

Heritage Statement

BERKSHIRE RECORD OFFICE, READING

December 2020

Quattro Design Architects



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Document Data

Project:	Berkshire Record Office, Reading
Client:	Quattro Design Architects
Project Number:	A132
Date:	January 2021

1. Introduction

1.1. Report Background

This Heritage Statement ('report') has been prepared by Roper-Pressdee Heritage Ltd on behalf of Quattro Design Architects (the Applicant). The purpose of the report is to ascertain and assess the impact of a proposed extension to the existing Record Office building for the Berkshire Record Office (the Site) on the significance of heritage assets within the vicinity of the Site (Figure 1.1 and Plate 1.1).

Other documents have been referred to in the writing of this report and should also form important background reading for the report. These include (but not exclusively) the list descriptions for nearby heritage assets, and both national and local government policy and guidance, those of which are deemed relevant to the proposed development are included in the accompanying appendices.

The findings of this report are based on a detailed understanding of the Site and its surroundings through archival research, a site visit undertaken from accessible locations carried out in December 2020, as far as was possible due to the Covid-19 restrictions, together with an application of professional judgement.

1.2. Site Description

The Site is centred at approximately SU 70860 72866, located on the south side of Castle Hill, to the west of Coley Hill, to the east of Coley Avenue and to the north of Castle Crescent (Figure 1.1). The Site comprises the existing Berkshire Record Office, and an existing car-park area serving the Record Office.

1.3. Heritage Assets

There is a requirement under national policy for an applicant of development proposals to ascertain what constitutes the 'significance' of any heritage assets identified, what potential effects the development proposals will have on that heritage asset's significance, and how such effects would be mitigated.

Section 4 sets out the heritage assets considered within this report, and provides a description of the assets, together with an analysis of their significance and the degree to which their setting contributes to their significance.

This assessment follows the Historic England guidance and methodologies set out in GPA 2 and GPA3, whilst referencing English Heritage's *Conservation Principles* (EH, 2008) to ascertain what constitutes an asset's significance or its 'heritage values', as well as the Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings, with specific regard to the principle of group value listing. Appendix D provides a detailed description of these documents, and how they have been used to inform this assessment.

1.4. Development Proposals

The development proposals are for the proposed development of a new extension to the existing Berkshire Record Office, in line with the project brief set out by West Berkshire Council for additional storage for the Berkshire Record Office. A description of the proposals is contained at Section 4 of this report.



Figure 1.1: Site Location



Plate 1.1: Satellite imagery of the Site (courtesy Google Earth, 2020)

2. Historic Background

The first mention of Reading is in AD871 within the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, with the Saxon settlement *Reada ingas*. Its early history was dominated by the invading Danes, who captured the settlement at the end of the ninth century, although they appear to have razed the settlement in c.1006. It is mentioned in the Domesday Book as being held by the King, rather than an overlord. From the outset, the settlement was recognised as a strategic settlement, being positioned on the route between London and settlements in the south-west such as Bath and Bristol. A timber fort is known to have been present during the early years following the Norman Invasion, although this was later replaced by a motte and bailey castle in c.1140—however, this was subsequently demolished in 1152-1153. An abbey was also built by Henry I, between 1121 and 1125, following which the Abbot became the landowner of Reading and its surroundings.

The principal industry of Reading during the Medieval period was centred on cloth and wool, with evidence of watermills around the area. Other industries, such as boat building, leather and gold-smithing, are also noted in the area, helping to identify Reading as a focal settlement for the region. The moving of the county gaol from Wallingford to Reading during the fourteenth century further helps show the growing importance of the town during this period.

The Reformation, as with many parts of the country, saw a drastic alteration in the running of the town, with the closure of the Abbey in 1538-40 together with the Grey Friars and the St John the Baptist Hospital. Soon after the closure of the Abbey, the town was granted independence, with the formation of a town council and the right to elect a mayor.

The seventeenth century saw the local wool and cloth industry suffer, in particular from competition both from the continent, as well as from areas of England such as the Cotswolds. By the eighteenth century, the collapse of the wool and cloth trade was complete, and was no longer a major industry in the town, although the increase in other industries, such as pin-making nail-making and gun-smithing ensured that the industrial heart of the town continued. Other industries, such as brick and tile -making helped to allow Reading to continue as the principal town in Berkshire.

The Civil Wars, between 1642 and 1651, saw a division in loyalties between the Royalists and the Parliamentarians, a situation common in many parts of the country. Whilst in the first months of the First Civil War, Reading was occupied by the Parliamentary troops, the Royalist army overthrew the Parliamentarians without a fight, following which fortifications were built around the town, and over three thousand troops were stationed in and around Reading. By 1643, the Royalist army abandoned Reading as it was too far behind enemy lines to hold and Reading remained in Parliamentary hands until the end of the war in 1646. 1688 saw the deposing of James II who fled abroad. Parliament invited William of Orange to replace him, who marched inland to Newbury. However, Irish troops loyal to James II remained stationed in Reading, and helped to secure the throne for Mary II, who was made Queen in 1689. In common with many areas of the country, the eighteenth century saw much of Reading rebuilt and redesigned. The national concern over public hygiene also saw other improvements in Reading at this time, including the creation of the Improvement Commissioners. This period saw the rapid expansion of Reading, and together with the development of the canal system, such as Brindley's Grand Cross, and more locally the opening of the Kennet and Avon canal in 1810, the industry of Reading was again secured.



Figure 2.1 John Speed's map of Reading, 1611

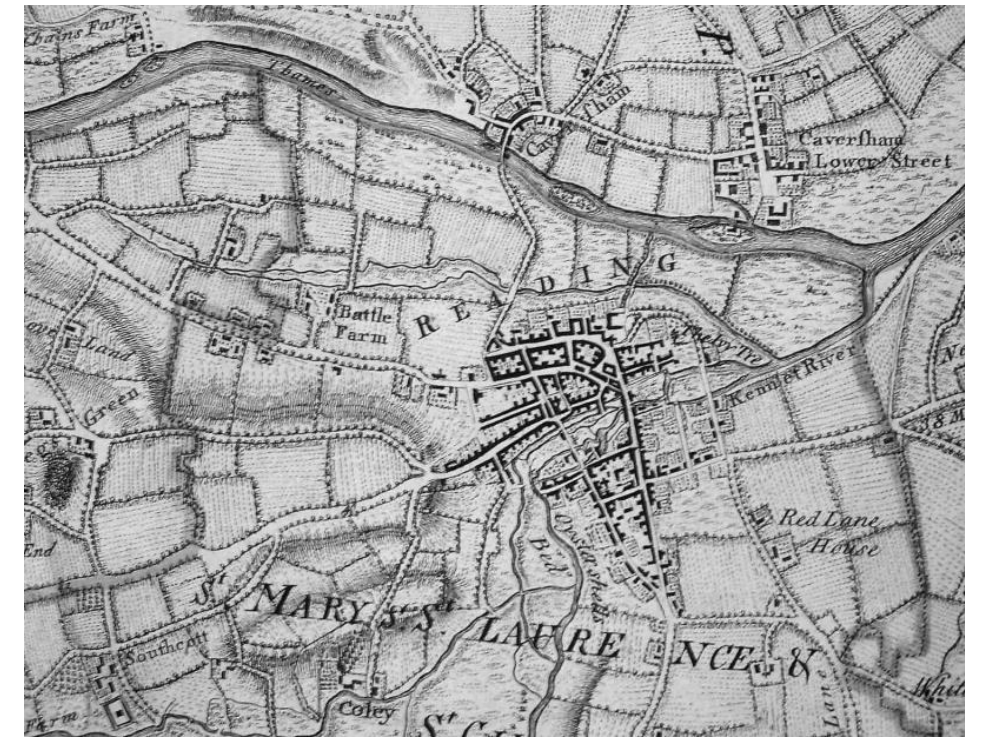


Figure 2.2 Extract from John Rocque's map of Berkshire, 1761



Figure 2.3 1883 Ordnance Survey map (1:10,000)

