

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Thames Ward

App Ref: PL/25/1023 – application for full planning permission

Address: Kennet Place, 121 Kings Road, Reading, RG1 3ES

Proposal: Replacement of windows/doors on all elevations at ground floor level; installation of balconies on east, south and west elevations at ground floor, north elevation at 1st to 3rd floors and west elevation at 2nd floor level; installation of projecting smokeshafts and automatic opening vents at roof level; and, various associated alterations.

Applicant: Mr Sam Pines – S & S Quality Contractors Ltd

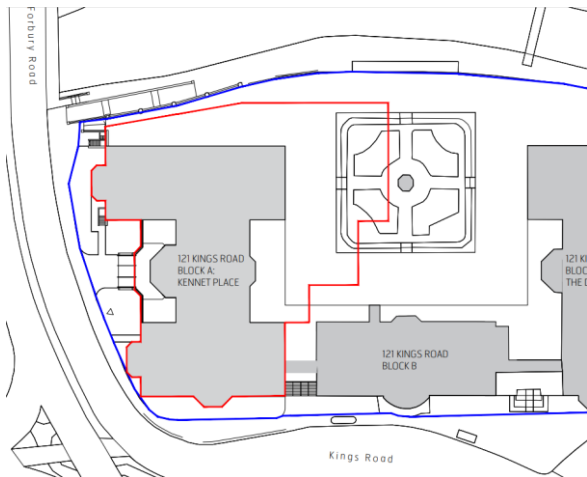
Received date: 18/07/2025 Valid date: 06/08/2025

Target Decision date: 01/10/2025

Case Officer: Jonathan Markwell

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a basement (car park) and five storey (and rooftop plant) building, known as Kennet Place, on the east side of Forbury Road and the north side of Kings Road. The red line boundary also includes some external space to the north and east of the building, with a blue line on the location plan (see below) indicating that the applicant has an interest in linked blocks 'B' and 'The Delta Building' to the east. All three buildings were originally constructed following planning permission in 1989 (see relevant history below & later occupied by Prudential), but this proposal solely relates to the Kennet Place building. Based on the officer site visit on 14/08/2025, the application site building is presently unoccupied and is in the process of being converted from office to residential use, as per a prior approval from 2024 (see relevant history below).



Above left: Site Location Plan



Above right and below: views of the application site



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 the Huntley Wharf residential-led development to the north of the River Kennet / Chocolate Island and Blakes Bridge. To the south, beyond Kings Road is Kings Road Gardens and Kennet and Avon Canal, with the Verto residential building to the south-west. Whilst located within flood zone 1, it is in close proximity to land to the north in flood zones 2 and 3, where the River Kennet is located. The site is also located within an air quality management area and has potential to include contaminated land, owing to the former Biscuit Factory use in and around the site. The application site building is not a listed building, nor is it located within a conservation area.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

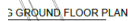
Full planning permission is sought for a series of further works to the building, which is in the process of being converted from office to residential use by virtue of a prior approval (see relevant history below). Permission has previously been granted in 2024 for new window openings to the east elevation and the addition of rooftop smoke shafts and AOVs (see relevant history below). This proposal expands on those applications by proposing, in summary:

- Replacement of windows/doors on all elevations at ground floor level; installation of balconies on east, south and west elevations at ground floor, north elevation at 1st to 3rd floors and west elevation at 2nd floor level; installation of projecting smokeshafts and automatic opening vents at roof level; and, various associated alterations.

More specifically, the proposals comprise:

