



Heritage Statement
(Statement of Heritage Significance)

In respect of

**36a & 38b
Church Street
Caversham
Reading
RG4 8AU**

For:

Rainsford Ltd

Report produced by:

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**FOR AND BEHALF OF
Heritage Consulting
Chartered Surveyors**

12th August 2022



36a & 38b Church Street

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1 Introduction

This document is prepared in accordance with the guidance as set out in the Historic England document; "Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets Historic England Advice Note 12"

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Heritage Statement is to;

Research, document, evaluate and advise on the significance and heritage value of 36a & 38b Church Street Caversham.

Comment on proposed works and the impact on 36a & 38b Church Street.

Discuss mitigation of negative impacts and opportunities to reveal or enhance significance.

1.2 Drawings

The following drawings detail proposal for the building and site.

- A102 Proposed Site Block Plan
- A103 Proposed Basement G.A Plan
- A104 Proposed Ground Floor G.A Plan
- A105 Proposed First Floor G.A Plan
- A106 Proposed Second Floor G.A Plan
- A107 Proposed Roof Plan
- A110 Proposed South (A-A) Elevation
- A111 Proposed West (B-B) Elevation
- A112 Proposed North (C-C) Elevation
- A113 Proposed East (D-D) Elevation

1.3 Existing Site

36a & 38b Church Street Caversham is currently laid out as a freehold building split into three units with the ground floor being occupied by takeaway / café units and the 1st and 2nd floor being residential accommodation.

1.4 Nature of proposals

The proposed works to the building / site include for;

- Refurbishment and upgrade of shop / café units including frontage.
- Conversion of 1st and 2nd floor of existing building to self-contained residential flats.
- Installation of dormer windows to the rear elevation of principal existing building.
- Demolition of rear outshot and new build residential development scheme and courtyard area.

1.5 Consultations

The following heritage and planning consultations have been sought;

- Pre application advise from Reading Borough Council. Initial feedback included in Appendix B – application ref 211963.
- Heritage and design advice from Heritage Consulting Chartered Surveyors in respect of dormer windows.

