

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 7th October 2020

Ward: Whitley

App No.: 191265

Address: St. Pauls, Whitley Wood Lane, RG2 8PN

Proposal: Redevelop the site, creating a new Church Centre building, comprising Cafe, Worship Area, Meeting Rooms, two one bed residential flats and also a Health Centre Building.

Applicant: The PCC of St. Paul's Church, Whitley

Deadline: 3/6/20

Extended Deadline: 27/11/20

Planning Guarantee 26 week target: 2/9/20

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve Planning Permission subject to conditions and informatives and subject to the satisfactory completion of a S.106 legal agreement.

OR Refuse permission should the legal agreement not be completed by the 27th November 2020 unless a later date is agreed by the Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services.

The Section 106 Legal Agreement to Secure the Following:

Affordable Housing

Either:

Financial Contribution of £20,000 towards the provision by the Council of Affordable Housing in the Borough, index-linked from the date of permission and payable pre-occupation of the development OR

Financial Contribution of £10,000 towards the provision by the Council of Affordable Housing in the Borough, index-linked from the date of permission and payable on commencement of the development AND

Retention of one flat as ancillary to the use of the site as a church and community use, and health centre.

To enter into a S278 legal agreement with the council to make permanent alterations to the public highway. All associated costs to be met by the applicant. The S278 works include:

- Relocation of the traffic calming measures (speed cushions) on Whitley Wood Lane as illustrated on Proposed Site plan (Drawing no 1861/P01 Rev E) prior to construction of the bellmouth access.
- Construction of the bellmouth access as illustrated on the Proposed Site Plan (Drawing no: 1861/P01 Rev E).

Financial contribution of £3,800 for mitigation tree planting (11 no.) on the highway verge adjacent to Imperial Way (RBC owned land), subject to survey for suitability, or an alternative publically prominent site within Whitley Ward.

Employment Skills and Training Plan - Construction - preparation and delivery of an ESP or financial contribution of £4,357.50

CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE:

- 1) TL1 - standard time limit 3 yrs
- 2) AP1 - Approved Plans
- 3) M2 - Materials to be submitted and approved
- 4) L2 - Landscaping - to include suitable permeable surfaces for access and parking areas
- 5) L3 - Boundary treatment, including mammalian access, and acoustic fencing
- 6) L10 - Habitat Enhancement Scheme
- 7) Vegetation clearance outside of nesting season
- 8) L11 - License for bats.
- 9) SU3 - SAP Assessment Minor - Design Stage.
- 10)SU4 - SAP Assessment - Minor - As Built.
- 11)DC1 - Vehicle Parking as specified
- 12)DC3 - Vehicle Access as specified
- 13)DC5 - Cycle Parking as approved
- 14)DC7 - Refuse and Recycling to be approved (to be vermin proof).
- 15)DD1 - Access closure with reinstatement
- 16)DD3 - Roads to be provided
- 17) Facilities Management Plan - including car parking, refuse, landscape and overall site management
- 18)DD9 - Travel Plan
- 19)DE1 - Annual Review of Travel Plan
- 20)DE6 - EV Charging Points
- 21)The parking spaces for disabled people as illustrated on the Proposed Site Plan Drwg no. 1861/P01 Rev E should be properly marked as per the detailed design specifications set out in Traffic Advisory Leaflet 05/9524 and in Inclusive Mobility.
- 22)CS1 - Hours of Construction
- 23)CS2 - Construction Method Statement to be submitted and approved (including dust control)
- 24)C4 - No Bonfires
- 25)N2 - Mechanical Plant - noise assessment required
- 26)N9 - Noise Assessment and Mitigation Residential to be submitted and approved
- 27) Noise assessment of the proposed_church hall and church premises to be submitted and approved which is to ensure that there will be no break-out noise emanating from the premises likely to give rise to disturbance to surrounding residents; to include mitigation to be installed and maintained thereafter.
- 28)N16 - Hours of Opening/ Operation - 7:00-22:00 Mondays to Saturdays and 7:30-21:00 Sundays or Bank Holidays (with the exception of church services and activities, which are related to the primary church and community uses, infrequently required to take place outside of these hours). The use of any

part of the outside space surrounding the approved buildings, within the application site boundary, shall not be used outside the hours of 8am-9pm Monday to Saturday and 8am to 8pm on Sundays and Bank Holidays, apart from for the purposes of setting up and clearing down, and accessing and departing the overall site within the curtilage of the application site.

29) No Amplified sound outside

30) Development to be undertaken in accordance with the principles set out in the approved Sustainability Statement and evidence provided post-construction to demonstrate which measures have been undertaken.

31) SU6 - BREEAM Post construction

32) SU7 - SUDS to be approved

33) PD8 - Use restriction, i.e. no other (D1 or D2 or subsequent uses)

34) External Lighting to be implemented as approved

35) PD3 - Obscure glazing to be implemented and retained.

36) Ancillary café use

INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE:

1) IF5 - Terms and Conditions

2) IF6 - Building Regulations

3) IF2 - Pre-Commencement Conditions

4) I10 - Noise between residential properties - sound insulation of any building - To minimise the disturbance by noise of future residential occupiers of the flats and its effect on neighbouring residents, residential accommodation must be designed and constructed or converted so as to achieve the insulation requirements set out in Building Regulations Approved Document E.

5) I11 - CIL

6) IF4 - S106

7) IF3 - Highways

8) I29 - Access Construction

9) IF7 - Complaints about Construction

10) IF1 - Positive & Proactive.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The site is located on the eastern side of Whitley Wood Lane and is a prominent plot. The St. Paul's parish owned portion of the site currently comprises two detached single storey buildings - a church and play barn (soft play area for toddlers and their parents/ carers) to the rear of the site, and a church hall to the northern side of the site. The Oxford Anglican Diocese, of which St. Pauls is a part, owns the pair of semi-detached houses to the frontage, no.1 Whitley Wood Lane is vacant and has been for a significant period of time.
- 1.2 There is amenity space, landscaping/ hedging to the boundaries, and a large parking area. There is an existing TPO (Ash) set well back on the site.

- 1.3 The area comprises largely residential uses with the rear gardens of Greenfields Road to the east and Whitley Wood Lane to the south. There are two commercial shop units, with residential above, to the north and a Lidl supermarket. Opposite the site is the Grade II listed St. Paul's Mews, the former church hall, now residential accommodation.



Location Plan



2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal is to demolish all buildings and redevelop the site for the following:

Church centre

- 2.2 New part 1 and part 2 storey church centre of 708sqm comprising - worship space (main hall), community café, downstairs office, a separate hall, 4 upstairs offices/ meeting rooms and 2x 1 bed flats, all equating to approximately double the size of the existing.
- 2.3 The meetings rooms for voluntary and community organisations are proposed to be available for meetings, office facilities and for one-to-one counselling for advice and support on a wide range of issues.
- 2.4 The community spaces and community café would provide for flexible meeting areas for small groups up to larger community events and celebrations.
- 2.5 The proposal is that the multi-purpose worship space would be available for community hire for meetings, group activities and celebrations. In addition, a small chapel/ prayer room is proposed.
- 2.6 The submission documents also refer to the proposed hall space being available for independent use from the café, church and meeting rooms, e.g. for a nursery or other commercial care provider. In addition, first floor rooms are identified as providing the potential for small social enterprises and that support could be available for small business start-ups.
- 2.7 The table below is the applicant's indicative activities, based on current usage of the site and their vision for suggested future use for community focussed activities and worship.

Activity	Day	Time	Frequency	Where
Mencap	Tue-Fri	9am-4pm	Regular	Separate hall
Play barn	Mon, Wed, Fri	9am-12noon	Term time	Main hall
Pensioners Lunch Club	Tue	12noon-4pm	Regular	Main hall
Cafe	Mon-Fri	10am-12, 2pm-4pm	Regular	Cafe
	Mon-Fri	12-2pm	Regular	Cafe
	Sat	11am-2pm	Regular	Cafe
Parish office work	Mon-Fri	9am-5pm	As required	Office
SYC	Mon-Fri	9am-5pm, occasional evenings /weekends	Regular	2 small offices
Small business use	Mon-Fri, occasional Saturdays	9am-5pm, occasional evenings	Regular	1 small office
Counselling, small group teaching	Occasional evenings, Saturdays	7pm-9pm evening, 10am-12 & 2pm-4pm Sat	Occasional	Larger office
Brownies, Youth Groups etc	Mon-Fri Evenings	6pm-9pm	Twice per week	Separate Hall
Church meetings	Evenings: 1-2 per month. Saturday: 3-4 per year	7pm-10pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat	Occasional	Larger office, main or separate hall
Parish church services (10-30 children may attend some services)	Sunday	8am-9am	Twice a month	Chapel or main hall
		10am-12noon	Weekly	Main Hall
		10am-12noon	Twice a year	Main Hall
		5pm-6pm	4 times a year	Chapel or Main Hall
Other churches' services	Sunday	2pm-4pm	Regular	Main hall
Children's parties	Saturday	2pm -9pm	Once a month	Separate Hall
Other events, eg Saturday school	Saturday	9am-12noon	Term time	Separate Hall
		1pm-5pm	Occasional	Separate Hall

GP health centre

- 2.8 1035sqm space including rooms for: Consulting, GP Training, Waiting, Nurses, Offices, Minor Operations, Treatment, Records, Staff, Reception, Ancillary facilities

It would be a replacement for the South Reading surgery on Whitley Wood Road and for the Whitley Wood Lane surgery which has closed. At the time of submission the practice had a list size of 7500 patients and was due to increase by around 5000 patients as residential developments within the catchment were completed. The catchment extends from southern parts of Reading to Swallowfield to beyond Grazeley Green to the west, beyond Sonning to the east and up to the outskirts of Winnersh and Wokingham.

The Health Centre would provide the following services: full GP and nursing services, minor operations, joint injections, patient group consultations, physio, counselling, out-patient clinics, ultra-sound

scans, blood tests, training for junior doctors and medical students, paramedics, pharmacists etc.

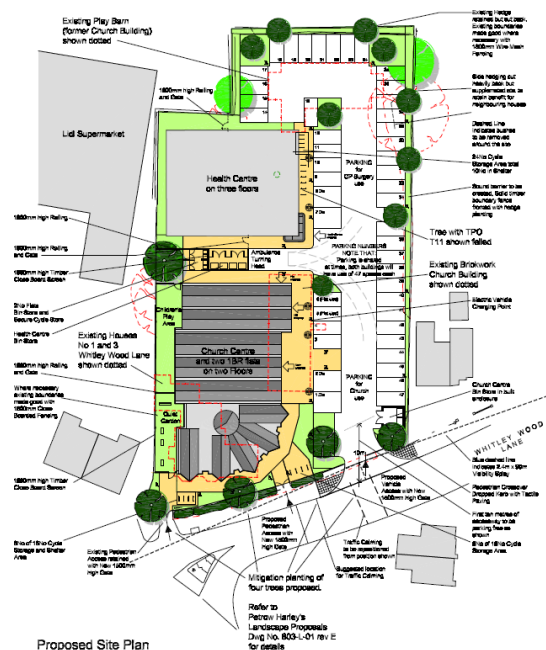
Hours of operation would be 8:00-20:00, Saturday mornings and some Sunday mornings (on a rota so not every surgery would be open until 20:00 through the week or weekend). Normal working hours would be 8:00-18:30 M-F.

