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PLANNING STATEMENT

Site: 138-144 Friar Street, Reading, RG1 1EX (QVS2)
Application by: The National Pub Portfolio Ltd (Thackery Estates)
Lead Consultant: Mr Paul S Bottomley
Date: 12th August 2022
Our Ref: URB-482e-ST1

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This planning statement is prepared by Mr Paul S Bottomley BA (Hons), MA, MRTPI of Town Planning Bureau and comprises supporting information in respect of a planning application and for the development as described at para 1.2 below.

- Applicant: The National Pub Portfolio Ltd ("the Applicant") – owned by the Thackeray Estates
- Site: 138-144 Friar Street, Reading RG1 1EX ("the site") – also referred to as QVS2.
- LPA: Reading Borough Council ("the Council").

Proposal

1.2 Planning permission is sought for the following development:

Redevelopment of site comprising demolition of 138 to 143 Friar Street, the partial retention of The Bugle Public House (144 Friar Street), the and the erection of a ground, mezzanine and 1st to 6th floor (7 storey) hotel building with 163 bedspaces, with ancillary ground floor food and beverage.

1.3 This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents submitted with this application. This material will show that the proposals accord with national and local planning policy and guidance, represent sustainable development and there are no material considerations that indicate that planning permission and listed building consent should not be granted for this conservation led scheme.



Report	Prepared by:
Location Plan	FCH Architects
Drawings	FCH Architects
DAS	FCH Architects
- Utilises	FCH Architects
- Landscape principles	FCH Architects
- Materials Details	FCH Architects
- Waste Collection	FCH Architects
- External Lighting	FCH Architects
- Cycle parking	FCH Architects
- Fire Statement	FCH Architects
Heritage & Townscape Visual Impact Assessment	Revival & Taylor
Archaeological Assessment	Oxford Archology
Air quality assessment	GEM
Energy / Sustainability Statement	TBA
M&E (Ventilation / Extraction Details)	TBA
Drainage	Uddin
Ecology	Skilled Ecology
Flood Risk & SUDS	JME
Fire Statement	Horner / FCH
Noise & Vibration Impact Assessment	KPA
Transport Assessment	MODE
Servicing Details (including Waste)	MODE
Travel Plan	MODE
CMP	MODE
Structure	Axiom
Planning Statement	TPBureau
Heads of Terms	TPBureau
CIL	TPBureau
Statement of Community Involvement	TPBureau

The Applicant

1.4 This application is submitted on behalf of The National Pub Portfolio Ltd (The Thackery Estate), a property development and investment company with nearly 60 years' experience and a nationwide portfolio. The Thackeray Estate has several key land holdings within Reading representing significant investment in the future growth of the Borough. This includes nos. 1-15 Queen Victoria Street & 145-148 Friar Street, adjacent the application - these buildings formed part of phase one of the QVS development (QVS1), submitted by Thackeray Estates. A reduced extent area gained Planning Committee approval in June 2021 (subject to a S106). In addition, 149-150 Friar Street, 2-4 Queen Victoria Street and 1 Station Road are also in the ownership of the Applicant. This combination of properties represents a key part of the town centre, as well as their wider Reading land holding – we refer readers to the DAS for further list of the Applicant's holdings. The Applicant is committed to a £60m investment into Reading Town Centre and is committed to the delivery of this destination scheme.

1.5 The Applicant has worked with the Council since November 2019 developing their shared vision for the redevelopment of the sites QVS1 and QVS2. The scheme has been developed through consulting, listening, formulating a scheme, and gaining the support of officers.

1.6 The Applicant has a track record of delivering sensitive, iconic sustainable development across the United Kingdom, with specialist experience in the successful restoration, reuse and

regeneration of listed buildings and town/ city centre sites. The Applicant has brought this relevant knowledge and wealth of experience to the development proposals presented herewith, which represents a unique opportunity to develop a new and exciting building at the heart of the town centre on an underutilised site in central Reading.

Background

1.7 This current application, Phase 2 of the QVS applications, aims to expand and encompass Phase 1 & 2 together, working together (separate applications) so Phase 2 can further enhance and regenerate the Friar Street frontage, presenting active frontages, a food and beverage offer, which underpins the QVS1 market square and enlivens the space to compliment this comprehensive redevelopment. The aspiration is to achieve the ongoing enhancement and regeneration of this important town centre site that lays at the gateway to the primary shopping area of Reading when accessing from the main line railway station.

1.8 The proposal is for a 163-bedroom hotel with ancillary food & beverage offering that represents a unique opportunity to enhance and utilise this highly accessible location within the town centre, bringing this site back into viable use, including the restoration and secured longevity of the front proportion of the Bugle Public House, which is vacant.

1.9 The proposal follows extensive research and review of successful precedent schemes across the country, consultation and engagement with key stakeholders who together have shaped the proposal the Applicant presents. The LPA engagement has included extensive pre-application discussions (LPA pre-app responses received on 7th April, 22nd April and 16th June 2022), Design Panel Review (response received 18th July 2022) and a comprehensive review of the existing assets to present the scheme before you.

1.10 The Applicant has also engaged with third party key stakeholders, including Reading BID, Reading Civic, Reading CAAC, business, local residents and social media, as well as informed local Councillors. The feedback to date has been positive and the constructive feedback has helped to inform and develop the scheme, which has evolved to take account of the engagement. The feedback is encouraging the speedy delivery of the scheme, to align with the linking of both proposals at QVS1 and QVS2 has key to this proposal.

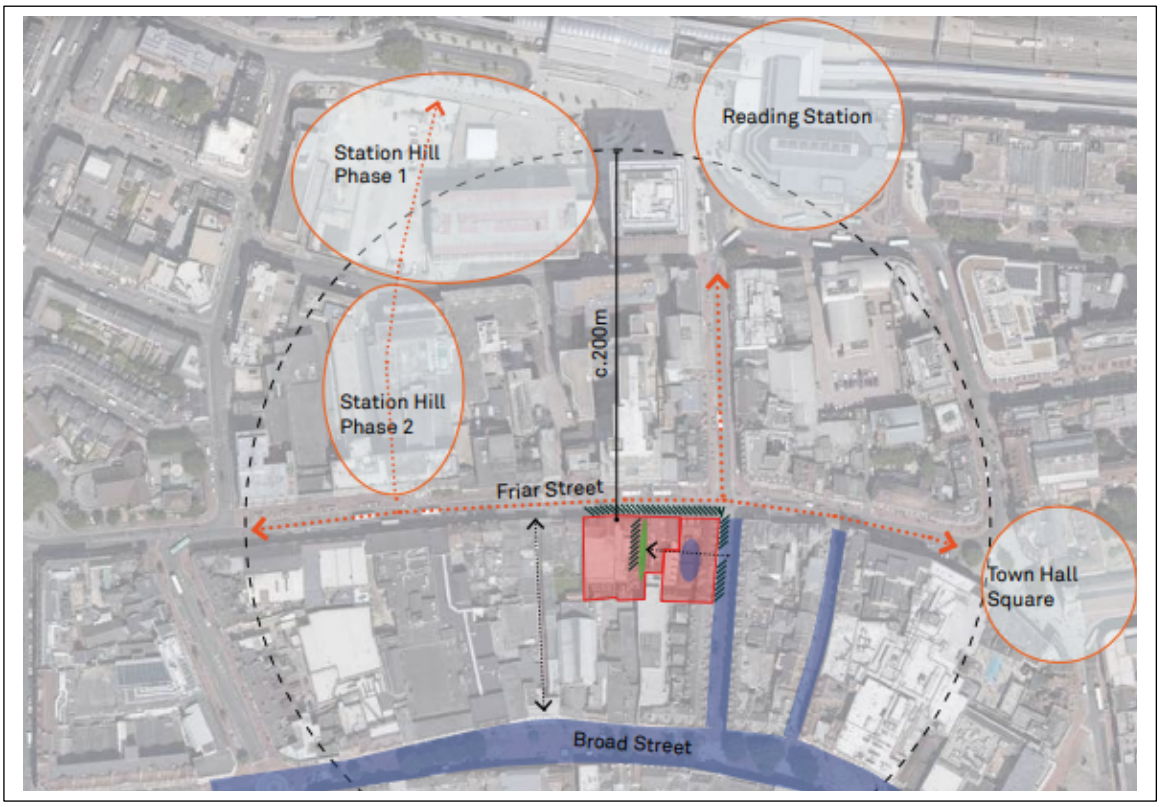
1.11 In summary, the engagement found that the scheme presented is a positive benefit that on the feedback received, on the whole is supported by the local community and key stakeholders. The Applicant has partnered with Jury's Inn, who have assessed at each stage the functionality of the scheme to ensure it is a viable and deliverable. We note other speculative schemes for hotels in Reading have not been delivered as they are unviable.

2.0 Site Location & Description

The Site

2.1 The QVS2 site is a prominent plot located on Friar Street, with significant frontage onto the street, adjacent to the approved QVS1. Friar Street is traffic controlled with access to busses, taxis and permit holders only during the day.

2.2 The Site comprises a few premises with retail uses and a pub, The Bugle, at ground floor level with other ancillary uses (although vacant) at first floor level and above. Friar Street is a key primary retail street within the town centre and is in a highly accessible location, approximately 250m from Reading Railway Station to the north.



2.3 The site comprises the following distinct buildings:

- 138-141 Friar Street – this unit comprises a bar (formerly A4) in sui generis use.
- 142-143 Friar Street – this unit comprises and retail Class E(a) (Eyesight opticians) at ground floor with vacant floors above.
- 144 Friar Street - the Bugle building is a non-designated heritage asset, which is vacant, and comprises a public house (formerly A4) in sui generis use. For note, the upper floor is ancillary to the ground floor use with no clear separation of the uses.

2.4 Photographs of the front elevation are over the page.





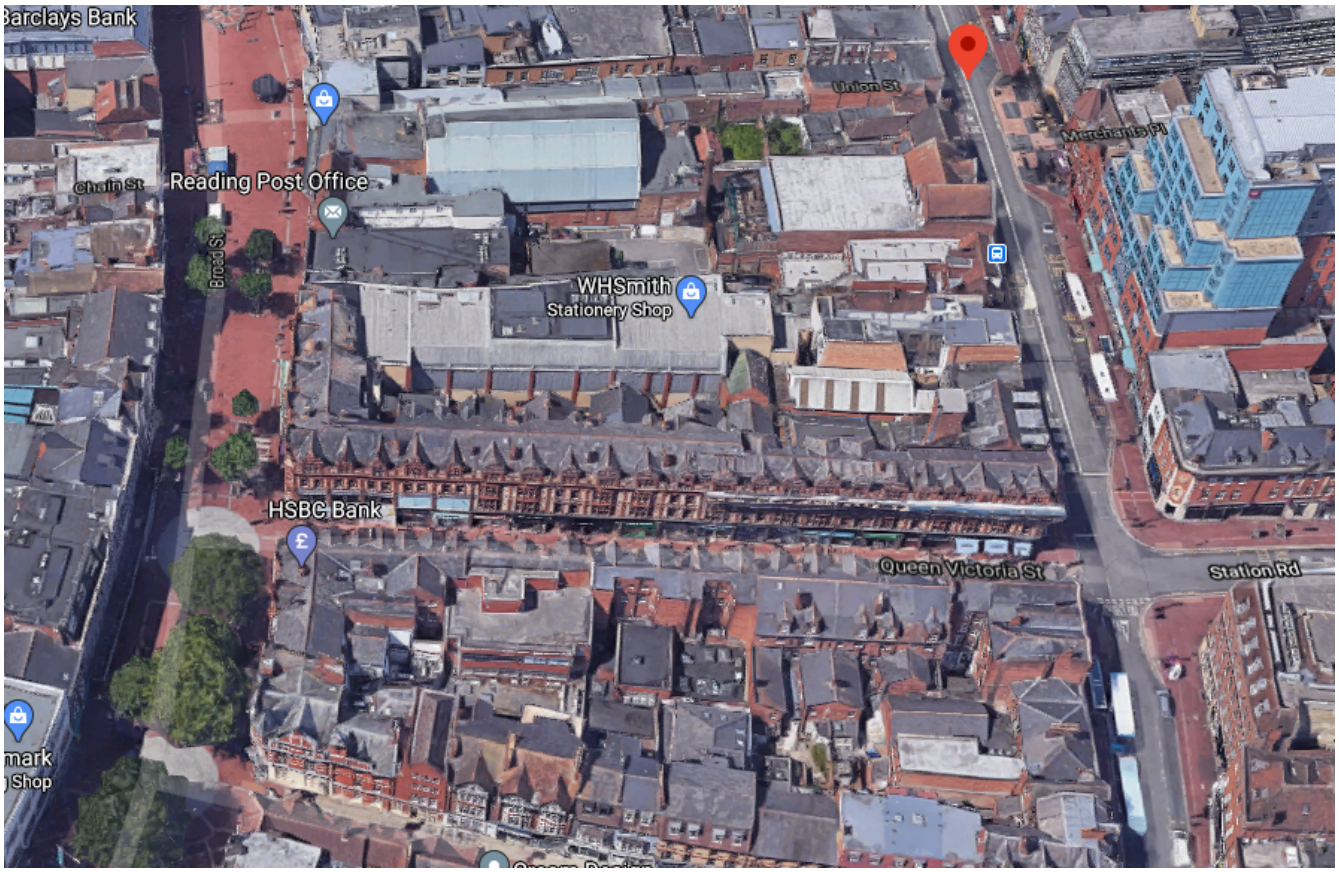
2.5 As advised, the Applicant also holds other sites in the town centre including 149-150 Friar Street and Nos. 1 to 15 QVS, No's 2 to 4 QVS forms the corner building of QVS - therefore the Applicant owns three corners of Friar Street/ Station Road.

2.6 The Site is highly accessible by public transport, walking and cycling with Reading Railway Station located approximately 250m to the north, with regular Crossrail services to London and acting as an interchange hub for services to the rest of the country. The Site is within the heart of the town centre with immediate access to associated shops, facilities, and services, including a key bus route on Friar Street. Friar Street is also a designated cycle route, and this part of the town centre offers pedestrianised streets and bus/taxi/cycle only restricted roads.

2.7 A full detailed description of the Site and existing buildings is included within the DAS submitted with this application and the full historic description of the Site is contained within the supporting Heritage Statement.

Surrounding Area

2.8 The remainder of the adjoining shopping parade along QVS comprises a wider set of listed buildings of 1-31 and 2-32 QVS. These buildings are all of a uniform design as per the application Site with tiled and terracotta principal facades and continuous ground floor retail frontages.



2.9 Central Reading has a wide range of town centre uses and services, including shopping high-streets, retail arcades, hotels, offices and residential uses. The town centre is undergoing regeneration and redevelopment with key projects underway or proposed.

2.10 The existing buildings at the Site reflect a mix of buildings heights, with the taller buildings being the predominant building heights within the town centre. However, there are some larger plots and building heights punctuating the skyline, such as the Novotel Hotel on the north side of Friar Street, Thames Tower by the railway station and John Lewis department store.

2.11 To the north of the Site is the Station/River Major Opportunity Area ("MOA"), as designated within the Reading Local Plan 2019. This area is designated for regeneration and redevelopment that will bring about significant change and enhancement to central Reading over the plan period. Immediately north of Friar Street is the Friar Street and Station Road sub-area of the MOA, which will assist in facilitating greater cycle and pedestrian permeability through central Reading with connectivity to the railway station.

3.0 Relevant Planning History

3.1 This section summarises relevant planning applications for the Site and other relevant developments in the surrounding area. A summary is provided of proposals previously presented for pre-application advice and the responses received from the Council.

Planning Applications

3.2 **138-144 Friar Street:** The below table summarises planning applications for the part of the Site with addresses along Friar Street. This does not include minor works such as shop front alterations or signage, and also omits duplicate Listed Building applications. There are numerous applications related to external shopfront alterations and signage that have not been included within the below table.

