



Town Planning Bureau

The Barn • 43 Oakdene Road • Redhill • Surrey • RH1 6BT
tel: 01737 390169 email: info@tpbureau.co.uk

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Site: 1-15 Queen Victoria Street / 145-148 Friar
Street, Reading RG1 1SY
Application by: Thackery Estates
Lead Consultant: Mr Paul S Bottomley
Date: 12th August 2022
Our Ref: URB-482b-SC2

Copyright Notice.

This document and its content are the property of Town Planning Bureau © Urbanistica Ltd 2009. All right reserved. Any redistribution or reproduction of part or all of the contents in any form is prohibited other than the following:

- You may print for your personnel use only.
- You may not, except with our permission, distribute or commercially exploit the content. Nor may you transmit or store in any other form.

1.

Introduction

2.

Consultation Policy Context

3.

Engagement

4.

Conclusions

A1.

Appendix 1

A2.

Appendix 2

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement (“SCI”) provides an overview the consultation process undertaken by the Thackeray Estates group comprises supporting information in respect of a planning application for the development as described at para 1.2 below.

- Applicant: Thackery Estate (“the Applicant”).
- Site: 1-15 Queen Victoria Street / 145-148 Friar Street, Reading RG1 1SY (“the site”).
- LPA: Reading Borough Council (“the Council”).

Proposal

- 1.2 Planning permission and listed building consent is sought 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.”

- 1.3 In summary, the proposals comprise:

- the partial demolition of existing buildings at the rear of the site,
- demolition of No.146 and rebuild
- extension and alteration of No.145.
- retention and restoration of the original listed buildings,
- the development of a rear extensions and the creation of a new public square,
- creating enhanced retail provision at ground floor and the provision of an apart-hotel use on the upper floors.

- 1.4 The vision for QVS1 and QVS2 was first presented to the Council in November 2019 and has been development in conjunction with officers and key stakeholders. Working together the scheme has evolved and will realise a shared vision and we hope will act as a catalyst for the further regeneration of Friar Street and enhancement of the public realm. The site is highly sustainable and accessible and the proposals are acceptable in planning terms that will deliver significant public benefits.

- 1.5 The scheme has built on the overwhelming positive feedback and support for QVS1.

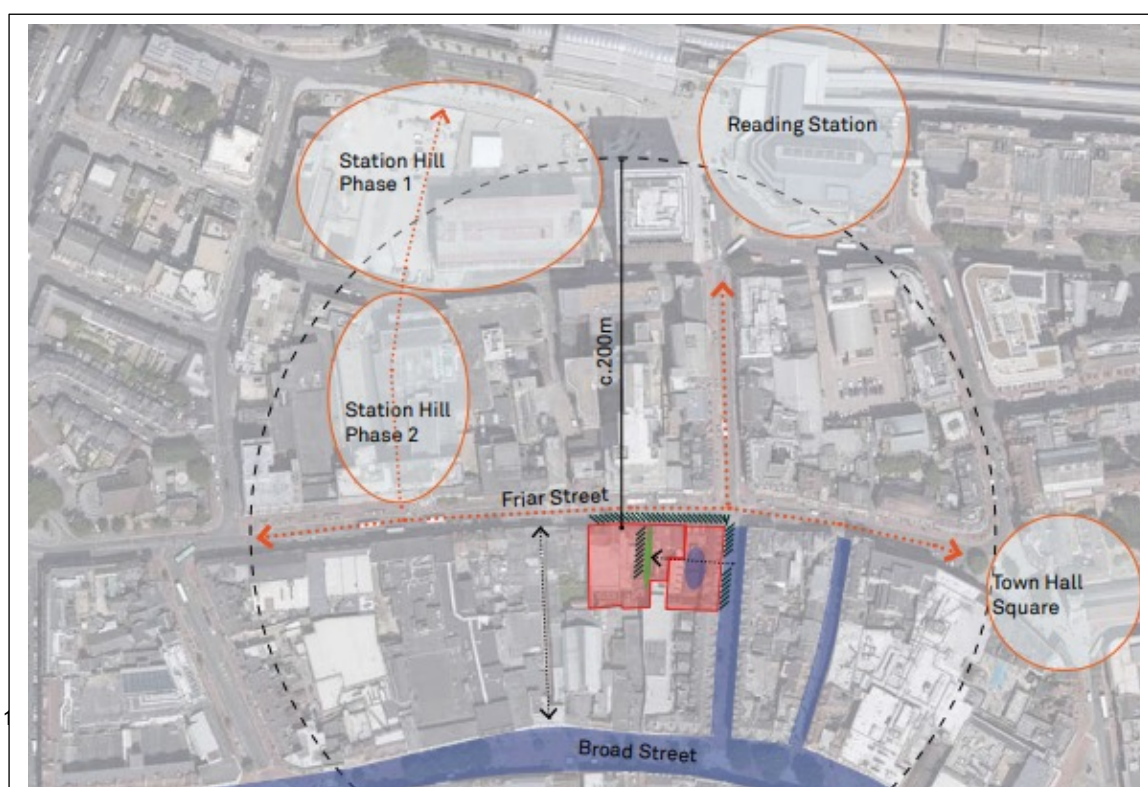
Site Context

- 1.6 The site is a prominent plot located on the corner of Queen Victoria Street (“QVS”) and buildings along Friar Street, with significant frontage to both. QVS is the principle pedestrianised access point to the town centre from Reading Railway Station and Friar Street is traffic controlled with access to busses and taxis only.

1.7 The Site comprises a number of premises with retail uses at ground floor level with other secondary uses (although vacant) at first floor level and above. Both QVS and Friar Street are key primary retail streets within the town centre and are in a highly accessible location, approximately 250m from Reading Railway Station to the north.

