

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Katesgrove

App Ref: 230169/FUL

Address: 248 Basingstoke Road, Reading, RG2 0HN

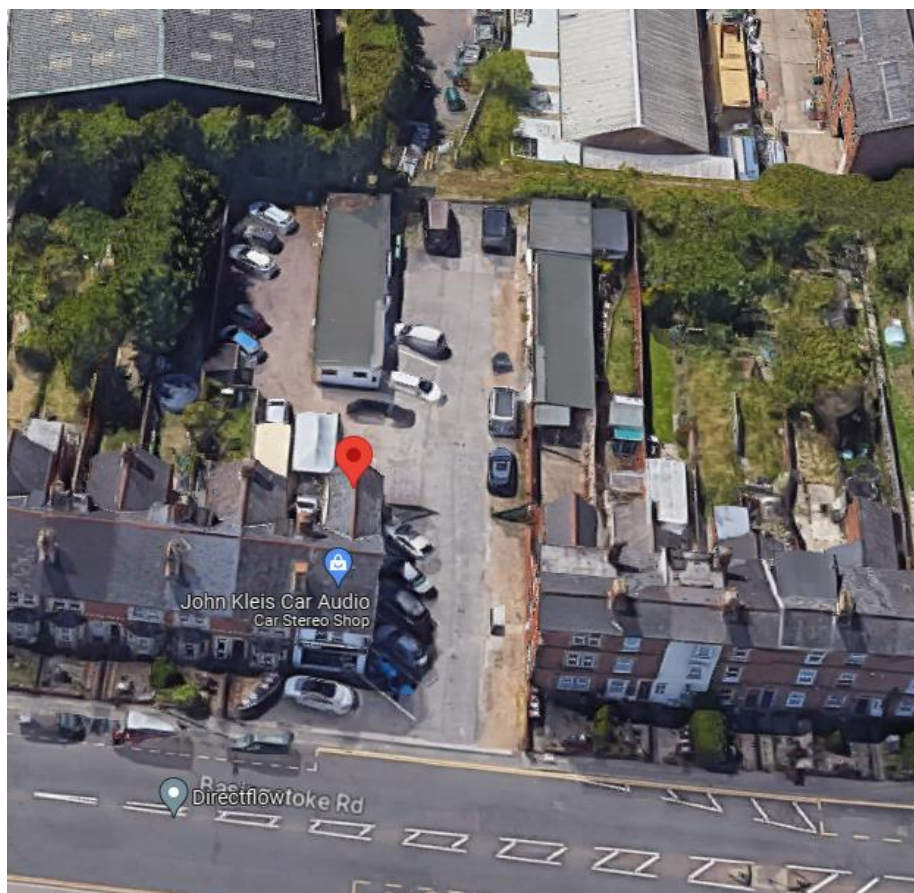
Proposals: Demolition of workshop outbuildings. Construction of singular workshop outbuilding with open-sided balcony mezzanine storage space and staff rooms. No change of use.

Case Officer: Marcie Rejwerska

Date received (valid from): 13 February 2023 **Target Decision date:** 31 May 2023 (ext.)

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises commercial premises on the west side of Basingstoke Road. The retail and office premises are situated at the host dwelling at 248 Basingstoke Road and two garage units at the rear are used as workshops. The rear of the site is used for parking and storage. The workshops/garages at the rear are flat roofed and single storey. The neighbouring properties are residential. The site is accessed from Basingstoke Road and is situated between two residential terraces.



Location of the application site, 248 Basingstoke Road. Image taken from Google Maps on 30 May 2023.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for demolition of the existing garages/workshops at the rear of the site to be replaced with one consolidated workshop oriented towards the rear of the plot. The proposed workshop would measure just under 300m² in footprint, 14.92m in depth x 19.53m in width. The workshop would have a mezzanine floor to be used for office space. The workshop will have a single storey element on the south-facing elevation which will measure 3.65m at its tallest point. The workshop will measure 6.2m total in height and have a pitched roof. Roller shutters garage doors are proposed at the front elevation, new windows are proposed at the front and rear mezzanine level and roof lights are proposed on the main pitched roof. The proposed materials to be used are brick glazing and concrete profile glazing.



