

Planning and Design Statement Temporary Accommodation

University of Reading

March 2016

Turley

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Client

University of Reading

Our reference

UNIW3010

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning and Design Statement has been produced by Turley, on behalf of the University of Reading, to support the:

“Erection of temporary teaching and office accommodation comprising 3,638 (GEA) square metres of floor space over 2 floors on former Rural History Centre site”

- 1.2 The application site is located on the western part of the Whiteknights campus on the site of the former Rural History Centre to the south of Chancellor’s Way. Until very recently the application site was occupied by the Rural History Centre (RHC), the demolition of which was completed in autumn 2015.
- 1.3 The need for temporary accommodation has been identified following a detailed feasibility and project management review of a number of capital investment projects which are proposed at the Whiteknights Campus over the next five years. The establishment of temporary accommodation is a critical first phase to support future development and to enable the decanting of existing teaching services and facilities from those buildings identified for refurbishment and /or redevelopment.

Planning Application Supporting Statement

- 1.4 The remainder of this statement is structured as follows:

- Site and Surroundings;
- Proposed development;
- Planning Policy Framework;
- Pre-application Advice;
- Planning Assessment; and
- Overview and Conclusion.

- 1.5 This Planning and Design Statement forms part of a suite of documents submitted in support of the application. Therefore, it should be read in conjunction with the following submitted documents:

- Drawing pack including site plan, floorplans, elevations, roof plans, topographical landscaping, construction and drainage plan prepared by Built Off-Site;
- Site Location Plan prepared by Turley;
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement prepared by David Challice Consulting;
- Transport Statement prepared by RPS;

- Sustainability Statement prepared by Built Turley;
- Ecological Assessment and Update Letter Report prepared by RSK; and
- Construction management Plan prepared by Built Off Site

1.6 The planning application comprises a comprehensive submission that has been compiled to address all relevant planning considerations. This statement reviews the submission documents against the relevant national and local planning policy frameworks and sets out the overall planning case to support the Council in being able to grant planning permission for the proposed development.

2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 This section sets out a description of the site and surroundings for the proposed development.

The University of Reading

- 2.2 The University of Reading is an internationally important educational institution set across three campuses within the administrative areas of Wokingham Borough Council and Reading Borough Council. The University's three campuses are Whiteknights, London Road and Greenlands.
- 2.3 The University of Reading was awarded its charter in 1926 and is in the top 1% of universities in the world. It will be celebrating its 90th anniversary in 2016. It is a research-intensive university with nearly 90% of its research deemed to be of international standing.
- 2.4 The University currently has 17,040 students from 141 different nationalities and nearly 4,000 members of staff.
- 2.5 The former Rural History Centre site which is the subject of this application is located within Whiteknights Campus and falls within the administrative area of Reading Borough Council.

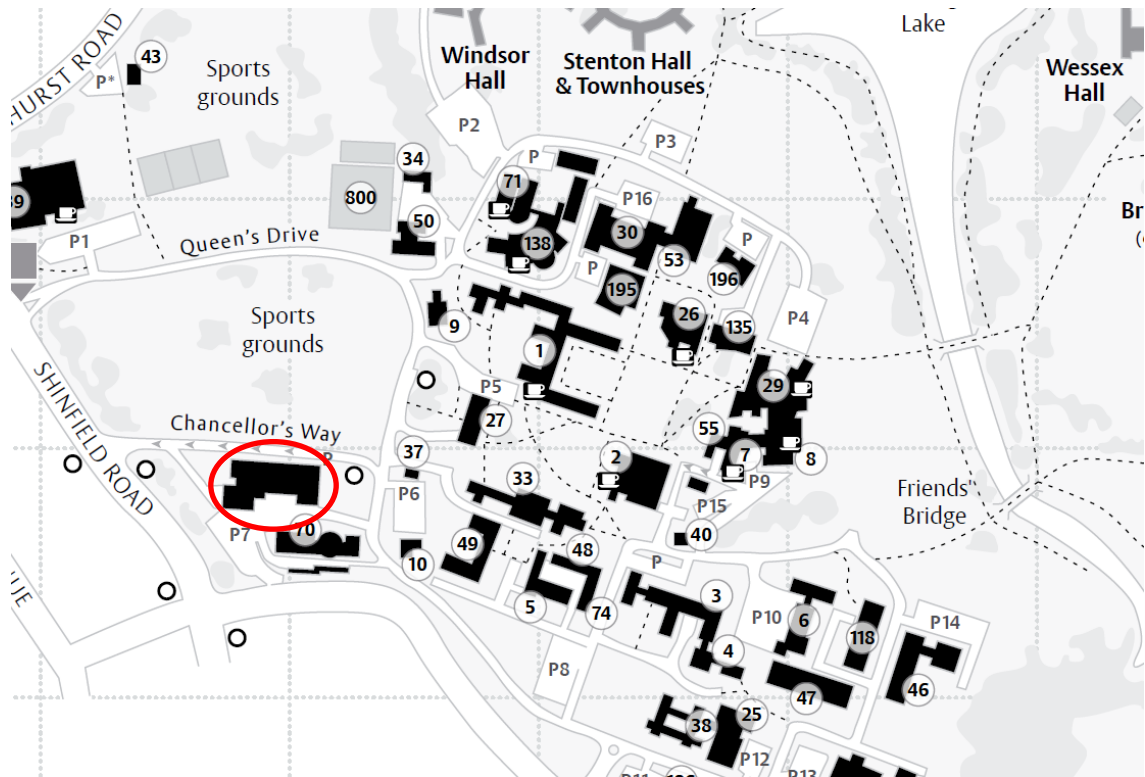
The Whiteknights Campus

- 2.6 Whiteknights is the University's main campus set within 130 hectares of parkland and is the heart of Reading University life. Whiteknights provides:
- cutting-edge teaching and learning facilities;
 - extensive indoor and outdoor sports facilities;
 - a wide choice of catered and self-catered student accommodation; and
 - three specialist museums which house collections relating to zoology (Cole Museum), Greek archaeology (Ure Museum) and rural life (Museum of English Rural Life).