Other

2.9 Comprising:

- A garden area to the north behind the church divided for Children's play area and a quiet sitting area. The Health centre would also have a garden area to the rear (north);
- 47 no. car parking spaces;
- 42 no. cycle spaces;
- Bin storage;
- Trees and other landscaping; and
- Ambulance/servicing turning head.

Proposed site plan



2.10 Submitted plans and documentation received 5th August 2019, unless otherwise stated (including amended details) is as follows:

- Existing Site Plan and Location Plan - Drawing no: 1861/P EX01
- Existing Site Elevations - Drawing no: 1861/P EX02
- Existing Plans and Elevations [houses]- Drawing no: 1861/P EX03
- Existing Plans and Elevations [hall] - Drawing no: 1861/P EX04
- Existing Plans and Elevations [church building] - Drawing no: 1861/P EX05
- Proposed Site Plan - Drawing no: 1861/P 01 Rev E, received 23rd September 2020
- Proposed Street Elevation - Drawing no: 1861/P 02

- Proposed Site Elevation [Church] - Drawing no: 1861/P 03
- Proposed Church Building Plans - Drawing no: 1861/P 04 Rev A, received 23rd September 2020
- Proposed Church Building Elevations - Drawing no: 1861/P 05 Rev A, received 23rd September 2020
- Proposed Plans [Health Centre] - Drawing no: 17/136 03 Rev A, received 1st July 2020
- Proposed Elevations [Health Centre] - Drawing no: 17/136 04 Rev B, received 23rd September 2020
- Proposed Church Building Lighting Elevations - Drawing no: 1861/P 06 Rev A, received 23rd September 2020
- External Lighting Details, received 12th February 2020
- Landscape Proposals - Drawing no: 803-L-01 Rev E, received 23rd September 2020
- Planting Plan - Drawing no: 803-L-02, received 12th February 2020
- Residential/Dwelling Units - Supplementary Information Template
- Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 Notice under Article 13 of Application for Planning Permission
- Affordable Housing Statement, prepared by DLK Architects, received 12th February 2020
- Air Quality Assessment, dated January 2020, Document ref: 19-6409, prepared by Syntegra Consulting, received 12th February 2020
- Application Statement, received 4th March 2020
- Arboricultural Implications Assessment, Tree Protection Plan and Method Statement, dated January 2020, prepared by David Archer Associates, received 12th February 2020
- Community Infrastructure Levy - Additional Information Requirement Form, received 12th February 2020
- Design and Access Statement, dated July 2019, prepared by DLK Architects
- Drainage Impact Assessment, Document Ref: 47270/4001, dated October 2019, prepared by PBA, received 7th October 2019
- Ecological Survey Report (Bats), dated 30/7/20, Document ref: SPH/ESR-20/15.07, prepared by Urban Tree Experts, received 3rd August 2020
- Noise Impact Assessment, dated January 2020, prepared by Syntegra Consulting, received 12th February 2020
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report, dated December 2019, Document ref: 19-6409, prepared by Syntegra Consulting, received 12th February 2020
- Site Survey as Existing - Drawing no: 01
- Sustainability and Energy Statement, dated January 2020 Document ref: 19-6409, prepared by Syntegra Consulting, received 12th February 2020
- Tree Survey, dated 28/4/17, Document ref: SPH/5837-01/28.04, prepared by Tree Surveys

- Transport Statement, dated January 2020, Document ref: 19-6409, prepared by Syntegra Consulting, received 12th February 2020
 - Travel Plan - Appendix 3 of DAS
 - Typical Week usage for Church, received 6th August 2020
 - Church Centre Typical Week usage (including health centre), received 6th August 2020
 - Typical usage of St Paul's Church Centre, received 6th August 2020
 - Cycle Storage, received 23rd September 2020
- 2.11 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): the applicant has duly completed a CIL liability form with the submission. The estimated amount of CIL chargeable from the proposed scheme would be £13,200. Demolition is proportionally offset against the floorspace created, so there is a proportional charge against the new flats.

3 PLANNING HISTORY

140381 - To redevelop the existing church site, to construct a new church and community facility (645 sq m), a clinic to house a GP practice (500 sq m) and two houses to the rear - Observations sent 8/7/14

171443/PREAPP - Pre-application for proposed redevelopment of site, creating a new community building, comprising cafe/worship space, meeting rooms, nursery and residential accommodation and a new GP practice facility - Observations sent 12/10/17

4 CONSULTATIONS

Statutory

4.1 None

Non-statutory

Clinical Commissioning Group

4.2 No comments were received during the course of the application, but comments were provided at the pre-application stage and these are included below for context:

"In the wider context, NHS England has set out a strategy to transform primary care across the country and is described in the document General Practice Forward View (GPFV) published in April 2016. This sets out a national approach to improving investment, workforce, workload, infrastructure and care design. Using this guidance, plus access to additional funding, primary care (GP services) will be future proofed to meet the needs of a growing and ageing population with complex multiple health conditions by offering population- orientated primary care."

In response to this national direction of travel, South Reading CCG has developed a local primary care strategy and action plan that sets out how we will develop primary care in our locality to meet the needs of our population and ensure long-term sustainability.

University Medical Group is not able to keep pace with the month on month increase to its registered patients list which currently stands at 27,433 [31st May 2017]. In addition, the CCH is aware of future housing developments planned by Reading Borough Council which will have a further impact on the registered list. Despite this, the surgery provides a full range of services to its patient population including additional services outside of core contract. This supports the joint Reading Borough Council and CCG Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017/20 of which one priority is: Supporting people to make healthy lifestyle choices - dental care, reducing obesity increasing physical activity, reducing smoking.

The Berkshire West Accountable Care System (ACS - the combined local health economy) has recently been awarded 'exemplar status' in the refreshed GP Forward Next Steps (published March 2017). One of the work streams within the development of the ACS will review the current configuration of Outpatients with a view to move more clinics into the community, in line with the diabetes model of care. This will ensure that services re 'wrapped around' the patient and release capacity from hospital. The proposed new build will provide additional clinic and training capacity to support consultant-led clinics and reduce the need for multiple hospital appointments for patients with chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and hypertension.

The CCG supports any activities and services that will help people keep well and managed in the community and avoid unnecessary attendance to Royal Berkshire Hospital. The CCG is therefore fully supportive of the plans and the approval of this new build will provide a key enabler for the delivery of our primary care strategy."

Ecology

- 4.3 The Ecology officer comments as follows: An ecological assessment ("Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report - Syntegra Consulting" has been submitted with the application. This reads:

"The play barn and dwellings had notable features providing crevice roosting opportunities and potential access points. The play barn was deemed of low potential and the dwellings are of moderate potential for roosting bats. Of the trees onsite, only one ivy clad ash tree was deemed as low potential for use by roosting bats."
and

"- The play barn and dwellings noted potential features suitable for roosting bats, it is recommended that given the location one dusk or

dawn echolocation survey is carried out to determine likely absence or confirmed presence.

- One mature ash tree within the southern boundary had notable features suitable for roosting bats, should any works be required to this tree or require removal to facilitate the development, then a further echolocation survey will be required during the active survey season (May to August inclusive);”

i.e. to determine if the site hosts roosting bats further surveys of the building and tree would need to be undertaken.

The results of the survey would need to be provided before the application is determined. This is because paragraph 99 of the government Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within The Planning System (this document has not been revoked by the National Planning Policy Framework) reads:

“It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted.”

Further survey requirements

The Bat Conservation Trust’s Bat Survey Guidelines state that to determine the presence or absence of bats where the building has been assessed as having “moderate” suitability for use by roosting bats (as is the case for the dwellings) two dusk emergence / pre-dawn re-entry bat surveys need to be carried out. For buildings with “low” suitability one survey needs to be undertaken.

Surveys need to be carried out between May and the end of August (sub-optimally)

Summary

The outbuilding, dwelling and ash tree have features potentially suitable for use by roosting bats. Further surveys would, need to be undertaken determine if these buildings and tree host a bat roost. The application should not be determined until the surveys have been carried out and the results, including a mitigation plan, submitted to the council. If this information is not provided, the application would need to be refused on the grounds that insufficient information has been provided for the council to determine the likely impact of the proposals upon bats, which are a protected species and material consideration in the planning process.

Planning Officer note: Following the submission of a bat survey report, Ecology provided the following further comments:

The bat emergence survey report (Urban Tree Experts, July 2020) has been undertaken to an appropriate standard and concludes that the building 1 Whitley Wood Lane hosts a day roost for a common pipistrelle bat, and that bats may use features within all buildings on site opportunistically. The report therefore recommends that works be undertaken under licence to Natural England.

As such, a licence for development works affecting bats will need to be obtained from Natural England - for derogation from the provisions of the Habitat Regulations - before works which could affect the roosts can commence. The report includes a mitigation strategy to ensure that the favourable conservation status of bats can be maintained.

A condition should be set to ensure that the licence is obtained.

A planning authority's duty under The Habitat Regulations

Planning Authorities have statutory duties under The Habitat Regulations. It needs to be satisfied that a licence for development works affecting bats is not unlikely to be granted by Natural England.

[The courts have considered the application of a planning authority's duty under the Habitat Regulations e.g. *Morge vs Hampshire County Council* (2010). In the *Morge* case the supreme court has ruled that it cannot see why planning permission should not be granted unless the proposed development would be unlikely to be licensed as a derogation from those provisions.]

Consideration of The Habitat Regulations

In this case it is considered that as long as a mitigation plan such as that given in the bat survey report is provided the proposed works would pass the three tests of The Habitat Regulations, and as such receive from Natural England a licence, because:

1. The development is for an imperative reason of overriding public interest of an economic nature as the development will contribute to a social and economic need of the local community (this is assuming that it is in compliance with other planning policy) - therefore Regulation 55(2)(e) can be met
2. There is no satisfactory alternative to the development as without carrying out the works the aforementioned need would not be met - therefore Regulation 55(9)(a) can be met.
3. Appropriate mitigation can be provided which will ensure that there will not be a detrimental impact to the favourable conservation status of the bat species concerned - therefore Regulation 55(9)(b) can be met.

Planning policy

Paragraph 99 of the government Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within The Planning System (NB this document has not been revoked by the National Planning Policy Framework) states that:

“It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted. However, bearing in mind the delay and cost that may be involved, developers should not be required to undertake surveys for protected species unless there is a reasonable likelihood of the species being present and affected by the development. Where this is the case, the survey should be completed and any necessary measures to protect the species should be in place, through conditions and/or planning obligations, before the permission is granted. In appropriate circumstances the permission may also impose a condition preventing the development from proceeding without the prior acquisition of a licence under the procedure set out in section C below.”

As such, subject to condition, there are no objections to this application on ecology grounds.

Environmental Protection & Nuisance (EP&N)

4.4 Noise impact on development

A noise assessment should be submitted in support of applications for new residential proposed in noisy areas.

