

04 September 2024



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT
Ward	Katesgrove
Planning Application Reference:	240800/FUL
Site Address:	1 Arkwright Road, Reading RG2 0LU
Proposed Development	Proposed demolition and replacement of existing industrial unit with Associated parking and landscaping.
Report author	Anthony Scholes
Applicant	Studland Property Investments Ltd
Deadline:	Extension of Time Agreed until 30 September 2024
Recommendations	Subject to the satisfactory provision of Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) details, including any conditions necessary to secure additional details and implementation thereof, delegate to the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (ADPTPPS) to ii) GRANT full planning permission, subject to the satisfactory completion of a s106 legal agreement and delegate to ADPTPPS to make such minor changes to the conditions, Heads of Terms and details of the legal agreement as may be reasonably required to issue the permission or ii) Refuse full planning permission if the legal agreement is not completed by 30/09/2024 (unless officers on behalf of the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement).
S106Terms	To either secure a construction phase Employment Skills and Training Plan or an equivalent employment and skills contribution of £5,717.85 towards an Employment and Skills Plan for the construction phase of the development, payable prior to commencement of development and index linked from the date of permission. Calculated on the basis of the Employment Skills and Training SPD in accordance with Local Plan Policy CC9. Secure a payment of £2,000.00 for the provision of at least three (3) street trees within the verge within the vicinity of the site frontage(s).
Conditions	1. Full - time limit - three years 2. Approved Plans 3. Materials (to be approved) 4. Full landscaping details (including any fencing/gates and no fencing except approved by this condition) to be approved to include timetable for implementation. Landscaping provision and maintenance.

	5. Noise Levels of Plant/Equipment (at least 10dB below the pre-existing background sound level) 6. Contaminated Land Assessment 7. Remediation Scheme (to be submitted) 8. Remediation Scheme (implement and verification) 9. Unidentified Contamination 10. Land Gas 11. External Lighting (details prior to any installation). No additional lighting other than approved. 12. Construction Method Statement (to be submitted) 13. Hours of Construction 14. No Bonfires on Site 15. Sustainable Drainage 16. BREEAM 'Excellent' non-residential Interim 17. BREEAM non-residential Post Construction 18. Hours of Operation 19. Hours of deliveries/waste collection 20. Vehicle Parking (as specific) 21. Cycle Parking (as specified) 22. EV Charging Points 23. Use restriction (B2, B8, E(g)(ii) & E(g)(iii)) 24. Access closure with reinstatement 25. Refuse storage details to include vermin-proofing 26. No additional Mezzanine 27. Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan
Informatives	• Positive and Proactive • Pre-commencement conditions • Highways • S106 • Terms and conditions • Building Regulations • Complaints about construction • Contamination • CIL • Thames Water informative • Do not damage the verge

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The proposals seek the redevelopment of the site to provide additional employment floorspace within the Core Employment Area. The existing building on site would be demolished and replaced with a new building, associated landscaping, access and parking areas. The proposal would result in a net increase of 613sqm of flexible employment floorspace within the Core Employment Area. There would be a net increase of biodiversity on the site, including additional street trees to be provided off-site and secured via a s106 agreement. The proposal would be of an appropriate design, scale and position, an acceptable impact on the road network, result in an increase in trees on site and would be conditioned to provide a BREEAM "Excellent" rating. Overall, it is considered that the proposal would be in accordance with the Local Plan, and would meet the policy aims of the NPPF, and supplementary planning documents, and therefore the application is recommended for approval.

2. Introduction and site description

- 2.1. This proposal is a Major planning application and is therefore being reported to Planning Applications Committee (PAC).
- 2.2. The site comprises an existing two storey front office building in grey steel cladding with a rear lower warehouse area, with an asbestos roof. The site is provided with access via both Craddock Road, and Arkwright Road. Carparking and hardstanding are provided around most of the site. The building and its surround are representative of the era it was built in, being the 1960's, a number of nearby properties have also undergone re-development to provide a more modern and fit for purpose space. The existing building provides 886sqm of B8 use floor space, with a first floor office, and ground floor storage area.