1.8 The site comprises the following distinct buildings:

- 1-15 QVS - Part of a larger terrace built in the early 1900s, the QVS properties comprise retail accommodation arranged over the ground and basement floors. The remaining 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors being office accommodation, albeit there are many vacant units. The properties are Grade II listed.
- 148 Friar Street - This unit comprises retail floorspace at ground (Café Nero) with vacant office floors above. The building is located on the corner of Friar Street and forms the corner of 1-15 QVS. This property is also Grade II listed.
- 147 Friar Street - Dating from the early 1880s, this unit comprises retail/ nail salon at ground floor with three vacant floors above, which are understood to be former offices. The building is also Grade II listed - the main interest of the building is the 2-storey shop front.
- 146 Friar Street is basement and 3-storeys in height, with an retail use at basement and ground floor level (Reading Food & Wine) and on the upper floors Simple Recruitment Services. This building is not listed.
- 145 Friar Street is basement and 4-storeys in height, with WHSmith occupying the ground floor and office uses above. This building is not listed.
- To the rear of the properties are a mix of more modern extensions and additions (late 19th and 20th centuries) that are incoherent with each other and represent crowded built form - all the buildings are vacant, deteriorating and suffer from anti-social behaviour and accessing by rough sleepers.



Benefits of the Proposal

- 1.9 The primary benefits for Reading as a town are:
- 1.10 In addition to heritage benefits, the NPPF requires an assessment of the balance of harm against other public benefits arising from development proposals. It is clear that the repair, reinstatement and enhancement of heritage assets are in themselves of public benefit, but the proposals will also deliver the following public benefits:
- Repair and reinstatement of the original historic frontages of the listed buildings and the architectural detailing that contributes to their significance;
 - Visual improvement to these prominent retail streets with uniform shop frontages, signage and lighting, respectful to the original historic frontages;
 - Removal and enhancement to the form and appearance of built form at the rear of the site;
 - Provision of modern, subservient and respectful built form to the rear of the site, enhancing the visual appearance and supporting and promoting the grandeur of the retained listed buildings;
 - Provision of additional floorspace for retail and appropriate town centre uses in a highly accessible and sustainable location,
 - Enhancing the diversity of retail provision and attracting boutique ‘heritage retail’ and independent retailers;
 - Provision of a mix of retail uses, providing diversity in town centre offering and opportunities for respite and relaxation, such as with coffee shops;
 - Provision for small businesses and shops with appropriate-sized retail units to meet demand and support the small business market;
 - Introduction of apart-hotel use, providing short-term let accommodation, supporting the needs of, and attracting, working professionals and visitors to Reading, as well as assisting in remedying an identified under-provision;
 - Provision of an enhanced public realm with the public square, providing opportunities for respite, relaxation and play, as well as community and public events and the opportunity to foster and support local community initiatives, exhibitions and performances;
 - Provision of a town centre destination that will attract visitors, shoppers and workers to this part of the town centre, enhancing the activity, vitality and viability of this part of the centre;
 - This is a proposal, which based on stakeholder consultation, will lead to significant public benefits.

- The proposals will arrest the decline of QVS and support and bolster the Reading economy, which is of particular importance at this current time and will play an important role in the post-Covid19 recovery of the town centre.
- The renewal of 141 - 148 Friar Street could act as a valuable catalyst to support wider improvements within this part of the Town Centre.

1.11 The scheme will provide a much need investment in this site, which requires substantial intervention to protect the heritage asset. This coupled with the enhancement of the retail offering and provision of a much-needed high quality apart-hotel. The vision for QVS1 and QVS2 was first presented to the Council in November 2019 and has been development in conjunction with officers and key stakeholders. Working together the scheme has evolved and will realise a shared vision and we hope will act as a catalyst for the further regeneration of Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street, and enhancement of the public realm.

2.0 Consultation Policy Context

NPPF

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework 2018 (“NPPF”) states:

“Applicants will be expected to work closely with those directly affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Proposals that can demonstrate this in developing design of the new development should be looked on more favourably.”

Reading BC

2.2 The Council has adopted a Statement of Community Involvement (2014) that sets out the Council’s policy for involving communities in the preparation of planning proposals. It states:

Developers should prepare a project plan for pre-application involvement and consultation to be discussed and agreed with the case officer. The case officer will provide assistance in identifying and providing contact information for local representatives, groups and individuals who should be invited by the applicant to become involved in the proposals. This will include local residential and other property, representatives of community groups, including local Councillors, relevant statutory and non-statutory consultees, statutory undertakers and any other bodies or individuals to which such information is deemed relevant by the local planning authority. Where proposals relate to the historic environment, the developer will be required to consult a number of organisations with interests in these matters.

3.0 Engagement

Engagement

3.1 The scheme builds on the vision shared with the Council in November 2019 to redevelop both QVS1 and QVS2 as a new hotel quarter in the town centre.

- 3.2 Planning permission was previously approved (subject to a S106) and a thorough Public Consultation Event was undertaken under APP1. This scheme now incorporates 145 and 146 Friar Street, these two elements of the scheme have been considered in tandem with QVS2. Therefore, we set out the Community Engagement under APP1 as an Appendices to this document.

[Engagement - APP2](#)

- 3.3 Presentation of concept to senior officers (September 2021).
- 3.4 Agreed key viewpoints with officers (October 2021)
- 3.5 Presented massing analysis (December 2021)
- 3.6 Presented concept and massing to Reading Civic & CAAC (January 2022)
- 3.7 Pre-App Meeting with Officers (January 2022) (LPA ref: 211901/PREAPP)
- 3.8 Refined massing and height submission (review of Bugle retention) (February 2022)
- 3.9 Pre-App Meetings with Officers (February 2022)
- 3.10 Pre-App Addendum (March 2022)
- 3.11 Pre-App Meetings with Officers (March 2022)
- 3.12 Presented to Reading Civic & CAAC (March 2022).
- 3.13 Pre-App responses issued (2 x April 2022)
- 3.14 Pre-App presentation at Council Offices (April 2022)
- 3.15 Presented to Reading Civic & CAAC (April 2022)
- 3.16 Public Consultation Event (June 2002)
- 3.17 Presented to Reading Design Review Panel (May 2022)
- 3.18 Engagement with senior officers (June 2022).
- 3.19 Pre-App responses issued (July 2022)
- 3.20 Further refinement and presentation to Officers (July 2022).
- 3.21 Further, Reading Civic Society have circulated and posted on local forums and websites including Instagram and <https://readingonthames.com>.

- 3.22 Website Consultation: a website to inform has been distributed to local amenities group and also posted on relevant social media - <https://queenvictoriastreet.co.uk/>
- 3.23 Brochure Consultation: a brochure has been posted to relevant local neighbours and is available to be sent out at request.
- 3.24 Poster Consultation: a poster has been posted on site

Consultation Area

- 3.25 To understand the context of the site, please see the aerial photograph below.

Scheme Consultation

Public Engagement

- 3.26 In these changing times, as we have been cautious to unable to directly engage face-to-face at times, we needed to consider how we can reach and access relevant people and groups, including those without digital access. However, the primary focus has been digital methods, which we hope has ensured all voices have been heard.
- 3.27 We have made use of existing networks in place, with particularly acknowledgement to the help Mr Bennett of Reading Civic Society has provided.

Further Public Engagement

- 3.28 The methods used have been:
- Advertised on site - 'poster' that are graphical as opposed text based have been displayed on site and were affixed by a local contact.
 - Newsletter - a brochure of the proposal has been distributed locally.
 - Website / Social Media - provided a general overview of the proposal, notify people of website and encouraging comments.
 - Engagement with established organisations/ networks, such as CAAC / Civic Society.
 - Webinar presentation / Q&A online - the digital media event allows stakeholders to join and ask questions.
 - Direct engagement - target relevant groups
 - Engagement of amenity groups.

- Email consultation to take into account comments.
- Local press.
- Offer to speak to people without digital access via telephone, but this was not taken up.

[Response - Design Review Panel](#)

- 3.29 The scheme was presented to Reading's Design Review Panel, the response was really positive and is summarised as:

The proposals have the potential to provide a significant townscape benefit to this key intersection at the heart of Reading. The overall vertical hierarchy applied to the scheme is sound, with a public / civic base of 2 storeys and then functional accommodation above. The challenge that remains to be addressed is how can The Bugle be retained as more than just a shell? It's historic volume, entrance and qualities should be respected and referenced in the proposals.

The renewal of 141 - 148 Friar Street could act as a valuable catalyst to support wider improvements within this part of the Town Centre.

- 3.30 The feedback has been positive, changes have been made to the scheme to take account of the comments. The amenity groups have been supportive of the proposal and the comments from the local community are also very positive - if regard is had to Appendix 1 the comments are tabulated.
- 3.31 In summary, the general tone has been that the scheme would add to the vitality of the town centre and would be very welcomed.
- 3.32 Councillors: we engaged with Local Ward Councillors, those 'able' to pass comments were positive.
- 3.33 Amenity Groups: feedback has been positive and some very constructive advice, based on local knowledge was provided and all points raised, we have taken fully into account and the scheme has been improved to take account of their comments.
- 3.34 Local Residents: the town centre site has limited the number of relevant stakeholders that have been inclined to comment, however, the wider residents of Reading have been positive in their responses.
- 3.35 Comments Received: a summary of the comments received is attached, we have not divulged any details of those commenting but the summary is at Appendix 1.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 The consultation by the Applicant has been an iterative process, which has engaged with local groups via modern technology in a very proactive and detailed manner, which has fulfilled the requirements of both national policy and Reading BC's policy. We have therefore fulfilled the requirements of the Council and those laid out in The Localism Act 2011.
- 4.2 The engagement with key stakeholders has been a very important and beneficial exercise, we have sought to integrate the comments at all stages including at times when slightly different to officers and will continue to adjust, where necessary the scheme. In most cases, this has directly influenced the scheme that has evolved to this day.
- 4.3 As the application progresses through the planning system, we will continue to engage with stakeholders. If the Council are minded to grant consent, again we will continue to work with stakeholder post decision and during construction.
- 4.4 The Applicant is committed developing a scheme for the residents and businesses of Reading and those visiting the town.
- 4.5 The feedback to date has been overwhelming positive and level of support has been beyond the Applicant's expectations. The feedback is encouraging the speedy delivery of the scheme.
- 4.6 In summary, the engagement found that the scheme presented is a positive benefit that on the feedback received, is supported by the local community and key stakeholders.

