

## **DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT**

**Ward: Katesgrove**

**App Ref: 230250/FUL**

**Address: 39 Boulton Road, Reading, RG2 0NH**

**Proposals: Demolition of existing office and workshop building. Construction of a replacement office and workshop building with associated external works.**

**Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes**

**Date received (valid from): 24 April 2023**

**Extended Target Decision date: 17 October 2023**

### **1. SITE DESCRIPTION**

The site comprises a light industrial unit in B2/B8 use located along Bolton Road. Bolton Road forms part of a larger industrial and warehouse area off of Basingstoke Road in an Article 4 area. The site is located within an industrial estate the site is surrounded by industrial warehouse buildings of a range of sizes.

It is within a Core Employment Area as Designated by Policy EM2e of the Reading Borough Local Plan and within an area of potentially contaminated land.

The river Kennet, Kennet Valley and Holy Brook Meadows, a priority habitat, biodiversity green link and biodiversity opportunity area are situated to the rear of the site, where there is a steep bank down to the river.

**Site visit date: 17/05/2023**

**Site visit photos:**



### **2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

The application consists of the demolition of an existing office and workshop building (122sqm) and the construction of a replacement office and workshop building with roller shutter doors, staff room, toilet facilities and mezzanine floor (334sqm) at the rear of the site. Associated external works comprise a yard area with gated access and perimeter fencing. The development would result in a net increase of 212sqm gross internal floorspace.

The repositioning of the workshop would allow a central storage area to accommodate vehicles and result in a more efficient use of space on site. The yard will continue to provide the same services on site.

No changes are proposed to access the site.

Plans considered

TCG 6913-1 Application letter, BDS Surveyors Ltd

~~TCG 6913 - Planning Statement, BDS Surveyors Ltd, 22 February 2023~~

6913:22:1 Plans & elevations

CIL

As received 28/02/2023

TCG 6913 - Planning Statement Rev A, BDS Surveyors Ltd, 24 April 2023

As received 24/04/2023

SPH/NP/PEA-23/13.06 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Bats) at 39 Boulton Road, Urban Tree Experts, 26 June 2023

As received 27/06/2023

Letter from Blew Burton Ltd, 13 September 2023 regarding BREEAM and sustainability  
Received 13 September 2023

### **3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

021090 First floor extension, demolition of store, new canopy over main entrance and alterations to windows of existing two storey office building. Permitted 04/02/2003

120806 First floor rear extension and internal alterations. Permitted 26/03/2012

**These extensions were not implemented.**

### **4. CONSULTATIONS**

A site notice was displayed at the site on 5 May 2023 for the requisite period and the following addresses were consulted by letter.

14/16 Boulton Road, Reading, RG2 0LT

37 Boulton Road, Reading, RG2 0NH

41 Boulton Road, Reading, RG2 0NH

No letters of representation have been received.

Thames Water - No objection subject to a sequential approach to the disposal of surface water and that works should not result in damage to public sewer network, subject to an informative. Feedback is provided in Appendix A below.

RBC Archaeology - No objection. A condition is recommended, to have a written scheme of investigation and a watching brief, as the site has potential archaeological implications. Feedback is in Appendix B

RBC Ecology - No objection. There is a risk that the proposals may affect roosting bats and an updated bat survey report was needed before this application could be determined. A bat survey was submitted Urban Tree Experts, June 2023, ref: SPH/NP/PEA-23/13.06 which concluded that the risk to bats would be minimal. A condition for any new exterior lighting to be approved is recommended due to bats in a nearby building and in woodland to the rear of the site.

RBC Environmental Protection - No objection subject to conditions relating to submission and approval of a contaminated land assessment prior to commencement of works (and then submission and approval of any necessary remediation reports), submission and approval of a construction method statement prior to commencement of the development, carrying out of the development during the Council's standard hours of working and that there shall be no burning of materials on site.

RBC Natural Environment - No objection. A small landscaping condition is recommended to improve the biodiversity of the site as it borders a Major Landscape Feature, Kennet and holy Brook Meadows. The proposed flat roof would be suitable for a green roof or to have planters with small trees or shrubs on site.

RBC Transport - No objection subject to a conditions for the provision of vehicle parking spaces and a cycle storage place and for a Construction Method Statement to be provided.

Canal & River Trust - No comments. The application falls outside the notified area for its application scale and location.

Communications with the agent

Additional information was provided for the application to be reviewed. A bat survey was undertaken, a letter provided in respect of BREEAM/sustainability and the agent agreed to the inclusion of each of the pre-commencement conditions.