The Application Site

- 2.7 The site is generally flat comprising the former RHC buildings set within surrounding landscaping and tree cover. The area subject to this application comprises approximately 0.6 hectares.
- 2.8 The application site is located on the western part of the Whiteknights campus and is well connected to and easily accessible from the main campus road network to the east. Shinfield Road is located immediately to the west and Chancellor's Drive operates one way east-to-west with traffic exiting onto Shinfield Road. The site is also closely related

to the central part of the Whiteknights Campus where the proposed development projects such as Library, URS building, and Henley Business School are located.



- 2.9 The site was formerly occupied by the Rural History Centre (RHC) which was demolished in autumn 2015 having been vacant for some time previously.
- 2.10 The site was identified as the most suitable location to accommodate the proposed temporary accommodation because:
- It is well-related to existing facilities on campus including the buildings which are to be refurbished, extended and replaced;
 - It has, until very recently been occupied by the Rural History Centre Buildings (which were demolished in autumn 2015);
 - There is convenient access to services (drainage, water supply, etc. which previously served the Rural History centre Buildings; and,
 - The site is currently largely hard-surfaced and (having been occupied by buildings until very recently) is devoid of any features of ecological or bio-diversity interest.
 - The site has previously benefitted from planning permission for a larger, permanent development (5-storey, 150 bedroom hotel and conference centre).

Access

- 2.11 The site is accessed from The Chancellor's Way, a private road. This operates one-way from the internal campus road network to the A327 Shinfield Road. The site is served by an existing access point from Chancellor's Way to the west of the proposed temporary accommodation.
- 2.12 As noted above, the site is also closely related to the centre of Whiteknights Campus and is a logical location to accommodate temporary decanting of teaching and offices from existing buildings which are to be extended, altered or replaced over the next few years.

Surroundings

- 2.13 The site is located adjacent to two small areas of green space: one to the west separates the site physically and visually from Shinfield Road whilst the other provides visual and physical separation from the Russell Building, to the south east, and the main of the Campus. To the north of the site, on the opposite side of Chancellor's Way, are the University sports pitches and beyond these are Queen's Drive and the new Queen's Drive car park.
- 2.14 There are trees of varying species, age and size surrounding the footprint of the former RHC. These have been fully taken into account in the proposals and more details can be seen within the accompanying Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement.
- 2.15 Reading public footpath no.9 runs along Chancellor's Way where it passes the application site. The footpath crosses the borough boundary within the campus and continues through the campus to connect with Whiteknights Road at Earley Gate.

3. Planning History

- 3.1 We have undertaken a planning history review of the application site and identified a number of applications of relevance to the current proposals.
- 3.2 In December 2006, University of Reading submitted an outline planning application (ref. 06/01443/OUT) for *“Erection of a 151 guestroom hotel and conference centre (access, layout and landscaping)”*. The application proposed:

- A Conference Centre;
- A Hotel (4 storeys) with 151 rooms and associated facilities;
- Car parking for approximately 75 cars on-site;
- Approximate floor space:

Conference facility	1,602 sqm
Hotel facility	9,931 sqm

- 3.3 This outline planning application was refused permission in April 2007 on the following grounds:
- (i) Vehicle parking provision for the hotel, conference centre and staff was substantially lower than the standards in the Local Plan and would result in high levels of on-street parking and resultant adverse effects; and
 - (ii) Incomplete legal agreement for the appropriate provision of contributions towards necessary infrastructure.
- 3.4 It is noted that the reasons for refusal did not relate to the principle of development on this site, nor the scale of development but to detailed matters of car parking and S106 contributions.
- 3.5 In June 2007, University of Reading resubmitted a second outline planning application (ref. 07/00785/OUT) for *“Erection of a 151 guestroom hotel and conference centre with adjacent car parking and a new carpark on Queens Drive totalling 400 spaces (access, scale, layout and landscaping) (re-submission of 06/01443/OUT)”*. The application proposed:
- A Conference Centre;
 - A Hotel (4 storeys) with 151 rooms and associated facilities;
 - Car parking for approximately 75 cars on-site;
 - Car parking for 400 cars (located north of Queens Drive); and
 - Approximate floor space:

Conference facility	1,602 sqm
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Hotel facility	9,931 sqm
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- 3.6 This outline planning application was approved in September 2007. See Appendix 1 for a copy of the planning permission for the hotel and also a copy of the approved site layout plan and elevations.
- 3.7 University of Reading did not implement this permission and the consent subsequently expired in September 2010.
- 3.8 Several issues relevant to the consideration of the hotel development proposal remain relevant when considering alternative proposals for the development of the site as follows:
- The proposed development which would have attracted additional vehicle movements to the site was not considered unacceptable in terms of its impact on the surrounding highway network;
 - Sufficient parking provision could be provided to meet the needs of the development; and
 - The scale of the proposed development at 5-storeys, and its visual impact were considered acceptable
 - It was possible to accommodate a sizeable building proposed development would without adverse impact on any trees in the nearby surroundings.
- 3.9 Demolition of the former Rural History Centre buildings was undertaken in autumn 2015. The University made an application to the local planning authority to establish whether Prior Approval was required regarding the method of demolition. That application was accompanied by a demolition method statement, tree survey, tree protection plan, ecology and bat survey reports and information regarding service disconnections. On the basis of the submitted information the local authority determined that Prior Approval was not required (local authority reference 151284). A copy of the decision is attached as Appendix 2.

