

Advice to the local planning authority

Advice to the local planning authority (LPA) from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as a statutory consultee for developments that include a relevant building.

To LPA	Reading Borough Council
LPA planning ref no	PL/24/0958
Our ref	25-0987
Site address	Waterfront Square, 2 Norman Place, Reading RG1 8DA
Proposal description	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.
Date on fire statement	22/07/2024
Date consultation received	17/11/2025
Date response sent	08/12/2025

1. Substantive response for the local planning authority

Thank you for consulting HSE about this application.

Headline response from HSE
Headline Response from HSE ('content')

Scope of consultation

1.1. The above planning application relates to a new mixed-use development, Waterfront Square, which consists of two sections: residential (236 residential dwellings) and commercial (240 sqm. of flexible Class E floorspace at ground floor level). An open-sided/undercroft car park is proposed at the ground level, enclosed/surrounded by the rest of the building and the podium located above.

1.2. The fire statement confirms the storey height of the building is 31.5m, and eleven storeys (ground floor, plus L1 to L10).

1.3. The development will be served by seven stair cores which consist of 4 firefighting shafts plus 3 protected/escape stairs. All upper storeys will be served by at least two stair cores (one representing a firefighting shaft). Each firefighting shaft will contain a firefighting stair, firefighting lift, smoke ventilated firefighting lobby, and a dry riser within the stair. Additionally, three of four firefighting shafts, will be provided with an evacuation lift.

Previous consultation

1.4. HSE issued a substantive response with the headline response 'Content,' on 30/10/2025, under the reference pgo-6027, following a consultation received on 09/10/2025.

Consultation

1.5. A further consultation was received from the LPA on 17/11/2025, providing revised *Proposed Floor Plans* drawings, an *Outline Fire Strategy* (dated 28/10/2025), and a *Design and Access Statement Addendum* (dated October 2025). For the avoidance of doubt, this substantive response relates to the information provided in the latest consultation.

1.6. The current consultation relates to the following proposed amendments:

- Reduction in units from 254 dwellings (15 x studios, 105 x 1 bed, 116 x 2 bed, 15 x 3 bed) and 268 sqm commercial floorspace to 236 dwellings (22 x studios, 92 x 1 bed, 110 x 2 bed, 12 x 3 bed) and 240 sqm commercial floorspace;
- Ground floor - Norman Place increased by 1m in width. Access to car park improved, public square increased in size;
- Second to Seventh Floor - Block A1 reduced by 1m width with consequent increase to podium area. Core layouts updated to reflect changes to massing;
- Fifth to Seventh Floor - Chamfer introduced to Block A1. Core layouts updated to reflect changes to massing;
- Seventh floor - Block A1 reduced by 1 storey;
- Eighth Floor - Block B2 reduced in length with consequent increase in accessible roof terrace (50% larger);
- Brick parapets replaced with railings;
- Block B1 amended through an increase in the variety of materials and tones to break up the Norman Place elevation;
- Block B1 - increased fluting detail provided to top floors of main block and metal detail added to window heads to visually enhance the crown of the building;
- Throughout - additional checkerboard detail added to window heads;
- Blocks A1 and A2 - greater detail provided to lower edge buildings on the river frontage to provide greater contrast with floors above.

1.7. The *Outline Fire Strategy* confirms that the design standards used are: BS9991:2024 ('*Fire safety design, management, and use of residential buildings*') for the residential areas, and Approved Document B, Volume 2: ('*Buildings other than dwellings*') (2019 edition, incorporating 2020 and 2022 amendments) for the non-residential areas. HSE has assessed this application on that basis.

1.8. Following a review of the information provided in the planning application, HSE is content with the fire safety design as set out in the project description, to the extent it affects land use planning considerations.

Yours sincerely

S. Bucur

Sorin Bucur
Fire Safety Information Assessor

Guidance on Planning Gateway One is available on the Planning Portal: [Planning and fire safety - Planning Portal](#).

This response does not provide advice on any of the following:

- matters that are or will be subject to Building Regulations regardless of whether such matters have been provided as part of the application
- matters related to planning applications around major hazard sites, licensed explosive sites, and pipelines
- applications for hazardous substances consent
- London Plan policy compliance