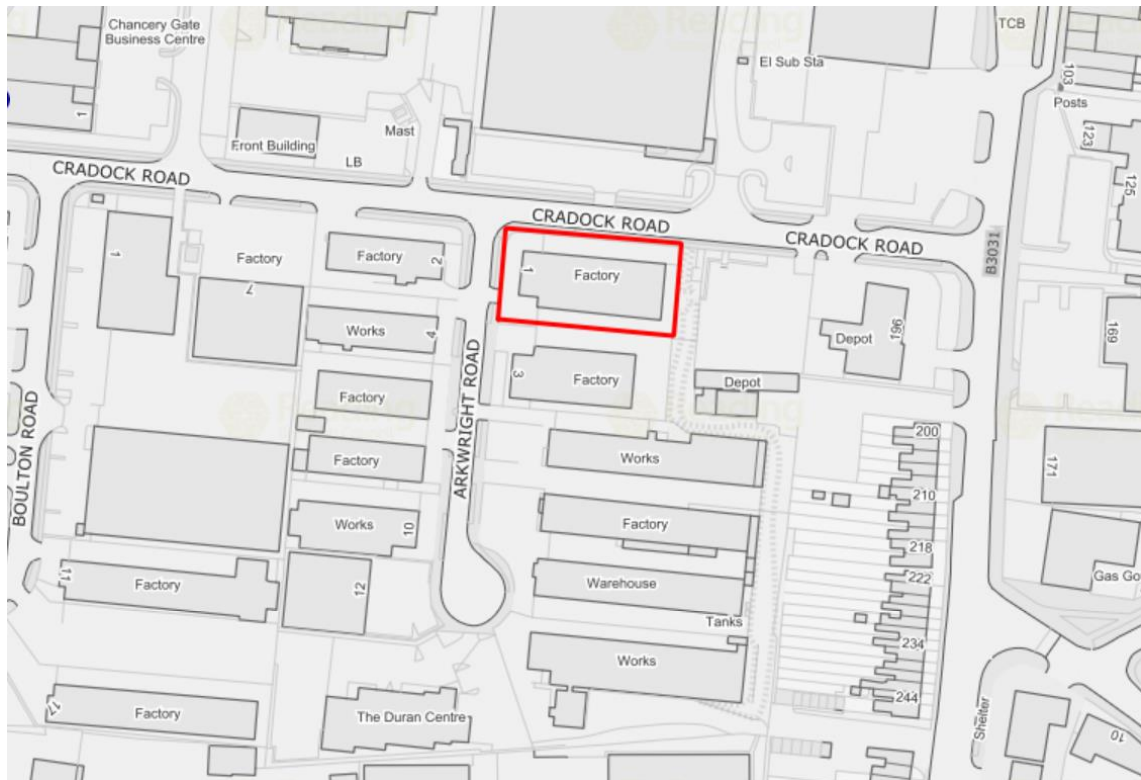


Figure 1 - Location Plan

- 2.3. The site is surrounded by other industrial and commercial uses and buildings within the wider industrial estate. To the Southwest, separated by other properties, are residential properties which are addressed to Basingstoke Road.
- 2.4. The site forms part of Core Employment Area EM2e 'North of Basingstoke Road'. The site lies within an Air Quality Management Area, and is known to be on potentially contaminated land as a former landfill site

3. The proposal

- 3.1. The proposal seeks permission to demolish the existing building and erect a new industrial building, with associated parking, hardstanding and landscaping. The proposal includes relocation of the access from Craddock road. The building would have a flexible use, within use classes B2 (General Industrial), B8 (Storage and Distribution), E(g)(ii) (Research and development of products or processes) and (iii) (Industrial Processes). The new building would have 1,499sqm (GIA) of floorspace, mostly at ground floor with office space at first floor. This represents an uplift of 613sqm (GIA) of floorspace.
- 3.2. The proposed building would be sited in the cover 900sqm of the 2,000sqm site, and is set back to the southern boundary adjacent to no.3 Arkwright Road. The revised location of the building would allow lorry access from both Craddock Road and Arkwright Road.