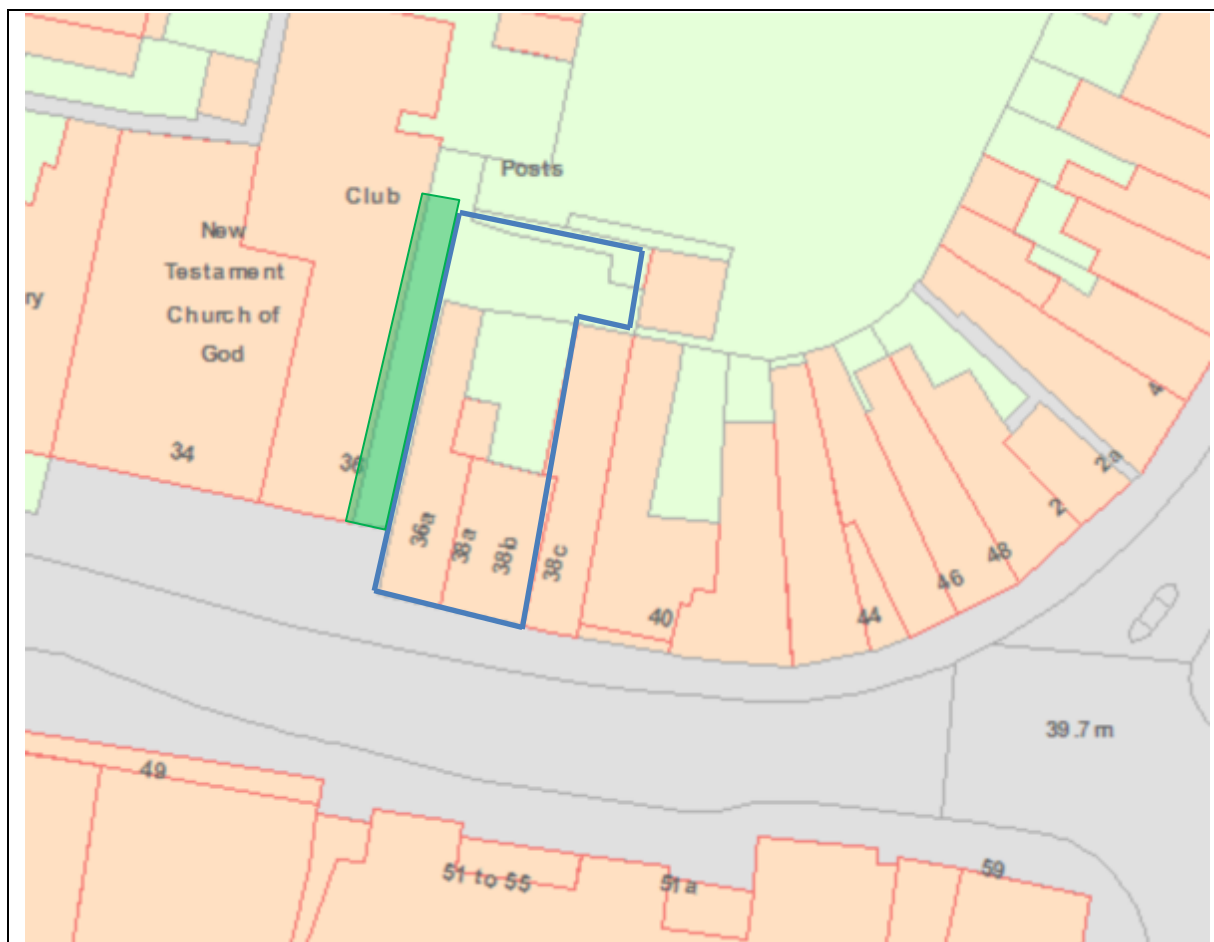
2 Site assessment

2.1 Location

36a & 38b Church Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AU

The site is outlined in Blue below.

The area highlighted in Green granted as a right of Way.



2.2 Street scene (existing)

The street scene is an important part of assessing a buildings significance in relation to its surroundings.

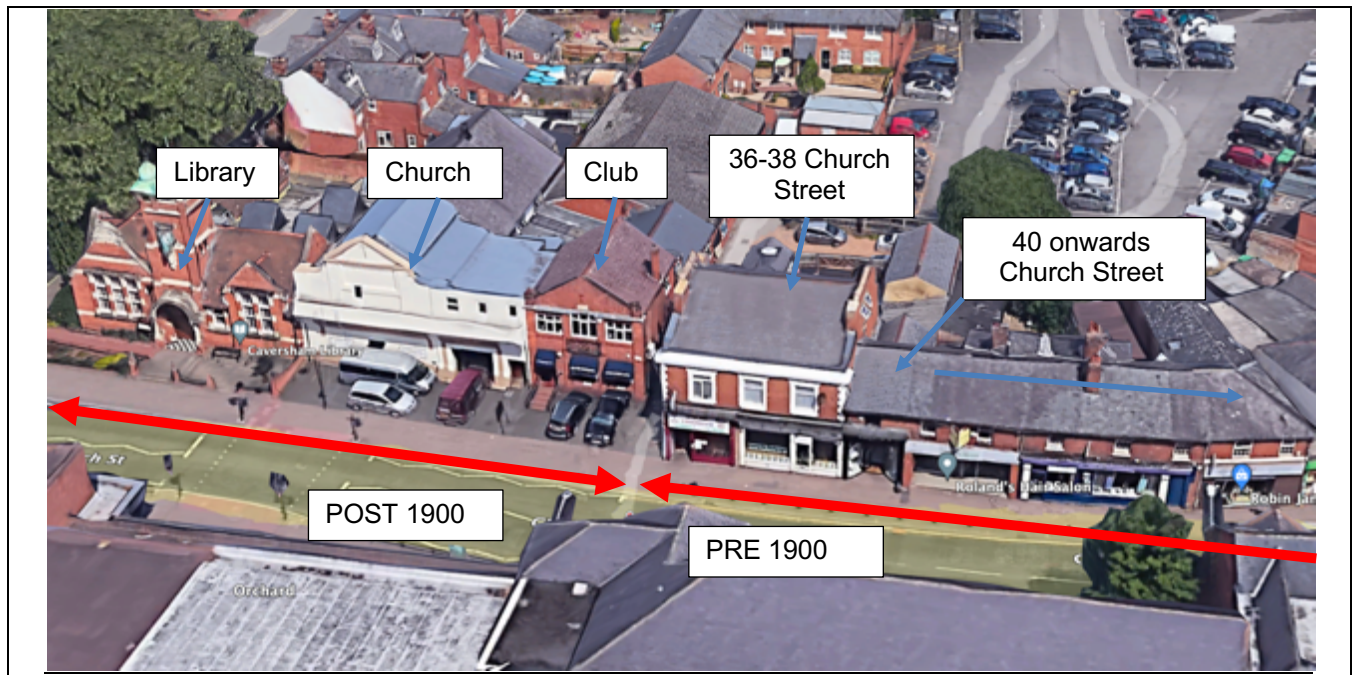
Church Street in Caversham has a large number of modern developments, and the overall historic street scene is limited in respect of heritage assets.

The plan below denotes in Red the extent of post war development.

It can be seen that broadly the only pre-war buildings remaining are (highlighted Blue) to the North side of the Road stretching from the Library East towards the roundabout / Prospect Road together with the Church House complex of buildings adjacent the roundabout.



