

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Target Date: 4/12/19

Application No: 191637/FUL
Address: Windrush House, 24 Portman Road, Reading, RG30 1EA
Ward: Battle
Case Officer: James Schofield
Proposal: Construction of external staircase to provide alternative means of escape from upper floors.

1. SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

The development site relates to a three storey building within a commercial estate which has been converted from B1 (commercial) to D1 (place of worship).

2. PROPOSAL

The application seeks planning permission for the installation of an external staircase to service the use of the building as a whole.

3. CONSULTTEES

Neighbours

A site notice was displayed receiving no comments in relation to the application.

4. PLANS/DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED

The agent supplied the following:
Design & Access Statement: Proposed External Staircase
Drawing reference: 767/Loc_stairs
Drawing reference: 767/Block_stairs
Drawing reference: 767/50 Existing Plans & Elevations
Drawing reference: 767/51 Proposed Plans & Elevations
Received on 9 October 2019

5. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Approved change of use through various applications starting in 2008 (08-00704-FUL).

6. 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.

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

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (adopted 2019):

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network

8. APPRAISAL

8.1 Principle of development

The application seeks planning permission for the installation of an external staircase to service the approved use of the building. No change of use is proposed. Such works are supported in principle by policies of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) subject to a number of criteria ensuring the effects of the development are not harmful and contributions are made to the sustainability of the Borough. This will be considered in more detail in the following sections.

8.2 Character

Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) requires development to be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area in Reading in which it is located.

The appearance of the external staircase would improve the appearance of the existing building, which is considered overwhelmingly functional at present. The design is not considered to result in any material harm to the immediate character or appearance of the building or the wider area. As such, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy CC7 of the Local plan 2019.

8.2 Access and Sustainability

The development results in the loss of a single parking space. 33 car parking spaces would be retained for use by the building. Given the nature of the approved use, this level of parking provision is deemed adequate. The proposal seeks to build the staircase where the existing cycle parking is located and to relocate the cycle parking into the adjacent parking space. The reduction of one parking space is considered acceptable in terms of Policy TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

8.3 Biodiversity

Part 'b' of Policy EN12 indicates that all development sites should not result in a net loss of biodiversity or geodiversity, and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible through new tree planting, wildlife friendly landscaping and other ecological enhancements.

The site does not benefit from any protected trees or identified Green Links. The development site is a paved car park and not deemed to have any ecological value; as such the proposal does not result in a net loss of biodiversity. The development is not considered to comply with the aspirations of Policy EN12 part 'b' as it does not seek to provide a net gain for biodiversity; however there is limited capacity to do so in this instance.

9. CONCLUSION

In light of the above assessment the proposal is considered to accord with the requirements of the development plan and is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions.

10. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT

11. CONDITIONS

1. AP1 Approved Plans
2. TL1 Standard Time Limit
3. M3 Materials (as specified)
5. DC5 Cycle Parking (as specified)

Appendix

Site Photos as of the 3rd of December 2019.

