

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Katesgrove

App Ref: 231802/FUL

Address: Unit 8-9 Hyperion Way, Reading, RG2 0HG

Proposals: Proposed freestanding pod unit (Use Class E (a or b)) and outdoor seating area, together with new landscaping, parking and associated works

Case Officer: Mr Anthony Scholes

Date received (valid from): 12 December 2023

Target Decision date: 18 April 2024

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

Site visit date: 10/01/2024

Site visit photos:



The Site is located in the south-eastern section of Hyperion Trade Park, which is arranged to the north of Rose Kiln lane. The site is approximately 0.05 ha and comprises an area of land consisting of hardstanding, car parking spaces and a hedge of Leyland cypress along its eastern boundary.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Proposed freestanding pod unit (Use Class E (a or b)) and outdoor seating area, together with new landscaping and parking. The proposed operator is 'Greggs' Bakery, and is seeking approval to operate as a Class E (a or b). In this instance, it is considered that the proposal should be considered as applied as Class E (a or b).

Plans considered

Dwg No. 16740-100C - Location Plan
Dwg No. 16740-101C - Existing Block Plan
Dwg No. 16740-102M - Proposed Block Plan
Dwg No. 16740-103A - Proposed Elevations
Dwg No. 16740-104 - Proposed Floor and Roof Plans
Dwg No. 16740-VL-L01E Landscape Plan
As Received 13 December 2023

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

210256/PRE - Pre-Application advice for proposed standalone pod unit (within Class E) at Hyperion Trade Park

221546/FUL - Proposed freestanding pod unit (Use Class E) and outdoor seating area, together with new landscaping, parking and associated works WITHDRAWN 15/8/2023

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

290 Basingstoke Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG2 0HN
286 Basingstoke Road, Reading
Unit 1, Hyperion Way, Reading, RG2 0HG
Unit 6 Hyperion Way, Reading, RG2 0HG
278 Basingstoke Road, Reading, RG2 0HN
258 Basingstoke Road, Reading, RG2 0HN
260 Basingstoke Road, Reading, RG2 0HN
Flat 3, 270 Basingstoke Road, Reading, RG2 0HN
Flat 2, 270 Basingstoke Road, Reading, RG2 0HN
Flat 1, 270 Basingstoke Road, Reading, RG2 0HN

No letters were received at the time of writing.

RBC Transport

No objections subject to conditions

RBC Ecology

No objections subject to conditions.

RBC Natural Environment

No objections subject to conditions

RBC Environmental Health

No objections subject to conditions

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 2023

National Planning Practice Guidance 2014

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

CC6: ACCESSIBILITY AND THE INTENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

CC9: SECURING INFRASTRUCTURE

H2: DENSITY AND MIX

EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK

EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND

EN15: AIR QUALITY

EN16: POLLUTION AND WATER RESOURCES

EN17: NOISE GENERATING EQUIPMENT

EM1: PROVISION OF EMPLOYMENT

EM2: LOCATION OF NEW EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

TR1: ACHIEVING THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTER

TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

SPG/SPD

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

Hyperion Trade Park falls within a wider 'Core Employment Area' (EM2e: 'North of Basingstoke Road'), where B1c, B2 and B8 uses are supported and safeguarded. In respect of non-employment uses, (like those falling within Class E), Policy EM2 of the Local Plan (2019) states that these will be encouraged providing they support the area's economic function and do not result in the loss of employment floorspace.

The proposed pod unit will be located within an area which currently contains car parking spaces in the south-eastern section of Hyperion Trade Park. These are noted by the applicant to be under-utilised.

Given the location of the pod, it is considered that it would not result in direct loss of employment floorspace. The proposal will in fact create jobs, which will support the area's economic function.

Policy RL2 requires "... a sequential approach to identifying sites for retail development ...". It is considered that compliance with the sequential approach to location of town centre uses as required by the NPPF has been fulfilled.

Although not referenced in the sequential assessment, this location is considered to be edge of centre, being located very close to the boundary of Whitley District Centre. As such, it is already sequentially preferable to any out of centre sites and is no less sequentially preferable than edge of centre sites.

The NPPF requires, for a sequential assessment, that it be proportionate to the proposal. In this case, the proposal is small and on the edge of a centre and intended to serve a specific catchment of employment premises, and I do not consider that examining sites in Central Reading, as the applicants have done, is necessary. I also consider that the parameters that have been used for the site search are reasonable and proportionate. As such I agree with the conclusion that there are no sequentially preferable sites that are available or suitable, and conclude that the requirement to undertake the sequential approach has been fulfilled.

