

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Church

App Ref: PL/25/0039 Prior notification: Demolition

Address: Field House, Pepper Lane, Reading RG2 7DG

Proposal: Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: Demolition of Buildings. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Schedule 2, Part 11, Class B. For the demolition of a disused boarding house building at Field House, Pepper Lane, Reading RG2 7DG

Applicant: C/O Agents C/O Agents

Received date: 09 January 2025

Target Decision date: 2 May 2025

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

A site includes 0.48ha portion of Leighton Park School campus. The site currently contains 'Field House' comprising a disused boarding house and associated staff residence.

The existing building is of varying height and design, with the highest part being 3-storeys. It is located closest to Pepper Lane, though the building has limited visibility from the highway given the extent of vegetation, and tapering building heights.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development is for the demolition of the existing buildings. The proposal is sought to clear the site in anticipation of a future development, though no such approval exists. A written statement of the proposed demolition description notice was displayed at the site.

Details Considered

- The 'Future Tree Management', Tree protection plan and arboricultural method statement, date 15 November 2024;
- The 'Soils', Preliminary investigation report, dated October 2024
- The 'Soltys Brewster', Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment & Bat Activity Survey Report, dated December 2024
- The 'Acheson', Demolition Management Plan
- The 'UL Solutions', Asbestos Demolition Survey Inspection Report – Revision 1, dated 9 September 2025
- Drawing No. 30774A/02 – Rev P1 Existing Site Plan
- Drawing No. 30774A/01 – Rev P1 Location Plan
- Drawing No. 15776 FH/4/1 – South-west elevation 1; west elevation 2
- Drawing No. 15776 FH/4/5/B – South-west elevation 10
- Drawing No. 15776 FH/4/4 – East elevation 7; south elevation 3; north-east elevation 9
- Drawing No. 15776 FH/4/3 – South-east elevation 5; south elevation 6
- Drawing No. 15776 FH/4/1 – South elevation 3; East elevation 4
- Drawing No. 15776 FH/4/5/A – North-west elevation 10
- Drawing No. 15776 FH/1/2 – Ground floor plan 2
- Drawing No. 15776 FH/3/1 – Second floor plan 1
- Drawing No. 15776 FH/1/3 – Ground floor plan 3
- Drawing No. 15776 FH/3/2 – Second floor plan 2
- Drawing No. 15776 FH/2/2 – First floor plan 2
- Drawing No. 15776 FH/2/3 – First floor plan 3

- Drawing No. 15776 FH/1/1 – Ground floor plan 1
- Drawing No. 15776 FH/2/1 – First floor plan 1

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 9th January 2025

- The 'Acheson', Demolition management plan Rev E

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 25 April 2025

3. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- Transport Development Control
No objection.
- Environmental Protection Consultations
No objection.
- Ecology Consultations
No objection.
- Trees - Planning Natural Environment
No objection.
- Wokingham Borough Council
No objection.

4. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Part 11, Schedule 2 of the GPDO requires the works to be carried out in accordance with the submitted details where it is determined that Prior Approval is not required.

Although the proposal is not a planning application the following local and national planning policy and guidance is useful in assessing this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2023
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

CC1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)
CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction)
CC5 (Waste Minimisation and Storage)
CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)
CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)
EN12 (Biodiversity and The Green Network)
EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands)
EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources)
TR1 (Achieving the Reading Transport Strategy)
TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters)

5. APPRAISAL

Under Part 11, the Local Planning Authority is only able to control the method of demolition and the restoration of the site. It is not able to resist the demolition for other reasons, such as townscape impact for instance.

Demolition and restoration

The proposed demolition includes satisfactory measures for the control of noise and dust, as well as deconstruction activities. Removal of asbestos containing materials is covered by separate legislation.

The site is to be restored as seeded lawn, with fencing to be retained closest to Pepper Lane to ensure safety for school pupils. This small amount of fencing is reasonable, though may require separate approval where it does not comply with the General Permitted Development Order (2015) as amended section relating to school fencing.

Tree protection

The submitted Arboricultural Method statement 15 November 2024 gives a suitable method for retaining and protecting the trees whilst also demolishing the buildings.

Reference should be made to both the Demolition Management Plan and Tree Protection Areas together with the Demolition Method Statement to ensure the protection of trees on site.

Ecology

The bat report found no evidence to suggest the current or previous use of the building by nesting birds, although an old bird nest was identified within the canopy of one of the trees which it appears may also be removed.

Highways

The submitted details have addressed the Highway Officer's and are considered acceptable.

Noise, Dust and Pest Control

The Council's Environmental Health Officer is satisfied with the details provided.

Equality Act

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the current applications) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application.

6. CONCLUSION

The method of demolition and the restoration of the site are considered acceptable as set out above.

7. RECOMMENDATION

PRIOR APPROVAL GIVEN