

DELEGATED FULL PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0276

Address: THE WHITE BUILDING, 33 KINGS ROAD, READING, RG1 3BU

Proposals: Installation of an external entrance canopy and surround to the main Kings Road entrance. (Amended Description)

Case Officer: Mishga Marshall

Applicant: Mr Paul Sexton

Date received (valid from): 03/03/2026

Target Decision date: 28/04/2026

EOT Agreed Decision Date: 08/05/2026

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is an office and co-working space, located on the northern side of Kings Road. The site is within the boundary of Reading Central Area, surrounded by tall buildings, with mixed uses of office, retail and residential flats. It is not a listed building nor does it fall within a Conservation Area, though is classified as an area of archaeological potential.

Site visit date: 14/04/2026

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal seeks planning permission for a new external entrance canopy to the main entrance, facing Kings Road. The canopy is proposed to be 2 storeys high (approx. 6.34m in height), span a width of approx. 10m and extend past the main elevation front wall by approx. 1.23m at its deepest point.

The canopy surround would be formed in GRC (Glass Reinforced Concrete) cladding panels supported off a lightweight steel support frame. And the reveals and soffit to the surround would be formed in PVD (Physical Vapour Deposition) cladding panels supported off a lightweight steel support frame. Lastly, the proposed sliding doors would be new PPC sliding aluminium sliding doors to be in same dark bronze colour to match canopy surround.

The initial full application submitted include a new illuminated fascia sign, which included backlit 3D metal letterings spelling 'THE WHITE BUILDING'. It was highlighted to the applicant that given this fulling planning permission includes a new fascia sign, Advertisement Consent would be required along with the full planning permission for the proposed works, and that the LPA would be unable to grant permission separately without the corresponding ADV consent. Where a sign forms an integral part of the development, the Full Planning application and the Advertisement Consent need to be considered alongside each other, as they are directly related.

The application was given the opportunity to either apply for the required ADV consent or remove the illuminated fascia sign and any associated fixings and references for the scheme submitted, and go forward with the proposed canopy in isolation.

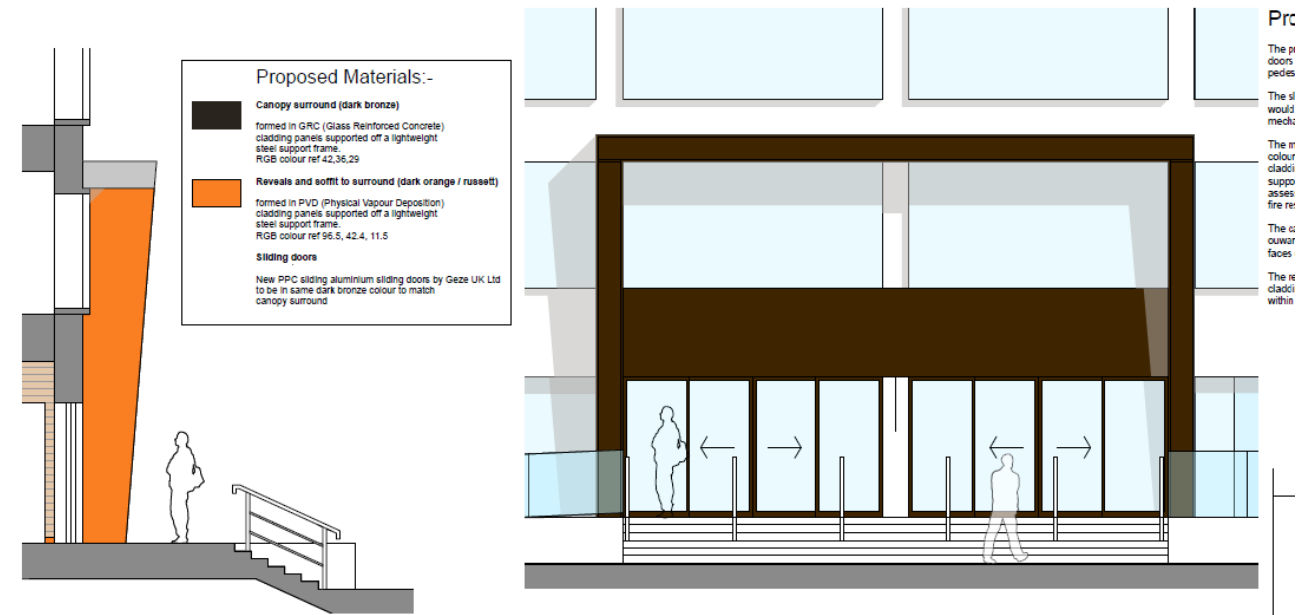
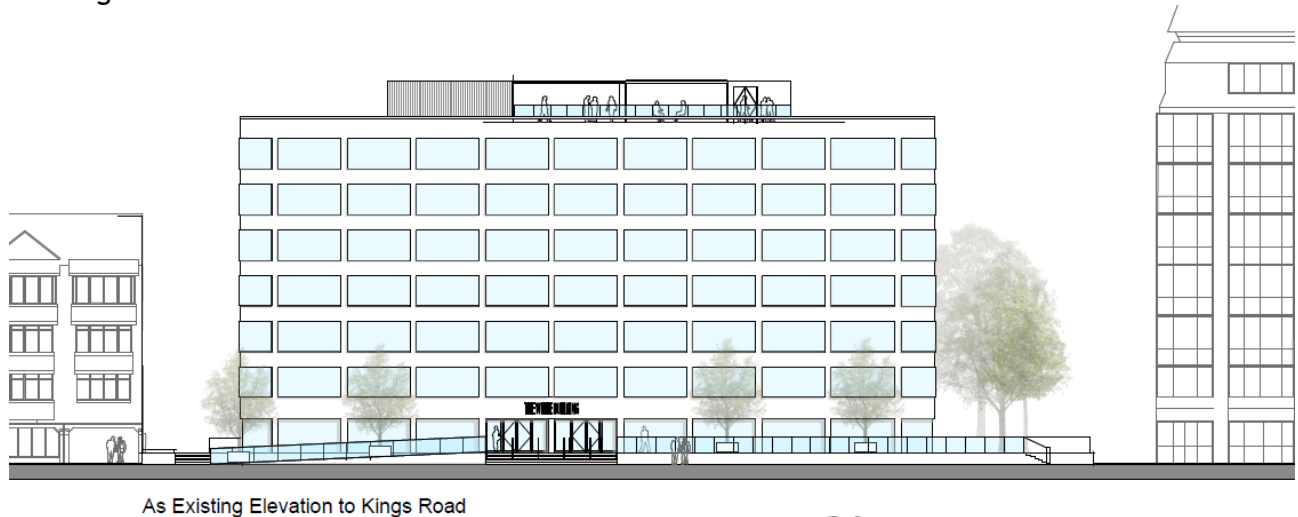
The applicant decided to go forward with the proposed canopy in isolation. With this in mind, the following assessment is on the canopy in isolation.

*Note: The applicant has informed the LPA, that a separate ADV consent will be submitted in regard to the illuminated signage, once the specifics have been agreed by the applicant.

PP-14740709v1 Location Plan dated 02.03.2026

2563-PPSD-20 REV A Ground Floor Plan and Kings Road Elevation As Proposed dated 08.04.2026

Existing Plans



PL/14/1028 - "Refurbishment of existing office building to include additional 1,947sqm. B1 office floorspace, new façade treatment, relocation of existing circulation core within new rear extension, ground floor extensions and improvements to main entrance, landscaping and parking". - Permitted subject to Legal Agreement dated 09.10.2014

PL/16/2309 - Application for a non-material amendment following a grant of planning permission (141028). - Agree dated 19.01.2017

4. CONSULTATIONS

Site notice displayed on 14.04.2026.

No letters of representation have been received.

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 2024

National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

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 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’.

6. APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The proposal relates to external alterations to an existing building and does not involve a change of use. As such, the principle of development is acceptable, subject to detailed consideration of design, visual impact, and impact on neighbouring amenity in accordance with the relevant policies of the Local Plan.

Character and Appearance

Policy CC7 requires 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.

The proposed canopy would be positioned on the principal elevation fronting Kings Road, where it would form a prominent feature within the street scene. It would extend across two storeys, measuring approximately 6.34 metres in height and 10 metres in width. Whilst this represents a relatively large addition in vertical terms, its projection from the host building would be limited to approximately 1.23 metres maximum. As such, the structure would read as a shallow addition rather than a bulky or overly dominant feature when viewed from the street, thereby reducing the potential for visual intrusion.

The introduction of a strong architectural feature to mark the entrance at ground and upper level is considered appropriate given the building's prominent frontage and the varied architectural character along Kings Road.

In terms of materiality, the use of Glass Reinforced Concrete (GRC) cladding panels to the main surround, together with the proposed panels to the reveals and soffit, would provide a high-quality and durable finish. The proposed dark bronze colour would create a cohesive and contemporary appearance, offering a clear contrast with the host building while remaining sympathetic in tone, especially in relation to its neighbouring buildings, integrating with their red brick.

It is acknowledged that the canopy would be visible within the wider streetscene; however, given its limited projection, high-quality materials and well-considered design, it would not result in visual clutter or harm to the established character of the area. Instead, it would provide a contemporary enhancement to the building frontage.

Overall, the proposal is considered sympathetic to the host building and would preserve its visual character within the surrounding area. The development is therefore considered visually acceptable and compliant with Policy CC7.

Residential Amenity

Policy CC8 states development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties.

The proposed canopy is located on the principal elevation and projects only a short distance (approximately 1.23m) from the building. Given this limited projection and its positioning, the development would not result in any material loss of outlook, daylight, or sunlight to neighbouring properties.

Furthermore, the proposal does not include any additional openings at upper levels that would give rise to overlooking or loss of privacy. The works are also not expected to generate any additional noise, disturbance, or activity beyond that associated with the existing lawful use of the building.

Due to the scale, siting, and nature of the proposal, it is considered that there would be no material adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. The proposal is therefore compliant with Policy CC8.

Other Matters

It is noted that the site is situated within an area of archaeological potential, however given the scale of the development and the fact that the proposed would be built upon existing developed and brown field land, as well as the fact that the area is on a raised platform. It is not considered that there would be harm to any land of archaeological potential beneath the site.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed entrance canopy, by reason of its scale, design and material finish, is considered to represent a high-quality and contemporary addition to the host building. Whilst forming a prominent feature on the principal elevation, the limited projection and lightweight appearance ensure that it would not appear unduly dominant or result in harm to the character or appearance of the building or wider streetscene.

Furthermore, the proposal would not give rise to any material adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, nor would it result in any highways concerns.

The development is therefore considered to comply with relevant Policies of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the design objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework. Accordingly, the application is recommended for approval, subject to conditions.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Recommended Conditions:

Time Limit

Approved Plans

Materials