

From: CADRA
Sent: 20 December 2019 14:13
To: brian.conlon@reading.gov.uk
Cc:
Subject:191792 Planning Application, 71 -73 Caversham Road, Reading, RG1 8JA - DREWS SITE

Dear Mr Conlon,

Caversham and District Residents Association (CADRA) would like to comment on the Planning Application proposals for this site as follows:

1) RETENTION OF EXISTING BUILDING

CADRA believe that serious consideration should be given to retaining, converting and possibly extending the existing buildings on the site. We note that the partial retention of the buildings on the western boundary is already proposed. The Malthouse buildings on this site dating from the 1870s are one of the few remaining examples of 19C industrial architecture in this area and the town. They relate to the Brewing Industry, a close part of Reading's identity historically, and for which Reading was renowned. The buildings still form an identifiable unified group with historic value both to the local area and the town.

Although the buildings have been altered in the 20C, both the overall form and much of the detailing is still apparent and this detailing can be repaired/ reinstated. Much of the detailing on the building (for example polychromatic brick detailing) is representative of a 19C style characteristic of Reading, and whilst many domestic examples survive, industrial examples do not. We note the applicants design statement make frequent reference to the architectural details on the existing building, the most appropriate way to celebrate these would be to therefore retain the existing building.

The massing and scale of the existing building relates well to the scale of the existing residential area to the west of the site and the setback of the upper floors from back of pavement level on the south eastern corner of the site visually eases the turn into Northfield road.

We understand that an application for Local Listing was made in September 2019 and this gives greater detail on the history and value of the buildings on the site which should be taken into consideration.

2) A TRANSITIONAL SITE AND PROPOSED HEIGHT

If the existing frontage buildings are not retained, this site should be treated as a transitional site between the larger scale development some 6-7 storeys of the proposals on the Aviva and Hermes sites on the eastern side of Caversham Road and the predominantly 2 storey development of the residential area around Swansea Road. In CADRA's view, development on this western side of Caversham Road should relate to the 2/3 storey scale of the residential community to which this site relates and none of the sites on this side of the road is appropriate for 7 storey development. We note in the Design and Access statement, in pre application advice the Planning Officer expressed concern about the height of the proposals.

3) BUILDING LINE

The proposals build right up to the back edge of pavement over seven storeys on Caversham Road. Careful examination of the building lines on this and existing adjacent sites indicate a variation in building line to the benefit of space on Caversham Road approaching the roundabout. The main building line, on the southern corner of the Drews site, lines with the adjacent Dawsons/ Pure Gym site but then cuts back at upper level approaching Northfield Road and relates to the building lines of the 19C development beyond the 1970s Shurgard building further down the road. Building seven storeys to the back edge of pavement on this site would be oppressive on this corner and form an unfortunate precedent for other sites likely to come forward on this side of the road.

4) ROOFSCAPE

The saw tooth roofscape proposed on top of the seven storey building seems to be an arbitrary response to a comment from the Design Review Panel, rather than to have any design logic. There do not seem to be precedents for this in the area.

For the above reasons CADRA object to this development.

I hope that these comments are helpful to your consideration of the application.

Kind Regards,

On behalf of Caversham and District Residents Association