

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Thames

App Ref: 240182/FUL

Address: Reading University Womens Rowing Club, Reading University Boat Club, Promenade Road, Caversham, Reading

Proposals: Application for the replacement of an existing sculling shed.

Case Officer: Sian Hickey

Date received (valid from): 27 February 2024 **Decision date (ext):** 24 May 2024

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site consists of the boat club building, the rowing club building, and the sculling shed. The sculling shed is located west of the building comprising the Reading University Women's Rowing Club. The site falls within an Air Quality Management Area. The site contains a number of trees, none of which are subject to a Tree Preservation Order. The river Thames is located to the south of the site, and the site falls within Flood Zone 3. The surrounding area also consists of residential properties and a supermarket.

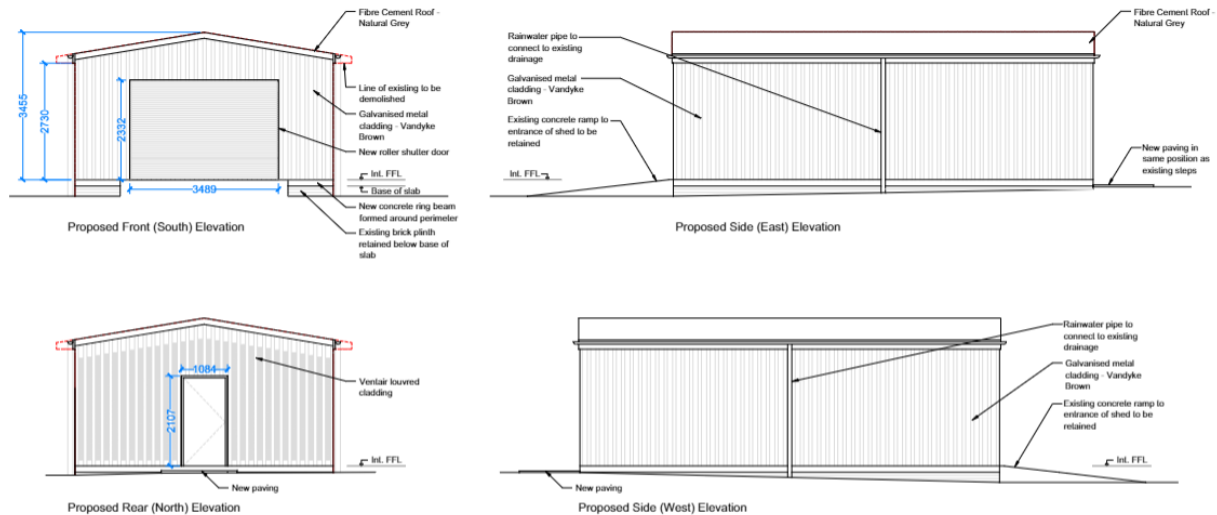
Site visit date: 14/03/2024

Site visit photos:



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for the demolition of the existing sculling shed and the erection of a new building of similar purpose in the same location on land used by Reading University Boat Club in Caversham Reading.



Plans/Documents considered:

Drawing No. 221076-1-001 - Location Plan
 Drawing No. 221076-1-002 - Existing Site Plan
 Drawing No. 221076-1-101 - Existing Floor Plans
 Drawing No. 221076-1-102 - Existing Elevation Plans
 Drawing No. 221076-1-200 - Proposed Block Plans
 Drawing No. 221076-1-201 - Proposed Floor Plans
 Drawing No. 221076-1-202 - Proposed Elevations Plans
 Flood Risk Assessment
 Ecological Appraisal and Bat Inspection Report
 Design and Access Statement
 Construction Environmental Management Plan - Biodiversity
 Wildlife Box Locations Map

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

940766 - New fire door and internal fire escape stairway. PERMITTED

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

20 Riverside Court, Promenade Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 8AL
 27 Riverside Court, Promenade Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 8AL
 29 Riverside Court, Promenade Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 8AL
 31 Riverside Court, Promenade Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AL
 21 Riverside Court, Promenade Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 8AL
 2 Abbotsmead Place, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 8BB
 24 Riverside Court, Promenade Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AL
 Pipers Island, Bridge Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AH
 13 Abbotsmead Place, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 8BB
 15 Abbotsmead Place, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8BB

A site notice was also erected at the site.

Letters of representation have been received as follows: **None**

Ecology

Bats

The applicant has now supplied Bat Emergence Survey report (EPR, no date provided) that provides the results of a single emergence survey undertaken in May 2023. No bats were seen to emerge from the boatshed and the report concludes that the building is not in use by roosting bats.

CEMP (Biodiversity)

The applicant has submitted a Construction Environmental Management Plan - Biodiversity which provides details of methods of working during construction to ensure that protected species and habitats are not adversely affected by the proposals. The report is acceptable and if implemented it will ensure that any impact on wildlife is minimal.

The CEMP also includes details on biodiversity enhancements including two bat, two bird roosting boxes and a hedgehog box and these are an acceptable way of achieving biodiversity enhancements on site. A plan showing the locations of the proposed enhancements was also requested and supplied.

The location of these enhancements will also need to take account of artificial lighting and any new lighting proposed post construction. As these details have not been supplied, and because of the site's location close to the River Thames, it is recommended that a condition is set to ensure that full details of any new lighting are submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA.

Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM
CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK
EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND
EN18: FLOODING AND DRAINAGE
OU1: NEW AND EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES

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APPRAISAL

The main issues are considered to be:

- Design
- Amenity
- Trees and biodiversity

Design

Policy CC7 states *“All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.”*

The existing sculling shed is in an extremely poor condition and, therefore, the proposal will be an improvement in terms of appearance. The scale and layout of the proposed outbuilding are similar to that of the existing and are, therefore, considered proportionate for the site.

The form is simple and appropriate for the site and its intended use. The proposed materials are considered suitable. The proposed sculling shed would be significantly set back from the roadside and, therefore, would have little impact on the street scene. It is considered that the proposal would not be harmful to the character of the site or the surrounding area.

The proposal is considered in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Local Plan.

Amenity

Policy CC8 states *“Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties”*.

The proposal is considered to pose no risk of harm to the neighbouring residential properties. It is not considered to be significantly different to the existing arrangement.

Trees and biodiversity

There are 3no. trees located nearby to the west of the existing sculling shed which are all to be retained. There are no proposed foundation works to the new shed as the existing concrete base is to be retained and re-used. The existing trees will be protected during the proposed works.

The Ecology team have confirmed that the proposals are unlikely to cause harm to badgers and bats. A condition is recommended in line with Ecology comments with regards to external lighting of the sculling shed to prevent harm to wildlife.

Other matters

The proposal would not involve the loss of any on-site parking spaces.

Due to the sufficient distance and the screening from surrounding trees, it is not considered that the replacement sculling shed would cause any harm to the listed war memorial in Christchurch Meadows.

As the proposal site is within flood zones 3, it is required that a flood risk assessment report be carried out and produced to support this application. The submitted report demonstrates that the proposed development complies with national and local planning policy with respect to flood risk and drainage. The risk of flooding is adequately managed, and the offsite flood risk is not increased.

Conclusion

The proposed development has been assessed against the relevant policies and is considered acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve