

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Tilehurst

App Ref: PL/26/0257 Full planning permission

Address: THE WATER TOWER PH, 160 PARK LANE, TILEHURST, READING, RG31 4DU

Proposal: Construction of new front patio with covered pergolas, picket fencing, raised planters and new floor finishes. Re-open existing doorway.

Applicant: Greene King

Received date: 24/02/2026

Target Decision date: 21/04/2026

Agreed Extension of Time until: 02/06/2026

Case Officer: Gary Miles

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

A large Public House known as the Water Tower, formerly known as the Bear PH. The application site fronts onto Park Lane and sides on to Langley Hill and Firs Road. The site consists of a large original main building with later single storey extensions. The pub has a rear public garden and a wrap around private frontage which is laid to tarmac and used for parking, with 2 vehicular entrances, one from Park Lane and one from Firs Road. The property is not listed, nor in a conservation area.

Site visit date: 4th March 2026



Front elevation looking from Park Lane



Side elevation looking from Firs Road

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The pub has limited areas for recreational use associated with the pub and the rear garden is disconnected from the rest of the property, so the proposal consists of constructing a new front patio with covered pergolas, festoon lighting, picket fencing, raised timber sleeper planters and new floor finishes. Works to the rear garden are also proposed. Reinstating an existing entrance on the main front elevation will allow additional access to the new outdoor seating directly connecting the interior to the external areas and for ease of serving customers. The planters will soften the patio and pergola construction and enhance the appearance of the overall scheme.

Plans & documents considered:

