

4 Broad Street, Reading, RG1 2BH

Azzuri Group

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BIDWELLS

PLANNING SUPPORT STATEMENT
PROPOSED INSTALLATION OF HVAC
CONDENSING UNITS TO SERVICE YARD AT
REAR OF PROPERTY

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Support Statement has been prepared to accompany an application for planning permission for the installation of HVAC condensing units to the service yard at the rear of the property at 4 Broad Street, Reading, RG1 2BH. The service yard is accessed via Butter Market.
- 1.2 The application proposals are very modest in nature and simply involve the installation of HVAC condensing units on the rear wall of the application premises, facing into the service yard at the rear of the property. Two units are proposed, comprising two new heat pump condensing units and their associated intake weather louvres to either side. The proposed plant would be located immediately above the rear entrance doors on the rear elevation of the property and would be adjacent to the two existing condensing units and two associated ventilation louvres, which serve the neighbouring property. The application proposals are detailed within the accompanying application drawings and details.
- 1.3 The application site lies within the designated Market Place and London Street Conservation Area. In addition, the adjoining properties at Nos. 2, 3 and 3A Broad Street are grade II listed buildings. Consequently, a Heritage Statement also accompanies the application documentation.
- 1.4 This Statement is set out in three sections and comprises:
 - 1.0 Introduction
 - 2.0 Site Description & Surrounding Area
 - 3.0 Assessment of Relevant Planning Policy and Material Considerations

2.0 Site Description & Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The application site comprises an existing and established commercial premises at 4 Broad Street, Reading, RG1 2BH. It forms part of a larger building which fronts the pedestrianised Broad Street, close to its junction with Butter Market and King Street.
- 2.2 To the rear of the application premises is a service yard, which is accessed via the Butter Market. The service yard is enclosed on all sides by the surrounding buildings, such that it is not visible from the public realm, save for the access road itself within Butter Market.
- 2.3 The application site lies within the designated Market Place and London Street Conservation Area. In addition, the adjoining properties at Nos. 2, 3 and 3A Broad Street are grade II listed buildings.

3.0 Assessment of Planning Considerations

- 3.1 This Planning Support Statement has been prepared to accompany an application for planning permission for the installation of HVAC condensing units to the service yard at the rear of the property at 4 Broad Street, Reading, RG1 2BH. The service yard is accessed via Butter Market.
- 3.2 The application proposals are very modest in nature and simply involve the installation of HVAC condensing units on the rear wall of the application premises, facing into the service yard at the rear of the property. Two units are proposed, comprising two new heat pump condensing units and their associated intake weather louvres to either side. The proposed plant would be located immediately above the rear entrance doors on the rear elevation of the property and would be adjacent to the two existing condensing units and two associated ventilation louvres, which serve the neighbouring property. The application proposals are detailed within the accompanying application drawings and details.

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

- 3.3 The 2021 Framework reiterates the presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11) which requires development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan to be approved without delay. Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless in conflict with the 2021 Framework. The 2021 Framework also requires LPAs to approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way and to work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible (all paragraph 38).
- 3.4 The 2021 Framework requires planning policies and decisions to help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development (paragraph 81).
- 3.5 The 2021 Framework states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development (paragraph 126). Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area; are visually attractive; are sympathetic to local character and history, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change; create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places; optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development and support local facilities and transport networks; and create safe, inclusive and accessible places that do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience (all paragraph 130).
- 3.6 The 2021 Framework requires that heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (paragraph 189). Heritage assets should be put to viable uses consistent with their conservation and development should make a positive contribution to local character and

distinctiveness (paragraph 190). Development proposals should avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal (paragraph 195). In determining applications, LPAs should take account of: the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (paragraph 197). When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance (paragraph 199). Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification (paragraph 200). Where a development would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use (paragraph 202).

Reading Borough Local Plan

- 3.7 Policy CC1 of the Local Plan reiterates the Framework's presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 3.8 Policy CC3 of the Local Plan concerns the adaptation to climate change and requires all developments to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. This policy specifically supports the maximisation of the resilience of existing buildings to climate change, including through heating and ventilation measures.
- 3.9 Policy CC8 of the Local Plan seeks to safeguard the amenity of residential properties neighbouring development proposals, including through noise and disturbance.
- 3.10 Policy EN1 of the Local Plan concerns the protection and enhancement of the historic environment, including conservation areas and the setting of listed buildings. All proposals are expected to protect and, where possible, enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, along with the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance.
- 3.11 Policy EN3 of the Local Plan addresses the enhancement of conservation areas. The special interest, character and architecture of conservation areas will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals within conservation areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 3.12 Policy EN4 of the Local Plan is concerned with locally important heritage assets. Proposals affecting these are required to demonstrate that the architectural, archaeological or historical significance of the building is conserved.

