

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0411 Full planning permission

Address: 173 Friar Street, Reading

Proposal: Proposed alterations including location of new mechanical system for kitchen extracting ductwork to the rear of the building, fresh air system and toilet extraction to the rear of the building via louvre grills and 2 x air conditioning condenser units

Applicant: Mr Luftar

Received date: 27/03/2026

Target Decision date: 22/05/2026

Case Officer: Matt Burns

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

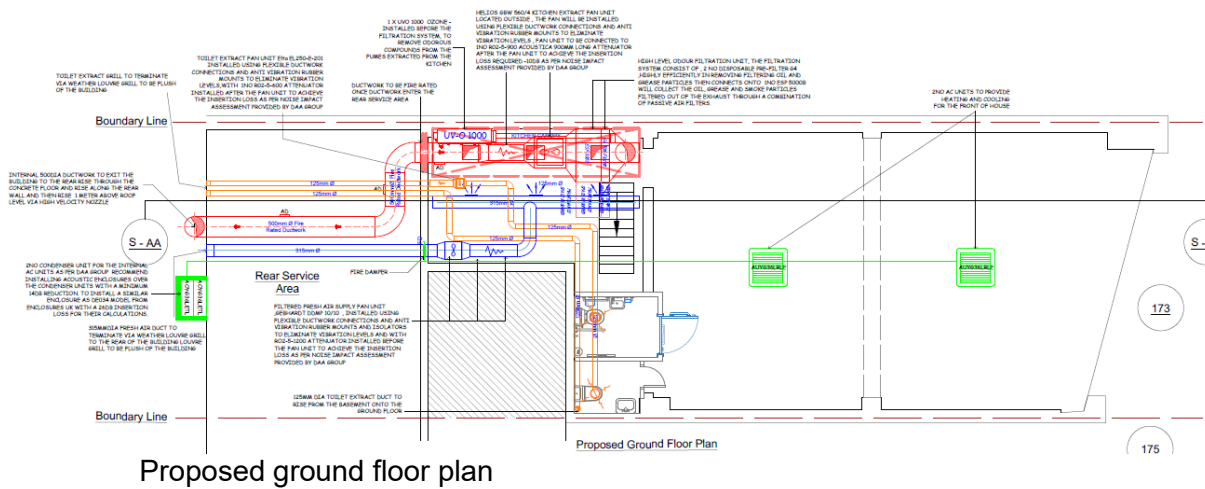
173 Friar Street is a four-storey building located at the eastern end of Friar Street at the junction with Market Place and The Forbury. The ground floor of the building is in Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) use and formerly comprised part of a ground floor shopping arcade (known as Bristol and West Arcade) together with the ground floors of no.s 174 and 175 Friar Street which form part of the wider four storey terrace of buildings. The upper floors of no.s 173, 174 and 175 have recently been converted from offices to C3 use class residential dwellings via prior approval consents (ref. PL/22/0579 and PL/22/0577). External alterations to the rear elevation of the building have been undertaken in accordance with planning permission ref. PL/23/0882 to facilitate implementation of the change of use to residential of the upper floors of the building.

The site is located within the Reading Central Area, Central Core, Office Core and Primary Shopping Area of the town centre as defined by Policy CR1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019. The ground floor level Friar Street frontage of the building is a designated Primary Frontages within the town centre as defined by Policy CR7. The application site together with 174 and 175 Friar Street and no.s 27-32 Market Place are allocated for development under Policy CR14d. The site allocation is for change of use of listed buildings (no.s 27-32 Market Place) and development of remainder of the site for residential and/or offices with retail and related uses on the ground floor, retaining the arcade form.

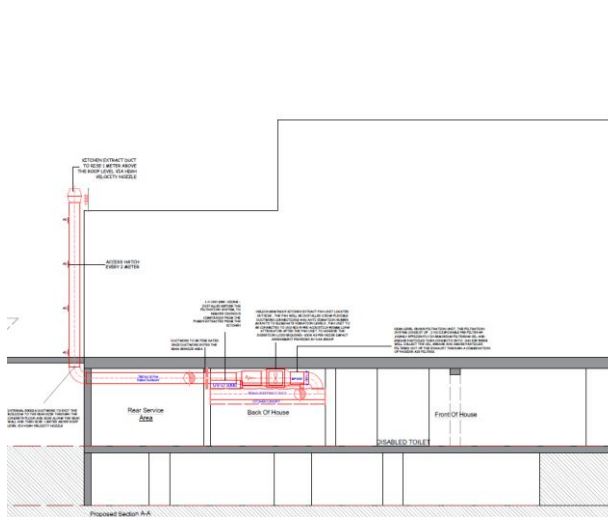
The building subject of this application is also located within area of archaeological potential and an air quality management area. The building is not listed, and whilst adjacent to is not within a Conservation Area.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

