

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Southcote Ward

App Ref: PL/25/0839 Full planning permission

Address: 60, Bath Road, Reading, RG30 2AY

Proposal: Change of use from a hotel to day nursery (Use Class E (f)) with associated works, including refuse, cycle and buggy storage (amended)

Applicant: Mr Harry Rowland

Received date: 06/06/2025

Target Decision date: 12/9/2025 (Ext)

Case Officer: Alison Amoah

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is currently a two-storey hotel (plus accommodation in the loft space) on the northern side of Bath Road. It has 15 rooms alongside ancillary accommodation. It is a large detached building with a large frontage including substantial landscaped bed and hardstanding accommodating 20 car parking spaces. There is also a rear garden. There is a one-way access system, and the 'in' (easternmost access) and 'out' access is shared with the property to the rear (58 Bath Road) also owned by the applicant.

The site is surrounded by residential use comprising blocks of flats; Armadale to the west and The Huntley to the northeast, with its heavily treed amenity space in front of it to the east of the application site (subject to TPO 129/07)).

The site itself originally had 3 protected trees under TPO 36/003 (T29, T30 and T31 - T30 has now been removed) and within Armadale Court T26, T27 and T28. The site is within a Green Link Designation (EN12) and an Air Quality Management Area (EN15).

Google aerial image



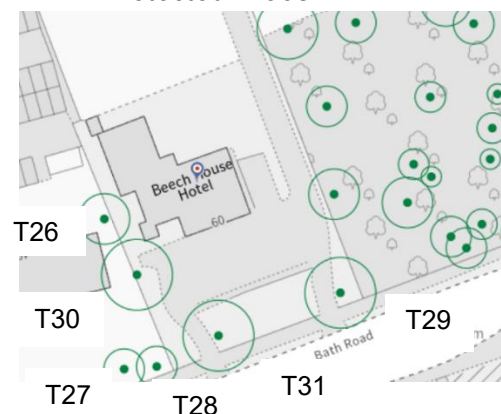
Google Streetview image



Location Plan



Protected Trees



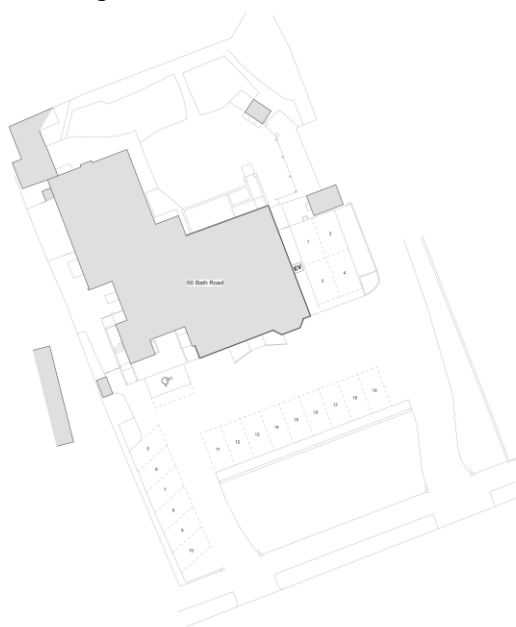
2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The amended proposal comprises the change of use of the hotel to a day nursery for 104 children and 26FTE staff with operational hours of 7.30-18.30. There would be 6 classrooms alongside offices, training rooms, plant and store-rooms and use of the rear garden. Nineteen of the existing 20 parking spaces would be retained and the proposal includes refuse, buggy and cycle storage.

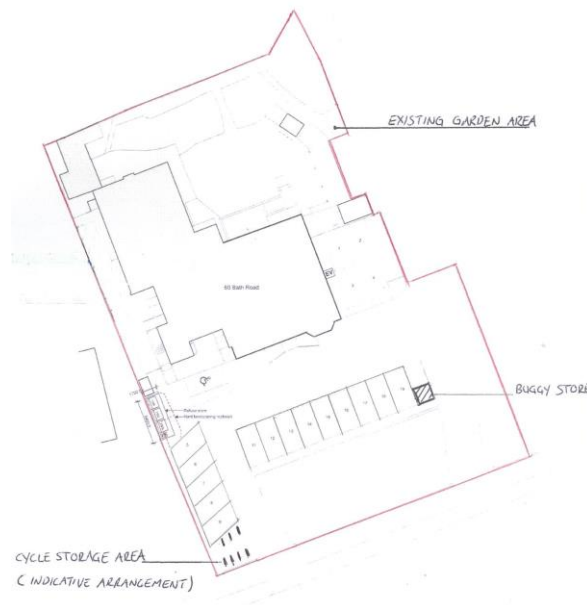
Plans and other information considered as received 6th June 2025, unless otherwise stated:

