HERITAGE AND TOWNSCAPE VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

138-144 FRIAR STREET, READING, RG1 1EX

ON BEHALF OF: THE THACKERAY ESTATE
AUGUST 2022

NAIRITA CHAKRABORTY IHBC RTPI [BA (HONS) M.SC]
FOUNDER, REVIVE AND TAILOR

w: reviveandtailor.co.uk | **e**: nchakraborty@reviveandtailor.co.uk
linkedin: linkedin.com/company/reviveandtailor | **twitter**: @reviveandtailor

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Section 1

Introduction.

1 Introduction

1.1 This Heritage and Townscape Visual Assessment (HTVIA) has been carried out by Revive and Tailor to provide an appraisal of 138-144 Friars Streets, Reading RG1 1EX (henceforth 'the Site').

1.2 This statement is to accompany an application for planning permission for:

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

1.3 The purpose of this HTVIA is to assist with the determination of the application by informing the decision makers on the effects of the proposed development on the historic built environment. It also provides an assessment of the likely impact that the development may have on the surrounding townscape character of Reading in local views.

1.4 Specifically, this report assesses:

- the significance of the identified listed buildings and the effect of the proposed development on that significance;
- the character of the townscape surrounding the Site; and
- The composition of selected representative views as a result of the proposed development.

1.5 In doing so, 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) 2021 and local planning policy.

1.6 The report uses, as its basis, the historic research undertaken by Heritage Collective as part of the approved application for Queen Victoria Street Phase 1 (QVS 1). Value judgements on the significance of the heritage assets affected are presented and the effects of the proposals upon that significance are appraised.

1.7 The verified views assessed as part of the Report have been produced by FCH Architects who have considered all the sensitive views as per Reading Borough Tall Buildings Strategy.

1.8 The existing Site and surrounding area was appraised during site visits between April and May 2022 in good weather. Research has been carried out at Berkshire Local Archives and through online research and digital archives, including the British History Online, the National Archives, and Kelly's and Post Office Directories Archives at the University of Leicester.

1.9 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 Thackeray Group. It should read alongside the Design and Access Statement and other documents submitted as part of the application.



Figure 1.1 Site shown in red
Source: Google maps

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 | Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

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 | Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

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 | Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

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.

2.37 Policy EN4 states that "Development proposals that affect locally important heritage assets will demonstrate that development conserves architectural, archaeological or historical significance which may include the appearance, character and setting of the asset."

2.38 The Policy notes that harm to or loss of a locally important heritage asset would be permitted only where it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development significantly outweigh the asset's significance. It also states that where loss is acceptable, recording of the heritage asset should be undertaken. Additionally, replacement buildings are required to draw upon heritage elements of the previous design, incorporating historical qualities that made the previous building significant. This may include appearance, scale and architectural quality.

2.39 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[1]

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 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.

3.3 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.

3.4 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.

3.5 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.

3.6 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.

3.7 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 Extracted from report by Heritage Collective as part of the consented QVS 1 application. Information has been updated pertaining to the Site in particular where relevant.

3 | History of Site and Surroundings

3.8 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.

3.9 The earliest map of Reading, published in John Speed's atlas of Great Britain in 1611 shows that the plan of the town in the early 17th century resembled a triangle with a church roughly at each corner: St Mary's, St Giles' and St Laurence's. The two long roughly north-south sides of the triangle are formed by the two old rivalrous routes mentioned above. The River Kennet, spanned by two bridges (one over each route), flowed through the centre of the town. The northern side of the triangle was Friar Street. The most developed area is shown to be north of the Kennet and west of the site of Reading Abbey. This map identifies and names London Street and Duke Street and illustrates the triangular market place beside St Laurence's. A lane branched westward from London Street to St Giles' Church, the precursor of today's Church Street.

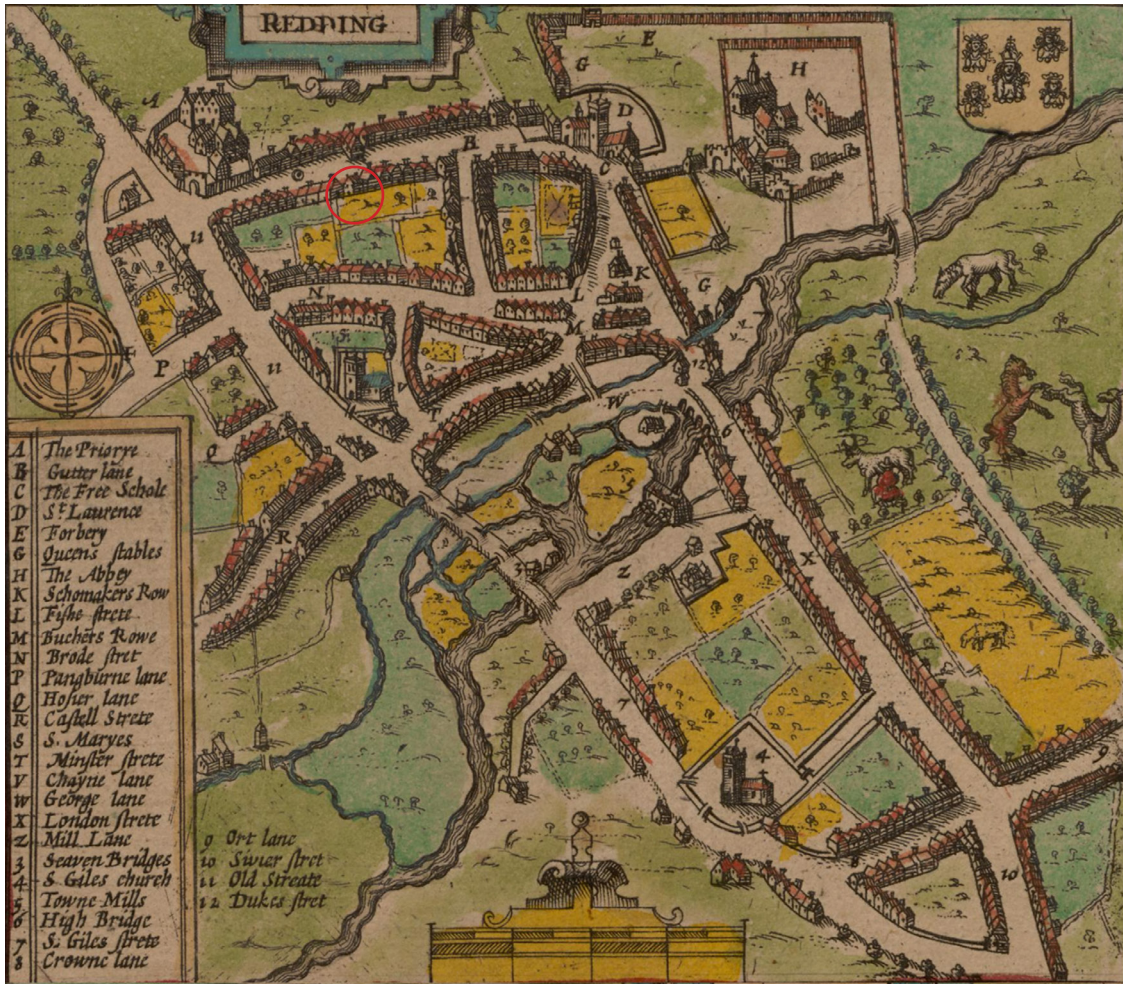


Figure 3.1 John Speed's Map of Reading, 1611
Source: Berkshire Local Archives

3 | History of Site and Surroundings

3.10 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.

