

Memo

To: Jonathan Markwell, Planning

From: Sarah Hanson, Natural Environment Officer, Planning

CC:

Date: 5 October 2026

Re: Consultation on an Application

Planning Application Ref: PL/26/1121

Application Type: Full planning permission

Address: 138-141, 142-143 & 144 Friar Street, Reading, RG1 1EX

Proposal: Phased redevelopment of the site involving the demolition of No's 138-141 & 142-143 Friar Street, partial demolition of No. 144 Friar Street and erection of a basement, 6-storey and rooftop plant building for purpose-built shared living accommodation (co-living) (Sui Generis), together with the partial retention of No. 144 Friar Street for flexible Class E(a)-E(e) uses.

The site is within a low canopy cover ward and within an AQMA, hence sufficient greening is important to respond to policy requirements and aims of our Tree Strategy.

With reference to the **Design & Access Statement, ref P21109-FCH-XX-XX-RG-A-0001, dated August 2026:**

Landscape proposals are described on pages 53-56 which, with reference to the Illustrative Landscape Plan on p.54 (no separate plan appears to have been provided), includes 4 trees (3 'in ground' and one in a pot), a 'hedge in raised planter' (described on the previous page as '*green buffer will shield the courtyards eastern edge from onlooking apartments*'), and further shrub planting in raised planters.

Details of landscaping can be secured by condition (L2, but with specific inclusion of 'planter details' in part c), however, the confirmation of planting trees 'in ground' Vs attenuation needs to be confirmed (see comments below). In addition, unless the DAS is to be listed as an approved document, a separate Illustrative Landscape Plan should be submitted for approval.

I note the Urban Greening Factor Score on p.56 assumes none of the trees will be native – however, we don't have a planting palette so I'm not sure why that is the assumption.

I note the extent of green roof is shown on P.39, as per **Proposed General Arrangement - 07 Roof Plan P21109-FCH-XX-RF-DR-A-1307 P08**, the details of which will need to be secured and should be in accordance with Ecology / biodiversity recommendations, and it must be ensured the roof is designed to accommodate the additional weight. I note the DAS states: *'Blue roof elements have also been incorporated to assist with sustainable surface water attenuation and management'*, however these are not clear in the **Drainage & Flood Risk Report dated 20 July 2026**, which appears to state 'no blue roof' in a number of places, or on the **PROPOSED SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE STRATEGY drawing 5033963 RDG XX XX D C 110500 P01**.

In relation to the SuDs /drainage strategy, this appears to consist of the green roof and two below ground attenuation tanks – there is no evident link of drainage into the landscaped courtyard area, which could be considered, prior to attenuation in accordance with EN18. One of the attenuation tanks is under the landscaped courtyard in which 'in ground' trees are proposed. Clarity is required on the depth of top of the tanks, i.e. soil depth for tree planting and whether their design is such that there will be no concern about root damage in the future – tree pit design may also figure in this.

In conclusion, whilst I have no objections in principle, the question of trees Vs drainage should be addressed now. In relation to the SuDs / drainage proposals, I note that these have also not been accepted by Darren Cook, hence also await amendments as necessary.