The noise assessment will be assessed against the recommendations for internal noise levels within dwellings and external noise levels within gardens / balconies in accordance with BS 8233:2014 and WHO guidelines for Community Noise. The report should identify any mitigation measures that are necessary to ensure that the recommended standard is met.

The noise assessment data should also include noise events (L_AMax) and the design should aim to prevent noise levels from noise events exceeding 45dB within bedrooms at night, as this is linked with sleep disturbance.

Internal noise criteria (taken from BS8233:2014)

Room	Design criteria	Upper limit
Bedrooms (23:00 to 07:00)	<30dB L _A eq,8hour	

Living rooms (07:00 - 23:00)	<35dB LAeq,16hour	
Gardens & Balconies	<50dB LAeq,T	<55dB LAeq,T

The submitted noise assessment shows that recommended internal noise levels can be met for the new residential properties, and recommendations are made for suitable glazing. The proposed ventilation strategy has not been decided however, as the assessment suggests either acoustic trickle vents or alternative ventilation. Trickle vents may not provide adequate cooling. A condition is recommended.

Noise arising from development

I have concerns about the potential for noise disturbance due to the use of the church and church hall and impacts for existing and new residents, in particular internal transfer from the church hall to the flats above. Although the submitted noise assessment makes brief mention of this element there is insufficient detail to determine likely noise levels and to ensure that no noise emanates from the buildings, e.g from music. Ideally such an assessment should be provided before determination.

Restrictions on opening hours may be required, but in the absence of a noise assessment it is also difficult to suggest appropriate hours of use, but I would suggest no use outside of 7 am to 11 pm as a minimum.

Noise generating development

Applications which include noise generating plant when there are nearby noise sensitive receptors should be accompanied by an acoustic assessment carried out in accordance with BS4142:2014 methodology. The health centre and church are likely to require mechanical plant such as air conditioning units.

A noise assessment of plant has not been submitted with the application and therefore I cannot determine the likely noise impact of the proposal and whether the proposals are acceptable. I therefore recommend refusal unless a noise assessment can be submitted and considered by us before the application is determined.

Alternatively, a condition could be attached to consent, however it is possible that the criteria would not be met with the plant specifications proposed in this application and a new application may need to be made at a later date for alternative plant / location.

Air Quality - Increased exposure

The air quality assessment concludes that the new receptors will not be exposed to levels of NO₂ above the EU limit values therefore no mitigation measures are required.

Air Quality - Increased emissions

The air quality assessment concludes that the development will result in a slight worsening of air quality at existing receptors, however these will remain below the EU limit values therefore no mitigation is required.

Construction and demolition phases

We have concerns about potential noise, dust and bonfires associated with the construction (and demolition) of the proposed development and possible adverse impact on nearby residents (and businesses).

Fires during construction and demolition can impact on air quality and cause harm to residential amenity. Burning of waste on site could be considered to be harmful to the aims of environmental sustainability.

Recommended conditions - CMS, hours of construction/demolition, no bonfires.

Bin storage - rats

There is a widespread problem in Reading with rats as the rats are being encouraged by poor waste storage which provides them with a food source. Where developments involve shared bin storage areas e.g. flats and hotels, there is a greater risk of rats being able to access the waste due to holes being chewed in the base of the large wheelie bins or due to occupants or passers not putting waste inside bins, or bins being overfilled. It is therefore important for the bin store to be vermin proof to prevent rats accessing the waste. I recommend a condition.

Planning Officer Note: Some further detail was provided by the applicant with regard to noise reduction measures, however EP&N requested a condition be included requiring the submission and approval of a specific noise assessment addressing noise generated from the use of the church building, which is included in the recommendation above.

Heritage

- 4.5 The proposed replacement buildings consist of 2 and 3 storey buildings with car park, which would be located across the road from the Grade II Listed St Pauls Church. The church centre building includes large areas of glazing with multi-pitch roofs.

The proposed re-development would remove the existing on-site buildings consisting of two Edwardian brick houses along the front, a brick church hall, and a corrugated iron Church at the rear of the site together with a large car park area. The Edwardian cottages and iron church hall have some local heritage interest. It is uncertain the

date of the corrugated church which could be of interest, but this is not explored in the supporting documentation.

Whilst the Grade II Listed Church Hall building would lose some historic context with the loss of the cottages, church hall and church opposite, it is already separated by the intervening road and does not relate well to these buildings which are of a different style. The development of the Lidl supermarket opposite has also eroded much of the remaining historic setting.

In view of the separation of the proposed site from the Grade II Listed Hall and the loss of the existing historic setting, there are no objections in principle to the proposals subject to conditions regarding the submission of further details and samples for the proposed materials.

Natural Environment (tree officer)

4.6 *The original comments were as follows:*

St Pauls Church is prominently located at the junction of Whitley Wood Lane and Basingstoke Road a potential treed corridor as identified in the Borough's adopted Tree Strategy. The site is located in an area of the Borough identified as an Air Quality Management Area where retention of large canopy trees is of greater importance and an area of the Borough identified as having less than 10% tree cover. The borough council looks to use new development in such areas as an opportunity to encourage new tree planting to enhance the appearance and environment of identified residential areas with very low levels of tree cover.

There is one protected tree on site, an Ash tree (T11 of the report) which is to be removed. The applicant has again made reference to the threat to the species from Chalara Ash Dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) in support of their application to remove the tree.

Current guidelines from Forest Research advise that:

'With the exceptions of felling for public safety or timber production, we advise a general presumption against felling living ash trees, whether infected or not. This is because there is good evidence that a small proportion will be able to tolerate H. fraxineus infection. There is also the possibility that a proportion of ash trees can become diseased, but then recover to good health. These, too, would be valuable for our research, although it is still too early to know whether there are such trees in the British ash population.'

However, by keeping as many ash trees standing as possible, we can identify individuals which appear to survive exposure to the fungus and which can be used for breeding tolerant ash trees for the future.'

Certainly, the Borough Council would not accept Chalara Ash Dieback as a justification to support the removal of otherwise healthy protected trees in the borough and permitting the removal of this tree for this reason alone would set an unacceptable precedent when it came to our consideration of similar applications in the future.

This proposal appears to require the removal of all 29 trees surveyed on and around the boundary of the site including 7 category B trees with only 8 replacement trees, 10 less than proposed in the initial pre-application scheme layout. I would note here that there appears to be some discrepancy between the trees shown to be retained and those which are to be removed in the Arboricultural Report and site plan. But in both plans, the application represents an overall loss and impoverishment of tree cover within the site which, coupled with the removal of the protected Ash is unacceptable in principle given the sensitivity of this urban area.

I appreciate that the scheme would be of benefit to the local area by improving the appearance and functionality of a currently substandard community site, however it must not be overlooked that trees in the area also offer significant benefits to the wider community. With this in mind, there may be scope for the removal of the protected tree within the site in order to achieve the best potential layout. However, as I advised in the pre-application discussion for the site, in order for the removal of this protected tree to be considered acceptable in arboricultural terms we would expect a suitable scheme to achieve the following:

- substantial new planting with a minimum of 1:1 replacement planting of all felled trees with better specimens.
- consideration given to the retention and protection of trees off site whose roots may be within the development site with no-dig pathways / parking spaces where appropriate.
- adequate space for new trees to grow to maturity without necessarily coming into contact with property or other trees on or off the site - as shown the future growth of canopies of the new trees along the frontage of the site and between the buildings will be restricted by the proximity of the new building.
- There should be a presumption in favour of planting trees in areas of soft landscaping. If it is essential that trees be planted around areas of hard standing and parking areas then an engineered rooting structure must be provided which allows for the predicted growth of each tree so that the trees can grow without foreseeable damage to areas of hard standing. Linked / connected tree pits where trees are to be planted in close proximity to each other and connected to SUDS for irrigation and to improve site sustainability.
- No trees planted within 5m of existing or proposed lamp columns.

New areas of close board fencing would need to incorporate mammalian access holes.

I consider that this application is contrary to policy EN14 of the adopted Local Plan which requires 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. The application is also contrary to the objectives within the Boroughs adopted tree strategy and the Revised Sustainable Design and Construction SPD which states that Development will not be permitted which would undermine current levels of tree cover as this is likely to be damaging to climate change adaptation strategies'.

Planning Officer note: Following a number of further discussions with the landscape consultant and receipt of amended plans, a final landscape plan was submitted and considered acceptable by the Natural Environment officer who provided the following comments and recommended conditions and informatives.

"The revised landscaping scheme is acceptable in principle.

I note that the neighbouring property owner has raised concerns regarding the planting of large trees along this boundary and the issue with roots damaging the adjacent mains water pipe. The current landscape layout proposes only smaller specimen trees and hedges along these boundaries in order to reduce potential conflict in these areas.

The original site held in the region 26 trees. The current layout includes 15 trees reasonably spaced, in locations where they can grow to a maturity without inevitable conflict with property. Tree species have been specified in order to take into account the space available and Planes along the frontage will be pollarded when they reach early maturity in order to allow for potentially large amenity trees along the frontage which will enhance the verdant character of Whitley Wood Lane.

Policy EN14 of the adopted Local Plan which requires that Reading's vegetation cover will be extended. The Boroughs adopted tree strategy and the Revised Sustainable Design and Construction SPD which states that Development will not be permitted which would undermine current levels of tree cover as this is likely to be damaging to climate change adaptation strategies'.

Recognising that this application would be of significant benefit the local community, I would accept a reduction in the net number of trees on site provided that a minimum of 10 additional trees can be planted elsewhere within the Whitley Ward. Having spoken to Parks, this is acceptable in principle and costs should be included within any a S106.

We will need to agree information on planting sizes and density if planning permission is granted. Also boundary fencing will need to

include small mammal holes in order to allow hedgehogs and other small mammals to access and forage the site etc.”

Transport

- 4.7 Following initial comments from Transport the applicant prepared amended information and provided details of usage and likely numbers. Transport’s amended comments were as follows:

Access

The site is situated on one of the Borough’s Main Transport Corridors classified as the C403, all proposals should comply with Reading Borough Council’s Design Guidance for Commercial Accesses on to Adopted Roads. Therefore, the proposed access modifications are assessed with particular care to ensure good design standards are achieved, especially with the respect to layout and visibility.

The existing vehicular access into the site is from Whitley Wood Lane in the form of a dropped kerb footway crossover. Access to the site will be provided in the general location of the existing access but upgraded to a bellmouth junction. It is stated that the proposed site access measures 7.0m in width allowing two-way movement with 6.0m radii.

In order to facilitate the upgraded access, the existing speed cushion will need to be relocated. This will need to be covered under a S278 agreement of the Highways Act which is separate to the planning process. All costs associated with this would be fully met by the applicant.

Adequate provision must be provided for pedestrians and cyclists. A separate pedestrian access is provided into the site, separate to the vehicular access. However, the proposed bellmouth junction should be provided with tactile crossing points for both pedestrians and cyclists. This should be illustrated on the final revisions to the proposed site plan.

