

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 2 FEBRUARY 2022

Ward: Minster

App No: 211928/REG3

Address: Land adjoining 24 Lesford Road, Reading, RG1 6DX

Proposal: Temporary Change Use of private amenity land for the purpose of providing temp parking for a period of 18 months (part retrospective).

Applicant: Reading Borough Council

Date validated: 02/12/2021

Target Date: 27/01/2022

Extended target date: 04/02/2022

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Planning Permission subject to conditions and informatives

Conditions to include

1. Temporary Use - 18 months from date of planning permission - (full reinstatement of land to former condition thereafter, including removal of all physical measures, any lawn re-seeding, etc.)
2. Approved plans
3. No installation of external lighting unless details have been submitted and approved. Installation to be removed on cessation of use.
4. Retention of safety signage on site for duration of use and all signage removed thereafter.
5. Scheme to be submitted and approved for kerbs to be reinstated once temporary use has ended

Informatives to include:

1. Positive and Proactive Working - Approval
2. Terms and conditions

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site is 476m² in area and is a section of lawned, Council-owned private amenity space between dwellings on Lesford Road and Wensley Road in Coley. The surrounding area is predominately residential, with a mix of two storey semi-detached and detached dwellings. Coley Allotment Gardens is located south of the application site, whilst Coley Park Community Centre is located north of the site. St. Mary & All Saints CofE Primary School is 150m east of the application site. The number 11 bus also runs along Wensley Road to the north of the application site.



Site Location Plan

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The proposed development seeks the change of use of the amenity space to a temporary car park providing 11 vehicle parking spaces. The spaces are to serve residents of Wensley Road whose vehicle parking spaces have been displaced as a result of the works now being carried out under Phases 1 and 2 of the Wensley Road redevelopment. The Phase 1 and Phase 2 works of the Wensley Road redevelopment are being carried out in accordance with approvals 200122/REG3 and 210549/REG3.
- 2.2 This additional parking land would be required for up to 18-months.
- 2.3 The application is largely retrospective, with the following minor physical works to convert the private amenity space to a temporary car park already carried out: laying 'Cellpave' plastic ground protection matting, the erection of knee-high barriers to the length of the car park on both sides, a new dropped kerb and vehicle crossings onto Wensley Road to the north, and extending the existing dropped kerb at Lesford Road to the south of the proposal site.



Fig 1. Application site as viewed from Wensley Road prior to development of site (Google Street View, image captured in July 2019).



Fig 2. Application site as viewed from Wensley Road following development of site (taken by Case Officer on 22/12/2021).



Fig 3. Application site as viewed from Lesford Road prior to development of site (Google Street View, image captured in July 2019).



Fig 4. Application site as viewed from Lesford Road following development of site (taken by Case Officer on 22/12/2021)

- 2.4 Height barriers to restrict access to high vehicles have been installed at both ends of the application site at Wensley Road (entrance) and Lesford Road (exit). The height barrier at Wensley Road is located centrally, whilst the height barrier closest to Lesford Road has been located to the east of the proposal site, with two bollards inserted to the west of the height barrier. Vehicle parking spaces have also been marked out on the plastic ground protection along the west length of the application site.
- 2.5 The applicant has stated within the Planning Supporting Statement that a one-way system will be used, with vehicles entering the temporary car park from the north of the site from Wensley Road and exit the car park onto Lesford Road. Associated signage was erected at the site on 21/01/2022.
- 2.6 Officers have advised the applicant that the works that have taken place on site do not accurately reflect the plans submitted to date. The applicant has been advised that they will need to submit revised plans to reflect the current arrangement on site, or that the works that have been done will need to be amended to reflect the proposed plans submitted.

3. PLANS AND DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED:

The following plans and documents were submitted on 29th November 2021:

- Site Location Plan - HTA-A_DR_001
- Temporary Parking Plan - HTA-A_DR_003 Rev A
- Cellpave AP Anchored Ground Reinforcement Paver Datasheet
- Planning Statement

4. PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant to this application at the application site. The following applications, however, are considered relevant to the development proposed under this application:

Phase 1 Development (as referenced by applicant)

200122/REG3 - Demolition of 29 garages and development of 46 new dwelling units, including the provision of affordable homes, provided in a mixture of houses and apartments (1 bed / 2 bed / 3 bed / 4 bed) in blocks of between

2.5 to 4 storeys, and the provision of bicycle parking spaces, car parking spaces and public realm works. - permission 16/12/2020. Under construction.

