3
 - Within an area with archaeological potential
 - Within a green link network area
 - Within an air quality management area
 - Within a British Waterways consultation area
 - Within a smoke control area
 - Licensing cumulative impact area
- 1.3 The application site is also located in close proximity to:
- A series of cycle routes (e.g. Bridge Street and the southern Riverside)
 - The classified highway network (Bridge Street) and Sustrans Route on the opposite riverbank
 - The River Kennet (an area of identified biodiversity interest)
 - Grade II listed building to the north - Seven Bridges House (19 Bridge Street)
 - The Russell Street / Castle Hill Conservation Area is to the north
 - Potential contaminated land
- 1.4 The surrounding area comprises a mix of uses and building styles. To the north, beyond the listed Seven Bridges House and the car park entrance are a range of buildings (including listed buildings) which front onto Gun Street, which are largely commercial in use with some limited residential upper floor uses too. to the east is the remainder of the Oracle shopping centre and Riverside, with a host of food and drink occupiers on the Riverside. To the south, beyond the river are further food and drink units with parking above. To the west on the opposite side of Bridge Street are the civic offices and Riverside House residential units on Fobney Street.
- 1.5 The application is being considered at Planning Applications Committee as the proposal constitutes a 'major' development.



Site Location Plan (red line = application site; blue line = land under the ownership of the applicant but not part of the proposed development)

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal seeks full planning permission for the subdivision of the existing three-storey retail unit (Class A1), currently occupied by House of Fraser, and change of use to form:

At Riverside level -

- 1x flexible retail/restaurant/bar unit (Class A1/A3/A4), specified as a Food Hall unit accessed from the Riverside only (1,515sqm and ancillary 184sqm storage GIA). The unit would be let to one tenant, with this then being formed of a series of restaurants or street food vendors. A bar would be included (maximum 20% of floorspace to be a bar servery area). No hot-food takeaway outlets are proposed. The proposed opening hours are 0800-0000 hours Monday to Saturdays and 0800-2300 hours on Sundays and Bank Holidays.
- 1x flexible retail/restaurant unit (Class A1/A3) self-contained unit fronting/accessed via Bridge St (210sqm GIA).
- 1x assembly and leisure unit (Class D2), accessed from within the Oracle centre as existing, adjacent to the rotunda entrance (1,719sqm and ancillary 53sqm storage GIA). During the application the applicant indicated that the leisure use will be adventure golf. However, the proposal seeks permission for any Class D2, rather than being specific to an adventure golf use. Accordingly, an adventure golf use is not guaranteed and any Class D2 use could operate from the unit. During

the application the applicant has confirmed that the absolute maximum occupancy levels of this unit is 860 people (although the applicant also notes that the actual figures are likely to be lower). The proposed opening hours are 0800-0000 hours Monday to Saturdays and 0800-2300 hours on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

At lower ground level -

- 1x retail unit (Class A1), accessed from within the Oracle centre as existing (1,386sqm GIA). Unrestricted opening hours are sought.
- 1x assembly and leisure unit (Class D2) (2,475sqm GIA), accessed via a new Riverside level entrance lobby (110sqm GIA). The applicant has specified that they are in discussions with a family ten-pin bowling alley operator in respect of this unit and the layout of the floorspace reflects their operational requirements. However, the proposal seeks permission for any Class D2, rather than being specific to a bowling alley use. Accordingly, a bowling alley use is not guaranteed and any Class D2 use could operate from the unit. During the application the applicant has confirmed that the absolute maximum occupancy levels of this unit is 480 people (although the applicant also notes that the actual figures are likely to be lower). The proposed opening hours are 0800-0000 hours Monday to Saturdays and 0800-2300 hours on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

At upper ground level -

- 1x retail unit (Class A1) at upper ground level, accessed from within the Oracle Centre as existing (3272sqm and 381sqm storage GIA). Unrestricted opening hours are sought.

- 2.2 The proposals also involve alterations to the Riverside frontage, most notably the removal of the existing canopy and replacement with a new largely glazed portal entrance. This removes the undercroft area and reduces floorspace at lower ground level (above the Riverside level). The curtain walling on the splayed Riverside elevation will also be removed and replaced with a largely glazed entrance to serve the proposed lower ground floor leisure unit.
- 2.3 Furthermore, internally, the servicing arrangements have been reconfigured to accommodate the provision of several additional occupiers, with routes/corridors to the main servicing space denoted, together with storage, refuse, sub-stations and goods lift areas.
- 2.4 At car parking levels (two levels above the upper ground level) it is proposed to remove the lifts and escalators serving the existing House of Fraser unit and, therefore, the lobby/atrium areas enclosing the lifts / escalators will also be removed. This results in the freeing up of space at these points, facilitating further plant areas and a net increase of 15 additional standard car parking spaces, 2 additional disabled parking spaces (at car park level 1) and 2 electric vehicle charging points (at car park level 2). During the application the location of the disabled parking bays was amended to be adjacent to the main atrium/lift core on car park level 1, rather than continuing to be located where the current lifts and escalators are being removed (to assist in ensuring the disabled spaces are accessible in practice).
- 2.5 The proposals show indicative future signage zones, which do not form part of the actual proposals. Instead any signage would be subject to separate

future advertisement consent application(s). The provision of external seating and tables associated with the Riverside Food Hall and Bridge Street A1/A3 unit would also require separate licenses.

2.6 During the application several points of clarification and refinements to the original proposals have been made. None of these amendments were of a nature or extent to warrant formal re-consultation.

2.7 Submitted Plans and Documentation:

URB OR [08] 00 01 Rev D00 - Site Location Plan as Existing
URB OR [08] 37 01 Rev D00 - Riverside Level as Existing
URB OR [08] 42 01 Rev D00 - Lower Ground Floor as Existing
URB OR [08] 48 01 Rev D00 - Upper Ground Floor as Existing
URB OR [08] 55 01 Rev D00 - Car Park Level 01 as Existing
URB OR [08] 58 01 Rev D00 - Car Park Level 02 as Existing
URB OR [08] 70 01 Rev D00 - Elevations as Existing
URB OR [08] 80 01 Rev D00 - Sections as Existing

URB OR [08] 37 02 Rev D01 - Riverside Level as Proposed, as received 29/01/2020

URB OR [08] 42 02 Rev D01 - Lower Ground Floor as Proposed, as received 29/01/2020

URB OR [08] 48 02 Rev D01 - Upper Ground Floor as Proposed, as received 29/01/2020

URB OR [08] 55 02 Rev D01 - Car Park Level 01 as Proposed, as received 29/01/2020

URB OR [08] 55 03 Rev D00 - Accessible Bay Relocation Car Park Level 1, as received 29/01/2020

URB OR [08] 58 02 Rev D01 - Car Park Level 02 as Proposed, as received 29/01/2020

URB OR [08] 58 03 Rev D01 - Additional EV Charging Points Car Park Level 02, as received 14/02/2020

URB OR [08] 70 02 Rev D01 - Elevations as Proposed, as received 29/01/2020

URB OR [08] 80 02 Rev D01 - Sections as Proposed, as received 29/01/2020

URB OR [08] 98 01 Rev D02 - Soft Landscape Proposal, as received 12/02/2020

URB OR [08] 98 02 Rev D01 - Typical Tree Pit Detail, as received 29/01/2020

180503-RGL-ZZ-00-DR-E-73-0001- Electrical Building Services Street/Area/Flood Lighting Strategy Riverside Facade

Indicative Planting Palette by Urban Edge Ref URB-OR A6 90 01.doc Rev D01, dated 24/01/2020, as received 29/01/2020

Detailed Landscape Specification by Urban Edge Ref URB-OR A6 90 02 Rev D01, dated 24/01/2020, as received 29/01/2020

7949-D-AIA - C:\Pro\7949-D-AIA-House of Fraser, JF The Oracle Shopping Centre, as received 12/02/2020

Design and Access Statement by Urban Edge Ref URB-OR A3 90 01-D01, dated November 2019

