

COMBINED DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey ward

App Ref: PL/26/0089 LBC & PL/26/0083 FUL

Address: 15 CASTLE STREET, READING, RG1 7TB

Proposal: Repair and renovate the front facade. Reinstate former residential use, including minor internal layout changes to the modern rear spaces of the building.

Applicant: Mr Arthur op den Brouw

Received date: 26/01/2026

Target Decision date: 08/05/2026 (agreed extension of time)

Case Officer: Marcelina Rejwerska

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a mid-terrace two-storey property on the south side of Castle Street, within the central core of Reading. The property is in office use and is Grade II* listed. The listing (recently amended) reads as follows:

15 Castle Street, Reading, is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:*

Architectural interest

** as a prominent, high-status urban vernacular building of the C16 and later, with finely proportioned double jetties and distinctive gables; * the interior retains a significant proportion of good quality early timber framing, particularly evident on all floors of the front range, and C18 fixtures in the ground-floor room.*

Historic interest:

** the long history and form of the building demonstrate the commercial and domestic occupation of English historic towns from the C16 onward which, amplified by its documented history, adds to the building's more than special national interest. Group value: * the building has a historical relationship with a number of listed buildings in close proximity, notably the neighbouring 17 and 19 Castle Street, both listed at Grade II*.*

The site is also within the St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area, and an area of archaeological potential.



Image of site frontage taken from the submitted Heritage Statement.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Listed building consent and planning permission are sought for repairs and renovations of the front façade and reinstating of the former residential use including minor internal layout changes to the modern rear spaces of the building.

2.1. Information submitted:

1025 Heritage Statement
1025-03-00 Floor Plans As Existing
1025-05-00 Existing Front Elevation
1025-05-01 Existing Rear Elevation
1025-05-02 Existing West Elevation
1025-05-03 Existing East Elevation
Received 26 January 2026

1025-02-10 Rev A Proposed Site Location Plan
1025-02-11 Rev A Proposed Block Plan
1025-03-10 Rev A Proposed Floor Plans
1025-05-10 Rev A Proposed Front Elevation
1025-05-11 Rev A Proposed Rear Elevation
1025-05-12 Rev A Proposed West Elevation
1025-05-13 Rev A Proposed East Elevation
Received 27 March 2026

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- PL/23/0643 - Pre-application advice for repair, renovation and partial change of use of a Grade II* listed building (amended description). Advice provided.
- PL/24/0061 - Internal alterations to create hallway and floor repairs. Application permitted.

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- Historic England – No comments to make.
- RCAAC – No comments received.
- RBC Conservation Officer – Clarification requested.

Site notices were also erected around the site. No letters of representation were received.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

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 and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

BS7193: Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings
Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance 2008

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE

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

H1: PROVISION OF HOUSING

H2: DENSITY AND MIX

H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE

TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

Other Local Documents

St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area Appraisal 2008

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.

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 is that they remain in accordance with national policy (aside from Policy H1, which is acknowledged to be out-of-date) and that the objectives of those policies remain very similar in the submission 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' (aside from Policy H1).

6. APPRAISAL

6.1. Land use matters

The NPPF seeks to 'boost significantly the supply of housing' and deliver a wide range of homes, of different types and tenures. Achieving an efficient use of the land within the context of any central and sustainability located site is a key priority both at a national and local level. The NPPF states that LPAs should actively "*encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed*

(brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value". Policy H2 (Density and Mix) specifically considers density and mix and requires that an appropriate density of residential development is informed by the character and mix of uses of the area in which it is located and its current and future level of accessibility.

Policy H1 states "*Provision will be made for at least an additional 15,847 homes (averaging 689 homes per annum) in Reading Borough for the period 2013 to 2036.*" This policy is proposed to be updated with the latest housing data in the Local Plan Partial Update which was submitted for examination on 9th May 2025; however, this is not considered to have a significant impact in relation to this proposal.

The application site has historically been a mixed use of commercial and ancillary residential. Therefore, it is not considered that there is any net change in the use (and therefore no affordable housing contribution sought). The rear of the building is already used as accommodation by the applicant and the proposal seeks to formalise this by improving the internal layout to serve the use as ancillary accommodation for the applicant who uses the front of the building as an office for his business. As such, the proposed ancillary residential use is considered acceptable in this case. At the pre-application stage the applicant was advised that a S106 legal agreement would be required to ensure the residential flat remains ancillary to the office use, however, this is not considered necessary at this stage as there is no way to access the flat independently from the office. It therefore has no capacity to operate as a self-contained dwelling and can only operate as ancillary to the office. There is no further requirement to control this use via a legal agreement.

6.2. Design and heritage implications

Policy EN1 states "Applications which affect Listed Buildings will not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where appropriate, their settings." Policy CC7 also requires high quality design.

The proposal includes a comprehensive scheme of repairs and renovations to the front façade of the property, which is an attractive feature with high heritage significance. The works proposed include:

- Removal of vegetation which has grown around the chimney and rainwater goods.
- Repair of leadwork (which was previously repaired but failed).
- Repairs and repainting of the timberwork which have deteriorated.
- Repair of lime rendered walls where cracking and delamination can be seen.
- All rainwater goods to be assessed and repaired/replaced where necessary.
- Repainting of the brickwork walls which have been previously painted with non-breathable paint.
- The stone step to be re-laid where it has shifted due to poor foundations.

The Conservation Officer requested clarifications with regards to the methodology of the repairs, and the agent has subsequently submitted revised plans which are considered acceptable. The proposed methodology is appropriate for the site and sympathetic to the significant of the historic asset. The works to the front façade are therefore considered acceptable.

The internal works proposed to facilitate the residential use include installation of a stud wall and tiled bathroom. These are contained within the rear of the building, which is a 1980s extension to the main property and have lower significance in comparison. This is considered acceptable in this case.

It is also proposed to replace the windows and external doors at the rear of the building with timber framed double glazing. This is also considered acceptable.

Overall, there are no objections to raise with regards to the design of the proposal.

6.3. Residential amenity

Policy CC8 requires development to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential policies or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties. Policy H10 also requires dwellings to be provided with functional private outdoor space wherever possible. These policies are relevant in this case as the residential use is being re-introduced on the site.

There are no risks to amenity identified either to the occupant nor the neighbouring residents. The existing fenestration layout allows access to adequate natural light and does not create or suffer from loss of privacy or overlooking.

There is also an existing small rear garden which has adequate space for sitting out and general storage. The proposal is therefore considered in line with Policies CC8 and H10.

6.4. Transport and refuse

Policy TR5 requires development to provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.

The site is located within the town centre on a road with extensive parking restrictions. No off-road parking spaces are available, and none are proposed. Considering the location of the site, this is considered acceptable. The rear garden has sufficient space for the storage of bicycles, and no storage facility is proposed which is also considered acceptable in this case as it would not be considered suitable for the setting of the listed building.

Policy CC5 is also relevant and requires development to demonstrate sustainable approaches to waste management including well-designed space to facilitate waste storage, reuse and recycling. The agent has advised that the residential unit will make use of the existing residential Council refuse collections in the form of refuse bags collected from the kerbside, and this arrangement has been confirmed by RBC Waste Services. No dedicated refuse storage is sought in this case as it would not be considered suitable for the setting of the listed building.

Overall, the proposed reinstatement of the ancillary residential use is considered acceptable in transport terms.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed works are considered appropriate and sympathetic to the historic significance of the building and as such, the proposal is considered in accordance with local policies as set out above.

8. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION

Recommended conditions (Lbc):

1. Time limit (standard)
2. Approved Plans
3. Materials to match and as specified

Recommended conditions (Ful):

1. Time limit (standard)
2. Approved plans
3. Materials as specified