

DESIGN STATEMENT

13 WEST STREET, READING RG1 1TT

Beijing restaurant for many years has struggled to compete with the growing number of specialist and fast food restaurants in Reading Town Centre. The current situation with the Covid 19 pandemic has had an irreversible effect on Beijing restaurant with little hope for its recovery in the future.

This application proposes the change of use of the restaurant's seating area to a minimarket whilst converting part of the existing kitchen into a small restaurant for the retail units. The existing basement is divided into two sections with one section providing stock storages for retail units and the second section provides a large space for a recording or art studio. The diversity of uses within the ground and basement space ensures long term sustainability as there is a great demand for these types of uses in the town centre.

Government's National Planning Policy Framework in section 7 (Ensuring the vitality of town centres) paragraph 85-c makes reference to town centre markets and states:

"Retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones."

Reading Borough Council adopted Local Plan November 2019 policy CR8 (Small shop units in central Reading) states:

"Small shop units make an important contribution to the diversity of the centre. Some areas of the centre are particularly characterised by small units, of less than 75 sq m. These include the arcades, Cross Street, Queen Victoria Street, Union Street, and any other areas designated in the future. Within the areas characterised by small shop units, the amalgamation of individual shop fronts will not be permitted. Major new retail development (more than 2,500 sq m) for multiple units in the Primary Shopping Area should include some provision for a range of small shop units."

Taking into consideration the variety of uses proposed, it would help the growth of small businesses in the town centre and provides more employment opportunities..