The proposal include 16 no. car parking spaces, including 1 no. accessible parking bay closest to the office area entrance.

3.3. The proposal would respond to the difference in level of the site through internal level changes in both the building and internal access and manoeuvring areas meaning that the office area above the ground floor storage area would be provided level access from the car parking areas and the street.

3.4. To assist with mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements, the proposal includes an area of landscaping and biodiversity enhancements to the rear of the building (eastern edge of the site) as well as providing four tree planting areas along the two frontages. The proposal also includes green roofs for outdoor amenity space for employees and to cover the bin/cycle storage areas.

3.5. The applicant has submitted the following documents as part of this application:

- Planning Statement
- Ecology PEA
- BNG assessment and mitigation report (The ecology partnership)
- Location Plan
- B 3187 01 Existing GF and site plan
- B 3187 02 Existing FF and Elevations
- B 3187 10A Proposed GF and site plan
- B 3187 11A Proposed Elevations

As received 21 June 2024

- 851-02 Rev C - Amended Site Plan (including floor plans)

As Received 6 August 2024

3.6 In relation to the community infrastructure levy, the applicant has completed a CIL liability form with the submission. The development would be CIL liable though would result in a nil charge in accordance with the adopted CIL charging schedule.

4. Planning history

011096/OUT - Widen access to Arkwright Road entrance. Increase hard standing and establish access to Craddock Road. WITHDRAWN 3/5/2001

5. Consultations

5.1. The following consultations were undertaken:

RBC Transport

Existing front access from Arkwright Rd is to be retained and the existing access from Craddock Road is to be reinstated and a new one created further away from the junction. There is no change to the existing arrangement of lorries reversing into site. There are no Transport objections to the proposed new access.

RBC Environmental Protection

Environmental Protection concerns

- *Noise arising from development*
- *Contaminated Land and land gas*

- *Construction and Demolition phase*

RBC Environmental Protection has recommended a number of conditions to mitigate the above concerns and impacts.

RBC Ecology

The BNG metric shows that the development will result in a 15.54% net gain habitat units and they have proposed to provide 'significant biodiversity net gain' on site through the addition of two small green roofs, new trees and establishing a larger area of scrub.

Thames Water

On the basis of information provided, Thames Water would advise that with regard to water network and water treatment infrastructure capacity, we would not have any objection to the above planning application. Thames Water recommends the following informative be attached to this planning permission. Thames Water will aim to provide customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head (approx 1 bar) and a flow rate of 9 litres/minute at the point where it leaves Thames Waters pipes. The developer should take account of this minimum pressure in the design of the proposed development.

6. Legal context

- 6.1. Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- 6.2. 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'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).
- 6.3. In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).
- 6.4. Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development

Section 4 – Decision Making

Section 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy

Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport

Section 11 – Making Effective Use of Land

Section 12 - Achieving well-designed and beautiful places

Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction

CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change

CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage

CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

EN7: Local Green Space and Public Open Space

EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
 EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland
 EN15: Air Quality
 EN17: Noise Generating Equipment
 EN18: Flooding and Drainage
 EM1: Provision of Employment
 EM2: Location of New Employment Development
 EM4: Maintaining a Variety of Premises
 TR1 Achieving the Transport Strategy
 TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
 TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Supplementary Planning Documents:

Planning Obligations under S106 (April 2015)
 Sustainable Design and Construction (Dec 2019)
 Employment, Skills and Training (2013)
 Parking Standards and Design (2011)
 Reading Borough Local Plan 2019
Supplementary Planning Documents and other guidance

7. Appraisal

7.1 The main considerations are:

- Principle of Development
- Biodiversity, Trees and Landscaping
- Design
- Transport
- Sustainability
- Other Matters

Principle of Development

7.2 Local Plan Policy CC1 (Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development) requires a positive approach to development proposals that reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which lies at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). To achieve sustainable development a proposal needs to meet economic, social and environmental objectives.

