

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey

App Ref: 230684/FUL

Address: 3-5 Duke Street, Reading, RG1 4SA

Proposals: New shopfront to enable sub-division of ground floor

Case Officer: Joel Grist

Date received (valid from): 31 May 2023 Target Decision date: 26 July 2023

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

Site visit date: 19/07/2023

Site visit photos:



The application site relates to a ground floor retail unit set within Dukesbridge House which contains a number of ground floor commercial units with residential uses above. The retail unit is currently occupied by Rymans (Use Class E). The host building has a dark brick facade with aluminium casements.

The site is within the Central Reading Core as defined by Policy CR1. The site is also within a Primary Shopping Area as defined by Policy CR1 and a designated primary frontage within Central Reading as defined by Policy CR7. The site is within the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area and lies opposite The Royal County Hotel which is a Building of Townscape Merit. The site is also within an area of high archaeological potential.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The application seeks permission for a new shopfront to enable the sub-division of the existing ground floor retail unit into 2no. retail units. The new shopfront will comprise a central brick pier constructed from brickwork to match the appearance of the host building as well as 2 sets of aluminium doors.

Plans considered:

Stuart Henley and Partners Heritage Statement

5016_82

5016_81

5016_80

5016_51A

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

There is an extensive history relating to wider development associated with Dukesbridge House however there is no recent planning history relating to the unit subject to this application.

4. CONSULTATIONS

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee - No comment received

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

Dukesbridge Chambers, 1 Duke Street, Reading
4-8 Duke Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 4RY
17 Dukesbridge Court, Duke Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 4SA
2 Dukesbridge Court, Duke Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 4SA
14 Dukesbridge Court, Duke Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 4SA
10 -14 Duke Street, Reading
6-12 Kings Road, Reading
7 Duke Street, Reading, RG1 4SA
13 Dukesbridge Court, Duke Street, Reading, RG1 4SA
1 Dukesbridge Court, Duke Street, Reading, RG1 4SA

The application has been advertised by site notice and in the local newspapers.

0 letters of representation have been received.

Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT
EN2: AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE
EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS
EN4: LOCALLY IMPORTANT HERITAGE ASSETS
EN6: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN A HISTORIC CONTEXT
RL1: NETWORK AND HIERARCHY OF CENTRES
OU5: SHOPFRONTS AND CASH MACHINES
CR1: DEFINITION OF CENTRAL READING
CR2: DESIGN IN CENTRAL READING
CR7: PRIMARY FRONTAGES IN CENTRAL READING

SPG/SPD

Design Guide to Shopfronts (2022)

Other Local Documents

Market Place/London Street Conservation Area Appraisal

Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

APPRAISAL

Design and Heritage

In consideration of the visual acceptability of the proposed development, the site is located within the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area therefore special regard has to be given to the desirability of preserving the character and setting of this area. The development would also be located opposite a Building of Townscape Merit and regard also has to be had to the design consideration of development within the Central Reading Core. The development will also involve the alteration of an existing shopfront therefore the considerations of Policies OU5, CC7, EN1, EN3, EN6 and CR2 apply alongside the considerations of Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The development would be minor in scale and the existing entrance aperture in the building façade will not be enlarged. The new entrance would be constructed from materials to match the host building alongside the installation of 2 sets of aluminium doors which match the aluminium fittings along the existing shop façade and other shopfronts further south within the frontage along Duke Street. The host building is more modern in its appearance and is not a key feature of special historic interest, nor an historic shopfront as defined in the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area appraisal. In this respect, the new shopfront will have no demonstrably harmful impact on either the appearance of the host building within the street scene, nor the character and setting of the conservation area or setting of the Building of Townscape Merit. The development is therefore considered to comply with Policies CC7, EN1, EN3, EN6 and CR2 and OU5 and Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Sub-division of the retail unit

The new shop entrance is proposed to facilitate the sub-division of the existing retail unit into 2 smaller units. The existing unit falls within Use Class E and the plans submitted confirm the 2 smaller units will remain in this Use Class therefore there will be no harm to the ongoing provision of retail units within the primary shopping area and primary shopping frontage of Central Reading, in compliance with Policies CR1 and CR7.

Area of High Archaeological Importance

The development will involve minor alterations to the shopfront that will be entirely above ground with no change to the footprint of the host building therefore the development is not considered to result in harm to the significance of any potential archaeological assets beneath the site and therefore the development complies with Policy EN2.

Conclusion

The development is considered visually acceptable and will not harm the character or setting of the conservation area, nor the Building of Townscape Merit. There will be no harm to the provision of retail units in the area, nor to the preservation of any historical items of significance in the area of high archaeological potential.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve

Subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than three years from the date of this planning permission.

REASON: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) in order to prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.

2. The development hereby permitted shall ONLY be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Drawing No:

5016_82; 5016_81; 5016_80 received on 19/05/2023

5016_51A received on 26/05/2023

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out and adhered to in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

3. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of this development shall be as specified on the plans and/or application forms unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and ensuring the new development responds positively to the local context and character and to protect the character and setting of the conservation area in accordance with Policies EN1, EN3 and CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.