Appendix 1

Below are the comments received during the process via email:

Looks good, restore a tired part of Reading
Thank you for including me in your zoom call. It was interesting. I think you are making a great effort to please the people of Reading, well done. Me I like Queen Victoria Street, it is one of my favorites, and I don't like change so hard to please. But if anyone makes a good job of it, I am sure it will be your company, good luck.
This looks great and would be very welcome in the town.
Very impressive and positive addition to town centre. Hopefully this can be approved and delivered
Rents for true independent occupiers need to be affordable though - hope this will be the case and Business case doesn't rely on unaffordable income.
Will be great to see improvements to listed buildings.
Love the concept. Essential to retain distinctive Victorian architectural features to differentiate from other town centre arcades. Needs to be characterful please!
Fantastic use of space. 100% Approve!
I'm hugely impressed with this plan. I shared some of the details on my Reading On Thames blog and social media accounts, attracting over 1500 views and many favourable comments. The only thing people don't seem to like is the Eat, Shop, Sleep wall mural, which I'm sure is only indicative. Something more locally applicable perhaps?
My only remark really, that same visual seems to show an isolated unit on that terrace level. Drawing potential customers into this square is one thing, but up some stairs as well feels like this might be isolated somewhat. You wouldn't want this unit vacant risking the whole place feeling half closed. Why not have one of the ground floor units as a cafe/bar with small ground floor footprint including internal stairs/lift and have the terrace as part indoor part outdoor seating dedicated to that unit. Is a paying customer not far more likely to climb the stairs for a seat?
Anyway, hope to see this scheme progress quickly and come to fruition very soon.
Seen the proposal and think it looks very good
This looks great and would be very welcome in the town.
I am all for what you are planning to do with these buildings, it's about time someone started caring about our old architecture in the town centre. I would love to be able to use the facilities you are proposing. Sadly people tend to see the store fronts but don't look up to see the wonderful buildings that house them so hopefully this will start a trend in town and others will follow in your footsteps.
The only concern I have is the apartments above, I know people love city centre living these days, I myself would happily do it but sadly lack the funds for such an adventure, but my concern relates to the noise from all the bars and clubs on Friar Street. Residents would want to have bedroom windows open during the night but the noise from the revellers would be horrendous.
But that said I wish you well and hope you manage to get the planning approved.
This is terrific, really positive news for the town centre.

Appendix 2

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

Date: 14.07.22

Signed



On behalf of the Reading Design Review Panel



EXPLORE WHAT'S ON READING

Just announced

Queen Victoria Place II Reading, so what happens next?

Is time up for the Bugle & WH Smiths on Friar Street?

Mon 27 Jun, 8:26 - Thu 30 Jun, 9:30

BOOK NOW



DETAILS



Do join Reading Civic Society on 30 June at 10 am when it hosts an on line presentation from the site owners (Thackeray Group) to hear more about their ideas for the rear of W H Smiths building, the Bugle Pub, closed for some time, and the modern building next door.

Their proposals will extend their vision for the already approved restoration and reimagination of their corner site (Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street) which they have called Queen Victoria Place 1. This is their plan to extend the scheme but with the same vision to significantly improve the long neglected buildings on Friar Street.

The Thackeray Group is a property development and investment company with holdings around the UK. It owns 4 corner blocks in Reading including this group at the corner of

BOOK NOW

Queen Victoria St and Friar Street. <https://thackerayestates.com/developments>

In March 2021 we held a public consultation with the company about their plan to restore the GII Listed buildings, remove old and low buildings at the back, create a new Market Place with retail elements and potential for community uses, establish a 40+ bed Aparthotel, establish new consistent shop fronts ready for new independent retail, restaurant and cafe. Planning Application No 210223 .

The scheme received planning consent quickly and urgent restoration work has already started. Further information may be found [Queen Victoria Place website](#)

Early this year Reading Civic Society was in discussion with Thackeray Group about their vision to extend the scheme to include the Art Deco rear of W H Smiths, the Bugle pub which closed during the pandemic and the modern building beyond that.

This on line consultation has been arranged for the company to share their proposals and seek your feedback.

The presenters, Paul Bottomley of the Town Planning Bureau and one of his colleagues , will give an overview of the scheme. There will be the opportunity to ask questions of the presenters.

This event is open to all.

Please book on Eventbrite where you will find the ZOOM link.

The details of the ZOOM event the event will start at 10:00 am , please join from 9:45am.

We will encourage you give feedback to the company after the event

Also please let Richard Bennett know your reactions as this will assist the Reading Civic Society & the CAAC to formulate their comments (email: Bennettbaker@msn.com)

BOOK NOW



Town Planning Bureau

The Barn · 43 Oakdene Road · Redhill · Surrey · RH1 6BT
tel: 01737 390169 email: info@tpbureau.co.uk

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Site: 1-15 Queen Victoria Street / 147-148 Friar
Street, Reading RG1 1SY
Application by: Thackery Estates
Lead Consultant: Mr Paul S Bottomley
Date: 5th February 2021
Our Ref: URB-482b-SC1

Copyright Notice.
This document and its content are the property of Town Planning Bureau © Urbanistica Ltd 2009. All right reserved. Any redistribution or reproduction of part or all of the contents in any form is prohibited other than the following:
• You may print for your personnel use only.
You may not, except with our permission, distribute or commercially exploit the content. Nor may you transmit or store in any other form.

1. Introduction

2. Consultation Policy Context

3. Engagement

4. Conclusions

A1. Appendix 1.....

A2. Appendix 2.....

A3. Appendix 3.....

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement (“SCI”) provides an overview the consultation process undertaken by the Thackeray Estates group comprises supporting information in respect of a planning application for the development as described at para 1.2 below.

- Applicant: Thackery Estate (“the Applicant”).
- Site: 1-15 Queen Victoria Street / 147-148 Friar Street, Reading RG1 1SY (“the site”).
- LPA: Reading Borough Council (“the Council”).

Proposal

1.2 Planning permission and listed building consent is sought for

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

1.3 In summary, the proposals comprise:

- the partial demolition of existing buildings at the rear of the site,
- retention and restoration of the original listed buildings,
- the development of a rear extensions and the creation of a new public square,
- creating enhanced retail provision at ground floor (and part first floor within market square and 147 Friar Street) and the provision of an apart-hotel use on the remaining upper floors.

Site Context

1.4 The site is a prominent plot located on the corner of Queen Victoria Street (QVS) and Friar Street, with significant frontage to both. QVS is the principle pedestrianised access point to the town centre from Reading Railway Station and Friar Street is traffic controlled with access to busses and taxis only.

1.5 The Site comprises a number of premises with retail uses at ground floor level with other secondary uses (although vacant) at first floor level and above. Both QVS and Friar Street are key primary retail streets within the town centre and are in a highly accessible location, approximately 200m from Reading Railway Station to the north.

1.6 The site comprises the following distinct buildings:

- 1-15 QVS - Part of a larger terrace built in the early 1900s, the QVS properties comprise retail accommodation arranged over the ground and basement floors. The remaining 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors being office accommodation, albeit there are many vacant units. The properties are Grade II listed.

- 148 Friar Street - This unit comprises retail floorspace at ground (Café Nero) with vacant office floors above. The building is located on the corner of Friar Street and forms the corner of 1-15 QVS. This property is also Grade II listed.
- 147 Friar Street - Dating from the early 1880s, this unit comprises retail/ nail salon at ground floor with three vacant floors above, which are understood to be former offices. The building is also Grade II listed - the main interest of the building is the 2-storey shop front.
- To the rear of the properties are a mix of more modern extensions and additions (late 19th and 20th centuries) that are incoherent with each other and represent crowded built form - all the buildings are vacant, deteriorating and suffer from anti-social behaviour and accessing by rough sleepers.

Benefits of the Proposal

- 1.7 The proposal presented herewith represent a unique opportunity to secure the long term future of the listed buildings, which are subject to significant decay and are in need of immediate repair to deliver enhanced retail provision and an apart-hotel use.
- 1.8 The proposals are a high-quality design response and elegant solution to retaining the listed buildings and enhancing this key site in the heart of Reading. The site is highly sustainable and accessible and the proposals are acceptable in planning terms that will deliver significant public benefits.



2.0 Consultation Policy Context

NPPF

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework 2018 (“NPPF”) states:

“Applicants will be expected to work closely with those directly affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Proposals that can demonstrate this in developing design of the new development should be looked on more favourably.”

Reading BC

- 2.2 The Council has adopted a Statement of Community Involvement (2014) that sets out the Council’s policy for involving communities in the preparation of planning proposals. It states:

Developers should prepare a project plan for pre-application involvement and consultation to be discussed and agreed with the case officer. The case officer will provide assistance in identifying and providing contact information for local representatives, groups and individuals who should be invited by the applicant to become involved in the proposals. This will include local residential and other property, representatives of community groups, including local Councillors, relevant statutory and non-statutory consultees, statutory undertakers and any other bodies or individuals to which such information is deemed relevant by the local planning authority. Where proposals relate to the historic environment, the developer will be required to consult a number of organisations with interests in these matters.

3.0 Engagement

Engagement

- 3.1 **Pre-Application:** pre-application engagement has been completed with Reading BC (LPA ref: 201372/PREAPP) and a second follow up addendum to address points raised during the first pre-application meeting.
- 3.2 **1st Round Consultation:** Zoom presentations have been held with Senior Officers of Reading BC, Local Ward Councillors, Reading BID, Reading CIVIC Society and Reading CAAC.
- 3.3 **2nd Round Consultation:** the second round of consultation informed Local Ward Councillors, Reading BID, Reading CIVIC Society, Reading CAAC. Reading Arts & Heritage Forum, Whitley Community Development Association and Caversham & District Residents Association.
- 3.4 Further, Reading Civic Society have circulated and posted on local forums and websites including Instagram and <https://readingonthames.com>.
- 3.5 **Website Consultation:** a website to inform has been distributed to local amenities group and also posted on relevant social media - <https://queenvictoriastreet.co.uk/>

- 3.6 **Brochure Consultation:** a brochure has been posted to relevant local neighbours and is available to be sent out at request.

- 3.7 **Poster Consultation:** a poster has been posted on site

Consultation Area

- 3.8 To understand the context of the site, please see the aerial photograph below.



1-15 QUEEN VICTORIA STREET & 147-148 FRIAR STREET
Mixed use redevelopment comprising retail, market square and aparthotel

THE VISION

- Vibrant new retail quarter
- Market square for cultural events
- Heritage assets restored
- New gateway setting to town centre
- New independent retail, restaurants and cafes
- Enhancements to the public realm
- New consistent shop fronts
- Visitor accommodation

We are intending to submit a planning application to renovate, restore and extend 1-15 Queen Victoria Street & 147-148 Friar Street to improve the connectivity between the railway station and main shopping area.

The vision is to create a vibrant mixed-use development while protecting one of Reading's key heritage assets for future generations bringing this beautiful building back into a fully active use. Extensive design work and consultation with key stakeholders has informed the scheme and we welcome further your views and comments on the proposals.

If you would like to get in touch, or have any comments you can contact us on the details below
Email: david@thuckerray-estates.co.uk
www.queenvictoriastreet.co.uk

REVITALISED HIGH STREET
The site offers massive potential to be a destination, both as a retail hub as well as offering town centre visitor accommodation. New high quality shopfronts with consistent signage will ensure a cohesive facade and create a destination identity. A new Market Square will make optimum use of the space to the rear providing its own destination and reimagining the retail experience with a range of independent retail units. The upper floors provide the opportunity for urban visitor accommodation.

RETAIL DESTINATION
A new Market Square will make optimum use of the space to the rear providing its own destination and reimagining the retail experience. The Market Square will be connected to both Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street creating a retail hub and visibility on two main street frontages. Some retail units will have dual aspect providing further connectivity to the Market Square within. The square will be adaptable to multifunctional uses such as community events, big screen for sporting occasions and themed markets.

