HERITAGE STATEMENT

148-145 FRIAR STREET & 1-15 QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, READING

ON BEHALF OF: THE THACKERAY ESTATE

AUGUST 2022

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Section 1

Introduction.

1 Introduction

1.1 This Heritage Statement has been carried out by Revive and Tailor to provide an appraisal of 145-148 Friar Street & 1-15 Queen Victorian Street, Reading (henceforth 'the Site'). The document has been written on behalf of Thackeray Estate Ltd ("the Client").

1.2 Part of the Site already has an approved application [Ref: 210223/ 210224] for a mixed use development comprising of 3308 sqm retail spaces, an apart hotel, and a new public market square.

1.3 Since the previous permission was granted, the Client has acquired Nos 145-146 Friar Street. This has allowed an opportunity to reassess the delivery of the Site more comprehensively.

1.4 This statement is to accompany a revised application for planning permission for:

Part demolition of rear of site and No.145, demolition of No.146; 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 four-storey rear extension with mansard; erection of a part-two, part-three storey rear addition (Use Class E(a) or (b)); alterations to ground floor principle façade; creation of public square; and associated works.

1.5 This Statement uses the information provided as part of the previous permission and extracts much of the historic background and heritage significance assessment from the Heritage Statement written by Heritage Collective on behalf of the same Clients. The report is included as Appendix 1 of the report.

1.6 The additional information contained within this Statement is intended to assist with the determination of the revised application by informing the decision makers on the effects of the proposed development on the historic built environment.

1.7 The assessment includes:

- a review of the relevant legislative, policy and guidance framework;
- an overview of the historical development of the Site and its surroundings;
- a description of the Site;
- an assessment of significance of the Site; and,
- assessment of impact of the proposed changes.

1.8 The report is authored by Nairita Chakraborty BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI IHBC; Director at Revive and Tailor, with close liaison with Falconer Chester Hall (Architects) and TP Bureau (Planning Consultant) on behalf of the Clients. It should read alongside the Design and Access Statement and other documents submitted as part of the application.



Figure 1.1 Current site with the additional buildings along Friar Street

Source: DAS, FCH Architects

Section 2

Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance.

2 Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

Legislation

2.1 Where any development may have a direct or indirect effect on designated heritage assets, there is a legislative framework to ensure the proposals are considered with due regard for their impact on the historic environment.

2.2 Primary legislation under Section 16 (2) and 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the Local Planning Authority or Secretary of State, as relevant, shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

2.3 For the purposes of this statement, preservation equates to an absence of harm.2 Harm is defined in paragraph 84 of Historic England's Conservation Principles as change which erodes the significance of a heritage asset.

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) (As amended)

2.4 In July 2018, the government published the updated National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF), which was again updated in February, June 2019 and July 2021. This maintains the focus on sustainable development that was established as the core of the previous, 2012, NPPF.

2.5 This national policy framework encourages intelligent, imaginative and sustainable approaches to managing change. Historic England has defined this approach, which is reflected in the NPPF, as 'constructive conservation': defined as 'a positive and collaborative approach to conservation that focuses on actively managing change...the aim is to recognise and reinforce the historic significance of places, while accommodating the changes necessary to ensure their continued use and enjoyment' (Constructive Conservation in Practice, Historic England, 2009).

2.6 Section 12, 'Achieving well-designed places', reinforces the importance of good design in achieving sustainable development, by ensuring the creation of inclusive and high quality places.

2.7 This section of the NPPF affirms, in paragraph 130, the need for new design to function well and add to the quality of the surrounding area, establish a strong sense of place, and respond to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities).

2.8 The guidance contained within Section 16, 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment', relates to the historic environment, and developments which may have an effect upon it.

2.9 Heritage Assets are defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as:

'A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).' Listed buildings and Conservation Areas are both designated heritage assets.

2.10 'Significance' is defined as 'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.

2.11 The 'Setting of a heritage asset' is defined as 'The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.'

2.12 Paragraph 192 requires local authorities to maintain or have access to a historic environment record. This should contain up-to-date evidence about the historic environment in their area and be used to assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their environment.

2.13 Paragraph 194 states that, when determining applications, local planning authorities should require applicants to describe the significance of the heritage assets affected and any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of the asset and sufficient to understand the impact of the proposal on this significance.

2.14 According to Paragraph 190, local planning authorities are also obliged to identify and assess the significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal and should take this assessment into account when considering the impact upon the heritage asset.

2.15 Paragraph 197 emphasises that local planning authorities should take account of: the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

2.16 Paragraph 199 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. It emphasises that the weight given to an asset's conservation should be proportionate to its significance, and notes that this great weight should be given irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

2.17 Paragraph 200 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

2.18 Paragraphs 201 and 202 address the balancing of harm against public benefits. If a balancing exercise is necessary (i.e. if there is any harm to the asset), considerable weight should be applied to the statutory duty where it arises. Proposals that would result in substantial harm or total loss of significance should be refused, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss (as per Paragraph 201).

2.19 Whereas, Paragraph 202 emphasises that where less than substantial harm will arise as a result of a proposed development, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

2.20 Paragraph 203 requires a balanced judgment for proposals that affect non-designated heritage assets, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

2.21 Paragraph 206 encourages opportunities for new development within, and within the setting of, Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, to enhance or better reveal their significance. It requires favourable treatment for proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset or which better reveal its significance.

2.22 Paragraph 207 notes that not all elements of Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites will contribute to their significance, but that, if harm to their significance is caused, decisions should follow the balancing exercise set out in paragraph 201 and 202, as appropriate.

"Planning Practice Guidance ("PPG") (Department for Communities and Local Government, last updated July 2019)

2.23 The guidance on Conserving and enhancing the historic environment in the PPG supports the NPPF. Paragraph 002 states that conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change that requires a flexible and thoughtful approach, and that neglect and decay of heritage assets is best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation.

2.24 Paragraph 006 sets out how heritage significance can be understood in the planning context as archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic, defined as follows:

- archaeological interest: As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- architectural and artistic interest: These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.
- historic interest: An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

2.25 The PPG emphasises in paragraph 007 the importance of assessing the nature, extent and importance of a heritage asset in understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals.

2.26 Paragraph 018 explains that, where potential harm to designated heritage assets is identified, it needs to be categorised as either less than substantial harm or substantial harm (which includes total loss) in order to identify which policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 200-202) apply.

2.27 It goes on to state that whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision-maker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest.

2.28 Harm may arise from works to the heritage asset or from development within its setting. A thorough assessment of the impact on setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.

2.29 The PPG also provides clear guidance in paragraph 020 on the meaning of 'public benefits', particularly in relation to historic environment policy, including paragraphs 201 to 202 of the NPPF. The PPG makes clear that public benefits should be measured according to the delivery of the three key drivers of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental outcomes, all of which are reflected in the objectives of the planning system, as per Paragraph 8 of the NPPF. Public benefits include heritage benefits, and do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to a listed private dwelling which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit.

"Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2017)

2.30 This document, published by Historic England as a second edition in December 2017, replaces the earlier 2015 setting guidance. The document provides for a thorough understanding of the setting of a heritage asset and the relationship of the setting to curtilage, character and context.

2.31 The guidance document notes, in paragraph 18, that the protection of the setting of heritage assets need not prevent change. The document recognises that not all heritage assets are of equal importance and states that the contribution made by their setting to their significance will also vary. Not all settings have the same capacity to accommodate change without causing harm to the significance of the asset.

2.32 As per earlier Historic England guidance, the document advocates a stepped approach to assessing the impact of change within setting on the significance of heritage assets. This stepped approach is:

- Step 1: identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;
- Step 2: assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s);
- Step 3: assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance;

- Step 4: explore the way to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and
- Step 5: make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

2.33 Guidance under Step 2 notes that the asset's physical surroundings and how the asset is experienced (such as views, noise, tranquillity, sense of enclosure etc.) should be taken in to consideration.

2.34 Step 3 is also important in making it clear that a proposed development should not be assessed in terms of its impact on setting; instead it should be assessed in terms of the impacts on significance. That is to say, what matters is not the extent of visibility of the development or change to the setting of an asset, but the extent of change to its archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest. In some circumstances, this evaluation may need to extend to cumulative and complex impacts which may have as great an effect on heritage assets as large-scale development and which may not only be visual. At the very least the assessment should address the key attributes of the development in terms of its location and siting, form and appearance, additional effects and permanence.

Local Plan

2.35 The main element of local planning policy is the Local Plan (adopted November 2019) which contains the main planning policies for Reading up to 2036. The following policies are relevant to the proposals:

2.36 Policy EN1 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment notes that historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced. It goes on to note that proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance and any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits. The policy also notes that applications which affect Listed Buildings will not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where appropriate, their setting.

2.37 Policy EN6 New Development in a Historic Context notes that in areas characterised by heritage assets, the historic environment will inform and shape new development. New development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development. When determining planning applications for new development, the following factors will be taken into consideration:

- The positive contribution of the development to the existing historic townscape (scale, height, mass, proportion, plot size, street form, materials, significant vistas and views, and open space);
- Sensitivity to historic context;
- Reflection of borough-wide major heritage themes that contribute to local distinctiveness (e.g. patterned brickwork or former worker terraced housing); and,
- Whether development promotes and/or improves access to previously undiscovered or neglected historic significance.

Section 3

History of Site and Surroundings.

3 History of Site and Surroundings

History of wider area [from Heritage Collective report]

3.1 Reading originated as a Saxon settlement, its name derived from the Old English Reada ingas ('the people of Reada'). Its position close to the confluence of the River Thames with the Kennet facilitated riverine trading links with both London and the wider Thames Valley. The settlement was first documented by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in AD 871, when it was occupied by a Viking army, shortly before the Battle of Reading, in which the Saxon King of Wessex, Aethelbert, was defeated.

3.2 The Norman taxation document known today as the Domesday Book, which documents the period 1066 - 1086, records two manors in Reading. Within the principal manor, held by the king, there were 55 villagers and 30 smallholders. In addition to the farmland and meadow there was woodland sufficient to support 100 swine, together with four mills and three fisheries[1]. The smaller manor, which belonged to Battle Abbey (St Martin), comprised nine villagers and eight smallholders. In addition to their farmland there was woodland sufficient to support five swine, two mills and 2½ fisheries together with a church[2]. The Normans are thought to have built a castle on Castle Hill, initially an earth and timber motte and bailey castle, later replaced in stone, which was probably demolished c.1152 during the civil war in the reign of King Stephen.

3.3 Reading Abbey, a royal monastery, endowed by Henry I in 1121-5, was one of the largest monasteries in Europe. The surviving abbey gateway and extensive ruins of the abbey church and abbey complex within its precinct wall lie close to the River Kennet on the east side of the town. In addition to its religious functions, the abbey attracted and promoted commerce not only along the Thames and Kennet rivers but also as a result of its location at the intersection of major roads linking London with Bath, and Oxford with Southampton. In addition to its religious and royal significance, the abbey developed a planned new town with new streets and burgage plots together with a market place immediately west of its precinct; the principal streets being Friar Street, Broad Street, London Street and the Market Place itself, which attracted visitors and pilgrims from all over Europe. The town prospered in the medieval period and there are numerous documents illustrating friction between the guilds and merchants on the one hand and the Abbot on the other[3].

3.4 A House of Franciscan friars (Grey Friars) had first been established in the town in 1233, at the opposite (west) end of the street leading westwards from St Laurence's church (built in the 1120s adjacent to the abbey) towards Caversham, a street which had been known as New Street (later Friars Street) since at least 1224. The Friary site was enlarged in 1285 because the original site closer to the river was seasonally flooded[4]. The approximate site of the Greyfriars House lies in the vicinity of No. 65 Friars Street.

3.5 Following the dissolution of the monasteries by King Henry VIII in 1538, the abbey was given to the Duke of Somerset as a private house, but having been left vacant was quickly robbed of building stone by the townspeople. Nevertheless some of the buildings, such as the abbot's lodgings were retained for use as occasional royal accommodation. The King gave the town its independence from church authority at this time, and the friary house was given to the mayor and burgesses of Reading as a new guildhall. Although the town initially suffering an economic downturn following the dissolution owing to the lack of pilgrims and visitors, nevertheless the town prospered as a centre of the wool and cloth trade.

1 Morris 1978: 1.41; 1.42
2 Morris 1978: 15.2
3 Ditchfield & Page 1923
4 Ditchfield & Page 1907.

3.6 As a major thoroughfare and part of the planned medieval town, both sides of Friar Street would have been occupied by shops and houses throughout the medieval period.

3.7 John Speed's 1611 Map of Reading shows the major elements of the medieval town (Figure 3.1). The Friary site (marked A) stands at the western end of the street (now known as Friars Street) leading to St Laurence's Church (marked D), with the Abbey beyond on the east side of the town (marked H). The approximate location of the Site is ringed in red. Reading had become a thriving and prosperous cloth town by this date, with a population of over 5000[5].