Phase 2 Development (as referenced by applicant)

210549/REG3 - Various renovation works to the three tower blocks (Wensley Court, Irving Court and Riversley Court), including replacement of the external envelope and windows, extended and reconfigured entrance areas incorporating altered refuse and recycling facilities, replacement ground floor escape doors, external stairs and windows, roof level works, various landscaping works including planting and surface treatments, and external cycle parking stores. - Permission 22/07/2021. Under construction.

5. CONSULTATIONS

Public consultation

5.1 The following neighbouring owners and occupiers were consulted by letter:

22 Lesford Road, Reading, RG1 6DX - No response received.
24 Lesford Road, Reading, RG1 6DX - No response received.
159 Wensley Road, Reading, RG1 6DU - No response received.
161 Wensley Road, Reading, RG1 6DU - No response received.

A site notice was erected on 22/12/2021 for a period of 21 days, expiring on 12/01/2022.

No responses have been received at the time of writing.

Internal Consultations

5.2 *RBC Environmental Protection*

Concerns for noise and fumes arising from the development. It is noted that the car park is very close to residential properties along Wensley Road and Lesford Road. A condition was recommended to restrict the hours of use of the car park i.e. no vehicle movements at night. A separate condition is also recommended to state no idling of engines to take place in the car park. See appraisal below for a discussion on these issues.

5.3 *RBC Natural Environment*

Notes from the site photos that the conversion to car park has already taken place - vegetation removed, knee rails erected and Cellpave laid. The Cellpave would provide some protection to the root system of the conifers in the rear garden of 159 Wensley Road. It is also noted that the parking spaces are on the over side of the land so the risk of the root system to the conifers is reduced. The site should be returned to its former use as private amenity space after the relevant time period, and this should be secured via condition.

5.4 *RBC Transport Development Control*

No objections to this proposed application given that it is to reduce on street parking in the surrounding area as a result of the construction work taking place within the vicinity of the site. Clarification is required, however, concerning the works that have been carried out on site to date and the plans that have been submitted.

6. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 6.1 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) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

- 6.2 The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

Reading Borough Council Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

CC7 Design and the Public Realm
CC8 Safeguarding Amenity
EN8 Undesignated Open Space
EN14 Trees, Hedges and Woodland
TR3 Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
TR5 Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

7. APPRAISAL

- 7.1 The main issues are considered to be:

- i) Principle of development
- ii) Safeguarding Amenity
- iii) Transport
- iv) Trees
- v) Design
- vi) Planning Balance

i) Principle of development

- 7.2 In accordance with Policy TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan; *“Development will only be permitted where:- i) Accesses and works to the highway comply with the adopted standards of the Transport Authority; ii) The development would not have a material detrimental impact on the functioning of the transport network; iii) The proposals would not be detrimental to the safety of users of the transport network, including pedestrians and cyclists; iv) The proposal would not generate regular movement of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) on unsuitable roads, or on roads without easy access to the Classified Highway Network; and v) For non-residential uses, or new dwellings on classified roads, off-street servicing would be provided”*. The application will be assessed to ensure that the proposed use of the land as a temporary car park will not have a detrimental impact on the free flow of traffic on the highway.

- 7.3 This application is also subject to Policy EN8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The Policy states that it is important for undesignated open spaces to be retained where possible. The supporting text of the policy states development upon undesignated open space that would prevent public access to the site or lead to unacceptable level of overshadowing will not be

supported. The application site is not accessible to the public, with chain-link fencing at the north and south elevations of the site.