3.11 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).

3.12 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. The approximate location of the Site is ringed in red.

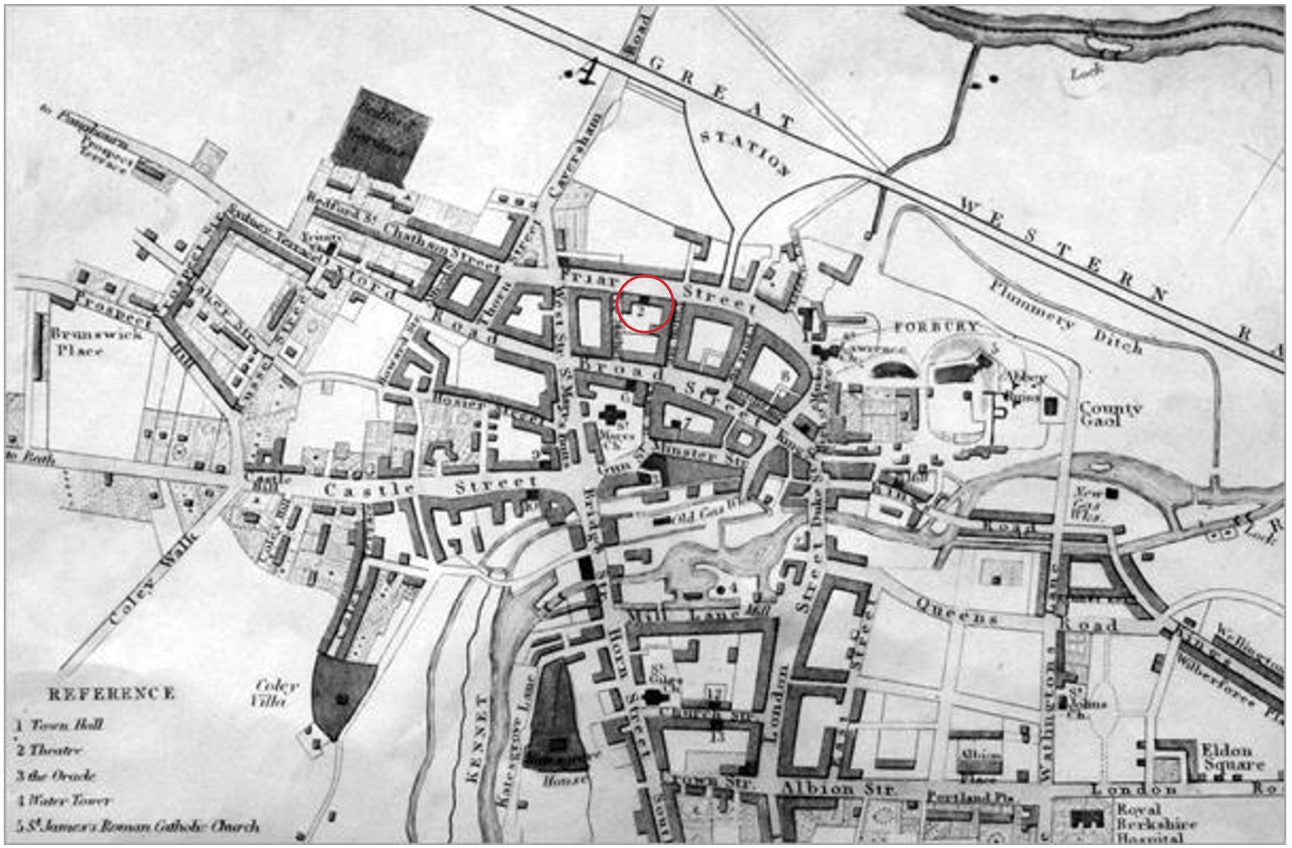


Figure 3.2 Edward Weller's Map of Reading, 1840
Source: Berkshire Local Archives

3 | History of Site and Surroundings

3.13 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.

3.14 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'.

3.15 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.

3.16 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.

3.17 In the mid-20th century the centre of Reading was redeveloped by demolishing parts of the historic core of the town to provide offices and shopping precincts. The construction of the Inner Distribution Road, which started in 1969, improved traffic circulation but severed links between different areas of the town. More recently, the Oracle Shopping Centre has reinvigorated the town centre but meant the loss of a number of historic buildings including Simonds' brewery on the banks of the River Kennett. The canal became disused and impassable by the 1940s but since 1992 has been reopened for leisure uses following a restoration scheme by the Kennet and Avon Trust.



Figure 3.3 Ordnance Survey Map of 1879, 1:2500
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3 | History of Site and Surroundings