3.8 As a result of the Siege of Reading in 1642, during the course of the English Civil War, in which the royalist garrison of the town was defeated, town was penalised by heavy taxation. The cloth trade was particularly badly hit. The Kennet Navigation, completed in 1723, enabled barges and boats to travel as far as Newbury. Although an iron works had been built in the 18th century, and Simonds' Brewery, the first of several successful breweries for which the town became famous, opened in 1785, the town's prosperity did not fully return until the beginning of the 19th century

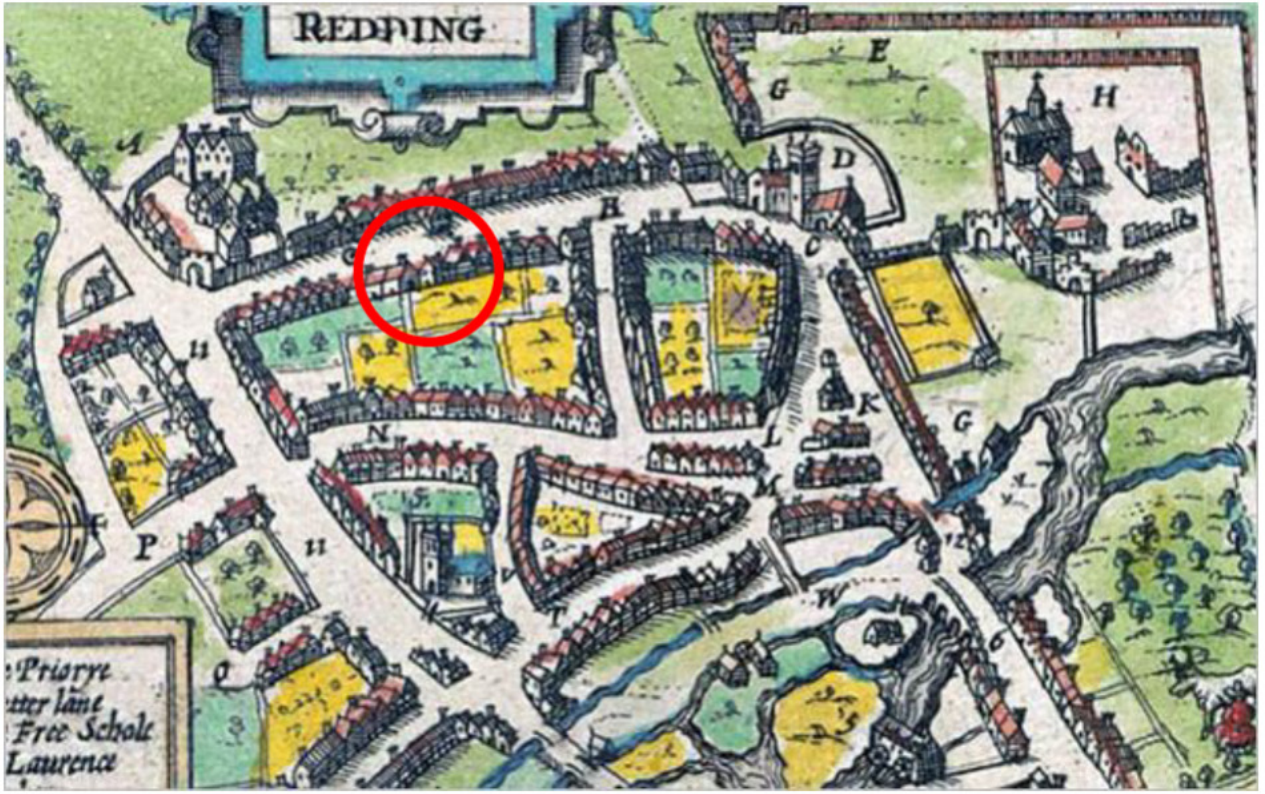


Figure 3.1 John Speed's Map of Reading, 1611
Source: Berkshire Local Archives

5 Ditchfield & Page 1923

3 | Context and Background

(1810) when the Kennet and Avon Canal was completed, connecting London via the Thames at Reading with Bristol and the Bristol Channel. Two large companies were established in the town at this time: Suttons Seeds (1806) and Huntley & Palmers Biscuits (1822).

3.9 Transport links were further improved by first the arrival of the Great Western Railway in 1840, followed by the South Eastern Railway in 1849 and The London and South Western Railway in 1856. Reading railway station opened in 1840. A contemporary map by Edward Weller shows the site of the newly built station and approach together with a new road linking the station with Friar Street (Figure 3.2). The approximate location of the Site is ringed in red.

3.10 The censuses show an expanding population throughout the second half of the 19th century, increasing almost threefold from 21,500 in 1851 to 59,000 by 1901[6]. Reading became a county borough under the Local Government Act of 1888. Building to accommodate the expanding population included not only a proliferation of terraced suburban dwellings, but also commercial landmark building in the town such as the Board Schools, banks and shop premises, mainly utilising coloured brick with terracotta dressings[7].

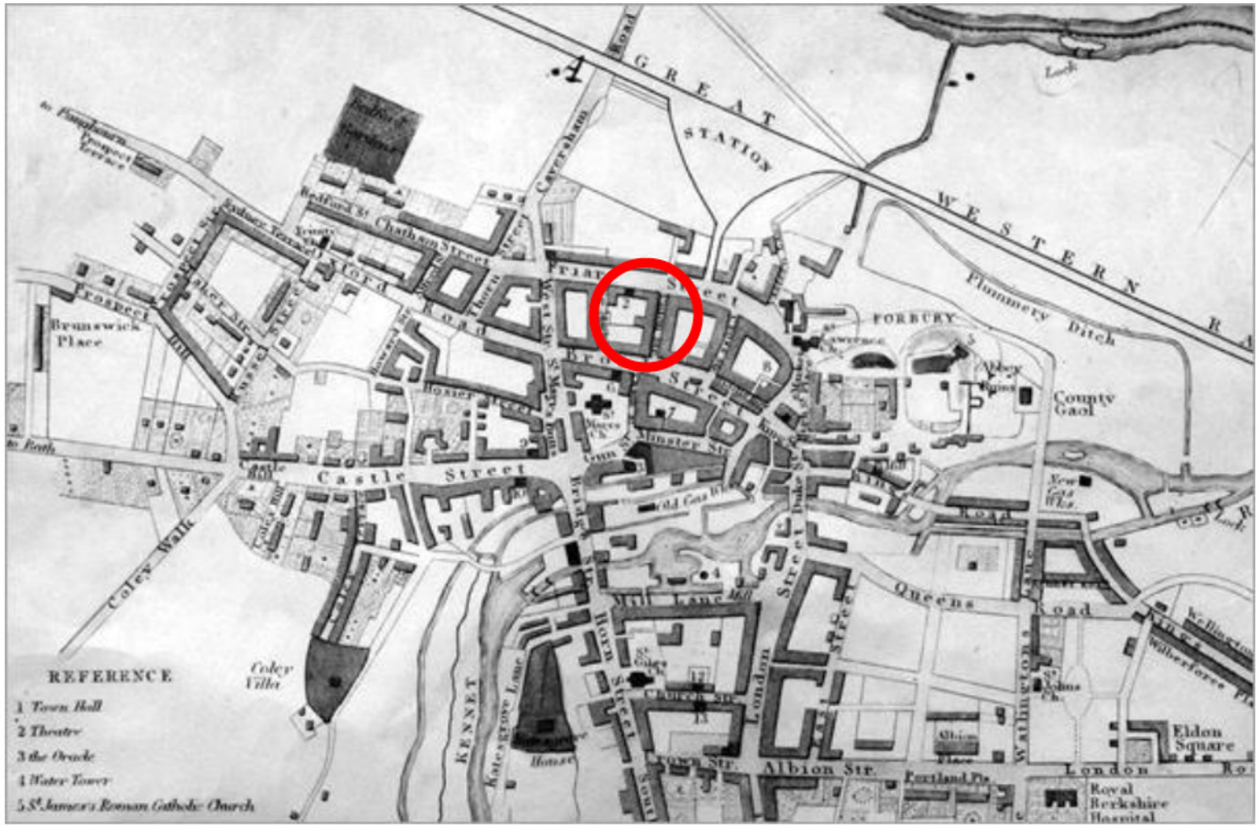


Figure 3.2 Edward Weller's Map of Reading, 1840
Source: Berkshire Local Archives

6 ancestry.co.uk
7 Tyack, Bradley & Pevsner 2010

3.11 Civic buildings, including the town hall (built in 1897 by Albert Waterhouse) had been built at the eastern end of Friar Street, close to St Laurence's church, whilst the western half was occupied by theatres and clubs, and what have been termed 'less salubrious pursuits'. The earliest Ordnance Survey large-scale mapping of 1879 shows that both sides of Friar Street were densely packed with properties, with long narrow plots fronting the streets and extending at the rear, often with yards or gardens, often served by narrow access lanes reflecting the burgage plots of the medieval town layout (Figure 3.3). The footprint of the present Site occupied part of a Gentlemen's Club, the Athenaeum, and two properties to the west, together with their rear gardens/yards and outbuildings.

3.12 The Charles E. Goad Ltd Fire Insurance Plan of 1895 provides details of the properties involved (Figure 3.4).

3.13 Comparison between the 1879 and 1895 plans (Figures 3.3 and 3.4) show differences in the footprints of the properties west of the Athenaeum, suggesting that the current No. 147 Friar Street was built in this period. The Goad Fire Insurance Plan shows that the building was 3½-storeys in height with an iron and glass frontage to second floor level;



Figure 3.3 Ordnance Survey Map of 1879, OS 25-inch 1st Edition.
Reproduced with permission of the National Library of Scotland

this frontage was retained when the block was redeveloped at the beginning of the 20th century. The current frontage bears the date 1882 for a company of Auctioneers, Surveyors and Land & Estate Agents. However, this signage refers to the history of a later 20th century occupant (Nicholas Estate Agents) rather than to the early history of the building itself[8]. This building, together with its next door neighbour to the west, was occupied in 1895 by the premises of the Arthur Newbery Furniture Factory, a two-storey cabinet factory and three-storey store building at the rear.

3.14 Properties in Friar Street and Broad Street were demolished at the end of the 19th century in order to create a new shopping thoroughfare linking Broad Street with the railway station. The new street, Queen Victoria Street, was completed in 1903. The work was one of a number of contemporary redevelopment schemes in the town which were sponsored by local Councillor and businessman, J.C. Fidler (of Fidler and Sons' Royal Berkshire Seed Stores). The street was flanked by matching 4-storey blocks with shops at ground level, constructed in yellow brick with terracotta façades and dressings. The design included corner plots at 148 and 150 Friar Street and Nos 24-28 and



Figure 3.4 1895 Charles E Goad Ltd. Insurance Place

© British Library

8 https://shopfrontelegy.wordpress.com/2016/12/17/nicholas/

35-38 Broad Street. The architect is uncertain: the Historic England List Entry names the possible architect as County Surveyor Joseph Morris, whilst Pevsner attributes the design to local architects S.Slingsby Stallwood and Charles Smith & Sons. The terracotta dressings were created by S & E Collier Ltd. The company published a contemporary advertisement in The Contractors', Merchants' and Estate Managers' Compendium, 1907, to highlight their work (Figure 3.5).

3.15 The 1912-13 Ordnance Survey map shows the new street layout for the first time (Figure 3.6). Nos 1-3 Queen Victoria Street and Nos 146-148 Friar Street comprised a single shop, replacement premises for Arthur Newbury Furnishers. Differences in the pitch of the roofs of these premises suggest that this part of the street had been purposely designed to accommodate the single premises. Several of the former buildings at the rear of the original Newbery factory works, including the cabinet works detailed by the Charles Goad Insurance plan (Figure 3.4) were retained, thus restricting the space at the rear of Nos. 5-13.

3.16 A postcard, posted in 1908, is the earliest image showing the new Newbery Furniture premises (Figure 3.7).



Figure 3.5 An advertisement (1907) published soon after completion of Queen Victoria Street

3.17 An early 20th century photograph shows the view looking southwards down Queen Victoria Street towards Broad Street (Figure 3.8).

3.18 A photograph taken in 1939 shows the corner of Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street and the Newbery's shop premises (Figure 3.9).

3.19 A series of aerial photographs were taken of Reading that show the site in the early 1950s (Figures 3.10 and 3.11) and demonstrate well the character of the rear of the site at this time.

3.20 A photograph taken in the late 1950s-early 1960s, looking east along Friars Street, shows changes to the shopfront and first floor windows of No. 148 (Figure 3.12). The building was still occupied by Newberys at this time. The 1957-9 Ordnance Survey map shows that the shopfront to No 147 Friar Street had also been altered to provide a recessed funnel-shaped access into the shop (Figure 3.13).

3.21 Photographs taken in 1973 show further modernisation of the shop fronts of Nos. 1- 3 (Figure 3.14) and Nos. 11-15 Queen Victoria Street (Figure 3.14). The former Newbery's premises remained a furniture store, by now the premises of New Day House Furnishers.



Figure 3.6 1912-13. OS 25-inch 3rd Edition.
Reproduced with permission of the National Library of Scotland.



Figure 3.7 c.1908 Friary Street, looking east.



Figure 3.8 Early 20th century. Queen Victoria Street, looking south towards Broad Street.



Figure 3.9 1939 Photograph of the site when it was in use as Newbery's Furniture Store.



Figure 3.10 1951 Aerial photograph of the site from the west

© Britain From Above (ref: EAW034973)



Figure 3.11 1951 Aerial photograph of the site from the west

© Britain From Above (ref: EAW034972)



Figure 3.12 Late 1950s-early 1960s. Looking east along Friar Street



Figure 3.13 1957-9 Ordnance survey map



Figure 3.14 Looking south down Queen Victoria Street.

© Get Reading



Figure 3.15 1973. Looking north up Queen Victoria Street.

© Get Reading

Section 4

Heritage Assets of Significance.

4 Statement of Significance

Assessment of Significance

Methodology

4.1 The assessment methodology used for assessing the significance of the identified heritage assets and their settings is based on the Historic England's Conservation Principles (both the published version by English Heritage in 2008[1] and the draft revised version by Historic England in November 2017.

4.2 Identification of special interest and significance is based on the three heritage interests - historical, archaeological and architectural & artistic - the definitions of these interests are set out in the PPG and cited in section 2 of this report.

1 https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-principles-sustainable-management-historicenvironment/

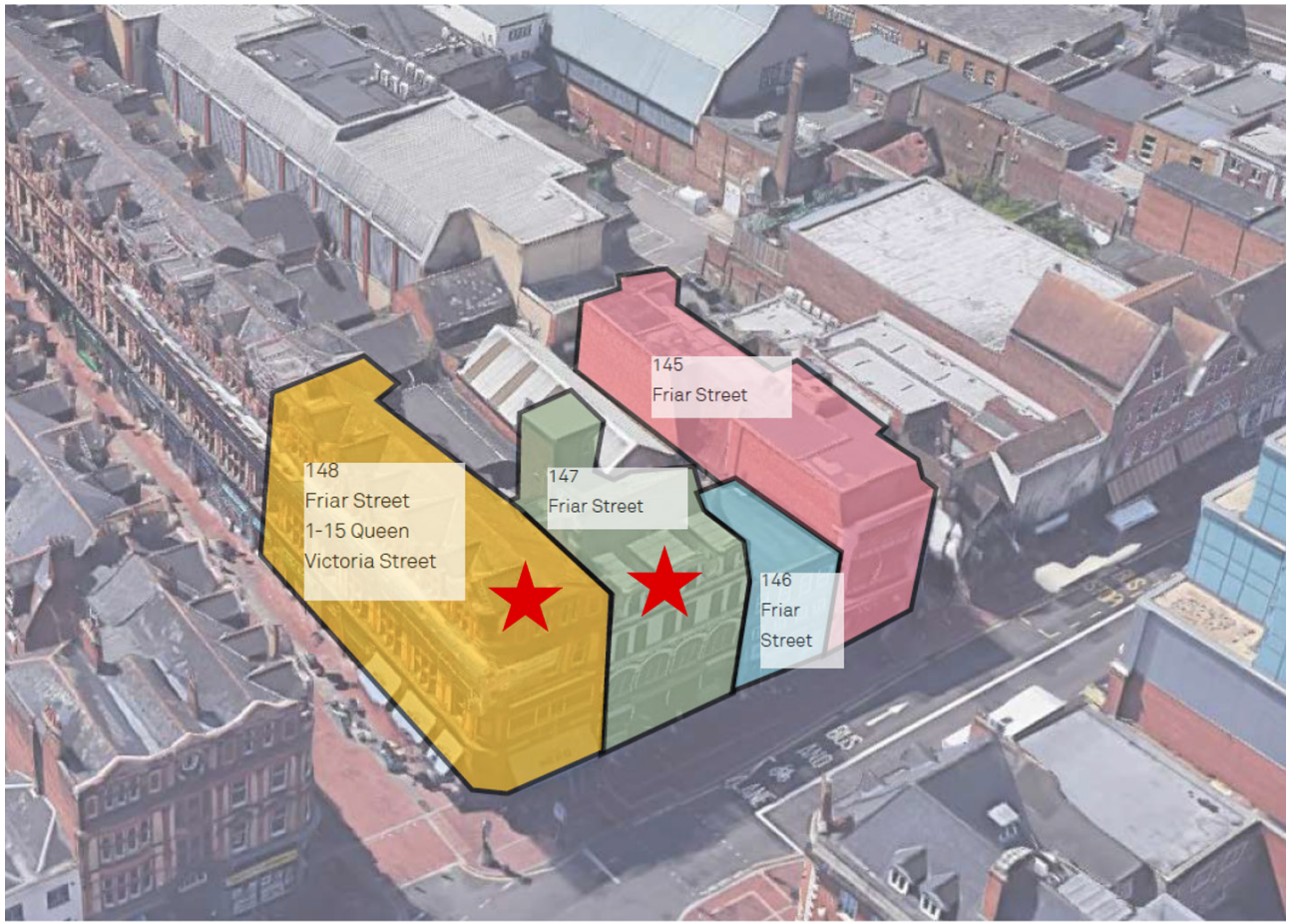


Figure 4.1 Buildings within the Site. Those statutorily listed have been identified with a star.

