

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Redlands Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0147 Consent to display an advertisement

Address: 69, London Road, Reading, RG1 5BW

Proposal: Erection of digital display advertising device (2.4m x 1.23m)

Applicant: Wildstone Estates Limited

Received date: 3 February 2026

Target Decision date: 7 April 2026 (agreed extension of time)

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is currently operating as a 'Londis' petrol filling station (PFS). The site is located on the northern side of London Road, at the junction with Watlington Street, opposite Redlands Road.

The site is located within the Eldon Square Conservation Area (ESCA), and in close proximity to the Kendrick Road Conservation Area. The site is identified within the ESCA as being within "area 2: Terraced streets west of Eldon Road i.e. Watlington Street, St John's Street, St John's Road, St John's Hill, Prince's Street, Eldon Place, Queen's Road (south)". The ESCA specifically notes the existence of the PFS opposite the listed buildings at 71/73 London Road: "*The southern end of Watlington Street is flanked by nos 71/73 London Road, a grade II listed 3 storey stucco house, and a single storey modern petrol station and shop.*" There is a digital road sign some 50m from the application site, though it is likely this is considered permitted advertising as a 'road sign' pursuant to The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

The Eldon Square Conservation Area includes a number of listed buildings and structures (listed and as shown on Figure 1 below), including:

- Grade II* Main Block and Wings at Royal Berkshire Hospital
- Grade II 'Greenbank' at 42 London Road
- Grade II Railings on northern side of London Road (from Albion Place to opposite Redlands Road)
- Grade II Garden Wall to north and east of the Acacias and wall to garden of the Acacias
- Grade II 'Acacias' at 44 London Road
- Grade II 71 and 73 London Road

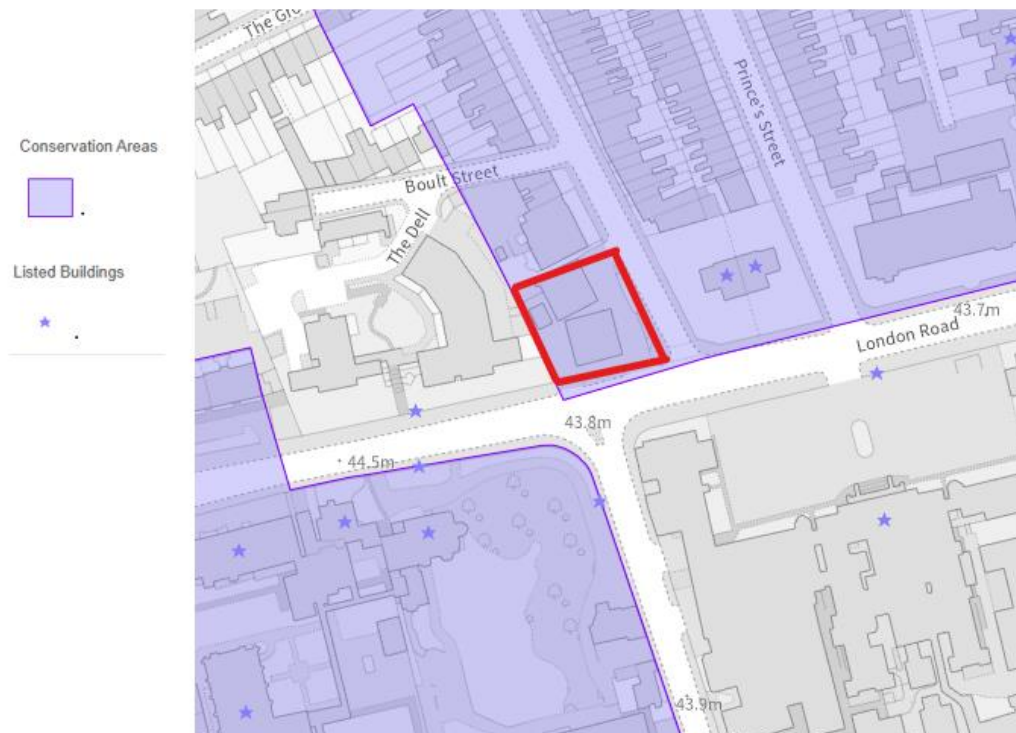


Figure 1 - Conservation Area Boundaries and Listed Buildings in Vicinity

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The site contains a number of informally erected (unauthorised) advertising structures (freestanding weighted adverts) with a variety of information on them. The proposal would provide a new 2.4m (high) x 1.23m (wide) LED digital advertising board. The advert is proposed to be located immediately adjacent to the listed railing on the northern side of London Road, at the south-western corner of the application site.

