

**CADRA's Comments on PL-26-0311 – Caversham Park House and Park
Application for Approval of Details Reserved by Condition 3 (Construction Method
Statement) relating to Planning Permission PL/22/0409**

Caversham Park House and Park are not only Grade II protected; they are a defining part of North Reading's heritage and landscape character.

CADRA considers that the submitted Construction Method Statement (CMS) does not provide sufficient detail to ensure its protection in terms of the listed building's fabric, the trees and landscape of the park, and how the impact on wildlife and the ecology will be protected.

Whilst the arrangements for construction traffic are explained, we think more is required to ensure the safety of all users of the public highway in the vicinity, and especially that of children and vulnerable people.

PROTECTION OF THE GRADE II LISTED CAVERSHAM PARK HOUSE - There are some key omissions in the CMS about how the listed building will be safeguarded during demolition and construction, which we believe can be rectified by:

- A full condition survey before works begin
- Installation of vibration monitoring with agreed thresholds and automatic alerts
- Defined exclusion zones to restrict heavy plant movements near the House
- Provision of heritage-specific dust and moisture controls
- Detailed method statements for work near the listed building
- Appointing a heritage consultant to oversee all work affecting historic fabric

These measures are proportionate and necessary to protect the listed building and must be confirmed and accepted before Condition 3 is discharged.

TREES IN THE GRADE II REGISTERED PARKLAND - The CMS refers only to "tree surgery work" and "site clearance", without demonstrating how the trees, hedges and lawns, that are an integral part of the designated historic landscape, will be protected during construction. We request the following actions:

- An Arboriculture Method Statement is required to include a Tree Protection Plan showing fencing, Root Protection Areas (RPAs), or exclusion zones, with particular emphasis on veteran or high-value trees that represent this listed landscape, in accordance with BS 5837:2012
- A no-dig methodology statement for excavation or service installations near RPAs
- Appointing an Arboriculturist/clerk of works to supervise at key times and for monitoring

These measures are standard for construction within a registered historic landscape and necessary to avoid irreversible harm and must be confirmed and accepted before Condition 3 is discharged.

WILDLIFE & ECOLOGY PROTECTION - The CMS contains no reference at all to wildlife, ecology, protected species, or biodiversity protection during construction. This is a significant omission given the historic parkland setting, known bat activity in the main house and woodland edge, and the potential for nesting birds, hedgehogs, badgers, reptiles, and amphibians. CADRA requests the following actions:

- Provision of a Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP)
- Appoint an Ecological Clerk of Works to oversee all vegetation clearance and works near sensitive habitats
- Undertake pre-commencement surveys for bats, nesting birds, badgers, reptiles, and amphibians
- Apply seasonal restrictions on vegetation clearance (March–August) unless cleared by an ecologist
- Implement a dark-corridor lighting strategy to protect bats
- Provide wildlife-safe site practices, including escape ramps from trenches and covered pipes
- Protect retained habitats with exclusion zones and clear signage
- Require ecological monitoring with reports submitted to RBC

These measures are standard for large sites with mature trees, historic parkland, and known bat interest and must be confirmed and accepted before Condition 3 is discharged.

TRAFFIC, HIGHWAY SAFETY & CONSTRUCTION LOGISTICS (PEPPARD ROAD) - The CMS acknowledges the need to manage construction traffic and includes a traffic marshal at the site entrance, a delivery booking system, and a “one in one out” approach. While these measures are welcome, they are framed primarily as logistics controls, not safety controls, and they do not address the specific risks associated with the constrained highway environment on Peppard Road.

Peppard Road is a heavily used corridor with narrow footways, serving a primary school and retail precinct. The geometry of the access from the main routes, combined with limited visibility and high pedestrian activity, requires a more robust and safety-focused approach than the CMS currently provides. CADRA request the following actions and statements are provided:

HGV Movement Control - The CMS provides only a gate-based traffic marshal, with no commitment to banksman-controlled movements along the approach route or during restricted-visibility manoeuvres. All HGV movements must be controlled by a trained vehicle marshal positioned to manage pedestrian interaction and blind spots.

Queuing and Waiting Restrictions - No prohibition is included on HGV queuing on Peppard Road, despite the risk of obstruction, pedestrian conflict, and congestion. Queuing or waiting of construction vehicles on Peppard Road must be explicitly prohibited.

Peak-Hour Protection - The CMS omits any peak-hour embargo aligned with school arrival/departure times as well as commuter flows. A movement embargo must be implemented for 07:30–09:30 and 14:45–18:00.

Conflict Point Assessment - No assessment is provided of key conflict points where construction traffic interacts with pedestrians and other road users. These include The Hill Primary School, the junction where Peppard Road where it rejoins the main highway out of Reading at the mini-roundabout, the retail parade entrance, bus stops, crossing points, and narrow footways. A full conflict-point assessment must be supplied, identifying where vehicle movements create risk and how these risks will be mitigated.

Pedestrian Safety Planning - There is no construction-phase plan for pedestrian safety, particularly for children and vulnerable users. This must be addressed separately from the conflict-point analysis. Updated construction logistic drawings must show safe pedestrian routes, visibility splays, temporary controls, and any required footway protection or traffic management to ensure safe passage during construction activity.

Off-Site Holding Arrangements - Although “holding points” are referenced, no off-site holding area is identified. An appropriate off-site holding area must be secured, supported by a call-forward system to prevent roadside waiting.

Management of Early Arrivals - No measures are provided for unexpected early arrivals, creating a risk of informal waiting on Peppard Road. A defined procedure must be included to manage early or unscheduled arrivals without roadside queuing.

Existing Construction Traffic - It should be noted that in the vicinity of Caversham House there are currently other significant construction works in progress or proposed. CADRA asks that this be factored into the traffic assessment aspect of the CMS.

These measures reflect standard practice for large, constrained urban sites and are essential to protect vulnerable road users. Without them, the CMS does not yet provide adequate assurance that construction traffic will be managed safely in this sensitive location. They must be confirmed and accepted before Condition 3 is discharged.

CONCLUSION

In its current form the CMS does not provide adequate detail to ensure the protection of this listed house and parkland in terms of the building, trees, wildlife and its ecology.

Nor does it offer sufficient information about how the safety of all pedestrians, especially children and vulnerable people will be protected during construction, and how traffic congestion minimised.

CADRA therefore request that the CMS be revised or conditioned to incorporate the mitigation measures outlined above.