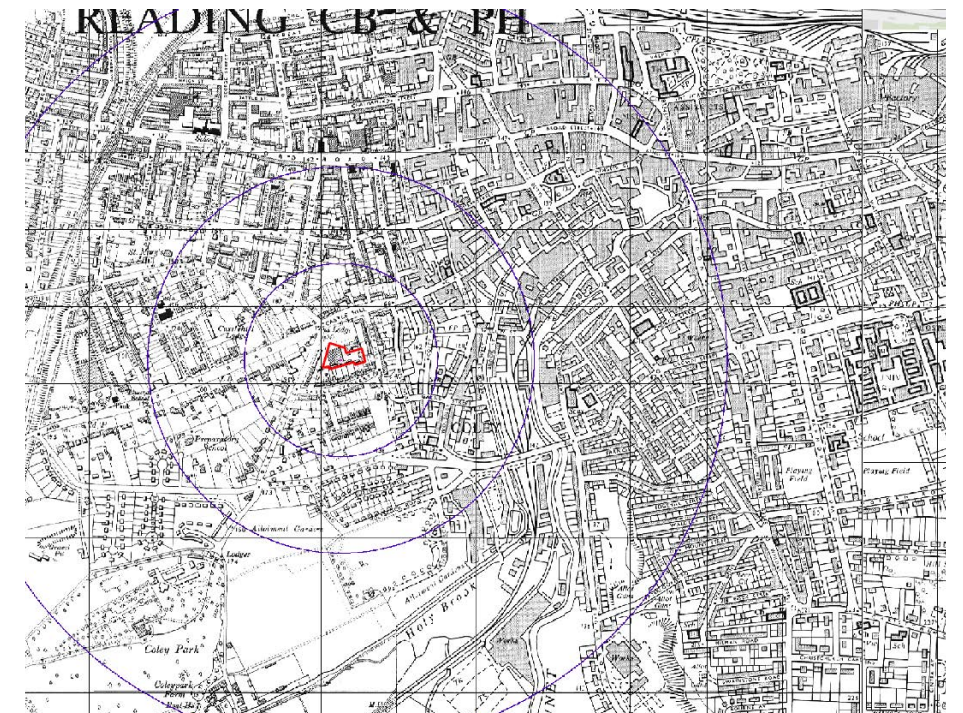


Figure 2.4: 1962 Ordnance Survey map (1:10,000)

Historic Background

The development of the railways, and their rapid replacement of the canal system c.1840, saw Reading being linked directly with London, with travel times and costs, both for the public and for industry, considerably reduced.

The nineteenth and twentieth century, as with much of the country, has seen considerable expansion of the town, partially as a result of an increasing population, but also in part due to other factors, including the continuing development of the University, and the proximity of the town to the capital city.

The house, which was originally known as Castle Hill House, was built in the early nineteenth century (Figure 2.5) and sat within large grounds, with a lodge-house to the north-east (shown on the historic maps Figures 2.5 to 2.8) with informal gardens to the front between the house and Castle Hill, and with additional outbuildings, glass-houses and kitchen gardens to the rear. Surrounding these appears to be a small area of parkland, providing a more rural immediate setting for the building, whilst Coley Avenue to the west is heavily tree-lined (as it's name suggests), with a pair of pillars to Castle Hill. Beyond its grounds, to the south, limited development is starting to appear along the southern edge of Castle Crescent.

By 1899, the building has changed names to Ascham House (Figure 2.6), and its associated gardens and land had considerably shrunk, with additional development to the south, forming the northern side of Castle Crescent, removing part of the kitchen gardens, whilst the building itself appears to have been extended to the south-west corner.

In 1906, the house further changed its name to Yeomanry House, becoming the headquarters of the Berkshire Yeomanry, and housing the B Squadron. Whilst the Yeomanry forces were originally created as an auxiliary force to the British Army in the eighteenth century in response to the French Revolution and the potential resultant invasion of England, they were disbanded in 1828, and re-formed with the creation of the Territorial Forces between 1906 and 1908. Whilst the gardens to the south and west largely remain the same, further encroachment of its grounds to the east saw the start of development along the western side of Coley Hill, with a large house on the corner of Castle Hill and Coley Hill.

By the early 1930s, a riding school has been constructed to the south-east of the Yeomanry House (Figure 2.8), whilst extensions to the house to the south-east corner run along the boundary to new development along the western side of Coley Hill. Further new development can be seen starting to appear along the eastern side of Coley Avenue. The riding school appears to have evolved to become a drill hall for the Berkshire Yeomanry, most likely either during the final years of the Second World War or immediately after. The drill hall was decommissioned in 1967, and finally demolished in the mid-1990s and nothing now remains of this building. Other outbuildings were also demolished at this time, such as those to the rear of Yeomanry House, running along the eastern boundary wall. In addition to this, several rear extensions to Yeomanry House were also removed, with the building scars now still visible.

In 1999/2000, the existing building, purposefully built to house the Royal County of Berkshire Record Office, was constructed.

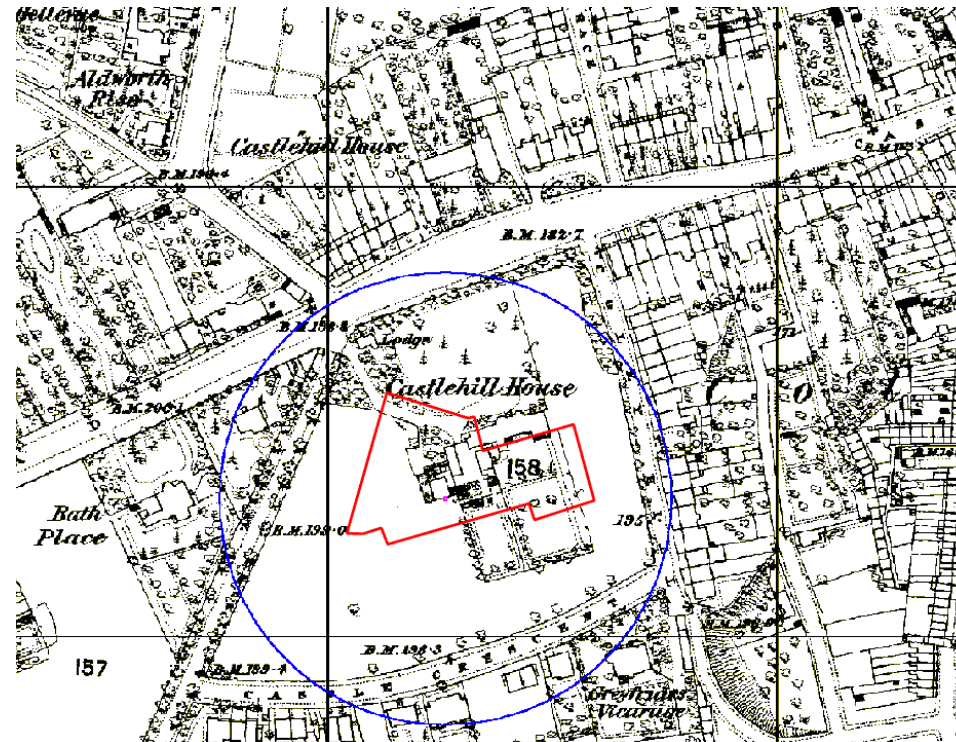


Figure 2.5 1879 Ordnance Survey map (1:2,500)

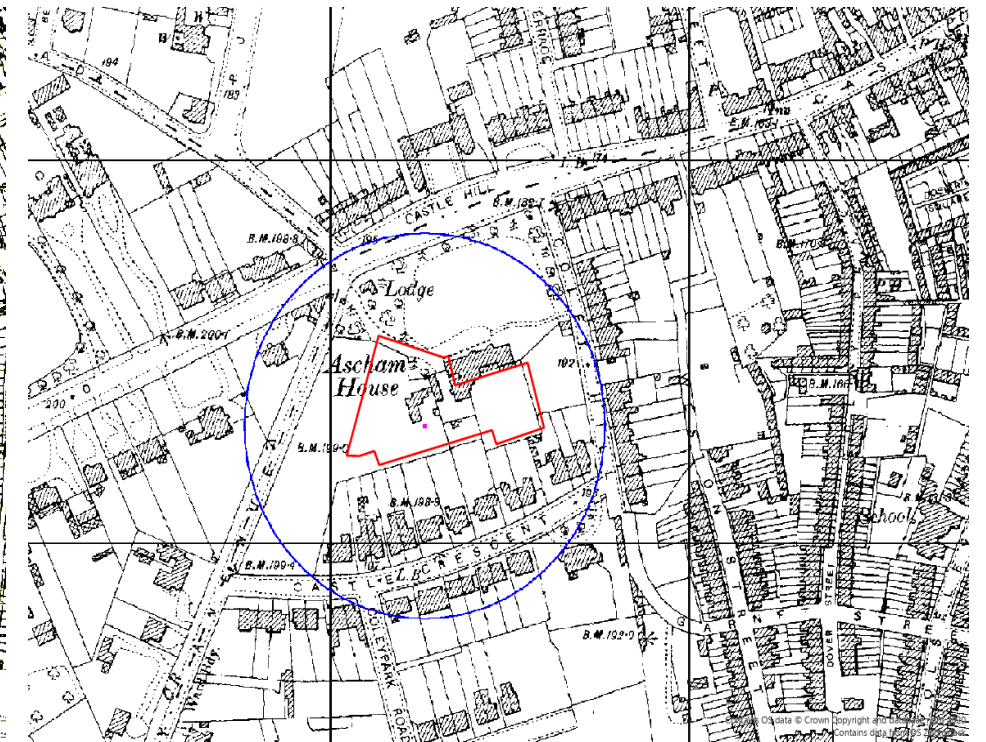


Figure 2.6 1899 Ordnance Survey map (1:2,500)



