

Reading Borough Council
Planning Section
Directorate for Economic Growth and
Neighbourhood Services
Civic Offices, Level 1 North
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

Shrimplin
Planning & Development

Date: 20 November 2024

My ref: 24103/LT20241120

By email

Dear Sir / Madam,

Replacement play space, boundary treatment and landscaping at Dee Park Open Space, Glenmore Place, Reading, RG30 4EP

1. On behalf of the applicant, Reading Borough Council, please find enclosed a full planning application for a replacement play space, boundary treatment and landscaping (hereafter referred to as the “Application Proposal”) at Dee Park Open Space, Glenmore Place, Reading (hereafter referred to as the “Application Site”).
2. The application fee has been paid.
3. Please find the attached documents in support of this application:
 - Application Form;
 - CIL form;
 - Drawings as existing (HTA) (September 2024)
 - Location Plan, drawing number RBC-DPR_HTA-L_DR_0903 Rev B (HTA) (October 2024);
 - Existing Site Plan, drawing number RBC-DPR_HTA-L_DR_0904 Rev A (HTA) (October 2024);
 - Drawings as proposed (HTA) (September 2024)
 - Hardworks General Arrangement, drawing number RBC-DPR_HTA-L_DR_0901 Rev G (HTA) (November 2024)
 - Softworks General Arrangement, drawing number RBC-DPR_HTA-L_DR_0902 Rev F (HTA) (October 2024)
 - Landscape Sections, drawing number RBC-DPR_HTA-L_DR-0910 Rev C (HTA) (October 2024)
 - Illustrative Plan, drawing number RBC-DPR_HTA-L_DR_0900 Rev E (HTA) (October 2024)
 - Outline Hard Landscape Schedule, document reference RBC-DPR_HTA-L_SH-0001 Rev F (HTA) (November 2024)

- Soft Landscape Schedule, document reference RBC-DPR_HTA-L-SH-0002 Rev C (HTA) (October 2024)
 - Tree Ratio Schedule, document reference RBC-DPR_HTA-L_SH-0003 (HTA) (October 2024)
 - Drainage Strategy Report (Hydrock) (November 2024)
 - Drainage Strategy, drawing number 36064-HYD-00-ZZ-DR-C-7000 – Rev P01 (Hydrock) (November 2024)
 - Design and Access Statement (HTA) (November 2024)
 - This cover letter (Shrimplin Planning & Development) (November 2024)
 - Biodiversity Impact Assessment: Losses and Gains Summary (ESL) (September 2024)
 - Biodiversity Net Gain Statement for Validation (ESL) (September 2024)
 - Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation (ESL) (September 2024)
 - Statutory Biodiversity Metric Conditions Assessment (ESL) (Sept 2024)
 - Biodiversity Metric Plan Post Development (ESL) (September 2024)
 - Baseline Biodiversity Metric Plan (ESL) (September 2024)
 - Arboricultural Planning Report (Arb Consultancy) (September 2024)
 - Phase 1 Desk Study (GW) (October 2024)
4. We look forward to receiving confirmation that the planning application has been registered. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Application Site

5. The Application Site comprises a playground, MUGA and a vacant temporary building previously used for youth and police facilities. There are street trees adjacent to the Application Site. These are not TPO's.
6. The existing play facilities are in a poor state of repair and in need of replacement. The existing temporary buildings are expected to be removed ahead of this planning application (December 2024) under the temporary planning permission (161807) which includes a condition to reinstate the site to its former state.
7. The Application Site is located within the Dee Park Estate which is being regenerated for housing and a range of community facilities and open space. The site is within the boundary of the Dee Park site allocation in the Local Plan (Policy WR1: Dee Park).
8. The Application Site is not within a Conservation Area. The Application Site is within Fluvial Flood Zone 1 (low probability).

