



Planning Statement

Site Address:

1 St Mary's Butts, Reading, RG1 2LN

Proposal:

Shopfront Alterations including the Installation of New Roller Shutter and New Signage (Retrospective)

Borough:

Reading Borough Council

Dated: 17/11/2025

1.0 Site Description

- 1.1 The application site is a ground floor commercial unit (Use Class E) located along St Mary's Butts within Reading Town Centre. The application site is not listed and is not located within a Conservation Area. The application site is located within the Boundary of Reading Central Area, along a Designated Primary Frontage in Central Reading, and within a Primary Shopping Area.

2.0 Proposal

- 2.1 The applicant seeks retrospective planning permission for the installation of a new roller shutter and a new internally illuminated fascia sign. The fascia sign projects approximately 0.3m forward of the shop frontage, and the roller shutter is located directly under this. The signage displays the store logo and is coloured in red and black. The roller shutter is coloured in black and is a visually permeable form of shutter.
- 2.2 Photos are included below detailing the development.



Pre-Existing Shopfront



Existing Shopfront



Housing for Shutter



Shutter Down

3.0 Relevant Planning History

3.1 The planning history relevant to this application is as follows:

PL/89/0308 - ILLUMINATED FASCIA SIGN – Decision not listed – Dated 12/02/1988

PL/89/0410 – DEMOLITION OF EXISTING HOUSE AND ERECTION OF 14 FLATS WITH ASSOCIATED UNDERGROUND PARKING - Decision not listed – Dated 06/04/1989

4.0 Relevant Planning Policies

4.1 The planning policies relevant to this development are as follows:

The National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019):

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

OU4: ADVERTISEMENTS

OU5: SHOPFRONTS AND CASH MACHINES

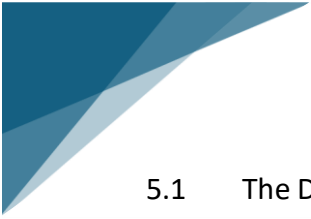
CR2: DESIGN IN CENTRAL READING

CR7: PRIMARY FRONTAGES IN CENTRAL READING

Supplementary Planning Documents: Design Guide to Shopfronts (2022)

5.0 Assessment

Character and Appearance of the Area

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- 5.1 The Design Guide to Shopfronts SPD (2022) states that *“Modern shopfront designs and materials are often inappropriate as part of a historic building or within a conservation area where they detract from the character or appearance the area is designed to protect”* (Paragraph 4.4). Paragraph 4.40 relates to security shutters. It is noted that *“Security shutters detract from the character of shopfronts and should be avoided in favour of laminated glass as 10-15mm glass can often achieve the same level of security. If laminated glass is not possible, internal grilles should be used. Solid internal or external shutters are generally inappropriate. All effort should be made to ensure that the shopfront display remains visible both day and night. If necessary, demountable or removable grilles are preferred to external roller grilles. External shutters that prevent access to recessed doorways may be appropriate to prevent access outside of trading hours, but these should provide as much visibility as possible. Applicants should also refer to the Thames Valley Police guidance for keeping businesses safe.”*
- 5.2 Policy CR2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) provides the following relevant design criteria within Central Reading. (d): *“The architectural details and materials used in the central area should be high quality and respect the form and quality of the detailing and materials in areas local to the development site.”* (e): *“Development and any associated public realm should contribute to the diversity of the central area, be capable of easy adaptation over time to meet changing circumstances, and be designed to enhance community safety.”*
- 5.3 Policy OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) states,
- “All adverts shall comply with the following criteria:*
- a) Advertisements will not obstruct windows, any other sign already located on the building, or cut across significant architectural features such as historic fascias, windows, pilasters, cornices or scrolls;*
 - b) Where a shop or business occupies more than one adjacent unit, the advertisement will not run between the shopfronts;*
 - c) Advertisements on listed buildings or in Conservation Areas will respect or enhance the building or area, and will respect the key features of the special historic interest;”*
- 5.4 Policy OU5 of Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) relates to Shopfronts and Cash Machines. It is noted that:
- “Shopfronts, individual features of shopfronts and cash machines will respect the character of the building on which they are located and their surroundings, as well as the wider street, in terms of design, colours, materials, lighting, and location. Features that positively contribute to the character of the building and street will be*



retained and, where possible, restored. Safety and security will be maintained and enhanced.

