

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Coley Ward

App Ref: PL/25/0385 Full planning permission

Address: HADWYN HOUSE, FIELD ROAD, READING, RG1 6AP

Proposal: Erection of new mansard roof together with new dormer windows, rooflights and creation of new additional office space within the roof-space.

Applicant: Mr Robin & Philip Andrews

Received date: 12/03/2025

Target Decision date (agreed extension): 11/11/2025

Case Officer: Sian Hickey

1. INTRODUCTION

The application site comprises an existing two-storey office building within a predominantly residential street. The building is not listed; however, the site falls within the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area.



Site visit date: 03/07/2025

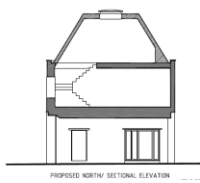
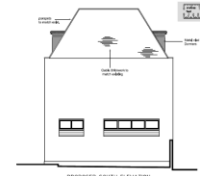
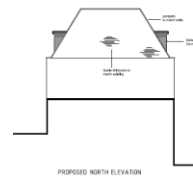
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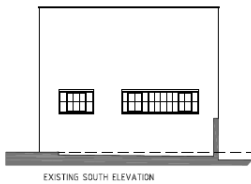
2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for the erection of a new mansard roof together with new front and rear facing dormer windows and rooflights. The development will create additional office space within the roof-space. The proposal includes re-modelling of the exterior of the building together with changes to the fenestration. The proposal does not involve enlarging the existing footprint of the building.

Proposed plans



Existing plans



Plans/documents considered:

Drawing No. 24-007-02B sheet 1 of 6 – Proposed Ground Floor Plan received 23/10/2025

Drawing No. 24-007-02B sheet 2 of 6 – Proposed First Floor Plan received 23/10/2025

Drawing No. 24-007-02B sheet 3 of 6 – Proposed Second Floor Plan received 23/10/2025

Drawing No. 24-007-02B sheet 4 of 6 – Proposed West Elevation received 23/10/2025

Drawing No. 24-007-02B sheet 5 of 6 – Proposed East Elevation received 23/10/2025

Drawing No. 24-007-02B sheet 6 of 6 – Proposed North and South Elevations and Sections received 23/10/2025

Daylight Study Version 2 received 06/06/2025

Design and Access Statement received 06/06/2025

Sustainability Statement received 06/06/2025

Proposed Ground Floor Plan and Cycle Parking received 06/06/2025

Arboricultural Assessment received 06/06/2025

Transport Statement received 06/06/2025

Heritage Statement received 06/06/2025

Planning Statement received 06/06/2025

Drawing No. 24-007-03 – Location and Block Plan received 12/03/2025

Drawing No. 24-007-01 sheet 1 of 5 – Existing Ground Floor Plan received 12/03/2025
Drawing No. 24-007-01 sheet 2 of 5 – Existing First Floor Plan received 12/03/2025
Drawing No. 24-007-01 sheet 3 of 5 – Existing Roof Plan received 12/03/2025
Drawing No. 24-007-01 sheet 4 of 5 – Existing West/South Elevations received 12/03/2025
Drawing No. 24-007-01 sheet 5 of 5 – Existing East/North Elevation received 12/03/2025

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

141889 - Erection of new mansard roof and provision of additional office space within the roofspace (approximately 186sqm) with dormer windows and rooflights. Re-modelling the exterior of the building with changes to fenestration. Permitted

021060 - Change of use of storeroom to offices – Permitted

76/992 – Extensions to form second floor to existing office and stores – Refused

4. CONSULTATIONS

A site notice was displayed at the front of the site by the case officer on 3rd July 2025 for a period of 21 days.

Press advert date: 03/07/2025

One letter of objection has been received from a neighbouring property with regards to loss of privacy, loss of sunlight/daylight, overdevelopment, inappropriate use, traffic and parking impact, harm to residential amenity, and conservation area concerns.

Officer note: these matters will be explored in more depth below.

RBC Natural Environment Officer

I have no objections on tree or landscaping grounds. With reference to the Arboricultural Assessment, 5th June 2025 it is stated that *‘as the proposal is limited to formation of a mansard roof extension, there are no ground-works that could impact tree roots’* which is acceptable. The hedge is retained and unimpacted by the development.

The assessment describes the tree (T1), located in an adjacent garden, as *“overgrown’ and given the limitations posed by adjacent buildings, there is in reality insufficient space for it to develop an full-sized naturally formed crown. On this basis crown reduction is an appropriate treatment / pruning regime and one that may need to be applied cyclically on a 3 year rotation*”*. Whilst it is recognised the tree’s natural crown growth has been affected by the adjacent buildings, reducing the tree would confine it to a lesser size and lesser amenity value.

In any case, the assessment recommends *‘The crown of T1 should probably be pruned to provide say 1.5/ 2m clearance’* – which is agreed and acceptable.

I note that assessment recognises *‘closer analysis the tree, by way of the characteristics of its growth, looks to have been previously reduced.’* – Our records do not indicate that we have received notice of this work being performed previously. It is, therefore, important to inform the applicant/agent that any proposed future pruning of the tree requires a Notice due to the Conservation Area status of the site and that this planning consent would not serve as notice for any future proposed works to the tree.

