

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey ward

App Ref: PL/26/0449 Full & PL/26/0450 Lbc

Address: 154 FRIAR STREET, READING, RG1 1HE

Proposal: Change of use of the upper floors of the building to serviced accommodation units (Class C1) and associated external and internal works.

Applicant: Bezalel Yerushalmy

Received date: 01/04/2026

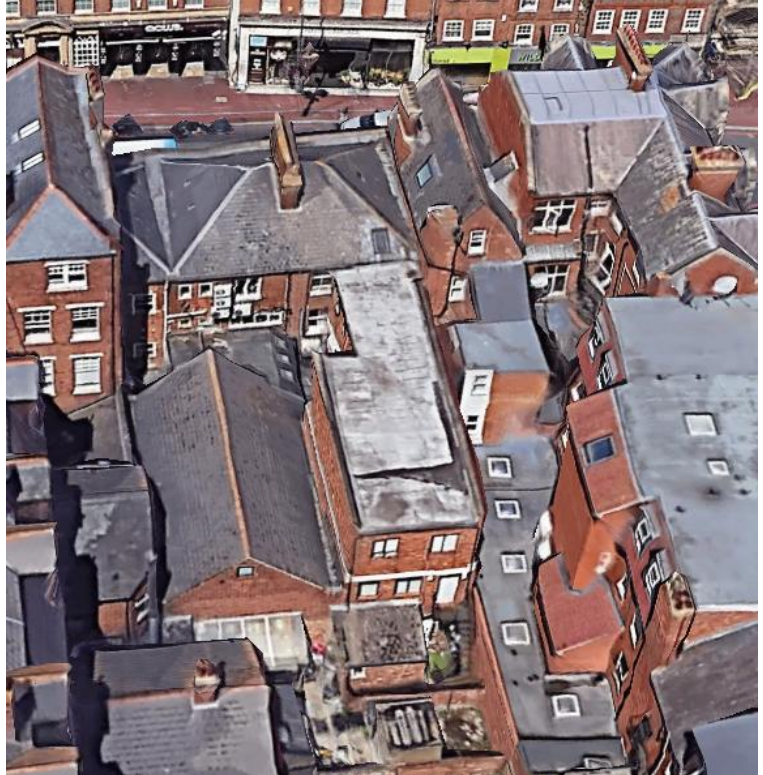
Target Decision date: 23/07/2026 (agreed extension of time)

Case Officer: Marcelina Rejwarska

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is located on the south side of Friar Street and comprises a ground floor retail unit with vacant office space above. There is 1980s three storey rear extension with a flat roof measuring approx. 16m in depth. The property is Grade II listed and the listing entry (ref. 1113489) reads as follows:

Formerly a pair with No 153 (too altered to include). Circa 1800. 3 storeys, red brick with stone cills to 1st floor and stone coping to parapet. 2 ranges of glazing bar sashes. Modern shop front.



Left: Image of the site frontage. Right: Aerial view of the rear of the site.

The property is also located in the Air Quality Management Area and is identified as a primary frontage within the Central Core. No works are proposed to the ground floor.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Full planning permission and listed building consent are sought for the change of use of the upper floors of the building to 4x serviced accommodation units (Class C1).

First Floor	Studio unit	35.2m2
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First Floor	2-bedroom unit	68.8m2
Second Floor	Studio unit	34.6m2
Second Floor	2-bedroom unit	69.1m2

Associated works proposed comprise new partitions and services and general repairs. Installation of Air Source Heat Pumps is also proposed, with the units replacing the existing air-conditioning condensers in the 1st floor lightwell.

2.1. Information submitted:

26219_FriarStreet_AQA_170426 Air Quality Assessment
Received 17 April 2026

Friar Street Planning Statement
154 Friar Street Reading HIA March 2026, Heritage statement
1129-01 Location Plan
1129-02 Site Block Plan
1129-03 Existing Floor Plans
1129-04 Existing Elevations (Front)
1129-05 Demolition Plans
1129-09 Proposed Wall and Floor Types
1129-c2603161 Listed Building Outline Scope of Works
Received 1 April 2026

1129-08 Rev A - Proposed Elevations
1129 - Design and Access Statement REV A
Received 1 July 2026

1129-07 Rev B - Proposed Plans
Received 20 July 2026

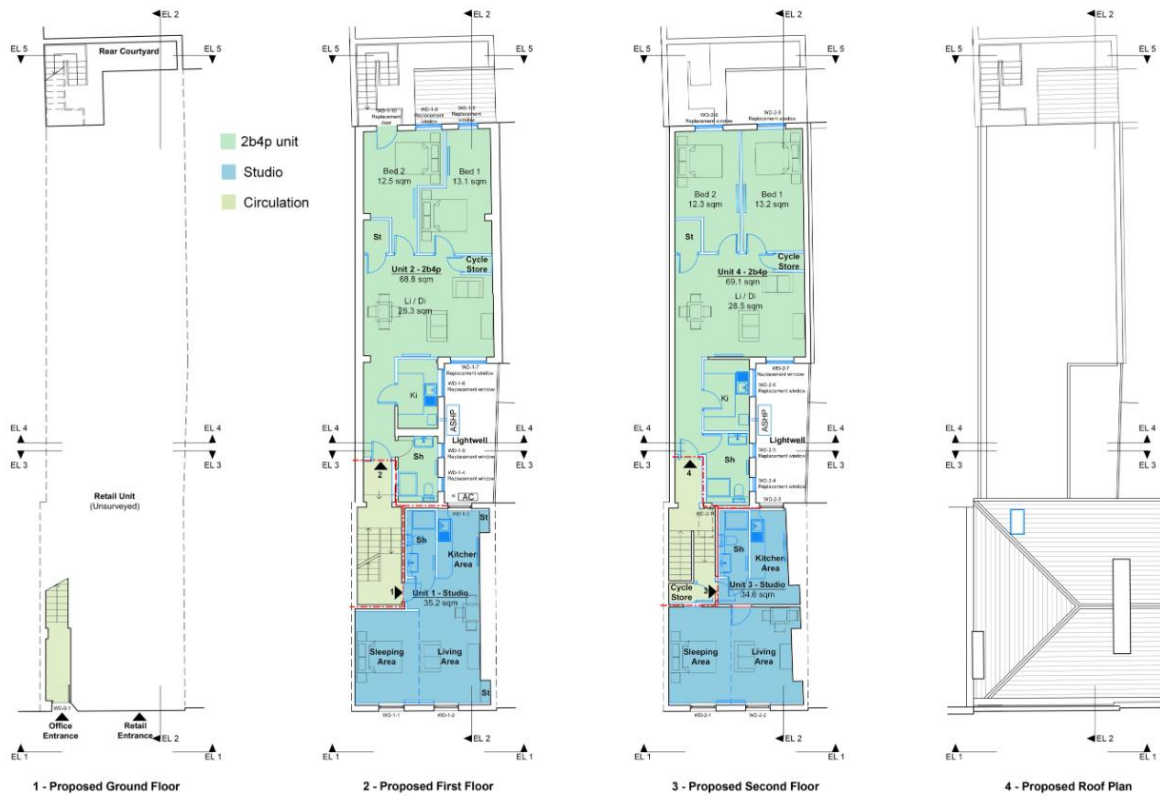


Fig 23—Proposed Floor Plans

Proposed Floor Plans

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- PL/99/2224 - CHANGE OF COLOUR AND LOGO TO/ON FASCIA AND PROJECTING SIGN. Application Permitted.
- PL/95/0377 - New door, new fascia and new projecting sign. Application permitted.
- PL/95/0719 - Temporary site sign board. Application permitted.
- PL/95/0420 - Fascia panel. Projecting sign. Application permitted.
- PL/95/0378 - New door entrance way. Application permitted.
- PL/94/0276 - New entrance way. New projecting and fascia signs. Application refused.
- PL/94/0995 - New fascia sign and new projecting sign. Application refused.
- PL/94/0994 - New entrance way. Application refused.
- PL/93/0790 - New shop front. Application permitted.
- PL/93/0791 - New shop front with fascia with projecting sign. New frontage aluminium frame with white (matt) powder coated finish. Fascia blue with white lettering on MDF board. Application permitted.
- PL/93/0597 - Change of use from Class A1 to Class A2 as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987. Application permitted.

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- RBC Environmental Protection – Air quality assessment is acceptable. Recommended condition requiring BS4142 noise assessment. Further information should be obtained regarding waste storage and pest proofing.
- RBC Transport Development Control – No objections subject to conditions.

- RBC Waste Operations – Proposed refuse storage and collection arrangements unlikely to be feasible, suggest conditioning details to provide alternative arrangements.
- RBC Conservation Officer – No objections, subject to recommended conditions.
- CAAC – No comments received.

Site notices were also erected on Cross Street, Friar Street and Queen Victoria Street in the public interest. No letters of representation were received.

Revised plans have been submitted by the agent resulting from feedback from the case officer and the Conservation Officer regarding cycle stores and additional annotations required regarding the use of materials in the proposed renovation works.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 16(2) and 66(1) 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.

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).

In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given). Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

NPPF December 2024

National Planning Practice Guidance (2014 onwards)

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage

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

EN15: Air Quality

EN16: Pollution and Water Resources

EN17: Noise Generating Equipment

TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

RL1: Network and Hierarchy of Centres

RL2: Scale and Location of Retail, Leisure and Culture Development

CR1: Definition of Central Reading

CR2: Design in Central Reading

CR6: Living in Central Reading

CR7: Primary Frontage in Central Reading

Reading Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)

Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

Other relevant documentation

Reading Borough Local Plan Pre-Submission Draft Partial Update, November 2024

St Mary's Butts / Castle Street Conservation Area Appraisal (2008)

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking (Historic England, 2015)

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 (2nd Edition) The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2017)

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 pre-submission draft was submitted to the Secretary of State on 9 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 these applications 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 determination of this planning application and are not considered to be ‘out of date’.

6. APPRAISAL

6.1. Land use matters

Policy EM3 (Loss of Employment Land), which broadly applies in this instance, most notably (as per EM3v) advocating that the need for the proposed use is greater than the need for the retention of employment land and that (as per EM3iii) there is a surplus of a similarly sized/type of accommodation in Reading.

Such proposals are also required to be considered in the context of the proposed serviced apartments (Class C1) use. Whilst there is no explicit adopted (2019) or emerging (draft updated) local plan policy specifically relating to serviced apartments, Policy RL1 (Network and hierarchy of Centres) acknowledges that Central Reading will see the greatest levels of development and change, Policy CR1 (Definition of Central Reading) recognises that other main town centre uses (such as serviced apartments) will take place in the Central Core (which the site is within), while Policy CR4 (Leisure, Culture and Tourism in Central Reading) encourages uses that would attract a wide range of people into the centre, which the proposed use would help facilitate. The overriding strategy for the Central Area, at paragraph 5.2.5 of the Local Plan, recognises a mix of uses across the central area. All of these policies and references weigh in favour of the proposed use.

In addition, adopted Policy CR6iv (and replicated in the emerging policy) does reference that where serviced apartments fall outside of a Class C3 use (as proposed in this instance), they will be located

within the Central Core of the Borough. The proposals comply in this regard. Furthermore, the policy goes on to reference there being a requirement to restrict the duration of occupancy, with monitoring information regularly supplied. Accordingly, the serviced apartment use is recommended to be secured by condition for serviced apartment (within Class C1) use only, with maximum occupancy of no more than 3 months. While Policy CR6 states that C1 use can be restricted using a S106 legal agreement or restrictive conditions, it is generally considered that a S106 legal agreement is more effective. However, as the proposal is acceptable in all other aspects, the use of conditions is considered sufficient in this case. A recent appeal decision at nearby 7 Blagrove Street (APP/E0345/W/25/3367585) also forms a material planning consideration, where the use of a S106 legal agreement was not upheld as a reason for refusal.

Therefore, in terms of land use principles, the proposed use is considered acceptable, subject to all other material considerations.

6.2. Design & heritage implications

Policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan states *“All proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance.”* Policy CC7 requires all development to be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.

Paragraph 213 of the NPPF (2024) states *“Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.”*

There are minimal external alterations proposed, primarily focused on the rear elevations of the site. All windows of the modern extension, and the external entrance door at the rear are proposed to be replaced with double glazed timber casement windows. This is considered an acceptable solution which is sympathetic to the significance of the property. The roofing of the extension is also proposed to be replaced with new felt covering and insulation in line with Building Regulations; new cavity wall insulation is also proposed within this modern extension. The proposed Air Source Heat Pumps are also proposed at the rear elevation (within the lightwell), replacing existing air-conditioning condensers. The range of these works is considered reasonable and is mostly contained to the modern extension with limited historical or architectural significance.

Within the main building the submitted Heritage Statement states that there are no internal surviving original features. However, these may survive underneath the modern finishes and suspended ceilings. As such, a condition is recommended to secure a condition report, for record keeping, once the original fabric has been revealed.

