



frost.

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

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT
PART 2 of 2

T

THACKERAY GROUP

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

RETAIL FRONTAGES

A GATEWAY TO READING



BENEFIT FOR THE WIDER PUBLIC REALM

The applicant currently owns the application site, along with 149-150 Friar Street and 2-4 Queen Victoria Street. These properties form both prominent corners of the northern end of the Queen Victoria Street terrace. When considered together, they form the gateway to the wider shopping district of Reading when accessed from the Railway Station. It is the intention of the applicant to improve the public realm covered by both sections of building, creating a retail hub with consistent heritage retail frontages and signage.

It is envisaged that this will then be considered the design standard for the remainder of the Queen Victoria Street properties and that these building owners will consider following this precedent.

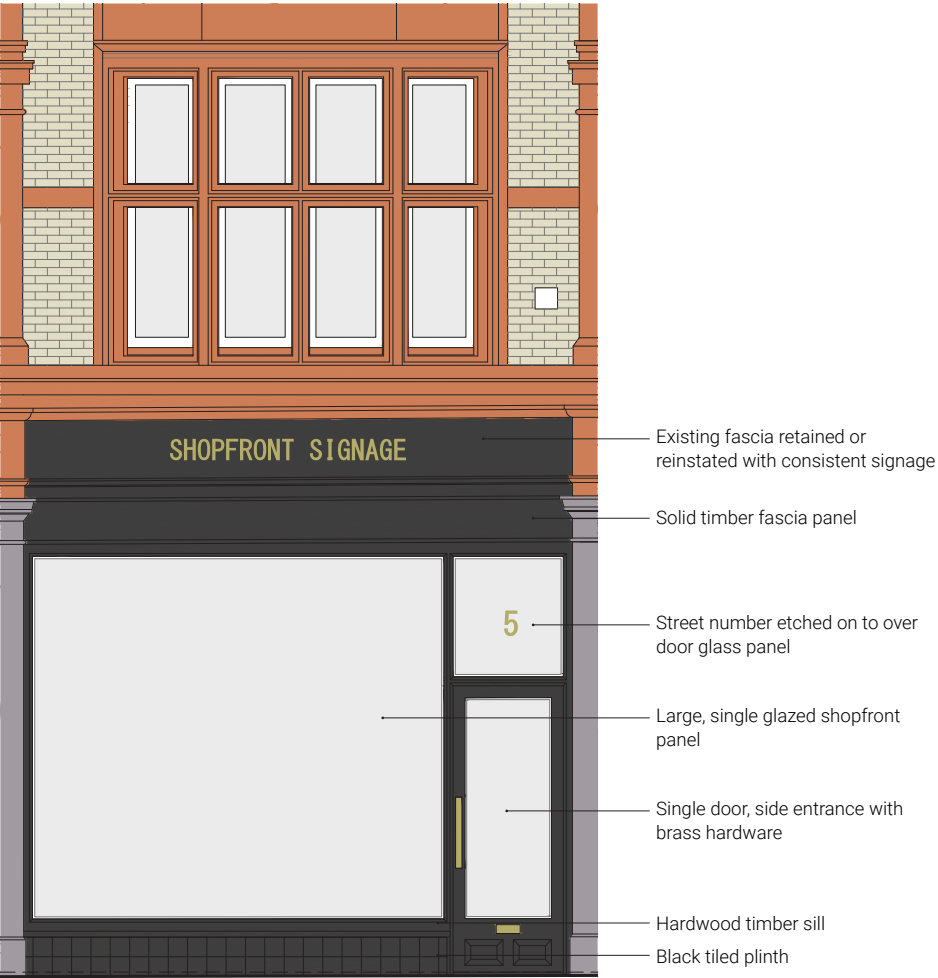
The applicant has experience in setting these standards for a wider area, such as the properties currently within their ownership on Eastcheap in London.



4.0 THE PROPOSAL

RETAIL FRONTAGES

INFORMED BY THE PAST



The proposed design for the new shop fronts to the Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street elevations has been informed by the historical photographs that date back to 1939. It is considered that these photos show the shop fronts that would generally have been installed from when the building was originally built.

The intention is to create a uniform appearance across the site and provide a template for the wider Queen Victoria Street terrace.

From the photos there is evidence that the shops were generally a single bay with the larger units generally being on either end of the terrace where the corners may have incorporated multiple bays. Further, the photos show that the shop fronts generally had a single entrance door and this was positioned to one side of the repeated bay. The doors were generally set back from the pavement, creating a recessed doorway. The remaining glazing was generally one large glazed panel with decoration internally depending on the shop.

Two built features further define the design. Firstly, a plinth below the shop front window is evident which appears to be tiled with a plain black tile. Secondly, the signage above the shop front is consistent with decorative moulding under the terracotta plinth at 1st floor level.

Although the colour of the shop front and signage is not known, it is evidently dark and most probably consistent across the terrace.

All of the above observations ensure that the street elevation is coherent and consistent.

The proposed new shopfronts will largely replicate these observations with a black painted timber framed shopfront of the same configuration and composition as can be seen in the photos. The timber fascia and signage will be reinstated. The main deviation will be that the recessed doorway will not be replicated as this is likely to cause a hidden recess that can not be monitored.



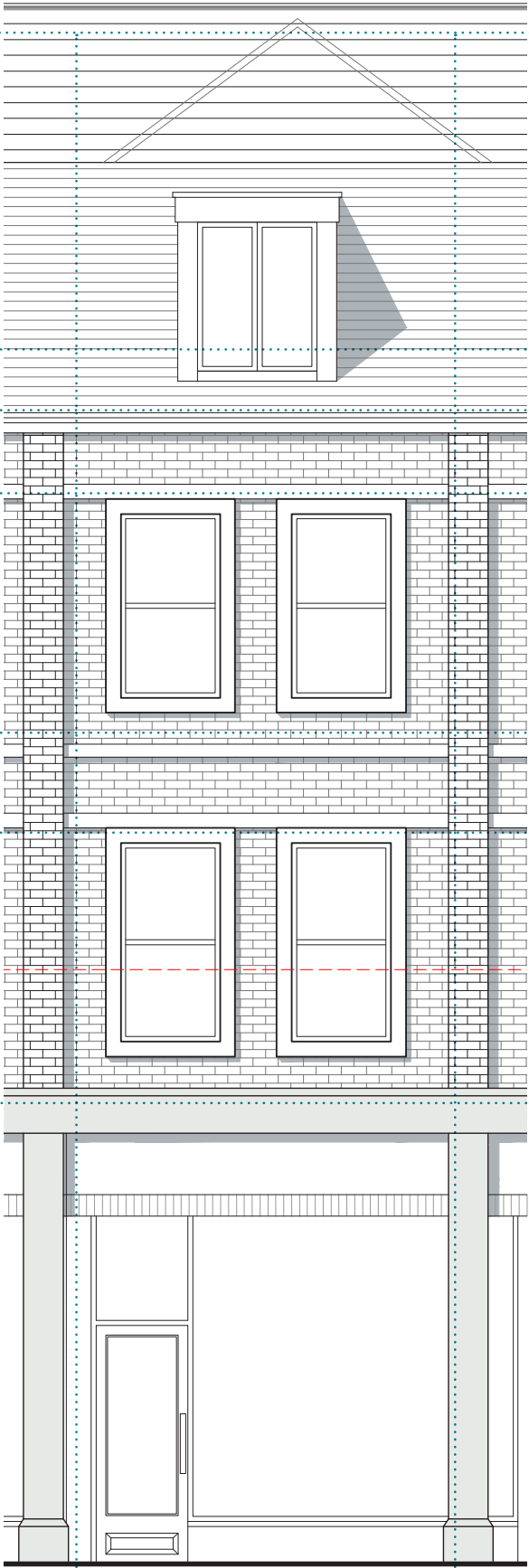
The market square will be secured out of hours by gates to both entrances. The entrances to both Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street will be secured. As proposed by the security strategy in section 7.0 of this document, the gates will be access controlled to allow access to the aparthotel guests out of hours.



A second option for the shopfront design has been considered, featuring a central door. This is shown opposite, but presented for approval.

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

ELEVATIONAL STUDY



Repeating bays with strong vertical elements

Smaller proportioned dormers

Simplified eaves detailing

Aligned window heads with simplified stone surrounds replicating the more elaborate terracotta

Simple horizontal banding

Simplified window surrounds

Simplified horizontal cornice separating the ground floor retail from the upper floors residential use.

REPETITION

The internal market square elevations have been designed to respond directly to the elaborate and ornate front façades, by taking a simplified, contemporary approach ensuring a subservient design hierarchy while ensuring these new elements are seen as distinct from the original building.

The front façades of the buildings to Queen Victoria Street have a regular, repeating bay rhythm with pairs of single sash windows and wider bay windows repeated along a recognisable pattern. The very strong vertical column elements are contrasted by the deliberate secondary horizontal elements. The light coloured recessed brick panels help to accentuate the ornate terracotta elements that are the defining feature of the building.

The proposals therefore comprise simplified stone window surrounds sitting within recessed brick panels which will complement the predominantly red brick featured to the rear of the surrounding buildings. The repeating bay with pairs of single sash windows creates a regular rhythm that responds to the more intimate proportions of the market square to the rear.

The mixture of simplified vertical and horizontal elements form a colonnade at ground floor giving more space to the market square and providing a covered area for the public space.

The dormer windows are deliberately smaller proportion and more simple in detail to ensure a minimal impact on the surroundings.

The proposed massing and elevation design therefore presents a coherent composition informed by the design of the historic Queen Victoria Street façades by taking clues from the original detail and hierarchy. This results in a respectful and high quality contemporary design.

RHYTHM

The new facade and roof to the rear of Queen Victoria Street has been designed to reflect the rhythm and scale of the adjacent buildings that have been restored. The repeating dormers and windows have been reflected in the new facade providing a high quality replacement to the existing building.



4.0 THE PROPOSAL

MATERIALITY



REPAIR

The repair works to the listed building comprise of two main areas, the gable repairs and the roof repairs.

Several of the gables have moved and become unstable requiring them to be temporarily propped with level scaffold. The high level gables are constructed of imperial red stock bricks, over clad with ornate terracotta units and faced to the front elevations with imperial yellow/white gaunt bricks. The terracotta units are in poor condition having suffered general weathering decay and spalling due to movement and modern cement mortar splitting the arrises. A proposal for the repair and reinstatement of the gables has been produced and accompanies this application.

The existing roof is similarly decayed and no longer fit for purpose. It is proposed that as part of the extension and renovation works, that the roof is stripped back to existing rafters and new felt and tiles replaced. This element will also be thermally upgraded as part of the works. Further detail is supplied as part of this application.



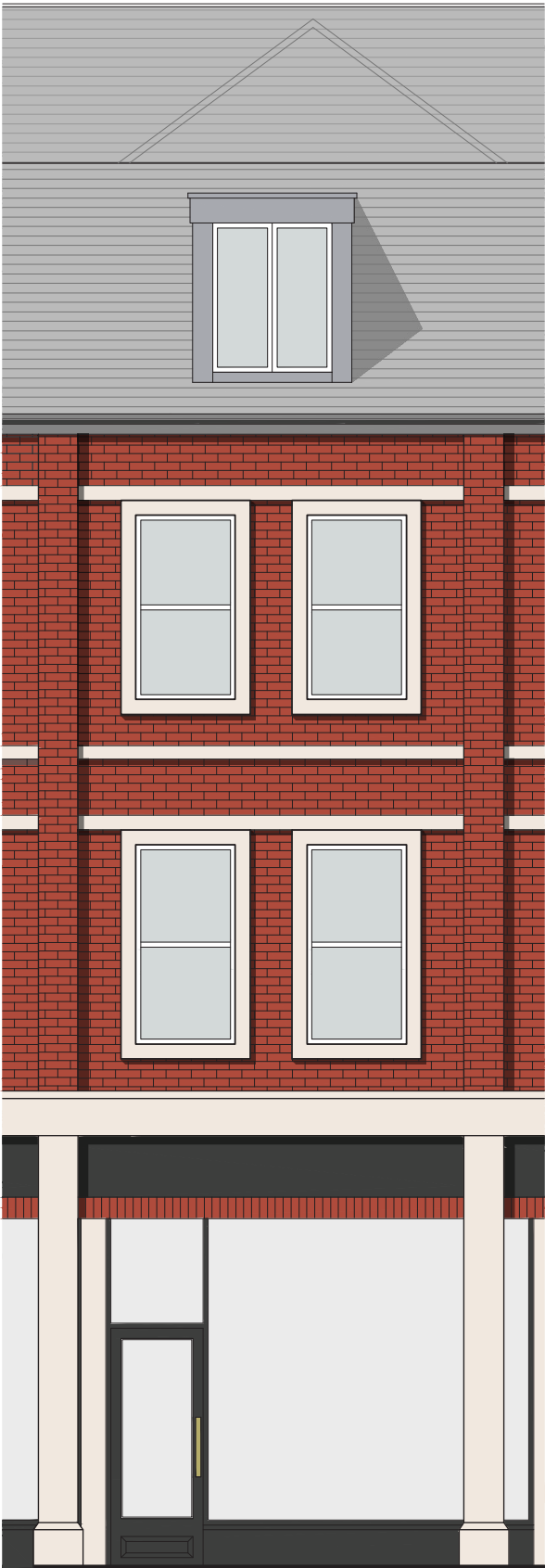
EXTEND

The materials for the rear extension to the listed buildings are to be complimentary and subservient in texture and colour. The materials will also be chosen to compliment the rear of the existing terrace adjacent that can be viewed from the market square. The dominant texture in the back land of this site and the surrounding area is the red brick of the Queen Victoria Street terrace. There are some lighter bricks apparent in the neighbouring buildings, however, these tend to be newer and lower quality materials. The brick for the rear extension will therefore be a red brick to closely match the tone of the existing bricks on the site. To aid this selection, physical sample panels will be undertaken.