Upon vehicular entry to the site, car parking is provided on either side of the internal road which measures 6.0m in width. New car parking bays will be introduced at the site entrance allocated to the church. However, no junctions with other roads or accesses to parking areas should be provided along the first 10 metres of the access road. Therefore, these parking bays must be relocated within the site. This has been addressed on the suggested revision to the site plan received 16/07/2020 - to be formally submitted.

Visibility splays of 2.4m x 90m are also required as Whitley Wood Lane is a classified road.

Parking

The site is located within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Council’s adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. Typically these

areas are within 400m of a Reading Buses high frequency 'Premier Route', which provides high quality bus routes to and from Reading town centre and other local centre facilities. In accordance with the adopted SPD, the development would be required to provide a parking provision in line with the standards below;

Table 1 – Car and Cycle Parking Standards

Site Use	Zone 3 Car Parking Standards	Minimum Cycle Parking Standards
D1 Clinic/ Health Centre	3 per consulting room + 1 per FTE staff	1 per 2 staff & 1 stand per consulting room
D1 Places of Worship (including crematoria chapels/ Church Hall/ Community Hall	1 per 8 fixed seats and/ or 1 per 16m ² open hall	1 space per 50m ²
C3 Dwelling Flat 1-2 Bed	1.5 space per unit	0.5*

The adopted Parking Standards SPD states *“Where comprehensive and mixed-use development schemes are likely, developers are encouraged to provide shared parking facilities which are likely to generate peak parking levels during different periods of the day.”*

In order promote good design and efficient use of land, we support proposals which share parking facilities but there needs to be a detailed analysis to demonstrate that the peak periods will not coincide. Given that the health centre will be open 8am to 6.30pm plus some evenings, the applicant has submitted additional information to assess the parking demand for the different uses at different times of the day.

A total of 47 car parking spaces and 42 cycle parking spaces will be provided within the site.

The proposed Health Centre will replace South Reading Surgery on Whitley Wood Road, located 650m from the site. It will also provide services for Whitley Wood Surgery (located 320m away) which closed in January 2018. The Health Centre will be provided with 30 car parking spaces, of which two will be provided for disabled use.

The Health Centre will be open 8am-6:30pm Monday-Friday, some evenings, alternate Saturdays and some Sundays. Peak times will be weekday mornings and afternoons (clinics usually run from 8.30-11.30 and then 2.30-18.00), with a reduction in appointments over lunchtimes and at weekends. The anticipated staffing levels at the Health Centre will be 3-4 GPs and 1-2 nurses per main shift plus a Practice Manager, 3-5 Receptionists/administration staff and up to 4-6 other clinical professionals. It is indicated that this will create no more than 20 face to face appointments per hour. The Health Centre is planning for at least 50% of patients' queries to be managed remotely which will not require a face to face appointment.

During the week, it is anticipated that staff parking will require up to 16 spaces with the demand for patient parking varying subject to appointment times. It is indicated that the Health Centre will be

able to remain within its 30 parking space allocation at peak times although it is recognised that at peak times, on occasion, up to an extra 4 car parking spaces may be required.

The Health Centre will not be open every Saturday (probably alternate Saturdays), and when it is open, it will be morning only, with likely only 1 GP and no nurse. Approximately 18-20 patients would be seen, some of whom would be managed remotely. The anticipated demand for parking on Saturdays is significantly lower requiring 2-3 staff car parking spaces and 6 patient spaces at any one time.

The Health Centre is likely to be open occasional Sunday mornings, always with very reduced staffing. Staffing and face to face sessions are expected to be similar or reduced compared to Saturday openings.

The proposed Church Centre (D1 Use Class) will be constructed over two floors, with a total of 708m² GFA for the entire building (508m² on the first floor and 200m² on the second floor). The proposed Church Centre will effectively replace the existing on-site buildings and will provide more space for community uses. The proposed Church Centre will be 416m² GFA larger than the existing buildings on the site. The Church Centre will provide 17 car parking spaces.

The site is located within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. In accordance with the adopted SPD, the development would be required to provide 1 space per 8 fixed seats and/or 1 space per 16msqm open hall.

It is stated that the proposed Church Centre would be just over double the size of the existing buildings providing additional facilities and meeting rooms. The Church Centre comprises a main hall, a café area, a downstairs office, a separate hall, and 4 upstairs offices/meetings rooms (3 small, one larger).

On weekdays, the main hall will be used for Playbarn (which currently operates from the existing building) and children's holiday clubs etc. It is anticipated that this will generate demand for 6 parking spaces. Given that this is an existing facility, I assume this is an accurate prediction of the parking demand. The café area will be available for people to drop in for informal social contact. It is expected that during the mornings and afternoons, it will mainly be used by those on site for other reasons (and so already counted for car parking purposes), or by local people on foot or on bicycle. At lunchtimes, it is hoped to be busier, with people dropping in from local businesses. It is anticipated the peak demand for parking associated with the café use will be at lunchtimes generating a demand for 8 parking spaces. It is stated that the use of the 4 upstairs offices/meeting rooms are not yet finalized but they are

intended for 1:1 counselling, small group meetings, small local business use, or small community uses etc. The demand car parking has been estimated (as the end users are not yet confirmed) but it is stated that the applicant would need to restrict their use to activities involving fewer cars at peak times if parking becomes an issue.

It appears that the anticipated weekday usage for the Church Centre will generate a peak demand for 19 parking spaces which exceeds the allocated number of spaces by 2. However, these peaks occur during the lunch period when the Health Centre has a reduction in appointments.

At weekends, the church centre it will be used for worship purposes to accommodate up to 60 chairs for formal worship. It is indicated that on rare occasions (eg annually) that we would expect to tidy away the soft play area to enable 100-150 seats to be put out. Given that the Health Centre would generate demand for significantly fewer parking spaces, shared parking facilities would not cause a shortfall of parking spaces for the combined uses at weekends.

A significant amount of detail has been provided regarding the anticipated demand for parking spaces across the two uses. It is noted that the applicant has estimated the demand for parking for some users as the end user has not been finalised, however, the applicant has stated that it is planned that the Doctors and the Parish will have quarterly meetings to manage the joint use of the site. At these meetings, review of parking will be a standing item on the agenda, and any emerging problems will be addressed. In addition, I would suggest that a Car Parking Management plan is conditioned to ensure that an agreed approach is submitted in respect of use of shared spaces.

For the residential element, 2 car parking spaces are proposed; one per dwelling which is slightly below (1 space) the required provision. However, this is deemed acceptable considering the flats are one-bedroom units.

Layout

The internal layout of the site is generally deemed acceptable aside from the parking bays located too close the access. Each car parking space measures 2.4m x 4.8m in accordance with RBC's guidance. A total of 4 spaces have been provided as suitable for disabled persons located within 10m of the entrance of the Church Centre and Health Centre.

The Council's Local Transport Plan 3 Strategy 2011 - 2026 includes policies for investing in new infrastructure to improve connections throughout and beyond Reading which include a network of publicly available Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points to encourage and enable low carbon or low energy travel choices for private and public

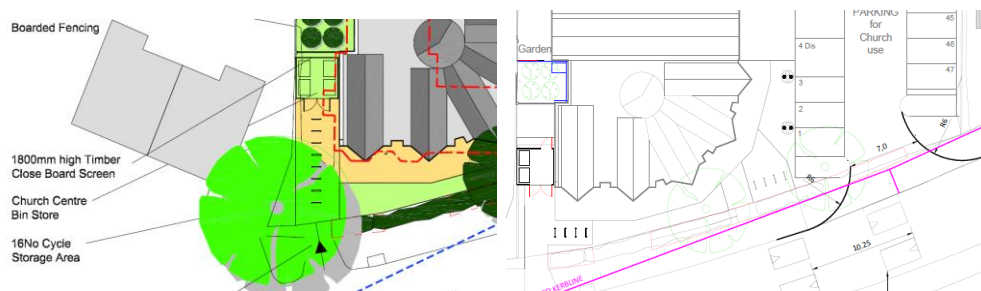
transport. Policy TR5 of the Local Plan also states any developments of at least 10 spaces must provide an active charging point (1 space for every 10 spaces). Five electric vehicle charging points will be provided, between parking bays to serve a total of 10 bays which exceeds the Council's standards.

The refuse store for the Church Centre is provided at the western corner of the site, providing space for two large Eurobins. However, the position of this bin store would cause the collection to occur on the carriageway close to the Basingstoke Road/Whitley Wood Lane/Imperial Way Roundabout. Therefore, it should be relocated within the site to ensure all refuse collection occurs off the highway - This has been addressed on the suggested revision to the site plan.

A separate store is provided for the Health Centre, providing space for four large Eurobins. A further store is provided for the flats, comprising two standard size bins for each flat.

Swept-path analysis has been undertaken to demonstrate a refuse vehicle, ambulance and delivery vehicle turning on-site. A turning head is located between the Health Centre and the Church Centre. The turning head has been designed to accommodate a delivery vehicle turning, whilst an ambulance (or similar vehicle) is waiting within the turning head (or vice versa).

A total of 42 cycle parking spaces will be provided within the site. The two flats will be provided with their own private bin and cycle storage areas. It is stated that 12 stands (to accommodate 24 cycles) are provided outside the proposed Health Centre, 4 stands (to accommodate 8 cycles) are provided adjacent to the main pedestrian entrance to the site and a further 4 stands (to accommodate 8 cycles) are proposed to the western corner of the site. However, this layout differs from the layout on the proposed site plan (drawing no. 1861/P01). The proposed cycle parking layout as illustrated on drawing no. 1861/P01 will obstruct access to the bin store which is unacceptable - I will relook at this once the suggested revision to the site plan is formally submitted.



In addition, it does not appear that these spaces are under a covered enclosure. This is particularly important for all day parking or staff cycle parking.

Trip Generation

The proposed Church Centre will replace the existing buildings on the site and will provide more space for community uses. It is stated that the church uses are likely to continue to operate similar uses to the existing site and will remain open throughout the week and weekends, as well as in the evenings. Therefore, it not anticipated that the church facilities will significantly increase vehicular trips to site during the AM and PM peak hours.

In terms of the proposed Health Centre building, the new GP Contract will require Hub practices to open 08.00 to 20.00 Monday to Friday, Saturday morning and also some Sunday mornings. The Transport Statement calculates that the proposed new health centre will generate in the region of 55 two-way vehicle trip in the AM peak, 44 two-vehicle movements in the PM peak and 636 two-way vehicle trips across a 12-hour period.

Whilst there is currently no health centre located on the site, the proposed health centre will replace the current South Reading Surgery and will also provide services for displaced patients of the recently closed Whitley Wood Lane Surgery, therefore, it is determined that the net impact of the total proposed development is likely to generate an additional 461 two-way vehicle trips across a 12-hour day, including 29 two-way vehicle trips in the AM Peak and 47 two-way vehicle trips in the PM Peak.

In view of this, it is therefore considered that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on the surrounding road and transport networks, and no further junction assessments are required.

Conditions: CMS, vehicle parking, vehicular access, cycle parking, refuse and recycling, access closure with reinstatement, roads to be provided, car parking management plan, travel plan, annual review of the travel plan, electric vehicle charging points.

