

Planning Applications Committee

Wednesday 31st May 2017

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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Applications for Committee Determination since previous Committee Report**Printed: 26 May 2017****Ward:** Abbey**Application reference:** 170509**Application type:** Full Planning Approval**Site address:** Kenavon Drive, Reading**Proposal:** Demolition of the two existing retail (Homebase and Toys R Us) structures and the erection of new buildings ranging between 2 and 11 storeys in height, providing 765 (18 x studio, 302x1, 409x2 and 36x3- bed) residential units (Class C3), 5 commercial units (3x flexible Class A1-5, B1 or D1-2 uses, 1x flexible Class A1-A5 use, 1x flexible Class A3 or A4 use), various works to the public realm, including a new riverside square, landscaping, accesses, parking and associated works. This application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement.**Reason for Committee item:** Major Development**Ward:** Abbey**Application reference:** 170650**Application type:** Full Planning Approval**Site address:** 17 Queen Victoria Street, Reading, RG1 1SY**Proposal:** Proposed change of use of first, second and third floor from office to residential use comprising 15 x 1 bed flats and 4 x 2 bed flats**Reason for Committee item:** Major Development**Ward:** Abbey**Application reference:** 170651**Application type:** Listed Building Consent**Site address:** 17 Queen Victoria Street, Reading, RG1 1SY**Proposal:** Proposed change of use of first, second and third floor from office to residential use comprising 15 x 1 bed flats and 4 x 2 bed flats**Reason for Committee item:** Major Development**Ward:** Battle**Application reference:** 170134**Application type:** Full Planning Approval**Site address:** 53-55 Argyle Road, Reading, RG1 7YL**Proposal:** Conversion from D1 use (former mental health Clinic) to C3 use as 11 self contained flats, four storey side/rear extension, associated access, parking, private amenity space, bin and cycle store**Reason for Committee item:** Major Development**Ward:** Katesgrove**Application reference:** 170685**Application type:** Full Planning Approval**Site address:** 79 Silver Street, Reading, RG1 2TN**Proposal:** Demolition of existing building and erection of a part 3 and part 4 storey (plus basement level) building to provide 54 student studio rooms (sui generis use class) with associated ancillary services and landscaping works.**Reason for Committee item:** Major Development**Ward:** Katesgrove**Application reference:** 170794**Application type:** Full Planning Approval**Site address:** 13-21 Crown Street and 22 Silver Street, Reading, RG1 2SE**Proposal:** Residential development consisting of 79 no. dwellings with associated access and landscaping works. Demolition of existing buildings.**Reason for Committee item:** Major Development

UPDATE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 31 May 2017

ITEM NO. 10

Page: 59

Ward: Katesgrove

App No.: 170019/FUL

Address: Existing Car Park, East Street Reading

Proposal: Erection of a 4 storey building to provide 103 student accommodation units (Sui Generis), landscaping, access and ancillary works, following removal of a 49 space car park.

Applicant: Studios Construction (Reading) Limited

Date received: 15th February 2017

Major Application 13 week target decision date: Extension agreed to 5th June 2017

RECOMMENDATION

Delegate to Head of Planning and Regulatory Services to REFUSE planning permission for the following reasons, but to exclude reason 2 if the Sequential Test is found to be acceptable:

1. The proposed building by reason of its scale, form and dominant massing, use of inappropriate materials and lack of detailing is unsympathetic and would fail to enhance or preserve the character and appearance of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area. Furthermore, it would have a detrimental impact on the settings of the rear of listed buildings in London Street and thus harm the significance of those buildings. It is thus contrary to Policies CS7 and CS33 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015), DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015) and to S.66(1) and S.72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
2. The proposal fails to demonstrate in a sequential test that there is an alternative location for such development, which is classified by the Environment Agency as "more vulnerable" and part within Flood Zone 2, and that the potential risks from flooding such as reduced flood water storage, impedance to flow or risks to life and property are acceptable or can be mitigated. It is thus contrary to Policy CS35 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015).
3. The proposed development does not comply with the Local Planning Authority's standards in respect of arrivals and departure procedure at the beginning and end of term and as a result constitutes a highway safety hazard in conflict with Policy CS24 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015) and Policy DM12 of the Reading Borough LDF Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015).
4. In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure an Employment and Skills Plan and use of the living accommodation to be occupied as student accommodation (Sui Generis) only, the proposal will not mitigate its impact on the social and economic infrastructure of the borough, contrary to Policies CS3 and CS9 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015), Policy DM3 of the Reading Borough LDF Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015) and the Council's Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents on Employment, Skills & Training (2013) and Planning Obligations under Section (2015).

1. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 The applicant has submitted a revised cycle storage plan, a Sequential Test and a revised Residences Management Plan. In addition, the applicant's response to the officer's report and recommendation has been attached in full as Appendices.

2. CONSULTATIONS (AMENDED PLANS)

- 2.1 The proposals were revised by the applicant following discussions with Officers as described in the report. The principal amendments relate to the height of the building, which has been reduced by one storey (to 4 storeys) with a further step down at its southern end; and the position of the building on site, which has been set back from East Street by 3 metres. Public consultations on the amended plans have been undertaken with the previous 5no. respondents and further site notices displayed.
- 2.2 One further response has been received on behalf of the Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee with additional comments made in respect of conservation and heritage; open and green space; street scene and ambience. This response has been attached in full to this update.

In conclusion RCAAC object to this application because fundamentally, it neither preserves nor enhances the character of the London Street/ Market Place Conservation Area. Despite the changes made in the updated plans, the proposed building is massive and out of scale, will overshadow neighbours and reduce open and green space. It makes no attempt to blend well with the surrounding buildings nor does it attempt to make a distinctive, or worthy, architectural statement of its own.

