



30 July 2021

**APPEAL REFERENCE – APP/E0345/W/21/3276463
55 VASTERN ROAD, READING, RG1 8BU
READING CONSERVATION AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMMENTS**

I am against the appeal proposals for the reasons given by the LPA, specifically that related to heritage:

The proposal would result in the complete loss of 55 Vastern Road, a Non- Designated Heritage Asset and building of local significance. The proposal has failed to demonstrate adequately that retention and reuse of the building has been explored fully. In this regard, the benefits of the proposal are not considered to significantly outweigh the harm caused to the asset's identified significance. Therefore, the development is contrary to Policy EN1, EN4 and Section 16 NPPF.

Reading CAAC promotes the preservation and enhancement of Reading's heritage particularly but not limited to the protection and good management of Conservation Areas. In our comments below we emphasise the importance of the industrial heritage of 55 Vastern Road.

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) did not comment on the planning application (200188) to redevelop the former SSE site on Vastern Road.

CAAC members attended consultation meetings with representatives of the applicant during 2018 and 2019.

Summary

The locally listed gatehouse at 55 Vastern Road, a non-designated heritage asset, should be retained.

1. Loss of non-designated industrial heritage building

1.1 The area of Reading to the north of the railway line was once a very industrialised area. Neighbours of the Reading Electricity Supply Company listed in the 1899 directory were: Collier & Catley, builders; Samuel Griffith, engineer and Henry Lewis, engineer at Thames Bank Ironworks. On the opposite side of Vastern Road were railway yards.

1.2 The only building that remains of this industrial centre and the electricity works is the gatehouse at 55 Vastern Road. The form and function as a gatehouse and entrance is still readable despite the blocking in of the front door and gateway entrance.

1.3 The architect of the electricity works, a director of Reading Electricity Supply Company, was Frederick W Albury (1845-1912). He was an important local architect responsible for many significant and prestigious buildings in Reading including the W I Palmer Memorial Hall on West Street and the public library on Oxford Road.

1.4 A stone's throw away on Caversham Road, the former Dowsons maltings was recently saved from demolition on appeal (APP/E0345/W/20/3263270). Like 55 Vastern Road, the maltings was also a locally listed, non-designated, heritage asset.

1.5 The demolition of the gatehouse at 55 Vastern Road as part of this redevelopment will be a great loss to Reading's industrial heritage. It is a notable building in the streetscape with community importance, contributing to a sense of place. The importance cannot be replaced by the proposed brick detailing on the front of a high rise block.

1.6 Reading CAAC requests that design solutions that would allow the retention of the locally listed building are explored further.

2. Conclusion

2.1 Please dismiss this appeal.

Your sincerely

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On behalf of Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee
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