

PLANNING STATEMENT

Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans)
Units 5 & 6 Southern Court, Reading

Site	Units 5 & 6 Southern Court, South Street, Reading, RG1 4QS
Application	PL/26/1038
Original permission	PL/25/0496 - External alterations to the property
Proposed variation	Relocation of Residential Unit 1's entrance from the side to the front elevation, with associated frontage access works
Document status	Revision A - Planning submission

1. Introduction

This statement supports the application to vary Condition 2 of permission PL/25/0496 at Units 5 and 6 Southern Court. It incorporates the applicant's revised works summary dated 14 September 2026: relocation of the entrance to residential Unit 1, a 900 mm-wide entrance path in brick paviours using a no-dig method, and consequential adjustments shown on reviewed drawings 0539-1000B and 0539-1001B.

This statement should be read with AIA SC-AIA-01, Revision 08, dated 14 September 2026. Drawings 1000B and 1001B, revision B dated 13 September 2026, have now been reviewed. Drawing 1000B confirms the path width, paving and no-dig note and labels T1 and T2. Drawing 1001B shows the proposed front entrance and associated window arrangement.

2. Site and planning background

The application buildings form part of a terrace of similarly detailed units. The supplied plans show existing entrance approaches, planted frontage beds, a side passage adjoining No. 7 Southern Court and a rear communal bin area. Building Units 5 and 6 are distinct from the residential unit numbers shown within the proposed layout.

The original statement identifies PL/25/0496 as permission for external alterations associated with the residential arrangement. The revised drawings distinguish elements described as previously approved in orange and proposed changes in magenta. The original decision notice and separate approved drawing set have not been reviewed for this revision.

3. Proposed external works

The proposed works comprise:

1. Omit the approved entrance door from the side elevation of Unit 6 Southern Court, South Street, serving residential Unit 1.
2. Make good that side-elevation opening in matching facing brickwork.
3. Form a 900 mm-wide entrance path to residential Unit 1 in brick paviours using a no-dig method, and form a new entrance door on the principal/front elevation by adapting the approved window opening.
4. Make the limited consequential adjustments shown on reviewed drawings 0539-1000B and 0539-1001B.

The 900 mm-wide brick-paved path occupies part of the frontage planted area and passes beside retained trees T1 and T2. The no-dig method and tree protection requirements in AIA SC-AIA-01 address that relationship. Detailed construction and protection arrangements are proposed to be secured by condition before the external path works.

4. Materials and construction details

Element	Specification / design requirement
Front entrance door	Retain the original specification: thermally broken, powder-coated aluminium-framed glazed door; anthracite grey RAL 7016, matt. Frame profile, glazing and ironmongery to match the approved/existing door suite.
Side opening infill	Matching facing brickwork and compatible mortar, with bond, joint profile and pointing to match. Reinstate disturbed insulation, cavity closers and internal finishes.
Associated window, trims and cills	Match adjoining approved/existing components in frame appearance, colour and finish; local making good without contrasting surrounds.
External approach and threshold	900 mm-wide path in brick pavements laid using a no-dig method. Confirm paving finish, support and bedding layers, edging, levels, threshold transition and drainage. The detail should avoid excavation or level reduction in retained rooting soil.
Planting	T1: sycamore, approximately 7 m; T2: Kilmarnock willow, approximately 2 m. Both trees are to be retained under the assessed scheme; no tree removal, transplantation or pruning is proposed.

The original requirement to verify the existing door colour and profiles before installation is retained. If the installed suite uses an equivalent manufacturer-specific anthracite finish, the closest matching finish should be used. New access construction must be coordinated with the verified vegetation constraints before its specification is finalised.

5. Section 73 context

Planning Practice Guidance allows conditions, including approved-plan conditions, to be varied through section 73, but not the operative development description. A resulting permission is independent of the original [R1]. The application seeks to retain the description 'External alterations to the property'. The council should consider the full depicted frontage works when confirming the variation's scope; assessment should not be confined to the door position alone.

6. Planning policy framework

Local policy: the council identifies the November 2019 Reading Borough Local Plan as adopted and its partial update as under examination [R2]. CC7 addresses design, landscape, materials and accessibility. CC8 concerns amenity. EN14 seeks protection of important trees and provision for retention, planting and maintenance. These provide the local framework for assessing the entrance and frontage works [R3].

National policy: the August 2026 NPPF replaces the December 2024 version. Annex A applies its decision-making policies from publication. DP3 addresses contextual design, movement and green infrastructure; N3 addresses suitable tree provision and maintenance. This revision replaces the former references to Chapter 12 and paragraphs 131, 135 and 140 with the current framework [R4].

7. Planning assessment

7.1 Design and character

Relocating the entrance within the existing elevation is a modest architectural change. Matching brickwork and coordinated door and window finishes would help integrate it with the established building. The proposed approach is also part of the design: its surfacing, edging and relationship with retained planting will affect the frontage's appearance and require coordinated details.

No change to the building footprint, height or overall massing is identified as part of this amendment. This does not mean that the external ground surface or planted-bed layout is unchanged. The wider alteration package is described in the original statement as retained.

7.2 Residential amenity

The amendment does not propose additional residential accommodation. Moving one entrance to the front would redistribute pedestrian activity. Given its scale, a material change in daylight, outlook or overall occupation is not anticipated from the entrance relocation itself. The final route should maintain appropriate separation and usability beside neighbouring entrances and ground-floor windows.

7.3 Access, movement and levels

The front door is reached by the proposed 900 mm-wide path. The detailed design must coordinate clear passage, gradients and threshold transitions with the above-ground no-dig build-up and retained trees. Compliance with the applicable access requirements must be addressed through the detailed design and Building Regulations process.

The approved use, residential quantum, parking, refuse and servicing arrangements are not proposed to change through this amendment, as described in the original statement. The pedestrian approach to Unit 1 does change and must be shown accurately. Building Regulations details must be coordinated with the planning layout and tree-protection method.

7.4 Landscaping and arboricultural effects

T1 is a sycamore approximately 7 m high and T2 a Kilmarnock willow approximately 2 m high. Both trees are recorded as fair condition and retention Category B. Their positions are shown on drawing 1000B beside the proposed path. Crown spreads were not measured. No tree removal or pruning is specified.

Trunk diameters of 315 mm for T1 and 105 mm for T2 at 1.5 m give preliminary circular RPAs of 3.78 m radius (44.89 m²) and 1.26 m radius (4.99 m²). The 1730 mm and 1320 mm drawing dimensions appear to locate the trees from the building face. After allowing for the 900 mm path, indicative edge clearances are 830 mm and 420 mm, suggesting overlap with both RPAs. Verify dimension endpoints and stem centres on site.

The AIA specifies above-ground construction without topsoil stripping, root cutting or excavated edge restraints, together with load distribution, permeable support and bedding, and protected construction access. These measures address the principal risks to the roots and rooting soil. Retaining T1 and T2 on this basis supports the objectives of Policy EN14.

7.5 Drainage, ground conditions and ecology

The above-ground path construction must maintain water and air movement through the complete paving, bedding and support system. Finished levels and surface-water disposal must avoid adverse effects on the building and retained rooting soil. The detailed method must address any planting disturbance within the path footprint and protect planting outside it.

8. Conclusion

PL/26/1038 seeks relocation of residential Unit 1's entrance from the side to the front elevation, matching brickwork infill, a 900 mm-wide brick-paved entrance path using a no-dig method, and limited consequential adjustments shown on 1000B and 1001B. The building alteration is modest and creates no additional accommodation. The no-dig proposal addresses potential excavation impacts, subject to a suitable detailed design.

The matching external materials and limited alteration to the existing elevation support Policy CC7. The absence of additional accommodation or increased building mass limits the potential amenity effects relevant to CC8. Retention of T1 and T2, with the no-dig construction and protection requirements secured, supports Policy EN14. Approval of the revised plans is requested.