

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ITEM NO. 9

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 10th October 2018

Ward: Abbey

Application No.: 181606/DEM

Address: Central Swimming Pool, Battle Street, Reading, RG1 7NU

Proposal: Application for prior notification of proposed demolition of Central Swimming Pool down to ground level.

Applicant: Reading Borough Council

Date Valid: 11/09/18

Application target decision date: 28 day period expired on 09/10/18; as such an initial response was sent on 24/09/18 advising that prior approval was required (and not given at that time) and agreeing an extension of time on the determination of the prior notification application until 12/10/18 (to enable the proposal to be considered by the Planning Applications Committee).

26 week date: 15/03/2019

RECOMMENDATION

That prior approval is required and is given, subject to conditions including:

1. The development must be carried out within a period of 5 years from the date of this decision notice.

Reason: To comply with Class B, B.2, (b) (ix) (aa), Part 11, Schedule 2, Article 3 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 (as amended).

2. The demolition shall be carried out in all respects in accordance with the submitted details including the following documents and plans:

5163105/103 Site Location Plan, as received 11/09/18

717001/001 Rev R2 Site Plan, as received 11/09/18

717001/002 Rev R2 South and North Elevations, as received 11/09/18

717001/003 Rev R2 East and West Elevations, as received 11/09/18

5163105/101 Site Plan – Phase 2, as received 11/09/18

5163105/102 Site Plan – Completion, as received 11/09/18

Safe System of Work incorporating Risk Assessments and Method Statement by Erith Contractors Ltd Ref D8334 Version 1, as received 11/09/18

Traffic Management Plan incorporating Risk Assessments and Traffic Control Measures by Erith Contractors Ltd Ref D8334 Issue 01 dated 19/07/18, as received 11/09/18

Ecological Impact Assessment by Windrush Ecology Ref W2738_rep_Central Swimming Pool, Reading_02-02-18, dated 02/02/2018, as received 11/09/18

Reason: To comply with Class B, B.2, (b) (viii) (aa), Part 11, Schedule 2, Article 3 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 (as amended).

Informatives:

