

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Emmer Green Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0756 Full planning permission

Address: Clayfield Copse Pavilion, Caversham Park Road, Caversham, Reading

Proposal: Various external changes, including new window and door openings

Applicant: Mr Jeroen Verheggen

Received date: 08 June 2026

Target Decision date: 21 August 2026 (agreed extension of time)

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site forms part of the Clayfield Copse and Blackhouse Woods in Caversham (RG4 6AA). Specifically, the area identified is the building on the western side of the site, owned by Reading Borough Council and Leased to the Caversham AFC.

The site is described on the Council's website as:

A large, mainly natural open space consisting of fields and native woodlands adjoining the Oxfordshire countryside. Two fields are recreational areas. Some woodland is being actively managed as hazel coppice, and traditional dead hedging defines some of the ancient woodland areas. A wild flower meadow and other fields are being left to regenerate woodland. Designated as a Reading Nature Reserve in 1991 (and was Reading's first Local Nature Reserve). Clayfield Copse also features a Sculpture Trail.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development includes external alterations associated with the internal remodelling of the building to suit the needs of Caversham AFC. Specifically, a new entrance door is proposed to enclose an entrance lobby area, two large glazed panels will be provided to the kitchen/servery and the 'social area'. A new door will be installed for independent access to a referee's area. Plant equipment will be provided, with a new door to the side provided. In addition, two new windows will be provided on the southern elevation to the 'social area'. The new doors and windows are proposed to be aluminium framed.



Figure 1 - Existing Floor Plans (Left); Proposed Floor Plans (Right)

The following information was provided in support of the application:

Application Form

CIL Form

Drawing No: PP-14974418v1 – Location Plan

Drawing No: 102/P/01 – Existing Floor plan & Elevations

Drawing No: 102/P/02 – Proposed Floor Plan & Elevations

The 'DRA Works', Design and Access Statement

3. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- RBC Assets (landowner)
No response received.

Two site notices were placed on site from 18 June 2026.



Two letters of support were received, citing the improved facilities for local sport and community use.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None.

5. 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.

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. The Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the *Reading Local Plan (2019)*.

The '*National Planning Policy framework*' ("NPPF") 2024 (as amended) states clearly that its content is to be a material consideration in the determination of applications. The 'NPPF' states that due weight

should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) 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 'NPPF' and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant.

National

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024 (as amended)

National Planning Policy Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND

TR1: ACHIEVING THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS

SPG/SPD

Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

7. APPRAISAL

Design

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.

The host building is a simple brick-built structure with a metal roof. The building is setback from the nearest highway (Caversham Park Road), and screened from views from within the site by significant amounts of vegetation. The proposed alterations to the building itself are limited, and seek to bring the building into a more functional arrangement, with greater light to the re-imagined internal spaces. Clayfield Copse is a large area with open spaces, fields, and walking trails throughout, and therefore the building is likely to be seen by many people seeking to use this large open space.



Figure 2 - Site visit photographs of building as existing

The proposal, with three new openings to the 'front' of the building would provide a greater amount of architectural detailing to those using the facilities, and the Copse more widely. Whilst the arrangement of features is quite busy along this frontage, the uses to which it serve make the arrangement reasonable. Given this is the only building in the area, it would not appear odd to have this arrangement. To the sides, two new glazed openings including sliding doors are proposed to the southern side. A new louvred door for a plant room would be located on the northern side.

Cumulatively, these new openings seek to modernise and enable a greater and more flexible use of the building. Converting the space from two large changing rooms, to individual changing areas, with a social area, greater toilets, as well as a kitchen/servery with associated storage. Overall, the changes would seek to improve the appearance of the building, and are not objectionable. They are considered to comply with Policy CC7.

It is noted that the proposal includes red security shutters to be used when the building is not in operation. Generally, the provision of external security shutters would be considered unsuitable in most circumstances. In this instance, the red security shutter would be visible for the majority of the time and would therefore form the principal element of the building's appearance. However, given the location of the building, it is reasonable to ensure that an appropriate level of security is provided to minimise the risk of unauthorised access and break-ins. The location, would also minimise the visual harm associated with a poor quality of external security shutter, and would not result in an unacceptable appearance.

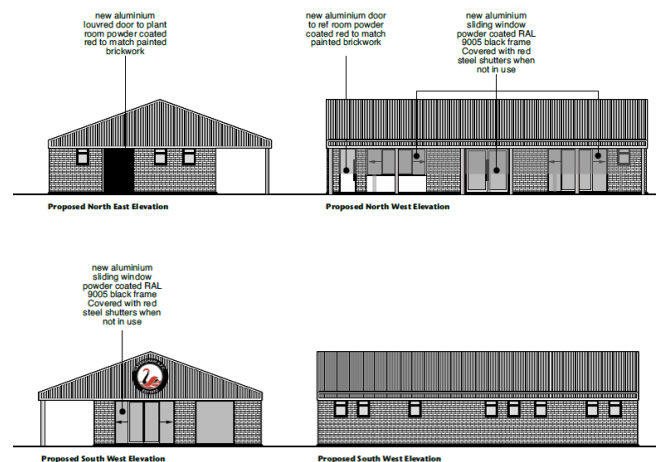


Figure 3 - Proposed Elevation Plans

Proximity to Trees

Policy EN14 seeks to ensure that development does not impact trees, whether protected or not. It is noted that the proposed development is in close proximity to a number of mature trees. The works around the building are limited to new openings, and internal fitting out/refurbishment. There would likely be some storage of materials outside of the site, however there is sufficient space around the building to ensure building materials are not stored within tree root protection areas. An informative is recommended to remind the developer that the permission does not involve or permit works to trees.

Amenity

The proposal comprises alterations to an existing building without any increase in activity beyond the established use. No neighbouring residential properties would be adversely affected in terms of outlook, privacy, noise or disturbance. The proposal therefore complies with Policy CC8.

Sustainability

It is acknowledged that policies CC2, CC5, and the SPD all seek to ensure that development considered the impacts of climate change and is constructed to meet sustainability aims. However, the proposal is predominantly for new openings to the existing building. The internal remodelling works would not constitute operational development requiring planning permission and therefore do not form part of the assessment of this application. Therefore are not considered as part of this application. Given the limited changes to the existing building, it would be considered excessive to require additional sustainable design standards to be required.

Advertisement

The proposal plans include an indicative image of a Caversham AFC badge on the southern gable end wall. It is noted that this is shown, however it would be considered an advertisement under the relevant Regulations. Separate advert consent would be required for this, and no indication of the acceptability thereof should be construed by its appearance on the approved plans.

8. CONCLUSION

The proposed development would introduce a number of new openings to an existing building used as facilities associated with AFC Caversham at Clayfield Copse. The openings would reimagine the use of the building and improve the appearance and enable a more functional use of the space. Given the absence of excavation works, foundations, extensions or alterations to the building footprint, the proposal would not adversely affect nearby trees or their (likely) root protection areas. As such, the proposal is considered acceptable and is recommended for approval.

9. RECOMMENDATION

Grant