

Helpful Hints for Objecting to Planning Applications

Using the Cadra List of Planning Applications

A list of significant applications currently affecting Caversham is updated monthly by CADRA and can be accessed via the CADRA website: <http://www.cadra.org.uk/planning.php>. This gives a link to the relevant page of the Reading Borough Council (RBC) website, where you can check the up-to-date status or send comments.

For other applications go to: <http://planning.reading.gov.uk> and select 'Enter Planning Registers'

A new system for recording planning applications is currently (June 13) in the process of being introduced. During the transition not all information is on line. You can check with planning department with queries. CADRA will try to keep the monthly list which appears on the CADRA website as up to date as possible.

Commenting on an Application

Seeing the plans

Planning files can be viewed in Planning Reception at the Borough Council offices. It should be possible to read the Planning Officer's report on an application and to speak to the officer responsible about their recommendation as well as the process for determining the application.

Plans can usually be viewed online if you search by individual application:

http://planning.reading.gov.uk/fastweb_PL/welcome.asp

Now that a new system is in place older applications may have changed reference numbers.

Timescale for commenting

If you receive a letter notifying you of an application it will give the deadline for commenting. Otherwise, check the CADRA planning lists or the RBC website. Stick to this timescale whenever you can, but if you are late it is still worth speaking to the Planning Officer. CADRA gets a little more time to submit comments.

What to include in your comments

You will find plenty of guidance on the web about which factors can and cannot be taken into account when considering planning applications. RBC has information about making planning applications:

<http://www.reading.gov.uk/businesses/Planning/PlanningApplicationService/FormsandInformation/>

When you make comments, do make sure that you concentrate on matters which the Planning Officers are able to take into account when recommending decisions on applications.

How to send your comments

Comments can be submitted by email, via the RBC website or by post.

Using email:

Address your email to the Planning Officer dealing with the application, for example john.smith@reading.gov.uk, with a copy to planningcomments@reading.gov.uk

Make sure to get an acknowledgement, to confirm that your comment has reached the application file, and remember to include your postal address to receive subsequent postal correspondence.

Using the website

Comments can be made online by clicking the Comments button on the bottom left of the entry for each application. We always recommend that you also send comments by email, especially so during the changeover period.

Using this system will automatically enter your comments into the planning database, and a copy of your comments should be sent to your email address.

You can also register to track the progress of an application and you be notified by email when an item is updated.

By post:

To The Planning Department, Reading Borough Council, Civic Centre, Reading RG1 7TD, stating clearly the Planning Application Number.

Widening support

Encourage lots of people to comment but try to make sure that they are aware of the matters which are relevant to the planning decision. You might wish to organise a petition but if you do so, encourage people to submit their own comments, which may carry more weight. It is easy to sign a petition but takes more time and commitment to participate as an individual.

How a decision is made on a planning application

Each application will be considered on its own merits. Whilst there may be a fear that a particular permission may set an unwelcome precedent, this is not in itself grounds for refusal under planning law.

Delegated powers and Committee Decisions

Significant applications are considered by the Planning Committee, whilst smaller applications are often dealt with by Planning Officers using Delegated Powers.

When minor applications are felt to be of wider concern, Councillors can 'call them in' so that they are considered by the Planning Committee. If you feel that an application warrants wider scrutiny, do talk to your local Councillor(s), especially those on the Planning Committee.

Planning Committee**Planning Officer's Report and Recommendations**

The Planning Committee will consider and debate the Planning Officer's recommendations and come to a decision on an application.

Notifying that you wish to speak at Planning Committee

When an application is considered by the Planning Committee, objectors have a total of five minutes to speak at the meeting. Make sure you speak to the Planning Officer in advance of the Committee Meeting, if you wish to take advantage of this opportunity and do read the RBC guidelines:

<http://www.reading.gov.uk/businesses/Planning/PlanningApplicationService/planning-application-committee/>

You should aim to keep your presentation calm, clear and succinct.

It is important to note that, if objectors choose to speak at Planning Committee, this gives the applicant the right to speak also. In some circumstances you may choose not to give the applicant this opportunity.

Planning Conditions and Amendments to proposed development

When planning permission is granted it is usually subject to Planning Conditions covering the implementation of the development. If an application which is causing concern is likely to be approved, it is worth talking to the Planning Officer about amendments which could reduce the impact of the development. The modification of details relating to overlooking, design and landscaping can mitigate the effects of new development significantly.

Refusal of planning permission

When an application is refused the applicant can either resubmit a new application with amended details, or appeal against the refusal to the Planning Inspectorate.

Repeat Applications

A repeat application will have a new application reference. Planning Officers are obliged to treat it as a completely new application and previous comments will not be carried forward. If your comments are still relevant to the revised plans, a photocopy of your previous response with the new application reference will suffice.

You can look at the specific Reasons for Refusal on the decision notice for the previous application at the Planning Office. It may be useful to consider whether the revisions have reflected or taken account of your previous concerns and to make this clear in your response.

Planning Appeals

The Planning Inspectorate

Planning Appeals are dealt with by the Planning Inspectorate,
<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/planninginspectorate/planninginspectorate>

When an appeal is lodged the Local Planning Authority will send all interested parties a copy of Guidance Notes http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/pins/taking-part_planning-written.pdf along with information about the case officers in the Planning Department and at the Planning Inspectorate.

A link to the Inspectorate website is included on the CADRA monthly list of planning for all the current appeals which are listed: <http://www.cadra.org.uk/planning.php>

Alternatively the appeal reference will be available from the RBC website:
http://planning.reading.gov.uk/fastweb_PL/welcome.asp or by speaking to the planning department.

The new system for recording appeals is not yet live on the RBC website - 17 June 13. We will update this section in due course.

The Planning Portal Website

The Planning Portal website gives advice about how appeals are conducted. This link on the CADRA website gives some details about finding specific content on the Planning Portal website:
<http://www.cadra.org.uk/planning.php>

Involving CADRA

If you do comment on an application you are invited to send a summary of points to CADRA so that we can draw from them if we also decide to send a response.

And finally, do encourage your neighbours to join CADRA. The more members we have, the greater our influence. We can send out membership leaflets, if that would help, or they are available in the Library, Wordplay, Delicious and Caversham Adult Education Centre.