

design & access statement

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Project: Abattoirs Road, Reading

Project N°: 201123

1.00 INTRODUCTION

- .01.1 This design and access statement has been prepared to support a planning application for a development of modular units to temporarily house rough sleepers and support them into more stable long term accommodation, located at Abattoirs Road, Reading. It should be read in conjunction with the other drawings and documents that form the application.

2.00 CONTEXT

2.01 Location

- .01.1 The proposed development site is just off Abattoirs Road, Reading in an area north of the city centre, adjacent to the railway tracks leading to the main train station.



Above: aerial view indicating the location of the site

2.02 Physical context

- .02.1 The proposed development site is an urban brownfield site bounded to the north by the railway tracks, to the east by the A329 Caversham Road, to the south by a mixture of industrial and residential buildings and to the west by a large area of hardstanding that appears to be used for surface car parking.
- .02.2 The site has an abandoned character with scrubby vegetation recolonising the area, growing from cracks in the concrete hardstanding, and a variety of palisade fence, brick wall and corrugated metal structures forming boundaries to neighbouring sites.



Northern site boundary



Eastern site boundary



Southern site boundary



Western site boundary

- .02.3 Whilst the buildings to the west of the site are predominantly low rise, one or two storeys, those to the east are much taller with several multi-storey buildings in close proximity. The elevated railway tracks running along the northern boundary rises high above the ground level of the development site.

2.03 **Social context**

- .03.1 The area surrounding the site is mixed use with some residential accommodation adjacent to industrial units, Reading Farmers' Market and offices along the A329 Caversham Road. The site is less than half a mile from the train station and the pedestrianised town centre.
- .03.2 The mixed-use character of the site context and the proximity to town centre services and resources are suited to a development of this type whilst also minimising impact on the locality when compared to providing a similar facility in a predominantly residential area.

2.04 **Economic context**

- .04.1 Providing temporary housing for rough sleepers in order to assist them off the streets has the potential to improve the economic context of the nearby town centre through reducing the prevalence of rough sleepers in the town centre, thus making it a more attractive place for people to visit. Furthermore, a successful scheme for assisting rough sleepers into stable jobs and accommodation enables them to reintegrate into society and contribute to the local economy.

2.05 **Planning policy context**

- .05.1 The proposed development site lies within the central Reading area and is thus covered by the 'Central Reading' area specific section of Reading Borough Council's Local Plan. Within the Local Plan the site is identified as falling within the CR12a – Cattle Market area. This area has been identified as requiring a mix of edge-of-town uses, including residential development.
- .05.2 Whilst it is difficult to identify any specific planning policies that are directly relevant to the type of development proposed in this application, information on the Reading Borough Council main website* indicates the borough council's achievements to date and ambitions on tackling the problem of rough sleeping in the town. The proposed development is a key part of the Borough Council's future plans for continuing to address rough sleeping in the town.

2.06 **Evaluation**

- .06.1 The proposed development site fits well the proposed purpose of the development. Its physical context is suited to a temporary installation as proposed which will make use of a site that is currently underused. Its proximity to the town centre offers the opportunity of easy links on foot to local services and it fits with the mixed-use social context. The proposal fits with the Borough Council's current strategy to tackle rough sleeping and meets the planning policy context of encouraging mixed uses, including residential, in the Cattle Market area.
- .06.2 For the reasons outlined above, the proposed site appears to be a suitable choice for the proposed development.

3.00 **DESIGN**

3.01 **Use**

- .01.1 The proposed development will be used for a period of five years as temporary accommodation for rough sleepers. The accommodation provided will go hand in hand with support services for the rough sleepers to assist them into more permanent accommodation.

3.02 **Amount**

- .02.1 The proposed development comprises 43 modular units: 40 sleeping units to accommodate former rough sleepers and 3 units accommodating associated offices, a switch room and a laundry.
- .02.2 The amount has been determined by the need estimated by Reading Borough Council and their partners in delivering the rough sleeping strategy in the town.

3.03 **Layout**

- .03.1 The layout of the units on the site has been determined by the constraints of the existing site boundaries. Arranging the units around the edge of the site with a central core provides an easily navigable space and a courtyard feel.
- .03.2 The units are stacked in twos and arranged with external staircases to access the upper units in pairs. The support services in the form of the offices and laundry units are arranged to the east of the site near the entrance.
- .03.3 A new 2m high palisade fence will be installed around the perimeter of the site with controlled vehicle and pedestrian access gates to secure entry to the site.

3.04 **Scale**

- .04.1 The proposed development is comprised of modular units stacked in twos. The repeating modular units form a pattern across the development which fits with the grain of the neighbouring sites used as surface car parking and external storage, highlighted in this aerial view of the area with the proposed development overlaid.



- .04.2 The proposed development is predominantly two storeys, with three single storey units to the east of the site boundary. This means that the proposed development fits in the existing space between the elevated railway lines to the north and the Farmers' Market and apartment buildings to the south without rising above any existing structure.

3.05 **Appearance**

- .05.1 Each individual unit forming the development is an anti-vandal, modular unit measuring approximately 2.9 x 7.6m which will be painted one of three colours. The palette of colours and arrangement of colours have been carefully considered as part of the early design process to ensure that a pleasing composition is achieved.



Above: rendered aerial view showing the arrangement of the different coloured units across the site.

- .05.2 The façade of each unit is animated with an entrance door and window. These are to have dark grey frames and, in the case of the window, shutters which will complement the coloured units.
- .05.3 The temporary nature of the development means that a light touch approach is sought in terms of intervention in the site and therefore external staircases have been proposed. The external staircases will be galvanised staircases providing a simple solution for access to the first floor units.



Above: rendered view looking west from outside the office units.

- .05.4 The arrangement of the units on the site includes ample open space, creating a courtyard-type outdoor space. Planter beds will be included in the central part of the site to introduce greenery

within the development. The proposed location benefits for nearby tall vegetation that can be viewed from various positions within the site boundary.



Above: rendered view of the central space, looking west.



Above: rendered view looking east from outside the central units.

- .05.5 It will be possible to view parts of the development from the elevated railway line to the north. The brightly coloured composition will have a striking appearance from this view, for those travelling past by train.



Above: rendered view of the proposed development as seen from the railway line to the north.

3.06 **Access**

- .06.1 The proposed development site is ideally located for easy access, both vehicular and pedestrian. It is directly accessed from the A329 Caversham Road and is less than half a mile from Reading train station. The town centre is also within a half a mile walk of the site. All the necessary infrastructure is already in place to ensure that access to the site will be trouble free.
- .06.2 In terms of inclusive access it is not anticipated that the site will present any particular barriers to those with disabilities. The ground is level and easy access through the proposed new pedestrian and vehicular gates will be possible. Furthermore, the ground floor units can be provided with access ramps to ensure step-free access, if required.

[end]

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*<https://www.reading.gov.uk/news/annual-rough-sleeper-count-at-five-year-low-in-reading/> [accessed 16mar21]