

Proposed Drive-Thru Coffee Shop at Reading Link Retail Park, Rose Kiln Lane, Reading

Design, Access and Planning Statement

October 2020





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Section 1

Introduction

- 1.1. This Design, Access and Planning Statement accompanies an application for planning permission for:

Outline permission for a drive-thru coffee shop of 189sqm and a new access at Reading Link Retail Park, Rose Kiln Lane

- 1.2. The proposed coffee shop and revised access arrangements utilise a current area of car parking at the Reading Link Retail Park and will offer a type of retail unit not currently seen at this site or in the surrounding area.

- 1.3. This application follows a refused application and subsequent dismissed appeal. With the previous layout the Council and Inspector had concerns relating specifically to the entrance into the site and the proposed access route for vehicles. This submission specifically addresses these concerns and the following changes have been made:

-  Reduction of the width of the new access point from Rose Kiln Lane and installation of a height barrier to restrict those vehicles that can use this access.
-  Introduction of pedestrian crossing points.
-  There will be no egress into Rose Kiln Lane. This will be an entry only point
-  Provision for service vehicle to access the site from the existing entrance

- 1.4. All other issues were resolved at the appeal stage and the same details are submitted with this application. The only outstanding issue relates to highways the details of which are submitted to resolve all previous objections.

- 1.5. This Statement is structured in accordance with the advice in National Planning Practice Guidance. It also takes account of the local requirements of the Council as well as setting out the appropriate planning background to the proposals.



Section 2

Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1. The site is located just off of the A33 on Rose Kiln Lane, which leads into Reading town centre when travelling north from the M4. There are a number of other business, retail and industrial parks on the A33, as well as new developments that are providing hotels, residential and retail/employment opportunities along the A33 corridor.
- 2.2. Adjacent, to the west, is an area of open space, to which there are two gates on the boundary between the retail park and the field.
- 2.3. To the north is a residential development. A footbridge provides access from the retail park, over the river, into the residential estate.
- 2.4. The eastern boundary abuts the Rose Kiln Lane section of the A33, whilst the southern boundary is the access road from the A33 into the retail park, with a shared access for the petrol station.
- 2.5. The retail park has a large area of parking to the front of the buildings together with an 'overflow' car park in the north eastern corner of the site and a small area behind the end unit. There is some planting within the car park areas.
- 2.6. An access road for delivery vehicles runs in front of the site and along the western boundary to a delivery area to the rear of the units.
- 2.7. The retail park is made up of one continuous building with the eastern half set slightly further back into the plot than the western half. There are five retailers at the retail park; Matalan (3 units), Home Bargains, Iceland, Magnet and Benson for Beds. Only Benson for Beds has a mezzanine floor, whilst Matalan has a 'vaulted' roof. There is one vacant unit that was previously Pound World.



Section 3

Planning Policy Context

- 3.1. This section considers the relevant planning policy context for the site as well as any relevant planning history for the site and its surrounding area.

National Planning Policy

- 3.2. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in February 2019 which established a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay.
- 3.3. In making decisions, Local Planning Authorities should approach decision taking in a positive way and should look for solutions rather than problems. They should, at every level, seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 3.4. The NPPF sets out the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice for the planning system and it encompasses three distinct areas; economic, social and environmental.
- 3.5. The NPPF sets out that the development plan should be the starting point for decision making, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.6. The focus of the NPPF's policies relating to retail focus on the protection and enhancement of retail facilities in town centre while recognising that local planning authorities should take a pro-active approach to development and growth.
- 3.7. The PPG advises that the sequential test should be 'proportionate and appropriate' for the given proposal. It goes on to outline a checklist which sets out the considerations that should be taken into account in determining whether a proposal complies with the sequential test.