4. Proposed Development

Background

- 4.1 In July 2008 the University published a Development Plan for the Whiteknights Campus which was to underpin its planned capital construction programme for the period 2008-2018.
- 4.2 A number of the early stage projects identified in the 2008 Campus Development Plan have been delivered and the University now has greater certainty regarding the scale, timing and delivery of some of the further projects. These include:
- refurbishment and extension of the Library (planning permission granted in December 2015)
 - extension and refurbishment of the URS building
 - development of a new Health and Life Sciences Building
 - subsequent removal of obsolete buildings from the estate
- 4.3 A number of projects will be delivered in parallel over the five year period 2016 – 2020. In order to facilitate these developments the University needs to provide some temporary teaching and office accommodation to accommodate activities which will be decanted from the affected buildings.
- 4.4 The University has consulted with Reading Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council on its development proposals for the Whiteknights Campus and has prepared a discussion document which identifies the strategic projects that are expected to be brought forward, and will require applications for planning permission over the period to 2021.
- 4.5 The temporary accommodation is identified as an essential development to support the wider delivery of the proposed projects subject of the masterplan. The University recognises that although the accommodation will be temporary it will nonetheless be a feature of the campus for several years. It is therefore recognised that:
- Due to its location within the Campus, the accommodation will be required to be of a suitable design quality;
 - Consideration must be given to the layout to maintain the surrounding green infrastructure and as many of the mature trees as possible; and
 - Transport considerations relating to the proposed decanting of students and staff from existing buildings must be carefully considered, including any impact on parking and overall traffic flows.

Proposal

Amount of Development

- 4.6 The proposed temporary accommodation will provide 3,638 (GEA) square metres of floor space that will be provided over 2 floors. The site layout plan by Built Off-Site (See Appendix 3) sets out the proposed location and footprint of the temporary accommodation.
- 4.7 The accommodation will comprise the high quality modular buildings that connect to form a fully functioning facility with teaching, office and student space.
- 4.8 Due to the nature of the scheme and modular accommodation, much of the fabrication will be completed off site and this will significantly reduce the time period required to construct the building on site.

Use

- 4.9 The identified needs for decant accommodation underpinned the evolution of the design concept to ensure that the proposed temporary accommodation meets the specific needs of the University. In addition, careful thought has been given to ensure that the University's requirements are met in a manner which respects planning considerations.
- 4.10 The Site Layout Plan demonstrates that the scheme which provides 3,638 sq. m (GEA) of floor space can be accommodated on the existing footprint of the former Rural History Centre without encroaching on the surrounding vegetation.
- 4.11 The building will provide the following facilities which are shown on the General Arrangements Plan:
- 15 classrooms/lecture theatres (ranging from 24-150 seat capacity)
 - 37 staff offices
 - 2 laboratories (1 x projects lab; 1 x fluids lab)
 - 1 computer room
 - Informal seating/'break out' areas
 - 4 independent research rooms
 - 3 internal meeting rooms
 - Male and Female WC facilities on each floor and showers on each floor
- 4.12 The former Rural History Centre site was chosen because:
- It is well-related to existing facilities on campus including the buildings which are to be refurbished, extended and replaced;
 - It has, until very recently been occupied by the Rural History Centre Buildings (which were demolished in autumn 2015);

- There is convenient access to services (drainage, water supply, etc. which previously served the Rural History centre Buildings; and
- The site has previously benefitted from planning permission for a larger, permanent development (5-storey, 150 bedroom hotel and conference centre).

Access

- 4.13 The existing vehicular access and hardstanding to the west of the temporary accommodation will be used to provide disabled parking facilities and the access widened locally as required to suit access requirements.
- 4.14 Public Footpath 9 runs along Chancellor's Way and the existing footpath on the south side of Chancellor's Way will provide convenient pedestrian access to the temporary accommodation when approaching from the main campus to the east (or Shinfield Road to the west). The eastern approach (from the centre of the Whiteknights Campus) will be the principal approach for the majority of users of the building. In recognition of the importance of this approach, the design incorporates a curved pathway leading to the building entrance and also proposes landscape planting along this approach. The building itself features an entrance which is set back from the main plane of the east elevation but is articulated through the use of colour and the incorporation of an entrance canopy which returns along the north elevation.

Appearance and Layout

- 4.15 A high quality insulated render finish has been selected in a range of colours. The predominant colours are light and dark grey which will give the building an understated appearance. These tones are accentuated by the use of red in keeping with the University's branding strategy which utilises a bespoke PANTONE® Reading Red.
- 4.16 Elevational design features include the selective use of colour and the varied pattern of window and door openings to avoid the uniformity which can sometimes be associated with temporary modular construction. As noted above, to provide a focal point on the building, and in order to provide interaction with the surroundings, the main access to the building is stepped uses a simple wrapped canopy to add interest to the built-form.
- 4.17 The layout of the building itself has been given careful consideration and the modules will be arranged on two principal axes. The deeper plan element runs east west and allows the creation of larger classrooms and teaching spaces at both ground and first floor. At the west end of the building, a narrower 'wing' runs on a north south axis and provides smaller teaching spaces and offices.
- 4.18 The layout creates some interest around the building and allows for the creation of a small, sheltered courtyard on its southern side.
- 4.19 Existing trees and landscaping are to be retained around the building. Landscape enhancement works will be undertaken in key areas immediately adjoining the building including the planting of a curved landscaped bed adjacent to the building entrance and the creation of new grassed areas. Retention of existing mature trees will ensure that the building is seen in the context of a well-landscaped setting.
- 4.20 Visualisations of the proposed buildings are provided below.



View of main entrance from Chancellors Way



View of proposed courtyard on south side of building

- 4.21 Overall it is considered that the modular construction is well designed. Its varied plan form, careful use of colour, varied fenestration patterns and the incorporation of simple design features, such as the entrance canopy, result in a pleasing building which will sit comfortably in its setting. The building will have an attractive external environment enhanced by retention of existing trees and new landscape planting.

