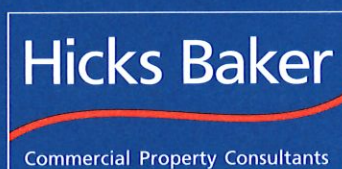


SEQUENTIAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

THE MALTINGS
BEAR WHARF
READING RG1 6BT

APRIL 2019

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Sequential Assessment has been prepared in support of a planning application for the Change of Use of existing A3 floor space into B1(a) offices at The Maltings, Bear Wharf, Reading (pre-planning application ref: 182074/PREAPP). The current A3 unit has been empty for over 12 months and the fabric of this Listed building is deteriorating. The LPA has asked for a sequential test to be carried out for B1 (a) use, which is part of the planning application.

2. POLICY BACKGROUND

The application at the site is to be considered within the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2018) Council's Core Strategy (2008, Altered 2015) and Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, Altered 2015) documents, Reading Central Area Action Plan (RCAAP), and the Supplementary Planning Guidance and Documents.

A new local plan for Reading is at an advanced stage.

(a) Land use principles

The NPPF (2018) states that "Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of the local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation". The NPPF definition of 'town centre' includes land within or adjacent to the main shopping areas and areas predominantly occupied by town centre uses.

The Council's LDF SDPD Policy CS26 Hierarchy of Centres requires that the vitality and viability of Reading's centres, including the town centre, be maintained and enhanced. It encourages inclusion of a wide range of uses. The Reading Central Area Action Plan (RCAAP) (2009) Policy TRC6 states that, all major office development over 1,000m² to be located within the Office Core, as defined on the proposals maps. Additionally, RC6 states that "*other main town centre uses will take place in the Central Core, as identified on the proposals maps*". In accordance with the NPPF, main town centre uses include offices. It is also noted at this stage that Policy CS33 also requires features and areas of historic importance to be protected, and where appropriate, enhanced.

The proposal seeks to introduce an office use outside of both the office and central cores within the RCAAP. The Council has therefore requested a sequential approach to determine the suitability of the use in this edge of centre location (also in line with paragraphs 86-87 of the NPPF). The office and central cores within the RCAAP have provided the basis for the geographical coverage of this study.

The sequential test is required as the proposed use is classified as a main town centre use (NPPF 2018) and not located within the central office core. The proposals could bring a listed building back into active use; the site is located within the RCAAP boundary, and is located within a building previously used in association with Courage's Brewery. The use of the proposed building as B1 (a) (offices) will also provide a 'unique' office space within close proximity to the Reading Town Centre.

(b) Listed Building considerations

The Council's heritage advisor has provided the following comments:

'Internally the building has been converted to restaurant use but retains internal features of architectural and historic interest including cast iron columns, internal historic timberwork to mansard roof with iron reinforcing straps, Crittal windows throughout, timber flooring. The internal dog-leg staircase appears to be a modern insertion, as do the two staircases at either end of the building'.

'The proposals are for the conversion from A3 restaurant use to B1 (office) based on a serviced-office model. The proposals would involve minimal internal alterations including removal of internal studwork walls, removal of the modern internal, central restaurant staircase. Works to the exterior would largely include cosmetic repairs to the external, although damage caused to the brickwork at the corner along the riverfront, caused by tree roots and would need more extensive brick repairs'.

'The building is watertight and in a generally sound condition, but is beginning to deteriorate due to lack of occupancy by the tenant'.

'The re-use of the building in a sustainable function which is compatible with the retaining of the historic fabric and character of the building is considered to be the most appropriate use. The re-use of the building as small, flexible-space offices is considered to be compatible with the Listed Building and there are no objections to conversion which would potentially minimally affect the Listed Building'.

(c) Transport matters

The following comments received from the Highway Authority are relevant:

'The site is located within the Reading Central Area and within Reading's primary shopping area. The site is located within Zone 1 of the adopted parking Standards and Design SPD which is an area at the very heart of Reading Borough, consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments, with limited residential. This area is well served by rail and bus links and also contains the largest proportion of public car parking spaces'.

‘The proposal consists of the change of use from A3 use to B1 office use. The proposal includes no parking spaces. However, the site does benefit from a short stay pay and display bay to the front of the site on Fobney Street’.

‘The site is well serviced by public transport services and the surrounding road network all have extensive parking restrictions preventing on-street parking. Therefore, the proposed change of use is likely to be acceptable in this town centre location’.