Figure 2.7 1912 Ordnance Survey map (1:2,500)



Figure 2.8 1931 Ordnance Survey map (1:2,500)

3. Identification of Assets and Assessment of Significance

3.1. Heritage Assets Identified

An inspection of the relevant databases and sources, including the Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER) (accessed online), the National Heritage List for England (NHLE), and the Council’s web-site, has identified thirty-five listed buildings as lying within 250m of the Site. In addition, the Site also lies within the Russell Street and Castle Hill Conservation Area. However, due to the location of the proposed development and the extent and nature of urban form between the Site and the majority of these buildings and structures, together with the lack of inter-visibility and co-visibility between these, the majority of these have been discounted from consideration within this assessment, both taking account of the pre-application advice from Reading Borough Council and in line with the requirement for proportionality set out in paragraph 189 of the NPPF in undertaking such assessments. As such, Table 1 and Figure 3.1 set out the heritage assets considered within this report (those specifically identified during the pre-application discussions in 2020), with no additional impact considered to the significance of other heritage assets.

For clarification, paragraph 189 of the NPPF states that the level of detail provided should be proportionate to the importance of each heritage asset, and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact that may arise from the development proposals.

Ref	Heritage Asset	Grade	NHL No.
1.	Yeomanry House	II	1321962
2.	Russell Street and Castle Hill Conservation Area	N/A	N/A

Table 1: Heritage Assets Considered Within This Assessment

3.2 Assessment of Significance

Yeomanry House

Description

Constructed in red brick and sitting over two and three storeys, the front and western side elevations are stuccoed, together part of the rear elevation, and painted an off-white, whilst the remainder of the building is plain brickwork. The front elevation has two full-height bays sitting over two storeys, each with three 6/6 sash windows with rendered cills to each floor, and flanking a recessed bay, containing a large recessed door with rusticated sides and a large fanlight above at ground floor, with a further 8/8 sash window to first floor. A stone balustrade sits above a moulded cornice.

To each side of the central bays lie a wing, with the left-hand wing sitting over two storeys and three bays. The ground floor is detailed with recessed arches containing 6/6-light sash windows, whilst a rendered string-course runs between ground and first floors, above which is a 3/6-light sash window to each bay. The moulded cornice and stone balustrade continues along the length of the bay, with a lower slate roof to the central bay visible behind. The right-hand wing sits over three storeys and seven/ eight bays, and appears to be a later addition to the main body. At ground floor, there are five 6/6-light sash windows with a door to the right

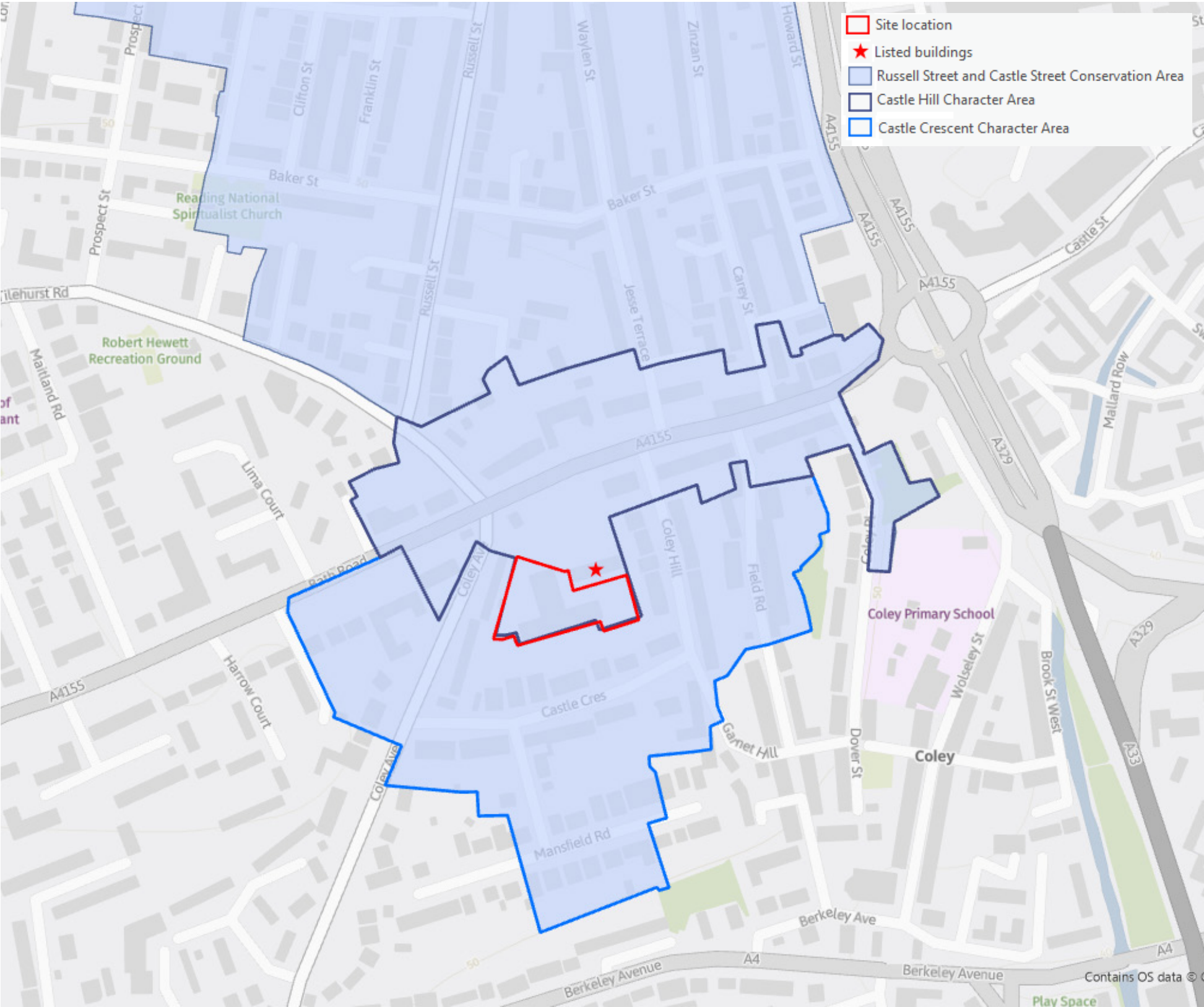


Figure 3.1 Heritage Assets considered within this assessment

hand side, and a blocked door to the left. The first floor has three further 1/1-light sash windows, irregularly spaced, whilst the second floor has two groups of three 1/1-light sash windows. A gabled slate roof lies above with no cornice or stone balustrade.

The right hand elevation (west) has a small 2-light casement window at ground floor set within an arch, with a blocked door to the side, whilst a double window sits central to the first floor, and a further narrow window sits off-set to the apex of the gable at second floor.

The rear of the building is similarly set over three ranges, with the eastern range of plain brick sitting over two storeys and three bays. Each bay at ground floor has a large 1/1-light sash window, with the lower light being boarded over, and each set under rubbed brick arched lintels, whilst three further 1/1-light sash windows with stone cills and rubbed brick lintels sit at first floor. Some building scars are evident at ground floor. The slate roof is higher than that of the central range. The central range, again in plain red brick, generally sits over two storeys with attic, and irregular bays, recessed from the eastern range. The ground floor has a central door set under a timber mono-pitched canopy, with one 6/6-light sash window to the right and a smaller 6/6-light sash window to the left, with the lower light being boarded over. To the left of this lies a further narrow blocked window, and again to the left the brickwork appears to have been reconstructed. A large 6/6-light sash window sits central to the building, probably lighting a stairwell, flanked with a 6/6-light sash window to each side with a further narrow 4/4-light sash window to the right. All windows have stone painted cills with rubbed brick arched lintels. The roof has a pair of twentieth century flat-roofed bay windows with leaded cheeks and each containing a 3/3-light sash window.

The western range, as with the front elevation, sits over three storeys and over seven/ eight bays and is slightly recessed from the central range. The ground floor has a further central timber door set under a timber mono-pitched canopy with a further door to the right-hand side, with the two doors separated by a pair of small 2/2-light sash windows. A further 2/2-light sash window sits to the left of the central door. The first floor has two sets of three windows, the right-hand set being 1/1-light sash windows, with the left-hand set being 3/3-tripartite sash windows. The second floor has a further four irregularly spaced 3/3-light sash windows with a further blocked window.

