

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0350 Full Planning Permission

Address: 3-5 DUKE STREET, READING, RG1 4SA

Proposal: New shopfront to enable sub-division of ground floor

Applicant: Lipman Properties Ltd

Received date: 16/03/2026

Target Decision date: 23/06/2026

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site relates to a ground floor retail unit set within Dukesbridge House which contains a number of ground floor commercial units with residential uses above. The retail unit is currently occupied by Ryman's (Use Class E). The host building has a dark brick facade with aluminium casements. The site is within the Central Reading Core as defined by Policy CR1. The site is also within a Primary Shopping Area as defined by Policy CR1 and a designated primary frontage within Central Reading as defined by Policy CR7. The site is within the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area and lies opposite The Royal County Hotel which is a Building of Townscape Merit. The site is also within an area of high archaeological potential.

Site visit 12 May 2026



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The application seeks permission for a new shopfront to enable the sub-division of the existing ground floor retail unit into 2no. retail units. The new shopfront will comprise a central brick pier constructed from brickwork to match the appearance of the host building and the new aluminium doors are to be in materials to match the existing building. The use class for each unit will remain Class E.

Plans & documents

5016/82 Location Plan

Planning and Heritage statement

CIL

As received 16 March 2026

5016_80 REV A Existing and proposed ground floor and rear elevations

5016_81 Existing and proposed front elevations

5016_82 Block Plan

As received 03 June 2026

Relevant Planning history

230684/FUL New shopfront to enable sub-division of ground floor. Approved 25/07/2023

3. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- Conservation Area Advisory Committee Consultations – No comment received at the time of writing the officer report.
- RBC Conservation officer – No objection. It is noted that both the proposed brickwork and fenestration would match the existing ones, although it is not the best design option. There is no harmful impact on the character and appearance of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area.
- Transport Development Control – No objections

A site notice was displayed for the required period on 7 May 2026 and an advert was placed in a local newspaper.

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.

4. 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:

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.

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

EN2: AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

EN4: LOCALLY IMPORTANT HERITAGE ASSETS

EN6: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN A HISTORIC CONTEXT

RL1: NETWORK AND HIERARCHY OF CENTRES

OU5: SHOPFRONTS AND CASH MACHINES
CR1: DEFINITION OF CENTRAL READING
CR2: DESIGN IN CENTRAL READING
CR7: PRIMARY FRONTAGES IN CENTRAL READING

SPG/SPD

Design Guide to Shopfronts (2022)

Other Local Documents

Market Place/London Street Conservation Area Appraisal

Reading Local plan 2019 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’.

5. APPRAISAL

Design and Heritage

The proposal is a resubmission of an earlier planning application for the sub-division of the units at 3-5 Duke Street. No material changes have occurred since the previous planning application was considered. As stated for the previous planning application PL/230684/FUL, in consideration of the visual acceptability of the proposed development, the site is located within the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area therefore special regard has to be given to the desirability of preserving the character and setting of this area. The development would also be located opposite a Building of Townscape Merit and regard also has to be had to the design consideration of development within the Central Reading Core. The development will also involve the alteration of an existing shopfront therefore the considerations of Policies OU5, CC7, EN1, EN3, EN6 and CR2 apply alongside the considerations of Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The development would be minor in scale and the existing entrance aperture in the building façade will not be enlarged. The new entrance would be constructed from materials to match the host building alongside the installation of 2 sets of aluminium doors which match the aluminium fittings along the existing shop façade and other shopfronts further south within the frontage along Duke Street. The host building is more modern in its appearance and is not a key feature of special historic interest, nor an historic shopfront as defined in the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area appraisal. In this respect, the new shopfront will have no demonstrably harmful impact on either the appearance of the host building within the street scene, nor the character and setting of the conservation area or setting of the Building of Townscape Merit. The development is therefore considered to comply with Policies CC7,

EN1, EN3, EN6 and CR2 and OU5 and Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Subdivision of the retail unit

The new shop entrance is proposed to facilitate the sub-division of the existing retail unit into 2 smaller units. The existing unit falls within Use Class E and the plans submitted confirm the 2 smaller units will remain in this Use Class therefore there will be no harm to the ongoing provision of retail units within the primary shopping area and primary shopping frontage of Central Reading, in compliance with Policies CR1 and CR7.

Area of Archaeological importance

The development will involve minor alterations to the shopfront and rear elevation that will be entirely above ground with no change to the footprint of the host building therefore the development is not considered to result in harm to the significance of any potential archaeological assets beneath the site and therefore the development complies with Policy EN2.

Other considerations

The site is also subject to planning permission granted for 230684/FUL a new shopfront to enable sub-division of ground floor on 25/07/2023, which is due to expire on 25/07/2026. Works proposed are the same for each planning application 230684/FUL and PL26/0350. Limited weight is given to the current planning application as a fallback given the upcoming expiration of the previous planning application.

6. CONCLUSION

The development is considered visually acceptable and will not harm the character or setting of the conservation area, nor the Building of Townscape Merit. There will be no harm to the provision of retail units in the area, nor to the preservation of any historical items of significance in the area of high archaeological potential

7. RECOMMENDATION

Approve

Recommended Conditions:

Time limit

Plans

Materials to match

Informatives:

P&P

Terms

Building regulations

Construction