Where there are pre-war buildings, these can broadly be categorised into two architectural styles, the post 1900 developments to the West of 36 - 38 Church Street (including the Working Mens Club, Church and Library) and the pre 1900 buildings which include 36a & 38b Church Street and remaining buildings to the East.



Pre 1900 Development

36a & 38b Church Street – Built mid 19th C

40 Church Street towards Prospect Place - Built mid 19th C

Post 1900 Development

Library - Built 1907

Church - Built as Cinema between 1912 and 1932

Working Man's Club - Built 1934

South side

The South side of Church Street has been mostly redeveloped post war. There is no heritage significance of value requiring consideration in respect of 36a & 38b Church Street.



Modern Development to the South Side of Church Street

North side of 36a & 38b Church Street (pre 1900 development)

36a & 38b Church Street adjoins the terrace of pre 1900 buildings. The buildings have been substantially altered to the shop frontages, but the street scene retains the historical mass and layout of the buildings. The buildings are mostly of mid 19th C, see historical mapping.



Pre 1900 buildings attached to 36a & 38b Church Street to East

It is considered that 36a & 38b Church Street shares more of a “relationship” with the pre 1900 buildings to the East rather than the later building of varying architectural style to the West.

West side of 36a & 38b Church Street (post 1900 development)



Working Mens Club and former Cinema



Public Library

2.3 Planning history

A schedule of planning consents are recorded in Appendix A.

2.4 Designation and listing

The property is not Listed.

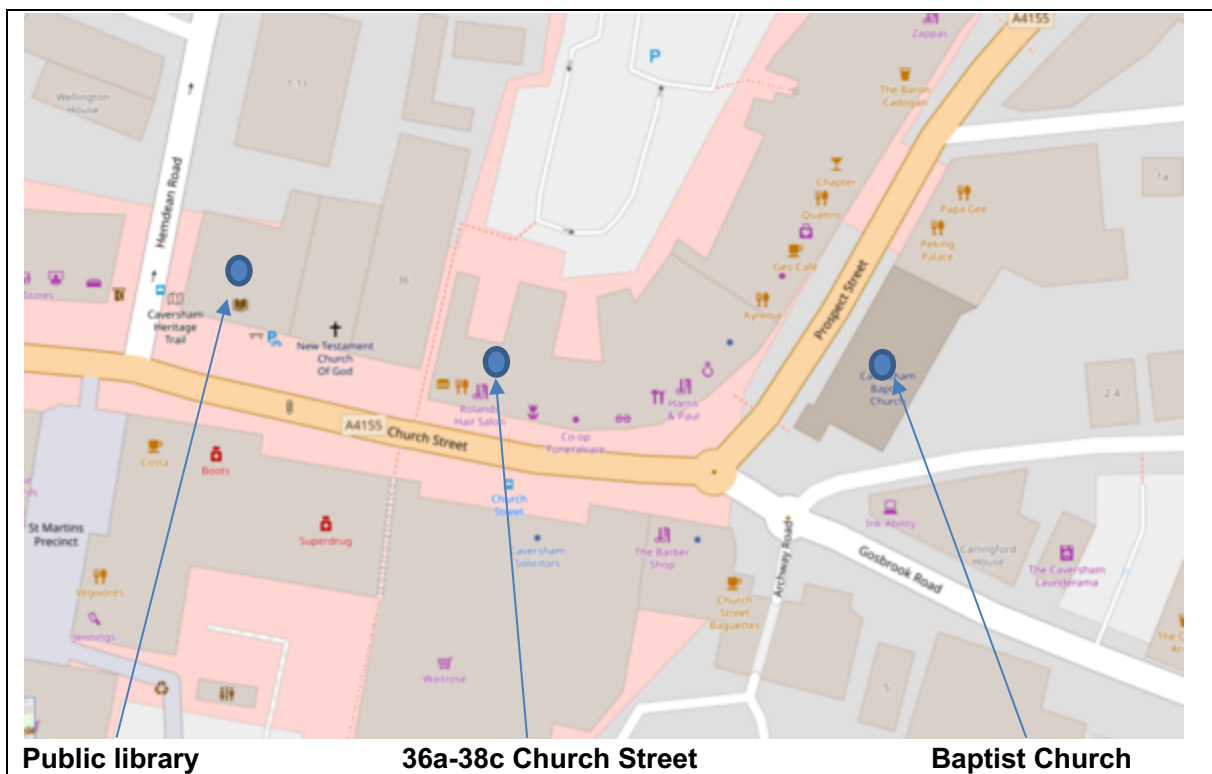
The property is not in a conservation area.

