

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT - Application No. 180240/FUL

Address: Clarendon House 59-75 Queens Road

Proposal: Additional and replacement fenestration and doors, new hard and soft landscaping, relocation of cycle store and revised car parking layout

Case officer: Matt Burns

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application relates to a five storey building with basement located on the north side of Queens Road at the corner junction with Watlington Street. The site is located within flood zone 2, an air quality management area and the rear car park is identified as an area of potential contaminated land.

The site is located within the 'Reading Central Area' but outside of the 'Central Core' as defined by the Reading Central Area Action Plan 2012, 2015.

The existing building is a five storey, red-brown brick office building with a flat roof containing significant plant equipment. The building is adjoined to Queens Wharf to the west, which is a white rendered six storey residential building, with a darker clad and recessed top floor.

To the east, the building corners onto Watlington Street with the taller 10 storey element of the 'Q2' building on the opposite side of the junction. To the rear (north) there is the site car park which is set within a courtyard formed by the rear elevation of Clarendon House, the east flank elevation of Queens Wharf and the six storey Grantley Heights residential development. Opposite the site on Queens Road is the Grade II listed Wesley Methodist Church and the northern edge of the Eldon Square Conservation Area.

Proposal

The proposal seeks alterations to the additional and replacement fenestration and doors, new hard and soft landscaping, relocation of cycle store and revised car parking layout.

Plans and Documents Considered:

Drawing no.s:

11-01 - Site location plan

11-02 - Existing site layout

12-01 - Existing ground floor plan

12-02 - Existing typical upper floor plan

12-03 - Existing basement floor plan

14-01 - Existing south elevation

14-02 - Existing north elevation

14-03 - Existing east elevation

21-01 rev 1 - Proposed site layout

22-01 - Proposed ground floor

22-02 - Proposed basement
22-03 - Proposed first floor plan
22-04 - Proposed second floor plan
22-05 - Proposed third floor plan
22-06 - Proposed fourth floor plan

24-01 - Proposed south elevation
24-02 - Proposed north elevation
24-03 - Proposed east elevation

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 19th December 2018

Relevant Planning History:

170905/OPA - Change of use of building from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 49 residential units. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) - Prior Approval Given.

180722/OPA - Change of use of building from Class B1 (a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 49 dwellings. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 - Prior Approval Given.

180909/FUL - One storey roof extension, part six, part nine storey side/rear extension and mews houses providing 43 new residential units together with associated services enclosures, parking, and landscaping (amended description)- Granted, subject to S106 legal agreement.

Consultation Responses:

RBC Natural Environment Trees - Seek more extensive landscape planting.

RCB Transport - No objection, subject to aisle width between parking spaces being increased in line with Councils standards and further details of cycle parking being provided.

Neighbouring Properties at Grantley Heights were notified of the application and a site notice was displayed outside the application site. No representations have been received.

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.

In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Core Strategy, Sites and Detailed Policies Document and Reading Central Area Action Plan) 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).

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.

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

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)

- CS1 Sustainable Construction and Design
- CS5 Inclusive Access
- CS7 Design and the Public Realm
- CS20 Implementation of the Reading Transport Strategy (Local Transport Plan 2006-2011)
- CS24 Car/Cycle Parking
- CS33 Heritage
- CS34 Pollution
- CS38 Trees, Hedges and Woodland

Reading Sites and Detailed Policies Document (SDPD 2012) (altered 2015)

- DM1 Adaption to Climate Change
- DM4 Amenity
- DM12 Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
- DM17 Tree Planting

Reading Central Area Action Plan (RCAAP 2009)

- RC5 Design in the Centre

Appraisal

Design and Appearance

Policy CS7 seeks to preserve or enhance the character of the area in which a development is located whilst CS33 seeks that development should preserve or enhance heritage assets, including their setting. Policy RC5 seeks to secure appropriate relationships between buildings, spaces and frontages within the centre of Reading.

The proposed alterations to the window seek to create a more domestic character given the extant prior approval consents to the building for conversion from offices to flats. The existing long rectangular windows to the north, south and east elevations have been divided into two paired windows, separated by a vertical louvre whilst a deeper window frame has been added to create a deep reveal, with shadow and relief. The window frame, louvre panel and surround would be finished in powder coated grey aluminium which is considered to complement the existing dark red brick finish to the building and result in a higher quality and more contemporary appearance. A column of smaller single pane window of the same materials is proposed to the north elevation facing the rear courtyard. Replacement doors at ground floor level would also be of the same appearance along with replacement of an existing entrance canopy from Queens Road (a second existing canopy to be removed).

The upgraded fenestration is considered an enhancement to the appearance of the building and in this respect the proposal is considered to preserve (and enhance in comparison with existing) the character of adjacent Eldon Square Conservation Area and Grade II listed Wesley Methodist Church.

The proposed works would accord with Policies CS7, CS33 and RC5.

Amenity

Policy DM4 seeks that proposals should protect the amenity of existing and surrounding occupiers.