The covering letter states that: *“The advertisement which is the subject of this application is primarily aimed at users of the PFS rather than road users.”* It should be noted that the proposal is located at the exit of the PFS and therefore is more likely to be aimed toward passersby. The proposal is seeking to display static images and change no more than once every 10 seconds.

Plans and supporting documents

Application form

Cover letter

Drawing No: 25614 – PA – 01 – Site Location Plan

Drawing No: 25614 – PA – 02 – Existing Site Plan

Drawing No: 25614 – PA – 03 – Proposed Site Plan

Drawing No: 25614 – PA – 04 – Proposed Site Plan

Drawing No: 25614 – PA – 05 – Existing and Proposed Elevations

Drawing No: 25614 – PA – 06 – Specification

Drawing No: 25614 – PA – 07 – CGI

As received by the LPA 3 February 2026

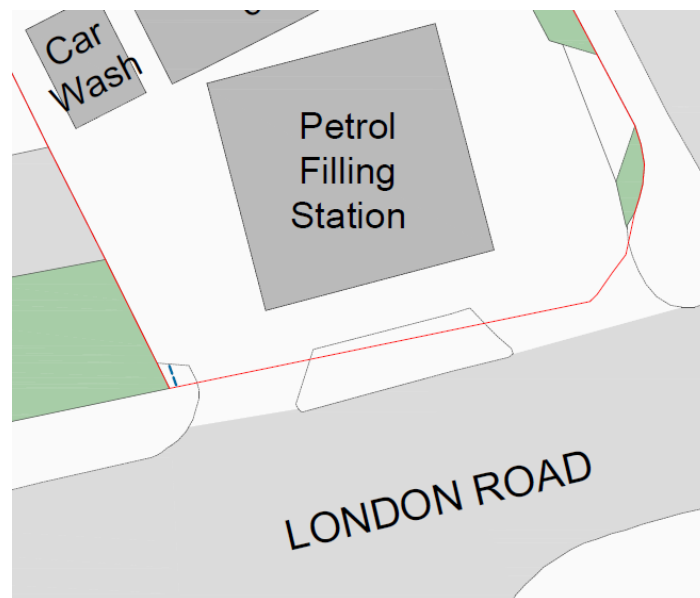


Figure 2 – Proposed Site Plan



Figure 3 – Proposed Elevations and Specification for Digital Advert

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/06/0981 - Installation of Jet Wash, enclosure and silt trap at petrol filling station. Refused 15 December 2006. Allowed at Appeal 27 March 2008 (APP/E0345/A/07/2035942)

PL/07/0153 - 2 single sided, free standing, internally illuminated, display units. Refused 9 March 2009 Dismissed at Appeal 10 June 2008 (APP/E0345/H/08/1202758)

PL/16/0213 - External refurbishment of forecourt shop. Refused 17 June 2016

PL/16/1296 - External refurbishment of forecourt shop. Withdrawn 17 August 2016

PL/18/1804 - Retention of parcel locker. Approved 13 December 2018

PL/22/0392 - Removal of the existing jet wash and construction of new single-storey side extension to existing sales building. Approved 26 October 2022 (Unimplemented – Lapsed 26 October 2025)

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- RBC Environmental Protection – No objection
- Transport Development – Objection on highway safety – Recommend refusal

“The proposal seeks to erect a single-sided small format advertising display located within the forecourt of the existing Petrol Filling Station (PFS) located on the A4 London Road. The advertising display is measured at 1.23m(w) x 2.4m(h) x 0.22m and will be visible to users of the PFS and to drivers travelling westbound on A4 London Road. The display will exhibit static advertisements on rotation. The proposed display will meet modern requirements and will be capable of displaying 6 advertising campaigns at a time, sequencing every ten seconds.

The proposed advertisement displays will be positioned within the site boundary but fronting onto the A4 London Road which carries a westbound annual average daily flow of in excess of 13,000, and is the main arterial roads into Reading from the east. No assessment of any accident data has been provided (by the applicant) as an accompaniment to the application.

The site fronts a three-lane section of the A4 London Road, a strategic corridor forming one of the principal approaches to Reading town centre. Along this frontage, the highway environment is notably complex, with multiple side-road junctions. These junctions generate regular turning movements, both into and out of the side roads, which contribute to a complex and sometimes unpredictable traffic pattern in this location.

A signal-controlled pedestrian crossing is situated nearby, providing an essential connection for pedestrians accessing key destinations in the area, including the Royal Berkshire Hospital. This crossing also introduces periodic queuing and speed changes along the corridor, as vehicles respond to signal phases. Driver attentiveness is particularly critical near pedestrian crossing points, where reaction times directly influence safe stopping and overall pedestrian safety.