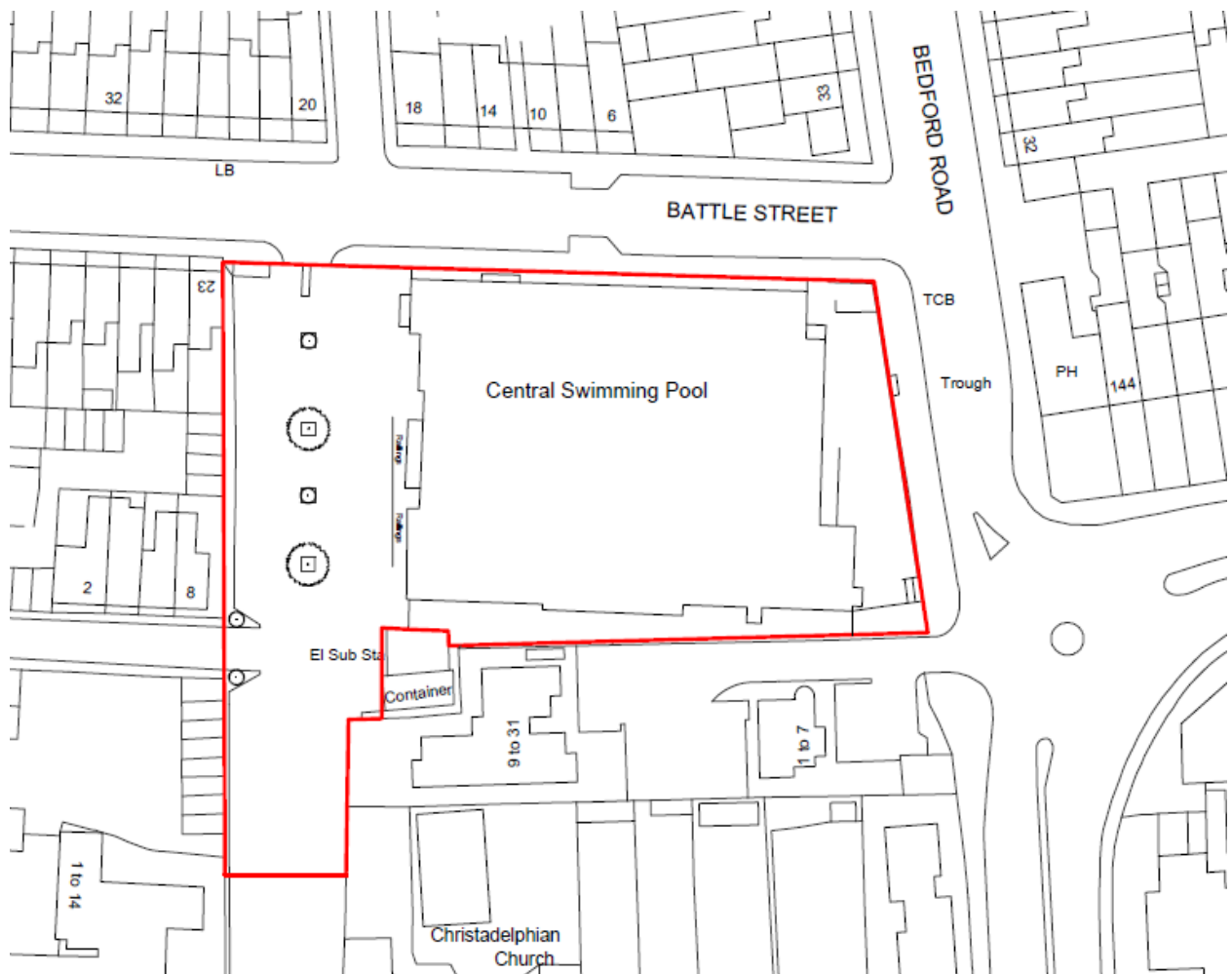
1. The attention of the applicant is drawn to Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980, which enables the Highway Authority to recover expenses due to damage caused by extraordinary traffic.
2. Any works affecting the highway shall be in accordance with Reading Borough's Council's document "Guidance Notes for Activities on the Public Highway within the Borough of Reading". The applicant should be aware that compliance with this document is mandatory and licences to work on the highway will only be issued if the requirements contained within it are met. A copy can be obtained at within the Transport Strategy area of the Transport Section on the Reading Borough Web Site.
3. To reaffirm information already detailed within the Safe System of Work incorporating Risk Assessments and Method Statement by Erith Contractors Ltd Ref D8334 Version 1, as received 11/09/18 document, the hours of demolition and associated deliveries should be restricted to the hours of 08:00hrs to 18:00hrs Mondays to Fridays, and 09:00hrs to 13:00hrs on Saturdays, and not at any time on Sundays and Bank or Statutory Holidays.
4. No materials or green waste produced as a result of the clearance of the site, demolition works or construction works associated with the restoration of the site should be burnt on site.
5. Please note that the consequence of condition 2 is that the methods of demolition (from a transport perspective), tree protection works and noise and dust measures shall be maintained and adhered to throughout the course of the development. Furthermore, the finished appearance of the site post development shall be a levelled site backfilled with crushed material, with a solid painted hoarding around the perimeter of the former building, as detailed on 5163105/102 Site Plan – Completion, as received 11/09/18
6. A Demolition Notice will be required under S.80 of the Building Act 1984, prior to any demolition works taking place.
7. The Local Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant allow prior approval to be given within the agreed extended timescale for the decision to be issued.
8. For the avoidance of doubt, this decision represents the local planning authority giving the applicant prior approval for demolition, in accordance with Class B, B.2, (b) (vii) (bb), Part 11, Schedule 2, Article 3 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 (as amended).

