

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Church Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0996 Full planning permission

Address: 16-20 LONG BARN LANE, READING, RG2 7SZ

Proposal: Construction of canopy with stud construction walls and Polycarbonate cladding over existing concrete wall fence and Polycarbonate roofing

Applicant: Mr Ahmad Noori

Received date: 27/07/2026

Target Decision date: 06/10/2026

Case Officer: Catrin Davies

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site relates to an area of hardstanding located adjacent to the existing garage/MOT centre. The lawful use of the garage has not been confirmed by the applicant. The hard standing is used as a car park for clients/employees of the existing garage/MOT centre.



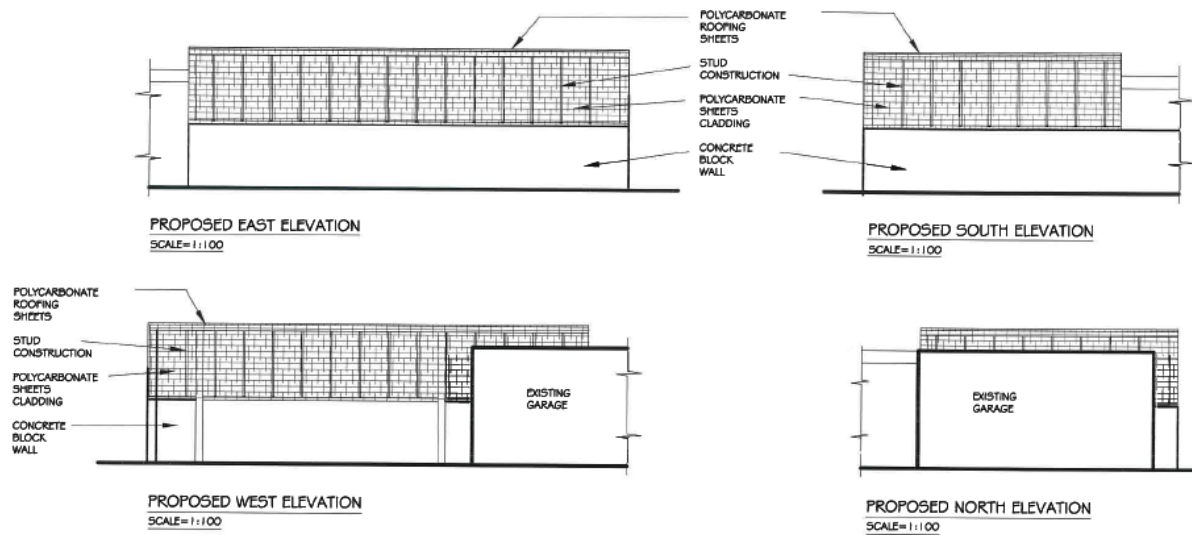
Location Plan

The site is located off Long Barn Lane and abuts 203 and 201 Basingstoke Road.

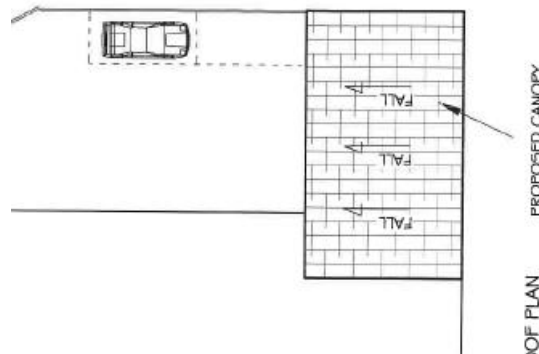
The site is within an Air Quality Management Area an area of potential contaminated land.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal seeks planning permission for the construction of a canopy with stud construction walls and Polycarbonate cladding over existing concrete wall fence and Polycarbonate roofing.



Proposed elevations



Proposed roof plan

The development has a height of 2.2m with the existing wall 2m as such there would be an overall height of 4.2m. The development runs the entire boundary wall.

This is a retrospective application with the structure already in place. The photo below shows the structure as built.



Plans:

2181/7 Roof plan received 11 Aug 2026
2181/1- Location Plan received 3 Aug 2026
2181/2a Proposed plans and elevations received 3 Aug 2026
2181/3 Existing Plans and elevations received 3 Aug 2026
2181/5 Proposed floor plans received 3 Aug 2026
2181/6 existing floor plans received 3 Aug 2026
16-20 Long Barn Lane Statement received 3 August 2026

Planning History:

PL/10/0574- Proposed part change of use from B2/B8 to Taxi control office (Sui Generis)

3. CONSULTATIONS

Two site notices were displayed at the application site and one letter of objection was received. This raised concerns of the following:

- States that they were not notified of the application despite being the neighbour most directly affected by the development.
- Argues that retrospective applications should receive the same or greater level of scrutiny because any impacts or risks are already present.
- Raises concern regarding safety incidents
- Raises concerns regarding the structural adequacy and safety of the canopy structure, including whether it has sufficient weight-bearing construction.
- States that because the structure was built before planning approval, the Council was unable to assess, Structural safety, Fire safety, Relationship and impact on neighbouring properties, boundary safety implications.
- Requests that the Council undertake a full site inspection, including a structural assessment, before determining the application.
- Requests that the application be refused unless the applicant can demonstrate the structure is safe and compliant.

4. 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' (Policy S3). 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 (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

Local Plan Partial 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. A consultation version of the draft update of the Local Plan was published on 6th November 2024.

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 remains 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’

The Local Plan Partial Update was submitted to the Secretary of State on 9th May 2025. Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to this application is that they remain in accordance with national policy (aside from Policy H1, which is acknowledged to be out-of-date) and that the objectives of those policies remains very similar in the submission 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’ (aside from Policy H1).

Relevant Policies:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2026, with a particular focus on:

Chapter 3. Decision-making policies

Chapter 4. Achieving sustainable development

Chapter 5. Meeting the challenge of climate change

Chapter 12. Making efficient use of land

Chapter 14. Achieving well-designed places

Chapter 16. Promoting healthy communities

Chapter 19. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (Nov 2019)

CC1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)

CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction)

CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)

CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)

TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters)

TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging)

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.

5. APPRAISAL

Design and Character

Policy CC7 seeks to ensure development preserves or enhances the character of the area through appropriate consideration of scale, height, massing, architectural detailing and materials. Similarly,

Policies DP3.1 and DP3.2(g) of the NPPF 2026 require development to respond positively to its context and create visually attractive and distinctive places through the use of appropriate materials and design features.

The development fails to comply with these requirements due to its excessive scale and design, and the development appears as a visually dominant and incongruous addition within the site. The development extends for the full length of the site boundary and, due to its connection with the existing boundary wall, has an overall height of approximately 4.2 metres. This significant height, combined with its extensive length, results in a prominent structure that has considerable visual presence and introduces an overly bulky form along the boundary.

Furthermore, the development is constructed from poor-quality materials that lack architectural merit and fail to complement the character of the surrounding area. The design is functional in nature and does not demonstrate any meaningful consideration of the site's context, appearance or relationship with adjoining land. As such, it fails to create a visually attractive form of development and instead appears as an obtrusive and unsympathetic addition.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the structure is not readily visible from the wider public street scene, this limited visibility does not negate the requirement for development to achieve a high standard of design. Development should respond positively to its surroundings irrespective of the degree of public visibility. In this instance, the development represents a visually harmful feature that detracts from the appearance of the site and surrounding area, appearing as an unsightly and poorly designed structure that fails to integrate with its context.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered contrary to Policy CC7 of the Local Plan and Policies DP3.1, DP3.2(g) and DP3.3 of the NPPF 2026, which collectively seek to secure high-quality, contextually responsive and visually attractive development. The development therefore results in unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area.

Residential Amenity

Policy CC8 requires that “Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of:

- Privacy and overlooking;
- Access to sunlight and daylight;
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;
- Harm to outlook ...”

Policy P3.1 of the NPPF 2026 requires development proposals to provide healthy, safe and inclusive places, whilst Policy P3.2 seeks to ensure that development provides a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

The neighbouring property most directly affected by the development is 203 Basingstoke Road, which shares its rear boundary with the application site. The development extends along the entirety of the shared boundary and, at approximately 4.2 metres in height, presents a substantial built form immediately adjacent to the neighbour's garden and outlook. Given its excessive height and massing and close relationship with the shared boundary, the structure introduces a visually intrusive and unneighbourly form of development with no meaningful separation distance. As a result, it creates a significant sense of enclosure and an overbearing presence when viewed from the neighbouring property.

The development is also considered harmful to the outlook and visual amenities enjoyed by the occupiers of 203 Basingstoke Road. Due to the poor-quality materials, utilitarian appearance and lack of

architectural merit, the structure appears as an intrusive and unsightly feature along the boundary. Given the direct views available from the neighbouring property, the development has an adverse effect on the visual environment experienced by occupiers.

Furthermore, by reason of its height and position along the shared boundary, the development is considered to result in a reduction in the amount of light received within parts of the neighbouring property and garden area. Whilst the impact on light may not be severe in isolation, when considered cumulatively with the overbearing nature of the structure and the harm caused to outlook and visual amenity, the overall effect on neighbouring living conditions is considered unacceptable.

Owing to its significant scale and poor design, the structure is readily visible from a number of residential properties along Basingstoke Road. The canopy therefore has a degree of visual harm to neighbouring occupiers more widely; however, due to the separation distance to other neighbouring properties, this will not form a reason for refusal in itself.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered to result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity by reason of its visually dominant, intrusive and overbearing appearance, harmful to the amenity of these neighbouring occupiers, contrary to Policy CC8 and Policies P3.1 and P3.2 of the NPPF 2026.

Consultation Comments

The matters raised have been carefully considered in the assessment of this application. The Council's statutory publicity requirements were satisfied through the display of site notices on Long Barn Lane and Basingstoke Road. Whilst the retrospective nature of the application is noted, retrospective applications must be assessed against the same planning policies and material planning considerations as any other application. Concerns relating to structural integrity, construction standards, fire safety and general safety matters fall outside the remit of the planning process and are regulated through separate legislation, including the Building Regulations regime. Although a site visit was undertaken by the case officer, it is not the role of the Local Planning Authority to undertake structural assessments or certify the safety of buildings. Accordingly, these matters have not been afforded weight in the determination of the application, which has been assessed on its planning merits.

6. CONCLUSION

The development, by reason of its excessive height and massing and proximity to neighbouring property combined with its poor design and inappropriate materials, results in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. Furthermore, the development has an unacceptable overbearing impact on neighbouring occupiers. The development is therefore contrary to Policies CC7 and CC8 of the Development Plan and Policies DP3.1, DP3.2(g), DP3.3, P3.1 and P3.2 of the NPPF 2026. Accordingly, the application is recommended for refusal.