

Date: 4 June 2019 at 12:02:31 CEST

To: jonathan.markwell@reading.gov.uk

Subject: 182252 - 80 Caversham Rd, RG1 1AA. Royal Mail depot site

Dear Mr Markwell,

CADRA would like to comment on the proposals for this important site as follows:

- Future development of this important site and its return to beneficial use is welcome.
- Layout - The north south orientation of the blocks and the possible future connection on the line of De Montfort Road are positive features of the layout, together with the positioning of the tallest building adjacent the station entrance.
- Accommodation - CADRA have concerns about the sheer quantity of residential accommodation proposed for this compact site. The heights of the blocks proposed and the widths between blocks means that for large parts of the day and year, the proposed amenity spaces between the blocks will be in shadow, notwithstanding the proposed orientation. This is especially important given that more than 650 residential flats including family accommodation are indicated. We understand that there are proposals by Hermes to contribute to school places. For successful urban living of this nature involving families and children, close and immediate access to crèche facilities, play areas and green amenity space is a necessity. The green space proposed seems inadequate for these purposes. Of particular concern are the residential blocks directly adjacent to the railway where openable windows would expose residents to noise, air pollution and a poor living environment.
- Massing and height - The tower proposed at the eastern end of the site is at 25/26 stories. Some of the tower will have commercial office use and therefore greater floor to floor dimensions and thus height. Whilst several visual perspectives are shown from several stationary viewing points, we would suggest that the OS datum height of the top of the tower should be set out and compared visually with the OS datum maximum heights of other tall permitted buildings and buildings under construction around the station. Other ways should also be found to show the tower in the context of the cluster of tall buildings around the station proposed in the tall buildings Policy so that the success of the cluster as a whole and the impact on Reading and Caversham of the height and bulk proposed and whether it is desirable, can be properly assessed. The 7/ 8 storey buildings proposed fronting Caversham Road do not relate to the scale of buildings on the west side of Caversham road and the predominantly 2 storey residential community beyond. We believe that the heights of proposed buildings on this heavily trafficked frontage should be reduced to allow a more gradual stepping up in scale and avoid an unpleasant trafficked canyon effect. The town houses proposed between blocks directly adjacent the railway seem an afterthought and reduce the green amenity space.
- Conclusion - CADRA believe on the basis of the above points that these proposals represent over development of the site.

I hope these comments will be useful to you in your assessment of the proposals.

Kind regards,

On behalf of Caversham and District Residents Association