

Design & Access Statement

Site: The Sportsman Public House, 14 Shinfield Road, Reading, RG2 7BW

Proposal: Detached open-sided timber pergola with sheet-metal roof (following removal of existing Jumbrella)

Applicant: Greene King Ltd

Prepared by: Hollington Agency Ltd

Date: 06.11.25

1. Introduction

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared to support a full planning application for the erection of a detached, open-sided timber pergola at The Sportsman, Reading. The proposal replaces an existing Jumbrella structure on the patio area and is intended to improve the quality and functionality of the outdoor customer space.

The Sportsman is a well-established public house located on Shinfield Road, serving the local community and nearby university. The premises include the main pub building, car park, and a rear garden/ patio area currently used for outdoor seating and dining.

2. Site and Context

The site lies within a mixed residential and commercial area. The immediate context is suburban, with a varied streetscape of traditional and modern buildings.

The pub occupies a prominent corner plot with a defined boundary and existing landscaping to the rear. The patio area, where the proposed pergola will be located, is already surfaced and used as an external seating area with tables and chairs.

There are no known heritage designations affecting the site — the property is not listed and does not lie within a conservation area.

Access for customers is via the main pub entrance and existing garden gates, with pedestrian routes throughout the site.

3. Design Proposal

The proposal involves the removal of the existing Jumbrella structure and installation of a detached, open-sided timber pergola over the same patio area.

Key design features include:

- **Structure:** Pressure-treated timber posts and beams, stained to complement the pub building.

- **Roof:** Lightweight corrugated sheet-metal roof in a muted finish (dark grey or black) to provide shelter while remaining visually unobtrusive.
- **Form:** Simple, rectilinear form consistent with the scale of the existing garden furniture and fencing.
- **Dimensions:** Similar footprint to the existing Jumbrella; no increase in the overall covered area or external seating capacity.
- **Lighting:** Soft, low-level festoon to ensure a welcoming atmosphere without light spill to neighbouring properties.

The pergola will be freestanding and reversible in nature, ensuring that the existing building fabric is unaffected.

4. Design Justification

The new pergola provides a functional and aesthetic improvement over the existing Jumbrella canopy. It offers a more durable and visually coherent shelter, enhancing the customer experience and supporting the pub's continued viability throughout the year.

The design has been carefully considered to:

- Reflect the pub's character and material palette.
- Avoid overdevelopment or enclosure of the garden area.
- Minimise visual impact from surrounding properties.
- Avoid any harm to neighbouring amenity or existing drainage/ landscaping.

No changes are proposed to the existing access routes, parking layout, or site boundaries.

5. Access Considerations

- **Pedestrian Access:** The pergola is located on an existing patio, easily accessible to all customers via existing pathways.
- **Inclusive Design:** The proposal does not introduce any steps or obstructions; level access is maintained.
- **Servicing & Deliveries:** Remain unchanged and continue via existing access routes.
- **Parking:** The existing car park layout is unaffected.

The proposal therefore maintains full accessibility in accordance with current Building Regulations and good practice guidance.

6. Planning Policy Context

The proposal is consistent with the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) and the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019), in particular:

- **Policy CC7 – Design and the Public Realm:** The structure is simple, high-quality, and proportionate in scale and materials.
- **Policy RL6 – Pubs:** Supports investment that sustains public houses as important community assets.
- **Policy CC8 – Safeguarding Amenity:** The development will not result in additional noise, light, or disturbance beyond the existing use.
- **Policy EN1 – Historic Environment** (if applicable): No heritage impacts arise.

In line with NPPF Paragraphs 84 and 85, the proposal promotes the vitality of an established local business, supporting the local economy and community well-being.

7. Conclusion

The proposed pergola represents a modest, well-considered enhancement to The Sportsman's outdoor facilities. It:

- Replaces an ageing Jumbrella with a high-quality, durable structure;
- Does not increase external covers or the extent of the trading area;
- Supports the ongoing success of a valued community pub; and
- Aligns fully with the NPPF and Reading Borough Local Plan policies promoting good design, accessibility, and economic vitality.

The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in design, scale, and policy terms and should be supported by the Local Planning Authority.