Drainage Statement by ByrneLooby Ref L1028-ST-R002 Rev 00 dated 20/09/19

Employment Skills Plan

Flood Risk Assessment by PBA Stantec Ref 47246 Rev B dated 12/11/ 2019

Street/Area/Flood Lighting (External) Statement Report by Rolton Group Ref 180503-RGL-ZZ-XX-RP-E-73-0001 Rev S2-PO3, dated 15/11/2019
Noise Impact Assessment by Hoare Lea REP-1011201-05-BJ-20190911 Rev 4, dated 15/11/2019
Planning Statement by Simply Planning dated November 2019
Sustainability Statement Incorporating Energy Assessment & BREEAM Review by Envision Rev E dated 14/11/19
Transport Statement by Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Ref WIE16556-100-R-1-1-5 Issue 5 dated 13/11/19
Public Utility Supplies Statement Report by Rolton Group Ref 180503-RGL-ZZ-XX-RP-U-90-0001 Rev S2-P05, dated 15/11/19
3 x computer generated images
Night photograph of Oracle (Alamy Stock Photo) Ref RMHxE8, as received 29/01/2020
Response to Sustainability Officer Comments - HoF, Oracle, Reading (191841) by Envision, dated and received 29/01/2020
Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment Arboricultural Method Statement & Tree Protection Plan by Hayden's Arboricultural Consultants Ref 7949 Rev A, dated 07/02/2020, as received 12/02/2020

All received on 15/11/19 unless where otherwise stated

- 2.8 Community Infrastructure levy (CIL): In relation to the community infrastructure levy, the applicant has duly completed a CIL liability form with the submission. Based on the uses proposed and the charging schedule, the charge will be £0.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The Oracle shopping Centre and the current department store have been operating on the site since 1999. There have been numerous planning applications at the wider Oracle site in the past quarter of a century. Those which are specifically relevant to this proposal are:
- 3.2 97/00017/FD / 970419 - Demolition of existing buildings, redevelopment and change of use to provide: shopping centre (Class A1, A2 & A3), 41 residential units, leisure facilities including multi screen cinema (Class D2), car parking (2390 spaces) and community uses together with associated landscaping etc. Granted 04/04/1997.
- 3.3 This is the original permission relating to the construction of the Oracle Centre. Condition 62 of the permission is relevant in that removes permitted development rights for the sub-division of the existing House of Fraser department store:

62 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 or any order revoking or re-enacting that Order, with or without modifications there shall be no subdivision of the department stores shown on the approved drawings into separate shop units unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reason: as the balance between shop units and department store retail floor space has a critical effect on the vitality and viability of the rest of the town centre and the impact of any shift needs to be evaluated by the Local Planning Authority.

- 3.4 Usually under planning law, the continued retail use at part lower ground level and upper ground level would not in themselves require planning permission. This is as no change of use is taking place and instead the unit is being subdivided into smaller (continued retail) parts at these points. However, based on the wording of condition 62 of the original permission this permitted development right has been removed and, consequently, this forms part of this application.
- 3.5 991435 - Variation of conditions 18 and 19 of planning permission 97/0017/FD to allow obscure glazing of selected windows of the department stores. Granted 22/09/99.
- 3.6 050162 - New access and external seating area to House of Fraser Restaurant. Granted 29/04/05.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 External

- 4.2 **Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue**- No comments. RBFRS will deal with this matter in appropriate detail when consulted under the Building Regulations.
- 4.3 **British Waterways** - as per the Canal & River Trust response below.
- 4.4 **Environment Agency** - No objection, with it requested for the FRA to be listed as an approved plan/document, to which the development must adhere.
- 4.5 **Thames Water Developer Services** - No agreement required, owing to the type of work being carried out.
- 4.6 **Canal & River Trust** - No comment on the proposal, as the Trust act as Navigation Authority only for this section of the River Kennet.
- 4.7 **Crime Prevention Design Advisor (CPDA) at Thames Valley Police** - The initial response sought more details regarding maximum occupancy levels for the proposed leisure units. Once this information was provided, observations and recommendations were provided. These specifically related to the curtain wall glazing adjacent to the public realm and maximising surveillance opportunities on Bridge Street (natural and formal):
- 4.8 a) the use of laminated glazing to all windows and curtain wall structures adjacent to public areas is strongly recommended / preferred for security applications and prevention of injury. The plans can either be amended to detail this or be secured via condition.
- 4.9 b) Bridge Street will continue to remain a secondary façade lacking ground floor active surveillance. Improved active surveillance between the Proposed Food Market and public realm (under the Pop Out box) could be maximised within the design by 'managing/ specifying' the type and style or treatment of glazing use in this location. Accordingly, a condition is recommended which prevents the fitting of obscured glazing, advertising panels or any visual displays that obscures visibility between the public realm. This is to maximise natural surveillance and deter crime and fear for crime.

- 4.10 c) The existing and proposed cycle facilities located on the Bridge Street 'secondary' façade lacks natural surveillance from the building and is partly obscured by low brick wall and bus stop shelter. Surveillance within these areas would be significantly improved by the inclusion of formal surveillance (CCTV), details of which should be secured via condition.
- 4.11 Subject to these conditions being secured, the CPDA is content with the proposals.
- 4.12 **Internal**
- 4.13 a) **Transport Development Control** - The site is located within the Reading Central Area and within Reading's primary shopping area which is an area at the very heart of Reading Borough, consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments. This area is well served by rail and bus links and also contains the largest proportion of public car parking spaces.
- 4.14 In terms of parking provision, following amendments during the application (original comments raised concerns about the location of disabled spaces not being accessible) the proposals seek to add 15 extra standard parking spaces (20 spaces at car park level 1, 2 at car park level 2, offset by the loss of 8 spaces at level 1 too) and 2 further disabled spaces (5 spaces provided at level 1, to offset 3 lost elsewhere at this level). 2 Electric Vehicle charging points will also be provided, located adjacent to the existing car park EV bays within the car park. These increases are as a result of the removal of the House of Fraser escalators and lifts, which will be infilled and utilised to provide additional parking. In accordance with the Council's Parking SPD parking should be provided appropriate to the size and type of unit. The increase in parking provision has been assessed and considered to be acceptable in the context of the proposed uses.
- 4.15 More specifically, TRICS generation analysis has been provided indicating that the proposed new Class A units and flexible Food Hall (Class A1/3/4) will generate similar trips to that of the existing space. The main change in transport generations will be for the new leisure D2 uses which will have a combined area of 4,193sqm (however it should be noted that there is a reduction of 6,101sqm of retail space). The data provided confirms that the proposed uses would result in a reduction in vehicle trips to and from the town centre area. Moreover, it is confirmed that this has been based on a worst-case scenario, as it does not account for any linked trips between the leisure uses and the existing town centre retail uses which would occur. The principle of the development is therefore acceptable. Both the parking and EV points will be secured by condition to be installed prior to the first occupation of any Class D2 use at the site.
- 4.16 In accordance with the Council's Parking Standards additional cycle parking is required for the D2 leisure use. However, supporting information details that the Oracle Centre has approximately 91 cycle parking spaces, plus 14 blue bike lockers, located in the Riverside car park and existing cycle provision is under-utilised. The Transport Statement states that in peak times the existing spaces will be sufficient to cover demand. Nevertheless, the applicant also proposes to install an additional 10 cycle parking spaces on Bridge Street, which is welcomed and supported in this context. A

condition will secure these being implemented prior to the first occupation of the adjacent Class A1/A3/A4 unit.

- 4.17 In terms of servicing, House of Fraser is currently serviced from the main service yard beneath the centre. This is accessed via Bridge Street, with the exit via Yield Hall Place. There are no substantial changes planned to the access to this area, but it is noted that reconfiguration to the servicing provision will be required. Given the likely multiple occupiers of the intended Food Hall (the exact number of occupiers is unspecified, resulting in a degree of ambiguity concerning the amount of servicing that will ensue) and standalone Class A1/3 unit fronting Bridge Street, and the need to maintain highway safety and amenity (from potential deliveries along Bridge Street), officers consider that a pre-occupation servicing management plan should be secured via condition and that this is required and necessary. More specifically, despite concerns from the applicant that such a condition is not necessary, the proposal will intensify the number of movements and therefore a service/management plan is required to ensure there is a suitable spread of deliveries. This is so queues do not extend on to Bridge Street, which is a busy bus route and main Transport route for the town centre and Holy Brook car park. The trigger point for the submission of the servicing management plan will be prior to the first occupation of the Class A1/A3/A4 unit, as this element has the greatest potential delivery impacts (owing to the possible substantial number of future occupiers).
- 4.18 Given the nature, location and level of works proposed, a pre-commencement Demolition and Construction Method Statement will be required to be secured via condition. This is to protect the amenity of local land uses and the character of the area, as well as for highway safety reasons. In overall terms there are no transport objections to the proposal subject to the conditions referenced.
- 4.19 **b) Natural Environment** - Initial tree and landscaping comments raised a number of matters which required the submission of further information / clarifications from the applicant. This included details regarding the protection of existing trees during construction and various queries relating to the form and nature of soft landscaping proposed along the Riverside, together with the extent of possible 'greening' works along Bridge Street too.
- 4.20 During the course of the application the applicant submitted commentary (for example outlining various constraints to soft landscaping on the Bridge Street frontage), the inclusion of further details to the plans regarding replacement and new planting along the Riverside and the submission of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment. The additional information was duly considered and some further concerns were raised. For example, concerns were raised in respect of the feasibility of retention / canopy protection during demolition works of the Hornbeam in the raised bed, adjacent to the portal to be removed. Furthermore, advice was provided in respect of shade tolerant plants that could be provided within land owned by the applicant off Bridge Street, with it reiterated that this should be provided.
- 4.21 The applicant subsequently supplied further information and details. The Arboricultural document has been updated to refer to the protection of the crown of the Hornbeam with boarding secured to the scaffolding. However, the tree plan (which indicates tree protection measures) had not been

