

Our Ref: LG/B0048-24

10 January 2025

Development Management
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

Via Planning portal

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Application for Listed Building Consent for temporary internal and external works to The Narrowboat (Bel and Dragon), Blakes, Lock, Reading, RG1 3EQ
Planning Portal Ref: PP-13682789

We are instructed by our client, Fuller Smith and Turner, to submit an application for Listed Building Consent for proposed temporary works to The Narrowboat, Blakes Lock, Reading.

The works are proposed following the recent grant of full planning permission (Reference PL/24/0619) for the temporary change of use of the public house to a kitchen training facility (Chefs Academy) for Fullers staff for a period of up to 5 years. All works set out within this application are temporary in nature and will be removed from the building upon cease of the temporary use and the reinstatement of brickwork and the overlights undertaken. In addition, all loose fittings and furniture and AC units associated with the temporary use will also be removed and where possible re-used by Fullers within their pub portfolio.

Specifically, the application seeks consent for the following works:

“Temporary installation of 2No. extract louvres to the southeast and southwest elevations through modification of 2no overlights; temporary installation of 4No. air condensers to an existing flat roof; temporary installation of steelwork frame to support kitchen extract ductwork serving delegate stations; temporary installation of 2.5 timber partition screens to separate meeting area from training kitchen; insertion of new double doors within existing opening in the southwest elevation; and replacement of existing pipework to the interior space of the southwest wall”.

The application has been submitted via the Planning Portal. In addition to the forms and ownership Certificate A the application comprises the following:



Drawings

• Site Location Plan	-
• Existing External Elevations	24-101-08-01
• Proposed External Elevations	24-101-08-02
• Existing and Proposed Roof Layout	24-101-02-03
• Existing Ground Floor Plan	24-101-01-01
• Proposed Ground Floor Plan	24-101-02-01
• Proposed Ground Floor Kitchen Section	24-101-02-05
• Proposed Ground Floor Structural Details	24-101-02-02
• Proposed Ground Floor Extract Details	24-101-02-04

Documents

- Covering Letter.
- Heritage Assessment.
- Design and Access Statement.

We understand that there is no planning fee in respect to this listed building consent application.

Site and Surrounds

The Narrowboat is located to the south of Gas Works Road, on the north bank of the River Kennet to the northeast of the centre of Reading.

The public house incorporates the southwest range of the former engine house within its accommodation. The former engine house is a Grade II listed building (NHLE: 1248683) constructed in the late 19th century as part of the Blakes Lock Sewage Works.

To the east and northeast are the Grade II listed Screens House (NHLE: 1113618) and pump and turbine house (NHLE: 1321867) both of which formed part of the Blakes Lock Sewage Pumping works, and which are contemporary in origin and design aesthetic as the former engine house.

To the southwest and west of the Narrowboat is a large car park area which serves the public house and restaurant and the museum.



Land uses within the immediate vicinity of the pub are typically residential and comprise multi-storey apartment blocks.

The main trading area of the public house is accommodated within a later addition adjoining the engine house to the southwest and is linked to the listed building by a low, two-storey range which is gabled to the southeast and which has the existing kitchen extract and intake equipment fitted to the northwest. The main range of the later addition is taller but also extends to two-storeys in height and has red brick and timber clad external elevations and metal sheet roof covering.

Planning History

The following applications are of relevance to the proposed works to proposed works:

- 010817 – Part change of use to restaurant (A3) demolition of existing industrial sheds and retention, extension and refurbishment of museum buildings – Granted 5 March 2002
- 030242 – Erection of 3-metre high timber gates – Granted 23 June 2023
- 161260 – Proposed change of use at first floor to create five guest bedrooms and associated external alterations – Granted subject to S106 agreement 14 June 2017
- PL/24/0619 – Proposed temporary change of use of the existing public house to a public house staff training facility, for a temporary period of up to five years – Granted 11 September 2024

Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that “*if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Act, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise*”. Any issue that relates to the use of land is capable of being a material consideration, this includes government statements of planning policy.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The aim of the document is to ensure that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that positive solutions are found to ensure economic development is brought forward.

Section 6 is concerned with building a strong and competitive economy. Paragraph 85 states that planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt and that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity. It goes on to state at paragraph 87 that decisions should recognize and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors.



Section 16 address the need for development to conserve and enhance the historic environment. Paragraph 207 requires that LPAs require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage asset affected by a development proposal, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance. Paragraph 2010 a) states that in determining applications, LPAs should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

Local Development Plan

The Development Plan for the site comprises the Reading Borough Local Plan adopted in November 2019.

Policy EN1 – Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment is relevant in considering the proposal. This policy states that historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced. The policy continues advising that proposals which affect listed buildings will not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest, including their setting.

Heritage Assessment

A proportionate heritage statement has been prepared to accompany the application submission.

It is anticipated that less than substantial harm would result to the significance of the building from limited aspects of the proposed works. In accordance with the NPPF, the harm identified should be weighed against the public benefits of the works overall which include the creation of national training facility which will support the creation of a full-time trainer / management position responsible for the management and operation of the training kitchen alongside the creation of other part time work opportunities ancillary to the temporary use such as cleaning jobs. In addition, the works would support investment in Fullers staff helping them to develop new skills.

The works should also be considered in the context of heritage benefits where the proposals support the viable use of the Narrowboat in the interim period with the facility operating from the building on a minimum basis of 5 days a week.

Whilst limited less than substantial harm is judged to result from limited elements of the temporary works, the key features which are of most interest and which contribute expressly to the significance of the listed building and its group value as part a larger historic sewage works complex would be conserved within the works. In addition resulting harm would be temporary only with those elements physically impacted repaired and reinstated to replicate the existing detail following cease of the temporary use. It is considered that harm would be outweighed by the benefits offered by the proposals.



Conclusion

The application submission demonstrates that the proposed works will not give rise to any unacceptable harm to the significance of the listed building nor to its setting.

The scheme has been shown to accord with relevant local and national planning policy and therefore we respectfully request that listed building consent is granted without delay.

The applicant wishes to work with the Council on these proposals and as such, if you have any queries in relation to the submission, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



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Cc: David Lilley, Fuller Smith and Turner

