



Planning Statement

September 2025 | Project Ref 12419



Championing a sustainable
natural environment

Project Number: 12419

File Origin: Erleigh Road Reading NHS/2026.09.28_25 Erleigh Road Planning Statement
HCUK.docx

Contents

1.	Introduction.....	1
2.	Site and Surrounding Area	2
3.	Proposed Development	4
4.	Planning Policy Framework	5
5.	Planning Assessment	8
6.	Conclusions.....	12

Appendices

App. 1 Submitted Application Documents

App. 2. Figures

1. Introduction

- 1.1** This Planning Statement has been prepared by HCUK Group on behalf of Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust in support of a full planning application for the installation of rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and permanent roof edge protection at 25 Erleigh Road, Reading, RG1 5LR.
- 1.2** The site lies within the Alexandra Road Conservation Area. Reading Borough Council has previously advised, following an enquiry in respect of the proposals, that full planning permission is required. This statement should be read alongside the accompanying Heritage Impact Assessment, application drawings, Solar Opportunity Assessment and product information.
- 1.3** The proposed works comprise a relatively small-scale intervention to an existing healthcare building. The PV panels would be positioned on the flat roof of the three-storey 1930s rear extension, rather than on the pitched roofs of the original late 19th-century building. Permanent roof edge protection is also proposed to allow safe access for inspection and maintenance.
- 1.4** The proposals would provide on-site renewable energy generation and contribute to the improvement of the environmental performance of the existing NHS estate. They would not result in additional floorspace, any change of use or an increase in the intensity of activity at the site.
- 1.5** The accompanying Heritage Impact Assessment concludes that, subject to an appropriately recessive finish to the roof edge protection and associated equipment, the proposals would preserve the character and appearance of the Alexandra Road Conservation Area and would result in no harm to the significance of the identified heritage assets.
- 1.6** As set out below, the proposals are considered to accord with the relevant provisions of the adopted Reading Borough Local Plan and with national planning policy. No material adverse effects are identified in respect of heritage, design, neighbouring amenity, access, highways, ecology or drainage.

2. Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1** 25 Erleigh Road occupies a prominent corner site at the junction of Erleigh Road and Alexandra Road. The building is in healthcare use and forms part of the Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust estate.
- 2.2** The site comprises an original late 19th-century house together with later additions. The building was originally constructed as a substantial private residence and was adapted for institutional use when the Reading district nursing association associated with the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses moved to the property in 1937. The three-storey flat-roofed rear extension dates from this phase of the building's development.
- 2.3** The Reading branch of the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses had been founded in 1897, although it did not occupy 25 Erleigh Road until 1937. The building therefore has local historic interest both as part of the late 19th-century development of the Alexandra Road area and through its later association with district nursing and community healthcare in Reading.
- 2.4** The site lies within the Alexandra Road Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the area as being characterised principally by its late 19th-century street pattern and development, mature trees, front gardens and surviving architectural details. 25 Erleigh Road occupies a prominent position at the junction of Erleigh Road and Alexandra Road and makes a positive contribution to the conservation area.
- 2.5** St Luke's Church and St Luke's Church Hall, both Grade II listed, are also located within the conservation area. Their significance and the relationship of the application site to their settings are considered in the accompanying Heritage Impact Assessment.
- 2.6** The original part of 25 Erleigh Road is characterised by its traditional materials, pitched roofscape, chimneys and late 19th-century architectural composition. The three-storey rear extension is architecturally plainer and more functional in appearance, although it has some historic interest as part of the building's adaptation for institutional use.

2.7

The proposed works would be confined to the flat roof of this rear extension. They would not involve demolition or alteration to the principal historic elevations, pitched roofs, chimneys, windows, front boundary treatment or landscaping. There would be no additional floorspace, change of use or alteration to the existing access and parking arrangements.

3. Proposed Development

- 3.1** The application seeks full planning permission for the installation of roof-mounted solar PV panels on the existing flat roof, together with permanent roof edge protection required to provide safe access for future inspection and maintenance.
- 3.2** Drawing 26007-T-005 identifies the proposed PV array and shows the panels with a maximum elevation height of 500mm above the roof surface. The panels would be positioned within the flat roof area and away from the pitched roofscape of the original building.
- 3.3** Drawing 26007-T-005 also identifies permanent roof edge protection at a height of 1100mm. The accompanying elevations illustrate the relationship of the railings to the existing building and roofline.
- 3.4** The submitted Solar Opportunity Assessment demonstrates the potential for the roof to provide useful on-site renewable electricity generation and associated carbon savings. The assessment was prepared at feasibility stage and should be read alongside the final application drawings and submitted solar panel product information.
- 3.5** The proposed roof edge protection comprises a free-standing system using weighted base plates. The submitted product information confirms that the system can be installed without drilling into the roof surface and is therefore non-penetrating and reversible in principle.
- 3.6** In response to the conservation area context, the roof edge protection and associated visible components are proposed in a muted grey or dark grey matt or low-sheen finish. A bright safety-yellow finish would not be appropriate in this location. Final details of the precise colour and finish could, if necessary, be secured by planning condition.

