



Planning & Development Ltd

JMS Planning & Development Ltd

PLANNING AND DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

**IN SUPPORT OF
A PLANNING APPLICATION
BY
SHELL UK LIMITED**

**IN RESPECT OF THE
REDEVELOPMENT OF
SHELL FAIRFIELD
585 BASINGSTOKE ROAD
READING
BERKSHIRE
RG2 0TA**

Client: Shell UK Ltd
Project: Redevelopment of Shell Fairfield, 585 Basingstoke Road, Reading, Berkshire,
RG2 0TA
Date: June 2019

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement, also incorporating a Design and Access Statement, has been prepared on behalf of Shell UK Ltd and is submitted in support of an application for full planning permission for the redevelopment of Shell Fairfield. Specifically, the application seeks the redevelopment of the whole site including removal of existing sales building, forecourt and tanks and redevelopment to provide a new sales building, new forecourt, including fuel tanks and canopy, car parking and other associated works with a dedicated access lane to the adjoining land.
- 1.2 The site currently comprises an existing petrol filling station but the entire site is in need of upgrade as it does not fully meet the needs of motorists and would benefit from environmental upgrade. Accordingly, the proposal will bring the petrol filling station up to expected standards.
- 1.3 The national need for additional and enhanced petrol filling station facilities is widely recognised and accepted. Whilst the recent closure of 150-200 sites a year has slowed, there continues to be strong competition between fuel retailers, particularly the big four supermarkets, which combined with the increasing costs of compliance with environmental regulations puts those remaining petrol stations under intense pressure. Information from the Experian Catalyst Market Summary Report (released November 2018) suggests that there were 8,418 petrol filling stations in the UK as at 2018, which represents less than a quarter of the 1970 total. Meanwhile, the total number of vehicles on the road rose to a record breaking 38.4 million as at the end of September 2018.
- 1.4 Given the decline in petrol filling stations juxtapose with a year-on-year increase in registered cars on the road, the option to deliver an enhanced petrol filling station meeting a local need should be embraced.
- 1.5 Petrol filling stations are a vital necessity and can often function as a community hub and are facing significant threats in a harsh economic climate. Petrol stations have been likened to post offices and local shops as vital community facilities which are rapidly disappearing.

- 1.6 Shell Fairfield Petrol Filling Station will offer all of the latest facilities expected by motorists and fully comply with the current environmental standards of petrol filling stations.
- 1.7 This report continues in Section 2 by providing a summary of the site's location and its context, with a brief summary of the planning history for the site within Section 3. Full details of the proposal are set out in Section 4 including a detailed description of the layout and facilities to be offered on the site. Section 5 sets out the planning policy position at national and local level with full justification for the proposal expanded upon in Section 6. Design and Access matters are discussed in Section 7, with conclusions drawn in Section 8.

SECTION 2: SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

- 2.1 The application site is located to the south of Reading town Centre on the B3031/Basingstoke Road, which provides access from the M4 Junction 11 to Reading City Centre. The application site is approximately 100m from the M4/A33 junction on the B3031, which runs parallel to the A33 and is the main road linking Reading Town Centre to the M4 with the B3031/Basingstoke Road providing a more suburban road.
- 2.2 Basingstoke Road is mixed in character comprising residential and commercial properties. As shown on the location plan the site immediately adjoins a van hire centre whose access and egress is via the petrol filling station. The existing and proposed plans show this right of way.
- 2.3 On the opposite side of the road from the garage there are a number of industrial units, motor trade units and retail uses, which have recently been developed with elements still 'to let'. To the north of the application site, on both sides of Basingstoke Road are residential properties. There are also residential properties to the rear/east of the site but these are separated by an area of public space.
- 2.4 The application site is approximately three miles from Reading Town Centre, but is located in an area well-served by public transport.
- 2.5 The application site currently comprises a forecourt with a four island starter gate arrangement with HGV refuelling to the east. To the south of the forecourt is the sales building. Access to the adjoining vehicle hire area is via the forecourt with no dedicated lane. Car parking is provided to the rear of the sales building adjacent to the hire area.
- 2.6 Traffic flows through the site in a one way direction entering to the north and exiting to the south.
- 2.7 The application site is rectangular in shape and is broadly flat. There is an area of vegetation along the northern boundary. Within this area is also the LPG tank and existing tank farm both of which are to be removed.



