

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Application No: 230587/FUL

Ward: Church

Address: 163 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HG

Proposal: Demolition of the existing structures on site, and the erection of a two storey 500 sq.m building for a mixed use as Scout and Guide Headquarters, Sunday School and Day Nursery (Sui Generis Use), with associated parking and landscaping. (Amended Description)

Case Officer: David Brett

Applicant: Reading Scout and Guide Headquarters Joint Management Committee

Received on (valid from): 02/05/2023

Target Date: 11/10/2023, extension of time on decision agreed with agent from 27/06/2023

Site Description and Surrounding Area

The proposal site consists of two single storey buildings that are interlinked, providing facilities for a Scout and Guide group, and a day nursery. The proposal site is close to the junction between Cressingham Road and Northcourt Avenue. There are other businesses within the locality close to the proposal site, these include a bed showroom, two convenience stores, a car mechanic garage, and a carpet shop. Tyndale Baptist Church is located to the southeast of the proposal site.

The wider surrounding area is considered predominantly residential, with a mix of detached and semi-detached dwellings with generously sized rear gardens.



Fig 1. Front of 163 Northcourt Avenue. Photo taken by case officer on 31/05/2023.

The proposal site is not within a Conservation Area or Listed. The rear of the proposal site is, however, located within the Air Quality Management Area.

A site visit was carried out on 31/05/2023.

Proposal

This application seeks the following:

- The demolition of the existing Scout and Guide buildings.
- Erection of two storey replacement building to facilitate the following uses:
 - o Scout and Guide Groups

- Sunday School
- Day Nursery
- Associated hard and soft landscaping

Plans/Documents Considered

The following plans and documents have been supplied for this application:

- Site Location Plan – CB_01_316_000
- ~~Scout & Guide HQ Elevations & Floor Plans – CB_01_316_SGHQ_01 Rev B~~
- Scout & Guide HQ Elevations – SQHQ_EX_01
- Transport Statement prepared by Abley Letchford Partnership – A445-R001 Rev A
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy – A445-R003
- Engineering Layout – A445-002 Rev P1
- Drainage Construction Details Sheet 1 – A445-003 Rev P1
- Drainage Construction Details Sheet 2 – A445-004 Rev P1
- Kerb and Materials Construction Details – A445-005 Rev P1
- Topographical Survey – 23-544/01 Sheet 1
- Archaeological Desk-based Assessment prepared by Thames Valley Archaeological Services – NAR 23/03
- ~~Interim Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) prepared by ACD Environmental – PRI124159 EcIA Rev A~~
- Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)
- Tree Protection Plan – PRI24159-03
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement (Including Tree Survey Schedule) – PRI24159
- Planning Statement Reading Scouts and Guides HQ prepared by Turley – REAS3005
- Energy Statement prepared by Abbey Consultants – PA-ES-NP-RS&GHQ-23-01
- Air Quality Headline Constraints and Impact Assessment prepared by ACCON UK Limited – A4944

Received on 02/05/2023

- Interim Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) prepared by ACD Environmental – PRI124159 EcIA Rev B

Received on 30/05/2023

- Transport Technical Note prepared by Abley Letchford Partnership – A445-R004
- Planning Statement Addendum prepared by Turley – REAS3005
- ~~Scout & Guide HQ Elevations & Floor Plans – CB_01_316_SGHQ_01 Rev D~~
- ~~Hard Surfacing & Landscape Plan – CB_01_316_002~~

Received on 28/06/2023

- ~~Scout & Guide HQ Elevations & Floor Plans – CB_01_316_SGHQ_01 Rev E~~
- ~~Hard Surfacing & Landscape Plan – CB_01_316_002 Rev A~~

Received on 05/07/2023

- ~~Scout & Guide HQ Elevations & Floor Plans – CB_01_316_SGHQ_01 Rev E~~

Received on 06/07/2023

- Scout & Guide HQ Elevations & Floor Plans – CB_01_316_SGHQ_01 Rev H
- Hard Surfacing & Landscape Plan – CB_01_316_002 Rev D