4. Planning Policy Framework

Key Planning Policies

- 4.1** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in August 2026, sets out national planning policy for England and is a material consideration in the determination of this application.
- 4.2** Policy CC2 relates to the mitigation of climate change. It requires substantial weight to be given to the benefits of improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings and/or drawing energy from renewable and low-carbon sources, including through the installation of solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights.
- 4.3** Policy W3 concerns renewable and low-carbon energy development. It requires substantial weight to be given to the benefits of such development for, amongst other matters, the transition to a net zero future and recognises the contribution that small-scale renewable and low-carbon energy projects can make to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- 4.4** The NPPF also requires the historic environment to be appropriately conserved. Policies HE5 and HE6 establish the approach to considering effects on the significance of heritage assets and Policy HE9 relates specifically to development within, or affecting the significance of, conservation areas. The application of these policies to the proposals is considered in detail within the accompanying Heritage Impact Assessment.

Statutory Heritage Duties

- 4.5** Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, when considering development which affects a listed building or its setting.

- 4.6** Section 72(1) of the Act requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area when exercising planning functions relating to land within that area.

Local Planning Policy

- 4.7** The Reading Borough Local Plan was adopted in November 2019 and remains the adopted development plan for Reading. The following policies are of particular relevance to the application:

- CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development;
- CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction;
- CC7: Design and the Public Realm;
- CC8: Safeguarding Amenity;
- EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment;
- EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas; and
- EN6: New Development in a Historic Context.

- 4.8** Policy CC2 supports sustainable design and construction and the reduction of carbon emissions. Policies CC7 and CC8 require development to respond appropriately to its context and safeguard neighbouring amenity.

- 4.9** Policies EN1, EN3 and EN6 seek to protect the historic environment and ensure that development within a historic context responds appropriately to heritage significance, character, scale, materials and important views.

- 4.10** The Council's Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document, adopted in December 2019, provides further guidance in support of the Local Plan's sustainability policies.

Emerging Local Plan

- 4.11** Reading Borough Council is currently progressing a Partial Update of the Local Plan. The Partial Update was submitted for examination in May 2025, examination hearings took place in 2025 and 2026, and consultation on Main Modifications was

undertaken during summer 2026. The examination remains ongoing and the Partial Update has not yet been adopted. The adopted 2019 Local Plan therefore remains the statutory development plan, although relevant emerging policies may attract weight having regard to their stage of preparation, the extent of unresolved objections and their consistency with national policy.

Alexandra Road Conservation Area Appraisal

- 4.12** The Alexandra Road Conservation Area Appraisal provides the principal local evidence base for understanding the character and special interest of the conservation area. It identifies the 19th-century street pattern, cohesive late 19th-century architectural development, mature trees, front gardens, boundary treatments and surviving local architectural details as important elements of its character.
- 4.13** The Appraisal specifically refers to 25 Erleigh Road in connection with the former Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses and also identifies the three-storey 1930s extension to the former Nurses Home as part of the area's 20th-century development.
- 4.14** The significance of the conservation area and the contribution made by 25 Erleigh Road are considered in detail within the accompanying Heritage Impact Assessment.

5. Planning Assessment

Principle of development and sustainability benefits

- 5.1** The proposal would provide on-site renewable electricity generation to an existing NHS building and would contribute to reducing the operational carbon emissions associated with the Trust's estate. It would make productive use of an existing flat roof without requiring additional land or new floorspace.
- 5.2** National policy provides clear support for this form of intervention. Policy CC2 of the NPPF requires substantial weight to be given to the benefits of drawing energy for existing buildings from renewable and low-carbon sources, expressly including solar panels where planning permission is required. Policy W3 similarly requires substantial weight to be given to the benefits of renewable and low-carbon energy development.
- 5.3** The principle of installing solar PV panels at the site is therefore strongly supported. The relevant consideration is whether the particular design and siting of the equipment gives rise to material planning harm, including in relation to the historic environment.
- 5.4** The proposals do not involve any change to the established healthcare use, additional floorspace or intensification of activity at the site. They represent a proportionate intervention to improve the environmental performance of an existing public-sector building.

