

32 ST MARYS BUTTS
PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT
ISSUE 01
JANUARY 2023



Bristol Studio

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January 2023

READING HSHAZ - 32 ST MARYS BUTTS: PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

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PART I - BACKGROUND & BRIEF

INTRODUCTION

I.1 WHAT IS THE HERITAGE ACTION ZONE INITIATIVE?

Historic England is delivering the £95 million government-funded High Streets Heritage Action Zone programme. This aims to unlock the potential of high streets across England, fuelling economic, social and cultural recovery and breathe new life into it for future generations. St Mary's Butts one of 60 high streets to be offered funding as part of a four-year programme.

The High Street Heritage Action Zone in Reading extends across three conservation areas. However, as funding is limited this will be focused on the areas in need of the most investment. This includes Oxford Road and the junction of St. Mary's Butts and Castle Street.

I.2 READING HSHAZ OBJECTIVES

- To enhance the understanding of Reading's heritage by revealing it's hidden histories and to give the community a sense of pride and ownership in developing the town's future
- To improve the physical condition and viability of the high streets within the three conservation areas by identifying those properties most at risk and engaging with property owners to help them to restore the buildings, to show them how to maintain the buildings and to share best practice. We want to see premises viably and fully occupied and footfall and customer satisfaction increasing.

- To develop a comprehensive strategy to improve the public realm across the HSHAZ. The outcome will be a better experience and sense of place for those living or working in or visiting the town centre.
- To support local businesses, the economy and local community and cultural initiatives by creating a positive sense of place through contributing to the heritage of their high street.



Masterplan showing situation of 84 Oxford Road within the Reading Heritage Action Zones.

PART 1 - BACKGROUND & BRIEF

1.3 SITE HISTORY

EARLY HISTORY

The Saxon centre of Reading focused on the principal building in the area, St Mary's Butts. The church, alongside an estate, was held by the Abbot of Battle in the 11th century, as recorded at Domesday. St Mary's Butts takes its name from the range where local men were obliged by law to practice archery in front of the church.

MEDIEVAL PERIOD

The street pattern of the area dates to the medieval period when it formed the heart of the town, holding the marketplace and some of the oldest buildings in Reading. These include a number of public houses such as the 16th century Horn Public House, which sits on the corner of Castle Street and St Mary's Butts, in close proximity to No. 8 Castle Street and Nos. 32 and 34 St Mary's Butts.

The historic core and marketplace shifted to the east, away from St Mary's Butts, with the foundation of Reading Abbey in the 12th century, which became one of the richest religious houses in England until the Dissolution in 1539. Until the late 18th century, the settlement at Reading was largely contained within the medieval limits of the triangle between the churches of St Mary's Butts, St Laurence and Greyfriars.

NINETEENTH CENTURY

After this date, the town began to expand owing to industrialisation and improved transport links. The 1802 map shows the town's medieval limits had begun to extend beyond these churches, although open fields and market gardens were still found to the rear of Castle Street and St Mary's Butts. Our site is shown to occupy part of a block between Castle Street, St Mary's Butts and Hosier Street. To the east of the site was St Mary's Butts, its churchyard lined with almshouses, and on an island site in the middle of the road, a row of buildings.

Towards the end of the 19th century, the almshouses in St Mary's Churchyard and the middle row of buildings on St Mary's Butts were demolished, as shown by the 1909 OS

map. The map also shows that extensions had been added into the rear yards of both No. 32 and No. 34 and tram lines had been laid along Castle Street and St Mary's Butts, improving accessibility across the town centre.

32 ST MARY'S BUTTS

No. 32, along with No. 34 is likely to date to the early 19th century and features a modern shopfront. No. 32 had a smaller shop front than No. 34 and had a side entrance, glazing panels, a fascia and a generous cornice above, at a slightly higher level than that of No. 34. In the mid / late 20th century, the terrace of buildings continuing north from No. 32 St Mary's Butts was demolished, opening up a gap site between this building and Hosier Street. During the late 20th and 21st century a number of retail units occupied the shop fronts at No. 8 Castle Street and Nos. 32 and 34 St Mary's Butts and all have had periods of vacancy. At present No. 34 is vacant.

PLANNING HISTORY

There is no planning history within the last 10 years. The current modern signage was installed in 1994 under approved application P940435.

No. 34 St Mary's Butts is also part of the HSHAZ scheme and has had works approved under application 220489 which is helping to revitalise this part of the Conservation Area.



Map dedicated to the Mayor, aldermen and burgesses of Reading by Charles Coates (engraved by W. Poole), 1802 (Reading Library). The map shows the market gardens and agricultural fields either side of the road. The study area is highlighted on the map.



St Mary's Butts in 1910 with No. 32 highlighted



St Mary's Butts with The Horn pub in the foreground and No. 32 highlighted

PART 1 - BACKGROUND & BRIEF

I.4 SHOPFRONT DESIGN PRINCIPLES & OBJECTIVES

St Mary's Butts has undergone much alteration since the early 20th century, however, there are a number of architectural features that remain which bring character to the street and reflect its historic function and character as a retail and residential street. These features should be retained where remaining and repaired where deteriorating.

The component shopfront parts survived in many instances along the street. Corbels are the most common remaining fragment, although pilasters survived in places and some cornices above. Some shopfronts retain appropriately proportioned fascia signage, but generally these have been replaced by inappropriate modern versions featuring oversized fascia signs and internally lit signage boxes. Glazed panels divided by mullions have generally been replaced by full-height modern glazing, which lacks depth and articulation.

What survives of the historic shopfront features are generally in poor condition across St Mary's Butts and should be retained, repaired and incorporated into new schemes rather than being replaced.

Ornament to upper storeys varies across the street. Georgian terraces are generally restrained, featuring sash windows, arched doorways and fanlights. The later Victorian terraces, however, exhibit a greater range of architectural features, which add character to groups of building and enliven the skyline.



Diagram showing typical features of a single shop front.



Largely intact historic shopfront at no. 111, with Early-Victorian sash windows



Historical image showing grocery store at no. 184. C. 1910

2.1 ELEVATIONAL STUDY

EXISTING ELEVATION



PROPOSED ELEVATION



PROPOSED ELEVATION (LIGHTING)



2.2 EXISTING ELEVATIONAL STUDY



2.3 PROPOSED ELEVATION

DESIGN JUSTIFICATION

The design for the new handpainted timber fascia and hanging sign have been developed in line with the brand and marketing guidance from the KallKwik brand. We have matched the blue and white colours to their logo. Furthermore, historical details have been incorporated such as beading to the timber fascia and a concealed light within the fascia.



2.4 PROPOSED SIGNAGE

84 Front Elevation (lighting)



Sign Front Elevation



Sign Front Elevation (lighting)



Hanging sign



Concealed slim cowl light installed in the top of the sign molding. Signage to be externally illuminated at night as illustrated. Illumination to be static. Lighting specification: Neutral (4000k) 1440 lumens per meter.

The colour choice for the signage has been informed by the logo of KallKwik and their advertising guidance.

Slim cowl light example (to be concealed in top of fascia)