#### **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  
National Design Guide

### **Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)**

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

EN2: AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK

EN13: MAJOR LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND

EN16: POLLUTION AND WATER RESOURCES

EN18: FLOODING AND DRAINAGE

EM1: PROVISION OF EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

EM2: LOCATION OF NEW EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

TR1: ACHIEVING THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

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 (2019)

## **APPRAISAL**

### **Land Use**

The proposed office and workshop are located in an existing industrial and commercial area, which would not result in any change in land use or any decrease in the number of employees on site.

The acceptability of the development would be subject to compliance with the following issues in order of material importance.

### **Design and local environment**

Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks that new development maintains and enhances the character of the surrounding area.

Although the proposed replacement office/warehouse building would be set back on the site, it would reflect the existing design and spacing of warehouse buildings to this part of Boulton Road.

The appearance of the office/warehouse building in terms of the proposed rectangular shape that would be approximately double the width of the existing building, with sloping roof, front overhang, and window placement together with its height would also reflect the surrounding buildings of mixed shapes and sizes within the industrial estate. The proposed use of materials with the walls and roof of the office/warehouse to be clad in profiled metal cladding with profiled metal cladding roof sheets is also considered to be acceptable subject to the submission of material specifications, would reflect the mix of warehouses styles surrounding the site.

The site is located within an area of the Borough identified in the Council's adopted tree strategy as having a tree canopy cover of 10% or less. Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and

Woodlands) seeks that new developments should assist in extending the Borough's vegetation cover. The proposed larger scale building will obstruct more of the land in front of the Major landscape feature sloping to the rear and landscaping and appearance of the site is considered important. It is necessary for new development to ensure that suitable landscaping is provided as part of new developments.

As such, the agent has agreed to a pre-commencement landscaping condition. The site would benefit from the introduction of a green roof or the planting of small tree or vegetation, subject to the constraints of the site.

The proposals are considered to accord with Policies CC7, EN13 and EN14.

### **Land conditions**

Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) seeks to mitigate impacts of pollution associated with development, whilst EN2 protects Areas of Archaeological Significance.

The site is located on a former landfill site that may contain unidentified contamination and/or land gas and conditions are recommended to ensure that future occupants would not be put at undue risk from potential contamination.

Due to the historic uses of the land, caution will be needed when preparing for the development as the land could also retain items of archaeological significance. HER records that Roman remains were found in the plot adjacent to the site in 1949, including traces of buildings, tesserae and quern fragments. This strongly suggests a substantial Roman structure of some status in the area, the exact position of which within the immediate area is unknown.

The development will be on a different footprint to the original building and as such an archaeological watching brief would be a requirement of planning.

There may be a conflict between the importance of the archaeological significance and potential for contamination on the land. The pre-commencement conditions should be discharged before any works commence on site to overcome any concerns raised.

### **Other matters**

### **Sustainability**

Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) seeks that all minor non-residential developments meet a BREEAM standard of Very Good. Policy CC3 (Adaption to Climate Change) seeks that all developments are designed to incorporate measures to tackle climate change.

It is noted in policy CC2 that some types of development, such as industrial uses might find it difficult to meet BREEAM standards to be ideally a 'Very Good' standard. Due to the proposed design and type of building proposed, BREEAM is not recommended as the most suitable method for improving the sustainability of the development in this instance. Alternative options were investigated for the site and a condition is recommended to require an acceptable energy statement to be approved for the construction.

The replacement building will be subject to the latest Part L Building Regulation requirements and should result in a minimum of 10% improvement in the Target Emission Rate (TER) of Requirement L1 of the Building Regulations (using Approved Document L Volume 2). Works would incorporate better insulation and renewable energy provisions

where appropriate, to be a more energy efficient building than the existing 1960s constructed building.

## **Transport**

No changes are proposed to the existing access and the proposed new layout would enable vehicles to be accommodated on site.

The site is located within the Zone 3, the Secondary Core Area but on the periphery of Zone 2, Primary Core Area. In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide a parking provision of 4 parking spaces based on the proposed floor area(s). The proposed Site Plan illustrates 4 parking spaces can be achieved on-site is a similar arrangement to the existing layout.

The provision of an off-street servicing area is considered to improve the existing access and servicing arrangements. Therefore it is anticipated that the transport implications of this proposal are unlikely to have an insignificant impact on the surrounding highway network.

Cycle parking must be provided, the provision of cycle stand in a secure, covered store would provide storage for at least 2 bicycles which would satisfy local plan requirements. Conditions for the provision of parking, a cycle parking storage space and a Construction Method Statement are recommended.

Subject to the recommended conditions it is considered that the proposals would accord with Policies TR1, TR3 and TR5.

