



Stuart Henley & Partners
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Planning & Heritage Statement in respect of; Dukesbridge Chambers, 3-5 Duke Street, Reading.

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1.0 The planning application seeks to sub-divide the current ground floor unit into two self contained spaces incorporating a new entrance from Duke Street.

2.0 The existing front elevation is shown on the photograph below,



The current unit has one access from Duke Street.

It is proposed to introduce a new brick pier to the existing door opening, which will match the other brick piers on the front elevation. This will allow two doors to be inserted each side providing access into each of the new units created.

The overall existing aperture will remain unaltered, therefore limiting the impact of the changes on the overall appearance of the building.

The new doors will be formed in matching materials to the existing shopfront. No other changes are proposed to the front elevation.

The Use Class will remain Class E in both units.



The site is within the Central Reading Core as defined by Policy CR1. The site is also within a Primary Shopping Area as defined by Policy CR1 and a designated primary frontage within Central Reading as defined by Policy CR7. The site is within the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area and lies opposite The Royal County Hotel which is a Building of Townscape Merit. The site is also within an Active Frontage as indicated on the proposals map. Policy RC10 of the Reading Area Action Plan deals with Active Frontages.

RC10: ACTIVE FRONTAGES

Uses on the ground floor along the designated active frontages (illustrated on the Proposals Map and in Figure 8.1) will be within one of the following use classes: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, C1, D1, D2 or related sui generis uses, unless it would be an entrance to upper floors. New developments (or alterations to existing uses) that front onto any of the designated active frontages will provide an active building frontage with a display window or glazed frontage at ground floor level, in order to contribute to the vibrancy of the Town Centre, and provide visual interest.

Frontages should be of a high visual quality. Any frontages that have the potential to hinder movement or cause unnecessary safety risk will not be permitted.

The proposed new uses, A3 and A5 are within the use classifications permitted under policy RC10 and with only very minimal alterations to the shop frontage the proposal will be in accordance with the requirement.

HERITAGE CONSIDERATIONS

A previous application was approved for an identical application and is still valid. Within the officers report for that application the situation was summarised :

The development would be minor in scale and the existing entrance aperture in the building façade will not be enlarged. The new entrance would be constructed from materials to match the host building alongside the installation of 2 sets of aluminium doors which match the aluminium fittings along the existing shop façade and other shopfronts further south within the frontage along Duke Street. The host building is more modern in its appearance and is not a key feature of special historic interest, nor an historic shopfront as defined in the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area appraisal. In this respect, the new shopfront will have no demonstrably harmful impact on either the appearance of the host building within the street scene, nor the character and setting of the conservation area or setting of the Building of Townscape Merit. The development is therefore considered to comply with Policies CC7, EN1, EN3, EN6 and CR2 and OU5 and Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

It is therefore proposed that, as there is no deviation from the previous application, the situation concerning the potential impact on the Conservation is the same.

Similarly, the site lies within a zone identified as potentially high for Archaeological finds. Again, referring back to the officers report for the previous application, it was stated that *“The development will involve minor alterations to the shopfront that will be entirely above ground with no change to the footprint of the host building therefore the development is not considered to result in harm to the significance of any potential archaeological assets beneath the site and therefore the development complies with Policy EN2.”*

Overall the conclusion drawn by the previous case officer was :

“Conclusion The development is considered visually acceptable and will not harm the character or setting of the conservation area, nor the Building of Townscape Merit. There will be no harm to the provision of retail units in the area, nor to the preservation of any historical items of significance in the area of high archaeological potential. RECOMMENDATION Approve”