



HERITAGE STATEMENT

23-24 Market Place, Reading, RG1 2DE

The purpose of this report is to accompany a planning application. A heritage statement sets out the details of the history and development of the asset using photographic, map, archival and fabric evidence. It includes an assessment of the evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value of the heritage asset and the impact of the proposed works upon that significance. In addition to desk based research a site visit was carried out as part of this assessment and a non intrusive survey took place.

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Heritage Asset and its Setting:

Project Address: 23-24 Market Place, Reading, RG1 2DE

Local Authority: Reading Borough Council

Conservation Area: Market Place/London Street

Listing Status: Grade II List entry no. 1113536

Building Use: Commercial

Scheduled Monument?	N
Listed Building?	Y
Registered Park and Garden	N
Historic Battlefield	N
Locally Listed Heritage Asset	N
Archaeological Notification Area	N
Other non-designated Heritage Asset	N

Project Overview:

Conversion of the upper floors of an existing office building into residential flats. Retention of the commercial unit at ground floor and basement level. No proposed extension.



Photo 1 – View of the front of the property

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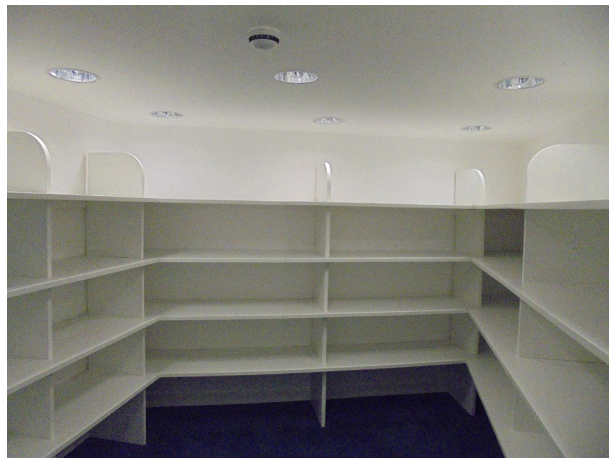


Photo 2 and 3 – Side view of the property



Photo 4 View from The Forbury

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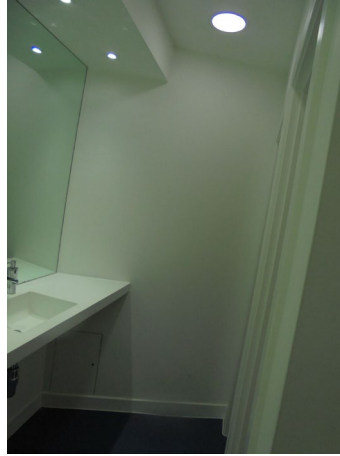


Photo 5-13 – Views of the interior, currently office space



Photo 14 and 15 – Photo from the yard at the rear of the property and the top

Schedule of Intervention:

In order to achieve the works, the following alterations/ interventions will be required:

- No change to the ground floor or basement. Access to flats proposed to be via the existing side entrance.
- Existing staircase to the first floor retained and utilised as part of the scheme. New floor covering.
- Strip out of the existing office fit out, soft furnishings and finishes throughout the first, second and third floor.
- Removal of the existing office air conditioning systems and suspended ceiling.
- Strip out of the existing sanitaryware to the first, second and third floor.
- Formation of a new lobby at first, second and third floor level to create a hallway for the new flats.
- New compartment walls internally to separate the flats using the British Gypsum Gyproc wall system.
- New compartment floors created by replacing the existing suspended ceilings with an independently framed fire and acoustic suspended ceiling system.
- New timber stud partitions to create room separation.
- New bathrooms to each flat utilising existing drainage runs and with extract ventilation running through the suspended ceilings to exit on the rear elevation.
- New kitchens to the new flats utilising existing drainage runs and with extract ventilation running through the suspended ceilings to exit on the rear elevation.
- New finishes throughout.
- No change to the front elevation externally. Redecoration like for like of the existing windows.
- Secondary glazing internally to all existing windows.
- New loft insulation within the existing roof space.
- New electric boilers to each of the flats. New electric heating system.
- No proposed insulation lining to the existing external walls as part of a thermal upgrade.
- Repairs as required to the existing roof/ parapet gutter on a like for like basis.

