

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Application No.: 220396/FUL

Address: Land off Rushley Way and Whale Avenue, Kennet Island

Proposal: Landscape Improvement Works

Case officer: Connie Davis

Extended Target Date: 29/06/22

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The site comprises an area to the north of Whale Avenue (in Kennet Island), one of the primary streets within the development, which is adjacent to a community space 'The Meeting Point', and an area to the south of the road which is existing public realm.

The site is surrounded by existing residential flats and houses and to the south the Circle Hospital.



Proposal: The proposal is to create two separate community spaces. The area to the north of Whale Avenue is proposed to be enlarged by relocating the existing visitor car parking spaces to the southern side of the road. The existing wall and railings which separate the Site from Kennet Island Meeting Point will be removed and replaced with wide steps to open up the frontage. In addition, the existing sculpture currently located in the southern section of the site is proposed to be relocated to the northern area, with new informal seating to create a casual meeting space.

Plans considered:

2825-LA-07 Rev P9 - Whale Avenue General Arrangements Plan

2825-PP-02 Rev P7 - Whale Avenue Planting Plan

Received 13th June 2022

2825-LA-05 Rev P2 - Site Location Plan

2825-LA-06 Rev P3 - Whale Avenue Existing Site Plan

Landscape Design Report

Application Form

CIL Form

Supporting Statement

Received 22nd March 2022

Relevant Planning History:

05/00548/OUT	Mixed use development comprising up to 1,150 new homes, offices (126,000 sq m), hotel, retail and community uses including cafes, bars, restaurants and health and fitness studios, open space and associated infrastructure including a pedestrian and cycle bridge link across the A33.	Approved subject to s106
190308/FUL	Landscape Improvement Works	Approved

Consultation Responses: 6 site notices were displayed. 1 representation has been received stating:

I do not agree to proposed plan of improvements, as now there is not many visitors spaces, and with new plan there will be even less. So is strong NO from me

Officer comment: This will be discussed in the appraisal

Environmental Protection and Nuisance: No objection subject to condition

Natural Environment: No objection subject to condition

Transport: No objection subject to condition

Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

Relevant Planning Policy and Guidance:

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate

otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) -

Policy CC1: Sustainable Construction and Design
Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm
Policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
Policy EN7: Loss of Open Space
Policy EN8: Provision of Open Space
Policy EN12: Biodiversity and Geology
Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland
Policy TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
Policy OU1: New and Existing Community Facilities

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents
Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Appraisal:

The main issues to be considered are:

- a) Suitability of open space proposals and community function
- b) Effect on car/ cycle parking

- a) Suitability of open space proposals and community function

The existing site comprises a mix of landscaping, parking spaces, and open space adjacent to, and to the south of, the existing community space.

The applicant has advised that the open space here is currently rarely used and the community space, which can be hired out by residents, is not well used. The open space, to the south of Whale Avenue lacks purpose. It contains a large number of benches but has no clear function. There is public art, but this is poorly sited and does not create a strong focal point. There is limited soft landscaping.

This application has been put forward as the compensation scheme for the loss of open space, which would result from the proposal (under ref: 180543) to replace the temporary marketing suite with flats (to the north-west of the site).

The area to the north of Whale Avenue is proposed to be enlarged by relocating the existing visitor car parking spaces to the southern side of the road. The existing wall and railings which separate the Site from Kennet Island Meeting Point will be removed and replaced with wide steps to open up the frontage. In addition, the existing sculpture currently located in the southern section of the site is proposed to be relocated to the northern area, with new informal seating to create a casual meeting space.

As demonstrated by the General Arrangement Plan (drawing 2825-LA-07) it is proposed for the area to the south of Whale Avenue to include 2 no. pergolas for shelter, in addition to a soft landscaping area with play features and new raised planters. Permission has previously been

granted for landscaping improvement works (see planning history) although this has not been implemented and has now expired.

Although this compensation scheme is not the same type of open space as that which would be lost by the development of the marketing suite for flats, it is considered to meet policy requirements under policy OU1. This Policy recognises that *“in some cases, this may mean some development on open areas within the site”*. The proposed open space scheme would enable the improvement of the layout, planting and appearance of an existing area of public realm, and would assist in intensifying the use of the space. In addition it would enable the potential for an improved community space, through the enhancement of its external space, thereby meeting the overall thrust of Policy OU1.

The overall landscaping proposals are considered acceptable by Natural Environment subject to conditions.

The site is located on potentially contaminated land. A condition will be attached requiring the previously approved contamination report for the original development to be adhered through whilst landscaping works are being carried out. This was deemed acceptable by Environmental Health Officers.

A condition is included to ensure that further details of the proposed furniture is submitted and approved.

b) Effect on car/cycle parking

The proposals include the relocation of 3 visitor parking spaces to the south side of the carriageway. No visitor parking spaces will be lost as a result of the proposal, which addresses the comment from the member of the public. The proposed landscape improvements are not located on land which has been adopted as public highway. Therefore, there are no transport objections to the proposal. However a condition will be applied ensuring that no visitor parking spaces shall be lost until all relocated vehicle parking spaces have been provided in accordance with the approved plans so as to cause minimum disruption for residents.

The proposed scheme includes for the relocation of existing visitor parking spaces, to the south of Whale Avenue, which Transport has confirmed is acceptable. It is noted that the Readibike cycle hire stands (which were secured as part of previous applications at the site) is not factored into this application. This is because the ReadiBike cycle hire scheme closed in 2019 due to cuts in funding from Reading Borough Council, in addition to a lack of sponsorship for private bike hire companies to keep the scheme going. Therefore, it is no longer proposed to include cycle hire parking as part of this planning application.

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT

1) TL1 - 3 years

2) Approved Plans

3) Prior to first use of the development hereby approved, tree pit details along with planting specifications and a maintenance programme covering a minimum of 5 years, detailing all operations to be carried out in order to allow successful establishment of planting, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details on Planting Plan 2825-PP-02 P7 in the first planting and seeding seasons following the first use of the development or in accordance with a timetable agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interest of ensuring that the landscaping of the development enhances the visual local environment and in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

4) No visitor parking spaces shall be lost until all relocated vehicle parking space(s) have been provided in accordance with the plans hereby approved. The space(s) shall be always kept available for parking thereafter.

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

5) Prior to the installation of the proposed furniture, details of the proposed furniture (as indicated on the approved General Arrangements Plan Drawing no: 2825-LA-07 Rev P9) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the approved features shall be installed in accordance with the approved timetable for completion of the works (see condition 4).

REASON: To ensure the provision of suitable associated infrastructure in accordance with Policy CC7 and OU1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

6) The development shall be carried out in accordance with the details approved under application 12/00572/APPCON (relating to contaminated land).

REASON: To ensure the development is suitable for its end use and the wider environment and does not create undue risks to occupiers of the site or surrounding areas in accordance with Policy EN16 of the Reading local Plan 2019.

Informatives:

- Terms and Conditions
- Highways
- Positive and Proactive