- Ground floor north elevation:
 - o 8 new tilt and turn windows added to replace fixed windows
 - o New double door entrance point installed
- Ground floor east elevation (also including the connected inward facing elevations):
 - o 2 new window openings reduced in size in comparison with those approved by PL/24/0973
 - o 13 new tilt and turn windows added to replace fixed windows
 - o Replacement of existing revolving doors with canopy entrance with new double door entrance point installed.
- Ground floor south (Kings Road) elevation:
 - o 8 new internal opening doors with Juliet balconies proposed, to replace fixed windows.
 - o New Juliet balcony added to existing full height inward opening door height door – in the centre of the elevation
- Ground floor west (Forbury Road) elevation (also including the connected inward facing elevations):
 - o 4 new internal opening doors with Juliet balconies proposed, to replace fixed windows.
 - o 2 fixed shut fire rated windows (replacing existing windows)
 - o 4 new tilt and turn windows added to replace fixed windows.
 - o 4 existing fixed windows to be removed and replaced with new balcony doors.
 - o Replacement of existing revolving doors with new double door entrance point installed.
 - o Existing double doors to the north of the existing revolving door to be removed and replaced with new glazing panels to match existing.
- Within the western forecourt area in front of the building:
 - o Removing the 2 existing raised planters (either side of the existing revolving door). Replacement with new paved terrace area, with direct flat access via new balcony doors.
 - o Replacement balustrade proposed, from glass to metal.
- First floor north elevation:
 - o 2 new inset balconies added to the existing full height doors in curtain walling.
 - o New Juliet balcony added to existing full height doors in curtain walling.
- Second floor north elevation:

- 4 roof level AOV'S now project from the roof level of the building, rather than being flush as shown at the time of permission PL/24/0973



Left: Existing ground floor plan.



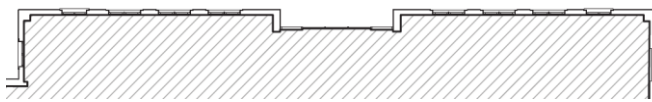
Right: Proposed ground floor plan

Left: Extract of existing first floor plan

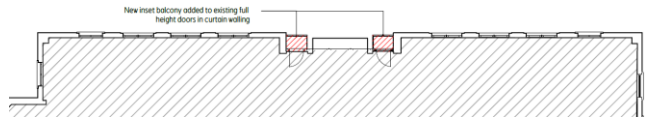
Right: Extract of proposed first floor plan

Left: Extract of existing second floor plan

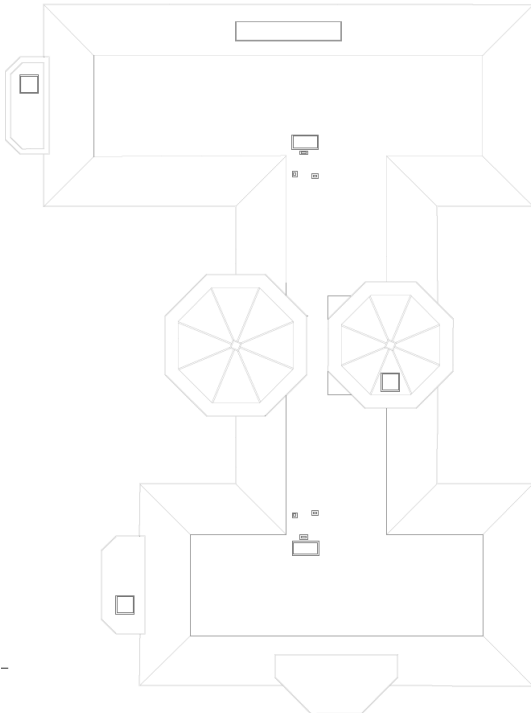
Right: Extract of proposed second floor plan



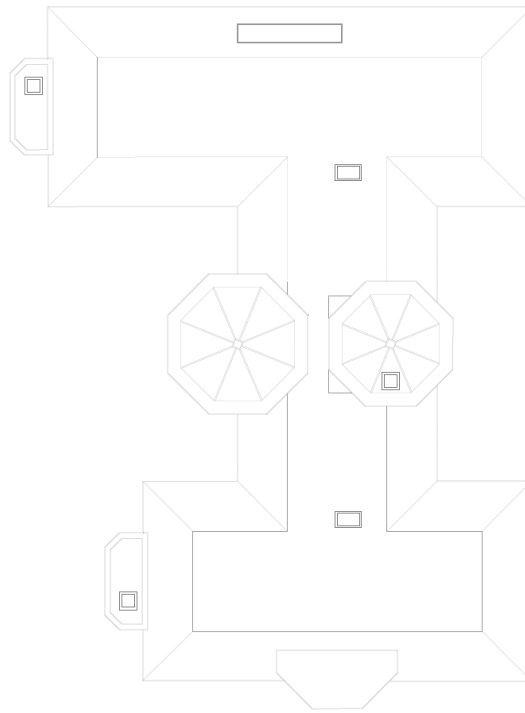
Left: Extract of existing third floor plan