- 4.22 The University is committed to ensuring that the temporary accommodation will be removed from the site once the permitted temporary period expires and will agree an appropriate strategy for restoration of the site once the buildings have been removed.

Construction

- 4.23 A fundamental aspect of the temporary accommodation project is to minimise the impact on students and staff of Whiteknights Campus. In addition to the inherent benefits of off-site construction of the modular units therefore, it is intended to construct the buildings during the University summer holidays (June-September).
- 4.24 It is proposed that Chancellor's Way will be closed for through traffic for the duration of the temporary building construction works in order to prevent interaction between general campus travel movements (pedestrian, cycle and vehicle) and construction traffic, including abnormal loads.
- 4.25 The closure of Chancellor's Way will also allow for the private road to undergo full resurfacing and improvement works that is proposed in two phases.
- 4.26 During the construction phase, it also required to temporarily divert or close Public Right of Way Footpath 9 along Chancellor's Way for the same reason. It is anticipated a Traffic Regulation Order will be made to temporarily divert or close the Public Right of Way (PRoW) due to potential danger/safety concerns to the public.
- 4.27 To ensure all construction works are undertaken in a considerate manner, and to minimise the impact of construction on the operation of the campus, campus users and the wider local community, a Construction Method Statement (CMS) prepared by the Built Off-Site has been submitted with the application. The CMS provides details of proposed: construction traffic routing; construction parking; arrangements for loading and unloading and storage of materials; hours of working and details of site establishment.

5. Planning Policy Framework

Planning Policy Review

- 5.1 The Whiteknights Campus is located across both Wokingham and Reading Borough Council administrative areas. The application site is located within the Reading administrative area. Therefore, the policy review that follows relates to the Reading Development Plan only.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into effect on 27 March 2012, replacing the majority of Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance.
- 5.3 The Ministerial foreword to the NPPF is clear that the purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development. It notes that:

“Sustainable means ensuring that better lives for ourselves don’t mean worse lives for future generations”

And that

“Development means growth. We must accommodate the new ways by which we will earn our living in a competitive world”.

- 5.4 Paragraph 2 of the NPPF states that planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It goes on to note that the NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 5.5 Paragraph 6 of the NPPF restates that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Subsequent paragraphs go on to note that there are three dimensions to sustainable development – an economic role; a social role and an environmental role – and that economic, social and environmental gains should be sought simultaneously through the planning system.
- 5.6 The ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ is described as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. For decision taking this means approving proposals which accord with the development plan without delay and, where the development plan is absent, silent or out-of-date, granting planning permission unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably out-weigh the benefits.
- 5.7 Paragraph 17 of the NPPF identifies twelve core planning principles which should underpin both plan making and decision taking. These include the principles that planning should:

- proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs;
 - not simply be about scrutiny but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to embrace and improve the places in which people live their lives;
 - always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
 - encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed provided that it is not of high environmental value; and
 - actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are, or can be made, sustainable.
- 5.8 Section 1 deals specifically with “Building a strong, competitive economy”. The government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Local planning authorities are encouraged to plan positively for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high-technology industries.
- 5.9 Section 4 promotes sustainable transport and decisions should be taken based on:
- whether the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up; whether safe and sustainable access can be achieved for all people; and
 - whether improvements can be undertaken that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of development.
- 5.10 Paragraph 32 is clear that development should only be refused or prevented on transport grounds where the residual impacts of development are severe. Paragraph 35 requires that developments should be located and designed where practical to give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements and have access to high quality public transport facilities, create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians and to accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and supplies.
- 5.11 The requirement for proposals to achieve good standards of design is carried forward from former PPS1 in Section 7. The government re-emphasises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people (paragraph 56). Focus is placed upon high quality and inclusive design and decisions should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles (Paragraphs 57 and 60). Paragraph 63 requires weight to be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area. Applicants are expected to have worked closely with these

directly affected by the proposal to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community (Paragraph 66).

- 5.12 Section 10 requires development take account of landform, layout, orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.
- 5.13 Section 11 encourages the effective re-use of previously developed land.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 5.14 Planning Practice Guidance was published in March 2014 and assists with the interpretation and implementation of the NPPF.

Development Plan

- 5.15 The Reading Borough Development Plan comprises the Core Strategy (adopted 2008) and the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (adopted 2012). There are also a number of relevant supplementary planning documents related to the implementation of the Development Plan policies.

Core Strategy (2008)

- 5.16 Policy CS1: Sustainable Construction and Design confirms that new development will be acceptable where the design and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change. The policy sets out the following requirements:
- Commercial development to meet BREEAM 'Very Good' as a minimum;
 - Developments of over 1,000sqm to ensure that 50% of the provision meets BREEAM 'Excellent' standards;
 - Maximise energy efficiency and energy conservation measures in design, layout and orientation to reduce overall energy demand;
 - Developments of over 1,000sqm to incorporate on-site generation of energy from renewable sources and energy efficiency design measures to off-set at least 20% of predicted CO2 emissions from the estimated energy usage of the completed and occupied development;
 - Reduce mains water use and demonstrate water conservation measures to meet appropriate BREEAM standards; and
 - Incorporate sustainable urban drainage facilities and techniques as part of the layout of a development as appropriate and as advised by the EA, including minimising the size of impermeable areas so that peak run-off and annual water run-off is reduced where possible and in any case is no greater than the original conditions of the site.