1-15 Queen Victoria Street and 148 Friar Street (grade II)

4.3 1-15 Queen Victoria Street and 148 Friar Street are part of a wider grade II designation which encompasses:

- 1-31 and 2-32 Queen Victoria Street;
- 148, 149 and 150 Friar Street; and
- 24-28 and 35-38 Broad Street."

4.4 This series of buildings was listed as a single entity in December 1978 (UID: 1113564) and its List Description reads:

"...A circa 1894 commercial street with returns to Broad and Friar Streets. Probably by Joseph Morris. Dutch gabled free Baroque style. 3 1/2 storeys, yellow brick and terracotta with dividing Ionic pilasters. Dentil cornice. Pilasters to dormers, broken pediments above. An elongated pattern of shallow bays to 1st and 2nd floors 4:2:1:1:1:1:3. Mullion and transom window to bays, sashes with architraves (and pediments on 1st floor) to rest. Modern shopfronts, retaining cornice to fascia and scroll brackets to pilasters, only one shop retains prewar shopfront. Large returns to Broad Street. The return to east (No 28 Broad Street) supported by No 26 (dated 1894, grey brick with red terracotta dressings) and by No 24 (an early C20 Bank with -large shaped pediment doorway on corner to Cross Street; red brick with stone dressings and stone fret patterns to gables)."

4.5 The part of the wider listed building which falls within the application site is the northern part of the terrace along Queen Victoria Street which turns the corner west with Friar Street. This building, and the wider listed structure, is of considerable architectural quality, primarily deriving from the quality and form of its front elevation which includes brickwork, terracotta, decorative gables, granite pilasters and original windows.

4.6 Within the site itself, while generally complete above ground floor, the ground floor shopfronts, signs and lights are all modern and detract from the significance of the terrace.

4.7 A double-height shopfront is present to no.148. While this is shown on the 1908 photograph the present timber infilling is modern (1950s-60s, see figure 3.12) and detracts from the architectural interest of the frontage. Interestingly a well detailed double height feature is echoed on the southern end of the terrace, suggesting that these unusual features may be original (though that present to no.148 is no longer in its original condition or form).



Figure 4.2 Modern ad hoc shopfronts along 1-15 Queen Victoria Street



Figure 4.3 Modern ad hoc shopfronts along 1-15 Queen Victoria Street

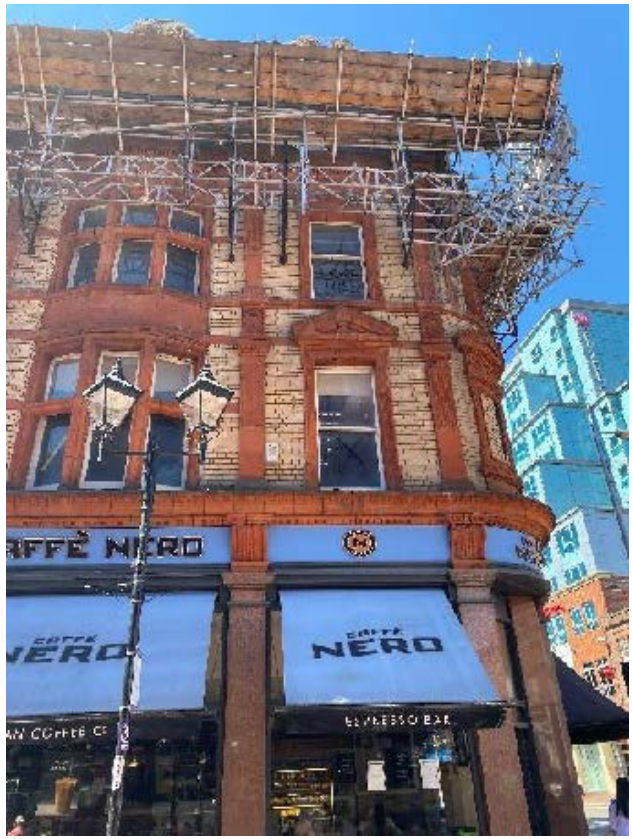


Figure 4.4 Modern shopfronts to 148 Friar Street which, on the Friar Street elevation, includes a two storey element



Figure 4.5 Modern shopfronts to 148 Friar Street which, on the Friar Street elevation, includes a two storey element

4.8 Despite the changes to the shopfronts, the terrace remains as a good example of an early 20th century commercial premises and this bestows a degree of historic (illustrative and associative) interest.

4.9 In addition to the changes to the ground floor exterior of the building, it is relevant to note that the condition of the front façade is deteriorating, with key architectural detailing such as the gables, which are structurally unstable, and brick and terracotta dressings in need of repair. This is exacerbated by the vacancy of the upper floors.

4.10 The rear of the listed building within the site has been heavily altered and demonstrates a basic, rudimentary design of limited architectural merit with blank brick elevations, modern windows and a detracting fire escape walkway. All of the rear chimney stacks have been removed and the roofs altered with new skylights and vents following the removal of the dormer windows. Nonetheless, the rear of the elevation is of some value, albeit to a significantly lesser degree than the front. The rear elevation of no.15 Queen Victoria Street retains more of its original rear composition with attractive brick-faced dormer windows and is of more architectural value than the rest of the terrace within the site.



Figure 4.6 Poor quality rear elevations of the site

4.11 Internally, nos. 1-3 Queen Victoria Street and 148 Friar Street have been heavily altered with all partitions being late 20th century in date associated with the office use of the buildings. The interiors of this part of the terrace are of no particular heritage value.

4.12 Elsewhere within the terrace (5-15 Queen Victoria Street), while the basement and ground floors are equally heavily altered, elements of the original interiors survive to the upper floors. This is typically in the form of plan form, original room proportions and circulation with party walls, original staircases (present within no. 5 and 9), chimney breasts and partitions. The presence of this fabric adds to the architectural and historic interest of the building.



Figure 4.7 Open plan layout and modern partitions present within 1-3 Queen Victoria Street and 148 Friar Street



Figure 4.8 Open plan layout and modern partitions present within 1-3 Queen Victoria Street and 148 Friar Street



Figure 4.9 Staircase located in 3 Queen Victoria Street with modern lower flights and earlier 20th century upper flights



Figure 4.10 Examples of earlier elements of plan form present



Figure 4.11 Examples of earlier elements of plan form present

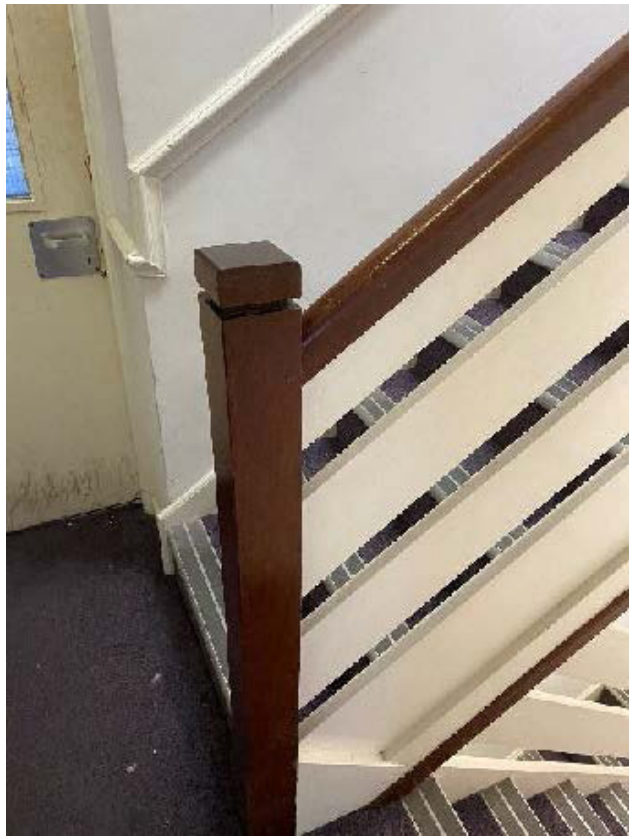


Figure 4.12 Modern staircases present within 5-15 Queen Victoria Street



Figure 4.13 Modern staircases present within 5-15 Queen Victoria Street

147 Friar Street (grade II)

4.13 147 Friar Street was grade II listed in December 1978 (UID: 1113488), it's List Description reads:

"*Circa 1880s. 3½ storey commercial frontage. Painted brick with stone voussoirs and dressings. Cornice and parapet. 3 high segmental headed dormers with ramped moulded coping between and modillion cornices, centre 2-light. These and 3 pairs of windows on 2nd floor are plate glass sashes. 4 depressed arches on 1st floor under cornice and fascia with outer pilasters and dividing fluted columns with Corinthian caps. Cornice and fascia over ground floor shop front of similar pattern with recessed entrance. The 2 storey shop front is the main interest of this building and it is included for that reason.*"

4.14 As indicated by the List Description, the significance of 147 Friar Street primarily relates to the architectural quality of the 1880s front elevation, particularly the double height colonnade shopfront and the 3no. segmental headed dormer windows that feature moulded coping between and modillion cornices. The building is a good example of a late 19th century commercial premises and this provides the structure with a degree of historic (illustrative and associative) interest. However, elements of the frontage now detract from the significance of the building and represent an opportunity for enhancement. These detracting features include:

- The 20th century shopfront with splayed frontage which divides the shopfront into two units;
- The boarding over the facias which obscures the full height character; and
- The modern paint applied to the front elevation which was originally left as exposed red brick.

4.15 An inscription above the first floor indicates the building was constructed for an auction and land agency firm established in 1882. However, this lettering was added in the late 20th century and it is known that, by 1895, the building was occupied by Arthur Newbery Furniture.

4.16 While the primary interest of the building relates to its frontage and the interior has been heavily altered at various phases and is now in a deteriorating condition. Nonetheless, there are some components of the interior which are also of value.



Figure 4.14 No 147 Friar Street

4.17 The most notable phase of alteration appears to date to the 1930s when the rear stair and lift core were added and new internal partitions (curved to the first floor) were introduced. While not part of the original phase of the building's construction these additions are of some limited value in their own right.

4.18 Despite the levels of alteration and deterioration present, some late 19th century elements of the interior survive. These include projecting chimney breasts still visible on flank walls and a small number of partitions which retain portions of lath and plaster. Where present, surviving elements of plan form present some degree of historic legibility within the building, but generally the interiors (now primarily open plan) are able to accommodate change.



Figure 4.15 Curved partitions at first floor and a view of the 1930s stair and lift core located to the rear of the building



Figure 4.17 Internal views within 147 Friar Street showing surviving partitions and chimney breasts



Figure 4.16 Internal views within 147 Friar Street showing surviving partitions and the general open plan layout present



Figure 4.18 Internal views within 147 Friar Street showing surviving partitions and chimney breasts

Unlisted buildings within the Site

146-145 Friar Street

4.19 Nos 146-145 Friar Street are a pair west of Fife Court and have been incorporated within the scheme as part of the revised application.

4.20 Both buildings were originally built in the mid 19th Century. However, they have been largely rebuilt since, with both re-fronted in the early 20th Century. Further modern alterations include new roofs, shop fronts and windows.

4.21 No 146 is particularly modest in its height and appearance, with a string course between the floors. The roof is hidden behind a tall parapet with stone coping.

4.22 In contrast No 145 has an attractive front façade from early 20th Century and a later mansard roof extension. The party wall has been raised considerably in height to allow for the extension. The blank brick wall is visible in some long distance views. Although the shop front is modern, the Art Moderne style elevation appears particularly attractive within the street scene. As such it contributes positively to the setting of the listed buildings in so far as the commercial street frontage, rhythm and scale.



Figure 4.19 No 146-145 Friar Street

Built Form to the Rear of the Site

4.23 To the rear of the Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street buildings are a variety of extensions and structures which, either by virtue of attachment (i.e. they are connected to the listed buildings) or curtilage (i.e. fall under the provisions of section 1(5)(b) of the 1990 Act, sometimes referred to as 'curtilage listed'), be considered part of the listed buildings for procedural matters.

4.24 A review of the history of the site and appraisal of the 1895 Goad Plan suggests that most of these structures have historic links to 147 Friar Street from this building's use as a furniture store.

4.25 To the southern end of the site are two red brick structures which are shown on the 1895 Goad Plan. These include a three storey building formerly in use as a store and a two storey building formerly in use as a cabinet factory. While contributing to the significance of 147 Friar Street as former ancillary buildings and being broadly contributory to the setting of the Queen Victoria Street terrace these buildings are not of any special interest in their own right.

4.26 Other built form to the rear of the site is more modern, heavily altered and possesses either a neutral or negative role in the heritage values of the listed buildings. The interiors of these aspects of the site are of no value.



Figure 4.20 Built form present to the rear of the site including the 19th century structures to the rear



Figure 4.22 Built form present to the rear of the site including the 19th century structures to the rear



Figure 4.21 Built form present to the rear of the site including the 19th century structures to the rear



Figure 4.23 Built form present to the rear of the site including the 19th century structures to the rear



Figure 4.24 Interior view within buildings to the rear of the site



Figure 4.25 Interior view within buildings to the rear of the site



Figure 4.26 Interior view within buildings to the rear of the site

Heritage Assets within the setting of the Site

4.27 There are several listed buildings within the context of the Site as shown in Fig 4.7. It is not possible to document all of them within this assessment. As such only those buildings that may be potentially impacted upon by the development are included below. It should be noted that this is in no manner an exhaustive list and further townscape assessment has therefore been provided to address the wider context.

St Laurence's Church and Town Hall.

