

Memo

To: (e)Access Officer - Helen Bryant Civic Offices Floor 1 North Front Bridge Street
Reading RG1 2LU

From: Brian Conlon brian.conlon@reading.gov.uk

Date: 1 April 2020

Re: Consultation on Planning Application

Application Number: 200328

Application Type: Outline Planning Approval

Address: Vastern Court Caversham Road Reading

Proposal: Outline planning permission for Demolition and redevelopment to comprise: up to 115,000 sqm GEA in one or more land uses comprising: Residential (Class C3 and including PRS); Offices (Use Class B1(a); development in Use Classes A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away), C1 (hotel), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car parking; provision of new plant and renewable energy equipment; creation of servicing areas and provision of associated services, including waste, refuse, cycle storage, and lighting; and for the laying out of the buildings.

This is to advise you that the above application has been submitted to the Planning Department. If you have any comments to make relating to the above development, please provide them by return email or memo by **22 April 2020**

Details of the application can be viewed on the Council's 'Planning Registers' website at <http://planning.reading.gov.uk> or Info@Work. Please allow 1 working day for documents to be viewable.

If you require any further information, or want to view the application, please contact me on the above telephone number or email.

Comments made will be taken into consideration before any decision is made.

If you are not able to meet the deadline above please contact me to explain the delay and to agree an extension of the consultation period.

You may find the following useful for your response:

- No objections
- No objections subject to conditions attached**
- Clarification required - see attached
- Object - see attached

TO SAVE PAPER PLEASE REPLY BY EMAIL

1. Unfortunately, in common with many planning applications there is not much mention of how the site will be made accessible to all in the Access and Design statement; the word “access” is generally used in its more broad sense.
2. As I’ve mentioned in other responses, shared spaces are not a popular feature for many disabled people, especially people who are blind, visually impaired or who are older. This applies to bicycles as well, because they go fast and cannot easily be heard or seen until it’s too late. There might need to be some form of tactile demarcation. There does appear to be separation in the illustration, which is very encouraging. I also think the changes of paving will be useful. Kerbs are a necessity for some for wayfinding purposes. However, cars in areas where pedestrians will be walking should be avoided if possible.
3. Water features, planters, public art and so on are welcomed, but they must be sited so that they do not become a trip hazard or cause problems for those who cannot easily see them. There was a nasty accident at the beginning of last year concerning one of the concrete blocks near to the station. Bollards which are reflective might cause confusion for some people, especially those with visual impairments and conditions such as dementia.
4. Wider pavements would definitely be welcomed by many, especially disabled people. However, if they are to be shared by cyclists then this could cause problems of conflict.
5. Car clubs are not usually useful for disabled people, as they do not provide adapted vehicles.
6. I am glad to see that there will be Blue Badge car parking spaces. Will there be any suitable for disabled drivers/passengers who have large WAVs (wheelchair accessible vehicles) and need a ramp to get in and out, either from the rear or the side? I did note that some of the spaces had larger spaces in between the blocks, so it’s possible that this has already been planned for.
7. I don’t know if there will be accessible dwellings at this stage, but if there are to be some, then the ideal would be to use Part M - M4(2) Category 2 - Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings or, better still, M4(3) Category 3- Wheelchair User Dwellings. BS8300 2018 - Parts 1 and 2 - will be very useful also, for the other buildings on the site.
8. The Centre of Accessible Environments also has a Housing Guide.
9. I would be interested to know how many of the rooms in the hotel will be accessible for disabled people.
10. I don’t think that putting the Blue Badge spaces in the service area gives a good impression - it looks a bit like an afterthought and doesn’t really give a feeling of welcome to those using them. It might be better if at least some of the spaces were further away from the bins.
11. I cannot easily tell, but I would hope that the podium garden(s) would be accessible to all residents.
12. All access buttons, etc., should be easily reachable by all, especially those using wheelchairs and people of shorter stature.
13. I was pleased to see that there is to be seating in a variety of styles in The Avenue. These should include different heights, and some should have arm rests.
14. It would be appreciated if wheelchair users could also get onto the grass areas.
15. I was pleased to see that inclusive play has been factored in. It would be wise to work with George Baptiste, who is the Council’s Playgrounds Officer.

16. Disabled people will not all be able to carry refuse far to get to the bin store.

I'm sure that there was more to say, but I hope that this will assist.