

26 June 2024

<b>Title</b>	<b>PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT</b>
<b>Ward</b>	Coley
<b>Planning Application Reference:</b>	231077
<b>Site Address:</b>	Reading Link Retail Park, Rose Kiln Lane, Reading
<b>Proposed Development</b>	Erection of 1,780 sqm unit for use as gym with mezzanine level at Reading Link Retail Park, Rose Kiln Lane
<b>Applicant:</b>	Sorbon Estates C/o Solve Planning Ltd
<b>Report author</b>	Anthony Scholes
<b>Deadline:</b>	31 July 2024
<b>Recommendations</b>	Delegate to the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (ADPTPPS) to i) GRANT full planning permission, subject to the following conditions and satisfactory completion of a s106 legal agreement to secure an Employment, Skills and Training Contribution, and delegate to ADPTPPS to make such minor changes to the conditions, Heads of Terms and details of the legal agreement as may be reasonably required to issue the permission, or ii) Refuse full planning permission if the legal agreement is not completed by 31/07/2024 (unless officers on behalf of the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement).
<b>S106 Terms</b>	To secure a contribution toward Employment Skills and Training a of £8,455.00 index linked from date of permission and payable on commencement.
<b>Conditions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Time limit 3 years</li><li>2. Approved Plans</li><li>3. Materials (to be approved) – pre-commencement</li><li>4. Parking to be provided in accordance</li><li>5. Cycle parking (details to be provided prior to occupation) including implementation</li><li>6. Sustainability standards as proposed – details to be submitted for approval prior to commencement to include measurable assessment criteria.</li><li>7. Validation report confirming sustainability standards met – to be submitted for approval prior to occupation</li><li>8. Sustainable Urban Drainage (to be approved – pre-commencement) to include timetable for implementation</li><li>9. SuDS implementation and maintenance</li><li>10. Landscaping (as proposed)</li><li>11. Pre-commencement biodiversity enhancements scheme</li></ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Pre-occupation external lighting scheme to be approved by LPA, including implementation. No additional lighting.</li> <li>13. Pre-installation acoustic assessment for plant installation, including implementation</li> <li>14. Amplified music restriction between 11pm and 6am</li> <li>15. Pre-commencement land gas risk assessment to be approved by LPA, including remediation and implementation</li> <li>16. Land gas validation report to be submitted for approval prior to first occupation</li> <li>17. Hours of construction (0800 – 1800 Mon – Sat)</li> <li>18. No bonfires</li> <li>19. Pre-commencement construction management plan</li> <li>18. Use restriction – Class E (d) (Indoor sport, recreation, or fitness not involving motorised vehicles or firearms or use as a swimming pool or skating rink, principally to visiting members of the public) only.</li> <li>19. Refuse and Recycling (as proposed)</li> <li>20. Pre-occupation provision of internal site pedestrian link (demarcation and pedestrian crossing to be provided)</li> <li>21. Maximum floorspace 1,780sqm</li> </ol>
<b>Informatives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Terms</li> <li>2. Building Control</li> <li>3. No bonfires</li> <li>4. Positive and Proactive</li> <li>5. Damage to Highway</li> <li>6. Works affecting highway</li> <li>7. Complaints about construction</li> <li>8. Community Infrastructure Levy</li> <li>9. Thames Water Recommended informative re: water pressure and flow rate</li> </ol>

## 1. Executive summary

1.1 The proposal is recommended for approval subject to the conditions set out above.

1.2 This application seeks permission for the erection of a 1,780m<sup>2</sup> unit for use as a gym with mezzanine level at Reading Link Retail Park, Rose Kiln Lane. The wider site contains predominantly retail uses. The proposal would result in a loss of car parking on the site, though it has been demonstrated that the site overall would continue to provide sufficient parking for the mix of uses. The design is of a reasonable standard for the use and would not be out of keeping with the scale or appearance of other buildings in the vicinity. There are no significant detrimental effects of the proposal, and it is considered that it accords with adopted policies and is recommended to you for approval.

