

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Address: 8-10 Station Road, 15 Friar Street and Units 1-26 Harris Arcade, Reading, RG1 1DB

Application No: PL/25/1179

Proposal: Internal refurbishment works comprising stripping and sanding of existing painted surfaces and associated re-painting.

Applicant: AEW UK Core Plus Property Fund

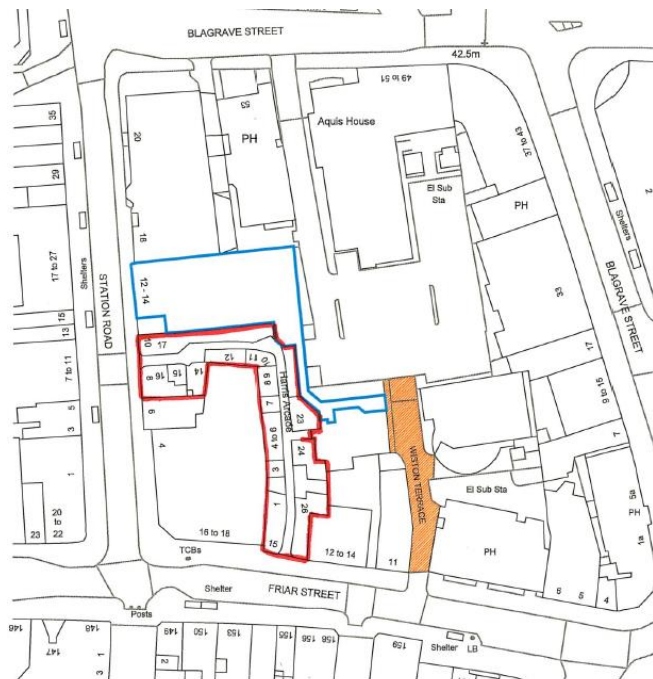
Date received (valid from): 21/08/2025

Target Decision date: 16/10/2025

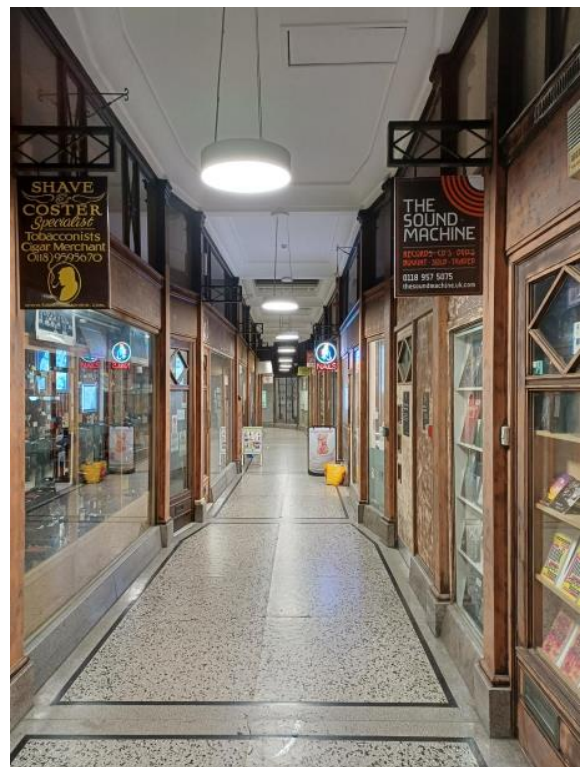
Case officer: Jonathan Markwell

1. Site Description and Surrounding Area

The application site is, as per the site location plan submitted (as shown below), No's 8-10 (even) Station Road, 15 Friar Street and Units 1-26 of Harris Arcade, which runs in a L shape with frontages on Station Road and Friar Street. On the Friar Street frontage the building is 3-storeys in height, with space within the roofscape too. On the Station Road frontage the building is 3 storeys in nature. Within the inward component of the Arcade the height of the building reduces. As per the location plan, the applicant also has an interest in 12-14 Station Road, but this does not form part of the application site.



Location Plan
1:1250 @ A3



Left: site location plan submitted by the applicant. Right: Within Harris Arcade, 29/08/25.

Number 15 Friar Street and 1 and 26 Harris Arcade are listed at Grade II. These buildings, as per the Historic England record, are listed for the following principal reasons:

Architectural interest:

- the façade to Friar Street includes the upper storeys of a Georgian house of four bays with refined architectural detailing;
- the building also incorporates part of a well-designed and notably well-preserved example of an early-C20 shopping arcade, in a consistent neo-classical style.

