

## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 7 September 2022

**Ward:** Kentwood

**App No.:** 220637/FUL

**Address:** Scours Lane, Tilehurst, Reading

**Proposals:** Proposed development of a Drive-Through restaurant (Use Class E (a,b) and Sui Generis Hot Food Take Away, Car Parking, enhanced landscaping and Access Arrangements

**Applicant:** Cube Real Estate Ltd

**Deadline:** An extension of time has been agreed until 9<sup>th</sup> September 2022

### RECOMMENDATION:

**REFUSE** planning permission for the following reason:

1. The proposed development would result in the loss of undesignated open space that has not been previously developed and which currently makes a positive contribution to the character, appearance and environmental quality of the area due to its openness, undeveloped character and green vegetated appearance. As such the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area contrary to Policies CC7 and EN8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Informatives

1.Plans refused

2.If otherwise approving, developer liable for costs associated with seeking and providing a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) in respect of altering parking restrictions on Scours Lane

3.If otherwise approving, developer liable for costs associated with relocating lamp column and litter bins.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The application site relates to an area of grassland located on the south east side of Scours Lane, opposite the junction with Oxford Road, near Norcot Roundabout. There is a change in site levels and the site slopes up from the north to the south of the site.

1.2 The surrounding area to the north and west is predominantly comprised of the industrial and commercial units of Stadium Way. The area to the south is predominantly residential, with shops nearby on the opposite (south) side of the Norcot Roundabout. The River Thames is to the north of the site, beyond the railway line.

- 1.3 The site is located within the Portman Road Core Employment Area (EM2h) as well as within an Air Quality Management Area.
- 1.4 There are 3 trees on the site which are protected by a Tree Preservation Order (reference 30/10). Scours Lane is a designated Green Link and Oxford Road a treed corridor, which these trees, and others on the site, form part of.
- 1.5 The rearmost part of the site, to the north, is within Flood Zones 2 and 3 as designated by the Environment Agency.
- 1.6 The site location plan together with site photographs are shown below:

Site location plan (not to scale)



Aerial view



1.7 This application has been called-in for Committee determination by the request of Councillor Keeping due to concerns for increased traffic.

## 2. PROPOSAL

2.1 Full Planning Permission is sought for a mixed-use of drive-thru restaurant Use Class E (a, b) and Sui Generis hot food takeaway for a Gregg's bakery/coffee outlet.

2.2 The proposed building would be 165m<sup>2</sup> in size and would be constructed out of material to include metal cladding in dark grey and blue colours. The proposals would incorporate internal and external seating areas.

2.3 The submission indicates the split of customers would be 20% eat in, 50% drive through and 30% takeaway.

2.4 A new access is proposed off Scours Lane and 22 car parking spaces are proposed, to include 3 disabled parking bays and 5 bays with electric vehicle charging points.

2.4 The proposals include soft landscaping, tree planting and indicative biodiversity enhancements.

### 2.5 SUBMITTED PLANS AND DOCUMENTS:

Site Location Plan 2483 P00a

Site Block Plan as Existing 2483 208101

Site Block Plan as Proposed 2483 208150

Ground Floor Plan as Proposed 2483 208151  
Ground Floor Plan as Proposed 2483 208150  
Elevations as Proposed 2483 208250  
Sections as Proposed 2483 208350  
Landscape Cross Sections QD784-301  
Cellular Tree Protection System QD784-303  
Well being Space QD788-200  
Seating Area Layout QD788-201  
Tree Survey Report by Quartet Design dated January 2022  
Arboricultural Impact Assessment/Arboricultural Method Statement  
Green Link Planting Principles QD784-307  
Wider Green Link Corridor QD784-306  
Green Link Ecological Enhancements GD784\_305 Rev A  
Landscaping Masterplan GD784-300  
Received 6<sup>th</sup> August 2022

Transport Statement dated September 2021  
Energy Strategy Statement Rev 01  
Noise Impact Assessment January 2022  
Flood Risk Assessment dated September 2021  
Design and Access Statement dated April 2022  
Air Quality Assessment dated February 2022  
Odour Risk Assessment dated February 2022  
Retail Sequential Test Assessment dated June 2021  
Planning Statement dated April 2022  
Community Statement  
Received 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022

### **3. PLANNING HISTORY**

- 3.1 211706/FUL - Retail drive through pod (Use Class E (a.b) and sui generis hot food takeaway, car parking, landscaping and access. Withdrawn.
- 3.2 200912/PRE Pre-application advice for proposed construction of 1 retail drive-through pod (Use classes A1, A3 and A5) including car parking, landscaping and access arrangement. Comments provided; concern raised in respect of the impact on the character of the area.

#### Other Nearby Sites of Relevance

- 3.3 *8 Stadium Way*  
220463/FUL Change of use of vacant unit to use as an indoor climbing centre (Use Class E(d)), minor amendments to building elevations/entrances, provision of cycle/bin storage and associated works. Pending Consideration - also on the Agenda for the Planning Application Committee 7<sup>th</sup> October 2022. The site is in close proximity, located approximately 32m to the north east.

## 4. CONSULTATIONS

### Internal Consultees

#### RBC Transport

- 4.1 No objection subject to conditions to include submission and approval of construction method statement, cycle parking, delivery and servicing. Discussed further below.

#### RBC Natural Environment

- 4.2 Further to revised plans demonstrating replacement planting, no objection subject to condition to secure tree protection and landscaping. Discussed further below.

#### RBC Ecology

- 4.3 Further to revised plans demonstrating replacement plant and additional biodiversity enhancements, no objection, discussed further below.