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The site comprises the Central Swimming Pool, which fronts onto both Battle Street and Bedford Road. The building has been vacant since its closure in January 2018, with temporary re-provision of swimming facilities provided at Rivermead Leisure Complex. The site is primarily accessed from Battle Street, with vehicular access at this point into a car park which extends as far south as Oxford Road.
- 1.2 The application site building is not listed, nor located within a conservation area. However, the boundary of the Russell Street / Castle Hill Conservation Area is nearby on the south side of Oxford Road, with a terrace of Grade II listed buildings adjacent to the swimming pool car park. The application site is located within the adopted Reading Central Area Action Plan. The site is within an air quality

management area and Oxford Road is an allocated cycle route. The surrounding area comprises a mix of uses, predominantly residential in nature.

- 1.3 It is also noted that the site is allocated within the emerging New Local Plan (within the Submission Draft Reading Borough Local Plan March 2018). More specifically, emerging policy CR14a states the site will be developed for residential use once replacement swimming provision has been addressed. Furthermore, development should: 1) Conserve and where possible enhance the setting of the Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings; 2) Take account of nearby scale of development, including higher density development to the east; 3) Address noise impacts on residential use; 4) Address air quality impacts on residential use; 5) Avoid overlooking of the rear of existing residential properties; and 6) Take account of the potential impact on water infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required. The site size is detailed as 0.55 ha, with the earmarked number of dwellings being 80-120.
- 1.4 The proposals are being considered at Planning Applications Committee by virtue of being a Council's own (Regulation 3) application. The site in relation to the wider urban area is shown below, together with a site photograph and aerial view.



Site Location Plan



Site photograph from the junction of Bedford Road and Battle Street (19/09/18)



Aerial view looking west

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The application comprises Prior Notification under Part 11, Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) ("the GPDO") for the demolition of the Central Swimming Pool down to ground level.
- 2.2 The supporting information submitted with the application has detailed that demolition works are scheduled to commence on 15/10/2018 and are expected to be completed by 21/12/2018. At the time of an unaccompanied officer site visit

around the perimeter of the site on 19/09/2018 a solid 2m high hoarding had already been erected around accessible areas of the site boundary, and initial preparatory works had commenced. The agent has clarified that at this time the contractor was securing the site and preparing the building for demolition, ahead of consent, as the building has large quantities of asbestos. Site services were also being isolated during this period up to demolition works being scheduled to commence on / after 15/10/2018.

- 2.3 Once demolition works are completed the site will be levelled and backfilled with compacted crushed material. The solid hoarding already present at the site will be retained around the footprint of the demolished building. The hoarding would not extend around the car park area, with this retained for public use).
- 2.4 It is confirmed that the proposals are not liable to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 Although there have been numerous applications at the site in the past, only the following are considered to be of relevance:
- 3.2 031246 - Proposed redevelopment to include demolition of existing swimming pool complex and erection of residential development of 89 units comprising 67 private dwellings and 22 affordable dwellings. Outline Permission Granted 12/10/2004. No reserved matters application was ever submitted.
- 3.3 Furthermore, a pre-application enquiry in relation to the demolition of the building was made earlier in 2018.

4. CONSULTATIONS

i) RBC Transport

- 4.1 The Transport Development Control section has assessed the documentation submitted against the standard criteria which would usually be secured via a construction method statement condition. In short, the proposals are considered acceptable on the proviso that the measures are maintained and adhered to throughout the course of the development.
- 4.2 More specifically, each of the criteria are detailed below, together with a brief commentary and analysis (in italics):
 - a) Space on site where vehicles of site operatives and visitors can be parked with details of how site operatives and visitors will be required to make use of the parking area provided.
Contractor's car park area illustrated on Site Plan Phase 2 Plan Drawing No 5163105/01. Limited parking on site. Traffic Management Plan states that either minibuses or car sharing will be promoted to reduce the need for parking spaces. This is deemed acceptable.
 - b) Location on site for storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development.
Drawing No 5163105/01 illustrates the site compound will be used for loading and unloading of materials and storage of plant and materials. It should be noted that no loading or unloading is permitted on any part of the public

highway. The Traffic Management Plan states that loading and unloading shall only be carried out in designated areas. This is deemed acceptable.