3. SEQUENTIAL ASSESSMENT

An assessment has been carried out to identify if there are any comparable available offices situated within the RCAAP. This data has been compiled by undertaking a desktop analysis and by telephone enquiries of commercial agents active in Reading. In addition, selected site visits have been carried out to verify the findings of the desktop web-based research, to identify any further properties and to assess their relevance to the application.

Property Type	Total	%
Available offices within qualifying criteria	22	100%
Self-contained ‘character’ offices	0	0%
Above retail	11	50%
Not self-contained	22	100%
Modern, ‘no character’	22	100%

The assessment identified a large number of available offices. Given that the applicant is seeking permission to convert approximately 400 sq.m. the size range considered appropriate for this sequential test is between 300 sq.m. and 500 sq.m. This reduces the number of properties relevant to the sequential test to 22; these are set out in the table below and summarised in more detail in Appendix 1.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The findings therefore clearly demonstrate that no sequentially preferable sites have been identified that would meet the following criteria:

- i) A self-contained office building which is not above retail or other non-B1 space.
- ii) A character building with unique features that would appeal to non-corporate style tenants, for example in the creative and media sectors.
- iii) Accommodation in the size range of 300 sq.m. to 500 sq.m.

- iv) Properties located either in the RCAAP or the (very) near vicinity, with access to public parking, public transport (including walking distance to the station) and local amenities.

The analysis is further underlined by the ongoing 'loss' of similarly sized self-contained office buildings to residential development (whether through Permitted Development or via a 'full' planning route). A selection of such properties is included in Appendix 2.

Research undertaken by the UCL Bartlett School of Planning (see Appendix 3) shows that, of 153 prior approval notifications in Reading between 2013 and 2017, 108 were granted. Of these, 58 schemes were implemented, further reducing the opportunities for small office occupiers in the town.

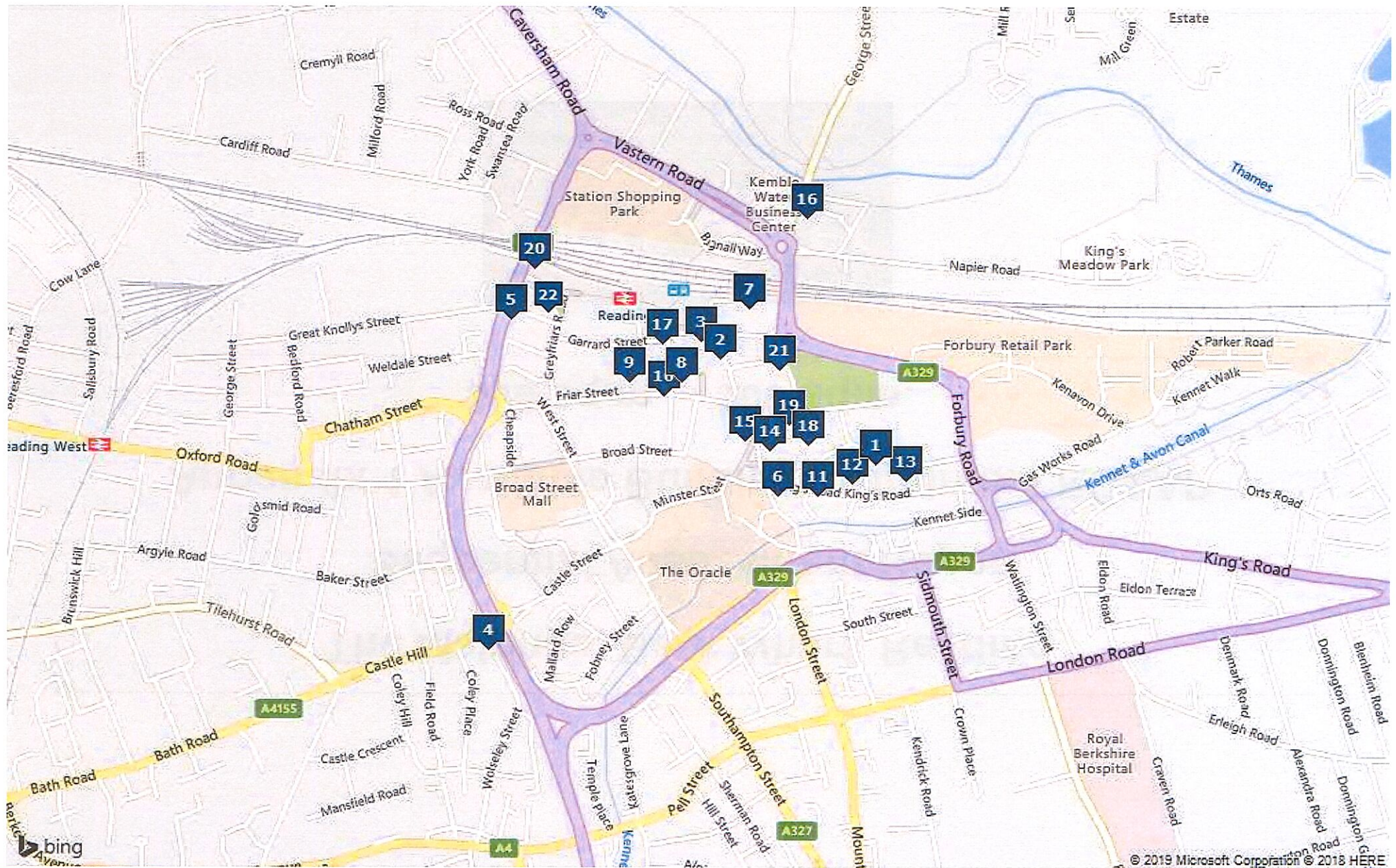
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The Maltings, Bear Wharf, Reading
Sequential Assessment Report
Appendix 1 Available Buildings within the RCAAP
300 sq.m. – 500 sq.m.

