

Planning, Design and Access Statement

10 Gun Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 2JR

Proposed partial change of use from offices (Class E) to Sui Generis to provide an expansion to existing entertainment venue at 9 Gun Street (Purple Turtle) with erection of rear extensions. Detached 3-storey ancillary building to rear boundary with yard over Holy Brook. Internal alterations.

Job No: 22/L/022

Client: PDR Ltd

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by JWPC Chartered Town Planners on behalf of the applicant and owners of the site, PDR Ltd. They currently own and operate the Purple Turtle venue adjacent to this site at 9 Gun Street.
- 1.2 This Statement supports a full planning and Listed Building Consent application for the change of use and adaptation of the adjacent, vacant former office building at 10 Gun Street so that it can be used in conjunction with 9 Gun Street and act as an expansion of that venue which is currently a comedy club and bar (Sui Generis). The front portion of 10 Gun Street will be operated as café/restaurant whilst a rear extension will accommodate a bar, entertainment space and stage whilst a detached, 3 storey structure to the rear of the site will accommodate back of house space including a store and green room for performers.
- 1.3 Whilst the application site has been empty since it was vacated by the NHS in mid-2004, proposals did come forward in 2008/09, 2010, 2012 and 2015 for a change of use to what was then Class A3 (food and drink). Planning and LBC applications were then approved in June 2020 for a similar propose to what is submitted now, albeit with a higher rear extension and an ancillary 'microbrewery' to the rear of the site.
- 1.4 10 Gun Street is a Grade II listed building and therefore a designated heritage asset. It also falls within the St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area, the southern boundary of which is the southern boundary of the application site. Care has been taken, taking into account previous discussions with the Local Planning Authority and the planning history, to ensure that the proposals do not harm the significance of any designated or non-designated heritage assets.
- 1.5 These applications are supported by the following documents:
- Existing / proposed plans and elevations (Alan Brown Design);
 - Planning, Design and Access Statement (JWPC Ltd);
 - Heritage Statement (ADL Architecture);

- Flood Risk Assessment (Stantec);
- Noise Impact Assessment (Stantec).
- Bat Survey Report (Future Nature); and
- Archaeology Written Scheme of Investigation (Thames Valley Archaeological Services).

1.6 Given the site's location on the edge of reading town centre and in light of its current use and planning history, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle.

1.7 This Statement should be read alongside the submitted documents set out above. It seeks to justify the proposal in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan, taking all other material planning considerations into account.

1.8 In light of the Local Planning Authority's duty under Paragraph 38 of the Framework it is requested that the agents are contacted in the first instance if any further information or dialogue is required to enable a positive determination.

2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.1. The application site is located on the western edge of Reading Town Centre, a thriving retail and commercial centre, in the heart of the Thames Valley. Gun Street itself is a pleasant curved street accommodating a range of retail and leisure operators and overlooks the pleasant grounds and cemetery of St Mary the Virgin Church. It has been described previously as being ‘a central focus of Reading’s night-time economy. It lies within a short walk of all the major town centre amenities and services and is approximately 0.4 miles from Reading Railway Station. The Oracle shopping centre immediately to the south of the site, offers town centre car parking provision. There are bus stops on Gun Street itself.
- 2.2. The application site consists of a three-storey brick built building which together with its neighbours forms an attractive terrace or parade of commercial premises at ground floor with ancillary spaces and residential accommodation above. Its frontage sits adjacent to the Gun Street footway and carriageway. The building remains vacant and has done since 2004 although it remains largely watertight.
- 2.3. Following the granting of planning permission and listed building consent under Applications 151281 and 151282, the demolition of the rear single and two-storey extensions took place some time in 2017. Commencement of these permissions ensured that they remain extant in perpetuity.
- 2.4. The building is Grade II listed and is described as below:

‘Early C18. 3 storeys. Red brick with grey header diaper, stucco string to 2nd floor, moulded wooden eaves cornice, old tile roof. Tile hung gable. 4 ranges of cross glazed sash windows. Early C19 shop bay with glazing bars to right and an C18 door with architrave surround and bracketed to open pediment good. A modern 3-light window on ground floor. Small C18 staircase with turned balusters and short moulded pendants.

Planning History

- 2.5. A review of the Reading Borough Council website reveals a comprehensive planning history for 10 Gun Street which can be summarised as follows:

081139 / 08-01677-LBC - Works relating to the change of use from offices to A1 at ground floor with offices above to include demolition of existing extensions and erection of new extension and internal alterations. Withdrawn 16/2/09.

081187 / 08-01676-FUL - Change of use from offices to A1 at ground floor with offices above to include demolition of existing extensions and erection of new extension and internal alterations. Withdrawn 16/2/09.

091230 / 09/00928/FUL - Change of use from offices to A1 at ground floor with offices above to include demolition of existing extensions and stair enclosure, replacement extensions, replacement stair enclosure, minor internal alterations (Resubmission of 08/01676/FUL). Granted 14/8/09.

090612 / 09-00929-LBC - Works associated with the change of use from offices to A1 at ground floor with offices above to include demolition of existing extensions and stair enclosure, replacement extensions, replacement stair enclosure and internal alterations. (Resubmission of 08/01677/LBC). Granted 14/8/09.

091741 / 09-02111-FUL - Change of use to A3. Demolition of late extensions and stair enclosure (stairs retained), replacement extensions and stair enclosure. Granted 28/1/10.

090085 / 09-02154-LBC - Works associated with the change of use to A3. Demolition of late extensions and stair enclosure (stairs retained), replacement extensions and stair enclosure. Granted 28/1/10.

100759 / 10-01343-FUL - Change of use of first, second, attic floors from B1a (offices) to A1 (retail) in association with permitted ground floor conversion and extension (ref: 09/00928/FUL). Granted 9/9/10.

120577 / 12-00939-EXT - Application for an extension of time limit for implementation of permission 09/00928/FUL for change of use from offices to A1 at ground floor with offices above to include demolition of existing extensions and stair enclosure, replacement extensions, replacement stair enclosure, minor internal alterations. Granted 7/8/12.

120578 / 12-00940-LBC - Application for an extension of time limit for implementation of permission 09/00929/LBC for works associated with the change of use from offices to A1 at ground floor with offices above to include demolition of existing extensions and stair enclosure, replacement extensions, replacement stair enclosure and internal alterations. Granted 7/8/12.

121736 / 12/01308/FUL - Change of use to A1 (Retail) or A3 (Restaurant). Refurbishment and alterations including single storey rear extension. Granted 15/10/12.

121737 / 12/01309/LBC - Works Associated with the change of use to A1 (Retail) or A3 (Restaurant). Refurbishment and alterations including single storey rear extension. Granted 15/10/12.

151281 / 151282/LBC - Change of use from office (Class B1) to café/restaurant (Class A3) at basement to second floor level, including replacement ground and first floor rear extension; Excavation of basement to rear as extension to existing nightclub (Sui Generis) at No. 9 Gun St; Erection of replacement two storey building to rear for micro-brewery (Sui Generis) with associated access, part de-culverting of brook, external open area and various other alterations.

191243/FUL / 191244/LBC - Change of use from office (Class B1) to café / restaurant (Class A3) at ground to second floor level, including ground and first floor extensions following removal of previous. Erection of building to rear for microbrewery (Sui Generis) with associated access, part de- culverting of brook, external open area and various other alterations - scheme almost identical to previous Consent 151281 but without basement nightclub extension.

