

To: Councillor Gavin (Chair)
Councillors Davies, Cresswell, Ennis, Goss,
Hornsby-Smith, Leng, Lovelock, Moore,
Rowland, Tarar and Yeo

Direct  : 0118 9372303

28 January 2025

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NOTICE OF MEETING - PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE 5 FEBRUARY 2025

A meeting of the Planning Applications Committee will be held on Wednesday, 5 February 2025 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

AGENDA	ACTION	WARDS AFFECTED	PAGE NO
1. MINUTES	-		9 - 12
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	-		
3. QUESTIONS	-		
4. POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS	Decision		13 - 16
5. PLANNING APPEALS	Information		17 - 20
6. THIRD QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT - PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL	Information		21 - 24
7. PL/23/0107(FUL) & PL/23/0108(LBC) - 10 GUN STREET	Decision	ABBEY	25 - 84

PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

7. PL/23/0107(FUL) & PL/23/0108(LBC) - 10 GUN STREET	Decision	ABBEY	25 - 84
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CIVIC OFFICES EMERGENCY EVACUATION: If an alarm sounds, leave by the nearest fire exit quickly and calmly and assemble on the corner of Bridge Street and Fobney Street. You will be advised when it is safe to re-enter the building.

Proposal: (PL/23/0107(FUL)) Proposed partial change of use from offices (Class E) to provide an expansion to existing entertainment venue (Sui Generis use) at 9 Gun Street (Purple Turtle) with erection of rear extensions and internal alterations. Detached 3-storey ancillary building to rear boundary with yard over Holy Brook.
(PL/23/0108(LBC)) Listed Building Consent for proposed extensions and internal alterations associate with partial change of use from offices (Class E) to provide an expansion to existing entertainment venue (Sui Generis Use) at 9 Gun Street (Purple Turtle) with erection of rear extensions and internal alterations. Detached 3-storey ancillary building to rear boundary with yard over Holy Brook.

Recommendation: Approve with conditions.

8. PL/24/1148 (HOU) - 4 SCHOLAR'S CLOSE, CAVERSHAM Decision CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS 85 - 100

Proposal: Proposed erection of a front, side and rear single-storey extension (rear extension off existing structural slab) with associated internal alterations and fenestration changes. Roof finish to be changed and installation of solar panels to roof.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

9. PL/24/1520 (FUL) - 300 BROOK DRIVE, GREEN PARK Decision WHITLEY 101 - 120

Proposal: External refurbishment of an existing office building (Use Class E) including alterations to the main entrance space, elevations, installation of solar photovoltaics (PV) panels and electric vehicle charging points, replacement plant equipment, external lighting, erection of a new cycle store with changing facilities, a new external pergola and associated landscaping works.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

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Members of the public who participate in the meeting will be able to speak at an on-camera or off-camera microphone, according to their preference. Please speak to a member of staff if you have any queries or concerns.

Agenda Annex

GUIDE TO PLANNING APPLICATIONS

1. There are many different types of applications processed by the Planning Service and the following codes are used to abbreviate the more common types of permission sought:
 - FUL - Full detailed planning permission for development or change of use
 - OUT - Principal of developing a site or changing a use
 - REM - Detailed matters "reserved matters" - for permission following approval of an outline planning application.
 - HOU - Applications for works to domestic houses
 - ADV - Advertisement consent
 - APC - Approval of details required by planning conditions
 - VAR - Significant change to a planning permission previously granted
 - NMA - Insignificant change to a planning permission previously granted
 - ADJ - Consultation from neighbouring authority on application in their area
 - LBC - Works to or around a Listed Building
 - CLE - A certificate to confirm what the existing use of a property is
 - CLP - A certificate to confirm that a proposed use or development does not require planning permission to be applied for.
 - REG3 - Indicates that the application has been submitted by the Local Authority.

2. Officer reports often refer to a matter or situation as being "a material consideration". The following list tries to explain what these might include:

Material planning considerations can include (but are not limited to):

- Overlooking/loss of privacy
- Loss of daylight/sunlight or overshadowing
- Scale and dominance
- Layout and density of buildings
- Appearance and design of development and materials proposed
- Disabled persons' access
- Highway safety
- Traffic and parking issues
- Drainage and flood risk
- Noise, dust, fumes etc
- Impact on character or appearance of area
- Effect on listed buildings and conservation areas
- Effect on trees and wildlife/nature conservation
- Impact on the community and other services
- Economic impact and sustainability
- Government policy
- Proposals in the Local Plan
- Previous planning decisions (including appeal decisions)
- Archaeology

There are also concerns that regulations or case law has established cannot be taken into account. These include:

- Who the applicant is/the applicant's background
- Loss of views
- Loss of property value
- Loss of trade or increased competition
- Strength or volume of local opposition
- Construction noise/disturbance during development
- Fears of damage to property
- Maintenance of property
- Boundary disputes, covenants or other property rights
- Rights of way and ownerships disputes over rights of way
- Personal circumstances

Glossary of usual terms

Affordable housing - Housing provided below market price to meet identified needs.

Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) - Area where air quality levels need to be managed.

Apart-hotel - A use providing basic facilities for self-sufficient living with the amenities of a hotel. Generally classed as C1 (hotels) for planning purposes.

Article 4 Direction - A direction which can be made by the Council to remove normal permitted development rights.

BREEAM - A widely used means of reviewing and improving the environmental performance of generally commercial developments (industrial, retail etc).

Brownfield Land - previously developed land.

Brown roof - A roof surfaced with a broken substrate, e.g. broken bricks.

Building line -The general line along a street beyond which no buildings project.

Bulky goods - Large products requiring shopping trips to be made by car:e.g DIY or furniture.

CIL - Community Infrastructure Levy. Local authorities in England and Wales levy a charge on new development to be spent on infrastructure to support the development of the area.

Classified Highway Network - The network of main roads, consisting of A, B and C roads.

Conservation Area - areas of special architectural or historic interest designated by the local authority. As designated heritage assets the preservation and enhancement of the area carries great weight in planning permission decisions.

Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Competent Authority - The Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1999 (COMAH) and their amendments 2005, are the enforcing regulations within the United Kingdom. They are applicable to any establishment storing or otherwise handling large quantities of industrial chemicals of a hazardous nature. Types of establishments include chemical warehousing, chemical production facilities and some distributors.

Dormer Window - Located in the roof of a building, it projects or extends out through the roof, often providing space internally.

Dwelling- A single housing unit - a house, flat, maisonette etc.

Evening Economy A term for the business activities, particularly those used by the public, which take place in the evening such as pubs, clubs, restaurants and arts/cultural uses.

Flood Risk Assessment - A requirement at planning application stage to demonstrate how flood risk will be managed.

Flood Zones - The Environment Agency designates flood zones to reflect the differing risks of flooding. Flood Zone 1 is low probability, Flood Zone 2 is medium probability, Flood Zone 3a is high probability and Flood Zone 3b is functional floodplain.

Granny annexe - A self-contained area within a dwelling house/ the curtilage of a dwelling house but without all the facilities to be self contained and is therefore dependent on the main house for some functions. It will usually be occupied by a relative.

Green roof - A roof with vegetation on top of an impermeable membrane.

Gross floor area - Total floor area of the house, including all floors and garage, measured externally.

Hazardous Substances Consent - Consent required for the presence on, over, or under land of any hazardous substance in excess of controlled quantity.

Historic Parks and Gardens - Parks and gardens of special historic interest, designated by English Heritage.

Housing Association - An independent not-for-profit body that provides low-cost "affordable housing" to meet specific housing needs.

Infrastructure - The basic services and facilities needed for the smooth running of a community.

Lifetime Home - A home which is sufficiently adaptable to allow people to remain in the home despite changing circumstances such as age or disability.

Listed building - Buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Consent is required before works that might affect their character or appearance can be undertaken. They are divided into Grades I, II and II*, with I being of exceptional interest.

Local Plan - The main planning document for a District or Borough.

Luminance - A measure of the luminous intensity of light, usually measured in candelas per square metre.

Major Landscape Feature - these are identified and protected in the Local Plan for being of local significance for their visual and amenity value

Public realm - the space between and within buildings that is publicly accessible, including streets, squares, forecourts, parks and open spaces whether publicly or privately owned.

Scheduled Ancient Monument - Specified nationally important archaeological sites.

Section 106 agreement - A legally binding agreement or obligation entered into by the local authority and a land developer over an issue related to a planning application, under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Sequential approach A method of considering and ranking the suitability of sites for development, so that one type of site is considered before another. Different sequential approaches are applied to different uses.

Sui Generis - A use not specifically defined in the use classes order (2004) - planning permission is always needed to change from a sui generis use.

Sustainable development - Development to improve quality of life and protect the environment in balance with the local economy, for now and future generations.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) - This term is taken to cover the whole range of sustainable approaches to surface water drainage management.

Tree Preservation Order (TPO) - An order made by a local planning authority in respect of trees and woodlands. The principal effect of a TPO is to prohibit the cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage or wilful destruction of trees without the LPA's consent.

Guide to changes to the Use Classes Order in England.

Changes of use within the same class are not development.

Use	Use Class up to 31 August 2020	Use Class from 1 September 2020
Shop - not more than 280sqm mostly selling essential goods, including food and at least 1km from another similar shop	A1	F.2
Shop	A1	E
Financial & professional services (not medical)	A2	E
Café or restaurant	A3	E
Pub, wine bar or drinking establishment	A4	Sui generis
Takeaway	A5	Sui generis
Office other than a use within Class A2	B1a	E
Research & development of products or processes	B1b	E
For any industrial process (which can be carried out in any residential area without causing detriment to the amenity of the area)	B1c	E
Industrial	B2	B2
Storage or distribution	B8	B8
Hotels, boarding & guest houses	C1	C1
Residential institutions	C2	C2
Secure residential institutions	C2a	C2a
Dwelling houses	C3	C3
Small house in multiple occupation 3-6 residents	C4	C4
Clinics, health centres, creches, day nurseries, day centre	D1	E
Schools, non-residential education & training centres, museums, public libraries, public halls, exhibition halls, places of worship, law courts	D1	F.1
Cinemas, theatres, concert halls, bingo halls and dance halls	D2	Sui generis
Gymnasiums, indoor recreations not involving motorised vehicles or firearms	D2	E
Hall or meeting place for the principal use of the local community	D2	F.2
Indoor or outdoor swimming baths, skating rinks, and outdoor sports or recreations not involving motorised vehicles or firearms	D2	F.2

Agenda Item 1

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 8 JANUARY 2025

Present: Councillor Gavin (Chair);
Councillors Davies (Vice-Chair), Cresswell, Ennis, Goss, Hornsby-Smith, Lovelock, Rowland, Tarar and Yeo

Apologies: Councillors Leng and Moore

RESOLVED ITEMS

64. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

65. POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS

The Committee considered a report setting out a schedule of applications to be considered at future meetings of the Committee to enable Councillors to decide which sites, if any, they wished to visit prior to determining the relevant applications. The report also listed previously agreed site visits which were yet to take place.

Resolved -

That the following application be the subject of an accompanied site visit:

PL/23/0107 (FUL) & PL/23/0108 (LBC) - 10 Gun Street, Reading

Proposed partial change of use from offices (Class E) to provide an expansion to existing entertainment venue at 9 Gun Street (Purple Turtle) with erection of rear extensions and internal alterations. Detached 3-storey ancillary building to rear.

66. PLANNING APPEALS

The Committee received a report on notifications received from the Planning Inspectorate on planning appeals registered with them or decisions made and providing summary reports on appeal decisions of interest to the Committee.

Appendix 1 to the report set out details of one new appeal lodged since the last Committee. There were no appeals decided listed in Appendix 2 and no reports on appeal decisions in Appendix 3.

Resolved – That the new appeal, as set out in Appendix 1, be noted.

67. PL/23/0107(FUL) & PL/23/0108(LBC) - 10 GUN STREET

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 8 JANUARY 2025

Proposed partial change of use from offices (Class E) to provide an expansion to existing entertainment venue at 9 Gun Street (Purple Turtle) with erection of rear extensions and internal alterations. Detached 3-storey ancillary building to rear.

The Committee considered a report on the above applications.

Resolved – That consideration of the applications be deferred for a site visit.

68. PL/24/1392 (REG3/VAR) - THE HEXAGON, QUEENS WALK

Application under s.73 - Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) of planning permission PL/24/0063 for Demolition of some of the existing back of house areas and erection of an extension of the existing Hexagon Theatre to provide a new studio auditorium, flexible rehearsal space, community studio with workshop space and back of house space, along with improved public realm by providing a new podium connection between the new proposed extension and Queen's Walk, along with other associated works.

The Committee considered a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting which gave information on a further consultee response and on accessibility matters.

Comments were received and considered.

Resolved –

- (1) That, pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, planning permission for application PL/24/1392 (REG3/VAR) be authorised, subject to the conditions and informatics recommended in the original report;
- (2) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to make such minor changes to the conditions and informatics as may reasonably be required to issue the permission.

69. PL/24/1257 (REG3) - 1, 3, 5, 7,10, 13, 19, 20, 23, 37, 39, 45 AND 47 LYNDHURST ROAD, TILEHURST

Retrospective application for Phase 4 of Estate Improvement Project including; installation of triple glazed uPVC windows; renewal of flat roof coverings; external structural repairs; renewal of pitched roof tiles; and installation of external wall insulation (amended).

The Committee considered a report on the above application.

Comments were received and considered.

Resolved –

- (1) That, pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, the carrying out of the development PL/24/1257 (REG3) be

authorised, subject to the conditions and informatics recommended in the report;

- (2) That the Chair of the Committee write to appropriate Assistant Directors within the Council reminding them of their obligation to ensure that planning applications were submitted in a timely fashion.

70. PL/24/1499 MISCELLANEOUS/PROJECT WORK - DEED OF VARIATION TO S106 - SITE OF 103 DEE ROAD, TILEHURST

Vary the existing S106 agreement ref 221130 as follows:

Affordable Housing: To secure 30% of the dwellings on-site as affordable housing as shown on the Affordable Housing Plan 092102-BEL-TV-04 revision G dated 12 September 2024 to be annexed to the agreement and consisting of sixteen units (five one-bedroom flats, four two-bedroom flats and seven three-bedroom houses), all to be let at Reading Affordable Rent tenure. The seven houses to be delivered prior to first occupation of the 11th market dwelling, and the remaining nine affordable flats to be delivered prior to first occupation of the 26th market dwelling. To be secured as such in perpetuity.

The Committee considered a report on the above application.

Comments were received and considered.

Resolved –

That the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to agree a Deed of Variation to the S106 Legal Agreement associated with planning permission 221130 as recommended in the report.

71. PL/23/0909 (REG3) - 56 BAMBURGH CLOSE

Retrospective installation of 18 No. air source heat pumps located externally and distributed around full perimeter.

The Committee considered a report on the above application.

Comments were received and considered.

Resolved –

- (1) That, pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, the carrying out of the development PL/23/0909 (REG3) be authorised, subject to the conditions and informatics recommended in the report;
- (2) That the Chair of the Committee write to appropriate Assistant Directors within the Council reminding them of their obligation to ensure that planning applications were submitted in a timely fashion.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 8 JANUARY 2025

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.00 pm)

Planning Applications Committee

05 February 2025



Title	POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Julie Williams, Development Manager (Planning & Building Control)
Lead Councillor	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
Corporate priority	Not applicable, but still requires a decision
Recommendations	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. note this report and any officer recommendations for site visits. 2. confirm if there are other sites Councillors wish to visit before reaching a decision on an application. 3. confirm if the site(s) agreed to be visited will be arranged and accompanied by officers or can be unaccompanied but with a briefing note provided by the case officer.

1. Executive Summary

1.1. To identify those sites where, due to the sensitive or important nature of the proposals, Councillors are advised that a Site Visit would be appropriate before the matter is presented at Committee and to confirm how the visit will be arranged. A list of potential sites is appended with a note added to say if recommended for a site visit or not.

2. The Proposal

2.1. A site visit helps if a proposed development and context is difficult to visualise from the plans and supporting material or to better understand concerns or questions raised by a proposal.

2.2. Appendix 1 of this report provides a list of, mainly major, applications recently received that may be presented to Committee for a decision in due course. Officers have marked some with * to indicate those that Members would benefit from visiting to inform their decision making. Appendix 2 then lists those sites that have previously been agreed should be visited before considering the officer report.

2.3. Often it is during consideration of a report on a planning application that it becomes apparent that Councillors would benefit from visiting a site to assist in reaching the correct decision. In these instances, Officers or Councillors may request a deferral to allow a visit to be carried out.

2.4. Accompanied site visits are appropriate when access to private land is necessary to appreciate matters raised. These visits will be arranged and attended by officers on the designated date and time. Applicants and objectors may observe the process and answer questions when asked but lobbying is discouraged. A site visit is an information gathering opportunity to inform decision making.

2.5. Unaccompanied site visits are appropriate when the site can be easily seen from public areas and allow Councillors to visit when convenient to them. In these instances, the

case officer will provide a briefing note on the application and the main issues to assist when visiting the site.

2.6. It is also possible for officers to suggest, or Councillors to request, a visit to a completed development to assess its quality.

3. Contribution to Strategic Aims

4.1 The processing of planning applications contributes to creating a healthy environment with thriving communities and helping the economy within the Borough, identified as the themes of the Council's Corporate Plan.

4. Environmental and Climate Implications

4.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).

4.2. The Planning Service uses policies to encourage developers to build and use properties responsibly by making efficient use of land and using sustainable materials and building methods.

5. Community Engagement

5.1. Statutory neighbour consultation takes place on planning applications.

6. Equality Implications

6.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

6.2. It is considered that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to the decision on whether sites need to be visited by Planning Application Committee. The decision will not have a differential impact on people with the protected characteristics of; age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) or sexual orientation.

7. Legal Implications

7.1. None arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1. The cost of site visits is met through the normal planning service budget and Councillor costs.

9. Timetable for Implementation

9.1. Site visits are normally scheduled for the Thursday prior to committee. Planning Administration team sends out notification emails when a site visit is arranged.

10. Background Papers

10.1. There are none.

Appendices

Appendix 1

PL/24/0173 - Part-demolition of existing retail units, car park and service areas, demolition and rebuild of car park ramp, and construction of a residential-led, mixed-use development fronting Queens Walk and Dusseldorf Way, including all necessary enabling and alteration works required.

PL/24/0174 - Part-demolition of podium deck on Dusseldorf Way and Queens Walk, amendments to existing retaining wall, excavation works and road and hardstanding re-alignment to create a temporary construction area related to proposed redevelopment works at Broad Street Mall

Appendix 2

Previously Agreed Site Visits with date of PAC when requested:

- PL/23/1041 (FUL) Portman Road – unaccompanied agreed by PAC 06.09.23.
- PL/23/0822 (OUT) Forbury Retail Park (west) – accompanied agreed by PAC 24.07.24.
- PL/24/0846 (FUL) Napier Court, Napier Road – accompanied agreed by PAC 24.07.24.

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Planning Applications Committee

05 February 2025



Title	PLANNING APPEALS
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Report author	Julie Williams, Development Manager (Planning & Building Control)
Lead Councillor	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
Corporate priority	Inclusive Economy
Recommendations	The Committee is asked: 1. To note the report.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. To advise Committee on notifications received from the Planning Inspectorate on planning appeals registered with them or decision made and to provide summary reports on appeal decisions of interest the Planning Applications Committee.

2. Information provided

- 2.1. Please see Appendix 1 of this report for new appeals lodged since the last committee.
- 2.2. Please see Appendix 2 of this report for appeals decided since the last committee with officer notes on the outcome.

3. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 3.1. Defending planning appeals made against planning decisions contributes to creating a sustainable environment with active communities and helping the economy within the Borough as identified as the themes of the Council's Corporate Plan.

4. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 4.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 4.2. The Planning Service uses policies to encourage developers to build and use properties responsibly by making efficient use of land and using sustainable materials and building methods

5. Community Engagement

- 5.1. Planning decisions are made in accordance with adopted local development plan policies, which have been adopted by the Council following public consultation. Statutory consultation also takes place on planning applications and appeals, and this can have bearing on the decision reached by the Secretary of State and his Inspectors. Copies of appeal decisions are held on the public Planning Register.

6. Equality Implications

- 6.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

6.2. It is considered that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to the decision on whether sites need to be visited by Planning Application Committee. The decision will not have a differential impact on people with the protected characteristics of; age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) or sexual orientation.

7. Legal Implications

7.1. Public Inquiries are normally the only types of appeal that involve the use of legal representation. Only applicants have the right to appeal against refusal or non-determination and there is no right for a third party to appeal a planning decision.

8. Financial Implications

8.1. Public Inquiries and Informal Hearings are more expensive in terms of officer and appellant time than the Written Representations method. Either party can be liable to awards of costs. Guidance is provided in Circular 03/2009 “Cost Awards in Appeals and other Planning Proceedings”.

9. Timetable for Implementation

9.1. Not applicable.

10. Background Papers

10.1. There are none.

APPENDIX 1 - Appeals Lodged:

None this month

APPENDIX 2 - Appeals Decided:

WARD:	COLEY
APPEAL NO:	APP/E0345/W/24/3347565
CASE NO:	PL/22/1769
ADDRESS:	39 Berkeley Avenue Reading
PROPOSAL:	Change of use of ground floor shop F.2 (former A.1) to takeaway (sui generis) and installation of an extraction chimney
CASE OFFICER:	Marcelina Rejwerksa
METHOD:	Written Representation
DECISION:	DISMISSED
DATE DETERMINED:	15.01.2025

Officer note: This refused proposal was for a fish and chips takeaway within the vacant side extension of the Costcutter store on Berkeley Avenue. Due to the constrained frontage of the site, the proposal was refused on the basis that there would be insufficient parking space for the residents in the flat above the unit, and for the staff and customers of the takeaway which would then result in a risk to highway and pedestrian safety. The inspector agreed with this reason for refusal and dismissed the appeal on this basis. There were two further reasons for refusal which the inspector did not agree with. These related to amenity concerns due to increased late evening activity on the site, and the inappropriate location of a commercial premises outside of an identified local or district centre. The inspector concluded that the residential flats above would not be harmed by the increased activity due to the existing

presence of the Costcutter store and a 24hr petrol station across the road. The inspector also concluded that our Local Plan did not restrict commercial development outside of local or district centres on the small scale.

WARD:	CHURCH
APPEAL NO:	APP/E0345/d/24/3347557
CASE NO:	PL/24/0430
ADDRESS:	3 Chagford Road, Reading
PROPOSAL:	Retrospective application for a single storey extension
CASE OFFICER:	Marcelina Rejwerksa
METHOD:	Written Representation
DECISION:	DISMISSED
DATE DETERMINED:	16.01.2025

Officer note: This application followed from a Planning Enforcement investigation which found a single storey rear extension had been constructed extending from the rear elevation of the dwelling up to the rear garden fence. The appellant sought retrospective permission on the claim that the extension was at the rear of the property, the limited views did not cause harm to the character of the area. However, the inspector agreed with the Council that the extension was excessive in size and viewable in part from the street and the garden of the surrounding neighbouring properties, and due to its excessive scale is considered harmful and therefore dismissed on this basis. The inspector however, did not agree with the second reason for refusal which identified harm to the outlook of nearby neighbours. The matter is now referred back to the Enforcement team to ensure the landowner complies with this decision.

WARD:	TILEHURST
APPEAL NO:	APP/E0345/W/24/3350138
CASE NO:	PL/23/1150
ADDRESS:	22 Norcot Road
PROPOSAL:	Proposed two bedroom residential unit
CASE OFFICER:	Anthony Scholes
METHOD:	Written Representation
DECISION:	DISMISSED
DATE DETERMINED:	17.01.2025

Officer note: The refused application was for the erection of a two-bedroom dwelling to the rear of no.22 Norcot Road. The site was the subject of a 2014 approval for the existing three maisonettes attached to the original building. Various attempts to develop further into the rear of the site has been made prior to the 2014 approval. The site is a transitional area at the edge of the district centre adjoining residential gardens to the rear. The inspector agreed with the key elements objecting to the proposal including impacts on character and appearance of the area, poor living conditions for future residents, and impacts on existing residents. The Inspector also considered that, although officers were content with the quantum of private amenity space, that in addition to impact of fencing, and adjoining uses, the amenity space was not sufficient in size in line with the Local Plan. The applicant chose to engage with officers to complete a s106 agreement to secure affordable housing in the event the appeal was allowed. However, Officers are pleased that the inspector agreed with Officers by dismissing the appeal.

WARD:	CHURCH
APPEAL NO:	APP/E0345/W/24/3337127
CASE NO:	PL/23/0115
ADDRESS:	9 Highmead Close
PROPOSAL:	The erection of two blocks of two flats (4 flats in total) with associated parking and access
CASE OFFICER:	Matt Burns
METHOD:	Written Representation
DECISION:	DISMISSED
DATE DETERMINED:	21.01.2025

Officer note: The refused application was for the erection of four flats to the end corner of Highmead Close which is a cul de sac. In dismissing the appeal, the Inspector agreed with Officers reason for refusal. It was concluded that the development would harm the character and appearance of the area through introduction of development that would unbalance the symmetrical and open green layout of the corners at the end of the cul de sac, provide small private garden areas for the flats which would be out of keeping with the prevailing character and size of gardens nearby and that the development would introduce excessive amounts of hardstanding which would be harmful to the verdant character of the Close. The proposal was also found to fail to demonstrate that it would not result in harm to protected species or priority habitats within the adjacent East Reading Wooded Ridgeline and to be harmful to highway safety by reducing parking for two existing dwellings within the Close meaning this parking would be displaced and result in additional on-street parking.

WARD: KATESGROVE
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/24/3347609
CASE NO: PL/22/1806 & PL/22/1807
ADDRESS: 27-33 Christchurch Road, Reading, RG2 7AA
PROPOSAL: Part converting an existing house and 9 flats to 12 flats including extensions to lower ground and ground floors.
CASE OFFICER: Ethne Humphreys
METHOD: Written Representation
DECISION: DISMISSED
DATE DETERMINED: 23.01.25

Officer note: The refused applications (planning permission and listed building consent) related to conversion of, and extensions to, the Listed terrace to facilitate the proposed increase from 9 flats and 1 house to 12 flats. The Inspector agreed with the key and fundamental concern with the proposals which was the unacceptable impact on both the Grade II Listed Building and Christchurch Road Conservation Area. The Inspector agreed that both internally and externally, the proposals would significantly erode the fabric and historic layout, causing considerable harm to the building's significance. The Inspector considered that the extensions would dominate the rear terrace, undermining its functional and modest character and would cause considerable harm to the significance of the listed building as well as harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The Inspector considered that any public benefit of the proposals (increase in housing numbers by two, some economic benefit, some internal improvements to layout) would be limited and would not outweigh the level of harm identified.

The Inspector considered that there would be some improvements to living accommodation; however, agreed that there would be inadequate amenity space for upper floor flats and that the lower ground floor flat No.29 would have inadequate levels of daylight and sunlight resulting in an overall conclusion that the proposal would not provide adequate living conditions.

The Inspector raised no concern about the loss of four bed house as the proposals would have delivered four, two bed dwellings that could have been used by small families.

The Inspector considered that concerns relating to trees and soft landscaping could have been dealt with by way of condition had the appeals been allowed.

The applicant chose to engage with officers to complete a s106 agreement to secure affordable housing in the event the appeal (in respect of full planning permission) was allowed.

The dismissal of both applications is a pleasing outcome and particularly with regard to Reading's heritage.

Planning Applications Committee

05 February 2025



Title	THIRD QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT - PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Report author	Julie Williams, Development Manager (Planning & Building Control)
Lead councillor	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
Corporate priority	Inclusive Economy
Recommendations	<p>The Committee is asked:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note the report.

1. Purpose of report

1.1. To advise Committee on the work and performance of the Planning Development Management and Building Control team for the third quarter of 2024/2025 (October to December) with comparison to same quarters in the previous year. These quarterly reports are focussed on planning and building control application processing performance and fee income.

2. Planning Development Management team

Decisions Issued

2.1 Table 1a provides a breakdown on the decisions issued for the last three quarters of this year compared to the previous year's quarters. For those decisions issued within the statutory timeframe or within an agreed extended timeframe we continue to perform well across the different types of planning applications handled. It also worth noting that of the 170 decisions issued 83% were granting permission for applicants.

**Table 1a: Planning Application Performance
By quarters in 2023/2024 and quarters 1, 2 & 3 for 2024/2025**

Application categories	Target	Q1 23/24 Apr-Jun	Q2 23/24 Jul-Sept	Q3 23/24 Oct-Dec	Q4 23/24 Jan-Mar	Q1 24/25 Apr-Jun	Q2 24/25 Jul - Sept	Q3 24/25 Oct - Dec
Major	60%	7/7 100%	4/4 100%	5/5 100%	4/4 100%	3/4 75%	8/10 80%	2/2 100%
Minor	70%	29/32 90%	29/35 82%	48/52 92%	39/40 98%	28/31 90%	32/40 80%	42/48 88%
Others (includes householders)	70%	110/119 92%	90/102 88%	85/92 92%	92/104 88%	84/88 95%	80/106 84%	105/112 94%
Overall Totals		146/158 92%	123/141 87%	138/149 93%	135/148 91%	115/123 93%	129/156 83%	155/170 91%

Fee Income

2.2 Table 1b provides data on income from dealing with applications, providing pre-application advice and responding to requests for information; such as planning histories and site background checks. The table compares last year's results with this year so far.

Table 1b provides information on Planning fee income.

Fee Income	Q1 23/24 Apr-Jun	Q2 23/24 Jul-Sept	Q3 23/24 Oct-Dec	Q4 23/24 Jan-Mar	TOTAL 23/24
Applications	£158,808	£125,894	£71,885	£239,825	£596,412
Pre-App	£11,720	£47,813	£29,518	£22,642	£111,693
Miscellaneous	£1,436	£4,962	£621	£1,290	£8,309
Totals	£171,964	£178,669	£102,024	£263,757	£716,414
Fee Income	Q1 24/25 Apr-Jun	Q2 24/25 Jul-Sept	Q3 24/25 Oct-Dec	Q4 24/25 Jan-Mar	TOTAL Q1 – Q3 24/25
Applications	£186,113	£416,043	£182,621		£784,777
Pre-App	£29,555*	£20,066	£30,107		£79,728
Miscellaneous	£1,177	£1,508	£1,238		£3,923
Totals	£216,845	£437,617	£213,966		£868,428

2.4 These figures show strong consistency between Q1 and Q3 and illustrate not only the general uplift due to national fee increases but also the impact of major applications on fee income, as experienced in Q2. Taken together this has meant that the total fee income for the year 23/24 has already been passed.

3. Building Control

3.1 Table 2 shows performance for the team and the applications dealt with for the last three quarters of this year compared with the four quarters for 23/24 and fee income. The increase in Q2 of Dangerous Structures attended is a result of the team carrying out follow up visits to sites previously identified as potentially dangerous to enable these cases to be closed or more action taken with owners.

3.2 Recruiting Building Control inspectors remains difficult (we need more experienced inspectors) but the existing staff and team leader do well to keep on top of the workload coming in, including dealing with high-risk buildings within the Borough on behalf of the Building Safety Regulator. Fee income remains steady over the last 3 quarters although I am anticipating an increase when the Building Safety Regulator reimburses for our Level 3 Inspector's work by the end of this financial year.

3.3 We have been notified that secondary legislation is expected to be introduced this spring to allow the Building Safety Levy (a tax on new residential buildings in England to fund building safety improvements) to start to be applied this autumn. New burdens funding has been announced to help local authorities set up to manage the collection of the levy but has not been received yet. This will require concentrated effort to be ready in time, however, based on our experience and systems used to collect CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) relevant officers are optimistic that we will be prepared.

Table 2: Building Control work performance.

Indicator	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25
Dangerous structure visits	12	55	55	15	11	55	5
Inspections carried out	333	436	432	489	389	420	380
Building Control applications submitted	70	194	50	59	86	88	118
Number of completion certificates issued	73	75	80	62	83	76	61
Fee income	£61,207	£61,316	£68,700	£79,502	£62,284	£73,769	£61,274
Approved Inspectors Initial Notices	107	54	67	107	116	167	113

4. Contribution to strategic aims

4.1 The processing of planning applications and associated work (trees, conservations areas and listed buildings) and building control activities contribute to creating a healthy environment with thriving communities and helps the economy within the Borough, identified as the themes of the Council's Corporate Plan.

5. Community engagement

5.1 Statutory consultation takes place on most planning applications and appeals. The Council's website also allows the public to view information submitted and comments on planning applications and eventually the decision reached. There is also information on policy matters and the and this can influence the speed with which applications and appeals are decided. Information on development management performance is publicly available.

6. Equality impact assessment

6.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

6.2 In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics, it is considered that the development management performance set out in this report has no adverse impacts.

7. Environmental and climate implications

- 7.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 7.2 The Planning & Building Control and Planning Policy Services play a key part in mitigating impacts and adapting building techniques using adopted policies to encourage developers to build and use properties responsibly, making efficient use of land, using sustainable materials and building methods.

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 The collection and monitoring of performance indicators is a statutory requirement. In addition, some of the work targets referred to in this report are mandatory requirements such as the determination of planning applications and building regulations applications.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 The report includes information on fee income in the planning and building teams.

