



Town Planning Bureau

Planning, Design & Access Statement

The Barn
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RE: APPLICATION FOR A DORMER WINDOW to FRONT ROOF SLOPE

SITE: 1 STATION ROAD, READING, RG1 1LG

This letter forms the Planning, Design & Access Statement for the above proposed works at the above identified property.

The application comprises:

1. Completed application forms.
2. Red edged site location plan.
3. Existing and Proposed drawings.

Date: 15th December 2021

Our ref: TPB-483c-ST4

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info@tpbureau.co.uk

Planning permission is sought for the following development:

'Addition of a new dormer window to the front elevation roof slope facing onto Station road'.

web
www.tpbureau.co.uk

We should be grateful if you would give full consideration to this application for full planning permission for changes to the roof façade and the matters set out below.

The proposal should be read in conjunction with the prior approval (ref: 191446) for the Change of use of 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 12 flats. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.

In addition, planning permission (ref: 191589) for the installation of additional windows into rear (west-facing) elevation and erection of new dormer window to front roof slope (linked to Prior Approval Application ref: 191446).

Reading Borough Council have already approved a dormer window in the elevation where we are proposing this dormer window, under Ref: 191589. The proposed dormer window is purely to ensure symmetry of the building line and number of dormers on the building.

1. The Site, Surrounding Area & Context

The site as shown in the location plan below, is a prominent plot located on the corner of Station Road, at the junction with Queen Victoria Street ("QVS") and Friar Street. QVS is the principle pedestrianised access point to the town centre from Reading Railway Station and Friar Street is traffic controlled with access to busses and taxis only. Friar Street and QVS are also designated cycle routes.

Both QVS and Friar Street are key primary retail streets within the town centre and are in a highly accessible location, approximately 200m from Reading Railway Station to the north.

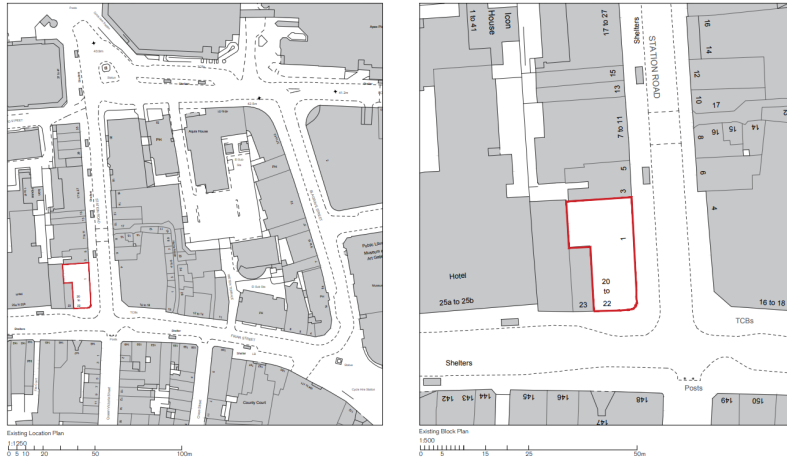


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The site comprises units within a late Victorian commercial building, dating back to the early 1880s/1900s, similar to many of the properties on QVS, in that it comprises retail accommodation arranged over the ground and basement floors.

In the surrounding area, the remaining 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors are often office accommodation, albeit there are many vacant units, or in more recent years, these have been converted to residential. These buildings are all of a uniform design as per the application Site, with tiled and terracotta principal facades and continuous ground floor retail frontages.



[Image: Site location plan](#)