- 2.3 The Council's Transport Strategy Officer has confirmed that the amended cycle storage plan and details are acceptable subject to a condition and thus Reason 4 for refusal as stated in the Officer's report can be removed.
- 2.4 With regard to the revised Residences Management Plan, the Council's Transport Strategy Officer has made the following comments:

The document still refers to the following:

- Details of parking and loading provision in the immediate locality will be provided with comprehensive information on restrictions, length of stay and penalties.
- Parking bays localised to the scheme will be suspended for use only for new arrivals to move in on the assigned move in weekend only. Tenants will be told these bays are for unloading only and will be directed to other parking areas.

It has now been stated that up to 8 on site parking spaces will be provided, however these are not included within the application site area. It is acknowledged that there are 6 spaces located opposite the site outside 1 New Century Place but these are not allocated to the site in

question and it should be clarified that both 1 and 2 New Century Place have been granted permission for a prior approval from office to residential, these spaces therefore cannot be guaranteed as the development could be converted to residential which would remove any potential for the shared use of parking.

As a result of the above the proposal will be fully reliant on the Public Highway as previously stated. However there are no guarantees that existing restrictions will remain and what take up would be of the pay and display bays in the area. Any proposal should therefore be able to accommodate its own demand on site. It should also be stated that the Highway will not permit the suspension of parking bays for the arrivals and collections of students. An updated Management Plan is therefore still required to ensure that it is contained on the application site.

In conclusion, it is considered that Reason 3 for refusal as stated in the Officer's report should therefore be retained.

- 2.5 The Council's Natural Environment Officer (Trees & Landscape) has noted the intention to retain the existing trees and requested details of how they will be safely retained using tree protection and special construction measures and that the proximity of the trees will not ultimately lead to their removal.
- 2.6 The proposed landscaping allows for tree species well-suited to the restricted space available. In particular, the space for new trees (in East Street) - fastigate Oaks are proposed - would provide meaningful landscaping as long as appropriate below ground conditions and space (large tree pits) are provided.

There are some concerns over the long-term of the multi-stemmed Hornbeams (in the rear courtyard) which may well outgrow their location and result in potential shading and nuisance. An alternative species of a lesser ultimate size and less imposing should be considered. The topiary Yew will add interest but require ongoing aftercare, making ground preparation, tree pits and long-term maintenance key on this site to ensure the plants and trees thrive and the desired ambience achieved.

Subject to information that can be made the subject of conditions on tree protection details, soft landscaping and implementation (to include tree pit details), existing and proposed service routes and amendments to the Landscape Management Plan, Reason 6 for refusal as stated in the Officer's report has been satisfactorily addressed and can be removed.

- 2.7 The applicant has submitted a Sequential Test that concludes the wider socio-economic and environmental benefits, due primarily to the site location and lower value of other more distant locations, outweigh the potential risk from flooding. In particular, East Street is a well-used pedestrian and cycle route. The redundant car park and now vacant offices do not contribute to the appearance and attractiveness of the area and there is a risk that the application site would fall into a state of disrepair, resulting in harm to the street and Conservation Area.
- 2.8 The Test also contains a location and size based search of two alternative

sites (173-175 Friar Street; Kings Point - 120 Kings Road) and concludes that there are few sites within the size category identified within the Council's Housing Economic Land Availability Assessment (May 2017), which provides information on site suitability and availability, that are preferable to that in East Street. In spite of being requested from pre-application stage onwards, this Sequential Test was only received on May 30th. Consequently, Officers need further time to consider this, and request that it is delegated to Officers to include this issue as a reason for refusal (reason for refusal no.2) if the submitted Sequential Test is considered inadequate.

2.9 Additional Plans:

VS065 Cycle Storage received on 25th May 2017

Landscaping Proposal/Landscape Maintenance & Management Plan as received on 30th May 2017

Case Officer: Daniel Murkin

**READING CONSERVATION AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE
OBJECTION TO APPLICATION 170019 – EXISTING PRIVATE CAR PARK EAST STREET
READING**

SUMMARY

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) objects to this application because fundamentally, it neither preserves nor enhances the character of the London Street/ Market Place conservation area.

Additionally, despite the changes made in the updated plans, the proposed building is massive and out of scale, will overshadow neighbours and reduce open and green space. It makes no attempt to blend well with the surrounding buildings nor does it attempt to make a distinctive, or worthy, architectural statement of its own.

1. CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE

1.1 The site lies within the London Street/ Market Place Conservation area.

1.2 Conservation Areas are defined as areas of: 'special architecture or historical interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

1.3 This application neither preserves nor enhances the area. This is admitted in the planning statement which says that there is a '**slightly adverse impact**'. Furthermore, it does not deal with the potential for enhancement of the area [para 4.35].

"Accordingly and in order to assess the historic sensitivities robustly, consultants Orion Heritage have prepared a Heritage Assessment which accompanies this planning application. The conclusions of the assessment are that there may be 'slight adverse' effects (sic) but that this would result in 'no meaningful harm or loss of significance'."

1.4 We do not agree with the statement in the Design & Access statement that having taken account of surrounding heritage (our stress in bold and (sic) comments [section 6 Summary]:

*"the effect (sic) of the proposed development on the significance of the Conservation Area, the Great Expectations Hotel and No. 35 London Street **would be no more than slight (sic) adverse**, with no **meaningful** harm or loss of significance resulting. Effects to (sic) other designated heritage assets would be **no more than negligible, with no material harm resulting.** "*

1.5 Despite the insistence of Reading Borough Council (RBC) planning (the LPA), the applicant continues to undervalue the rear of the London Street buildings:

"The historic character of this Conservation Area is focused on the London Road frontage, which comprises a high proportion of listed buildings,...."

