



READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

Interpretation Board Installation

Land adjacent to 1-7 Bedford Road,

Reading RG1 7EU

Planning Statement

17 February 2022



Image capture: Aug 2021 (c) 2022 Google

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Corporate Property Services and is submitted in support of an application on behalf of the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, Reading Borough Council for Full Planning Permission to install an Interpretation Board on existing timber hoarding erected on the site boundary of the former Central Swimming Pool facing Bedford Road, Reading, RG1 7EU.
- 1.2 The land on which the proposed Interpretation Board is to be installed is owned by Reading Borough Council and it is in the Abbey Ward of Reading and just outside the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area.
- 1.3 The purpose of the proposed Interpretation Board is to provide details of the existing graffiti mural painted on the Bedford Road hoarding and also the other Artwork Installations, which were produced as part of the Oxford Road High Street Heritage Action Zone.
- 1.4 The footprint of the development site is approximately 2 square metres in area.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 In 2020, Reading was awarded £9,231 from Historic England to initiate a cultural pilot project around the Oxford Road. The project was developed as a spring board for the wider High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) programme.
- 2.2 High Street Heritage Action Zones are a heritage-led regeneration initiative lead by Historic England, working with local councils and the community to create economic growth and improve the quality of life in our historic high streets.
- 2.3 The Council's wider HSHAZ programme is running until 31 March 2024. The project aims to breathe new life into high street areas within the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road, St Mary's Butts/Castle Street, and Market Place/London Street Conservation areas of the town.
- 2.4 The Objectives of the Reading HSHAZ are:
 - To enhance the understanding of Reading's heritage by revealing its hidden histories and to give the community a sense of pride and ownership in developing the town's future.
 - To improve the physical condition and viability of the high streets within the three conservation areas by identifying those properties most at risk and engaging with property owners to help them to restore the buildings, to show them how to maintain the buildings and to share best practice. We want to see premises viably and fully occupied and footfall and customer satisfaction increasing.
 - To develop a comprehensive strategy to improve the public realm across the HSHAZ. The outcome will be a better experience and sense of place for those living or working in or visiting the Town Centre.
 - To support local businesses, the economy and local community and cultural initiatives by creating a positive sense of place through contributing to the heritage of their high street.
- 2.5 The HSHAZ programme combines three complementary components:

- **Physical Interventions:** to buildings, including repair, reinstating lost features, supporting the conversion of historic buildings for new uses and improvement of shared spaces, drawing on the lessons learnt in Streets for All.
- **Community Engagement:** giving local communities a key role in deciding what works they want to see happening on their high street and what sort of place they want it to be.
- **Cultural Programme:** activities and events celebrating the history of the high street and its importance to local communities over the generations.

- 2.6 As part of the project, the University of Reading collected residents' stories and memories that would be used as the inspiration for the three new art projects along the Oxford Road. This research has resulted in a new online community exhibition called "Oxford Road Stories" hosted by Reading Museum.
- 2.7 Three local artists were selected by a community panel to produce new art works to be installed along the eastern end of Oxford Road, their projects aiming to amplify the local heritage and rich multicultural history of the road.
- 2.8 The artists; Baker Street Productions, Caroline Streatfield and Gemma Anusa were commissioned to create the art work inspired by the Oxford Road Stories. The art pieces celebrate the history, heritage and vibrancy of culture of Reading's Oxford Road.
- 2.9 In 2021, another artist called Arron Lowe, painted a mural on the blank timber hoarding that was erected on the eastern site boundary of the recently demolished Central Pool in Bedford Road. The mural, called "Welcome to the Oxford Road", was developed by Arron in conjunction with local people, including passers-by who suggested details to paint on the mural.
- 2.10 To help the Public to understand the Oxford Road HSHAZ Artwork Installations, including the mural by Arron Lowe, it is proposed that an Interpretation Board should be fixed on an unused section of the existing site hoarding in Bedford Road.

