

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

SITE ADDRESS: Forbury Park, Kenavon Drive, Reading, RG1

APPLICATION NUMBER: PL/25/0639

PROPOSAL: Retrospective temporary use of vacant land for public car parking (Sui Generis)

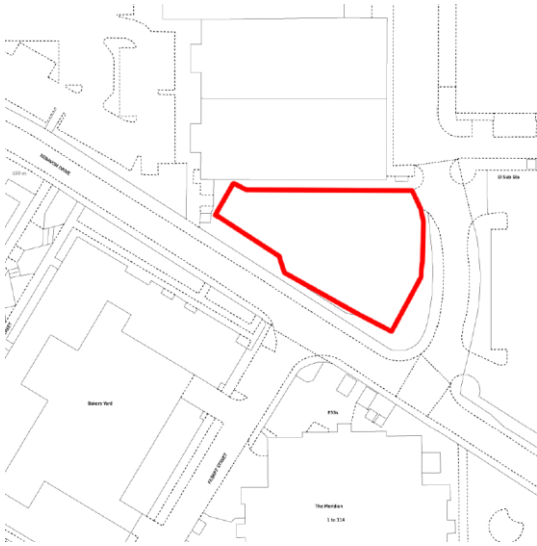
VALIDATION DATE: Valid as of 22/05/2025, having been first received on 29/04/2025

DETERMINATION DATE: 17/07/2025

CASE OFFICER: Jonathan Markwell

1. Site Description and Surrounding Area

- 1.1 The application site comprised (prior to the car parking use applied for) a vacant site on the north side of Kenavon Drive, opposite the junction with Filbert Street (to the south). The site is 0.17ha in size. A building (most recently occupied by a company named Ventello) most recently stood at the site until being demolished in 2017, having been subject to a fire in August 2016 (see photographs below).



Left: Extract of the red line application site boundary submitted. Right: Aerial map via Google Maps of the site and surrounding area.





Above: Site photographs 08/03/2017 post-fire, pre-demolition.
Below: site photograph 21/08/2017 post-demolition.



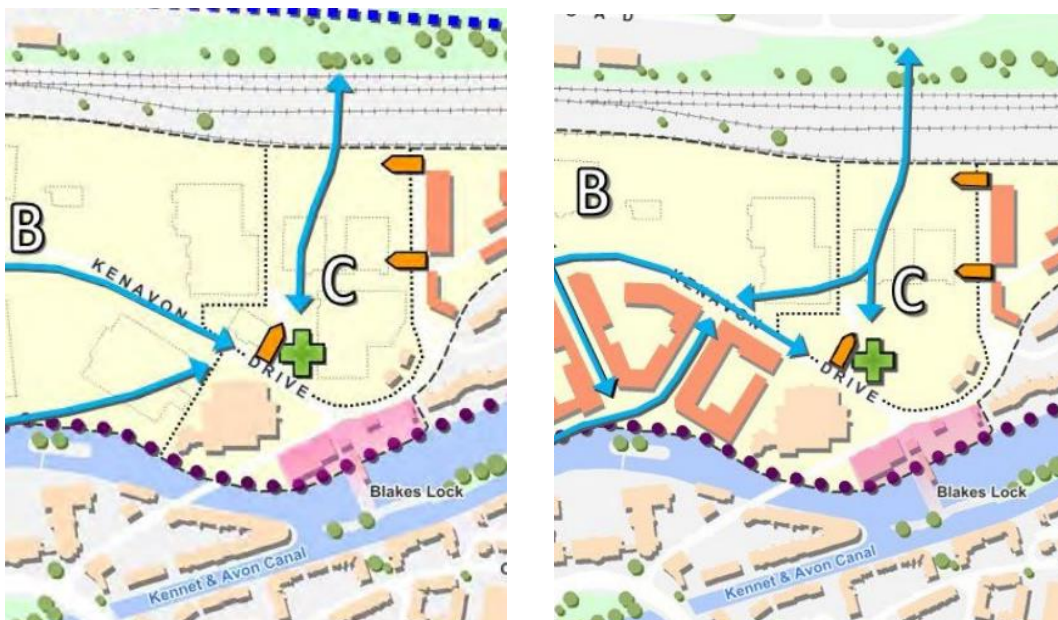
View of the application site looking south (Meridian on the left & Bakers Yard on the right), dated 29/05/2025

- 1.2 To the north of the site are retail shed buildings occupied by Decathlon, Argos and Hobbycroft, with customer parking to the north-west and servicing space to the north / north-east of the red-line boundary. Beyond this is the mainline railway towards London Paddington and London Waterloo. To the north-east are industrial-looking buildings (although one is actually in use as an indoor Padel tennis club), with the vacant former Kodak site to the east (beyond which are residential units). To the south-east are a group of Grade II listed buildings associated with Blakes Lock. To the south is the Meridian residential block of flats and the contemporary Bakers Yard component of the wider Huntley Wharf residential-led development site, as completed earlier in 2025. Beyond these blocks to the south is the River Kennet. Kenavon Drive connects to Forbury Road to the west, which is part of the town's Inner Distribution Road.



Aerial view of the site looking north, via Google Maps.

- 1.3 The application site is part of an allocated site within both the adopted Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the emerging Local Plan Partial Update, which was submitted to the Secretary of State in May 2025 and an examination-in-public is anticipated to take place later in the year.