7.3 Local Plan Policy EM1 sets out the ambition to provide an additional 148,000sqm of industrial and/or warehousing space in the Borough across the period between 2013 and 2036. Policy EM2 directs major employment development (other than offices) to the Core Employment Areas. Policy EM4 seeks to maintain a range of types and sizes of industrial units, and proposals should maintain or enhance this range. Specifically, the policy requires proposals within the EM2e (North of Basingstoke Road) Core Employment Area to maintain the overall level of storage and distribution uses. The policy also encourages the redevelopment of older industrial units for more flexible employment premises.

7.4 The proposal would redevelop the site to create an additional 613sqm of flexible employment floorspace within the Core Employment Area in accordance with Policies EM1 and EM2. The development would introduce a flexible employment use (B2, B8, E(g)(ii) or E(g)(iii) in place of an older building, which is no longer fit for purpose due to its age, deterioration and layout. The provision of additional employment floorspace as part of an intensification of the use would be in accordance with Policy EM4. Furthermore, the proposal would not result in the loss of a B8 use within the Core Employment Area, but

would provide the opportunity for additional B8 floorspace in this Core Employment Area as part of the flexible use offer, which is another aim of Policy EM4.

- 7.5 Overall, the proposals would represent an appropriate employment use within a Core Employment Area. It is therefore considered that the proposals would be acceptable in principle.

Biodiversity, Trees and Landscaping

- 7.6 Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) seeks that development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and should provide for a net gain of biodiversity wherever possible by protecting, enhancing and incorporating features of biodiversity on and adjacent to development sites and by providing new tree planting and wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements wherever practicable.
- 7.7 The application was submitted prior to the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements pursuant to the Environment Act 2021, and so is assessed against the Local Plan requirements relating to BNG and Ecology.
- 7.8 The proposals would result in a significant biodiversity net gain of 15.54% as originally submitted. The amended proposal includes additional landscaping areas, and as such is likely to have a greater BNG. This would be provided within the site, and would be secured by condition. It is noted that in accordance with central government guidance which states: *“Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of 10% for developments is a mandatory requirement in England under the Environment Act 2021, subject to some limited exceptions. Unless exempt, every planning permission granted pursuant to an application submitted after 12 February 2024 is deemed to have been granted subject to a pre-commencement condition requiring a Biodiversity Gain Plan to be submitted and approved by the local planning authority prior to commencement of the development. The statutory biodiversity gain condition (and its reason for imposition) should not be included on decision notices. The statutory condition for non-phased development (considering the current template of the biodiversity gain plan and additional duties imposed on local authorities) below is purely for informational purposes.”*
- 7.9 In accordance with the guidance, the biodiversity net gain plan is required to be submitted to and approved by the LPA. Though its submission does not specifically secure compliance with the approved BNG plan. The national guidance released with the introduction of mandatory net gain includes guidance that, a condition is not required to be applied by LPA's as all approvals which are required to provide a BNG are taken to have the condition applied to them under the provision of the Environment Act 2021 for a minimum 10% BNG. However, the guidance is also clear that the details and management should be secured by condition to ensure maintenance and monitoring is provided to the LPA. As such, the mandatory requirements would apply to an approval, and the condition as recommended secures a habitat management and monitoring plan to ensure that the BNG is provided and secured for the 30 year period to meet those requirements. The Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan is to be prepared in accordance with the BNG plan including details of actions needed to create and enhance habitat on site as well as maintain it for 30 years from the completion of the development.
- 7.10 Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) and the Tree Strategy seek to extend the Borough's vegetation cover and that development should make provision for tree planting whilst Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks that proposals should include appropriate landscaping. Proposals should demonstrate an appropriate level of greening and/or net gain in tree coverage.
- 7.11 The site as existing is provided with minimal soft landscaping, with predominantly hardstanding around the building. There are some hedges to Arkwright Road, and an area of greenery to the rear of the site. The proposal, would seek to improve the appearance of the site through the provision of four planting areas with individual trees,

and surrounding low level vegetation, which will be spaced along the frontages, and to the corner of the site. This would improve the appearance above the existing from a landscaping perspective. In addition, the applicant has agreed to a financial contribution for the provision of at least 3 no. street trees within the vicinity of the site, the highways officers have provided guidance that Craddock Road contains at least 3 locations where trees could be placed which would be clear of underground services. The proposal would also include a green roof structure over the bin/bike storage area, and the staff outdoor sitting area (denoted as a smoking area on the proposal plans).

- 7.12 The proposal would therefore enhance the landscaping on and off-site within the area. The remainder of the site would be covered by the building or hardstanding. Overall, the landscaping proposals would be acceptable for a site of this nature, and details are recommended to be secured by condition.

Design Considerations

- 7.13 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks to ensure that new development enhances and preserves local character. The policy places importance on the layout of the urban area and urban grain, stipulating that development should respond positively to the local context and create attractive, safe and accessible environments.
- 7.14 The surrounding area is characterised by large scale industrial and commercial premises, with a mixed palette of materials, including a modern glazed frontage building directly adjacent at 3 Arkwright Road. The proposal includes indication that fencing may be required. It is unclear why fencing around the entire site would be required as shown on the perspective visuals, as this is generally to enclose external storage areas. Therefore, the landscaping condition will ensure that any fencing proposed will require permission from Council to ensure that the scheme is appropriate in this regard and does not harm the appearance of the site, as no details of the type or size of any fencing has been provided. It is noted that permitted development rights would allow for a 1m high fence or wall around the site fronting the highway.
- 7.15 The proposal would demolish the existing building, which is no longer fit for purpose, is vacant, and does not positively contribute to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal seeks to erect a new industrial building in a similar location to the existing building, with a parking and servicing to both frontages. The new building would be industrial in appearance, with the Craddock Road elevation and corner providing visual interest and differentiation through glazing. The remainder of the building would include a variation of material with a brick base, and pre-fabricated insulated metal panels. There would be high level windows in the eastern side of the building. There would also be a large access door for lorry access toward both frontages.
- 7.16 The proposal would also increase the overall height of the building above the current levels. To achieve this, in part, the proposal would increase the levels of the site, and build down into the slope of the site. This would result in a slight difference in level between Craddock Road and Arkwright Road of approximately 2.8m. This would be achieved externally by a slightly increased retaining wall within the parking area to Craddock Road, and a sloping internal driveway. The design facilitated flexibility in access for lorries whilst responding to the slope within the site and providing an improved built form for a prominent corner location.
- 7.17 Overall (and subject to appropriate boundary treatment), the proposal would represent an appropriate addition to the site, would be an acceptable scale and design and would not have an adverse impact on the quality of the open space.

Transport

- 7.18 Policies TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway related matters), TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) of the Local Plan seek to ensure that development has an acceptable relationship with the transport network, and encourage the use of public transport, walking and cycling.