Setting Overview:

The building is a 4 storey plus basement building in a prominent location on the corner of Market Place and Friar Street in Reading town centre. It sits opposite the Grade I Listed Church of St Laurence in a medieval sector of the town, an area containing a large number of historic buildings. The area is part of the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area.

The ground floor level of the building in question is used as a restaurant and the upper levels for office accommodation (currently vacant). There is an enclosed yard at the rear of the property containing a metal spiral staircase which can't be seen from public areas.

The building, Grade II Listed as one, (now split under 2 ownerships) is early 19th Century and has a rendered curved frontage. It sits immediately on the pavement edge. There are a series of Doric pilasters that split the elevation into 3 sections each containing 6 evenly spaces traditional timber sash windows which reduce in height as you ascend the building. The first floor windows each have carved brackets and cornices over them. At ground floor level there is a sympathetic but modern shop frontage. The roof has a parapet edge with cornice detailing and a slate roof behind. It sits higher than its two adjoining buildings.

The surrounding buildings vary in style and age and are predominantly commercial at the ground floor level with a mixture of offices and residential accommodation above.

The location is part of the central/ primary shopping area of Reading. St Lawrence opposite is recorded between 1189 and 1193 however is believed to have predated this recording with a similar age to Reading Abbey in parts.

Setting: Urban Area/ Town Centre



Map taken from Historic England Listing Database. Property shown with a red dot.

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Impacted Heritage Assets:

The building sits within the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area, and within Reading's High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ).

The building itself is Grade II Listed:

Heritage Category: Listed Building
Grade: II List Entry Number: 1113536
Date first listed: 26-Jul-1973 Statutory Address 1: 23-26, MARKET PLACE

District: Reading (Unitary Authority) Parish: Non Civil Parish National Grid Reference: SU 71683 73513

Details

MARKET PLACE 1. 5128 (West Side) Nos 23 to 26 (consec) SU 7173 NE 1/205 26.7.75. II GV 2. Early C19 loosely attributed to Henry or Nathaniel Briant. 3 storeys, Bath stone ashlar now rendered. Round corner. Moulded cope to parapet. Slate roof. Doric pilasters above ground floor level between each house with fluted caps. Modern shops with Doric piers. 2:2:2 ranges of glazing bar sash windows, 1st floor windows have carved brackets to cornices.

Listing NGR: SU7167973514

Legacy: The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number: 39073

Legacy System: LBS

The building is within the context of several Listed Buildings including.

Heritage Category: Listed Building
Grade: II List Entry Number: 1302967
Date first listed: 22-Mar-1957 Statutory Address 1: 27 AND 28, MARKET PLACE

District: Reading (Unitary Authority) Parish: Non Civil Parish National Grid Reference: SU 71688 73504

Details

MARKET PLACE 1. 5128 [West Side] Nos 27 and 28 SU 7173 NE 1/206 22.3.57. II GV 2. Early C17 possibly older. 3 storeys and attic. Double jettied timber-frame with stucco infilling, pebbledashed. Tiled roof with crested ridge and ornamental cast iron gutter to eaves. Moulded 2nd floor jetty. 2 dormers. 2 original bay windows with mullion windows on each floor. Decorative lead work in upper part of windows. C18 shop front retained to ground floor with coved fascia and engaged columns. Outer doors, 5 panel (raised and fielded) with plain overlight to right, modern door to left (to No 29). Interior: 1st floor ceilings divided into panels by moulded strips.

