

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT - Application No: 171072/FUL

Address: Forbury Court 12-14 Forbury Road

Proposal: Proposed refurbishment of existing building to include painted black facade (upper floors); installation of mesh cladding to reception window, double glazed entrance doors/metal gate and screen to ground floor office and mesh car park entrance gates. Revised ground floor to provide 12no. cycle storage spaces and shower/changing facilities plus formation of a 5th floor terrace for communal/office use.

Case officer: Matt Burns

Site Description and Surrounding Area: The application site comprises a 6 storey office building located on the south side of Forbury Road. To the west the building adjoins the 4 storey grade II listed Corn Stores building at no. 10 Forbury Road with the part 4 and part 5 storey Tangent House building at no. 16 Forbury Road to the east. Opposite the site is the large Apex Plaza complex.

The site is located within the Reading Central Area, Central Core and Office Core as defined by the Reading Central Area Action Plan 2009.

Proposal: The application seeks planning permission for proposed refurbishment of the existing building, to include painted black facade (upper floors), installation of mesh cladding to reception window, double glazed entrance doors/metal gate and screen to ground floor office and mesh car park entrance gates. A revised ground floor layout is proposed to provide 12no. cycle storage spaces and shower/changing facilities together with formation of a 5th floor terrace for communal/office use.

Plans and Documents Considered:

Drawing no.s

AP(0)10 - Existing Ground Floor Plan

AP(2)10 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan

AP(2)15 - Proposed 5th Floor Plan

AP(0)15 - Existing 5th Floor Plan

AE(0)10 - Existing Elevations

AE(2)10 - Proposed Elevations

S1.AP(0)10 - Site Location

Received on 4th July 2017

Minifie Architects Design and Access Statement (and Heritage Note) ref. Forbury Court (August 2017)

Received on 11th September 2017

Relevant Planning History:

97-00379-ADV - 1 No. banner supported on rods fixed to brickwork. Feature F in circle to right hand window and to car park gates - Granted

97-00378-FUL - Installation of new shop front and canopy and modification of existing Entrance - Granted

Consultation Responses:

Notification letters were sent to no.s 10, 16 and 18 Forbury Road, no.s 17-19 and 21-23 Valpy Street and no. 2 Blagrove Street. No representations have been received.

RBC Transport - No objection, subject to a condition.

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).

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 (Adopted January 2008, 2015)

- CS5 Inclusive Access
- CS7 Design and the Public Realm
- CS24 Parking
- CS33 Historic Environment

Sites and Detailed Policies Document - (Adopted October 2012, 2015)

- DM4 Safeguarding Amenity
- DM12 Highway Related Matters

Reading Central Area Action Plan - (Adopted 2009)

- RC5 Design in the Centre

Appraisal

- a) Design and impact on the character of the surrounding area

Policies CS7 and RC5 state that the architectural details and materials used in development should be of high quality in order to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area. The existing building is utilitarian in appearance and the combination of alterations is considered to result in a building of a higher quality appearance than existing. Whilst the proposed painting of the front brick façade black, above ground floor level, provides an interesting adaptation of the tired looking form of the existing building, the painting of an unlisted building outside of a conservation area such as this could be carried without the need for planning permission.

The alterations to the ground floor façade with the introduction of aluminium mesh pattern detailing to the windows and similar mesh pattern to the replacement vehicle entrance gates is considered to turn the existing ‘non-descript’ entrance gates and frontage windows into intricate design features which would be visually attractive and is considered to enhance the buildings contribution to the street-scene. Similarly the vertical linear lighting bars either side of the entrance doors would be modest and discreet whilst also being functional.

The formation of the 5th floor front terrace area would utilise existing openings to replace two windows with two doors to create access to the terrace area which would be decked. This would result in a negligible change in the appearance of the 5th floor front elevation, which due to set back and parapet roof surround at 4th floor below, is not readily visible from street-level. Set down within the terrace area the proposed 1.1m high glazed balustrade would barely be visible above the 4th floor parapet roof.

The proposed façade alterations are considered to result in a building of better visual quality, which, in the context of the existing building and surrounding office buildings it not considered detrimental to the historic character and setting of the adjoined grade II listed ‘Corn Stores’ building at no. 10 Forbury Road. The proposal is considered to preserve the setting of this heritage asset and to accord with Policy CS33.

b) Impact on neighbours

The terrace area is to be utilised in association with the existing office use of the building. There are commercial use adjoining the building to either side as well as opposite and it is not considered that any undue overlooking, noise or disturbance would result from the small terrace area proposed. The proposal is not considered detrimental to the amenity of surrounding occupiers and would accord with Policy DM4 and CS34.

C) Transport

The proposed loss of 2 no. car parking spaces to the ground floor internal car park is considered acceptable given the sites central location which is well served by a range of alternative modes of transport whilst the additional 12 cycle parking spaces are welcomed in terms of proposed more sustainable means of transport to the site.

A condition is recommended to secure a construction management statement for the proposed development given the sites location within the busy town centre and need to management and disturbance and inconvenience to highway users.

Subject to the above condition the proposal is considered to accord with Policies DM12 and CS24.

D) Inclusive Access

The proposal would retain a level access into the building whilst all floors would be served by lift access. The proposal is considered to accord with Policy CS5 which seeks that developments should provide suitable access for all users.

E) Other Issues

The proposal is not liable for the Community Infrastructure Levy.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT full planning permission, 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 permission relates only to the following plans and drawings:

Drawing no.s

AP(0)10 - Existing Ground Floor Plan

AP(2)10 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan

AP(2)15 - Proposed 5th Floor Plan

AP(0)15 - Existing 5th Floor Plan

AE(0)10 - Existing Elevations

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Reason: to clarify which plans have been approved and in the interests of proper planning.

3. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the materials and external finishes details set out on pages 4 and 5 of the Minifie Architects Design and Access Statement (and Heritage Note) ref. Forbury Court (August 2017) received by the Local Planning Authority on 11th September 2017.

Reason: in the interests of the visual amenity of the surrounding area in accordance with Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy 2008, 2015 and Policy RC5 of the Reading Central Area Action Plan 2009.

4. No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the local planning authority to provide for:
- a) space on site where vehicles of site operatives and visitors can be parked with details of how site operatives and visitors will be required to make use of the parking area provided
 - b) location on site for storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development
 - c) the erection and maintenance (including removal of any graffiti or fly posters) of security hoarding around the site
 - d) any footpath closures or road closures needed during construction

The measures within the approved Construction Method Statement shall be maintained and adhered to throughout the course of the development unless changes are agreed in advance and in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: in the interests of protecting the amenity of local land uses or neighbouring residents, the character of the area and highway safety. In accordance with Policy DM12 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012, 2015.

Informatives:

1. These 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 permission. 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. The determination of this planning application required, additional information in the form of a heritage statement. Officers have worked positively and proactively to allow this information to be provided.
4.
 - i) The attention of the applicant is drawn to Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980, which enables the Highway Authority to recover expenses due to damage caused by extraordinary traffic.
 - ii) Any works affecting the Highway shall be in accordance with Reading Borough's Council's document "Guidance Notes for Activities on the Public Highway within the Borough of Reading". The applicant should note that compliance with this document is

mandatory and licences to work on the Highway will only be issued if the requirements contained within it are met. A copy can be obtained from the Council's website.