Design, Appearance and Heritage

- 5.5** The PV panels have been located on the flat roof of the three-storey 1930s rear extension rather than on the pitched roofs of the original late 19th-century building. This avoids intervention to the architecturally more sensitive roofscape and principal historic elevations.
- 5.6** The proposed panels would rise no more than 500mm above the roof surface. Their low profile and location within the flat roof area would limit their prominence in public views and ensure that they remained subordinate to the existing building.

- 5.7** The permanent roof edge protection would be more visible than the panels in some local views because it would extend 1100mm above the roof. It would, however, comprise a slender and open structure rather than a solid enclosure and would be located on the architecturally plainer rear extension.
- 5.8** The choice of finish is important in limiting the visual prominence of the railings. A muted grey or dark grey matt or low-sheen finish is proposed so that the structure reads recessively against the existing building and roofscape.
- 5.9** The proposals would not affect the conservation area's street pattern, front gardens, mature trees, boundary treatments, principal historic elevations, traditional pitched roofs, chimneys or characteristic late 19th-century architectural detailing.
- 5.10** As set out in the accompanying Heritage Impact Assessment, the fact that a roof-level addition may be visible does not in itself amount to harm to heritage significance. In this instance, the proposed works are limited in extent, lightweight in character and located on the less architecturally sensitive rear extension. Subject to the proposed recessive finish, they would not erode the architectural or historic interest from which the conservation area derives its significance.
- 5.11** The proposals would therefore preserve the character and appearance of the Alexandra Road Conservation Area. The Heritage Impact Assessment also concludes that there would be no harm to the significance of the nearby listed buildings through change within their settings.
- 5.12** The proposals accord with the objectives of Local Plan Policies CC7, EN1, EN3 and EN6 and with the relevant heritage policies of the NPPF.

Residential Amenity

- 5.13** The development would not result in new habitable accommodation, windows, balconies, external lighting, noise-generating plant or a change of use. It would not increase the number of staff, patients or visitors using the site.
- 5.14** The proposals would therefore have no material effect on neighbouring privacy, outlook, daylight, sunlight or general residential amenity and would accord with Local Plan Policy CC8.

Access, Highways and Operational Matters

- 5.15** The proposals would not alter the existing vehicular or pedestrian access arrangements, parking provision or servicing arrangements at the site.
- 5.16** Once installed, the PV panels would require only periodic inspection and maintenance. The permanent edge protection is required to allow such access to be undertaken safely and would remove the need to provide temporary edge protection each time routine access to the roof is required.
- 5.17** There would be no increase in staff, patient or visitor numbers and no material increase in vehicular movements arising from the development. No highways impact is therefore anticipated.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

- 5.18** The proposed works are confined to an existing built roof and do not involve the removal of trees, vegetation, soft landscaping or other on-site habitat.
- 5.19** The proposal is therefore expected to fall within the statutory de minimis exemption from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements, as it would not result in an impact upon on-site habitat. The relevant exemption will be identified through the Planning Portal application and supporting validation information.

Drainage and Flood Risk

- 5.20** The proposals would not increase the extent of impermeable surfacing at the site. The PV panels and free-standing edge protection would be installed above the existing roof and would not materially alter the building's established surface-water drainage arrangements.
- 5.21** No material flood-risk or drainage effects are therefore anticipated as a consequence of the development.

Planning Balance

- 5.22** The proposals would provide renewable electricity generation at an existing NHS facility and contribute to the reduction of operational carbon emissions. National planning policy requires substantial weight to be given to these benefits.
- 5.23** The works have been directed to the flat roof of the three-storey 1930s extension, avoiding direct intervention to the principal late 19th-century fabric and roofscape. The PV panels would remain low profile and the more visible edge protection would be lightweight in form and finished recessively.
- 5.24** The accompanying Heritage Impact Assessment finds no harm to the significance of the Alexandra Road Conservation Area or to the significance of nearby listed buildings through change within their settings. No material adverse effects have been identified in respect of neighbouring amenity, access, highways, ecology or drainage.
- 5.25** The environmental benefits of the development therefore weigh positively and, in accordance with national policy, attract substantial weight. In the absence of identified planning harm, the proposal is considered to accord with the adopted development plan when read as a whole and with the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1** This application seeks full planning permission for the installation of rooftop solar PV panels and associated permanent roof edge protection at 25 Erleigh Road.
- 6.2** The proposals would provide renewable energy generation at an existing NHS building and contribute to the Trust's wider decarbonisation objectives. The works would make effective use of an existing flat roof without creating additional floorspace, changing the established healthcare use or increasing activity at the site.
- 6.3** The panels and roof edge protection would be located on the flat roof of the three-storey 1930s rear extension, avoiding direct alteration to the principal late 19th-century building and its pitched roofscape. The panels would remain low profile, while the edge protection would comprise a lightweight structure finished in a muted, recessive colour.
- 6.4** The accompanying Heritage Impact Assessment concludes that the proposals would preserve the character and appearance of the Alexandra Road Conservation Area and would result in no harm to the significance of the identified heritage assets.
- 6.5** The proposals would not give rise to material adverse effects on neighbouring amenity, access, highways, ecology or drainage.
- 6.6** Substantial weight should be given to the renewable-energy and carbon-reduction benefits of the proposals in accordance with Policies CC2 and W3 of the NPPF. Taken as a whole, the proposal accords with the relevant provisions of the Reading Borough Local Plan and national planning policy.
- 6.7** It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.

Appendix 1

Submitted Application Documents

- Completed Planning Portal application form, ownership certificate and agricultural land declaration
- Site Location Plan / Site Map: 26007-T-001
- Existing Drawings: 26007-T-002, 26007-T-003 and 26007-T-004
- Proposed Roof Plan: 26007-T-005
- Proposed Elevations: 26007-T-006
- Heritage Impact Assessment, HCUK Group
- Planning Statement, HCUK Group
- Solar panel specification
- Roof edge protection / safety rail specification