- 7.19 The proposal would result in a net uplift of floorspace of 613sqm of flexible employment uses within a Core Employment Area. The access to the site would remain as existing, from Worton Drive, with road layout changes within the site to create a separate service yard and car parking area.
- 7.20 The site is within Zone 3 of the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, allowing a maximum of 1 parking space per 100sqm (B2 uses) or a maximum of 1 space per 150sqm (B8 uses). The applicant has provided a proposal with 16 car parking spaces. This level of parking is considered sufficient in this location for the uses proposed.
- 7.21 The proposals would provide covered and secure cycle parking for 5 bicycles with Sheffield Stands, which meets the Borough's adopted cycle parking standards. Servicing and deliveries are proposed to take place entirely on site, using the loading bays and yard area. This would require HGV's reversing from Craddock Road or Arkwright Road to access the site. It is noted that this arrangement is typical within the surrounding industrial area that have the same access arrangements.
- 7.22 Overall, it is considered that the proposal would not result in any harm to the highway network, would provide adequate parking and would ensure a safe access to and from the site. The proposals are therefore considered to comply with Local Plan transport policies.

Sustainability

- 7.23 Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) seeks major non-residential to meet BREEAM "excellent" standards where possible.
- 7.24 The application is not supported by an Energy and Sustainability Strategy. In accordance with the Local Plan requirements A BREEAM Pre-Assessment will be required prior to commencement of the development to ensure a BREEAM "Excellent" rating is achievable. A further compliance condition requiring certification following completion will also be required. Given this, it is considered that the proposal would meet the required Local Plan standards as set out within policy CC2 and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD.

Other Matters

Noise

- 7.25 Policy EN17 (Noise Generating Equipment) requires development to ensure noise arising from equipment does not result in harm. Policy CC8 seeks to protect noise sensitive uses from noise generating development.
- 7.26 The nearest sensitive noise receptors are residential properties on Basingstoke Road some 78m away. No noisy equipment is proposed, however a condition is recommended to ensure that any plant introduced to the site remains at an appropriate noise level.

SUDS

- 7.27 Policy EN18 (Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems) requires Major development to incorporate SUDS. No details have been provided and SUDS. An initial assessment of the run-off rate and information to demonstrate that this will be reduced in line with policy EN18 is required prior to determination. Officers are seeking agreement from Council to permit subject to suitable provision of SUDs information and ability to apply conditions as required to secure implementation.

Contaminated Land

- 7.28 Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) requires development to ensure that land contamination and land gas are adequately managed or remediated.
- 7.29 Contamination is present at the site as land identified for a former landfill, the applicant is aware of this, and has agreed to conditions requiring investigations and mitigation actions to ensure safety and remediation as required. As such, conditions are recommended for site investigations, remediation, control of land gas, and mitigation where required.

Legal Agreement

- 7.30 The overarching infrastructure Policy CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) allows for necessary contributions to be secured to ensure that the impacts of a scheme are properly mitigated. The following obligations would be sought and as set out in the recommendation above.
- 7.31 Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) for the Construction phases of the development. This is required in line with Policy CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) and the Employment, Skills and Training SPD. The applicant has opted for a financial contribution in lieu of a site specific ESP, and the figure below is agreed having been calculated in accordance the adopted SPD.
- To secure a construction phase Employment Skills and Training Plan financial contribution (£5,717.8).
- 7.32 The applicant has confirmed that they agree to also contribute toward off-site tree planting within the verge nearby the application site to be undertaken by Council.
- To secure a contribution of £2,000.00 for the implementation of street trees.

8. Equality implications

- 8.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 8.2. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular application.

9. Conclusion & planning balance

- 9.1. As with all applications considered by the Local Planning Authority, the application is required to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as per Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 9.2. The proposals would represent the appropriate redevelopment of a brownfield site allocated for employment use. The proposals would represent a biodiversity net gain on the site. The proposals would provide an increased and improved employment floorspace in an appropriate location that would not have an impact on the highway network and would ensure that the appearance of the area is improved. Overall, the proposals are considered acceptable. It is considered that officers have applied a suitable planning balance when reaching this conclusion. As such, this application is recommended for approval.

