

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey

App Ref: 230709/FUL & 230710/LBC

Address: The Sun Ph, 16 Castle Street, Reading, RG1 7RD

Proposals: Single storey rear extension and outdoor seating area improvements including a timber pergola and seating booths and associated works

Case Officer: Marcie Rejwerska

Date received (valid from): 30 June 2023 **Target Decision date:** 20 October 2023 (ext.)

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a two-storey medieval inn on the north side of Castle Street in the Reading town centre, which is Grade II listed. The property has a number of later extensions at the rear, a rear beer garden and side access to a car park at the rear of the site. The property is currently vacant and in disrepair. Internally, there are a number of original features in the principal dwelling fronting the highway including windows and timber beams. The property has served as a public house and therefore also has a number of modern features such as the flooring, and the interior in the rear extensions which have linoleum flooring. The original windows in the principal dwelling have existing secondary internal glazing.

The surrounding area is predominately commercial but there are a number of residential flats on Castle Street.

The listing reads as follows,

CASTLE STREET 1. 5128 (North Side) Nos 14 and 16 (Sun Inn) SU 7173 SW 2/71 22.3.57. II GV 2. C17 and older foundations and cellars, altered and modernized. 2 storeys and attic. Stucco over timber-framing. Tiled roof. A picturesque inn with half hipped gable to right of centre. 5 glazing bar sashes on 1st floor (2 in gable which has one small attic window). Ground floor has modern square bay bar window to left with balustraded balcony over; architrave surround and flat hood to plank door with wreath knocker, one 3-light window in gable and small door and 1 window to right (No 14). Two 2 storey extensions to rear. Interior: a considerable amount of exposed timber-framing. A small stone arch in yard called "Norman Arch" and cellars reputed to be remains of Reading Old Gaol.

It is noted that the cellars and Norman Arch no longer exist. The site is also within the St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area, an Area of Archaeological Potential, and the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ). HSHAZ has identified the immediate area as having a distinct character and history and as such should be prioritised for investment and improvement.



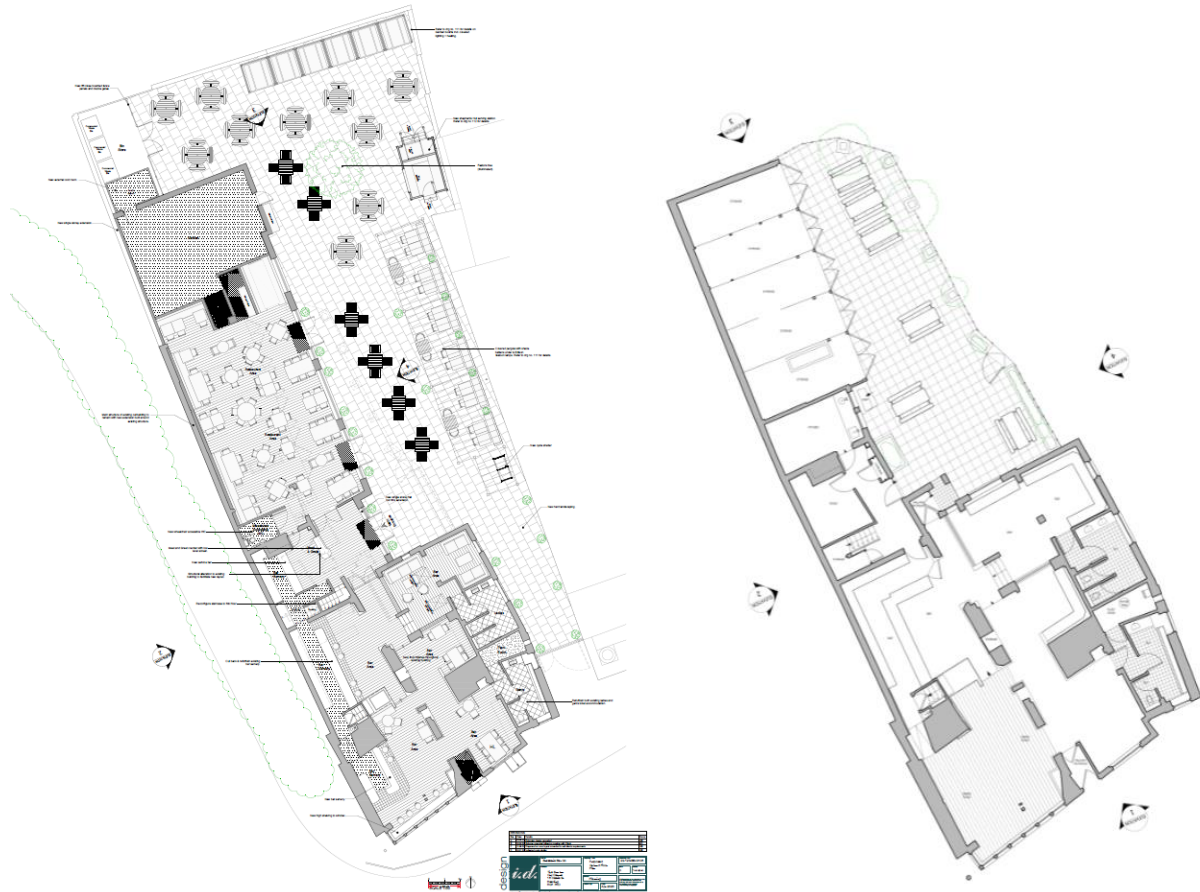
Location of the application site. Image taken from Google Maps on 23.08.2023.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission and listed building consent are sought for the refurbishment of the property to bring it back into use as a public house. The proposed works include changes to the internal layout of the bar servery, general repairs internally and to the existing windows. Internal layout changes include creation of new bathrooms on the first floor and relocation of the internal staircase.