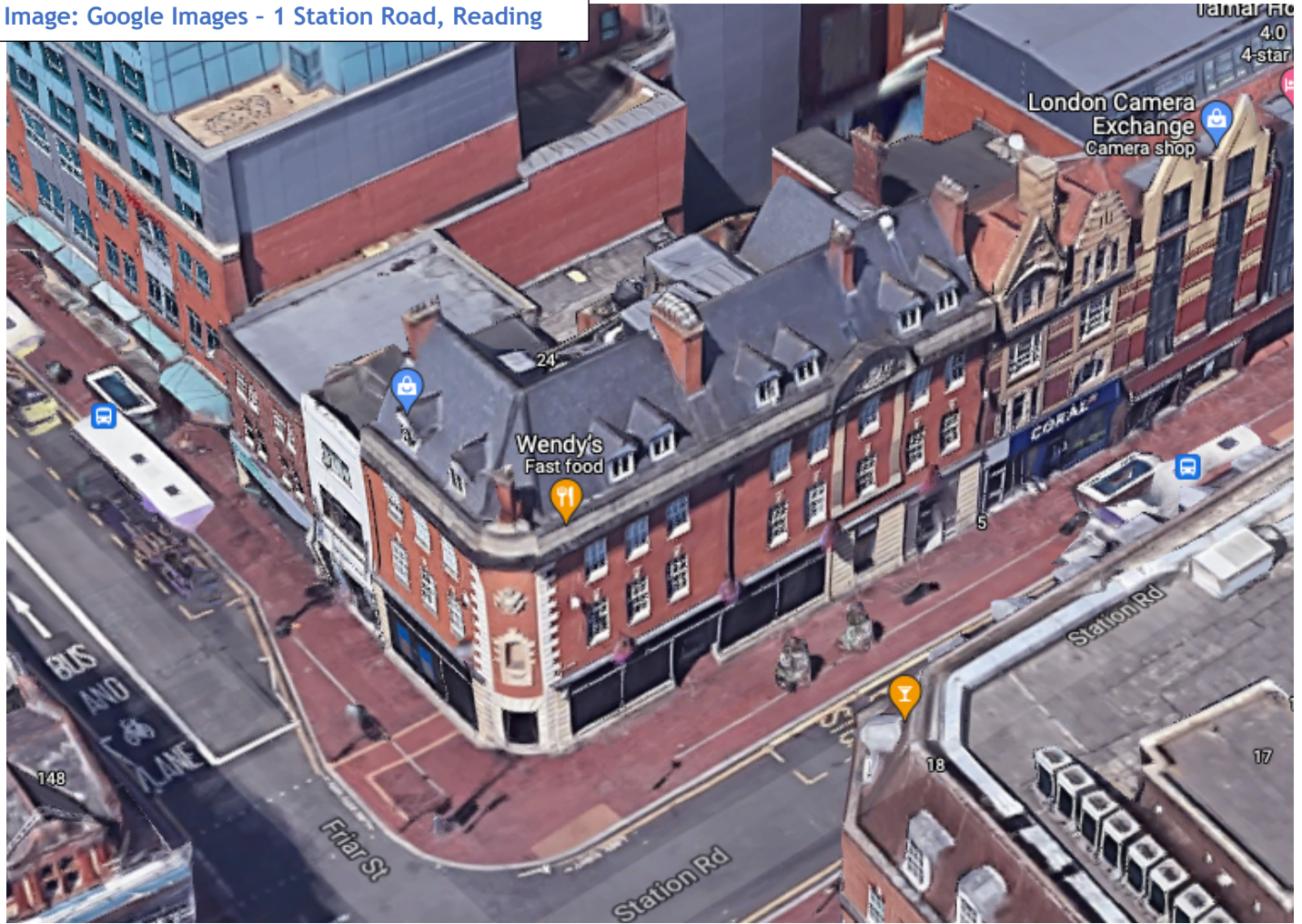
The existing building has been much altered and much changed from its original state and will benefit from the new dormer window added to the external façade to even up the number of dormer windows in the building, as there is a strong desire for a consistent approach to the frontages in Queen Victoria street and surrounds.

The proposals accord with national and local planning policy and guidance, represent sustainable development and there are no material considerations that indicate that planning permission should not be granted for this proposed scheme.



[Image: Google Images - 1 Station Road, Reading](#)

Image: Google Images - 1 Station Road, Reading



2. Site & Planning History

Of relevance to this application is the below consent (ref: 191446) for the Change of use of 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 12 flats. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.

This shows the importance of bringing back into use underutilised spaces.

Following on from the above consent, the installation of additional windows into rear (west-facing) elevation and erection of new dormer window to front roof slope (linked to Prior Approval Application 191446).

In the same way, the external change to the roof slope facade proposed in this location will help to preserve and enhance this building, modernising, but still in-keeping with its heritage and improving light, outlook and daylight levels.

3. The Proposal - Design & Layout

Façade Alterations

The alteration to the front façade of the existing building will be in the roof slope (see enclosed drawings pack and proposed elevation drawing above). This will improve the rhythm to the roof façade of Station Road.

There will be timber windows, matching the materials and detailing of the building.

