

UPDATE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES READING BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 3 March 2021	ITEM NO. 9
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Ward: Abbey

Application Nos.: 201532/VAR, 201536/VAR, 201533/REM, 201537/REM, 201534/NMA, 201535/NMA.

Address: Station Hill, Reading

Proposals:

201532/VAR - Plot E s.73 Outline

Outline application under s.73 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 with all matters reserved for mixed use redevelopment of Plot E of the Station Hill site and neighbouring Telecom House site (48 to 51 Friar Street & 4 to 20 Garrard Street) to comprise the demolition of existing buildings and erection of new buildings/ structures to provide residential units (Use Class C3), a range of town centre uses, including retail and related uses (Use Class E (a),(b) and (c); Drinking establishments (sui generis) and Hot food takeaways (sui generis)), and leisure uses (Use Class E (d), (e), and (f); Class F.1; Class F.2; and Theatres; Cinemas; Concert Halls; Bingo Halls; Dance Halls (sui generis)), associated infrastructure, public realm works and ancillary development as permitted by planning permission 190442 granted on 6 December 2019 (as amended).

201536/VAR - Plot F and North Site s.73 Outline

Outline application (pursuant to Section 73 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990) for mixed use redevelopment of the site through the demolition and alteration of existing buildings and erection of new buildings & structures to provide Offices (Use Class E (g)(i) and (g)(ii)), a range of town centre uses including retail and related uses (Use Class E (a),(b) and (c); Drinking establishments (sui generis) and Hot food takeaways (sui generis)), leisure and community (Use Class E (d), (e), and (f); Class F.1; Class F.2; and Theatres; Cinemas; Concert Halls; Bingo Halls; Dance Halls (sui generis)), and residential units (Use Class C3), associated infrastructure, public realm works and ancillary development (all matters reserved) as permitted by planning permission 190441 granted on 6 December 2019 (as amended).

201533/REM - Plot F Reserved Matters

Application for the approval of reserved matters (access, scale, appearance, layout and landscaping) and submission of details (Conditions 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, and 67(i)) for Plot F within the development site known as Station Hill, submitted pursuant to the Outline Planning Application ref. 201536/VAR. The proposals comprise the construction of a 13 storey, plus basement storey, building comprising 184 Build to Rent residential units, 762 sqm (GEA) of flexible retail, leisure and business floorspace (Use Class E (a),(b) (c),(d),(e),(f), (g)(i), and (g)(ii), Use Class F.1 and Use Class F.2); the following sui generis uses: Drinking establishments; Hot food takeaways; Theatres; Cinemas; Bingo Halls and Dance Halls; together with cycle storage; car parking; servicing; plant areas; landscaping; new public realm and other associated works.

201537/REM - Plot E Reserved Matters

Application for the approval of reserved matters (access, scale, appearance, layout and landscaping) and submission of details (Conditions 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 30, 34 and 62(i)) for Plot E within development site known as Station Hill, submitted pursuant to the Outline Planning Application ref. 201532/VAR. The proposals comprise the construction of a 12 storey building, plus basement storey, comprising 415 Build to Rent residential units,

722 sqm (GEA) of flexible commercial and leisure (Use Class E (a),(b) (c),(d),(e),(f), (g)(i), and (g)(ii), Use Class F.1 and Use Class F.2); the following sui generis uses: Drinking establishments; Hot food takeaways; Theatres; Cinemas; Bingo Halls and Dance Halls; cycle storage, car parking, servicing, plant areas, landscaping, new public realm and other associated works.

201534/NMA (Plot E)

Non material amendment to planning permission 190442/VAR to amend land uses within description of development and amend Use Classes described in Conditions 6 and 11 and 60.

201535/NMA (Plot F and North Site)

Non material amendment to planning permission 190441/VAR to amend land uses within description of development and amend Use Classes described in Conditions 6, 54 and 55 and 63.

Applicant: SH Reading Master LLP

Dates received (valid): 2 November 2020

13 Week target decision dates: 1 February 2021

26 Week dates: 3 May 2021

PPA: Agreed target: 2 April 2021

Amended Recommendations

Amend Recommendation 3 201537/REM as follows

Additional condition 5: Full SUDS details to be submitted for approval prior to commencement to include timetable for implementation and full integration with approved tree pit design (notwithstanding current drainage strategy and plans).