Received on 04/09/2023

~~Proposed Access – A445-007 Rev P5~~
Received on 28/09/2023

- Proposed Access – A445-007 Rev P6
Received on 03/10/2023

Relevant Planning History

88/TP/0134 - Erection of a Temporary Building for Use by Scouts and Guides During Refurbishment Of The Existing Premises. – Conditional Consent on 21/03/1988

77/01044/TP – Erection of a Store Building – Conditional Consent on 13/01/1978

0000013097 – Store Building and Car Park – Unconditional Consent on 15/10/1965

0000006366 – Headquarters – Unconditional Consent on 13/02/1959

0000002120 – Alterations and Additions – Unconditional Consent on 19/09/1952

Consultations

Reading Borough Council, Archaeology – Response received on 17/05/2023

- There are potential archaeological implications with this proposed development as demonstrated by Berkshire Archaeology's Historic Environment Record. The site lies within 100m of a known Bronze Age settlement uncovered during works to the rear of No.74 and a Roman settlement found in the development of the Stansfield Close estate to the north. The proximity of these sites and their substantial nature suggests the immediate area to be one of relatively high archaeological potential.
- As shown, the application site falls within an area of archaeological significance and archaeological remains may be damaged by ground disturbance for the proposed development. It is therefore recommended that the following condition is applied, should permission be granted, in order to mitigate the impacts of development. This is in accordance with Paragraph 205 of the NPPF(2021) which states that local planning authorities should 'require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible'.

Officer Note: Paragraph 205 of the NPPF as updated in September 2023 is still relevant as described within the consultation response from Archaeology, which was received prior to the September 2023 update of the NPPF.

Reading Borough Council, Ecology – Response received on 08/08/2023

- The updated Interim Ecology report (ACD Environmental Ltd, May 2023) has been undertaken to the appropriate standard and states that the site is not considered to be suitable for reptiles, amphibians, badgers or other protected species. Nonetheless, there is a very small risk that bats may be present in the building when works start and the vegetation on site may be used by nesting birds. As such the report recommends that a number of precautionary measures are adopted during construction works. These measures include hand removal of features on the building identified as potential bat roosting features and vegetation clearance to be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive) would be sufficient to ensure that the risk of the works affecting nesting birds remains minimal. The report also states that variegated yellow archangel was identified on

the site (a non-native semi-invasive species) which will need to be cleared. The recommendations in the report should be secured through a planning condition

Reading Borough Council, Environmental Protection – Response received on 18/07/2023

- I am satisfied that the proposed frequency of use of the fire pit and use of dry wood only should prevent nuisance and significant air quality impacts due to smoke. If possible I recommend a planning condition requiring the use of the firepit to be similar in frequency to that proposed in the submitted application and for only dry wood to be used.
- I would like to request confirmation as to whether the outdoor play area for the pre school is in a similar location to currently so that I can establish whether potential noise impact on neighbours is likely to worsen. If the location is similar then I have no further comments. If the location is closer to neighbouring properties or barriers such as existing buildings will be removed then additional noise control measures may be required.

Reading Borough Council, Transport Development Control – Responses received on 15/08/2023

- The agent has provided revised details and an updated description as the nursery operating from the Scout Hut were not factored into the original submission.
- There are currently 15 children that attend the nursery, but it is anticipated that this number could increase to 25. Operation times for the nursery are out side of the Scouts/Guides operating times. Currently there are 4 part time staff and 2 volunteer staff that run the pre school, this application will see this increase to 6 part time and 3 volunteers.
- In accordance with the Councils current parking standards 1 space per 2 FTE staff and 1 drop off space per 5 pupils would be required. For the existing nursery, this would equate to 2 spaces for staff (based on 4 FTE) and 3 spaces for 15 children for pick up and drop off, total of 5 spaces would have been required.
- New staffing levels and increased numbers of children will require 5 for children pick up and drop off (based on 25 children) and 4 parking spaces for staff (based on 4FTE), total of 9 parking spaces would be required.
- Proposed layout illustrates 7 parking spaces along the frontage of the site of which one is a disabled bay and 2 volunteer spaces that would be blocked by 2 bays fronting Northcourt Ave.
- The main hall is 122sqm and the small hall is 55sqm (as detailed in the planning statement). In accordance with the Councils current adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, 1 parking space per 16m² would be required. This therefore equates to 11 parking spaces.
- The proposed development now includes an increase in formalised onsite parking provision, and will reduce on street parking, changes to the floor hall area are insignificant and therefore there is no requirement for any additional parking above what is provided.
- Given that the bays fronting Northcourt Ave will be primarily for transient use, staff can park in the bays where they can be blocked in temporarily. All bays will need to conform to the Councils current standards.
- With regards to the dropped crossing, in between the parking bays a full height kerb will need to be provided as well as the dropper kerbs; A length of 2.8m would be required. The lamp column and public refuse bin located on the site's boundary will need to be illustrated on the site plan to ensure that there would be no conflict with vehicles entering and exiting the parking bay located adjacent to the northern boundary. It should be advised that any vehicle access point must be at least 1m away from Highway infrastructure.

- The gully located in the carriageway has been illustrated. Vehicles driving over this to access parking could cause damage, therefore relocation may be required, the cost of which would be fully met by the applicant and will require a license from the highways department, as would all other works on the public highway.
- Cycle storage has been illustrated at the front of the site adjacent to the parking bays, these should be covered.
- Refuse, storage and collection areas will need to be illustrated on plans and should not obstruct access to parking areas, the Transport statement states that refuse collection will continue to be undertaken as per the existing arrangements, however the location of the bin storage and collection areas need to be illustrated on plans.
- A CMS will be required for this development.

Reading Borough Council, Waste Services – Response received on 06/06/2023

- Clarification is required for the waste collection arrangements.

Thames Water – Response received on 19/05/2023

- If you are planning on using mains water for construction purposes, it's important you let Thames Water know before you start using it, to avoid potential fines for improper usage. More information and how to apply can be found online at thameswater.co.uk/buildingwater.
- On the basis of information provided, Thames Water would advise that with regard to water network and water treatment infrastructure capacity, we would not have any objection to the above planning application. Thames Water recommends the following informative be attached to this planning permission. Thames Water will aim to provide customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head (approx 1 bar) and a flow rate of 9 litres/minute at the point where it leaves Thames Waters pipes. The developer should take account of this minimum pressure in the design of the proposed development.

External Consultees

82 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ – No response received.

Flat 1, 86 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ – No response received.

Flat 2, 86 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ – No response received.

Flat 3, 86 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ – No response received.

Flat 4, 86 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ – No response received.

Flat 5, 86 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ – No response received.

Flat 6, 86 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ – No response received.

Flat 7, 86 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ – No response received.

Flat 8, 86 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ – No response received.

Flat 9, 86 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ – No response received.

Flat 10, 86 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ – No response received.

88 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ – No response received.

90 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ – No response received.

Berkshire Carpets, 92 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ – No response received.

Fresh And Clean Services, 92 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ – No response received.

Flat 1, 92A Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ – No response received.

Flat 2, 92A Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ – No response received.

Flat 3, 92A Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ – No response received.

Flat 4, 92A Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ – No response received.

157 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HG – No response received.

Maisonette, 157 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HG – No response received.

159 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HG – No response received.

163 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HG – No response received.
6 Cressingham Road, Reading, RG2 7JE – No response received.
8 Cressingham Road, Reading, RG2 7JE – No response received.
8A Cressingham Road, Reading, RG2 7JE – No response received.
10 Cressingham Road, Reading, RG2 7JE – No response received.
118 Shinfield Road, Reading, RG2 7DA – No response received.
120 Shinfield Road, Reading, RG2 7DA – No response received.
122 Shinfield Road, Reading, RG2 7DA – No response received.
Tyndale Baptist Church, 2-4 Cressingham Road, Reading, RG2 7JE – No response received.
Church Hall, Tyndale Baptist Church, 2-4 Cressingham Road, Reading, RG2 7JE – No response received.

A site notice was displayed on 17/05/2023, expiring on 07/06/2023. The following additional comments were received to the application (as summarised).

- 28 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HA – Response received on 12/06/2023
- Concerns raised regarding highway safety and on street parking pressures as a result of the proposed development.
- 72 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ – Response received on 05/06/2023
- Concerns raised regarding highway safety and on street parking pressures as a result of the proposed development.
 - Observation the proposed building is taller than the existing building.
- 74 Northcourt Avenue, Reading, RG2 7HQ – Response received on 05/06/2023
- Concerns raised regarding highway safety and on street parking pressures as a result of the proposed development.