Whilst prominence tends to be given to consideration of the impact on the front of buildings the rear of the listed buildings along London Street have almost as much visibility as the front, as they are seen from East Street. Whilst many opportunities have been lost in the past this cannot be a justification for further deterioration.

As well as the rear of buildings currently directly facing East Street there are historic alleyways that lead from London Street to East Street, including along the side of London Court (between 47 and 49 London Street) and south of 39 London Street. These demonstrate the clear historic connection between London Street and East Street.

1.6 For many visitors to RISC (35-39 London Street) and Great Expectations (33 London Street), it is the rear of the building that they experience. The rear of RISC gives access to the roof garden and meeting rooms. The rear of Great Expectations is the accessible entrance to the bars.

1.7 The applicant was asked by RBC to consider the impact on 49-53 London Street. In the heritage letter (15.2.17) it is stated that 'the proposed development would be screened by existing modern intervening buildings'. The buildings mentioned may possibly be London Court and although this may be a modern conversion it is not a modern building. Consequently the looming presence of the new block will jar with the surrounding heritage buildings along the alleyway (see 3.3. below).

1.8 The opportunity should be taken in this application to provide accommodation which enhances the conservation area rather than takes advantage of the fact that there are already some large modern buildings along the street.

1.9 The setting of listed buildings will be severely damaged by this large out of keeping accommodation block which does not blend well with the surrounding buildings nor make a significant architectural statement of its own.

2. OPEN AND GREEN SPACE

2.1 The Conservation Area Appraisal for Market Place and London Street comments that there is very little green space [para 5.2].

"The only green open spaces are graveyards adjoining three places of worship: St Laurence's Church, St Giles' Church and the Friends Meeting House. Former back yards or gardens have been developed or are used for car parking."

None of the above is on the east of London Street or on East Street. There is indeed very little green open space in the area immediately surrounding this development which is why the RISC roof garden is very important as are the trees and bushes currently on the edges of the car park.

2.2 The RISC roof garden is a unique roof space in an urban location and will be overshadowed by this development. This is a real garden and not just a few plants in

tubs on a terrace. Any danger to this garden's eco-system should be strongly contested.

2.3 Planting along East Street shown on the amended plans is welcome, but it would seem that the tree that currently sits next to the substation will go.

2.4 The vital contribution that green space can make to health and wellbeing as well as the character an appearance of the area has been cynically underplayed by the applicant in the comment on the plan, **“low level planting plan to provide interest to the passing public”**. [East Street Reading – Landscape]

2.5 In an area as built up as this is, the new building needs to try a lot harder to improve on the provision of green space.

3. STREET SCENE AND AMBIENCE ON EAST STREET

3.1 Walking down East Street the focus is the gap between no 1 and no 2 New Century Place and the pedestrian route onto Queen's Road. Even with the amended plans, with this building in place the route will become an oppressive corridor [see view of East Street proposed].

3.2 East Street is used as a quieter pedestrian route than London Street, to and from the town centre. Users include students from Kendrick School which has access on East Street, as well as those visiting South Street Arts Centre and living or working in nearby properties. Any threat to this ambience will have a negative impact on the character of the area.

3.3 London Court, which is within the conservation area, will be overshadowed by this bulky building to its north. The site is shown as a malthouse on the 1879 OS Map in the Archaeological desk based assessment.

3.4 The maximum height of surrounding properties is four storeys (plus one turret to the south), mostly they are three storeys or less.

3.5 No 16 East Street, a small attractive single storey building, with green railings, will be dwarfed by the proposed building on the car park.

Evelyn Williams
On behalf of

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee
30 May 2017

Ms. L. Baker,
Principal Planning Officer,
Development Management,
Reading Borough Council,
Planning and Development,
Civic Offices,
Bridge Street,
Reading,
BERKSHIRE. RG1 2LU

26550/A3/GC/dw

BY ELECTRONIC FILE TRANSFER & RECORDED DELIVERY

26th May, 2017

Dear Lynette,

LAND AT EAST STREET, READING
PLANNING APPLICATION 170019
PRE-COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE - RESPONSE TO COMMITTEE REPORT

Further to our recent discussions and more recently to our meeting with Councillor Tony Page on 22nd May, 2017 we write to summarise our position in respect of the above application, prior to the scheduled Planning Committee meeting on Wednesday, 31st May.

We would be grateful if this correspondence could be circulated to all Members of the Planning Committee meeting in advance of the scheduled meeting.

From the outset, it is important to note that the Applicant has remained committed to working with Officers during the determination of the application with a view to producing a scheme that is mutually acceptable. We are disappointed to find that despite the largely positive dialogue that has taken place, a recommendation for refusal is still being pursued.

This submission summarises our response to the concerns identified within the Committee Report with a view to ensuring that Members have a clear and complete understanding of the Applicant's position prior to making its final determination. Should Members be so minded, and should Members feel unable to dissent from the current Officer recommendation, we would be grateful for the opportunity of further time to resolve outstanding design issues by means of a deferral.

APPLICANT BACKGROUND

The Applicant, Studios Construction (Reading) Ltd. is a design led, fit for purpose student accommodation development company with a proven track record of 100% occupancy across all its sites in the United Kingdom (UK). Studios aims to provide safe, secure housing for University students throughout the country. Studios currently has over 1,200 dedicated student beds either under construction or operational in the UK, in each case committing to produce fully managed, secure accommodation to house students.



ES 29637

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STUDENT DEMAND TRENDS WITHIN READING

There is a growing belief amongst market experts that student accommodation market within Reading is still experiencing a shortfall in supply. This narrative is supportive by rental price trends at Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) within Reading over the past three years.

