

Development Management  
Bristol City Council

Our ref: PR02012

Your ref: PP-11166069

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022

**Sent via the Planning Portal**

Dear Sir/Madam,

**External alterations to building including changes to fenestration, reinstatement of front lightwell, and removal of external staircase at rear.**

**19 Whiteladies Road, Bristol BS8 1PB**

The application is submitted for external alterations to the building only, and this letter forms a proportionate Heritage, Design, Access, and Planning Statement commensurate to the scale of development.

The building has a lawful use as commercial, business, and service (Use Class E), and was last used as Allied Irish Bank, which closed at the beginning of the pandemic and never reopened to customers. The Applicant now owns the property and is seeking these changes to the building's appearance.

The application site covers an area of 780sqm. The building spans five floors, including a lower ground floor level. The customer-facing elements of the bank were located on the ground floor with safes and stores within the lower ground floor level. Backroom offices, meeting rooms, and staff facilities were located on the first, second, and third floors.

The site is located within the Bristol Central Area Plan Boundary and the Whiteladies Road Conservation Area. The site is not part of a designated shopping frontage or area. There is a rear parking court, which is completely hard surfaced, accessed off Tyndall's Park Road. To the front is a landscaped amenity space. The site is in Flood Zone 1, there are no Tree Preservation Orders on the site, and the building is not listed.

The proposals include the following works: -

#### Lower ground floor

At the front of the building, three windows are to be elongated and a lightwell created. There is evidence within the lower ground floor, externally, close to the building, and from observations of the neighbouring property, No.17, that these windows were foreshortened and a lightwell infilled. It is assumed that this was a security measure for the bank use.

Towards the rear of the lower ground floor an existing side door will be replaced with another door with increased glazing. Finally, a small window and accompanying lightwell is to be created between the southern wall of the ground floor single-storey element and the boundary with No.17. All security bars and grills will be removed.

#### Ground floor

Above the new rear-facing window, a ground floor level one of the same style/proportions would be inserted. To the very rear, a narrow door is replaced with a window and a similar window inserted just to its north (east facing).

Another window is inserted for the same room, this time, on the northern wall (directly above the boiler room access). Within this same wall, but towards the west (Whiteladies Road) to two sets of arched windows will be altered to incorporate opening casements, as these windows are currently fixed shut.

Finally, the external stairs that land adjacent to parking space 9 (see site plan), and their associated walkways are to be removed. All security bars and grills will be removed.

#### First floor

Only works to the rear are proposed. The existing fire-escape door is to be replaced by a window of the same proportions and style as the adjacent one at No.17 (see proposed elevations). The wall below the new sill will be made good. The other rear-facing first floor (currently obscured) window will be replaced with clear glazing. All security bars and grills will be removed.

#### Second floor

No external changes proposed. However, an obscure film will be removed from one of the rear-facing windows (see proposed elevations).

### Third floor

No external changes proposed.

The external alterations to the building, in this instance, are principally assessed against development plan policies BCS21, BCS22, DM26, DM30, and DM31. Whiteladies Road Conservation Area does not have an up-to-date Character Appraisal, only an Enhancement Statement, which is close to 30 years old. However, of relevance to the scheme, the latter notes that the conservation area faces challenges from loss of front gardens and unsympathetic paving materials.

The bulk of the proposed alterations are located at ground and lower ground floor levels. The opening up of the front lightwell and insertion of railings would have a minimal visual impact on the appearance of the building, as seen from Whiteladies Road or Tyndall's Park Road. The extensive front garden space, planting, and grand entrance to the elevated ground floor screen the area and provide the visual focal point for the frontage. Subject to final details and execution, given they largely involve reinstatement works, the opening of the lightwell would have a neutral impact.

There are no alterations to the front of the building above lower ground floor level.

To the side elevation, facing Tyndall's Park Road, the alterations to the lower ground floor (changed door) are not wholly visible. Similarly, the two arched windows are only altered to allow opening. Towards the rear, the new window within the single-storey element would be of a more modest scale and design to the arched windows and would ultimately help in breaking up what is currently a stark plain wall, which faces the public realm.

Towards the rear of the building the insertion of new windows would be well screened by the site's boundaries and would not detrimentally alter the appearance of the building. The creation of a small lightwell, located between the boundary with No.17 and the single-storey rear element of the building would have some impact on the visual amenity of the property. However, this impact is in the most discrete location within the property, completely screened from public views and almost out of sight from private views.

The removal of security grills and bars (across the whole building) would have a moderate benefit to the appearance of the building.

The replacement of the first-floor fire door with a window and the complete removal of the external steel stairs and walkway would be a significant visual improvement to the building and how it is viewed

from the public realm and its contribution to the general character and appearance of this section of the conservation area.

The external alterations represent a combination of improvements and new interventions that ultimately balance in favour, with the removal of the stairs and security bars as significant benefits to the architectural integrity of the building and as improvements to the visual amenity and character of the conservation area. As such, the proposals are considered appropriate and in accordance with policies BCS21, BCS22, DM26, DM30, and DM31, and the National Planning Policy Framework. It is therefore hoped that the application can be supported.

If any further information is required in order to clarify the above, please contact us as soon as possible so that we are able to provide this prior to a decision being made.

Yours faithfully,

**Stokes Morgan Planning Ltd**