As Approved dormer window (& existing)



1 Station Road - Additional Windows
Proposed Elevation 02 - Station Road

Proposed Elevation with new dormer window opening to match existing.



4. Access

Existing access to no.1 Station Road, is via a corner entrance onto Friar Street. The access from Friar street will remain the same.

Access

There will be no change to access as a result of the proposal.

Car Parking

There is no car parking on site at present and none proposed.

Cycle Parking

Cycle parking is by means of a cycle store located within the basement demise.

Servicing

The site does not benefit from car parking. Due to the town centre location car parking provision is not necessary due to the highly sustainable nature of the site.

5. Relevant Planning Policy

5.1 Planning Policy Framework

In preparing the application proposals, consideration has been given to the relevant development plan for the Site and proposed development, which comprises the key documents and sources set out below.

5.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)

The NPPF establishes overarching national policies for plan making and decision taking. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development where permission should be granted for development that accords with an up-to-date development plan, or where material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.3 Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP) (2019)

The RBLP provides local policy and guidance, which accords with that set out at national level in the NPPF, providing a greater level of detail. The key policies of relevance to this application are listed below:

5.4 Policy Considerations

The RBLP 2019 forms part of the adopted Development Plan, the principal policies relevant to this application include:

Sustainability, Design and Amenity:

- Policy CC1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development;
- Policy CL2 - Sustainable Design and Construction;
- Policy CC7: Design and the public realm;
- Policy CC8: Safeguarding amenity

Natural and Historic Environment:

- Policy EN1: Protection and enhancement of the historic environment;
- Policy EN4: Locally Important Heritage Assets

Central Reading:

- Policy CR1: Definition of Central Reading;

- Policy CR2: Design in Central Reading;
- Policy CR7: Primary frontages in Central Reading; and

Planning Policy Designations

The site is subject to the following planning policy designations from the RBC Proposals Map 2019:

- Adjacent Classified Highway Network (Friar Street);
- Adjacent identified Cycle Route (QVS and Friar Street);
- Primary Shopping Area;
- Office Core;
- Central Core;
- Air Quality Management Area;
- Station River Major Opportunity Area

6. Planning Considerations

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF establishes the government's planning policies for new development within England and how these are expected to be applied. 'At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 11).

In July 2021 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published the revised NPPF. The sections most relevant here are outlined below:

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF establishes the presumption in favour of sustainable development, whereby proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay. The up-to-date development plan in this case is the RBLP, which has been prepared with consideration to the NPPF and was adopted after the current NPPF.

Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places

Paragraph 126: The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

Paragraph 130: Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments: a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development; b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities); d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit; e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Section 16 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Paragraph 203: The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application.

In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

6.2 Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP) (2019) Key Planning Considerations -

The following are considered to be the key considerations for this planning application:

1. Principle of Development
2. Design Considerations.
3. Heritage Impacts (on non-designated heritage assets).
4. Impact on Amenity.

6.3 Principle of Development and Proposed Uses

The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development unless the development would result in demonstratable and significant effects.

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset (para.203)

Policy CC1 Reiterates the presumption in favour of sustainable development within the NPPF (noted above) and will approve developments that are in accordance with policy. Proposals contrary to the development plan will be refused unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The following key principles for the central Reading area are set out within the RBLP:

- The centre will contain a broad range of different but complementary uses within an area easily accessed by foot.
- The centre will appeal to all sectors of Reading's population as a place to live in, work in, study in and visit.
- New development will exhibit an excellent, safe and sustainable quality of design that contributes to the attraction of the centre.
- Areas and features that positively contribute to the unique and historic character of central Reading will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced.

Consideration

The starting position is that the Council has previously approved the development a dormer to this property, in granting consent officers reached the view that a dormer would be acceptable in principle.

6.4 Design Considerations

There are several key separate elements to the design of the proposals that warrant individual focus as part of the policy assessment.

The following elements of the proposed external works are addressed in turn below. We also refer readers to the drawings provided as part of this application pack.

The NPPF identifies at paragraph 126 that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Paragraph 130 requires developments to function well and be visually attractive, be sympathetic to local character, whilst not preventing appropriate innovation or change. Proposals should use street layouts, spaces, building types and materials to create distinctive places.

Policy CC7 reflects the national position in seeking high quality design, maintaining and enhancing the character and appearance of the area within which it is located.

Under Policy CC7, developments will also be assessed to ensure that they:

- Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;
- Are visually attractive as a result of good high-quality built forms and spaces.

