

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey

App Ref: PL/25/0098 Full planning permission

Address: HICKIES, 153 FRIAR STREET, READING, RG1 1HE

Proposal: Full planning permission and advertisement consent for 1no. replacement fascia sign, 1no. replacement projecting sign and 1no. new roof level sign, alterations to fenestration and associated alterations to front and rear elevations.

Applicant: Mr William Elphick

Received date: 21/01/2025

Target Decision date: 18/03/2025

Case Officer: Gary Miles

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

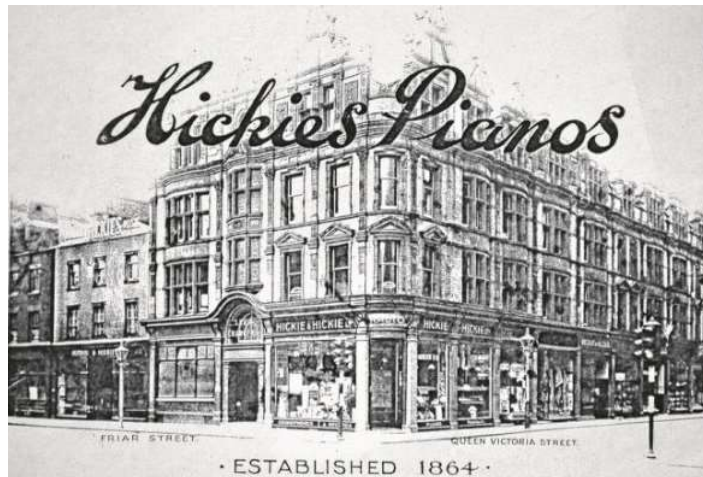
The application site consists of a Class E retail unit trading as Hickies Music Shop located in the heart of Reading Town Centre, the shop has an entrance of Friar Street as well as an entrance of Queen Victoria Street, no longer used. The retail unit fronting Friar Street is flanked both sides by retail units (Charity Shop) and (Travel Agent, with the adjacent area being made up of a mixture of retail and residential units and residential above the existing store on floors one and two. The site forms part of a Major Local Centre under Policy RL1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The property is not listed but is located within the Air Quality Management Area. This application relates to the elevation fronting onto Friar Street and the rear elevation hidden from view of the main street.

Hickies Music Shop occupies the entire building at 153 Friar Street, constructed over 3 floors. The exterior of the shop is bland, flat and lacks quality architectural appearance to that of its neighbouring elegant Victorian style building, appears the upper floor facade has a later 1930's feel about it. Whilst this is the case with the architecture, it is believed the store has been trading as Hickies Music Shop since 1864 and started out primarily selling musical instruments and later a record department on the first floor.

Originally the Music Shop consisted of a large store (adjacent) located on the corner of Friar Street and Queen Victoria Street as the main building with the unit at 153 Friar Street an adjacent building later occupied and retained as the main shop when Hickies downsized and moved out of the larger Victorian building on the corner of Friar Street and Queen Victoria Street.

Whilst the building is not listed, nor within a conservation area, Hickies Music Shop has been part of Reading for many years, the proposed works will revitalise the store for many generations to come.

Hickies dated 1864



Hickies now: 11th February 2025



Site photos: existing front elevation looking from Friar Street

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Full planning permission is sought for advertisement consent for 1no. replacement fascia sign, 1no. replacement projecting sign and 1no. new roof level sign. The proposal includes alterations to fenestration and associated alterations to front and rear elevations.

The proposal seeks to remove the recess, bringing both access doors forward creating a flat elevation along the street fronting Friar Street and enhancing the level of active street frontage to the building. The proposal includes altering the front facade through changes to the existing fenestration and signage to create a higher-quality, more traditional shop frontage to something more similar to years-gone-by. The works do not propose any changes to the use to the site but instead seeks alternations to enhance the existing building.

The proposal includes metal roof mounted advertising signage in keeping of the Victorian era with uplighting, includes new fenestration and facade with additions of corning detail, replacement windows

and doors to the shop front and ground floor, upper floor fenestration changes to include removal of existing windows and with top hung sash windows to first and second floor. Polyester coated projecting sign rails with powder coated aluminium signs. Changes to rainwater goods, removal of extraction units at the rear, removal of lamp and existing projecting sign to front elevation. New render at first and second floors front and rear elevations replaced with EWI render in white.

