

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Application No: 210935/FUL

Address: Mayer House, Chatham Place, Reading

Proposal: Removal of combustible material on the façade, designing and installing new materials that are fit for purpose and make watertight the existing structure

Agreed Target Date: 21/09/21

Case Officer: Connie Davis

1. Site Description and Surrounding Area

The Site is a residential block comprising of 6 floors. It lies centrally between Chatham Street (A329) and Oxford Road to the northeast of Reading Town Centre. The Site fronts Chatham Place, which forms a pedestrian-only forecourt between Mayer House to the south and Chatham Place to the north. Pedestrian and vehicle access is provided via Eaton Place to the east and Alfred Street to the west of the Site.

The surrounding area is a mix of residential and commercial. It is not Listed, nor in a Conservation Area.

2. Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the replacement of external cladding on the building. Render is also proposed to be replaced with similar colours to the existing.

Materials proposed are as follows:

- Proposed Hardie Plank cladding (Chestnut colour)
- SPS Envirowall Render (WH89 White and BL37 - Blue)

Associated works are proposed to make the building watertight.

3. Internal Consultations

Transport - No objections, subject to condition securing Construction Method Statement details

4. External Consultees

The residents of Mayer House were advised of the application via letter on 20/07/21. In addition, a site notice was displayed between 26th July 2021 - 16th August 2021

Two comments have been received relating to the following matters:

- The chosen colour for the cladding is too dark and the regional cladding was lighter in colour. The colour is outdated and would not be in keeping with surrounding buildings

Officer comment: *The above will be discussed in the report*

- Workers are causing disturbance (noise and looking into flats)

Officer comment: This is not a matter the LPA can comment on and it is recommended that the objector contacts the managing agent for the company to discuss concerns over those who are carrying out work.

5. Plans/Documents Considered

Planning Statement V2 prepared by Newsteer dated September 2021
Construction Management Statement V2 prepared by Higgins Partnerships

Received 13th September 2021

Emails from agent dated 27th August 2021 and 6th September 2021 to the case officer clarifying colours of proposed render

Received 27th August 2021 and 6th September 2021

FAT-377 SK-C08 Rev 00 - Sketch 08
MAY-FAT-ZZ-SKE-015_P3_Preliminary_Detail 015 Cladding - Sketch 15
MAY-FAT-ZZ-SKE-036_P5_Preliminary_Detail 036 Cladding - Sketch 36

Received 23rd August 2021

Notice Served on Reading Borough Council dated 14th July 2021
Notice served on residents of Mayer House dated 13th July 2021
List of tenants at Mayer House
SPS Envirowall Details
Supporting Letter prepared by Newsteer dated 13th July 2021
HardiePlank Fibre Cement Cladding Details
MAY-FAT-ZZ-SKE-504_P3_Preliminary_Detail 504 Cladding - Sketch 504
Application Form

Received 14th July 2021

FAT-377 PE-004 Rev 00 - North Elevation Key Materiality (existing)
FAT-377 PE-005 Rev 00 - South Elevation Key Materiality (existing)
FAT-377 PE-006 rev 00 - East and West Elevations Key Materiality (existing)

FAT-377 PE-001 rev 04 - North Elevation Key Materiality
FAT-377 PE-002 rev 04 - South Elevation Key Materiality
FAT-377 PE-003 Rev 04 - East and West Elevations Key Materiality

Received 30th June 2021

Materials Summary EK 03.06.2021
Photographs of proposed cladding
CIL Form

Received 8th June 2021

6. Relevant Planning History

051364 - Detailed planning application for phase 1 comprising a mixed use development of 50,289 sq.m gea including 307 residential units (211 Private and 96 affordable), 591 space multi-storey car park, ancillary parking, a community use, flexible mixed uses at ground floor level comprising A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 and D2 uses, highways and public realm works. - Application Permitted

7. 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.

8. Relevant Planning Policy and 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') 2021 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).

9. Relevant Policies

The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National

National Planning Policy Framework 2021;

National Planning Policy Guidance 2014 onwards;

Reading Borough Council Local Plan

CC1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction

CC7 Design and the Public Realm

CC8 Safeguarding Amenity

TR3 Traffic, Access and Highway-Related Matters

Supplementary Planning Documents

Sustainable Design and Construction (2011)

10. Appraisal

The main issues are considered to be:

- Principle of development
- Design and impact on surrounding area
- Impact on neighbouring amenity
- Transport matters

Principle of development

There is no strong resistance to the principle of replacing the existing cladding, subject to being considered an appropriate design. It is acknowledged that the works are needed due to the existing materials not being safe from a fire safety perspective. As such, the principle is deemed acceptable.

Design and impact on surrounding area

The proposed materials would be of the same general appearance as the existing. White and blue render are proposed, along with Chestnut Cladding. It is noted a representation was received stating the proposed cladding would be too dark and not in keeping with the surrounding area. Over time, the originally lighter cladding on the building has weathered and so has become darker. As such, replacing this with a dark cladding would not result in substantial change in appearance compared to what the site looks like today (albeit that is not how it appeared when approved). Given the varied street scene, it is not considered there is a strong sense of design or colour palette in the vicinity and therefore would not be considered at odds with, or cause detrimental impact to the appearance of the surrounding area.

Due to the similar nature of the materials in terms of appearance, it is considered that the proposed development would not materially affect the design and appearance of the building. As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Amenity

The proposed replacement cladding/ render is not considered to cause harm to the residents of the blocks in terms of loss of light and privacy. The materials will be located around windows.

One aspect that has to be considered is that development would not cause detrimental effect on the living environment of residential properties in terms of safety. In this type of application, the proposal's acceptability from a fire safety perspective is critical following the Grenfell Tower disaster. This planning application has not assessed the suitability of the proposal from a fire safety perspective as this is beyond the remit of the planning process. Separate Building Control Approval should be sought to confirm the proposal's acceptability in this regard before installing the cladding. This will be advised to the applicant by way of an informative.

From a planning perspective, the proposal is considered acceptable in relation to Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Other Matters

Transport

Following the submission of a Construction Method Statement, the proposal has been deemed acceptable from a Transport perspective. A condition will be attached ensuring the CMS is complied with throughout the works being completed to ensure the proposal would not cause harmful disruption to the highway in line with Policy TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

11. Conclusion

Having regard to the material considerations and all matters raised, the Local Planning Authority considers that the balance of considerations therefore weigh in favour of granting permission subject to conditions.

Recommendation: GRANT

12. Conditions:

1. TL - Standard time limit
2. AP - Standard approved plans
3. M2 - Materials as proposed
4. CMS as specified

Informatives:

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