The other dominating material apparent at the rear of the site is the slate roof tiles of the Queen Victoria Street terrace. These can be seen on the adjacent buildings and those opposite the site. The proposal is to closely match the roof slate to that of the existing building.

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

MATERIALITY



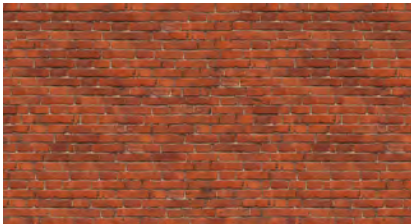
Lead dormers



Stone window surrounds



Stone string course



Red Brick



Slate tile



Stone features



Frameless glazing

The materials have been chosen to be complimentary to the main front facade. The window surrounds, horizontal banding and columns to the colonnade will all be a light coloured sandstone or limestone that will compliment and lift the red brick.

All new windows in the upper floors will be white painted timber framed, double glazed sash windows. The shopfronts will be timber framed single glazed and painted black to compliment the front facade renovations.

Between the new extension and the rear of 147 Friar street, the proposed glazed link will be a silicone jointed, frameless glass panel system.

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

NO. 148 ALTERATIONS



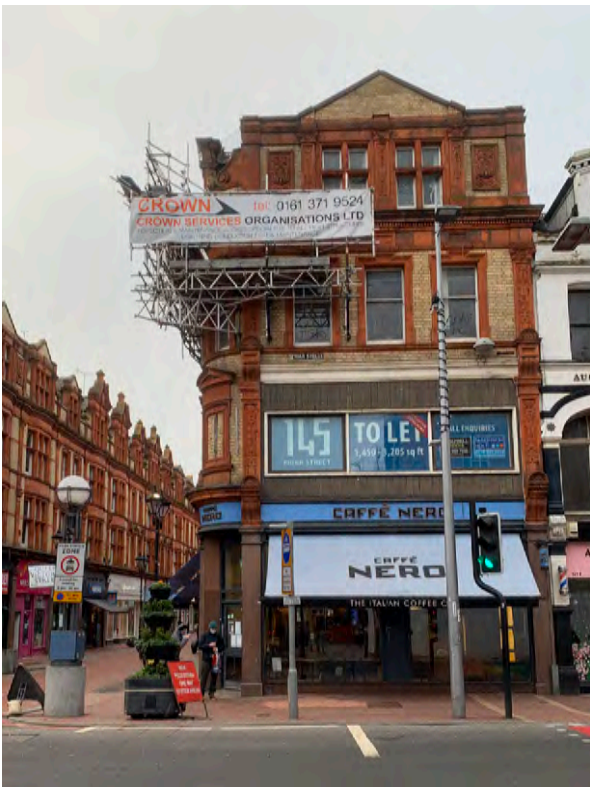
Existing no.148 Elevation



Proposed no.148 Elevation

While part of the wider Queen Victoria Street terrace, 148 Friar Street has a different shopfront arrangement with double height glazing present. As this double height glazing is present to southern end of the terrace it would appear as though the general arrangement, while unusual, was part of the original arrangement. Nonetheless, the existing double height glazing present to 148 Friar Street dates from the mid 20th century and the poor quality shopfront detracts from the character and significance of the listed building. Installing a solid glazed first floor element (as per the building on the southern end of the terrace) would not be appropriate given the proposed first floor use of the building as an Aparthotel and, as such, proposals seek to create a more solid arrangement with two new timber windows surrounded by terracotta detailed and set within a brick infill panel.

All materials and detailing would be to match the existing building. While this arrangement would not be reflective of the original first floor detailing of the building it would be wholly appropriate in terms of its form, materials, character and detailing and would provide a symmetrical entrance to Queen Victoria Street from the north with the matching building to the east.



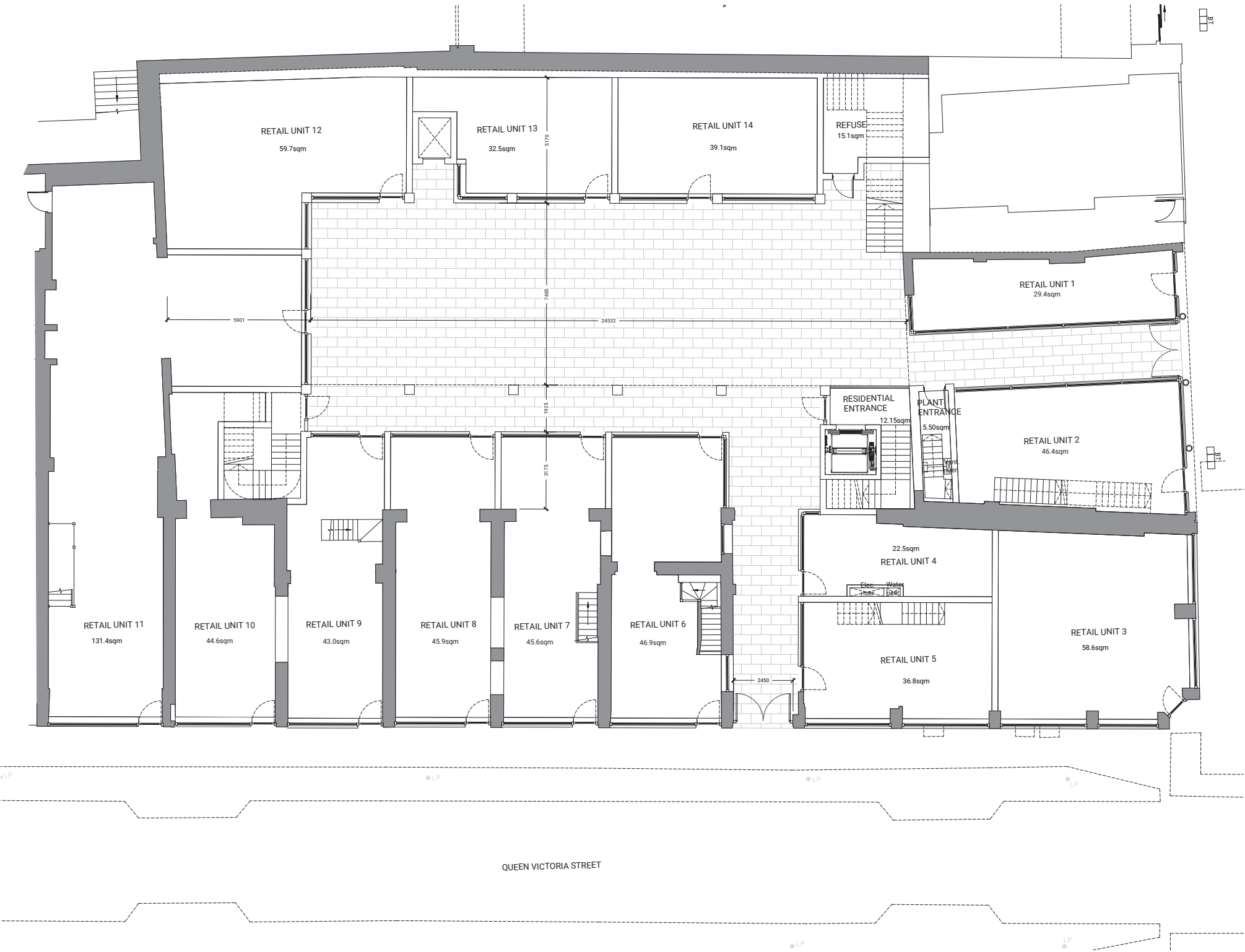
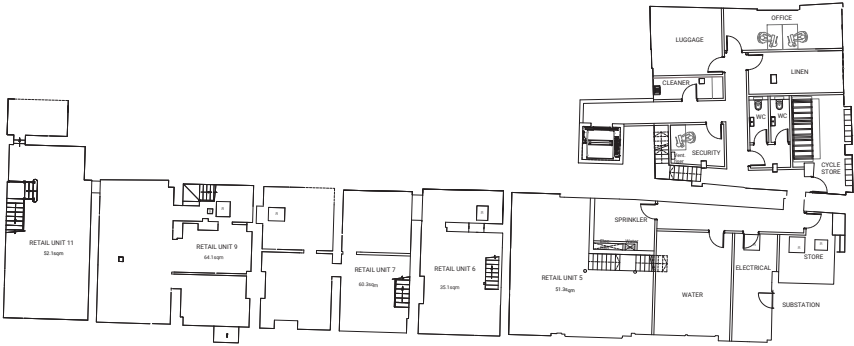
4.0 THE PROPOSAL

PLANS

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

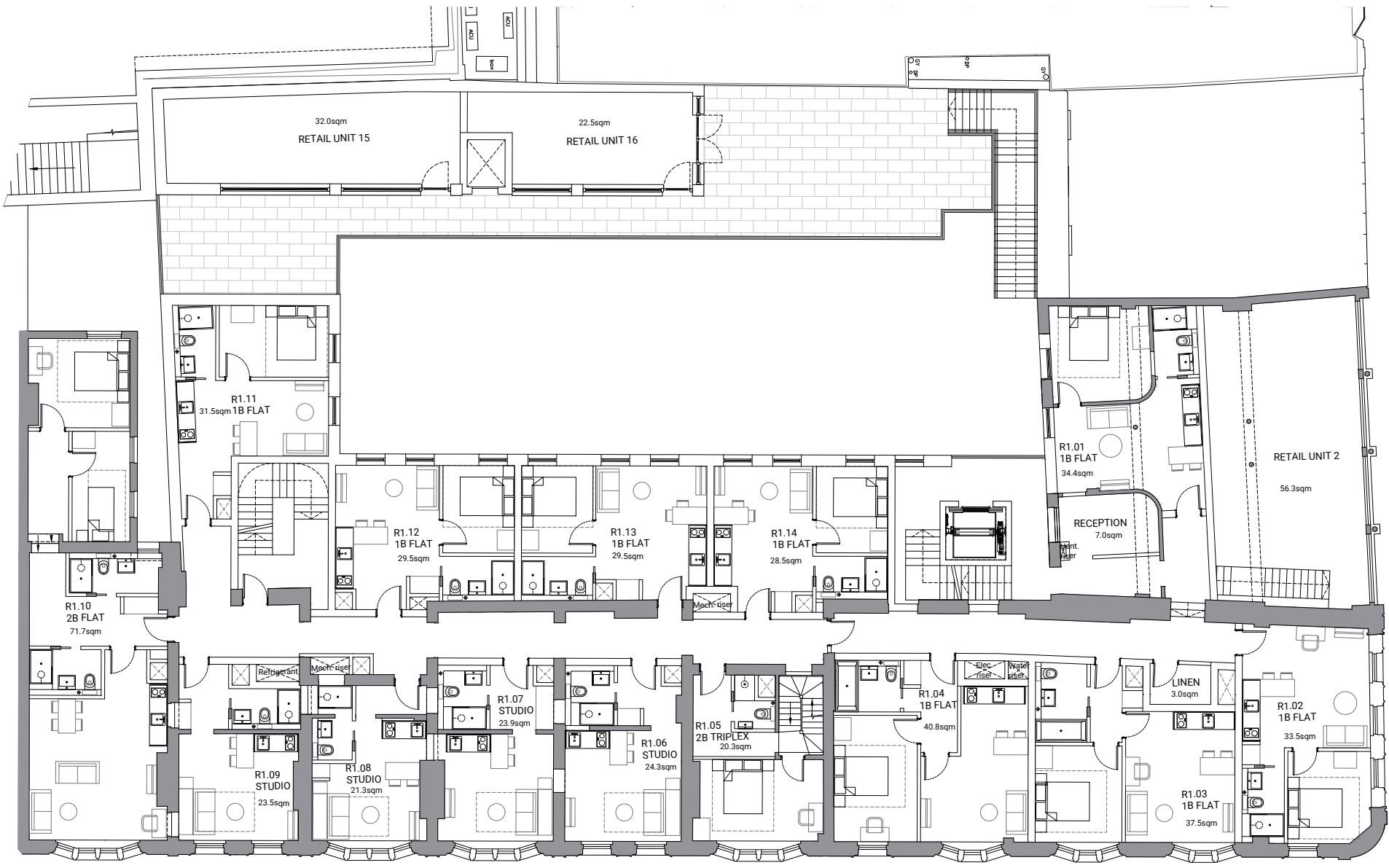
- market square behind the main buildings to Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street
- links to both streets creating activity to frontages and new space behind
- small retail units for independent traders
- dual aspect to main street frontages and market square
- access to residential accommodation above via small glass box to north east corner of market square
- circulation core located outside of existing building footprint to minimise any disruption to historic fabric
- lift pit set away from existing walls to avoid foundations and basement structures
- Various retail units ranging in size from 30sqm to 130sqm

