

Donna Williams

Subject: FW: 55 Vastern Rd, Reading (200188) - Agenda and attachments for meeting on Monday 14th September

From: Markwell, Jonathan <Jonathan.Markwell@reading.gov.uk>

Sent: 10 September 2020 13:41

To: Craig Pettit <Craig.Pettit@bartonwillmore.co.uk>

Cc: Caroline McHardy <Caroline.McHardy@berkeleygroup.co.uk>

Subject: RE: 55 Vastern Rd, Reading (200188) - Agenda and attachments for meeting on Monday 14th September

Dear Mr Pettit,

Thank you for your email. I can confirm that I will be joined by Darren Cook at the meeting on Monday. It was hoped that Steve Hicks / the consultant from BPS would be in a position to attend too, but I have been advised on Steve's return from leave this week that the consultant is actually on leave this week, so they won't have had an opportunity to both view/assess/discuss the viability response you submitted last week (as at least one of them has been on leave since your submission); as such, this matter will need to be discussed at a later separate date. Steve will make contact with BPS next week to discuss this and we will be in touch to arrange a separate date for this.

In terms of the highways based information just submitted, based on my first glance this appears quite substantial in nature and will be likely to require some time to consider (both from a pure transport perspective and then with wider officers as well as to the wider impacts on the proposals). Before even forwarding the information onto Darren Cook, I doubt whether there is sufficient time for it to be fully assessed prior to the meeting on Monday morning. I presume your thought process was to submit this now for you to then elaborate / explain further at the meeting, and then allow officers to consider matters further in greater detail subsequent to the meeting? I would welcome your clarification.

Turning to the microclimate responses, I will forward on this commentary to BRE and seek whether they are content for this to be discussed further via an initial conference / zoom / teams call and the logistics / procedures around this.

In terms of the energy review, Element Energy advised me (subsequent to receipt of further information from your consultant on 4 September) that their report would be anticipated to be completed during w/b 14 September.

I hope that these initial responses are of assistance to you and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Markwell
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From: Craig Pettit <Craig.Pettit@bartonwillmore.co.uk>

Sent: 10 September 2020 12:38

To: Markwell, Jonathan <Jonathan.Markwell@reading.gov.uk>; Caroline McHardy <Caroline.McHardy@berkeleygroup.co.uk>

Cc: Kim Cohen <Kim.Cohen@bartonwillmore.co.uk>; Emily Ford <Emily.Ford@bartonwillmore.co.uk>; joseph.harding@berkeleygroup.co.uk; Sophie Haslum <Sophie.Haslum@berkeleygroup.co.uk>; David Taylor (Oxford) <Dave.Taylor@berkeleygroup.co.uk>

Subject: 55 Vastern Rd, Reading (200188) - Agenda and attachments for meeting on Monday 14th September

This is an EXTERNAL EMAIL. STOP. THINK before you CLICK links or OPEN attachments.

Good morning Jonathan,

Ahead of our meeting on Monday, please note for your consideration the following:

1. Proposed agenda (attached)
2. Highways – response prepared by Stantec and accompanying revised tracking drawing (attached)
3. Wind – commentary following comments received by BRE (please see below in body of email)
4. Energy – further to my email on 4th September confirming that our client's energy consultants Hodkinson had supplied the requested cost data to Element Energy, no further dialogue has been received. I have attached the cost data again for clarity.

Regarding the attached highways response, the main change which has been made is to move the location of the refuse collection vehicle from overhanging the footpath when collecting the bins from Block D, to now parking parallel to the building. This will mean that the vehicle will fully cross over the foot/cycleway, however this will only be for a matter of seconds. With the previous approach, the front end of the vehicle would overhang whilst the bins were being collected. We trust that this approach is seen as positive and better than making any changes to the 'direct' nature of the foot/cycleway and/or any unnecessary intrusions onto it.

Regarding wind, our client's consultants RWDI have reviewed the document provided by BRE. The document highlighted three concerns that were considered to be unresolved by the reviewer as follows:

- A. Walking use wind conditions west of the existing Sovereign House entrance in the context of the cumulative surrounding buildings;
- B. Standing use conditions on private balcony spaces; and
- C. The lack of quantitative evidence of mitigation for an area of standing use conditions in the café seating space.

In response to the above identified points, please see the below commentary:

- A. For clarity on point one, the area being referenced is to the western side of the entrance foyer (Figure 1 - attached) for the existing Sovereign House, east of the Site on Vastern Road. In the context of the cumulative schemes (excluding 80 Caversham Road and Vastern Court schemes), wind conditions in this area are predominantly suitable for strolling use (yellow contours in Figure 2 - attached), with a small area of walking use conditions (pink contours in Figure 2). BRE's comments are accepted where it is stated that these conditions would be windier than suitable for an entrance location and made windier by the interaction of the Proposed Development with cumulative schemes, however, the entrance is located some metres further east in an area of sitting use conditions (green contours in Figure 2) that would be considered suitable for an entrance location. The area west of the entrance foyer would not be an area reasonably expected to be frequented by pedestrians (we consider that the only entrance in this location is an emergency exit door, where for this use wind comfort is not a key concern) and therefore has not been considered an entrance or pedestrian thoroughfare. Additionally, existing landscaping in this area has not been accounted for within the assessment and would be expected to shelter this area from the effects of the Proposed Development – it is anticipated that with the planting of the scale seen in this location will result in a drop of one comfort category would be seen in these areas. In the context of the existing surrounding buildings and in the context of the cumulative schemes including 80 Caversham Road and Vastern Court, wind conditions in this area would be calmer. While this has been raised with the reviewer, RWDI would be happy to highlight this in more detail in the report to remove any suggestion that this has been overlooked.
- B. Point two is one of a difference of opinion between RWDI and BRE and RWDI note that their approach has been widely accepted by numerous London boroughs and peer reviewers. The justification for standing use conditions on balconies is that occupants at height would be expected to be more tolerant of windier conditions due to the exposure this location inherently incurs. Additionally, the use of the balcony will also be constrained by the prevailing weather conditions on any given day and would therefore be expected to be used when appropriate weather conditions prevail. Large outdoor amenity spaces are assessed more strictly as these spaces may be expected to be suitable for amenity use regardless of the prevailing weather conditions and being located at ground level.
- C. As discussed with the reviewer, where there are no instances of strong winds it is commonly accepted practice to assess the likely suitability of wind mitigation measures using professional judgement based on experience of similar development. RWDI therefore reaffirm their assessment that the proposed landscaping scheme and the border treatment incorporating a wall to the west of the café space and balustrade formed of dense railings to the north of the café space, would constitute an appropriate level of wind mitigation for the highly localised area of standing use conditions at the north-eastern corner of the spill-out space.

In RWDI's experience a verbal discussion with the reviewer may be a beneficial and positive approach to resolve these remaining areas of concern. I would be grateful therefore if you could please share the above with BRE and subsequently arrange a call with them, so that our client's consultants RWDI can have a detailed discussion on these elements.

Having considered my commentary above and the attachments I have included, I would be grateful if you would please consider who should attend the meeting from the Council's perspective. In terms of viability we would request the attendance of Steve Hicks, as this is a key discussion and we would welcome Steve's updated thoughts on this matter as well as Darren Cook, RBC Highways, following submission of our revised highways comments.

Many thanks and I look forward to hearing from you.

Craig Pettit

Planning Associate



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