updated to reflect this. Hence the Construction Method Statement (as recommended by Transport and Environmental Protection colleague will specifically secure tree protection measures too. The applicant has continued to resist the provision of any soft landscaping along Bridge Street, so whilst the principle of the Riverside details are largely considered appropriate (barring the area immediately outside the Class A1/3/4 unit - which are unspecified at this time), a pre-commencement (barring demolition) condition is required to secure full landscaping details. Both the Natural Environment and Planning Officers consider that, in line with the Council's Climate Emergency, the policy requirement to maximise greening and the current 'hard' nature of Bridge Street (thus any softening would be a tangible benefit) means that soft landscaping along both main frontages should be included in the scheme.

- 4.22 The recommended landscaping condition will also secure implementation of the landscaping scheme prior to the first occupation of the Class A1/3/4 unit or in accordance with a timetable approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Moreover, any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. A separate compliance condition will ensure that protective measures shall be carried out in accordance with the Arboricultural Report and Method Statement submitted. With these conditions secured the proposals are considered appropriate from a Natural Environment perspective.
- 4.23 c) **RBC Ecology Consultant (GS Ecology)** - Based on the information submitted it is considered that the proposals will have a limited impact on wildlife. While it is noted that lighting is proposed on the Riverside, the information submitted demonstrates that the light spill onto the river will be within acceptable levels. Some concerns are raised in relation to the possible increased amount of internally sourced light spill through the proposed largely glazed frontages, in comparison with existing. However, given the already prevailing character of the Oracle Centre and that similar amounts of light spill could occur from House of Fraser at present, there is limited scope to demonstrate harmful impacts from the proposals.
- 4.24 d) **Reading UK CIC** - At the outset of the application the applicant advised that a S106 requiring a separate Employment, Skills and Training Plan (ESP) was not considered to pass the necessity test in their view. Reading UK CIC advised that a formalised S106 agreement was required to be put in place for both the Construction and End User phase, in line with RBC policy and guidance. Following discussions, the applicant agreed to UK CIC's suggestions and the exact form and terms of the ESP have been agreed. For example, the construction ESP will target progression into employment, apprenticeship / upskilling programmes and enable a local school/college/university to visit the construction site. Meanwhile, the end user ESP will include targets to maximise local employment and implement a skills and training learning programme. Such an ESP is welcomed and supported, as secured via S106 Legal Agreement. Reading UK CIC comment that the delivery of a formalised plan with the applicant will provide excellent visibility for Employment and Skills Plans, as well as the opportunity for The Oracle to reinforce its substantial commitment to the local community, and needs of the local workforce.

- 4.25 More generally, Reading UK CIC is in full support of the application, which seeks to offer a sustainable alternative provision to large scale department store shopping in the heart of Reading. The general reconfiguration of the store to include leisure/entertainment provision, with smaller retail units, makes sense in light of the quickly changing retail landscape throughout the UK. Footfall, and the vibrancy of the town centre, will depend more and more on the provision of this type of mixed-use scheme, so the changes within The Oracle are to be welcomed.
- 4.26 **e) Environmental Protection** - In overall terms there are no objections subject to conditions, given there are potential EP concerns in relation to: noise; lighting; odour and noise from kitchen extraction; and, issues arising through the construction and demolition phase.
- 4.27 The noise assessment submitted proposes suitable noise limits for the roof top plant. As the exact details of the plant are not yet known, it is recommended that a condition requiring a further assessment to be submitted, to confirm that the proposed plant will meet the limits and/or propose suitable mitigation to ensure the limits are met. This shall be worded to reference each separate unit proposed, to only be triggered when each unit is about to be occupied and hence not delay other units being occupied. The noise assessment also separately confirms that internal noise from the new uses will not adversely affect the nearby residents.
- 4.28 Cooking odour is also often a significant problem in commercial kitchens. Accordingly, an assessment of the likelihood of odours based on the proposed cuisine and a statement of how the proposals will ensure that odour nuisance will be prevented will be secured via condition. Like the noise condition, this will specifically reference each unit to allow applications to be submitted as and when occupiers are known.
- 4.29 The lighting information submitted in relation to the Riverside is considered appropriate from an EP perspective, although separate observations should be sought from the RBC Ecologist. The inclusion of the lighting plan/document on the list of approved plans for the development to be carried out in accordance with will ensure action can be taken should the lighting later prove brighter than shown.
- 4.30 During the construction and demolition phases concerns could arise about potential noise, dust and bonfires adversely impacting on nearby residents (and businesses). Accordingly, a condition will secure details of the measures to control pollutants as part of the construction and demolition method statement recommended by RBC Transport. A further condition will specify the demolition/construction hours.
- 4.31 **f) Leisure & Recreation** - No objections.
- 4.32 **g) CCTV Reading** - No objections.
- 4.33 **h) Sustainability** - The initial consultation comments firstly acknowledged the context and scope of the information submitted. Whilst in overall terms the proposals appear reasonable, it is suggested that further steps/measures could/should be introduced to seek to achieve the equivalent of at least 'very good' (rather than aligning with BREEAM 'Good'

as stated - both of which are below the BREEAM 'Excellent' standards required by Policy CC2). Suggestions were made in respect of some categories where shortfalls were identified. With specific regard to the energy elements, the predicted figures appear satisfactory, but it was suggested that a future proofing element was included, with the applicant committing to explore connecting to a district heating system in the future.

- 4.34 The applicant responded to the officer comments, providing further details on the BREEAM points raised and agreeing to the principle of exploring connecting to a district heating system in the future, should this be proven to save carbon over the existing arrangements. In this latter regard, the applicant does however note that there is no centralised plant and all operators install and maintain their own heating / hot water. Nevertheless, the applicant is willing to participate in any future council-led studies for decentralised energy in the local area.
- 4.35 Officers have considered the further information submitted by the applicant and, in short, are satisfied that this has component of the proposals has been satisfactorily justified in this instance. Accordingly, it is agreed by officers that in this specific instance it is not possible for the proposals to meet a BREEAM 'Excellent' standard as required by policy. Instead, the equivalent (given it has been demonstrated that BREEAM is not technically appropriate to apply in the context of the nature of these refurbishment proposals) of a BREEAM 'Good' rating is considered sufficient in this instance.
- 4.36 To ensure that the sustainability and energy matters which the applicant has committed to undertaking in their submissions are carried out in practice, it is considered appropriate to secure in this bespoke case a joint sustainability / energy based condition for a report to be submitted / approved prior to the first occupation of any Riverside or lower ground floor unit (as this is where the predominant works are taking place). This will be required to demonstrate that the measures committed to within the documentation submitted at application stage has been installed and achieved at the site. Hence, given the specific circumstances of this proposal, officers are content that the proposals are policy compliant in this regard.
- 4.37 **i) Access Officer** - Significant initial concerns were raised with the lack of step free access being provided within the R22 Food Hall unit. Instead the proposals were originally intending to introduce an internal set of three steps within the unit, making it inaccessible for those unable to walk steps. Similar concerns to those made by RBC Transport were raised in relation to the originally proposed disabled parking spaces not being located close to a lift core. After the submission of revised plans showing a platform lift within the Food Hall and relocated disabled parking spaces next to the main atrium and lift core, the access officer was content with the proposals.
- 4.38 **j) Emergency Planning** - the site is located within an area classed as a crowded place within the town centre. Whilst Reading is no more at threat of terrorism than anywhere else, there is still a risk to such crowded places, and flying/broken glass causes most injuries in the event of an explosion. Accordingly, laminated anti shatter glass is recommended to be

installed, with frames installed to a similar standard. This should be secured via planning condition.