Table 1.0 - Occupation Rate of Existing Student Accommodation within Reading

Scheme	Opened	No of beds	Average studio price pw (£)			Occupancy		
			15/16	16/17	17/18	15/16	16/17	17/18
Crown House	2014	99	£ 209	£ 229	£ 233	100%	100%	
Central Studios	2014	141	£ 210	£ 220	£ 233	100%	100%	
Saxon Court	2015	83	£ 215	£ 225	£ 235	100%	100%	
Kendrick Hall	2014	599	£ 239	£ 249	£ 272	100%	100%	
Weighted ave rent		922	£ 229.18	£ 240.26	£ 258.52			
Year on year growth				4.83%	7.60%			

Table 1.0 above demonstrates that the occupation rate of a selection of existing, comparable student accommodation buildings (i.e. similar sized schemes within the immediate locality and near the city centre) within Reading is consistently 100%, regardless of notable annual price increases. Studios considers this to represent a clear demand for this type of accommodation and therefore considers a gap in the market to still exist. Accordingly, the Applicant's view is that there is a clear scope for this form of housing with Reading and that the proposed development is a valuable opportunity to address this requirement in a sustainable location.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

Paragraph 7.1 of the Committee Report states the following:

The proposal for a student residence is considered acceptable in principle in terms of its general location in the town with proximity to both the town centre facilities and attractions, public transport and Reading University campus buildings. Furthermore, a good standard of student living accommodation would be created with all necessary on-site amenities for future residents and staff in an accessible location by public transport that is not dependent on parking.

The principle of student accommodation (Sui Generis) is accepted by Officers; indeed, this has consistently been the case since original pre-application discussions in December 2016. The Applicant welcomes Officers' confirmation that the principle of development is permissible on this site and would reiterate that, given the site's central location within the urban area, its proximity to key transport routes and a range of services and facilities, the site occupies a highly sustainable brownfield site ideally placed to accommodate the proposed new building. The proposal will utilise suitable, available and deliverable land and in doing so will contribute effectively towards meeting the housing needs of a specific group, i.e. students.

Subject to compliance with other relevant development plan policies, there is no reason why the proposal should not be afforded the benefit of planning permission, particularly when considered in the context of the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development enshrined within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Members will be conversant with the NPPF's definition of sustainable development as having three roles - economic, social and environmental. The Applicant submits that the development is genuinely sustainable in delivering significant benefits in all three dimensions of sustainability.

We consider the issue of compliance - particularly those relating to design and heritage - in the following paragraphs, regarding the draft reasons for refusal cited within the Officer's Report.

BENEFITS OF THE SCHEME

The Applicant submits that the proposal presents a valuable opportunity to deliver superior quality student accommodation on a sustainable, centrally located site. The site is situated in a highly accessible location with excellent links to the services and amenities of Reading and, importantly, the University of Reading (UoR). The scheme will deliver a range of public benefits. It will:

1. Make a significant contribution towards meeting the Borough's overall housing requirement, and towards meeting the needs of a specific community group;
2. Relieve pressure on the private rented sector and release family homes from student accommodation - Members will note the emphasis within the NPPG for local planning authorities to plan for sufficient student accommodation, whether it consists of communal halls of residence or self-contained dwellings. It further notes that encouraging more dedicated student accommodation can take pressure of the private rented sector and increase local housing stock;
3. Generate additional expenditure into the town via restaurants, bars, shops and transport;
4. Optimise the use of a private, soon to be vacant office car park by delivering a high-quality scheme in a wholly sustainable location;
5. Deliver a car-free development that will have positive implications for the environment and which will result in reduced traffic movements to and from the site;
6. Deliver a contemporary well-designed scheme which respects the character and appearance of the area, functions well and adds to the overall quality of the area; and
7. The development represents effective use of brownfield land that is not of high environmental value (NPPF refers), optimising the potential of the site to accommodate development.

RESPONSE TO DRAFT REASONS FOR REFUSAL

We have considered the draft reasons for refusal set out within the Officer's Report for the application and within the following paragraphs provide a brief response to each of the points raised. As matters stand reasons for refusal relate to design and layout/heritage; lack of sequential test; the proposed arrivals and departure procedure; cycle storage provision; lack of completed legal agreement to secure an Employment Skills Plan and use of living accommodation to be used as student accommodation only (Sui Generis). For ease, we deal with each reason for refusal in turn, grouped under the relevant sub-heading.

Design and Layout/Heritage

1. *The proposed building by reason of its scale, form and dominant massing, use of inappropriate materials and lack of detailing is unsympathetic and would fail to enhance or preserve the character and appearance of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area. Furthermore, it would have a detrimental impact on the settings of the rear of listed buildings in London Street and thus harm the significance of those buildings. It is thus contrary to Policies CS7 and CS33 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015), DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015) and to S.66(1) and S.72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.*

The amended proposals are the result of pre, and post submission discussions with Officers. Considered and concerted efforts have been made to address the points raised during those discussions, to develop a scheme that sits comfortably within its immediate surroundings and which respects the character and appearance of the wider Conservation Area. Of note is the reduction in the height of the proposed building from six storeys to four storeys (with a part three-storey step).

In order to document the amendments to the scheme to date (since pre-application stage) the Applicant has prepared a series of diagrams that depicts the adjustments that have been made to the building scale, mass and elevations. The diagrams are enclosed at **Annex A** to this correspondence.

A key area of concern that Officers noted during discussions was the subservience of the proposed building and the need to ensure that there was a clear deferential between it and the neighbouring buildings. Image 1 below demonstrates how this has been achieved.

