

# insight

Winter 2017 Bulletin

**FARMER & DYER**  
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## Minimum room sizes for HMOs

**ROOM TO LET**

Minimum room sizes have been proposed by the Government to tackle overcrowded homes and drive out rogue landlords in England. Included is an extension of mandatory licensing parameters, a tougher 'fit and proper person' test and storage requirements.

The proposals form part of the Government's consultation paper Houses in Multiple Occupation and residential property licensing reforms, inserting a new compulsory condition that in order for a room to be deemed suitable for sleeping in, it must meet minimum size requirements.

The prescribed sizes are 70sqft for one person and 110sqft for two persons.

If a room let doesn't meet the minimum standard the licensor would be liable on conviction to a financial penalty of up to £30,000. However, the condition would not be breached by temporary arrangements, such as visitors sleeping overnight on an occasional basis, who are not to be treated as occupying the room.

## 9th November 1911



On this day in 1911 Caversham reluctantly left the county of south Oxfordshire to become part of Reading with the promises of tramways, cheaper utility services and a revamped Caversham bridge.

During the late 19th century Reading rapidly grew in size with its population more than doubling to approx. 60,000 by 1901. The growth in population created a demand for more homes and the proximity of the largely undeveloped parish of Caversham to the north of the town presented an enticing prospect for Reading's industrialists and local politicians.

This prompted a local poll amongst the Caversham residents which resulted in the apparent outcome: some 925 voted against and only 368 in favour.

A Public Inquiry concluded that Caversham should still become part of Reading, and a bill was introduced into the House of Commons in 1910. The passage of the Bill through the Commons was also accompanied by a failed petition from 542 Caversham residents.

It would be interesting to see what the vote would be today.

## Business is Booming

Our Lettings office has reaped the benefits of their hard efforts this year and we are delighted to report we have registered three record months in the last quarter of 2016.

This year the team has been bolstered with the addition of two new members of staff, Holly and Lyn, who are both locally based, as the Farmer & Dyer brand has continued to make great in-roads within the existing local lettings market. Our portfolio has significantly increased with many landlords switching from their existing agent due to mis-advice and low levels of service.

We love our clients to review our services through Referenceline.com and here are a few recent comments:

*“Took over from another agent who were proving to be a disaster- almost classical levels of conflict. The handover and running since then has been smooth and professional”*

*“Compared to my previous experience with property finding, moving and dealing with the task (and agencies), I can truly say this was our best and smoothest procedure we've had by miles”*

*“Having become increasingly frustrated with the poor service of my previous letting agency, I was recommended to Farmer & Dyer - the process went very smoothly with minimal effort from me”*



# What is a Tree Preservation Order (TPO)?

A Tree Preservation Order is an order made by a local planning authority in England to protect specific trees, groups of trees or woodlands in the interests of amenity. An Order prohibits:

- Cutting down
- Topping
- Lopping
- Uprooting
- Wilful damage
- Wilful destruction

of trees without the local planning authority's written consent. If consent is given, it can be subject to conditions which have to be followed. In the Secretary of State's view, cutting roots is also a prohibited activity and requires the authority's consent.



Upper Warren Avenue, Caversham Heights

## What are a tree owner's responsibilities?

Owners of protected trees must not carry out, or cause or permit the carrying out of, any of the prohibited activities without the written consent of the local authority. As with owners of unprotected trees they are responsible for maintaining their trees. The local planning authority cannot require maintenance work to be done to a tree just because it is protected. However, the authority can encourage good tree management, particularly when determining applications for consent under a Tree Preservation Order.

A full list of trees in Caversham with TPO's can be found at: [www.reading.gov.uk/media/1197/TPO.../Tree\\_Preservation\\_Order\\_Directory1.pdf](http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1197/TPO.../Tree_Preservation_Order_Directory1.pdf)

## Listed Sales

We have recently been involved with the sale of two fine and notable Grade II listed properties in the local area:



**East Lodge** was one of the original lodge cottages in Coley Avenue for the main entrance to Coley House which was unfortunately since been demolished.  
**Asking Price £325,000**



**Boleyn Cottage** is located in Paddock Road amongst a small pocket of period cottages, some of the earliest properties existing in Caversham, probably dating to the early 17th century. The property includes many period features from beamed ceilings to period doors with latchkey door furniture.  
**Asking Price £459,950**



## Live locally

One of the great aspects of the Caversham area is the desire from many locals to make sure this area retains the right sense of community and notably there are two local residents associations CADRA & EGRA who, over the years, have carried out outstanding work.

**CADRA** (Caversham and District Residents Association) was established over 40 years ago and has become a widely respected voice for the community north of the river. Their aim is to "preserve and enhance the quality of life in Caversham and the surrounding District" or in other words that Caversham should always be 'a great place to live'.

They work closely with Reading Councillors and Officers, other local groups including the Police, local businesses and individuals and resolutely avoids party political bias.

In recent years they were jointly involved with the project to celebrate Caversham's rich local heritage, Caversham 100 years on, celebrating the centenary year of the boundary change in 1911.

**EGRA** (Emmer Green Residents Association) was established in 1984, as a pressure group to support the Council in their opposition to major development in a rural valley. Subsequently the association took on a much broader role in the community and currently EGRA works hard to reflect the wishes of local people, and has a membership of over 500 households.

It is pro-active on environmental issues, transport provision, with local planning and development top of their agenda.

Local projects have included an historical exhibition and book, village sign, community notice board, the wooden dragon sculpture, memorial seats and tree planting.

More details including joining can be found on their respective websites:

CADRA – [www.cadra.org.uk](http://www.cadra.org.uk)  
EGRA – [www.egra.co.uk](http://www.egra.co.uk)

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