- 7.4 The proposed use of the private amenity land subject to this application as a temporary car park for an 18-month period is acceptable in principle in view of the transient nature of the application and the potential benefits of proposed use of the site, providing that the land is returned to its former use and condition after the pre-determined temporary period has ended. The remainder of this report will now turn to more detailed matters which need to be addressed.

ii) **Safeguarding Amenity**

- 7.5 Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan states that; *“Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of: (...) Noise and disturbance; (...); Dust and fumes; (...); Crime and safety”*.
- 7.6 Two height barriers have been installed at the application site; one fronting the Wensley Road entrance, and one fronting the exit on to Lesford Road. Two bollards have also been installed fronting the exit on to Lesford Road. The application has explained that the height barriers and bollards have been installed to reduce the risk of potential unauthorised encampments from occurring at the application site. Officers agree that this is necessary to protect residents from this potential threat.
- 7.7 Concerns regarding the temporary car park have been raised by the Environmental Protection Team. Specifically, these concerns relate to noise and disturbance arising from idling of car engines due to the location of the temporary car park in relation to nearby residential properties. In particular, to residents directly adjacent to the proposed temporary car park at 22 and 24 Lesford Road, and 159 and 161 Wensley Road.
- 7.8 EP therefore recommended that conditions be attached to any approval of this application. One condition would restrict the use of the temporary car park to daytime hours only, with no vehicle movements during hours of darkness. The second condition would state no idling of engines within the temporary car park. The aim of these conditions is to reduce the likely increase in noise and disturbance as a result of the change in use of the land from private amenity space to temporary car park. These suggested conditions were brought to the attention of the applicant. The applicant resists the inclusion of the condition restricting the use of the car park to daytime hours only. The applicant has emphasised that the temporary car park is for the use of residents whose usual vehicle parking spaces have been displaced due to construction, and that it would not be reasonable to offer this solution and include restrictions of its use. The applicant also highlights that restricting the use of the temporary car park to daytime hours would be impossible to enforce. Due to the temporary nature of the proposed car park and that its intended use is for residents who have been affected by the development taking place at Wensley Road, it is considered unreasonable to restrict the hours of use of the car park. It is also considered that a condition requiring no idling engines within the car park would not be enforceable.
- 7.9 The applicant does not currently envisage external lighting being required for the temporary car park, however it would be necessary to secure the details

of any external lighting prior to its installation on site, should illumination of the temporary car park subsequently be considered necessary. This is considered appropriate to ensure that any external lighting does not detrimentally impact highway safety, the living conditions of nearby residents in terms of light pollution or give rise to anti-social behaviour. Any such lighting would also need to be removed in its entirety upon cessation of the temporary use.

iii) Transport

- 7.10 The following adopted policies and guidance have been used to assess the impact that the application would have on the flow of traffic and highway safety along Wensley Road and Lesford Road; TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD.
- 7.11 The proposed vehicle parking spaces as specified on the Parking Plan submitted for this application are 2.5m x 5m in size in a 30° angled parking layout, along the west of the application site. The Planning Supporting Statement advises that a one-way system will be in place, with vehicles entering the temporary car park to the north from Wensley Road and exiting the temporary car park to the south on to Lesford Road.
- 7.12 The proposed development as demonstrated on the plans is supported by Transport Development Control as it would reduce on street parking during both construction phases of the Wensley Road development approved under applications 200122/REG3 and 210549/REG3. Transport Development Control visited the application site on 19/01/2022, when it was clear that some layout amendments were required. The applicant is aware that any cars attempting to park in the first few bays to the north of the application site, as currently marked out, would obstruct access due to the location of the height barrier. It was also advised that the dropped kerb would need to be further widened to allow for the access that has been demonstrated on the proposed plans. The applicant has been presented with the option to either relocate the height barrier and extend the dropped kerb in order to appropriately facilitate the access proposed, or submit revised plans that reflect the existing arrangement on site.
- 7.13 Notwithstanding the need to attend to the above details, the proposed temporary car park is considered to suitably address the needs of the local area as a result of the development of Wensley Road under applications 200122/REG3 and 210549/REG3. Residents affected by the ongoing development will benefit from the temporary car park in having an off-street vehicle parking space. The application is considered to make a positive contribution to highway safety by removing vehicles from the highway along Wensley Road and Lesford Road, aiding in the flow of traffic.
- 7.14 Safety signage has been installed. The signage consists of a maximum headroom sign to the height barrier, a “one way” direction sign to the height barrier (Wensley Road entrance), a no entry sign to Wensley Road entrance facing within the car park, a no entry sign to the height barrier facing the highway at the Lesford Road exit, and an “Out” sign to the height barrier facing the highway at the Lesford Road exit. These are appropriate and should be retained for the duration of the development and a condition should require this.

