Introduction

Introduction

This Accompanying Statement has been prepared to accompany a Full Planning Application for external changes at Kennet Place, RG1 3ES. It is proposed to

- Replace Ground floor fixed windows with openable windows and balcony doors
- Add new juliet and inset balconies to be existing and proposed and full height openable windows and doors
- Removal of existing rear entrance porch and revolving door, replaced with new double entrance doors
- Removal of existing front revolving door, replaced with new double entrance doors
- Removal of existing planters at the front of the building and installation of fencing to create private amenity space accessed from residential units

This statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted drawings and documents.

Section 1
Context

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Context
Site Location and Setting

1.1 Site Context

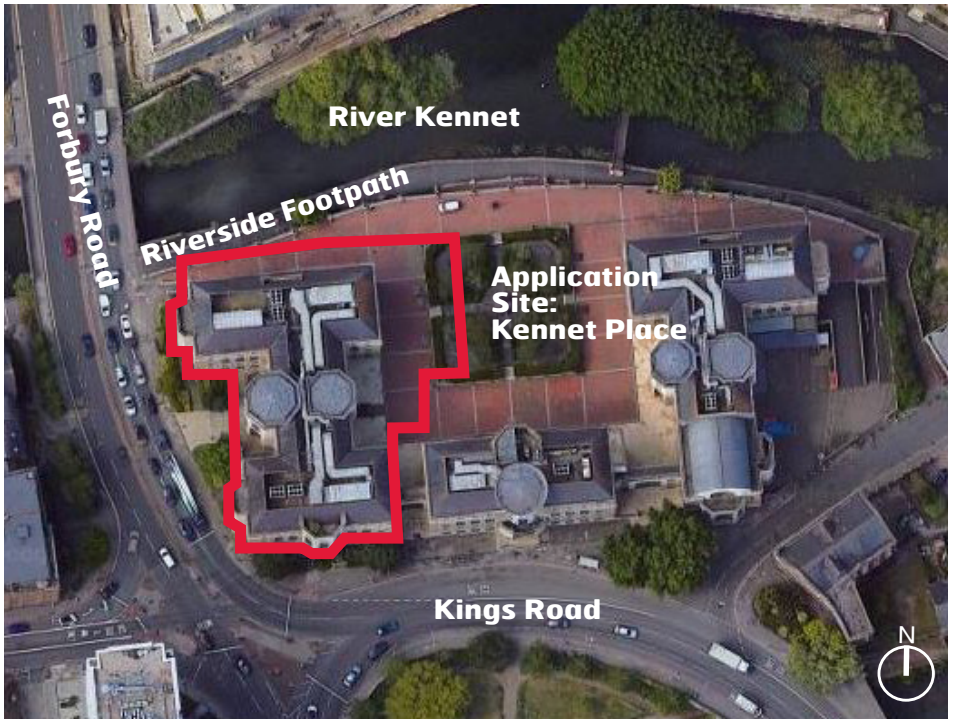
The existing building on the application site is a five-storey building with: a basement car park level with a separate access; and a rooftop plant level. The building is currently unoccupied.

The building was constructed as part of development with 2 other blocks similar in appearance and is the western-most of the 3, situated on the corner by Forbury Road and Kings Road. To the north the site is bordered by the River Kennet.

The broad area surrounding the site is characterised by a variety of building uses.

To the north of the site across the River Kennet is the recently-constructed high-density residential development Huntley Wharf.

To the other sides are predominantly high-rise office buildings, with some low-density residential dwellinghouses.



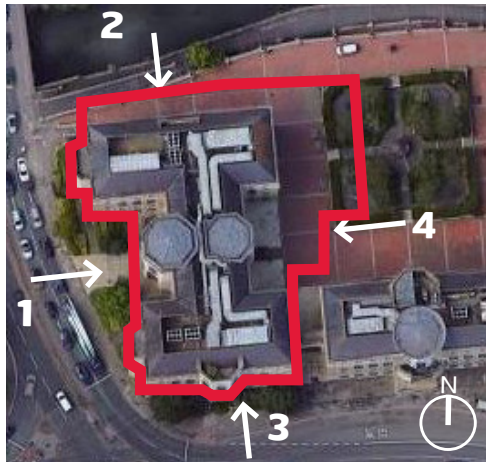
Site Context Map

The Front (West) Elevation viewed from Forbury Road

Context
Existing Building

1 - Front elevation viewed from Forbury Road

2 - North Elevation (River Kennet Side)



Key Plan

3 - South Elevation viewed from Kings Road

4 - South Elevation (Courtyard Side)

