

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey Ward

App Ref: PL/25/1466 Full planning permission

Address: One Station Hill, Reading, RG1 1NR

Proposal: Proposed use of part of the adjoining forecourt to form an outside customer seating area with external alterations to the building

Applicant: C/O Agent

Received date: 14/10/2025

Target Decision date: 25/12/2025

Case Officer: Catrin Davies

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises part of a modern, mixed-use, commercial and residential building, located on Station Hill, close to Reading railway station which gained consent to be redeveloped within (PL/20/1532) The mixed-use redevelopment scheme for the wider site comprises residential units, together with a range of town centre uses, including retail, drinking establishments, hot food takeaways and leisure uses.

The application site relates to Unit 7/9 of the building which is located to the western and southern elevation of One Station Hill adjacent to the existing external staircases.

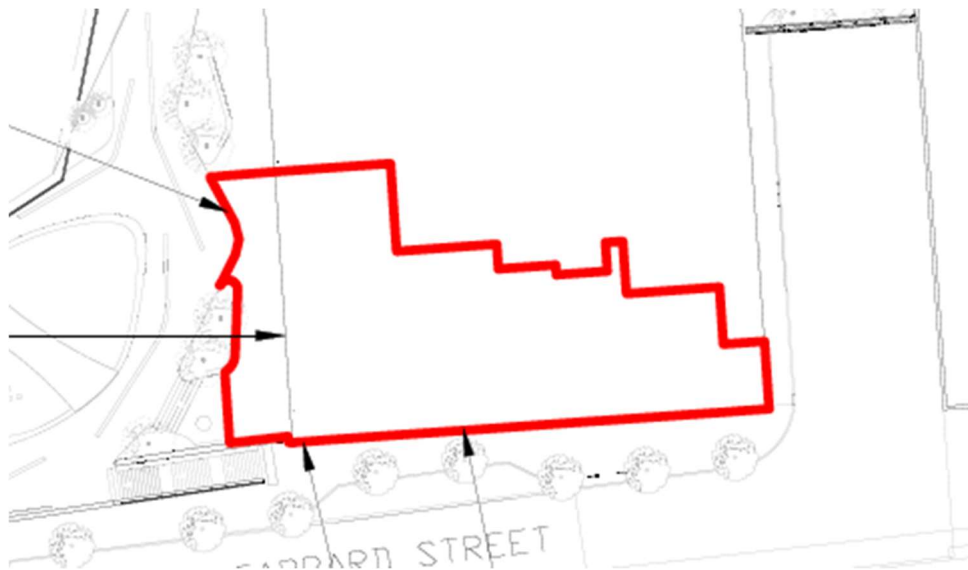


Figure 1: Location Plan

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal seeks planning consent for an external seating area used in connection with Flight Club. The outdoor seating area sits in between the existing external public staircases and the western elevation of One Station Hill. For the avoidance of doubt the seating area would not extend to the public footpath along Garrard Street on the southern elevation.

Plans:

FC-UK-16-I-201 PL01- Proposed elevation received 14/10/25

FC-UK-16-A-010 PL01- Location and site plan received 14/10/25

Planning History:

PL/25/1467- Advertisement Consent for canopy signage with fascia lights and hanging sign. Granted

PL/20/1532- Outline application under s.73 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 with all matters reserved for mixed use redevelopment of Plot E of the Station Hill site and neighbouring Telecom House site (48 to 51 Friar Street & 4 to 20 Garrard Street) to comprise the demolition of existing buildings and erection of new buildings/ structures to provide residential units (Use Class C3), a range of town centre uses, including retail and related uses (Use Class E (a), (b) and (c); Drinking establishments (sui generis) and Hot food takeaways (sui generis)), and leisure uses (Use Class E (d), (e), and (f); Class F.1; Class F.2; and Theatres; Cinemas; Concert Halls; Bingo Halls; Dance- Approved

3. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

Transport Development Control

No objection

Environment Protection team

No objection subject to condition restricting the use of the area after 11pm.

A site notice was displayed at the site, and no letters of representation were received.

4. 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).

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'

The Local Plan Partial Update was submitted to the Secretary of State on 9th May 2025. Submission marks the beginning of a process of public examination led by an independent Inspector. Due to the stage of examination, the draft Local Plan can be afforded limited weight.

Relevant Policies:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (Nov 2019)

CC1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)

CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)

CR1 (Design and Central Ready)

CR4 (leisure, culture and tourism in Central Reading)

CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)

EN16 (Pollution and water resources)

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.

5. APPRAISAL

Land Use Considerations

Policy CC1 (Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development) requires a positive approach to development proposals that reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which lies at the heart of the National Planning Policy (NPPF). To achieve sustainable development a proposal needs to meet economic, social and environmental objectives.

The application is located within the Central Core where leisure facilities and tourism facilities are encouraged. This proposal would expand the leisure and tourism facilities offered at the site and is therefore considered appropriate within this town centre location in compliance with policy CR4 of the Reading Local Plan.

Design and Character

Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) aims to preserve or enhance the character of the area in which a development is in terms of layout, landscape, density, scale, height, massing, architectural detail and materials. Policy CR1 (Design and Central Ready) requires applications for development within Central Reading to demonstrate appropriate relationships between buildings and spaces, and frontages that engage with the street at lower levels, and contributing towards enhanced ease of movement through and around the central area.

The proposal would be sited adjacent to the western elevation within only limited views from Garrard Street. The seating area would be contained within the spaces and does not overspill onto the public footpath of Gerald Street as such is not considered to intensify or clutter the footpath. The application site is located within the core central where external seating areas in connection with leisure facilities are common as such the proposal would not be out of character for the area. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with policies CC7 and CR1 of the Reading Local Plan.

The ancillary adverts are assessed under application PL/25/1467.

Residential Amenity

Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan requires that “Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of:

- Privacy and overlooking;
- Access to sunlight and daylight;
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;

- Harm to outlook ...”

Additionally, policy EN16 states that “development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment and sensitive receptors through land, noise or light pollution.”

The application would be located within close proximity to residential units; the intention of the seating area is to create an outside space for future customers to eat and drink the purpose is not an external entertainment venue. This relationship would be similar to other external seating areas associated with restaurant/leisure facilities within the core centre as such this relationship is common with the town centre. It is therefore not considered the proposal would result in undue harm to neighbouring amenities however it is considered that conditions will be included within the decision notice restricting opening hours, external noise and containing the seating area to ensure that the noise does not result in harm to neighbouring amenities.

6. CONCLUSION

The development is considered acceptable in terms of appearance and with no harmful impacts on residential amenities. The development has been assessed against the policies within the Reading Local Plan the policies of the NPPF, guidance in the PPG, and other material considerations including third party representations. It has been concluded that the development would not result in any harm that would justify refusal in the public interest. The decision has been taken in compliance with the requirement of the NPPF to foster the delivery of sustainable development in a positive and proactive manner

7. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Planning Permission

Subject to the conditions.