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**Our Ref: B0120/24**

October 2024

Planning,
Reading Borough Council Civic Offices,
Bridge Street,
Reading,
RG1 2LU

Via the Planning Portal

**Planning, Design and Access Statement**
**Reading Gateway Premier Inn, Gateway Proctor End South, Reading, RG2 0GG.**
**Planning Portal Reference: PP-13447808**

**Dear Sir/Madam**

We are instructed by Premier Inn Hotels Ltd to submit the following application for full planning permission in relation to the existing Premier Inn hotel at Reading Gateway Premier Inn, Gateway Proctor End South, Reading, RG2 0GG.

Specifically, this application proposes:

*"External alterations to the existing hotel and restaurant building to provide additional bedrooms, reconfigured restaurant and all associated works".*

The application has been submitted via the Planning Portal and in addition to the completed forms and requisite fee, it is accompanied by the following drawings and documents:

- This Planning, Design & Access Statement
- Location Plan
- Existing and Proposed Site Plans
- Existing and Proposed Elevations
- Existing and Proposed Floorplans
- Drainage Strategy Report
- Noise Impact Assessment

- Sustainability Statement
- Transport Statement
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment
- BNG Exemption Statement
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation
- CIL Form

**Introduction**

This application is submitted in relation to the Premier Inn hotel at Gateway Proctor End South, Reading. The application seeks planning permission for external alterations to the existing building to facilitate additional hotel bedrooms and a reconfigured restaurant.

**Site and Surroundings**

The site comprises of a six-storey Premier Inn hotel building with an ancillary Beefeater restaurant at ground floor level.

The site is located in Reading Gateway Retail Park which includes an Aldi, Burger King, Schmidt Kitchens, Jolly Groomer, Burger King and Costa Coffee within a short walking distance from the hotel.

There is shared car parking (333 spaces) for the Premier Inn, Beefeater and other retail and dining operations within the Retail Park.

Reading South (Reading Gateway) Premier Inn (North Elevation)

Reading South (Reading Gateway) Premier Inn (East Elevation)

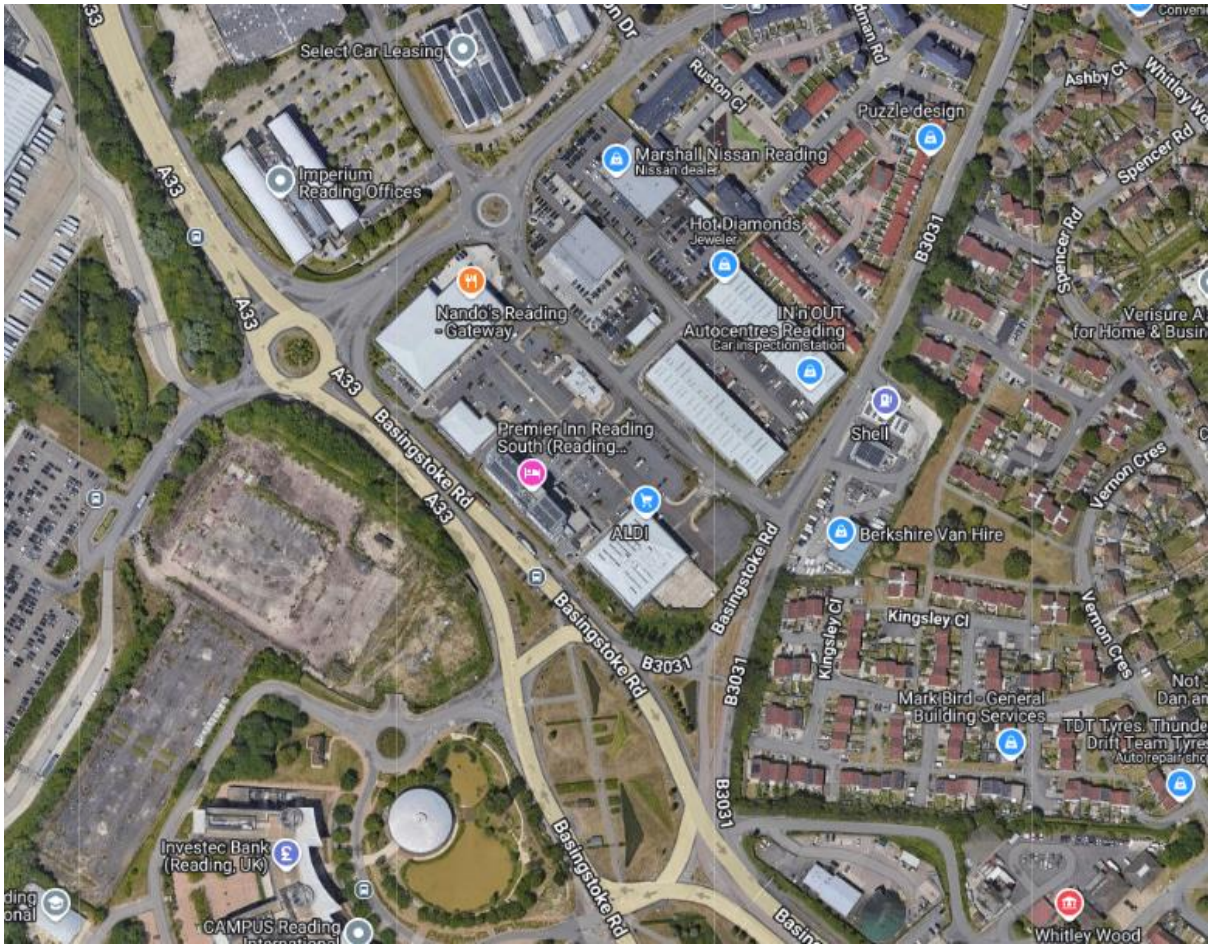
As mentioned, the site forms part of Reading Gateway Retail Park which forms part of a wider commercial area in South Reading with a Tesco distribution centre to the west, numerous industrial properties to the north and Green Park Business Park and the Select Car Leasing Stadium to the northwest.