Right: Extract of proposed third floor plan



Left: Extract of existing roof plan



Right: Extract of proposed roof plan



Left: Existing west (Forbury Road) elevation



Right: Proposed west (Forbury Road) elevation



Right: Proposed east elevation

Left: Existing north elevation Right: Proposed north elevation



Left: Existing east elevation

Right: Proposed east elevation



Left: Existing south elevation

Right: Proposed south elevation



Left: Existing inward courtyard south elevation

Right: Proposed inward courtyard south elevation



Left: Existing inward courtyard north elevation
Plans submitted:

Right: Proposed inward courtyard north elevation

1364.2 – 011 – Existing Ground Floor Plan
1364.2 – 012 – Existing First Floor Plan
1364.2 – 013 – Existing Second Floor Plan
1364.2 – 014 – Existing Third Floor Plan
1364.2 – 015 – Existing Fourth Floor Plan
1364.2 – 016 – Existing Rooftop Level Plan
1364.2 – 017 – Existing Roof Plan
1364.2 – 104 - Proposed Fourth Floor Plan

As all received on 18/07/2025

1364.2-001 Rev A – Site Location Plan
1364.2-002 Rev A - Existing Block Plan
1364.2-003 – Existing Building Section A-A
1364.2-020 Rev A – Existing Front Elevation (West)
1364.2-021 Rev A – Existing North Elevation
1364.2-022 Rev A – Existing Rear East Elevation
1364.2-023 Rev A – Existing South Elevation
1364.2-024 – Existing Courtyard Elevation 01
1364.2-025 – Existing Courtyard Elevation 02
1364.2-050 Rev A - Proposed Block Plan
1364.2.PA – 101 Rev A - Proposed Ground Floor Plan
1364.2.PA – 102 Rev A - Proposed First Floor Plan
1364.2.PA – 103 Rev A - Proposed Second Floor Plan
1364.2.PA – 104 Rev A - Proposed Third Floor Plan
1364.2.PA – 107 Rev A - Proposed Roof Plan
1364.2-200 Rev A – Proposed Front Elevation (West)
1364.2-201 Rev A – Proposed North Elevation
1364.2-202 Rev A – Proposed Rear Elevation (East)
1364.2-203 Rev A – Proposed South Elevation
1364.2-204 – Proposed Courtyard Elevation 01
1364.2-205 – Proposed Courtyard Elevation 02
1364.2-210 Rev A – Proposed Window and Balcony Design

As all received on 01/08/2025

Kennet Place, Reading, RG1 3ES Design Statement – July 2025 Rev A dated 06/08/2025 by Brooks Murray Architects

As received on 06/08/2025

CIL

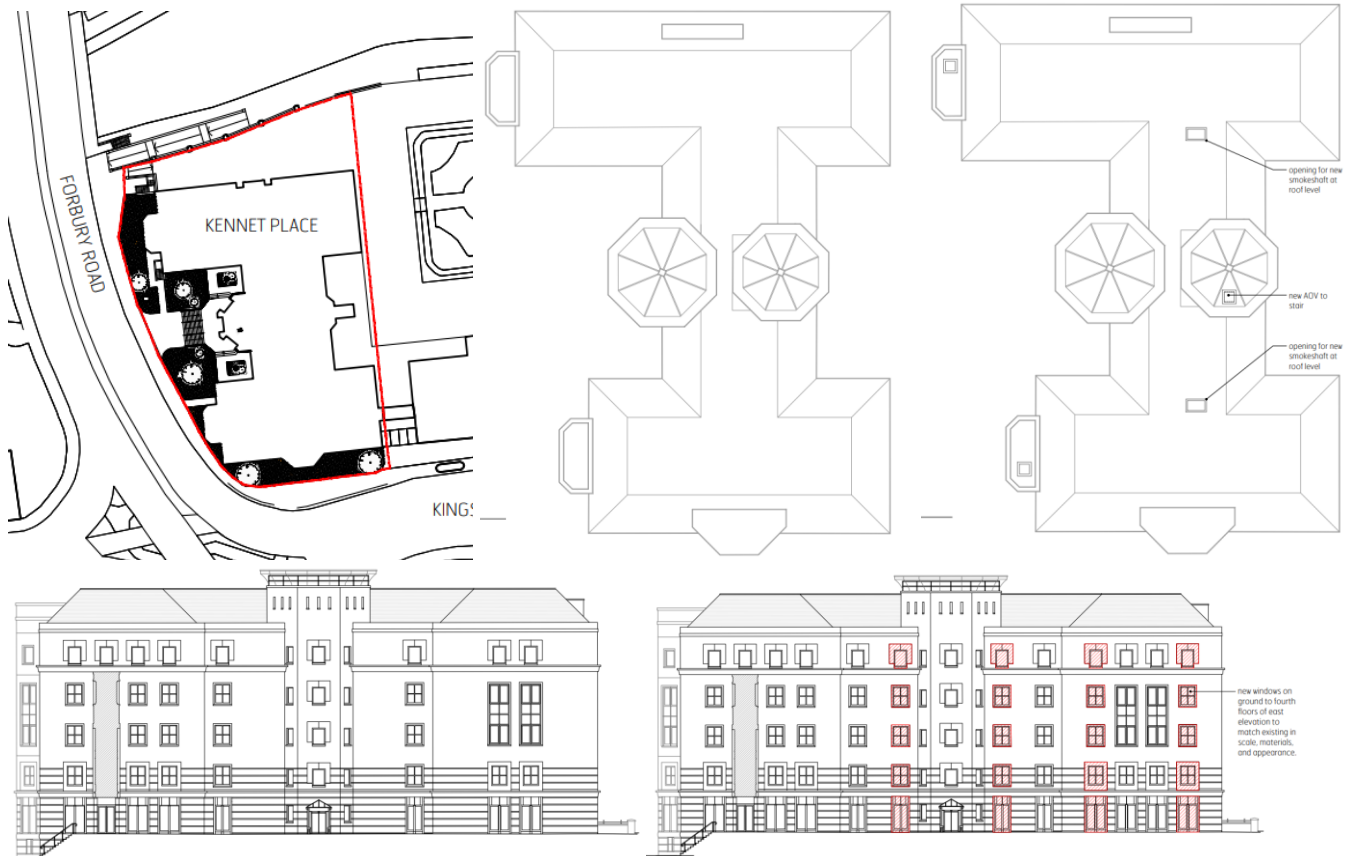
It is confirmed that these specific proposals will not be liable for the Reading Community Infrastructure Levy.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

The application site - Kennet Place, 121 Kings Road

PL/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. Prior Notification Granted 02/10/2024.

PL/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 25/09/2024.



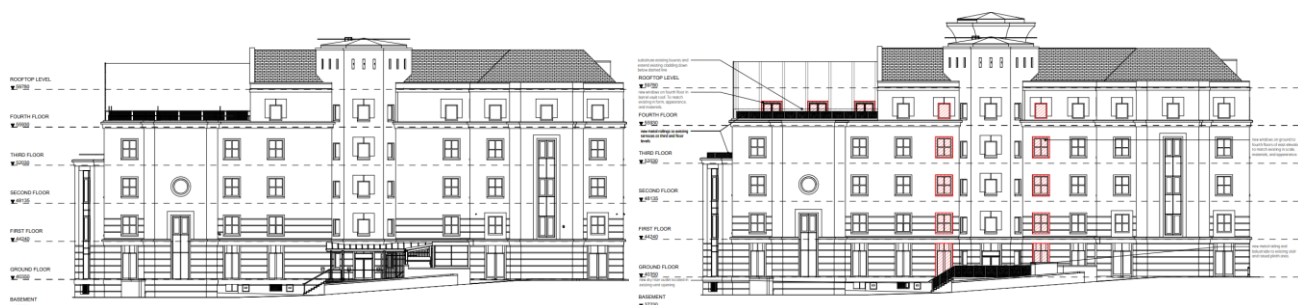
PL/25/0067 - Discharge of conditions 3 (contaminated land assessment), 4 (remediation scheme), 5 (validation report), 8 (foul water network details) & 9 (surface water network details) for prior approval application PL/24/0997, as given on 27/09/2024. Granted 07/03/2025.

