

Supporting Application Statement

PROPOSED NEW COFFEE SHOP WITH NEW SHOPFRONT & AWNING WITHIN THE CURTILAGE OF THE SITE
AT 93 WHITLEY STREET, READING RG2 0EQ

Client: Ms. F. Kurti
Date: January 2026
Job no: 193_DAS_v1



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App 1 – Reading Shopfronts

Revision	Summary of Changes	Date	Rev By	Chkd By

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1.00 INTRODUCTION

1.01 AIMS OF THE STATEMENT

This Supporting Statement accompanies a full planning application by Ms Florine Kurti for a proposed new shopfront with awning over an open-air dining area.

The description of development is as follows:

'Proposed new coffee shop with new shopfront with bi-folding doors and awning within the curtilage of the site.'

The aims of this Design and Access Statement are to show that the proposed development has been informed by an awareness of the site's context, principles highlighted by Reading Borough Council and national policies.

The statement will explain the proposals, identify the factors which have influenced this application and highlight the principles that were incorporated in the detailed design of the proposed works.

This statement is in accordance with CABE's guidance 'Design and Access Statements – How to Write, Read and Use Them', the Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019), and the criteria highlighted within National Planning Policy Framework especially regarding 'good design' (2024).

1.02 PLANNING POLICIES

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 planning policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

Within the Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019), the main Cross Cutting Policies relevant to the development are:

Policy CC1 'Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development' A positive approach to considering development proposals will be taken that reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Where appropriate, the council will work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible.

Policy CC7 'Design and the Public Realm' All developments must be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of the development form will be assessed to ensure that the development proposed makes a positive contribution. The local character and sense of place should be positively enhanced within the local context.

Policy CC8 'Safeguarding Amenity' Development will not cause detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties.

Policy EN1 'Protection & enhancement of Heritage Assets' Historic features, area of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced, this will include Conservation Areas.

Policy OU5 'Shopfronts & Cash Machines' 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.

Reading Borough Council Design Guide to Shopfronts (Jan 2022)

2.00 SITE ASSESSMENT

2.01 LOCATION AND MOVEMENT NETWORKS

The application site is part of a District Centre located on Whitley Street, Reading. The site is currently in disrepair and was last used as a fashion retail offer.

Whitley Street links with Southampton Street to the north which tapers with Mount Pleasant linking to Reading Centre and the Oracle. To the east Whitley Street forms a junction with Christchurch Road leading to Reading University. Whitley Street is part of a one-way road system forming a main arterial road into Reading Town Centre from the southern suburbs and was an historical stopping point for travellers.

The site is located at 94 Whitley Street close to the junction of Essex Street and is located on the southern end of the Whitley Street District Centre. The Whitley Street District Centre extends for the majority of the road with a broad mix of shops and facilities ranging from grocers, hardware stores to a small convenience store.

Almost all the surrounding area is two storey buildings, being a mixture of residential and retail uses. There are also a few clinics linked to the hospital which are located east of the site towards the hospital. Many of these clinics are formed from converted residences.

There are good shopping, community and recreation facilities nearby and the transport links are excellent, with the No. 5 & 6 bus service running to and from Reading Centre. The bus services along Christchurch Road, 21, 3 & 9 are a short 5-minute walk away. This coupled with the nearby University site, means the area is very well serviced by most town centre activities, most within walking distance.



Existing external dining area



Historic use of retail unit (circa 2000)



2.02 SITE AND PLANNING HISTORY

Historical Ordnance Survey plans indicate that the terrace dates back to circa 1872. The site was originally designated as a residential property, however, over the years it has operated as Retail Shop with residential flat over and functioned as this for circa over 25 years under an A3 use. Whilst Whitley grew as a prosperous suburb, recent years have seen a decline in the area with ad-hoc retailers on short term tenancies. This has led to unsympathetic conversions and shopfronts with the last 'New Fashion' tenant leaving the property due to a decline in sales. The property has remained a vacant retail unit, which soon became the target for vandalism, and the property is rundown and requires significant investment.



