

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey

App Ref: 240622/FUL

Address: Station Hill, Reading,
RG1 1NF

Proposals: Full planning permission for the construction of a Temporary Car Park, including vehicular access from Garrard Street

Case Officer: Steve Vigar

Date received (valid from): 14 May 2024 **Target Decision date:** 9 July 2024

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

Site visit date: 31 May 2024





Site visit photos:

The site is located within land forming part of the Station Hill regeneration site and broadly equates to the land forming Phase 3 of that development. The site is bounded by Garrard St to the south, Plot G and associated public realm to the east, Xaffinity House (site offices) to the west and Station Hill (“Southwest Interchange”) to the north. The site is currently a construction site and compound for Phase 2 of the development.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Full planning permission for the construction of a Temporary Car Park, including vehicular access from Garrard Street via the Phase 2 entrance which has been constructed.

Plans considered

SHRN - CRL - ZZ - P2 - DR - A - 0131 - P1 dated 10 April 2024

SHRN - CRL - ZZ - P2 - DR - A - 0132 - P2 dated 3 May 2024

SHRN - CRL - ZZ - P2 - DR - A - 0133 - P2 dated 3 May 2024 (*submitted but not approved - see below*)

SHRN - CRL - ZZ - ZZ - DR - A - 2110 - P2 dated 3 May 2024

SHRN - CRL - ZZ - ZZ - DR - A - 2111 - P3 dated 3 May 2024

SHRN - CRL - ZZ - ZZ - DR - A - 3110 - P2 dated 3 May 2024

SHRN - CRL - ZZ - ZZ - DR - A - 3111 - P3 dated 3 May 2024

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

192032 Hybrid application comprising (i) application for Full Planning Permission for Phase 2 (Plot G and public realm) including demolition of existing structures, erection of an eighteen storey building containing office use (Class B1) and flexible retail, non-residential institution and assembly and leisure uses (Class A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, D1 and D2). Provision of podium deck, vehicular access and parking. New public open space and landscaping. Bridge link over Garrard St and (ii) Application for Outline Planning Permission for Phase 3 (all Matters reserved) for four building plots (A, B, C and D). Demolition of existing buildings and structures. Mixed-use redevelopment comprising residential dwellings (Class C3), hotel (Class C1), residential institutions (Class C2), office use (Class B1). Flexible Retail, financial and professional services, restaurants and cafes, drinking establishments, hot food takeaways, non-residential institutions and assembly and leisure (Class A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, D1 and D2). Provision of podium deck and basement storey running beneath Phase 2 and 3. Formation of pedestrian and vehicular access. Means of access and circulation and car parking within the site. Provision of new public open space and landscaping. Approved

Various Non-material Amendments and approval of details reserved by conditions associated with 192032.

4. CONSULTATIONS

RBC Transport (Highways Authority)

"The Highway Authority can confirm that Plot G, located within Phase 2 of the Station Hill development and currently under construction, would eventually have 139 spaces in total (in accordance with RBC's maximum parking standards) when Phase 3 of the scheme is built out. The proposal seeks to provide a total of 254 car parking spaces across the temporary permission and the Phase 2 element of the scheme which would be 115 spaces in excess of parking standards. The only provision that could be accepted by the Highway Authority would be a total amount across both sites of 139 spaces as this has been consented as the maximum provision.

No justification has been provided for this increase in car parking other than it will help the transition of the future occupiers of Plot G however the application site is the most sustainable location within the Borough providing opportunities for alternative modes of transport. The proposed development is therefore not promoting sustainable modes of travel to the proposed development and as such the Highway Authority objects to the proposal on these grounds. Should the future occupiers require help in relocation then this

should be addressed through suitable measures within the Travel Plan to advise of all of the suitable options which may include park and ride options for those whereby alternatives are unavailable.

Should the number of car parking spaces be reduced then updated drawings would be required illustrating the gradient of the proposed ramp between Phase 2 and 3.

A dedicated route would also be required into the Phase 2 site to ensure that pedestrians do not travel along the ramp into the Phase 2 car park to find the quickest route into the building.

A detailed car park management plan would also be required to explain how the car park will be managed alongside the office use, it should be reminded that the original application assessed the public car parking as being available between the hours of 19:00 and 07:00 and also how pedestrian movements around the Phase 2 car park area would be managed.