Due to the current Covid-19 situation, the interior of the building could not be inspected.

In addition, a listed building consent application and planning application are currently under consideration by Reading Borough Council for the alteration to Yeomanry House, which include for the construction of a new glazed section to the rear of the building, facing into the rear car-park and the location of the proposed addition to the Berkshire Record Office.

Significance

The heritage value of this Grade II listed building arises primarily through its aesthetic and historic values, with some further communal values. The aesthetic value is evident mainly through its front elevation, with the Regency architecture of the central bays and the left hand range, dominating the elevation, with the full



Plate 3.1: Front elevation, Yeomanry House

height bays of the central bays flanking a radiating fanlight above the entrance door. The use of stucco, whilst now largely faded, provides further input to this value, as do elements such as the balustrading and large sash windows. The right hand bay, most likely of a later date, provides only a limited input to this value, primarily through its continuation of the use of stucco. The rear elevation of Yeomanry House makes some contribution to the aesthetic value of the listed building, although again this is largely limited to the two more historic elements of the building. In particular, the central range, retaining its symmetrical design and its Georgian sash windows, provides the most input, whilst the right-hand range still retains some value, but this is limited through the evidence of building scars, and the later plate-glass sash windows.

The historic value of the building is mainly illustrative, in particular through its representation and illustration of Regency architecture, in particular through the imposing front elevation, and the comparatively less rigid architecture to the rear. Whilst it is not clear who the house was originally built for, there is some further associative value through the use of the building from the early twentieth century as the headquarters for the Berkshire Yeomanry, although its architecture and the loss of the Drill Hall do not allow an understanding of this association.

With the historic use of the building as the headquarters of the Berkshire Yeomanry until the mid-twentieth century, together with the building being the Registry Office, and thus the location for marriages, provides some additional communal value, although this is generally at a more local level than of national significance.

Setting

The setting of this Grade II listed building is primarily that of its curtilage, defined to the front by the remnants of the gardens, consisting of a grassed area, some mature trees, and a large area of tarmac parking and drive-way, bound to the north



Plate 3.2 Rear elevation, Yeomanry House



Plate 3.3 Lodge to entrance of Yeomanry House

to Castle Hill by a timber fence and scrub planting, and to the east by a modern brick wall. Overall, this area makes a moderate contribution to the significance of the listed building, through providing an ability to experience and appreciate the architecture and design of the listed building and the historic intended role of the front garden, whilst also allowing an understanding of its historic development. The driveway curves to the west, to Castle Hill, with the lodge-house, now defined within its own curtilage, providing some historic reflection of the entrance to Yeomanry House.

To the rear of Yeomanry House, a modern dwarf brick wall with modern hand rails provides a separation from the car-park, which now covers the majority of the area historically forming the kitchen gardens. A high, rendered and buttressed brick wall runs along the eastern boundary separating the car-park from the modern development to Coley Hill, with a further mid-twentieth century brick wall with a soldier-course coping running to the rear, separating the car-park from the rear of the properties along Castle Crescent. The existing Berkshire Record Office sits to the south-east and east of the building. Whilst the car-park is retained as an area of open space, providing some ability to understand and appreciate the rear elevation of Yeomanry House, and as such its evolution, there is little beyond this which makes any contribution to the significance of the listed building, with no ability to understand or appreciate the original use as a kitchen garden serving the listed building. With regards to the existing Record Office, this makes no contribution to the significance of the listed building in its current form, and instead makes an overall neutral contribution. The walls, both to the rear and side of the car-park all appear to be of mid-twentieth century construction, and bear no particular reference to the historic planform of the original plot or kitchen gardens, and thus make no particular contribution to any of the heritage values, and thus the significance, of the Grade II listed building.

Russell Street and Castle Hill Conservation Area

Description

The Conservation Area Appraisal, prepared by Reading Borough Council in 2020, identifies five sub-areas of the Russell Street and Castle Hill Conservation Area, with the Site lying within the Castle Street/ Castle Hill Character Area, and on the northern edge of the Castle Crescent Character Area. Due to the size of the Conservation Area as a whole, its character and appearance is greatly varied, and most of this is not relevant to this assessment. As such, this assessment focuses on these two character areas, with the Castle Crescent Character Area forming part of the setting of the Castle Street/ Castle Hill Character Area. The following provides a brief description of the Conservation Area as a whole, as set out by the Appraisal:

- The area developed largely in the 18th century as an area of intense residential housing to the west of the town centre centred along the road to Bath, along Castle Street and Castle Hill, and the Oxford Road leading towards Pangbourne and Oxford. These two early mediaeval routes out of Reading defined the structure of the development of the area.

- The Conservation Area is a microcosm of Reading's residential building styles in a concentrated area. Within its boundaries, housing spans both wealthy and more modest examples from the 18th century to the 20th century. It encompasses a range of Georgian villas, terraces and artisan housing. The long Victorian era is evident in the development of substantial Victorian single-family terraces and the later polychrome patterned two-up, two-down terraces. Arts and Crafts influences appear in the area's large Victorian and Edwardian villas.

- The open views north from several vantage points to the leafy hills of the Caversham escarpment highlight the geographical location of the area set atop a large clay and chalk escarpment.

With regards to the Castle Hill Character Area, the Appraisal notes the following:



Plate 3.4: View of other listed buildings along Castle Street

- The area boasts 151 addresses that are Listed properties either singly or as part of a terrace. Listed properties are mainly concentrated along Castle Hill/Castle Street, Russell Street and the Oxford Road but also dotted throughout the area.

- The remaining large Georgian villas and terraces are concentrated along Castle Street/Castle Hill, Coley Hill, the Oxford Road, Russell Street and Baker Street, signifying the early move by the more affluent to the west of the town to take advantage of the 'salubrious air' away from local industry.

- The view south along Coley Avenue and its allée of trees in place along the road for over 200 years is protected as a significant heritage view for Reading.

- A number of mature trees, largely along Coley Avenue, Castle Street/Castle Hill and Bath Road, create a positive green canopy and many are protected by TPOs (Tree Protection Orders).

- The Grade II* 154-160 Castle Hill, the former Kings Arms Inn, is a Reading landmark property. Throughout its life it served as an inn, a refuge for French priests during the French Revolution and was home to the local Jesse family of developers throughout the 19th century. It was also for part of its life a school, run by Jesse's wife.

- The striking streetscape of Jesse Terrace, built by the local Jesse family, is distinguished by well-proportioned terraces on both sides with decorative cast iron verandas.

- Along with 154-160 Castle Hill, Yeomanry House with its intact gatehouse, front garden and drive and 1 and 2 Bath Road remain as examples of the large "gentlemen's residences" for Reading's elite 19th century society that once populated the apex of Castle Hill.

- Individual large Georgian and early Victorian villas (Yeomanry House and No. 2



Plate 3.5: View from Site to rear of properties within the Castle Crescent Character Area



Plate 3.6: View towards Site from Castle Hill

Bath Road) are set back from the wide road in grounds with some surviving mature trees still show evidence of large "prestige villas" that were situated at the top of Castle Hill at its junction with Bath Road.

- The streets south of Castle Hill have early 19th century Georgian terraces of two and three storey houses in Coley Hill and detached and semi-detached houses in their own gardens in Castle Crescent. There is a large detached villa in its own grounds at No. 3 Castle Crescent, a former vicarage recently restored with further development of the site.

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- *There are substantial Georgian terraces of three storey houses along Castle Hill with front gardens of varying size.*

Significance

The Character Appraisal notes the following as the primary significance of the Castle Street/ Castle Hill Character Area:

- *Castle Hill and Castle Street comprise one of the finest, oldest and most attractive streets within the Conservation Area. It is a wide, curving, open street that winds uphill from the town centre to the top of the chalk and clay escarpment at the junction of Castle Hill with Russell Street and Coley Avenue. This leafy street is part of the original London to Bath Road. It is notable for its large trees and imposing Georgian houses which make up part of the fine views within, into and out of the Conservation Area. The houses are mostly two and a half to three storeys tall. Largely of Georgian period construction, there are several later additions along the road, but they do not detract significantly from the grandeur of the street. The Georgian properties have large gardens set back from the pavement and leafy vistas, high quality detailing and original features. These principal characteristics contribute to its significance and justification as a separate and unique character area.*
- *Unfortunately, the building of the IDR in 1969 divided this section of the street from the town centre with the insertion of the large roundabout, thus losing the significance of that route through the town. Reconnecting Castle Hill to the heart of the town centre, whether real or visually, would create greater understanding of the historic course of this road through Reading and its significance in influencing the development of the remainder of the Conservation Area.*
- *Yeomanry House, Grade II, and its associated gatehouse, at 131 and 133 Castle Hill, comprise the most significant remaining example of the grand houses built at the junction of Castle Hill, Russell St and Coley Avenue for the wealthy and prominent businessmen of Reading. It exemplifies the layout of these properties with its c.1840 gatehouse and large front garden facing directly onto Castle Hill. The footprint of its original drive is still in situ. The gatehouse is notable for its early and extensive use of salmon-coloured brick.*
- *The modern, purpose-built Berkshire Record Office was built on the site of the Berkshire Yeomanry's Riding School (built 1911). The Record Office's minimalist design, appropriate massing and footprint allows it to fit well within the setting.*
- *The view along the entrance drive to listed building, emphasised by the TPOs on the trees to the front garden display some of the grand houses that once dominated the Castle Hill, Russell St and Coley Avenue junction.*