Proposed CGI elevations. See pg. 16 Design and Access Statement.

Landscaping is also proposed however, it is noted that due to amendments made by the applicant at the request of the officer, these are no longer accurate. The initial landscaping detail included planting of Italian cypress at either side boundaries with residential gardens.

Plans considered

299-03-A.01-9 Existing site plan, dated 4 April 2023, received 5 April 2023
 299-03-A.02-9 Existing elevations, dated 4 April 2023, received 5 April 2023
 299-03-A.03-9 Proposed site plan, dated 4 April 2023, received 5 April 2023
 299-03-A.04-9 Proposed ground floor plan, dated 4 April 2023, received 5 April 2023
 299-03-A.05-9 Proposed mezzanine floor plan, dated 4 April 2023, received 5 April 2023
 299-03-A.06-9 Proposed roof plan, dated 4 April 2023, received 5 April 2023
 299-03-A.07-9 Proposed elevations, dated 4 April 2023, received 5 April 2023
 299-03-A.08-9 Proposed elevations, dated 4 April 2023, received 5 April 2023
 299-03-A.09-9 Impact on street, dated 4 April 2023, received 5 April 2023
 299-03-A.10-9 Proposed 3D view, dated 4 April 2023, received 5 April 2023
 Design and Access Statement, dated 13 February 2023, received 14 February 2023
 Noise Impact Assessment, 8881CA, Nova Acoustics, dated 14 February 2023, received 14 February 2023

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 880006 - Erection of workshop extension at rear. Change of use of dwelling at 250 to retail with flat above and of upper floors at 248 to a flat - Application refused on 20/03/1989

- 900750 - Erection of fitting bays, conversion of ground floor of No 250 to offices both ancillary to motor accessories shop at No 248, conversion of upper floors to two flats - Application permitted on 26/04/1990
- 010856 - Amendment to previous consent 90/0187/FD to create detached workshop at rear end of property, separated from host building by a proposed parking area. - Application withdrawn on 26/04/2002
- 220733 - Removal of workshop outbuildings. Construction of singular workshop outbuilding with open-sided balcony mezzanine storage space and staff rooms. - Application withdrawn on 23/11/2022

4. CONSULTATIONS

Internal consultations:

Natural Environment -

- This site is part of the Air Quality Management Area, which means that tree retention and planting criteria should be given more weight in determining this application, as per the states aims of the adopted Tree Strategy, and policies EN14 and EN15 of the adopted Local Plan.
- A similar development was proposed under planning application 220733, on which occasion Natural Environment Team raised an objection based on the lack of information on existing trees near the development and the lack of proposed planting.
- Thank you for your e-mail of 4 April 2023 advising us of a possible impact on rear garden of 252 Basingstoke Road. I note that amended plans have since been submitted which address this.
- With reference to the Existing. Site Plan, Location Plan, Block Plan Drg. No. 299-03-A.01-9 and the Proposed Site Plan, Location Plan, Block Plan Drg. No. 299-03-A.03-9 both dated 4 April 2023, the following are noted:
Existing trees
- There is no significant vegetation on site, but there are trees growing within the gardens of 254 Basingstoke Road and Union Ocean Transport, Hyperion Way.
- The site layout has changed as such that the proposed building is not abutting the trees in the rear gardens of 254 Basingstoke Road. However, along the boundary with said gardens the Proposed plans show removal of the existing surfacing and planting of a Cypress hedge. The trees at 254 Basingstoke Road are not plotted on the submitted plans, as they should be, in line with our validation checklist.
- Trees (or hedge vegetation) growing along the western site boundary at Union Ocean Transport, Hyperion Way are still within falling distance or 15 m to the proposed building, as such our previous comments relating to them remain valid:
- As per our validation checklist, any trees within falling distance or 15m to the proposed development should be plotted on a plan in relation to it - the accurate location of the trees' trunks, as well as extent of their crowns and expected Root Protection Areas should be included. If any parts of the existing trees overlap the development, then an Arboricultural Impact Assessment is necessary to demonstrate that impact on trees can be mitigated or compensated via planting. Neither of the above have been provided so far, as such the submission fails to demonstrate lack of harm to existing trees.
Landscaping
- With reference to the Proposed Landscape Plan Drg. No. 299-L010-1 dated 13 December 2022, the following are noted:
- I note the document is shown as superseded - but an amended version is not provided, so I will provide 'in principle' comments based on the species shown on the Softscape

Schedule - however, an up-to-date Landscaping Plan must be submitted prior to a decision.

- It is unfortunate that no frontage planting can be included in the proposal - even a small or medium tree would greatly improve the character of the street and would soften the industrial character of the site.
- Italian cypress trees are proposed in the form of two rows, north and south of the proposed building, and Common Juniper shrubs are proposed to the west of the building. In general, we consider any greenery on an industrial site is positive, but I consider there are opportunities to introduce some trees with a higher biodiversity value than the Italian Cypress - while still maintaining the hedge character of the vegetation. As such, at least one of the Cypress planting rows should be replaced with columnar broadleaved alternatives. The agent should consider the use of the fastigate cultivars of some native tree species.
- I note that documents accompanying previous application indicated some green roof on the new building. This application does not provision a green roof, which is a lost opportunity to compensate for the overwhelming hardstanding proportion of the site.
- However, please note that the plans received on 5 April 2023 are not consistent with the superseded Landscape Plan, as such my comments are not final until an updated Landscape Plan is provided. If a Landscape Plan will be submitted it should include the following details to avoid a pre-commencement condition: plants name (in Latin), numbers and stock size in metres (and girth if deciduous), tree pit details, establishment and maintenance schedule, underground service runs locations.

SUDs

- With two rows of tree planting on either side of the proposed building, this is a great opportunity to integrate tree pit design in the SUDs strategy to reduce and slow down the rainwater runoff on site.
- In conclusion, the application is not currently supported in terms of trees and landscaping as the existing trees have not been accurately plotted on the plans, the development's impact on said trees has not been assessed and the landscape plan is shown as superseded.

Environmental Protection -

Environmental Protection concerns:

- Noise arising from development
- Contaminated Land - land gas
- Light - security lighting informative
- Construction and Demolition phase

Noise - delivery hours / waste collections/ opening hours

I have concerns about the potential for noise disturbance due to commercial operations on occupants of nearby residential properties, particularly late at night and early morning, so a restriction on permitted hours for these activities is recommended, if possible. The hours stated are based on those in the noise assessment.

Noise generating development

A condition is recommended to ensure that the action plan from the noise assessment is put in place. Prior to any consent being issued, the applicant should confirm that it is realistic for the roller shutter doors to be closed whilst works are being undertaken on vehicles. If it is not, then the noise assessment will need to be revised.

Land Gas

The site is situated in close proximity to a former landfill site therefore there is the possibility of land gas being present. Whilst I acknowledge that there is no change of use, the erection of a new building may increase the risk from that which is existing as new pathways

for the gas may be opened up and also the building may be of different construction than the previous building, e.g. may be better sealed therefore increase likelihood of gas build up.

Light - security lighting

I have concerns about security lighting resulting in loss of amenity to nearby residents. The applicants should be made aware that lighting should be angled appropriately and of an appropriate brightness to ensure that lights are not shining onto neighbouring properties and is not triggered inadvertently by passing vehicles or pedestrians as this has the potential to result in nuisance.

Construction and demolition phases

We have concerns about potential noise, dust and bonfires associated with the construction (and demolition) of the proposed development and possible adverse impact on nearby residents (and businesses).

Fires during construction and demolition can impact on air quality and cause harm to residential amenity. Burning of waste on site could be considered to be harmful to the aims of environmental sustainability.