- 3.13 Policy EN6 of the Local Plan addresses new development in a historic context. This states that in areas characterised by heritage assets, the historic environment will inform and shape new development.
- 3.14 Policy EN17 of the Local Plan concerns noise generating equipment and requires appropriate noise limitations below the existing background noise levels.
- 3.15 Policy CR2 of the Local Plan addresses design in central Reading and lists criteria that should be met. The focus of this policy is upon development of a significantly greater scale than the proposed plant in this application. Consequently, this policy is not considered to be reasonably relevant to the application proposals.

Material Considerations

- 3.16 The application proposals are very modest in nature and simply comprise the proposed installation of HVAC condensing units on the rear wall of the application premises, facing into the service yard at the rear of the property. Two units are proposed, comprising two new heat pump condensing units and their associated intake weather louvres to either side. The proposed plant would be located immediately above the rear entrance doors on the rear elevation of the property and would be adjacent to the two existing condensing units and two associated ventilation louvres, which serve the neighbouring property.
- 3.17 The external appearance of the property will essentially remain as it currently is, albeit with some modest additional plant located next to existing, similar plant. Furthermore, the proposed plant is entirely enclosed, generally by large scale, modern buildings, within the service yard area, such that it would not be visible within the public realm. The location of the application proposals is also such that the settings of the adjacent listed buildings would be unaffected and there would be no direct inter-visibility between these designated heritage assets and the proposed plant.
- 3.18 The application proposals therefore do not result in any significant nor detrimental external visual impacts upon the host building, the settings of neighbouring listed buildings, the character and appearance of the designated conservation area, nor the wider street scene. It is therefore considered that the character and appearance of the designated conservation area and the settings of the neighbouring listed buildings would be preserved by the application proposals. Within the context of the application proposals, it is not considered that they would result in material harm to these designated heritage assets.
- 3.19 Within the context of the proposals, the application proposals are considered to be justified, appropriate, modest and sympathetic to the existing external visual character of the application premises. The application proposals have been kept to the minimum required to service the application premises, have been appropriately located for their required purpose and have no direct, inappropriate, implications for their historical context.
- 3.20 The heritage and design implications of the application proposals are considered to be modest and appropriate. In the case of the application proposals, it is considered that less than substantial

harm would be caused to the character, appearance and setting of the designated heritage assets; whilst the local street scene would be unaffected by the proposed plant, given the visual context of its location. The heritage implications of the application proposals are considered to be justified, modest and appropriate and are considered to preserve the character and appearance of the designed conservation area and the settings of the neighbouring listed buildings. Taking all of the above into account, it is therefore considered that there are no reasonable grounds, in terms of heritage and visual/design impacts, to withhold the granting of planning permission in this case.

- 3.21 For the reasons rehearsed above, and within the accompanying Heritage Statement, it is considered that any proportionate and reasonable assessment of the application proposals, against this adopted policy context, would conclude that there was no material conflict caused, given the genuine and justified requirement for, and the nature and extent of, the application proposals. The application proposals are therefore considered to comply with the reasonable requirements of the Framework and Policies EN1, EN3, EN4 and EN6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.
- 3.22 It is considered that the applicant has genuine and reasonable requirements to undertake these modest plant proposals, in order to properly service these premises.
- 3.23 In terms of potential amenity considerations, the proposed plant is modest in scale and appropriate in noise output. It is also located adjacent to existing plant, which will directly impact upon the ambient noise environment immediately surrounding the proposed plant. Furthermore, the proposed plant is located within a service yard area which is effectively screened from the public realm by existing buildings, including large scale modern structures. Given all of the above, it cannot be reasonably concluded that there would be any material conflict with the requirements of Policies CC8 and EN17 of the Local Plan.
- 3.24 It is considered that the application proposals would be specifically supported by Policy CC3 of the Local Plan, which concerns the adaptation to climate change and requires all developments to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change. This policy specifically supports the maximisation of resilience of existing buildings to climate change, including through heating and ventilation measures. The application proposals are to provide heat pumps for the application premises, and this would specifically assist in helping the premises adapt to climate change.
- 3.25 The application proposals therefore accord with the relevant and reasonable requirements of the national and local planning policy context for this site. In accordance with the Framework's presumption in favour of sustainable development, reiterated by Policy CC1 of the Local Plan, the application proposals should be approved without delay.