

## UPDATE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES READING BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 13 January 2021	ITEM NO. 8
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Ward: Abbey

Application Nos.: 192032/HYB, 200822/NMA, 200823/NMA, 190441, 190442

Address: Station Hill, Reading

Proposals:

### 192032/HYB:

Hybrid application comprising:

(i) application for Full Planning Permission for Phase 2 (Plot G and public realm) including demolition of existing structures, erection of an eighteen storey building containing office use (Class B1) and flexible retail, non-residential institution and assembly and leisure uses (Class A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, D1 and D2). Provision of podium deck, vehicular access and parking. New public open space and landscaping. Bridge link over Garrard St, and

(ii) Application for Outline Planning Permission for Phase 3 (all Matters reserved) for four building plots (A, B, C and D). Demolition of existing buildings and structures. Mixed-use redevelopment comprising residential dwellings (Class C3), hotel (Class C1), residential institutions (Class C2), office use (Class B1). Flexible Retail, financial and professional services, restaurants and cafes, drinking establishments, hot food takeaways, non-residential institutions and assembly and leisure (Class A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, D1 and D2). Provision of podium deck and basement storey running beneath Phase 2 and 3. Formation of pedestrian and vehicular access. Means of access and circulation and car parking within the site. Provision of new public open space and landscaping.

Applicant: SH Reading Master LLP

Date received (valid): 7 January 2020

26 Week dates: 7 July 2020

PPA: Agreed target: 31 July 2020 (agreed EOT)

### AMEND recommendations 192032, 190441, 190442 as follows.

Deleted text struck through, new text underlined:

*"In the event that the owner of a build to rent development notifies the Council that it intends to sell or otherwise transfers some or all of the units so that they no longer qualify as build to rent ~~under some agreed variation to the terms of this agreement~~ and the Council has provided written agreement to this change, the developer shall provide a valuation of the Build to Rent accommodation immediately prior to the sale/transfer and a valuation of the value following the change to non-Build to Rent. A financial contribution equal to 30% of the increase in value shall be paid to the Council within 3 months of sale/transfer."*

*All other parts of recommendation as per main agenda.*

## 1. Procedural Matters

- 1.1 192032/HYB is split into two recommendations for ease of reference and reflecting the different nature of the two phases. Full planning permission is sought for the Phase 2 proposals and outline permission is sought for Phase 3 proposals. However it should be remembered that, procedurally this is a single 'hybrid' application and the decision will be issued on a single decision notice, under a single application reference. It is therefore recommended that Members determine the two recommendations together as a single decision.

