

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey ward

App Ref: PL/26/0300 Full planning permission

Address: 4 KINGS ROAD, READING

Proposal: Proposed Security Shutters

Applicant: Mr Gill

Received date: 05/03/2026

Target Decision date: 25/05/2026

Case Officer: Marcelina Rejwarska

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises the commercial units at 2-4 Kings Road including the Duke's Corner Store, Amo, Just Momo and Paesinos Pizza. Duke's Corner Store and Just Momo have existing box shutters. The site is located on the Jacksons Corner junction and is within the London Street/Market Place Conservation Area. The site is a designated frontage in the Primary Shopping Area of Central Reading. The site is within the setting of the Grade II listed 3-5 King Street (the Botanist) and a number of Buildings of Townscape Merit (Jacksons Corner, 2, 4-8 Duke Street, 25 King Street).



Figure 1 Photo of the application site taken by the case officer in April 2026.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for box shutters for all units along 2-4 Kings Road (of which 2 units have existing box shutters). It is noted that the external shutter box above the entrance to Duke's Corner Store was existing prior to the development of the shop units and has gained immunity from enforcement. The proposed plans also show alterations to the advertising for the units, which the applicant was advised would require separate advertisement consent and is, therefore, not assessed as part of this application.



Figure 2 Extract from proposed elevations.

2.1. Information submitted:

Heritage Statement, dated 5 March 2026

Letter from Matt Rodda MP, dated 3 November 2025

JEA-PRO-002e Proposed Elevation and Site Plan

JEA-PRO-001e Proposed Ground Floor and Elevation

Received 5 March 2026

JEA-EXI-003d Existing Layout

Received 30 March 2026

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 231657/FUL – Change of Use from Class E(g) to Class E(a) to provide 4 commercial units at ground floor level. Permitted
- 231658/ADV – 4 fascia signs with pronounced lettering with backlit white LED and one hanging sign. Permitted
- 220130/FUL - Single storey vertical extension and associated works to provide 4x1 bed flats, following demolition of roof top plant room structure – Application permitted subject to legal agreement
- 211263/OPA - Change of use of 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 12 Flats. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 – Application Permitted
- 211410/OPA - Change of use of plant room from Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 1 dwelling. Prior Notification under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 – Application Closed
- 211389/FUL - The proposed works seek to introduce windows to the existing plant room on the roof of the 4 storey building know as Abbey Corner – Application Permitted
- 211207/OPA - Change of use of 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 9 new dwellings. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Prior Approval Given.
- 141408/FUL - Ground floor change of use from A1 Retail to A3 Restaurant/cafe. Installation of air conditioning plant and air extraction ductwork at roof level. Permitted.
- 080134/FUL - Change of use from A1 Retail to A3 Restaurant/cafe. Installation of air conditioning plant and air extraction ductwork at roof level. Permitted.
- 071309/ADV - Non-illuminated blue hanging 600mm square panel sign, projecting on to Kings Road. Permitted.
- 011276/FUL - To construct new ground floor entrance which serves offices on upper floors. Permitted.
- 010711/ADV - 2 no. sets of internally illuminated letters, each set consisting of 3 no. logos. Permitted.

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- RBC Conservation Officer – Objection.
- RCAAC – Objection.

Site notices were also erected around the site. Letters of representation have been received as follows:

- 4 letters of support
- 1 letter of objection

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

National Planning Practice Guidance

Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance 2008

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

EN6: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN A HISTORIC CONTEXT

OU5: SHOPFRONTS AND CASH MACHINES

Supplementary Planning Documents

Design Guide to Shopfronts SPD 2022

Other documents

Market Place/London Street Conservation Area Appraisal

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 was submitted to the Secretary of State on 9th 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 remain 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’.

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.

6. APPRAISAL

Policy EN3 requires that development proposals within Conservation Areas contribute positively to local character and distinctiveness. This policy states, “*Development proposals within Conservation Areas must*

make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Positive consideration will be given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas.”

Policy EN6 also requires “New development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development. When determining planning applications for new development, the following factors will be taken into consideration:

- a. *The positive contribution of the development to the existing historic townscape (scale, height, mass, proportion, plot size, street form, materials, significant vistas and views, and open space) ...”*

The NPPF outlines government policy, including its policy in respect of the historic environment. Chapter 16 of the NPPF (2024) 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development.

Similarly, Policy OU5 requires shopfronts to respect the character of the building on which they are located and their surroundings, as well as the wider street, in terms of design, colours, materials, lighting, and location. The specific criteria are relevant: “a) *New shopfronts on listed buildings or in Conservation Areas will respect or enhance the building or area, and will respect the key features of the special historic interest;... e) Shopfronts should present an active frontage to the street at all times. Where security is essential, security features will be internal, such as internal open mesh grilles.”*

The existing and proposed solid box roller shutters are considered harmful to the character and visual quality of the application site and the wider street scene. Solid box shutters limit natural surveillance, contribute to a more hostile streetscape, heighten the perceived risk of crime, and often attract vandalism such as tagging and graffiti. From the Google Street View below, it appears that the shutters have already attracted some graffiti in the past.



Figure 3 Image taken from Google Street View.

The applicant has submitted justification for the proposal which states that the alternative security measures which are identified as the preferred options in the Shopfronts SPD (laminated glass windows, internal shutters) would be too costly and would not prevent damage to glass windows. This, however, is considered to have little weight when considered against the harm to the setting of the Conservation Area. There are no other benefits identified or proposed with the application which would outweigh the harm identified.

The proposed solid security shutters would cover almost the entire ground floor of the glazed façade of the building, creating a visually unattractive barrier outside shopping hours and giving the street an unwelcoming, fortified appearance. As such, the proposed shutters would significantly detract from the character and appearance of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area by failing to respect, preserve, or enhance its significance.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed development would be harmful to the appearance of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area and the surrounding Buildings of Townscape Merit, contrary to Policies EN3, EN6 and OU5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. There are no public benefits identified which would outweigh the identified harm.

8. RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE

Due to the following reasons:

1. The proposal by way of its prominent design and unsympathetic materials using solid security shutters covering almost the entire ground floor of the glazed façade would be harmful to and significantly detract from the setting and character of the London Street/Market Place Conservation Area due to creating a visually unattractive barrier and giving the street an unwelcoming, fortified appearance. The provided reasoning for the development is not considered sufficient justification, therefore, there are no identified public benefits to the proposal which would outweigh the harm identified. The proposal would fail to respect, preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area, and its significance, and is as such contrary to Policies EN3, EN6 and OU5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, the Design Guide to Shopfronts SPD 2023 and NPPF Paragraph 219.