

DELEGATED FULL PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Redlands Ward

App Ref: PL/25/0981

Address: Land south of the Sports Park, University of Reading Whiteknights Campus, RG6 6DJ

Proposals: Removal of existing cycle store and erection of a new cycle store.

Case Officer: Mishga Marshall

Applicant: Ilaria Sutton (Agent)

Date received (valid from): 10/07/2025

Target Decision date: 04/09/2025

EOT Agreed Decision Date: 15/09/2025

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is the land south of the Sports Park, University of Reading Whiteknights Campus. The Sports Park is location on the edge of the Whiteknights Campus, north-east of Shinfield Road. The site is only bounded by residential properties to the west.

The specific location of the proposed development, The Sports Park, is located within the northwestern part of the Campus, north of car park one which is situated to the north of Queen's Drive. Queen's Drive is the main vehicular access point into the Campus from Shinfield Road to the west of the Campus. The Site is comprised entirely of hardstanding.

The existing cycle store is located adjacent to the southern elevation of the Sports Park building. It comprises Sheffield cycle stands enclosed by steel frames with curved polycarbonate panels across the back and over the top of the stands. The store is open at the sides and front. There are 58 cycle spaces. The store is located on top of existing hardstanding. There is a row of trees to the south of the existing stores and beyond this is car park one. To the west is the Sports Park building and to the east is an area of open grassland.

It is not a listed building nor does it fall within a Conservation Area. The surrounding area is primarily residential to the west, but within the University of Reading boundary.

Site visit date: 22/08/2025

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal seeks planning permission for the removal of the existing sports park cycle store which has 58 existing cycle spaces and its replacement with a new cycle store with 60 cycle spaces.

The cycle store will be fully enclosed, with timber panels on the rear (north) elevation and toughened glass on the other elevations. It will have a grey PVC roof.

The cycle unit would be adjacent to the wall of the building, with dimensions of approx. 2.35m in height, 29m in width and 3.9m in depth.

Plans considered [Received by the LPA 9th July 2025]:

- Planning Statement
- Location Plan (484-ACG-XX-RF-DR-A-1002 Rev A)
- Existing (484-ACG-XX-RF-DR-A-1050 Rev A) and Proposed (484-ACG-XX-RF-DR-A-1052 Rev A) Site Plan
- Existing (484-ACG-XX-00-DR-A-0001 Rev A) and Proposed (484-ACG-XX-00-DR-A-2000 Rev A) Floor Plan
- Existing (484-ACG-XX-RF-DR-A-0004 Rev A) and Proposed (484-ACG-XX-RF-DR-A-2001 Rev A) Roof Plan

- Existing (484-ACG-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0100 Rev A, 484-ACG-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0101 Rev A) and Proposed (484-ACG-XX-ZZ-DR-A-4000 Rev A, 484-ACG-XX-ZZ-DR-A-4001 Rev A) Elevations
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan
- Biodiversity Net Gain Note
- Great Crested Newt Statement

Plans considered [Received by the 3rd September 2025]:

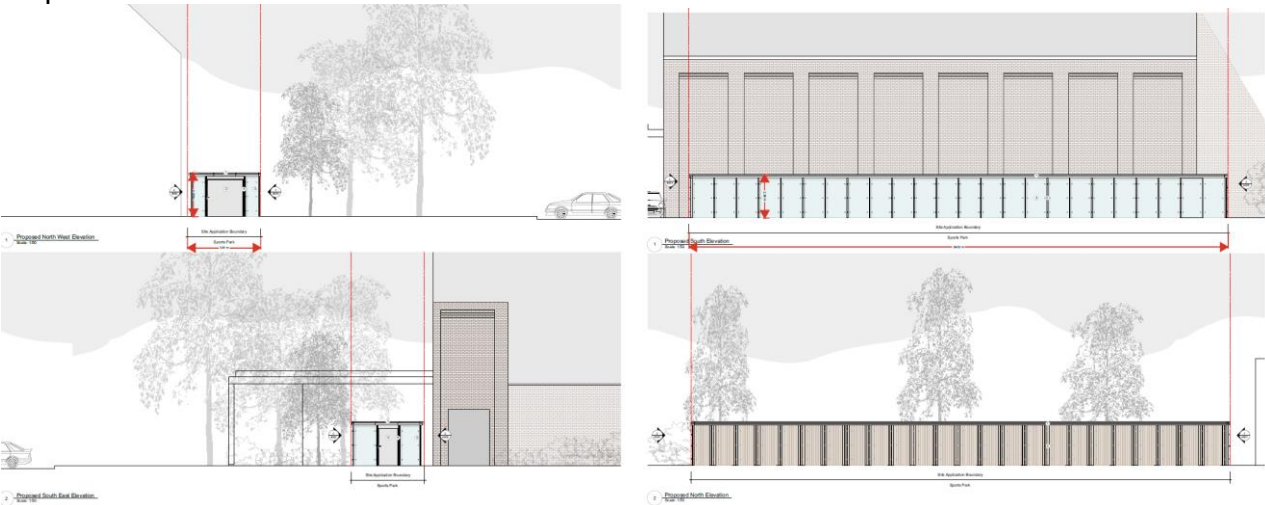
- Rev 1-Pre-Com-University of Reading Sports Park Cycle Store-03.09.2025

Plans submitted:

Existing Plans



Proposed Plans



3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

N/A

4. CONSULTATIONS

Site notice displayed on 25/07/2025.