Amend Recommendation 4 201533/REM as follows

Additional condition 4: Full SUDS details to be submitted for approval prior to commencement to include timetable for implementation and full integration with approved tree pit design (notwithstanding current drainage strategy and plans).

All other parts of the recommendations remain as per the main agenda.

1. Amended Plot E Ground Floor

- 1.1 Paragraph 6.36 of the main report states that the following discussions with officers, the applicant has confirmed that they will be partially reverting to the original 2019 design with areas previously shown as internal residential amenity areas will now be proposed as commercial retail. Revised drawings have been submitted showing this and these are appended to this report. The revised floorspace schedule is included below. As indicated in the main report the amended design maintain a good mix of retail and leisure at ground and lower ground floors (as required by Policy CR11) and maintains a good degree of activity through other means including residential entrances to the Plot F duplex units and views into the reception and other communal areas within Plot E.

- 1.2 The Reserved Matters floorspace schedule at para 2.8 of the main report is amended as follows, reflecting the increase in retail floorspace:

Block E GEA

		Planning Max.	Planning Min.	Purchase	Current
Residential Units	GEA Resi	33,550		30,301	34,334
Residential Amenity	GEA Amenity				739
Retail	GEA Retail	7,000	1,000		867
BOH, plant, refuse	GEA BOH	1,200			2,386
Parking	GEA Parking				6,539
Total GEA					44,865
Leisure	GEA Leisure	-	-		-

Block F GEA

		Planning Max.	Planning Min.	Purchase	Current
Residential Units	GEA Resi	19,500		12,600	14,799
Residential Amenity	GEA Amenity				336
Retail	GEA Retail		800		77
BOH, plant, refuse	GEA BOH		-		858
Parking	Parking				-
Total GEA					16,069
Leisure	GEA Leisure	2,200	2,200	-	685
Leisure min. DP9			900		

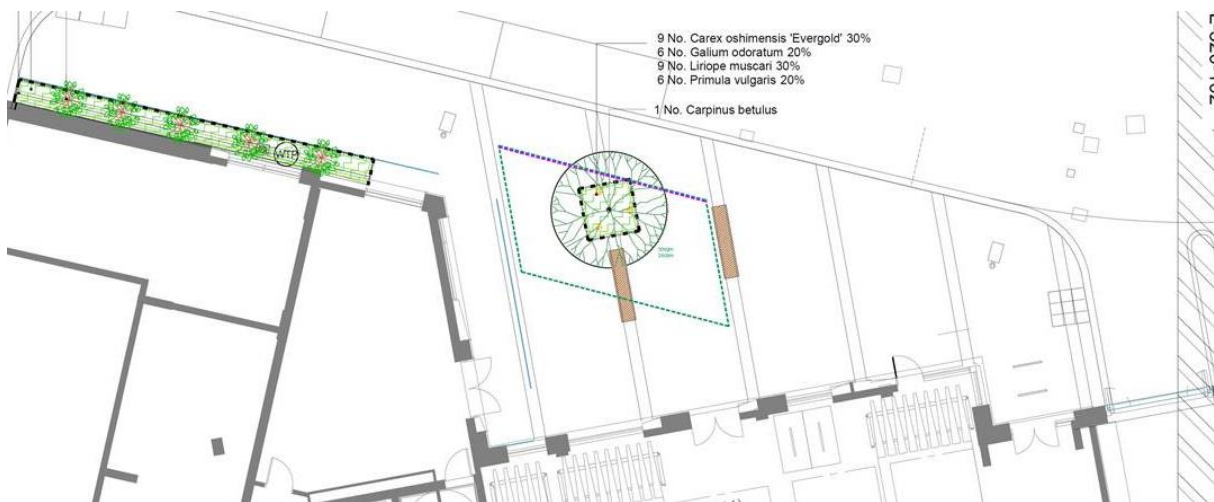
- 1.3 The extract below shows the, now predominantly commercial, frontage to Plot E.