Listing NGR: SU7169073501

Legacy: The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number: 39074

Legacy System: LBS

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Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade I List Entry No. 1113532

Date first Listed: 22-Mar-1957 Statutory Address: Church of St Laurence, Market Place, Reading

District: Reading (Unitary Authority) Parish: Non Civil Parish National Grid Reference: SU 71708 73548

Church of England. Structure Norman to C15 with excessive restorations of 1867. Flint with Bath stone ashlar quoins and dressings. Taynton stone elements. Principal feature the tile C15 three stage tower closing vista to north of Market Place - crenellated parapet, octagonal chequered clasping buttresses with strings, capped by crenellation (spirelets removed); sundial to south dated 1727, main entrance to west. Tower built 1458. Tiled roofs with centre valley (nave and north aisle).

1+4 bay nave, two very wide chancel bays. Nave south wall has small Norman window at west end and a late C12 round headed doorway with waterleaf capitals; other openings restored Decorated style. Chancel east end has three lancets with blind lancets between. North aisle and chancel aisle probably 1521 (when present arcade built) see flat topped two light cusped windows and three light east window.

Interior: Norman fragments in north aisle door, king-post roof of C15. 1522. Font. Good C18 pulpit. Fine bench ends with tracery panels and poppyheads in chancel. Organ case (very fine) 1741 by Byfield. Pulpit also 1741 - panelled single storey affair on mid C19 stand. A number of brasses and memorials. The best is the memorial to John Blagrove (died 1611, author of "The Mathematical Jewell"). The principal interest of this church is that it was built at the Abbey gate. The circa 1200 work may possibly be in connection with foundation of St John's Hospice (qv Blagrove St Municipal Buildings).

Listing NGR: SU7170473547

Legacy: The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number: 39066

Legacy System: LBS

Assessment of Significance:

Heritage has cultural, social, economic and environmental values. The attributes that combine to define the significance of a historic building can relate to its physical properties or to its context. – BS 7913:2013.

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance – NPPF

Archeological:

There are no proposed below ground works so this has not been assessed as part of this report.

Historic:

The mapping shows the area behind the site to be the former poultry market for Reading. The site forms part of the medieval town centre of Reading and an area of high historical significance.

The building is believed to have been designed in the early 19th Century by renowned Reading Architects Henry or Nathaniel Briant, who worked in Reading in the 1830s and early 1840s and were responsible for many of the towns building and civic designs such as Reading Cemetery and the Former Barclays Bank on King Street.

The building was originally attached to a Public House.

Architectural or Artistic:

The building is of typical early 19th century detailing and composure contributing positively to the town centre street scene. It is reflective of the prosperity of Reading town from the 18th Century onwards as it grew as a centre of industry doubling in population size between 1801 and 1851.

The building is of high architectural significance in regards to the contribution it makes to key views through the Conservation Area around the Market Place and St Lawrence area.

The commercial function at ground floor level reflects the historic market centre of the town and that too forms part of its significance.

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A detailed woodcut map of the city of Redding, showing its fortifications, streets, and surrounding landscape. The city is enclosed by a wall with bastions, and a river flows through the lower right corner. Various parts of the city are labeled with letters.

This is a detailed black and white map of the Forbury area in Reading. The map shows a network of streets including 'Forbury', 'Abbey Ruins', 'St. Lawrence Ch.', 'St. Marys Ch.', 'Old Gas Works', and 'Road'. Numbered locations 1 through 8 are marked on the map. The map also shows the 'Forbury' area, 'Abbey Ruins', 'St. Lawrence Ch.', 'St. Marys Ch.', 'Old Gas Works', and 'Road'.

HERITAGE FUSION
CONSERVING THE PAST, INSPIRING THE FUTURE

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Extract from Berkshire XXXVII.3 1879



Extract from Berkshire XXXVII 1883

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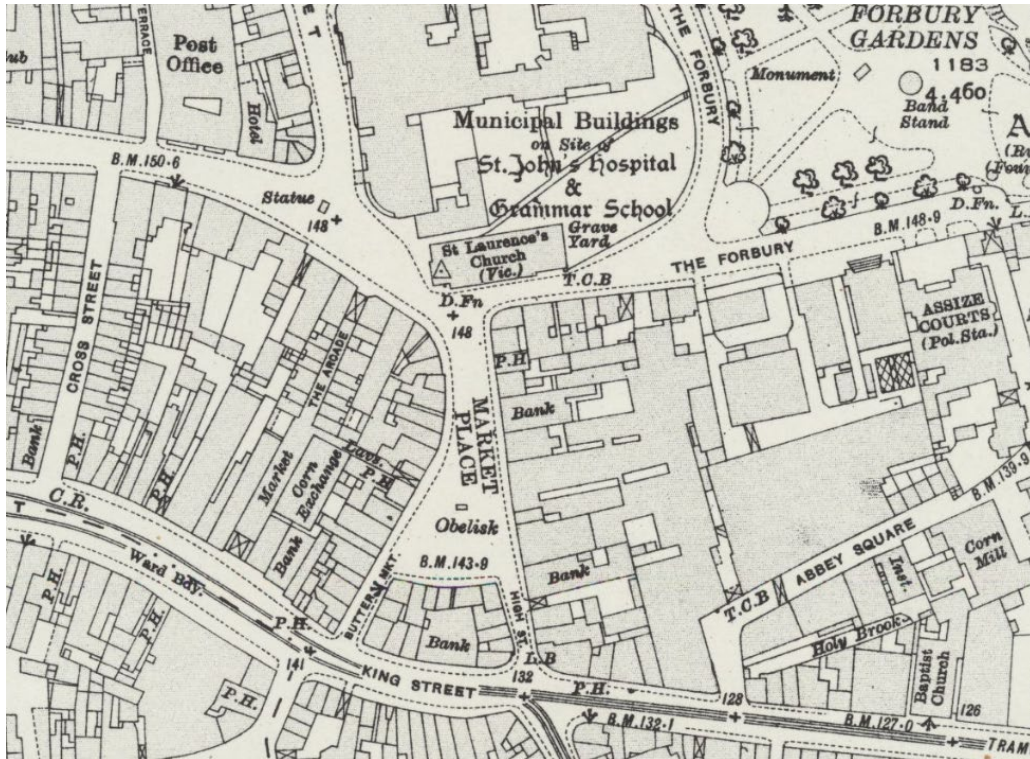
Extract from Berkshire XXXVII.3 1900



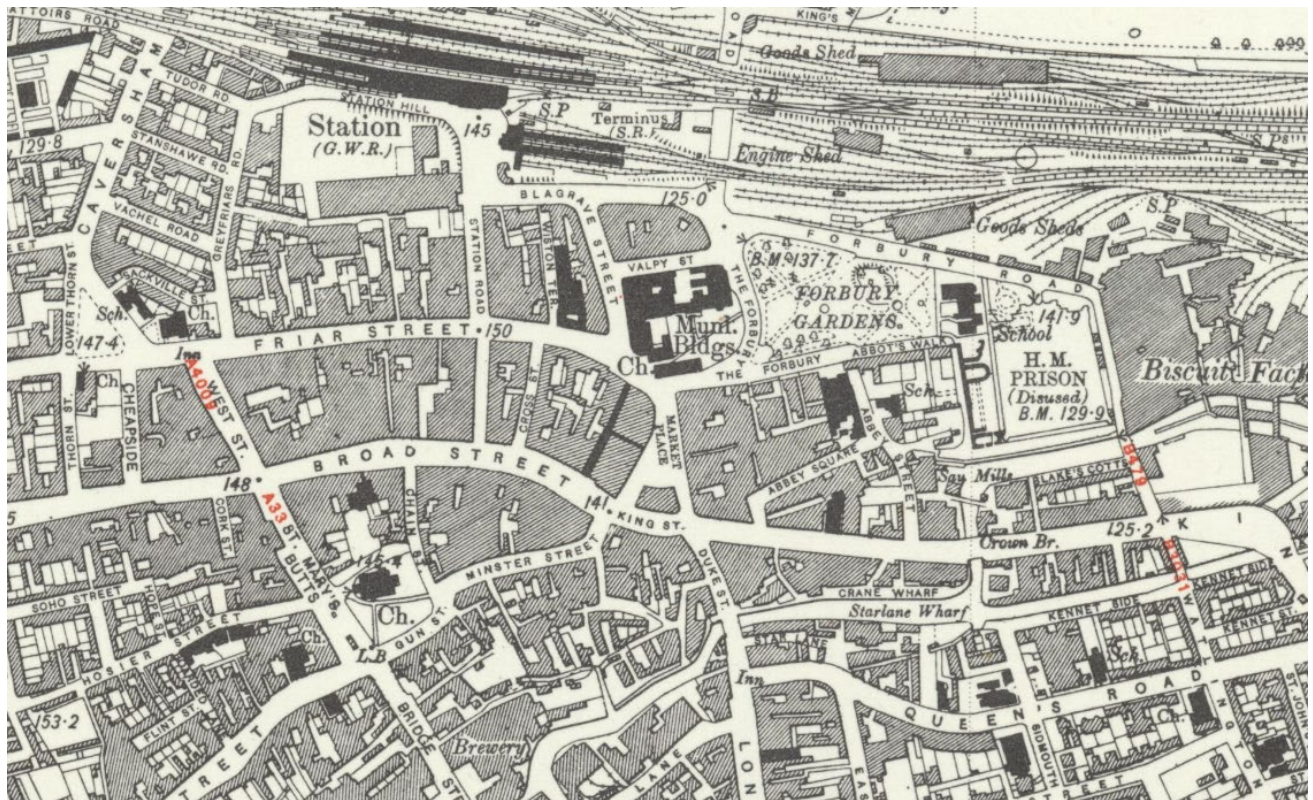
Extract from Berkshire XXXVII.3 1912

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Extract from Berkshire XXXVII.3 1934



Extract from Berkshire Sheet XXXVII.NE 1947

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Photo taken from the Historic England Archive dated 1928

Development Impact on the Historical Asset:

An assessment of how the proposed works will affect the significance of the heritage asset and the justification for that impact.

Proposals should and do:

- 1 - Avoid, minimise and mitigate negative impact, in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF.*
- 2 - Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance.*

Building Elevations and Setting:

The significant front elevation will be unimpacted by the proposed works remaining as it does at present. The commercial frontage at ground floor level will also be unimpacted. Consequential sound insulation upgrade requirements resulting from the change of use are dealt with via the use of secondary glazing which won't be visible externally.

The access to the new residential accommodation will utilize the existing side entrance and there are no proposed new openings in the building.

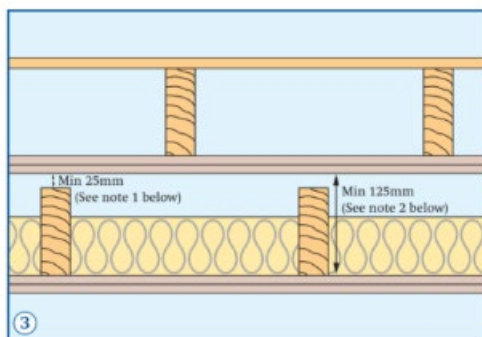
New service extracts that are required to meet residential ventilation requirements will penetrate through the rear elevation only, a secluded and much altered space, therefore having minimal impact upon any visual significance. Heating will be through the use of electric boilers so no gas flues will be required.

There are no external landscaping works proposed.

Internally:

Access to the original internal building fabric was limited at the point of survey due to the modern office fit out that clads the interior so it is difficult to understand the extent of loss to any historic building fabric or if any historic detailing remains hidden behind the modern surfaces. Existing dropped ceilings currently bring services through the building and there is power, water and drainage available on each of the floors already.

It is believed that the residential conversion can be achieved utilizing existing services routes and with minimal disruption to any potential original building fabric. Fire and sound upgrades to the compartment floors/ceilings are proposed to use the methodology of installing an independent fire and sound rated ceiling below the existing floor structure. This creates a sympathetic void for service routing, lighting installation and fire protection without harm to the existing, likely historic floors. The detailing will step up around the windows as it does at present.



The new compartment walls use the British Gypsum Gyproc twin frame wall system, which are reversible in nature.

Scale and Massing:

There is no proposed change to the scale or massing of the building in any way so there is no impact.
There is no change to the existing roofline.

Archeaology:

There are no proposed below ground works so there is no impact upon below ground archaeology in what is a historic core to the town.

Use:

The commercial use is retained at ground floor and basement level so there is no impact at street level.

The works relate only to the upper floors. The loss of office accommodation will not visually have an impact upon the building. The added pressure on a Listed structure typically resulting from changing use has been sympathetically dealt with using the existing methodology of false ceilings and service runs. Any extract requirements will run to the rear of the building and will not come through the prominent front elevation.

The typical upgrade of the building as a result of improvements required by Building Control have been proposed in a sympathetic manner and I believe will have no greater an impact on the building than the current office function. Noise insulation requirements have been dealt with through the use of secondary glazing rather than the wholesale replacement of the windows ensuring that the sensitive front elevation remains unimpacted.

The change of use will allow the building to return to having useful purpose as many offices spaces have become redundant since the pandemic. This will allow for continued high quality investment in the building fabric.

Its design connection with a well known Reading Architect remains unchanged.

Relevant Policy:

The Government has set out its planning policies for the historic environment in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This was published in March 2012 and replaced in 2018, 2019 and 2021. It replaced Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment. The PPS5 Practice Guide remains valid for use alongside the NPPF. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.

The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.

Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of: (a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; (b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and (c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Historic England 'Conservation Principles' deem new work or alteration to be normally acceptable where the proposals do not materially harm the value of the place. They consider the setting of the heritage asset to contribute greatly to its significance. They accept that a heritage setting changes over time.

The local authority guidance also includes policies which seek to ensure the protection of the historic environment and that development is of a high quality and seeks to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Heritage Asset, in this case the surrounding Conservation Areas.

Changes to the setting of historic buildings / Conservation Areas are to be sympathetic in terms of siting, proportion, scale, form, height, materials and detailing. All design work and procedures should follow guidance outlined in BS 7913:2013 Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings.

Conclusion:

The proposals have no impact upon the architectural/ visual significance of the front elevation of the building and the its relevance within the town centre street scene on what is a prominent site. There is no change to the architectural proportions or the scale or massing of the building. There is no impact upon surrounding listed Buildings. All service penetrations are to the concealed and much altered rear of the building.

The development seeks to preserve or enhance the building by bringing the upper floors of a redundant building back into functional use ensuring its long term investment.

The proposals have been carefully considered in relation to the consequential improvements required by Building Control as a result of a change of use and the introduction of new services. The existing office fit out internally is modern in nature and there is no loss of historic material through its proposed removal and replacement. At the point of survey it was not clear if historic detailing remains behind the modern ceilings so careful opening up works are required however the proposals assume the use of existing service runs and the creation of service voids through replacement of the existing false ceiling rather than the requirement to chase services.

The proposals are sympathetic in nature and act in accordance with the local and national planning policy in regards to the historic environment and should be supported by the local authority.

Assessor Details:

Surveyor: Michelle Purnell BA(hons) BArch RIBA MSc Building Conservation IHBC
Date of Site Visit: 21/11/22 Weather conditions at time of visit: Wet

Information Source Checklist:

The following information sources have been used when conducting desk based research:

Historic England List of Protected Historic Sites x
National Planning Policy Framework x
Planning Practice Guidance: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment x
Relevant Local Plans x
Conservation Area Character Appraisal x
Local Authority Landscape Character Assessment n/a
The Local List of Buildings and Monuments x
Local Records Office Other (please state):