

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey Ward

App Ref: PL/24/1729 Full planning permission

Address: 40 CAVERSHAM ROAD, READING, RG1 7EB

Proposal: External alterations

Applicant: Mandale Homes

Received date: 30 December 2024

Target Decision date: 6 May 2025

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a four-storey building on corner of Caversham and Stanshawe Road, Reading. Access to the site is via Vachel Road, with vehicular access to the southeast corner of the site. The surrounding area consists of a mix of commercial buildings, mostly along Caversham Road, and a mix of residential building styles.

The site is not listed, nor within a conversation conservation area. However, it is opposite a listed pair of semi-detached properties (29-31 Caversham Road), and a listed terrace (Regent Court).

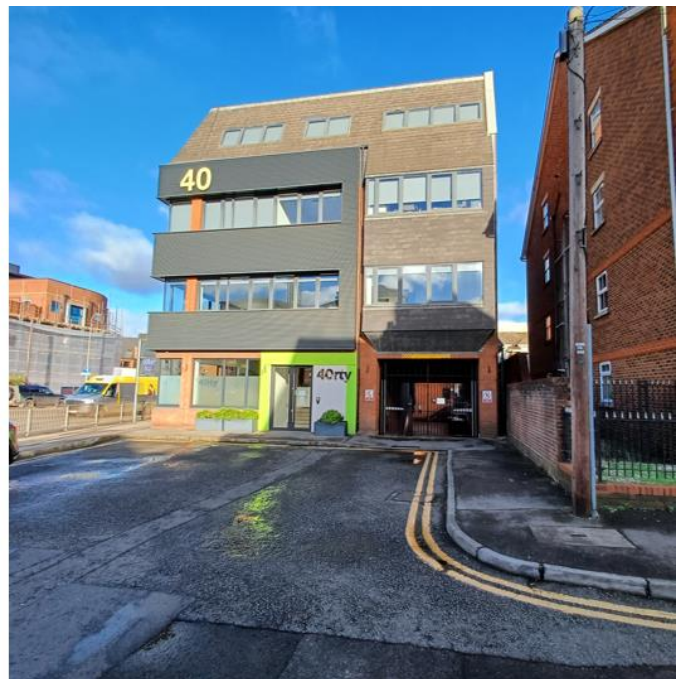


Figure 1 - Site Visit Photo's 2 December 2024

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The applicant is seeking planning permission for external alterations to the building consisting of:

- Replacement of all windows, including roof lights;
- Replacement of existing hung tiles/slate with slate tiles;
- Removal of vertical cladding to Caversham Road, and Vachel Road and repair of brickwork below

The building gained prior approval under application ref 24/1572 (approved in 2024) for Change of use from Class E (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 31 dwelling units under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.

Plans and supporting information

Drawing No. 24-CAV-002 – Existing elevations

Drawing No. 24-CAV-003 – Existing and proposed block plan

Drawing No. 24-CAV – Location plan

Drawing No. 2444-P002A – Proposed elevations

As received 30 December 2024

Drawing No. 2444-P002C - Proposed elevations

Drawing No. 2444-P003A - Proposed elevations sheet 2

Drawing No. 2444-003 – Existing elevations

Drawing No. 2444-002A - Existing elevations

As received 17 February 2025

The 'Enviro solution', air quality impact assessment, ref. AS14855, dated

As received 13 March 2025

The 'Apex', Noise Impact Assessment, ref. 12565.1001, dated 26 March 2025

As received 28 March 2025

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/24/1572 - Change of use from Class E (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 31 dwelling units. Prior Notification under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Prior Approval Required and Given 9 January 2025

PL/16/0649 - Application for a non-material amendment following a grant of planning permission (141454). Non-material amendment agreed 13 May 2016

PL/15/2040 - Application for a non-material amendment following a grant of planning permission (141454). Non-material amendment agreed 30 December 2015

PL/15/1308 - Approval of Conditions 3 & 6 relating to the planning application reference 141454. Details approved 15 October 2015

PL/14/1454 - Refurbishment of existing office building including alterations to existing elevations and entrance facade. Introduction of new permanent feature signage and branding (amended description). Approved 6 March 2015

PL/14/1455 - Permanent feature signage, branding and number 40 sign. Advertisement Consent Given 9 March 2015

PL/13/0076 - Creation of new external entrance and steps to Vachel Road elevation to provide access to the ground floor reception. Works include the removal of existing external fire exit door, modifications to existing ground floor window arrangement, new double entrance door, steps and the installation of new glazed external canopy. Approved 29 April 2013

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- RBC Environmental Protection – No objections subject to conditions.

A site notice was placed along Caversham Road, no responses were received.

5. 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. 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.

The Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the Reading Local Plan (2019) The 'National Planning Policy framework' ("NPPF") 2018 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) 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.

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE
CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE
CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM
CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT
EN6: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN A HISTORIC CONTEXTS
EN15: AIR QUALITY
EN16: POLLUTION AND WATER RESOURCES

7. APPRAISAL

Design and impact on the street scene

The existing building is not considered to be of an overly poor quality in terms of materials or design. The building is a highly visible one which sits on a heavily trafficked thoroughfare through central Reading. The site is opposite a number of older, and listed buildings. The proposed development would include fairly minor changes to the character and appearance of the building, with some areas of cladding which has been added over time, removed and retained as original brick. The materials for the roof for the roof, and hung tiles would be similar to the existing. The proposed windows, would lead to a more residential appearance in lieu of a commercial appearance as currently exists.

Given the light touch changes, the proposal will not have a negative impact on the overall area, nor an impact upon the nearby heritage assets. The proposed materials are in keeping with the appearance of

the building itself. Therefore, given the scale of development, the proposed design is considered acceptable in this instance and is in line with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019). A condition securing materials as shown and detailed within the application forms is recommended.

Noise and Air Quality

The application site was subject to a prior approval application for the change of use to C3 use (dwellinghouse). The assessment of the impact of the prior approval are limited by the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) (2015) as amended. As such, a detailed assessment of the noise, and air quality impacts on the residents was unable to be considered by the LPA. Equally, the GPDO does not include provisions for external works to facilitate the conversion to residential uses.

The proposal is considered within the context of a prior approval being given for the change of use to a residential use. Given this is a material planning consideration, the requirement for a noise and air quality assessment were required in line with Policies EN15 and EN16, which seek to protect residents from adverse impacts of noise and air pollution.

The applicant's information demonstrates that the site is within a heavily polluted area in terms of both noise and air pollution given the high vehicle traffic along the Caversham Road section of the Inner Distribution Road (IDR).

Environmental protection officers have confirmed that the proposed adequate glazing to mitigate against external noise.

With regard to air quality, it is considered that full details of MVHR should be provided prior to the commencement of the development as limited details has been provided. A condition is recommended to secure this.

8. CONCLUSION

The proposed development includes minor changes to the elevations of the building which facilitates the conversion of the building to residential in line with the prior approval. Subject to sufficient details of ventilation, the proposal will adequately address the noise and air quality impacts to improve the situation for future residents.

9. RECOMMENDATION

Grant.