

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey

App Ref: PL/25/1645 Full planning permission

Address: 136-137 Friar Street, Reading, RG1 1EX

Proposal: Demolition of existing outbuilding and erection of a single story ground floor rear extension to the existing shop

Applicant: Erleigh Investments Ltd

Received date: 17/11/2025

Target Decision date: 20/01/2026

Case Officer: Matt Burns

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a three-storey building on Friar Street with a shop unit (Class Ea) to the ground floor with vacant office accommodation (Class Eg) to the first and second floors. There is a yard area to the rear of the building.

The building is an attractive three-storey Victorian building with characteristic Reading grey/orange decorative brickwork façade, wrought iron hanging projection sign at first floor (an indication of its former public house use, which is what this building appeared to be until around 1990) strong symmetry, and original chimneys. Although not currently locally listed, the building is considered to be a Non-Designated Heritage Asset due to its architectural details to the upper floors of the front elevation.

Friar Street is a designated primary frontage (as defined by Policy CR7), located within the designated Primary Shopping Area and within the Central Core of the Reading Central Area (as defined by Policy CR1).

As with much of the town centre, Friar Street contains a wide variety of town centre uses and buildings of a variety of scale and appearance, a number of which incorporate residential accommodation to upper floors.

The site is within an air quality management area and includes land identified as having archaeological potential.

The application site is adjoined by a two storey adult gaming centre premises to the west (no. 134-135 Friar Street) and a part three part four storey bar/restaurant premises to the east (no. 138-141 Friar Street). There is an extant planning permission (ref. 22/1235) on land at no.s 138-144 Friar Street, which includes the bar/restaurant building at no.s 138-141 Friar Street, for demolition of No's 138-141 & 142-143 Friar St, partial demolition of No. 144 Friar St and erection of a 7 storey hotel building with ancillary ground floor lounge, bar and restaurant. This planning permission has not been implemented at the time of writing this report. To the rear of the application site are the backs of the terraced shop buildings which front on to Broad Street, directly to the rear is no. 48-49 Broad Street which contains a Boots Pharmacy.

There is an extant but not yet implemented planning permission (ref. PL/23/1266) on the site for '*demolition of the rear part of building, retention of front facade and roof plane, and construction of a five storey rear extension and dormer windows to retained front roof plane to accommodate a Class C1 use apart-hotel, along with the retention of the ground floor Class E commercial, business and service use*'.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Full planning permission is sought for the construction of a single storey rear extension to the existing ground floor shop unit. The proposed rear extension would measure 9.92m in depth to infill the courtyard area and would span the full width of the existing building and site with a width ranging from 5.3m to 6.7m.

The extension would have a flat roof at 3.1m in height reflecting the height of the existing single storey rear part of the building. A parapet is proposed to the rear of the extension roof reaching 3.5m in height. The extension would be constructed of red brick to match the existing building. The proposed development will increase the floor area of the commercial unit from 120sqm to 179sqm.

The application proposes that the enlarged commercial unit would be used for either Class E(a) Display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food or Commercial E(b) Sale of food and drink for consumption (mostly) on the premises use.

The proposals are identical to the rear extension that was approved under planning permission ref. PL/22/0215 which lapsed on 26th April 2025 before being implemented.

Plans considered:

- Application forms
- Site Location Plan at 1:1250 (dwg. P001 rev 1)
- Site Block Plan (dwg. P002 rev 1)
- Proposed Ground Site Plan (dwg. P003 rev 1)
- Proposed First Floor (Roof) (dwg. P004 rev 1)
- Proposed Sections AA (dwg. P005 rev 1)
- Proposed Rear Elevation (dwg. P006 rev 1)
- Design and Access Statement (ref. 195/DAS01/REV1)
- Completed CIL form.

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- Existing Floor Plans Sheet 1 (dwg. 03-100 rev 2)
- Existing Floor Plans Sheet 2 (dwg. 03-101 rev2)
- Existing North Elevation (dwg.05-100 rev 1)
- Existing Section (dwg. 04-100 rev 1)
- Existing South Elevation (dwg. 05-101 rev 1)

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3. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

Ecology Adviser – No objection

Berkshire Archaeology – Recommend a condition is attached to secure submission and approval of written scheme of archaeological investigation prior to commencement of development and to ensure the development is only carried out in accordance with the approved scheme of archaeological investigation.

