
Re-location of the School of Art, Central Kitchen Building, University of Reading's Whiteknights Campus

Planning Statement

May 2022

**Re-location of the School of Art, Central Kitchen Building, University of Reading's
Whiteknights Campus,**

Planning Statement

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Community Engagement Document

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Barton Willmore LLP now Stantec has been instructed by the University of Reading (hereafter referred to as 'the University') to prepare a Planning Statement in support of the following application for the re-location of the School of Art to the Central Kitchen Building located at the University's Whiteknights Campus. The description of development is as follows:

"Erection of a single storey extension with associated external and internal alterations to the existing central kitchen building to facilitate the relocation of the School of Art."

- 1.2 The Reading School of Art (or RSA) is a department which forms part of the Arts and Communication Design at the University of Reading (alongside the departments of Film, Theatre and Television (FTT) and Typography and Graphic Communication (TGC)), which has a strong reputation for innovation in combining practice, theory and history in research, teaching and enterprise. The School of Art provides a space where students can develop and refine skills, exchange experiences with others and develop as an artist, with access to a wider range of equipment to create and curate work in fields such as digital photography, film, ceramics, sculpture, welding, and woodwork.
- 1.3 The existing School of Art is located within the eastern part (near the Earley Gate access) of the University's Whiteknights Campus, at building TOB1 which lies within Wokingham Borough (the supporting Design Statement indicates the current location). As part of future proposals at the campus the existing School of Art building would be demolished. To ensure the School of Art remains at the Whiteknights Campus, the proposal subject to this planning application is to re-locate the School of Art to the current unoccupied Central Kitchen building which will also be extended.
- 1.4 This Planning Statement has therefore been prepared to support this application which provides an assessment of the proposals in consideration of relevant national and local planning policy. The following documents have also been submitted in support of this application and should be read in conjunction with this Statement.

Plan/Document	Drawing No./Prepared by
Site Location Plan	W310-1956132-SBR-ZZ-SW-DR-A-ZZZZ-80002 Site Location Plan Rev6
Campus Plan	W310-1956132-SBR-ZZ-SW-DR-A-ZZZZ-80003 Campus Plan Rev3
Site Layout Plan	W310-1956132-SBR-ZZ-SW-DR-A-ZZZZ-80001 Site Layout Plan Rev7
Existing Site Plan	W310-1956132-SBR-ZZ-SW-DR-A-ZZZZ-81001 Existing Site Plan Rev4
Existing Ground Floor Plan	W310-1956132-SBR-ZZ-00-DR-A-ZZZZ-81002 Existing Ground Floor Plan Rev4
Existing First Floor Plan	W310-1956132-SBR-ZZ-01-DR-A-ZZZZ-81003 Existing First Floor Plan Rev4
Existing Roof Plan	W310-1956132-SBR-ZZ-RF-DR-A-ZZZZ-81005 Existing Roof Plan Rev2
Existing Elevations	W310-1956132-SBR-ZZ-XX-DR-A-ZZZZ-81004 Existing Elevations Rev4
Proposed Ground Floor Plan	W310-1956132-SBR-ZZ-00-DR-A-ZZZZ-80100 Proposed Ground Floor Plan Rev4
Proposed First Floor Plan	W310-1956132-SBR-ZZ-01-DR-A-ZZZZ-80101 Proposed First Floor Plan Rev4
Proposed Elevations	W310-1956132-SBR-ZZ-XX-DR-A-ZZZZ-80203 Proposed Elevations Rev5
Proposed Elevations	W310-1956132-SBR-ZZ-XX-DR-A-ZZZZ-80202 Proposed Elevations Rev4
Proposed Roof Plan	W310-1956132-SBR-ZZ-RF-DR-A-ZZZZ-80102 Proposed Roof Plan Rev4
Proposed Sections	W310-1956132-SBR-ZZ-XX-DR-A-ZZZZ-80200 Proposed Sections Rev4
Proposed Sections	W310-1956132-SBR-ZZ-XX-DR-A-ZZZZ-80201 Proposed Sections Rev4
Proposed Bin Store	W310-1956132-SBR-ZZ-SW-DR-A-ZZZZ-80300 Proposed Bin Store Rev1
Proposed Cycle Store	W310-1956132-SBR-ZZ-SW-DR-A-ZZZZ-80301 Proposed Cycle Store Rev1
Design and Access Statement (DAS)	Scott Brownrigg
Transport Statement	Curtins
Travel Plan Technical Note	Curtins
Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment	Wessex Archaeology
Built Heritage Assessment	Wessex Archaeology
Ecological Appraisal	EPR
External Lighting Report	BYA
Arboricultural Report	Challice Consulting
Utilities Statement	BYA
Noise Assessment Report	RPS
Energy Statement	Ecounico
Art Sustainability Statement	Ecounico
Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Strategy	Curtins
Land Contamination Assessment	RPS

- 1.5 The proposed development lies within Reading Borough Council, and therefore this planning statement has considered these proposals against the relevant policies of Reading Borough's Local Plan.
- 1.6 This Planning Statement demonstrates that the existing Central Kitchen Building (hereafter known as 'the Site'), together with the proposed alterations, is appropriate to accommodate the re-located School of Art, therefore meeting the requirements of national policy (i.e. the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework')) and the relevant policies of Reading Borough Council's Development Plan.

- **Structure of Planning Statement**

- 1.7 Please see below the structure of this Planning Statement:

Chapter 2.0 of this statement (The Application Site and Surroundings) details the physical characteristics of the Application Site and its immediate surroundings.

Chapter 3.0 (Planning History) sets out the planning history of the site.

Chapter 4.0 (The Proposed Development) provides details of the Proposed Development.

Chapter 5.0 (Relevant Planning Policies) refers to relevant national planning policy (the Framework), and documents forming part of Reading Borough Council's Development Plan.

Chapter 6.0 (Planning Issues) provides a response to the Development Plan Policies and other guidance which relate to the Site and explains why the proposed development should be approved.

Chapter 7.0 (Summary and Conclusions) sets out the conclusions of this Statement.

2.0 THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site has an area of approximately 4,158m², comprising of the Central Kitchen Building and a large forecourt laid to hardstanding sited to the east of the building. There are six parking spaces on this area which is also used as a service yard. The site is adjacent to Pepper Lane to the south, Carter Drive to the north and Cark Park 11 lies to the west. The Poly Vacher building sits to the north of the application site, beyond Carter Drive.
- 2.2 The Central Kitchen Building is about seven years old and is of a modern appearance with limited architectural detailing. The building has a part pitched/part flat roof design and is part single/part two storey. It is externally finished in grey brick, vertical and horizontal cladding with some louvres to the first floor level. The building is currently part vacant, with some cold storage units still in use.
- 2.3 The site is located within the University of Reading's Whiteknights Campus. The Whiteknights Campus is set in 123 hectares of parkland, which includes a lake, open grassland spaces, woodlands and heritage Harris Gardens. The Site's immediate surroundings predominantly comprise of other modern academic office buildings, including the Health and Life Sciences Building which is currently under construction, to the north east of the site.
- 2.4 Vehicular access to the site can be gained to the Kitchen Building service yard from both Carter Drive and Pepper Lane. Carter Drive is a private road within the University's Whiteknights Campus whereas Pepper Lane is a public adopted highway. The closest bus stops to the site are located on Pepper Lane in close proximity to the main Pepper Lane entrance (circa 180m). Pepper Lane is identified as a high frequency bus route. It is served by bus route Claret 21 and 21a which provides services every seven to eight minutes during peak periods.
- 2.5 Part of the application site is identified as an area of Biodiversity Interest as shown on Reading Borough Council's Proposals Map and this area also covers the tree belt directly to the south of the existing Central Kitchen building and forecourt. The area to the south of Pepper Lane (where Leighton Park School is located) is designated as a Major Landscape Feature and there is Existing or Proposed Green Link which links into the site.

- 2.6 The Site lies within Flood Zone 1 and therefore has a less than 0.1% chance of flooding in any year. Leighton Park School, a Grade II Listed Building, is located to the west of the application site, on the opposite side of Pepper Lane. Within Whiteknights campus there are heritage assets within proximity to the site including the Blandford Lodge, the URS Building, or the landscape garden feature.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 The following planning applications were found of relevance to the Site.

Planning App No.	Planning Proposal	Date Received	Decision Date
08/01511/FUL (081500)	Development of a centralised food production building with associated service yard, substation and widened access road.	3 November 2008	Approved 28 January 2009
09/00211/FUL (090851)	Development of a centralised food production building with associated service yard, substation and widened access road. (Resubmission of approved planning application 08/01511/FUL).	12 February 2009	Approved 9 April 2009

3.2 A pre-application enquiry was submitted to Reading Borough Council on 25 November 2021 and a meeting was held on 16th December 2021. A pre-application written response from Reading Borough Council was received on 14 January 2022.

3.3 The pre-application letter concludes that the proposal would be acceptable in principle. The proposal's scale would also be considered acceptable, however there would be a need for some further articulation of the elevations, and the proposed design would need to better relate to the new role that the building would have, to house the relocated Art Department. The proposed design has been reviewed in light of the pre-application discussions and further details can be found on Chapter 6 of this statement.

3.4 The pre-application letter further covers matters related to transport/parking, sustainability, landscape/ecology, and drainage. Chapter 6 of this Statement, and the supporting documents to this application consider these matters.

4.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 As indicated in the Introduction Chapter, Barton Willmore now Stantec has been instructed by the University of Reading to prepare a detailed planning application for:

“Erection of a single storey extension with associated external and internal alterations to the existing central kitchen building to facilitate the relocation of the School of Art.”

- 4.2 The proposed single storey extension would be located on the existing hardstanding forecourt area to the east of the existing Central Kitchen building. It has been designed to fuse with the existing building and its form emulates the existing rectangular building. The external finished would be a vertical metal profile cladding with a brick plinth. The glazing would comprise portrait windows to highlight the views to the trees and buildings opposite and rooflights would be added to let natural light into the building. The energy strategy proposes connecting the development to an existing district heating network with CHP as well as providing a large PV system for the building to generate renewable electricity. The PV system would be installed on the extension’s roof, which would have a flat roof design with a parapet wall to screen the panels.
- 4.3 The refurbished building and extension would in combination have an internal floor space of approximately 1400m² (970m² of existing gross internal floor space and 920m² of proposed internal floor space associated with the extension) and provide workshops, studio and gallery space as well as a staff and student welfare area, shop and visitor space. The number of staff and students within the campus would not change as a result of the proposal. The aim is to remain at an intake of 80 undergraduate students.
- 4.4 In addition, internal space within the Poly Vacher building (located to the north of the Central Kitchen building) would be refurbished to allow office space in connection within the School of Art. However, this is not part of this planning application as it would comprise internal works only.
- 4.5 Vehicular access will remain from both Carter Drive and Pepper Lane. Servicing for larger vehicles (including refuse collection) is proposed from Pepper Lane. Six parking spaces (located in the service yard) would be lost as a part of the proposal. However, historically, these spaces have been for use by staff located at the Central Kitchen rather than by students. Students and staff travelling by car will be able to use the existing Car Park 11 to the west of the building, which itself is accessed from Carter Drive.

- 4.6 Pedestrian access to the existing building is provided from Car Park 11, which is located to the west of the existing building. This would remain unchanged as a result of the proposal. Currently, there are eight existing external and covered cycle parking spaces located directly outside of the existing Central Kitchen Building accessed via Car Park 11. The proposal would see this provision increase to 30 no spaces. These would be located to the west of the building.
- 4.7 The proposal ensures the retention of the tree belt and soft landscaped area to the south of the application. Some trees will be lost to allow for a turning head within the south east corner of the site, however, as indicated with the Ecology Appraisal submitted within this application, new planting is proposed south and east of the existing landscape belt to mitigate for the loss of trees, in addition to providing ecological enhancement of the site and additional screening of the building from Pepper Lane.
- 4.8 The proposed development is located within Flood Zone 1, and as such is at a low risk of flooding from fluvial and tidal sources. The proposed drainage strategy comprises limiting the discharge from the site to 5 l/s for storms up to and including the 1 in 100-year event plus a 40% climate change allowance, with attenuation storage primarily provided via underground attenuation tanks located upstream of the proposed flow control.
- 4.9 The waste storage and recycling facilities will follow the University's campus wide waste management strategy. This includes colour coded mixed recycling bins throughout the internal spaces. 50% capacity of external bins will be for recycling.
- 4.10 The existing utility services within the application site are owned by the University and therefore will be adapted in order to meet the requirements of the proposed School of Art. It is noted that an existing high voltage (HV cable), which runs from the existing substation into the wider campus, will have to be relocated as a result of the proposed development. This cable is currently located underneath the service yard and will be re-located eastwards.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that where the development plan contains relevant policies, applications for development which are in accordance with the plans should be allowed unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 5.2 This chapter of the Planning Statement identifies the relevant national, regional and local planning policies considered to be of relevance to the determination of the application. The Applicant has sought to ensure that the development proposals accord with all the relevant planning policy guidance relating to the Site.

National Planning Policy

- National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework')

- 5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the overarching national planning policy principles. Initially published in March 2012, this was most recently revised in July 2021 making key reforms to the planning system.

- 5.4 Sections of the NPPF that are of relevance in this instance include:

- Achieving sustainable development
- Decision-making
- Building a strong competitive economy
- Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Promoting sustainable transport
- Making effective use of land
- Achieving well-designed places
- Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Achieving Sustainable Development

- 5.5 Paragraph 11 sets a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking, this means:

**"approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance**

**provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."**

Decision-Making

- 5.6 Paragraph 38 identifies that decisions on proposed development should be approached in a positive and creative way. Paragraph 47 emphasises applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities

- 5.7 Paragraph 92 states that planning decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places. It is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities, in accordance with paragraph 95.

Promoting Sustainable Transport

- 5.8 Paragraph 110 emphasises that in assessing applications for development, it should be ensured that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be taken up, safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users and any significant impacts from the development on the transport network or highway safety can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.

Making Effective Use of Land

- 5.9 Paragraph 119 states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously developed or brownfield land.

Achieving Well-Designed Places

- 5.10 Paragraph 126 states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Paragraph 130 supports developments that function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and sympathetic to the

local character and history. In addition, developments should be provided with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

- 5.11 Paragraph 152 states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help shape places to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

- 5.12 Paragraph 174 emphasises that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment, including by protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity or geological value and minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.
- 5.13 Paragraph 180 identifies principles that local planning authorities should apply the when determining planning applications, including that if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused. Paragraph 180 emphasises that development resulting the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

- 5.14 Paragraph 199 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

- 5.15 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was published live on the internet on 6th March 2014 and, alongside the Framework, provides guidance notes on various matters including Air Quality; Design; Noise; Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities, Public Rights of Way and Green Space; and Climate Change.

National Design Guide (MHCLG, 2019)

- 5.16 The National Design Guide (2019) illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. The focus of this guide is on good design in the planning system and it sets out that well-designed buildings provide good quality internal and external environments for their users, relate positively to the spaces around them and resolve the details of operation and servicing so that they are well-integrated into their surroundings.

Local Planning Policy

- 5.17 As set out above, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that where the development plan contains relevant policies, applications for development which are in accordance with the plans should be allowed unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.18 In terms of Reading Borough Council, the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the Central and Eastern Berkshire Minerals and Waste Plan comprise the Development Plan in terms of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004.
- 5.19 The local planning policy for Reading Borough Council comprises several Supplementary Planning Documents. Of these, the Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011); the Sustainable Design and Construction (2019) and Planning Obligations under S106 (2015) constitute material planning considerations. The Tree Strategy (2020) and The Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (2021) are of relevance for this proposal.

- Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019)

- 5.20 Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019) is the document that contains the policies for how Reading will develop up to 2036. It identifies the amount of development that will take place, the areas and sites where development is expected to be accommodated, and where it will be restricted, and sets out policies for how planning applications will be decided. The relevant policies are listed below:
- Policy CC1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 - Policy CC2 - Sustainable Design and Construction
 - Policy CC3 - Adaptation to Climate Change

- Policy CC4 - Decentralised Energy

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and where it will be restricted, and sets out policies for how planning applications will be decided. The relevant policies are listed below:

- Policy CC1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy CC2 - Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy CC3 - Adaptation to Climate Change
- Policy CC4 - Decentralised Energy
- Policy CC5 - Waste Minimisation and Storage
- Policy CC6 - Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
- Policy CC7 - Design and the Public Realm
- Policy CC8 - Safeguarding Amenity
- Policy CC9 - Securing Infrastructure
- Policy EN1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
- Policy EN2 - Areas of Archaeological Significance
- Policy EN12 - Biodiversity and the Green Network
- Policy EN13 - Major Landscape Features and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Policy EN14 - Trees, Hedges and Woodland
- Policy EN15 - Air Quality
- Policy EN16 - Pollution and Water Resources
- Policy EN17 - Noise Generating Equipment
- Policy EN18 - Flooding and Drainage
- Policy TR1 - Achieving the Transport Strategy
- Policy TR3 - Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
- Policy TR4 - Cycle Routes and Facilities
- Policy TR5 - Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
- Policy OU1 - New and Existing Community Facilities
- Policy ER2 - Whiteknights Campus, University of Reading

5.21 Policy CC1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) supports a positive approach to considering development proposals that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. This Policy further states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the development plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.22 Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) advises that proposals for new development 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.