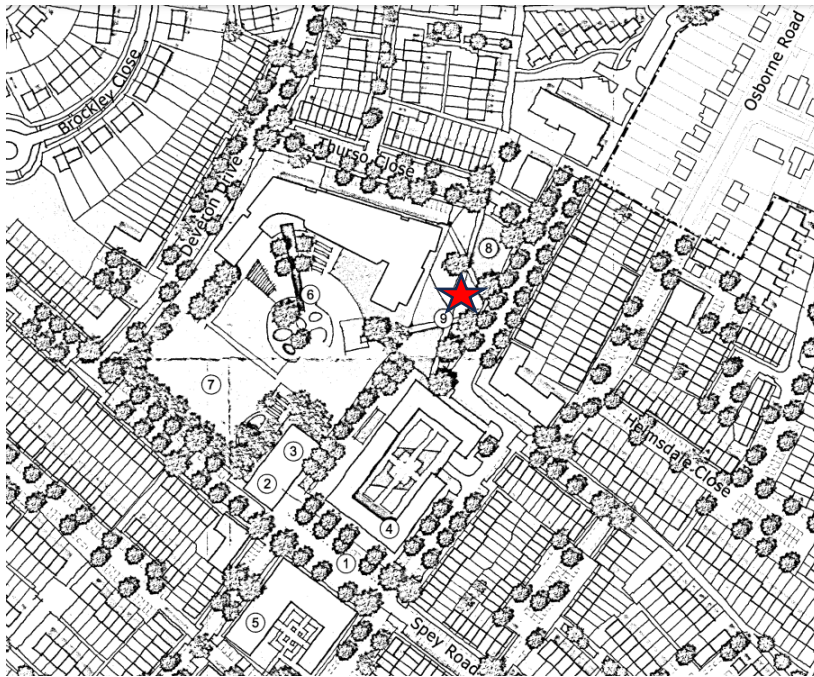
Application Proposal

9. The Application Proposal is for a new multi-use open space including under 5's and 5-11's play facilities, a flexible community space and a gathering space linking to the new community centre to the west. New boundary treatment is proposed including 1.1m high metal gates and railings and 2m high mesh fencing around the ball court.

10. The Application Proposal has been informed through consultation with the local community and local councillors. Consultation events took place in March 2023 and July 2024. Details of the outcome of this are in the Design and Access Statement. There have also been discussions on hard landscaping and boundary treatment with the highways team at Reading Borough Council, particularly around ensuring that materials specified could easily re-ordered in the future if repairs/replacements were required. Suppliers for these elements have not been specified to allow these to be reviewed in more detail at the next design stage.
11. There are 4 no. trees on the Application Site. These are to be removed and replaced with 38 no. predominantly native trees. This is a net gain of 34 no. trees. A landscaping scheme is proposed as shown on the Softworks General Arrangement Plan, drawing number RBC-DPR_HTA-L_DR_0902 Rev F. An Arboricultural Planning Report (Arb Consultancy) (September 2024) has been provided. This demonstrates that trees adjacent to the Application Site will be protected as part of the development.
12. A Biodiversity Impact Assessment (ESL) (September 2024) has been provided. This identifies a loss of 0.17 habitat units on the site. This will be offset through replacement on-site habitat to provide 262.21% net gain. This can be secured through the standard biodiversity net gain condition.
13. The existing play equipment is in a poor state of repair and cannot be re-used or re-purposed as part of the proposal. These will be recycled along with other site materials. Details of this will not be known until a contractor is appointed once planning permission has been granted.
14. No external lighting is proposed.

Planning history

15. Outline planning permission was granted on 23 December 2009 for the "Outline application for the phased regeneration of Dee Park Estate with access comprising demolition of 376 dwellings and replacement with 281 houses and flats for affordable rent and sale and 482 houses and flats for private sale (763 total), with new community centre, shops, school, and environmental improvements to the regeneration area" (091606 / 09/01454/OUT). The Application Site falls within the boundary of the outline permission. It is identified as an area for a neighbourhood park and play area, as shown on the Landscape Masterplan, drawing number INSDPRAL(0)014, below.



16. The development was split into a number of phases. Reserved matters applications have been granted by the Council for phases 1, 2A and 2B. These phases have now been completed. Phase 3 is currently at the design and feasibility stage. A planning application for this phase is expected to be submitted in 2025.
17. A S73 planning application was granted on 6 November 2013 for “Application for variation of conditions 6, 7 and 22 following grant of planning permission 09/01454/OUT” (131058). This permission amended the phasing of the masterplan. This introduced a new Phase 2C. The Application Site falls within the Phase 2C boundary, as shown on the phasing plan below (indicated by a red star).



18. Condition 2 of planning permission 131058 required applications for reserved matters for the phases to be made to the Local Planning Authority within 7 years of the main outline permission (091606 / 09/01454/OUT), approved on 23 December 2009. This permission has therefore expired.
19. Full planning permission was granted on 26 February 2018 for “Provision of the Dee Park Community Centre comprising of a Children's Centre, secure outdoor amenity space, community hall, offices and café with associated landscaping and disabled parking” (172312). The new community centre to the west of the Application Site.
20. The Application Proposal is a standalone application for a neighbourhood park and play area as part of Phase 2C.
21. In order to implement Phase 2B of the outline permission, a police facility and youth centre were temporarily re-located to the Application Site. Full planning permission was granted on 29 January 2015 for “Erection of a temporary facility consisting of six portakabin units (2 for temporary police facility relocation and 4 for temporary youth centre relocation accommodation) as part of previously approved development at Dee Park (Phase 2) in Reading (110612)” (141662). This was followed by another planning permission granted on 25 November 2016 to allow the 6 portakabins to remain in place until 30 January 2019 (161807). These facilities have since been re-provided at the new community centre to the west of the Application Site, approved through planning permission 172312. The centre is now operational and the temporary facilities are now redundant.

