

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0322 Full planning permission

Address: R14 THE RIVERSIDE, THE ORACLE, BRIDGE STREET, READING, RG1 2AG

Proposal: Refurbishment of the shopfront to include the redecoration of the fascia panel, window and door frames and replacement canopies, with associated works.

Applicant: McDonald's Restaurants Limited

Received date: 10/03/2026

Target Decision date: 05/05/2026

Case Officer: Huimin Chen

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is located within a commercial area of the Oracle Complex, in an outdoor riverside courtyard. The property is currently in use as a McDonald's restaurant and is situated at ground-floor level.

The frontage of the site is close to Flood Zone 3 and lies within an Air Quality Management Area.



Front view of R14 The Riverside, McDonald's Restaurant, taken 02/04/2026

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal involves the refurbishment of the shopfront. The existing fascia box and floor-to-ceiling window frames would be decorated in RAL 7022 (Umbra Grey). The existing canopy fabric would be replaced with a new black canopy featuring two golden arches. Additionally, the existing digital window poster would be upgraded. The agent has confirmed, via email dated 25/03/2026, that there would be no increase in the intensity of illumination.



EXISTING ELEVATION
1130



PROPOSED ELEVATION
1130

Existing and proposed elevations submitted

Plans/documents considered:

- Flood Statement, dated 26/02/2026.
- P21-050-0980-01-A - The Location Plan, dated 05/02/2026
- P21-050-0980-02-A - Block plan of the site, dated 05/02/2026
- P21-050-0980-05-A - Proposed Elevations, dated 05/02/2026
Received 10/03/2026.
- The Oracle Hoarding Installation – Safety Method Statement, dated 16/04/2026
- The Oracle Hoarding Design (002)
Received 23/04/2026.

3. PLANNING HISTORIES

- PL/08/0213 – Alterations to the shop front windows, building fascia, and canopy material. Approved 22/07/2008.
- PL/08/0222 – Two internally illuminated building fascia signs and two non-illuminated canopy signs. Approved 14/07/2008.
- PL/15/0983 – Redecoration of the window and door frames RAL6015. Installation of new internal digital window display and new khaki green RAL6015 fascia box. New canopies and signage suite. Approved 29/07/2015.

4. CONSULTATIONS

- RBC Transport Development Control – no objections, subject to a condition.

There are no Transport objections to this application, however given its prominent position within the Riverside pedestrianised area, a scaled-down version of a CMS will be required and should include details of any partial footway closures, etc.

Suggested condition: Constructed Method Statement (To Be Submitted)

Planning Officer's note: A scaled-down CMS was submitted by the agent on 23/04/2026 and has been confirmed as acceptable by Transport.

- RBC Environmental Protection Consultations – no comments.

- A site notice was displayed in front of the application site. The 21-day consultation period was from 2 April 2026 to 23 April 2026. No letters of representation have been received.



Site notice photo

Equality Act 2010:

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.

5. 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 (NPPF)

National Planning Policy Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019)

CC7: Design and The Public Realm

CR1: Definition of Central Reading

CR2: Design in Central Reading

CR3: Public Realm in Central Reading

CR7: Primary Frontages in Central Reading

TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
EN15: Air Quality
EN18: Flooding and Drainage

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 submission draft of the Local Plan was submitted on 9th May 2025 and the Examination held in February 2026.

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 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’.

6. APPRAISAL

Character and Appearance

Policies CC7, CR3 and CR7 require that all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. Policy CR2 also requires that the architectural details and materials used in the central area should be high quality and respect the form and quality of the detailing and materials in areas local to the development site;

The application is considered to be minor in nature and would not result in a significant change to the appearance of the existing shopfront, as the visual alterations are primarily limited to a change in colour to Umbra Grey and the introduction of black canopies. The proposal is, therefore, considered acceptable in terms of character and appearance and is compliant with Policies CC7, CR3, CR7 and CR2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Safety Amenity

Policy TR3 The proposals would not be detrimental to the safety of users of the transport network, including pedestrians and cyclists; Policy EN15 requires that development should have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality. While Policy EN18 states “*Where development in areas at risk of flooding is necessary, it will not reduce the capacity of the flood plain to store floodwater, impede the flow of floodwater or in any way increase the risks to life and property arising from flooding.*”

The site lies within an Air Quality Management Area, and the frontage is adjacent to Flood Zone 3. However, the proposal is not considered to result in any harmful impacts in terms of flood risk or air quality, as it relates solely to the refurbishment of the existing shopfront.

With regard to transport matters, the Highway Authority has confirmed that the application would not result in long-term traffic concerns. However, given that the site is located within a busy shopping area, a scaled-down Construction Method Statement is considered necessary. Following the submission of The Oracle Hoarding Installation (Safety Method Statement), dated 16/04/2026, and The Oracle Hoarding Design

(002), both received on 23/04/2026, it is confirmed that the pedestrian walkway would maintain a clear width of 1.7 m for all members of the public during construction activities. A condition would be imposed to secure adherence to the Safety Method Statement.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and is considered to be acceptable on that basis, subject to the following conditions.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Approve with conditions

Time Limit

Approved Plans

Materials (As Specified)

Hours of Construction

Construction Method Statement (As Specified)