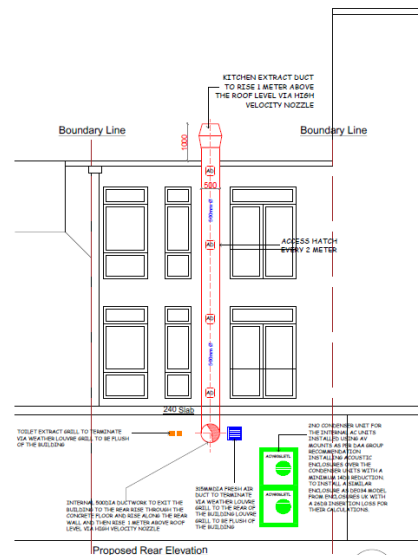
Full planning permission is sought for a proposed new plant and mechanical system to the existing commercial unit to the ground floor of the building to provide kitchen extraction ductwork, louvre grills for a fresh air system and toilet extraction and 2 x air conditioning condenser units to the rear of the building.



Proposed ground floor plan



Proposed building section



Proposed rear elevation

Submitted Plans and Documents

- Drawing ref. 02 – Existing Ground & Basement Plan
- Drawing ref. 03 – Existing Roof Plan
- Drawing ref. 04 – Existing Section
- Drawing ref. 05 – Existing Front & Rear Elevation
- Drawing ref. 06 – Proposed Ground & Basement Plan – Rev A
- Drawing ref. 07 – Proposed Roof Plan
- Drawing ref. 08 – Proposed Section
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- Risk Assessment for Odour report no. OD657019 by Fan Rescue
- Kitchen Extraction, Kitchen Fresh Air and High Level Odour Control System Proposal report ref. P1184582910 BY Fan Rescue
- Enclosed Spring Vibration Isolators by Superlite – JM Aerofoil Accessories
- High Performance Centrifugal Fan DDMP by Nicotra Gebhardt
- Split Air Conditioner – Cassette 4-way Air Flow Range by Fujitsu
- V Line Disposable peated panel filters ref. VL4-2424
- Drawing no. GA/009/892 – Type HES Spring Hangers by Eurovib (Acoustic Products) Limited
- Gigabox with discharge adapter and flex sleeve 1-ph controllable model GBW 560/4 Helios Select

- Noise Impact Assessment – 173-175 Friar Street, RG1 1HE, Issue 01 (13th March 2026) by DAA Group
- Rectangular Silencers R02 by Acoustica
- Multiflow SEM Mixed Flow Fan by Elta Fans
- UV-O Odour Control Units Technical and Operations Manual (Models UV-O 500 / UV-O 1000 by Purified Air

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 27th March 2026

- Drawing ref. 01 – Location and Site Plan – Rev C

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 13th July 2026

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/24/0990 - Change of use from Class E (commercial, business and service) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 20 flats. Prior Notification under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 without complying with condition 3 (noise mitigation) of consent ref. 220579 - in order to amend the condition to a compliance condition – Granted on 30th October 2024

PL/24/0546 - External changes and internal reconfiguration to ground floor only – Granted on 18th November 2024.

PL/24/0118 - Non Material Amendment to Prior Approval consent reference 220579 (Change of use from Class E (commercial, business and service) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 20 flats. Prior Notification under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015) for minor internal changes to first, second and third floors only – Agreed on 28th February 2024

PL/23/1780 - Non-Material Amendment to Prior Approval Consent ref. 220579 (Change of use from Class E (commercial, business and service) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 20 flats. Prior Notification under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015) for minor internal alterations – Not Agreed on 18th January 2024

PL/23/0882 - Alterations to rear and side elevation only; including new and revised fenestration, juliette balcony, replacement of metal safety rail and a material change from brick to mortar on the rear and side external elevation – Granted on 20th November 2023

PL/22/0579 - Change of use from Class E (commercial, business and service) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 20 flats. Prior Notification under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 – Granted on 16th June 2022

4. CONSULTATIONS

RBC Environmental Protection – No objection subject to a condition to require implementation of the proposed noise and odour control mitigation measures prior to first use of the plant equipment and to stipulate that the plant equipment shall not operate outside of the 0700 to 2300 hours.

