

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Katesgrove Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0045 Full planning permission

Address: 94 Whitley Street, Reading, RG2 0EQ

Proposal: Change of Use to a coffee shop with new shopfront and awning.

Applicant: Mrs Florine Kurti

Received date: 16/01/2026

Extended Target Decision date: 21/07/2026

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site at 94 Whitley Street is located at the end of a row of Victorian terraced housing. It comprises a shop unit in Class E use at ground floor level (last in use as a retail shop selling clothing), with separate residential accommodation at first floor level and lies within the Whitley Street District Centre (as defined in the adopted Local Plan).

It is not a listed building and is nor within a conservation area, although is sited directly across from the Christchurch Conservation area. It is within an Article 4 area, smoke control zone and Air Quality Management Area.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal seeks full planning permission for the change of use to a new coffee shop, together with the installation of a fixed retractable canopy along the shop frontage.

Internal reconfiguration works are also required and an external flue is proposed to the rear, with an external seating area to the front of the shop. The proposed external seating and barrier system are removable and not a permanent fixture.

Proposed plan 193 005 Rev A Existing & Proposed shopfront elevations



Plans/Documents submitted

193_PA_v1 Design & Access Statement
193_001 Rev A Location and Block Plan
193_004 Proposed Ground and First Layout
193_002_A Existing ground and First layout_
CIL Form

As received 16 January 2026

193 005 Rev A Existing & Proposed shopfront elevations
Single Fixed Wall Light - Black IP65 _ Knightsbridge (WALL1LBK)
The Victorian Awning company specification brochure
The Victorian Awning company quotation
Amf500 Ventorn Engineered Ventilation Services specification
Economy café Barrier Banner System
Café barrier key features
As received 8 May 2026

260617_141212 P01 Odour Impact assessment, Goya Works Ltd, 17/06/2026
00-XX-GK-345890-01_260617_134615 Proposed ventilation system schematic
As received 17 June 2026

BS4142 NIA (Rev 2)_260_260704_221828, Noise Impact assessment, Sound Licensing Ltd,
02/07/2026
As received 6 July 2026

Relevant Planning History
None applicable.

3. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- RBC Conservation officer – No objections to the revised shop frontage subject to conditions.

The subject building is from the early 19th century and appears to be the only one with its original chequered work wall of Flemish bond using burnt headers still preserved, contrary to the other buildings in the terrace. It also has a Victorian shopfront very similar in the photo from the library below. The first one is from the 1980s and the second from the 1910s (Whitley Street, Reading, c1980 at the junction with Christchurch Road and Basingstoke Road. Nos. 96-106 Whitley Street and the Washetteria can be seen. 1980-1989 [picture] AND Whitley Street, Reading, looking southwards to the junction of Southampton Street with Mount Pleasant, c. 1910. The corner of Essex Street is visible to the left, and by it is an electric tramcar. 1910-1919 : scan of a postcard by P. O. Collier, with caption "Whitley, " and numbered 205)



The application site is facing the Christchurch Conservation Area, affecting its setting.
I have no objection to the proposed materials and colour - anthracite grey

- Transport Development Control – In principle, there are no transport or highway objections to the proposal. The surrounding roads are subject to extensive parking restrictions, which help to prevent unauthorised or obstructive parking.
- RBC Environmental Protection – No objection subject to compliance conditions and recommend compliance conditions and also a condition restricting the hours of operation of the kitchen extraction. The reports are considered acceptable. The nearest receptor benefits from screening by the building itself.
- Conservation Area Advisory Committee – No response was received at the time of writing this report.

A site notice was displayed at the site for the required period. No letters of representation have been received.

Communications with the agent

Additional information was provided in relation to noise and odour and revisions were made to the frontage following feedback from the RBC Conservation officer.

Equality Act

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'.

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990:

- Section 72 (1) 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.

The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

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 consultation version of the draft updated version of the Local Plan was published on 6th November 2024 and a submission version submitted in May 2025. 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 advice given below and are not considered to be 'out of date'. Policies CC2 and CC3 are being updated to reflect developments in climate change and sustainability construction which should be a consideration in the Local Plan review. Policy CC7 reiterates that all development must be of high quality design, to maintain and enhance physical character and context.

