

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey

App Ref: PL/25/1214 Prior approval Part 1 Class AA: Enlargement of a dwellinghouse by construction of additional storeys

Address: EATON COURT, 104-112 OXFORD ROAD, READING, RG1 7FU

Proposal: Application for prior approval of 2 storey roof extension to accommodate 15 proposed New dwellinghouses on Detached buildings in commercial or mixed use - Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Schedule 2, Part 20, Class AA

Applicant: Eaton Reading Ltd

Received date: 28 August 2025

Target Decision date: 2 December 2025 (agreed extension of time)

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

Eaton Court comprises a part two, part three storey L-shaped commercial building (Class E – office (a)), on the corner of Oxford Road and Eaton Place but excluding the neighbouring Grade II Listed Building (104 Oxford Road – Royal Meteorological Society), with an area of multi-deck car park to the rear.

This section of Oxford Road is characterised largely by terraced buildings on either side, extending over 2 to 4 storeys. The surrounding area comprises a range of uses, it is predominantly residential and commercial in character. Directly north of the site comprises a small commercial property (10 Eaton Place) and a new residential development which is currently under construction. To the east of the site lies a row of 3 storey terraced properties and residential accommodation blocks which are between 7 and 19 storeys in height, part of Chatham Place. Adjacent to the site to the south lies The Royal Meteorological Society, a grade II listed building, beyond this is Oxford Road which borders the site to the south. To the west of the site is a modern 4 storey residential block, Bond House, completed in 2022.

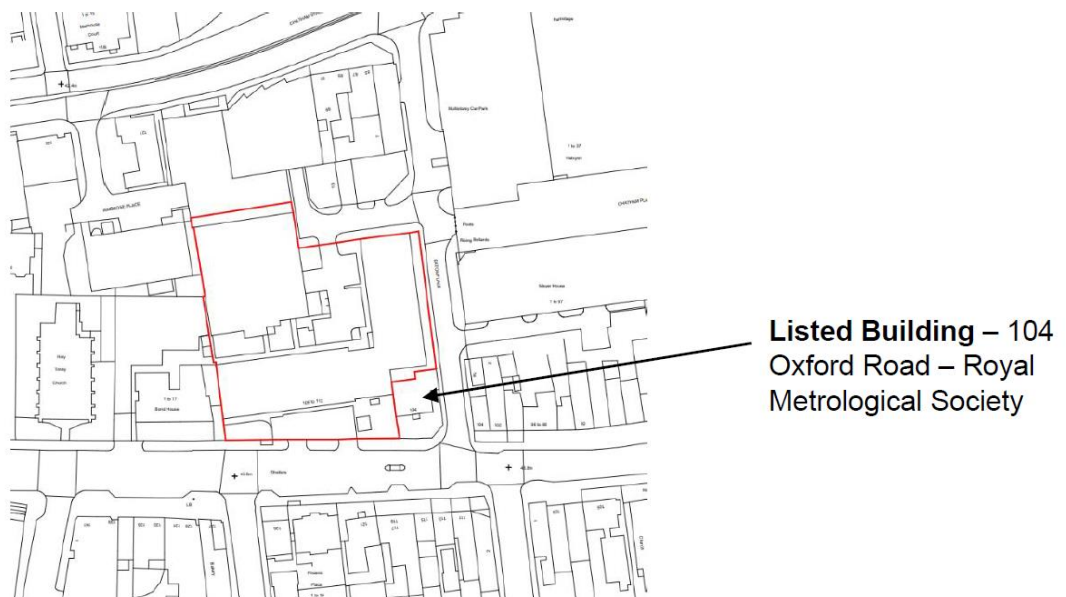


Figure 1 – Site Location Plan

The application site does not fall within a Conservation Area or Article 4 Direction but the site is immediately adjacent to the Castle Hill/Russell Square/Oxford Road Conservation Area. The site and proximity to the Conservation Area boundary are shown in figure 2 below.



Figure 1 - Castle Hill/Russell Street/ Oxford Road Conservation Area

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

This application seeks Prior Approval planning permission for the construction of a two-storey roof addition to the existing 'L' shaped building, which presently extends to two storeys on the Oxford Road frontage and three storeys of the Eaton Place frontage. The proposal would include no changes to the part of the building fronting Oxford Road, but a two-storey addition to the Eaton Place building frontage, extending this from three to five storeys. The development would provide a total of 15 residential dwellings and 902 square metres of residential floor space.

The accommodation schedule is set out in the tables below.

Table 1 - Floor areas for proposed flats

Unit No.	Type (bedrooms/persons)	Gross Internal Area (GIA) m ²
4.01	1B1P	39
4.02	1B1P	37
4.03	1B1P	39.3
4.04	1B1P	37
4.05	1B1P	37
4.06	1B1P	40.5
4.07	1B1P	39.4
4.08	1B1P	39.3
4.09	1B1P	51.2
4.01	1B1P	41.2

4.02	1B1P	41.6
4.03	2B3P	61.8
4.04	1B1P	40.4
4.05	1B1P	39.5
4.06	1B2P	54.9

The proposed dwellings will have 10 allocated car parking spaces, by way of the existing rear carpark to the rear of the building accessed from Eaton Place, which equates to 0.5 car parking spaces per unit. Also, 10 cycle spaces are proposed on the ground floor of the site within a Cycle Storage unit, which equates to 0.5 spaces per dwelling.

A separate refuse storage facility is shown on the ground floor of the site.

The following plans and documents have been submitted in support of the application:

Drawing No: 103-225_(SK)001B Existing Ground Floor Plan
 Drawing No: 103-225_(SK)002B Existing First Floor Plan
 Drawing No: 103-225_(SK)003B Existing Second Floor Plan
 Drawing No: 103-225_(SK)007H Proposed Third Floor Plan
 Drawing No: 103-225_(SK)008E Proposed Fourth Floor Plan
 Drawing No: 103-225_(SK)009B Existing Elevations
 Drawing No: 103-225_(SK)010F Proposed Elevations
 Drawing No: 103-225_(SK)013B Sketch Section - PD Class AA
 Drawing No: 103-225_(SK)101B Proposed Ground Floor Plan
 Drawing No: 103-225_(SK)200 Site Location Plan
 The 'RGP', Transport Statement ref 2025/8647/TS01
 Overheating Risk Analysis
 Daylight and Sunlight Assessment
 The 'MZA Acoustics' Doc Ref: 1701260 – Class AA Noise Impact Assessment, dated September 2025
 Application Form
 CIL form
 Cover Letter
 As received by the Local Planning Authority on 28 August 2025

103-225_(SK)010G Proposed Elevations
 103-225_(SK)013C Sketch Section - PD Class AA
 As received by the Local Planning Authority on 25 September 2025

The 'MZA Acoustics' Doc Ref: 1701260 – Class AA Noise Impact Assessment, dated October 2025
 As received by the Local Planning Authority on 21 October 2025

Drawing No: 103-225_(SK)007I Proposed Third Floor Plan
 Drawing No: 103-225_(SK)008F Proposed Fourth Floor Plan
 Drawing No: 103-225_(SK)010H Proposed Elevations
 Drawing No: 103-225_(SK)013D Sketch Section - PD Class AA
 Drawing No: 103-225_(SK)017A Proposed Ground Floor Plan
 Drawing No: 103-225_(SK)018 Proposed Roof Plan
 As received by the Local Planning Authority on 5 November 2025

Follow up e-mail with clarifications and additional acoustic data
 18 November 2025

Drawing No: 103-255_(SK)011E – Sketch Visual

Euroclad group vertical wall external board details
Euroclad group brochure
As received by the Local Planning Authority 20 November 2025

Drawing No: 103-225_(SK)007J Proposed Third Floor Plan
Drawing No: 103-225_(SK)008G Proposed Fourth Floor Plan
As received by the Local Planning Authority on 25 November 2025

3. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- Transport Development Control – No objection.
- Environment Agency EA Environment Agency EA – No objection – standing advice only.
- RBC Environmental Protection Officers – No objection.
- RBC Conservation Officer – No objection.
- HSE Fire Safety Consultations – No consultation required, does not meet height requirements.

Two site notices were displayed, one placed on Oxford Road, and one on Eaton Court. One comment was received summarised as follows:

- *The site address covers a property outside of the application land;*
- *The parking spaces on Oxford Road are for the Royal Meteorological Society (shown as visitor spaces);*
- *Concerns over construction and demolition noise and impact on neighbours, and Party Wall Act requirements*

Officer Note: It is noted that the proposals address is over land which contains a separate property. However, the red line plan shows the extent of the application. With regard to parking on land that may be subject to a separate agreement (i.e. on title, or otherwise), this is not considered a material planning consideration. Concerns over party wall requirements are covered under separate processes and are between the respective owners. Construction and demolition noise and impacts are considered further below.

4. EQUALITY ACT

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.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The application has been submitted to determine whether prior approval is required in accordance with Schedule 2, Part 20, Class AA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

Class AA - new dwellinghouses on detached buildings in commercial or mixed use

Permitted Development

AA.—(1) Development consisting of works for the construction of up to two additional storeys of new dwellinghouses immediately above the topmost storey on a detached building to which sub-paragraph (2) applies, together with any or all—

(a) engineering operations reasonably necessary to construct the additional storeys and new dwellinghouses;

(b) works for the replacement of existing plant or installation of additional plant on the roof of the extended building reasonably necessary to service the new dwellinghouses;

(c) works for the construction of appropriate and safe access to and egress from the new dwellinghouses and existing premises in the building, including means of escape from fire, via additional external doors or external staircases;

(d) works for the construction of storage, waste or other ancillary facilities reasonably necessary to support the new dwellinghouses.

(2) This sub-paragraph applies to a building which is—

(a) used for any purpose within Class A1 (shops), Class A2 (financial and professional services), Class A3 (restaurants and cafes) or Class B1(a) (offices) of the Schedule to the 1987 Order, or as a betting office, pay day loan shop or launderette;

(b) in a mixed use combining—

(i) two or more uses within paragraph (a); or

(ii) a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to [F501the 1987 Order], together with one or more uses within paragraph (a).

(3) In relation to Class AA, “the 1987 Order” means the Use Classes Order as in force on 5th March 2018.

Before development can be carried out under Class AA, the developer must submit a Prior Notification to determine if 'Prior Approval' of the Local Planning Authority is required in respect of the following matters:

(a) transport and highways impacts of the development;

(b) air traffic and defence asset impacts of the development;

(c) contamination risks in relation to the building;

(d) flooding risks in relation to the building;

(e) the external appearance of the building, including—

(i) the design and architectural features of—

(aa) the principal elevation; and

(bb) any side elevation that fronts a highway; and

- (ii) the impact of any works under sub-paragraph (1)(c) or (d) of Class AA;
- (f) the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the new dwellinghouses;
- (g) impact on the amenity of the existing building and neighbouring premises including overlooking, privacy and the loss of light;
- (h) impacts of noise from any commercial premises on the intended occupiers of the new dwellinghouses;
- (i) impacts of the introduction of, or an increase in, a residential use of premises in the area on the carrying on of any trade, business or other use of land in the area;
- (j) whether, because of the siting of the building, the development will impact on a protected view identified in the Directions Relating to Protected Vistas dated 15th March 2012(a) issued by the Secretary of State, and the provisions of paragraph B (prior approval) of this Part apply in relation to that application.
- (k) where the existing building is 18 metres or more in height, the fire safety of the external wall construction of the existing building, and
- (l) where the development meets the fire risk condition (see paragraph C(3) of this Part), the fire safety impacts on the intended occupants of the building Class AA requires development to be completed within a period of 3 years starting with the prior approval date.

Any development under Class AA is permitted subject to the condition that before beginning the development, the developer must provide the local planning authority with a report for the management of the construction of the development, which sets out the proposed development hours of operation and how any adverse impact of noise, dust, vibration and traffic on occupiers of the building and adjoining owners or occupiers will be mitigated.

In assessing these issues, officers must have regard to the NPPF as if the application were a planning application, and also have regard to the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 (the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework 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).

It is pertinent to note that legislation was introduced from 1st August 2020 in relation to prior approval also being required in relation to demonstrating suitable natural light considerations Town and Country Planning (Permitted Development and Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020. .

Similarly, on 30th September 2020 the Housing Secretary announced that homes delivered through permitted development rights will have to meet with the nationally prescribed space standards as a minimum.

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

EN1 – Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

EN6 – New Development in a Historic Context

EN16 - Pollution and Water Resources

EN18 - Flooding and Drainage

TR1 - Achieving The Transport Strategy

TR3 - Traffic Access and Highways Related Matters

CC7 - Design and the Public realm
CC8 - Safeguarding Amenity
CR1 – Definition of Central Reading
CR2 – Design in Central Reading
CR12 – West Side Major Opportunity Area
CR12c – Chatham Street, Eaton Place and Oxford Road

The developer must notify the local planning authority of the completion of the development as soon as reasonably practicable after completion. The notification must be in writing and must include—

- (a) the name of the developer;
- (b) the address or location of the development; and
- (c) the date of completion.