3.3 App Ref	Description	Decision/Date
138-141 Friar Street		
991081	Refit of existing shop unit including new shop front and dividing wall between other occupants entrance and Bon Marchi.	Approved 21/3/2001
991120	Change of use of first floor from A1 (retail) to A2 (financial and professional services).	Approved 11/10/2000
991826	Proposed change of use of building from A1 (Retail) to use for a cafe bar/restaurant use within Class A3 of the Use Classes Order, & for open class A3 at first floor level.	Approved 24/11/1999
141673	Change of use of building from Class A1 retail to Class A4 bar, installation of external plant and alterations to shopfront.	Approved 19/02/2015
142-143 Friar Street		
010994	Change of use of ground floor to use Class A2 (Financial and Professional services).	Approved 23/01/2002
144 Friar Street		
030948	Single storey rear extension and formation of roof terrace.	Approved 13/11/2003

Linked Planning Application

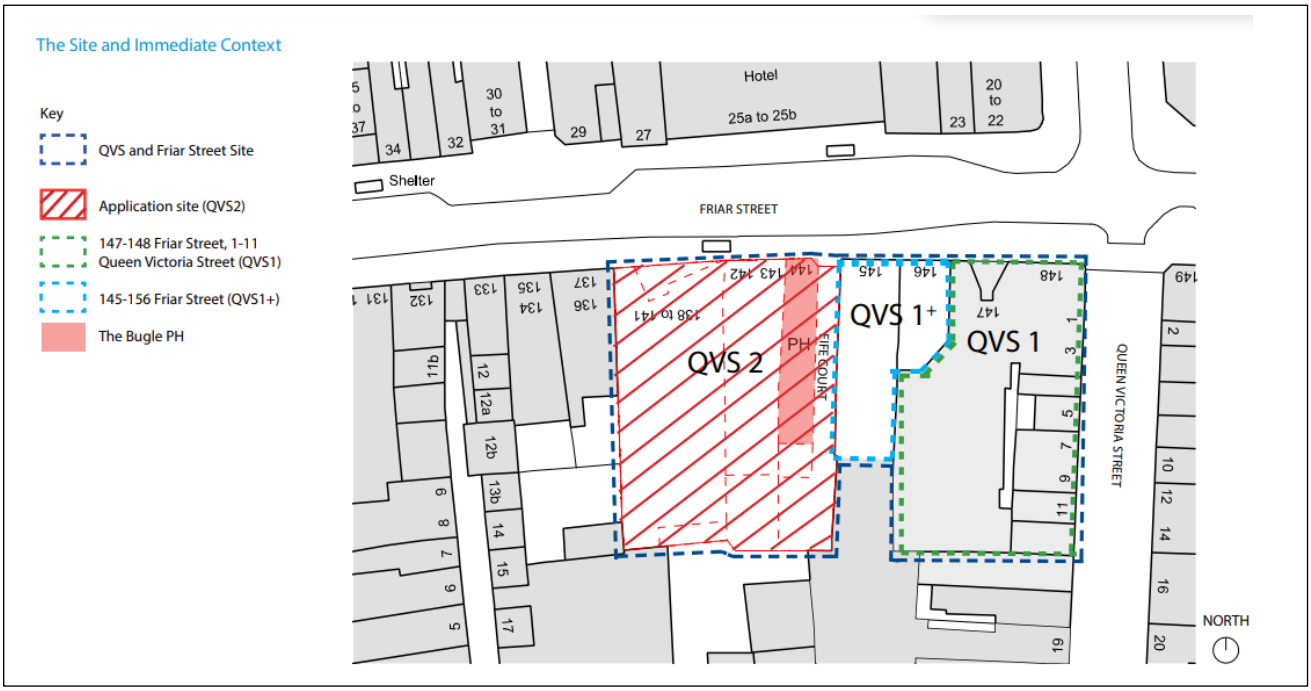
3.4 **1-15 Queen Victoria Street and 145-148 Friar Street**: an Application for 1-15 Queen Victoria Street and 147-148 Friar Street Reading, (Phase 1 (QVS1) was approved at Planning Committee in June 2021 (LPA refs:)for,

"Part demolition of rear of site; repair and refurbishment of listed buildings; change of use of upper floors from office (Use Class E(g)) to apart hotel (Use Class C1); erection of a three-storey rear extension with mansard; erection of a part-single, part-two storey rear addition (Use Class E(a) or (b)); alterations to ground floor principle façade; creation of public square; and associated works."

3.5 The vision is to create a destination location that restores the listed buildings of QVS and Friar Street, that creates a retail experience, provides overnight accommodation in a variety of concepts and that will create vibrancy, job creation, and support the local and regional economy.

3.6 The Applicant has now incorporated 145-146 Friar Street and expanded the offering and this application is submitted in tandem for

"Part demolition of rear of site; repair and refurbishment of listed buildings; change of use of upper floors from office (Use Class E(g)) to apart hotel (Use Class C1); erection of a three-storey rear extension with mansard; erection of a part-single, part-two storey rear addition (Use Class E(a) or (b)); alterations to ground floor principle façade; creation of public square; and associated works."



Surrounding Area

3.7 There are numerous planning applications of note in the surrounding area, which share similar attributes. Examples are given below.

3.8 **17-27 QVS:** Planning and listed building consent was granted in January 2019 (app refs: 181296 and 181297) for, "change of use of first, second and third floor from office use (B1a) to serviced apartment use (use class C1) comprising 15 x 1 bed units and 4 x 2 bed units". These proposals and the site are very similar to that of this Application, being in close proximity, sharing the same planning policy designations and issues and being of the same configuration of uses. This consent has also been referenced in pre-application advice discussions with the Council (see below) as a good example to follow for the Site and an example of some technical requirements and mitigation that may be relevant for the application proposals.

3.9 **2-4 QVS:** Planning and listed building consent was granted in 2017 (app refs: 170210 and 170211) for, "conversion of vacant office accommodation at first, second and third floor levels to create 7 x 2 bed residential units with part of ground floor and basement for ancillary storage space". These proposals demonstrate the acceptability of loss of office floorspace in this part of Reading town centre and the introduction of accommodation.

Pre-Application Advice

3.10 In developing the proposals herewith, the Applicant first met with Senor officers in 2019 to present their vision for the redevelopment of both QVS1 and QVS2 – the vision is shown below.

QUEEN STREET AND FRIAR STREET

VISION

High Quality Mixed Used Development

Our proposal is to repair, restore and rejuvenate the listed buildings and create a vibrant mixed use development in this key commercial town centre location in two phases. Drawing inspirations from other successful mixed-use developments in other major City's, such as Manchester's Corn Exchange, Fulham Market Hall and Ham Yard Hotel. The vision is to create a destination development befitting Reading's emerging cultural and economic status.

Phase 1 will consist of works to the listed buildings of Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street, providing improved retail frontage, to the rear a new high-quality market square. The upper floors of the listed building would be converted to 'city living' apartments.

Phase 2 will be the redevelopment of the site to enhance the commercial retail frontage and provide a C-use class – this is likely to be a hotel, apart-hotel or serviced apart-ments.



Corn Exchange interior, Manchester



Corn Exchange streetscape, Manchester

North
Phase 1
Phase 2



Phasing Diagram - Aerial view from North East



Fulham Market Hall interior, London



Fulham Market Hall exterior, London



Ham Yard Hotel, London

Queen Victoria St and Friar St - Reading -Thackeray Estates

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3.11 Following the approval of QVS1 in June 2021 (subject to S106), the Applicant commenced work on Phase 2.

3.12 A pre-application meeting took place on 21/01/2022, following submission of a pre-application document in December 2021 (Proposed 2 Hotel Development 138-144 Friar Street Reading Pre-application submission ref P21109-FCH-XX-XX-RF-A-0005 P01 dated December 2021).

3.13 A number of follow up meetings took place and information provided to the LPA in March and April 2022 (The Bugle PH retention appraisal & design development summary by FCH Ref P21109-FCH-XX-XX-RF-A-0006 P01, dated February 2022, as received 04/02/2022; Planning Note by Town Planning Bureau Ref URB-482e-L1b, as received 04/02/22. Follow up meeting 2: Pre-application Addendum – Design Development 02 by FCH Ref P21109-FCH-XX-XX-RF-A-0008 P01, dated and received March 2022).

3.14 Pre Application advice was obtained on 7th April 2022 (ref: 211901/PREAPP) on this proposal, which has modestly evolved in response to the meetings and advice received to date, Initial advice was followed up with additional clarification and subsequent advice we received on

22nd April 2022 (ref: 211901/PREAPP) and 16th June 2022 (ref: 211901/PREAPP). The initial proposals comprised the following:

- Partial demolition of existing buildings 145 and 146 Friar Street;
- Change of use of the remaining upper floors to a C1 apart-hotel use.
- Fife Court enhancements
- Enhance and regenerate Friar Street active retail frontage
- Market Square and significant enhancements to shops
- Connections to market square creating new urban pathways
- Restoration and alteration of the original listed buildings to be retained (internal and external) including restoration of shopfronts and facades, gables and roof;
- A proposed three storey rear extension (with accommodation in the roof space) to nos. 144-138 and 145-146 Friar Street, either side of Fife Court.

3.15 The pre-application advice request was accompanied by a detailed description of the scheme and analysis of relevant planning policy, a visual design document, floor plans and elevations and a Heritage Statement. Overall the proposals were positively received and supported as an appropriate and positive refurbishment and redevelopment solution for the site. The pre-application advice received is summarised at APP1.

The acceptability of the proposals in principle

- Overall, the proposed development and mix of uses would enhance the viability and vitality of the town centre.

Loss of existing uses:

- Replacement of Class E(a) use is unlikely to be contentious, although reference to existing/proposed floorspace, and commentary relating to, and compliance with, Local Plan Policy RL1, will be necessary.
- In regards to both No. 138-141 and No. 144, protection is given to leisure facilities and public houses under adopted Policy RL6. The onus is on demonstration of a case to support loss of these two facilities.

Loss / partial loss of existing buildings at the site:

- No. 138-141 and 142-143 existing buildings are not considered to be of any specific or special architectural merit to warrant their retention and the principle of demolition is acceptable.
- The entire demolition of the Bugle Public House is not acceptable to officers. It is deemed a non-designated heritage asset. Design changes have been made to incorporate retention of the fascia of the building, which is a welcome proposal which is likely to align with Policy EN4 requirements.

Principle of proposed uses at the site

- The principle of introducing a hotel use (presumed to be Class C1) within this location is broadly supported.
- The same goes for the provision of food and beverage use, which aligns with specific policy requirements.

Associated land use matters

- scheme needs to clearly detail how it ties in with other schemes/land owned by the prospective applicant in the locality.

Proposed design/massing & heritage considerations

- The revised design and massing is considered to respond to officer comments whilst offering a viable and deliverable regeneration scheme that aligns with the shared vision for the area.

- The scheme itself, the massing and approach to heritage-based concerns, as well as the loss of the Bugle, have evolved and addressed officers comments as per the below:
  - Top floor removed and height reduced (mezzanine floor introduced)
  - Additional set-back introduced to front elevation at resultant top floor level
  - Guestrooms relocated to rear of the proposed building
  - The front corner part of the Bugle Public House retained
  - Friar Street massing reduced
  - Redesign of elevation to seek to achieve a greater heritage connection
- In short, it is acknowledged that these represent positive changes in comparison with the original proposal. It is considered that in height and massing terms the proposals are getting closer to a position that officers may, on balance, be able to support.
- The latest iteration of the scheme is considered a far better proposal than the original intention to fully demolish the pub, with the front half of the Bugle retained and the movement of the upper levels of the proposal further back into the site. This would be likely to better integrate the significant old and new elements of the site into the Friar Street streetscape.

Transport

- The site is located within the Reading Central Area and within Reading's primary shopping area. The site is located within Zone 1 of the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. Parking for the hotel and retail units should be provided in accordance with the Council's current Parking Standards. However, given the constraints of the site it would appear that no on-site parking will be provided.
- Details of how the hotel and retail units will be serviced is required.
- Details on refuse collection will be necessary.

Further Pre-Application Advice

3.16 Following advice provided in pre-app responses on 7th April, and the addendum sent on 22nd April, as part of which, LPA Officer's referred to the Applicant's presentation which showed how the proposal had been altered to, amongst other matters, to retain the front part of Bugle Public House and increase the ground floor height (to incorporate a mezzanine level towards the rear of the building), remove the previously proposed 7th floor and increase the footprint of the upper floors in the south-west corner of the site, which increased the number of hotel bedrooms from 155 to 157. Officers also referred to the fact the presentation also provided more information on views from the west along Friar Street and details of materials to reflect the character of the street, which consists of individual buildings with different and distinctive designs.

3.17 The officer's note as part of the addendum, that it is considered that the proposals have evolved positively since the initial discussions in January 2022. The changes made, in particular the partial retention of the Bugle and partial reduction in height and massing of the proposed scheme, are welcomed and you are continuing to work on providing a fuller assessment of the proposals in order to demonstrate, by the time the application is submitted, how this site can come forward with officer support.

3.18 In May 2022, A Façade and Materials Design Development study was submitted, which was prepared to provide officers with a summary of design proposals that have been developed in response to officer comments. The design changes made to address officer comments were:

1. Alternative materiality
2. Extension set back
3. Series of 3D studies to show massing
4. Review of recent approvals

3.19 On 16th June 2022, the applicant received further detailed design pre-application advice, as follows:

Front Elevation

- At ground floor level it is considered that the proposed shopfronts should be mindful of the Design Guide to Shopfronts Supplementary Planning Document, Adopted January 2022.
- Upper floor façade materials should be in red brick as it is the predominant material along Friar street.
- Floors above should be set back and the detailed DAS should comment upon this design at application submission stage. The overriding objective is for the floors 5 and 6 to appear as lightweight additions which seek to 'disappear' from view (assisted by the set-back location from the Friar Street elevation).

Side and rear elevations

- On the Fife Court eastern elevation, brickwork should be incorporated rather than render at ground floor level. The Conservation and Urban Design Officer is content with the principle of the front part of the side elevations (closest to Friar Street) being brickwork, before the rear part of the side elevations and the rear elevation being rendered finish.

Ground floor use

- Based on the latest iteration of the scheme it appears that the ground floor lounge/bar/restaurant would be proposed to be ancillary to the hotel. As per previous feedback, please clarify this at application stage-it is advised that you will need to provide commentary.

3.20 Officers concluded:

"The detailed design matters discussed include some elements which officers are content with and others will require your future refinement and alterations, which can be progressed as you also continue to advance your justification for the overarching scale, massing and height of the scheme to application stage too. Furthermore, your verbal agreement at the meeting to engage in the Reading DRP process is welcomed and I await your submission in order to ensure this is considered at the upcoming 30th June DRP meeting."

Design Review Panel

3.21 The Design Review Panel took place in June 2022, and the presentation by FCH set out the Vision for the development, 'to create a destination location that restores the listed buildings of QVS and Friar Street, that creates a market square retail experience, provides overnight accommodation in a variety of concepts and that will create vibrancy, job creation and support the local and regional economy'.

3.22 Furthermore, the presentation provided an overview on the site and public realm, historical context, emerging proposals and the story so far, design evolution and planning rationale, and

the comprehensive redevelopment plans were summarised with a list of the proposals, as follows;

- Creation of Exciting New Reading Quarter
- Mixed-Use Development comprising retail, food & beverage and visitor accommodation
- Repair & restoration of Listed Buildings and secure their future
- High quality to design that respects heritage assets and strikes the right balance between conservation heritage and imagination
- High quality hotel development that respects streetscene through intensive townscape assessments
- Reactivation of Queen Victoria Street with heritage shopfronts that returns their retail frontage to their former historic appearance
- Active frontage to Friar Street & Fife Court
- Market Square – visitor attraction, outdoor markets, events
- 3308sqm of retail
- c.160 bedroom international hotel brand
- c.100 suite apart-hotel for business and leisure visitors
- Reinvigorating Fife Court (historic laneway)
- Highly sustainable and highly accessible development offering inclusive design & access
- Significant investment into Town Centre and economic benefits – job creation, independent retail unit et al.
- Approach adopted of working with Reading BC on scheme evolution

3.23 The DRP response stated:

Design Approach
The proposals have the potential to provide a significant townscape benefit to this key intersection at the heart of Reading. The overall vertical hierarchy applied to the scheme is sound, with a public / civic base of 2 storeys and then functional accommodation above. The challenge that remains to be addressed is how can The Bugle be retained as more that just a shell? It's historic volume, entrance and qualities should be respected and referenced in the proposals.
Detailing
The applicant has drawn strong reference to Reading's rich brick heritage, the Panel applaud the integration of detail and the limited diversity of palate applied to the proposals. The Panel request detailed & dimensioned bay elevations, sections and plans are provided to ensure sufficient allowance is available to deliver the aesthetic shown. At present we fear the external walls to Friar Street do not allow enough depth for the articulation / reveal steps shown.
Any further comments
Whilst outside the scope of the review, the proposals for 145 – 146 Friar Street show great promise. The renewal of 141 – 148 Friar Street could act as a valuable catalyst to support wider improvements within this part of the Town Centre. We request this scheme is returned to Panel 1 as it progresses to application stage.

Final Pre-Application Advice

3.24 On 22nd June officers confirmed

"the principle of the height and massing as shown on the latest pre-app submission is acceptable but you need to elaborate as part of your planning submission why this will work in its context by illustrating its appearance and impact from relevant views and exploring options for architectural detailing to improve appearance.

3.25 The final evolution that has been agreed with Officers follows the resolution of RBC's Planning Committee to approve the local listing of The Bugle Public House. To address this change, as agreed with Officers, part of the side elevation of the former tenements is façade retained fronting Fife Court.

Pre-Application Summary

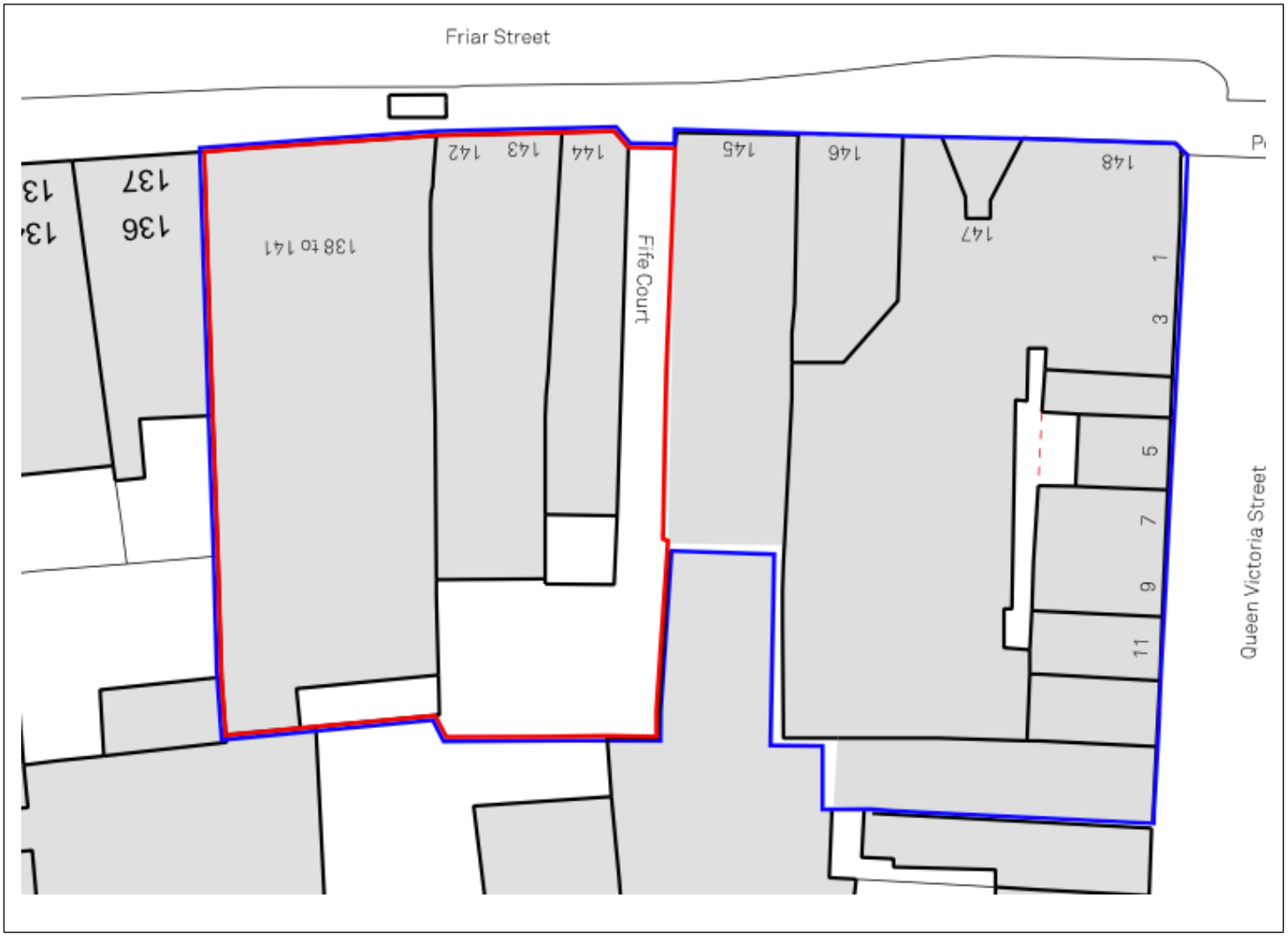
3.26 This application therefore addresses the points raised in the pre-apps, discussions with amenity societies, and subsequent consultation, which includes the retention of the Bugle Public House and part façade retention of the side elevation to Fife Court. A detailed heritage assessment accompanies. Therefore, this application is submitted for determination, which is based on extensive negotiations, and presents a scheme that successfully blends the conservation aspiration of the Council with a high quality design.

