

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Whitley Ward

App Ref: PL/25/1777 Consent to display an advertisement

Address: 8 FLAGSTAFF ROAD, READING, RG2 6AX

Proposal: Shopfront fascia signage with overhead light, a projecting sign, and window vinyl. (amended)

Applicant: Mr Tom Parke

Received date: 10/12/2025

Target Decision date: 04/02/2026

Case Officer: Huimin Chen

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is currently operating as an Esquires Coffee on the ground floor of a five-storey building, with residential flats on the upper floors. It is located in the southwest of Green Park Village, a newly built area with South Lake situated to the west of the site. The site is close to Flagstaff Road and falls within Flood Zone 2.



Figures 1 - 3: Views from the southeast (L), northeast (M) and northwest (R) of the property (12/01/26)

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The application seeks permission for shopfront fascia signs with overhead light, a projecting sign, and window vinyl.

To the southeast of the application site, two signs are proposed to be tape-fixed to the existing aluminium panel. The sign located closer to the highway displays the wording “COFFEE · FOOD · PEOPLE”, enclosed within a rectangular border. The lettering would be produced from 10 mm-thick golden (PMS466) acrylic. The rectangle would measure approximately 0.24 m in height and 1.67 m in width. The sign would be illuminated by static LED trough lights, with a luminance level of 300 cd/m².

The second sign proposed on the southeast elevation would display the wording “ESQUIRES” above a dividing line, with “THE ORGANIC COFFEE C^o.” beneath. It would use the same material, colour (PMS466), and illumination specifications as the first sign. The proposed sign would measure approximately 0.23 m in height and 0.68 m in width. The other two elevations would feature the same sign as the second one described above.

With regard to the proposed projecting sign, this would be fixed to the brickwork. It would be circular in form and constructed from a fabricated aluminium panel finished in dark grey (RAL 7021). The face would be stencil-cut and backed with 3 mm LED-optimised acrylic, with UV-printed translucent vinyl matching PMS466 and a matt laminate finish to the face. Illumination would be provided via GE LED modules. The lettering would match the second sign proposed on the southeast elevation.

The proposal also includes white window vinyl displaying images, lettering and opening hours.

Plans considered:

- Location Plan, received 10/12/2025.
- Drawing No. T-1426_F-212 Proposed Signage, received 19/01/2026.
- Drawing No. T-1426_F-201 Existing External Elevations, received 19/01/2026.
- Drawing No. T-1426_F-211 Proposed External Elevations, received 19/01/2026.



Figures 4-6: Existing and proposed elevations, proposed sign's detail plans

(Planning Officer's note: The existing elevation was in place prior to the installation of the advert applied for, which was installed in late December 2025.)

3. PLANNING HISTORY:

None.

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- RBC Transport Development Control: No objection, subject to condition.
- RBC Environmental Protection: No comments received.
- Site Notice: – A site notice was displayed on 12th January 2026 in front of the application site. The 21-day consultation period ended on 2nd February 2026. No letters of representation have been received.



Fig 7: Site notice photo

Communication with agent:

With regard to the proposed signage, the Officer visited the site on 12 January 2026 and observed that all of the proposed signs had already been installed. The Agent subsequently confirmed via email that the signage was installed in late December 2025, which was after the application had been submitted. Therefore, the proposal is not retrospective.

During the site visit, the Officer also noted that lights had been installed above the signage. The Officer sought clarification from the Agent as to whether these lights were existing or formed part of the current application. If the latter, revised plans including the lights would be required. Existing plans and updated elevations were also requested to distinguish between the existing and proposed elements clearly.

Existing plans, revised plans were subsequently submitted on 19 January 2026.

5. EQUALITY ACT 2010:

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age and disability. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development. The proposal is specifically to address the needs of a disabled person.

6. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 requires the Local Planning Authority to exercise its powers under these regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety taking into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material; and any other relevant factors. Regulation 3 states that factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural, or similar interest. Factors relevant to public safety include highway safety and whether the advert would hinder security or surveillance devices, including speed cameras.

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'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

OU4: Advertisements

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 submission draft of the Local Plan was submitted on 9th May 2025 and is currently at Examination with hearings scheduled for the first two weeks in February 2026.

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 this application 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

The main issues for consideration are:

- a) Amenity; and
- b) Safety

a) Amenity

The proposed shopfront signage would be on the southeast, northeast, and northwest elevations of the unit. The signs comprise golden acrylic lettering taped on the existing dark grey aluminium panels and illuminated by external LED trough lights positioned above. Owing to their modest size, restrained colour palette, and integration with the existing shopfront materials, the fascia signs are considered to respect the character and appearance of the main building in terms of scale, design, siting, and visual impact.

The proposed projecting sign— a circular dark grey aluminium panel fixed to the brickwork with golden stencil-cut lettering— is consistent with the wider signage scheme. It's scale and finish appear visually cohesive with the fascia signs and do not create an overly dominant feature within the streetscape.

The proposed white window vinyl, displaying opening hours and simple wording such as “DOGS WELCOME”, “PASSION”, and “HAND PICKED”, is limited in extent. The glazing would remain largely transparent, and the vinyl would function primarily as minor decorative elements. As such, they would not result in any significant adverse impact on the overall appearance of the shopfront or the amenity of the surrounding area.

The Transport consultee has confirmed that the proposed luminance levels for both the fascia and projecting signs are acceptable, subject to conditions.

Overall, the proposal is considered acceptable and complies with Policies CC7, CC8, TR3, and OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

b) Safety

The NPPG (in particular in this instance Paragraph: 068 Reference ID: 18b-068-20140306 & Paragraph: 078 Reference ID: 18b-078-20140306) provides guidance as to the considerations affecting public safety.

The Transport consultee response confirms that there are no transport objections to this application, subject to conditions to secure public safety, as discussed in the amenity section above (also separately relevant from a safety perspective too). Therefore, it is concluded that there would be no detrimental effect with regard to highway safety and the proposed development is therefore considered to accord with Adopted Reading Borough Local Plan Policies TR3 and OU4.

8. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and is considered to be acceptable on that basis, subject to the following conditions.

9. RECOMMENDATION

Approved with conditions

Recommended Conditions:

1. Standard Advert Requirements
 - i. No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or any other person with an interest in the site entitled to grant permission.
 - ii. No advertisement shall be sited or displayed so as to:
 - a) endanger persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);
 - b) obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air; or
 - c) hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.
 - iii. Any advertisement displayed, and any site used for the display of advertisements, shall be maintained in a condition that does not impair the visual amenity of the site.
 - iv. Any structure or hoarding erected or used principally for the purpose of displaying advertisements shall be maintained in a condition that does not endanger the public.
 - v. Where an advertisement is required under these Regulations to be removed, the site shall be left in a condition that does not endanger the public or impair visual amenity.

REASON: In accordance with Schedule 2, Regulation 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

2. Approved Plans

The advertisements hereby consented shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

- Drawing No. T-1426_F-212 Proposed Signage, received 19/01/2026.
- Drawing No. T-1426_F-201 Existing External Elevations, received 19/01/2026.
- Drawing No. T-1426_F-211 Proposed External Elevations, received 19/01/2026.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the advertisement is carried out in accordance the details hereby approved in accordance with Policy OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

3. The light source must be shielded such that it is not directly visible to motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

REASON: To avoid glare which could lead to danger to the public in accordance with Policy CC7 and OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

4. The maximum luminance of advertisements displayed should not exceed 300 cd/m² above ambient light levels.

REASON: To protect the visual amenity and avoid excessive glare that could lead to a danger to highway users in accordance with Policy CC7 and OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.