

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Redlands

App Ref: 210623/FUL

Address: Progress Theatre, The Mount, Reading, RG1 5HL

Proposals: Single storey extension

Case Officer: Mr David Brett

Applicant: Steph Dewar, Progress Theatre

Date received: 21/04/2021

Valid from: 22/04/2021

Target Decision date: 17/06/2021

1. INTRODUCTION

The Progress Theatre dates to the 1930's and is located within The Mount Conservation Area. The theatre is included in The Mount Conservation Area, not for its own intrinsic value, but "to reasonably round off the area".

The theatre building itself is a predominantly low, flat-roofed structure. Parking extends to the north and west of the building (to the rear). The site is accessed via The Mount, which is north of Christchurch Road. Trees subject to TPO's are located to the front of the site. Throughout the conservation area trees are a significant and important part of its character and setting. The surrounding area is otherwise considered predominantly residential in nature.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development seeks to improve the currently inadequate WC provision at the Progress Theatre through the construction of a single storey front/side (west/south elevation) extension serving as a WC.

Plans considered:

~~Planning Statement - 200062~~

- Location Plan - A01

~~Proposed Block Plan - A03~~

- Existing Layout - A04 Rev A

- Existing Roof Plan - A05 Rev A

- Existing Elevations - A06 Rev A

~~Proposed Layout - A07 Rev A~~

~~Proposed Roof Plan - A08 Rev A~~

~~Proposed Elevations - A09 Rev A~~

Received on 22/04/2021

- Proposed Layout - A07 Rev A

- Proposed Roof Plan - A08 Rev A

~~Proposed Elevations - A09 Rev A~~

Received on 28/04/2021

- Planning Statement - 200062 Issue 2

- Proposed Block Plan - A03 Rev A

Received on 20/05/2021

- Proposed Elevations - A09 Rev B

Received on 07/06/2021

- Existing & Proposed Landscaping Plan

Received on 15/06/2021

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

910636/CON - partial demolition of covered storage area - Application Permitted on 24/07/1991

910862/FUL - Partial demolition of covered storage area, extensions and elevational alterations - Application Permitted on 24/07/1991

950120/FUL - Single storey extension for enclosed access to stage - Application Permitted on 06/09/1995

980876/FUL - Erection of storage area - Application Permitted on 06/07/1998

051120/FUL - Replacement of access ladder with external staircase - Application Permitted on 19/01/2006

190294/FUL - Re-surfacing of car park - Application Permitted on 19/06/2019

191414/APC - Discharge of condition 4 (landscaping) of planning permission

190294/FUL - Condition discharged on 12/11/2019

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 *The following addresses were consulted by letter.*

24 The Mount, Reading, RG1 5HL - No response received.

38 The Mount, Reading, RG1 5HL - No response received.

40 The Mount, Reading, RG1 5HL - No response received.

83 The Mount, Reading, RG1 5HL - No response received.

Linden Mews, The Mount, Reading, RG1 5HL - No response received.

55 Christchurch Road, Reading, RG2 7AT - No response received.

Theatres Trust - Response received on 13/05/2021

- By extending the theatre to its southern boundary the theatre is able to rationalise the layout of its WCs and provide a small buffer between the WCs and the bar which should alleviate congestion. Provision of five unisex WCs meets the standards set out in the Technical Standards for Places of Entertainment. Furthermore, an accessible WC will also be provided within the same location. These will enhance the audience experience considerably.
- In conclusion we welcome this proposal and support the granting of planning permission.

Reading Borough Council, Natural Environment - Response received on 18/05/2021

- The conversion of gravel to grass (around the tree) is positive but, given the location of the site, it is reasonable to expect greater soft landscaping to be incorporated to improve the frontage. Our criteria for landscaping principles within a CA and AQMA are not met, especially in this case where the solely proposed tree planting was already required under the TPO hence does not represent a net gain in trees - this site overall has had a net loss over the last 5-10 years. Therefore, the frontage landscaping layout should be reconsidered to include planting other than just grass.
- Concrete paving slabs appear to be proposed south of the soft landscape area around the existing bike hoops, however, there are already slabs in place hence clarification is required. If the hard surfacing is to be replaced, it would seem to be an opportunity for a more attractive surface to be considered given the setting.
- This application provides submissions which are inconsistent with the current situation and fail to demonstrate appropriate landscaping principles for frontage landscaping in a CA and AQMA area, therefore it is not supported with regards to natural environment. We can reconsider our objection if the above are addressed.

