# **Development Control Committee B – 16 March 2016**

ITEM NO. 6

WARD: Cabot CONTACT OFFICER: Anna Schroeder

SITE ADDRESS: Prince House 43 - 51 Prince Street Bristol BS1 4PS

**APPLICATION NO:** 15/05894/F Full Planning

**EXPIRY DATE:** 20 January 2016

Installation of 5 no. heat recovery units to the flat roof area. Removal of the existing canopy to the front elevation with the renewal of pedestrian entrance doors.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Grant subject to Condition(s)

AGENT: Alder King Planning Consultants APPLICANT: Mr Mike Greenslade

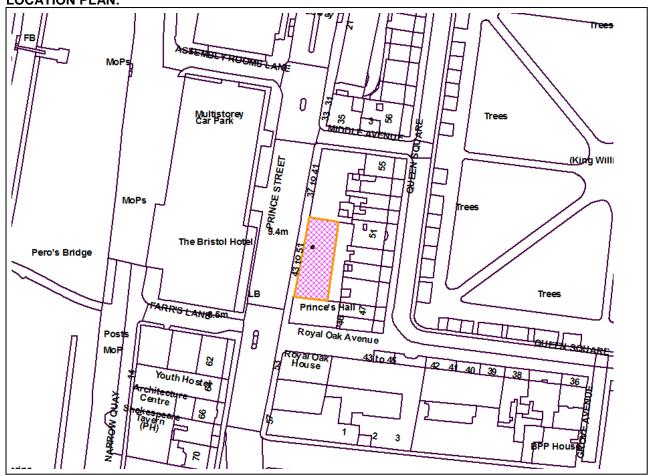
Pembroke House 12 Carn Brea Business Park

15 Pembroke Road Redruth
Clifton TR15 3RQ

Bristol BS8 3BA

The following plan is for illustrative purposes only, and cannot be guaranteed to be up to date.

### **LOCATION PLAN:**



04/03/16 14:51 Committee report

#### **SUMMARY**

Planning permission is sought for the siting of 5 heat recovery units on the roof of Prince House and external alterations to the entrance of the building on Prince Street. The units are proposed to serve both heating and cooling systems, installed as part of a general refurbishment of this office building. 4 objections to the proposals have been received, including one from the Friends of Queen Square. The objections are raised on the grounds of potential noise issues, adverse visual impact and potential for air pollution and waste issues when the units are eventually decommissioned. The application has been assessed against relevant development plan policies and minimal adverse impact has been identified. BCC pollution control officers have assessed the specifications of the units and concluded that operational noise levels are likely to be acceptable. Conditions are recommended to ensure operational noise levels would be below background levels during operation of the units. The visual impact of the units on the conservation area and setting of nearby listed buildings would be negligible due to the siting, scale and appearance of the units, and tree screening from within Queen Square. Other matters would be controlled under appropriate regulations. The proposals would accord with relevant development plan policies and approval with conditions is therefore recommended by your officers.

The Application has been referred for a committee decision by Councillor Stafford-Townsend on the following grounds; Proximity of application to neighbouring residential addresses. Issues include noise level, air pollution, visual impact and waste issue.

#### SITE DESCRIPTION

The site lies within the City and Queen Square Conservation Area, with Prince House identified as a neutral building in the City and Queen Square character appraisal.

Prince House is a 6-storey office building that fronts onto Prince Street, comprising ground floor undercroft car park and reception and 5 floors of office space. To the rear, the building backs onto Nos. 48 - 51 Queen Square all of which are Grade II listed buildings, in use as offices. There is additional car parking beyond the building footprint to the rear, within an open yard, accessed from Prince Street. Prince House lies directly adjacent to Crown House, which is a 7 storey building recently converted to residential apartments, with access from Prince Street.

#### PLANNING HISTORY

07/01074/F Installation of satellite dish on roof. GRANTED 31/05/07

Notable applications in the vicinity of the site include recent applications on Crown House, immediately adjacent to the site at 37-41 Prince Street. These include;

13/05367/COU Prior approval for the change of use (Part of 3rd floor - 6th floor) from the office floor space within use class B1(a) to residential accommodation falling within Class C3 (dwelling houses). GIVEN 15 January 2014

14/00376/F Change of use of existing first, second and third floor offices to 6 no. student clusters flats. GRANTED 26 March 2014

14/04863/F Change of use of ground floor from B1 to Cafe and Restaurant (A3), associated refuse storage, new entrance and new windows. GRANTED 26 November 2014

14/06241/COU Prior approval for the change of use for the conversion of the lower ground and ground first floor mezzanine level located towards the rear of the building from offices (Use Class B1a) to a Use Class C3 Studio apartment. GIVEN 10 February 2015

15/01910/F Proposed external alterations on Prince Street and Middle Avenue (to include the installation of a new office entrance and lowering cill levels on ground floor windows on Prince Street); and installation of sub-station doors, ventilation intake and new windows on Middle Avenue.

