

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

APPLICATION NUMBER: 150391/FUL

ADDRESS: 42 Portman Road

THE PROPOSAL

Proposed Car Park Extension

SITE DESCRIPTION AND SURROUNDING AREA

The application site is a two storey commercial building located within the Portman Road Core Employment Area. The surrounding area comprises commercial uses.

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

- 01-01308-FUL (010718). External: private car park extension. Refused.
- 06-01334-FUL (060028). New entrance area and first floor extension to existing office building. Granted.
- 08-01546-FUL (081489). Extension of existing on-site parking to office building. Refused.

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATIONS

The application was assessed at an Applications Steering Group meeting. It was agreed at this meeting that if a proposed low brick wall were to be removed, the application would be acceptable.

The Transport Strategy Section and Natural Environment Officer have no objection.

RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY

No representations were received.

POLICIES

Legal and Planning Policy Context

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. Material considerations

include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Planning Policy Framework

Part 1 – Building a strong, competitive economy

Part 4 – Promoting sustainable transport

Part 7 – Requiring good design

Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2008)

CS7 (Design and the Public Realm)

CS24 (Car/Cycle Parking)

Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012)

SD1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)

SPG/SPD

- Parking Standards and Design (Supplementary Planning Document).

APPRAISAL

This application is for a proposed car park extension to create 5 additional car parking bays of which 2 are for disabled users. A similar proposal was considered under application 08/01546/FUL, and was refused for the following reasons:

1. The provision of additional car parking would influence and encourage journeys to and from work to be made by private car which would be in direct conflict with guidance at PPG13 - Transport, Saved Policy TRN11B of the Reading Borough Plan 1998 and Policy CS20 of the LDF adopted Core Strategy 2008.
2. The expansion of the car parking area would have an adverse effect on the visual amenity of the street frontage in addition to setting an undesirable precedent for this area of Portman Road, contrary to Saved Policy CUD14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 1998 and Policy CS7 of the LDF adopted Core Strategy.

Reason 1 – Encouraging the use of the private car

The site currently provides 17 parking spaces. In accordance with the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the building would require 1 space per 50 square metres. The applicant has not submitted

details of the floorspace of the building, but officers estimate that it would require approximately 11 spaces. However, under exceptional circumstances the Local Authority can give consideration to a higher level of car parking.

The applicant states that there is significant congestion in the site vicinity caused by an excess of private cars parking on the public highway. The applicant has also submitted further information regarding the operational requirements of the businesses located within the building to justify why additional on-site parking is required. Therefore, in the circumstances the Council's Transport Strategy Section confirm that the provision of 5 additional parking spaces will not create a material change in trips to and from the site as employees are already travelling to the site by car and parking on the public highway. Officers agree with the view of the Transport Strategy Section that the applicant has submitted sufficient evidence to justify a higher parking provision.

Reason 2 – Visual amenity

The proposal involves the retention of a 3.3 metre landscaped buffer between the proposed car park extension and the rear of the public pavement. This is more generous than the 1.1 metre buffer at the neighbouring site. The amount of planting proposed has been increased following a request by officers, with a low wall removed. The visual impact of the proposal is considered to be acceptable.

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.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant.

Case Officer: Ben Pratley