- 4.39 **k) Waste Operations** - No comments.
- 4.40 **l) Lead Local Flood Authority (Via RBC Transport, in conjunction with RBC Streetcare Services Manager - Highways)** - It is confirmed that the proposal will not increase the impermeable area and therefore will not worsen the existing surface water run-off. The assessment is therefore considered to be acceptable and no further action is required.
- 4.41 **m) Licensing** - Based on the proposed plan/changes to the structure and proposed times of operation, there are no immediate issues with what is proposed. The proposals appear to be in line with the Cumulative Impact Policy. More generally, it is advised that any premises in the revamped development will need to apply for a licence to sell alcohol or provide entertainment, existing oracle policy appears to be a food lead environment with reasonable hours of trading, any business wishing to apply for late hours (after 12pm) will need to rebut the cumulative impact policy, depending on the type of businesses they may be granted hours which permit them to trade in the early hours.
- 4.42 **n) RBC Historic Buildings Consultant** - Contention that the proposed alterations to the Oracle along Bridge Street would not harm to the setting of the listed Seven Bridges House (19 Bridge Street) or the setting of the Russell Street / Castle Hill Conservation Area. Although the windows into the building would no longer be opaque resulting in greater light emissions, this part of the building is set back in the streetscene and only really directly relates to other modern parts of the Oracle, the Council offices and a block of residential units. It is also confirmed that the changes to the Riverside would not indirectly affect any designated heritage assets.
- 4.43 **o) Reading Design Review Panel** - The scheme was presented to the Reading Design Review Panel (DRP) on 21/11/19. A summary of the main comments from DRP were
- It is important to solve the jigsaw of numerous Riverside tenants and a standalone Bridge Street unit, the 1.5m level difference between the Riverside and Bridge Street and to encourage the retail and other potential tenants to provide clear visibility on Bridge Street at low and high levels.
 - Removing canopy on Riverside is worthwhile and the symmetry and relationship between the two canopies relates the two corners. While increasing visual permeability of the centre, this loses the architectural articulation. Suggestion to look at the articulation between the two; creating a minor reflection or a similar family may reduce the impact? Alternatively, all three elevations could be deliberately different.
 - Concern regarding access and particularly the reduction of access to the Food Hall from inside the centre and from the car park. Suggestion there should be better links through to the centre and the atrium.
 - South facing and outdoor seating area are supported by the DRP, likewise the removal of the portal and undercroft on the Riverside in principle, particularly as it will provide improved opportunity for activity.
 - DRP supports the idea of enhancing the landscaping, retain existing trees and wherever possible providing soft and "green" landscaping at ground level, on walls and at roof level too.

- Overall the changes made make the scheme look substantially refreshed and are likely to improve the connectivity to shopping mall, cafe on Bridge Street and the Riverside Food Hall.

4.44 Public consultation

- 4.45 A series of site notices were erected on 26/11/19, expiring on 17/12/19. A press notice was published on 5/12/19, expiring on 26/12/19. House of Fraser and 19 Bridge Street were also individually consulted by letter on 25/11/19, expiring on 16/12/19. No responses have been received.

5 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states at Paragraph 11 "Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development".
- 5.2 Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.
- 5.3 Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- 5.4 For this Local Planning Authority the development plan is now in one document - the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019), which fully replaces the Core Strategy, the Sites and Detailed Policies Document and the Reading Central Area Action Plan. The relevant policies are:

- CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
- CC4: Decentralised Energy
- CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
- CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
- CC7: Design and the Public Realm
- CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
- CC9: Securing Infrastructure
- EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
- EN5: Protection of Significant Views with Heritage Interest
- EN6: New Development in a Historic Context
- EN11: Waterspaces
- 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
- 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
OU5: Shopfronts and Cash Machines
CR1: Definition of Central Reading
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
CR7: Primary Frontages in Central Reading
CR8: Small Shop Units in Central Reading

- 5.5 Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:
Employment, Skills and Training SPD (2013)
Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)
Revised SPD on Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)
- 5.6 Other relevant guidance
Russell Street / Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal

6 APPRAISAL

- 6.1 The main matters to be considered are:
- Principle of development / land use matters
 - Design considerations and effect on character / heritage assets
 - Impact on amenity
 - Transport
 - Landscape/ecology/SuDS
 - Other Matters
 - S106 Legal Agreement
 - Equalities impact
- 6.2 Principle of development / land use and related matters
- 6.3 In its simplest terms, the proposals involve the sub-division of the existing House of Fraser unit into six separate planning units. In comparison with the existing Class A1 retail use, the proposal seeks a far wider range of possible uses, with the provision of two standalone assembly and leisure units (Class D2), a flexible Class A1/A3/A4 unit, a flexible Class A1/A3 unit and two continued (but smaller) Class A1 retail units.
- 6.4 It is acknowledged that the repurposing of the space will inevitably result in an overall loss of Class A1 retail floorspace at the application site. However, the prevailing local policies fully support a mix of uses within Central Reading (as a regional centre), with this being at the heart of the strategy. Policy CR7 relates to primary frontages, which the Riverside is within and Bridge Street is outside. Along frontages Class A1-5, C1, D1-2 or related sui generis uses will be supported, which the proposals comply with in full in this regard. Although there is a reduction in Class A1 use, the proposed uses will collectively add to the overall diversity of the centre.

- 6.5 With specific reference to the two leisure units, Policy CR4 recognises that leisure uses which would attract a wide range of people into the centre will be encouraged. It is considered that the proposals would, as the supporting text to the policy notes, assist in widening the variety of the offer of the centre, with this also helping to attract a greater range of people into the centre. Accordingly, the units would introduce uses which would make a positive contribution to the overall character of the centre. As such, in pure land use terms, the two leisure units are welcomed and supported.
- 6.6 It is also relevant to note that usually under planning law, the continued retail (Class A1) use at part lower ground level (unit L43 on the proposed plan) and upper ground level (unit U48 on the proposed plan) would not in themselves require planning permission as no change of use is taking place and instead the unit is being subdivided into smaller (continued retail) parts at these points. However, based on the wording of condition 62 of the original permission (see section 3 above) this permitted development right has been removed and, consequently, planning permission is required for these elements too. In land use terms, based on current local and national policies, the provision of these smaller units raises no issues and reflects the changing dynamics of the retail sector since the 1990s.
- 6.7 Turning to consider the principle of the two flexible Class A1/A3/A4 and Class A1/A3 units (both at Riverside level), the principle of the proposed uses, these uses align with the principles specified above by Policy CR7, as well as Policies RL1, RL2, CR1 and CR5. With specific regard to Policy CR5, the possible Class A4 (drinking establishment) element, this is an accessible location and would contribute to the evening and night-time uses, subject to amenity matters discussed separately below.
- 6.8 It is recommended for an informative to be included within any permission denoting that if implemented, specifying the flexibility for use within the Bridge Street Class A1/A3 unit for 10 years from the date of any permission. After 10 years the lawful use would revert to whichever of the permitted uses is taking place at the time within the unit. The same applies in part to the flexible retail/restaurant/bar (Class A1/A3/A4) unit, intended to be a Food Hall. In this case there would be a condition which limits the Class A4 element to 20% of the floorspace (as discussed in detail in the amenity section below), which would remain the case after the 10 year period expires.
- 6.9 Consequently, the principle of the proposed development is established. The amenity section below considers the various potential impacts of the proposed uses in more detail.
- 6.10 Design considerations and effect on character / heritage assets**
- 6.11 The proposals primarily involve the change of use and sub-division of the existing unit. To facilitate this, several external alterations are proposed. These predominantly relate to the Riverside frontage and consist of:
- a new largely glazed entrance to access the lower ground level Class D2 unit (on the splayed riverside elevation)
 - removal of the existing canopy (and therefore the Riverside undercroft area too) and replacement with a new largely glazed portal entrance with lighting, to serve as an entrance for the proposed Food Hall.