BASEMENT



4.0 THE PROPOSAL

PLANS

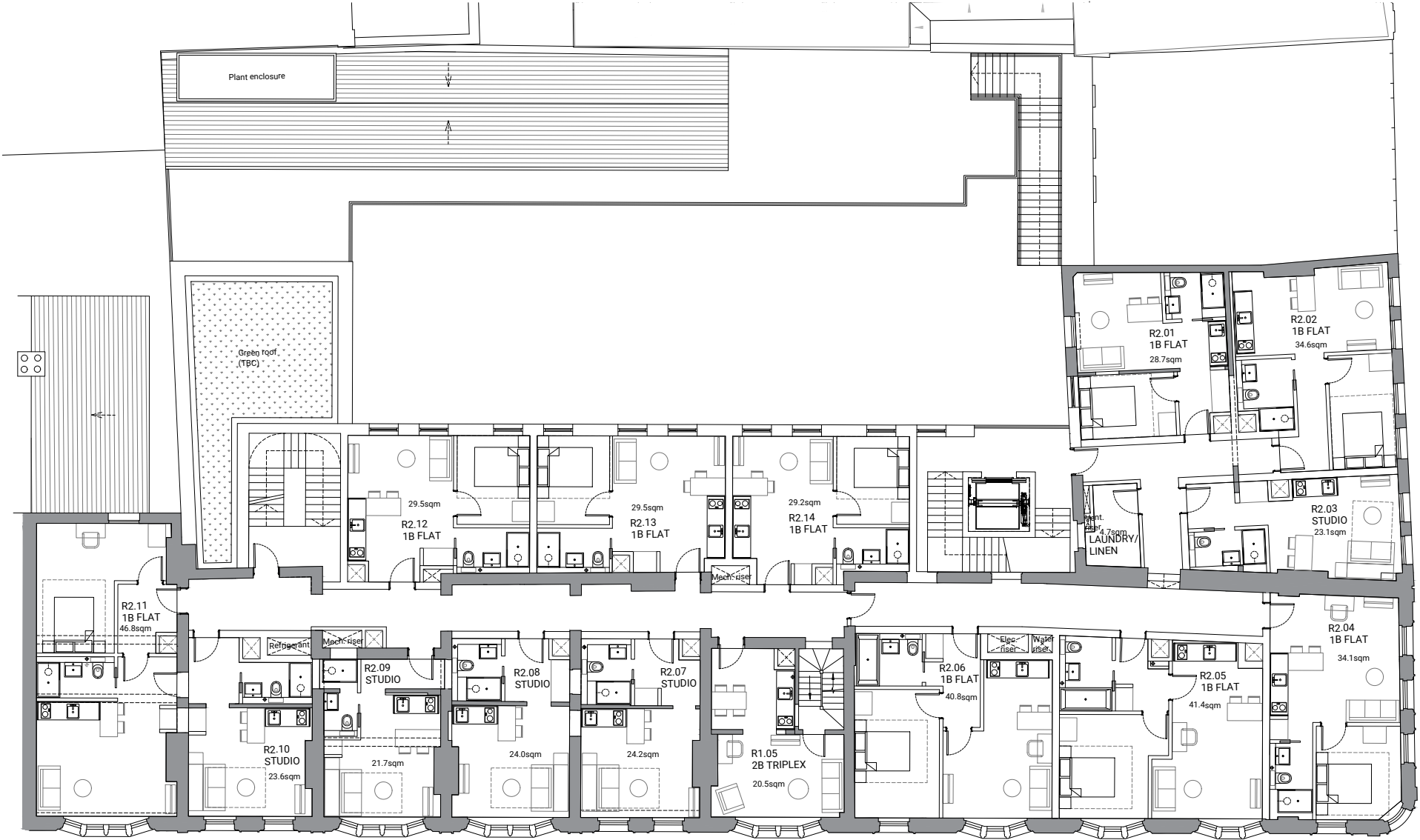


FIRST FLOOR PLAN

- first level of visitor accommodation
- terrace overlooking the market square
- additional retail units on the terrace
- ‘apartments’ designed to minimise disruption to the historic fabric
- corridor runs along the back of existing building and utilises existing window openings where passes through the existing party walls
- stair to No.5 Queen Victoria Street retained
- some partitions retained to Nos. 7, 9, 11 & 13 Queen Victoria Street and No. 147 Friar Street where historic value
- stair and lift core located outside of footprint of existing retained building to avoid disruption
- 14no. studio and 1 bed visitor apartments ranging from 21sqm to 37sqm

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

PLANS

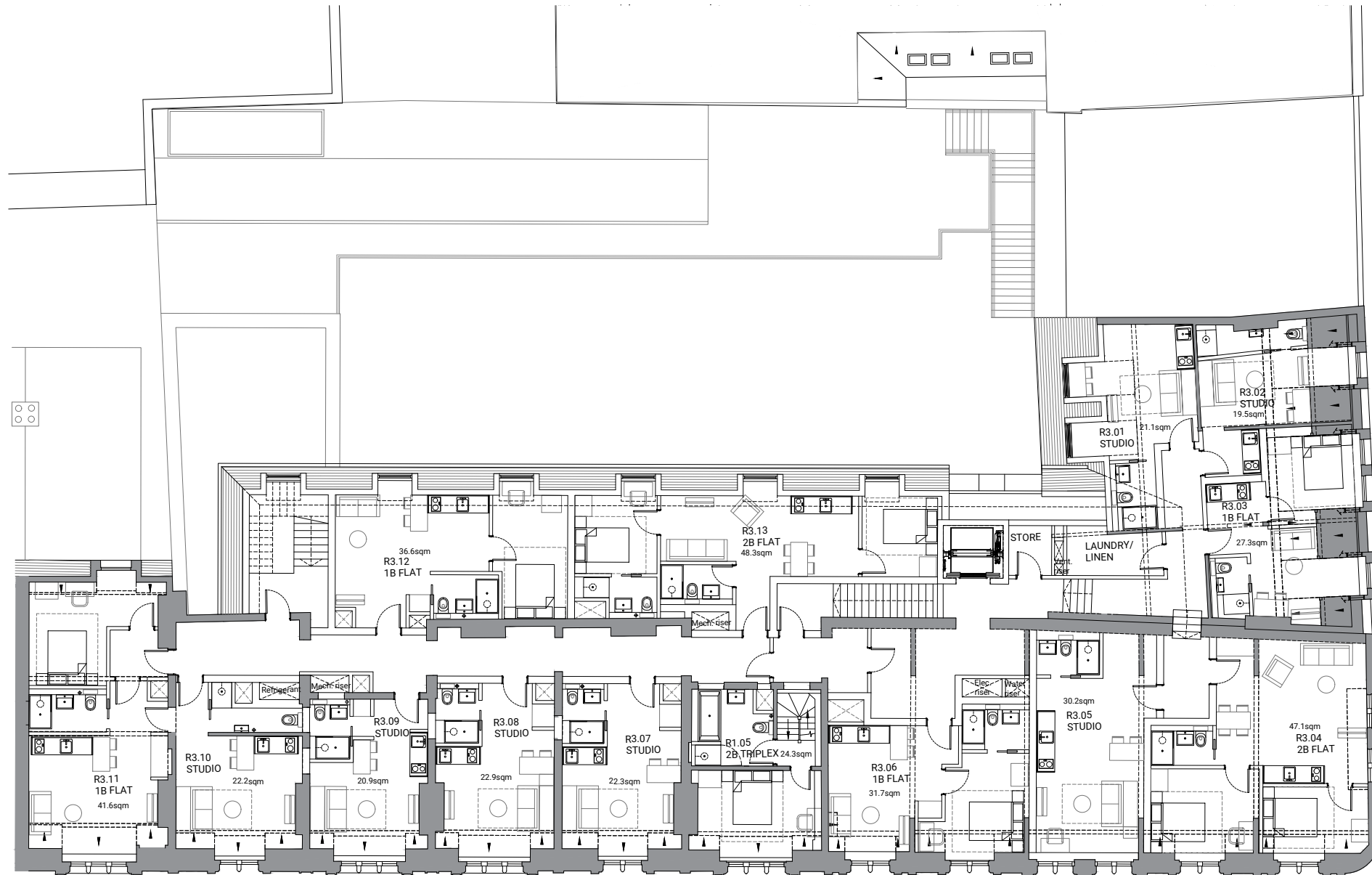


SECOND FLOOR PLAN

- all visitor accommodation with significantly reduced footprint and massing
- extension gives separation and distance to No. 15 Queen Victoria Street
- ‘apartments’ designed to minimise disruption to the historic fabric
- corridor runs along the back of existing building and utilises existing window openings where passes through the existing party walls
- stair to No.5 Queen Victoria Street retained
- some partitions retained to Nos. 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 & 15 Queen Victoria Street and No. 147 Friar Street where historic value.
- stair and lift core located outside of footprint of existing retained building to avoid disruption
- 17no. studio and 1 bed visitor apartments ranging from 21sqm to 37sqm

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

PLANS



THIRD FLOOR PLAN

- all visitor accommodation with further reduced footprint and massing by a mansard roof to the rear
- extension gives separation and distance to No. 15 Queen Victoria Street
- 'apartments' designed to minimise disruption to the historic fabric
- corridor runs along the back of existing building and utilises existing window openings where passes through the existing party walls
- stair to No.5 Queen Victoria Street retained
- some partitions retained to Nos. 5, 13 & 15 Queen Victoria Street and No. 147 Friar Street where historic value
- stair and lift core located outside of footprint of existing retained building to avoid disruption
- 17no. studio and 1 bed visitor apartments ranging from 21sqm to 37sqm

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

APARTHOTEL EXAMPLE UNITS

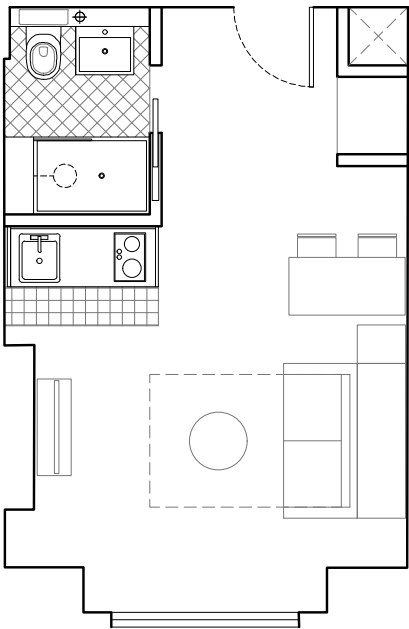
The aparthotel is designed to have all the benefits of serviced apartments but within the hotel setting. This means that all rooms benefit from the comfort and amenities of a hotel with the space, privacy and facilities of self-catering accommodation. The aparthotel is intended for short to medium stay of between 5 and 20 days. The target market would generally be both business and leisure travellers looking to stay in the centre of reading for a defined period of time.

The aparthotel comprises a mixture of unit sizes designed to accommodate for a range of users.