## 2. Introduction and site description

2.1 The application site lies at the southern end of Rose Kiln Lane at its junction with the A33. The site area measures 0.174 hectares. It is located on the western side of Rose Kiln Lane and adjoins the Holy Brook. The Environment Agency (EA) flood mapping shows the site is within close proximity to flood zone 3, though the area of the red line plan is within Zone 1 and outside of the mapped flood risk area (zones 2 and 3).

2.2 The uses in the estate area are retail in nature with a bedding, furniture, and leisure sales uses. There is also a 'Starbucks' coffee shop in the norther portion of the retail park. To the

south, is a service station and car wash, and further south is the Grosvenor casino. To the north is predominantly semi-detached dwelling along St Saviours Road.



Figure 1 - Location Plan

- 2.3 The application is a 'major' development according to the Reading 'Scheme of Delegation' (over 1,000 sqm.) and, therefore is presented to Planning Applications Committee for a decision.

### 3. The proposal

- 3.1. The area of the proposed development is used as open carparking associated with the retail park. The construction of the gym building would result in a net loss of 47no. spaces.

- 3.2. The proposed gym building is a circa 10m (to ridge) high building, and 6.2m to eaves. The plans identify the site to be constructed for 'JD Gyms'. The building would be clad with a composite cladding, though details of the colour are not provided, the colour scheme adopted of similar 'JD Gyms' is of a darker colour palette. The applicant is seeking 24 hour operation 7 days a week.

- 3.3. Submitted plans and documents:

Dwg No. RLRPRKL\_PLN-GM\_003 – Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations

Dwg No. RLRPRKL\_LOC-GM\_001 – Location Plan

Dwg No. RLRPRKL\_FSE\_008 – Feasibility Layout

Motion Transport Planning – Transport Statement, dated 14 February 2023

Pegasus Group – Retail Statement, dated 16 March 2023

Solve Planning – Design, Access, and Planning Statement, dated July 2023

Wardell-Armstrong – Archaeological Desk Based Assessment, including historic survey map appendices, dated January 2023

Price & Myers – Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy Report – Rev 1, dated March 2023

Redmore Environmental – Air Quality Assessment, dated 31 March 2023

Received 21 July 2023

Reading Link Retail Park – New Building – Addendum ecology Note, dated September 2023

David Archer Associates – Ecological Assessment, dated 30 September 2022

Dwg No. RLRPRKL\_LOC-GM\_001 – Location Plan

Dwg No. RLRPRKL\_FSE\_009 – Proposed Block Plan

Dwg No. RLRPRKL\_PLN-GM\_003 – B – Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations

Rexel – Lighting Proposals, dated 18 August 2023

David Archer Associates – Ecological Assessment, dated 10 June 2023

As received 7 September 2023

Eight Versa – Sustainability Statement, Dated 19 October 2023

As received 19 October 2023

Dwg No. RLRPRKL\_PLN-GM\_011 – B – Proposed Floor Plan and Sections

Dwg No. RLRPRKL\_PLN-GM\_003 – D – Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations

As received 19 December 2023

Pulsar Acoustics - Revised Acoustic Assessment, dated 21 December 2023

Redmore Environmental - Air Quality Assessment, dated 19 December 2023

As received 21 December 2023

Pulsar Acoustics - Revised Acoustic Assessment, dated 4 January 2024

As received 11 January 2024

'Motion' Transport Planning – Transport Statement Addendum, dated April 2024

As received 8 April 2024

Dwg No. RLRPRKL\_PLN-GM\_010 – A – Site Plan Indicative Landscaping

As received 10 April 2024

Dwg No. RLRPRKL\_PLN-GM\_010 – B – Site Plan Indicative Landscaping

Dwg No. RLRPRKL\_PLN-GM\_002 – A – Site Plan

Dwg No. RLRPRKL\_PLN-GM\_014 – A – Plan – Pedestrian Link

As received 7 May 2024

#### 3.4. Community Infrastructure levy (CIL):

In relation to the community infrastructure levy, the applicant has duly completed a CIL liability form with the submission. The development would be CIL liable, though the LPA's adopted charging schedule would make the charge zero.

#### 4. **Planning history/Building control**

4.1 None applicable to the application site area.

## **5. Consultations**

5.1. Statutory:

Environment Agency – Advised that the application does not require consultation to EA

5.2. Non-statutory:

Thames Water – No objections, subject to an informative.