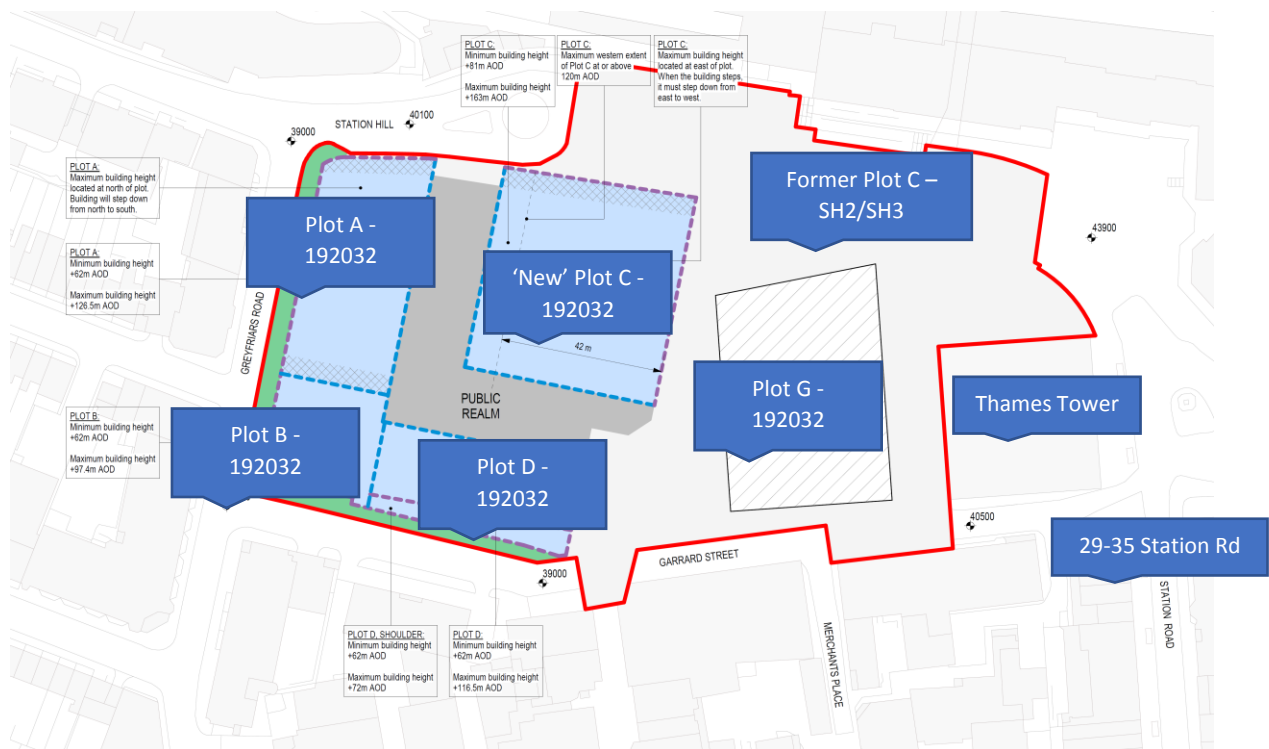
## 2. Height

- 2.2 It is considered that it would be useful to provide further clarification on the heights of the proposed buildings (maximum heights in the case of Phase 3) and to compare these with existing tall buildings in the area and those which have been granted permission but not built.

Site	Height (max.)	Comment/status
Plot C, 'Station Hill 3'	109-128m AOD	Outline Planning Permission 130436 - not built - extant
Plot C, 'Station Hill 2'	168m AOD	09/01076/OUT - not built - lapsed
Thames Quarter	111.7 AOD	Permission granted under 162166. Under construction.
80 Caversham Road 'Royal Mail site'	123.18m AOD	Current application 182252 - not yet determined
Thames Tower (adjacent to Plot G SH)	103.3m AOD	Permission 141043, upward extension - completed.
Chatham Place Phase 2	102.5m AOD	Completed
Kings Point/Verto	94.1m AOD	Completed
29-35 Station Rd	121m AOD	Permission - not built - extant



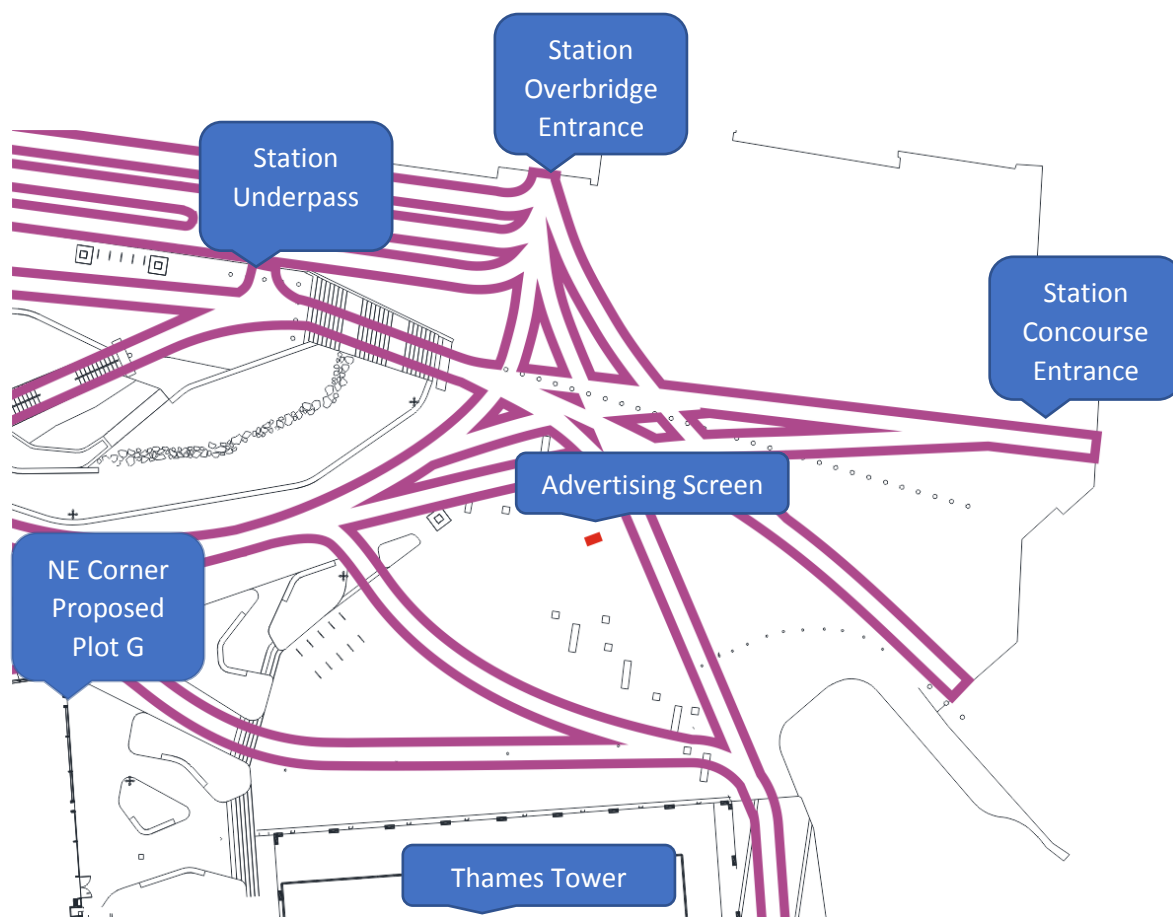
- 2.3 The chart above is intended to give an indication of the heights of tall buildings in the area, with the existing/previously permitted buildings to the left and compared with the current Station Hill proposals to the right. The levels quoted are heights above mean sea level (AOD). To reflect the way the buildings might appear 'on the ground' the scale has been set beginning at 40m AOD, this is because the surrounding street levels range between 38.7m AOD at the junction of Garrard St and Greyfriars Road and 44m AOD at the station entrance in Station Square.