2.5 Adjacent Listed Buildings

There are no listed buildings directly adjacent or in immediate proximity to 36a & 38b Church Street.

Caversham Free Public Library to the West is Grade II listed, List entry number 1113456.

Caversham Baptist Church to the East is Grade II listed, List entry number 1113562.



2.6 Historic environment record

There are no entries on the Historic Environment Record for 36a & 38b Church Street.

2.7 Historical photos



1910 Photo of 36a & 38b Church Street

2.8 Historical maps



1845 Tithe Map.



There are buildings located on the site, however these do not match the existing building in scale and form.



1897 OS MAP

In 1897 the building and site can be seen. Note adjacent development to the West has not yet begun by this point.



1912 OS MAP

Building can be seen with adjacent development to West largely complete by this point.

36a & 38b Church Street appears to be one unit.



1932 OS MAP

36a & 38b
Church Street
sub divided into
three units.

3 The heritage asset and its significance

3.1 Detailed building description

36a & 38b Church Street was likely constructed in the mid 19th C.

The building is a square plan two storey building (three storey with attic accommodation) with shallow pitch slate roof constructed in gable ended format. There is a projecting front parapet with decorative string course. The East and West gable end wall incorporates chimney stacks and attic window fenestrations.

The historic shop front and windows have been removed and lost complete. Historically the windows were 6 over 6 sash window to the front elevations and likely the rear also. All windows are replacement 20th C factory made units of either timber or uPVC construction. Shop frontages are aluminium metal units

There is a mid 19th C rear outshot which appears to be partly constructed off a boundary wall and is predominately single skin stretcher bond 4.5" masonry to the courtyard elevation with a cut and pitched roof over with artificial slate coverings.

There is additionally a 20th C rear single storey extension constructed out of plywood and felt currently used as a food store.

The building appears from its layout internally to have been constructed as shop units, with the front entrance and hallway being located on the West elevation.



Front (South) elevation.

20th C replacement shop fronts and factory made 20th C windows above.



Side (West)
elevation.

Mid 19th C door
and entrance.

Various 20th C
signage,
advertising, flue
pipes and
additional
drainage
services.

Replacement 20th
C factory made
windows.



Rear (North)
courtyard
elevation.

Various 20th C
commercial flue
installations.

20th C plywood
and felt
extension.

20th C AC units

Replacement 20th
C factory made
windows.



Rear outshot constructed from single skin 4.5" masonry and appears to be constructed off a boundary wall.



20th C plywood rear extension.

Rear outshot

Given proposals look to demolish the rear outshot complete, a more detailed overview of this is provided below;

The rear outshot to the ground floor is currently used as a Kitchen for the takeaway. There is no historic fabric visible internally with the roof structure being fully plaster boarded (with no roof access) and external walls internally tiled.

The external walls to the rear outshot are solid masonry to the West elevation, with the remainder being predominately 4.5" thick half brick thick stretcher bond masonry. The West elevation is cement rendered which has extensively failed. The East elevation is painted white.

The outshot does not likely pre date the main building. There is evidence the West elevation brick coursing and brick type is matched to the main building and there is a simple straight joint at the rear of the junction with the main building.

The West wall is of solid construction with the remainder being half brick thick. To the West elevation there is an odd roof detail where the rafter line is inset of the face of the external wall and remains of a half round coping detail are present to the furthest North section of wall. This suggests the West wall is a boundary wall that has been later enclosed upon by the current roof structure. This would also explain why the West wall is solid, with the remaining being of half brick thick construction.

What is not clear at this stage is whether the roof structure is of mid 19th C or a later adaptation. The roof is covered in artificial slate coverings.

In any event, the structure is generally of a poor quality and without any redeeming features or of significance.

	Straight joint at rear of main building and outshot West wall (facing alley)
	Failed cement render to alley wall.



Remains of half round coping indicating the current roof structure is perhaps a later alteration.



Half brick thick stretcher bond North wall.

	There is a significant dip in the roof to the approximate centre of the building. There are no tie beams and it is thought these have possibly been removed.
	East elevation courtyard elevation wall is painted white and is half brick thick single skin masonry.
	Internal fitted out as kitchen.

3.2 Retained architectural details

External

The building largely retains its historic mass and structure e.g. masonry shell and roof structure. However, remaining architectural details have been predominately lost. There are no historic windows. The shop fronts have been replaced and are not historic.

There is a mid 19th C entrance door to the West elevation. There is a mid 19th C cellar door (now obscured by 20th C plywood and felt extension) to the North elevation. It would be fair to say that aside from the masonry and roof structure, the retained external architecture details are very limited.