Historic interest:

- as an example of a prestigious C18 house at the centre of Reading which was later transformed to include part of a C20 shopping arcade, reflecting the morphology of the town.

Group value:

- with 12, 13 and 14 Friar Street and 147, 154 and 155 Friar Street (all Grade II).

The listing describes the site as follows:

A shopping arcade dating from 1929-1931 built for John Harris and incorporating an earlier street frontage of a motor showroom which dates from before 1922.

MATERIALS AND PLAN: the street front to Friar Street has a stone surround with carved decoration and plate glass shop windows with bronzed metal surrounds at ground-floor level. The walling of the two storeys above this is of red brick laid in Flemish bond with stone dressings. Flooring of the arcade is of terrazzo and the skylights are of wood and metal with stained and clear glass panels. The arcade is of an irregular L shape with a shorter range leading east from Station Road and a longer range running north-south to connect with Friar Street. The portion of the arcade which includes 15 Friar Street and 1 and 26 Harris Arcade is at the far southern end of the arcade.

EXTERIOR: the street front to Friar Street has three principal bays at ground-floor level, the central one of which forms the southern entrance to the arcade. The shop windows to either side of this are of bowed plate-glass. At left is a doorway leading to the upper floors. To either side of the frontage are wide, panelled pilasters with projecting classical motifs. The entablature above the front has a frieze with a central projecting panel that carries stainless steel lettering reading 'HARRIS ARCADE'. The deep cornice above has regularly-spaced square blocks (mutules).

The floors above this, which were formerly part of an C18 town house, have four bays with horned sash windows of three by four panes at first-floor level and three by three panes to the second floor, all with splayed heads of gauged brick. To the top of the wall is a bracketed cornice and above this is a low brick parapet.

The arcade pavement is of terrazzo with inlaid black borders. Shop fronts have granite stall risers and plate glass windows, divided by panelled pilasters. The window surrounds are a combination of base metal and timber, all painted in a consistent imitation of bronze. Above the shop windows is a deep transom light which includes regularly-placed pivoting windows to supply ventilation. Decorative motifs cast into the metal and carved into the wood include guilloche and anthemion mouldings and paterae. The plaster ceiling of the arcade at its southern end is panelled. A plaque recording 15 Friar Street as the birthplace of Professor Goldwin Smith (1823-1910) is attached to the entrance front.

INTERIOR: the interiors of all of the shops appear to have been remodelled and contain few original fittings, although suspended ceilings may mask original features. The upper floors were not inspected.

As the listing references, there are a number of other listed buildings within close vicinity of the site, with these starred in blue in the map below. There are also locally listed buildings in close proximity too, as shown via pink stars.



The site is also within a specifically designated 'areas to the north of Friar Street and east of Station Road' location, as per Policy CR16, with the policy requiring the character of the retail units within Harris Arcade to be maintained and, where possible, enhanced. The policy was written in advance of the listing (referenced above) being amended in December 2021.

Area to the North of Friar Street and East of Station Road

CR16: AREA TO THE NORTH OF FRIAR STREET AND EAST OF STATION ROAD

The area east of Station Road and north of Friar Street, as shown on the Proposals Map, makes a positive contribution to the character of the town centre. The character of the retail units in the Harris Arcade and the overall Station Road and Friar Street frontages will be maintained and, where possible, enhanced. There is potential for some conversion of buildings and some development within the site that does not detrimentally affect its overall character. However, proposals for wholesale redevelopment that would detrimentally affect the overall character will not be supported.

5.4.41 The area to the north east of the Station Road and Friar Street junction is unusual, in that it makes a significant positive contribution to the townscape of central Reading, but most of the area does not have sufficient historic significance to justify a heritage designation, with the exception of six listed buildings (Great Western House, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 Friar Street). Many of the buildings are more modern than they appear, but nevertheless present high quality frontages to the street. The Harris Arcade is a vital part of the diversity of the shopping offer, and contains many small independent shops (see also policy CR8). Aside from its own merits, the area is of wider significance because it joins the Station/River Major Opportunity Area, where there will be large-scale redevelopment and regeneration featuring tall buildings, to the London Street/Market Place conservation area, including the Grade I listed St Laurence's Church and Grade II* listed Town Hall. It is also the area through which visitors will pass to get from the station to the heritage destination of the Abbey Quarter area.