Reading Borough Council, Natural Environment - Further response received on 15/06/2021

- Confirmation that a replacement tree was planted on the frontage has been provided and the front elevation photos have been updated to indicate this.

- A raised planting bed is proposed along the front elevation that, subject to a good selection of plants, will help improve the street scene, break up and soften the scene, which is positive and what we previously requested (section 5.5 of the Planning Statement).
- Clarification with regards to the retention of the existing concrete paving south of the newly planted tree has been given - the hard surfaced area must be retained to provide bin collection area (section 5.6 of the Planning Statement).
- Previously, the proposal removed the existing gravel around the tree and replaced with grass - the revised Block Plan does not indicate the surfacing around the tree hence clarification is required.
- As all of our previous comments have been addressed by the latest submission, there are no more objections in terms of trees or landscaping with regards to this application. However, in order that we secure planting details for the landscaping plan on the frontage, please add landscaping condition to your decision.

Reading Borough Council, Natural Environment - Further response received on 16/06/2021

- Reversing to the proposal to which my 15th June 2021 Memo is addressed is fine. As stated in the memo, we are fine with the proposal in principle but condition L1 is necessary to secure the details. As a side note we just requested clarification with regards to the surfacing around the tree - to which the applicant responded with a re-design.

Reading Borough Council, Transport - Response received on 10/06/2021

- There are no transport objections to this application and no conditions are required given the small scale of the development.

Reading Borough Council, Conservation & Urban Design - Response received on 15/06/2021

- The property is within The Mount Conservation Area and is opposite a group of Grade II, c.1870 terraces. I raise no objections to the proposed design and location of the new extensions which are single storey.
- The site is on the western edge of The Mount Conservation area, but the proposed works are considered to have little or neutral impact on the setting of the conservation area or Listed Buildings on the opposite side of the Street.
- The application is considered to comply with the policies and planning constraints. The scheme is appropriate and supported.

A site notice was displayed from Tuesday 4th May 2021, expiring on Tuesday 25th May 2021. A press notice was published from Thursday 6th May 2021, expiring on Thursday 27th May 2021. No responses have been received.

5. 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.

6. 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. The Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

The '*National Planning Policy framework*' ('NPPF') 2018 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).

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction

CC3 Adaption to Climate Change

CC5 Waste Minimisation and Storage

CC6 Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

CC7 Design and the Public Realm

CC8 Safeguarding Amenity

EN1 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

EN3 Enhancement of Conservation Areas

EN14 Trees, Hedges and Woodland

OU1 New and Existing Community Facilities

The Mount Conservation Area Appraisal

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 *New and Existing Community Facilities*

In accordance with policy OU1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, the proposed development is considered to improve the facilities at the theatre. The proposed development is simply for a single storey side extension to create a large unisex toilet space. In accordance with paragraph 4.7.3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, the proposed works are considered to improve the quality of the facility. The proposed development is not, however, considered to result in an over intensification of the existing site.

7.2 *Design and Access*

The proposed single storey side extension is considered subservient and to respect the character and appearance of the existing building in terms of size, scale and design. The materials selected have been specified to match the existing building. The proposed rear access door to the foyer is considered acceptable.

The only exception is that the wall facing the boundary fence will be in brickwork to minimise maintenance. As the wall facing the boundary fence does not front the street scene, this is not considered to harm the character and appearance of the existing building or surrounding area. A high-level window is also proposed to the side elevation, which serves to provide natural light to the unisex bathroom. The white uPVC material specified for this window is considered acceptable as it would be largely obscured from the street scene within The Mount Conservation Area.

Overall, the proposed development is considered minor in scale and is not considered harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area in accordance with policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The proposed development is considered to have very little impact on the street scene and public realm surrounding the proposal site.

7.3 *Safeguarding Amenity*

The proposed development is not considered to harm the living conditions of nearby residents in accordance with policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The proposed development is not considered to harm the living conditions of adjoining properties 55 Christchurch Road, Linden Mews, or any other residential property within the surrounding area. The proposed single storey side extension is considered minor in scale and to improve the facilities at the Progress Theatre.

7.4 *Conservation Area*

The proposal site is within The Mount Conservation Area and is opposite a number of Grade II Listed terraces. As stated within The Mount Conservation Area Appraisal, the Progress Theatre

was not included within the conservation area for its intrinsic value, rather to simply “round off the area”.

It is acknowledged, however, that any harmful design implemented at the Progress Theatre would likely have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area and nearby Listed Buildings. In this instance, the proposed works are not considered harmful to the character and appearance of the conservation area due to the scale and modest design of the development, as confirmed by the Conservation and Urban Design Officer.

Overall, the proposed development is considered minor in scale and will not harm the character and appearance of The Mount Conservation Area or nearby Listed Buildings. Therefore, the proposed development is considered in accordance with policies EN1 and EN3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

7.5 Natural Environment

As detailed in section 4 of this report, the plans were amended to include the recently planted tree following the felling of one TPO Ash tree (TPO 2/03) at the proposal site. An existing and proposed landscaping plan was submitted for this application, however, the plan proposed the removal of the existing cycle parking to create a disabled parking bay. The landscaping plan submitted is considered to raise wider Natural Environment and Transport implications. Therefore, it was recommended to the agent that approval be issued for this application, with a condition requiring the submission of a landscaping plan to be approved by the LPA.

The proposed development is considered in accordance with policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. There are no objections to the proposed development in principle, however, it is considered necessary to include a condition requiring details of hard and soft landscaping to be submitted and approved by the LPA. This is in the interest of ensuring that the landscaping of the development enhances the visual local environment and in accordance with policies CC7 and EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

8. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed and the proposed works are considered to be in accordance with the above relevant policies and planning permission can be granted.

9. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT

10. CONDITIONS

TL1: Time Limit (Standard)

The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than three years from the date of this planning permission.

REASON: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) in order to prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.

AP1: Approved Plans

The development hereby permitted shall ONLY be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

- Location Plan - A01

Received on 22/04/2021

- Proposed Layout - A07 Rev A
- Proposed Roof Plan - A08 Rev A

Received on 28/04/2021

- Proposed Block Plan - A03 Rev A
Received on 20/05/2021

- Proposed Elevations - A09 Rev B
Received on 07/06/2021

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out and adhered to in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

M3: Materials (As Specified)

The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of this development shall be as specified on the plans and application forms unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and ensuring the new development responds positively to the local context and character in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

L1: Landscaping Small Scale (To Be Approved)

Prior to first occupation/use of the extension hereby approved, a scheme of hard and soft landscaping shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme shall specify means of treatment for hard surfaced areas, means of enclosure including mammal gaps where appropriate, specify species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted (including replacement trees and tree pit specifications where appropriate, and must include a maintenance programme detailing all operations to be carried out in order to allow successful establishment of planting.

Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building(s) or in accordance with a timetable agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interest of ensuring that the landscaping of the development enhances the visual local environment and in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

11. INFORMATIVES

IF1: Positive and Proactive Working - approval

The Local Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant to resolve relevant matters to allow permission to be granted within the prescribed target timescale for the decision to be issued.

IF5: Terms

Your attention is drawn to the terms and conditions of this permission. Any development which is carried out but which differs materially from the approved plans and details, or does not comply with any condition(s) or planning obligation(s) attached to the permission may result in the Council taking action to remedy the breach of planning control. If you are in any doubt please contact the Council.

IF6: Building Control

Your attention is drawn to the possible requirement for submission of a Building Regulations application for the proposed development. Please contact Building Control on 0118 937 2449 for advice.

IF7: Complaints about construction

Complaints are commonly received about noise and dust caused by construction and demolition works, particularly working outside reasonable hours and smoke from bonfires associated with the burning of waste on site. The developer is reminded that construction and demolition associated with the approved development will be subject to environmental health law.

IF8: Encroachment

During the course of construction, the developer should take care to ensure that no part of this development (foundations, eaves, guttering, etc.) would encroach on, under or across the boundary line with the adjoining property, as the requisite Notice has not been served on the owner of that property. This permission does not confer any right of access onto land that is not under the developer's control. The developer should also be mindful of the obligations and requirements of the Party Wall Act (1996) details of which can be found at: www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/partywall