

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Katesgrove Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0962 Removal/variation of conditions

Address: 85 PELL STREET, READING, RG1 2NP

Proposal: Demolition of existing disused salvage yard and construction of a replacement building to provide 4no. 1 bedroom units and 1 no. 2 bedroom house together with associated landscaping, cycle and bin stores. [Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans) of application PL/20/1757 to include 2 rear dormer windows]

Applicant: Acquestra

Received date: 20/07/2026

Target Decision date: 22/09/2026

Case Officer: Ethne Humphreys

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site relates to land on the north side of Pell Street, to the rear of 86 Southampton Street to the east. The land had previously been in use as an architectural salvage yard, housing a single storey building. This building has now been demolished and the planning permission granted under application 20/1757 is under construction and largely complete.

The character of the area is predominantly residential and No.86 Southampton Street is Grade II Listed, and the remainder of the terrace 74-84 Southampton Street is Grade II* Listed.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal seeks to vary condition 2 (approved plans) of planning permission PL/201757 to include 2 rear dormer windows on the building serving flats. The dormer windows are shown to serve en-suite bathrooms and are indicated to be obscurely glazed.

The applicant has stated that the dormer windows *would 'improve the design and provide an additional bathroom'*.

Plans considered:

Existing Location and Block Plans AED000

Proposed Elevations Sheet 1 PD162 Rev F

Proposed Elevations Sheet 2 PD163 Rev F

Proposed Section Sheet 2 PD152 Rev F

Proposed Second Floor Plan PD102 Rev F

Proposed Site Plan – Roof PD010 Rev F

Received 20th July 2026

3. HISTORY

26/0130 Application for Approval of Details Reserved by Condition 16 - (Biodiversity) of application PL/20/1757. Condition Discharged.

25/1132 Demolition of existing disused salvage yard and construction of a replacement building to provide 4no. 1 bedroom units and 1 no. 2 bedroom house together with associated landscaping, cycle and bin stores. Variation to condition 2 (Plans) of application PL/20/1757 to include 2 rear dormer window and condition 19 (Mix) Flat 3 and 4 to be 2-bed [2-bed 3ppl]. Withdrawn.

25/1852 Application for Approval of Details Reserved by Conditions 3 - (Materials), 4 - (Construction Method Statement), 10 & 11 - (Contamination inc Remediation Scheme) and 14 - (SAP Assessment) of application PL/20/1757. Conditions Discharged.

20/1757 Demolition of existing disused salvage yard and construction of a replacement building to provide 4no. 1 bedroom units and 1 no. 2 bedroom house together with associated landscaping, cycle and bin stores. Approved subject to S106 legal agreement, under construction.

21/0629 Demolition of existing disused salvage yard and construction of a replacement building to provide 4no. 1 bedroom units and 1 no. 2 bedroom house together with associated landscaping, cycle and bin stores. Approved.

18/0350 Conversion of existing building to a 1-bed unit and the erection of a new two storey building comprising 2 x 1-bed units with associated carparking and cycle storage on land to the R/O 86 Southampton Street, Reading. Re-submission of application 162204. Approved, subject to S106 legal agreement, not implemented.

18/0351 Conversion of existing building to a 1-bed unit and the erection of a new two storey building comprising 2 x 1-bed units with associated carparking and cycle storage on land to the R/O 86 Southampton Street, Reading. Re-submission of application 162204. Approved.

16/2204 Conversion of existing building to a 1-bed unit and the erection of a new two storey building comprising 2 x 1-bed units with associated carparking and cycle storage on land to the R/O 86 Southampton Street, Reading. Refused.

4. CONSULTATIONS

Site notices were displayed around the site along Pell Street and Southampton Street and the car park to the north west.

One neighbour letter of representation received concerned with:

- Intensification of site
- Disproportionately large building for plot
- Overlooking / loss of privacy
- Increased visual presence / sense of enclosure
- Insufficient amenity space
- Increased pressure on parking, refuse storage, access and other facilities
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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 because of the development.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 16(2) 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 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.

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.

Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

National Planning Policy Framework 2026

Policy S3 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)
Policy S4 (Principle of Development within Settlements)
Policy DP3 (Key Principles for Well Designed Places)
Policy P3 (Living Conditions)

National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 onwards

Of particular note is paragraph 015:

Permission granted under section 73 takes effect as a new, independent permission to carry out the same development as previously permitted subject to new or amended conditions. The new permission sits alongside the extant permission, which remains intact and unamended. It is open to the applicant to decide whether to implement the new permission or the one originally granted.

A decision notice describing the new permission should be issued, setting out all the conditions related to it. To assist with clarity decision notices for the grant of planning permission under section 73 should also repeat the relevant conditions from the extant planning permission unless they have already been discharged.