S106 Requirements: Relocation of the traffic calming measures (speed cushions) on Whitley Wood Lane as illustrated Proposed Site plan (Drawing no 1861/P01) prior to construction of the bellmouth access.

Planning Officer note: Following the submission of amended plans and showing the following: Bellmouth illustrated; parking bays moved to a minimum of 10 m for the access road; re-siting of refuse so that collection would be off the highway; and revised location for cycle storage and the details of the cycle storage shelter, Transport confirmed that the proposal would be acceptable from a transport perspective. This would be subject to conditions and informatives and S106 as included in the recommendation above.

4.8 Public

Nos. 1-6 St. Paul's Mews, Whitley Wood Lane, Nos. 25-31 (odd) Whitley Wood Lane, Nos 1-3 Whitley Wood Lane, Nos. 55-63 (odd) Greenfields Road, Lidl, 579 & 581 Basingstoke Road were consulted and a site notice was displayed.

3 no. objections and 12 no. support were received. These are as follows:

Noise and disturbance

- We have had noise and disturbance issues with the Church's lettings over a long period of time. This will only get worse with the proposed development.
- One of the major noise disturbances we have to endure is the constant banging of car doors both upon entry and exit to the site, waiting in cars with engines running, music blaring etc. This used to happen at the side of our house, but now thanks to the car park extension, extends to our back garden. The summer months can be unbearable when the hirers are in. They leave their cars running and we have to retreat indoors.

Loss of Privacy

- A loss of privacy from the southern side of the building from overlooking. The health centre will overlook our property and all surrounding properties.

Transport and Parking

- The proposed carpark is intended to extend further resulting in more noise, higher emissions! I am at a loss to understand why the car park constantly needs extending if it is in fact a hub for the local community. Does the local community really need to drive there? Should the council not be encouraging the reduction of CO2 emissions and the use of more environmental friendly methods of transport?
- Located on the very dangerous junction of Basingstoke Road and Whitley Wood Lane. People speed up the road in spite of the speed humps. There is a shop 2 doors away from the planned development. Customers park over dropped kerbs of the nearby houses and park outside the shop, visibility is restricted when leaving the site of St Paul's and even our houses. How can there be safe access going/leaving the development? It's dangerous currently so adding vehicles coming/leaving the planned facilities will increase problems. Cyclists use the pavements as cycle paths and many times 'near misses' have happened because of restricted visibility.
- The proposed development will be a 7-days a week operation with a vastly extended carpark! Access to and from the development will be from a busy main road (Whitley Wood Lane) that has seen traffic calming measures introduced over the years. The entrance/exit will be in fact just metres from a very busy junction with neighbouring Basingstoke Road.

Security

- The site has not been secure for several years. The vicar used to live on site and church warden next door and things were very peaceful. Since both have left it is now down to us to either report the anti-social behaviour or tolerate it! There have also been several break-ins, some we have witnessed and reported to the Church. I would strongly recommend that any proposed development would need some form of security, especially if a Health Centre is indeed part of the development.

Design

- Design of the Church is very pleasant and you can appreciate the time, effort, skill and imagination undertaken. The Health Centre looks like a prison block. Little time or imagination used there. Overbearing and totally out of character in terms of appearance.

Need

- Why is there a need for a health centre? There are 6 and the Whitley Health Clinic all within a three mile radius.
- If we are in need of a health centre in Whitley Wood why was/is the recent much larger development across the road at Worton Grange not considered a more practical option instead of the empty industrial/retail units currently sited there

Trees

- I am also very concerned about the mature Ash tree covered by a TPO being destroyed. The tree is in good condition and I am amazed Reading Borough Council are even entertaining this!

Use

- We, Reading Mencap, are current users of the existing St.Pauls church hall for 4 days a week 52 weeks a year for a Reading Borough Council commissioned day service for people with learning disability. We feel this is not properly reflected in the submission from the vicar. We will certainly need to use the hall following any redevelopment.

Support comments

- It will provide a valuable local resource for the area, local health care and a space for people to meet. An excellent resource to build community; These plans help serve the young people and community of Whitley Wood and wider Whitley very well, building on the many years community engagement that has taken place there so far.
- Local facilities for families with young children is poor - the Playbarn has been very popular amongst the locals, and a lifeline for many, and often isolated young mums in the area, but the life of the building it is currently held in, is limited and very difficult to heat. I understand this will be rehoused in the new church centre, which will be excellent.

- Whitley Wood needs a cafe to which local people can walk and get a decent cup of reasonably priced coffee. A place to sit down, meet and talk provides a heart in a community. It will bring community cohesion.
- Whitley Wood's only civic building is the community centre in Swallowfield Drive; built by the people themselves it has served the community well over many decades. A new well-designed visible centre on the St Paul's site will foster civic pride and be an uplift for the whole area.
- This area is in need of a health facility and this plan is a comprehensive one; it will provide essential facilities for residents of the newer developments in the area. The current premises of South Reading Surgery is not suitable for a doctor's practice, as it is too small, and without sufficient parking for patients. The new building will be purpose-built and provide suitable access for patients, some of whom are disabled.
- The proposed development will be a real boost to this deprived part of Reading. The redeveloped centre would provide a much needed focal hub in this area.

Comments from Alok Sharma MP

"In September I met with Rev Sue Cady of St Agnes with St Paul and St Barnabas, based in my constituency. During our meeting, Rev Sue informed me of plans to redevelop the site of St Paul's on Whitley Wood Lane. The proposals seek to create a new community building to include a cafe, multi-purpose community areas, meeting rooms, two one-bed residential flats, along with a health centre. A new church facility will also be built and the proposed site layout is enclosed. Rev Sue explained that the redevelopment will deliver improved primary care and much needed new homes in the local area whilst also providing space for community usage and church activities. During my visit in September, I was impressed with the outreach work the church undertakes and the fact that the redevelopment delivers new homes and a healthcare facility should be welcomed. Therefore, I would be grateful if you could please take this letter of support into consideration as part of your deliberations about the above planning application."

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) (2019) which states at Paragraph 11 "Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development".
- 5.2 The Development Plan is the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019) (RBLP). The relevant policies are:

Policy CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
 Policy CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
 Policy CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
 Policy CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
 Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm
 Policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
 Policy CC9: Securing Infrastructure
 Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
 Policy EN6: New Development in a Historic Context
 Policy EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
 Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland
 Policy EN15: Air Quality
 Policy EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
 Policy EN17: Noise Generating Equipment
 Policy EN18: Flooding and Drainage
 Policy H1: Provision of Housing
 Policy H2: Density and Housing Mix
 Policy H3: Affordable Housing
 Policy H5: Standards for New Housing
 Policy H7: Protecting the Existing Housing Stock
 Policy H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
 Policy H11: Development of Private Residential Gardens
 Policy TR1: Achieving The Transport Strategy
 Policy TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
 Policy TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
 Policy OU1: New and Existing Community Facilities

- 5.3 Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are:
- Employment, Skills and Training (April 2013)
 - Sustainable Design and Construction (December 2019)
 - Revised Parking Standards and Design (October 2011)
 - Affordable Housing (July 2013)
 - Planning Obligations Under Section 106 (April 2015)

6 APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are:

- **Principle of Development**
- **Design and Effect on the Character and Appearance of the Area**
- **Housing Mix**
- **Residential Amenity**
- **Transport**
- **Landscaping and Ecology**
- **Sustainability**
- **Environmental Matters**
- **S106**

- Other Matters Raised
- Equalities impact

Principle of Development

- 6.1 In order to achieve sustainable development the NPPF identifies three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental. As part of the social objective development should *“support, strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that accessible services and open spaces ... reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being.”*
- 6.2 Paragraphs 91 and 92 of the NPPF require planning policies and decisions to promote social interaction and provide the facilities and services for community uses and to support the delivery of local strategies to improve health.
- 6.3 One of the key objectives (para 2.2.2 part 3) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP) is to *“Improve the quality of life for those living, working, studying in and visiting the Borough, creating inclusive, sustainable communities with good access to..... services and facilities (such as....., healthcare services, social and community facilities, ...) to meet identified needs.*
- 6.4 The requirement for health infrastructure is identified as a high priority within Policy CC9: Infrastructure, and the RBLP also includes an Infrastructure Delivery Plan. This identifies infrastructure required to support sustainable growth and this includes new surgeries, in particular, in the south of the Borough.
- 6.5 Policy OU1 states that *“Proposals for new, extended or improved community facilities will be acceptable, particularly where this will involve co-location of facilities on a single site. Proposals for on-site intensification of important facilities, such as schools and healthcare uses, will be supported, subject to other policies in the plan.”*
- 6.6 The supporting text in para 4.7.1 states that *“The provision of sufficient good quality community facilities is crucial to ensuring that Reading is a place in which people want to live and continue living. This includes health facilities, community centres, meeting places and places of worship.*
- 6.7 The provision of a new health hub would clearly meet this objective, and in light of the Covid pandemic there is an increased priority for improving and extending healthcare provision.
- 6.8 The principle of the proposed redevelopment and enlargement of the community provision both with respect to the church building, but also the health centre, providing a broader range of services and improved access, and for the health centre with outpatient services

to reduce the demand for these at the hospital, would comply with Policy OU1 in providing an enhanced community use over and above the existing. Although acceptable in principle this would need to be subject to meeting other policy considerations as set out below

- 6.9 The proposal includes the loss of two family homes and replacement with two 1 bed flats as part of the overall mix of development. 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, in particular for family homes of three or more bedrooms.”* It should be noted that although these would be within the building envelope of the Church, the submission does not implicitly state that it is the intention that they would be ancillary to the church use. However, there is further discussion, as set out below, regarding the potential for this to be formalised, which would form part of the overall S106 legal agreement.
- 6.10 Although the proposal would mean the loss of two family units this needs to be balanced against the overall benefits of the proposal. It would provide a significant enhancement to the quality and overall size of community facility along with a health provision, the positive impacts of which are considered to outweigh the loss of family sized accommodation in this case. However, in light of this weight given to the proposed use of the two buildings it is appropriate and reasonable to remove any permitted development rights to change the use to any allowed as permitted development. The recent amendments to the Use Classes Order (UCO) sets out that *“If prior to the commencement of the material period, a relevant planning application was submitted, or was deemed to be submitted, to the local planning authority which referred to uses or use classes which applied in relation to England and were specified in the Schedule to the Use Classes Order on 31st August 2020, that application must be determined by reference to those uses or use classes”*. Therefore, a condition is recommended to remove permitted development rights to change the use under either the use class system before 1st September or after it.

Design and Effect on the Character and Appearance of the Area

- 6.11 The NPPF (Para 124) sets out that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. The National Design Guide identifies 10 key components for good design and of particular note are the characteristics of Context and Identity; *“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.”* *“Responding to local character and identity”*.
- 6.12 Policy CC7 requires all development to be *“of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.”* The components of design include: Layout: Urban structure and urban grain; Landscape; Density and mix; Scale: height and massing; and Architectural detail.

- 6.13 The existing church buildings on site are modest scale single storey structures with pitched roofs. The hall, closest to Whitley Wood Lane is a simple rectangular shape with pitched roof and is brick built. It is set well back from Whitley Wood Road and is side on. The church building is constructed of corrugated iron and sits further back to the rear of the plot, it also has a pitched roof and a rectangular form with a small gable ended forwarded projection. The two houses similarly have pitched roofs and gable feature bays, with some more recent extensions and are also brick built. The remainder of the site is given over to parking areas and garden/landscaped areas.
- 6.14 It is a big plot, but there is no strong presence of the buildings on site, no effective relationship with surrounding development, it does not represent an efficient use of the land, nor does it provide a suitable presence to the streetscene.



Looking towards the north

- 6.15 The proposed site would include two main buildings. The church building would comprise a high single storey part, with void over, serving the worship space, increasing to two storeys behind. It would have large areas of glazing and multi-pitch roofs with a feature roof to represent a church steeple type form. The materials would be traditional, including brick and tiled roofs, but with a variety, with the use of two tone brick and some stone detailing.
- 6.16 The health centre building behind would increase to 3 storeys. The overall mass has been broken down by the proposed use of panels of brick and self-coloured render, with visual interest created in the curves of the brickwork and fascia. The shallow roof minimises the overall height, whilst enabling sufficient height for the lift and services.



- 6.17 The overall scale of the buildings is very different to what is there at present. The current site is very under-developed and the purpose of redeveloping is to enable a more effective use of the site area. The proposal would enhance community facilities, and bring a new health centre to the site, providing a range of services. This understandably necessitates an increase of overall floor space on the site, and in order to achieve the required space, whilst still providing sufficient supporting parking, bin and cycle storage, and outside space. This has meant it would be required for the height, in parts, to be taller than the surrounding context.
- 6.18 Comments received include that the health building is considered to be overbearing and totally out of character in terms of appearance. However, the health building would be located on the northern boundary, as far as possible from the residential houses, and directly behind the church, which seeks to minimise the visual impact as far as is feasible. Although it would be very different in scale to the existing buildings on site it would be sited ca 20m from the boundary with no. 25 Whitley Wood Lane (front to side boundary relationship) and ca 17m from the boundary with the houses on Greenfields Road (side to rear relationship).
- 6.19 This is considered to be sufficient distance to limit any overbearing effects and that the overall scale of the proposed buildings would be appropriate within the context. In terms of amenity considerations these are addressed in the section below.
- 6.20 With respect to the overall design of the health centre it is accepted that it is a very simple functional form. Its simplicity is considered to ensure that it does not detract from the frontage church building, which is intended as the main focus for the site.

- 6.21 The church building would be visually prominent from the street frontage and would reflect the overall height of the adjacent properties. The large areas of glazing would provide a much more welcoming appearance than the existing building, more consistent with its community function as a church. It is considered that it would be more ecclesiastical in appearance than the existing church building, which is considered to be wholly acceptable. The repeated steep triangle roof outline is intended to reflect the design of the Listed Building opposite, and helps to break up the mass and appearance of the scheme.
- 6.22 Policy EN6 requires new development within the historic environment to contribute to the historic character of the area “*by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities.*” The supporting text, at para 4.2.23, also recognises the need for new development in the vicinity of historic assets to be sympathetic. They should reflect the local historic environment which could include footprint sizes, setbacks, landscaping, window placement and size, prevailing building or architectural features.
- 6.23 The Heritage officer was consulted and notes that the Grade II listed church hall would lose some historic context through the redevelopment of the overall site, and that the Edwardian cottages and iron church have some local heritage interest. However, because the Listed building is separated from the site by the road, does not relate well to the buildings which are a different style, and the development of Lidl, which has eroded much of the remaining context, there were no objections in principle to the proposal, subject to conditions regarding the submission of further details and samples for the proposed materials.
- 6.24 In terms of layout, the built form has been focussed away from the boundaries with the existing main residential units, and there would be clear and separate access for vehicles/cyclists and pedestrians. The accesses to the building, although not facing towards the road, would be clear and legible within the site, and also clearly visible from the street.
- 6.25 It is considered that a tandem form of development in this instance provides the best option to maximise the development plot, whilst seeking to limit detrimental impacts in terms of neighbouring amenity and would retain an element of openness to the frontage, which would avoid a dominant form adjacent to no. 25 Whitley Wood Lane and a gap in building form long associated with this site.
- 6.26 It is considered that the overall scheme would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the road and would consolidate the site and use it more effectively and give it some street presence, that it currently lacks. It would, therefore, accord with policies CC7 and H9 and EN6. It is recommended that a condition be included requiring

the submission and approval of details and samples of materials to be used.

Housing Mix

- 6.27 Policy H2 addresses density and housing mix and states that this will be informed by character and mix of the area; accessibility; the need to achieve high quality design; maximise efficiency of land; need to minimise the environmental impacts including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers. The supporting text (para 4.4.7) states that, *“wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting the needs for the mix of housing set out in figure 4.6, in particular for family homes of three or more bedrooms.”* It is however, accepted in para 4.4.13 that *“Inevitably, even with this policy requirement in place, Reading is likely to provide a significantly greater proportion of smaller dwellings than its neighbours in the Western Berkshire HMA. This may mean that some rebalancing across the HMA is appropriate, with other authorities potentially providing a greater proportion of larger family accommodation”*.
- 6.28 The site currently has two family homes, although the applicant has advised that only one of these is currently rented out due to the state of repair of the other. During pre-application discussions officers advised that there would likely be acceptability of the loss of the dwellings based on the overall community benefit of the proposed scheme. The submitted scheme, however, does still include two residential units, albeit two one bed flats. Although not family sized units, consideration has been given to the other aspects of Policy H2 and the overall scheme benefits. There is a mix of unit sizes along Whitley Wood Lane. Higher densities are encouraged in accessible locations and this is an accessible location with frequent bus services to Reading.
- 6.29 The provision of good quality one - bedroom units, for which there is a need and the development of enhanced and expanded community facilities on the site, is considered to provide an exceptional case to not meeting the requirement for family sized units in this instance. Additionally, it is not considered that two one bed units would have a significant detrimental effect on the overall mix and balance of housing in this area.

Residential Amenity

- 6.30 Policy CC8 requires development to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of: Privacy and overlooking; Access to sunlight and daylight; Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development; Harm to outlook; Noise and disturbance; Artificial lighting; Vibration; Dust and fumes; Smell; Crime and safety.

- 6.31 With respect to noise and disturbance considerations the proposal would include an increase in the number of vehicular movements and the intention is that the use of the church buildings - halls, meeting rooms and café/entrance foyer would be intensified compared to current operation.
- 6.32 The applicant submitted a noise assessment which concluded that due to the relatively high noise levels present at the site, habitable rooms would not be able to achieve required standards with windows open. As the proposed ventilation strategy has not been decided Environmental Protection & Nuisance (EP&N) recommended the inclusion of a condition requiring the submission and approval of details.
- 6.33 As the proposal includes for a café there would also need to be a noise assessment of any extraction equipment before it was installed and a condition is included.
- 6.34 The Assessment does not include sufficient detail with respect to measures to ensure that there would be no noise emanating from the building during its use, including to protect the amenity of the flats above one of the halls. The Environmental Protection and Nuisance (EP&N) Officer, therefore requested additional detail be submitted.
- 6.35 Further information was subsequently provided of the insulation and other measures which would be implemented. EP&N confirmed, that a further assessment in this regard would be required, and a condition covering this and other Environmental Protection matters are included in the recommendation above.
- 6.36 Additionally, that there would need to be a control on hours of operation both in terms of internal and external use. Also, there would need to be good quality landscaped boundaries. The proposed scheme includes for a mix of hedging and fencing. A condition is included requiring the submission of further boundary details which include for any of the fencing to be acoustic fencing.
- 6.37 In terms of privacy and overlooking of existing residents, as set out above, the buildings are located ca 17m from the eastern boundary and 20m from the southern boundary, which are those adjacent to residential gardens. The original submitted plans showed that the second floor windows of the health centre as obscure glazed with top hung windows on restrictor openings to restrict the view from these windows. An issue was raised during consultation that there would be a loss of privacy from the windows on the southern elevations. Although it is considered that there would be an acceptable distance to the boundary with no. 25 there is also the issue of a perception of overlooking, and as there would be no part of the private amenity space not being faced by the proposed buildings, further to discussion with the applicant amended plans were submitted, which include obscure glazing and openings restricted for all first and second floor windows on the southern elevation of the Health Centre

and partial obscure glazing for the windows of the south facing flat. It is considered that this would minimise overlooking and perception of overlooking. It is noted that a number of the health centre windows would serve consulting rooms where internal privacy would be required in any case.

- 6.38 The submission included details of proposed external lighting, which comprises wall/eaves mounted leds for the church and wall lights, first floor floodlights and security lighting on the side and rear of the building. It is proposed that there would be linked to a photo cell and time clock. A condition is recommended to control this. In addition, there would be bollard led lighting.
- 6.39 In addition, Policy H5 sets out standards for new housing, which must be adhered to unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would render a development unviable. Such standards include (relevant to this scale of proposal): *“...a. All new build housing outside the Central Area....will comply with the nationally-described space standard. b. All new build housing will be built to the higher water efficiency standard under Regulation 36(3) of the Building Regulations⁷⁹. d. All other new build housing will achieve at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations. e. All new build housing will be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2)¹ of the Building Regulations....”*
- 6.40 Policy H10 deals specifically with private and communal space and in Para 4.4.87 identifies a previous minimum provision that the Council previously sought, which is considered to be a useful guide, and for 1-2 bedroom flats outside the Central Reading this would be 25sqm per flat.
- 6.41 The proposal does not include private garden space for the two flats, however occupants would have access to the church’s quiet garden space as and when it was not being used by the church. In addition, there is public open space within walking distance of the site and a play area within the new residential development on Imperial Way/ Basingstoke Road development.
- 6.42 The internal floorspace of the flats would be in accordance with the minimum standards for one bed units as set out within the national space standards (as replicated in Policy H5).
- 6.43 The applicant has agreed in writing that the flats would have access to a lift and other measures would be incorporated for full accessibility in accordance with Policy H5, an amended plan to show this is awaited.

¹ Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations is for accessible and adaptable dwellings, and relates to relatively straightforward design measures that can allow homes to be adaptable as the needs of the occupier change (similar to Lifetime Homes, although not identical).

- 6.44 In terms of water efficiency and sustainability standards these form conditions as recommended above.
- 6.45 The proposed scheme is therefore considered to accord with the relevant policies, which are CC8, H5 and H10.

