

UPDATE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 6th February 2019

ITEM NO. 12
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Ward: Katesgrove

Application No.: 181117

Address: 34-36 & 38 Southampton Street, Reading, RG1 2QL

Proposal: Erection of a basement and 4-storey building to provide 11 (1x studio, 8x1-bed & 2x2-bed) residential units (Class C3) and associated works following the demolition of the existing buildings (basement & 3-storey public house at No's 34-36 Southampton Street and 2-storey residential building at No. 38)

Recommendation:

As in main report, barring rewording of condition 20 (omissions denoted by ~~strikethrough~~):

20. ~~Notwithstanding the provisions of the GPDO 2015~~ no change to the unit mix (1xstudio, 8x1-bed and 2x2-bed units) shall be made to the development hereby permitted without express planning permission from the Local Planning Authority.

1. Certificate of immunity from listing update

- 1.1 Further to section 4xii) and paragraph 6.6 of the main report, on 28/01/19 Historic England (HE) confirmed the certificate of immunity from listing. More specifically, having considered HE's recommendation, the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has decided not to add Red Lion Public House and 38 Southampton Street, Reading to the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. Accordingly, HE confirmed that the Minister hereby certifies that he does not intend to list the building.
- 1.2 Under section 6(2) of the 1990 Act, the effect of this certificate is to preclude the Secretary of State from listing Red Lion Public House and 38 Southampton Street for a period of five years from the date of issue (28/01/19), and to preclude the local planning authority from serving a Building Preservation Notice (BPN) on the building during that period.
- 1.3 The reasons for the decision were as already stated at paragraph 4.50 of the main report.

2. Further public consultation responses

- 2.1 Subsequent to the completion of the main report, three further public consultation responses have been received. These are addressed below.
- 2.2 First, an objection has been received from an unspecified address on Southampton Street (2 submissions made at separate times, but of an identical nature). Secondly, a further response has been received from Calbourne Drive, Calcot, RG31 (previous objections were received at the time of the initial consultation, as reported at section 4xiv of the main report). Both responses from the Southampton Street and Calbourne Drive addresses are identical and are summarised as follows:

- a) Disheartened and astonished regarding the way in which the consultation process has been run. Concerns that Article 15 of the Development Management Procedure Order has not been followed as the application does not appear on the website from a postcode search. This is unfair and unjust on the residents of Reading as the whole point of the public consultation is so that anyone can respond to a planning consultation. In addition to individuals who might be directly affected by a planning application, community groups and specific interest groups (national as well as local in some cases) may wish to provide representations but in this case would be unable to do so as it is unlikely they would have the application number.
- b) The Red Lion Public House is a great iconic building and no similar building exists within Reading.
- c) The pub has been neglected by the current owners; the previous tenants were given a premium to leave the premises and forfeit their lease.
- d) Not clear in the structural report prepared by Scott White and Hookins if the building is deteriorating and likely to collapse. RBC's house surveyor should assess whether it can be retained rather than demolished.
- e) The proposal would be an over-development of the site.
- f) The proposed design is poor and cumbersome and the proposed development would be large and dominant which is out of keeping with the street scene (agree 100% with previous officer comments at the time of application 172328) and contrary to policies CS7 and RC5.
- g) The amenity for future occupiers is abysmal due to having an unacceptable lack of outlook which comes from the quality of rooms, and flat layouts being compromised.
- h) The amenity of the existing nearby occupiers would be an unacceptable visual dominance due to the significant increase in massing proposed at the side/rear of the application site. As such, the existing/future occupiers of Solent Court would suffer significant detrimental impacts to their living environment, contrary to policy DM4.

2.3 Officer responses: a) Officers are content that the consultation requirements have been met. Owing to a technical issue, the application did not appear from the planning search function on the website via a postcode search. This was rectified when the matter was brought to the attention of officers. Throughout the consultation period the proposals could be found via an address search. Furthermore, responses were received from various addresses, as per section 4xiv of the main report. It is noted that one of the further respondents had commented at the time of the initial consultation in August 2018; b), d) e) & f) Please see sections 4ii), 4iii), 6ii) and 7 of the main report; c) Officers are content with the loss of the existing use, as per section 6i) of the main report; g) Please see section 6iv) of the main report. h) Please see section 6v of the main report.

2.4 Thirdly, an observation has been received from Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (noting it has not commented on application 181117), subsequent to the publication of the main report. This queried the accuracy of the information which assisted HE in recommending the buildings should not be listed (more specifically whether the pub was pre or post 1840 - as referenced in separate) and sought for HE to reconsider the listing description on this basis.

2.5 Officer response: Officers fed the correspondence from Reading CAAC (including submissions at the time of application 172328) into HE. HE replied confirming that the evidence/argument put forward by the CAAC did

not seem to provide any relevant new information not considered during HE's assessment. This was then fed back to Reading CAAC, who acknowledged HE's response and thanked officers for pursuing this.

3. Further Councillor response

- 3.1 Subsequent to previous comments received from Cllr James, as detailed at section 4xv) of the main report, a further response has been received withdrawing the original concerns raised. The further response, in full, is as follows:

After careful consideration and further conversation with the developers, I have decided to withdraw my objection of the Red Lion site. Although it would always be preferable to retain original features, I acknowledge that it is challenging given alterations made to the site and previous structural damage, and that developers have made an effort to act on previous feedback from residents in terms of the design.

Creating more housing is a priority in Reading and any additional units is important with a town with such high need. I welcome this element of the application, however, I would like to see a firm commitment to affordable housing.

Case Officer: Jonathan Markwell