A re-consultation on the application took place from 11/07/2023, expiring on 02/08/2023. The reason for the re-consultation was due to a change in the application description, which omitted important details. The revised description confirmed that a day nursery is located within the proposed development and clarified the nature of the use of the proposed development. No further comments were received following the re-consultation.

Equality Act 2010

In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular 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 development.

Relevant Planning Policy and Guidance

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. The Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the Reading Borough Local Plan (adopted November 2019).

The 'National Planning Policy Framework' ("NPPF") 2023 states clearly that its content is to be a material consideration in the determination of applications. The 'NPPF' states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 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).

Relevant Policies

The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National

National Planning Policy Framework 2023;
National Planning Policy Guidance 2014 onwards;

Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019)

- CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC3: Adaption to Climate Change
- CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
- CC7: Design and the Public Realm
- CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
- EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
- EN2: Areas of Archaeological Significance
- EN6: New Development in a Historic Context
- EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
- EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland
- EN15: Air Quality
- EN17: Noise Generating Equipment
- EN18: Flooding and Drainage
- TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
- TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
- OU1: New and Existing Community Facilities

Other documents

Sustainable Design & Construction SPD (2019)
Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)
Tree Strategy (2021)

Appraisal

The main issues considered for these three separate applications are as follows:

- a) Land Use Principles
 - b) Design and Access
 - c) Safeguarding Amenity
 - d) Transport
 - e) Natural Environment and Ecology
 - f) Archaeology
 - g) Air Quality
 - h) Pre-Commencement Conditions
-
- a) Land Use Principles

Policy OU1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) states that; *“Proposals for new, extended or improved community facilities will be acceptable, particularly where this will involve co-location of facilities on a single site.(...)”*

Paragraph 4.7.2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019), sub-paragraph to Policy OU1 refers to “youth and community centres” as being a community use. The principle of improving community facilities is supported by Policy OU1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019). The principle of the provided development is therefore acceptable provided

the development satisfies the other Policy requirements of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

b) Design & Access

Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan requires all development to be of high-quality design and maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the surrounding area. In this specific case, this concerns the following components:

- Layout
- Landscape
- Density and mix
- Scale: height and massing; and
- Architectural detail and materials

The existing building at 163 Northcourt Avenue consists of two single storey buildings, both of which serve as the headquarters for a Scout and Guide group. The building to the north of the proposal site is a white painted brick and mortar structure with an open gable roof. The building the south of the site is a timber structure, which has previously served as a table tennis hut. Both buildings have an internal link, with an alleyway between the two buildings. It is considered that the two buildings were not designed to be interlinked, but the link between buildings was due to the growth and expansion of the Scout and Guide group. Consequently, the two existing buildings appear dated, incoherent in terms of design and function.

The buildings within the site are considered to have served its purpose well for at least fifty years according to the planning history of the site. The buildings have a certain charm in terms of its positive contribution to the community, and the site's ability to adapt over the years. It is, however, clear that the site needs development to improve the existing facilities at the site and improve upon the existing offer to make it more attractive to existing and future service users. Due to the incoherent design and contrived layout of the existing arrangement, the demolition of the existing buildings is considered acceptable.

The replacement building is a two-storey structure with an open gable roof facing the highway. At ground floor level the external walls consist of red brickwork, with dark grey horizontal weatherboard cladding at first floor level. The windows and doors are to be grey uPVC, with grey roof tiles. The ground to eaves height of the proposed building is 4.2m, with the ridge height being 9.3m. The building has a depth of 24.3m, with a 2.6m deep covered terrace area to the rear of the building. The width of the building is 16.1m.

Existing and proposed street scene elevations have been provided that demonstrate that despite the increase in size and scale of the proposed building from the existing buildings, the new building would sit comfortably within the street scene. With the ridge height only extending slightly higher than 159 Northcourt Avenue.