Transport -

- The site is located on the western side of Basingstoke Road. 248 Basingstoke Road currently acts as the main office for the business. To the rear of the property there are currently two single story workshops/garages.
- The space to the rear is currently used as a parking area and the main workshop space for the business. The proposal seeks to replace the existing workshops/garages to the rear of 248 Basingstoke Road with a single purpose build workshop to act as the main premises of John Kleis Audio. The workshop would have a floor area of approximately 282sqm, including a balcony mezzanine for storage space and staff rooms. The proposal would enable an established in-car audio equipment business to expand, improving their offer suitable for modern use. There is no proposed change in staffing or vehicle numbers associated with this proposal.
- Access is gained from Basingstoke Road, and this will remain unchanged. It is stated (within the D & A statement) that the operations of the business are arranged on an appointment basis, taking cars into the unit and completing the works there and then. As such, the use would not generate an additional requirement for longer term parking or increased trip generation associated with the use.
- Policy TR5 states that development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport. Local parking standards are set out in the RBC, Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which takes into account the accessibility of the site.
- Local parking standards are set out in the RBC, Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which takes into account the accessibility of the site. However, there are no adopted parking standards for this specific type of use. Therefore, an application of this type, will be considered on its own merits considering business operations, staffing numbers and anticipated number of customers.
- The existing yard contains areas for informal parking for approximately 20 spaces. However, the proposed development will reconfigure the car park and significantly reduce the parking provision within the site. Given that there is no proposed change in staffing or vehicle numbers associated with this proposal, justification (business operations, staffing numbers and anticipated number of customers) must be submitted to support the level of parking proposed. Based on the information received, I am concerned that the scale of the proposed warehouse reduces the parking provision within the site below an acceptable level.

- In principle, the proposed parking layout is acceptable, however, the parking space located closest to the access from Basingstoke Road should be removed and replaced by landscaping to reduce the potential conflict between pedestrians and vehicles entering/exiting the site. The development provides the opportunity to reinstate part of the kerb to reduce the width of the vehicular access. This may alleviate some of the objections about vehicles obstructing the footway.
- Policy TR5 of the Local Plan also states any developments of at least 10 spaces must provide an active charging point (1 space for every 10 spaces) which should be provided within the site.
- Details of delivery and servicing to the workshop is also required. Tracking drawings should be submitted to ensure that there is sufficient space for operational, servicing and delivery vehicles to enter and manoeuvre within the site.
- Cycle parking must also be provided at a ratio of one space per 350sqm. Cycle provision must meet the standards set out in the Parking Standards SPD. A Sheffield stand (to accommodate 5 bicycles) has been illustrated on the submitted plan but these facilities must be covered. Further details should be provided.
- The applicant should be aware that any full application will be conditioned to ensure a Construction Method Statement is submitted and approved before any works commence on-site. As well as demonstrating how construction deliveries will be managed and controlled, the CMS must demonstrate where the on-site parking will be displaced to during the construction process to ensure there is no overspill in the surrounding area. This is to be covered by condition.
- The applicant is requested to review and address the points above before determining this application.

External consultation:

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

12 Stockton Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG2 8AP

Binfield

244 Basingstoke Road, Reading, RG2 0HN

246a Basingstoke Road, Reading, RG2 0HN

246b Basingstoke Road, Reading, RG2 0HN

2 Bigbury Gardens, Reading, RG2 7LD

252 Basingstoke Road, Reading, RG2 0HN

46 Heron Island, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8DQ

Flat 3, 250 Basingstoke Road, Reading, RG2 0HN

Flat 2, 250 Basingstoke Road, Reading, RG2 0HN

Letters of representation have been received as follows:

5 objections citing concerns of:

- Noise associated with current use and its potential intensification
- No detail of proposed boundary treatment with no. 244 Basingstoke Road
- Excessive parking including on public footpath
- Impact on amenity of neighbouring residential properties
- Concern regarding loss of access to path at the rear of properties on Basingstoke Road accessed from application site

11 letters of support received.

Officer note: the above objections are discussed within this report.

