

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Redlands Ward

App Ref: PL/24/1580 Full planning permission

Address: SOUTH BLOCK, ROYAL BERKSHIRE HOSPITAL, LONDON ROAD, READING

Proposal: Proposed construction of a fire escape enclosure

Applicant: Mr Neil Toomey

Received date: 26/11/2024

Target Decision date: 21/01/2025

Case Officer: Sian Hickey

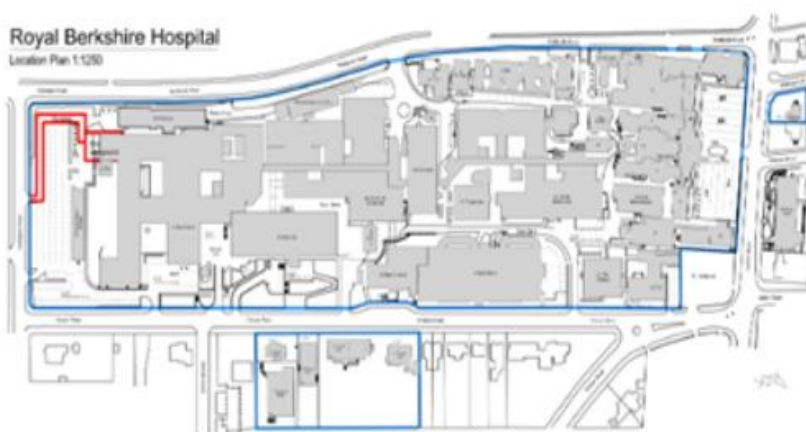
Site Description and Surrounding Area

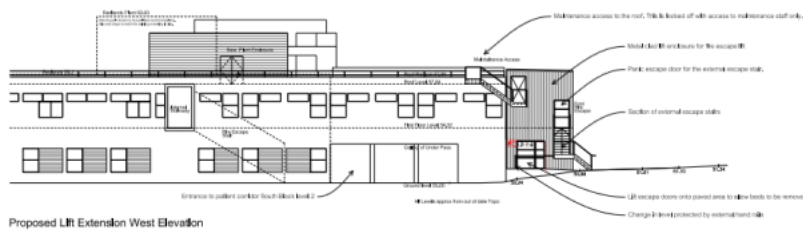
The application site is the South Block of the Royal Berkshire Hospital. The Royal Berkshire Hospital (use class C2) is located partially on London Road, Redlands Road and Craven Road.

The Proposal

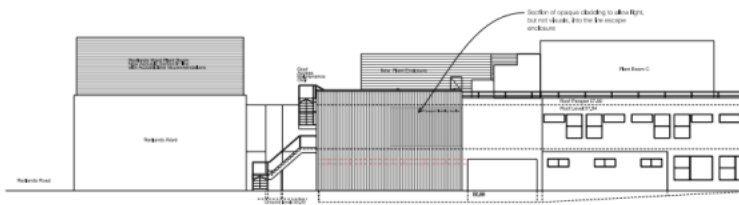
Planning permission was recently granted under reference no.231087 for the installation of new enclosed escape stairs on the external of the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Due to limitations on the internal layout of the ICU, there is need for a secondary means of escape at the end of the building. This would provide a weather protected means of escape from the ICU and safe maintenance access to the roof.

The current proposal is seeking to widen the size of the escape enclosure to allow the enclosure to house an escape lift as well as escape stairs. The lift would be used to evacuate patients on beds. This proposal would require the removal of the current staff bike storage unit located below the ICU and the bike storage relocated underneath the covered entrance area. A store will be constructed to support the lift canopy, but also provide an area for the lift power and ICU UPS Battery back-up systems. This will all be contained within the lift enclosure.

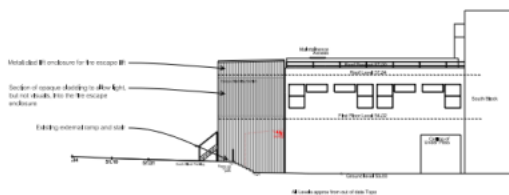




Proposed Lift Extension West Elevation



Proposed Lift Extension South Elevation



Proposed Lift Extension East Elevation

Consultations

Two site notices were displayed outside the hospital on 5th December 2024. The 21-day consultation period expired on 26th December 2024. No letters of representation have been received.

RBC Transport –

The site is located on the roof of South Block, part of Royal Berkshire Hospital and is part of the ongoing internal renovation of the ICU unit located in South Block. Under previous approved application 231087 an external escape stair was proposed. This application seeks an alteration to provide an enclosed escape enclosure. The enclosure will result in the displacement of the existing staff cycle storage area; however, the Design and Access Statement states that these are to be relocated and storage increased by using a 2 tier storage system.

In principle there are no Transport objections to this application, however the exact location and the type of provision proposed is required. Storage would need to be secure and covered, I am happy to deal with this by way of condition.

Officer note: to avoid a pre-commencement condition, the agent provided details of the proposed bike storage prior to a decision being issued. The Transport Officer reviewed the details submitted and confirmed acceptability.

RBC Environmental Protection – no comments received

Plans and Documents Considered

Design and Access Statement
Drawing No. 7069.803 rev D – External Works Lift and Stair
Drawing No. 203 P01 – Steel Work Layout
Drawing No. 201 P01 – Steel Work Layout
Drawing No. 101 P01 – Steel Work Layout

Acoustic Report
Filon Data Sheet
Drawing No. SHOE-579Q – Profile Detail
Drawing No. 7069.231 – Existing Elevations
Drawing No. 7069.105 – Location Plan and Site Plans
Drawing No. 7069.229 – Proposed Elevations
Drawing No. 7069.106 rev D – Existing Site Plan
Colorcoat GP data sheet/colours
Manufacturer info document

As received 26 November 2024

Drawing No. 7069.804 rev B – External Works UPS Room

As received 13 January 2025

Relevant Planning History

There is extensive application history at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, the two recent approvals of relevance to this application are:

231087 - Installation of new enclosed escape stairs on the external of the ICU. Approved 11/12/2023

231816 - Proposed upgrade and replacement of the rooftop air handling system within the Intensive Care Unit located within the South Block Building. Erection of a new acoustic screen around the existing Redlands rooftop plant. Approved 22/04/2024

Relevant Planning Guidance

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. The Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

The 'National Planning Policy framework' ("NPPF") 2012 states clearly that its content is to be a material consideration in the determination of applications. The 'NPPF' states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Reading Borough Local Plan, 2019) according to their degree of consistency with the 'NPPF' (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the 'NPPF', the greater the weight that may be given). Accordingly, the 'NPPF' and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

Relevant Policies

The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National

National Planning Policy Framework;
National Planning Policy Guidance;

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction
CC7 Design and the Public Realm
CC8 Safeguarding Amenity

ER3 Royal Berkshire Hospital

Appraisal

Principle of development

The public benefit of development to help the efficiency and quality of environment at the hospital is understood and accepted. In addition, Policy ER3 (Royal Berkshire Hospital) states that development will be supported where it complies with the following criteria:

*Where development would result in an increase in staff or visitors, it should be accompanied by measures which ensure that development does not have an adverse effect on the functioning of the highway, either as a result of increased use or by resulting in additional on-street parking in surrounding streets – **it would not.***

*Development will conserve the listed main block on London Road and 17 Craven Road, ensuring that their use is consistent with its conservation – **this proposal does not relate to the Listed part of the hospital.***

*Development would not result in adverse effects on the setting of listed buildings and conservation areas – **it would not.***

*There will be no significant detrimental impact on neighbouring residential properties – **it would not result in detrimental impact; see section (b) of the appraisal.***

Subject to meeting the above criteria, and other policy considerations, development at the Royal Berkshire Hospital is accepted in line with Policy ER3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Impact of the proposal on the surrounding area

Although much larger in scale than the previous approved escape stairs, the proposal is not considered excessive in size in relation to the site, and not considered harmfully out of keeping given the context of the site and surrounding area which comprises of an array of structures and equipment to facilitate the effectiveness of the hospital. The proposed stairs are set away from the hospital boundary and the roadsides.

Overall, the proposal is not considered to conflict with policies CC7, CC8 and ER3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) subject to condition.

Amenity

It is not considered that the proposal would cause any detrimental effect to neighbouring amenity due to the nature of the proposal combined with distance to the closest residential property.

The proposal is considered acceptable in relation to Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Transport

To allow the proposed lift to reach the ground floor level, the existing bike store will need to be removed. The covered area that allows entrance into South Block level 2 is currently used for a few benches, this area will be used for bike stores to restore the lost number of cycle parking spaces removed to facilitate the proposal.

As per the transport officer comments, a condition is attached to this planning permission to ensure that the bicycle parking is provided in accordance with the approved plans.

The proposal would not result in the loss of any vehicle parking spaces on site or affect vehicle access.

Other matters

The proposed development would not result in an unacceptable loss of biodiversity or impact any existing trees.

Recommendation

Grant planning permission

Conditions

1. Time limit
2. Approved plans
3. Materials
4. Bicycle storage (as specified)

Informatives

1. Terms
2. Building Control
3. Complaints about construction
4. Positive and Proactive