

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

App Ref: 230584/FUL

Address: Unit 1A Vastern Court, Caversham Road Reading, RG1 8AL

Proposals: Retrospective application for new external plant equipment, and new plant compound and enclosure at mezzanine level required for internal refurbishment of the Aldi foodstore.

Case Officer: Sian Hickey

Date received (valid from): 23 May 2023

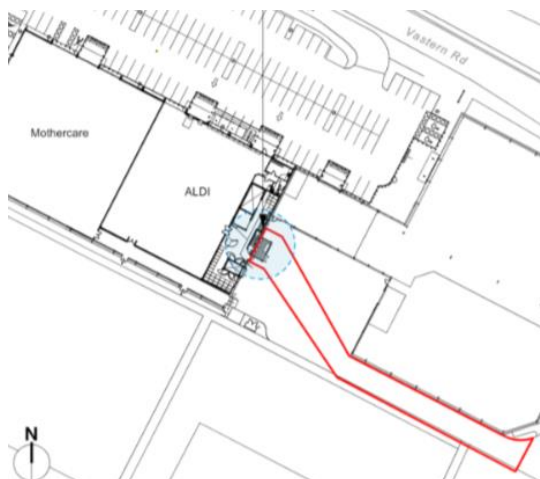
Agreed decision date (ext): 6 September 2023

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a commercial unit (ALDI) within The Station Shopping Park located in Reading Central Area. The unit has associated parking at the front. The site can be accessed at the side/rear via Bagnall Way. The local area is a mix of commercial and residential. The site is within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The site is not a listed building, nor does it fall within a conservation area.



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION



Retrospective planning permission is sought for new external plant equipment within the former plant compound, and further new external plant equipment, compound and enclosure at mezzanine level above the ground floor enclosure. This was required as part of the internal refurbishment and update of the Aldi foodstore. The plant equipment and enclosure is located at the side of the ALDI unit facing Bagnell Way.

Plans considered:

Drawing No. 170666-1000 P01 - Site Location Plan
Drawing No. 170666-1011 P2 - Proposed Site Layout
Drawing No. 170666-1010 P2 - Existing Site Layout and Compound Elevations
Drawing No. 170666-1002 P4 - Proposed Plant Elevation
Drawing No. 170666-1001 P4 - Proposed Plant Compound

As received 22nd May 2023

Documents considered:

Assessment of noise from replacement fixed plant equipment dated 18th July 2023 received 19th July 2023

Technical Note dated 25th July 2023 received 31st July 2023

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

Unit One, Vastern Court Caversham Road, READING, Berkshire, RG1 8AL
Po Box 2293, 80 Caversham Road, 80 Caversham Road,, RG1 7FP
Vastern House, Trooper Potts Way, Reading, RG1 8FP
Unit 2 Vastern Court, Caversham Road, Reading, RG1 8AL
Unit 3 Vastern Court, Caversham Road, Reading, RG1 8AL

Letters of representation have been received as follows: None

RBC Environmental Health

The Environmental Health Officer had concerns regarding noise arising from the development. Subsequently, a Noise Assessment was received from the agent. The Environmental Health Officer had concerns regarding the impact on new residents of a previously approved application at 80 Caversham Road (*Outline application considering access, landscaping, layout and scale for redevelopment proposal involving the demolition of all existing buildings and structures (Classes B1a & B2) and erection of new buildings ranging between basement and 2 - 24 storeys in height, providing 620 residential units (Class C3), office accommodation (Class B1a), flexible ground floor shop (Class A1), financial and professional services (Class A2) or restaurant/café (Class A3) uses, a community centre (Class D1), health centre uses (Class D1) and various works including car parking (94 spaces (70 at basement level)), servicing, public and private open space, landscaping, highways, pedestrian and vehicular access and associated works*). The Noise Assessment was updated and a Technical Note Document was received to cover the concerns raised by the Environmental Health Officer.

The Environmental Health Officer provided the comments below on 21st August 2023:

“Given the latest information they have provided regarding the background noise levels at the proposed new residential development and the comparison with the pre-existing plant, this now looks acceptable and I have no further comments.”

RBC Transport

No objections

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

EN16: POLLUTION AND WATER RESOURCES

EN17: NOISE GENERATING EQUIPMENT

TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS

CR2: DESIGN IN CENTRAL READING

CR3: PUBLIC REALM IN CENTRAL READING

CR11: STATION/RIVER MAJOR OPPORTUNITY AREA

Equality Act 2010:

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APPRAISAL

a) Principle of Development

The principle of development is supported subject to compliance with any other relevant policy within the Local Plan.

b) Impact of the proposal on the surrounding area

The building has an existing designated plant area. The positioning of new equipment has been carefully considered to ensure that there will continue to be minimal impact to the surrounding area. Unit 3 (The Range) screens the views of the plant area from the public highway. The materials and colours match those of the existing. The plant area will continue to be set back from the building's edges. Whilst it is acknowledged that proposal increases the amount of plant equipment and includes an additional mezzanine level, it is not considered that this results in a harmful level of visual clutter given the location, and in comparison to the size of the building. The proposal is not considered to be out of keeping with the equipment likely to be found in the vicinity to support these types of units. As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in relation to Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

c) Neighbouring Amenity

The proposal results in changes to the previous plant area which is considered far enough away to not impact neighbouring amenity. The nearest residential property is 95m north of the plant equipment on Vastern Road. Given the nature of the proposal, no detrimental impact will be caused upon the amenity of neighbours as a result of this proposed development and so is considered acceptable in relation to Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

d) Environmental Health Matters

Applications which include noise generating plant when there are nearby noise sensitive receptors should be accompanied by an acoustic assessment carried out in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 methodology. A noise assessment has been submitted to support the application.

The noise assessment submitted has been carried out in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 and the methodology has been correctly applied. The assessment concludes that the predicted rating noise levels from the replacement fixed plant equipment are significantly below the existing daytime and night time background noise levels at the closest existing residential properties, and as such comply with the requirements of RBC. Noise from Aldi plant at the closest future residential development to the south, is shown to be mitigated insofar that that future internal noise levels would meet the requirements of BS 8233:2014.

It is concluded that noise from the replacement plant is indicative of low impact at the closest existing and future residential properties. The development is therefore considered acceptable in relation to Policies EN16 and EN17 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

e) Transport matters

The works do not change or impact the current parking arrangements. There is no reduction in the number of parking spaces in the retail car park. All works are within the curtilage of the site. There are no Transport objections to this application.

Conclusion

Due to the location of the new external plant equipment/enclosure, along with the noise assessment and additional technical notes which have been deemed compliant with local criterion by colleagues in Environmental Protection, it is considered that the proposals are considered acceptable, and not so significantly different to that of the previous arrangement to warrant refusal.

RECOMMENDATION - GRANT

Conditions:

Approved Plans

Noise