4.0 The Proposals

4.1 As advised, this application seeks planning permission for the following description of development:

Redevelopment of site comprising demolition of 138 to 143 Friar Street, the partial retention of The Bugle Public House (144 Friar Street), the and the erection of a ground, mezzanine and 1st to 6th floor (7 storey) hotel building with 163 bedspaces, with ancillary ground floor food and beverage.

4.2 This application is for QVS2 and although separate, is linked to the application QVS1. Phase 2 will deliver the hotel, with significant improvements to Fife court through activation of the frontage and expansion of the market square established as part of QVS1 development. This comprehensive redevelopment will provide many jobs, investment, attract visitors and help to act as a catalyst for the continued regeneration of Reading Town Centre. See site plan below to clearly identify the different land parcels of the QVS sites.



4.3 Each key element of the proposals is summarised below in turn.

Demolition

4.4 Through Site assessments, heritage assessments and pre-application advice discussions with the Council, the poor quality and lower value elements of the Site have been identified as suitable for demolition. This will make way for a sympathetic, modern and inventive redevelopment to the Site and enable the development of a 163-bedroom hotel. The historic Bugle will be retained and part of the secondary façade will be facade retained.

Hotel Use

4.5 The site use is Class E / Sui-Generis, the proposal is for a Class C1 use, which will include ancillary food and beverage, and guests only gym. For note, the bar and restaurant will be connected to the hotel use, however, it will be available for members of the public to visit and make use of the facility. In this regard, the use of the building will be C1.

4.6 In retaining the public accessibility to the site, the use as place where members of the public will be able to purchase alcohol (subject to licensing) will sustain the use as a 'beer retailor', this is especially important as the Bugle will be retained and incorporated into the hotel to make this a key feature of the scheme.

4.7 The site will be under one operation, which is the Applicant's development partner, for a complete guide to the layout, we refer readers to the DAS. However, for note, the hotel will provide:

- Ground Floor: hotel foyer & reception, admin office, luggage store, food & beverage lounge, kitchen, staff ancillary areas, refuse, switch rooms, stores, sub-station, utilities stores and five bedrooms.
- Upper Floors: gym for hotel guests only, 158 x bedrooms, linen stores.
- Roof: plant and brown/ blue roof, and PV panels.

4.8 The Applicant proposes to allow access to the food and beverage who are not patrons of the hotel, we note officers have raised question over public access, however, the ability to access would be subject to RBC Licencing requirements. However, the retention of the Bugle we view as a benefit.

The Bugle

4.9 The existing buildings are in a poor state of repair and there are elements and architectural detailing of the fascia of the Bugle public house that require intervention. The proposals include the identification and restoration of the key features of the fascia to be retained, as well as the preservation where possible to historic internal beams system. The scheme will retain, as agreed with officers, the front and main body of the Bugle, which sits within the streetscene integrates into the hotel redevelopment scheme to form a pivotal and important aspect of the scheme – giving the 'wow factor' to the proposal.

4.10 The HTVIA identifies those features of merit of the Bugle fascia and condition, and a Method Statement accompanies prepared by Axiom. These include repairs to the roof, gable ends, deteriorating masonry and brickwork detailing to restore it to its former glory, with replacement where necessary, as well as the retention of part of the side elevation. Internally, beams and other features of merit will be retained.

QVS1, QVS1+ and QVS2

4.11 As advised, a tandem planning application for the expanded QVS1 scheme is submitted, as agreed with Officers at pre-app, the schemes will form separate proposals as QVS1 contains listed buildings and will function as an apart-hotel on upper floors. Therefore, keeping the procedure for separate will aid the future delivery of the scheme in construction terms as both scheme require different skill sets. However, they are presented at the same time and the joined-up approach of considering design has been the underpinning approach.

4.12 Both schemes are summarised below.

QVS 1

- Proposals for redevelopment of 1-15 Queen Victoria Street & 147-148 Friar Street.
- Repair and refurbishment of heritage buildings.
- Apart hotel rooms
- High quality retail
- New public market square
- Application approved at Committee June 2021

QVS1+

- Applicant secured ownership of 145 and 146 Friar Street
- Ground floor of 145 & 146 Friar street will be integrated into the market square to improve connectivity and enhance the commercial offering.
- Upper floors of 145 & 146 incorporated into the overall comprehensive redevelopment designs means the number of bedrooms in the apart-hotel can increase.
- QVS1+ will provide additional commercial floorspace, more apart-hotel bedspaces and improved market square further enhancing scheme viability.
- Underpinning food and beverage offer.

QVS2

- QVS2 will integrate with QVS1 and QVS1+ to revitalise this iconic town centre location, comprehensively redeveloping the site(s) to provide a vibrant and attractive mixed use hotel quarter.
- QVS2 will provide a large hotel and food and beverage offer, providing a destination location on Friar street, increasing footfall and connectivity between the station and shopping areas, creating new jobs and leisure and business accommodation in the heart of the town centre to help sustain the long term success of Reading. QVS2 will act as an anchor for the public square, as further detailed below.



QVS1 Public Square

4.13 The QVS1 development (approved at committee June 2021) will enable the creation of a new public square and public realm in the locality, with open-air public space and additional covered space under the first-floor element of the new rear extension to QVS1. This application for QVS2, will support the QVS1 scheme with footfall from the hotel, with a food and beverage offer and the activation and enliven of Fife Court.

4.14 The QVS1 square will be a multi-functional public space that will operate as an outdoor seating space associated with the retail units and for general public rest and relaxation. The space will be adaptable for multiple public events and uses, such as hosting outdoor markets, screening of sports events, music, entertainment, and other cultural events.

4.15 Pedestrian access to the square will be gained from Queen Victoria Street and there is anticipated to be access from Fife Court. This will also create permeability from QVS2.

5.0 Relevant Planning Policy and Legislation

Planning Policy Framework

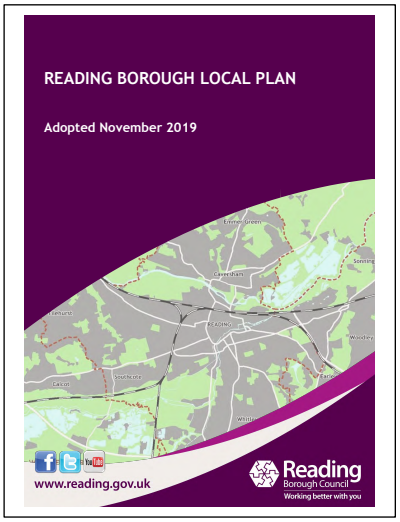
5.1 In preparing the application proposals, consideration has been given to the relevant development plan for the Site and proposed development, which comprises the key documents and sources set out below.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)

The NPPF establishes overarching national policies for plan making and decision taking. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development where permission should be granted for development that accords with an up-to-date development plan, or where material considerations indicate otherwise.

Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP) (2019)

5.2 The RBLP provides local policy and guidance, which accords with that set out at national level in the NPPF, providing a greater level of detail. The key policies of relevance to this application are listed below:



- Sustainability, Design and Amenity:
  - 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;
- Natural and Historic Environment:
  - EN1: Protection and enhancement of the historic environment;
  - EN2: Areas of archaeological significance;
  - EN4: Locally Important Heritage Assets
  - EN6: New development in a historic context;
  - EN9: Provision of open space;
  - EN15: Air quality;
  - EN17: Noise generating equipment;
  - EN18: Flooding and drainage;
  - EM3: Loss of employment land;
- Transport:
  - 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;
- Retail and Leisure:
  - RL1: Network and hierarchy of centres;
  - RL2: Scale and location of retail, leisure and culture development;
- Central Reading:
  - CR1: Definition of Central Reading;
  - CR2: Design in Central Reading;
  - CR4: Leisure, culture and tourism in Central Reading;
  - CR6: Living in Central Reading;

- CR7: Primary frontages in Central Reading; and
- CR8: Small shop units in Central Reading.

Planning Guidance

5.3 Although not forming part of the development plan, the following Reading Borough Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) have been given consideration in the development of the proposals:

- Design Guide to Shopfronts SPD (January 2022)
- Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011);
- Sustainable Design and Construction (2019); and
- Planning Obligations Under Section 106 (2015).

Other Documents

5.4 Some additional supporting evidence and monitoring documents have also been referenced in the preparation and assessment of the application proposals:

- Annual Monitoring Report 2019-20 (2020); and
- Open Space Strategy (2007).

Planning Policy Designations

5.5 The site is subject to the following planning policy designations from the RBC Proposals Map 2019:

- Area of Archaeological Potential;
- Air Quality Management Area;
- Adjacent Classified Highway Network (Friar Street);
- Adjacent identified Cycle Route (Friar Street);
- Primary Shopping Area;
- Office Core;
- Central Core; and
- Designated Primary Frontage in Central Reading (proposed).

5.6 The Site is located within Flood Zone 1, as identified on the Government Flood Map for Planning.

6.0 Planning Considerations

6.1 This section of the Planning Statement summarises the relevant planning policy and guidance and assesses the proposals for compliance and other material considerations. The following key issues are considered to be the main points for consideration of this application, which are addressed in turn below:

1. Principle of Development and Proposed Uses
2. Demolition and Retention of the Bugle
3. Loss of Retail Use 142-143 Friar Street
4. Loss of Sui Generis Uses: 138-141 & 144 Friar Street
5. Proposed Hotel Use
6. Design Considerations
7. Heritage Impacts
8. Impact on Amenities
9. Open Space Provision
10. Air and Noise Impacts
11. Archaeology
12. Transport and Parking
13. Flood Risk & SuDS
14. Sustainability
15. Servicing and Waste

1. Principle of Development and Proposed Uses

General Development Principles

Policy

6.2 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF establishes the presumption in favour of sustainable development, whereby proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay. The up-to-date development plan in this case is the RBLP, which has been prepared with consideration to the NPPF and was adopted after the current NPPF.

6.3 **Policy CC1** Reiterates the presumption within the NPPF and will approve developments that are in accordance with policy. Proposals contrary to the development plan will be refused unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.4 The following key principles for the central Reading area are set out within the RBLP:

- Strengthen the role of Reading, including central Reading, as the hub for the Thames Valley, providing an accessible focus for the development including for visitors.
- The centre will contain a broad range of different but complementary uses within an area easily accessed by foot.
- The centre will appeal to all sectors of Reading's population as a place to live in, work in, study in and visit.
- New development will exhibit an excellent, safe and sustainable quality of design that contributes to the attraction of the centre.

- Areas of designated open space within the centre will be protected and new opportunities will be sought.
- Areas and features that positively contribute to the unique and historic character of central Reading will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced.
- Centre uses include hotels (C1 use).

6.5 In acknowledgement of the changing context of retail, the Central Reading strategy recognises that the town centre leisure offer will need to expand. This will include arts and cultural provision, sport and recreation facilities, additional restaurants and evening uses that appeal to a wide range of users and continue to provide an 18-hour welcome. These uses will also need associated support, such as visitor accommodation.

6.6 Reading 2050: A Vision for Reading 2050 is a collaboration between Reading UK (economic development company for Reading), University of Reading and Barton Willmore and is developed by businesses of Reading. This sets out the future vision and ambition for (inter alia) a 'City of Culture' and includes the following areas of focus, relevant to the Site and proposals:

- Build upon the success of the Reading Festival – all year-round cultural events through provision of vibrant public gathering spaces and street life and diverse venues – new 'Reading on Thames Festival';
- Refurbishing existing heritage assets;
- Strong, coordinated, and well-marketed leisure offer; and
- Further support growing night economy.

Assessment

6.7 The general thrust of the RBLP is to encourage and enable the growth and diversification of central Reading, enhancing its role as a Regional Centre. The proposals for both QVS1 and QVS2 will play an important role in achieving those objectives, providing at QVS1 enhanced retail, food and beverage offering, Whereas QVS2 will provide a compatible town centre use of visitor accommodation, as well as providing the retained part of the Bugle with a viable use.

6.8 The proposals will make efficient use of a key Site within the town centre in a sustainable way that balances the development opportunities. A unique opportunity exists for the Site to contribute to a positive future for this part of Central Reading. Therefore, fulfilling and sharing the aspirations of the Reading 2050: A Vision for Reading 2050.

6.9 Consideration must also be given to the long-term potential impacts of the Covid19 pandemic on the retail and leisure economy and behaviours of shoppers, tourists and workforces. A reinvigorated and enhanced retail and leisure town centre destination will play an important role in the post-Covid19 recovery of the Reading economy, encouraging a return to physical retailing and adaptable to a post-Covid19 environment. The proposals represent a unique opportunity to assist in this recovery and drive forward Reading's offer, drawing visitors to the town and helping to sustain the retail function of the town centre.

Summary

6.10 This Planning Statement and other supporting material show that the development proposals presented herewith represent sustainable development, are in accordance with the up-to-date development plan and should be granted planning permission accordingly.

2. Demolition and Retention of the Bugle

Policy

6.11 Para.121 of the NPPF advises that Local planning authorities should take a proactive role in identifying and helping to bring forward land that may be suitable for meeting development needs. This should include identifying opportunities to facilitate land assembly.

6.12 Para.122 of the NPPF requires planning decisions to reflect changes in demand for land and uses.

6.13 Para.123 b) states that Local planning authorities should also take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs.

6.14 The Site is not allocated for an employment use and falls outside of an identified Core Employment Area.

6.15 **Policy EN4** notes that where some loss or harm to locally important heritage asset is permitted, recording of the heritage asset should be undertaken. Additionally, replacement buildings are required to draw upon heritage elements of the previous design, incorporating historical qualities that made the previous building significant.

Assessment

6.16 The site comprises three buildings, these are:

6.17 138-141 Friar Street: The front elevation of the building is modern and features a three storey and two storey brick frontages, each with a gable roof. Originally three separate properties, these appear to have been amalgamated somewhere between 1931 and 1956.

6.18 142-143 Friar Street: This is a two-storey building possibly 19th Century. The roof is pitched with the apex running east west. The tall parapet of the front facade hides the roof form entirely. Although the roof has been altered. To the rear, there are a series of single storey buildings form ancillary usage of the shop.

6.19 144 Friar Street (The Bugle): The Bugle has since at least the 1840s sold alcohol from its premises and has been subject to alterations in the 20th Century and has operated as a public house until its closure – for a fuller description of the history we refer readers to the HTVIA. The Bugle has recently been proposed to be locally listed but in any event, during the pre-app process was identified as a non-designated heritage asset and has been assessed throughout

the process with such a designation, therefore, the local listing has not changed the statutory position.

6.20 The HTVIA finds (para.5.30):

"Overall, within the Site, the frontage of No 144, the Bugle PH, is considered to have some historic and communal value. Other than that, the architectural and historic value of No 138-143 is neutral at best, in that they follow a similar grain and urban form prevalent along Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street. The rhythm of the built form in particular is of importance which appears congruent within the wider area."

6.21 The proposal is for:

- Demolition of No 138-143 Friar Street and part retention of the Bugle PH;
- Redevelopment of the Site, incorporating the retained part of the Bugle, with a four to six storey building to be used as an Apart- Hotel;
- Public realm improvements to Fife Court including active frontages and landscaping to create and enhance the route; and,
- Direct connection with the Market Square/ Courtyard delivered as part of QVS 1 scheme.

6.22 When considering demolition, the HTVIA finds (para.6.5, 6.6 & 6.7):

"As discussed in the previous chapter, No 138- 143 have little architectural value. Although No 143 has some historic value, their overall contribution to the setting of the listed buildings and the wider area is limited. As such their demolition would not cause any harm to the heritage assets or their significance.

The Bugle PH at No 144 has historic and communal value. The front and flank elevations of the main building has some townscape significance. It is one of the older pubs within the area and provides an understanding of the historic development of pubs within the area.

Its retention forms an important part of the proposal. The façades to the front and flank, alongside the roof would be retained and incorporated within the new development. Although internally, most of the fabric is modern, any historic beams would be removed carefully and reinstated insitu. Further historic narrative would form part of the interior of this part of the proposal giving a visitors an insight into the history of the pub as well as the wider area.