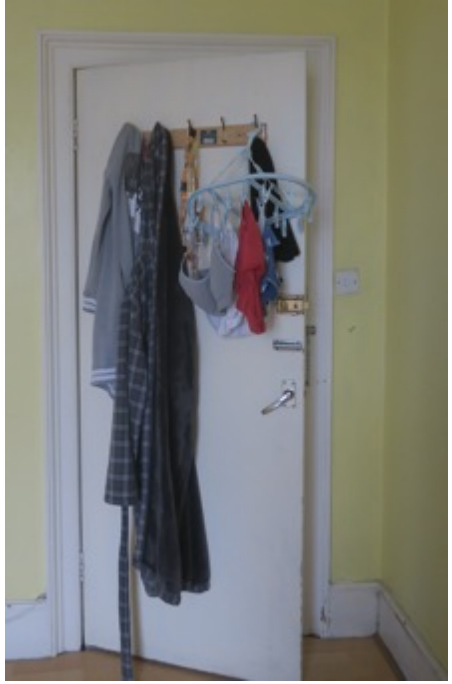
	Mid 19th C rear double door frame. The left door is the cellar door which is retained and the right door (once the rear exit door) has been lost.
	Cellar door retained although boarded over externally and built in front of by rear plywood and felt extension.

Internal

The shop units have been extensively adapted and modernised and do not contain any retained historic architectural details.

To the habitable flat unit there are elements of retained simple mid 19th C architectural detail. With the exception of the hallway arch detail, the standard of internal detailing is fairly basic and is not overly ornamented or of high quality. These are detailed below;

	The ground floor stairwell and stairs have been adapted by insertion of a fire partition. While the staircase balustrade is mostly lost the hall retains a decorative arch.
	The 1st floor retains a decorative arch as the ground floor.

	The 1st floor principal room retains an historic cornice, but the remaining simple architectural details such as the fireplace, window casings etc have been lost.
	 Mid 19th C door architraves and casings remain to the 1st and 2nd floor but in roughly 50% of areas the panelled doors are lost and there are now hollow core / glazed 20th C doors.

3.3 Development

The building usage appears to have remained fairly constant since construction in the mid 19th C. The building has been used as shop units to the ground floor with habitable accommodation to the 1st and 2nd floors.

The internals and externals of the building have been adapted to accommodate the current usage, including for installation of commercial kitchens and associated extractor ducting etc.

There has been construction of a single storey plywood and felt addition to the rear courtyard in the 20th C. There has also been replacement of the shop fronts, installation of signage and advertising and replacement of all windows.

3.4 Current condition

The building is externally in poor condition. There have been a number of alterations to the drainage to accommodate commercial services, and installation of ducting and other associated services which have caused damage and protrusions to the building. The protrusions and adaptations have been repaired poorly in the past.

The windows are generally in poor order and it is considered are beyond economic repair.

Internally the habitable flat is in poor condition and in need of refurbishments.

The ground floor takeaway is in poor condition particularly the rear kitchen areas.

The ground floor café is in fair order internally and largely compromised a 20th C modern fit out.

3.5 Assessment on significance

The building has limited significance as an individual building. The building is of mid 19th C and is fairly simple without any special or exceptional architectural features. There is no known historic interest.

The majority of external architectural details such as windows and shop frontages have been lost in the 20th C and replaced. Internally some architectural features remain but these are limited at best and are mainly confined to a Cornice to the 1st floor principal room, hallway arch details and 4 panel doors including casings.

The building does have some significance as part of a historic / pre-war street scene., The building is within a group of buildings stretching from the Library to the roundabout which are of varying phases of development but all pre-war.

The building is not Listed and would not meet the criteria for listing. This is due mainly to the relatively late construction date of the building and lack of any exceptional architectural features or historic value.

The building is not in a Conservation Area and as such the “group value” identified above, it appears was not adequate to meet the more basic requirements of being included in a Conservation Area. It is understood the area was considered (but not adopted) into a Conservation Area in 2016.

