

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey

App Ref: 240160/FUL

Address: Sub Station, St Marys Butts, Reading

Proposals: To add a painted mural on Di-Bond aluminium panels that will be fixed to the external wall of the building facing St Mary's Butts. The mural will depict the history and heritage of the area and Reading. There will also be an information panel mounted on the wall. The panels will sit within recessed areas of the wall and not protrude.

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

Date received (valid from): 8 February 2024 **Target Decision date:** 4 April 2024

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is occupied by a brick built Victorian sub-station on the corner of Hosier Street and St Marys Butts, set back from the road. It is sited behind the Reading Hosier Street market that takes place on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

The sub station is not a listed building but is located within the edge boundary of the St Mary's Butts Conservation area and Reading High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ), 52m west of the Grade I listed church of St Mary's Butts and Grade II listed memorial and fountain.

The site is located within the Council's Minster Quarter Area as part of the Minster Quarter Development Framework (2018) which outlines future development aspirations for the area setting out that the Minster Quarter Area will be a distinctive and high-quality, high density, mixed use area within Reading's Central Core. The area will portray a unique character and sense of place retaining the historical associations of the area and its wider environs, providing high quality public realm, both through the enhancement of existing public spaces adjacent to the site and the provision of new spaces that provide a setting and focus for new development.

The site is also located within the Central Core and Office Core Areas of the town centre, within the Primary Shopping Area and an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) as defined by the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Site visit date: 21/02/2024

Site visit photo:



Google map (May 2012)



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal forms part of a community project for a public art display at the sub-station at Hosier Street/St Mary's Butts, called the Market Tree. The application has been submitted by the artist for a hand-painted mural that has been painted in sections using a colour by numbers format by volunteer members of the public within the Broad Street Mall. The artwork may result in small changes to the design, which will not alter the impact of the artworks and will be approved in writing by the local authority.

The mural is proposed to be fixed into the recessed sections of the sub-station. Materials proposed comprise Di-Bond aluminium panels that have been prepared with an undercoat of paint, drawn on and hand painted, with a top layer of transparent anti-graffiti covering. The mural will depict the history and heritage of the area and Reading. There will also be an information panel mounted on the wall to provide an explanation and history of the project. The panels will sit within recessed areas of the wall and not protrude.

Plans considered

Location plan

Application statement and concept designs

CIL

As received 08/02/2024

Information board

As received 22/03/2024

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following addresses were consulted by letter. An advert was also placed in a local newspaper and a site notice was displayed at the site for the required period.

32 St Marys Butts, Reading, RG1 2LS

The Boundary Ph, 21-23 St Marys Butts, Reading, RG1 2LN

Flat 2, 32 St Marys Butts, Reading, RG1 2LS

Flat 1, 32 St Marys Butts, Reading, RG1 2LS

No letters of representation have been received.

Consultees

Reading Conservatory Area Advisory Committee - No response was received at the time of writing this report.

Reading Civic Society Committee - No response was received at the time of writing this report.

RBC Conservation officer - It is acceptable in principle however, additional information was requested regarding the proposed materials to be used and the scale of artwork proposed, due to the location in the setting of listed buildings.

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:

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.

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Insert any additional e.g. National Design Guide, Historic England Guides etc etc.

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

EN6: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN A HISTORIC CONTEXT

TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS

CR2: DESIGN IN CENTRAL READING

CR3: PUBLIC REALM IN CENTRAL READING

Other Local Documents

St Mary's Butts Conservation Area Appraisal

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

Design and Impact on the Historic Character of the St Mary's Butts Conservation area and Visual Amenity of the Area

The proposal seeks to provide a mural, resulting from a community project. The artwork is set back from St Marys Butts on the pavement behind trees and a bus stop in the brick recesses of the substation. It is considered to enliven the area without detracting from the setting of the listed buildings in the vicinity.

The use of timber as an art material was investigated, however it was discounted as unsuitable due to the risk of damp damaging the artwork. The Dibond panels will be hand painted and will have a textured appearance.

It is considered that the proposed artwork, by incorporating the history of the area makes a positive contribution within the public realm, on the boarder of the St Mary's Butts conservation area.

Before the installation of the artwork, any minor changes in design are to be approved in writing by the local authority, due to the fluid nature of the creation of the artwork. This is recommended to protect the character of the location and comply with policy CC7 and EN3.

There is sufficient space on the pavement to enable the works to be completed whilst not obstructing pedestrians.

The proposal is acceptable in principle and considered to enhance the public realm within the setting of St Mary's Butts Conservation Area and the setting of the historic environment. The artwork should not detract from Grade I listed church of St Mary's Butts and Grade II listed memorial and fountain, in accordance with Policy EN1. The Local Authority has therefore discharged their duties under the relevant section of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. (Policies EN1 and CC7).

7. CONCLUSION

GRANT.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Approve

Subject to the following conditions:

Time limit

Materials

Proposed works and plans