Setting

The setting of the Castle Street/ Castle Hill Character Area is varied, but the Castle Crescent Character Area, and in particular Castle Crescent and Coley Hill, forms the most immediate element of setting for the Site. Castle Crescent is formed primarily

by large Victorian villas, both detached and semi-detached, largely sitting over three storeys, with the development to the north side of the road forming the immediate setting for the Site. Whilst there are some views into the Site from Castle Crescent, these are largely restricted to glimpses between the houses, and which are subject to considerable seasonal change. Views into the Castle Crescent Character Area are visible from the Site, although these are limited to the rear of the houses, and of the mid-twentieth century wall forming the boundary to the two Character Areas. As such, whilst the Castle Crescent Character Area provides some input to the historic and aesthetic value of the Castle Street/ Castle Hill Character Area, this is minimal and limited to the minimal views gained between each.

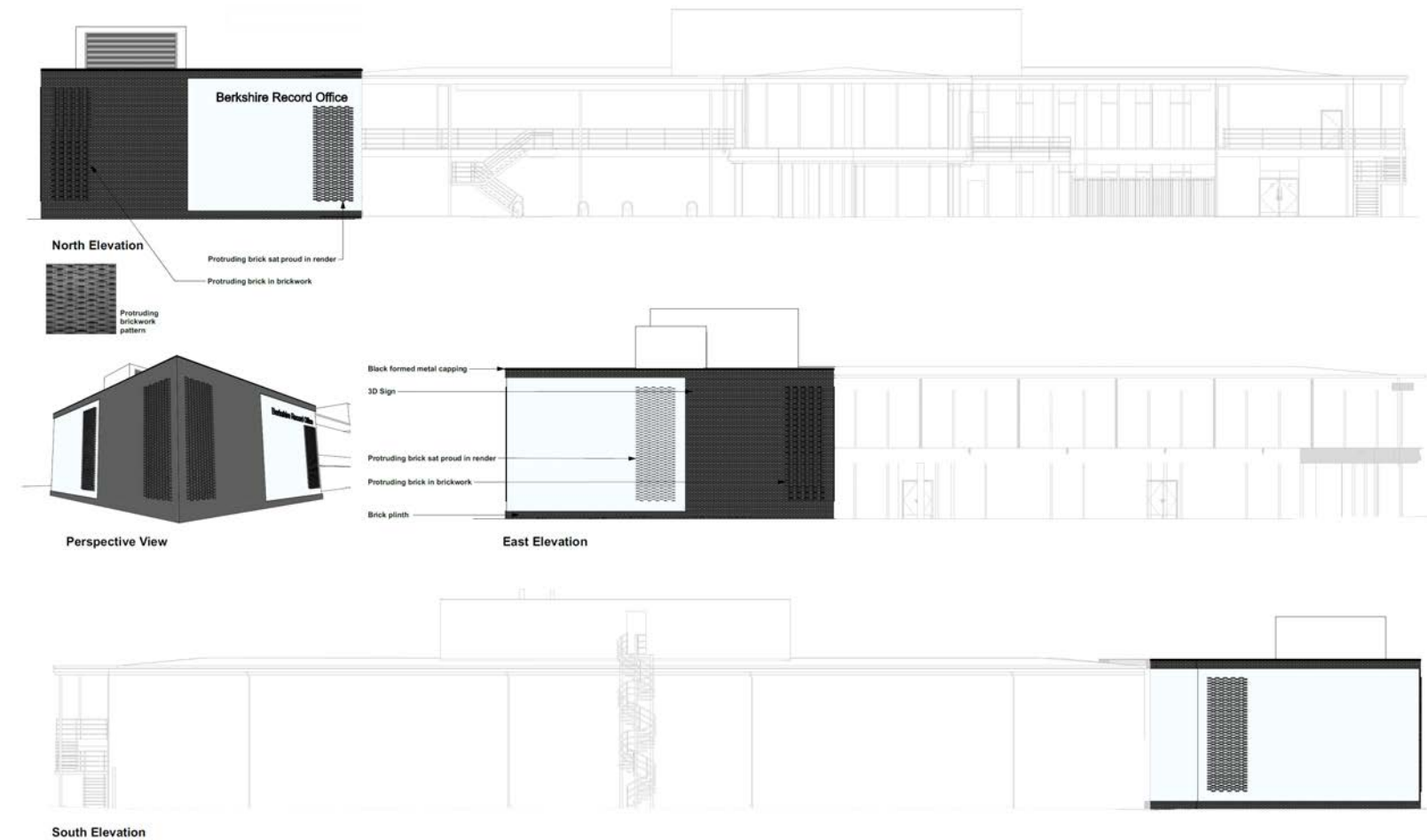
With regards to the Coley Hill Character Area, this is largely defined by the three-storey Georgian and Victorian houses on the east side of the Area, and of twentieth century development to the west, abutting the Site. As with the Castle Crescent Character Area, there are limited glimpses to the Site, gained from between the gaps between the twentieth century houses, whilst views from the Site into the Castle Crescent Character Area are limited by the wall forming the boundary to the Site and are largely of the rear of the twentieth century houses. As such, there is limited, if any, contribution of the Coley Hill Character Area to the significance of the Castle Street/ Castle Hill Character Area.

4. Development Proposals

The proposals seek the erection of a new extension to the existing Berkshire Record Office, retaining the existing car-parking to the front and west of the building, as well as the majority of the parking to the east.

The proposed extension sits over two storeys, following the floor levels of the existing building. Sitting to the east of the existing building, and attached to its eastern side elevation, the proposed extension follows the minimalist architectural style of the existing building.

The northern and eastern elevations are proposed to be constructed with dark grey Ibstock facing brick work, with a rendered panel to each side and a black formed metal roof and capping. A pattern of raised brickwork is further proposed within the rendered panels, to provide some additional architectural and visual relief to the elevations. The southern elevation is proposed to be completely rendered, with a dark grey brick plinth and a further raised brick detail.

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5. Assessment of Impact

This section will consider the impact of the proposals on the significance, or special interest, of the heritage assets identified in Section 3 of this assessment. Following the advice provided in Historic England’s GPA3, the following attributes are considered for their effect on the significance of such assets:

The location and siting of development; the proximity of the Site to the asset; the position of the Site in relation to relevant topography and to key views to, from and across the Site and the asset; the form and appearance of development, its prominence, dominance, or conspicuousness and the potential for competition with or distraction from the asset; the dimensions, scale and massing, materials, architectural design of the Proposed Development; and the potential wider effects of the development, including any change to built surroundings and spaces, and to the general character of the surrounding area.

Yeomanry House

The heritage value of this Grade II listed building has been found to arise primarily through its aesthetic and historic values, as well as some contribution from its communal value. The aesthetic value is largely found through its architectural appearance and details, in particular of the front elevation. Its historic value arises primarily through its illustrative value, not least as a result of its date and its retention of features arising from its Regency architecture. The rear elevation has limited such value.

The immediate setting to the front, formed by the garden and approach, provides considerable input to the significance of the building, in particular through the ability to understand its historic grandeur, whilst also providing space around the building where its architecture and dominance can be appreciated and understood. To the rear, the setting makes little contribution to its overall significance, although such views do allow some understanding of the hierarchy of the different phases of the building as well as allowing an understanding and appreciation of its historic development, through the evidence of building scars. Whilst the car-park provides some degree of space to appreciate the significance of the building, this area has been substantially altered through its history, and there are no features remaining which allow an understanding or appreciation of the former kitchen garden associated with the building.

