

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Thames Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0353 Full planning permission

Address: 18 RICHFIELD AVENUE, READING

Proposal: Enlargement of existing external terrace and formation of new bin store behind.

Applicant: Mr Andrew Joyce

Received date: 16/03/2026

Target Decision date: 11/05/2026

Case Officer: Huimin Chen

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site consists of a two-storey building facing Richfield Avenue, with a single-storey element behind. The building is currently used as a casino known as Gentings, which has an existing smoking area on the east side of the premises and surface car parking to the rear and east side of the premises. The surrounding area consists predominantly of commercial and industrial units and warehouses, and the site is opposite the Rivermead Leisure Complex.

The site is within an Air Quality Management Area and Flood Zone 2.



Front & east side views of 18 Richfield Avenue, taken on 29/04 & 10/04/26 respectively by the Officer

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

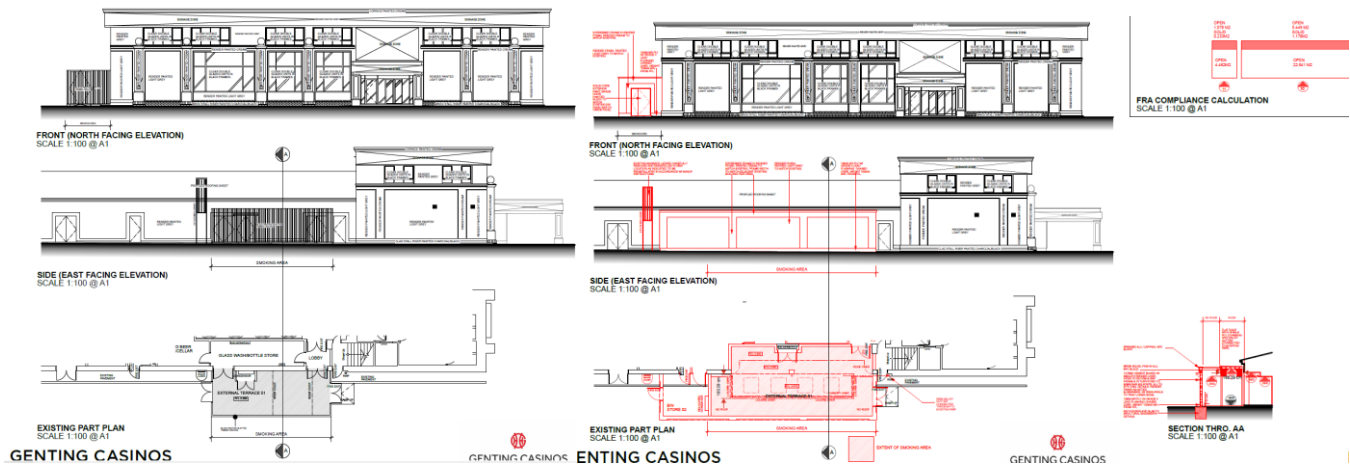
The planning application seeks permission for the enlargement of the existing external terrace and the formation of a new bin store to the rear of this new terrace. The existing terrace would be removed to facilitate this new proposal.

The proposed width would be broadly the same as the existing, measuring approximately 3.6 m as projected from the eastern wall of the main building. The proposed depth would be greater, measuring approximately 13.2 m, which is around 4 m deeper than the existing terrace. The proposed terraced area would incorporate a single-ply canopy projecting approximately 1.9 m from the existing recessed area, partially covering the new terrace.

The bin store would be provided behind the new terraced area, with a depth of approximately 3.8 m. The overall height of the proposed development would be approximately 3.2 m, which is around 0.7 m higher than the existing structure.

Part of the existing external eastern wall would be removed to create a larger opening onto the expanded terrace. The new enclosure would be formed by cement board with an expressed cream-painted frame, while the rest would be painted light grey. The front door facing Richfield Avenue would be painted black to match the existing.

The proposal also includes the relocation of the existing man-safe ladder and the relocation of the existing air-conditioning condensers to the new dedicated bin store located behind the expanded terrace.



Existing and proposed plans and elevations

Plans/information considered:

- Drawing No. 2437.P01 - Existing Elevations, location and block plan, dated 01/2026.
- Drawing No. 2437.P02 - Proposed Elevations (including proposed floor plans and section plan), dated 01/2026.
- Ref: 2437-4.1-set-designaccess – Design and access statement, dated 16/03/2026.
- Ref: 2437-4.1-set-terracemanagement - Terrace Management Statement, dated 16/03/2026.
- Ref: 2437-4.1-jeg-twimc - Covering Letter, dated 16/03/2026.
Received 16/03/2026.
- Ref: 2437-4.1-jeg-binstore2 - Bin Store Arrangements, dated and received 16/04/2026.
- Drawing No. 2437P03 – Proposed Block Plan, dated 05/2026, received 11/05/2026.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/12/1375 - 18 Richfield Avenue - Introduction of a glazed shop front onto Richfield Avenue to replace solid wall and external alterations including new lighting, changes to entrance door and creation of an external smoking terrace. Approved 12/06/2012.

4. CONSULTATIONS

- RBC Environmental Protection (EP) Consultations – Clarification would be required. Please see the summary as follows:

The Environmental Protection consultation comments confirm that there are no objections to the proposed enlargement of the terrace. However, as the provision of a bin store is likely to increase the potential for rats to access the bins—by providing a more sheltered and secluded environment—the applicant would need to outline a management strategy for minimising pests or otherwise consider the provision of a pest-proof bin store.

Planning Officer's note: Following the submission of the document ref. 2437-4.1-jeg-binstore2 – Bin Store Arrangements, dated and received on 16/04/2026, which sets out details of the bin store arrangement and management strategy, the Environmental Protection team confirmed that the relevant concerns have largely been addressed and that they have no further comments.

- RBC Transport Development Control – No objection.

Enlargement of the existing external terrace and formation of a new bin store behind. There are no transport objections to the proposed enlargement of the external terrace as a smoking area. The proposal does not involve any alterations to the existing access arrangements or the onsite parking provision. As such, the development is not expected to result in any additional vehicle movements or have an adverse impact on highway safety or the operation of the surrounding highway network.

- RBC Waste Services – No comments were received during the consultation period.
- One site notice was displayed near the application site. The 21-day consultation period was from 10 April 2026 to 1 May 2026. No letters of representation have been received.



Site Notice

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)

2. Achieving Sustainable Development

4. Decision -making

12. Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

National Planning Policy Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019)

CC1: Presumption In Favour of Sustainable Development

CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction

CC7: Design and The Public Realm

EN15: Air Quality

EN18: Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems

EM2: Location of New Employment Development

SPD

Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (Adopted December 2019)

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

Design 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 enlargement of the existing external terrace and the installation of the bin store are considered acceptable in terms of size and design. This is because the proposed width would be the same as the existing terrace, and the colour of the proposed materials is considered to respect the appearance of the main building. Given that the application site and the main building are both large, the enlarged terrace would be proportionate to the host property.

In addition, as the surrounding area is predominantly characterised by commercial and industrial units and warehouses, the proposal would not detract from the wider environment in terms of character and appearance.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Sustainability and Environmental Protection

Policy EN15 requires that development should have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality.

Policy EN18 states that 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.

Policy EM2 indicates that Richfield Avenue is located within the designated Core Employment Areas within Reading Borough.

Policies CC1 and CC2 require that a positive approach to considering development proposals will be taken that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Given that the existing terrace already serves as a smoking area, the proposed enlargement is not considered to have a greater impact on air quality than the existing arrangement, as the casino would remain the same size. The Environmental Protection team has confirmed that there are no objections to the proposed larger terrace. As such, the proposal is not considered contrary to Policy EN15.

Although the site is located within Flood Zone 2, the proposal largely comprises an open smoking area and a bin store. On this basis, a Flood Risk Assessment is not considered necessary.

The application site lies within a designated Core Employment Area, and the enlarged terrace is considered to be a positive provision for patrons of the premises, as it would provide additional external amenity space.

With regard to the bin store, it was noted that it could potentially encourage rats. Following a request by the Council, the applicant submitted a Bin Store Arrangement Plan (ref. 2437-4.1-jeg-binstore2), which includes a bin store management plan and hygiene measures. The operational management procedures outlined within this document are considered sufficient to address concerns relating to pests, which would also be conditioned, should the application be approved.

As a result, the proposal is not considered harmful to sustainable development and is considered to comply with Policies CC1 and CC2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Other matter

Based on the consultation comments, the Transport team has confirmed that the proposal would not be harmful to highway safety as there are no alterations to the existing access arrangements or the onsite parking provisions.

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)

In Accordance with the Bin Store Arrangement

In Accordance with the Terrace Management Statement