Plans & documents considered:

Drawing no: 300P1-Site Location Plan, dated Jan 25

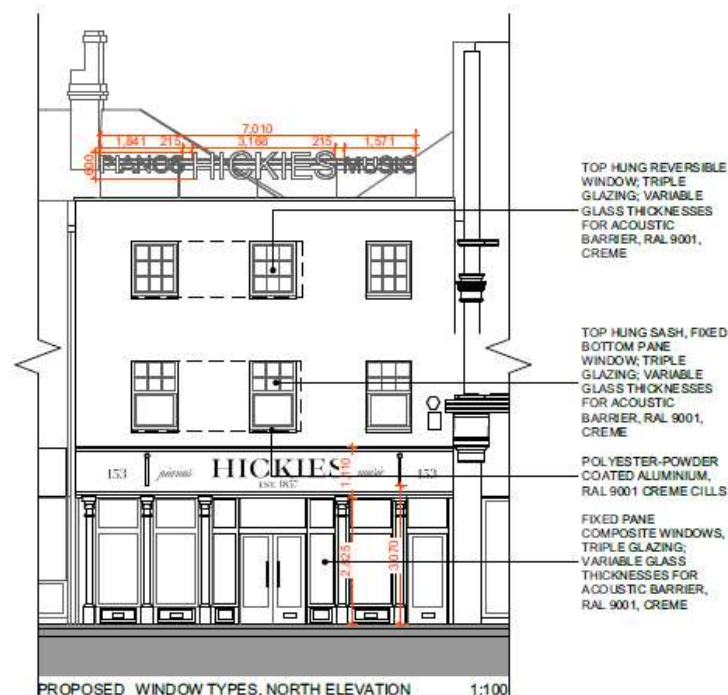
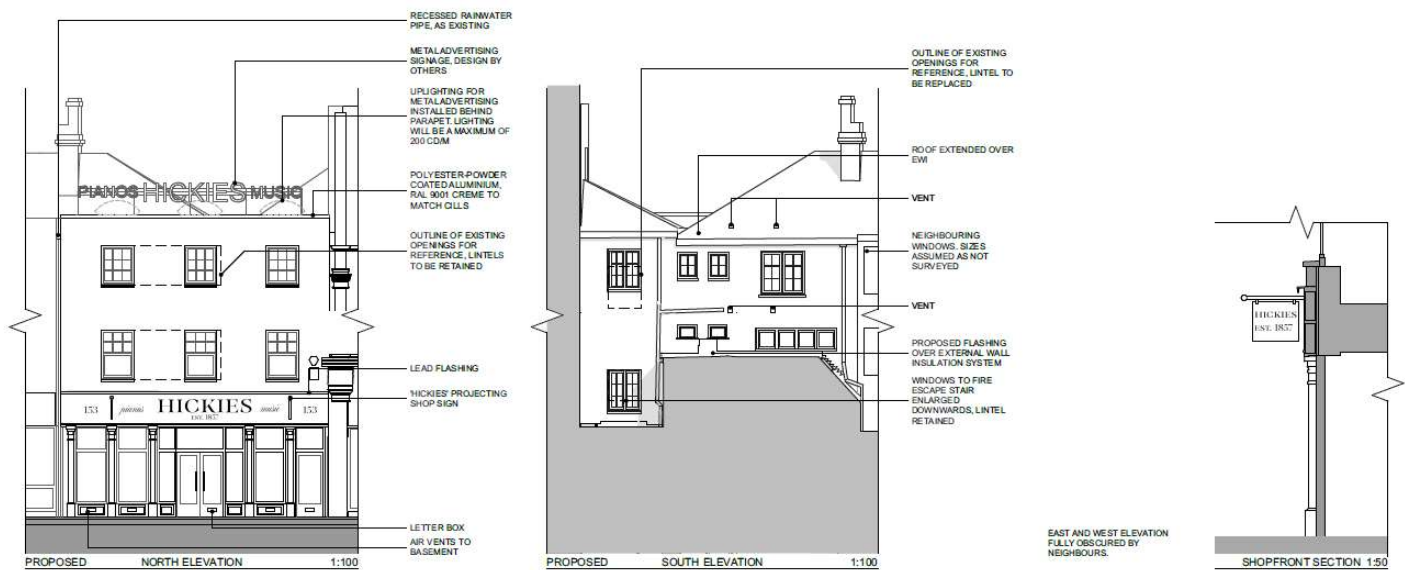
Drawing no: 301P6-Existing and Proposed Floor Plans, Elevations, dated Jan 25