3.8. The Council's current planning policy context of relevance to this site is contained within the Borough Local Plan (adopted November 2019). Relevant policies in this document are:

- ▣ Policy CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- ▣ Policy CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
- ▣ Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm
- ▣ Policy EN2: Areas of Archaeological Significance
- ▣ Policy EN11: Waterspaces
- ▣ Policy EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
- ▣ Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands
- ▣ Policy EN18: Flooding and Drainage
- ▣ Policy TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy
- ▣ Policy TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
- ▣ Policy TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
- ▣ Policy RL2: Scale and Location of Retail, Leisure and Culture Development

3.9. The site lies within Flood Zone 2.

Planning History

- 3.10. This current application follows an appeal which was dismissed in April 2020. The application (181860) had previously been refused for seven reasons relating to highways, ecology and sequential test. At the appeal only the highways reasons for refusal were maintained by the Council and this was the basis on which the appeal was considered. The appeal upheld the reasons for refusal relating to highways (excluding parking) and this resubmission seeks to directly address these specific outstanding issues.
- 3.11. The appeal proposals followed a withdrawn application (181169) in September 2018 for the same form of development on the site. More detail on this is provided in Section 3.
- 3.12. Planning consent was granted in 1988 by the Secretary of State for the Retail Park. This consent granted 6500sqm of retail floorspace and c.300 parking spaces. Over time, additional retail floorspace has been added to the site through the addition of mezzanine floor levels and the retail units themselves have been sub-divided or amalgamated to meet the changing needs of retailers.

- 3.13. Pursuant to a planning consent 01/00873/FUL, the total retail floorspace permitted at the site is 9,230sqm. Car parking provision at the site has not been amended at the site since the original grant of consent and provides approximately 300 spaces.
- 3.14. A number of consents have also been granted in recent years to extend the range of goods that can sold from the site within the existing retail units.
- 3.15. As noted in the introduction, a recent planning application for a drive-thru coffee shop was submitted in July 2018 but subsequently withdrawn. This resubmitted application addresses the issue that were raised during consideration of the previous application and this is the focus of the subsequent chapters of this Statement.



