

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey

App Ref: PL/24/1213 Listed building consent (Alt/Ext)

Address: THE HORN PH, ST MARYS BUTTS, READING, RG1 2LS

Proposal: External and internal refurbishment of public house and 2x flats above, reinstate external door and window on south elevation, retain existing uses (amended description).

Applicant: Mr Alejandro Munoz

Received date: 13/09/2024

Target Decision date: 07/11/2025 (EOT)

Case Officer: Marcelina Rejwerska

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a Grade II listed public house on the corner of St Mary's Butts and Castle Street in the Reading town centre. It is also within the St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area. The national listing reads as follows:

CASTLE STREET 1. 5128 (North Side) Nos 2 to 6 (even) (The Horn Inn) SU 7173 SW 2/75 II GV 2. C16, much altered and modernised. 2 storeys. Stucco over timber-framing. Tiled roof. 5 Yorkshire sashes on 1st floor. Late C19 shop frames to ground floor windows to left. Early C19 reeded surround and band below bracketed cornice on No 2; mullion and transom (wood) windows. Corner entrance now a window. 3 window return to St Mary's Butts, casements on 1st floor, glazing bar sashes on ground floor; applied timbering with quadrilobe decorative band over 1st floor (C20).

The property is dated to the 16th century, having initially comprised no. 2 Castle Street and later amalgamating nos. 4 and 6 Castle Street around the latter half of the 20th century. The site is currently vacant, with the previous use as a public house having closed in 2021. The property is in poor condition internally and externally. There is a S215 Planning Enforcement notice in place.

Table 1 Image taken from the submitted Heritage Statement, dated 2024.



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Listed building consent is sought for internal and external refurbishment of the property to bring it back into viable use as a public house on the ground floor and 2x flats on the first floor. A structural survey has been submitted which identifies the following works to be carried out:

- CCTV survey to be done prior to commencement of construction works.
- Timber treatment for all retained structural timber structures.
- Install new timber rafters/joists to strengthen the roof structure.
- Add metal plates to timber beams which support the ceiling joists.
- Restoration of laith and plaster in internal rooms.
- Floor joists to be replaced where they have failed.

The following is proposed on the ground floor specifically:

- Strip out modern bar fittings and finishes including the bar and kitchen equipment.
- Reinstall external door on the south elevation, which was previously replaced with a window.
- Repair and refurbish existing windows.
- Repair ceilings where the ceilings have failed.
- Demolish timber stairs and make good opening in the service rear corridor.
- Remove and replace wiring and other servicing.

The following is proposed on the first floor specifically:

- Reconfiguration of some internal walls, including removal of some walls (retaining any timber beams) and fitting of new partition walls.
- Repair and replacement of timber flooring where it has failed, including fitting of additional insulation.
- Refurbishment of original fireplaces.
- New bathroom fittings and other servicing.

The agent has also supplied a revised statement to include works included within the S215 notice which was served on the property in 2024. The proposal has been amended at the request of the officers from 3x proposed flats to 2x, due to concerns relating to an unsympathetic layout and harm to historic fabric associated with excessive partitioning works to facilitate the subdivision. The lawful existing use of the first floor has already been established as 2x flats.

2.1. Information submitted:

- 24.247 Structural Site Survey & Condition Report - January 2025, received 30 January 2025
- 01 Site Location, received 13 September 2024
- Existing Ground Floor, received 28 October 2024
- 03 Ground Floor Proposed, received 13 September 2024
- 04A First Floor Proposed, received 28 July 2025
- 05A First Floor Existing, received 28 July 2025
- 06A Existing Elevations, received 28 July 2025
- 07A Proposed Elevations, received 28 July 2025
- Scope of Works, received 23 October 2025

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 85/TP/0360 – Change of use shop/flat to ancillary accommodation for public house new toilets & flat over. Application permitted.
- 85/TP/0361 – As 85/TP/0360 plus rendered & painted externally to match existing. Application permitted.

- 93/00629/LB – Internal & external redecorations & repairs. Application withdrawn.
- 94/00768/AD – Replacement fascia hanging amenity board & wall signs. Application permitted.
- 94/00769/LB – Replacement fascia hanging amenity board & wall signs. Application permitted.
- 94/00770/LB – Removal of internal partitions. Application permitted.
- PL/02/0746 - Repairs to roofs including partial removal of existing tiling and replacement with existing/secondhand tiles, replacement of slate roof and rooflight to rear chimney repairs, repairs to joinery. Application withdrawn.
- PL/02/0071 - Repair of roofs including partial removal of existing tiling and subsequent replacement with existing/ secondhand tiles. Replacement of slate roof and rooflight to rear chimney repairs and repairs to joinery. Listed building consent granted.
- PL/13/1301 – Replacement signage comprising fascia and hanging signage and various signs relating to public house. Repainting of exterior. Application permitted.
- PL/22/1103 - Repairs, reinstatement and redecoration of a public house. Listed building consent granted, works partially implemented (roof repairs only).

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- RBC Conservation Officer (final comments) – No objections subject to conditions. Previous/initial comments are available to view online.
- Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (RCAAC) (This is a summary of comments received; full comments can be found on the Council public register of planning applications):
 - The location plan submitted only covers 2-4 Castle Street, but the application covers 2-6 Castle Street which is the extent of the listed building (1303691).
 - The position in relation to proposals for the repairs and refurbishment of the exterior and the unexpired works in application 221103 should be clarified.
 - Items of concern to us are the basement/cellar area and the partial removal of a chimney and installation of a new wall on the first floor.
 - Many aspects of the refurbishment have not been specified in sufficient detail.
 - Two of the three flats do not meet national minimum space standards, and the headroom of the accommodation is not shown on the plans.

Nearby properties were also consulted via letter, and a site notice was erected on site. No letters of representation were received.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the LPA 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 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'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance
Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance, Historic England 2008
HEAG125 Listed Buildings and Curtilage
HEAG304 Listed Building Consent

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM
CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT
EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS
EN6: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN A HISTORIC CONTEXT

Other documents

St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area Appraisal 2008

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.

6. APPRAISAL

Paragraph 201 of the NPPF 2024 requires authorities to take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation when determining planning applications.

Policy EN1 requires proposals to protect and, where possible, enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, as well as the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Policy EN3 requires development in conservation areas to enhance the significance of the conservation area in which they are located. Policy CC7 also sets out relevant design considerations.

The proposal is for a comprehensive scheme of refurbishment and repair of the site to bring it back into viable use as a public house on the ground floor and 2x residential flats above (with independent access). The lawful existing use of the first floor has been confirmed as 2x flats and therefore these are not considered a change of use.

The property is vacant and in a state of disrepair, with the ceiling on the ground floor having collapsed in places. The proposed works are necessary to ensure the longevity of the heritage asset, and the works have been revised at the feedback of the case officer and RBC Conservation Officer to ensure that they are sympathetic to the property and not excessive. The submitted Scope of Works is considered acceptable.

Overall, the works are considered necessary and acceptable to bring a listed building back into viable use and prolong its life.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposal has been assessed in line with national and locally adopted policies as set out above and is found to be in accordance with those policies.

8. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

Subject to conditions:

1. Time Limit Standard (LB)
2. Approved Plans and Schedule of Works
3. Materials as specified
4. Details of new servicing/rewiring routing throughout to be submitted prior to those works being carried out
5. CCTV survey findings to be submitted to the LPA for record keeping

Informatives:

1. Terms
2. Building Control
3. Complaints about construction
4. Contamination (including Anthrax)
5. Highways
6. Positive and proactive