

27 March 2024



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Title	PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT
Ward	Thames
Planning Application Reference:	231673/VAR
Site Address:	55 Vastern Road, ReadingRG1 8BU
Proposed Development	Application under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to vary conditions 2 (approved drawings), 24 (unit mix), 33 (roof terrace enclosures), 35 (parking provision) and 47 (Block B glazing and ventilation) of permission 200188 (allowed on appeal under APP/E0345/W/21/3276463 on 17/03/2022 for Demolition of existing structures and erection of a series of buildings ranging in height from 1 to 11 storeys, including residential dwellings (C3 use class) and retail floorspace (A3 use class), together with a new north-south pedestrian link, connecting Christchurch Bridge to Vastern Road), including an increase from 4 to 5 storeys of the western wing of Block B, amendments to the top two floors of Blocks D & E, changes to the unit mix and various other associated alterations (amended description).
Applicant	Berkeley Homes (Oxford and Chiltern) Ltd.
Report author	Jonathan Markwell, Principal Planning Officer
Deadline:	11 th April 2024
Recommendation	Grant variation of conditions 2, 24, 33, 35 and 47, as sought by the applicant and, additionally, vary the wording of conditions 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 15, 22, 31, 42 and 46.
Conditions	<p>Condition 2 (approved plans) varied for drawing numbers to align with those referenced at paragraphs 3.27 to 3.31 below and those as per the original decision which have not been submitted with this application but remain relevant.</p> <p>Condition 24 (unit mix) varied to: No change to the unit mix (70 x 1-bedroom units, 116 x 2-bedroom units, 20 x 3-bedroom units and 3 x 4-bedroom units) shall be made to the development hereby permitted</p> <p>Condition 33 (roof terrace enclosures) varied to solely reference this being required in respect of the 8th floor level at Block D (no longer required at 6th floor level of Block E owing to design changes)</p> <p>Condition 35 (parking provision) varied to reflect the updated plans referenced in the condition and the altered parking arrangements proposed</p>

Condition 47 (Block B glazing and ventilation) varied to reflect the updated plans referenced in the condition and incorporating the changes to the scheme (e.g. the additional storey within Block B)

Additionally, the following conditions are varied:

Condition 4 (Demolition and Construction Method Statement) varied to reflect that this condition has been satisfied by application 221135/APPCON

Condition 5 (contamination assessment) varied to reflect that this condition has been satisfied by application 230556/APPCON.

Condition 6 (remediation scheme) varied to reflect that this condition has been satisfied by application 230556/APPCON

Condition 10 (Land gas) varied to reflect that parts of this condition (10a & 10b) have been satisfied by applications 221104/APPCON and 221858/APPCON

Condition 11 (archaeological evaluation) varied to reflect that parts of this condition have been satisfied by application 221105/APPCON

Condition 15 (refuse and recycling) varied, following the officer assessment, to also require a management plan to be submitted:

Prior to the first occupation of any residential / commercial unit within the relevant building ((a) Block A - The Railway Warehouse; (b) Block B - The Goods Warehouse; (c) Block C - The Goods Office; (d) Block D – The Generator / The Turbine Hall; (e) Block E – Christchurch Wharf; f) Block F - The Coal Drop Building; (g) Block G; (h) Café) details of how refuse and recycling collections will be managed from the site (including vehicles, servicing and deliveries, as per a management plan) and measures to prevent pests and vermin accessing the refuse and recycling store(s) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter refuse collection, servicing and deliveries shall be carried out fully in accordance with the approved details and management plan, the approved pest and vermin control measures shall be provided prior to the first occupation of the relevant building and the refuse and recycling stores shall not be used for any purpose other than refuse and recycling storage at all times thereafter.

Condition 22 (recording of lodge building) varied to reflect that this condition has been satisfied by application 221126/APPCON

Condition 31 (Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan) varied to reflect that this condition has been satisfied by application 221126/APPCON

Condition 42 (DDA compliant pedestrian route to and from the accessible parking bays details) varied to reflect that this condition has been satisfied by application 230032/APPCON

Condition 46 (CEMP: Biodiversity) varied to reflect that this condition has been satisfied by application 221126/APPCON

Review of other conditions as per the original permission, for inclusion on the future decision notice (as per Planning Practice Guidance on flexible options for planning permissions) summarised as follows:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Three years for implementation – remains unchanged – the scheme will need to be implemented by 17/03/2025. 3. Materials – remains unchanged 7. Contaminated land validation report – remains unchanged 8. Unidentified contamination – remains unchanged 9. De-watering and foundation details – remains unchanged (although this would change if application 231467/APPCON is determined prior to the determination of this application, as per paragraph 4.10 below). 12. Security strategy – remains unchanged 13. Flood risk assessment mitigation measures – remains unchanged 14. Provision of sustainable drainage scheme – remains unchanged 16. Noise assessment – remains unchanged 17. Odour assessment associated with café – remains unchanged 18. Delivery and waste collection hours for café – remains unchanged 19. Café opening hours – remains unchanged 20. Construction and demolition hours – remains unchanged 21. No burning of waste on site during demolition and construction – remains unchanged 23. Demolition of locally listed building – remains unchanged 25. Active window displays – remains unchanged 26. Photovoltaic details – remains unchanged 27. Details of at least 11 wheelchair adaptable units – remains unchanged 28. Hard and soft landscaping details – remains unchanged 29. Boundary treatment details – remains unchanged 30. Landscape management plan – remains unchanged 32. External lighting details – remains unchanged 34. On-site public art – remains unchanged 36. Provision of vehicle access points – remains unchanged 37. Provision of visibility splays – remains unchanged 38. Provision of cycle parking – remains unchanged 39. Parking permits 1 – remains unchanged 40. Parking permits 2 – remains unchanged 41. Electric vehicle charging points – remains unchanged 43. Biodiversity enhancement scheme – remains unchanged 44. Biodiversity Impact Assessment – remains unchanged 45. Wildlife suitable lighting scheme – remains unchanged 48. Provision of towpath access – remains unchanged 49. Car Parking Management Plan – remains unchanged
<p>Informatives</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive and Proactive Working 2. Pre-commencement conditions 3. Highways 4. Legal Agreement as per the original permission remains in place in full 5. Terms of the permission 6. Building Control 7. Complaints about construction 8. Encroachment 9. Noise between residential properties – sound insulation of any building 10. Community Infrastructure Levy 11. Parking permits 12. Do not damage the verge during demolition and construction 13. Advice about installation of underground services 14. Likely requirement for separate advertisement consent in respect of future externally facing advertisements (shown indicatively on the proposed elevations)

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. A series of changes are proposed to the allowed on appeal scheme for the redevelopment of this allocated site for 209 residential units. Most substantially, these changes include an increase from 4 to 5 storeys of the western wing of Block B, amendments to the top two floors of Blocks D & E, changes to the unit mix and various other associated alterations. These are all predominantly arising from the requirement for the proposals to reflect fire safety changes, as introduced since the original scheme was allowed. The changes have been carefully considered, both individually and collectively. It is considered in overall terms that, whilst some harmful impacts in comparison with the original scheme are identified, in other respects the changes result in welcomed additions. The harmful impacts identified are not so significant or fundamental to outweigh the benefits previously identified by the Inspector in supporting the original proposals, enabling this application to be supported.

2. Introduction and site description

- 2.1. The application site measures 0.76 ha and is part of an allocated site in the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 (Site CR11g – Riverside) for residential redevelopment and leisure uses.



Figure 1 - Site Location Plan

- 2.2. The application site, as existing, is mainly hard-surfaced open car-parking, which serves the part-two, part-three storey vacant and unoccupied office building, most recently occupied by Southern & Scottish Electricity Networks (SSE). The buildings front onto Vastern Road, with vehicular access from Lynmouth Road. The entrance building is designated (as of 22/05/2017) on the RBC List of Locally Important Buildings. There are also two energy storage systems within the application site. One is next to the building and adjacent to the vehicular access off Lynmouth Road. The other is in the north-west corner of the site, as part of a grassed area in this area of the site.



Figure 2 – View from Reading Station car park looking north-west towards the southern (Vastern Road) boundary of the site and beyond



Figure 3 – View from Christchurch Bridge looking south towards the site and Lynmouth Road properties (right)

- 2.3. The site's unusual shape can be seen on the location plan above.
- 2.4. Immediately to the north of the site is the southern bank of the River Thames, which is a public right of way. Christchurch Bridge provides a pedestrian and cyclist link to the north side of the river and Christchurch Meadows at this point. To the east of the application site is the remaining Southern & Scottish Electricity transfer station, which serves Reading. Beyond this are the 4-storey Thames Court (primarily accessed via Norman Place) residential flats, which front onto the river, and the predominantly 3-storey (and roofspace) Sovereign House office building, which fronts onto Vastern Road.
- 2.5. To the south of the site is Vastern Road, which forms the northern element of the town's Inner Distribution Road (IDR). Beyond this is Vastern Court Retail Park and associated buildings leading to Reading Station. To the west of the site are the 2-storey terraced properties of Lynmouth Road, with the 3-storey Lynmouth Court properties closest to the river. No's 1-6 Lynmouth Court front onto the river, with No's 7-12 a continuation of the Lynmouth Road terrace and parking spaces between the two blocks.

- 2.6. As already mentioned, the site is part of Policy CR11g sub-area allocation. Accordingly, the site is also within the designated wider CR11 Station/River Major Opportunity Area. This overarching element of this policy specifies a vision and a set of principles which apply to all sites within the major opportunity area, stating as follows:

Station/River Major Opportunity Area

VISION: The station/river area will be a flagship scheme, extending the centre and providing a mixed use destination in itself and centred on the new station and public transport interchange. It will integrate the transport links and areas northwards towards the River Thames and into the heart of the centre.

CR11: STATION/RIVER MAJOR OPPORTUNITY AREA

Development in the Station/River Major Opportunity Area will:

- i) Contribute towards providing a high-density mix of uses to create a destination in itself and capitalise on its role as one of the most accessible locations in the south east. Development for education will be an acceptable part of the mix;*
- ii) Help facilitate greater pedestrian and cycle permeability, particularly on the key movement corridors. North-south links through the area centred on the new station, including across the IDR, are of particular importance;*
- iii) Provide developments that front onto and provide visual interest to existing and future pedestrian routes and open spaces;*
- iv) Safeguard land which is needed for mass rapid transit routes and stops;*
- v) Provide additional areas of open space where possible, with green infrastructure, including a direct landscaped link between the station and the River Thames;*
- vi) Give careful consideration to the areas of transition to low and medium density residential and conserve and, where possible, enhance listed buildings, conservation areas and historic gardens and their settings;*
- vii) Give careful consideration to the archaeological potential of the area and be supported by appropriate archaeological assessment which should inform the development;*
- viii) Demonstrate that it is part of a comprehensive approach to its sub-area, which does not prevent neighbouring sites from fulfilling the aspirations of this policy, and which contributes towards the provision of policy requirements that benefit the whole area, such as open space; and*
- ix) Give early consideration to the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*

Figure 4 – Extract from Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 – Policy CR11

- 2.7. More specifically in relation to the application site, this forms the western part of the Riverside sub-area, with the sub-area policy stating in full:

CR11g, RIVERSIDE:

Development should maintain and enhance public access along and to the Thames, and should be set back at least ten metres from the top of the bank of the river. Development should continue the high quality route including a green link from the north of the station to the Christchurch Bridge, with potential for an area of open space at the riverside. The main use of the site should be residential, although some small-scale leisure and complementary offices will also be acceptable. Development should take account of mitigation required as a result of a Flood Risk Assessment.

Site size: 1.24 ha Indicative potential: 250-370 dwellings, 1,000-2,000 sq m of leisure, no significant net gain in offices.

Figure 5 – Extract from Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 – Policy CR11g

- 2.8. These characteristics and requirements are all reflected within the Station/River Major Opportunity Area Strategy, as specified at figure 5.3 of the Local Plan.



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Figure 5.3: Station/River Major Opportunity Area Strategy

Figure 6 – Extract from Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 – Figure 5.3

2.9. In addition to the site allocation and local listing described above, there are also a number of other site constraints / designations / nearby designations:

- Within the Office Core
- Within the Central Core
- Within Flood Zone 2 & 3
- Within an air quality management area
- Within a smoke control zone
- Includes contaminated land
- Adjacent to a public right of way along the river
- The River Thames, Christchurch Meadows, Kings Meadows and Hills Meadow are major landscape features
- Christchurch Meadows, Kings Meadows and Hills Meadow are important areas of open space
- From an ecological perspective the site backs on to the River Thames which constitutes a Priority Habitat 'Rivers' (as per the NPPF)
- The River Thames is an existing green link
- There are mature Plane trees on the Vastern Road frontage
- Neighbouring Lynmouth Road is a nearby sensitive location – low-rise residential

- Within the North of the Station cluster identified in the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD as being potentially suitable for heat network schemes.
- 2.10. The application is being considered at Planning Applications Committee as the proposal constitutes a ‘major’ development. Planning Practice Guidance on Flexible Options for Planning Permissions confirms that;
- “Permission granted under section 73 takes effect as a new, independent permission to carry out the same development as previously permitted subject to new or amended conditions. The new permission sits alongside the original permission, which remains intact and unamended. It is open to the applicant to decide whether to implement the new permission or the one originally granted”.*
- 2.11. Given this context and the floorspace and number of residential units involved in the proposals, the scheme is required to be considered and decided by the Planning Applications Committee.

3. The proposal

- 3.1. The proposal is seeking to make a series of amendments to the original permission at the site, which was allowed on appeal on 17/03/2022 for:

Demolition of existing structures and erection of a series of buildings ranging in height from 1 to 11 storeys, including residential dwellings (C3 use class) and retail floorspace (A3 use class), together with a new north-south pedestrian link, connecting Christchurch Bridge to Vastern Road.

- 3.2. The amendments are being sought via a section 73 application, to vary conditions 2 (approved plans), 24 (unit mix), 33 (roof terrace enclosures), 35 (parking provision) and 47 (Block B glazing and ventilation) of original permission 200188. In headline terms, the main proposed changes are summarised as including:
- Internal reconfigurations of the layouts to reflect fire safety changes, most notably within Blocks B, D and E, including:
 - o the addition of second staircases within Blocks B, D and E and increase in width of all staircases within all blocks
 - o altered internal corridor lengths (typically shorter lengths), circulation spaces, smoke shafts, air inlets and riser cupboard locations
 - o omission of direct access between internal circulation spaces to covered areas
 - o Increase of one storey to the western wing of Block B, from 4 to 5 storeys in height
 - Design and massing amendments to the top two floors of Blocks D and E, including increasing the width of Block D (but also increasing the setback on the riverside elevation) and changing the material and form of Block E from a glazing to brickwork;
 - Elevational changes to reflect internal changes, including various changes to windows within Blocks A, B, D (for example changes at first to seventh floor level on the riverside elevation) and E.
 - Changes to unit mix – whilst the overall number of dwellings remains unaltered at 209, the number of units within each separate block is changing, with five fewer units within Block E and five additional units in Block B. Furthermore, there are a number of changes in terms of the number of bedrooms per unit, with an overall increase in 1-bed units (from 61 as approved to 70 as proposed), decrease in 2-bed units (from 136 to 116), increase in 3-bed units (from 12 to 20) and the introduction of 3 x 4-bed units into the development too, as detailed in Table 1 below (App = Approved; Pro = Proposed):

Block	1-bed			2-bed			3-bed			4-bed			Total		
	App	Pro	+/-	App	Pro	+/-	App	Pro	+/-	A	Pro	+/-	App	Pro	+/-
A	8	8	0	19	19	0							27	27	0
B	29	41	+12	49	41	-8	0	1	+1				78	83	+5
C	3	4	+1	7	6	-1							10	10	0
D	8	10	+2	35	32	-3	12	11	-1	0	2	+2	55	55	0
E	13	7	-6	19	11	-8	0	8	+8	0	1	+1	32	27	-5
F				6	6	0							6	6	0
G				1	1	0							1	1	0
Total	61	70	+9	136	116	-20	12	20	+8	0	3	+3	209	209	0
%mix	29.2	33.5	+4.3	65.1	55.5	-9.6	5.7	9.6	+3.9	0	+1.4	+1.4			

Table 1 – comparison of the approved and proposed mix of units per block

- 3.3. More specifically, the changes can be broken down into site-wide external changes and block-by-block amendments. Helpfully, the applicant has provided detailed schedules of the proposed alterations in each instance. Describing first the site wide external changes, these are identified by the applicant as follows (text in blue marks changes made during the course of the application, or additional changes proposed not originally included by the applicant, but added to the schedule following officer feedback):

Reference	Description
S01	Adjustments to the towpath access.
S02	Continuation of footpath around south and east of Turbine Hall.
S03	Paving updated to entrance to Turbine Hall.
S04	Steps updated.
S05	Additional footpath connections added to rear of Christchurch Wharf.
S06	Footpath adjusted to refuse store at rear of Coal Drop Building.
S07	Continuation of footpath around east of Goods Office and Goods Warehouse.
S08	Adjustment to parking and landscape along central street.
S09	Parking area and landscape to Good Warehouse amended.
S10	Additional footpath onto Vastern Road.
S11	OMITTED - Reverted to approved layout.
S12	Paving updated to ancillary areas to Railway Warehouse.
S13	Changes to planting along Vastern Road.