4.28 St Laurence's Church and the adjacent Town Hall complex are the key buildings of this character area. The early 12th century church looks down the Market Place and overlooks Town Hall Square. Originally the outer gate of Reading Abbey was attached to its south flank. Along the south side of the church, a covered walkway was built by the mathematician John Blagrave in 1619, known as Blagrave's piazza. Later the parish stocks stood beneath it. The walkway was demolished in 1867.

4.29 The collection of municipal buildings in Blagrave Street is arranged around an 18th century town hall. In 1785 the old town hall in the upper storey of the Abbey Hospitium was demolished and a new one was built, now known as Victoria Hall. It was rebuilt in an Italianate style in 1864 to accommodate the Father Willis Organ.

4.30 In 1875 a new building designed by Alfred Waterhouse with bricks from the Reading firm of Colliers was completed. Waterhouse wrapped his new building around the earlier town hall and carefully placed the clock tower for views from Friar Street and Market Place.

4.31 In the next few years, further buildings were added to the complex. A Public Library and Museum by Thomas Lainson was added in 1883-4 and an Art Gallery by W.R.Howell in 1897. This group of buildings, decorated with a lively display of red and blue bricks and terracotta is one of the defining images of Reading's architecture. The pairing of the stone and flint medieval church tower and Waterhouse's red and blue brick clock tower display a lively contrast of colour and building materials, both in a Gothic style.

4.32 These group of buildings are of exceptionally high significance, and derive their interest from archaeological, architectural and historic values.

Site's contribution to the setting of assets

4.33 The Site forms part of the listed group of buildings along Queen Victoria Street. These buildings and those along Friar Street, comprise of varying ages, heights, widths and design. However, they do represent the commercial core of Reading and the retail centre of the town.

4.34 Together, the buildings also form part of the street which was one of the oldest routes connecting the Greyfriar's Church with St Laurence. This was a historic route which was used by several monks and priests and holds high significance for the history of the area. Views out of St Laurence Church and the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area are available along Friar Street, again signifying the historic links and the medieval street pattern of the area.

4.35 Although the Site does not itself contribute to the route, its building line and retail use forms part of the setting, linking the two Churches together. Views of the precincts of St Laurence are available to and from the Site. This view is considered to be key in understanding the medieval street and routes and the existing building line contributes to the same.

Summary of Significance and Site's contribution

4.36 Overall, the Site has high architectural value. Closely related to the development of Reading it is considered to have historic and communal value. No 146 has limited architectural or historic value, having been altered beyond recognition. No 145 has architectural interest, limited to its front facade above ground floor.

4.37 Additionally, they have high group and townscape value, following 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.

4.38 The current building line of the buildings within the Site allow views of St Laurence Church to be appreciated along Friar Street which contributes to these highly significant group of buildings, forming the medieval core of the town.

Section 5

Heritage Impact Assessment.

5 Heritage Impact Assessment

Summary of proposals

5.1 The proposals remain much the same so far as it is related to the listed buildings. There are no additional alterations to the fabric and the repair and restoration works continue as per consented scheme. As per application ref (21/0223/FUL & 21/0224/LBC), the works approved are:

- The demolition of existing rear outbuildings comprising a series of extensions dating to the late 19th and 20th centuries;
- A rear extension to the Queen Victoria Street terrace;
- External alterations to Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street which seek to enhance the architectural merit of the listed buildings and halt deterioration;
- Internal alterations to upper floors to convert the spaces into an Aparthotel, to include reinstatement of traditional features where appropriate; and
- The introduction of replacement built form within the courtyard.

5.2 As part of the application, Heritage Collective provided a detailed assessment of the fabric and concluded that much of the internal fabric was modern and therefore of no heritage value. The proposals were mainly to remove the modern partitions and provide new layouts for the efficient use of the buildings. While some works, such as the removal of staircase, were considered to result in the loss of some historic fabric, the internal alterations alongside the repair works were considered to be an acceptable balance.

5.3 This was also the view of the Council. Paragraph 6.41 of the Officer's report dated 23rd June 2021 stated:

"Officers and the Council's Conservation and Urban Design Officer concur with the overall findings of the heritage statement in terms of the assessment of the heritage significance of the existing buildings."

5.4 In addition, paras 6.74 and 6.75 of the report stated:

"The proposed repair and restoration works to the upper façades of the building are considered to contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the listed buildings and their significance and to be a further significant benefit of the proposed development.

In overall terms the proposed works to the listed buildings, including demolition of modern elements to the rear, restoration of uniform shop fronts, repair and restoration of the upper façades of the building frontages, reinstatement of internal compartmentalised layouts, re-use of and improving public access and visibility of the listed buildings are considered to represent works which would both preserve and enhance the significance of the listed buildings and the character of the surrounding area. Officers consider that these works would outweigh the few identified instances of minor harm to the significance of the listed buildings, including demolition of former store and factory outbuildings associated with no. 147 Friar Street and rear stair/lift core to the same building as well as loss of an original internal stair to no. 9 Queen Victoria Street. The minor harm identified is considered to amount to less than substantial harm in accordance with paragraph 196 of the NPPF which requires such harm to be balanced against public benefits of the scheme. The proposals are considered to result in a "significant positive benefit to the listed buildings and no net heritage harm is identified."

Minor alterations to No 147

5.5 In comparison to the approved works, there are some minor alterations proposed to the first floor at No 147 alongside a new shop front. Figures 5.1 and 5.2 show the areas of the minor alterations. Figure 5.3 shows the significance plans (prepared as part of the previous application) for the first floor. The key areas where the alterations are proposed are of low heritage value.

5.6 The proposals are considered to create a more efficient layout and will achieve a more comprehensive development by incorporating Nos 145 and 146 within the new Hotel.

5.7 Additionally, a new shop front will be introduced to No 147. The design has been carefully considered following an understanding of the Victorian frontages elsewhere within the wider area.

5.8 Overall, the proposals would only affect fabric of low value which will not cause any harm to the significance of the buildings. The new shop front and the layout alterations would result in a more efficient and comprehensive development that would result in enhancements to the Reading town centre.

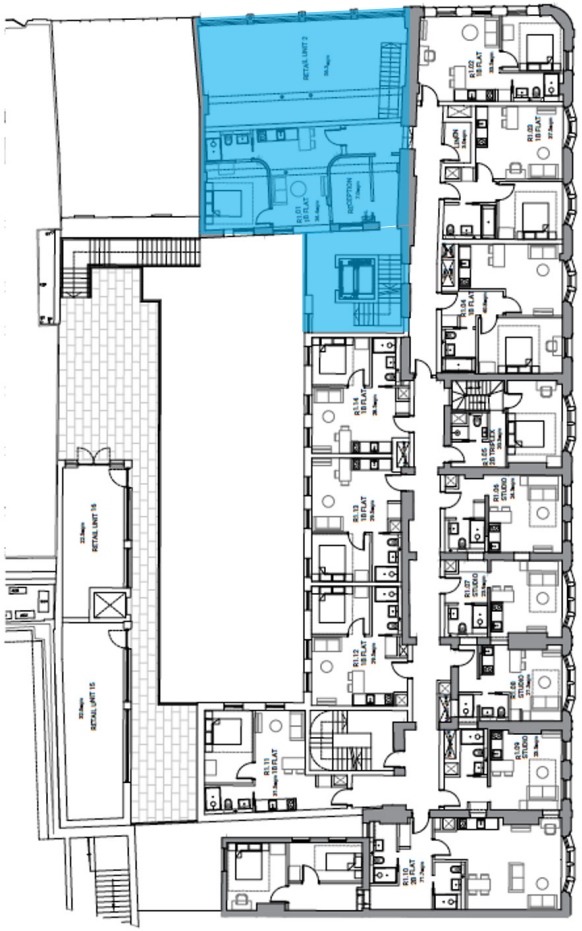


Figure 5.1 Approved first floor layout at No 147 showing areas where slight alterations are proposed (coloured in blue)

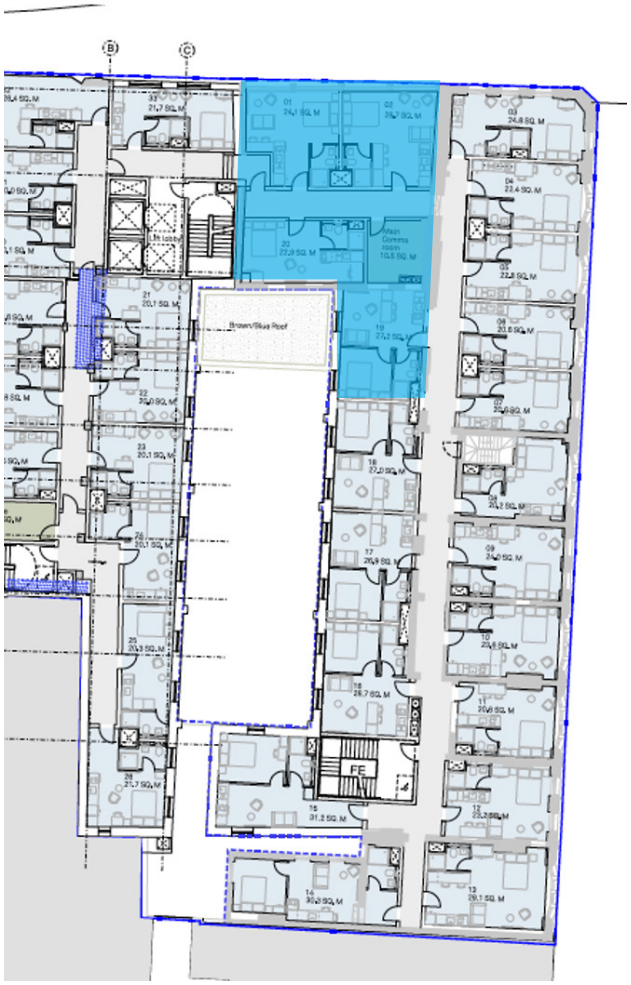


Figure 5.2 Proposed first floor layout at No 147 showing areas where slight alterations are proposed (coloured in blue)

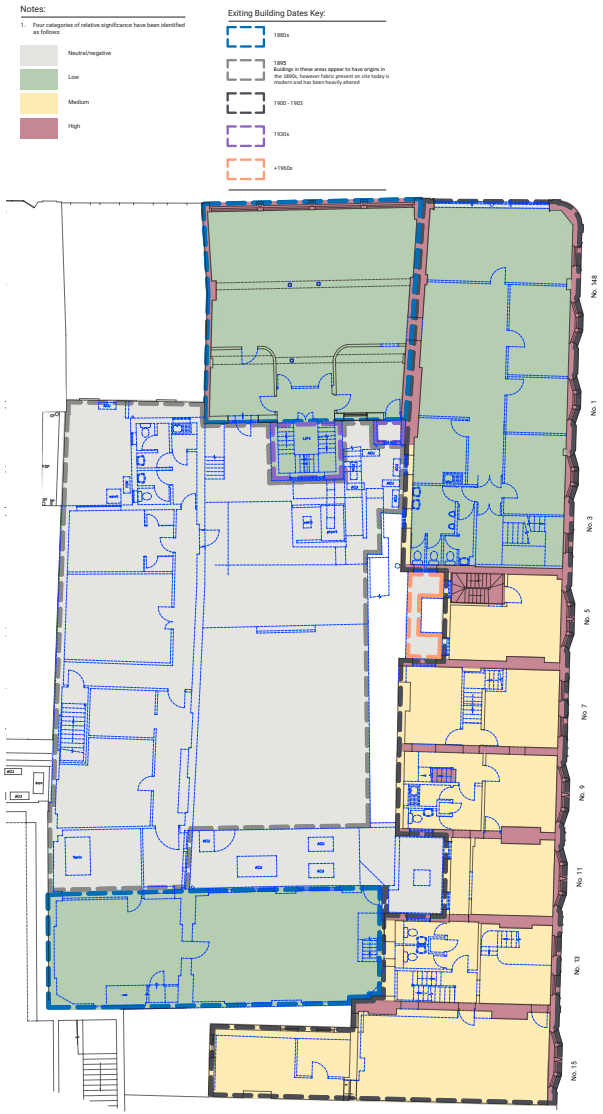


Figure 5.3 Significance plan for the first floor

Alterations to No 145-146

5.9 The remainder of the proposals mainly relate to No 145 and 146 Friar Street. Informed by the heritage significance of the two properties, the proposal would rebuild No146 (considered of no architectural merit) and retain front facade of No 145 (considered of some architectural merit). Figure 5.4 shows the additional massing to be introduced along Friar Street.

5.10 No 146 is to be rebuilt with two additional storeys. The third floor has been designed to replicate the more traditional design of the main building, in brick. The fourth floor extension is designed to appear as a minimalist roof form in grey cladding that will give the impression of a mansard roof.

5.11 No 145 would be retained and restored with the third floor rebuilt. The ground floor would be altered and include a new shopfront. The current modern mansard roof would be replaced with a traditional upper floor, designed with proportions akin to early 20th Century buildings. This would appear congruous with the rest of the building's retained facade. Above this a new mansard roof extension would be introduced in a material similar to that of No 146. This will have a harmonious effect in terms of the roofline, which will continue to appear animated with slight height differences.

5.12 Taken together, the additional massing would appear well designed and belonging to the current rhythm of the street and townscape. While providing additional accommodation for the Hotel, it would have a positive effect on the street frontage by removing poorly designed shopfront and modern roofs. There would be no impact on the listed buildings or their settings and the proposal would result in enhancements.



Figure 5.4 Consented front elevation to Friar Street showing the archway retained



Figure 5.5 Proposed front elevation to Friar Street with additional massing and new shopfront to No 147 shown in blue



Figure 5.6 3D visualisation of the consented scheme with the massing to the rear



Figure 5.7 Friar Street elevation with the additional massing on Nos 145-146 and new shopfront to No 147

Introduction of new shopfronts and signage

5.13 As part of the revised scheme, the arcade entrance to No 147 would be replaced with a traditionally designed shopfront. This part of the fabric is of low heritage value and would not impact on the significance of the listed building The design would align with the street frontage and would enhance the retail and commercial character of the town centre. During discussions with the Council at various pre-application meetings, Officer were supporting of the proposal.

5.14 The shopfront and signage for No 145 and 146 would follow the same principles as the approved scheme. This would bring a unified design approach, enhancing the street frontage which is currently marred by ad hoc and modern shopfronts that detract from the significance of the listed buildings. This would not involve any loss historic fabric or significance and as such would be considered as an enhancement.

5.15 The proposed shopfronts have been heavily informed by traditional shopfront design and surviving historic photographs which show Queen Victoria Street. The shopfronts would feature fascia panels, stallrisers, a single side entrance door, street numbering and traditionally detailed door with plinth and glazing. The shopfront colour and signage is proposed to be consistent across the terrace. These works would represent a considerable enhancement to the architectural integrity and authenticity of the street and will enhance the setting of the listed buildings.

Development to the rear

5.16 The proposal will include the redevelopment of the rear parts of No 145-146 Friar Street and their amalgamation with the consented scheme. This would include an extension to the terrace and new courtyard structures forming an open market square to create a new, accessible public space.