Photograph 1: Aerial Photograph Fairfield Petrol Station and Adjoining Van Hire Centre



Photograph 2: View of Fairfield Petrol Station form Basingstoke Road

SECTION 3: PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 A review of the planning history for the application site has been undertaken using the Reading Borough Council's online application search facility. Since 1990 there have been various applications for signage.
- 3.2 In 1997 permission was granted for the *"enclosure of replacement car wash in building, provision of jet wash"* and *"Jet wash portico"* (Ref: 970303 and 970129 respectively) both approved 4 August 1997.
- 3.3 The liquid petroleum gas tank was approved in October 2010 (Ref: 99/0178), and the *"installation of spiked palisade protection fencing"* was approved in July 2001 (Ref: 010510).
- 3.4 A *"single storey side extension (retrospective)"* was granted planning permission on the 28 December 2012 (Ref: 120554) which included a store area and disabled WC, located to the rear of the existing ATM.
- 3.5 Accordingly, the existing structures on site are quite historic by modern petrol filling station standards.

SECTION 4: THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The application site currently comprises of an existing petrol filling station with a shop of 58 sqm net tradeable area with a '*starter gate*' forecourt area to the front with four islands providing fuelling positions for eight cars and two HGV pump islands providing two refuelling positions. An LPG compound is located adjacent to the northern boundary of the site adjacent to the existing tank farm, both of which are to be removed. Also on site is an air/water bay located to the south of the sales building.
- 4.2 The site has a separate entrance and exit crossovers on to Basingstoke Road so traffic flows in a single direction through the site. The adjoining van hire centre also utilises these access/egress points, albeit currently there is no dedicated right of way lane for those vehicles meaning they have to navigate the forecourt (cars and HGVs) to access their site.
- 4.3 Signage associated with the use of the site as a petrol filling station is positioned across the site.
- 4.4 The new sales building and forecourt will be located broadly in the same position as the existing facilities but with a dedicated passing lane created for those vehicles accessing the adjoining land. The sales building will be single storey with a net floor area of 125 sqm (gfa 245sqm). As well as providing a retail sales area, the sales building will also provide customer toilet facilities and paying facilities for the fuel as well as an ATM. The proposed sales building will include a back of house area for stock and staff facilities.
- 4.5 The sales building is proposed to be modern in appearance, utilising lightweight materials to create a clean and crisp appearance. The sales building makes extensive use of glazing fronting the forecourt, allowing visitors to the site and passers-by to witness activity occurring within this area of the building thereby assisting in creating visual interest. This will also allow staff to have a view of the forecourt ensuring safety and security at all times.
- 4.6 An external compound is positioned to the east of the sales building for the storage of refuse.

- 4.7 The forecourt will meet the latest expected standards with four pump islands arranged in a “*starter gate*” format accommodating eight refuelling positions plus dedicated HGV refuelling area (two pump islands for two vehicles) along with dedicated right of way, which results in a significantly more efficient arrangement and ensures no unnecessary delays for those seeking to access the adjacent site. The site also includes provision for two future electric charging bays along the southern boundary along with an air/water bay and additional car parking spaces. Customer car parking is provided to the north of the sales building adjacent to the forecourt in the form of ten spaces, including one disabled space adjacent to the sales building entrance. A further four spaces are provided on the southern boundary of the site.
- 4.8 New underground storage tanks are to be installed replacing the existing underground tank farm. These are to be positioned to the north of the forecourt with the tank vents positioned by the HGV pumps. In addition, Adblue is to be provided on site with a tank positioned to the east of the sales building.
- 4.9 The access and egress remains as existing continuing the one way flow of traffic through the site, but with the addition of a dedicated right of way passing land to the east of the site. The site layout therefore now separates cars using the forecourt from HGVs and those passing through the site to access the adjoining site.
- 4.10 As shown on the plans, a small area of existing grassland is to be incorporated in to the forecourt to accommodate the right of way passing lane but the remainder of the vegetation, and particularly trees, will be retained on site. The area of the LPG tank and exhumed tanks will be reverted back to grass meaning the net area of grass remains broadly as existing.

SECTION 5: PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1 This section sets out an overview of national policy and development plan guidance relevant to the redevelopment of the existing petrol filling station use, including policies relevant to design and access matters.

National Planning Policy

- 5.2 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 24 July 2018 and updated in March 2019 (with very minor changes) and constitutes guidance for local planning authorities and decision-takers and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications (paragraph 2).
- 5.3 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development (paragraph 7).
- 5.4 Paragraph 8 confirms that there are three overarching objectives to sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways:
- An economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
 - A social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural wellbeing;
 - An environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making efficient use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising

waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

5.5 These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and application of policies in the framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. It is confirmed that the planning system should play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area (paragraph 9).

5.6 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 10). For decision taking, this means:

- Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay, and
- 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 the framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides 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 (paragraph 11).

5.7 The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (paragraph 12).

5.8 Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social

and environmental conditions of the area. Decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible (paragraph 38).

- 5.9 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing (paragraph 47). Local Authorities may give weight to relevant policies and emerging plans according to the stage at which they are at and the extent of unresolved objections (paragraph 48).
- 5.10 Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and where there are opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future (paragraph 80).
- 5.11 Planning policies should set out clear an economic vision and strategy which positively and practically encourages sustainable economic growth having regard to local industrial strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration; set criteria to identify strategic sites for local inward investment to match the strategy and meet anticipated needs over the plan period; seek to address potential barriers to investment; and be flexible enough to accommodate the needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances (paragraph 81).
- 5.12 Planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors (paragraph 82).
- 5.13 Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the needs for homes and other uses, whilst safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions (paragraph 117).

- 5.14 The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps to make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is the effective engagement between applicants, communities, Local Planning Authorities and other interests throughout the process (paragraph 124).
- 5.15 Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; are sympathetic to local character and history; establish or maintain a strong sense of place; and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users (paragraph 127).
- 5.16 Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals (paragraph 128) and permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions (paragraph 130).

Development Plan

- 5.17 To the extent the Development Plan policies are material to an application for planning permission, a decision must be taken in accordance with the Development Plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise (Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

5.18 The Development Plan for the area comprises the Core Strategy adopted January 2008 and altered January 2015, the Reading Central Area Action Plan January 2009 (not applicable to the application site), Sites and Detailed Policies October 2012 and altered January 2015 and the Proposals Map October 2012. Upon the Proposals Map the site is within the settlement boundary but also falls within an Air Quality Management Area (Policy DM19) and on an existing or potential green link (Policy DM17). The area on the opposite side of Basingstoke Road and the adjacent van hire site forms part of South Reading Strategic Development Site (Policy SAa)

5.19 The Council is at an advanced stage in the preparation of the Local Plan which will replace the above documents. The main modifications to the plan were published early June and are subject to consultation until 24 July. Accordingly, this plan has also been briefly reviewed below.

Core Strategy 2008 (With Alteration Adopted 27 January 2015)

5.20 The Core Strategy sets out a number of environmental objectives to encourage living within environmental limits and ensuring a strong, healthy and just society. These include, inter alia:

- Create, enhance and maintain safer, cleaner and greener environments, which include diverse and distinctive places, spaces and buildings;
- Create buildings and environments that work well, look well, wear well and are easy maintained;
- Promote safer and stronger communities through measures to reduce crime and the fear of crime and enhance community cohesion;
- Ensure accessible opportunities for all to engage in cultural, leisure and recreation activity, particularly open space and water space; and
- Provide employment opportunities for all and support a successful, balanced, local economy that meets the needs of the area.

- 5.21 Policy CS1 (Sustainable Construction and Design) confirms that proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, will be acceptable where the design of the building and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take into account the effect of climate change. The policy continues by setting various criteria which need to be met above certain thresholds, but advises that in all new development one should maximise the use of energy efficiency and energy conservation measures in design, layout and orientation to reduce overall energy demand; all developments should reduce mains water use and demonstrate water conservation measures are incorporated into schemes; and incorporate sustainable urban drainage facilities and techniques where possible.
- 5.22 Policy CS5 (Inclusive Access) requires all buildings to be located, sited and designed to provide suitable access to, into and within, its facilities for all potential users, including disabled people, so they can use them safely and easily.
- 5.23 Policy CS6 relates to the settlement boundary and advises that no development will be permitted outside the settlement boundary as defined on the Proposals Map.
- 5.24 Policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm) requires that all development must be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form, include:
- Layout, urban structure and urban grain;
 - Landscape;
 - Density and mix;
 - Scale, height and massing; and
 - Architecture detail and materials.
- 5.25 The policy continues to say that these components will be assessed to ensure that the development proposed makes a positive contribution to the following urban design objectives:

- Character – a place with its own identity and sense of place;
- Continuity and enclosure;
- Quality of the public realm;
- Ease of movement and permeability;
- Legibility – clear image and easy to understand;
- Adaptability – capable of adapting over time; and
- Diversity – meets a wide range of needs.

5.26 The policy continues by also saying that development proposals will be assessed to ensure that they respond positively to their local context and create room for local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm; creating safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder and fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them; and are visually attractive as a result of good, high quality, built form and spaces with the inclusion of public art, appropriate materials and landscaping.

5.27 Policy CS25 (Scale and Location of Retail, Leisure and Cultural Development) advises that major retail and main town centre leisure and cultural development will take place in, or as an extension to, the city centre of Reading. Where a need for additional development has been identified, no sites are available in or adjoining the centre of Reading, a sequential approach should be adopted to identify alternative sites. All development will comply with the relevant test for retail, leisure and cultural development as set out in Government guidance.

5.28 Policy CS26 sets out the network and hierarchy of centres, defining a number of local centres, including Basingstoke Road North, which is some considerable distance from the application site.

Sites and Detailed Policies Document Adopted October 2012 (with Alteration Adopted 27 January 2015)

5.29 Policy SD1 (Assumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) reflects guidance as set out at national level.

- 5.30 Policy DM1 (Adapting to Climate Change) requires that all development will demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. The policy lists out a number of measures which shall be incorporated into the development to include appropriate orientation to maximise the opportunity for both natural heating and ventilation and reducing exposure to wind and other elements; demonstration that buildings have been designed to maximise resistance and resilience to climate change; use of trees and other planting and minimise the impact of surface water run-off from the development into the design of the drainage system.
- 5.31 Policy DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity) requires that development will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties in terms of privacy and overlooking; access to sunlight and daylight; visual dominance and overbearing effects of the development; noise and disturbance; artificial lighting; vibration; dust and fumes; or crime and safety.
- 5.32 Access, traffic and highway related matters are covered by Policy DM12 which requires in determining of proposals involving new altered access onto the highway and transport network that consideration will be given to the effect on safety, congestion and environment.
- 5.33 Policy DM14 (Impact of Main Town Centre Uses) requires that proposals including more than 1,000 sqm gross of new additional floorspace for main town centre uses in edge of centre or out of centre location should demonstrate that there will be no significant adverse impact on existing centres.
- 5.34 Policy DM17 (Green Networks) advises that the diversification of green network comprises local wildlife centres, local nature reserves, Areas of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats and designated open space plus both existing and potential green links, all of which are shown on the Proposals Map. These green links shall be maintained, protected, consolidated, extended and enhanced.

- 5.35 Policy DM19 (Air Quality) requires that development shall have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality. Development that would detrimentally affect air quality will not be permitted unless the affect is to be mitigated. The policy lists a number of criteria which should be taken into account in the consideration of planning applications.
- 5.36 As referred to above, the site is opposite and adjacent to one of South Reading's Strategic Development Sites. Policy SA2a - Worton Grange - advises that the redevelopment of this site will incorporate a mix of uses including housing (between 175-275 units), community uses, additional small retail and leisure uses at a scale commensurate to the needs of the housing proposal, open space and a public transport interchange. There is also potential for some office floorspace or warehousing development. Further detailed guidance for the development of this area is set out within the policy.

Emerging Local Plan

- 5.28 Upon the Emerging Policy Map the site remains allocated as existing, ie within the settlement boundary, and within an Air Quality Management Area and on an existing or proposed green link.
- 5.29 Emerging policies in relation to sustainability and the environment reflect those previously adopted and that set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 5.30 Retail policy continues to reflect that set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and retains the 1,000 sqm gross threshold for assessment of impact.

SECTION 6: PLANNING ISSUES

6.1 This section of the Planning Statement sets out the general planning matters which should form part of the consideration and determination of this application. Design and access matters are covered in the following section. Accordingly, the following general planning matters are considered below:

- The principle of development on the site;
- Quantitative need and benefits of the improved facility;
- Job Creation;
- Retail issues;
- Design issues; and
- Contamination.

Principle of Development of the Site

6.2 As noted elsewhere within this report, the site is an established petrol filling station providing an important service and facilities for users of the highway network on Basingstoke Road/A3031. The proposal seeks the removal of the existing structures on the site including sales building, forecourt, canopy and underground fuel and LPG tanks and the site's complete redevelopment with new sales building, forecourt, canopy and underground fuel tanks, plus associated car parking and other works along with the introduction of a dedicated right of way passing lane to the east of the site. Accordingly, the site must be considered to be an existing/established developed site within the urban area of Reading.

6.3 The principle of the redevelopment of a site to provide an improved facility must be accepted as the use is well-established on the site and is clearly in need of upgrade noting the historic nature of the buildings on site (see Planning History) and the advancement in technology and environmental standards within the petroleum industry over time.

- 6.4 Furthermore, in line with the general decline in petrol station facilities countrywide, investment in the site, in contrary to general trends in petrol station numbers, should be embraced.

Qualitative Need and Benefits of Improved Petrol Station

- 6.5 It is considered that the site provides important service station facilities for those travelling within Reading and the wider area, particularly those travelling from the city centre and joining the motorway network (or vice versa). It is important that adequate facilities are provided for road users to ensure that their basic needs are met and enable them to comfortably and safely undertake their journeys. The provision of an enhanced petrol station will better meet the needs of those travelling on the highway network and provide them with the break and nourishment required.

Job Creation

- 6.6 The enhanced proposal will provide a valuable source of jobs, creating further job opportunities on site. Many of these jobs will be suitable for local residents, particularly residents who wish to be flexible in the hours they work. The proposal will therefore bring a wide range of economic benefits and accord with the role and focus as contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and adopted Development Plan.
- 6.8 In addition to the actual jobs created by the development, further jobs will be created in the construction phase of development. There will be other spin off linkages to the benefit of the local area during the construction period itself as, for example, on site construction staff utilise shops and services in the local area during the period of construction.

Retail Issues

- 6.9 Due to the nature of the proposal servicing motorists of the highway network, the replacement of an existing facility and the very small scale nature of the proposal it is not

considered that a sequential appraisal is required as the sales building element is intrinsically linked to the wider use of the site as a petrol filling station.

- 6.10 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires an Impact Assessment only for developments involving an additional 2,500 sqm gross or more floor space. This is echoed within the adopted Development Plan, albeit the threshold is set at 1,000 sqm. In this case the proposal relates to an additional 69 sqm over and above the existing net floorspace of the sales building (56 sqm) giving a total net sales area for the new building of 125 sqm (gross floor area 245 sqm). Therefore, the proposal falls considerably below the threshold set at national and local level whereby an Impact Assessment is required.
- 6.11 Notwithstanding this, in light of the very limited scale of the proposal and the existing sales building on site, it is not considered that there will be a significant diversion of trade from any single centre or particular retailer or commercial unit which is protected under retail policy that would cause a significant adverse impact. Accordingly, it is not considered that there will be any adverse impact arising from the proposal. On this basis it is considered that the proposal accords with the relevant national policy in this regard.
- 6.12 Given the proposal is merely for the redevelopment of the site and the replacement of the existing sales building with a new, modern, purpose-built facility there is no requirement to undertake a Sequential Assessment of the proposal as the proposed uses are already operating (and authorised) on the site. Whilst the floor area of the replacement sales building is larger than existing, the offer and the operation of the site will remain broadly as existing, albeit it will meet modern standards and provide a more comfortable environment for customers and employees.

Design Issues

- 6.13 Given the nature of the site, its relationship to the highway network and surrounding uses including residential, the redevelopment of the site as a petrol filling station using the latest technology and modern petrol filling station design is entirely appropriate to the site's location. The design will create a modern petrol filling station meeting expected standards and a clean fresh approach to the site.

- 6.14 There are no amenity issues arising from the use of the site as a petrol filling station due its distance from residential properties and established location within the area and proximity to employment, retail and busy road network.
- 6.15 Consideration has been given to the landscaping area to the north of the site and minor changes are to be made to this area to facilitate the passing land. However due to the retention of all of the trees on site and the removal of tanks in this vicinity with the reinstatement of grass there is no impact on the overall amenity of this area.
- 6.16 As shown on the plans an enclosed compound is located to the rear of the sales building to accommodate refuse storage. This is located out of view from the remainder of the site and wider area but is accessible from the sales building's store area, as well as the forecourt.
- 6.17 Refuse collection, shop delivery vehicles and fuel delivery vehicles can enter and exit the site in forward gear without disruption to the public highway.

Contamination

- 6.18 The application is submitted with a Phase 1 Contamination Report. The proposal includes the removal of the existing tank farm along with the necessary recommendation as set out in the accompanying report (which can be dealt with by condition) and the installation of a new tank farm adjacent to the forecourt.

SECTION 7: DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

- 7.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of the Applicant to support the full planning application for the redevelopment of the sales building and associated car parking area at Shell Fairfield, Reading.
- 7.2 The Design and Access Statement requirements of the site have evolved from an appraisal of the site's context against the background of its location and the proximity to the highway network.
- 7.3 In accordance with the requirements to formally state how design and access issues have been considered (under Section 61 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2014) this document addresses the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development in relation to location, use, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping in relation to the site's context.
- 7.4 The Design and Access Statement should be read in context with the planning application's supporting reports, drawings and accompanying material.

Site Evaluation

- 7.5 There are a number of key issues which have informed the design solution for the site's development. Effectively, it balances the site's opportunities and constraints arising from the assessment of the site to deliver a development that achieves high quality design, is sustainable, is economically viable and enhances the established locality. The principal constraints can be identified as:
- The need to utilise existing access points to and from the highway, maintaining an entrance and exit and one-way traffic flow arrangement;
 - The need to upgrade the facility to meet the operational needs of the operator and the requirements of the customers;
 - The need to retain the existing landscaping and specifically the trees on site;

- The need to ensure appropriate levels of car parking; and
- The need to provide right of way passing lane to alleviate potential for congestion on site and improve traffic flow through it.

7.6 There are a number of opportunities afforded by the potential redevelopment of the site that are a relevant material consideration in evaluating the proposals. In summary these are:

- The site offers an excellent location in terms of visibility and accessibility for motorists travelling along Basingstoke Road and urban area of Reading;
- The opportunity to provide an upgraded facility which would benefit the users of the site and motorists on the road network;
- The opportunity to improve traffic flows within and through the site;
- The opportunity to upgrade the environmental features of the site; and
- The opportunity to make best use of an existing site within the urban area of Reading.