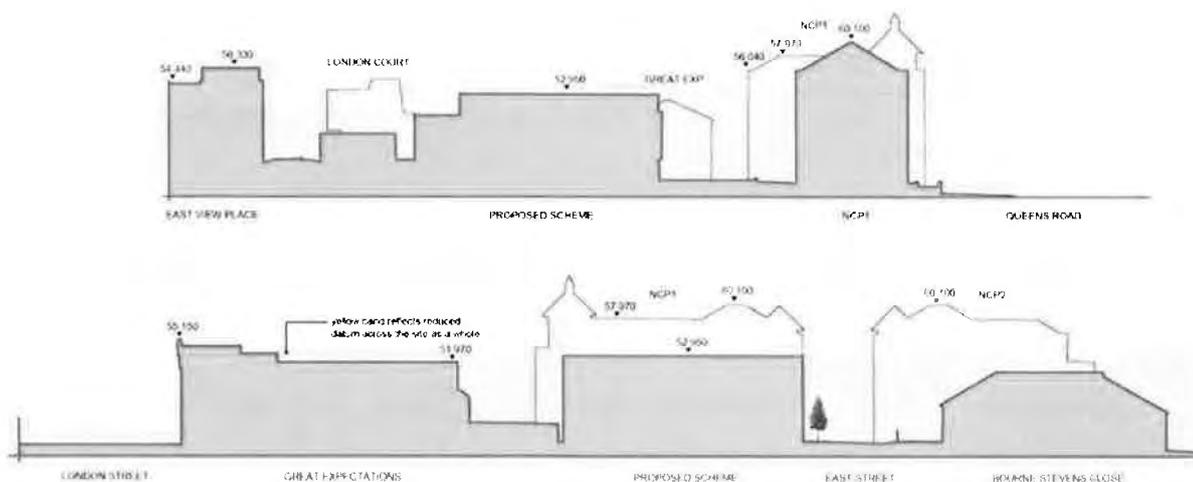


Image 1: subservient section (diagram also forms part of the application material - Drawing Ref VS064C)

Regarding the material selection, reference has been taken from the core dominant material from the surrounding buildings and wider area. These materials are essentially red brick with buff details. The materials were discussed at the meeting on 20th April, 2017 with Lynette Baker, Daniel Murkin and Jon Mullis (Conservation), and Officers confirmed during those discussions that 'brick' was seen by Reading Borough Council as an appropriate material. Ms. Baker also was encouraged by the recessed top floor material being in glass (a combination of glass and glass spandrel panels). This change in material helps to reduce the visual scale of the building.

During the planning process, we have been guided by comments received with regards to the elevational mass and following comments from Mr. Mullis, we introduced steps within the façade to break up the 'block like' nature of the elevation to ensure that the proposed scheme is more reflective of East View Place which Mr. Mullis also indicated should be used as a design reference. Alongside this change we also incorporated further detailing in the form of external bedroom doors with Juliet balconies which are more residential in character, which take further influence from East View Place and Bourne Stevens Close opposite. In addition, the ground floor has been reconfigured to provide as much active frontage as possible to East Street following comments received by Jonathan Markwell (original case officer) at the initial pre-application stage back in December 2016.



Image 2: East View Place stepped façade



Image 3: Bourne Stevens Close balconies



Image 4: Other balconies in the area



Image 5: Other balconies in the area

The overall footprint of the building has also been reduced to provide an increased set back from East Street (please refer to diagram below - image 6) with soft landscaping and trees introduced to soften the building edge (refer to CGI - image 7).

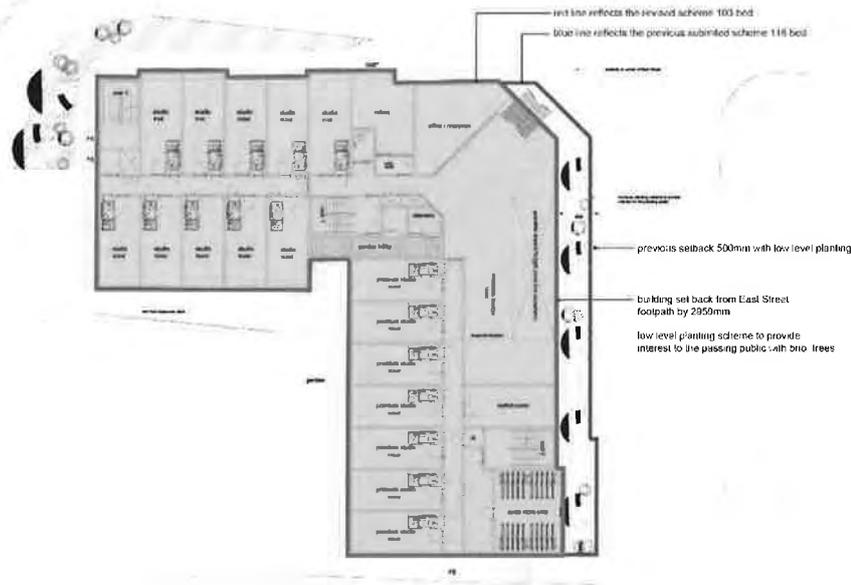


Image 6: footprint setback diagram. Diagram also forms part of the application material drawing ref VS060C

We feel that with the aid of Officers, the design of the scheme has adapted and enhanced through our discussions to date.



Image 7: CGI showing scale, mass and subservience

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| BRISTOL | LONDON |
| CAMBRIDGE | MANCHESTER |
| CARDIFF | NEWCASTLE |
| EBBSFLEET | READING |
| EDINBURGH | SOLIHULL |
| LEEDS | SOUTHAMPTON |

We note the concern that the proposals '*would fail to enhance or preserve the character and appearance of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area*' and that it '*...would have a detrimental impact on the settings of the rear of listed buildings in London Street and thus harm the significance of those buildings.*'

We would emphasise that the heritage constraints presented by the listed buildings in the vicinity, and the Conservation Area, were carefully considered throughout the design process for the proposed development. In recognition of these heritage constraints, the scale and mass of the building were kept to a level such that no key view of any listed building in the vicinity would be affected, and no change would occur to the London Street setting of the conservation area, which is the key element of its setting. Furthermore, the materials proposed are consistent with the buildings near the application site, and are therefore consistent with the character of this part of the Conservation Area, which is dominated by modern buildings. Finally, the scale of the proposed development has been significantly reduced to ensure that it does not dominate nearby historic buildings and to guarantee its subservience.