Context

Site Location and Setting

East Elevation, southern wing

East Elevation, centre

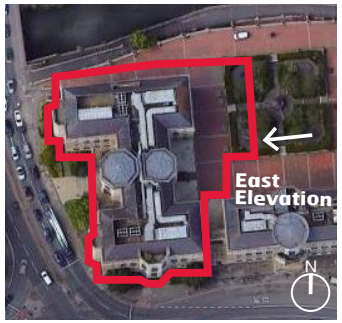
East Elevation, centre and northern wing

East Elevation, northern wing

Existing Windows Appearance & Materials

Window Type 01

Window Type 02



Key Plan

Window Type 03

Window Type 04

Context
Site Location and Setting

1.2 Planning Context

The site is not located within the Green Belt, in a Conservation Area or any Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
The site is not occupied by a listed building nor are there any listed buildings within the immediate vicinity of the site.
The site is located within Flood Zone 2 which has a medium probability of flooding.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

App ref PL/24/0997 – Prior Approval in September 2024 Class MA Change of use Commercial, Business and Service (Use Class E) to Dwellinghouses (Use Class C3). Application Approved.

App ref PL/24/0973 – Full planning application September 2024 for new window openings to the east elevation to match the existing windows, and the addition of rooftop smokeshafts and AOVs.
Application Approved.

The works relating to both these applications began in March 2025, and are currently ongoing.

The purpose of this Full Planning application, is to address elements of 'design development' which have arisen while carrying out the works covered under the aforementioned approvals.

Section 2
Design

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Design
Materials & Appearance

2.1 New Windows/Doors - Ground Floor

Proposals

The proposal is to replace all the existing windows at Ground Floor level, which are currently fixed panels which are undesirable for use in a residential scenario for both ventilation and overall wellbeing reasons. (Image Example 1).

These will be replaced with new openable windows (tilt and turn operation) and, in some locations, balcony doors.

In instances where the building ground floor is above the external site levels, a Juliet balcony is being proposed (See chapter 2.2 for further details) to ensure these windows and doors can be operated safey without any risk of fall. (Image Example 2)

Futhermore, in very limited areas, where windows are within the proximity of a final fire escape, the new windows will be remain unopenable, however require upgrading to fire rated performance. (Image Example 2)

Material & Appearance

The proposed replacement windows will match the panel size, structural opening, frame colour and materials of the existing windows.

Due to the openable nature of these new windows and doors, the frame size and centre spherical mullion detail will inherently have to change for an appropriate frame casement to allow them to open and close.

Example 1 - Typical existing ground floor fixed windows

Example 2 - Existing ground floor raised fixed window in vicinity of fire escape door

New Ground Floor Tilt and Turn windows

New Ground Floor Balcony Doors

Design
Materials & Appearance

2.1 New Windows - Courtyard Elevation

Following application (App. Ref PL/24/0973) in September 2024, where permission was granted to create 2no. new full height window openings at ground floor on the Rear Elevation (Internal Courtyard).

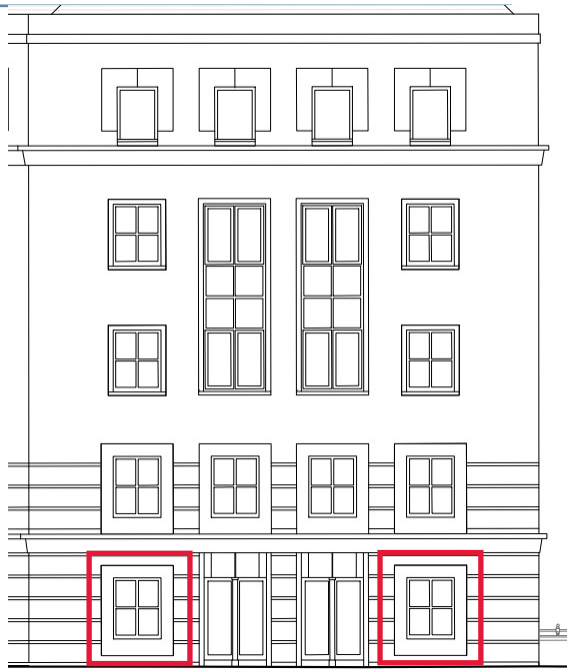
During site investigation works, it was found that this wall is a structural sheer wall in is integral to the stability of the building.

New openings the size proposed could not be accommodated.

It is proposed to reduce the size of the new window openings and install 2no. new inward opening windows to match the existing above in scale, form, appearance, and materials.

The windows will align vertically, and replicate the arrangement of the existing windows as they are on the floors above.

Approved Rear Elevation from App. Ref PL/24/0973



Proposed New Ground floor openings and new windows to match existing above

Example of existing windows to be replicated at Ground Floor

Design
Materials & Appearance

2.2 Proposed Balconies - Rationale

1. Addressing existing building conditions

New Juliet and inset balconies are proposed to address existing full height openable doors(1) and windows (2) found on the elevations.

