

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham

App Ref: PL/25/1211 Full planning permission

Address: 3 PROSPECT STREET, CAVERSHAM, READING, RG4 8JB

Proposal: Change of use of the premises to a tanning and beauty salon

Applicant: Mr Brad McCoid

Received date: 27/08/2025

Target Decision date: 21/01/2026; EOT agreed until 06/02/2026

Case Officer: Ethne Humphreys

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site relates to a vacant shop (at ground floor level) located on the east side of Prospect Street. The upper floors are in residential use and there is a flat at the rear of the site. The surrounding area largely comprises commercial/retail uses at ground floor and residential above.

The unit was previously a restaurant. The building is not listed nor in a conservation area. The site is within an Air Quality Management Area and located within the Caversham District Centre. The site forms part of a key frontage.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

This application seeks planning permission for the change of use of the premises to a tanning and beauty salon. No external changes are proposed as part of this application although there was an indication of new shop front associated with the proposed use. The agent was advised to submit a separate application in this respect.

This application is limited to the assessment of the proposed change of use only.

The proposals comprise:

- 5 cubicles for sunbeds
- 3 private treatment rooms
- 2 treatment rooms to be rented to independent beauty massage and wellness practitioners

Plans considered:

Location Plan 9107-100 Rev C

Existing and Proposed Block Plan 9107-101 Rev C

Proposed Ground Floor Plan 9107-107 Rev G

Received 26th November 2025

Existing Ground Floor Plan 9107-102

Existing Elevations 9107-112

Existing Side Elevations 9107-113

Received 9th October 2025

Planning Statement

Received 27th August 2025

3. RELEVANT HISTORY

4. CONSULTATIONS

- Environmental Protection: No objection, discussed below.
- Transport: No objection, discussed below.

3 site notices were displayed.

One letter of representation was received from Caversham and District Residents Associated (CADRA) with concerns regarding:

- Potential alterations to shop frontage – no details submitted
- Illuminated signage and compliance with the Council's Design Guide to Shopfronts
- Request condition be attached that shopfront design be approved before change of use
[Officer note – this application is for change of use only and there is an existing shopfront which appears capable of accommodating the use.]

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'.

The following local and national planning policies and guidance are relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

EN16: Pollution and Water Resources

TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

RL1: Network and Hierarchy of Centres

RL3: Vitality and Viability of Smaller Centres

OU5: Shopfronts and Cash Machines

SPD

Design Guide to Shopfronts SPD (2022)

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

7. APPRAISAL

Land Use Considerations

The site has been vacant since at least December 2023. Prior to that, it was in use as a restaurant, which now falls with Class E (Commercial, business and service). The proposed use as a beauty parlour and tanning salon is also considered to fall within Class E. This is because the salon, in respect of both uses, would be open to visiting members of the public either on an appointment basis or as walk-in trade. This aligns with Class E which includes providing 'a service to visiting members of the public'. There is no indication that this would be a mixed use. Given also the immediate site context, which is largely commercial at ground floor, the salon also meets the description in Class E of a 'service which it is appropriate to provide in a commercial, business or service locality. In the circumstances of this application, and acknowledging the generally more flexible approach advocated by government in respect of town centre uses, the proposals are considered to fall within Class E1.

The proposal site is within a 'Key Frontages' area of Reading.

Therefore, the use class of the property should be one of the 'Centre Uses' as listed in Policy RL3. This includes beauty parlours. The proposal therefore is in compliance with the requirements of Policy RL3 and as such it is considered acceptable.

Further to the above, the proposal would revitalise a vacant unit that has not been active since at least December 2022. In addition, the loss of restaurant this area is not considered to be to the detriment of the general public as the street and the wider area has a number of existing restaurants. The proposal is not considered to undermine the retail function of the area and is considered to contribute to the District Centre's vitality and viability bringing the ground floor element back into use.

In compliance with Policy RL3.

Design Considerations

Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks to ensure that new development enhances and preserves the local character and Policy CR2 (Design in Central Reading) seeks to acceptable relationships between buildings in the town centre are created.

No external changes are proposed as part of this application. The applicant has indicated proposed changes to the shopfront, which would be subject to a separate application for planning permission and potentially advertisement consent. It is not considered reasonable to require changes to the shopfront to be submitted and approved prior to the change of use taking place. However, an informative will be added to the decision notice in this respect.

It is considered that the proposal would have minimal impact on the character of the street scene or surrounding area. However, shopfront should present an active frontage to the street at all times. To ensure the proposal complies with this, a condition will be included to ensure the shopfront maintains an active window display, to assist the viability and vitality of the primary frontage.

Given the above, it is not considered that there would be any impact to the street scene. No design concerns.

In compliance with CC7.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) requires development to 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; Noise and disturbance; Artificial lighting; Vibration; Dust and fumes; Smell; Crime and safety.

Residential units are located above and to the rear of the site. No external changes are proposed and as such there would be no loss of privacy or overbearing effects.

The levels of noise, disturbance and smells likely to be generated from the use are unlikely to be worse than that from a restaurant and indeed are likely to be less, and result in a better commercial/residential relationship.

The Council's Environmental Protection officer has not raised any objection to the proposal. It does not appear that any external plant such as air conditioning is proposed as part of this application. However, it is recommended that a condition is added to state that no mechanical plant shall be installed until a noise assessment of the proposed mechanical plant has been submitted and approved by the LPA.

The applicant has stated proposed hours of use of 8am earliest to 10pm latest but advised most likely 9am to 9pm. Given hours of opening of other premises within the vicinity, 8am until 10pm is reasonable and will be conditioned.

As such, the proposal is not considered to result in any material harm to neighbouring properties in terms of noise, disturbance or smells subject to relevant conditions and in compliance with Policies CC8 and EN16.

Transport/Highways

Policies TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters) and Policy TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, highway and parking matters.

The site is located in Zone 2, Primary Core Area, of the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD. The site is in a highly sustainable location in terms of proximity to local services, transport links and easy access to the wider community. Prospect Street and the surrounding road network all have parking restrictions preventing on-street parking. Chester Street public car park within walking distance to the site.

The site fronts onto Prospect Street which has many commercial/retail/food outlets and the proposed change of use is unlikely to have a significant impact on the trips and parking demand generated by the proposal. On street parking in the vicinity of the site is either restricted or regulated and therefore any increase in parking demand would not be accommodated on the street.

The Council's Transport officer has not raised any objection to the proposal. The proposal therefore is considered acceptable from a highways perspective.

Compliance with Policies TR3 and TR5.

8. CONCLUSION

The proposed change of use has been assessed and is considered to be in accordance with the above relevant policies and planning permission can be granted subject to conditions as attached. The use would maintain the vitality and viability of the centre. It would not harm the character of the area, would not harm neighbouring amenity and would be acceptable from a transport perspective. The permission does not include any external works including any shopfront alterations and signage that may take place as a result of the change of use and separate permission for which would be required.