



ERECTION OF OUTBUILDING FOR USE ASSOCIATED WITH KADAMPA MEDITATION CENTRE

Planning, Design & Access Statement (incl. Heritage Statement)

**9 Bath Road
Reading
RG1 6HH**

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Introduction

This Planning, Design & Access Statement has been prepared by NAPC Ltd to support the planning application for the erection of a single-storey outbuilding for ancillary use associated with Kadampa Meditation Centre at *9 Bath Road, Reading, RG1 6HH*.

The purpose of the outbuilding is to provide additional space for use associated with the meditation centre, due to growing demand for the centre's services. The outbuilding will be used by the centre for meditation classes, retreats, and day courses.

In support of the application, a supporting letter has been provided (Appendix A), offering additional context and background to demonstrate the need for the outbuilding.

The supporting documents submitted as part of this application are:

- Location Plan
- Existing Block Plan
- Proposed Block Plan
- Proposed Elevations
- Proposed Floor Plan
- Supporting Letter from the Applicant

Proposal

As stated above, this application proposes the erection of a single-storey outbuilding for use associated with Kadampa Meditation Centre. The outbuilding will provide additional space to meet the centre's growing demand for its services.

The proposed outbuilding will measure 10.2m x 5.7m (overall footprint of 53 sqm) and will feature a mono-pitched roof, with a maximum height of 2.95m at its highest point and 2.59m at its lowest point.

The outbuilding will feature the following high-quality materials:

- **Foundations** – Great British Screw company ground screw foundations. 150mm Interlocking steel coated structurally insulated floor panels sit on top of foundation system.
- **Roof** – Pent roof with 120mm of high-density polyurethane insulation surrounded by 1mm steel plates. 150mm overall depth.
- **Fenestration** – French door/window with Planitherm glass to front elevation. Single door to rear elevation. 2x small full height windows (non-opening); 2x square windows (opening, top-hung); 3x Lozenge windows (opening, top-hung). All windows finished with Planitherm glass.
- **External cladding** – Tanalised shiplap vertical redwood timber cladding to rear and side elevations. Slatted honey redwood cladding to front elevation.

Site Context

Application Site

The application site is located on the southern side of Bath Road, in the central-western part of Reading. The site is within the administrative boundaries of Reading Borough Council. The site comprises the main building which is currently occupied by Kadampa Meditation Centre. A large private garden extends towards the south of the property and ample off-street parking is provided to the front of the property.

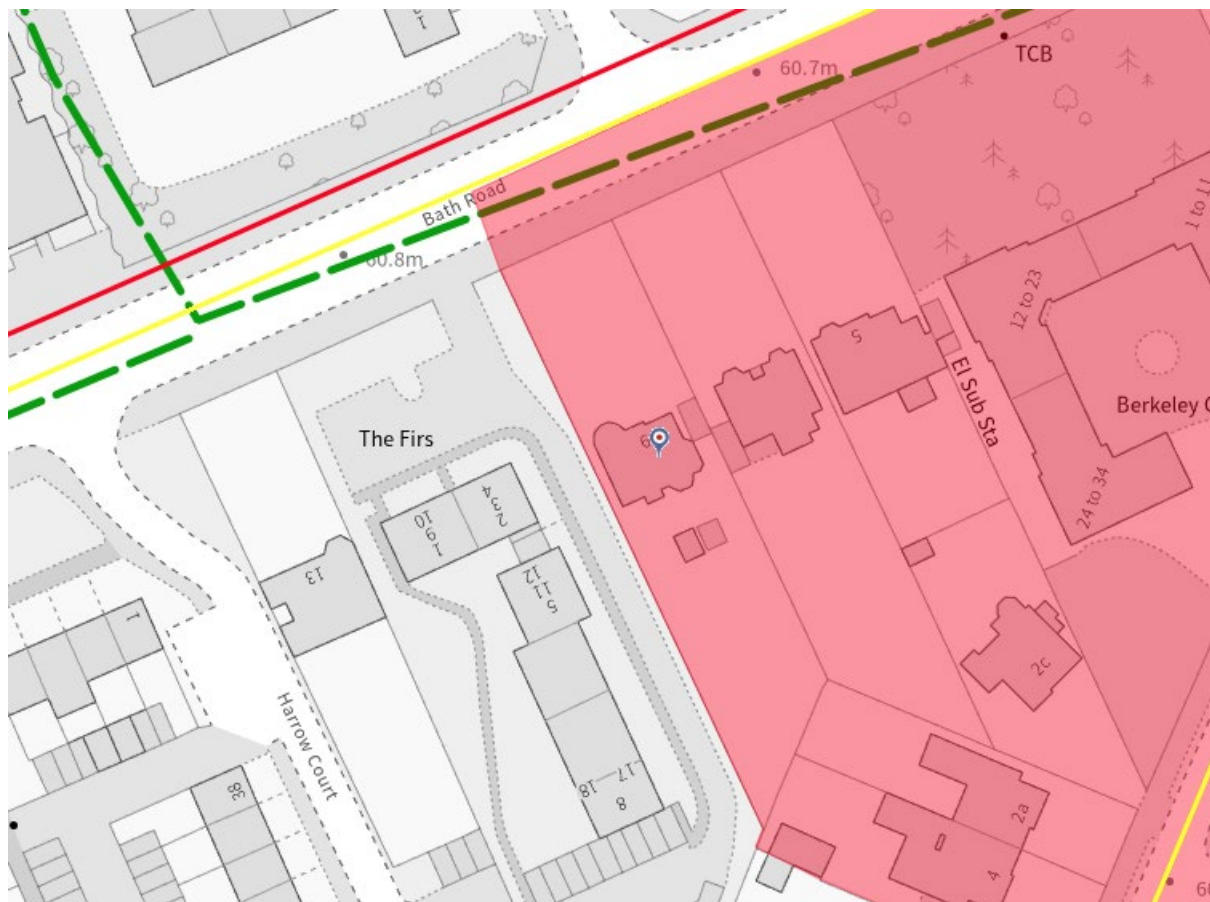
The plot is bordered by neighbouring gardens to the eastern and south-eastern boundaries, and a public highway which runs parallel to the western boundary. The curtilage of the property is clearly defined with domestic fencing and mature vegetation, serving as an effective screen to minimise any potential impact on neighbouring amenity and on the street scene.

