

COMBINED DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey Ward

App Ref: PL/26/1053 Full & PL/26/1054 Adv

Address: 4-5 ST MARYS BUTTS, READING, RG1 2LN

Proposal: Replacement of existing shopfront signage with new internally illuminated fascia and projecting signs, relocation of the entrance doors by swapping the existing door with the existing glazing, installation of new window vinyls, and associated external alterations.

Applicant: Mr Kevin Lark

Received date: 05/08/2026

Target Decision date: 06/10/2026

Case Officer: Marcelina Rejwerska

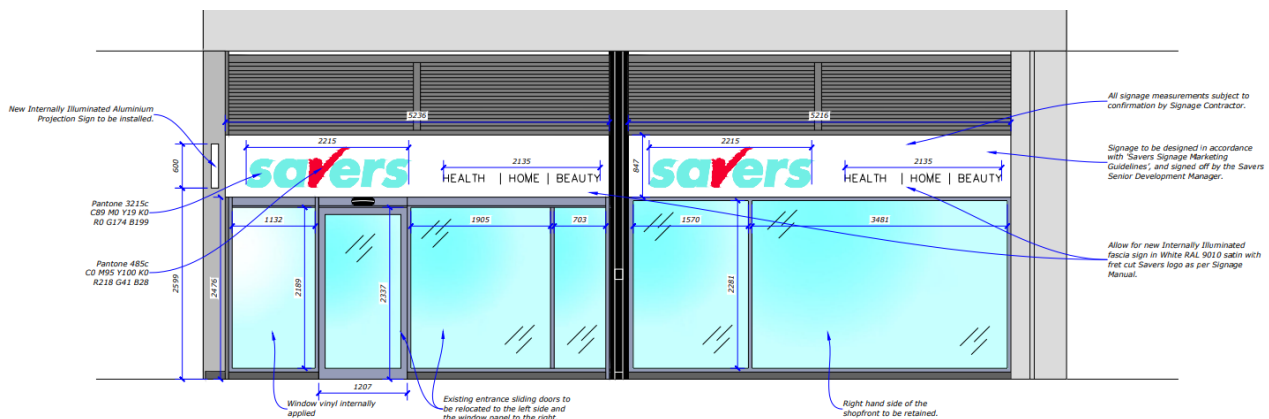
1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a retail unit on the west side of St Mary's Butts in the Reading Central Core, part of the St Mary's Shopping Mall complex. The site is an allocated development site within the West Side Major Opportunity Area under CR12(d) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019. The site forms part of the designated primary frontages in the Central Core.



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Full planning permission and advertisement consent are sought for the replacement of the existing shopfront and signage, with new internally illuminated fascia and projecting signs, relocation of the entrance doors, by swapping the existing door with the existing glazing, installation of new window vinyls, and associated external alterations.



Proposed Elevations

2.1. Information submitted:

SV - Reading - Planning-Location Block Plan
SV - Reading - Planning-Existing and Proposed Front Elevation
SV - Reading - Planning-Proposed Signage Details
Received on 5 August 2026

Planning Statement
Received on 11 August 2026

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- PL/90/0086 – Internally illuminated fascia signs and projecting sign. Application permitted.
- PL/13/1380 - 2 fascia signs, 1 projecting sign, 1 tensioned vinyl flag and 3 reverse applied window vinyls. Application permitted.
- PL/13/1382 - New shopfront. Application permitted.
- PL/13/1780 - 1 flank wall hoarding. Application permitted.
- PL/16/2040 - New fascia sign & new projecting sign. Application permitted.

Nearby relevant applications:

- PL/21/1451 & PL/21/1452 - Proposed installation of 1no. new BT Street Hub, incorporating 2no. digital 75" LCD advert screens, plus the removal of associated BT kiosk(s). Applications permitted

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- RBC Transport – No objections subject to condition to restrict luminance levels.
- RBC CCTV – There is nearby CCTV so luminance levels should be restricted.
- TVP CCTV – No comments to make.

Site notices were displayed at the front of the site in the public interest on 19 August 2026. No letters of representation were received.

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 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 (NPPF Appendix 2).

Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 requires the Local Planning Authority to exercise its powers under these regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety taking into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material; and any other relevant factors. Regulation 3 states that factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural, or similar interest.

Factors relevant to public safety include highway safety and whether the advert would hinder security or surveillance devices, including speed cameras.

