

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Tilehurst

App Ref: PL/26/0284 Full planning permission

Address: 100 School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5AU

Proposal: Change of use at ground floor from a former bank (Class E(c)(i)) to an educational use (private tuition centre)(Class F1)

Applicant: Kumon Reading Tilehurst Study Centre

Received date: 03/03/2026

Target Decision date: 18/05/2026

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a two-storey, semi-detached building located within the Tilehurst District Centre, on the northern side of School Road. The site was last in use as a Bank by the 'Nationwide' building society (Class E (c)(i)).

Above ground floor, is a recently approved residential dwelling (PL/24/1703 (FUL)). The flat is accessed via an independent access from the rear of the building through a shared access between the property and no.98. The shared access also provides a courtyard for the dwellings to the rear of both properties.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal seeks permission for a change of use of the premises from a bank (Class E) to an educational use for 'Kumon' tutoring. 'Kumon' currently operates from 26 School Road, and are seeking to relocate to a larger premises. No external alterations are currently proposed.

The following plans and documents were submitted with this application:

The 'Momentum', Planning, Design & Access Statement

The 'Momentum', Cover Letter

Location Plan

Application Form

CIL Form

The 'Magna Transport Planning Ltd', Transport Note, Ref: 26/887/B dated 21 February 2026

Drawing No: 02 A – Plans & Elevations

As received by the Local Planning Authority on 3 March 2026

Drawing No: 02 B – Plans & Elevations

As received by the Local Planning Authority on 23 March 2026

3. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- Transport Development Control – No objection.
- Environmental Protection Consultations – No objection subject to conditions.

A site notice was placed near the site on 25 March 2026. No comments were received to date.

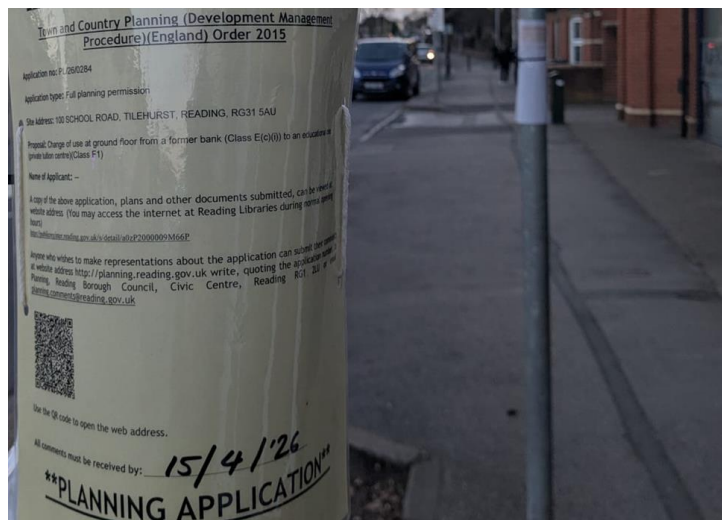


Figure 1 - Site notice photo

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/24/1703 (FUL) - Conversion of the existing storage rooms to create a 1x1 bedroom dwelling. Approved 5 June 2026 (Implementation status unclear)

PL/18/1742 (ADV) - 1 no. lozenge fascia sign, 1 no. projecting sign, 2 no. ATM surround. Approved 7 November 2018

PL/13/0872 (APC) - Discharge of conditions 3,7,11,12,14,15 of planning permission 13/00020/FUL. Approved 20 September 2013

PL/13/0306 (FUL) (13/00020/FUL) - Construction of two single storey dwellings. Approved 6 March 2013

PL/06/1193 (FUL) - Form new flat roof to rear and carry out alterations to rear and side elevations. Approved

The site has also been subject of various advertisement consent, and shopfront works between 1990-2003.

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:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

CC1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction

CC3 Adaption to Climate Change

CC5 Waste Minimisation and Storage

CC6 Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

CC7 Design and the Public Realm

CC8 Safeguarding Amenity

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

OU1 New and Existing Community Facilities

OU5 Shopfronts and Cash Machines

SPG/SPD

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

Design Guide to Shopfronts SPD (2022)

Local Plan Partial 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 pre-submission draft was submitted to the Secretary of State on the 9th of May 2025 and is currently at examination.

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 remains very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the appraisal below and are not considered to be ‘out of date’.

7. APPRAISAL

Land Use Considerations

The application site is within the Tilehurst District Centre as identified on the Proposals Maps of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019. The site is also identified as a ‘key frontage’ within the centre. Policies RL1 (Network and hierarchy of centres) and RL3 (Vitality and viability of smaller centres) seek to protect centres within Reading from inappropriate development, including loss of ground floor ‘centre uses’. In addition, Policy RL3 seeks that within key frontages that there would not be more than 3

consecutive units not in retail use, and that there would not be more than 2 consecutive takeaway uses. It also seeks to maintain the percentage of A1 of A2 uses within the centre to 60%. The supporting text of Policy RL3 (4.6.16) defines non-residential institutions (including schools) as centre uses.

The adjoining units are:

- 102 – ‘James Bloor’ – Jewellers (Retail Class E)
- 98 – ‘Vapourwise’ – Vape Shop (Retail Class E)

Policy RL3 is somewhat out of date, as it refers to the use classes as in place when the Local Plan was adopted, and therefore the percentage of uses within class A1 and A2 cannot be applied. The draft Local Plan Partial Update policy RL3 is similar in its intent, and reflects the updated and expanded Use Class E, seeking that:

*“• There would be no more than 2 consecutive sui generis takeaways, and no more than 30% of the length of the Key Frontage would be in takeaway use; and
• There would be no net loss of ‘centre uses’ for ‘non-centre uses’ at the ground floor (apart from entrances to upper floors), particularly in the Key Frontages, except in exceptional circumstances. On upper floors, other uses including residential (‘living over the shops’) will be acceptable.”*

The Local Plan partial update is still underway, and yet to be adopted. Though, a fair level of weight can be afforded to the emerging local plan Policy RL3, given that the proposed changes to it merely update reference to national guidance and legislation (including the Use Classes Order) and the fact that there have been no objections to the policy, meaning that it is likely to be adopted as proposed to be altered.

The proposal is not for a takeaway use and is for the change of use to another centre use. As such, there would not be any conflict with the existing or emerging Policies RL3. As such, the change of use is acceptable.

The proposed use falls within Use Class F.1 (Learning and non-residential institutions), which also includes other uses (display of works of art, museum, library or reading room, public hall, religious use, law courts). The application material solely relates to a Class F.1(a) education use, and has considered the impacts, such as transport related impacts, on the basis of that use. Any unrestricted change of use to an alternative Learning and non-residential institutions has the potential to have unacceptable impacts, or impacts which have not been considered.

Policy OU1 (New and Existing Community Facilities) provides support for new community facilities, particularly in areas where there is a choice of means of travel, and in existing centres. The supporting text of policy OU1 (4.7.2) states that community facilities are considered to include education and training facilities. As such, given the site is within a centre, and has a variety of means of travel (as discussed elsewhere), the provision of educational use in this location complies with policy OU1.

Residential Amenity

Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) seeks to ensure that existing residential dwellings are not subject to unacceptable disturbance from new development. The proposal seeks a change of use from a bank, to a educational establishment. The new use is considered to be a noisier use than the existing. The proposed hours of operation (08:00 to 2000 Monday to Saturday and not at all on Sundays) do not significantly vary from that of a bank, and are recommended to be secured by condition.

RBC Environmental Protection Officers have recommended a suitable condition is applied to any permission to ensure that noise insulation between the tutoring use and the residential above properties provides sound insulation performance greater than or equal to 55dB would overcome concerns with the

proposed use. The applicant raised some concern with meeting this requirement however, the pre-commencement conditions was agreed by the Applicant's agent on 16 April 2026.

The application proposes trading hours between 0900-1830 daily. The above noise criteria would allow sufficient flexibility in the hours of operation, that a condition would only seek to restrict opening hours to 8am – 8pm daily. Any alteration to the acoustic performance condition would necessitate revised hours of operation.

Design and appearance

Policy OU5, among other things, requires shopfronts to present an active frontage to the street at all times. The proposed development does not include any alterations to the shopfront. As confirmed by the planning agent by e-mail on the 29th of April, it is reported that the shopfront has been replaced. It would appear this would have required planning permission as it is not a like for like replacement, and no planning permission has been sought.



Figure 2 - 2025 Streetview image (left) 24/4/26 Site visit photo (right)

It is not clear whether the occupier would require any further alterations.. There is concern that the privacy of users may result in opaque coverings of the window such as vinyl stickers or the like. As such, a condition will be attached to this permission to ensure that the glazing of the shopfront, and doorway remain transparent and clear of any obstruction.

A separate advertisement consent would be required for any fascia signage and therefore is not part of the consideration of this application.

Transport Impacts

Policy TR1, TR3, and TR5 seek to ensure that developments do not impact highway safety and provide sufficient facilities for the intended use. The red line plan for the site only includes the building footprint, and does not include any external areas. Nor does the site currently have, or propose any car parking. Given the centre designation, and provision of wider centre parking nearby, the non-provision of parking would be acceptable.

With regard to cycle parking and storage. The centre includes some uncovered Sheffield type stands further along School Road. Given the intended users of the site would be school aged children, it may have been beneficial and useful to encourage health and activity to have some cycle parking on site.

However, the district centre is also a confluence of bus routes from the surrounding residential areas. As such, in addition to walking, there would be sufficient public transport in the vicinity of the site to justify non-provision of cycle parking in this instance.

Sustainability

Policies CC2, and CC3 seek to ensure all development consider methods for addressing and mitigating impacts of climate change on development. The proposal would not include significant refurbishment of the building, beyond what has already occurred as part of the banks vacating of the premises. As such, though policies CC2 and CC3 seek to apply a BREEAM requirement, it is not considered that the alterations to the building required would be significant enough to warrant a BREEAM assessment in this instance.

Waste

The originally submitted plans included waste storage outside of the building, and outside of the red line plan. The revised plans include waste storage inside the building. Policy CC5 seeks to ensure waste is minimised and managed effectively. The provision of internal waste storage for the use is reasonable, and the occupier would be required to organise private waste collection services.

8. CONCLUSION

The proposed change of use from a Bank (Class E) to an educational use (Class F) is considered to be an appropriate centre use at the ground floor of the Tilehurst District Centre, and would not disrupt the character of the key frontage. The proposal would also be conditioned to ensure that appropriate noise mitigation is applied to the ceiling to protect the residential amenity above, and ensure that the glazing to the front would remain clear to comply with Policy OU5. As such, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable and is recommended for approval.

9. RECOMMENDATION

Approve.