Planning Policy

7.7 A detailed evaluation of the planning policies relevant to this planning application is provided in Section 5 of this Statement. However, in summary, the following policies are of particular relevance to the Design and Access Statement and they form this report:

- Paragraphs 7, 8, 10, 11, 124, 127, 128 and 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2019); and
- Reading Core Strategy, Policies CS1, CS5, CS6 and CS7; and

- Reading Sites and Detailed Policies, Policies SD1, DM1, DM4 and DM12.

Design Considerations

Use

- 7.8 The proposal is for the redevelopment of an existing petrol filling station and therefore the principle of the use is already established on site.

Layout

- 7.9 The proposed layout of the scheme is shown on the accompanying planning application drawings particularly the 'Proposed Site Plan'.
- 7.10 Detailed consideration has been given to the layout of the site in order to ensure optimum circulation across the site, improve the flow of vehicles through the forecourt, particularly with reference to the right of way, make adequate provision of parking and provide a sales building of an appropriate scale and massing. Car parking spaces are located in proximity to the entrance doors, with the disabled space allocated in the optimum location.

Scale

- 7.11 The building is of an appropriate scale to meet the needs of customers and the operator.

Appearance

- 7.12 The design of the replacement sales building and new forecourt reflects the modern style of petrol filling stations, adopting a simple uncluttered design. The proposed sales building will be of a high quality design with inviting interiors incorporating a glazed frontage overlooking the forecourt creating a clean, welcoming environment which is modern, attractive and uncluttered.
- 7.13 The appearance of the overall building is clean, crisp and modern and entirely suitable to its petrol filling station use.

Materials

- 7.14 The development incorporates the use of modern materials typically found on petrol filling stations.

Landscaping

- 7.15 The existing trees on site have been retained along with the grassed areas bar a very small area adjacent to the eastern boundary to facilitate the right of way passing lane. However with the removal of the LPG tank and underground tank farm in this area, and reinstatement to grass, the amount of landscaping will broadly remain as existing.

Accessibility

- 7.16 The Applicant is committed to a policy of equality, inclusion and accessibility for those who live and visit the site and has strived to exceed all required standards and achieve a development which promotes inclusion and accessibility.
- 7.17 The provision of an accessible and inclusive environment has been an integral theme throughout the design process from its initial conception to its current form. The concept of inclusive design seeks to remove barriers which create undue effort, separation and special treatment which enables everyone to participate equally regardless of gender, disability or age.
- 7.18 The use of the site as a petrol filling station is well established by the planning history of the site and the current access arrangements upon it. The access to the main highway network has been predetermined by the existing access and egress points.

Conclusions

- 7.19 The proposal responds positively to the site's opportunities and constraints and consideration has been given to layout, scale, appearance and landscaping. Access to and within the site has been carefully reviewed. It is considered that, based on the above, an appropriate and site sensitive design solution has been found.

SECTION 8: CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The application seeks the redevelopment of the entire site with the demolition of existing structures and development of new sales building and forecourt, including underground tanks, with the provision of car parking and other associated works at Shell Fairfield's, Basingstoke Road, Reading.
- 8.2 The National Planning Policy Framework identifies the need for planning positively for community facilities and motorist services. Petrol filling stations are a vital necessity and provide an important role ensuring that motorists travel safely.
- 8.3 The application site has a long planning history for roadside related uses and the proposal will meet this roadside need. Against a general trend in decline in petrol station numbers, investment in this site will ensure it continues to meet the needs of motorists whilst adhering to the latest environmental standards.
- 8.4 It is considered that the application proposal is of an appropriate design, raises no amenity issues to local residents through good design and landscaping. The proposal is of a high quality design and consideration has been given to the circulation of traffic upon the site offering an improvement over the existing situation. It is therefore considered that the proposal accords with policy.
- 8.5 On the basis of the above it is requested that planning permission is forthcoming for this proposal.