5.17 Paragraph 6.43 of the Officer's Report as part of the previous scheme stated:

"The proposed demolition works to the rear include two outbuildings dating from the 19th Century which were former store and cabinet factory buildings. Whilst not considered to be of any specialist interest in their own right, these building do contribute, to a limited extent, to the significance of no. 147 as former ancillary structures. The submitted heritage statement concludes that the loss of these structures, due to their limited contribution to the significance of the listed terraces of buildings, would not result in any material harm, noting that the significance of the buildings comes largely from the street frontage elevations and not the rear. Officers' opinion is that the loss of the outbuilding would result in some, albeit minor, harm to the significance of the listed building."

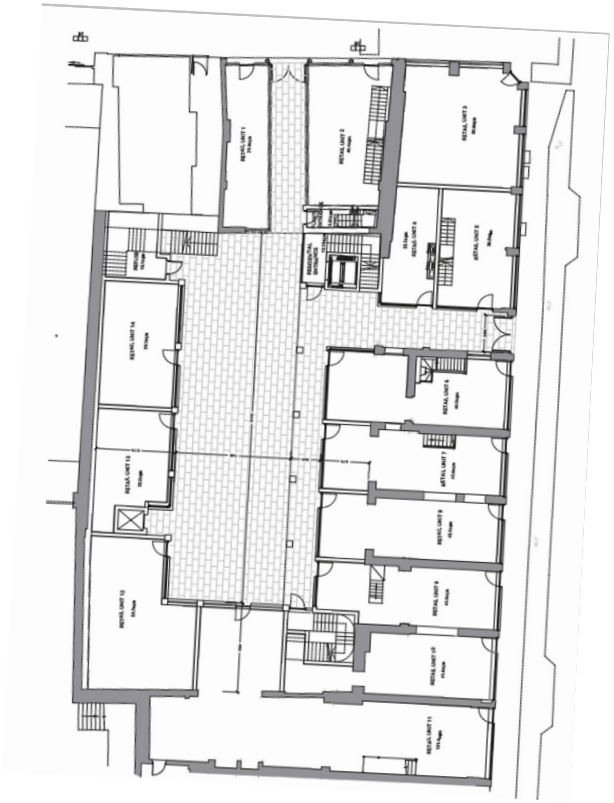


Figure 5.8 Consented ground floor with the arcade entrance to no 147

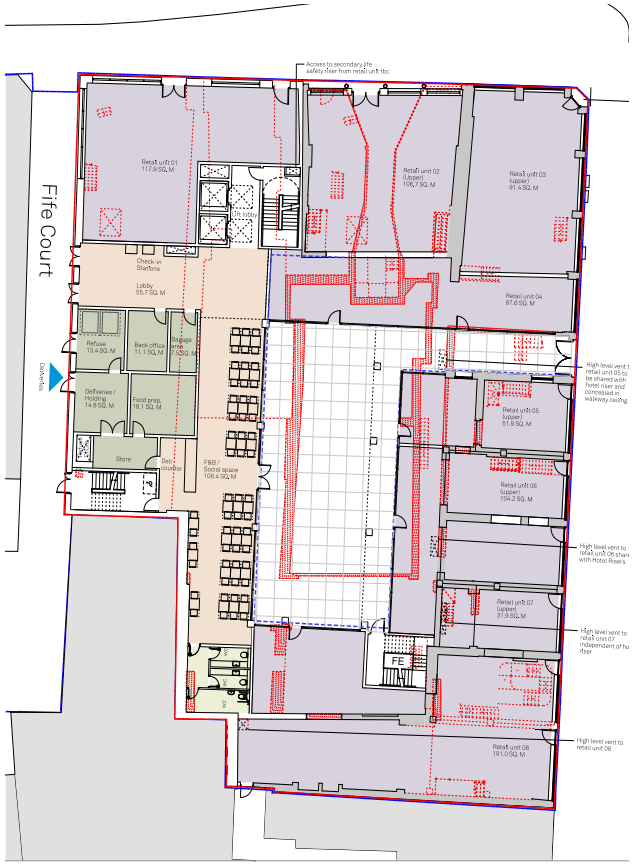


Figure 5.9 Proposed ground floor with a new shop front to No 147

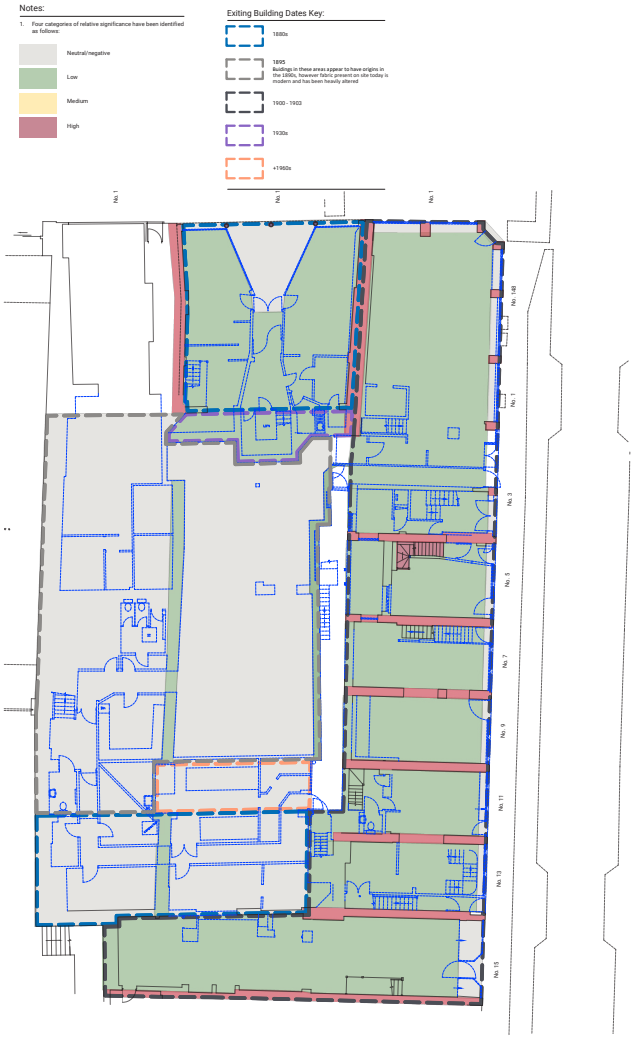


Figure 5.10 Significance plan for the ground floor

5.18 The current proposal integrates the consented extensions with the new extension to Nos 145-146. As discussed in the previous chapter, the rear of the buildings are of no architectural or historic merit and do not have any direct relationship with the listed buildings. Their redevelopment would facilitate the delivery of this new quarter and would be considered as an enhancement to the wider area.

5.19 The introduction of replacement built form within the courtyard area and the transformation of this space to a publicly accessible market square have the opportunity to enhance the functionality of the space and the quality of built form present on the site.

5.20 Architecturally, the character of the courtyard built form at ground floor will continue the established character of the rear elevation with brick colonnade and well detailed shopfronts.

Summary of Heritage Impact

5.21 Overall, due to the appropriate scale, carefully considered and high-quality design, the introduction of additional massing over No 145-146 would not affect the heritage significance of the grade II listed buildings on the site.

5.22 The proposal would retain and restore the unlisted No 145 Friar Street which is considered to contribute positively to the local townscape and would be considered as an enhancement.

5.23 The arcade entrance to No 147 would be replaced with a traditionally designed shopfront. Minor alterations are also proposed to the first floor layout to allow for efficient integration of the consented scheme with No 145-146. These works only relate to fabric that is considered to be of low heritage value and would not have an impact on the significance of the listed asset.

5.24 The proposal would provide a comprehensive redevelopment of the site to provide a high quality commercial and visitor accommodation use that will reinvigorate a series of currently underused heritage assets within Reading town centre.

5.25 In addition to the restoration of the listed buildings and the heritage benefits derived from the same, the revised scheme provides the following enhancements in heritage and townscape terms:

- Continued investment and restoration of 1-15 Queen Victoria Street and 147-148 Friar Street and their highly significant frontage;
- Reviving the currently underused buildings within the immediate setting of the listed buildings by providing an active and comprehensive viable use that will see for their future conservation and maintenance; and,
- Reinstatement of appropriate shopfronts throughout the site, thus enhancing the street frontages and thereby the setting of the listed buildings.

5.26 Prior to the submission of the application, the proposal was discussed with the Council Officers as part of pre-application engagement. The proposals were seen as positive and Officers expressed support in principle.

5.27 Given that the proposal would not result in any harm to heritage assets, Paragraph 197 of the NPPF would not be applicable. The high quality design and optimisation of the heritage assets will be considered in line with the requirements of local and national planning policies.

Section 6

Conclusion.

6 Conclusion

6.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared in accordance with paragraph 189 of the NPPF and is submitted alongside an application for planning permission and listed building consent for a heritage led redevelopment of 148-145 Friar Street & 1-15 Queen Victoria Street, Reading. The proposal is a revision to the consented scheme at 1-15 Queen Victoria Street and 147-148 Friar Street.

6.2 This report considers the additional impact of the revised proposal an does not repeat the conclusions of the consented scheme. It provides a proportionate assessment of the significance of the application site and this is followed by an assessment of the effect of the proposals on that significance.

6.3 The Queen Victoria Street terrace (including 148 Friar Street and 1-15 Queen Victoria Street) is a building of considerable architectural quality, primarily deriving from the quality and form of its front elevation which includes brickwork, terracotta, decorative gables, granite pilasters and original windows. While its significance has been affected by virtue of poor quality shopfronts but the building remains a good example of an early 20th century commercial premises and this bestows a degree of historic (illustrative and associative) interest.

6.4 The significance of 147 Friar Street primarily relates to the architectural quality of the 1880s front elevation, particularly the double height colonnade shopfront and the 3no. segmental headed dormer windows that feature moulded coping between and modillion cornices. As with the Queen Victoria Street terrace, the building is a good example of a late 19th century commercial premises.

6.5 The minor alterations proposed as part of the current proposal to no 147 only relate to fabric that is of low or no heritage value. As such, this would not have an impact on the significance of the listed building. The new shop front proposed as part of the works is informed by detailed understanding of Victorian and traditional frontages elsewhere in the area. This would enhance its appearance and thereby its contribution within the wider area.

6.6 No 146 Friar Street is unlisted and has been altered beyond recognition and has no architectural value. In townscape terms, whilst it follows the rhythm of the street frontage, its scale appears to be disproportionately smaller. The modern shopfront further detracts from the contribution to the setting of the listed buildings and wider the townscape of the area. The proposal to rebuild it to a more appropriate scale whilst adhering to the modesty in architectural detailing would ensure that the character and appearance of the listed buildings continues to be distinctive.

6.7 No 145 Friar Street has an early 20th Century front facade above the modern shop front on the ground floor. This has some architectural value which would be retained as part of the proposals. The rear of the building would be redeveloped and incorporated within the consented scheme to create a more comprehensive redevelopment of the Site.

6.8 The proposed scheme of works is based on an understanding of the significance, character, historic development and surviving historic fabric of the grade II listed buildings on the site. The proposals have been designed to provide a new viable use for the Site and the listed buildings within it. The proposal would continue to provide investment towards their repair and maintenance, sensitive to their significance.

6.9 The revised 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.

6.10 Given that the proposal would not result in any harm to heritage assets, Paragraph 197 of the NPPF would not be applicable. The high quality design and optimisation of the heritage assets will be considered in line with the requirements of local and national planning policies.

Appendix 1
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http://ww2.berkshirenclosure.org.uk/calmview/

Appendix 2
Statutory List Descriptions.

Appendix 2: Statutory List Descriptions

147 Friar Street

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1113488

Date first listed: 14-Dec-1978

Statutory Address 1: 147, FRIAR STREET

District: Reading (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

National Grid Reference: SU7149673571

Details

1. 5128 SU 7173 12/492

FRIAR STREET (South Side) No 147

2. Circa 1880s. 3½ storey commercial frontage. Painted brick with stone voussoirs and dressings. Cornice and parapet. 3 high segmental headed dormers with ramped moulded coping between and modillion cornices, centre 2-light. These and 3 pairs of windows on 2nd floor are plate glass sashes. 4 depressed arches on 1st floor under cornice and fascia with outer pilasters and dividing fluted columns with Corinthian caps. Cornice and fascia over ground floor shop front of similar pattern with recessed entrance. The 2 storey shop front is the main interest of this building and it is included for that reason.

1-31 Queen Victoria Street

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1113564

Date first listed: 14-Dec-1978

Date of most recent amendment: 01-Aug-1979

Statutory Address 1: 1-31, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET

Statutory Address 2: 148,149 AND 150, FRIAR STREET

Statutory Address 3: 2-32, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET

Statutory Address 4: 24-28, BROAD STREET

Statutory Address 5: 35-38, BROAD STREET

District: Reading (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

National Grid Reference: SU7152373529

Details

In the entry for BROAD STREET (north side)

1/558 Nos 24 to 28 (consec) Nos 35 to 37 (consec) the numbering shall be amended to read Nos 24, 26, and 28 and Nos 35, 36 and 37

FRIAR STEERT (South Side) 2/558 Nos 148 and 149

The numbering shall be amended to read Nos 148, 149 and 150

QUEEN VICTORIA STREET 1. 5128 Nos 1 to 31 (odd) Nos 2 to 32 (even) SU 7173 NE 1/558 SU 7173 SW 2/558 SU 7173 SE 3/558 SU 7173 12/558 II

2. Including Nos 148 and 149 Friar Street and Nos 24 to 28 and 35 to 37 (consec) Broad Street. A circa 1894 commercial street with returns to Broad and Friar Streets. Probably by Joseph Morris. Dutch gabled free Baroque style. 3 1/2 storeys, yellow brick and terracotta with dividing Ionic pilasters. Dentil cornice. Pilasters to dormers, broken pediments above. An elongated pattern of shallow bays to 1st and 2nd floors 4:2:1:1:1:1:3. Mullion and transom window to bays, sashes with architraves (and pediments on 1st floor) to rest. Modern shopfronts, retaining cornice to fascia and scroll brackets to pilasters, only one shop retains prewar shopfront. Large returns to Broad Street. The return to east (No 28 Broad Street) supported by No 26 (dated 1894, grey brick with red terracotta dressings) and by No 24 (an early C20 Bank with -large shaped pediment doorway on corner to Cross Street; red brick with stone dressings and stone fret patterns to gables).

Appendix 3

Heritage Statement by Heritage Collective.