- c) The erection and maintenance (including removal of any graffiti or fly posters) of security hoarding around the site.
Heras fencing and hoarding illustrated on plan Drawing No 5163105/01. This is deemed acceptable.
- d) Any footpath closures or road closures needed during construction
Drawing No 5163105/01 illustrates the closure of the footpath fronting the site (Battle Street). The Transport Management Plan states that the Highway Authority will be consulted and the required Licence(s) obtained. In principle this is acceptable however, the requirements of Section 8, of the adopted Guidance Notes for Activities on the Public Highway must be adhered to and Reading Borough Council's Streetcare Team would need to be contacted with details of the closure and plans illustrating alternative arrangements. This is deemed acceptable.
- e) Wheel washing facilities on site
A wheel washing facility is illustrated adjacent to the proposed main vehicle access/egress. Inspections of the road should be undertaken to ensure the public highway remains clear of dirt and debris. This is deemed acceptable.
- f) Given the close proximity to the town centre, the Demolition Method Statement must state that deliveries will not be made to site between 8.00am 9:15am and 5:00-6:00pm, Monday to Friday to avoid peak traffic hours.
A route to and from the site shall be provided utilizing the classified road network as much as possible (IDR / Chatham Street). The traffic Management Plan provides this information and confirms deliveries will not be undertaken during the times stated above. This is deemed acceptable.

ii) RBC Environmental Protection

- 4.3 There are potential Environmental Protection concerns relating to noise and dust arising from development. The method statement provided is detailed and adequate noise and dust controls are proposed to assure officers that neither should be an issue if their proposals are adhered to. The standard proposed hours of working are also accepted. I therefore have no objections to the proposed demolition, subject to a condition securing the works to be carried out in accordance with the details submitted.

iv) RBC Planning Natural Environment

- 4.4 Section 3.2.3 of the Ecology Impact Assessment describes the trees on site, all within the car park, and states that they are of ecological value at site level. Both the annotated photograph on Page 5 of the Safe System of Work document and the Site Plan – Phase 2 drawing 5163105/101 show that hoardings will be used around these trees to protect them during demolition. Consequently, no concerns are raised on the proviso that the tree protection measures are implemented prior to commencement of demolition and retained throughout (as indicated in the information submitted).

v) RBC Ecology Consultant

- 4.5 The ecological report submitted with this application has been undertaken to an appropriate standard. It concludes that bats are unlikely to be present in the building and that the demolition is unlikely to affect any protected or priority species or priority habitats. As such, there are no objections to this application on ecology grounds.

vi) RBC Building Control

- 4.6 It has been confirmed that a section 80 demolition notice has been submitted to RBC Building Control. Confirmation is awaited at the time of writing as to this being granted.

vii) Public consultation

- 4.7 As per Part 11, Class B, B.2 (b) (iv) of the GPDO 2015 (as amended), the site notice (for which it is the responsibility of the applicant to erect) must be in place for not less than 21 days in the period of 28 days from which the application was submitted. The applicant confirmed that two site notices were erected on the day of the submission – 11/09/18. Two site notices were witnessed during the unaccompanied officer site visit on 19/09/18, one on the Bedford Road hoarding and one on the Battle Street heras fencing. No responses have been received at the time of writing. Should any responses be received subsequent to the completion of this report and before the Planning Applications Committee meeting, these will be reported in an update report.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1 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'.
- 5.2 Part 11, Schedule 2 of the GPDO requires the works to be carried out in accordance with the submitted details where it is determined that Prior Approval is not required. Where Prior Approval is required, it is in accordance with the details approved. If no response is received within 28 days, then the applicant receives prior approval by default. Given that the 28 day deadline was a day in advance of the Planning Applications Committee meeting, officers provided an initial response to the agent on 24/09/18, advising that prior approval was required, and not given at that time. Instead, it was agreed that there would be an extension of time on the determination of the prior notification application until 12/10/18. This enables the proposal to be considered by the Planning Applications Committee, as required by the scheme of delegation (as a Council's Own development), whilst potentially not compromising the anticipated start date of the demolition works (15/10/18 – subject to approval of this application by the Planning Applications Committee).
- 5.3 The application has been assessed against the following policies:
- 5.4 **National**
National Planning Policy Framework (2018)
National Planning Policy Guidance (2014 onwards)
- 5.5 **Reading Borough Local Development Framework – Adopted Core Strategy (2008) (Altered 2015)**

