

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

SITE ADDRESS: Fountain House, 2 Queens Walk, Broad Street Mall, Reading

APPLICATION NUMBER: 211177/OPA

PROPOSAL: Change of use of basement, ground floor, 1st floor, podium, 2nd floor 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th floors from Class B1(a)(offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 48 Dwellings. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015

TARGET DATE: 13/09/21

INTRODUCTION

The application site is a 10 storey building which forms part of the Broad Street Mall on the corner of Oxford Road and Queens Walk. The building is known as the Reading Business Centre and comprises of offices and education facilities.



The application site

PROPOSAL

The proposal comprises of the change of use of building from Class E(g)(i) (formally B1(a) (office)) to C3 (dwellinghouses) to comprise of 48 residential units (1, 2 and 3 bed units).

The new dwellings will be concentrated on floors 5 - 8. The existing basement would be used for cycle parking, bin store and a plant room. There would be no change to the ground floor lobby. At first and podium levels, there is minimal change; only to the internal stairs and lift shaft. Floor 3 and 10 will remain in Educational use (D1) and is not subject to this application as it does not benefit from permitted development rights. Floor 9 is also not included. The Education Centre delivers midwifery and nursing programmes. Floor plans for these floors have not been provided as they are not subject to this application.

The works are sought under Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended).

DOCUMENTS/ INFORMATION SUBMITTED:

Drawing no:

Application Form
CIL Form

Letter reference DP4003/CPB/MAK dated 19th July 2021

Letter reference Fountain House dated 19th July 2021 from Avison Young

Flood Risk Assessment dated June 2021. Report Ref: 2206-FRA02

Phase 1 Preliminary Risk Assessment dated 14th July 2021. Report Ref: GSP-2021-2001-1

Transport Statement dated 19th July 2021 prepared by Connect Consultants

21383-0100 Rev P-00 - Site Location Plan

21383-0200 Rev P-00 - Existing Basement

21383-0300 Rev P-00 - Proposed Basement

21383-0201 Rev P-00 - Existing Ground Floor

21383-0301 Rev P-00 - Proposed Ground Floor

21383-0202 Rev P-00 - Existing First Floor

21383-0302 Rev P-00 - Proposed First Floor

21383-0203 Rev P-00 - Existing Podium Floor

21383-0303 Rev P-00 - Proposed Podium Floor

21383-0204 Rev P-00 - Existing Second Floor

21383-0304 Rev P-00 - Proposed Second Floor

21383-0205 Rev P-00 - Existing Fourth Floor

21383-0305 Rev P-00 - Proposed Fourth Floor

21383-0206 Rev P-00 - Existing Fifth to Eighth Floor

21383-0306 Rev P-00 - Proposed Fifth to Eighth Floor

Baseline Noise Assessment Revision 1 prepared by Hoare Lea - dated 02 July 2021

Received 19th July 2021

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Legal context

Class O allows development consisting of a change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage to Class C3 dwellinghouses (houses or flats) from a Class B1(a) office use.

As set out in Para 0.2 of Class O (as amended), development is permitted subject to the condition that before beginning the development, the development shall apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the local authority will be required as to:

- (a) transport and highways impacts of the development,
- (b) contamination risks on the site,
- (c) flooding risks on the site, and
- (d) impacts of noise from commercial premises on the intended occupiers of the development
- (e) the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses

and the provisions of paragraph W (prior approval) apply in relation to that application.

Furthermore, all dwellings created through the Prior Approval process are required to meet the national space standards.

In assessing these issues, officers must have regard to the NPPF as if the application were a planning application, and also have regard to the Local Development Framework (the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework 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)).

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

EN16 Pollution and Water Resources

EN18 Flooding

TR3 Traffic Access and Highways Related Matters

PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant to this application.

RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY (REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED)

A site notice was displayed between 6th August 2021 - 27th August 2021

No representations have been received.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Transport: No objections

Environmental Protection: No response received

Thames Water: No objections, informative recommended

APPRAISAL

Development is not permitted by Class O in the following instances (officer comments follow in **bold**):

O.1 Development is not permitted by Class O if—

(a) the building is on article 2(5) land; **COMPLIES**

(b) the building was not used for a use falling within Class B1(a) (offices) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order—

(i) on 29th May 2013, or **COMPLIES**, **Business Rates information confirms that all floors in question (those above ground level) were registered as offices on the aforementioned date. The ground, basement and podium floors are ancillary spaces to the offices (providing an entrance and storage areas). Residential development would not be situated on these floors.**

(ii) in the case of a building which was in use before that date but was not in use on that date, when it was last in use; **COMPLIES**

(c) the site is, or forms part of, a safety hazard area; **COMPLIES**

(d) the site is, or forms part of, a military explosives storage area; **COMPLIES**

(e) the building is a listed building or is within the curtilage of a listed building; or **COMPLIES**

(f) the site is, or contains, a scheduled monument. **COMPLIES**

Conditions:

O.2.—

(1) Development under Class O is permitted subject to the condition that before beginning the development, the developer must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to—

(a) transport and highways impacts of the development,

(b) contamination risks on the site,

(c) flooding risks on the site, and

(d) impacts of noise from commercial premises on the intended occupiers of the development

(e) the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses and the provisions of paragraph W (prior approval) apply in relation to that application.