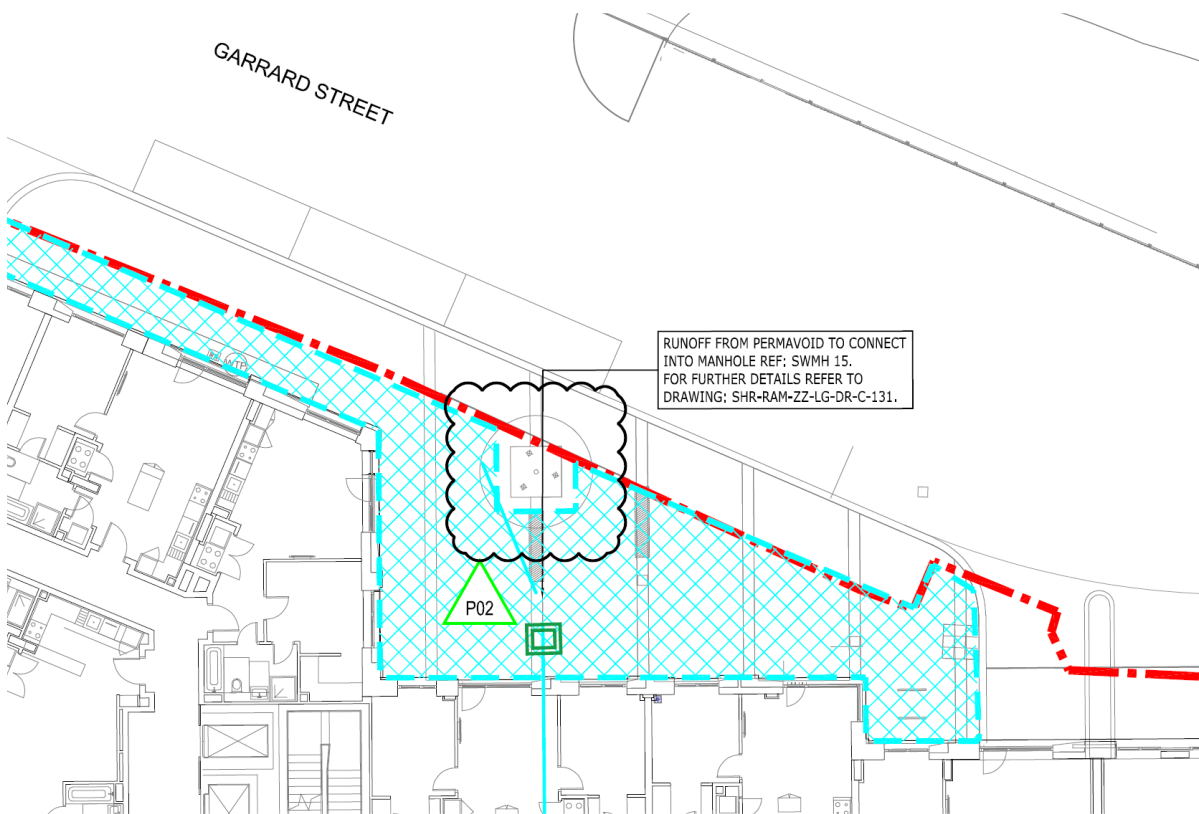
2. Sustainable Drainage (SUDS)

- 2.1 The current SUDS design fits around tree pits within the new Friars Walk but the 'permavoid' underground attenuation storage (extent shown as blue hatching on image below) extends across the tree pit close to the residential entrance in Plot E in Garrard Street (tree pit extent shown as green dashed line around tree on image below). Officers are satisfied that it is possible to amend this arrangement, or design a tree pit which forms part of the SUDS system, but revised drawings need to be submitted. This is recommended to be secured by condition, as per the amended recommendation above.

Landscaping Plan (below)



SUDS Plan (below)



3. Consultee Comments - Transport

- 3.1 Updated transport comments have been received. These accord with the initial advice and officer comments set out in paras 4.3 to 4.20 in the main report. The full text is included at Appendix 2 for completeness.