Left: 2019 Local Plan extract. Right: Partial Update Local Plan May 2025 extract.

- 1.4 More specifically, the site is within the designated East Side Major Opportunity Area and forms part of the Policy CR13c (Forbury Business Park and Kenavon Drive) allocation, which also includes land to the east and north (as shown above). This wider site is allocated as follows in the 2019 adopted local plan:

CR13c, KENAVON DRIVE & FORBURY BUSINESS PARK:

This site would be largely residential in nature, although opportunities to create an area of open space close to the Kennet should be sought. Development will link into the newly-opened pedestrian link under the railway to Napier Road.

Site size: 2.07 ha Indicative potential: 190-285 dwellings.

- 1.5 Within the Local Plan (Partial Update) submission draft May 2025 (which can only be afforded a low level of weight given the pre-examination stage) the wider site is allocated as follows:

CR13c, KENAVON DRIVE & FORBURY BUSINESS PARK:

This site would be largely residential in nature, although opportunities to create an area of open space close to the Kennet should be sought. Development will link into the existing pedestrian link under the railway to Napier Road. Development should deliver a fitted-out primary healthcare facility where this is viable and where there is a realistic prospect that an occupier to operate the facility can be found.

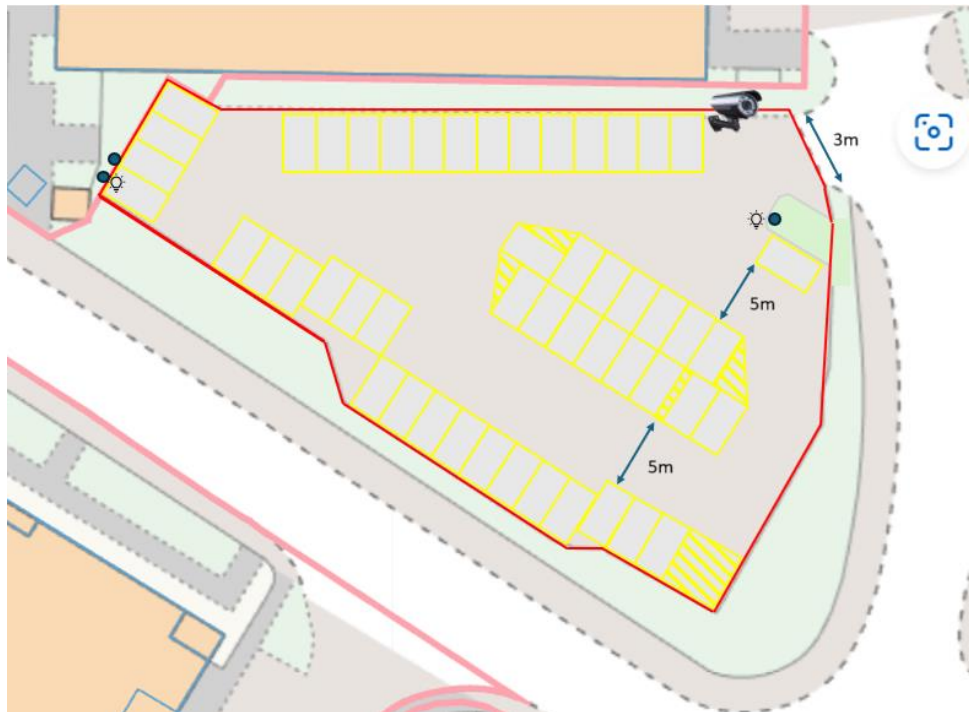
Site size: 2.07 ha

Indicative potential: 320-490 dwellings, primary healthcare.

- 1.6 The site is also within the Reading Central Area (Policies CR1-10), an area of archaeological potential (Policy EN2) and an area with potential for contaminated land (Policy EN16 – owing to a historic biscuit factory use in the area) within the adopted local plan.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 Planning permission is sought retrospectively for the temporary use of vacant land for public car parking (Sui Generis). In addition, during the course of the application, following officer feedback, the applicant sought to provide details of a non-vehicular access/exit point on the southern boundary onto Kenavon Drive, to provide an alternative access point at the site. However, the details submitted were not considered to be satisfactory (see comments from the Designing Out Crime Officer and the assessment section below), with alternative details of this second access instead being secured via a planning condition. It is therefore not referenced in the description of development.
- 2.2 More specifically, the use of the land for car parking is understood to have begun in late April 2025, around the time of the submission of this application on 29/04/2025. A revised application form received prior to the registration of the application confirmed that the change of use was completed on 05/05/2025. The car park provides 50 standard parking bays for vehicles on a 24 hours a day, 7 days of the week basis, with vehicular entry and exit via the same single point in the north-east corner of the site. The perimeter of the site, where not bound by an existing retail shed building (northern boundary) or existing fencing (western boundary), is secured through 1.8m high temporary fencing and the existing vegetation surrounding the site (eastern and southern boundary points). Temporary permission is sought for up to 24 months, as specified by the applicant. Information boards and signage associated with the use have been displayed on the east (by the access point), south-east (junction point) and west boundaries of the site, together with 2 information boards within the site itself, with associated solar powered lights to provide lighting at the point of the payment signage.



Layout plan submitted by the applicant on 04/06/2025



View looking north-west from Kenavon Drive 19/05/2025

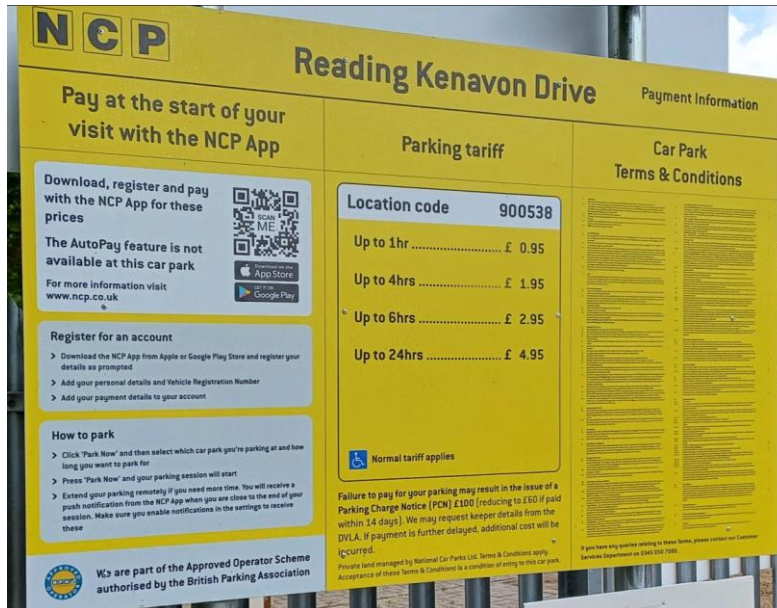


Site photographs as of 19/05/2025.

2.3 Prior to the registration of the application, some additional details / clarifications were provided by the agent for the applicant (via email on 22/05/2025):

- NCP have a daily patrol in lieu of an ANPR camera system and this helps with security. A daily NCP patrol is in place to maintain the site and for security purposes and although the site does not generate an employment opportunity specific to this area or NCP, it does provide the area with a far cheaper cost alternative to the local community and commuters to offset their general rising living costs
- Parking bays are 2.5m x 5m.

- There are no accessible parking bays because there is sufficient blue badge holder parking available on street outside and this is marginally closer to amenities and attractions.
- Likewise, no bike bays of any description or EV charging bays.
- The tariff covers both short and long stay (see full details via the on-site information boards).
- It is estimated that the majority of customers will be all day commuter and staff parking from the surrounding businesses, such as SSE Electricity and Thames Water, who are both major employers within 10 minutes walk and currently use some off site solutions for their staff.
- The tariff is clearly advertised as 24/7 and does NOT include a weekend or evening discount.



2.4 During the course of the application, some amended information was provided, a revised site plan was submitted and the agent subsequently provided indications that a 2m wide non-vehicular access point would be provided on the southern elevation. As per the DOCO comments below, these are not considered acceptable, but are shown below:





2.5 Plans and documents considered

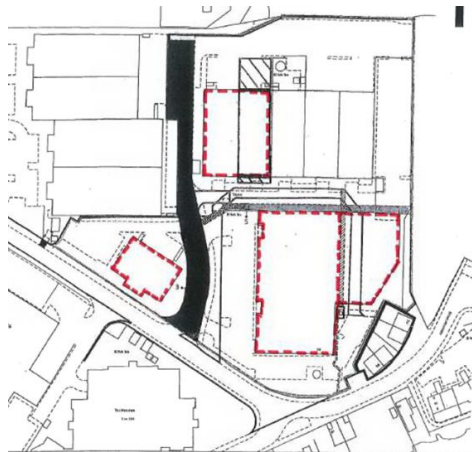
- Kenavon Drive, Reading, RG1 3DH Site Location Plan
- Kenavon Drive, Reading, RG1 3DH Block Plan
- Planning Statement by Aitchison Raffety dated April 2025
As all received on 29/04/2025
- Email from Aitchison Raffety 'RE: Unit C2, Forbury Park, Kenavon Dr (PL/25/0639)', including 4 site photographs, dated and received 22/05/2025
- Proposed layout plan, as received 04/06/2025
- Email from Aitchison Raffety 'RE: Unit C2, Forbury Park, Kenavon Dr (PL/25/0639)', dated and received 03/07/2025
- 'Plan – Proposed Gate Location'
- Elevation – Gate'
- As both received on 22/07/2025
- Email from Aitchison Raffety 'RE: Unit C2, Forbury Park, Kenavon Dr (PL/25/0639)', dated and received 24/07/2025

2.6 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – A CIL form has been submitted with the application, which indicate that the proposals will not be CIL liable. This is confirmed to be the case, owing to the nature of the proposals.

3. Relevant Planning History

3.1 Solely the red line boundary of the application site

- 3.2 None.
- 3.3 Wider site also including land to the east (former Kodak building site)
- 3.4 061386 (06/01429/FUL) - A mixed use development comprising 290 no. residential units and 425 sqm commercial floorspace with associated parking, access, open space and landscaping. Withdrawn 07/02/2007.
- 3.5 070399 (07/00366/FUL) - A mixed use development comprising 289 no. residential units and 480 SQM commercial floorspace with associated parking, access, open space and landscaping. Refused 18/09/2007.
- 3.6 081648 (08/01729/FUL) - Mixed use development comprising 333 new residential units and 509 sqm commercial floorspace together with associated car parking, access, open space and landscaping. Withdrawn 09/03/2009.
- 3.7 111524 (11/01422/FUL) - Mixed use, comprising 302 residential units and 996 sq m of commercial floor space, with associated works, following demolition of existing buildings. Withdrawn 24/11/2011.
- 3.8 "Forbury Retail Park", Former Ventello and Kodak buildings and Business / Industrial Units at 36 Kenavon Drive, Reading
- 3.9 170262/DEM - Application for prior notification of proposed demolition. Prior approval required and given 13/04/2017 & implemented.



- 3.10 Nearby site where proposals for public car parks have recently been considered
- 3.11 Thames Quarter, Kings Meadow Road (560m to the north-west of the site)
- 3.12 160236 - Part retrospective change of use to public car park for temporary three year period. Granted 24/05/2016.
- 3.13 Kodak site, Kenavon Drive (immediately to the east of the application site)
- 3.14 171678 – Temporary Public Car Park for Three Years. Refused 02/08/2018, for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development does not comply with the Local Planning Authority's standards in respect of provision of long stay parking and, as a result, is in conflict with Core Strategy Policy CS24 and the Interim Parking Policy 2011.

2. Insufficient information has been submitted with the planning application to enable the highways, traffic and transportation implications of the proposed development to be fully assessed. Therefore, from the information submitted, it is considered that the applicant has failed to demonstrate that additional traffic likely to be generated by the proposal would not adversely affect the safety and flow of users of the existing road network within Reading, contrary to Policies CS4, CS20 and CS22 of the Adopted Reading Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies document Policy DM12.

3.15 Station Hill (1km to the west of the site)

3.16 PL/24/0622 - Full planning permission for the construction of a Temporary Car Park, including vehicular access from Garrard Street. Granted 02/07/2024.

3.17 2 Norman Place (810m to the north-west of the site)

3.18 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. Approved 24/03/2025.

4. CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY

4.1 RBC Transport (Highways Authority)

4.1.1 This planning application is for the retrospective temporary change of use of land at Kenavon Drive, Reading to be used as a public car park with associated access and equipment. Permission for up to 24 months is sought.

4.1.2 The site has 50 car parking spaces. The applicant has confirmed that these are all standard bays, with no electric vehicle charging facilities due to the temporary nature of the car parking to be provided on site. There are no marked accessible or parent/child car parking spaces. There is no provision made for cycles or motorbikes. The temporary car park will provide both short and long stay tariffs.

4.1.3 There is currently no adopted Parking Policy Strategy. However, the Interim Parking Policy (2011) provides some guidance for off-street parking numbers in the town centre. Our parking standards reflect the need for a mixture of long and short term parking facilities in the town centre. We have set a limit for the maximum amount of public spaces allowed, however, we do not have a minimum requirement. The Interim Parking Policy states that the maximum number of public parking spaces in the town centre should be 8500, including on-street parking, and be at least 70% short stay/shoppers/leisure parking.

4.1.4 Across the seven town centre car parks (including the Oracle Riverside, Oracle Holybrook, Broad Street Mall, Chatham Place Q Park, Queens Road, Hill Meadow and Kings Meadow car parks) there is a combined parking provision of approximately 4,669 spaces.

- 4.1.5 Given that the Station Hill redevelopment resulted in the loss of public parking spaces, the temporary provision of 50 parking spaces proposed with this application is not going to exceed the maximum levels. We also have the current Broad Street Mall and Oracle applications for residential developments which would further reduce the public parking spaces.
- 4.1.6 In terms of access and layout, the car will utilise the existing access point from Kenavon Drive. All spaces comply to the dimensions of 2.5m x 5m. However, some spaces have less than the recommended 6m forecourt and it may not be possible to provide for vehicles to get into the spaces in one movement. Some back and fore manoeuvring may be required which is acceptable where traffic volumes and speeds are low. Given the temporary nature of the application, the access and layout is considered acceptable. However, no directional signage or markings within the car park has been illustrated on the proposed site plan to ensure that priority movement is given to vehicles entering the site. I am happy to deal with this by condition or by amended plan.
- 4.1.7 The Highway Authority do not have any objections to the granting of a temporary public car park for a maximum period of 2 years as the change of use would not have a material impact on the traffic in the vicinity of the site. However, it is requested that the site provides designated accessible parking bays within the site to comply with the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. 3 no. accessible parking spaces should be provided within the site to meet the required provision. Indicated that they are content to deal with this by condition or by amended plan. (N.B The provision of accessible parking spaces has also been requested for application ref PL/24/1725 Norman Place Temporary Car Park).
- 4.1.8 Conditions:

Within 4 weeks of the date this application is permitted, a plan showing how at least 3 (three) accessible parking spaces can satisfactorily be provided on site is submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The vehicle parking spaces shall be provided in full accordance with the approved details within 4 weeks of approval being given and thereafter kept free of obstruction and retained in accordance with the approved details and shall remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and in order to ensure that the development is provided with adequate parking facilities to meet the needs of future users in accordance with Policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Within 4 weeks of the date this application is permitted, full details of the direction signage and markings within the car park area should be submitted to an approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details will be provided in full within 4 weeks of approval and thereafter maintained in good condition.

REASON: In the interests of road safety in accordance with Policies TR1 and TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

4.1.9 These comments were fed into the agent on 20/06/2025, encouraging more plans / information to be submitted by 07/07/2025 to prevent the need for the two conditions above requiring details to be submitted (they could instead be worded as compliance conditions). The agent replied on 03/07/2025, stating *“we are happy with the conditions suggested”*.

4.2 **Designing Out Crime Officer (DOCO) at Thames Valley Police**

4.2.1 The DOCO has reviewed the submitted documents and crime statistics for the area and the following comments are provided to ensure the application meets the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024, which states at paragraph 135(f) that

“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible... and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience”.

4.2.2 It is appreciated that the car park is proposed for a temporary period and the application has been submitted retrospectively. However, it is noted that the car park is proposed to be accessible 24/7 and I have significant concerns with regards to the safety and security of proposed users of the car park without the inclusion of appropriate security measures. At present, from the information submitted, I cannot determine whether the appropriate level of security has been provided.

4.2.3 I therefore request that a plan is submitted, prior to determination, which confirms the following:

- Boundary treatment: Any fencing or hedging around the site, and identification of entry and exit points
- Barrier Details: Detail of the barrier into the car park
- CCTV: location of CCTV and indication of coverage (this could be conditioned on any permission, see below)
- Lighting: Location of lighting columns and coverage

4.2.4 Further details about the existing/proposed monitoring and management of the car park from a security perspective should also be provided. The site's location means that formal surveillance should be provided. CCTV is not a universal solution to security problems. However, it can help deter crime and criminal behaviour, assist with the identification of offenders, promote personal safety, and provide reassurance for users of the car park.

4.2.5 The provision of CCTV should be informed by an Operational Requirements Study. This should assess the specific requirements of the CCTV system for the site. It should include detailed plans as to what the role of each camera is, their location, camera type and specification and how the system will be managed/monitored.

4.2.6 The CCTV operational requirements study and implementation of the CCTV system could potentially be a planning condition if planning permission is proposed to be granted. However, the CCTV system will need to be considered in relation to the lighting for the site.

4.2.7 The lighting of the car park should meet the general standards of BS 5489-1:2020 and ensure that the entire parking area is well lit. Bollard lighting is not an appropriate lighting method, and should be avoided. Not only can they be damaged by reversing vehicles, more critically they do not provide sufficient light at the right height to aid facial recognition and reduce the fear of crime. It also does not deter crime and antisocial behaviour. Lighting details should be provided within the application.

4.2.8 The above comments are made on behalf of Thames Valley Police and relate to designing out crime only.

4.2.9 The agent responded as follows via email on 03/07/2025:

- Boundary treatment: Any fencing or hedging around the site, and identification of entry and exit points – **ALL FENCES AND HEDGES ARE APPROX 6 FOOT TALL AND NOT EASILY CLIMBED. THERE IS ONE MAIN ENTRY AND EXIT POINT ONSITE WHICH IS THE MAIN DRIVEWAY ENTRANCE. ANYONE ENTERING OR EXITING THE SITE WILL HAVE TO USE THIS POINT. THERE IS NO ACCESSIBLE GAPS OR BREAKS IN THE BOUNDARY.**

- Barrier Details: Detail of the barrier into the car park – **THE CAR PARK HAS 7 FOOT HIGH, METAL GATES WITH A MESH FINISH FITTED TO THE MAIN ENTRY POINT, ALTHOUGH THESE ARE LEFT OPEN 24/7. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO MAN THE SITE 24 HOURS A DAY OR HAVE AN OPENING AND CLOSING SCHEDULE.**

- CCTV: location of CCTV and indication of coverage (this could be conditioned on any permission, see below) – **CCTV NOT CURRENTLY FITTED – THE SITE IS OVERLOOKED BY DOZENS OF NEW BUILD APARTMENTS RANGING UPTO 6 STORIES HIGH WHICH PROVIDES FOR A LARGE AMOUNT OF NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH.**

- Lighting: Location of lighting columns and coverage Further details about the existing/proposed monitoring and management of the car park from a security perspective should also be provided. **LIGHTING IS PROVIDED BY THE SURROUNDING STREET LIGHTING WHICH CONSISTS OF 1 LAMP PER 17 BAYS. WE HAVE ALSO FITTED MOVEMENT SENSOR REACTIVE SOLAR LIGHTS TO BOTH ENDS OF THE CAR PARK, ALTHOUGH ADMITTEDLY THIS IS MORE SO FOR SIGNAGE VISIBILITY IN THE DARK.**

The site's location means that formal surveillance should be provided. **WE PROVIDE PHYSICAL VISITS AT LEAST 5 DAYS A WEEK TO MAINTAIN AND PATROL THE SITE. ALL VISITS ARE CONDUCTED IN NCP BRANDED WORKWEAR AND VEHICLES TO PROVIDE A PRESENCE ONSITE. WE VISIT AT RANDOM TIMES OF THE DAY AS WELL SO THAT A PATTERN CAN NOT BE FORMED.**

4.2.10 The DOCO was re-consulted and replied as follows:

- It is noted that only a single entry point into the site is proposed. As this access point will remain open at all times and will not be secured, I have concerns regarding personal safety and vulnerability to crime for car park users. The absence of an alternative means of entry or egress means that, should the primary route become compromised or obstructed, users would have no other safe means of escape, thereby increasing their exposure to potential criminal activity. An additional pedestrian entrance (in a different location to the main entrance) should therefore be provided. This would need to be covered by CCTV (more below). I would also suggest that the surrounding hedgerow vegetation is reduced in height, so that its defensive qualities are maintained, but allows views into the car park when approaching from the street. A vehicle barrier at the entrance to the site is recommended – whilst it is noted that certain types of barrier can easily be lifted out the way, a barrier would provide additional protection from car theft and provide a visual demarcation of private space, thus modifying people's actions.
- I am also concerned that there is no lighting of the site and it is solely reliant on existing street lighting which is unlikely to provide sufficient coverage of the site. There should

be lighting to provide coverage of the whole site and this should be demonstrated as part of the planning application. If the Council are satisfied that they do not need details of lighting columns as part of the planning approval, lighting could be conditioned with CCTV as you have suggested.

- I am happy for details of lighting and CCTV to be conditioned on any approval. However, prior to determination of the application I would request that the above comments regarding boundaries and entrances are addressed.

4.2.11 When the applicant provided plans indicating a pedestrian access/exit point on the southern boundary of the site, the DOCO commented as follows:

- The quality of the information provided does make it difficult (case officer clarification: to assess the proposals), and the reference to a gate is misleading. (case officer clarification: the titles of the documents submitted reference gates, but no gates are shown)
- The general location of the pedestrian access is ok, but it's proposed position next to a tree will potentially obscure views and effect coverage of the entrance by CCTV and lighting. Therefore the access should be moved a further c.5-10m east along the boundary so good surveillance of it can be achieved. I also believe that bollards or chicane barriers to restrict vehicle entry here will be required and should be added to the details submitted, or required through condition.
- As mentioned previously, it will be important to ensure that the boundary vegetation around the car park is cut back to approximately 1m in height to ensure there are views into and out of the car park. This is particularly key around this pedestrian entrance – can a condition be added to ensure that the boundary vegetation is maintained to a suitable height?
- Subject to the above, and the inclusion of your proposed conditions relating to the provision of a pedestrian entrance and CCTV Lighting (noting my previous comments) I have no further comments.

4.2.12 These concerns with the pedestrian entrance were fed into the agent, and given the deadline for the determination of the application being the following day, the agent was provided with two options:

- 1) Choose to submit more details now prior to a decision being issued, which seek to address all matters raised in these further comments and submit clear plans to illustrate the pedestrian only access point on Kenavon Drive
- 2) Alternatively, another option is for the information submitted earlier in the week not being approved or referenced on a decision notice. Instead, a condition would secure full details of a to-be-approved pedestrian access point (with features to prevent vehicular use and a management strategy to maintain visibility) through a condition. In that scenario, on any decision notice the DOCO's advice would be summarised as an informative to guide your future details application, which would be required to be submitted within 4 weeks of the decision notice, and then be implemented within another 4 weeks of the details being approved, given the retrospective nature of the application.

4.12.3 The agent referenced agreement with option 2), with this approach subsequently recommended to be followed. Accordingly, the DOCO comments are considered to have been taken into account.

4.3 Public Consultation – Four site notices were erected on 29/05/2025, expiring on 19/06/2025. No responses have been received.

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 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). In this case the development plan consists of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

6.2 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).

6.3 Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

6.4 National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework December 2024 (and update February 2025)

- 2. Achieving sustainable development
- 4. Decision-making
- 6. Building a strong, competitive economy
- 7. Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
- 9. Promoting sustainable transport
- 11. Making effective use of land

National Planning Practice Guidance (2014 onwards) (PPG)

6.5 Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

- CC1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC3 Adaption to Climate Change

- CC7 Design and the Public Realm
 - CC8 Safeguarding Amenity
 - EN12 Biodiversity and the Green Network
 - EN14 Trees, Hedges and Woodlands
 - EM3 Loss of Employment Land
 - TR1 Achieving the Transport Strategy
 - TR3 Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
 - TR5 Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
 - RL1 Network and Hierarchy of Centres
 - RL2 Scale and Location of Retail, Leisure and Culture Development
 - CR1 Definition of Central Reading
 - CR2 Design in Central Reading
 - CR4 Leisure, Culture and Tourism in Central Reading
 - CR13 East Side Major Opportunity Area
- 6.6 Supplementary Planning Documents
Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document (2011)
Kenavon Drive Urban Design Concept Statement 2004
- 6.7 Other relevant documentation
Reading Borough Local Plan Submission Draft Partial Update, May 2025
Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy (March 2021)
Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (March 2021)
Reading Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plan 2020-2030 (LCWIP) (Reading Borough Council, in partnership with Wokingham Borough Council and West Berkshire Council, March 2020)
- 6.8 Local Plan Update
- 6.9 The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. A consultation version of the draft updated version of the Local Plan was published on 6th November 2024. Subsequent to this consultation a submission draft was sent to the Secretary of State on 9th May 2025. At the time of writing, the examination-in-public of the partial update to the local plan is scheduled to take place in late 2025.
- 6.10 Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become “out of date” when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example.
- 6.11 Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to this application is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remains very similar in the submission draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the determination of this planning application and are not considered to be ‘out of date’.

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 The main considerations are:

- Land use principles
- Transport matters
- Amenity
- Other matters

Land use principles

7.2 The site has been vacant since 2017, when demolition of the former Ventello building took place following a fire in 2016. The proposal would bring back into use vacant land, albeit on a temporary basis, which in principle terms is welcomed and supported. It is recognised that the site is located on allocated land, with the site allocation anticipating a largely residential development coming forward on the wider 2.07ha site. This part of the site amounts to 0.17ha (therefore under 10% of the total area) and the use is solely sought on a temporary 24 month basis. Set within this context, the proposal is not considered to compromise or undermine the ability of the wider site, or indeed for that matter other sites elsewhere in the East Area Major Opportunity Area, coming forward in the manner envisaged within either the adopted or emerging partial update to the local plan. There is no current application under consideration for the wider Policy CR13c site.

7.4 In terms of the provision of a public car park (a Sui Generis use), whilst these are not specifically referenced as a 'town centre' use (with the site being within the designated Reading Central Area), it is considered that the provision of car parking spaces facilitates the various functions of the town centre, such as retail, leisure, culture and tourism uses. As such, the proposed use in this regard is considered to comply with Policies CR1, CR3, TR5, RL1 and RL2.

7.5 In addition, it is also relevant to note that the proposals will be temporary, with a temporary car park being considered to be a fairly typical 'meanwhile use' on a site subject to a site allocation within a major opportunity area within the town centre. This is considered to count in favour of the proposals. Furthermore, the proposals are simply 'change in use' only, aside from the associated works – e.g. information boards, lighting and temporary fencing. In totality from a land use perspective, the provision of a car park for a temporary 2 year period is considered to be suitable in land use principle terms.

7.6 To ensure that the permission occurs for only a temporary time period, as has specifically been proposed by the applicant, this is recommended to be secured via condition. This is to prevent this being a permanent change of use, which mindful of the above, would need to be separately considered and would be unlikely to be considered acceptable owing to the wider site allocation.

Transport matters

7.7 As per section 4.1 above, the Highway Authority are satisfied with the proposals subject to conditions to secure at least 3 accessible parking spaces at the site and details of the direction signage and markings within the car park area. Given the retrospective nature of these proposals, details will be required to be submitted within 4 weeks of any future

decision, with the subsequently approved measures being required to be provided within 4 weeks of the future approval of details application decision. This was communicated with the agent during the course of the application, with view to potentially dealing with such matters during the course of this application, to avoid the need for more details to be submitted and approved. The applicant confirmed agreement for such matters to be conditioned, so this approach will therefore be taken. The proposals are therefore considered appropriate from a transport perspective, subject to these two conditions.

Amenity

- 7.8 As per the consultation response from the Designing Out Crime Officer at Thames Valley Police, as per section 4.2 above, there are some concerns raised regarding the safety and security of proposed users of the car park without the inclusion of appropriate security measures. Accordingly, a security strategy is required to be secured, with this having a particular focus on CCTV and lighting. This is considered necessary to protect the amenity of users of the car park and the general area from the on-going use. This feedback was provided to the agent at any early stage of the determination period, with view to details being submitted/assessed at application stage, with view to a compliance condition being secured. Whilst the agent provided some initial details, insufficient information was submitted to prevent this matter being required to be secured in full via condition. In the context of the proposals being sought retrospectively, it is considered reasonable for the proposed strategy to be submitted within 4 weeks of the decision notice, with the subsequently approved measures to be implemented within a further 4 weeks of those measures being approved. The agent has been made aware of these timescales from the outset and has raised no issues with the intended approach.
- 7.9 Following further input from the DOCO during the course of the application it was considered necessary for the applicant to indicate an alternative means of escape for people from the site (and by consequence access into the space) prior to the determination of the application. The applicant provided some very basic details indicating a 2metre wide access point being provided on the southern boundary (with Kenavon Drive), specifying that clearance works would be required outside of the NCP demise, that pedestrian signage would be added for clarity, that the hedges would be cleared, the ground flattened and Heras fencing removed. The titles of the documents both reference gates, although no gates are shown. The DOCO raised concerns with the information provided (see section 4.2 above for details), meaning a condition to secure full details of the entry/exit point will instead be secured. This will require details to be submitted within 4 weeks, with details also including measures to prevent vehicular access and a landscape management strategy to maintain suitable visibility to this point. The condition will also require the subsequently approved details to be carried out within a further 4 weeks and then be kept free of any other obstructions, maintained in a good condition and kept open and available at all times for non-vehicular use to access and exit the car park for the lifetime of this permission. Whilst it would have been preferable to have received acceptable details during the course of the application, meaning only the implementation and maintenance elements of the condition would be required, the applicant has at least indicated a willingness to provide this secondary access point, so in the circumstances it is considered possible for all details to be secured via condition. The agent for the applicant has also indicated agreement to the above approach.
- 7.10 Based on the layout of the car park, there is the potential for additional vehicles to possibly park at the site outside of the designated bays, taking the total number of

spaces above the 50 applied for and assessed as part of this application. This has the potential to cause amenity issues in terms of safe access and security for users of the car park and the wider area, as well as the application not being assessed on this basis from a highways perspective. In the circumstances, it is considered reasonable and necessary to limit the number of vehicles parking at the site to a maximum of 50, which aligns with the number of parking bays marked on the proposed plan.

- 7.11 Subject to these conditions, the proposals are not envisaged to raise any other amenity impacts and are considered acceptable in this regard.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 On the basis of the above, it is considered that the application can be supported, to grant retrospective permission for the change of use of existing car park associated with the former office premises to a public car park (Sui Generis), for a temporary period of two years. This is subject to the following conditions.

1. Temporary permission – 2 years only

The use of the land as a public car park hereby approved shall cease and the site shall be restored to its former condition on or before 25th July 2027.

REASON: The type of use is not one that the Local Planning Authority is prepared to approve in this location other than for a limited period, having regard to the nature of the use and the wider site allocation, in accordance with Policies CR1, CR3, CR13, TR5, RL1 and RL2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

2. Details of at least 3 Accessible parking spaces

Within 4 (four) weeks of the date this application is permitted, a plan showing how at least 3 (three) accessible parking spaces can satisfactorily be provided on site shall be submitted to for approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The vehicle parking spaces shall be provided in full accordance with the subsequently approved details within 4 (four) weeks of written approval being given and thereafter 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.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and in order to ensure that the development is provided with adequate parking facilities to meet the needs of future users in accordance with Policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

3. Details of directional signage and markings

Within 4 (four) weeks of the date this application is permitted, full details of the direction signage and markings within the car park area, based on 'Proposed layout plan, as received 04/06/2025', shall be submitted to for approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be provided in full accordance with the subsequently approved details within 4 (four) weeks of written approval being given and thereafter be maintained in good condition.

REASON: In the interests of road safety in accordance with Policies TR1 and TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

4. Maximum of 50 vehicles parked at the site at any one time

The public car park hereby approved shall include vehicle parking for a maximum of 50 vehicles at any one time within the marked parking bays shown on Proposed layout plan, as received 04/06/2025 and future details approved under condition 2.

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.

5. Security Strategy

Within 4 (four) weeks of the date this application is permitted, a site security strategy shall be submitted in writing to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The site security strategy shall as a minimum include a formal surveillance strategy, with the provision of CCTV informed by an operational requirements study, and external lighting details. The subsequently approved measures by the Local Planning Authority, as contained within the Site Security Strategy, shall be implemented in full within 4 (four) weeks of written approval and shall be permanently retained and maintained thereafter for the lifetime of this permission.

REASON: To safeguard the amenities of those using the site and the area generally, in accordance with Policies CC7, CC8, CR2 and CR13 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

6. Submission, provision and retention of separate pedestrian access point

Notwithstanding the layout plan hereby approved (Proposed layout plan, as received 04/06/2025), within 4 (four) weeks of the date this application is permitted, details of a pedestrian only entry/exit point opening onto Kenavon Drive shall be submitted to for approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include measures to prevent vehicular use and a landscape management strategy to maintain suitable visibility. The entry/exit point shall be provided in full accordance with the subsequently approved details within 4 (four) weeks of written approval being given. Thereafter, the pedestrian entry/exit point opening shall permanently be kept free of any other obstructions, maintained in a good condition and kept open and available at all times for non-vehicular use to access and exit the car park for the lifetime of this permission.

REASON: To safeguard the amenities of those using the site and the area generally, in accordance with Policies CC7, CC8, CR2 and CR13 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Informatives:

1. As per comments from the Designing Out Crime Officer at Thames Valley Police during the course of the assessment of this application, it is clarified that any operational requirements study referenced in condition 5 shall include detailed plans as to: what the role of each CCTV camera is, their location, camera type and specification and how the system will be managed/monitored. It is therefore recommended that the strategy should be prepared by a security/CCTV specialist. Furthermore, CCTV shall be informed by the

lighting at the site. Lighting of the car park should meet the general standards of BS 5489-1:2020 and ensure that the entire parking area is well lit. Bollard lighting is not an appropriate lighting method, and should be avoided.

2. In reaching this decision, the Local Planning Authority has taken into consideration the following information:

- Kenavon Drive, Reading, RG1 3DH Site Location Plan
- Kenavon Drive, Reading, RG1 3DH Block Plan
- Planning Statement by Aitchison Raffety dated April 2025
As all received on 29/04/2025
- Email from Aitchison Raffety 'RE: Unit C2, Forbury Park, Kenavon Dr (PL/25/0639)', including 4 site photographs, dated and received 22/05/2025
- Proposed layout plan, as received 04/06/2025
- Email from Aitchison Raffety 'RE: Unit C2, Forbury Park, Kenavon Dr (PL/25/0639)', dated and received 03/07/2025
- 'Plan – Proposed Gate Location'
- 'Elevation – Gate'

As both received on 22/07/2025. For the avoidance of doubt, these two documents received on 22/07/2025 are not considered to be acceptable and are not approved as part of this permission, as per condition 6 above and informative 4 below. They were however considered as part of the assessment of the application and are hence referenced here for completeness purposes.

3. The Local Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant to resolve relevant matters to allow permission to be granted within the agreed extended timescale for the decision to be issued.
4. With regard to condition 6, as per comments from the Designing Out Crime Officer at Thames Valley Police during the course of the assessment of this application, it is clarified that the position and details of a pedestrian entry/exit point shown on 'Plan – Proposed Gate Location' and 'Elevation – Gate', as both received on 22/07/2025 is not considered to be acceptable. Its position next to a tree will potentially obscure views and effect coverage of the entrance by CCTV and lighting. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the access should be moved a further circa. 5-10m east along the boundary, so satisfactory surveillance of it can be achieved. It is also considered that bollards or chicane barriers will be required to restrict vehicular entry to the entry/exit point, with this reflected in the wording of condition 6. It will also be important to ensure that the boundary vegetation around the car park is cut back to a suggested 1m in height to ensure there are views in and around the car park and this pedestrian entrance. It is also expected that this will be covered in the site security strategy too (condition 5).