

FORBURY COURT

AUGUST 2017

Design & Access Statement

BMO  Global Asset Management



MINIFIE ARCHITECTS



CONTENTS

1-2 Introduction, site location and existing building

3-6 The proposal

a. Proposed elevations

b. Proposed terrace

c. Proposed cycle store/showers

7 Conclusion

INTRODUCTION, SITE LOCATION AND EXISTING BUILDING

Introduction

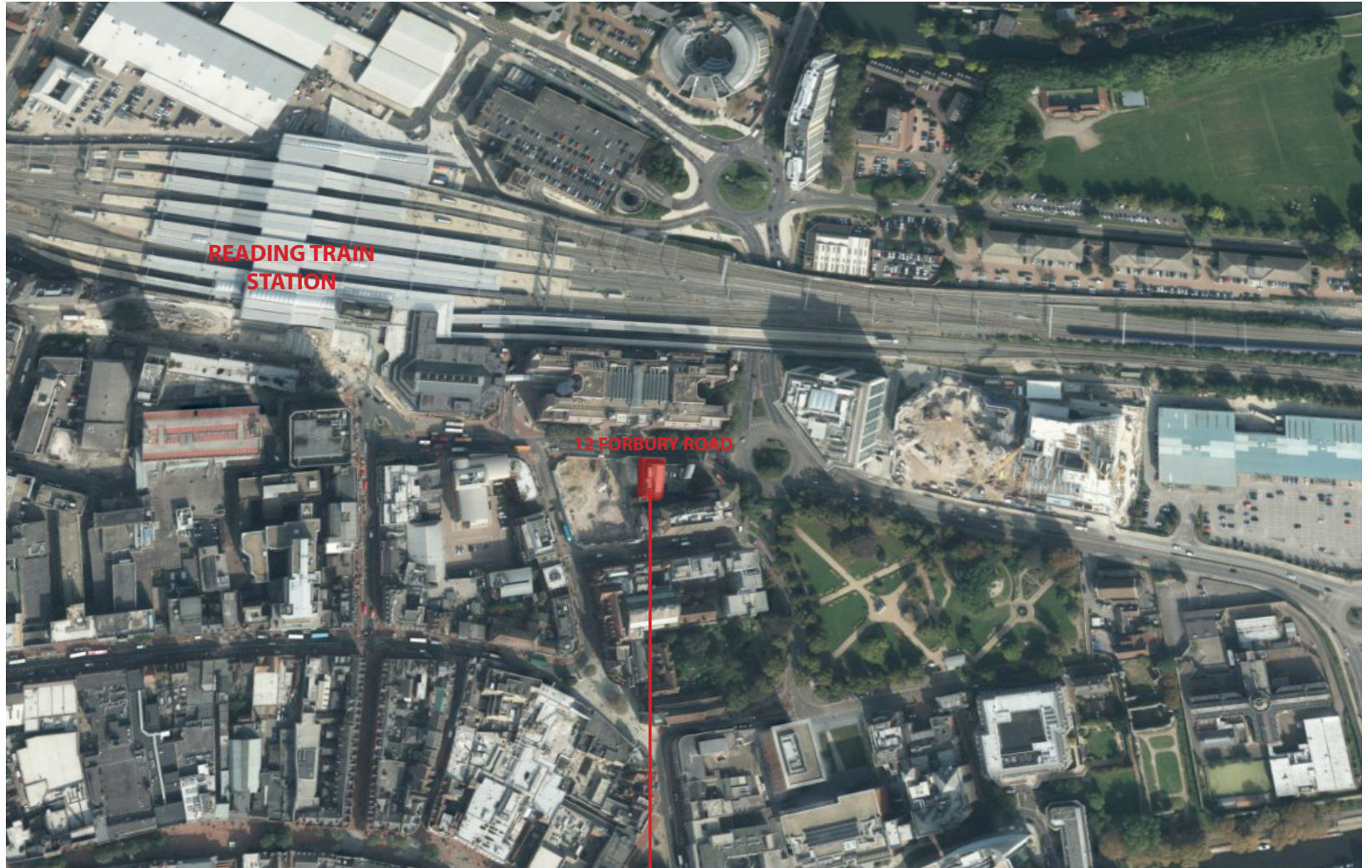
This Design and Access statement is submitted on behalf of BMO Global Asset Management in support of a full planning application for exterior modifications to the existing fabric, in connection with a general programme of internal and external refurbishment works to Forbury Court, 12 Forbury Road, Reading.

The site

The site is set along the busy frontage of Forbury Road and is close to the Reading main line train station. Reading is an important commercial centre- the town hosts the headquarters of several large companies as well as being a major retail centre. Whilst located close enough to London to be regarded as part of the London commuter belt, Reading is a new inward destination for commuters and will be enhanced by the opening of Crossrail.

The site falls within the Abby Quarter boundary and is close to the Market Place/ London Street Conservation Area.

The building operates as entirely B1 office.



Forbury Court



Forbury Court front elevation



Existing 5th floor terrace overlooking Forbury Road



Forbury Court entrance on Forbury Road

THE PROPOSAL

Proposed External Works and modifications

The building was built in the early 1990's and the client has owned it for a number of years. They are now looking to carry out a full refurbishment of 3rd floors, reception, car park along with the front and side façade to regenerate this dated and tired building to meet the standard of its neighbouring contemporaries.

The existing brick façade is to be painted matt black as a way of changing and unifying the elevation of the building, leaving the number 12 in exposed red brick, as a brand identity. This will be applied to the front and side approach of the building along Forbury Road.

A silver coloured metal frame and mesh will form a gate and screen over the entrance reveals to both the dry riser and the letter boxes either side. The shape was derived from the existing columns around the entrance, and has

been repeated in modules with graduating levels of density to control the view and light into the car park and reception space. We are also proposing lighting to the ground level façade.

The proposed work entails new full height entrance doors and side glazed panels. The existing window frame is to be painted black. The entrance will have a level access, with new DDA compliant intercom system to the reveal.

The new car park gates within the existing entrance will have new remote access for both cycles and cars users to the building.

Landscaping

It is also proposed to repave the pavement to the width of the existing building in flush granite setts.



Light fitting



Black painted brick



Building numbering in brick work



Mesh/ metal frame

Proposed Front Elevation



Proposed Terrace

We propose to create a communal terrace on the 5th floor for the tenants, which will have a new metal black balustrade along with grey composite decking and low-level metal tube lights. Sliding doors will provide access from the 5th floor office and metal benches, and colourful planters will provide a usable amenity space for the tenant, and a unique selling point for the office.



Composite decking



Coloured metal benches



Coloured metal planters



Access

The building is located within a short distance from Reading train station and bus terminal. At present, there are no dedicated showers or cycle racks. It is therefore proposed to lose 2nd car parking spaces to make way for 12 cycle spaces and two shower/changing facilities within the existing ground floor car park. We are incorporating an area for condensing units into existing storage.

In terms of inclusive access it is the intention to keep the existing level access into the building. We also propose to refurbish the existing disabled toilet within the existing reception space. All floors are accessible by the existing lift with disabled refuges located within each lift lobby.

Source of Guidance

Statutory requirements:

Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
Approved Document M 2004
edition of the Building Regulations.
Non Statutory guidance where possible.

British standard BS 8300. The design of buildings and their approach to meet the needs of disabled people.



CONCLUSION

Conclusion

The design of the entrance ironmongery and signage on Forbury Road will greatly improve the frontage of the building, which combined with the painting of the facade to correlate the materiality, will offer a more enticing and attractive elevation. The proposed works will improve the existing arrangement for people with disabilities, as well as providing commuter facilities for cyclists. The new fifth floor terrace overlooking Forbury Road will be an additional communal feature.



Heritage Note

Forbury Court, Reading

Introduction

1. This note has been produced by Heritage Collective for BMO Global Asset Management to advise on the effect of the refurbishment and creation of a new roof terrace at Forbury Court, 12 Forbury Road, Reading on the adjacent designated heritage asset the Walter Parsons Corn Store.
2. Forbury Court is a modern building dating to the early 1990s. It is not listed statutorily or locally and is not within a conservation area. Although it is near to the Market Place/London Road Conservation Area (to the west), the built form between the application site and the designated heritage asset would mean that the minor works that are proposed would not affect its character or appearance by being a change within its setting. Instead it is the potential effect of the changes on the significance of the listed grade II Walter Corn Store, adjacent to the application site that is assessed by this note.



Red outline shows conservation area, blue the application site

The Heritage Asset

3. The Walter Parsons Corn Stores was listed grade II on 5 November 1993. The list description describes the building as:

'1/10002 No. 10 Walter Parsons Corn Stores - II Corn merchant's warehouse. Built in 1890 for Walter Parsons, corn merchants. Purple brick with yellow brick and ashlar dressings; slate roof with parapeted gable to front. PLAN: Rectangular plan with carriageway through left side and office on right with front entrance and loading bay behind; and with three storage floors above. EXTERIOR: 4 storey 2-bay gabled north front. The ashlar ground floor has panelled pilasters and segmental arches to office front on right, with panelled and glazed door and 3-light window with overlights above and carriageway on left with plank double doors. Storeys above with moulded brick stringcourses at floor and cill levels and the two bays divided by brick pilasters corbelled at top with ball finials flanking the gable [one ball missing]. Wide 4-light mullion-transom windows with segmental arches. Plain red brick rear elevation with sash windows. INTERIOR: The floors are supported on timber joists with iron beams and iron columns. Collar truss roof with struts. The office has glazed and boarded screen to carriageway. Simple ladder stairs in corner to each floor. Hoist hatch over carriageway and through floors above. Machinery includes winch mechanism on first floor, threshing machine on second floor and hoppers on third floor.'



Walter Parsons Corn Store and Forbury Court

Heritage Values of the Walter Parsons Corn Stores

4. The building is of architectural and historic interest as a late 19th century building that was originally used as a storage facility for corn. The building has architectural interest in the adornment of the front elevation which was also an advert for the firm. The classical style of the building reflects the fashion during the 19th century with the pediment, pilasters, round arched windows and ball finials all contributing to its interest.
5. The original carriage entrance, hoist hatch, winch mechanism and machinery that is presumed¹ to survive within the building contributes to the illustrative interest of the building showing how it functioned as well as an experience of the technological advancements of the period. There is associative interest with Walter Parsons as a corn merchant whose name remains on the pediment of the building and was clearly a wealthy merchant judging by the scale and adornment of the building.
6. The building is of limited archaeological interest. The machinery surviving internally ² has some evidential value in demonstrating mechanisms and technology at the end of the 19th century, but otherwise the built fabric is of limited interest in itself. The building is not of artistic interest.
7. The setting of the building is primarily found in its urban location and proximity to the railway station which would have allowed for the transportation of the goods stored within 10 Forbury Road. The surrounding townscape has been heavily altered since the corn store was built with a number of late 20th century buildings now dominating the streetscene (including the application site) along Forbury Road. These buildings do not contribute to the significance of these buildings.
8. The application site, located adjacent to the listed building is a modern 1990s brick building of no particular architectural interest. Its height, mass and bulk are all in excess of, and in contrast to, the listed building. Therefore, there is no real association between the two buildings and it cannot be considered that Forbury Court contributes to the significance of the listed building.

¹ It is presumed the machinery has not been removed, access to this building was not possible when a site visit was undertaken.

² See above

Proposals

9. It is proposed to refurbish the building internally and externally and to create a new roof terrace in the location of the existing flat roof at the front of the building. It is only the external changes which could affect the significance of the listed building. These changes are limited to:
- Painting the existing brickwork white at ground floor and black above. Some red brickwork would be left exposed in the 'Twelve' letters at ground and first floor level (refer to drawings included in the application).
 - A new silver coloured metal frame and mesh will form a grate and screen over the entrance reveals.
 - Creation of a new terrace at fifth floor including the provision of a new balustrade, low level lights, new windows and patio doors to provide access onto a terrace.

Potential Effects in Walter Parsons Corn Store

10. The proposed works are minor and will not physically affect the listed building, therefore it is only the change to its setting that can effect the significance of the heritage asset.
11. The architectural and historic interest of the listed building will be preserved by the changes to Forbury Court. The refurbishment of the ground floor entrance and the painting of the building will change the appearance of the building within the streetscene but this will update the building to match other more modern development on and surrounding Forbury Road. There would be no appreciable change to the bulk, scale and mass of Forbury Court that could affect the significance of the listed building which is primarily found in its interest as a warehouse/storage building and the machinery which survives to illustrates this. The black painted brickwork would not detract from the architectural interest of this listed building and would not compete with the historic facade of the Walter Parsons Corn Store.
12. The significance of the listed building would be preserved by the proposed change at Forbury Court. This building makes no contribution to the setting of the Walter Parsons Corn Stores, the only aspect of significance that the setting of the building

contributes to is the proximity to the railway. This would be completely unaffected by the change at Forbury Court.

Policy Context

13. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is engaged by the proposals which requires the local authority to give considerable importance and weight to preserving the special architectural and historical interest (heritage significance), including the setting, of a listed building.
14. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides guidance to local authorities on the conservation and management of the historic environment (Section 12). The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions along with the local planning policies. Setting is defined as:

'The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.'

15. Paragraphs 132-134 deal specifically with designated heritage assets, in this case Walter Parsons Corn Stores, and the need to balance the benefits of a proposed development against any harm to the significance of this asset. The levels of harm are divided between total loss or substantial harm to significance (132-133) or less than substantial harm to significance (134). Heritage significance is one of a number of material considerations for the decision maker in weighing the planning balance. In this instance there would be no harm to the designated heritage asset by the proposals and paragraphs 132-134 of the NPPF would not be engaged.
16. Local planning policy documents includes The Core Strategy (adopted January 2008). Policy CS33 - Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment addresses the management of the historic environment and states the setting of heritage assets should be protected or where appropriate enhanced. As demonstrated above the proposals would not affect the setting of the heritage asset and is therefore compliant with this policy.

Summary

17. The proposed works are for the refurbishment of Forbury Court. This building is not listed statutorily or locally and is not within a conservation area. It is adjacent to a listed building – Walter Parsons Corn Store.
18. The proposed works to Forbury Court are for the refurbishment internally and externally of this building including the painting of the front elevation, new glazing and mesh to the entrance reveals and the introduction of a roof terrace to an existing flat roof.
19. The proposed changes are minor and would not harm the significance of the listed building by a change in its setting. The significance of the Walter Parsons Corn Store would be preserved in accordance with the 1990 Act and no harm is identified therefore paragraphs 132-134 are not engaged. The proposals are compliant with heritage related policy CS33.



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