

Jonathan Markwell
Principal Planning Officer
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
READING
RG1 2LU

Our Ref L.448.028.EE

14th August 2025

Letter of response

Proposal: **Application under Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) for Approval of Details Reserved by a Condition in relation to permission LPA ref. 200188 / Appeal ref. APP/E0345/W/21/3276463 (granted on 17/03/2022) varied under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) application number 231673 (granted on 27/03/2024) - to discharge condition 12.**

At: **55 Vastern Road, Reading, RG1 8BU**

Further to submitted details of a security scheme proposals planning application ref PL/25/0383, we have received a request for further clarification on proposed security measures as set out in this letter.

Response from Designing Out Crime Officer, as received 18/07/2025

“The applicant should confirm the method of compartmentation, as per the extract I provided from the Secured by Design Residential Guide 2025 (section 29.42). I provide again for ease of reference:

Developments of 26 or more flats, apartments, bedsits or bedrooms can suffer adversely from anti-social behaviour, criminality and a reduced sense of safety, due to unrestricted access to all areas and floors of the building. SBD therefore seeks to prevent unlawful free movement throughout the building through the use of an access control system. How this is achieved is a matter for the specifier, the following two methods are acceptable:

1. Lift and stairwell access controlled separately:

- *To prevent the lift and stairwell providing unrestricted access onto a residential landing, each resident shall be assigned access to their floor only via the use of a security encrypted electronic key (e.g. fob, card, mobile device, key etc.) both on the stairwell/landing door and lift*
- *Access to stairwells from the communal lobby shall be restricted to residents to reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour or criminal activities*
- *Unrestricted egress from a landing into the stairwell and from the stairwell to the communal lobby/emergency fire exit must be provided at all times*

2. Lift and stairwell access jointly controlled via an additional secure doorset:

- *An additional secure doorset prevents access to each landing from both the lift and stairwell. Each resident shall be assigned access to their floor only via the use of a security encrypted electronic key (e.g. fob, card, mobile device, key etc.) for this doorset*
- *Access to stairwells from the communal lobby shall be restricted to residents to reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour or criminal activities.*
- *Unrestricted egress from a landing into the stairwell and from the stairwell to the communal lobby/emergency fire exit must be provided at all times*

As I mentioned previously, further guidance on compartmentation is provided with the SBD Guidance, including how to deal with visitors as part of compartmentation.

If compartmentation is appropriately achieved, and with the audio-visual access control, then the proposed 'meet and greet' arrangements (as outlined in para 3.12 of Security Strategy) will not be necessary (noting SBD guidance does not consider meet and greet appropriate for larger scale developments). “

Wording of the condition

12. Prior to commencement of works above slab level, written details of the security strategy shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the first occupation of any residential unit within the relevant building ((a) Block A - The Railway Warehouse; (b) Block B - The Goods Warehouse; (c) Block C - The Goods Office; (d) Block D – The Generator / The Turbine Hall; (e) Block E – Christchurch Wharf; (f) Block F - The Coal Drop Building; (g) Block G) and the approved details shall be retained and maintained as such thereafter.

Reason: To ensure the development can be safely accessed by its intended users, to protect the amenity of future occupiers of the proposed development and in the interests of safeguarding the character and appearance of the buildings and the wider immediate area, in accordance with Policies CC7 and CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Applicant's response

Thank you for your letter and for providing the relevant extract from the *Secured by Design (SBD) Residential Guide 2025*. We note the guidance within section 29.42 regarding compartmentation for larger residential developments.

While we acknowledge the value of the SBD recommendations, we would respectfully point out that the wording of the relevant planning condition does not explicitly require full compliance with the SBD guide, nor does it mandate floor-by-floor compartmentalisation. Instead, the condition requires the provision of appropriate security measures to achieve a safe and secure environment for residents.

In line with Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm), the scheme has been designed to create a secure, high-quality living environment through the considered use of materials, layout, and controlled access points. The proposed secured postal lobby provides a robust first line of defence against unauthorised access, supported by an audio-visual access control system for all visitors. These measures directly address the need to maintain safety and security without creating additional barriers to movement within the building. We have been following this best practice which has proven to be efficient and substantial in providing sufficient level of security throughout various Berkeley sites with the latest one being at Horlicks Factory in Slough.

In relation to Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity), our approach ensures residents benefit from a safe and comfortable living environment, while avoiding overly restrictive compartmentation that could impede ease of movement or create an overly institutional feel. The proposed arrangements will reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour and unauthorised entry while maintaining a welcoming and functional communal space.

The design also incorporates:

- A secure, monitored entrance with audio-visual verification for all visitors
- Controlled entry to the postal lobby to prevent direct access to residential areas
- Unrestricted emergency egress routes in compliance with fire safety requirements
- Passive surveillance opportunities from active frontages and lobby glazing

We consider that these measures meet the intent of the SBD guidance by providing reasonable and proportionate security for a development of this scale, without the operational drawbacks of full floor-by-floor compartmentation.

For these reasons, we believe the proposed strategy offers an appropriate balance between security, accessibility, and amenity, fully in accordance with policies CC7 and CC8, and therefore satisfies the requirements of the condition.