05 February 2025



Title	PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT
Ward	Abbey
Planning Application Reference:	PL/23/0107(FUL) & PL/23/0108(LBC)
Site Address:	10 Gun Street, Reading, RG1 2JR
Proposed Development	PL/23/0107(FUL) – Application for Full Planning Permission: Proposed partial change of use from offices (Class E) to provide an expansion to existing entertainment venue (Sui Generis use) at 9 Gun Street (Purple Turtle) with erection of rear extensions and internal alterations. Detached 3-storey ancillary building to rear boundary with yard over Holy Brook. PL/23/0108(LBC) – Application for Listed Building Consent: Proposed extensions and internal alterations associate with partial change of use from offices (Class E) to provide an expansion to existing entertainment venue (Sui Generis Use) at 9 Gun Street (Purple Turtle) with erection of rear extensions and internal alterations. Detached 3-storey ancillary building to rear boundary with yard over Holy Brook
Applicant	PDR Ltd
Report author	Matt Burns - Principal Planning Officer
Deadline:	Originally 11/05/2023, but extensions of time have been agreed with the applicant for both applications until 31/01/2025
Recommendation	As per 8 th January 2025 PAC report
Conditions	As per 8 th January 2025 PAC report
Informatics	As per 8 th January 2025 PAC report

1. PAC SITE VISIT

- 1.1 Determination of the above applications for planning permission and listed building consent was deferred at Planning Applications Committee on 8th January 2025 in order for an accompanied Committee site visit to take place. This site visit is due to take place on Thursday 30th January 2025.
- 1.2 The 8th January 2025 PAC report is attached as appendix 1 to this report.

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Title	PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT
Ward	Abbey
Planning Application Reference:	PL/23/0107(FUL) & PL/23/0108(LBC)
Site Address:	10 Gun Street, Reading, RG1 2JR
Proposed Development	<p>PL/23/0107(FUL) – Application for Full Planning Permission: Proposed partial change of use from offices (Class E) to provide an expansion to existing entertainment venue (Sui Generis use) at 9 Gun Street (Purple Turtle) with erection of rear extensions and internal alterations. Detached 3-storey ancillary building to rear boundary with yard over Holy Brook.</p> <p>PL/23/0108(LBC) – Application for Listed Building Consent: Proposed extensions and internal alterations associate with partial change of use from offices (Class E) to provide an expansion to existing entertainment venue (Sui Generis Use) at 9 Gun Street (Purple Turtle) with erection of rear extensions and internal alterations. Detached 3-storey ancillary building to rear boundary with yard over Holy Brook</p>
Applicant	PDR Ltd
Report author	Matt Burns - Principal Planning Officer
Deadline:	Originally 11/05/2023, but extensions of time have been agreed with the applicant for both applications until 31/01/2025
Recommendation	<p>PL/23/0107(FUL) – Grant full planning permission, subject to conditions</p> <p>PL/23/0108(LBC) - Grant listed building consent, subject to conditions</p> <p>Delegate to the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (ADPTPPS) to make such minor changes to the conditions and informatics, as may be reasonably required to issue the planning permission and listed building consent</p>
Conditions	<p>To include:</p> <p><u>PL/23/0107FUL</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Time Limit – 3 years. 2. Approved plans.

3. Pre-commencement (including demolition) submission and approval of demolition and construction method statement (including Transport, EP and Holy Brook based requirements)
4. Pre-commencement submission and approval of a design stage BREEAM Certificate demonstrating that the development would meet a minimum BREEAM Very Good standard
5. Pre-occupation submission and approval of a final, as built, BREEAM Certificate demonstrating compliance with the BREEAM standard approved under condition 6 above
6. Compliance condition for the development to be carried out in accordance with the energy measures achieved in the Energy Statement hereby approved
7. Pre-occupation submission, approval and provision of cycle parking space details
8. Pre-occupation submission, approval and provision of bin stores and measures to prevent pests and vermin accessing bin stores
9. Pre-occupation submission and approval of refuse collection strategy
10. No mechanical plant to be installed unless a noise assessment and mitigation scheme has been submitted and approved
11. Compliance condition relating to hours of demolition/construction works (0800-1800hrs Mondays to Fridays and 0800-1300hrs Saturdays, and not at any time on Sundays and Bank or Statutory Holidays)
12. Pre-commencement (barring demolition) submission and approval of a detailed hard and soft landscaping scheme and implementation within the first planting season following occupation of the development
13. Pre-commencement (including demolition) submission and approval of Natural England License for works that could impact bats
14. Pre-commencement (barring demolition) submission and approval of habitat enhancement and management scheme, including bat and bird boxes and tiles
15. Implementation of the development only in accordance with the submitted archaeological written scheme of investigation.
16. Implementation and use of the development only in accordance with the approved flood risk assessment
17. The Class E(a) café use hereby permitted shall not operate outside the hours of 0800-0000 each day
18. The Sui Generis nightclub/entertainment use hereby permitted shall not operate outside the hours of 11-0400 each day
19. The Sui Generis nightclub use of the site shall not take place within the parts of the site shown for café (and associated areas) use
20. The use of any external area at the site shall not operate outside the hours of 0800-2300 hours each day
21. First floor external terrace area to be for café use only
22. No amplified live or recorded music to be played within the green room at any time
23. Pre-occupation submission and approval of deliveries and servicing management plan to include a requirement that

	<p>deliveries, collection of empty bottles and waste collections shall not be carried out between the hours of 20:00 to 08:00 Monday to Saturdays and 20:00 to 10:00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays.</p> <p>24. Pre-occupation submission and approval of a premises management plan for use of the nightclub extension and café areas</p> <p>25. Pre-occupation submission and approval of a scheme of external lighting</p> <p>26. No burning of waste on site</p> <p>27. No hot food cooking to occur unless an odour assessment is submitted and approved</p> <p>28. Development not to be undertaken other than in strict accordance with the submitted noise assessments (by Apex Acoustics and Stantec). All noise mitigation measures to be installed prior to first occupation/use of the development</p>
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PL/23/0108LBC

1. Time Limit – 3 years
2. Approved Plans
3. No works to the listed building hereby permitted shall be carried out other than in strict accordance with submitted heritage statement and conservation management plan
4. Pre-commencement submission and approval of a scheme of external works for restoration, repair and refurbishment of:
 - (i) cleaning and repointing of defective brickwork
 - (ii) cleaning and repainting of iron railings
 - (iii) cleaning and repainting of timber shopfront windows
 - (iv) repair and repainting of sash windows
 - (v) repair, replacement and repainting of rainwater goods
 - (vi) repair and repainting of stucco band
 - (vii) repair and repainting of doorcase
 - (viii) damp proofing
5. Pre-commencement submission and approval of a scheme of internal works for restoration, repair, refurbishment and whereby necessary replacement of:
 - (i) Internal walls, ceilings and floors
 - (ii) exposed timber beams, dado panelling, open-well staircase and other decorative features
 - (iii) Fireplaces
6. All works of making good to match existing in terms of colour, face bond, texture and pointing
7. Pre-commencement submission and approval of samples and detailed schedule and specification of materials to be used in construction of all external surfaces of the development
8. Pre-commencement submission and approval of details of all new windows and doors including details of reveals, heads, sills and lintels
9. Pre-commencement submission and approval of details of all new services and plant equipment (hoist, extractors, pipework and wiring) to include installation methodology

	<p>10. No other works to features of architectural or historic interest, without written approval.</p> <p>11. Adequate protection and support shall be given to the host and adjacent listed buildings during all construction works</p>
Informatics	<p>To include:</p> <p><u>23/0107FUL</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive and Proactive Statement 2. Damage to the highway 3. Works affecting highways 4. Associated listed building consent ref. PL/23/0108 5. Pre-commencement conditions 6. Terms 7. Building Control 8. Complaints about construction 9. Community Infrastructure Levy – not liable 10. Ongoing information conditions <p><u>23/0108LBC</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building Control 2. Associated full planning permission ref. PL/23/0107 3. Pre-commencement conditions 4. Terms 5. Ongoing information conditions 6. Positive and Proactive Statement 7. No other works to the listed building are hereby approved

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The proposals would provide a series of tangible benefits, including bringing a long term vacant grade II listed building back into viable use, facilitating expansion of The Purple Turtle a popular town centre entertainment, leisure and cultural facility, and short and long term economic benefits resulting from construction and subsequent operation of the proposed café and nightclub uses. The proposals also incorporate a series of internal and external repair and restoration works to the host grade II listed building as well as a number of sustainable energy efficiency measures. Whilst the proposals do not include de-culverting of the section of the Holy Brook that crosses the site to the rear, other on-site landscape and biodiversity enhancements are proposed.

1.2 Having regard to all matters raised, it is concluded that combined environmental, economic and social benefits of the proposals would, on balance, outweigh the identified low level of 'less than substantial' harm to the host Grade II Listed Building and surrounding St Marys Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area, that would result from the scale and appearance of the proposed extensions and extent of internal alterations proposed to the host building. Therefore, when applying an overall critical planning balance of all material considerations presented, these applications for full planning permission and accompanying listed building consent are considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Development Plan and are recommended for approval subject to conditions.

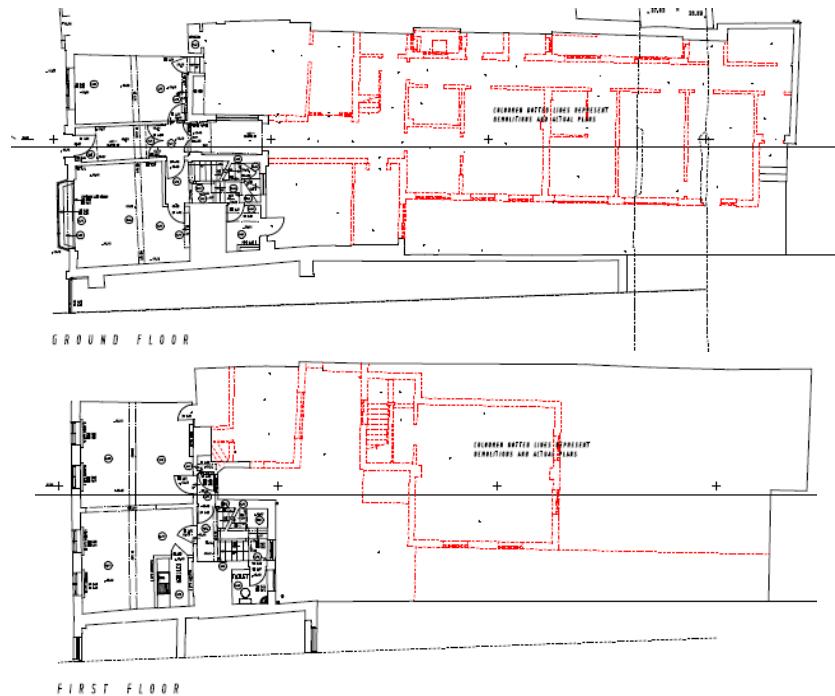
2. INTRODUCITON

2.1 The application site comprises an early 18th century Grade II Listed Building located on the south side of Gun Street (List entry Number: 1321918). The site is within St Mary Butts / Castle Street Conservation Area and adjacent to other Grade II listed buildings fronting onto Gun Street.

2.2 The site is located within Flood Zones 1 and 3 and, like adjoining properties, the culverted Holy Brook runs under the southernmost part of the rear yard. The site also lies in an archaeological potential area, an Air Quality Management Area and the Reading Central Area. Within the Central Area the site is located within an existing active frontage, the Primary Shopping Area and the Central Core. St Mary's Churchyard is an identified important area of open space directly opposite. The application site has been vacant for over two decades since the NHS left their offices at the building in 2004. Nearby uses include a number of restaurants, bars and nightclubs, and the immediate area of Gun Street constitutes a central focus of Reading's night-time economy. Next door at 9 Gun Street is the long-standing Purple Turtle bar and late-night music venue, which is also under the ownership of the applicant. As with elsewhere in the locality, there are existing residential units located on the upper floors of buildings (e.g. 11-12 Gun St).

2.3 The building itself is of red brick construction, with grey diaper-work, a stucco string course to the second floor and moulded wooden eaves cornice. The roof is of plain tiles with a tile hung gable and four ranges of cross glazed sash windows. The early 19th century shop front has glazing bars to the right and an 18th century door with architrave surround, together with a bracketed pediment hood and a modern three-light window on ground floor. Internally there is an 18th century stair with turned balusters and short moulded pendants. The building is in a very poor state of repair with some elements unsafe structurally, as witnessed on the officer site visit. Following the granting of planning permission and listed building consent under Applications 151281 and 151282 (see planning history below), large single and two storey rear extensions to the building were demolished in 2017 and the cleared rear yard area is currently overgrown.

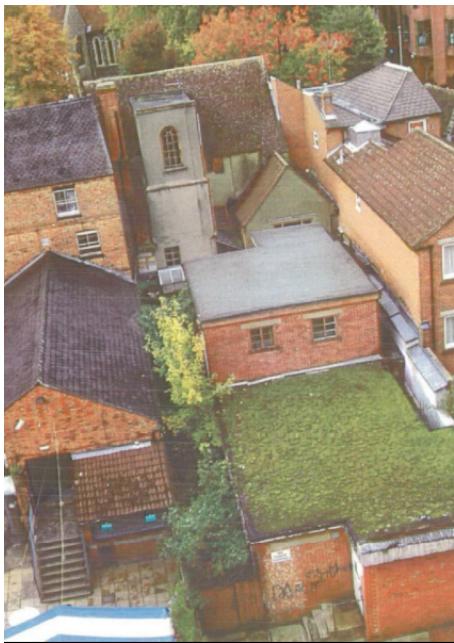




Existing ground and first floor level plans with previously demolished extensions outlined in red



No. 10 Gun Street



Rear of no. 10 before demolition of previous two and single storey rear extensions



Rear of no. 10 as existing following demolition of previous two and single storey rear extensions

2.3 The applications have been called in to Planning Applications Committee by Abbey Ward Councillor Rowland on the basis that there are important local issues relating to the treatment of the Holy Brook, nearby residential neighbours and heritage matters that require consideration.

3. PROPOSAL

3.1 The proposal seeks full planning permission for a change of use from offices (Class E) to provide an expansion to existing bar/nightclub/entertainment venue (Sui Generis Use) at 9 Gun Street (Purple Turtle), together with erection of part two-part single storey rear extension and the enlargement of the existing basement. A detached 3-storey ancillary building to the rear (south) boundary, with yard over the Holy Brook is also proposed. Listed building consent is also sought in relation to the proposed internal and external alterations to the building and proposed rear extensions and outbuilding.

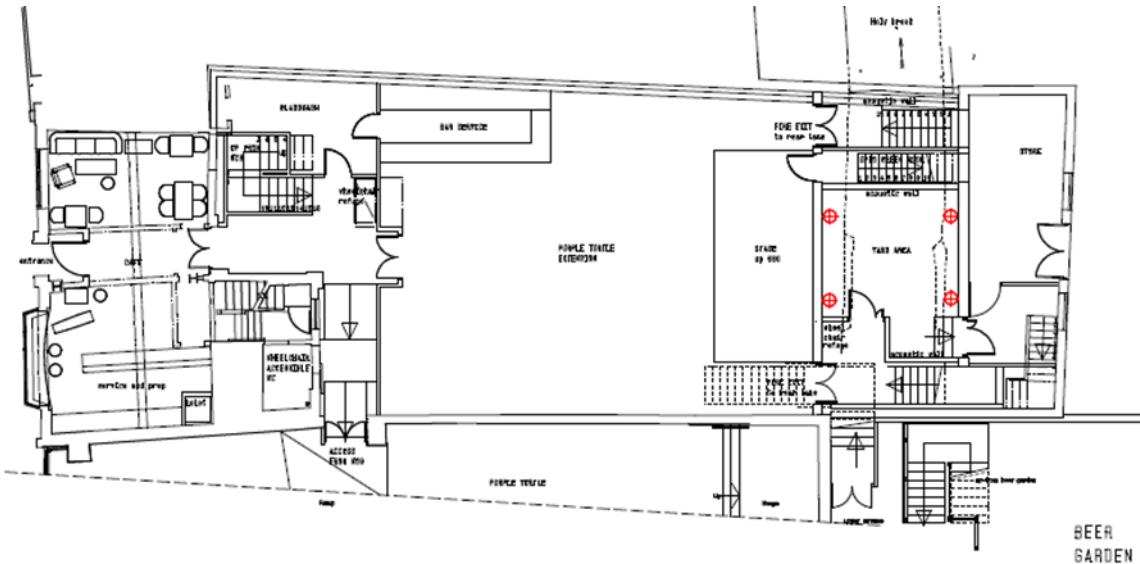
3.2 More specifically, the proposals incorporate:

- Conversion of the existing ground and first floor rooms from former office accommodation to a café with servery, food preparation and seating areas at ground floor and additional seating areas at first floor level. Both the proposed café and former office use of the building are both within Class E of the use classes order and therefore the change of use alone is not development requiring planning permission. The café would be accessed via the existing front entrance door from Gun Street, albeit it is proposed to set the door back from the Gun Street pavement to provide a recessed entrance and small covered entrance porch area. The entrance door currently provides access to an internal corridor off of which are two principal rooms. It is proposed to remove the corridor rooms to create a single open plan café and seating area.



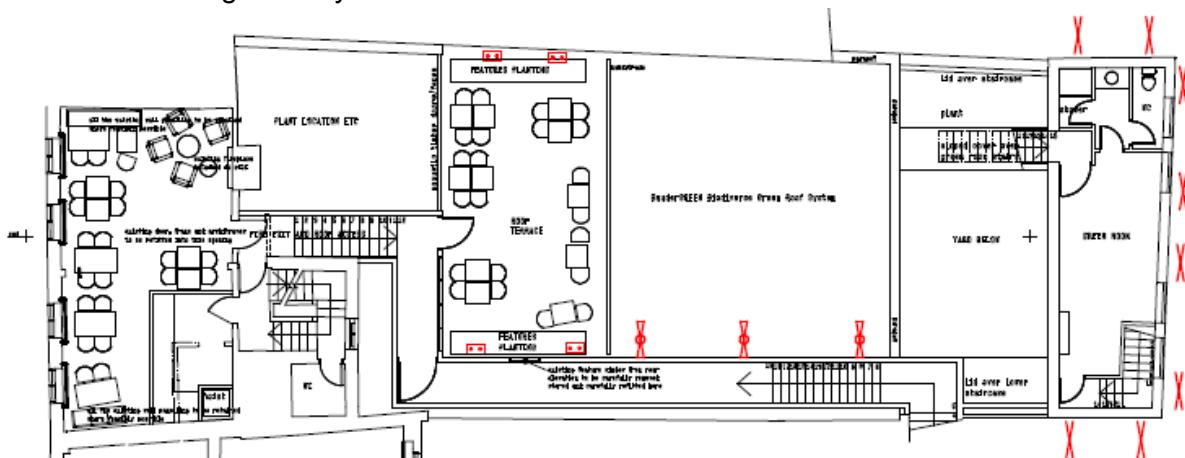
Proposed Front Elevation

- It is proposed to retain the existing staircase leading up to first floor level. At first floor level the building is already set out as one single room and this arrangement is proposed to be retained to create an open plan café seating space. An existing fireplace in this room is to be retained.
- The existing staircase leading from first to second floor level is also to be retained with a small kitchen and food preparation area proposed at second floor level. It is also proposed to install a hoist between ground, first and second floor areas to pass food/drinks between the different floors of the café.
- To the rear of the building, it is proposed to construct a part two, part single storey extension. The single storey element of the extension would project 16m from the rear of the existing building, would span the full width of the site and would be finished in white stucco render. The single storey extension would terminate at the north edge of the culverted section of the Holy Brook which crosses the rear of the site. The extension is proposed to provide a new large event space room/hall. The single storey extension would have a high ceiling height to accommodate the events space with the flat roof extension having a parapet height of 5.2m and incorporating an acoustic ceiling. The event space/hall would be accessed at ground floor level from the rear of the proposed café area where there would be a new circulation area and stair core which would also lead to the first floor part of the proposed rear extension. It is proposed that the event space room/hall would be used to provide additional space for the adjoining Purple Turtle bar/nightclub/entertainment venue use at no. 9 Gun Street, which is also under the ownership of the Applicant. To this effect a single new internal access door between no. 9 and no. 10 Gun Street is proposed to be provided through the shared walls of the two properties. The Applicant advises that the proposed event space/hall would be used flexibly for a variety of u18 events, business and community events during the day and as an entertainment space during evening/nighttime hours, as an expansion to the Purple Turtle for club nights and live performances such as music or comedy (Sui Generis Use).

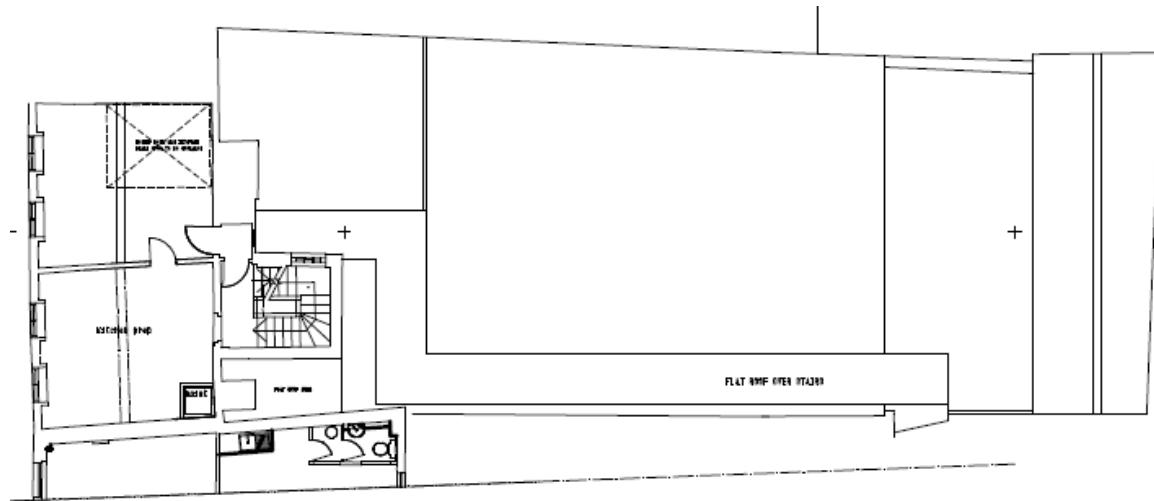


Proposed Ground Floor Plan

- The proposed two storey element of the proposed extension would project 4.2m from the existing rear elevation of the building and would be 5.8m wide, spanning just over half the width of the building. The two storey extension would have a flat roof and would be finished in white stucco render and would have full height glazing and glazed entrance door to its rear elevation. The extension would facilitate provision of a new stair core and corridors connecting the existing part of the building to the extended rear elements and would provide access to a first floor level external terrace area to the flat roof of the large single storey rear extension. The terrace area would be 5m x 9.2m and would be used for the proposed café use only. A decorative black metal rail balustrade would enclose the terrace, overlooking a green biodiverse roof proposed to the rest of the flat roof of the single storey rear extension. A first floor level external stair is also proposed to run along the western edge of the roof of the single storey rear extension, which would also provide a first floor level link passageway between the first floor extension and external terrace area and the elevated rear terrace area at the adjacent Purple Turtle.
- Adjacent to the proposed extension at first floor level across the other half of the building would be a plant enclosure bounded by a timber acoustic fence and gate set on the flat roof of the single storey extension.



Proposed First Floor Plan



Proposed Second Floor Plan

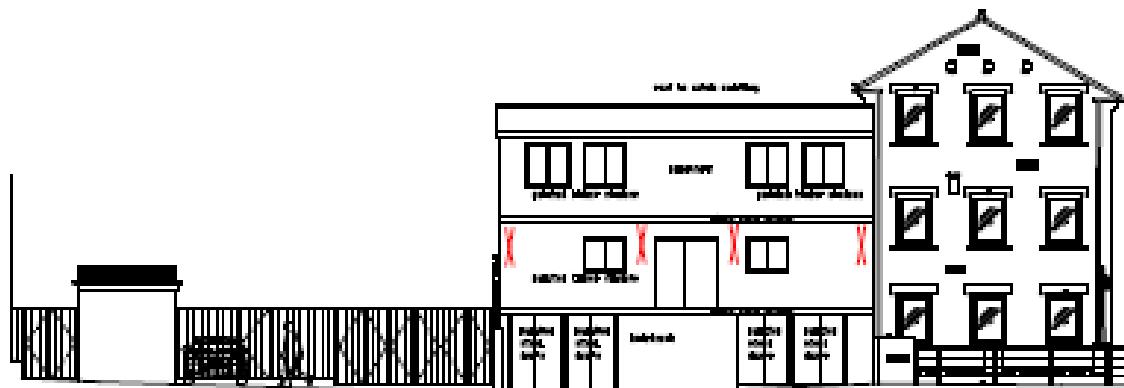


Proposed Rear Elevation Section (showing proposed rear extensions)

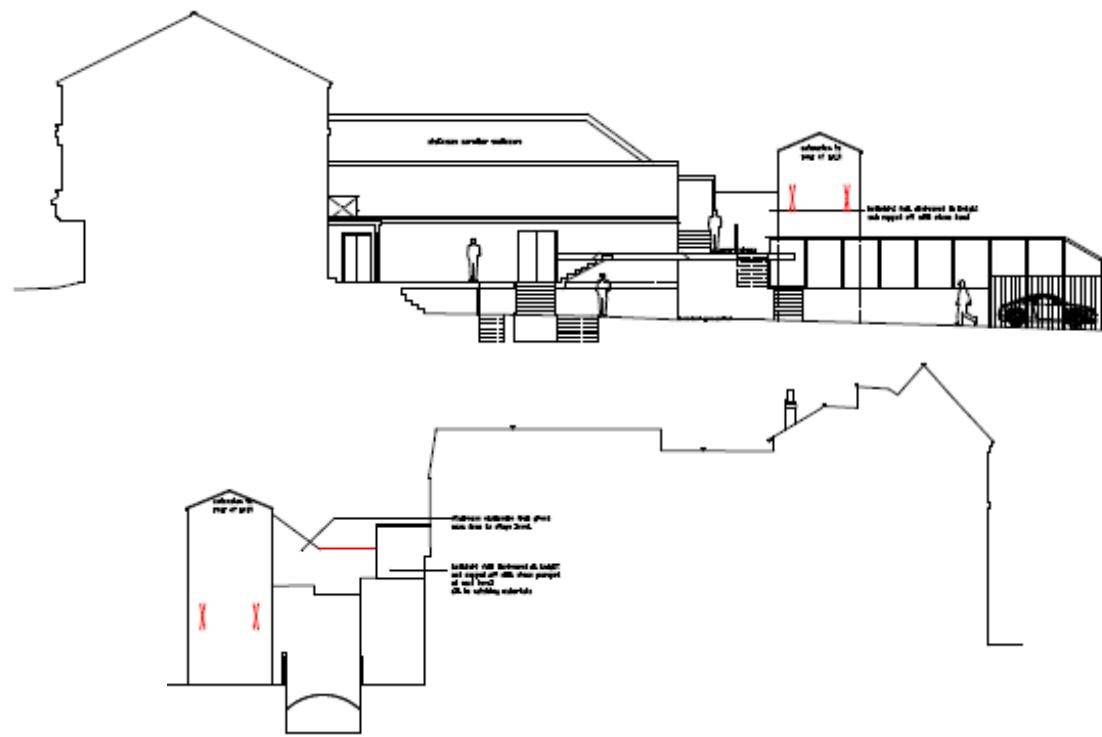


Proposed Rear Extensions Detailed Elevation

- To the other (south) side of the culverted section of the Holy Brook it is proposed to erect a three storey ancillary building which would extend up to the rear boundary of the site. Beyond the rear of the site is a pedestrian route connecting Bridge Street and The Oracle. The ancillary building would be between 3.2m and 3.8m in length and would span the full width of the site. The ancillary building would have a shallow gable pitch roof with a ridge height of 8.2m and eaves height of 7.3m. It would be finished in red brick, red roof tiles and white painted timber windows to reflect the host listed building. The ancillary building is proposed to be used as a refuse and general store at lower and upper ground floor level with a small green room for performers at the entertainment venue to the upper floor.



Proposed Rear Elevation (showing proposed ancillary building)

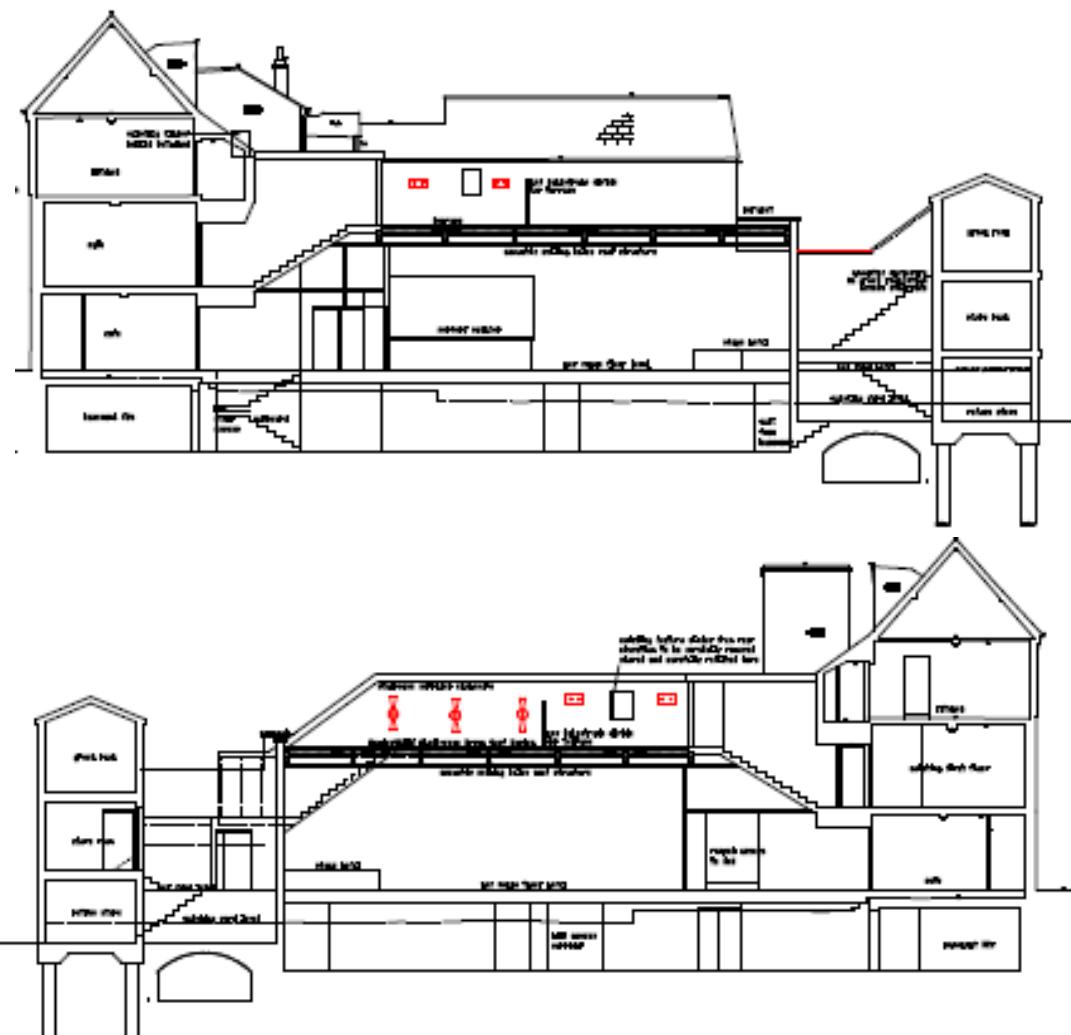


Proposed Side Elevations

- There are changes in levels within the existing building at ground floor level and across the site which steps down twice from front to rear (north to south). The proposals seek to remove this level change by raising the level towards the rear of the site to provide a consistent ground floor level throughout the building and proposed extension. The site level would not be changed to the very rear of the site on the south side of the culverted

Holy Brook channel where the proposed three storey ancillary building would be located. As such, whilst this is a three storey building, the ground floor level of the building would be midway between the basement and ground floor of the extended building to the north side of the culverted Holy Brook channel. This means that the roof ridge of the ancillary building would be set at the same height as the flat roof of the proposed two storey rear extension.

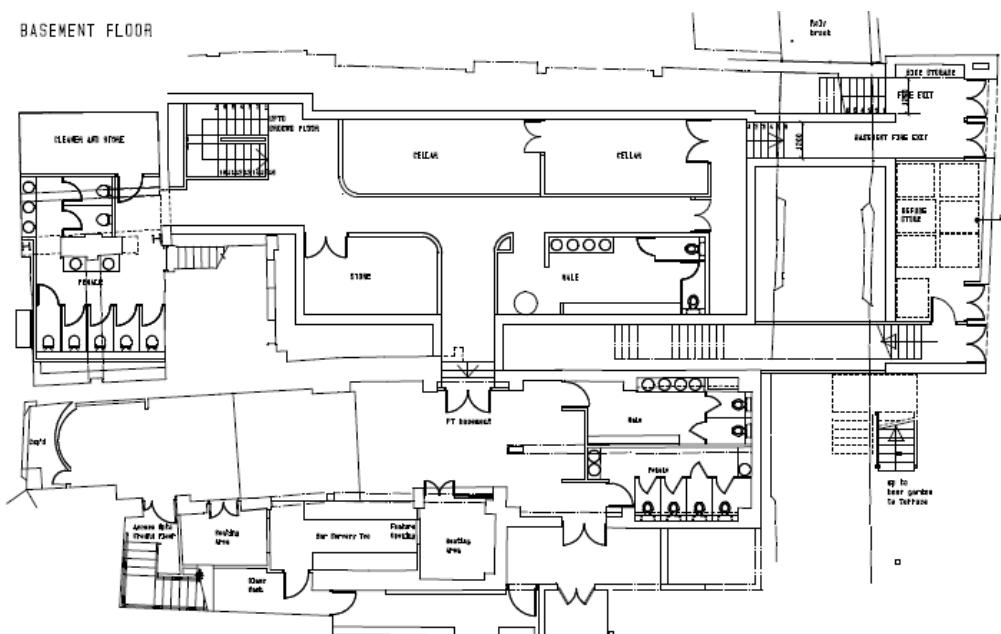
- It should be noted that there would be no substantive built development within the area between the proposed ancillary building and rear extension to the building, which sits directly above the culverted Holy Brook channel. This would be used as an external yard area, which is the existing use for this part of the site. It is not proposed to de-culvert this section of the Holy Brook. The only built development in this part of the site is the introduction of two lightweight external staircases, which would be used to provide elevated access between the rear extension and ancillary building.



