

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Address: 452 Basingstoke Road

Application No: 210421/FUL

Proposal: Installation of proprietary window bays and replacement of windows on the Clocktower

Applicant: Procter & Gamble

Target Decision date: 18/06/21

Case officer: Connie Davis

1. Site description and Surrounding Area

The application site is located within the Gillette factory complex, which is a designated COMAH site (Control of Major Accident Hazard), facing Basingstoke Road but formally sitting on Factory Drive. The factory site contains a clocktower which is subject to this application. The clock tower is designated Locally Listed (since April 2019). Part of the description of the Local Listing is as follows:

The factory was built in the late 1930s at a time when the Whitley estate had been growing rapidly and the factory provided much needed local employment. It was built and extended in the art deco style, which was used in the building of many factories during the 1930s, including the Grade II listed Gillette factory at Brentford. It retains several unique and individual external features, including the tower (with its clock and special windows near the top), the planters, outside the north building entrance, the almost matching north and south building staff entrances with door furniture and brass work, and the gates at the vehicle entrance by the south side of the tower.

2. The Proposal

The proposal comprises of the installation of replacement proprietary window bays on the clock tower. The existing white upvc windows are to be replaced with white aluminium windows. The modifications are proposed to retain the structural integrity of the clock tower and aluminium windows will help support the structure. Repointing to the clocktower is also proposed.

3. Consultation

Internal Consultation

Heritage Consultant - No response received

External Consultation

A site notice was displayed between 26/04/21 - 17/05/21

No responses have been received.

4. Plans and Documents Considered

PL-01 - Existing and Proposed Elevations and plan

Received 23rd April 2021

Clock Tower - Location Plan
Clock Tower

Received 25th March 2021

Photograph

Received 24th March 2021

Heritage, Design and Access Statement for Proposed Alterations to the Gillette Clocktower

Application Form

Received 18th March 2021

5. Relevant Planning History

030119 - Building A - Replacement of steel frame windows and doors with tinted double glazed units and erection of new glazed entrance enclosure. Building B - erection of external steel cladding and curtain glazing on south elevation - Application Refused, *this application was refused on accessibility grounds and did not relate to the clocktower*

030872 - Replacement of all the steel windows and doors with new PVF coated aluminium framed double glazed units with reflective/ tinted glass - Application Closed

6. Discussion with applicant/ agent

Scaled existing and proposed elevations and floor plans were sought from the applicant at validation stage.

7. Relevant Planning 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') 2012 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). Accordingly, the 'NPPF' and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

8. Relevant Policies

The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National

National Planning Policy Framework;
National Planning Policy 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
EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
EN4: Locally Important Heritage Assets

9. Appraisal

a) Impact of the proposal on the surrounding area

The preservation of heritage assets is supported by Policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) which states that *'All proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings'*.

Proposals that affect locally important heritage assets will demonstrate that development conserves architectural, archaeological or historical significance which may include the appearance, character and setting of the asset.

Within the supporting statement, it is noted the windows are no longer supporting the weight of the clock tower causing a drop and separation in the concrete lintel structure which has manifested itself in cracks around the windows. New windows with bay posts would ensure structural integrity. The existing white upvc windows would be replaced with white aluminum windows. Other than the proposed material, the windows would match the existing.

Within the Local Listing of the site, it states that the exterior and interior of the factory site have largely remained unaltered. The rationale behind the proposal is noted and would be considered of benefit to support the long-term future of the Locally Listed building. As such the principle of replacing the windows is considered acceptable based on the structural benefit of the works would have on the heritage asset.

b) Design and impact on the Locally Listed Building

Within the Local Listing of the site, it states: *'It retains several unique and individual external features, including the tower (with its clock and **special windows near the top**)...'*. The proposed windows are to be like-for-like in the same position, scale and colour; only the material properties would be altered (upvc to aluminium). From the structural survey carried out, it does indicate the original windows were timber, however, over time, these have been replaced.

Whilst the local listing refers to the windows at the top as 'special windows', Officers consider this could refer to the scale and positioning of the window rather than the windows themselves. As such, so long as the proposal does not change the location and scale of windows (which as shown on the plans would not be the case), the proposal is not considered to conflict with the local listing of the building in the context of the current situation. A schedule of re-pointing has also been provided, which would also be considered to structurally benefit the heritage asset.

As such, the proposal would not be considered to materially impact or alter the appearance of the locally listed heritage asset. As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in relation to Policies CC7 and EN4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

c) Impact on neighbouring amenity

The surrounding area is industrial. It is not considered that there would be a detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity as a result of the proposed replacement windows in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

11. Recommendation

GRANT planning permission, subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

1. TL1
2. Approved Plans
3. Materials and specification of works as specified

Informatives

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