1872-77 Ordnance Survey

The current operators took over the property in early 2025, with a view to substantially invested in revitalising the run-down retail unit and commenced trading as Coffee House. However, the new tenant

wishes to follow due process with Planning and Building Regulations to meet new and relevant legislation.

The Coffee House hopes to become a thriving business, local employer and a community hub in Whitley, not just for students, but nurses, nearby clinics/hospital, young families, young professionals as well as the retired community.

The site is proposed as a Coffee House with 22 internal covers and 12 open air covers.

The Coffee House will be located near the corner between Essex Street and Whitley Street within a terrace of three retailers. This prominent position together with a sensitive modern shopfront fit out with historical references for today's discerning customer will allow the Coffee House to raise its profile within the area.

The Coffee House forms part of a short run of shops on the west side of Whitley Street close to the roundabout junction which are set back from the highway by circa 4.8m. The existing elevation will retain a prominence on the streetscene, with an existing concrete hardstanding that defines the external area allowing the existing footpath on Whitley Street to be retained.

In terms of planning history for the property there are no records on the council planning website. However, the pre-application response stated the following.

For confirmation, the proposal to use the site as a coffee shop would not amount to a change of use, as the premises are considered to be in a Lawful planning use as Class E (Commercial) already.



Junction of Whitley Street Road & Christchurch Road

2.03 LAND USE

The property's immediate and contextually surroundings to the north, east and south are a mix of retail and residential in nature. Please note the mix of existing building styles, advertising and single storey side and front canopy extensions.

2.04 LANDSCAPE AND FLOODING

The existing building at 94 Whitley Street occupies its current site curtilage, with no historical extensions to the building. The area in front of No.94 and that of its neighbouring retailers is demised to these properties as this area does not form part of the public footpath.

The site is not identified by the Environmental Agency as somewhere at risk of flooding and as such a Flood Risk Assessment does not accompany this application.



Whitley Street District Centre

2.05 SCALE AND AMOUNT

The properties on Whitley Street are mainly two/three storeys in height with ridge heights approximately 7-8m above finished floor level.

2.06 ARCHITECTURAL VENACULAR

The surrounding properties are mainly built around the mid/late Ninetieth Century. The predominant materials are red/grey brick with contrasting coloured brick features, bay windows and grey slate pitched roofs.

The application property has been re-roofed in the past and benefits from feature brickwork in red and grey above the shopfront. Evidence of structural ties to the front elevation at first floor indicate that these must remain for building integrity purposes. The existing shopfront

features need repair as well as the removal of the security shutters that have been added in the past.

The form of the building line is linear to the west of Whitley Street and is illustrated in the drawing above. The proposal will not detract from this building form but rather enhance the linear building line with a traditional awning feature. The proposal comfortably respects the existing linear building line and becomes a seamless addition to the locality.



Form of Linear Building Line

3.00 DESIGN

3.01 PRINCIPLES OF DEVELOPMENT

It is evident from the 'site assessment' that various opportunities and constraints exist which needed to be incorporated when formulating a design for any development of the proposed site. For ease of understanding the main principles have been identified:

- The existing site is brownfield and is in need of development to improve safety and provide a more aesthetic addition to the streetscene. (CC7 Design of Public Realm)
- The area surrounding the site is mainly retail and residential in nature.
- There is an existing level access from Whitley Street which could be utilised within any development of the site.
- The site is relatively level given its current use.

There is an opportunity to comprehensively design the shopfront, to assist in a design precedent and provide an externally covered dining area which would fit well with the surrounding context in terms of use and scale as well as vibrance and vitality.

It should be noted that the applicant approached the council planners via a pre-application (ref: [PL/25/0855](#)) regarding a sketch proposal in June 2025. In October 2025 (four months later) a response was received that.

- Confirmed the lawful planning use of the site
- Provided guidance to SPD Design Guide for Shopfronts
- Relevant Reading Borough Local Plan Policies
- Brief commentary on the proposal

This application now responds to the commentary made and guidance provided concerning the shopfront element of the proposal. In addition, references have also been made to current and historical 'Reading Shopfront Vernacular' which will accord with the SPD guidance.

3.02 Planning Policy

Reading Borough Local Plan, Policy CC7, states that 'All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located'. The policy further advocates for the creation of positive local context with character and distinctiveness, with inclusive design for all users.

Policy CC8 Safeguarding Amenity states 'Development will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties.' This also includes matters such as hours of business and effects of traffic movements.

Policy EN1 seeks to protect and where possible enhance the historic environment which extends to Conservation Areas. The inclusion of the 'setting' of a historic environment is to be considered.

Policy OU5 specifically refers to the individual shopfront features that positively influence the building character. This also extends to canopy and security features.

The SPD 'Design Guide for Shopfronts' has been referenced along with the examples provided within and the historic Reading shopfront vernacular.

3.03 Proposal

In considering the design of the proposed shopfront and canopy due regard has been given to the SPD, surroundings and local character.

The pre-application submission did not meet with officer support and kindly made specific reference to page 13 of the SPD, concerning shopfront design. The SPD has provided useful elements to be reviewed in the context of the site and wider area (App1).

The SPD also provides historic photos of Reading shopfronts in both Oxford Road and Castle St. On closer inspection it is clear that the canopy awning design is typically located over the shopfront fascia. The existing application shopfront provides an area above the fascia for such a feature.



Oxford Road (RBC Archive)

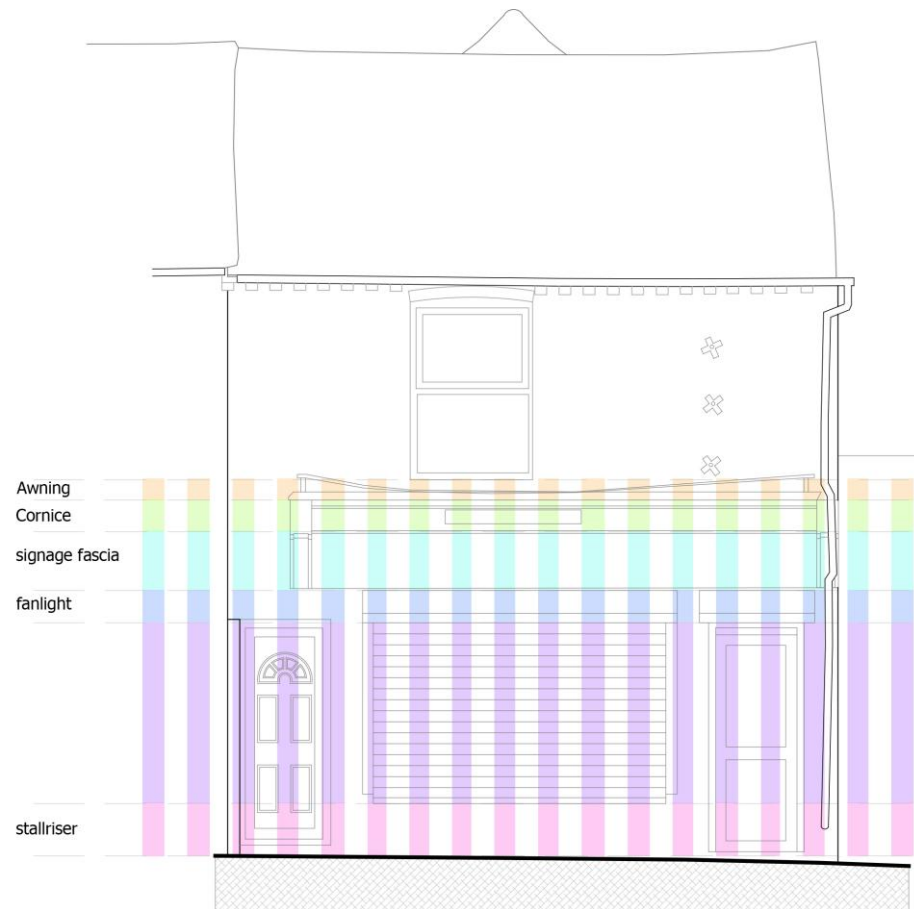


Castle Street (RBC Archive)

The prescriptive Elements of a shopfront provided within the SPD have been reviewed in the context of the site. Whilst no shopfront features currently exist, this has provided an opportunity to introduce key elements with a modern bespoke shopfront that will respect the character of the area.

