

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey

App Ref: 230881/FUL

Address: 175 Friar Street, Reading, RG1 1JL

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

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

Date received (valid from): 30 July 2023

Extended Target Decision date: 7 November 2023

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a four-storey building located at the eastern end of Friar Street at the junction with Market Place and The Forbury, opposite the Grade I Listed St Laurence Church. Works have commenced following 220577/EPA granted to change the use of the upper floors and rear part of the ground floor from Class E Commercial to C3 residential use to comprise 6 flats. The building formerly comprised a ground floor retail unit with offices above.

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 173-174 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 but is a building of townscape merit located within the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area.

Site visit date: 20/09/2023

Site visit photos:

Front elevation



Rear elevation and surroundings



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal is for works to the rear elevation only, to improve its appearance of the rear following new and revised painted timber 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.

The position of the existing timber sash windows in the 1077-052 South elevation are proposed to be removed and replaced with new timber sash windows as shown on plan 1077-053 175 Friar Street.

Plans considered

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

Jw1077-100 Location Plan

~~Jw1077-053 Rev A Proposed elevations 175 Friar Street, Render thin coat colour milk, Timber sash window RAL 7031. New replacement metal safety rail~~

~~JW1077-052 Rev A Existing rear/south 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 173-174 Friar Street – aluminium windows

JW1077-053 Rev A Existing rear/south elevations - proposed elevation with window detail
Render thin coat colour milk, Timber sash window RAL 7031. New replacement metal safety rail

Received on 30 July 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

4. CONSULTATIONS

A site notice was displayed on 4 September for a 21 day consultation period. An advert was placed in a newspaper on 14 August 2023.

No letters of representation have been received.

RBC Conservation Officer – No objections. The proposal would have a neutral impact on the setting of nearby listed buildings and negligible impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area and the building of townscape merit. It is advised that the proposed silicone render is expected to be compatible with the existing mortar and materials of the building.
CAAC – No comments were received at the time of writing the officer report.

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:

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

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

EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

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

Planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. All proposals will be expected to protect and where appropriate enhance the character and appearance of the area in which they are located.

Heritage and Conservation Area

Exterior architectural features and elements to the front of the building such as decorative bands, swan neck pediment and iron window guard, which emphasises the middle window on the first floor, ensure that the building will continue to contribute positively to the historic environment of Reading. 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.

The proposed works will only be at the rear of 175 Friar Street and will not be visible within the public realm. Following changes to the existing brickwork for the repositioning of the rear timber windows which are to be painted in grey RAL 7032, the proposed to change 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 change to mortar, however in this instance it is not considered to detract from the Conservation Area or dominate the settings of listed buildings with red brick bonds in the vicinity at the rear of the building at Market Place Square.

It is important that the replacement sash windows match the style of the existing window design to ensure that the proposal is in accordance with policy EN1. The grey coloured fenestration and new silicone render would differentiate from the existing features, particularly the loss of texture created by the brick bonding and finish, however on the grounds that the rear elevation is the least significant and poor in condition, the proposal is considered to have a limited/negligible impact on the BTM and the character and appearance of the conservation

area. It is advised that the proposed silicone render is expected to be compatible with the existing mortar and materials of the building.

The Local Authority has therefore discharged their duties under the relevant section of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Amenity

The proposed changes do not result in an increase in the number of windows proposed. 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 may be required in relation to the proposed works.

Conclusion

The development will result in a material change to the appearance of the rear of 175 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 and will result in a more symmetrical fenestration design. 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