

1-3 QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, READING.

PROPOSED SIGNAGE.

BLACK SHEEP COFFEE SHOPS LTD

**PLANNING SUPPORT STATEMENT, INCORPORATING DESIGN AND
ACCESS STATEMENT AND HERITAGE STATEMENT.**

1.0 INTRODUCTION.

- 1.1 This Planning Support Statement, incorporating a Design and Access Statement and a Heritage Statement and has been prepared to accompany a Listed Building Consent Application, submitted on behalf of Black Sheep Coffee Shops Ltd, for proposed signage to the ground floor unit at 1-3 Queen Victoria Street, Reading.
- 1.2 These conjoined units, with a return frontage to 148 Friar Street, were previously occupied by Caffè Nero. The company previously operated circa 650 stores in the United Kingdom but due to Covid trading restrictions and lockdowns over the past 18 months has had to close a number of its outlets, including that at 1-3 Queen Victoria Street, Reading.
- 1.3 Black Sheep Coffee Shops Ltd are now in the process of acquiring the lease of the premises, to operate them as a shop selling principally coffees, smoothies, cakes and pastries, waffles and bagels for consumption on or off the premises.
- 1.4 Queen Victoria Street and the surrounding area forms part of Reading Town Centre and, together with adjoining properties at the Friar Street and Broad Street ends of the street, were listed Grade II in August 1979.
- 1.5 The majority of the external Caffè Nero signage and logos have been removed and it is proposed to provide new external Black Sheep Coffee signage. These form the basis of a submitted Advertisement Consent application (Council Ref: 212010/ADV).

2.0. PROPOSALS/DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

- 2.1 At present the remaining vestiges of Caffè Coco signage are the company's corporate light blue colour on the retained fascia boards. These sit in a recess within and below the cornice to the entablature of the building and above a protruding architrave lip that runs across and immediately above the tops of the capitals of the pilasters to the ground floor unit. Four Caffè Coco awnings remain, three on the units Queen Victoria Street elevation and one on its Friar Street elevation,
- 2.2 It is proposed to fix and locate, on both the Queen Victoria Street frontage and that to Friar Street, a new internally illuminated "Black Sheep Coffee" lettered aluminium boxed sign within the fascia recess, with the fascia panel made up of vertical reclaimed timber panels. The opal acrylic lettering would be fret cut into the aluminium faced panel and pushed through so it is flush with the face of the timber. Only the lettering itself would be internal illuminated.
- 2.3 A much smaller but similarly made, faced and internally illuminated "Black Sheep Coffee" sign is to be located above the splayed return frontage entrance door to the unit, on the corner of Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street.
- 2.4 A rounded internally illuminated stainless steel projecting sign, powder coated black would be located on both the Queen Victoria Street frontage and the Friar Street frontage. Sited on the pilasters at the ends of the unit and below their capitals, they would have the Black Sheep Coffee lettering and company sheep's head roundel motif on them.
- 2.5 The framework to the existing Caffè Coco manual awnings to the unit would be retained but the existing fabric would be replaced with a charcoal grey fabric with cream Black Sheep Coffee roundels on them.

3.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT

- 3.1 Nos 1-31 Queen Victoria Street, together with Nos 2-32 Queen Victoria Street and conjoined properties in Friar Street and Broad Street were Grade II listed in December 1978 and an amended description published in August 1979. Its listing description states:

QUEEN VICTORIA STREET 1. 5128 Nos 1 to 31 (odd) Nos 2 to 32 (even) *Including Nos 148 and 149 Friar Street and Nos 24 to 28 and 35 to 37 (consec) Broad Street. A circa 1894 commercial street with returns to Broad and Friar Streets. Probably by Joseph Morris. Dutch gabled free Baroque style. 3 1/2 storeys, yellow brick and terracotta with dividing Ionic pilasters. Dentil cornice. Pilasters to dormers, broken pediments above. An elongated pattern of shallow bays to 1st and 2nd floors 4:2:1:1:1:3. Mullion and transom window to bays, sashes with architraves (and pediments on 1st floor) to rest. Modern shopfronts, retaining cornice to fascia and scroll brackets to pilasters, only one shop retains prewar shopfront. Large returns to Broad Street. The return to east (No 28 Broad Street) supported by No 26 (dated 1894, grey brick with red terracotta dressings) and by No 24 (an early C20 Bank with -large shaped pediment doorway on corner to Cross Street; red brick with stone dressings and stone fret patterns to gables).*

- 3.2 The listing details acknowledged, even at the end of the 1970's, that Queen Victoria Street and its returns to Friar Street and Broad Street contained modern shopfronts. That at 1-3 Queen Victoria Street is one such shopfront. What these streets have however been able to retain is the strong and distinctive architectural character of the buildings above the entablatures of these modern shopfronts.
- 3.3 Whilst some of the entablatures have been concealed behind extended modern fascia panels, that at 1-3 Queen Victoria Street has been retained and used to incorporate elongated fascia panels, most recently by the previous occupiers, Caffè Coco. The proposed new occupiers of the unit, Black Sheep Coffee, similarly wish to use the entablature to erect inset fascia signs to both the unit's frontages to Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street, and above the entrance door at the corner of these two streets. Rather than plastic or vinyl finishes they wish to use recycled and

sustainable wooden panels to make up the fascia, with “Black Sheep Coffee” internally illuminated lettering inset flush with these panels.

- 3.4 Whilst a different approach to normal shopfront fascia cladding material the overall fascia proposal, it is argued, adds visual interest to the building and the street scene. Reusing an area of the building’s fascia, to advertise its presence, demonstrates the ephemeral nature of such signage, as businesses that occupy them come and go. No existing original features of the entablature’s are physically affected by the proposal and the distinctive topped corbels to the pilasters serve to break up the lengths of proposed fascia panelling.
- 3.5 Like many of the businesses in Queen Victoria Street the proposed projecting signs help to advertise the presence of the business and the rebadged existing manual awnings add interest to the street scene.
- 3.6 Overall it is considered that whilst the proposal will have a visual impact on the listed building, in that it replaces existing signage it will have less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset and make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. There is also a public benefit in that by taking on a lease of a vacant property it brings it back into use and enlivens the street scene.