

## UPDATE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ITEM NO. 8

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020

**Ward:** Redlands

**App No:** 200061/FUL

**Address:** The Abbey School, Kendrick Road, Reading

**Proposal:** Erection of a new dining hall with green roof over the existing courtyard, rooftop extension to the 6th Form block to provide a new common room, extension to the south-east to provide additional classroom space and a new study area for the 6th Form block, reconfiguration of hard landscaped area to remove 1 of 4 netball courts, move existing flood lighting, relocate existing 6th form parking and enhance the frontage of the 6th form building.

**Applicant:** The Abbey School

**Determination Date:** Originally 15/4/2020; EOT agreed until 30/6/2020

### RECOMMENDATION:

As per the main Agenda report, with the following additional condition:

#### 1. Development in accordance with Landscape and Ecology Management Plan

#### 1. Clarification of glazing proposed to 6<sup>th</sup> Form rooftop extension

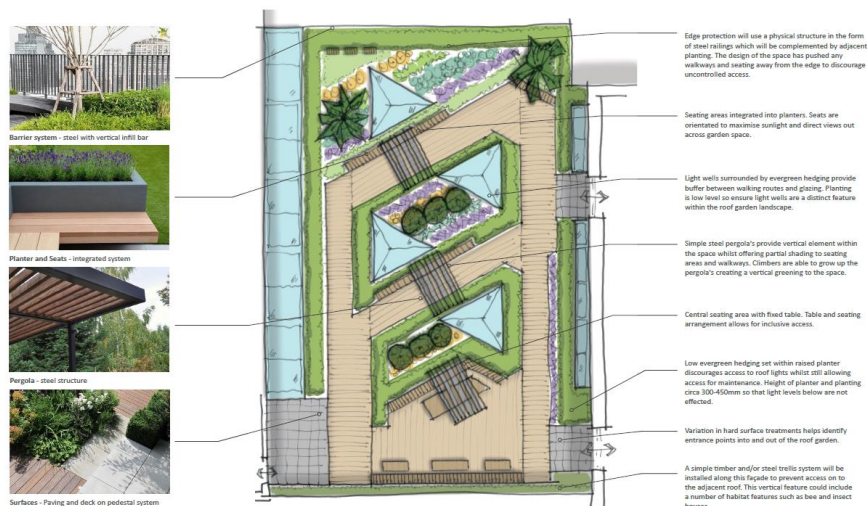
- 1.1 The applicant has confirmed that there will be no tint to any glazing and that all glazing will be clear to avoid a top heavy appearance. The following CGI provides an impression of the appearance of the proposed building. Furthermore, the specifications for the windows can be required by adapting the standard materials to be approved condition to ensure design quality.



## 2. Clarification of proposed green roof and separate roof garden

- 2.1 The Council's recently adopted Sustainable Design and Construction SPD states at paragraph 4.8 that "A green roof is a roof of a building that is partially or completely covered with vegetation and a growing medium, planted over a waterproof membrane".
- 2.2 The SPD supports Policy CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change which includes green roofs as an example of a measure to maximise resistance and resilience to climate change.
- 2.3 The proposals incorporate a wildflower roof system. It is recognised that this system will require more maintenance over, for example, a sedum roof which is low maintenance, as wildflower roofs require more feeding and irrigation. However, the benefits of a wildflower system include encouragement of a range of insect species including bees, butterflies and small birds, as well as providing species diversity and long season flowering.
- 2.4 As part of the application submission, the applicant has provided a 'Landscape and Ecology Management Plan' which details the management of biodiversity features, species and maintenance regime. Pages 11-15 of this Management Plan sets out the proposed measures and it is considered that a suitably worded condition could be attached to ensure that the proposed green roof works are undertaken as set out in this document. Furthermore, it is noted that for as long as the green roof is in place, there would be an obvious imperative for the applicant to keep it well maintained so that the school building is an attractive proposition for students and visitors. It is also noted that the management plan will fulfil a key criterion under BREEAM to allow a credit to be awarded in this respect.
- 2.5 In addition a roof garden is proposed on the second floor (see second floor plan in main report) to be accessed from the 6<sup>th</sup> Form with balustrade for safety. A Roof Garden Concept has been included in the submitted Planning, Heritage, Design and Access Statement. This is also indicated below:

### 2.0 Abbey School - Roof Garden Concept



### 3. Update on light levels

- 3.1 The applicant submitted an External Lighting Study, given the proposals include the relocation of existing floodlighting. Whilst a change might be visible to Martindale Court to the east of the site (light may be seen in a different position) the impact of the change is considered to be negligible in terms of light levels (lux). The Council's Environmental Protection Team have reviewed the document and have raised no concerns about the impact of light levels to any nearby property.

### 4. Update on parking arrangements

- 4.1 It is noted that the Council's parking standards do not require any parking provision for students at a secondary school. With this in mind, the Highway Authority would have no objection to their loss as part of this development. This is due to the existing parking restrictions that surround the application site ensuring that overspill parking does not occur and the sustainable location of the school which is highlighted extensively within the Transport Statement submitted alongside the application. The existing and proposed reconfigured parking spaces at the rear of the site are for use by the 6<sup>th</sup> Form students, with no increase in the number of parking spaces proposed.

### 5. Corrections

- 5.1 There is a typographical error in paragraph 6.14 of the main agenda report which is corrected as follows:

*"The value of trees is graded by the British Standard 5837:20112 British Standard 5837:2012 and these range from Grade A (the best, most healthy, valuable specimens) to Grade U (those that are the least healthy and valuable specimens)."*

- 5.2 There is also an error in paragraph 6.19 of the main agenda report which is correct as follows:

*"In this very specific instance, whilst acknowledging that the loss of these trees is not strictly in accordance with the development plan ~~Policy EN12~~, Policy EN14, officers consider this is outweighed by the very specific mitigation proposed including replacement mature tree planting (of the same species), further additional trees ensuring net gain and the wider landscaping proposals, which is considered to be a tangible planning benefit of the proposal, which is noted within the context of the overall planning balance, as detailed at the end of this report."*

- 5.3 The above errors do not materially change the assessment of the scheme made as discussed within the main committee report.

### 5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The officer recommendation remains to grant planning permission subject to the conditions and informatives as outlined in the main report, with the amendment to the materials condition to specify glazing details to be approved and the additional details for the proposed green roof as noted above.

Officer: Ethne Humphreys