Due to the combination of three traffic lanes, closely spaced junctions, and adjacent pedestrian activity, this part of London Road experiences frequent lane-changing manoeuvres. Drivers often reposition themselves to access side roads, respond to merging traffic, or align with their intended route through the next junction. In this context, any advertisement that incorporates illumination, sequencing effects, or changing visual content has the potential to draw drivers’ attention away from the primary task of safely negotiating the highway environment. As such, there would be a conflict with Local Plan Policies and paragraphs of the NPPG (highlighted below).

The National Planning Policy Guidance stipulates the following;

Paragraph: 067 Reference ID: 18b-067-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014

All advertisements are intended to attract attention but proposed advertisements at points where drivers need to take more care are more likely to affect public safety. For example, at junctions, roundabouts, pedestrian crossings, on the approach to a low bridge or level crossing or other places where local conditions present traffic hazards. There are less likely to be road safety problems if the advertisement is on a site within a commercial or industrial locality, if it is a shop fascia sign, name-board, trade or business sign, or a normal poster panel, and if the advertisement is not on the skyline.

Paragraph: 068 Reference ID: 18b-068-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014

The main types of advertisement which may cause danger to road users are:

(b) those which, because of their size or siting, would obstruct or confuse a road-user’s view, or reduce the clarity or effectiveness of a traffic sign or signal, or would be likely to distract road-users because of their unusual nature;

(d) those externally or internally illuminated signs (incorporating either flashing or static lights) including those utilising light emitting diode technology:

i. where the means of illumination is directly visible from any part of the road;

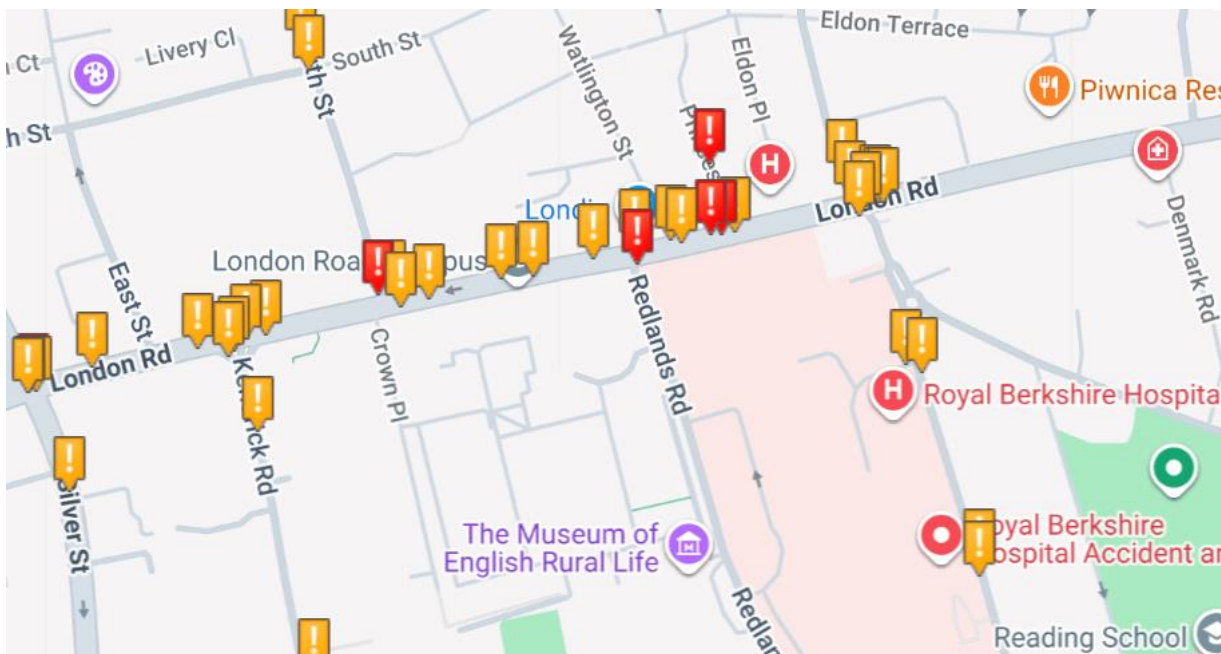
ii. which, because of their colour, could be mistaken for, or confused with, traffic lights or any other authorised signals;

iii. which, because of their size or brightness, could result in glare and dazzle, or distract road-users, particularly in misty or wet weather; or

iv. which are subject to frequent changes of the display;

Given the combination of high traffic flows, lane-changing behaviour, and the function of London Road as a key distributor route, it is the Highway Authority's view that any additional distraction would present an unacceptable increase in road safety risk within the vicinity of the application site. Such displays are more likely to divert attention at precisely the moments when situational awareness is most needed. The applicant states that "The Site is an uncomplicated location which drivers should be able to navigate with ease. The panel has been positioned to ensure that no driver visibility is blocked for users of the PFS entering or leaving the Site. London Road is a straight, single carriageway. The cognitive demand on road users at this point is low as there are no unusual highway complexities which would require extra care to be taken. No assessment of the localised accident data has been undertaken."