The proposed building is positioned towards the north (side) boundary of the site to 159 Northcourt Avenue. This is to allow for vehicular access to the side of the building along the south (side) boundary. The replacement building extends deeper within the site from the existing buildings; however, a reasonable amount of usable outdoor space remains to the rear and would be suitable for the requirements of both the Scout and Guide group, and the day nursery.

As existing, the front of the site consists entirely of hard standing, with a closed boarded fence along the front and side boundary of the site, with access for pedestrians and vehicles. The proposed layout of the front of the building consists of seven on site vehicle

parking spaces, two volunteer parking spaces to the side of the building, cycle parking, and a new tree. The proposed layout of the frontage will provide a formalised off-street vehicle parking arrangement, as well as provide a new cycle storage facility. The addition of a tree to the frontage is considered to somewhat improve the appearance of the existing arrangement. The arrangement of the vehicles parked in front of the building is not considered to visually contribute positively to the character and appearance of the development. The benefits of the vehicle parking arrangement through removing on street parking, however, is considered to outweigh the visual harm of the parking arrangement.

Overall, the replacement building is considered of high quality design both in terms of the materials selected and in terms of its attractive visual appearance. The development is considered to vastly improve upon the existing facilities at the site. The proposed development is therefore considered in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

In accordance with Policy CC2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan; *“Proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, will be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change. To meet these requirements: (...) All minor non-residential developments or conversions to residential are required to meet the most up-to-date BREEAM ‘Very Good’ standard as a minimum;”*

The Energy Statement prepared by Abbey Consultants includes a BREEAM pre-assessment of the development, which concludes that the development would achieve a BREEAM ‘Very Good’ rating, with a targeted score of 61.93%. This is above the required score of 55.00% and factors in a 5% buffer as per the requirements of the Sustainable Design & Construction SPD (2019). A condition will be included to any approval of this application for a copy of a Final BREEAM Certificate which confirms that the development has reached the required standard of BREEAM ‘Very Good’.

It has been estimated that a total of 76 photovoltaic (PV) panels will be included to the site facing roof slope. PV panels have been selected as a low carbon, renewable energy for the development. The electricity supplied from the PV panels will power electric panel heaters, provide hot water and power the lighting of the building. Other renewable energies such as Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP), Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHP), wind turbines, biomass boilers, and solar thermal have all been considered for the development. PV has been selected as the most appropriate solution in this instance. Given the size and orientation of the south facing roof slope, PV appears to be the logical solution in this instance for renewable energy. Other options have been discarded due to installation costs, or not achieving the carbon reduction levels set by PV. The final details of PV will be secured via condition to any approval of this application.

Therefore, subject to condition, the development is considered in accordance with Policy CC2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

c) Safeguarding Amenity

This proposal has also been assessed against Reading Borough Local Plan policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity, which states that proposals are acceptable where they will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties with regard to various factors, including (amongst others):

- Privacy and overlooking

- Access to sunlight and daylight
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of development
- Harm to Outlook
- Noise and disturbance
- Dust and fumes

The proposed development is in close proximity to the rear garden of 159 Northcourt Avenue and extends beyond the rear elevation of number 159 by 9.3m. The development is set from the side boundary to number 159 by 1.5m. The ground to eaves height of the proposed building is 4.2m, therefore, there were officer concerns that the development would be overbearing, reduce access to sunlight and daylight and appear visually dominant to number 159.

A further site visit was carried out for this application, with the proposal site viewed from the rear garden area at number 159. The entirety of the ground floor of number 159 is a convenience store, with the first floor consisting of a flat that is occupied by the shop owner. Upon visiting the site, it was explained that the rear garden area, rather than an area for sitting out and enjoyment. The rooms to the rear of the ground floor of the building are used as storage to the convenience store and as an office. As existing, when viewed from the rear garden, the Scout and Guide building to be demolished is clearly visible. The development would be closer to the side boundary to number 159 than the existing building, and would have a greater ground to eaves height whilst retaining the same roof formation design as the existing building.

Had the use of the ground floor to number 159 been residential, it is considered that alterations to the design would have been required as to reduce the harm the development would have had to rooms to the rear of number 159 and the enjoyment of the rear garden. As the ground floor to number 159 is not residential, with the rear garden mainly used for functional purposes rather than recreational, the development is not considered to harm the function of the ground floor to number 159 and the rear garden.

