

Planning Statement

incorporating

Sustainability Statement

Ref
1354 PS02

Date
18 July 2025

Project
External Alterations

at
50 Broad Street
Reading
RG1 2AA

1. **Site Description**

- 1.1 The application site is located at the junction of Broad Street with Union Street, in the heart of Reading town centre. The premises are currently used as a retail shop on the ground floor with storage at basement level and the upper floors. The retail area on the ground floor is 158.1m² or 1,702sq.ft.

2. **Proposed Development**

- 2.1 The current shop unit has a rather disjointed floor plan, caused by the location of a large curved staircase at the centre of the floor area. This stair served previous uses of the premises, with numerous cellular office/meeting rooms spread over the upper levels.
- 2.2 The owner of the premises wishes to make the retail space more attractive for better quality retail tenants. The planned refurbishment will remove the large internal stair and provide the premises with new shopfronts all round. This will provide a single open space that is more desirable for retail users. The basement will serve as a storage area to support the retail operation.
- 2.3 In order to achieve removal of the current stair, it is proposed to reconfigure access to the upper levels by moving the stairs to the rear of the premises with an entrance directly from Union Street.
- 2.4 Access to the basement level is currently adjacent to the existing stair in the centre of the ground floor space. Building Regulations for Fire Safety require that the means of escape from the basement be either via an open staircase within 3m of a final exit at ground level, or via a protected stairway that provides access to the final exit. The direct distance within the basement to the escape stair is also required to be no more than 12m. In order to satisfy these requirements, it is proposed to relocate the stair to a new position within a fire protected stair enclosure that does not interrupt the open retail space. This is shown on the proposed ground floor plan.

3. **Planning Considerations**

3.1 **Retail Space**

The proposed reconfiguration will not reduce the available retail floor space. The current layout provides 158.1m² or 1,702sq.ft. of retail space. The proposed layout provides 158.3m² or 1,704sq.ft. of retail space.

3.1.1. **Primary Frontage and Design in Central Reading**

Overall the proposals will improve the appearance of the premises facing both Broad Street and Union Street. The frontage to Broad Street remains fully glazed with a renewed modern shop front. By necessity the frontage to Union Street includes areas of inactive frontage. These provide access to the upper levels and also form a protected means of escape from the basement level. In order to reduce the impact on the street frontage, these 2 areas are divided and separated by an area of display glazing.

Although the proposed elevations include inactive entrance/exit areas, the current arrangement of poor quality retail space leads to much of the frontage to Union Street being shuttered off during trading hours. This can be seen in the site photos included in the Appendix. The proposed development is therefore seen as an overall improvement to the street frontage of the premises.

The design of the proposed frontage consists of modern aluminium shop fronts and signage, with areas of facing brickwork to match that at upper levels of the building. This design is seen as appropriate to the building and surrounding context.

4. **Sustainability Statement**

- 4.1 The development proposals are confined to alterations to the external elevations. In this regard the proposed materials, facing brick and aluminium shopfronts have a long life expectancy of 25 years+. This will help ensure that the proposals have a low environmental impact.

5. **Conclusion**

- 5.1 The proposals are required to allow the refurbishment of the retail unit at ground floor and basement levels of the premises. This will provide a single open space retail area that will help attract a high quality retailer to the premises. Along with the renewed frontages, this will lead to an improvement that will be beneficial to Reading town centre. It is therefore requested that the Planning Authority looks at this application favourably and grants planning approval.

Appendix A - Site Photos



Broad Street frontage



Union Street frontage