

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Battle

App Ref: PL/25/0943 Lawful development: Proposed use

Address: 6 BRIDGEWATER CLOSE, READING, RG30 1NS

Proposal: Certificate of Lawfulness for Proposed change of use to brewery (B2)

Applicant: Phantom Brewing Co.

Received date: 02/07/2025

Target Decision date: 28/08/2025

Case Officer: Gary Miles

Introduction & Proposal

The site comprises an existing general industrial building located within Bridgewater Close, off Portman Road. The area is mainly commercial with some nearby residential properties located to the rear off Ilydene Road, and retail units to the west. Bridgewater Close is made up of a number of light industrial and warehouse buildings. The businesses range from a trampoline park to an automotive alloy wheel centre, a coffee supplier to a kickboxing club, an air conditioning supplier to a self-storage centre. The building is currently occupied by a metal fabrication company serving the railway industry – the existing use is ‘General Industry’ and falls under Class B2.

The proposed use is for a Brewery (Phantom Brewing Co) operated by a local business in Reading, currently located in Meadow Road. The premise is constructed from brick and block, with corrugated fenestration. Consisting of a ground floor and a first-floor mezzanine space. The property comes with its own private gated parking area.

A lawful development certificate is sought to confirm the proposed use proposed use / development under Section 192 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) of a brewery located at 6 Bridgewater Close, and that it would fall within the use class of the existing use (Metal Fabrication) and would therefore not require a separate planning permission for change of use.

The applicant has submitted an operations statement which includes a breakdown of the proposed operations/uses of the premise.

Four Primary Functions

1. FV area containing fermenting vessels
2. Brew area, containing equipment including hot liquor tank; copper mash tun; cold liquor tank
3. Storage area, accommodating significant volumes of dry goods – malted barley, hops, yeast and flavourings – used in the brewing process, as well as cans and other packing materials;
4. Cold store area, which will be used to store fresh ingredients and where finished product is kept in climatically controlled conditions ahead of distribution to trade

There will also be canning and labelling facilities, with a canning line and labelling machine which will usually be kept on the production floor but have the ability to be moved as required.

Brewing beer is not a noisy process. Noise from the machinery is never louder than conversational level; there is never the need to raise voices or shout when making beers. There is never the need for ear protection to be used.

The process is generally odourless too. As part of production, wort is boiled in a large vessel but the plant utilises a condensing stack which means that the steam and any associated odour is

not released into the air.

As part of the brewery, the Applicant intends to utilise an area no more than 15% of the floorspace within the premises for customers to either sample the beer being brewed there and then, and/or take it home to consume at a later time. This function will be ancillary to the Class B2 use.

Ancillary Facilities

The arrangement of the premises will include ancillary functions.

Associated with the day-to-day use are toilets, kitchen facilities, staff area, plant room, IT / communications room, offices, meeting space and a locker room. These facilities will provide for the administrative function of the brewing business and welfare of the staff. On non-brewing days, this space will be occupied by sales staff, accounting, brewing schedule management and planning, and human resources. Staff will also take designated breaks in this space, as well as consuming any food for lunch.

The secondary ancillary use of the premises will be the tap room, located on the ground floor (when not required on brewing days). The tap room will have limited opening hours (in line with the current taproom at the Meadow Road location) as below:

The function of this tap room will be, as with the Meadow Road site, to allow customers to enjoy our product where it is at its best / freshest, and to try before deciding whether or not to purchase cans of beer to take home. We also feel this gives customers an opportunity to try the product before purchasing at an alternate location at a later date. We will also be selling limited amounts of merchandise, such as branded t shirts in the tap room.

For most of the week, the taproom area will not be available to the public and would function as part of the overall brewery, providing space for brewing activities and related administrative functions;

The ability for the public to purchase beer for consumption will be limited in duration to between 17:00 – 20:00 on Wednesdays and Thursdays, 15:00 – 22:00 on Fridays, and from 13:00 – 22:00 on Saturdays;

The brewing process will be a 24hr operation.

The intended use as a brewery and falls under Class B2 'General Industry'.

Plans & Documents Submitted

Covering Letter (Nexus Planning) dated 2nd July 2025
Ground Floor Plan (Phantom Brewing Co)
First Floor Plan (Phantom Brewing Co)
Operations Statement (Phantom Brewing Co)
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 2 July 2025

Relevant Planning History

Original planning permission was granted for the construction of the existing building in the 1960's.

PL/94/0837 – Change of use from warehouse to indoor children's adventure playground and café facilities – Withdrawn November 1994

Two businesses are listed as operating at the address:

Newfold Engineering
Chrysalis Fabrication

Summary of Consultations

No consultations or a planning notice is a requirement for this type of application.

Relevant Planning Policy and Guidance

National Planning Practice Guidance

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Assessment

The proposal must be assessed to ensure that the proposed use will fall within the current use class of the building. Based on the information provided, the proposed use would fall within use Class B2 (general industry). Evidence suggests the current use of 6 Bridgewater Close also falls within the use class B2. Therefore, planning permission would not be required for the proposed use.

Recommendation

Sufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that a Certificate of Lawfulness should be granted for the proposed use of a brewery located at 6 Bridgewater Close, under Class B2. Therefore, the Local Planning Authority can issue the applicant with a Certificate of Lawfulness for the proposed development.