Policy Framework

3. The relevant parts of the development plan comprise the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019) and the Proposals Map (November 2019).
4. The NPPF (December 2023), with additional guidance in the NPPG, is also an important material planning consideration. The Dee Park Planning Brief (December 2008), whilst dated, is a material consideration also.

Assessment of the Application Proposal

Principle of Development

22. Local Plan Policy WR1: Dee Park supports the regeneration of the area, including through the provision of new and improved community facilities and open spaces:
 - “Improved community facilities, which would be multi-functional and serve a range of groups, and may include sports facilities; and
 - Improved quality of open space provision, including greater usability of recreational space, and an area of public realm in the centre”

23. The supporting text emphasises the importance of the regeneration of the Dee Park area:

“Regeneration of the area is therefore essential, and a key objective for the Council. This regeneration is well underway, and at the time of this plan, phases 1, 2a and 2b had delivered 515 new homes (a net gain of around 301) along with new retail facilities. The remainder of the scheme as currently permitted would deliver 190 more homes (a net gain of 108), and this has not commenced.” (paragraph 7.3.2).

24. The Dee Park Planning Brief (2008) recognises the poor quality open space that serves the estate:

“The existing estate layout includes extensive areas of often undefined and relatively low-grade open space with few facilities” (paragraph 8.27)

25. The Planning Brief identifies a number of objectives, including:

“To improve the community facilities on the estate including making better use of the open spaces and improve the recreational value, quality and safety of open space on the estate” (paragraph 4.4)

26. The Planning Brief sets the following requirement for the regeneration of the estate:

“smaller elements of open space should be used to complement the main area and to enhance other parts of the estate. These open spaces should together provide a series of attractive focal points within the built environment and act as pleasant links between different parts of the estate and between the estate and other adjoining open spaces, including the adjoining Louse Hill Copse. Such spaces should contribute to overall recreational provision and environmental quality of any scheme” (paragraph 8.30)

27. It also identifies various sports facilities to be delivered as part of the regeneration:

“All weather, floodlit, outdoor artificial turf games pitch; Indoor two-court sports hall / performing arts studio (NB could be multi-use flexible space in community centre or youth facility); Informal kick-about area (NB: a multi-use games area currently provided near Lyon Square could fulfil this role if retained)” (table below paragraph 7.8)

28. The Application Proposal will provide new and improved multi-function facilities serving a variety of groups within the local community and enhancing the usability of the site. The proposals have been informed by extensive consultation with the local community and have been designed to complement the new community centre to the west. Further details on this is provided within the Design and Access Statement (HTA) (September 2024).

29. The Application Proposal aligns with the outline planning permission for Dee Park which identified the Application Site as an area for a neighbourhood park and play area, as shown on the Landscape Masterplan, drawing number INSDPRAL(0)014. It is in accordance with Local Plan Policy WR1 as well as the Dee Park Planning Brief. Other facilities identified in the Planning Brief have already been delivered in the early phases of the development, including the synthetic turf facility at the school as part of phase 1, the MUGA and the community centre with multi-use space adjacent to the Application Site.

Open space

30. The Application Site is not an area of open space protected through Policy EN7: Local Green Space and Public Open Space. Local Plan Policy EN8: Undesignated Open Space is relevant. This policy sets out the approach to undesignated open space:

“There will be a presumption in favour of retention of undesignated open space, which will include allotments. Development should not result in the loss of or jeopardise use and enjoyment of undesignated open space. Development may be permitted where it is clearly demonstrated that replacement open space, of a similar standard and function, can be provided at an accessible location close by, or that improvements to recreational facilities on remaining open space can be provided to a level sufficient to outweigh the loss of the open space. The quality of existing open space should not be eroded by insensitive development on adjoining land.”

31. The existing facilities are in a poor state and in need of replacement. The existing MUGA was installed as a temporary measure whilst the Multi Use Games area and Synthetic Turf Pitch was provided as part of the development of phase 1. As part of the Unilateral Undertaking, the school entered into a community use agreement to include access to the facilities for the local community outside of school hours. The Application Proposal will provide new and improved replacement facilities.
32. The Application Proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy EN8: Undesignated Open Space.