Following the development, every dwellinghouse in the building must remain in use as a dwellinghouse within the meaning of Class C3 of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order and for no other purpose, except to the extent that the other purpose is ancillary to the primary use as a dwellinghouse.

National Policy National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024)

Chapter 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
Chapter 7: Ensuring the vitality of town centres
Chapter 9: Promoting sustainable transport
Chapter 11: Making effective use of land
Chapter 12: Achieving well designed places
Chapter 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

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. A consultation version of the draft update of the Local Plan was published on 6th November 2024.

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 these applications listed above is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remains 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’.

6. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/18/2098 - Change of use of office building from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 59 dwelling units. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Withdrawn, January 2019.

PL/19/0291 - Certificate of Lawfulness for Continuous Use of the Site as B1(a) Office Accommodation for 10 Years or More. Certificate granted, 16 April 2019

PL/19/0419 - Change of use from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 58 Units. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. No objection, prior approval not required, 14 May 2019.

PL/21/0639 - Demolition and residential redevelopment to provide three buildings comprising 120 residential units (Use Class C3), along with car parking, cycle parking, servicing bay and associated landscaping, amenity space, plant and refuse areas, and access arrangements. Refused, 26 June 2024.

PL/25/0769 - Application for prior approval of a proposed: 20 New dwellinghouses on detached buildings in commercial or mixed use - Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Schedule 2, Part 20, Class AA. Prior Approval Refused 16 July 2025

PL/25/0770 - Change of use of building from Class E (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 52 dwelling units. Prior Notification under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Prior Approval Refused 16 July 2025.

PL/25/1025 - Change of use of the ground, first and second floors of the building from Class E (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 40 x1 bedroom and 12 x2 bedroom dwelling units. Prior Notification under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Prior Approval Given 23 September 2025

10 Eaton Place

PL/20/01104 - The development proposed is demolition of the existing building and redevelopment of the site to provide a residential building of 5-storeys (Use Class C3) and associated public realm improvements. Refused and dismissed upon appeal, 11 October 2024 (Appeal reference: APP/E0345/W/24/3343524)

7. APPRAISAL

Appraisal

The proposal must comply with all requirements of a Class AA development.

Development not permitted

AA.1. Development is not permitted by Class AA if—

the permission to use the building as a dwellinghouse has been granted only by virtue of Class MA of Part 3 of this Schedule;

The building has been approved for conversion to a block of flats under Class MA (PL/25/1025). The GPDO includes the definition of “dwellinghouse” as:

“except in Part 3 (changes of use), Class B (demolition of buildings) of Part 11 (heritage and demolition), Part 12A (development by local authorities and health service bodies) and Part 20 (construction of new dwellinghouses) of Schedule 2 to this Order, does not include a building containing one or more flats, or a flat contained within such a building;”

The site has approval for conversion to ‘dwellinghouses’. The site would not be a dwellinghouse which is granted only by virtue of Class MA of part 3 of the GPDO and therefore **Complies**.

(a) above ground level, the building is less than three storeys in height;

The building, to which the extension is sought, is presently three storeys in height above ground level and therefore **Complies**.

- (b) **the building was constructed before 1st July 1948 or after 5th March 2018;**

The building was constructed in the 1980s and therefore **Complies**.

- (c) **on 5th March 2018 the building was in a use other than—**
(i) **a use or mixed use within paragraph AA(2)(a) or (b); or**
(ii) **a use falling within Class C3 of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order;**

On 5th March 2018, the building was in commercial use (Office) (Class E) and therefore **Complies**.

- (d) **the additional storeys are constructed other than on the principal part of the building;**

The additional storeys exactly follow the footprint of the principal part of the building and do not extend beyond it and therefore **Complies**.

- (e) **the floor to ceiling height of any additional storey, measured internally, would exceed the lower of—**
(i) **3 metres; or**
(ii) **the floor to ceiling height, measured internally, of any storey of the principal part of the existing building;**

The floor to ceiling heights for the proposed additional storeys are as following:

Third Floor: 2.4m

Fourth Floor: 2.4m

As a result, the floor to ceiling height proposes does not exceed 3m or the floor to ceiling height of the principal part of the existing building (3.05m) and therefore **Complies**.

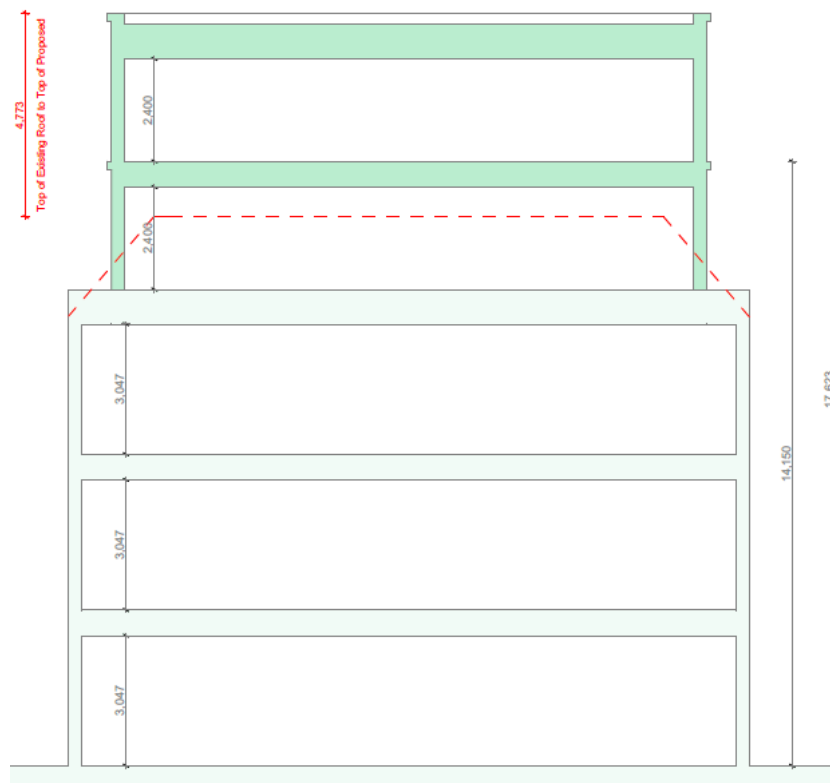


Figure 2 - Proposed Section Plan

- (f) the new dwellinghouses are not flats;

The proposed dwellings are flats (15 in total) and therefore **Complies**.