- 6.12 The alterations represent contemporary lightweight additions which assimilate satisfactorily into the remaining context of the building (e.g. retained stone panels) and wider Oracle site. In particular, these elements will visibly activate the Riverside frontage, with this being a clear tangible planning benefit of the development. Being largely glazed (with the ground floors being free from vinyls, banners or roller shutters and thereby retaining 'active window displays' - as secured by condition - relating to both the Riverside and Bridge Street elevations) will assist in making the uses more visible and enticing for passers-by, as well as assisting legibility as a whole.
- 6.13 At ground level the 'shopfront' entrances are akin to those seen elsewhere at the wider Oracle site and include sliding/folding doors to allow indoor/semi-outdoor seating and eating opportunities, as well as dedicated outdoor seating (which will be subject to separate licenses). In comparison with the existing inactive frontages at this point, the proposals will enable far more engaging frontages. Above is an indicative signage zone, with the upper floor glazed façade framed by a portal and columns following the existing rhythm. Between the floors decorative cladding panels are shown. The exact details of the materials, although indicated, have not been provided at application stage. Therefore, samples and manufacturers details will be secured via pre-commencement (barring demolition) condition. This is required to ensure the design quality in this instance, which will be crucial to the success of the proposed development.
- 6.14 It is evident that whilst various works are proposed on the Riverside, fewer alterations are proposed on the Bridge Street elevation. Although officers consider that it would have been preferable to fully open up the Bridge Street façade (with access into the proposed Food Hall at this point), as Reading DRP suggests, the change in land levels are acknowledged to be a significant constraint. The provision of a standalone unit on Bridge Street, together with clear glazing (secured via condition) and anticipated soft landscaping works do represent improvements in comparison with the existing situation. Reading DRP also raised concerns about the loss of architectural articulation between the Bridge Street (largely unchanged) and Riverside (revamped) elevations. However, officers are content that this is not essential in this instance, and the proposals in themselves are not objectionable to on this basis.
- 6.15 It is also noted that the removal of the roof level lifts and escalators (which presently serve House of Fraser), together with the removal of the pop out canopy on the Riverside, means in overall terms there is a reduced massing as a result of the proposals. Set within the context of the nature of the works, no design-based concerns are raised in this regard.
- 6.16 Turning to consider the impact of the proposals on nearby heritage assets, the Council's Historic Buildings Consultant has confirmed (as specified at section 4n) above) that the proposals are acceptable in this instance. Accordingly, in general terms the proposals are policy compliant in design-related matters, subject to conditions.
- 6.17 Amenity**
- 6.18 It is fully acknowledged that the sub-division of a single retail unit into six planning units, each with its own far wider use(s), may potentially result in a more intensive function of the space than existing. This has the potential

to have a negative impact on the amenity of nearby occupiers (e.g. Riverside House residential units on Fobney Street to the south-west) and users of the area more generally. Accordingly, this has been carefully considered and various steps are proposed to maintain amenity.

- 6.19 Considering first the opening hours, the applicant is proposing for the non-Class A1 units (specifically the A1/A3/A4 unit at Riverside level; Class A1/A3 unit at Riverside level; Class D2 unit at Riverside level; Class D2 unit at lower ground level) to be open:
- Monday to Saturday 08:00hours - 00:00 hours;
 - Sunday, Bank Holidays 08:00 hours - 23:00 hours.
- 6.20 Within this Central Reading / primary shopping area / central core location a degree of late-night noise/disturbance already occurs and the proposed would not substantially worsen this situation. Accordingly, the proposed hours are considered appropriate in this instance and will be secured via condition. To clarify, no hours of use restrictions are proposed for either the Class A1 unit at lower ground level or the Class A1 unit at upper ground level. This is consistent with the approach taken previously in relation to retail units accessed from inside the Oracle centre.
- 6.21 With specific reference to the intended Food Hall which would front the Oracle Riverside, the applicant has submitted an operational management plan, following the example of a comparable scheme at Broad Street Mall in 2019 (Ref 190099). This commits the applicant to limiting the Class A4 bar servery area to no more than 20% of the total floorspace (20% of 1514.8sqm = 302.96sqm). With the Class A4 (drinking establishment) element limited to 20% of the floor space, both planning and Licensing officers are content with this component of the scheme. The operational management plan also duplicates the aforementioned opening hours and commits to other licensing (e.g. membership of Reading Pub Watch scheme; Reading Business Against Crime / Townsafe; and, meeting RBC's Cumulative Impact Policy) and security (e.g. code of conduct; entry / exit / dispersal policies and CCTV) standards. The commitment of the applicant in this regard is welcomed and considered necessary given the nature of the proposal. In practice, the measures detailed within the operational management plan will be secured via condition.
- 6.22 In respect of the two leisure (Class D2) units, although the applicant has indicated the likely adventure golf and family ten-pin bowling uses, the Class D2 use class as a whole is wide. Class D2 uses comprise: cinemas, music and concert halls, bingo and dance halls (but not night clubs), swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums or area for indoor or outdoor sports and recreations (except for motor sports, or where firearms are used). Therefore, the different uses within the same use class could potentially have very different transport and amenity (e.g. noise/disturbance / hours / anti-social behaviour / crime) implications. Accordingly, the proposal needs to be considered based on any Class D2 use, and not just the specific intended uses the applicant has denoted. It is considered that the previously referenced hours condition largely mitigates any significant amenity concerns for any Class D2 use, while the transport section below demonstrates that all traffic impacts have been accounted for.
- 6.23 With specific regard to any possible future gym (Class D2) use, a separate

condition will also be secured to require a noise assessment, including specific reference to structure borne noise, to be submitted and approved prior to the first use of the unit(s) for a gym use. This is because structural borne noise at low frequencies causing vibration is a known potential issue associated with gyms, impacting on the amenity of occupiers/users of other floors of the same building. As such, this safeguard will protect amenity should a gym use transpire to occur at the site in the future. In overall terms it is considered that any Class D2 use could suitably operate from the proposed units without causing significant adverse amenity impacts and therefore unrestricted Class D2 uses are considered appropriate in this instance.

6.24 Various specialist officers have also provided observations on the proposals and many of the matters outlined (see section 4 above) revolve around seeking to protect nearby amenity. For example, from an Environmental Protection perspective, conditions will secure details of external plant and kitchen extraction systems serving any applicable specific unit prior to first use. Another example is the CCTV surveillance details to be secured on the recommendation of the Crime Prevention Design Advisor at Thames Valley Police. When considered within the context of the proposed hours condition and operational management plan associated with the Food Hall, these various measures will suitably protect the amenity of nearby occupiers and users of the area as a whole.

6.25 In terms of the amenity of future occupiers (both operators, employees and customers) of the proposed units, these are shown to be regularly shaped and open plan units with suitable access to supporting facilities (e.g. dedicated storage spaces and direct routes to likely servicing areas). All units have suitable levels of outlook and access to natural day/sunlight, within the context of pre-existing deep floor plates. For customers of the Food Hall, the plans were revised during the application to show an anticipated area for a platform lift, to enable step-free access throughout the unit.

6.26 Transport

6.27 As per the transport comments at section 4a) above, following the submission of revised information during the application, the proposals have been fully justified from a transport perspective, subject to several conditions. In particular, it is illuminating that the proposed uses will result in a reduction in vehicle trips to and from the town centre area, even without considering linked trips (between the leisure uses and the existing town centre retail uses), which it is considered would be likely to occur in practice.

6.28 Landscape/ecology/SuDS

6.29 As per the Natural Environment Officer's comments, summarised at section 4b) above, the submitted details (following revisions during the application) are largely considered appropriate. However, there are some outstanding details (e.g. provision of soft landscaping on Bridge Street and immediately adjacent to the Class A1/3/4 unit) means full landscaping details will be secured via pre-commencement (barring demolition) condition.

6.30 Turning to consider ecology-based matters, the RBC Ecology Consultant (see section 4c) above) has some concerns about light spill onto the river from

internal lighting within the units, but given the existing context there is limited scope to demonstrate harm in this regard. The lighting information submitted to justify the external lighting proposed is considered appropriate. In terms of SuDS, officers are content that the information submitted is acceptable and no conditions are required in this instance (see section 4l above).

6.31 Other matters

6.32 Sustainability / energy - As detailed at section 4h) above, it is acknowledged that the proposals, as largely a refurbishment proposal, do not align neatly with the standard BREEAM / Energy requirements. The applicant has submitted a detailed and robust assessment demonstrating the context in full, including satisfactorily responding to officer concerns during the application. In short, it is evident that the applicant is committed to incorporating a range of sustainability and energy measures within the proposals. In the specific circumstances of this case, it is considered reasonable and necessary to secure the various measures via condition (required to be submitted / approved prior to the occupation of any Riverside or lower ground floor unit - to ensure the measures are implemented), rather than securing an official BREEAM rating or energy measures.