The principle of the development is considered acceptable as it complies with Policy EM2 and RL2 of the Reading Local Plan (2019); however the application must comply with the other Policies set out within the Local Plan, such as those regarding character and appearance or neighbouring amenity etc.

Design and Appearance

The proposed pod will utilise contemporary dark grey cladding and galvanised steel roof sheeting. This will correspond with the modern appearance of the wider trade park and is considered acceptable.

The use of double height glazing on the western and southern elevations are considered to create an active frontage on each elevation onto the wider trade park and Rose Kiln Lane respectively.

An outdoor seating area is to be provided, alongside accessible parking spaces. This requires the removal of a small section of the existing brick wall, signage board and fencing on the southern boundary. This will also allow pedestrian access into the site.

The proposed bin store area will be provided to the north of the pod and which will be screened via treated softwood.

The design of the proposed scheme is considered to be suitable quality and the materials will fit in with the contemporary design of the wider trade park.

Landscaping

The proposed scheme is considered to comply with Policy CC7.

Impacts upon neighbouring amenity

The proposal includes the removal of part of a hedge along the eastern boundary of the site. The proposal seeks to replace this with additional planting, which will be 2.4 metres high at maturity in order to retain this strip of landscaping. This will therefore continue to screen Hyperion Trade Park when viewed from the residential properties to the east.

The proposal would introduce built form close to the rear gardens of properties along Basingstoke Road. This built form is preceded by the Screwfix building further north of the site which adjoins similarly deep gardens of nearby dwelling. In addition, the proposal includes a mono-pitched roof, which decreases in height closer to residential boundaries. The proposed use also does not include on-site cooking (including noisy extraction, or odorous impacts). As such, the proposal is not considered to have a significant detrimental impact upon the adjoining amenity of residents in terms of noise, disturbance, odour, or overbearing effects. As such it is considered to comply with Policy CC8 of the Local Plan (2019).

Trees

This site currently serves as a parking area for Hyperion Trade Park, is part of the Air Quality Management Area, the low canopy cover Katesgrove ward and its eastern boundary is lined with a dense row of Lawson Cypress of 2 ages - mature ones on the northern segment and younger ones on the southern segment. Furthermore, two green hedge islands separating the access way from parking area are also located within the site's boundary.

Existing tree retention and further planting are given more weight in assessing this application in the context of it being part of the AQMA and the low canopy ward.

It is noted that the Lawson Cypress group of trees form a natural visual and sound barrier between the commercial or industrial character of the Hyperion Trade Park and the residential properties in the east (274 to 290 Basingstoke Road). Therefore, the trees provide important functional benefits as well as maintaining the canopy cover and visual amenity within the area.

With reference to the **Proposed Site Plan Drg. No. 16740-102 Rev B** dated 26th January 2021 and the **Cover Letter from Jones Lang LaSalle Ltd** dated 12th February 2021, the following is noted:

The plans indicate 7 existing boundary trees are to be removed and an unstated number of trees on the southern part of the boundary will be cut back to enable development. Of the trees to be removed, 2 are of the larger size and 5 are from the group of the young trees. However, a glance at Google Street View reveals these numbers are probably higher, with 3 large and 6-7 younger trees likely to be removed.

The two existing low green hedge islands on the western side of the site will also be removed to enable development. Given that outside seating is proposed, planting another hedge on the perimeter of this seating area helps to screen it from access way traffic to the wider Hyperion Parking facilities and to compensate for the loss of existing green hedges.

Two Leyland Cypress hedges grow on the Eastern boundary of the site (G1 and G2). Two trees part of G2 and up to 4 trees part of G1 must be removed to enable development. This is agreeable subject to appropriate replacement planting provisions.

The removal of existing vegetation, and replacement with a mixture of vegetation, both at low and higher level is considered to compliment the character and appearance of the area. Though the removed boundary trees will remove existing screening, this is proposed to be replaced with 'instant hedging' which will be maintained at a height of 2.4m, though this may take some time to grow to this height, it will overall maintain the relationship of the residential property and the wider industrial estate. In terms of other landscaping, the proposal includes landscaped grassed and wildflower areas toward the frontage of the site. This will overall have a positive impact upon views internal and external to the site.

Ecology

The application site comprises an area of car park within a trading estate where it is proposed to construct a fast-food retail outlet (Greggs). A number of trees along the eastern side of the site will be removed, along with some small area of non-native vegetation within the car park.