- (g) the height of the highest part of the roof of the extended building would exceed the height of the highest part of the roof of the existing building by more than 7 metres (not including plant, in each case);

The height of the existing roof where the extension is proposed, extends to a height of 12.8 metres above ground level. The proposed extension (two additional storeys) would extend the height of the existing building to an overall height of 17.6m. This is an increase of 4.7m in total. It is noted that the proposal is partly below the existing roof height (as below). The proposals is no more than the 7 metre allowance and therefore **Complies**.

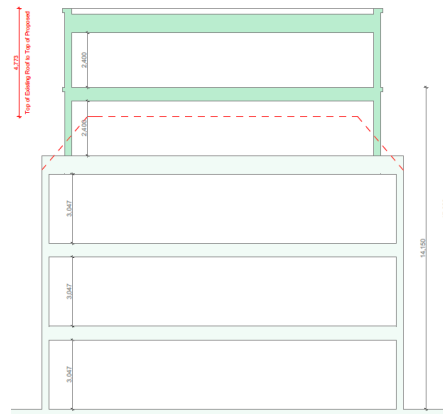


Figure 3 - Proposed Section Plan

- (h) the height of the highest part of the roof of the extended building (not including plant) would be greater than 30 metres;

The highest part of the roof would be well below a height of 30m (17.623m) and therefore **Complies**.

- (i) development under Class AA(1)(a) would include the provision of visible support structures on or attached to the exterior of the building upon completion of the development;

The development does not include the provision of any visible support structures on or attached to the exterior of the building and therefore **Complies**.

- (j) development under Class AA(1)(a) would consist of engineering operations other than works within the existing curtilage of the building to—
- (i) strengthen existing walls;
 - (ii) strengthen existing foundations; or
 - (iii) install or replace water, drainage, electricity, gas or other services;

No additional engineering operations are proposed other than those set out under parts j) (i)-(iii) above and therefore **Complies**.

- (k) in the case of Class AA(1)(b) development there is no existing plant on the building;

There is existing plant on the building and therefore **Complies**.

- (l) in the case of Class AA(1)(b) development the height of any replaced or additional plant as measured from the lowest surface of the new roof on the principal part of the extended building would exceed the height of any existing plant as measured from the lowest surface of the existing roof on the principal part of the existing building;

The existing plant measures 2.04m in height, the proposed replacement plant would be 1.74m, the proposed plant would not exceed the height of any existing plant as

measured from the lowest surface of the existing roof on the principal part of the existing building and therefore **Complies**.

- (m) **development under Class AA(1)(c) would extend beyond the curtilage of the existing building;**

The development falls within the curtilage of the existing building and therefore **Complies**.

- (n) **development under Class AA(1)(d) would—**

- (i) **extend beyond the curtilage of the existing building;**
- (ii) **be situated on land forward of a wall forming the principal elevation of the existing building; or**
- (iii) **be situated on land forward of a wall fronting a highway and forming a side elevation of the existing building;**

The development falls within the curtilage of the existing building, would not be situated on land forward of a wall forming the principal elevation of the existing building nor situated on land forward of a wall fronting a highway and forming a side elevation of the existing building. The proposed extension follows the footprint of the existing building and therefore **Complies**.

- (o) **the land or site on which the building is located, is or forms part of—**

- (i) **article 2(3) land;**
- (ii) **a site of special scientific interest;**
- (iii) **a listed building or land within its curtilage;**
- (iv) **a scheduled monument or land within its curtilage;**
- (v) **a safety hazard area;**
- (vi) **a military explosives storage area; or**
- (vii) **land within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome.**

The land and site on which the building is located does not comprise article 2(3) land, a SSSI, a listed building or land within its curtilage, a scheduled ancient monument or land within its curtilage, a safety hazard area, a military explosives storage area, or land within 3km of the perimeter of an aerodrome and therefore **Complies**.

The site to which the building is located does not form part of a listed building or land within its curtilage, it is located immediately adjacent to a Grade II Listed Building (104 Oxford Road – Royal Meteorological Society).

Development is only permitted by Class AA, on the condition(s) that:

Conditions

AA.2.—(1) Where any development under Class AA is proposed, development is permitted subject to the condition that before beginning the development, the developer must apply to the local planning authority for prior approval of the authority as to—

- (a) transport and highways impacts of the development*
- (b) air traffic and defence asset impacts of the development;*

- (c)contamination risks in relation to the building;
 - (d)flooding risks in relation to the building;
 - (e)the external appearance of the building, including—
 - (i)the design and architectural features of—
 - (aa)the principal elevation; and
 - (bb)any side elevation that fronts a highway; and
 - (ii)the impact of any works under sub-paragraph (1)(c) or (d) of Class AA;
 - (f)the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the new dwellinghouses;
 - (g)impact on the amenity of the existing building and neighbouring premises including overlooking, privacy and the loss of light;
 - (h)impacts of noise from any commercial premises on the intended occupiers of the new dwellinghouses;
 - (i)impacts of the introduction of, or an increase in, a residential use of premises in the area on the carrying on of any trade, business or other use of land in the area;
 - (j)whether, because of the siting of the building, the development will impact on a protected view identified in the Directions Relating to Protected Vistas dated 15th March 2012 issued by the Secretary of State...
 - (k)where the existing building is 18 metres or more in height, the fire safety of the external wall construction of the existing building; and
 - (l)where the development meets the fire risk condition (see paragraph C(3) of this Part), the fire safety impacts on the intended occupants of the building]
- and the provisions of paragraph B (prior approval) of this Part apply in relation to that application.
- (2) In sub-paragraph (1)(h), “commercial premises” means any premises in the building or the surrounding area which are normally used for the purpose of carrying on any trade or business, and includes any premises licensed under the Licensing Act 2003 or any other place of public entertainment.
- (3) Any development under Class AA is permitted subject to the condition that it must be completed within a period of 3 years starting with the date prior approval is granted.
- (4) Any development under Class AA is permitted subject to the condition that before beginning the development, the developer must provide the local planning authority with a report for the management of the construction of the development, which sets out the proposed development hours of operation and how any adverse impact of noise, dust, vibration and traffic on occupiers of the building and adjoining owners or occupiers will be mitigated.
- (5) The developer must notify the local planning authority of the completion of the development as soon as reasonably practicable after completion.
- (6) The notification referred to in sub-paragraph (5) must be in writing and must include—
 - (a)the name of the developer;
 - (b)the address or location of the development; and
 - (c)the date of completion.
- (7) Following the development, every dwellinghouse in the building must remain in use as a dwellinghouse within the meaning of Class C3 of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order and for no other purpose, except to the extent that the other purpose is ancillary to the primary use as a dwellinghouse.

Appraisal

Transport and highways impacts of the development

The application site lies just outside Reading's central core area approximately a 14-minute walk to both Reading Train Station and Reading West Train Station, providing onward travel to the UK rail network. Also, the site benefits from a number of bus stops with Waylen Street bus stop located directly outside the site.

The application site, according to the Council's adopted parking standards SPD, lies within Zone 2: Primary Core Area, though it is noted that the site is very close to Zone 1: Core Central Area and the application indicates provision for 8 car parking and 8 secure covered cycle spaces within the existing on-site car park.

The Council's adopted parking standards within Zone 2 are for one parking space for a one/two-bedroom flat, and 1.5 spaces for a three or more-bedroom flat, with a visitor space per every 10 flats. In addition, the requirements for cycle parking are 0.5 spaces per one/two-bedroom flat and one cycle space for a three plus bedroom flat. This would mean a total required on-site parking requirement of:

Car Parking

One/Two Bedroom Flats = 15

Three+ Bedroom = 0

Visitor Parking = 2

Total required car parking spaces = 17

Cycle parking

One/Two Bedroom Flats = 15

Three+ Bedroom = 0

Total required cycle parking spaces = 7.5 (8)

The proposal provides an on-site secure and covered cycle parking facility with 8 spaces, which accords with the SPD. However, whilst some on-site parking is provided (10 car parking spaces), this is a shortfall on 5 spaces on the requirement in-line with the SPD. In these circumstances the SPD advises that should a developer require fewer spaces there would need to be demonstration, to the Highway Authority's satisfaction, that there would be no detriment to highway safety as a result. The applicant has indicated that the spaces will be allocated to the larger flats on a first come basis.

The Council's Transport Strategy Team have reviewed the proposal and raised no objection, subject to construction method statement condition and informatives relating to damage to the public highway and parking permits.

It has been concluded that the proposal would not result in a material impact on the character of the traffic in the vicinity of the site given the extensive existing parking restrictions in the area. As such, the development is considered acceptable in respect of transport and highway matters, in-line with Policies TR1 and TR3 of the Reading Local Plan 2019, the Council's adopted SPD: Revised Parking Standards and Design and the advice contained within the NPPF.

Air traffic and defence asset impacts of the development

The application site is located within a high-density urban environment within Reading. The site is not close to aeronautical assets and although the roof extension would result in the height of the property being two storeys higher than the existing, this increased height is not so significant that it would conflict with air traffic and defence assets.

The site is over 14.5 kilometres from the nearest aerodrome, which is the White Waltham Airfield. Therefore, the proposed development will not have an impact on Air Traffic Defence Asset Impacts as required under Paragraph AA.2(1)(b) of Class AA.

Contamination risks in relation to the building

The application site is recorded within the Council's records as being a contaminated site, having historically been used for warehousing with the potential to have caused land contamination.

The Council's Principal Environmental Health Officer has reviewed the proposal and advised that the proposal may introduce new pollutant linkages between contaminated land and sensitive receptors at the site, whereby it is the developer's responsibility to ensure the development is safe and suitable for use for the intended purpose, to be secured by condition.

A contamination assessment has not been submitted as part of this application. However, given the nature of the proposal largely building upwards from the footprint of the existing building with limited ground disturbance the contamination risk is not considered to be significant. As such, a condition requiring the submission of a contamination land assessment and any remediation that may be required, as recommended by the Council's Principal Environmental Health Officer, is considered sufficient to ensure the proposal does not present a contamination risk.

On this basis of the condition, the proposed development would not have a contamination risk and accords with the requirements under Paragraph AA.2(1)(c) of Class AA, Policy EN16 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the advice contained in the NPPF.

Flooding risks in relation to the building

The application site lies within Flood Zone 1, representing the lowest risk of flooding from external sources. The proposal is to extend upwards with the creation of new floors and would not increase the building's footprint or impermeable surfaces on the site. As such, the proposal is not considered to result in any materially greater risk of flooding than that of the existing situation. The proposal would not have an adverse flooding risk in relation to the building and comply with Paragraph AA.2(1)(d) of Class AA of the GPDO, Policy EN18 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the advice contained within the NPPF.

The proposed development included the provision of an additional bin storage enclosure at ground floor. Details of the enclosure can be secured by condition to ensure they remain permeable to overland flow of rainwater.

The external appearance of the building

Paragraph AA.2(1)(e)(i) and (ii) of the GPDO requires the local planning authority's prior approval and consideration relating to the external appearance of the building, which includes the design and architectural features of the principal elevation and any side elevation that fronts a highway (i). In addition, part ii of paragraph AA.2(e) requires the assessment of the impact of any works that may be sought relating to the construction of appropriate and safe access to and egress from the new dwellinghouse and existing premises in the building and works for the construction of storage, waste or other ancillary facilities reasonably necessary to support the new dwellinghouses.

Impact on designated heritage assets

Under Part 1 Class AA, it is considered appropriate to have regard on the effect of the development on the external appearance on both the building extended from and the effect on the appearance of neighbouring properties in the locality. Though, it should be noted that the scope of considerations under Class AA are more restrictive than an assessment that would otherwise be undertaken for an application for full planning permission.

Paragraph B of Part 20 of the GPDO sets out the procedure for prior approvals and requires the local planning authority to consider any representations made to them as a result of consultation, Council's Conservation Officer in this instance, and to have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Policies in the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 are relevant insofar as they are material to the matters for which prior approval is sought.

Policy EN1 of the Reading Local Plan 2019 sets out that historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of historic environment, including their setting will be protected and enhanced. This includes listed buildings and conservation areas, amongst others. In addition, Policy EN3 requires proposal to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and Policy EN6 outlines how new development proposals will make a positive contribution to the historic character, with the supporting text of this policy (Paragraph 4.2.23) advising that new development in the vicinity of historic assets or at the edges of conservation areas should be sympathetic to the heritage assets.

Policy CC7, CR2, CR3, and CR12c cumulatively seek conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which it is located, the host building, and the public realm. Including protecting the nearby heritage assets further to the above.

The NPPF (paragraph 210) advises that, in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The NPPF, paragraphs 212 and 213, advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be)

and any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification, whereby substantial harm or loss of a grade II listed building should be exceptional.

Lastly, sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting, together with preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of any given conservation area. This relates to the LPAs function in the exercise of planning functions relating to planning applications.

The application site lies outside of a conservation area and the application building is not listed, nor does it fall within the curtilage of a listed building. However, the site immediately abuts the Castle Hill/Russell Square/Oxford Road Conservation Area and shares part of its southern and eastern boundaries with a Grade II Listed Building (104 Oxford Road – Royal Meteorological Society). This listed building lies immediately adjacent to the site, with the rear elevation of this building facing the proposed development, no more than 2-3 metres away.

For context, Figure 2 below shows the positioning of the listed building, conservation area and building to be enlarged.

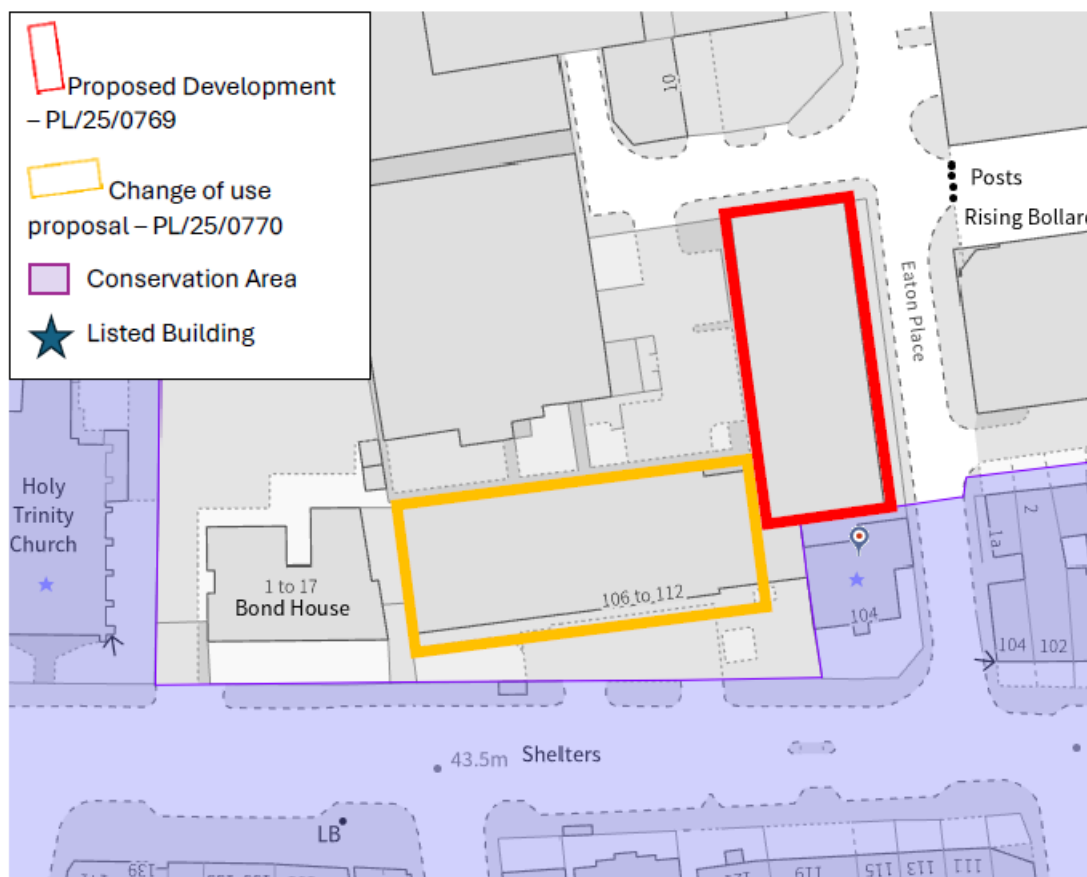


Figure 4 - Historic context of application site

The Council's Conservation Officer has reviewed the proposal and has raised no objection to the proposed development. A previous application was refused due to concerns regarding the built form and massing and its impact on the setting of the listed building (104 Oxford Road) and

harm to the setting of the adjacent conservation area. The revised proposal (the prior approval notification before the LPA) includes a setback from the listed building, by 9.8 m at storey 1 above the roof, and 19.39m at storey 2.



Figure 5 - Side-by-side view of 3d image and existing site

There is only a modest separation distance (4m) between the proposed development and the listed building. The proposed addition would rise above the height of the listed building, where presently the two buildings are of a comparable scale, and would be readily perceived from Oxford Road. The first floor of the upward extension would be set off the listed building, and the second floor upward extension again further off. This setback minimises the impact of the development on the listed building, and its visibility from within the Conservation Area.



East Elevation

Figure 6 - East Elevation (facing Eaton Place)

Around the site, the proposal includes a nominal setback to the rear (Eaton Place, between the site and The Butler PH (also a LB)). The remaining sides of the proposal, includes a 1m setback to the proposal. Whilst a reasonably uninspired design, the impact on the building itself is not entirely evident (as per the limited assessment available under the GPDO). Given the majority

of the road frontage elevation is glazed, with vertical bands of brick details the top-hat would replicate to some degree the window positions below. The side elevations shown shade the intervening windows darker than they actually are, it should be noted that the windows on the side elevation between floors are opaquely glazed.



Figure 7 - Proposed elevations

The proposed development includes external metal cladding which is not currently present on the building. At current (as above) the building is heavily glazed, with sloping roofs in what appear to be slate roof tiles. The existing brick detailing contains the rainwater good in a pleasing arrangement. The Oxford Road elevation contains a mismatched assortment of angled glazed/opaquely glazed roof windows over the entrance lobby area. The proposal would include a 'euroclad' standing seam metal cladding system on all sides. The proposal would be 2.4m internally in height per floor, less than the existing internal heights of 3.04m which, would be approximately 80% of the height of the existing. A change in material in the context of the building to which it is attached is not unreasonable. There would be limited scope to directly match the appearance of the building below, particularly on the road frontages. The internal courtyard/west elevation could match, however this would likely present an incongruous design approach (no such proposal has been put forward in any event). The change of materiality at upper floors is also a relatively common architectural approach, though usually in taller buildings. In this instance, the proposed change in material would serve to retain the character of the existing building, and clearly show that the rooftop element would be an addition to the building without trying to replicate or mimic the existing design. The setback from the road frontage would further soften the impact of the development in a way that does not result in significant harm to the appearance of the building in the limited scope of GPDO considerations available to the LPA under this application.



