

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey

App Ref: PL/25/1453

Address: 33 BEDFORD ROAD, READING

Proposal: The reinstatement of two blocked-up windows to the front at the lower ground floor level and the replacement of an existing door with a window on the rear elevation and unblocking and replacement of a rear facing window, blocking up of side facing ground floor door, and the removal of external open sided canopy, removal of rear external staircase, and associated works.

Applicant: Mr A Jones

Received date: 10 October 2025

Target Decision date: 5 December 2025

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is situated on the western side of Bedford Road, on a prominent corner with Battle Street. The site has been used as a stone masonry for the past 160 years, during which the use of the site has evolved over the years with the production and cutting of stone moved to the other AJ Jones site in rural Ipsden in Oxfordshire, to reduce any impact on the neighbouring residential properties. The overall use of the site had historically, originally been classed as B2. The application site was given a certificate to confirm the lawful use as Class E in 2018 (PL/23/1019 (CLE)).

The site incorporates an ancillary office (first floor) and retail/show room (ground floor) in the main building, with associated storage and distribution taking place at the side and rear of the building. ET Sheppard Monumental Masons and AF Jones Stone Interiors are sister companies advertised at the site which are associated with the main business. ET Sheppard Monumental Masons delivers headstones and arranges for them to be engraved in a workshop in Henley. AF Jones Stone Interiors provides a range of marble and granite products. No stonework is carried out in connection with business at 33 Bedford Road.

The site is within an Air Quality Management Area.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development seeks to reinstate two blocked-up windows (one to the front, and one at the lower ground floor level), and the replacement of an existing door with a window on the rear elevation in the basement. The proposal also seek to block up a side facing ground floor door. Finally, the proposal seeks to remove an external open sided canopy. The works are necessitated by the separate prior approval application sought to convert the property to two flats.

The following plans and documents were submitted with the application:

Cover Letter

Application form

CIL form

Drawing No: 2443-P002-P1-Site Location Plan

Drawing No: 2443-P200-P3-Existing and Proposed Elevations

Drawing No: 2443-P003-P4-Proposed Site Layout

Drawing No: 2443-P100-P5-Proposed Layout Plans

Drawing No: 2443-S100-P2-Existing Floor Plan

As received by the Local Planning Authority on 10 October 2025

Drawing No: 2443-P110-P1-Proposed Layout Plans 2

Drawing No: 2443-P210-P1-Existing and Proposed Elevations 2

As received by the Local Planning Authority on 24 October 2025



Figure 1 - Site Visit Photos - 30 September 2025

3. CONSULTATIONS

None.

A site notice was placed on 16 October 2025 with the expiry date for comments set as 6 November 2025. No comments were received.



Figure 2 - Site notice photo

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/25/1003 (OPA) - Change of use from Class E (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 2 flats. Prior Notification under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Under Consideration

PL/23/1019 (CLE) - Certificate of Lawfulness for existing use of the site as an office with ancillary parking and outbuildings, falling within Use class E. Certificate given 18 October 2023

PL/22/0992 Erection of rear facing dormer and installation of 1no. roof light. Permitted 12/12/2022

PL/18/1816 Demolition of all stonemasons buildings and structures (Class B1c) barring No.33 Bedford Road and residential redevelopment to provide: a basement and two-storey building and single storey bin/cycle store fronting Battle Street, a three-storey building on the corner of Battle Street and Bedford Road, and the change of use and alterations to No.33 Bedford Road, providing in total 9 (6x1, 2x2 and 1x3 bed) residential flats (Class C3). Withdrawn 29/09/2020

PL/93/0518 (930518) - Alterations to frontage inclusive of new display area and erection of new workshop and storage areas to rear of site. Approved 18/4/94.

5. 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.

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. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the 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). Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework December 2024 and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant and would be applied to any future proposal:

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

CC5: WASTE MINIMIATION AND STORAGE

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

Supplementary Planning Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Local Plan Partial 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’.

7. APPRAISAL

Design and character of the area

The proposed development seeks various alterations to the existing non-residential premises at 33 Bedford Road. It includes the reinstatement of two blocked-up windows to the front at the lower ground floor level and the replacement of an existing door with a window on the rear elevation and unblocking and replacement of a rear facing window, blocking up of side facing ground floor door, and the removal of external open sided canopy and associated works. The proposed works seek to alter the building ahead of gaining prior approval for the change of use of the property to two flats (PL/25/1003).

Windows

The proposed development would re-introduce one front facing basement window, and one rear facing basement window. These would be replaced within existing opening that have been blocked up at some point in the past. The proposal included matching the material of the windows with those above. The reinstatement would improve the appearance of the currently blocked up openings.

Doors

The proposal would remove an existing basement door to the rear. The proposal would also remove a side facing ground floor door. The basement door would be replaced with a window to match other windows on the building. The removal of the rear basement door is not considered objectionable, as it would not appear necessary for the building to function. The rear lightwell stairs are also shown for removal. The side facing door is a later addition to the building. It would be blocked up with matching materials (lime render over brick). This change would be unobjectionable as it would be an uncharacteristic element for the area.

Removal of rear canopy

The existing rear canopy served a large piece of industrial equipment which has since been removed. The flat roof metal and timber framed rear canopy is a large and uncharacteristic addition to the end terrace building. The removal of this would improve the appearance of the site, and improve the relationship between it and the neighbouring property.

8. CONCLUSION

Overall, the proposed alterations and additions to the property would revert the property back to a more residential feel of property, and are generally considered to improve the appearance of the dwelling in the Streetscene and with regard to neighbouring properties. As such, the proposal is recommended for approval.

9. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT.