

PLANNING STATEMENT

FEBRUARY 2025 v 1.0

TK MAXX
Middle Level Store A
Oracle Shopping Centre
Reading
RG1 2AG



rpa:group

51-53 Church Road, Ashford, Middlesex TW15 2TY Tel. +44 (0)1784 256 579 www.therpagroup.com

Prepared for and on behalf of:
TJX Europe

Project Name:
TK Maxx – Middle Level Store A, Oracle Shopping Centre, Reading RG1 2AG

Report Name:
Planning Statement

Status Planning:
This document has been issued and amended as follows:

Issue	Description	Date	Prepared	Approved
v1.0	HVAC Application	10.02.2025	MC	NT

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1- INTRODUCTION

1-1: THE PROPOSAL

Prepare and submit an HVAC application for installation of new plant to the roof of an existing retail unit in Oracle Shopping Centre, Reading. This statement will describe the site and surroundings, document the site's planning history and assess the proposals against relevant local planning policy and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The new installation will consider materials in keeping with the existing nature of the building.

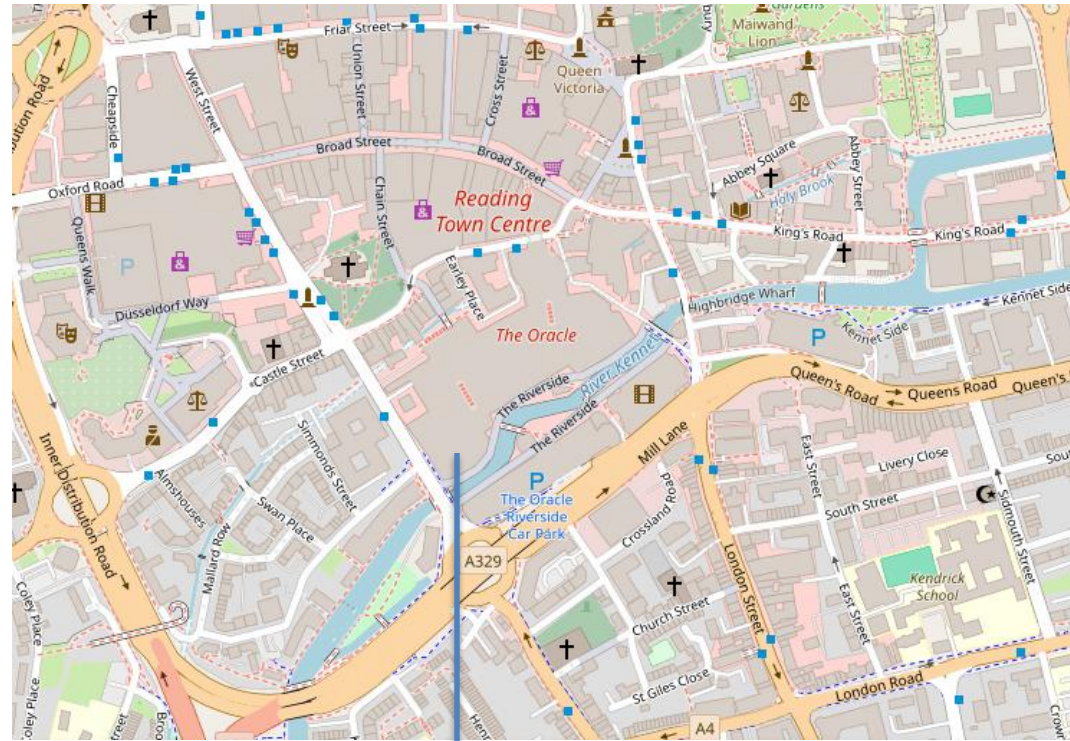
1-2: THE EXISTING BUILDING

This Planning Statement has been prepared by rpa:group at the request of our client TJX Europe, the applicant for this application.

The proposal relates to Middle Level Store A (refer to figure 1) - an existing commercial premises, that has been created by the sub-division of the old House of Fraser unit. The property is within the demise of the Oracle Shopping Centre which opened in 1999.

The surrounding buildings are mixed in nature with residential dwellings located immediately opposite the proposed store within 1-48 Riverside House on Fobney Street, as well as Reading Civic Centre and Reading Borough Council's offices.