The wider Reading Gateway commercial area has been graded LLA positive for economic development within Reading Borough Councils Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment. To the immediate south, 'land on the west side of Basingstoke Road' has been allocated land for development for employment uses.

In 2016, planning permission (ref: 151944) was granted for the 120-bed Premier Inn hotel (Use Class C1) with pub or restaurant facility (Use Class A4) as part of a wider hybrid application including 175 new homes, 12 commercial units in flexible use, two car showrooms with MOT and servicing, coffee shop, restaurant and bank. Along with new vehicular access from Basingstoke Road and Imperial Way, bus stop facilities, hard and soft landscaping and other ancillary development.

Vehicular access is provided from Sentinel End northeast of the development, which is accessed off the Imperial Way/ Sentinel End / Worton Drive roundabout which provides access to the A33.

The site resides in Flood zone 1 and is not at risk of surface water flooding.
The site is not listed and does not reside in a conservation area. No listed buildings or their settings would be affected by the proposals.




Areal Image of the site (Google Maps)

**Proposal**

Premier Inn Hotels (the applicant) has identified a demand for the provision of additional budget hotel accommodation in this location, having regard to the proximity of the site to Reading Town Centre, the Select Car Leasing Stadium, commercial/business uses, tourist and leisure attractions and its location on the road network. Equally, the existing hotel restaurant has shown a continued shortfall in demand. The applicant therefore seeks to reconfigure the hotel bedroom and restaurant offer on the site to ensure its success and future viability. To allow for this, external alterations are required and proposed.

At ground floor level, the restaurant area would be reconfigured and reduced in size to allow for additional hotel bedrooms. All upper floors would remain as existing.

The proposal would result in a net increase of 9 hotel bedrooms from a total of 120 to 129. A restaurant would be retained on the ground floor for hotel guests.

Modest external alterations to the façade of the existing building are required in the way of new windows and doors to serve the new layout. Materials for these would match existing.

The existing parking arrangement would remain the same.

**Planning History**

The existing hotel and restaurant on the site were established by the granting of the planning permission ref. 151944**.** The hotel is therefore fully established, with the requirement for additional rooms and a retained (albeit smaller) in keeping with the site's planning history and reflective of ongoing demand for additional rooms at this location.

**Planning Policy**

Paragraph 3 states that the Framework should be read as a whole (including its footnotes and annexes).

Chapter 6 is concerned with building a strong and competitive economy. Paragraph 85 explains that planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, considering both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. Paragraph 87 identifies that planning decisions should recognise the specific locational requirements of different sectors.

Chapter 9 sets out the Government's policy in relation to transport. Paragraph 116 explains that applications for development should create places that are safe, secure and attractive. Paragraph 115 confirms that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Chapter 11 relates to the effective use of land. Paragraph 124 explains that planning decisions should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings.

Chapter 12 is concerned with creating well-designed and beautiful places. Paragraph 135 states planning decisions should ensure that new development adds to the overall quality of the area and is visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping. It also confirms that development should be sympathetic to local character, and that development optimises the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount of development.

Paragraph 14 states that plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Reading Borough Local Plan

Policy CC1 prioritises sustainable development, meaning that any new building projects should meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Policy CC2 emphasises that new buildings in Reading should be designed and built with sustainability in mind to reduce their environmental footprint. It encourages the use of sustainable materials, energy efficiency, water conservation, and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Policy CC3 requires that new developments take steps to adapt to the impacts of climate change, where all development shall minimise the impact of surface water runoff from the development in the design of the drainage system.

Policy CC6 states that the density of new development will depend on how accessible it is by public transport, walking, and cycling.

Policy CC7 This policy requires that all new development is of high design quality and enhances the public realm.

Policy CC8 aims to protect the amenity of existing and future residents from the negative impacts of development.

Policy EN12 state that on all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible.

Policy EN17 seeks to control noise pollution by setting standards for noise-generating equipment. Developers must assess potential noise impacts and implement mitigation measures where the noise source specific level (plant noise level) should be at least 10dBA below the existing background level as measured at the nearest noise sensitive receptor.

Policy EN18 requires development will be directed to areas at lowest risk of flooding where flooding from all sources, including fluvial, surface water, groundwater and sewer flooding will be assessed.

