

25 KING STREET

PLANNING STATEMENT

Date: JULY 2024
Ref: 1030
25 KING STREET
READING RG1 2HE



RIBA 



A collaborative of architects
and designers with an agenda.
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01 PRELIMINARIES

PURPOSE

This statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for retrospective consent for works done to the shop frontage at 25 King Street, Reading.

PLANNING CONTEXT

The planning enforcement team have requested the submission of an application for the works, and informal discussions have been had with the planning officer and conservation representatives regarding the reasons for enforcement attention.

This statement is made to explain and clarify the changes made and those proposed to rectify them.

METHODOLOGY

This statement has been prepared following detailed discussions with the applicant and our own site attendance.



STREET FRONTAGE OF 25 KING STREET

02 PARTICULARS

LOCATION

25 KING STREET, READING RG12HE

DESIGNATION

Not Listed

Building of Townscape Merit

Within Reading's Market Place / London Street Conservation Area

CONSERVATION AREA DESCRIPTION

Market Place / London Street conservation area protects the original route into Reading Abbey from the south, over the Kennet River. The target building occupies a visible frontage forming part of Jacksons Corner, a local landmark where the busy King Street (built 1760s) crosses the route of the Conservation Area.

The appraisal says "Buildings of Townscape Merit help to create a conservation area's distinctive and interesting historic townscape" and that "the general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area".

In this sense 25 King Street is a good example of Victorian brickwork and the projecting clock at second floor level is of particular note.



EXCERPT FROM CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL WITH TARGET BUILDING CIRCLED RED

03 TIMELINE

PRE-2003

Before Jacobs fitout the shop was vacant and the shop frontage was of low value to the streetscene

Metal glazing frames, stone clad posts, white painted signage

2003

Jacobs shop front installed including new signage, new window surrounds, and new front door

dark painted timberwork with gold lettering

2021

Shop front refitted including over-cladding of timber posts with brickwork, new external lighting, new glazing to front door, and new signage

natural brickwork, purple timberwork, purple and gold signage, gold lettering

NOVEMBER 2023

Letter from enforcement requesting submission of planning application

DECEMBER 2023

Meeting with enforcement officer on site

FEBRUARY 2024

Meeting with Reading Conservation Area Appraisal Committee

MAY 2024

Planning application submitted

JUNE 2024

Application notified as invalid

Colony Architects engaged



25 KING STREET FRONTAGE BEFORE 2003



25 KING STREET FRONTAGE 2003-2020



25 KING STREET FRONTAGE JULY 2024

04 ENFORCEMENT & PLANNING CONCERNS

Through discussions between the applicant and various stakeholders, it is understood that there are three main areas of concern in the current shopfront: lighting, brickwork, and signage.

LIGHTING

Consent had not been sought or given for the changes made in the external lighting.

BRICKWORK

The brickwork at ground floor is at odds with the style and colour of brickwork in the upper levels. While not a listed building, the upper floors exhibit details and quality that warrant status as a "Building of Townscape Merit". The historic brickwork at upper levels are in a vernacular red brick with tight mortar joints. The new brickwork at ground floor level is in a more domestic format and brick blend with modern width cement mortar joints.

SIGNAGE

the colour of the fascia (purple and gold) was the subject of a complaint calling it "striking and garish", especially when compared to the previous subdued dark brown fascia.



25 KING STREET LIGHTING, BRICKWORK, SIGNAGE (PRESENT)

05 APPLICATION RESPONSES

This application responds to each concern in turn:

LIGHTING

Reading's Design Guide for shopfronts suggests caution should be employed at the target site as it is in a conservation area: "External lighting should only be used when shopfronts are trading after dark... In conservation areas or on listed buildings there should be particular caution with internal illumination"

That said, lighting is not outlawed, and its value is recognised with particular regard to a feeling of safety at night if done with sensitivity: "evening lighting of shopfront window displays can contribute to a feeling of safety and activity, but will only be acceptable when energy-efficient LED lighting is used... for instance face or halo illumination of individual letters may be appropriate... discreet slim-line LED downlighters may be acceptable."

As the target site forms part of the prominent junction at Jacksons Corner some lighting should be acceptable, assuming the following conditions:

Lighting is only in use in trading hours

Low-energy lighting only is proposed

These changes are acceptable to the applicant and will be adhered to.

BRICKWORK

The new ground floor brickwork is not heritage work, nor was the previous shop frontage that it replaced. The building is not listed (it is a Building of Townscape Merit) and surrounding shopfronts range widely including full-fill frameless glass (Prospects, next door), modern smooth painted render, replacement historic façades, and authentic stonework of Barclays Bank.

On this basis there appears to be no reason to install heritage brickwork in this location. This said, the domestic character of the brick blend used is out of place in this location, and detracts from the street-scene by adding an out-of-place material.

This application therefore proposes to tint the brickwork using a permanent brick dye.

SIGNAGE

The new signage is purple and gold and the gold strip is highly reflective. This application proposes to alter the gold strip so that is it not reflective. The lettering has already been treated in this way.

05 SHOP FRONT LAYOUT - AS EXISTING



25 KING STREET FRONTAGE 2003-2020



STREET FRONTAGE OF 25 KING STREET AS EXISTING

06 SHOP FRONT LAYOUT – AS PROPOSED



STREET FRONTAGE OF 25 KING STREET AS PROPOSED



STREET FRONTAGE OF 25 KING STREET AS EXISTING



STREET FRONTAGE OF 25 KING STREET WITH CHANGES



BRICK TINTING TO MUTE COLOUR, BEFORE (L) & AFTER (R)

07 CONCLUSION

This application seeks consent for the works done to date and further works to remedy the shortcomings of the 2021 build.

The applicant wishes to engage fully with the planning process and hopes the changes proposed in this application allay any concerns raised regarding their shopfront constructed in 2021.

Should there be need to discuss details further the applicant would welcome the opportunity to meet a council representative - or a heritage consultee - on site to cover specific details or provide sample patches for the brick tinting.