- Drawing no: 01, dated 15/10/24 – Existing Lower Ground & Ground Floor
- Drawing no: 02, dated 15/10/24 – Existing First & Second Floor Plan
- Drawing no: 01, dated 15/10/24 – Proposed Lower Ground & Ground Floor
- Drawing no: 02, dated 15/10/24 – Proposed First & Second Floor Plan
- Drawing no: GPP-111-0001, dated 5/6/25 – Existing Site Layout
- Drawing no: GPP-111-0002 Rev A, dated 5/6/25 – Site Block Key Plan, received 18th June 2025
- Drawing no: GPP-111-0101, Rev A, – Proposed Site Layout, received 10th September 2025
- Covering Letter: Supporting Planning Statement, ref: BA/JLA_472, dated 6.6.25, prepared by JLA
- Air Quality Statement, dated 31/7/25, document ref: PP2470/CL/AQ/202503-RT, Rev A, prepared by NRG Consulting, received 1st August 2025
- CIL form
- Noise Impact Assessment Report, dated 31/7/25, document ref: R/NIA/1/250731 Version 01, prepared by Auricl Acoustic Consulting, received 1st August 2025
- Transport Note, dated 5/6/25, Document ref: R-24-0184-01, prepared by Evoke

Existing Site Plan



Proposed Site Plan



3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

82/TP/383 – Change of use of existing flats to old persons home with secondary escape staircase added, single storey lounge extension and 2 new rooms on second floor – Approved 29th June 1982

89/0637/FUL (89/0988 – Civica Ref) - Single storey front and rear extensions and minor alterations to existing retirement home – Approved 15th September 1989

01/00817/FUL (01/1367 – Civica Ref) - Change of use from nursing home (C2 use) to 15-bedroom hotel (C1 use) incorporating manager's flat/office – Approved 12th September 2001

09/0148/FUL (09/0029 Civica Ref) - Change of use from hotel to non-secure convalescent centre – Refused 16th April 2009 for the following reasons:

- 1. The submitted application has failed to demonstrate that the development would not result in undue noise and disturbance being conferred upon residential occupiers of surrounding site from the use of the site as a “non-secure convalescent centre”, which would be contrary to their amenity. Consequently the application is contrary to Policy CS34 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2008).*
- 2. The submitted planning application fails to demonstrate that it complies with the Local Planning Authority’s standards in respect of vehicle parking. This could result in on-street parking/reversing movements on the local road network, adversely affecting road safety and the flow of traffic, and in conflict with ‘Saved’ Policies EMP3, COM2 and TRN11B of the Reading Borough Local Plan (1998).*
- 3. The proposed development does not comply with the Local Planning Authority’s standards in respect of secure cycle storage provision, contrary to the principles of PPG13 (Transport), Policy T1 of the Berkshire structure Plan 2001-2016, and Policy CS24 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2008).*

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

Transport Development Control – *The following are the comments based on the original submission, prior to amendments to the proposed site layout to resite cycle and buggy storage, which resulted in the loss of one existing car parking space:*

The site is located north of the A4 Bath Road and currently consists of a 15-bed hotel named ‘Beech House’. The Proposal comprises the change of use of the hotel to a day nursery. The nursery would comprise 6 class rooms alongside offices, training room, plant and store rooms.

The nursery will accommodate a maximum of 104 pupils and circa 26 full time equivalent (FTE) staff, with operational hours from 07:30 to 18:30 and flexible drop-off and pick-up times.

Access to the site is provided off the A4 Bath Road with a separate entry and exit point. The proposals involve the retention of the existing access points which comprises a ‘loop’ arrangement with the ‘in’ access being located at the eastern end of the site whilst the ‘out’ egress is located at the western end of the site.

Local parking standards are set out in the RBC, Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which takes into account the accessibility of the site. The site is located in Zone 2, Primary Core Area which extends to walking distances of 2 kilometres from the centre of Reading. Typically this zone is well served by public transport, with buses continuing either into or out of the Central Core Area via this zone. In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, a D1 day nursery would be required to provide a parking provision of 1 space per 3 FTE staff and 1 drop-off space per 10 pupils based on flexible pick-up/drop-off times.

Based on the proposed number of staff and pupils, the proposed use would require 19 parking spaces. The proposed Site Plan, drawing no. GPP-111-0101 illustrates 20 parking spaces. The site will provide 9 permanent car parking spaces for staff alongside 11 flexible pick-up / drop-off bays as part of the existing

loop arrangement of the site. There are no proposed physical alterations to the parking layout currently in existence on-site. The 4 tandem bays will be solely for staff to ensure that these bays will operate efficiently. The existing tandem bays have one electric vehicle charging point installed for use by staff.

Applying RBC's standards to the site's 26 FTE staff, 13 cycle parking bays are required on site. Provision for 14 cycle spaces will be provided. However, these facilities should be provided under a covered shelter or lockable store. I am happy to cover the full details by condition. A buggy store will also be provided which helps encourage parents to utilise sustainable modes of transport.

It is anticipated that the existing servicing arrangements will be retained as part of the application, with servicing vehicles proceeding through the loop arrangement in the same manner as cars would. This would include refuse pick up and food and supply deliveries.

A detailed analysis of the site's potential trip generation by all modes has been undertaken. The assessment has been based on the maximum capacity pupil numbers of 104 and therefore is considered to be a worst case robust assessment as it will take time for the nursery to achieve these levels and the nursery is unlikely to ever be fully occupied at any one point. The proposed development is anticipated to generate a total of 30 vehicle movements in the AM peak period (0800-0900) and a total of 33 vehicle movements in the PM peak period (1700-1800).

It should be highlighted that the trip rates above only reflect vehicle trips to the site. A detailed analysis of the two-way person trips has been undertaken in section 4 of the Transport Statement which assesses the person trips by sustainable modes in more detail. Further, it is anticipated that a large proportion of the vehicle trips to and from the site will be pass-by or linked trips, with parents dropping off and picking up pupils and then travelling to another location such as a workplace, school or retail/leisure use. This is a reasonable assumption based on the proposed use of the development.

Whilst the proposed development is anticipated to result in an increase in trips across all modes of transport in all time periods, it is considered that the proposed change of use would not have a severe impact on the surrounding local highway network.

Given the above, there are no transport objections subject to the conditions below.

Suggested conditions and informatives: Vehicle parking as specified, and cycle parking to be approved.

Education – Early Years and Childcare Team, Brighter Futures for Children – A summary of their comments is as follows:

Local authorities across England have a duty of sufficiency to make sure there are enough childcare places for families in their area. Parental demand for 0–2-year-old places has increased following the expansion of funded childcare for many working families, additionally eligible parents will be able to increase their entitlement from 15 to 30 hours a week, term time from September 2025. The DfE has set local authority expansion targets and the supply of childcare in Reading has increased, however further growth is required to ensure growing demand is met.

The proposed day nursery is situated in Southcote ward where providers are currently reporting vacancies for children 0-5 years. However, childcare options and places for families with children 0-2 years are limited in this area. The addition of a new day care provision for children 0-2 years may help respond to new demand for the [Working Entitlement](#). Additionally, the take up of funded places for [Targeted Two Year Olds](#) is less than 50% in west central, therefore any commitment to places for this group may support access.

In Southcote ward there are 10 early years providers in total: 2 day nurseries; 2 pre-schools; 1 nursery class; and 5 childminders.

There is a varied offer which includes Monday to Friday provision with term time, all year, full day and school hour options for children 0-5 years. However, currently there are no reported spaces for children under 2 years from the single day nursery provider who serves this group. Current vacancies are reported for children 2-4 years.

The Early Years and Childcare Team supports expansion of provision which prioritises children aged 0-2 years in the Southcote ward and demonstrates a commitment to offering spaces funded by the government for both working families and those who may not have as many advantages.

Environmental Protection - Environmental Protection initial comments are as follows:

- Noise arising from development
- Air Quality impact – increased exposure / new receptors
- Air Quality impact – increased emissions
- Contaminated Land

Noise generating development – mechanical plant or commercial activities

Applications which include noise generating plant or commercial activities when there are nearby noise sensitive receptors should be accompanied by an acoustic assessment carried out in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 methodology.

There is potential for noise from the use of the outdoor space for the nursery play to impact on the amenity of nearby receptors. Whilst there will be some road noise, there are flats situated further from the road than the nursery is, and the type of noise from children being outside playing is unlikely to be significantly masked by road noise. Noise from young children playing can be very loud, and as it is not a school the hours for outdoor play may be more continuous. 104 children is a fairly large number.

I, therefore, recommend a noise assessment be submitted so that any suitable mitigation can be identified. The assessment should be carried out in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 methodology and should take into account any other relevant guidance relating to the particular noise source or activity.

