

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

Direct ☎ : 0118 9372112

2 September 2025

Your contact is: **Nicky Simpson - Committee Services (nicky.simpson@reading.gov.uk)**

### NOTICE OF MEETING - PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE 10 SEPTEMBER 2025

A meeting of the Planning Applications Committee will be held on Wednesday, 10 September 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<br>AFFECTED | PAGE<br>NO |
|--|-------------|-------------------|------------|
| 1. MINUTES   | -           |                   | 7 - 10     |
| 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST  | -           |                   |            |
| 3. QUESTIONS   | -           |                   |            |
| 4. POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR<br>COMMITTEE ITEMS                        | Decision    |                   | 11 - 14    |
| 5. PLANNING APPEALS  | Information |                   | 15 - 20    |
| 6. PROPOSED TREE WORK TO<br>ONE COUNCIL PLANE TREE IN<br>LANCING CLOSE | Decision    | BATTLE            | 21 - 26    |

### PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

|   |          |       |         |
|---|----------|-------|---------|
| 7. PL/25/0885 (LBC) - TOWN HALL,<br>BLAGRAVE STREET | Decision | ABBEY | 27 - 34 |
|---|----------|-------|---------|

**Proposal:** Replace existing timber double fire door with a new metal double door.  
**Recommendation:** Grant, subject to conditions

**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.

|    |  |          |          |         |
|----|--|----------|----------|---------|
| 8. | PL/25/0620 (FUL) - LAND<br>ADJACENT TO 43 UPPER<br>REDLANDS ROAD | Decision | REDLANDS | 35 - 52 |
|----|--|----------|----------|---------|

**Proposal:** Self-build erection of a single dwellinghouse, with associated access, parking and landscaping, including the relocation of a boundary wall and the removal of a bunker structure

**Recommendation:** Grant, subject to S106

|    |   |          |        |         |
|----|---|----------|--------|---------|
| 9. | PL/25/0616 (FUL) - SOVEREIGN<br>HOUSE, 57-59 VASTERN ROAD | Decision | THAMES | 53 - 68 |
|----|---|----------|--------|---------|

**Proposal:** Change of use from E(g)(i) offices to F1(g) Law Courts, including internal alterations, additional external lift, additional sub-station and landscaping works.

**Recommendation:** Grant, subject to 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.

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.

**Apartment-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                             |

**Present:** Councillor Gavin (Chair);

Councillors Davies (Vice-Chair), Ennis, Goss, Hornsby-Smith, Leng, Lovelock, McCann, Moore, Rowland, Tarar, Williams and Yeo

**Apologies:** Councillors

### RESOLVED ITEMS

#### 7. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 May 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### 8. 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 no additional site visits be arranged at this time.

#### 9. 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 two new appeals lodged since the last Committee. Appendix 2 to the report set out details of two appeals decided since the last Committee. At the meeting a verbal update was given to summarise the reasons for the two appeal decisions set out in Appendix 2.

##### Resolved –

- (1) That the new appeals, as set out in Appendix 1, be noted;
- (2) That the outcome of the recently determined appeals, as set out in Appendix 2, be noted.

#### 10. PL/25/0197 (LBC) - 5 THE BROOKMILL

Removal of partition wall in master bedroom.

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 25 JUNE 2025

The Committee considered a report on the above application.

Comments were received and considered.

### **Resolved –**

That listed building consent for application PL/25/0197 (LBC) be granted, subject to the conditions and informatives as set out in the report.

#### **11. PL/24/1555 (REG3) - DEE PARK OPEN SPACE, GLENMORE PLACE**

Replacement play space, boundary treatment and landscaping.

The Committee considered a report on the above application. An update report was tabled at the meeting which summarised additional consultation responses from Transport Strategy and Thames Valley Police, and recommended an additional condition regarding footpath works to ensure that access into the Dee Park open space would remain accessible following the refurbishment of the site. A verbal update was given at the meeting to clarify and update points in the original report regarding parking, submission of biodiversity net gain documents, works on the public highway no longer being required, and an updated drainage strategy.

Comments were received and considered.

At the meeting it was proposed and agreed that Condition 3, regarding play equipment, and Condition 6 regarding landscaping, planting, maintenance and landscape management plan, should be approved in consultation with local ward councillors.

### **Resolved –**

- (1) That, pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, the carrying out of the development PL/24/1555 (REG3) be authorised, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the original report, with the additional condition as recommended in the update report;
- (2) That Condition 3 (play equipment) and Condition 6 (landscaping, planting, maintenance and landscape management plan) be approved in consultation with Ward Councillors.

#### **12. PL/24/1385 (REG3) - 146 HEXHAM ROAD AND 199- 211 NEWCASTLE ROAD**

New External Wall Insulation, Windows, Communal Exit Doors, Roof Tiles, PV Panels & Air Source Heat Pump.

The Committee considered a report on the above application.

Comments were received and considered.

At the meeting it was proposed and agreed that an additional informative be added to request the applicant to maximise the tree canopy cover within the proposed landscaping scheme without affecting the amenity of the properties.

**Resolved –**

That, pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, the carrying out of the development PL/24/1385 (REG3) be authorised, subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the report, with an additional informative regarding tree canopy cover as agreed at the meeting.

**13. PL/25/0435 (FUL) - 146 CARDIFF ROAD**

Change of use of Units 2, 3, and 4 from Storage and Distribution (Class B8) to a flexible use of Class B8, Research & Development (Class E(g)(ii)), and Light Industrial (Class E(g)(iii)).

The Committee considered a report on the above application. A verbal update was given at the meeting to withdraw the requirement for an Employment and Skills Plan (recommended Condition 5), as discussions with the applicant had concluded that this was not a reasonable requirement.

Comments were received and considered.

**Resolved –**

That planning permission for application PL/25/0435 (FUL) be granted, subject to the conditions and informatives as set out in the report with the removal of recommended Condition 5 regarding an Employment and Skills Plan.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.20 pm)

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## Planning Applications Committee 10 September 2025



**Reading**  
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|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Title</b>  | <b>POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS</b>  |
| <b>Purpose of the report</b>  | To make a decision  |
| <b>Report status</b>  | Public report   |
| <b>Executive Director/<br/>Statutory Officer<br/>Commissioning Report</b> | Emma Gee  |
| <b>Report author</b>  | Julie Williams, Development Manager (Planning & Building Control)   |
| <b>Lead Councillor</b>  | Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets  |
| <b>Council priority</b>   | Not applicable, but still requires a decision   |
| <b>Recommendations</b>  | <p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. note this report and any officer recommendations for site visits.</li> <li>2. confirm if there are other sites Councillors wish to visit before reaching a decision on an application.</li> <li>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.</li> </ol> |

### 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 and which Officers consider Members would benefit from visiting to inform decision making. Appendix 2 then lists those sites that have previously been agreed should be visited before considering the officer report.
- 2.3. More 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**

- 3.1. The Council Plan has established five priorities for the years 2025/28. These priorities are:
  - Promote more equal communities in Reading
  - Secure Reading's economic and cultural success
  - Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint
  - Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children
  - Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
- 3.2. In delivering these priorities, we will be guided by the following set of principles:
  - Putting residents first
  - Building on strong foundations
  - Recognising, respecting, and nurturing all our diverse communities
  - Involving, collaborating, and empowering residents
  - Being proudly ambitious for Reading
- 3.3 Full details of the Council Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the Council's website - [Council plan - Reading Borough Council](#). These priorities and the Council Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.
- 3.2 The processing of planning applications contributes to delivering a sustainable and healthy environment and helping the economic, cultural and vibrant success for Reading Borough.
- 3.3 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**

Potential Site Visits. List of applications received that may be presented to Committee for a decision in due course:

None this time

### **Appendix 2**

Previously Agreed Site Visits with date of PAC when requested:

- 231041 - Portman Road – unaccompanied agreed by PAC 06.09.23.
- 230822/OUT Forbury Retail Park (west) – accompanied agreed by PAC 24.07.24.
- 
- 240846/FUL Napier Court, Napier Road – accompanied agreed by PAC 24.07.24.

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## Planning Applications Committee

10 September 2025



**Reading**  
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|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Title</b>                 | <b>PLANNING APPEALS</b>   |
| <b>Purpose of the report</b> | To note the report for information                                |
| <b>Report status</b>         | Public report   |
| <b>Report author</b>         | Julie Williams, Development Manager (Planning & Building Control) |
| <b>Lead Councillor</b>       | Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets    |
| <b>Corporate priority</b>    | Inclusive Economy   |
| <b>Recommendations</b>       | The Committee is asked:<br>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 summary reports provided.

### 3. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 3.1. The Council Plan has established five priorities for the years 2025/28. These priorities are:
  - Promote more equal communities in Reading
  - Secure Reading's economic and cultural success
  - Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint
  - Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children
  - Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
- 3.2. In delivering these priorities, we will be guided by the following set of principles:
  - Putting residents first
  - Building on strong foundations
  - Recognising, respecting, and nurturing all our diverse communities
  - Involving, collaborating, and empowering residents
  - Being proudly ambitious for Reading
- 3.3. Defending planning appeals made against planning decisions contributes to creating a sustainable and healthy environment with supported communities and helping the economy within the Borough as identified as the priorities within the Council 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:**

WARD: EMMER GREEN  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/D/25/3368161  
CASE NO: PL/25/0165  
ADDRESS: 151 Peppard Road  
CASE OFFICER: Louise Fuller  
PROPOSAL: Erection of annexe (Retrospective)  
METHOD: Written Representation

WARD: TILEHURST  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/W/25/3367970  
CASE NO: PL/24/1534  
ADDRESS: Peter Moss Services 20 Norcot Road, Tilehurst  
CASE OFFICER: Anthony Scholes  
PROPOSAL: Demolition of existing garage workshops, canopy extension, and detached spray booth building, and replacement with metal clad building for General or General Industrial purposes (Class B2 – Vehicle Workshop and Vehicle Body Spraying) accessed via Lemart Close, with carparking, and waste storage  
METHOD: Written Representation

WARD: THAMES WARD  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/Z/25/3367583  
CASE NO: PL/25/0468  
ADDRESS: Thames Valley Service Station, George St, Caversham  
CASE OFFICER: Gary Miles  
PROPOSAL: 1no D6 (digital advertisement) screen  
METHOD: Written Representation

WARD: BATTLE  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/Z/25/3368994  
CASE NO: PL/25/0557  
ADDRESS: Milk and More, 1 Portman Road, Reading RG30 1EA  
CASE OFFICER: Gary Miles  
PROPOSAL: Proposed 48 Sheet LED Advertising Billboard, 5.76m x 2.88m  
METHOD: Written Representation

WARD: EMMER GREEN  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/D/25/3369443  
CASE NO: PL/25/0167  
ADDRESS: 16 Jefferson Close, Emmer Green, Reading  
CASE OFFICER: Gary Miles  
PROPOSAL: Single Storey Rear Extension and Internal Alterations  
METHOD: Written Representation

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| WARD:         | KATESGROVE  |
| APPEAL NO:    | APP/E0345/Z/25/3371390  |
| CASE NO:      | PL/25/0866  |
| ADDRESS:      | 70 Whitley Street, Reading  |
| CASE OFFICER: | Gary Miles  |
| PROPOSAL:     | Retrospective advertising consent for illuminated signboard for Turkish Halal Food Centre |
| METHOD:       | Written Representation  |

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Appeals Decided:**

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| WARD:            | KATESGROVE                                      |
| APPEAL NO:       | APP/E0345/W/25/3363345                          |
| CASE NO:         | PL/24/0661                                      |
| ADDRESS:         | Folk House Church Street Reading                |
| PROPOSAL:        | Replacement of timber windows with UPVC windows |
| CASE OFFICER:    | Matthew Harding                                 |
| METHOD:          | Written Representation                          |
| DECISION:        | REFUSED   |
| DATE DETERMINED: | 23.07.2025                                      |

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| WARD:            | CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS                      |
| APPEAL NO:       | APP/E0345/D/25/3359487                 |
| CASE NO:         | PL/24/0824                             |
| ADDRESS:         | The Shanty, 145 The Warren             |
| PROPOSAL:        | Extensions and alterations to dwelling |
| CASE OFFICER:    | Nathalie Weekes                        |
| METHOD:          | Written Representation                 |
| DECISION:        | REFUSED                                |
| DATE DETERMINED: | 25.07.2025                             |

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| WARD:            | CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS   |
| APPEAL NO:       | APP/E0345/C/24/3354050 & APP/E0345/C/24/3354051   |
| CASE NO:         | Enforcement Appeal  |
| ADDRESS:         | 19 Richmond Road  |
| PROPOSAL:        | Without planning permission, the material change of use of a garden building incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse to a mixed-use that includes business purposes (treatment room) |
| CASE OFFICER:    | Stephen Hammond   |
| METHOD:          | Written Representation  |
| DECISION:        | ALLOWED   |
| DATE DETERMINED: | 31.07.2025  |

|            |                               |
|------------|-------------------------------|
| WARD:      | TILEHURST                     |
| APPEAL NO: | APP/E0345/D/25/3364230        |
| CASE NO:   | PL/25/0217                    |
| ADDRESS:   | 49 Recreation Road, Tilehurst |

PROPOSAL: Single storey rear extension (retrospective)  
CASE OFFICER: Mishga Marshall  
METHOD: Written Representation  
DECISION: REFUSED  
DATE DETERMINED: 08.08.2025

WARD: Abbey  
APPEAL NO: APP/TPO/E0345/9429  
CASE NO: PL/22/1070  
ADDRESS: Chancery Mews, Russell Street  
PROPOSAL: Crown Reduce, crown lift & crown thin two Yew trees  
CASE OFFICER: Sarah Hanson  
METHOD: Written Representation  
DECISION: DISMISSED  
DATE DETERMINED: 19 June 2025