Figure 7 – Site-wide schedule of changes

3.4. In overall terms, the external layout changes are relatively limited in nature and scope. A number of changes involve additional footpath accesses to fire doors introduced. Arguably the most significant change is associated with the parking and soft landscaping around Block B. The references within figure 7 above (S01, S02 etc) are then shown on the marked up proposed illustrative masterplan referenced below at figure 8, with the corresponding approved plan also shown to help illustrate the exact nature of the proposed changes in visual terms:



Figure 8 - Approved (above) and marked up (below) proposed illustrative masterplan



3.5. The applicant has also provided brief commentary seeking to justify and explain each change made, with this detailed below:

Reference	Justification
S01	Layout updated to reflect the approved towpath access plan.
S02	Footpath continued around the building to connect the revised fire escape locations to the alternative means of escape required from the undercroft area.
S03	Paving area amended to reflect changes to the entrance door position and width.
S04	Steps updated to reflect changes to the site layout to suit retaining wall within undercroft parking area. Blister paving added to the top and bottom of the steps. The revised stair position results in marginally greater soft landscape area to the north.
S05	Footpaths to the rear of the block amended to reflect the new fire escape locations. Soft landscaping updated to replace shrub planting with flowering lawn and an additional tree to provide more beneficial amenity and biodiversity.
S06	Footpath updated to suit the revised refuse store door positions.
S07	Footpath continued around the building to connect the revised fire escape locations and cycle store access.
S08	Adjustments to the hard and soft landscape to allow direct access to the new sub station within Goods Office.
S09	4no parking spaces relocated to reflect changes to the undercroft elements through the alterations to plant room requirements to Goods Warehouse. Landscape adjusted to suit.
S10	Footpath added to the front of the block to reflect the fire escape location from the second stair core. See S13 for changes to planting.
S11	n/a
S12	Connections to the ancillary spaces adjusted to reflect the door positions into the refuse and cycle stores. See S13 for changes to planting.
S13	Further review of the existing culvert along Vastern Road shows limited planting depth above. A stronger planting bed has been provided against the buildings with flowering lawn between this and the back of footway, thereby maintaining a green edge to the site and increasing biodiversity.

Figure 9 – Justification by the applicant for the site-wide changes

3.6. In terms of Block A (The Railway Warehouse), the proposed changes (in comparison with other blocks) are fairly minimal, including just changes to the stair cores, waste and recycling area and other internal layout changes. Externally, on the Vastern Road elevation the position of a Juliette balcony on all upper floors has moved across one window (reflecting internal changes). On the north elevation (with views towards the rear of Lynmouth Road properties) three windows have been omitted (one each at third to fifth floor level).

Reference	Description
A01	Stair configuration changed.
A02	Entrance door position set-back.
A03	Communal circulation arrangement changed with the introduction of a lift lobby and adjustment to the lengths of corridors serving apartment entrances.
A04	Internal arrangement of apartment handed.
A05	Balcony position moved two bays to the right.
A06	Window changed to tax (bricked-in) opening.
A07	Lift and smoke shaft over-run positions changed and AOV introduced over stairs.
A08	Introduction of plant rooms.
A09	Refuse configuration updated.

Figure 10 – Block A schedule of changes

3.7. The majority of these changes are detailed below in figures 11 and 12, with the mark-up showing the areas where changes are proposed, alongside the already approved plans to help illustrate the extent of the changes proposed.



Figure 11 - Approved (left) and marked up (right) proposed ground floor plans



Figure 12 - Approved (left) and marked up (right) proposed north elevation plans

3.8. The justification and explanation provided by the applicant for the Block A changes is as follows:

Reference	Justification
A01	Stair width increased from 1200mm overall width to 1200mm between handrails to reflect fire regulation changes. Stair configuration amended to suit.
A02	Entrance door moved inwards to suit changes in stair arrangement and subsequent relocation of stair escape door.
A03	Introduction of a lift lobby between the stairs and corridors with access to apartments in line with fire regulation changes. Corridors serving apartment entrances redesigned to limit distance from apartment entrance to the lift lobby to 7.5m max. to reflect fire regulations.
A04	Internal apartment layout handed as entrance is relocated to sit within the communal corridor as required under fire regulations.
A05	Balcony position changed to reflect internal arrangement changes set out in A04.
A06	Window to apartment hallway blocked due to relocation of apartment entrance to sit 7.5m from protected lift lobby to reflect fire regulation changes. Relocation of riser cupboard results in window being blocked.
A07	Lift position changed to suit A01 and A03, with smoke shaft position adjusted to suit fire regulations. AOV added to roof plan over stair position for clarity to reflect fire regulation requirements.
A08	Plant rooms introduced for LV switchgear and Emergency LV switchgear to provide dedicated emergency electrical supplies to each block.
A09	Internal refuse store arrangement updated to suit feedback from waste officer.

Figure 13 – Justification by the applicant for the Block A changes

3.9. In terms of Blocks B (The Goods Warehouse) and C (The Goods Office), the proposed changes are numerous, as per the schedule at figure 14 below. In particular, it is proposed to add a further storey of accommodation at fourth floor level on the western wing of the Block B building, altering this from a four to five storey building at this point, as shown below at figures 16 and 17. This introduces a further six residential units at this point, with 3x1-bed units facing east and 3x2-bed units facing west. The proposed design approach would continue the pattern of the consented scheme at this point. In addition, a second

stair core has been introduced for fire safety regulation reasons, with a series of changes occurring as a result. The introduction of a second stair results in an approved 2-bed unit being reduced in size and becoming a 1-bed unit on each floor along the Vastern Road frontage. Another change is the internal reconfiguration of 2x1-bed units at tenth floor level on the south elevation becoming 1x3-bed unit. When the various proposed changes within Block B are accounted for, there is a net increase of five dwellings in comparison with the already approved scheme.

Reference	Description
B01	Stair configuration changed.
B02	Escape door position changed.
B03	Entrance door arrangement changed.
B04	Introduction of second stair and lift core within tallest part of the building.
B05	Apartment changed from 2-bed to 1-bed.
B06	Window changed to fire escape door.
B07	Communal circulation arrangement changed with the introduction of a lift lobby and adjustment to the lengths of corridors serving apartment entrances.
B08	Introduction of new plant rooms.
B09	Parking spaces reconfigured.
B10	Cycle store consolidated to a single location.
B11	Refuse store consolidated to a single location.
B12	Introduction of an on-site management office.
B13	Introduction of a single storey.
B14	Lift and smoke shaft over-run positions changed and AOV introduced over stairs.
B15	Balcony removed.
B16	Access to parking area introduced.
B17	Combination of 2no. 1-bed to 1no 3-bed.

Reference	Description
C01	Stair configuration changed.
C02	Escape door position changed.
C03	Apartment changed from 2-bed to 1-bed.
C04	Communal circulation arrangement changed with the introduction of a lift lobby and adjustment to the lengths of corridors serving apartment entrances.
C05	Introduction of sub station, reconfiguration of refuse and cycle stores to suit.
C06	Extent of flat roof increased.
B18	AOD levels updated.

Figure 14 – Blocks B&C schedule of changes

3.10. A series of changes are also shown at ground floor level, including alterations to the vehicle and cycle parking arrangements, the refuse and recycling storage areas, a further internally located plant room. A change at the very south-west corner of Block B at ground floor level also seeks to introduce a management office/suite (ancillary to the Class C3 residential use), which the supporting planning statement advises would be available for use by occupiers of all dwellings at the site. These changes are shown below in figure 15. In addition, at roof level changes to the lift shaft and smoke shaft over-run positions and heights has resulted in a change in the overall (including roof level plant) height of Block B from AOD 73.7m to 73.85m, representing an increase of 0.15m. The building remains 11 storeys in total, with an overall height of 35.25m.

Approved Planning Drawing

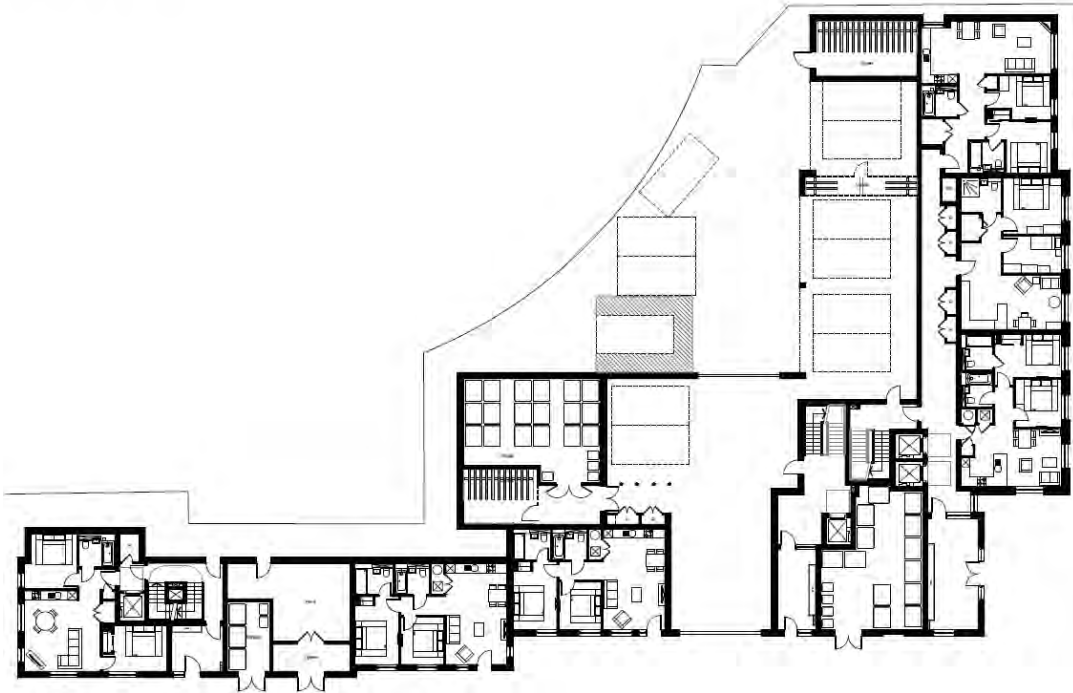


Figure 15 - Approved (above) and marked up (below) proposed ground floor plans

25 Proposed Resubmission Drawing





Figure 16 - Approved (left) and marked up (right) proposed fourth floor plans (showing the six additional units proposed at this point)



Figure 17 - Approved (above) and marked up (below) proposed west elevation plans



3.11. The justification and explanation provided by the applicant for the Blocks B&C changes is as follows:

Reference	Justification
B01	Stair width increased from 1200mm overall width to 1200mm between handrails to reflect fire regulation changes. Stair configuration amended to suit.
B02	Fire escape door and associated internal corridors amended to provide direct escape to external area (planning approved discharged into a vehicle undercroft area) to suit fire regulations.
B03	Minor amendment to the main entrance door and screen to allow the provision of an on-site management office.
B04	Second stair core with lift introduced in the tallest part of the building to reflect fire regulation changes to buildings over 18m.
B05	Introduction of second stair as noted in B04 reduces the footprint of this apartment and therefore results in a change from 2 bedrooms to 1.
B06	Fire escape door and associated internal corridors introduced to provide direct escape to external area from the new second stair core.
B07	Introduction of a lift lobby between the stairs and corridors with access to apartments in line with fire regulation changes. Corridors serving apartment entrances redesigned to limit distance from apartment entrance to the lift lobby to 7.5m max. to reflect fire regulations (increased travel distances in lower building with introduction of mechanical extract and ventilation system). Riser cupboards amended to suit.
B08	Larger plant room requirements due to changes in water tank sizes serving the sprinkler systems and introduction of LV switchgear and Emergency LV switchgear to provide dedicated emergency electrical supplies to each block.
B09	4no parking spaces relocated to reflect changes to the undercroft elements through the alterations to plant room requirements set out in B08.
B10	Cycle store consolidated to a single location due to the introduction of plant rooms and subsequent internal changes.
B11	Refuse store consolidated to a single location due to the introduction of plant rooms and subsequent internal changes. Internal arrangement updated to suit waste officer comments.
B12	On site management office introduced to serve the development.
B13	Introduction of a single storey to provide 6no apartments (3x 1-bed and 3x 2-bed) to offset losses in saleable floorspace through fire changes.
B14	Lift position changed to suit B01 and B04, with smoke shaft position adjusted to suit fire regulations. AOV added to roof plan over stair position for clarity to reflect fire regulation requirements.
B15	Balcony removed to reflect internal changes (introduction of stair core).
B16	New corridor and access to rear of building introduced to provide more direct routes to refuse, cycles and parking areas from second core.
B17	Apartments combined to maintain policy-compliant number of 3-beds and overall quantum of 209 dwellings.

Reference	Justification
C01	Stair width increased from 1200mm overall width to 1200mm between handrails to reflect fire regulation changes. Stair configuration amended to suit.
C02	Fire escape door and associated internal corridors amended to provide direct escape to external area to suit fire regulations.
C03	Changes to stair, lift, and common circulation as noted in C01 reduces the footprint of this apartment and therefore results in a change from 2 bedrooms to 1.
C04	Introduction of a lift lobby in line with fire regulation changes. Corridors serving apartment entrances redesigned to limit distance from apartment entrance to the lift lobby to 7.5m max. to reflect fire regulations. Riser cupboards amended to suit.
C05	Sub station required due to increased electrical demands in part due to increased electric car charging facilities. Refuse store internal arrangement updated to suit waste officer comments.
C06	Area of flat roof on the rear elevation increased to suit internal changes noted in C04.
B18	AOD levels for plant over-run to roof-tops updated to suit required offset from closest roof obstacles and required offset from ceiling of top floor.

Figure 18 - Justification by the applicant for the Blocks B&C changes

- 3.12. Moving on to Block D (The Turbine Hall), figure 19 provides the schedule of changes specified by the applicant. One of the main internal changes is the introduction of a second staircase into the south-west corner of the proposed building. A series of other ground floor alterations are proposed, such as the consolidation of cycle parking into a single space, the provision of plant rooms, alterations to the vehicle parking layout and access to this space (see figure 20).

Reference	Description
D01	Stair configuration changed.
D02	Escape door position changed.
D03	Introduction of second stair and lift core within tallest part of the building.
D04	Communal circulation arrangement changed with the introduction of a lift lobby and adjustment to the lengths of corridors serving apartment entrances.
D05	Parking spaces reconfigured.
D06	Cycle store consolidated to a single location.
D07	Entrance door arrangement changed.
D08	Number of windows changed on north elevation.
D09	Set-back element expanded to meet line of building below on east and west elevations.
D10	Set-back element pulled back from northern elevation.
D11	Apartment changed from 3-bed to 1-bed.
D12	Plant enclosure proportions changed.
D13	Lift and smoke shaft over-run positions changed and AOV introduced over stairs.
D14	Change from metal cladding to brickwork.
D15	Changes to brick detailing.
D16	Introduction of plant rooms.
D17	Adjustment to parking space setting out.

Reference	Description
D18	Internal apartment arrangement handed.
D19	Study room added.
D20	Refuse store updated.

Figure 19 – Block D schedule of changes



Figure 20 - Approved (left) and marked up (right) proposed ground floor plans

3.13. On the upper floors there have been some reductions in internal corridor lengths. That, together with the external changes proposed (as discussed below) has created some additional internal space which has resulted in the number of bedrooms within some units changing. At fifth to seventh floor on the western elevation an additional room is proposed within the approved 2-bed units, making these now proposed as 3-bed units. The applicant did not include this within its original schedule of changes, but is now referencing these as study rooms (see change D19), assisting future occupiers who may work from home for example. Officers have counted these as additional bedrooms in all instances, with this reflected in Table 1 of this report. On the top two floors of Block D the approved 3 x 3-bed units (at both eighth and ninth floors) have now been reconfigured to provide 1x1-bed, 1x3-bed and 1x4-bed at both floors. Again, the fourth bedroom within the 4-bed units have been marked on the plans as study rooms, but have been counted by officers as additional bedrooms.



Figure 21 - Approved (left) and marked up (right) proposed eighth floor plans

3.14. Externally, a series of changes are proposed, most significantly at the top two floors of the building. It is proposed to increase the east-west width of the building at this point, so that it aligns with the external envelope of the floors below, rather than being inset as per the approved scheme (see figure 22). It is also proposed to set the building slightly further back from the riverside elevation too, while increases to the footprint of the rooftop plant are also sought. This all results in slight increases in the height of the building (excluding plant) from AOD points of 67.87m to 68.225m, meaning a total increase of 0.355m (overall height is 30.125m). The building remains 10 storeys in height. On the north elevation the window arrangements have also changed at first to seventh floor level, in particular the middle section of the building, with the inclusion of four columns of windows (rather than three as granted), without clear breaks between the floors (see figure 22). At the southern end of the western elevation the original glazed finish is replaced with brickwork (as shown in figure 23), but glazing remains the predominant material of the top two floors.



