

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Address: The Oracle Shopping Centre, Bridge St, Reading, RG1 2AG

Application No: 171556/FUL

Proposal: Erection of two tier plant deck with screen at levels 6&7 facing the Riverside and provision of two additional parking spaces at level 6 following removal of plant

Applicant: The Oracle Shopping Centre

Date received (valid from): 02/10/17

Target Decision date: 27/11/17

Case officer: Jonathan Markwell

1. Site Description and Surrounding Area

- i. The application site is a small area on the northern bank of the riverside at the Oracle at roof level (plant space) and an area of plant surrounded by car parking spaces at level 6.
- ii. The applicant is the Oracle Shopping Centre and car park, bounded by Broad St / Minster Street / Gun St to the north, Yield Hall Place to the east, the IDR to the south and Bridge Street to the west. The River Kennet runs through the site, either side of which is the public realm space associated with the Oracle, with a variety of largely restaurants, retails shops, a cinema and entrances (some to the Oracle, others to the associated multi-storey car parks) beyond this.
- iii. The wider site is subject to the following site constraints / designations, including:
 - The site is designated as an important area of open space (Policy RC14j)
 - Inside the primary shopping area (RC6)
 - Active frontages (RC10)
 - Inside the central core (RC6)
 - Within an area with archaeological potential (DM19)
 - Within an Air Quality Management Area (DM19)
 - Within a green network (DM17)
 - Within a British waterways consultation area (CS8)
 - Eastern tip of the application site is within the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area (CS33) the Yield Hall Place bridge is identified as having an important view to the south-west (towards the site) and the Duke Street High Bridge (just outside the red-line boundary) is identified as having important views in both eastern and western direction, as well as itself being Grade II listed.
 - Parts of the northern area of the application site are within St. Mary Butts / Castle St Conservation Area and adjacent to Grade II listed buildings fronting onto Gun Street, beyond which is the Grade I listed Church of St Mary / Grade II listed Queen Victoria Jubilee Fountain.
 - Flood Zone 2&3a/b (CS35)
 - Potential contaminated land (CS34)
 - South side of the River Kennet through the Oracle is part of the designated National Cycle Route 4
- iv. To the south-east of the site, the land is designated under policy RC4i as 'the Oracle Extension, Bridge St & Letcombe St' for 'development of the area between the River Kennet and Mill Lane for retail, with use of site at Letcombe Street for public car park'.

2. The Proposal

- i. Full planning permission is sought for the erection of a two tier plant deck with screen at levels 6&7 facing the Riverside and the provision of two additional parking spaces at level 6 following removal of plant at this point.
- ii. The applicant has confirmed that the proposed plant screen will have an open top, with access provided via the level 6 car parking area. No actual plant is proposed, aside from a new riser and replacement smoke vent. The applicant has stated that the exact plant has not yet been ascertained. A deck with screen for future plant is shown, together with specified spaces for future use by Units L11, U11 and R11 (Pizza Express), with that existing within the car park for unit R11 removed. Once plant is removed from within level 6 of the car park, two additional parking spaces are proposed at this point.

3. Consultation

- i. Public Consultation
A site notice was displayed at the site from 04/10/17, expiring on 25/10/17. No responses have been received.
- ii. Internal Consultation
Transport Planning
The proposal will not result in a loss of town centre car parking spaces as it will be located at levels 6&7 facing the Riverside. The provision of two additional parking are acceptable as they have sufficient manoeuvring space. Therefore, there are no transport objections to the erection of two tier plant deck with screen.

Environmental Protection
No objection.

4. Plans & Documents Considered

- i. The Council, in reaching its recommendation, has taken into consideration the following plans & documents:

P100 Rev A - Plant Location Plan Level 6, as received 02/10/17
P101 Rev A - Plant Location Plan Level 6, as received 02/10/17

E202 - External Riverside Elevation Existing, as received 12/09/17
A202 - External Riverside Elevation Proposed, as received 12/09/17

E106 Rev D - Level 6 Plan Existing and Demo, as received 12/09/17
A106 Rev D - Level 6 Plan Proposed, as received 12/09/17

Letter from Simply Planning, dated 05/09/17, as received 12/09/17
Email from Simply Planning, dated and received 02/10/17
Photograph of Pizza Express Caged Plant, as received 02/10/17

5. Relevant Planning History

None specific to this application.

6. 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.

7. Relevant Planning Guidance

- i. 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. The Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the Reading Local Development Framework '*Core Strategy*' 2008 (Altered 2015) and '*Sites and Detailed Policies Document*' 2012 (Altered 2015).

The '*National Planning Policy framework*' ('NPPF') 2012 states clearly that its content is to be a material consideration in the determination of applications. The 'NPPF' states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document) according to their degree of consistency with the 'NPPF' (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the 'NPPF', the greater the weight that may be given). Accordingly, the 'NPPF' and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

8. Relevant Policies

- i. The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National

National Planning Policy Framework;

National Planning Policy Guidance;

RBC Local Development Framework

Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015)

CS7 Design and the Public Realm

CS20 Implementation of the Reading Transport Strategy

CS24 Car/Cycle Parking

CS33 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

CS34 Pollution and Water Resources

Reading Centre Area Action Plan (2009)

RC5 Design in the Centre

Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015)

DM4 Safeguarding amenity

DM12 Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

Supplementary Planning Documents & other relevant documents/guidance

9. Appraisal

i. The main issues are considered to be:

- Design
- Amenity
- Transport

ii. Design and impact on the character of the surrounding area

The proposed deck and screen is proposed to be located alongside existing screening to plant already existing at these levels of the building overlooking the riverside. The proposed location, at one end of this particular façade, would mean the addition would not be particularly prominent or significantly unbalance the architectural composition of the building at this point. Although this is presently a degree of uniformity with the consistent position / gap of plant screens, this has already been partly eroded by other additions and the proposal, in itself, is not sufficiently visually harmful to resist the proposal. The proposed materials and finished appearance would match the existing. The proposal is considered too distant to impact on the setting of listed buildings or the nearby conservation area. With the above in mind the proposal is considered to comply with policies CS7, CS33 and RC5.

The element of the proposal involving the removal of an existing plant area is welcomed in design terms.

iii. Amenity

Given the applicant has stated that no plant is proposed as part of this application, no adverse noise impacts would occur as a result of the proposed works. EP officers raise no concerns with the proposals. No other adverse amenity impacts are considered to be likely, in line with policy DM4.

iv. Transport

As per the Transport Planning observations, the proposed provision of two additional parking spaces within the Oracle car park raises no transport issues.

10. Conclusion

- i. Having regard to the material considerations and all matters raised, the Local Planning Authority considers that the balance of considerations therefore weigh in favour of granting planning permission subject to conditions.

Recommendation

Grant Planning Permission subject to conditions;

11. Conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than three years from the date of this planning permission.

Reason: to prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions, and in accordance with Section 91 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

A202 - External Riverside Elevation Proposed, as received 12/09/17

A106 Rev D - Level 6 Plan Proposed, as received 12/09/17

Reason: because permission is granted in respect of the development as detailed in the approved plans only.

3. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used on the existing building.

Reason: in the interests of ensuring that the new development appears in keeping with the existing building in accordance with Policy CS7 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015) and Policy RC5 of the Reading Borough Central Area Action Plan 2009.

Informatives:

1. These works may require separate approval under the Building Regulations. Please contact the Council's Building Control service for further advice on (0118) 937 2449.
2. Your attention is drawn to the terms and conditions of this permission. Any development which is carried out but differs materially from the approved plans and details, or does not comply with any condition (s) or planning obligation (s) attached to the permission may result in the Council taking action to remedy the breach of planning control. If you are in any doubt please contact the council.
3. The determination of this planning application required no issues to be resolved subsequent to the validation of the application, so officers have worked positively and proactively to provide a recommendation for approval within the statutory timescale.
4. Complaints are commonly received about noise and dust caused by construction and demolition works, particularly working outside reasonable hours and smoke from bonfires associated with the burning of waste on site. The developer is reminded that construction and demolition associated with the approved development will be subject to environmental health law.