WARD: KATESGROVE  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/Z/25/3359854  
CASE NO: PL/24/1345  
ADDRESS: 70-72 Whitley Street  
PROPOSAL: The development proposed is the replacement of internally  
Illuminated D48 poster with a digital display  
CASE OFFICER: Gary Miles  
METHOD: Written Representation  
DECISION: ALLOWED  
DATE DETERMINED: 19.08.2025

WARD: EMMER GREEN  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/D/25/3368161  
CASE NO: PL/25/0165  
ADDRESS: 151 Peppard Road, Emmer Green  
PROPOSAL: Erection of annex (retrospective)  
CASE OFFICER: Louise Fuller  
METHOD: Written Representation  
DECISION: ALLOWED  
DATE DETERMINED: 21.08.2025

WARD: BATTLE  
APPEAL NO: APP/E0345/Z/25/3368994  
CASE NO: PL/25/0557  
ADDRESS: Milk & More 1 Portman Road  
PROPOSAL: Proposed 48 Sheet LED Advertising Billboard, 5.76m x 2.88m  
CASE OFFICER: Gary Miles  
METHOD: Written Representation  
DECISION: DISMISSED  
DATE DETERMINED: 27.08.2025

A tree works application (ref: PL/22/1070) was submitted on 20 July 2022 and sought approval for works to two Yew trees; that being a reduction of the height by approx. 6-10ft/2-3m and a reduction of the crown by approx. 6-10ft/2-3m, crown lifting and crown thinning. The reasons cited for the works were '*to keep the tree clear of the gutter and windows, increase light levels for occupiers and reduce risk of snow damage*'. The overall reductions were refused on 14 November 2022 due to the harm to the amenity value of the trees and that reductions alongside thinning was not good arboricultural practice. Lesser works were approved, consisting of pruning to provide better clearance from the building, alongside the crown lifting and crown thinning. The appeal was finally decided on 19 June 2025 and was dismissed with the

Inspector concluding that '*I am satisfied that the tree contributes to the appearance and character of the conservation area and that the proposed work is likely to have a detrimental impact on this contribution. No evidence has been submitted to justify the proposed works over and above what has already been approved*'. Officers are pleased that the Inspector appreciated the detrimental impact of the works on the trees and on the wider area.



## Planning Applications Committee

10 September 2025



**Reading**  
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|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Title</b>  | <b>PROPOSED TREE WORK TO ONE COUNCIL PLANE TREE IN LANCING CLOSE, READING</b>  |
| <b>Purpose of the report</b>                                      | To make a decision   |
| <b>Report status</b>  | Public report  |
| <b>Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report</b> | Emma Gee   |
| <b>Report author</b>  | Sarah Hanson, Natural Environment Officer  |
| <b>Lead councillor</b>  | Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets   |
| <b>Council Priority</b>   | Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint  |
| <b>Ward</b>   | Battle   |
| <b>Recommendations</b>  | The Committee is asked:<br>1. To approve the proposed tree works subject to no substantive objections being received within the consultation period. |

### 1. Executive summary

- 1.1. To report to Committee on proposed work to one Plane tree on Council land at the end of Lancing Close; that being T12 of TPO 29/03 (copy of TPO plan attached – Appendix 1).

### 2. Policy Context

- 2.1. Local Plan policy EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLANDS includes the aim for  
*'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'.*
- 2.2. The protection of Council trees where appropriate to do so contributes to this policy aim.
- 2.3. The Reading Borough Council adopted Tree Strategy (2021) sets 12 Objectives, which can be viewed here: [Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy, March 2021](#) . Appropriate management of Council, protected trees meets the aims of Objective 1.

### 3. The Proposal

- 3.1. The tree is located at the end of Lancing Close. On 8 August 2025 an application was received from the Tree Surveyor in Streetscene seeking consent to crown lift (remove/reduce lower branches) of the

tree up to 4-4.5m above ground level (application reference PL/25/1128). The reason for the pruning is cited as being that: *'Branches are hanging down low over the adjoining school playground and also some branches are resting on the adjoining garage roofs'*. An indication of the crown lift can be seen in Appendix 2 alongside a photo of the whole tree in-situ.

- 3.2. As the Council-maintained tree in question is subject to a Tree Preservation Order, a formal tree works application is required for the works to be approved.
- 3.3. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires applications for works to protected Council owned or maintained trees to be decided by a Committee of the Council which is not responsible for managing the land to which the application relates
- 3.4. The law also requires a public notice to be displayed for at least 21 days giving details of the proposed works and contact details for any comments to be sent.
- 3.5. The crown lifting proposed is considered to be reasonable management of the tree to alleviate concerns from the school and to avoid damage to the adjacent garages. The proposed work will not have a significant detrimental impact on the health or amenity value of the tree. Subject to no substantive objections or comments being received as a result of the public notice, it is recommended that the works be approved

#### **4. Contribution to Strategic Aims**

- 4.1. Trees within the Council's ownership improve the quality of its open spaces and provide multiple environment benefits, including improvement of air quality. The retention, planting and appropriate management of Council trees promotes a healthy environment in Reading.
- 4.2. The Council Plan has established five priorities for the years 2025/28. These priorities are:
  - Promote more equal communities in Reading
  - Secure Reading's economic and cultural success
  - Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint
  - Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children
  - Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
- 4.3. In delivering these priorities, we will be guided by the following set of principles:
  - Putting residents first
  - Building on strong foundations
  - Recognising, respecting, and nurturing all our diverse communities
  - Involving, collaborating, and empowering residents
  - Being proudly ambitious for Reading

- 4.4. Full details of the Council Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the Council's website - [Council plan - Reading Borough Council](#). These priorities and the Council Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

## **5. Environmental and Climate Implications**

- 5.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 5.2. Trees have multiple environmental benefits that include flood alleviation, wildlife benefits, air pollution mitigation and air cooling. The proposed works are not expected to substantially impact the tree's contribution to these multiple environmental benefits, as the intention of the works is to enable the tree to be retained in preference to felling

## **6. Community Engagement**

- 6.1. A site Notice was placed adjacent to the Plane tree on 21 August 2025 and will be left for the required 21-day period until 11 September 2025. An update on any public comments received so far will be provided at Planning Applications Committee.
- 6.2. The application has also been available to view via Public Access

## **7. Equality Implications**

- 7.1. 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.
- 7.2. None required.

## **8. Other Relevant Considerations**

- 8.1. None

## **9. Legal Implications**

- 9.1. Service and administration of Tree Preservation Orders falls under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 and The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012.
- 9.2. Preparing, serving confirmation and contravention of TPO's are services dealt with by the Council's Legal Section.
- 9.3. Determination of applications affecting work to protected trees is delegated to officers except where the proposal has been submitted by or on behalf of the Council.

## **10. Financial Implications**

- 10.1. None of this report. It is understood that works to the tree would be funded by the Council from existing budgets.

## **11. Timetable for Implementation**

- 11.1. Once issued, tree work approvals last for a period of 2 years, i.e. must be carried out within that period. A standard Condition of consent will be attached to the works (if approved) requiring the pruning to be carried out in line with good arboricultural practice.

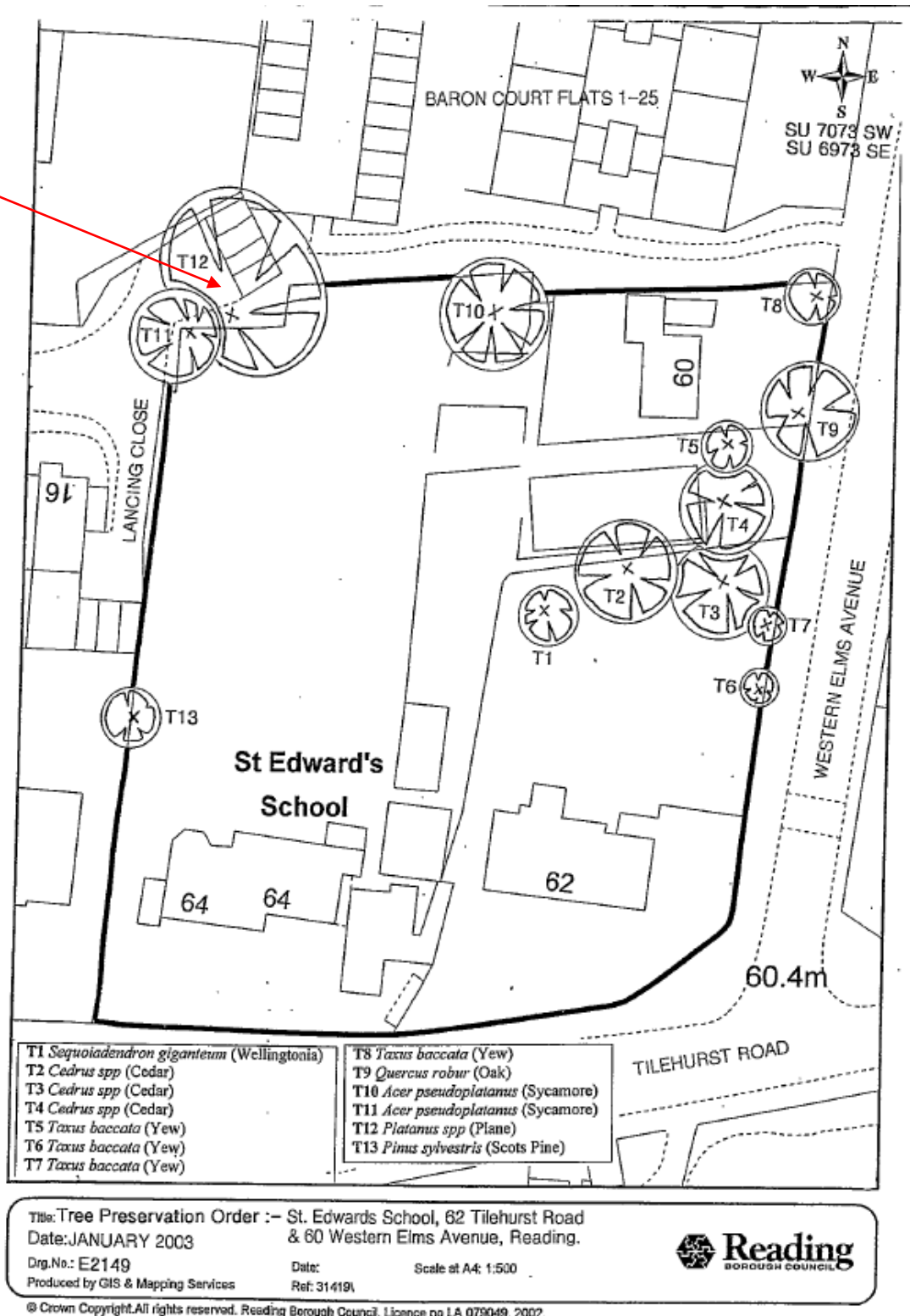
## **12. Background Papers**

- 12.1. Register of Tree Preservation Orders

## **Appendices**

- 1. TPO plan of TPO 29/03
- 2. Photographs

## Appendix 1 – TPO 29/03 (plan)





## Appendix 2 – Photographs



**indicative crown lift above garage**

10 September 2025



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|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Title</b>                           | <b>PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT</b>   |
| <b>Ward</b>                            | Abbey  |
| <b>Planning Application Reference:</b> | PL/25/0885 LBC   |
| <b>Site Address:</b>                   | Town Hall, Blagrove Street, Reading  |
| <b>Proposed Development</b>            | Replace existing timber double fire door with a new metal double door.   |
| <b>Applicant</b>                       | Reading Borough Council  |
| <b>Report author</b>                   | Marcie Rejwerska   |
| <b>Deadline:</b>                       | 3 September 2025   |
| <b>Recommendations</b>                 | Grant listed building consent, subject to conditions.  |
| <b>Conditions</b>                      | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Time Limit – Three Years</li> <li>2. In accordance with approved plans</li> <li>3. Materials as specified</li> </ol>       |
| <b>Informatives</b>                    | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Terms</li> <li>2. Building Control</li> <li>3. Complaints about construction</li> <li>4. Positive and Proactive</li> </ol> |

## 1. Executive summary

- 1.1. The proposal is to remove an existing timber double fire door which has rotted and is in poor condition and replace with a metal double fire door in a similar colour (grey). The Town Hall is Grade II\* listed, and the door is located at the rear, adjacent to the Grade II listed Hospitium building.
- 1.2. The proposal is recommended for approval subject to the conditions as outlined above.

## 2. Introduction and site description

- 2.1. The proposal relates to external fire exit double doors at the rear of the site. These doors are not original and have no historical significance. The Town Hall is a Grade II\* listed building. The relevant section of the official listing reads as follows:  
*The eastern front, facing the churchyard of the Church of St Laurence is partially masked by later buildings joined to the eastern end of the former School of Art and Science and forming neighbouring properties. The eastern side of the Victoria Hall (formerly known as the Small Town Hall) built in 1785-1786 by Charles Poulton can be seen. This has five windows placed behind gauged-brick relieving arches. These each have sashes of four by six panes and the space between their square heads and the*

*arches above was opened during the remodelling of the interior in 1863 by WH Woodman to give the windows arched heads that include a pattern of semi-circular and round panes.*

The full listing description can be found on the Historic England register. The site is within the Abbey Quarter and the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area.

- 2.2. In accordance with the Constitution of the Council as the application is submitted on behalf of the Council it is required to be determined by Planning Applications Committee.