4. S106 Procedure

- 4.1 An agreement to modify or discharge a planning obligation can be made *at any time* as a deed of variation by virtue of s106A(2) of the 1990 Act.
- 4.2 An equally valid option would be to prepare a new S106 legal agreement (as opposed to a deed of variation to the 2019 version). The effect in practice would be the same.
- 4.3 The Head of Legal will be sent instructions on the S106 if the application is approved by Committee and the format of the legal agreement will be decided at that time, as is normal practice.

5. Affordable Housing

- 5.1 Some further clarification on Affordable Housing and the appropriateness of seeking a deferred payment mechanism in this instance is set out below:
- 5.2 Paragraphs 6.4 and 6.5 of the main report explain that a s.73 application can be used to 'vary' an existing permission where the proposals do not amount to a fundamental alteration to the original. Whilst a s.73 permission results in a new permission, it should remain within the scope of the original in respect of any conditions imposed and, by implication, any s106 planning obligations required.
- 5.3 Paragraph 6.6 of the main report explains that the extant 2019 permissions are material considerations in the determination of the current applications.
- 5.4 Paragraph 6.40 of the main report explains that it is considered appropriate to continue the approach to affordable housing secured under the recent 2019 permissions as s.73 proposals should not substantially differ from the preceding applications.
- 5.5 Paragraph 6.48 of the report to 17th July 2019 Committee in respect of application references 190441/190422 explained that: *"The deferred payments mechanism as currently worded under the extant permissions has already been discharged by the site owner. Accordingly, this is not currently proposed to be carried forward under the s.73 procedure into the new S106 agreement under 190441 and 190442. This leaves an overall provision of 5% on site and 15% off-site, total of 20% Affordable Housing within the scheme as currently proposed."*

- 5.6 The current proposals also seek to secure 20% Affordable Housing under the same terms as the 2019 permissions.
- 5.7 Paragraph 6.86 of the main report acknowledges that the negative aspects of the approved 2019 scheme are carried forward but not worsened by the current s.73 and Reserved Matters proposals. The negative aspects include the harm identified in 2019 in respect of affordable housing. Paragraph 6.50 of the report to 17th July 2019 Committee for application references 190441/190422 addresses the shortfall: *"It is apparent that the current proposals (190441/2) would not secure the full 30% on-site as required by policy and the shortfall in numbers must be considered to be harmful to meeting housing need; as the 30% requirement is based on detailed assessment of this need. The NPPF and the Council's policies allow for viability considerations to reduce the provision and the current proposals are a continuation of this exercise carried on from the 2016 permissions. Nevertheless, the harm in terms of housing need will need to be weighed against other material considerations, including the wider benefits of the scheme if the proposals are to be considered acceptable."*
- 5.8 Paragraph 6.87 of the main report concludes that *"As with the 2019 scheme the considerable benefits of the revised proposals outweigh the less favourable aspects" and recommends approval on that basis. Para 6.117 of the 2019 report concludes that "the regeneration benefits of the proposal would be considerable; especially in socioeconomic and townscape terms, and that these benefits should be afforded substantial weight when considering the current proposals"*.
- 5.9 The current s.73 proposals are therefore set firmly in the context of the 2019 permissions (which the current applications seek to vary). The current proposal is to secure the same *proportion* of Affordable Housing, again without a deferred payments mechanism, following the recent approach adopted when determining the 2019 applications. It was recognised, in determining the 2019 permissions, that harm would result from a shortfall in affordable housing (20% instead of 30%). That harm was weighed against the wider benefits of the scheme and permission granted on that basis. This approach has been carried forward from the 2019 permissions on the basis that the extant permissions represent a significant material consideration *"due to their recentness and strong similarities with the current proposals"* (para 6.87 of the main report).
- 5.10 The main report explains why the proposals can be accommodated under the s.73 procedure and it follows from this that any new conditions or obligations should focus on the changes from the original permission. The assessment in the main report is that the harmful aspects of the current proposals have been fully considered and weighed against the benefits of the scheme and are considered acceptable on that basis. The constraints of the s.73 procedure and the assessment of the merits set out in the main report, and this update, suggest that the amount of affordable housing remains acceptable and the need for deferred payments is not justified in this particular case.

