

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Redlands

App Ref: 231087/FUL

Address: Royal Berkshire Hospital, London Road, Reading, RG1 5AN

Proposals: Installation of new enclosed escape stairs on the external of the ICU

Case Officer: Sian Hickey

Date received (valid from): 1 August 2023 **Decision date (ext):** 12 December 2023

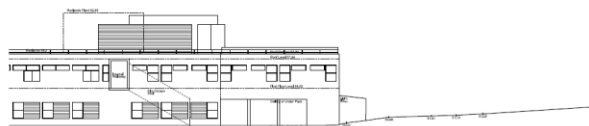
1. Site description and Surrounding Area

The application site is the South Block of the Royal Berkshire Hospital. The Royal Berkshire Hospital (use class C2) is located partially on London Road, Redlands Road and Craven Road. The application site is outside of a conservation area and does not include any listed buildings.

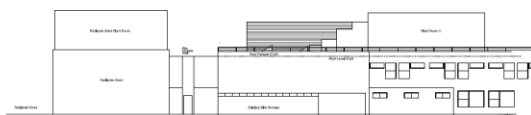
2. The Proposal

The proposal is for the installation of new enclosed escape stairs on the external of the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Due to limitations on the internal layout of the ICU, there is need for a secondary means of escape at the end of the building. The proposal would provide a weather protected means of escape from the ICU and safe maintenance access to the roof.

Existing elevations



Existing West Elevation - 1:100

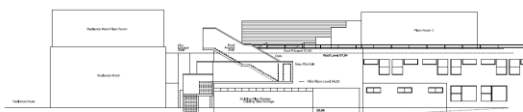


Existing South Elevation - 1:100

Proposed elevations



Proposed West Elevation - 1:100



Proposed South Elevation - 1:100

3. Consultation

Discussions with applicant/agent

The proposal originally included upgrading the air handling system within the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) located within the South Block Building level 3. This involved demolishing a section of the existing roof plant room to facilitate for a new open-air acoustic compound for the new air handling equipment.

The agent decided to remove this element from the proposal and continue with the application solely for the external fire escape stairs following a noise complaint and concerns raised by the RBC Environmental Health Officer.

Internal Consultees

Environmental Health

The Council has opened a noise nuisance investigation with regards to the existing plant at the site following complaints. The location appears to be the existing rooftop air handling plant on South Block close to the location of the new proposed plant. In response to this The Environmental Health Officer now has significant concerns regarding the approval of more plant without an assessment of the existing plant.

It is not known how the current application proposal would affect this pre-existing situation. I.e. is the proposed plant replacing the existing noise source? Would the noise source remain?

Would the new plant combined with the noisy plant result in unforeseen noise outcomes (frequencies, tonal characteristics, sound levels etc?).

Therefore, in order to proceed with the proposal for the new plant, a noise assessment of the existing and proposed plant is required to determine a solution that complies with our noise criterion and also does not create a noticeable tonal noise and removes the existing tonal noise.

There are no objections with regards to the fire escape stairs.

Transport

There are no transport objections to this application.

Conservation Area Advisory Committee

No comments received at time of writing report.

External Consultation

The following addresses were consulted by letter:

15 Redlane Court, Reading, RG1 5QT
16 Redlane Court, Reading, RG1 5QT
32 Redlands Road, Reading, RG1 5HD

36 Redlands Road, Reading, RG1 5HD
34 Redlands Road, Reading, RG1 5HD
26 Redlands Road, Reading, RG1 5EX

One letter of objection was received with concerns regarding noise from plant.

4. Plans and Documents Considered

Drawing No 7069.105 - Location and Block Plan received 2nd August 2023

Drawing No. 7069.144 - Existing Roof Plan and Site Plan received 2nd August 2023

Design and Access Statement received 29th November 2023

Drawing No. 7069.218 rev C - Existing South and West Elevations received 29th November 2023

Drawing No. 7069.220 rev A - Existing and Proposed East Elevations received 29th November 2023

Drawing No. 7069.219 rev C - Proposed South and West Elevations received 29th November 2023

5. Relevant Planning History

There is extensive application history at the Royal Berkshire Hospital but none are considered of particular relevance to this application.

6. Relevant Planning Guidance

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. The Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

The 'National Planning Policy framework' ('NPPF') 2012 states clearly that its content is to be a material consideration in the determination of applications. The 'NPPF' states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Reading Borough Local Plan, 2019) according to their degree of consistency with the 'NPPF' (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the 'NPPF', the greater the weight that may be given). Accordingly, the 'NPPF' and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

7. Relevant Policies

The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National

National Planning Policy Framework;
National Planning Policy Guidance;

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction

CC7 Design and the Public Realm

CC8 Safeguarding Amenity

EN16 Pollution and Water Resources

EN17 Noise Generating Equipment

ER3 Royal Berkshire Hospital

8. Appraisal

Principle of development

The public benefit of development to help the efficiency and quality of environment at the hospital is understood and accepted. In addition, Policy ER3 (Royal Berkshire Hospital) states that development will be supported where it complies with the following criteria:

Where development would result in an increase in staff or visitors, it should be accompanied by measures which ensure that development does not have an adverse effect on the functioning of the highway, either as a result of increased use or by resulting in additional on-street parking in surrounding streets - it would not.

Development will conserve the listed main block on London Road and 17 Craven Road, ensuring that their use is consistent with its conservation - this proposal does not relate to the Listed part of the hospital.

Development would not result in adverse effects on the setting of listed buildings and conservation areas - it would not.

There will be no significant detrimental impact on neighbouring residential properties - it would not result in detrimental impact; see section (b) of the appraisal.

Subject to meeting the above criteria, and other policy considerations, development at the Royal Berkshire Hospital is accepted in line with Policy ER3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Impact of the proposal on the surrounding area

The proposed fire escape stairs are not considered harmfully out of keeping given the context of the site and surrounding area which comprises of an array of structures and equipment to facilitate the effectiveness of the hospital. The proposal is similar to the existing fire escape stair that links the South Block with the Redlands building. The proposed stairs are set back from the hospital boundary and there is a sufficient distance between the proposed development and the road sides.

Overall, the proposal is not considered to conflict with policies CC7, CC8 and ER3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) subject to condition.

Amenity

It is not considered that the proposal would cause any detrimental effect to neighbouring amenity due to the scale and nature of the proposal combined with distance to the closest residential property.

The proposal is considered acceptable in relation to Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Other matters

The proposed development would not result in an unacceptable loss of biodiversity or impact any existing trees.

The proposal would not result in the loss of any parking spaces on site.

9. Recommendation

Grant planning permission

Conditions

1. TL1
2. Approved Plans
3. Materials

Informatives

1. Terms
2. Building Control
3. Complaints about construction
4. Positive and Proactive