To the rear, the tenements are proposed to be demolished. It has been established as part of detailed understanding of the building, that the interior of the wing is entirely modernised. The wing itself was built in phases made clear from the bricks and chimney stack. Its limited value, therefore, does not justify its retention. However, as a non-designated asset, its removal will result is some harm. This would be at the very low end of less than substantial harm."

6.23 <u>138-143 Friar Street</u>: the HTVIA finds that the demolition would not cause any harm to the heritage assets or their significance. If regard is then had to the pre-app 2 response from officers' states, which we concur with:

"The existing buildings at No. 138-141 and 142-143 are not considered to be of any specific or special architectural merit to warrant their retention. As such, the principle of demolishing these existing buildings would be considered to be acceptable, providing the replacement building(s) is/are appropriate by satisfying relevant policies."

6.24 144 Friar Street: through the detailed design process, public consultation and engagement with officers, the proposals retain the front and flank elevations Bugle that form the main building that has some townscape significance. When considering this in Pre-app 2, officers state:

"The entire demolition of No. 144, the Bugle Public House, as discussed at our initial meeting, would not be acceptable to officers. It is considered that the public house would be considered a non-designated heritage asset and a possible future candidate for local listing…It was strongly suggested at the initial meeting that you explore options whereby this building is retained as part of an altered proposal at the site.

Accordingly, you have altered your proposals in the ensuing follow up meetings to retain the front part of the building. This is welcomed in principle as a positive step and it is considered possible that you will be able to justify the partial removal of the Bugle, in the context of the Policy EN4 requirements. Your future submission should include specific commentary as to how you consider the proposal meets the Policy EN4 tests (1) that the benefits of the development significantly outweigh the asset's significance and (2) that the development conserves, architectural, archaeological significance, which may include the appearance, character and setting of the asset."

6.25 Taking the two tests of **Policy EN4** as requested by Officers:

(1) that the benefits of the development significantly outweigh the asset's significance and

6.26 Notwithstanding the conclusions reached in the HTVIA, if one reviews the Public Benefits, which can comprise economic, social, and environmental (NPPF para.8) the key finds (as detailed at para.7.25 and 7.26) are primarily social and economic:

- Create secondary and tertiary employment because of visitors making use of the town centre amenities or visiting for business needs.
- Creating investment during construction phase in the local economy.
- Lead to economic boost from visitors both from leisure and business.
- Sustaining the Bugle and creating a catalyst for the further regeneration of Friar Street and the local town centre environ.

(2) that the development conserves, architectural, archaeological significance, which may include the appearance, character and setting of the asset.

6.27 We refer readers to the HTVIA that fully considers the redevelopment from a design, significance, and public realm improvement (paras.6.10 to 6.25) against the NPPF para.203 and concludes:

- The well-considered architectural language and materiality enhances the historic setting of the town centre as well as the setting of the listed buildings.
- Policy EN4 notes that where some loss or harm to locally important heritage asset is permitted, recording of the heritage asset should be undertaken.
- Additionally, replacement buildings are required to draw upon heritage elements of the previous design, incorporating historical qualities that made the previous building significant.

- As demonstrated and recommended above, the most valued parts of the Bugle PH would be retained and incorporated within the proposal.
- Parts that are proposed to be demolished would be appropriately recorded and interpretation provided as part of the proposal.

Summary

6.28 The HTVIA and officers find that the existing buildings at No. 138-141 and 142-143 are not considered to be of any specific or special architectural merit to warrant their retention. As such, the principle of demolishing these existing buildings is considered acceptable, providing the replacement building is appropriate by satisfying relevant policies.

6.29 Through the detailed design process, public consultation and engagement with officers, the proposal retains the front and flank elevations Bugle that form the main building that has some townscape significance. As demonstrated and recommended above, the most valued parts of the Bugle PH would be retained and incorporated within the proposal. Therefore, there are strong material considerations when taken into account, and the conclusion we reach is that the proposals are in compliance with the provision of the NPPF and RBLP Policy EN4, and the principle of demolition of 138 to 143, and partial demolition and retention of the Bugle are acceptable and meet the tests of both national and local planning policy.

3. Loss of Retail Use 142-143 Friar Street

Policy

6.30 At paragraph 86, the NPPF requires planning decisions to support the role of town centres, taking a positive approach to their growth and adaptation. The focus of main town centre uses being located within town centres is highlighted at paragraph 87.

6.31 The Site is located within Reading Town Centre and is within an area designated as a Primary Shopping Area (including Primary Shopping Frontage), Office Core and Central Core.

6.32 **Policy CR1** states that for proposed main town centre uses, the following will apply:

- Retail development will take place in the Primary Shopping Area;
- Major office development of over 1,000 sqm will take place in the Office Core; and
- Other main town centre uses will take place in the Central Core.

6.33 Reading is identified as a Regional Centre under **Policy RL1**, where the greatest levels of development and change will be seen. The vitality and viability of centres should be maintained and enhanced. The following improvements will be acceptable:

- Accessibility and transport improvements;
- Broadening range of facilities;
- Residential use of upper floors; and
- Environmental enhancements.

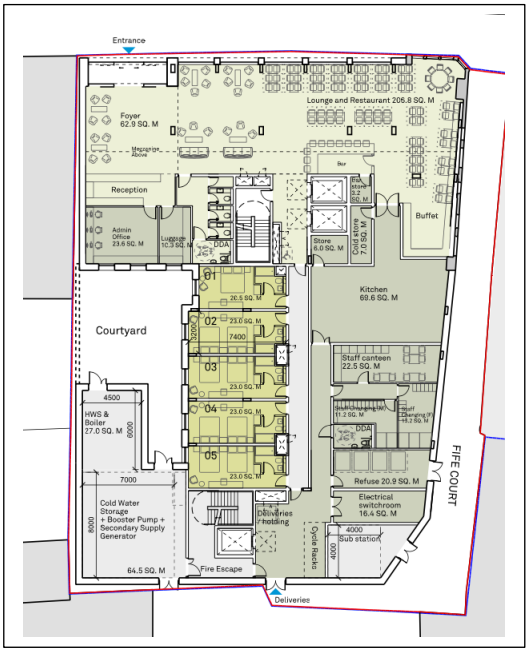
6.34 **Policy RL2** focuses retail and main town centre leisure and culture development of over 2,500 sqm to within town centres.

6.35 Under **Policy CR7**, ground floor uses in primary frontages in Central Reading should be in use classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, C1, D1, D2 or related sui generis uses (as per defined Use Classes prior to 1st September 2020). Development must provide an active frontage with a display window or glazed frontage at ground floor level.

Assessment

6.36 142-143 comprises an opticians shop with ancillary space on the 1st and 2nd floors. In isolation, QVS2 will see a reduction in Class E(a) on site, however, if the co-submitted scheme for QVS1 is considered, the wider site proposals will create additional, retail, food, and beverage floorspace, bringing enhanced and additional retail space in new functional and modern fit-for-purpose layouts of Use Class E(a) and E(b). Furthermore, the QVS2 will benefit from an ancillary food and beverage offering of circa 207sqm.

6.37 If regard is had to Policy RL1, the expansion of the public square with the addition of food and beverage as part of this QVS2 proposal, combined with the boutique market retail feel of QVS1 proposals, public and cultural uses, and events within the square, will bring a new vibrancy and vitality to this part of the town centre, helping to halt the decline of Friar Street. The proposals for this QVS2 are complimentary uses that will underpin the Phase 1 development. The retail, food and beverage provision and public square will create a destination for shoppers, tourists, and other visitors to Reading, enhancing the vitality and viability of Friar Street and the surrounding areas of the town centre. The plan below shows the adjacent QVS1 and QVS2 proposals.





6.38 The combined provision of an enhanced retail offering and open, functional public space and retail, food and beverage destination is seen as an important contributor to the post-Covid19 recovery of the town centre and local retail and leisure economy.

6.39 Policy CR7 permits ground floor uses in primary frontages in Central Reading to be in use classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, C1, D1, D2 or related sui generis uses (as per defined Use Classes prior to 1st September 2020). Development must provide an active frontage with a display window or glazed frontage at ground floor level.

6.40 The food and beverage space of the hotel will generate activity and attract the users of the hotel throughout the day and evening, to activate these spaces and increase footfall and secure and underpin the market square.

6.41 Furthermore, the retention of the Bugle and large glazed display window of the hotel will comply with the assertion of Policy CR7.

6.42 When considering the loss of 142-143, the pre-app 2 confirms that the replacement of a Class E(a) use is unlikely to be contentious, and as advised, the enhancement to the vitality and viability of the Reading regional centre as a result of the QVS2 and QVS1 proposals complies with Policy RL1.

Summary

6.43 The retail and food and beverage provision of the proposals is an appropriate use within the town centre and will enhance its vitality and viability. The proposals are therefore in accordance with the NPPF and policies CR1, CR7, CR8, RL1 and RL2 of the RBLP.

4. Loss of Sui Generis Uses: 138-141 & 144 Friar Street

Policy

6.44 At paragraph 86, the NPPF requires planning decisions to support the role of town centres, taking a positive approach to their growth and adaptation. The focus of main town centre uses being located within town centres is highlighted at paragraph 87.

6.45 The Site is located within Reading Town Centre and is within an area designated as a Primary Shopping Area (including Primary Shopping Frontage), Office Core and Central Core.

6.46 **Policy RL6** seeks to protect existing leisure and public houses, subject to three criteria.

6.47 Under **Policy CR7**, ground floor uses in primary frontages in Central Reading should be in use classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, C1, D1, D2 or related sui generis uses (as per defined Use Classes prior to 1st September 2020). Development must provide an active frontage with a display window or glazed frontage at ground floor level.

Assessment

6.48 144 (The Bugle) comprises a public house and 138-141 a restaurant/ sui-generis food and beverage offering are in the town centre, and if regard is had to the three criteria of Policy RL6 we assess below.

a.There is no need for this type of facility in this area;

6.49 144 Friar Street: This is a matter that has been discussed with officers and further a catalyst for the redevelopment of the site. The Bugle has a modest footprint with a narrow frontage, which results in a constrained and modest layout.

6.50 The Applicant has owned the Site for over 5 years, pre-Covid-19 the Applicant worked with the tenant to support them in the business, which included a significant discount on market rent and assistance with periods of non-payment.

6.51 During the Covid-19 pandemic, the public house was closed, and rent was not charged. As the restrictions eased, again the Applicant offered the premises rent free, however, the tenant was still unable viability operate, which resulted in the tenant returning the keys and the premises has remained vacant since 2021.

6.52 Although we note that members of the public may have fond memories of the Bugle, however, these memories did not translate into customers. The public house with its limited trading area, low ceiling, and generally older appearance, failed to attract patrons, which we note are more likely to frequent the more modern larger premises and especially in a the 'tougher' evening economy market. As such, the Bugle simply has not been viable and there was a lack of need of such a use.

b. The function of the facility can be adequately fulfilled by an existing facility, or a facility proposed as part of the development, where that facility would be at least as accessible to the same catchment; or

6.53 The site falls within the town centre, there are a plethora of such establishments local to the site, which include Pitcher & Piano (junction of Station Road & Friar Street). Having regard to http://www.inapub.co.uk/pubs/facilities/Reading/Town-Centre it states are 40 pubs within Reading Town Centre.

6.54 In terms of food and beverage, again there is a plethora of such establishments in the Town Centre and especially on Friar Street, which caters to both the day and evening economy. Furthermore, there are currently vacant premises on Friar Street, which would be suitable for relocation of existing uses.

6.55 In any event, the hotel will provide a food and beverage offering, which will incorporate the Bugle as part of this use therefore providing such a facility on site. Further, if Revolution de Cuba proposes to relocate in the town centre, there are a number of vacant premises available.

Summary

6.56 The food and beverage provision of the proposals is an appropriate use within the town centre and will enhance its vitality and viability and the loss of the two individual units will be replaced by the hotel's food and beverage offering. Furthermore, the sui generis Revolution de Cuba (that is listed as a restaurant) could relocate to alternative premises in the town centre. The proposals are therefore in accordance with the NPPF and policies CR1, CR7, CR8, RL1 and RL6 of the RBLP.

5. Hotel Use

Policy

6.57 As above, paragraph 86 of the NPPF supports the adaptation of town centres and promotes their long-term vitality and viability by allowing them to grow and diversify that can respond to industry changes and allow a suitable mix of uses.

6.58 **Policy RL1** emphasises this in encouraging a broader range of facilities and residential uses on upper floors and **Policy CR1** supports other main town centre uses in the Central Core.

6.59 **Policy RL3** supports the loss of A1 and A2 (note policy drafting pre-Use Class change to Class E) subject to ensuring that there are not 3 consecutive uses not in A1 or A2.

6.60 **Policy CR4** states that the Central Core will be the prime focus for major leisure, culture and tourism development. Uses that would attract a wide range of people into the centre will be encouraged. Innovative solutions to leisure provision will be encouraged, particularly those that make the best use of available (often limited) site area. The policy also states ground floor uses in primary frontages in Central Reading should be in use classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, C1, D1, D2 or related sui generis uses (as per defined Use Classes prior to 1st September 2020). Development must provide an active frontage with a display window or glazed frontage at ground floor level.

Assessment

6.61 The introduction of the hotel uses will add to the variety of uses and attractiveness of the town centre for visitors and workers. This represents an inventive diversification of town centre uses, making effective use of vacant floorspace where previous uses have become unattractive and unviable. Further, the use will also benefit from an ancillary food and beverage use.

6.62 The 2018-19 Reading Annual Monitoring Report ("AMR") notes an exceptionally low provision of C1 floorspace within the monitoring year, with only 1,500 sqm permitted within Reading and none delivered. The 2019-20 AMR shows a dramatic increase in permitted C1 floorspace at 10,350 sqm but with only 848 sqm (8%) completed during the monitoring year. The 2020-21 AMR (December 2021) shows permitted C1 floorspace at 188 sqm but with 1066 sqm completed during the monitoring year. However, the AMR notes '*There has also been an increase in C1 use*

that is entirely due to a new development of serviced apartments.' Accordingly, the delivery of C1 hotel space is very low.

6.63 The proposals will provide a compatible town centre use that will assist in increasing the provision to meet demand for short-term letting accommodation within the town centre, a use that the market indicates is required. The Applicant has a commercial partner who they have bene working with and the future operator with be Jury's Inn, who have bene consulted throughout the process on design and layout, as such, this is a scheme that will be delivered as opposed to speculative.

6.64 As considered previously, Policy CR8 accepts that C1 can be an appropriate town centre use, including at ground floor provided a large-glazed display window is retained – this requirement is satisfied. Therefore, we submit the proposed use complies with the policies of the Development Plan.

6.65 Furthermore, when considering the principle of hotel use on the Site was deemed acceptable as part of pre-application advice received from the Council.

6.66 It should be noted that the hotel has a significant public benefit, which is the generation of employment with over 50 vacancies created directly and also in-direct jobs including suppliers to the hotel. Finally, there are the jobs and economic benefits associated with visitors to Reading. These visitors are expected to be business and leisure travellers, making a Reading a destination and the associated investment and expenditure spent locally.

6.67 Jurys Inn identified Reading and this part of the town as part of their investment strategy.

6.68 The hotel will benefit from a food and beverage offering, again a use that can be appropriate in the town centre and it is noted 138-141 Friar Street and Bugle both operate(d) in food and beverage uses. For avoidance of doubt, the hotel will have a gym but this will be ancillary to the hotel use and for guests only – there will be no public access. Access to the food and beverage for the public will be subject to RBC Licensing.

6.69 The hotel will provide 4* accommodation with 163 bedrooms, all of which will benefit from windows, mechanical ventilation, generous sizing in most cases a single room being 20sqm. Furthermore, there will be five bedrooms at ground floor, all floors are accessible by lifts and level thresholds and 5% will be accessible.

Summary

6.70 The hotel use is a compatible and supporting use for this location within central reading and will assist in enhancing the vitality and viability of the centre. The proposals comply with the provisions of the NPPF and RBLP Policies RL1, RL3, CR1, CR4 and CR6.

6. Design Considerations

6.71 There are several key elements to the design of the proposals that warrant individual focus as part of this assessment. The following elements of the proposed external works are addressed in turn below. We also refer readers to the DAS, HTVIA and the drawings presented.

Policy

6.72 The NPPF identifies at paragraph 126 that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

6.73 Paragraph 130 requires developments to function well and be visually attractive, be sympathetic to local character, whilst not preventing appropriate innovation or change. Proposals should use street layouts, spaces, building types and materials to create distinctive places.

6.74 **Policy CC7** reflects the national position in seeking high quality design, maintaining and enhancing the character and appearance of the area within which it is located. Design will be assessed to ensure a positive contribution to the following objectives:

- Character – a place with its own identity and sense of place
- Continuity and enclosure
- Quality of the public realm and provision of green infrastructure and landscaping
- Ease of movement and permeability
- Legibility – clear image and easy to understand
- Adaptability – capable of adaptation over time
- Diversity – meets a wide range of needs

6.75 Under **Policy CC7**, developments will also be assessed to ensure that they:

- Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;
- Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;
- Address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them, including providing suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily;
- Are visually attractive as a result of good high-quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping.

6.76 Building upon these principles and with a focus on Central Reading, **Policy CR2** requires proposals to demonstrate the following attributes:

- Respect the existing grid layout, provide continuity and enclosure and frontages that engage with the street at lower levels. Enhance ease of movement through and around the central area;
- Provide well designed public spaces and other public realm, hard and soft landscaped areas, public art, sense of place and linkages to adjoining areas;
- High quality architectural details and materials should be used, respecting form and quality in local areas;

- Should contribute to the diversity of the central area, be capable of easy adaptation over time and be designed to enhance community safety;
- Should be designed with consideration to adjacent development sites, not preventing or causing unreasonable burdens on future development.

6.77 In terms of density, **Policy CC6** states that scale and density to be related to the level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities. The supporting text for the policy notes that the highest levels of accessibility in Reading are within the town centre, which is also one of the most accessible locations in the South East. Good levels of accessibility are considered to be those within 400m of a defined centre with a good range of facilities by pedestrian routes, and within 400m by pedestrian routes of a bus stop with a service frequency better than one bus every 20 minutes in each direction.