3.0 Local History

- 3.1 The application site is just outside the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area. A map of the area is provided in Appendix B.
- 3.2 The Oxford Road is one of the earliest roads leading out of Reading, south of the River Thames, serving as the primary route to Pangbourne and on to Oxford. The Oxford Road character area consists of the Oxford Road corridor between the IDR to the east and the Reading West Railway Bridge at its western end and encompasses a small area of both Prospect Street and Argyle Street directly to the south because of the related housing styles.
- 3.3 Today, this is a vibrant area with an active pedestrian and vehicular traffic route, well known for its array of independent shops which reflect the area's diverse communities.
- 3.4 The streetscape is a mix of 2-and 3-storey buildings consisting of impressive Georgian terraces and stand-alone houses interspersed with Victorian shops and houses along the route.
- 3.5 Along this half-mile route of 19th century heritage buildings on the Oxford Road, forty of the addresses are listed, either singly or collectively as a terrace. Although a general neglect of retail frontages and poorly maintained, terraced houses is very prevalent along the road, the area's early history is still strongly evident in its 19th century built environment. Solid Arts and Crafts influences are apparent in the many

attractive polychrome brick and terracotta façades in the area. The Oxford Road Community School, and houses along the west side of Prospect Street display good terra-cotta embellishment. The first-floor levels above the shops and the residences opposite the retail terrace at the junction with Argyle Road are notable for their colourful polychrome brickwork.

- 3.6 Early 19th century mapping evidence suggests that shops with residential accommodation above them extended westward from the town centre; notably between Alfred Street and Eaton Place and also between Russell Street and Waylen Street. However, the nature of the shops and services has altered over time, reflective of incoming immigrant populations. The current speciality hair salons, grocers and bakers, along with the estate agents, key cutters, pharmacies and dentists, all serve the needs of the diverse local community and Reading's wider population. Today's businesses are a continuation of the Oxford Road's history of diverse retail services established over many generations.
- 3.7 The application site for the proposed Interpretation Board is at the southern end of an existing timber hoarding that has been erected on the eastern site boundary of the former Central Swimming Pool in Bedford Road. The pool building, which was constructed in the mid 1960's, was demolished in 2018 and the site is planned to be redeveloped for residential use.

4.0 Relevant Planning History

- 4.1 The following planning application records were found on the Reading Borough Council Online Planning Website for the adjacent site.

Planning Application Number: 992144

Site Address: 1 Bedford Road, Reading RG1 7EU

Description: Residential development comprising sixteen two-bedroom flats

Decision Date: 02 March 2001

5.0 Location of the proposed development

- 5.1 The location of the proposed Interpretation Board is currently being used to display a temporary sign directing people to the Battle Street Car Park (see photograph below).



- 5.2 The proposed Interpretation Board will be immediately adjacent to the mural it relates to and only 80 metres walking distance away from the Oxford Road HSHAZ.
- 5.3 The existing timber hoarding will afford an easy installation of the proposed Interpretation Board and also its removal at a later date, without causing any lasting damage to a permanent structure. Therefore, it was the preferred location compared to the side of a building or walls in the area, for example.
- 5.4 The site of the proposed Interpretation Board is adjacent to the pavement on a pedestrian and vehicular traffic route and makes an ideal location for the application site. Due to its location it will be accessible to the many people who walk along the Oxford Road and Bedford Road.

6.0 Description of the proposed development

- 6.1 The purpose of the proposed Interpretation Board is to provide details of the existing graffiti mural painted on the Bedford Road site hoarding and also the other Artwork Installations that were produced for the Oxford Road HSHAZ. The mural on the hoarding celebrates the history and diversity of the area and shows local people from the past and present and will also include Oxford Road landmarks.
- 6.2 The installation will be on display for at least until the end of the Oxford Road HSHAZ project, which is scheduled to be March 2024.

7.0 Appearance and Materials

- 7.1 The proposed Interpretation Board will be printed onto three 3mm thick ACM (Aluminium Composite Material) Di-bond panels, which will be secured to the existing timber hoarding using suitable fixings (see Appendix C for Method Statement).

8.0 Amount

- 8.1 A soft touch will be adopted to ensure that the character of the area is respected. The proposed intervention is minimal and appropriate to fulfil the objectives of the HSHAZ programme.

9.0 Layout

- 9.1 The proposed Interpretation Board will consist of three Di-bond panels butted together and they will be located on the right-hand side of the pedestrian and vehicle entrance to 1-31 Bedford Road.
- 9.2 The location of the proposed Interpretation Board will be immediately adjacent to the existing graffiti mural it will be providing details of.

10.0 Scale

- 10.1 The proposed Interpretation Board will be 3.20m wide and 2.34m high. The new development will have a negligible impact on the existing Street Scene.

11.0 Landscaping

- 11.1 No landscaping is necessary for this development. The existing tarmac pavement will not be disturbed by the installation of the proposed Interpretation Board.

12.0 Access

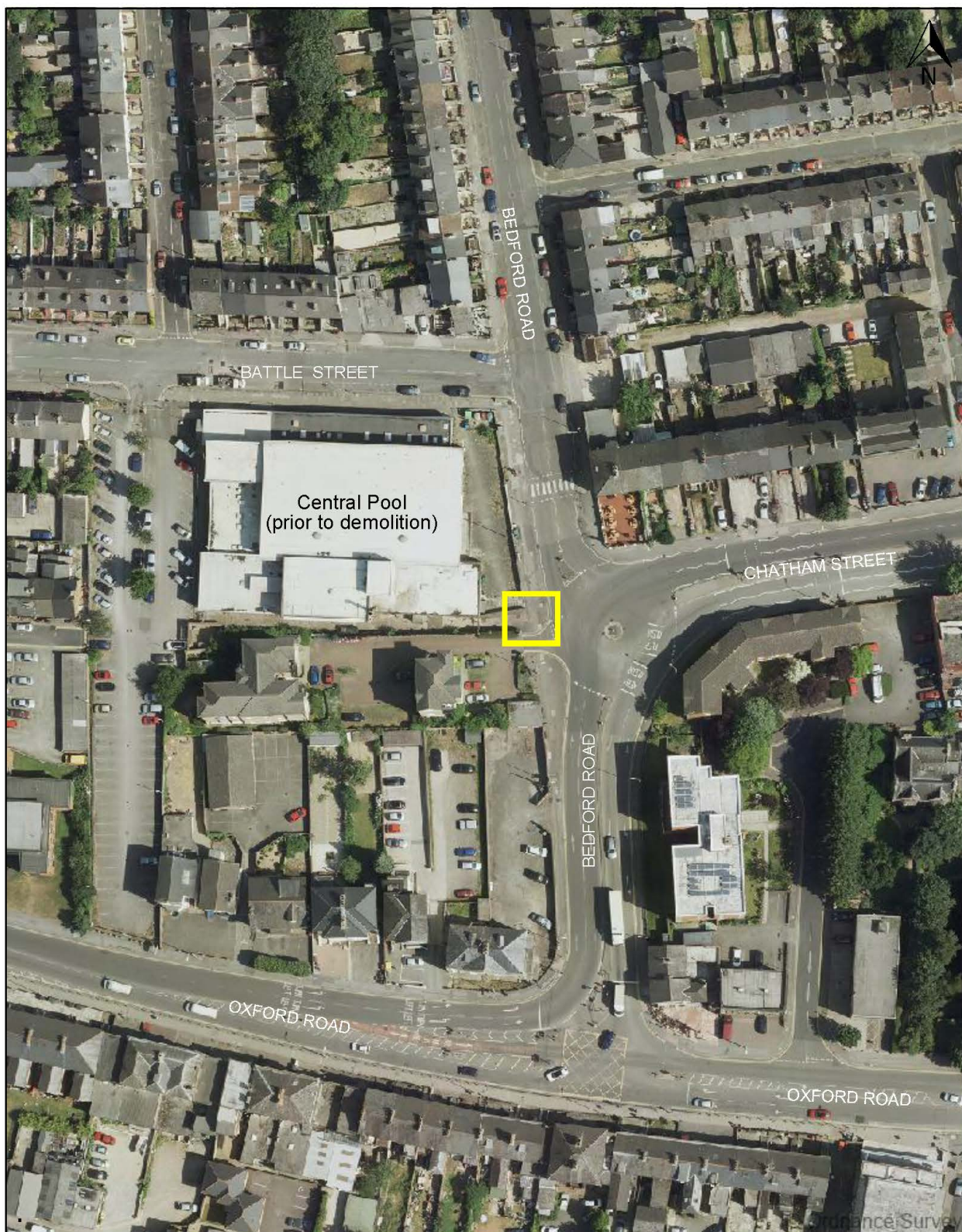
- 12.1 The site has a good level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport.
- 12.2 Pedestrian access to the proposed Interpretation Board will be via the Bedford Road, which has a wide tarmac pavement.
- 12.3 The proposed development will not change or affect the access to the Bedford Road or any of the adjacent buildings.
- 12.4 No vehicle parking provision is necessary and therefore, a Transport Impact Assessment is not required.

13.0 Conclusion

- 13.1 The proposed development has been designed in accordance with relevant Planning Policies and guidance and seeks to respect the character and appearance of the local area.
- 13.2 Pre-application advice has been sought from Council Planning Officers in respect of this proposed development and the applicant has sought to address all the matters raised in the pre-application process.
- 13.3 The proposed development is part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) programme, which is supported by Planning Officers and will not unduly affect the Street Scene nor any of the original structures within the Conservation Area.
- 13.4 It is therefore considered that the proposed development, being of small scale and installed on an unused part of a site hoarding, is unlikely to detract from the character of the adjacent buildings or the area. The development is consequently considered appropriate in this location.

Appendix A

Aerial Photograph of the Development Site



Installation of Interpretation Board for HSHAZ Oxford Road
on land adjacent to 1-7 Bedford Road, Reading

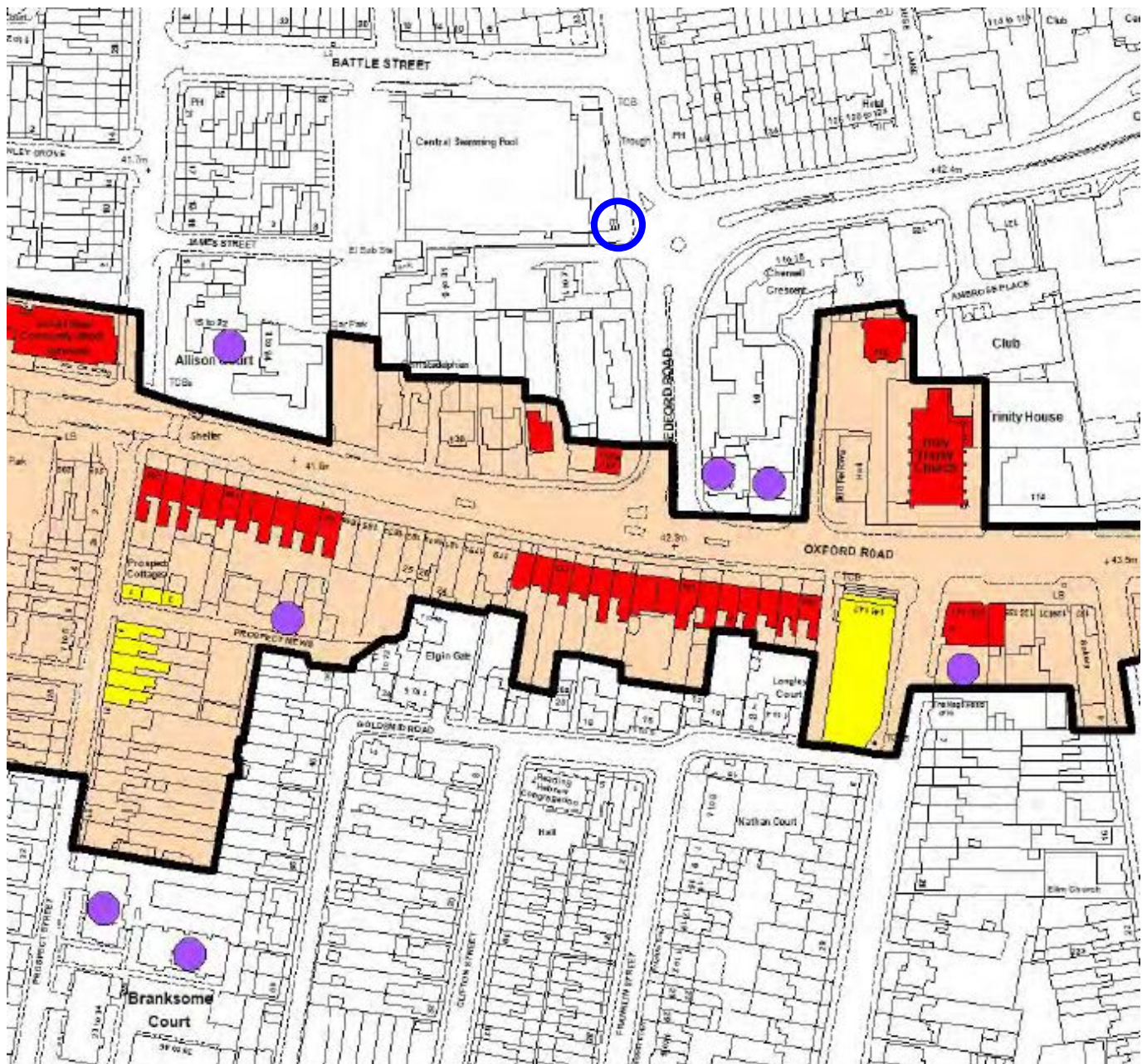
Title: Aerial Photograph of Development Site
Scale at A4: 1:1000