Proposed Side Elevation Sections

- It is also proposed to significantly enlarge the existing basement at the application site. The existing basement is small and lies underneath the two existing principal rooms to the building which sit adjacent to Gun Street and currently contain storage areas. It is proposed to extend the basement to be under the entirety of the proposed single storey rear

extension up the north edge of the culverted Holy Brook channel. The proposed enlarged basement would contain toilet facilities to the front within the existing part of the basement and then large cellar, store rooms and further toilets within the enlarged part. A new stair core within the proposed two storey rear extension would provide access down to the basement. Similar to the proposed event space/hall at ground floor level the basement facilities are also proposed to be used as part of the expanded Purple Turtle use. A single new entrance door is proposed at basement level which would provide access from the basement level of the Purple Turtle to the enlarged basement of no. 10 Gun Street. To the rear of the basement a small stair case leading up to the yard area over the culverted section of the Holy Brook is proposed to provide an emergency and fire exit through the proposed rear ancillary building on to the footway to the rear of the site.



Proposed Basement Floor Plan



Proposed Visual of First Floor Rear Terrace and Green Roof

3.3 It is pertinent to note that there have been previous approved planning permission and listed building consents granted at the site for similar developments, albeit these have not been implemented and have now lapsed. The previous permissions are referenced in the relevant history section of this report below and are also summarised (with plans) at Appendix 1 at the end of this report.

Community Infrastructure Levy

3.4 In relation to the community infrastructure levy, the applicant has duly completed a CIL liability form with the submission. In accordance with the Council's adopted CIL Charging Schedule, the uses proposed are not liable for CIL and therefore there would be no levy due for this application.

3.5 Plans and Documents Considered:

Plans

- Drawing no. 201 - 114 – Existing Plans pre demolition
- Drawing no. 203 - 1114 – Existing Elevations pre demolition
- Drawing no. 205 - 1114 – Existing Site Plan
- Drawing no. 206 – 1114 - Proposed Site Plan Rev A

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 30th January 2023

- Drawing no. 201-1114 – Existing Plans with demolitions Rev D
- Drawing no. 103 Rev D – Existing Elevations with demolitions
- Drawing no. 02-1114 Rev C – Proposed Plans
- Drawing no. 204-1114 Rev E – Proposed Elevations Sections

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 16th March 2023

- Drawing no. 210-1144 – Rear Sectional View through Terrace

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 8th November 2024

Supporting Documents

- Planning, Design and Access Statement (JWPC Ltd)
- Heritage Statement (ADL Architecture)
- Flood Risk Assessment (Stantec)
- Noise Impact Assessment (Stantec)
- Ecology Assessment (Future Nature)
- Archaeology Written Scheme of Investigation (Thames Valley Archaeological Services)

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 30th January 2023

- Sustainability Statement (Scott White and Hookins)
- Exterior Lighting Specification (Alan Brown Design)
- Air Conditioning & Ventilation Specification (WM Air Conditioning)

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 16th March 2023

- River Condition Assessment (Future Nature)

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 15th December 2023

- Addendum to Planning, Design and Access Statement (JWPC Ltd)
- A Conservation Plan for Historic Fabric (Ridgeway Heritage Consultancy)

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 8th November 2024

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

10 Gun Street (application site)

08/1139FUL & 08/01677LBC - Works relating to the change of use from offices to A1 at ground floor with offices above to include demolition of existing extensions and erection of new extension and internal alterations. Withdrawn 16/2/09.

01676-FUL & 08/1187LBC - Change of use from offices to A1 at ground floor with offices above to include demolition of existing extensions and erection of new extension and internal alterations. Withdrawn 16/2/09.

09/00928FUL & 09/1230LBC - Change of use from offices to A1 at ground floor with offices above to include demolition of existing extensions and stair enclosure, replacement extensions, replacement stair enclosure, minor internal alterations (Resubmission of 08/01676/FUL). Granted 14/8/09.

09/0612FUL & 09/00929LBC - Works associated with the change of use from offices to A1 at ground floor with offices above to include demolition of existing extensions and stair enclosure, replacement extensions, replacement stair enclosure and internal alterations. (Resubmission of 08/01677/LBC). Granted 14/8/09.

09/02111FUL & 09/1741LBC - Change of use to A3. Demolition of late extensions and stair enclosure (stairs retained), replacement extensions and stair enclosure. Granted 28/1/10.

09/0085FUL & 09/02154LBC - Works associated with the change of use to A3. Demolition of late extensions and stair enclosure (stairs retained), replacement extensions and stair enclosure. Granted 28/1/10.

10/01343FUL & 10/0759LBC - Change of use of first, second, attic floors from B1a (offices) to A1 (retail) in association with permitted ground floor conversion and extension (ref: 09/00928/FUL). Granted 9/9/10.

12/00939EXT & 12/0577LBC - Application for an extension of time limit for implementation of permission 09/00928/FUL for change of use from offices to A1 at ground floor with offices above to include demolition of existing extensions and stair enclosure, replacement extensions, replacement stair enclosure, minor internal alterations. Granted 7/8/12.

12/0578FUL & 12/00940LBC - Application for an extension of time limit for implementation of permission 09/00929/LBC for works associated with the change of use from offices to A1 at ground floor with offices above to include demolition of existing extensions and stair enclosure, replacement extensions, replacement stair enclosure and internal alterations. Granted 7/8/12.

12/01308FUL & 12/1736LBC - Change of use to A1 (Retail) or A3 (Restaurant). Refurbishment and alterations including single storey rear extension. Granted 15/10/12.

12/1737FUL and 12/01309LBC - Works Associated with the change of use to A1 (Retail) or A3 (Restaurant). Refurbishment and alterations including single storey rear extension. Granted 15/10/12.

15/1281FUL & 151282/LBC - Change of use from office (Class B1) to café/restaurant (Class A3) at basement to second floor level, including replacement ground and first floor rear extension; Excavation of basement to rear as extension to existing nightclub (Sui Generis) at No. 9 Gun St; Erection of replacement two storey building to rear for micro-brewery (Sui Generis) with associated access, part de-culverting of brook, external open area and various internal and external alterations. Granted 16/08/2016.

19/1243FUL & 19/1244LBC - Change of use from office (Class B1) to café / restaurant (Class A3) at ground to second floor level, including ground and first floor extensions following removal of previous. Erection of building to rear for microbrewery (Sui Generis) with associated access, external open area and various other internal and external alterations - scheme almost identical to previous Consent 151281 but without basement nightclub extension and no de-culverting of brook. Granted 29/06/2020.

9 Gun Street (Purple Turtle) Adjoining

95/00677FUL & 95/0935LBC - Change of use from retail shop (Class A1) to premises for the sale of food and drink (Class A3). Granted 19/10/95.

10/1474FUL / 10/00615FUL & 10/1475FUL / 10/00616LBC - Internal refurbishment, minor new build and garden refurbishment. Granted 29/07/2010 & 30/07/2010.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Environment Agency – Object. It is understood that the site is constrained however Readings Local Plan Policy EN11 specifically highlights developments should “Pursue opportunities for de-culverting of watercourses” Furthermore the Holy Brook itself is specifically referenced in paragraph 4.2.48 which states:

“In addition to the two main rivers, the Holy Brook contains a unique character and links to the town’s ancient history. Development should seek to increase the prominence of the Holy Brook, and open up the brook for public access, as well as consider any opportunities for de-culverting it, which will provide ecological and potentially flood risk benefits. There are also a number of other small tributaries within Reading Borough, with their own character, and there may again be opportunities to enhance these as well as investigate de-culverting.”

We do not believe the option of de-culverting has been considered in this application therefore we maintain our objection on this basis. We understand that de-culverting at this point in time may not be an option therefore if the applicant were to keep the area above the currently culverted Holy Brook free from development, so it can be de-culverted at a later date, we would also consider that acceptable.

5.2 RBC Conservation Officer – No objection, subject to conditions to secure the following:

- Pre-commencement submission and approval of a full external materials schedule, accompanying samples and detailed drawings and specifications of works, including details of cleaning and repointing of decorative brickwork, cleaning and repainting of iron railings, cleaning and repainting of timber shopfront windows, repair and re-painting of timber sash windows, repair replacement and repainting of rainwater goods, repair and repainting of stucco band and door casement.
- Pre-commencement submission and approval of detailed drawings and specifications for the all internal repair and restoration works to the listed building including a specification for full repair and making good of internal walls, ceilings and floors, details of how exposed timber beams, dad panelling, open-well staircase (including balusters, string, newel and handrails) and other decorative features will be retained and restored and a programme and methodology of investigation and conservation treatment for all fireplaces
- All making good shall be toned to match existing in colour, face bond, texture and pointing.
- Pre-commencement submission and approval of details of all new internal window and door joinery, including depth of reveal, details of heads, sill and lintels.
- Pre-commencement submission and approval of details of all new services (including kitchen and toilets), including position type and method of installation and relates fixture (including hoist, extractors, pipework and communication services).
- Pre-commencement submission and approval of details of water proofing and damp treatment, including methodology and justification.
- Unless specifically referred to within the approved plans and documents no features of architectural or historic interest shall be altered, replaced or removed.

The proposed alterations and extension to the rear of the property is similar in detail to the previously consented applications ref. 151281 and 191244.

5.3 Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) – Object. The proposed applications (ref. 23/0107 for full planning permission and ref. 23/0108 for full planning permission are considerably similar to previously consented applications ref. 19/1243FUL & 19/1244LBC. Reading CAAC did not comment on those applications or the earlier proposals for the site such as under consents ref. 15/1281FUL and 15/1282LBC which were before the formation of CAAC (2016). All the applications predated the RBC Shopfronts Design Guide SPD and consideration of the potential of Reading's High Street Heritage Action Zone Project (HSHAZ) which began in March 2020 (now ended) and includes Gun Street within its area of interest. Summary of reasons for objection:

- The façade of the property on Gun Street is the exterior view that most people see and has been least affected by the ravages of past uses. Alterations to the front door to open outwards will have a harmful impact on the listed building.
- Creation of a basement route between the two properties destroys the integrity of the curtilage of the listed buildings at 10 Gun Street (1321918) and 9 Gun Street (1155899).
- The curtilage of 10 Gun Street includes a section of Holy Brook in a culvert and a piece of land beyond this. This area is visible at the rear of the Oracle and from the access road off

Bridge Street. The proposed new buildings to the north and south of Holy Brook will have a negative and overly dominant impact on the listed building and the setting of Holy Brook.

- Negative impact on listed property at No 9 Gun Street.
- Materials, paint colour should be secured by condition.
- This proposal does not comply with policies EN1 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment, EN3 Enhancement of Conservation Areas and EN6 New Development in a Historic Context as described in more detail below.

5.4 RBC Transport – No objection subject to a condition to secure submission and approval of a construction and demolition method statement prior to the commencement of development and pre-occupation provision of cycle and bin stores.

5.5 RBC Natural Environment Team – No objections, subject to a condition to secure submission and approval of full details of the proposed green roof.

5.6 RBC Environmental Protection – Raised initial concerns regarding the impact of noise from loud music and performance events at the proposed expanded Purple Turtle nightclub/entertainment venue on the occupiers of the adjacent flats at no. 11-12 Gun Street. Following submission of additional information from the applicant regarding the acoustic specification of the proposed extension are satisfied that the proposals are not likely to adversely impact on neighbouring occupiers of the flats when windows are closed. However, noise from the proposed development is very likely to still be audible to occupiers of the flats when windows are open during the night time and when loud music or performance events are taking place.

Are satisfied that significant efforts have been made to acoustically address noise related issues from the development but advise that given the nature of the use proposed and closeness of the adjacent flats, it is unlikely to be able to completely mitigate against noise from the development to the extent that it would be inaudible. Based upon the submitted noise assessment and given the existing nighttime noise environment at the site and along Gun Street, where there are already a number of noise producing uses, the impact on the neighbouring properties would likely be towards the low end of the scale but still with the potential to result in annoyance to occupiers of the flats when windows are open.

Notwithstanding the above, should planning permission be granted conditions to secure the following are considered necessary:

- No amplified live or recorded music to be played within the proposed green room at any time
- No use of the proposed external terrace after 2300 hours each day
- Development not to be carried out other than in strict accordance with the submitted noise assessment and mitigation details. All mitigation measures to be implemented in full prior to first occupation/use of the development.
- No installation of any plant equipment until full details and specifications, including noise assessment have been submitted and approved.
- Pre-commencement submission and approval of a construction and demolition method statement including measures to control construction noise, dust and vibration.

- No construction, demolition or associated deliveries shall take place outside the hours of 0800hrs to 1800hrs Mondays to Fridays, and 0800hrs to 1300hrs on Saturdays, and not at any time on Sundays and Bank or Statutory Holidays
- No burning of waste on site at any time
- Pre-occupation submission and approval of details of bin stores including measures to protect the stores against pests and vermin
- Pre-occupation submission and approval of premises management plan for the proposed café and nightclub/entertainment venue uses

5.7 RBC Ecology Adviser – Object given the proposal does not incorporate de-culverting of the section of the Holy Brook to the rear of the site. However, if planning permission is granted, recommend conditions to secure pre-commencement submission and approval of evidence that a Natural England licence for works that could impact bats has been obtained, details of a habitat enhancement scheme including bat bricks and tiles and details of an external lighting scheme to demonstrate how all external lighting has been designed to be wildlife friendly.

5.8 RBC Archaeology - No objection, subject to a condition to secure that the development is undertaken in full accordance with the submitted written scheme of investigation and that not part of the development is occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the approved written scheme of investigation.

5.9 RBC Licensing – No objection, a license for similar development has been granted at the property previously.

5.10 The Canal and River Trust – No comments.

Public consultation

5.11 Notification letters that the applications had been submitted were sent to the following nearby properties:

- No. 1, 2, no. 3-4, no. 5, no. 6, no. 7, no. 8, no. 9, no. 11-12, no. 14, no. 15 Gun Street
- Flats 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 no. 11-12 Gun Street
- No. 11, No. 11A Bridge Street
- Flat 1, 2 no. 15 Bridge Street
- The Oracle, Bridge Street
- Flats 1 to 9 Turtle Towers Bridge Street

5.12 A site notice for each application was also displayed outside the application on Gun Street on 26th April 2023.

5.13 No letters of representation have been received.

6. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

6.1 Section 16(2) and 66(1) 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.

6.2 Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

6.3 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) (December 2024) which also states at Paragraph 11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”.

6.4 The following relevant planning policy and guidance is applicable to the assessment of this application. The following national policy, local policies and supplementary guidance is relevant in the considering of this application:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024)

Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development
Section 4 - Decision-making
Section 6 - Building a strong, competitive economy
Section 7 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres
Section 8 - Promoting healthy and safe communities
Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
Section 11 - Making effective use of land
Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places
Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE
CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE
CC6: ACCESSIBILITY AND THE INTENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT
CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM
CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT
EN2: AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE
EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS
EN5: PROTECTION OF SIGNIFICANT VIEWS WITH HERITAGE INTEREST
EN6: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN A HISTORIC CONTEXT
EN11: WATERSPACES
EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK
EN15: AIR QUALITY
EN16: POLLUTION AND WATER RESOURCES
EN17: NOISE GENERATING EQUIPMENT
EN18: FLOODING AND DRAINAGE
EM3: LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT LAND

EM4: MAINTAINING A VARIETY OF PREMISES
TR1: ACHIEVING THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY
TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS
TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING
RL1: NETWORK AND HIERARCHY OF CENTRES
RL2: SCALE AND LOCATION OF RETAIL, LEISURE AND CULTURE DEVELOPMENT
RL6: PROTECTION OF LEISURE FACILITIES AND PUBLIC HOUSES
OU5: SHOPFRONTS AND CASH MACHINES
CR1: DEFINITION OF CENTRAL READING
CR2: DESIGN IN CENTRAL READING
CR3: PUBLIC REALM IN CENTRAL READING
CR4: LEISURE, CULTURE AND TOURISM IN CENTRAL READING
CR5: DRINKING ESTABLISHMENTS IN CENTRAL READING
CR7: PRIMARY FRONTAGES IN CENTRAL READING

Supplementary Planning Documents

Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)
Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Design Guide to Shopfronts (2022)

Other relevant documents

St Mary Butts / Castle St Conservation Area Statement
Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy (March 2021)
Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (March 2021)
Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking (Historic England, 2015)
Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 (2nd Edition) The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2017)
Reading Historic Area Assessment (Feb 2023)

Local Plan Update

- 6.5 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 updated version of the Local Plan was published on 6th November 2024.
- 6.6 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.
- 6.7 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'.

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 The main issues are considered to be:

- A) Principle of development – land use matters
- B) Flood risk, the water environment and natural environment matters
- C) Design and heritage matters
- E) Amenity matters
- F) Transport matters
- G) Archaeology matters
- H) Sustainability matters

A) Principle of development – land use matters

7.2 In terms of the proposed Class E(a) cafe use to the ground first and second floor of the principal part of the building (fronting Gun Street), this would involve the loss of an existing (in lawful use terms at least) Class E(g)(i) office use at the site. Given both the existing and proposed uses of this part of the development are within use Class E (commercial business and service) planning permission to change between these sub-sections of the same use is not required. Nonetheless, with regard to policy EM3 (Loss of Employment Land), also having regard to the various previous permissions in the recent past for similar Class E uses (previously referred to as Class A1 shop and Class A3 restaurant uses under the 2020 superseded version of the Use Classes Order) at the site, no issues are raised with the loss of the existing (lawful) office use. In particular, it is noted that the building has been vacant for over two decades. The principle of the proposed Class E(a) café use in this location, within an existing active frontage, the primary shopping area and central core of the Reading Central Area) would also accord with Policies CR1 (Definition of Central Reading) and CR7 (Primary Frontages in Central Reading) in terms of where such uses are sought to be located within the town centre.

7.3 The proposals also seek that parts of the enlarged premises at no. 10 Gun Street would also, at times, be used as an extension of the existing Sui Generis nightclub/bar/entertainment venue use at the adjoining premises at no. 9 Gun Street (Purple Turtle). A series of openings are proposed to link the two buildings internally and externally from the rear yard areas of both buildings and the provision of a hall/multi-purpose performance space within the proposed ground floor rear extension to no. 10. It is understood that this would allow greater flexibility and capacity for club nights and live performances at the premises. As can be seen from the planning history section of this report above, a similar extension of the Purple Turtle nightclub use into no. 10 Gun Street and internal and external links between the two buildings were granted under planning permission ref. 151281 (and listed building consent ref. 151282). It is proposed that the now sought space would be used flexibly with the applicant advising it would be used for a variety of u18 events, business and community events during the day and as an entertainment space during evening/nighttime hours, as an expansion to the Purple Turtle for

club nights and live performances such as music or comedy. The proposed basement area would instead be used to provide an additional cellar, storage space and toilets.

7.4 In land use principle terms, the proposals seek an extension to an existing town centre Sui Generis use at the Purple Turtle which would comply with the principles of Policies CR1 (Definition of Central Reading), CR4 (Leisure, Culture and Tourism in Central Reading), CR5 (Drinking Establishments in Central Reading) which support such night time economy uses within the town centre as long as they would not give rise to adverse impact on the amenity of nearby residents and other town centre uses, and that the location of such uses is accessible to current and proposed night-time public transport services. The amenity and transport sections of this report below will consider these impacts of the proposals in more detail in terms of the intensification of the use proposed. Subject to no unacceptable impacts being identified in respect of these matters no overriding land use concerns are identified in relation to the proposed development.

B) Flood risk, the water environment, landscaping, ecology and biodiversity

7.5 The majority of the site is located within Flood Zone 1 which are defined as areas having the lowest risk of flooding. The rear part of the site is also located over a culverted section of the Holy Brook, which the Environment Agency (EA) classify as a main river and therefore within Flood Zone 3, which are areas at high risk of flooding. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) sets out that a sequential test should be applied to development proposals within flood zones 2 and 3 in order to identify and direct development to alternative sites at a lower risk of flooding if available. In this instance the proposals do not seek to substantially build directly over the culverted section of the Holy Brook (land within Flood Zone 3) where, as is existing, a small yard area is proposed. Two external light weight and non-structural stair cases would cross over the land and connect the proposed rear extension with the proposed ancillary building either side of the culverted channel. Given the land above the culvert would remain as a yard area as existing and free from built development the sequential test is not considered to need to be applied in this instance. All parts of the site where new built development is proposed are within flood zone 1.

7.6 The NPPG classifies the café use proposed as 'less vulnerable' in terms of flood risk, while drinking establishments and nightclubs are classified as 'more vulnerable' and identifies that both uses are appropriate within flood zone 1. The NPPG also sets out that new development within the vicinity of a watercourse should be constructed such that it does not detrimentally impact on flow routes or reduce available floodplain storage which could increase flood risk on-site or elsewhere. However, in this instance given this section of the Holy Brook is culverted it has no flood plain outside of the culverted channel. The height of the culvert walls either side of the channel mean that the flow of water is contained within the canalised concrete channel up to the predicted 1 in 100 year plus an allowance for climate change flood level and therefore flooding at the worst predicted level for this location would be fully contained within the culvert. Therefore, the proposed extensions and outbuildings would not impinge upon floodplain land and no flood plain compensation or mitigation works are required or proposed as part of the development to accommodate the proposed Sui Generis use.

7.7 The submitted FRA also demonstrates that continuous safe access and egress for the development is available from the front door of the building on to Gun Street and pedestrian route running past the rear of the site which are both within flood zone 1. Due to floor levels

the FRA identifies that during a 1 in 100 year rainfall event (plus an allowance for climate change) surface water could flow into the basement via the internal stairs from Gun Street at the front of the site. The basement is proposed to include stores and toilets for customers, therefore the risk of flooding to occupants of the basement would only occur if they were in the basement during opening hours and surface water enters the building via the open doors at the front entrance at the peak of an extreme rainfall event. Officers concur with the findings of the submitted FRA, that in such an event there would be sufficient warning of this happening for occupants to safely exit the basement to higher ground via exits to the front and rear of the site.

- 7.8 In terms of drainage, it is proposed that rain and surface water rainwater would be collected and discharged directly into the Holy Brook to the rear of the site, which is an existing arrangement. There would be no worsening of drainage at the site which is covered entirely in built form and hardstanding. The proposed green roof would ensure an improvement in the drainage conditions at the site.
- 7.9 In overall terms the proposals are considered to be acceptable from a flood risk perspective, subject to a condition to ensure the development is carried out full in accordance with the submitted flood risk assessment.
- 7.10 Whilst the Environment Agency do not object to the proposals on the flood risk grounds, they do object to the planning application on the basis that it is not proposed to de-culvert the section of the Holy Brook that crosses the rear of the site. Therefore, as per section 5 above, the EA considers that the proposal fails to restore the ecological value of the Holy Brook to its condition prior to culverting and fails to provide the opportunity for de-culverting to take place in the future.
- 7.11 In this respect it is noted that a previously consented scheme for a similar development from 2016 (ref. 151281) included part de-culverting of the Holy Brook through the rear of the site. This aspect of the scheme was strongly supported by both the EA and LPA from an environmental perspective. However, a different scheme for another similar development was then given planning permission in 2020 (ref. 191243) which did not include de-culverting of the Holy Brook. The EA objected to this previous application at that time for the same reasons as now, but planning permission was granted for the development. This was on the basis that the benefits of the development, most notably in terms restoration and re-use of a listed building currently in a poor condition, were considered to outweigh the environmental harm that would result from maintaining the poor environmental condition of this small section of the Holy Brook as a result of its culverted form.
- 7.12 The applicant's justification for not proposing to de-culvert this section of the Holy Brook is the same now as was given under the 2020 permission (ref. 191243). More specifically, the cost involved in these works for such a small section of the Holy Brook would be disproportionate and would mean the development, as a whole, would not be viable. The applicant's state that this is the reason why the 2015 scheme (ref. 151281) was not progressed. The EA, and RBC Ecology Adviser, are of the view that, as per the 2020 permission (ref. 191243), such rationale is insufficient that de-culverting has not been adequately explored or considered as part of the current application.

7.13 Engineered river channels have little ecologically valuable habitat and there would clearly be benefit in this respect from opening up (de-culverting) and enhancing the Holy Brook. The restoration and enhancement of such watercourses is an objective of Policy EN11 (Waterspaces) of the RBC Local plan. This is also supported by paragraph 187 of the NPPF (December 2024) which recognise that the planning system should conserve and enhance the environment and site of ecological and biodiversity value.

7.14 In this instance, given the culverted Holy Brook is an existing situation, the proposal itself cannot be said to be worsening the condition of the Holy Brook, rather it is not taking this opportunity to de-culvert this section of the channel and provide the associated ecological improvements to the Holy Brook that this could result in. A River Condition Assessment report has been submitted with the application which concludes that the current culverted section of the watercourse running through the site provides very limited biodiversity value in its current state, noting that DEFRA identify culverted watercourses as being habitats of low distinctiveness and that no aquatic or emergent vegetation is evident within this section of the culvert. The report sets out that this section of the Holy Brook is only of current value ecologically in terms of species commuting through it, such as fresh water invertebrates but that there are negligible sheltering and foraging opportunities within the culvert.

7.15 Whilst the 2015 proposals (ref. 151281) for the site, which included de-culverting, are clearly preferable and are referenced by the EA in their objection, the LPA are unable to withhold planning permission on the basis that a current proposal no longer contains elements that a previous 'more desirable' proposal contained in the past, hence the granting of the 2020 permission (ref. 191243) which did not include de-culverting. Every planning application must be considered on their own merits, against the Local Plan and the existing use of the land at the time of the application.

7.16 Policy EN11 (Waterspaces) states that Reading's waterspaces will not only be protected but enhanced but that development in the vicinity of watercourses will pursue opportunities for deculverting of watercourses (Officer emphasis). In addition, supporting paragraph 4.2.48 of Policy EN11 states that 'Development should seek to increase the prominence of the Holy Brook, and open up the brook for public access, as well as consider any opportunities for deculverting it, which will provide ecological and potentially flood risk benefits' (Officer emphasis). Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) is also relevant and states that '*the green network which includes all of the Thames tributaries, shall be maintained, protected, consolidated, extended and enhanced*'. Point c) states that '*On all sites, development should ... provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible.*'

7.17 The current applications have been under consideration for some time with much of this spent awaiting further advice from the EA and officers pressing the applicant to consider incorporating de-culverting within the proposed development. The applicant has been consistent throughout the process that the works involved to de-culvert such a small section of the Holy Brook would make the development unviable. Therefore, the current proposal would effectively maintain the status quo position at the site whereby this section of the Holy Brook remains culverted and covered by hardstanding. In this respect it cannot be said that the proposals would result in harm to the Holy Brook in terms of its ecology and biodiversity but that it would not result in the ecological and biodiversity benefits to the watercourse that Policies EN11 and EN12 aspire to achieve. Notwithstanding this, the development would still provide for a net gain in biodiversity at the site as whole through the provision of the proposed

green roof and also a series of bat and bird boxes and tiles and therefore satisfy the requirements of Policy EN12, as was the case with the 2020 permitted scheme (ref. 191243) which also did not include de-culverting.

7.18 Officer's consider that the proposals would still allow for de-culverting to occur in future given the part of the site directly above the culverted channel is proposed to be retained as a hardstanding yard area free from ground based built form, with just two light weight non-structural staircases proposed above and crossing the land to connect the proposed rear extension and outbuilding either side of the culverted watercourse channel. Therefore, it is not considered that the proposals would preclude the environmental benefits of de-culverting this section of the Holy Brook from being pursued in future, as sought by Policy EN11.

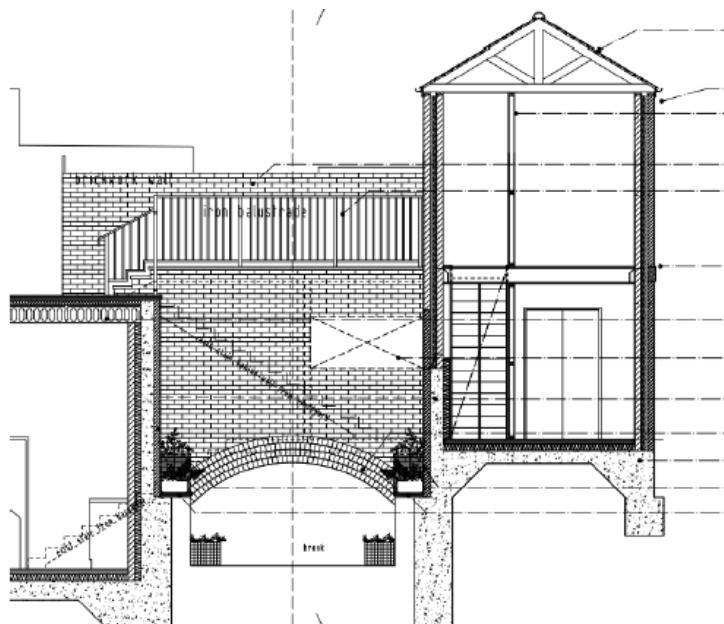
7.19 In addition to ecological and biodiversity matters, Policy EN11 (Waterspaces) also requires that development in the vicinity of watercourses should enhance the visual relationships of buildings, spaces and routes to the watercourse and make positive contributions to the character and appearance of watercourse. In this respect the culverted nature of the section of the watercourse crossing the site is such that it is entirely covered over with hardstanding. Therefore, it is not visible from within or from outside of the site and is of no discernible character. The wider site is also long term vacant and in poor condition, meaning it itself does not contribute positively to the character of the watercourse. It is therefore difficult, given the existing context at the site, to argue that the proposals would result in any significant visual harm to the watercourse. Whether in its current permitted use as Class E office use or the proposed Class E/Sui Generis use, there is also no restriction on the land above the water course being used in connection with the main use of the building, as it can be at present.

7.20 The culverted section of the watercourse is also not located adjacent to the rear boundary of the site such that even if de-culverting did occur development or boundary treatment (such as for security reasons) beyond the southern edge of the channel directly adjacent to the rear boundary of the site and the pedestrian route to the rear of The Oracle could still occur. This would mean the Holy Brook would still not be visible from public areas. This was the case for the 2016 permission (ref. 151281), where part de-culverting was proposed but a two storey outbuilding was also approved beyond the southern edge of the channel, meaning the development, if carried out, would have provided visual benefit to views from within the site on privately owned land, but not from public areas. Therefore, whilst providing some visual enhancement and improvement of the watercourse's relationship with surrounding buildings, this provided limited wider public benefit. Given the 3 most recent applications at the site have included a 2 or 3 storey ancillary buildings adjacent to the rear boundary which would screen views of the location of the Holy Brook, it cannot be assumed that de-culverting would result in significant improvement in terms of the visibility and visual relationship of this section of the Holy Brook with the character of the surrounding area.

7.21 It is also pertinent to note that the relationship of the current proposal with the culverted channel is different than that which was proposed and considered to be acceptable under the 2020 permission (ref. 191243). Under the 2020 permission (not implemented and now lapsed) the area directly adjacent to and over the culverted brook was proposed as an outdoor seating area associated with the proposed ground floor café use. This meant that there was a 6m set back from the proposed ground floor extension to the north edge of the culverted channel, albeit a 3 storey outbuilding was permitted directly abutting the southern edge of the culverted channel. Under the current proposals it is proposed to build right up to both edges of the

culverted channel but has removed the previously permitted outdoor seating area. The applicant explains that this is to provide the amount of indoor space required for the hall/performance space proposed with the ground floor rear extension and make this proposed venue viable. As per the 2020 permission (ref. 191243) a 3 storey outbuilding to the southern edge of the culverted channel is proposed to be replicated as part of the current application.

7.22 Officers consider this change to the proposed development and removal of the previously proposed outdoor seating area and set back of the single storey rear extension from the north edge of the culverted channel to be disappointing. The Officer view is that this would have provided a pleasant outdoor space next to the channel, that should de-culverting occur in the future, would have provided a nice waterside seating area. However, in response the Applicant has advised that such a seating area was also proposed for the 2016 permission (ref. 151281) where de-culverting was proposed, but that the difference in ground levels between the site and the lower level of the Holy Brook are such that the channel itself would not have been readily visible from the seating area. Instead, it would have been a dark cavern and sudden drop to the water level, such that in reality the relationship with the channel would have been of limited visual benefit to persons using the outdoor seating area and viewing the Holy Brook from within the site.



Section from 2016 consented scheme showing high level of rear yard amenity area compared to part de-culverted section of the Holy Brook

7.23 In respect of the above and requirements of Policy EN11, the LPA and the owner of the site have 'pursued opportunities' for de-culverting of this watercourse over a number of years, as part of various development proposals on the site. In respecting the applicant's decision not to pursue de-culverting, additional options were explored to improve biodiversity on the site given the site's current level of hardstanding, including provision of a large area of green roof and additional of bat and bird boxes and tiles. Therefore, whilst the LPA would of course have preferred de-culverting to be pursued, the tests required by Policy EN11 and EN12 of the Local Plan, namely to 'pursue' and 'consider' any 'opportunities' for de-culverting, have been adequately discharged.