## **Ecology**

A bat survey was provided to demonstrate that the development would not have a detrimental impact on wildlife at the site and a condition is recommended for any new proposed external lighting due to the presence of bats on the vicinity in the major landscape feature to the rear. The proposal would not result in any decrease in biodiversity at the site and is not considered to impact the trees located to the rear of the site.

The proposals are considered to accord with Policies EN12.

## **Amenity**

Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) seeks to ensure development protects the amenity of existing and future surrounding occupiers.

There is no residential accommodation in close proximity to the development. Conditions are recommended to reduce the impact of development in terms of dust, fumes and rodents during construction and demolition on neighbouring businesses. The site is located within an existing industrial estate within a designated employment area which is considered an appropriate location for B2/B8/B1a uses. The location of the development is such that it is not considered to result in any adverse harm to residential occupiers.

It is considered that the proposals would accord with Policy EN16.

## **Community Infrastructure Levy**

The proposed B2/B8 use is not liable for CIL because the charging rate for this land use is currently zero.

## **Conclusion**

The design is considered acceptable and conditions have been recommended to overcome concerns relating to the impact on the landscape and land conditions. There are not considered to be any implications for transport or impact on residential amenity. Ecological concerns have been addressed by the submission of a bat survey and new lighting condition is recommended to protect wildlife at the sides and rear of the development. The development should aim to meet sustainability attainments to meet standards above the part L requirements in the industrial location in which it is located. Subject to the following conditions, the development will result in a visual improvement to the site that would not result in a detrimental impact to neighbouring business amenity, access or local wildlife.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

**GRANT Planning Permission, subject to conditions:**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Approve

Subject to the following conditions:

Time limit

Plans]

Materials

Construction Method statement

Parking spaces

Cycle parking

Land gas

Undetermined contamination

No bonfire

Landscaping minor

Exterior lighting

Archaeology

Sustainability

## Appendix A

### Thames Water Consultation feedback

Thames Water would advise that with regard to WASTE WATER NETWORK and SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS infrastructure capacity, we would not have any objection to the above planning application, based on the information provided.

With regard to SURFACE WATER drainage, Thames Water would advise that if the developer follows the sequential approach to the disposal of surface water we would have no objection. Management of surface water from new developments should follow guidance under sections 167 & 168 in the National Planning Policy Framework. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required. Should you require further information please refer to our website. <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/developers/larger-scale-developments/planning-your-development/working-near-our-pipes>

There are public sewers crossing or close to your development. If you're planning significant work near our sewers, it's important that you minimize the risk of damage. We'll need to check that your development doesn't limit repair or maintenance activities, or inhibit the services we provide in any other way. The applicant is advised to read our guide working near or diverting our pipes. <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/developers/larger-scale-developments/planning-your-development/working-near-our-pipes>

Thames Water recognises this catchment is subject to high infiltration flows during certain groundwater conditions. The scale of the proposed development doesn't materially affect the sewer network and as such we have no objection, however care needs to be taken when designing new networks to ensure they don't surcharge and cause flooding. In the longer term Thames Water, along with other partners, are working on a strategy to reduce groundwater entering the sewer networks.

Thames Water recognises this catchment is subject to high infiltration flows during certain groundwater conditions. The developer should liaise with the LLFA to agree an appropriate sustainable surface water strategy following the sequential approach before considering connection to the public sewer network. The scale of the proposed development doesn't materially affect the sewer network and as such we have no objection, however care needs to be taken when designing new networks to ensure they don't surcharge and cause flooding. In the longer term Thames Water, along with other partners, are working on a strategy to reduce groundwater entering the sewer network.

### WATER COMMENTS

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.

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](https://www.thameswater.co.uk/buildingwater).

## Appendix B

### Berkshire Archaeology feedback

There are potential archaeological implications with this proposed development as demonstrated by Berkshire Archaeology's Historic Environment Record. The site lies adjacent to the River Kennet which is known to have been a focus for settlement activity from Prehistory to the present. The HER records that Roman remains were found in the plot adjacent to the site in 1949, including traces of buildings, tesserae and quern fragments. This strongly suggests a substantial Roman structure of some status in the area, the exact position of which within the immediate area is unknown.

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'*.

#### **Condition:**

A) No development shall take place/commence 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, Roman remains. The potential impacts of the development can be mitigated through a programme of archaeological work. This is in accordance with national and local plan policy.

In view of the nature and scale of the development and the low likelihood of the potential archaeology, should it exist, meriting preservation in situ, an archaeological monitoring and recording exercise in the form of a Watching Brief, on a controlled strip of the area, to the required depth for the development, is likely to represent an appropriate programme of works.

Berkshire Archaeology would be pleased to discuss the approach with the applicant, or their archaeological consultant, should permission be granted.