

Ms Frances Martin
Exec. Dir. for Economic Growth &
Neighbourhood Services
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
Reading
Berks

12 Thames Side
Reading
Berks
RG1 8DR

25 March 2021

Dear Ms Williams,

Re: Planning Application 200188 - Berkeley Homes old SSE site Vastern Road

I am writing with regard to your letter of 22 March 2022 regarding the above Planning Application.

The original planning application for this site by Berkley Homes showed flats and mews houses. The houses were sited abutting Lynmouth Road. Unfortunately these plans were rescinded and the high rise plans to enable extra flats were devised. This meant that houses in Lynmouth Road would be overlooked and their privacy would be invaded.

The site will retain the SSE transformers. These transformers do emit a humming noise which can be heard by the residents living around the site. The new development will be much nearer the transformers and there has been some publicity regarding the risks of cancer caused by electricity pylons etc.

The plans show the site to be considerably overdeveloped for the area. The homes around Vastern Road are only 2, 3 or 4 storey. The retail developments on the other side of Vastern Road are also only 2 storey. The proposed development will look incongruous with the surrounding area. I can see no benefit to the local area.

A small development of houses or low level flats would be far more desirable for the SSE Site and more commensurate with the houses currently along Vastern Road and Lynmouth Road.

This area of Reading was originally deemed a flood plain. Planning Applications were refused because of the risk of flooding to homes in this area. This flood plain extended to the railway bridge on the Caversham Road.

The Environment Agency are concerned enough to be looking into the flood risk in this area. Vastern Road has a tributary running beneath the road which enters the Thames by Caversham Lock. The foundations used on the site will increase the risk of flooding in this area. Proposed further developments on the old Royal Mail building, the Station complex, the Aldi/Range site and the Drew's building will also

seriously increase the risk of flooding. I am sure the Council will not want to increase this risk to homeowners in this area by approving high rise developments.

Any of the flat dwellers with cars will overburden already limited car parking spaces in the locality. There are not enough car spaces for each flat to be allocated with one. Three bedroom flats will be intended for families but where can children play? There is already a considerable lack of medical facilities in this area of Reading. We have a 320+ block of flats erected on the old Coopers BMW site. The new occupants of these flats will require medical facilities and schooling bringing an *already overburdened system on its knees*. *With a further 209+ flats on Vastern Road* this will increase the burden even further.

A cafe on the proposed site is also a concern. The one on Vastern Road did not last the course and was sold and is now converted to housing. I am concerned about empty coffee cups littering the river bank and excess noise if it is open into the evening. The proposed walkway between Vastern Road and the Thames Path is also a real concern. I am concerned that this path will be used by drug dealers as a short cut or may be a possible danger for women walking alone at night.

The Footpath along the River Thames is narrow and footfall is quite a problem. Cyclists, runners, parents with pushchairs and walkers currently use the path. I see the proposed cafe as a further problem with additional traffic making the area prone to litter problems. We have so much rubbish ending up in the Thames with plastic bags and general litter causing untold problems to the local bird population.

The proposed siting of trees on the site will also overshadow the adjacent properties blocking out light and causing extra problems with falling leaves. Who will be responsible for their maintenance?

If permission is granted for this development along Vastern Road what is there to stop the offices selling their premises for building and further high rise dwellings being built. The houses would be dwarfed by the high risers on both sides of the road. I also pose the question how many offices will become available should home working become the norm and make the offices ripe for conversion into flats?

In my opinion this is an inconceivably bad Planning Application which will not enhance the area one iota but will cause immeasurable problems if it is permitted.

Yours sincerely,

Carol Goddard