- 5.23 Policy CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change) requires all developments to demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change either through design or provision of landscaping.
- 5.24 Policy CC4 (Decentralised Energy) advises that non-residential developments of over 1000m² shall consider the inclusion of decentralised energy provision, within the site, unless it can be demonstrated that the scheme is not suitable, feasible or viable for this form of energy provision.
- 5.25 Policy CC5 (Waste Minimisation and Storage) advises that development should demonstrate measures to minimise the generation of waste in the construction, use and life of buildings, as well as promoting more sustainable approaches to waste management.
- 5.26 Policy CC6 (Accessibility and the Intensity of Development) requires the scale and density of development to be related to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities.
- 5.27 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) supports high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. In addition, developments should respond positively to their local context, create safe and accessible environments, are accessible and are visually attractive.
- 5.28 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) states that development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties.
- 5.29 Policy CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) states that proposals for development will not be permitted unless infrastructure, services, resources, amenities or other assets lost or impacted upon as a result of the development or made necessary by the development will be provided through direct provision or financial contributions at the appropriate time.
- 5.30 Policy EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) states that historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced. This Policy further advises that applications which have the potential to affect the significant features of heritage assets should be justified by a Heritage Statement.

- 5.31 Policy EN2 (Areas of Archaeological Significance) advises that planning applications are accompanied by an adequate assessment of the archaeological impacts of development proposals.
- 5.32 Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) requires the Green Network, which includes Green Links and Biodiversity Opportunity Areas to be maintained, protected, extended and enhanced. Development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity, and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible.
- 5.33 Policy EN13 (Major Landscape Features and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) advises that development proposals should not detract from the character or appearance of a Major Landscape Feature.
- 5.34 Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands) says that individual trees and groups of trees will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance. New development shall therefore make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site, particularly on the street frontage or off-site in appropriate locations.
- 5.35 Policy EN15 (Air Quality) advises that new development should have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality.
- 5.36 Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) requires development not to damage the environment and sensitive receptors through land or noise pollution.
- 5.37 Policy EN17 (Noise Generating Equipment) advises that where noise generating equipment is proposed, the noise source specified level (plant noise level) should be at least 10dBA below the existing background level as measured at the nearest noise sensitive receptor.
- 5.38 Policy EN18 (Flooding and Drainage) advises that smaller schemes are encouraged to incorporate SuDS, where possible. In addition, SuDS provision should where possible maximise ecological benefits, link into the existing Green Network, incorporate tree planting and landscaping.
- 5.39 Policy TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy) seeks to ensure that development proposals are provided with an adequate level of accessibility and safety by all modes of transport from all parts of a development, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling.

- 5.40 Policy TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters) supports development that would not have a material detrimental impact on the functioning of the transport network. Proposals involving a material increase in the use of an existing site access, directly onto the Classified Highway Network, will not be acceptable if they would be likely to result in the encouragement of the use of the network for short local trips or compromise the safe movement and free flow of traffic on the network or the safe use of the road.
- 5.41 Policy TR4 (Cycle Routes and Facilities) expects new developments to make full use of opportunities to improve access for cyclists to, from and within the development and to integrate cycling through the provision of new facilities.
- 5.42 Policy TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) 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. In addition, electrical vehicle charging points should be provided within communal car parks.
- 5.43 Policy OU1 (New and Existing Community Facilities) 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. Proposals for additional development for higher education will only be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that it would not lead to a material increase in the need for student accommodation, or that it will be supported by an appropriate increase in existing or planned student accommodation.
- 5.44 Policy ER2 (Whiteknights Campus, University of Reading) states:

"..... the University of Reading is a national and international educational establishment of strategic importance which will continue to adapt and expand over the plan period. The Whiteknights Campus as shown on the Proposals Map will continue to be a focus for development associated with the University of Reading. Such development may include additional staff, teaching, research and enterprise accommodation, infrastructure and services, and sports and leisure facilities among other uses. Access to and within the site will be improved where necessary.

Where development would result in a material need for additional students to be housed, it should be supported by an appropriate increase in existing or planned student accommodation. Provision of new student accommodation on the Whiteknights Campus, or as a reconfiguration or

extension of nearby dedicated accommodation, will therefore be acceptable subject to other policies in the Plan. Development will accord with the following criteria:

- **Areas of wildlife significance and current or potential green links will be retained or enhanced, and not detrimentally affected by development, including through light effects;**
- **The safety of those using the campus will be maintained or enhanced;**
- **There will be no significant detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring residential properties; and**
- **The loss of undeveloped areas on the site will be weighed against the benefits of development to the wider community."**

- **Supplementary Planning Documents**

○ **Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)**

5.45 The Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011) provides guidance on the levels of parking required as part of new developments. The SPD sets out the parking standards based on several zones within Reading and the application site is located within Zone 3. For higher education land use sited in this zone, the SPD recommends that 1 space is provided per 1.5 full time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff; 1 space is provided per 3 non-FTE; and 1 space is provided per 20 students. The relevant footnotes on this table advise that where FTE students live within Halls of Residence on site, the student parking provision will be deducted from requirement. The provision will be based on the maximum capacity of a building (at any one time).

5.46 In terms of cycle parking facilities, the SPD advises that these should reflect a desire for more cycle parking to support the reduction in vehicular parking. The number of parking spaces for bicycles should be provided as a minimum. For higher education use, the SPD recommends 10% of building users (FTE staff and students) up to 500, plus 7% for building users in the range 501-1000, plus 5% for building users over 1000.

5.47 Facilities such as changing rooms and showers should also be provided to support the level of cycle parking provision.

○ **Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)**

5.48 The Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019) has been prepared to help guiding developers and decision-makers on the implementation of key sustainability policies set out in the Reading Local Plan, namely CC2, CC3, CC5 and EN18. The SPD provides

practical advice on forms of sustainable design and construction, as well as waste minimisation that will meet these policy requirements. It also details how policies will be applied. For non-residential minor development the SPD sets out that the proposed building should achieve a BREEAM 'Very Good' standards. Development should also promote more sustainable approaches to waste management, including re-use and recycling of construction waste and promotion of layouts and designs that provide adequate space to facilitate waste storage, re-use, recycling and composting.

- **Planning Obligations under S106 SPD (2015)**

- 5.49 The Planning Obligations under S106 SPD (2015) sets out how planning obligations under Section 106 for new development will be secured, in the context of the Community Infrastructure Levy. The SPD sets out that the Section 106 will apply to the contributions towards for site related infrastructure requirements, whereas CIL only be used to fund infrastructure on the Council's Regulation 123 list.

- **Employment, Skills and Training SPD (2013)**

- 5.50 The Employment, Skills and Training SPD (2013) provides detailed guidance on how Reading expects developers to contribute to employment initiatives, such as creating apprenticeship, employment and training opportunities for the local workforce.

- **Other Relevant Documents**

- **Tree Strategy (2020)**

- 5.51 The Tree Strategy (2020) sets out the approach to the planting, management and maintenance of trees in Reading. In particular, the strategy contains ambitious proposals for new tree planting and extension of tree canopy cover in Reading up to 2030, to mitigate climate change effects and to adapt to the climate change that is already occurring, as well as for the many other benefits that trees bring. Objective 1 of the Tree Strategy seeks to protect, retain, manage and plant trees to ensure an increased canopy cover of healthy trees. Objective 2 aims to increase the diversity of the tree stock to provide resistance to climate change.

- **Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (2021)**

5.52 The Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (2020) is an overall framework for conserving biodiversity within Reading. It aims to ensure that by 2030 Reading will be richer in wildlife, be better connected to the wider landscape and that biodiversity loss will have been reversed. Furthermore, it places biodiversity at the heart of the Council's activities.

- **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2015)**

5.53 The development would be liable to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) however, in line with the Council's Charging Schedule, there would be nil charge for the proposed use in this location.

- **Neighbourhood Plan**

5.54 Currently there is no adopted Neighbourhood Plan covering the application site.

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 This section of the planning statement assesses the proposals against relevant national and local planning policy.