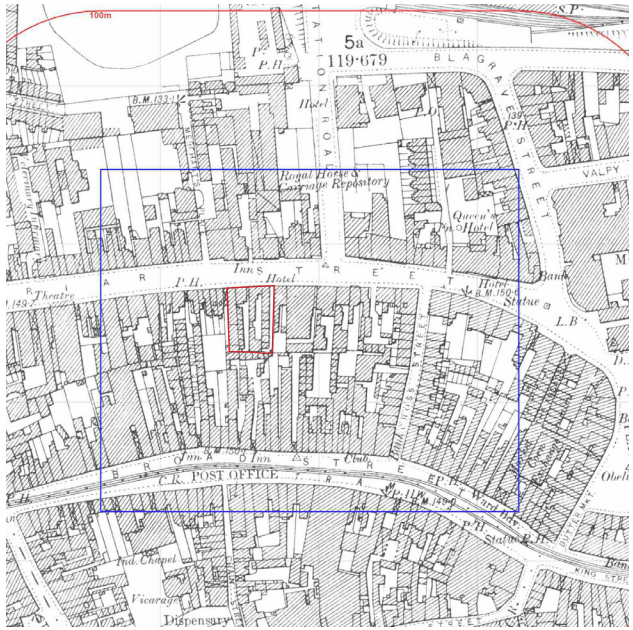


Figure 3.4 Ordnance Survey Map of 1900, 1:2500
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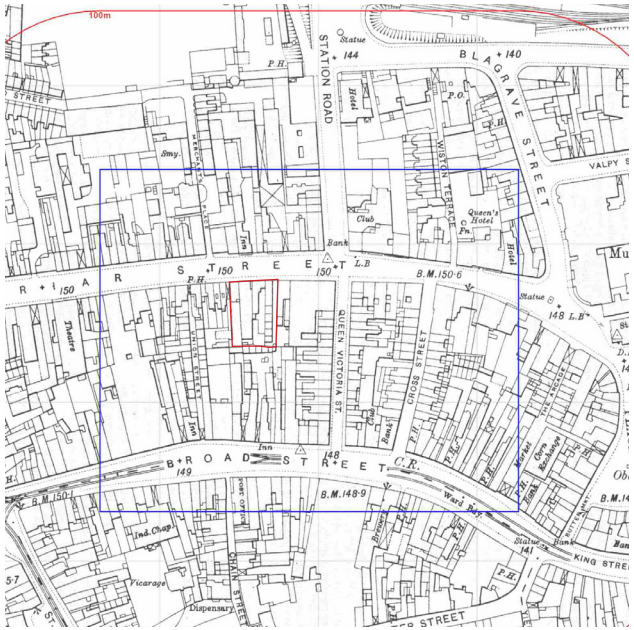


Figure 3.5 Ordnance Survey Map of 1912, 1:2500
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Figure 3.6 Ordnance Survey Map of 1931, 1:2500
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Figure 3.7 Ordnance Survey Map of 1956-57, 1:1,250
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History of the Site

3.18 The Site formed part of Friar's Street, one of the oldest streets in Reading. It is likely that the current layer of buildings along this part is between late 18th Century and early 20th Century.

3.19 The 1802 map by Tomkin (Figure 11) is the first detailed plan of the buildings present within the site and indicates both communal market gardening, as well as private, enclosed gardens. The map shows the presence of Fife Court with a building running down the western side of on the same footprint as the present Bugle public house. It is the only remaining example of a number of 19-century courts off Friar Street. The map also illustrates that the separate buildings constructed between Friar Street and Broad Street were built upon previously cultivated land.[2]

3.20 The Tithe Map on 1847 shows the Site as part of land parcel 56, described as "Block Bounded By Friar Street Union Street Cross Street and Broad Street" owned by Thames Commissioners.

3.21 Further research through Directories (1840-49) show that the properties were leased by the Commissioners to a range of users, for example No 143 was an Accountant's office[3]; No 139 a restaurant[4]. No 144 (The Bugle) is registered as 'Beer Retailer' in this and subsequent directories. Others have remained shops with No 143 remaining a paint shop. It is important to note that licensed public houses were listed as such (see for example Star & Garter PH at No 133 in Fig 3.9) or separately under 'Taverns & Public Houses' within other commercial Directories.

3.22 Detailed mapping from 1853 depict the construction, expansion and consolidation of a number of smaller buildings located to the rear of Friar Street. Ball Court with its row of facing buildings illustrates the intensification of the use of the area. Various buildings are also shown to the east of the site in the area of modern Queen Victoria Street.

2 Archaeological desk-based assessment, 138-144 Friar Street; Oxford Archaeology.

3 Pigot and Co.'s Royal National and Commercial Directory, 1840-49

4 Ibid

3 | History of Site and Surroundings

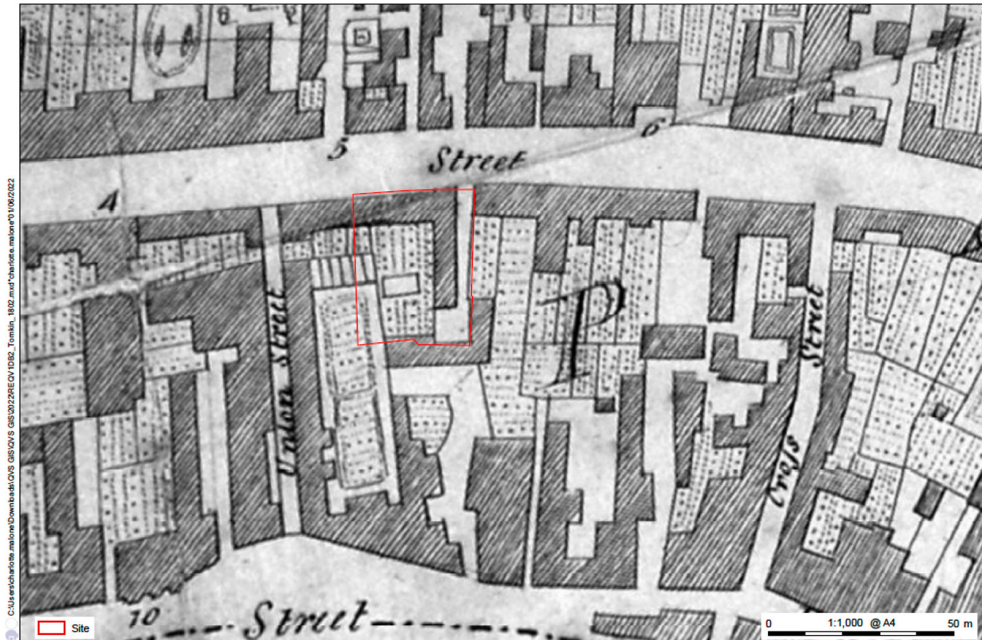


Figure 3.8 Extract from Tomkin's map of Reading, 1802.
Source: Archaeological Desk-based Assessment, 138-144 Friar Street, Reading; Oxford Archaeology



Figure 3.9 Tithe Map of Reading, 1847. The Site forms part of the land parcel number 56 (shown in red) belonging to Thames Commissioners.
Source: National Archives, Kew, London

3 | History of Site and Surroundings


Dance William, wheelwright, Silver street
Darter William Silver, plumber, glazier, painter, & lead & glass merchant, 26 London street
Darvall Joseph, solicitor, & agt.to the Western ins.co.Forbry
Darvall Richard & George, bakers, 3 Oxford street
David Daniel, beer retailer, 144 Friar street
Davies & Son, grocers, provision merchants, & agents to the Dissenters' & General fire & life ins. co. 5 & 6 Gun street
Davies Jeremiah, tallow chandler, 123 Broad street
Davies Mrs. Lucy, grocer, 27 Thorn street

Figure 3.10 Extract from Pigot and Co.'s Royal National and Commercial Directory, 1840-49 showing the proprietor at No 144
Source: University of Leicester, Special Collections Online