3. Application Proposal

- 3.1. These full planning and listed building consent applications have been carefully conceived by the same applicants and project team who secured consent in 2020 for a similar proposal. Since then, the global Coronavirus pandemic and uncertain economic climate that followed, has led to the applicants reappraising their business strategy and how best to conserve and utilise 10 Gun Street. They wish to continue along the route of expanding the current Purple Turtle business into 10 Gun Street through a basement level linking corridor. Access from this basement level to the upper floors of 10 Gun Street will be via a new set of stairs behind its existing cellar which will be utilised as a female toilets and storage space.
- 3.2. One difference between this proposal and previous one is the use of the principle rooms of the existing building of 10 Gun Street, the ground and first floor will now be utilised as a self-contained café/restaurant – albeit linking doors to the rear of the building will facilitate access at appropriate times to the main room in the extension. This use requires only very minor internal alteration.
- 3.3. The current use of the premises falls under Class E of the Use Classes order and therefore the retention of space for café/restaurant use does not constitute any material change of use – hence the description of the proposal as ‘partial change of use’ – the rear element will be sui generis which constitutes a material change from Class E.
- 3.4. The proposed rear extension will be smaller in scale than that previously proposed being largely single storey to accommodate a flexible event space and stage. It will terminate short of the existing culverted route of Holy Brook. As per the previous proposal, a three storey ancillary building is proposed to the rear of the site which will accommodate back of house storage and a green room for performing artists.
- 3.5. The area over the Holy Brook culvert will remain as a yard area. Due to fire regulations and securing appropriately protected means of escape, it is essential that fire escape staircases are located in this area. However, they will be non-structural additions of lightweight construction.

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- 3.6. A small roof terrace of approximately 22 covers is proposed over a small part of the main extension roof, close to the existing rear elevation.

4. Planning Policy

- 4.1 Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance the 'Development Plan' comprises the Reading Borough Local Plan. The Council has also published a range of Supplementary Planning Documents which carry some weight in the decision making process. Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise.

Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

- 4.2 The following policies are relevant to this application:

CC1: Presumption In Favour Of Sustainable Development

CC2: Sustainable Design And Construction

CC3: Adaptation To Climate Change

CC5: Waste Minimisation And Storage

CC6: Accessibility And The Intensity Of Development

CC7: Design And The Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

EN1: Protection And Enhancement Of The Historic Environment

EN3: Enhancement Of Conservation Areas

EN5: Protection Of Significant Views With Heritage Interest

EN6: New Development In A Historic Context

EN11: Waterspaces

EN12: Biodiversity And The Green Network

EN16: Pollution And Water Resources

EN17: Noise Generating Equipment

EN18: Flooding And Drainage

EM4: Maintaining A Variety Of Premises

TR3: Access, Traffic And Highway-Related Matters

RL2: Scale And Location Of Retail, Leisure And Culture Development

RL5: Impact Of Main Town Centre Uses

RL6: Protection Of Leisure Facilities And Public Houses

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 4.3 The Council has adopted a suite of SPD's but only the following is relevant to these applications:

Sustainable Design and Construction (adopted December 2019);

Revised Parking Standards and Design (adopted 2011)

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

- 4.4 The Framework places at its heart the principle of sustainable development which consists of an economic, a social and an environmental objective. It sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development by ensuring that development proposals are approved where they accord with an up-to-date Development Plan 'without delay', or where the Plan is silent or policies are considered to be out of date, permission should be granted unless specific policies that protect areas or assets would lead to a clear reason for refusal or any adverse impacts of approving the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh their benefits (Paragraph 11).

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- 4.5 Paragraph 81 places significant weight on the need to support economic growth and productivity whilst Paragraph 83 requires that policies and decisions should address the specific locational requirements of different sectors.
- 4.6 Section 7 address the vitality of town centres and seeks to apply a sequential approach for main town centre uses of which the application is one.
- 4.7 Paragraph 120 seeks to ensure planning decisions make the most efficient use of 'under-utilised' land and buildings.
- 4.8 Paragraph 199 requires that when considering any development to a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 200 goes on to state that any harm or loss to the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, whilst Paragraph 201 states that consent should be refused for any development which would lead to substantial harm to, or loss of, a designated heritage asset unless a number of very particular circumstances apply.
- 4.9 Paragraph 203 requires that the effect of any application on a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining that application. A balanced judgement will be needed, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

5. Planning Considerations

- 5.1 This Statement has sought to describe the application site, the application proposal and the planning policy context against which the application should be considered. This chapter will assess how the proposal is compliant with the Development Plan and set out other material planning considerations that should be taken into account when reaching a decision.