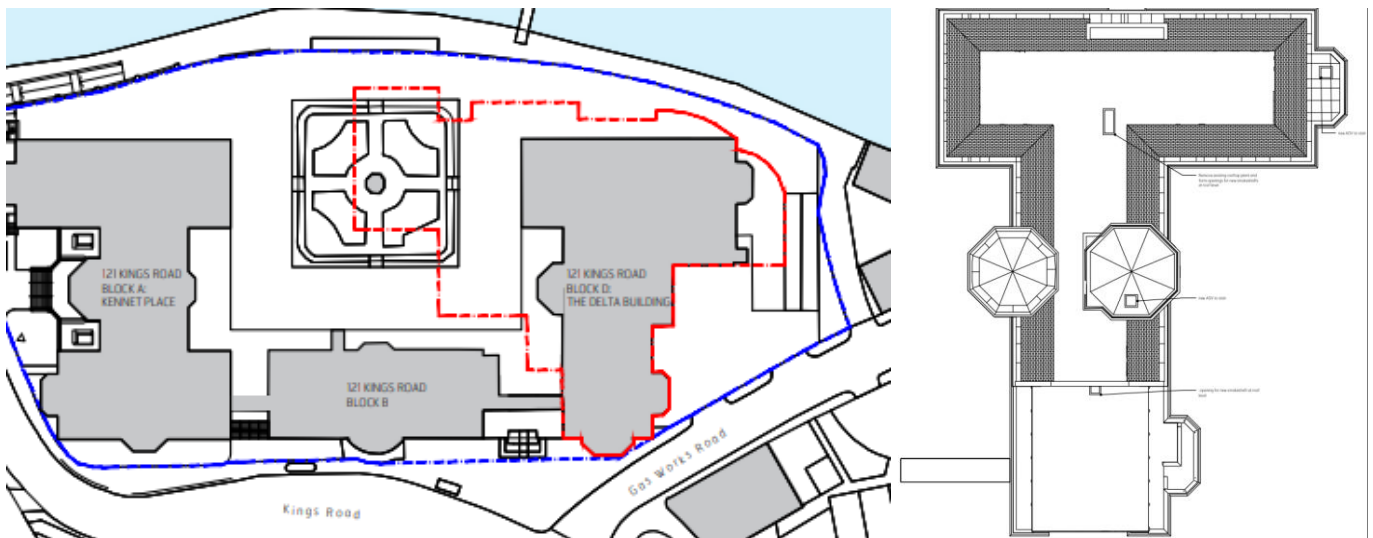
The Wider Site

89/1390 - Office development of 180,000sq ft gross: car parking for 250 cars and riverside walk. Permitted. Granted 14/12/1989.

The Delta Building, 121 Kings Road

PL/25/0466 - 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. Granted 20/05/2025.





PL/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. Prior Notification Granted 20/05/2025.

4. CONSULTATIONS

No internal / external consultees were considered to be necessary for this application. Prior to the validation of the application the agent provided evidence that the height of the building is beneath the threshold whereby a fire statement is required to be submitted and the Health and Safety Executive consulted. Planning officers are also satisfied that the site is within Flood Zone 1, meaning the Environment Agency is not required to be consulted.

Three site notices (on Forbury Road, Kings Road and to the north of the site) were displayed at the site on 07/08/2025, expiring on 28/08/2025, in the public interest. No 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 2024

- 2. Achieving sustainable development
- 4. Decision-making
- 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
- 11. Making effective use of land
- 12. Achieving well-designed places

National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

- CC1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction

CC3 Adaption to Climate Change
CC7 Design and the Public Realm
CC8 Safeguarding Amenity
EN11 Waterspaces
EN12 Biodiversity and the Green Network
TR1 Achieving the Transport Strategy
CR1 Definition of Central Reading
CR2 Design in Central Reading
CR3 Public Realm in Central Reading

Local Plan Update

The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. A consultation version of the draft updated version of the Local Plan was published on 6th November 2024. At the time of writing, the examination-in-public of the partial update to the local plan is scheduled to take place in late 2025.

Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become “out of date” when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example.

Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to these applications listed above is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remains very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the determination of this planning application and are not considered to be ‘out of date’.

6. APPRAISAL

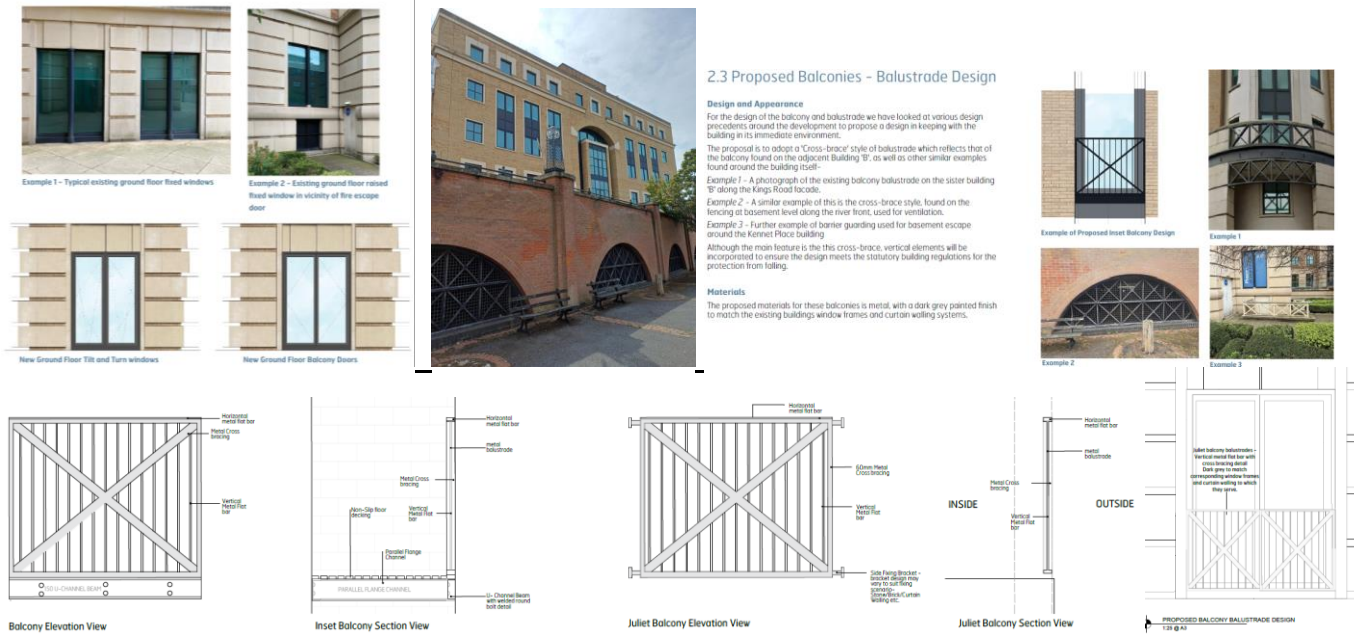
Context of the application in conjunction with other approvals at the site

The application is considered on its own merits, albeit it was evident from the Officer site visit on 14/08/2025 that works are on-going to implement a prior approval (from office to residential) and previous alterations permission at the site. There is no change of use proposed as part of this application, which is for external works to the existing building and some works to the forecourt space adjacent to the Forbury Road entrance.