RESTORATION
Central to the proposals is the restoration and re-use of the listed building. The building will be a series of design and contribute to dominate as much of the upper floors remain vacant. The careful and much needed restoration of the main facade, cleaning and repair of the masonry and removal of scaffolding supports will be carried out in meticulous fashion to ensure this building is restored for future generations. A series of well designed, appropriate shop fronts and signage will set a standard for the return of the street as has been seen in many towns with significant heritage assets.

REMOVE

- poor quality additions to be removed
- poor quality rear elevations with low amenity value
- landscaped rear with limited use to be cleared

RESTORE

- repair and restore listed asset
- clean and repair facades of immediate design
- building improved for future generations
- new heritage shop fronts and signage setting the standard for the street
- subservient to elaborate and decorative front facade

CREATE

- carefully designed extensions weaved into existing fabric
- high quality retail and apartment
- existing rear facade of the listed building retained and exposed internally
- majority of the listed fabric to remain in place and on display
- subservient to elaborate and decorative front facade

PUBLIC SPACE

- new market square to be a vibrant and intimate public space
- key destination with high quality retail and cafe spaces
- outdoor space for daily use and for regular events such as farmers markets and screenings
- market square will offer significant public value to the area

CONNECT

- connect the main pedestrianised streets and the market square
- providing 'back' movement for visitors
- enable the currently underused and under-valued land to the rear of the listed building to become active
- part of the urban grain of town centre
- value and potential of the site unlocked

Securing a beautiful listed building... ..for the future of Reading

Scheme Consultation

- 3.9 Consultation Events: we have been unable to hold face-to-face consultation events as a result of the global pandemic, however, a consultation strategy was agreed with Officers, which is based on best practice guidance.
- 3.10 Therefore, alternative method of engagements was undertaken.

Public Engagement

- 3.11 As we are unable to directly engage, we needed to consider how we can reach and access relevant people and groups, including those without digital access. However, the primary focus has been digital methods, which we hope has ensured all voices have been heard.
- 3.12 We have made use of existing networks in place, with particularly acknowledgement to the help Mr Bennett of Reading Civic Society has provided.

Further Public Engagement

- 3.13 The methods used have been:
- Advertised on site - 'posters' that are graphical as opposed text based have been displayed on site and were affixed by a local contact.
 - Newsletter - a brochure of the proposal has been distributed locally and via existing organisations/ networks.
 - Website / Social Media - provided a general overview of the proposal, notify people of website and encouraging comments.
 - Engagement with established organisations/ networks, such as CAC / Civic Society.
 - Social media - Instagram and Facebook.
 - Webinar presentation / Q&A online - the digital media event allows stakeholders to join and ask questions.
 - Direct engagement - target relevant groups
 - Engagement of amenity groups.
 - Email consultation to take into account comments.
 - Notification of local press.
 - Responded to emails contact.
 - Offer to speak to people without digital access via telephone, but this was not taken up.

Response

- 3.14 The feedback has been entirely positive with regard to this conservation led restoration scheme. The amenity groups are very supportive of the proposal and the comments from the local community are also very positive - if regard is had to Appendix 1 the comments are tabulated.
- 3.15 In summary, the general tone has been that the scheme would add to the vitality of the town centre and would be very welcomed.
- 3.16 Councillors: we engaged with Local Ward Councillors, those 'able' to pass comments were positive.
- 3.17 Amenity Groups: feedback has been positive and some very constructive advice, based on local knowledge was provided and all points raised, we have taken fully into account and the scheme has been improved to take account of their comments.
- 3.18 Local Residents: the town centre site has limited the number of relevant stakeholders that have been inclined to comment, however, the wider residents of Reading have been positive in their responses.
- 3.19 Comments Received: a summary of the comments received is attached, we have not divulged any details of those commenting but the summary is at Appendix 1.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 The consultation by the Applicant has been an iterative process, which has engaged with local groups via modern technology in a very proactive and detailed manner, which has fulfilled the requirements of both national policy and Reading BC's policy. We have therefore fulfilled the requirements of the Council and those laid out in The Localism Act 2011.
- 4.2 The engagement with key stakeholders has been a very important and beneficial exercise, we have sought to integrate the comments at all stages including at times when slightly different to officers and will continue to adjust, where necessary the scheme. In most cases, this has directly influenced the scheme that has evolved to this day.
- 4.3 As the application progresses through the planning system, we will continue to engage with stakeholders. If the Council are minded to grant consent, again we will continue to work with stakeholder post decision and during construction.
- 4.4 The Applicant is committed developing a scheme for the residents and businesses of Reading and those visiting the town.
- 4.5 The feedback to date has been overwhelming positive and level of support has been beyond the Applicant's expectations. The feedback is encouraging the speedy delivery of the scheme.
- 4.6 In summary, the engagement found that the scheme presented is a positive benefit that on the feedback received, is supported by the local community and key stakeholders.

Appendix 1

Below are the comments received during the process via email:

This looks great and would be very welcome in the town.
Very impressive and positive addition to town centre. Hopefully this can be approved and delivered Rents for true independent occupiers need to be affordable though - hope this will be the case and Business case doesn't rely on unaffordable income. Will be great to see improvements to listed buildings.
Love the concept. Essential to retain distinctive Victorian architectural features to differentiate from other town centre arcades. Needs to be characterful please!
Fantastic use of space. 100% Approve!
I'm hugely impressed with this plan. I shared some of the details on my Reading On Thames blog and social media accounts, attracting over 1500 views and many favourable comments. The only thing people don't seem to like is the Eat, Shop, Sleep wall mural, which I'm sure is only indicative. Something more locally applicable perhaps? My only remark really, that same visual seems to show an isolated unit on that terrace level. Drawing potential customers into this square is one thing, but up some stairs as well feels like this might be isolated somewhat. You wouldn't want this unit vacant risking the whole place feeling half closed. Why not have one of the ground floor units as a cafe/bar with small ground floor footprint including internal stairs/lift and have the terrace as part indoor part outdoor seating dedicated to that unit. Is a paying customer not far more likely to climb the stairs for a seat? Anyway, hope to see this scheme progress quickly and come to fruition very soon.
Seen the proposal and think it looks very good
This looks great and would be very welcome in the town.
I am all for what you are planning to do with these buildings, it's about time someone started caring about our old architecture in the town centre. I would love to be able to use the facilities you are proposing. Sadly people tend to see the store fronts but don't look up to see the wonderful buildings that house them so hopefully this will start a trend in town and others will follow in your footsteps. The only concern I have is the apartments above, I know people love city centre living these days, I myself would happily do it but sadly lack the funds for such an adventure, but my concern relates to the noise from all the bars and clubs on Friar Street. Residents would want to have bedroom windows open during the night but the noise from the revellers would be horrendous. But that said I wish you well and hope you manage to get the planning approved. This is terrific, really positive news for the town centre.

