
From: Vigar, Stephen [<mailto:Stephen.Vigar@reading.gov.uk>]
Sent: 01 June 2017 17:12
To: Tracy Smith <Planning@jppc.co.uk>
Cc: Alex Cresswell <alex.cresswell@jppc.co.uk>
Subject: 170794/FUL - 13-21 Crown St and 22 Silver Street, Reading
Importance: High

Dear Mr Cresswell,

Thank you for your application.

Unfortunately pre-application discussions (170182) were not concluded and concerns remain, as follows:

- The corner lacks the quality of design approved under 160868 – there is a lack of form and detailing addressing the corner. Large blank areas exist and there is little to differentiate this part of the building from the two wings which proceed from it. This needs to be improved with better fenestration and a more clearly defined entrance as per previous scheme. **This element has now been redesigned to create a much stronger corner which is clearly differentiated materially from its two wings with a clearly defined entrance at its base. Note that the roofline over all the balconies has also been redesigned to give greater emphasis to the discreet vertical elements all the way up to roof level which is also something Steve Vigar requested previously, and we think improves the proposal further.**
- A fundamental concern remains over the segregated entrance to the Affordable Housing units. The proposed AH entrance fails Policy CS3 in terms of social cohesion and national policy supporting mixed and balanced communities. In addition to the in principle concerns over segregation, the layout is also very inconvenient for access from surrounding streets. A visitor to the AH units coming from the town centre would need to walk the full length of the site, turn along the access road, continue through the car park and join the proposed footpath leading to the rear door. It would appear that an access to the AH units from the main entrance could be formed by changing Unit 9 and those above it. Dual aspect flats could be formed in place of AH units 1 and 2 (and those above them) to compensate. **The internal layout has been revised so that the main entrance can be shared.**
- The AH units appear to have no direct stairwell access to basement car park/cycle store. **See item above, the lift core is now shared.**
- It is considered that the proposed west facing bedroom windows at the western end of the site would prejudice development of the adjacent plot, which also forms part of the allocated housing site. Unit 1 of the market housing (and those above) could be changed to a smaller unit. The side facing windows may be acceptable as secondary windows serving habitable rooms, or serving a bathroom. The displaced three bedroom units should be provided elsewhere, possibly in place of units 1 and 2 (AH) at the southern end of the building. **There are two windows serving secondary**

bedrooms on this elevation - these windows will have obscured glass below eye level which is considered an acceptable approach.

- Street level, particularly to Crown Street needs improvement. The proposal involves a full storey of blank wall at ground floor level. This compares unfavourably with the doorways, large windows and lower ground floor level (46.95) approved under 160868 and would harm the quality and appearance of the street. The lack of soft landscaping to the Crown Street frontage (western end) needs improvement. The 'blank' wall (resulting from the submerged basement parking and the desire to keep the ramp to a minimal length/ impact on the internal courtyard) is set back from the street and fronted by a boundary wall with railings at back of pavement and soft landscaping buffer within. The landscaping in this zone has now been redesigned and significantly improved - which will help to mitigate this area of blank wall. The wall will of course be viewed in the context of having much animation (balconies etc) occurring above it.
- The fifth floor extends further west than previously ending in an unusual and uncharacteristic form wrapped around the stairwell and smoke vent. This needs cutting back to the limits set by 160868. Now redesigned.
- Something with better texture and visual interest than fibre-cement cladding is required – possibly sheet metal or a contrasting brick. Please also confirm details of window frame colour. It would be useful if a materials sample panel could be submitted at application stage. Fibre-cement cladding (such as Eternit's 'Equitone Natura') has been used on numerous prestigious projects nationally and is therefore considered wholly appropriate in this instance as a foil/ relief to the predominant brickwork - certainly better and with greater longevity than certain rendered alternatives in the immediate locality. A material image board is currently being prepared for submission.
- Proposed levels need to be shown on plan and elevation drawings. Added. A topographical survey (the original one for 160868 would suffice) should be formally re-submitted. Now submitted.
- Please provide section details through the façades as per previous scheme 160868 – drawing ref 1122/F16/EL/08/Rev- Sections updated
- Please clarify which windows are 'obscured/fixed' on the plan drawings to avoid any confusion. Please provide a drawing equivalent to 1122/F16/EL/06/Rev- showing the design of the angled privacy windows. Notes added; drawing on privacy windows added.
- Disabled access to the main entrance needs clarifying. This will be detailed to be 'ambulant disabled' in acc with Part M; level wheelchair access is available from the basement (via lift) or at the rear (via the gently sloping ramps), all as Part M.
- The bin store should be fully contained with roof and secure doors to control noise, odour and vermin. Bin store now redesigned.

The consultation period has not ended. It may well be the case that further changes are required once consultee responses have been received.

I would be grateful if you would confirm receipt of this email. If you wish to clarify what is required, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Kind regards

Steve Vigar

Principal Planning Officer

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