RBC Conservation Officer – No objection.

Public Notification

A site notice was displayed at the application site on 16th April 2026.

No letters of representation have been received.

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

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.

Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

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

EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network

EN15: Air Quality

EN16: Pollution and Water Resources

EN17: Noise Generating Equipment

CR1: Definition of Central Reading

CR2: Design in Central Reading

CR14D: 173-175 Friar Street and 27-32 Market Place:

Change of use of listed buildings and development of remainder for residential and/or offices with retail and related uses on the ground floor, retaining the arcade form.

Development should:

- Avoid detrimental effects on the significance of the listed building and the Conservation Area and their settings;*
- Take account of potential archaeological significance;*
- Address noise impacts on residential use; and*
- Address air quality impacts on residential use.*

Site size: 0.18 ha 36-54 dwellings plus ground floor town centre uses

Other Relevant Documentation

Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal (2008)

Local Plan Partial 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. The submission draft of the Local Plan Partial Update was submitted on 9th May 2025 and examined earlier this year. At the time of writing, the examination-in-public of the partial update to the local plan is in the process of taking place. Stage 1 hearings were held virtually on 11th and 12th November 2025. Stage 2 hearings took place 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.

In respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to this application, it is considered 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. EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues, and priorities in relation to this particular application.

With regard to the above, whilst the Equality Act protects against age discrimination, housing restricted to older people (e.g over 60s) is not illegal discrimination. The Equality Act 2010 allows discrimination on protected classes if it is a “proportionate means to achieve a legitimate goal” which in this case is building a retirement community.

7. APPRAISAL

The application does not involve any proposal to alter the use of the ground floor unit to which the scheme relates and seeks planning permission for the proposed plant equipment only. The unit would remain as Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) use and can effectively lawfully operate as any Class E use (for which there are 11 parts) without the need for permission from the Local Planning Authority. Given the proposals do not involve any change of use, such matters are outside the scope of the assessment of the proposals and no land use issues are engaged.

It is however noted that the application form lists the applicant as being Tasty Greek Souvlaki. The nature of the operator is unclear and whether this could potentially be a café/restaurant use or a hot food takeaway use. Whilst a café/restaurant use would fall under the current Class E use of the unit it is pertinent to note that a hot food takeaway use of the site would not and would instead, as per the 2020 changes to Use Classes Order, be a Sui Generis use. It is considered necessary to include an informative on the decision notice specifying that *“A hot-food takeaway use of the application site would be a Sui Generis Use, for*

which a separate planning permission would be required from the Local Planning Authority. This application does not involve any change of use proposal and solely relates to the proposed plant equipment”.

It noted that the existing commercial unit is vacant. The proposed development would likely increase the scope for the unit to be occupied, which would be considered a planning benefit of the proposal. This would be through introducing a functioning use to the benefit of the local economy, potentially increasing footfall and natural surveillance in the area and activating the frontage of the site within a Primary Frontage within the Central Core of the Reading Central Area.

Design and Heritage Assets

Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan requires all development to be of high-quality design that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Policy CR2 also echoes this in the context of the Central Reading location. In addition, the site is located outside of but adjacent to the boundary of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area. Whilst the application site building is not listed or identified as being a building of townscape merit the site is located within 15-35m of the rear elevations of a series of grade II listed buildings located around the corner within Market Place (no.s 23-35). As per Policy EN1, listed buildings, conservation areas and their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced. Furthermore, Policy EN3 states that the special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced.

External elements of the proposed plant equipment would all be located to the rear elevation of the building. The two proposed condenser units, fresh air duct and toilet extract grill would all be located at ground floor level which is below slab level to the rear of the site such that these elements would not be visible. A metal flue is also proposed which would rise up through the rear slab level and extend vertically up the rear elevation of the building between window columns to a height of 1m above the flat parapet roof of the building. Located to the rear of the building the proposed plant equipment would not be visible from the front of the site and public realm areas to Friar Street, Town Hall Square and Market Place. The modest 1m project of the flue above the parapet combined with the depth of the building means the flue would also not be readily visible from these public realm areas. There is various existing plant equipment located to the rear and roof tops of surrounding buildings with the area surrounding the rear of the site having a utilitarian, back of house and service character and function. In this respect the proposals would not be out of keeping and are not considered to be detrimental to the character or appearance of the building or surrounding area. In terms of private views of the flue from residents of the upper floor flats there are no accessible areas to the rear of the site for residents' so views would be limited to those from the rear windows of the flats. Such views would be limited given the flue would be affixed to the rear wall of the building and as such is not considered harmful to visual amenity.