The surrounding area features a mix of residential and non-residential properties and land uses, with many sites and gardens featuring outbuildings, meaning that the creation of a new outbuilding in this location would not be out of character with the surrounding area.

Site Designations

As per the adopted Reading Borough Local Plan policy map, the application site is located within the Russell Street and Castle Hill Conservation Area. The Environment Agency's Flood Map confirms that the site is within Flood Zone 1, which is categorised as having the lowest risk of fluvial and tidal flooding.

Figure 1: Extract from Reading Borough Local Plan policy map (accessed January 2026).



Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that decisions must be made in accordance the Local Development Plan unless material considerations suggest otherwise.

The relevant policies for assessing this proposal are outlined in the adopted Reading Borough Local Plan (2019), the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024), and any relevant Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance (SPDs/SPGs).

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

- Policy CC1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy CC7 – Design and the Public Realm
- Policy CC8 – Safeguarding Amenity
- Policy EN1 – Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
- Policy EN3 – Enhancement of Conservation Areas
- Policy EN6 – New Development in a Historic Context
- Policy EN14 – Trees, Hedges and Woodland
- Policy TR5 – Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
- Policy OU1 – New and Existing Community Facilities

SPD's/SPGs

- Design Guide to House Extensions SPD (2021)
- Russell Street & Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal (2020)

NPPF (2024)

- Paragraph 8 – Achieving sustainable development
- Paragraph 11 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- Paragraph 39 – Approaching decision making in a positive and creative way
- Paragraph 96 – Achieving healthy, inclusive and safe places
- Paragraph 124 – Making effective use of land
- Paragraph 131 – Creating high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places
- Paragraphs 202-214 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

The proposal seeks planning permission for the erection of a single-storey outbuilding within the curtilage of 9 Bath Road for use by the centre for meditation classes, retreats, and day courses.

In accordance with Policy CC1, the proposal represents a small-scale form of development within an established plot, in a sustainable and accessible location. The development makes efficient use of land without resulting in the loss of open space or community facilities, thereby aligning with Policy OU1.

It is worth noting that a similar scheme was approved for the site on 27th July 2021 (ref: **211224**) for the erection of a 72 sqm meditation room extension and internal refurbishment. This demonstrates that the principle of an outbuilding is therefore acceptable in this context, subject to its detailed design, impact on neighbouring amenity, and compliance with relevant design guidance.

Design & Character

Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and the Design Guide to House Extensions SPD (2021) emphasise the importance of high-quality design that responds positively to its surroundings. The proposed single-storey outbuilding is of modest scale (53 sqm) and has been designed to sit comfortably within the plot, ensuring that it remains clearly subordinate to the host property.

The proposed materials reflect a high standard of sustainable construction and a natural palette that integrates well with the garden setting. The use of vertical and slatted timber cladding, coupled with Planitherm glazing, ensures a contemporary but sympathetic appearance. The fenestration has been positioned to balance natural light with privacy considerations.

The design respects the established character of the area and, compliant with Policies EN1, EN3, and EN6, ensures that there is no harm to the surrounding built context and pattern of development.

Neighbouring Amenity

Policy CC8 requires development not to adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. The outbuilding has been carefully sited to avoid overbearing impacts, overshadowing, or loss of privacy. At single-storey height, it will not give rise to undue visual intrusion.

Window placements have been considered to minimise overlooking, consistent with the SPD guidance on fenestration. The small-scale nature of the proposal means that noise, disturbance, and light spill will be minimal and no greater than that typically associated with incidental garden structures.

Therefore, the proposal is fully compliant with Policy CC8 and relevant SPD guidance, safeguarding the living conditions of neighbouring properties.

Access, Highways & Parking

The outbuilding will remain ancillary to the commercial use of the site to better serve existing visitors. As such, it will not create a requirement for separate access or parking.

Policy TR5 is satisfied, as sufficient off-street parking exists to the front of the property to meet the needs of the demand for the centre. Access arrangements remain unchanged, with no intensification of use that would compromise highway safety.

Trees

Policy EN14 seeks to protect trees and vegetation that contribute to the Borough's landscape character and ecological value. Furthermore, as the site is located within a designated conservation area, all trees within the site are protected. The proposed outbuilding is to be positioned within an existing area of maintained garden where no significant trees, hedgerows, or vegetation will be removed or harmed by development.

The submitted block plan confirms that there are no trees within the immediate footprint of the proposed building, and the development will be sited clear of any root protection areas. Construction will take place on a screw-pile foundation system, which is a low-impact method that minimises soil disturbance and avoids deep excavation. This ensures that any nearby root systems are safeguarded during and after construction. Existing boundary vegetation and garden planting will be retained and enhanced to maintain privacy and soften the visual appearance of the structure within the site.

Considering the above, the proposal accords with Policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) by preserving existing trees and enhancing the site's green character through sensitive construction and landscape retention.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The proposed development has been informed by a detailed assessment of existing ecological features and is supported by a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Small Sites Metric, an Existing BNG Plan, Proposed BNG Plan, and a Biodiversity Net Gain Management Plan.

The outbuilding will result in the loss of 53 sqm of vegetated garden land; however, this is fully compensated through on-site habitat creation and enhancement, including the provision of a newly-created vegetated garden (including Wildflower Meadow and Sensory Planting) and the planting of 3 new trees. These measures deliver a measurable biodiversity uplift and achieve a minimum 10% BNG in accordance with the Environment Act 2021 as amended by the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024.

The implementation, protection, and long-term management of all existing and proposed biodiversity features over a minimum 30-year period are secured through a dedicated Biodiversity Net Gain Implementation and Management Plan, which should be read in full alongside this Planning Statement.

Heritage Statement

Conservation Area Significance

The property lies within the Russell Street and Castle Hill Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The proposed development must be assessed against the statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. In addition, the proposal is to be judged in accordance with the Russell Street & Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal (2020) and the relevant heritage policies in the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019), including Policies EN1, EN3, and EN6.

The Russell Street and Castle Hill Conservation Area is an area of special architectural and historic interest that derives much of its character from the predominance of 19th Century residential terraces and villas. The layout of the streets, the rhythm of terraced and semi-detached dwellings, and the consistent use of traditional brickwork and decorative detailing contribute to its strong historic

character. Gardens, boundary walls and mature landscaping also form an important part of the area's special interest, providing a sense of enclosure and reinforcing the domestic scale of the area.

The area is significant for its association with the expansion of Reading during the Victorian period and its continuing role as a coherent example of historic suburban development. The application site is situated within this wider context but is located within a private garden that is set back from the main road frontage. This positioning reduces its prominence in the conservation area streetscape.

Heritage Assessment

The application proposes the construction of a modest single-storey outbuilding, positioned within the rear garden of the Meditation Centre. Its design adopts a low-profile form with a shallow pent roof, clad in high-quality redwood timber with slatted detailing to the front elevation. The building incorporates modern fenestration using Planitherm glass and is constructed using sustainable methods, including screw pile foundations and structurally insulated panels. The choice of materials is contemporary in detail but natural in appearance, ensuring the building sits comfortably within a garden setting.

The impact of the proposal has been considered against Local Plan Policies EN1, EN3 and EN6. The outbuilding is subordinate to the host property, that will not compete with or detract from the surrounding historic setting. Its siting within the rear garden ensures that it does not visible from public views and will not disrupt the historic street pattern that characterises the Conservation Area.

The use of natural timber cladding provides a sympathetic and recessive finish, and the simple, unobtrusive design means that the proposal will not introduce any incongruous or discordant features. Furthermore, the development does not involve the removal of boundary treatments or landscape features that contribute to the area's character, and it preserves the garden setting which is an important element of the conservation area's historic character and significance.

