

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Kentwood

App Ref: 231076/FUL

Address: 127a Loverock Road, Reading, RG30 1DZ

Proposals: Temporary change of use to open storage (Use Class B8) for up to 5 years, with associated works

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

Date received (valid from): 31 July 2023

Extended Target Decision date: 15 December 2023

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is located within the industrial area north of Portman Road, at the junction of Loverock Road and Wigmore Lane. The site contains four commercial units which are currently vacant, associated parking space, and hoarding has been erected to secure the site. Historically, the units have been in a variety of uses, including storage, industrial, office, private hire firm and an MOT testing centre/garage.

The site is within the Portman Road Core Employment Area (EM2h) and the Air Quality Management Area. The railway embankment to the north of the site is identified as an area of biodiversity interest. The north area of the site is within Flood Zones 2 and 3.

Industrial buildings are located to the south, east and west of the site.

Site visit date: 13/09/2023



Site Location. Image taken from Google Maps November 2023

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The site is not currently in use. A commencement of ground drainage works has been confirmed at the site in accordance with planning permission granted 190591 (dated 29 April 2020) for “Demolition of 2 number existing single storey buildings, removal of telecoms plant. Replacement with new single unit for B1c, B2 and B8 use classes with ancillary offices including associated service areas, car parking and landscaping. Modified access onto Wigmore Lane.” It was confirmed that the permission has been implemented through a Certificate of Lawfulness ref. 231103.

The proposal is for a temporary change in use of the site to ‘open storage’ Use Class B8 for up to 5 years, with associated works. Once the existing buildings are demolished, temporary permission is sought to use the open site for outside storage until the applicant is in a position to build the new single unit. Following the end of the temporary use, all of the conditions attached to the original 190591 permission would apply to a future build of the new single unit.

B8 use was deemed an acceptable use of the site in the previous permission granted.

Plans considered

Planning application letter, PMV Planning

Planning Statement, Temporary consent, 127a Loverock Road, July 2023

182.01.01 Rev B Site Location Plan

MTP ref 18-132 Transport assessment Rev B, March 2019

CSG/17590 Geotechnical Assessment, HESI, 15 August 2022

SHP/STW/AIA/01b Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Landmark Trees, 28 March 2019

CIL

As received 31/07/2023

23/238/11A Transport note, August 2023

As received 22/08/2023

18132/TA/TK01 Rev C Swept path analysis – Articulated vehicles at Site Access

18132/TA/TK03 Rev C Swept path analysis – Max legal articulated vehicle

~~2304-P-PL01 Site Plan & Site Sections~~

As received 05/10/2023

VA4946.231006.NIA, Venta Acoustics, 6 October 2023

As received 9/10/2023

VA4949.231026.M1 Additional Mitigation requirements, Venta Acoustics, 27 October 2023

As received 31/10/2023

182.01.15 Approved plan layout for 190591, illustrating landscaping

As received 8/11/2023

2304-P-PL01 Site Plan & Site Sections Rev A

As received 15/11/2023

VA4946.231116.M2, L_{AMAX} Assessment of Open Storage Yard, Venta Acoustics, 16 November 2023

As received 16 November 2023

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

127 Loverock Road

- 920584 - Refrigerated storage, distribution and offices. Certificate of Lawfulness for a Proposed Use. – Withdrawn 25/01/93
- 920966 – Erection of garage for maintaining cars – Granted 24/09/92
- 930402 - Change of use from industrial/warehouse and offices to social club and ancillary offices D2. – Withdrawn 27/01/94
- 930577 - Change of use to refrigerated storage, and distribution and offices (Use Class B8) – Granted 08/04/93
- 950508 – Increase in height of existing door opening – Granted 23/01/96

127a Loverock Road

- 020161 - New MOT testing bay and new roller shutter door. – Granted 04/09/02
- 190591 - Demolition of 2 number existing single storey buildings, removal of telecoms plant. Replacement with new single unit for B1c, B2 and B8 use classes with ancillary offices including associated service areas, car parking and landscaping. Modified access onto Wigmore Lane. – Granted 29/04/20
- 221873 - Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 5 (Contaminated Land), 6 (Remediation Scheme), 10 (CMS), 14 (Cycle Parking), 17 (AMS and TPP), 18 (SUDS), 20 (BREEAM), 22 (Photovoltaics/Solar Water) of Application 190591 - Discharged 06/03/23
- 231103 CLE - Application for a Certificate of Lawfulness for Existing Development to establish that development pursuant to planning permission reference 190591 has been lawfully implemented. – Granted 20/09/2023

127b Loverock Road

- 030594 – Use of site for private taxi hire – Granted 11/06/03
- 030619 – Private hire company and car hire premises. – Refused 01/04/03

4. CONSULTATIONS

Site notices were displayed at the site for the required period.

Statutory

No letters of representation have been received.

Non Statutory

RBC Environmental Protection

The site is not very close to residential dwellings, however, there are two types of noise that could occur on the site and should be addressed as they could cause disturbance to the residential properties along Portman Rd and those are:

- Large deliveries taking place at night creating crashing/dropping noises
- Forklift movements on site moving materials around and using reverse beepers

RBC Transport

190591 - Demolition of 2 number existing single storey buildings, removal of telecoms plant. Replacement with new single unit for B1c, B2 and B8 use classes with ancillary offices including

associated service areas, car parking and landscaping. This application was approved on 29 April 2020 and has been implemented.

The site currently comprises of four units currently occupied by vehicle repair and maintenance companies which are soon to be demolished. The site is accessed from Wigmore Lane.

This site is located within a Core Employment Area (SA12h: Portman Road) as stated in the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (SDPD). These Core Employment Areas (CEA) are the main location for industrial and warehouse uses, and a high proportion of the traffic using the road is commercial traffic ranging from light vans to articulated lorries. There is high demand for parking in the area.

The site benefits from a planning permission (reference: 190591) for the demolition of two existing single storey buildings (floor area of 586 sqm) and replacement with single unit for Class (E)(g)(iii) (former B1(C))/B2/B8 use with a floor area of 1,758 sqm. The permitted development included modified access arrangement onto Wigmore Lane.

The application seeks permission for a temporary open B8 storage use for a period of five years due to the current high construction costs required to complete the development approved under application reference 190591. It is stated that B8 open storage will enable some revenue to be achieved by the owner, once the site has been cleared.

There is not currently a tenant identified. The types of open storage may include lorry parking, van fleet storage and pallet storage or other active user types such as scaffolding, car storage, truck washing, concrete production etc.

The Transport Note asserts that the existing site access arrangements are considered to be adequate to meet the demands of the proposed B8 open storage use, and the access modifications as approved under application reference 190591 will not be implemented under the proposed temporary permission.

Whilst the Highway Authority agree that the proposed open storage is likely to have no adverse residual traffic impact on the local road network in terms of trip generation, the potential end user may require HGV articulated vehicle access to the site especially as there is not currently a tenant identified. In view of this, it is considered that the access should be upgraded to accommodate all potential users which may require access to the site including 16.5m long articulated vehicles. For clarity an updated tracking drawing should be provided confirming that this manoeuvre can take place without any conflicts occurring and without extensive turning manoeuvres on Wigmore Lane.

Additional information was required vehicle tracking on site, parking, cycle storage and access.

RBC Natural Environment

The proposal would not be supported if the landscaping approved under 190591 is not a requirement of future development of the single unit at the site. Various conditions, including the AMS, were discharged under 221873/APC. The current proposal which includes a proposed 2.4m fence, potentially within the RPA of the Birch – this is unclear due to the AIA not being specific to this proposal. A revised AIA is required, which is not expected to be lengthy. The proposal to have 5 years of entirely hard landscaping is not desirable.

RBC Legal team

Part on s57(2) TCPA 1990:

(2) Where planning permission to develop land has been granted for a limited period, planning permission is not required for the resumption, at the end of that period, of its use for the purpose for which it was normally used before the permission was granted.

As 190591 has been lawfully implemented (as confirmed by 231103), the current lawful use (and so normal use) will be in accordance with that permission. So, in terms of the use, the owner will be able to resume that use at the expiry of the temporary storage permission and continue with 190591.

The use would revert at the end of the temporary permission, under s57(2). However, any operational development (so, the “structures, plant, materials and all other equipment” in the condition below) would remain and need to be removed by condition.

Amended Plans

Additional plans were submitted to address noise at night concern, vehicle tracking, parking, cycle storage, the appearance of the site and access.