March 2019



List Availability Report



List Availability Report

Abbey Gardens 4 Abbey St



SF AVAILABILITY

P 1st	5,495
P GRND	3,500
P GRND	2,495
Total	11,490

OVERVIEW

Type:	New Lease
Rent:	£29.50/SF
Rates:	£10.90/SF
Service:	£6.75/SF
Total £:	£47.15/SF

Property	Not Self Contained	Above Retail	No 'Character'
Abbey Gardens	•		•

33 Blagrove St



SF AVAILABILITY

4th	4,181
3rd	4,654
P 2nd	2,952
Total	11,787

OVERVIEW

Type:	New Lease
Rent:	£32.50/SF
Rates:	£10.00/SF
Service:	£6.98/SF
Total £:	£49.48/SF

Property	Not Self Contained	Above Retail	No 'Character'
33 Blagrove St	•		•

Aquis House 45-51 Blagrove St



SF AVAILABILITY

3rd	9,662
P 1st	4,389
Total	14,051

OVERVIEW

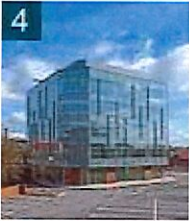
Type:	New Lease
Rent:	£33.50/SF
Rates:	£7.44/SF
Service:	£6.56/SF
Total £:	£47.50/SF

Property	Not Self Contained	Above Retail	No 'Character'
Aquis House	•		•

List Availability Report

Advantage

87 Castle St



SF AVAILABILITY

P 3rd	3,240
P 3rd	2,055
2nd	5,255
Total	10,550

OVERVIEW

Type:	New Lease
Rent:	£24.50/SF
Rates:	£9.00/SF
Service:	£7.89/SF
Total £:	£41.39/SF

Property	Not Self Contained	Above Retail	No 'Character'
Advantage	•		•

40rty Caversham

40 Caversham Rd



SF AVAILABILITY

3rd	5,552
P GRND	3,799
Total	9,351

OVERVIEW

Type:	New Lease
Rent:	£24.50/SF
Rates:	£9.01/SF
Service:	£6.60/SF
Total £:	£40.11/SF

Property	Not Self Contained	Above Retail	No 'Character'
40rty Caversham	•		•

Dukesbridge Chambers

1 Duke St



SF AVAILABILITY

2nd	2,557
1st	2,500
Total	5,057

OVERVIEW

Type:	New Lease
Rent:	£24.50/SF
Rates:	£8.49/SF
Service:	£8.81/SF
Total £:	£41.80/SF

Property	Not Self Contained	Above Retail	No 'Character'
Dukesbridge Chambers	•	•	•

List Availability Report

Apex Plaza

Block D
Forbury Rd

7



SF AVAILABILITY

P 2nd	4,117
P 2nd	2,135
P 2nd	1,235
P 2nd	3,926
P 2nd	4,011
P 1st	3,990
P GRND	3,374
Total	22,788