#### RBC Environmental Protection

- 4.4 No objection subject to conditions in respect of noise, odour, hours of use, bins/rats and contaminated land. Discussed further below.

#### Berkshire Archaeology

- 4.5 No objection subject to condition requiring submission and approval of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation. Discussed further below.

### External Consultees

#### Environment Agency

- 4.6 No comments received.

## 5. Publicity

- 5.1 Surrounding neighbouring properties were notified of the applications by letter. A site notice was also displayed at the application site.

- 5.2 Three letters of objection and 14 letters of support and have been received. Comments and concerns are summarised as follows;

#### *Objection*

- technical reports not fit for purpose
- loss of grassed area will impact flooding
- will impact quiet enjoyment of residents
- impact on traffic
- already plethora of other hot food takeaways in area
- odour problems
- permission for food hut previously refused
- littering

### *Support*

- great idea
- best thing to happen to Scours Lane
- great to have outside town centre
- Greggs offers vegan options
- will bring business to the area
- will freshen up existing business in area
- positive as nothing like this in the area
- area needs a fresh hot food outlet
- no other easily accessible Greggs in Reading Borough Council
- great to have in walking distance
- limited food outlets in area
- prices affordable

## **6. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

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) which states at Paragraph 11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”.

6.2 Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

### **National Planning Policy Framework 2021 National Planning Guidance 2014 onwards**

6.3 The relevant sections of the NPPF are:

- Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 8 - Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities
- Section 9 - Promoting Sustainable Transport
- Section 11 - Making Effective Use of Land
- Section 12 - Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Section 15 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

6.4 **Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019):**

- CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
- CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
- CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
- CC7: Design and the Public Realm
- CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
- CC9: Securing Infrastructure

EM1: Provision of Employment  
EM2: Location of New Employment Development  
EM3: Loss of Employment Land  
EN8: Undesignated Open Space  
EN12: Areas of Archaeological Significance  
EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network  
EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland  
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources  
EN17: Noise Generating Equipment  
EN18: Flooding and Drainage  
TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy  
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters  
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging  
RL2: Scale and Location of Retail, Leisure and Culture Development  
RL3: Vitality and Viability of Smaller Centres  
RL5: Impact of Main Town Centre Uses

**6.5 Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:**

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)  
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)

Other relevant documents:

Reading Tree Strategy (2021)  
Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (2021)

**7. APPRAISAL**

The main matters to be considered are:

- Principle of Development/Land Use Matters
- Design Considerations and Impact on Character of the Area
- Impact on Natural Environment - Trees, Landscaping and Ecology
- Impact on Parking/Highways
- Impact on Flooding
- Impact on Neighbouring Properties
- Sustainability
- Archaeology

**Principle of Development/Land Use Matters**

7.1 The site is located within a Core Employment Area as per Policy EM2 (Location of New Employment Development). The proposals would not seek to introduce a non-employment use in the area and the development would not, in itself, result in the loss of employment land or floorspace.

7.2 The proposed use is a town centre use in an edge of town centre location.

The NPPF specifies that retail development should be located in line with a sequential approach, and that it should have no detrimental impact on the vitality and viability of existing centres. This is reiterated in Policy RL2 (Scale and Location of Retail, Leisure and Culture Development) which proposals outside designated centres will need to demonstrate that a sequential approach has been adopted to site selection.

- 7.3 As part of this application submission, a sequential test to site selection has been provided. The sequential test considers the availability of premises within and on the edge of Reading Town Centre which would be capable of accommodating the proposal's requirements. The sequential assessment includes sites within a defined search area, of between 1,879m<sup>2</sup> and 2,818m<sup>2</sup> and clearly seen and accessible from an A or B road. Outside of this range, the submission considers that sites would not be viable or would not meet the established needs of the operator and these sites have not been assessed.
- 7.4 It is considered that suitable parameters have been provided for identifying alternative sites that are consistent with NPPF and PPG guidance. It is also considered that the submission demonstrates a reasonable degree of flexibility in relation to its size and furthermore, given the nature of the use and requirement for passing traffic, the need to be clearly visible from an A or B road is accepted.
- 7.5 Whilst the applicant's sequential test does not identify alternative sites in other district/local centres, it is considered that the emphasis in the NPPF is on the protection of Town Centres rather than smaller neighbourhood centres.
- 7.6 The conclusion of the sequential site assessment is that there are no suitable and available sites that would meet the requirements of the developer as a consequence of either insufficient available floorspace, or a level of floorspace significantly in excess of that required or not visible from an A or B road (given the nature of the use).
- 7.7 Given the above, the proposals are considered to accord with Policy RL2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 which advises that planning applications for main town centre uses in out-of-town centre or edge of town centre locations will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated there are no other sequentially preferable sites or premises.

#### Retail Impact

- 7.8 The Council has adopted a threshold of 1,000 sqm in Policy RL5 (Impact of Main Town Centre Uses) for assessment of retail impact. The proposal relates to development of less than 1000 sqm, and, therefore, does not require an assessment of impact. There is therefore no policy objection to the proposed development in terms of impact.