STUDIO APARTMENT

The typical studio apartment is approx. 20-25sqm and is intended for a short stay of between 5-10 days by a single occupant. All studios benefit from;

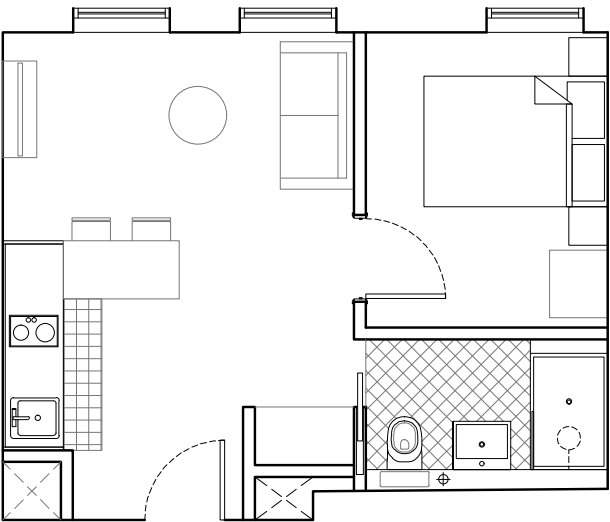
- Dedicated front door
- Cooking facilities including hob, fridge and sink
- Private en-suite with shower facilities
- Fold-out sofa bed
- Study and dining space
- TV and media unit



1 BED APARTMENT

The typical 1 bed apartment is approx. 30-35sqm and is intended for a short stay of between 5-20 days by 1-2 occupants. All 1 bed apartments benefit from;

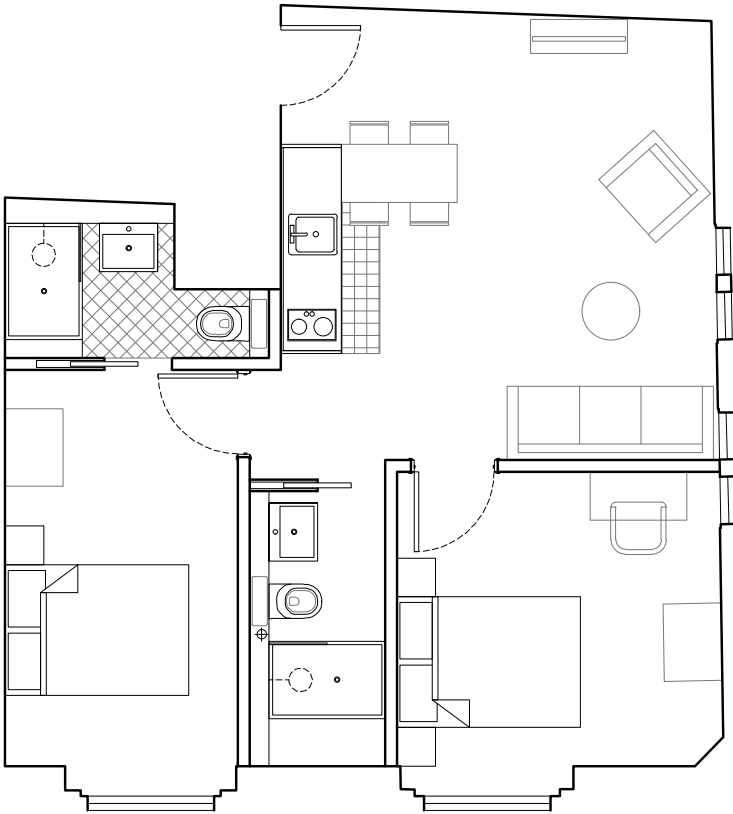
- Dedicated front door
- Cooking facilities including hob, fridge and sink
- Private bathroom with shower facilities
- Separate double bedroom with storage
- Study and dining space
- Lounge area with sofa and TV unit



2 BED APARTMENT

The typical 2 bed apartment is approx. 45-50sqm and is intended for a short stay of between 5-20 days by 1-4 occupants. All 2 bed apartments benefit from;

- Dedicated front door
- Cooking facilities including hob, fridge and sink
- 2 private bathrooms with shower facilities
- 2 separate double bedrooms with storage
- Study and dining space
- Lounge area with sofa and TV unit



AREAS

FLOOR AREAS

The development has a total GIA of 3310sqm of high quality retail space and aparthotel space for Reading.

The retail space totals 1056sqm NIA of high quality new and upgraded shop units both fronting the main street and surrounding the market square.

The aparthotel totals 1318sqm NIA and consists of a mixture of studio, 1 bed and 2 bed short stay apartments.

QUEEN VICTORIA STREET			
Ref.: 20357			
Revision: B		04.02.21	SCHEDULE OF ACCOMMODATION
Based on 109_P1, 110_P2, 111_P1, 112_P1, 113_P2			
BASEMENT			
	m ²	sq ft	COMMENTS
Aparthotel Back of House	91.4	984	
Plant Room	47.2	508	
Retail Unit 5	51.3	552	
Retail Unit 6	35.1	378	
Retail Unit 7	60.3	649	
Retail Unit 9	64.1	690	
Retail Unit 11	52.1	561	
BASEMENT COMMERCIAL NIA	262.9	2830	
BASEMENT GIA	495.2	5330	
GROUND FLOOR			
	m ²	sq ft	COMMENTS
Residential Entrance	12.15	131	
Plant Entrance	5.5	59	
Retail Unit 1	29.4	316	
Retail Unit 2	46.4	499	
Retail Unit 3	58.6	631	
Retail Unit 4	22.5	242	
Retail Unit 5	36.8	396	
Retail Unit 6	46.9	505	
Retail Unit 7	45.6	491	
Retail Unit 8	45.9	494	
Retail Unit 9	43	463	
Retail Unit 10	44.6	480	
Retail Unit 11	131.4	1414	
Retail Unit 12	59.7	643	
Retail Unit 13	32.5	350	
Retail Unit 14	39.1	421	
Refuse	15.1	163	
GROUND FLOOR COMMERCIAL NIA	682.4	7345	
GROUND FLOOR GIA	802.4	8637	
1ST FLOOR			
	m ²	sq ft	COMMENTS
Retail Unit 2	56.3	606	
Retail Unit 15	32	344	
Retail Unit 16	22.5	242	
R1.01 1B Flat	34.4	370	
R1.02 1B Flat	33.5	361	
R1.03 1B Flat	37.5	404	
R1.04 1B Flat	40.8	439	
R1.05 2B Triplex	65.1	701	
R1.06 Studio	24.3	262	

R1.07	Studio	23.9	257	
R1.08	Studio	21.3	229	
R1.09	Studio	23.5	253	
R1.10	2B Flat	71.7	772	
R1.11	1B Flat	31.5	339	
R1.12	1B Flat	29.5	318	
R1.13	1B Flat	29.5	318	
R1.14	1B Flat	28.5	307	
Linen		3	32	
Reception		7	75	
1ST FLOOR COMMERCIAL NIA		110.8	1193	
1ST FLOOR RESIDENTIAL NIA		495.0	5328	
1ST FLOOR GIA		772.2	8312	
2ND FLOOR		m²	sq ft	COMMENTS
R2.01	1B Flat	28.7	309	
R2.02	1B Flat	34.6	372	
R2.03	Studio	23.1	249	
R2.04	1B Flat	34.1	367	
R2.05	1B Flat	41.4	446	
R2.06	1B Flat	40.8	439	
R2.07	Studio	24.2	260	
R2.08	Studio	24.0	258	
R2.09	Studio	21.7	234	
R2.10	Studio	23.6	254	
R2.11	1B Flat	46.8	504	
R2.12	1B Flat	29.5	318	
R2.13	1B Flat	29.5	318	
R2.14	1B Flat	29.2	314	
Linen		4.7	51	
2ND FLOOR RESIDENTIAL NIA		431.2	4641	
2ND FLOOR GIA		648.4	6979	
3RD FLOOR		m²	sq ft	COMMENTS
R3.01	Studio	21.1	227	
R3.02	Studio	19.5	210	
R3.03	1B Flat	27.3	294	
R3.04	2B Flat	47.1	507	
R3.05	Studio	30.2	325	
R3.06	1B Flat	31.7	341	
R3.07	Studio	22.3	240	
R3.08	Studio	22.9	246	
R3.09	Studio	20.9	225	
R3.10	Studio	22.2	239	
R3.11	1B Flat	41.6	448	
R3.12	1B Flat	36.6	394	
R3.13	2B Flat	48.3	520	
Linen		5.4	58	
3RD FLOOR RESIDENTIAL NIA		391.7	4216	
3RD FLOOR GIA		589.4	6344	
TOTAL FLOOR COMMERCIAL NIA		1056.1	11368	
Studio Flats No.		16		
1 Bed Flats No.		21		
2 Bed Flats No.		4		

COVID RECOVERY

It is envisaged that throughout 2021, as the world starts to move forward following the Coronavirus pandemic, there will be a period of economic and social recovery. The importance of revitalising the retail and hospitality sectors can be aided by the implementation of carefully planned public spaces. As restrictions ease the success of the recovery will depend partly on the confidence of the people to return to café's, bars, restaurants and shops. This confidence will be boosted by the creation of clean, clear and open public space.

With the current requirement for social distancing, we are experiencing an increasing demand for outside space. A market square offers this space and will encourage people back to the retail environment. Socialising in an open air environment will be attractive to many and is likely to underpin the immediate recovery, whilst restrictions remain over the medium term.

We are also seeing a shift in the retail model. Large department stores are struggling to adapt to the limitations of an internal space and struggling to maintain their viability as the push towards online shopping gathers pace.

Smaller units with short leases are becoming more popular with the need for businesses to be more nimble and flexible. The retail hub offers this opportunity for independent retailers and traders to create a destination and community of businesses which can thrive and grow in this new evolving world.

It is possible that restrictions in other countries will remain in the medium term. The creation of attractive city break locations and destinations will aid the local economy throughout the UK. The aparthotel model is uniquely suited to this.



5.0 LANDSCAPE

LANDSCAPE PRINCIPLES



1. Green Roof
2. Stone Setts paving
3. Picnic bench style seating
4. Informal planting
5. Timber planters with fork-lift lifting points
6. Bistro style tables and chairs
7. Planted screening
8. Large mural painted on wall

Currently the site is devoid of any greenery and is entirely covered with buildings. The proposals will open up the rear of the site and make it accessible to the public.

The landscape principles for the proposals are intended to compliment the flexibility and informality of the market square space. The market square is envisaged to be used for a variety of short term events that may be in place for a number of days before returning back to the general use space for the retail area. It is envisaged that a large screen could be erected for national sporting events or an informal stage for drama events. Therefore any fixtures will need to be flexible and easy to manoeuvre.

It is proposed that timber planters will be constructed with fork-lift lifting points to enable easy manoeuvrability. All furniture will be informal picnic style benches that can be easily moved in to position. Other informal seating will be bistro style tables and chairs.

The main paving will be stone setts to give a hard wearing and easily cleaned surface that will compliment the brick and stone features of the building.

Planted screening will be required on the terrace area to screen the view through to adjacent properties.

The proposed green roof will further soften the space and provide more greenery to the area.



PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

The pre-application consultation was conducted in two stages with additional information supplied following initial presentations by the applicant team. The initial pre-application advice meeting was held on 4th November 2020 with the formal feedback received on 2nd December 2020.

Overall the reaction to the proposals was positive and officers commented that the pre-application proposals were well thought out and in particular the heritage led approach was welcomed. It was noted that detailed matters would be key to the consideration and assessment of the future planning application and that this would be addressed through full heritage assessments and management plan of the aparthotel operation.

INITIAL PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE (October 2020)

Officers advised that the principle of development is acceptable with the policies of the development plan. It was noted that the site is not located in a designated employment area, however, the loss of employment space would need to be assessed. It was noted that the upper floors of the listed buildings was found not to be compatible with the modern office environment. Evidence to support this was requested. It was noted that the retail uses is acceptable and aligns with policies that promote small shop units. The Aparthotel use was noted to align with policy assuming duration of stay was suitably restricted and used on a short term basis only.

Additional information relating to heritage significance was requested, including a set of plans assessing the demolition of the listed fabric and the significance of each part. This additional information was provided to the officers which showed the demolition and the significance of the historic fabric.

Officers welcomed the proposal to provide a redesigned series of shopfronts and acknowledged this could become a design standard for the remainder of the street. Officers also queried the removal of cast iron columns to no.147. This was subsequently corrected and confirmed this was not part of the intended design.

Officers noted that they agreed with the location of the entrances to the market square and that they have been located to avoid loss of retail space. It was noted that the access routes should be made smaller to minimise interruption of the historic shopfront pattern. They also requested detailed drawings of the proposed entrances. The access routes have been reduced in width as suggested and detailed drawings are included as part of this application.

Previous proposals encased the staircase to no.5 Queen Victoria Street, noting its historical significance, however, it couldn't be accommodated in the proposals. Officers requested that this was incorporated as a usable feature or retained as a design feature. This has subsequently been addressed and the stair is now incorporated in the design as part of a tri-plex apartment.

Officers noted that fire suppression should be included in the early design proposals to ensure that it can be suitably accommodated within the historic fabric. Fire sprinklers have been designed in as part of the current application. See M+E proposals for more detail.

It was noted that the rear extension was considered appropriate in massing terms and

suitably subservient to the listed building. It was also noted that a glazed link to the rear of no.147 was a suitable proposal. Officers felt that off-setting the proposed rear extension away from the rear elevation of no. 15 Queen Victoria Street is again considered a sensible approach.

