



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

This Design and Access statement is submitted in support of an application for full planning permission to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) under Section 62A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, on behalf of Envelop Risk Analytics Ltd., for the:

'Use of external balcony area for additional office space, involving installation of decking, balustrade and side partition screen', at Vintry House (sixth floor), No.'s 20-32 Wine Street, Bristol, BS1 2BD.

It should be read in conjunction with the accompanying proposed plans and elevations, Planning and Heritage Statement, Noise Impact Assessment and Outdoor Area Management Plan.

1.2 THE SITE

Site Location

The application site is located within the central Ward of the Bristol City Centre Local Authority Area. It is located on the northern side of Wine Street, and 50m west of the junction with Union Street, at which point the road continues as Newgate and forms the southern extent of Bristol City Centre's main shopping area. To the south of the site is the western part of Castle Park, a large public open space, approximately 500m in length (west-east). The area to the north, west and east of the site is predominantly commercial. To the north and west are relatively tall (5-8 storey) buildings accommodating offices, ground floor commercial units, with some leisure and educational uses. To the north-east (and east of Union Street) is the large late 20th Century shopping mall, The Galleries, and its multi-storey car park, which takes up a significantly sized block. The outdoor pedestrianised shopping quarter, Broadmead, is beyond this.

Vintry House (also known as the Vintry Building) is an eight-storey (including basement and ground floor) post-war commercial building in a mid-century modern style, comprising offices on the upper floors, along with a cafe/bar and related uses on the ground floor fronting Wine Street. The building has a simple main rectangular plan form (14m x 18m), with the lower two floors set forward by approximately 2m at street level, and the top floor being set back from the front elevation and part of the rear elevation by a similar distance. The main entrance to the upper floors is located at the western end of the façade. This, and the majority of the adjacent shop fronts are high quality with subtle signage, and full-height glass frontages between the repeating dark stone pillars that contrast to the lighter stone façade. The building is finished in a mixture of brick, stone, and concrete, with strong horizontal emphasis across the main Wine Street elevation due to identical groups of four windows repeating in the stone façade. The much shorter western elevation to the downward sloping street 'The Pithay', has a vertical emphasis through division into a central slightly taller stone section and narrower full-height brick sections at each corner, with smaller windows spaced more generously. The rear (northern) elevation is accessed via Pithay Court, a small courtyard providing servicing space for the surrounding buildings. The rear elevation is entirely clad in brick, aside from the stone surrounds to the windows.

The building immediately adjoins Southey House to the east, which is similar in scale and form, beyond which is Aylward House. Both buildings are former commercial office buildings with various commercial/vacant uses at ground floor and now largely residential flats above.

Site Description

The application site is located on the sixth floor of Vintry House. The sixth floor is occupied by an open floor office (approximately 420sqm, including main stair and lift cores at the western end and a secondary stair and lift core at the eastern end), and the application site comprises a flat roof balcony area on the southern side, which extends to approximately 135sqm in length, and is currently finished in asphalt. It is accessed via an existing doorway from the kitchen area within the office. The balcony area is contained by a 0.75m stone parapet wall and is empty aside from a row of mounted flag poles, wall mounted air conditioning units, and a metal ladder for maintenance access to the roof. Photographs of the application site are included at Appendix 1.

Immediately to the east of the balcony, is a flat roof area already in use as an outdoor terrace by a residential unit at sixth floor level within the adjacent building Southey House.

Conservation Area

The site is located within the City and Queens Square Conservation Area. The Bristol City Council City and Queen Square Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2009) locates the site within Character Area 1 (Medieval Core) of the Conservation Area, situated on the Primary Route of West Street and included within an identified local view looking eastwards from the junction of Wine Street, Corn Street, and Broad Street (the old centre of the Medieval City). Vintry House as a building is not identified as being of any specific merit.

The Appraisal includes limited analysis of the eastern end of Wine Street, and notes that 'Castle Park is included in the Conservation Area primarily because of the archaeological significance of the area. The area was severely damaged by bombing in World War Two and by post-war clearance, and little of the former street pattern survives'(Paragraph 7.2.9).

The dominant characteristics of the entire Conservation Area are identified as:

- **Scale:** 4 or 5 storeys along central streets and backland areas; traditional buildings occupying narrow/long plot widths; strong building lines directly addressing the street
- **Proportions and Architectural Treatment:** vertical emphasis; pitched roofs behind parapets on main streets or where buildings have shopfronts at ground floor; window heights diminishing up elevations; shopfronts at ground floor level with continual entablature fascia
- **Material Palette: painted stucco render:** pennant stone with Bath stone dressings; red clay brick; clay and slate roof tile coverings; cast iron railings; limestone ashlar dressings; timber windows, doors, shopfronts and surrounds

Character Area 1 area is particularly noted for its:

- Densely packed, intimate spaces, narrow streets, few green areas
- Buildings 4 to 5 storeys high
- Banks, public buildings, shops, bars and restaurants mixed together
- Street layout of medieval original
- Buildings date from all periods
- Service delivery to commercial premises causes problems

2.0 DESIGN

The proposed use of the balcony area as additional outdoor office space, necessitates the following alterations to the building:

- Installation of a floating decking system
- Installation of a deck-mounted glass balustrade (with metal handrail)
- Installation of a partition screen (half-way along the flat roof area)

The installation of new decking will provide a safe surface underfoot to the balcony. This will effectively be a 'free-floating' deck, comprised of open-cell grated aluminium panels, mounted upon a metal grid sub-frame. Fixings will involve no penetration of the existing asphalt roof surface, and will continue to allow for surface water to run-off to the existing drain (located adjacent to the kitchen door). The decking system will be approximately 150-200m in total depth, and will not be visible from anywhere except within the balcony.

The installation of a 1.2m high glass balustrade is also essential, for safety purposes. This will be positioned on top of the new decking, and inside the 0.75m high existing parapet wall, such that only a minimal amount will protrude above this and be visible externally. The balustrade will be very similar in appearance to that to the front of the neighbouring flat to the east (which is set directly on top of the parapet wall, and much more visible).

Finally, a 2.3m high partition screen will be installed to define the eastern extent of the usable balcony area. This will consist of galvanised framed mesh and incorporate a locked gate (allowing access to a maintenance ladder to the roof at the end of the balcony). The screen will be fixed between the stone rear wall of the building (at an obvious space between windows, so as not to interrupt the rhythm of the fenestration) and the new balustrade. It will be set back from the front parapet, and only minimally visible in profile from the street. Two planters will be positioned at the base of the partition screen (on the western balcony side), to soften its visual impact and reinforce its function as a barrier.

Within the balcony area, modest groups of outdoor furniture will be positioned. The balcony is located approximately 22m above street level and set behind the parapet wall, such that this furniture (and use of the area) will be imperceptible when viewed from Wine Street to the west or Newgate to the east. While the area to the south of the building includes the Castle Park open space, there is a line of mature trees along the northern edge of the park, which obscures the building (including the upper floors) from longer views towards the site, such that the balcony alterations/any users, will be imperceptible.

In summary, the proposed alterations to the building are modest in scale (and effectively reversible), appropriate to context, will involve no loss of existing building fabric, and will be minimally visible within the public realm. Furthermore, the proposals will involve no harm to the significance of this part of the City and Queen Square Conservation Area, but would entirely conserve its character and appearance here. Neither would the proposals result in any harm or loss of significance to any other designated heritage assets.

The proposals therefore comply with Core Strategy Policies BCS21 and BCS22 and Development Management Policies DM30 and DM31, and the requirements of the NPPF in respect of high quality design, sensitive alterations to buildings, safeguarding residential amenity and ensuring the proportionate protection of heritage assets.

3.0 ACCESS

Pedestrian access to the application site will remain via the existing sixth floor office to Vintry House (via the lift or stairs). The main entrance to Vintry House is located directly on Wine Street (at the western corner with The Pithay). The proposed use of the balcony will have no access or highway impacts as it will only accommodate existing staff. Very occasionally (no more than twice a year) the balcony may host larger groups of up to 56 people for the purposes of special events, however this number is unlikely to result in any adverse highway capacity or safety impacts (and visitors will be encouraged to travel by public transport).

Appendix 1: Photographs of the Application Site



Photograph 1: Balcony area looking west



Photograph 2: Balcony area looking east



Photograph 3: Western end of balcony area, with access door from kitchen



Photograph 4: Access door to balcony area from kitchen



Photograph 5: Office building to west (across The Pithay)



Photograph 6: Residential building to east (top floor flat with terrace and balustrade)

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Planning Ventures Ltd
Registered in England and Wales
Company Number 8820095



Registered office: 61 Macrae Road, Pill, Bristol, BS20 0DD
VAT Registration Number: 245 5372 03



Photograph 7: Partition screen to be attached to central break in fenestration



**Photograph 8: Maintenance ladder to roof
(access maintained via gate in new partition screen)**