6.33 Flooding - In summary, the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has sufficiently demonstrated that the proposals comply with Policy EN18. Furthermore, the Environment Agency raise no objection to the proposals and seek for the FRA to be included on the list of approved documents for the development to be carried out in accordance with.

6.34 Future advertisements - The applicant has indicatively shown future areas for signage. However, no application for advertisement consent has been sought as part of this application and therefore this is not assessed as part of this application. An informative will be included on the decision notice to clarify this to the applicant. In the future, if/when advertisement consent applications are sought, these will be judged on their own merits.

6.35 S106 Legal Agreement

6.36 As detailed at section 4d) above, during the application the applicant has liaised with Reading UK CIC to agree the form and extent of a construction and end user stage Employment, Skills and Training Plan. This shall be secured in full via s106 legal agreement. It is considered that the obligation would comply with the National Planning Policy Framework and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in that it would be: i) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, ii) directly related to the development and iii) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

6.37 Equalities Impact

6.38 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. Therefore, in terms of the

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

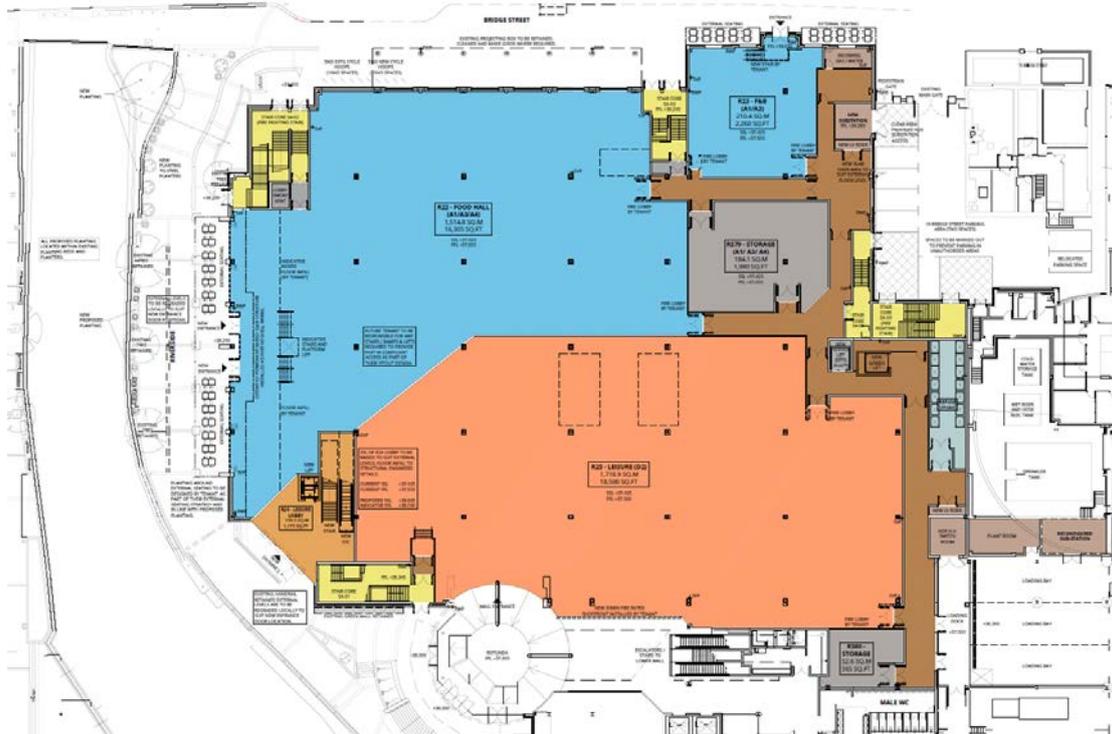
7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This proposal has been carefully considered in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and supplementary planning documents. The proposal raises no in-principle land use issues and has demonstrated that it will not adversely impact on nearby amenity, subject to conditions mitigating any impacts. Furthermore, the design approach is welcomed, and no harmful impacts will occur to nearby heritage assets. Moreover, it is considered that the scheme proposes an exciting range of uses which will maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the regional centre, with the activation of the Riverside being a clear tangible planning benefit of the development.
- 7.2 The proposals are thus considered to be acceptable within the context of national and local planning policies, and, accordingly, full planning permission is recommended. This is subject to the conditions and completion of the S106 Legal Agreement specified at the outset of the report.