Appendix 2 - Brochure and Poster

1-15 QUEEN VICTORIA STREET & 147-148 FRIAR STREET

Mixed use redevelopment comprising retail, market square and aparthotel



We are intending to submit a planning application to renovate, restore and extend 1-15 Queen Victoria Street & 147-148 Friar Street to improve the connectivity between the railway station and main shopping area.

The vision is to create a vibrant mixed use development while protecting one of Reading's key heritage assets for future generations bringing this beautiful building back into a fully active use.

Extensive design work and consultation with key stakeholders has informed the scheme and we welcome further your views and comments on the proposal.

T

THACKERAY GROUP



REVITALISED HIGH STREET

The site offers massive potential to be a destination, both as a retail hub as well as offering town centre visitor accommodation.

New high quality shopfronts with consistent signage will ensure a cohesive façade and create a destination identity.

A new Market Square will make optimum use of the space to the rear providing its own destination and reinvigorating the retail experience with a mix of independent retail units.

The upper floors provide the opportunity for urban visitor accommodation.

RESTORATION

Central to the proposals is the restoration and re-use of the listed buildings. The buildings are in a state of disrepair and continue to deteriorate as much of the upper floors remain vacant.

The careful and much needed restoration of the main façades, cleaning and repair of the elaborate terracotta and removal of scaffold supports will be carried out in meticulous fashion to ensure this building is retained for future generations.

A series of well designed, appropriate shop fronts and signage can set a standard for the entirety of the street as has been seen in many towns with significant heritage assets.

RETAIL DESTINATION

A new Market Square will make optimum use of the space to the rear providing its own destination and reinvigorating the retail experience.

The Market Square will be connected to both Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street creating a retail hub and visibility on two main street frontages. Some retail units will have dual aspect providing further connectivity to the Market Square behind.

The square will be adaptable to multi-function uses such as community events, big screen for sporting occasions and themed markets.



REMOVE



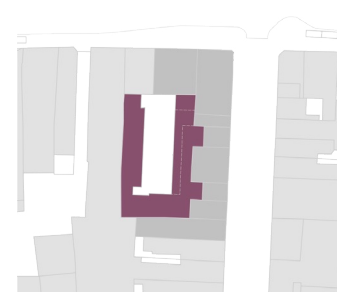
- poor quality additions to be removed
- poor quality rear elevations with low amenity value
- landlocked rear with limited use to be cleared

RESTORE



- repair and restore listed asset
- clean and repair façades of terracotta dressings
- building retained for future generations
- new heritage shop fronts and signage setting the standard for the street

CREATE



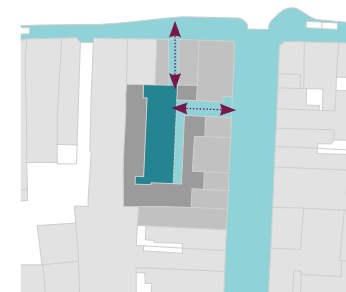
- carefully designed extensions weaved into existing fabric
- high quality retail and aparthotel.
- existing rear facade of the listed buildings retained and exposed internally
- majority of the listed fabric to remain in place and on display
- subservient to elaborate and decorative front facade

PUBLIC SPACE



- new market square to be a vibrant and intimate public space
- key destination with high quality retail and cafe spaces
- outdoor space for daily use and for regular events such as farmers markets and screenings
- market square will offer significant public value to the area

CONNECT



- connect the main pedestrianised streets and the market square
- passing trade maximised for traders
- enable the currently underused and undervalued land to the rear of the listed buildings to become active
- part of the urban grain of town centre
- value and potential of the site unlocked

THE VISION

T

THACKERAY GROUP

- Vibrant new retail quarter
- Market square for cultural events
- Heritage assets restored
- New gateway setting to town centre
- New independent retail, restaurants and cafés
- Enhancements to the public realm
- New consistent shop fronts
- Visitor accommodation



If you would like to get in touch, or have any comments you can contact us on the details below:

Email: david@thackeray-estates.co.uk

www.queenvictoriastreet.co.uk

1-15 QUEEN VICTORIA STREET & 147-148 FRIAR STREET

Mixed use redevelopment comprising retail, market square and aparthotel

THE VISION

- Vibrant new retail quarter
- Market square for cultural events
- Heritage assets restored
- New gateway setting to town centre
- New independent retail, restaurants and cafés
- Enhancements to the public realm
- New consistent shop fronts
- Visitor accommodation

T

THACKERAY GROUP



We are intending to submit a planning application to renovate, restore and extend 1-15 Queen Victoria Street & 147-148 Friar Street to improve the connectivity between the railway station and main shopping area.

The vision is to create a vibrant mixed use development while protecting one of Reading's key heritage assets for future generations bringing this beautiful building back into a fully active use.