Turning to the impact of the development upon the residents to the south of the proposal site along Cressingham Road; the development is not considered to harm the living conditions of residents along Cressingham Road. The development is located to the north of these dwellings and would not result in a harmful loss of light or appear overbearing. This is due to the separation distance of the development to the rear gardens and habitable rooms of dwellings along Cressingham Road. No other neighbours are considered to be impinged by the development.

The agent has confirmed that the outdoor play area serving the day nursery will occupy the same area within the existing site. The day nursery will also occupy a similar space within the proposed replacement building. The development is not therefore considered to result in any harmful levels of noise and disturbance to residents within the surrounding area. It has been specified within the Planning Statement Addendum that the number of children anticipated at the day nursery could increase to 25. As the staff levels and the assessment of the development has been based on an occupancy of 25 children (for instance parking provision), the number of children attending the day nursery will be capped to 25 via condition to any approval of this application. Any application to increase the number of children at the day nursery will need to be in the form of a separate planning application.

Conditions have been suggested by the Environmental Protection Team restricting certain activities such as fire building and the use of the outdoor play area. As the size of the outdoor area to the rear is decreasing as a result of this development, and the nature of

the existing use of the outdoor area is not changing, it is not considered reasonable to restrict the use of this space under planning conditions.

The development is considered to significantly enhance the existing facilities at 163 Northcourt Avenue and improve the contribution that the existing site provides to the community.

The proposal was considered against the criteria specified within Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The proposed development would not harm the amenity of the surrounding area in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

d) Transport

It has been demonstrated that the development would provide a suitable level of parking for all service users. As discussed, the development would provide a formalised onsite vehicle parking arrangement, along with a new covered cycle parking provision. The level of on site parking provision is considered acceptable by Transport Development Control, as the Scout and Guide groups will not be running at the same times as the day nursery. Therefore, the provision of seven on site vehicle parking spaces is acceptable. The onsite vehicle parking spaces are accessed via an extended dropped kerb along Northcourt Avenue. The final details of cycle parking are to be secured via condition.

Subject to conditions, including the details of a Construction Method Statement, the development is considered in accordance with Policy TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

e) Natural Environment and Ecology

Trees are proposed to the side (south) boundary, with one tree proposed to the front of the development along the pedestrian footpath. The additional tree planting is supported by the Natural Environment Team, the final details of soft landscaping and maintenance thereof shall be secured via condition to any approval of this application. The tree to the frontage in particular is considered a welcome addition to an otherwise entirely hard landscaped frontage.

With regards to construction; the details provided within the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement are acceptable and will be secured as a compliance condition to any approval of this application. Therefore, subject to conditions the application is considered in accordance with Policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the Tree Strategy (2021).

A biodiversity net gain calculation has been carried out for this application and concludes that the development would result in a 23.3% net gain in habitat units. Enhancements to the site are in the form of additional trees and grassland. RBC Ecology have stated that the biodiversity net gain is likely to be achieved through the proposed tree planting, additional grassland, and biodiversity enhancements such as bird nesting and bat roosting opportunities within the new building. Therefore, subject to condition the development is in accordance with Policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

f) Archaeology

An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment has been carried out by Thames Valley Archaeological Services for this application. The assessment concludes that despite the alterations that have taken place in the area since 1932, the existing buildings within the

site are of lightweight construction with expected small, shallow foundations. This would suggest that any potential findings of archaeological significance will have faced minimal disturbance.

Therefore, as there is the potential for the discovery of undisturbed findings within the site during construction, a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) shall be submitted for approval by the Local Planning Authority. The details of the WSI shall be secured via condition to any approval of this application in accordance with Policy EN2 and EN6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

g) Air Quality

This proposal has been considered against Reading Borough Local Plan policy EN15, as the proposal site is within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). As demonstrated in the policy, this proposal does not meet the requirements for an Air Quality Assessment (AQA) and is considered not enough of a detrimental impact air quality to warrant such an assessment due to the size and scale of the proposal.

h) Pre-Commencement Conditions

All pre-commencement conditions were agreed with the agent in accordance with Section 100ZA (5) of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Conclusion

The development has been assessed and the works are considered to be in accordance with the above relevant policies and planning permission can be granted.

Recommendation

GRANT

Conditions

TL1: Time Limit (Standard)

The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than three years from the date of this planning permission.

REASON: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) in order to prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.

AP1: Approved Plans

The development hereby permitted shall ONLY be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

- Site Location Plan – CB_01_316_000

Received on 02/05/2023

- Scout & Guide HQ Elevations & Floor Plans – CB_01_316_SGHQ_01 Rev H

Received on 04/09/2023

- Proposed Access – A445-007 Rev P6

Received on 03/10/2023

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out and adhered to in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

M3: Materials (As Specified)

The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of this development shall be as specified on the plans and/or application forms unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and ensuring the new development responds positively to the local context and character in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

C2: Construction Method Statement (To Be Submitted)

No development shall commence on site, including any works of demolition, until a site specific Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Statement shall provide for:

- a) Space on site where vehicles of site operatives and visitors can be parked with details of how site operatives and visitors will be required to make use of the parking area provided;
- b) Location on site for storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
- c) The erection and maintenance (including removal of any graffiti or fly posters) of security hoarding around the site;
- d) Identification of any footpath closures or road closures needed during construction;
- e) Required wheel washing facilities on site;
- f) A scheme for recycling waste resulting from the construction works.
- g) Measures for controlling the use of site lighting whether required for safe working or for security purposes;
- h) Required measures to control the emission of dust, dirt and other airborne pollutants during demolition and construction;
- i) Provisions to be made for the control of noise coming from the site during demolition and construction;
- j) Full details of pest control measures following any demolition required. Where necessary, capping of drains/sewers and baiting arrangements.

The measures within the approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the demolition and construction period unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and in the interests of protecting the amenity of local land uses or neighbouring residents, the character of the area and highway safety in accordance with Policy CC8 and TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Details Of PV (To Be Approved)

No development above ground floor slab level shall commence on site until full details of the proposed roof mounted Photovoltaics shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include a roof plan showing the location and position of the Photovoltaics, their dimensions, manufactures specification, and ongoing maintenance arrangements. The approved Photovoltaics shall thereafter be installed in accordance with these approved details and maintained in good working order to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and in order to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change in accordance with Policy CC3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

DC6: Cycle Parking (To Be Approved)

No development above ground floor slab level shall commence on site until a plan showing how 12 covered cycle parking spaces can satisfactorily be provided on site is submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The cycle parking spaces shall be provided in full accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation and thereafter kept free of obstruction and retained in accordance with the approved details and shall remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and in order to encourage travel by sustainable alternatives to private vehicle in accordance with Policy TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

DC1: Vehicle Parking (As Specified)

The building hereby permitted shall not be occupied until all vehicle parking spaces have been provided in accordance with the plans hereby approved. The spaces shall be kept available for parking at all times thereafter.

REASON: To ensure that the development is provided with adequate parking facilities to meet the needs of future occupiers and reduce the likelihood of roadside parking which could be a danger to other road users in accordance with Policy TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

DC3: Vehicular Access (As Specified)

No building hereby permitted shall be occupied until the vehicle access serving it has been constructed in accordance with the plans hereby approved.

REASON: In the interests of road safety in accordance with Policy TR1 and TR3 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

Day Nursery Occupancy

The number of children attending the premises for the day nursery use hereby approved shall not exceed 25 at any time.

REASON: In order to protect local residents from unreasonable disturbance arising from the use and to ensure that there is sufficient on-site parking during the drop-off/pick-up times, in accordance with Policies CC8 and TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Day Nursery Opening Hours

The day nursery use shall not be open to children attending the day nursery use outside the hours of 9:30am to 12:30pm on Mondays to Fridays and not at any time on Saturdays, Sundays, Bank or Statutory Holidays.

REASON: In order to protect local residents from unreasonable disturbance arising from the use in accordance with Policy CC7 and CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

BREEAM (Compliance)

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the details and recommendations as set out in the BREEAM Pre-Assessment within 'Energy Statement PA-ES-NP-RS&GHQ-23-01' prepared by Abbey Consultants, dated April 2023, and shall be adhered to throughout the whole of the construction unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with sustainable building standards in accordance with Policy CC2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

BREEAM Final Certificate (To Be Approved)

Within 6 months of first occupation of the development hereby approved, a copy of a Final BREEAM Certificate in accordance with the BREEAM Sustainability Standard following a post-construction stage review carried out by a licensed assessor has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, demonstrating that the development has attained as a minimum the standard set out in the initial BREEAM pre-assessment and schedule referred to in condition [BREEAM (Compliance)].

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with sustainable building standards in accordance with Policy CC2 and H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Archaeology – Written Scheme of Investigation

A) No development shall take place/commence, save site clearance, until a programme of archaeological work including a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been submitted to, and approved by, the local planning authority in writing. The WSI shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and:

1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording
2. The programme for post investigation assessment
3. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording
4. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation
5. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation
6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the WSI.

B) The Development shall take place in accordance with the WSI approved under condition (A).

The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the WSI approved under condition (A) and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured.

Reason: The site lies in an area of archaeological potential, particularly for, but not limited to, Prehistoric and Roman remains. The potential impacts of the development can be mitigated through a programme of archaeological work. This is in accordance with Policy EN2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

C1: Hours of Construction/Demolition

No construction, demolition or associated deliveries shall take place outside the hours of 0800hrs to 1800hrs Mondays to Fridays, and 0800hrs to 1300hrs on Saturdays, and not at any time on Sundays and Bank or Statutory Holidays without prior written approval from the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In order to protect occupiers of nearby properties from unreasonable disturbance from works connected with implementing this permission in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

C4: No Bonfires

No materials or green waste produced as a result of the clearance of the site, demolition works or construction works associated with the development hereby approved shall be burnt on site.

REASON: In the interests of air quality, the amenity of neighbours, and to promote more sustainable approaches to waste management in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Informatives

IF1: Positive and Proactive Working - approval

The Local Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant to resolve relevant matters to allow permission to be granted within the agreed timescale for the decision to be issued.

Pre-Commencement Conditions

In accordance with Article 35 (DMPO 2015) some conditions have been highlighted to make clear that they require approval from the Local Planning Authority before any development begins. This is because the details need to be designed or works implemented before any other works start on the site or are of a nature that it would be impractical to consider after work has started.

IF3: Highways

- i) The attention of the applicant is drawn to Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980, which enables the Highway Authority to recover expenses due to damage caused by extraordinary traffic.
- ii) Any works affecting the Highway shall be in accordance with Reading Borough's Council's document "Guidance Notes for Activities on the Public Highway within the Borough of Reading". The applicant should note that compliance with this document is mandatory and licences to work on the Highway will only be issued if the requirements contained within it are met. A copy can be obtained from the Council's website.

IF5: Terms

Your attention is drawn to the terms and conditions of this permission. Any development which is carried out but which differs materially from the approved plans and details, or does not comply with any condition(s) or planning obligation(s) attached to the permission may result in the Council taking action to remedy the breach of planning control. If you are in any doubt please contact the Council.

IF6: Building Control

Your attention is drawn to the possible requirement for submission of a Building Regulations application for the proposed development. Please contact Building Control on 0118 937 2449 for advice.

IF7: Complaints about construction

Complaints are commonly received about noise and dust caused by construction and demolition works, particularly working outside reasonable hours and smoke from bonfires associated with the burning of waste on site. The developer is reminded that construction and demolition associated with the approved development will be subject to environmental health law.

Encroachment

During the course of construction, the developer should take care to ensure that no part of this development (foundations, eaves, guttering, etc.) would encroach on, under or across the boundary line with the adjoining property, as the requisite Notice has not been served on the owner of that property. This permission does not confer any right of access onto land that is not under the developer's control. The developer should also be mindful of the obligations and requirements of the Party Wall Act (1996) details of which can be found at:

Contaminated Land

You are advised that the development lies on a potentially contaminated site. Due to the nature of the historic land use there is the potential of contaminated land being present. The developers must be aware that any ground or enabling works may bring receptors into contact with the aforementioned contaminants. You may wish to satisfy yourself that the details of the construction proposals take the necessary account of the possibility of contaminants from that source.