- 5.17 Policy CS2: Waste Minimisation requires development to demonstrate measures to minimise the generation of waste in construction, use and life of buildings and promote more sustainable approaches to waste management.
- 5.18 Policy CS3: Social Inclusion and Diversity encourages major developments to incorporate measures to enhance social inclusion. Public involvement in planning will be encouraged.
- 5.19 Policy CS4: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development requires new development to be at a scale, density and intensity appropriate to its level of accessibility. Sites with lower levels of accessibility should be upgraded through means including high quality pedestrian routes.
- 5.20 Policy CS5: Inclusive Access requires development to be accessible to all potential users, including disabled people.
- 5.21 Policy CS7: Design and the Public Realm requires development to be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. It sets out a criterion to guide and assess the design of development, including addressing:
- Layout;
 - Landscape;
 - Density and mix;
 - Height and massing;
 - Architectural details and materials;
 - Character;
 - Ease of movement; and
 - Adaptability.
- 5.22 Policy CS9: Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities provides a platform to use planning obligations to secure appropriate arrangement for the provision of infrastructure necessary to mitigate the impact from development.
- 5.23 Policy CS20: Implementation of The Reading Transport Strategy (Local Transport Plan 2006-2011) requires development to contribute appropriately to the provision of a balanced transport network.
- 5.24 Policy CS22: Transport Assessments indicates that transport assessments will be used to ensure appropriate provision for works and contributions to ensure an adequate level of accessibility and safety by all modes of transport from all parts of a development, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling.

- 5.25 Policy CS24: Car/ Cycle Parking states that maximum car parking standards and cycle parking requirements will be applied to development.
- 5.26 Policy CS28: Loss of Open Space resists the loss of open space or development that jeopardises its use or enjoyment by the public. In exceptional circumstances, development may be permitted where it is clearly demonstrated that replacement open space, to a similar standard, can be provided at an accessible location close by, or that improvements to recreational facilities on remaining open space can be provided to a level sufficient to outweigh the loss of the open space.
- 5.27 Policy CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment seeks to protect and enhance historic features and areas of historic importance, including setting.
- 5.28 Policy CS34: Pollution and Water Resources will only permit development where it would not damage the environment through air, land, noise or light pollution where it would preserve or ideally enhance ground and surface water quality; and where existing water resources, sewerage and wastewater treatment infrastructure are adequate to support the proposed development.
- 5.29 Policy CS36: Biodiversity and Geology requires development to retain, protect and incorporate features of biodiversity or geological interest found within the application site.
- 5.30 Policy CS38: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands seeks to protect individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands and to extend the Borough's vegetation cover.

Reading Sites and Detailed Policies Document

- 5.31 Policy SD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development confirms that the Council will approve development that accords with the Development Plan without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.32 Policy DM1: Adaptation to Climate Change requires applicants to demonstrate how design incorporates measures to adapt to climate change. This includes the use of natural heating and ventilation and minimising surface water runoff.
- 5.33 Policy DM2: Decentralised Energy requires development over 1,000sqm to consider the inclusion of CHP, or biomass-fuelled heating scheme, or other form of decentralised energy provision, within the site, unless it can be demonstrated that the scheme is not suitable or feasible for this form of energy provision. Development of this size will be expected to link to existing CHP or a district heating energy networks if present, subject to feasibility.
- 5.34 Policy DM3: Infrastructure Planning provides greater detail on where planning obligations will be sought and directed.
- 5.35 Policy DM4: Safeguarding Amenity seeks to protect residential amenity from detrimental impacts, including:
- Privacy and overlooking;

- Noise and disturbance;
 - Dust and fumes; and
 - Crime and safety.
- 5.36 Policy DM12: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters provides detail on proposals involving a new or altered access onto the transport network, improvement works to the transport network, the creation of new transport infrastructure or the generation of additional trips on the transport network. Consideration will be given to the effect on safety, congestion and the environment.
- 5.37 Policy DM17: Green Network states that new development shall demonstrate how the location and type of open space, landscaping and water features provided within a scheme have been arranged such that they maintain or link into the existing Green Network and contribute to its consolidation. Such features should be designed to maximise the opportunities for enhancing this network. All new development should maximise opportunities to create new assets and links into areas where opportunities are as yet unidentified on the Proposals Map.
- 5.38 Policy DM18: Tree Planting encourages the provision of trees within the application site, or off-site in appropriate situations.
- 5.39 Policy DM19: Air Quality seeks that development improves air quality and reduces the effects of poor air quality.
- 5.40 Whiteknights campus is included within the South Reading framework and is specifically addressed through Policy SA6: Whiteknights Campus, University of Reading. The policy recognises that the University of Reading is a national and international educational establishment of strategic importance which will continue to adapt and expand over the plan period. The Whiteknights Campus as shown on the Proposals Map will continue to be a focus for development associated with the University of Reading. Such development may include additional student, staff, teaching, research and enterprise accommodation, infrastructure and services, and sports and leisure facilities among other uses. There will also be improvements to access, including rationalisation of vehicle entrances and exits.
- SA6 requires development to accord with the following criteria:
 - Areas of wildlife significance and current or potential green links will be retained or enhanced;
 - The safety of those using the campus will be maintained or enhanced;
 - There will be no significant detrimental impact on neighbouring residential properties; and
- 5.41 The loss of undeveloped areas on the site will be weighed against the benefits of development to the wider community.

- 5.42 Policy SA14: Cycle Routes encourages improvements to existing identified cycle routes where opportunities exist.

Revised Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (2011)

- 5.43 The SPD seeks to promote high standards of sustainable design and construction, providing detail on development plan policies. It also brings together relevant national guidance.

Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document (2011)

- 5.44 The document establishes a number of zones based on accessibility. The campus is located in Zone 3 (Secondary Core Area) and maximum parking standards are as follows:
- 1 per 1.5 FTE teaching staff;
 - 1 per 3 non FTE teaching staff; and
 - 1 per 20 students.
- 5.45 Where FTE students live within Halls of Residence on site, D1 student parking provision will be deducted from requirement and provision will be based on the maximum capacity of a building (at any one time). In all developments of up to 200 spaces 3 spaces or 5% of total capacity, whichever is greater, are to be disabled spaces.
- 5.46 Minimum cycle parking standards are as follows:
- 10% of building users (FTE staff and students) up to 500; Plus
 - 7% for building users in the range 501-1000; Plus
 - 5% for building users over 1000.
- 5.47 Motorcycle and moped parking provision for major developments will be provided based on at least 2% of the maximum total car parking provision.

Employment, Skills and Training Supplementary Planning Document (2013)

- 5.48 The purpose of this document is to set out the obligations which will be sought from developers at the construction and end user phases of major development to contribute towards a range of employment, skills and training measures to mitigate the impacts of development to ensure that local people can better access job opportunities arising from new development.

S.106 Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (2013)

- 5.49 This Interim SPD focuses on contributions from residential and commercial development. The Council, however, can still seek obligations if they can make a case that they are necessary and justified to mitigate a defined impact arising from the proposed development.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 5.50 Reading brought their Community Infrastructure Levy into effect in April 2015. There is no charge for the type of development proposed.

6. Pre-application Advice

6.1 Pre-application advice has been sought and meetings have been held with Reading Borough Council to inform the preparation of the development proposals. The University has also undertaken a significant amount of internal consultation with key users and stakeholders to fully understand building user requirements.

6.2 The details of the pre-application discussions with Reading Borough Council are detailed as follows:

July 2015

6.3 A meeting was held between Reading Borough Council and University of Reading on 23rd July 2015. At the meeting the University outlined the projects it planned to bring forward on Whiteknights Campus over the next few years. The projects included the temporary accommodation within the RBC administrative area as a critical first phase to support the proposed developments.

October 2015

6.4 A formal pre-application submission was made to Reading Borough Council on 21st October 2015.

6.5 A pre-application meeting attended by Reading Borough Council, the University of Reading, Turley and RPS was held on 12th January 2015 on site.

6.6 On the 23rd February 2016 Turley received a written response from Reading Borough Council (see **Appendix 4.**) The response set out the policies which would be relevant in the determination of a planning application.

6.7 Key points arising from the pre-application process include:

- It would appear to be appropriate to provide temporary accommodation of around 3400 sq.m. on the site of the former Rural History Centre as this quantum of accommodation could be provided over two storeys without giving rise to an unacceptable impact on trees.
- Arboricultural information would be required at application stage to address any conflicts between modular buildings and tree canopy or roots;
- The two storey scale of buildings as shown in pre-submission plans reflected that of demolished building on site and was considered appropriate;
- It was also considered appropriate to increase the height up to 4 storeys (if required) to compensate for limited opportunity to extend the buildings laterally;
- If the proposal would result in an increase in trips appropriate provision of car and cycle parking would be required;

- A Construction Management Plan was deemed necessary to demonstrate how the Public Right of Way immediately adjacent to the site might be affected;
- Due to the temporary nature of the scheme, the local planning authority would be open to considering a relaxation of BREEAM and sustainability requirements provided that a justified statement explaining why the proposed development is unable to meet BREEAM 'Excellent' was provided; and
- A five year temporary period was appropriate (and it would be possible to extend this further by means of a future planning application should the University so require).

6.8 The officer requested the following information to be provided as part of any planning application:

- Tree Survey;
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment;
- Transport Statement
- A Construction Management Plan;
- A desktop Archaeological Assessment
- A bat survey along with consideration to potential ecological enhancements;
- A sustainability statement; and

6.9 These aspects have been addressed in the supporting information and summarised where necessary in this statement.

January 2016

6.10 In January 2016 the University held a further meeting with planning and transport officers of Reading and Wokingham Borough Councils and explained its proposals for investment in a number of significant projects at the Whiteknights Campus over the next five years. Projects discussed included the New Temporary Accommodation, the URS Building, the Library and the new Health & Life Sciences Building.

Internal Engagement

6.11 From the inception of the project the University of Reading has undertaken a significant level of internal engagement, which has been an important part of the design process to ensure that proposals are able to meet user requirements as well as comply with the relevant planning policies. The main aim of the internal consultations has been to inform the design and function of the temporary accommodation. Those involved in the development of the scheme have included:

- Fire Safety Advisor;

- Energy and Sustainability Staff;
- Grounds Staff;
- The Equality and Disability Department;
- The University Energy and Sustainability Team; and
- The Maintenance Team.

External Engagement

- 6.12 The University has provided local residents in the vicinity of the application site with advance notice of the planning application for the temporary accommodation and provided details of a contact within the University's Estates and Facilities Team with whom they can discuss the application.

7. Planning Assessment

- 7.1 This section of the Planning Statement assesses the temporary accommodation proposals against the relevant planning policy framework.

Principle of Development

- 7.2 The site is located within western part of the Whiteknights Campus, which is covered by Policy SA6 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012).
- 7.3 Policy SA6 recognises the national and international importance of the University and the need for it to adapt and expand over the plan period. Therefore, the policy sets out an overall presumption in favour of sustainable development at the campus which will be a focus for University development. The principle of providing additional University related accommodation on the application site is therefore well-established in local planning policy.
- 7.4 Policy SA6 sets out a number of sub-criteria which development proposals should accord with in order to benefit from the presumption in favour of allowing the University to develop on the campus. These criteria require that:
- Areas of wildlife significance and current or potential green links will be retained or enhanced;
 - The safety of those using the campus will be maintained or enhanced;
 - There will be no significant detrimental impact on neighbouring residential properties; and
 - The loss of undeveloped areas on the site will be weighed against the benefits of development to the wider community.
- 7.5 The proposal to provide the temporary accommodation does not conflict with any of these criteria.
- 7.6 In addition to the 'in principle' policy acceptability of the proposed development, it should be borne in mind that the site previously housed the University's Rural History Centre and should be considered as previously developed land within the boundary of the campus.
- 7.7 Permission has historically been granted, but not implemented, for construction of a five-storey, 150-bed hotel and conference on the application site. Details of that permission are provided at Section 3 and Appendix 1 of this report. This previous permission is a material consideration when considering the current proposal and demonstrates the acceptability in principle of providing a new building of significant scale on the site.