Officers made a number of design suggestions. These are noted as follows;

- The part 2 storey wrap around extension, forming the courtyard, previously had a flat roof. Officers felt this should have a pitched slate roof.
- The northern end of the roof terrace to the single storey part of the rear extension next to the proposed external stair access has an awkward corner shape. Officers suggested this was regularised.
- Officers proposed that the current square brick columns to the proposed colonnade within the rear square could benefit from a different materiality to the red brick building above. Round stone-type (cast or real) or cast-iron columns would be considered appropriate and would relate to features found within the existing street-side shopfronts.
- The proposed entrances from Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street should have a double door width in order to minimise interruption to historic shop front layout/pattern.
- Stair to no.5 Queen Victoria Street should be incorporated into the design.

It is noted that all of these comments have been incorporated into the final designs.

ADDITIONAL PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE (December 2020)

HERITAGE AND DESIGN MATTERS

Officers considered that the approach to the proposals was well planned and that the development has the potential to enhance the heritage character of the listed buildings and the setting. It was however noted that the potential to fulfil this objective will be realised once a detailed heritage report is submitted.

It was noted that the applicants desire to progress works urgently, addressing the current deterioration of the buildings and identifying a future beneficial use, is welcomed by officers and that this should be supported by a project programme. Officers also welcome the use of detailed significance and phasing plans in developing the design, particularly regarding internal works to the listed building.

Officers noted that they require detailed inspections of the listed building fabric to provide full comment on the implications of the proposed changes on the historic fabric and that this would be required for the full application.

Officers made some design suggestions for consideration in the final scheme. It was suggested that a pitched roof would be preferable to the 2 storey building to the rear of the courtyard. This has been incorporated in the proposals in this application. It was also requested that the existing staircase in no.5 and no.9 are incorporated into the scheme. The stair in no.5 has been included as part of the aparthotel. Officers also suggested some alterations to design details such as materials of the columns and material choices to the access routes to the market square.

LOSS OF OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

Officers noted that the proposed loss of the existing office accommodation would need to be justified by way of the evidence against the criteria set out under the policy EM3. See

Planning Statement for further information on this matter.

OTHER MATTERS

Officers confirmed the following would be required as part of the full application;

- Full Archaeology Study
- Management plan for the development and in particular the rear courtyard
- Scheme of biodiversity enhancements
- Transport Statement

CONSULTEE RESPONSES

The consultation by the Applicant has been an iterative process, which has engaged with local groups via modern technology in a very proactive and detailed manner. The engagement with key stakeholders has been a very important and beneficial exercise, we have sought to integrate the comments at all stages including at times when slightly different to officers and will continue to adjust, where necessary the scheme. In most cases, this has directly influenced the scheme.

The feedback to date has been overwhelming positive and level of support has been beyond the Applicant's expectations. The feedback is encouraging the speedy delivery of the scheme.

In summary, the engagement found that the scheme presented is a positive benefit that on the feedback received, is supported by the local community and key stakeholders.

HERITAGE

Some suggested amendments to the scheme identified during the pre-application stage included wholly minor comments and queries on the scheme design. These points, summarised below, have all been addressed as part of the revised submission:

- To confirm the cast iron columns within the shopfront of 147 Friar Street would be retained. These were accidentally omitted from one of the pre- application drawings;
- As requested, a pitched slate roof has been added to the new two storey commercial unit within the courtyard space;
- The design of proposed columns to the rear extension have been revisited; and
- Existing basement to ground floor staircases within nos. 5, 7 and 11 Queen Victoria Street are retained.

READING CIVIC SOCIETY

The feedback from the Civic Society consultation was positive.

"I hope that you sensed that on first sight of the scheme we warmed to it. It is clearly vital that the condition of the listed building is addressed. The planned use of the upper floors is most welcome, for so many years these have been abandoned to Pigeons. On the other corner The Dog House scheme we think has been done well, they too had to dump years of pigeon poop, wrestled with the internals of the building and incorporated remaining original elements well and made it live again. All this is brilliant."

BID

The Reading BID welcomed the proposals and were supportive.

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

Mixed use redevelopment comprising retail, market square and aparthotel

THE VISION

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



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

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

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

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

Email: david@thackeray-estates.co.uk

www.queenvictoriastreet.co.uk

REVITALISED HIGH STREET

The site offers massive potential to be a destination, both as a retail hub as well as offering town centre visitor accommodation. New high quality shopfronts with consistent signage will ensure a cohesive façade and create a destination identity.

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

The upper floors provide the opportunity for urban visitor accommodation.

RETAIL DESTINATION

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

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

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

RESTORATION

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

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

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





Securing a beautiful listed building...

...for the future of Reading

7.0 ACCESS AND MAINTENANCE

TRANSPORT AND SERVICING

TRANSPORT

The site is located within the Reading Central Area and within Reading's primary shopping area consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments. The site is in a key central location, being situated on the corner of Friar Street/Queen Victoria Street, and in close proximity to Reading rail station to the north.

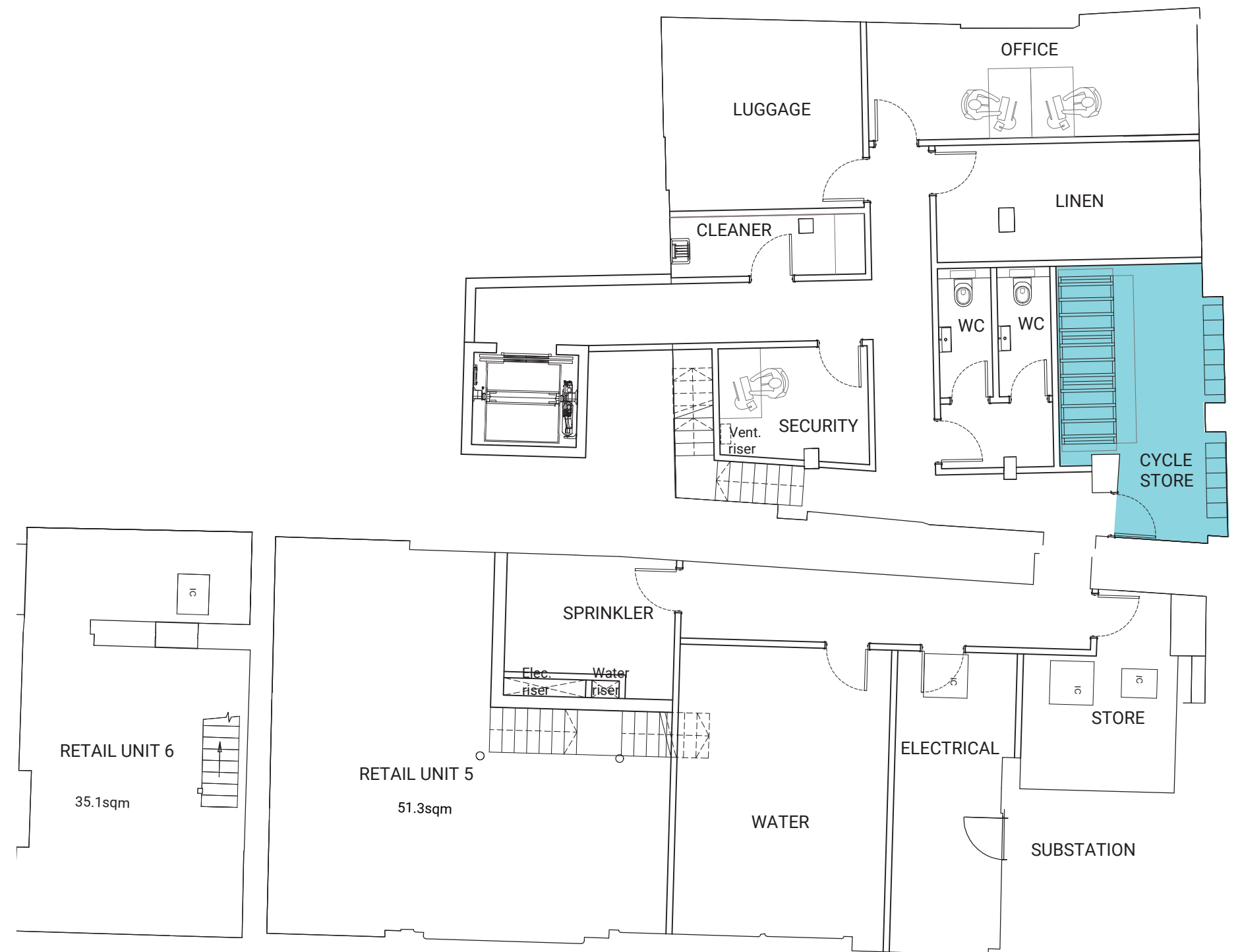
The site benefits from frequent bus and rail services that extend to a wide range of destinations which provide the opportunity for end-users, guests and staff to travel to the site by alternative methods to the private car. The development will therefore be provided on a car-free basis as per the existing conditions.

See Transport Statement prepared by Mode Transport Planning for further detail.

Cycle parking within the site will be provided in accordance with the local standards of 1 space per 6 staff as per the Reading Framework for hotel use. A designated cycle store will be located in the basement for staff use which will be accessible by lift. We estimate approximately 50 staff will be on site and have therefore assessed the need for 9 cycle spaces located in the basement.

In addition to the cycle parking provided as part of the development proposals, there are numerous opportunities for cycle parking within the vicinity of the site. The combination of cycle parking in the application site and the additional stands within the surrounding area, provide ample opportunity for cyclists arriving at the site to securely park bicycles.

See Transport Statement prepared by Mode Transport Planning for further detail.



7.0 ACCESS AND MAINTENANCE

TRANSPORT AND SERVICING

SERVICING AND REFUSE

The creation of the new market square and aparthotel on the upper floors will require refuse to be managed. Queen Victoria and Friar Street are heavily restricted with regards to access and parking. Queen Victoria Street is pedestrianised between 10am and 6pm, with loading permitted outside these hours. Friar Street is used by buses and has access restrictions in place during certain times of the day. There is a 24 hours restriction in place for Friar Street West Bound (except for buses and taxis) and time restricted access Friar Street Eastbound between 7am – 11am and 4pm – 7pm. All other vehicles are not permitted within these hours.

RETAIL

Currently, the retail units along Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street are all serviced from the front, with the individual units holding waste internally. This waste is bagged and separated into general waste, dry mixed recycling and paper and card. This separated waste is then placed on the street on pre-agreed days ready for collection during the hours of 10am and 6pm.

It is envisaged that the existing retail units will continue to be serviced from the front as currently is the case. It is also proposed that the additional three retail units in the market space will also be serviced in this way, with waste placed on Queen Victoria Street in the same manner.