RBC Waste Services – Query what the existing commercial waste arrangements are for the site and how the proposed development will impact this.

Public Notification

A site notice was displayed at the application site on 9th December 2026. No letters of representation have been 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.

Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:
Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE
CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE
CC6: ACCESSIBILITY AND THE INTENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT
CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM
CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK
EN15: AIR QUALITY
EN16: POLLUTION AND WATER RESOURCES
EN17: NOISE GENERATING EQUIPMENT
TR1: ACHIEVING THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY
TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS
TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING
RL1: NETWORK AND HIERARCHY OF CENTRES
RL2: SCALE AND LOCATION OF RETAIL, LEISURE AND CULTURE DEVELOPMENT
CR1: DEFINITION OF CENTRAL READING
CR7: PRIMARY FRONTAGES

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 consultation version of the draft updated version 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 this application listed above is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remain 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'.

5. APPRAISAL

Land Use Principles

The site is located within the Central Core and Primary Shopping Area of the Reading Central Area and within a designated Primary Frontage which is the area of the town centre where Policies RL2 (Scale and Location of Retail, Leisure and Culture Development), CR1 (Definition of Central Reading) and CR7 (Primary Frontages) direct Class E(a) and E(b) uses and development. In terms of land use principles this would be an appropriate location within the Central Area for the proposed enlarged unit.

Notably the existing building could change to any use under Class E without the need to obtain planning permission. It is considered reasonable to attach a condition to ensure that the enlarged building could not be used for use under classes E(g)(i) Offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions, E(g)(ii) Research and development of products or processes or E(g)(iii) Industrial processes which would not be appropriate in this location within the town centre or contribute the necessary viability and vitality to the Central Area.

Character and Appearance

The proposal single storey rear extension would not be visible from the street and therefore would not impact on the character and appearance of Friar Street. The extension would be visible when viewed from the upper floor windows of other neighbouring properties within the terrace of buildings and those to other surrounding buildings to the rear of the site. It would be preferable to make better use of the existing courtyard area with the proposals meaning the entire footprint of the site would be built upon. However, many other buildings on Friar Street fill out their entire plot and as such the proposed development will not be out of character the layout or character of buildings on the street.

The proposed size and scale of the proposal at single storey level are considered acceptable, as well as the design and use of materials which respects the existing property. The existing building is considered to be a building of townscape merit with its townscape significance relating to its former use as a public house and architectural features to the upper floors of its front elevation. As a single storey extension to the rear the proposals would not be detrimental to the parts of the building that provide its townscape significance.

The proposed development by way of its modest scale is not considered to prevent or cause unreasonable burden on any future development of this or adjacent sites. It is also noted that the proposed extension is identical to that given planning permission in 2022 (ref. PL/22/0215) and separate planning permission has also recently been granted (ref. PL/23/1266) for much larger redevelopment of the site including a five storey rear extension.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policies CC7 and CR2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Amenity

Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) states that development proposals should safeguard the amenity of both existing and future occupiers and Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) seeks that development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment and sensitive receptors in terms of pollution. Policy EN15 (Air Quality) seeks to protect existing and future occupiers from the impact of poor air quality.

The site is situated in a busy location within the Central Core of the Central Area. Buildings surrounding the application site are primarily in commercial uses and this is the case for the two buildings which directly adjoin the application site either side on Friar Street. The adjoining premises at 138-141 Friar Street to the east is a part three part four storey building in use as Revolución de Cuba bar with ancillary office and storage to the upper floors whilst adjoining the application site to the west is two storey building in use as an adult gaming centre at 134-135 Friar Street. To the rear of the application site are the backs of the

terraced shop buildings which front on to Broad Street, directly to the rear is no. 48-49 Broad Street which contains a Boots Pharmacy.

The existing buildings surrounding the site are larger in scale than the host building and do not incorporate any windows facing the application site. The modest scale of the proposed single storey rear extension which would also not incorporate any windows is such that it would not result in any adverse overbearing or loss of privacy to surrounding buildings.