- CS1 Sustainable Design and Construction
- CS2 Waste Minimisation
- CS7 Design and the Public Realm
- CS20 Implementation of the Reading Transport Strategy
- CS33 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
- CS34 Pollution and Water Resources
- CS36 Biodiversity and Geology
- CS38 Trees, Hedges and Woodlands

5.6 **Reading Central Area Action Plan (2009)**

- RC5 Design in the Centre

5.7 **Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012) (Altered 2015)**

- SD1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- DM4 Safeguarding Amenity
- DM12 Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters
- SA14 Cycle Routes

5.8 **Other relevant documentation**

Russell Street / Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal (2004)
 Submission Draft Reading Borough Local Plan March 2018 – specifically emerging policy CR14a – Central Swimming Pool, Battle Street

6. APPRAISAL

6.1 The main issues are considered to be:

- i) Principle of demolition
- ii) Design/impact on the nearby conservation area/heritage assets
- iii) Transport
- iv) Ecology and trees
- v) Amenity
- vi) Other matters – equality

i) Principle of demolition

6.2 The site is allocated within the emerging new local plan for redevelopment. The emerging plan is at an advanced stage, albeit it has limited weight at the time of writing with the examination public hearings presently taken place. Subject to specific site concerns, the demolition of the existing vacant building is considered to be acceptable as a precursor to redevelopment taking place. The form of the future redevelopment is not considered as part of this proposal, which is solely for demolition.

ii) Design/impact on the nearby conservation area/heritage assets

6.3 In terms of the impact of the demolition on the character and appearance of the area, the existing building is not of any specific architectural or historic significance. Moreover, its vacant nature is not considered to contribute positively to the area and thus its loss and non-replacement raises no concerns in this specific instance. The proposals indicate that a solid hoarding, as is present at the site at

the moment, will be in place subsequent to the demolition taking place. The hoarding is necessary to keep the site secure and to maintain the amenity of the street/area. Providing this occurs, as will be secured via condition, there is considered to be no conflict with policies CS7, CS33 (in terms of the nearby conservation area and listed buildings on Oxford Road), or RC5.

iii) Transport

- 6.4 As per the Transport Planning observations provided above at section 4i above, the proposals are considered appropriate in all transport-based regards, providing the demolition is carried out in accordance with the details submitted. This will be secured via condition.

iv) Ecology and trees

- 6.5 In line with observations summarised at sections 4iv and 4v above, specialist officers have considered the proposals from ecology and tree perspectives and are satisfied with the proposals. Again, this is on the basis of the demolition being carried out as stated, which will be secured via condition.

v) Amenity

- 6.6 As already alluded to in the design section above, the proposed solid hoarding will secure the site once demolition is complete, so as to minimise opportunities for noise/disturbance and anti-social behavior. During the demolition stage both Transport and Environmental Protection colleagues have advised that the submitted details are sufficient to maintain the amenity of nearby occupiers. Accordingly the proposals are considered acceptable in this regard.

vi) Equality

- 6.7 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular application.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 It is considered that following the assessment of the details submitted prior approval is able to be given for the demolition of the building, subject to conditions.

Drawings and Information:

5163105/103 Site Location Plan, as received 11/09/18
717001/001 Rev R2 Site Plan, as received 11/09/18
717001/002 Rev R2 South and North Elevations, as received 11/09/18
717001/003 Rev R2 East and West Elevations, as received 11/09/18
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Highway Plan dated 19/12/2017, as received 11/09/18
Section 80 Building Control Form, as received 11/09/18
Site Notice dated and received 11/09/18