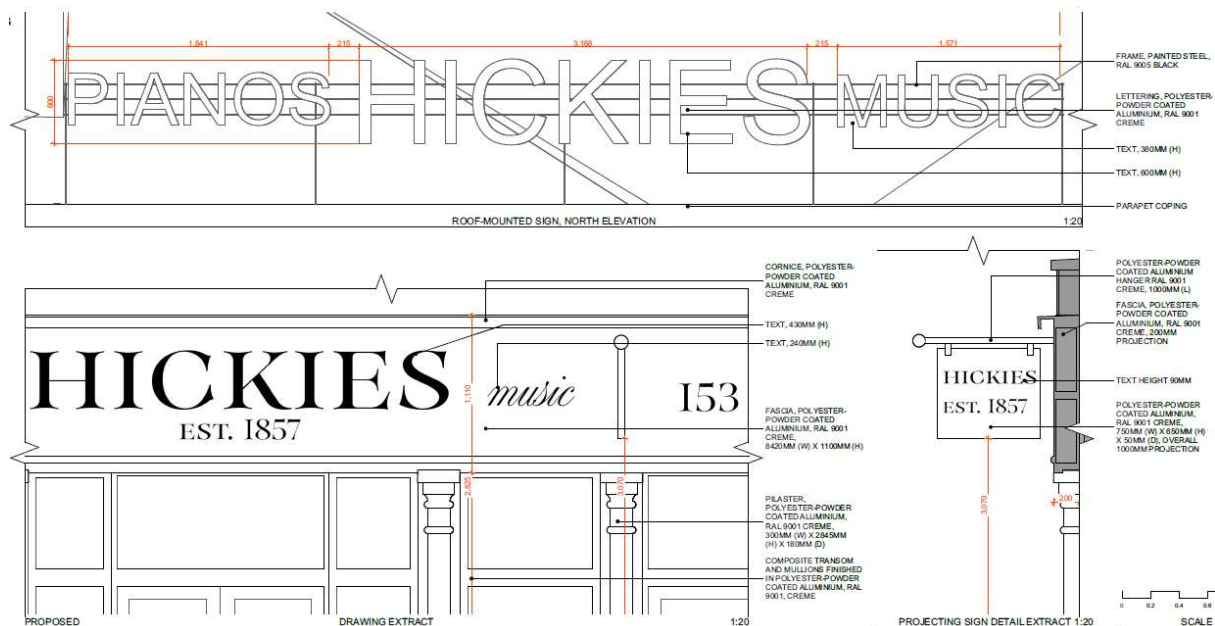
Drawing no: 302P3-Block Site Plan, dated Dec 24

Covering Letter (Vail Williams) dated Jan 25

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 21st January 2025.

Proposed Plans





3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/22/1906 – Change of use from Commercial, Business and Service (Use Class E), or betting office or pay day loan shop to mixed use for two flats (Use Class C3) under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Schedule 2, Part 3, Class G – Permitted March 24

PL/22/1340 - Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed Change of use from Commercial, Business and Service (Use Class E), or betting office or pay day loan shop to mixed use including up to two flats (Use Class C3). Conversion of 1st and 2nd floor to 2no 1 bedroom flats under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Schedule 2, Part 3, Class G – Withdrawn October 22

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following Reading Borough Council teams were consulted:

Transport Development Control – No Objection

Environmental Protection Officer – No Objection

The planning notice was attached to street furniture directly adjacent to the property on 11th February 2025 and left in place for a minimum of 3 weeks for the duration of the public consultation.

No letters of representation have been received.

5. EQUALITY ACT 2010

In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities

protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

6. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7: Design & the Public Realm
CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
OU4: Advertisements
OU5: Shopfronts and Cash Machines
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway related Matters

7. APPRAISAL

Principle of development

The proposed alterations to the front and rear elevations to Hickies Music Shop, which includes changes to existing fenestration and signage is generally considered acceptable in terms of design, scale and impact on neighbouring properties.

Design and impact on the character of the area

Policy CC7 requires that all development be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. Policy CC8 states proposals will be acceptable where it will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties.

From the documents supplied officers consider the proposed changes to Hickies Music Shop will respect the character of the existing shop, the neighbouring stores and the wider streetscene. The proposal includes high quality fixtures and fittings and will create a more elegant, higher quality and more traditional shop frontage, the changes to the upper floor fenestration including replacement sash windows and revised openings will return the building back to its former condition like that of 1864.

Shopfronts should present an active frontage to the street at all times. To ensure the scheme complies with this, a condition will be included to ensure the shopfront maintains an active window display, to assist the viability and vitality of the primary frontage.

In terms of appearance, the proposal is not considered to impact the street scene and as such the proposal complies with policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Amenity

Friar Street comprises a mix of buildings. The ground floors are predominantly class E retail space whilst the upper floors are a mix of class E and residential space.