The closest residential uses to the application site are located further away on the opposite side of Friar Street to the upper floors of nos 31, 32, 33 and 34 Friar Street and also to Union Street (Smelly Alley) to west. Given the separation to these dwellings and presence other commercial premises surrounding the site it is not considered that the possible Class E uses of the building would be inappropriate in this location or be harmful to the amenity of the nearby residential occupiers.

However, there is potential for Class E(b) sale of food and drink uses at the site to result in cooking odours which could impact nearby residential occupiers and therefore a condition is recommended to secure submission and approval of an odour assessment before any Class E(b) use of the extended area were to begin. A further condition is also recommended to secure submission and approval of a noise impact assessment before any mechanical plant is installed at the building.

The proposed extension would also infill the existing rear yard area where bins for the current shop use of the building are stored. There would be scope within the enlarged building to accommodate necessary bin storage, but this is not shown on the proposed plans. Therefore, a condition is also recommended to secure submission and approval of details of the location and size of the bin store for the building as well as detailed measures to prevent pests and vermin from accessing bin stores. The applicant advises that the waste is currently collected by a private refuse collection company on a regular basis, similarly to other retail outlets in the town centre and that it is not proposed to change this arrangement as part of the proposed development. Notwithstanding this, given the loss of the rear yard area it is considered reasonable to secure submission and approval of refuse collection management plan to detail arrangement for collection of waste to avoid the risk of refuse to be left on the street for extended periods.

Given the location of the site which is surrounded by built form on all sides and not easily accessible construction of the rear extension is likely to be challenging. A condition is recommended to secure submission, approval by the Local Planning Authority and then implementation of a construction method statement prior to the commencement of the proposed development in order to mitigate potential impacts on surrounding occupiers from matters such as construction noise, dust and fires and from impact upon the surrounding highway network.

Transport

Policies TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway related matters), TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking related matters relating to development.

The site is located within the Reading Central Area and within Reading's primary shopping area. This area is well served by rail and bus links and also contains the largest proportion of public car parking spaces. There is no off street parking associated with the site and none is proposed. Given the site's accessible town centre location and access to public car parks, there are no transport objections to this application. As per the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011) 1 staff cycle parking space is required to be provided. There is adequate space for such cycle parking to be accommodated within the extended building, and a condition is recommended to secure details of this prior to first use of the development.

Archaeology

Policy EN2 (Areas of Archaeological Significance) requires that developers should identify and evaluate sites of archaeological significance and that where remains are identified and cannot be preserved 'in situ' they should be properly excavated, investigated and recorded.

Berkshire Archaeology have reviewed the proposals and have advised that there is potential for archaeological remains of various periods below ground in the surrounding area. It is recommended that a condition is applied to secure submission and approval of a scheme of archaeological investigation (WSI) prior to the commencement of development and for the development to be then undertaken only in accordance with the approved WSI to ensure that any remains are identified, recorded and where appropriate preserved.

Natural Environment

The site currently contains no vegetation or greenery and as such statutory BNG requirements are not applicable. The RBC Ecology Adviser states that it is unlikely that bats or other protected species would be adversely affected by the proposals which would accord with Policy EN12 and not result in a net loss in biodiversity at the site. However, there is considered to be a small risk that birds may nest in the building or those nearby and therefore an informative is recommended to advise the applicant that it is a criminal offence to damage or destroy the nest of a wild bird during construction and that building works should only take place outside of the bird nesting season (March to August).

6. CONCLUSION

The proposed development is considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 as discussed above.

7. RECOMMENDATION

Grant subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than *three* years from the date of this planning permission.

REASON: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) in order to prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.

2. The development hereby permitted shall ONLY be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

- Application forms
- Site Location Plan at 1:1250 (dwg. P001 rev 1)
- Site Block Plan (dwg. P002 rev 1)
- Proposed Ground Site Plan (dwg. P003 rev 1)
- Proposed First Floor (Roof) (dwg. P004 rev 1)
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REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out and adhered to in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

3. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used on the existing building.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and ensuring the new development responds positively to the local context and character in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

4. **A)** No development hereby permitted shall take place until a programme of archaeological work, informed by a Desk Based Assessment, including a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been submitted to, and approved by, the local planning authority in writing.

The WSI shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and:

1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording
2. The programme for post investigation assessment
3. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording
4. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation
5. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation
6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the WSI.