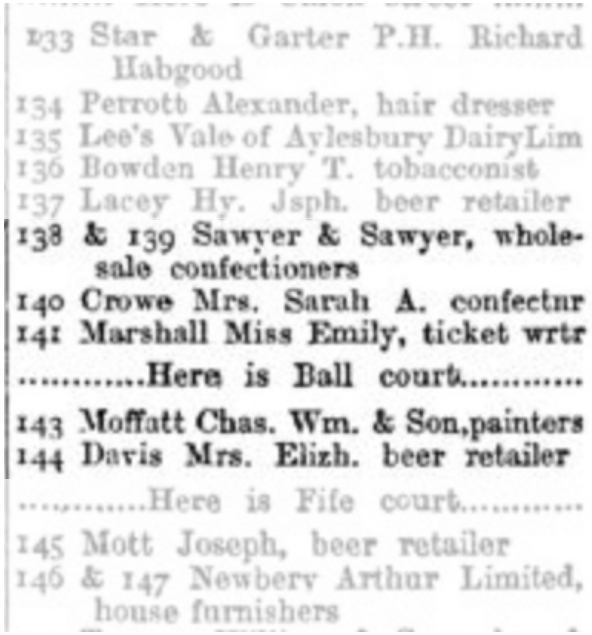

133 Star & Garter P.H. Richard Habgood
134 Perrott Alexander, hair dresser
135 Lee's Vale of Aylesbury DairyLim
136 Bowden Henry T. tobacconist
137 Lacey Hy. Jsph. beer retailer
138 & 139 Sawyer & Sawyer, wholesale confectioners
140 Crowe Mrs. Sarah A. confectnr
141 Marshall Miss Emily, ticket wrtr
.....Here is Ball court.....
143 Moffatt Chas. Wm. & Son,painters
144 Davis Mrs. Elizh. beer retailer
.....Here is Fife court.....
145 Mott Joseph, beer retailer
146 & 147 Newbery Arthur Limited, house furnishers

Figure 3.11 Extract from Kelly's Directory 1899, Pg 174 showing the proprietors at Nos 138-144
Source: University of Leicester, Special Collections Online


137 Goddard Arthur William Thomas, beer retailer
138 Stock Algernon Edward, wholesale newsagent
..... here is Ball court .....
140 & 141 Skurray's, automobile engineers. See advertisement page16
143 Moffatt William C. painter
144 Blackwell John, beer retlr
..... here is Fife court .....
145 Brunton Albt. Howard, tailr
146 & 147 Newbery Arthur Ltd. house furnishers
.... here is Queen Victoria st

Figure 3.12 Extract from Kelly's Directory 1915, Pg 190 showing the proprietors at Nos 138-144
Source: University of Leicester, Special Collections Online

3.23 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.

3.24 The Athenaeum is to the east of the Site (now demolished to make way for Queen Victoria Street) and the Royal Horse and Carriage Repository to the north. There are also hotels at the intersection with Station Road, signifying the area's importance for merchants, traders and travellers.

3.25 By 1912, The Royal Repository had been demolished with buildings of various uses now covering almost whole of the site. This was later developed as the Central Picture Playhouse, as shown in the 1931 OS Map. In the 1990s, the site of the Cinema was redeveloped into the existing premise of Ibis Hotel at 25a Friar Street.

3 | History of Site and Surroundings



Figure 3.13 Ordnance Survey Map of 1879, 1:500
© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 100035207



Figure 3.14 Goad's Map of 1895
© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 100035207

3.26 The Site has three parallel courts including one formed between No 143-144. Ball Court is to the west, rear of No 138 and Fife Court is to the east. The buildings fronting to the courts appear to be subdivided into smaller premises indicating that these too had uses, ancillary or unrelated to the buildings along the street frontage.

3.27 The Goad's Insurance Map of 1895 shows the Site more clearly, with the smaller rear properties indicated as 'tenements'. Some have been specified as shops. Nos 138-141 are listed as shops, No 143 as 'plumber', although the Directory suggests a 'paint shop'. No 144 is shown as Public House, although this is not reflected in the Directories.

3.28 Either way, it can be established that the buildings within the Site were shops, with No 144 as a 'beer establishment' since at least the mid 19th Century. The planform of the Site has remained similar since, apart from the courtyard to the rear of No 143 entirely built up, and Ball's Court vanishing entirely. Fife Court has remained as one of the last remaining 'alleys' to the rear of an otherwise busy and active street frontage.

3 | History of Site and Surroundings

3.29 Aerial views taken from Britain from above, dated 1951 shows the Site in its current form with the larger building at 138-142 Friar Street and a series of single storey buildings to the rear. These buildings have been altered repeatedly and beyond recognition.

3.30 The series of ancillary buildings to the rear of No 144 are also shown with not much material change. However, there is a light level change between the rear most wing of the tenements to the rear. Further alterations have since occurred with a new terrace installed.



Figure 3.15 Aerial view of the Site looking towards railway station
© Britain from above



Figure 3.16 Photos showing the rear of the outbuildings to the Bugle

3 | History of Site and Surroundings



Figure 3.17 Aerial view of Site looking towards St Laurence Church
© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 100035207

Section 4

Site Description and Identification of Heritage Assets.

4 Site Description and Identification of Heritage Assets

Site Location and Context

4.1 The Site is located in Reading Town Centre central area near a key junction between Friar Street and Queen Victoria Street.

4.2 Friar Street runs south of the Railway Station, perpendicular to Queen Victoria Street and is a primary public transport route within the town centre. Primary uses are commercial on the ground floors, with ancillary or offices to the upper floors.

4.3 Within the wider area, the townscape is dominated by the Ibis Hotel directly opposite. Newer developments relating to the Station Square area are also visible, hinting at the transforming context of the historic town centre.

4.4 Whilst much of the transformation appears to the west, the historic centre to the east is distinctly visible with the Church of St Laurence terminating the views along Friar Street east. Greyfriar's Church forms the western end of this vista, although it is wholly dominated by Chatham tower further west.

4.5 The terracotta buildings along the pedestrianised Queen Victoria street also form a key architectural, accentuated by the traffic movement restricted along Friar Street.



Figure 4.1 Front elevation showing No 144-142 Friar Street



Figure 4.2 Front elevation showing No 141-138 Friar Street



Figure 4.3 Corner of Station Road and Friar Street showing the modern developments around the railway station



Figure 4.4 Queen Victoria Street elevation

4 | Site Description and Identification of Heritage Assets



Figure 4.5 View of St Laurence Church from Friar Street, looking east



Figure 4.6 View from Friars Street, looking west towards Ibis Hotel and the corner of Station Road.

Site description

4.6 The Site contains 3 properties.

138-141 Friar Street

4.7 The front elevation of the building is modern and features a three storey and two storey brick frontage, each with a gable roof. Originally three separate properties, these appear to have been amalgamated somewhere between 1931 and 1956.

4.8 Although the Reading Council records do not go far enough to provide details of any planning permission for the demolition and redevelopment of the Site, it is likely to have been in the post-war period.

4.9 At the time of redevelopment, the buildings were deliberately designed to appear two separate buildings with one gable higher than the other. This was an architectural treatment to breaks up the width of the building.

4.10 The ground floor is divided in a asimilar way with the appearance of two shop fronts, although both are for the restaurant/club.

4.11 To the rear, the building covers the whole of the property with a flat roofed two storey wing. The main building fronting Friar Street is a steeply pitched T shape in modern tiles. The roof form and the gables give the building a prominent appearance within the street.

142-143 Friar Street

4.12 This is a two storey building pitched roof building with the apex running east west. The tall parapet of the front facade hides the roof form entirely. Although heavily altered, its scale and shallow form appear to suggest that this would be an mid Victorian building with a simple frontage.

4.13 The front elevation appears to have been re-fronted. It contains two bays with a blank solid section in the middle. It is likely that the properties would have been two smaller units with a party wall in the middle, which has been amalgamated to form one unit. The windows, whilst modern would have been canted which is reflected in the deep reveals.

4.14 The ground floor is a modern shop front and it unlikely that any vestige of the previous shop front would have remained.

4.15 To the rear, there are a series of single storey buildings form ancillary usage of the shop.

4 | Site Description and Identification of Heritage Assets

144 Friar Street, The Bugle PH

4.16 The Bugle has recently been included in the Council's Local List. Whilst a detailed research[1] on the building's fabric was not deemed necessary for this report, a search on several archived records has been undertaken. Site visits to understand both external and internal fabric were undertaken to further inform the assessment.

4.17 It is most likely that the building got license to sell beer following the Beerhouse Act of 1830 which overhauled the system creating looser regulations. This significant rise in the numbers of licensed premises selling alcohol, established them separate from the Taverns and Inns licensed from 1617.

4.18 This is reflected in the search in various archives that show the building as 'beer retailer' or 'licensed victualler' rather than under the list of Taverns, Inns and Public Houses. Nevertheless, it is clear that the building has since atleast 1840s sold alcohol from its premises.



Figure 4.7 Map showing designated and non-designated assets

1 Paragraph 194 requires the level of detail for any asset to be proportionate to its significance. Since the building is not a designated heritage asset, our research has focused on the building's history rather than detailed analysis of its fabric.

4 | Site Description and Identification of Heritage Assets



Figure 4.8 Front elevation, the Bugle at 144 Friar Street



Figure 4.9 The Bugle, 144 Friar Street, 1905
Source: https://simondsfamily.me.uk/the-brewery-estate/public-house-estate/



Figure 4.10 Views to and from Fife Court, showing the flank elevation of the Bugle much altered and in poor condition

4 | Site Description and Identification of Heritage Assets

4.19 Architecturally the building appears to have been much altered. A photo from 1905 (Fig 4.9) shows the earlier elevation with the much smaller dormer to the roof and the timber 'shop' front. The 20th Century alterations include addition of gabled dormer with larger casement windows, new roof tiles with open eaves [suggesting that much of the roof is 20th Century].

4.20 Although the corner entrance at ground floor has been retained, the elevation now has brick quoins on either side as well as the central window. The shop front at the ground floor appears to have also been from early 20th Century with applied timber framing. The entrance is now along the party wall and not at the corner.

4.21 Internally the building does not retain any old features. Whilst chimney breasts have been retained, the fire places are modern pastiche. The original plan form is not recognisable with new sub divisions and openings throughout. The existing structure consists of timber beams with a suspended timber floor joists, supported off a traditional solid masonry walls located around the perimeter of the building. The roof consists of a tiled roof supported by cut timber roof rafters and existing timber beams spanning between the existing perimeter masonry walls.



Figure 4.11 Internal view of the bar area with steel beams and modern fabric



Figure 4.12 Internal view of the rear bar area with steel beams and modern fabric

4.22 The rear wing is lower but runs along the length of the plot. It appears to be a series of 7 bay linear extension, originally containing 5 tenements. Historic mapping and research of Directories alludes to shops such as haberdashery, all of which are now subsumed by the Bugle itself.

4.23 Externally, it is painted about halfway through and is exposed brick towards the rear end. Almost all the windows are blocked along this elevation. There is an entrance to the bars through Fife Court.

4.24 The elevation along Fife Court, especially, is marred by later brick work (evident from the fact that they are machine cut and not hand-made as the case would have been in mid 19th Century), cementitious mortar joints throughout, blocked windows and a plethora of service wires and pipes running haphazardly along it. As such, it detracts from the elevation along Fife Court.

4 | Site Description and Identification of Heritage Assets

4.25 Further forensic analysis of the fabric shows that there are perhaps two parts to the rear wing, the one painted in white which may as well have been earlier, and the part to the rear which is most possible early 20th Century. This is evident from the brick colours matching with the 'quoins' on the main building which were added post 1905. Additionally, the positioning and style/height of the chimneys evidences that the rear element was later. As such, the pre-1840 historic value is also questionable.

4.26 It is clear from the plan form, level change and the brick type that the rearmost part of the wing is from the 20th Century.

4.27 Internally the rear wing has no surviving historic fabric. Much has been modernised to create ancillary flats and various other accommodation. The roof structure also appears to have been modernised, some appearing to be infested.



Figure 4.13 Break in the brick work, along Fife Court, showing the extent of earlier and later extensions



Figure 4.14 Modern brick towards the end of the rear wing



Figure 4.16 Difference in bricks with modern cementitious mortar, evidencing that this part of the rear wing is modern and altered.