However as explained above the proposed development seeks parking in excess of the Highway Authority's standards in the most sustainable location within the Borough and as such the Highway Authority objects to the proposal.

The enlarged parking area for Plot G would encourage the increased use of private cars thus promoting unsustainable travel habits and intensifying long term private motorised traffic burden on the transport system in direct conflict with Local Plan Policies TR1 and TR5."

Lead Flood Authority

"The references to the approved drainage discharge rates are incorrect and I attach the approved discharge rates that were included within the attached drainage report at paragraph 2.10.1.2 which states:

Phase 3:

- Building A - 17.76 l/s*
- Building B/D - 15.70 l/s*
- Run-off for the ground floor podium and Building C will be discharged to 5 l/s.*

The proposed drainage layout should therefore be designed so as to mirror this agreed discharge.

It is noted that the discharge onto Garrard Street results in flood events and it is proposed that this is to be controlled at the southern part of the site but no information has been provided to explain what this entails. The LLFA are therefore unable to establish whether this will impact the adjacent pedestrian access into the car park and how this would impact the parking spaces mainly disabled bays along that southern boundary.

It is also noted that Xfinity House is currently discharged via an existing private surface water network located within the car park area it would therefore also need to be illustrated and clarified within the submission that this drainage connection would be retained. In addition to this there are existing connections from the application site into that same private sewer and it will also need to be confirmed what the applicant proposes with those connections.

The information therefore fails to demonstrate that it will be providing a SuDs scheme in line with the approved discharge for the site and how the flood event would be managed therefore the LLFA objects to the development.

Due to the absence of a satisfactory Sustainable Drainage Strategy, the application has failed to demonstrate its acceptability in terms of sustainable drainage and attenuating localised flooding, contrary to Policy EN18 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.”

Network Rail

Confirm no objection

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

5 Merchants Place, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 1DT
5-9 Merchants Place, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 1DT
Scottish Mutual House, 35-43 Greyfriars Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 1JH
8 Merchants Place, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 1DT
Phoenix House, Whitney Road, Daneshill, Basingstoke, RG24 8NS
Thames Tower, 37-41 Station Road, Reading, RG1 1LY
6a Merchants Place, Reading, RG1 1DT
9 Merchants Place, Reading, RG1 1DT
9a Merchants Place, Reading, RG1 1DT
7 Merchants Place, Reading, RG1 1DT

Site notices were displayed on
Station Road (junction with Garrard St)
Station Hill (adj SW interchange)
Garrard St (adj site entrance)
Greyfriars Rd (junction with Garrard St)

No letters of representation have been received:

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
TR1: ACHIEVING THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY
TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS
TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING
CR2: DESIGN IN CENTRAL READING
CR3: PUBLIC REALM IN CENTRAL READING
CR11: STATION/RIVER MAJOR OPPORTUNITY AREA

SPG/SPD

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)

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.

APPRAISAL

Amount of Parking

Phases 2 and 3 together as approved under the 192032/HYB permission allows for up to 835 spaces within a basement car park extending across much of the site. Condition 87 of that permission requires details of allocation of spaces for each plot to be submitted for approval prior to first occupation. That is a matter to be resolved after Reserved Matters for Phase 3 have been submitted and approved. This does not allow for any reduction in the total number of spaces permitted and ultimately it would not be reasonable to withhold spaces from a particular use under this condition, provided other uses also received an appropriate allocation. The proposal is, in effect, an early phased provision of spaces which are already envisaged for the Station Hill regeneration site. The proposed condition restricts the use of the spaces to being for the occupiers of Plot G offices only. The spaces would not be usable by occupiers of Xaffinity House or Plots E and F Station Hill.

The following is relevant to note: That the proposals would be temporary; That they would not exceed the total number of spaces permitted on the land under 192032; and that a temporary car park is a typical meanwhile use. It is also noted that now-demolished Garrard St Car Park also sat on the Station Hill land and its removal has also reduced parking considerably.

Taking these matters together, it is considered, on balance, that the provision of additional car parking for a limited period would not be sufficiently harmful to warrant refusal.

Policies CC7, CR11, TR1, and TR5 apply.