RBC Natural Environment – No objections, subject to conditions.

RBC Transport – No objections, subject to conditions.

RBC Environmental Protection - No objections, subject to conditions.

RBC – Ecology – No objections, subject to conditions.

Public:

No comments were received during the course of the application.

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

6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states at Paragraph 11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”.

6.2 For this Local Planning Authority the development plan is the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019). The relevant national / local policies / guidance are:

National Planning Policy Framework (2023). The following chapters are the most relevant (others apply to a lesser extent):

2. Achieving Sustainable Development

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 Places

14. Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

National Planning Policy Guidance (2014 onwards)

Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019). The relevant policies are:

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  
EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network  
EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland  
EN15: Air Quality  
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources  
EN17: Noise Generating Equipment  
EN18: Flooding and Drainage  
TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy  
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters  
TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities  
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:

Employment Skills and Training SPD (2013)

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)

Planning Obligations under Section 106 Supplementary Planning Document (2015)

Other relevant documents:

Reading Borough Council Tree strategy (2021)

## **7. APPRAISAL**

The main matters to be considered are:

Land use principles

Transport/ Parking

Design Considerations and Effect on Character

Environmental Matters

Flood Risk & Drainage

Natural Environment

Sustainability

S106 Obligations

Equalities impact

### Land use principles

- 7.1 Policy CC1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP) requires a positive approach to development that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which lies at the heart of national policy (NPPF).
- 7.2 Paragraph 96 of the NPPF states that *“specifically supports planning decisions which achieve healthy places and: “enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs.*
- 7.3 *Local Plan Policy RL5 requires ‘proposals of greater than 1,000sqm of new or additional floor space to demonstrate that there will be no significant adverse impact on existing centres’.*
- 7.4 Policy CC1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP) requires a positive approach to development proposals that reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which lies at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It goes on to state that “Planning applications that accord with the policies in the development plan .....will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.....”
- 7.5 Policy CC6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP) states *“The scale and density of development will be related to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities, with the densest and largest scale development taking place in the most accessible locations.*
- 7.6 The subject site is within an existing mixed use site within close proximity to the Reading Town Centre, as well as various transport links. The area of the proposed gym is currently open carparking. Given the accessibility and proximity of the site to central Reading, this is considered an appropriate scale of development in accordance with policy CC6. Subject to all other matters being addressed, the principle of development is acceptable.
- 7.7 It is noted that the erection of a drive-thru coffee shop was granted in July 2021 (Ref: 201558), where the Council also accepted the implementation of the sequential test. The applicant has demonstrated that there are no sequentially preferable sites for the size and scale of development proposed that could accommodate this development. Sites that would be of a good size within the town centre are also generally allocated or committed for housing provision.

### Transport/Parking

- 7.8 Policies TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy), TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway related matters), and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking related matters relating to development.
- 7.9 A Transport Statement and supplementary technical notes have been submitted to support this application. These statements seek to address the potential highways implications arising from the proposed development.
- 7.10 The access to the proposed development would be unchanged in the current proposal. Car park circulation would be changed, though it is clear that the key matter from a transport perspective relates to the net loss of 47 car parking spaces.
- 7.11 In this particular instance, the site as a whole has been considered, as well as the trips specifically associated with the gym. The trip generation rate demonstrates that mid-week, the key peak trips (43 arrivals) would generally occur for a gym between 17:00 and 18:00 hours. The majority of the businesses within the wider retail park close after 6pm, with some open until 8pm weekdays. This, in part demonstrates that the peak period for a gym, is most likely to differ from that of the retail uses in the centre, particularly on weekdays. For weekend use, the gyms anticipated peak period is anticipated to be 1200-1300 (23 arrivals). This would likely occur at a similar time to the peak usage of the wider retail park.

