

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Address: Four Corners, Upper Warren Avenue, Reading

Application No: 172184/LBC

Proposal: Internal alterations at ground floor level to widen an opening between the kitchen and breakfast area

Applicant: Mrs Zeman

Date received (valid from): 05/01/18

Target Decision date: 02/03/18

Case officer: Jonathan Markwell

1. Site Description and Surrounding Area

- i. The application site is located on the south side of Upper Warren Avenue, opposite the junction with River Road. It comprises a Grade II Listed (see full listing within section 4 below) single dwellinghouse, set within extensive grounds. The site is not within a conservation area.

2. The Proposal

- i. Listed building consent for:
 - internal alterations at ground floor level to widen an opening between the kitchen and breakfast area

3. Public Consultation

- i. Neighbour Consultation
A site notice was erected on 02/02/18, expiring on 23/02/2018. A press notice was published on 18/01/2018, expiring on 08/02/18. No responses have been received.

4. Consultations

- i. RBC Historic Buildings Consultant:

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

With respect to this application, the applicable statutory provisions are Section 66(1) which states that:

‘in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority, or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.’

Reading Borough Planning Policies

The Core Strategy 2008 (with further alterations January 2015), Policy CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment states:

Historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced. This will include:

- *Listed Buildings;*
- *Conservation Areas;*
- *Other features with local or national designation, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and historic parks and gardens.*

Planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. All proposals will be expected to protect and where appropriate enhance the character and appearance of the area in which they are located and for the purpose of ensuring that work is appropriate to the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building.

Within paragraph 11.8 of the Core Strategy it also specifies that:

The Borough Council is committed to protecting and where appropriate, enhancing the Borough's historic environment. This includes ensuring that buildings and features of Local architectural and historic interest (which are not necessarily recognised components of the historic environment) are taken fully into account and safeguarded...".

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states:

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. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

The NPPF (paragraph 128) requires applicants:

'to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance'.

Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states that, local planning authorities should take into account:

'the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation'.

Paragraph 134 of the NPPF states that:

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF states that:

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Planning Practice Guide (PPG)

The PPG states under 'What is the setting of a heritage asset and how should it be taken into account?' that:

The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights or an ability to access or experience that setting. This will vary over time and according to circumstance.

When assessing any application for development which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change. They may also need to consider the fact that developments which materially detract from the asset's significance may also damage its economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its on-going conservation.

The PPG states under 'How to assess if there is substantial harm?' that:

What matters in assessing if a proposal causes substantial harm is the impact on the significance of the heritage asset. As the National Planning Policy Framework makes clear, significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Architectural Description

Date first listed: 14-Mar-2012.

House in an Art and Crafts style, designed 1916 by the architect Percy Westwood (1878-1958) for Thomas Poynder, printer (d.1960) and constructed between 1918 and 1922. Also contemporary upper and lower terrace with urns, sundial/water feature and bench all probably the work of the Compton Pottery.

Four Corners, a suburban detached house of 1918-22 designed for the Reading businessman Thomas Poynder by the architect Percy Westwood, is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

Architectural design: for its careful massing and elevational treatment, also the integrated design of its garden terraces and good quality interiors, all in an Arts & Crafts idiom; * Materials: for the quality of the principal building material, hand-made red bricks, and the detailing of the pewter door furniture and the craftsmanship with which they are employed; * Intactness: a house which is largely unaltered from its original early C20 form and retains its strong relationship with the garden.

In c.1916 Thomas Poynder (c.1880-1960), a partner in E Poynder & Son, a successful family printing business based in Gun Street, Reading, purchased land at Caversham to build a house. The 2½ acre plot was located south of Upper Warren Avenue and north of the River Thames. This area of Caversham was open fields at the time of the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1879 but began to be developed at the very end of the century: the 1899 map shows that Upper

Warren Avenue had been laid out although with no houses built at that time. These begin to appear soon afterwards with a small number completed by the time of the 1913 edition.