7.24 Separate to the planning regime, the land owner would be required to obtain an environmental permit from the Environment Agency for any activities which will take place on or within 8 metres of a culvert (Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016). Therefore, the EA would need to be satisfied that the proposals are acceptable within the context of their own environment rules and regulations in order for the owner to obtain such a permit.

7.25 The application is accompanied by an Ecology Report, including bat survey, which identifies the presence of four existing pipistrelle roosts to the roof of the existing building and that the existing rear yard area is used by foraging bats and birds. The applicant would therefore be required to obtain a license from Natural England prior to commencement of development to ensure that suitable mitigation is put in place during construction works to protect the identified bats and roosts. The River Condition Assessment submitted with the application also recommends a number of measures to be included within a construction method statement to protect the Holy Brook from pollutants, including dust and mud controls, constriction stage drainage strategy and for chemicals and fuels to be stored within secure and bunded containers and that spill kits are provided on site at all times.

7.26 The development is considered acceptable from a flood risk, water and natural environment perspective, with compliance with the relevant tests of the Local Plan and with due regard to all other material considerations. Conditions are recommended to secure to secure implementation of the development in accordance with the submitted flood risk assessment, submission and approval of a scheme of biodiversity enhancements (including bat and bird boxes and tiles), detailed landscaping scheme relating to the proposed green roof, a detailed external lighting scheme, details of Natural England licence for works that could impact bats and measures to be included within a construction method statement to protect the Holy Brook from pollutants.

C) Design and Heritage matters

7.27 As detailed in paragraph 2.3 the application site comprises an early 18th century Grade II Listed building in a very poor state of repair with some elements unsafe structurally as witnessed on the officer site visit.

7.28 The building sits centrally within a wider terrace of two and three storey grade II listed buildings fronting Gun Street (no.s 7 to 15). The buildings are all dated from the 19th century, consisting of timber shopfronts with red brick and timber sash windows to upper floors (except no. 15), but have all been subject to variety of modern alterations, particularly to the shopfronts and addition of modern rear extensions. The grade I listed St Marys Church and grounds are located opposite the application site on Gun Street.

7.29 The application site also sits within the St Marys Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area. The RBC St Marys/Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area Appraisal (2008) identifies that elements of this part of the conservation area that contribute to its significance include St Mary's Church as a local landmark building, traditional shop frontages in Gun Street; The Holy Brook which links the rears (albeit partly in a listed culvert) of the properties in Castle Street and Gun Street on their south sides (culvert to the rear of no. 10 Gun Street is not listed) and also railings at the front of several properties on the south side of Gun Street and Castle Street. The Conservation Area Appraisal also identifies negative features of this part of the conservation

area including noise and pollution from traffic, modern highway and street furniture, non-traditional shopfronts to Gun Street and the proximity and scale of The Oracle, which dominates the rear of the properties to Gun Street.

7.30 Local Authorities are required by Section 66 and Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas and effects upon listed buildings or their setting when considering development proposals that affect the setting or views into it. This is reflected locally within Policies EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) and EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas) which requires proposals to protect and where possible enhance the character and appearance of heritage assets including listed buildings and conservation areas. More generally Policy CC7 (Design and The Public Realm) requires that new development maintains and enhances the character of the surrounding area.



Existing rear elevation of no. 10 Gun Street

7.31 The proposed internal and external alterations to the grade II listed building to facilitate the proposed development are similar to that permitted under the previous planning permission and listed building consents granted at the site (ref. 151281FUL/151282LBC and 191243FUL/191244LBC). Like the previous proposals, the current applications have been subject to consideration and discussion with the RBC Conservation Officer, including review of the detailed Heritage Statement and Conservation Management Plan submitted with the applications. The Conservation Officer, in reviewing the current application, is mindful of the recent planning history at the site and previously permitted works and alterations to the listed building. The officer is broadly content with the proposals and does not object, subject to a range of conditions to be applied to the listed building consent.

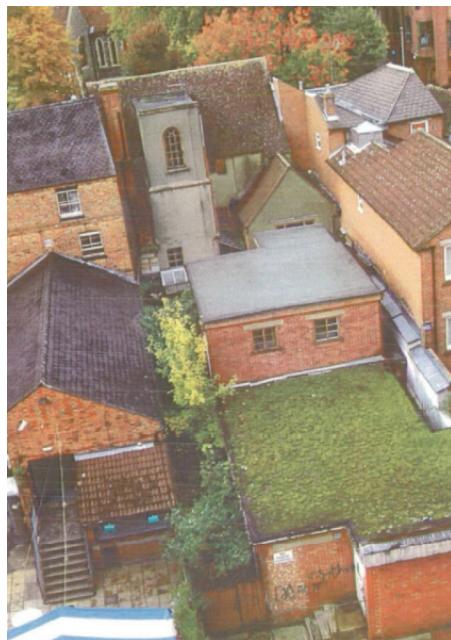
7.32 The Conservation Officer, having visited the site, notes the poor condition and deteriorated state of the existing building. In particular, the semi-derelict condition of the rear elevation following earlier demolition work that has been undertaken and removal of previous modern rear extensions, the poor condition of the front elevation of the building in terms of its timber shopfront and upper floor windows, as well as the negative impact of previous internal alterations to the original layout of the building and the poor state of upkeep of the remaining internal rooms. In its current form and appearance, the building does not contribute positively to the surrounding St Marys Butts/Castle Steet Conservation Area when viewed from the front from Gun Street and also from the rear from the pedestrian route connecting Bridge Street to The Oracle.

7.33 In terms of the internal alterations proposed, these largely reflect those changes approved under previous applications in terms of opening up the ground and first floors to form a more open plan layout for the proposed café use, significant enlargement of the proposed basement level of accommodation and recessing of the existing front entrance door to the building from Gun Street. A notable difference with the previous consents at the site is the insertion of a doorway opening at ground floor level to link no. 10 with the Purple Turtle next door, in order to provide the proposed extended night club use. Historically the buildings are separate entities, so providing these doorways results in loss of some original fabric along the shared party wall albeit, to a small degree, and also alters the historic function of the buildings as separate premises. It is pertinent to note that a doorway opening between the two buildings was previously consented under planning permission 151281 and listed building consent 151282 which was located at basement level, and this is also proposed to be provided as part of this application. Other intrusions to original fabric of the listed building include installation of a hoist between the basement and second floor level to assist with function of the café, however, again, installation of a hoist has been previously approved at the site.

7.34 In terms of external extensions to the listed building, these relate to the proposed part two part single storey rear extension, which again reflects the approach taken to extensions under previous applications. The Conservation Officer notes that the single storey element of the proposed rear extension would be significantly greater in size than the previously consented and would practically fill the entirety of the existing rear yard up to the north edge of the culverted Holy Brook channel. The single storey extension would also be significant in height with a parapet height of 5.2m in order to accommodate the proposed hall/performance space. However, the proposals would be smaller than the previously consented schemes at first floor level, in terms of rear projection with a modest flat roof stucco render and glazed element proposed. The single storey element proposed would also be a simple clean construction of white stucco render.

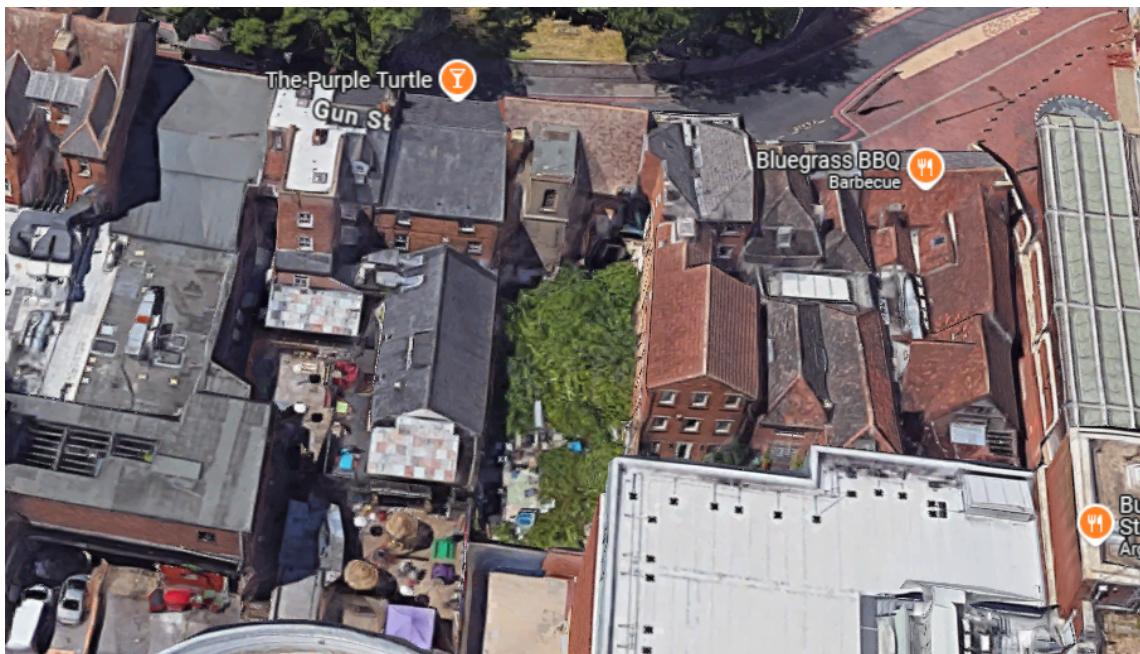
7.35 The proposed single storey element is large and reasonable to say somewhat out of proportion with the host listed building. Owing to its height, it would largely obscure the existing rear elevation. Whilst the rear elevation of the building is of less significance and architectural merit than the front, it is clear that the proposed extensions as result of their scale would result in a level of harm to the buildings character and significance and how it is viewed from within the surrounding conservation area to the rear. Albeit the most notably feature of the existing rear elevation is the turret style stair projection which projects up to roof level and would be retained and restored as part of the proposed development. Furthermore, due to its high level, it would still be visible to views from the rear of the site.

7.36 Notwithstanding the above, it can be noted that the previous modern part two part single storey rear extensions to the building that were removed in 2017 were also significant in size, as can be seen from the photograph below.



Rear of no. 10 before demolition of previous modern extension

7.37 Furthermore, the other listed buildings within the Gun Street terrace have also all been subject to similar significant rear extensions of a variety of styles and material finishes as can be seen from the aerial image below, which at present dominate the rear of no. 10 and obscure views to its rear elevation.



Existing rear extensions to Gun Street properties (no. 10 can be identified by the cleared rear yard with overgrown vegetation)

7.38 The proposed three storey red brick ancillary outbuilding to the south side of the culverted Holy Brook and abutting the rear boundary of the site would also obscure views of the

proposed rear extensions and would be the most visible element of the proposals from the public realm area to the rear of the site. This building would be red brick with stone string line course detail, a shallow gable pitched tile roof, white painted timber windows and painted metal doors at ground level to provide service access and fire exits from the site on to the adjacent rear pedestrian route to the rear of The Oracle. This building is identical to that permitted under the previous 2020 permission (ref. 191243) and its proposed design and use of materials is considered sympathetic to the red brick nature of the principal buildings to this part of Gun Street. The change in levels across the site, which drop down from Gun Street to the pedestrian route to the rear, mean the outbuilding would be set at the same roof level as the two storey element of the proposed extension. Given the variety and scale of rear extensions found to the rear of the site, as well as the dominance of the adjacent The Oracle shopping centre, it is considered that the building would integrate satisfactorily with surrounding character and would preserve the setting of the host and wider terrace of grade II listed buildings and to views within the part of the conservation area to the rear of the site.

7.39 Overall, and for the reasons discussed above, officers identify that the proposed internal and external alterations and extensions to the building would result in a degree of harm to the historic character and significance of the host listed building. Officers, and the Council's Conservation Officer, conclude that this harm would be 'less than substantial' harm at a low level (as per the NPPF), given the rear of the building where the extension would be located is considered to be of less important architecturally than the principle front elevation of the building, the current poor and semi-derelict condition of the building and degree to which it has been altered in the past. Similarly low levels of less than substantial harm is also identified to the setting of the St Marys Butts/Caste Street Conservation Area, given views of the building from the rear would be more limited, the utilitarian back of house service area character of this part of the conservation area, and also given this part of the conservation area is subject to the existing visually dominant large scale rear extensions and development which already impinge upon views of the rear of the site, most notably The Oracle shopping centre. Negligible impacts are identified to the setting of other surrounding listed buildings and no harm is considered to result from the proposed development to the principal front elevation of the building and the more significant part of the conservation area to the front of the site.

7.40 In accordance with Paragraph 215 of the NPPF (December 2024) the low level of 'less than substantial harm' identified to the significance of the heritage assets falls to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed development as part of the wider planning balance assessment. This weighing up exercise will be undertaken within the conclusion section of this report.

7.41 With regard to the above it is identified that a number of specific heritage benefits would also result from the proposed development. Most notably in terms of bringing a long term vacant listed building which is in a very poor state of repair back into a viable use. This weighs in favour of these proposals. The application is also accompanied by a conservation management plan which sets out how parts of the existing building would be repaired and restored as part of the proposed conversion and extension works. This includes:

- Cleaning and repointing of any defective brickwork
- Cleaning and repainting of iron railings to the Gun Street frontage
- Cleaning and repainting of timber shopfront
- Repair and repainting of all existing timber sash windows

- Repair replacement and repainting of all rainwater goods
- Repair and repainting of stucco band
- Repair and repainting of doorcase
- Repair and making good of internal walls, ceilings and floors
- Retention and restoration of exposed timber beams, dado panelling, open-well staircase (including, balusters, string, newel and handrails) and other decorative features
- Retention and restoration of existing fireplace

7.42 A series of detailed listed building conditions are recommended to secure submission and approval of details, specifications, methodology, material details and drawings of the above proposed works to the listed building. The conditions would require completion of all the works in accordance with approved details prior to first use/occupation of the proposed development.

D) Amenity matters

7.43 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) seeks to protect the amenity of existing surrounding occupiers. Policy EN15 (Air Quality) and Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) seeks to protect surrounding occupiers from the impact of pollution.

7.44 The proposals, most notably the expanded Purple Turtle nightclub and entertainment venue use in terms of music and patron noise, have the potential to result in noise and disturbance to nearby residential occupiers. The closest residential occupiers are flats to the upper floors of no. 11-12 Gun Street adjacent to the site to the east. There are already a number of nearby late night noise producing premises on Gun Street, including the existing Purple Turtle nightclub and entertainment venue at no. 9, Gun Street Garden nightclub at no. 5-6 Gun Street and Be at One bar at no. 1-2 Gun Street.

7.45 Given the close proximity of the residential occupiers at no. 11-12 Gun Street, noise transmission from playing of loud music and live performances within the parts of the building to be used by the expanded nightclub/entertainment venue use have been highlighted as a concern by RBC Environmental Protection Officers. It is proposed that the expanded Purple Turtle use would operate at the same licensed hours as the existing Purple Turtle premises, which is 1100 to 0400 hours each day. In response to this, the applicant has provided more detailed information about the construction of the proposed extensions and their acoustic treatment to accompany the noise assessment submitted with the planning application. This sets out that any new walls would be constructed with a high specification acoustically designed structure and would be entirely separate to, and not attached to, the shared walls of no. 11-12 Gun Street. Whilst there is a shared wall with no. 11-12 at the front of the existing building, this is where the proposed café use would be located, and this part of the building would not be used by the proposed expanded Purple Turtle nightclub and live entertainment use.

7.46 The acoustic proposals for the proposed rear extension include a number of measures focused on insulating against noise transmission from the premises, including low frequency sounds associated with bass. The acoustic proposals include provision of a dense masonry and cavity block walls with high specific insulation boards and wool, high performance acoustic ceiling and high performance acoustic steel doors.

7.47 Based upon the proposed acoustic performance and specifications of the rear extension, where the expanded nightclub and entertainment use would be located, the submitted noise assessment models that during loud events noise levels within the adjacent flats would not exceed recommended internal noise levels for residential properties. The noise levels are modelled upon those found at similar nightclub and live performance venues, which is standard practice.

7.48 However, the report does model that when windows are open during the evening or night-time when loud entertainment noise is occurring the noise at the adjacent flats with rear facing windows will be audible, particularly low frequency noise. The report states that this is unlikely to be any greater or different to the existing noise climate at the site, given the proximity of existing nearby late night noise producing premises. The noise assessment models that the noise level outside of the rear flat windows would be 39dbA which is 2db below the existing nighttime background noise level of 41db at the site.

7.49 The noise report states that the lower the modelled noise is relative to the measured background sound level, the less likely it is that the specific sound source will have an adverse impact or a significant adverse impact. Where the rating level does not exceed the background sound level, this is an indication of the specific sound sources having a low impact, depending on the context. Albeit noise being below the prevailing background noise level doesn't necessarily mean inaudible.

7.50 For residential premises it is targeted (within British Standard noise technical document ref. BS4142:2014 A2019) that sources of noise should be 10 dB below the background noise level. At this level, new noise would be far enough below the underlying background noise level such that during lulls in the noise climate the new noise source would not be readily distinguishable against the acoustic environment. However, this is not achieved for the proposed development with a noise level of 2 dB below background projected outside of the flats which, would be audible to occupiers of the adjacent flats with windows open.

7.51 The noise report acknowledges that the nature of the use proposed use, and particularly generation of low frequency noise, means controlling noise break-out is very challenging and that the building has been designed to the limit of what is practicable to construct in terms of acoustic performance. The report also notes that the noise impact should be considered in the context of the site's location within the Reading Town Centre, where there are a number of other bars and venues in the area contributing to the noise climate, including the existing operational venue at The Purple Turtle.

7.52 RBC Environmental Protection Officers have reviewed the noise assessment submitted and consider that it is has been carried out to a high standard and proposes significant measures in an attempt to acoustically insulate the extended part of the building and prevent noise transmission and breakout. Whilst predicted noise levels within the adjacent flats are not of concern, it is clear some additional noise would be audible during loud noise events when occupiers of the flats to the rear have their windows open. Based upon the proposed modelling it is considered reasonable to conclude that this additional noise impact would not be significant, given the existing background noise levels at the site, albeit this does not mean there is not potential for annoyance to the adjacent occupiers. There is also a degree of uncertainty attached to the modelled noise projections and the acoustic performance of the building will not be able to be verified until built. RBC Environmental Protection Officers are

satisfied that significant efforts have been made to acoustically address noise related issues from the development but advise that given the nature of the use proposed and closeness of the adjacent flats, it is unlikely to be able to completely mitigate against noise from the development to the extent that it would be inaudible.

7.53 RBC Environmental Protection Officers conclude that the proposals are likely to have an adverse impact upon the amenity of the occupiers of the adjacent flats, in terms of audible nighttime noise with windows open. However, based upon the modelled projections and the existing night time noise environment at the site, the additional impact is considered to be towards the low end of the scale but still with the potential to result in annoyance.

7.54 This adverse impact on the existing adjacent residential occupiers will need to be considered as part of the overall planning balance assessment for the proposals. This is in respect of conflict with Policies CC8 and EN16, which seek that development does not result in detrimental impacts upon the living environment of existing and proposed occupiers in terms of noise and disturbances.

7.55 Notwithstanding the above, there is also potential for noise breakout from the proposed first floor external terrace area. Given the external nature of the terrace noise spill from this area is difficult to control there is the and therefore a condition is recommended to restrict use of all external areas to between the hours of 0800 and 2300 hours each day and for use by the café only to protect the residential amenity of the occupiers of the adjacent flats. RBC Environmental Protection Officers also recommend a condition to stipulate that there shall no playing of amplified live or recorded music within the green room proposed within the outbuilding to the rear of the site, given this separate building would not be subject to the same level of acoustic performance as the extensions to the building.

7.56 The proposed café use would operate within the original part of the listed building at the front of the site and as such would share existing party walls within no. 11-12 Gun Street next door. This use does not present significant concerns in terms of noise and disturbance matters; however, the acoustic performance of this part of the building would not be as efficient as the new build extensions to the rear. As such, a condition is recommended to limit the hours of use of the cafe use to 0800-0000 hours each day in order to protect the residential amenity of the adjoining residential occupiers to the upper floors of no. 11-12 Gun Street. The same hours limitation has been applied to previously permitted café uses at the site and is in also in place for similar nearby uses, such as at no. 15 Gun Street (Bluegrass restaurant) and is therefore considered reasonable.

7.57 The proposed layout of the building presents possibilities that the proposed café and nightclub uses may blend unless this is strictly controlled. Management of these two distinct uses it considered necessary in order to protect the amenity of nearby residential occupiers, the main concern is if the expanded nightclub use were to stray into the parts of the building shown for café use (i.e those areas to front of the building fronting Gun Street where the acoustic performance of the building would not be as high as the extended parts, which have been specifically acoustically design for such a use). In this respect a condition is recommended to stipulate that no part of the building shown on the proposed plans as being for café use is to be used for the nightclub use proposed elsewhere within the development. A further condition is also recommended to secure submission and approval of management plan for the premises to set out measures and controls that will be put in place by the owner and

management team to ensure the café and nightclub uses remain separate, as well as additional controls and mitigation to manage wider noise impacts of the proposed development, such as managing patrons.

- 7.58 A condition is recommended and considered reasonable to stipulate that deliveries, collection of empty bottles and waste collections shall not be carried out between the hours of 20:00 to 08:00 Monday to Saturdays and 20:00 to 10:00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays. This is in order to mitigate potential noise from these activities given the close proximity of nearby residential occupiers.
- 7.59 The application sets out that the café use proposed would not involve on-site cooking and would mainly serve drinks, cold food and food that is heated up. As such there are not considered to be any concerns about food odours from the proposed development or significant extraction equipment required in this respect. Nonetheless, a condition is recommended to secure submission and approval of full details of any plant equipment, including a noise assessment, specifications and location within the building (including service connections throughout the building) prior to installation of any such equipment at the site. A condition is also recommended to secure vermin and pest control measures for all bin store areas to ensure stores are kept clean, well maintained and secure.
- 7.60 In terms of other amenity considerations to surrounding occupiers no adverse impacts are identified in respect of impact on receipt of daylight, privacy and overbearing matters from the proposed rear extensions and outbuilding. Notably there are not considered to be any harmful to impacts in respect of the Purple Turtle adjoining the site to west at no. 9 Gun Street given its commercial use. In terms of the flats at no. 11-12 Gun Street there are no side facing habitable windows that would be impacted by the proposed rear extensions with the windows to the front and rear of the building not considered to be affected by the proposals.
- 7.61 RBC Environmental Protection officers have identified potential noise, dust and vibration issues that could result during construction of the proposed development. Therefore, a condition is recommended to secure suitable controls are provided within a demolition and construction method statement to be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any development on site. Further conditions are also proposed to limit hours of construction to standard daytime working hours for noisy activities and to stipulate that there shall be no burning of waste or building materials on site at any time.

E) Transport

- 7.62 Policies TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway related matters), TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking matters relating to development.
- 7.63 The site is located within the Reading Central Area and within Reading's primary shopping area. This area is well served by rail and bus links and also contains the largest proportion of public car parking spaces. There is no off street parking associated with the site and none is proposed. Given the sites accessible town centre location and access to public car parks, there are no transport objections to this application. The proposals are for the type of use associated with town centre sites and would not result in a material change in vehicle trips.

7.64 Adequate space for cycle and refuse storage for the development is located to the rear of the site within the proposed outbuilding. Servicing would be from the rear as is existing for the site and The Purple Turtle next door. Conditions are recommended to secure provision of these facilities prior to first use and occupation of the development.

7.65 Given the location and constraints of the site, construction of the proposed development has the potential to result in disruption to the surrounding highway network, a condition is recommended to secure submission and approval of a demolition and constriction method statement prior to any works commencing on site.

7.66 The proposals are considered to be acceptable in respect of transport related matters and to accord with Policies TR1, TR3 and TR5.

F) Archaeology

7.67 Policy EN2 (Areas of Archaeological Significance) requires that developers should identify and evaluate sites of archaeological significance and that where remains are identified and cannot be preserved 'in situ' they should be properly excavated, investigated and recorded.

7.68 Berkshire Archaeology have reviewed the proposals and have advised that there is potential for archaeological remains of various period below ground in the surrounding area. A written scheme of archaeological investigation (WSI) has been submitted with the application and has been reviewed and found to be acceptable by Berkshire Archaeology. A condition is recommended to require that the development is undertaken only in accordance with the submitted WSI.

G) Sustainability

7.69 Policy CC3 (Adaption to Climate Change) seeks that proposals should incorporate measures which take account of climate change. A number of sustainability measures are proposed to be incorporated within the development including energy efficient materials and fittings and a net increase in greening and landscaping and biodiversity enhancements across the site.

7.70 Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) requires that proposed for conversion or refurbishment of existing buildings for residential or non-residential uses meets a BREEAM standard of Very Good.

7.71 The application is submitted by sustainability statement which sets out a variety of sustainability and energy efficiency measures proposed to be incorporated within the proposed development. These include provision of a decentralised energy source in the form of an air source heat pump, provision of a biodiverse green roof to the large flat roof of the proposed single storey rear extension, use of energy efficient materials and fittings and achieving the BREEAM Very Good standard for the development in accordance with Policy CC2.

7.72 Conditions are recommended to secure submission and approval of a design state BREEAM certificate prior to commencement of development, submission and approval of an as built BREEAM certificate prior to first use/occupation of the development to certify that the

development has been built to the required standard and to secure implementation of all other sustainability measures proposed within the submitted sustainability statement.

7.73 The proposals are considered to comply with Policies CC2 and CC3.

8 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

8.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular application.

9 CONCLUSION

9.1 The NPPF (December 2024) sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development running through both plan-making and decision-taking. The three dimensions to achieving sustainable development are defined in the NPPF as: economic, social and environmental. Both the adopted Local Plan and the NPPF require a positive approach to decision-taking to foster the delivery of sustainable development. These three dimensions of sustainable development are also central to the Council's Local Plan core Policy CC1.

9.2 As set out within paragraph 7.40 of this report officers identify that the proposals would result in a low level of less than 'substantial harm' to the host grade II listed building and St Marys Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area. In accordance with paragraph 215 of the NPPF (December 2024), where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Officers have also identified that the proposals are likely to result in some harm to the residential amenity of the existing adjacent residential occupiers at no. 11-12 Gun Street as a result of noise from loud music and live performance events, albeit given the existing nighttime noise environment at the site and subject to the recommended conditions it is considered that such impacts can be managed to result in a low level of impact.

9.3 In terms of public benefits of the proposals a variety are identified. The proposed development would see a vacant grade II Listed building in disrepair brought back into an active and complimentary use along Gun Street and would secure repair and restoration of internal and external features of the listed building, important to its historic significance. These are considered to be significant benefits of the proposed development.

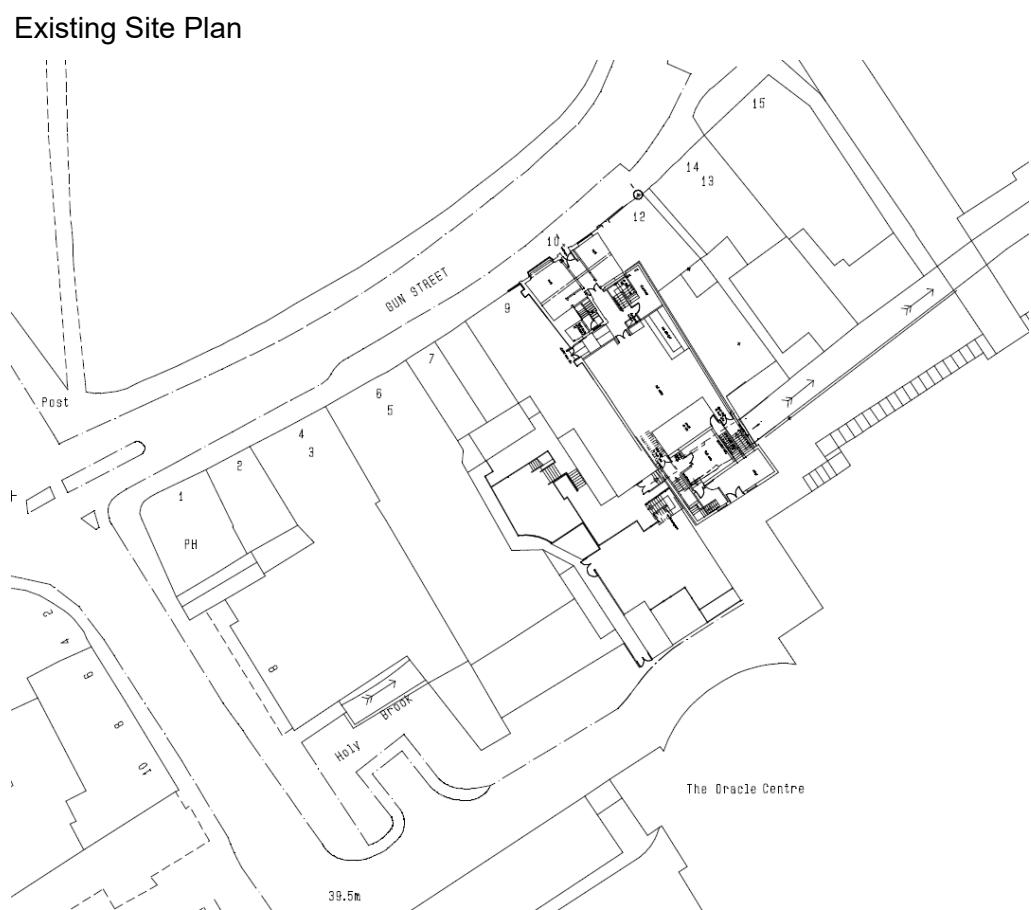
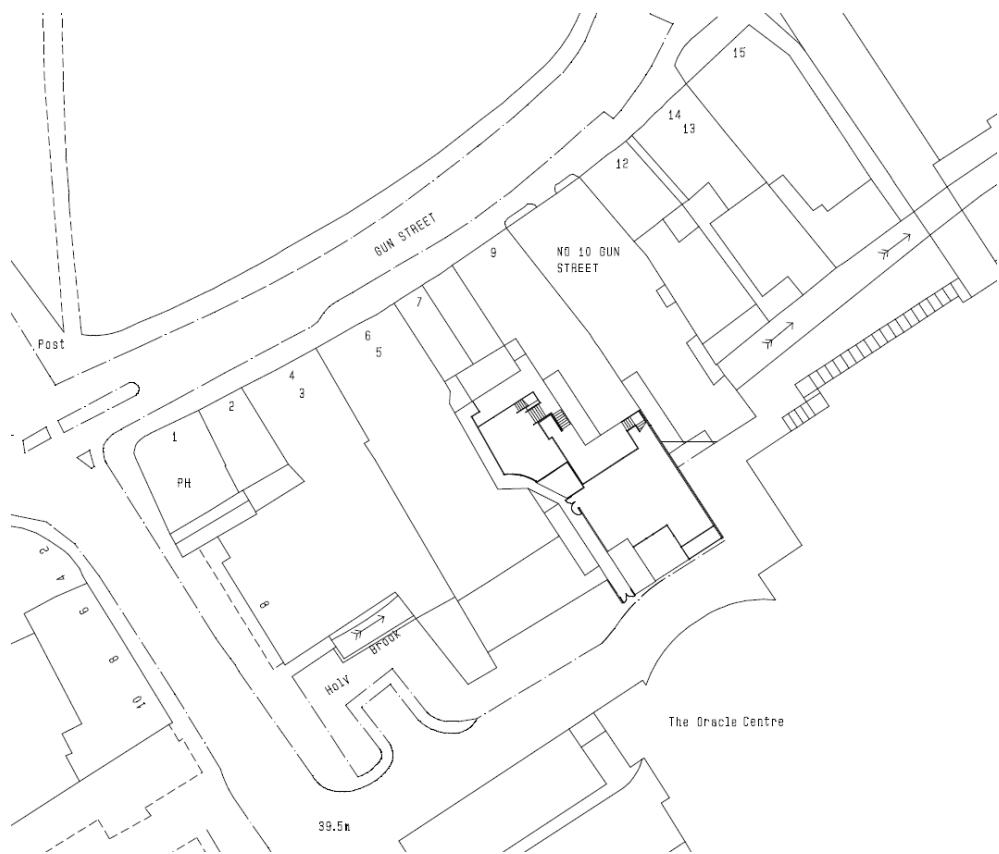
9.4 Whilst not significant, during the construction phase the proposed development would clearly contribute to and encourage associated economic activity by directly sustaining jobs in the borough. This would be supported further and in the long term by new employment opportunities in the hospitality sector.

