

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward:

App Ref: 230882/FUL

Address: 173-174 Friar Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 1HE

Proposals: Alterations to rear and side elevation only; including new and revised fenestration, juliette balcony, replacement of metal safety rail and a material change from brick to mortar on the rear and side external elevation.

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

Date received (valid from): 19 September 2023

Extended Target Decision date: 24 November 2023

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

173-174 Friar Street is a four-storey building located at the eastern end of Friar Street at the junction with Market Place and The Forbury. The building whilst now vacant formerly comprised a ground floor shopping arcade (known as Bristol and West Arcade) with offices above. Permission has been granted for a change of use for the first, second and third floors and part of the ground floor from Class E to Class C3 residential to comprise 20 flats.

The site is located within the Reading Central Area, Central Core, Office Core and Primary Shopping Area of the town centre as defined by Policy CR1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019. The ground floor level Friar Street frontage of the building is a designated Primary Frontages within the town centre as defined by Policy CR7. The application site together with 175 Friar Street and no.s 27-32 Market Place are allocated for development under Policy CR14d. The site allocation is for change of use of listed buildings (no.s 27-32 Market Place) and development of remainder of the site for residential and/or offices with retail and related uses on the ground floor, retaining the arcade form.

The building subject of this application is also located within area of archaeological potential and an air quality management area. The building is not listed, and whilst adjacent to, it is not within a Conservation Area.

Site visit date: 20/09/2023

Site visit photos:

Front elevation



Rear elevation



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal is for works to the west side and rear elevation only, to improve its appearance following new and revised fenestration, to change from brick to an off white milk mortar on the rear external elevation. A metal safety rail in grey RAL 7032 is proposed to be replaced. Smart Alitem 300 Aluminium windows are proposed in a KL001 cream colour, with Smart Alitem Plus Aluminium doors in a KL004 cream colour. A number of frameless glass Juliet balconies are also proposed.

Planning permission has been granted for alterations to the rear of 175 Friar Street which is situated within the Conservation Area, the mortar is proposed to match the colour of render for works approved at 175 Friar Street.

The position of the existing rear windows in the 1077-050 South elevation are proposed to be removed and replaced with new cream aluminium windows as shown on plan 1077-05 Rev B, 173-4 Friar Street. The interior of the building has been stripped and is currently open plan with structural walls in situ.

Plans considered

Planning, Heritage, Design & Access statement, Allen Planning Ltd, June 2023

Jw1077-100 Rev A Location Plan

~~Jw1077-051 Rev A Proposed elevations 173-4 Friar Street, Render thin coat colour ash white~~

JW1077-050 Rev A Existing rear/south & west elevations

Smart Alitherm Series window specification architectural aluminium

Smart Alitherm Plus Series window specification architectural aluminium

Smart architectural aluminium colours

CIL

Received on 22 June 2023

~~Jw1077-051 Rev A Proposed elevations 173-4 Friar Street, Render thin coat ash white~~
As received 22 June 2023

Jw1077-051 Rev B Proposed elevations 173-4 Friar Street, Render thin coat colour
mink
As received 26 October 2023

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

173-175 Friar Street & 27-32 Market Place

210163FUL & 210164LBC - Demolition of vacant former Bristol & West Arcade (173-175 Friar Street) and redevelopment of site including minor excavations at basement level to provide an 8- storey building to provide a hotel (C1 use) of up to 182 beds, creation of a bar/restaurant/gym at ground floor associated with the hotel and the provision of ancillary facilities including outdoor terrace, demolition of rear parts of 29-31 and 32 Market Place, the change of use of the retained units at 27-28, 29-31 and 32 Market Place at first, second and third floors to provide 8 residential units, retention of flexible Class E uses at ground and basement floors – Withdrawn