### **3. The Proposal**

- 3.1. Listed Building Consent is sought for the removal of the existing timber double fire doors and replacement with metal double doors in a similar colour (grey).

3.2. Documents and plans received:

Revised Heritage Statement  
Location Plan  
Floor Plan  
Elevations

Received by the LPA on 18 June 2025

Block Plan  
Photograph of existing door

Received by the LPA on 9 July 2025

Titan Door Systems - S-series product brochure  
Received by the LPA on 14 August 2025

### **4. Relevant Planning History**

- PL/91/0804 - External sign (un-illuminated) in 250mm high gold Times Roman Typeface to read Gift Shop to west (Blagrove St) elevation. Application permitted.
- PL/01/0573 - Installation of 2no. vertical sliding sash timber windows, to be in keeping with existing windows, to the Earley charities room, including soldier courses above heads to match. Application permitted.
- PL/06/0052 - Exterior signage - 2 no. non-illuminated banners and vinyl lettering to doors. Application permitted.
- PL/06/0159 – Exterior signage - 2 no. non-illuminated banners and vinyl lettering to doors. Application withdrawn.
- PL/06/0198 - External signage - 2 no. external banners, signs and lettering to doors. Application withdrawn.
- PL/06/1330 - External signage - 2 no. external banners, signs and lettering to doors. Application permitted.
- PL/17/0987 - Internal alterations including, refurbishment of cafe and bar areas, replacement of bar area steps with new steps and wheelchair platform lift, replacement partition walls, refurbishment of toilets, replacement lighting and additional doors. Application permitted.



- PL/17/1223 - Erection of a galvanised walkway to assist with access for maintenance of ventilating plant to the roof of the Huntley & Palmers Gallery of the museum. Application permitted.
- PL/19/0327 - Installation of 1 x non-illuminated hanging sign, 1 x non-illuminated wall mounted sign, 1 x non-illuminated over-head doorway sign and 8 x window vinyls. Application permitted.
- PL/19/0567 - Installation of 1 x non-illuminated hanging sign, 1 x non-illuminated wall mounted sign, 1 x non-illuminated over-head doorway sign and 8 x window vinyls. Application permitted.
- PL/19/1632 - Retention of existing signs and interpretation panels on a permanent basis (application 170962) and proposed of extra directional signage in the Town Centre on a permanent basis. Application permitted.

## 5. Consultations

- 5.1 The planning notice was attached to nearby street furniture on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2025 and left in place for a minimum of 21 days (until 18<sup>th</sup> August 2025). A press advert was also published in the local paper.

No letters of representation have been received.

- 5.2 Statutory consultees:

- **Historic England** – No comments to make.
- **RCAAC** - No comments received.
- **RBC Conservation Officer** – No objections.

## 6. Legal context

- 6.1 Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the LPA 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 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).
- 6.3 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).
- 6.4 Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

### **National Planning Policy**

National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (amended February 2025)  
 National Planning Practice Guidance (2014 onwards)  
 Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance 2008, Historic England  
 HEAG304 Listed Building Consent, Historic England Advice Note 16, 2021

## **Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)**

Policy EN1 – Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

Policy EN3 – Enhancement of Conservation Areas

## **Other documents**

Market Place/London Street Conservation Area Appraisal 2007

## **Local Plan Partial Update**

- 6.5 The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. The submission draft of the Local Plan Partial Update was submitted on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025.
- 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. Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to this application and listed above is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remain very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the determination of this planning application and are not considered to be ‘out of date’.

## **7. Appraisal**

- 7.1. Policy EN1 states "Applications which affect Listed Buildings will not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where appropriate, their settings." Policy EN3 requires the special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas to be conserved and enhanced.
- 7.2. The proposed replacement door while not an ideal material choice, is considered acceptable in this case. The door is located at the rear of the site and there are no public areas from which the door might be viewed. There are some benefits to replacement with a more durable metal door, as will be fire resistant so potentially more secure and should require less maintenance.
- 7.3. Therefore, on balance, the proposal is considered acceptable.

## **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 application.

## **9. Conclusion & Planning Balance**

- 9.1 As with all applications considered by the Local Planning Authority, this application for consent 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 and Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 9.2 The proposal is considered to have no harm on the significance of the heritage asset nor the wider Conservation Area. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

## Plans

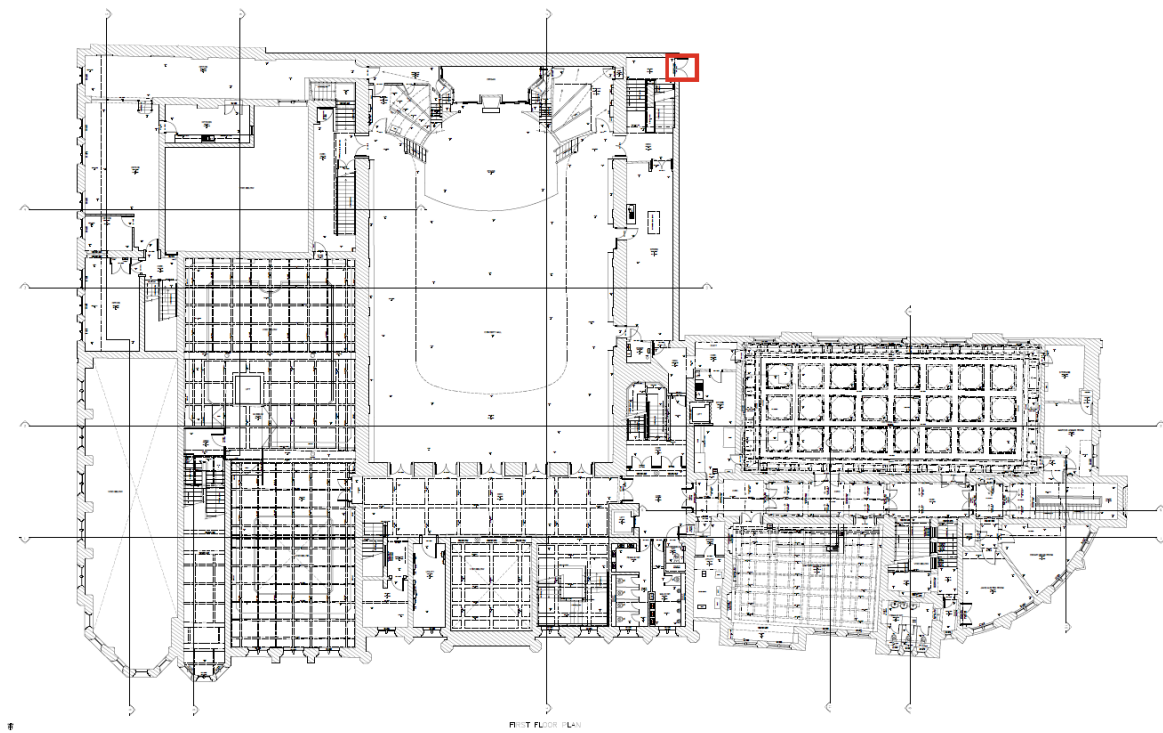


Figure 1 Floor Plan



Figure 2 Location indicated on Google Maps





*Figure 3 Photograph of the existing door submitted by the applicant*



*Figure 4 Example photo taken from the supplier's brochure*

10 September 2025



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|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Title</b>                           | <b>PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT</b>   |
| <b>Ward</b>                            | Redlands   |
| <b>Planning Application Reference:</b> | PL/25/0620 (FUL)   |
| <b>Site Address:</b>                   | Land adjacent 43 Upper Redlands Road, Reading  |
| <b>Proposed Development</b>            | Self-build erection of a single dwellinghouse, with associated access, parking and landscaping, including the relocation of a boundary wall and the removal of a bunker structure  |
| <b>Report author</b>                   | Ethne Humphreys  |
| <b>Applicant</b>                       | Mr H Saood   |
| <b>Deadline:</b>                       | 17 September 2025 (extension of time)  |
| <b>Recommendations</b>                 | <p>Delegate to the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (ADPTPPS) to:</p> <p>i) GRANT full planning permission, subject to:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a) the satisfactory completion of a s106 legal agreement and delegate to ADPTPPS to make such minor changes to the conditions, Heads of Terms and details of the legal agreement as may be reasonably required to issue the permission,</p> <p>OR</p> <p>ii) REFUSE full planning permission if the legal agreement is not completed (unless officers on behalf of the ADPTPPS agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement)</p>                                   |
| <b>S106 Terms</b>                      | Contribution toward affordable housing equivalent to 10% GDV (£61,250) and off-site BNG units  |
| <b>Conditions</b>                      | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Time Limit</li> <li>2. Approved Plans</li> <li>3. Pre-commencement material details and samples (to be approved)</li> <li>4. Pre-commencement bin storage (to be approved)</li> <li>5. Pre-commencement gate details (to be approved)</li> <li>6. Pre-commencement landscaping details to include sedum roof details (to be approved)</li> <li>7. Pre-commencement arboricultural method statement (to be approved)</li> <li>8. Compliance construction method statement</li> <li>9. Ecological enhancements installed with photos (as specified)</li> <li>10. SAP post construction prior to first occupation (to be approved)</li> </ol> |

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
|                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Electric Vehicle charging points (detailed to be provided, approved by LPA, and implemented prior to occupation)</li> <li>12. Vehicle parking (as specified)</li> <li>13. Vehicular access (as specified)</li> <li>14. Cycle parking (as specified)</li> <li>15. Refuse and recycling (as specified)</li> <li>16. Set back of gates (as proposed – 5m)</li> <li>17. Pre-commencement visibility splays (to be approved)</li> <li>18. Parking Permits</li> <li>19. Parking Permits</li> <li>20. Hours of construction/demolition (0800-1800 Mon-Fri; 0800-1300 Sat (not at all on Sundays/Bank Holidays))</li> <li>21. No Bonfires</li> <li>22. Permitted development extension rights removed (Class A (enlargement, improvement or other alteration), Class B (enlargement of a dwellinghouse consisting of an addition or alteration to its roof), and Class E (building or enclosure, swimming or other pool required for a purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse))</li> <li>23. Permitted development extension rights removed (no new openings)</li> <li>24. Obscure glazing (to specific windows facing neighbouring properties, including maintaining in perpetuity)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Informatives</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Positive and proactive</li> <li>2. Pre-commencement conditions</li> <li>3. Highways</li> <li>4. Terms</li> <li>5. Building regulations approval may be required</li> <li>6. Complaints about construction</li> <li>7. Encroachment</li> <li>8. Nesting birds</li> <li>9. Parking Permits</li> </ul>  |

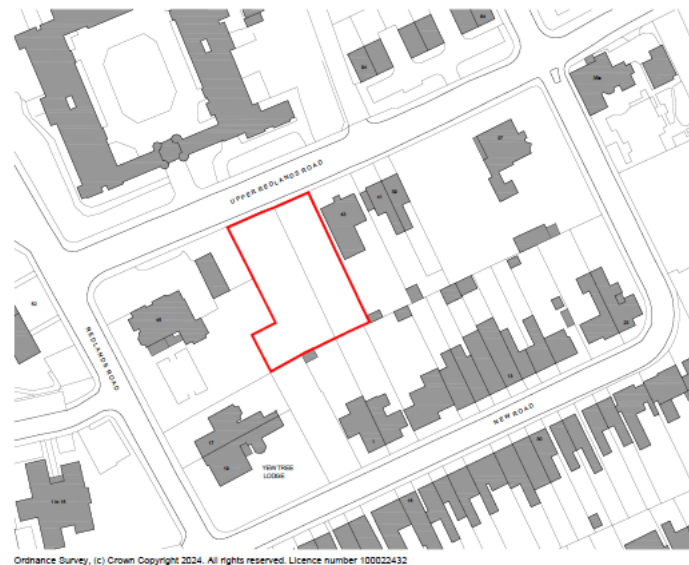
## 1. Executive summary

- 1.1. This report relates to the application for full planning permission for the erection of 1 x 4 bed detached dwelling on land adjacent to 43 Upper Redlands Road. A previous application was approved in 2021 for 1 no. dwelling on the same site. Since the granting of this permission, the applicant has changed, and it is no longer intended to build out the previously approved scheme. The legal agreement will be worded to ensure that both permissions are not built out.
- 1.2 The proposal would provide an additional dwelling, with a policy compliant affordable housing contribution. The proposal would result in an on-site loss of biodiversity but would be mitigated by provision of off-site biodiversity credits alongside appropriate on-site biodiversity enhancements. Suitable tree planting and soft landscaping is proposed, and the proposals are not considered to result in any adverse harm to the character and appearance of the area, conservation area or other nearby heritage assets. Overall, it is considered to be acceptable, and the recommendation is to grant subject to completion of a s106 agreement.



## 2. Introduction and site description

- 2.1. The application site comprises land adjacent to 43 Upper Redlands Road, located on the south side of Upper Redlands Road.
- 2.2. The site is located in the Redlands Conservation Area and the Grade II Listed Wantage Hall is located opposite the site to the north. The site is also located within a Green Link.
- 2.3. The surrounding residential properties are between 2 and 3 storeys in height, and their designs vary within traditional architecture. There are examples of grey and red brick, mostly Victorian, with Stucco and render. The majority of the properties in the area are grand buildings, within generous plots and walled gardens.
- 2.4. The application is a 'minor' application and is presented to Committee at the request of Councillor Cross, with concerns relating to the scale, design and imposing front elevation.



*Figure 1 - Site Location Plan*

## 3. The proposal

- 3.1. The proposed development is for the erection of a single dwellinghouse with associated access, parking and landscaping.
- 3.2. The proposed materials include:  
Grey brick finish  
White painted render
- 3.3. 2 car parking spaces are proposed, as well as secure cycle parking area and bin storage and electric vehicle charging point.
- 3.4. Indicative soft landscaping and biodiversity enhancements are proposed which includes 30 new trees, along with sedum roof, wildflower area, bird and bat boxes and hedgehog gaps.

Plans considered:

Location Plan 24-J4673-01-001  
Site Information Plan 24-J4673-01-002  
Coloured Site Plan 24-J4673-01-003  
Proposed Floor Plans 24-J4673-02-001  
Proposed Site Sections and Street Scene 24-J4673-05-001  
Proposed Gate 24-J4673-08-001  
Proposed Cycle Shed 24-J4673-08-002

Tree Survey Plan PRI24678-01 Rev A  
Tree Protection Plan PRI24678-03 Rev C  
Eco Enhancement Plan PRI24678 Rev D  
Landscape Proposals PRI24678-11 Rev G  
Soft Landscape Specification Rev B



Proposed Site Plan

#### **4. Planning history**

- 4.1. PL/24/0279 – Erection of a single detached dwellinghouse with associated access, parking and landscaping. Refused 31/05/2024
- 4.2. PL/24/1296 - Application for Approval of Details Reserved by Conditions 10 (Tree Protection and Arboricultural Survey and Report), 11 (Hard and Soft Landscaping) and 13 (Design Stage SAP) of application 210308. Discharged 06/12/2023
- 4.3. PL/23/1288 - The proposal is to construct a two storey L shaped hipped roof dwelling adjacent to the eastern boundary in a similar location to the approved scheme under reference 210308. Refused 3/11/2023
- 4.4. PL/21/0308 - Erection of a single detached dwellinghouse with associated access, parking and landscaping. Permitted 10/12/2021
- 4.5. 18/2214 – Erection of 4 dwellinghouses and access with associated landscaping and parking. Refused and dismissed at appeal.

#### **5. Consultations**

- 5.1. Internal

*RBC Ecologist*

- 5.2. Concerns originally raised over incorrect metric submitted. No objection, subject to conditions relating to securing ecological enhancements and for off-site units to be secured. Discussed below.

### *RBC Natural Environment*

- 5.3. Concerns originally raised over insufficient tree planting/soft landscaping and inaccurate AMS. No objection, subject to conditions. Discussed below.

RBC Conservation Officer

- 5.4. No objections subject to conditions. Discussed below.

### *RBC Transport*

- 5.5. No objection subject to conditions. Discussed below.

### *Conservation Area Advisory Committee*

- 5.6. Concerns relating to full heritage statement not being provided; justification for relocation of wall, objection to decorative brickwork copying Wantage Hall, lack of investigation into age of bunker, object to rooflights, chimney spoils the roofline.

### *Public*

- 5.7. Site Notices were displayed at the site and the application advertised. No neighbour letters of representation received.

## **6. Legal context**

- 6.1. 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.
- 6.2. Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the LPA to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.
- 6.3. 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) - 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).
- 6.4. 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).
- 6.5. Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

### National

National planning policy framework (2024)

The following NPPF chapters are the most relevant (other apply to a lesser extent):

- 2. Achieving sustainable development
- 4. Decision-making
- 5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
- 9. Promoting sustainable transport
- 11. Making effective use of land
- 12. Achieving well-designed places
- 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

National planning policy guidance (2014 onwards)

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION  
CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE  
CC5: ACCESSIBILITY AND THE INTENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT  
CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM  
CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY  
CC9: SECURING INFRASTRUCTURE  
EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT  
EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS  
EN6: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN A HISTORIC CONTEXT  
EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK  
EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND  
EN15: AIR QUALITY  
H1: PROVISION OF HOUSING  
H2: DENSITY AND MIX  
H3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING  
H5: STANDARDS FOR NEW HOUSING  
H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE  
TR1: ACHIEVING THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY  
TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS  
TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

Supplementary Planning Documents and other guidance

Affordable Housing SPD (2021)  
Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)  
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)  
Reading Tree Strategy (2021)  
Biodiversity Action Plan (2021)

Other relevant documentation / guidance / legislation

Redlands Conservation Appraisal (2008)  
Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (Historic England, 2016)  
Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking (Historic England, 2015a)  
Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2015b)  
Principles of Conservation (Historic England, 2008)  
Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings (British Standards Publication BS 7913:2013, 2015)  
National Design Guide: Planning practice for beautiful, enduring and successful places (2019)

Local Plan partial update

- 6.6 The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. A consultation version of the draft update of the Local Plan was published on 6th November 2024.
- 6.7 Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become “out of date” when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have

been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example. Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to these applications listed above is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remains very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the determination of this planning application and are not considered to be 'out of date'.

## **7. Appraisal**

### **7.1 Land Use Considerations**

7.2 The NPPF states that LPAs should *"encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value"*. The NPPF definition of 'previously developed land' excludes private residential gardens.

7.3 Therefore, it is clear that the priority for development should be on previously developed land, in particular vacant and derelict sites and buildings. However, that does not mean that the development of private residential garden land is unacceptable in principle, rather that previously developed land should be the first choice for housing development.

7.4 Policy H11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens) requires that new residential development that involves land within the curtilage of private residential gardens will be acceptable where:

- 1) It makes a positive contribution to the character of the area;
- 2) The site is of an adequate size to accommodate the development;
- 3) The proposal has a suitable access;
- 4) The proposal would not lead to an unacceptable tandem development;
- 5) The design minimises the exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas;
- 6) It does not cause detrimental impact on residential amenities;
- 7) The emphasis is on the provision of family housing;
- 8) There is no adverse impact on biodiversity, and
- 9) The proposal does not prejudice the development of a wider area.

7.5 Therefore, while the proposed site is not 'previously developed land', the principle of redevelopment is considered acceptable providing the criteria outlined in Policies H11 and H2 (relating to general location, accessibility, density and housing mix matters) are met.

7.6 Policy H2 (Density and Mix) states that: *"The appropriate density of residential development will be informed by:*

- *the character and mix of uses of the area in which it is located, including the housing mix, and including consideration of any nearby heritage assets or important landscape or townscape areas;*
- *its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport;*
- *the need to achieve high quality design;*
- *the need to maximise the efficiency of land use; and*
- *the need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers...*

*Indicative densities for different types of area are set out in figure 4.5, but the criteria above may indicate that a different density is appropriate. ...Net densities of below 30 dwellings per hectare will not be acceptable."*

*Wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting the needs for the mix of housing set out in figure 4.6, in particular for family homes of three or more bedrooms"*

- 7.7 From a land use perspective, provision of housing would align with the broad objectives of Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) in assisting meeting annual housing needs. Indeed, a scheme for 1 dwelling was approved under application 210308 and as such a new dwelling is acceptable in principle. The density of development is also considered suitable, with the proposal making an efficient use of the space/land available. Furthermore, the proposal would provide family sized accommodation. Accordingly, the proposals are considered to respond well to Policies H1 and H2. This will be subject to the more detailed considerations of relevant Local Plan policies detailed below.
- 7.8 Design Considerations and Impact on Heritage Assets**
- 7.9 Policies CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) and H11 (Development of Private and Residential Gardens) both seek to ensure that new development enhances and preserves the local character. Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) states that “the design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity”.
- 7.10 The site lies within the Redlands Conservation Area and as such there is a duty imposed by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requiring decision makers to have special regards to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. This is reflected in Policy EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) which states that historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced. Policy EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas) requires that the special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced and that development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Further to this, Policy EN6 (New Development in an Historic Context) states that in areas characterised by heritage assets, the historic environment will inform and shape new development. The Council will, therefore, have regard to both the quality of the townscape and the quality and interest of the area, rather than solely that of the individual building.
- 7.11 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF details that decisions should ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.
- 7.12 Paragraph 212 of the NPPF details that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.
- 7.13 The site comprises undeveloped land between No’s 43 and 45 Upper Redlands Road. The character of this part of Upper Redlands Road, and as noted in the Redlands Conservation Area Appraisal, is one of large two storey detached and semi-detached properties set within generous plots and well-treed grounds. This creates a relatively low density, open and spacious character and appearance within an arboreal setting.
- 7.14 There is a variety of design styles, featuring a variety of material from red brick to stucco to render. The Conservation Area Appraisal also notes that ‘properties here and throughout the Conservation Area are “linked” by frontage brick walls and/or low brick walls with railings above, and good tree cover behind’.
- 7.15 Concern has been raised that the proposed dwelling would result in an unsympathetic pastiche which does not positively contribute to the conservation area and is of a larger scale and size than the previous permission. Concern has been raised that the proposal would result in an imposing front elevation.

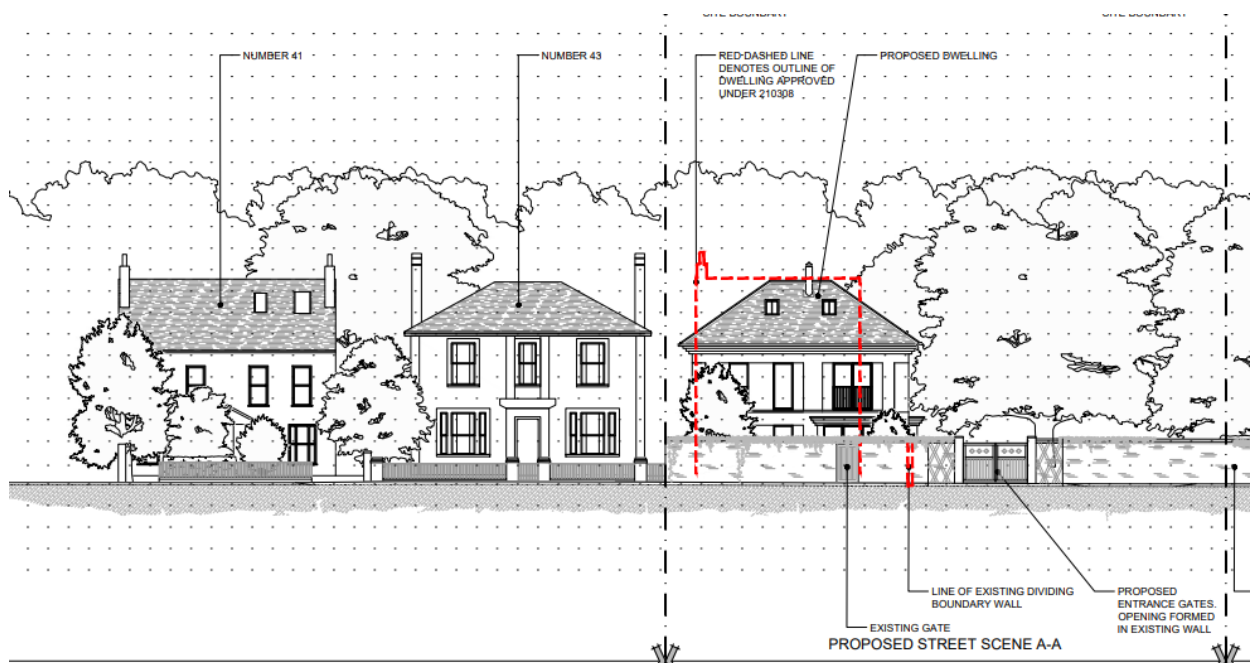
- 7.16 The planning history of this site (and wider area) is important here. Application 18/2214, which was for 4 dwellings, was refused and dismissed at appeal. The concern was largely to do with the substantial loss of garden space to facilitate the four dwellings proposed. The Inspector for the appeal did not raise any specific design concerns with the proposed dwellings themselves. Further to the above, application 21/0308 was approved with a dwelling of a more contemporary design.
- 7.18 It is acknowledged that a more recent application 24/0279 was refused. However, this was due to a combination of excessive scale and layout and bulky form combined with lack of suitable landscaping/greenery measures and insufficient information in relation to trees and biodiversity.
- 7.19 The proposed dwelling would follow the established building line of this part of Upper Redlands Road which is appropriate. When viewed from Upper Redlands Road, the scale, proportions and roof form of the proposed dwelling – which would be of a similar eaves and overall height to No's 39 and 43 Upper Redlands Road – would be sympathetic to the character and appearance of neighbouring properties.
- 7.20 The orientation of the proposed dwelling means that the principal elevation with the main entrance would not be facing Upper Redlands Road but would be facing west into the site:

Elevation facing Upper Redlands Road

Principal Elevation



- 7.21 As can be seen from the proposed street scene drawing, the elevation facing Upper Redlands Road, although wider than that approved previously, would be no greater in width or height than the adjacent No.43 Upper Redlands Road:





- 7.22 It is considered that the orientation of the proposed dwelling, with its principal elevation facing the side garden, assists in reducing the dominance of the new building in the street scene. Along with appropriate landscaping this is considered appropriate and acceptable without resulting in significant harm to heritage assets.
- 7.23 Elements of the proposals would reflect neighbouring properties and materiality of the listed Wantage Hall (opposite). The inclusion of diamond brick motif (again to reflect the boundary wall of Wantage Hall) is considered to add further visual interest to the scheme and is welcomed - it is not considered to detract, from the Listed Wantage Hall. Modern interpretations of traditional design features are also considered acceptable. The grey brick and white render will ensure that the dwelling would not 'compete' with the red brick of the listed Wantage Hall opposite.
- 7.24 Concern has been raised about the relocation of a wall that runs north/south down the middle of the site. Whilst there is no requirement to consider its retention, it is recognised to be an original feature of the site. As such, it is proposed to relocate to form the western site boundary. It is noted that approval 21/0308 did not propose or require the retention of this wall and its proposed relocation is considered to be positive. The Council's Conservation Officer raised no concern in this respect.
- 7.25 It is considered that there would be sufficient space about the dwelling and distance to the boundaries to accommodate the proposed dwelling without resulting in overdevelopment of the site or appearing cramped. As discussed elsewhere, the proposals include appropriate provision of tree planting and soft landscaping which will assist in softening the impact of the dwelling and its assimilation into the landscaped grain of the surrounding environment.
- 7.26 When seen from all nearby vantage points, the proposed scale and design approach, although in contrast to nearby buildings – and in contrast to the design of the approved scheme – is not considered to be so overwhelming or out of keeping as to undermine or harm the character and appearance of the conservation area as a whole or the setting of nearby listed buildings.
- 7.27 Compared to refused application 24/0279, the proposed dwelling would appear more modest in views from Upper Redlands Road with appropriate landscaping and tree planting and biodiversity measures as discussed elsewhere in this report.
- 7.28 Concern has been raised regarding the removal of the bunker. The site is not listed, and bunkers are not protected structures. The applicant has advised its retention is a safety issue and there is no reason to doubt that. Whilst its removal might be seen as unfortunate, this element constitutes a very small part of the significance of the conservation area – indeed, based on the conservation area appraisal, it does not serve any particular importance. The Council's Conservation Officer has confirmed no objection to its removal.
- 7.29 There would be limited harm in the immediate vicinity of the site but only by reason of introducing built form into presently open land. The level of harm is considered to be 'less than substantial' and very much at the lower end of the 'less than substantial' range as noted in paragraph 215 of the NPPF. There is no objection to the proposals from the Council's Conservation Officer. However, the success of the scheme from a design perspective will to an extent be dependent on the quality and finish of the materials. As such, it is considered necessary to secure samples and manufacturing details of all facing materials by way of condition.
- 7.30 Natural Environment - Trees/Landscaping**
- 7.31 Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) seeks to extend the Borough's vegetation cover and requires that development should make provision for tree planting whilst Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) requires proposals to include appropriate



landscaping. Given that the site is also located within a Conservation Area, tree retention and planting is a high priority and proposals should demonstrate an appropriate level of greening and/or net gain in the tree number.

7.32 Prior to the submission of this application, a Section 211 Notice (tree works notice) was submitted to the Council and approved for the removal of 26 trees in the rear garden. This removal has taken place.

7.33 The landscaping scheme originally proposed 10 new trees. This was not considered acceptable, given the 26 trees felled, as was not providing a net gain in tree numbers. Further to discussions during the consideration of the application, 30 trees are now proposed which results in a net gain. This is complemented by hedging around the majority of the perimeter alongside shrub planting. The Council's Natural Environment Officer has confirmed that the species and genus diversity mix is acceptable – including some larger canopy species which is appropriate. It should be noted that given the number of trees in a relatively small space, it is not expected that each will become 'specimen' trees achieving optimum size and shape. Set within the context of the trees removed and constraints of the site, the landscaping proposed is acceptable subject to condition to secure further detail.

7.34 A final Arboricultural Method Statement will also be secured by way of condition. Whilst it is sufficient to demonstrate that the proposals would be acceptable in relation to trees to be retained, further detail is required to include specification and construction method for the western boundary wall where it would be within root protection areas.

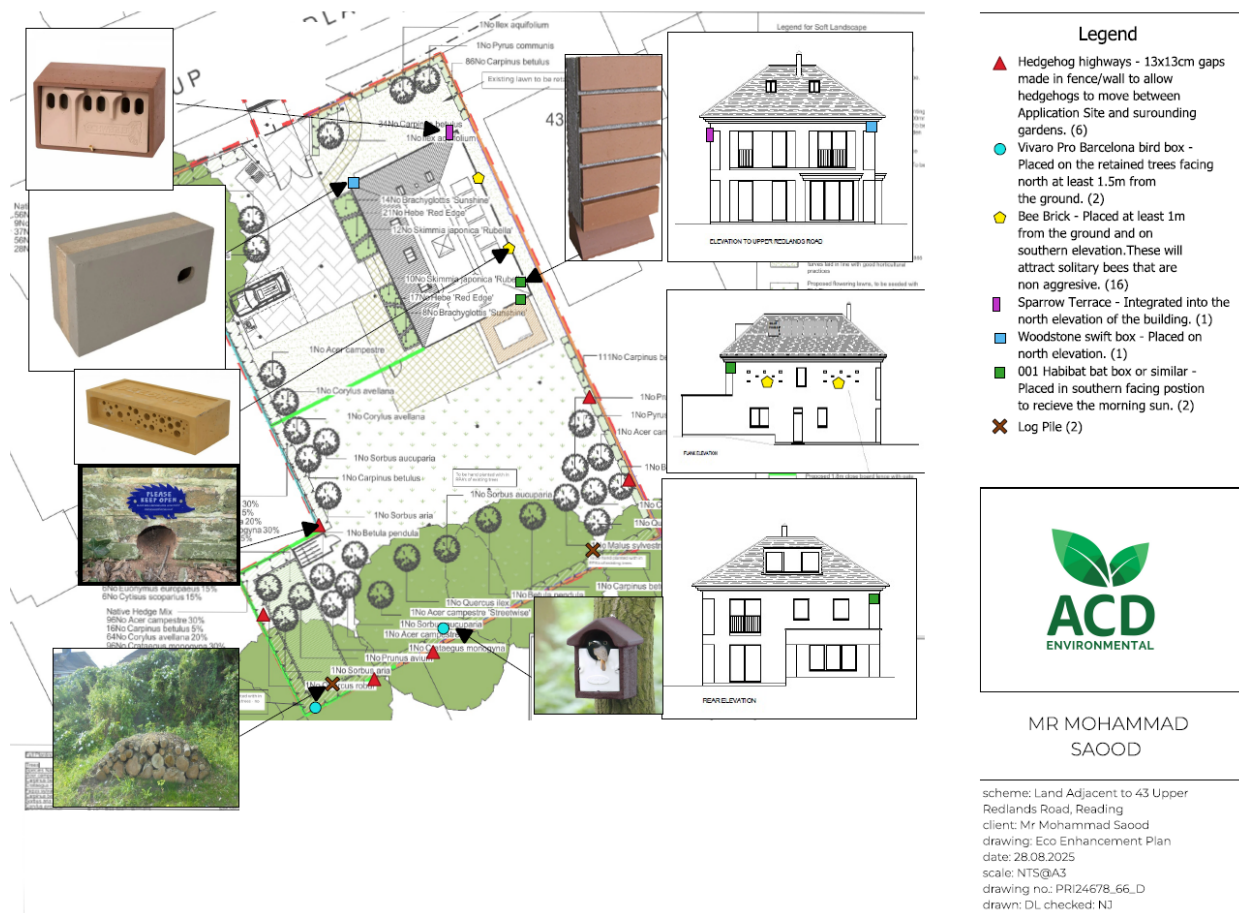
### **7.35 Ecology**

7.36 Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) seeks that development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and should provide for a net gain of biodiversity wherever possible by protecting, enhancing and incorporating features of biodiversity on and adjacent to development sites and by providing new tree planting and wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements wherever practicable. The site also forms part of a Green Link.

7.37 From 12 February 2024, biodiversity net gain (BNG) is mandatory for most development. This policy change has occurred since the decision on the previous planning application in 2021. However, this application is proposed to be a 'self-build' construction and is exempt from demonstrating a net gain of at least 10%. However, regardless of the exemption, Policy EN12 states that *"on all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity"*.

7.38 Since the revised provision of 30 new trees, an updated biodiversity net gain small sites metric calculation and report has been submitted. This shows that technically the proposals would lead to a net loss 0.8542 units. Whilst biodiversity enhancements are proposed – and which are welcomed – the loss of units should be mitigated through purchase of units off-site. The units will cover the loss and will not need to demonstrate net gain as the proposals are exempt from mandatory BNG. This will be secured through the S106 legal agreement and the Council's Ecologist has confirmed the approach to be acceptable.

7.39 The provision of sedum roof, bird and bat boxes including sparrow terrace and swift box, bee bricks, hedgehog gaps and wildflower meadow is further welcomed. The proposals, as indicated on the drawing below, offer a more comprehensive scheme than the extant 21/0308 in this respect and could be a positive enhancement of the current unmanaged land:



## Ecological Enhancement Plan

- 7.40 Given the combination of benefits to be secured on-site and off-site, it is considered that the proposals will provide habitat improvement.
- 7.41 Impact on Neighbour Amenity**  
Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) requires developments to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing properties in terms of: Privacy and overlooking; Access to sunlight and daylight; Visual dominance and overbearing; Harm to outlook; Noise and disturbance; Artificial lighting; Vibration; Dust and fumes; Smell; and Crime and safety.
- 7.42 The neighbouring properties potentially most affected by the proposals are No's 43 and 45 Upper Redlands Road located to the east and west of the site respectively.
- 7.43 In relation to No.45, given the distance from the proposed dwelling to this property (over 20m from the main dwelling itself) it is not considered to result in any overbearing effects. Whilst upper floor windows are proposed on the elevation facing across to No.45, given the distance, no significant material loss of privacy is considered to arise.
- 7.44 In relation to No.43, this property has the benefit of a deep two storey rear addition close to the western boundary. The proposed dwelling would not project past this at two storey level. Whilst the roof would be slightly higher, it would be hipped away and no significant material overbearing effects are considered to arise. The upper floor window facing towards No.43 would serve an en-suite bathroom and will be conditioned to be obscurely glazed.
- 7.45 Owing to the element of flat roof proposed, however, it is considered necessary to include a condition stipulating that the flat roof area shall not be used as a roof terrace, and any access out onto this area shall be for maintenance/means of escape purposes only. This

is in order to prevent any detrimental impacts of overlooking and/or noise and disturbance of the neighbouring premises.

- 7.46 In general terms it is noted that the proposed dwelling could be subject to significant further extensions and alterations under subsequent permitted development rights, which could negatively impact on the amenity of nearby occupiers. In order to manage this, it is considered necessary and reasonable to have a condition to remove permitted development rights under Classes A (alterations), B (roof additions) and E (outbuildings).

#### **7.47 Amenity of Future Occupiers**

- 7.48 Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) seeks that all new housing is built to high standards. Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) seeks to protect future occupiers from the impacts of pollution and Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) seeks that residential developments are provided with adequate private or communal outdoor amenity space.

- 7.49 It is considered that the proposals would provide an overall good standard of accommodation throughout with regular shaped rooms providing suitable outlook, natural lighting and ventilation. Internally, the floor spaces would comply with the space standards as set out in Policy H5. Whilst the outlook to bedroom 4 would be limited, given this would be a fourth bedroom, this is not considered unacceptable. The proposed garden area would be commensurate to the size of the dwelling – albeit irregular in shape - and not out of keeping with the wider area which features gardens of similar size. The plans also include conveniently located cycle and waste storage facilities.

- 7.50 In order to help ensure future residents maintain sufficient amenity space (and to protect neighbouring amenity as above) it is proposed to remove PD rights in relation to Class A (enlargement improvement or alteration), B (roof additions) and Class E (outbuildings).

#### **7.51 Transport Issues**

- 7.52 Policies TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy), TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development.

- 7.53 The site is located within Zone 2 the proposed dwelling would require 2 off road car parking spaces. The plans illustrate acceptable provision.

- 7.54 The proposals also include an electric vehicle charging point which is appropriate, and further details will be secured by way of condition. The plans illustrate that gates would be set back a minimum of 5m into the site to avoid vehicles waiting in the carriageway to enter the site which is appropriate.

- 7.55 An opening in the boundary wall is proposed to provide a new access. The principle of creating such an opening was accepted under application 21/0308. Whilst visibility splays should be illustrated, this can be dealt with by way of condition.

- 7.56 The development site is located in an area where the Council's Residents Parking Permit Scheme operates. Whilst the proposals include sufficient on-site parking, any off-site parking could generate additional pressure for parking in the area. Therefore, there should be an assumption that any future occupants of the houses would not be issued with resident or visitor parking permits and the appropriate condition and informative will be attached in this respect.

- 7.57 Plans illustrate cycle storage for 2 cycles within the garden, which is acceptable and complies with the Parking SPD.

- 7.58 Bin storage has been illustrated located to the front of the site allowing for kerb side collection, this is considered acceptable.

7.59 A construction method statement has been submitted which the Council's Transport Officer has confirmed is acceptable in respect of the construction phase of the development and the impact on surrounding highway network given the prominent location.

#### **7.60 Affordable Housing**

7.61 Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) requires that for development proposals of 1-4 dwellings, the application should make a financial contribution to enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere within the Borough.

7.62 The applicant has agreed to provide a policy compliant contribution towards affordable housing of £61,250.00 which has been agreed as representing 10% of the GDV of the site (based on valuations submitted). The contribution would be secured by a legal agreement should approval be forthcoming. As such, the proposal would make an appropriate contribution to meeting the identified housing needs of the Borough and achieving sustainable mixed and balanced communities.

#### **7.63 Sustainability**

7.64 Various sustainability measures are proposed as noted in the Sustainability and Energy Statement. Measures include solar panels, air source heat pump and sedum roof. These elements represent positive sustainability benefits of the scheme and are welcomed.

7.65 Notwithstanding the above, Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) requires that all new build housing integrate additional measures for sustainability. In light of this, conditions are recommended to ensure the development meets the following requirements:

- Higher water efficiency standards of 110 litres per person per day; and
- A 19% improvement over building regulations energy requirements

Although secured by planning condition, these new requirements will be administered through the Building Regulations. Confirmation of compliance will need to be submitted to the LPA to discharge the condition.

#### **7.66 CIL**

7.67 The proposal would be a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liable development. It is proposed to be a self-build development. An informative will be attached to the decision notice to advise the applicant of their responsibilities in this respect.

### **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

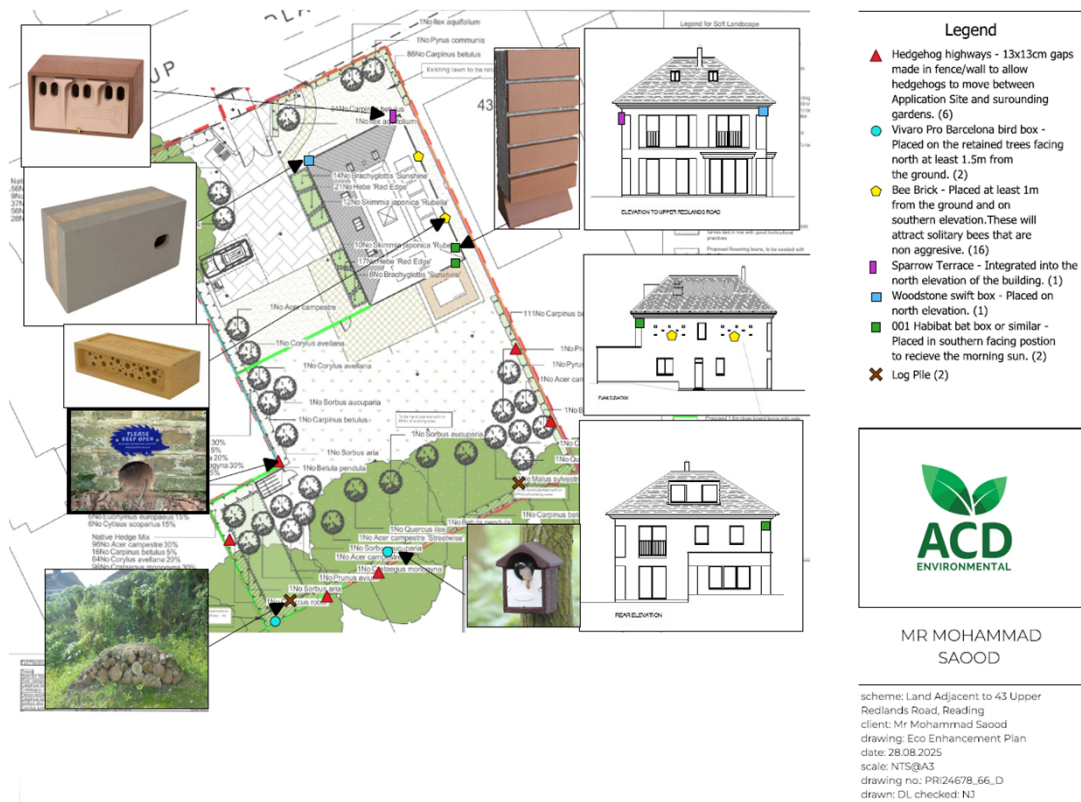
### **9. Conclusion**

9.1 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.

- Case Officer: Ethne Humphreys

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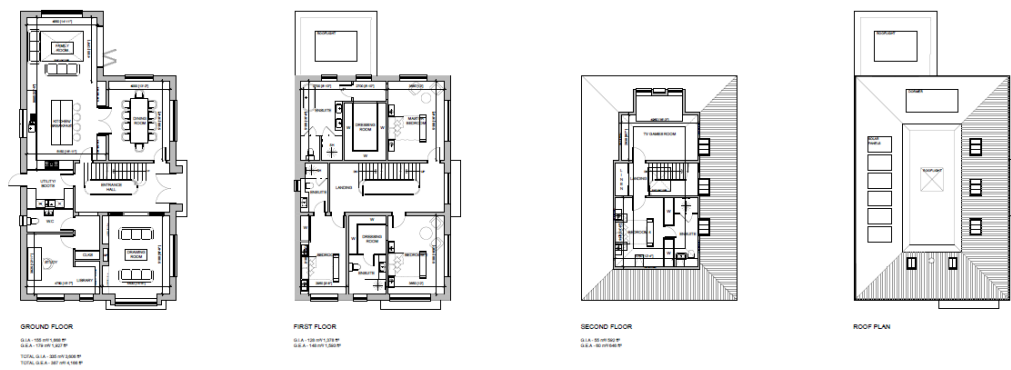





## Ecological Enhancements



## Proposed Elevations



|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| PLANNING ISSUE   |                 |
| <br><b>ASCOT DESIGN</b><br>Timeless architecture<br><small>Head Office: 43 Upper Redlands Road, 3rd Floor, Reading, RG2 7PT<br/>         Tel: 0118 987 0000 Fax: 0118 987 0001 Email: info@ascotdesign.co.uk<br/>         www.ascotdesign.co.uk</small> |                 |
| MR MOHAMMED SAOOD  |                 |
| LAND ADJACENT<br>43 UPPER REDLANDS ROAD,<br>READING  |                 |
| PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS   |                 |
| Scale: 1:100 @ A1  | Sheet: 01 of 01 |
| Project No: 24-J4673-02-001  | Date: -         |
| <small>Prepared by: [Name] Drawn by: [Name] Checked by: [Name] Approved by: [Name]</small>   |                 |

Proposed Floor Plans



Proposed Site Plan

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10 September 2025



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
Working better with you

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Title</b>                           | <b>PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT</b>  |
| <b>Ward</b>                            | Thames  |
| <b>Planning Application Reference:</b> | PL/25/0616 (FUL)  |
| <b>Site Address:</b>                   | Sovereign House, 57-59 Vastern Road, Reading  |
| <b>Proposed Development</b>            | Change of use from E(g)(i) offices to F1(g) Law Courts, including internal alterations, additional external lift, additional sub-station and landscaping works.   |
| <b>Report author</b>                   | Anthony Scholes   |
| <b>Applicant</b>                       | Ministry of Justice   |
| <b>Deadline:</b>                       | 11 September 2025 (extension of time)   |
| <b>Recommendations</b>                 | Grant planning permission, subject to conditions as follows   |
| <b>Conditions</b>                      | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Time Limit (TL1)</li> <li>2. Approved Plans (AP1)</li> <li>3. Pre-commencement materials details (including samples) (M3)</li> <li>4. Pre-commencement landscaping details (to be approved) (L2)</li> <li>5. Arboricultural method statement (to be approved) (L7)</li> <li>6. Pre-commencement construction method statement (C2)</li> <li>7. Pre-commencement construction environmental management plan (CEMP)</li> <li>8. Pre-commencement external lighting scheme (N19)</li> <li>9. Pre-commencement details of biodiversity enhancements scheme</li> <li>10. End user employment, skills, and training plan (to be approved)</li> <li>11. BREEAM interim assessment (to be approved) (SU5)</li> <li>12. BREEAM post construction compliance with condition 13 (SU6)</li> <li>13. EV charging details (to be approved)</li> <li>14. Vehicle parking (as specified) (DC1)</li> <li>15. Vehicular access (as specified) (DC3)</li> <li>16. Cycle parking (as specified) (DC5)</li> <li>17. Refuse and recycling (as specified) (DC8)</li> <li>18. Set back of gates (as proposed – 5m) (DC11)</li> <li>19. Sustainable drainage strategy implementation (as proposed) (SU7)</li> <li>20. Hours of deliveries/waste collection (0800-1800 Mon-Fri; 0800-1300 Sat; not at all Sundays/Bank holidays) (N17)</li> <li>21. Use restriction (Class F2) (PD8)</li> </ol> |

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
|                     | <p>22. Hours of construction/demolition (0800-1800 Mon-Fri; 0800-1300 Sat; not at all Sundays/Bank holidays) (C1)</p> <p>23. Unidentified contamination</p>   |
| <b>Informatives</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mandatory biodiversity net gain plan (Schedule 14 of Environment Act 2021, Part 2, 13 (2)) (I33)</li> <li>2. Positive and proactive (IF0)</li> <li>3. Pre-commencement conditions (IF2)</li> <li>4. Highways (IF3)</li> <li>5. Terms (IF5)</li> <li>6. Building regulations approval may be required (IF6)</li> <li>7. Complaints about construction (IF7)</li> <li>8. Encroachment (IF8)</li> <li>9. Contamination (IF9)</li> <li>10. Bats and work to roof (IF12)</li> <li>11. Advice to adhere to approved Arboricultural Methods Statement (I16)</li> <li>12. Do not damage the verge (I17)</li> <li>13. Advice about installation of underground services (I27)</li> <li>14. Advice to use tree protection (I29)</li> <li>15. Advice to comply with courts and tribunal design guide</li> <li>16. Advice about neighbouring utilities and works around them (SEPC)</li> <li>17. Advice that separate advertisement consent required</li> </ol> |

## 1. Executive summary

- 1.1. The application site is an existing three storey office building, constructed as part of a modern development of Norman Place in the 1990s. It fronts onto the IDR (Vastern Road) and contains parking to the rear. The proposal is for the change of use of the building for tribunal courts. To facilitate the conversion, the proposal includes a full height lift attached to the rear of the building, a new ramped and stepped access for staff from Vastern Road and the parking area to the rear (western side of building), a new ramped access for visitors from Vastern road (near Norman Place), a new substation, and new complimentary landscaping along the Vastern Road frontage.
- 1.2. The proposal is generally acceptable as a new community/civic use which is supported by Policy OU1. The alterations and additions to the building are not highly visible, and the rear lift would match the materials of the existing building. The landscaping and accessibility improvements are required for the building, as is the new substation. These result in some loss of on-site vegetation, but the overall proposal results in enhanced landscaping overall and in a biodiversity net gain on the site. The renewed landscaping would also improve some existing plain areas of the site.

## 2. Introduction and site description

- 2.1. The application site relates to 'Sovereign House' which is a three storey office building located on the northern side of Vastern Road. The site fronts a Pelican crossing which provides access towards Reading Station. The site includes a car parking area for 19 car parking spaces, accessed via Norman Place.
- 2.2. The site is in close proximity to the River Thames to the north. To the west, no.55 Vastern Road (the western part of the SSE electrical distribution site) (now 'Reading Riverworks'), includes an extant permission for "Demolition of existing structures and erection of a series of buildings ranging in height from 1 to 11 storeys, including residential dwellings (C3 use class) and retail floorspace (A3 use class), together with a new north-south

pedestrian link, connecting Christchurch Bridge to Vastern Road” (Planning ref: PL/20/0188 (FUL); PL/23/1673 (VAR)). This permission was granted on appeal and the development is under construction.

- 2.3. The site is not Listed, nor in a Conservation Area. However, it is within an Air Quality Management area and on a ‘treed corridor’ (as defined in our adopted Tree Strategy 2021). The site is located within the Central Core (Policy CR1) and the Office Core (Policy CR1). The site is located partially within flood zone 2, though mostly within flood zone 1. The site is near the major landscape feature of the ‘Thames valley’ as identified by policy EN13 and the proposals map.
- 2.4. The site also abuts a current cycle route linking central Reading and Caversham via Christchurch Bridge, though a new link is proposed as part of the neighbouring approved development at 55 Vastern Road.



*Figure 1 - Site Location Plan*

### **3. The proposal**

- 3.1. The proposal involves the conversion and refurbishment of the building to accommodate a new Tribunal Court facility for His Majesty’s Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) to include two social security and child services tribunal hearing rooms, and seven employment tribunal hearing rooms, both services appear to be relocating from properties on Friar Street, however this has not been specifically outlined by the applicant. The proposal is considered as other development, and is referred to PAC as a Major application as a result of the floor area sought to be changed (~3000m<sup>2</sup>).
- 3.2. The proposal includes associated internal and external alterations to meet operational and security requirements. The external works include the installation of a new external lift within the secure car park to provide level access for judiciary staff, and the construction of a new substation to support the building’s energy requirements. Ramped entrances will be added to both the west (staff/judiciary) and east (public) sides of the building to ensure inclusive access. The rooftop plant enclosure will be expanded to accommodate new mechanical equipment, with the overall building height remaining unchanged.
- 3.3. Security enhancements include the installation of bollards along the eastern boundary, the raising of boundary walls, and the provision of secure gates to the car park. Privacy and solar control films will be applied to existing windows to ensure operational discretion. External signage and court crests will be installed to clearly identify the building’s new function, though a separate advertisement consent will be required for this aspect.
- 3.4. The landscape strategy retains the existing hard landscaping, with enhancements to improve security and accessibility. New cycle storage facilities will be provided, including six public spaces and eight secure staff/judiciary spaces. Benches and external furniture will be installed at the public entrance, designed to discourage anti-social behaviour. Electric vehicle charging points will be installed, with infrastructure in place for future expansion.

- 3.5. The proposal re-uses the reuse of existing building systems where feasible, supplemented by new air handling units, air source heat pumps, and a chiller system. An external electrical substation is required.



Figure 2 - Proposed landscape plan

### Supporting materials

- 3.6 The application is supported by full plans and sections of the proposed works. The applicant also provided information to address flood risk, ecological and landscaping matters, drainage, acoustics to address technical and other matters required under the Local Plan. The application is liable for community infrastructure levy (CIL), though would generate no liability by virtue of the charging schedule.

## 4. Planning history

- 4.1. PL/15/1372 – Installation of replacement air conditioning unit Granted 12/10/2015
- 4.2. 050872: Amended Description: Increase car parking provision from 5, to 16 spaces, re-use of bin store as cycle storage and new bin store, landscaping and secure barrier control. Granted 12/09/2005
- 4.3. 910233/OUT: Erection of offices and associated parking. Granted – 12/12/1990

## 5. Consultations

- 5.1. Internal

### *RBC Ecological consultant*

- 5.2. No objection, subject to conditions relating to: construction environment management plan for biodiversity, wildlife friendly lighting, biodiversity enhancements, and biodiversity net gain requirements.