Officers consider the proposed development would not result in harm to the setting of the neighbouring listed building (104 Oxford Road) or the adjacent Castle Hill/Russell Square/Oxford Road Conservation Area, due to the scale, setback, and limited bulk of the proposal in close proximity to these heritage assets. As detailed above, the scope of assessment under Paragraph AA.2(1)(e)(i) of Class AA of the GPDO, is more limited than an assessment under an application for full planning permission. The scale, design, and details of the proposed development are considered acceptable in this limited instance, and are considered acceptable with regard to Policies EN1 and EN6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, the advice contained within the NPPF and sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the new dwellinghouses;

The proposed development includes mostly single aspect flats. These flats face east and west respectively. The Applicant has provided a daylight and sunlight assessment to demonstrate that the proposal would be provided with adequate daylight and sunlight as per BRE standards. However, it should be noted that BRE standards, whilst industry standard, are not specifically mentioned in the GPDO and it is up to the LPA to consider whether flats are provided with 'adequate natural light'.

Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 requires development proposals not to cause a detrimental impact on the living conditions of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of access to sunlight and daylight.

Due to the orientation of the development, and given that the assessment is shown to meet the BRE requirements for daylight and sunlight for all flats, it is considered that all flats are provided with adequate daylight and sunlight.

Impact on the amenity of the existing building and neighbouring premises including overlooking, privacy and the loss of light

Criterion (g) is an assessment of the proposal in respect of neighbouring amenity, consistent with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, to ensure any amenity impact from the proposed development, in terms of overlooking, privacy and loss of light, is not to an unacceptable level.

In this respect, it is noted that there is a significant separation distance of approximately 58 metres from the western elevation of the site to the residential buildings dwellings west along Oxford Road. To the east of the site the nearest residential dwellings are located 12.5 metres away, on the opposite side of Eaton Place, where a degree of overlooking would result to the occupants of the neighbouring residential block. However, a 'front to front' separation distance of 12.5m in an urban context is not considered to result in unacceptable levels of overlooking and loss of privacy.

To the north / north-west of the site there is a new development (114-116 Chatham Street) and public house which has a sufficient separation distance of some 35 metres. The south of the Site comprises Oxford Road, the southern side of Oxford Road contains residential properties on the upper floors which are located 50 metres from the proposal. Therefore, given the significant separation distances between the proposed development and the nearest residential dwellings there is not considered to be an unacceptable overlooking and privacy impacts as a result of the proposal.

Regarding access to sunlight and daylight for the occupants of the surrounding buildings, a Daylight and Sunlight Assessment has been provided to support the proposals. This assessment uses numerical analyses to determine the effects of the proposal at Eaton Court and the levels of change in daylight and sunlight for the windows and gardens of the neighbouring properties. The main criteria used in this analysis to show compliance are the Vertical Sky Component (VSC) for daylight impacts and Annual and Winter Probable Sunlight Hours for sunlight impacts.

The submitted Assessment primarily focuses on the neighbouring residential development on the opposite side of Eaton Place (Mayer House), whereby the submitted daylight assessment notes this neighbouring scheme has been built with windows to habitable rooms near the street (Eaton Place). The assessment demonstrates that all windows would exceed 80% of their current values, representing some minor loss of daylight/sunlight to these windows. It is acknowledged that the proposal would result in some reduction of daylight to series of habitable windows to the neighbouring building (Mayer House). However, the light loss is not considered to be so significant that it would have an unacceptable impact on the occupants of Mayer House.

Therefore, it is not considered the proposal would result in any unacceptable adverse impact on the occupants of the neighbouring properties in terms of daylight. In terms of sunlight, the assessed windows retain 80% of their existing sunlight hours, both annually and over the winter months. The neighbouring gardens retain over 80% of their existing areas that receive 2 hours or more of sunlight on March 21st. Therefore, the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the existing building and neighbouring premises including overlooking, privacy

and the loss of light'. The proposal, therefore, is considered to comply with Paragraph AA.2(1)(g) of Class AA of the GPDO and Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Impacts of noise from any commercial premises on the intended occupiers of the new dwellinghouses

Paragraph AA.2(h) of Class AA of the GPDO requires the LPAs assessment relating to impacts of noise from any commercial premises on the intended occupants of the new dwellinghouse, which follows a similar requirement of Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

For context, the site does lie on the edge of Reading Town Centre and there is a range of predominantly residential and commercial uses in the area. From the perspective of noise, there are notable existing commercial premises operating in the area that could potentially give rise to significant noise levels, this relates to "The Face Bar" on Ambrose Place some 50 metres to the north-west of the site, a tyre fitting shop (Tyre Fit Pro Reading), immediately to the north of the building, some 25 metres away, and a Public House (The Butler, which hosts live music events), approximately 45m metres to the north of the site on the junction with Eaton Place and Chatham Street. The Face Bar is a nightclub / music and sports (pool/snooker) venue.

A Noise Impact Assessment has been prepared and submitted in support of this application, which concludes the noise from the existing commercial uses in the area should not have an adverse impact on the amenity or health of future occupiers of the dwellinghouses.

The Council's Environmental Protection Team have reviewed the proposal and have made the following comments:

The noise assessment proposes suitable facade and roof construction, glazing and ventilation to mitigate noise from the surrounding uses, notably Face Bar and the Butler.

The provision of ventilation is key to the scheme as the noise from the Face Bar means windows will need to be kept closed during their events.

Also, concerns are raised with the potential use of any heating and cooling systems to limit or potentially prevent the opening of windows. Whilst it is likely to be beneficial to have these systems maintain a constant comfortable temperature in the dwellinghouses, the occupants should have the opportunity to open main windows and not be subject to unacceptable noise from commercial premises.

Of note, a recent development proposal (PL/20/1104) for a five-storey residential building at 10 Eaton Place was dismissed at appeal (October 2024), with the site located to the south of The Butler Public House and the proposal detailing the use of mechanical ventilation with heat recovery systems (MVHR). The location, nature and use of MVHR system are all consistent with this proposal. The Planning Inspector stating the following:

"Future occupants might at times close their windows and switch on the MVHR in relation to traffic noise. Live music performances would however typically occur at times when nearby roads were less busy. Noise generated by a live music venue and that generated by traffic is in any case different in character, and of the two sources, only that generated by music could potentially qualify as a statutory nuisance, and be subject of local control. Within this context

paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) indicates that existing businesses and facilities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established. Music venues are specifically identified.

The appellant's proposed solution is one provided as an example within the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). Mitigation of this type relies upon the actions and cooperation of occupants to be effective, and neither can be secured by condition. The PPG further indicates that it can be useful to make future occupants aware in advance. The experience of living with and having to react to noise would however come with time. The PPG accordingly makes clear that mitigation will help to minimise the risk of complaints rather than prevent them. In the current case, even had I accepted that the appellant's solution would work year-round, the risk of complaint would remain heightened given the uncomfortably close relationship that would exist between bedroom windows and the main performance area at The Butler.