As a result of the design responses, it is evident that there would be no more than a slight effect to the significance of the Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings. Given the steps taken to minimise any harm which may result from the proposed development, it is considered that this slight effect is acceptable and in keeping with Local and National policies designed to conserve the historic environment.

The Officer's Report refers to the Council's statutory duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings and the character and appearance of conservation areas, however it is also required under the NPPF (paragraphs 133 to 134) to recognise that a balance needs to be struck between the preservation of the significance of a heritage asset and delivering public benefits from development. When determining a planning application, the Council must weigh up a proposal which would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset against the public benefits of the proposal. Regrettably this does not appear to be have been considered in either Mr Mullis' comments or the Officer's Report to Committee.

Overall, it is considered that the public benefits of the proposal (as summarised as the outset of this letter) outweigh any perceived harm to the significance of heritage assets which are discussed by the Council and that, on balance, the less than substantial harm is fully justifiable.

Sequential Test

- The proposal fails to demonstrate in a sequential test that there is an alternative location for such development, which is classified by the Environment Agency as "more vulnerable" and part within Flood Zone 2, and that the potential risks from flooding such as reduced flood water storage, impedance to flow or risks to life and property are acceptable or can be mitigated. It is thus contrary to Policy CS35 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015).*

A Sequential Test will be produced by the Applicant and sent to the case officer for review ahead of the 31/05 committee date (expected 30/05). It is anticipated that upon receipt of this information the second draft reason for refusal can fall away.

Arrivals and Departure Procedure

- The proposed development does not comply with the Local Planning Authority's standards in respect of arrivals and departure procedure at the beginning and end of term and as a result constitutes a highway safety hazard in conflict with Policy CS24 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015) and Policy DM12 of the Reading Borough LDF Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015).*

The Applicant has submitted a revised Student Management Plan (**Annex B**) which details the arrivals and departure procedure at the beginning and end of term. Pages 20 - 23 refer. The Applicant believes they have taken sufficient measures in order that minimal disruption is caused, and at the time of writing we await further feedback from the Council's Transport Officer. Subject to the Transport Officer's confirmation it is also anticipated that this reason for refusal can fall away.

Cycle Storage Provision

4. *The proposed development does not comply with the Local Planning Authority's standards in respect of secure cycle storage provision. In particular, insufficient information has been provided on access to the cycle storage location on Level 0 to ensure that this alternative mode of travel is encouraged. It thus conflicts with the aims of Policies CS23 and CS24 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015) in this regard.*

Drawing VS065 has been provided to the Council further to discussions during the meeting with Officers held on 20th April, 2017. Drawing VS065 was reissued to Officers on 25th May, 2017 and is appended to this submission for ease of reference (**Annex C refers**). The plan indicates the proposed two-tier rack system and the proposed access strategy for the cycle store. Again, subject to the Transport Officer's confirmation, it is anticipated that the third draft reason for refusal can also fall away.

Section 106 Agreement

5. *In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure an Employment and Skills Plan and use of the living accommodation to be occupied as student accommodation (Sui Generis) only, the proposal will not mitigate its impact on the social and economic infrastructure of the borough, contrary to Policies CS3 and CS9 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015), Policy DM3 of the Reading Borough LDF Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015) and the Council's Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents on Employment, Skills & Training (2013) and Planning Obligations under Section (2015).*

As acknowledged by the Council in the third draft informative, the fifth draft reason for refusal can be overcome by entering into a section 106 legal agreement. The Applicant is committed to entering into further discussions regarding the s106 Agreement and confirms a willingness to the provision of, or a contribution towards an EMP as well as a restriction restricting occupation of the building to student accommodation only (Sui Generis). Accordingly, the fifth draft reason for refusal is not, in isolation, justification for refusing to grant planning permission for the proposal.

Trees and Landscaping

6. *The loss of trees on site with insufficient opportunity for replacement planting and landscaping visible from the public realm would be unacceptable in this urban setting and detrimental to the long-term character of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area. It is thus contrary to Policy CS7 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015) and Policy DM18 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015).*

Following further dialogue with the case officer and the submission of revised drawings we are in receipt of additional comments from the Council's Natural Environment Officer. A full response has been issued to the Council and we anticipate resolution of this matter in full. Accordingly, we anticipate that draft reason or refusal 6 is also likely to fall away by the date of the Planning Committee.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We trust that the contents of this submission are helpful to Members in understanding the Applicant's position and intentions, and that it provides comfort to Members that the Applicant is an experienced provider of high quality, bespoke student accommodation with a track record of proven delivery.

Our review of the Officer's Report and the draft reasons for refusal leads us to believe that ultimately the key issue with the submitted application relates to design and layout and perceived heritage impacts. As explained in the preceding paragraphs genuine and concerted efforts have been made by the Applicant and their appointed consultant team to address these concerns and it is the Applicant's view that the documented changes have resulted in a scheme which is in keeping with the immediate surroundings, of a high-quality finish, with a negligible impact on the wider Conservation Area.

Notwithstanding this, it is the Applicant's view that the public benefits of the scheme as outlined at the outset of this correspondence should be given significant weight in the determination of this application to the extent that they clearly outweigh the less than substantial heritage harm that may be said to arise. In all other respects the design and layout of the scheme is considered appropriate and the Applicant considers that it would make a positive and attractive addition to what is currently an underused piece of brownfield land within a sustainable city centre location.

