

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT FOR CONSENT TO DISPLAY AN ADVERTISEMENT

App Ref: PL/25/0870

Ward: Abbey Ward

Address: 23 KINGS ROAD, READING, RG1 3AR

Proposals: Application for consent to display an Advert -3no. internally illuminated fascia signs, and 4no digital screens, internally fixed behind shopfront glazing.

Case Officer: Mishga Marshall

Date received (valid from): 16/06/2025

Target Decision date: 19/08/2025

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a commercial premises located on the northern side of Kings Road, within Reading town centre. The surrounding area is predominantly commercial in character with a variety of retail and service uses at ground floor level to the west and office space to the east.

PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The application seeks advertisement consent for the installation of the following:

- 3no. internally illuminated fascia signs fixed externally to the building
- 4no. digital display screens to be installed internally behind the shopfront glazing

The signage relates to the commercial use of the premises and is intended to advertise the occupant's business and associated services.

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

- Boundary of Reading Central Area
- Air Quality Management Area
- Tall Buildings Cluster
- Central Core
- Office Core
- Area of archaeological potential

SITE VISIT

Site visit date: 16/07/2025

PLANS AND DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED RECIEVED [16/06/2025]

- 23 KINGS ROAD Proposed Signage Visual
- 23 KINGS ROAD A4_00-Proposed Elevation
- 23 KINGS ROAD A0_00 Location Plan
- 23 KINGS ROAD A1_01-Existing Elevation

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/19/0674 - Installation of a new Air Conditioning Condenser to the rear wall of an existing office, plus modification of rear glazing to accommodate ventilation louvres. - Approved

PL/15/0871 - Permanent change of use of ground floor premises from A1 (Shop) to B1a (Offices). - Approved

CONSULTATION

Internal & External Consultations:

RBC Transport: The location of the screens do not face onto any on-coming traffic, however, no individual advertisement shall contain moving images, videos or flashing images. No objection subject to conditions.

RBC CCTV: No impact believed to be on CCTV. No objection.

Thames Valley CCTV: No Comment.

Thames Valley Police: No Comment.

No neighbour notifications were undertaken as part of these applications and no comments have been received.

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.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

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'.

Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 requires the Local Planning Authority to exercise its powers under these regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety taking into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material, and any other relevant factors. Regulation 3 states that factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural, or similar interest.

Factors relevant to public safety include highway safety and whether the advert would hinder security or surveillance devices, including speed cameras.

The following local and national planning policies and guidance are relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

OU4: Advertisements

TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

OFFICER ASSESSMENT:

Design Considerations

Policy OU4 states that advertisements will respect the building or structure on which they are located and/or their surroundings and setting in terms of size, location, design, materials, colour, noise, lettering, amount and type of text, illumination and luminance, and will not have a detrimental effect on public safety. The cumulative impact of adverts will be taken into account, and a proliferation of advertisements that detrimentally affects visual or aural amenity or public safety will not be acceptable.

The proposed fascia signs are appropriately scaled and proportioned in relation to the host building and surrounding commercial context. While the fascia signs are internally illuminated, this is common in commercial frontages in the area and is not considered out of character.

However, to maintain an appropriate balance between visibility and visual amenity, and to reduce the overall luminance impact on the streetscene, a condition will be imposed requiring that the illumination be limited to internally illuminated individual letters only, rather than full panel illumination. This will ensure a more refined and less visually intrusive signage approach in line with good design principles.

The proposed digital display screens, while not generally encouraged due to their commercial intensity and potential visual disruption, are to be installed internally behind the shopfront glazing. Given this internal positioning and their modest size, the overall visual impact is substantially reduced. The Council considers that, on balance, and subject to standard conditions regarding brightness and display behaviour (i.e. static or slow transitions), the digital screens are acceptable in this instance.

Given the above, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in design terms in accordance with Policies CC7 and OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Public Safety

The fascia signage is to be securely fixed and does not overhang or interfere with the highway or footpath. In the interest of public safety, and to minimise distraction to drivers or pedestrians, a condition will be applied requiring that the fascia signs are limited to internally illuminated individual letters, rather than fully illuminated box or panel signs.

The internal digital display screens are not expected to present any public safety risk due to their setback location and the proposed control over brightness levels. Highways officers have raised no objections to the proposal.

As such the proposal is considered to be acceptable in public safety terms in accordance with Policy TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

RECOMMENDATION

The development has been assessed, and the works are considered to be in accordance with the above relevant policies and Advertisement Consent can be granted.