Planning Balance

The proposal has been considered against the local development plan and material considerations. As set out above, the development is acceptable in principle, is of an appropriate scale and design, preserves neighbouring amenity, safeguards trees and biodiversity, and preserves the character and appearance of the Russell Street and Castle Hill Conservation Area. No technical concerns arise in relation to access, parking, ecology, or heritage, and the scheme has been carefully designed to minimise any potential impacts.

Any perceived harm associated with the proposal is limited in nature and relates primarily to the introduction of a modest additional structure within a private garden. However, this is mitigated by the small footprint, single-storey form, discreet siting, and high-quality, recessive design, which ensures that the outbuilding remains clearly subordinate to the host property and largely screened from public view. The development does not result in any material harm to visual amenity, heritage significance, residential amenity, or environmental assets.

These limited and carefully managed effects are significantly outweighed by the clear social and community benefits arising from the proposal. The outbuilding will provide dedicated space to support meditation classes, retreats, and day courses, facilitating the continued operation of an established community facility in a highly accessible and sustainable location. The provision of improved, purpose-built accommodation will enhance the quality, accessibility, and resilience of services offered by the centre, supporting mental wellbeing, community cohesion, and inclusive social activity, objectives that are strongly supported by both local and national planning policy.

In addition, the proposal delivers wider public benefits through sustainable construction methods, long-term biodiversity enhancement achieving a 10% BNG, and the efficient use of land within an existing developed site. Taken together, these benefits align with the core planning principles of sustainable development outlined in the NPPF and reinforce the positive contribution of the proposal to the surrounding area and local community.

On balance, it is therefore concluded that the social and community benefits of the development clearly outweigh any limited and localised impacts. The proposal represents sustainable development for which planning permission should be granted in accordance with the development plan and the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Conclusion

This Planning, Design & Access Statement has demonstrated that the proposed outbuilding for use associated with Kadampa Meditation Centre, 9 Bath Road aligns with both national and local planning policies, regarding its design, use, visual impact, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), and heritage considerations.

We therefore politely request that this application is granted planning permission without delay.

Positive and Proactive Decision-Making

NPPF Paragraph 39 states that local planning authorities should approach decisions positively and proactively, working with the applicants and agents to reach amicable solutions. As such, we ask that Reading Borough Council works positively and proactively with the applicant and agent on this application. Should the council require any further information or any clarification on any aspects of the application, we ask that this is requested from NAPC Ltd before a decision is issued, to ensure that a positive outcome can be reached on the application.

Appendices

Appendix A – Supporting Letter

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing with reference to the planning application for a purpose-built outbuilding at Kadampa Meditation Centre Reading, 9 Bath Road, Reading, RG1 6HH.

Kadampa Meditation Centre Reading is a registered charity (No. 1050321). As a Buddhist centre, we provide meditation classes, retreats, and day courses open to everyone, regardless of age, background, or circumstance. Our programmes are rooted in the teachings of Buddha, as presented by Venerable Geshe Kelsang Gyatso Rinpoche.

Our centre in the heart of Reading is already a valued part of the town's cultural and spiritual life, attracting local residents as well as people from surrounding areas who seek a peaceful and supportive environment. With free on-site parking and events suited to all levels of experience, we are committed to making meditation and mindfulness accessible to everyone.

With growing demand for our services, the proposed outbuilding will provide much-needed space to meet this demand in a sustainable way. Importantly, it is designed to better serve our existing visitors rather than to create large-scale growth in numbers. It will allow us to run activities more comfortably, improve accessibility, and provide a dedicated, peaceful space for those already attending.

The outbuilding will be a fully accessible facility, ensuring that people of all ages and abilities can benefit from the centre's offerings. Its location at the rear of 9 Bath Road is both quiet and secluded, making it an ideal setting for meditation and reflection while minimising any impact on the surrounding neighbourhood.

Meditation is an inherently quiet and reflective activity, and the use of the outbuilding will not create additional noise or disturbance. In terms of traffic and parking, the centre already provides free onsite parking, which is more than sufficient for our modest visitor numbers. The outbuilding will simply enhance the quality of provision for current attendees and create space to welcome community organisations and school groups, without placing new pressures on local infrastructure.

We respectfully ask for your support in making this vision possible, enabling KMC Reading to continue its charitable work so that more people can benefit from practices that improve mental health, reduce isolation, and nurture stronger, more compassionate communities creating a lasting resource of peace and wellbeing for Reading, now and for generations to come.

Yours faithfully,

Rosie McKenzie

Admin Director, KMC Reading

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