B) The Development shall take place in accordance with the WSI approved under part A) of this condition above and shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the WSI approved under condition (A) and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured.

REASON: The site lies in an area of archaeological potential, particularly for, but not limited to, Medieval remains. The potential impacts of the development can be mitigated through a programme of archaeological work in accordance with Policy EN2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

5. No development shall commence on site, including any works of demolition, until a site specific Demolition and Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Statement shall provide for:
- a) Space on site where vehicles of site operatives and visitors can be parked with details of how site operatives and visitors will be required to make use of the parking area provided
 - b) Location on site for storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
 - c) The erection and maintenance (including removal of any graffiti or fly posters) of security hoarding around the site;
 - d) Identification of any footpath closures or road closures needed during construction;
 - e) A scheme for recycling waste resulting from the construction works.
 - f) Measures for controlling the use of site lighting whether required for safe working or for security purposes;
 - g) Required measures to control the emission of dust, dirt and other airborne pollutants during demolition and construction;
 - h) Provisions to be made for the control of noise coming from the site during demolition and construction;

- i) Full details of pest control measures following any demolition required. Where necessary, capping of drains/sewers and baiting arrangements.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and in the interests of protecting the amenity of local land uses or neighbouring residents, the character of the area, the special architectural and historic interest of this non-designated heritage asset and highway safety in accordance with Policies CC7, CC8, TR3 and EN6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

6. No materials or green waste produced as a result of the clearance of the site, demolition works or construction works associated with the development hereby approved shall be burnt on site.

REASON: In the interests of air quality, the amenity of neighbours, and to promote more sustainable approaches to waste management in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

7. No construction, demolition or associated deliveries shall take place outside the hours of [0800hrs to 1800hrs] Mondays to Fridays, and [0800hrs to 1300hrs] on Saturdays, and not at any time on Sundays and Bank or Statutory Holidays without prior written approval from the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In order to protect occupiers of nearby properties from unreasonable disturbance from works connected with implementing this permission in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

8. Notwithstanding the approved drawings, the development hereby permitted shall not be occupied or the approved use commence, whichever is the sooner, until details of refuse and recycling storage sufficient for the intended development has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be fully implemented before first occupation or the use first commences, whichever is the sooner, and the areas of land so provided shall not be used for any purposes other than the storage (prior to disposal) or the collection of refuse and recycling and shall be thereafter retained and maintained as such, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of general amenity, to ensure convenience of arrangements for refuse and recycling storage and collection and to ensure that no obstruction is caused on the adjoining highway, in the interest of highway safety and in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Local Plan 2019

9. Prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved, details of how refuse and recycling collections will be managed from the site (including vehicles, servicing and deliveries), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter refuse collection, servicing and deliveries will be carried out fully in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: In the interests of general amenity, to ensure convenience of arrangements for refuse and recycling storage and collection and to ensure that no obstruction is caused on the adjoining highway, in the interest of highway safety and in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

10. No mechanical plant shall be installed until a noise assessment of the proposed mechanical plant has been submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The assessment shall be carried out for in accordance with BS4142:2014 methodology. The predicted specific sound level (LAeq,TR) (with reference to BS:4142) as measured at a point 1 metre external to the nearest noise-sensitive facade shall be at least 10dB below the pre-existing background sound level, LA90,T when all plant/equipment (or any part of it) is in operation. The predicted rating level, LAr,Tr (specific sound level plus any adjustment for the characteristic features of the sound) as measured at a point 1 metre external to the nearest noise-sensitive façade (habitable window of a dwelling) shall not exceed the pre-existing background sound level, LA90,T when all plant/equipment (or any part of it) is in operation. The plant shall thereafter only be installed in accordance with the assessment and shall thereafter be maintained so that it operates to the same standard.

REASON: To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises and the area generally, in accordance with Policy CC8 and EN17 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

11. Prior to any Class E(b) use of the development taking place an odour assessment shall have been carried out and a detailed odour management plan to include scaled plans, odour control specifications and a maintenance plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reference shall be made to the DEFRA guidance on the Control of Odour and Noise from Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Systems (Jan 2005) when assessing potential odours and selecting appropriate odour control methods. Thereafter, the development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved scheme unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and to safeguard the amenity of adjoining properties and to protect the general environment in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.