For shopfronts, the following criteria will be fulfilled:

- a) New shopfronts on listed buildings or in Conservation Areas will respect or enhance the building or area, and will respect the key features of the special historic interest;*
- b) Where a shop occupies multiple units, shopfronts will not run in a continuous horizontal line across the different unit façades. The fascia and the shop windows should be broken up to ensure the features of each unit are not lost;*
- c) Fascia boards should be lower than any first floor windows, and reflect the predominant height of historic fascia boards on surrounding buildings;*
- d) Canopies and blinds over windows and entrances should be for the shading of the shop and should be retractable; and*
- e) Shopfronts should present an active frontage to the street at all times. Where security is essential, security features will be internal, such as internal open mesh grilles. Opaque coverings on shop windows, such as paint and films, will be minimised and will not obscure the window.”*

External Roller Shutter

- 5.5 The roller shutter, incorporates a mesh finish and is visually permeable in line with policy and guidance, the colouring of the shutter relates well to the colour scheme of the shopfront and signage above and would not appear at odds with the colouring of other shopfronts within the locality. Whilst it is acknowledged that the roller shutter is technically not contained internally as recommended by Policy OU5 (e) and the Design Guide to Shopfronts SPD (Para. 4.40), We still consider it to be a discreet and low scale addition to the building and wider area. The shutter housing integrates well with the fascia sign above, not protruding any further forward which has the effect of concealing the shutter housing, and avoiding an unsightly protrusion. The shutter housing has been ornated designed to appear as an extension to the fascia signage above, incorporating detailing to match the colour scheme of the sign above. It is worth acknowledging that there are various other examples of roller shutters within the locality, some of which feature externally contained shutter housing. Shutters of particular note include No. 6-7 St Mary's Butts, and No. 10 St Mary's Butts (photos included below) with No. 10 featuring external shutter housing of far greater prominence than the application site. Whilst the roller shutter does not fully accord with Policy OU (e) and the Design Guide to Shopfronts SPD, this should not mean that the application is unacceptable by default. Decision makers should take into account established site context, and consider whether or not the level of harm is significant. In this case we believe that the shutter is a congruous addition based on its discreet design and established site context. It is also worth recognising that the shutter provides various security and crime prevention benefits, and feel that this should be factored into account in the Council's assessment.



No. 6-7 St Mary's Butts' Shutter



No. 10 St Mary's Butts' Shutter

Fascia Signage

- 5.6 We consider the unit's new fascia sign to be a congruous and sympathetic addition to the host building, street scene and area in a wider context. The sign is not excessive in its size, prominence and protrusion beyond the front façade of the shopfront. The design of the sign is of high quality does not appear unduly at odds with other signage within the locality. The colouring of the shutter relates well to the colour scheme of the shopfront and shutter below. The illumination of the signage is not significant enough to cause harm to the street scene and area.

Neighbouring Residential Amenity

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- 5.7 Owing to the fact that the development relates only to the installation of a new fascia sign and roller shutters, and is contained well away from surrounding residential premises, the development is not considered to unduly prejudice the residential amenities of any neighbouring residential occupants.

Public Safety and Highways Impact

- 5.8 Policy OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) notes that:

“All adverts shall comply with the following criteria:

- d) Advertisements will not reduce visibility for users of the highway or accesses onto the highway;
- e) Illumination should not detract from the amenity of the area or pose a safety hazard to users of the highway; and
- f) Advertisements should not obscure the sight lines of cameras installed for public safety.”

The new fascia sign is not considered to conflict with any of the above. It is set well way from the main highway, would not obstruct any sightlines for pedestrians, vehicles and CCTV. The illumination of the sign is low scale, and is not considered significant to cause distraction for highway users.

6.0 Conclusion and Planning Balance

- 6.1 Overall we consider the development to be acceptable on grounds of character, residential amenity, public safety, and highways impact.
- 6.2 If any clarifications and/or amendments are required by officers, it is respectfully requested that the officers proactively engage with the applicant. We are capable of providing any clarifications and/or amendments within a very short timeframe if necessary.