There is limited scope for views of the rear of the building from within the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area and given the presence of extensive existing plant equipment to the rear of the site and surrounding buildings no harm is identified to the setting of the Conservation Area. For similar reasons and given the modest nature of the proposals and separation between from the application site to the rear elevations of the listed buildings within Market Place the RBC Conservation Officer does not identify any material impact or harm to the setting of the listed buildings.

No conflict with Policies CC7, CR2, EN1 and EN3 is identified.

Residential Amenity

The provision of an external extraction and ventilation systems raises possible issues in respect of noise, and odour matters given the presence of nearby residential occupiers to the upper floors of surrounding buildings whilst the upper floors of the application building itself is occupied as residential flats. It is noted

that the applicant, listed on the application form as being Tasty Greek Souvlaki, is already operating at another premises nearby where complaints have been received in respect of noise from plant equipment impacting on the residential amenity of occupiers of flats above the premises. The proposed introduction of similar plant equipment at the application site and close relationship with the residential occupiers above is therefore of concern.

Impact assessment reports in have been submitted with the application which have been reviewed by RBC Environmental Protection Officers who are satisfied that the subject to implementation of the mitigation measures outlined in the reports then this would ensure surrounding occupiers would not be adversely impacted in terms of noise or odour. In this respect two conditions are recommended to require the mitigation measures set out in the reports to be implemented in full prior to first use/operation of the proposed plant equipment. In respect of noise matters a condition is also recommended to stipulate that the plant equipment shall not operate or be in use outside the hours of 0700 to 2300 hours each day to protect surrounding occupiers from disturbance during nighttime hours.

Notwithstanding the above, officers still have concern regarding operation of the proposed plant equipment during daytime hours given the issues experienced at the other premises operated by the applicant in the town centre and the similar close relationship of commercial plant equipment to upper floor flats which is considered sub-optimal. However, given the technical reports submitted with the application, the findings of which have been reviewed by RBC Environmental Protection Officers and subject to the recommended conditions, no significant harms are identified by officers that would result from the proposed plant equipment in terms of impact on the residential amenity of occupiers of the upper floor flats.

It is also possible that a degree of noise and disturbance to any existing/future nearby residential occupiers may occur as a result of whoever operates the unit in the future, however such matters would fall outside the scope of this application. Considering the development proposed as part of this application only (the proposed plant equipment) no significantly detrimental amenity issues are considered to arise subject to the proposed planning conditions and no conflict with Policies CC8, EN15, EN16 and EN17 is identified.

Other matters

In terms of biodiversity net gain, the proposals are subject to the de minimis exemption, so are exempt from being required to provide biodiversity net gain in this instance.

The nature and extent of the proposals mean they will not be liable to the Reading Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

8. CONCLUSION

The proposed development will help to facilitate a presently vacant unit coming back into active use, which is considered to be a benefit of the proposals. The proposed plant equipment located to the rear of the site is not considered to have a harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the host building or surrounding area, nor upon the setting of the adjacent Market Place/London Street Conservation Area and nearby Grade II Listed Buildings (no.s 23-35 Market Place). The proposed noise and odour mitigation measure are considered acceptable and to suitably minimise and detrimental impacts of the plant equipment upon nearby residential occupiers, subject to conditions. Set within this context the benefits of the proposals are considered to outweigh all harmful impacts, thereby allowing planning permission to be recommended to be granted.

9. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Planning Permission, subject to conditions.

Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than three years from the date of this planning permission.

REASON: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) in order to prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.

2. The development hereby permitted shall ONLY be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - Drawing ref. 02 – Existing Ground & Basement Plan
 - Drawing ref. 03 – Existing Roof Plan
 - Drawing ref. 04 – Existing Section
 - Drawing ref. 05 – Existing Front & Rear Elevation
 - Drawing ref. 06 – Proposed Ground & Basement Plan – Rev A
 - Drawing ref. 07 – Proposed Roof Plan
 - Drawing ref. 08 – Proposed Section
 - Drawing ref. 09 – Proposed Rear Elevation
 - Risk Assessment for Odour report no. OD657019 by Fan Rescue
 - Kitchen Extraction, Kitchen Fresh Air and High Level Odour Control System Proposal report ref. P1184582910 BY Fan Rescue
 - Enclosed Spring Vibration Isolators by Superlite – JM Aerofoil Accessories
 - High Performance Centrifugal Fan DDMP by Nicotra Gebhardt
 - Split Air Conditioner – Cassette 4-way Air Flow Range by Fujitsu
 - V Line Disposable peated panel filters ref. VL4-2424
 - Drawing no. GA/009/892 – Type HES Spring Hangers by Eurovib (Acoustic Products) Limited
 - Gigabox with discharge adapter and flex sleeve 1-ph controllable model GBW 560/4 Helios Select
 - Noise Impact Assessment – 173-175 Friar Street, RG1 1HE, Issue 01 (13th March 2026) by DAA Group
 - Rectangular Silencers R02 by Acoustica
 - Multiflow SEM Mixed Flow Fan by Elta Fans
 - UV-O Odour Control Units Technical and Operations Manual (Models UV-O 500 / UV-O 1000 by Purified Air