- 7.12 As a whole, the most recent transport statement states that the parking demand, in peak periods on weekdays and weekends would be 126 and 183 spaces respectively. The number of parking spaces remaining, following construction of the gym building, would be 264 spaces. As such, there would be an oversupply (based on the assumed trip generation rate) of 81 spaces.
- 7.13 A cycle store is proposed to meet the required number of spaces, though additional details are required by pre-occupation condition.
- 7.14 By virtue of the location of the proposed building, and the aims to provide a more accessible facility by non-car based transport options, the applicant has been required to provide a pedestrian link within the site from the public footpath. The route has been shown, which includes a zebra crossing.
- 7.15 Transport officers have reviewed the information submitted, including trip generation rates, and pedestrian link plans, and have responded with agreement with the findings. Therefore, have not objected to the proposal on highways grounds, subject to conditions.

#### Design Considerations and Effect on Character

- 7.16 Policy CC7 (Design and The Public Realm) states that “all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area”.
- 7.17 The proposal includes the construction of a 6m to eaves building, with a maximum height of ~10m within an area of open carparking. In addition to the building, the proposal includes some minor landscaping around the footprint of the building. It is noted that the location of the building would have limited visibility from much of the public realm, with very limited views from the A33, and also limited views from Rose Kiln Lane. Notwithstanding, the building will be highly visible from within the site, and from the road which provides its access behind the ‘Esso’ services. The key elevations will therefore be the north-east and north-west sides.
- 7.18 The site, is characterised by the existing large format retail usage. With ground floor access, and reasonably blank facades above ground level. The buildings have been designed with triangular glass, and architectural elements for entrances closer to the junction of Rose Kiln Lane and the A33. Whereas the detailing and design is more limited further south within the site.
- 7.19 The proposal includes a frontage (internal) which includes a protruding hipped roof form with glazing, and an entrance canopy. The side most visible to the highway will provide a predominantly blank façade with two emergency exits and is indicated to contain signage (though this application does not consider the signage). The lower part of the building would be clad in differing materials to the upper portion. This is similar to the design of the other buildings on the site.
- 7.20 In broad terms, the proposal, though basic in design, is considered reasonable in the context of the wider area, with a mix of commercial and industrial buildings with similarly limited architectural detailing. As such, subject to review of the materials palate, the design is considered acceptable.

#### Environmental Matters

- 7.21 Noise – Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) and EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) require development to not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties. There are many other industrial buildings in the vicinity and due to the site location, the proposed building is not considered to cause a significant impact on the surrounding area. A condition on the noise levels of mechanical plant is however recommended.

- 7.22 Contaminated land – Policy EN16 states that “development will only be permitted on land affected by contamination where it is demonstrated that the contamination and land gas can be satisfactorily managed or remediated so that it is suitable for the proposed end use and will not impact on the groundwater environment, human health, buildings and the wider environment, during demolition and construction phases as well as during the future use of the site.”
- 7.23 The Council’s Environmental Protection Team have advised that the application site is located within 250 metres of a former landfill site and development within this zone has the potential to be adversely affected by landfill gas. As the proposal involves a new building a land gas assessment and remediation would be required, and a condition is recommended to secure this.

#### Flood Risk & Drainage

- 7.24 Local Plan Policy EN18 (Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems) states, “Development will be directed to areas at lowest risk of flooding in the first instance...” and “Wherever possible, development should be designed to reduce flood risk, both on- and off-site.
- 7.25 The site is located within close proximity to flood zone 3, being the Holy Brook, and Kennet and Holy Brook meadows. The EA was consulted on the application, though responded that they did not require consultation. There is therefore no identified flood risk over the site, and a Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) scheme is sought to be secured by condition.

#### Natural Environment

- 7.26 The area of the proposed gym is adjacent to areas of existing landscaping, including some trees, and other low level planting. As part of this proposal, the area designated for landscaping, and tree planting would be slightly increased. There would also be two additional trees planted. RBC Natural Environment team as there will be no impact on the adjoining biodiversity interest area and the proposal would not negatively impact or alter any habitat. There is no net biodiversity loss on site, in line with policy EN12.

#### Sustainability

- 7.27 The overarching sustainability policy, Policy CC2 requires proposals for new development to reduce the consumption of resources and materials and includes that “All major non-residential developments ..... meet the most up-to-date BREEAM ‘Excellent’ standards, where possible”. The supporting text (para 4.1.4) accepts that “some types of development, such as industrial uses, warehouses and schools might find it more difficult to meet these standards. In these cases, developments must demonstrate that the standard to be achieved is the highest possible for the development, and at a minimum meets the BREEAM ‘Very Good’ standard.” The supporting SPD recognises that “applications for change of use may fall to be considered as refurbishment depending on the level of internal alterations. The appropriate approach to sustainability will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Requirements...are subject to caveats in the relevant policies (CC2 ...) around viability and achievability.”
- 7.28 Policy CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change, requires that “all developments demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change.”
- 7.29 Policy CC4: Decentralised Energy also requires development to demonstrate how consideration has been given to securing energy for the development from decentralised sources. Supporting text in para. 4.1.19 states that although this policy would mainly apply in Central Reading there would be some potential in South Reading.
- 7.30 Policy CC5 requires minimisation of waste during construction and the life of the development.
- 7.31 Sustainability and Energy Statement has been submitted which includes a design statement which includes: insulation, materials including windows, air permeability matters, waste management and creation guidelines, water efficiency standards, transport and

active travel strategies, and air quality considerations for users. The applicant has provided this to offset the need for a full BREEAM assessment which is believed to be difficult for the type and scale of development as outlined in policy CC2 above although it is noted that the submitted details are quite general in nature and a revised document which sets out measurable criteria is recommended to be secured by condition.

#### S106 Obligations

- 7.32 In accordance with Policy CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) all development is required to provide or contribute toward employment skills and training. The applicant has agreed to enter into a s106 agreement which would secure a contribution of £8,455.00 toward Employment Skills and Training in line with the calculation methodology contained within the Employment Skills and Training SPD (2013) this figure would be index linked from date of permission and payable on commencement.

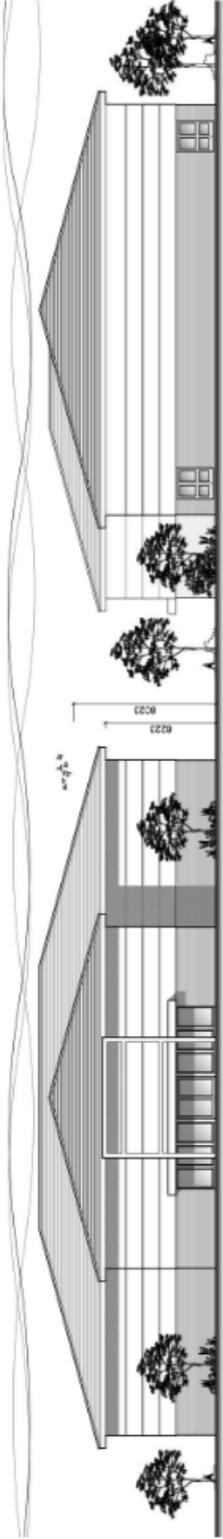
#### Equalities Impact

- 7.32 When determining an application for planning permission the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the proposed development.

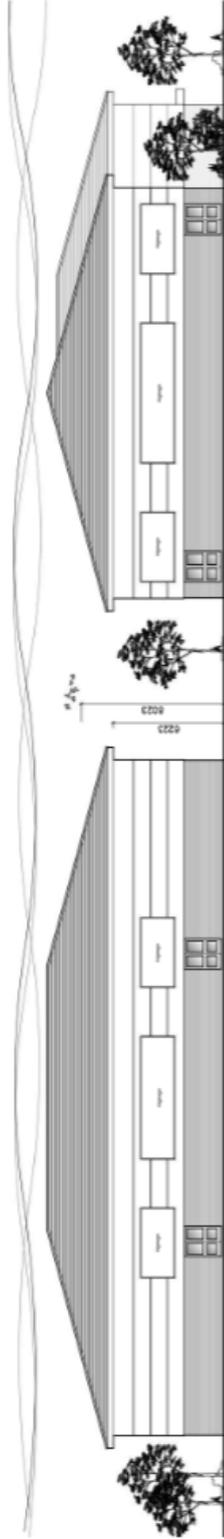
### **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The proposal would result in the construction of a new gym building, with a mezzanine level, within the car park of Reading Link Retail Park. It is considered that the proposal would not harm the character of the surrounding area and is not considered to result in significant harm.
- 8.2 In accordance with the NPPF it would result in sustainable development, utilising previously developed land in a sustainable location.
- 8.3 It is considered that the scheme would address all material matters and that there would be no significant detrimental effects resulting. The application is recommended for approval, subject to the recommended conditions.

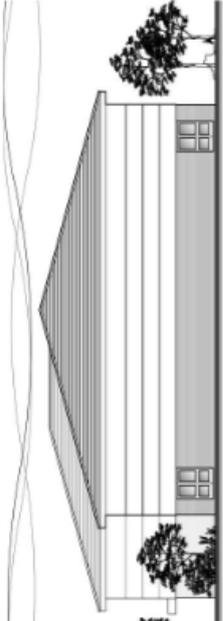
# Proposed Elevations and Floor Plans



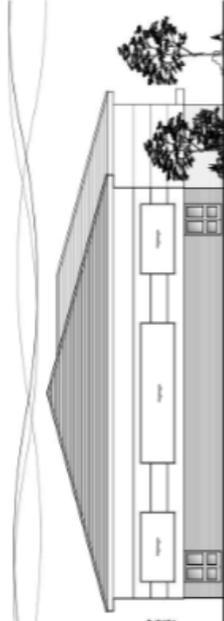
FRONT ELEVATION



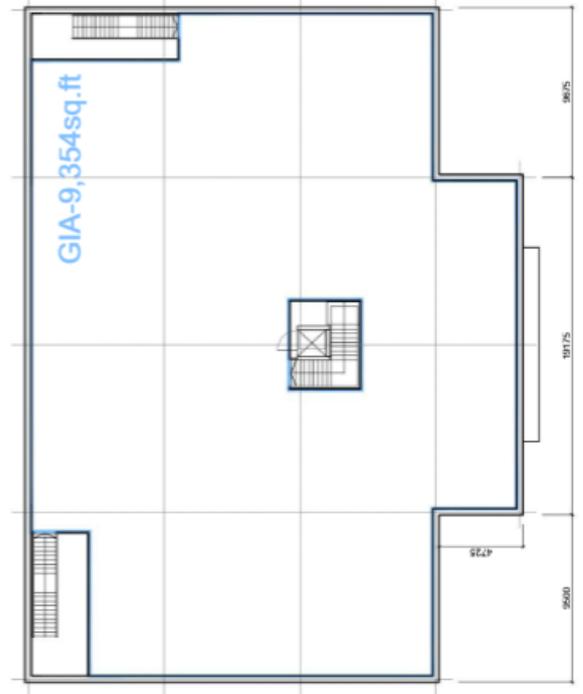
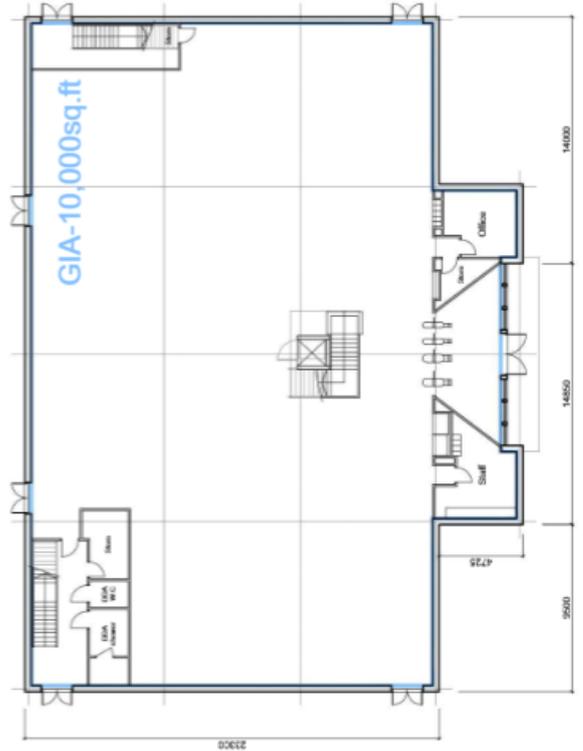
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SIDE ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION



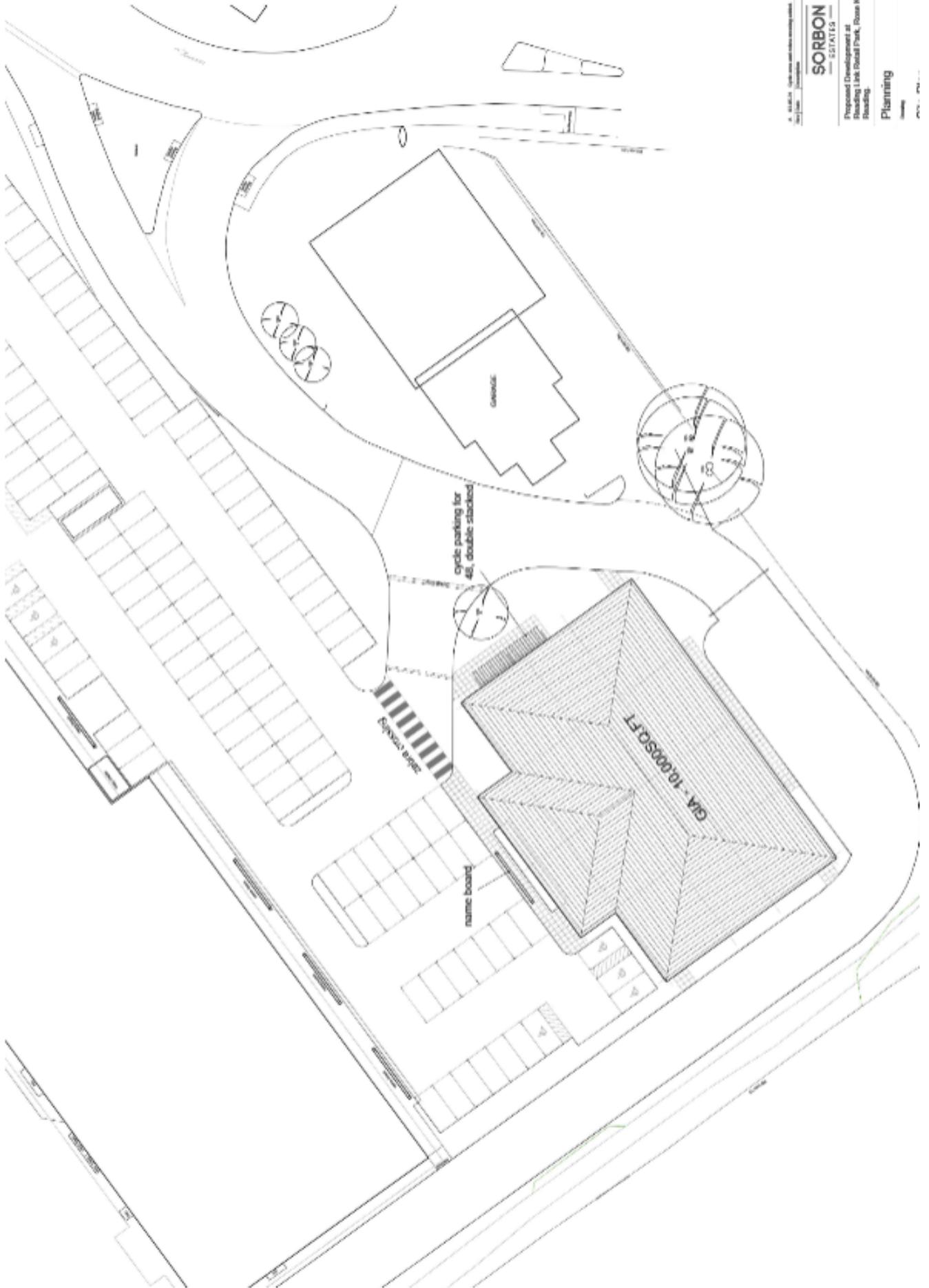
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# Proposed Site Plan



**SORBON**  
STATES  
Proposed Development at  
Standing Link Road Park, Phase II  
Standing  
Planning  
Date: 01/2024