Public Use

The submitted details suggest that the car park will be open to members of the public outside office hours. In the same vein as the current approval 192032 it does not appear that the car

park layout would be suitable for public use in terms of safety and security. There are no designated pedestrian routes, crossing points etc. Disabled accessibility into and around the car park is unclear. It would also create a secluded space behind the hoarding with potential for anti-social behaviour. It is unclear how public access would be controlled. It is also relevant to note that public use of the Phase 2 car park entrance etc is not permitted without a Car Parking Management Strategy being approved under the terms of the 192032 S106 Agreement. As such a condition is recommended to limit the spaces to occupiers of the development only on the basis that management for a single group of users - i.e. the occupiers of Plot G - would be simpler to manage with fewer concerns in respect of access, pedestrian circulation, lighting, safety and anti-social behaviour.

Policies CC7 and CR2 apply.

Layout and Landscaping

The proposal illustrates 185 spaces. It is noted that this makes no provision for soft landscaping. The site is in a prominent location and forms part of the Station Hill sub area within the Station/River Major Opportunity Area. Car parking would appear stark and unattractive when viewed from street level and also particularly from vantage points on the Garrard Street bridge and the extended Station Square. This is a reason for the time limit for the use being restricted to 5 years. It is also justification for soft landscaping to be secured by condition. It is expected that this should include trees in planters (if not the ground) which continues the theme of planters being used to soften parts of the wider SH site where ground conditions are problematic, or where further redevelopment is expected. The inability to provide a full, high quality, landscaping scheme under the current car park proposal is another reason justifying a 5 year temporary permission instead of a longer period. As the relationship between parking spaces and landscaping is not yet known, the drawing showing the spaces (SHRN - CRL - ZZ - P2 - DR - A - 0133 - P2 dated 3 May 2024) is recommended to be omitted from the list of approved drawings. The submission contains sufficient detail to define the extent of the use and access arrangements with the layout forming part of the landscaping, reserved by condition.

Policies EN12, EN14, CC7 and CR2 apply.

Appearance

As stated above the parking would appear stark and disrupt the long term redevelopment of the area if not time-limited. Landscaping will assist in softening as described above. It is also considered necessary to enhance the appearance of the hoardings which are proposed to the site perimeter. A scheme of artwork is recommended to be secured by condition.

Policies CC7 and CR2 apply.

Drainage

Lead Flood Authority comments are noted. A condition is recommended to secure suitable drainage. It is acknowledged that this is unlikely to be to the same standard as a more permanent arrangement due to the limited nature of any landscaping. It is likely that additional attenuation and flow controls will be required to control water within the site and reduce flood risk beyond the site boundary. The temporary use is likely to be able to introduce basic controls over the rate of flow and containing water within the boundary of the site. More appropriate sustainable drainage involving natural features and infiltration measures would be required for a more permanent proposal. This therefore forms one of the justifications for the 5 year restriction.

Policy EN18 applies.

Lighting and Amenity

The proposals indicated a basic lighting scheme. It is considered that a more aesthetic approach is required. Lighting is included in the recommended landscaping condition to secure this. A condition preventing additional lighting is also recommended to prevent excessive lighting harming the amenity of surrounding residents.

A condition restricting hours of construction is recommended to prevent noise and disturbance harming residential amenity.

Policies CC7, CC8 and CR2 apply.

Ecology

The site contains no existing habitat as it is an existing active construction site it is exempt from Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements. Policy EN12 seeks no net loss of biodiversity. There is unlikely to be any net loss due to the existing condition of the site. The recommended landscaping condition would provide some minimal additional habitat. A more permanent development would be required to provide far better landscaping and other biodiversity enhancements. The lack of landscaping potential within the current car park proposal forms a justification for the 5 year restriction.

Archaeology

The same controls on archaeology secured under 192032 are recommended. Any below ground works are to be subject to a written scheme of investigation.