Consultee	Comments
Public Consultation	No letters of representation have been received.

Trees - Planning Natural Environment	1)The report requires amendment to include confirmation that the foundation pads can be relocated if tree roots over 10mm in diameter are found. 2) I can confirm that I have no objects to the above application. Please condition L7A
Ecology Consultations	The site currently comprises a strip of hardstanding with virtually no wildlife value. The area is not a priority habitat and is therefore exempt from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain and as such, there would be no ecological objections to the application
Transport Development Control	1) In principle, there are no transport objections. However, the stands should be spaced 700mm (500mm) from the rear of the store to allow for the frame and both wheels to be locked to the fixture. Example below. The proposed floor plan does not appear to provide this spacing. Clarification is, therefore, required. 2) As the applicant has confirmed that the spacing will comply with our standards, there are no transport objections.

Equality Act 2010:

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.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK

EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND

TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS

TR4: CYCLE ROUTES AND FACILITIES

TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

ER2: WHITEKNIGHTS CAMPUS, UNIVERSITY OF READING

6. APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The replacement the existing cycle storage with a new, modern facility is acceptable in principle, as it continues to provide for sustainable travel modes in accordance with local and national planning policies, while also providing safe and secure storage to mitigate repeated bicycle thefts. The principle of the proposed development is therefore acceptable, subject to detailed considerations, highlighted below.

Character and Appearance

Policy CC7 requires that all development must of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.

The proposed cycle store would be fully enclosed, with timber panels on the rear (north) elevation and toughened glass on the other elevations, with a grey PVC roof. Although visible from the public vantage point, the proposed materials and design of the development is considered to be appropriate and characteristic of the site. In design terms, the development would not appear prominent or intrusive within the site and is considered to be an improvement compared with the existing structures on the site; and would be sympathetic to the surrounding built environment.

Overall, the proposal is considered to be sympathetic to the host building and would preserve its visual character within the surrounding area. Therefore, the development is considered visually acceptable, in compliance with CC7.

Sustainability and Climate Change Considerations

The proposed cycle store is conveniently positioned next to the sports park, with direct access from a Car Park. This location makes it easily accessible for a variety of users cycling to the sports park and nearby facilities. By improving cycling infrastructure, the development would encourage greater use of bicycles, supporting active lifestyles, enhancing public health, and contributing to reduced traffic congestion and lower emissions.

Encouraging cycling as a sustainable mode of transportation directly supports the Council's wider sustainability and climate change commitments. The upgraded facility will provide a safe, accessible, and attractive option for cycle storage, thereby supporting a modal shift away from private car use and reducing carbon emissions. The development is therefore considered to have a positive contribution in this regard, therefore, the development is considered acceptable and in compliance with CC1, CC2, CC3, ER2.

Noise

While the comings and goings associated with cycle parking can generate some level of incidental noise, this is considered to be minimal and in keeping with the normal use of the site. The number of users is not expected to increase significantly as the proposal is a sort of replacement rather than an intensification of use. Given the existing use of the site and the separation distances to nearby dwellings and the limited duration of activities associated with cycle storage, the proposal would not give rise to unacceptable noise or disturbance.

Trees

There are a number of category A and B trees within close proximity. Concern was initially raised about the foundations and whether they would extend past the footprint of the proposed cycle store and impact on the trees root protection areas. Concern was also raised that root severance may be required. Further to additional information received confirming foundations would not extend beyond footprint of cycle store and not affecting RPA, no objection was raised by RBC Natural Environment, subject to condition requiring works to be in accordance with protective measures.

Ecology

The proposal relates to a modest replacement structure situated on previously developed land. There is no evidence to suggest that the existing cycle store provides habitat for protected species, and the Council's Ecology Officer has raised no objection, stating that the site currently comprises a strip of hardstanding with virtually no wildlife value. The area is not a priority habitat and is therefore exempt from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain as well.

Highway and Access Considerations

The proposed development would provide secure and weather-protected storage, consistent with local planning policy requirements. The improved layout and security of the storage are likely to encourage greater cycle usage in the area, which is consistent with the Council's sustainable transport objectives. The applicant has confirmed that the cycle stand spacing would comply with cycle parking standards, and there are no highway safety concerns and no objection has been raised by RBC Transport.

Residential Amenity

Policy CC8 states development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties.

Beyond potential noise impacts (as assessed above), the cycle storage is positioned within the curtilage of the University campus and would be of limited height and massing. As such, it is not considered to result in an overbearing presence nor would it cause a material loss of light or outlook to nearby occupiers.

The functional nature of the proposal means that its day-to-day use is unlikely to materially differ from the existing arrangement. Users of the site would continue to store and retrieve bicycles in a similar manner, and as such, no significant change to amenity impacts is considered to occur.

Therefore, the development is considered to have an acceptable impact on the amenity of all adjoining neighbours, complying with Policies CC8.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed replacement of the existing cycle storage with a new more secure storage facility is acceptable in principle and would result in an improved design, enhanced functionality, and support for sustainable transport. The development would not result in undue harm to neighbouring amenity or to the character of the surrounding area.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Recommended Conditions:

Time Limit

Approved Plans

Materials

Protective Measures