

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Application No. 220215

Address: 136-137 Friar Street, Reading RG1 1EX

Proposal: Ground floor extension to existing shop

Target Date: 14/04/2022

Case Officer: Marcie Rejwerska

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application site comprises a three-storey building on Friar Street. The application relates to the retail unit (Class Ea) on the ground floor. The first and second floor (Class Ec) are unaffected by this application and have a separate access door at the front of the property. The ground floor retail unit is accessed from the front of the property. At the rear, the property extends approx. 15m away from the host property into a modest courtyard. The courtyard is paved and has no existing vegetation. Friar Street is designated a Primary Shopping Area within the Reading Central Area (Policy CR1).

Planning approval is sought for the construction of a rear extension to the ground floor retail unit. Proposed rear extension to measure 9.92m in depth to infill the courtyard area. The proposal will have a flat roof with materials to match the existing. The proposed development will increase the floor area of the retail unit from 120sqm to 144sqm.

Plans Considered:

CA-195-P001 Location Plan

CA-195-P002 Block Plan

CA-195-P003 Proposed Ground Floor

CA-195-P004 Proposed First Floor

CA-195-P005 Proposed Section

CA-195-P006 Proposed Rear Elevation

Design and Access Statement

Received 17/02/2022

CA-195-P007 Existing Ground Floor

CA-195-P008 Existing First Floor

CA-195-P009 Existing Rear Elevation

CA-195-P010 Existing Section

Received 02/03/2022

Relevant Planning History:

150170 - New front entrance door - Application Permitted on 25/03/2015

Public Consultation:

The following addresses were formally consulted via letter on 03/03/2022:

138-141 Friar Street

134-135 Friar Street

12b, 13b Union Street

No responses received.

Site notice was sent to the applicant to be displayed on site.

Consultation Responses:

Berkshire Archaeology:

I recommend that this proposal for a rear extension to 136-137 Friar Street has an archaeological implication, on account of the high archaeological potential of the site. I would recommend that an archaeological condition is attached, should permission be granted, to secure a scheme of archaeological works.

The proposed development lies in an area rich in archaeological remains, being in the medieval core of the town. In the Berkshire Archaeology Historic Environment Record some 145 monuments are recorded within just a 250 m radius, including listed buildings and numerous early medieval and medieval sites, some of national significance such as the remains of Reading Abbey c. 500 m to the east. Paragraph 5.4.11. and figure 5.3 of the Reading Local Plan (adopted 2019) note the high potential for archaeological finds of prehistoric, Saxon, medieval, and post medieval date in this area.

The proposed works are limited in their scale, with a footprint of 59 square metres. This area may have seen development in the post medieval period which could have truncated earlier archaeological remains, but such backland sites are known to preserve earlier archaeology well, as at 25-26 Friar Street c. 50 m to the northeast. The proposed development works may involve areas of ground reduction and excavation for foundations and utilities. These impacts may have the effect of truncating, damaging, or entirely removing unrecorded heritage assets of archaeological interest.

Paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF; revised July 2021), states that “where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.” Further, Paragraph 205 of the NPPF states that “Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible.” I would therefore recommend that, given the archaeological potential of the site, and the proposed impacts, it would be in line with National and Local Planning Policy to attach a condition requiring a scheme of archaeological works, should the proposal be permitted.

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.

Relevant Planning Policy and Guidance

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'. However the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making.

In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document) according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

CC7	Design and the public realm
CC8	Safeguarding amenity
CR2	Design in Central Reading

Appraisal

Design and the public realm

Policy CC7 states that: *“All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.”*

Additionally, Policy CR2 states that: *“Applications for development within Central Reading should demonstrate the following attributes:*

- Development will build on and respect the existing grid layout structure of the central area, providing continuity and enclosure through appropriate relationships between buildings and spaces, and frontages that engage with the street at lower levels, and contributing towards enhanced ease of movement through and around the central area;*
- Development will provide appropriate, well designed public spaces and other public realm, including squares, open spaces, streetscape, utilising high quality and well maintained hard and soft landscaped areas, and public art, that provide suitable functions and interest, sense of place and safe and convenient linkages to adjoining areas;*
- Development should consider and, where possible, include ways of providing green infrastructure designed into the development, for instance through roof gardens, green walls and green roofs, to enhance the otherwise very urban environment;*

- *The architectural details and materials used in the central area should be high quality and respect the form and quality of the detailing and materials in areas local to the development site;*
- *Development and any associated public realm should contribute to the diversity of the central area, be capable of easy adaptation over time to meet changing circumstances, and be designed to enhance community safety; and*
- *Development should be designed with consideration of adjacent development sites and should not prevent or cause unreasonable burdens on the future development of those sites.”*

The proposal will not be visible from the street and therefore has no impact on the character of Friar Street. Although it would be preferable to make better use of the existing courtyard, many other buildings on Friar Street fill out their entire plot. As such the proposed development will not be out of character for units on this street. The proposed size and scale are considered acceptable, as well as the design which respects the existing property. The proposed development is not considered to prevent or cause unreasonable burden on any future development of this or adjacent sites.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policies CC7 and CR2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Safeguarding amenity

Policy CC8 states that: *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;*
- *Vibration;*
- *Dust and fumes;*
- *Smell;*
- *Crime and safety; or*
- *Wind, where the proposals involve new development of more than 8 storeys.*

The proposed development does not introduce any new windows and therefore there are no overlooking concerns. The proposal does not pose a risk of overshadowing. Size and scale of the proposal are considered acceptable and therefore are not considered to appear visually dominant. The impact on amenity to neighbouring units is considered minimal.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT PERMISSION

Conditions

TL1

AP1

M1

AC1

Informatives