Design

A series of works are proposed at ground floor level, to replace the existing fixed windows with a variety of different window/door types to suit the future residential uses at the site. The intention is for the panel size, structural openings, frame colour and materials to match those of the existing building, so as to provide continuity. This is considered to be a suitable design response in the context of these proposals and recent approvals at the site. The proposal includes the removal of the revolving doors on the east and west elevations, with the provision of more accessibility-friendly conventional doors. Set within this context, these works are supported. Any windows which are above the actual ground level (given the change in land levels part of the basement car park is actually above the ground level) will include Juliet balconies, with the design for the railing (a ‘cross-brace’ dark grey metal railing) taking inspiration from existing features of the building (e.g. adjacent to the basement car park). These are considered to be relatively

modest changes which will align with the future use of the building, with the choice of detailing for the balconies benefitting from a coherent rationale which will maintain the character of the existing building.



On the east elevation it is no longer proposed to pursue the ground floor openings approved under application PL/24/0973, with it now proposed to provide smaller windows which align with those on the floors above. This design change, as explained by the applicant below, is considered appropriate.

2.1 New Windows - Courtyard Elevation

Included within application (App. Ref PL/24/0973) in September 2024, 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 shear wall and 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.



On the north elevation it is proposed to provide additional openable windows and inset balconies / Juliet balconies to serve the future residential units. The proposed amendments are again considered to be modest in nature, in keeping with the character of the existing building, integrate satisfactorily with the wider area (noting a similar permission for window works at the neighbouring 'Delta Building' – see relevant history above) and, in overall terms, raise no design based concerns.

2.2 Proposed Balconies - Rationale

1. Addressing existing building conditions

New Juliet and inset balconies are proposed to address existing full height operable 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, they 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 whilst doubling as barrier guarding.

2. Proposed Ground Floor Openable windows/doors

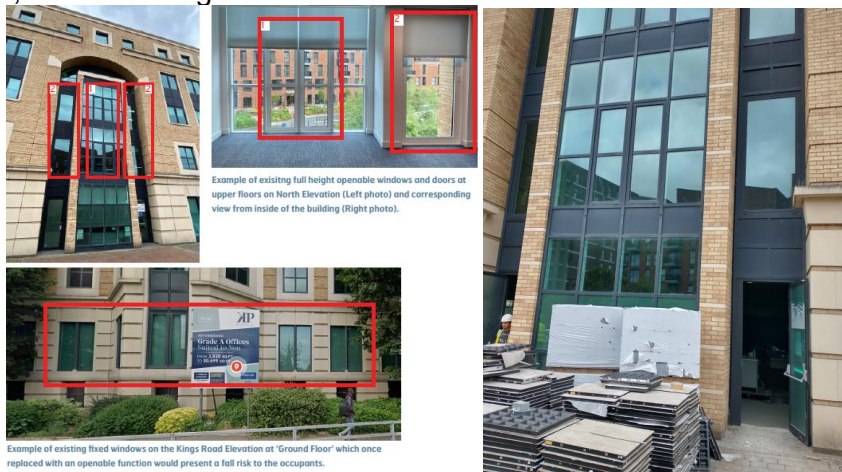
All existing ground floor windows are fixed, which is common in office use where the building is fully mechanically ventilated.

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 operable 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.



At roof level, the previously approved AOV vents and smoke shafts were not anticipated to project from the roof level, thereby not having any material visual impact. However, separate building regulations requirements have confirmed that there is now a need for a slight projection to be provided. These are consequently shown on the plans. Whilst such additions would now have a material visual impact, this impact is not considered harmful in the context of the building as a whole or the wider character of the area. These additions are relatively modest, will not be highly discernible in the street or river scenes and serve an important function in delivering the overall development at the site.

2.4 Proposed Rooftop Smokeshafts and AOVs

As described 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, it 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.



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



Externally, within the forecourt area of the western elevation, fronting onto Forbury Road, it is proposed to remove the two existing raised planters / benches and provide like-for-like paving to match that surrounding the planters. This raises no design-based concerns, with future occupiers of the corresponding flats possibly being able to utilise these resultant spaces for amenity purposes. The proposed replacement balustrade

2.5 Ground Floor Private terrace space

Either side of the main entrance to the building, on the Front Elevation to Forbury Road, there are 2no. existing raised planters with integrated timber benching.

See photo opposite. The planters are currently bare and unattended to.

Previously, as an office building, these would have been managed, and would have provided external amenity space for employees.

