

Our Ref: B0168/24

23 January 2025

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

Via Planning Portal

RE: Planning, Design & Access Statement - Proposed single storey outbuilding at Circle Reading Hospital, 100 Drake Way, Reading, RG2 0NE.

Dear Sir/Madam

We are instructed by the Circle Group to submit the following application for full planning permission in relation to the existing Circle Reading Hospital at 100 Drake Way, Reading, RG2 0GG.

Specifically, this application proposes:

'External alteration to the existing hospital to provide a single storey outbuilding 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:

- Location Plan
- Existing and Proposed Site Plan
- Existing and Proposed Elevations
- This Planning, Design, and Access Statement

Introduction

This application is submitted in relation to Circle Reading Hospital at 100 Drake Way, Reading. This application seeks planning permission for an external alteration to the existing hospital in the form of a single storey outbuilding to house the above ground relocation of an existing fuel tank.



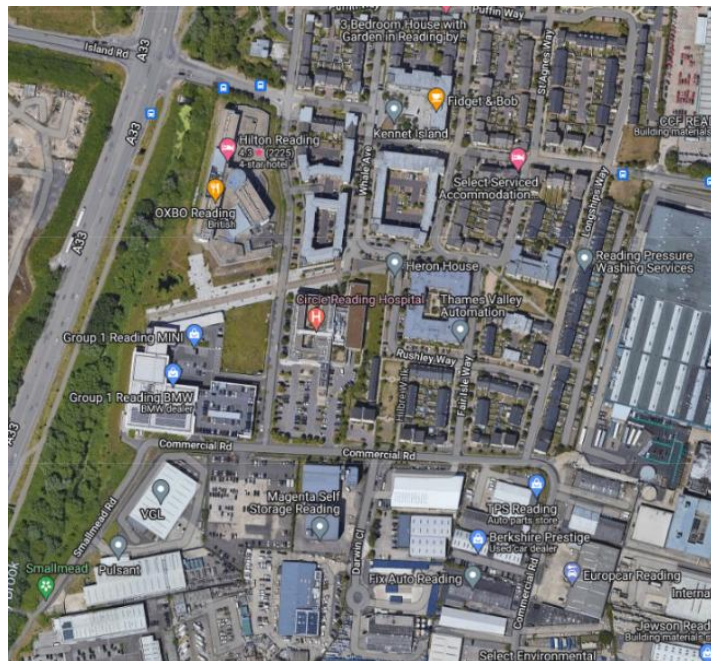
Site and Surroundings

Circle Reading Hospital comprises of a cladded main rectangular block with a further rectangular block to the west of the main building. The main body of the hospital is immediately to the north of the proposed area of works with surrounding vehicular parking and access to the south and landscaping to the west.

The hospital is a 30-bed healthcare facility with five operating theatres. There is an endoscopy suite within the theatre complex, as well as a suite of consulting and treatment rooms, and an imaging department offering x-ray, ultrasound and scans. The hospital also has a pharmacy on site.

The Hospital currently provides 150 car parking spaces for staff, patients and visitors, including dedicated disabled parking bays.

The hospital is located on the western edge of South Reading with the A33 0.2k to the east of the site, from which there is direct vehicular access. The Hospital building is set back from the A33 and the site is surrounded by residential dwellings to the north, and commercial buildings to the west and south and east.



Aerial Image – Existing Hospital site (© Google Maps)



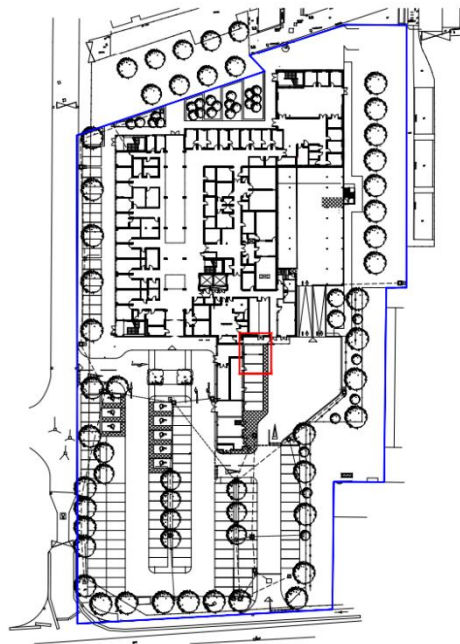
The site is not within a conservation area and there are no nearby listed buildings. The site is located within flood zone I according to the Government's Flood Map for Planning.

This site is not in the countryside or green belt.

Proposal

The Circle Group (the applicant) has identified the need to bring their existing underground fuel tank for Circle Reading Hospital's backup generator above ground. The move to bring the fuel tank overground is necessary to enable easier maintenance and refilling, along with greater security against water contamination. The need for an external fuel tank is currently being satisfied by a temporary fuel tank located immediately south of the application site.

In order to house this fuel tank, a single storey outbuilding is required. This would be located to the east of the south wing of the existing hospital, outside of the Hospital's main plant room to which it would connect to.



Site Plan

The outbuilding to house this fuel tank would take up two existing parking spaces. The outbuilding would however, free up two parking spaces currently filled by the temporary external fuel tank.



The proposed outbuilding would be finished in materials to match the surrounding hospital.



Existing Site



Proposed Outbuilding Location





Temporary External Fuel tank



Existing Underground Fuel Tank Location



Planning History

In 2008 planning permission (08/00893/FUL) was granted for the construction of a hospital (8,456 sq m), retail units (234 sq m) and associated car parking (172 spaces) and landscaping.

In 2010 planning permission (10/00291/FUL) was granted for the Construction of a hospital with associated landscaping and car parking (re-submission of 09/02187/FUL).

In 2011 planning permission (11/00641/NMC) was granted for the non-material change to planning permission 10/00291/FUL in respect of changes to north, east, south and west elevations and amendments to landscaping materials and planting.

Notably, the permitted development rights for the Hospital were removed in planning permission 10/00291/FUL.

There have been no other relevant planning applications for this site.

Planning Policy

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

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.

Policy CC7 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 OUI states that proposals for on-site intensification of important facilities, such as schools and healthcare uses, will be supported.



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.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2024 and sets out the Government's aims for achieving sustainable development. Paragraph 8 explains that sustainable development comprises three overarching objectives:

- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy;
- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities;
- c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.

Paragraph 11 explains that the presumption in favour of sustainable development means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

Section 6 sets out the conditions needed to build a strong and competitive economy. Where Planning policies and 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, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

Section 8 specifically promotes the development of healthy communities. It states that planning policies and decisions should enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs. Established community services should be allowed to develop and modernise to the benefit of the community.

Section 12 relates to achieving well-designed places. Paragraph 131 notes that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Paragraph 135 states that planning decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area;



b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting;

Planning Assessment

Principle of Development and Design

The principle of improving and investing in hospital facilities is supported by the Council in the Local Plan. Unequivocal support is also provided by the Government within the NPPF and through the 2021 amendments to Part 7 Class M of the General Permitted Development Rights.

Ordinarily, this proposal for a single storey outbuilding would be Permitted Development. However, as this site had its Permitted Development Rights removed in condition 14 of planning permission 10/00291/FUL, Circle Health Group has proceeded with a full planning application.

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 Circle Reading Hospital is a well-used facility providing numerous healthcare services both privately and through the NHS. There is demand for a new overground fuel tank for the backup generator to provide easier access which would simplify the Hospital's maintenance and refilling programs, which currently require time consuming heavy manual labour. In order to house this above ground fuel tank, a single storey outbuilding is therefore required to provide visual amenity to the area along with providing security against contamination.

The proposed works would be entirely contained to the existing site (brownfield land) and would allow for a more efficient use of the site, without needing to expand outside of its curtilage.

The proposed works would create additional employment opportunities during the and construction phase, as well as supporting third party suppliers.



The proposed single storey outbuilding is modest, appropriate and in-keeping with the existing building such that the building's character and appearance will not be adversely impacted.

The proposal is set to have a neutral impact on current parking levels as the proposed outbuilding would take two parking spaces that are currently being used by an external temporary fuel tank which will be removed after the proposed outbuilding has been constructed.

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

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

Conclusion

We consider that this development offers an opportunity for sustainable development in a highly suitable location.

There is 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.

Chris Hatton

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