

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT - Application No. 192028/FUL

Address: Former Cooper Reading Bmw Kings Meadow Road Reading

Proposal: Change of use of part of ground floor reception to a flexible commercial unit for uses falling within Use Class A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, D1 and D2.

Case officer: Anthony Scholes

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The site includes a change of use of the part of the ground floor within the under-construction 'Thames Quarter' development.

Proposal:

The application seeks planning permission for a flexible town centre use (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, D1 and D2) to allow flexibility in finding a tenant.

The proposal seeks minor external changes as part of this proposal, including increasing the width of the ramp to accommodate/facilitate access in line with building regulations equality standards.

Relevant Planning History:

162166/FUL - Erection of a part 12 storey, part 23 storey building comprising 315 apartments in a mix of studio, one bedroom, two bedroom and three bedroom units, residents' lounges, tech hub, dining room, cinema room, various rooftop outdoor amenity spaces, concierge reception with coffee meeting area, residents' storage facilities, postroom, ancillary back of house facilities, 315 secure cycle parking spaces, 49 car parking spaces, landscaping, and associated works. Demolition of existing multi-storey car park. APPROVED 23 November 2017

181537/NMA - Non-material amendment to application 162166 for various internal alterations and minor external changes. APPROVED 22 July 2019

190926/NMA - Non-material amendment to Condition 33 of planning permission ref. 162166 (sprinkler system). APPROVED 7 August 2019

Consultation Responses:

Environmental Protection: No objection, subject to conditions.

Transport: No objection, subject to conditions.

Notification letters were sent to adjoining properties, and a site notice was erected from 3 May 2019.

No letters of representation have been received.

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. The Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

The '*National Planning Policy framework*' ('NPPF') 2019 states clearly that its content is to be a material consideration in the determination of applications. The 'NPPF' states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)) according to their degree of consistency with the 'NPPF' (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the 'NPPF', the greater the weight that may be given). Accordingly, the 'NPPF' and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

- CC1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction

- CC3 Adaptation to Climate Change
- CC7 Design and the Public Realm
- CC8 Safeguarding Amenity
- TR1 Achieving the Transport Strategy
- TR3 Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
- TR5 Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
- EN15 Air Quality
- EN16 Pollution and Water Resources
- EN17 Noise Generating Equipment
- CR2 Design in Central Reading
- CR3 Public Realm in Central Reading
- CR4 Leisure, Culture and Tourism in Central Reading
- CR5 Drinking Establishments in Central Reading
- CR11 Station/River Major Opportunity Area

Appraisal

Principle

Policy CR11h ‘Napier Road Junction’ seeks to, among other things, create *“A landmark building, containing residential and/or offices is appropriate for this site, which may contain an active commercial use on the ground floor. Land on the Napier Road frontage will be safeguarded for Mass Rapid Transit.”* There is no commercial unit at ground floor as part of the approved scheme. The approved plans (under permission 162166) show a reception area. The proposal to include a commercial use at ground floor complies with the objectives of the above mentioned policy, subject to design considerations, and potential impacts of the commercial use which are addressed below.

Design Considerations

The application proposes an additional entrance door to the commercial unit from Vastern Road. Internally, the proposal includes the construction of an internal wall dividing the Reception areas from the proposed commercial unit. There would also be an additional door constructed on the side elevation for servicing for the unit. Externally, due to the minor nature of the works as compared to the previously approved schemes would not affect the appearance of the previously approved building. The side elevation changes are also minor and would not be visible from the public realm.

In addition to the above, the entrance ramp and steps in front of the unit would be moved out 900mm to facilitate Building Regulation compliant wheelchair access to the unit. The ramp, and other external changes are also in keeping with the proposed conversion to a flexible commercial unit, and would provide equitable access.

An informative is recommended to advise that any further alterations or signage would require separate planning permission and advertisement consent.

Impact on Neighbour Amenity

The impact of the change of use upon the amenity of surrounding occupiers must be considered in accordance with Policy CC8 which seeks to protect amenity and Policy EN16 which seeks to control pollution.

The site is the ground floor of a large residential building in close proximity to the Railway, and the busy Vastern Road (part of the Inner Distribution Road (IDR)). A number of requirement on the original approval required a number of noise mitigation measures to protect the amenity of future residents. It is considered that external works to secure noise mitigation within the wider scheme would protect the amenity of residents, and in this instance, it is considered appropriate to restrict the hours of use to 0600 - midnight reflective of the location of the development.

No additional plant is proposed as part of the application however, certain uses proposed are likely to require mechanical plant such as kitchen extraction or other mechanical plant. Environmental Protection Officers have provided comments, citing no objection to the proposal on the basis that a condition can be included that requires the submission of a noise assessment/odour assessment prior to the installation of any mechanical plant equipment in accordance with Policy CC8 and Policy EN16.

Transport

The Council Transport Team has considered the proposal and raises no objections subject to conditions.

CIL

The proposal would not be liable for the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Conclusion

Having regard to the material considerations and all matters raised, the Local Planning Authority considers that the balance of considerations therefore weigh in favour of granting planning permission subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:

GRANT planning permission, subject to conditions.