HCUK
GROUP
Heritage
Statement
1-15 Queen Victoria Street & 148 Friar Street and 147 Friar Street, Reading
Heritage
Collective
February 2021 | Project Ref 4768B

Project Number: 4768B

File Origin: https://heritagecollectiveuk.sharepoint.com/sites/Projects/Shared Documents/Projects 4501-5000/4701-4800/04768 - 15 Queen Victoria Street and 147, 147A and 147B Friar Street, Reading/4768B_2020/HC/Reports/2021.02.05 QVS Heritage Statement_Final.docx

Author with date	Reviewer code, with date
SD 19.01.2021	Project team
SD 05.02.2021	

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Appendices

App. 1 Scale of Harm table (Heritage Collective, 2019)

1. Introduction

1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Heritage Collective, part of the HCUK Group, on behalf of the Thackeray Estate. It relates to heritage led proposals for the extension and alteration of the site which encompasses 1-15 Queen Victoria Street & 148 Friar Street and 147 Friar Street, Reading. Reading Borough Council (RBC hereafter) are the determining authority.



Figure 1: View of the site from Friar Street

1.2 1-15 Queen Victoria Street & 148 Friar Street are grade II listed as part of a wider composition of coherent built form. The buildings were developed c.1900-1903 and are a good quality commercial terrace with a red brick frontage and Dutch and Flemish style gables. The building is in a particularly poor state of repair with scaffolding at the upper floors ensuring that no elements of the building fall to the ground. Without considerable investment the building's condition will continue to deteriorate.

1.3 147 Friar Street is also grade II listed building as a separate designation. The building dates from the early 1880s and features a double height cast iron colonnade shopfront which is the principle reason for the building's designated as highlighted by the building's List Description.



Figure 2: Site location plan

1.4 The site is not located within or adjacent to a conservation area and the only other listed buildings in the vicinity are other parts of the wider terrace along Queen Victoria Street.

Relevant Background and Proposals

1.5 The proposals seek to comprehensively redevelop the site so to provide enlivened retail space within the ground floor units, a market space within the newly created

courtyard and an Aparthotel within the upper floors. In order to achieve this various alterations to the buildings are required which can be summarised as:

- The demolition of existing rear outbuildings which typically comprises a series of extensions dating to the late 19th and 20th centuries;
- A rear extension to the Queen Victoria Street terrace;
- External alterations to Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street which seek to enhance the architectural merit of the listed buildings and halt deterioration;
- Internal alterations to upper floors to convert the spaces into an Aparthotel, to include reinstatement of traditional features where appropriate; and
- The introduction of replacement built form within the courtyard.

1.6 The proposed development has been subject to extensive pre-application discussions with RBC, specifically their conservation officer (LPA ref: 201372/PREAPP). On heritage matters, the pre-application response was wholly positive and noted that:

> *"In general terms and based on the limited information submitted at this stage the Council's Conservation and Urban Design Officer is of the opinion that the approach to the scheme appears well planned and that the proposed development has the potential to enhance the heritage character of the buildings and their setting."*

1.7 Other minor matters and suggested amendments to the scheme identified during the pre-application stage included wholly minor comments and queries on the scheme design. These points, summarised below, have all been addressed as part of the revised submission:

- To confirm the cast iron columns within the shopfront of 147 Friar Street would be retained. These were accidentally omitted from one of the pre-application drawings;
- As requested, a pitched slate roof has been added to the new two storey commercial unit within the courtyard space;
- The design of proposed columns to the rear extension have been revisited; and

- Existing basement to ground floor staircases within nos. 5, 7 and 11 Queen Victoria Street are retained.

1.8 As part of the pre-application response, a suite of documents was requested to be provided at application stage so to ensure that the heritage assets could be appropriately safeguarded. These documents have been provided as part of the application submission and can be summarised as:

- Detailed significance and phasing plans based on a thorough assessment of the building;
- A photographic record of the listed building (contained within the Schedule of Works);
- Schedule of Works for internal alterations to the listed buildings; and
- Timetable of urgent works to the listed buildings.

1.9 Overall, the proposals amount to a heritage led scheme which is based on a thorough understanding of the historic development, character and significance of the listed buildings and the site itself. The scheme as a whole seeks to preserve and enhance the significance and unique heritage values of the designated heritage assets and provide the buildings on the site with a long term viable use that will see for the conservation and maintenance of the listed buildings.

Purpose of this Statement

1.10 The purpose of this Heritage Statement is to assist with the determination of the applications by informing the decision takers on the effects of the proposed development on the historic built environment. Specifically, this report assesses the significance of the identified listed buildings and the effect of the proposed development on that significance. Particular regard is given to the provisions of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. The report also sets out how the proposal complies with the guidance and policy of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 and local planning policy.

1.11 Value judgements on the significance of the heritage assets affected are presented and the effects of the proposals upon that significance are appraised. The heritage

assets affected have been observed and assessed by the author following a site visit made in 2020 in good weather.

2. Relevant Planning Policy Framework

2.1 Sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building and its setting when exercising planning functions. The decision maker must give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the significance of the listed building, and there is a strong presumption against the grant of permission for development that would harm its heritage significance.[1]

2.2 For the purposes of this statement, preservation equates to an absence of harm.[2] Harm is defined in paragraph 84 of Historic England's Conservation Principles as change which erodes the significance of a heritage asset.[3]

2.3 The significance of a heritage asset is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as being made up of four main constituents: architectural interest, historical interest, archaeological interest and artistic interest. The assessments of heritage significance and impact are normally made with primary reference to the four main elements of significance identified in the NPPF.

2.4 The setting of a heritage asset can contribute to its significance. Setting is defined in the NPPF as follows:

> *"The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral."*

2.5 The NPPF requires the impact on the significance of the designated heritage asset to be considered in terms of either "substantial harm" or "less than substantial harm" as described within paragraphs 195 and 196 of that document. National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) makes it clear that substantial harm is a high test, and case law describes substantial harm in terms of an effect that would

[1] Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Limited v East Northamptonshire District Council and others [2014] EWCA Civ 137.
[2] South Lakeland v SSE [1992] 2 AC 141.
[3] Conservation Principles, 2008, paragraph 84.

vitiate or drain away much of the significance of a heritage asset.[4] The Scale of Harm is tabulated at **Appendix 1**.

2.6 Paragraphs 195 and 196 of the NPPF refer to two different balancing exercises in which harm to significance, if any, is to be balanced with public benefit. Paragraph 18a-020-20190723 of National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) online makes it clear that some heritage-specific benefits can be public benefits. Paragraph 18a-018-20190723 of the same NPPG makes it clear that it is important to be explicit about the category of harm (that is, whether paragraph 195 or 196 of the NPPF applies, if at all), and the extent of harm, when dealing with decisions affecting designated heritage assets, as follows:

> *"Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated."*

2.7 Paragraphs 193 and 194 of the NPPF state that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset when considering applications that affect its significance, irrespective of how substantial or otherwise that harm might be.

Local Policy

2.8 The main element of local planning policy is the Local Plan (adopted November 2019) which contains the main planning policies for Reading up to 2036. The following policies are relevant to the proposals:

2.9 **EN1 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment**: This policy notes that historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced. It goes on to note that proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance and any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form

[4] Bedford Borough Council v SSCLG and Nuon UK Limited [2013] EWHC 4344 (Admin).

of public benefits. The policy also notes that applications which affect Listed Buildings will not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where appropriate, their setting.

2.10 **EN6 New Development in a Historic Context**: This policy notes that in areas characterised by heritage assets, the historic environment will inform and shape new development. New development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development. When determining planning applications for new development, the following factors will be taken into consideration:

- The positive contribution of the development to the existing historic townscape (scale, height, mass, proportion, plot size, street form, materials, significant vistas and views, and open space);
- Sensitivity to historic context;
- Reflection of borough-wide major heritage themes that contribute to local distinctiveness (e.g. patterned brickwork or former worker terraced housing); and
- Whether development promotes and/or improves access to previously undiscovered or neglected historic significance.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

2.11 The National Planning Practice Guidance (updated July 2019) provides advice on enhancing and conserving the historic environment in accordance with the NPPF.

2.12 In relation to harm the guidance states:

"Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated.

Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the

National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting."

2.13 Paragraph 020 of the document notes that public benefits can be heritage based. The guidance goes on to note that examples of heritage based public benefits include:

- Sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting;
- Reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset; and
- Securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation.

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2017)

2.14 This document, published by Historic England as a second edition in December 2017, replaces the earlier 2015 setting guidance. The document provides for a thorough understanding of the setting of a heritage asset and the relationship of the setting to curtilage, character and context.

2.15 The guidance document notes, in paragraph 18, that the protection of the setting of heritage assets need not prevent change. The document recognises that not all heritage assets are of equal importance and states that the contribution made by their setting to their significance will also vary. Not all settings have the same capacity to accommodate change without causing harm to the significance of the asset.

2.16 As per earlier Historic England guidance, the document advocates a stepped approach to assessing the impact of change within setting on the significance of heritage assets. This stepped approach is:

- Step 1: identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;
- Step 2: assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s);
- Step 3: assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance;
- Step 4: explore the way to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and
- Step 5: make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

2.17 Guidance under Step 2 notes that the asset's physical surroundings and how the asset is experienced (such as views, noise, tranquillity, sense of enclosure etc.) should be taken in to consideration.

2.18 Step 3 is also important in making it clear that a proposed development should not be assessed in terms of its impact on setting; instead it should be assessed in terms of the impacts on significance. That is to say, what matters is not the extent of visibility of the development or change to the setting of an asset, but the extent of change to its archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest. In some circumstances, this evaluation may need to extend to cumulative and complex impacts which may have as great an effect on heritage assets as large-scale development and which may not only be visual. At the very least the assessment should address the key attributes of the development in terms of its location and siting, form and appearance, additional effects and permanence.

2.19 Paragraph 39 notes that options for reducing the harm arising from development may include the relocation of elements of a development or changes to its design. It notes that good design may reduce or remove the harm.

3. Background and Development

3.1 Reading originated as a Saxon settlement, its name derived from the Old English *Reada ingas* ('the people of Reada'). Its position close to the confluence of the River Thames with the Kennet facilitated riverine trading links with both London and the wider Thames Valley. The settlement was first documented by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in AD 871, when it was occupied by a Viking army, shortly before the Battle of Reading, in which the Saxon King of Wessex, Aethelbert, was defeated. The Vikings subsequently erected a defensive earthen rampart between the two rivers east of the settlement. Documentary sources record a second Viking incursion in 1006, when the settlement was burnt to the ground.

3.2 The Norman taxation document known today as the Domesday Book, which documents the period 1066 - 1086, records two manors in Reading. Within the principal manor, held by the king, there were 55 villagers and 30 smallholders. In addition to the farmland and meadow there was woodland sufficient to support 100 swine, together with four mills and three fisheries.[5] The smaller manor, which belonged to Battle Abbey (St Martin), comprised nine villagers and eight smallholders. In addition to their farmland there was woodland sufficient to support five swine, two mills and 2½ fisheries together with a church.[6] The Normans are thought to have built a castle on Castle Hill, initially an earth and timber motte and bailey castle, later replaced in stone, which was probably demolished c.1152 during the civil war in the reign of King Stephen.

3.3 Reading Abbey, a royal monastery, endowed by Henry I in 1121-5, was one of the largest monasteries in Europe. The surviving abbey gateway and extensive ruins of the abbey church and abbey complex within its precinct wall lie close to the River Kennet on the east side of the town. In addition to its religious functions, the abbey attracted and promoted commerce not only along the Thames and Kennet rivers but also as a result of its location at the intersection of major roads linking London with Bath, and Oxford with Southampton. In addition to its religious and royal significance, the abbey developed a planned new town with new streets and burgage plots together with a market place immediately west of its precinct; the

[5] Morris 1978: 1.41; 1.42.
[6] Morris 1978: 15.2.

principal streets being Friar Street, Broad Street, London Street and the Market Place itself, which attracted visitors and pilgrims from all over Europe. The town prospered in the medieval period and there are numerous documents illustrating friction between the guilds and merchants on the one hand and the Abbot on the other.[7]

3.4 A House of Franciscan friars (Grey Friars) had first been established in the town in 1233, at the opposite (west) end of the street leading westwards from St Laurence's church (built in the 1120s adjacent to the abbey) towards Caversham, a street which had been known as New Street (later Friars Street) since at least 1224. The Friary site was enlarged in 1285 because the original site closer to the river was seasonally flooded.[8] The approximate site of the Greyfriars House lies in the vicinity of No. 65 Friars Street.

3.5 Following the dissolution of the monasteries by King Henry VIII in 1538, the abbey was given to the Duke of Somerset as a private house, but having been left vacant was quickly robbed of building stone by the townspeople. Nevertheless some of the buildings, such as the abbot's lodgings were retained for use as occasional royal accommodation. The King gave the town its independence from church authority at this time, and the friary house was given to the mayor and burgesses of Reading as a new guildhall. Although the town initially suffering an economic downturn following the dissolution owing to the lack of pilgrims and visitors, nevertheless the town prospered as a centre of the wool and cloth trade.

3.6 As a major thoroughfare and part of the planned medieval town, both sides of Friar Street would have been occupied by shops and houses throughout the medieval period.

3.7 John Speed's 1611 Map of Reading shows the major elements of the medieval town (**Figure 3**). The Friary site (marked A) stands at the western end of the street (now known as Friars Street) leading to St Laurence's Church (marked D), with the Abbey beyond on the east side of the town (marked H). The approximate location

[7] Ditchfield & Page 1923.
[8] Ditchfield & Page 1907.

of the Site is ringed in red. Reading had become a thriving and prosperous cloth town by this date, with a population of over 5000.[9]

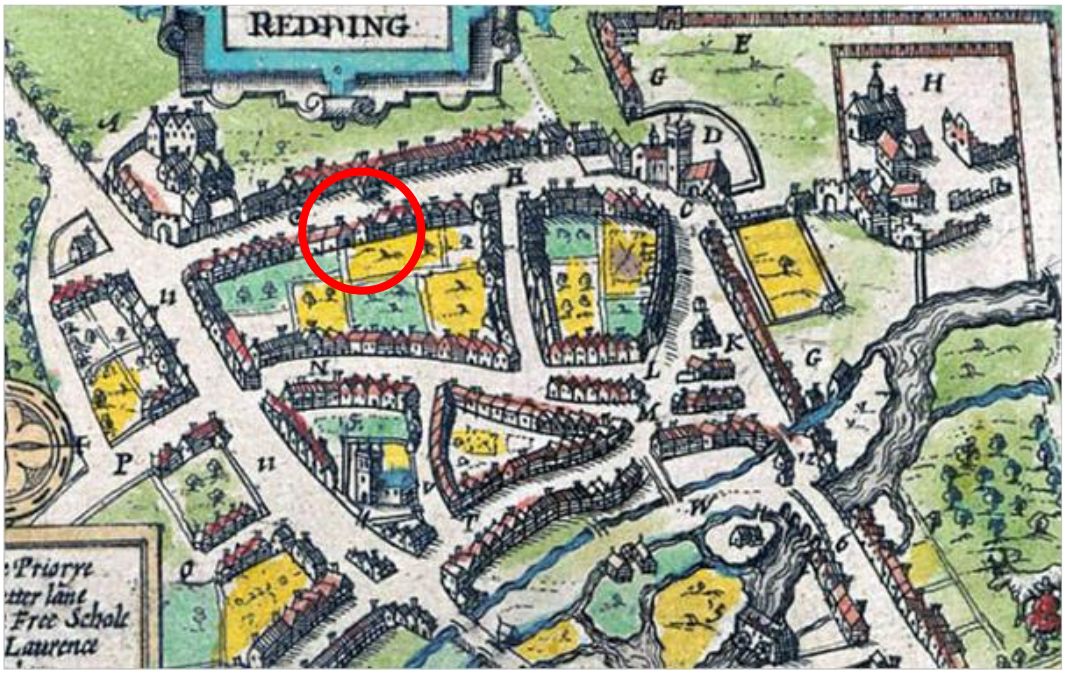


Figure 3: 1611, John Speed's Map of Reading

3.8 As a result of the Siege of Reading in 1642, during the course of the English Civil War, in which the royalist garrison of the town was defeated, town was penalised by heavy taxation. The cloth trade was particularly badly hit. The Kennet Navigation, completed in 1723, enabled barges and boats to travel as far as Newbury. Although an iron works had been built in the 18th century, and Simonds' Brewery, the first of several successful breweries for which the town became famous, opened in 1785, the town's prosperity did not fully return until the beginning of the 19th century (1810) when the Kennet and Avon Canal was completed, connecting London via the Thames at Reading with Bristol and the Bristol Channel. Two large companies were established in the town at this time: Suttons Seeds (1806) and Huntley & Palmers Biscuits (1822).