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.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE
CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM
CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK
EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND
EN15: AIR QUALITY
EN17: NOISE GENERATING EQUIPMENT
EM1: PROVISION OF EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT
EM4: MAINTAINING A VARIETY OF PREMISES
TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS
TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

SPG/SPD

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)

APPRAISAL

Design and impact on the character of the site and wider area

Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan states that “all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form, including:

- Layout: urban structure and urban grain;
- Landscape;
- Density and mix;
- Scale: height and massing; and
- Architectural detail and materials”

The proposed new workshop would have a total height of 6.2m. This is less than the height of either the host property at 248 Basingstoke Road which stands at 8.71m tall and the neighbouring 246 Basingstoke Road which stands at 9.2m tall. Despite this, the location of the

workshop at the rear of the residential terraces is considered problematic. Although outbuildings and garages are common at the rear of the properties in the immediate area these are single storey. As such, the height of the proposed workshop is excessive for its location. This disrupts the prevailing building pattern and residential character of this section of Basingstoke Road and is therefore considered unacceptable and contrary to Policy CC7.

Impact on amenity

Policy CC8 states that “development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of:

- Privacy and overlooking;
- Access to sunlight and daylight;
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;
- Harm to outlook;
- Noise and disturbance;
- Artificial lighting;
- Vibration;
- Dust and fumes;
- Smell;
- Crime and safety”

The proposal by nature of its excessive height and location in the rear of the plot at 248 Basingstoke Road raises concerns about the impact on amenity of neighbouring residential properties. Due to its location at the rear of the plot, the proposal is likely to be visually dominating and overbearing to the neighbouring properties. The proposal is therefore not considered acceptable.

Noise pollution was a commonly raised concern in objection received from external consultations. The submitted noise assessment is considered acceptable and there are no further concerns with regards to noise pollution.

Landscaping and tree protection

Policy EN12 states “On all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity, and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible.”

In addition, Policy EN14 states “Individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance, and Reading’s vegetation cover will be extended.”

It is noted that the proposal initially included a soft and hard landscaping plan. Due to amendments made to the site plan, the landscape plans are no longer up to date and have therefore not been assessed. Due to insufficient information, the landscaping and tree protections are not considered acceptable. This has not been explored further due to harm identified in terms of design and impact on amenity.

Parking provision

Policy TR3 states that “in determining proposals involving a new or altered access onto the transport network, improvement works to the transport network, the creation of new transport infrastructure or the generation of additional trips on the transport network, consideration will be given to the effect on safety, congestion and the environment. Development will only be permitted where:-

- i) Accesses and works to the highway comply with the adopted standards of the Transport Authority;
- ii) The development would not have a material detrimental impact on the functioning of the transport network;
- iii) The proposals would not be detrimental to the safety of users of the transport network, including pedestrians and cyclists;
- iv) The proposal would not generate regular movement of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) on unsuitable roads, or on roads without easy access to the Classified Highway Network; and
- v) For non-residential uses, or new dwellings on classified roads, off-street servicing would be provided.”

As the operations of the business are arranged on an appointment basis, there is little concern that the development would lead to increased trips made to the site. However, the footprint of the proposed workshop significantly decreases the existing provision of parking at the rear of the site. Justification for this reduction has not been submitted and therefore the reduction is not considered acceptable at this stage.

Objections to the proposal based on customer parking on the public footpath is noted - the reduction in parking spaces is therefore likely to exacerbate this issue. As such the proposal is not considered acceptable.

Conclusion

The proposal and the information submitted has been assessed in the context of the relevant policies as set out above and is not considered acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE PERMISSION

Reasons for refusal:

1. The proposed workshop by nature of its excessive height would result in harm to the appearance of the street scene, prevailing building pattern and residential character of this section of Basingstoke Road, contrary to Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
2. The proposed workshop by nature of its excessive height would result in harm to the amenity of the neighbouring residential properties by appearing overbearing and visually dominant contrary to Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
3. Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that adequate protection can be given to existing trees, or that the proposed landscaping can be successfully provided, with consequent harm to the existing trees and biodiversity of the area, contrary to Policies EN12 and EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
4. The proposed workshop would reduce parking provision on site below an acceptable level resulting in harm to the local highway network and highway users including pedestrians, contrary to Policy TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.