## Planning Assessment

Principle of Development and Design

The NPPF makes it clear that sustainable development has three overarching objectives: an economic objective to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy; a social objective to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities; and an environmental objective to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.

The proposed works would support each of these three objectives. The existing Premier Inn hotel is a well-used facility providing overnight accommodation for tourists and business travellers. There is demand for additional hotel bedrooms which would create additional employment opportunities during the operational and construction phases, as well as supporting third party suppliers. The proposed works would be entirely contained to the existing building and site (brownfield land) and would allow for a more efficient use of the site, without needing to expand outside of its curtilage.

As such, the proposed development would bring economic, social, and environmental benefits.

The hotel operates viably and successfully in this location, whereas there is a lack of demand for a hotel restaurant of the current size with the number of alternative options to guests, hence the proposal for additional guest bedrooms and a smaller restaurant space. The principle of the hotel in this location has been long-established.

A hotel is classified as a town centre use which would normally requires the sequential test to be passed. However, this is not a new hotel and has already been judged by the Council to be an appropriate location for visitor accommodation. It is an established hotel in a sustainable location which fulfils an important roadside function in providing overnight accommodation for business and leisure travellers using the surrounding road network. The proposal seeks planning permission to facilitate works to allow for a modest increase in bedrooms to an existing successful hotel. The proposed number of hotel rooms would not be built in isolation, and a sequential test is not therefore considered necessary or appropriate in this instance.

National and local policies note the importance of tourism to local economies. With eating out and other incidental purchases (provisions, petrol, bus and train fares, local purchases at newsagents/chemists) the proposed development will increase the amount of spending in the area. Bringing more visitors to the area will, therefore, have a recognisable benefit on the local economy.

The proposed external alterations are modest, appropriate and in-keeping with the existing building such that the building's character and appearance will not be adversely impacted.

The relevant local plan policies offer support for this development and contain nothing that indicate that planning permission should not be granted.

Transport and Parking

A Transport Statement, prepared by RGP, fully explores the parking provision for the site as well as the wider transport issues. In summary there is on site shared car parking with capacity of up to 330 vehicles.

Although the proposal would result in an increase in guest bedrooms, the parking demand would be offset by the smaller restaurant area which generates a higher parking demand.

A car parking survey was carried out on site, the full results of which can be found in the Transport Statement. The results of the survey conclude that the proposed car parking capacity is sufficient to cater to all parking demands and that it complies with all relevant policies and standards.

The extents of the site are predominantly 'edge-of-town' in nature, with the site located in Reading Gateway at Junction 11 of the M4 motorway. It is therefore considered the primary mode of travel would likely comprise the private vehicle, either as a driver of or passenger in.

There are active (walking and cycling) and sustainable (public transport) could be used by staff and guests to access the site, however, as a result of the nature of the site, it is considered the primary mode of travel would likely comprise the private vehicle.

The site's existing access would remain unchanged. The existing arrangements for delivery and refuse collections etc. will remain unchanged.

Amenity

Hotels are not noisy land uses or inappropriate neighbours, especially when, like Premier Inn, the operators have a policy of refunding payments to guests whose sleep is disturbed or otherwise inconvenienced. As a result, the residential amenity of nearby houses will not be adversely affected by this development.

A Noise Impact Assessment is provided in support of the proposals which confirms that, with appropriate and the recommended mitigation, new and replacement plant serving the hotel bedrooms would not impact the amenity of any neighbouring land uses.

Sustainability and Design

A Whitbread Sustainability Statement is submitted, this sets out wider sustainability credentials relating to the construction of the hotel, the waste management strategy; cooking methods; water saving features; energy-saving measures; and other sustainability features.

Drainage

As the proposed development comprises of an internal conversion and external alterations only, there is no change to the impermeable area or surface water drainage on site.

A pre-development sewer capacity enquiry has been submitted to Thames Water and they have confirmed that there is sufficient capacity in the local sewer network.

The Drainage Strategy Report concludes *'It is concluded that it will be possible to dispose of surface & foul water runoff from the development without increasing the level of flood risk to the site of neighbouring properties. Therefore, the scheme can be considered acceptable in terms of drainage strategy and flood risk'*

Ecology

The proposed development is being built solely on developed land and hard standing which has no ecological value.

This application has been submitted with a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment along with a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and calculation.

The Preliminary Ecological Assessment and Roost Appraisal concludes that there are no local notable habitats on-site, the site is not subject to any statutory designations, there is no evidence of roosting bats or any other surveyed species.

As the site is built solely upon developed land, the proposed development is 'BNG exempt'.

**Conclusion**

We consider that this development offers an opportunity for both economic and sustainable development in a well-established and highly suitable location.

There is considerable policy support for this development and there are no policies contained within the local development plan that would seek to restrict a development of this nature in this location; this coupled with the sustainable and established location of the site means that the development is fully development plan compliant.

Considering all of the above, and in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, we urge that planning permission is granted without delay.

I trust that the information supplied is sufficient to enable the application to be registered and progressed. However, if you require any additional information or have any queries then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully.

Thank you,

**Chris Hatton**
**Graduate Planner**

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