Principle of Development

- 5.2 The application site lies within a prominent location within Reading Town Centre and has lain vacant for many years now. As the building was last used for offices (Class B1 at the time) it now has an unencumbered Class E use. Therefore, it follows that the use of the current building for a café/restaurant falls within the Class E Use Class and does not require planning permission.
- 5.3 The rear extension is of a similar footprint and scale to that previously approved, most recently under Applications 191243/FUL & 191244/LBC. The applicants propose a Sui Generis use within the rear extension and proposed outbuilding, effectively as an expansion of the existing Purple Turtle venue at 9 Gun Street – a live music and entertainment venue which has become an intrinsic part of Reading's night life. The link between the two buildings will be formed from the existing Purple Turtle basement to basement level in the rear extension. A staircase will provide a link to the Ground Floor event space. Similarly, there will be a link at ground floor beyond the existing rear wall of 10 Gun Street.
- 5.4 The application site lies within the part of Gun Street allocated under Policy CR7 as designated Primary Frontage in Central Reading. Whilst the policies refers to a number of uses that may be permitted here, several have been revoked and replaced with Class E. Nonetheless, the policy supports the old uses of Class A3 and D2 as well as relevant Sui Generis uses. Therefore, the uses are considered policy compliant – especially as they seek to bring life back to the building frontage. It should be noted that no A1 or A2 floorspace would be lost as a result of this proposal. It therefore fully complies with Policy CR7 of the Local Plan.

Heritage Assets

- 5.5 The building within the application is Grade II listed and therefore a designated heritage asset. It has the potential to effect other non listed buildings within the Conservation Area i.e. non-designated heritage assets. The proposals to the current building reflect much earlier discussions with officers and the precedent of previous approvals. The Heritage Statement submitted with this application by Axford Heritage Planning details the history of the site from its early years as a private house, to when it was substantially overbuilt and remodelled, through to its use as a saddlers with a 'glass works' to the rear. Since the 1930's to the early 21st Century it appears to have been used by healthcare professionals. The Statement confirms that the building displays many of the key elements of a high quality, high status, Palladian dwelling. However, it has been substantially adapted internally to accommodate an office use with some original divisions being lost. However, some historic interior features remain and these will in situ as part of this proposal.
- 5.6 Internally, care has been taken to retain the plan form of the original building where possible. Existing staircases will remain in situ- whether they will be used by patrons or not. The Statement confirms (para 6.2) that the re-use of the building will not lead to harm, particularly as what remains of the 18th century building has already experienced a high degree of alteration. The full use and expansion of the basement has previously been supported by the LPA and the new access proposed will not have any harmful effect on the building overall. There will be a clear demarcation between the old and new buildings at ground floor and above. The less bulky rear extension will have less impact on the appearance of the host building than the extant consented scheme. Loss of historic fabric is minimised, and the key historic architectural elements are retained.
- 5.7 In this context, the proposal complies with Policy 197 of NPPF insofar as it contributes positively to the character of the Conservation Area and will, taking Paragraph 199 into account, ensure that there will be no harm to the significance of the site as a Grade II listed building and designated heritage asset.
- 5.8 Policies EN1 and EN3 of the Local Plan seek to enforce the requirements of the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act through protection of listed building and conservation areas

respectively. EN1 seeks to avoid harm in the first instance and protect and enhance such assets.

- 5.9 Aside from the sensitive development proposed, this application will facilitate the re-use and adaptation of a currently vacant listed building in a poor and deteriorating state of repair. Moreover, it will facilitate a viable use that will allow for investment in its fabric, securing it for future generations to experience whilst also making a significant contribution to the local town centre economy.

Hydrology Matters

- 5.10 Officers of the LPA will be aware of previous discussions with the applicants and Environment Agency regarding the position of Holy Brook with the application site. Previous schemes have address its presence by both de-culverting the Brook in this location and retaining it in situ without building over it.
- 5.11 The applications as submitted show that the rear extension stops short of Holy Brook. In this location and open yard will be retained and used for ad hoc storage. Beyond the yard and also beyond the pat of the Brook it is again proposed to erect a 3 storey outbuilding. The position of the Brook has been carefully plotted on the Proposed Ground Floor Plan. It is essential that along both the eastern and western flanks of the site, metals staircases, providing Fire Escape access, are provided and which span the yard above Holy Brook.
- 5.12 Policy EN11 of the Local Plan addressed development in, on or over 'waterspaces'. It primarily seeks to ensure that there will be no adverse impact on the function and setting of any waterspace and its associated corridor. The justification text to the policy includes an 'aspirational' paragraph (4.2.28) and states: 'Development should seek to increase the prominence of the Holy Brook, and open up the brook for public access, as well as consider any opportunities for de-culverting it, which will provide ecological and potentially flood risk benefits'.
- 5.13 The previous applications' Delegated Report recognises that the section of Holy Brook which passes across the application site is already culverted with a yard above, and the proposals did not change this. That remains the case now. Furthermore, it would simply be unviable to the applicant, who has already scaled back the development proposal from the previous

submission, to undertake the works and effectively sterilise this part of the site from any development or useability. It remains the case that the proposal before the LPA complies with the policies of the Development Plan on this matter.

- 5.14 The site lies primarily within Flood Zone 1. Although the Brook itself must be considered to be in Flood Zone 3. However, it sits outside the modelled and historic floodplain of the main River Kellet. Therefore, a full Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared to support these applications. This demonstrates that because the Brook will be unaffected by the proposal, there will be no detrimental impact on floodplain storage capacity or flood flow routes. Continuous safe access is available from both the front and the rear of the site. It therefore complies with Policy EN11 of the Local Plan and Section 14 of NPPF.

6. Summary

- 6.1. This Statement is submitted in order to support full planning and Listed Building Consent applications to Reading Borough Council for the change of use and extension of 10 Gun Street, with internal alterations, in order to facilitate the expansion of the Purple Turtle and to provide an associated café/restaurant. The site's location within Reading Town Centre, in a Primary retail frontage, lends itself to such a use in any case, notwithstanding the fact the owners, own and operate the adjacent Purple Turtle music and comedy venue. Furthermore, consents have been granted on several occasions for similar proposals, the last of which proposed a rear extension of greater bulk than that proposed now. The proposal complies entirely with Policy CR7 of the Local Plan as the uses are compliant and would not lead to a loss of retail function of this street.
- 6.2. During the course of previous applications, considerable discussions have been had over the adaptation and re-use of 10 Gun Street for a café/restaurant use and how it can facilitate access to a rear extension. As a result, the original plan form of the building has been retained and existing staircases throughout have been retained, including the rear stairwell. The Heritage Statement submitted with the application confirms that the proposal would not give rise to harm to designated and non-designated heritage assets and acknowledges the benefits of securing a long-term future to this vacant and deteriorating heritage asset. The proposal complies with the requirements of the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act 1990 and Policies EN1 and EN2 of the Local Plan.
- 6.3. Finally, the proposal retains the existing rear yard in situ with Holy Brook beneath. Whilst previous proposals have secured consent both to open the Brook at this point AND to leave it in situ, the opening up at this time is simply not viable to the applicants and in any event, it is of no material ecological value. The proposal does not therefore run contrary to Policy EN11 of the Local Plan.
- 6.4. The application has been tested against all relevant policies of the Development Plan and this Statement has demonstrated that there are no other material planning considerations that indicate anything other than approval of this application. Under Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, this application should therefore be approved.



Thank you.

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