Previously, as office use, these doors/windows would have been managed by the building owner, with the handles removed so users cannot operate them.

In a residential environment, in the event these doors and windows are opened by occupants for ventilation purposes, or in general day to day use, presents a fall risk.

As these are all open inward operation, in order to best utilise them for future use and safeguard the residential occupants, balconies are being proposed doubling as barrier guarding.

2. Proposed Ground Floor Openable windows/doors

All existing ground floor windows are fixed, which is common in office use where the building is fully mechanically ventilated.

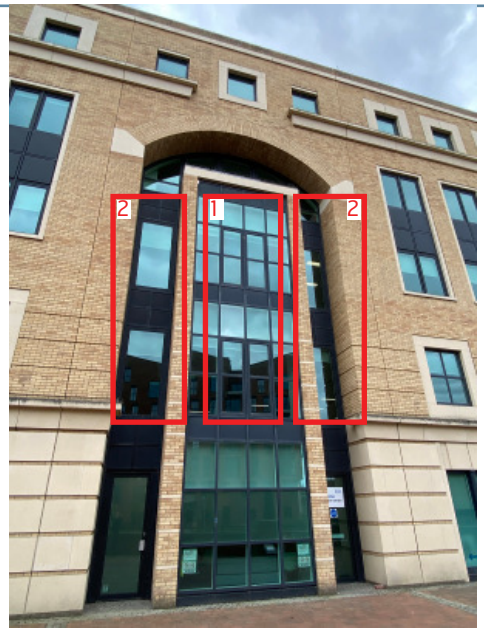
As these windows now serve residential units, the proposal is to replace these fixed windows with openable tilt and turn windows or inward turning balcony doors.

In scenarios where these new openable elements are elevated from the external ground level (however still at building ground floor) as either a tilt and turn window or door, this would present a fall risk.

It is therefore the proposal to add a Juliet balcony to any 'elevated' full height openable units at ground floor.

These are mainly located on the South Elevation onto Kings Road, however they slightly set back from the boundary with road pedestrian way separated by a planted area.

Please also refer to the submitted drawings for further details.



Example of exisitng full height openable windows and doors at upper floors on North Elevation (Left photo) and corresponding view from inside of the building (Right photo).

Example of existing fixed windows on the Kings Road Elevation at 'Ground Floor' which once replaced with an openable function would present a fall risk to the occupants.

2.3 Proposed Balconies - Balustrade Design

Design and Appearance

For the design of the balcony and balustrade we have looked at various design precedents around the development to propose a design in keeping with the building in its immediate environment.

The proposal is to adopt a 'Cross-brace' style of balustrade which reflects that of the balcony found on the adjacent Building 'B', as well as other similar examples found around the building itself-

Example 1 - A photograph of the existing balcony balustrade on the sister building 'B' along the Kings Road facade.

Example 2 - A similar example of this is the cross-brace style, found on the fencing at basement level along the river front, used for ventilation.

Example 3 - Further example of barrier guarding used for basement escape around the Kennet Place building

Although the main feature is the this cross-brace, vertical elements will be incorporated to ensure the design meets the statutory building regulations for the protection from falling.

Materials

The proposed materials for these balconies is metal, with a dark grey painted finish to match the existing buildings window frames and curtain walling systems.

Example of Proposed Inset Balcony Design

Example 1

Example 2

Example 3

Please also refer to the submitted drawings for further details.

2.4 Proposed Rooftop Smokeshafts and AOVs

As descirbed in the planning context section, the building is currently undergoing works from Class E to Class C3 (App. Ref PL/24/0997)

A full planning application was also approved at the same time to supplement this change of use which included, amongst other proposals, the addition of rooftop smokeshafts and AOVs. These are necessary in a residential building to meet fire regulations by ventilating stairs and corridors of smoke in the event of a fire.

Intent was that these new rooftop elements would not be visible from the elevations, hidden by either the rooftop plant screen or the existing roof parapet to the stairs. Therefore, they were only included on the proposed roof plan.

During the design development, and in accordance with the statutory building regulations, in was noted that these rooftop smoke vents and AOVs must project a min. of 500mm above any surrounding structure within 2m of them. This therefore has meant that the head of these elements may now be visible on the elements, even if only slightly. They have been included on the elevations accordingly.

Given the nature of these AOV's, and the strict regulations and certifications which govern their design and installation, there is little to no control over the aesthetic. These will only be in an open position during periodic maintenance and testing, and in the event of a fire within the building.

Please also refer to the submitted drawings for further details.

Example of a typical Smoke and Heat Ventilator installed at roof level