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Ms Alison Amoah
Planning Department
Reading Borough Council

By email to: Alison.amoah@reading.gov.uk

Dear Alison and Darren

448a Basingstoke Road

Many thanks for our useful meeting last week following the resolution of Committee to Grant planning permission. The main purpose of our meeting was to discuss the Heads of Terms of the S106 that the Council requires.

First, I have now been advised that there were errors on the submitted plan, which indicated only 50 parking spaces were available on site. While we are newly designating bin store areas and new cycle parking, the car park will remain largely unaltered, and will continue to provide 60 spaces. (A correct revised plan will follow very soon).

Our discussion was based on the earlier understanding of only 50 spaces being available. Even on that basis, having considered your adopted parking standards, we agreed that there is adequate on-site parking for the various proposed uses in combination. There is a condition to preserve the uses shown on the approved plans, thus any occupier other than my client would not need any overflow parking. It seemed to me that this conclusion had not been realised before the report to Committee was finalised.

My client however has volunteered the information that it wishes to make provision off site for exceptional 'personal' circumstances i.e. high attendance at my clients Church events, which will take place at weekends and Bank Holidays.

As an illustration that this arrangement is deliverable, we have provided information that for the first 5 years of use by the Church (who manage the entire site), off site overflow parking can be provided nearby by licence at a site owned by Ultima in Manor Farm

Road. The parking available via this licence will be hugely in excess of any potential needs.

We discussed a potential 'worst case scenario', as mentioned in your update to Committee. We agreed that this would reflect an (unlikely) major public access event such as a wedding taking place in the D1 part of the building, at the same time that the small office suites were in full occupancy and possibly the small ancillary café space was in use. At the meeting we calculated this to involve a maximum of around 550 people on the site at one time. (The hall on its own has a capacity of 400 according to your parking standards – requiring 50 spaces). The exceptional circumstances were calculated to potentially require up to 37 more spaces (rounded to 40 – although as we now have discovered an additional 10 on site this could be reduced to 30).

As long as the Church continues to operate from 448a Basingstoke Road, it is happy to make arrangements by licence for this overflow amount, unless circumstances change and overflow parking is not required. We will be monitoring this as part of the Travel Plan requirements.

In the event however that the Church does not continue at the site or wishes to sell the premises, it is considered that it is unnecessary for overflow parking to be provided, as sufficient space exists on the site for the uses defined.

I would suggest that the Heads of Terms of a reasonable S106 should:

- Do not refer specifically to the Ultima licence (as this is for excessive provision), but simply to a requirement to demonstrate to RBC that 30 overspill parking spaces are made available at all times that the D1 hall area is in use by the Church [unless it has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that such overprovision is no longer required];
- My client would be happy to be required to produce evidence that such overspill parking is secured within 4 weeks of the grant of Planning permission and at all times the Church remains on the site.

I remain of the opinion that this matter would be better dealt with by a Condition rather than a S106. In effect it is a personal condition, rather than a general land use consideration.

I agree that the steps to be taken if off-site parking is required but is not available will need to be a matter of agreement with the Council. I believe we agreed that the terms used in the Committee update were unsuitable (revocation without compensation). Such a clause would fundamentally harm the financial arrangements my client has in place to purchase the site and potentially scupper the whole project, which appeared at Committee to be universally welcomed by all Councillors.

Other steps could resolve any problems – for example the Church could run more Sunday services to spread the parking demand over the day or close the small office suites on these days.

I would appreciate your comments on the above as soon as convenient.

In the meantime I intend to provide further information on cycle parking in hope that a revised/supplementary plan for approval can obviate the need for discharge of a condition on this issue.

Yours sincerely

Deirdre Wells DipTP MRTPI
Red Kite Development Consultancy

Cc Clients