

leftcity



2 Blagrove Street, Reading

Planning Statement

for Oktra

April 2024

2 Blagrove Street, R+building

Building background

The R+ Building, is a 6 storey commercial (class E) building located in the centre of Reading. The building has been newly constructed and so is not listed. The only listed building in close proximity is the Walter Parsons Corn Stores, which is a Grade II Listed Building in Forbury Road. Although the building sits adjacent to the R+ building, the proposed works are to the Blagrove Street elevation and therefore there is no visual connection between the two. The building does not sit within a conservation area.

The current building is a result of application made in 2019 (Application: 101300)

Current Proposals

The tenant of the fifth floor of the building has a requirement to provide air conditioning to the space due to be occupied. Best practice dictates that air conditioning plant is most efficient when it is located as close as possible to the area to be served, as this reduces the energy requirement. It is therefore proposed that units are located within the floorplate with louvres for fresh air supply located on the external face of the building. The upper floors on the South East elevation are set back from the building line and therefore will not have a high level of visibility from street level. Further the proposed louvres have been designed to tie in with the existing building detailing, with the louvres being to the depth of the suspended ceiling sitting behind the glazing and also in colours to match the existing. Louvres will further be to match the width of the glazed units. In this way the impact of the installation will be minimised.

Planning Policy

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. Where there is a difference in policy, Section 38(5) requires that the most recently adopted policy takes precedence.

Planning Policy exists at both National and Local Level. The latest version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2023 and sets out overall requirements of the Planning system at National Level, this guidance is the overarching set of rules which require to be followed when local councils produce Local Plans, setting policy at a local and specific level.

NPPF encourages sustainable development. There is also active encouragement supporting energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings.

Reading Borough Local Plan was adopted in 2019 and sets out the vision and aspirations for the area within the lifespan of the plan.

Development proposals will be determined when judged against the policies set out in these documents

NPPF policies

One of the key threads that runs through the NPPF is the concept of sustainable development. Sustainable development is considered to have environmental, social and economic implications. Clearly minor alterations to an existing office space in order to make it suitable for an incoming tenant mean that a previously empty office space in the heart of the town centre will come into full use. Use of existing town centre buildings with good links to public transport is key to sustainability.

Reading Borough Local Plan policies

Reading is a major centre for employment. The borough is said to have more jobs than workers meaning that many commute into the town from other neighbouring authorities. Maintaining the quality of office environment and the attractiveness as a place for business to be conducted.

Policy CC7 – Design and Public Realm

This policy requires that all development must be of high design quality which maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.

With reference to the current proposals, external louvres have been designed in a manner which sits well with the existing building. The location of the louvres has been chosen specifically as the elevation is set back from the building line, meaning that visibility from street level is reduced and the visual impact will be minimal.

Policy CC8 – Safeguarding Amenity

Development will not be permitted where it will have a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties.

With regard to the present proposals, it is considered that the installation will have no noticeable noise impact on the surrounding area. Plant units are to be located to the interior of the building and the louvres will provide intake and extract, and therefore the louvres to the windows will generate little to no noise.

Policy EN17 – Noise generating equipment

Where noise generating equipment is proposed, noise levels should be at least 10dBA lower than the existing background level as measured at the nearest noise sensitive receptor.

As outlined above the units which are served by the louvres are located within the ceiling space of the office floor and therefore will not increase the overall noise generated by the building in line with the current plant.

Other Policies – Employment

In creating an office space which meets the internal environmental requirements of the new tenant, without compromising the appearance of the building, this works with Reading policies concerning employment (4.3) Although the works do not propose additional floor space, they do seek to make minor alterations to an existing office space to make it work for the new tenant.

Planning history of the building

Much of the recent planning history of the building is related to conditions of the application for the new 6 storey building which is the application site.

Date	Description	Application no
26/01/2023	Application for approval of details reserved by condition 5 (Hard and Soft Landscaping) of Application 211882	230099
13/02/2023	Application for approval of details reserved by condition 4 (External Lighting) of Application 211882	230167
13/02/2023	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).	230166
11/07/2022	Use of the fifth floor roof area as a roof terrace	221015
06/07/2022	Application for advertisement consent for 1 internally illuminated fascia sign	220991
19/01/2022	Application for approval of details reserved by condition 3 (Construction Method Statement) of application 210655	220075
19/11/2021	Construction of new external staircase (replacing existing) at the front entrance and associated works (amended description)	211882
27/04/2021	Erection of external staircase	210655
08/03/2018	Installation of ground floor fire escape door on west elevation and plant equipment within existing rooftop plant enclosure.	180436
16/12/2016	Discharge of condition 25 (BREEAM Final Certificate) of planning permission 140540	162335
26/05/2016	Discharge of condition 26 (Sustainable Building Standards) of planning permission 140540	161023
06/05/2016	Discharge of conditions 3 (Travel Plan), 6 (Footway Reinstatement), 14 (Noise Assessment), 25 (BREEAM) and 27 (External Lighting) of planning permission 140540	160845
11/03/2016	Discharge of condition 14 (Noise Assessment) of planning permission 101300 (10/00989/FUL)	160506
03/03/2016	Discharge of condition 6 (footway reinstatement) and partial discharge of condition 25 (BREEAM) of planning permission 101300 (10/00989/FUL)	160402
22/02/2016	Display of 2 non-illuminated fascia signs at the main entrance and 1 non-illuminated fascia sign at the car park entrance.	160321

30/10/2015	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.	151948
29/10/2015	Discharge of condition 27 (external lighting) of planning permission 101300 (10/00989/FUL)	151937
10/07/2015	Non-material amendment to planning permission 101300 relating to alterations to public artwork	151213
27/04/2015	Discharge of condition 3 (travel plan) of planning permission 101300 (10/00989/FUL)	150736
03/12/2014	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)	141927
11/04/2014	Variation of condition 28 of planning application 140109. Addition of plant material to roof and external alterations	140540
21/02/2014	Discharge of condition 13 of planning permission 101300	140267
28/01/2014	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	140109
18/11/2013	Discharge of conditions 2, 13 and 20 of planning permission 10/00989/FUL	131612
01/11/2013	Discharge of conditions 7, 8, 18, 21 and 23 of planning permission 10/00989/FUL	131536
04/10/2013	Discharge of conditions 12, 16, 19, 22, and 14 of planning permission 10/00989/FUL	131404
09/11/2011	Application for the extension of the time limit for implementation of planning permission 08/01093/FUL for the refurbishment of existing office building including new cladding and the inclusion of two additional floors	110456
09/09/2010	Retrospective application for mesh banner	101241
19/05/2010	Demolition of existing office building and construction of new 6-storey office building with associated basement car park and external works	101300
19/06/2009	Refurbishment of existing office building including new cladding and the inclusion of two additional floors without complying with condition 25 of planning permission 08/01093/FUL	090845

15/01/2009	Retrospective mesh banner suspended by cable system	090294
15/08/2008	Refurbishment of existing office building including new cladding and the inclusion of two additional floors	081109

Conclusion

Although the proposed works are very minor in nature, they do provide the required working environment for an incoming tenant and are designed taking the detail of the existing building into consideration. It is therefore considered that they accord with National and Local Planning Policy.