It therefore appears that if the appeal was allowed there is a strong likelihood that future occupants would sooner or later complain about noise generated by live music. Concerns that restrictions might then be placed on The Butler thus appear well founded. Such an outcome would be contrary to that envisaged by paragraph 193 of the Framework as set out above.

For the reasons outlined above I conclude that the appellant has failed to demonstrate that the development would both provide acceptable living conditions for its future occupants in relation to noise and disturbance and be compatible with the existing use of the adjacent public house. The development would therefore conflict with Policy CR6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 (the Local Plan) which, in the absence of mitigation, seeks to restrict the location of new residential next to existing uses which give rise to unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance, and Policy CC8 of the Local Plan which seeks to secure acceptable living conditions for new residential properties including in relation to noise and disturbance."

Similar concerns arise within the proposed development. The use of the MVHR system cannot be relied upon for year-round mitigation without expecting that occupants will want to open their windows, the proposal would likely increase the risk of complainants in relation to those nearby nighttime uses and likely result in unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance to the proposed occupants of the building. RBC's Environmental Protection Officers have considered that the acoustic assessment has adequately mitigated impacts on future residents. When considering the bounded assessment available under the permitted development class of the GPDO sought under this prior approval application, officer's are content that the applicant has demonstrated compliance with AA.2(h). Though, the mitigation does include sufficient internal and external soundproofing requirements, and windows on the more affected elevations requiring acoustic laminated double glazing, the windows would need to be closed to mitigate noise. It may be possible that this could be a suitable solution, however it would rely on individuals who own or rent the properties to be aware of the noise sources, and also the mitigation method of keeping windows closed, likely to be in nighttime hours. Therefore, it is considered reasonable to apply a condition which requires all future occupiers and owners to be made aware of the acoustic assessment and mitigation measures contained within, as well as keeping a record of these notifications (i.e. contained within lease agreements, and sale agreements).

The Applicant has demonstrated that the creation of new residential units would not result in significant noise impacts on the intended occupiers of the dwellinghouses, in accordance with

the requirements under Paragraph AA.2(h) of Class AA of the GPDO, Policies CC8 and EN16 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and the advice contained within the NPPF (paragraph 198).

Impacts of the introduction of, or an increase in, a residential use of premises in the area on the carrying on of any trade, business or other use of land in the area

The site is located within an area which includes a range of land uses, including existing residential. The proposal will deliver 20 additional residential units to the area. Given that the immediate surrounding area comprises both commercial and predominantly residential land uses, it is not considered that an additional 20 dwellings would harm trade or business within the locality. In fact, it could be that the provision of further residential units in the area would be a benefit to other existing commercial premises in the area to utilise existing shops and services.

The enlargement of the existing building and creation of 20 additional dwellinghouses (flats) is not considered to have an adverse impact on the carrying out of any trade, business or other use of land in the area as required under Paragraph AA.2(i) of Class AA of the GPDO.

Whether, because of the siting of the building, the development will impact on a protected view identified in the Directions Relating to Protected Vistas dated 15th March 2012 issued by the Secretary of State

The application site is not located within or close to a 'protected view' as identified in the Directions Relating to Protected Vistas dated 15 March 2012 issued by the Secretary of State. Therefore, the proposal would have no adverse impact on a protected view, as identified in the Directions Relating to Protected Vistas dated 15 March 2012, and accords with the requirements set out under Paragraph AA.2(j) of Class AA of the GPDO.

Where the existing building is 18 metres or more in height, the fire safety of the external wall construction of the existing building

The existing building is three storeys above ground. With the additional two storeys, the new building will be five storeys above ground, and the height from ground floor level to the finished floor level of the top floor will be less than 18 metres (17.623 metres).

The building is therefore not a high-risk building in terms of fire and a fire strategy is not required. The above measures demonstrate that the proposals will result in a safe residential environment from a fire safety perspective.

Therefore, this proposal is acceptable regarding 'the fire safety impacts on the intended occupants of the building' as required under Paragraph AA.2 (1) (i) of the GPDO.

Any development under Class AA is permitted subject to the condition that before beginning the development, the developer must provide the local planning authority with a report for the management of the construction of the development, which sets out the proposed development hours of operation and how any adverse impact of noise, dust, vibration and traffic on occupiers of the building and adjoining owners or occupiers will be mitigated.

A condition in line with the above to secure a construction management plan is considered necessary to replicate this requirement.

National Described Space Standards

All proposed units comply or exceed with the minimum standards. Therefore, the proposal accords with the provisions of paragraph B (prior approval) of this Part apply in relation to the application.

8. CONCLUSION

The proposal comprises the upwards extension of Eaton Court to provide residential floorspace (Class C3). The proposal seeks to deliver 15 dwellinghouses (self-contained flats) across the two-storey extension.

The proposal has been found to accord with the requirements as set out within Paragraph AA.1, of Schedule 2, Part 20, Class AA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (GPDO).

As required under Paragraph AA.1 and AA.2 of Class AA it has been demonstrated that there is no transport, air traffic defence impacts, contamination, flooding, daylight access or dwelling size reasons why the development should not proceed.

With regard to the external appearance of the proposal, the proposal has been assessed under the somewhat limited assessment available under the provisions of the GPDO. The proposal would be a clear and distinct extension to the host dwelling, and does not seek to replicate or mimic the host building, and is set in from the side of the building. This approach limits the impact on the host building and is considered to be acceptable with regard to the principal architectural features, and the elevations fronting the highways.

The proposal would result in the 2 additional storeys that would be highly visible from within the adjoining conservation area, and near the listed building. However, due to the stepped and staggered design, it would not result in unacceptable harm to the character of the area, or the setting of the listed building or conservation area.

The proposed development would be provided with an acceptable level of amenity for future residents with regard to floor space, daylight and sunlight, and protection from external noise. Though it is noted that restricting opening of windows to prevent noise from 'Face Bar' and The Butler would be logistically challenging. The condition recommended seeks to ensure that all future owners and renters would have advance warning of the requirements of the acoustic assessment, and also ensure that the live, music venues would not be subject to undue complaints. The adjoining premises would be subject to some loss of daylight/sunlight, however not to an unacceptable degree. The site opposite Eaton Court would also be subject to a new relationship with the proposal, being 12m opposite with direct views into flats. However, this would be similar to the lower levels, as well as not uncommon within an urban setting. The proposal would not result in harm to the adjoining residential properties.

9. RECOMMENDATION

PRIOR APPROVAL GIVEN