

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Thames Ward

App Ref: PL/25/0466 Full planning permission

Address: THE DELTA BUILDING, 121 KINGS ROAD, READING, RG1 3ES

Proposal: Application for external works including new windows to match the existing; new AOV and smoke shaft roof openings; demolition of existing canopy; changes to the existing atrium; and new and replacement metal railings and balconies.

Applicant: Mr Alassar

Received date: 25/03/2025

Target Decision date: 20/05/2025

Case Officer: Matt Burns

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The existing building on the application site is a five-storey office building with: a basement car park level with a separate access; and a rooftop plant level. The building is currently unoccupied.

The building was constructed as part of development with 2 other blocks similar in appearance and is the eastern-most of the 3, situated on the corner by Gas Works Road and Kings Road. The western-most (Kennet Place) of the 3 buildings from the original development was approved by the council for conversion from offices to 93 flats in 2024 under prior approval consent ref. 24/0997.

The broad area surrounding the site is characterised by a variety of building uses. The buildings along this part of Kings Road are mainly commercial, with large scale retail to the North of the River Kennet and a mixture of residential and commercial to the South.

The application site is located on the island between the River Kennet and the Kennet and Avon Canal and whilst located within flood zone 1 is adjacent to land to the north where the River Kennet is located which is in flood zones 2 and 3. The site is also located within an air quality management area.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Application for external works including new windows to match the existing; new Automatic Opening Vents and smoke shaft roof openings; demolition of existing canopy; changes to the existing atrium; and new and replacement metal railings and balconies.

More specifically the proposals include:

- Form 10 new window openings on the east elevation of the building - with opening sizes and window appearances to match the existing windows on the building.
- Form 6 new window openings at fourth floor level (east and west).
- Form 3 new AOV openings at roof level to serve the stair cores.
- Form 2 new smoke shaft openings at roof level and remove the existing rooftop plant.
- Demolish canopy, frame and replace existing double door to match the other openings to rear yard area.

- Install replacement metal balustrades to existing stair access and plinth at ground floor level, and to terraces at third and fourth floor level
- Form new terrace balconies with metal balustrades, and juliet balconies, on the north elevation at first and second floor levels.
- Infill the existing atrium to the west elevation and replace the existing glazed screen and rotating door to the west elevation

Plans submitted:

1378-001 Location Plan 1:1250 A4 PI

1378-002 Existing Block Plan 1:500 A3 PI

1378-009 Existing Basement Plan 1:500 A3 PI

1378-010 Existing Ground Floor Plan 1:200 A3 P1

1378-011 Existing First Floor Plan 1:200 A3 P1

1378-012 Existing Second Floor Plan 1:200 A3 P1

1378-013 Existing Third Floor Plan 1:200 A3 P1

1378-014 Existing Fourth Floor Plan 1:200 A3 P1

1378-015 Existing Roof Plan 1:200 A3 P1

1378-020 Existing West elevation 1:200 A3 P1

1378-021 Existing North elevation 1:200 A3 P1

1378-022 Existing East elevation 1:200 A3 PI

1378-023 Existing South elevation 1:200 A3 PI

1378 – 050 Proposed Block Plan 1:500 A3 PI

1378.PA —100 Proposed Ground Floor Plan 1:200 A3 P1

1378.PA —101 Proposed First Floor Plan 1:200 A3 P1

1378.PA —102 Proposed Second Floor Plan 1:200 A3 P1

1378.PA —103 Proposed Third Floor Plan 1:200 A3 P1

1378.PA —104 Proposed Fourth Floor Plan 1:200 A3 P1

1378.PA —105 Proposed Roof Plan 1:200 A3 P1

1378.PA —200 Proposed West elevation 1:200 A3 P1

1378.PA —201 Proposed North elevation 1:200 A3 P1

1378.PA —202 Proposed East elevation 1:200 A3 P1

1378.PA —203 Proposed South elevation 1:200 A3 P1

1378.PA —210 Proposed New Windows Diagram 1:200 A3 P1

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 25th March 2025

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

89/1390 - Office development of 180,000sq ft gross: car parking for 250 cars and riverside walk. Permitted. Granted 14th December 1989.

25/0470 - Change of use of Ground to 4th Floors from Class E (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 77 self-contained flats. Prior Notification under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Under Consideration.

Kennet Place

24/0997 Change the use of the building at ground to fourth floors from office (E Class) to residential (C3), to accommodate 93 self-contained flats. Granted. 02/10/2024.

24/0973 – Application for new window openings to the east elevation to match the existing windows in opening sizes and appearance and addition of rooftop smoke shafts and AOVs. Granted 25th September 2024.

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

A site note was displayed at the site on 8th April 2025. No neighbour letters of representation have been received.

5. 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. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework 2023

National Planning Practice Guidance 2014

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

CR2: DESIGN IN CENTRAL READING

6. APPRAISAL

There is no change of use proposed as part of this application which is for external works to the existing building only. The application indicates that the proposed works would facilitate the change of use of the building from offices to residential proposed under separate prior approval application ref. 25/0470. The separate prior approval application is still under consideration and has not yet been determined. Notwithstanding this, the application for external changes can still be considered on its own merits.