We trust that this letter is helpful and informative and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss the proposals further, with a view to reaching a positive solution for all parties.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on (0118) 943 0088 or via email - gemma.care@bartonwillmore.co.uk. In my absence please speak to my colleague Craig Pettit on 0118 430 0000.

Yours sincerely,



GEMMA CARE
Planning Associate

Encs.

ANNEX A



PRE APPLICATION ISSUE

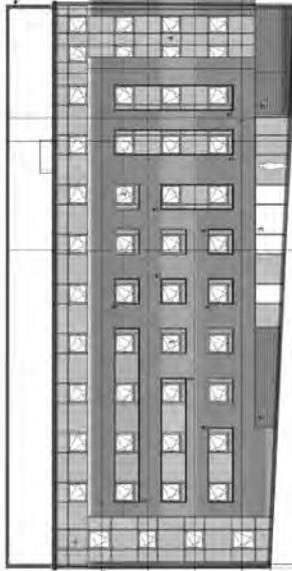
Date: 2016.11.21

Building Description

6 storey building
139 beds
brick with some areas of aluminium cladding

Comments received - Jonathan Markwell

loss of landscape to East Street
windows too small
loss of car parking
loss of parking assets
inappropriate scale
flat roof
active frontage required to East Street



line of 6 storey scheme

INFORMAL ISSUE No.2

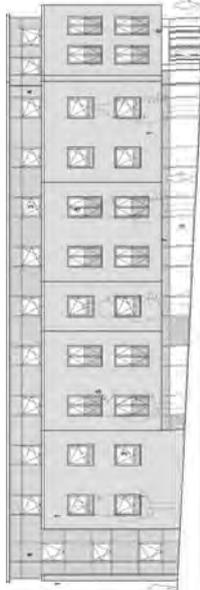
Date: 2017.05.03

Building Description

4 storey building
107 beds
increased definition to the elevation
loss of parking
loss of parking assets
similar to the character of the area
more residential in appearance

Comments received - verbal from CM to CP

step needed to the southern part of East Street.



line of 4 storey scheme

FULL PLANNING APPLICATION

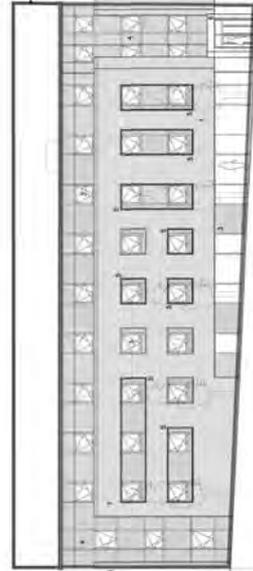
Date: 2017.01.19

Building Description

increased activity to East Street
increased height to - 9 storeys
118 beds
simplified materials
larger windows with increased interest - less block like elevations
500mm landscape step to Norm and East

Comments received - Jon Mullins & Daniel Murkin

setting of heritage assets
loss of parking
aluminium cladding
scale and massing
cycle parking inappropriate
directly abutting East Street - need increased public space
flat roof



line of 5 storey scheme

INFORMAL ISSUE No.3

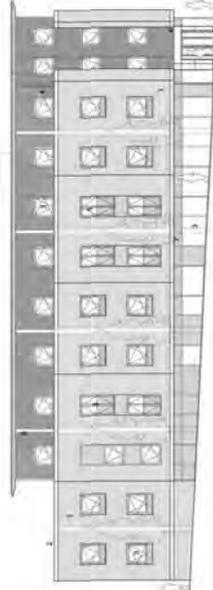
Date: 2017.05.03

Building Description

4 storey building with step to south
103 beds

Comments received - Jon Mullins

setting of historic assets
loss of parking
scale and massing
negative comment regarding the use of basic brick as the dominant material
proposed materials are not classed as high quality
too bulky in mass and would dominate the streetscape



INFORMAL ISSUE

Date: 2017.04.26

Building Description

increased set back to East Street with trees
primary materials - Brick (lyttelton cement)
brick with some areas of aluminium cladding
Reading and welcomed the introduction of the glass top floor
4 storey building
107 beds

Comments received - verbal comments from Daniel Murkin to CP

welcomed the reduction in height and set back
Jon Mullins currently looking for information in detail
from design - set to block like

FULL PLANNING APPLICATION

Date: 2017.05.10

Building Description

4 storey building
103 beds
increased set back with introduction of columns to add verticality and interest
introduction of pre cast concrete cornice detail to reflect local character

Comments received - Daniel Murkin committee report

recommended for refusal
scale, form and design massing, use of inappropriate materials, loss of parking
sequential loss not submitted
arrivals and departure procedures inefficient
cycle storage access
absence of a completed legal agreement
loss of trees, insufficient replacement planting

UPDATE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 31st May 2017

ITEM NO. 11

Ward: Whitley

App No.: 170096

App Type: Reserved Matters

Address: Green Park Village, Longwater Avenue

Proposal: Application for approval of reserved matters following outline approval for Phase 3B2 for 143 dwellings (10/01461/OUT)

Applicant: St Edward Homes

Date valid: 20th January 2017

Major Application: 13 week target decision date: 21st April 2017

Extended decision date: 9th June 2017

Planning Guarantee: 26 week date: 21st July 2017

RECOMMENDATIONS

GRANT approval of Access (not approved by the original outline), Appearance, Layout, Scale and Landscape Reserved Matters

Conditions to include:

As on main report and **additional condition:**

3. Evidence of tree pit implementation (i.e. root cells), as shown on approved drawings, in the form of written and photographic evidence shall be submitted in order for the Local Planning Authority to be able to fully discharge condition 11 of planning permission 10/01461/OUT (102172).