#### **Design Considerations and Impact on Character of the Area**



- 7.38 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) requires that all development must be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is situated. Policy EN8 (Undesignated Open Space) states that there will be a presumption in favour of retention of undesignated open space.....The quality of existing open space should not be eroded by insensitive development on adjoining land”. This is in line with the expectations of paragraph 99 of the NPPF for the protection of open space.
- 7.39 The application submission states that, “the site is not presently in any significant recreational use which would be displaced as a result of the development”. The definition of ‘open space’ in the glossary to the NPPF does not limit it to land in public ownership, but all space of public value. Furthermore, and importantly, the NPPG confirms that open space can take many forms, including being an important part of the landscape and setting of built environments. This is reflected in the supporting text to Policy EN8 which explains that “Reading has many areas of open space not identified in Policy EN7 (Local Green Space and Public Open Space) in both public and private ownership. It is important that these areas are retained where possible”.
- 7.40 It is acknowledged that the piece of land does not have and formal recreational use. However, aerial imagery shows that the area formed part of the open land around the site when it served the Greyhound Stadium, before its redevelopment to an industrial estate in the 1970s/1980s. The land has the character and appearance of an open area of managed grassland which provides valuable relief between the industrial/commercial areas to the north and the busy Oxford Road and residential areas to the south. It is one of the very few large areas of soft landscaping within the vicinity. The site has visual amenity value (as well as important natural environment designations) and is an important area of undesignated green space in this otherwise built-up area. The site forms part of the openness coming from the denser Oxford Road to the east towards the more suburban area of Tilehurst to the west and is clearly visible - and providing landscaped relief - from all directions. Its inherent openness is an important part of its character, and it marks a change in character in the urban environment and it is important in doing so. The appearance of the grassed areas of the site and the existing trees makes a significant positive contribution to the landscape character of this approach into the town centre.
- 7.41 It is asserted in the submission that the majority of the site is to remain untouched. However, it is considered that the erection on the site of the proposed building and the formation of its associated hardstanding areas and presence of cars would result in a large amount of the presently grassed area being developed and broken up. The physical appearance of the proposed building and its associated hardstanding areas (roads/cars, footpaths, parking areas, outdoor seating areas) and the visual impact of

them would result in the loss of the open character of the grassed amenity space which contribute to the landscape character of the area, all to the detriment of the amenity and landscape character and visual amenity of the area.

- 7.42 Further to the above, it is recognised that the amount of tree planting, wildflower planting and ecological enhancements (discussed below) proposed would mitigate harm to ecology and the Green Network. However, this is secondary to the fundamental concern over the loss of this open space and overall undeveloped green character. It is officers' strong opinion that the proposed development would significantly change the site's natural and open character by removing a substantial area of existing green space trees of amenity value and replacing it with a new building and associated hardstanding. This would have a detrimental impact on the amenity and landscape function that this piece of undesignated open space provides to this area, contrary to Policies CC7 and EN8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

#### **Natural Environment - Trees, Landscaping and ecology**

- 7.43 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks that development shall maintain and enhance the character of the area in which it is located including landscaping. Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) requires new development to make provision for tree retention and planting to assist in extending the Borough's vegetation cover. The site is also located within an Air Quality Management Area which increases the importance of tree retention. Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and The Green Network) requires that new development should provide a net gain for biodiversity where possible and should incorporate biodiversity features into proposals where practical.
- 7.44 Application 211706 (see planning history above) was partly withdrawn due to concerns regarding the protection of retained trees, insufficient landscaping and unacceptable fragmentation of the green link and wider green network.
- 7.45 The current submission is the same proposal for the area within the site boundaries but, in addition, includes significant green link and ecological enhancement along Scours Lane, Stadium Way and Wigmore Lane (on applicant land) to show the applicant's wider landscape and ecological aims.
- 7.46 2 trees are proposed to be removed to enable development (T2 Black Alder and T3 Cherry); 3 trees would be affected by the erection of a retaining wall across their root protection areas (protected T1 Leyland Cypress, T4 Cherry and T5 Black Alder); and 2 trees would have a cellular confinement system driveway installed across their root protection areas to protect their roots from compaction via vehicles (T8 Ash and T9, a protected London Plane).

7.47 The Council's Natural Environment Officer has confirmed that one of the affected trees, T1 (Leyland Cypress), is already in a poor condition - classed as a category U tree - and is considered a tree of limited value and unsuitable for retention. However, other existing trees that would be affected by the proposal are highly prominent trees visible from Oxford Road that have a high amenity value and contribute positively to the open character of the area.

7.48 To mitigate against the loss of these trees and to provide ecological enhancements, the following is proposed:

- 119 new trees to be planted on site and along Stadium Way, Scours Lane and Wigmore Lane - 38 planted in association with the proposed development within the site boundary and 81 planted outside the site boundary to enhance the wider green link

- Native shrub planting on site and along Stadium Way

- Wildflower planting along Wigmore Lane

- 5 bird boxes, 4 bat boxes, hedgehog hotels and 4 log piles within boundary

- 15 bird/bat boxes on existing trees and warehouse buildings outside boundary

7.49 As above, the trees to be removed to enable development are prominent trees, visible from the busy Oxford Road, of high amenity value. In contrast, a significant share of the proposed 119 trees, such as those along Stadium Way would have limited public amenity value due to less exposure to traffic/public. The same is true, to a lesser extent, for the trees along Wigmore Avenue.

7.50 Natural Environment Officers consider that the new trees proposed on the Oxford Road frontage would at maturity, eventually match the amenity value of those removed and that the tree cover net gain as a result of the proposals is considered, on balance, to mitigate successfully against the loss of the existing trees - from a replacement tree perspective. This more technical approach, tree for tree, is considered acceptable in terms of tree numbers. However, officers consider that the visual impact in the short to medium term would be harmful as described above and also, importantly, for the longer term, this does not mitigate fundamental concerns about the impact on the open and undeveloped character of the area as described in the section above.

7.51 The Council's Ecologist has raised no objection to the proposals due to the enhancements proposed that would contribute towards enhancing the green network. In technical terms, the Ecologist does not consider that the proposal would result in fragmentation of the two green links that cross the site (nor the wider green network) and that whilst a biodiversity net gain metric calculation has not been provided, the proposals would likely result in a net gain in habitat units as measured using the DEFRA Metric.

- 7.52 Should the application have otherwise been recommended for approval, conditions would have been recommended to secure tree protection measures during development, Arboricultural supervision and inspections. A landscaping condition would have also been recommended to secure planting details to include the species, maintenance and management schedule and a condition to require full details of the ecological enhancements (to include ongoing maintenance and monitoring arrangements). In accordance with Policies EN12 and EN14.

### **Traffic Generation and Parking**

- 7.9 Policies TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway related matters), TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking-related matters relating to development. The applicant has produced a transport statement to accompany the application.
- 7.10 The site is accessible on-foot and by cycle to a range of local destinations. Pedestrian crossing facilities are provided on the A329 Oxford Road facilitating direct pedestrian access to Norcot Road to the south, and across the Wigmore Lane and Norcot Road arms of the roundabout junction. A signalised pedestrian crossing is provided across the A329 Oxford Road, circa 200-metres south-east of the roundabout.
- 7.11 The site also benefits from access to frequent public transport services operating along the A329 Oxford Road corridor.

### *Access*

- 7.12 Scours Lane is approximately 6.7m in width, subject to a 30mph speed limit and is provided with footways on both sides of the carriageway and street lighting. Scours Lane provides access to the Stadium Way Industrial Estate, Deacon Way as well as access to Reading City football club, The Atrium Health Club, Reading Marine Services, Park, Riverside Park Homes and the River Thames.
- 7.13 Scours Lane forms a give-way controlled crossroads junction with the A329 Oxford Road and Bramshaw Road. Heading eastwards on the A329 Oxford Road there is no right turn lane waiting area or filter lane into Scours Lane; however, 'Keep Clear' markings are provided over the eastbound carriageway through the junction to prevent blocking for traffic turning into / out of Scours Lane.
- 7.14 The proposed unit would be accessed from Scours Lane approximately 40m north of its junction with the A329 Oxford Road. The proposed site access road would be 6.0m in width to facilitate two-way movement of vehicles entering and exiting the proposed retail drive-thru pod simultaneously. The

new bell-mouth junction would be constructed with 4.0m radii on both sides of the proposed site access road. The vehicular access would be provided with 2.4m x 43m visibility splays in both directions in accordance with the Manual for Streets requirement for a 30mph road. Transport Officers confirm that in terms of access design, the proposal is acceptable.

- 7.15 A lamp column and refuse/recycling bins would need to be relocated to facilitate the access, but a new location has not been identified on the submitted plans. Should the application have otherwise been recommended for approval, the applicant would be advised that they would be liable for any costs associated with relocating the lamp column (separate to the costs associated with the changes to the parking regulations) and that these works would be required to be undertaken with the Council's approved contractor before any works associated with the proposed access be implemented.
- 7.16 The area experiences high levels of on-street parking especially with large HGV and articulated trucks on the east side of Scours Lane which is currently unrestricted. Transport Officers advise that the visibility splays from the proposed site access would be impacted by high levels of on-street parking. Should the application have otherwise been recommended for approval, a financial contribution towards a review of the existing parking regulations in the area - with the view to implementing parking restrictions on Scours Lane in close proximity to the site access - would have been sought and secured by S106 Legal Agreement. Transport Officers advise that the financial contribution would have amounted to £7,500.
- 7.17 The length of the one-way drive-thru lane from the serving hatch to the main parking area is approx. 50m providing queuing length for at least 8-9 vehicles at any one time. A further 40m of additional queuing length, equivalent to an additional 6-7 vehicles, is also available within the main parking area which Transport Officers have confirmed is acceptable.

### *Parking*

- 7.18 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, a maximum parking standard of 1 space per 5sqm should be provided (based on class A3 Restaurant & Café' use) equating to 35 parking spaces. The proposals include the provision of 22 parking spaces which falls below the adopted standards.
- 7.19 It is stated by the applicant that given the nature of the uses proposed, only a proportion of customers would choose to park, either for purchasing or consuming goods. To justify a lower parking provision, a car parking accumulation exercise has been undertaken by the applicant, for weekday

and Saturday/Sunday peak periods. The peak in demand is anticipated to occur during the Saturday lunchtime period 12:00-13:00hrs when it is anticipated that a total of 19 car parking spaces would be occupied. A review of the parking restrictions on Scours Lane (as recommend by Transport Officers above) would ensure that no overspill would occur on the public highway.

- 7.20 The proposed car park would incorporate the provision of 5 x active EV charging bays (23%). Whilst this would be an over-provision, Transport Officers do not consider this would result in an overspill of car parking.
- 7.21 The level of cycle parking proposed would be in excess of the minimum standards as laid out in the RBC Parking Standards and Design SPD of 1 space per 6 staff plus 1 space per 300m<sup>2</sup>. 5 x 'Sheffield' cycle stands for customer and staff use would be provided. However, the cycle parking must also be covered if it is be used for staff cycle parking. Should the application have otherwise been recommended for approval, exact detail of cycle parking could have been dealt with by way of condition.

#### *Servicing & Deliveries*

- 7.23 Deliveries to the proposed retail drive-thru pod would come from the Company's distribution warehouse where timings are controlled such that the restaurant receives its fixed delivery slot and on-site staff are notified within 30-min of a vehicle arrival to make any necessary preparations for servicing. Where feasible, deliveries are scheduled to arrive on-site during quiet trading periods.
- 7.24 It is envisaged that the proposed retail drive-thru pod would receive three deliveries per week for frozen, chilled and ambient products all of which could be accommodated in one multi-temperature vehicle per visit. The proposed retail drive-thru pod would be provided with a dedicated delivery bay of 13.0m in length and 2.8m in width that would be located at the northern end of the pod 'island' with trolleying distance for food deliveries and refuse collection being less than 20.0m from the delivery bay. A swept path analysis of a 10m long rigid delivery vehicle accessing the delivery bay and entering / exiting the site in a forward gear is provided within the submitted Transport Statement and Transport Officers confirm this is acceptable.
- 7.25 Refuse collection would be made by a private contractor. Refuse collections would be timed outside of peak hours and scheduled to not be concurrent with food deliveries utilising the dedicated delivery bay.
- 7.26 Should the application have otherwise been recommended for approval, a condition would have been recommended for submission and approval of a scheme to manage deliveries and servicing.

#### *Trip Generation*

- 7.27 Concern has been raised by Councillors around the potential for increasing traffic delays around the already busy Norcot roundabout. Concern is raised that the potential addition to any traffic waiting to turn right from Oxford Road into Scours Lane would only exacerbate an existing problem to the main traffic flow, with the potential to increase danger.
- 7.28 The applicant has undertaken an assessment using data from fast food drive thru restaurants using the TRICS database. TRICS is the national standard system of trip generation which allows its users to establish potential levels of trip generation for a wide range of development and location scenarios and is widely used as part of the planning application process by both developer consultants and local authorities to ascertain likely trip generation. The proposal would generate an increase in trips as is illustrated in the below table taken from the Transport Statement:

**Table 5.1 Vehicular Trip Generation**

Time Period	Arrivals		Departures		Total		
	Trip Rate	No. Vehs.	Trip Rate	No. Vehs.	Trip Rate	No. Vehs.	
Weekday	AM Peak Hour (08:00-09:00)	9.991	17	9.519	16	19.510	33
	Lunchtime Peak Hour (12:00-13:00)	15.025	25	14.015	24	29.040	49
	PM Peak Hour (18:00-19:00)	12.437	21	13.226	22	25.663	43
	Daily	148.532	250	147.652	248	296.184	498
Saturday	Lunchtime Peak Hour (13:00-14:00)	34.236	57	34.433	58	68.669	115
	Daily	350.546	589	348.693	586	699.239	1,175
Sunday	Lunchtime Peak Hour (13:00-14:00)	24.216	41	24.457	41	48.673	82
	Daily	238.092	400	239.397	402	477.489	802

Trip Rates expressed per 100sqm

- 7.29 The proposed retail drive-thru pod has the potential to generate 33 total two-way vehicle trips during the weekday AM peak hour, 43 two-way vehicle trips during the weekday PM peak hour. It can also be seen from Table 5.1 that the proposed retail drive-thru pod would be likely to generate substantially higher traffic flows at the weekend, compared to the weekday. On a Saturday it is estimated that the proposed development could generate up to 115 total two-way vehicle trips during the lunchtime peak hourly period. On a Sunday up to 82 two-way vehicle trips could be generated during the lunchtime peak period.

7.30 As has been the case when assessing other drive through facilities within Reading it is accepted that the proposed use would attract a mixture of the following:

- New Trips - These trips are new to the network and would not take place without the proposed development being in place;
- Pass-by Trips - These trips represent traffic that is already passing the site, these trips simply divert in and re-join the network afterwards;
- Diverted Trips - These trips represent traffic passing nearby that diverts into the site, this traffic is already present on the network but the route it takes will vary; and,
- Linked Trips - These trips represent traffic that already enters the site for some other purpose and simply includes a trip to the new development as part of this. These trips have no impact on the study network.

7.31 Table 5.2 (from the Transport Statement) sets out the proportions of peak hour hourly vehicle trips by type. New (sole purpose) trips can vary between weekdays and weekends.

**Table 5.2 Peak Hourly Total Two-Way Vehicle Trips by Type**

Trip Type	Weekday AM Peak		Weekday PM Peak		Saturday Lunchtime Peak		Sunday Lunchtime Peak	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
New	42%	14	45%	20	36%	42	36%	30
Pass-By / Diverted	48%	16	38%	16	42%	48	42%	34
Shared	10%	3	17%	7	22%	25	22%	18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>82</b>

7.32 Transport Officers advise that it should be noted that the potential trip generation is based on data from fast food drive thru chain restaurants (McDonald, Burger King, KFC) which are considered to be higher vehicle trip generators than the proposed Gregg’s Drive-thru restaurant. Therefore, Transport Officers consider that the TRICS assessment establishes a worst-case scenario.

7.33 Capacity assessments have been undertaken of the proposed site access onto Scours Lane, the A329 Oxford Rd / Scours Lane / Bramshaw Rd crossroads as well as the A329 Oxford Rd / Wigmore Lane / Norcot Rd roundabout using the predicted vehicle trip data for the proposed development in Table 5.1 (of the Transport Statement).



- 7.34 It should be noted that the trip rates in Table 5.1 only reflect vehicle trips to the site. A detailed analysis of the two-way person trips has been undertaken in section 5 of the Transport Statement which assesses the person trips by alternative modes.
- 7.35 It is noted that the Scours Lane forms a give-way controlled crossroads junction with the A329 Oxford Road and Bramshaw Road with no right turn lane facilities into or out of Scours Lane and no enhancement of this situation is proposed. However, Transport officers confirm that the capacity assessments demonstrate that the proposed development would have an immaterial impact on the operation of the local highway network causing minimal delays above current levels.
- 7.36 Further to the above, the accident data demonstrates that one minor accident has occurred at the A329 Oxford Rd / Scours Lane / Bramshaw Rd crossroads in a 5 year period. Therefore, Transport officers consider that there is no evidence that the junction cannot accommodate the additional vehicle flows anticipated by the development or that the proposal would cause severe or detrimental impact on the surrounding local highway network. Transport Officers also consider that the proposed use would be more likely to be utilised by staff and visitors of the local business and would not generate any significant increased vehicular movement along Scours Lane.
- 7.37 Given the above, Transport Officers' clear advice is that the development, if permitted, would not lead to an unacceptable increase in traffic or parking on the surrounding highways network such to warrant a refusal on this basis. It is considered that the proposals are acceptable in transport terms and would accord with Policies TR1, TR3 and TR5.

### **Impact on Flooding**

- 7.53 Policy EN18 (Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems) requires that development be directed to areas at lowest risk of flooding...and that wherever possible development should be designed to reduce flood risk both on- and off-site.
- 7.54 The majority of the site is within Flood Zone 1 (at the lowest probability of flooding) as designated by the Environment Agency, with the rearmost part of the site (to the north) partly located within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The proposals would be located to the south of the site, within Flood Zone 1, which is the area at lowest risk of flooding, and a flood risk assessment has been submitted with the application.
- 7.55 The proposal falls within the 'less vulnerable' class of the NPPG's flood risk vulnerability classification table. This type of development is considered compatible within Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3a as per the NPPG's Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification table. As such, in terms of flood risk, the

proposals are considered to comply with the relevant national and local policies and guidance. The proposed SuDs document has suggested that the proposed surface water drainage would be managed by way of a new soakaway located underneath the car park. The Council's Lead Flood Officer has confirmed that this is acceptable. The soakaway would increase the run off rate from the site over and above the greenfield run off rate but as this would be a minimal increase this would be acceptable. However, no ground investigations have been undertaken to establish the actual infiltration rate and this would need to be provided to ensure that the soakaway is of a sufficient size. Should the application have otherwise been considered acceptable, a condition would have been recommended requiring details of a sustainable drainage system to dispose of runoff from the development, through permeable paving systems.

### **Impact on Neighbouring Properties**

- 7.56 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) seeks to ensure development does not cause harm to the living environment of existing properties, in terms of loss of privacy, overlooking and visual dominance, amongst other things. Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) seeks to protect surrounding occupiers from the impact of pollution.
- 7.57 Given the location of the proposal, distance to residential properties and the intervening Oxford Road, the proposals are not considered to result in any loss of light, privacy or overbearing effects to any neighbouring property.
- 7.58 A noise assessment has been submitted with the application. The Council's Environmental Protection Officer has confirmed that this has been undertaken appropriately and agrees with the conclusions of the assessment, that the noise level of the proposed plant would not exceed background noise. As such, the proposals are not considered to result in any unacceptable adverse impact in terms of noise. Should the application have otherwise been recommended for approval, a condition would have been recommended to stipulate noise levels to be maintained.
- 7.59 An odour assessment has been submitted with the application. However, it proposes two options for odour control, one which the Council's Environmental Protection Officer has confirmed would be acceptable and one which is unclear at this stage. The Council's Environmental Protection Officer has confirmed that, should the application have otherwise been recommended or approval, that this could have been dealt with by way of condition. The hours of use would also have been conditioned.
- 7.60 It is recognised that litter can be a problem; however, in a commercial environment, unfortunately some litter can be expected. A condition would have been recommended to have been attached to any decision requiring details of bin storage to be submitted by way of a pre-commencement

condition. This would have also secured details to ensure that bin stores were vermin proof, to prevent rats accessing the waste.

- 7.61 Given the above, it is not considered that the proposal would generate any significant material harm to residential amenity through privacy or overbearing effects, noise, disturbance or odours to the extent that it is harmful to the health and well-being of neighbouring residents and as such, with the recommended conditions attached, it would satisfy Policy CC8.

### **Sustainability**

- 7.62 Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction), supported by the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD seeks that minor non-residential development such as this should comply with BREEAM Level of 'Very Good'.
- 7.63 The application submission is supported by an Energy Statement which includes the following proposed energy efficiency measures:
- Improved building fabric
  - Energy efficient lighting.
  - Lighting Control Systems.
  - Space heating and domestic hot water provided by waste heat collected from refrigeration systems and supplemented by ASHP.
  - High Efficiency mechanical ventilation.
  - Improved services distribution.
- 7.64 Notwithstanding the above and should the application have otherwise been recommended for approval, a condition would have been recommended to require the standard BREEAM certificate to be provided demonstrating 'Very Good' standard in compliance with Policy CC2.

### **Archaeology**

- 7.65 Policy EN2 (Areas of Archaeological Significance) seeks to protect areas of archaeological potential.
- 7.66 The Berkshire Archaeologist considers that the site may have archaeological implications. Whilst the site is closely sandwiched between a large commercial development and the Oxford Road, and shows an elevation change across it, this open patch of grassland has been present for a considerable number of years (as above, GIS imagery indicates this area as open space pre-1980s), apparently undisturbed and undeveloped. It is possible therefore that historic buried sediments are still present in this location, if construction activity for the commercial development or the road did not disturb the site. The site lies at the edge of the Thames floodplain, which is an area typically used by prehistoric and Roman inhabitants for agricultural, settlement, and funerary activity. The

proposed works may damage or destroy preserved archaeological remains through below-ground works required for development.

- 7.67 Given the above, evidence is required from across the site in order to demonstrate whether or not intact deposits survive. If they do, then they will need to be evaluated for their archaeological potential. The presence or absence of buried sediments can be determined through a series of archaeological test pits or bore holes, followed, if necessary, by archaeological trial trench evaluation (or trial trenching may be used from the outset). Should the application have otherwise been recommended for approval, the Archaeologist has confirmed that this could have been dealt with by way of condition requiring a programme of archaeological work to be submitted and approved.