OVERVIEW

Type:	New Lease
Rent:	£35.00/SF
Rates:	£12.40/SF
Service:	£9.02/SF
Total £:	£56.42/SF

Property	Not Self Contained	Above Retail	No 'Character'
Apex Plaza	•	•	•

County House

17 Friar St

8



SF AVAILABILITY

2nd	4,034
Total	4,034

OVERVIEW

Type:	New Lease
Rent:	£23.00/SF
Rates:	TBA
Service:	£5.00/SF
Total £:	TBA

Property	Not Self Contained	Above Retail	No 'Character'
County House	•	•	

The Workplace

30-31 Friar St

9



SF AVAILABILITY

P 1st	3,456
Total	3,456

OVERVIEW

Type:	New Lease
Rent:	£19.00/SF
Rates:	£4.21/SF
Service:	£6.91/SF
Total £:	£30.12/SF

Property	Not Self Contained	Above Retail	No 'Character'
The Workplace	•	•	•

List Availability Report

145 Friar St Reading, RG1 1DR



SF AVAILABILITY

P 3rd	1,452
P 2nd	1,753
Total	3,205

OVERVIEW

Type:	New Lease
Rent:	£28.00/SF
Rates:	TBA
Service:	TBA
Total £:	TBA

Property	Not Self Contained	Above Retail	No 'Character'
145 Friar St	•	•	•

Kings Wharf 20-30 Kings Rd



SF AVAILABILITY

P 4th	4,775
P 3rd	5,121
P 2nd	5,173
P 1st	5,124
P GRND	5,146
Total	25,339

OVERVIEW

Type:	New Lease
Rent:	TBA
Rates:	TBA
Service:	TBA
Total £:	TBA

Property	Not Self Contained	Above Retail	No 'Character'
Kings Wharf	•		•

The White Building Kings Rd



SF AVAILABILITY

P 3rd	3,315
Total	3,315

OVERVIEW

Type:	New Lease
Rent:	£35.00/SF
Rates:	£11.50/SF
Service:	£6.95/SF
Total £:	£53.45/SF

Property	Not Self Contained	Above Retail	No 'Character'
The White Building	•		•

List Availability Report

Abbey Gate

57-75 Kings Rd

13



SF AVAILABILITY

P 2nd	3,177
P 1st	5,785
P GRND	4,044
P GRND	2,879
Total	15,885

OVERVIEW

Type:	New Lease
Rent:	£26.00/SF
Rates:	£9.84/SF
Service:	£6.27/SF
Total £:	£42.11/SF

Property	Not Self Contained	Above Retail	No 'Character'
Abbey Gate	•		•

6-8 Market PI

Reading

14



SF AVAILABILITY

P 1st	100 - 12,510
Total	100 - 12,510

OVERVIEW

Type:	New Lease
Rent:	TBA
Rates:	TBA
Service:	TBA
Total £:	TBA

Property	Not Self Contained	Above Retail	No 'Character'
6-8 Market PI	•	•	•

33-34 Market PI

Reading

15



SF AVAILABILITY

2nd	1,252
1st	2,252
Total	3,504

OVERVIEW

Type:	Sublease
Rent:	£17.50/SF
Rates:	£3.25/SF
Service:	£2.50/SF
Total £:	£23.25/SF

Property	Not Self Contained	Above Retail	No 'Character'
33-34 Market PI	•	•	•

List Availability Report

Reading Bridge House

Reading Bridge

16



SF AVAILABILITY

P 5th	4,802
Total	4,802

OVERVIEW

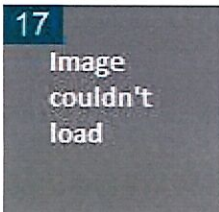
Type:	New Lease
Rent:	£28.00/SF
Rates:	£7.81/SF
Service:	£6.75/SF
Total £:	£42.56/SF

Property	Not Self Contained	Above Retail	No 'Character'
Reading Bridge House	•	•	

Brunel House

Station Rd

17



SF AVAILABILITY

3rd	3,681
Total	3,681

OVERVIEW

Type:	New Lease
Rent:	£31.00/SF
Rates:	£9.11/SF
Service:	£5.20/SF
Total £:	£45.31/SF

Property	Not Self Contained	Above Retail	No 'Character'
Brunel House	•	•	•

Davidson House

The Forbury

18



SF AVAILABILITY

Total	100 - 44,714
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OVERVIEW

Type:	New Lease
Rent:	£33.50/SF
Rates:	£12.09/SF
Service:	£8.80/SF
Total £:	£54.39/SF