### *RBC Transport Strategy*

- 5.3. No objections subject to conditions.

### *RBC Planning (Natural Environment) Team (tree officer)*

- 5.4. No objection, subject to pre-commencement conditions regarding landscaping details and arboricultural method statement (tree and root protection measures).

### *RBC Environmental Protection*

- 5.5. No comments at the time of writing.

### *Lead Local Flood Authority*

- 5.6. No objection subject to securing details as proposed by condition.

- 5.7. No objection subject to conditions.

*RBC Access Officer*

- 5.8. No comments received at the time of writing.

*Designing Out Crime Officer (DOCO) (Thames Valley Police (TVP))*

- 5.9. No objection, requests ongoing engagement to ensure compliance with court and tribunal design guide.

*Public*

- 5.10. One comment was made by a resident. However, this was erroneously directed towards this application, and related to the neighbouring Normal Place application (PL/25/0958).

*Southern Electric Power Distribution PLC*

- 5.11. SEPC provided comments that works near SEPD cables must avoid deep planting or erecting structures, maintain asset security and clearance, prevent climbing aids, follow industry standards, and involve SEPD teams in planning and construction.

## **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

National planning policy framework (2024)

National planning practice guidance

### Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

CC4: DECENTRALISED ENERGY

CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE

CC6: ACCESSIBILITY AND THE INTENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

CC9: SECURING INFRASTRUCTURE

EN11: WATERSPACES

EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK

EN13: MAJOR LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND

EN15: AIR QUALITY

EN16: POLLUTION AND WATER RESOURCES

EN17: NOISE GENERATING EQUIPMENT

EN18: FLOODING AND DRAINAGE

EM3: LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT LAND

TR1: ACHIEVING THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS  
TR4: CYCLE ROUTES AND FACILITIES  
TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING  
OU1: NEW AND EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES  
CR1: DEFINITION OF CENTRAL READING  
CR2: DESIGN IN CENTRAL READING  
CR3: PUBLIC REALM IN CENTRAL READING

#### Supplementary Planning Documents and other guidance

Employment, skills and training SPD (2013)  
Revised parking standards and design SPD (2011)  
Sustainable design and construction SPD (2019)

#### Other relevant documents

Reading Tree Strategy (2021)

#### Local Plan partial 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 update 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. 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**

The main considerations are:

- Principle of Development
- Design, and Landscaping
- Flood Risk
- Site security
- Other matters

### **7.1 Principle of Development**

- 7.2 Policy OU1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 supports the provision of new community facilities (including courts). It highlights that these developments should be undertaken within accessible areas with a choice of means of travel.
- 7.3 The proposal includes the loss of office space. The site is not located within the office core, as identified in the Local Plan. The application is therefore considered in the context of the requirements of Policy EM3 which sets out matters to be considered when assessing the proposal. It is considered that there is a good amount of similar sized, or type of office accommodation in Reading, demonstrated by the non-residential planning commitments at 31 March 2025 (published June 2025). This outlines that 21,927m<sup>2</sup> of new office floorspace has been completed within Reading borough from 1 April 2024-31

March 2025. In addition, further to Policy EM3, the need for this important community/civic use, in terms of Policy OU1 is also considered to outweigh the need for office use.

#### **7.4 Design and landscaping**

- 7.5 Policies CC7, and CR2 relate to design and character and appearance of the area, with a number of similar, but different requirements. The scope of the proposal includes comparatively minor alterations to the building. The proposal would include access improvements to a staff entrance to the west, and the main entrance to the east. The proposal includes security bollards approximately 1.2m apart along the Norman Place frontage with flat roof behind. The window sizes match that on other parts of the building, and in elevation form is considered to be a satisfactory design. This is an extension to the rear of the building, with limited view from the public realm.
- 7.6 Given the relatively minor nature of the external alterations, particularly where visible to Vastern Road, the proposal would have a negligible impact on the area. The site, being adjacent to the major landscape feature (MLF) has the potential to impact upon the overall character of the Thames Valley MLF. The proposal, being an addition to an existing building would not detract from the character of the major landscape feature through dominant appearance or prominence. Through landscaping enhancements, the proposal would present an improved appearance to Vastern Road. Materials details for the proposed lift shaft, bollards, paving, and fencing, including heights, have been indicated and reflect the appearance of the building, and will also be an improvement on the rather dated existing hard surfacing, albeit in reasonable condition.
- 7.7 A condition is recommended to secure material, including samples. This is to ensure that brick details match that of the existing building as closely as possible given the age of the building and difficulty in finding an exact match of brick. Overall, the design responds to the modern building form, and design and is considered acceptable in this regard.

#### **7.8 Flood Risk**

- 7.9 The application site is partially located within Flood Zone 2. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been undertaken in support of the proposal. The assessment has been prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Environment Agency (EA) guidance, given that the site lies partially within Flood Zone 2, indicating a medium probability of fluvial flooding. The proposed use is considered 'less vulnerable' under the national planning policy guidance, further explained within EA guidance for flood risk.
- 7.10 The flood risk assessment has been considered against the EA's Standing Advice (due to vulnerability classification of the proposal). As outlined within the standing advice, a change of use (except changes of use to a caravan, camping or chalet site, or to a mobile home or park home site) is exempt from the sequential test. Further, the exception test is only needed for developments which are 'highly vulnerable' within flood zone 2. As primarily a change of use proposal, the proposal is exempt from both the Sequential and Exception Tests.
- 7.11 For a 'less vulnerable' development within Flood Zone 2, a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required, incorporating estimated flood levels (including climate change allowances), finished floor levels, and appropriate flood resistance and resilience measures. Floor levels should be set at least 600mm above the flood level, or 300mm where flood level certainty is high. Safe access and escape routes must be demonstrated for any part of the development below the flood level, and surface water management must comply with local and national drainage policies.
- 7.12 The building itself is situated outside the flood zone and has not historically experienced flooding. The building is elevated approximately 0.8–1.0 metres above surrounding ground levels, further reducing its vulnerability to fluvial flood risk. No mitigation measures

are deemed necessary for fluvial flooding due to the building's elevation and protective boundary wall.

7.13 The FRA demonstrates that the proposed development is not at significant risk from flooding and will not increase flood risk elsewhere. Appropriate design measures have been incorporated to manage residual risks, and the development is considered to comply with Policy EN18.

7.14 The proposed development has provided a sustainable drainage system (SuDS). This system is designed to capture runoff from the new elements of the proposal. This has been demonstrated, and is deemed acceptable by the lead local flood authority (LLFA) and a condition is included above to secure implementation.

#### **7.15 Site Security**

7.16 The Thames Valley Police designing out crime officer (DOCO) has reviewed the application. The DOCO has not raised concern with the proposal, only stated that the applicant must ensure compliance with the courts and tribunal design guide. Reading CCTV team has been contacted for comment, with any response provided via an update report.

7.17 The design of the building incorporated anti-vehicle attack barriers. It is understood that there is concern around safety and security around HMCTS buildings. Though important for the operator, the technical aspects thereof appear to be relevant to access and segregation of staff and visitors. This is evident through the proposed works (i.e. staff entrances, and lifts separated from visitor entrances and lifts. Further consultation responses on site specific security matters of relevance to RBC will be provided within an update report.

#### **7.18 Other matters**

##### *Amenity*

7.19 The proposed development includes potentially noisy equipment to be installed on the roof. The applicant has considered noise impacts, and submitted an acoustic assessment to demonstrate no impacts on adjoining residents. RBC Environmental Protection colleagues have yet to confirm suitability, and an update report will be provided confirming acceptability, although officers at this stage are not anticipating that this will pose insurmountable problems.

##### *Tree matters*

7.20 The applicant has duly submitted information relating to impacts to trees, both on and off site. Notably, the prominent street trees in close proximity to the front boundary. The Natural Environment (tree) officer noted that the works appear generally acceptable. There are some concerns with regard to the ramps proposed, and drainage proposals and their impacts upon trees. They have suggested the scheme does not fully demonstrate no impacts, needs to demonstrate further via discharge of conditions that the works would be acceptable, or the design varied to ensure no impacts to trees.

7.21 There is some concern that the works will not achieve the tree protection goals in the current format. However, further details will allow officers the opportunity to review and agree works to ensure trees (including roots) are protected. The improvements to the site, and the frontage in landscaping terms will be beneficial, subject to further detailed design officers are confident in finding a suitable outcome.

##### *Ecology*

7.22 The application is subject to mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements (10% net gain). The proposal is also subject to Policy EN12 which seeks no net loss of biodiversity. The proposal has demonstrated a net gain of 14% on-site which is considered acceptable. The proposal, through an appropriate prepared bat roost assessment, has demonstrated no bats were seen during the survey periods. A precautionary method of working statement shall be provide prior to commencement of construction (within the below



mentioned CEMP. Details of a construction environmental management plan (CEMP), lighting, and biodiversity enhancements (3 each bird and bat boxes) will be secured by condition.

*Transport and parking*

- 7.23 The proposed development includes 19 parking spaces, with 3 accessible bays, and 2 electric vehicle (EV) charging bays. The parking is understood to be staff only parking. A new gate will be provided at the entrance to the car park. Three visitor cycle spaces (open Sheffield stands) are proposed, with 8 for staff within a secure covered area. Waste will be stored within an existing area. The provision of parking, including EV and cycle parking is considered acceptable with regard to the Council's adopted standards. The site is also within a highly accessible area, with various means of transport for those visiting the site. The proposal will require a construction method statement to minimise impacts on neighbouring sites and roads.

*Employment, skills and training*

- 7.24 Policy CC9 seeks, among other things, provision of infrastructure including employment development mitigating its impacts on the local labour market. The limited works would not result in significant construction to warrant a construction phase employment skills and training plan (ESP). The applicant has agreed to provide an end user ESP, this is acceptable and will be secured by condition.

*Sustainability*

- 7.25 The applicant proposes to meet policy requirements for a 'Very Good' BREEAM standard. This will be secured by condition and will therefore comply with policy CC2 and CC3 of the RBLP (2019).

**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 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 would re-use an existing office building as law courts (community use). Beyond the new lift shaft, the proposal involves limited external alterations, through some increased heights of walls, and increased security measures including bollards. The development would provide an enhanced external appearance with landscaping to compliment accessibility improvements.
- 9.3 This application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes

## Plans & Appendices

### Plans and documents submitted:

- Location Plan – dated 23 April 2025
- Drawing No: 377915\_15380-FMA-RTC-00-D-A-0100 – Existing ground floor plan rev P11
- Drawing No: 377915\_15380-FMA-RTC-01-D-A-0101 – Existing first floor plan rev P11
- Drawing No: 377915\_15380-FMA-RTC-01-D-A-1201 – Proposed first floor – planning rev P06
- Drawing No: 377915\_15380-FMA-RTC-02-D-A-0102 – Existing second floor plan rev P11
- Drawing No: 377915\_15380-FMA-RTC-02-D-A-1202 – Proposed second floor – planning rev P06
- Drawing No: 377915\_15380-FMA-RTC-03-D-A-0103 – Existing third floor plan rev P09
- Drawing No: 377915\_15380-FMA-RTC-03-D-A-1203 – Proposed – third floor plan rev P07
- Drawing No: 377915\_15380-FMA-RTC-R3-D-A-0104 – Existing roof plan rev P09
- Drawing No: 377915\_15380-FMA-RTC-R3-D-A-1204 – Existing roof floor – planning rev P06
- Drawing No: 377915\_15380-FMA-RTC-ZZ-D-A-0099 – Existing location and site plan rev P11
- Drawing No: 377915\_15380-FMA-RTC-ZZ-D-A-0300 – Existing section A – A rev P4
- Drawing No: 377915\_15380-FMA-RTC-ZZ-D-A-0301 – Existing section B – B rev P05
- Drawing No: 377915\_15380-FMA-RTC-ZZ-D-A-0400 – Existing south & elevation rev P07
- Drawing No: 377915\_15380-FMA-RTC-ZZ-D-A-0401 – Existing north & west elevation rev P07
- Drawing No: 377915\_15380-FMA-RTC-ZZ-D-A-1099 – Proposed site plan rev P16
- Drawing No: 377915\_15380-FMA-RTC-ZZ-D-A-1302 – Proposed section A – A rev P04
- Drawing No: 377915\_15380-FMA-RTC-ZZ-D-A-1303 – Proposed section B – B rev P04
- Drawing No: 377915\_15380-FMA-RTC-ZZ-D-A-1400 – Proposed south & east elevation rev P07
- Drawing No: 377915\_15380-FMA-RTC-ZZ-D-A-1401 – Proposed north & west elevations rev P08
- Drawing No: 377915\_15380-FMA-RTC-ZZ-D-A-9003 – External lift – north elevation rev P04
- Drawing No: 377915\_15380-FMA-RTC-ZZ-D-A-9004 – 3D Render External lift – east elevation plan rev P04
- Drawing No: 100099718-ATR-XX-XX-D-L-401001 – Landscape general arrangement rev P01
- Drawing No: 100099718-ATR-XX-XX-D-L-401002 – Landscape softworks plan rev P01
- Drawing No: 100099718-ATR-XX-XX-D-L-401003 – Landscape softworks typical details rev P01
- Drawing No: 100099718-ATK-ARB-TPP – Tree protection plan Rev P01  
As received by the Local Planning Authority 23 April 2025
- Drawing No: 100099718-ATR-XX-XX-D-L-100001 - Landscape Outline Specification  
As received by the Local Planning Authority 15 May 2025
- Drawing No: 100099718-ATR-XX-XX-D-L-401001 – Landscape general arrangement rev P02
- Drawing No: 100099718-ATR-XX-XX-D-L-401002 – Landscape softworks plan rev P02
- Drawing No: 100099718-ATR-XX-XX-D-L-401003 – Landscape softworks typical details rev P02
- Drawing No: 100099718-ATK-ARB-TPP – Tree protection plan rev P02  
As received by the Local Planning Authority 23 June 2025