Block Plan

Drawing no: PP-14731062v1 – Location Plan, dated be 26

Drawing no: 03 – Site Plan As Existing, dated Jan 26

Drawing no: 04 – Site Plan As Proposed, dated Jan 26

Drawing no: 05 – Elevations – Existing & Proposed, dated Jan 26

Drawing no: 06 – Pergola Details, dated Jan 26

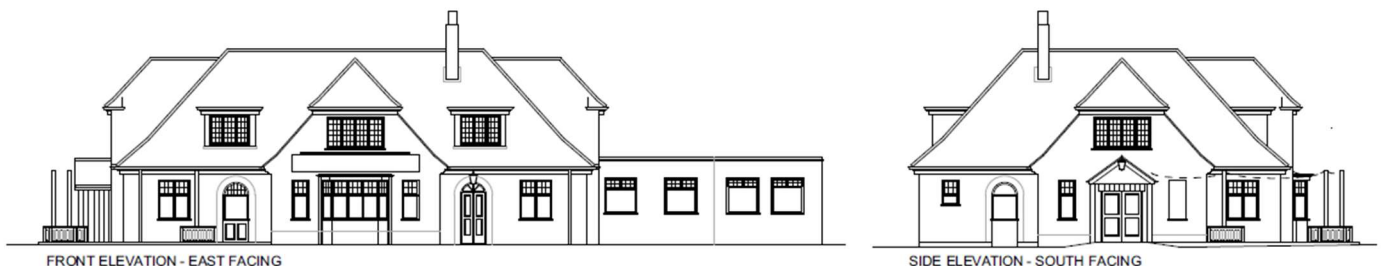
Photomontage – Existing

Design & Access Statement

Received by the LPA 24th February 2026

Highways Technical Note (Motion) dated 5 May 26

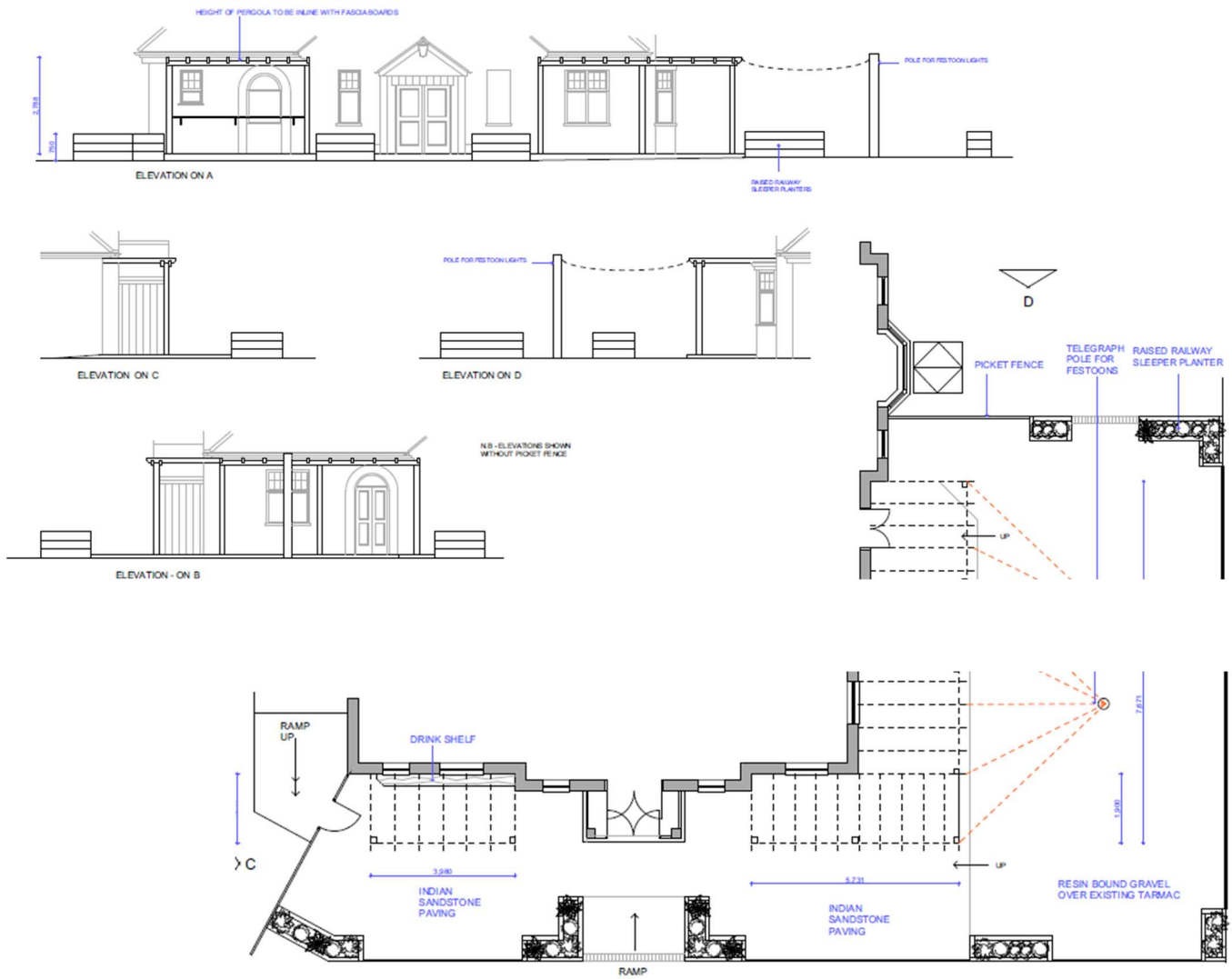
Received by the LPA 5th May 2026



EXISTING ELEVATIONS



PROPOSED ELEVATIONS



3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/26/0675 - Installation of replacement signs to include 1x new pictorial panel and 2x amenity boards to existing post, 1x fascia sign, 1x door plaque, 1x welcome sign and 2x double sided post mounted corex signs – Advertising Consent – currently under consultation awaiting to be determined.

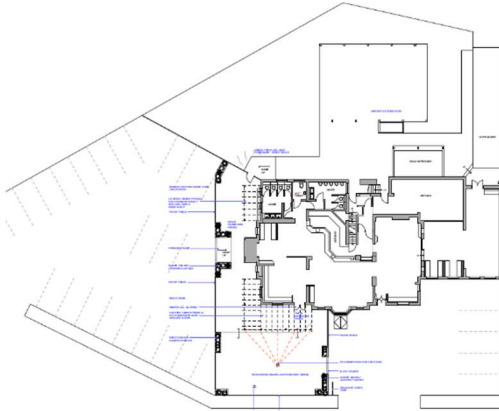
4. CONSULTATIONS

Internal

- Transport Development Control Memo received 20/03/2026

The existing pub plans to enlarge its front patio by extending the existing paved area and covering part of the current car park surface with resin-bound gravel. The space will be enclosed with picket fencing

and raised railway-sleeper planters. Additionally, two covered pergolas are proposed on either side of the main side-entrance door, extending around to the front elevation. These structures will provide a designated smoking area and sheltered seating to enable greater year-round use of the outdoor areas.



Having reviewed the submitted plans, the Highway Authority is unable to form a full assessment at this stage due to insufficient information regarding the proposed loss of on-site parking and the implications for vehicle circulation within the site.

The proposal involves enclosing and resurfacing part of the existing car park for use as an external seating area. From the plans provided, it is not clear:

- How many parking spaces will be lost, retained, or reconfigured.
- Whether the remaining number of spaces will continue to meet the parking demand associated with the pub's operation.
- Whether any disabled parking bays will be affected or relocated.
- Whether the required manoeuvring distances will be maintained to ensure all spaces are easily accessible.

The enclosure of part of the car park and the introduction of new structures and planters appear likely to alter current access and manoeuvring arrangements. However, it is unclear whether vehicles will still be able to circulate safely through the remaining car park area and how delivery and servicing vehicles will retain adequate turning space.

If there is a loss of parking spaces within the site, the applicant should provide a parking demand justification, including information on typical usage levels, peak periods, and how displaced parking (if any) will be managed. This information is necessary to assess whether the loss of spaces will lead to increased on-street parking or pose a potential risk to highway safety.

At this stage, due to the lack of clarity regarding parking provision and internal circulation, the Highway Authority is unable to provide a definitive recommendation.