Figure 22 - Approved (left) and marked up (right) proposed north elevation (riverside) plans

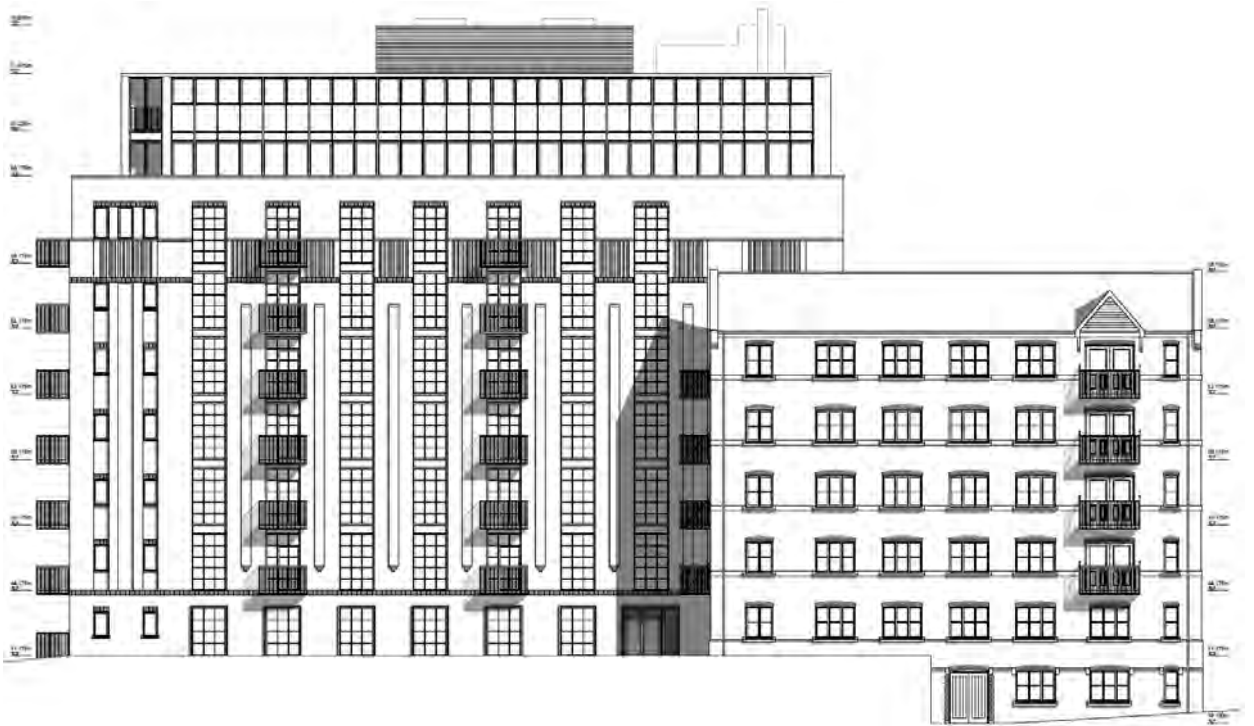


Figure 23 - Approved (above) and marked up (below) proposed west elevation plans



3.15. The justification and explanation provided by the applicant for the Block D changes is as follows:

Reference	Justification
D01	Stair width increased from 1200mm overall width to 1200mm between handrails to reflect fire regulation changes. Stair configuration amended to suit.
D02	Fire escape door and associated internal corridors amended to provide direct escape to external area to suit fire regulations.
D03	Second stair core with lift introduced in the tallest part of the building to reflect fire regulation changes to buildings over 18m.
D04	Introduction of a lift lobby between the stairs and corridors with access to apartments in line with fire regulation changes. Corridors serving apartment entrances redesigned to limit distance from apartment entrance to the lift lobby to 7.5m max. to reflect fire regulations. Riser cupboards amended to suit.
D05	Undercroft parking spaces relocated to reflect changes to new stair and lift core positions and alterations to structure to suit changes on floors above.
D06	Cycle stores consolidated into a single location following changes to circulation and parking area.
D07	Minor amendment to the main entrance door to suit changes to the stair position and orientation.
D08	Change from 3 windows to 5 windows within this section of the building to provide more glazing within apartments where party wall runs centrally on upper floors whilst retaining odd number of openings and symmetry on elevation.
D09	Set-back removed to limit loss of accommodation from introduction of secondary stair core.
D10	Set-back increased to balance increased width on the east and west elevations and to allow simplified structural approach.
D11	Introduction of second stair as noted in B04 reduces the footprint of this apartment and therefore results in a change from 2 bedrooms to 1.
D12	Enclosure changed to reflect repositioned plant due to locations of smoke shafts, lift over-runs and AOVs. AOV to new stair to open within the enclosure to provide safer access to roof plant.
D13	Lift position changed to suit D01 and D03, with smoke shaft position adjusted to suit fire regulations. AOV added to roof plan over stair position for clarity to reflect fire regulation requirements.
D14	Brickwork introduced to suit elevational changes, providing a "stop" to the glazed element which now sits further back on the building (see D10).
D15	Detailing at upper floors changed to suit the revised elevations on the top two floors.
D16	Plant rooms introduced for LV switchgear and Emergency LV switchgear to provide dedicated emergency electrical supplies to each block.
D17	Parking spaces adjusted to provide a clear gap to allow alternative fire escape routes from the undercroft area.

Reference	Justification
D18	Apartment layout handed to suit change in entrance door position (driven by changes to communal corridor arrangement) and maximise the floor area for the living/kitchen/dining area of this apartment. These internal changes do not affect the external envelope.
D19	Introduction of study rooms to apartments where possible to promote a better home-working environment. These internal changes do not affect the external envelope.
D20	Internal arrangement updated to reflect waste officer comments.

Figure 24 - Justification by the applicant for the Block D changes

- 3.16. Finally, in terms of Blocks E (Christchurch Wharf), F & G (The Coal Drop Building), a host of changes are proposed, as per the schedule at figure 25 below.

Reference	Description
E01	Stair configuration changed.
E02	Escape door position changed.
E03	Introduction of second stair and lift core within tallest part of the building.
E04	Communal circulation arrangement changed with the introduction of a lift lobby and adjustment to the lengths of corridors serving apartment entrances.
E05	Cycle store position adjusted.
E06	2no 1-bed apartments combined into a single 2-bed apartment at ground floor, and 1no 1-bed and 1no 2-bed combined to a single 2-bed on upper floors.
E07	Door and window configuration handed.
E08	Doorset changed to window. Balcony removed on upper floors.
E09	High-level windows omitted on rear elevation.
E10	New south-facing window added.
E11	Building footprint changed to match floors below. Addition of 1no 1-bed apartment.
E12	Building footprint changed to match floors below, with provision of 2no setbacks to provide external amenity.
E13	1no 2-bed apartment changed to 1no 3-bed apartment.
E14	Lift and smoke shaft over-run positions changed and AOV introduced over stairs.
E15	Study room added.
E16	Additional height information added.

Reference	Description
F01	Stair configuration changed.
F02	Entrance door handed.
F03	Window sizes changed.
F04	Enlarged lean-to building through introduction of plant rooms.
F05	Refuse store updated.

Figure 25 – Blocks E,F&G schedule of changes

- 3.17. Internally, the provision of a second stair (due to the height of the building and fire regulations thereby requiring this) results in a series of changes. At the southern end of Block E 2x1-bed units are condensed into 1x2-bed unit at ground floor level (change E06 on figures 25 and 26), while on the first to fourth floor levels a 1-bed unit is omitted and a more spacious 2-bed unit is created and a previous 2-bed unit becomes a 2-bed + study room unit (counted as a 3-bed unit in Table 1). At fifth floor level the space is reconfigured from 2x1 and 2x2-bed units (4 units in total) to 1x1-bed and 2x3-bed units (3 units in total). At sixth floor level, an additional unit is created through a change from the approved 2x2-bed unit layout to 1x1-bed and 2x3-bed units (3 units in total), as shown in figure 27. At seventh floor level, again as shown in figure 27, 2 units continue to be proposed, but instead of both these units including 2-beds (as approved), the revised layout creates 1x2-bed and 1x4-bed unit, overlooking the river (the floor plan depicts one of these rooms as a study, but this has been counted as a bedroom in Table 1). In overall terms, these changes result in a reduction of five units within Block E, from 32 (as approved), to 27 (as now proposed). There are now six fewer 1-bed units (from 13 to 7) and eight fewer 2-bed units (from 19 to 11), with this partly offset by the introduction of 8x3-bed units and 1x4-bed unit within Block E. There are no changes to the number of bedrooms within any of the Block F & G units.



Figure 26 - Approved (above) and marked up (below) proposed ground floor plans



Figure 27 - Approved (left) & marked up (right) proposed sixth (above) & seventh (below) floor plans for Block E



3.18. Externally, the most prominent change is associated with the top two floors, which essentially now replicates the floorplate of the floors below and is proposed to be finished with brickwork rather than glazing. As such, instead of being inset on each elevation (see figure 27) as approved, the form now follows the remainder of the building (see figures 28 & 29), although the proposed change in brick colour seeks to create a contrast.



Figure 28 - Approved (above) & marked up (below) proposed west (left) & north riverside (right) Block E elevation plans



3.19. These changes also result in the increase in the height of the building. At roof parapet level the AOD points alter from 62.3m to 63.175m, an increase in height of 0.875m. When rooftop plant is also taken into account the AOD points change from 64.6m to 64.852m, an increase of 0.252m. The building remains 8 storeys in height, with the total height of the building being 27.452m (AOD 37.4m at the lowest point adjacent to the river, rising to AOD 64.852m). A variety of window changes are also sought, including the omission of a series of windows at first to fifth floor level on the west elevation (facing towards Lynmouth Court), as shown in figure 28. These were previously approved to serve a living/dining/kitchen room and a staircase but are no longer proposed (the corresponding area internally is an en-suite bathroom and one of the two staircores).

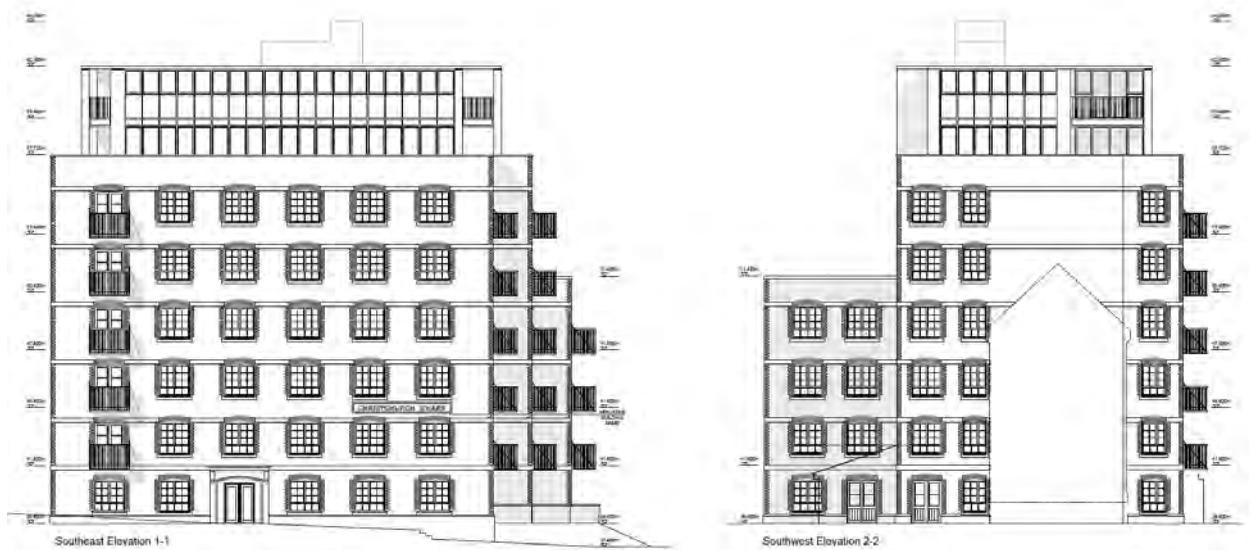


Figure 29 - Approved (above) & marked up (below) proposed east (left) & south (right) Block E elevation plans



3.20. Window changes (decreasing the size of the openings) are also proposed on the west (facing the rear of properties which front onto Lynmouth Road) elevation of Block F, as shown in figure 30. Plant rooms are also proposed to be introduced to Block F (see figures 26 and 30), together with changes to the refuse and recycling store. No changes are proposed to Block G.



Figure 30 - Approved (left) & marked up (right) proposed west elevation (riverside) plans for Block F&G

3.21. The justification and explanation provided by the applicant for the Blocks E, F & G changes is as follows:

Reference	Justification
E01	Stair width increased from 1200mm overall width to 1200mm between handrails to reflect fire regulation changes. Stair configuration amended to suit.
E02	Fire escape door and associated internal corridors amended to provide direct escape to external area to suit fire regulations.
E03	Second stair core with lift introduced in the tallest part of the building to reflect fire regulation changes to buildings over 18m.
E04	Introduction of a lift lobby between the stairs and corridors with access to apartments in line with fire regulation changes. Corridors serving apartment entrances redesigned to limit distance from apartment entrance to the lift lobby to 7.5m max. to reflect fire regulations. Riser cupboards amended to suit.
E05	Cycle store shifted south to allow emergency escape door to revised stair core position.
E06	Combination of apartments due to smaller footprint sizes through larger circulation spaces, and requirement to maintain 209 dwellings across the scheme.
E07	Handing to suit internal arrangement changes.
E08	Removal of balcony and change to window to reflect the internal arrangement changes and provide rhythm with the adjacent two bays to this elevation.
E09	Windows omitted due to incompatibility with internal arrangement of the apartment and configuration / floor levels within the stair cores.
E10	Introduction of windows to upper floor apartments to allow introduction of study spaces. Introduction of study rooms to apartments where possible to promote a better home-working environment. These internal changes do not affect the external envelope.
E11	Changes to floor due to inefficiencies of previous scheme when incorporating second stair and lift cores in such a small footprint.
E12	Changes to floor due to inefficiencies of previous scheme when incorporating second stair and lift cores in such a small footprint.
E13	Change in number of bedrooms to suit floorspace of the apartment and maintain quantum of 3-beds across the site.
E14	Lift position changed to suit E01 and E03, with smoke shaft position adjusted to suit fire regulations. AOV added to roof plan over stair position for clarity to reflect fire regulation requirements.
E15	Introduction of study rooms to apartments where possible to promote a better home-working environment. These internal changes do not affect the external envelope.
E16	AOD levels provided to maintain consistency with approved elevations. Changes to AOD heights through the introduction of parapet to suit masonry construction.

Reference	Justification
F01	Stair width increased from 1200mm overall width to 1200mm between handrails to reflect fire regulation changes. Stair configuration amended to suit.
F02	Door handing to reflect stair core layout changes.
F03	Window size and positions changed to provide fire separation from adjacent fenestration.
F04	Plant rooms introduced for LV switchgear and Emergency LV switchgear to provide dedicated emergency electrical supplies to each block.
F05	Internal arrangement updated to suit waste officer comments.

Figure 31 - Justification by the applicant for the Blocks E,F&G changes

3.22. As a point of clarification, officers are mindful of paragraph 013 of the Planning Practice Guidance for flexible options for planning permissions, which states:

“an application made under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 can be used to make a material amendment by varying or removing conditions

associated with a planning permission. There is no statutory limit on the degree of change permissible to conditions under s73, but the change must only relate to conditions and not to the operative part of the permission”.

3.23. In this regard, it is clarified that the proposed changes do not relate to the operative part of the permission (the description of development is unchanged) and so can proceed to be considered under the s73 route applied for.

3.24. During the course of the application a number of changes have been made to the proposals, including:

- Omission of originally proposed changes to the wording of condition 48 (towpath access), following officer comments for the original wording to be retained unaltered.
- Changes to the waste and recycling storage provision, layout and access arrangements.
- The applicant has acknowledged that various internal alterations have resulted in a number of units including additional rooms (over and above the originally referenced mix changes), which the applicant has referenced as study rooms, but officers have counted as additional bedrooms within units. For information, at the outset of the application, the applicant was specifying that the changes to the mix, in comparison with the original mix of the allowed on appeal permission, were as follows (App = Approved; Pro = Proposed):

Block	1-bed			2-bed			3-bed			Total		
	App	Pro	+/-	App	Pro	+/-	App	Pro	+/-	App	Pro	+/-
A	8	8	0	19	19	0				27	27	0
B	29	41	+12	49	41	-8	0	1	+1	78	83	+5
C	3	4	+1	7	6	-1				10	10	0
D	8	10	+2	35	35	0	12	10	-2	55	55	0
E	13	7	-6	19	19	0	0	1	+1	32	27	-5
F				6	6	0				6	6	0
G				1	1	0				1	1	0
Total	61	70	+9	136	127	-9	12	12	0	209	209	0
% mix	29.2	33.5	+4.3	65.1	60.8	-4.3	5.7	5.7	0			

Table 2 - comparison of the approved and originally proposed mix of units per block – subsequently superseded by the mix detailed in table 1 above, following officer feedback

- Omission of originally proposed changes to the public realm at the arrival square, adjacent to Block B off Vastern Road.

3.25. In terms of the Reading Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), the proposals will be CIL liable. In this regard the applicant has submitted the relevant CIL based information, namely a completed form and plans illustrating the methodology behind the floorspace figures specified. A Section 73 CIL calculation is a complex calculation and the information submitted is in the process of being considered by the Infrastructure and Monitoring Officer. For example, comparisons are required between the original allowed on appeal scheme and the current proposals and accounting for various differences in the floor areas now shown. For context, the allowed on appeal permission facilitated a CIL Liability Notice being issued on 17/05/2022 (Ref LN00000661) advising the applicant that the liability totalled £2,981,671.66.

3.26. The following plans have been submitted for approval (only the latest versions submitted are referenced):

- 3.27. Site Context Elevation River Front 448.PL.200 Rev B
Site Context Elevation Vastern Road 448.PL.201 Rev B
Site Context Elevation Street Section 448.PL.202 Rev B
Site Context Elevation Street Section 448.PL.203 Rev B
Site Context Elevation Lynmouth Road 448.PL.204 Rev A
Site Sections - Sections A-A, E-E 448.PL.SS.300 Rev B
Site Sections – Sections B-B, C-C, D-D 448.PL.SS.301 Rev B
As received 20/11/2023
- 3.28. Enclosure Plan 448.PL.SL.003 Rev A
Christchurch Bridge Connection Section 448.300.LAND.001 Rev A
As received 08/12/2023
- 3.29. Block A Fourth – Roof Floor 448.PL.A.101 Rev E
Block A Elevations 448.PL.A.200 Rev E
Block A Section A-A, B-B, and C-C 448.PL.A.300 Rev E
Block BC First Floor Plan 448.PL.BC.101 Rev E
Block BC Second Floor Plan 448.PL.BC.102 Rev E
Block BC Third Floor Plan 448.PL.BC.103 Rev E
Block BC Fourth Floor Plan 448.PL.BC.104 Rev E
Block BC Fifth Floor Plan 448.PL.BC.105 Rev E
Block BC Sixth Floor Plan 448.PL.BC.106 Rev E
Block BC Seventh Floor Plan 448.PL.BC.107 Rev E
Block BC Eighth Floor Plan 448.PL.BC.108 Rev F
Block BC Ninth Floor Plan 448.PL.BC.109 Rev F
Block BC Tenth Floor Plan 448.PL.BC.110 Rev F
Block BC Roof Floor Plan 448.PL.BC.111 Rev F
Block D First Floor Plan 448.PL.D.101 Rev E
Block D Second Floor Plan 448.PL.D.102 Rev D
Block D Third Floor Plan 448.PL.D.103 Rev D
Block D Fourth Floor Plan 448.PL.D.104 Rev D
Block D Fifth Floor Plan 448.PL.D.105 Rev D
Block D Sixth Floor Plan 448.PL.D.106 Rev D
Block D Seventh Floor Plan 448.PL.D.107 Rev D
Block D Ninth Floor Plan 448.PL.D.109 Rev D
Block D Roof Floor Plan 448.PL.D.110 Rev D
Block D Southeast Elevation 448.PL.D.200 Rev E
Block D Northeast and Southwest Elevation 448.PL.D.201 Rev E
Block D Northwest Elevation 448.PL.D.202 Rev D
Block D Southwest Elevation 448.PL.D.203 Rev C
Block D Section A-A and B-B 448.PL.D.300 Rev D
Block EFG First Floor Plan 448.PL.EFG.101 Rev D
Block EFG Second Floor Plan 448.PL.EFG.102 Rev D
Block EFG Third Floor Plan 448.PL.EFG.103 Rev D
Block EFG Fourth Floor Plan 448.PL.EFG.104 Rev D
Block EFG Fifth Floor Plan 448.PL.EFG.105 Rev D
Block EFG Sixth Floor Plan 448.PL.EFG.106 Rev D
Block EFG Seventh Floor Plan 448.PL.EFG.107 Rev D
Block EFG Roof Floor Plan 448.PL.EFG.108 Rev D
As received 11/01/2024
- 3.30. Block FG Southwest, Southeast and Northwest Elevation 448.PL.EFG.202 Rev F
As received 21/02/2024
- 3.31. Illustrative Masterplan 448.PL.SL.002 Rev I
Landscape General Arrangement Plan 448.LA.101 Rev N
Landscape Planting Framework Plan 448.LA.102 Rev L
Block A Ground -Third Floor 448.PL.A.100 Rev F

Block BC Ground Floor Plan 448.PL.BC.100 Rev I
Block B and C Southwest Elevation 448.PL.BC.200 Rev H
Block B and C Southeast Elevation 448.PL.BC.201 Rev H
Block B and C Northeast Elevation 448.PL.BC.202 Rev I
Block B and C Northwest Elevation 448.PL.BC.203 Rev H
Block B and C Section A-A and B-B 448.PL.BC.300 Rev H
Block B and C Section C-C 448.PL.BC.301 Rev H
Block D Ground Floor Plan 448.PL.D.100 Rev H
Block D Eighth Floor Plan 448.PL.D.108 Rev E
Block EFG Ground Floor Plan 448.PL.EFG.100 Rev F
Block E Southeast and Southwest Elevation 448.PL.EFG.200 Rev F
Block E Northwest and Northeast Elevation 448.PL.EFG.201 Rev G
Block EFG Section A-A, B-B and C-C 448.PL.EFG.300 Rev E
As received on 04/03/2024

3.32. Other plans / documents submitted:

3.33. Application for Removal or Variation of a Condition following Grant of Planning Permission or Listed Building Consent

As received 20/11/2023

3.34. Daylight & Sunlight Report River Gate, 53-55 Vastern Road Reading by eb7 Ltd, dated 30/11/2023

Technical Memorandum by 24 Acoustics Ref Updated Fire Layout – Blocks B & C
Block B Parking Area Vehicle Tracking 448.TR.BC.100
Email from Berkeley Homes 'RE: 55 Vastern Road, Reading (231673/VARIAT)'
As received 08/12/2023

3.35. Letter from Berkeley Homes '55 Vastern Road, Reading, RG1 8BU', dated 07/01/2024

Affordable Housing Statement by Berkeley Homes Ref 448.PL.AHS.001 dated 05/01/2024

Planning Statement by Stantec '55 Vastern Road, Reading Variation of Conditions 2, 24, 33, 35, 47 and 48' Ref 333100572/P1c/A5 Rev P1c dated 04/01/2024

Letter from Ecoconsult Ltd River Gate, Vastern Road, Reading 'Overshadowing of marginal vegetation along River Thames' dated 14/12/2023

As received 07/01/2024

3.36. Design and Access Statement Addendum Rev A By Berkeley Homes, Oxford and Chiltern Ltd, Ref 448.LAND.RP.002 Rev A dated January 2024

Fire Engineering Planning Fire Statement by Clarke Banks Ref F13023 Version 03 dated 11/01/2024

Memo 'Reference: 55 Vastern Road, Reading - Amended Proposals - Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment Addendum' by Stantec Project 333100572 dated 11/01/2024

Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment Addendum Appendix A1 by Realm Communications dated January 2024

Site Access Swept Path 448.TR.SW.100

RBC Refuse Vehicle Turning Head 448.TR.SW.101

Block B and C - MVHR Proposal Glazing and Ventilation Plans 448.PL.BC.V.100 Rev B

Block B and C - MVHR Proposal First Floor Plan 448.PL.BC.V.101 Rev B

Block B and C - MVHR Proposal Second Floor Plan 448.PL.BC.V.102 Rev B

Block B and C - MVHR Proposal Third Floor Plan 448.PL.BC.V.103 Rev B

Block B and C - MVHR Proposal Fourth Floor Plan 448.PL.BC.V.104 Rev B

Block B and C - MVHR Proposal Fifth Floor Plan 448.PL.BC.V.105 Rev B

Block B and C - MVHR Proposal Sixth Floor Plan 448.PL.BC.V.106 Rev B

Block B and C - MVHR Proposal Seventh Floor Plan 448.PL.BC.V.107 Rev B

Block B and C - MVHR Proposal Eighth Floor Plan 448.PL.BC.V.108 Rev B

Block B and C - MVHR Proposal Ninth Floor Plan 448.PL.BC.V.109 Rev B

- Block B and C - MVHR Proposal Tenth Floor Plan 448.PL.BC.V.110 Rev B
Block B and C - MVHR Proposal Roof Plan 448.PL.BC.V.111 Rev B
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - Form 1: CIL Additional Information, dated 11/01/2024
GIA Schedule and Area Proof Block A 448.GIA.A.100 Rev B
GIA Schedule and Area Proof Block BC 448.GIA.BC.100 Rev B
GIA Schedule and Area Proof Block D 448.GIA.D.100 Rev B
GIA Schedule and Area Proof Block EFG 448.GIA.EFG.100 Rev B
As received 11/01/2024
- 3.37. Block A Ground -Third Floor Annotated Drawing Rev E

Block D Parking Area Vehicle Tracking 448.TRD.100 Rev B
Proposed Revisions to Planning Conditions 448.PL.CS.001 A by Berkeley Homes
Email from eb7 Ltd 'RE: 55 Vastern Road, Reading (231673)', dated 09/02/2024
Transport Officer Response by Berkeley Homes
As received 09/02/2024
- 3.38. Response from CBF E to HSE consultation response dated 12/02/2024

As received 15/02/2024
- 3.39. Refuse Strategy Plan Rev M

Email from Berkeley Homes 'RE: 55 Vastern Road, Reading (231673) - Waste / EP / Access' dated 21/02/2024
As received 21/02/2024
- 3.40. Vastern Road Drawing Schedule 448.PL.DS.001.F

Approved Refuse Strategy 448.RS.901
Proposed Refuse Strategy 448.RS.902
Letter from Berkeley Homes '231673/VARIAT – 55 Vastern Road, Reading' dated 04/03/2024
The Old Power Station Proposed Scheme Amendments January 2024 (updated March 2024) by Berkeley Homes
The Old Power Station Vastern Road, Reading Refuse Store Layouts by Berkeley Homes
As received on 04/03/2024
- 3.41. Email from Berkeley Homes 'RE: 55 Vastern Road, Reading (231673/VARIAT)' dated and received 11/03/2024
- 3.42. Email from Berkeley Homes 'RE: 55 Vastern Road, Reading (231673/VARIAT)' dated and received 12/03/2024

4. Planning history

Application site

- 4.1. 200188 - Demolition of existing structures and erection of a series of buildings ranging in height from 1 to 11 storeys, including residential dwellings (C3 use class) and retail floorspace (A3 use class), together with a new north-south pedestrian link, connecting Christchurch Bridge to Vastern Road. Refused 09/04/2021. Allowed at appeal (Ref APP/E0345/W/21/3276463) on 17/03/2022. The appeal decision in full is included as Appendix 2.
- 4.2. 221104/APP CON - Discharge of condition 10a (land gas site investigation) of planning permission 200188, as allowed on appeal (Ref: APP/E0345/W/21/3276463) on 17/03/2022. Discharged 14/09/2022.
- 4.3. 221105/APP CON - Partial discharge of condition 11 (archaeological evaluation) of planning permission 200188, as allowed on appeal (Ref: APP/E0345/W/21/3276463) on 17/03/2022. Discharged 08/12/2022.

- 4.4. 221126/APPCON - Discharge of conditions 22 (recording of lodge building), 31 (Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan) & 46 (CEMP: Biodiversity) of planning permission 200188, as allowed on appeal (Ref: APP/E0345/W/21/3276463) on 17/03/2022. Discharged 26/09/2022.
- 4.5. 221135/APPCON - Discharge of condition 4 (Demolition and Construction Method Statement) of planning permission 200188, as allowed on appeal (Ref: APP/E0345/W/21/3276463) on 17/03/2022. Discharged 08/03/2023.
- 4.6. 221858/APPCON - Discharge of condition 10b (land gas remediation scheme) of planning permission 200188, as allowed on appeal (Ref: APP/E0345/W/21/3276463) on 17/03/2022. Discharged 20/02/2023.
- 4.7. 230032/APPCON - Discharge of condition 42 (DDA compliant pedestrian route to and from the accessible parking bays details) of planning permission 200188, as allowed on appeal (Ref: APP/E0345/W/21/3276463) on 17/03/2022. Discharged 20/04/2023.
- 4.8. 230150/NMA - Non-material amendments to planning permission 200188, as allowed on appeal (Ref: APP/E0345/W/21/3276463) on 17/03/2022, to alter the wording of condition 42 (DDA compliant pedestrian route to and from the accessible parking bays details) to enable a phased approach to the timing and delivery of the disabled parking spaces and the pedestrian routes accessing them. Agreed 02/03/2023.
- 4.9. 230556/APPCON - Discharge of conditions 5 (contamination assessment) and 6 (remediation scheme) of planning permission 200188, as allowed on appeal (Ref: APP/E0345/W/21/3276463) on 17/03/2022. Discharged 20/06/2023.
- 4.10. 231467/APPCON - Discharge of condition 9 (de-watering and foundation details) of planning permission 200188, as allowed on appeal (Ref: APP/E0345/W/21/3276463) on 17/03/2022. Current application under consideration – a response is awaited from the Environment Agency on revised details submitted by the applicant.
- 4.11. 240248/DOV - Deed of Variation to the Legal Agreement secured as part of Planning Permission 200188 (as allowed on appeal APP/E0345/W/21/3276463 on 17/03/2022) to alter the affordable housing requirements and insert a phasing plan, as per section 106A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Current submission under consideration.

Other nearby sites

- 4.12. 80 Caversham Road (former Royal Mail site) – 182252/OUT – Outline application considering access, landscaping, layout and scale involving the demolition of all existing buildings and structures (Classes B1a&B2) & erection of new buildings ranging between basement and 2 – 24 storeys in height, providing 620 residential units (Class C3), office accommodation (Class B1a), flexible ground floor Class A1 -3 uses, a community centre (Class D1), health centre uses (Class D1) & various works including 94 car parking spaces, servicing, public & private open space, landscaping, highways, pedestrian & vehicular access & associated works. This application is accompanied by an ES (amended description). Granted Outline Planning Permission 29/03/2023 following completion of S106 Legal Agreement.
- 4.13. Vastern Court (retail park), Caversham Road – 200328/OUT - Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. A demolition phase and phased redevelopment (each phase being an independent act of development) comprising a flexible mix of the following uses, Residential(Class C3 and including PRS), Offices (Use Class B1(a), development in Use Classes A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5(take away), D1 and D2(community and leisure), car parking, provision of new plant and renewable energy equipment, creation of servicing areas and provision of associated services, including waste, refuse, cycle storage, and lighting, and for the laying out of the buildings, routes and open spaces within the development, and all associated works and operations including but not limited to demolition, earthworks, provision of attenuation infrastructure, engineering operations. Appeal (Ref: APP/E0345/W/21/3276463) under non-determination lodged on 23/12/2021. The outline application (Ref 200328) was reported

to Planning Applications Committee on 15/02/2022, whereby members resolved that had they been able to determine the planning application they would have refused outline planning permission. The appeal was heard via Public Inquiry between April and November 2022. The report and recommendation by the Inspector is presently being considered by the Secretary of State, with an outcome presently scheduled to be received by 21/03/2024.

5. Consultations

Internal / External

- 5.1. RBC Transport Development Control – A series of concerns with the original intention to alter the towpath access point (condition 48) were raised. Following officer feedback, the applicant chose to omit varying condition 48 and instead proposed to revert to the originally approved arrangements. In terms of other external changes, the bulk of the external areas remains as per the consented scheme, from a transport perspective. As such, the tracking of vehicles through the site is largely unaltered from that previously approved, but updated tracking has however been provided where necessary and this is deemed acceptable.
- 5.2. Clarification was sought regarding the total number of cycle stores sought to be provided. When the applicant provided details, indicating that on a block-by-block basis that RBC Transport standards were being met or exceeded (e.g. 62 spaces provided in Block B, in excess of the 42 required), this is deemed acceptable. In addition, some concerns were raised in relation to the location of the Block C cycle store, but upon justification by the applicant (relating back to fire regulation changes), this was accepted. In summary, all queries initially raised were addressed and therefore there are no objections to the plans or the changes in wording to the planning conditions from a transport perspective.
- 5.3. RBC Conservation Officer – Summary of original comments: Objection raised on the basis that the proposed development would result in the total loss of the non-designated heritage asset at 55 Vastern Road and fails to retain the approved scheme of high-quality contrary to Policies EN1, EN4 and EN6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019). These policies seek, amongst other things, to ensure that new development proposals conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non-designated heritage assets, take into account the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset and ensure new development is integrated into the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located, in accordance with the advice in the NPPF. In addition, the proposed development would conflict with paragraphs 203 and 209 of the NPPF.
- 5.4. More specifically, the proposed application includes additional mass and bulk along with design changes to the granted permission. The proposal still replaces the existing locally listed building by extending the approved blocks upwards/vertically and horizontally. In allowing the appeal the Inspector conceded that there would be conflict with Policies EN1 and EN4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 (paragraph 105), before considering that the appellant's approach to using the site's industrial heritage to inform the design of the appeal buildings would be an appropriate and proportionate and, ultimately, that the wider planning benefits outweighed the loss.
- 5.5. The approved design already creates a significant gap between the scale of the existing three-storey urban fabric and openness along the riverside by erecting the highest buildings on both Vastern Road and the Thames path, which are the most sensitive areas in terms of historic and natural values of the wider townscape of Reading. In the context of the allowed appeal, the positive design feature of the Block D inset glazed box would be lost, reducing design quality. The proposed increase in width of the top floors of Block D would create a monotonous appearance and relates less to historic elements. Similar concerns are raised in relation to Block E changes too.
- 5.6. Further comments following response from applicant: Original comments remain and no further comments are made.

- 5.7. RBC Environmental Protection (EP) confirm that the implications from an EP perspective are minimal, noting there will be no changes to the 'blank' façade facing SSE equipment, and that the new storey at Block B will have the same acoustic treatment as the rest of the site. Accordingly, no objections are raised.
- 5.8. RBC Valuations note the affordable housing statement submitted and the changes to the mix, as proposed. It is confirmed that, proportionally, the change in unit mix in isolation will not materially affect the viability position and previously agreed terms from the previous submission.
- 5.9. RBC Housing state that it is disappointing that the proposals are not offering any upfront affordable housing, owing to viability reasons. Accordingly, at the outset at least, this means that the scheme is not providing any benefit to Reading in terms of meeting Affordable Housing pressures. RBC Valuations will comment on the validity of this position. It is also noted that the previous legal agreement included a late-stage review, which should continue to be required if the viability position is confirmed.
- 5.10. RBC Legal Services have confirmed that clause 22 of the section 106 agreement (as agreed as part of the scheme allowed at appeal) is considered sufficient to ensure that any pre-existing planning obligation will apply to the section 73 permission/development. It is also noted that this clause does not fetter the Council's ability to request a deed of variation where it is of the view that one is required. This is mindful of Planning Practice Guidance on flexible options for planning permissions, which states at paragraph 015 that *"If the original permission was subject to a planning obligation then this may need to be subject of a deed of variation"*.
- 5.11. RBC Waste Services – initial comments raised concerns with the pulling distance of the bins not being within 10m of the rear of the collection vehicle, meaning either a site management team would need to be available to pull out the bins and return them, or a private arrangement being entered into. Concerns were also raised in relation to the layout of the bin storage areas and whether any additional space could be provided as the areas appear to be full capacity.
- 5.12. Following further submissions of information by the applicant, it was clarified that a waste management plan would need to be secured via condition, as the pulling distances are still shown to exceed the 10m collection distance. The exact wording of the intended condition was shared with the applicant, who continued to seek to resist this on the basis of the proposed arrangements being stated to be a betterment to the approved position. Officers consider, based on the arrangements shown, a management plan should be secured via condition.
- 5.13. RBC Natural Environment – initial comments noted that an updated illustrative masterplan, including an indication of intended soft landscaping has been submitted with the application and a series of changes are specified within the site layout section of the schedule of amendments proposed. Such details will need to be picked up when the landscape details (condition 28) are subsequently submitted for approval, but specific comments were provided in terms of the site layout changes. These included comments that there were reductions in shrub/bulb planting in a number of areas (and increases in some other areas), with additional explanations sought to justify the intended approach.
- 5.14. For example, further justifications were sought to explain what appear to be significant reductions in shrub planting along the Vastern Road edge and replacement with grass, noting the importance of meaningful planting along the frontage. The applicant provided an explanation that the depth of the known culvert has become clearer, with the limited depth (300mm) preventing shrub planting (which requires 600mm depth). It is therefore proposed to move structural planting closer to the building (avoiding the culvert), with the area above the culvert now providing a flowering lawn with bulb planting to provide seasonal interest along Vastern Road. In response to the additional explanation, the Officer is satisfied that the changes have been suitably justified and are therefore satisfactory.

- 5.15. In overall terms it would appear that the same level of tree planting is being proposed and slight reductions in areas of planting have been justified, with the precise details to be considered further when the condition 28 landscape details are separated submitted for approval in due course. Beyond the site layout changes, none of the changes to the blocks appear to significantly impact footprints of the proposed buildings. Hence, there will be no significant impacts on the landscape provisions that have been shown during the planning inquiry. The Officer therefore has no objection to the other changes.
- 5.16. GS Ecology (ecology consultants for RBC) has no objections to the proposed changes on ecology grounds, given the original application was allowed on appeal.
- 5.17. RBC Access Officer has provided comments regarding the proposed footpaths through the site (the applicant reaffirmed these are unchanged from the original approval) and queries in relation to ramped accesses and stairs (again, the applicant confirmed these are unchanged), whether the decking area is wheelchair accessible (the applicant confirmed it is) and if disabled parking areas are changing (the applicant confirmed arrangements would be as per the condition 42 approval). Accordingly, no objections were raised by the Access officer.
- 5.18. RBC Emergency Planning confirms there are no concerns/objections from an Emergency Planning perspective.
- 5.19. The Lead Local Flood Authority at RBC has no objection to the proposal.
- 5.20. RBC Licensing has no objection to the application.
- 5.21. Building Research Establishment (BRE) – BRE were instructed to undertake an independent review on behalf of the LPA of the daylight and sunlight information submitted in support of the application, as per the report by eb7 Ltd. BRE undertook a similar review at the time of the original application. BRE's initial report included a series of queries, which required clarification from the applicant. This was duly provided, which enabled BRE to provide a full assessment of the information submitted. BRE confirmed contention with the methodologies used by the applicant. The following conclusions were reached by BRE:
- A) In general, at 2-28 Lynmouth Road there would be minor adverse impacts to daylight. This is the same conclusion as previous reviews and values are generally slightly lower than those with the previously allowed scheme.
 - B) Exceptions are No's 2 and 24 Lynmouth Road, where the impact would be characterised as major adverse. These have overhangs which limit the amount of daylight they can received, which is a mitigating factor. Moderate adverse impacts to daylight are also experienced at No's 26 & 28.
 - C) In general, there would be a minor adverse loss of winter sunlight to the rear of 2-28 Lynmouth Road if living rooms are located there. Two windows would be below the annual probable sunlight guideline (one each at No's 2 & 24). These windows met the guideline with the previous allowed scheme and amounts to a minor adverse impact.
 - D) There would be a slightly increased impact on daylight to 5 and 6 Lynmouth Court. One window at No. 5 would be slightly below the guidelines; previously all met. Four windows at No.6 would be below the guidelines; previously one was below the VSC guideline. Two rooms would also be marginally below the daylight distribution guidance. The impact would be assessed as minor adverse.
 - E) 7-12 Lynmouth Court would still be most affected by the proposals. There would be a moderate loss of daylight, the same as the allowed scheme. Values are slightly reduced compared to this scheme. Loss of sunlight would be largely within the guidelines.
 - F) 51 Vastern Road would have at least a moderate adverse impact to daylight, with most of the loss due to the potential scheme at Vastern Court retail park. That scheme would also influence the minor adverse impact to sunlight too.

- G) Gardens at 2, 4, 8 and 10 Lynmouth Road, 3 Lynmouth Court and 51 Vastern Road would have a loss of sunlight to their gardens which would be outside the guidelines. The losses would be major for No. 2 (this would be particularly affected, as before), major for No. 4 (an increase from moderate for the previously allowed scheme), moderate for No. 3, minor for No. 10 (previously met, but only now below by a small margin), minor with mitigating factors for No. 8 and minor for No. 51.
- H) For future occupiers, while daylight provision in the proposed scheme is not ideal and there are a large number of rooms (particularly living areas) below the recommendations, the design changes since at least the initial scheme reviewed in April 2020 have resulted in improvements for the worst lit rooms. The southern facades of Blocks A&B would be impacted by the potential scheme at Vastern Court.
- I) A comparison between the previous and current methodologies (based on updated BRE guidance from 2022) suggest a lower overall pass rate with the new method, particularly for living areas.
- J) Around a third of living rooms meet both previous sunlight recommendations and around a half of living rooms would meet the current recommendations. Although this is mediocre at best, in large developments it would be unrealistic for every living room to face south. Some north facing rooms would have compensating views of the River Thames. The potential Vastern Court development limits sunlight provision to the south facades of Blocks A&B.
- K) Overall, all proposed open spaces combined would meet BRE guidelines.
- 5.22. In summary terms, BRE advise that generally the loss of light results are slightly reduced (i.e. worse) compared to the original approval. Although there are some changes to the overall results (i.e. characterised as changing from minor adverse to moderate and from moderate to major adverse, as examples) there are no significant changes to BRE's previous general conclusions in the review at the time of the original application.
- 5.23. Berkshire Archaeology advise that the written scheme of investigation submitted from Foundations Archaeology for the monitoring of the removal of the slab and groundworks should be sufficient for the mitigation of the site. No objections are therefore raised by Berkshire Archaeology.
- 5.24. Active Travel England is content with the development proposed.
- 5.25. Historic England are not offering advice. This should not be interpreted as comment on the merits of the application. Historic England suggest that the LPA seek the views of specialist RBC conservation and archaeological advisers.
- 5.26. HSE Fire Safety at Health and Safety Executive: Original response: Concerns raised to the LPA, including an excessive distance (22m, rather than maximum 18m) between the Block D & E dry riser pipe and farthest staircase, which may affect water pressure for firefighting. Supplementary information queries (not part of HSE'S substantive response) were also raised in relation to elements of the means of escape, hydrants and photovoltaic panels.
- 5.27. Further comments following response from applicant: In overall terms HSE is content with the fire safety design as set out in the project description, to the extent it affects land use planning considerations. However, HSE has identified some matters that it advises that the applicant should try to address, in advance of later regulatory stages.
- 5.28. Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service advise that they are not providing comments, as at this stage the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) are the lead Enforcing Authority and have already made observations.
- 5.29. Thames Water has no comments on the application.
- 5.30. No responses have been received to date to formal consultation requests to RBC CCTV / Community Safety, RBC Education, RBC Leisure, RBC Streetscene, RBC Sustainability, Reading's Economy and Destination Agency (REDA), Buckinghamshire,

Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB), the Designing out Crime Officer at Thames Valley Police, the Environment Agency, Southern Gas Networks and SSE Power Distribution.

- 5.31. Planning Practice Guidance on flexible options for planning permissions confirms that for s73 applications *“Provisions relating to statutory consultation and publicity do not apply. However, local planning authorities have discretion to consider whether the scale or nature of the change warrants consultation, in which case the authority can choose how to inform interested parties”* (Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 17a-013-20230726) . With this in mind, the LPA has taken a cautious approach in consulting all those formally notified at the time of the original permission, together with ‘new’ consultees such as Active Travel England and HSE Fire Safety. Moreover, the absence of consultation responses from the specified consultees are not considered to prevent an officer recommendation being made on this s73 application, in light of the nature of the proposed amendments, the context of the original permission at the site and the quoted guidance above. If any responses are received from any of these consultees in advance of the application being considered at Planning Applications Committee, these will be specified in an update report.

Public consultation

- 5.32. Eight separate site notices were erected around the site on 19/01/2024, expiring on 09/02/2024. A press notice was published on 25/01/2024, expiring on 15/02/2024. In addition, relevant neighbouring occupiers along Lynmouth Road (including Lynmouth Court), Vastern Road and Norman Place (Thames Court) were consulted by letter. A total of nine separate objections have been received, with six from Lynmouth Road addresses (one objector made two separate submissions) and one each from addresses at Lynmouth Court (as part of three separate submissions), Tudor Road (RG1) and Filey Road (assumed to be RG1). A summary of the issues raised are:

- 5.33. Loss of amenity:

- Additional height of buildings (predominantly in relation to the additional storey at Block B, but also reference in relation to lift and smoke shaft overrun positions being altered on Block A and the changes proposed at Block E) resulting in:
 - o Likely loss of privacy and increased overlooking from changes to Blocks B and E
 - o Loss of daylight and sunlight to Lynmouth Road properties, with one response noting that the previous report demonstrated disastrous impacts on sunlight levels for neighbours, which would only be further exacerbated by the additional building mass.
 - o Loss of daylight will impact on wellbeing and solar power generation
 - o On-going noise and disturbance from vibrations at the site in December 2023.
 - o Additional fire escapes may introduce covert areas for anti-social behaviour
- Additional height of buildings (predominantly in relation to the additional storey at Block B, but also reference in relation to lift and smoke shaft overrun positions being altered on Block A and the changes proposed at Block E) resulting in:
 - o Likely loss of privacy and increased overlooking from changes to Blocks B and E
 - o Loss of daylight and sunlight to Lynmouth Road properties, with one response noting that the previous report demonstrated disastrous impacts on sunlight levels for neighbours, which would only be further exacerbated by the additional building mass.
- Loss of daylight will impact on wellbeing and solar power generation
- On-going noise and disturbance from vibrations at the site in December 2023.

- Additional fire escapes may introduce covert areas for anti-social behaviour

5.34. Height and Design:

- The height of the buildings on the river front are far too high, with all other buildings 4 storeys maximum
- The design of the buildings on the river front are completely out of keeping with the style of the other buildings on the river frontage
- Concern that the tower blocks have been moved too close to each other and risk dominating pedestrians walking over the bridge.

5.35. Open Space:

- Reduction in quality and amount of open space by changes S05 and S10 (which both propose additional footpaths to serve new/altered fire escape doors) (Officer comment: see Figures 7-9 above for these changes)

5.36. Wildlife

- Long term damage to local wildlife – starlings, robins, blackbirds, tits, sparrows – loss of nesting places.

5.37. Other matters

- Concerns that the daylight and sunlight assessment is not up to date.
- Lack of justification for the proposed amendments - the developers interest in meeting a target number of apartments is not a valid reason for the community to suffer.

Local Groups

5.38. Caversham and District Residents' Association (CADRA) object, stating:

We note that changes are necessary in relation to fire regulations. We object to the changes on the basis of:

- *reduced set back on the top floors facing the Thames, thus increasing overshadowing of the river;*
- *additional storey overlooking Lynmouth Road, reducing amenity;*
- *increased proportion of one bed flats. The need in Reading is for larger units and we suggest that two one bed flats could be replaced by one three bed flat. (Officer comment: this response was received when the submission was not specifying any change in the number of 3-bed units, as per Table 2 above, rather than the now proposed increase in 3-bed units, as per Table 1 above)*

5.39. Reading CAAC and Reading Civic Society were also formally consulted on the application. No responses have been received. If any responses are received from either group in advance of the application being considered at Planning Applications Committee, these will be specified in an update report.

6. Legal context

6.1. Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

6.2. 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'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

- 6.3. In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).
- 6.4. Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:
- 6.5. NPPF 2023
 2. Achieving sustainable development
 3. Plan-making
 4. Decision-making
 5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
 6. Building a strong, competitive economy
 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
 9. Promoting sustainable transport
 11. Making effective use of land
 12. Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

National Planning Practice Guidance (2014 onwards)

- 6.6. Reading Borough Local Plan 2019
 - CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 - CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
 - CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
 - CC4: Decentralised Energy
 - CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
 - CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
 - CC7: Design and the Public Realm
 - CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
 - CC9: Securing Infrastructure
 - EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
 - EN2: Areas of Archaeological Significance
 - EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas
 - EN4: Locally Important Heritage Assets
 - EN6: New Development in a Historic Context
 - EN7: Local Green Space and Public Open Space
 - EN9: Provision of Open Space
 - EN10: Access to Open Space
 - EN11: Waterspaces
 - EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
 - EN13: Major Landscape Features and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 - EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland
 - EN15: Air Quality
 - EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
 - EN18: Flooding and Drainage
 - EM3: Loss of Employment Land
 - H1: Provision of Housing
 - H2: Density and Mix
 - H3: Affordable Housing
 - H5: Standards for New Housing
 - H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
 - TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy

TR2: Major Transport Projects
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
RL1: Network and Hierarchy of Centres
RL2: Scale and Location of Retail, Leisure and Culture Development
OU5: Shopfronts and Cash Machines
CR1: Definition of Central Reading
CR2: Design in Central Reading
CR3: Public Realm in Central Reading
CR4: Leisure, Culture and Tourism in Central Reading
CR6: Living in Central Reading
CR10: Tall Buildings
CR11: Station/River Major Opportunity Area

6.7. Reading Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents

Topics

Affordable Housing (March 2021)
Employment, Skills and Training (2013)
Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)
Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

Sites

Reading Station Area Framework (2010)

6.8. Other relevant documentation

Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy (March 2021)
Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (March 2021)
The Reading Tall Building Strategy 2008
Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: A guide to good practice By BRE Ref BR209 2022 Edition (Third Edition)

7. Appraisal

7.1. Planning Practice Guidance on flexible options for planning permissions confirms that section 73 applications are considered against the...

“... Development plan and material considerations, under section 38(6) of the 2004 Act, and conditions attached to the existing permission. Local planning authorities should, in making their decisions, focus their attention on national and development plan policies, and other material considerations which may have changed significantly since the original grant of permission”.

(Annex A: summary comparison table of the flexible options for planning permissions planning practice guidance)

7.2. With this context in mind, matters such as the principle of development and the general layout and provision of the north-south route, as discussed in detail at the time of the previous application at appeal and, ultimately, judged in the appeal decision by the Inspector, are not repeated in this assessment, for they have already been considered appropriate and the overriding policy context has not changed so significantly in the intervening time to alter those findings. For reference, the appeal decision is included in full at Appendix 2 of this report. Furthermore, a range of technical matters not impacted by the proposed changes are not explicitly referenced within this appraisal, with consultation responses in section 5 of this report and conditions included on the original permission (and proposed to be unaltered as part of this s73 application) satisfying these elements. Instead, as per the guidance above, the focus of attention is national and local policy and other material considerations which have changed significantly. Firstly, since

the original decision (March 2022) the NPPF has been updated (most recently in December 2023), but the local policy context has not altered, with the same Local Plan (2019) in place. With that in mind, the main considerations for the amendments proposed are considered to involve:

- Design / conservation / impact on the river
- Affordable Housing
- Housing mix
- Amenity
- Quality of accommodation for future occupiers
- Other matters

Design / conservation / impact on the river

- 7.3. The proposals seek to alter the massing and design of the approved scheme at various points, predominantly associated with Blocks B, D and E. Accordingly, each is considered in turn.
- 7.4. As per paragraphs 3.9 – 3.11 above, a series of changes are proposed to Block B, most predominantly the provision of an additional storey on the western wing and the overall increase in the height of the building by 0.15m. The applicant has sought to justify the additional storey in townscape terms by suggesting it assists the progression in height from Block C (4 storeys), to the western wing of Block B (now 5 storeys) and up to the main 11 storey element of Block B fronting onto Vastern Road. The more pronounced stepped approach is acknowledged and it is agreed that in design terms the additional storey does assist in differentiating this part of Block B from Block C, as shown below in figure 32.



Figure 32 - Section through the middle of the site looking east, showing (left to right) the west elevations of Blocks D, C & B – as approved (above) and as proposed (below)



- 7.5. From Vastern Road, it is considered that, when combined with the changes proposed to Block E (as shown in outline form within figure 33 below), the additional storey would slightly further reduce scope for views through the site towards the river and Christchurch Bridge, but not to such an extent to alter the Inspector's conclusions regarding the acceptability of the legibility and attractiveness of the north-south route for users (paragraphs 30-39, as per Appendix 2).



Figure 33 - Vastern Road streetscene elevation showing Blocks A (left) and B (right), with the outlines of Blocks E (rear middle) and D (rear right) also shown – as approved (above) and as proposed (below)



- 7.6. As shown above in figures 32 and 33, the additional storey seeks to continue the form and pattern of development, utilising the same materials as intended on the remainder of this block in the original permission. This is considered to be an appropriate design response and aligns satisfactorily with the contrasting roof form at Block C, whilst matching the original design intent at Blocks A and B fronting onto Vastern Road.
- 7.7. With regard to the 0.15m increase in height of the overall building, this is a result of design development (advancements in the plant requirements) and does not result in any changes to the total number of storeys proposed or breach the Policy CR10 (Tall Buildings) threshold (11 storeys and 35.25m, below the 12 storey / 36m stipulations of Policy CR10). No design based concerns are therefore raised in these regards, nor the other minor material amendments proposed for Block B.
- 7.8. Moving on to consider Block D, as already described at paragraphs 3.12 – 3.15, a series of fairly prominent changes are proposed, particularly in respect of the top two floors and a number of detailed design matters too. At eighth and ninth floor level, officers consider that the proposed increase in width can be supported on balance, predominantly as this is offset by the proposed set back of these floors further from the river than originally approved (by 3m).
- 7.9. However, some concerns are raised by officers in this regard, as shared by the RBC Conservation Officer (as per paragraphs 5.3 to 5.6 above). Particular concerns are raised regarding the introduction of brickwork at the southern end of building diluting the proportions and character of the building as a whole. In overall terms the top floors of Block D are now less well defined in comparison with the approved scheme. The Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment addendum information assists in raising such concerns, as shown below at figures 34-39 where comparisons of the existing, approved and now proposed contexts are referenced.



Figure 34 - Zoomed in extract of the winter view P6 from Reading Bridge, with Block D (foreground right), Block E (background far right) and the upper most floors of Block B (background left) – as existing (top), as approved (middle), as now proposed (bottom). Full versions are within Appendix 1.

- 7.10. The applicant considers that the expansion of brickwork at the southern ends of the east and west facades act as a “bookend” or “stop-end” which assists with the balance of the building, suitably framing it where more functional elements are located internally and facing the remaining SSE site. The applicant also references parallels with the proposals to those at Battersea Power Station, where lightweight glazed elements have been added to the existing building. In summary, the applicant considers that the current proposals deliver a more varied and interesting approach than that of the approved scheme and is *“a significantly positive step forward in design terms, enhancing the overall design and material quality of the scheme”*. Officers do not agree with this summary, with the changes to the top floors of Block D instead being considered a backward step in overall design terms. However, with specific regard to Block D only, the extent of the changes to the top floors are not so significantly different that they alter the conclusions previously reached

by the Inspector. The block remains ten storeys in height and the overriding design approach remains similar to the consented scheme.



Figure 35 - Zoomed in extract of the summer view P6A from Reading Bridge, with Block D (foreground right), Block E (background far right) and the upper most floors of Block B (background left) – as existing (top), as approved (middle), as now proposed (bottom). Full versions are within Appendix 1.

- 7.11. With specific regard to the wider design changes to Block D, another prominent component part is the change in the fenestration arrangements in the centre of the riverside façade. This alters the glazing pattern from three columns to four thinner columns, with less definition between each floor and this appearing, as per figures 36 and 37 below, to be a continuous vertical element. This is considered to add to the impression of the verticality of the building as a whole, but also strengthens the power station typology originally proposed, so in overall terms no specific design concerns are raised with this element of the proposals. It is also noted that the overall height of Block D is increasing, as per paragraph 3.14 above, but this is not a harmful addition in the context of the approved height.



Figure 36 - River elevation as approved (above) and as proposed (below), with Block D on the left and Block E on the right. The outlines of Blocks B (left) and A (right) are shown too.



Figure 37 – Riverside CGI as approved (above) & as proposed (below) showing Blocks D&E.



7.12. Turning to consider solely the Block E changes, the alterations to the top two floors of the building are very visible changes to the approved scheme, with the clear differentiation in form having been lost and the now proposed building being of a significantly different design character to the approved scheme. This is both in terms of the increase in bulk and massing at this point (with the floorplate of the top two floors expanding), together with the change in material approach from a glazed inset box to the now sought continuation of the form of the floors below, only differentiated by a modest change in brickwork colour to the lower floors (as shown in figures 34-37 above, and figures 38-39 below). Officers are mindful that paragraph 140 of the NPPF (2023) states:

“Local planning authorities should also seek to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion, as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme (for example through changes to approved details such as the materials used)”.

7.13. Differentiation is considered to be required at the top of Block E to accentuate the horizontal breaks in the form of the proposed building, with the Block E now almost seeking to compete for primacy with Block D given the changes proposed. The Conservation Officer comments (see paragraphs 5.3 to 5.6 above) considers that a more monotonous appearance is created, reducing design quality. Accordingly, officers consider this another backward step in comparison with the previously approved scheme.



Figure 38 - Zoomed in extract of the winter view P2 from Christchurch Meadows, with Block D (left) and Block E (right) either side of the Christchurch Bridge mast – as existing (top), as approved (middle), as now proposed (bottom). Other schemes in the vicinity outlined in different colours – e.g. Vastern Court pink and 80 Caversham Road green). Full versions are within Appendix 1.

- 7.14. The applicant considers that the paler colour of brickwork on the top two floors mitigates the increased width of massing and the greater perceived weight of materiality. The applicant also considers the contrasting material colour also maintains the distinction of the top from the middle section of the building. The applicant points to Butlers Wharf in London where the intended approach has been successfully applied, and advises that if greater differences in the brick colours are required, these can be reviewed when material details are submitted relating to condition 3. Furthermore, the applicant considers that the design changes create a clearer distinction in the character of Block E from Block D. The approved scheme shares the same rooftop glazing on Blocks D & E, whereas a wholly warehouse approach, as now proposed for Block E, appears from the applicant's viewpoint to be more honest and coherent approach. The contrast means the buildings express their own individual characteristics. The applicant also considers that the roof terrace amenity spaces provided on the top floor bring further articulation to this floor. Moreover, the applicant considers in overall terms that the changes enhance the overall design and material quality of the scheme.
- 7.15. Officers are not entirely convinced by the various justifications provided by the applicant but returning back to the conclusions reached by the Inspector, it is considered that the changes are not sufficiently harmful to lead to the reversal of previous conclusions reached at paragraphs 80-84 of the appeal decision in respect of the riverside.
- 7.16. Linking into this wider consideration of the riverside setting as a whole, thereby considering changes at Blocks D & E collectively, as noted in section 2 above, the site is sensitively located, adjacent to the Major Landscape Features of River Thames and Christchurch Meadows. This was carefully considered at length by the Inspector in allowing the appeal (see in particular paragraphs 51 to 84 at Appendix 2).

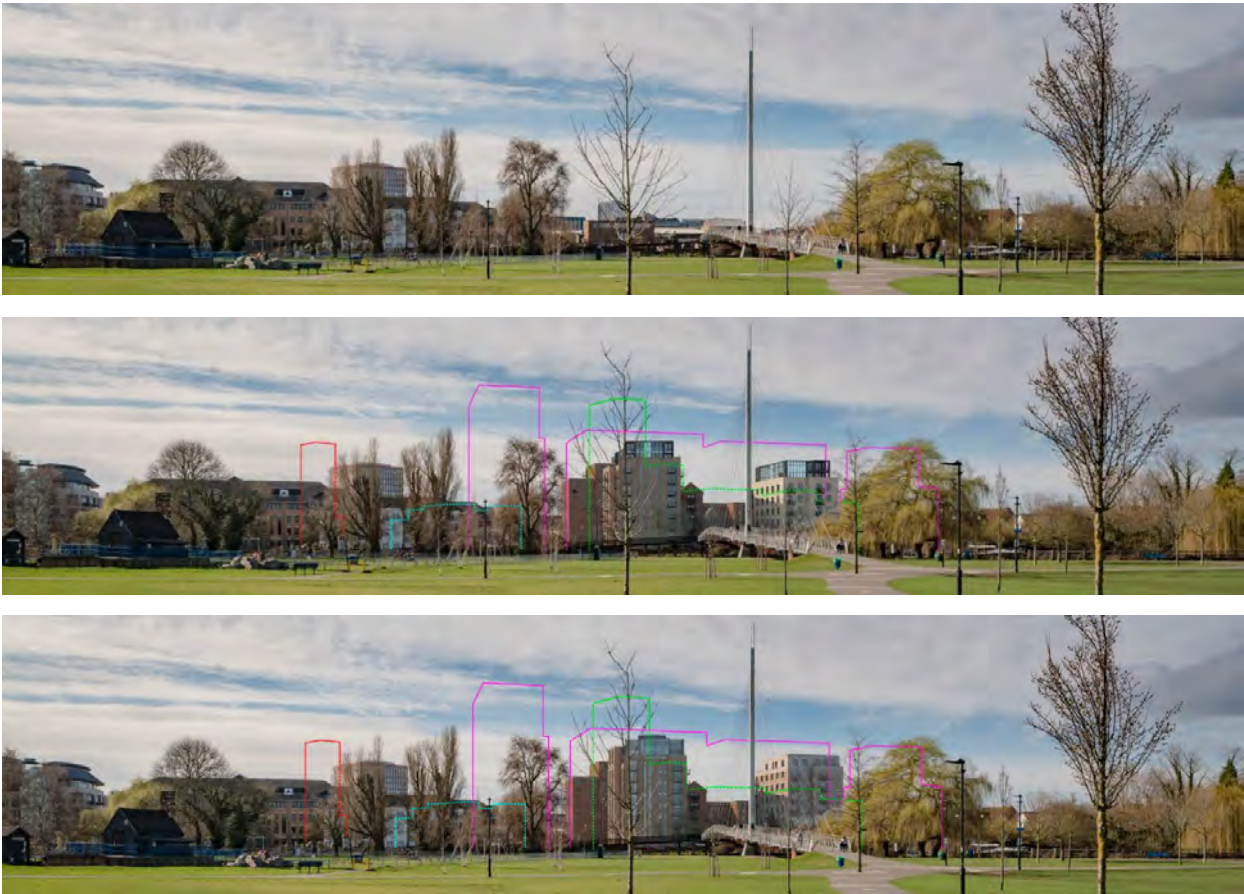


Figure 39 – Winter view P2 from Christchurch Meadows, with Block D (left) and Block E (right) either side of the Christchurch Bridge mast – as existing (top), as approved (middle), as now proposed (bottom). Other schemes in the vicinity outlined in different colours – e.g. Vastern Court pink and 80 Caversham Road green). Full versions are within Appendix 1.

- 7.17. In this regard, it is noted that in allowing the appeal, the Inspector considered the presence of Blocks D and E in the context of gateway function of Christchurch Bridge, with the gap between the blocks being important. Paragraph 57 concludes that *“the splayed gap between them [Blocks D & E] would be sufficient to achieve a sense of spaciousness, softened through landscaping, to frame a welcoming entrance which would clearly mark the arrival into the MOA”*. Whilst this gap is reducing as a result of the now sought proposals at Blocks D & E, both physically (with the increase in width of the top floors of Blocks D&E) and in form (with Block E no longer being a lightweight glazed element) it is not considered to be reducing to such an extent to arrive at a different conclusion to that previously reached by the Inspector in this regard.
- 7.18. In addition, in considering both the landscape and visual impacts of Blocks D & E (paragraph 76 of the Appeal decision), the Inspector on the one hand acknowledged that these blocks would be *“significant additions which would be at odds with the requirement that the River should retain a natural character”*, before reconciling this with inevitable future changes in the vicinity (owing to policy), the high quality design, the contemporary interpretation of historic links to the site and the opening up and planting along the frontage would all lead to the proposals enhancing this stretch of the river. Whilst changes have been made to Blocks D & E, in particular with regard to Block E, it is not considered that this overriding conclusion on this matter would be reversed as a result of these changes. Hence, officers consider that, despite the concerns raised with component parts of the changes, it would not be sustainable to resist these amended proposals on this basis.
- 7.19. For completeness, the relatively minor design changes at Blocks A, C and F, as outlined in full at section 3 above, are considered to be appropriate changes which do not dilute or undermine the original design idiom or result in any adverse related heritage impacts. The overwhelming majority of changes at these blocks are a result of design development, which can realistically be expected in any proposal of this scale and nature. Accordingly, no design-based issues are raised with these component parts of the proposals.
- 7.20. In addition, the series of site layout changes described at paragraphs 3.3 to 3.5 above do not significantly alter the approved scheme. The majority of the changes are access related as a consequence of fire regulation changes internally. The Council’s Natural Environment officer is, following clarifications, largely content (see paragraphs 5.13 – 5.15 above for details) from this perspective, with officers welcoming the omission made during the course of this application of an initially intended change to the public realm at the arrival space adjacent to Block B. Moreover, the exact details of the hard and soft landscaping arrangements will be secured through the approval of details associated with condition 28 of the original permission. With all of the above in mind, the site layout changes raise no design based concerns.
- 7.21. Finally, it is acknowledged that the allowed at appeal proposal accepted the loss of the locally listed building at the site. It is not considered that the shortfalls in the design components of the proposals are so significant to reverse this overriding conclusion.
- 7.22. In conclusion in respect of design and related matters, whilst a number of changes raise no concerns or are justified and supported in design terms, most notably the additional storey at Block B, some concerns are raised in respect of the changes proposed at Blocks D and E facing the sensitive River Thames. These are considered in themselves to be backward steps in comparison with the original scheme at the site. However, mindful of the Inspector’s various comments in allowing the original proposals at the site, the changes are not considered so fundamentally different to the approved scheme to result in contrasting overarching conclusions to those previously reached by the Inspector in supporting the proposals on design-based matters.

Affordable Housing

- 7.23. The applicant has included an affordable housing statement as part of this application which, in summary, does not propose to update the viability assessment submitted at the time of the original permission. The rationale for this is that the overall quantum of

development (209 residential units) and tenure (100% market housing / 0% affordable housing – whilst also noting at the time of the previous application an offer of 20.57% on site provision was introduced to the scheme, but this was withdrawn by the applicant at appeal stage) is not changing and the previous viability assessment identified a significant deficit (£17.75m - -22.6%). This was subject to verification through an independent review on behalf of the LPA at the time, which confirmed it was unviable to provide an upfront on-site affordable housing. Accordingly, the applicant maintains this position, as per the original permission, with a late-stage viability review (to potentially capture any uplift through a deferred contribution mechanism) continuing to be secured via legal agreement.

- 7.24. Officers note that there has been a passage of time between the original viability submission (in 2020) and the current day and the changes to the unit mix as part of this application, which potentially mean the viability position may have altered in the intervening time. RBC Valuations (as per paragraph 5.8 above) have confirmed that proportionally, the change in unit mix in isolation will not materially affect the viability position and previously agreed terms from the previous submission. RBC Housing meanwhile state (see paragraph 5.9 above) disappointment that the proposals are not offering any upfront affordable housing, owing to viability reasons. Ultimately officers consider that the proposed changes sought as part of this s73 application are unlikely to result in the previous deficit becoming a surplus and it would be unsustainable to seek to resist the current proposals on this basis, in the context of the previous appeal (for example paragraph 196 of the appeal decision stated that the Inspector “*agree[d] that the development cannot viably support the provision of affordable housing at this point in time*”. Accordingly, whilst the continued provision of a wholly market housing scheme at the outset, without the provision of any affordable housing, is naturally disappointing, this is a result of viability assessments as Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) accounts for. Furthermore, the legal agreement to secure a late-stage review, thereby providing an opportunity for a contribution to be secured should the viability position improve in due course, is retained from the original permission. As such, in overall terms, the proposals are considered to be satisfactory in respect of affordable housing.
- 7.25. As noted above, in the planning history section (4.11), a separate S106A application has recently been submitted by the applicant to alter the affordable housing requirements. This is a wholly separate submission to this s73 application and forms no part of the assessment of this s73 application.

Housing mix

- 7.26. With regard to the mix of different residential unit sizes at the site, this is shown and compared with the original permission at Table 1 at paragraph 3.2 of this report. Mindful of Policy CR6 (Living in Central Reading), which guides there to be no more than 40% 1-bed units and no fewer than 5% 3-bed or more dwellings, the amended proposals are acceptable in themselves and an improvement in comparison with the original permission. Although a greater number of 1-bed units are now proposed (from 61 to 70), the proportion is still comfortably below the maximum 40% guidance figure, at 33.5%. In terms of 3+-bed units, the now sought proposals represent a betterment, increasing the number of 3-bed units from 12 to 20 and introducing the provision of 3x4-bed units too. Although the applicant has shown the additional larger units are including study rooms (to assist home-working), in practice officers have counted these as bedrooms (as could be the case in practice). Accordingly, the percentage of larger units is actually almost doubling, from the already approved 5.7% to the now proposed 11%. This is a welcomed outcome of these amended proposals, with this being considered a tangible planning benefit of these specific amendments to the proposals.
- 7.27. Accordingly, the proposed changes to the mix of units is strongly supported, with condition 24 of the original permission proposed to be varied as follows (omissions shown by strikethroughs, additions in bold:

No change to the unit mix (~~64~~ **70** x 1-bedroom units, ~~436~~ **116** x 2-bedroom units, and ~~12~~ **20** x 3-bedroom units and **3 x 4-bedroom units**) shall be made to the development hereby permitted.

- 7.28. The applicant has indicated agreement to the wording of the condition being varied in this manner.

Amenity

- 7.29. It is acknowledged that one of the main concerns arising from the public consultation responses (see paragraphs 5.32 – 5.38 above) is the loss of daylight and sunlight to Lynmouth Road residents in particular, with this exacerbated by the additional storey to Block B and changes to Blocks D&E. The LPA obtained an independent review of the daylight and sunlight evidence submitted, with the review undertaken by BRE, authors of the main technical guidance on daylight and sunlight matters.
- 7.30. For further context, BRE undertook a similar review of the original application, with daylight and sunlight not a specific reason for the refusal of the original application. At this time a number of shortcomings with the proposals were identified in the BRE review, but in overall terms officers considered these shortfalls were not significant enough for the proposals to be refused on this basis, largely owing to the attempts made by the applicant to minimise impacts and the town centre location of the site. In allowing the subsequent appeal, the Inspector commented on daylight and sunlight matters (primarily at paragraphs 177-178 – see Appendix 2 for the decision in full), acknowledging that there would be losses for existing properties, but concluding that *“the overall loss of sunlight would be largely within the BRE guidelines”* (paragraph 177) and for Lynmouth Road residents the minor adverse daylight losses *“would not be unreasonable in this urban context”* (paragraph 178).
- 7.31. Since the original permission in March 2022 the overarching BRE guidance has been updated, with the third edition of the guide to good practice published in June 2022. Accordingly, the eb7 report has considered the proposals in the context of both the previous BRE guidance (to allow direct comparison with the original scheme) and the latest BRE guidance (to indicate adherence with current guidance). A fuller assessment of the proposed units is also provided. The assessment also considers the cumulative impact of the potential Vastern Court development, should that come forward (see paragraph 4.13). As per the summary of the BRE review, above at paragraphs 5.21-5.22, the proposed scheme results in slightly greater impacts for Lynmouth Road properties, which is perhaps unsurprising given the proposed additional storey at Block B and the alterations to the massing at Blocks D and more specifically Block E. There are some instances where the impacts alter the overall characterisation of the impacts, but BRE advise that generally the previous overall conclusions remain similar. Given this context, together with the comments from the Inspector at the time of the previous appeal, whilst adverse impacts are envisaged for existing nearby occupiers, these are not considered significantly harmful to warrant resisting the proposals on this basis. This is both in the context of the proposals on their own merits, and set against the backdrop of the previous approval.
- 7.32. Another concern arising from public consultation responses is the additional loss of privacy and overlooking, as a result of the changes to Block B and E, to Lynmouth Road properties. Furthermore, harm to outlook and visual dominance and the overbearing effects of a development are another relevant and related factor referenced by Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity), which could be worsened as a result of the proposed amendments. It is accepted that the provision of an additional storey at the western wing of Block B will introduce additional opportunities for overlooking and a further loss of privacy to occupiers of properties on the east side of Lynmouth Road, with figures 16 and 17 demonstrating that nine additional windows are proposed at this point (six serving individual bedrooms and three serving living/dining/kitchen rooms). However, this is partly offset by the omission of three windows in the north elevation of nearby Block A (see figure 12), which would reduce overlooking towards the rear of Lynmouth Road properties at this point. Moreover, as the Inspector noted at paragraph 173 of the appeal decision,

the presence of trees on the boundary would soften views and a sense of screening and separation, whilst also noting the Inspector commented that *“it is unrealistic to expect total privacy within inner urban environments such as this”*.