Conclusion

The proposals are considered to be an appropriate meanwhile use, for a limited 5 year period. The provision of parking is a temporary situation and in effect an early provision of what has been approved already within the Phase 3 Station Hill site. The parking proposed is significantly less than that approved for Phases 2 and 3 combined and would be restricted to occupiers of Plot G only. Deficiencies in respect of landscaping, ecology and drainage are mitigated by condition to a degree that is appropriate for the temporary period. Higher standards of design and environmental performance would be required for a more permanent form of development and the shortcomings justify the temporary time period. On balance the proposals are considered acceptable, for a 5 year period only, and subject to the following conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve

Subject to the following conditions:

1. The use of the land hereby approved shall cease on or before 4 July 2029 and the site restored in accordance with a scheme of works which shall first have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: Permanent use is not appropriate and would conflict with the long term regeneration of the area; would harm the visual amenities of the area; would not contribute adequately to sustainable drainage and would not provide appropriate landscaping or biodiversity enhancement. In accordance with Policies CR11, CR2, CR3, CC7, EN12, EN14 and EN18 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

2. The development hereby permitted shall ONLY be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

SHRN - CRL - ZZ - P2 - DR - A - 0131 - P1 dated 10 April 2024

SHRN - CRL - ZZ - P2 - DR - A - 0132 - P2 dated 3 May 2024

SHRN - CRL - ZZ - ZZ - DR - A - 2110 - P2 dated 3 May 2024

SHRN - CRL - ZZ - ZZ - DR - A - 2111 - P3 dated 3 May 2024

SHRN - CRL - ZZ - ZZ - DR - A - 3110 - P2 dated 3 May 2024

SHRN - CRL - ZZ - ZZ - DR - A - 3111 - P3 dated 3 May 2024

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out and adhered to in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

3. The site shall not be used at any time except as a private car park to serve occupiers of Block G as shown on the approved drawings. The site shall not be used as a public car park at any time.

REASON: It has not been demonstrated that the access arrangements, layout and security arrangements of the site would be appropriate for public use. In accordance with Policies CC7 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

4. No development (other than development above existing ground level) shall commence within the site until a detailed Written Archaeological Scheme of Investigation (WSI) based on 'Overarching Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation' (Waterman, October 2019)' has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development of shall only take place in accordance with the approved WSI.

REASON. In the interests of protecting the archaeological heritage of the Borough. In accordance with Policies EN1 and EN2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

5. No development shall commence except works of excavation until a comprehensive scheme of hard and soft landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include:

- a. Means of enclosure, car parking layout, vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas, to include details of ramps;
- b. Hard surfacing materials;
- c. Details of all exterior lighting;
- d. Soft landscaping details to include planting plan, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable;
- e. A timetable for implementation;
- f. A maintenance programme detailing all operations to be carried out in order to allow successful establishment of planting.

The approved hard and soft landscaping scheme shall be fully carried out in accordance with the approved details and timetable.

Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next

planting season with others of similar size and species, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To mitigate the visual impacts of the development during the temporary period in the interests of the amenity, character and appearance of the area. In accordance with Policies CC7, CC8, CR2 and CR11 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

6. No development shall commence on site except works of excavation until a Sustainable Drainage Strategy and associated detailed design, management and maintenance plan of surface water drainage for the site using SuDS methods where feasible has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall include:

- i. a timetable for its implementation, and
- ii. a management and annual maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include the arrangements for adoption by any public body or statutory undertaker, or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the sustainable drainage scheme throughout its lifetime.

The sustainable drainage scheme for the site shall be completed in accordance with the approved details before any part of the site is brought into first use.

The sustainable drainage scheme shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved scheme and management and maintenance plan at all times thereafter.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and in order to reduce the risk of flooding onsite or elsewhere in accordance with Policy EN18 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

7. Notwithstanding the drawings hereby approved, the use hereby approved shall not be brought into first use until a scheme detailing artwork to be displayed on the boundary hoardings, together with a timetable for its implementation, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The artwork shall be provided in its entirety in accordance with the approved scheme and timetable and shall be retained and maintained as such at all times thereafter.

REASON. To reduce the visual impact of the hoarding in the interests of the character and appearance of the area. In accordance with Policies CC7, CR2 and CR11 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

8. No construction, demolition or associated deliveries shall take place, outside the hours of 0800hrs to 1800hrs Mondays to Fridays, and 0800hrs to 1300hrs on Saturdays, and at any time on Sundays and Bank or Statutory Holidays, without prior written approval from the Local Planning Authority.

REASON. In order to protect occupiers of nearby properties from unreasonable disturbance from works connected with implementing this permission in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

9. No external lighting shall be installed within the site at any time except where approved under the terms of this permission.

REASON. To prevent harm to the amenity of surrounding residents in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.