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2026)

DM3: Determining development proposals

S3: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

DP3: Key principles for well-designed places

P3: Living conditions and pollution

National Planning Practice Guidance (2014 onwards)

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) (RBLP)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

OU4: ADVERTISEMENTS

OU5: SHOPFRONTS AND CASH MACHINES

CR2: DESIGN IN CENTRAL READING

CR7: PRIMARY FRONTAGES IN CENTRAL READING

CR12: WEST SIDE MAJOR OPPORTUNITY AREA

Other documents

Design Guide to Shopfronts SPD 2022

Reading Borough Local Plan Partial Update Submission Draft (2025) (LPPU)

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 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 this application 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 appraisal below and are not considered to be 'out of date'.

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 development.

6. APPRAISAL

6.1. Design and amenity

Policy DP3 of the NPPF outlines the principles of good design. Policy CC7 of the RBLP also requires high-quality design that integrates and enhances the area in which the development is located. Policies CR2 and CR7 of the RBLP also outline the design aspirations specifically for the Central Core.

Policy OU4 of the RBLP states "*Advertisements will respect the building or structure on which they are located and/or their surroundings and setting in terms of size, location, design, materials, colour, noise, lettering, amount and type of text, illumination and luminance, and will not have a detrimental effect on public safety. The cumulative impact of adverts will be taken into account, and a proliferation of advertisements that detrimentally affects visual or aural amenity or public safety will not be acceptable.*" Furthermore, the Design Guide to Shopfronts SPD sets out additional considerations for shopfront design. The proposed alterations to the shopfront and new fascia design respect the pattern of shopfront design and layout on the external ground floor of the Broad Street Mall. The proposal will refresh the appearance of the site, enhancing the local character. The proposal is, therefore, considered acceptable.

6.2. Public safety

The NPPG (Paragraph: 068 Reference ID: 18b-068-20140306) provides guidance as to the considerations affecting public safety. These are outlined below:

(a) those which obstruct or impair sight-lines at corners, bends or at a junction, or at any point of access to a highway; NO

(b) those which, because of their size or siting, would obstruct or confuse a road-user's view, or reduce the clarity or effectiveness of a traffic sign or signal, or would be likely to distract road-users because of their unusual nature; NO

(c) those which effectively leave insufficient clearance above any part of a highway, or insufficient lateral clearance for vehicles on the carriageway (due allowance being made for the camber of the road-surface); NO

(d) those externally or internally illuminated signs (incorporating either flashing or static lights) including those utilising light emitting diode technology: YES

i. where the means of illumination is directly visible from any part of the road; YES – level of illumination restricted to 250cdm and a condition is recommended to restrict the use of the lights (to be turned off when the shop is closed due to nearby CCTV cameras).

ii. which, because of their colour, could be mistaken for, or confused with, traffic lights or any other authorised signals; NO

iii. which, because of their size or brightness, could result in glare and dazzle, or distract road-users, particularly in misty or wet weather; or NO

iv. which are subject to frequent changes of the display; NO

(e) those which incorporate moving or apparently moving elements in their display, or successive individual advertisements which do not display the whole message; NO

(f) those requiring close study (such as Public Information Panels), which are situated so that people looking at them would be insufficiently protected from passing vehicles; or those advertisements sited on narrow footpaths where they may interfere with safe passage by causing pedestrians to step into the road; NO

(g) those which resemble traffic signs, as defined in section 64 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and may therefore be subject to removal by the traffic authority under section 69 of that Act, for example:

i. those embodying red circles, crosses or triangles, or any traffic sign symbol; or those in combinations of colours which might otherwise be mistaken for traffic signs; or NO

ii. those incorporating large arrows or chevrons with only the arrow or chevron made of retroreflective material or illuminated, causing confusion with similar signs in use at, or approaching roundabouts. NO

(h) those which embody directional or other traffic elements and which need special scrutiny because of possible resemblance to, or confusion with, traffic signs; for example, advertisements which: NO

i. contain a large arrow or chevron (or have a pointed end and have only a few words of message); NO

ii. invite drivers to turn right on a main road, or where there is fast moving traffic; NO

iii. invite drivers to turn, but are sited so close to the turning that there is not enough time to signal and turn safely; or NO

iv. are so close to similar advertisements, or official traffic signs, that road-users might be confused in the vicinity of a road junction or other traffic hazard. NO

7. CONCLUSION

The proposal has been assessed against the advertisement regulations within the NPPG and local planning policies and is considered acceptable.

8. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT

Full planning permission:

1. Time limit (standard)
2. Approved plans
3. Materials to match

Advertisement consent:

1. Standard advert conditions

2. Approved plans
3. Maximum luminance restriction to 250cdm and to be turned off after 6pm