The Principle of Development

- 6.2 The University of Reading has been at the forefront of UK higher education for nearly a century. Over the decades the University has become innovators and pioneers, pushing academic boundaries and leading social change. The University currently has around 17,000 students from over 150 countries plus over 4,000 staff., and comprises of three different campus: Whiteknights, London Road and Greenlands.
- 6.3 Whiteknights Campus is the main University campus which includes a number of academic buildings and halls of residence, all set within in 130 ha of parkland. The Campus is accessible from Reading Town Centre, with regular bus services.
- 6.4 The Reading School of Art (or RSA) is a department which forms part of the School of Arts and Communication Design at the University of Reading, alongside the departments of Film, Theatre and Television and Typography and Graphic communication. The School of Arts and Communication Design has a strong reputation for innovation in combining practice, theory and history on its research, teaching and enterprise. The Reading School of Art is ranked in the top 10 in the UK for Art and Design (Complete University Guide 2022) and it offers undergraduate, master's and PhD studies. The School of Art provides a space where students can develop and refine skills, exchange experiences with others and develop as an artist, with access to a wider range of equipment to create and curate work in fields such as digital photography, film, ceramics, sculpture, welding, and woodwork.
- 6.5 The existing School of Art is located within building TOB1 on the eastern side of Whiteknights Campus. As part of future proposals at the campus, this building is to be demolished. To ensure that the School of Art remains at Whiteknights Campus, which is key for the University, the proposals subject to this application is to re-locate the School of Art to the currently unoccupied Central Kitchen building. The proposal would see the Central Kitchen building refurbished and extended to house the School of Art, with the extension located on the existing hardstanding forecourt area to the east of the existing building. The proposal will therefore make good use of an existing building, and adjacent

hardstanding area, rather than providing a new building on an undeveloped area of the Campus.

- 6.6 The proposed internal layout would comprise a teaching space, which would include different galleries and studios. The office space would comprise a staff office and tech office with a viewing area. The building would also accommodate support spaces such as student welfare area, an Art shop where the students would be able to purchase materials and WC. Different workshops would give students access to a wide range of equipment to create and curate work in fields such as ceramics, woodwork, metal and screen printing with associated jet wash room would also be provided. A spray booth and dark room would also be available. In addition, internal space within the Poly Vacher building will be refurbished to allow office space in connection within the School of Art.
- 6.7 Paragraph 95 of the NPPF emphasises the importance of sufficient choice of school places, and that Local Planning Authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement and to development that will widen choice in education. Although the NPPF doesn't specifically refer to University's, the emphasis within national policy is supporting educational opportunities. As indicated above, the intention of these proposals is to ensure that the re-located School of Art remains at the Whiteknights Campus to the advantage of both students and staff that study and work at the University's Department of Art.
- 6.8 At a local planning policy level, Objective 3 (paragraph 2.2.2) of Reading Borough's Local Plan is to support the provision of educational facilities. This objective seeks to improve the quality of life for those studying in the Borough, creating inclusive, sustainable communities with good access to education. Policy ER2 of the Reading Borough's Local Plan is specific to Whiteknights Campus. This policy states that the Whiteknights Campus will continue to be a focus for development associated with the University. Such development may include additional staff, teaching, research and enterprise accommodation, infrastructure and services, and sports and leisure facilities among other uses. As indicated above, this application would see the re-location of the School of Art within Whiteknights Campus and therefore these proposals, for an academic building in connection with the University, align with the principle of what considered acceptable development at the campus as set out at Policy ER2.
- 6.9 Policy ER2 also states that development within the campus will need to accord with the following criteria:

- Areas of wildlife significance and current or potential green links will be retained or enhanced, and not detrimentally affected by development, including through light effects;
- The safety of those using the campus will be maintained or enhanced;
- There will be no significant detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring residential properties; and
- The loss of undeveloped areas on the site will be weighed against the benefits of development to the wider community.

6.10 Each of these criteria is considered further below.

Areas of wildlife significance and current or potential green links will be retained or enhanced, and not detrimentally affected by development, including through light effects

6.11 Part of the site is covered by an area of Biodiversity Interest, and a Green Link exists from the landscape belt to the south of the site, providing a link to other green spaces south of Pepper Lane. An Ecological Appraisal has been prepared in support of this application which concludes that no signs of protected or notable species, as well as of species of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity were encountered on site. The proposals would see the re-located School of Art using an existing part vacant building, with a single storey extension proposed on the existing hardstanding forecourt. The existing landscape belt to the south of the site will therefore remain, bar some loss of low or moderate quality trees within the south east corner of the site to allow for a turning head, however additional tree planting is proposed south and east of the landscape belt to mitigate any loss of trees, in addition to providing ecological enhancement to ensure a biodiversity net gain including installation of Hedgehog hibernation box, bird nest boxes, bat boxes, and planting of native scrub and species of known benefit to wildlife.

6.12 The proposed external lighting to the building has been considered in liaison with ecology consultant for this project and is considered sensitive to wildlife in proximity to the building.

The safety of those using the campus will be maintained or enhanced

6.13 Policy ER2 requires development proposals to maintain or enhance the security of those using the campus. The proposals would comprise utilising a part vacant building and existing hardstanding forecourt, therefore will not impact on the safety of those using the campus. New CCTV covering the main access zones would be added to the proposed

School of Art as part of the University's general site security plan. The main entrance would be well lit to safe lighting levels. A full intruder alarm system would be fitted to the premises as part of the University's wider site security plan.

There will be no significant detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring residential properties

- 6.14 The proposals will not be located near any neighbouring residential properties and, as such, would not result in any adverse impact on residential amenity.

The loss of undeveloped areas on the site will be weighed against the benefits of development to the wider community

- 6.15 The proposal would promote an effective use of land, as it would re-use an existing building which is currently part vacant and would extend onto the existing service yard. Although some small areas of undeveloped land would be lost to make way for cycle storage, and part of the extension, these areas by virtue of their size and location do not have any specific benefit as open or amenity space. For this reason, it is considered that the loss of these modest areas of undeveloped land would be outweighed by the benefits of retaining the School of Art within the Campus.
- 6.16 On the basis of the above, it is therefore considered that the principle of development subject of these proposals align with national and local planning policies, in particular what is considered acceptable development at the Whiteknights Campus as indicated by policy ER2 of Reading Borough's Local Plan.

Design

- 6.17 Section 12 of the NPPF places significant weight on ensuring good design. In fact, paragraph 126 seeks to create high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings as well as places. Policy CC7 of Reading Borough's Local Plan also talks about the importance of achieving buildings with high quality design that respond positively to their local context.
- 6.18 The existing Central Kitchen building, which is currently part vacant, was constructed some seven years ago and is of a modern appearance with limited architectural detailing. The existing building facade is made up of grey brick, vertical and horizontal extruded profile curtain walling, with some louvres at first floor height. A forecourt area lies directly to the east of the building.

- 6.19 As existing, the building itself would fail to provide the necessary space to accommodate the School of Art, so an extension is required to provide the floor area to suit the Art Department Requirements. The proposed extension would sit on the forecourt area to the east of the building, which is laid to hardstanding.
- 6.20 As detailed in Chapter 3 above, comments were provided regarding the design of the proposal's by Reading Borough Council through the pre-application enquiry. The pre-application letter advises that the proposal's design response would need to better relate to the building's new role as the School of Art, and that the design should be more prominent and achieve an external appearance that reflects the international reputation of the University and continues to attract students. The pre-application response also states that there is the need for some further articulation of the elevations, which could be achieved through material choice, further openings and some differentiation in building line. One specific, which requires more consideration, is the inclusion of a more evident and welcoming marked entrance to the building.
- 6.21 The Design and Access Statement submitted in support of this application, prepared by Scott Brownrigg, sets out the rationale behind the design of the proposals including how the design has evolved to address the points raised during the pre-application discussions with Reading Borough Council.
- 6.22 The proposed extension has been designed to fuse with the existing building. The mass of the extension would follow the height of the single storey part of the existing building and its form would mimic that of the existing rectangular building. The roof will be developed with a parapet wall around the edge to maintain the simplicity of form and to screen the solar panels which will be located on the roof of the extension. Façade articulation was achieved through doors and recessed windows with a change in façade material to break up the building's elevations, in addition to incorporating a feature colour to the window reveals as well as the entrance canopy. The entrance canopy would highlight the building's entrance and glazing would provide a link to the internal use of the flexible space and gallery.
- 6.23 In terms of materials, the existing horizontal profile white cladding in the entrance space would be removed and replaced with new vertical profile grey cladding and black panels to create a consistency along the elevation and create a welcoming entrance. The existing materials are industrial and simple and the proposal seeks to retain this palette to reflect the functional use of the building as the School of Art. As an art focused building, it is important that the fabric is practical and reflective of the creative energies of the users. To this end, bright colours have been employed within the façade to highlight key

structural or wayfinding elements to provide relief and a positive and vibrant contrast to the more functional outer metal skin. A red colour was selected in line with the University's branding, and can be seen highlighting the entrance canopy, external doors and window reveals. This would give the site its own identity as the School of Art and sense of place, as suggested in the pre-application response.