RBC Transport

The proposals will result in the creation of an additional 186m² of new floorspace which, when combined with the existing 427m², will result in a total of 613m² of office use.

Based on the Council's current parking standards, office developments within Zone 2 primary Core area are required to provide 1 car parking space per 100 sqm of floorspace. For a total floor area of 613 sqm, the policy requirement equates to six spaces. Therefore, based on 613m², 6 parking spaces would be required. The site currently benefits from 12 on-site car parking spaces; The existing provision exceeds the policy requirement. The increase in office floorspace will result in a negligible increase in vehicle movements supported by the applicants Trics data and Transport Statement.

There are extensive parking controls surrounding ensuring no unauthorised on street parking can occur. The applicant has confirmed that there are no changes proposed to the existing site access and on-site car parking arrangements.

Based on the Council's standards of one cycle parking space per 200 sqm, the proposed extension will require at least one cycle parking space. The applicant proposes to introduce three secure and covered cycle stands (i.e., six cycle parking spaces) which will be accessed via the rear. This is deemed acceptable.

Waste storage and collection arrangements will be managed in line with the existing situation, with refuse being stored in a secure, accessible location on-site on the ground floor.

There are no Transport objections to this application.

RBC Environmental Protection

No objections to the proposal

RBC Conservation Officer Comments (based on original plans submitted)

Summary

Object

The proposed alterations to the principal elevation of the building, by reason of its false historic / pastiche appearance would compete the historic terrace of BTMs on Field Street, and due to the cumulative impacts from increase in height, additional massing and render it would dominate the street scene failing to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, contrary to Policies EN1, EN3, and EN6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019. I find no benefit sufficient to outweigh the harm resulting from the new distracting appearance.

The proposal could be highly acceptable if the design is revised to reflect the building's period.

Impact of proposal upon heritage asset(s)

I noted that the proposal is very similar to the previously approved scheme with reference 141889 (PL/14/1889). Therefore, I would leave the final judgement to the planning officer, although I would like to make the comments below for the proposed additional storey and new design for the building.

- Proposed mansard roof: considering the history of the application site, either an open field or a walled garden (?). Considering the setback position of the building and the presence of three-storey listed buildings whose settings would potentially be affected by the proposed development, the impact of the additional mansard roof would have minimal impact on the significance of the conservation area. The properties on the east side of Field Road are buildings of townscape merit, which possess some special brickwork of Reading. They create a long, continuous façade

that, compared with the subject building, the impact of the additional mass would not be that intrusive on the streetscape and views.



The application site on the OS Map dated 1876 (left) showing the original use of the site, the first appearance of the subject building on the OS Map dated 1968 (right)



Field Road, Reading, c. 1915, looking northwards to Castle Hill. A wall on the left; terraced housing with bay windows and very small front gardens to the right. 1910-1919 : postcard with the caption "Field Rd., Reading, " numbered 333, by H. A. Giles (from the Reading Library's Online Archive) – the existence of a wall in the place of the application site is seen

- The proposal also includes alterations to the facades which would bring some stone elements – ornamentation, new windows with traditional dimensions and look, and new render, which all result

in the building looking like a pastiche, out of its period. It would be perceived as a highly altered Victorian building or terrace of buildings, which are domestic, not offices. Therefore, I find many problems with the proposed façade designs trying to change the building's appearance as if historic, but fail to do so. The final look of the building would be confusing as it would not reflect its period (or modernism), it would not be from Victorian times of Reading, and it would not belong to today's contemporary architecture. There is also a risk that it would compete with the traditional buildings on Field Street due to the cumulative impact of the design with the height and additional mass.

- Therefore, I would prefer and suggest the proposed façade be revised to reduce the ornamentation, continue with the horizontal windows and lines and keep the brick finish instead of render to reduce its possible dominance on Field Street. I find the proposed West Elevation more appropriate in this instance. Use of bath stone, circular or traditional-like surrounds for openings, horizontal banding, carved parapet wall or sash-like windows (?) is unnecessary. The building should not lose its basic architectural features. I think it is a contribution of the existing 1960s building being present within the conservation area to the richness of architectural style and periods. This should be considered and sustained.

I conclude that, the proposed alterations to the principal elevation of the building, by reason of its false historic / pastiche appearance would compete the historic terrace of BTMs on Field Street, and due to the cumulative impacts from increase in height, additional massing and render it would dominate the street scene failing to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, contrary to Policies EN1, EN3, and EN6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019. I find no benefit sufficient to outweigh the harm resulting from the new distracting appearance.

The proposal could be highly acceptable if the design is revised to reflect the building's period. No harmful impact on the settings of listed buildings.

Planning Officer Note: Following the comments received above, the agent was advised to revise the design by removing some of the proposed detailing, specifically in the east elevation. Subsequently, amended plans were submitted.

5. 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. 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. The Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019). The 'National Planning Policy framework' ("NPPF") 2012 states clearly that its content is to be a material consideration in the determination of applications. The 'NPPF' states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Reading Borough Local Plan, 2019) according to their degree of consistency with the 'NPPF' (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the 'NPPF', the greater the weight that may be given).

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

CC3: ADAPTION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

EM1: PROVISION OF EMPLOYMENT

EM4: MAINTAINING A VARIETY OF PREMISES

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

EN6: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN A HISTORIC CONTEXT

EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK

EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND

TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS

TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

SPDs and other documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD 2011

Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal 2020

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. The submission version of the Local Plan was submitted 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 application is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remain very similar in the 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’.

7. APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

Planning permission for a similar proposal was granted in 2014 for the construction of a new mansard roof to provide additional office space within the roof area. However, the approved scheme was never implemented, and the three-year approval period has long since expired.

The site is outside of designated Employment Area but is within close proximity to the town centre. The proposal would intensify the use of the site by extending the existing workplace building, helping to boost the local economy. In principle, the proposal is considered acceptable subject to other planning considerations below.

Design and Access

Policy CC7 states all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.

Policy EN3 requires development to enhance the appearance and significance of conservation areas.

Policy EN6 states that in areas characterised by heritage assets, the historic environment will inform and shape new development. New development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development.

The proposed development seeks to extend the existing office building through the addition of a new mansard roof, incorporating front and rear facing dormer windows, to facilitate the provision of additional office accommodation within the new roof space. In terms of scale, the proposed development is considered acceptable. The proposal would not increase the footprint of the existing building. The addition of the mansard roof is considered subordinate and fairly modest, respecting the scale of the existing site. The proposed dormer windows are appropriate in terms of size, the dormer windows are in proportion with the scale of the roof.

As per the Conservation Officer, the original scheme was considered to have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the conservation area. However, the Conservation Officer indicated that the proposal could be acceptable if the design were revised to better reflect the period and character of the existing building. Following these concerns, the agent submitted amended plans demonstrating that the existing facades of the building would be retained. The revised scheme is not considered to detract from the existing building and is not regarded as causing harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area in which it is located.

Safeguarding Amenity

The building is surrounded by residential properties. To the rear it backs onto the rear gardens of properties on Coley Hill, to the north side it adjoins the rear gardens of properties on Castle Hill and Malvern House. To south and east sides are dwellings on Field Road. Due to the changing ground levels, the building is set lower than properties to the rear on Coley Hill.

The proposal would increase the height of the existing building by approximately 3 metres. The additional height is not regarded as excessive and is not likely to appear visually dominant to the surrounding properties. Due to the adequate separation distance to the rear boundary and the prevailing garden depths of properties on Castle Hill, the additional floor is not considered to be detrimental to the amenities of properties on Coley Hill and Castle Hill in terms of being overbearing. Furthermore, the separation combined with the small scale of the proposed additional windows reduces the impact of any overlooking and loss of privacy.

The existing building partly projects to the rear of adjoining Malvern House, to which it is linked at ground floor level. As Malvern House is a commercial building, it is not considered the additional floor would be detrimental to its amenities.

The dwelling most likely to be affected by the proposed development is the dwelling to the south of the application site, Sunwood. Although there would be an increase in height, the existing building is already taller than the adjacent building and additional impacts on amenity would be limited. As the additional built form is one additional storey, restrained in scale as it would be contained within a gable ended roof space, and the siting of the existing building angles away from this neighbouring property slightly, the degree of harm is not considered to be at a level that would justify a reason for refusal.

The development is not likely to result in any significant additional effects, compared to the existing building, in terms of loss of daylight or sunlight. A Daylight and Sunlight Report has been submitted to support the application which concludes that the proposed development will have a low impact on the light receivable by its neighbouring properties.

In relation to the properties located opposite the front of the site, the application building's footprint would not be amended and it would, therefore, remain set back from the roadside. There are already large existing windows facing these properties, the proposed roof extension includes windows which are considerably smaller in scale. As such, it is not considered that the proposal would result in any significant additional overlooking or loss of privacy.



The proposed development is considered to be in accordance with policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Other Matters

The recommendation proposes a pre-commencement planning condition (for a construction method statement) therefore in accordance with section 100ZA of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning (Pre-commencement Conditions) Regulations 2018, the Local Planning Authority served notice upon the applicant to seek agreement to the imposition of such a condition. Notice was served in writing on 23rd October 2025 and agreed by the agent on the same day.

It is also considered appropriate to attach a planning condition to remove permitted development rights in relation to residential conversions to ensure that any subsequent change of use of the additional office space to a residential use would require an application for full planning permission. The agent was made aware of this during the application process.

8. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed, and, on balance, the proposed works are considered to be in accordance with the above relevant policies and planning permission can be granted.

9. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT

CONDITIONS

Time Limit (Standard)
Approved Plans
Materials (As Specified)
Construction Method Statment (to be submitted)

Bicycle storage (details to be submitted)
Class MA PD right removed
Vehicle Parking (As Specified)
Vehicle Access (As Specified)
Cycle Parking (As Specified)
Refuse Collection (to be approved)