*Locations of tall building plots within Station Hill and immediately adjacent*

### 3. Highways Comments Clarification

- 3.1 The image below appears in the Transport Comments para 4.4 of the main report.
- 3.2 It is noted that the image is not labelled which may cause some confusion. Location labels are now included below:



#### 4. Representations from Applicant in Response to Published Report

4.1 The following comments were received on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Officer comments are set out beneath each comment in turn:

##### 4.2 “Quantum of Development

*In paragraph 2.8 you set out the maximum quantum of development for the site and note that “it is not possible to “row back” from an amount of development granted at outline stage”. We would like to make the point clear that the total quantum of development sought (170,356 sqm GEA) is the maximum amount that can be delivered on the Phase 2 and 3 site and we do have the ability to bring forward less development if so desired.”*

4.3 **Officer Comment:** The report is seeking to explain that the *Local Planning Authority* cannot reduce the amount of development granted at outline stage. The *developer* may choose to seek Reserved Matters Approval for buildings with less floorspace. The LPA therefore needs to be satisfied that the physical expression of the maximum amount would be acceptable. This is addressed in the main report.

4.4 “Wayfinding Contribution

*In paragraph 6.81 you have noted that the wayfinding contribution is £60,000. However, it was agreed, and as set out within the heads of terms, that the contribution would be £40,000 split 50:50 between Phases 2 and 3.”*

4.5 **Officer Comment:** The figure of £40,000 is the agreed amount, split equally between phases, as set out in the recommendation.

4.6 “Distances Between Buildings (Phase 3)

*In paragraph 6.106 you have set out how the distances between buildings differs dependant on the land uses sought within Phase 3. We would like to make the point that the 18m distance at ground and first floor level is a minimum distance and the developer has the ability to provide a greater distance if they elect to do so. This will only be known when the detailed design comes forward at the Reserved Matters stage.”*

4.7 **Officer Comment:** The report is clear that this is the minimum distance, which implies that the distance could be greater.

4.8 “Unit Mix

*In paragraph 6.120 you have set out the indicative mix as “..10% studio, 46% one-bed (i.e. 56% one-bed, 42% two-bed, and 2% three-bed...”. It appears the following has been added in error “(i.e 56% one-bed”. For clarity the indicative mix within the application is as follows:*

*Studios - 10%*

*1 Bed - 46%*

*2 Bed - 42%*

*3+ Bed - 2%”*

4.9 **Officer Comment:** Para 6.120 omits a bracket after “56% one-bed” in error and should read “The Applicant has provided an indicative residential mix of 10% studio, 46% one-bed (i.e. 56% one-bed), 42% two-bed, and 2% three-bed but suggests that the final unit mix should be dependent on the type of development that comes forward at Reserved Matters stage. Given the flexibility that is being proposed in terms of numbers, uses, built form etc, this is not an unreasonable approach. However it is important that this is understood as remaining flexible. The indicative mix is not approved at Outline stage and remains to be assessed under Policy CR6 at Reserved Matters stage.”