- 7.15 Provided that clarification is sought regarding the proposed plans as described in paragraph 7.15, the application is considered acceptable from a Transport and Highways perspective. Confirmation as to how the applicant will proceed with regards to the submission of revised plans or adjusting the arrangement on site will be presented in an Update Report for this application.

iv) Trees

- 7.16 In accordance with Policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan; measures must be in place to ensure that trees are adequately maintained. There are Conifer trees within the rear garden of 159 Wensley Road, which are close to the side boundary with the proposal site.
- 7.17 The site photos, plans and documents submitted for this application have been reviewed by the Natural Environment Team. The location of the vehicle parking spaces in relation to the Conifer trees is considered acceptable. The plastic ground protection matting is simply laid on top of the existing ground and considered to minimise the risk of detrimental impact to the roots of nearby trees. The development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

v) Design

- 7.18 In accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan; development will; *“Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; Address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them, including providing suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily”*.
- 7.19 The application site as a private amenity space is considered to be a characteristic green buffer which is considered to soften the predominantly suburban surrounding area.



Fig 5. Proposal site as viewed from Wensley Road prior to development of site (Google Street View, image captured in May 2012).



Fig 6. Proposal site as viewed from Wensley Road prior to development of site (Google Street View, image captured in July 2019).

- 7.20 The design of the temporary car park is considered to have taken into account the appearance of the application site as a verdant amenity space. The plastic ground protection in place, which supports the conversion to a car park as a

temporary arrangement whilst protecting the land for when it is returned to its use as an amenity site. The use of plastic ground protection matting is common in the use of temporary car parking on fields and is considered favourable to alternatives such as using permeable tarmac and retains a green parking area. The proposed knee-high wooden railings to each side of the car park are considered very minor and not harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It is considered that the opening of the space and the removal of the chain-link fence at both ends of the proposal site is positive, however, the visual impact of vehicles parking at the site is considered less favourable when viewed against its pre-existing state as demonstrated in figures 5 and 6.

- 7.21 The use of the proposal site as private amenity space is considered to soften the appearance of the surrounding area in what is predominantly a suburban area of Reading. The use of the land as a car park would be a significant visual departure from the existing arrangement. The green space would instead be occupied by almost a dozen vehicles. Nevertheless, the use of the land as a temporary car park is considered to address a specific need in the area for temporary vehicle parking spaces.

vi) Planning Balance

- 7.22 The proposed change of use of the proposal site from private amenity space to a temporary car park is considered to have positive implications in providing off street parking for residents affected by the ongoing major development to Wensley Road. The development would remove parked vehicles from the highway, thereby improving the flow of traffic within Wensley Road, Lesford Road and beyond. This view is shared by Transport Development Control. Noise and disturbance will occur in a localised manner, for a relatively short period and there will be a reduction in the contribution this green space makes to the character of the area.
- 7.23 These concerns, however, are considered to be outweighed by the inherent benefits of the proposed temporary car park. The applicant's attempts to sensitively convert the space to a temporary car park through the use of Cellpave and positioning the car park spaces away from the roots of the Conifer trees within 159 Wensley Road is considered positive. The development is considered to contribute positively to highway safety within the surrounding area. The short-lived nature of the development is also a significant factor, and conditions will be attached to any approval of this application requiring the temporary car park to be returned to its previous use as private amenity space after the relevant 18-month period.

8. Equality

- 8.1 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age and disability. 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. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development. The proposal is specifically to address the needs of a disabled person.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 Appropriate justification has been provided for the temporary car park. Therefore, on balance, officers recommend that planning permission should be granted with conditions as set out above provided that suitable clarification is provided regarding the parking layout.

Case Officer: David Brett

Site Photos taken by Case Officer on 22/12/2021.



Site Photos taken by Case Officer on 20/01/2022.





Site Photos taken by Applicant on 21/01/2022 demonstrating signage



Appendix 1: Plans



Site Location Plan



Proposed Site Plan

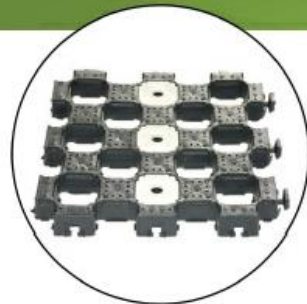
CellPave™ AP from Groundtrax is a 'no-dig' anchored ground reinforcement paving tile.

CellPave™ AP has a great deal of applications and may be used in many situations such as driveways, access tracks, vehicle parking, airfields, helipads, parks, caravan parks, farms, golf paths, grass verges, mobility paths and many more. Installing CellPave™ AP tiles is simple and easy. Using a vibratory roller CellPave™ AP can be placed in existing grass areas. If required, they can also be placed in soil and onto a prepared sub-base. Additionally, they can be also be upturned and back-filled with sand, soil or gravel.



DESIGN

CellPave™ AP has a unique design which suppresses resurgence of mud from below. The openings ensure effective drainage. Ground anchors on the underside of the tiles ensure the best possible fixing, even in poor ground or under heavy loads. Over time, the integration with the ground also increases as the existing grass root intertwines with the tile structure.



CellPave™ AP with
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- Grass grows back through the tile, preserving the character of the environment
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- Natural drainage maintained
- No splintering or risk of injury
- Planning permission not required for most applications
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- Can be removed later, if required
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- Normally requires no excavation, unlike most other grass reinforcement products
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- Simple 'snap-in' markers available



APPLICATIONS

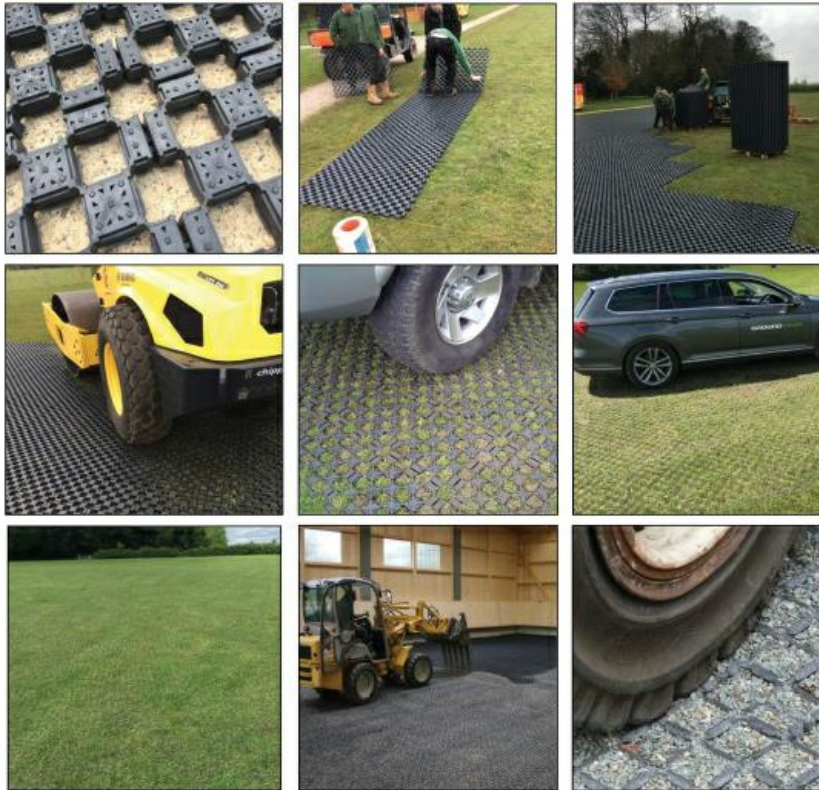
- Green parking areas
- Emergency vehicle access
- Temporary and permanent roadways
- Road protection
- Embankments
- Driveways
- Tree beds
- Golf walkways
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TILE DIMENSIONS:	302mm x 302mm wide x 37mm (+/-2%) *not including connecting lugs
MAT SIZE:	1220mm x 920mm (4 x 3 tiles)
WEIGHT:	6.2kg per m ² (+/-2%) / 550grams per tile
NOMINAL CELL DIMENSIONS:	50mm x 50mm
CLOSED SURFACE AREA:	50% / Raised points for grip
CONNECTION METHOD:	Edge loops and tabs
CELL WALL THICKNESS:	5mm (+/-2%)
LOAD BEARING:	Up to 160t/m ² *depending on ground conditions and preparation
COLOUR:	Black
UV/FROST/OIL/SALT RESISTANT:	Yes
PALLET DIMENSIONS:	1220mm x 920mm x 2340mm / Contains 876 pavers / 73 layers (80m ³) / Total pallet weight 500kg



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