

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

App Ref: 220525/FUL

Address: 23 Dukesbridge House,

Proposal: Installation of new railings to site boundary (part retrospective)

Case Officer: Connie Davis

Extended Target Decision date: 02/08/22

INTRODUCTION

The application site relates to the southern side of Dukesbridge House that runs parallel to the River Kennet. The surrounding area comprises commercial and residential premises. Dukesbridge House has permission for the change of use of the building to 77 residential units.



The site is not Listed but is within the Market Place/ London Street Conservation Area.

PROPOSAL

This application proposes the enclosure of the external paved area between the southern elevation. Dukesbridge House which looks onto the River Kennet and the existing pedestrian ramp which runs alongside the River Kennet with a line of new painted galvanised steel fencing with a lockable pedestrian gate. The fence would be black, with pointed caps on the railings. The need for the proposed fence has been driven by the change of use of the building, and the need to provide additional security at ground level for the new inhabitants of what is now a residential building, and particularly for the new flats at ground level.

The fence has partly been erected.



Photograph of the partly erected fence

Submitted Plans and Documentation:

5016 PA 27 A - Proposed Plan and Elevation

Received 22nd July 2022

5016 PA 24 - Site Location Plan

5016 PA 25 - Block Plan

5016 PA 26 - Existing Plan and Elevation

Design and Access Statement

Application Form

CIL Form

Received 7th April 2022

PLANNING HISTORY

201081 - Upward extensions of between two and three storeys, part five/part six storey side extension to east elevation adjacent to Highbridge Wharf and part three/part four/part five storey extension to west elevation corner with Duke Street (following demolition of existing corner block) to provide new residential units (mixture of studios, 1 bed, 2 bed and 3 bed units), retail units and gym. Realignment of ramped access between the Kennet riverside and Duke Street frontage, relocation of substation to east elevation, proposed hard and soft landscaping works and provision of bin and cycles stores - Application under consideration

201018 - Alterations to Dukesbridge House, including - Infill extension at lower ground level on south elevation, replacement of grills with windows at lower ground floor level on east and south elevations, new windows/doors at ground to second floor on north and west elevations, removal of louvred grills on north elevation to create private amenity spaces, new windows at lower ground to third floor on east elevation, new external cycle parking, bin storage and external lighting within courtyard area and various other associated alterations to facilitate the implementation of prior approval 201043 - Application Permitted

190602 - Change of use of part lower ground floor, part ground floor, first,

second, third and loft floors from Class B1(a)(offices) to Class C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 77 dwellings (26 x studio, 49 x 1 bed, 2 x 2 bed). Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 - Permitted Development

220265/FUL - Retrospective installation of a new metal fence with pedestrian gate to enclose an outdoor area - pending decision

CONSULTATIONS

Internal

Transport - No objections

Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) - No comments received

Canal and River Trust - No comments to make

Environment Agency - No objection, informatives recommended

Berkshire Archaeology - No comments received

Public

The following addresses were consulted by letter on 13/04/22:

Flats at Dukesbridge House

A site notice was also displayed.

No representations have been received.

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. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states at Paragraph 11 "Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development".

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.

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019):

CC1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
CC2	Sustainable design and construction
CC3	Adaptation to climate change
CC6	Accessibility and the intensity of development
CC7	Design and the public realm
CC8	Safeguarding amenity
EN3	Enhancement of Conservation Area
EN11	Waterspaces
EN16	Pollution and Water Resources
EN18	Flooding and Drainage
TR3	Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters

Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:

Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are:

- Principle of development
- Design and impact on the surrounding conservation area and waterscape
- Residential amenity and quality
- Transport matters

Principle of development

The proposed fence is to improve security for the residential dwellings at Dukesbridge House. This need is accepted, and the principle of installing a fence within this town centre location is accepted subject to other material considerations as outlined below.

Design and impact on the surrounding area

Policy CC7 seeks to protect and enhance the character and appearance of the area, and require a *“high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.”*

Policy CC7 outlines a number of considerations to ensure development would protect and enhance the character and appearance of the area including:

- *Layout: urban structure and urban grain;*
- *Landscape;*
- *Density and mix;*
- *Scale: height and massing; and*
- *Architectural detail and materials*
- *Character - a place with its own identity and sense of place*
- *Continuity and enclosure*
- *Quality of the public realm and provision of green infrastructure and landscaping*
- *Ease of movement and permeability*

- *Legibility - clear image and easy to understand*
- *Adaptability - capable of adaptation over time*
- *Diversity - meets a wide range of needs.*
- *Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;*
- *Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;*
- *Address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them, including providing suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily;*
- *Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping.*

Policy EN3 states that *“Development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Positive consideration will be given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas.”*

In addition, the NPPF (para. 64) states: *“Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions”.*

The proposed fence would measure a maximum height of 2m. It would be slightly staggered due to the change in ground level. However, this stagger is not considered so varied that it would adversely affect the surrounding conservation area and waterscape. The fence would create some visual interest to an area that is currently open and lacks focus. The design of the fence is considered of suitable quality, with detailed caps to the railings which are found elsewhere within the Conservation Area and Dukesbridge House complex.

The proposed development is also within 8 metres of a main river, the River Kennet. Despite policy EN11 stating that development should be set back 10m from the River Kennet, it is considered that this proposal, a fence (which is not solid boarded) could be erected closer to the river than advised without adverse impact to the appearance of the bank or footpath.

The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in relation to Policies CC7, EN3 and EN11 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Impact on existing occupiers

Policy CC8 seeks to protect the amenity of surrounding occupiers in terms of:

- Privacy and overlooking;
- Access to sunlight and daylight;
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;
- Harm to outlook;
- Noise and disturbance;
- Artificial lighting;
- Vibration;
- Dust and fumes;
- Smell;
- Crime and safety; or

- Wind, where the proposals involve new development of more than 8 storeys.

The proposal would not result in an adverse impact to ground floor windows at Dukesbridge House as a railed fence, instead of a close boarded fence is proposed, which means windows would still experience sufficient outlook and access to light. As mentioned earlier, the purpose of the fence is to improve security for residents which accords with Policy CC8 of the Local Plan.

Transport matters

The proposed fence would not adversely affect the footpath running alongside the river. Adequate space for pedestrians is still proposed and therefore the proposal is acceptable in relation to Policy TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Flooding

The proposed development is within 8 metres of a main river, the River Kennet. According to the Flood Map for Planning, the application site lies within Flood Zone 3, which is land defined by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) as having a high probability of flooding. However, the Environment Agency raise no objection as this proposal is a minor development. Informatives are recommended to the applicant regarding buffer zones, boundary treatment and obtaining an environmental permit

Equalities Impact

When determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the 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.

Recommendation: GRANT permission subject to the following conditions:

1. Approved Plans

Informatives:

1. Terms
2. Building Control
3. Complaints about construction
4. Encroachment
5. Buffer Zones
6. Boundary Treatment
7. Environmental Permit
8. Positive and Proactive