It is understood that the store opening hours are 0930 to 2000 Monday to Friday, 0900 to 1900 on Saturdays and 1100 to 1700 on Sundays and that the proposed building services plant will operate for a maximum of an hour before the store opens and after the store closes (0830 to 2100 Monday to Friday, 0800 to 2000 on Saturdays and 1000 to 1800 on Sundays).



Aerial view of Reading- source : Goggle Maps

Figure 1: Middle Level Store A

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (1) published in December 2024 sets out the Government's current planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF supersedes the previous NPPF published in December 2023.

With regards to local noise and vibration, paragraph 198 states:

"Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:

a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life;

b) identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and

c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation." Reference is made to the DEFRA Noise Policy Statement for England 2010 (NPSfE). This latter document is intended to apply to all forms of noise other than that which occurs in the workplace and includes environmental noise and neighbourhood noise in all forms.

The NPSfE advises that the impact of noise should be assessed on the basis of adverse and significant effect but does not provide any specific guidance on assessment methods or limit sound levels. Moreover, the document advises that it is not possible to have *"a single objective noise-based measure...that is applicable to all sources of noise in all situations"*. It further advises that the sound level at which an adverse effect occurs is *"likely to be different for different noise sources, for different receptors and at different times"*.

In the absence of specific guidance for assessment of

environmental noise within the NPPF and the NPSfE, it is considered appropriate to base assessment on current British Standards and national guidance. These are considered to be Local Authority guidance, BS 4142 (2), BS 8233 (3) and the World Health Organisations (4) (WHO) guidelines. 3.2 BS 4142: 2014 + A1: 2019 – Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound.

Current Government advice to Local Planning Authorities in both England and Wales makes reference to BS 4142 as being the appropriate guidance for assessing commercial operations and fixed building services plant noise. This British Standard provides an objective method for rating the likelihood of complaint from industrial and commercial operations. It also describes means of determining noise levels from fixed plant installations and determining the background noise levels that prevail on a site.

The assessment of impacts is based on the subtraction of the measured background noise level from the rating level determined. The rating level is the source noise level (either measured or predicted) corrected for tone or character (if necessary). The difference is compared to the following criteria to evaluate the impact.

– A difference of around +10 dB or more is likely to be an indication of a significant adverse impact.

– A difference of around +5 dB indicates is likely to be an indication of an adverse impact.

– Where the rating level does not exceed the background noise level, this is an indication of the specific sound source having a low impact.

This method is only applicable for external noise levels.

READING BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN Adopted November 2019

The Local Plan for Reading is the document that contains the policies for how Reading will develop up to 2036, which is the end date of the plan. It identifies the amount of development that will take place, the areas and sites where development is expected to be accommodated, and where it will be restricted, and sets out policies for how planning applications will be decided.

The Local Plan is the main planning document for Reading. It replaces the three previous development plan documents – the Core Strategy (adopted 2008, amended 2015), Reading Central Area Action Plan (adopted 2009) and Sites and Detailed Policies Document (adopted 2012, amended 2015).

This plan has been prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which sets out the overall national approach to planning. Local plans should be consistent with the principles and policies in the NPPF, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Policies Relevant to this Application

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced. This will include:

- ☐ Listed Buildings;
- ☐ Conservation Areas;
- ☐ Scheduled Monuments;
- ☐ Historic parks and gardens; and
- ☐ Other features with local or national significance, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and assets on the Local List.

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. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits. Applications which affect Listed Buildings will not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where

appropriate, their settings. Applications which affect Historic Parks and Gardens will safeguard features which form an integral part of the special character or appearance of the park or garden. Development will not detract from the enjoyment, layout, design, character, appearance, features or setting of the park or garden, key views out from the park, or prejudice its future restoration. Applications which affect, or have the potential to affect, the significant features of heritage assets should be justified by a Heritage Statement. The Council will monitor buildings and other heritage assets at risk through neglect, decay or other threats, proactively seeking solutions for assets at risk including consideration of appropriate development schemes that will ensure the repair and maintenance of the asset, and, as a last resort, using its statutory powers. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect or of damage to a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.

EN16: POLLUTION AND WATER RESOURCES

Development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment and sensitive receptors through land, noise or light pollution; where it would result in no deterioration in, or ideally enhance, ground and surface water quality; and where adequate water resources, sewerage and wastewater treatment infrastructure will be in place to support the proposed development prior to occupation. Proposals for development that are sensitive to the effects of noise or light pollution will only be permitted in areas where they will not be subject to high levels of such pollution, unless adequate mitigation measures are provided to minimise the impact of such pollution. Development will only be permitted on land affected by contamination where it is demonstrated that the contamination and land gas can be satisfactorily managed or remediated so that it is suitable for the proposed end use and will not impact on the groundwater environment, human health, buildings and the wider environment, during demolition and construction phases as well as during the future use of the site.

EN17: NOISE GENERATING EQUIPMENT

Where noise generating equipment is proposed, the noise source specific⁶¹ level (plant noise level) should be at least 10dBA below the existing background level as measured at the nearest noise sensitive receptor.

CR2: DESIGN IN CENTRAL READING

Applications for development within Central Reading should demonstrate the following attributes:

- a. Development will build on and respect the existing grid layout structure of the central area, providing continuity and enclosure through appropriate relationships between buildings and spaces, and frontages that engage with the street at lower levels, and contributing towards enhanced ease of movement through and around the central area;
- b. Development will provide appropriate, well designed public spaces and other public realm, including squares, open spaces, streetscape, utilising high quality and well maintained hard and soft landscaped areas, and public art, that provide suitable functions and interest, sense of place and safe and convenient linkages to adjoining areas;
- c. Development should consider and, where possible, include ways of providing green infrastructure designed into the development, for instance through roof gardens, green walls and green roofs, to enhance the otherwise very urban environment;
- d. The architectural details and materials used in the central area should be high quality and respect the form and quality of the detailing and materials in areas local to the development site;
- e. Development and any associated public realm should contribute to the diversity of the central area, be capable of easy adaptation over time to meet changing circumstances, and be designed to enhance community safety; and
- f. Development should be designed with consideration of adjacent development sites, and should not prevent or cause unreasonable burdens on the future development of those sites.

3- DESIGN APPROACH

3-1: PROPOSED HVAC INSTALLATION

The property forms part of the Oracle Shopping Centre, with prescribed locations for plant and machinery allocated and approved by the Centre Management team and landlord – refer to figure 2

The proposal is to locate nine condenser units and a single air handling nit within the existing plant compound at roof level – refer to figure 3

In relation to Policy EN1, the location and scale of the proposal is in-keeping with that of the existing, so will have no negative impact on the surrounding areas or impact on any existing vistas.

The proposal satisfies Policy CR2 with design utilising high quality materials and in consideration to adjacent buildings

Pursuant to Policy EN16 and EN17, a noise impact assessment has been completed and forms part of the supporting documentation, which concludes that the proposal satisfies the requirements of Reading Borough Council – refer to figure 4

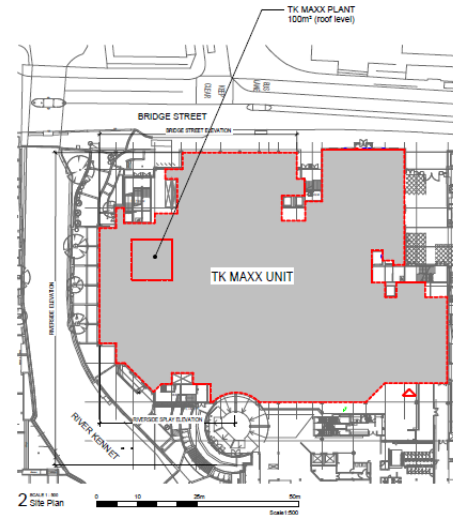


Figure 2 : Proposed HVAC location

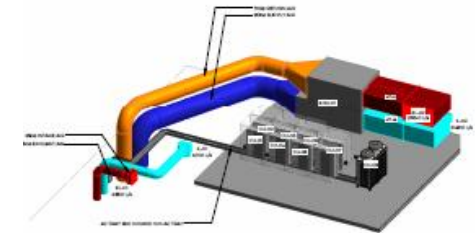


Figure 3 : Proposed HVAC schematic



Figure 4 : Proposed HVAC plant zone and nearest sensitive receptor