The location of the proposed development has been secured to ensure that the new extension continues the minimalist architecture of the existing building, and is of an appropriate massing and footprint allowing it to fit well within the setting of the listed building. Whilst there was some concern raised at the pre-application stage that such a location would sever the visual and historic relationship between the historic building and the wall to the rear, this assessment has shown that the wall is of a more modern construction, and makes no reference, either in design or location, to the original kitchen garden. As such, considering the continuation of the minimalist design, and the purely visual and very limited historic relationship between the wall, the car-park and the historic building, it is not considered that the proposed development will have any impact on the significance of the Grade II listed building, and there will be no effect on any of the heritage values of Yeomanry House as described and assessed within this report. With no effect on these heritage values, and the significance of the Grade II listed building remaining unscathed, such significance, and the setting insofar as it contributes to the significance of Yeomanry House, will be preserved, therefore meeting the statutory tests set out

at S.66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the applicable heritage tests set out within Section 16 of the NPPF, and those within the Adopted Local Plan. However, if any degree of harm is identified by the LPA, such harm has to be balanced against the public benefits of the scheme – such benefits include any heritage benefits, which should be given considerable weight (Appendix 4). In this instance, such heritage benefits clearly include the provision of additional storage for and access to historic archives from public authorities and community organisations, helping to continue to fulfill the statutory obligations to The National Archives, contractual obligations to the Berkshire districts, and the joint archives’ obligations to Berkshire communities.

Russell Street and Castle Hill Conservation Area - Castle Street/ Castle Hill Character Area

The significance of the Castle Street/ Castle Hill Character Area has been shown to largely arise through its aesthetic and historic value, through its architecture, the extent of trees protected by TPOs, as well as its origins as one of the oldest and more significant areas of development during the Regency and later Georgian period.

The setting of the Character Area, and in particular of the Site, is that of the Castle Crescent Character Area, has been shown to make minimal input to the significance of the Character Area.

As such, and considering the continuation of the minimalist design, the location of the proposed extension and its overall character and appearance, there will be no detrimental effect on the Character Areas identified, and as such no detrimental effect on the Conservation Area as a whole and any change to the content and significance of the designated heritage asset will be of the lowest scale.

In the event there is any harm identified to the heritage significance of the Conservation Area as a whole, there is considerable justification for this and considerable heritage benefits, as set out above.

It is thus clear that, when considering all of these factors, the significance of the Russell Street/ Castle Hill Conservation Area will be preserved, and thus the tests set out in both the statutory legislation, the Local Plan and the NPPF will all be met.

6. Summary of Findings

The Site has been shown to lie within the setting of one listed building, and within the Russell Street/ Castle Hill Conservation Area, and in particular within the *Castle Street/ Castle Hill Character Area*.

The significance of Yeomanry House has been found to lie primarily in its aesthetic and historic value, with some further limited communal value. The Site, whilst lying within the setting of the listed building has been identified as being of a sympathetic and minimalist design, The car-park and wall to the rear make no particular contribution to significance, and whilst there is some minimal input to the historic value of the listed building, the modern character of both of these elements have been shown to heavily limit such contribution. With no alteration to the heritage values of this Grade II listed building resulting from the proposed development, the statutory tests set out at S. 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 have been met, as have all national and local planning policy requirements, pertinent to heritage, and its significance is therefore identified as being preserved from harm.

The Russell Street/ Castle Hill Conservation Area, and in particular the Castle Hill/ Castle Street Character Area has also been identified as having both aesthetic and historic values, together with some communal value, most of this arising through its architecture and representation of the historic development of this area of Reading during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Whilst there will be some development within the Character Area, the continuation of the minimalist design of the existing development, together with the location and design of the proposed new extension, ensures that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as a whole will be preserved, and that the policy requirements, both in terms of heritage and other matters are met.

If, however there is any harm identified to the significance of either of these two designated heritage assets, then the public benefits of the scheme, including the heritage benefits (being given considerable weight) set out in Section 5 of this assessment will have to be weighed against any identified harm to significance.

In view of all of these findings, there is therefore no heritage-based reason why this proposed development should be refused, and instead it should be approved without delay.

7. Bibliography

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Landmark mapping (2020)

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8. Appendices

- A. Statutory List Descriptions
- B. Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance
- C. Detailed Methodology

A. Statutory List Descriptions (National Heritage List for England)

YEOMANRY HOUSE, CASTLE STREET

Grade II

List Entry Number: 1321962

Date first listed: 14-Dec-1978

Date of most recent amendment: 16-May-1979

National Grid Reference: SU 70888 72899

Details:

CASTLE STREET 1. 5128 Castle Hill Yeomanry Hill House SU 70 13/38 II GV 2. Known as Castle Hill house. Early C19 with modern extensions and adjoining buildings. Original front 2 storeys, stucco with moulded cornice and balustrade carried right across. Slate roof. Wide central 6 panel door flanked by rusticated side panels, in recessed arch with key pattern ornament to door head; wide radiating fanlight. Glazing bar sash windows, 1 over door, flanking full height segmental bows with 3 windows each. Wing to left handy 2 storeys, 3 windows, ground floor windows in arched recesses. 3 storey later (late C19) wing to right.

B: Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

Overview of the decision-making process

The decision-making process of planning applications is within the role of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), and in certain cases the Secretary of State, which will have consideration of relevant legislation and planning policy at both national and local level. As such, this section will examine the relevant legislation and planning policies and guidance in relation to the Site’s development proposals. A comprehensive assessment of these are outlined below.

The current regime recognises that planning applications should consider the potential impact of development proposals on heritage assets. This term includes: designated historic assets, which have a statutory designation (e.g. Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) and non-designated historic assets, such as those compiled into a Local List by LPAs.

Legislation

Legislation regarding Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) (the 1990 Act).

Section 16(2) of the 1990 Act states that, when considering whether to grant listed building consent, a decision-maker shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 66(1) states that, in considering whether to grant planning permission for development that affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority (LPA) or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Section 72(1) states that, in the exercise of planning functions, special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of appearance of conservation areas.

The term “preserve”, within the context of Section 66, has been defined within South Lakeland District Council v Secretary of State [1992] 2 WLR 204, where it was held that the “desirability of preserving” creates a presumption against harmful changes, but not a presumption against any change - or more simply that “preservation” equates to leaving character or appearance unharmed. Furthermore, it was also held that where a development would not have any adverse effect on the character or appearance of that area, and it otherwise unobjectionable in planning terms, there should be no reason for its refusal.

The meaning and effect of these duties have been further considered by the courts, including the Court of Appeal decision in relation to Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v East Northamptonshire District Council [2014] EWCA Civ 137. 4.4 The Court agreed with the High Court’s judgment that Parliament’s intention in enacting Section 66(1) was that decision-makers should give “considerable importance and weight” to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings.

The appeal decision for APP/H1705/A/13/2205929 adds further clarification as to the overall planning balance in the context of Section 66. The application for the

proposed development of 425 dwellings at Razor’s Farm, Chineham, Basingstoke was called in by the Secretary of State for determination. The Secretary of State, like the Inspector, considered that considerable importance and weight is not synonymous with overriding importance and weight.

The Court of Appeal Judgment of Williams v Powys County Council ([2017] EWCA Civ 427) provides further clarification regarding the setting of listed buildings, and in particular on the issues of both inter-visibility and of co-visibility, and the potential relevance of visual relationships of heritage assets and their setting. Linbolm L.J. recognised that, if a proposed development is to affect the setting of a listed building, there must be a distinct visual relationship of some kind between the two. However, the Judgment goes on to state that this does not mean that the mere possibility of seeing both the listed building and the development at the same time establishes that the development will affect the setting of the listed building.

The same Judgment, in considering concerns about impacts on setting of heritage assets, arising from consultation responses, also states that sometimes a consultee or an objector may have raised concern about the effect the development will have on the setting of a listed building but the decision-maker can properly take the view that there will be no such effect, or at least no harm.

Furthering this, in the High Court Judgment of Safe Rottingdean Ltd and Brighton and Hove City Council [2019] EWHC 2632 (Admin) Sir Duncan Ousley stated that: “I do not think that giving considerable weight to the desirability of achieving the statutory duty requires separate views to be reached on each part, and then the beneficial parts to be put to one side where there is some harm, however relatively unimportant. It would be an irrational thought process, not sanctioned by statutory wording, to require significant weight to be given to the benefit, and significant weight to the harm, without the two being brought into a single balance under the statute, and then requiring only significant weight to be given to the harm... That is not to say that the harm becomes irrelevant; it is simply that the statutory duty can be complied with, in line with the jurisprudence, even if there is some harm to a setting, if it is not as significant as the benefit to the building and its setting, as was obviously the case here. Quite the reverse; considerable weight has to be given to the overall benefits”.

In the Court of Appeal Judgment of Jones v Mordue [2015] EWCA Civ 1243, the Court held that, given that the relevant paragraphs (132-134) of the NPPF are to be read together and consecutively, they create a presumption in favour of the desirability to preserve the setting of a listed building or to preserve or enhance a Conservation Area, in line with the statutory requirements.