### **Other matters**

#### **Contaminated Land**

- 7.68 Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) required that developments on land affected by contamination can be satisfactorily managed or remediated against so that it is suitable for the proposed use. The development lies on the site of an historic gravel pit which has the potential to have caused contaminated land and the proposed development is a sensitive land use.
- 7.69 The site lies adjacent to the site of historic works, which has the potential to have caused contaminated land. Should the application have otherwise been recommended for approval, the Council's Environmental Protection Officer recommend the standard four-stage conditions to ensure that the possible presence of contamination is thoroughly investigated and removed/mitigated if necessary (3 of the conditions are pre-commencement). The proposal is considered to accord with Policy EN16.

#### **Other Matters Raised in Representation**

- 7.70 The material planning considerations have been addressed in the report above.
- 7.71 A refusal of planning permission nearby does not automatically mean a new proposal should be refused. Each application is assessed and decided on its own merits.
- 7.72 It is not the function of the planning system to safeguard existing businesses from competition.

#### **Equalities Impact**

- 7.73 When determining an application for planning permission 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 as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the proposed development.

## 8 CONCLUSION

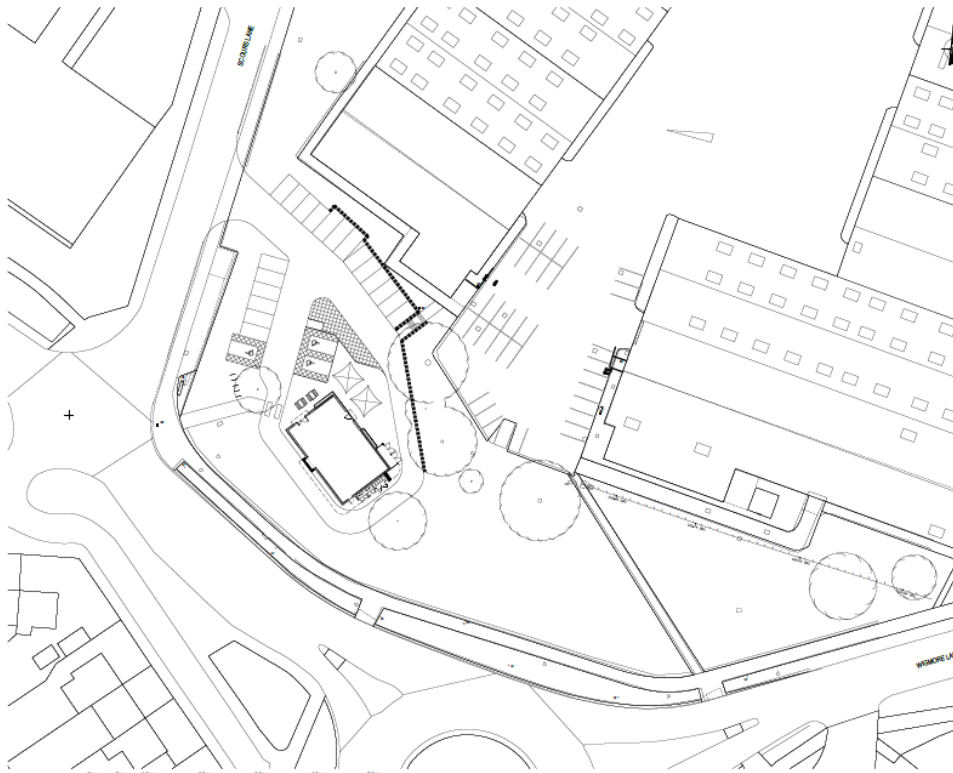
- 8.1 It is considered that the proposals would result in the loss of undesignated open space that would be harmful to the character of the area. It is recognised that there are no technical consultee objections to the scheme. However, the harm identified is not considered to be outweighed by proposed landscape and ecological mitigation for the reasons set out above,
- 8.2 The application is, therefore, recommended for refusal as set out in the recommendation at the head of the report.

