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Principal Planning Officer
Planning Section Directorate of Environment and Neighbourhood Services
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices,
Bridge Street,
Reading, RG1 2LU

19699/A1/JH/PF
24 February 2016

Dear Jonathan,

ORACLE RIVERSIDE PUBLIC REALM

Following discussions with the Environment Agency I am writing to clarify our position in respect of the detailed design of the public realm at Oracle Riverside.

The public realm proposals include substantial new areas of timber terracing. This component of the proposals plays a key role in the proposed upgrade of the riverside, enhancing access to the waters edge and encouraging greater use of the riverside areas.

The openings within these terraces have been designed to allow the free flow of water in a flood event. The ratio of 'open' area to 'solid' slat is in accordance with Environment Agency guidance. The EA have requested that the proportion of open area is increased over and above that currently proposed. As a client and design team we have reviewed this request. We are able to increase the proportion of open area in the timberwork below the proposed pavilion building. Revised drawings are enclosed to illustrate this proposal.

Across the remainder of the public realm we do not feel it is appropriate to increase the proportion of open area within the proposed design of the timber terraces for the following reasons:

- i. Increasing the width of the openings will create the risk of children's fingers becoming entrapped, crushed and potentially broken between the individual slats. This would create an unacceptable safety risk.
- ii. The risk identified in item i. above will only be removed if the opening between slats is widened to more than 25mm. At this width the bench would become uncomfortable to use as a seating area compromising one of its primary functions.
- iii. Opening the gaps between slats will increase the ability to view through the timberwork to the void beyond substantially diminishing the visual enhancements which the scheme is designed to deliver.

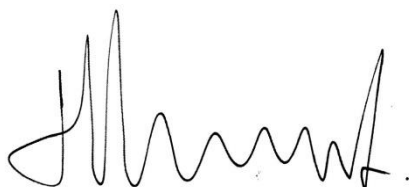
We would reemphasise that the riverside area at Oracle is the focus of an intensive management regime. The gaps between the slats will be inspected and cleaned frequently maintaining the operational effectiveness during flood events.

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We trust this clarifies our position in relation to the design of the timber terraces at Oracle Riverside.

Please do not hesitate to give me a call you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Haxworth', with a stylized, wavy line for the surname.

JOHN HAXWORTH
Partner