Appendix 2

Figures

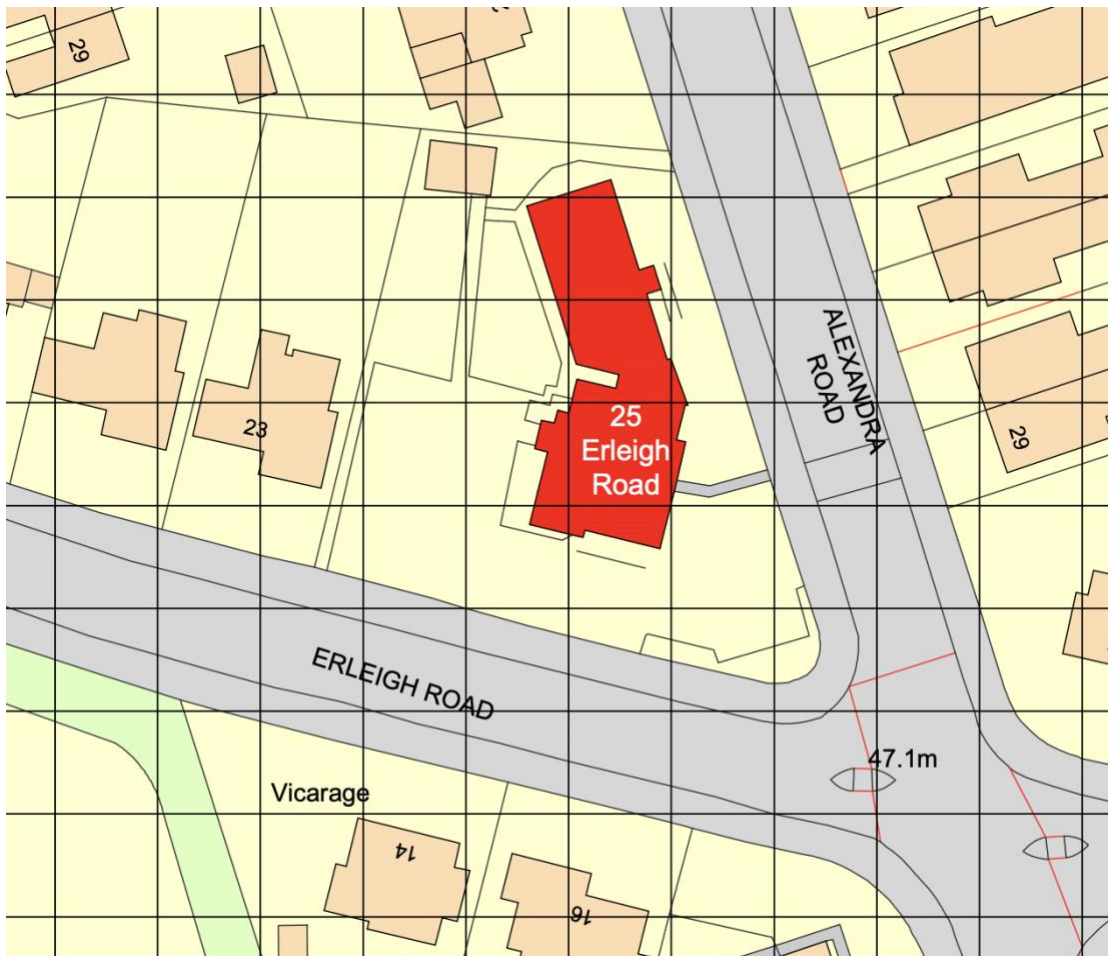


Figure 1: Site location map



Figure 2: The site from Erleigh Road



Figure 3: The site from Erleigh Road and dating plaque for rear block



Figure 4: The site from Erleigh Road



Figure 5: The two blocks at 25 Erleigh Road – the older 19th-century house at the front of the site and the 1939 block as a rear extension to this older structure



Figure 6: The two blocks at 25 Erleigh Road – the older 19th-century house at the front of the site and the 1939 block as a rear extension to this older structure



Figure 7: The two blocks as visible from Alexandra Road



Figure 8: The two blocks as visible from Alexandra Road



Figure 9: The two blocks as visible from Alexandra Road



Figure 10: The two blocks as visible from Alexandra Road



Figure 11: The rear block as visible from Alexandra Road



Figure 12: The rear block as visible from Alexandra Road



Figure 13: Proposed elevations

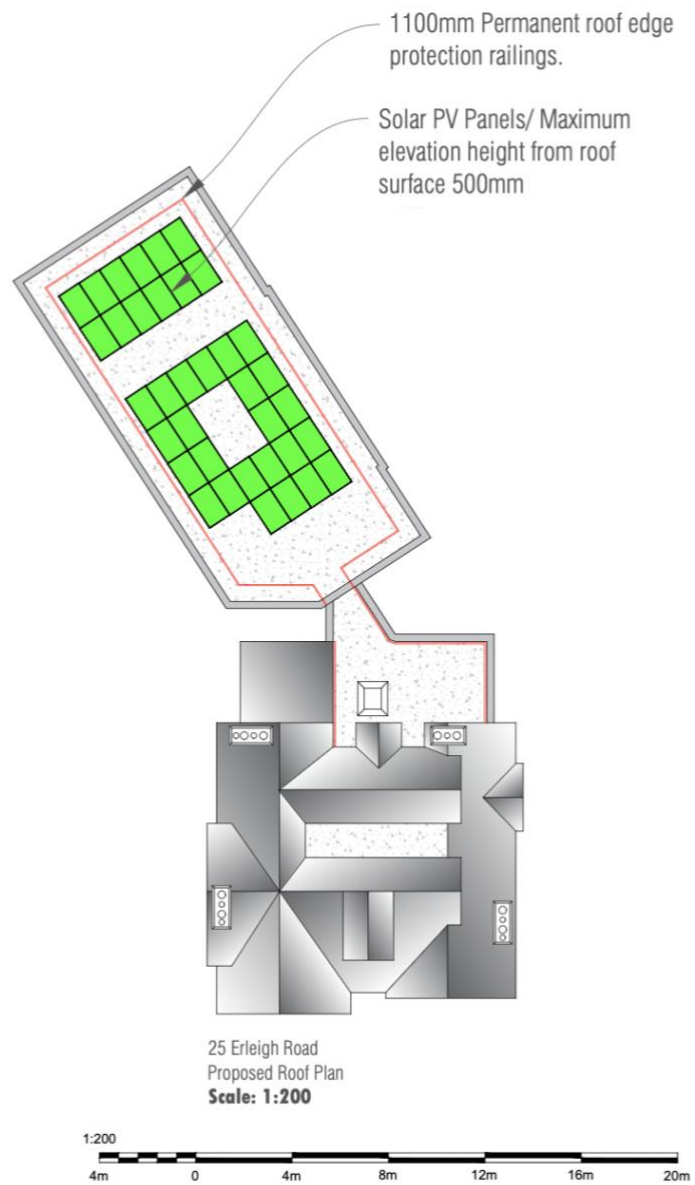


Figure 14: Proposed location of PV panels



Figure 15: Reference image showing suggested appearance of roof edge protection rails



Figure 16: Reference image showing suggested appearance of PV panels