

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Address: 2 Blagrove Street

Application No: 180436/FUL

Proposal: Installation of ground floor fire escape door on west elevation and plant equipment within existing rooftop plant enclosure.

Applicant: Area Sq

Date received (valid from): 08/03/2018

Target Decision date: 09/05/2018

Case officer: Tom French

1. Site description and Surrounding Area

The application site comprises an office building that occupies frontages on Blagrove Street, Valpy Street and Forbury Road. The former four storey building at the site was known as Aldwych House. Planning permission was granted in 2010 for the demolition of the four storey building and replacement with a six storey office with basement car park (see relevant history below).

The application site is located to the south east of Reading Station (a distance of 60m), to the south of Apex Plaza (opposite on Forbury Road) and to the north of part of the listed Town Hall. Opposite, on the western side of Blagrove Street, are building ranges that are predominantly five storeys in height and maintain a more classical appearance of façade treatment. The surrounding area is mainly characterised by B1 uses, although there are also a number of A3 and A4 uses.

Adjacent to the east of the site, and entrance to the basement carpark, on Forbury Road is a four storey, gabled building known as the Corn Stores. This building is Grade II listed with a pub on the ground floor and restaurant above. The application site does not lie within a conservation area, although the buildings opposite on the southern side of Valpy Street and the western side of Blagrove Street are within the London Street/Market Place Conservation Area.

The site is located within the Reading Central Area, Central Core and Office Core Area.

2. The Proposal

Full planning permission is sought for the addition of a fire door in the Blagrove Street elevation and the installation of an air handling unit and associated equipment in the existing plant enclosure.

The fire door would replace an existing window and provide a clear opening of at least 1050mm. It would be located 12m from the norther corner of the Blagrove street elevation.

3. Consultation

Neighbours consultation:

A site notice has been displayed in a prominent position at the site from 19/03/2018. No responses have been received.

Environmental consultation:

The RBC Environmental Health Officer provided the following consultation:

Environmental Protection concerns

- **Noise arising from development**

The applicants have provided no noise data to clearly demonstrate that the new plant will have no negative impact, however it is not believed there are any particularly noise sensitive receptors nearby that are likely to be impacted by roof mounted plant and given the addition is relatively minor compared with the overall plant and contained within an enclosure, no objections are raised on the proposal.

4. Plans and Documents Considered

The Council, in reaching its recommendation, has taken into consideration the following plans & documents:

Drawing No.:

- A100P00 - Rev. C3 - Planning, Ex & Prop Fire Escape Door Plans & Elevations
- A101P00 - Rev. C2 - Planning, Proposed Fire Escape Door Details & Sections
- A102P00 - Rev. C1 - Planning, OS Plan, Block Plan
- Summary for unit no.1

As received: 09/03/18

- CCSL6258_M02 - Roof Level Mechanical Services Layout
- CCSL6258_M03 - Existing Roof Level Mechanical Services Layout

As received: 14/03/18

5. Relevant Planning History

101300 - Demolition of existing office building and construction of new 6-storey office building with associated basement car park and external works. Granted following completion of s106 legal agreement 30/11/10.

140109 - Non material amendment to planning permission 101300 to include alteration to ground floor level, alteration to reception design to include public art, alteration of ratio of glazing on façades and courtyard elevation, introduction of polished concrete at base and interface to adjoining buildings, enlargement of brown roof at roof level and car parking. Granted 12/3/14.

140540 - Variation of condition 28 of planning application 140109. Addition of plant material to roof and external alterations. Granted following completion of s106 legal agreement 29/8/14.

141927 - Non-material change to planning permission 140540 VARIAT for demolition of existing office building and construction of new 6- storey office building with associated basement car park and external works to vary condition 28 of permission 10/00989/FUL. Granted 20/2/15.

151213/NMC - Non-material amendment to planning permission 101300 relating to alterations to public artwork. Granted 24/08/15.

151948 - Non-material amendments to planning permission 101300 including: changes in location of photovoltaics, green roofs, roof level louvre doors, basement cycle storage & gas room ; alterations to terrace balustrades and doors, entrance steps, ground floor pass door, goods lift entrance door; omission of basement smoke extract room, and associated works. Granted 27/11/15.

160321 - Display of 2 non-illuminated fascia signs at the main entrance and 1

non-illuminated fascia sign at the car park entrance. Granted 27/04/16.

A variety of approval of condition applications have been submitted / approved in addition to the original permission above.

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. 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 Local Development Framework '*Core Strategy*' 2008 (Altered 2015) and '*Sites and Detailed Policies Document*' 2012 (Altered 2015).

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.

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) (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 '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;

RBC Local Development Framework

Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015)

CS7 Design and the Public Realm

CS33 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

CS34 Pollution and water resources

Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015)

DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity)

Reading Central Area Action Plan 2009

RC5 Design in the centre

RC6 Definition of the centre

Other guidance

London Street/Market Place Conservation Area Appraisal

9. Appraisal

The main issues to be considered are:

- i) Design impact on the character of the host building and surrounding area
- ii) Impact on neighbouring properties
- iii) Impact on quality of accommodation for current/future occupiers

i) Design impact on the character of the host building and surrounding area

The replacement of a window with a glazed fire door would result in an appearance only marginally different to the existing situation. Whilst the fire door would be visible from the street scene along Blagrove Street the proposal is not considered harmful to the character of the building or the surrounding area.

The proposed air handling units would not be visible from the street scene so would not have any impact on the character of the host building or surrounding area (including the nearby conservation area). Further, considering the contemporary design of the host building, and the relatively diminutive scale of the proposed door, the proposal would not have any adverse effects upon the siting of any nearby listed buildings.

As such the proposal is in accordance with Policies CS7, CS33 and RC5.

ii) Impact on the neighbouring properties

Given the existing window and the glazed nature of the proposed fire door the proposal is not considered to have any adverse impacts on the neighbouring buildings / occupiers.

The air handling unit would be relatively minor compared with the overall plant equipment mounted within the plant enclosure. It is also considered that there are no noise sensitive receptors nearby (as per Environmental Protection observations above). As such the proposed unit would not have a harmful impact on neighbouring amenity.

The proposal accords with Policies CS34 and DM4.

iii) Impact on quality of accommodation for current/future occupiers

The proposed works will improve the quality of accommodation for current / future occupiers, aligning with RC6.

10. Recommendation

Grant permission 180436/FUL subject to the following 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 materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of this development shall match those of the existing building.

Reason: To ensure that the new development appears in keeping with the existing building, in the interests of the character of the area, in accordance Policy DM9 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (altered 2015).

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

Drawing Number:

- A100P00 - Rev. C3 - Planning, Ex & Prop Fire Escape Door Plans & Elevations
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As received: 14/03/18

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

Informatives

1. Your attention is drawn to the terms and conditions of this permission. Any development which is carried out but which differs materially from the approved plans and details, or does not comply with any condition(s) or planning obligation(s) 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.
2. The applicant's attention is drawn to Building Regulations requirements. Please contact Building Control on 0118 937 2449 for advice.
3. The construction (and demolition) of the development will be subject to environmental health law and the applicant is referred to:
<http://beta.reading.gov.uk/environmentalprotection>
4. The decision to grant planning permission follows the positive and proactive consideration of the issues raised by this planning application and issuing the decision within the statutory time period.