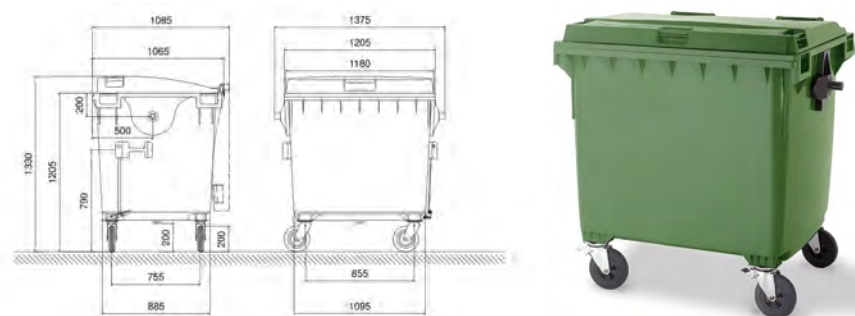
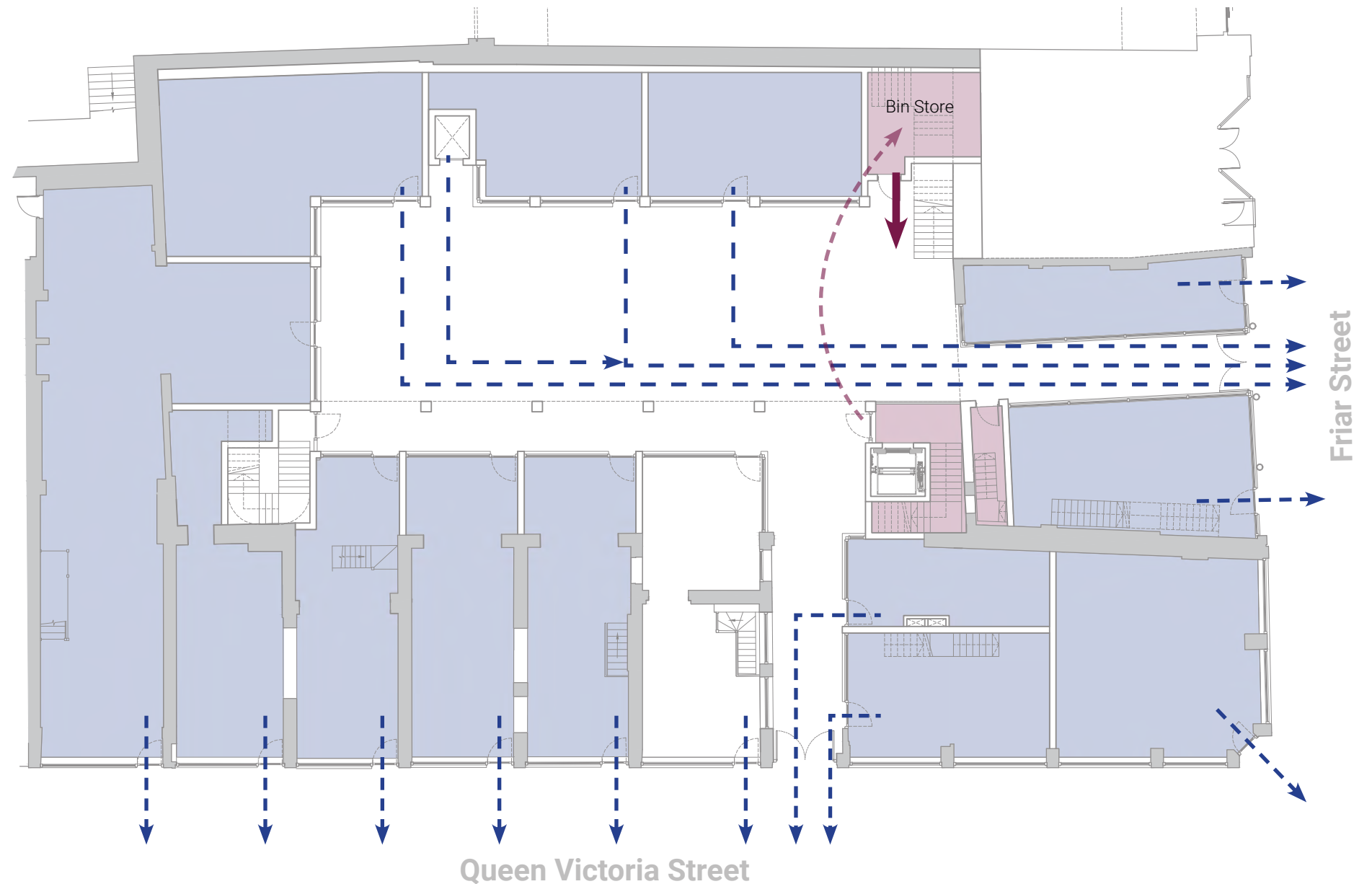
APARTHOTEL

The aparthotel will have greater refuse and servicing demands. It is proposed that the waste and recycling collections and deliveries will be managed by a private collection company.

A self-contained bin store will be constructed off the main market square, enabling easy access and for the bins to be collected and returned as the bin lorry arrives at the roadside. The bin store will be suitably ventilated, will house 1100l bins and will be serviced by a private waste collection company. Waste will be separated at source, with separate general waste and recycling bins at each kitchen throughout the building. This will then be collected as each apartment is cleaned and moved to the refuse store on the ground floor by cleaning staff. It is envisaged that the waste collections by the private collection company will be required 2-3 times per week, however, during busy periods this may increase to daily.

The aparthotel will also have requirements for servicing such as removing and replacing bed linen. There will not be any on site cleaning facilities, therefore, dirty and clean linen will be stored on site with regular deliveries to collect and return linen.

All servicing and delivery details will be subject to a further sub-mission prior to occupation.



7.0 ACCESS AND MAINTENANCE

SECURITY AND ESTATE MANAGEMENT

SECURITY

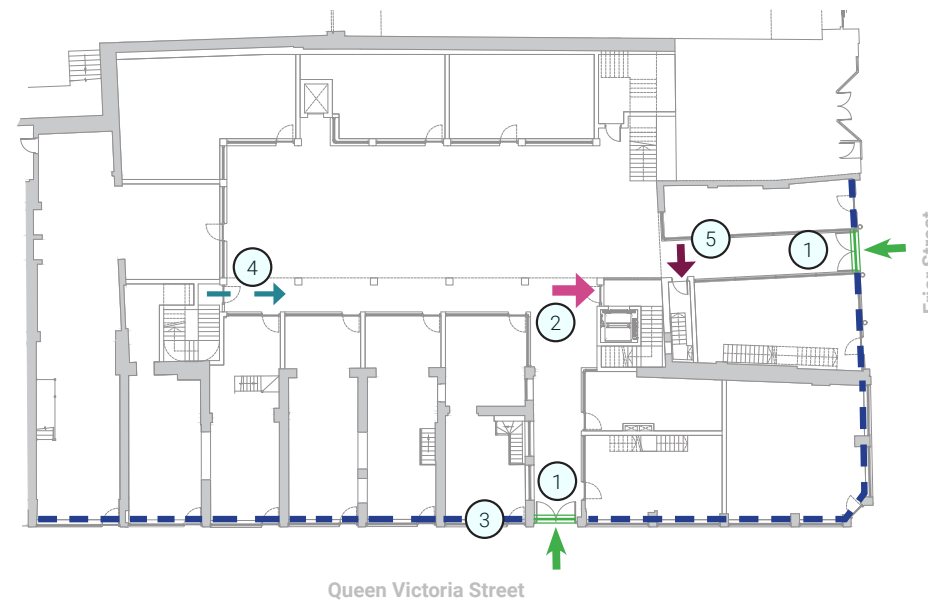
The principle of the security strategy is to promote community safety and remove, where possible, the fear of crime through sensible design of the built form. Whilst it is inevitable that this will be enhanced by way of digital surveillance, the promotion of natural surveillance is the primary objective. The nature of the market square behind the main high street will require some form of restricted access during the hours of darkness, however, the intention is that users of the aparthotel will be given 24 hour access.

Given the central city centre location, the site will benefit from natural surveillance of the busy high street and the digital surveillance of the on-street CCTV network. Therefore the main high street shops will largely be unaffected from the current situation. Most retail units from Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street will have their own dedicated CCTV to protect the premise they are responsible for.

As for the Aparthotel, it will be essential that unauthorised access is designed out and the pre-application consultee advice of the Crime Prevention Design Advisor has been taken into account to ensure this is achieved.

It is noted that 'Secured By Design' accreditation is not considered applicable to this application, however, the following is identified as contributing to the ongoing security of the site.

- The intention is to introduce a new shop-front design for the retail units that closely resembles that of original building design. However, photos from this ear suggest that the doorways of the shop fronts would have been recessed. The redesign has omitted this detail due to the creation of hidden recess doorways.
- The market square forms an area that is potentially secluded from the main high street during times when it is not active such as outside of trading hours. It is therefore proposed that the market square will be gated at the main entrances from Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street. These gates will be full height and positioned approx. 300mm (behind the main column on the elevation) so as not to create a hidden or recessed area when they are closed. These gates will have pass-through pedestrian gate that is controlled from the Aparthotel reception for residents arriving out-of-hours.
- It is noted that the southern staircase serving the aparthotel is intended as a fire escape only, however, the main entrance stair and lift will require out-of hour access. It is intended that the main entrance door will be access controlled with audio/visual link to the reception lobby where entry can be authorised for new guests. Authorised guests once registered will have electronic access controls and key fob functionality. All guests will then be provided a pass that will allow access into the building and guests can only access hotel floors on which they reside.
- Dome cameras will be installed throughout the stairwell, lift, reception and main corridors and will be capable of storing images for at least 30 days.



1. Secure entry gate to be locked out of hours. Gate to Queen Victoria Street to have video call link to allow access to aparthotel visitors out of hours.
2. Main entrance to aparthotel with video call access control. Authorised users of the aparthotel will be issued with a fob for entry.
3. Retail units to be secured internally if required by individual tenant.
4. Fire escape only, no access.
5. Entry to basement for maintenance only

ESTATE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Thackeray Estates' Managing Agents would be responsible for management of the buildings and the courtyard and will ensure compliance with statutory regulations and public safety. It is the intention that a management office will be set up in the scheme (the exact location is yet to be determined but will be within the basement area) and this will provide management and security resources for the scheme.

The Managing Agents will provide a 24 hours, seven days a week contact number to allow residents, retailers and occupiers to raise any issues of concern to be resolved as a matter of priority. There will be a thorough and transparent system for recording calls and reporting progress and resolution.

A Management Strategy would be developed (and agreed with the Council as part of a planning condition) which would include for:

- No smoking permitted in the courtyard;
- Noise Controls and applicable thresholds that would apply in the evenings.
- Restriction in the hours of use and access to the market square – gates will be closed at night;
- The establishment of a residents' liaison group for on-going engagement with neighbours. A function of the group will be to monitor the scheme's impacts and, if necessary, to discuss and agree potential solutions;
- Noise surveys, if necessary and appropriate.

Early Engagement will be undertaken with Reading Council's Building Control Licensing Officer to agree specific requirements that will need to be captured in both the overall management strategy and in relation to any future Alcohol Licensing application.

Fire Safety Provisions – a fire safety strategy would be developed, which would be consulted with and agreed with the Fire Authority.

The principle of the security strategy is to promote community safety and remove, where possible, the fear of crime through sensible design of the built form. The pre-application consultee advice of the Crime Prevention Design Advisor has been considered to ensure this is achieved.

Whilst it is inevitable that this will be enhanced by way of digital surveillance, the promotion of natural surveillance is the primary objective. The nature of the market square behind the main high street will require some form of restricted access during the hours of darkness, however, the intention is that users of the aparthotel will be given 24 -hour access. An overview of the strategy is set out below.

Experienced security personnel will be employed to ensure the safety of visitors, residents and the public. They will be in the central management office, with designated patrols on the area which will be focused on the Market Square and the two access points. The level of security will reflect circumstance and it is envisaged will increase during the evening and during the night. There will be increased security provided for specific temporary events and activities in the market square.

For further detail, see QVS Management Plan by Thackeray Estates

7.0 ACCESS AND MAINTENANCE

EXTERNAL LIGHTING

LIGHTING PRINCIPLES



The new market square will require adequate lighting to ensure the area is well-lit and does not create any dark corners that are difficult to monitor via CCTV.

A more detailed proposal will be secured by way of condition, however, the principle of the proposal will be to light the undercroft and cut-through with high-level soffit lights.

This will be supplemented with up/down lights on the piers of both the colonnade and new retail units.

Some further security lighting will be used around the entrance to the aparthotel and bin store.

- Up/down lights
- Soffit lighting
- Security lighting

7.0 ACCESS AND MAINTENANCE

ACCESSIBILITY

ACCESS INTO AND AROUND THE BUILDING

Access into around the retail units facing Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street will remain as existing. The existing thresholds and pavement surfaces can not be altered under this application. Further, due to the building being listed, there are no alterations proposed that will affect access into the existing retail units. New shopfronts are proposed to the existing retail units. It is therefore proposed that the widths of the new doors will comply with Part M.

Where practical, the new retail units will be designed to have level thresholds and new doors will comply with Part M.

The new access routes through to the Market Square will be constructed to have level paving throughout and generally will comply with Part M.

The aparthotel entrance will be designed to be fully accessible by wheelchair users and the entrance doors will have level thresholds and automated doors.

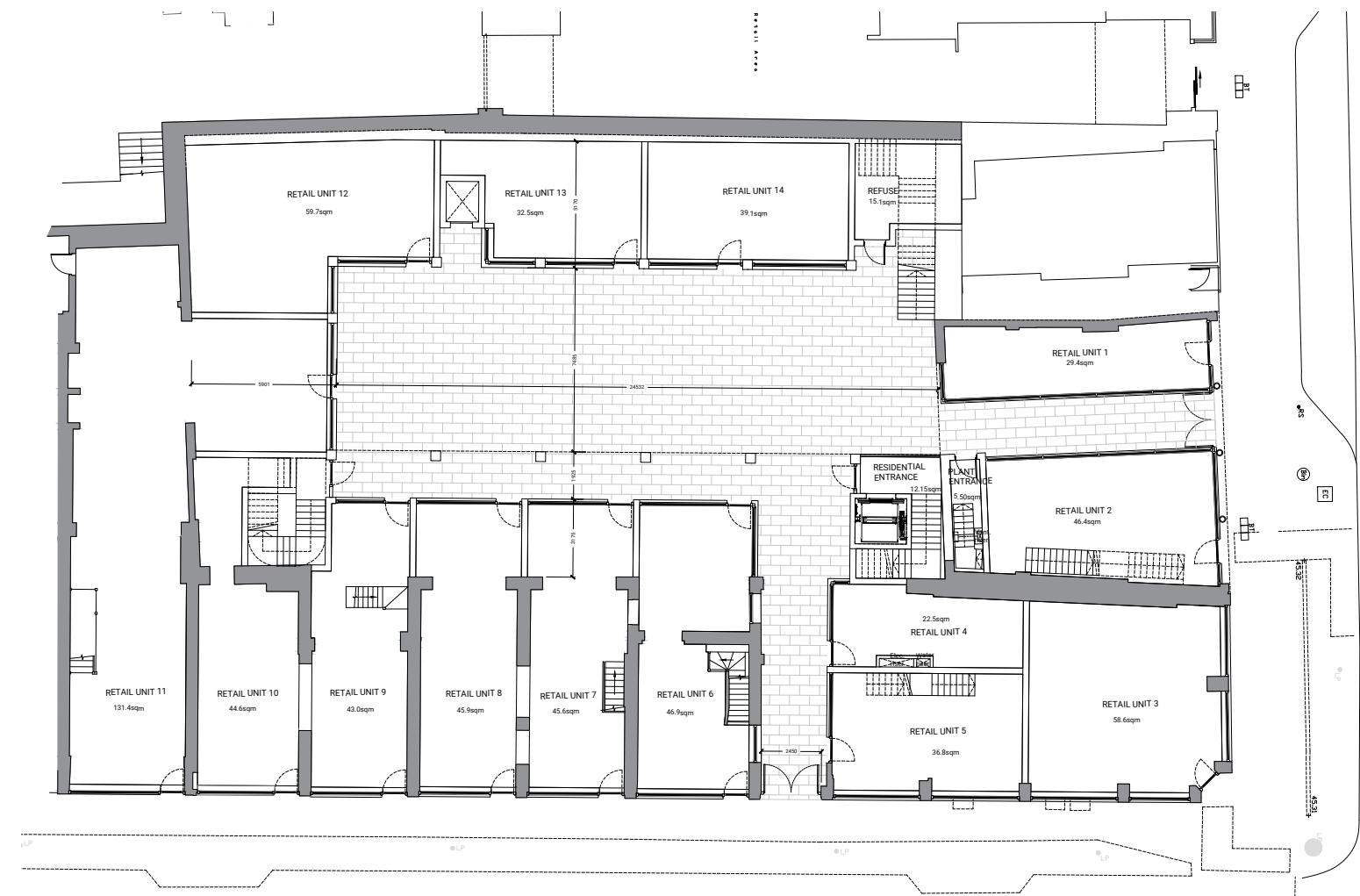
From the market square, the upper level terrace and retail units will be accessed via a stair and external lift that will accommodate wheelchair users.

INTERNAL CIRCULATION

Internally the building is restricted due to the limitations of the existing building, the listed status of the retained fabric and the various levels within the building. Where possible, level access has been provided throughout the main circulation.

Disabled access to the upper floors is provided via the lift that forms part of the main entrance. Due to limitations with the listed building and existing levels, certain areas of the aparthotel will not be accessible by wheelchair users. However, most of the 3rd floor and parts of the 2nd and 1st floor will be wheelchair accessible which will give a variety of options for accessible accommodation.

Whilst the limitations of the existing building fabric has prevented access to some parts of the building, the use as an aparthotel means that certain rooms can be allocated for disabled users and reserved on that basis.



SUSTAINABILITY/BREEAM

The sustainability and energy strategy for the ‘1-15 Queen Victoria Street & 147-148 Friar Street’ development has been developed to comply with the relevant policies of the Reading Borough Council.

The proposals incorporate a range of sustainable design and construction measures, primarily addressing the sustainable management of resources, the protection and enhancement of the environment and the effective adaptation and mitigation of the development to climate change. The energy strategy has been developed in line with specific fabric efficiency measures and has sought to incorporate suitable low and zero carbon technologies where appropriate.

The overall regulated CO2 savings on site against a Part L2A compliant scheme for the new build element to the rear of the site and against existing building parameters for the listed building refurbishment, as well as Part L2B standards for the extension element are estimated at 68.5% for the refurbishment and extension and 23.5% for the standalone new build part with SAP2012 carbon factors, and 79.5% (refurbishment and extension) and 30.9% (standalone new-build) with SAP10 emission factors.

- Key sustainability features of the proposals include:
- The re-use of previously developed land;
 - Effective site layout in response to the neighbouring context;
 - Protection of listed building and its historic character by avoiding harm and any invasive measures in line with heritage conservation requirements;
 - Efficient design of the proposed massing, openings and internal layouts so that habitable spaces across the site benefit from adequate daylight and sunlight levels where possible, whilst impacts to neighbouring buildings are kept to a minimum;
 - Potential risk of overheating will be mitigated by incorporating passive and active design measures;
 - Incorporation of water saving fixtures and fittings;
 - NOx emissions have been eliminated on site;
 - To reduce air pollution from vehicular transport, the development has been designed to encourage cycling via dedicated cycle storage;
 - Specification of high-performance fabric and glazing to minimise heat losses;
 - The incorporation of renewable technologies via the specification of air source heat pumps and PVs;
 - Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) to be incorporated on site and the buildings’ fabric and structure will be designed to minimise risk of infiltration and damage via flooding where possible;
 - Effective pollution management and control: the development is not expected to have any significant adverse effects to air, noise or land.
 - Effective choice of healthy materials, in addition to reducing construction and operational waste.

In addition, the development has been assessed under two BREEAM pre-assessments, BREEAM RFO 2014 assessment for the refurbishment of the Grade II listed building (hotel) and a BREEAM NC 2018 assessment for the standalone new build to the rear of the site.

The reduction in regulated CO2 emissions notably exceeds Reading Borough Council’s energy policies, and demonstrate the client and design team’s energy and sustainability aspirations for the proposed development.

The BREEAM NC 2018 pre-assessment undertaken in support of the application indicates that a score of 60.55%, exceeding the ‘Very Good’ threshold of 55% can be obtained for the standalone new-build part of the development to the rear of the site.

The sustainability measures incorporated reflect the client and design team’s aspirations in integrating sustainability measures and demonstrates that the project is designed to exceed the planning policy sustainability requirements.

For more information, see report prepared by XC02

ENERGY

The Regulated CO2 emissions for the development have been reduced against a Part L 2013 compliant scheme for the new build, and against existing building parameters for the listed building refurbishment, as well as Part L2B standards for the extension element. In total, the development is expected to achieve regulated CO2 savings on-site as below:

- SAP2012 carbon factors
- 68.5% (408.5 tonnes per annum) for the refurbishment and extension part of the development; and,
 - 23.5% (3.0 tonnes per annum) for the standalone new-build part of the development.

- SAP10 carbon factors
- 79.5% (325.7tonnes per annum) for the refurbishment and extension part of the development; and,
 - 30.9% (2.0 tonnes per annum) for the standalone new-build part of the development.

The following tables summarise the implementation of the energy efficiency measures and renewable technologies for the proposed scheme and detail the CO2 emissions and savings against the baseline scheme for each measure; as well as the savings achieved through carbon offset.

Separate tables are presented for the refurbishment and extension part and the standalone new-build parts of the development. It should be noted that the planning stage calculations are based on indicative design only and without a consolidated National Calculation Methodology on SAP10 carbon factors; therefore, it is anticipated that the energy results are subject to change during detailed design stage post planning.

Overall, the proposed development has been designed to meet energy policies set out by the Reading Borough Council, which demonstrates the client and the design team’s commitment to enhancing sustainability of the scheme.

For more information, see report prepared by XC02

Table 9: CO2 emissions after each step of the measures for the refurbishment and extension part of the development

	Carbon dioxide emissions for refurbishment and extension (tonnes CO2 per annum)			
	SAP2012		SAP10	
	Regulated	Unregulated	Regulated	Unregulated
Baseline	596.0	38.9	409.9	17.4
After energy demand reduction	290.1	38.9	228.8	17.4
After heat network/CHP	290.1	38.9	228.8	17.4
After renewable energy	187.5	38.9	84.2	17.4

Table 10: Regulated CO2 savings from each measure for the refurbishment and extension part of the development

	Regulated refurbishment and extension carbon dioxide savings			
	SAP2012		SAP10	
	Tonnes CO2 per annum	% over baseline	Tonnes CO2 per annum	% over baseline
Savings from energy demand reduction	305.9	51.3%	181.0	44.2%
Savings from heat network/CHP	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
Savings from renewable energy	102.6	17.2%	144.7	35.3%
Cumulative on-site savings	408.5	68.5%	325.7	79.5%

Table 11: CO2 emissions after each step of the measures for new-build part of the development

	Carbon dioxide emissions for the new-build (tonnes CO2 per annum)			
	SAP2012		SAP10	
	Regulated	Unregulated	Regulated	Unregulated
Baseline	12.9	2.2	6.4	1.0
After energy demand reduction	11.7	2.2	5.9	1.0
After heat network/CHP	11.7	2.2	5.9	1.0
After renewable energy	9.9	2.2	4.4	1.0

Table 12: Regulated CO2 savings from each measure for the new-build part of the development

	Regulated new-build carbon dioxide savings			
	SAP2012		SAP10	
	Tonnes CO2 per annum	% over baseline	Tonnes CO2 per annum	% over baseline
Savings from energy demand reduction	1.2	9.4%	0.6	8.6%
Savings from heat network/CHP	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
Savings from renewable energy	1.8	14.1%	1.4	22.3%
Cumulative on-site savings	3.0	23.5%	2.0	30.9%

M+E PRINCIPLES

The developments servicing strategy will split into two distinct elements; the Aparthotel and Retail units.

The Aparthotel will be provided with a dedicated power and water utilities connection. Centralised mechanical services will provide; mains water, domestic hot water, ventilation, and heating and cooling. Central plant will be located on either the main roof of the new extension within an acoustic louvred enclosure or within the basement. The main electrical incoming room will be located within the basement which houses the main switch gear.

Services will be distributed through out the Aparthotel using dedicated mechanical and electrical vertical risers, these have wherever possible been located in the new build elements of the development and only located within the listed areas where it is unavoidable.

The Retail units will be serviced independent of the Aparthotel with dedicated utility power and water connections to be provided for each unit. All services within the retail units will be fitted out by the tenant. A communal heating and cooling VRF system will be provided that the retail tenants can connect into to limit the amount of rooftop plant. Ventilation intake and exhausts will be integrated into the façade signage at high level on the courtyard side to maintain the listed façade elements.

All heating and cooling services on the project will use electricity as the energy source. Variable refrigerant flow systems for space heating and cooling and air source heat pumps for the production of domestic hot water. The electrification of heat will Enable the development to benefit from the continual decarbonisation of UK power grid. This strategy also means that no fossil fuels are combusted within the development for the production of heat.

See M+E strategy produced by XCO2

ECOLOGY

Initial consultation has been undertaken with the Council's Ecology Consultants as part of the pre-application process. Given the buildings location and current condition, it is considered unlikely that there will be any species that will be inadvertently affected by these works. The proposals, however, do include a green roof of 36sqm which is an improvement over the current ecological value of the site.

To: Matthew Burns

From: Giles Sutton (RBC Ecology Consultations)

CC:

Date: 22 October 2020

Re: Planning application ref: 201372 (PRE-APPLICATION)

Address: 1-15 Queen Victoria Street 147-148 Friar Street Reading

Description: Partial redevelopment/extension and retention of listed buildings to provide enhanced retail and apart-hotel use.

The proposals involve renovation of a listed building in central Reading, this will require the demolition of some of the outbuildings at the rear.

Given the buildings location it is considered unlikely that the building will host roosting bats and the proposals are unlikely to affect other protected species.

There would therefore be no objections to this application on ecology grounds.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY

SUDS

Given the restricted site, the listing of the building and the curtilage and the archaeological importance of the site, there are limited opportunities to provide a comprehensive SUDS scheme.