As a section 73 application cannot be used to vary the time limit for implementation, this condition must remain unchanged from the extant permission. If the original permission was subject to a planning obligation, then this may need to be the subject of a deed of variation.

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC7 Design and the Public Realm
CC8 Safeguarding Amenity
EN1 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
EN6 New Development in a Historic Context

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. The submission draft of the Local Plan Partial Update (LPPU) was submitted on 9th May 2025 and examined earlier this year. At the time of writing, the examination-in-public of the partial update to the local plan is in the process of taking place. Stage 1 hearings were held virtually on 11th and 12th November 2025. Stage 2 hearings took place in February 2026.

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'.

Whilst at this time, the examination of the LPPU has reached a fairly advanced stage the weight that can be attributed to policies within the LPPU depends on the degree to which modifications are proposed to relevant policies. Where it is considered any updated policies within the LPPU that are relevant to the changes to the approved development proposed by this s73a variation of conditions application can be attributed significant weight this will be outlined in this report if relevant.

6. APPRAISAL

The Planning Practice Guidance on flexible options for planning permissions confirms that section 73 applications are considered against the...

"...Development plan and material considerations, under section 38(6) of the 2004 Act, and conditions attached to the existing permission. Local planning authorities should, in making their decisions, focus their attention on national and development plan policies, and other material considerations which may have changed significantly since the original grant of permission".

With this context in mind, many of the matters that have already been considered appropriate, are not repeated in this assessment. Furthermore, technical matters not impacted by the proposed changes are not explicitly referenced within this appraisal and conditions included on the original permission satisfying these elements satisfactorily (barring in a number of instances an update to the plans referenced). Instead, as per the guidance above, the focus of attention is on the proposed changes to the development and national and local policy and other material considerations which have changed significantly. A new NPPF was published in August 2026 and relevant new policies within this are discussed in the appraisal section below.

With the above in mind the main considerations for the amendments proposed are considered to be:

- Design and Character / Heritage Impacts
- Amenity Impacts (both future occupiers and neighbours)

Design and Character Impacts

Policy CC7 of the Local Plan (2019) and Policy DP3 of the NPPF (2026) state that the appearance and character of development should integrate with and enhance its surroundings, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment and providing value to the public realm. Policies EN1 and EN6 of the Local Plan (2019) state that elements of the historic environment, including their setting will be protected and where possible enhanced and new development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area.

The main design change proposed is for the addition of two rear dormer windows on the roof slope of the flatted element. The approved and proposed rear elevations are shown below:



Approved rear elevation



Proposed rear elevation

The approval resulted in a simple roof form and restrained two storey appearance. In contrast, the proposed dormer windows would be large, would add considerable bulk to the rear roof slope and would sit awkwardly within the roof slope. Whilst dormer windows have been approved on the development at the rear as can be seen above, these are smaller scale and sit more comfortably within the roof space as well at a considerably lower level of the house so are not as dominant. Similarly, the dormer windows on the front elevation are smaller, and have been designed to fit within the scheme, rather than 'stuck on' as an afterthought as those proposed appear. Indeed, the majority of the building and roof form has been constructed so it is hard to see how the proposed dormer windows would successfully integrate into the built form:



This part of the approved scheme is already large, effectively filling the confines of the plot and it is not considered appropriate to add more bulk – indeed, the proposed dormer windows would be considerably larger than the two smaller approved and would result in the appearance of a three storey building in views from the rear rather than a two storey building with accommodation in loft and over and above what was approved. The size and awkward positioning of the dormer windows within the roof slope would be greater than the upper floor windows below and unacceptably draw the eye. The scale and siting would add high level bulk in a prominent and highly visible position on the roof slope. The effect is to dominate the appearance of the host building from its own (limited) garden and from surrounding gardens where the disproportionate size of the dormer windows would be dominant and assertive features that has a significant adverse effect on the immediate skyline. In views from the surrounding area, the proposed dormer windows would appear as an unduly dominant and visually jarring additions to the roofscape. Consequently, it would erode the hierarchy of its architectural order and noticeably disrupt the rhythm of the existing smaller dormer windows.

The site is highly prominent, and even in views from the rear such that the proposed dormer windows would be highly visible from neighbouring properties and the wider public domain including car park. It remains important in the interests of good planning that proposed development does not unduly detract from the appearance or character of a host building even if the building would normally only be viewed from private viewpoints including on-street views. This is reflected in NPPF Policy DP3(2)(g) which articulates the important principle of creating visually attractive, distinct and characterful development, which means ensuring additions to host properties do not unduly harm their character and appearance per se. The proposals are considered to result in an unacceptable intensification and harmful increase in visual dominance of the building.

As above, the terrace to the north along Southampton Street is listed, which contributes positively to the character of the area. The built form at this point would no longer be modest and simple in appearance and the unattractive dormer windows, which would be harmful to the host property and street scene would result in a degree of harm to the wider setting of the nearby listed terrace which forms part of the character of the area.

Policy HE6 of the NPPF states that with regard to a designated heritage asset, the *“effect on the asset and its significance should be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposal”*. Furthermore, PPG sets out that planning is mainly concerned with the use of the land in the public interest.

The proposed dormer windows would provide en-suite bathrooms for future occupiers. However, this would be a private benefit to occupiers of the property that carries limited weight in favour of the proposal. No public benefits have been advanced by the applicant.

The proposal would also conflict with Policy DP3 of the NPPF 2026 which states that 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.”

DP3 continues that *“to create well design places”*, development proposals should:

“Built Form: use the pattern of buildings to define the arrangement of streets, squares and other spaces, promote compact forms of development to optimise the site’s potential, distinguish between public and private areas, create focal points and, where appropriate, enhance views into and out of the scheme;”

And:

“Identity: create visually attractive, distinctive and characterful development to establish or maintain a strong sense of place and pride, including through the use of a coherent palette of materials, design features and planting.”

The proposal would also conflict with Policy L2 of the NPPF 2026 which states that proposals should:

“Be consistent with the overall street scene, other than where: it is appropriate to have larger buildings (such as at street corners, or where building upwards would not cause substantial harm to the character of a building and its surroundings); the development would not be visible from the street frontage; or where specific changes are provided for through a design code which forms part of the development plan”

For the above reasons, the proposed dormer windows would not “*integrate with and enhance their surroundings*” nor would they “*create focal points and...enhance views into and out of the scheme*” nor would they “*create visually attractive, distinctive and characterful development*”.

Policy DP3.3 of the NPPF 2026 states that development proposals should be refused if:

“without clear justification, they conflict with paragraph 1 of this policy or relevant aspects of the principles in paragraph 2, or with any explicit design standards set out in the development plan (including those in locally specific policies, guides, codes or masterplans). Substantial weight should be given to compliance with relevant development plan policies when assessing the design quality of proposals.”

Amenity Impacts

Policy CC8 of the Local Plan (2019) and Policy P3 of the NPPF (2026) state that development should not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for occupier of new residential development.

The proposed dormer windows are annotated as being frosted and as above, it is recognised that there are rear dormer windows on the rear of the house facing across the rear gardens of the properties of Southampton Street to the north west. However, as above, these are at a much lower level than those proposed. Some overlooking is a characteristic that is common in many built-up areas. However, the proposed dormer windows, given their scale and elevation position would appear intrusive from neighbouring gardens and result in a heightened perception of overlooking over and above that previously approved. Whilst views would be at an oblique angle, and noting the more direct overlooking relationship that exists, the proposed dormer windows would be highly visible from the neighbours gardens due to the excessive scale siting which gives rise to a clear perception of overlooking, the overall effect of which can be considered to be intrusive.

Rear dormer windows were originally proposed on this building as part of PL/20/1757; however, following concerns raised at the time in respect of design and amenity concerns, these were removed and the following condition was attached to the approval to restrict window/openings:

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and/or re-enacting that Order) no windows/doors/dormers/openings, other than those shown on the approved plans shall be placed in the south west facing, north or north east facing elevations of the building hereby permitted at any time without the grant of a separate planning permission from the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises from overlooking and loss of privacy in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

It is also noted that planning permission PL/18/0250 which approved a similar two storey building in this location also included a restrictive condition in respect of Class B (enlargement of a dwellinghouse consisting of an addition or alteration to its roof). The Local Planning Authority has been consistent in this respect and with regard to privacy.

The proposal would also conflict with Policy L2 of the NPPF 2026 which states that proposals should:

“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”

And Policy DP3 which states that proposals should:

“Built Form: use the pattern of buildings to define the arrangement of streets, squares and other spaces, promote compact forms of development to optimise the site’s potential, distinguish between public and private areas, create focal points and, where appropriate, enhance views into and out of the scheme;

For the above reasons, the proposed dormer windows would not *“maintain...acceptable living standards for...neighbours in terms of...privacy”* and nor would they *“distinguish between public and private areas”*.

7. CONCLUSION

Taken as a whole, the appearance of the building is considered to be a substantial departure from that approved, that would result in harm to the host property, wider public realm including heritage assets as well as being unneighbourly. As such, the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policies CC7, CC8, EN1 and EN6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, and Policies DP3, HE6 and L2 NPPF 2026.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Refuse.