4.10 The reason for combining the studio and 1-bed figures in brackets is that the required accommodation types in Figure 4.6 of the Local Plan do not distinguish between 1-bed and studio and studio is a single bedroom type of accommodation.

4.11 This does not alter the analysis or conclusions reached in the main report.

#### 4.12 "BTR Clawback"

*In paragraph 6.139 you have noted the suggested heads of terms wording for the clawback provision. This was discussed in detail with officers at a recent meeting where it was noted that the S106 agreement should include the ability to agree the BTR clawback and should not require a variation of the agreement. We have provided slightly revised wording below which addresses our concerns.*

*"In the event that the owner of a build to rent development notifies the Council that it intends to sell or otherwise transfers some or all of the units so that they no longer qualify as build to rent ~~under some agreed variation to the terms of this agreement~~, the developer shall provide a valuation of the Build to Rent accommodation immediately prior to the sale/transfer and a valuation of the value following the change to non-Build to Rent. A financial contribution equal to 30% of the increase in value shall be paid to the Council within 3 months of sale/transfer."*

- 4.13 **Officer Comment:** It is important that the Council retains some control over a change from BtR to other forms of housing, but it is acknowledged that the possibility of an agreed change can be built into the S106 agreement, rather than requiring a deed of variation to the agreement. The amended wording is set out in the recommendation above.

#### 4.14 "Pocket Park"

*In Paragraph 6.170 you note that the applicant seeks Reading Borough Council to contribute a sum of £900k to help deliver the Pocket Park. We request that this paragraph, along with any other reference, is deleted from the committee report as it has been agreed with the Council that the Pocket Park will be delivered by the applicant."*

- 4.15 **Officer Comment:** Paragraph 6.170 is clear that this request was not accepted by officers and this is reflected in recommended condition 17 which requires the Pocket Park feature (and all other Phase 2 landscaping) to be provided in Phase 2, prior to occupation of the office building, or to an agreed timetable within Phase 2. The text cannot be deleted from a published report.

#### 4.16 "Energy"

*In paragraph 6.273 you note that application indicates that BREEAM 'Excellent' will be achieved for all non-residential development. To confirm, the application identifies this is possible for the office accommodation but not the retail, which is targeting a Shell Only BREEAM 'Very Good' standard. A BREEAM 'Excellent' rating can be targeted for the retail elements but this will be based on the final unit, once fitted out..."*

- 4.17 **Officer Comment:** Policy CC2 requires non-residential developments to meet BREEAM Excellent where possible and doesn't distinguish between office and retail. Conditions 31 and 97 require the certificate prior to first occupation, i.e.

once fitted out. This aligns with the applicant's intentions described above and no change to the recommendation is required.

- 4.18 *"...In paragraph 6.282 you note that the Phase 2 proposals do not fully comply with policy requirements. We would disagree as the policy and supporting text, as noted in paragraph 6.276 and 6.277 of the committee report states that air source or ground source heat pumps should be considered in the first instance, as these methods are less carbon intensive than [fossil-fuel powered] Combined Heat and Power. The Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2019 notes that the preference for air source and ground source heat pumps over CHP is set out in the Local Plan, but in general ground source heat pumps should be investigated as a priority over air source heat pumps. We have demonstrated to RBC why ground source heat pumps are not appropriate in Phase 2 given the site constraints but have identified the possibility of their inclusion within the Energy Strategy for Phase 3. Therefore, the proposals are policy compliant."*
- 4.19 **Officer Comment:** The proposals 6.282 to 6.287 explain why officers consider that the proposals do not fully comply with Policy CC4. The analysis and conclusions within the main report remain unchanged.

## **5. Drawings**

- 5.1 Updated drawings have been received, as requested, for the cycleway highway works. The updates finalise changes to traffic calming proposals to Greyfriars Road and now include the Pocket Park on the drawings to avoid misunderstanding and to ensure accuracy. Drawing numbers:  
44470/5502/TA/01 Revision D dated 17 December 2020 - Phase 2 Proposals  
44470/5502/TA/02 Revision E dated 17 December 2020 - Phase 3 Proposals  
Appended below.

Case Officer: Steve Vigar





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