Appendix B

Map of Part of the Castle Hill/Russell Street/ Oxford Road Conservation Area

Appendix B

Part of the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area



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-  Boundary of Character Area
-  Listed building
-  Building of townscape merit
-  Site or building of opportunity for improvement
-  Site of proposed Interpretation Board installation

Appendix C

Method Statement for Installation of Interpretation Board

METHOD STATEMENT FOR

Project: Installation of Interpretation Board for HSHAZ Oxford Road

Prepared by: Property Services

Site Address: Land adjacent to 1-7 Bedford Road, Reading RG1 7EU

Scope of Works:

Fix Interpretation Board to existing timber hoarding to site boundary of former Central Swimming Pool in Bedford Road.

Access / Egress:

Access: Public

Pedestrian access: No public access to working area

Vehicular traffic: N/A

Containers / plant and equipment: N/A

Any vehicles or materials needed to install the Interpretation Board shall be parked or stored within the adjacent Battle Street Car Park at all times and should any activity associated with installing or maintaining the Interpretation Board involve using the pavement this shall not cause an obstruction to pedestrians and shall retain footway provision.

Lighting: Natural Daylight

Plant and Equipment used: Battery operated Power Tools

Description / Scope of Works:

2no Operatives to secure & fix the Interpretation Board consisting of three Di-bond panels to the existing timber hoarding on the site boundary using 'stixall' mastic glue & nails.

Working area will be fenced off from the public at all times when work is being undertaken.

If necessary, a step ladder will be used to fix the top fixings.

This project will produce no wastage and will take less than 1 working day to complete.

Summary of Risks identified: SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS ARE TO HAVE RISK ASSESSMENTS PRODUCED. DO NOT PRODUCE PAPERWORK FOR THE SAKE OF PRODUCING PAPERWORK

The following risks have been identified through assessment; control measures are listed on the attached risk assessment:

Manual Handling
Working at Height
Hazardous Substances (I.e. Dusts)
Slips, Trips & Falls

Control of waste and substances hazardous to health

There will be no waste or substances hazardous to health deposited as a result of this operation. All waste will be removed from site by a certified waste carrier.

Lifting Equipment:

N/A

Emergency Arrangements:

Qualified First Aiders will be on site who can administer initial first aid.

Training:

All operatives will be provided with the correct training to carry out the duties asked of them and continual evaluations of training requirements are to be carried out. Certification will be made available on request.

Personal Protective Equipment and clothing

Five Point PPE to be worn used at all times onsite. Dusks mask and hearing protection to be used as required. Task specific PPE will be required as required before commencing associated works.

Supervision/Contact: TBC**The following risk assessments are attached:**

Risk Assessments: For activities included in this method statement

Noise Assessments: Where operative may be exposed to noise levels above the first action level of 80 db (A), a noise assessment will be carried out.

CoSHH Assessment: Where operatives may be exposed to hazardous products a specific CoSHH assessment will be carried out.

Date of compilation: 11/02/2022

Distribution			
Principal Contractor			
Company:		Contracts Manager:	
Site team:			
Company:	Name:	Signed:	Dated:
All operatives must sign this method statement to confirm that they completely understand the method statement and attached risk assessment and they agree to comply with the method of works and risk controls			
Notes:			
Attachments:			