

DELEGATED LISTED BUILDING CONSENT APPLICATION REPORT

Address: 41 Minster Street
Application No: 191400/LBC
Target Date: 29/10/19
Case Officer: Mr James Schofield
Proposal: It is proposed to recover the glazing from two windows on the ground floor and install two aluminium Louvres as per the submitted drawings and photos. The louvres will be powder coated white to match the existing windows and louvres on the same elevation.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT:

The application relates to the large Grade II listed BT Telephone Exchange building located at 41 -47 Minster Street, Reading. The three-storey building constructed circa 1900 is finished in red brick with stone dressings in an attenuated Georgian style. The Telephone Exchange was extended to the rear with a significant extension constructed circa 1960, and the proposed louvres are to be located in this modern extended element.

The site is located near the town centre and is surrounded by similar large buildings including John Lewis and The Oracle Centre (5-6 storeys). No. 41 is three storeys high facing Minster Street and five 5 storeys high at its rear.

The site is located within the Reading Central Area, Central Core in the Primary Shopping Area and within an existing designated Active Frontage. It is also adjacent to the eastern boundary of St. Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area.

PROPOSAL:

Planning Permission is sought to recover the glazing from two windows on the ground floor and install two aluminium Louvres as per the submitted drawings and photos. The louvres will be powder coated white to match the existing windows and louvres on the same elevation.

This would involve removing the glazing from three windows in the western elevation of the extension and install aluminium blade weather louvres within these openings that would match the existing louvres on the building.

PLANS SUBMITTED:

The agent supplied the following plans, photographs and information:

Deign and Access Statement: BT Telephone Exchange, Minster Street
Drawing No. 119357-3 - Proposed Planning Layout for Reading Central TE
Received 21st August 2019

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

010200	Communications switch room with existing building and installation of ventilation louvres to side elevation	PER 28.9.2001
010354	Installation of ventilation louvres to the side elevation (LBC)	PER 28.9.2001
010064	Removal of three windows at 2nd floor level. Installation of louvres into openings	PER 17.10.2001
011012	Removal of 3 no windows at 2nd floor level and fitting louvres to openings (LBC)	PER 17.10.2001
011282	Installation of new double door and ventilation louvres to front elevation and ground floor level	PER 19.11.2001
060124	Installation of new louvres	PER 17.5.2006
060689	Installation of new louvres (LBC)	PER 31.5.2001
100600	To replace 5 windows on the ground floor with aluminium louvres to allow ventilation into and out of the telephone exchange	PER 24.3.2010
100263	Listed Building Consent to replace 5 windows on the ground floor with aluminium louvres to allow ventilation into and out of the telephone exchange (LBC)	PER 28.4.2010
130638	Installation of 3 ventilation louvres on the first floor west elevation	PER 1.8.2013
161633	Removal of 3 fixed window panes on the ground floor and replacement with aluminium weather louvres to match existing.	PER 28.10.2016
181231	Removal of 2 fixed window panes on the ground floor and replacement with aluminium weather louvres to match existing.	PER 30.11.2018
181476	Removal of 2 fixed window panes on the ground floor and replacement with aluminium weather louvres to match existing.	PER 30.11.2018

CONSULTEE REPONSES:

External:

A site notice was displayed on 6th September 2019. No letters have been received.

Internal:

The conservation officer has no objections.

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.

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) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

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.

In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document) 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 National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015)

CS7 Design and the Public Realm

CS33 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

Reading Central Area Action Plan (RCAAP) 2009

RC5 Design in the Centre

Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015)

SD1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

DM4 Safeguarding Amenity

APPRAISAL

Impact on Listed Building/character of the surrounding area

Policy CS33 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets including listed buildings and their settings

The proposal seeks further external alterations to the west elevation of the building, similar to previous changes permitted to allow for the ventilation of the telephone exchange. The proposed aluminium louvres are to be located on the extended element of the telephone exchange towards the rear of the site.

This modern part of the building is of no particular architectural merit, and is inconspicuous when viewed from the street. Its long return frontage is also set back behind the front corner of the Telephone Exchange and as such the proposed louvres would hardly be visible, much less noticeable, from Minster Street which contains the principal views of the listed building.

This elevation of the building already features a number of aluminium louvres, and the additional louvres proposed are to be of the same aluminium material and appearance as those already on the building, and so are not considered to detrimentally alter or impact upon the existing design and appearance of the listed building. Furthermore, given that the louvres are to be located within the existing openings on the building, no structural works that may affect the fabric of the listed building are to be carried out, and the existing symmetry of the openings on the building will remain. Consequently it is considered that the proposal would not detract from the character and historic integrity of the listed building and or the character of the area. In this regard the proposal is considered to be acceptable

For similar reasons, the proposal is not considered to result in any harm to the visual amenities of the surrounding area in accordance with Policy RC5 (Design in the Centre) of the RCAAP and Policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm) of the Core Strategy.

CONCLUSION

No conflict with CS33 and the following Conditions and Informatives are recommended:

- **Conditions**
 - Time limit LB1
 - Development to match plans AP1
- **Informatives**
 - Positive and proactive working IF1
 - Building Control IF6

RECOMMENDATION:

GRANT Listed Building Consent.