Policy CS1

- 7.8 The requirements of Policy CS1 have been considered through the design stage of the proposals. During pre-application discussions, it was agreed that the modular accommodation would be of good design quality. It was further discussed that the temporary nature of the accommodation represented a material constraint to the achievement of full policy compliance in respect of sustainability. The LPA commented :

“It is acknowledged that the temporary nature of the scheme may make it difficult to comply with some aspects of the BREEAM standards. The Council would be open to considering a relaxation of the requirements, provided that these are fully explained and justified in detail. This is on the basis that the buildings would be of a temporary nature and this would mitigate long term environmental harm that may otherwise occur.”

- 7.9 The principle of the proposed development is acceptable and in accordance with the NPPF and Policies CS1 and DM1. In addition to confirming that the principle is acceptable this section also reviews the detailed aspects of the proposal against the following planning policy considerations:

- Scale;
- Design;
- Sustainability;
- Travel;
- Ecology;
- Landscaping;
- Drainage;
- Archaeology; and
- Amenity.

Scale

- 7.10 The proposed development comprises 3,638 (GEA) square metres of floor space over two storeys on the footprint of the former Rural History Centre.
- 7.11 The building will have a finished floor level set at 70.580 AOD and the roof height will be at 77.730.AOD. The building will thus have a height of 7.15m.
- 7.12 The two storey building will have little perceptible visual impact beyond the campus, particularly given that until recently the site was occupied by the Rural History Centre which was of similar scale and footprint.

- 7.13 The two-storey scale of the building falls well-within previously established scale parameters for the site as established in pre-application discussions and having regard to the previous permission for a five-storey hotel building.
- 7.14 The overall scale, height, mass and function of the building will reflect that of the former building on site and the proposals accord with the requirements of Policies CS4 and CS7.

Design

- 7.15 As described at paragraphs 4.6 to 4.21 above, , the proposals will provide temporary accommodation which is of a good quality and has an attractive overall design and appearance
- 7.16 The University recognises that, although temporary, the accommodation will become an integral part of the campus whilst it is on site and that the temporary accommodation will be an important element of some students' university experience. The temporary accommodation building should, in the University's opinion, have a design character and quality that reflects its role within the campus.
- 7.17 We consider that the use of design features such as include the selective use of colour and the varied pattern of window and door openings will avoid the uniformity which can sometimes be associated with temporary modular construction. Other features such as the creation of a building with wings of different plan form and depth on different axes, the articulation of the main entrance and the creation of an external courtyard create a building with genuine visual and design interest.
- 7.18 A key aspect of the design approach is to retain the majority of the existing trees and vegetation on site adjacent to the building. The modular form of construction proposed, and the fact that the building is to be sited on an area of existing hard-standing, makes it easier to reduce impacts on trees that are to be maintained. The form and footprint of the building give rise to a proposal where encroachment into the surrounding landscaped area is minimal.
- 7.19 The scheme will provides a high quality, temporary building that meets the requirements of Policies CS7 and SA6.

Sustainability

- 7.20 The University is committed to delivering a sustainable campus estate.
- 7.21 The separately submitted Energy and Sustainability Statement provides further detailed information on the sustainability credentials of the proposed development including setting out the approach to meeting BREEAM requirements.
- 7.22 The Energy and Sustainability Statement sets out the limitations imposed by the temporary nature of the accommodation. Nonetheless it demonstrated that the proposals accord with the principles of sustainable development and will support the principles of the Council's Sustainability Strategy as well as enabling the University to achieve its own Carbon Reduction targets.

Travel

- 7.23 The proposal seeks to locate 3,638 (GEA) sqm of temporary accommodation on the site of the former Rural History Centre at Whiteknights campus. The proposal will not give rise to an increase in overall staff/students on the campus as the temporary accommodation is required to provide decant space for staff and students re-located from other buildings which are to be altered, refurbished or replaced.
- 7.24 At a high level therefore the transport and travel impacts of the development during its operational life will be acceptable as the local highway network will experience the same overall level of movements. It is not anticipated that the temporary accommodation will give rise to any modal shift in transport patterns.
- 7.25 There will be 86 permanent staff, based in the buildings. The number of students using the building will vary considerably as there is a lot of centrally booked teaching space in the building there are enough seats for a total of 878 students at maximum capacity. In practice the building will rarely be occupied to its full capacity.
- 7.26 The university recognises that decanting staff and students from existing buildings to the temporary accommodation may give rise to some changes to where staff and students access and leave the campus and how and where they move within it.
- 7.27 As noted previously, the site is highly accessible from the centre of the campus and the existing footpath on the south side of Chancellor's Way will provide direct and convenient pedestrian access to the temporary building. The building is also located in close proximity to the existing bus stop on Chancellor's Way.
- 7.28 The proposals include the provision of new 40 cycle hoops (80 spaces) immediately adjacent to the eastern elevation of the temporary accommodation. Although the proposals will not need lead to an overall increase in demand for cycle parking, the University considers it appropriate to provide on-site cycle parking, immediately adjacent to the building provision for convenience of building users.
- 7.29 The proposals require a temporary closure of Chancellor's Way and possibly the Public Right of Way footpath 9 parallel to the highway during the 3 month construction period. The current timetable for construction will allow for these works to be carried out during University holidays to ensure minimal disruption and maximum safety for all users.
- 7.30 The Transport Statement supporting the application confirms that the proposals are acceptable in transport planning terms and notes that the project will not increase overall trip generation on the campus in line with Policy CS22.
- 7.31 The proposal complies with the aims and requirements of Policies CS5, CS20 and DM12.

Ecology

- 7.32 Ecological issues have been considered throughout the design of the proposals and are addressed in the supporting materials to the application.