Modern construction and manufacturing techniques have created systems and products that sit harmoniously with their historical counterparts i.e. the glass pyramid at the Louvre. Taking the traditional shopfront theme, the design has sought to re-invent this with modern techniques that are sensitive to the character of the area.

The overall main shopfront frame is to be an aluminium system which employs the latest technology for slim line profiles. The main supporting framework will have an integrated internal security shutter system. Technological advances have allowed the tempered glazing to be 10mm thick, and still durable for maintenance purposes.



Key elements of a Shopfront

The overall main shopfront frame is to be an aluminium system which employs the latest technology for slim line profiles. The main supporting framework will have an integrated internal security shutter system. Technological advances have allowed the tempered glazing to be 10mm thick, and still durable for maintenance purposes.

Much of the Victorian ironworks were either black or a cream white in colour. In order to relate back to the Victorian theme, the main framework of the proposal is to be Black Grey RAL 7021, with clear glazing. This colour palette would assist in minimising any impact of the proposal.

The proposed glazing to the shopfront doors in elevation will consist of two types. The bi-fold doors will be created with a low transom bar that replicates the existing stallriser proportions. Glazing will be provided above and below the transom, however, the lower glazing panel will benefit from a thin manifestation decal. The manifestation will not unduly obscure any views both into and out of the shopfront. This feature detailing was referenced on p.27 of the SPD as a good example of visibility into a shopfront. This is another strong reference to the local character of the area.



Oxford Road. Good example of sympathetic window display that provides visibility into the shop and avoids use of decals or opaque glazing (Source: RBC Planning SPD).

The shopfront proposal will not cause any privacy or overlooking issues by virtue of its location. In terms of overshadowing issues, the proposal is within a terrace and therefore no overshadowing will occur. Whilst the eastern elevation will get some sunlight, this will be relatively short lived, due to the surrounding buildings. The design has taken into consideration the neighbouring businesses i.e. Launderette and Barbers and is sympathetic to the existing sightlines that these frontages have and continue to enjoy. The proposed awning will not block out views when deployed and will be located above the existing fascia to emulate the Reading vernacular.



Proposed Awning type over fascia

The Coffee House proposes to operate opening hours of 7.00am – 4.00pm and therefore will not increase any noise/disturbance. The café's kitchen will utilise an efficient extract system so there will be no fumes/smells generated by the proposal.

In terms of staff there is a mix of full and part time staff. The total number of hours the Cafe is open is approximately 63 so the maximum number of possible hours are 14 (staff) x 56 = 784

It is suggested 5 people work 40 hours and 5 people work 20 hours and 4 people work 10 hours = 200 + 100 + 40 = 340 hours so

$784/340 = 2.3$ therefore the full-time equivalent staff is $14/2.3 = 6$

It is envisaged that the proposal will not generate an increase in traffic with specific deliveries to be timed and co-ordinated out of peak times. The proposed seating covers are 22 covers internally and 10 covers externally (within the proposal).

The approximate anticipated consumer figures that will frequent the café can be broken down as follows.

