

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

App Ref: 201826/LBC

Address: Royal Berkshire Hospital, London Road, Reading

Proposal: Listed Building Consent for a new piled underpinning scheme to foundations, together with a new below ground drainage network (including soakaway).

Case Officer: Ethne Humphreys

Determination Date: Originally 10/02/2021; EOT until 23/06/2021

1. INTRODUCTION

The Royal Berkshire Hospital (use class C2) is located partially on London Road, Redlands Road and Craven Road. The site is a Grade II* listed hospital building.

The surrounding area mainly comprises of buildings facilitating the hospital, the University of Reading London Road Campus and residential dwellings. The site is adjacent to the Kendrick Road and Eldon Square conservation areas.

The listing for the building is as follows:

“Main block 1839 by local architect and builder Henry Briant (who won the competition for designing the hospital). As King William IV took such a keen interest in the hospital before it was built, his Arms, not Queen Victoria’s appear on the central pediment. Two storeys and basement. Bath stone - very large ashlar blocks used to front. Slate roofs. eleven bays with seven bay central break projecting pedimented hexastyle Ionic portico. Glazing bar sash windows. Corner piers. Channelled basement. Astragal to moulded cornice (dentil cornice to portico) and parapet. Recessed side entrance bays. Wide steps to portico with excellent contemporary lamp tripods with guilloche ornament. Interior: colonaded stair hall, cast iron balusters to stairs which divide at landing. 1882 chapel with contemporary fittings reached from under landing. (By Joseph Morris who made considerable extensions to the Hospital at that date).

The main block has flanking wings added 1865 to designs by Joseph Morris. Three storeys also Bath stone and long side wings forming a large courtyard added 1881-2. The latter are also of Bath stone, have 5x5 end pavilions with three bay pedimented breaks and are linked to side wings by a Greek Doric colonade (east side) and a 1911 block (west side). In front to street is a dwarf-stone wall with moulded coping and five retraining ashlar gate piers with block modillions to moulded capping.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

This application seeks listed building consent for a new board pile type underpinning scheme to foundation together with a new below ground drainage network. No external changes to the building are proposed as part of this application.

Plans considered:

Drawing No: Site and Location Plan 6947.100
Drawing No: Proposed Ground Floor Plan 6947.200
Drawing No: Proposed Ground Floor Plan 6947.201
Drawing No: Proposed Piling Layout P1
Drawing No: Proposed Underpinning Plan P1
Drawing No: Enabling Works P1
Drawing No: Constraints Plan P1
Drawing No: Public Health Details P1
Drawing No: Public Health Enabling Works P1
Drawing No: Public Health Below Ground Services P1
Received 16th December 2020

Heritage Report October 2020
Design and Access Statement 6947
Technical Note 1 Summary of Initial Findings
Received 16th December 2020

Heritage Report May 2021
Received 12th May 2021

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

There is extensive application history at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, but none are considered of particular relevance to this application.

4. CONSULTATIONS

Internal Consultees

Conservation and Urban Design Officer - No objection subject to condition.

Berkshire Archaeology - No objection and no archaeological mitigation required.

External Consultation

Historic England: Further to additional information received, no objection.

A site notice was displayed 4th January 2021. An advert was also published in the local press on 11th January 2021.

No letters of representation 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. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the '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.

The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2019

National Planning Practice Guidance 2014

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

EN2: Areas of Archaeological Significance

ER3: Royal Berkshire Hospital

7. APPRAISAL

Development at Royal Berkshire Hospital

In accordance with Policy ER3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, development will be supported where it complies with the following criteria:

- *Development will conserve the listed main block on London Road and 17 Craven Road, ensuring that their use is consistent with its conservation; and*
- *Development would not result in adverse effects on the setting of listed buildings and conservation areas.*

Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

The NPPF details that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset the greater the weight should be, and any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.

In accordance with Reading Borough Local Plan Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment, proposals affecting Listed Buildings are acceptable where it will not:

- *Have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where appropriate, their setting.*

The proposals are required due to the current poor state of the foundations which have deteriorated over many years and as a consequence of the existing pipework having blocked and collapsed.

The applicant's (hospital) agents, including their architects and conservation consultants had extensive discussion in pre-application meetings in late 2020 in November and December with RBC Officers including the Conservation and Urban Design Officer. The proposed works are as discussed in the pre-application meeting and are supported. The documentation submitted with this application and the works proposed follow recommended conservation practice and philosophy.

The proposed works relate to the conservation and maintenance of the building, using mainly "Like for Like repairs" but there are also some more extensive conservation works required to underpin the foundations of the building. Historic England have confirmed that the strategy has been sympathetically devised whilst salvaging surviving fabric of merit as far as reasonably achievable.

Overall, the proposed works are considered a necessity to stop the further deterioration of the building and it is considered that any less than substantial harm that may occur from the proposal would be outweighed by the heritage and public benefits of removing risks to the listed building by repairing the decaying structure. Moreover, the proposals will seek to protect and enhance this historic asset, contributing to its longevity.

The finished works would not be seen from the outside and the proposals would not have any adverse impact on the setting of the listed building nor would they have any detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the listed building.

In accordance with Policies EN1, EN2, CC7 and ER3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the NPPF.

8. CONCLUSION

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

9. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT LISTED BUILDING CONSENT