**Case Officer:** Ethne Humphreys

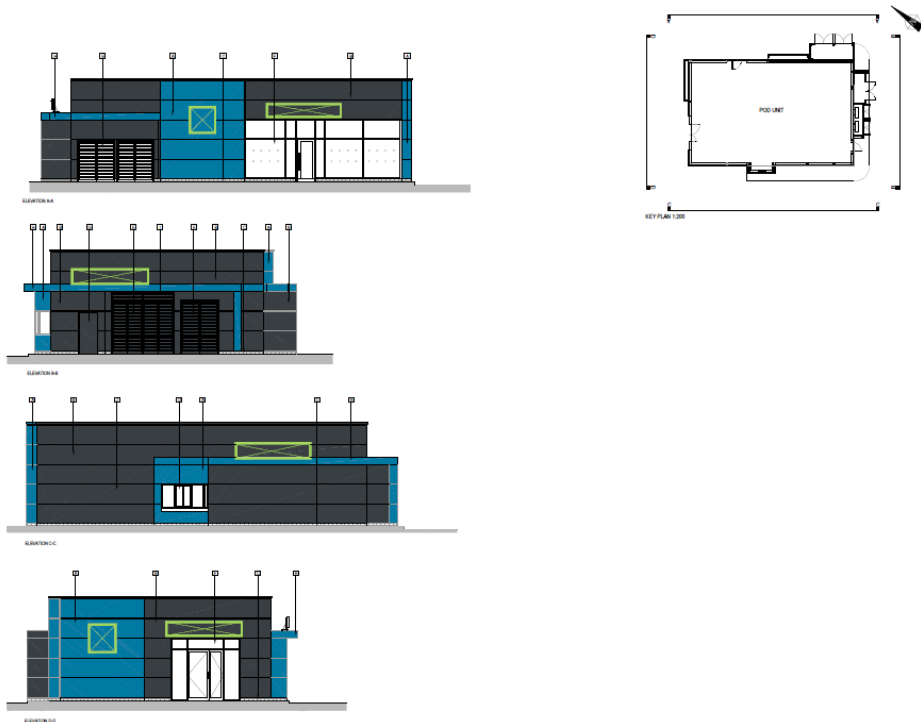
**Plans Considered:**



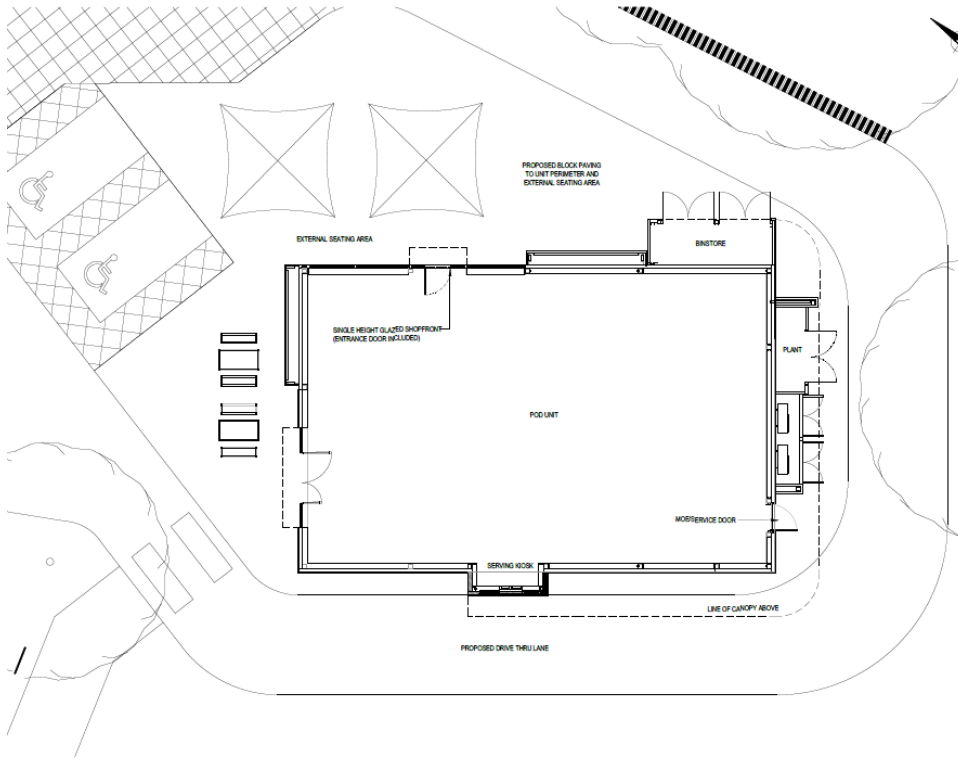
**Site Location Plan**



Site Block Plan Proposed



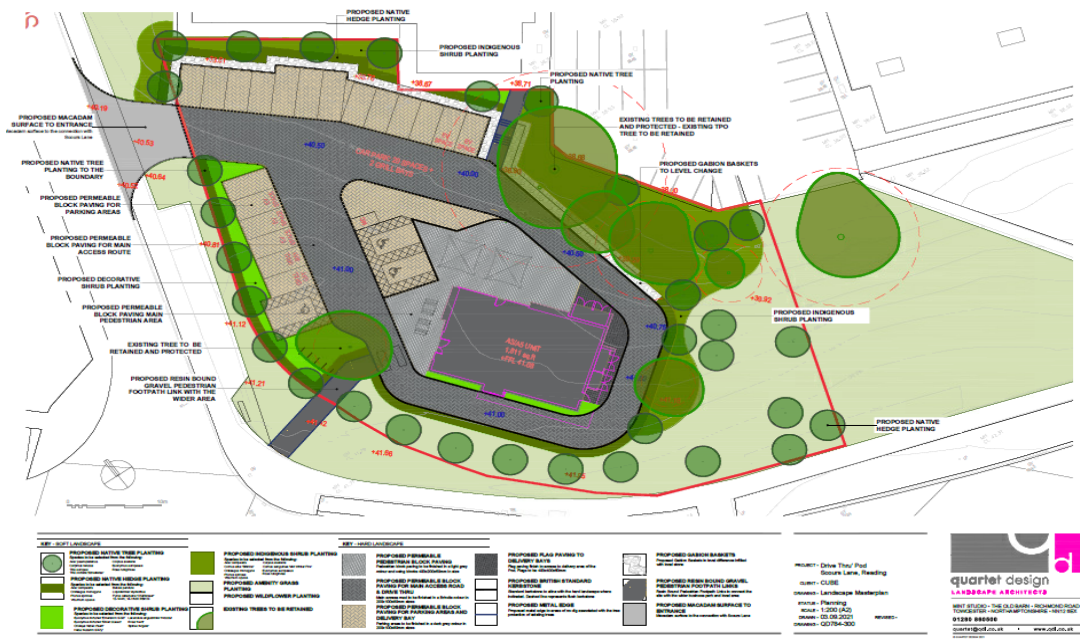
Proposed Elevations



Ground Floor Plan Proposed



Green Link and Ecological Enhancements



Landscape Masterplan