

Our ref: hk/O/S&P/ADV/28.02.25

26 March, 2026

Planning Development Control
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices,
Bridge Street,
Reading,
RG1 2LU

Dear Planning Officers,

Retrospective application for shopfront alterations and Advertisement Consent for new externally illuminated fascia and projecting sign and awning at 2-3 Butter Market, Reading, RG1 2DP

Planning Design and Access Heritage Statement

The subject premises is operated as a Smoke and Pepper restaurant.

This is a long established 'greasy spoon' restaurant and takeaway premises. The subject property traded as Munchees Restaurant since 1985 serving all day breakfast, chips, burgers, grill and roast dinners.

The subject property is a modern commercial ground floor building located at the junction of Butter Market and Broad Street. The premises is not statutorily or locally listed but is located in the Market Place/ London Street Conservation Area.

The special interest of the conservation area is derived from –

- Linear conservation area beside the planned medieval southern approach road, over the River Kennet, to a market place and church outside one of Reading Abbey's gateways;
- The Hospitium of St John the Baptist, founded in 1189 (Scheduled Monument);
- Two of Reading's three medieval churches: St Laurence's and St Giles', both with well treed churchyards;
- Isolated examples of timber-framed 16th and 17th century buildings e.g. nos 26/27 Market Place, nos 49/53 London Street and nos 3/5 London Road;
- Good examples of prestigious Georgian town houses in London Street;
- The fine collection of 19th century municipal buildings in Blagrove Street including Waterhouse's distinctive Town Hall and Victoria Hall, Concert Hall and Museum, Library and Art Gallery;
- Groups of historic building around Market Place;
- Special historic and architectural focus around St Laurence's Church and the Town Hall complex;
- Many examples of building with bricks (red, blue and buff) from Reading's extensive local brickworks;
- Fine examples of 19th century banks and commercial buildings notably Barclays Bank, King Street and NatWest Bank, Market Place;
- Three green open spaces namely the churchyards of St Laurence's and St Giles' and the burial ground of the Friends Meeting House;
- Public open space (part-pedestrianised) composed of Market Place and Town Hall Square i.e. the area around the statue of Queen Victoria;
- Jacksons Corner, a once busy crossroads and locally known landmark;
- Trees in the public realm particularly street trees in London Street, Market Place and Town Hall Square;
- Tranquil atmosphere of Church Street;
- The presence of the River Kennet and a short visible length of Holy Brook;
- Lengths of natural stone kerb and historic paving in the courtyard of The George Hotel, Thorn Lane and alleys off London Street;

- Two examples of 19th century monuments: Sir John Soane's Simeon Monument and the Queen Victoria statue;

The conservation area contains some historic 19th/early 20th century shopfronts, or parts of shopfronts, that make a positive contribution to the special interest of the area. The two most notable are no. 103 London Street which is an original early 19th century shopfront with two flat bows with frieze and moulded cornice over (obscured by modern fascia) and no. 8 High Street (Oxfam) which has a tiled and terracotta façade in Art Nouveau style of 1904.

The following premises, have been noted for their historic shopfronts or significant elements of a historic shopfront

- 54 London Street;
- 82-84 London Street;
- 90-94 London Street;
- 103 London Street;
- 114 London Street;
- Blagrove Arms, Blagrove Street;
- Jackson's, King's Road (now Roasa Thai with illuminated fascia and projecting signs);
- 24 King Street;
- 5 Butter Market (see below);
- 27/28 Market Place;
- 46/47 Market Place;
- 8 High Street.

No 5 Butter Market which is noted as having an historic shopfront actually has a non-original replacement shopfront with canopy over as per Plate 1 and Plate 2 below



Plate 1 – Undated photo of 5 Butter Market



Plate 2 – Google Street view image 5 Butter Market and subject property (Munchies)

The application site previously had a poor-quality aluminium shopfront and aluminium entrance door and canopy that has been in place for many years (more than ten) such that it

was established and immune from enforcement action. We believe that the previous aluminium shopfront was consented. The premises also had externally illuminated signage as can be seen from Plate 3 below



Plate 3 – Munchies April 2013

In the area in question there are all manner of shopfronts and signage. Immediately adjoining the subject premises and also directly opposite are Costa Coffee and Starbucks which have modern aluminium framed shopfronts, externally illuminated aluminium signage and awnings (Plate 4 and Plate 5)



Plate 4 - Modern commercial shopfront and signage at Costa adjoining application site



Plate 5 – Modern shopfront and externally illuminated fascia and projecting signs at Starbucks opposite application site.

There are many more such examples throughout the conservation area. indeed there are many such examples throughout the conservation area (Plate 6 and Plate 7) within the immediate vicinity of the site such that the setting. Has the character of a moder commercial environment. The subject property itself does not have an historic shopfront and has not had

a shopfront of any historic value for a great many years. the shopfront that was removed was a poor-quality aluminium shopfront that was in need of repair.



Plates 6 and 7 – Modern signage and shopfront in the immediate vicinity of the application site.

The proposed shopfront features full height aluminium glazing with a centrally positioned entrance door and advertisement canopy. The shopfront complements the existing commercial character of the area and does not detract from its setting. An active shopfront is provided in accordance with policy OU56 of the adopted development plan.



Plate 8 – Application Site

As to the proposed signage, it is proposed to replace the existing internally illuminated signage with externally illuminated signage, which is in accordance with the majority of neighbouring premises and in lines with the Policy OU4 and the 2007 Advertisement Regulations. There is no harm to amenity or highway safety (Plate 9)

SHOPFRONT AS PROPOSED

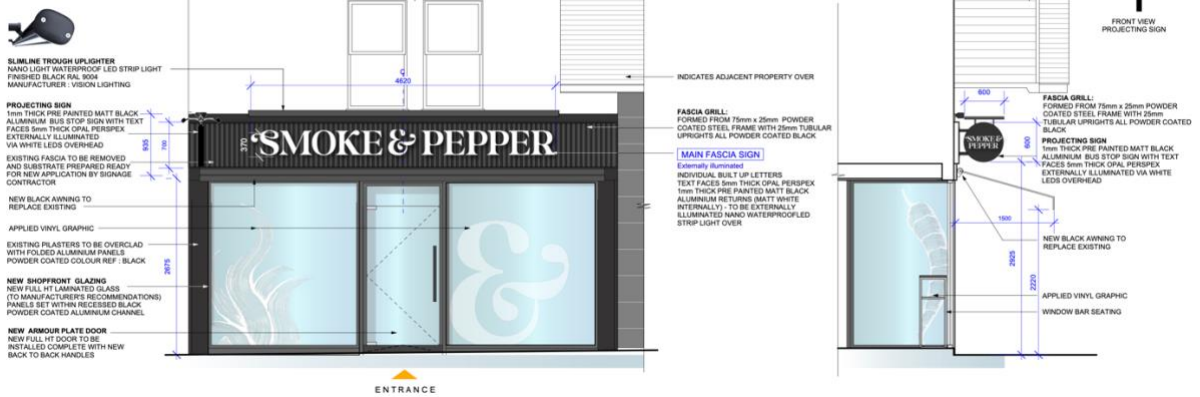


Plate 9 – Proposed Signage

Overall the proposed development complements the existing character and setting of the conservation area and paragraph 215 of the NPPF is engaged.

If you have any questions relating to this application, please do not hesitate to contact these offices in the first instance.

Yours sincerely,

HARIS KASUJI BA MA MRTPI