The proposal also includes a rear extension to measure approx. 9m in depth and 3.44m in width in addition to the conversion of the existing rear element to form part of the new restaurant section. Alterations are proposed to the rear external doors to form a new main entrance. The proposed extension would have a flat zinc roof.

Externally, the footprint of the proposed extension covers the existing beer garden. The existing car park is proposed to be converted to a new beer garden with timber pergola and seating booths. A new locked bin store is proposed at the rear of the plot.



Proposed (left) and existing (right) site layout.

Plans considered:

- Planning Design and Access Statement, received 23 May 2023
- Planning Statement [Walsingham Planning], dated June 2023, received 30 June 2023
- Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment & Historic Building Heritage Statement [Forum Heritage Services], dated May 2023, received 23 May 2023
- LUS2318 EcIA, Ecological Impact Assessment [LUS Ecology], dated 12 June 2023, received 17 August 2023
- 22.123.BB.G113 Rev. A, Proposed Site Block and Location Plan, dated April 2023, received 23 May 2023
- 22.123.BB.G112, Proposed Shepherd Hut, dated April 2023, received 23 May 2023
- 22.123.BB.G111 Rev. A, Garden Booth & Pergola Details, dated April 2023, received 11 July 2023
- 22.123.BB.G110 Rev. C, Proposed Elevations, dated April 2023, received 24 May 2023
- 22.123.BB.G109 Rev. B, Proposed Roof Plan, dated April 2023, received 24 May 2023
- 22.123.BB.G108 Rev. A, Proposed Loft Plan, dated April 2023, received 23 May 2023
- 22.123.BB.G107 Rev. A, Proposed First Floor Plan, dated April 2023, received 23 May 2023
- 22.123.BB.G106 Rev. G, Proposed Ground Floor Plan, dated April 2023, received 22 September 2023
- 22.123.BB.G203 Rev. A, Proposed First Floor Schedule of Works, dated October 2023, received 16 October 2023
- 22.123.BB.G200 Rev. A, Existing Ground Floor Schedule of Works, dated October 2023, received 16 October 2023
- 22.123.BB.G201 Rev. A, Existing First Floor Schedule of Works, dated October 2023, received 16 October 2023

- 22.123.BB.G202 Rev. A, Proposed Ground Floor Schedule of Works, dated October 2023, received 16 October 2023
- 22.123.BB.G105, Existing Site Block and Location Plan, dated April 2023, received 23 May 2023
- 22.123.BB.G104, Existing Elevations, dated April 2023, received 23 May 2023
- 22.123.BB.G103, Existing Roof Plan, dated April 2023, received 23 May 2023
- 22.123.BB.G102, Existing Loft Plan, dated April 2023, received 23 May 2023
- 22.123.BB.G101, Existing First Floor Plan, dated April 2023, received 23 May 2023
- 22.123.BB.G100, Existing Ground Floor Plan, dated April 2023, received 23 May 2023
- Odour Risk Assessment, received 30 June 2023
- Letter regarding roof insulation from Forum Heritage Services, dated 23 August 2023, received 23 August 2023
- 23e106wb, Project Specification for an archaeological watching brief [Thames Valley Archaeological Services], dated 21 July 2023, received 26 July 2023
- 22.123.BB.G512, Existing Ground Floor Window Repair Schedule, dated July 2023, received 2 August 2023
- 22.123.BB.G513, Existing First Floor Window Repair Schedule, dated July 2023, received 2 August 2023
- 22.123.BB.G514, Existing Second Floor Window Repair Schedule, dated July 2023, received 2 August 2023
- 22.123.BB.G515, Existing Window Repair Schedule, dated July 2023, received 2 August 2023
- 22.123.BB.G120, Existing and Proposed Outbuilding Sections, dated July 2023, received 2 August 2023

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

930358 - Signage - Application permitted

930585 - Internal and external decoration. New external signage. - Application permitted

120827 - 1 fascia sign, 1 hanging sign, painted signs to flank elevations and external display boards. - Application permitted

4. CONSULTATIONS

Non-statutory:

Archaeology - No objections subject to conditions.

RCAAC - No comments received.

RBC Transport - No objections subject to conditions.

RBC Ecology - No objections subject to conditions.

RBC Licensing - Licensing do not have any concerns with this application and believe that the proposed offer will be an improvement on the existing premises.

RBC Environmental Protection - No objections subject to conditions.

Public:

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

19 Castle Street, Reading, RG1 7SB
17 Castle Street, Reading, RG1 7SB
St Marys Church, 14 Castle Street, Reading, RG1 7RD
Berkshire Community Service, 18a Castle Street, Reading, RG1 7SD
15 Castle Street, Reading, RG1 7TB
Blue Collar Corner, 15 Hosier Street, Reading, RG1 7QL

No letters of representation received. Site notices were also displayed on site.

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 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

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
BS7913:2013 Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings
Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance [Historic England] 2008
Traditional Windows [Historic England] 2017

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE
CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM
CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT
EN2: AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE
EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS
EN15: AIR QUALITY
EN17: NOISE GENERATING EQUIPMENT
TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS
TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING
RL6: PROTECTION OF LEISURE FACILITIES AND PUBLIC HOUSES
CR2: DESIGN IN CENTRAL READING
CR5: DRINKING ESTABLISHMENTS IN CENTRAL READING

SPD

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Other Local Documents

St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area Appraisal 2008

Reading Historic Area Assessment 2023 [relates to the High Street Heritage Action Zone Area]

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

Character and appearance and heritage implications

Policy EN1 states that *"All proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located."*

Additionally, Policy EN3 states *"The special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness."*

The application site comprises the principal medieval inn which has a number of extensions towards the rear, as demonstrated in the Heritage Assessment submitted. Although considered part of the listing, the later 19th century additions at the rear have limited architectural and historic value and have little remaining original interior finishes.



Figure 13 Ground floor plan showing the main phases of construction.

The scale of the proposed works varies depending on the age of the building structure with the least disturbance to the principal medieval property.

The proposed single storey extensions to the existing Victorian storage rear element to create the restaurant area and kitchen are considered acceptable in terms of scale and design, creating a visible difference between the original Victorian roof of the extension and the proposed additions. Pillars of the existing external walls are to be maintained as internal features in the proposed extension, which will retain a record of the existing layout. Insulation is proposed to the original Victorian roof which will increase the height minimally and original roof tiles are to be reused. This is considered acceptable to improve the longevity of the structure. The roof of the proposed restaurant extension would be a flat zinc roof which creates a contrast between the original and the new in a sympathetic manner. Overall the proposal brings back into use the rear of the site to expand the facilities provided by the Public House.

The proposed extensions are contained to the rear of the site and would not be visible from Castle Street, therefore, having minimal impact on the character of the street and the Conservation Area. The proposed double French doors at the side elevation of the proposed extension will be timber, which is sympathetic to the historical significance of the site. The proposed restaurant extension will be clad in timber, and the proposed kitchen extension will have a painted brickwork finish. The design is considered to complement the host property.

The site at Castle Street has historically contained a number of rear outbuildings and extensions. The proposed extensions are therefore not considered an overdevelopment of the site. The rear of the site is the most appropriate siting for the proposed extensions as this minimises the impact to the principal medieval property.

The proposed new principal restaurant entrance at the rear of the main property reconfigures the rear entrance to make it more cohesive, which is considered acceptable. This includes the removal of two non-original external doors and four non-original timber windows. The property at the rear currently has two Victorian pitch roofs above an infill extension. The proposal includes the addition of two rooflights into the pitched roof and the replacement with a flat zinc roof of part of the pitched roof to improve its appearance. This is considered acceptable as the pitched roofs have minimal historical value.

The proposed internal layout changes have minimal impact on the historic fabric of the property. The internal staircase to be relocated is not original, and many of the internal finishes such as the carpets, lino flooring and bar servery are not original. As such, the proposed works are considered acceptable. The original finishes and fabric of the property are to be maintained and repaired, including all windows. The proposed new bar servery at the front of the property is to be installed into the mortar joints to avoid damage to the fabric of the property, and all other furniture is to be free-standing. The proposed improvements are considered acceptable in principle, however, a condition is recommended to secure further materials details.

Amenity

Policy CC8 states “Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of:

- Privacy and overlooking;
- Access to sunlight and daylight;
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;
- Harm to outlook;
- Noise and disturbance;

- Artificial lighting;
- Smell.

Additionally, policy EN16 states that “development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment and sensitive receptors through land, noise or light pollution.”

There are a number of residential properties on Castle Street within the surrounding area, however as the use as a public house is already established, it is considered that the proposal would not cause any significant additional impacts over and above the established use..

Common amenity concerns associated with public houses/restaurants include noise and odour. Conditions are recommended to control the opening hours as well as amplified music hours in order to protect the amenity of residential units in the immediate area.

The submitted noise assessment is considered acceptable and conditions are recommended to ensure the noise mitigations are implemented. Insufficient information has been submitted with regards to odour abatement and the details of these has been secured via a pre-commencement condition.

The proposed extensions are contained to the rear of the site and therefore have minimal impact on the appearance of Castle Street. Due to the siting of the application site, the proposed extensions are not considered overbearing or visually dominant.

Other matters

The loss of the existing parking is not considered harmful; the site is within the town centre and a car-free development is therefore considered acceptable. The expansion of the beer garden will also better complement the setting of the property.

There is limited vegetation on site, which consists of potted shrubs and trees which have not been maintained since the pub closed; new potted vegetation is proposed on site which is considered sufficient and acceptable.

A pre-commencement condition is recommended to secure biodiversity enhancements on site including bat and swift boxes to be incorporated into the new kitchen extension.

Conclusion

The proposal has been assessed against the above policies and is considered to be in accordance with those policies.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PERMISSION AND GRANT LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

Subject to the following conditions:

230709/FUL

1. Time Limit Standard
2. Approved Plans
3. Materials (To Be Submitted)
4. Habitat Enhancement Scheme (To Be Approved)

5. Amplified Music Indoors (Hours Permitted)
6. No Amplified Music Outdoors
7. Noise Levels of Plant/Equipment Restricted
8. Ventilation & Extraction (To Be Submitted)
9. Hours of Opening/Operation
10. Construction Method Statement (To Be Submitted)
11. No Bonfires
12. Cycle Parking (As Specified)
13. Archaeology

230710/LBC

1. Time Limit Listed Building (Works)
2. Listed Building Consent (Works Specification)
3. Listed Building Materials To Be Submitted