

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey Ward

App Ref: PL/25/1209

Address: READING CROWN COURT, THE FORBURY, READING, RG1 3EH

Proposal: Non-Material Amendments to Planning Permission ref: PL/24/1462 To reconfigure the ground floor internal layout to introduce a new Crown Court and ancillary rooms, relocation of a reception desk and modifications to the partition walls within the security area located at the entrance in the significant listed part, to add obscuring film to windows

Applicant: The Secretary of State for Justice c/o Neil Spiker

Received date: 27/08/2025

Target Decision date: 30/09/2025 (EOT)

Case Officer: Marcelina Rejwerska

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises the Grade II listed Assize Court, south of the historic Forbury Park. The national listing (1113476) reads as follows:

“THE FORBURY 1. 5128 Assize Courts SU 7173 NE 1/306 II GV 2. 1861. Said to be by J B Clacy. Baroque revival style in channelled Bath stone ashlar. 2 storeys with 2 1/2 storey corner pavilions which break forward. Cornices on ground and 1st floors, panels with palmettes over caps. 5 bay centre with flanking 1x1 bay wings. Ground floor Doric with engaged rusticated columns, paired to pavilions. Ionic 1st floor. C19 glazed sash windows, round headed on 1st floor, segmental headed on ground floor, with architrave surrounds and keys. Ground floor of centre projects between flanking pavilions and has 3 bay arcaded portico with balustrade over. Attics have elaborate recessed scroll terminals above entablature forming aedicules. Extensive buildings to rear. Interior: large central top lit and galleried hall. Street wall with 2 pairs of high cruciform piers with rusticated rebates to corners and ball-finials. Heavy lozenge pattern panels of rails.”

The listed building has a large 1980s rear extension which makes up majority of the Crown Court and extends back to Abbey Square. The site and the surrounding area are within an area of archaeological potential, and are comprised of mostly commercial premises.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed amendments comprised of replacing the existing glass wall partitions in the reception with solid partitions, and for the existing front secure exit door to be rehung to swing outwards instead of inwards.

2.1. Information submitted:

256379-9573-FMW-RCC-00-DR-A-1111-S2-P04-Ground Floor Plan As Existing

256379-9573-FMW-RCC-00-DR-A-1111-S2-P02-Ground Floor Plan As Existing

256379-9573-FMW-RCC-00-DR-A-1211-S2-P02-Ground Floor Plan As Proposed

256379-9573-FMW-RCC-00-DR-A-1211-S2-P03-Ground Floor Plan As Proposed

Received by the LPA on 27 August 2025

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/22/0907/LBC - To install wall mounted electric car charge points and associated cabling. The charge points will be surface mounted to the concrete supporting columns to the rear staff car park (enclosed). – Application Permitted on 24/10/2022

PL/22/1486/LBC The proposal seeks to improve the current alarm system. This would be achieved via installation of new concealed cabling and an alarm control keypad, mounted on one wall of exit lobby (ground floor). Application Permitted 24/11/2022

PL/24/1462 - To reconfigure the ground floor internal layout to introduce a new Crown Court and ancillary rooms, relocation of a reception desk and modifications to the partition walls within the security area located at the entrance in the significant listed part, to add obscuring film to windows. Application permitted.

PL/24/1465 - To reconfigure the ground floor internal layout to introduce a new Crown Court and ancillary rooms, relocation of a reception desk and modifications to the partition walls within the security area located at the entrance in the significant listed part, to add obscuring film to windows. Application permitted.

PL/25/1050 - Application for Approval of Details Reserved by Condition 3 (Door details) of application PL/24/1465. Condition discharged.

PL/25/1054 - Application for Approval of Details Reserved by Condition 3 of application PL/24/1462. Condition discharged.

4. CONSULTATIONS

No statutory requirement for any for this type of application, however, the RBC Conservation Officer was consulted and has raised no objections.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Whilst there is no statutory definition of what constitutes a ‘non-material’ amendment, Section 96A, part 2 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) states that, *"In deciding whether a change is material, a local planning authority must have regard to the effect of the change, together with any previous changes made under this section, on the planning permission as originally granted."*

The proposed amendments are assessed for materiality – not on the basis of their planning merits. Planning policies therefore do not apply.

6. APPRAISAL

In the context of the permitted scheme, it is not considered that the amendment would have any material impact on the overall design. This is primarily owing to the context of the overall approved scheme and the nature of the surrounding context, with the proposed changes being of a relatively minor scale and nature in this context.

An informative is recommended which states that this permission relates only to the changes highlighted on the plans. Furthermore, it shall only be read in the context of the substantive permission and is bound by all conditions attached to that permission.

7. CONCLUSION

Overall, the proposed amendment is not considered to bear any significant impact or harm on the application site.

As a result, the local planning authority is satisfied that the changes proposed by this application do not constitute material changes to the approved planning permission.

8. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT NON-MATERIAL AMENDMENT

Conditions:

1. Approved Plans

Informatives:

1. This notice relates only to the changes to the plans as approved under condition 2 of the substantive planning permission and is bound by all the conditions and obligations attached to that permission. That permission still stands and this notice (and any other notices issued under section 96a for this development) should be read together.
2. In reaching this decision, the local planning authority is satisfied that the changes proposed by this application do not constitute material changes to the approved planning permission.