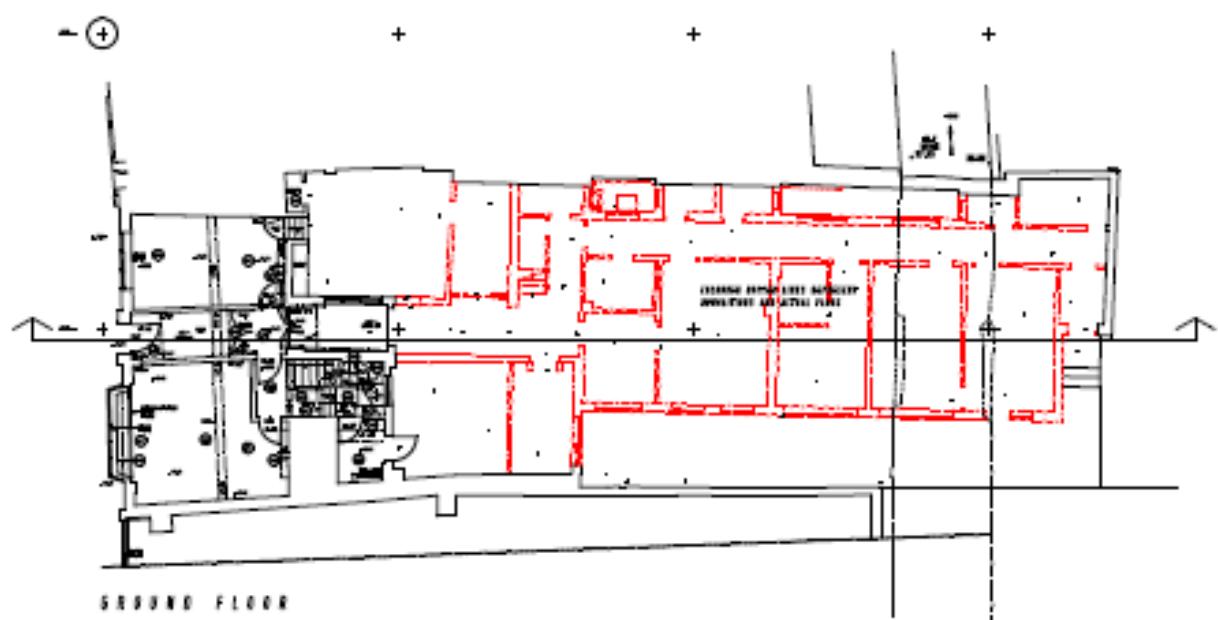
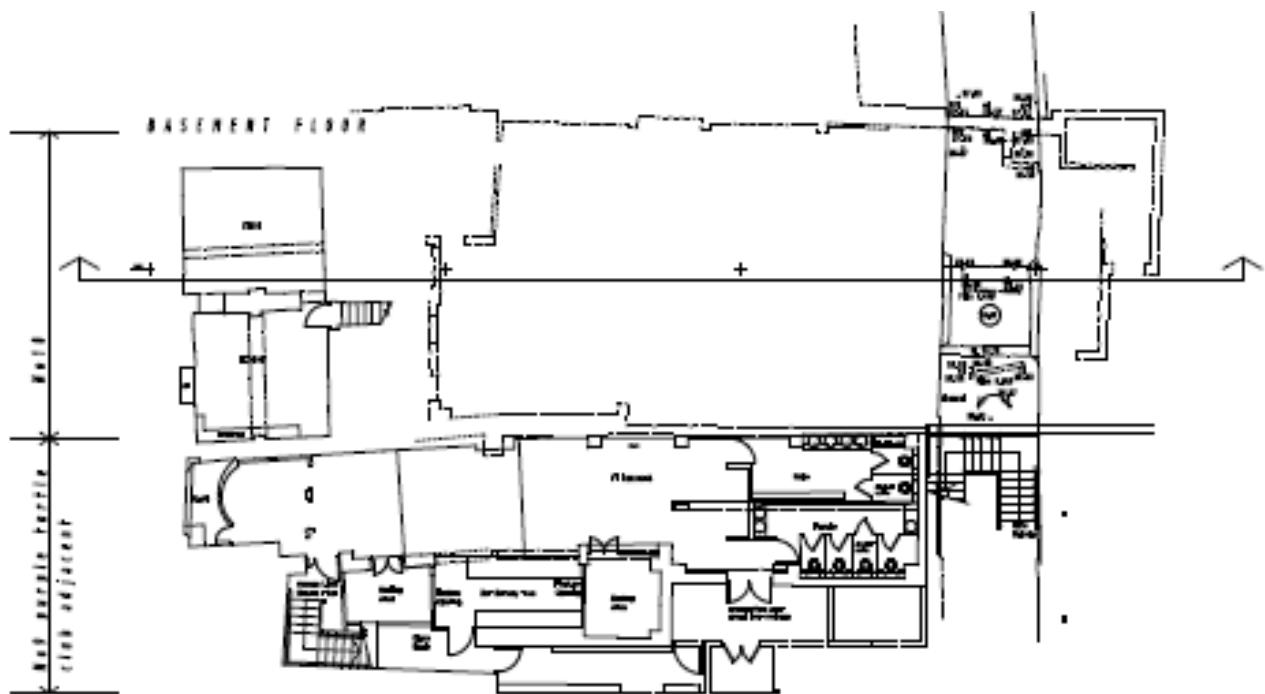
9.5 In terms of the social role, the proposal will secure the reuse of a heritage asset, ensuring the building is protected and valued in the future. In terms of health and wellbeing the internal and external spaces proposed are considered to be of good quality and would provide improved and extended facilities for the Purple Turtle, a popular town centre entertainment venue. The proposed performance hall also has the potential to provide tangible and significant cultural and leisure benefits to the local community, through providing an additional purposely designed facility within the town for hosting of live entertainment performances.

9.6 With regard to the natural environment the proposed refurbished and extended building would meet an enhanced level of sustainability than existing through compliance with appropriate BREEAM standards. The introduction of on-site soft landscape in the form of a green roof and habitat enhancement scheme would provide visual and environmental benefits, thereby allowing the site to confidently perform a far greater environmental role than it does as present. Whilst the de-culverting of the Holy Brook is not proposed, the proposals are considered to perform a more positive environmental role than at present and safeguard the ability to de-culvert in the future.

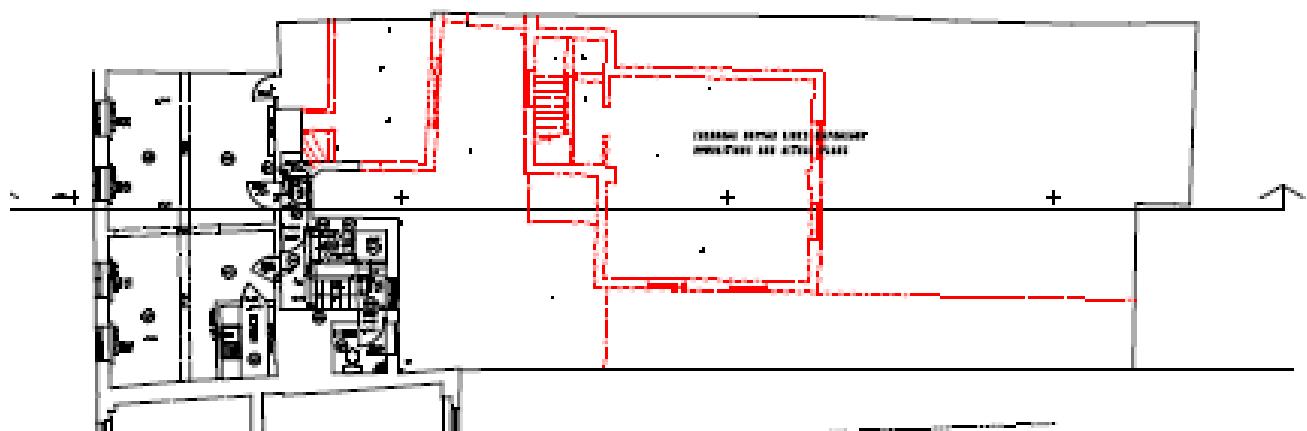
9.7 In summary, the proposal provides notable and tangible benefits, fulfilling many aspects which contribute to achieving the three dimensions of sustainable development. Having regard to all matters raised, it is concluded that these combined environmental, economic and social benefits would, outweigh the identified low level of 'less than substantial' to the host grade II Listed building and surrounding St Marys Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area and impact identified upon the residential amenity of the adjacent residential occupiers at 11-12 Gun Street. Therefore, when applying an overall critical planning balance of all material considerations presented, these applications for full planning permission and accompanying application for listed building consent are considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Development Plan and are recommended for approval subject to conditions.

Existing and Proposed Plans shown below:

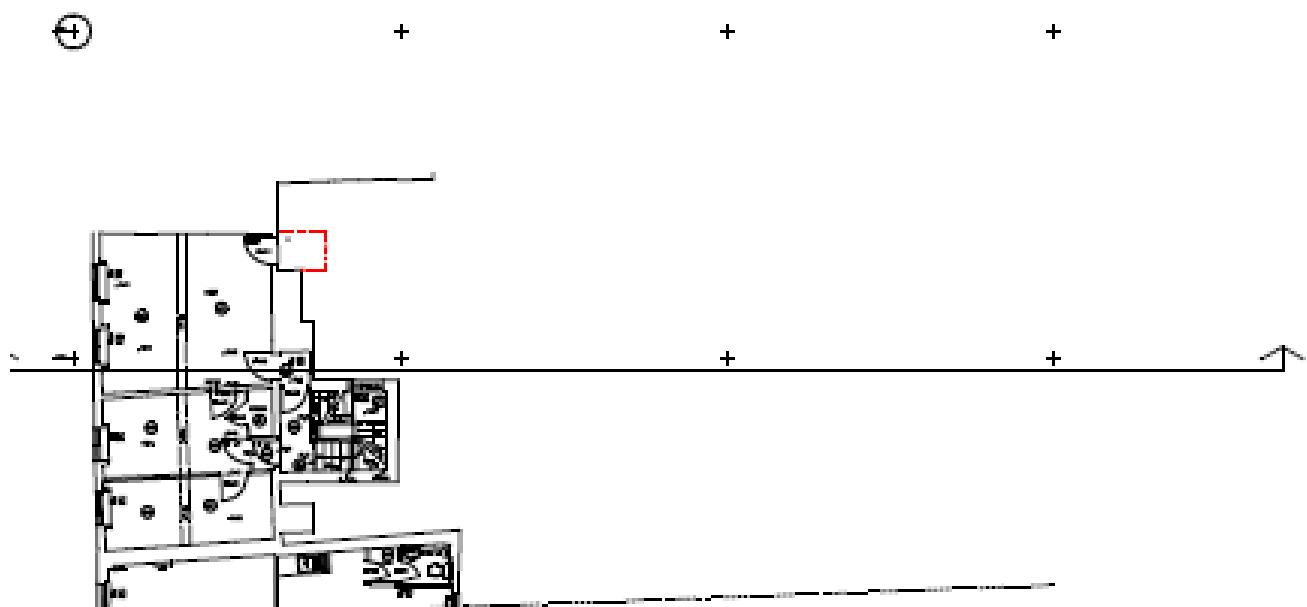




Existing Basement and Ground Floor Plans

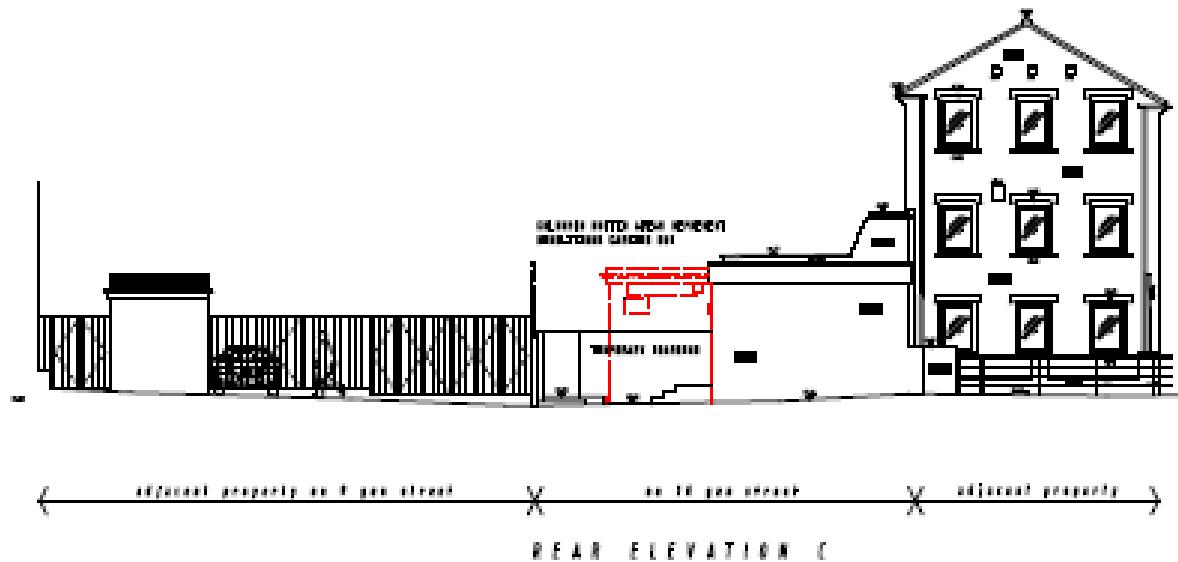


FIRST FLOOR

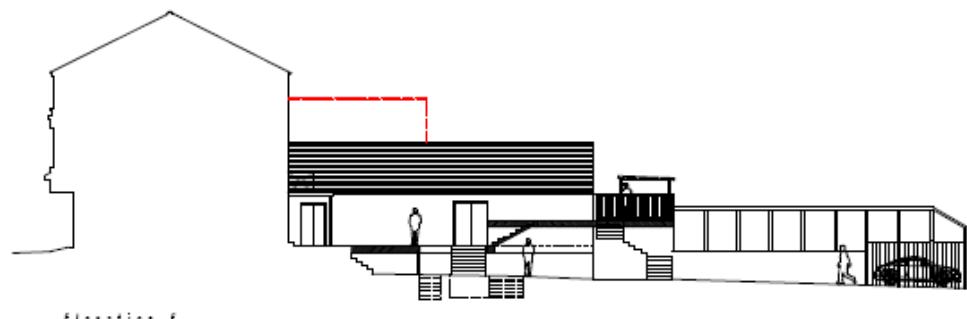


SECOND FLOOR

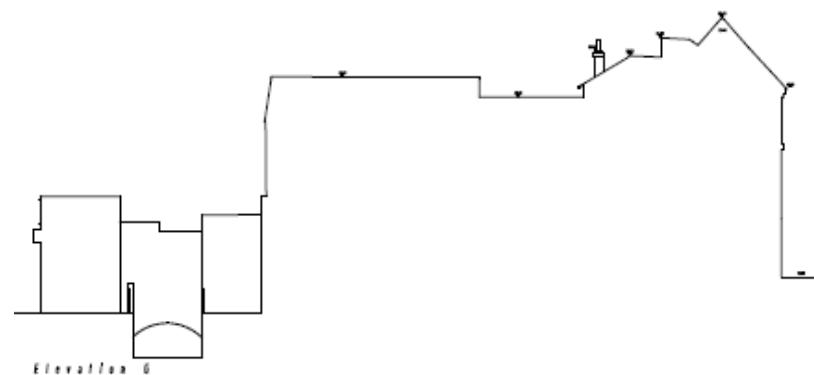
Existing First and Second Floor Plans



Existing Front and Rear Elevations

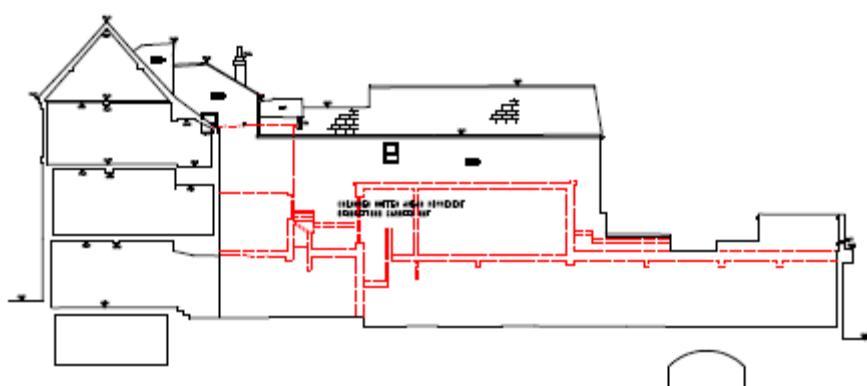


Elevation F



Elevation G

Existing Side Elevations

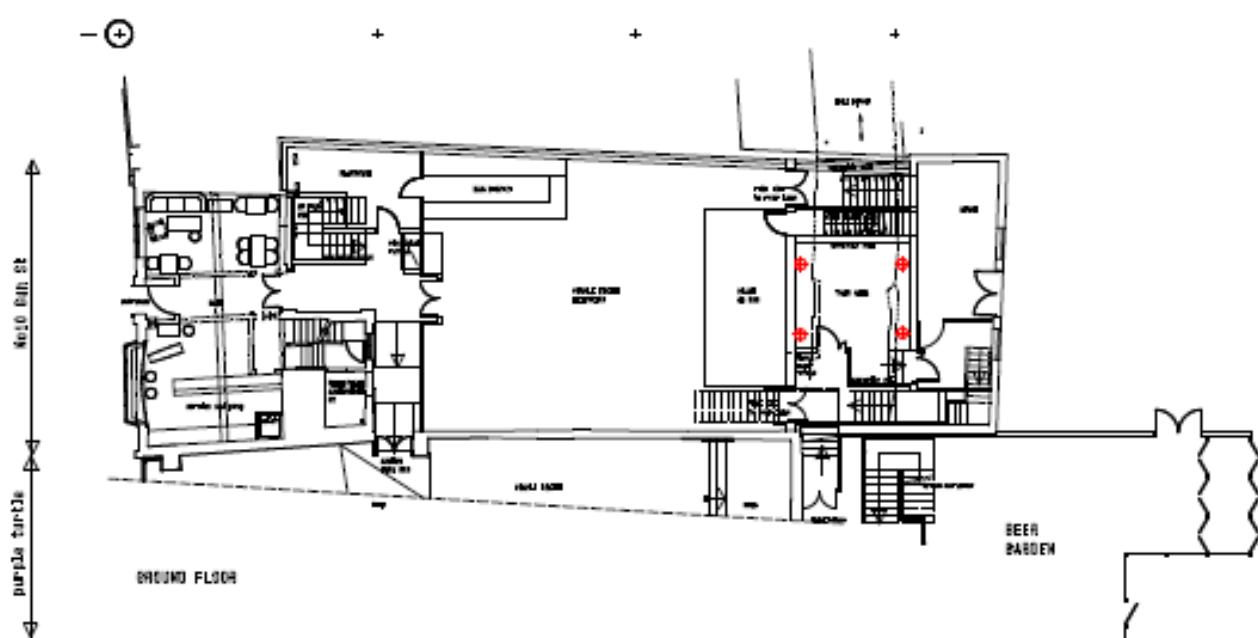
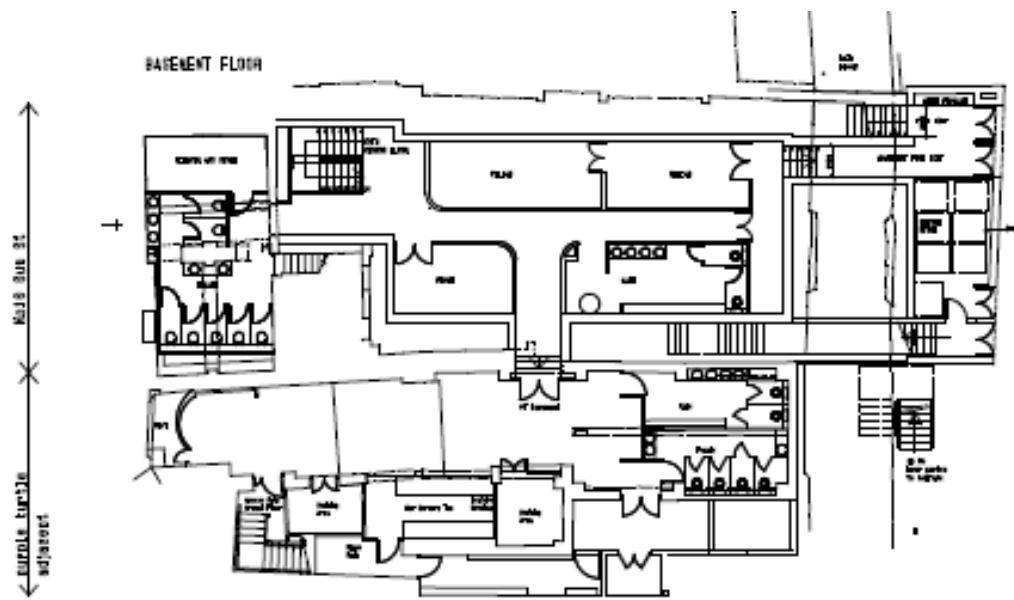


Existing Site Section

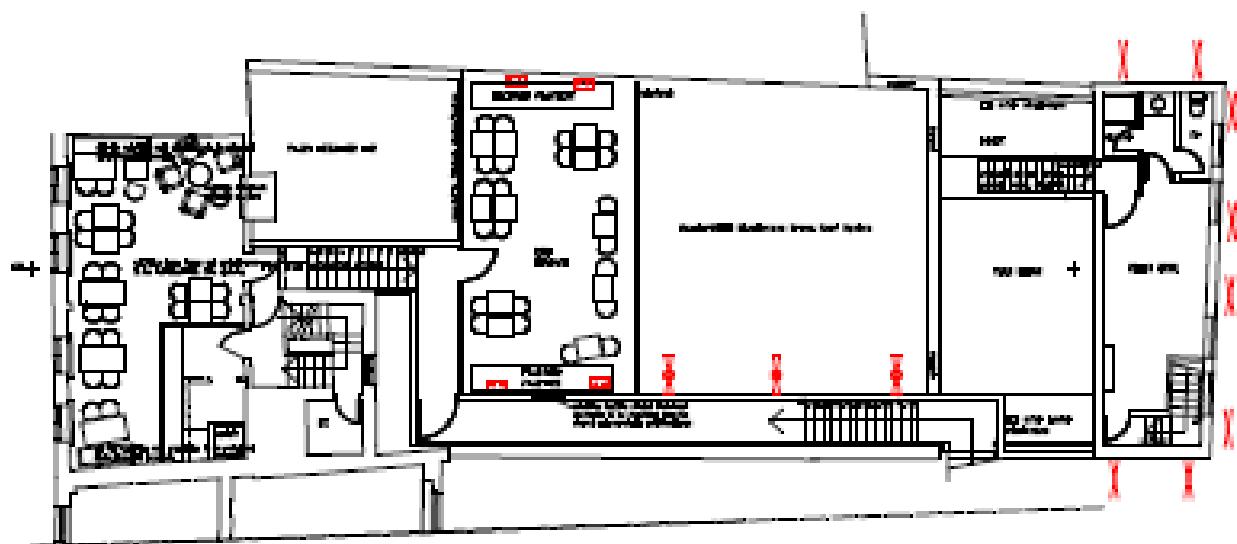


REAR ELEVATION A

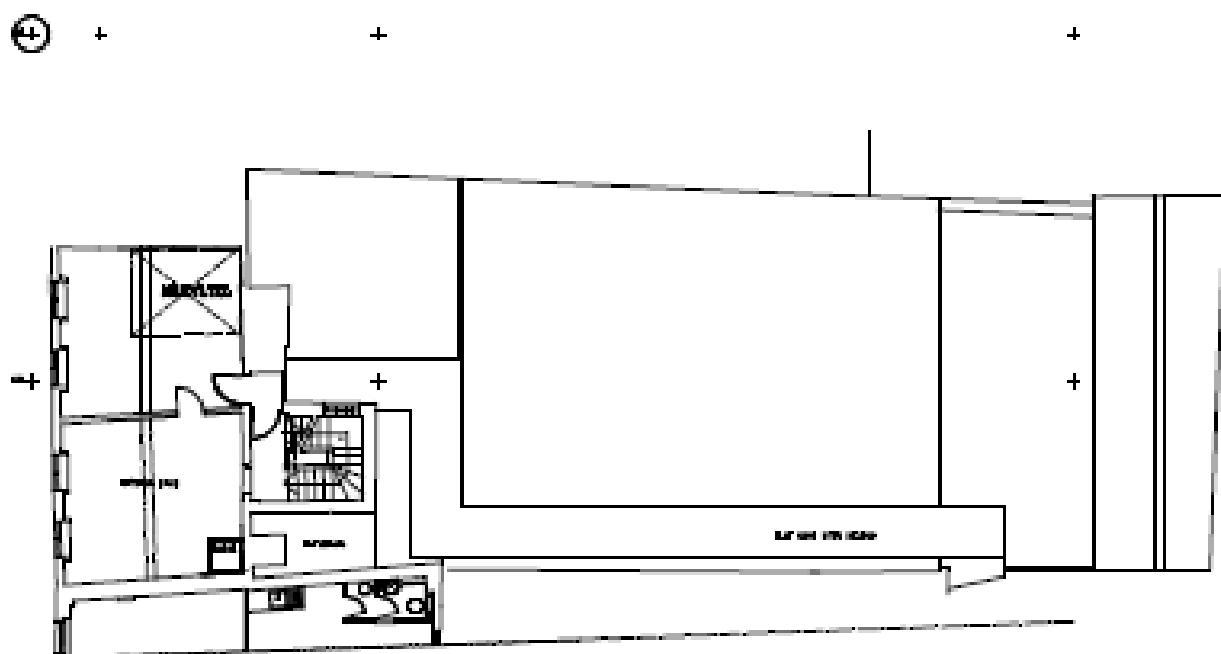
Existing Rear Street Scene



Proposed Basement and Ground Floor Plans



FIRST FLOOR

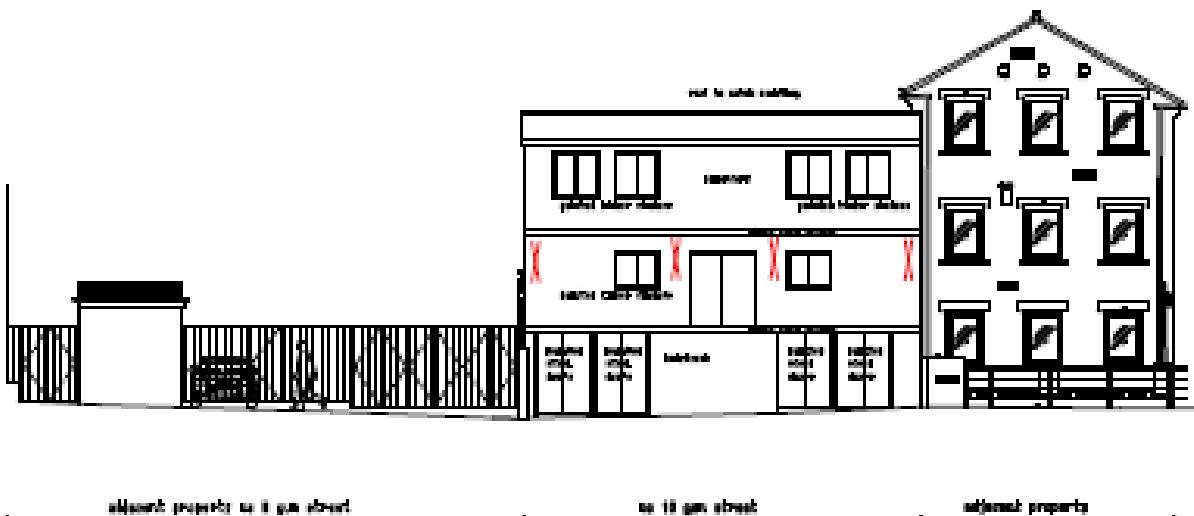


SECOND FLOOR

Proposed First and Second Floor Plans



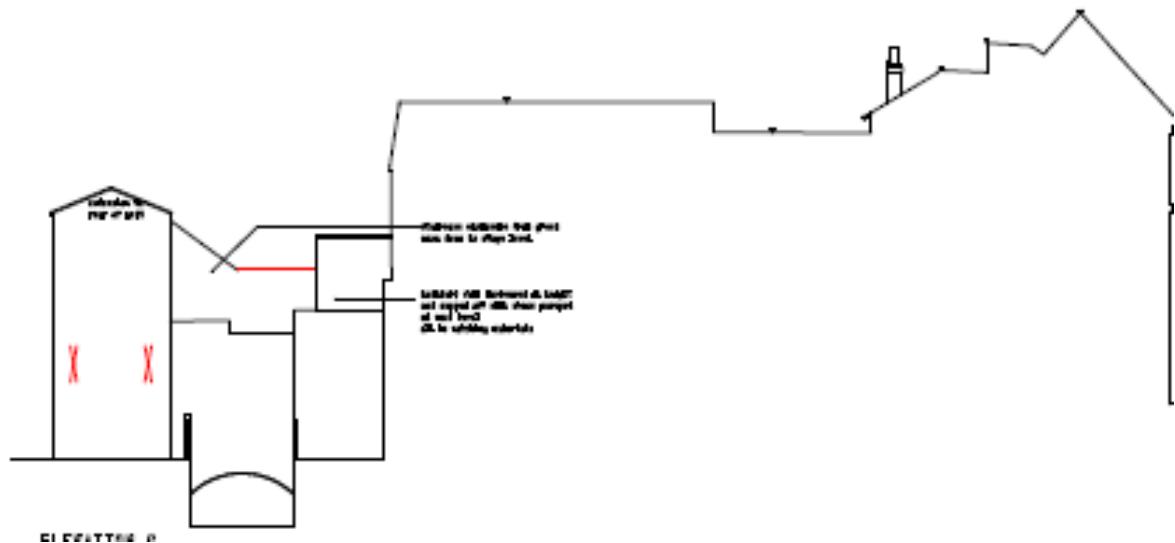
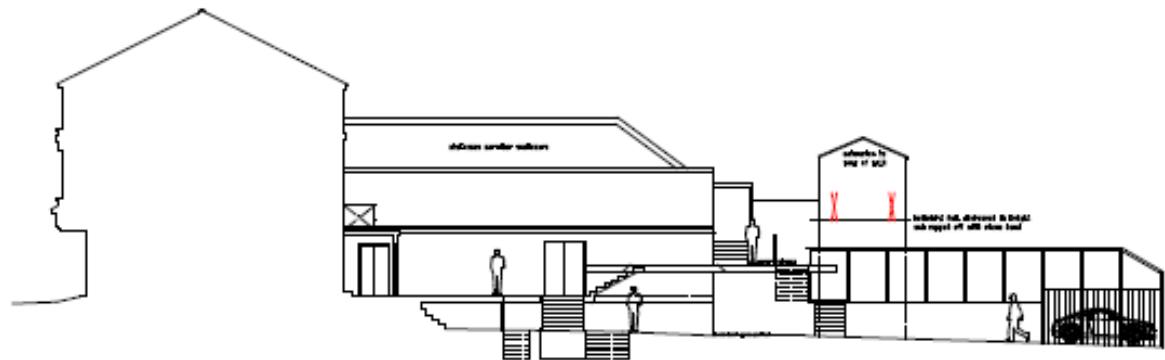
Proposed Front Elevation



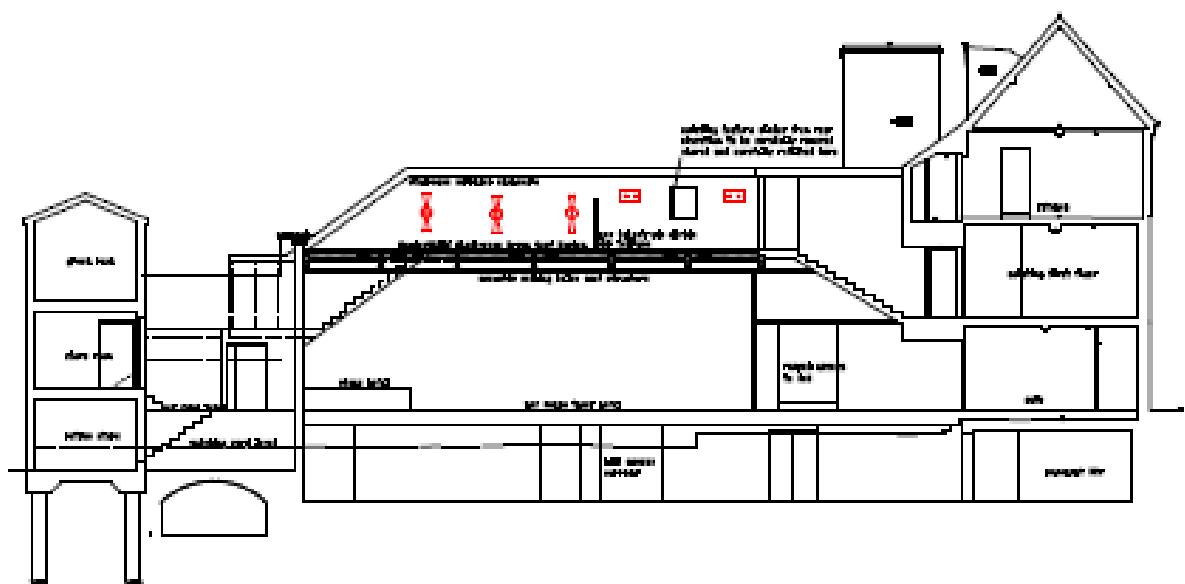
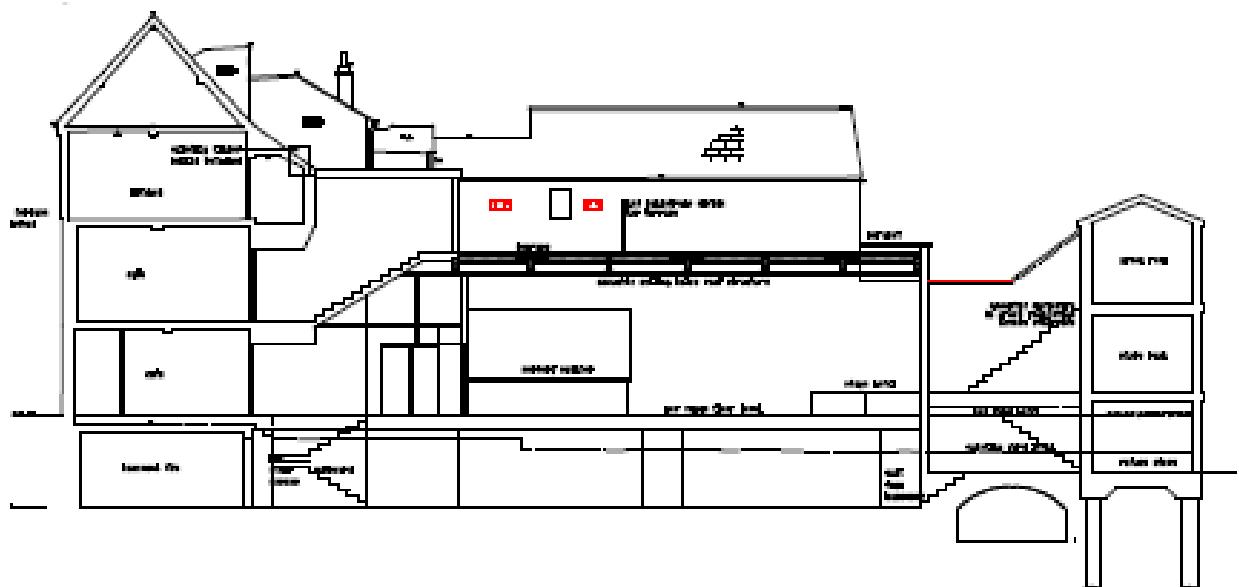
Proposed Rear Elevation



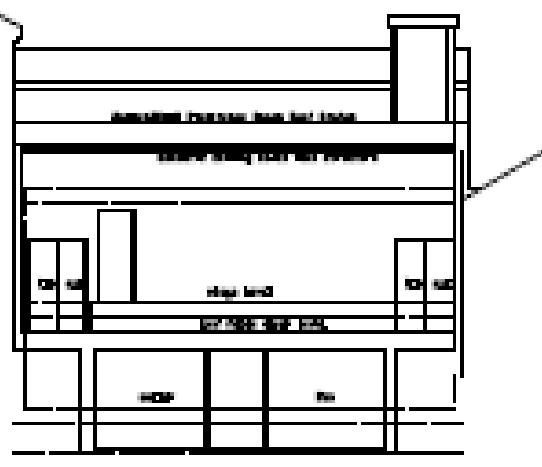
Proposed Rear Street-Scene Section



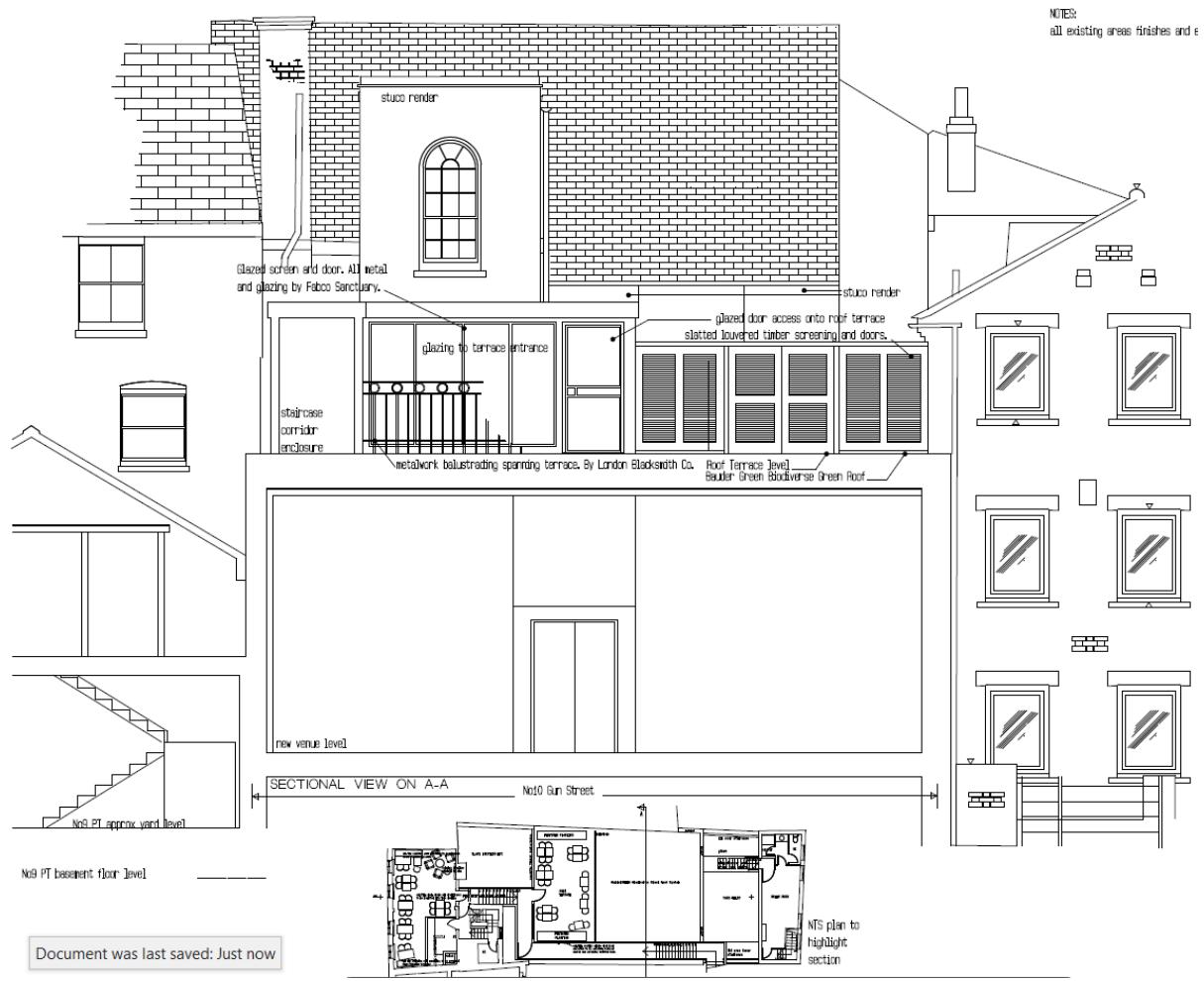
Proposed Side Elevations



Proposed Building Sections



Proposed Yard Section Drawing



Proposed more detailed Rear Elevation Section



Proposed Visual of First Floor Level Rear Terrace and Green Roof

APPENDIX 1

The following planning permission and listed building consent were granted in 2016:

15/1281/FUL

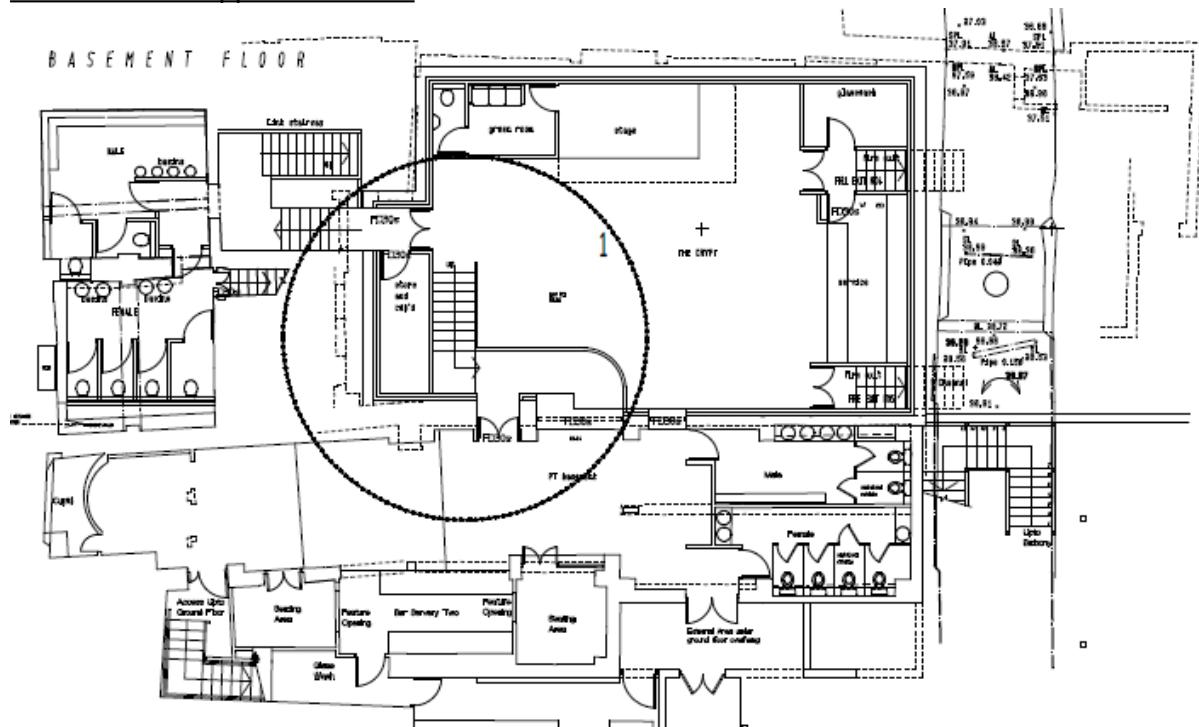
Change of use from office (Class B1) to café/restaurant (Class A3) at basement to second floor level, including replacement ground and first floor rear extension; Excavation of basement to rear as extension to existing nightclub (Sui Generis) at No. 9 Gun St; Erection of replacement two storey building to rear for micro-brewery (Sui Generis) with associated access, part de-culverting of brook, external open area and various other alterations.

15/1282/LBC

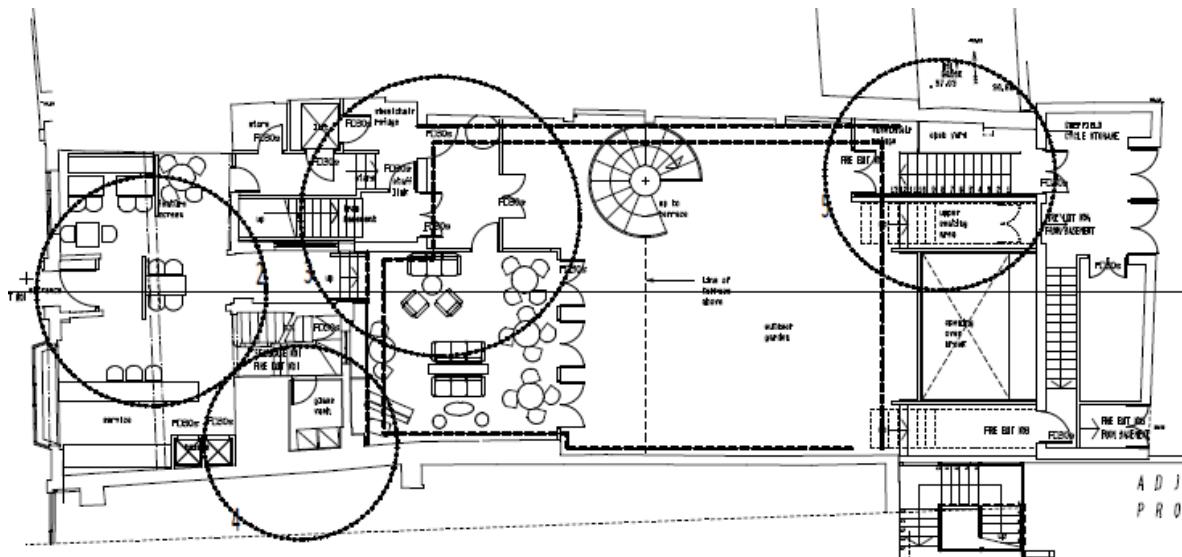
Various internal and external alterations including demolition of existing ground/first floor rear extensions, in association with change of use from office (Class B1) to café/restaurant (Class A3) at basement to second floor level, including replacement ground and first floor rear extension; Excavation of basement to rear as extension to existing nightclub (Sui Generis) at No. 9 Gun St; Erection of replacement two storey building to rear for micro-brewery (Sui Generis) with associated access, part deculverting of brook, external open area and various other alterations.

The notable differences of the above previous proposals compared to the current proposals are that this previous proposals included part de-culverting of a section of the Holy Brook to the rear of the site, smaller part two part single storey rear extension, expansion of the Purple Turtle use into no. 10 Gun Street but at basement level only and provision of a micro-brewery in the proposed outbuilding to the rear of the site.

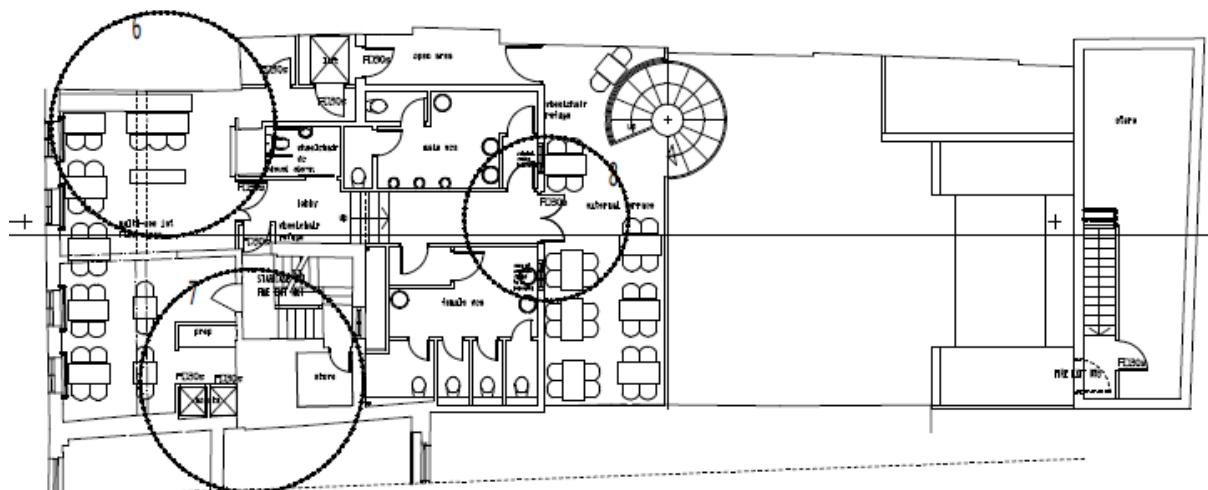
2016 Scheme Approved Plans:



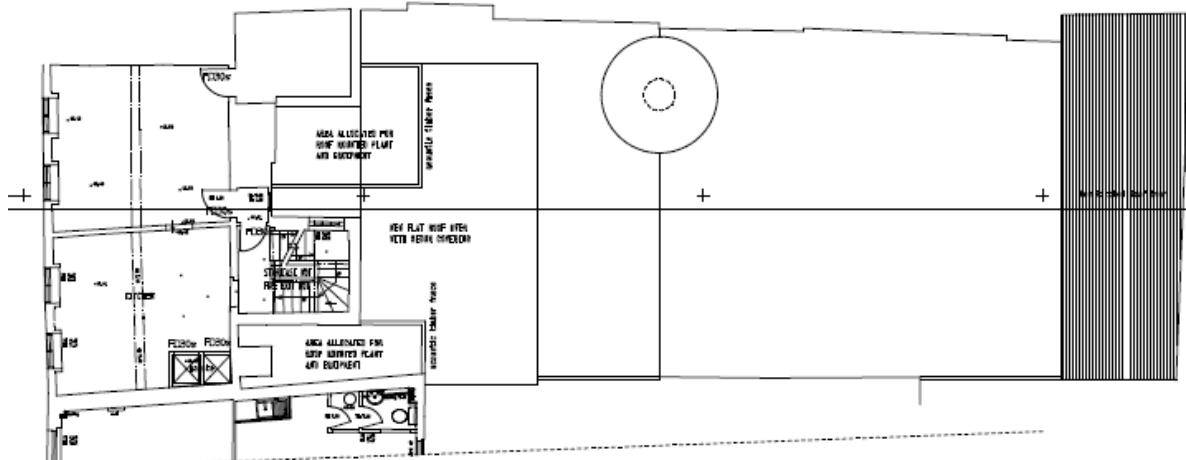
2016 Consented Scheme Proposed Basement Floor Plan



2016 Consented Scheme Proposed Ground Floor Plan



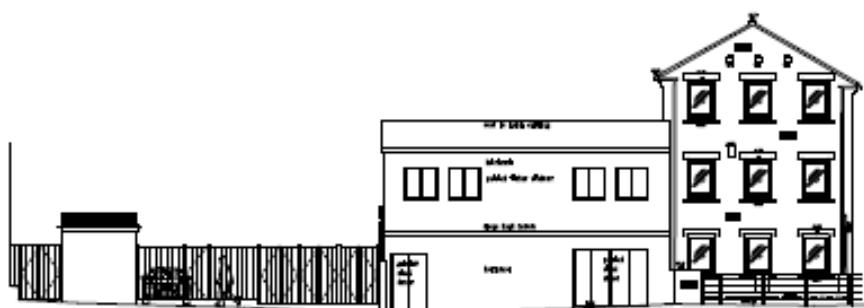
2016 Consented Scheme Proposed First Floor Plan



2016 Consented Scheme Proposed Second Floor Plan



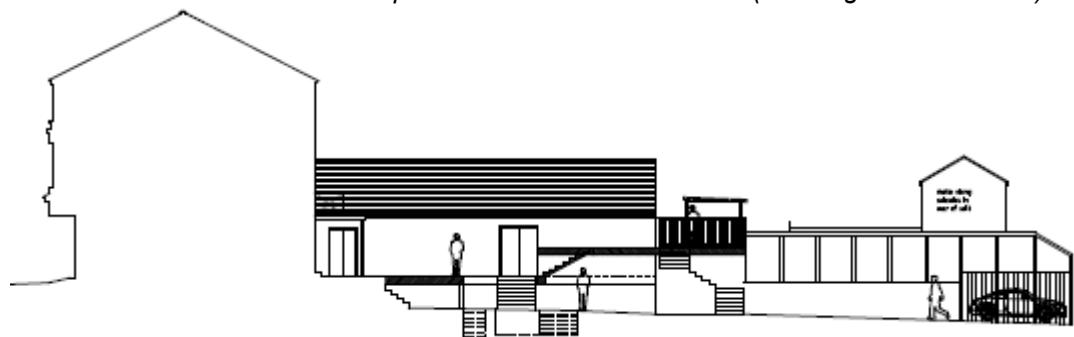
2016 Consented Scheme Proposed Front Elevation

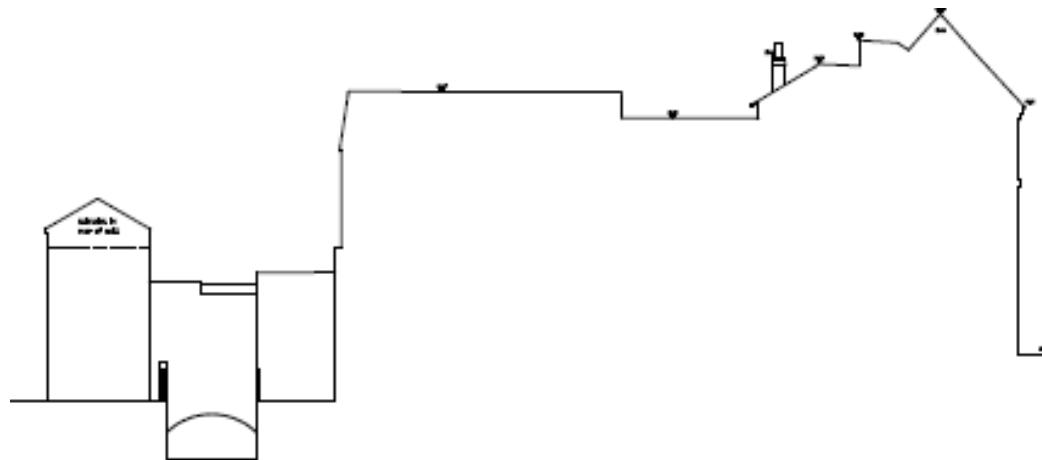


2016 Consented Scheme Proposed Rear Elevation (showing rear outbuilding)

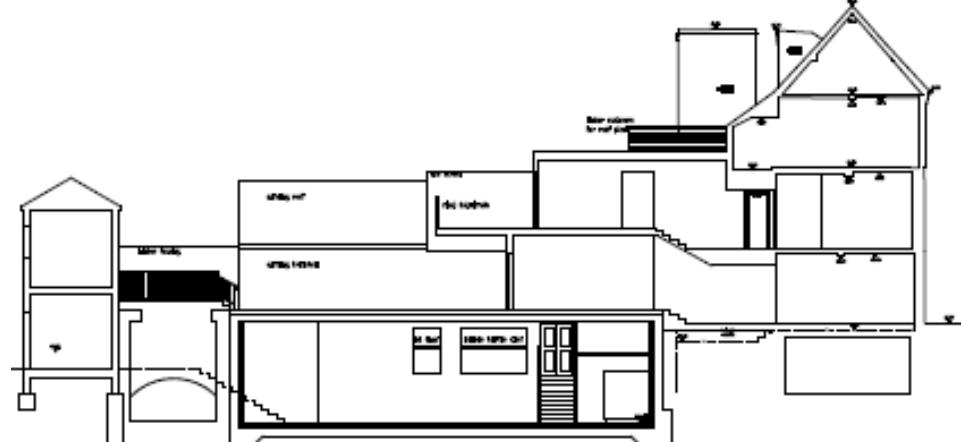
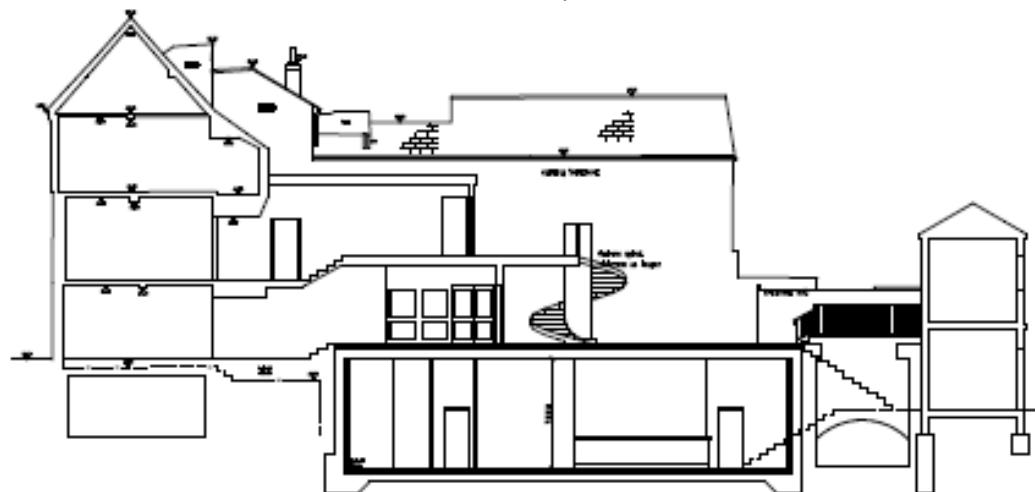


2016 Consented Scheme Proposed Rear Elevation Section (showing rear extension)





2016 Consented Scheme Proposed Side Elevation



2016 Consented Scheme Proposed Site Sections

The following planning permission and listed building consent was granted in 2020:

19/1243FUL

Change of use from office (Class B1) to café / restaurant (Class A3) at ground to second floor level, including ground and first floor extensions following removal of previous. Erection of building to rear for microbrewery (Sui Generis) with associated access, external open area and various other internal and external alterations -

scheme almost identical to previous Consent 151281 but without basement nightclub extension and no de-culverting of brook.

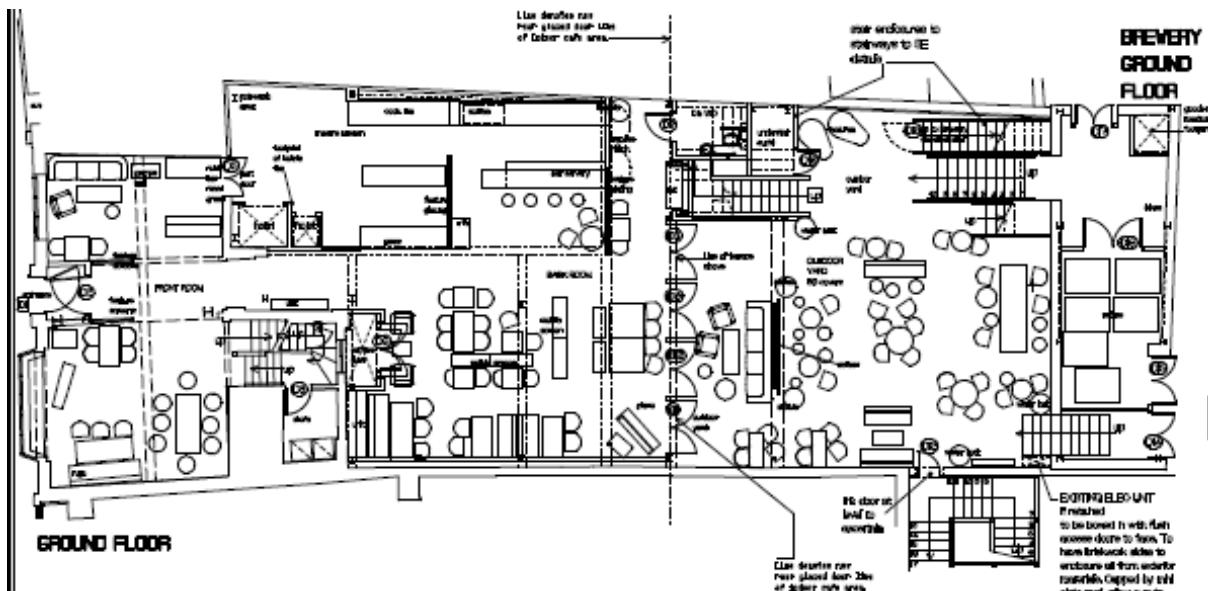
19/1244LBC

Various internal and external alterations including demolition of existing ground/first floor rear extensions, in association with change of use from office (Class B1) to café / restaurant (Class A3) at ground to second floor level, including ground and first floor extensions following removal of previous. Erection of building to rear for microbrewery (Sui Generis) with associated access, external open area and various other alterations.

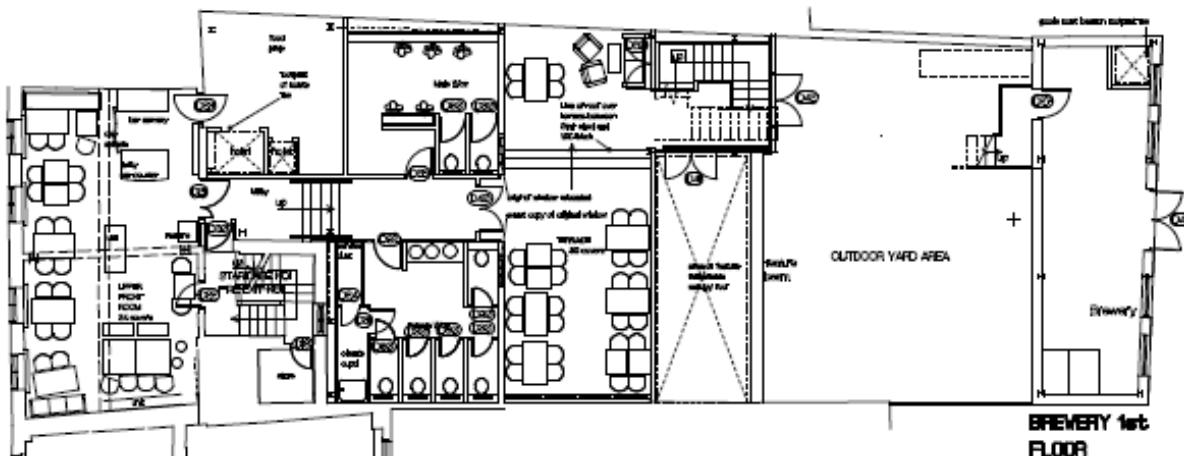
The above scheme was very similar to the consented 2016 scheme but no longer proposed to expand the Purple Turtle into 10 Gun Street with basement extension removed. This approval however did propose a slightly larger part two part single storey rear extension, but no longer proposed to part de-culvert a section of the Holy Brook to the rear of the site.

The key differences of the consented 2020 scheme to the current proposals under consideration as part of this report, are that the expansion of the Purple Turtle is again now proposed (as per the 2016 scheme) but at basement and ground floor level. In addition, a larger part two, part single storey rear extension is proposed and the outbuilding to the rear of the site is now proposed for storage and green room use, rather than as a micro-brewery.

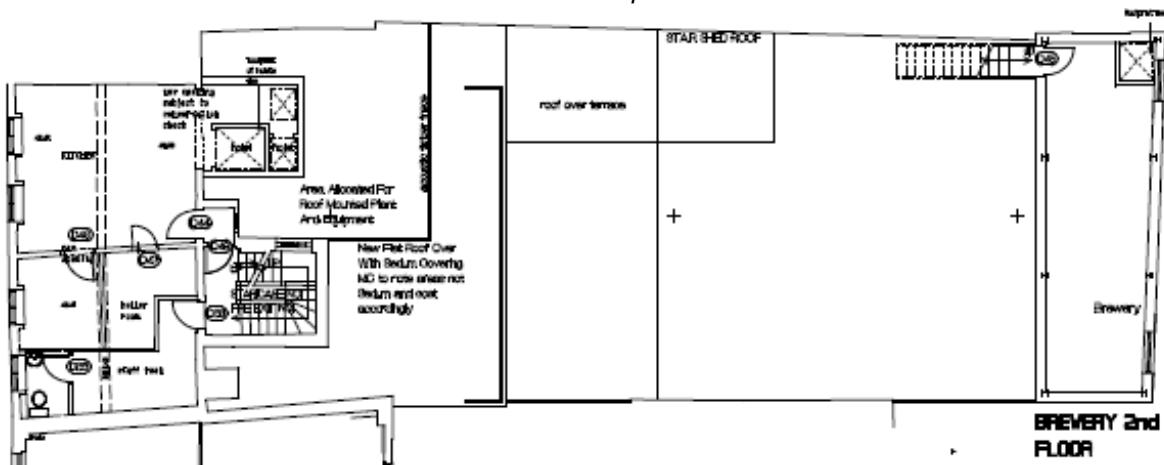
2020 Scheme Approval Plans:



2020 Consented Scheme Proposed Ground Floor Plan



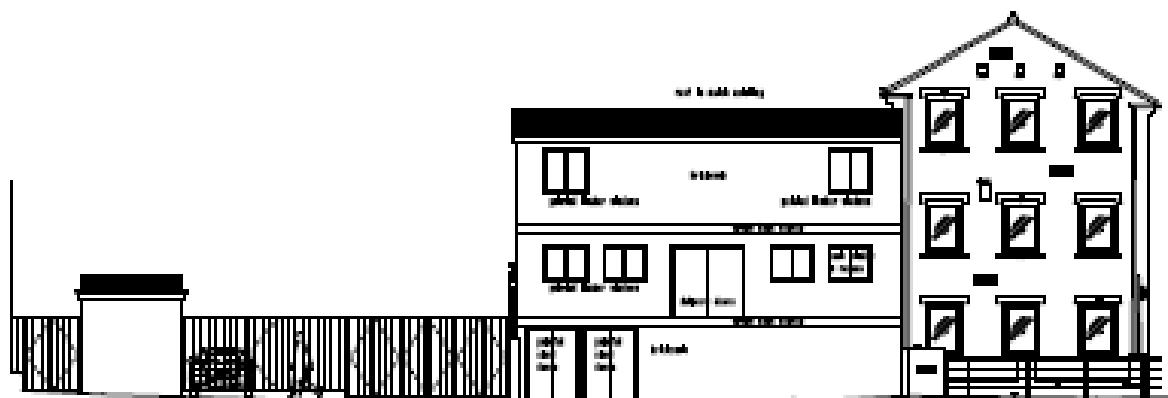
2020 Consented Scheme Proposed First Floor Plan



2020 Consented Scheme Proposed Second Floor Plan



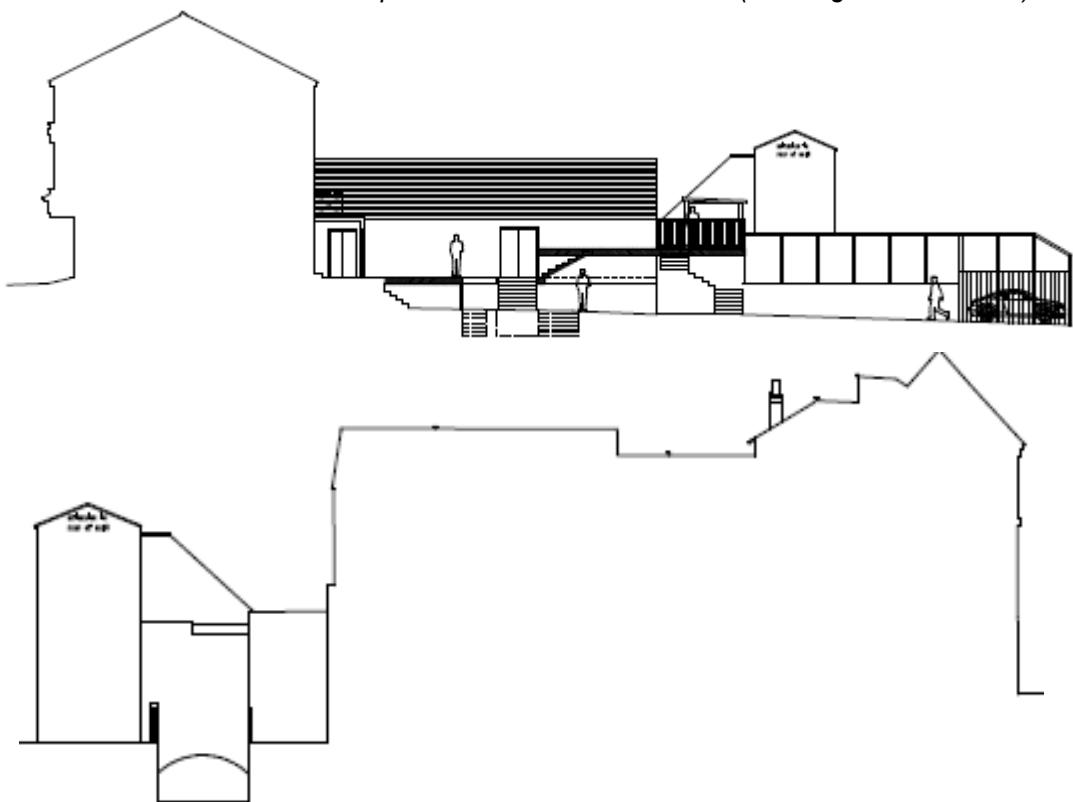
2020 Consented Scheme Proposed Front Elevation



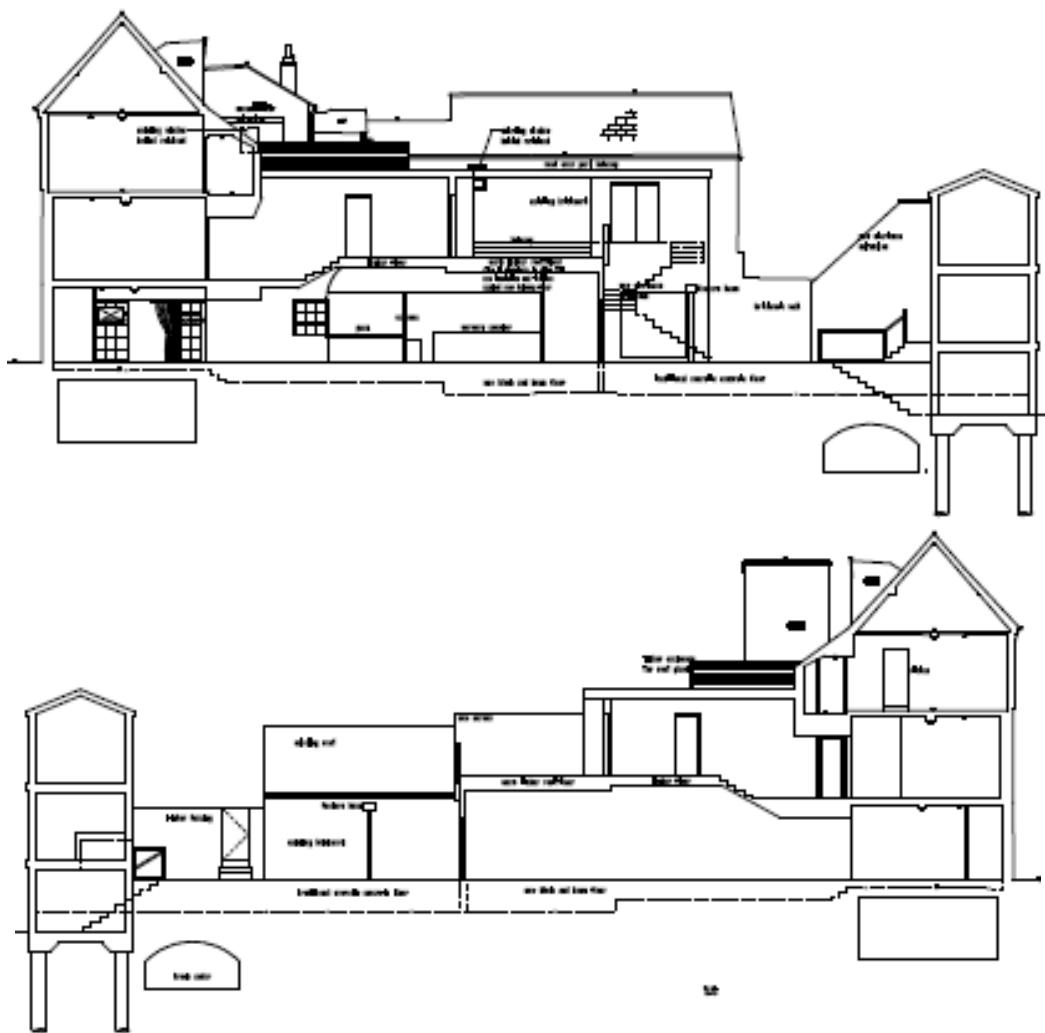
2020 Consented Scheme Proposed Rear Elevation (showing outbuilding)



2020 Consented Scheme Proposed Rear Elevation Section (showing rear extension)



2020 Consented Scheme Proposed Side Elevations



2020 Consented Scheme Proposed Site Sections

05 February 2025



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT
Ward	Caversham Heights
Planning Application Reference:	PL/24/1148 (HOU)
Site Address:	4 Scholars Close, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7DN
Proposed Development	Proposed erection of front, side and rear single-storey extensions (rear extension off existing structural slab) with associated internal alterations and fenestration changes. Roof finish to be changed and installation of solar panels to roof.
Applicant	Mr & Mrs M & A Yeo and Fernandez
Report author	Sian Hickey
Deadline:	Originally 25 December 2024, extension of time agreed until 7 February 2025
Recommendations	Grant planning permission, subject to conditions as follows
Conditions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>TL1 – Time Limit</i> 2. <i>AP1 – Approved Plans</i> 3. <i>M3 – Materials As Specified</i> 4. <i>DC1 – Vehicle Parking As Specified prior to occupation</i> 5. <i>L7A –Development in accordance with submitted Arboricultural Method Statement</i> 6. <i>Precommencement - Trial hole / trench investigations to establish the existing foundations. Arboricultural Method Statement to be submitted for approval prior to commencement for any additional foundation works required resulting from the investigations.</i>
Informatives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>IF6 - Building Regs</i> 2. <i>I2 - Pre-commencement conditions</i> 3. <i>IF7 - Complaints About Construction</i> 4. <i>IF8 – Encroachment,</i> 5. <i>IF3 – Highways</i> 6. <i>I24 – Damage to highway verge</i> 7. <i>I1 – Positive and Proactive</i>

1. Executive summary

1.1. The proposal is to alter and extend the existing residential bungalow. The proposal is considered acceptable in terms of its effect on the character of the area, the effect on neighbouring amenity and the impact on trees.

1.2. The proposal is recommended for approval subject to the conditions as outlined above.

2. Introduction and site description

2.1. The application seeks full planning permission for a single storey side extension, a single storey rear extension, and a single storey front extension. The proposal also includes converting the existing garages into habitable space, alterations to the existing fenestration and materials, a new roof finish, removal of the existing chimney and the mounting of 12 solar panels onto the forward roofslope.

2.2. The application is required to be determined by Planning Applications Committee as the applicant is a Ward Councillor.

2.3. The application site is a bungalow located at the end of a cul-de-sac (Scholars Close) off St Peters Avenue. The street consists of two houses and four bungalows. The rear boundary of the application site runs adjacent to St Peter's Hill. Two oak trees in the rear garden are protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

Location Plan



Site Photograph



3. The Proposal

3.1. The works comprise converting the existing garages into habitable use and erecting a single storey side extension in front of the existing garage closest to the main dwelling. The existing garage flat roof would be made good with a rear facing parapet wall. At the front of the property, a single storey pitched roof extension is proposed to create an

entrance hall. Replacement windows and doors are proposed with aluminium polyester powder coated frames, and a composite front door with sidelights and glazing. The proposal also includes insulated render being applied to the existing masonry. Natural slate tiles are proposed to replace the existing tiles of the main roof, and 12 Solar Panels are proposed in the front facing roofslope. The plans show the existing chimney is to be removed. At the rear, a single storey extension is proposed to replace the existing conservatory.

3.2. The following plans/documents have been received:

- Drawing No. 336-1300 – Existing and Proposed Elevations
- Drawing No. 336-1200-A – Site Location Plan, Existing Site Plan and Floor Plans
- Tree Protection Plan
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Arboricultural Method Statement

Received 30th October 2024

- Drawing No. 336-1205-B – Proposed Site Plan and Floor Plans

Received 20th November 2024

- Bat Survey

Received 18th December 2024

4. Planning history

None

5. Consultations

5.1. The following consultation responses were received:

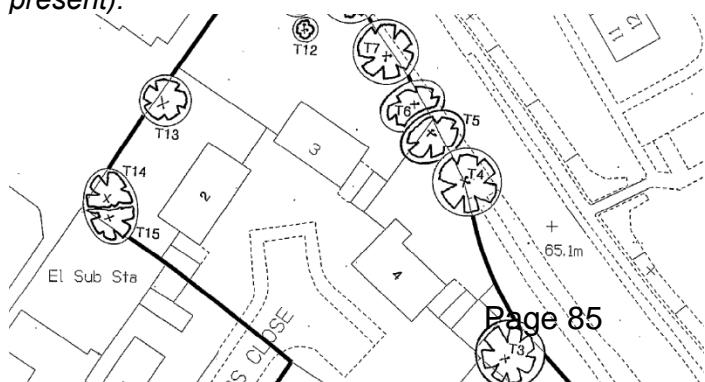
5.2 *RBC, Transport Development Control*

The proposed works will result in the loss of the 2 garages and therefore the loss of 2 parking spaces. Submitted plans illustrate 2 parking spaces located on the front drive accessed via an existing shared vehicle crossing.

There are no Transport objections to this application as parking is being provided in accordance with current standards.

5.3 *RBC Natural Environment*

Two Oak trees in the rear garden are protected by TPO 135/01 (other non-TPO trees are also present):



With reference to **Existing & Proposed Elevations Plan 336-1300, Proposed Site Plan & Proposed Plans 336-1205-A, Arboricultural Implications Assessment dated 30/10/24 and Arboricultural Method Statement dated 30/10/24 (both from Merewood Arboricultural Consultancy Services)**:

"The AMS [Arboricultural Method Statement] (following on from the AIA) demonstrates that the development is acceptable and that trees can be appropriately protected. However, the acceptability of the AMS is partially based on one important assumption that it makes; that being that the foundations of the existing conservatory will be used for the rear (dining room) extension. I understand that conservatories are not required to have Building Control approval if under 30m², which would apply to the one here, hence the foundations of the conservatory are unknown and may not be sufficient for the rear extention proposed. If that is the case, excavation within the RPA of a protected Oak (T4 of TPO and tree survey) would be required and as such would need to be addressed within the AMS.

Given the above, I asked for clarity on whether trial holes had been dug to establish the foundation depth to confirm if they would meet NHBC standards for the proposed rear extension. In response, the agent advised in his email of 14/11/24:

'That is the intention, to reuse the existing foundations to avoid major ground works within the RPA of the oak trees. No trial holes have yet been undertaken as these would be done so on award of consent to limit costs etc. to the applicants. Any trial holes to establish the foundations would be done so by hand, this can be discharged by condition as part of any consent notice.

The ground conditions in this part of Reading are Boyne hill gravel overlaying Seaford Newhaven chalk formation which provides a solid ground base and depths can be fairly minimal - The investigations and subsequent structural design would be provided by a charted structural engineer in due course as Stage 4'

As such, approval will be with an unknown in relation to the foundations. Whilst it is appreciated that foundations are largely dealt with by Building Control, in this case it is appropriate to deal with these via a planning condition due to the potential works within the RPA of a protected tree for the foundations, and also the initial trial digs mentioned.

As well as condition L7A requiring development in accordance with **Arboricultural Method Statement dated 30/10/24 from Merewood Arboricultural Consultancy Services**, we also need a separate condition to deal with the foundation investigation and possibility of new / deeper foundations being required. Something along the following lines:

'No development shall commence on site until the location, specification and method of trial hole / trench investigations to establish the existing foundations of the rear conservatory has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. If, following investigations, existing foundations are found to be inadequate for the rear extension (dining room) hereby approved, then no development shall commence on site until an Arboricultural Method Statement Addendum has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority detailing the new foundation specifications and tree protection measures to minimise harm to adjacent retained and protected trees. Development shall then be in accordance with the approved Arboricultural Method Statement Addendum.

Reason: In order to ensure that appropriate protection is given to trees of amenity value within and adjacent to the site in accordance with Policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the Reading Borough Council adopted Tree Strategy 2021'."

5.4 RBC Ecology

"The bungalow may host roosting bats and to confirm whether this is the case, and if so how bats will be affected by the proposals, a bat survey will need to be carried out. Alternatively, the applicant may wish to provide photographs that we will then be able to review for any potential features suitable for use by roosting bats. Such evidence will need to be provided prior to determination of the application or the application would need to be refused on the grounds that insufficient evidence had been provided to determine the likely impacts of the proposals on bats (which are a protected species and a material consideration in the planning process)."

Officer note: further to the comments above, photographs were provided and reviewed by Ecology, however, the photographs were not considered sufficient evidence that a bat survey is not needed.

Subsequently, a bat survey was submitted on 18 December 2024 and reviewed by Ecology. Additional comments were received as follows:

The Bat report (Arbtech, December 2024) has been undertaken to an appropriate standard and concludes that the risk of bats being affected by the proposals is minimal. There are therefore no objections to this application on ecology grounds.

5.5 Neighbour Consultations

1 Scholars Place, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7DN
2 Scholars Place, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7DN
3 Scholars Place, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7DN
5 Scholars Place, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7DN
18 St Peters Avenue, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7DD

No letters of representation have been received.

6. Legal context

- 6.1 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 paragraph 12).
- 6.2 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).
- 6.3 Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

National Planning Practice Guidance

SPD – Design Guide to House Extensions (2021)

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)

CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)

H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation)

H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space)

TR3 Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

TR5 Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network)

EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands)

EN17 (Noise Generating Equipment)

CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction)

7. Appraisal

Character and Appearance

7.1 Policy H9 states that an extension to a house will be acceptable where it respects the character of the house in terms of scale, location, materials, and design and respects the character and pattern of neighbouring properties and the street as a whole in terms of scale, location, materials and design, and any important existing building line. Policy CC7 also sets out relevant considerations for design.

7.2 Officers consider the proposed front extension is appropriate in terms of size, scale and design. Both of the two-storey dwellings within the Close have pitched roof porches thus this is not considered out of character. The proposed side extension roof is to be set down from the existing ridge height of the original property and set back from the existing front elevation of the original dwelling, thus protecting the original form and shape of the host property and ensuring a subservient addition. The single storey rear extension is positioned in the same footprint as the existing conservatory and as such is not considered to be harmful in terms of scale. The size and placement of the window and door openings are considered acceptable. The proposed solar panels have been positioned on the roof to create a balanced feel. It is considered that, although more modern in appearance, the scheme has been appropriately designed to complement the existing dwelling and would not harm the wider streetscene. The proposal is considered compliant with policies H9 & CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Residential Amenity

7.3 Policy H9 states that an extension will be acceptable where it does not result in an overbearing impact on neighbours. Policy H10 seeks to ensure that the amenity of gardens and other outdoor areas are not compromised. Policy CC8 states an extension to a house will be acceptable where it will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties.

7.4 The proposed single storey rear extension is considered acceptable as it will replace an existing conservatory of similar scale. The proposed side extension is sufficiently set away from the attached garage at number 5 Scholar Close. Given the modest scale of the proposed single storey extensions, combined with the distance between the proposed extensions and the neighbouring properties, no significant adverse impacts are envisaged to neighbouring amenity with regards to overbearing effects, loss of light, or privacy and overlooking. The amount of remaining amenity space is considered acceptable.

7.5 The proposal is considered compliant with policies H9, H10 & CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Ecology

7.6 The Ecology Officer confirms that the Bat Survey has been conducted to the appropriate standard and that the proposal is acceptable in ecological terms. There would be little or no loss of biodiversity within the garden as a result of the proposal.

7.7 The proposal is considered compliant with policies H9 and EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Trees/Natural Environment Officer

7.8 Policy EN14 states that individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance, and Reading's vegetation cover will be extended.

7.9 The Natural Environment Officer (NEO) was consulted and in principle has no objections. The proposed development can be carried out and the existing trees can be appropriately protected. However, there are concerns that the foundations of the existing conservatory may not be sufficient for the proposed rear extension. Therefore, trial hole/trench investigations are required to establish the existing foundations of the conservatory. A condition securing this prior to commencement is recommended.

7.10 It is considered the proposal complies with ^{Page 88} policies H9 and EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Transport

7.11 The Council's Transport team have no objections to the proposals as the submitted plans illustrate 2 off-road vehicle parking spaces. A condition is recommended to ensure that both vehicle parking spaces are provided and kept available for parking thereafter.

7.12 Officers consider the proposal will be compliant with policies TR3 & TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Sustainable Design and Construction

7.13 Policy CC1 states that a positive approach to considering development proposals will be taken that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

7.14 Policy CC2 states that proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, will be acceptable where the design of the building and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change.

7.15 With regards to the proposed solar panels, whilst the above policy is not directly applicable to this type of application, officers note that the proposed development is a means to maximise the use of energy efficiency and energy conservation, utilising the existing layout of the building and its orientation in efforts to reduce overall energy demand.

8. Equality implications

8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2 The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular application.

9. Conclusion & planning balance

9.1 As with all applications for planning permission considered by the Local Planning Authority, the application is required to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as per Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

9.2 It is considered that, subject to the recommended conditions, the proposed single storey side extension, single storey rear extension, front porch extension, fenestration alterations, roof and solar panels would be acceptable in terms of their effect on the character and appearance of the area. The proposals would not harm the amenity of neighbouring properties and the suitable protection is secured for existing trees. As such, this application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

Plans

Drawing No. 336-1200-A

Location Plan

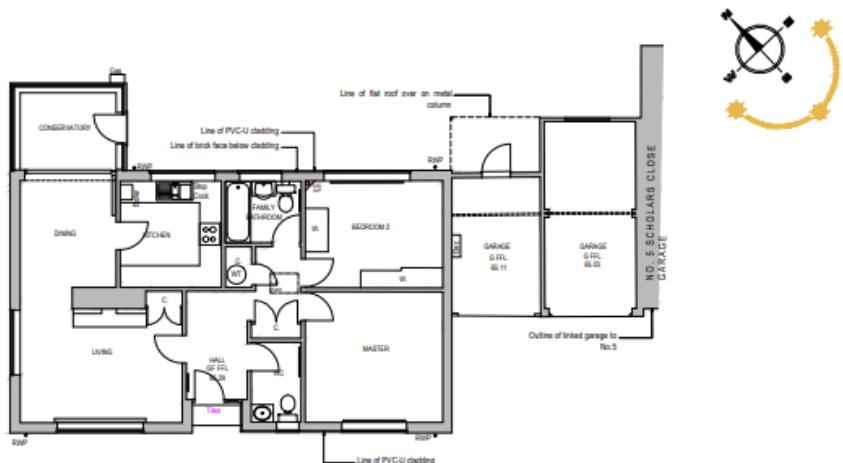


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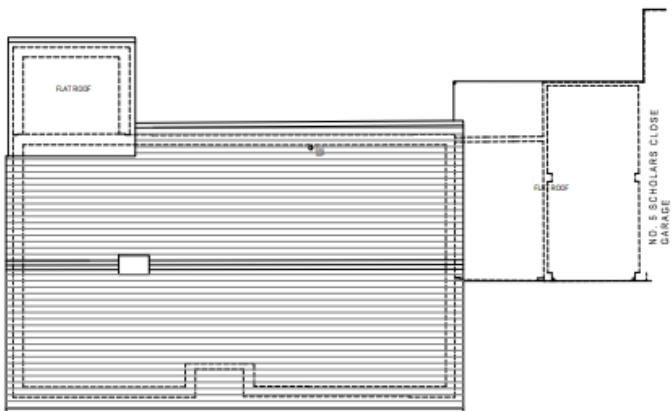
Block Plan



Existing Floor Plans



Existing Ground Floor Plan - 1:100 @ A1



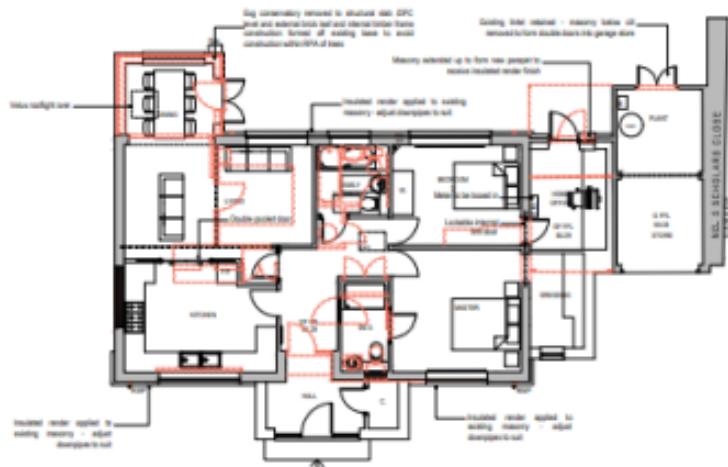
Existing Roof Plan - 1:100 @ A1

Drawing No. 336-1205 -A

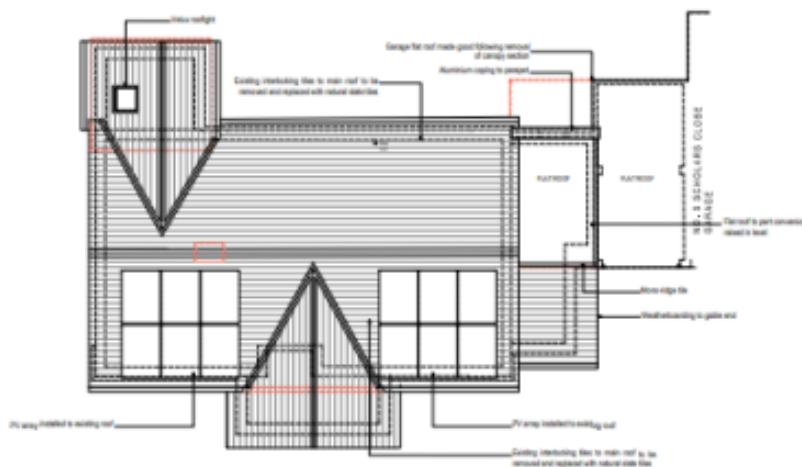
Proposed Site Plan



Proposed Floor Plans



Proposed Ground Floor Plan - 1:100 @ A1



Proposed Roof Plan - 1:100 @ A1

Drawing No. 336-1300

Existing and Proposed Elevation Plans



Site Visit Photos:









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05 February 2025



Title	PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT
Ward	Whitley
Planning Application Reference:	PL/24/1520 (FUL)
Site Address:	300 Brook Drive, Green Park, Reading RG2 6UA
Proposed Development	External refurbishment of an existing office building (Use Class E) including alterations to the main entrance space, elevations, installation of solar photovoltaics (PV) panels and electric vehicle charging points, replacement plant equipment, external lighting, erection of a new cycle store with changing facilities, a new external pergola and associated landscaping works.
Report author	Anthony Scholes
Applicant	Green Park (Reading) No. 1 LLP C/o Boyer Planning
Deadline:	19 February 2025
Recommendations	Approve, subject to conditions.
Conditions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Time Limit 2. Approved Plans 3. Materials (as proposed) 4. Pre-commencement Green Roof Details (to be approved) 4. Pre-occupation Cycle Parking (details to be approved) including implementation 5. Flood Risk Measures implementation (EA requirement) 6. Pre-occupation biodiversity Enhancements (to be approved) 7. Pre-commencement landscaping large scale (details to be approved, including implementation) 8. Pre-commencement Arboricultural Method Statement (To be approved) 9. BREEAM Post-assessment confirmation (Excellent) 10. Car parking to be provided (As proposed) 11. Waste storage to be provided (as proposed) 12. EV Charging Points (as specified) 13. Pre-commencement Acoustic Assessment (to be submitted and approved by LPA) 14. Pre-commencement Land gas risk assessment and remediation (to be submitted, including approval by LPA , and implementation as recommend)
Informatics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mandatory BNG requirements (Biodiversity Gain Plan to be submitted and approved by LPA)

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Positive and proactive 3. Pre-commencement conditions 4. Highways 5. Terms 6. Building control 7. Bats & works to roofs
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1. Executive summary

- 1.1. The proposal is recommended for approval subject to the conditions set out above.
- 1.2. This application seeks permission for the external refurbishment of the existing three-storey commercial building at 300 Brook Drive, Green Park. The proposal involves a light touch in changes to the building itself, with minor architectural detailing, some additional fire escape routes, and other additional staff or service doorways installed. The installation of additional plant enclosures to the roof would also be required. All minor alterations to the building are considered minor, and not detrimental to the character and appearance of the area.
- 1.3. The primary area of consideration for the application relates to the surrounding grounds, predominantly the existing lawn, and ground floor plant area which is sought to be removed in favour of 'sedum' green roofed 'end of journey' facility for cyclists, including shower rooms. The surrounding lawn area would be re-designed through a comprehensive landscaping scheme which includes an earth mound amphitheatre, rain garden, orchard and wildflower planting. The proposal increases the cyclist/pedestrian permeability through the site and provides greater connection to the spinal walking/cycling route connecting Green Park Station toward Madjeski Stadium.
- 1.4. Overall, the development is considered a positive scheme for the improvement to the building, and grounds. The general layout, appearance, and function of the site will be therefore improved through the development.

2. Introduction and site description

- 2.1. The proposed development is classified as a 'major' development as development over a site with an area greater than 1ha. The application is therefore reported to Planning Committee.
- 2.2. The application site is part of the wider Green Park area, within the commercial and/or light industrial portion. The site contains the existing 3 storey office building, part two-storey carparking structure, a detached plant enclosure at ground floor, associated landscaping, and a landscaped area fronting Foudry brook. The site is part of a site of three buildings of a similar scale and design. To the immediate north of the site is an existing pedestrian footpath which links Green Park Station to the wider green park area, with a series of smaller connected footpaths, and through to the football stadium.
- 2.3. The site is located within Flood Zone 2.

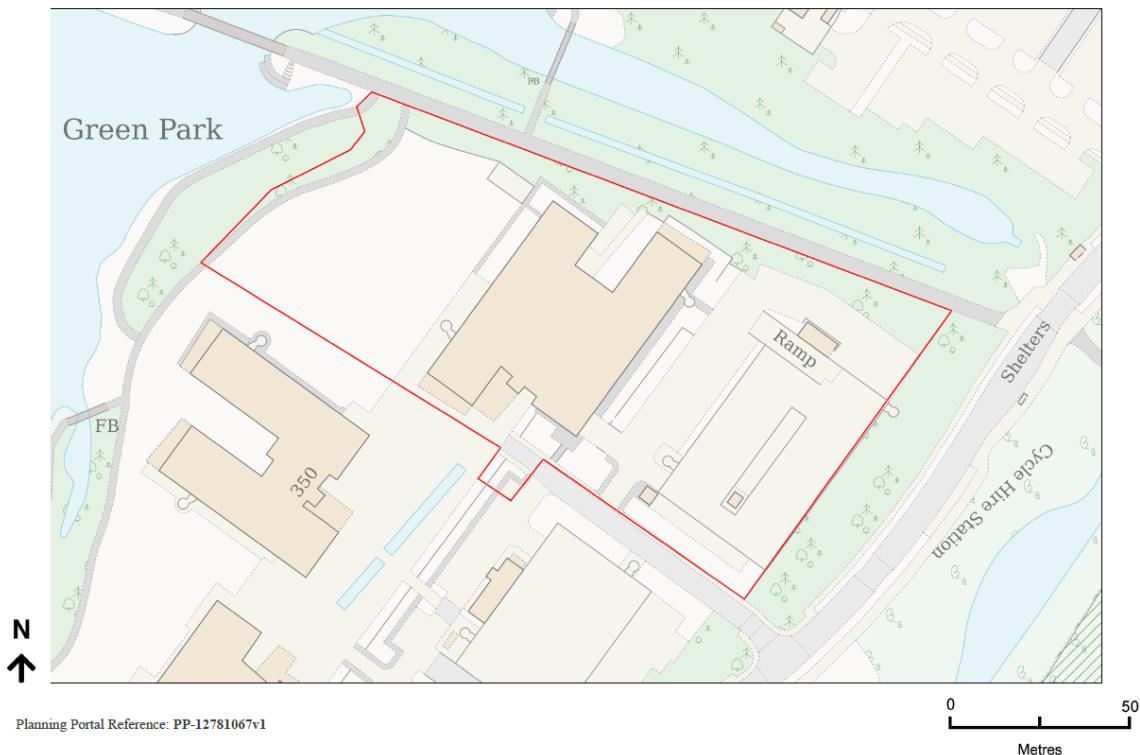


Figure 1 - Location Plan



Figure 2 - Site photos

3. The proposal

- 3.1. The proposal seeks permission for the external refurbishment of the office building, the removal of an existing plant equipment and its enclosure at ground level and the erection of a new end of journey facility including showers, lockers, and changing facilities. The proposed end of journey facility is sought to be timber framed, with a 'sedum' green roof.
- 3.2. The external alterations include the following:
 - Rooftop solar installations;
 - Rooftop installation of an air source heat pump system in place of existing plant;
 - 6 additional openings at ground level (including 2 new fire escape exits);
 - An additional outdoor covered pergola area with replacement decking, accessed from ground floor;

- New decorative metal archways to multiple openings;
- Alterations to the parking provision including loss of 1no. parking bay to facilitate an additional 1 accessible parking bay (11 total) and provision of 22 electric vehicle charging points;
- Provision of a landscaping scheme to create a natural amphitheatre, including tree planting, orchard ring, and rain garden
- Additional wayfinding lighting from the building to the end of journey facility.

3.3. Submitted Plans and documents:

Drawing No. 156210-STL-XX-00-DR-A-XXXX-17003 – Refuse Enclosure

Drawing No. 156210-STL-XX-00-DR-A-XXXX-61002 – Proposed GA – Feature Archway

Drawing No. 156210-STL-XX-00-DR-A-ZZ-E2003 – Existing Site Plan

Drawing No. 156210-STL-XX-00-DR-A-ZZ-E1000 – Existing Plan – Level 00

Drawing No. 156210-STL-XX-01-DR-A-ZZ-E1001 – Existing Plan – Level 01

Drawing No. 156210-STL-XX-02-DR-A-ZZ-E1002 – Existing Plan – Level 2

Drawing No. 156210-STL-XX-03-DR-A-XXXX-10204 – Proposed Roof Plan

Drawing No. 156210-STL-XX-03-DR-A-ZZ-E1004 – Existing Roof Plan

Drawing No. WP500-B1-R-C1 and 2-RD-M13 – Building 1 Roof Level Cores 1&2 mechanical services plant areas

Drawing No. 1004_PL_001 – Landscape General Arrangement

Drawing No. 1004_PL_002 – Rendered Master Plan

Drawing No. 1004_PL_003 – Existing tree plan

Document No. 1004-LS-003 – Landscape Strategy – Stage 2

Document No. 156210-300BD Pergola Planning Pack

Document No. 156210-A – Design and Access Statement

Drawing No. 156210-STL-XX-00-DR-A-XXXX-10000 – EOJF – Proposed GA Plan

Drawing No. 156210-STL-XX-00-DR-A-XXXX-10002 – EOJF – Proposed Site Plan

Drawing No. 156210-STL-XX-00-DR-A-XXXX-10200 – Proposed Ground Plan

Drawing No. 156210-STL-XX-00-DR-A-XXXX-17001 – Site Location Plan

Drawing No. 156210-STL-XX-00-DR-A-XXXX-17002 – Proposed Site Plan

Drawing No. 156210-STL-XX-XX-DR-A-XXXX-20001 – Proposed Building Elevations Sheet 01

Drawing No. 156210-STL-XX-XX-DR-A-XXXX-20002 – Proposed Building Elevations – Sheet 02

Drawing No. 156210-STL-XX-XX-DR-A-XXXX-20003 – EOJF – Proposed Elevations

Drawing No. 156210-STL-XX-XX-DR-A-ZZ-E2001 – Existing Elevations – Sheet 01

Drawing No. 156210-STL-XX-XX-DR-A-ZZ-E2002 – Existing Elevations – Sheet 02

300 Brook Drive Covering Letter

300 Brook Drive Planning Statement

Document No. 552638JB17DEC23FV03-EA – Ecological Appraisal
Page 102

Document No. 552638sr18Jan24FV03-BNGA – Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Document No. 332611112 – Flood Risk Assessment

Application Form

The 'Stantec' Flood Risk mapping package

Drawing No. 102475-1 – Topographical Survey

Drawing No. 332611112-200-0001 – Modelled Flood Extents Present Day Scenario

Drawing No. 332611112-200-0002 – Modelled Flood Extents Climate Change Scenario

ASHP End of Journey Specifications

Form 1 CIL - 300 Brook Drive November 2024

Green Park Travel Plan 2023

Location Plan

Document No. PAE881Kp – ASHP Specifications

Document No. 332611112 – Transport Statement

Document No. 35 / 1.0.20231004.1111558 – Toilet AHUs AHU07 and 08 Datasheets

Solar Panel Specification sheet

Document Ref: v482 300 Brook Drive BREEAM Pre-Assessment and Sustainability Statement RevE 20241021 – BREEAM Pre-Assessment

Drawing No. W.001175-RED-XX-00-DR-M-2900 – Mechanical Services Layout (Ground)

Drawing No. W.001175-RED-XX-RD-DR-E-2002 – Electrical Services Roof PV Services

Drawing No. W.001175-RED-XX-RF-DR-M-2900 – Mechanical Services Layout (Roof)

Document No. W.001478_300 Brook Drive Energy Statement_R003 – Energy Statement

As received 14 November 2024

Archaeological statement

Green roof illustrative drawing

As received 19 December 2024

Biodiversity Net Gain Metric Spreadsheet

As received 16 January 2025

4. Planning history

PL/11/0693 (DIS) – Discharge of conditions of planning permission PL/00/00656 (REM)
Conditions Discharged 17 December 2024

PL/00/00656 (REM) – Application for reserved matters of planning consent TP/85/690, to
erect 3 three storey offices buildings (Use Class B1) Approved 6 December 2000

TP/85/690 (OUT) – Business uses (including light industrial) and warehousing and
ancillary offices; together with associated service areas, road, aprons and car parking
areas. Approved 26 July 1995

5. Consultations

Statutory:

Environment Agency

5.1. The environment agency provided a response dated 8 January 2025 which recommended one condition be attached, should an approval be recommended. This condition seeks to secure implementation of the flood risk mitigation measures as contained within the submitted flood risk assessment.

