

Design and Access Statement

Caversham Bridge Garden Centre

Land adjacent 10/12 Richfield Avenue

RG1 8EQ

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1. Introduction and brief requirements

The site has been used as a Garden Centre for 4 years. The Caversham Bridge Garden Centre have made good use of temporary structures and large tents to conduct a successful independent family run business for the local community during this time.

The constraints of the existing accommodation such as lack of security and toilet facilities have led to the idea of creating a building to provide for the needs of the business moving forward.

2. Summary

Removal of the existing marquee structure and construction of a new pavilion to accommodate the needs of the Garden Centre and visitors.

3. The site and surrounding areas

The Garden Centre is located at the north west extremity of Reading 2km northwest of the centre of Reading with the River Thames to the north.

Locally, the site is on the northern edge of a predominantly commercial area. The Thames itself is approximately 500m north of the site with largely undeveloped landscaping and playing field between its southern bank and the Garden Centre. There is some further commercial development to the north west immediately adjacent to the site.

The greenfield nature continues westward with a driving range immediately adjacent to the north and open fields further west. Eastward, the land is developed up to the Caversham Bridge across the Thames 700m from the existing site. Residential development becomes more prominent 500m south east of the site.

4. Planning policy and justification

The main planning considerations to arise from this application are:

- Principle of development;
- Design and appearance;
- Amenity impact;
- Quality of layout;
- Transport;
- Trees;
- Sustainability;
- Flooding; and
- CIL.

Principle of development

Retail use is well established at the site and in the immediate surrounding area. Retail use would be retained as part of this proposal. Redevelopment of the site for retail use is not contrary to any Council policy in principle.

5. Site usage

Retail use.

6. Size and area

Area Schedule

Site: 2000m²

Proposed building: 430m²

7. Layout

The Ground Floor is largely open plan to provide flexible retail space. A central core with Stair and lift connection to the First Floor is proposed. A unisex WC and Wheelchair accessible WC are also within the core.

A kitchen area with pizza oven is proposed for the Ground Floor.

The First Floor within the raised roof section provides storage / staff and office spaces.

8. Scale

The massing/scale of the building would be suitable for the site. The foot print covers less than ¼ of the site. The ground floor pitched roof converges into a raised first floor also with pitched roof. In an area with predominantly industrial shed type and modular buildings the traditional proportions are well suited to the green and tree lined site.

9. Design

The general design, massing and scale shown in the drawings suitably complements the wider street scene and provides a good graduation from more built up areas to the green open space to the west. Materials are sympathetic to the surrounding area and relate well to the green open space and connection with views to the west and river to the north.

Design Concept is a timber framed building set in a wooden context.



10. Materials

All external walls will be timber clad

Proposed roofing material is cedar shingles.

Windows are to be double glazed timber framed. Doors and sliding doors to be double glazed timber framed.

11. Landscaping

Development provides the opportunity for the current tree stock to be added to and green space enhanced. The ground surface will always be natural and easily drained.

12. Access including transport

The Garden Centre is situated in Reading, Berkshire. Located between Reading Festival and Rivermead Leisure Complex. Only a few minutes walk from Caversham Bridge and only a 15 minute walk from Reading Town Centre and The Oracle Shopping Centre.

The Garden Centre offer free parking for 36 cars in a private carpark which is situated inside Rivermead Leisure Complex.

The closest train station is Reading which is just a 15 minute walk away.

13. Conclusion

In summary, the proposal relates well to other nearby development and the character of the area.

The application is really being made to enhance a popular local garden centre and ensure that it can survive for the future.