(2) Development under Class O is permitted subject to the condition that it must be completed within a period of 3 years starting with the prior approval date

ASSESSMENT OF CONDITIONS O.2

(a) Transport and highways impact of the development

The site is located within the Reading Central Area and within Reading's primary shopping area. The site is located within Zone 1 of the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD which is an area at the very heart of Reading Borough, consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments. This area is well served by rail and bus links and also contains the largest proportion of public car parking spaces one of which is directly adjacent to the site.

Submitted Transport Statement states that this will be a car free development. The non-provision of parking is acceptable in this town centre location given the proximity of public transport services and public car parks. The Councils Residential Permit Parking Scheme operates in the area, therefore future occupants should be made aware that they will not be eligible to apply for a Residents Parking Permit. The appropriate conditions and informative would be applied to prevent future occupants applying for permits.

Servicing of the proposed residential units will be undertaken from the Broad Street Mall basement, in line with existing arrangements.

50 secure cycle parking spaces are being provided for the development.

There are no Transport objections to this application but informatives relating to highways and parking permits will be included.

(b) Contamination risks on the site

A portion of the site is on potentially contaminated land. A Phase 1 Environmental Risk Assessment is submitted in support of the proposal and concluded that the site is low risk in terms of contamination. The proposed change of use of the existing building involves internal works only. No ground works are proposed. Given the previous uses of the existing building, the proposal is not considered likely to present risk of contamination to identified receptors including the future occupants. In the absence of contrary information provided by the Environmental Health team, the proposal is deemed acceptable in terms of this consideration.

(c) Flooding risks on the site

The application site is located within Flood Zone 1 meaning flood risk at the site is low.

d) Impacts of noise from commercial premises on the intended occupiers of the development

A noise assessment was submitted in support of the application and concluded that:

The survey and subsequent assessment carried out for this site indicates that the noise climate at the proposed residential development is dominated by road traffic noise from Oxford Road, the A329 and other town centre roads. Additional noise is generated by roof level plant installed to the shopping centre and this noise generates comparable levels to general ambient noise at the lower floors of the building.

Based upon the measured noise climate at the site, the existing sealed glazing system will provide adequate sound reduction to achieve the internal requirements of ProPG 2017 and BS8233.

As such, noise experienced will not primarily be commercial noise, nevertheless the existing glazing system is deemed acceptable to reduce such disturbance. Without evidence to the contrary provided by the Environmental Health team, the proposal is deemed acceptable in this regard.

(e) the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses

All bedrooms and living areas have windows and be a sufficient distance from neighbouring buildings to ensure adequate daylight to the flats. The application was also supported by a Daylight/ Sunlight assessment which also demonstrates the dwellings would receive an adequate amount of natural light.

Space standards:

All dwellings meet the nationally prescribed space standards.

Recommendation: **APPROVE** Prior Approval

Conditions:

1. The development permitted must be completed before the expiration of three years from the date of this prior approval.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of paragraph O.2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) Order 2015 (as amended)

2. The development shall be carried out only in accordance with the submitted information and details:

21383-0100 Rev P-00 - Site Location Plan
21383-0300 Rev P-00 - Proposed Basement
21383-0301 Rev P-00 - Proposed Ground Floor
21383-0302 Rev P-00 - Proposed First Floor
21383-0303 Rev P-00 - Proposed Podium Floor
21383-0304 Rev P-00 - Proposed Second Floor
21383-0305 Rev P-00 - Proposed Fourth Floor
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Baseline Noise Assessment Revision 1 prepared by Hoare Lea - dated 02 July 2021

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REASON: In order to comply with the provisions of Part W of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) Order 2015 (as amended)

Informatives:

1. The applicant is advised that as an application for prior approval under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, as amended by The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2015, this prior approval notice relates to the change of use of the building from Class B1(a) to C3 (dwellinghouses) only and no other use.
2. This prior approval relates only to the change of use of existing floor space and land. If there are any external alterations or extensions to the building, planning permission is required for these.
3. To minimise the disturbance by noise of future residential occupiers of the flats and its effect on neighbouring residents, residential accommodation must be designed and constructed or converted so as to achieve the insulation requirements set out in Building Regulations Approved Document E.
4. Highways
5. Parking Permits
6. Thames Water will aim to provide customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head `Waters pipes. The developer should take account of this minimum pressure in the design of the proposed development.