

UPDATE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 24th April 2019

ITEM NO. 11

Ward: Whitley

App No.: 180543

App Type: FUL

Address: Sales and Marketing Suite, Drake Way, Kennet Island

Proposal: Proposed construction of 12 apartments (1 x 1 bed, 11 x 2 bed) with associated car parking, landscaping and open space, and infrastructure provision.

Applicant: Berkeley Homes (Western) Limited

Date valid: 4/4/2018

Major Application: 13 week target decision date: 4/7/2018

Agreed Extension of time date: 31/5/2019

Planning Guarantee: 26 week date: 3/10/2018

RECOMMENDATIONS

As on main report.

1.0 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Further Consultation Response

- 1.1 A late objection was received, following the preparation of the main committee report and the recommendation for approval. This is as follows:

I live on Kennet Island and would like to register an objection.

I note that only properties in the vicinity of the marketing suite were actively consulted with this application. This application will result in the loss of what was a meadow before this building was erected that was well used by residents.

The alternative open space proposed is not equal to what was there before. Given the developers are closing the gym and placed a commercial business into a unit under the guise of community space, there is little real offering of community space offered to residents. The Residents Association when it existed was approached about this space being used as a community centre when it was seeking planning permission for it to be built originally then the developers subsequently submitted an application for a temporary structure. To approve this application would be to against the conditions of the original application which are to return the space to its original use - the meadow - which was the largest piece of green open space available on the development - enabling older children to play where as other open spaces on the development are targeted to a much younger age group.

It appears that the developers have not given proper consideration to the full demographics of this development when considering the community space and open space required: a nursery/creche and three play parks only meet the needs of some of the residents who live here. Whilst a meeting room does exist on the development, it does not have the facilities, space or a suitable cover charge to meet most needs of residents. I understand that developers build houses and not communities but without full proper consultation with all residents, Kennet Island will continue to become a bland landscape without facilities or sense of

community. Residents can only do so much with the available resources and I would hope that even though the planning meeting will take place this week, that you are able to take this comment into consideration given that this planning application was 'hidden' to many of the residents that it would affect.

- 1.2 It is acknowledged that the proposed flats would result in the loss of open space, and the justification for this is as documented in the main report section vi, paras 6.27-6.37. The area of the application site was originally intended to provide a landscape buffer/ area of grassland and planting rather than a formal play area. This loss is being compensated by an enhanced open space further into the development at Whale Avenue, under application reference 190308, which has now been approved, and its delivery will be a requirement as part of the proposed Section 106 legal agreement under this application.
- 1.3 With regards to play space for older children, the loss of open space resulting from this proposal would have no effect on this, as the space was not intended for this use. The applicant has confirmed that there is a large grassed area off Greenham Avenue, which provides a flexible space that can be used for a wide range of activities and play for all ages.
- 1.4 The objector also makes reference to the Kennet Gym. This does not form part of this application, however, the applicant has confirmed that residents were recently written to with regard the gym and its closure and that the gym space is bound by an earlier S106 agreement to be used as community space. It is the applicant's clear intention for the unit to be brought into alternative community use following engagement with local residents.
- 1.5 The objector refers to the application not being advertised widely enough. The consultation undertaken was in accordance with statutory requirements with both letters to nearest residents and a site notice.
- 1.6 It is considered that the issues raised have been addressed within the main report and the recommendation for approval remains as set out in the main report.

Officer: Alison Amoah