3.9 Transport links were further improved by first the arrival of the Great Western Railway in 1840, followed by the South Eastern Railway in 1849 and The London

[9] Ditchfield & Page 1923.

and South Western Railway in 1856. Reading railway station opened in 1840. A contemporary map by Edward Weller shows the site of the newly built station and approach together with a new road linking the station with Friar Street (**Figure 4**). The approximate location of the Site is ringed in red.

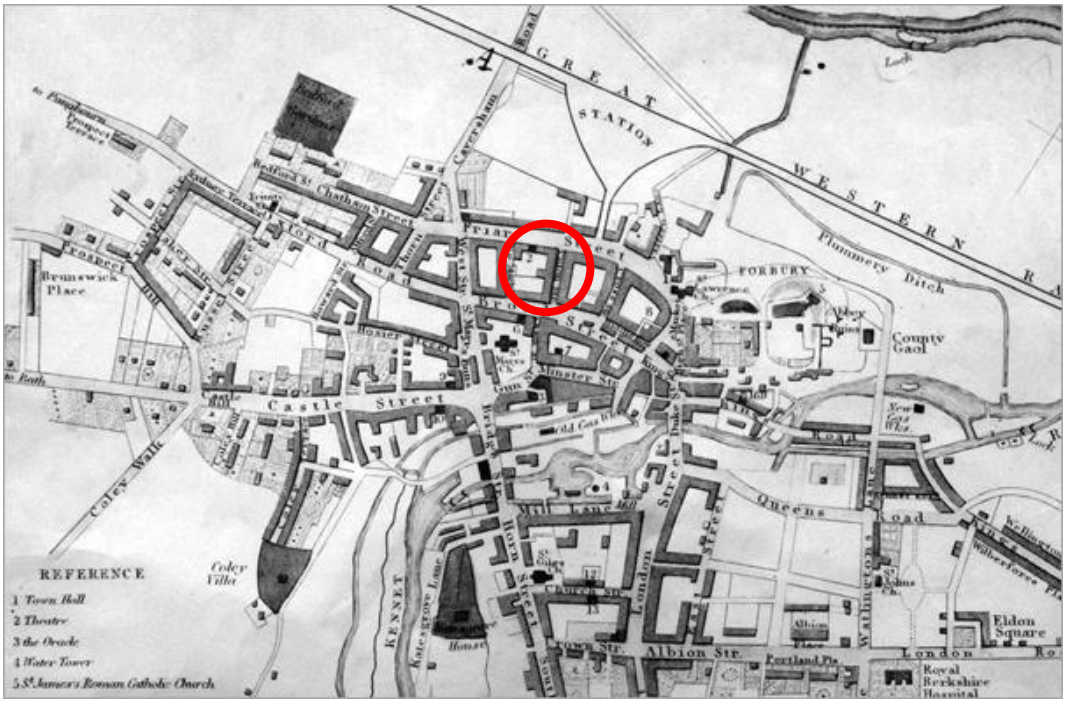


Figure 4: 1840. Edward Weller's Map of Reading

3.10 The censuses show an expanding population throughout the second half of the 19th century, increasing almost threefold from 21,500 in 1851 to 59,000 by 1901.[10] Reading became a county borough under the Local Government Act of 1888. Building to accommodate the expanding population included not only a proliferation of terraced suburban dwellings, but also commercial landmark building in the town such as the Board Schools, banks and shop premises, mainly utilising coloured brick with terracotta dressings.[11]

3.11 Civic buildings, including the town hall (built in 1897 by Albert Waterhouse) had been built at the eastern end of Friar Street, close to St Laurence's church, whilst the western half was occupied by theatres and clubs, and what have been termed

[10] ancestry.co.uk
[11] Tyack, Bradley & Pevsner 2010.

'less salubrious pursuits'. The earliest Ordnance Survey large-scale mapping of 1879 shows that both sides of Friar Street were densely packed with properties, with long narrow plots fronting the streets and extending at the rear, often with yards or gardens, often served by narrow access lanes reflecting the burgage plots of the medieval town layout (**Figure 5**). The footprint of the present Site occupied part of a Gentlemen's Club, the Athenaeum, and two properties to the west, together with their rear gardens/yards and outbuildings.

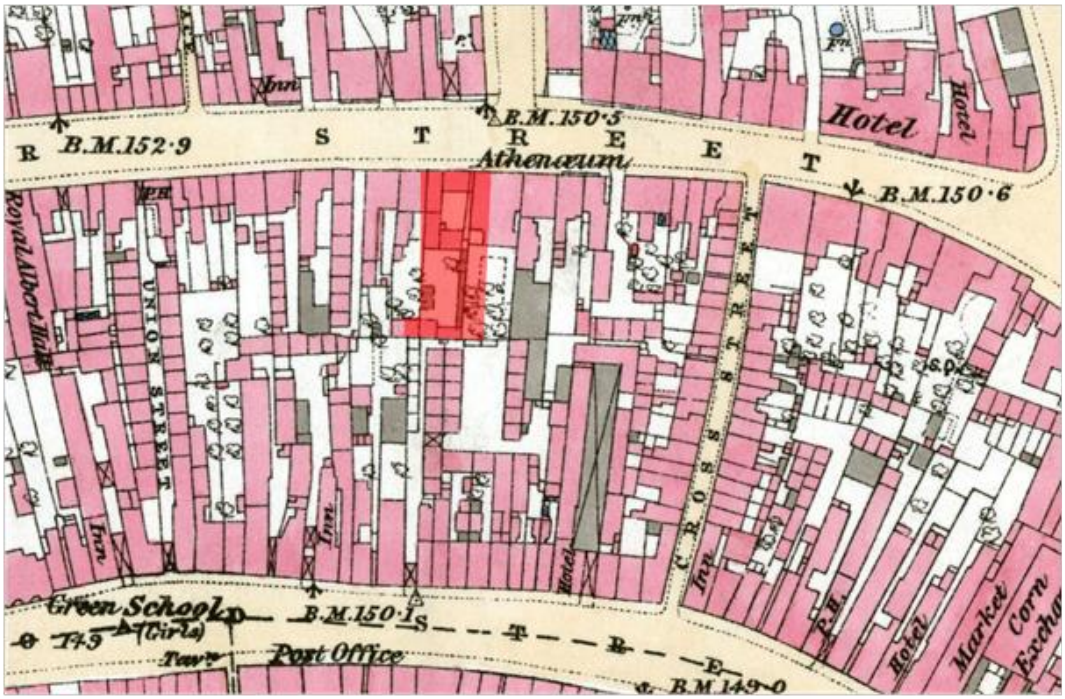


Figure 5: 1879. OS 25-inch 1st Edition. Reproduced with permission of the National Library of Scotland

3.12 The Charles E. Goad Ltd Fire Insurance Plan of 1895 provides details of the properties involved (**Figure 6**).

3.13 Comparison between the 1879 and 1895 plans (**Figures 5 and 6**) show differences in the footprints of the properties west of the Athenaeum, suggesting that the current No. 147 Friar Street was built in this period. The Goad Fire Insurance Plan shows that the building was 3½-storeys in height with an iron and glass frontage to second floor level; this frontage was retained when the block was redeveloped at the beginning of the 20th century. The current frontage bears the date 1882 for a

company of Auctioneers, Surveyors and Land & Estate Agents. However, this signage refers to the history of a later 20th century occupant (Nicholas Estate Agents) rather than to the early history of the building itself.[12] This building, together with its next door neighbour to the west, was occupied in 1895 by the premises of the Arthur Newbery Furniture Factory, a two-storey cabinet factory and three-storey store building at the rear.



Figure 6: 1895 Charles E Goad Ltd. Insurance Place © British Library

3.14 Properties in Friar Street and Broad Street were demolished at the end of the 19th century in order to create a new shopping thoroughfare linking Broad Street with the railway station. The new street, Queen Victoria Street, was completed in 1903. The work was one of a number of contemporary redevelopment schemes in the town which were sponsored by local Councillor and businessman, J.C. Fidler (of Fidler and Sons' Royal Berkshire Seed Stores). The street was flanked by

[12] https://shopfrontelegy.wordpress.com/2016/12/17/nicholas/

matching 4-storey blocks with shops at ground level, constructed in yellow brick with terracotta facades and dressings. The design included corner plots at 148 and 150 Friar Street and Nos 24-28 and 35-38 Broad Street. The architect is uncertain: the Historic England List Entry names the possible architect as County Surveyor Joseph Morris, whilst Pevsner attributes the design to local architects S.Slingsby Stallwood and Charles Smith & Sons. The terracotta dressings were created by S & E Collier Ltd. The company published a contemporary advertisement in *The Contractors', Merchants' and Estate Managers' Compendium*, 1907, to highlight their work (**Figure 7**).



Figure 7: An advertisement (1907) published soon after completion of Queen Victoria Street

3.15 The 1912-13 Ordnance Survey map shows the new street layout for the first time (**Figure 8**). Nos 1-3 Queen Victoria Street and Nos 146-148 Friar Street comprised a single shop, replacement premises for Arthur Newbury Furnishers. Differences in the pitch of the roofs of these premises suggest that this part of the street had been purposely designed to accommodate the single premises. Several of the former buildings at the rear of the original Newbery factory works, including the cabinet works detailed by the Charles Goad Insurance plan (**Figure 6**) were retained, thus restricting the space at the rear of Nos. 5-13.



Figure 8: 1912-13. OS 25-inch 3rd Edition. Reproduced with permission of the National Library of Scotland

3.16 A postcard, posted in 1908, is the earliest image showing the new Newbery Furniture premises (**Figure 9**).

3.17 An early 20th century photograph shows the view looking southwards down Queen Victoria Street towards Broad Street (**Figure 10**).

3.18 A photograph taken in 1939 shows the corner of Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street and the Newbery's shop premises (**Figure 11**).



Figure 9: c.1908 Friary Street, looking east



Figure 10: Early 20th century. Queen Victoria Street, looking south towards Broad Street



Figure 11: 1939 Photograph of the site when it was in use as Newbery's Furniture Store

3.19 A series of aerial photographs were taken of Reading that show the site in the early 1950s (**Figures 12 and 13**) and demonstrate well the character of the rear of the site at this time.

3.20 A photograph taken in the late 1950s-early 1960s, looking east along Friars Street, shows changes to the shopfront and first floor windows of No. 148 (**Figure 14**). The building was still occupied by Newberys at this time. The 1957-9 Ordnance Survey map shows that the shopfront to No 147 Friar Street had also been altered to provide a recessed funnel-shaped access into the shop (**Figure 15**).



Figure 12: 1951 Aerial photograph of the site from the west © Britain From Above (ref: EAW034973)



Figure 13: 1951 Aerial photograph of the site from the west © Britain From Above (ref: EAW034972)



Figure 14: Late 1950s-early 1960s. Looking east along Friar Street



Figure 15: 1957-9 Ordnance survey map

3.21 Photographs taken in 1973 show further modernisation of the shop fronts of Nos. 1-3 (**Figure 16**) and Nos. 11-15 Queen Victoria Street (**Figure 17**). The former Newbery's premises remained a furniture store, by now the premises of New Day House Furnishers.



Figure 16: 1973. Looking south down Queen Victoria Street. © Get Reading



Figure 17: 1973. Looking north up Queen Victoria Street. © Get Reading

4. Statement of Significance

4.1 It is recognised that not all parts of a heritage asset will necessarily be of equal significance. In some cases, certain aspects or elements could accommodate change without affecting the Government's objective, which includes the conservation of heritage assets and which seeks to ensure that decisions are based on the nature, extent and level of significance of heritage assets.

4.2 Change is only considered to be harmful if it erodes an asset's significance. Understanding the significance of any heritage asset affected (paragraph 189 of the NPPFs) is therefore fundamental to understanding the scope for and acceptability of change

4.3 An assessment of the significance of the grade II listed buildings affected by the proposals is provided below. In accordance with paragraph 189 of the NPPF, the descriptions are proportionate to the assets' significance and are sufficient to understand the nature of any impact the proposals may have upon that significance.

4.4 In order to better present an understanding of the significance of the listed buildings a full internal appraisal has been undertaken alongside a series of phasing and significance plans produced by Heritage Collective. These are separately bound but should be reviewed in conjunction with this section of the Heritage Statement.

1-15 Queen Victoria Street and 148 Friar Street (grade II)

4.5 1-15 Queen Victoria Street and 148 Friar Street are part of a wider grade II designation which encompasses:

- 1-31 and 2-32 Queen Victoria Street;
- 148, 149 and 150 Friar Street; and
- 24-28 and 35-38 Broad Street.

4.6 This series of buildings was listed as a single entity in December 1978 (UID: 1113564) and its List Description reads:

> *"…A circa 1894 commercial street with returns to Broad and Friar Streets. Probably by Joseph Morris. Dutch gabled free Baroque style. 3 1/2 storeys, yellow brick and terracotta with dividing Ionic pilasters. Dentil cornice. Pilasters to dormers, broken pediments above. An elongated pattern of shallow bays to 1st and 2nd floors 4:2:1:1:1:1:3. Mullion and transom window to bays, sashes with architraves (and pediments on 1st floor) to rest. Modern shopfronts, retaining cornice to fascia and scroll brackets to pilasters, only one shop retains prewar shopfront. Large returns to Broad Street. The return to east (No 28 Broad Street) supported by No 26 (dated 1894, grey brick with red terracotta dressings) and by No 24 (an early C20 Bank with -large shaped pediment doorway on corner to Cross Street; red brick with stone dressings and stone fret patterns to gables)."*

4.7 The part of the wider listed building which falls within the application site is the northern part of the terrace along Queen Victoria Street which turns the corner west with Friar Street. This building, and the wider listed structure, is of considerable architectural quality, primarily deriving from the quality and form of its front elevation which includes brickwork, terracotta, decorative gables, granite pilasters and original windows.