Contrary to the applicant's assertion, an examination of CrashMap (collision records) clearly indicates a cluster of incidents within the immediate vicinity of the site, demonstrating that this part of London Road has a history of collisions. The presence of this cluster is a strong indicator that the road layout is not "uncomplicated", nor does it present "low cognitive demand" to road users. Instead, the collision pattern is consistent with a network environment where drivers must respond to multiple competing turning vehicles, pedestrians, lane changes, signal phases, and merging traffic within a short distance.



As such, the proposed advertisement is considered to be in conflict with relevant Reading Borough Local Plan policies and the applicable guidance within the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) relating to public safety and driver distraction, as referenced above.

Suggested reasons for refusal if refused

The siting and sequential images displayed on the proposed advertisement display screens would distract drivers in a location where there is conflicting vehicle movement and high flows of traffic. This could

result in sudden and unpredictable vehicle movements, increasing the risk of collisions with other vehicles or pedestrians. This would be in conflict with Local Plan Policy TR3 and Paragraphs 067 and 068 of the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).

- RBC Conservation Officer – Objection

Objection

The proposed digital display advertising device, due to the siting, scale, size and design of the proposal, would lead to less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of Eldon Square Conservation Area, and settings of listed walls, railings and hospital in the immediate area, and setting of Kendrick Road Conservation Area, failing to meet Council's Local Plan Policies EN1, EN3, EN6 and OU4. I leave the final decision to the planning officer; I cannot support the proposal on heritage grounds.

Relevant policies and legislation

From the point of view of the historic environment, the main statutory tests are set out within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also requires the Council to pay **special attention** to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of designated Conservation Areas. Section 66 of the Act also requires that **special regard** be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

National Planning Policy and Guidance

The NPPF outlines government policy, including its policy in respect of the historic environment. Chapter 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development.

Paragraph 207 states, "In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting." Paragraph 208 says, "Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal."

Paragraph 212 of the NPPF requires that 'when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation....' And paragraph 213 says, 'any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification'.

Paragraph 215 requires that 'where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighted against the public benefits of the proposal...'

National Planning Practice Guidance on Historic Environment provides context to the NPPF.

Local Planning Policy and Guidance

Policy EN1 'Protection and enhancement of the historic environment' of the Reading Borough Local Plan sets out the Council's aspirations for the historic environment. The policy requires that all proposals to protect and, where possible, enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. It echoes the NPPF by stating, "Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits".

Applications which affect Listed Buildings are expected not to have an adverse impact on the elements that contribute to their special architectural or historic interest, including their settings.

Policy EN3 'Enhancement of conservation areas' of the Reading Borough Local Plan requires that development proposals within Conservation Areas contribute positively to local character and

distinctiveness. This policy states, “Development proposals within Conservation Areas **must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness**. Positive consideration will be given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas.”

Policy EN6 ‘New development in a historic context’ also requires “**New development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities** and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development. When determining planning applications for new development, the following factors will be taken into consideration:

- a. The positive contribution of the development to the existing historic townscape (scale, height, mass, proportion, plot size, street form, materials, significant vistas and views, and open space);
- b. Sensitivity to historic context;
- c. Reflection of borough-wide major heritage themes that contribute to local distinctiveness (e.g. patterned brickwork or former worker terraced housing);
- d. Whether development promotes and/or improves access to previously undiscovered or neglected historic significance.”

The Council’s Policy OU4 ‘Advertisements’ is also applicable to this application. The policy states “**Advertisements will respect the building or structure on which they are located and/or their surroundings and setting** in terms of size, location, design, materials, colour, noise, lettering, amount and type of text, illumination and luminance, and will not have a detrimental effect on public safety. **The cumulative impact of adverts will be taken into account**, and a proliferation of advertisements that detrimentally affects visual or aural amenity or public safety will not be acceptable. All adverts shall comply with the following criterion:

c) Advertisements on listed buildings or in Conservation Areas will respect or enhance the building or area, and will respect the key features of the special historic interest;”

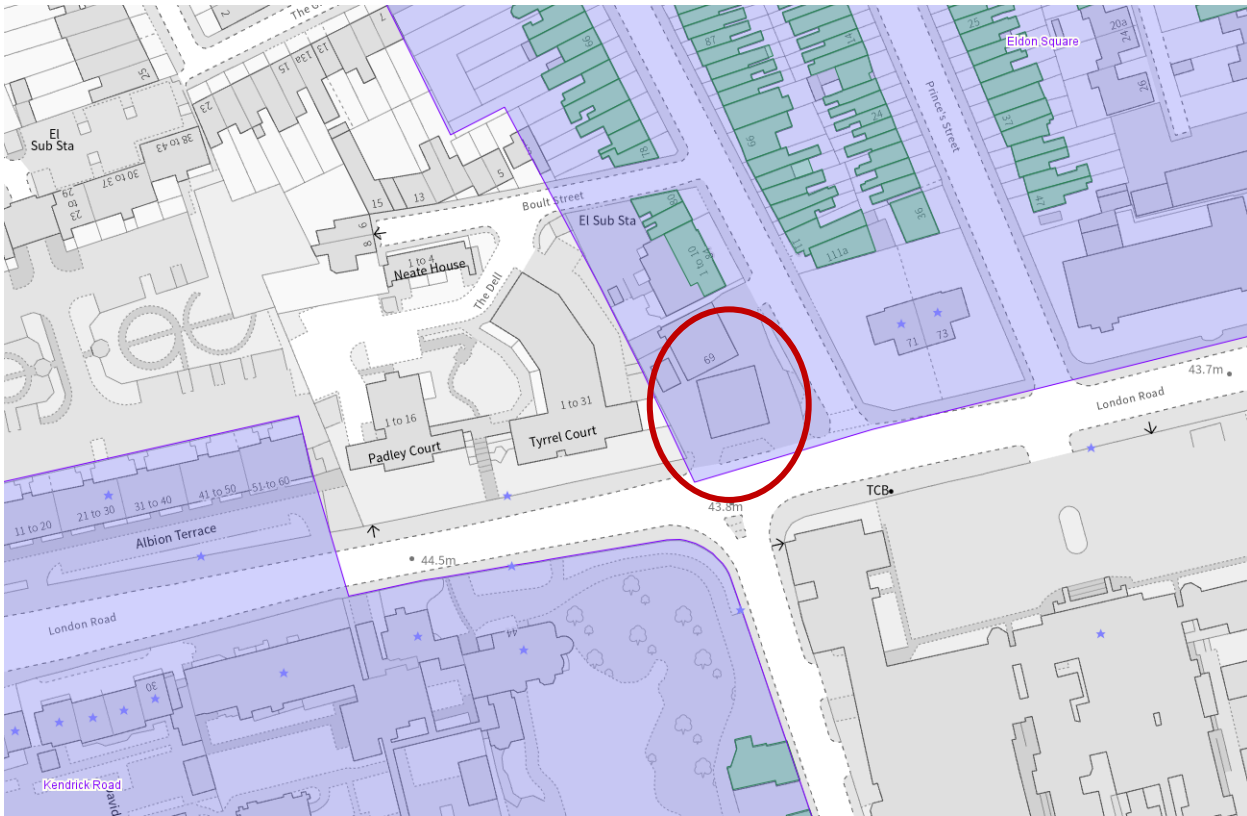
Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal and **Kendrick Road Conservation Area Appraisal** are material considerations in determining applications for development.

Other Guidance

English Heritage’s “Conservation Principles” provides policy and guidance for the “sustainable management of the historic environment”.

Relevant heritage assets

The application site relates to the modern petrol station located to the north of London Road and within the Eldon Square Conservation Area. As illustrated below, the site also within the settings of Grade II listed buildings of Railings to Road From Albion Place to Opposite Redlands Road ([Railings to Road From Albion Place to Opposite Redlands Road, Non Civil Parish - 1321925 | Historic England](#)), Garden Wall to North and East of the Acacias Wall to Garden of the Acacias ([Garden Wall to North and East of the Acacias Wall to Garden of the Acacias, Non Civil Parish - 1321929 | Historic England](#)), 71 and 73 London Road ([71 AND 73, LONDON ROAD, Non Civil Parish - 1113507 | Historic England](#)), Grade II* Main block and flanking wings at Royal Berkshire Hospital ([Main block and flanking wings at Royal Berkshire Hospital, Non Civil Parish - 1156091 | Historic England](#)) and Kendrick Road Conservation Area.



Application Site (red circled), conservation areas shown in purple and listed buildings with stars on them

Significance of heritage assets

The NPPF defines significance as the “value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest.”

The interest may be architectural or historic, as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Section 1.

*“Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”
(NPPF, 2023)*

Historic England assesses significance in a similar manner, referring to evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values of a place.