5.4.42 Key principle (i) for Central Reading is that "Areas and features that positively contribute to the unique and historic character of central Reading will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced". Conservation of the character of this area therefore fits in with the overall strategy. This policy is not intended to prevent any development taking place, and there may be opportunities within parts of the site, particularly away from the main frontages, as well as opportunities for changes of use. However, it does seek to ensure that any such development takes place within the context of the character of the area and conserves those elements that make the greatest contribution.

The site is also within the primary shopping area, central core, office core, active frontages, air quality management area, archaeological priority area, adjacent to a cycle route, but outside of any major opportunity area or tall buildings cluster.

2. The Proposal

- i. Listed building consent is sought for internal refurbishment works comprising stripping and sanding of existing painted surfaces and associated re-painting. In the updated schedule of works submitted on 14/10/2025, the more precise scope of works were confirmed, comprising:
- All ceiling areas to be sanded down and 2 coats of Vinyl matt (Pure Brilliant White) to be applied. There will be no colour change or alterations in these areas.
 - All ceiling lights are to be sanded down. An oil based undercoat will be applied and then 2 coats of flexible oil based gloss (Brilliant white) to match existing (therefore no changes or alterations are actually proposed). It has also been confirmed that all glass is to be left in situ and not painted.
 - Sand down all 27 retail units top glazed detail areas. Apply an external oil-based undercoat and then 2 coats of Gori 88 compact opaque wood finish. Colour to be 12 B 17 Willow, 'Burford Green'. It has also been confirmed that no hot works/ burning of old paint are to be carried out and that all glass is to be left in situ and not painted.
 - Sand down all retail units. Apply an external oil-based undercoat and then 2 coats of Gori 88 compact opaque wood finish. Colour to be 12 B 17 Willow, 'Burford Green'. It has also been confirmed that no hot works/ burning of old paint are to be carried out and that all glass is to be left in situ and not painted.
 - Sand down all timber doors. Apply an external oil-based undercoat and then 2 coats of Gori 88 compact opaque wood finish. Colour to be 12 B 17 Willow, 'Burford Green'. It has also been confirmed that no hot works/ burning of old paint are to be carried out and that all glass is to be left in situ and not painted.
 - All metal shop sign brackets are to be sanded down. Apply a dark grey oil-based undercoat and then 2 coats of external black flexible gloss to match existing (therefore no changes or alterations are actually proposed).
 - It has also been confirmed that the flooring will be cleaned only.
 - It has also been confirmed that all granite details are to be cleaner, but no actual alterations or changes are proposed to any granite details within the Arcade.
- ii. During the course of the application the exact extent of the works were confirmed (following the submission of an updated schedule of works). In addition, as part of this, the precise colour of the re-painting was altered following officer input from Willow Tree to 12 B 17 Willow, 'Burford Green'.



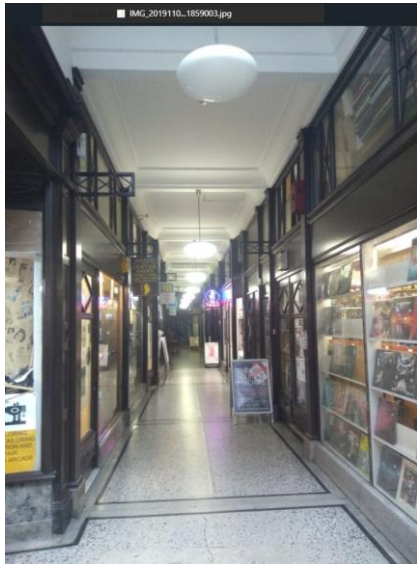
The originally proposed Willow Tree (left) was later superseded by (right) 12 B 17 Willow, 'Burford Green'

- iii. It was also confirmed during the course of the application that the works were partly sought retrospectively. The officer raised this matter, as it appeared based on a comparison of

photographs dated from October 2019 with those on 29th August 2025 that some of the stripping and sanding of the existing painted surfaces had already been carried out:



Station Road entrance October 2019 (left) and August 2025 (right)



Friar Street entrance October 2019 (left) and August 2025 (right)

- iv. The agent confirmed that “the works were contained to sanding back of the existing paintwork ahead of any consent being provided for painting”.

3. Public Consultation

i. Neighbour Consultation

Three site notices were erected (one on Station Road, one within the arcade and one on Friar Street) on 29/08/2025, expiring on 19/09/2025. A press notice was published on 04/09/2025, expiring on 25/09/2025. No responses have been received.

ii. Local Groups

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee was formally consulted on 29/08/2025. No response has been received.

4. Consultations

i. RBC Historic Buildings Consultant:

Initial comments:

- *The existing colour is not original, although it is mentioned within the official listing descriptions; the historic photographs of the arcade show dark coloured shopfronts.*
- *Although dark colour is consistent with Georgian and Victorian colour palettes, there are many examples of light-coloured shopfronts within historic arcades as well (Great Western Arcade in Birmingham or Westgate Arcade in Peterborough). Therefore, I am not totally against the lighter coloured shopfronts as they can highlight architectural detailing, in Harris Arcade's case, the mouldings.*
- *However, because the proposed green colour would also be perceived from the entrances of the arcade, it would not blend in with the existing architectural features and colours of the host building(s). The proposed willow green colour from the Dulux brand appears modern, and I am unconvinced about its harmony with the rest of the building.*
- *Generally, colours of modern brilliant white, pink, bright versions of orange, green and yellow and modern gloss finish are avoided and subtle and more muted tones, darker and richer colours using a flat finish, for instance, satin or eggshell, could be a desired approach. I think the applicant should reconsider the colour palette to include one from British Standard Colours. West Oxfordshire District Council has guidance on traditional paint colours among which for greens the following is suggested*
14 C 40 Conifer, 'Trust Green'
14 C 39 Hollybush
16 C 45 Scarab
12 C 39 Orchard
10 B 17 Mistletoe
12 B 17 Willow, 'Burford Green'
12 B 21 Moorland
12 B 25 Chive
12 B 29 Juniper
- *I have attached that document if the applicant wishes to consider other/darker colours (Planning Officer note: Obviously, this is not adopted RBC Policy, but in the circumstances of this specific proposal, this can be considered as a helpful guide in assisting the progression of this application).*
- *I would be happy to consider an alternative palette rather than the existing one. Although the proposed light colour would bring some contrast, the arcade would look more welcoming. However, there would be some harm to the appearance of both the arcade and the host building/streetscape. We would like the arcade to be perceived as historic after the refurbishment. In this regard, it is advised that it would not be appropriate to paint granite stall risers; the proposed images show so.*
- *Lastly, it is unclear whether the proposal also entails replacement signage? There is a gold colour proposed as well on the proposed visuals submitted on 29th August. What are the details of it? We would like to see consistency. Gold is likely to be considered satisfactory, but we need clarification for the fascia and hanging sign brackets.*

Further comments:

- *The amendment to use the 12 B 17 Willow 'Burford Green' paint is supported.*
- *The amended schedule of works are also acceptable. It is noted that cleaning is now proposed for the floor and stall rise, for which we need to know the method. This can be secured via condition.*
- *The following conditions should be included on any future decision notice:*
 - *All existing ornamental features, including carved stone decoration, glass on panel ceiling, panelled pilasters, projecting motifs, and decorative mouldings, shall not be disturbed and shall be left in their present positions unless changes are shown on the approved drawings or are required by conditions to this permission. All these features shall be protected properly during work on site.*
 - *REASON: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the heritage asset in accordance with Policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.*
 - *Prior to the commencement of any cleaning works hereby consented, a method statement showing how the cleaning of the terrazzo pavement and granite stall riser is to be carried out shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Cleaning shall be implemented strictly in accordance with the approved method statement.*
 - *REASON: The application contained insufficient information to enable these matters to be considered prior to granting listed building consent and the matters are required to be agreed in order that the works to the designated heritage asset are undertaken in an acceptable manner and in order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the heritage asset in accordance with Policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.*

5. Plans / documents Considered

- i. The Council, in reaching its recommendation, has taken into consideration the following documents:
- Application form Ref PP-14270997, dated 20/08/2025
 - 230120-01 - Lease Plan 01 (Site Location Plan)
 - Harris Arcade, Reading (Site Plan, unreferenced)
 - Supporting letter from Opus Works 'Listed Building Consent, replacement of paintwork internal' Ref OP-16-25 dated 20/08/2025 (including Heritage Assessment)
 - ~~Harris Arcade Colour Change by JJF Group Ltd dated 6 May 2025 (Specification of Works Report)~~ – superseded 14/10/2025
 - Johnstone's Trade Stormshield Flexible Primer Undercoat specification
 - GORI 88 Compact Opaque Wood Finish specification, Version 1 dated 15/01/2021
 - ~~Photograph of the proposed Willow Tree colour~~ – superseded 14/10/2025
As all received on 21/08/2025
 - ~~Existing and Proposed Images_Harris Arcade~~ – superseded 14/10/2025 given the change in colour proposed
As received on 29/08/2025
 - JJF Group Ltd (Specification of Works)
As received on 14/10/2025