3.6 Proposed works and impact on significance

3.6.1 Refurbishment and upgrade of shop / café units

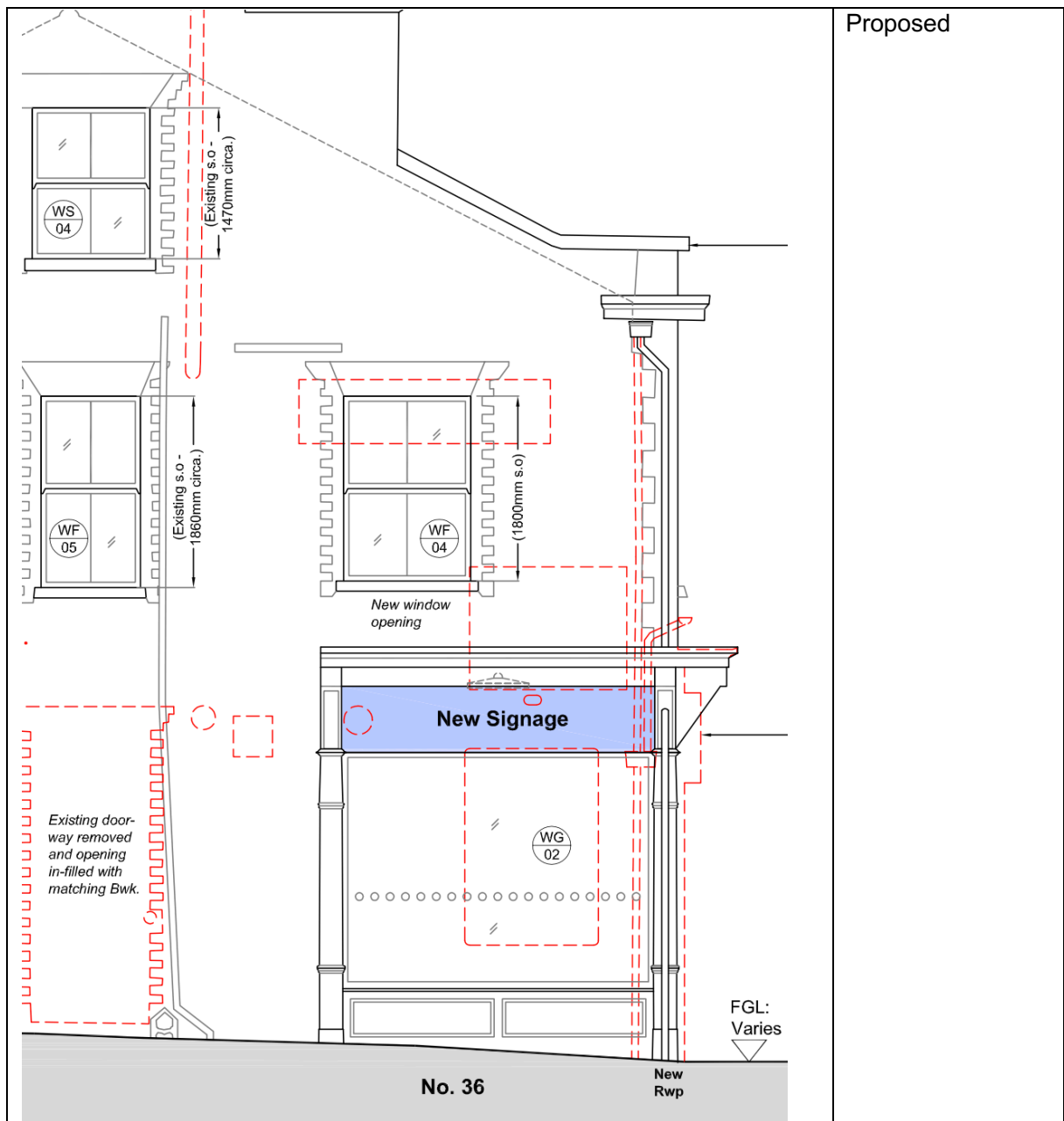
The proposals are for removal of the ground floor masonry to the South West corner of the building to provide a glazed traditional style shop frontage. Additionally, there are fenestration alterations proposed to the West elevation.



South West corner ground floor masonry proposed to be removed.

Approximate line dotted in Red.

Alterations to the fenestration is also proposed to the first and second floor, inc bricking up of doorway.



It is considered the removal of the 20th C signage and advertising would provide a positive benefit to the building. Additionally, the provision of a traditional style shop frontage in place of the current metal framed unit is considered a positive benefit to street scene and will enhance the group value of the building.

There will be the loss of the historic door opening and door.

3.6.2 Conversion of 1st and 2nd floor of existing building to self-contained residential flats

The conversion of the 1st and 2nd floor into self-contained flats and part usage as office space requires some sub division of the spaces internally.

Sub division and alteration have already taken place at some point by installation of a fire wall on the staircase.

The sub division it is considered will have a limited effect on the significance of the building given its significance is mainly due to the street scene and group value with other buildings.

The proposals do involve some alterations to the roof by insertion of dormers to the rear elevation which is commented upon separately.

There are additionally window insertions to the West alley although it is considered given these are largely obscured from view and the street scene these will not affect the street scene or group value of the building.