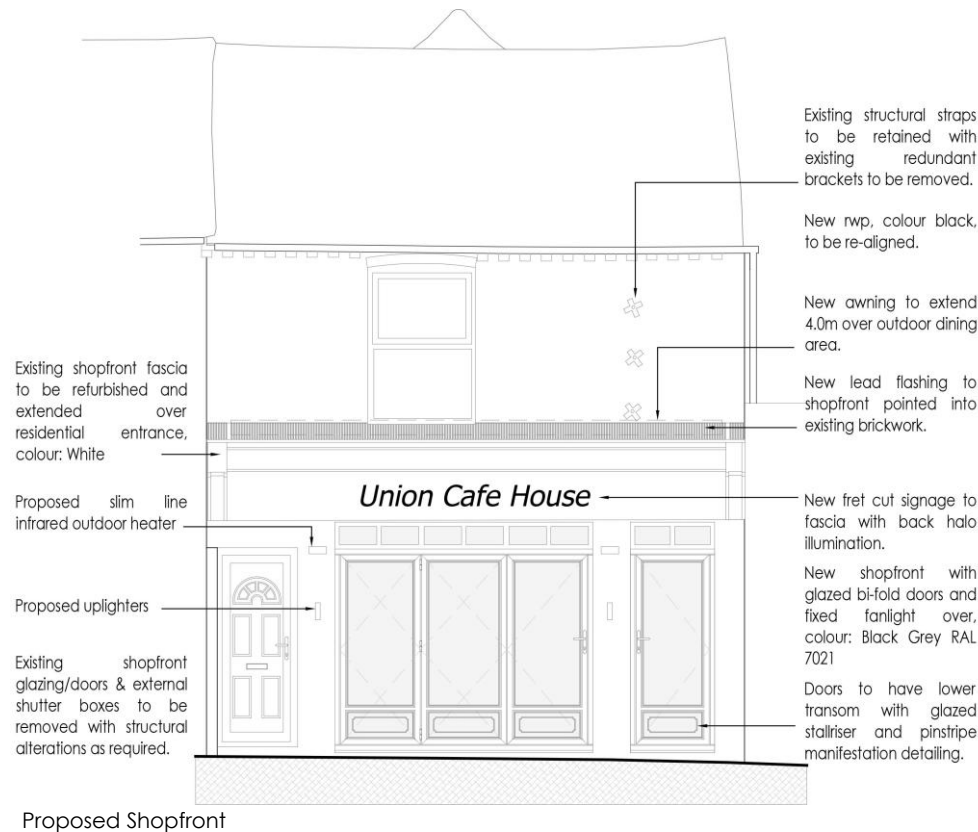
Drive to the café	5%
Walk to the café	70% (students)
Walk to the café	25% (local community)

Security of the proposal has been duly considered, and it is proposed to utilise integrated security shutters which are motorised, with an open shutter lath profile that allows relief to the elevation when in the closed position. Furthermore, to contrast with the framing system, it is proposed that the security shutters are White Aluminium (RAL 9006) in colour. This further animates the elevations when the café has closed for business.

The existing shopfront windows and doors are protected by externally mounted shutters which are time expired and costly to maintain, not to mention out of keeping with the character of the area. The above proposal will modernise the security feature with well-designed and integrated shutters.

Other enhanced security measures will be considered i.e. CCTV and motion detectors.

The proposal is therefore of the highest possible quality and design whilst respecting the Victorian design principles of the area.



Proposed Shopfront

3.04 LAND USE

The proposal is to provide a new shopfront with bi-folding doors that open onto the external dining area, whilst replicating the features and proportions of a traditional shopfront.

The recently extended area of the Christchurch Conservation Area is now directly opposite the application site, and the current shopfront does not accord with Policy EN1 having a negative impact on the

area. Views into, out of and within a conservation area are significant because they are often a defining characteristic that contributes to its special interest and sense of place. These views are important for maintaining the area's historic and architectural character, and their preservation is a key goal when considering new development.

The new shopfront, whilst formed in modern materials and technology, will complement the character of the area and hopefully encourage other quality design.

3.05 ACCESS AND LAYOUT

The proposals are to retain the existing level access to 94 Whitley Street to access the site. This will allow access for pedestrians and from public footpaths.

As mentioned earlier the site has the benefit of good public transport links to the town centre and railway stations using the frequent bus service along Whitley Street. Most local facilities, including schools, shops, library, places of worship and recreation ground are accessible by foot, and the majority are no longer than a ten-minute walk or less.

3.06 SCALE

The proposal is the removal of the existing shopfront and externally mounted security shutter boxes. The existing fascia is to be extended over the residential access door in order to bring a symmetry and proportion to the frontage. The proposed shopfront is to be an aluminium frame with low transom bar and toughened glazing. A fabric-based awning is also proposed to reflect the historical feature and to allow external dining and promote an active frontage and vitality to the area.

The scale of the new awning proposal will be at a height to reflect historical detailing and will be located above the fascia, thus retaining the shop front proportions indicative of the surrounding area.

Therefore, it is considered that there will be no visual dominance or overbearing issues from the awning proposal.

The proposal will be in scale to the existing properties on Whitley Street. The materials used will complement the area and be in keeping with the Coffee House proposal.

3.07 LANDSCAPING AND OPEN SPACE

The existing external dining area is to be defined with 'Bolero' type removable barriers on stainless steel posts. It is envisaged that the 'Bolero' barriers are removed each day at close of business. In terms of hard landscaping the existing uneven concrete hardstanding is to be replaced with permeable block paving setts that will add to the character of the area.



Typical removable barriers

3.08 ARCHITECTURE AND APPEARANCE

It is proposed to replace the existing time expired shopfront with an integrated awning to provide cover for the external dining area. The proposal will help define the external area and give this active retail plot the vitality of a café offer. The reference to Victorian features strengthens the proposal from the form, colour and glazing. The proposal can further integrate and interact with its surroundings when the awning is deployed.

The awning membrane is to benefit from the latest fabric technology and allow natural light to percolate into the dining area.

3.09 WASTE MANAGEMENT

A common rear access linking to Essex Street is available to the three retailers in this terrace and also includes the bin store access. Kerbside collections will be arranged with the local authority.

3.10 EXTERNAL LIGHTING

The external dining area is to be illuminated with energy efficient uplighters to the shopfront. The space will be heated by infrared heaters by Burda with variable heat control.



Proposed visual

4.00 CONCLUSION

The physical extent of the development proposed within this District Centre location has been appropriately designed ensuring the visual impact upon the character, appearance and visual amenity of the locality has been preserved and enhanced.

It is the applicant's desire to create a high-quality enhancement to the site, the scheme has been designed to the highest standards thus ensuring a quality and sensitive development overall within keeping of its surroundings.

The proposal will not give rise to any adverse impacts upon the retail/residential amenities within the District Centre currently enjoyed by existing retailers/residents within the proximity of the site.

The proposal makes a positive contribution to the wider area within this District Centre, enhancing the vitality and viability of the area. Therefore, it is in accordance with Policy CC7.

Following the loss of the Greggs bakery the existing vacant property is to be revitalised as a café and promote a community hub and feature of Whitley Street, therefore the proposal is in accordance with Policy CC8.

The development will not prejudice highway safety conditions along Whitley Street or at the junctions immediately adjacent to the site.

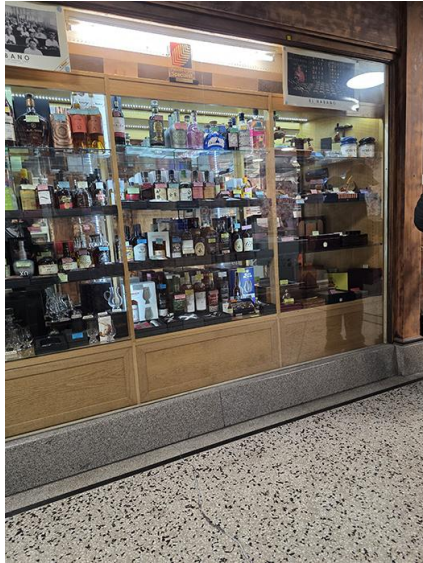
Given the proposals lack of encroachment and visibility beyond the immediate vicinity of the site, it is not considered that there would be any harmful visual impact on the retail/residential environment and therefore considered to be acceptable and in accordance with policies CC7, CC8, EN1 and OU5 of the Local Plan.

The development therefore not only complies with national planning guidance and strategic and local planning policies but also enhances the area. On the basis of the evidence and justification set out in this

Supporting Statement with the application, it is respectfully requested that this application be approved.

5.00 APPENDIX

Appendix 1 – Typical Reading centre shopfronts with manifestation



Harris Arcade – stallriser behind glazing



Harris Arcade – stallriser manifestation



Minster St - Planters defining external dining area



Station Rd – Stallriser manifestation