Designs for Four Corners date to 1916 are by the architect (and friend of Thomas Poynder) Percy Westwood (1878-1958). Percy Westwood was a Scottish architect who was based in London, working in partnership with Joseph Amberton between 1922-6. Austin Reed, the tailor and retailer (1873-1954) was a friend (and indeed was also a friend of Thomas Poynder's) and gave Westwood his first major commission, re-fitting a shop in Fenchurch Street in London. Following a joint fact-finding trip to the United States in 1920, they decided that the Austin Reed shops should be refitted and Westwood's work can be seen either singly or with his architectural partner at the stores in Birmingham, Glasgow, Edinburgh and the Barber's shop to the Regent Street store, London of 1929. Two of the partnership's buildings are currently listed, both at Grade II: a house at 8, Churchfields Avenue, Elmbridge, Surrey (1926) and Summit House (1935), an office block for Austin Reed in Camden, Greater London.

Proposals

There are no proposed external works to the building. The proposals consist of the formation of an enlarged opening between the existing kitchen and breakfast room and replacing the existing kitchen units.

The works would involve removal of section wall to create the enlarged opening for a larger kitchen area; making good and inserting reveals around the new openings; installation of support beam over opening; installation new kitchen units and associated electrical works.

Conclusions

Whilst there would be loss of doorway and timber surround, these are not considered to be of special interest. Based on the low significance of the wall between the wall between the kitchen and breakfast room, there is no objection in principle to the proposals, subject to the following condition:

WORKS TO MATCH EXISTING

All new works, and works of making good to the retained fabric, unless approved otherwise in writing by the local planning authority, shall be finished to match existing, original or adjacent work (as deemed appropriate by the local planning authority) with regard to the methods used and to materials, textures and profiles.

Reason: For the purpose of ensuring that work is appropriate to the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building.

5. Plans Considered

- i. The Council, in reaching its recommendation, has taken into consideration the following documents:

FC.SP101 Location and Block Plans, as received 06/12/17

FC.MP01 Rev A - Existing & Proposed Layout Plans, as received 05/01/18

FC.MP02 - Existing & Proposed Typical Cross Sections A-A & C-C, as received 05/01/18

FC.MP03 - Existing & Proposed Typical Cross Section B-B, as received 05/01/18

Design and Access Statement, as received 06/12/17

Heritage Statement, as received 05/01/18

6. Relevant Planning History

- i. None.

7. 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.

8. Relevant Planning Guidance

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.

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'.

9. Relevant Policies

The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National
National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Policy Guidance

Reading Borough Local Development Framework
Core Strategy (2008) (Altered 2015)
CS33 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

Historic England Good Practice Guide Note Number 2: managing significance in decision-taking

10. Appraisal

- i. As per the comments received during the application from the RBC Historic Buildings consultant (see section 4 above), the proposed internal works are considered appropriate subject to a condition.
- ii. Standard conditions relating to timeframes and the approved plans are also suggested, alongside standard informatives for a listed building consent.

11. Conclusion

- i. The local planning authority considers that the proposal is appropriate for the reasons set out in this report.

Recommendation

Grant Listed Building Consent subject to conditions

Conditions:

1. The works to which this consent relate shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

Reason: in accordance with Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The consent relates only to the following plans, drawings and documents:

FC.MP01 Rev A - Existing & Proposed Layout Plans, as received 05/01/18

FC.MP02 - Existing & Proposed Typical Cross Sections A-A & C-C, as received 05/01/18

FC.MP03 - Existing & Proposed Typical Cross Section B-B, as received 05/01/18

Heritage Statement, as received 05/01/18

Reason: to ensure that the works carried out are fully in accordance with the approved drawings and details in order to protect the special historic and architectural character of the listed building, in accordance with Policy CS33 of the Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015).

3. All new works, and works of making good to the retained fabric, unless approved otherwise in writing by the local planning authority, shall be finished to match existing, original or adjacent work (as deemed appropriate by the local planning authority) with regard to the methods used and to materials, textures and profiles.

Reason: in order to protect the special historic and architectural character of the listed building, in accordance with Policy CS33 of the Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015).

Informatives:

1. Approved works will require separate approval under the Building Regulations. Please contact the Council's Building Control service for further advice on (0118) 937 2449.
2. Your attention is drawn to the terms and conditions of this consent. Any development which is carried out but 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.
3. Officers have worked positively and proactively with the applicant to determine the application within the statutory timeframes for determining such applications.
4. For the avoidance of doubt, no other works are approved except those as authorised by this Consent. Any other works required to the Listed Building may require a separate application for Listed Building Consent and/or an application for Permitted Works to a Listed Building.