Extensive design work and consultation with key stakeholders has informed the scheme and we welcome further your views and comments on the proposal.

If you would like to get in touch, or have any comments you can contact us on the details below:

Email: david@thackeray-estates.co.uk

www.queenvictoriastreet.co.uk



REVITALISED HIGH STREET

The site offers massive potential to be a destination, both as a retail hub as well as offering town centre visitor accommodation. New high quality shopfronts with consistent signage will ensure a cohesive façade and create a destination identity. A new Market Square will make optimum use of the space to the rear providing its own destination and reinvigorating the retail experience with a mix of independent retail units. The upper floors provide the opportunity for urban visitor accommodation.

RESTORATION

Central to the proposals is the restoration and re-use of the listed buildings. The buildings are in a state of disrepair and continue to deteriorate as much of the upper floors remain vacant. The careful and much needed restoration of the main façades, cleaning and repair of the elaborate terracotta and removal of scaffold supports will be carried out in meticulous fashion to ensure this building is retained for future generations. A series of well designed, appropriate shop fronts and signage can set a standard for the entirety of the street as has been seen in many towns with significant heritage assets.

RETAIL DESTINATION

A new Market Square will make optimum use of the space to the rear providing its own destination and reinvigorating the retail experience. The Market Square will be connected to both Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street creating a retail hub and visibility on two main street frontages. Some retail units will have dual aspect providing further connectivity to the Market Square behind. The square will be adaptable to multi-function uses such as community events, big screen for sporting occasions and themed markets.

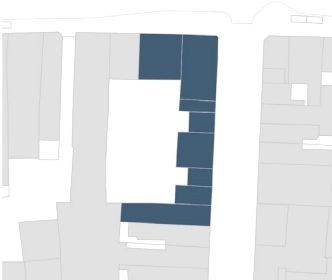


REMOVE



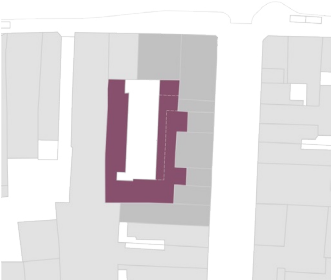
- poor quality additions to be removed
- poor quality rear elevations with low amenity value
- landlocked rear with limited use to be cleared

RESTORE



- repair and restore listed asset
- clean and repair façades of terracotta dressings
- building retained for future generations
- new heritage shop fronts and signage setting the standard for the street

CREATE



- carefully designed extensions weaved into existing fabric
- high quality retail and aparthotel.
- existing rear façade of the listed buildings retained and exposed internally
- majority of the listed fabric to remain in place and on display
- subservient to elaborate and decorative front façade

PUBLIC SPACE



- new market square to be a vibrant and intimate public space
- key destination with high quality retail and cafe spaces
- outdoor space for daily use and for regular events such as farmers markets and screenings
- market square will offer significant public value to the area

CONNECT



- connect the main pedestrianised streets and the market square
- passing trade maximised for traders
- enable the currently underused and undervalued land to the rear of the listed buildings to become active
- part of the urban grain of town centre
- value and potential of the site unlocked

Securing a beautiful listed building...

...for the future of Reading

Appendix 3 - Reading-on-Thames Article

Reading-on-Thames



Queen Victoria Courtyard Scheme Unveiled

January 29, 2021 | [Reading-On-Thames](#) | [Queen Victoria Street, reading](#)



(<https://readingonthames.files.wordpress.com/2021/01/screen-shot-2021-01-29-at-19.55.39.png>)

On these pages, I've frequently emphasised the need to drive Reading's offer forward, to keep the visitors from neighbouring towns coming, and therefore to underpin the overall vitality of the town centre. Yet I reflect now that perhaps the biggest competition to those aims is not Oxford, Basingstoke and Newbury, but rather Amazon, Deliveroo and Netflix. Will the Covid lifestyle stick, or will there be a collective clamour to return to the physical, or the "in real life"? Thankfully, whilst lockdowns have shut us all indoors, that hasn't stopped the investors and architects forming new plans to haul us off our sofas and back into town.

An exciting new heritage-led regeneration of Queen Victoria Street has just been unveiled online (<https://queenvictoriastreet.co.uk/>). The courtyard retail scheme behind the early 1900's thoroughfare, will see the upper floors of those period buildings converted to an apart hotel, with linkage through to the new square. Around the corner, further restored buildings will also provide

access.



(<https://readingonthames.files.wordpress.com/2021/01/screen-shot-2021-01-29-at-19.55.05.png>)

The area being used is what I understand to be part of the former Burger King, that has since been partly superseded by Caffé Nero. The courtyard will also offer a terrace, with further outdoor seating and retail units. The Friar Street visual shows a potential working title of “Victoria Market Square”.



(<https://readingonthames.files.wordpress.com/2021/01/screen-shot-2021-01-29-at-19.54.44.png>)

Shops on Queen Victoria Street will be remodelled to provide access at both sides, helping visibility and awareness of the square behind. The developer, Thackeray – a specialist in heritage projects, expands:

“The vision is to create a destination development befitting Reading’s emerging cultural and economic status. The proposals include a retail offer comprising a market square together with new retail frontages to Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street. This new retail hub will provide small units for independent retailers, start-ups and pop-up eateries. The frontages of Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street will link directly through to the new market square behind.”

The Thackeray Estate



(<https://readingonthames.files.wordpress.com/2021/01/screen-shot-2021-01-29-at-19.56.00.png>)

The developer is seeking feedback (<https://queenvictoriastreet.co.uk/feedback>) on the plans in advance of submitting them to the council. Needless to say, I'm wholly supportive of what seems to be both a sensitive revitalisation of some of our finest buildings yet also bringing something new and interesting to the heart of town.