### Other documents submitted:

- Doc ref: 377915\_15380-ATR-RTC-XX-T-C-0004 – Drainage strategy
- Doc ref: 377915\_15380-ATR-RTC-XX-T-C-0005 – Flood Risk Assessment

- Doc ref: 100099718-ATR-XX-XX-D-L-100001 – Landscape Outline Specification
- Doc ref: 2025/JAN/01 – Stage 3 acoustic design
- The 'Atkins Realis', Arboircultrual impact assessment, dated April 2025
- The 'Atkins Realis', Statutory biodiversity metric, rev 1
- Doc ref: 20250010 – Sovereign house EclA Atkins Realis 2025, dated March 2025  
As received by the Local Planning Authority 23 April 2025
- Doc ref: 20250010 Sovereign House EclA AtkinsRealis 2025 Rev2.0, dated May 2025  
As received by the Local Planning Authority 16 May 2025
- Doc ref: 100099718-ATR-XX-XX-D-L-100001 – Landscape Outline Specification
- Doc ref: 377915\_15380-ATR-RTC-XX-T-C-0004 – Drainage strategy, dated 20 June 2025
- The 'Atkins Realis', Arboircultrual impact assessment, dated June 2025  
As received by the Local Planning Authority 23 June 2025
- Doc ref: 20250010\_SovereignHouse\_EclA\_AtkinsRealis\_2025\_Rev3.0 dated June 2025  
As received by the Local Planning Authority 1 July 2025
- Doc ref: 20250010\_SovereignHouse\_EclA\_AtkinsRealis\_2025\_Rev4.0 dated July 2025  
As received by the Local Planning Authority 17 July 2025
- The 'Atkins Realis', Arboircultrual impact assessment, dated April 2025  
As received by the Local Planning Authority 22 July 2025
- Doc ref: 377915\_15380-ATR-RTC-XX-T-C-0004 – Drainage strategy, dated 23 July 2025  
As received by the Local Planning Authority 23 July 2025

## Appendices – Plans and documents



Planning Portal Reference: PP-13941006v1



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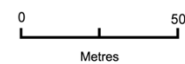


Figure 3 - Location Plan



*Figure 4 - Proposed Site Plan*



Figure 5 - Proposed south and east elevation



Figure 6 - Proposed north and west elevation



Figure 7 - Proposed elevations (rear lift shaft)

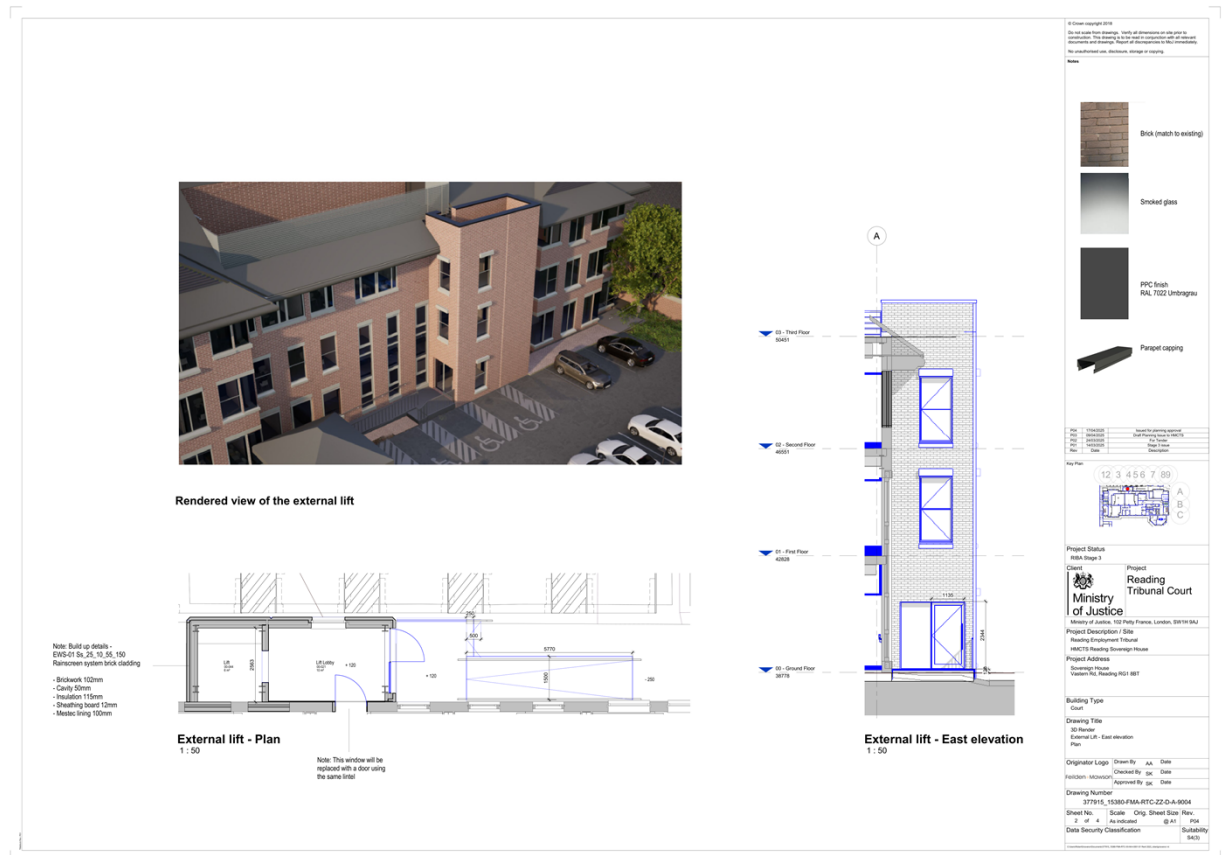
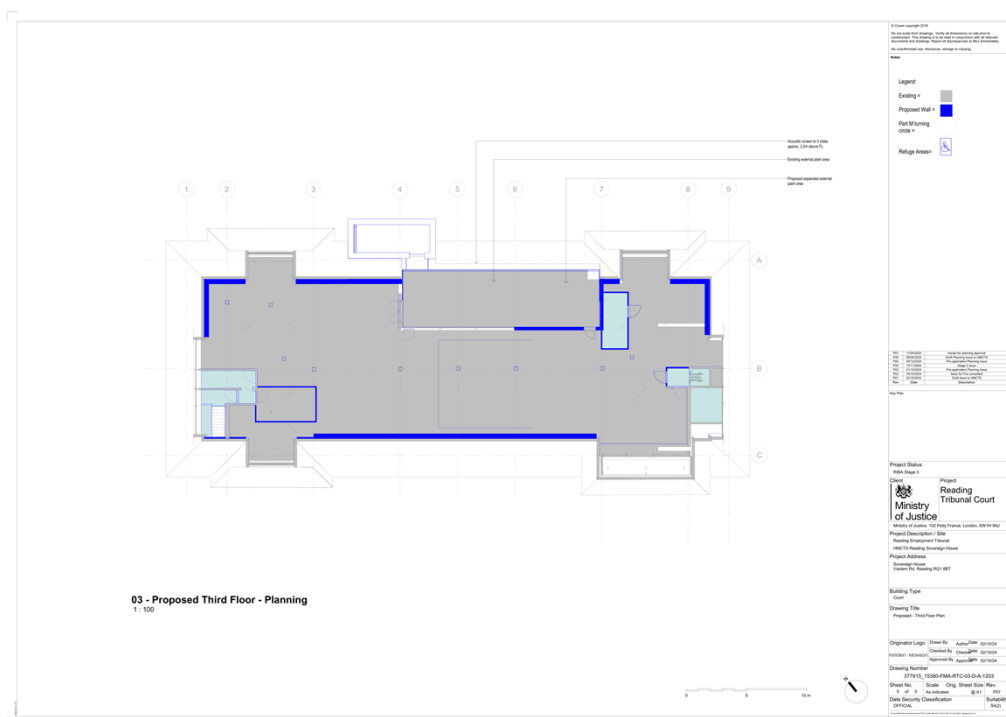


Figure 8 - Proposed perspective and diagram (rear lift shaft)



*Figure 9 - Proposed Third Floor Plan*

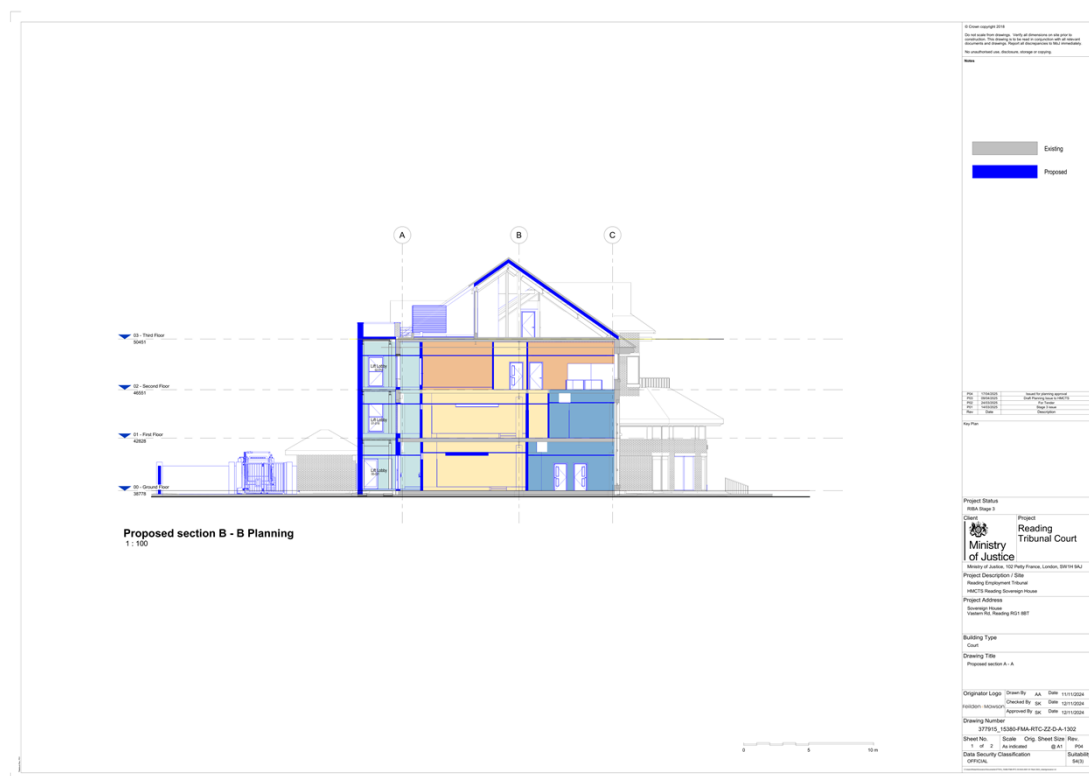


Figure 10 - Proposed section (1)



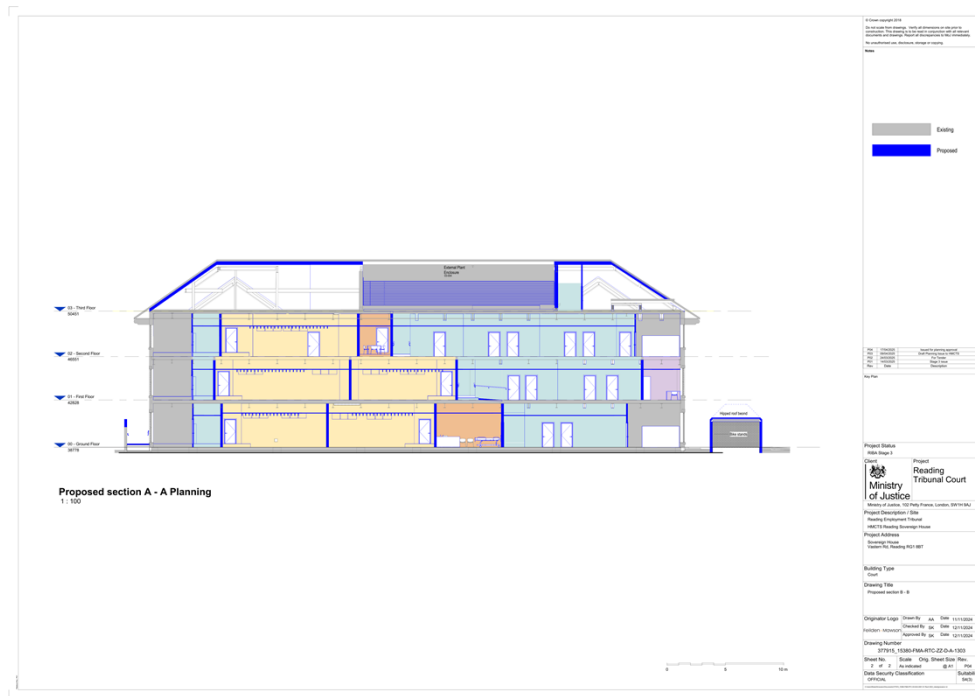


Figure 11 - Proposed section (2)



Figure 12 - Landscape general arrangement plan