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
CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM
CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK
EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND
EN15: AIR QUALITY
EN17: FLOODING AND DRAINAGE
EM1: PROVISION OF EMPLOYMENT
EM2: LOCATION OF NEW EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT
EM3: LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT LAND
EM4: MAINTAINING A VARIETY OF PREMISES

Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:
Reading Borough Council's Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD
Reading Borough Council's Revised Sustainable Design and Construction SPD
Employment, Skills & Training SPD

APPRAISAL

Land Use

Policy EM4 of the Reading Local Plan (November 2019) states, *"A range of types and sizes of units should be present in the Borough, and proposals should maintain or enhance this range. In particular, the overall level of start-up and grow-on space should be maintained and, where possible, increased, and any loss of small units should be offset by new provision. Proposals should maintain the overall level of storage and distribution uses in the South of Basingstoke Road (EM2c).*

Use Class B8 is an acceptable use for the site. The proposed temporary change is not considered to be a substantial alteration in land use terms compared to the previous permission, and is not considered to limit the previous permission for a single unit in B1c, B32 and B8 use to be built at the end of the temporary period.

No new buildings have been proposed for the site that would negate the extant permission. A temporary use condition is recommended as the use would revert at the end of the temporary permission, under s57(2). However, any operational development (i.e. any "structures, plant, materials and all other equipment" would remain and need to be removed.

The proposed temporary scheme is compliant with Policies EM1, EM2 and EM4 of the Reading Local Plan (November 2019); and therefore it is considered that the principle of the development is acceptable.

Design and appearance

Policy CC7 requires that all development must be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is situated.

The existing buildings would be demolished to result in an open space to be used for storage.

The site is situated within an industrial area and the change in appearance is not considered to be out of keeping with the area.

Conditions are recommended requiring additional information to be provided if any additional structures are proposed for the site to control the appearance of the site.

The proposed temporary scheme is considered to be compliant with Policy CC7 of the Reading Local Plan (November 2019).

Transport and Parking

RBC transport has confirmed that there will be an acceptable amount of parking on site. A condition is proposed to require changes to the access into the site to be as specified. Any further changes to the scheme would require additional information to be submitted to the Local authority.

Impact on local amenity

Policy CC8 states that development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment through air, land, noise or light pollution and seeks to protect residential amenity.

The proposed development is located in an established industrial area. The nearest residential properties are located to the south of the site and on Portman Road.

Management steps have been proposed as part of the Noise Impact Assessment report VA4946.231006.NIA, Venta Acoustics, 6 October 2023, in addition to additional noise assessment data. RBC Environmental Protection raised concerns regarding the potential for noise disturbance at night. A condition is recommended for the management steps to be put into place before the change of use commences to avoid any potential disturbance for the residential properties to the south which are considered to be a reasonable distance away from the development. Subject to condition, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy CC8.

Landscaping and vegetation

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. The quality of waterside vegetation will be maintained or enhanced.*

New development shall make provision for tree planting within the application site, particularly on the street frontage, or off-site in appropriate situations, to improve the level of tree coverage within the Borough, to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which a site is located, to provide for biodiversity and to contribute to measures to reduce carbon and adapt to climate change”.

The existing trees and vegetation on site should be protected during the temporary change of use. Compliance with a landscaping scheme is required prior to occupation of the new single unit application 190591. There should be no loss of biodiversity on site during the temporary change of use. A condition to require protective tree measures to be submitted to the Local Authority is recommended for approval before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought on to the site prior to the demolition of the existing buildings on site or erection of any replacement fencing. No reduction in existing vegetation is proposed on site.

Flood risk

No changes are proposed to the existing hardstanding on site. Any additional structures to be placed on the land would require additional information to be provided to the Local Authority. The temporary proposed change of use is not considered to detrimentally impact the flood risk of the site based on the plans submitted.

Legal Agreement

A S106 agreement is linked to the original 190591 extant planning consent. No S106 is required for the temporary change of use.

Conclusion

With the addition of appropriate conditions, the proposed development is considered not to have a detrimental impact upon employment, the character of the area, nor will it have a detrimental

impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties. As such planning permission is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve

Subject to the following conditions:

Time limit

Approved plans

Additional or temporary buildings

Access

Noise

Fencing

Temporary use

Informatives

Terms

Lighting

P&P

Trees