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes

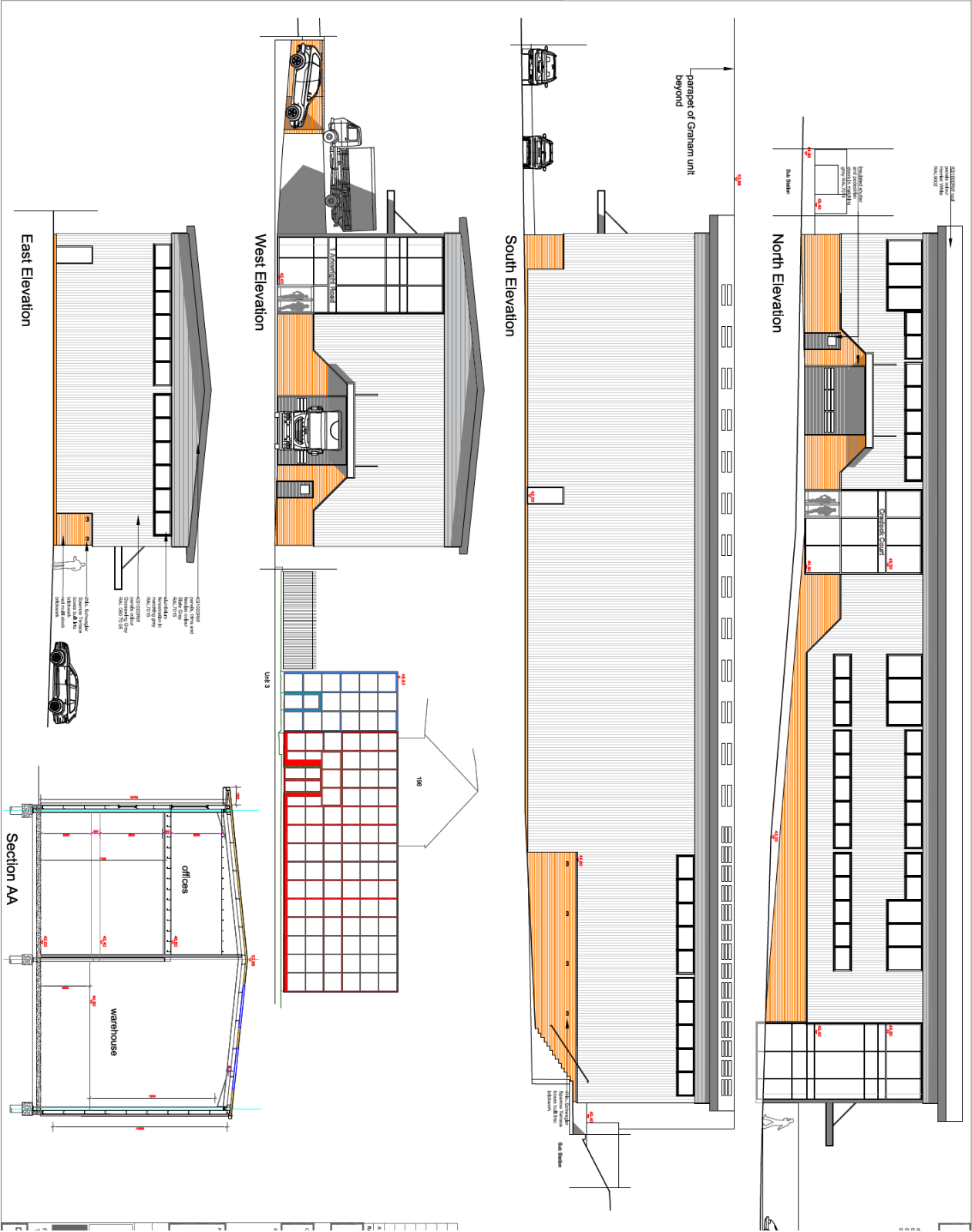




Figure 3 - Proposed Site Plan



Figure 4 - Perspective Image (Arkwright Road)



Figure 5 - Perspective Image (Craddock Road)