Assessment - Proposal

6.78 As a reminder, the proposal is for the:

Redevelopment of site comprising demolition of 138 to 143 Friar Street, the partial retention of The Bugle Public House (144 Friar Street), the and the erection of a ground, mezzanine and 1st to 6th floor (7 storey) hotel building with 163 bedspaces, with ancillary ground floor food and beverage.

6.79 In summary, the scheme will yield a seven storey building with the top two floors of the building set back from the Friar Street frontage. This allows the taller element of the proposal to remain away from Friar Street frontage and soften the massing along longer range views. The ground floor will retain the front proportion and part of the side elevation of the Bugle – this imaginative approach has been carefully worked up via public consultation and with via the pre-app procedure with officers of the council. Further, the engagement with Readings Design Panel has cumulated in the building presented.

Assessment - Retention of the Bugle

6.80 A key and striking part of the scheme is the retention of the Bugle. Officers (including the Council's Conservation and Urban Design officer) noted that the scheme is considered a far better proposal than the original intention to fully demolish the pub, with the front half of the Bugle retained and the movement of the upper levels of the proposal further back into the site. Officers confirmed the illustrations showed how it would be possible to integrate the significant old and new elements of the Site into the Friar Street streetscape.

6.81 In consultation with the public, again the retention of the Bugle was supported, albeit it is noted that CAAC would prefer for the Bugle and Tenements to be retained in entirety.

6.82 The Bugle and significance are considered, and findings set out in the HTVIA and concludes:

"It is evident that the part demolition of the rear wing of the Bugle would result in some low level of less than substantial harm. However, the restoration and retention of the Bugle's front and flank elevation, and incorporating it within the proposal is considered the right heritage approach. This would mean the fabric that is of most historic and architectural value would be retained. Other parts would be removed and a new use would be introduced to allow

for the optimised use of the building. This would result in a 21st Century layer to the building, adding to the historic narrative of the pub. This would result in considerable heritage benefit."

6.83 The retention of the Bugle and subsequent further retention of part of the tenements to Fife Court are supported by officers and the DRP.

Assessment - Building Mass & Height

6.84 The mass, bulk and height of the proposed building has been an iterative process, which the Applicant has worked with key stakeholders and the Council's planning team to present the scheme as submitted. The process comprised:

- Presentation of concept to senior officers
- Agreed key viewpoints with officers (October 2021)
- Presented massing analysis (December 2021)
- Presented concept and massing to Reading Civic & CAAC (January 2022)
- Pre-App Meeting with Officers (January 2022)
- Refined massing and height submission (review of Bugle retention) (February 2022)
- Pre-App Meetings with Officers (February 2022)
- Pre-App Addendum (March 2022)
- Pre-App Meetings with Officers (March 2022)
- Presented to Reading Civic & CAAC (March 2022)
- Pre-App responses issued (2 x April 2022)
- Pre-App presentation at Council Offices (April 2022)
- Presented to Reading Civic & CAAC (April 2022)
- Presented to Reading Design Review Panel (May 2022)
- Engagement with senior officers (June 2022)
- Review local listing (July 2022)
- Further refinement and presentation to Officers (July 2022).

6.85 The cumulation of these negotiations is a scheme that is:

- Five storey to Friar Street.
- Seven storey building.
- Top two floors set back from Friar Street.



6.86 Officer feedback (June 2022) confirmed that the principle of the height and massing as shown on the latest pre-app submission is acceptable, but the Applicant needs to elaborate as part of your planning submission why this will work in its context by illustrating its appearance and impact from relevant views and exploring options for architectural detailing to improve appearance.

6.87 HTVIA notes the elevation treatment breaks the building to incorporate a similar rhythm as established within the street frontage.

"The building frontage is proposed in red brick to reflect the materiality of the existing buildings found elsewhere on Friar Street. Panels of brick detailing are also included to the red brick part of the building to add visual interest. In order to achieve architectural unity, the upper set back floors are proposed to be in a similar colour tone. This further reduces the apparent massing of the building when seen in long distance views. The predominant use of red brick reflects that on surrounding buildings and part of the special interest of the surrounding conservation area.

Whilst the scale of the building would represent a change to the building and the townscape of Friar Street but one that would enhance the heritage and townscape setting while contextual and high quality new development.

The proposal clearly respects the rhythm, scale and proportions of its neighbours, using vertical emphasis within the façades to break down the façade into a series of bays.

At seven storeys, the height and massing of the proposed building would project above the established skyline along south side of Friar Street. However, it is not a divergence from the existing context which includes the 14 storey tall Ibis Hotel opposite. Instead, the massing of the proposal has been carefully developed through a robust and iterative process taking into account the historic and town centre context."

6.88 The mass, bulk and height has received support from key stakeholders, which is as a result of the careful consideration of the view analysis and a thorough understanding of the immediate setting of the site. the front elevation is limited in height with the top two floors set back to limit the views. The full analysis if this views and agreement of officers is a guiding principle of the scheme.

Assessment - Building Design

6.89 As noted in the DAS the design evolution of the proposal with stakeholders has cumulated in the scheme presented. The scheme was further refined post the Design Review Panel response and also the Local Listing review.

6.90 The design of the front elevation has been updated during the course of the pre-app, as per the Pre-App response June 2022, the primary points are noted:

- *It is considered that red brick is the predominant material along Friar Street, so this would be more characterful within the existing streetscape.*
    - No change necessary.
- *The Conservation and Urban Design officer is content with the proposed approach, but considers above this level all brickwork should be red*
    - Amended and recommendation agreed
- *At fourth floor level it is considered that there is a need for the panel elements to be set back from the front façade, to provide the impression of this being the 'roof level' of the building (rather than being set level with the floors below as existing, which means this is not recessive in its form at present).*
    - Panel set back and changed to brick, felt to be a more comprehensive approach.
- *It is suggested that an angled mansard form may be a suitable solution at this point to explore. Your presentation at our meeting referenced these elements as being 'mansard style', but given the lack of a setback or angled orientation with windows branching out from an angled roof form it is difficult for the current arrangement to be interpreted as being of mansard in form at present.*
    - Set back proposed as the angle would be skewed to the top floor.
- *In terms of the uppermost floors it is considered that these should be as lightweight in their form and composition as possible.*
    - The number of glazing panels has been increased to be more lightweight.
- *The Conservation and Urban Design Officer considers, as per discussions in our meeting, that you could explore a contrasting bronze rooftop element.*
    - The roof is proposed in a red hue.
- *Above all however, if the provision of these two floors are subsequently proven in principle, the overriding objective is for them to appear as lightweight additions which seek to 'disappear' from view (assisted by the set-back location from the Friar Street elevation).*
    - As advised the glazing panel proportions are increased and addresses the comemnts of officers.
- *On the Fife Court eastern elevation, it is considered that the length of brickwork shown at first to third floor level is also incorporated at ground floor level too (rather than render as shown - see marked up area below).*
    - The scheme has evolved and part of the Bugle tenements is retained.
- *The Conservation and Urban Design Officer is content with the principle of the front part of the side elevations (closest to Friar Street) being brickwork, before the rear part of the side elevations (and the rear elevation) alter to a rendered finish.*
    - Materials confirmed for side elevation.
- *More specific information would be required in relation to the render, with possible questions in terms of weathering characteristics, quality, finished appearance and maintenance.*
    - Render and the system proposed is detailed in the DAS.

6.91 The front facade of the building consists of a podium in tinted acid etched pre-cast concrete supporting four levels of red brickwork separated by tinted concrete bands. The brickwork surrounding the windows features two different decorative motifs which are enriching the overall look and feel of the building. The top two set back levels, not visible in proximity of the building, consist of a lightweight metal curtain wall system in terracotta colour matching the colour tone of the building. The Bugle pub facade is restored and integrated in the scheme. The rear of the building features a Rainscreen cladding system with high-quality render finish.

6.92 Following careful massing tests, the setbacks have been designed to allow for the main building and frontage to remain dominant. Additionally, the fenestration and materiality have been chosen to provide architectural unity and homogeneity. The high-quality architecture and resulting appearance of the development adds vitality to the character and appearance of the wider area and would enhance the townscape. The scheme was

6.93 The building frontage is proposed in red brick to reflect the materiality of the existing buildings found elsewhere on Friar Street. Panels of brick detailing are also included to the red brick part of the building to add visual interest. To achieve architectural unity, the upper set back floors are proposed to be in a similar colour tone. This further reduces the apparent massing of the building when seen in long distance views. The predominant use of red brick reflects that on surrounding buildings and part of the special interest of the surrounding conservation area.

6.94 The proposed development takes cues from the established rhythm and proportions and continues them in a contemporary interpretation, while also recognising that there is room for individual architectural expression within this varied townscape. In doing so, it attempts to create a distinctive yet contextual building that add a new twenty-first century layer to the character of the area. As part of this process, the building seeks to ground itself within this wider townscape.

6.95 The similar proposals presented at pre-application stage received a positive response and were noted as being appropriate in scale and design, with suggestions for some alterations in terms of massing, retention of the Bugle and elevation redesign which have been incorporated. The proposals represent an appropriate design response and will provide a high-quality visual and functional environment that is secure and accessible to all, in compliance with the NPPF and RBLP policies.

6.96 The design of the rear elevations reflects the character and detailing of the host building and setting and is considered an appropriate design response to the Site. This element of the proposals is therefore in compliance with the NPPF and policies of the RBLP.

Assessment - Materials

6.97 Materials: the front elevation proposes (see DAS for fuller explanation:

Front Elevation:

- Shopfront = tinted acid etched pre-cast panel (red hue)
- Floors 1 to 4 = Red brick (with central darker red brick)
- Floor 5 to 6 = PPC Aluminium panel (complimentary red hue) with glazing

Side Elevation East:

- Bugle = retention of Bugle and part of Tenements.
- Front Side Elevation = Red brick (with central darker red brick)
- Rear Side Elevation = Rainscreen cladding with high-quality render finish
- Floor 5 to 6 = PPC Aluminium panel (complimentary red hue) with glazing

Side Elevation West:

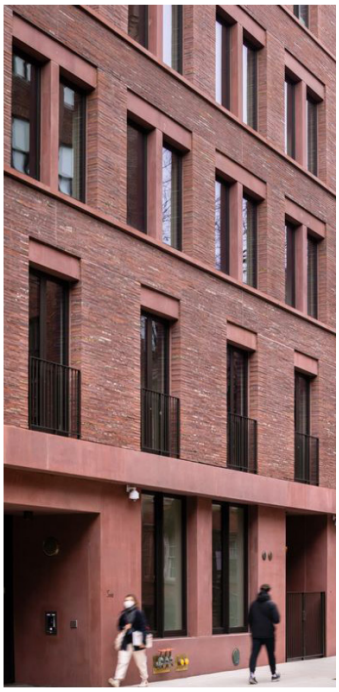
- Front Side Elevation = Red brick (with central darker red brick)
- Rear Side Elevation = Rainscreen cladding with high-quality render finish
- Floor 5 to 6 = PPC Aluminium panel (complimentary red hue) with glazing

Rear Elevation:

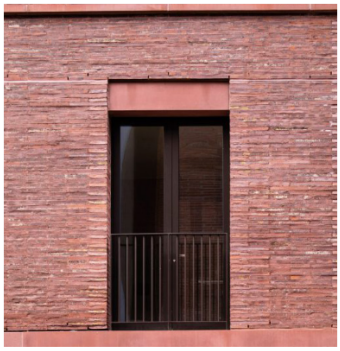
- Rear Elevation = Rainscreen cladding with high-quality render finish
- Floor 5 to 6 = PPC Aluminium panel (complimentary red hue) with glazing

5.4 FACADE DESIGN & MATERIALS REFERENCES

These images illustrate the material palette and design reference of the project.



FCH BRICKWORK and TINTED CONCRETE
David Chipperfield Architects, New York



BRICKWORK and TINTED CONCRETE



PPC ALUMINIUM, Morris + Company, London



HIGH-QUALITY RENDER FINISH



BRICKWORK DECORATIVE MOTIF



PPC ALUMINIUM, Morris + Company, London



HIGH-QUALITY RENDER FINISH

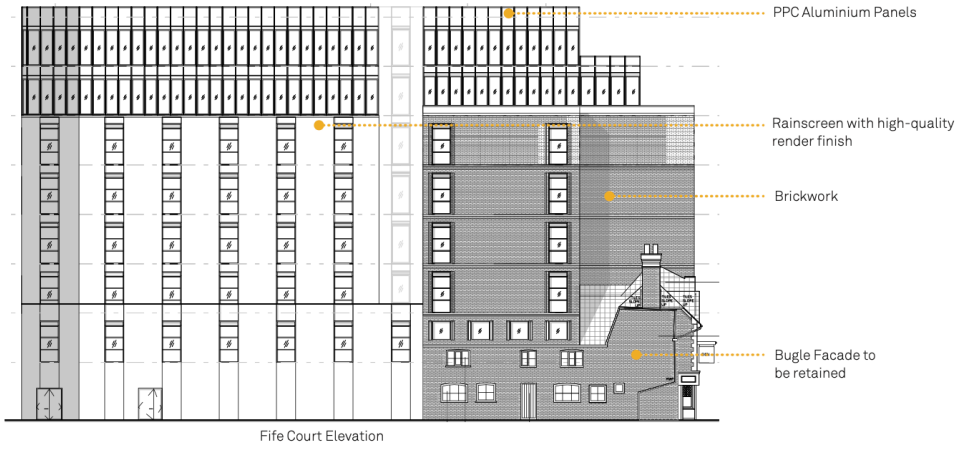


The proposed Fife Court elevation has been developed to incorporate officer comments and refined through a series of detailed facade and material studies.

The existing Bugle facade is will be retained, restored and integrated with the new brickwork above.

To the rear of the site, and alternative rainscreen system with rendered finish is proposed to provide a visual break between the brickwork along Friar Street.

The upper floors will continue the curtain walling and aluminium facade which wraps around the building at this level.



Fife Court Elevation


High-quality Render Finish


High-quality Render Finish


Pre-cast Panels


Red Brickwork

FCH
QVS II - CONSIDER CREATE CONNECT

6.98 Materials Summary: accordingly, the materials pallet has evolved but complies with the guidance of officers and is an appropriate material pallet for this town centre site.

Assessment - Shop fronts

6.99 The original uniformity and consistency of the Friar Street frontage has been lost over time with the alteration of individual shopfronts, amalgamation of units and addition of signage. Whilst they differ in their lettering and window displays, the dimensions of the shopfronts are consistent and the uniform, continuous shop name facia is a predominant feature. The frontage proposes, as required by Policy CR7, a large glazed display window has had regard to the 148 and 147 elevations and proposes a double height three segmental colonnade shop front, whilst retaining the Bugle.



Summary - Design Assessment

6.100 The detailed design submission with this application shows that due care has been taken to design proposals that strike an appropriate balance with desirable uses; preserve and enhance the Bugle Public house); make effective use of the Site and respond to constraints; and create a safe, attractive and well-designed place for future enjoyment by the public and visitors. The proposals reflect the historic character, built form, street layout, design features, materials and setting of the surrounds and utilise high-quality materials and modern sympathetic design.

6.101 The design proposals were supported in principle at pre-application advice stages, have evolved with guidance received and are considered to fully accord with the NPPF and RBLP Policies CC6, CC7 and CR2.

7. Heritage Impacts

Policy

6.102 The NPPF requires proposals affecting statutory heritage assets to describe the significance of the assets (paragraph 194). Paragraph 199 states that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets when assessing development and paragraph 200 states that any harm to the significance of an asset will require clear and convincing justification for such harm. Paragraph 202 states that where less than substantial harm would be caused to significance, then public benefits including optimum viable use should be considered.

6.103 **Policy EN4** states that development proposals that affect locally important heritage assets will demonstrate that development conserves architectural, archaeological or historical significance which may include the appearance, character and setting of the asset. Planning permission may be granted provided it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development significantly outweigh the asset's significance.

6.104 **Policy EN6** states that, in areas characterised by heritage assets, new development will make a contribution to the historic character by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development. The following will be considered:

- Positive contribution to the existing historic townscape;
- Sensitivity to historic context;
- Reflection of borough-wide major heritage themes that contribute to local distinctiveness;
- Whether the development promotes and/or improves access to previously undiscovered or neglected historic significance.

Assessment

6.105 The application is accompanied by a HTVIA, prepared by Revive & Taylor. This provides a comprehensive historic assessment of the heritage assets, determination of their significance and value, and assesses the potential impact of the proposals on the assets. The HTVIA should be referred to for full details of the assessment, the key elements of which are summarised here in relation to the above relevant planning policy.

6.106 The HTVIA sets out a detailed history of central Reading and the formation of the streets and building layouts that have resulted in the present-day situation. The Statement also notes the addition of the more modern rear extensions and alterations, which in many cases detract from the special interest of the original buildings.

Heritage Significance

6.107 The HTVIA notes there are no listed buildings within the Site, nor does it lie within a conservation area. However, No 144, The Bugle PH has been proposed in the Council's Local List. For the purposes of the assessment, it is considered to be a non- designated heritage asset.

6.108 Full details of the assessment of significance are contained within the Heritage Statement and summarised and states:

Overall, within the Site, the frontage of No 144, the Bugle PH, is considered to have some historic and communal value. Other than that, the architectural and historic value of No 138-143 is neutral at best, in that they follow a similar grain and urban form prevalent along Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street. The rhythm of the built form in particular is of importance which appears congruent within the wider area…. The unkempt nature of Fife Court and the rear buildings detract from the wider area and are of no significance.

