

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0931 Full planning permission

Address: ABBEY WHARF, 57-75 KINGS ROAD, READING, RG1 3AB

Proposal: External alterations

Applicant: Mr H Schneck

Received date: 13/07/2026

Target Decision date: 07/09/2026

Case Officer: Alison Amoah

1. SITE DESCRIPTION/ BACKGROUND

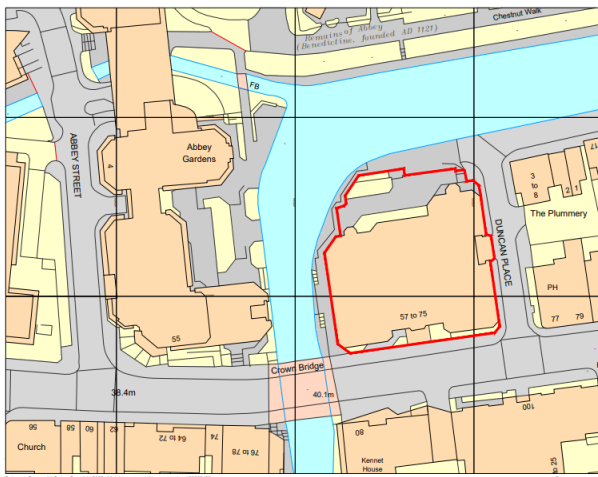
Abbey Wharf is a five-storey building located on the northern side of King's Road, near Crown Bridge, with the river Kennet wrapping around the side (west) and rear (north) elevations of the building.

The site falls within the Central Core and Area of Archaeological Potential and Policy CR1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

The site has an underground car park comprising circa 40 spaces and is located within an Air Quality Management Area, area of potential contaminated land and within Flood Zone 2. However, the north-west corner of the site is within Flood Zone 3.

The Abbey Ruins (Scheduled Ancient Monument) are situated opposite the application site. The application building is not listed, nor is it located within a conservation area.

Permission was granted under ref: PL/25/1059 for prior approval to change use from Class E offices to 78 no. C3 use residential units.



Site Location Plan



Google Streetview image (June 2023)

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal includes external changes as follows:

- Removal of redundant historic plant and associated louvres
- Upgrade of climbable and non-compliant balustrading to prevent falling
- Provide new privacy screens

- Provide smoke ventilation to accord with new Fire Regulations
- Introducing blanking panels (to match existing blanking panels) to the external façade in lieu of some glazing/ redundant louvres
- Top storey via rooflights, and new glazing replacing louvres and glazing into the existing void in the centre of the building, which currently contains redundant plant & associated structures

Plans and other information considered received 13th July 2026 unless otherwise stated:

- Drawing no: jw1231 201 PL Rev01 - Site Location and Block Plan
- Drawing no: jw1231 120 PL Rev01 - General Arrangement- Existing Plans Basement & Ground Floors
- Drawing no: jw1231 121 PL Rev01 - General Arrangement - Existing Plans First & Second Floors
- Drawing no: jw1231 122 PL Rev01 - General Arrangement - Existing Plans Third and Fourth Floors
- Drawing no: jw1231 123 PL Rev01 - General Arrangement - Existing Plans Roof Plan
- Drawing no: jw1231 125 PL Rev01 - General Arrangement - Proposed Plans Basement Floor
- Drawing no: jw1231 126 PL Rev01 - General Arrangement - Proposed Plans Ground Floor
- Drawing no: jw1231 127 PL Rev01 - General Arrangement - Proposed Plans First Floor
- Drawing no: jw1231 128 PL Rev01 - General Arrangement -Proposed Plans Second Floor [Labelled as First Floor]
- Drawing no: jw1231 129 PL Rev01 - General Arrangement - Proposed Plans Third Floor
- Drawing no: jw1231 130 PL Rev01 - General Arrangement - Proposed Plans Fourth Floor
- Drawing no: jw1231 131 PL Rev01 - General Arrangement - Proposed Plans Roof
- Drawing no: jw1231 135 PL Rev01 - General Arrangement - Existing Elevations South, East, North & West
- Drawing no: jw1231 136 PL Rev01 - General Arrangement - Proposed Elevations South (Front) Elevation
- Drawing no: jw1231 137 PL Rev01 - General Arrangement - Proposed Elevations East (Side) Elevation
- Drawing no: jw1231 138 PL Rev01 - General Arrangement - Proposed Elevations North (rear) Elevations
- Drawing no: jw1231 139 PL Rev01 - General Arrangement - Proposed Elevations West (side) Elevation
- Drawing no: jw1231 140 PL Rev01 - General Arrangement - Existing Sections North/South Section A
- Drawing no: jw1231 141 PL Rev01 - General Arrangement - Top Storey (AA, BB & CC) Existing Sections/ Internal Elevations
- Drawing no: jw1231 142 PL Rev01 - General Arrangement - Top Storey (DD, EE & FF) Existing Sections / Internal Elevations
- Drawing no: jw1231 144 PL Rev01 - General Arrangement - Proposed Sections North/ South Section A
- Drawing no: jw1231 145 PL Rev01 - General Arrangement Top Storey (AA, BB and CC) Proposed Section/ Internal Elevations
- Drawing no: jw1231 146 PL Rev01 - General Arrangement - Top Storey DD, EE & FF Proposed Section/ Internal Elevations
- Drawing no: jw1231 155 PL Rev01 - Balustrading & Privacy Screen Details
- Planning and Design Statement, dated July 2026, prepared by Allen Planning Ltd

Example of Elevation:

Existing Front Elevation



Proposed Front Elevation



3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/07/0963/FUL – The conversion of half the existing fourth floor storage space into office space and erection of 4 new pitched roof dormers with alterations to 2 existing ones. Pitched Velux roof lights are included to increase daylight penetration into the office space. Removal of decorative balustrades and replacement with ones conforming to current building regulations. Facade and hard landscape cleaning – Permitted

PL/07/0898/FUL – Refurbishment of the entrance and central area of front elevation of 1990's office block. Permitted.

PL/18/1850 /FUL– External alterations and ancillary works to existing building, including a private terrace area. Permitted.

PL/25/0642/PA – Change of use of ground, first, second, third and fourth floors (all floors) from Class E (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 78 apartments (27 x studios, 43 x 1 bed and 8 x 2 bed apartments). Prior Notification under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 - Prior Approval required and refused.

PL/25/1059/PA - Change of use of 5 floors from Class E (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 27x studio, 43x 1-bedroom and 8x 2-bedroom flats (78 units total). Prior Notification under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 – Prior approval required and given.

4. CONSULTATIONS

No internal consultations were undertaken.

Neighbour Consultation

A site notice was erected on 30th July 2026.



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.

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

National Policy (NPPF)

National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026)

- 12. Making Effective Use of Land
- 14. Achieving Well-Designed Places
- 17. Pollution, Public protection and Security

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) (RBLP)

- CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
- CC7: Design and the Public Realm
- CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
- H5: Standards for New Housing
- H8: Residential Conversions
- TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:

- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)
- Residential Conversions SPD (2023)

Local Plan Partial Update

The current version of the Local Plan turned five years old on 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 the submission draft submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 9th May 2025. It 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 is that they remain in accordance with national policy. The objectives of the policies listed above remain very similar in the draft updated Local Plan, and although at present they have some weight in the decision-making process the current policies can continue to be afforded weight in the appraisal below and are not considered to be 'out of date'.

6. APPRAISAL

The relevant matters are as follows:

- a) Principle
- b) Design and Impact on the Character of the Area
- c) Amenity

a) Principle of development

NPPF Policy S3 gives a presumption in favour of sustainable development and Policy S4 states that “1. *Development proposals within settlements should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework.*”

The proposal would involve external alterations to a building with prior approval for change of use to residential (C3). There would be no adverse effects of the proposal (further assessed below) and is, therefore, acceptable in principle.

b) Design and Impact on the Character of the Area

NPPF Policy DP3 states “1. *Development proposals should respond to their context (the history, character and features of their site and its setting), so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings; such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features, and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets.*”

Policy CC7 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 building is of a relatively modern design in a mixed commercial/ residential area and not within a Conservation Area. The proposed changes to the external appearance, as set out in the Proposal section above, would include minimal changes, which would accord with the existing design of the building and utilise appropriate materials.

As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in relation to Policy DP3 of the NPPF and CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

b) Amenity

NPPF Policy L2 states: “1. *Substantial weight should be given to the benefits where a development proposal would achieve one or more of the following...ii. Maintain safe access and egress for occupiers and users, and acceptable living standards for residents and neighbours in terms of access to daylight, sunlight, privacy and external amenity space; ...*”

NPPF Policy P3 states in 1. A that “*proposals should: a. Provide healthy living conditions for occupiers and users in terms of adequate access to light....*”

Policy CC8 of the RBLP seeks to protect the amenity of future occupiers.

Future occupiers

The proposal would provide for some additional windows and improved safety to the existing balconies through upgraded balustrading. There would also be new privacy screens and smoke ventilation to accord with new Fire Regulations. All such measures would provide an appropriate and safe environment for future residential occupants.



Existing occupiers

There would be no adverse impacts on any nearby existing occupiers.

The prior approval permission included the requirement for the submission and approval of a Construction Method Statement (Condition 5). This was approved under ref: PL/25/1668 and compliance with this is included as a recommended condition in the interests of protecting the amenity of local land uses and neighbouring residents, as well as highway safety.

The proposed scheme would, therefore, accord with the requirements of national and local policies.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and is considered to be acceptable on that basis, subject to the following conditions.

8. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT permission subject to a S106 legal agreement and the following conditions:

Conditions

1. Time Limit
2. Plans
3. Materials (compliance)
4. CMS (compliance)

Informatives

1. Terms
2. Building Control
3. Complaints about construction
4. Positive and Proactive