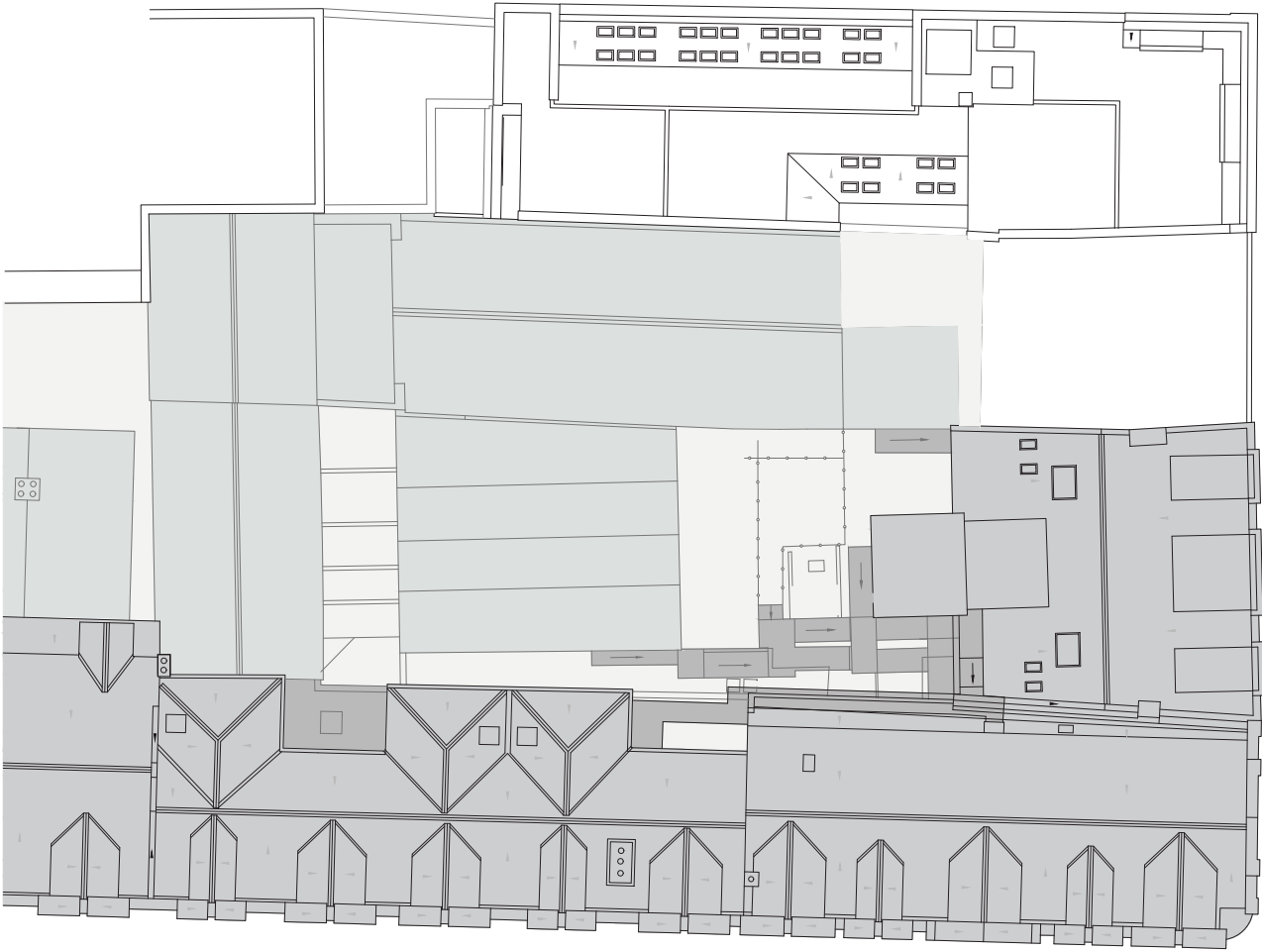
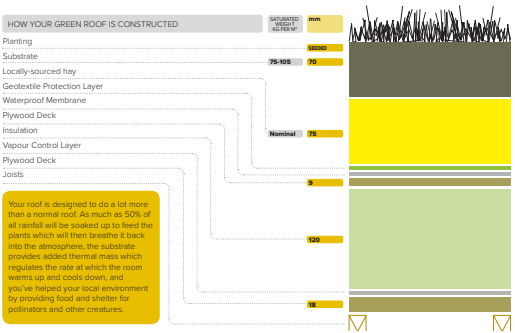
The existing site is nearly 100% covered with existing building and roof. This totals 1179sqm of impermeable area.

The proposal includes a green roof area on the 1st floor extension which will offset the impermeable area by 33sqm, leaving 1146sqm of impermeable area.

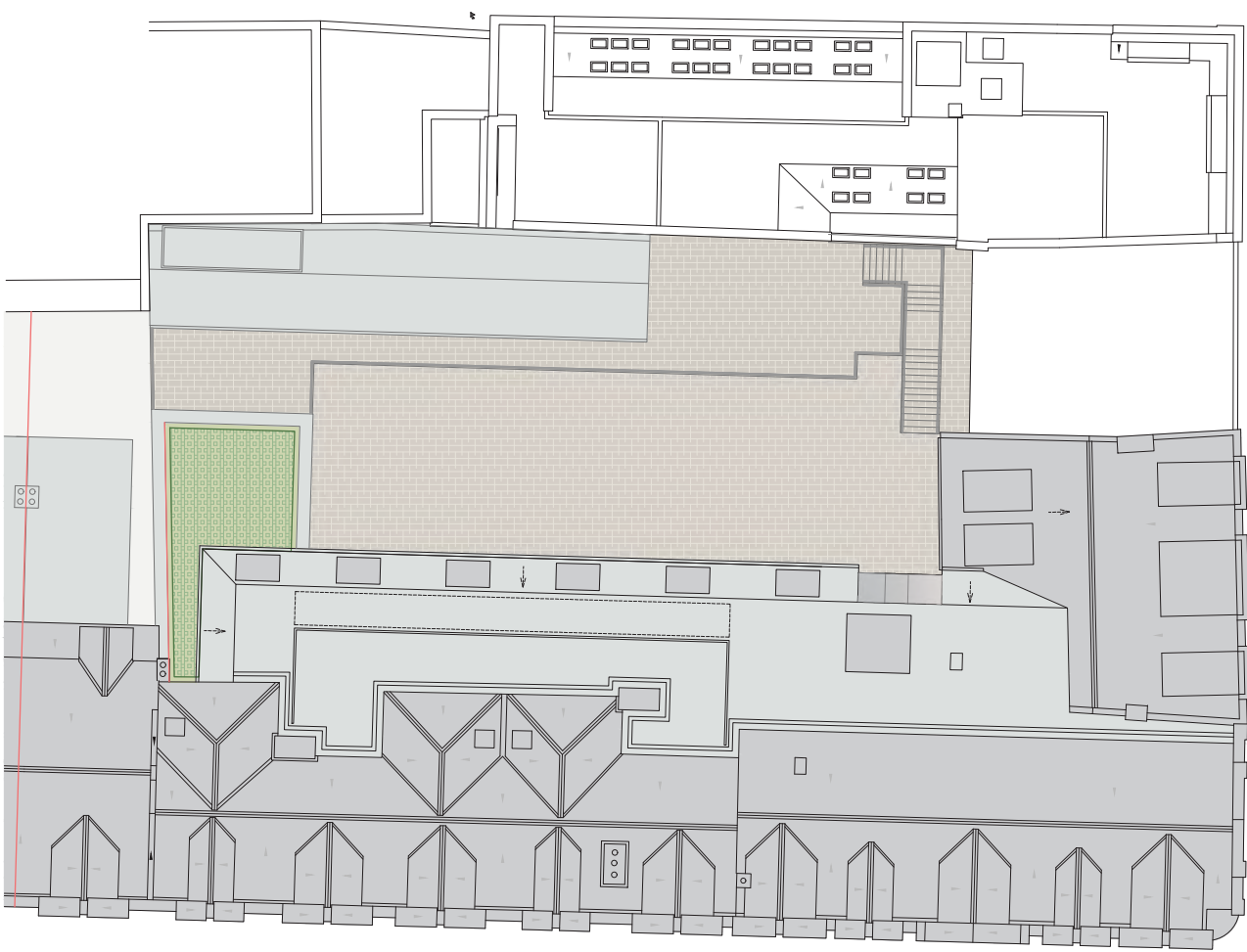
An attenuation tank has been considered, however, due to the archaeological risk to the site. Further, impermeable paving is not considered robust enough for a high traffic location such as a market square.

It is proposed that flat roof area that is not utilised for plant or will be specified as a green roof.

The proposal is to use a Haybase lightweight meadow system which replaces 50% of the substrate growing medium with hay or straw, reducing weight whilst performing like a traditional Sedum roof.



Existing impermeable area - 1179sqm



Proposed impermeable area - 1146sqm
Proposed permeable area - 33sqm

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

READING BENEFITS

THE PUBLIC BENEFIT

The proposals bring this vacant, dilapidated and detracting site into a beneficial use that will provide a firm basis for the enhancement and regeneration of Queen Victoria Street and this part of Friar Street that is long overdue. The employment space is not fit-for-purpose in comparison to modern provision and the loss of which will enable comprehensive redevelopment of the site, including the provision of employment generating uses.

The proposals will reinvigorate these prime and essential primary retail frontages in the Primary Shopping Area that is a key gateway to the town centre. The redevelopment will create employment opportunities that are currently not provided by this predominantly vacant site.

The proposed development and uses are appropriate to the town centre location and will enhance the retail and leisure provision (in this case C1) within Reading town centre.

The Annual Monitoring Report 2018-19 notes an exceptionally low provision of C1 floorspace within the monitoring year with 1,500m2 permitted within Reading but none delivered. The site is an appropriate location for an aparthotel use and represents a use that has been under-provided. An aparthotel will assist in the provision of short-term letting accommodation for people visiting Reading.

The market square and general enhancement of the site and retail proposals will attract people to the town centre.

This private sector-led scheme will boost business and enhance visitor experiences in a way that improves the quality of life for all in the Reading region and will form part of the Council's ambition to see a coherent and enhanced improvement to Queen Victoria Street.

There are few locations in the Borough that have better accessibility to public transport options and town centre services and facilities.

The proposals represent efficient use of brownfield land with development at a scale and density appropriate to the high accessibility level of the site. The scheme will meet the desires of the Reading 2050: A Vision for Reading 2050.

Shops units will be modest to support small start-ups and high-growth companies.

It meets the Council's ambition for a 'A City of Culture':

- Build upon the success of the Reading Festival – all year round cultural events through provision of vibrant public gathering spaces and street life and diverse venues – new 'Reading on Thames Festival'
- Refurbishing existing heritage assets
- Greater diversification of retail offer
- Strong, coordinated and well-marketed leisure offer
- Further support growing night economy – capitalise on music heritage

The proposals represent a unique opportunity to enhance and utilise this highly accessible location within the town centre, bringing a largely vacant and dilapidated site back into viable use, including the restoration and secured longevity of the Listed Buildings.

READING UK

A short consultation was held with Reading UK. They were happy to offer their support for the scheme and made the following comments and observations;

- The scheme would add to the vitality of the Town Centre
- It would bring many local social benefits and aid small businesses
- They considered the scheme could be an iconic symbol of recovery for the Town Centre post-COVID
- Incredibly forward thinking scheme which will arrest decline of Queen Victoria Street
- The scheme aligned with their visions/aims for the future
- The scheme supports the growth of Reading independent businesses and groups such as Reading Indies



9.0 CONCLUSIONS

READING BENEFITS

THE HERITAGE BENEFIT

The scheme and design proposed is as a result of the collaboration with the Heritage Consultant and is based on a thorough understanding of the history, evolution and changes to the building throughout its life and its current poor condition. The primary aim of the proposal is to restore the building and provide it with a viable use that will ensure that the future safeguarding of the heritage asset.

To facilitate this aim, whilst there is identified less than substantial harm, the scheme has been carefully designed to retain and, where possible, enhance the most significant aspects of the buildings, their external form and appearance as well as the clear majority of their historic fabric and surviving plan-form. In addition, there are considerable public and heritage benefits that would clearly outweigh against this harm because as it stands, the heritage asset is at risk.

Specific heritage benefits can be summarised as:

- Reviving the currently underused heritage assets by providing the listed buildings with an active viable use that will remove risk to the structures and see for their future conservation and maintenance;
- Preventing further deteriorating to the listed buildings, specifically 1-15 Queen Victoria Street and 148 Friar Street. These buildings are currently in a significantly deteriorating condition with the highly significant frontage at risk of collapse without swift intervention to halt decay;

- Reinstatement of appropriate and in-keeping shopfronts throughout the site, thus enhancing the significance and authenticity of the listed buildings;
- Removal of poor-quality additions to the rear of the buildings, many of which are currently abutted directly against the rear elevation of the listed buildings;
- Retention and restoration of key elements of heritage significance, for example the important façades, original staircases and elements of historically legible plan form; and
- Opportunities to reinstate appropriate detailing (fire surrounds, cornices and skirting boards etc.) in those areas of the listed building (primarily 5-15 Queen Victoria Street) which, internally, retain a higher degree of survival and plan form.

While interventions to the listed buildings are required to facilitate this, the proposals are based on a thorough understanding of the historic development, character and significance of the grade II listed buildings. Through the design development phase, the project team has sought to minimise harm through good design and retention of historic fabric and maximise benefits.

HERITAGE LED APPROACH

The plans have been developed in close partnership with Heritage and Planning consultants to ensure that the proposals are respectful and subservient to the listed buildings. The following considerations have been incorporated:

- the extension gives separation and distance to No. 15 Queen Victoria Street;
- 'apartments' designed to minimise disruption to the historic fabric;
- corridor runs along the back of existing building and utilises existing window openings where passes through the existing party walls;
- stair to No.5 Queen Victoria Street retained;
- circulation core located outside of existing building footprint to minimise any disruption to historic fabric;
- lift pit set away from existing walls to avoid foundations and basement structures;
- partitions retained to Nos. 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 & 15 Queen Victoria Street and No. 147 Friar Street where of historic value.