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- Drawing ref. 01 – Location and Site Plan – Rev C

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REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out and adhered to in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

3. Prior to first use or operation of the extraction, ventilation and air condensing systems hereby permitted the noise, vibration, sound insulation measures and any other mitigation specified shall be installed in accordance with the specifications set out within the following documents:
 - Noise Impact Assessment – 173-175 Friar Street, RG1 1HE, Issue 01 (13th March 2026) by DAA Group and approved det
 - Enclosed Spring Vibration Isolators by Superlite – JM Aerofoil Accessories
 - High Performance Centrifugal Fan DDMP by Nicotra Gebhardt
 - Split Air Conditioner – Cassette 4-way Air Flow Range by Fujitsu
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The mitigation measures shall thereafter be permanently retained and maintained in accordance with the approved specifications.

REASON: In order to protect the amenity of future and nearby occupants of the proposed development in accordance with Policies CC8, EN16 and EN17 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

4. Prior to first use or operation of the kitchen extraction/ventilation systems hereby permitted the odour control measures and any other mitigation specified shall be installed in accordance with the specifications set out within the following documents:
 - Risk Assessment for Odour report no. OD657019 by Fan Rescue
 - Kitchen Extraction, Kitchen Fresh Air and High Level Odour Control System Proposal report ref. P1184582910 BY Fan Rescue
 - UV-O Odour Control Units Technical and Operations Manual (Models UV-O 500 / UV-O 1000 by Purified Air

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REASON: To safeguard the amenity of nearby premises and the area generally in accordance with Policies CC8, EN15 and EN16 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

5. The extraction, ventilation and air condensing systems hereby permitted shall not be used or operated outside the hours of 0700 to 2300 hours each day.

REASON: In order to protect local residents from unreasonable disturbance arising from use of the equipment in accordance with Policies CC8, EN16 and EN17 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

Informatives:

1. The ground floor commercial unit to which this planning permission relates is in a Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) use. It should be noted that a hot-food takeaway use of the site would be a Sui Generis Use, which is not permitted within Class E and for which a separate planning permission would be required from the Local Planning Authority.

2. The Local Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant to resolve relevant matters to allow permission to be granted.

3. i) The attention of the applicant is drawn to Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980, which enables the Highway Authority to recover expenses due to damage caused by extraordinary traffic.

ii) Any works affecting the Highway shall be in accordance with Reading Borough's Council's document "Guidance Notes for Activities on the Public Highway within the Borough of Reading". The applicant should note that compliance with this document is mandatory and licences to work on the Highway will only be issued if the requirements contained within it are met. A copy can be obtained from the Council's website.

4. Your attention is drawn to the terms and conditions of this permission. Any development which is carried out but which differs materially from the approved plans and details, or does not comply with any condition(s) or planning obligation(s) attached to the permission may result in the Council taking action to remedy the breach of planning control. If you are in any doubt please contact the Council.

5. Your attention is drawn to the requirement for submission of a Building Regulations application for the proposed development. Please contact RBC Building Control on Building.control@reading.gov.uk OR telephone 0118 9372449 9.00am to 1.00pm Monday to Friday

6. Complaints are commonly received about noise and dust caused by construction and demolition works, particularly working outside reasonable hours and smoke from bonfires associated with the burning of waste on site. The developer is reminded that construction and demolition associated with the approved development will be subject to environmental health law.

7. During the course of construction, the developer should take care to ensure that no part of this development (foundations, eaves, guttering, etc.) would encroach on, under or across the boundary line with the adjoining property, as the requisite Notice has not been served on the owner of that property. This permission does not confer any right of access onto land that is not under the developer's control. The developer should also be mindful of the obligations and requirements of the Party Wall Act (1996) details of which can be found at:

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/partywall