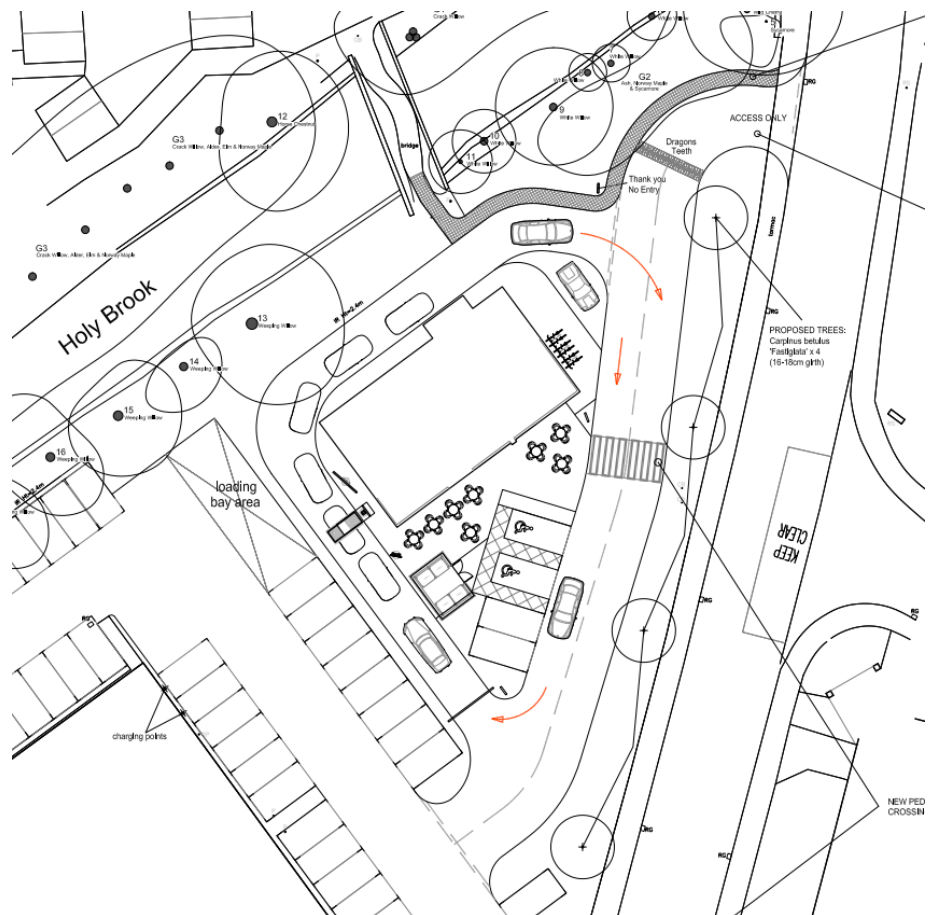
Section 4 Proposals

- 4.1. The proposals seek consent for:

Outline permission for a drive-thru coffee shop of 189sqm and a new access at Reading Link Retail Park, Rose Kiln Lane

- 4.2. At this time only access and siting are sought for approval, all other matters are reserved. The indicative layout of the proposals is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Site Location Plan



- 4.3. The proposals consist of a 189sqm drive-thru coffee shop with a new access from Rose Kiln Lane to serve the site. Drive thru access is provided surrounding the building while a seating area is provided, both inside and outside, as well as associated facilities for cycle parking.

- 4.4. The proposals will also include provision of a further 2 disabled parking spaces for customer use. Electric car charging points (outside of the red line of this application) are to be installed at Reading Link Retail Park as part of the wider upgrading of facilities at the site.
- 4.5. The new access into the site will be directly from Rose Kiln Lane providing a left and right turn into the site. This access will also serve as a secondary access for the rest of the site, re-assigning some of the existing right turning traffic from the Rose Kiln Lane gyratory. The access will be controlled by a 1.98m height barrier to prevent large vehicles entering the site by this route. Furthermore, to address the concerns raised by the Inspector, with regards access width, no egress will be permitted from the access on to Rose Kiln Lane and dragons' teeth will be installed to prevent any vehicle exiting by this route. A right turn lane has not been provided given the Inspector clearly stated that such a provision was not required.
- 4.6. The accompanying Transport Statement demonstrates that the access will meet all necessary highways standards in this respect.
- 4.7. The proposals will provide for significant improvements to the public realm in this location with improved pedestrian access into and across the site to reach the residential properties to the north. In addition, further tree planting and landscaping is proposed to significantly improve the quality of the environment. Part of this overall improvement will provide a pedestrian link through to site to provide access along the length of Holy Brook to link with a Public Right of Way to the south west of the site along this watercourse.



Section 5

Planning Considerations

5.1. This section assesses the planning considerations for the redevelopment of this site under the following headings:

-  Principle of Development and Retail Provision
-  Layout of the Site
-  Parking, Access and Highways Impact
-  Flooding and Drainage
-  Other

Principle of Development

- 5.2. Previous applications on site and the dismissed appeal considered that the principle of the development was acceptable.
- 5.3. The site is a sustainable one and is already in retail use. The development on part of the retail park for a drive-thru restaurant is in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development (Policy CC1) and ensuring that the vitality and viability of in accordance with Policies RL1 and RL2.
- 5.4. The proposed use for a drive-thru coffee shop has a set of distinct characteristics that means it is different to a standard model of coffee shop. A Drive-thru is not a destination in itself, but will be located where it can benefit from those who are already visiting and travelling in the area, and will simply 'call-by' at a Drive-thru. It is not appropriate to introduce such provision at a town centre, where customers are typically away from their car, and hence would have no need for a drive-thru facility.
- 5.5. Considering these special characteristics, the location of a drive-thru coffee shop in this location is entirely appropriate making good use of an existing retail site with good access to the local highway network. For the reasons set out in the letter relating to the Sequential Test that has been submitted with this application, the site will not compete with more traditional town centre coffee shops and will have added benefits for this long standing out-of-town retail park.

- 5.6. As a result of this application, significant improvements will be made to the environment alongside Holy Brook as well as pedestrian access into the site to provide better access to the residential development to the north.
- 5.7. For these reasons the proposals are considered to meet the requirements of the NPPF as well as Local Plan Policies

Layout of the Site

- 5.8. This application is submitted in outline with approval for access and siting only being sought. The siting of the proposed coffee shop has been considered in the context of the operation of the existing retail units and surrounding car parking as well as the proposed new access road into the site.
- 5.9. The proposals do not extend any further north than the existing area of hardstanding currently in use as car parking. This is to ensure that there is no impact on the vegetation in this area and maintains the existing buffer zone to Holy Brook. No built form is proposed within 10m of the brook.
- 5.10. Additional planting is proposed along the Rose Kiln Lane frontage of the site within the existing landscaped areas. This will improve these areas significantly and provide screening along this main access road. Further planting is proposed along Holy Brook to supplement dead or dying trees that are to be removed as part of this application. Further details of this tree planting are included in the Arboricultural Report.
- 5.11. The site sits in Flood Zone 2 which is confirmed in the supporting Flood Risk Assessment and Sequential Test documents. The proposals will provide a new access road from Rose Kiln Lane as well as improvements to pedestrian access through the site.
- 5.12. The layout of the site is largely driven by commercial factors to ensure safe operation of the coffee shop. Provision is made for the drive-thru access, a sitting out area, car parking and cycle parking. As part of the wider improvements to the retail park additional electric car charging points will be provided on the site.
- 5.13. The suitability of the access road is considered in more detail in the next section as is the provision of car parking.

- 5.14. This section considers the highway merits of the proposals. This is particularly relevant as the sole issue still outstanding from the appeal scheme.

Parking

- 5.15. Policy TR5 and the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (October 2011) sets out the car parking standards for developments in the Borough. The requirement for retail uses is 1 space per 40sqm. This equates to a requirement across the site for 168.5 spaces.
- 5.16. The wider site currently has 308 spaces and, therefore, there is sufficient surplus for spaces to accommodate the new coffee shop while maintaining sufficient car parking in accordance with Policy TR5.

New Access and Highways Impact

- 5.17. Policy TR3 requires that proposals for new accesses onto the transport network comply with highways standards, does not have a material detrimental impact on the functioning of the highways network and should provide suitable servicing requirements. The proposals should not impact on highway safety or result in inappropriate HGV movements.
- 5.18. In response to the comments received to the previous application and subsequent appeal, the proposed access has been revised to enable access off of Rose Kiln Lane in both directions but to prevent egress from the site. A height barrier will also be installed to ensure that larger vehicles do not enter the site from Rose Kiln Lane.
- 5.19. The application is supported by robust survey work and assessment to justify that the proposals will not have a material detrimental impact on the highways network. An updated Transport Statement is submitted with this planning application.
- 5.20. The key findings of the Transport Statement are:
-  The proposal accords with national and local policies relevant to transport;
 -  The proposal benefits from good pedestrian and cycle connections to local public transport services, and the town centre.
 -  The development proposals retain the existing level of car parking at the retail park, whilst also providing additional cycle parking facilities at the Drive-Thru.
 -  The proposed development will result in an increase of 5 and 7 two-way vehicle movements in the weekday AM and PM peak hours, and an additional 12 movements within the Saturday afternoon peak. The

increase can be accommodated on the adjacent network as accepted by the Inspector at the previous appeal on the site.

- In accordance with the Inspector's requirements, deliveries and servicing can be undertaken through the existing retail park delivery area without the need to use the new access from Rose Kiln Lane.
- The new access will be one way only into the site, managed by a height barrier and dragon teeth. This arrangement overcomes the concerns of the Inspector with regards the width of the access to accommodate two way traffic movements and the new access vehicles being used by large vehicles delivering to the existing retail units.
- Pedestrian access will be clearly provided to the site from Rose Kiln Lane

- 5.21. In light of the conclusions from the Transport Statement and in accordance with Policy TR3, it is considered that the proposals can be accommodated without detriment to the operation of the local highway network. As such, it is considered that there is no reason why the proposals should be resisted on traffic or transportation grounds.

Trees

- 5.22. Four individual trees and part of a group of trees are proposed to be removed to enable the proposals. These are: Lime (no. 1 on the tree schedule), Cherry (no. 3), Ash (no. 4), Sycamore (no. 18) and a mixed species group (G2). Of these, all are between 5m-11m in height and are of low quality. Four are categorised as 'C' and the Cherry is categorised as 'U'.
- 5.23. The proposals include an area for landscaping between the drive-thru access and Rose Kiln Lane. It is proposed that four extra heavy standards (16-18cm) fastigate Hornbeam are to be planted to mitigate for the tree removals and to provide an attractive landscaped setting for the drive-thru. The details of a full, high-quality landscape scheme could readily be secured by an appropriate planning condition.
- 5.24. The White Willow trees nos. 6-9 (subject to TPO), although dead, will be retained as they provide habitat for bats who use Holy Brook.
- 5.25. There are no impacts on the key arboricultural features of the site as confirmed in the supporting Arboricultural Statement.

Landscaping

- 5.26. The proposals will provide for additional tree planting and landscaping along the north east boundary of the site with Rose Kiln Lane to provide a better environment in this location.

- 5.27. The area of land where the environmental improvements are proposed is currently blighted by being isolated from public access and has become a location for anti-social and illegal behaviour and the dumping of drug-related items. This area regularly needs cleaning up and creates an unwelcoming environment for people using the access and is also a potential deterrent to use.
- 5.28. The proposals will provide for significant improvements to the public realm with improved pedestrian access into and across the site to reach the residential properties to the north. In addition, further tree planting and landscaping is proposed to significantly improve the quality of the environment. Part of this overall improvement will provide a pedestrian link through to site to provide access along the length of Holy Brook to link with a Public Right of Way to the south west of the site along this watercourse.
- 5.29. The proposals will significantly improve the quality of landscaping and tree cover on this site. Tree planting is proposed to replace dead or dying trees along Holy Brook to improve the environment here and to contribute to biodiversity improvements. Further tree planting is proposed along the Rose Kiln Lane frontage to improve screening affects and visual amenity along this frontage.
- 5.30. Overall, the proposals represent a significant environmental improvement over the existing situation and are a major benefit of the current proposals.

Flooding and Drainage

- 5.31. Policy EN18 states that planning permission will not be granted for developments which impact on the flood risk of the site and surrounding area.
- 5.32. The site lies in Flood Zone 2. According to the flood risk and flood vulnerability tables set out in Planning Policy Guidance retail facilities are appropriate in this area of flood risk. In accordance with the NPPF, a Sequential Assessment accompanies this application which identifies no alternative sites are available.
- 5.33. The proposed development is classified as Less Vulnerable under the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) "Flood Risk & Coastal Change". Therefore, the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) can be undertaken in accordance with the Environment Agency's (EA) Standing Advice.
- 5.34. The EA's Standing Advice states that Less Vulnerable developments in Flood Zone 2 should address the following:
-  Surface Water Management
 -  Access and Evacuation
 -  Floor Levels

- 5.35. The British Geological Survey Map shows that superficial deposits will most likely provide opportunities for infiltration techniques. Therefore, permeable pavement systems and soakaways should be considered for surface water drainage.
- 5.36. The EA provided flood levels for this location for storm events with a return period of 1 in 100 year and 1 in 100 year plus 20% which is appropriate for this location as set out in the accompanying Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment.
- 5.37. The worst-case scenario for the 1 in 100 year plus 25% storm event shows that the flood level will be 38.68m AOD. The topographical survey drawing shows that most of the site will not flood in this storm event and direct access from the development to Rose Kiln Lane, where the ground levels are well above the flood level, is available. Rose Kiln Lane leads to Berkeley Avenue which provides access to Flood Zone 1. Therefore, safe access is available at all times.
- 5.38. The EA's standing advice states that the building's ground floor levels should be a minimum of either 300mm above the general ground level or 600mm above the estimated river or sea flood level whichever is higher.
- 5.39. The EA's standing advice also clarifies that the 1 in 100 year flood level should be used for areas at risk of fluvial flooding. The topographical survey drawing shows that the average ground level is 39.2m AOD. Therefore, the building's ground floor level will be above the flood level identified by the EA.

Ecological Buffer Zone

- 5.40. In advice received to the previous application the EA raised the issue of an ecological buffer zone to Holy Brook. The current proposals maintain the current position in terms of the proximity of hardstanding to Holy Brook and any built form is in excess of 10 metres from the banks of the river. In addition, proposed new planting and landscape and ecological improvement works are proposed along the bank of the river to improve the current position.
- 5.41. Therefore, these revised proposals have considered the issue of the buffer zone and have ensured that the status quo is maintained with respect to hardstanding and that no additional buildings are located within 10m with the relocation of the bin store.

Archaeology

- 5.42. The site lies in an Area of Archaeological Potential. A desk-based assessment has been carried in support of the application which concludes:

"While the proposed development has the potential for a negative impact on the archaeological remains, if present, an archaeological evaluation undertaken along the northern boundary of the site

targeted both sides of the Holy Brook in 1988 and revealed no archaeological deposits (HER ERD53). The site has also undergone some significant previous ground disturbance.”



Section 6

Conclusions

- 6.1. This Design, Access and Planning Statement accompanies an application for planning permission for:

Outline application for a drive-thru coffee shop of 189sqm and a new access at Reading Link Retail Park, Rose Kiln Lane

- 6.2. This application follows on from a previous application that was refused and subsequently dismissed at appeal. The reasons for dismissing the appeal were related solely to highways/access issues and this has been resolved in this revised application.
- 6.3. The proposed coffee shop and revised access arrangements utilise a currently under used area of car parking at the Reading Link Retail Park and will offer a type of retail unit not currently seen at this site or in the surrounding area.
- 6.4. The proposed access has been revised to enable access off of Rose Kiln Lane in both directions but to prevent egress from the site. A height barrier will also be installed to ensure that larger vehicles do not enter the site from Rose Kiln Lane.
- 6.5. The location of a drive-thru coffee shop at Reading Link Retail Park is entirely appropriate, making good use of an existing retail site with good access to the local highway network. It will not compete with more traditional town centre coffee shops and will have added benefits for this long standing out-of-town retail park. For these reasons the proposals are considered to meet the requirements of the NPPF as well as Local Plan Policies CC2 and RL1.
- 6.6. The siting of the proposed coffee shop has been considered in context of the operation of the existing retail units and surrounding car parking as well as the proposed new access road into the site.
- 6.7. Overall, the proposals represent a significant environmental improvement over the existing situation and are a major benefit of the current proposals providing for significant improvements to the public realm with improved pedestrian access. In addition, further tree planting and landscaping is proposed to significantly improve the quality of the environment.
- 6.8. The proposals provide for sufficient car parking in accordance with parking standards in Policy TR5 and ensure sufficient car parking with remain within

the retail park. The proposed new access into the site will be constructed to meet all relevant highway standards.

- 6.9. The proposals lie within Flood Zone 2 but pass the sequential test and will not worsen the flood risk in the vicinity of the site. An ecological buffer zone to Holy Brook is maintained and improved over the existing situation.

Solve Planning Ltd
Sentinel House
Ancells Business Park
Harvest Crescent
Fleet
Hampshire
GU51 2UZ
01252 419978
info@solveplanning.co.uk

	Initials	Date
Prepared by	KC	27/10/2020
Checked by	KS	28/10/2020