The starting point should be that the predicted specific sound level (LAeq,TR) (with reference to BS:4142) as measured at a point 1 metre external to the nearest noise-sensitive facade should be at least 10dB below the pre-existing background sound level, LA90,T when the activity is taking place. The predicted rating level, LAr,Tr (specific sound level plus any adjustment for the characteristic features of the sound) as measured at a point 1 metre external to the nearest noise-sensitive façade (habitable window of a dwelling) should not exceed the pre-existing background sound level, LA90,T when the use is taking place.

Air Quality - Increased exposure

The air quality statement demonstrates that no mitigation is required to protect users of the development from poor air quality.

Air Quality - Increased emissions

The air quality statement does not cover the impact on air quality of additional traffic associated with the development. The assessment should be amended to screen for this element, based on the transport assessment.

Contaminated Land

The development does not lie on an identified contaminative use, however, the new proposed land use is highly sensitive. Contamination is not restricted to previously developed industrial land but it can occur

also on greenfield sites including land used for residential gardens. Contamination can create risks to human health, property and the wider environment, including long-term limitations on the use of soils.

The proposal may introduce new pollutant linkages between contaminated land and sensitive receptors at the site.

The developer is responsible for ensuring that development is safe and suitable for use for the intended purpose or can be made so by remedial action.

A contaminated land assessment should be submitted to give an indication as to the likely risks and to determine whether the site is suitable for the proposed use or can be made so by remedial action.

See recommended conditions below, these are required to ensure that future occupants are not put at undue risk from contamination. Recommended conditions: submission and approval of - a contamination land assessment; remediation scheme; and implementation and verification of remediation scheme.

Planning Officer Note: Further to the submission of an amended Air Quality Assessment and Noise Impact Assessment the Environmental Protection Officer confirmed that the scheme was acceptable subject to the following recommended conditions: Contamination Remediation Scheme (to be submitted); Contamination Remediation Scheme (Implement and Verification); Unidentified Contamination; Acoustic fence details.

A site notice was erected on 2nd July 2025.

No letters of representation have been received.

Discussions with the agent

Due to concerns regarding the impact on trees an amendment was sought to move the buggy and cycle storage details. An amended plan was submitted.

5. 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

National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2024):

- 4. Decision-Making
- 8. Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities
- 9 Promoting Sustainable Transport
- 11. Making Effective Use of Land

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

- CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
- CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
- CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
- CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland
EN15: Air Quality
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
OU1: New and Existing Community Facilities

Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:

- Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

Other relevant documents:

- Reading Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2024-2025 (Brighter Futures, March 2025)

Local Plan Partial Update

The current version of the Local Plan turned five years old on 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up-to-date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. A consultation version of the draft updated version of the Local Plan was published on 6th November 2024 and the submission draft submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 9th May 2025.

Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become out of date when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example.

Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to this pre-application is that they remain in accordance with national policy. Of those listed above Policies CC7, EN12, TR1, TR4 and TR5 are proposed for amendment, but the objectives of those policies remain very similar in the draft updated Local Plan, and although at present they have some weight in the decision making process the current policies can continue to be afforded weight in the appraisal below and are not considered to be 'out of date'.

6. APPRAISAL

The relevant matters are as follows:

- a) Principle
- b) Design
- c) Amenity
- d) Transport
- e) Other

a) Principle

The proposal includes the change of use of an existing hotel, and as this is not located within one of the defined 'centres' (under Local Plan Policy RL3 (Vitality and Viability of Smaller Centres) there is no in-principle objection to its loss.

The proposal for a new day nursery is supported by national and local policy. Paragraph 100 of the NPPF requires the availability of a *“sufficient choice of early years, school and post-16 places...to meet the needs of existing and new communities”* and states that *“Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should: a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter early years, schools and post-16 facilities through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications;...”* Policy OU1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan also supports the provision of a new community facility as a day nursery. The local Childcare Sufficiency Assessment identifies that places for children aged 2 to 4 years are in highest demand with more children waiting overall than vacancies available. This was confirmed by the consultation response from the Early Years Team as set out above, who support this proposal.

The overall principle of the proposal is considered acceptable, subject to addressing other relevant policy matters as set out below. However, as Class E includes a number of wide ranging uses a condition is included removing permitted development rights for change of use and thereby restricting the use to day nursery only (Use Class E (f)), this is to ensure that any alternative use of the site would be subject to suitable assessment within the context of a planning application submission.

b) Amenity/ Environmental Matters

The key matters are with respect to the impact of the proposal on air quality and the impact of noise on surrounding residents.

Policy CC8 states that *“development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties...”*, including in terms of noise and disturbance.

