

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

SITE ADDRESS: 2 Norman Place, Reading, RG1 8DA

APPLICATION NUMBER: PL/25/0857

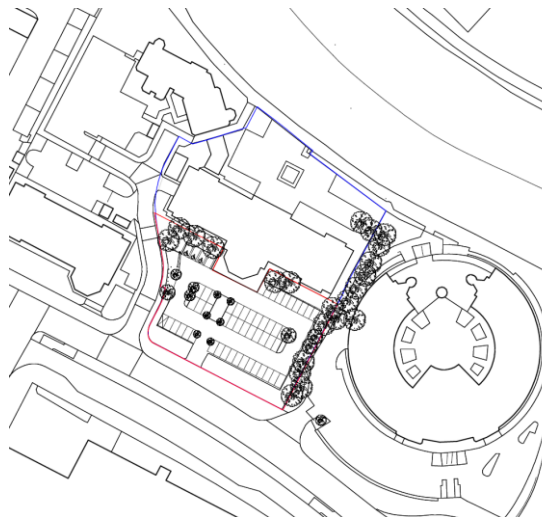
PROPOSAL: Non-material amendments to permission PL/24/1725 (granted on 24/03/2025) to alter the wording of conditions 2 and 3 to show an updated car parking layout and the extent of site ownership.

DETERMINATION DATE: 08/07/2025

CASE OFFICER: Jonathan Markwell

1. Site Description and Surrounding Area

- 1.1 The application site comprises the car park associated with the vacant office building at 2 Norman Place. The red line boundary is solely within the car park area, is broadly rectangular in shape (as shown below) and 0.23ha in size.



Above: Location Plan by applicant

- 1.2 The site currently contains 55 car parking spaces, with access from Norman Place and associated on-site trees, greenery and lighting. In the southern part of the site it is understood that there is an existing culvert which runs across the site following the line of Vastern Road, which is to the south of the site.
- 1.3 To the north of the red line boundary, also under the ownership of the applicant (denoted by a blue line), is an unoccupied four-storey office building, beyond which is the Thames Path, the River Thames and Christchurch Meadows green space. To the east is the basement and 5-storey Clearwater Court (occupied by Thames Water), with staff parking to the south. Beyond this is Reading Bridge and the 10-storey Reading Bridge House office building. To the south is the busy Vastern Road, part of the town's Inner Distribution Road (IDR). Beyond this is a multi-storey car park, which leads towards the northern entrance of Reading Station. To the west, beyond Norman Place, are the 3-storey office Sovereign House, which includes parking to the north. To the north of this is the 4-storey Thames Court residential building. At present, Norman Place provides an important pedestrian / cycle route between Caversham and Reading Station, following the opening of Christchurch Bridge in 2015. This is anticipated to evolve in time, as the permitted and now under construction redevelopment of the 55 Vastern Rd site includes a more direct connection from Christchurch Bridge towards and from Reading Station.



Above: Site Photographs 13/06/2025.

1.4 The site is not specifically allocated within the 2019 adopted Reading Local Plan. As per the local plan, the site is however within:

- Reading Central Area (Policies CR1-10)
- Air Quality Management Area (Policy EN15)
- Central Core (Policy CR1)
- Office Core (Policy CR1)
- Flood Zone 1, 2 and 3 (Policy EN18)

1.5 It is however acknowledged that the wider site, also including the office building and space up to the Thames Path, is identified within the Local Plan Partial Update, which was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 09/05/2025. Within the submission draft (May 2025) the site is identified as a possible other site for development in Central Reading, as follows:

CR14v 2 NORMAN PLACE

Development for residential.

Development should:

- *Contribute to enhanced bus priority on Vastern Road exiting the northern station interchange;*
- *Contribute towards an extension and bifurcation of the BUZZ18 bus route, with an increase in daytime, evening and weekend frequency;*
- *Include tree planting on the Vastern Road frontage to enhance the treed corridor;*
- *Avoid a detrimental impact on, and where possible enhance, the biodiversity value of the River Thames, and set buildings back at least ten metres from the top of the bank of the river;*

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- *Address flood risk issues, including avoiding development in the part of the site within Flood Zone 3 insofar as is possible;*
- *Address air quality impacts on residential use;*
- *Address any contamination on site; and*
- *Take account of the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*