3.6.3 Installation of dormer windows to rear elevation of existing building

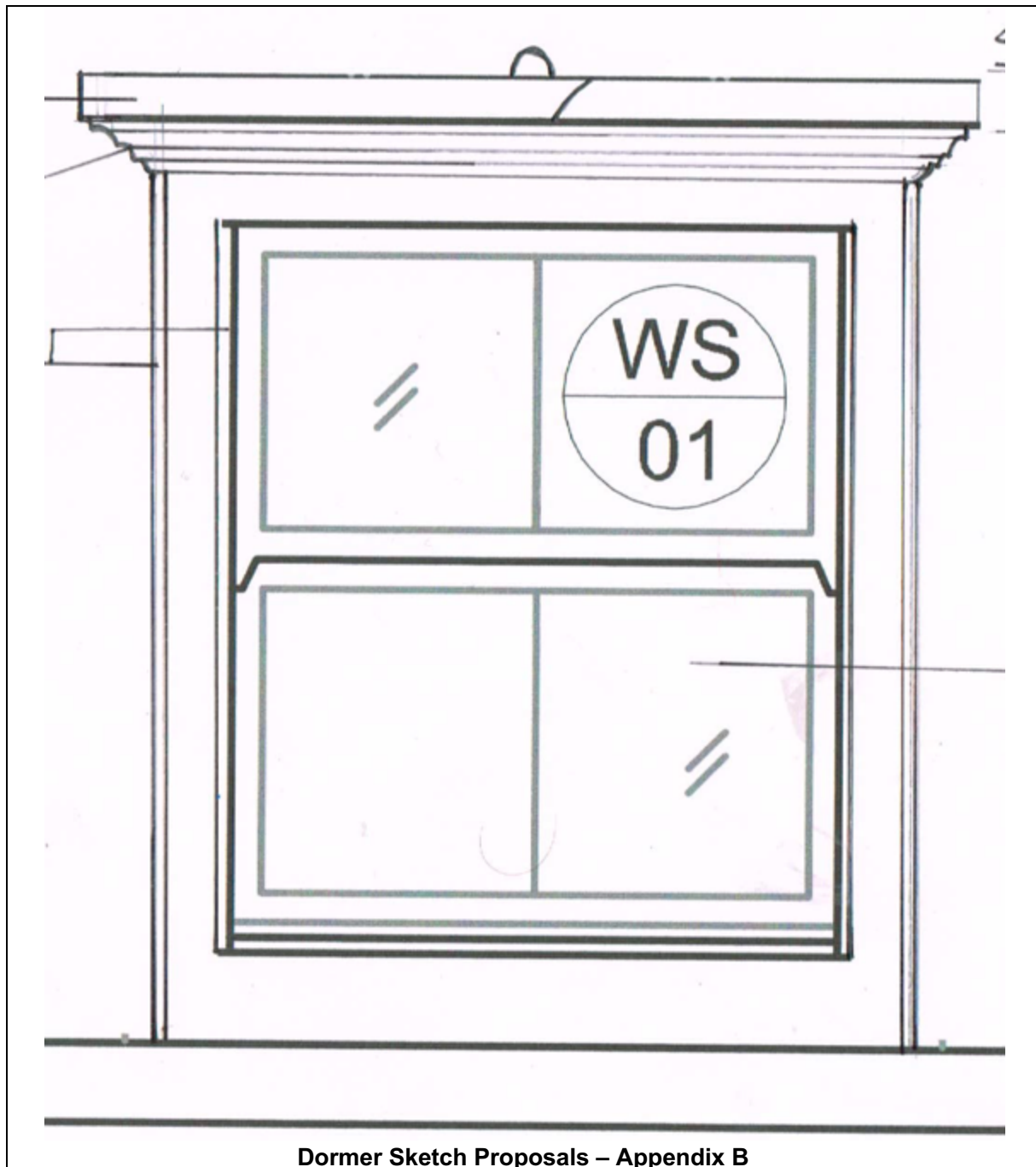
Pre application advise from Reading Borough Council ref 211963 opposed installation of box dormer windows to the front elevations. Further the pre app considered any rear dormers should be an enhancement and not raise the existing ridge line.

As a result of the pre application advice the proposals have been amended to omit front dormer windows, and to reduce the size of the rear dormer windows and to provide a traditional flat Lead roof covering. The design intention of dormers is to provide a simple traditional dormer window which will minimise the impact on the building and not alter the ridge line.



Flat roof lead lined dormer windows - example traditional designs

It is considered this style of simple flat roofed lead dormer is sensitive and appropriate for the age and style of the building. A sketch of the proposed dormer detailing is included in Appendix B.



The proposed rear dormers are not symmetrical with the central dormer offset. Whilst it could be said this may detract from the overall aesthetic, it can be seen on other local historical buildings dormers are not always provided in a completely symmetrical fashion and in fact being off centre adds interest to the building. Refer to picture below of 2-4 Church Street.



Non symmetrical dormers to principal façade of 2-4 Church Street, Reading.

The proposed rear dormers have no effect on the ridge line.