6. Revised Drawings List

SHR - CRL - SB - GF - PL - A - 130-003- P52 Plot E - Ground Floor Level (45.7 AOD) - dated 22 February 2021

SHR - CRL - SB - GF - PL A - 130-003S- P51 Plot E Ground Floor Level (45.7 AOD) dated 22 February 2021

SHR - CRL - SB - GF - PL A - 130-103S- P51 Plot F - Ground Floor Level (45.7 AOD)
dated 22 February 2021 (included for completeness as shows Plot E)

SHR - CRL - SB - GF - PL A - 130-103S- P51 Plot F - Ground Floor Level (45.7 AOD)
dated 22 February 2021 (included for completeness as shows Plot E)

SHR-RAM-ZZ-GF-DR-C-00133 P02 Block E &F Proposed Surface Water Permavoid
Layout Sheet 2of2 dated 23 February 2021

GENERAL NOTES

All rights reserved.

All drawings and written material appearing here, constitute original and unpublished work of the Architect and may not be duplicated, used or disclosed without written consent of the Architect.

Notes and material designations are typical for similar

Note:
"Commercial" refers to Flexible
Office/Retail/Community and Leisure
(E, Sui Generis, F.1 and F.2) Use Class

Future Phases

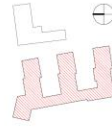
Plot F (see concurrent but separate application)

Plot E

MERCHANTS PLACE

REV	NO	DATE	DESCRIPTION	OWN	CHK
P02		2021-0222	Knowledg Units changed to Conventional Use		
P01		2021-0218	Updated to released to RBC consent		
P00		2020-0000	Issued for Planning		

NOTES



PROJECT
Station Hill, Reading

CLIENT
**SH Reading Master
LLP**

CALLISONRTKL
A DESIGN CONSULTANCY OF ARCADIS

CallisonRTKL - UK Ltd
25 Finsbury Street, 10th Floor
London EC4A 3DF
T: +44(0)20 7336 8404

**Plot E - Ground Floor
Level (45.7 AOD)**

STATUS	PLANNING			
PROJECT NUMBER 050-170073	DATE DRAWN 09/25/18	As indicated		
	SCALE 3/4"	AM		
	DRAWN BY	AM		
	CHECKED BY	AM		
	PROJECT ORIGINATOR	ZONE	LEVEL	TYPE
	SHR - CRL - SB - GF - PL			
	ROLE	NUMBER		REGION
	A - 130-003- P52			



1 Block E - Ground Floor Level

Plot E Ground Floor Plan (with bridge version)

APPENDIX 2 - Updated Transport (Highway Authority) Comments

"I have reviewed the additional amended plans and I comment as follows, just one quick SuDs question remains:

A Reserved Matters application for the scheme (190465/REM and 190466/REM) was approved in July 2019 for 538 units, 1,770sqm of retail floorspace and 855sqm of community floorspace this proposed Section 73 Application is to extend and amend the development quantum to provide:

- 599 residential units; and*
- 1,355sqm commercial/retail/community floorspace.*

These changes result in an increase of 61 residential units and reduction of circa 1,270sqm commercial/retail/community floorspace when compared to the approved permission. A Transport Addendum has been submitted alongside the application to assess the implications of the proposed changes and my comments on this are as follows:

Trip Generation

The applicant has undertaken a comparison of the people trip generation between the consented and proposed development utilising the trip rates previously agreed, which is deemed an acceptable methodology. The assessment has identified that the proposal will result in an overall reduction in person trips and as such is deemed acceptable.

The applicant has not undertaken an assessment of the vehicle trip impact but given that the car parking numbers are being reduced I am happy that this will result in a reduction in vehicle movements on the network when assessed against the consented scheme.