They are set back and elevated from the main road, sheltered by tree's to the East, and the building itself to the other 3 sides.

It is very unlikely this space will be utilised by residents, with an additional concern that benching may as a place for loitering for those not associated with the building.

The proposal is to remove these planters, and replace them with paving stones to match existing.

This will create the for small private terrace areas for the flats directly serving them at ground floor.

The new balcony doors are being proposed to enable the flats to access them directly.

These terrace areas will be separated from one another, and from the main entrance route, by low level metal fencing, in the same style and finish as the new balustrading being proposed.

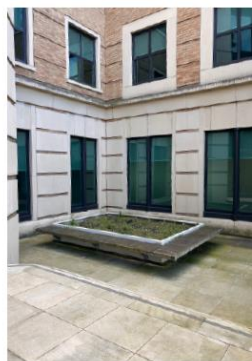


Photo of existing raised planter with benching



None of the proposed works are considered to adversely impact on the nearby River Kennet, thereby ensuring that the proposals comply with the requirements of Policy EN11. As such, in overall design terms, the proposed alterations are considered to be appropriate in terms of the building itself and the wider character of the area, complying with Policies CC7, EN11 CR2 and CR3.

Amenity

The proposals would not result in an increase in scale or footprint of the building and as such no adverse amenity impacts, over and above those currently possible from the application site, are envisaged from an amenity perspective. It is acknowledged that the proposals would introduce a number of Juliet balconies, meaning that windows associated with a likely future residential use could result in increased opportunities for noise and disturbance. However, set within the context of the site location within Central Reading, the proximity to the local highway network of Forbury Road and Kings Road in particular, together with the

significant distances to nearby residential, no significantly harmful noise and disturbance from the provision of Juliet balconies at the application site are anticipated to occur for nearby occupiers.

It is acknowledged that the replacement of a series of windows/doors and roof level works could cause disturbance to nearby occupiers during the construction stage of the development. However, given the on-going works at the site, the space surrounding the application site and the lack of immediately adjoining neighbouring occupiers, there is not considered to be a need for any construction method statement to be secured in this specific instance.

For future residential occupiers of the presently under construction works at the site, the provision of these works will improve the quality of accommodation provided, for the benefit of their future amenity. In overall terms the proposals are considered to accord with Policy CC8.

Other matters

Sustainability matters have been acknowledged within the design statement submitted by the applicant, with it clarified that the proposed window works will assist in respect of SAP and EPC fabric performance standards (which will be separately required in association with building regulations) and noise prevention. It is considered that the proposals comply with the relevant components of Policies CC2 and CC3.

In terms of biodiversity net gain, it is accepted that these proposals would be subject to the de minimis exemption.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposals are considered to be acceptable and not result detrimental impacts. Instead, they are considered to 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:

1364.2 – 104 - Proposed Fourth Floor Plan
As received on 18/07/2025

1364.2-050 Rev A - Proposed Block Plan
1364.2.PA – 101 Rev A - Proposed Ground Floor Plan
1364.2.PA – 102 Rev A - Proposed First Floor Plan
1364.2.PA – 103 Rev A - Proposed Second Floor Plan
1364.2.PA – 104 Rev A - Proposed Third Floor Plan
1364.2.PA – 107 Rev A - Proposed Roof Plan
1364.2-200 Rev A – Proposed Front Elevation (West)
1364.2-201 Rev A – Proposed North Elevation

1364.2-202 Rev A – Proposed Rear Elevation (East)
1364.2-203 Rev A – Proposed South Elevation
1364.2-204 – Proposed Courtyard Elevation 01
1364.2-205 – Proposed Courtyard Elevation 02
1364.2-210 Rev A – Proposed Window and Balcony Design
As all received on 01/08/2025

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 application form.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and ensuring the new development responds positively to the local context and character in accordance with Policies CC7 and CR2 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. A Building Regulations application may be required for the proposed development. Please go to our website for more advice. <https://www.reading.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/building-control/apply-for-building-control/> You can also find advice and submit an application using the Planning Portal.
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 timescale for the decision to be issued.