- Transport Development Control Memo received 13/05/2026 having reviewed the Highways Technical Note provided by the applicant in response to the initial Transport Development Control Memo

Additional information has been submitted with confirms that the proposals will reduce the total number of parking spaces within the car park from 30 to 26. The car park will be reconfigured into two separate areas, each served by an existing access. One parking area will be accessed from Firs Road and will provide 22 spaces, including the two disabled bays, which will be relocated slightly west to accommodate an enlarged patio area. The second parking area will be accessed from Park Lane and will provide four spaces.

To assess whether the remaining number of parking spaces would continue to meet the parking demand associated with the pub's operation, a parking accumulation survey was undertaken within the existing car park. The surveys demonstrated that the existing car park did not reach capacity at any point during the surveyed periods, with the highest recorded occupancy being 87% between 12:00 and 13:00 on Sunday 19th April.

Following the removal of four parking spaces, this peak period would result in the car park operating at full capacity, with all parking still able to be accommodated on site. In addition, on-street parking surveys show that parking stress on surrounding streets is low during peak operating periods, and any limited overspill parking is unlikely to have a material impact on local parking conditions or highway safety.

It has been confirmed that delivery and servicing arrangements would remain unchanged, with all deliveries undertaken outside opening hours and sufficient space retained for on-site manoeuvring. Dray deliveries involve a lorry reversing into the eastern side of the car park via Park Lane to access the cellar drop, while food deliveries and refuse collection are undertaken via the western side of the car park from Firs Road. At these times, the car park is not in use by customers, allowing vehicles to manoeuvre using the full extent of the parking area. On this basis, the proposed layout will not adversely affect the site's delivery or servicing arrangements.

In summary, the proposals would reduce parking from 30 to 26 spaces through a reconfiguration into two areas accessed from Firs Road (22 spaces) and Park Lane (4 spaces). Surveys show the car park currently operates below capacity, with a peak of 87%, meaning demand can still be accommodated after the reduction, albeit at full capacity during busiest periods. Surrounding streets have low parking stress, so any minor overspill would not significantly impact conditions. Delivery and servicing arrangements remain unchanged and operate outside customer hours, with sufficient space available for manoeuvring, ensuring no adverse impact from the new layout. In view of the above, there are no further transport objections subject to the conditions below.

- Environmental Protection

I don't have any concerns about this application, as the location of the seating area at the front seems low risk in terms of noise disturbance, as is some distance from residents and adjacent to a busy road junction – in terms of Environmental Protection – No objections.

External

- Planning notices were attached to street furniture in streets surrounding the site on 4th March 2026 and left in place for the statutory 21-day consultation period

No letters of representation have been received.

5. 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. 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
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)
CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)
TR1: (Achieving the Transport Strategy)
TR3: (Access, Traffic & Highway related Matters)
EN17: (Noise Generating Equipment)

7. APPRAISAL

The main issues to be considered are:

- a) Principle of development
- b) Design and impact on the character of the area
- c) Impact on amenity
- d) Transport matters
- e) Environmental Protection (noise)

a) Principle of development

In principle the proposed changes are considered acceptable and within the realms of the application site.

b) Design and Impact on the Character of the Area

Policy CC7 sets out relevant considerations for design.

The creation of the new front patio with covered pergolas, festoon lighting, picket fencing, raised timber sleeper planters and new floor finishes with works to the existing rear garden are deemed acceptable. The proposal is largely considered complementary to the original host property and overall adjacent area, the timber pergola structures are open sided and not considered overbearing or unsightly. The development will be created using natural materials like stone and timber. The proposed development will include raised planters which will be planted up and soften and enhance the character of the

development. The reinstated door will match the existing door in terms of design; the reinstated door will be constructed using materials to match and when finished will match the other entrance doors on said elevation, its considered that reinstating the left hand entrance door on the front flank elevation will enhance the original host property.

The proposal is considered compliant with policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

c) Impact on Amenity

Policy CC8 states an extension will be acceptable where it will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new properties.

The use of the property remains a public house in terms of harm to neighbours. The development is considered to fall within the scope of the existing use and is all at ground level. The development is not considered overbearing and doesn't take away or harm privacy of neighbouring properties.

The proposal is considered compliant with policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

d) Transport Matters

Officers raised concerns about the loss of parking spaces, to assess whether the remaining number of parking spaces would continue to meet the parking demand associated with the pub's operation, a parking accumulation survey was undertaken within the existing car park. The surveys demonstrated that the existing car park did not reach capacity at any point during the surveyed periods. The survey showed demand can still be accommodated after the reduction, albeit at full capacity during busiest periods.

Surrounding streets have low parking stress, so any minor overspill would not significantly impact conditions. Delivery and servicing arrangements remain unchanged and operate outside customer hours, with sufficient space available for manoeuvring, ensuring no adverse impact from the new layout.

The proposed development is considered acceptable and is therefore compliant with policies TR1 and TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

e) Environmental Protection (Noise)

The Environmental Protection officer was consulted due to the introduction of more seating and outdoor lighting towards the front of the pub. The development is considered minor, it is not considered noise levels will increase anymore than existing, these levels are also offset with the noise of the busy public highway adjacent to the application site.

The proposed development is not considered harmful in terms of increased noise levels, and as such the development is compliant with policies EN17 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

8. 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.

9. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT