

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey

App Ref: 240391/FUL

Address: Aldwych House, 2 Blagrove Street, Reading, RG1 1AZ

Proposals: Proposal to add louvres above the existing 2 balcony doors on the 5th floor, south elevation.

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

Date received (valid from): 30 April 2024 Target Decision date: 25 June 2024

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a six storey office building that occupies frontages on Blagrove Street, Valpy Street and Forbury Road.

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. The surrounding area is mainly characterised by class E uses, although there are also a Sui generis Pub use nearby, with C3 accommodation situated to the rear of the site.

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 and is not a listed building, 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, Office Core Area and AQMA, along the Classified Highway network

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal to add louvres above the existing 2 balcony doors on the 5th floor on the south elevation to increase internal air supply. Information has been provided regarding the heat recovery unit, attenuators and the weather louvre detail. All associated equipment is internal and approximately 15m distance from the louvres. The mechanical heat recovery unit will not connect to the existing plant, only to the Air inlet louvre and Air discharge louvre, to operate only during daytime office hours.

The proposed louvres are proposed to match the existing façade panels RAL colour in a Light Grey.

Plans considered

Application letter, Oktra Ltd

CIL

CROWE-OKT-31-AZZ-DE-I-3101-Existing South Elevation

~~CROWE-OKT-31-AZZ-DE-I-3102-P03-Proposed South Elevation~~

CROWE-OKT-XX-AZZ-DP-I-0012-Site Plan

Location Plan
As received 02/04/2024

Planning statement, Oktra Ltd, April 2024
CROWE—OKT—31—AZZ—DE—I—3102 C03 Proposed South Elevation
As received 30/04/2024

Caice Attenuator brochure specification
S70620-M-05-MEC-01-RD 5th floor Mechanical Services Layout
LGH-RVX3-E Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery (MVHR)
FBL Series Louvres, Fixed Blade Weather Louvres, jpr services
As received 18/06/2024

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

101300/FUL - 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/NMA - 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 19/03/2024

141927/NMA - 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 (Civica ref 101300) Granted 20/02/2015

151948/NMA - 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.

160506/APC - Discharge of condition 14 (Noise Assessment) of planning permission 101300 (10/00989/FUL). Granted 13/04/2016

180436/FUL - Installation of ground floor fire escape door on west elevation and plant equipment within existing rooftop plant enclosure. Granted 09/05/2018

221015/FUL - Use of the fifth floor roof area as a roof terrace. Withdrawn 09/05/2023.

230166/NMA - Minor amendment to planning permission 211882 - for the proposed alterations to the layout and height of the concrete steps and landing, reduction of the concrete planters, alteration of the external railings, incorporation of drainage pipes, and new closing piece to rear (amended). Under consideration.

4. CONSULTATIONS

A site notice was displayed at the site on 9 May 2024 for comments to be received by 30 May 2024. The following addresses were also consulted by letter.

Flat 4, 17-19 Valpy Street, Reading, RG1 1AR
Flat 3, 17-19 Valpy Street, Reading, RG1 1AR
Flat 2, 17-19 Valpy Street, Reading, RG1 1AR
Flat 1, 17-19 Valpy Street, Reading, RG1 1AR
Flat 5, 17-19 Valpy Street, Reading, RG1 1AR
Flat 6, 17-19 Valpy Street, Reading, RG1 1AR

No letters of representation have been received.

RBC Building control - A building regulation would be required, with an application to the BSR rather than the RBC as the building is classified as a 'relevant building'

Relevant building definition

(4) In this regulation—

(a) a “relevant building” means a building with a storey (not including roof-top plant areas or any storey

consisting exclusively of plant rooms) at least 18 metres above ground level and which—

(i) contains one or more dwellings;

(ii) contains an institution; or

(iii) contains a room for residential purposes; and

(b) “above ground level” in relation to a storey means above ground level when measured from the lowest

ground level adjoining the outside of a building to the top of the floor surface of the storey.

RBC Environmental Protection - No objections to the proposal following the submission of additional plant specifications.

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.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

EN16: POLLUTION AND WATER RESOURCES

EN17: NOISE GENERATING EQUIPMENT

CR2: DESIGN IN CENTRAL READING

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.

APPRAISAL

Impact of proposed louvres on the public realm

Policy CC7 states, 'All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.'

The louvres are proposed to match the existing building in colour, small scale changes are proposed which will not be seen within the public realm due to the height and set-back of the 5th floor. As such the visual changes are considered negligible.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

Policy CC8 states, 'Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of:

- Noise and disturbance.'

Policy EN16 states, 'Development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment and sensitive receptors through land, noise or light pollution'.

The RBC Environmental Protection team have assessed all of the plant proposed and have no objection to the product specifications proposed. The office building will use the proposed louvres MHRU during daytime hours. The louvres are not considered to detrimentally impact any neighbouring residential amenity in respect of noise and disturbance.

The mechanical plant in relation to the Louvres hereby permitted shall be operated during daytime hours only. Any additional plant required (not hereby permitted) in relation to the Louvres would require an additional noise report to be submitted.

Other issues

Building Safety Regulator

Building Regulations will be required, as it is a 'relevant building.' The applicant is advised to contact the BSR for building control approval as the proposed works include alterations to the building façade.

Use of the 5th floor roof

No permission has been granted for the external use of the 5th floor terrace. Additional planning permission would be required.

Conclusion

The recommendation for the addition of louvres is considered acceptable and to comply with relevant national and local planning policy for the reasons stated above, subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve

Subject to the following conditions:

Time limit

Approved plans

Materials

Plant daytime hours

No additional plant other than hereby approved

Construction hours