Case Officer: Mr Jonathan Markwell



Existing Riverside level



Proposed Riverside level



Existing upper ground floor plan



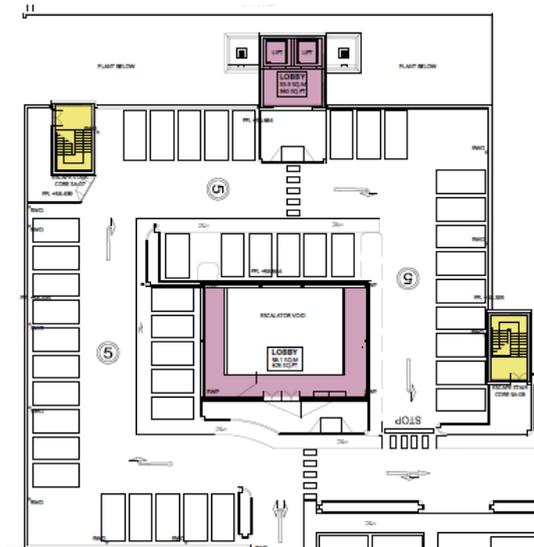
Proposed upper ground floor plan



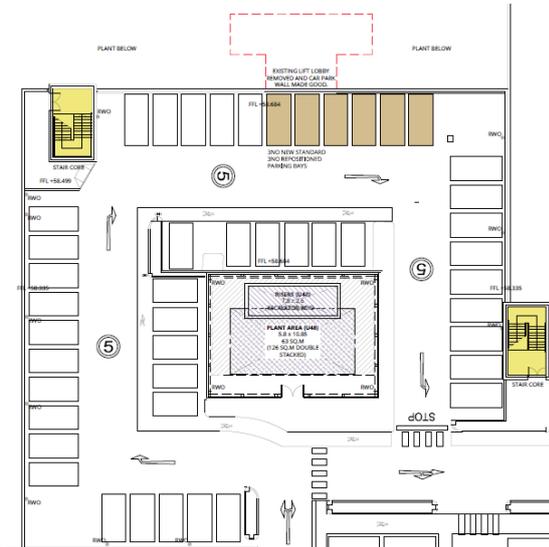
Existing car park level 1



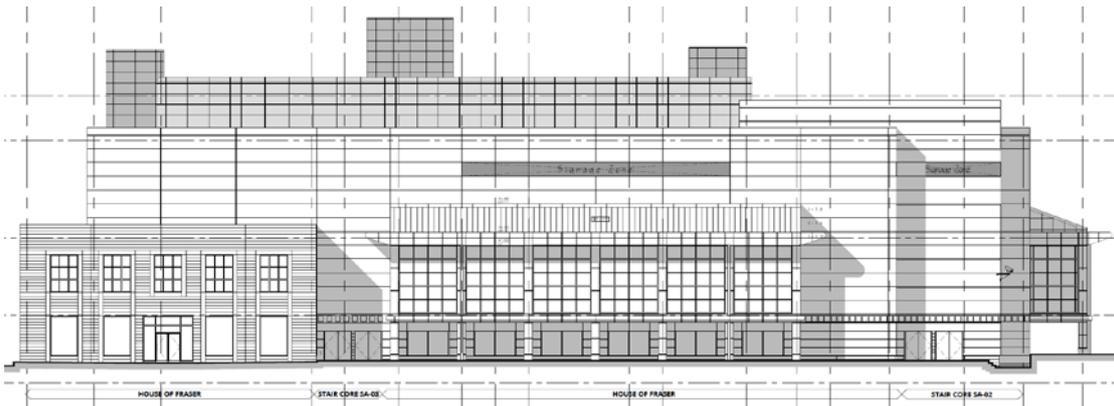
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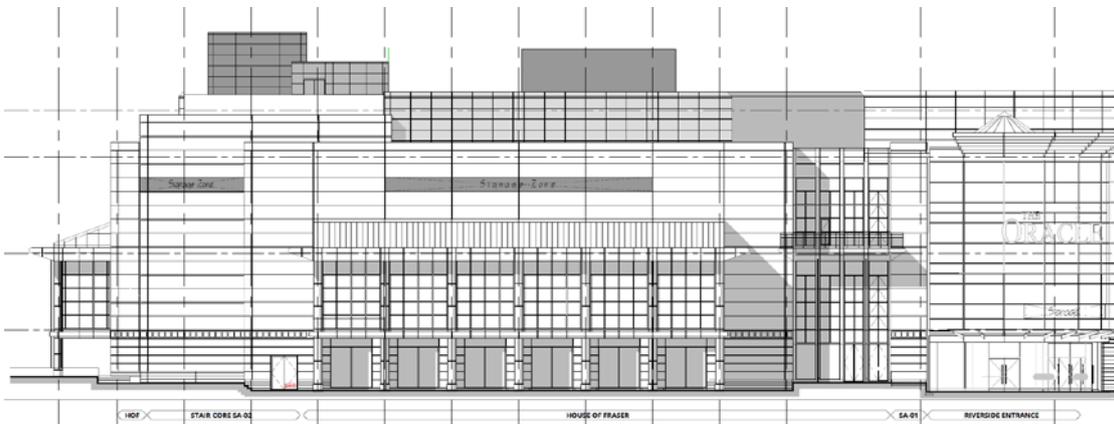
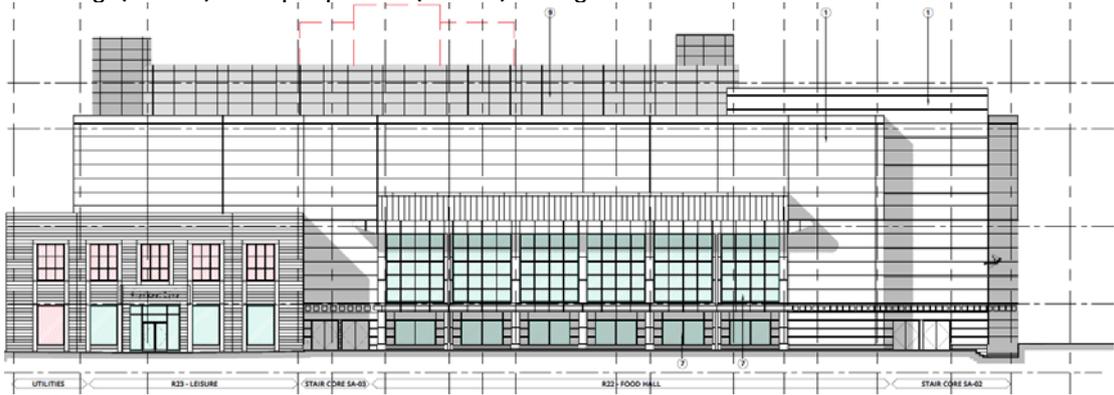
Existing car park level 2



Proposed car park level 2

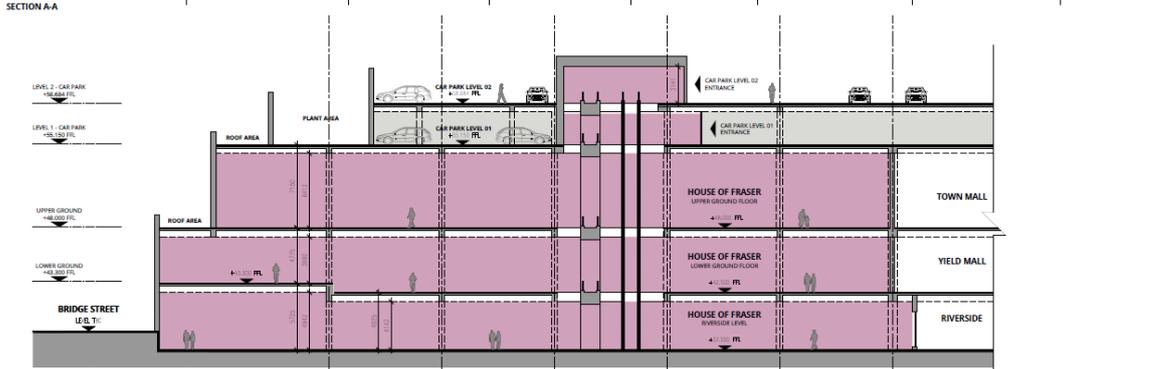
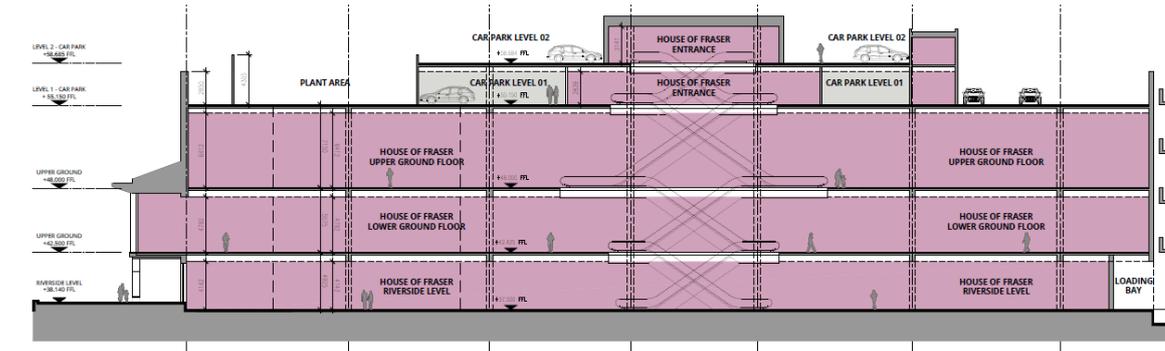


Existing (above) and proposed (below) Bridge Street elevations

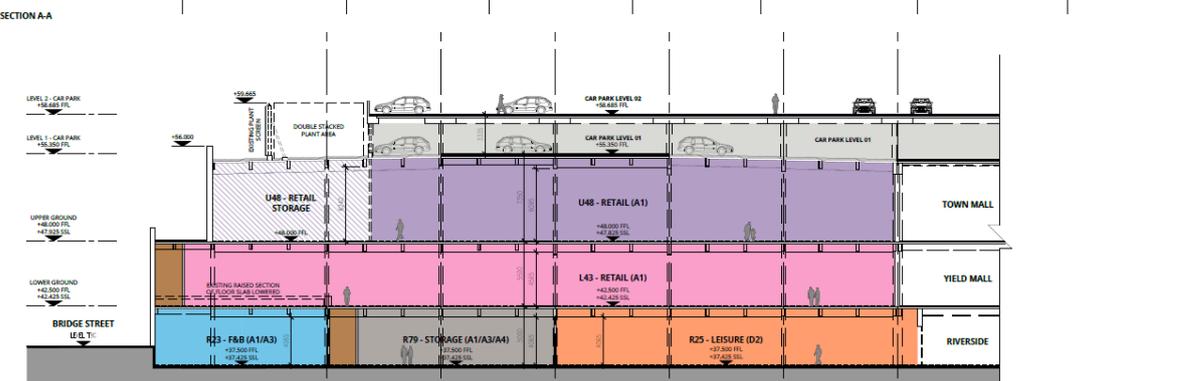
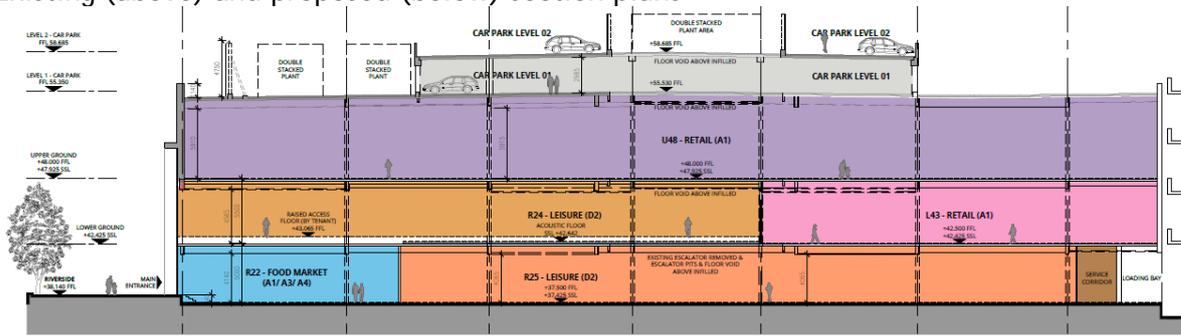


