

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Thames

App Ref: 230842/FUL

Address: Thames Quarter, 2 Napier Road, Reading, RG1 8FS

Proposals: External wall mounted air conditioning condensers and air intake and extract louvres

Case Officer: Mrs Alison Amoah

Date received (valid from): 16 June 2023 Target Decision date: 8 December 2023 (ext)

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The commercial unit forms part of the ground floor of the 23 storey residential building of Thames Quarter on the corner of Vastern Road and Kings Meadow Road. The commercial unit faces Vastern Road. The application area faces the railway line (south elevation).

The overall building was approved under ref: 190809 and the commercial unit under ref: 192028. This latter permission included a number of conditions which are relevant to the consideration of the application proposal (see in the Relevant Planning History section below).

The agent confirmed in writing that the commercial premises permission has been implemented by the creation of the identified space by glazed screening separating it from the main reception area, and the provision of the external entrance and service doors. Refuse collection requirements, as required under condition 5 of 192028 have been satisfied in that this would be the facilities within the host building.



Google Streetview images

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal is for necessary equipment to be sited on the outside of the building to support air handling and conditioning equipment within the unit. The equipment on the outside would be wall mounted air conditioning condensers and air intake and extract louvres.

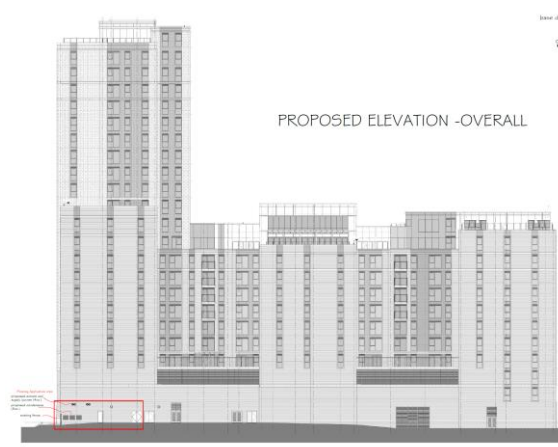
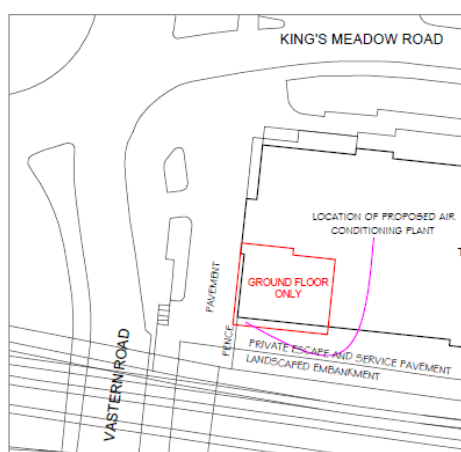
There would be three units installed externally with the nearest habitable apartment window 9.8 metres above the a/c units.

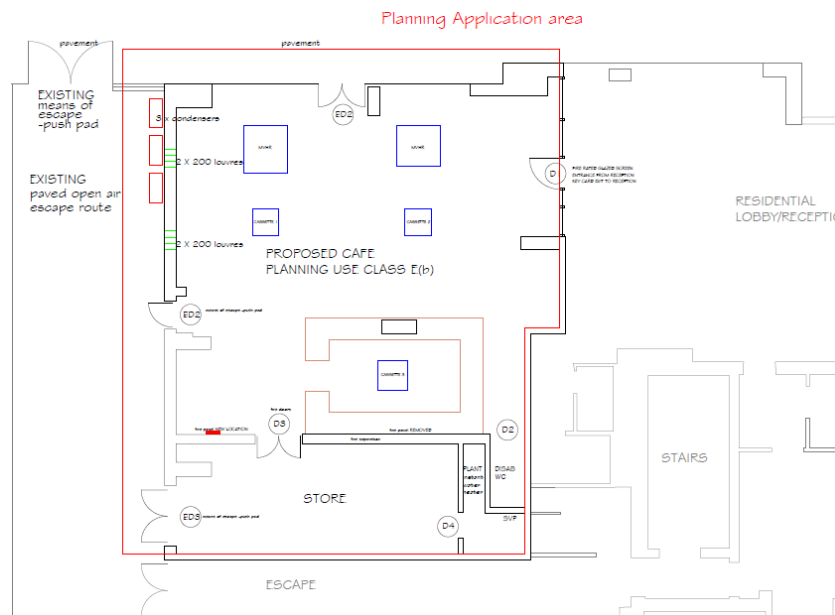
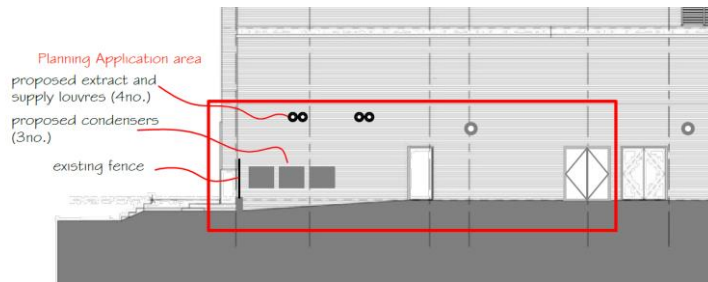
The equipment would be sited on the side wall with condensers screened with an existing boundary fence. The proposed condensers are Midea X3 Outdoor units - MOD30U-36HFN8-Q(GA)

No kitchen fume extracts would be required.

Plans considered

- Drawing no: 23-2132/000, dated 15/6/23 - Location and Block Plan, received 16th June 2023
- Drawing no: 23-2132/100, dated 15/6/23 - Existing Plan, received 16th June 2023
- Drawing no: 23-2132/111, dated 15/6/23 - Existing Local Elevation, received 16th June 2023
- Drawing no: 23-2132/112, dated 15/6/23 - Existing Overall Elevation, received 16th June 2023
- Drawing no: 23-2132/120, dated 16/6/23 - Proposed Local Elevation, received 16th June 2023
- Drawing no: 23-2132/122, dated 16/6/23 - Proposed Overall Elevation, received 16th June 2023
- Drawing no: 23-2132/120, dated 15/6/23 - Proposed Plan, received 16th June 2023
- Proposed Internal Plan [no drawing number], received 16th June 2023
- Thames Quarter Coffee Shop - Reading Plan View Ground Floor [no drawing number], received 16th June 2023
- Midea Technical Specification Sheet, received 16th June 2023
- Design and Planning Statement, document ref: 23-2132 15jun23, prepared by Owens Galliver Architects, received 16th June 2023





3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

162166/FUL - Erection of a part 12 storey, part 23 storey building comprising 315 apartments in a mix of studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom and 3-bedroom units; residents' lounges, tech-hub, dining room, and cinema room, various rooftop outdoor amenity spaces, concierge/reception with coffee meeting area, residents' storage facilities, postroom, ancillary back-of-house facilities, 315 secure cycle parking spaces, 49 car parking spaces, landscaping, and associated works. Demolition of existing multi-storey car park - Approved 23/11/2017

190809/FUL - Erection of a part 13-storey, part 23 storey building comprising 335 apartments in a mix of studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom and three- bedroom units, residents' lounges, tech-hub, dining room, and cinema room, various rooftop outdoor amenity spaces, concierge/reception with coffee meeting area, gym, residents' storage facilities, post room, ancillary back-of-house facilities, 335 secure cycle parking spaces, car parking spaces, landscaping, and associated works (revision to planning permission 162166 dated 23/11/2017)(Part Retrospective) - approved 10/3/2020

192028/FUL - Change of use of part of ground floor reception to a flexible commercial unit for uses falling within Use Class A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, D1 and D2 - Approved 20/3/20. This permission included two relevant conditions related to kitchen extraction and ventilation with regard to odour (4) and noise (9) as below:

4. No kitchen extraction or ventilation system shall be installed until an odour assessment has been carried out and a detailed odour management plan to include scaled plans, odour

control specifications and a maintenance plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reference shall be made to the DEFRA guidance on the Control of Odour and Noise from Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Systems (Jan 2005) when assessing potential odours and selecting appropriate odour control methods. Thereafter, the development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved scheme unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and to safeguard the amenity of adjoining properties and to protect the general environment in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

9. No mechanical plant shall be installed until a noise assessment of the proposed mechanical plant has been submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The assessment shall be carried out for in accordance with BS4142:2014 methodology. The predicted rating level, L_Ar,Tr (specific sound level plus any adjustment for the characteristic features of the sound) as measured at a point 1 metre external to the nearest noise-sensitive façade (habitable window of a dwelling) shall not exceed the pre-existing background sound level, L_A90,T when all plant/equipment (or any part of it) is in operation. The plant shall thereafter only be installed in accordance with the assessment and shall thereafter be maintained so that it operates to the same standard.

REASON: To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises and the area generally, in accordance with Policy CC8 and EN17 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

4. CONSULTATIONS

A site notice was displayed on 8th August 2023.

Environmental Protection and Nuisance (EP&N):

- Noise arising from development
- Odour from extraction system

Noise generating development

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 not been submitted with the application and therefore I cannot determine the likely noise impact of the proposal and whether the proposals are acceptable. I therefore recommend refusal unless a noise assessment can be submitted and considered by us before the application is determined.

Alternatively a condition requiring the submission and approval of a noise assessment could be attached to a consent, however it is possible that the criteria would be met with the plant specifications proposed in this application and a new application may need to be made at a later date for alternative plant / location.

If the applicant feels a noise assessment may not be needed then they should as a minimum submit information on the noise levels of the plant at known distance e.g. 1 m or 3 m and provide the distance from the nearest resident, so I can confirm this. The residents within the building itself are likely to be considered sensitive receptors as they are pre-existing.

Odour from extraction system

Can the applicant confirm whether the extract louvres will be extracting cooking fumes from the café or just ambient air? If the former then an odour risk assessment will be required.

Planning Officer Note: The agent confirmed via email on 21/9/23 that there would be no cooking extraction equipment being installed and that there would be just coffee and reheating in a merry chef oven, and that the air conditioning would be for air change and heating only. The EP&N officer confirmed that no odour assessment would be required, but that a noise assessment would still be required.

Following the submission of a noise assessment on 20th November 2023 EP&N Officer confirmed that the noise assessment had been carried out in accordance with BS4142 and the methodology applied correctly. As the noise assessment concluded that the specific noise level of the proposed plan would not exceed -10dB above background noise and the rating level would not exceed the background noise, therefore, it would be unlikely that there would be an adverse impact on the local noise climate the Officer had no objections subject to the following condition:

Noise Levels of Plant/Equipment Restricted

The specific sound level of the plant/equipment hereby approved, (LAeq,TR) (with reference to BS:4142) as measured at a point 1 metre external to the nearest noise-sensitive facade shall be at least 10dB below the pre-existing background sound level, LA90,T when all plant/equipment (or any part of it) is in operation. The rating level, LAr,Tr (specific sound level plus any adjustment for the characteristic features of the sound) as measured at a point 1 metre external to the nearest noise-sensitive façade (habitable window of a dwelling) shall not exceed the pre-existing background sound level, LA90,T when all plant/equipment (or any part of it) is in operation.

REASON: To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises and the area generally, in accordance with Policy CC8 and EN17 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

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)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
EN16: POLLUTION AND WATER RESOURCES
EN17: NOISE GENERATING EQUIPMENT
CR2: DESIGN IN CENTRAL READING

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APPRAISAL

Design

Policy CC7 states that *“All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.”*

As the site is within central Reading Policy CR2 is also relevant and part d states *“... materials used in the central area should be high quality and respect the form and quality of the detailing and materials in areas local to the development site...”*

The proposal includes for three wall mounted air conditioning condenser units and air intake and extract louvres on the side elevation facing the embankment of the railway line and adjacent to a private escape and service pavement area as part of the overall building. There is an existing boundary fence to the edge of public highway, which provides some additional screening. The units would be grey and white/cream powder coated metal.

The proposed units and louvres would be very modest in scale and sited to the side of the unit. It is considered that their scale and appearance would be wholly acceptable within the context of the large scale of the overall building and the surrounding appearance of the railway bridge. The proposal is, therefore, considered to accord with relevant policies CC7, and CR2.

Amenity

The relevant policies are CC8, which requires that development does not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties including through noise and disturbance and odour.

Policy EN16 states that *“Development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment and sensitive receptors through land, noise or light pollution.”*

Policy EN17 specifically addresses noise generating equipment and the requirement for the plant noise level to be at least 10dBA below the existing background level as measured at the nearest noise sensitive receptor, which in this case would be the residential units above.

The submitted noise assessment has been reviewed by the EP&N Officer and they have confirmed that it is acceptable subject to condition. The noise levels that would be generated would, therefore, be within acceptable limits and would not have a detrimental impact on the nearest residential units, ca 9.8m above the units.

Other

This approval addresses the specific condenser unit requirements for the proposed occupier of the commercial unit. However, as the permission of the commercial unit under 192028 allows for a flexible and wide range of uses, should any differing mechanical plant and/kitchen extraction/ ventilation be required then separate planning approvals would be required and that the conditions as part of that original permission would still apply. An informative is included to this effect.

Conclusion

The proposed scheme is considered acceptable when assessed against relevant policies and is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve

Subject to the following conditions:

- 3yr standard time limit
- Approved plans
- Materials as specified
- Noise Levels of plant

Informatives:

- Terms and conditions
- Other mechanical plant would require separate planning approval
- Positive and proactive