The proposed works include new wood fibre insulated wall linings with a lime render finish to improve insulation and repair of the existing timber windows. Replacement of an existing rooflight at the rear elevation roof slope with a smoke vent and additional roof insulation are also proposed – the details of these works are proposed to be secured by condition.

Overall, the proposed works will have little impact on the property and the wider street scene. Most of the works will be contained within the modern extension and will have little to no impact on the significance of the heritage asset.

6.3. Residential amenity

Policy CC8 requires development to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties. Policy EN15 requires

development which would introduce sensitive uses (such as residential) into an Air Quality Management Area to mitigate the detrimental effects on that use. Furthermore, Policy EN17 requires plant noise level to be at least 10dBA below the existing background level as measured at the nearest noise sensitive receptor.

Future occupants

It is considered that an overall good standard of accommodation would be provided for future occupiers of the proposed serviced apartments. Each of the upper floor rooms are regular in size and shape, providing natural outlook and suitable access to daylight and sunlight for future occupiers. This is acceptable in the context of provision of holiday/short term accommodation in the central core of Reading but would not be considered acceptable for permanent habitation. This is because all units fail to meet nationally described minimum space standards.

Given the nature of the proposals, in particular the short-term nature of the occupation, and the site constraints (town centre location with a limited existing car park within an enclosed location), the non-provision of open space is accepted in this specific instance.

Neighbouring residents

The proposed development does not introduce any new viewpoints which would cause a risk of overlooking or loss of privacy. Similarly, it is not considered that the use would generate excessive noise and disturbance associated with the comings and goings of occupants beyond what would be the norm for a residential development, especially in a vibrant area of the town centre where there is a lot of background noise associated with the night time economy.

A noise assessment is recommended to be conditioned in relation to the installation of the 2x new Air Source Heat Pumps at the rear of the site, installed on the side elevation wall within the lightwell, replacing the existing air-conditioning condensers.

The applicant has also submitted an Air Quality Statement which demonstrates that there would be negligible effects of the development to nearby sensitive receptors.

Overall, there is no harm identified to both future occupants and the nearby residents and would comply with policy subject to the inclusion of conditions as set out above.

6.4. Transport, highways and waste

Policy TR5 requires development to provide car and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of the site. Policy CC5 requires development to demonstrate promotion of layouts and designs that provide adequate, well-designed space to facilitate waste storage, reuse, recycling and composting.

The site is located within the Reading Central Area and within Reading's primary shopping area. The site is located within Zone 1 of the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD which is an area at the very heart of Reading Borough, consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments, with limited residential. This area is well served by rail and bus links and contains the largest proportion of public car parking spaces.

Friar Street is used by buses and has access restrictions in place during certain times of the day. There is a 24-hour restriction in place for Friar Street West Bound (except for buses and taxis) and time restricted access to Friar Street Eastbound between 7am – 11am and 4pm – 7pm and restricted access to Market Place. A section of a 'no stopping' red route has been introduced east along Friar Street. The new restriction means vehicles will not be allowed to stop unless they are within a dedicated loading bay.

Due to the above constraints, there is no parking available on the site, Queen Victoria and Friar Street and the surrounding road network all have parking restrictions preventing on-street parking. No parking is proposed and this is acceptable due to the location of the site. Most occupants would be expected to travel to the site using sustainable modes such as buses or trains.

The development also provides cycle storage internally in the form of cupboard for upright storage. Given the constraints of the site, this is considered acceptable on this occasion.

No refuse is proposed to be stored at the site as it is expected that a member of staff will visit the site everyday to clean and remove refuse. This, however, may present some challenges with the timing of when refuse is presented for collection. As such, a condition is recommended to secure full details of refuse collections.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposal has been assessed against national and locally adopted policies and is considered in accordance with those policies.

8. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION

GRANT LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

Recommended Conditions (Full):

1. Time limit (standard)
2. Approved Plans
3. Materials as specified
4. Noise assessment to be submitted prior to installation of ASHP
5. Use and occupation restriction
6. Cycle parking as specified
7. Refuse collection details to be submitted prior to first use
8. Construction Method Statement to be submitted prior to commencement

Recommended Conditions (LBC):

1. Time Limit (standard)
2. Approved plans
3. Materials as specified
4. Record of original features once they have been revealed to be submitted
5. Details of existing and proposed insulation in the loft to be submitted
6. Details of proposed new smoke vent to be submitted