Non-Statutory

RBC Transport Officers

5.2. The site is located within Green Park Business Park and the proposals consist of external refurbishment to the existing office building.

5.3. It has its own multi-storey car park consisting of 216 spaces, including 10no. Accessible parking bays. The new proposal will provide a total of 218 bays in the new scheme including 11no. accessible parking bays. The proposals also include new end of journey facilities such as secure, covered cycle storage and showers/ lockers/drying rooms. A new footpath approach through the landscape from Foudry Brook will be provided which will provide a pedestrian connection to the building from the newly opened rail station and the business park's central facilities.

5.4. In transports terms, there are no objections to the proposals. The proposed location of the new cycle facilities is acceptable, however, detailed plans are required confirming that the cycle parking provision meets the Council's adopted standards in terms of layout and design as no details have been submitted regarding the type of stands. Further details regarding the type and manufacturer of the proposed cycle racks should be provided to ensure the frame and wheels can be secured and is easy to facilitate the use of 'D' type locks and/or conventional chains/cables. Transport are happy to cover this by condition.

RBC Ecology

5.5. The application site lies within Green Park, in Reading where it is proposed to refurbish an existing office building, including the addition of a new changing facility and changes to the landscaping including new paths, a performance area and tree planting across the site.

5.6. The Ecology report (Greengage, October 2024) has been undertaken to the appropriate standard and concludes that the site is of very limited ecological value, and it is considered unlikely that the proposals will adversely affect protected species. Nonetheless, the vegetation may be used by nesting and roosting birds and if removal of such vegetation is required, it is recommended that a condition is set to ensure that the site is not cleared during the bird nesting season.

Biodiversity Net Gain

5.7. A Biodiversity Net Gain assessment has been undertaken (Greengage, October 2024) using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric and based on the landscaping documents provided. The assessment results indicate that the development will result in a net gain of +0.84 Area habitat units, equivalent to 14.97% net gain as well as a net gain of 0.03 Hedgerow units (24.51%). The net gain appears to be mostly achieved through the addition of trees/orchards , wildflower areas and rain gardens.

5.8. The applicant supplied a Biodiversity Net gain spreadsheet in line with national guidance. The information informatoin provided satisfies the requirements at this stage to demonstrate the mandatory BNG can be provided. Subject to the BNG condition, the development would be acceptable.

Biodiversity Enhancements

5.9. The Ecology report recommends the inclusion of bird boxes and bee bricks within the development. These will be installed on existing trees which seems given the type of the existing building and the impracticability of installing them on the existing structure itself. However, a greater number of bird boxes should be installed, together with a small number of bat boxes. The Landscape Strategy plan shows a green roof which is welcome.

However, it is recommended that a biodiverse green roof, rather than a sedum roof, is provided.

5.10. Should the application be approved, it is recommended that a condition be set to ensure that full details of these wildlife enhancements are provided (including specification, locations and management details).

RBC Natural Environment Officer

5.11. Landscape Strategy - Stage 2 October 2024 1004-LS-003 P07 – this explains all the changes which are positive and will result in increased landscaping on site and greater biodiversity value.

5.12. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) is required for this area as thus far it has not been addressed. In this instance, a condition securing provision of an Arboricultural Method Statement prior to commencement of any development would be acceptable.

Berkshire Archaeology

5.13. Though a condition was originally suggested by Berkshire Archaeology. A response from the applicant demonstrated that sufficient archaeological investigation and mitigation has been previously undertaken over the site, and further would yield limited meaningful results. As such, Berkshire Archaeology accept that the works would not have a negative impact upon archaeological interests.

Lead Local Flood Authority

5.14. No objection to the proposal.

RBC Environmental Protection

5.15. The site is located within a past landfill buffer. To ensure safety of future occupants and works, a land gas risk assessment is required. This should be secured by condition.

5.16. The proposal includes potentially noise equipment. An acoustic assessment to ensure noise is managed to an appropriate level should be provided. This is to be secured by condition.

6. Legal context

6.1. 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 paragraph 12).

6.2. 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).

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

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

CC1 - PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC2 – SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

CC3 – ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

CC5 – WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE

CC7 – DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8 – SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
CC9 – SECURING INFRASTRUCTURE
EN1 – PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT
EN2 – AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE
EN11 – WATERSPACES
EN12 – BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK
EN14 – TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLANDS
EN15 – AIR QUALITY
EN16 – POLLUTION AND WATER RESOURCES
EN17 – NOISE GENERATING EQUIPMENT
EN18 – FLOODING AND SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS
EM4 – MAINTAINING A VARIETY OF PREMISES
TR1 – ACHIEVING THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY
TR3 – ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS^{P[5]}
TR4 – CYCLE ROUTES AND FACILITIES
TR5 – CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

Supplementary Planning Documents and other guidance

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

Employment, Skills and Training (2011)

7. Appraisal

The main considerations are:

- Design and Impact on the Character and Amenity of the Area
- Natural Environment
- Transport Matters
- Other Matters

7.1 Design and Impact on the Character and Amenity of the Area

7.1. Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) states that: *“All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form...”*

7.2. Policy EN11 (Waterspaces) states that: *“Reading’s waterspaces will be protected and enhanced, so that they can continue to contribute to local and regional biodiversity and ecology, flood mitigation, local character, heritage and visual amenity, the provision of accessible leisure and recreational opportunities ... Where development in the vicinity of watercourses is acceptable, it will:-*

- *Provide appropriate, attractive uses and buildings that enhance the relationship of buildings, spaces and routes to the watercourse, including through creating or enhancing views of the watercourse, and create a high quality public realm;*
- *Make positive contributions to the distinct character, appearance, historic significance, landscape and amenity of the watercourses;”*

7.3. As the proposal includes various elements, each will be addressed separately below.

Alterations to the main building

7.4. The proposal, would implement modest, and sympathetic alterations to the main building. The minor works around the building, to improve fire escape access, and also provide distinctive entrance for the building is considered to respect the overall Green Park design rationale, and maintain the distinctive green and metallic elements on the prominent facades. As shown in figure 3 below, the alterations to the building are minor.

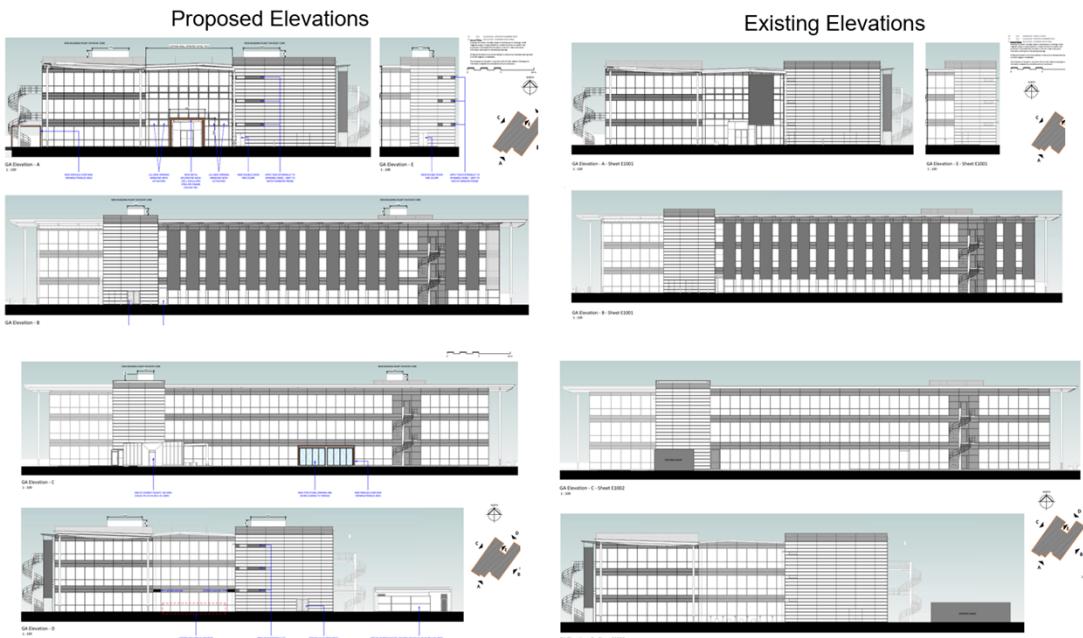


Figure 3 - Side-by-side elevations

7.5. Notably, the proposal includes two plant enclosures to the roof, and the provision of a new pergola structure to the western side of the building. Given the scale of the existing building, the rooftop additions will have little impact on the appearance of the building, being predominantly seen from long views of the building, than via the grounds of the site.

7.6. The pergola structure proposed on the western side of the building would be constructed over an area of existing decking, accessed from an existing opening. At the officer's site visit, it was noted that the decking was in a poor state of repair. The black metal pergola, with slatted roof, and light coloured deck would provide a refreshed outdoor area for use for future tenants. It would also connect to the works in the grassed area as discussed below.

New End of Journey Facility

7.7. The development includes the demolition of the existing ground level plant area located on the north-western side of the site. Following the removal of the existing structure, this is to be replaced with a 3.85m tall, timber clad 'end of journey facility'. This facility is to contain external bicycle storage within a secure gated enclosure, the provision of men's, women's, and an accessible changing/shower room, and an area of outdoor seating to the southern side. The small scale of the building, within an area already provided as built form is considered non-objectionable, and with the addition of a sedum roof, and timber cladding will be an improvement in appearance of the area.

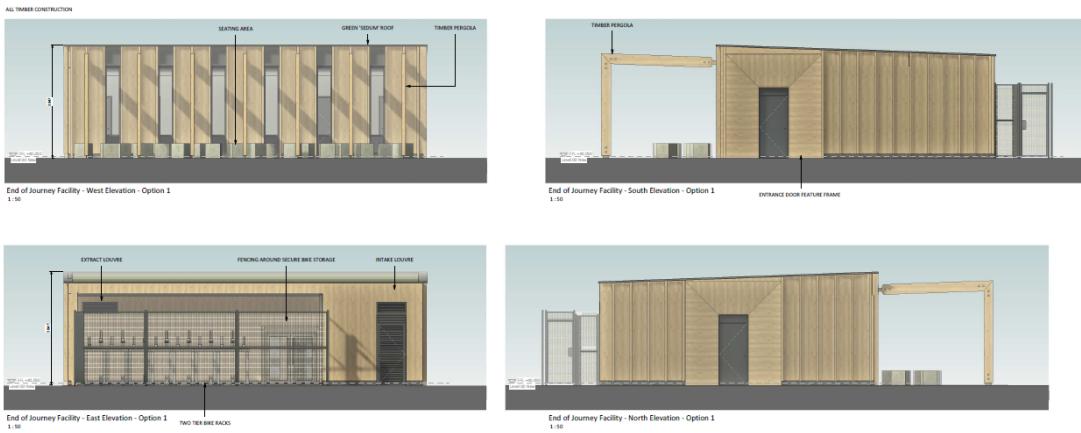


Figure 4 - Proposed End of Journey Facility

Proposed Landscaping Works

7.8. The development includes the removal of one tree toward the main entrance of the building, and the removal of a small portion of a hedge. In addition to offsetting those losses, the scheme seeks to improve the access to the proposed 'end of journey' facility from the west (Green Park Station side), and access to, and use thereof the current open grassed area through a significant landscaping scheme.



Figure 5 - Partial extract of landscaping scheme

7.9. The additional pedestrian access ways through the site would provide greater pedestrian permeability via non-car routes. The provision of a natural amphitheatre through the creation of a sloped earth mound would provide a functional and relaxing area for future users of the site. The implementation of additional planting areas, including trees, wildflowers, a rain garden area, orchard planting within the lawn area, as well as to the north of the building, within a small recess in the building. There is also proposed planting at ground level within the carparking area to establish larger trees where existing vegetation has been less successful.

Other Minor Alterations

7.10. The proposal includes the re-organisation of the carparking area to provide one additional accessible parking space, and the provision of waste storage within an existing area of the carparking structure. The installation of rooftop solar, and wayfinding lighting around the proposal are also very minor. With regard to the lighting installations, this is primarily provided between the building and the proposed 'end of journey' facility. This would

improve safety and accessibility to the cycle storage facility and be a benefit to the development.

7.11. Overall, the changes to the building, and the wider site, are considered to be positive. They both respect the existing character of the area, and implement a scheme which would seek to improve the sites appearance and functionality for future occupants. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the design requirements of the Local Plan, specifically CC7 and EN11.

7.12. Natural Environment

7.13. From 12 February 2024, all major developments were required to provide a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Before granting planning permission, LPA's must be satisfied that the BNG calculations, and the proposed net gain plan are satisfactory. The granting of permission automatically includes the pre-commencement condition for a 10% BNG that requires submission of, and approval of a biodiversity gain plan by the LPA.

7.14. Policy EN11 (Waterspaces) states: *“Reading’s waterspaces will be protected and enhanced ... (development will) Provide a strengthened role for watercourses as important landscape features, wildlife corridors, historic features and recreation opportunities; □ Wherever practical and consistent with its biodiversity role, provide good, level access to and along the waterside for all those who want to use it; Be set at least ten metres back from the watercourse wherever practicable and appropriate to protect its biodiversity significance; Improve the quality of watercourse environment through protecting and enhancing habitats and ensuring that habitat creation is balanced with access and urban uses; and Pursue opportunities for deculverting of watercourses”*

7.15. Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) states: *“On all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity, and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible”*

7.16. Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands) states: *“Individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance, and Reading’s vegetation cover will be extended. The quality of waterside vegetation will be maintained or enhanced.”*

Trees

7.17. The application site forms part of the wider Green Park area, which among other things included significant care and detail surrounding Fourdroy brook, by way of a focal point for the surrounding development, and the integration of blue and green spaces within the development. Therefore, great care to maintain and enhance tree cover within this area is considered necessary.

7.18. The proposal includes relatively minor works that would have the potential to affect existing vegetation within the site. Beyond the purposeful removal of one tree, and a small portion of hedging, the provision of services has the potential to impact existing trees (foul drainage, power, telecommunications).

7.19. A particular area of trenching, to the north of the proposed ‘end of journey’ facility, would be in proximity to an established row of trees. These trees currently, and would continue to screen the functional areas of the development, and therefore would be important to retain. In accordance with the RBC’s natural environment officer’s comments, a arboricultural method statement should be secured as a pre-commencement condition to ensure sufficient protection for existing trees near any proposed underground/trenching works.

7.20. Full details of the proposed landscaping scheme, and ‘sedum’ green roof are also sought to be secured as pre-commencement requirements.

Ecology

- 7.21. The demolition of the existing plant area, and replacement with a green 'sedum' roof structure would result in a gain in biodiversity value. The works around the grounds, including the various planting types, the rain garden which will provide amenity and ecological value. The earth mound, surrounding orchard, wildflower planting, and other installations will improve the existing lawn area, from that of limited ecological value, to a higher ecological value area. The BNG spreadsheet outlines the implementation schedule will achieve a 14.8% increase in habitat units on site.
- 7.22. In addition to this, RBC's ecologist has requested a condition be attached to include further wildlife enhancements on the building, including 6 bird and 2 bat boxes. In addition to the BNG requirements, the development will secure additional enhancements to the benefit of wildlife.
- 7.23. Therefore, the development is considered to comply with the requirements of policies EN11, EN12, and EN14 with regard to waterspaces, trees, and ecological values.

7.24. Transport Matters

- 7.25. Policy TR1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan states: "*Proposed development should contribute appropriately to meeting the objectives of the most up-to-date Local Transport Plan or any successor document, including sub-strategies, specific projects identified and the local action plans.*"
- 7.26. Policy TR5 states: "*Development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.*"
- 7.27. Green Park is already home to a number of improvements to, or provision of various transport options for those who live and work within the area. With a new train station (circa 2023), provision of a circular bus route connection Green Park Station to the Town Centre, and a high quality network of cycle routes (including wayfinding).
- 7.28. The development would provide additional convenience facilities for those who may choose to cycle to work, possibly also split by a train journey. The shower, changing, and storage facilities would be a great benefit to a future tenant and their staff, and would be in line with a number of broad principles of the Reading Transport Strategy 2040 and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (2020).
- 7.29. The proposed development would include minor tweaks to the car parking, with loss of 1 general parking space for 1 accessible parking space. This is considered immaterial given the scale of parking across the site, and the wider area. The provision of 22 electric vehicle charging points is also considered a positive step in line with broad decarbonisation goals.
- 7.30. As such, the proposed development is considered to comply with policy TR1 and TR5 of the Reading Local Plan subject to the condition as recommended by RBC transport officers.

7.31. Other Matters

Sustainability

- 7.32. Policy CC2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan states: "*Proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, will be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately.*"
- 7.33. Though the development does not include the internal refurbishment of the building, the applicant has submitted a BREEAM pre-assessment report which states that 'Excellent'

standards will be met, including a margin above the threshold of excellent. As such, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy CC2.

Amenity

7.34. The proposal includes additional Air Source Heat Pumps installed on the roof of the building. These are potentially noisy installations. Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) and EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) require development to not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties. Though it is not anticipated to be a major concern given the distance to residential uses, the reporting should be provided to ensure no impacts.

Flooding

7.35. No objections were received by the Lead Local Flood Authority, and subject to implementation in line with the Flood Risk Assessment (as per the EA condition recommended), the proposal would not have a detrimental impact in terms of flood risk.

7.36. The Environment Agency was also a statutory consultee for the application. A response was received on 8 January 2025 confirming no objection to the works, subject to implementation in accordance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment.

Land Gas

Whilst the building is largely existing, the groundworks have the potential to introduce new risks associated with the mapped landfill buffer area, and these need to be assessed and where necessary, mitigated. A condition is recommended to secure investigations, and where necessary a mitigation strategy.

Employment, Skills, and Training

7.37. Policy CC9 states: *“Proposals for development will not be permitted unless infrastructure, services, resources, amenities or other assets lost or impacted upon as a result of the development or made necessary by the development will be provided through direct provision or financial contributions at the appropriate time.”*

7.38. In accordance with the Employment, Skills, and Training Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) all ‘major’ development within Reading would be expected to contribute toward local employment and skills. However, the scale of the proposed development is not considered of a scale that would require such a contribution, as it would not include the construction of 1,000m² of Gross Floor Area, which is the metric for calculating contributions in the SPD.

8. Equality implications

8.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular application

9. Conclusion & planning balance

9.1 As with all applications considered by the Local Planning Authority, the application is required to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material

considerations indicate otherwise, as per Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 9.2 The proposed development is required to be considered in the context of national and local planning policies, as detailed in the appraisal above. It is considered that the proposal would provide external improvements to the subject site to the benefit of future users, and the wider area. The development would also improve the biodiversity and ecological interest within the area and contribute positively to the appearance of the waterspace of Foudry Brook.
- 9.3 As such, this application is recommended for approval subject to conditions and informatics as noted above.

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes

Plans & Appendices (delete appendices if none)

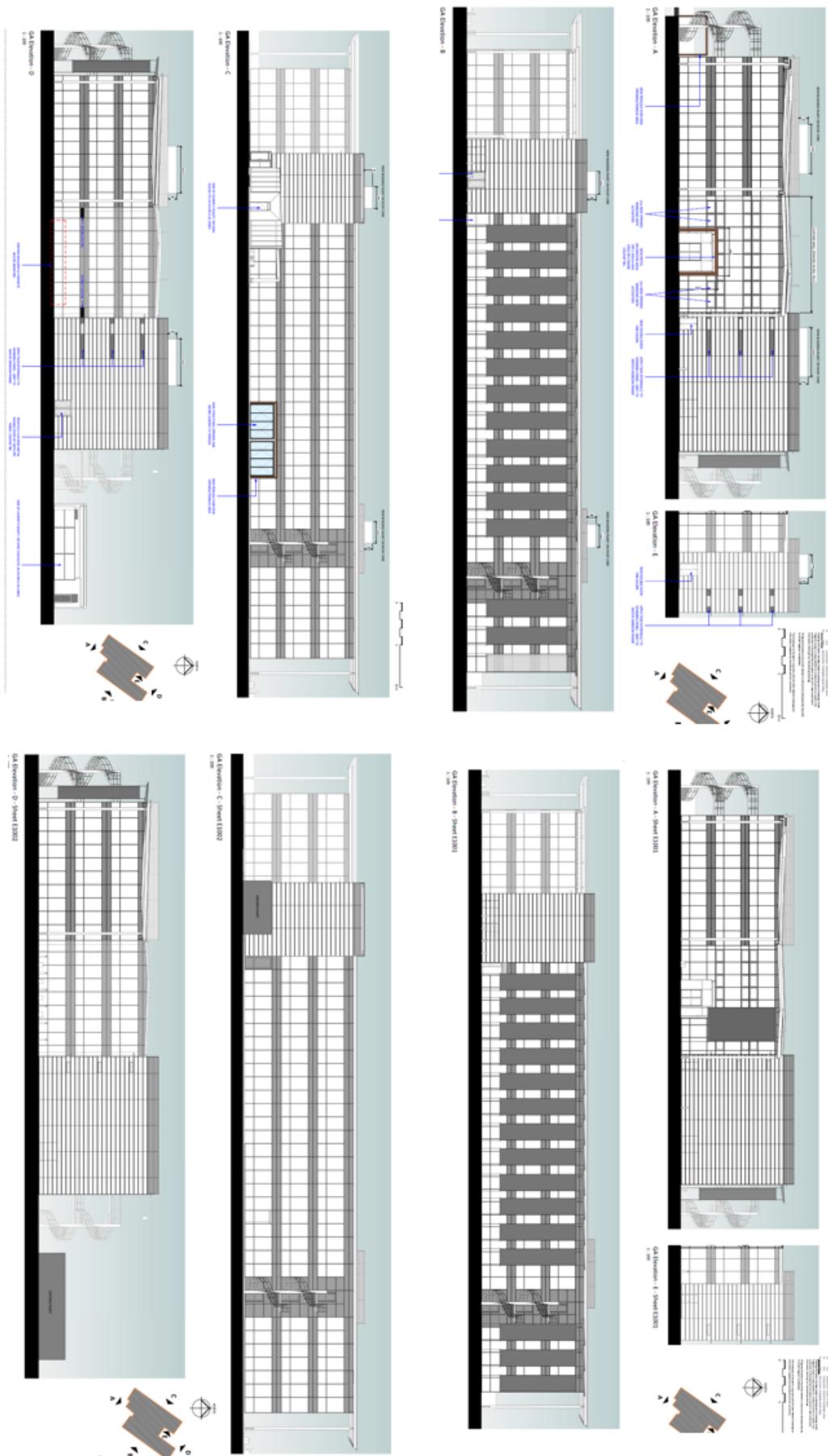


Figure 6 – Existing and Proposed Elevations



Figure 7 - Site Landscaping and layout plan

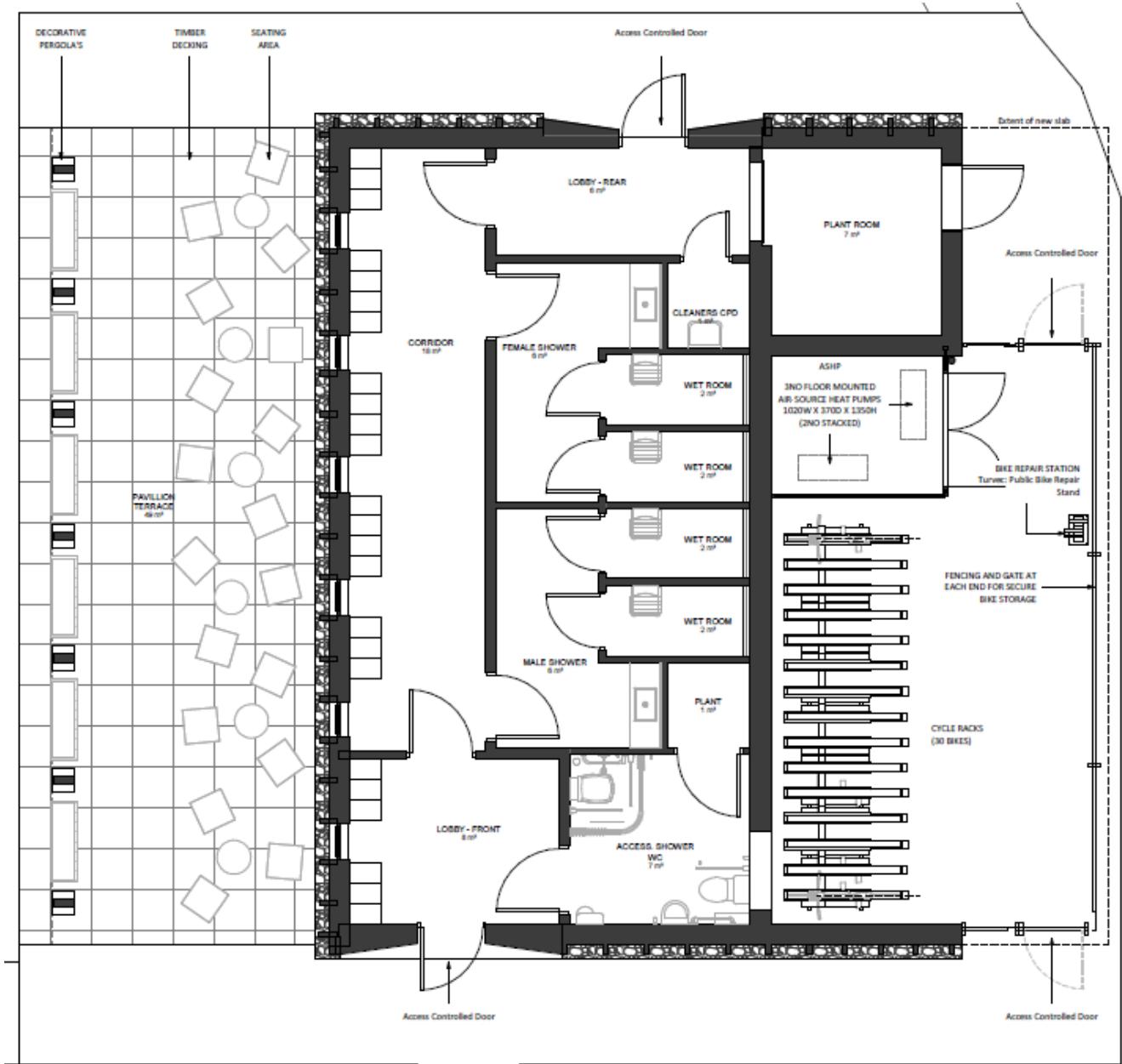


Figure 8 - Proposed end of journey facility floor plan



Figure 9 - Proposed Pergola attached to building

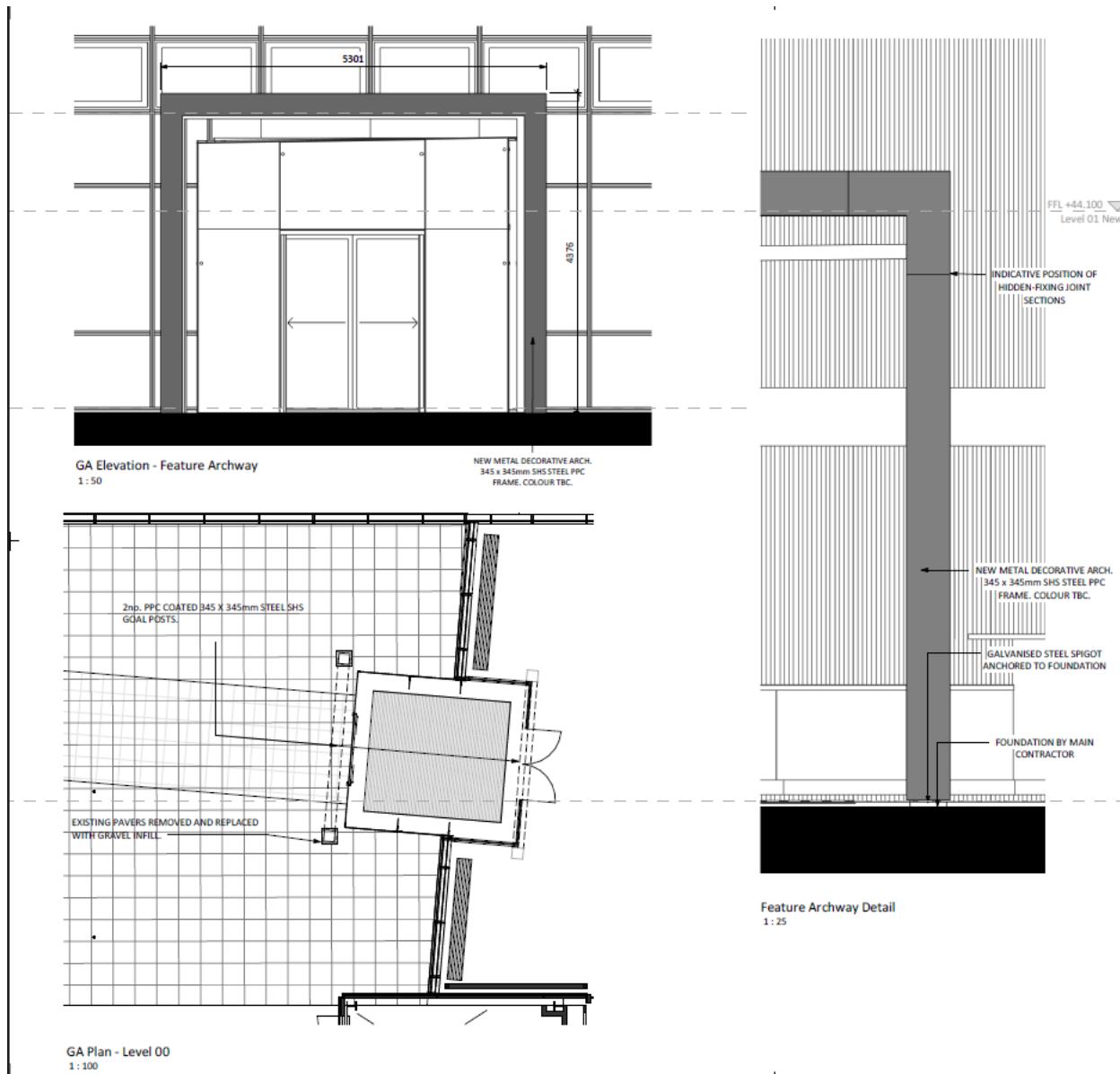


Figure 10 - Proposed main entrance improvements

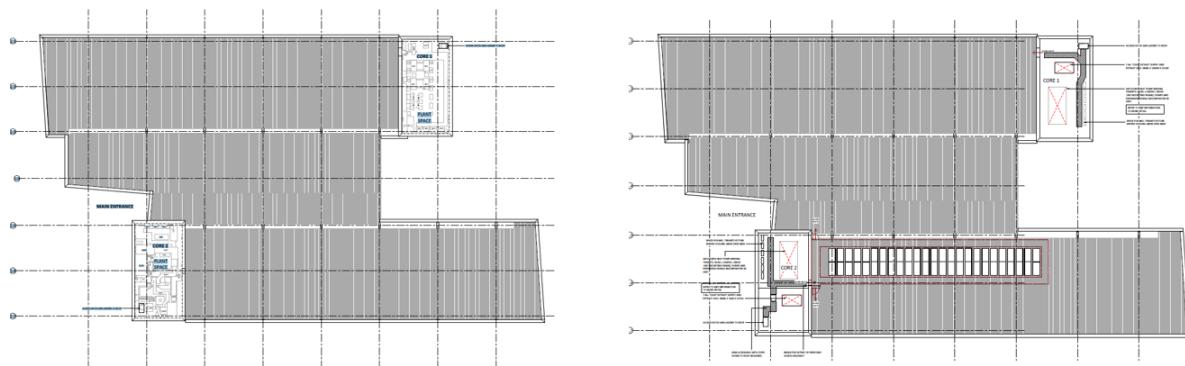


Figure 11 - Existing and proposed roof plan



Figure 12 - Additional site photos



Figure 13 - Additional Site Photos