Transport

- 6.46 The proposed scheme includes a shared parking area with a vehicular access from Whitely Wood Lane in largely the same position as currently but would introduce a separate pedestrian access and pathways within the site.
- 6.47 There would be 47 no. car parking spaces in total with 30 proposed for use by the Health Centre and 17 by the church with 2 spaces for the flats. As part of this there would be 4 no. disabled spaces, closest to the buildings, and 5 no. Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP) to serve 10 spaces.
- 6.48 Transport made it clear that any scheme would need to justify the level of proposed car parking, which is below adopted standards. Following a review of further detail provided by the applicant on usage Transport confirmed that this level of provision would be acceptable and that the spaces could be shared effectively between the two sites, subject to the submission and approval of a car parking management plan, further details of the design of the disabled spaces, along with standard conditions, as set out in the recommendation above.
- 6.49 A speed cushion would need to be moved and this would obligation for a S78 agreement would be included within the S106.
- 6.50 With respect to alternative modes there would be the provision of 42 no. cycle spaces, with stands within different parts of the site serving the different users; the church building, residential units and the health building. Transport has confirmed that the location and number are acceptable, but that these need to be covered, so a condition has been included requiring further details to be submitted and approved.
- 6.51 Although the site is well served by buses, potential for walking and cycling, the supporting text to RBLP Policy OU1 (supporting text 4.7.5) makes it clear that health care facilities should also have facilities for the car.
- 6.52 A turning head is included on site, which would serve ambulances and other service vehicles including for off-road refuse vehicles. An amendment was made to the location of the bin storage for the church so that it was not behind cycle storage. Detail was provided of the proposed cycle storage which Transport confirmed is acceptable.

- 6.53 Subject to attaching a number of conditions including with respect to car parking management, as part of an overall site wide facilities management and maintenance plan, the scheme is considered to accord with the requirements of policies TR1, TR3, TR4 and TR5.

Landscaping and Ecology

- 6.54 Policy CC7 requires developments to be assessed to ensure, amongst other things, that they *“Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping.”*
- 6.55 Policy EN14 states: *“individual tress, group of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from removal or damage where they are importance and Reading’s vegetation cover will be extended... New development shall make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site, particularly on the street frontage, or off-site in appropriate situations, to improve the level of tree coverage within the Borough, to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which a site is located, to provide for biodiversity and to contribute to measures to reduce carbon and adapt to climate change. Measures must be in place to ensure that these trees are adequately maintained.”*
- 6.56 The original proposed scheme was to remove the protected Ash Tree (T1) and a further 25 trees and replace these with 17 trees. It was made clear to the applicant that this would be unacceptable unless the benefits of the scheme in terms of community benefit and the net tree/ landscape cover could go some way to justifying the loss of the TPO and that on balance the application would therefore be acceptable in planning terms.
- 6.57 As the site is within an area of low canopy cover, and an Air Quality Management Area it was important that, with the loss of the TPO tree that any scheme, as a minimum, did not lead to an overall reduction in trees. In particular, there was the need for large canopy trees to the frontage with space to achieve their full potential as well as ensuring the provision of other trees within the site and, if required, beyond the site.
- 6.58 Discussion has been ongoing during the course of the application as to how a satisfactory scheme could be achieved. It is inevitable that the proposal requires the removal of the TPO tree so it is even more important that it should present an acceptable scheme to comply with the Council’s Tree Strategy with respect to tree coverage and ensure good quality tree planting to improve the appearance of the site and providing landscaping buffers to surrounding residential properties.
- 6.59 Due to the limited space, once parking and buildings are sited, it has not been possible to develop a scheme which would enable a 1-1 replacement of all lost trees. However, a scheme which is supported

by Natural Environment has been devised which includes four large trees in prominent locations adjacent to the highway and others in the parking areas.

6.60 This has to be balanced against the significant benefits that this co-located community scheme would offer specifically to Whitley and South Reading, an area with the largest concentration of deprivation in the Borough and many neighbourhoods within the 20% most deprived in England (Para. 6.1.5 of the RBLP) in the Borough. This is considered to outweigh the reduction in tree cover on site and provide an exceptional case for not wholly meeting the policy in this case.

6.61 As a means to improve overall tree cover within this part of the Borough, which experiences below average tree cover, the applicant has agreed to contribute to 11 no. trees within the Imperial Way/ Basingstoke Road verge as mitigation and to make the landscaping scheme acceptable. This would be included as an obligation within the S106.

6.62 Landscaping conditions are recommended including one regarding the submission and approval of boundary treatments.

6.63 With respect to ecology Policy EN12 requires that all developments do not *“result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity, and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible. Development should:*

- *Protect and wherever possible enhance features of biodiversity interest on and adjacent to the application site, incorporating and integrating them into development proposals wherever practicable; and*
- *Provide new tree planting, wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements (such as wildlife ponds, bird and bat boxes) wherever practicable.*

In exceptional circumstances where the need for development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site, and it is demonstrated that the impacts cannot be: 1) avoided; 2) mitigated or; 3) compensated for on-site; then new development will provide off-site compensation to ensure that there is “no net loss” of biodiversity. Provision of off-site compensation shall be calculated in accordance with nationally or locally recognised guidance and metrics. It should not replace existing alternative habitats, and should be provided prior to development.”

6.64 The submitted Ecological Appraisal concludes that the proposed scheme *“will result in a minor negative impact upon surrounding habitats, protected species and wildlife in general, which can be compensated for with further surveys, mitigation and precautionary measures along with recommendations for enhancement.”*

- 6.65 The Report identified that a further bat survey was required, which was submitted during the course of the application, and which was confirmed by the Ecology Officer as having been undertaken to a suitable standard. A condition is included requiring a bat licence to be obtained from Natural England and a copy provided to the Council, with mitigation measures detailed in the licence to be maintained in accordance with approved details.
- 6.66 In addition the Appraisal recommends that *“any new planting uses a mixture of wildlife friendly and native species to compensate for the loss of foraging grounds. Within the boundaries of the site and within the buildings to compensate for the loss of shelter sites, insect hotels/bug boxes, bat boxes and nesting boxes will be placed. The future lighting on site must ensure a lighting plan that is direct, low light spill, low lux and have hooded designs, it is recommended that no light spill is directed on boundary tree lines given the potential for traversing and foraging bats.”* A condition is included requiring the submission and approval of measures. With respect to landscaping the scheme includes for a mixture of species.
- 6.67 Subject to conditions and informatives the proposal is considered to accord with relevant Policies, CC7, EN12 & EN14.

Sustainability

- 6.68 Adopted Local Plan Policy CC2 requires new development to reduce the consumption of resources and materials by using designs and site layouts which use *“energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change”*. It specifically includes:
- “All major non-residential developments or conversions to residential are required to meet the most up-to-date BREEAM ‘Excellent’ standards, where possible”* and that *“Both residential and non-residential development should include recycling greywater and rainwater harvesting where systems are energy and cost effective.”*
- 6.69 Policy CC3 requires that all developments demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. Supporting text in para 4.1.8 states that *“The design of developments therefore needs to more carefully consider matters such as shading, insulation and ventilation, surface water runoff and storage and the use of appropriate tree and other planting.”*
- 6.70 Policy CC5 requires minimisation of waste during construction and the life of the development.
- 6.71 Policy H5 sets out the expectations for the performance of new build homes in terms of emission and this is addressed through recommended conditions above.

- 6.72 The submitted Sustainability Statement includes a BREEAM Pre-Assessment which shows that the scheme could achieve 'Excellent'.
- 6.73 The proposed residential units would achieve a 20% carbon reduction and the non-residential 35%, through proposed energy efficiency measures and on-site renewable technologies: Measures include:
- Windows - U-values and air permeability above Building Regulations Part L 2013;
 - Natural ventilation with extract fans in wet rooms;
 - 100% low energy lights;
 - Low water consumption through the use of water efficiency fittings;
 - High efficiency communal Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) for heating and hot water; and
 - PV panels of 1.0 kWp on the roof (approximate 4 panels with 250 w/p are required).
- 6.74 Such measures are considered to accord with Policies CC2, CC3 and H5 and conditions are included regarding the submission and approval of post construction BREAAM to meet minimum 50% Good and 50% Excellent and a minimum 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate as defined in the Building Regulations.

Environmental matters

- 6.75 **Noise:** The key issues for the proposal are with regard to noise from any plant, breakout noise from the use itself, noise from the use of outside spaces, and the effect of ground floor activities and the residential flats above. Policy EN16 requires development to not be damaging to the environment and sensitive receptors through land, noise or air pollution. Policy EN17 specifically addressed noise generating equipment requiring such plant to be at least 10dBA below existing background level. Noise issues are discussed in the amenity section above.
- 6.76 **Air Quality:** Policy EN15 requires developments to “*have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality*”. The submitted Air Quality Assessment concludes that air quality exposure or increased emissions are not of concern as a result of the proposed development apart from with regard to dust emissions from the site. Assuming good practice dust control measures the residual significance would be ‘not significant’. A construction method statement including dust control measures is recommended.
- 6.77 **Drainage:** Policy EN18 requires all major developments to incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) with runoff rates aiming to reflect greenfield conditions. The submitted Drainage Impact Assessment identifies that the site currently drains to soakaways, although with increased built up areas on the site this

may be insufficient, and as the site is currently operational, further intrusive testing would need to be undertaken prior to the detailed design stage. If infiltration rates were insufficient to discharge the runoff from the site then surface water would need to be discharged to the public surface water sewer network at a controlled runoff rate. Within the report it is recommended that the proposed surface water drainage strategy consists of lined permeable pavement beneath the car park and external hardstanding around buildings, and a controlled discharge to the existing public sewer manhole within the site at 3.6 l/s, resulting in a reduction of over 65% in peak runoff rates from the site for a range of rainfall events. This is considered to accord with Policy EN18 and a condition is included for the submission and approval of a sustainable drainage plan and maintenance and management plan

Section 106

- 6.78 In addition to Community Infrastructure Levy, and in accordance with Policy CC9 and H3, the following S106 obligations would be sought:
- Affordable Housing provision within the Borough
 - Employment, Skills and Training - construction and end user
 - Provision of 11 no. trees as mitigation
 - Relocation of the traffic calming measures (speed cushions) on Whitley Wood Lane as illustrated on Proposed Site plan (Drawing no 1861/P01 Rev E) prior to construction of the bellmouth access.
- 6.79 The Applicant has confirmed that they agree to a policy compliant affordable housing contribution. Valuations suggest a total GDV of £200k per unit and therefore a financial contribution of £20k (5%) has been agreed with the applicant. However, the applicants are still discussing whether indeed they would wish for one of the flats to be retained as ancillary to the use of the church and health centre in perpetuity. If this were the case it is considered that this would form an obligation within the S106 and would be offset against the Affordable Housing contribution, i.e. this would reduce to £10k. therefore, both options are set out in the recommendation above.
- 6.80 For construction skills the applicant will have the option of either developing an Employment Skills Plan in conjunction with Reading UK CIC or providing a financial contribution.
- 6.81 In terms of the end user requirements Reading UK CIC has confirmed that this would be covered as the health centre would be set up as a training centre amongst its other work. The applicant has provided the following information regarding frequency and type of training which would be delivered at the site.

“The Medical Practice will be a registered training practice taking in and training various Health professional as part of the new NHS GP Contract.

These will include Clinical Pharmacists, Paramedics, Nurse Practitioners and Physios. These professional will require GP supervision, mentoring and attendance at local educational courses. They will also provide training to Registrars, F1 and F2 doctors as well as Medical Students.

A wide range of training and apprentice opportunities within the Administration Team will also be provided.

This is vocational training so this will be daily supervision, teaching and mentoring of these health professionals.

The medical students and junior doctors are with us for periods of 12 weeks at a time and they must pass an end of placement assessment via a GP trainer.

The Clinical Pharmacists get a half day weekly to study.

- 6.82 This is considered acceptable in meeting their obligations in this regard.

Other Matters Raised

- 6.83 One of the objectors raised the issue of site security. A condition is included requiring the submission and approval of a joint management plan to include car parking, landscaping, refuse and other site management and maintenance issues.

Equalities Impact

- 6.84 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. The health centre and the church buildings are proposed to be fully accessible. There would be level access to all entrances and within the health centre the doors would be automated, with disabled WCS on all floors, corridors and doorways wide enough for wheelchair access. The habitable rooms would be well lit by natural light and the corridors would have good artificial light for clear orientation. The reception area would be well lit for lip reading and a portable hearing aid loop system available on the front desk, which would also be dual height. buildings are proposed to be fully accessible. 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

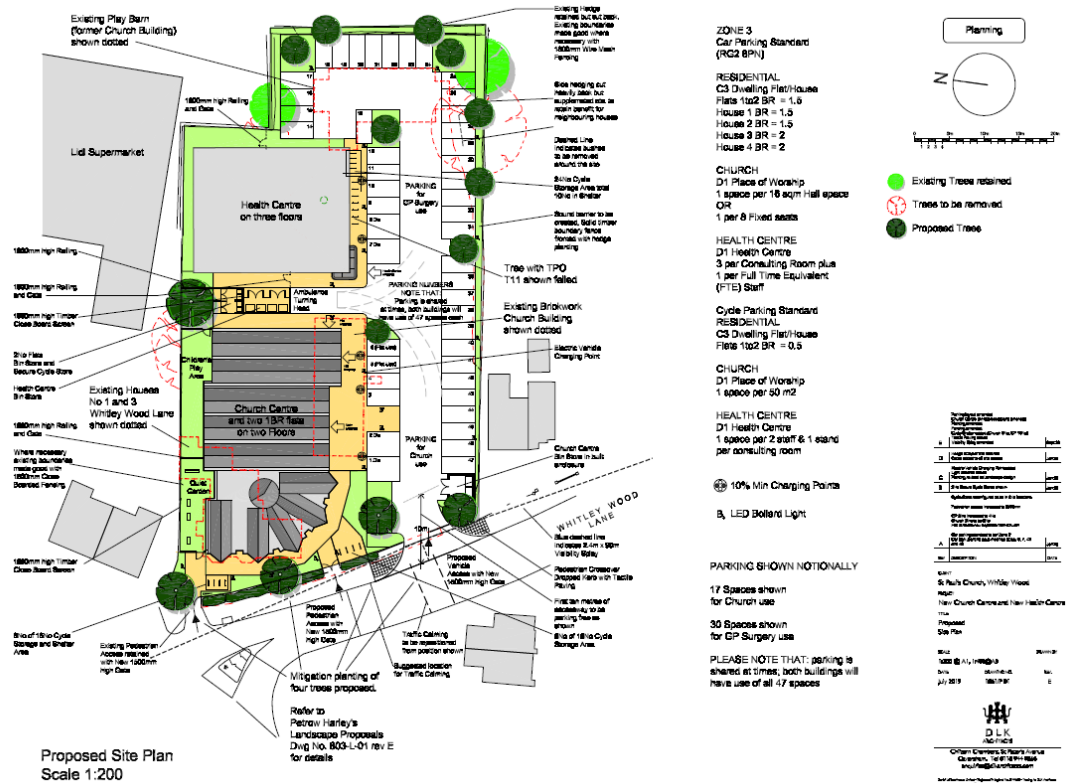
- 7.1 This proposal has been carefully considered in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and previous planning history. It would provide for enlarged and enhanced community facilities and a health centre, which would meet national and local policy objectives including co-location of two key community buildings.
- 7.2 With respect to the proposed housing the provision of two one bed flats and the loss of two family houses would not be wholly policy complaint. However, in this instance, with a proposal which includes for re-provided, enlarged and enhanced community facilities both with respect to a church, other community provision and a health centre, it is considered that the benefits of the overall proposals far outweigh the limited policy infringement in this case and that an exception to the policy is justified.
- 7.3 Officers have worked positively and proactively with the applicant on this scheme, and amendments have been secured, which are considered to satisfactorily address policy issues and overall officers consider this to be a supportable scheme. It is therefore, recommended for approval subject to conditions and the completion of a S106 legal agreement for the provision of a contribution towards affordable housing, and obligations for tree planting, an employment, skills and training plan for construction and relocation of a traffic calming cushion.

Case Officer: Alison Amoah

3D Image

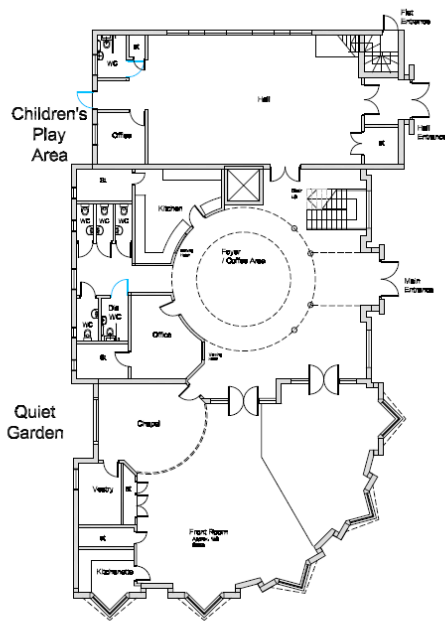


Site Plan

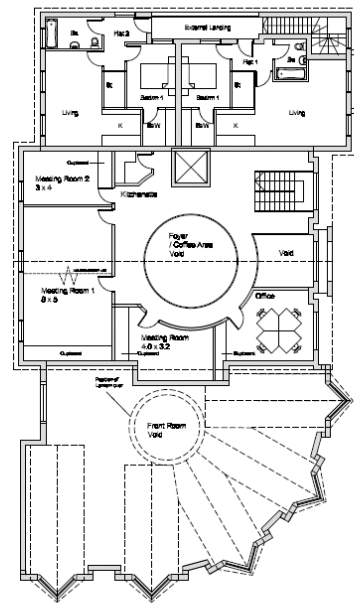


Floor Plans

Church Building

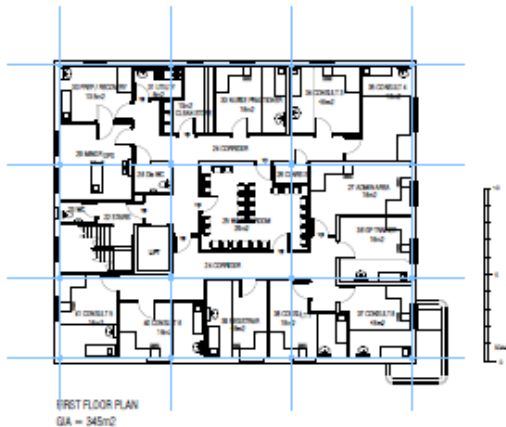


Church
Ground Floor Plan

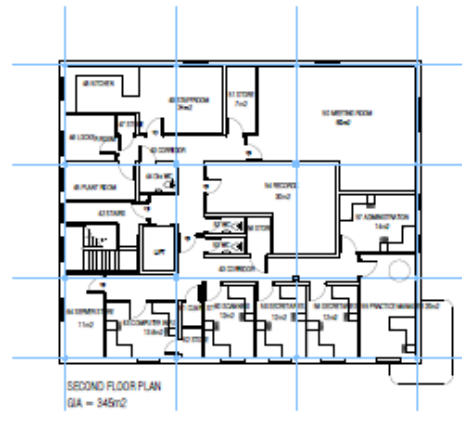


Church
First Floor Plan

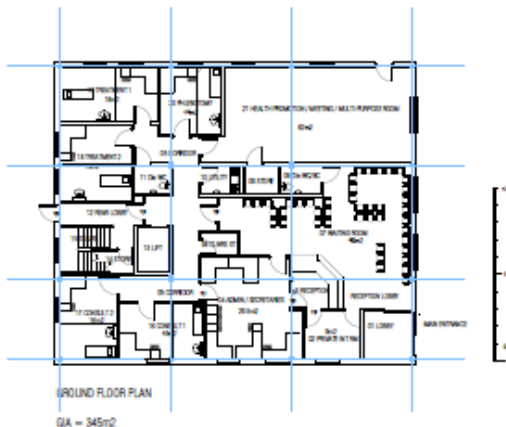
Health Centre



FIRST FLOOR PLAN
GIA = 345m²



SECOND FLOOR PLAN
GIA = 345m²



GROUND FLOOR PLAN
GIA = 345m²



Elevations

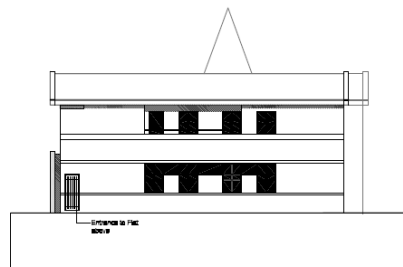
Church Building



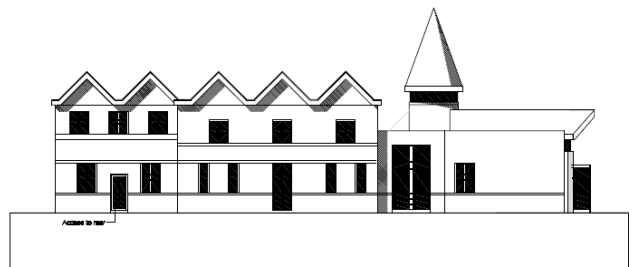
Church
West Elevation (along Whitley wood Lane)



Church
South Elevation (along Site)



Church
East Elevation



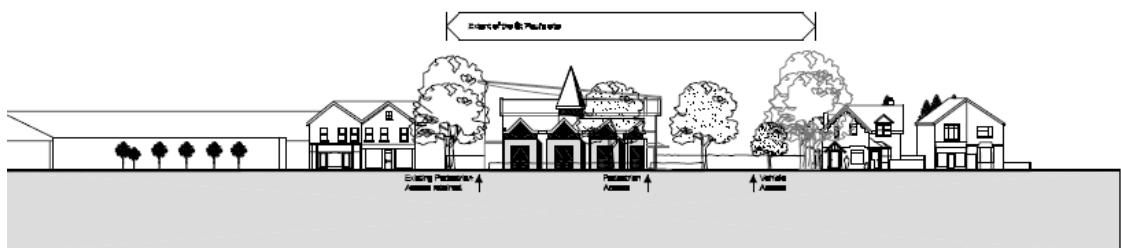
Church
North Elevation

Site Elevation looking north (church to left, medical hub to right)



Site Elevation

Street Elevation



Outline Street Elevation along Whitley Wood Lane

Health Centre

Landscape Plan