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework December 2024 (updated February 2025)

National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

EN16: POLLUTION AND WATER RESOURCES

EN17: NOISE GENERATING EQUIPMENT

RL1: NETWORK AND HIERARCHY OF CENTRES

RL3: VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF SMALLER CENTRES

OU5: SHOPFRONTS AND CASH MACHINES

TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS

TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

Supplementary Planning Documents

Design Guide for Shopfronts` (January 2022)

5. APPRAISAL

Use

The proposal to use the site as a coffee shop would not amount to a change of use, as the premises are already considered to be in a Lawful planning use as Class E (Commercial). By virtue of this, the proposal would comply with policies RL1, and RL3.

The site lies within the Whitley Street Local Centre, an established commercial parade comprising a wide range of shops, services, and community facilities that support the surrounding residential neighbourhood. The introduction of a coffee shop will complement the existing mixed uses within the local centre.

Design and impact on the character of the area

Policy CC7 of the Reading Local Plan 2019 sets out relevant considerations for design and states '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 various components of development form, including: -

- Layout: urban structure and urban grain;
- Landscape;
- Density and mix;
- Scale: height and massing; and
- Architectural detail and materials

Policy EN3 states '*The special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced*'.

Due to the location of the site, external works at this site impacts views into the Christchurch Conservation area, which has recently been extended. Views into, out of and within a conservation area are significant because they are often a defining characteristic that contributes to its special interest and sense of place. These views are important for maintaining the area's historic and architectural character, and their preservation is a key goal when considering new development. The original shopfront fascia, appears to be quite original, and is the only property in the line that has retained the original Victorian fascia. This fascia is sought to be retained, and refurbished, finished in white paint. The remainder of the shopfront is in a poor condition, and appears unoriginal, including visually unattractive roller shutters. The proposal seeks to remove the poor quality additions to the shop front, and install a modern shopfront with tri-folding doors, as well as a separate entrance door. The proportions match closely to the existing openings.

The shop frontage has been redesigned to incorporate features from the Design Guide to shopfront SPD, with changes proposed to the fenestration and an additional of a traditional style retractable canopy. The revised shop frontage is considered to be better than the existing frontage and acceptable in its setting. The inclusion of a vintage awning has a positive impact on the appearance of the shopfront, conditions will be applied to ensure that the awning is retracted, and the frontage is cleared of tables and chairs outside of operating hours.

Impact on amenity

The ground floor unit is situated beneath residential accommodation on the first floor and at the end of a residential terrace. Use of the site frontage for external seating is recommended to have an hours of use condition for the use of external seating and the retractable awning from 9:00 to 17:00 Monday to Sunday (including bank holidays) to protect neighbouring amenity from noise and disturbance. The premises opening hours are recommended to be restricted outside the hours of 08:00 and 22:00 with a restriction on the hours of operation of the kitchen extraction from 09:00 to 22:00.

Product specifications, noise and odour reports have been submitted and are considered acceptable and compliance conditions are recommended.

External lighting will be downlit to avoid disturbance to neighbouring amenity. A condition is recommended to restrict the use of external lighting outside the hours of opening to avoid the impact of glare to neighbouring residents.

Highways and access

The external seating would be fully contained within the curtilage of the site and has been designed to ensure that all activity remains within the private forecourt.

Given the highly accessible location, it is anticipated that most customers will arrive on foot, by bicycle, or via public transport, rather than by private vehicle.

The applicant should, however, be reminded that the external seating area must not encroach onto or obstruct the public highway under any circumstances. A clear separation between the private forecourt and the adopted footway must be maintained at all times to ensure pedestrian safety and preserve the free flow of movement. Should any part of the proposed café seating area be located on adopted highway land, a street pavement café licence from Reading Borough Council would be required.

Other

Advertisement consent is required in addition to the full application for shopfront changes. An informative is recommended.

Additional licensing consent may be required.

6. CONCLUSION

The proposed changes associated with the change of use are considered acceptable and is considered to comply with policies CC7, CC8, EN1, EN3 and EN17 subject to conditions.

7. RECOMMENDATION

Grant

Recommended Conditions:

1. Time limit
2. Plans
3. Materials
4. Hours of operation/opening
5. External seating hours of use
6. Retractable awning
7. Lighting
8. Extract\ventilation system

Informatives:

1. Terms
2. Building Regs
3. Construction
4. Positive & proactive
5. Advertisement consent
6. Additional licensing and café licence