Case Officer: Jonathan Markwell

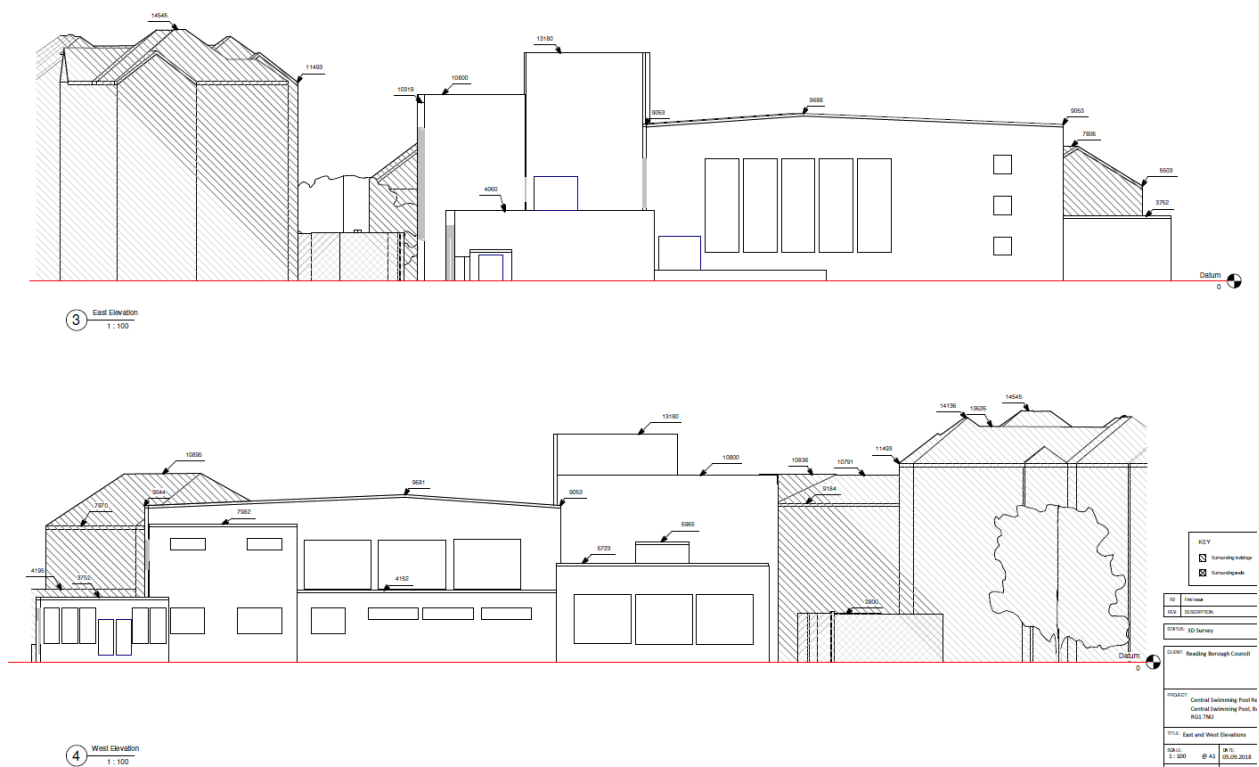
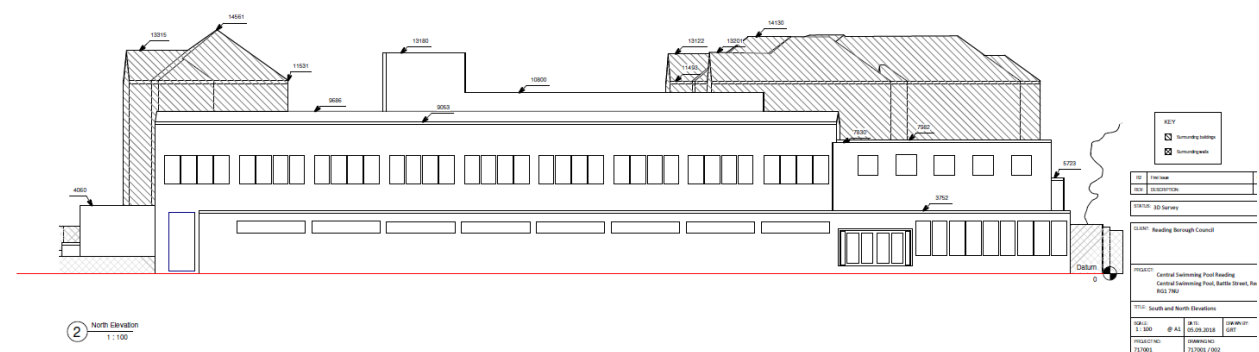