The proposals are very unlikely to affect any priority habitats, protected species, or designated wildlife sites. Nonetheless, the trees and vegetation on the site are likely to be used by nesting birds. Once a condition is put in place to protect nesting birds (see below for wording), the risk of impacting upon protected species or priority habitats is minimal.

The applicant has also submitted a Biodiversity Net Gain calculation (Phlorum, December 2023) which concludes that the development will result in a biodiversity net gain of +361.54% habitat units. The Landscape plan (Vector design concepts, 9/2022) shows the landscape enhancements which include a length of the species rich native hedge, small areas of wildflower planting and four new native trees. These appear satisfactory but you should seek the views of the Natural Environment team on the landscaping.

In accordance with paragraph 186 of the NPPF(2023), which states that "opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design" a condition should be set to ensure that additional enhancements for wildlife such as bird and bat boxes are provided within the new development

Sustainability

In accordance with Policy CC2 of the Reading Local Plan (2019) all new developments are required to mitigate the impacts of climate change with regards to energy consumption of the proposal. As such, and in accordance with the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019) the proposed development will be required to achieve a BREEAM 'Very Good' rating. Conditions have been applied as no information in this regard has been provided at this stage.

Transport

The proposed pod measures 112 sqm (GIA) to be occupied by Greggs. The development includes a total parking provision of 9no. allocated parking spaces including 2no. disabled spaces. Vehicle access to the proposed parking area will be provided from Hyperion Way and the adjacent access onto Rose Kiln Lane. The applicant has confirmed that the proposed use will be restricted to use Class E.

Vehicular access is to be gained via the existing junction of Hyperion Way and Rose Kiln Lane, although the proposed use will generate an increase in trips, the principal use of this access is deemed acceptable. A 2m footway will be provided between the edge of the public highway on Rose Kiln Lane and entrance to the Pod unit. A 2m footway will also be provided along the southern Pod frontage and a 1.55m footway will be provided alongside the Pod, on its western elevation, connecting the Pod entrance with parking to the north and west of the unit. The existing gates into the trade park will be relocated so that they do not obstruct any of the proposed parking spaces including the disabled space to the front of the Pod unit.

The access road will be a minimum of 6m in width to maintain two-way vehicle movement into the site. No dedicate servicing area is proposed for the Pod Unit with the Transport Statement specifying that servicing will take place to the north of the Pod Unit given the low frequency of deliveries to Pod. However, a condition is required to ensure that a delivery and servicing plan is submitted prior to occupation of the development.

To establish the proposed trip generation for the proposed Pod Unit the applicant has undertaken an assessment via the Trip Rate Information Computer System (TRICS). The category 'DRIVE THROUGH COFFEE SHOP' has been used as this is the most similar 'TRICS' category to the proposed Greggs Pod as dwell times of customers are expected to be of similarly short duration. The Transport Statement has also undertaken an assessment of a comparable Greggs Pod Unit (on White House Road, Ipswich) which indicates that the trip generation may be slightly higher than the TRICS assessment. However, it is likely that the vast majority of trips to the proposed Pod unit will be linked with existing trips to local industrial estates or be drawn from traffic already using the road network local to the site. Whilst the proposed methodology is accepted the Highway Authority, it should be noted that no through assessment has been undertaken to account for all of the proposed uses within Class E to establish a worst-case scenario. However, the applicant has suggested that a condition could be applied to limit the use to that of a bakery and for no other use within Class E, which is deemed acceptable to the Highway Authority.

In terms of parking, a car park accumulation assessment has been undertaken for the proposed Pod using arrival and departure data from the TRICS database. In addition to the TRICS survey, a CCTV parking beat survey has been undertaken at a comparable Greggs Pod to ensure that the assessment is robust. The proposed provision of 9no. parking spaces will provide capacity for the proposed Greggs Pod during peak times. Additional spaces are also available within the wider Trade Park and so overflow parking on Rose Kiln Lane is unlikely to occur given the extensive parking restrictions in the area.

Hyperion Trade Park contains 143 car parking spaces, which are shared among the 9 properties in an informal arrangement. To demonstrate that the proposed reduction in parking will not impact the overall parking capacity of the Trade Park, a car park beat survey was undertaken demonstrating that the trade park currently has a maximum occupancy of 66%. Therefore, the assessment undertaken identifies that the proposed reduction in parking will not impact the overall parking capacity of the Trade Park.

4no. cycle parking spaces are proposed. The cycle parking will be provided in a covered, lit cycle store near to the proposed Pod entrance.

In summary, there are no transport objections to this application providing a condition is imposed to prevent the pod being used for other uses outside Class E (a or b).

Conclusion

The proposed development is considered acceptable as outlined above, and is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve