

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey

App Ref: PL/26/0285 Full planning permission

Address: 102 BROAD STREET, READING, RG1 2AX

Proposal: To install a new ventilation system.

Applicant: Ms Maggie Lo

Received date: 04/03/2026

Target Decision date: 22/09/2026 (EXT)

Case Officer: Chukwudi Onwudinanti

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application relates to a commercial premises at 102 Broad Street, within Reading town centre. The property forms part of a continuous terrace of commercial buildings fronting Broad Street, with commercial accommodation at ground-floor level and upper floors above.

The principal Broad Street elevation is of considerable architectural interest, comprising an ornate traditional frontage with projecting bay windows, decorative detailing, a projecting timber balcony/veranda and pedimented roof form.

To the rear, the character of the site is substantially more utilitarian. The submitted photographs show a series of enclosed and semi-enclosed service areas bounded by brick and rendered walls and containing existing drainage, service infrastructure and flat-roof areas.

The surrounding area is predominantly commercial in character, reflecting the site's central Reading location. However, there is residential accommodation within the wider area, including first-floor flats on Queen Victoria Street identified in the submitted acoustic information as the nearest noise-sensitive residential receptors.

The site is within an Air Quality Management Area, Area of Archaeological Potential, and an Article 4 removing permitted development rights for conversion to residential.

Site Photos



Flat roof enclave at first floor for proposed ventilation equipment



View from ground floor of surrounding walls to the enclave space

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for the installation of a commercial kitchen extraction and ventilation system, which externally would comprise 3 exhaust fans and 2 air supply fans to be mounted on the flat roof within an enclave site at the centre of the site.

The overall system would also include (internally) kitchen extraction canopies, extraction fans, fresh-air supply fans, ductwork, filtration equipment, and silencers.

The proposed first-floor ventilation route plan confirms that the ventilation system would be routed through the premises towards the rear/central part of the building.

The extraction specification identifies three kitchen canopies/extraction systems. Activated-carbon filtration is proposed for the two principal cooking extraction systems. The proposed system also incorporates pre-filters, carbon filters for odour abatement, silencers and anti-vibration measures.

2.1 Information submitted received 4th March 2026 unless otherwise stated:

The application is supported by the following information:

- Location Plan
- Block Plan, received 21st August 2026
- Proposed First Floor Plan
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan
- Design and Specification for Extraction Ventilation System, dated 21 February 2026
- Noise Assessment Report dated 4th March 2026 prepared by Xcellence Consultancy
- Odour Assessment Report dated 15th April 2026 prepared by Maggie Lo Catering Supplies Ltd
- Ventilation Route Plan on the Flat Roof and Elevations received 17 September 2026

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

App Ref: PL/91/0637 (original ref: 01/01027/ADV)

Description: Erection of new fascia and sign.

Decision: Consent

Decision Date: 21/11/1991

App Ref: PL/97/0079

Description: Extension and alterations at ground and first floor levels to rear (only) of building.

Decision: Approved

Decision Date: 18/02/1998

App Ref: PL/08/1442

Description: Change of use from A1 retail to D1 medical

Decision: Approved

Decision Date: 12/01/2009

App Ref: PL/14/0315

Description: One externally illuminated fascia sign and one externally illuminated projecting sign (retrospective)

Decision: Approved

Decision Date: 11/07/2014

4. CONSULTATIONS

Site notice was put up 29/07/2026

The following were consulted:

RBC Environmental Protection

Odour Assessment was requested, following standing advice. The Odour Assessment and Noise Assessment submitted are deemed satisfactory.

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 contained within the National Planning Policy Framework, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF does not alter the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making.

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework – August 2026

Policy DP3 - Key principles for well-designed places

Policy 3 – Living Conditions and Pollution

National Planning Practice Guidance (2014 as amended)

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

Policy CC1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy CC7 – Design and the Public Realm

Policy CC8 – Safeguarding Amenity

Policy EN15 – Air Quality

Policy EN16 – Pollution and Water Resources

Policy EN17 – Noise Generating Equipment

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 was submitted to the Secretary of State 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’.

6. APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The proposal would be in association with a Class E use. The premises were previously in use for medical/health purposes, a use formerly falling within Class D1(a) of the Use Classes Order. Following amendments to the Use Classes Order which came into effect on 1 September 2020, medical and health

services of this nature fall within Class E(e), whilst restaurants and cafés fall within Class E(b). Movement between uses within Class E does not constitute development requiring planning permission. Accordingly, subject to there being no restrictive condition affecting the premises, planning permission is not required for the proposed change from medical/health use to restaurant use. The application, therefore, falls to be considered in respect of the proposed extraction and ventilation equipment and associated operational development.

There is no objection in principle to the installation of appropriately designed ventilation and extraction equipment associated with a commercial use. Such equipment is commonly required to allow food and drink premises to operate effectively. The principal planning considerations are, therefore, the siting and appearance of the equipment, its effect upon the character and appearance of the building and surrounding historic environment, and its potential effects upon neighbouring occupiers through noise, vibration, fumes and odour. Subject to these matters being satisfactorily addressed, the principle of the development is acceptable.

Character and design

NPPF Policy DP3 states that proposal should respond to their context, so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings. RBLP Policy CC7 requires development to be of high quality and to maintain and enhance the appearance of the area in which it is located. Policies EN1, EN3 and EN6 seek to protect the historic environment and ensure that development within a historic context responds appropriately to its surroundings.

The principal Broad Street elevation is architecturally detailed and contributes positively to the town-centre streetscape. Commercial extraction equipment and exposed ductwork positioned upon this elevation would have the potential to detract materially from its architectural character. However, no such works are proposed to the principal frontage. The proposed equipment would instead be routed internally towards the rear of the premises and installed within a recessed and substantially enclosed rear service/roof area.

The submitted photographs demonstrate that this area is utilitarian in appearance and bounded by substantial brick and rendered walls. The ventilation route plans similarly demonstrate that the equipment would be concentrated within this rear part of the building rather than extending across the principal elevation.

The siting would consequently substantially screen the plant from public views from Broad Street and avoid material interference with the architectural composition of the principal elevation.

The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in character and design terms and consistent with Policies DP3, CC7, EN1, EN3 and EN6.

Residential amenity and pollution

NPPF Policy P3 requires the assessment of development proposal to take into account the likely effects of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, whether these effects are on or off-site. Proposals should not give rise to, or contribute to, an unacceptable level of access to daylight and sunlight for neighbouring residents and occupiers, or unacceptable levels of air, noise, artificial light, water, soil or other forms of pollution on or beyond the site.

Policy CC8 requires development to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. Policies EN15 and EN16 seek to ensure that development does not result in unacceptable effects associated with air pollution, fumes, odour or other forms of pollution. Policy EN17 specifically addresses noise-generating equipment and seeks to ensure that such equipment does not adversely affect noise-sensitive receptors.

The principal amenity considerations in this case are noise, vibration and cooking odour.

Noise

The application is accompanied by a Noise Assessment addressing the proposed mechanical plant. The nearest identified noise-sensitive receptors are residential flats on Queen Victoria Street. The submitted site information identifies these as approximately 70 metres from the application site and this has been confirmed on site visit.

The assessment has been undertaken having regard to BS4142:2014+A1:2019 and considers the combined operation of the proposed mechanical equipment.

The extraction specification provides further mitigation through the installation of silencers. The principal extraction fans are proposed with silencers and anti-vibration mounts, with the specification indicating that these measures are intended to reduce the discharge noise associated with the system.

On the basis of the submitted acoustic information and the substantial separation and screening between the equipment and the identified residential receptors, the proposed installation is not considered likely to result in unacceptable noise effects.

The equipment should nevertheless be installed and thereafter operated in accordance with the submitted acoustic and ventilation specifications.

Subject to this being secured by condition, the proposal is considered acceptable in accordance with NPPF Policy P3, and RBLP Policies CC8 and EN17.

Vibration

The proposed mechanical equipment would be located within the building/rear roof structure and therefore consideration must also be given to the potential transmission of vibration through the building fabric.

The specification states that the system would be installed on anti-vibration supports to reduce reverberation-type vibration travelling through the structure. The detailed specification additionally provides for silencers and anti-vibration mounts associated with the extraction fans.

Subject to these measures being installed and retained, unacceptable vibration impacts are not anticipated.

Odour and air quality

The proposed restaurant extraction system would handle cooking fumes and grease-laden air and, therefore, effective odour control represents an important consideration.

The submitted specification proposes pre-filters and activated-carbon filters as odour-abatement measures and explains that the extraction ductwork would accommodate double pre-filters and double carbon filters, together with the associated acoustic equipment.

The activated-carbon system is dependent upon appropriate ongoing maintenance. The manufacturer's specification expressly identifies maintenance as necessary to ensure that the stated filtration performance continues to be achieved.

Subject to the filtration and odour-abatement measures being installed in accordance with the submitted specification and thereafter maintained and replaced as necessary, the proposal is not considered likely to result in unacceptable cooking odours affecting neighbouring occupiers.

The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in accordance with NPPF Policy P3 and RBLP Policies CC8, EN15 and EN16.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed ventilation and extraction system would be positioned within a recessed and substantially enclosed rear service/roof area and would not materially affect the architecturally important Broad Street frontage.

The submitted technical information demonstrates that the system incorporates appropriate measures to control noise, vibration and cooking odours, including silencers, anti-vibration mounts, pre-filtration and activated-carbon filtration.

The location of the equipment within the enclosed rear part of the premises, together with the separation from the identified residential receptors and the proposed mitigation measures, means that unacceptable impacts upon neighbouring amenity are not anticipated.

Subject to the proposed system being installed, operated and maintained in accordance with the submitted drawings and technical specifications, the development is considered consistent with Policies CC7, CC8, EN1, EN3, EN6, EN15, EN16 and EN17 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and Policies DP3 and P3 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2026.

8. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT planning permission, subject to the following conditions:

1. Time Limit
2. Approved Plans
3. Extraction Ventilation System in accordance with approved specifications and mitigations including within the noise and odour assessments prior to use for which extraction ventilation is necessary
4. Materials
5. Hours of Operation of Mechanical Plant