



Planning **Insight**

**62 Britton Street
Clerkenwell, London
EC1M 5UY**

T: 020 7993 4539

W: www.planninginsight.co.uk

Reading School Planning and Heritage Statement

Reading School Planning and Heritage Statement

Contents Amendment Record

This report has been issued and amended as follows:

Issue	Revision	Description	Date	Signed
1	0	Final Draft	2018	SK
1	1	Final	2018	PH

Contents

1	Introduction.....	4
2	Description of site and surroundings	5
3	Relevant Planning History	6
4	Planning Policy.....	8
5	Planning Considerations	13
6	Heritage.....	16
7	Conclusion	18

1 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Planning Insight on behalf of Reading School (hereafter referred to as 'the Applicant') to accompany a planning application to Reading Borough Council in respect of the proposed development at Reading School (the 'Application Site').

1.2 Full planning permission is sought for the installation of a new MUGA. The description of development is as follows:

"Installation of Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)"

1.3 The overall objective of the scheme is to improve the facilities used in connection with the educational institution while safeguarding neighbouring amenity, the character of the surrounding area and the setting of the nearby listed building.

2 Description of site and surroundings

- 2.1 The application site is located within the Reading Borough Council administrative area.
- 2.2 The subject site is located within the grounds of Reading school, closest to the Craven Road boundary.
- 2.3 The site is not located within a conservation area, however does contain a number of listed buildings including the Grade II listed chapel.
- 2.4 The site currently comprises hardstanding.



Figure 1 – Site as viewed from Craven Road



Figure 2 – Aerial Photo

3 Relevant Planning History

3.1 A search of Reading's online planning database for the Application Site was conducted. The following applications were identified.

- 171175PRE – New multi-use games area (MUGA). Response received 18/08/2017
- 141324/FUL - Demolition of existing chemistry building and firing range to allow the erection of a new two storey science block and associated services and landscaping, including temporary classrooms and temporary construction vehicle access off Addington Road for the duration of construction. The existing chemistry building is within the curtilage of a listed building and is connected to

this listed building by a glazed link. A new glazed link will be built joining the two buildings - Approved 14/11/2014

- 141325/LBC - Demolition of existing chemistry building and firing range to allow the erection of a new two storey science block and associated services and landscaping, including temporary classrooms and temporary construction vehicle access off Addington Road for the duration of construction. The existing chemistry building is within the curtilage of a listed building and is connected to this listed building by a glazed link. A new glazed link will be built joining the two buildings – Approved 14/11/2014

4 Planning Policy

- 4.1 This section of the Statement provides an analysis of the planning policy context in which the proposed development should be considered in accordance with the relevant planning legislation and national policy guidance.
- 4.2 Planning decisions in England and Wales should be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This statutory requirement is set out in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 4.3 The statutory development plan for Reading consists of:
- Core Strategy (2008 with 2015 alterations)
 - Sites and Detailed policies document (2012 with 2015 alterations)
- 4.4 While not forming part of the statutory development plan, the following documents remain important material considerations for the determination of planning applications in Reading:
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012);
 - National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) (2014);
 - Supplementary Planning Guidance and Documents; and
 - Local Plan Evidence Base.

- 4.5 The most relevant extracts of these documents are analysed in more detail below.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

- 4.6 On 27th March 2012, the government adopted the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The document provides a consolidated framework of planning policy which replaces most of the previous national Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance Notes.
- 4.7 The NPPF outlines the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It further states that permission should be granted for development where a plan is absent, silent, indeterminate or where relevant policies are out of date.
- 4.8 The framework indicates that proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved, and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF constitutes a material consideration in determining applications.
- 4.9 Planning decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiate through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles.

- 4.10 Paragraph 128 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.
- 4.11 Paragraph 131 requires local planning authorities, in determining planning applications, to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets make and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution.
- 4.12 Paragraph 132 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.
- 4.13 Paragraph 134 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

National Planning Practice Guidance (2014)

- 4.14 The Government launched the Planning Practice Guidance web-based resource in March 2014.
- 4.15 Paragraph 001 of Design states that as a core planning principle, plan-makers and decision takers should always seek to secure high quality design.
- 4.16 Protecting and enhancing the historic environment is an important component of the National Planning Policy Framework's drive to achieve sustainable development. The appropriate conservation of heritage assets forms one of the 'Core Planning Principles' that underpin the planning system.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Reading Borough Core Strategy (2008)

- 4.17 The Strategy sets out the spatial vision which supports the overarching vision and goals for Reading. The key policies contained within the Core Strategy which are considered relevant to the determination of the application are as follows:
- 4.18 CS7: Design and the Public Realm states 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. This includes axle, height and massing, architectural detail and material.
- 4.19 CS31: Additional and Existing Community Facilities states that proposals for new, extended or improved community facilities will be acceptable, particularly where this will involve co-location of facilities on a single site.

4.20 CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment states that historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced.

4.21 CS38: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands states that individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal.

Reading Borough Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012)

4.22 The Sites and Detailed Policies Document, adopted October 2012, with alterations adopted January 2015, provides detailed planning policies and identifies the specific development sites and designations necessary to deliver the Core Strategy. The following policies are considered to be relevant

4.23 DM4: Safeguarding Amenity states that development will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing of new residential properties in terms of noise and disturbance.

5 Planning Considerations

Principle for Development

- 5.1 CS31 'additional and existing community facilities' states that proposals for new, extended or improved community facilities will be acceptable, particularly where this will involve co-location of facilities on a single site. The proposal will improve the facilities on this site in connection with the educational institution.
- 5.2 The principle of the development is therefore considered to be acceptable, subject to a number of other policy considerations. These are discussed in detail below.

Neighbouring Amenity

- 5.3 DM4 'safeguarding amenity' states that development will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties in terms of noise and disturbance. The nearest residential properties are located a substantial distance from the application site. As such, any noise generated by pupils using the MUGA is not considered to cause any demonstrable harm to neighbouring amenity.
- 5.4 The pre-application advice noted that due to the respective proximity of these properties to the proposed site, and in the context of the hospital use, located opposite, the level of noise and disturbance, and effect from floodlights is unlikely to have a significant effect.
- 5.5 The development is not proposing any floodlights and so concern with regard to light will not arise.

Design and Appearance

- 5.6 The proposed MUGA would have a functional appearance, comprised of a muted colour that is comparable to similar facilities in other schools. The existing site currently comprises hardstanding, and as such provides no visual enhancement to the streetscene or the wider locality. The site benefits from a number of trees that substantially screen this area. Policy CS7 'design and public realm' states that developments will be assessed to ensure that they respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local distinctiveness. The proposal is considered to be an improvement on the existing arrangement, creating a functional use that will integrate well with the surrounding sports facilities, including the squash court and sports fields. This is considered to be in accordance with this policy, responding to the surrounding school context, landscaping and street elevation.

Scale

- 5.7 The proposed fencing will measure 4m in height. The application site is surrounded by buildings of at least two stories, and so the proposal will not appear dominant in the streetscene. The site is screened by a number of trees. Policy CS7 'design and the public realm' states that all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area. This includes considering the scale, height and massing of the proposal. Given the existing landscape screening and the height and colour of the proposed fencing, the proposal is of an appropriate scale that will maintain the character of the area, in accordance with this policy.

Ecology/Landscape

- 5.8 There are five trees located within close proximity to the site. The submitted drawings clearly identify the location of these existing trees and the works that will be conducted. Two trees will require minimal pruning to facilitate the 4m fencing proposed. One tree is currently mis-shaped and this will be correctly reformed. Policy CS38 'trees, hedges and woodlands' states that individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal. The proposal will retain all trees on site, while improving the quality of one. This is considered to be in accordance with this policy, preserving the established landscaping.

Access and Parking

- 5.9 Access to the site will be via the existing access to the squash courts which is located south of the application site. Access to the MUGA itself will be from two access doors on the north and south of the structure. The existing parking arrangements will remain unchanged.
- 5.10 The pre-application advice notes that should the MUGA be proposed solely for the use of the school then this will likely be acceptable. The proposal is not proposed to be used within the wider community, with its proposed use for the students of the existing school only. The parking arrangement is therefore considered to be acceptable.

6 Heritage

Impact on the setting of the listed building

- 6.1 The pre-application response received from the council confirmed that listed building consent would not be required. However, the acceptability of the MUGA was noted as being dependent on the overall size, fencing structure, and the scale of the floodlights.
- 6.2 Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Policy CS33 'protecting and enhancement of the historic environment' states that planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. The immediate setting of the listed chapel is seen in the context of the squash court and car park. The proposal will not alter either of these features. The application site forms part of the wider setting of the building.
- 6.3 The MUGA will comprise an area of 233sqm and be located 18m from the chapel. As the proposal effectively forms a fenced structure, the only elements visible above ground level will be the fencing measuring 4m in height. A substantial proportion of this fencing will be not be discernible when viewed from the nearby listed chapel, screened by the existing squash court. As noted on the drawings, the squash court is approximately 5m to the eaves, and so will entirely obscure the fencing behind. Only 25% of the structure will be visible, which will comprise a muted colour that assimilates well with the surrounding landscaping.

- 6.4 Given the proximity from the site, the proportion of the proposal that will be visible, and the muted materials proposed, the development is considered to preserve the setting of the listed building. No floodlights are proposed and so in this respect will present no harm to the setting.
- 6.5 It is not considered that the proposal would have any adverse impact on the significance, special character or setting of the listed building, in accordance with this policy CS33, preserving the established character of the asset.
- 6.6 The other listed buildings on site are located a substantial distance from the proposal. As such the proposal is not considered to impact on the setting of these buildings.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The proposed development comprises the Installation of Multi Use Games Area (MUGA).
- 7.2 Overall the proposed development will provide a high quality development at this site to improve the facilities used in connection with the educational institution while safeguarding neighbouring amenity, the character of the surrounding area and the setting of the nearby listed building.
- 7.3 The proposal is considered acceptable with regards to the relevant policies of the Development Plan and with regards to the NPPF and therefore planning permission should be granted.