Figure 4.15 The difference in the chimney stacks, evidencing the later extension to the rear wing

4 | Site Description and Identification of Heritage Assets



Figure 4.17 Internal view of the rooms within the upper floor of the Bugle, all with modern finishes and modern steel beams



Figure 4.18 Modern brick and timber beams, some infested, within the roof of the rear wing



Figure 4.19 Modern brick and timber beams, some infested, within the roof of the rear wing



Figure 4.20 Windows modernised later including the frames

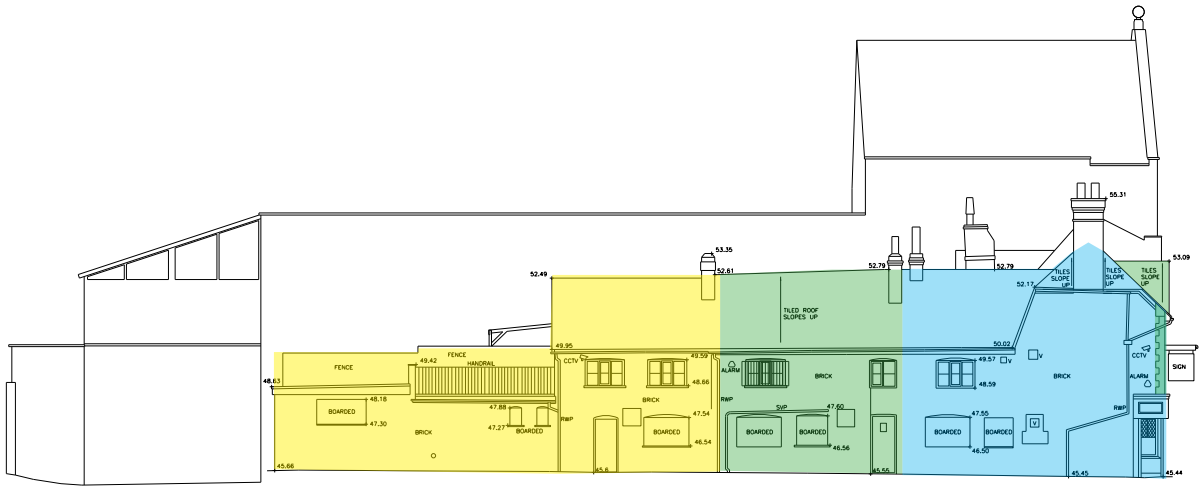


Figure 4.21 Phasing diagram assessed for the Bugle PH, West elevation

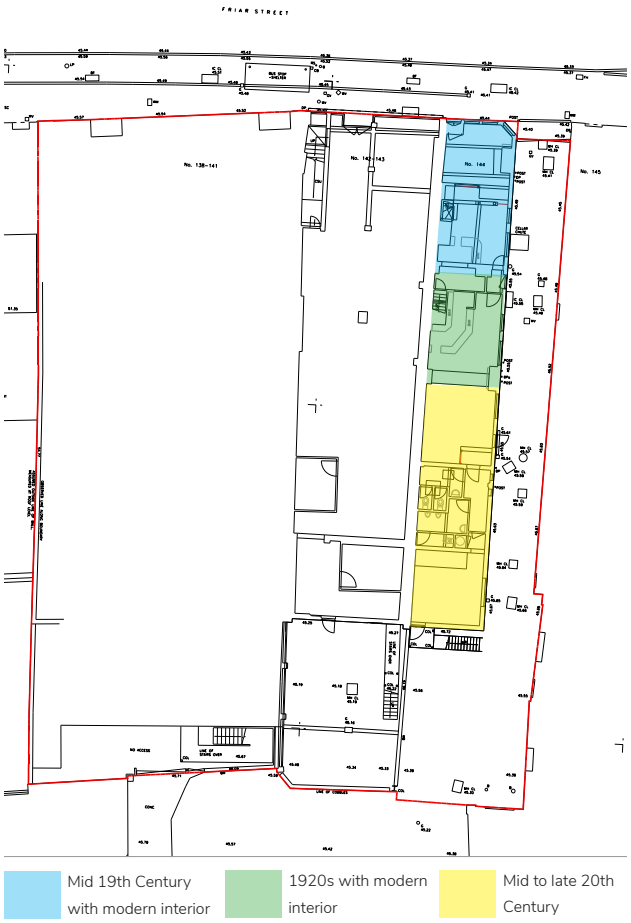


Figure 4.22 Phasing diagram assessed for the Bugle PH, Ground Floor existing

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Section 5

Assessment of Significance.

5 Assessment of Significance

Assessment of Significance

Methodology

5.1 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.

5.2 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.

5.3 This proposes the use of three heritage interests – historical, archaeological, and architectural and artistic- in assessing what makes a place and its wider context special. These are broadly in line with the values evidential [now archaeological], historical, aesthetic [now architectural and artistic], and communal [now part of historical] – set out in the previous, 2008 version, but are consistent with the heritage interests in the NPPF, the definitions for which are now included in the updated Planning Practice Guidance as cited above.

- 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.
- Historical 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.

5.4 These values correspond to the heritage interests as per best practice guidance. In addition, the extent of value us assessed using six criteria:

- The quality and extent of survival of historic fabric.
- The extent to which the fabric contributes to understanding of history of place and occupants.
- The originality of the design and the contribution of features to that design.
- Associations with history, people or events.
- Contribution towards landmark qualities and public appreciation.

5.5 The level of value is assessed using five criteria: high, medium, low, neutral, and negative.

1 High – the element is critical to understanding of significance.

2 Medium – the element is important to understanding of significance.

3 Low – the element makes some limited contribution to understanding of significance.

4 Neutral – the element is not negative, and could be enhanced to make a positive impact of the understanding of significance.

5 Negative – the element is harmful or intrusive and detracts from the understanding of significance.

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

5 | Assessment of Significance

Identification of Heritage Assets within the Site

5.6 There are no listed buildings within the Site, nor does it lie within a conservation area. However, No 144, The Bugle PH has been included in the Council's Local List. The Committee Report states (para 4.3.2):

> "*Whilst there have been a number alterations to the building since this period, including internal alterations to the bars and smoke room, as well as external alterations such as the dormer window, some elements that contribute to the heritage significance remain substantially complete. The original layout of the commercial buildings has been retained. The 19th / early 20th century structures show an important development of the provision of public houses and related activity to the community of Reading. The building also retains important elements such as flat clay tiles and a single central timber framed window facing Friar Steet*, as well as the angled corner at the entrance to Fife Court. Its positive impact on the character and streetscape of Friar Street remains largely intact. It is therefore considered that the buildings fulfil the criteria for the period of 1840-1913."

5.7 For the purposes of this assessment, it is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset.

5.8 The Bugle PH, although much altered, has communal and historic value. This is derived from its use as a beer house and the collective memory it evokes amongst its patrons within the area. Architecturally, however, the various alterations mean that its authenticity is limited.

5.9 Internally the rear wing has no surviving historic fabric. Much has been modernised to create ancillary flats and various other accommodation. The roof structure also appears to have been modernised, some principle rafters and timber beams appearing to be infested. It has no vestige of the tenements and is of little value.

5.10 Additionally, Fife Court is considered to be of some value. Historic maps show several small courts and yards to the rear of the properties along Friar Street. Most have now been built over and disappeared. Fife Court, however, has been retained, although it is not thoroughfare and appears unkempt and unsafe.

