

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT FOR CONSENT TO DISPLAY AN ADVERTISEMENT

App Ref: PL/25/1068

Ward: Abbey Ward

Address: ST LAWRENCE HOUSE, ABBEY SQUARE, READING

Proposals: Proposed installation of new fascia and projecting signs

Case Officer: Mishga Marshall

Date received (valid from): 29/07/2025

Target Decision date: 23/09/2025

EOT Agreed till: 26/09/2025

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a commercial premises located on the southern side of The Forbury, within Reading town centre. The surrounding area is predominantly commercial in character with a variety of retail and service uses at ground floor level and office spaces and residential on the upper levels.

PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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

- 1no. internally illuminated fascia signs fixed externally to the building
- 1no. internally illuminated projecting sign

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
- Central Core
- Office Core
- Area of archaeological potential
- Abbey Quarter

SITE VISIT

Site visit date: 16/07/2025

PLANS AND DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED RECIEVED 29th July 2025

- EXT-EL-01 Existing Elevations, floor and location plan
- EL-11 Proposed Elevations, Ground Floor and Location Plan

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/13/0257 - Discharge of condition 27 of planning permission 04/00282/FUL - Conditions not discharged

PL/13/1577 - Change of use of lower ground and ground floors from Class A3 restaurant to Class A3 restaurant or Class B1 office use. - Approve

PL/16/1749 - To confirm compliance with conditions 6, 17 and 27 relating to planning permission 04/00282/FUL. - Conditions not discharged

PL/17/0357 - Change of use of the ground and lower ground floor from Class A3 restaurant use to Class D2 (assembly and leisure) function room use for leisure and corporate events - Approve

PL/23/1093 - Proposed change of use from vacant ground and lower ground floors, (approved use defaulted to Class E) to provide flexible use both;

ClaE,

a) for the display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food, principally to visiting members of the public, (not solely Alcohol)

b) for the sale of food and drink principally to visiting members of the public where consumption of that food and drink is mostly undertaken on the premises,

c) for the provision of the following kinds of services principally to visiting members of the public??

(i) financial services,

(ii) professional services (other than health or medical services), or

(iii) any other services - Historic Application

PL/25/1279 - Application for Approval of Details Reserved by Condition 4 (Bin Store) of application PL/23/1091 - Pending Consideration

PL/25/1280 - Application for Approval of Details Reserved by Condition 6 (Noise Assessment) of application PL/23/1091 - Pending Consideration

PL/25/1281 - Application for Approval of Details Reserved by Condition 7 (Odour Assessment) of application PL/23/1091 - Pending Consideration

PL/25/1316 - Installation of louvres to the front and rear facades at ground and lower ground floor level - Pending Consideration

CONSULTATION

Internal & External Consultations:

RBC Conservation: No objections to the proposed signage, no direct or harmful impact on the setting of Grade II Listed Abbey Mill Ruins and Market Place/London Street Conservation Area.

RBC Transport: There are no transport objections to this application subject to the condition below regarding luminance levels.

RBC CCTV: No Comment.

Thames Valley CCTV: No Comment.

Thames Valley Police: No Comment.

One comment has been received.

Commenter stated that the original approved application (PL/23/1091) included a stairway and lift connecting the Ground and Lower Ground floors. However, the new proposal (PL/25/1068) omits these features, meaning access to the Lower Ground Floor can no longer be via the Ground Floor frontage. This change would redirect significant traffic—including staff, goods, and refuse—through a narrow passageway between St. Lawrence House and The Blade, potentially compromising a fire exit. This appears to conflict with the original planning approval.

Officer Comment: *The comments made are duly noted, however as this application is solely in relation to an advert consent, and so, comments made not in relation to this advert cannot be addressed via this application. As such, although noted, given these comments are not in*

relation to the current application for advertising consent, the Council is unable to given weight to these comments.

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 and Conservation/Heritage

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 sign is appropriately scaled and proportioned in relation to the host building and surrounding commercial context. In regards to the proposed projecting signage, given its positioning and modest size, the overall visual impact is considered to not be unduly

harmful. While the signs are internally illuminated, this is common in commercial frontages in the area and is not considered out of character.

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 signages of between 200-300cd/m². This will ensure a more refined and less visually intrusive signage approach in line with good design principles. No objection from the Conservation Officer.

The Council considers that, on balance, and subject to standard conditions regarding brightness, the proposal is 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 sign is limited to internally illuminated, rather than fully illuminated box or panel signs.

The projecting sign is, although overhanging, not expected to present any public safety risk due to their location.

Highways officers have raised no objections to the proposal, subject to illuminance condition.

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.