- 6.24 Within the internal environment the materials are also paired back to allow for the art work to be the main focus. The materials are mainly white, pale grey and black. The proposed development would therefore bring activity to a redundant area of Whiteknights Campus.
- 6.25 The building will be set back from Pepper Lane by approximately 35m and benefit from a good amount of screening provided by the existing trees and landscaping located directly to the south of the application site. As such, public views towards the proposal from Pepper Lane would be limited. The proposal further comprises additional tree planting which would further screen the development from public vantage points.
- 6.26 As such, the proposal would be in line with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Transport

- 6.27 A Transport Statement, prepared by Curtins, has been submitted in support of this application. The key conclusions of the Statement are summarised below.
- 6.28 The proposed extension to the existing building would be located on the existing service yard and there would be a net loss of six parking spaces. It is noted that these have not historically been accessible by users of the wider campus and were only used by occupants of the building. There would not be an uplift in staff or student numbers at the campus as a result of the proposal due to the relocation of the School of Art. As such, no additional parking would be provided for the refurbishment and expansion of the existing kitchen building. Car park 11 will remain in place and would not be affected by the proposal. As such, the proposal would be in accordance with the requirements of the Parking Standards SPD.
- 6.29 The application site is located on the Whiteknights campus which includes a number of walking and cycling routes. There are several Local Cycle Routes in the vicinity of the proposed development site, the closest one (cycle route R2) is located ca 600m distance from the site. Policy TR5 requires development to provide cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities.

There are eight existing covered cycle spaces adjacent to the entrance the application building which would be retained as a result of the proposed development. In addition to these, the proposal would see the provision of 22 additional parking spaces, to be provided as covered Sheffield stands and, in total, there would 30 cycle parking spaces accessible on the western perimeter of the development. Shower facilities would be provided within the application building, in line with the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD.

- 6.30 This holistic approach would be in line with Policy TR4, which expects developments to make full use of opportunities to improve access for cyclists to, from and within the development and to integrate cycling through the provision of new facilities.
- 6.31 The closest bus stops to the site are located on Pepper Lane, at approximately 180m from the site's access off this lane. Pepper Lane is identified as a high-frequency bus route. Earley Railway Station is located to the east of the application site at approximately 2.5km away, which is within an easy cycling distance and an approximate 30 minutes walk. Reading Railway Station is located circa 3.4km from the site, which is within a reasonable cycle distance.
- 6.32 Pedestrian access to the existing building is provided from Car Park 11, which is located to the west. A well-connected network of footways and crossings are provided to reach the site.
- 6.33 Servicing for larger vehicles (including refuse collection) is proposed from Pepper Lane. Vehicles would utilise the exiting access to the south of the development site. Vehicles would leave the highway in a forward gear before reversing into a designated loading/servicing area located in the southeast corner of the site. Vehicles would then exit the site onto Pepper Lane in a forward gear. This is demonstrated by the swept path analysis contained in the Transport Statement submitted in support of this application. The Pepper Lane vehicle access will remain controlled, and it will not be used for general traffic or pedestrian / cycle access to the wider campus.
- 6.34 As demonstrated above, the site offers good opportunities to use sustainable travel modes and would comply with guidance in the NPPF on promoting development in sustainable locations as well as with Policy CC6 of Reading Borough Local Plan, which directs denser and largest scale development to the most accessible locations. Policy TR1 of Reading Borough Local Plan requires development to contribute appropriately to meeting the objectives of the most up-to-date Local Transport Plan. Supporting para 4.5.1 advises that the Council's objectives for this include facilitating more active travel journeys,

ensuring that the transport network operates safely and efficiently and aligning transport and land use planning to enable sustainable travel choices. The above paragraphs address these matters and, on this basis, the proposal would be in line with the requirements of Policy TR1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

- **Traffic Generation**

- 6.35 The proposed development is not anticipated to materially increase the trip generation of people or services accessing Whiteknights campus, as it would comprise relocating existing facilities. Consequently, the number of delivery and servicing vehicles are not expected to increase as a result of the proposal. As such, the proposal would have a negligible impact on the operation and safety of the immediate local highway network, in accordance with the requirements of Policy TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

- **Travel Plan**

- 6.36 The proposal is supported by a Travel Plan Technical Note, which highlights the benefits associated with the University's Travel Plan and sets out its main objectives. The primary focus of the University Travel Plan is staff and student commuter trips to and from the University. The Travel Plan additionally considers travel by visitors and contractors as well as deliveries and fleet vehicles wherever feasible. University business trips are also now included for the first time, as they have identified a need to address increasing CO2 emissions in this area and many of the initiatives required are the same or related.
- 6.37 The University Travel Plan is due to be updated. The current proposal for the re-located School of Art will be considered as part of the revision of the University of Reading Travel Plan document.

Ecology

- 6.38 The habitats on site, as detailed in the Ecological Appraisal submitted in support of his application, include shrubs, buildings and hardstanding, amenity grassland and mixed semi-natural woodland. The proposal would result in the loss of predominantly hardstanding which forms part of the existing service yard, as well as a small area of amenity grassland to make way for the proposed extension. The proposed bin storage and bike storage would result in the loss of small areas of grassland and hardstanding.

- 6.39 A field survey of the development site was undertaken and found no evidence of bats, invertebrates or non-flying mammals. Although the tree belt to the south of the application site has potential to support nesting birds, their protection can be safeguarded by timing any works affecting bird nesting habits to avoid the bird breeding season or by undertaking precautionary nesting bird checks in advance of works taking place.
- 6.40 The report includes a number of ecological mitigation and enhancement measures which, taking into consideration the impacts to the existing habitats on site, would result in an overall biodiversity net gain, in accordance with Policy EN12 of Reading Borough Local Plan. These measures include the planting of a small area of native scrub, creating woodland edge habitat, as well as the addition of bird boxes, bat boxes and a Hedgehog hibernation box. Therefore, the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the area of Identified Biodiversity Interest which covers part of the application site.

Arboriculture

- 6.41 An Arboricultural Report has been submitted, as prepared by Challice Consulting, in support of this application. The Report advises that the arboricultural impact of the proposed development would be minor, as the trees proposed for removal are considered of low or moderate quality. Minimal pruning would be required to enable construction works to be completed. In addition, the Report confirms that there would be no incursions into the Root Protected Areas (RPA's) of the retained trees which would also be subject to protection measures during construction.
- 6.42 It is noted that the trees that would be lost as a part of the proposals form part of an Area of Biodiversity Interest however such a loss will be compensated by the provision of replacement planting to the south and east of the existing landscape belt. The new planting areas are located within the same Area of Biodiversity Interest and are shown on Map 6 'Mitigation and Enhancement' appended to the Ecological Appraisal. The new planting would enhance the character and appearance of the area and provide for biodiversity, in accordance with Policy EN14 of Reading Borough Local Plan.

Flooding

- 6.43 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and, as discussed on the Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Strategy prepared by Curtins, is at low risk of flooding from all sources. The proposed development is classified as a More Vulnerable development type and is therefore appropriate for the Flood Zone classification it lies within.

- 6.44 Dedicated foul and surface water drainage networks are proposed to serve the development. Where possible, these will utilise aspects of the existing networks serving the existing catering building subject to existing condition, level and suitability for re-use.
- 6.45 A review of available discharge locations has identified discharge of the surface water from the site to the wider University private surface water drainage infrastructure, subsequently discharging to Whiteknights Lake, as being the most favourable, viable discharge location. Whilst the site is not classified as a major development and is therefore not required by the NPPF to implement SuDS techniques, these have been utilised where possible in line with the Council's requirements. It is therefore proposed to limit discharge from the site to 5 l/s for storms up to and including the 1 in 100-year event plus a 40% climate change allowance, with attenuation storage primarily provided via underground attenuation tanks located upstream of the proposed flow control. The foul drainage from the site will continue to discharge north to wider University private foul drainage infrastructure. Drainage serving the classroom/ workshop areas will be of suitable chemical resistivity for the anticipated chemical loading. As such, the proposal would accord with policy EN18 of Reading Borough Council Local Plan.