5.11 Overall, the building has historic and communal value but its architectural interest is limited.

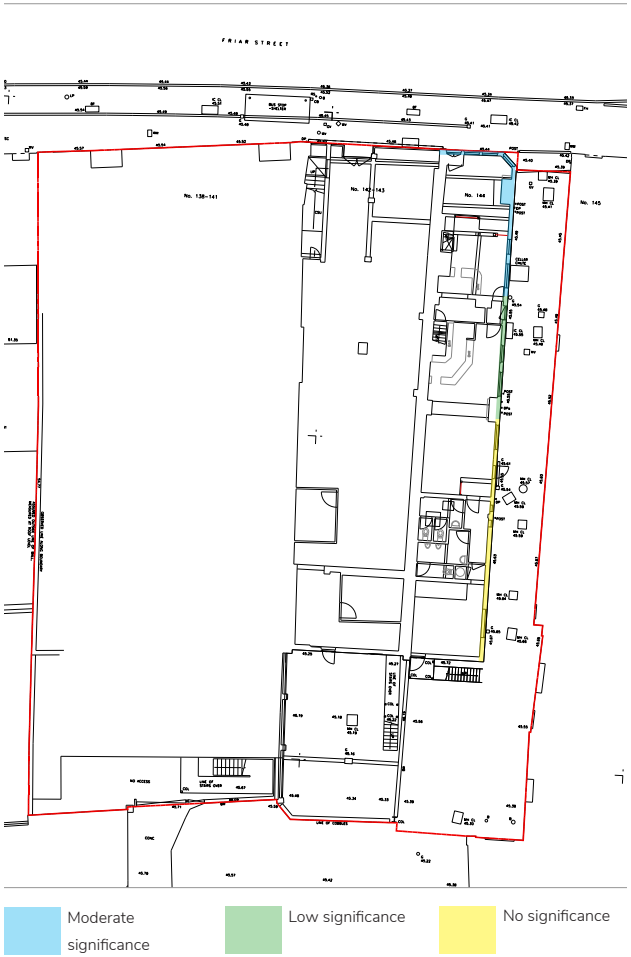


Figure 5.1 Significance diagram Bugle PH

5 | Assessment of Significance



Figure 5.2 Friar Street elevation taken from the DAS by FCH



Figure 5.3 View of Friar Street looking east



Figure 5.4 View of Friar Street looking west

Heritage Assets within the setting of the Site

5.12 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.

147 Friar Street

5.13 147 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."

5 | Assessment of Significance

5.14 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 shop front and the 3 segmental headed dormer windows that feature moulded coping between and modillion cornices.

5.15 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.

5.16 The building forms part of the Phase 1 of the project (QVS 1).

Queen Victoria Street

5.17 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.

5.18 These buildings, and the wider listed group, 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.

5.19 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.

5.20 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.

5.21 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.

St Laurence's Church and Town Hall.

5.22 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.

5.23 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.

5.24 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.

5 | Assessment of Significance

5.25 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.

5.26 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

5.27 The Site forms part of the immediate context of No 147 Friar Street and 1-15 Queen Victoria Street.

5.28 The two Grade II listed buildings are in a key position at the corner of the Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street. The remaining Friar Street buildings, alongside those within the Site, comprise of varying ages, heights, widths and design. However, they do represent the commercial core of Reading and the retail centre of the town.

5.29 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.

5.30 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.

5.31 Apart from the building line and the frontage of No 144, the Bugle PH, the Site's contribution to the setting of the surrounding assets is limited. Although Fife Court is one of the remaining historic alleys in the area, its current condition and unkempt appearance detracts from the historic setting of the area. Additionally, the rear of the buildings appear haphazard and piecemeal, not contributing to the area or the immediate townscape.

Summary of Significance and Site's contribution

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

5.33 The unkempt nature of Fife Court and the rear buildings detract from the wider area and are of no significance.

5.34 The Site forms part of the setting of the key listed buildings along Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street. Their vertical rhythm and retail use contributes to the historic commercial core of the town.

5.35 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 6

Heritage Impact Assessment.

6 Heritage Impact Assessment

Summary of proposals

6.1 An application for the regeneration of 1-15 Queen Victoria Street and 147-146 Street (Phase 1(QVS1)) was approved by the Council in principle, subject to the signing of a Section 106 Agreement. Following the acquisition of two further buildings along this frontage (145-146 Friar Street) a revised application to incorporate these buildings is being submitted separately.

6.2 The proposals part of this submission relates to 138-144 Friar Street (Phase 2 (QVS2)) of the continued regeneration of this part of the town centre. The underpinning intention for the proposal is to provide a complimentary use that will be an extension to Phase 1 development and will bring further vitality to the town centre with a hotel that will attract visitors form outside Reading.

6.3 The integration of the two sites would deliver a comprehensive regeneration which would restore and integrate heritage assets of significance whilst optimising their uses; at the same time removing later and detracting buildings that make no contribution to the setting of the heritage assets. The new built form introduces a similar scale, rhythm and materiality which enhances the overall appearance of the Site within the town centre, creating an exciting new quarter within Reading.

6.4 In summary the proposal involves:

- Demolition of No 138-143 Friar Street;
- Part retention of the Bugle PH;
- Redevelopment of the Site, incorporating the retained part of the Bugle, with a four to six storey building to be used as a 163 bed Hotel;
- Public realm improvements to Fife Court including active frontages and landscaping to create and enhance the route; and,
- Direct connection with the Market Square/ Courtyard delivered as part of QVS 1 scheme.

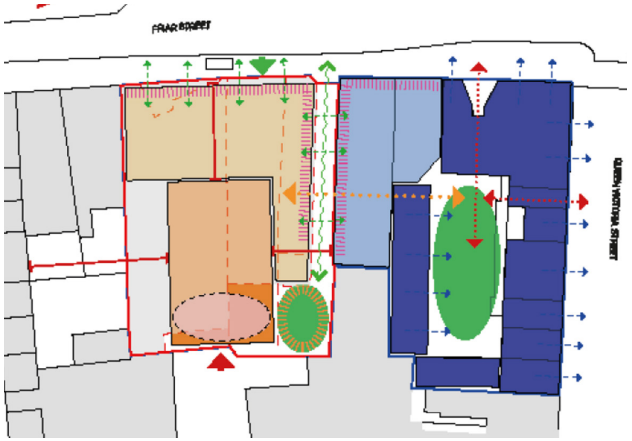


Figure 6.1 Relationship between QVS 1 and 2 [taken from DAS by FCH Architects]

Pre-application and DRP feedback

6.5 Following the first pre-application, the Council raised concerns over the height of the building which at the time had an additional storey. The Council also objected to the complete demolition of the Bugle PH which was being considered for local listing. The Officers did not object to the demolition of Nos 138-143 Friar Street.

