

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 21st July 2021

Ward: Caversham

App No: 210471/LBC

Address: Caversham Court Environmental Centre, Church Road, Caversham, Reading

Proposal: Listed Building Consent for Listed Building Consent for the installation of a toilet facility in a store room in single storey outbuilding of the main Stable Block.

Applicant: Property Estates & Valuation

Date validated: 25/3/2021

Target Date: 20/05/2021

Extended target date: 23/07/2021

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT listed building consent subject to conditions, to include:

1. Time limit for implementation
2. Approved plans
3. Materials as submitted

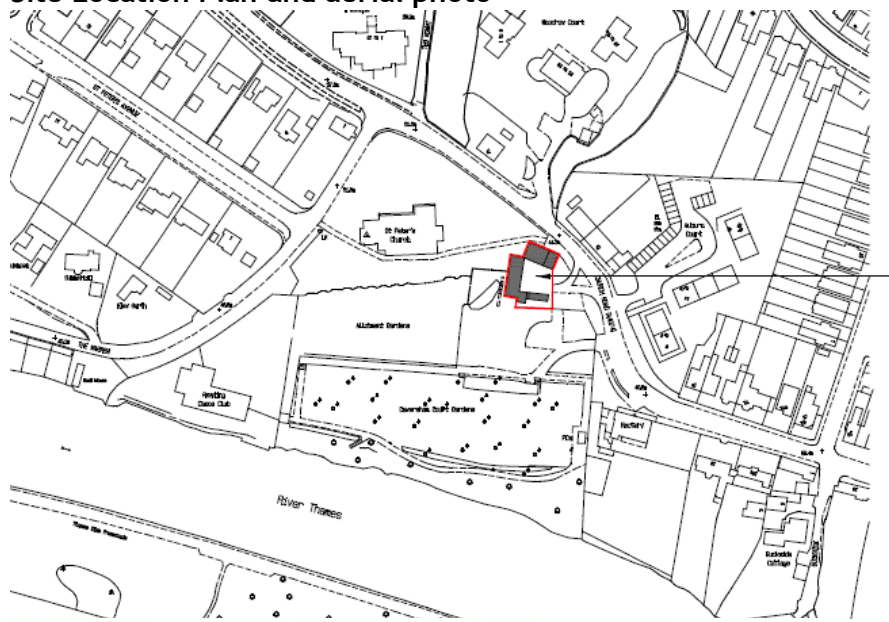
Informatives to include:

1. Terms and conditions
2. Positive and proactive

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The proposal site forms part of the Caversham Court Stables building and is located within the grounds of Caversham Court Gardens, which are a Grade II Listed Park and Garden. The site also lies in the St. Peter's Church Conservation Area of Caversham and the Caversham Ward of Reading. The buildings are Grade II Listed.
- 1.2 The Gardens are adjacent to St Peter's Church (which is Grade II* listed) and the associated churchyard. There are also several other Grade II listed structures within the park itself, including a 17th Century Gazebo, retaining walls to the raised walk/causeway to the gazebo, retaining walls to the axial east-west garden walk, the crinkle-crankle retaining wall forming the north boundary of the allotments and the stable block (to the demolished mansion house).
- 1.3 This listed building consent application is reported to the Planning Applications Committee for a decision as the application has been submitted by the Council's Property Estates & Valuation section.

Site Location Plan and aerial photo



Caversham Court Stables
 Project: Proposed Park Officer's Toilet
 Title: Aerial photograph of site
 Scale: 1:500 @A3



Site photos provided by applicant within Design & Access Statement



Stable Block and part of the Victorian Coach House (west & north wings)



Elevation of southern wing of stable block - location of proposed toilet

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 Listed building consent is sought to provide toilet facilities in one of the stores in the single storey southern wing of the Stable Block. It will be adjacent to the existing Park Officer's Office which is located in the same block. The toilets would for use by Park Officers that work in Caversham Court Gardens.
- 2.2 The applicant has explained that these new facilities are needed to replace the existing dilapidated toilet located in the main Stable Block. Reading Borough Council is committed to retaining an on-site gardener to maintain the park and gardens to the high standard that the numerous national awards testify to. The existing toilet and store will be refurbished to become part of the Stable Block so that the entire building can be leased to a tenant and the

subsequent income from the rent will help to ensure the long-term future of the building.

- 2.3 The proposed new doorway which is to be formed in the brick wall in the covered passageway will be fitted with a security door and frame manufactured from steel to match the existing door to the Park Officer's Office.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

Most relevant:

130168 - Re-configuration of the main stairs in the stable block and minor alterations to the internal layout including new partitions and doors. Structural repairs to the coach houses and alterations to provide conference/meeting rooms with supporting facilities. Permitted 17/10/2013.

130169 - Re-configuration of the main stairs in the stable block and minor alterations to the internal layout including new partitions and doors. Structural repairs to the coach houses and alterations to provide conference/meeting rooms with supporting facilities. New open covered walkway between the buildings with a clear glass roof. Permitted 19/06/2013.

4. CONSULTATIONS

Statutory:

The limited scope of the application and the classification of the buildings and gardens (not Grade I or Grade II*) means that the proposed works fall outside of the criteria set for when proposals for development need Historic England to be consulted. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Amendment (England) Regulations 2105 (SI 2015/809).

Non-Statutory:

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee did not respond to their consultation.

The Reading Borough Council Conservation & Urban Design Officer raised no objection to the proposals.

Public:

The applicant has confirmed a site notice was displayed on 21st April 2021. A press notice was published on 29 April 2021. No responses from the public have been received.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1 Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.
- 5.2 The Notification to Historic England and National Amenities Societies and the Secretary of State (England) Direction 2015, which came into force on 15 April, 2015, confirmed that applications submitted by the local authority for works to its own listed buildings should only be referred to the Secretary of

State if an objection has been received from Historic England or a National Amenity Society.

- 5.3 The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)
Reading Borough Council Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas

6.0 APPRAISAL

- 6.1 The main issue to consider for this application is the effect the proposal may have on the historic fabric and character of the Grade II listed building and adjacent gardens.

- 6.2 Policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan states that all proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits. Applications which affect Listed Buildings will not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where appropriate, their settings.

- 6.3 The details of the proposed works are described as follows:

- The proposed external door and frame will be manufactured from steel with a powder coated finish in a matt green colour (RAL 6024) to match the existing metal window frames and doors.
- The proposed toilet cubicle will be constructed from timber studwork clad with plasterboard mounted on plywood to provide a robust assembly.
- The plasterboard will be decorated with matt emulsion paint to match the internal walls of the Store.
- The cubicle door will be a flush plywood door hung in a softwood frame, decorated with gloss paint. The door will be fitted with appropriate hardware.
- The new sanitaryware will consist of one commercial quality w.c. suite and one wash hand basin, both made from white vitreous china and fitted with appropriate accessories.
- The existing window in the new toilet cubicle will have an obscure privacy film applied to the internal face of the glass.

The conclusion reached is that the proposed development will have minimal impact on the character of the building and will not be visible from the public areas of Caversham Court Stables or the Gardens or the Conservation Area.

- 6.4 The Heritage Statement emphasises that the works are mainly internal and not visible from the street scene. The proposed works are considered minor and would not cause material harm to the heritage asset or its surrounding

and are therefore in accordance with Policies CC7, CC8, EN1 and EN3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Equality

- 6.5 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age and disability. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposed works are considered to be acceptable in the context of national and local planning policy, and would involve no greater material harm to the fabric of the Heritage Asset, as set out in this report. The application is recommended for approval on this basis.

Plans considered:

Planning & Heritage Statement

Drawings:

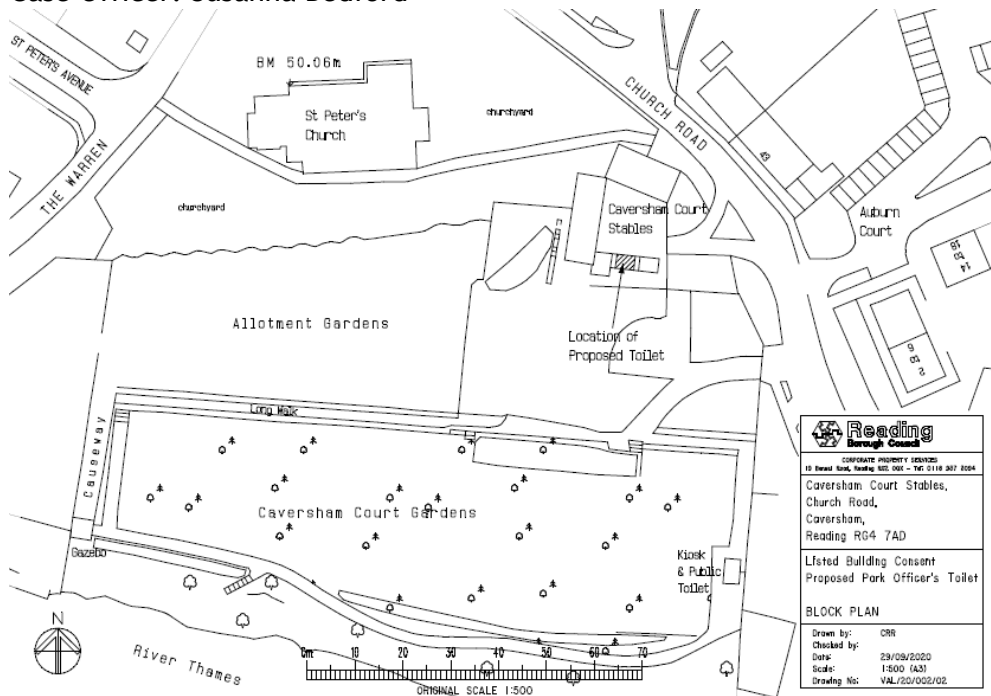
Location Plan VAL/20/002/01

Block Plan VAL/20/002/02

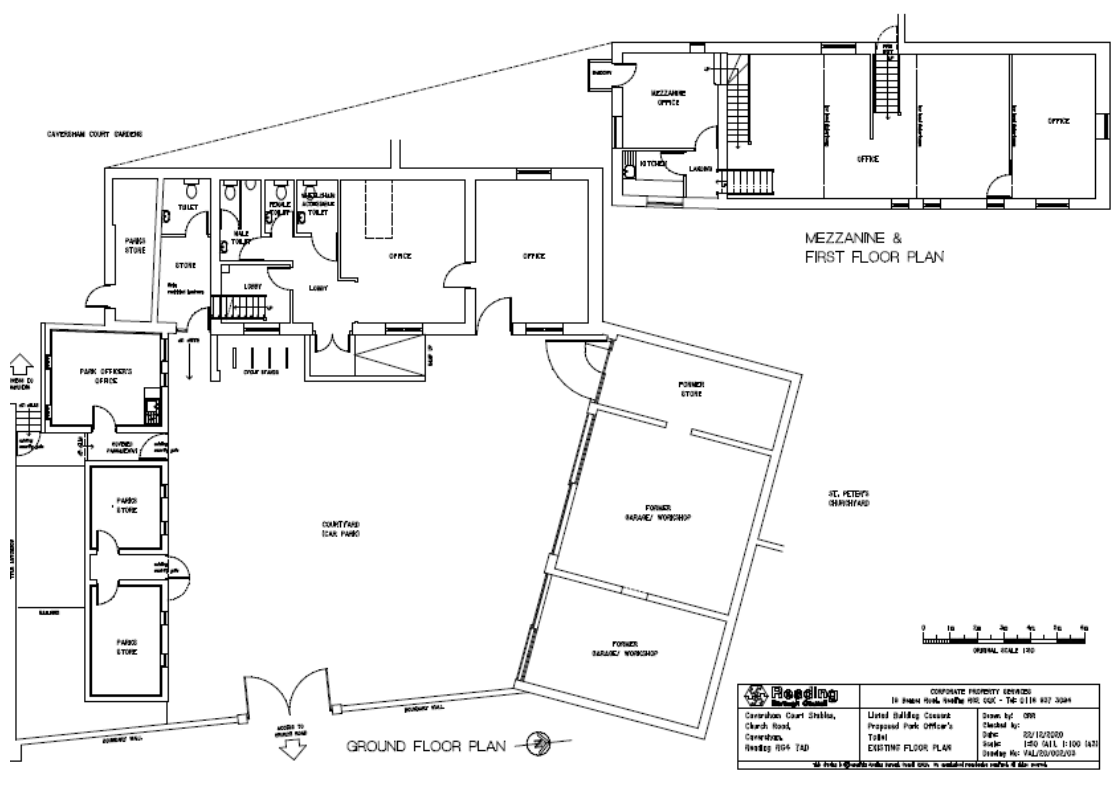
Existing Floor Plan VAL/20/002/03

Proposed Floor Plan VAL/20/002/04A

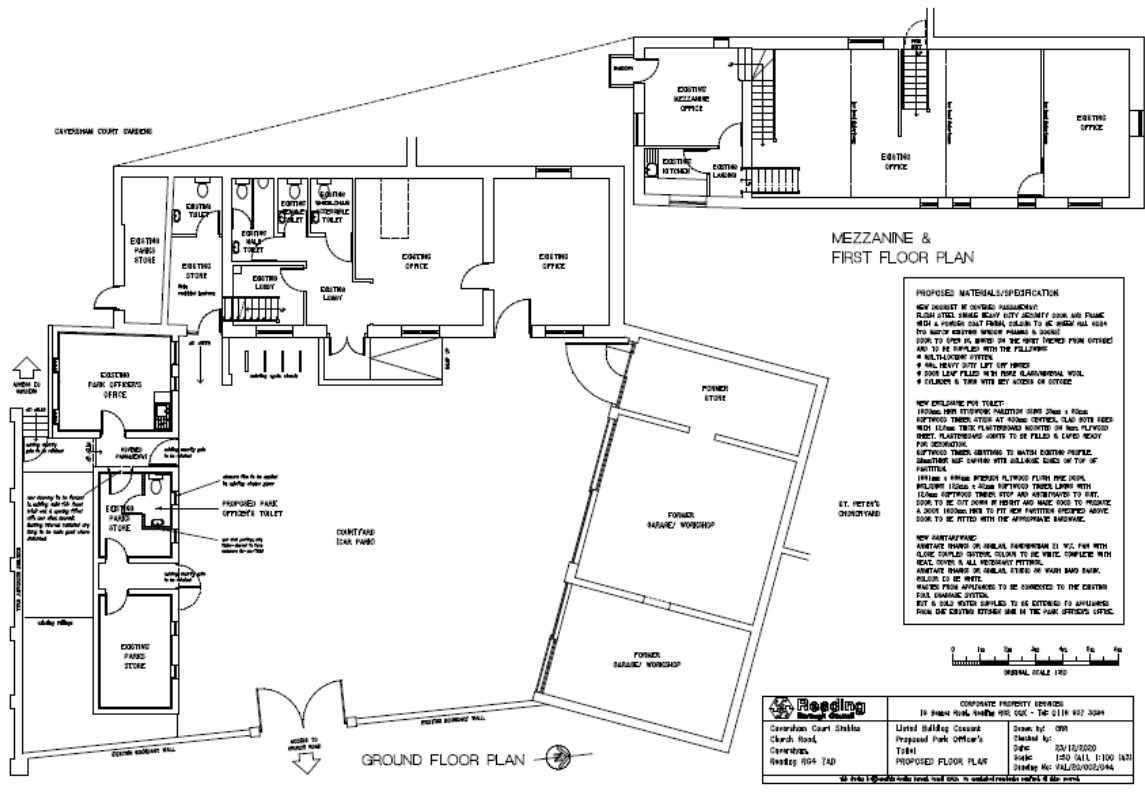
Case Officer: Susanna Bedford



Block plan



Existing Plan



Proposed Plan