The proposed changes to Hickies Music Shop would not conflict with the other existing uses within the vicinity of the application site and it is not considered likely to harm the character of the street.

This proposal has also been assessed against Reading Borough Local Plan policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity, which states that proposals are acceptable where they will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties with regard to:

- Privacy and overlooking
- Access to sunlight and daylight
- Harm to outlook
- Crime and safety

Due to the nature of the application the proposal is not considered to detrimentally impact the amenity to the surrounding area and is considered compliant with policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity of the Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019).

The proposed for the roof mounted advertising signage uplighting shall not exceed 250cd/m². This will be secured via a condition to protect residential and visual amenity.

The proposals considered compliant with policies CC7 and OU4 of the Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019).

Traffic and Highway related Matters

As the proposal includes advertisement consent for 1no. replacement fascia sign, 1no. replacement projecting sign and 1no. new roof level sign with uplighting, the Transport Development Control team were consulted in terms of road safety, who confirm no objections to the proposal but did advise the intensity of the illumination of the sign permitted by this consent shall be no greater than 300 cd/sqm in the hours of darkness.

Shopfronts and Cash Machines

Shopfronts, individual features of shopfronts and cash machines will respect the character of the building on which they are located and their surroundings, as well as the wider street, in terms of design, colours, materials, lighting, and location. Features that positively contribute to the character of the building and street will be retained and, where possible, restored. Safety and security will be maintained and enhanced.

In terms of character, design, colours, materials and lighting the proposed changes to the fenestration of the front and rear elevations along with the advertisements and roof mounted uplighting are considered acceptable.

Public Safety (Advertisement & Signage)

Officers have also assessed the proposal against the following document.

The NPPG (in particular in this instance Paragraph: 068 Reference ID: 18b-068-20140306 & Paragraph: 078 Reference ID: 18b-078-20140306) provides guidance as to the considerations affecting public safety. These are detailed below (in italics), together with officer responses in relation to the proposal (in bold):

(a) those which obstruct or impair sight-lines at corners, bends or at a junction, or at any point of access to a highway; **NO**

(b) those which, because of their size or siting, would obstruct or confuse a road-user's view, or reduce the clarity or effectiveness of a traffic sign or signal, or would be likely to distract road-users because of their unusual nature; **NO**

(c) those which effectively leave insufficient clearance above any part of a highway, or insufficient lateral clearance for vehicles on the carriageway (due allowance being made for the camber of the road-surface); **NO**

(d) those externally or internally illuminated signs (incorporating either flashing or static lights) including those utilising light emitting diode technology:

i. where the means of illumination is directly visible from any part of the road;

ii. which, because of their colour, could be mistaken for, or confused with, traffic lights

or any other authorised signals; **NO**

iii. which, because of their size or brightness, could result in glare and dazzle, or distract road-users, particularly in misty or wet weather; **NO**

iv. which are subject to frequent changes of the display; **NO**

(e) those which incorporate moving or apparently moving elements in their display, or successive individual advertisements which do not display the whole message; **NO**

(f) those requiring close study (such as Public Information Panels), which are situated so that people looking at them would be insufficiently protected from passing vehicles; or those advertisements sited on narrow footpaths where they may interfere with safe passage by causing pedestrians to step into the road; **NO**

(g) those which resemble traffic signs, as defined in section 64 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and may therefore be subject to removal by the traffic authority under section 69 of that Act, for example:

i. those embodying red circles, crosses or triangles, or any traffic sign symbol; or those in combinations of colours which might otherwise be mistaken for traffic signs; or **NO**

ii. those incorporating large arrows or chevrons with only the arrow or chevron made of retroreflective material or illuminated, causing confusion with similar signs in use at, or approaching roundabouts. **NO**

(h) those which embody directional or other traffic elements and which need special scrutiny because of possible resemblance to, or confusion with, traffic signs, for example, advertisements which: **NO**

i. contain a large arrow or chevron (or have a pointed end and have only a few words of message); **NO**

ii. invite drivers to turn right on a main road, or where there is fast moving traffic; **NO**

iii. invite drivers to turn, but are sited so close to the turning that there is not enough time to signal and turn safely; or **NO**

iv. are so close to similar advertisements, or official traffic signs, that road-users might be confused in the vicinity of a road junction or other traffic hazard. **NO**

The proposals considered compliant with policies CC7 and OU4 of the Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019).

8. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and is considered to be acceptable on that basis, subject to the following conditions.

9. RECOMMENDATION

Recommended Conditions:

AP1
AD1
AD2
A1
TL1
M3