Energy / Sustainability

- 6.46 Reading Borough Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 aiming to eliminate carbon dioxide emissions in Reading by 2030. According to the local planning policies, the development is only required to meet Part L of the building regulations. However, the University has an aspiration to become Net Zero by 2030. Therefore, the University aims to achieve the highest possible energy efficiency targets and carbon reduction targets for this project by following the LETI guidance for schools where possible with an aspiration to meet the operational Net Zero target.
- 6.47 The Energy Statement, prepared by Ecounico, sets out the proposed energy strategy for the proposed development. The Energy Strategy follows the Energy Hierarchy: Be Lean, Be Clean and Be Green. The overarching objective in the formulation of the strategy is to maximise the reductions in total CO2 emissions through the application of the hierarchy with a technically appropriate and cost-effective approach.
- 6.48 After reduction of the energy demand by using LETI guidance where possible, the energy strategy proposes to connect the development to an existing district heating network with CHP as well as providing a large PV system for the building to generate renewable electricity. The PV system would be mounted on the extension's roof and aim to generate

circa 58,825 kWh/year of renewable electricity. The generated PV electricity would be used on site as much as possible helping to reduce the reliance on grid electricity. Any excess electricity would be exported to the grid.

- 6.49 The energy assessment shows that the proposed energy supply strategy may result in circa 42.2 tCO₂ reduction of regulated CO₂ emissions per annum which equates to circa 127% reduction over the regulated Part L 2013 carbon baseline. The overall CO₂ emissions from both regulated and unregulated energy can be reduced by circa 73% over the baseline. With the new Part L 2021 carbon factors, the proposed energy strategy may result in circa 10.5 tCO₂ reduction of regulated CO₂ emissions per annum which equates to circa 44% reduction over the adjusted regulated Part L 2013 carbon baseline. The overall CO₂ emissions from both regulated and unregulated energy can be reduced by circa 33% over the baseline.
- 6.50 It is anticipated that with the use of the water source heat pump system the development will likely be able to achieve the regulated operational Net Zero target and potentially even the regulated and unregulated operational Net Zero target. As such, the proposal would be in accordance with Policies CC2 and CC3 of Reading Borough's Local Plan and with the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019).
- 6.51 The BREEAM pre-assessment carried out for the development demonstrates that the proposals can achieve a 'Very Good' rating, in line with Policy CC2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.
- 6.52 The waste storage and recycling facilities for the proposed School of Art would follow the campus wide waste management strategy. This includes colour coded mixed recycling bins throughout the internal spaces. 50% capacity of external bins will be for recycling. In most cases 1100L wheeled external bins will be used.
- 6.53 The design of the building has been developed to significantly reduce the amount of waste generated during construction phase. The existing building would mostly be retained and the demolished parts would be recycled and reused to minimise waste from site. The materials that cannot be re-used or reclaimed would be recycled where possible. As such, the proposal would comply with Policy CC5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

- 6.54 The University is served by an existing site wide district heating network powered from central gas fuel CHP plant. Waste heat is distributed around the site via a network of underground heating flow and return pipework to all the designated buildings. Both the existing Energy Centre (EC) and the associated underground heating distribution pipework are in close proximity to the School of Art building. The proposals would connect to the new building to the District Heating network, powered by gas-fired Combined Heat and Power (CHP) engine and gas boilers. The proposal would therefore minimise the impact on air quality, given that the local emissions would not increase significantly, as the development would utilise the existing energy generating facilities. As such, the proposal would be in accordance with Policies CC4 and EN15 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.
- 6.55 High efficiency internal and external lighting would be used throughout the development in conjunction with a lighting control system incorporating daylight and presence detection as appropriate. This would ensure that lights are switched off when not required to minimise light pollution in accordance with Policy EN16 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Contaminated Land

- 6.56 This planning application is accompanied by a Desktop Study and Preliminary Risk Assessment, prepared by RPS. The report has identified a number of potential pollutant linkages that may be active upon the redevelopment of the site and recommends that the potential for these linkages to be active is assessed through a Phase 2 Geo-Environmental Site Investigation. It is considered that the submission of this study can be secured through planning condition, in the event of an approval. As such, the proposal would be in accordance with Policy EN16 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Heritage

- 6.57 The application is supported by an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment, prepared by Wessex Archaeology. This report demonstrates that, while there are no known heritage assets within the site, those recorded within the Study Area suggest that there has been activity in the area since the Palaeolithic, even though more substantive occupation activity does not appear to predate the late Iron Age period. Despite this, the potential for archaeological remains within the application site itself would be low. As such, the proposal would be in accordance with Policy EN2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

- 6.58 A Settings Assessment Report, prepared by Wessex Archaeology, has also been submitted in support of the application. The report identifies 12 no Listed Buildings, one Conservation Area and one locally Listed Building to be present within an approximate 1km study area surrounding the site. Of these, the School House and attached laboratories at Leighton Park School (Grade II Listed Building) is the closest heritage asset to the site and is located at approximately 180m to the west of the application site. The report concludes that the application site does not form part of the setting of this listed building.
- 6.59 In the case of the other six Listed Buildings that were taken forward for further assessment (please refer to the Settings Assessment Report for further details), the report concludes that parts of their setting incorporate Whiteknights campus, which is considered to contribute to their significance to some extent. Despite this, the sympathetic design of the proposed development would create visual continuity with the existing surrounding buildings and strengthen the campus environment. As such, the proposals would not alter the character of Whiteknights Campus in a way which would negatively detract from its environment or harm the significance of the identified heritage assets. On this basis, the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the nearest Listed Buildings or on their setting, in accordance with Policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Noise

- 6.60 A Noise Impact Assessment Report, prepared by RPS, has been submitted in support of this application. The Report identifies the nearest existing university buildings accommodating the Knowledge Transfer Centre, Computer Sciences and Biomedical Engineering departments as being the noise sensitive receptors closer to the proposal, at approximately 45m away. Leighton Park School buildings, a number of which appear to be residential in nature, are located at approximately 75m to the south of the proposed development.
- 6.61 The Report assessed the impact of the existing noise climate on the proposed development and concluded that appropriate internal ambient noise levels are likely to be achieved using standard façade materials. Should the noise emission limits identified in the report be complied with, it is unlikely that the proposal would result in adverse effects at nearby sensitive receptors. As such, the proposal would be in accordance with Policy EN16 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

- 6.62 It is noted that at this stage of the project details of the likely noise generating plant and equipment associated with the proposed development are not yet available. As such, the Noise Report has set the noise emission limits for the development based on Reading Borough Council requirements and concludes that it is unlikely that the proposed development would result in adverse effects at nearby noise sensitive receptors. As such, the proposal would comply with Policy EN17 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Utilities

- 6.63 The Utilities Statement, prepared by BYA, advises that all existing utility services within the site (gas, water electricity, district heating, communications, data, and drainage) are owned by the University and will be adapted and/or modified as required to meet the needs of the proposed School of Art. The required alterations to each service connection are detailed in the Utilities Statement submitted in support of this application.
- 6.64 Of note is the existing substation to the south of the Kitchen building which will be retained as a part of the proposal. It is noted that an existing high voltage (HV cable), which runs from the existing substation into the wider campus, will have to be relocated as a result of the proposed development. This cable is currently located underneath the service yard and will be re-located eastwards

Residential Amenity

- 6.65 The proposed School of Art would not be located near residential development and, as such, it would result in an adverse impact on neighbouring amenity. The proposal would therefore be acceptable in relation to Policies ER2 and CC8 of Reading Borough Local Plan.

Public Consultation

- 6.66 A public consultation took place between Thursday 3rd February and Friday 18th February 2022. Local residents close to the Whiteknights Campus, staff and students at the University were consulted and encouraged to comment on the proposals. Due to constraints associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the consultation was held digitally via a website which also hosted a recording of the proposed scheme presented by the project team.

- 6.67 A letter was posted to 55 local addresses surrounding the site, made up of 54 residential addresses and 1 business address. The letter gave information about the proposed development. 26 people responded to the consultation (12 Staff, 12 Students, 1 Resident and another unknown) with 24 responses via the online feedback form and 2 via email. The top 3 concerns raised related to the overall design; the provision of parking both on site and then for construction parking off site in neighbouring residential roads and that appeared to be a lack of outdoor exhibition space. A high-level summary of the main comments and concerns is contained in the Consultation Feedback Statement, appended to this Report.

Employment Skills Plan

- 6.68 Although the extent of the additional floorspace being created by this proposal is lower than the floorspace threshold for providing an Employment Skills Plan (as set out within the Council's Employment, Skills and Training SPD), within the pre-application response, the Council would support the development of an Employment Skills Plan for construction. With this in mind, and based on the expected construction value, the University will request that the appointed contractor provides one apprenticeship role during the construction phase of the development.