Character and Appearance

The 16 proposed new windows and replacement door would be of a size, materiality (dark grey metal frames and window bars) and appearance to match existing windows to the corresponding floors of the building and are considered to integrate satisfactorily with its appearance and that of the surrounding area. Notably the same new windows were recently approved to Kennet Place,

one of the other office buildings within the wider island development under planning permission ref. 24/0973.

The proposed removal of the existing extension roof top plant equipment is a welcome change which would significantly reduce clutter at roof top level of the building. The proposed additional of AOV vents and smoke shafts would comparably be very modest additions to the roof of the building and would not have a material visual impact.

The removal of the existing ground floor level canopy frame and roof to the eastern elevation of the building is also a positive change given this is a utilitarian structure and its removal would facilitate the ground floor stone façade of the building taking greater visual prominence.

The introduction of black metal balustrades to upper floor terrace areas and to the ground floor stepped entrances to the building to the east and south elevations are simple and modest additions and are not considered to have any adverse visual impact.

The proposed infilling of the double height open aspect atrium entrance area to the west elevation and provision of new entrance door and glazing panels which windows and glazing panels to match the floors above and the rest of the building would integrate with the appearance of the existing building.

The proposed external changes are considered to integrate satisfactorily with the character and appearance of the existing building and the two other buildings which form part of the wider development within which the building is located. Notably the changes would align with the nature and appearance of the alterations already approved to Kennet Place within the wider existing development approved under planning permission ref. 24/0470. The character of the wider surrounding area is mixed containing a variety of residential and commercial buildings of a variety of styles and the proposals would integrate with and be appropriate within this character. The changes proposed would not result in a significant change to the appearance of the building from the surrounding streets.

Huntley and Palmers Social Club and Gas Works Social Club are located opposite the building on Gas Works Road and are two locally listed buildings. The minor and in-keeping nature of the alterations to the buildings proposed are such that there is not considered to be a material or adverse impact upon the setting of these locally listed buildings.

The proposals would accord with Policies CC7, CR2 and EN4.

Amenity

The closest residential dwellings to the building are at Harry Tee Walk to the south along the canal and those new residential dwellings at Huntley Wharf to the north on the opposite side of the river. There is also an extant prior approval consent for change of use of Kennet Place to the west to residential use albeit this has not yet been implemented. These adjacent dwellings would all be located over 40m from the application site and as such no overlooking or overbearing to surrounding residential properties as a result of the proposed new windows, doors or terrace areas is considered to result.

The proposals would not result in an increase in scale or footprint of the building and as such no impacts upon surrounding occupiers in terms of overbearing or loss of light are identified. No impacts in terms of noise or disturbance are identified from the proposed external changes to the building. No impacts in terms of noise or disturbance are identified from the proposed external changes to the building, notably removal of the roof top plant equipment would reduce any plant noise from the site.

The alterations to the building are proposed in connection to the application to convert the building to residential use under separate prior approval application ref. 25/0470, albeit prior approval for the change of use has not been given at the time of writing this report. Should that prior approval consent be approved, then it is likely that the addition of windows would represent improvements in lighting and outlook for future occupiers.

The proposals would accord with Policy CC8.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposals are considered to be acceptable and not result detrimental impacts and comply with the relevant policies of the Development Plan outlined above.

8. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT full planning permission subject to the following recommended conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than three years from the date of this planning permission.

REASON: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) in order to prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.

2. The development hereby permitted shall ONLY be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

1378-001 Location Plan 1:1250 A4 PI
1378-002 Existing Block Plan 1:500 A3 PI

1378-009 Existing Basement Plan 1:500 A3 PI
1378-010 Existing Ground Floor Plan 1:200 A3 P1
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1378.PA —210 Proposed New Windows Diagram 1:200 A3 P1

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REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out and adhered to in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

3. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of this development shall be as specified on the plans and/or application forms unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and ensuring the new development responds positively to the local context and character in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

Informatives

1. Your attention is drawn to the terms and conditions of this permission. Any development which is carried out but which differs materially from the approved plans and details, or does not comply with any condition(s) or planning obligation(s) attached to the permission may result in the Council taking action to remedy the breach of planning control. If you are in any doubt please contact the Council.
2. Your attention is drawn to the requirement for submission of a Building Regulations application for the proposed development. Please contact RBC Building Control on Building.control@reading.gov.uk OR telephone 0118 9372449 9.00am to 1.00pm Monday to Friday
3. i) The attention of the applicant is drawn to Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980, which enables the Highway Authority to recover expenses due to damage caused by extraordinary traffic. ii) Any works affecting the Highway shall be in accordance with Reading Borough's Council's document "Guidance Notes for Activities on the Public Highway within the Borough of Reading". The applicant should note that compliance with this document is mandatory and licences to work on the Highway will only be issued if the requirements contained within it are met. A copy can be obtained from the Council's website
4. Complaints are commonly received about noise and dust caused by construction and demolition works, particularly working outside reasonable hours and smoke from bonfires associated with the burning of waste on site. The developer is reminded that construction and demolition associated with the approved development will be subject to environmental health law.

5. The Local Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant to resolve relevant matters to allow permission to be granted within the prescribed target or agreed extended timescale for the decision to be issued.