

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Redlands

App Ref: PL/24/0590 Full planning permission

Address: St Josephs College, 64 Upper Redlands Road, Reading, RG1 5JT

Proposal: Replacement windows, replacement roofing and the provision of PV panels to the South facing roof slope.

Applicant: Mrs Rachel Sheridan

Received date: 2024-05-07

Target Decision date: 2024-12-23 (EOT)

Case Officer: Marcelina Rejwerska

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a 1930s addition to the Grade II listed Broad Oak. While the property is not considered to be part of the listed building itself, it sits within the curtilage, setting and context of the listed building. It can be argued that the property defines the main character/architectural style for the listed curtilage and wider setting. The national listing reads as follows:

UPPER REDLANDS ROAD 1. 5128 Broad Oak SU 77 SW 17/588 II 2. Now incorporated in a Convent. Circa 1870-1890s. 2½ storeys, red brick with stone bands to plinth, ground floor lintel and 1st floor cill. Stone dressings and coped verges. Ball finials to kneelers. Asymmetrical plan with 2 slight end gable breaks and a further gable to right. 5 bays in all : 2 storey bay to left triple lancet and oculus-type stair window left of centre. Thicker panel of masonry for arched entrance (with "Broad Oak" inscribed in relief on lintel). 3 snail foiled lights over. 2 right hand windows have mullion and transom windows. Tiled roof with Joseph Morris-type dormers :- 2 gables it triangular moulded verges and 2 lights. Interior: not outstanding. Tiled hall with staircase to left, unusual balustrade and pendants. Chimneypieces circa 1890 with pigeon-hole over mantels.



Aerial 2002 – Grade II listed Broad Oak is yellow circled and the historic school building is circled in red



Area of the proposed works circled in blue.

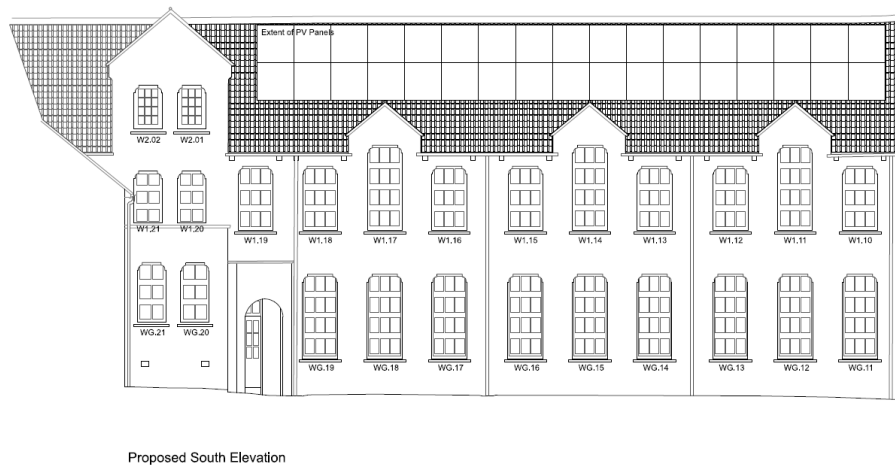


Aerial view of the application site. Image taken from Google Maps on 21/10/2024.

The application site is not within a conservation area. The surrounding area is predominately residential, including student accommodation within the University of Reading campus on the other side of Upper Redlands Road.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought to replace existing timber windows within Block B of the school, which is not listed, with triple-glazed uPVC windows, replacement roofing and installation of PV panels on the front elevation slope of the roof. The application does not specify which windows are to be replaced.



2.1. Information Submitted:

Design and Access Statement, The Bush Consultancy, dated April 2024, received 20 May 2024

Ecological Impact Assessment, Darwin Ecology, dated June 2024, received 1 July 2024

Heritage Statement, Ridgeway Heritage Consultancy, dated 14 August 2024, received 3 September 2024

Location plan, dated 7 May 2024, received 7 May 2024

3860-TBC-V0-ZZ-DR-A-2050-P01 Existing Elevations, dated 30 April 2024, received 7 May 2024

3860-TBC-V0-ZZ-DR-A-2000-P01 Block Plan, dated 30 April 2024, received 7 May 2024

Bridgwater Double Roman Product Technical Information Sheet, Wienerberger, received 16 October 2024

Heritage Flush Sash Technical Guide, Deceuninck, received 16 October 2024

TOPHiKiu6 (All-Black) Preliminary Technical Information Sheet, Canadian Solar, received 16 October 2024

3860-TBC-V0-ZZ-DR-A-2000-P02 Proposed Elevations, dated 11 December 2024, received 11 December 2024

3860-TBC-V0-ZZ-DR-A-021D-P01 Roof Plan, dated 11 December 2024, received 11 December 2024