6.6 In response, the proposal was altered to, retain the front part of Bugle Public House and remove the previously proposed 7th floor. Additionally, in order to address the street frontage appropriately, the ground floor height was increased to incorporate a mezzanine level.

6.7 At a meeting with Reading's Design Review Panel on 14th July, 2022, the following comments were provided:

"The applicants have applied skill to illustrate a significant building within the proposals, that in the view of Panel would substantially be acceptable in massing and townscape terms save for the following comments:

The overall extent of five storey frontage to Friar Street is excessive – the proposals are split into three main sections, instinctively the Panel consider a setback to either of the outer elements would benefit the scheme. Further finessing of the upper levels of articulation may also be required as the building tiers back.

To Friar Street, the proposals are split into four different layers vertically, a base, the main body, and then two forms of 'roof top' or 'mansard' accommodation. This is a little confusing and the complexity will lead to additional challenges delivering quality at implementation stage. Simplifying the upper elements should be explored.

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

The applicant has drawn strong reference to Reading's rich brick heritage, the Panel applaud the integration of detail and the limited diversity of palate applied to the proposals.

6.8 In response to the DRP comments and the inclusion of the Bugle PH within the Local List on 20th July, the overall proposals and the materiality were reconsidered by the Design Team. The main alterations included:

- Additional set-back introduced to front elevation at G+6.
- Front and side elevation alongside the roof form to the Bugle PH retained and incorporated within the design.
- Materially and design of front elevation to Friar Street updated

6.9 To address the DRP comments about the "finessing of the upper levels" elevation to Friar Street was reconsidered. Options included materiality for the level 4 and the set back floors alongside the treatment of the bays. These included concrete, solid metal panels and curtain wall systems. However, this resulted in a heavier 'top'. In order to appropriately address the concerns raised by the DRP, level 4 is proposed to be treated in brick with the upper set back levels in lightweight curtain wall system in terracotta colour. This allows greater architectural unity and cohesiveness in the design of the proposal.

6.10 The proposal presented as part of this application has been developed following a rigorous iterative process that responds positively to the comments received during the pre-application consultation process.



Figure 6.2 Pre-application scheme January 2022 [taken from DAS by FCH Architects]



Figure 6.3 Pre-application scheme May 2022 [taken from DAS by FCH Architects]



Figure 6.4 Exploring material options with metal cladding [taken from DAS by FCH Architects]



Figure 6.5 Exploring material options with grey curtain wall [taken from DAS by FCH Architects]



Figure 6.6 Proposed material with brick fourth floor and terracotta curtain wall [taken from DAS by FCH Architects]

Demolition

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

Part retention of Bugle PH

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

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

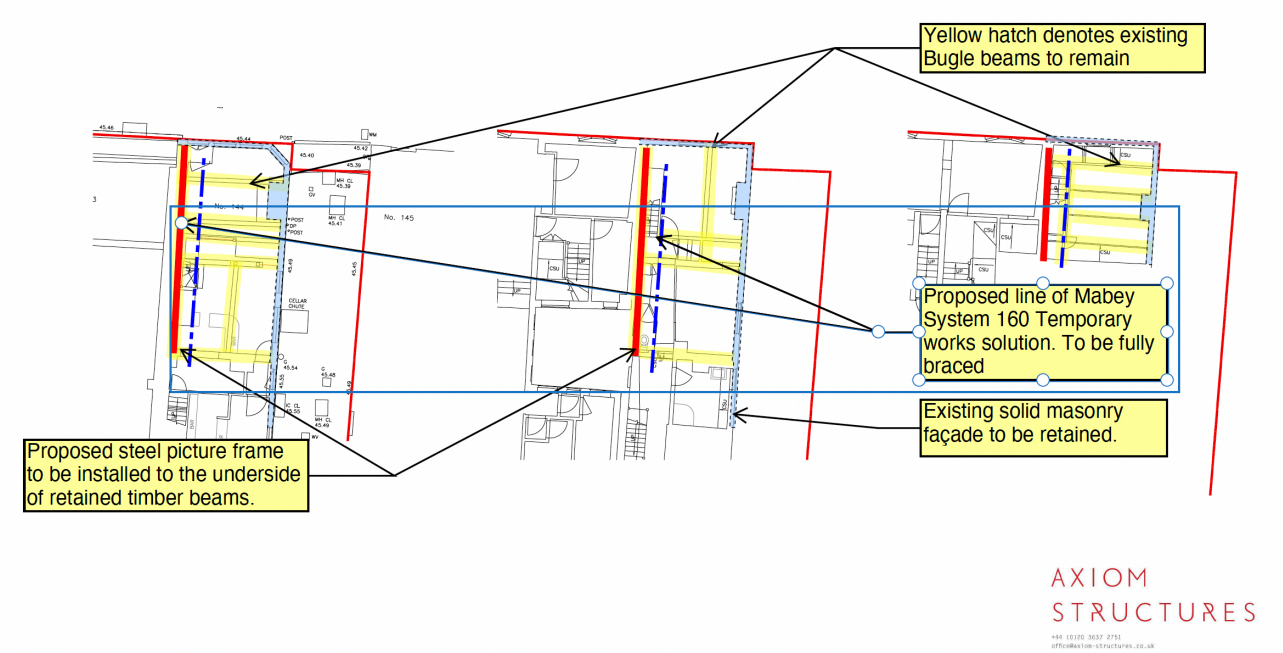


Figure 6.7 Retention of Bugle [as recommended by Structural Engineers at Axiom Structures]



Figure 6.8 Retention of Bugle to front and flank [as recommended by Structural Engineers at Axiom Structures]

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

6.15 It is proposed that if the demolition is approved by the Council, a recording of the building, upto Level 2 in line with Historic England's "Understanding historic buildings: A guide to good recording practice" is conditioned. This would provide a record of the building's exterior and interiors including photographs and any fabric revealed during the opening up works.

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Redevelopment

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

6.17 The design process has gone through a series of consultation with the Council, Reading Civic Society, the Conservation Area Advisory Committee and the Design Review Panel. This iterative process has resulted in the careful consideration of the massing and materiality.

6.18 The redeveloped Site would include 163 hotel rooms alongside a food and beverage offer on the ground floor. The front facade of the building consist of a podium in tinted pre-cast concrete. The four levels above are in red brick, separated by tinted concrete bands of string course.

6.19 The elevation includes animated window surrounds featuring two different motifs which add architectural interest to the building as well as breaking the mass.

6.20 Above the main facade, there are two set back levels. Although not visible from the street frontage they would be visible in long distance views. They consist of a lightweight metal curtain wall system in terracotta colour matching the colour tone of the brickwork.



Figure 6.9 Street facade details [taken from DAS by FCH Architects]