In the High Court Judgment of Bedford Borough Council v Nuon UK Ltd ([2013] EWHC 2847 (Admin) Mr Justice Kay states that, where there is substantial harm, then there is a presumption against granting consent – however, where the harm is less than substantial, it is simply a question of weighing that harm against the public benefits of the proposals. It further suggests that “substantial harm” is such as where “the impact on significance was required to be serious such that very much, if not all, of the significance was drained away”.

The High Court Judgment of Forge Field Society v Severnoaks District Council ([2014] EWHC 1895 (Admin) sets out the “need for suitably rigorous assessment of potential alternatives” – in other words, where any harm is identified to the significance of a heritage asset, but there is a need for the type of development considered, and an alternative site on which such harm can be avoided all together,

“this will add force to the statutory presumption in favour of preservation”: in other words, if a different site can be identified, this will strengthen the presumption against the harm. However, whilst this presumption will be strengthened, this does not mean that refusal is justified; the requirement is then that the benefits must be shown to outweigh the identified levels of harm.

When considering the implications of Paragraph 14 of the NPPF, the High Court Judgment of Forest of Dean v Gladman Developments Ltd ([2016] EWHC 421 (Admin)) is the authority for the proposition that if harm is caused to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the tilted balance does not apply (by reason of Footnote 9), and provides precedent on the application of paragraph 14 of the NPPF (ie: the presumption in favour of development), and the two “limbs”. This clarifies that, in undertaking the balancing exercise required by paragraph 134 (which itself takes account of the considerable importance and weight required by legislation), and where the public benefits have been weighed against (but not necessarily outweighed by) the public benefits, the decision-maker is required to then assess the overall benefits of development are weighed against the collective adverse impacts identified within NPPF as a whole.

In the Judgment for Palmer v Herefordshire Council ([2016] EWCA Civ 106), a discussion on the balance between harm and benefit to a listed building was undertaken. It was accepted that “where proposed development would affect a listed building or its settings in different ways, some positive and some negative, the decision-maker may legitimately conclude that although each of the effects as an impact, taken together there is no overall adverse effect on the listed building or its setting”. In essence, where there is some harm and some benefit, these should be given the same weight, and where they are equal in measure, the effect on the listed building would be neutral, and thus its significance would be preserved.

The NPPF (MHCLG, 2019)

The NPPF sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. When determining Planning Applications, the NPPF directs LPAs to apply the approach of a presumption in favour of sustainable development; the ‘golden thread’ that is expected to run through the plan-making and decision-taking process. This is expected to apply unless this conflicts with other NPPF policies, inclusive of those covering the protection of designated heritage assets.

Section 12 ‘Achieving well-designed places’ (NPPF Paragraphs 124-132) emphasise on the importance of creating high quality buildings and places, with good design a key aspect of sustainable development. NPPF paragraph 127 reinforces the importance of good design in achieving sustainable development by ensuring that development proposals:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic 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);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive

places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience. Section 16 ‘Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment’ (NPPF Paragraphs 184-202), relates to development proposals that have an effect on the historic environment. This is the guidance to which LPAs need to refer to when setting out a strategy in their Local Plans for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. It is noted that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

In Annex 2: Glossary of the NPPF are the relevant terms relating to the historic environment. For the purposes of this report, the following are important to note:

Heritage Asset is a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. These include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority; and

Significance is the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.

When determining applications for development proposals, LPAs should require applicants to describe the significance of the identified heritage assets affected and the contribution made by their setting. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of this heritage asset, and sufficient to understand the impact of development proposals on that significance (NPPF Paragraph 189).

The NPPF Paragraph 192 advises LPAs to consider the following points when drawing up strategies for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, and when determining planning applications:

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.

NPPF Paragraphs 193-202 consider the impact of development proposals on the significance of a heritage asset. Great weight should be given to the heritage asset’s conservation, and that the more important the heritage asset, the greater this weight should be applied (NPPF Paragraph 193).

NPPF Paragraph 196 advises that, where development proposals will cause ‘less than substantial harm’ to a designated heritage asset’s significance, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits, including securing its optimum viable use.

National Planning Guidance Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (DCLG, March 2014) (as amended)

This guidance has been adopted in support of the NPPF and reiterates the importance of conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change, requiring a flexible and thoughtful approach. The neglect and decay of heritage assets is best addressed by ensuring that they remain in an active use consistent with their conservation.

Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. An important consideration should be whether development proposals adversely affect a key element of the heritage asset’s significance:

‘it is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development that is to be assessed’.

The level of ‘substantial harm’ is stated to be a high bar, which may not arise in many cases. Whether development proposals cause substantial harm will be a judgment in the decision-taking process, having regard to the circumstances of the case and by applying the relevant NPPF policies.

Such harm may arise from works to the heritage asset or from development within its setting. Setting is defined as:

‘the surroundings in which an asset is experienced, and may be more extensive than the curtilage’.

A thorough assessment of the harm development proposals will have on this setting needs to consider, and be proportionate to, the heritage asset’s significance and the degree to which any changes enhance or detract from that significance, and the ability to appreciate and experience it.

Conservation Principles, Policies, and Guidance (English Heritage, April 2008)

This document outlines Historic England’s approach to the sustainable management of the historic environment. While primarily intended to ensure consistency in their own advice and guidance through the planning process, the document is commended to LPAs to ensure that all decisions about change affecting the historic environment are informed and sustainable. This document was published in line with the philosophy of PPS5, yet remains relevant with the NPPF and PPG, the emphasis placed upon the importance of understanding significance to properly assess the effects of change to heritage assets. Guidance within the document describes a range of ‘heritage values’ that constitute a heritage asset’s significance to be established systematically; the four main heritage values include: aesthetic, evidential, communal or historical. The document emphasises that:

‘considered change offers the potential to enhance and add value to places...it is the means by which each generation aspires to enrich the historic environment’ (Paragraph 25).

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes

GPA 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (March 2015)

This document provides advice on the numerous ways in which decision-making

in the historic environment can be undertaken, emphasising that the first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and the contribution of its setting to its significance. In line with the NPPF and PPG, this document states that early engagement and expert advice in considering and assessing the significance of heritage assets is encouraged, stating that:

“...application proposals that affect the historic environment are much more likely to gain the necessary permissions and create successful places if they are designed with the knowledge and understanding of the significance of the heritage assets they may affect.”

The advice suggests a structured staged approach to the assembly and analysis of relevant information, this is as follows:

- Understand the significance of the affected assets;
- understand the impact of the proposal on that significance;
- avoid, minimise, and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF;
- look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance;
- justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance and the need for change; and
- offset negative impacts on aspects of significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

The advice reiterates that direct physical change may affect heritage assets, or by change in their setting. Assessment of the nature, extent, and importance of the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting at an early stage can assist the planning process resulting in informed decision-taking.

This document sets out the recommended steps for assessing significance and the impact of application proposals upon a heritage asset, including examining the asset and its setting and analysing local policies and information sources. In assessing the impact of a development proposal on the significance of a heritage asset the document emphasises that the cumulative impact of incremental small-scale changes may have as great an effect on the significance of a heritage asset as a larger scale change.

GPA 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (December 2017) (2nd Edition)

This advice note focuses on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets. This guidance updates that previously published by English Heritage (The Setting of Heritage Assets 2011) in order to ensure that it is fully compliant with the NPPF and is largely a continuation of the philosophy and approach of the 2011 document. It does not present a divergence in either the definition of setting or the way in which it should be assessed.

Setting 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’. The guidance emphasises that setting is not a heritage asset or a heritage designation and that its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset itself. Elements of setting may make a positive, negative or neutral contribution to the significance of a heritage asset.

While setting is largely a visual concept, with views considered to be an important consideration in any assessment of the contribution that setting makes to the significance of an asset, setting, and thus the way in which an asset is experienced, can also be affected by other environmental factors, including historic associations.

This document states that the protection of the setting of a heritage asset need not prevent change and that decisions relating to such issues need to be based on the nature, extent and level of the significance of a heritage asset. It is further stated that the contribution made to an asset’s significance by their setting will vary depending on the nature of the asset and its setting. Different heritage assets have the capacity to accommodate changes and, therefore, setting should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Although not prescriptive in setting out how this assessment should be carried out, Historic England recommend using a ‘5-step process’ to assess any effects of a development proposals on the setting and significance of a heritage asset:

- Identifying the heritage assets affected and their settings;
- Assessing whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s);
- Assessing the effect of the development proposals on the significance of the heritage asset(s);
- Maximising enhancement and minimising harm; and making and documenting the decision and monitoring outcomes.

Local Plan Policy

Reading Borough Council provides the planning policy context for the Site. The Reading Borough Local Plan was adopted in December 2019 and contains the following policies pertinent to the historic environment, and are relevant to this site:

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced. This will include:

- Listed Buildings;
- Conservation Areas;
- Scheduled Monuments;
- Historic parks and gardens; and
- Other features with local or national significance, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and assets on the Local List.

All proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits.

Applications which affect Listed Buildings will not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including,

where appropriate, their settings.

Applications which affect Historic Parks and Gardens will safeguard features which form an integral part of the special character or appearance of the park or garden. Development will not detract from the enjoyment, layout, design, character, appearance, features or setting of the park or garden, key views out from the park, or prejudice its future restoration.

Applications which affect, or have the potential to affect, the significant features of heritage assets should be justified by a Heritage Statement.

The Council will monitor buildings and other heritage assets at risk through neglect, decay or other threats, proactively seeking solutions for assets at risk including consideration of appropriate development schemes that will ensure the repair and maintenance of the asset, and, as a last resort, using its statutory powers.

Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect or of damage to a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.

WR3: OTHER SITES FOR DEVELOPMENT IN WEST READING AND TILEHURST

WR3e YEOMANRY HOUSE, CASTLE HILL

Change of use of listed building to residential use or to potential office or restaurant use.

Development should:

- * Avoid detrimental effects on the significance of the listed building and the Conservation Area;
- * Address noise impacts on residential use;
- * Address air quality impacts on residential use; and
- * Retain the lawn and wooded frontage to Castle Hill as a key part of the setting of the building and conservation area.

Site size: 0.44 ha 10-14 dwellings

C: Methodology

In order to assess the impact of proposed development on the significance of each identified heritage asset, the significance of each asset is assessed against a range of “heritage values”. Whilst a variety of different sources identify a wide range of such values, these are largely similar, and as such the values set out by Historic England (formerly by English Heritage, 2008), forming the most proportionate and inclusive values, are utilised herein.

Conservation Principles (EH, 2008)

Conservation Principles outlines Historic England (formerly English Heritage) approach to the protection and management of the historic environment as a whole. While primarily intended to ensure consistency in HE’s own advice and guidance, the document is recommended to LPAs, property owners, developers and their advisors to ensure that all decisions about change affecting the historic environment are informed and sustainable.

The guidance describes a range of historic values which enables the significance of assets to be established systematically, with the four main ‘historic values’ being:

Evidential value: which derives from those elements of an heritage asset that can provide evidence about past human activity, including its physical remains or historic fabric;

Historical value: which derives from either the illustration of a particular aspect of past life, or through the association with a notable family, person, event or movement;

Aesthetic value: which derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from an heritage asset; and

Communal value: which derives from the meanings of a heritage asset for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. The British Standard for Conservation (2015)

The British Standard states that “significance” represents a public interest, and the planning system, and the policy and legislation which support it, reflects this. It provides a list of twenty-five (non-exhaustive) values which may be considered when assessing significance. The Guide goes on to state that heritage has cultural, social, economic and environmental values, and that a wide range of factors can contribute to the significance of historic buildings, examples of which examples include:

a. attributes relating to the physical and spatial properties of a historic building (aesthetic, historic and evidential value):

1) the original design of the historic building and how it has changed over time, including material patina;

2) The materials used in construction; and

3) The presence of archaeological information in remains above and below ground (evidential value);

b. characteristics in relation to the context of the historic building;

1) how a historic building relates to its surroundings (e.g. other buildings, townscape or the wider environment); and

2) how a historic building relates to similar buildings;

c. characteristics relating to wider associations—(communal value/ associative

value):

1) the use of the historic building over time and its connections with a significant person, family or community;

2) associations with historic, scientific or artistic events or works (e.g. literature, paintings); and

3) social significance, and the historical, cultural, economic, political and social factors that influenced the design.

Approach to Assessment of the Setting of Heritage Assets

The following assessment has been undertaken following Historic England guidance set out in its *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: The Setting of Historic Assets (2nd Ed.) (2017)* (GPA3), as well as identifying the elements which make up significance, as set out in English Heritage’s *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment (2008)* (Conservation Principles): Aesthetic, Historic; Communal; and Evidential. The 5-step process set out in GPA3 requires an analysis of the setting of heritage assets, and the degree to which setting contributes to the significance of the heritage asset. It also requires an assessment of how such contribution may be altered through proposed development. However, prior to this Setting Assessment being undertaken, and in order to fully understand the significance of a heritage asset, a proportionately-detailed assessment of the heritage values as set out in Conservation Principles should be undertaken, in order to inform the Setting Assessment.

In order to understand the extent and contribution of the setting of each historic asset identified as requiring assessment, and the potential impact of proposed development on setting and significance, the 5-step process set out in Historic England’s *The Setting of Historic Assets* has been used. The five steps are:

Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected.

A search of the Historic Environment Record (HER), together with the National Heritage List (NHL) and the Council’s website provides an initial list of potential heritage assets to be considered, including listed buildings, conservation areas, and other national or local heritage designations which may need to be considered. This is augmented with a site visit and additional research, where other buildings and structures not included in any of the above, but potentially considered as non-designated heritage assets, can be identified. Each heritage asset is visited, as far as public access allows, and its surroundings are examined in order to understand the degree to which elements of the surroundings allow for the building to be experienced or better understood, therefore identifying its setting, as defined within the NPPF.

Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated.

In order to undertake this stage, the significance of the heritage assets has to be understood, whether designated or non-designated. Although there is no proscriptive method for assessing significance, this Appraisal utilises the heritage values¹ set out in Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (English Heritage, 2008), and considers each heritage asset against these values. Whilst the British Standard suggests a variety of additional potential values, the ones set out by in Conservation Principles are generally recognised as appropriate and proportionate

values to assess. Once each heritage asset has been assessed against the five heritage values, and its significance is understood, an assessment of the contribution of setting to this significance can be undertaken. This is achieved through assessing each element of setting against the heritage values of the asset, and identifying whether it a positive, negative or neutral contribution, if any—and if so, identifying which heritage values it contributes to and how. The final stage is to identify the relative extent of significance arising from setting, in comparison to other sources of heritage value.

Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance or on the ability to appreciate it.

GPA3 sets out suggested, although non-exhaustive, potential attributes of a development which may affect the setting of heritage assets, which include location and siting of the development; the form and appearance of the development; other effects such as planting, lighting, noise, change to general character, and changes to skylines or built surroundings and spaces; permanence of the development; and longer term or consequential effects of the development. These are used as a guide and a basis from which to assess how a development may alter a particular element of setting, and to understand which heritage values the proposed development may impact upon. Details of the design of the proposed development will often vary, and will range from initial concepts through to detailed plans and elevations, verified photographs and photomontages. Where details are lacking, assumptions based on professional judgement and knowledge can be used to undertake assessment—where this is the case, this will be set out clearly in the report, and caveated accordingly. Where harm is identified to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the nature of harm is explained, and the extent of harm to significance is set out in terms of substantial harm, or in degrees of less than substantial harm, as appropriate. Where harm is identified to the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, the nature of harm is set out in terms of high, moderate, low or negligible. This is in recognition that the NPPF differentiates the extent of weight to be afforded to the conservation of a heritage asset, dependant on its status of designation. Where benefit is identified, this is identified in terms of substantial, moderate, low or negligible, for the purpose of clarity.

Step 4: Explore Ways to Maximise Enhancement and Avoid or Minimise Harm.

Although this Step generally relates to identification and assessment of potential impact during design, and the subsequent mitigating harm through re-design, for the purposes of this assessment, this Step will be used to identify areas of where there is heritage benefit within the scheme, and/or elements of mitigation integral to the design (for instance, landscaping, or repairs to a listed building). In order to be able to undertake a quantitative balancing exercise between heritage benefit and heritage harm in the next Step, benefit is referred to in terms of substantial, moderate, low or negligible.

Step 5: Make and Document the Decision and Monitor Outcomes.

As this final stage the guidance states that it is good practice for the results of the As this final stage is explicitly for the decision-maker, this Step is not undertaken within this assessment. However, as any decision will be based on the compliance of the proposed scheme with legislation and policy at both national and local level, this Step is used to assess whether the scheme is in line with the requirements stemming from such. A synopsis of the identified impacts on each heritage asset is provided, followed by an assessment of cumulative harm on the surrounding historic built environment. Where both heritage harm and heritage benefits are

identified, a balancing exercise of these is undertaken. Finally, the assessment will identify whether the proposed scheme is compliant with relevant legislation and policy, and whether any additional balancing of harm against public benefit is required. This final Step will take account of all relevant and up-to-date case-law as it pertains to the scheme, as well as the planning history of the site where relevant, including (but not exclusively) any previous applications, appeals, together with any formal or informal pre-application advice from both the Local Planning Authority and from Historic England.

The appendices contain background information and reference material, including historic mapping, list descriptions, location of heritage assets, photographs, and all relevant paragraphs of legislation and relevant policies. This should all be referred to throughout these five steps.