- 7.33. It is also conceded that increasing the west wing of Block B from four to five storeys will further reduce outlook and increase the visual dominance of the development for nearby Lynmouth Road occupiers (see figure 40 below). However, in the context of the approved scheme, which is already four storeys in height at this point and adjacent to an eleven storey element which fronts onto Vastern Road, the amount of additional visual dominance and loss of outlook is considered to be limited and not great enough to specifically seek to resist the proposals on this basis. Similarly, whilst additional overlooking opportunities would occur, these are not fundamentally increased in comparison with the approved scheme. In allowing the appeal, the Inspector commented on such matters at paragraphs 172-176 of the decision (see Appendix 2), with the 25-29m front-to-back distances towards Lynmouth Road not changing (exceeding the 20m back-to-back distance referenced by Policy CC8) and the moderated scaling up of blocks to ensure they are not unduly overbearing (as per paragraph 176) continuing.

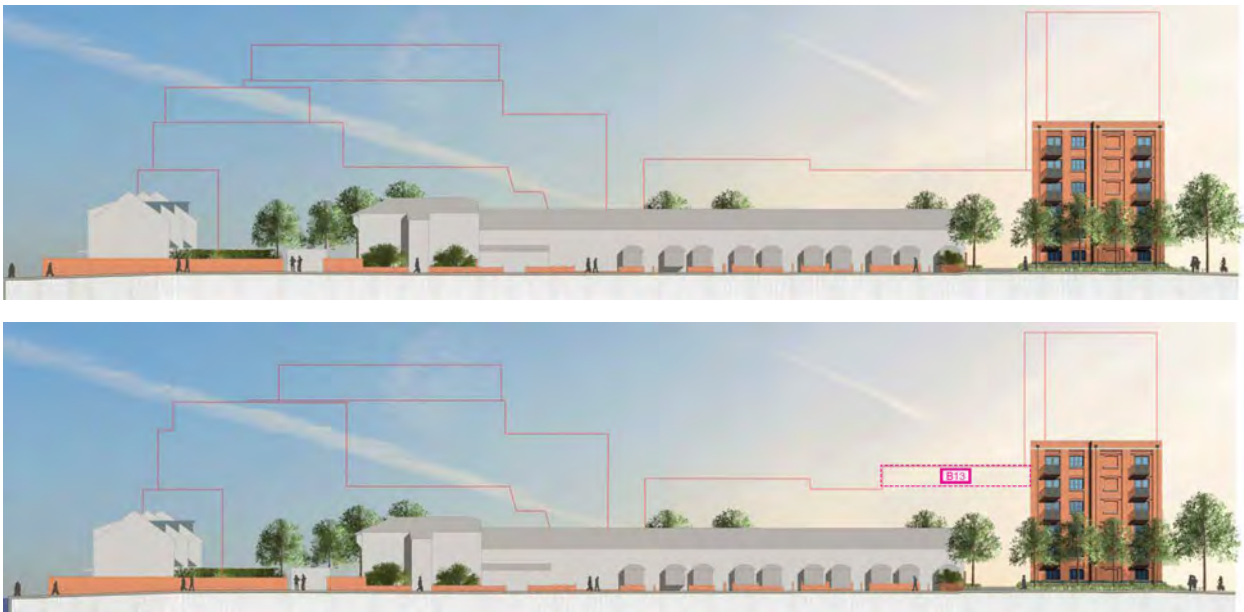


Figure 40 - Section along the middle of Lynmouth Road looking east and relationship with Block A (right), with other proposed blocks shown in outline form, as approved (top) and as now proposed (bottom)

- 7.34. In terms of Block E, there is a reduced number of windows on the west elevation facing towards Lynmouth Road (see figure 28), with the omission of the inset with external terrace (see figure 27) improving matters further for nearby occupiers in comparison with the approved scheme. On the south elevation of Block E the amount of glazing is reduced and hence the possible amount of overlooking towards the rear of Lynmouth Road is slightly reduced at this point too (see figure 29). This is all balanced against the increase in massing on the upper two floors, which would result in Block E being slightly more overbearing and visually dominant / reduced outlook than the approved scheme. It is also noted that on the west elevation of Block F windows are reducing in size (see figure 30), again resulting in a slight improvement for nearby occupiers. Hence, in overall overlooking/privacy terms the Block E/F changes result in slight improvements for nearby Lynmouth Road residents at this point, set against a slightly worsening impact of reduced outlook and increased visual dominance through the design changes to Block E. In each instance the scale of the impact is not considered to be fundamental or result in a different overarching conclusion of acceptability, as made by the Inspector in allowing the original scheme.
- 7.35. In respect of other amenity based matters referenced by Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity), the proposed changes are not considered to result in any worsening of the situation in comparison with the original scheme. For example, the external layout

changes are not envisaged to result in any specific crime or safety implications. Meanwhile, the small changes in the overall heights of buildings and the updated design approach for the top two floors of Blocks D&E, or the additional storey to the western wing of Block B is not considered to alter the wind and microclimate conditions beyond the conclusions reached at the time of the original permission.

Quality of accommodation for future occupiers

- 7.36. In terms of the quality of accommodation for future occupiers, the requirement for the scheme to adhere to updated fire regulations has been the major driver in the proposals, with a series of other amendments generally stemming from these changes. In particular, the requirement for a second staircore within buildings over 18m in height has resulted in these being introduced to Blocks B, D and E. The HSE has been formally consulted on the application, as is now required (see paragraphs 5.26-5.27 above), and following a series of clarifications by the applicant the HSE has confirmed contention to the extent it affects land use planning considerations. Accordingly, adherence to the updated standards is considered to be a benefit of the proposed amendments, assisting in the overall quality of accommodation for future occupiers.
- 7.37. In other regards, the changes in housing mix, specifically the increase in larger units is seen as a benefit in helping to foster the creation of mixed and balanced communities. The applicant has indicated that these additional rooms, considered by officers to be counted as bedrooms, are envisaged to function as study rooms to assist future occupiers who work from home, adapting to this recent societal trend. Furthermore, the creation of a management office/suite (ancillary to the Class C3 residential use) at ground floor level of Block B, and available for future use by occupiers of all dwellings at the site, is another on-site benefit for future occupiers.
- 7.38. In terms of daylight and sunlight provision for future occupiers, the supporting report has been independently reviewed on behalf of the LPA by BRE. As per paragraphs 5.21 (specifically parts h) to k) and 5.22 BRE acknowledge that daylight provision is not ideal, but there have been improvements for the worst lit rooms since BRE's initial review at the time of the original application in 2020. In terms of sunlight, the results are described as "mediocre at best", but are partly compensated by some north facing windows including river views and officers consider that the results are not fundamentally worse than the previous approval, at which point lack of day/sunlight for future occupiers was not a reason for refusal of the application, nor raised by the Inspector as a shortcoming in the appeal decision. Consequently, a similar conclusion is reached now, that day/sunlight provision for future occupiers is in overall terms adequate in the context of the proposals as a whole.
- 7.39. The consultation response from RBC Waste Services (see paragraphs 5.11-5.12 above) has drawn out an issue not raised at the time of the original permission. At the time of the original application no response to the consultation request was received from RBC Waste Services (as per paragraph 4.23.1 of the officer committee report for application 200188), with condition 15 of the appeal decision requiring details of refuse and recycling bin stores to be submitted and approved prior to the first occupation of the relevant block. Input from RBC Waste Services concerning the current proposal has identified an issue regarding the pulling distances of bins from the stores to the collection vehicles being in excess of 10m. Accordingly, a management plan is required in order to establish and formalise the approach the applicant's strategy in this regard. The applicant has made submissions rejecting this feedback, on the basis of the pulling distances now proposed being an improvement on those shown on the already approved plans. Officers reject such a justification and therefore recommend to vary the wording of condition 15, to specifically require the applicant, as part of the details required as per the original wording of this condition, to require a management plan to also be secured. In practice, this alters the wording of condition 15 from:

15. Prior to the first occupation of any residential / commercial unit within the relevant building ((a) Block A - The Railway Warehouse; (b) Block B - The Goods Warehouse; (c) Block C - The Goods Office; (d) Block D – The Generator / The Turbine Hall; (e)

Block E – Christchurch Wharf; f) Block F - The Coal Drop Building; (g) Block G; (h) Café) details of refuse and recycling bin stores have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include measures to prevent pests and vermin accessing the bin store(s). The approved bin storage, including pest and vermin control measures, shall be provided in accordance with the approved details prior to the first occupation of the relevant building and shall not be used for any purpose other than bin storage at all times thereafter.

(Condition 15 of the appeal decision, as per Appendix 2)

7.40. To the following wording instead:

Prior to the first occupation of any residential / commercial unit within the relevant building ((a) Block A - The Railway Warehouse; (b) Block B - The Goods Warehouse; (c) Block C - The Goods Office; (d) Block D – The Generator / The Turbine Hall; (e) Block E – Christchurch Wharf; f) Block F - The Coal Drop Building; (g) Block G; (h) Café) details of how refuse and recycling collections will be managed from the site (including vehicles, servicing and deliveries, as per a management plan) and measures to prevent pests and vermin accessing the refuse and recycling store(s) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter refuse collection, servicing and deliveries shall be carried out fully in accordance with the approved details and management plan, the approved pest and vermin control measures shall be provided prior to the first occupation of the relevant building and the refuse and recycling stores shall not be used for any purpose other than refuse and recycling storage at all times thereafter.

7.41. The inclusion of a management plan will ultimately improve the quality of accommodation for future occupiers, by ensuring that there is a co-ordinated approach adopted in the future to waste collection and avoiding a potential issue (no management plan) which may have inadvertently arisen in the original permission.

7.42. In overall terms there is considered to be a slight increase in the quality of accommodation for future occupiers of the now proposed development, when compared with the originally allowed scheme. This consequently forms another benefit of these proposals.

Other matters

Specific commentary on other proposed conditions sought to be amended

7.43. By consequence of the changes proposed, a number of other conditions, beyond the approved plans condition 2 (whereby the now proposed plans will be referenced), are required to be varied, predominantly to update the wording to reflect updated plans referenced in these conditions. More specifically, the omission of the inset on the top floors of Block E means no roof terrace enclosures are now proposed at 6th floor level. Accordingly, condition 34 is re-worded to omit this requirement for details, with that no longer being applicable. Condition 35 (parking provision) is required to be varied to reflect the updated plans referenced in the condition, aligning with the altered parking arrangements proposed. This is confirmed as being acceptable by RBC Transport as per paragraphs 5.1-5.2 above. Condition 47 (Block B glazing and ventilation) is required to be varied to reflect the updated plans referenced in the condition, incorporating the changes to the scheme. For example, the additional storey within Block B is shown, with the previously proposed measures also proposed to be incorporated at this floor too. Such an approach is necessary, in light of the proposed changes, and considered acceptable too by officers.

Other conditions

7.44. In addition to the conditions sought to be amended in the description of development and condition 15 (refuse and recycling) as all separately discussed above, there are also a series of other conditions whereby the wording is required to be updated. This is to reflect that these conditions have already been satisfied through approval of details applications

submitted and approved (see section 4 above for details). In practice, the wording of these conditions will therefore change to compliance-based wordings, essentially requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the already approved details. This relates to the following conditions:

- Condition 4 (Demolition and Construction Method Statement)
- Condition 5 (contamination assessment)
- Condition 6 (remediation scheme)
- Parts a and b of condition 10 (Land gas)
- Parts of condition 11 (archaeological evaluation)
- Condition 15 (refuse and recycling) following the officer assessment as referenced above
- Condition 22 (recording of lodge building)
- Condition 31 (Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan)
- Condition 42 (DDA compliant pedestrian route to and from the accessible parking bays details)
- Condition 46 (CEMP: Biodiversity)

7.45. Planning Practice Guidance on flexible options for planning permissions also makes clear that, for the purpose of clarity, s73 applications should restate the conditions imposed on earlier permissions that continue to have effect. Beyond the discussion above regarding those conditions proposed to be altered, or those that are subsequently required to be reworded to reflect approval of details applications having already been satisfied, all remaining conditions of the original permission will be restated on the future decision notice. All such conditions, as per the 'Review of other conditions as per the original permission' sub-section of the 'conditions' section at the outset of this report, remain unchanged.

Legal Agreement

7.46. In terms of the legal agreement, this remains in place in accordance with the terms of the original agreement, as confirmed by RBC Legal Services (see paragraph 5.10 above). In summary, the original legal agreement secured an affordable housing viability review, an open space contribution, ecological works, a carbon off-setting mechanism, an employment, skills and training contribution and various highways works associated with the north-south link, highways improvements and works, a travel plan and car club. The specific amendments sought as part of this s73 application do not explicitly alter the general requirements previously secured, nor result in any new obligations being required to be secured. Accordingly, no deed of variation to the legal agreement is considered to be required in this instance.

8. Equality implications

8.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular application

9. Conclusion & planning balance

- 9.1 As confirmed at paragraph 7.1 above, section 73 applications are required to be considered against the development plan and material considerations, under section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and conditions attached to the existing permission, with a particular focus on national and development plan policies, and other material considerations which may have changed significantly since the original grant of permission. This has been evidenced in the above assessment.
- 9.2 Any harmful impacts of the proposed development are required to be weighed against the benefits in the context of national and local planning policies, as detailed in the appraisal above. In this instance it is considered relevant to initially return to the planning balance exercise undertaken by the Inspector in allowing the original proposals in 2022. At this time (see paragraphs 197 to 212 at Appendix 2), a summary of the harmful impacts / conflicts were:
- loss of the locally listed building, albeit the LLB can be afforded no more than a low level and modest degree of significance
 - provisions relating to the requirement to demonstrate that the proposal would be part of a comprehensive approach to the development of the Station/River major opportunity area
 - technical conflict with the policy requirement for development to be set back 10m from the riverbank, albeit this was considered a minor matter
- 9.3 Meanwhile, a summary of the scheme benefits, as identified by the Inspector, were compliance with key elements of the borough and site planning policy, such as:
- principle of residential-led mixed use development of an inner urban site as part of the expansion of the core of the town centre northwards
 - o delivering a significant amount of new housing on part of an allocated brownfield site in a highly sustainable location.
 - establishment of a connection to the major north-south movement corridor
 - o providing an important link supporting the Council's aspirations for this key movement corridor, enabling sustainable and healthy travel choices
 - o the opening up of the riverside area and provision of a café to support the attractiveness of this route.
 - o the supporting text to Policy CR11g sets out that achieving the north-south link is the main priority for the site and should be given substantial weight in development management.
 - o given the evident challenges of achieving a viable route through the site, securing the delivery of this important piece of infrastructure would be a benefit attracting significant weight
 - o the provision of a pedestrian/cycle crossing facility over Vastern Road would support connectivity across the wider north-south sustainable travel corridor and should be afforded beneficial weight
 - the highly accessible location is ideally suited to the proposed high-density development with low car dependency
 - the high-quality design reflects the history of the site, has regard to its riverside setting, and connects key elements of the major opportunity area with the rest of central Reading, making a significant contribution to the overall environmental improvement of the area.
 - suitable response to the natural environment, with any harmful effects on marginal vegetation addressed by an appropriate level of mitigation.

- generic wider social, economic and environmental benefits associated with urban development of this nature achieves moderate weight

- 9.4 With specific regard to the changes sought through this application, whilst some of the changes are considered appropriate in design terms (e.g. the additional storey to Block B), some harmful impacts in comparison with the original scheme are also identified (e.g. changes to the top floors of Blocks D & E). The changes to the housing mix, specifically the increase in larger 3 and 4-bedroom units is a welcomed benefit, with the mix alterations not in themselves materially affecting the viability position and previously agreed terms from the previous submission in respect of no upfront contribution to affordable housing being viably possible, but a late-stage review being secured. In amenity terms, the changes will not in themselves result in any substantial additional harmful impacts for nearby occupiers, and in overall terms the scheme will improve the quality of accommodation for future occupiers. In all other respects, the proposals are not envisaged to result in any significant harmful impacts over and above those previously raised and weighed by the Inspector in allowing the original application.
- 9.5 It is considered that the harmful impacts identified in these changes are, in the context of the proposals as a whole, are not so significant or fundamental to outweigh the benefits previously identified by the Inspector in supporting the original proposals. Officers consider that it remains the case, as concluded by the Inspector, that the policy harms in the now proposed scheme would be clearly outweighed by *“the significant benefits associated with managing the regeneration of the site as a whole”* (paragraph 210, as per Appendix 2).
- 9.6 It is considered that officers have applied a suitable planning balance when reaching this conclusion. As such, it is recommended to vary conditions 2, 24, 33, 35 and 47, as sought by the applicant and, additionally, vary the wording of conditions 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 15, 22, 31, 42 and 46 too, all associated with planning permission 200188, as allowed on appeal (Ref: APP/E0345/W/21/3276463) on 17/03/2022.

Appendix 1 – Selected further plans / visual information submitted with the application (and comparisons with the approved scheme)

View P2 Winter - Christchurch Meadows, approach to Christchurch Bridge, looking south-west - existing

Single frame image | Focal length 24.26mm | Camera height above survey point 1650mm | Nominal lens rise 0mm | Date 05.03.19 | Time 10:44



View P2 Winter - Christchurch Meadows, approach to Christchurch Bridge, looking south-west - allowed on appeal



View P2 Winter - Christchurch Meadows, approach to Christchurch Bridge, looking south-west - proposed



View P2 Winter - Christchurch Meadows, approach to Christchurch Bridge, looking south-west - existing

40 degree horizontal field of view - cropped image



View P2 Winter - Christchurch Meadows, approach to Christchurch Bridge, looking south-west - allowed on appeal



View P2 Winter - Christchurch Meadows, approach to Christchurch Bridge, looking south-west - proposed

40 degree horizontal field of view - cropped image



View P2 Summer - Christchurch Meadows, approach to Christchurch Bridge, looking south-west - existing

40 degree horizontal field of view - cropped image



View P2 Summer - Christchurch Meadows, approach to Christchurch Bridge, looking south-west - allowed on appeal



View P2 Summer - Christchurch Meadows, approach to Christchurch Bridge, looking south-west - proposed

40 degree horizontal field of view - cropped image



View P6 Winter - Reading Bridge, looking north-west - existing

Single frame image | Focal length 24.26mm | Camera height above survey point 1650mm | Nominal lens rise 0mm | Date 11.03.19 | Time 10:52



View P6 Winter - Reading Bridge, looking north-west - allowed on appeal



View P6 Winter - Reading Bridge, looking north-west - proposed



View P6 Winter - Reading Bridge, looking north-west - existing

40 degree horizontal field of view - cropped image



View P6 Winter - Reading Bridge, looking north-west - allowed on appeal



View P6 Winter - Reading Bridge, looking north-west - proposed

40 degree horizontal field of view - cropped image



View P6A Summer - Reading Bridge, looking north-west - existing

40 degree horizontal field of view - cropped image



View P6A Summer - Reading Bridge, looking north-west – allowed on appeal



View P6A Summer - Reading Bridge, looking north-west - proposed

40 degree horizontal field of view - cropped image



View P6A Summer - Reading Bridge, looking north-west - existing

Single frame image | Focal length 17.32mm | Camera height above survey point 1650mm | Nominal lens rise 4mm | Date 18.10.19 | Time 11:02



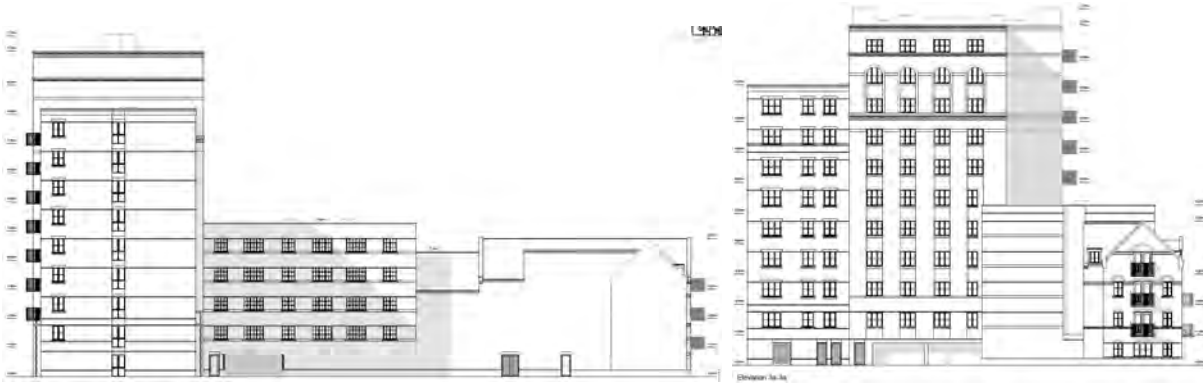
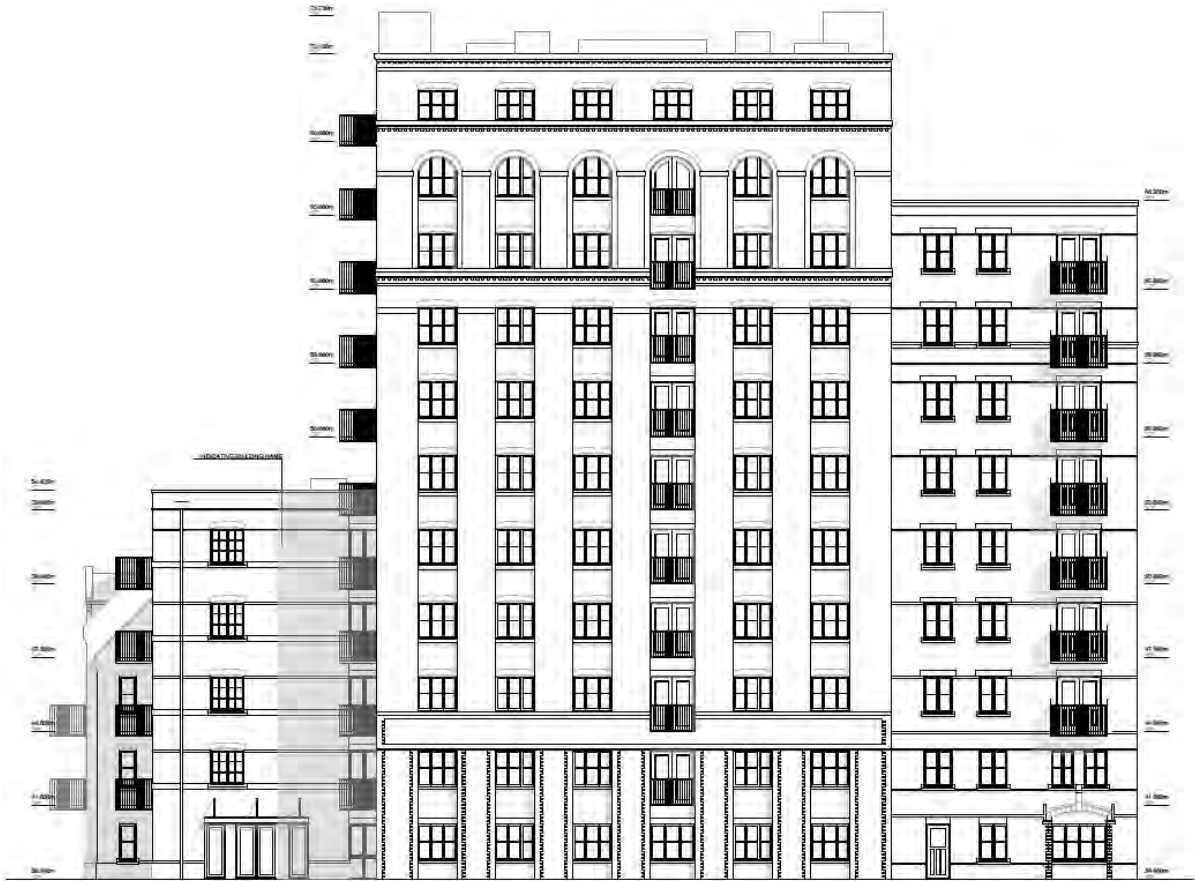
View P6A Summer - Reading Bridge, looking north-west – allowed on appeal



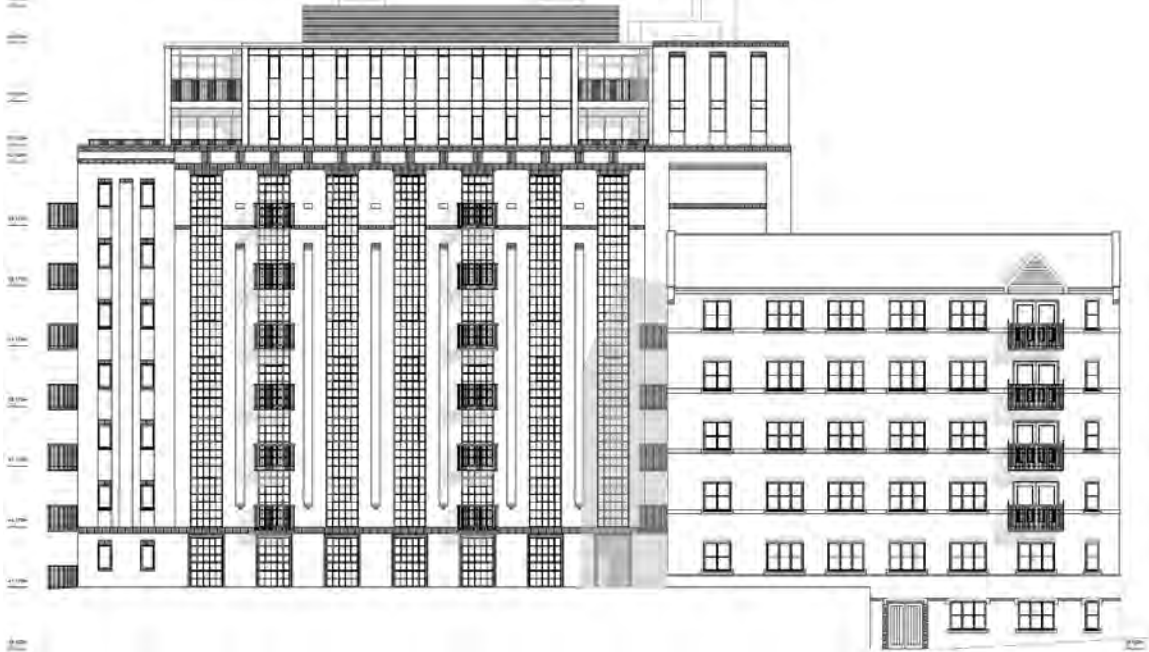
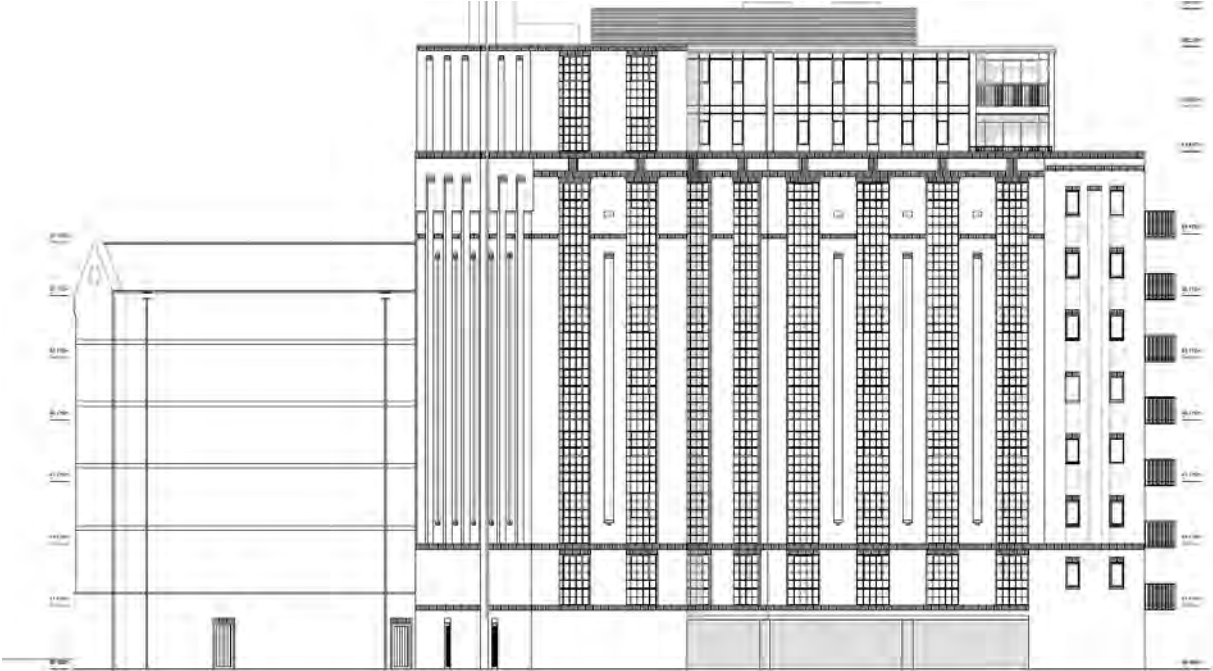
View P6A Summer - Reading Bridge, looking north-west - proposed



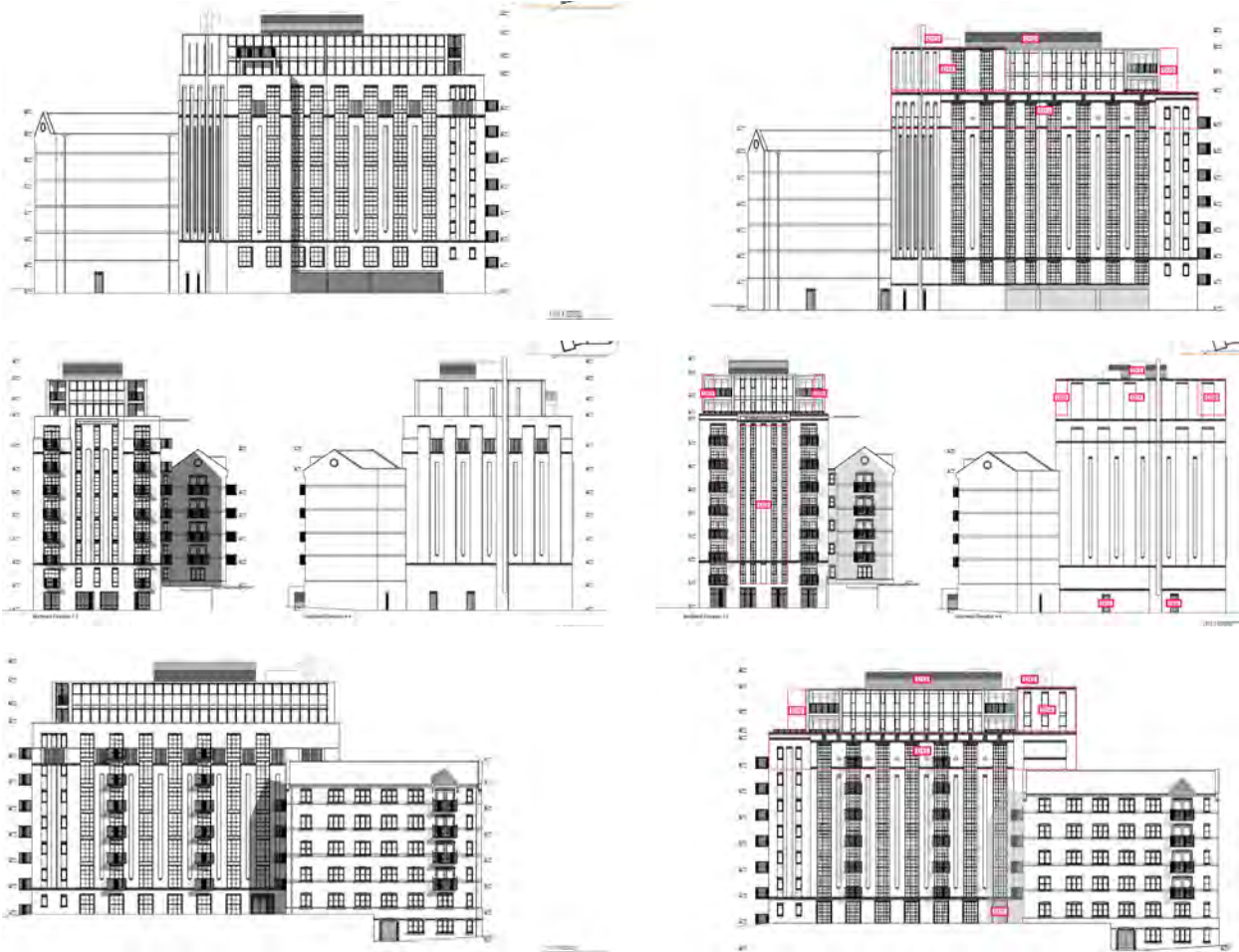
Blocks B & C proposed elevations (south, west, east and north)



Block D proposed elevations (east, south, north and west)

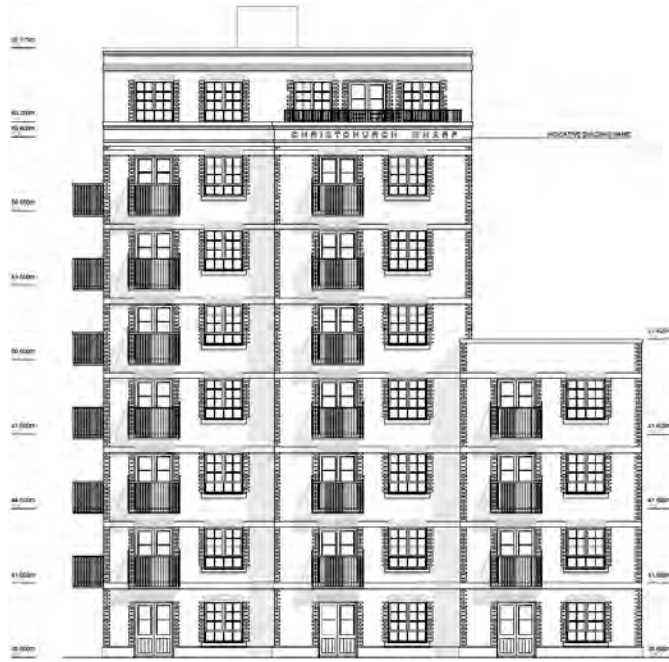


Comparison of approved and as now proposed Block D elevations



Section through the middle of the site looking west, as approved (top) & as proposed (bottom), showing the east elevations of Blocks A, G, F and E

Block E proposed elevations (north, east, south and west)



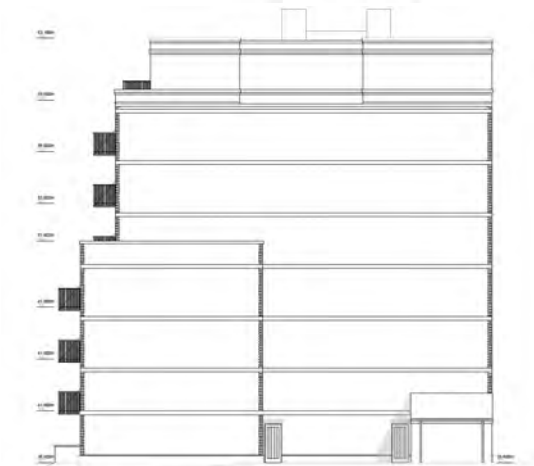
Northeast Elevation 4-4



Southeast Elevation 1-1



Southwest Elevation 2-2



Northwest Elevation 3-3

Comparison of allowed on appeal and as now proposed elevations for Block E