7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The Reading School of Art is a department at the University of Reading's Whiteknights Campus which forms part of the Arts and Communication Design at the University of Reading (alongside the departments of Film, Theatre and Television (FTT) and Typography and Graphic Communication (TGC)), which has a strong reputation for innovation in combining practice, theory and history in research, teaching and enterprise. The School of Art provides a space where students can develop and refine skills, exchange experiences with others and develop as an artist, with access to a wider range of equipment to create and curate work in fields such as digital photography, film, ceramics, sculpture, welding, and woodwork.
- 7.2 This application, submitted on behalf of the University, would see the re-location of the School of Art, as the building it currently occupies (building TOB1) is to be demolished as a part of the University's future plans for the campus. The proposals therefore will see the existing Central Kitchen building on campus, which is currently part vacant, re-furnished and extended to re-house the School of Art. This would allow for the School of Art to be retained at Whiteknights Campus, a key objective of the University, with the proposals providing an efficient use of land by using a part vacant building and adjacent existing hardstanding forecourt, which in turn will avoid the loss of a significant undeveloped part of the campus. As explained above, such proposals will therefore align with the principles of what is considered appropriate development at the Whiteknights Campus as indicated at policy EN2 of Reading Borough's Local Plan.
- 7.3 The proposed extension would be respectful of the shape and massing of the existing building, and its design and materials would reflect the use of the building as the School of Art. The proposed design response has evolved from the pre-application response received from Reading Borough (and also comments received through the public engagement exercise) to a building which will be visually pleasing and have well balanced façades with recessed windows and feature colours to add visual interest, including the entrance to the building. The proposed extension would read as a proportionate addition to the Central Kitchen building, with the flat roof form with parapet wall providing an opportunity for solar panels to be installed on the roof. The BREEAM pre-assessment carried out for the development demonstrates that the proposed development can achieve a 'Very Good' rating, in line with local policy.

- 7.4 As indicated within the Transport Statement, the proposal would not require additional vehicle parking spaces, as there would be no increase in the number of students or staff. The proposal would provide a total of 30 covered cycle parking spaces as Sheffield stands.
- 7.5 The proposals are also considered acceptable from an ecological and arboricultural perspective. The proposal would comprise ecological mitigation and enhancement measures which would result in an overall biodiversity net gain. This would include planting of native scrub and trees in locations to the south / south-east of the site.
- 7.6 As indicated above, the proposal would allow for the School of Art to remain at Whiteknights Campus, as its current building is to be demolished as a part of the University's future plans. The proposals therefore align with the emphasis within national policy of supporting educational opportunities. In addition, the proposals are considered to accord with local planning policy, in particular, the principles and criteria of policy ER2 (Whiteknights Campus) of Reading Borough's Local Plan. On this basis, we respectfully request that planning permission should be granted for these proposals.

APPENDIX 1

Community Engagement Document

32738/PT/dw

21st April 2022

**Reading University School of Art
Summary of consultation for Planning Statement**

The consultation commenced on Thursday 3rd February and run until Friday 18th February 2022. Local residents close to the Whiteknights Campus, staff and students at the University were consulted and encouraged to comment on the proposals.

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about many changes across the country and has shaped how we interact with communities. At the time of the consultation, there had been and continued to be a steep rise in COVID-19 cases due to the Omicron variant - both nationally and in Reading. In order to keep members of the public, staff, students and the project team safe, the decision was made to hold the consultation digitally via a website which also hosted a recording of the proposed scheme presented by the project team.

An A4, two page letter was posted to 55 local addresses surrounding the site, made up of 54 residential addresses and 1 business address. The letter gave information about the importance of relocating and building a purpose built School of Art - for existing and future students - on the redundant Central Kitchen building; illustrative images on how the proposed building could look and invited people to view the website and leave their feedback via the online feedback form. The leaflet asked for all comments on the application to be submitted by Friday 18th February 2022. Full details of the consultation including the website details were widely advertised on the University's student and staff portal.

The dedicated project website www.reading.ac.uk//department-of-art-relocation went live on the 3rd February 2022 and was available throughout the consultation period. It gave information on the consultation timeframe, details of the proposed scheme with illustrative images, contact details and allowed people to submit their feedback via the online form. A recorded presentation of the proposal was available to stream or download from the website.

26 people responded to the consultation (12 Staff, 12 Students, 1 Resident and another unknown) with 24 responses via the online feedback form and 2 via email. One local resident requested the presentation be printed and posted to them but no further feedback was received.

Respondents were first asked to provide some information about their personal circumstances (their connection to the University, age group, gender, and postcode). 92% of respondents were either staff or students of the University, with a majority representation from the age groups 18-24 and 45-54. 67% of the responses were from women with 17% chose not to respond to the question.

Respondents were given unlimited space to add their comments. From the 26 responses received there were 20 positive/supportive comments and 19 comments that raised some concerns or were negative. Overall, over half of the responses we received were positive (54%), with 25% feeling that the new modern facilities would attract more students. 20% positively commented on the repurposing of a redundant building and 20% supported the focus on environmental and sustainability.

The top 3 concerns raised were the overall design with some comments suggesting it was bland, ugly and lacked a soul (18%). The provision of parking both on site and then for construction parking off site in neighbouring residential roads (16%), Lastly there was some concern that there appeared to be a lack of outdoor exhibition space (16%)

A high level summary of the main positive comments and concerns (in no particular order) which have been considered by the project team are highlighted below: total of 26 responses with multiple comments received.

Positive Comments	Concerns / Negatives
Design of new building	Design - ugly/no soul/bland shed/lack of windows
Focus on environmental sustainability	Lack of outdoor exhibition space/ sculptures in grounds
Flexibility for growth and evolve offering	More secure bike storage needed
Good use of redundant/pre-existing building	Parking provision (on site)/Construction parking (off site)
New modern facilities attract new students	Sufficient capacity for growth/new students/studio space
Blends with the landscape	Loss of view and natural light (from Polly Vacher building)
Better access from halls and campus	Increased footfall access off Pepper Lane - safety concern

Comments and Suggestions:
No room for additional offices in Polly Vacher please consult so can support and be inviting to our Art colleagues.
The new building will create a greater number of pedestrians. Please consider improving pedestrian access to and from the bus stops in Pepper Lane, and pathways across the roadway towards the rest of the campus.
If the Polly Vacher building is being 'refurbished' as part of this development, the plans should look at improving the building at the same time.
Please consider roofed card-entry secure cycle storage to protect cycles against weather and theft.

The final question asked respondents if at this stage, from the information they have about the proposed new School of Art, would they support a planning application for the proposed development. **58%** of respondents said that they would support a planning application, **19%** were undecided and **15%** said that they would not support it. **8%** of respondents chose not to answer this question.

Throughout the consultation period a log was kept of questions raised by any residents, students and staff. Following the consultation, the Applicant provided a comprehensive response to the questions and concerns raised via a questions and answers document. This was posted on the project website and made available for anyone to view or download at any time.

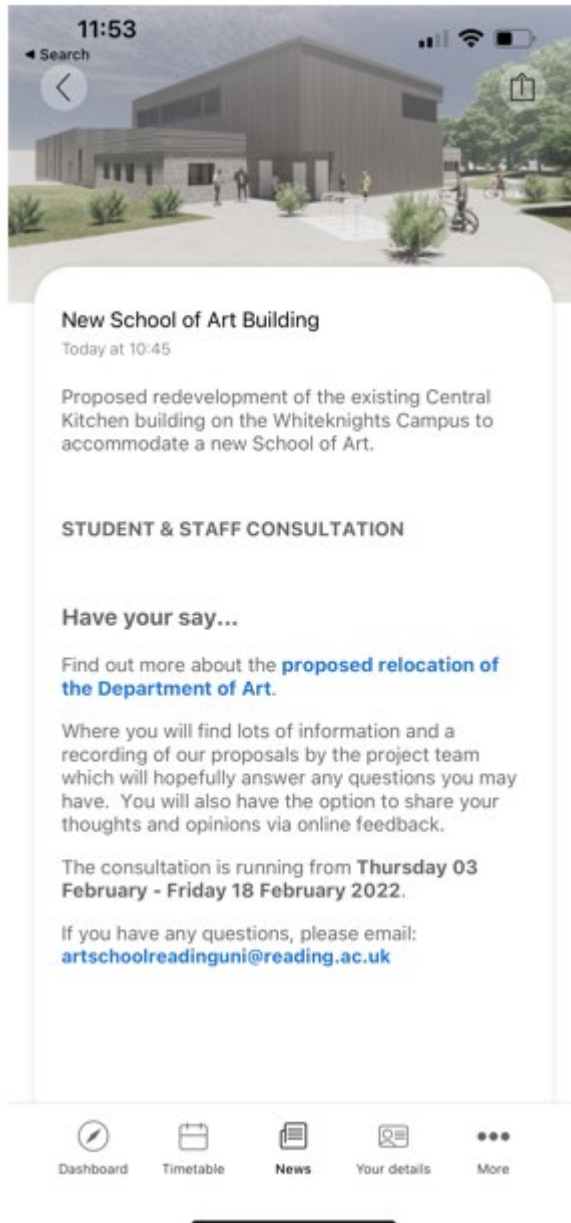
Questions:	Response
Is this a shop for students to buy equipment, or is there thinking that this could be a place for selling UoR merchandise as well, plus the opportunity for students to sell their artwork?	This will be a shop for art materials/equipment.
If student artwork is to be sold through the shop, can this also be aligned with selling it / marketing it online, through something like the E-commerce portal, so that people could potentially buy online and then pick up from the shop?	This shop would not be used for selling students work.
Will there be any food or drinks facilities?	The Department only has a vending machine and minimal kitchen facilities, kettle, microwave for students to make tea and heat up food. As the new building more centrally located on the campus students will be much closer to campus facilities.
Will there be a designated space for photography, or does this fit into the facilities that are currently documented?	There is provision for a dark room and digital facilities The Department also has a range of cameras for student use.
Could students artwork be used to decorate the outside of the facility as well?	We are working on the incorporation of artworks on the site.
Will you be providing some kind of time capture/video of the development taking place? Perhaps not continuous video, but some kind of week-by-week progress that can be viewed online.	We are investigating the possibly of a time lapse / capture video during the works.
Will you run exhibitions online? Perhaps this could also be an option, again to align with what is going on in the physical world?	For the last two years, due to Covid, we have run simultaneous on-site and on-line degree exhibitions. Moving forward, we are keen to keep elements of this structure.