Transport implications / Transport Statement

33. Local Plan Policy TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters is aimed at ensuring that new development ensures highway safety and does not interfere with the free flow of traffic on the highway.

“Development will only be permitted where:-

- i) Accesses and works to the highway comply with the adopted standards of the Transport Authority;
- ii) The development would not have a material detrimental impact on the functioning of the transport network;

- iii) The proposals would not be detrimental to the safety of users of the transport network, including pedestrians and cyclists;
 - iv) The proposal would not generate regular movement of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) on unsuitable roads, or on roads without easy access to the Classified Highway Network; and
 - v) For non-residential uses, or new dwellings on classified roads, off-street servicing would be provided”.
34. With regard to part (i) of Policy TR3, no changes are proposed to the highway and the access arrangements to the site will broadly remain the same as existing.
35. Parts (iv) and (v) of Policy TR3 are not relevant to the Application Proposal. With regard to parts (ii) and (iii), the Application Proposal is for the replacement of an existing play area and MUGA with new facilities. The number and extent of facilities is broadly similar to the existing facilities and so there is not expected to be a significant change in circumstances. No parking is proposed on the Application Site as this is not required and would only reduce the usable space for the community facility. There is on-street parking on Glenmore Place and Eddleston Way¹, including disabled parking bays. The facility is designed as a Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) which are intended to be located within 400m of residential dwellings which they serve². In this case, the play area is intended to serve the local Dee Park community as is envisaged through the outline masterplan for the site, which identifies the site as an area for a neighbourhood park and play area, and Local Plan Policy WR1 and the Planning Brief. It is therefore expected that users would predominantly travel to and from the site on foot.
36. For these reasons, it is not expected that the Application Proposal would result in a material increase in trips to and from the site by any form of transportation and would not be of detriment to the highway safety.
37. The Application Site is not constrained and has good access to the strategic road network. It is a modest development and not expected to result in significant highways implications. On this basis, we do not believe that a Construction Method Statement is required. Without prejudice, should the Council consider these details necessary, we request this is dealt with by condition.

Noise

38. Local Plan Policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity is a permissive policy that seeks to ensure that new development does not reduce the quality of the environment, particularly for residential occupiers:

“Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of:

¹ Not known to be subject to parking restrictions.

² Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play (Fields in Trust) (2020)

- Noise and disturbance”

39. Local Plan Policy EN16: Pollution and Water Resources sets similar requirements:

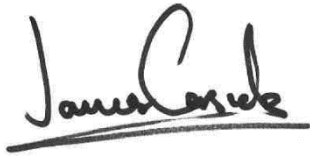
“Development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment and sensitive receptors through land, noise or light pollution”

40. The Application Site is located in a residential area within an urban environment. There are residential neighbours to the south (Stronsay Court), east (Frazer House and Glenmore Place) and north (Plaice Court) of the Application Site. These are separated by parking areas and public realm.
41. The site is identified as an area for a neighbourhood park and play area in the outline masterplan for the site (planning ref: 091606 / 09/01454/OUT). The Dee Park Planning Brief recognises the need to improve the existing open space and play facilities at Dee Park. The principle of a play area in this location is established.
42. The Application Proposal is for the replacement of an existing play area and MUGA with new facilities. The number and extent of facilities is broadly similar to the existing facilities and so any change to the use of the site would be insignificant. The play area and MUGA is separated from Stronsay Court by approximately 16m and the central play area and MUGA are separated from Frazer House and properties on Glenmore Place by between 21.5m - 25m. These are significant separation distances. The new facilities are aimed at younger children (0-11 years) and so will mainly be used during daylight hours. The layout of the Application Proposal has also been informed by the surrounding context with planting surrounding the play area, MUGA and meeting places which will serve as a noise and visual buffer. For these reasons, we consider that there would be no notable change in circumstances to surrounding residential neighbours. The Application Proposal is in accordance with Local Plan Policies CC8 and EN16.

Summary and Conclusion

43. Full planning permission is sought for a replacement play space, boundary treatment and landscaping at Dee Park Open Space, Glenmore Place, Reading.
44. The Application Proposal aligns with the outline planning permission for Dee Park which identified the Application Site as an area for a neighbourhood park and play area, as shown on the Landscape Masterplan, drawing number INSDPRAL(0)014. It is in accordance with Local Plan Policy WR1 as well as the Dee Park Planning Brief.
45. The Application Proposal aligns with Policy EN8: Undesignated Open Space.
46. We respectfully request that the application be approved.
47. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'James Garside', with a horizontal line underneath.

James Garside

Associate

james.garside@shrimplin.co.uk