Site photographs from Battle Street (above) and Bedford Road (below) (19/09/18)

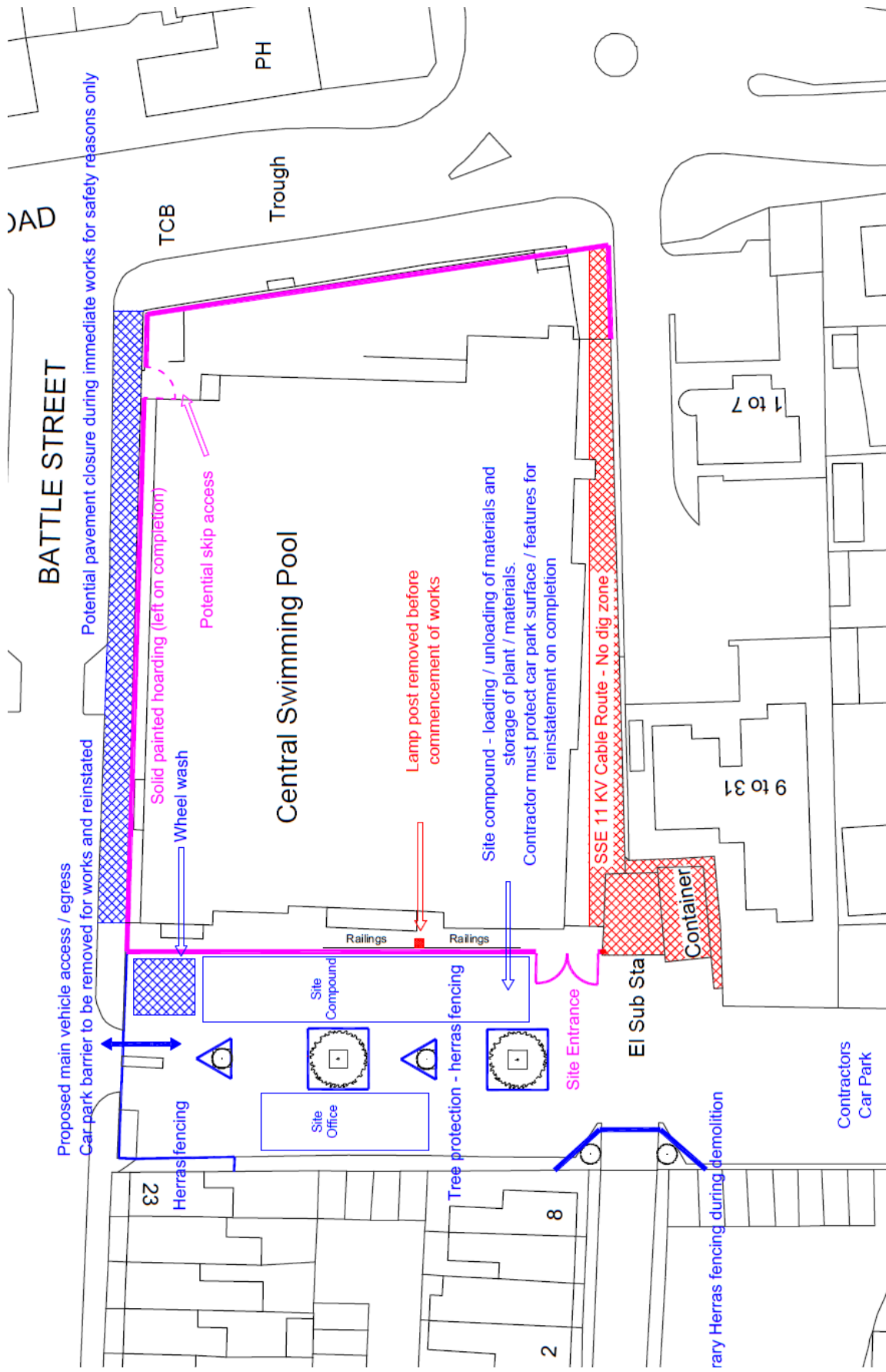


Below: Aerial image looking south