4.8 Within the site itself, while generally complete above ground floor, the ground floor shopfronts, signs and lights are all modern and detract from the significance of the terrace.

4.9 A double-height shopfront is present to no.148. While this is shown on the 1908 photograph the present timber infilling is modern (1950s-60s, see **figure 14**) and detracts from the architectural interest of the frontage. Interestingly a well detailed double height feature is echoed on the southern end of the terrace, suggesting that these unusual features may be original (though that present to no.148 is no longer in its original condition or form).

4.10 Despite the changes to the shopfronts, the terrace remains as a good example of an early 20th century commercial premises and this bestows a degree of historic (illustrative and associative) interest.





Figures 18 and 19: Modern ad hoc shopfronts along 1-15 Queen Victoria Street

4.11 In addition to the changes to the ground floor exterior of the building, it is relevant to note that the condition of the front façade is deteriorating, with key architectural detailing such as the gables, which are structurally unstable, and brick and terracotta dressings in need of repair. This is exacerbated by the vacancy of the upper floors.





Figures 20 and 21: Modern shopfronts to 148 Friar Street which, on the Friar Street elevation (right), includes a two storey element

4.12 The rear of the listed building within the site has been heavily altered and demonstrates a basic, rudimentary design of limited architectural merit with blank brick elevations, modern windows and a detracting fire escape walkway. All of the

rear chimneystacks have been removed and the roofs altered with new skylights and vents following the removal of the dormer windows. Nonetheless, the rear of the elevation is of some value, albeit to a significantly lesser degree than the front. The rear elevation of no.15 Queen Victoria Street retains more of its original rear composition with attractive brick-faced dormer windows and is of more architectural value than the rest of the terrace within the site.



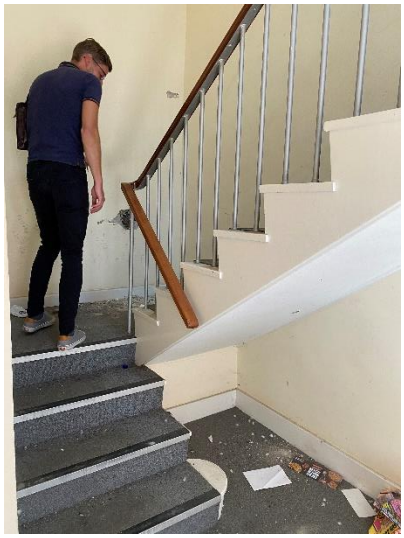

Figures 22 and 23: Poor quality rear elevations of the site

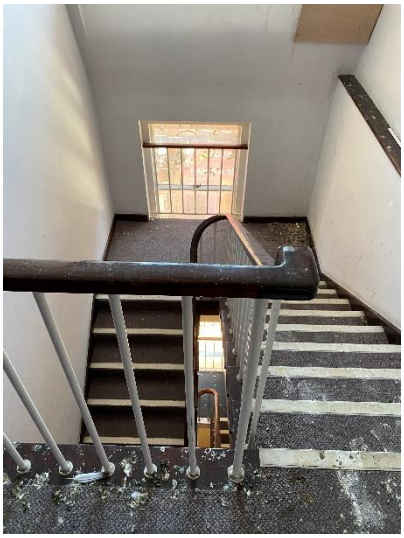



Figures 24 and 25: Open plan layout and modern partitions present within 1-3 Queen Victoria Street and 148 Friar Street

4.13 Internally, nos. 1-3 Queen Victoria Street and 148 Friar Street have been heavily altered with all partitions being late 20th century in date associated with the office

use of the buildings. The interiors of this part of the terrace are of no particular heritage value.





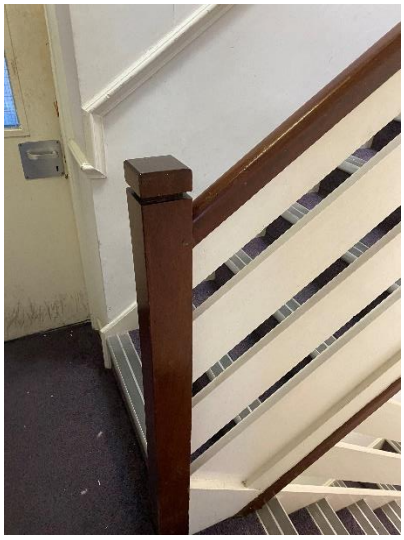
Figures 26 and 27: Staircase located in 3 Queen Victoria Street with modern lower flights and earlier 20th century upper flights

4.14 Elsewhere within the terrace (5-15 Queen Victoria Street), while the basement and ground floors are equally heavily altered, elements of the original interiors survive to the upper floors. This is typically in the form of plan form, original room proportions and circulation with party walls, original staircases (present within no. 5 and 9), chimney breasts and partitions. The presence of this fabric adds to the architectural and historic interest of the building.





Figures 28 and 29: Examples of earlier elements of plan form present




Figures 30 and 31: Images of staircases present within 5-15 Queen Victoria Street

147 Friar Street (grade II)

4.15 147 Friar Street was grade II listed in December 1978 (UID: 1113488), it's List Description reads:

> *"Circa 1880s. 3½ storey commercial frontage. Painted brick with stone voussoirs and dressings. Cornice and parapet. 3 high segmental headed dormers with ramped moulded coping between and modillion cornices, centre 2-light. These and 3 pairs of windows on 2nd floor are plate glass sashes. 4 depressed arches on 1st floor under cornice and fascia with outer pilasters and dividing fluted columns with Corinthian caps. Cornice and fascia over ground floor shop front of similar pattern with recessed entrance. The 2 storey shop front is the main interest of this building and it is included for that reason."*

4.16 As indicated by the List Description, the significance of 147 Friar Street primarily relates to the architectural quality of the 1880s front elevation, particularly the double height colonnade shopfront and the 3no. segmental headed dormer windows that feature moulded coping between and modillion cornices. The building is a good example of a late 19th century commercial premises and this provides the structure with a degree of historic (illustrative and associative) interest. However, elements of the frontage now detract from the significance of the building and represent an opportunity for enhancement. These detracting features include:

- The 20th century shopfront with splayed frontage which divides the shopfront into two units;
- The boarding over the facias which obscures the full height character; and
- The modern paint applied to the front elevation which was originally left as exposed red brick.



Figure 32: Front elevation of 147 Friar Street (grade II)

4.17 An inscription above the first floor indicates the building was constructed for an auction and land agency firm established in 1882. However, this lettering was added in the late 20th century and it is known that, by 1895, the building was occupied by Arthur Newbery Furniture.

4.18 While the primary interest of the building relates to its frontage and the interior has been heavily altered at various phases and is now in a deteriorating condition. Nonetheless, there are some components of the interior which are also of value.

4.19 The most notable phase of alteration appears to date to the 1930s when the rear stair and lift core were added and new internal partitions (curved to the first floor) were introduced. While not part of the original phase of the building's construction these additions are of some limited value in their own right.





Figures 33 and 24: Curved partitions at first floor and a view of the 1930s stair and lift core located to the rear of the building





Figures 35 and 36: Internal views within 147 Friar Street showing surviving partitions and chimney breasts

4.20 Despite the levels of alteration and deterioration present, some late 19th century elements of the interior survive. These include projecting chimney breasts still visible on flank walls and a small number of partitions which retain portions of lath and plaster. Where present, surviving elements of plan form present some degree of historic legibility within the building, but generally the interiors (now primarily open plan) are able to accommodate change.




Figures 37 and 38: Internal views within 147 Friar Street showing surviving partitions and the general open plan layout present

Built Form to the Rear of the Site

4.21 To the rear of the Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street buildings are a variety of extensions and structures which, either by virtue of attachment (i.e. they are connected to the listed buildings) or curtilage (i.e. fall under the provisions of section 1(5)(b) of the 1990 Act, sometimes referred to as 'curtilage listed'), be considered part of the listed buildings for procedural matters.

4.22 A review of the history of the site and appraisal of the 1895 Goad Plan suggests that most of these structures have historic links to 147 Friar Street from this building's use as a furniture store.




Figures 39 and 40: Built form present to the rear of the site including the 19th century structures to the rear

4.23 To the southern end of the site are two red brick structures which are shown on the 1895 Goad Plan. These include a three storey building formerly in use as a store and a two storey building formerly in use as a cabinet factory. While contributing to the significance of 147 Friar Street as former ancillary buildings and being broadly contributory to the setting of the Queen Victoria Street terrace these buildings are not of any special interest in their own right.

4.24 Other built form to the rear of the site is more modern, heavily altered and possesses either a neutral or negative role in the heritage values of the listed buildings. The interiors of these aspects of the site are of no value.




Figures 41 and 42: Built form present to the rear of the site including





Figures 43, 44 and 45: Interior view within buildings to the rear of the site

5. Heritage Impacts Assessment

5.1 With reference to **Appendix 1**, along with the most important considerations relating to the impact of the proposals, judgements on the impact of the outline proposals on significance have been set out below. This part of the Heritage Statement should be read in conjunction with the application drawings, Schedule of Works (SoW hereafter), and the significance and phasing plans.

Summary of Proposed Development

5.2 Overall, the proposed development can be summarised as the comprehensive redevelopment of the site to provide a high quality commercial and visitor accommodation that will reinvigorate a series of currently underused heritage assets within Reading town centre.

5.3 While interventions to the listed buildings are required to facilitate this, the proposals are based on a thorough understanding of the historic development, character and significance of the grade II listed buildings. Through the design development phase, the project team has sought to minimise harm through good design and retention of historic fabric and maximise benefits. Advice received from the Council as part of the pre-application stage has fed into and informed the scheme as submitted.

5.4 The works required are discussed below but can be summarised as:

- External works to Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street which seek to halt deterioration and enhance the architectural merit of the listed buildings. These works include the introduction of coherent and traditionally designed shopfronts across the terrace;
- The demolition of existing rear outbuildings which typically comprises a series of extensions and structures dating to the late 19th and 20th centuries;
- Introduction of replacement built form to the rear of the site following the demolition of the outbuildings comprising an extension to the terrace and new

courtyard structures forming an open market square to create a new, accessible public space; and

- Internal alterations to the buildings to facilitate the retention of commercial lower ground and ground floors with upper floors converted into an Aparthotel, where relevant works include the reinstatement of traditional features. These works are fully detailed by a submitted Schedule of Works which is referred to within this Heritage Statement.

External alterations to the Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street frontages

5.5 One of the main goals of the proposed development is restoration and enhancement of the site's street frontage. There are various components to this element of the proposals which amount to a considerable heritage benefit both individually and collectively. In addition, these works are envisaged to act as a catalyst for collective enhancement of Queen Victoria Street as a whole. These works are considered below under the relevant subheadings.

Repair works to halt deterioration

5.6 As previously noted, the frontage of 1-15 Queen Victoria Street and 148 Friar Street is currently supported by scaffolding and in a poor condition with masonry at risk of falling down onto the pedestrianised street below. The continued deterioration of the building will, over time, increase risks to the grade II listed terrace and result in increased loss of original masonry detailed and cause harm to the building's significance.

5.7 Proposals seek to undertake widespread repair works to the terrace's frontage in order to reinstate structural stability to the façade and reinstate lost detailing. As a whole these works would remove risk (both to the building's longevity and the public) and would restore the architectural interest of the decorative frontage. The repair works would follow best practice conservation practice and would be heavily informed by those recently completed repair works which were undertaken to the

southern end of the listed terrace. A guide to the restoration works is contained within the submitted method statements.

Introduction of new shopfronts and signage

5.8 As identified in the preceding section, existing shopfronts to the Queen Victoria Street terrace are ad hoc in their nature and, due to their modern and often inappropriate character, detract from the significance of the listed buildings. Proposals seek to replace all the shopfronts and signage in the terrace to provide a coherent architectural approach reinstating a degree of consistency to the terrace and street.

5.9 The proposed shopfronts have been heavily informed by traditional shopfront design and surviving historic photographs which show Queen Victoria Street. The shopfronts would feature fascia panels, stallrisers, a single side entrance door, street numbering and traditionally detailed door with plinth and glazing. The shopfront colour and signage is proposed to be consistent across the terrace. These works would represent a considerable enhancement to the architectural integrity and authenticity of the listed building.

5.10 In order to reflect the various shopfront arrangements on other parts of the site, proposals differ for 147 and 148 Friar Street.

5.11 At 147 Friar Street, proposals seek to alter the to reinstate it back to its known 'off-centre' arrangement present during 1939. While this is not the original configuration the change would only affect modern shopfront fabric and the works would provide an appropriate entranceway into the new rear market square. As confirmed as part of the pre-application process, all original cast iron columns present within the shopfront arrangement would be retained. These works would preserve the significance of the grade II listed 147 Friar Street.

5.12 While part of the wider Queen Victoria Street terrace, 148 Friar Street has a different shopfront arrangement with double height glazing present. As this double height glazing is present to southern end of the terrace it would appear as though the general arrangement, while unusual, was part of the original arrangement. Nonetheless, the existing double height glazing present to 148 Friar Street dates

from the mid 20th century and the poor quality shopfront detracts from the character and significance of the listed building. Installing a solid glazed first floor element (as per the building on the southern end of the terrace) would not be appropriate given the proposed first floor use of the building as an Aparthotel and, as such, proposals seek to create a more solid arrangement with two new timber windows surrounded by terracotta detailed and set within a brick infill panel. All materials and detailing would be to match the existing building. While this arrangement would not be reflective of the original first floor detailing of the building it would be wholly appropriate in terms of its form, materials, character and detailing and would provide a symmetrical entrance to Queen Victoria Street from the north with the matching building to the east. Overall these works would represent an enhancement to the architectural interest of the listed terrace.

Demolition of rear outbuildings

5.13 As noted in the preceding section, existing built form located to the rear of the site comprises a series of late 19th and 20th century structures which historically served 147 Friar Street.

5.14 The demolition of the existing 20th century modern built form, which are poor quality and detracting in their form and appearance, would not affect the heritage significance of the identified listed buildings. Instead, the removal of these structures offers an opportunity for enhancement to the rear of the site.

5.15 The two 19th century components (a three storey building store and a two storey building cabinet factory) do contribute to the significance of no.147. While not of any special interest in their own right, the demolition of these buildings would have limited some effect on the significance of this building due to the loss of the former ancillary structures. Though being broadly contributory to the setting of the Queen Victoria Street terrace, these buildings do not make any marked contribution to the significance of this asset and demolition would not result in any material harm. It is relevant to note that the main rear elevation of Queen Victoria Street will be retained and integrated into the interior of the new extension.