180358FUL & 180359LBC - Demolition of vacant former Bristol & West Arcade (173 – 175 Friar Street) and erection of an eight storey mixed–use building (plus basement) to provide 35 residential units, 4,208 sqm of B1 office floorspace, and 5 retail units (A1/A2/A3); demolition of rear parts of 29 – 31 and 32 Market Place the change of use of the retained units at 27 – 28, 29 - 31 Market Place at first, second and third floors to provide 8 residential units, change of use at ground and basement level of 32 Market Place from A2 to flexible retail use (A1/A2/A3), retention of 260.4 sqm of A4 use at ground and basement at 29-31 Market Place, change of use at ground and basement of 27 - 28 Market Place to flexible retail use (A1/A2/A3), and associated internal and external works to the Listed Buildings, landscaping, refuse, plant, cycle stores and substation at basement level – Granted (associated s106). LAPSED

173-174 Friar Street

220579EPA - Change of use from Class E (commercial, business and service) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 20 flats. Prior Notification under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 – Prior Approval Granted.

175 Friar Street

220577 Change of use of upper floors and rear part of ground floor from Class E (Commercial, Business and Services) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 6 flats. Prior Notification under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 Granted 5 July 2022

230881 Alterations to rear elevation only; including new and revised fenestration and a material change from brick to mortar on the rear external elevation and replacement of metal safety rail. Granted 25 October 2023

4. CONSULTATIONS

A site notice was displayed at the site for a 21 day consultation period.

No letters of representation have been received.

RBC Conservation Officer – No objections. The building is not a listed building or sited within the Conservation area however it is requested that the proposed mortar on the rear elevation is the same shade and specification for 173-174 Friar Street as it is for 175 Friar Street.

It is advised that the proposed silicone render is expected to be compatible with the existing mortar and materials of the building. The proposed works are considered to have a neutral impact on the adjacent Conservation Area.

RBC Building control – No objections were raised however it was confirmed that a building regulation application will be required for the proposed works.

Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS

CR2: DESIGN IN CENTRAL READING

Other Local Documents

Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Conservation Area Appraisal

APPRAISAL

The interior of the building has been stripped for works to convert the building into C3 residential accommodation following a prior approval application and works are proposed to the side and rear elevations. The repositioning of the windows in the rear and side elevation will result in a different appearance of the rear façade, and realign windows across changes in internal floor levels. Although the windows differ in size and are not symmetrical, in this instance they do not result in a detrimental impact to the rear and would provide an improvement in living accommodation for future occupiers of the building.

The proposed change to the rear of 175 Friar Street from brick to thin off white mink mortar (K Rend Silicone Thin Coat. Colour – Mink) is considered acceptable due to the position, existing poor condition and colours of the existing elevation. Brick elevations within Reading are generally considered important to be retained with a resistance to a change to mortar, however in this instance it is not considered to detract from the original building, Conservation Area or harm the settings of nearby listed buildings with red brick bonds in the vicinity at the rear of the building at Market Place Square. It is advised that the proposed silicone render is expected to be compatible with the existing mortar and materials of the building. Aluminium windows are considered acceptable.

The proposed works will not be visible from the public realm. The impact of works have been considered on the setting and significance of listed buildings including the Town Hall Square and in Market Place Square and the character and appearance of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area which are situated nearby to the building of townscape merit at 175 Friar Street. Planning permission has been granted for the adjacent building at 175 Friar Street for works to the rear elevation fenestration with a change from brick to mortar. 173-174 Friar Street is not located in the Conservation area.

Amenity

The revised layout is not considered to result in any increased detrimental overlooking and is considered to comply with CC8.

Other Issues

Building control regulation approval will be required in relation to the proposed works.

Any internal changes that do not reflect the permission granted under 220579EPA may require an additional planning application.

Conclusion

The development will result in a material change to the appearance of the rear and side elevations of 173-4 Friar Street however the proposal is not considered harmful to the character or appearance of the site or its surroundings and does not have a detrimental impact on the original building, Conservation Area or neighbouring properties. The changes will provide improved living for future residents at the property following the commencement of the conversion from Class E to create 20 C3 residential flats. The proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the Policies set out

within the Local Development Plan, and as such planning permission is recommended for approval.

Grant Planning Permission

RECOMMENDATION

Approve

Subject to the following conditions:

Timeline

Plans

Materials as specified on the plans