Will the facilities will be available for community use e.g. evening classes, exhibitions, summer schools?	ArtLab, which will have facilities and a dedicated workspace in the adjoining Polly Vacher building, which will also be occupied by Art and is a part of this development, is a Project designed and run by the Art Department as a facility, which works with primary and secondary schools to introduce 'a wide range of children from across different social backgrounds [to] cutting edge art and technology projects'. See details of ArtLab's activities and projects here: https://readingartlab.com/about/ 'Our aim is to help educators, parents and pupils understand the value that art brings when combined with technology, offering amazing opportunities and potential careers within the fastest growing sector in the UK, the creative economy. Underlying this idea are a set of core educational values concerning the deeper understanding of computing, digital media and new technologies that will form part of a vibrant cultural and economically viable society both today and in the future'.
The relocation of activities to this side of campus, will divert the traffic flow on Whiteknights Road, Wokingham and Wilderness Road to Pepper Lane and Shinfield Road side of campus, what consideration has been given to this?	The School of Art is not expected to generate a large amount of vehicle trips or vehicle activity, therefore the impact on Pepper Lane and Shinfield Road is expected to be immaterial. As the proposals comprise relocating facilities associated with the existing Arts Department, there is not expected to be any material change to the trip generation of people or service vehicles accessing the campus. This would have a negligible impact on the local highway network. Furthermore, there is no car parking provided at the proposed development. The majority of visitors are expected to travel to site via sustainable modes of transport. The historic Arts Department site TB1 will be subject to a separation planning application and the potential trip generation explored.
Are there any opportunities for greening any of the roof space?	PV panels have been prioritised for the roof space. This limits the ability to add a green roof.
Will the proposed building size and layout provide sufficient capacity for students in the future, if the number of students taking Art programmes increases in future years?	We are working with the architects and University to ensure we have sufficient space, given that our student figures look set to increase.

Will there be good ventilation systems installed as part of the refurbishment and expansion, to ensure that the building can be used to maximum capacity, even if restrictions are put in place, such as the ventilation capacity restrictions which were put in place for Covid?	Yes. The designers have proposed a solution which can accommodate maximum occupancy requirements
Will there also be a suitable space within the building where students can work and access online learning materials, particularly as the university is planning to adopt blended learning across all programmes?	We have computer rooms and workspaces in the Polly Vacher building and wifi access across the whole site. Our recent experience is that many students prefer to work in the Department studios on their own laptops.
Is there more or less studio space planned in the new building compared to the current building?	The studio spaces are slightly smaller than the current spaces updated as part of the works however they provide quality studio spaces and facilities to the department.
Please also let us know what level of disruption staff in the building (Polly Vacher) face, my window is over this space at ground level, will I lose my only source of view and natural light?	Minimal works will be undertaken as part of the Polly Vacher refurbishment.
Will there be any increased parking to compensate for the massively increased head count in this part of campus?	There will be no loss of parking spaces due to this development. There are other carparks nearby 8, 7, 10 & 12 and Carpark 1A of course, a short and pleasant walk is available for permit holders/pay & display.
Please explain further how the internal courtyard is going to be changed into offices in Polly Vacher?	The minor refurbishment of Polly Vacher includes existing spaces within the building.
Will you repurpose the material that's been lost from the old buildings?	As much of the existing building will be recycled, repurposed or reused as possible.
Is the department going to be visually determinable as an art department, so that it stands out slightly from other buildings as a hub of creativity?	Yes the design has since developed and incorporated an entrance canopy as well as incorporating public art and adding colour to the façade.

Will there be a community created mural or wall where students are free to add their own stamp, especially as like Architecture this will be a department students will spend much of their hours in?	There will be an element of public art as part of the project to celebrate the history of Art at the University.
As a resident of the Polly Vacher building, no one has discussed with us any relocation plans into the Polly Vacher building - when do you intend to discuss these plans with us so we can help and be inviting to our art colleagues?	Once the move plan is finalised, a communication will be issued to all building occupants outlining the programme of works to be undertaken and the move schedule. We will work with the existing occupants of the building to minimise the immediate impact of any works, and to facilitate a smooth introduction of the new occupants to the building.
What sort of sound proofing will be installed so as not to disturb students?	An acoustic engineer was employed to ensure adequate sound proofing throughout

Appendix: Internal Communication to Staff and Students



Appendix: Letter issued to Local Residents

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NEWCASTLE
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SOUTHAMPTON

BARTON WILLMORE
bartonwillmore.co.uk
7 Selho Square
London
W10 3GB
T/ 0207 444 6888

Our ref: 32738/CE/kq

1st February 2022

Dear Resident

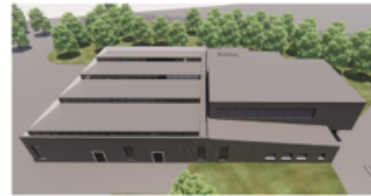
PROPOSED RE-LOCATION OF THE SCHOOL OF ART AT THE UNIVERSITY OF READING'S WHITEKNIGHTS CAMPUS, EARLEY

On behalf of our client the University of Reading, we are writing to you to outline the proposals for the refurbishment and extension to the existing but redundant Central Kitchen Building for the re-location of the School of Art at the University's Whiteknights Campus.

The Reading School of Art (or RSA) is a department which forms part of the Arts and Communication Design at the University and it is ranked in the top 10 in the UK for Art and Design (Complete University Guide 2022), alongside the departments of Film, Theatre and Television (FTT) and Typography and Graphic Communication (TGC), which has a strong reputation for Innovation in combining practice, theory and history in research, teaching and enterprise.

The existing School of Art is located within the eastern part (near the Earley Gate access) of the University's Whiteknights Campus. As part of the future proposals at the campus, it is planned to demolish the existing School of Art building and re-locate it to the current unoccupied Central Kitchen building. The proposal would see the Central Kitchen building refurbished and extended to house the new School of Art, with the extension located on the existing hardstanding forecourt area to the east of the existing building. The refurbishment and extension will provide workshops, studio and gallery space as well as a staff & student welfare area, shop and visitor space.

In addition, internal space within the Polly Vacher building (located to the north of the Central Kitchen building) will be refurbished to allow office space in connection within the School of Art. The existing Car Park 11 will be utilised in connection with these proposals.



Have your say

We had planned to host a face to face Public Exhibition in early February but we have now made the decision following the steep rise in COVID-19 cases due to the Omicron variant - both nationally and in Reading - to hold the consultation digitally via our website. We feel this is the best approach in order to keep members of the public, staff, students and the project team safe.

Please visit our website www.reading.ac.uk/department-of-art-relocation where you will find lots of information, including a recording of our proposals by the project team, which will hopefully answer any questions you may have on our plans for the new School of Art. You will also be able to give us your comments and opinions via the online feedback form.

We understand that not everyone has access to the Internet or is comfortable navigating websites and commenting online, so you can also email us at artschoolreadingunit@bartonwillmore.co.uk.

We will be running our consultation from Thursday 3rd February to Friday 18th February 2022. Following the end of the consultation period, we will review all the comments we receive in the finalisation of the plans before submitting our planning application to Reading Borough Council in the Spring.

We look forward to receiving your feedback.

Your faithfully

Kate Greatrix

KATE GREATRIX
Communications & Engagement Director



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