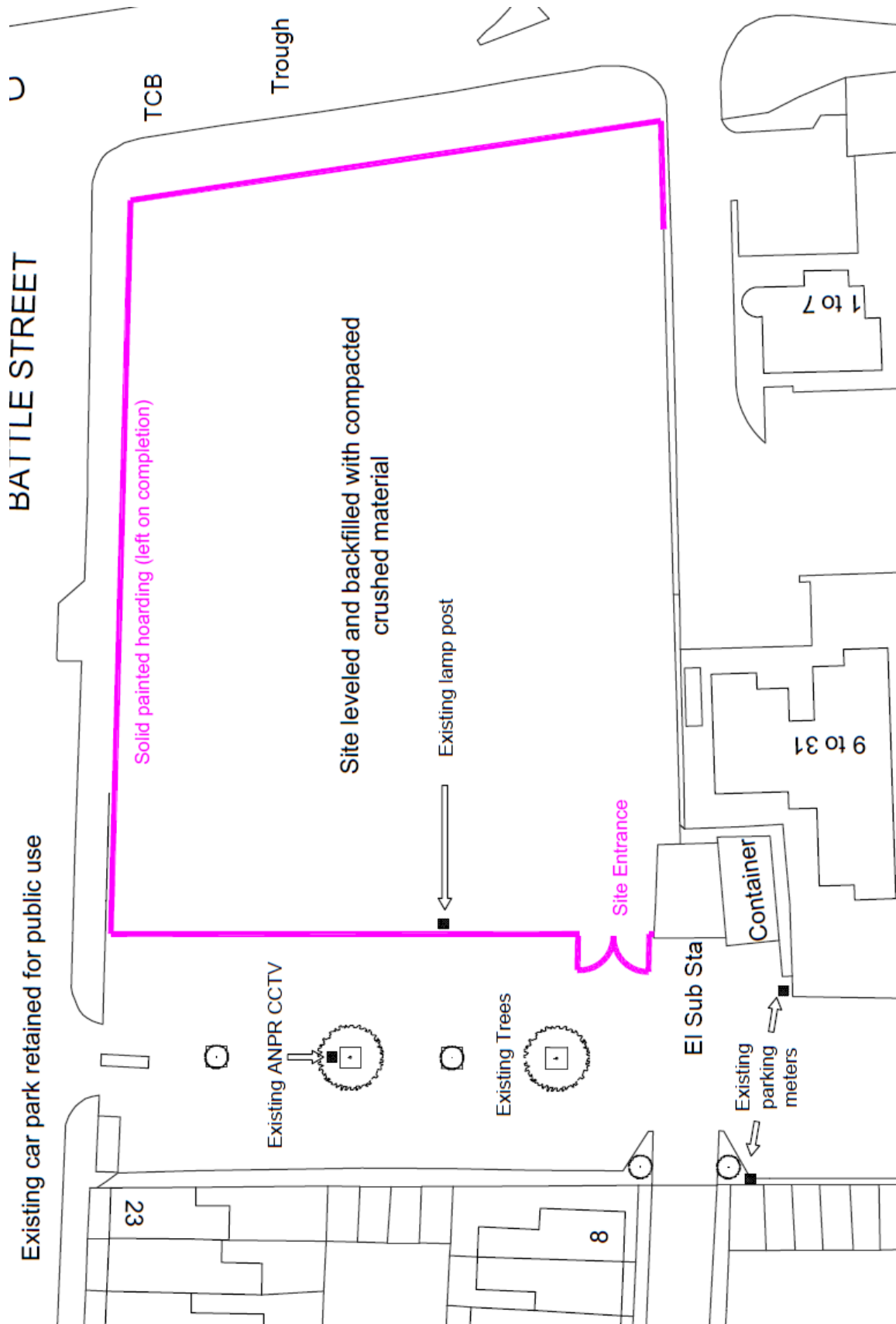




Existing east and west elevations



Details during demolition works



Site plan once the proposed demolition works are complete.