Car Parking

It has been stated that no changes are proposed to the vehicular parking on the scheme which originally permitted 157 car parking spaces, 8 disabled and 5 motorcycle parking spaces as part of the previous reserved matters application. Given that the site is located within the town centre area which is restricted so that overspill parking cannot occur this would comply with Policy. However, following the submission of the plans to include the steps the proposal now slightly alters the car parking numbers on the site to the following:

Layout including the steps - 155 car parking spaces, 8 disabled and 5 motorcycle parking spaces

Layout including the bridge - 157 car parking spaces, 8 disabled and 5 motorcycle parking spaces

There are no objections with either of these scenarios with the layouts now updated to ensure that the disabled bay provision is retained as previously consented.

Cycle Parking

As a result of an increase in residential units of the scheme, additional cycle parking will be provided. The development will still comply with the current 2011 RBC Parking Standards with the application stating that the following cycle parking umbers will be provided:

- 305 residential spaces;*
- 12 spaces for staff;*
- 16 spaces for visitors*
- Total = 333 spaces*

The residential cycle parking will be provided within the car park podium at lower ground level in Two Tier Bike Racks, within two secure cycle stores. One store will be accessible from both Garrard Street and from within the lower ground floor car park whilst the other is accessed solely from the lower ground floor car park.

I have reviewed the cycle parking layout for the scenario that includes the bridge and the steps and these are deemed acceptable given that it has been confirmed that a 3m height clearance will be retained above all of the cycle spaces.

It is also noted that 4 Sheffield stands are proposed to the side of the 4 duplex dwellings. However, given that these cycle spaces do not appear to be covered and would only be able to accommodate 1 bicycle per Sheffield stand which would be below the Councils standards the applicant has stated that the cycle parking for these units could be stored within the basement areas. This in principle is deemed acceptable albeit that the Sheffield stands are still identified on the latest drawings.

The minimum employee requirement has been calculated using RBC standards for retail facilities, these state that as a minimum 1 space per 6 staff and an additional visitor space per 300sqm or floor area should be provided. To calculate the minimum employee cycle parking requirements the staff numbers for Plot E and F have been estimated using the Homes and Communities Agency Employment Density Guide (3rd Edition). This suggests a retail employment density of 15-20 sqm per employee. Using 1 employee per 20 sqm of floor area (1,355sqm) would suggest 68 staff.

On this basis storage for 12 bicycles is required as a minimum to meet RBC's requirement for staff (68 staff / 6 = 12 spaces). The storage for the commercial and community uses is proposed in a secure cycle store accessible from Friars Walk for employees and is deemed an acceptable form of cycle parking.

Visitors should be provided with access to a minimum of 5 spaces (1,355 sqm / 300 sqm) based on RBC standards. These cycle parking spaces will be located on street at the access point to Friars Walk and on Garrard Street as previously agreed with the applicant previously stating that they will provide space for 16 bicycles which in principle is accepted. It is also noted that the applicant has removed the two Sheffield type stands previously illustrated on the Garrard Street frontage given that they would obstruct pedestrian access to the car park (west of the vehicle entrance). The latest landscape drawings illustrate a provision of 6 Sheffield stands which equates to 11 cycle spaces and these are provided at Garrard Street level and Friar Street level, given that this is in excess of the required 5 spaces this is deemed acceptable.

Delivery, Servicing and Waste Strategy

No changes are proposed to the delivery and servicing strategy for Plot E and F as a result of the proposals.

There are also no changes proposed to the waste strategy and waste storage for the additional units can be accommodated within the existing strategy.

As previously agreed, the bins will be housed within the refuse storage areas located on the ground and mezzanine floors of the car park. It is still proposed to carry out a twice weekly collection of the refuse bins which requires storage for an overall provision of 60 bins on site for the residential units. The principle of which is accepted.

Infrequent access for vehicles setting up temporary event within the Plaza of the proposed Station Hill North site (Planning Ref 192032) is proposed to be accessed from Friar Street via Friars Walk. However, this was not accepted as part of planning application 192032 given the conflicting movements with pedestrians given that the vehicles would utilise a pedestrian crossing to access Friars Walk. The planning condition included within extant permission should therefore be retained.

General Comments

It is noted that the proposal includes doors that open outwards, even though the area would be private this would be contrary to S153 of the Highways Act. It has been stated

that these doors open outwards as they form part of the fire strategy and as such has been deemed acceptable.”