Building upon these principles and with a focus on Central Reading, Policy CR2 requires proposals to demonstrate the following attributes

- High quality architectural details and materials should be used, respecting form and quality in local areas
- Should be designed with consideration to adjacent development sites, not preventing or causing unreasonable burdens on future development.

Consideration

The new dormer window will be a sensitive design, in keeping with those already in existence representing an enhancement of the character of the existing building.

The Friar Street entrance will remain in the same location, there are no ground floor changes as part of this application.

Care has been taken in the design of the dormer window to closely reflect the design, scale and detailing of the original dormer windows of the Station Road terrace.

The proposals seek to reinstate the historic design and uniformity. The proposals will be in keeping with, and respectful to, the existing buildings and setting.

6.5 Heritage Impacts

Paragraph 203 of the NPPF states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Policy EN1 of the RBLP seeks the protection and enhancement of the historic environment. 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.

The Council will proactively seek solutions for assets at risk, including consideration of appropriate development schemes that will ensure the repair and maintenance of the asset.

Policy EN4 of the RBLP requires development proposals that affect locally important heritage assets to demonstrate that development conserves architectural, archaeological or historical significance which may include the appearance, character and setting of the asset.

The building is not listed, but is currently being considered for local listing by Reading Borough Council and as such, the heritage impact must be assessed.

A detailed Heritage Report is provided to accompany the suite of planning application information we submit in order to accurately assess those impacts.

The following heritage overview reviews the proposed works and their impact on the identified heritage significance of the assets.

Consideration

New dormer window:

- Detailing and design will reflect traditional design of historic buildings in this location and represent a significant enhancement to the architectural integrity and authenticity of the asset.
- The proposed timber dormer window would be wholly appropriate in terms of form, materials, character and detailing. These works represent an enhancement to the architectural interest.

The proposals are considered to comply with relevant tests and requirements of the NPPF and Policies EN1, EN4 and EN6 of the RBLP.

6.6 Public Benefit

In addition to heritage benefits, the NPPF requires an assessment of the balance of harm against other public benefits arising from development proposals.

The proposal will deliver the following public benefits:

- Visual respectful to the original historic frontages
- As part of the redevelopment, will repair and reinstatement of the original historic roof slope of the building and the architectural detailing.

The dormer window will be constructed to exactly match the existing building and would therefore cause no harm to the street scene or surrounding area. The new dormer would be a positive addition to the street scene and roofscape.

6.7 Amenities

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF promotes development that will create a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Policy CC8 of the RBLP stipulates that development Must not cause a detrimental impact to living environment of existing or future residential properties.

Firstly, the building will not result in any further material instances of overlooking as a result of the dormer.

Turning to the future residents, the new dormer window in the roof slope and will provide the occupiers with the benefit of more sunlight and daylight into their residential accommodation. The kitchen area would be significantly enhanced as a result of the head space and further natural light.

Consideration

The proposal will protect the amenities of existing and future residents and will provide a well-designed new dormer window that provides good levels of outlook, access to sunlight and daylight.

The proposed dormer would overlook the existing street and would have enough separation distance (approximately 20 m) to the opposite building to not cause any concern with overlooking or harm to current or future neighbouring occupiers.

The proposal is considered to comply with the NPPF and Policy CC8 of the RBLP.

7. Summary and Conclusions

This application is for full planning permission for the addition of a dormer window to the roof slope principal façade of number 1 Station Road, Reading.

- The proposal provides the opportunity for preservation and enhancement of a heritage asset (locally listed).
- The Heritage Overview concluded that any harm to the significance of the Building would be negligible and any harm is weighed against the preservation and enhancement of the building that the proposal delivers, in terms of continuity and uniformity of the roof slope.
- The proposal will protect and enhance the amenity of future occupiers.
- The new dormer window will enhance amenities by improving the outlook and daylight levels to the kitchen area.
- The dormer window proposal is of a high quality, well-considered and responds positively to heritage significance of the building.
- The policy presumption is in favour of the grant of planning permission and there are no material considerations that outweigh that presumption.
- The proposals are therefore considered to comply with relevant planning policy and should be granted planning permission accordingly.

Should you wish to discuss this application, please do not hesitate to contact the Town Planning Bureau.

Yours faithfully

Paul S Bottomley BA (Hons) MA MRTPI
Town Planning Bureau