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- PL/90/1174 – Erection of 1.5m TV satellite dish on flat roof rear of main school. – Application permitted
- PL/92/0629 – Construction of covered walkway and screen to link WC area with eastern covered way. – Application permitted
- PL/95/0054 – Erection of single storey building for art room. – Application permitted
- PL/03/0396 - Part retrospective application for erection of 2.4 metre high palisade fence and double gates on boundary with Lydford Rd and Alexandra Rd, to include sections of fencing at 0.4 metres in height attached to the brick wall on Alexandra Rd. – Application permitted
- PL/05/0881 – Single storey side extension with garage attached and front porch – Application permitted
- PL/06/0522 – New garage – Application permitted
- PL/11/0642 – Installation of roof mounted solar PV panels – Application permitted but not implemented
- PL/12/0627 – Construction of new nursery classroom building – Application permitted

- PL/14/1781 & PL/14/1782 – Creation of double storey bay entrance, replacement windows on eastern elevation, internal alterations and landscaping – Application permitted
- PL/15/1719 - Installation of two Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA) together with associated fencing and floodlights for 1 MUGA and installation of steps and a gate for access. Erection of single storey changing room building and removal of bike sheds. – Application permitted
- PL/16/1734 - Installation of two Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA) together with associated fencing and floodlights for 1 MUGA and installation of steps and a gate for access. Erection of single storey changing room building and removal of bike sheds but with varied conditions 5 and 6 of planning permission 151719 to extend the hours of use to 9pm for one day per year. – Application permitted
- PL/17/0687 – Erection of a new music block – Application permitted.

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- **RBC Conservation Officer** – The proposed PV panels, by reason of their location, scale, and colour, would dominate the roof of the eastern wing, detract from the appearance of the historic school building and be highly visible from the public realm, resulting in harm to the listed curtilage and setting of the listed building. The proposed replacement uPVC windows, because of their unsympathetic design and materials, would also harm the historic and architectural character of the listed curtilage. The harm caused by the proposed development on the setting of the listed building would, therefore, be less than substantial harm at the moderate level. As the benefit of the energy efficiency measures would not outweigh this harm, the proposal would not meet the requirements of Policy EN1 of the Local Plan and Paragraph 215 of the NPPF (December 2024).
- **RBC Ecology** – No objections on ecological grounds.

The following addresses were consulted by letter:

- 110 Blenheim Gardens, READING RG1 5QJ
- 112 Blenheim Gardens, READING RG1 5QJ
- 114 Blenheim Gardens, READING RG1 5QJ
- Redlands Primary School, Lydford Road, READING RG1 5QH
- 88-118 (even) Blenheim Gardens, READING RG1 5QJ

No letters of representation received. The applicant displayed a site notice on site.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the LPA 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 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).

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC4: DECENTRALISED ENERGY

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Local Plan Update

The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. A consultation version of the draft updated version of the Local Plan was published on 6th November 2024.

Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become “out of date” when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example.

Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to this application listed above is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remains very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the appraisal below and are not considered to be ‘out of date’.

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.

6. APPRAISAL

Policy EN1 states “Applications which affect Listed Buildings will not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where appropriate, their settings.”

The proposal does not specify which windows are to be replaced, and, therefore, it is not possible to fully assess the application. The case officer requested that this be specified but no clarification has been received from the applicant. Regardless, the use of uPVC is not considered appropriate in the context of this site. The existing windows are timber sashes which the Heritage Statement identifies are in poor state and in need of replacement. The case officer requested that this be revised to timber sash like-for-like replacement windows, and that for the purpose of better energy performance, these could be double glazed, however, this was not agreed by the applicant.

With regards to the roof repair and replacement of tiles, this is considered acceptable. As identified in the submitted Heritage Statement, the existing roof tiles are no longer in production, and the proposed materials are considered a suitable choice. There is, therefore, no objection to the roof replacement and repairs.

The proposed solar panels are positioned on the front elevation roof slope, highly visible from Upper Redlands Road and, therefore, dominant and imposing on the character of the building. The applicant was advised that these could be relocated to a roof space of a more modern addition within the school grounds. However, agreement was not reached with the applicant on this, and the proposal is assessed on the positioning of the panels as per the submitted proposed elevations and roof plan. This placement is not considered suitable or sympathetic to the character of the building due to its high visibility and prominence, as viewed from the street.

Overall, the proposed works are not considered sympathetic to the character of the building, and the setting of the listed heritage asset.

7. CONCLUSION

Insufficient information has been submitted to allow the officers to fully assess the proposal, as it is not stated which windows are to be replaced. Regardless, their replacement with uPVC is not considered appropriate given the character of the property. Similarly, the proposed prominent placement and number of the proposed solar panels would detract from the character of the property. The energy benefits to the site are not considered to outweigh the harm to the appearance of the property when other alternatives could be reasonably considered.

8. RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE

Due to the following reasons:

1. Insufficient information has been submitted regarding which windows are to be replaced and as such it is not possible to fully assess the proposal. Additionally, the proposed uPVC materials are not considered sympathetic to the character of the property nor the setting of the listed building, contrary to Policies CC7 and EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
2. Due to their prominent siting and excessive quantity, the proposed solar panels would be highly visible from Upper Redlands Road, harmful to the character of the site, the setting of the nearby designated heritage assets, and the wider surrounding area. The harm caused by the proposed development on the setting of the listed building would be less than substantial harm at the moderate level. As the benefit of the energy efficiency measures would not outweigh this harm, contrary to the requirements of Policies CC7 and EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and Paragraph 215 of the NPPF (December 2024).