GRANTED 9 June 2015

15/04830/F Construct new raised deck within courtyard in connection with ground floor A3 use, including installation of two sets of folding doors in place of existing windows and 1800mm high timber screen. In addition to changes to cycle parking provisions and refuse storage as approved under application number 14/04863/F. WITHDRAWN 2 February 2016

#### **APPLICATION**

The application is for the siting of five heat recovery units on the roof of Prince House and external alterations to the entrance on Prince Street. The units are proposed as part of a general refurbishment of the building, including the replacement of the existing gas powered heating system.

### Rooftop Units

Units are specified as Mitsubishi Air Cooled Heat Recovery Unit, PURY - P250YLM-A1. Units to be set back in two rows, at least 4m from rear building edge, 5m from front.

External Dimensions of units - .74m x 1.75m w x 1.71m h, with units to stand .5m proud of roof level.

Units to be finished in light colour cladding, with grilling to the units to face inwards towards the centre of the roof area.

Further information has been provided on the operational noise levels of the units. In addition, a statement has been provided from the agent on the building upgrade and energy efficiency measures to be introduced as part of the refurbishment. This confirms the following:

"The existing system in Prince House is naturally ventilated via opening windows, and heated via radiators served by gas fired central boilers. This type of system results in high heat losses to outside via the windows as well as a reduced quality of internal space due to noise ingress from Prince Street which is a busy road. The way in which this building is serviced will be changing dramatically and at each stage systems have been chosen to maximise efficiency whilst enhancing the renovation of the office floors and providing high quality flexible office space.

The proposed new system would provide a far higher quality of internal space. The office floors would be fully mechanically ventilated, avoiding the requirement to open the windows and waste heat. Also the ventilation and VRF heating and cooling systems both contain a highly efficient heat recovery system to ensure maximum efficiency whilst minimising energy consumption when heating or cooling the office spaces. Also the VRF system is powered by electricity so the building would no longer require the gas boilers to power the existing heating system. This will mean the use of gas to power the boiler is removed, which will also mean flue emitting exhaust gasses that potentially have an impact on local air quality is removed. It also allows electricity to be sourced from green suppliers that use renewable energy.

In terms of waste when the units need to be replaced, the proposed system will comply with new F-gas regulations, using refrigerant with zero ODP and low global warming potential.

The renovation proposals will replace the existing light fittings with LED fittings which use substantially less electricity during use as well as daylight dimming and presence detection to ensure lighting use is as efficient as possible.

Once complete the property will provide the area with a number of employment opportunities that we believe will provide positive benefits to the local area economically and socially. The first office floor became vacant in January 2015 with the last in July 2015. Initial marketing found there was little interest in the office areas, a contributing factor being the current dated heating system with no provisions of cooling and ventilation and potential occupiers needing to provide a comfortable good work environment for their employees. Since marketing the office with the incorporation of new building services a significant amount of interested has been gained from potential occupiers. The refurbishment will encourage sustainable commuting for staff as the refurbishment project is incorporating shower facilities and the installation of cycle stands to promote green travel to work.

The refurbishment project and introduction of the rooftop plant will ensure the original building usage as offices, is future-proofed, to enable it to remain as office which we believe is a great benefit to the local area. It is also deemed a better alternative than a number of similar office based properties that have been converted to residential use."

#### **External Alterations**

The application includes alterations to the front entrance, on Prince Street, comprising the removal of the existing oversailing canopy and renewal of glazed pedestrian entrance doors in the current location.

#### PUBLICITY AND CONSULTATION

Application advertised in press and with a site notice with an expiry date for receipt of comment of 6/1/16. Neighbouring properties consulted in two rounds of consultation, with expiry dates of 31/12/15 and 27/1/16 respectively.

- 4 Representations have been received, all objecting to the proposals, including 2 from the same resident. The objections include representations from the Friends of Queen Square on the following grounds;
- the notification list is incomplete and has not alerted all the neighbours that may be affected by the installation.
- the installation would have a negative impact on adjoining properties, especially those in residential use due to noise and disturbance from plant hum which will continue 24 hours a day.
- other issues; plant would introduce increased heat and pollution during warmer months and be unsightly.

If the application is to be granted we would suggest

- the units to be contained within the building such as at the parking levels (ground floor) and not on the roof.
- any containment building should be fully sound attenuated and designed to reduce the impact of pollution or heated air created by the plant.
- not be unsightly.

The objections to the proposals have been received from a resident of 52 Queen Square and Flat 7 Crown House. In summary, objections are raised on the following grounds;

#### **VISUAL IMPACT**

- The units would have an adverse visual impact; the units will be clearly visible over the listed Georgian Houses from right across Queen Square and will detract significantly from the historic integrity of the Square.

#### **NOISE**

- strongly object to the plant installed just under my window-it could definitely influence my daily life, especially my sleeping. (Case officer note; the application units would not be located under any window of Crown House)
- Considering all the 200 residents who live in Crown House, the installation could cause complaints of all the residents.
- the proposals have been submitted at the same time as proposals next door at Crown House, Prince Street; these proposals are part of the same general development by developers to turn the area and businesses into a noisy extension of harbourside bars, clubs and restaurants in an area already saturated by these. Resulting noise and disturbance will cause systemic degradation of Queen Square and lives and wellbeing of residents.
- The restrictions proposed in terms of hours of use of the plant would not overcome the fundamental objections in our original response.
- The Council is ineffective in enforcing noise restrictions; we will continue to object to noise and dirt pollution imposed on us at any time of day or night.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

- the application demonstrates how property developer associates of BCC have no understanding of green or environmental issues, despite Bristol bearing the title of Bristol 2015 European Green Capital. The plan shows the exact opposite of environmental friendliness.
   For instance:
- Unacceptable noise level for residents day and night noise will reverberate off the backs of the buildings in this narrow confined space, will not only deprive us of sleep but will cause interference to our normal home life and contravene the legal obligation by BCC to allow us 'peaceful enjoyment of our premises' as stipulated in our lease.
- Air pollution the plan for 5 ozone depleting units in the centre of Bristol will make a public mockery of BCC and its stated commitment to environmentally friendly policies and development. The air quality and health and well being of Queen Square residents has been worsened by the actions and recent approvals of BCC.
- 5 new refrigerant units in the vicinity will downgrade the previously green environmentally friendly credentials of the area.
- Solid Waste pollutants associated with building, operation, maintenance and eventual decommissioning of the proposals will render this to be very anti environmental and anti-green development.

#### OTHER ISSUES

- The deliberate devaluation of our home, property, health, quality of life and wellbeing puts BCC in direct contravention of a number of UK and European laws. Approval of such a plan could therefore trigger legal recourse including significant compensation claims for many years to come.

#### INTERNAL CONSULTEES

BCC Pollution Control have been consulted and have commented on both the initial submission and further information provided on operational noise levels of the plant. Officers are satisfied that the operation of the units would be below background noise levels, with this matter conditioned to be submitted and approved following installation. An additional restrictive condition is recommended to ensure noise levels from the plant would be below background noise levels in perpetuity.

#### **RELEVANT POLICIES**

### National Planning Policy Framework - March 2012

# **Bristol Core Strategy (Adopted June 2011)**

BCS21 Quality Urban Design

BCS22 Conservation and the Historic Environment

BCS23 Pollution

### Bristol Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (Adopted July 2014)

DM26 Local character and distinctiveness

DM27 Layout and form

DM30 Alterations to existing buildings

DM31 Heritage assets

DM33 Pollution control, air quality and water quality

DM35 Noise mitigation

#### **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

City and Queen Square Conservation Area Character Appraisal

#### **KEY ISSUES**

(A) WOULD THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT BE ACCEPTABLE ON VISUAL GROUNDS IN TERMS OF THE IMPACT ON THE SETTING OF LISTED BUILDINGS NEARBY OR HARM THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THIS PART OF THE CITY AND QUEEN SQUARE CONSERVATION AREA?

The site lies within the City and Queen Square Conservation Area. Prince House is unlisted. The rear of the building stands directly beyond nos 49 - 51 Queen Square, all of which are Grade II listed as part of the wider terrace between Royal Oak Avenue and Middle Avenue.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The Authority is also required (under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990) to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, with any harm or loss requiring clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Further, Para.133 states that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance

of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss. Finally, Para 134 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

Bristol Core Strategy Policy BCS22 (adopted June 2011) states that development proposals should safeguard or enhance heritage assets and the character and setting of areas of acknowledged importance including Conservation Areas. Policies DM30 and DM31 in the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (adopted July 2014) express that alterations to buildings should safeguard the amenity of the host premises and neighbouring occupiers, and preserve or enhance historic settings.

The 5 heat recovery units are proposed to be located in two rows, at the northern end of the existing flat roof of Prince House. Given the height and depth of this large building, as well as the set back within the roofscape, views of the units would be limited from close vantage points at street level in both Prince Street and Queen Square. Mid and long range views would be limited from Prince Street due to the narrow character of this street and height of surrounding development. Views of the units would be limited from the offices within nos 48-51 Queens Square. Windows to the rear of 52 Queen Square, the closest residential property do not directly overlook the rear elevation or roofscape of Prince House. Windows within Crown House do not overlook the rear elevation or roofscape of Prince House.

Mid and long range views of the roofline of Prince House from points around Queen Square are limited to oblique angles from the pathways across the Square, and points to the southside of the Square. The modern roofline of Prince House when glimpsed is functional and utilitarian, with visible plantroom projection adjacent to that of Crown House to the immediate north. Given the existing character and appearance of this interrupted roofline, the impact of the units from these mid and long range vantage points is considered neglible, taking into account the setback location, scale and light colour of the units.

Furthermore, whilst the roofline of Prince House is perceptible above the roofs of nos 48 - 51 Queen Square during the winter, these distant views are screened by the mature trees lining the square. The roofline would be totally screened from midrange and long distance views from points around Queen Square during the spring/summer/autumn months when the trees are in leaf. In these circumstances, officers have concluded that the scale, siting and appearance of the units would cause no adverse impact to the appearance of the building and the contribution it makes to the Conservation Area. The external alterations to the front elevation of the property are considered acceptable.

Overall, the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of this part of the City and Queen Square Conservation Area and the special interest and setting of the nearby Grade II listed buildings and would accord with Bristol Core Strategy policies BCS21 and BCS22, policies DM30 and DM31 in the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (adopted July 2014) and section 12 of the NPPF (2012).

### (B) WOULD THE PROPOSAL HARM THE RESIDENTIAL AMENITY OF NEARBY OCCUPIERS?

Policy BCS23 in the Bristol Core Strategy states that the location of development should take account of the impact of the proposed development on the viability of existing surrounding uses by reason of its sensitivity to noise pollution. Policy DM35 in the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies states that any scheme which will have an unacceptable impact on environmental amenity by reason of noise will be expected to provide an appropriate scheme of mitigation.

Objections to the rooftop plant have been received from two local residents as well as the Friends of Queen Square Amenity Group. As set out above, windows to the rear of 52 Queen Square, the

closest residential property do not directly overlook the rear elevation or roofscape of Prince House. Windows within Crown House do not overlook the rear elevation or roofscape of Prince House. Following consultation with the Council's Pollution Control team it is concluded that the operational noise level of the units would be likely to be below background noise levels and therefore, subject to a condition requiring a noise report to be submitted and restricting noise levels to below background in perpetuity, then noise levels arising from the units can be suitably mitigated.

### (C) OTHER ISSUES

Local residents and Councillor Stafford-Townsend have raised issues such as the environmental credentials of the units and the potential impact on air pollution and residential amenity. As heat recovery units, the proposals have been submitted by the agents as part of a general upgrading and refurbishment of the building, with the stated aim of improving the energy efficiency of the building.

Applications that are themselves solely for the installation of energy efficiency measures are exempt from the requirement to produce a Sustainability Statement in support of an application for planning permission. It is understood that the specifications of new ventilation, cooling and heating systems installed to existing buildings is a matter covered under relevant building regulations, and that an energy performance certificate has been commissioned for the building in line with Government requirements.

BCC pollution control officers have confirmed that the operation of the units would have minimal impact on local air pollution.

#### CONCLUSION

BCC pollution control officers have assessed the specifications of the units and concluded that operational noise levels would be acceptable and likely to be below background noise levels. This is recommended secured via condition with requirement for a pre-commencement noise report as well as noise level restriction in perpetuity. The visual impact of the units on the conservation area and setting of nearby listed buildings would be negligible due to the siting, scale and appearance of the units, and tree screening from within Queen Square. Other matters would be controlled under appropriate regulations. The proposals would accord with relevant development plan policies and approval subject to conditions is therefore recommended by your officers.

#### COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

How much Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will the development be required to pay?

Development of less than 100 square metres of new build that does not result in the creation of a new dwelling; development of buildings that people do not normally go into, and conversions of buildings in lawful use, are exempt from CIL. This application falls into one of these categories and therefore no CIL is payable.

### **RECOMMENDED** GRANT subject to condition(s)

### Time limit for commencement of development

1. Full Planning Permission

The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: As required by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

# Pre commencement condition(s)

- 2. Noise from plant & equipment affecting residential
  - 1. No development shall take place until an assessment to show that the rating level of any plant & equipment, as part of this development, will be at least 5 dB below the background level has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

The assessment must be carried out by a suitably qualified acoustic consultant/engineer and be in accordance with BS4142: 2014 Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of nearby residents and premises and the area generally.

#### Pre occupation condition(s)

3. Restriction of noise from plant and equipment

The rating level of any noise generated by plant & equipment as part of the development shall be at least 5 dB below the background level as determined by BS4142: 2014 'Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound' in perpetuity.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of nearby premises and the area generally.

### List of approved plans

4. List of approved plans and drawings

The development shall conform in all aspects with the plans and details shown in the application as listed below, unless variations are agreed by the Local Planning Authority in order to discharge other conditions attached to this decision.

Email confirmation of unit model number; PURY-P250YLM-A1 manufactured by Mitsubishi, received 15 January 2016

82127-07 Existing Roof Plan, received 30 November 2015

82127-01 Existing Ground Floor Plan, received 30 November 2015

82127-08 Existing West Elevation, received 30 November 2015

82127-09 Existing East Elevation, received 30 November 2015

82127-18 Proposed Ground Floor Plan, received 30 November 2015

82127-25 Proposed West Elevation, received 30 November 2015

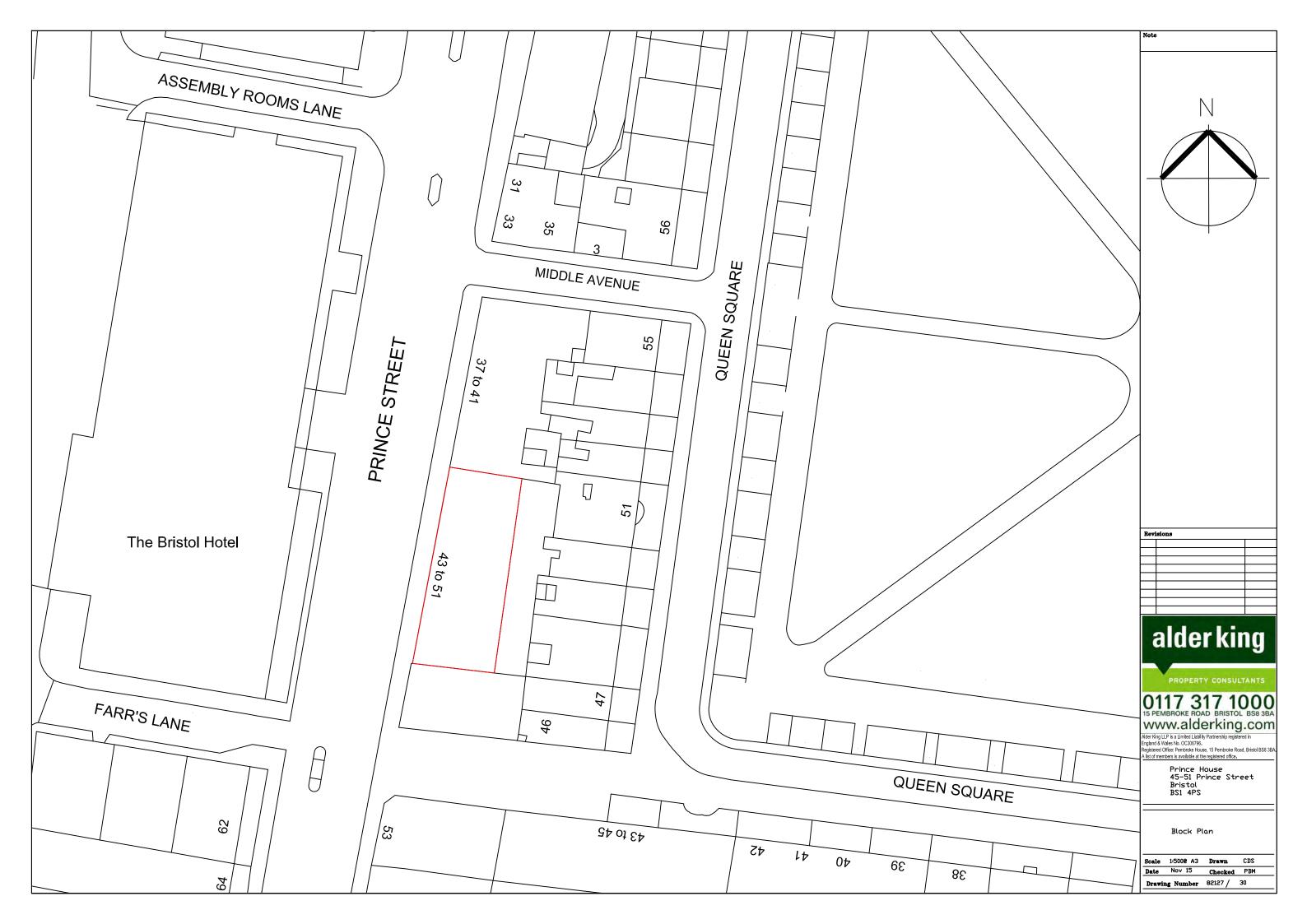
82127-24 Proposed Roof Plan, received 30 November 2015

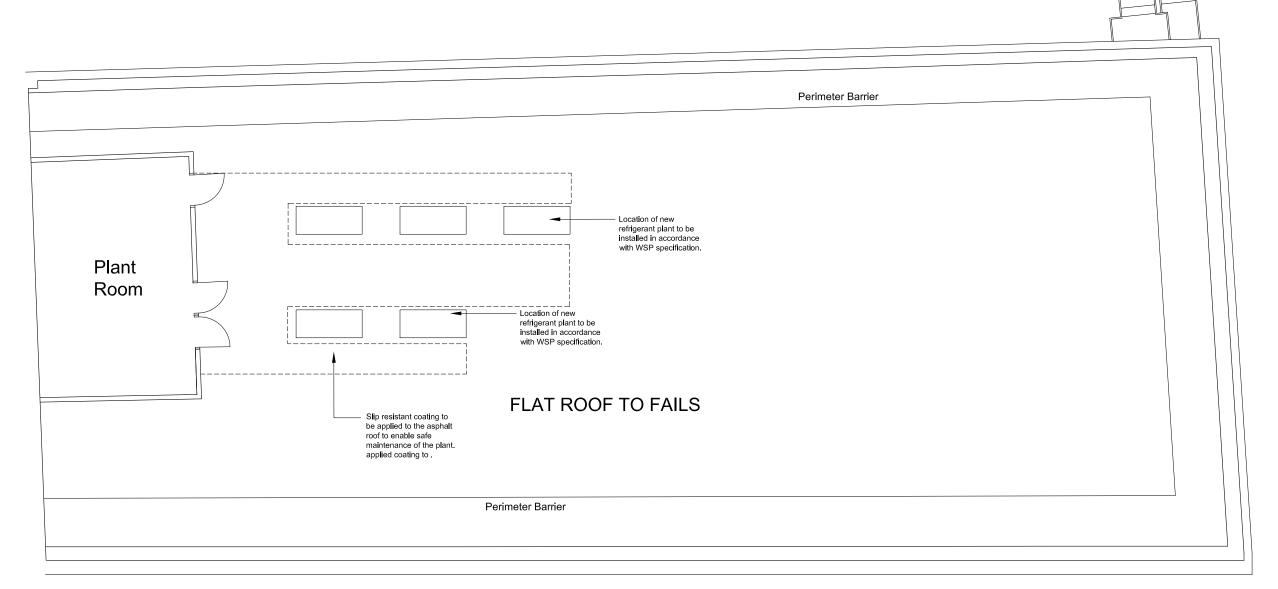
82127-26 Proposed East Elevation, received 30 November 2015

82127-29 Site Location Plan, received 30 November 2015

82127-30 Site Block Plan, received 30 November 2015 Roof Top Plant Markup, received 30 November 2015

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.





**ROOF PLAN** 

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