Existing (above) and proposed (below) Riverside elevations

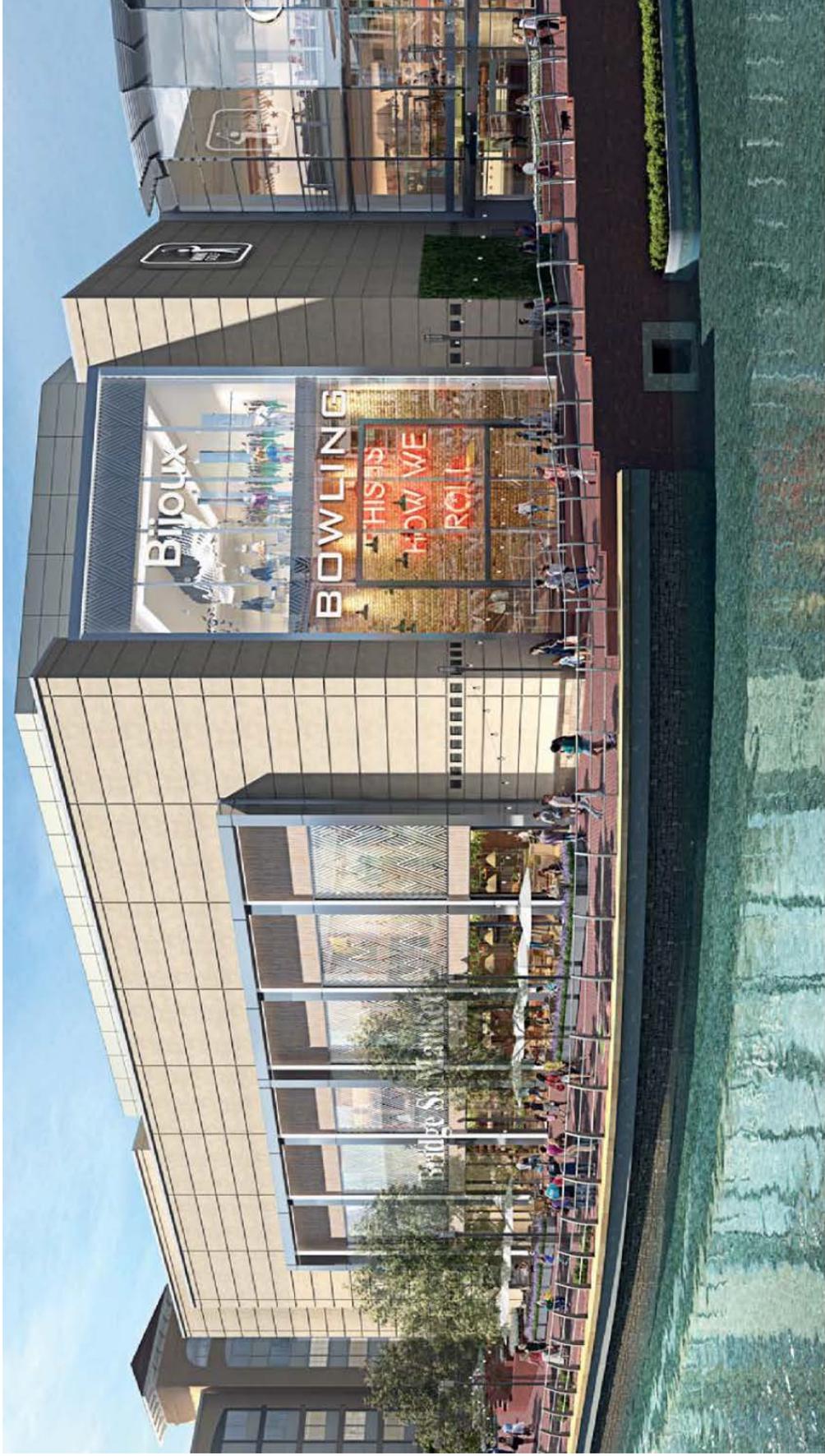




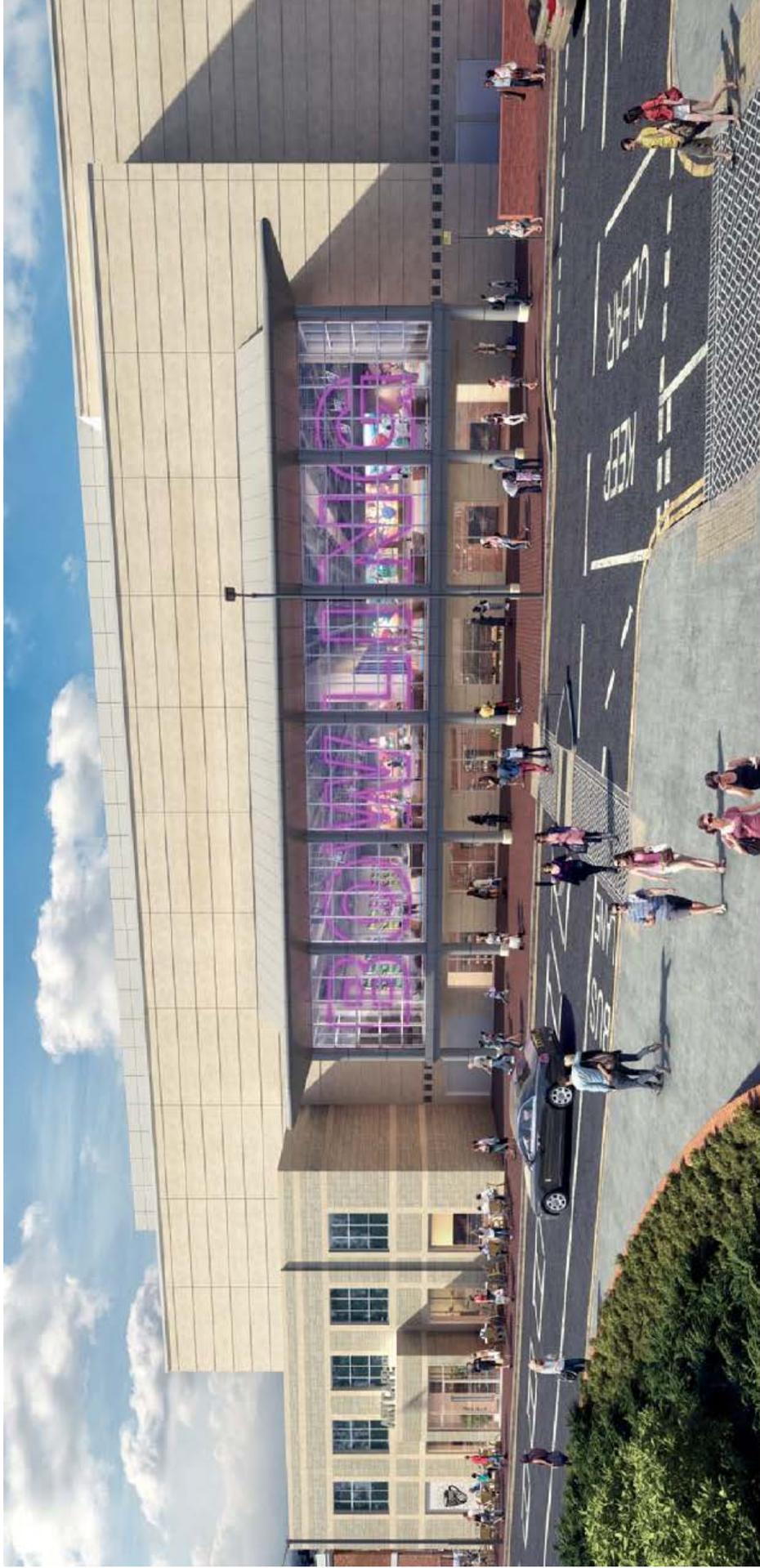
Existing (above) and proposed (below) section plans



SECTION B-B



CCI View - Riverside



◆ CCI View - Bridge Street



◆ CGI View - Riverside at night



Aerial views of the site looking north-east (above) & north-west (below)





Further Bridge St / Riverside views



Riverside at night





Existing Riverside views



Longer Riverside context from the east





Access to House of Fraser from car park (to be removed)

The location of the disabled parking bays was amended during the course of the application to be adjacent to the main atrium/lift core on car park level 1