Being Reading’s first conservation area, the significance of the conservation area derives from its mid-19th-century planned square centred on King George V Gardens, an enclosed park with mature trees, listed railings and a prominent statue, surrounded by detached and semi-detached Bath stone buildings and a notable terrace on Kings Road; two grade II listed buildings, two landmark church spires, intact 19th-century street patterns and a mix of middle- and working-class housing (including small workers’ terraces), plus surviving historic kerbs, gulleys, railings and characteristic stone and brick materials.*

Similarly, Kendrick Road conservation area has many historic buildings—particularly on London Road—are statutorily listed ones and buildings of townscape merit; key features of early-19th-century terraces flanking London Road, large mid-19th-century houses in Kendrick Road and Redlands Road, and a tucked-away group of early-20th-century university buildings notable as the only university founded between the World Wars.

The official listing entries of the listed buildings whose settings would be potentially impacted by a development in the application site are read as follows.

Main block and flanking wings at Royal Berkshire Hospital

"SU 7272 9/161 READING LONDON ROAD (south side) Main block and flanking wings at Royal Berkshire Hospital 19.3.75. GV II"

Main block 1839 by local architect and builder Henry Briant (who won the competition for designing the hospital). As King William IV took such a keen interest in the hospital before it was built, his Arms, not Queen Victoria's appear on the central pediment. Two storeys and basement. Bath stone - very large ashlar blocks used to front. Slate roofs. eleven bays with seven bay central break projecting pedimented hexastyle Ionic portico. Glazing bar sash windows. Corner piers. Channelled basement. Astragal to moulded cornice (dentil cornice to portico) and parapet. Recessed side entrance bays. Wide steps to portico with excellent contemporary lamp tripods with guilloche ornament.

Interior: colonaded stair hall, cast iron balusters to stairs which divide at landing. 1882 chapel with contemporary fittings reached from under landing. (By Joseph Morris who made considerable extensions to the Hospital at that date). The main block has flanking wings added 1865 to designs by Joseph Morris. Three storeys also Bath stone and long side wings forming a large courtyard added 1881-2. The latter are also of Bath stone, have 5x5 end pavilions with three bay pedimented breaks and are linked to side wings by a Greek Doric colonade (east side) and a 1911 block (west side). In front to street is a dwarf-stone wall with moulded coping and five retraining ashlar gate piers with block modillions to moulded capping.

Listing NGR: SU7241272955"

Railings to Road From Albion Place to Opposite Redlands Road

"LONDON ROAD 1. 5128 (North Side). Railings to road from Albion Place to opposite Redlands Road SU 7273 7/512 SU 7272 9/512 II GV 2. Circa 1855-kl). 2 chains long. Cast-iron with trefoiled heads and round-headed guilloche patterned standards 1 gate in centre and later gates to east.

Listing NGR: SU7228272995"

Garden Wall to North and East of the Acacias Wall to Garden of the Acacias

"LONDON ROAD 1. 5128 (South Side) Garden wall to north and east of the Acacias SU 7272 9/162A II GV 2. Early-mid C19. Starts to east of front railings, curves to corner and extends about 70-80 yds up Redlands Road. About 10 ft high. Red brick. Included for group value and contribution to street scene.

Listing NGR: SU7232172982"

71 AND 73, LONDON ROAD

"LONDON ROAD 1. 5128 (North Side) SU 7273 7/158 Nos 71 and 73 II GV 2. Now one house, part of the hospital offices. Early C19. 3 storeys and basement. Stucco with rusticated ground floor and quoins. Moulded cornice at 1st floor level. 4 Roman Ionic pilasters embracing 2 upper floors with plain frieze and moulded and bracketed cornice breaking forward over pilasters. Blocking course. Slate roof. 6 ranges of glazing bar sash windows with moulded architraves, eared on 1st floor with cornices, round headed in arched recesses with panels below on ground floor. Entered from side. Large central stuccoed chimney stack.

Listing NGR: SU7237073033"

Impact of proposal upon heritage asset(s)

The proposed digital display advertising device, with dimensions of 2.4m x 1.23m, would be located in the southwestern corner close to the post of the listed Railings to Road from Albion Place to Opposite Redlands Road, next to the existing petrol price displays.

Although the proposed signage would not be in any important views of the Eldon Square Conservation Area and the Kendrick Road Conservation Area, due to the nature of London Road being one of the

main roads in Reading, it would be highly visible. The Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026) states, “Modern petrol station is completely out of character with the historic street (...)” that addition of a sizeable advertisement would result in further cluttering and could be considered as a discordant addition to the conservation area, causing some harm to the settings of listed buildings and heritage assets in the immediate surrounding.

Whilst it could be argued that the petrol station lies within the most altered part of the conservation area, due to the impact on multiple heritage assets, I cannot support the proposed advertising device. I conclude that, due to the siting, scale, size and design of the proposal, it would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of Eldon Square Conservation Area and settings of listed buildings, walls, railings and hospital, and Kendrick Road Conservation Area, failing to meet Council’s Local Plan Policies EN1, EN3, EN6 and OU4.

- Conservation Area Advisory Committee Consultations – No comments received

A site notice was erected on 12 February 2026.



No comments were received during the 21-day consultation period.

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 policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (3. – (1)) states that:

“A local planning authority shall exercise its powers under these Regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account—

(a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material; and

(b) any other relevant factors

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1)(b)—

(a) factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest;

(b) factors relevant to public safety include—

(i) the safety of persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);

(ii) whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air;

(iii) whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.

(3) In taking account of factors relevant to amenity, the local planning authority may, if it thinks fit, disregard any advertisement that is being displayed.

(4) Unless it appears to the local planning authority to be required in the interests of amenity or public safety, an express consent for the display of advertisements shall not contain any limitation or restriction relating to the subject matter, content or design of what is to be displayed.”

The National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (the Framework) and the Planning Practice Guidance (the PPG) confirm this approach. The Council has referred to policies in its development plan document. I have taken relevant policies into account in my assessment where they relate to proposals for advertisements.

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)

EN1 (Protection and enhancement of the historic environment)

EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas)

EN6 (New development in a historic context)

OU4 (Advertisements)

TR3 (Access, Traffic & Highway-Related Matters)

Other Documents

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

7. APPRAISAL

Amenity

The NPPF 2024 para 141 states that “the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed”. It also states that the control of advertisements should also take into account of cumulative impacts.

The site lies within the Eldon Square Conservation Area (ESCA). In accordance with the statutory duty set out in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the ESCA. It is also necessary to have regard to the ESCA as a material planning consideration. This includes the designation within character area 2.

The immediate area around the site is characterised and dominated by the expanse of tarmac that is London Road. A one-way three lane A Road dissecting this part of the town. The area contains a mixture of older 18th Century buildings, and mid/late 19th Century working class housing.

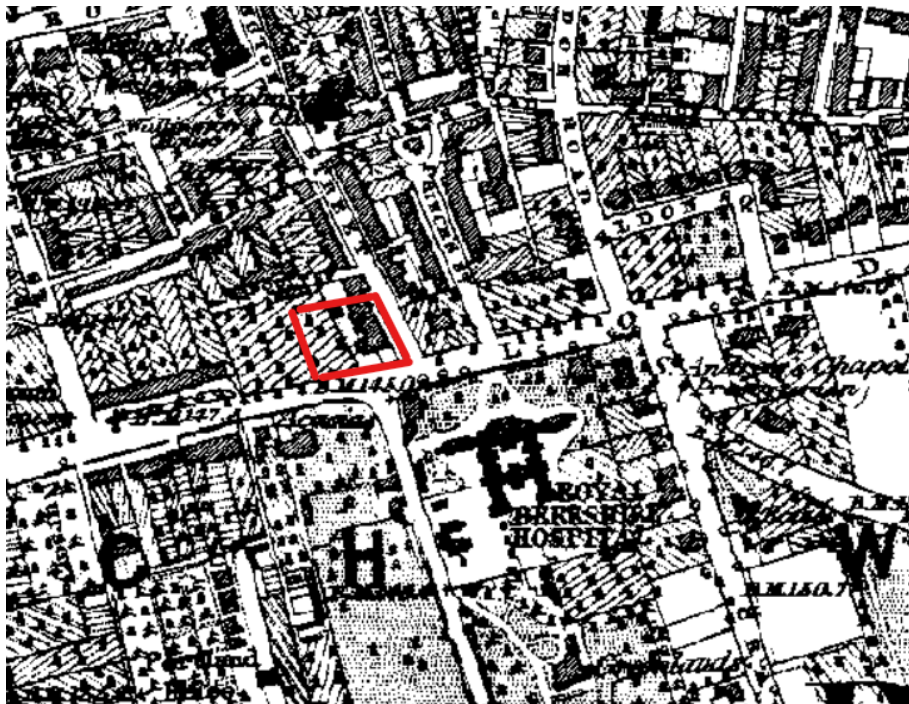


Figure 4 - Approximate extent of application site (red) on 1880 OS survey

A large pylon sign with fuel prices sits immediately adjacent the proposed advertisement, and a number of free-standing moveable signs also litter the forecourt of the PFS. It is unclear whether any of the freestanding moveable signs are authorised.

The ESCA also specifically mentions features that have a negative impact on the historic character and appearance of the conservation area, (ESCA p.11), including:

- “ - Modern petrol station is completely out of character with the historic street
- ...
- Intrusive traffic noise from London Road and Queen’s Road.”

Policies EN1, EN3, and EN6 cumulatively seek to protect, enhance and ensure development is appropriate within historic settings. The NPPF (2024) (Part 16) also emphasises the importance of conserving heritage assets (including listed buildings and conservation areas). It is clear that the PFS within the conservation area is an unwelcome and jarring element of the conservation area. The continued use of the site as PFS is unavoidable; however further uncharacteristic elements should be avoided. It is also noted that the proposal lies immediately adjacent the listed fencing along London Road.

The proposal is sited at the very far edge of the Conservation Area, and adjacent to a listed fence on London Road. The proposal would introduce a modern digital advertising device within a conservation area and setting of a listed boundary fence. The Advert, being 2.4m tall would be prominent within the site as the closest structure to the site frontage. It would be highly visible from the settings of the nearby listed buildings (71-73 London Road (Grade II), and The Royal Berkshire Hospital Buildings (Grade II*), and would be directly adjacent to a listed boundary fence (Grade II).

It is not overly clear what would be shown on the sign, with the statement confirming: *“The advertisements will comprise local and national campaigns as well as goods and services sold on site.”* It is noted that one of the advertisements that the proposal is seeking to ‘replace’ includes advertising for third-party delivery services (‘replace’ highlighted due to the potential unauthorised nature of the freestanding advert).

The site is within a highly prominent location. By way of its visual prominence within the conservation area and from the setting of nearby listed buildings it is considered that the proposed advertisement would have a significant detrimental impact upon the conservation area and these listed buildings.

It is considered that the size and prominent location of the proposed D6 small format illuminated advertising display which will exhibit static advertisements on rotation, sited at the exit to the PFS at 69 London Road would appear as an unattractive and prominent feature which would have a visual dominance in the street scene, harmful to the visual amenity of the area. The proposal would exacerbate an undesirable proliferation of visual clutter at this location.

It is likely that the digital panels (which would may allow for smarter real-time campaigns and better control over sales) would result in private benefits to the advertisers and operator of the site and are not matters that weigh in favour of the proposal in respect of the historic environment matters.

The proposal is contrary to Policy OU4 (Advertisements), EN1 (Protection and Enhancement Of The Historic Environment), EN3 (Enhancement Of Conservation Areas), Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) and Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

Public Safety

The Planning Practice Guidance emphasises that all advertisements are intended to attract attention but advertisements at points where drivers need to take more care are more likely to affect public safety.

The siting and illuminated D6 small format illuminated advertising display which will exhibit static advertisements on rotation adjacent to a busy classified A road near to a signalised pedestrianised crossing, busy side roads with regular in and out movements, would distract drivers in a location where there is conflicting vehicle movement and high flows of traffic. This could result in sudden and unpredictable vehicle movements, increasing the risk of collisions with other vehicles or pedestrians. As above, there is a Transport/Highways objection to the proposals.

The proposal conflict with Policy TR3 of the Reading Local Plan 2019 and Policies TR1 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters) and OU4 (Advertisements) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and Paragraphs 67 and 68 of the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) (2014).

8. CONCLUSION

Having considered the proposals, the proposed siting of the D6 small format illuminated advertising display sited at the entrance to the PFS at 69 London Road, would be harmful in terms of Highway safety and the proposals would result in harm to visual amenity and have a negative effect on the Conservation Area and setting of nearby listed buildings.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal at this site would harm the interests of visual amenity and be harmful to public safety.

9. RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE

1. The siting and sequential images displayed on the proposed advertisement display screens would distract drivers in a location where there is conflicting vehicle movement and high flows of traffic. This would increase the risk of sudden and unpredictable vehicle movements, increasing the risk of collisions with other vehicles or pedestrians. This would result in harm to public safety and would be in conflict with Policies TR3 and OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and Paragraph: 067 Reference ID: 18b-067- 20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014 and Paragraph: 068 Reference ID:18b-068-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014 of National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).
2. The proposed advertisement display screens sited at the exit to the Petrol Filling Station would, due to its combined scale, illumination, orientation, and positioning, appear as an unattractive and obtrusive feature in the street scene and would contribute towards an undesirable proliferation of visual clutter at this location and detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and setting of nearby listed buildings. The proposed advertisements would therefore result in harm to the visual amenity, character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policies EN1, EN3, EN6, OU4 and CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and Paragraphs 141 and 214 of the NPPF (2024).