

Royal Court
King's Rd
Reading
RG1 4AE
Sequential Assessment



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Sequential Assessment has been prepared in support of the planning application for the conversion of an existing A3 floor space into 3 residential units and one A1 use, located at Kings Road , Reading (planning application ref :181421, Reading) . The proposal would result in loss of floor space (UCO A3) outside of a designated shopping area to a combination of (UCO C3 & A1) The current A3 unit has been empty for over 10 years and has become centre for anti-social behaviour. The local planning Authority has asked for a sequential test to be carried out for A1 use, which is part of the planning application.

2.0 POLICY BACKGROUND

2.1 The Core Strategy (adopted in January 2008 and amended in January 2015) and the Reading Central Area Action Plan (2009) are both relevant to the determination of this planning application. The Local Planning Authority are currently preparing a new Local Plan which when formally adopted will replace the current development plans. The Borough Council have recently undertaken consultation on the Issues and Options and subsequently they are seeking to produce a full draft Local Plan which they expect to publish in 2017.

2.2 Policy CS26 (Network and Hierarchy of Centres) of the Core Strategy outlines the Boroughs network of centres. The Application Site is situated between Reading Centre which is defined as a regional centre and Kings Road which is defined as east side.

2.3 Policy RC6 (Definition of the Centre) of the Reading Central Area Action Plan states that 'retail development will take place in the Primary Shopping Area, as defined on the Proposals Map' . As outlined in paragraph 1.1 of this Statement the proposal is for retention of 27sq m of retail floor space and the Application Site is situated outside of the Primary Shopping Area. The explanatory text supporting this policy states that the Primary Shopping Area will be 'the first location to be examined in applying the sequential approach to identifying sites for retail proposals, in line with Planning Policy Statement 6 (2005).'

2.4 The Core Strategy and the Central Area Action Plan both pre-date the National Planning Policy Framework which was adopted in March 2012. Paragraph 24 of the Framework outlines the requirement for sequential tests to planning applications for main town centre uses which are situated outside of an existing centre and not in accordance with an up –to-date Local Plan. The paragraph goes on to state that Local Planning Authorities should 'require applications for main town centre uses to be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations and only if suitable sites are not available should out of centre sites be considered.' Moreover, the Framework concludes that when determining planning applications for edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference should give to accessible sites that are well connected to the town centre.

2.5 Flood risk assessment has been carried out and submitted as part of the planning application

3.0 SEQUENTIAL ASSESSMENT

3.1 Royal court occupies the lower ground floor at Kings Road and we are seeking to retain 27 sq m to A1 use. There are currently 1 no. car parking spaces situated to the rear of the proposed application within an existing car park and some amenity space to the side of the

development site. The car parking space is essential for the business as the goods can be dropped off and thus easy to transport on foot into the retail unit. Therefore considering other premises which does not have dedicated parking or parking within a close proximity would be detrimental to the business given the small space it occupies. Also the site enjoys from amenity space.

3.2 The Application Site is situated 700m East of the Primary Shopping Area and moreover the two are both well connected. The site is therefore considered outside of centre location which is defined in the NPPF as a 'location that is well connected and up to 300 metres of the primary shopping area.' In line with paragraph 24 of the Framework the main town centre use is considered acceptable in an edge of centre location if there is no suitable or available site within the Primary Shopping Area.

3.3 Accordingly an assessment has been carried out to identify if there are any suitable and available sites situated just outside the Primary Shopping Area. In the first instance sites were identified by carrying out a desk based analysis by searching key agents to find available commercial units. Secondly, a comprehensive site visit was carried out to verify the desk based research and to identify any further properties and assess their suitability for the Applicant.

3.4 The assessment identified large number of available units (excluding offices). A large proportion of these are too large units which have no dedicated car parking or indeed situated within a close proximity to car parking. Given that the applicant is seeking permission to use 27 -35 sqm , the maximum threshold deemed acceptable for this sequential test was 50 sqm. As such the assessment has been narrowed down to 7 units which have been considered in the table below, over a large area close to town and outside the centre area

Table 1 – Assessment of Sites

Address	Description	Assessment Summary
London street	Retail unit (UCO A1). It is being marketed to let by Dunster & Morton and the particulars state that the property has a total floor area of 395sqm .	Property is too large comparing the 27-35 sq m available in Royal court. Also royal court offers potential seating area outside and parking
7-9 Oxford road	Retail unit (UCO A1). It is being marketed to let by knight Frank and the particulars state that the property has a total floor area of 3793 st ft	Property is too large comparing the 27 -35 sq m available in Royal court. Also royal court offers potential seating area outside and parking
102 Broad Street	Retail unit (UCO A1). It is being marketed to let by knight Frank and the particulars state that the property has a total floor area of 472.6 sqm	Property is too large comparing the 27 sq m available in Royal court. Also royal court offers potential seating area outside and parking
254 Shinfield Road	Retail unit (UCO A1). It is being marketed to let by Hicks Baker and the particulars state that the property has a total floor area of 908 -1485 sq ft	Property is too large comparing the 27 sq m available in Royal court. Also royal court offers potential seating area outside
Harris Arcade, Reading, RG1 1DN	Retail unit (UCO A3). It is being marketed to let by Hicks Baker and the particulars state that the property has a total floor area of 275 sq m	The property is too large and there is no car parking, as such it would be unsuitable to accommodate the proposal.
119 Broad Street Mall	Retail unit (UCO A1). It is being marketed to let by knight Frank and the particulars state that the property has a total floor area of 1122 sqft	The property is too large and there is no car parking, as such it would be unsuitable to accommodate the proposal.
11-13 Kings Road	The property has a total floor space of 594 sqm and benefits from its corner location.	The property is too large for the proposal and moreover there is no car parking available on the site.

The above table clearly demonstrates that no sequentially preferable sites have been identified that would meet the A1 use by accommodating 30 -35 sqm of floor space and providing adequate car parking either on site or within a very close proximity to the store. with added advantage of amenity space.

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 The sequential assessment has been carried out to support the planning application in order to satisfy Policy RC6 of the Reading Central Area Action Plan and paragraph 24 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The assessment has shown that there are no sequentially preferable sites in the outside / and or in the Primary Shopping Area and therefore the proposed change of use should be supported.