Informatives as on main report.

1. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Landscaping

1.1 Further to comments from the Natural Environment officer, as documented in the main report paragraphs 4.2 to 4.14, a number of amended plans/ clarification have been received. These have addressed the issues raised by the officer summarised as follows:

- All plans have been amended to exclude the Boulevard, which has now reverted to being within Phase 3A as originally approved.
- The specification for the pergolas over the Woodland Place Car Park have been provided and these are considered acceptable.
- A larger feature tree species (Liquidambar) has been included on an amended plan at the end of the Gateway Boulevard.

- A larger tree species (Lime) has now been included within the central car park area, which is considered suitable and will work with the proposed pergolas.
- The applicant has confirmed that the attenuation tanks (storm cell SUDS system) under the car park will be positioned to ensure that there will be adequate rooting volume for the Lime trees to be able to mature and reach their full rooting circumference without compromise.
- The applicant confirmed that that the attenuation zones under the car park will exclude the area occupied by root cells.
- Tree pit details have now been submitted and include root barrier details, and are acceptable.
- An alternative tree species has been included within amended plans for the edge of the LEAP, which the Natural Environment Officer considers is acceptable.

1.2 The Natural Environment Officer has recommended an additional condition to obtain evidence that the root cells have been implemented as per the approved drawings, because implementation of them would not be possible to confirm from observation after installation. An additional condition is included in the recommendation above.

Amended Plans

The following plans were received on 19th May 2017 (unless otherwise stated):

- House Type A1, A1H, A1-5H Plans & Elevations Hardie Plank - Drawing no: PL-P3B2-005 Rev P2
- House Type B1 Plans & Elevations Hardie Plank - Drawing no: PL-P3B2-006 Rev P2
- House Type C1-1 Plans & Elevations Hardie Plank - Drawing no: PL-P3B2-007 Rev P2
- House Type C2/C2H Plans & Elevations Hardie Plank - Drawing no: PL-P3B2-008 Rev P2
- House Type C3-1/C3-1H Plans & Elevations Hardie Plank - Drawing no: PL-P3B2-009 Rev P2
- House Type D1 Plans & Elevations Hardie Plank - Drawing no: PL-P3B2-010 Rev P2
- House Type D3 Plans & Elevations Hardie Plank - Drawing no: PL-P3B2-011 Rev P2
- Woodland Apartment Plan - Drawing no: PL-P3B2-012 Rev P2
- Woodland Close Apartment Elevations - Drawing no: PL-P3B2-013 Rev P2
- Longwater Av. Apartments (LWA) LWA 1& 2 Plans - Drawing no: PL-P3B-014 Rev P2
- Longwater Av. Apartments (LWA) LWA 1& 2 Elevations - Drawing no: PL-P3B-015 Rev P2
- Longwater Av. Apartments (LWA) LWA 3 Plans - Drawing no: PL-P3B-016 Rev P2
- Longwater Av. Apartments (LWA) LWA 3 Elevations - Drawing no: PL-P3B-017 Rev P2
- Gateway Apartments (GWAs) 3B2 Plans - Drawing no: PL-P3B-018 Rev P2
- Gateway Apartments (GWAs) 3B2 Elevations - Drawing no: PL-P3B-019 Rev P2
- Urban House Ground Floor Plan - Drawing no: PL-P3B2-020 Rev P2
- Urban House First Floor Plan - Drawing no: PL-P3B2-021 Rev P2
- Urban House Second Floor Plan - Drawing no: PL-P3B2-022 Rev P2
- Urban House Third Floor Plan - Drawing no: PL-P3B2-023 Rev P2
- Urban House Roof Plan - Drawing no: PL-P3B2-024 Rev P2

- Urban House Elevations - Drawing no: PL-P3B2-025 Rev P2
- Urban House Elevations - Drawing no: PL-P3B2-026 Rev P2
- Site Refuse Plan - Drawing no: PL-P3B2-027 Rev P2
- Substation & Bin/Cycle Store - Drawing no: PL-P3B2-028 Rev P2

Received 22nd May 2017 (unless otherwise stated):

- Phase 3B2- Detailed Hard Landscape General Arrangement Plan (sheet 1 of 2)- Drawing no: D2307 L.240 Rev A
- Phase 3B2- Detailed Hard Landscape General Arrangement Plan (sheet 2 of 2)- Drawing no: D2307 L.241 Rev A
- Phase 3B2- Detailed Soft Landscape General Arrangement Plan (sheet 1 of 4)- Drawing no: D2307 L.340 Rev D, received 24th May 2017
- Phase 3B2- Detailed Soft Landscape General Arrangement Plan (sheet 2 of 4)- Drawing no: D2307 L.341 Rev A
- Phase 3B2- Detailed Soft Landscape General Arrangement Plan (sheet 3 of 4)- Drawing no: D2307 L.342 Rev C, received 24th May 2017
- Phase 3B2- Detailed Soft Landscape General Arrangement Plan (sheet 4 of 4)- Drawing no: D2307 L.343 Rev B
- Planting Schedule and Specification - Drawing no: D2307 L.344 Rev B, received 24th May 2017
- Tree Pit Detail - Trees within Hard Landscaping - Drawing no: D2307 L.402 Rev A
- Tree Pit Detail - Trees within Soft Landscaping - Drawing no: D2307 L.403 Rev A
- Tree Pit Detail - Trees within Soft Landscaping Type 2 - Drawing no: D2307 L.409 Rev A

Other documentation and studies:

- Amended Pages 42 & 43 of the Design and Access Statement, Ref: 30934/6-GPV-Phase 3B1 & 3B2, prepared by Broadway Malyan, received 25th May 2017 (to show amended LEAP equipment).

Officer: Alison Amoah