

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Battle Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0919 Full planning permission

Address: 92, Audley St, Reading, RG30 1BS

Proposal: Installation of three rooflights within the existing roof slopes

Applicant: Mr Vernon

Received date: 09/07/2026

Target Decision date: 08/09/2026

Case Officer: Catrin Davies

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site relates to a section of a building located on the north side of Audley Street. The remainder of the building lies within commercial use including a welding shop, gym and dog groomers.

The building is located within a mixed use built-up area; however, the majority of the properties on the road are in residential use.

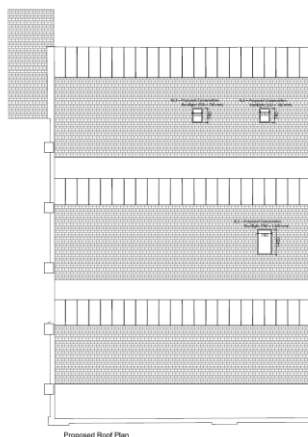
The site has recently been granted a certificate of lawful development to confirm the use of the building as commercial units, Use Class E.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for the installation of:

2 no. VELUX GGL CK02 2570H Conservation Centre-Pivot Roof Windows (550mm × 780mm); and
1 no. VELUX GGL MK08 2570H Conservation Centre-Pivot Roof Window (780mm × 1,400mm).

The proposed rooflights are flush-fitting conservation units installed within the existing roof plane. No dormers, raised roof structures or alterations to the roof profile are proposed.



Proposed roof Plan

Plans:

Proposed Rooflight Schedule received 9 Jul 2026
108 Proposed roof light received 9 Jul 2026
107 Existing roof plan received 9 Jul 2026
Site Plan received 14 Jul 2026
110 Proposed site plan received 14 Jul 2026
Location Plan received 9 Jul 2026
Planning Statement received 9 Jul 2026

Planning History:

PL/26/0356- Change of use from Class E (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 10 flats. Prior Notification under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Refused

PL/25/1376- Change of use from Class E (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 10 Flats. Prior Notification under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Refused

PL/24/1564- Use of 92 Audley Street as four Class E units for more than 10 years (amended description). Granted.

3. CONSULTATIONS

Site notices were displayed at the application site, and three letters of representation were received. These can be summarised as:

The applicant is doing this to overcome a refusal reason for the Class MA application (natural light)

The objections on the previous application should still be counted

If approved the applicant will re-submit for a change of use

The change of use would result in future uses experience unacceptable noise level due to the use of noisy machinery.

No need for the windows.

4. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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. A consultation version of the draft update of the Local Plan was published on 6th November 2024.

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 remains 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’

The Local Plan Partial Update was submitted to the Secretary of State on 9th May 2025. Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to this application is that they remain in accordance with national policy (aside from Policy H1, which is acknowledged to be out-of-date) and that the objectives of those policies remains very similar in the submission 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' (aside from Policy H1).

Relevant Policies:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2026

National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Local Plan (Nov 2019)

CC1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)

CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction)

CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)

CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)

EN18 (Flooding and Sustainable Drainage System)

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

5. APPRAISAL

Design Considerations

Policy CC7 seeks to ensure that development preserves or enhances the character of the area, having regard to matters such as scale, height, massing, architectural detailing and materials.

The proposed roof lights are modest in size and have been designed to sit flush within the roof slope, thereby minimising their visual prominence. Furthermore, the roof lights are stepped in from the side elevations and are positioned such that they would not be readily visible from the public street scene. As a result, the development would not result in any harmful alteration to the appearance of the building or the wider character of the area.

Given their limited scale, discreet positioning and flush-fitting design, the proposed roof lights are considered to represent a sympathetic addition to the host building and would preserve the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposal therefore accords with the requirements of Policy CC7.

Residential Amenity

Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan seeks to ensure that development does not result in unacceptable impacts on the amenity of existing or future occupiers, including in relation to privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, noise and disturbance, and visual dominance.

The proposal relates solely to the installation of roof lights within the existing roof slope. Given their modest size and flush-fitting design, the roof lights would not result in any material loss of privacy, overlooking, loss of light, overbearing impact, or visual dominance to neighbouring occupiers. Furthermore, the proposal would not generate any additional noise or disturbance.

Accordingly, it is considered that the development would have no unacceptable impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties and would comply with the requirements of Policy CC8.

Other Matters

Several letters of representation have been received raising concerns that the proposed roof lights are intended to facilitate a future change of use of the building, following the refusal of a previous Class MA applications.

The Local Planning Authority acknowledges these concerns and understands the frustrations expressed by local residents. However, the application under consideration relates solely to the installation of roof lights, and it must therefore be assessed on its own planning merits. The planning system requires each application to be considered based on the development proposed, taking into account the relevant planning policies and material planning considerations.

Any future proposal for a change of use would require a separate planning application (where necessary) and would be assessed accordingly. It would not be reasonable to refuse the current application based on speculation regarding a potential future use of the building.

Whilst the concerns raised in relation to the previously refused Class MA application are noted, those comments cannot be directly transferred to the assessment of this proposal, as the development now before the Local Planning Authority is materially different and relates only to the installation of roof lights.

The reasons behind an applicant's desire to install roof lights, or any potential future aspirations for the building, are not material planning considerations in the determination of this application. Therefore, the assessment has focused solely on the planning impacts arising from the roof lights themselves. As set out elsewhere in this report, the proposed roof lights are modest in scale, flush fitting, and would not result in harm to the character of the area or to neighbouring amenity. Accordingly, whilst the objections are acknowledged, there are no issues with the proposal that would result in the refusal of planning permission.

6. CONCLUSION

Having regard to the material considerations and all matters raised, the Local Planning Authority considers that the balance of considerations therefore weigh in favour of granting planning permission.

Recommendation

Grant with conditions