Heritage Impact

6.109 The HTVIA assesses the component parts of the proposed works and their impact on the identified heritage significance of the assets. The findings of this assessment are summarised here and are based on the schedule of works and significance drawings prepared:

6.110 **Demolition:** No 138- 143 have little architectural value, although No 143 has some historic value, their overall contribution to the setting of the listed buildings and the wider area is limited. As such their demolition would not cause any harm to the heritage assets or their significance. The Bugle PH at No 144 has historic and communal value. The front and flank elevations of the main building has some townscape significance. It is one of the older pubs within the area and provides an understanding of the historic development of pubs within the area. The Bugle retention forms an important part of the proposal. The façades to the front and flank, alongside the roof would be retained and incorporated within the new development. Although internally, most of the fabric is modern, any historic beams would be removed carefully and reinstated insitu. Further historic narrative would form part of the interior of this part of the proposal giving visitors an insight into the history of the pub as well as the wider area. The final detail would be subject to further approval.

6.111 To the rear, the tenements are proposed to be demolished with partial facade retention. It has been established as part of detailed understanding of the building, that the interior of the wing is entirely modernised. The wing itself was built in phases made clear from the bricks and chimney stack. Its limited value, therefore, does not justify its retention. However, as a non-designated asset, its removal will result is some harm. This would be at the very low end of less than substantial harm.

6.112 **Redevelopment:** The redevelopment of the Site presents an exciting opportunity to create a new destination within this part of the town centre.

6.113 **Public realm improvements:** Alongside activation of Friar Street, the proposal also includes enhanced public space and landscaping along Fife Court. There is potential for outdoor seating to support wider area traders, subject to access rights. There would be a direct connection with the Market Square contained within QVS 1. This will result in considerable enhancement of the public realm, increasing permeability within the town centre.

6.114 **Assessment of Heritage Impact**: It is evident that the part demolition of the rear wing of the Bugle would result in some low level of less than substantial harm. However, the restoration and retention of the Bugle's front and flank elevation and incorporating it within the proposal is considered the right heritage approach. This would mean the fabric that is of most historic and architectural value would be retained. Other parts would be removed and a new use would be introduced to allow for the optimised use of the building. This would result in a 21st Century layer to the building, adding to the historic narrative of the pub. This would result in considerable heritage benefit.

6.115 **Assessment against Policies**: As demonstrated and recommended above, the most valued parts of the Bugle PH would be retained and incorporated within the proposal. Parts that are proposed to be demolished would be appropriately recorded and interpretation provided as part of the proposal.

6.116 Overall, the proposals would improve the architectural quality and character of the area resulting in considerable heritage benefits and enhancements. The proposal offers genuine opportunity of regeneration creating a new commercial quarter within Reading.

6.117 In accordance with NPPF paragraph 203, the proposal takes a balanced judgment against the limited loss of significance against the significance heritage benefits.

Heritage Assessment Conclusions

6.118 The HTVIA has identified that there is some heritage significance associated with the Bugle fascia, predominantly borne from historic and communal value. The Statement recognises that 138 to 143 have little architectural value.

Public Benefits

6.119 It is clear that the redevelopment of this key town centre site, as well as the retention of the Bugle and provision of a repair, reinstatement and enhancement of the fascia of the Bugle as a heritage asset is in itself of public benefit, but the proposals will also deliver the following public benefits:

- Repair and retention of the Bugle building and the architectural detailing that contributes to its significance.
- Visual improvement to these prominent retail streets with enhanced frontages, signage and lighting, respectful to Friar Street
- Introduction of hotel use, providing visitor accommodation, supporting the needs of, and attracting, working professionals and visitors to Reading, as well as assisting in remedying an identified under-provision.
- Significant investment in the town centre which includes the associated local economy boost as a consequence of constructing the building.
- Job creation during construction.
- Job creation during operation.
- Provision of a town centre destination that will attract visitors, shoppers and workers to this part of the town centre, enhancing the activity, vitality and viability of this part of the centre.
- The proposals will arrest the decline of Friar Street and support and bolster the Reading economy, which is of particular importance at this current time and will play an important role in the post-Covid19 recovery of the town centre.

Summary

6.120 The proposals represent a unique opportunity to regenerate this part of Friar Street. The proposals are considered to comply with relevant tests and requirements of the NPPF and Policies EN1, EN4 and EN6 of the RBLP.

8. Impact on Amenities

Policy

6.121 Paragraph 130 f) of the NPPF promotes development that will create a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

6.122 **Policy CC8** of the RBLP stipulates that development Must not cause a detrimental impact to living environment of existing or future residential properties in terms of (inter alia):

- Privacy and overlooking;
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;
- Harm to outlook;
- Artificial lighting;
- Security and Safety and
- Access to sunlight and daylight.

Assessment

6.123 There are several key elements of the proposals and amenity tests that have been addressed as part of their design and assessment. These are taken in turn below.

Assessment - Privacy and Outlook

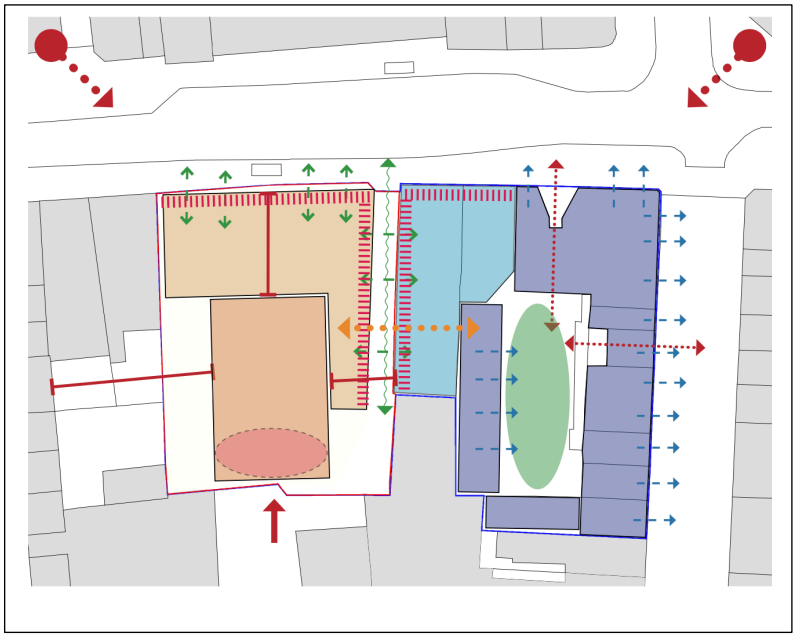
6.124 Given the sites prominent town centre location, on assessment of residential uses, it is noted that the site is isolated from such uses and therefore, the proposal will not result in loss of outlook nor privacy concerns impacting upon neighbours.

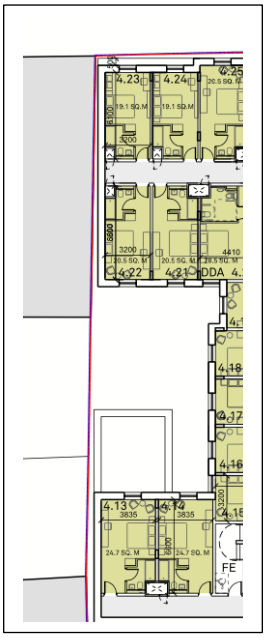
6.125 We note Officers refer to the residential use of 136-137 Friar Street, however, we are advised this is not in residential use and was not implemented. In any event, the layout to the rear comprised a lobby at first floor and a kitchen stair and bathroom – habitable accommodation was proposed to the front

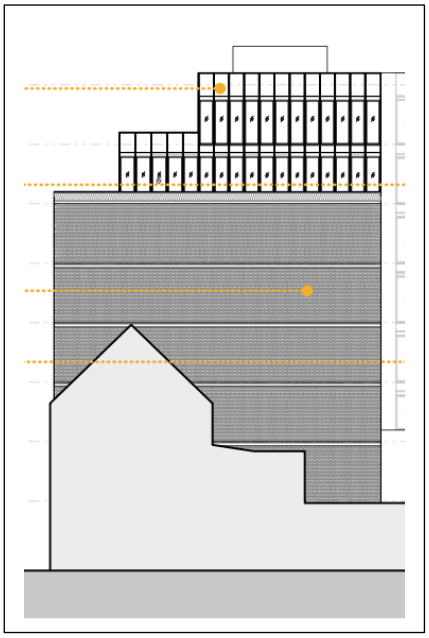
Assessment - Future Development Proposals

6.126 As per Officers request at pre-application, Officers have requested that the site should preserve the ability of adjacent sites to be extended and altered. To assess such, we consider the four adjacent land uses – see map below.

- North: this is Friar Street.
- East: this is QVS1 and in the Applicant's ownership and subject to redevelopment.
- South: Fife Court and protected for access.
- West: the front section does not benefit from side elevation windows, whereas the rear is set in from the site extent – see the drawings over the page that highlight this proposition.







Assessment - Security and Safety

6.127 The Site's town centre location benefits from existing natural surveillance of a busy high street and existing on-street CCTV network. The retail frontage of Friar Street will therefore benefit from this and additional security measures that may be implemented by individual occupiers, such as internal CCTV. Further, the reception foyer of the use will provide physical presence to further aid public safety in this part of Friar Street.

6.128 Access to the hotel main entrance will be controlled via reception and electronic key card access for guest once they have been registered and checked in. Internally, guests will utilise passes that will only allow access to their rooms and circulation space associated. Internal CCTV will also be in operation.

6.129 Adequate lighting will be provided to Fife Court and the rear of the building to further enhance security and safety, as well as clear visibility for CCTV cameras. The details of lighting in these areas will be secured by condition pursuant to any planning permission, but is anticipated to include high-level soft lighting, supplemented by up/down lights.

Assessment - Sunlight & Daylight

6.130 Sunlight & Daylight impact proposed development of the two sites (QVS1 and QVS2) is presented together to provide the "worst case scenario" of both sites being developed out as one, and to assess the cumulative neighbouring effects. The conclusions reached are:

8. Conclusion

8.1. The Sites are in an urban location in the centre of the city of Reading.

8.2. We assessed the potential effects of the proposed developments on daylight and sunlight to surrounding residential properties.

8.3. We ran our assessments using methodologies recommended in the BRE guide.

8.4. The advice contained in the BRE guide is not mandatory and its numerical guidelines should be interpreted flexibly.

8.5. In daylight and sunlight terms, any proposed effects to neighbouring buildings will be negligible with all (100%) of the relevant neighbouring rooms/windows assessed, fully and comfortably complying with the BRE's numerical guidelines.

8.6. In conclusion, it is submitted that the layout of the proposed development is consistent with the Council's local planning policy on daylight and sunlight.

Wind and Microclimate

6.131 We note the Local Plan states wind microclimate assessments should be undertaken for Tall Buildings. A tall building is defined as ten storeys and the validation checklist states more than 8 storeys, which the scheme is neither. As such, such an assessment has not been prepared at the time of writing.

Summary

6.132 The proposals are considered to provide an adequate safe and inviting environment that provides sufficient security and deters crime, without being an overly dominant feature or posing as a deterrent for all users. The proposals are considered to comply with the NPPF and Policy CC8 of the RBLP.

9. Open Space Provision

Policy

6.133 In seeking to serve community needs, paragraph 93 a) of the NPPF requires decisions to plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, such as meeting spaces and open spaces. Paragraph 123 of the NPPF is concerned with making efficient use of land and requires a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of developed land where this would help meet an identified need. Proposals for improving the quality of access to open space should be supported.

6.134 **Policy EN9** of the RBLP requires all new development to make provision for appropriate open space based on the needs of the development. New open space should:

- Be in useable parcels of land and not be fragmented;
- Be safely and easily accessible and not severed by any physical barrier, including a road;
- Be accessible to the general public and be designed so as to feel that it is part of the public and not private realm;

- Create a safe environment, appropriately considering lighting and layout to reduce the fear of crime;
- Provide some informal landscaping for aesthetic, wildlife and recreational purposes; and
- Link into the Green Network where possible.

6.135 The supporting text for Policy EN9 notes that people in and around the town centre are still further away from public open space than guidelines recommend.

6.136 **Policy EN10** states that in areas with relatively poor access to open space facilities (including as a result of severance lines), new development should make provision for, or contribute to, improvements to road and other crossings to improve access to green space and/or facilitate the creation or linking of safe off-road routes to parks.

6.137 In relation to public realm in Central Reading, **Policy CR3** requires development to make a positive contribution and will be assessed against the following:

- All sites greater than 1ha will need to provide new public open space or civic squares integrated with surrounding development;
- New open spaces should be of a size and shape to accommodate imaginative uses. Where appropriate, provision of water features, trees, other planting and hard landscaping will be expected;
- Public realm should conserve and enhance the historic environment of the centre and significance of heritage assets therein and their setting.

6.138 Section 7.7.7 of the Reading Open Space Strategy recognises the importance of town centre spaces and their role in creating urban sanctuaries in which people can relax, meet, play or take a break from working or shopping.

Assessment

6.139 The RBLP notes a lack of access to open space within Central Reading. Whilst there are some park areas nearby: Lavender Place Community Gardens, 360m straight line to the south west; and Forbury Gardens, 300m straight line to the east, there are limited civic squares or similar areas of public realm designed for congregation, meeting and relaxing. With the exception of the Railway Station approach, there are no such squares within a 500m radius of the Site, and beyond in some directions.

6.140 The public square as proposed for QVS1, will provide active, useable public realm in the heart of Central Reading, complementing the retail and apart-hotel uses and acting as a destination in this part of the town centre. The square will be a hub for respite for shoppers and workers within the town centre, a place to meet others, relax, eat and socialise.

6.141 The square will be a functional event space, adaptable and able to host numerous different format and size of events, ranging from outdoor markets, and art displays to sports screenings and stage events.



6.142 **Biodiversity**: an ecology assessment accompanies that finds there are no greenspace was present or proposed for impact and no signs or evidence of protected, priority or rare species were noted during either survey and habitats were considered highly unlikely to support such species.

6.143 The scheme proposes brown roofs where possible and planting to the front, which will aid and improve biodiversity on site, albeit it is acknowledge there is limited scope for ecology improvements, however, best efforts will be made to improve biodiversity with planting, which will make a modest contribution where currently there is no greening.

Summary

6.144 The proposed expansion of the public square is a considerable and significant public benefit of the proposals and an important part of preserving and enhancing the historic character of the Listed Buildings that are sited on the sister site, QVS1. The proposals are considered to comply with the provisions of the NPPF and RBLP Policies EN9, EN10 and CR3. The proposed public square was also supported in earlier pre-application advice received, noting it as an inventive design response and a benefit of the proposals.

10. Air and Noise Impacts

Policy

6.145 NPPF paragraph 170 seeks to protect the natural environment, including preventing new and existing development from unacceptable or adverse impacts of air or noise pollution. Air and noise impacts is also a relevant consideration for amenity as per paragraph 127 of the NPPF.

6.146 **Policy CC8** also seeks to safeguard existing and future residents from detrimental impact from noise and disturbance, dust and fumes, vibration and smell.

6.147 **Policy EN15** states that where a development would introduce sensitive uses into, or intensify such uses within, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), detrimental effects on that use should be mitigated. Planning obligations may be used to secure contributions to tackle poor air quality or for air quality monitoring.

6.148 Where noise generating equipment is proposed, RBLP **Policy EN17** requires the noise source specific level (plant noise level) should be at least 10dBA below the existing background level as measured at the nearest noise sensitive receptor.

Assessment - Air Quality

6.149 Much of Reading is designated as an AQMA and the Site falls within such an area. Major developments are required to be accompanied by an Air Quality Assessment (AQA) if they will meet a set of criteria, including increasing the level of car parking or give rise to an increase in HGV movements or other detrimental air quality impacts.

6.150 The application is accompanied by an AQA, which assesses the impact of the proposals during construction and occupation, both on existing neighbouring uses and future occupiers of the development. The AQA concludes that the site is a 'low risk' site and the impact of dust soiling and particulate matter from construction activities can be reduced to negligible levels through recommended mitigation measures. Continuous visual assessment of the site is recommended, along with maintaining a complaints log to capture isolated incidents and to rectify them.

6.151 For the impact of vehicle emissions on future occupiers, the AQA finds that predicted particulate matter concentrations will be below relevant objectives and an acceptable level. The proposals are therefore in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF and policies CC8 and EN15. Please refer to the submitted AQA for further details of the technical assessment and recommendations.

Assessment - Odour and Ventilation

6.152 In preparing the scheme, a M&E assessment that details the ventilation strategy accompanies, ventilation for the food use will discharge at roof level with an appropriate system being installed to aid odour control.

Assessment - Noise

6.153 This application is accompanied by a Noise Impact Assessment (NIA), produced by KP Acoustics. This assesses the impact of the proposals on existing sensitive receptors, as well as the conditions for future occupiers of the development, notably the proposed hotel. The NIA has focussed on the impact of proposed plant, which will be located on the rooftop of the proposed rear extension (main plant enclosure).

6.154 The NIA makes several recommendations to ensure appropriate noise levels are achieved. The following mitigation measures will be incorporated into the proposals accordingly:

- *Use of recommended specified glazing;*

6.155 The Applicant confirms the glazing of the hotel will comply with the requirements of the NIA. The internal noise levels for all hotel guest room environments of the development are commensurate to the design range of BS8233. The restricted windows will ensure that noise as a result of the uses, location and plant will not be affected.

- *Use of recommended technical specification of mechanical ventilation systems to meet identified noise levels;*

6.156 The Energy/ Ventilation Strategy that accompanies confirms the plant to be used and the NIA assessment has assessed the said plant.

- *Installation of appropriate sound insulation and noise reduction for buildings*

6.157 The Applicant confirms appropriate sound insulation will be fitted which is detailed in the NIA.

- *Installation of noise reducing louvres to plant enclosures.*

6.158 The NIA confirms the method of noise reduction required and a specification for the plant enclosure louvres.

Summary

6.159 The NIA concludes that, with the incorporation of the recommended mitigation, the proposals will ensure noise levels to sensitive receptors will remain below the identified standard and requirements of policy and will not give rise to detrimental noise impacts. This will protect the amenity of existing surrounding residential and commercial uses as well as the proposed future occupiers of the apart-hotel. The proposals will therefore comply with the NPPF and RBLP policies CC8 and EN17.

11. Archaeology

Policy

6.160 Paragraph 194 of the NPPF requires an appropriate desk-based assessment for sites that have the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest. The Site falls within an identified Area of Archaeological Potential within which, RBLP **Policy EN2** requires applicants

to identify and evaluate sites of archaeological significance and assess the impacts of development proposals. Where remains cannot be preserved in situ, they should be excavated, investigated and recorded. Where appropriate, Section 106 agreements will be negotiated to protect, enhance and interpret archaeological remains.

Assessment

6.161 An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment is submitted with this application, which assesses the potential for the Site to contain historic remains and is reflective of its location within an identified Area of Archaeological Potential. The Assessment identifies the potential for remains from the late post-medieval period onwards but does not identify any over-riding archaeological constraints that would prohibit or significantly constrain the Site's development. The report states that, very little of the site is free of buildings. Associated foundations and services will have truncated, disturbed or removed any archaeological remains within their footprint, as will have any basements that may lie beneath the buildings on the site.

6.162 Notwithstanding this, there is the potential for redevelopment to have an impact on potential remains. As such, the Assessment concludes that further investigation is likely to be required to ascertain the nature and significance of any potential remains. It states that this could comprise evaluations following demolition of buildings, and/or an archaeological watching brief, caried out alongside demolition and groundworks.

Summary

6.163 The applicant commits to implementing the recommendations of the Archaeological Assessment and such provisions can be secured by way of condition pursuant to any planning permission. The assessment of the archaeological potential and the implementation of appropriate investigative measures is in line with the requirements of the NPPF and Policy EN9 of the RBLP.

12. Transport and Parking

Sustainable Transport

Policy

6.164 The NPPF promotes sustainable modes of transport and opportunities for development to increase the use of walking, cycling and public transport as modes of travel. Paragraph 106 a) supports an appropriate mix of uses across areas and larger sites with the aim of minimising the number and length of trips. Paragraph 110 a) seeks to ensure that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes in developments have been taken, that safe and suitable access to the site can be gained by all users and that acceptable mitigation can be provided where required.

6.165 **Policy TR1** states that developments should promote and improve sustainable transport facilities, encouraging walking, cycling and the use of public transport. The supporting text for this policy recognises that, for major developments, it is important that users of, and visitors to the development can make sustainable travel choices using non-car modes of transport. For developments likely to have significant transport implications, Travel Plans will be sought.

6.166 RBLP **Policy TR3** states that development will only be permitted where:

- Accesses and works to the highway comply with the adopted standards of the Transport Authority;
- The development would not have a material detrimental impact on the functioning of the transport network;
- The proposals would not be detrimental to the safety of users of the transport network, including pedestrians and cyclists;
- The proposal would not generate regular movement of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) on unsuitable roads, or on roads without easy access to the Classified Highway Network; and
- For non-residential uses, or new dwellings on classified roads, off-street servicing would be provided.

6.167 **Policy TR3** also states that proposals involving either the construction of a new site access, or a material increase in the use of an existing site access, directly onto the Classified Highway Network will not be acceptable if they would be likely to result in the encouragement of the use of the network for short local trips or compromise the safe movement and free flow of traffic on the network or the safe use of the road.

6.168 In relation to cycle routes and facilities, **Policy TR4** requires developments to improve access for cyclists to, from and within the development. Development should not detrimentally affect identified Friar Street cycle routes.

Assessment - Transport

6.169 The Site is in a highly accessible location in the heart of the town centre, with immediate access to town centre shops, services and facilities. There is extremely good access to public transport with the busy bus route along Friar Street and Reading Railway Station approximately 250m to the north. The traffic restrictions along Friar Street make the area surrounding the Site pedestrian and cycle friendly, enhancing the safe accessible nature of the Site. The Transport Assessment submitted with this application provides further detail on the accessibility of the site via pedestrianised areas, extensive cycle network and public transport provisions.

6.170 The hotel use will attract visitors to Reading and provide modern, high quality accommodation in the heart of the town centre that is accessible by public transport to many parts of the country, and highly accessible by foot and cycle to local facilities and amenities, including the central Reading employment market. The hotel also proposes secure cycle parking and changing facilities to encourage the use of cycling as a sustainable mode of transport by staff and potentially guests.

6.171 The Transport Statement has undertaken a TRICS assessment of the potential trips generated by the proposed apart-hotel use, compared to an assumed zero level for the existing vacant office floorspace. This identifies that approximately 87 (AM) and 79 (PM) two-way trips will be generated per day. The high level of public transport accessibility of the Site will, however, serve to reduce the requirement for vehicular trips, which the transport consultants notes accounts for 28 (AM) and 27 (PM), but due to the scheme being car free, these could shift to taxi journeys. In any event, if patrons are to drive there is a plethora of car parking local to the site with capacity.

6.172 The Site and specifically the hotel is in close association to national rail (250m) and local bus services, it is expected that many users may utilise such modes of transport. However, if patrons were to arrive by taxi, there is a taxi layby located on Friar Street and there is more than sufficient road and parking capacity for drop off without compromising highway safety or adding to congestion.

6.173 For the remaining proportion estimated to travel via public transport, and those additional trips transferring from private vehicles, the Transport Statement concludes that the existing public transport network has sufficient capacity to absorb these additional trips.

6.174 A Framework Travel Plan (TP) has been developed for the proposals and is submitted as part of this application. The aim of the TP is to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport and to reduce reliance on the private car. The TP sets out numerous measures and initiatives that can be implemented to meet this aim, including:

- Travel information packs on public transport services available;
- Information on available walking routes and health benefits and other encouragement measures;
- Additional promotion of cycling, beyond facilities provided by the proposals, such as cycle safety and maintenance workshops, encourage participation in cycling events and provide information on routes and health benefits;
- Promotion of public transport services and information, journey planner smartphone applications and display of timetables for staff;
- Provision of local taxi numbers and details to promote this as an alternative to the private car; and
- Local advertisement of jobs for the hotel use within walking and cycling distance.

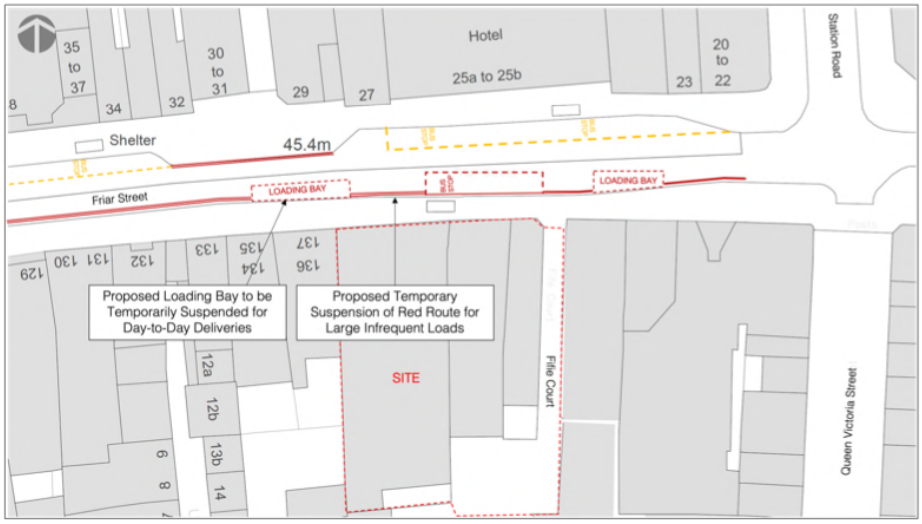
6.175 The Transport Statement concludes that the proposals will have a negligible impact on the operation of the surrounding highway and transport networks and that the proposed car-free nature of the development is acceptable. There will be no alterations to the highways network or impact on highway safety in this regard.

Assessment – Construction Method Plan

6.176 A draft-Construction Method Plan (CMP) accompanies the application, which provides a basic overview of the potential manor the scheme could be built out. The caveat to place on the CMP is that the full details and assessment would be prepared at the appointment of a construction team and prior to the commencement of development.

6.177 Based on past experience and Applicant input, it is anticipated that construction could be circa 15 months. The site developer will make use of a existing loading bays via temporary suspensions. For additional specific deliveries, the temporary suspension of the red route directly to the front of the site would eb pre-agreed with the Council.

Figure 4.2 Proposed Loading / Unloading Arrangement



6.178 Accordingly, we submit that the development can be constructed for this town centre site, which has direct highway access, of course subject to resolution at pre-commencement phase.

Summary

6.179 The location of the Site and the proposed uses are compatible and together utilise and encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport and will have negligible impact on the local highway and transport network. The proposals therefore accord with the NPPF and RBLP Policies TR1, TR3 and TR4.

Cycle Parking

Policy

6.180 Paragraph 107 of the NPPF states that parking standards should take into account the accessibility of sites, type and mix of development and availability of public transport. **Policy TR5** of the RBLP requires car and cycle parking provision that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.

6.181 The Reading Parking Standards and Design SPD establishes the following car parking standards of relevance to the proposals that apply to Zone 1 (central Reading) and are a maximum:

- C1 Hotels: 0.25 spaces per room

6.182 The following cycle parking standards are a minimum as set out in the SPD:

- C1 Hotels: 1 space per 6 staff

6.183 Loading bays and facilities for delivery and servicing within Zone 1 will be based on the merits of the individual application. Disabled car parking spaces are required from all developments in all zones at a level of 3 spaces or 5% of total capacity on developments proposing up to 200 car parking spaces. For parent and toddler parking, the requirement is for 2 spaces or 4% of the capacity for developments proposing up to 200 spaces. It is noted that in determining the required provision of both disabled and parent and toddler parking, it must be remembered that some of these motorists could have the option to switch transport mode, particularly where there is access to high quality bus corridors and routes.

Assessment

6.184 The proposals are for a car-free development that reflects the highly accessible location of the Site, as described above. The car parking standards are a maximum and the zero-parking provision is reflective of the location and availability of public transport. The principle of a car free development was noted as acceptable in the pre-application advice received on the previous scheme iteration. The proposals are therefore considered to be appropriate and in accordance with the NPPF and Policy TR5 of the RBLP.

6.185 Secure parking spaces will be provided at a level of 1 space per 6 staff to comply with cycle parking standards for C1 use and retail use. These will be provided in a designated cycle store in the basement level. Additionally, there are multiple opportunities for cycle parking in the immediate vicinity, with Sheffield-style bike stands located on Broad Street, 100m south of the Site, and slightly further away on Friar Street and Belgrave Street.

6.186 The Applicant estimates that there will be up to 33 staff members on site at one time, therefore six secure cycle spaces will be provided on site.

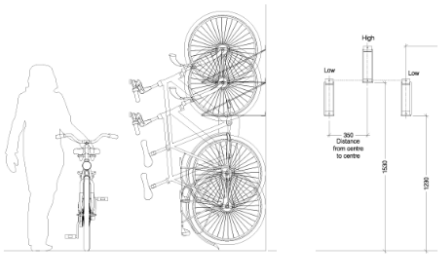
Pedestrian and Cycle Accessibility

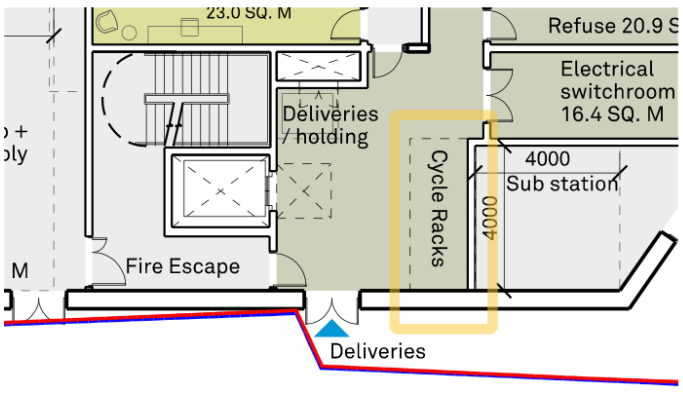
The site is situated within the Reading Central Area and Reading's primary shopping area consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments.

The site benefits from frequent bus and rail services that extend to a wide range of destinations for end-users, guests, and staff to travel to the site by alternative methods to the private car. The development will therefore be provided on a car-free basis as per the existing conditions.

See Transport Statement prepared by Mode Transport Planning for further detail.

Cycle parking will be provided on site following the local standards of 1 space per 6 staff as per the Reading Framework for hotel use. A designated staff cycle store will be located on the ground floor and is accessible via Fife Court. It is estimated approximately 20 staff will be on-site and have therefore assessed the need for 4 cycle spaces located to the rear of the ground floor.







Above: Illustration of vertical bike stand from side and front elevation.
Right: Ground floor plan highlighting location of staff cycle store in yellow.

FCH

Summary

6.187 The provision of cycle parking is in accordance with the parking standards and the development will be car free, therefore it is considered appropriate for the development and complies with RBLP policy TR5.

13. Flood Risk & SuDS

Policy

6.188 The NPPF requires development in areas at risk of flooding to be avoided (paragraph 159), utilising the sequential test and directing development towards areas of lowest flood risk (paragraph 162). Development should ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere and should be supported by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) where appropriate. Paragraph 169 of the NPPF requires major developments to incorporate sustainable drainage systems unless it can be justified that these would be inappropriate.

6.189 **Policy EN18** directs development to areas at the lowest risk of flooding in the first instance. It also states that all major developments must incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) as appropriate. Runoff rates should aim to reflect greenfield conditions and, in any case, must be no greater than the existing conditions of the site.

6.190 The Site is located within Flood Zone 1, as identified on the Government Flood Map for Planning. Flood Zone 1 is at low probability of flooding and defined as land having less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding.

Assessment

6.191 The Site location is at low risk of flooding and the most suitable location for development, in accordance with the sequential approach. The proposals do not meet the minimum requirements for a Flood Risk Assessment, and one has not been prepared for this application.

6.192 The proposals do not introduce any additional impermeable surfaces than that of the existing Site and are not considered to give rise to additional surface water runoff levels. The building fabric and structures will be designed to minimise the risk of infiltration and water damage.

6.193 There are limited opportunities to provide a comprehensive SuDS owing to the Site constraints.

6.194 Consideration has been given to the provision of an attenuation tank to control the discharge of surface runoff, however this has been discounted owing to the archaeological potential and risk of the Site that could be impacted by such an installation.

6.195 Therefore, the FRA/ SUDs assessment concludes:

To inform the FRA, a drainage strategy has been prepared for the proposed development following a review of relevant planning policy and guidance. To comply, the drainage hierarchy has been followed and SUDS have been considered from the outset of the design process. This has enabled significant areas of brown/blue roofs (640m^2) to be included across the roof at 6 locations and permeable paving (including permavoid) across 255m^2 of courtyard and access road at ground level. Raised planters including 'SUDS Planters' will be considered as the design of the courtyard progresses at the next stage of design.

This will result in 96% of the site draining via SUDS which has the opportunity to more than offset the surface water and foul increases arising from the development (+1 l/s compared to existing) as long as the receiving sewers are carefully considered and agreed with Thames Water. By attenuating the surface water flows significantly and by removing surface water flows from the foul sewer in Friar Street where practicable there will be an overall positive impact on the receiving sewers.

Summary

6.196 The proposals are at low risk from flooding and comply with the sequential approach for such development. Policy EN18 provides flexibility in the incorporation of SuDS where this is appropriate for any particular site or development. The Site constraints prohibit the provision of a comprehensive SuDS and significant weight is to be given to the protection and conservation of the adjacent heritage assets and archaeological potential in relation to QVS2. With no additional impermeable area added and a reduction in impermeable area through the inclusion of a brown/ blue roofs, the proposals will provide a lower surface runoff rate than currently exists. Therefore, the proposals comply with the NPPF and Policy EN18 of the RBLP.

14. Sustainability

Policy

6.197 Paragraph 154 a) and b) of the NPPF requires new development to avoid increased vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Development plans should identify opportunities for decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems (paragraph 155). Paragraph 157 a) builds on this and requires the determination of applications to consider the feasibility and viability of compliance with sustainability policies where the type of development and design may justify otherwise.

6.198 **Policy CC2** requires all major non-residential developments or conversions to meet the most up-to-date BREEAM 'Excellent' standards, where possible. Development should include recycling grey water and rainwater harvesting where systems are energy and cost efficient.

6.199 In considering adaptation to climate change, **Policy CC3** requires the following measures to be incorporated into development:

- Orientated to maximise opportunities for natural heating and ventilation;
- Designed in resilience to climate change with measures such as solar shading, thermal mass, heating and ventilation, material colour choices, green and brown roofs and walls etc;

- Trees and planting for shading of amenity areas and buildings, utilising native species;
- Minimise the impact of surface water runoff and where possible, mitigation and resilience measures for any increase in river flooding levels as a result of climate change.

6.200 **Policy CC4** states that development of over 1,000 sqm should consider the inclusion of decentralised energy provision within the site, unless it can be demonstrated that the scheme is not suitable, feasible or viable for this form of energy provision. Developments will be expected to link to existing decentralised energy provision in the vicinity.

Assessment

6.201 This application is accompanied by an Energy and Sustainability Statement (ESS), which assesses the sustainability potential of the proposals and makes recommendations, as well as undertakes a BREEAM assessment of the proposals. The ESS recognises the constraints of the Site. Those measures contributing towards the sustainability of the proposals include:

+ High performing fabric for new build and refurbished elements
+ High performance VRF heat pump heating and cooling
+ Heat pumps for DHW with gas top up
+ MVHR for ventilation
+ High performance LEDs throughout with presence/absence detection and daylight dimming
+ 100m^2 PV on the roof

6.202 It is noted within the ESS that the hotel should aim to meet BREEAM Excellent in accordance with RBLP Policy CC2. .

6.203 **New Building**: we are pleased to confirm the 'new build' element achieves Excellent:

The energy performance results are summarised in the table below.