6. Relevant Planning History

- i. There have been various applications at the Harris Arcade over the years, although only the following within the past three decades are considered to be specifically relevant to these proposals.
- ii. PL/95/0481/LBC - Stripping of 20th century outbuildings at rear and construction of new replacement roof. Alteration to ground floors, and repair to upper floor fabric. Existing bulkhead sign Harris Arcade removed (no15) and installation of new glass canopy. Approved 14/05/1996.
- iii. PL/19/1611/LBC - Various external alterations associated with repair works to Harris Arcade, including to parapets, external render, chimneys, walls, columns, cornices and roof level works. Listed Building Consent Granted 22/11/2019.

7. 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.

8. Relevant Planning Guidance

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

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'.

9. Relevant Policies

The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

4. Decision-making

16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019)

EN1 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

CR16 Area to the North of Friar Street and East of Station Road

Other relevant documentation

Reading Borough Local Plan Submission Draft Partial Update, May 2025

Local Plan Update

The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 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. Subsequent to this consultation a submission draft was sent to the Secretary of State on 9th May 2025. At the time of writing, the examination-in-public of the partial update to the local plan is scheduled to take place in late 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 application is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remains very similar in the submission draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the determination of this planning application and are not considered to be ‘out of date’.

10. Appraisal

- i. As per the comments received during the application from the RBC Conservation Officer (see section 4 above), the proposed works are considered appropriate in terms of protecting and enhancing the significance of the heritage asset, subject to conditions. Furthermore, although this is solely a listed building consent application, it is confirmed that the proposals are considered to comply with the wider site allocation under Policy CR16, which seeks to maintain and, where possible, enhance the character of the retail units in the Harris Arcade. It is hoped that the repainting works will enliven the units and wider Arcade, to help enhance the vitality and viability of the wider retail centre.



- ii. Standard conditions relating to timeframes and the approved plans are also suggested, alongside those recommended by the Conservation Officer and standard informatives for a listed building consent.

11. Conclusion

- i. The local planning authority considers that the proposal is appropriate for the reasons set out in this report.

Recommendation

Grant Listed Building Consent subject to conditions

Conditions:

1. The works hereby permitted shall begin no later than three years from the date of this consent.

REASON: In accordance with Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The works to the Listed Building hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and specifications:

- Harris Arcade, Reading (Site Plan, unreferenced)
- Johnstone's Trade Stormshield Flexible Primer Undercoat specification
- GORI 88 Compact Opaque Wood Finish specification, Version 1 dated 15/01/2021
As all received on 21/08/2025
- JJF Group Ltd (Specification of Works)
As received on 14/10/2025

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the Listed Building Consent hereby approved, in accordance with Policy EN1 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

3. All existing ornamental features, including carved stone decoration, glass on panel ceiling, panelled pilasters, projecting motifs, and decorative mouldings, shall not be disturbed and shall be left in their present positions unless changes are shown on the approved drawings or are required by conditions to this consent. All these features shall be protected properly during work on site.

REASON: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the heritage asset in accordance with Policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

4. Prior to the commencement of any cleaning works hereby consented, a method statement showing how the cleaning of the terrazzo pavement and granite stall riser is to be carried out shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Cleaning shall be implemented strictly in accordance with the approved method statement.

REASON: The application contained insufficient information to enable these matters to be considered prior to granting listed building consent and the matters are required to be agreed in order that the works to the designated heritage asset are undertaken in an acceptable manner and in order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the heritage asset in accordance with Policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Informatives:

1. A Building Regulations application may be required for the proposed development. Please go to our website for more advice. <https://www.reading.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/building-control/apply-for-building-control/> You can also find advice and submit an application using the Planning Portal.

2. Your attention is drawn to the terms and conditions of this consent. Any development which is carried out but differs materially from the approved plans and details, or does not comply with

any conditions attached to the consent may result in the Council taking action to remedy the breach of listed building control. If you are in any doubt please contact the Council.

3. The Local Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant to resolve relevant matters to allow consent to be granted within the prescribed target for the decision to be issued.

4. For the avoidance of doubt, no other works are approved except those as authorised by this Consent. Any other works required to the Listed Building may require a separate application for Listed Building Consent and/or an application for Permitted Works to a Listed Building.