It is considered the installation of the dormers to the rear of building will not detract from the building's significance and the traditional detailing of the dormers will ensure the dormers are appropriate for the age and style of the building.

3.6.4 Demolition of rear outshot and new build residential development scheme

The rear outshot is not considered of significance and is a low quality structure. The plywood and felt addition is of no significance and detracts from the buildings appearance.

The demolition of the rear outshot and replacement with a new building scheme will provide a modern development, which due to its design will be easily read as a new development against the host building.

The proposed scheme is subservient to the main dwelling with the new structure being confined to the ground floor area of the principal building.

The proposed design looks to provide a smaller “link” building and courtyard area, which further demarks the historic elements of the principal building and provides further space to separate the principal building from the new development.

The Design and Access statement provides further details on new build design elements.

3.7 Mitigation and enhancements

There are opportunities for enhancement of significance to the main building and the street scene in the proposed development. These are;

Reinstatement of traditional window fenestration

The proposed scheme looks to remove 20th C factory made window units and reinstate a more traditional sash window design. This will enable the street scene and overall appearance of the building to be improved and enhance significance.

Removal of metal frame shop unit fronts and insertion of traditional panelled shop front

The existing takeaway shop frontage is not sympathetic to the building or street scene. The proposed traditional shop frontage will enable the street scene and overall appearance of the building to be improved and enhance significance.

Removal of side elevation advertising and tidying up external elevation

The proposed scheme looks to remove the cluttered advertising from the West elevation and rationalise the drainage arrangements. This will enable the street scene and overall appearance of the building to be improved and enhance significance. In particular this will improve the appearance down the Church Street view looking towards the Baptist Church.

Removal of commercial extractors

The proposed rear developments will remove the commercial large extraction systems from the rear of the building.

Mitigation

The building is currently in a poor state of repair. The proposals look to undertake a number of improvements and put the building back into a good state of repair. This will enhance the buildings significance and the street scene.

The proposed rear extension / development will rejuvenate the existing rear “yard” area and provide additional access and a visual of the rear aspect of the 36a & 38b Church Street.

Appendix A – Planning History

<u>App No.</u>	<u>Site Address</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Decision Date</u>
211807	38c Church Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AU	Illuminated hanging side sign to side of shopfront	18/02/2022
970113	38b Church Street, Caversham Reading, RG4 8AU	Illuminated lettering and logo on shop fascia.	22/08/1997
970114	38b Church Street, Caversham Reading, RG4 8AU	New shop front, enlargement of sales area and provision of kitchen and toilet.	22/08/1997
191187	36a Church Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AU	Notification of Prior Approval for a Change Of Use from Retail, betting office or pay day loan shop or casino (Class A1 (shops) or Class A2 (financial and professional services)) to restaurant or cafe (Class A3). Prior Notification under Class C, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.	13/09/2019
920389	36a Church Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AU	Internally illuminated fascia box sign.	08/03/1993
010020	36a Church Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AU	2 x wall mounted advertising display units.	30/05/2001
010851	36a Church Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AU	1 x wall mounted illuminated advertisement display unit	28/01/2002

990500	36a Church Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AU	2 x wall mounted internally illuminated advertising panels (retrospective).	21/11/2000
090632	36B Church Street, Caversham Reading, RG4 8AU	Discharge of conditions 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15 relating to planning consent 07/01614/FUL	13/11/2009
091532	36B Church Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AU	Discharge of conditions 3, 5, 6, 9 and 15 of planning consent 07/01614/FUL	20/07/2010
080860	36B Church Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AU	Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 7 one bedroom flats	17/09/2008
070720	36B Church Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AU	Demolition of existing workshops and offices, and the erection of 4 1-bed flats and 4 studio flats	19/12/2007
901053	36 Church Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AU	Ground floor extension to provide large meeting room/occasional function room	07/03/1991
901115	36 Church Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AU	Ground & first floor extensions, alterations to provide new activity rooms. Snooker facilities relocated at first floor.	14/03/1990
901116	36 Church Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AU	Single storey rear extension and alterations to provide activity room & new toilets.	28/03/1990
890828	36 Church Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AU	Ground and first floor extension to working mens social club to provide activity rooms and enlarged snooker facilities.	14/12/1989

071343	36B Church Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AU	Demolition of existing buildings and replacement with 206 square metres of offices in part single/part two storey building	29/02/2008
071344	36B Church Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AU	Demolition of existing buildings and the erection of a building comprising 4 no. 1-Bedroom flats located on the ground floor and 4 no. Studio flats located on the first floor. (Resubmission of 07/01071/FUL)	29/02/2008
071536	36B Church Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AU	Demolition of existing buildings and erection of part single storey part 2 storey office	23/11/2007
092003	36B Church Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AU	Description: Revised internal layout; alterations to fenestration on north, east and west elevations.	11/01/2010