Property	Not Self Contained	Above Retail	No 'Character'
Davidson House	•	•	

List Availability Report

One Forbury Square

The Forbury



SF AVAILABILITY

P 1st	4,295
Total	4,295

OVERVIEW

Type:	New Lease
Rent:	TBA
Rates:	TBA
Service:	TBA
Total £:	TBA

Property	Not Self Contained	Above Retail	No 'Character'
One Forbury Square	•	•	•

The Pinnacle

20 Tudor Rd



SF AVAILABILITY

P 5th	3,637
P 2nd	2,406
Total	6,043

OVERVIEW

Type:	New Lease
Rent:	£28.50/SF
Rates:	£5.28/SF
Service:	£8.30/SF
Total £:	£42.08/SF

Property	Not Self Contained	Above Retail	No 'Character'
The Pinnacle	•		

One Valpy

Valpy St



SF AVAILABILITY

P 6th	2,441
P 5th	1,772
P 2nd	3,518
Total	5,290

OVERVIEW

Type:	New Lease
Rent:	£35.00/SF
Rates:	£7.50/SF
Service:	£7.50/SF
Total £:	£50.00/SF

Property	Not Self Contained	Above Retail	No 'Character'
One Valpy	•		•

List Availability Report

The Brick Works

Centrium
35-43 Greyfriars Rd

22



SF AVAILABILITY

4th	3,358
3rd	4,219
2nd	4,263
1st	4,263
GRND	2,357
Total	18,460

OVERVIEW

Type:	New Lease
Rent:	£35.00/SF
Rates:	TBA
Service:	£6.50/SF
Total £:	TBA

Property	Not Self Contained	Above Retail	No 'Character'
The Brick Works	•		•

Appendix 2

Selected self-contained office buildings 'lost' to Residential Use (by Permitted conversion or 'full' Planning)

March 2019



Address	Approx Date	Size (sq. ft.)	Comments
136-137 Friar Street	2015	1,942	Prior approval for change of use from offices to residential conversion for 2x1 bedroom apartments.
Units 1 Wesley Gate, Queens Road	2016	3,015	Plans for residential conversion.
Units 2 Wesley Gate, Queens Road	2016	3,395	Plans for residential conversion.
60 Queens Road	2016	20,000	Prior approval for change of use from offices to residential conversion.
Havell House, 62-66 Queens Road	2016	5,000	Prior approval for B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise of 8 x 1 bed flats, 3x1 bed flats, 4x2 bed flats.
52-55 Friar Street Reading	2016	40,000	Planning granted for change of use from offices to residential.
108 London Street	2017	3,475	Sold for residential conversion.
125 Chatham Street	2017	5,000	Prior approval for change of use from offices to residential conversion for 8x1 bed flats.
45 Boulton Road	2018	5,477	Sold for residential conversion.
6 St Giles Court	2018	525	Sold for residential conversion.
29-35 Station Road	2018	17,800	Prior approval for change of use from offices to residential conversion for 22 storey building.
13 Bridge Street	2018	1,450	Planning granted for change of use from offices to residential to comprise 2x2 bed apartments.
50 Queens Road	2019	1,500	Sold for residential conversion.
Kings Lodge, Kings Road	2019	8,000	Sold for PD. Office users outbid by residential developers.
Units 3 Wesley Gate, Queens Road	2019	3,954	Under offer for residential conversion.
Units 4 Wesley Gate, Queens Road	2019	3,326	Under offer for residential conversion.
Alexander House, Kings Road	2019	12,899	Sold for residential conversion.

Source: Reading Borough Council - Residential Commitments 2018

Appendix 3

Permitted Development conversion rates:

Selected UK towns

March 2019



Prior approvals (English cases) and full planning applications (Glasgow)	Camden	Croydon	Leeds	Leicester	Reading	Glasgow
Notifications 2013-17 (schemes and units)	249	263	139	100	153	77
	2354	5359	2170	1493	1949	564
Granted	155	176	119	77	108	63
Duplicates (from granted)	42	57	17	15	24	0
Net approvals (schemes and units)	110	119	112	62	84	63
	832	3330	1565	1035	1295	282
Mean average size of approved schemes (units)	9	30	18	20	15	7
Implemented (Schemes and units)	76	89	22/39	42	58	32/50
	605	2708	715/1198	637	879	133/360

Source: UCL Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment Bartlett School of Planning