*Site size: 0.55 ha
130-190 dwellings*

- 1.6 At this point in time, only a low level of weight is afforded to the Local Plan Partial Update policy, given the pre-examination stage of the process.
- 1.7 Beyond the red and blue line application site boundary, the following nearby characteristics (all based on the adopted local plan policy) are also of relevance:
- River Thames is part of the Thames Valley major landscape feature (Policy EN13), one of Reading's waterspaces (Policy EN11) and an area of identified biodiversity interest (Policy EN12)
 - The River Thames footpath, immediately to the north of the site, is a Public Right of Way (PROW) and a leisure cycle route in the LCWIP.
 - Opposite to the site Christchurch Meadows is a Local Green Space (Policy EN7).
 - Reading Bridge is on the List of Locally Important Buildings (Policy EN4), with the local listing (LL25) map confirming that the listing extends to the roundabout and includes the steps adjacent to Reading Bridge House. Reading Bridge added to the local list on 6th September 2023.
 - Norman Place is a specified cycle route (Policy TR4). Within the Reading Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Norman Place is part of a strategic cycle route.
 - Vastern Road is a specified cycle route (Policy TR4). Within the LCWIP Vastern Road is part of an orbital cycle route.
 - Vastern Road is part of the classified highway network (Policy TR3) and part of the proposed Mass Rapid Transit route at this point (Policy TR2).
 - The site is between two 'Treed corridors' (Vastern Road and the River Thames) as per the Reading Tree Strategy, and hence is a high priority area for tree retention and planting, with a green buffer also expected on the riverside for any redevelopment of this site.
- 1.8 It is also relevant to note from the outset that the site is located outside of any Central Reading Major Opportunity Area (Policies CR11-13) and outside of any area of potential for tall buildings (Policy CR10).



Site photograph looking north from the multi-storey car park roof to the south (20/02/2024)

2. Proposal

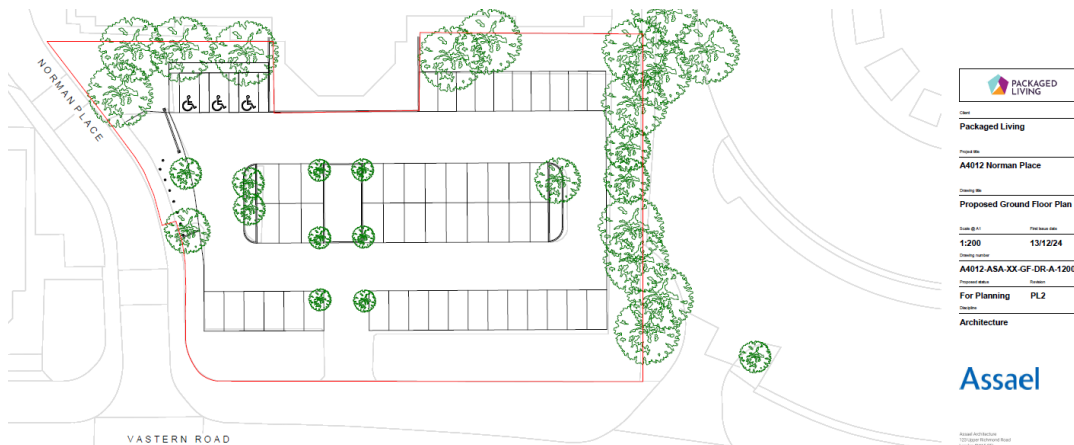
- 2.1 Non-material amendments are proposed to the wording of conditions 2 (accessible parking spaces) and 3 (maximum 55 spaces as per the approved layout) of planning permission PL/24/1725, which on 24/03/2025 granted the change of use of the existing car park associated with the vacant office premises to a public car park (Sui Generis), for a temporary period of three years. The applicant has explained on the application form the background and reasons for the application:

Please state why you wish to make this amendment

The onsite car parking layout has changed from that shown on the approved plan and the revised plan needs to be reflected in the wording of the relevant conditions.

The Site Location Plan is identified in Informative 2 of the Decision Notice. Officers have asked how CCTV can be controlled as this sits outside of the application red line. Provision of a blue line denoted the applicant's wider ownership helps to identify how this can be appropriately satisfied.

- 2.2 The second paragraph above is in relation to the on-going assessment of approval of details application PL/25/0601, which concerns the CCTV strategy. In short, the CCTV cameras proposed are located outside of the red line boundary of the application site, but the applicant has confirmed that the land in which they are located is also under the control of the applicant, with a blue line added to the block plan to denote that.



Above – approved layout at time of permission PL/24/1725. Below – current proposed layout.



- 2.5 The areas of difference are the areas in the north-west and south-west of the site. The originally approved layout included three accessible parking bays in the north-west corner, but the implemented layout includes three accessible bays and one standard bay (4 in total). As a consequence, with all other bays installed the site was exceeding the maximum 55 spaces managed by condition 3. To address that, a space in the south-west corner of the site has been hatched out (thereby no longer being a marked out parking bay) by the applicant. The amended layout is therefore submitted to ensure that proposal complies with condition 3 (which requires the parking to be in accordance with the layout). An unaccompanied officer site visit took place on 13/06/2025 to confirm matters, as shown below:



Photo on 13/06/2025 showing the 3 accessible spaces and 1 standard parking bay in the north-west corner of the site



Photo on 13/06/2025 showing a former space in the south-west corner of the site has been hatched out (thereby no longer being a marked out parking bay) by the applicant.

These are consistent with photographs provided by the agent on behalf of the applicant on 22/04/2025 and 21/05/2025, during the consideration of application PL/25/0601 at the site:



2.6 Plans and documents considered

Plans associated with original permission PL/24/1725

- A4012-ASA-XX-GF-DR-A-1100 Rev PL1 - Site Location Plan
As received on 24/12/2024
- A4012-ASA-XX-GF-DR-A-1200 Rev PL2 – Proposed Ground Floor Plan
As received 14/03/2025

Plans associated with current application:

- Application form, as received 10/06/2025
- A4012-ASA-XX-GF-DR-A-1100 Rev PL3 - Site Location Plan
As received on 02/07/2025

3. Relevant Planning History

Solely the red line boundary of the application site

- 3.1 PL/24/1725 - Retrospective change of use of existing car park associated with the former office premises to public car park (Sui Generis) for a temporary period of three years. Granted 24/03/2025.
- 3.2 PL/25/0601 - Discharge of condition 4 (Site Security Strategy) of planning permission PL/24/1725, as granted on 24/03/2025. Condition not discharged 13/06/2025.
- 3.3 PL/25/0944 - Discharge of condition 4 (Site Security Strategy) of planning permission PL/24/1725, as granted on 24/03/2025. Application received on 02/07/2025.

Wider site also including land to the north (office building and up to the Thames Path)

- 3.4 PL/94/0792 (FUL) - 1 No. 4 storey office block and 1 No. 3 storey office block and 1 residential block consisting of 32 flats. Granted 18/10/1995. Please note that this would appear to be the original permission relating to both the application site and Sovereign House / Thames Court.
- 3.5 PL/00/0025 (ADV) - Erection of high level individual letter signage applied to illuminated domed perspex domes. Advertisement Consent Granted 08/05/2000.
- 3.6 PL/14/1903 (FUL) - Erection of 1.5m high railings and automated gates adjacent to Norman Place. Granted Planning Permission 18/02/2015.
- 3.7 PL/15/1572 (FUL) - Erection of two bicycle shelters to provide 12 additional secure bicycle stands. Granted Planning Permission 04/11/2015.
- 3.8 PL/24/0828 (SCO) - Request for a Screening Opinion under Regulation 6 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 for the demolition of the Covea Insurance building and the construction of up to 300 build-to-rent residential dwellings within buildings up to 11 storeys with commercial use on the ground floor; approximately 30 car parking spaces; access from Norman Place; and associated infrastructure. A negative screening opinion, advising that the proposed development is not EIA development was issued on 29/08/2024.
- 3.9 PL/24/0958 - Demolition of existing office and substation buildings and residential-led site redevelopment within 1-11 storey buildings comprising residential (Class C3) and ground floor commercial uses (Class E), together with various associated works including replacement pedestrian and vehicle access routes, car/cycle parking, hard and soft landscaping and a public open space adjacent to the river. Current application under consideration.

4. CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY

- 4.1 None required for this type of application.

5. Equality Act 2010:

- 5.1 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

6. Relevant Planning Policy and Guidance

- 6.1 Whilst there is no statutory definition of what constitutes a 'non-material' amendment, Section 96A, part 2 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) states that, *"In deciding whether a change is material, a local planning authority must have regard to the effect of the change, together with any previous changes made under this section, on the planning permission as originally granted."*

7. APPRAISAL

- 7.1 The proposed change to the layout of the parking regularises an alteration made on site when installing the accessible parking bays. The total number of standard parking bays remains unchanged at 52, as does the number of accessible (3) and overall spaces (55) at the site. Given the layout as shown on site deviates from that which was approved at the site, which as per the conditions are required to be adhered to, this application effectively regularises a scenario whereby the layout on site did not match the approved plans. The original wording of condition 2 included two trigger points, first the provision of the 3 accessible parking bays within 4 weeks of the original decision, and secondly the subsequent retention of these for the lifetime of the permission. Given the spaces have now been provided, the wording of the replacement condition will now solely reference the second trigger concerning the retention of the provided accessible spaces.
- 7.2 There are no adverse transport, amenity or related impacts as a result of the proposed changes, with it considered that these changes can be made through the non-material amendment procedure. More specifically, it is not considered that the amendments, either individually or cumulatively, will have any significant material or adverse impact on the overall design idiom, neighbour amenities, landscaping proposals, transport and highway safety intentions or any other consideration, set within the context of the original permission. This is primarily owing to the context of the original permission and the nature of the surrounding context, with the proposed changes being of a relatively minor scale and nature in this specific context.
- 7.3 It is also noted that the submission now includes a blue line (which highlights any additional owned land or property that is relevant to the application) on the location plan. This has been added to clarify this matter, in the context of the separate approval of details application under consideration at the site for the security strategy, where CCTV cameras are located marginally outside the red line boundary, but within land also owned by the applicant (as per the blue line). An informative will reference this separate matter on the decision notice.
- 7.4 It is also clarified that this is the first s96a NMA application associated with the original permission, so there are no cumulative impacts (as advised should be considered in guidance) to consider in this instance.
- 7.5 In overall terms, all changes proposed as part of this application are considered appropriate by officers and suitable to progress through the non-material amendment procedure.
- 7.6 An informative is recommended which states that this permission shall only be read in the context of the planning permission granted under reference number PL/24/1725, and is bound by all the conditions attached to that permission. A further informative is recommended which states: In reaching this decision, the local planning authority is satisfied that the changes proposed by this application do not constitute material changes to the approved planning permission.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The local planning authority is satisfied that the changes proposed by the application do not constitute material changes to the approved planning permission.

9. CONDITIONS: Wording for decision notice

REPLACEMENT CONDITION 2

The 3 (three) accessible parking spaces shown on approved plan A4012-ASA-XX-GF-DR-A-1100 Rev PL3 - Site Location Plan, as received on 02/07/2025 shall be kept free of obstruction and retained in accordance with the approved details and shall remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times for the lifetime of this permission.

REASON: In order to ensure that the development is provided with adequate parking facilities to meet the needs of all users, in accordance with Policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

REPLACEMENT CONDITION 3

The public car park hereby approved shall include vehicle parking for a maximum of 55 vehicles at any one time, in accordance with the layout shown on approved plan A4012-ASA-XX-GF-DR-A-1100 Rev PL3 - Site Location Plan, as received on 02/07/2025

REASON: To adhere to the terms in which the application has been presented and assessed and to prevent the over occupation of the car park without the impacts having first been assessed by the Local Planning Authority, in accordance with Policies CC8, CC2, TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Informatives:

1. This permission shall only be read in the context of planning permission PL/24/1725 and is bound by all the conditions attached to that permission. That permission still stands and this notice (and any other notices issued under section 96a for this development) should be read together.
2. In reaching this decision, the local planning authority is satisfied that the changes proposed by this application do not constitute material changes to the approved planning permission.
3. The Local Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant to determine under the non-material amendment procedure within the statutory timeframes.
4. In reaching this decision, the Local Planning Authority has taken into consideration the following information:

Information considered at the time of PL/24/1725 which still remains relevant:

- A4012-ASA-XX-GF-DR-A-1101 Rev PL1 – Existing Ground Floor Plan
 - A4012-ASA-XX-GF-DR-A-1150 Rev PL1 – Proposed Block Plan
- As all received on 24/12/2024

- Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) Letter Report 2 Norman Place – Proposed Car Park Change of Use Technical Note Ref TN003 by Stantec
 - Letter by Opus Works Group Limited – Retrospective change of use of existing car park associated with former office use to public car park, 2 Norman Place, Reading, RG1 8DA dated 27/01/2025
 - Norman Place Occupancy Data dated 01/10/2024 – 21/01/2025 (3 pages)
 - Application form
 - CIL form
- As all received on 27/01/2025

- Email from Opus Works Group Limited '2 Norman Place - Car Park, ref: PL/24/1725', dated and received 05/02/2025

- Email from Opus Works Group Limited 'Re: FW: 2 Norman Place - Car Park, ref: PL/24/1725', dated and received 24/03/2025

Information submitted with this application:

- Application form, as received 10/06/2025
- A4012-ASA-XX-GF-DR-A-1100 Rev PL3 - Site Location Plan
As received on 02/07/2025

Accordingly, it is recognised that a blue line boundary has now been added to indicate additional owned land or property that is relevant to the application.