	Energy Savings		CO_2 Emissions Savings			
			Part L		SAP10.2	
	in %	in MWh/year	in %	in tons CO_2/year	in %	in tons CO_2/year
After passive design	42%	1328.1	40%	365.9	43%	259.6
After active design	54%	1698.8	62%	559.4	51%	309.7
After LZC	80%	2513.7	68%	618.4	84%	509.9

The proposed energy strategy achieves five Ene01 credits in line with the BREEAM Excellent requirement

Summary

6.204 The proposals are considered to meet many of the best practice techniques and use of technologies to enhance the sustainability of the Site and the proposed development, within the feasibility of the Site constraints. The proposals will result in a much enhanced sustainability performance than the existing Site and will ensure an efficient reuse of the existing Buildings. The proposals are therefore considered to comply with the provisions of the NPPF and RBLP Policies CC2, CC3 and CC4.

15. Servicing and Waste

Policy

6.205 **Policy CC5** requires development to minimise the generation of waste in construction and use of buildings. Proposals should be well designed to facilitate waste storage, reuse, recycling and composting. The Reading Sustainable Design and Construction SPD details measures that should be considered in the pursuit of minimising and managing waste. The re-use and refurbishment of existing buildings where possible, rather than demolition, will contribute to minimising waste and a Site Waste Management Plan (contained in the DAS) should be prepared for developments. For during the lifetime use of buildings, the SPD states that adequate provision should be made for both internal and external storage of waste.

6.206 **Policy TR3** protects against detrimental impacts to highway safety and requires off-street servicing to be provided for non-residential development. The policy resists development that would give rise to regular movements of HGVs.

Assessment - Servicing

6.207 A Delivery and Servicing Plan (DSP) has been prepared and submitted in support of this application, which assesses the current servicing and waste situation and provides a strategy for future servicing of the development proposals. The DSP identifies that the combination of kerbside options on either Friar Street or off street via Fife Court. Both provide sufficient opportunity to continue servicing the hotel with more than enough capacity in the existing provision and arrangements. The primary points to note are:

Table 4.1 Delivery Types and Vehicles

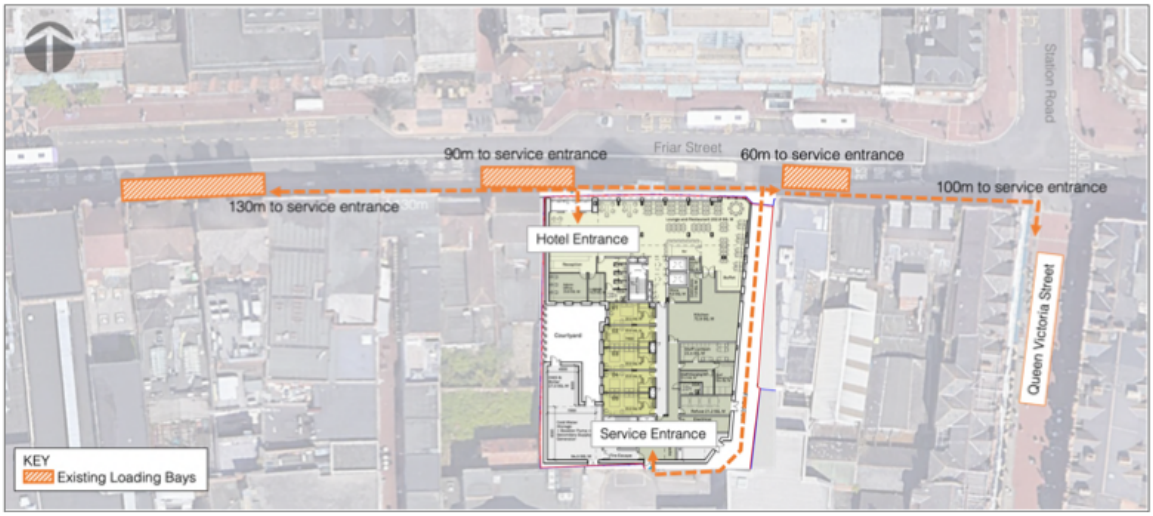
Delivery Type	Frequency	Dwell Time	Vehicle Type
Linen Collection / Delivery	Daily	1 hour	4.6T Van
Food (Fresh / Dry Goods)	Daily	30 minutes	4.6T Van
Drinks	Weekly	1 hour	Small Rigid

6.208 This equates to up to 3 deliveries were day, which we are advised is a reduction over the current operation. The servicing with utilise two places:

- Delivery entrance from Fife Court.
- Loading bay on Friar Street or Queen Victoria Street.

Details of the loading and swept path analysis is contained in the DSP.

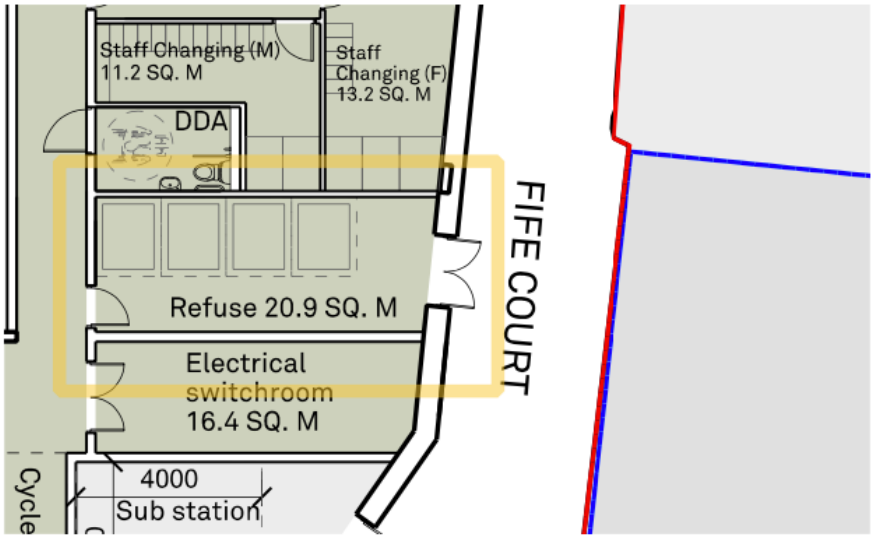
Figure 4.1 Servicing Carry Distances



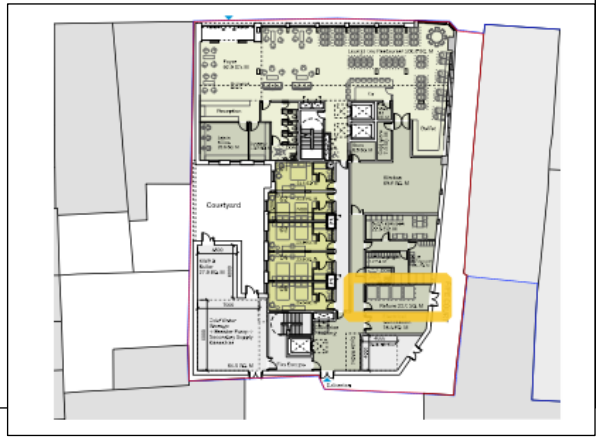
6.209 As noted in the DSP, discussions are currently ongoing with RBC with regards to amending the existing loading restrictions along Friar Street via a TRO to allow for an extended dwell time and a daytime loading window in order to effectively service the proposed hotel from Friar Street which are critical to the hotel operation, if the use of 4.6T vehicles with local suppliers is not possible.

Assessment - Waste

6.210 Refuse collection will continue to take place as per existing conditions from Friar Street and therefore there will be no change to the demand for refuse collection vehicles visiting the site. It is expected that refuse collection would take place from the loading bay on Friar Street to the east of the hotel, complying with the existing restrictions. It is proposed that refuse collection would be undertaken by a private contractor. Bins will be wheeled from the designated refuse store on Fife Court to Friar Street and the collection arrangements and carry distances would be agreed with the appointed contractor.



Ground Floor Plan - Refuse Location



Summary

6.211 The DSP concludes that the servicing and waste arrangements will enable the efficient operation of the proposals and will minimise any impact of servicing movements on the existing road network. The Transport Statement submitted with the application also concludes that the proposals will not give rise to detrimental impacts to the highway network or highway safety. Refuse disposal arrangements will be subject to a condition pursuant to any planning permission to ensure appropriate monitoring and control. For the reasons set out above, the proposals are considered to comply with the NPPF and Policies TR5 and CC3 of the RBLP.

7.0 Summary & Conclusions

Summary

7.1 This Planning Statement and supporting material show that the development proposals presented herewith represent sustainable development, are in accordance with the up-to-date development plan and should be granted planning permission accordingly.

7.2 The lack of desirability of the existing use, the demand for hotel uses and the opportunity for preservation and enhancement of a heritage asset (the Bugle façade) and the other benefits the scheme will deliver represent a strong justification for alternative uses with a summary of the key matters of consideration set out below.

7.3 The proposals represent a unique opportunity to further enhance and regenerate the Friar Street frontage, presenting active frontages and units that attract further investment, whilst integrating with the QVS1 scheme, breathing new life into this part of the town centre, which officers consider represents a potentially exciting development in central Reading.

7.4 QVS2 proposes a complimentary use that will underpin the QVS1 development that will bring further vitality to the town centre with a hotel that will attract visitors form outside Reading. The significant public benefits of the proposals far outweigh the less than substantial harm arising to the heritage significance and result in a net benefit and enhancement to the current situation in full compliance with the tests and requirements of the NPPF and Policies EN1 and EN6 of the RBLP.

7.5 The scheme will generate jobs in their own right, as well as creating secondary and tertiary employment opportunities.

7.6 The hotel and ancillary food and beverage provision of the proposals is an appropriate use within the town centre and will enhance its vitality and viability in accordance with the NPPF and policies CR1, CR7, CR8 and RL2 of the RBLP.

7.7 The hotel use is a compatible and supporting use for this location within central Reading and will assist in enhancing the vitality and viability of the centre in accordance with the NPPF and RBLP Policies RL1, CR1, CR4 and CR6.

7.8 The design proposals were supported at pre-application advice stages, have evolved with guidance received and are considered to fully accord with the NPPF and RBLP Policies CC6, CC7 and CR2.

7.9 The proposed scheme of works is based on an understanding of the significance, character, historic development and surviving historic fabric of the locally listed Bugle alongside the other heritage assets within the vicinity. The proposals have been designed to ensure that the scale and design remain homogeneous with the existing street frontage whilst providing a new 21st Century quarter within the area.

7.10 In townscape terms, the proposed development takes cues from the established rhythm and proportions and continues them in a contemporary interpretation, while also recognising that there is room for individual architectural expression within this varied townscape. In doing so, it attempts to create a distinctive yet contextual building that add a new twenty-first century layer to the character of the area.

7.11 The proposal clearly respects the rhythm, scale and proportions of its neighbours, using vertical emphasis within the façades to break down the façade into a series of bays.

7.12 The scheme will result in enhancement in heritage and townscape terms by optimising use of the heritage assets within town centre as well as considerably improving their commercial frontages and would be in compliance with relevant local plan policies- EN1, EN4 and EN 6. In addition, the proposal complies with policies CC7 and CR2 that seek development to be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area within which it is located.

7.13 The proposals are considered to provide a safe and inviting environment that provides sufficient security and deters crime, without being an overly dominant feature or posing as a deterrent for all users in compliance with the NPPF and Policy CC8 of the RBLP.

7.14 The significant enhancements to Fife Court via the activation of this frontage is also supported in pre-application advice received, noting it as an inventive design response and a benefit of the proposals.

7.15 The NIA concludes that, with the incorporation of the recommended mitigation, the proposals will ensure noise levels to sensitive receptors will remain below the identified standard and requirements of policy and will not give rise to detrimental noise impacts.

7.16 The scheme will not impact residential neighbours as a result of loss of daylight, sunlight nor outlook.

7.17 This will protect the amenity of existing surrounding residential and commercial uses as well as the proposed future occupiers of the hotel, therefore complying with the NPPF and RBLP policies CC8 and EN17.

7.18 The location of the Site and the proposed uses are compatible and together utilise and encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport and will have negligible impact on the local highway and transport network, which complies with the NPPF and RBLP Policies TR1, TR3 and TR4.

7.19 The provision of cycle parking is in accordance with the parking standards and the development will be car free, therefore it is considered appropriate for the development and complies with RBLP policy TR5.

7.20 The proposals are at low risk from flooding and comply with the sequential approach for such development.

7.21 Policy EN18 provides flexibility in the incorporation of SuDS where this is appropriate for any particular site or development. No additional impermeable area is to be added, the proposals will provide a lower surface runoff rate than currently exists. Therefore the proposals comply with the NPPF and Policy EN18 of the RBLP.

7.22 The proposals are considered to meet many of the best practice techniques and use of technologies to enhance the sustainability of the Site and the proposed development, within the feasibility of the Site constraints. The proposals will result in a much-enhanced sustainability performance than the existing Site. The proposals are therefore considered to comply with the provisions of the NPPF and RBLP Policies CC2, CC3 and CC4.

7.23 The DSP concludes that the servicing and waste arrangements will enable the efficient operation of the proposals and will minimise any impact of servicing movements on the existing road network.

7.24 The Transport Statement submitted with the application also concludes that the proposals will not give rise to detrimental impacts to the highway network or highway safety.

7.25 The utilisation of a private refuse collection contractor is in accordance with the pre-application advice received are considered to comply with the NPPF and Policies TR5 and CC3 of the RBLP.

7.26 We have consulted Planning Officers, Councillors, Reading BID, Reading Civic, Reading CAAC, amenity societies, business, local residents and social media. The feedback to date has been positive and high level of support. The feedback is encouraging the speedy delivery of the scheme.

7.27 In summary, the engagement found that the scheme presented is a positive benefit that on the feedback received, is supported by the local community and key stakeholders.

Public Benefits

7.28 The primary benefits for Reading as a town are:

7.29 In addition to heritage benefits, the NPPF requires an assessment of the balance of harm against other public benefits arising from development proposals. It is clear that the repair, reinstatement and enhancement of heritage assets are in themselves of public benefit, but the proposals will also deliver the following public benefits:

- Repair and retention of the Bugle building and the architectural detailing that contributes to its significance.
- Visual improvement to these prominent retail streets with enhanced frontages, signage and lighting, respectful to Friar Street
- Introduction of hotel use, providing visitor accommodation, supporting the needs of, and attracting, working professionals and visitors to Reading, as well as assisting in remedying an identified under-provision.
- Significant investment in the town centre which includes the associated local economy boost as a consequence of constructing the building.
- Job creation during construction.
- Job creation during operation.
- Provision of a town centre destination that will attract visitors, shoppers and workers to this part of the town centre, enhancing the activity, vitality and viability of this part of the centre.
- The proposals will arrest the decline of Friar Street and support and bolster the Reading economy, which is of particular importance at this current time and will play an important role in the post-Covid19 recovery of the town centre.

Conclusions

7.30 Reading is poised for a bright future and to position itself as nationally recognised city of culture and sustainability, leading the way in green tech innovation. The redevelopment and growth of the town centre is a pivotal in achieving this ambition and is already underway with major schemes approved and under construction that will modernise and diversify Reading's offer in culture and leisure, education, research and development, retail and employment sectors.

7.31 The success of Reading's future vision will depend upon its ability to build upon its existing legacy in these sectors.

7.32 The Friar Street Site has an important role to play in the delivery of Reading's wider vision and represents a unique opportunity to retain and promote Reading's heritage as part of a diversified and modernised visitor accommodation.

7.33 The scheme will provide Reading with a high-quality gateway scheme to the town centre.

7.34 The proposals presented herewith are a chance to breathe new life into this part of Friar Street and reinvigorate this part of the heart of Reading 'city' centre, attracting businesses, shoppers, visitors, workers, students, and investment into Reading especially in these current changing times.

7.35 Through the proposed development, the Site will become a destination within the centre, attracting people from the wider region to its new sought after hotel accommodation, set within a comprehensive redevelopment site.

7.36 QVS1 will be a place for the community and public to meet, relax, rejuvenate, perform and celebrate in the new public square provided as part of, but the offer is extended through QVS2, with its food and beverage offering and retained Bugle, becoming a focal point of this part of central Reading.

7.37 A place that supports the working population of Reading and local businesses and bolsters the leisure and tourism sector. A scheme committed to local employment, skills enhancement, job creation and driving footfall in this part of the town centre.

7.38 The proposals have evolved over time through engagement with the Council and have been carefully designed to achieve an exact balance of considerations that have been rigorously tested through technical assessments and supported with an evidence base and thorough justification.

7.39 The scheme fulfils and shares the aspirations of Reading 2050: A Vision for Reading 2050.

7.40 The proposal has been supported by the Council during pre-application discussions and the feedback from key stakeholders to date has been positive. The engagement found that the scheme presented will be a benefit to the town centre and is supported by the local community and key stakeholders, who consider this will be a good thing for Reading.

7.41 The world has evolved and adapted over the last year or so, in response to the outbreak of the Covid19 pandemic, which has affected the global economy and life as we know it in a way that could not be anticipated. With the development and rollout of effective vaccines, the path is laid out for a recovery from these impacts, but to exactly what future is as yet unknown. The importance of this Site and proposals is amplified by this situation and they have a key role to play in the recovery of Reading from the impacts of the pandemic, delivering a reinvigorated 'city' centre and flexible and adaptable retail, leisure and cultural offering that will be much needed in the rehabilitation of these sectors and Reading as a whole.

7.42 The scheme will be delivered by the Applicant's hotel partner Jury's Inn providing a much-needed high quality hotel. The vision for QVS1 and QVS2 was first presented to the Council in November 2019 and has been development in conjunction with officers and key stakeholders. Working together the scheme has evolved and will realise a shared vision and we hope will act as a catalyst for the further regeneration of Friar Street and enhancement of the public realm.

7.43 This application demonstrates compliance with national and local planning policy and guidance, as well as best practice techniques and approaches where possible, all the while continuing to strike that delicate balance. It has been demonstrated through this application that the proposals accord with an up-to-date development plan, represent sustainable development and there are no material indications that indicate otherwise. This comprehensive redevelopment and associated regeneration of this key town centre Site should therefore be granted planning permission accordingly.