Policy EN15 requires that *“development should have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality.”*

The submitted Air Quality Assessment states that the current air quality is within national objectives and, therefore, there is no need for mitigation for air quality purposes. Following comments from the Environmental Protection Officer (EPO) an amended Air Quality Assessment was submitted to address the impact of the proposal on the existing air quality from additional traffic associated with the proposal. This stated that the projected increase of traffic movements arising would be very small when compared to daily traffic figures, a ca 0.3% increase, and therefore, the impact from road traffic would be negligible. The EPO raised no objection on this basis.

The proposal would introduce a greater frequency of comings and goings compared to a hotel, and although there would be periods of the day where the children would be inside, children would use the outside rear space for play (staggered across the day for different age groups). The submitted Noise Impact Assessment sets out a predicted increase in the ambient noise level as a result of the proposed outdoor play space. Although the conclusion of the Assessment was that the increase would not be significant as it would be less than 3dB, the EPO stated that the comparison presented is with the ambient and not underlying background, and that the noise would be of a completely different and noticeable character to the existing noise. As a result, mitigation was requested through the use of an acoustic fence. A condition is, therefore, included requiring the submission and approval of the fence details. In addition, a condition restricting the hours of use of the garden area is included.

The proposed scheme, subject to the above conditions, is considered to accord with the requirements of CC8 and EN15.

c) Transport

Policy TR3 requires developments to not have a detrimental effect on safety, congestion and the environment.

Policy TR5 requires that development should make the provision for electric vehicle charging points of 10% of spaces (of communal car parks of at least 10 spaces).

The site is in an accessible urban location on a high frequency bus route into central Reading. The site has 20 existing car parking spaces, and the proposal would retain 19 of these with a proposed 9 permanent car parking spaces for staff alongside 10 flexible pick-up / drop-off bays as part of the existing one-way loop arrangement of the site. The 20th space is proposed to form part of the cycle storage area. 14 cycle spaces and buggy storage are proposed.

The Transport officer has confirmed that in accordance with adopted parking standards there would be the requirement for 19 car parking spaces and 13 cycle spaces, and therefore, the proposed scheme would accord. An existing electric vehicle charging point for staff would be retained.

The Transport Officer has confirmed that the analysis of the potential trip generation by all modes is considered to be robust, based on a worst case scenario of the maximum pupil number of 104 and that a large proportion of trips are likely to be linked trips. Although there is anticipated to be an increase in trips across all modes compared to the existing hotel it is not considered that this would have a severe impact on the local highway network.

It is anticipated that the existing servicing arrangements will be retained as part of the application.

Transport has confirmed that there is no objection to the proposal subject to conditions related to vehicle parking and the approval of cycle parking details. To ensure that the existing in and out one-way arrangement is retained, a condition is included.

d) Other matters

Biodiversity

Biodiversity net gain became mandatory for minor developments from 2nd April 2024. The application is exempt from mandatory biodiversity net gain as it would not impact on hedgerows or priority habitat.

Trees

Within and adjacent to the site are a number of protected trees (see plan extract above). The proposed works within the curtilage include cycle, buggy and bin stores. Although these are likely to require minimal ground works and the proposed siting is within areas of existing hard surfacing, it is likely that these would be within the root protection areas of protected trees both within and adjacent to the site. Therefore, a condition is included requiring details of the fixings and a method statement to ensure that there would be no detrimental impact. In addition, an informative is included reminding the applicant of their responsibilities with respect to TPO trees.

Design

The proposal does not include any external changes/ extensions to the building. The only additions would be the ancillary storage for bins, cycle and buggies. Relevant conditions are included requiring the submission and approval of such details.

Contamination

In accordance with Policy EN16 conditions are included with respect to contamination in association with this more sensitive use than the existing hotel.

Bin storage

The proposed plans indicate an area for bin storage. A condition is included for the submission and approval of details for an enclosed bin store which is vermin proof.

7. 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.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Application Permitted

Recommended Conditions:

- Standard Time Limit
- Approved Plans
- Use Restriction
- Contamination Assessment (to be submitted)
- Contamination Remediation Scheme (to be submitted and approved)
- Contamination Remediation Scheme (Implement and Verification)
- Acoustic fence details (to be approved)
- Vehicle Parking (as specified)
- Vehicle Access Arrangements as Existing (compliance)
- Cycle Parking (to be approved)
- Buggy Storage (to be approved)
- Refuse and Recycling (to be approved)
- Arboricultural Method Statement
- Hours of Use (compliance)

Informatives:

- Terms and Conditions
- Complaints about Construction
- TPO trees
- Positive and Proactive