

9th October 2023

Our Ref: 333100737

Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
READING
RG1 2LU

BY PLANNING PORTAL REFERENCE: PP-13380677

Dear Sir/Madam

**SECTION 73 APPLICATION WITH RESPECT TO LAND AT FLAGSTAFF ROAD, GREEN PARK,
READING
SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF ST EDWARD HOMES LIMITED**

We are instructed by St Edward Homes Limited to submit a Section 73 application to Reading Borough Council for the variation of Condition 1 attached to planning permission reference 212006 relating to Land south of Flagstaff Way and west of Longwater Avenue, Green Park, Reading (the Site).

Full planning permission was granted in February 2022 for the construction of a temporary car park, with vehicular access from Longwater Avenue and pedestrian/cycle access onto Flagstaff Road. The consented car park comprises 300 parking spaces, an initial phase of 150 having been consented in September 2021 (reference 210294). The car parking was approved on a temporary basis to provide parking for contractors involved in the construction of Green Park Village to the north of the Site.

This application seeks to vary Condition 1 attached to the permission which states:

The use of the land as a car park hereby approved shall cease on or before 11th February 2025 (i.e. at the end of 3 years from the date of permission), whichever shall first occur, the use hereby permitted shall cease (and all materials and equipment brought on to the premises in connection with the use shall be removed) and the site shall be restored to its former condition.

REASON: The proposal has only been assessed as a temporary proposal and a permanent retention of such use will need to be re-assessed under local planning policy.

The variation sought seeks to extend the time period during which the land can be used as a car park by five years to 11th February 2030.

Section 73(5) of the TCPA 1990 (as amended) states that planning permission must not be granted under Section 73 to extend the time limit within which a development must be started or an application for reserved matters must be made. Variation to the time period in which a use can be carried out is not

excluded from Section 73; hence this application seeks to vary the existing consent to extend the time period during which the land can be used as a car park through Section 73.

The use of the car park by contractors has supported the development of Green Park Village. Whilst the need for contractor parking is diminishing as the construction of Green Park Village approaches its conclusion, the retention of car parking on the Site for an extended temporary period presents an opportunity to support the growth of Green Park business park. In particular, the car park offers the opportunity to support the relocation of businesses to Green Park as they transition to the lower parking provision at Green Park compared to previous premises.

To this end, this application seeks to vary Condition 1 to allow for parking to be provided for a longer temporary period, to allow for use by occupiers of Green Park.

Parking is intended to be used on a temporary basis by Wood Group employees who have recently relocated from offices at Shinfield Park to 400 Longwater Avenue. Approximately 1,000 employees are due to be located at Wood Group's new offices. 1,039 more parking spaces were available at Wood Group's previous offices at Shinfield Park than are provided at 400 Longwater Avenue. To support the transition to the 361 spaces provided at 400 Longwater Avenue, 150 additional spaces for the use of Wood Group employees are proposed to be provided at the Application Site on a temporary basis.

Whilst there is a strong desire to encourage sustainable travel, in line with the Green Park Travel Plan strategy, it is recognised that there is a need for additional parking to be provided on a temporary basis while commuting patterns change. The provision of this additional parking will assist Wood Group in reassuring its staff that they will be able to access the new office while they adjust to the sustainable transport options available at Green Park. This is considered necessary to minimise the risk of staff turnover increasing due to the office relocation. The majority of occupiers who relocate to Green Park require temporary additional parking to support the transition to new commuting patterns, with occupiers working with their employees to gradually reduce the need for parking.

In addition, 150 parking spaces are intended to be used on a temporary basis by Three who relocated to 450 Longwater Avenue in 2022. Three employs 1,532 people at their HQ in Green Park, with an additional 380 partners working with them at Green Park, totalling 1,912 staff. Three have reported that car driving has become a more popular mode of travel since relocating to Green Park from town centre locations in Reading and Maidenhead, with commuter patterns post-Covid also contributing to strain on available car parking. Average demand for parking spaces at 450 Longwater Avenue on the busiest days of the week exceeds the current provision of 361 parking spaces by up to 193 spaces. Three are anticipating demand to increase further over the next few months with a number of high focus projects required staff to be in the office.

Similar to Wood Group, a transition period with the extension of the car park will provide time for the travel patterns of employees to be influenced by the availability of sustainable transport options.

In this regard, the proposed provision of 300 additional parking spaces at the Site for use on a temporary basis is intended to achieve an appropriate balance between business needs and the parking provision being appropriate to the accessibility of the location to sustainable transport facilities, in line with Local Plan Policy TR5. Supporting business needs is considered vital given that Green Park is home to more than 60 diverse and forward-thinking businesses and provides a significant contribution to the local economy.

In summary, even taking into account the additional 300 spaces which are the subject of this planning application, demand still exceeds parking provision on the busiest days at 400 and 450 Longwater Avenue, thereby encouraging employees to switch to more sustainable travel modes.

Moreover, information on the sustainable transport options available to staff at Green Park is being shared as part of efforts to break existing travel habits and promote more sustainable commuting options. This work, alongside staff being able to trial the transport options available at Green Park, is anticipated to

lead to a gradual reduction in car usage, ultimately enabling the parking demand to be met wholly at 400 and 450 Longwater Avenue.

In the long-term, Mapletree are committed to building out the remaining plots at Green Park for employment premises, enabling a continuing contribution towards the employment floorspace needs identified in Local Plan Policy EM1 and reflecting the allocation of Green Park as a Core Employment Area in Policy EM2. Mapletree are also committed to reducing car usage and encouraging sustainable travel, in line with the existing Travel Plan strategy in Green Park. In this context, long-term retention of this additional parking is not proposed.

To ensure that parking responds to an identified need, access to the Site will be controlled by a barrier activated by key fobs which Mapletree will provide to Wood Group and Three.

A Transport Statement is submitted as part of this application which considers the transport implications of the proposed use of the Site for parking for Wood Group and Three employees. The Statement concludes that based on anticipated travel to the office each weekday the change of use from a contractor car park to parking for 400 and 450 Longwater Avenue will result in an initial minor increase in the number of two-way vehicle trips between 08:00-09:00 of 14 and a decrease of 13 between 17:00-18:00. As such, the proposal will have no significant impact on the local highway network. The number of vehicle trips will further decrease throughout the lifespan of the temporary car parking as Wood Group and Three employees switch to sustainable transport modes as awareness of these options increases. As such, the use of the car park for Wood Group and Three employees will facilitate the transition period while employees adapt their travel behaviours whilst having no significant impact on the local highway network.

A post-occupation Travel Plan will be prepared for 400 and 450 Longwater Avenue to demonstrate the Green Park commitment to sustainable travel.

This planning application is supported by the following material:

- Completed Planning Application Form and Certificates
- Transport Statement

The application fee of £293 is paid via the Planning Portal.

We trust that you have sufficient information to register the above application as being validly made and thus determine it accordingly. If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



EMILY EVERITT
Planning Associate
STANTEC UK LIMITED