The proposal almost entirely relates to replacement of existing windows such that any additional impacts upon surrounding occupiers are very limited. The only new additional windows are a column of smaller single pane openings to the north courtyard facing elevation of the building. These additional windows would be located adjacent to existing windows and would not result in any undue overlooking or loss of privacy within the courtyard. The separation to the flat windows to the rear courtyard elevation of Grantley Heights at 28m is such that as per the existing windows there would be no loss of privacy in this respect.

The proposal is considered to comply with Policy DM4.

Landscaping

Policy CS7 seeks that development should preserve or enhance the area of Reading within which it is located including landscaping. Policy CS38 seeks to extend the Borough's vegetation cover and Policy DM17 states that new development should make provision for tree planting.

The proposal seeks to provide tree and vegetation to the south and east elevations fronting Queens Road and Watlington Street and also to the north courtyard elevation. Given the limited nature of the proposals which is largely replacing existing windows more *extensive* landscaping is considered to be beyond the scope of what is being considered and it would be unreasonable to require widespread planting within the site.

There is currently little landscape to the perimeter of the property and it is considered that the landscaping proposed would enhance the appearance of the building within the surrounding area and street and provide an enhanced environment for future occupiers of the building, whether in the current office use or residential use under the extant prior approval consents.

In this respect the proposal is considered to accord with Policies CS7, CS38 and DM17.

Transport

The proposal seeks some minor reconfiguration of the vehicle and cycle parking arrangements to the rear of the site. The number of spaces proposed is the same as that agreed under the extant prior approval consent ref. 170905 for change of use of the building to flats any the layout is essentially the same as that for the existing office use. Transport officers have reviewed the proposal and sought amendments to the vehicle parking layout to ensure there is adequate space between parking aisles and amended plans have been submitted in this respect. It should also be noted that prior approval consent ref. 180722 also granted change of use of the building to flats with a much reduced parking provision of only 4 spaces within the courtyard area. A cycle store area is also proposed as per the prior approval consent. The precise details of the cycle were not securable as part of the prior approval consent. This application shows a change in layout of the cycle store arrangement as such it is considered reasonable and relevant to secure details of the appearance and detailed layout of the cycle store by way of a suitably worded condition. This is to ensure a store building of design and appearance that would maintain the character of the surrounding area in accordance with Policies CS7, RC5 and DM12, CS20, CS23 and CS24.

The proposal is considered to accord with Policies DM12, CS20, CS23 and CS24.

Other Issues

The application does not propose any additional floor space or change of use and therefore is not liable for the Community Infrastructure Levy.

RECOMMENDATION:

GRANT planning permission, subject to conditions.

Conditions

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which the permission was granted.

Reason: to prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions and in accordance with Section 91 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Drawing no.s:

21-01 rev 1 - Proposed site layout

22-01 - Proposed ground floor

22-02 - Proposed basement

22-03 - Proposed first floor plan

22-04 - Proposed second floor plan

22-05 - Proposed third floor plan

22-06 - Proposed fourth floor plan

24-01 - Proposed south elevation

24-02 - Proposed north elevation

24-03 - Proposed east elevation

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Reason: because permission is granted in respect of the development as detailed in the approved plans only.

3. The hard and soft landscaping of the development hereby permitted shall be carried out, in accordance the details set out in sections 4.7 (landscape proposal), 4.8 (hard landscaping), 4.9 (soft landscaping) and 4.10 (defensive zones) of the EAA - Emre Arolat Architecture Design & Access Statement ref. 220-D-P-DAS dated 05/02/2018. The landscaping works shall take place no later than during the first planting season following the date when the building to which the development hereby permitted relates is ready for occupation or in accordance with a timetable agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: in the interests of the character and appearance of the new development and in accordance with Policy CS7

4. All planted materials shall be maintained for five years and any trees or plants removed, dying, being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within 5 years of planting shall be replaced with others of similar size and species to those originally required to be planted.

Reason: in the interests of the character and appearance of the new development and in accordance with Policy CS7

5. Prior to first occupation of the building to which the development hereby permitted relates, details of secure, covered and lockable bicycle storage spaces shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. The approved bicycle storage spaces shall be provided in accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation and shall not be used thereafter for any purpose other than the storage of bicycles.

Reason: To ensure travel by sustainable alternatives to the motor car in accordance with Policies CS23 and CS24 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015).

Informatives

1. The Local Planning Authority has been positive and proactive in dealing with this planning application by explaining concerns with the application to the applicant and accepting amended plans to address the issues.
2. Your attention is drawn to the terms and conditions of this planning permission. Any development which is carried out but which differs materially from the approved plans and details, or does not comply with any conditions attached to the permission may result in the Council taking action to remedy the breach of planning control. If you are in any doubt please contact the Council.
3. Your attention is drawn to the requirement for submission of a Building Regulations application for the proposed development. Please contact Building Control on 0118 937 2449 for advice.
4. Complaints are commonly received about noise and dust caused by construction and demolition works, particularly working outside reasonable hours and smoke from bonfires associated with the burning of waste on site. The developer is reminded that construction and demolition associated with the approved development will be subject to environmental health law.