- 7.33 The following reports have previously been prepared and submitted in relation to the Prior Approval of the demolition of the Rural History Centre.
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report
 - Phase 2 Bat Survey Report,
- 7.34 The A Phase 2 Bat Survey Report was undertaken in 2015 by RSK prior to the demolition works starting in autumn 2015. No bats were found during the demolition within the buildings or tree that was also felled as part of the demolition.
- 7.35 Vegetation and clearance works were also undertaken as part of the demolition outside of the nesting bird season to protect against disruption during the sensitive nesting period.
- 7.36 An update letter report provided by the ecologist in March 2016, and submitted in support of the application notes that as the RHC buildings have been demolished, and the tree previously identified as having roosting potential has been felled (after appropriate investigations were undertaken) there are no features with potential for roosting bats remaining on the site. In addition all the vegetation has been cleared and therefore it is unlikely that there will be any features of ecological interest remaining on site.
- 7.37 The ecologist advises that during construction of the new temporary building, no further actions are required with respect to ecology. Noting that the buildings are to be in place for five years however the ecologist recommends that the building maintained to ensure that no opportunities are created which could attract bats to roost within the building (e.g. cracks or crevices, holes in soffit boxes). In the unlikely event that a bat is discovered during removal of the temporary building at the end of the five year period, all works should stop and an ecologist consulted immediately.
- 7.38 In view of the previous ecological surveys and assessments undertaken, it is evident that the design will not give rise to harmful effects to any protected species and that the proposals accord with Policy CS36.

Trees

- 7.39 The proposals will require the removal of some trees and hedges to facilitate the temporary accommodation and surrounding works. Whilst the affected trees are not subject to a Tree Preservation Order the implications on trees has been carefully considered in the design of the proposed development.
- 7.40 The supporting Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and Method Statement (AMS) provides a detailed assessment of the health and quality of all the trees within the application site (based upon a tree survey undertaken in September 2015).
- 7.41 The AIA confirms that where trees are required to be removed this is acceptable as the majority of trees to be removed are of low or moderate quality.

- 7.42 The AMS provides a suitable protection strategy to safeguard the retained trees (both above and below ground parts) during the development works. The tree protective fencing is the principal on-site protective measure.
- 7.43 We consider the submitted materials align with the aims of Policy CS38 and the local planning authority can secure the necessary tree protection works by imposing a suitably worded planning condition.

Landscaping

- 7.44 The former Rural History Centre is set within open areas of green space on the western part of Whiteknights campus.
- 7.45 Tree retention, as described in the Arboricultural Method Statement will ensure that the building sites in an attractive landscaped environment. The landscaping plan submitted with the application demonstrates the grassed areas surrounding the building will be retained and includes proposals for new landscape planting to the north-east of the main entrance. The proposed landscaped area will create a focal point adjacent to the entrance to the temporary accommodation and will enhance the relationship of the building to Chancellor's Drive.

Drainage

- 7.46 A drainage plan is submitted as part of the application documentation. This demonstrates that the proposed development will be served by existing foul and surface water connections albeit with a re-routing of certain aspects to facilitate internal reconfiguration.

Archaeology

- 7.47 In response to the pre-application submission the local planning authority indicated that the site was located within an area of archaeological potential and consequently a desk based archaeological assessment would be needed. This should consider the archaeological potential of the site along with past and proposed impacts.
- 7.48 Further discussions took place with Berkshire Archaeology however resulting in the archaeologist updating her advice as recorded at Appendix 5 to this statement. The updated advice states:

"As discussed, as the scale of the proposal has been reduced and the location sited over the previous buildings footprint I am happy to change our response to the pre-application information. The potential impact on archaeological remains are now likely to be minimal and as such a desk-based assessment is no longer required. If there are areas of new impact outside the existing foundations it would be suitable for these to be dealt with by small scale archaeological investigations, such as a watching brief."

- 7.49 On the basis of the above advice the proposal is considered to comply with the requirements of Policy CS33.

Amenity

- 7.50 The temporary accommodation is located on the western part of Whiteknights campus. The nearest residential properties to the application site are located on Shinfield Road to the west. Established vegetation and mature trees provide physical and visual separation between the proposed temporary building and properties on Shinfield road and it is not considered the temporary accommodation will give rise to any adverse impact on amenity.

8. Overview and Conclusion

- 8.1 The University of Reading is an internationally important education institution that makes a significant contribution to the social, economic and cultural well-being of its students and indeed the wider community of Reading.
- 8.2 The requirement for the temporary accommodation is intrinsically linked to, the University's proposals for significant capital investment in its Estate at Whiteknights Campus. The temporary accommodation will provide decant space which is necessary to allow other major capital projects to proceed. These capital projects include the Library refurbishment, URS building refurbishment, a new Health and Life Sciences Building and subsequent removal of obsolete buildings from the estate. Provision of the temporary accommodation is therefore a key early phase of work which will allow delivery of significant improvements to the wider campus.
- 8.3 The site which has been chosen for the temporary accommodation is inherently sustainable. It is well-related to existing facilities on campus including the buildings which are to be refurbished, extended and replaced. It is previously developed land which until very recently been occupied by the Rural History Centre Buildings (which were demolished in autumn 2015). It benefits from convenient access to services (drainage, water supply, etc.) which previously served the Rural History Centre Buildings and existing service runs can be used to serve the new development.
- 8.4 The proposals have been carefully formulated through extensive consultation with key users, stakeholders and engagement with the Council through informal and formal pre-application discussions.
- 8.5 This statement and other supporting technical reports demonstrate that the proposals accord with the relevant national and local planning policies and accordingly planning permission should be granted.

Appendix 1: App. 07/00785/OUT – Hotel permission documents

Appendix 2: Demolition Decision Notice

Appendix 3: Built Off-Site Site Layout Plan

Appendix 4: Pre-application response

**Appendix 5: Correspondence with
Berkshire Council
Archaeological Officer – March
2016**

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