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**Ref: 0659-1**

# Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment

Abbey Corner
2-4 Kings Road
Reading
RG1 3AA

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## Introduction

### The Author

Katherine Harrison, the author of this report, is a fully Accredited member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC), holds a Masters degree in Building's History from Cambridge University, a Postgraduate Certificate in Historic Conservation from Oxford Brookes University and a Bachelors in Fine Art from Goldsmiths University of London.

Prior to her employment at Janus Conservation she worked for 7 years as a specialist Conservation Officer advising on all aspects of the management of historic buildings and areas at South Northants District Council.

### The Report

This Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment has been produced to support the planning application for a change of use to the ground floor of to 2-4 Kings Road, Abbey Corner, Reading

2-4 Kings Road is located on the prominent Abbey Corner within Reading Town Centre (Market Place/London Street) Conservation Area and, whilst the building is not listed or locally listed, it is located in close proximity to a number of listed buildings. The building itself dates from the late 20th Century and is currently part occupied by a public health body.

This Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment establishes the historic development and significance of the building to inform the assessment of the impact of the proposed internal alterations on that significance. It has been formulated using the assessment methodology contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paragraphs 194, 195, 197, 199, 201 ) and local planning policies within the Reading Borough Local Plan and Market Place/London Street Conservation Area see (Appendix D). It also takes account of the relevant Historic England guidance, most notably their best practice guidance document, Conservation Principles (2008 and revised 2017). The knowledge of the site has been derived from a site visit undertaken by Senior Heritage Consultant Katherine Harrison.

*Figure 1: 2-4 Kings Road Abbey Corner, outlined in yellow*

## Designated Heritage Assets

*Figure 2: The distribution of Listed Buildings in 100m of the site is shown in the aerial map above*

2-4 Kings Road is located on the corner of Kings Road and Kings Street. Whilst the building itself is not listed nor locally listed, it is located within a conservation area and is in close proximity to a number of listed buildings. Not all have been identified in the map above, however the highlighted buildings are within 100m of the site.

The Conservation Area map can be found in **Figure 17-18**.

The heritage assets around the site are given in the table and shown on the above plan **Figure 2**.

| Number on Plan | Name | Designation |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Market Place/London Street Conservation Area | Conservation Area |
| 2 | 2-4 Kings Road | Not listed |
| 3 | 17-18 King Street | Grade II |
| 4 | George Hotel | Grade II |
| 5 | 2-3 Broad Street | Grade II |
| 6 | Barclays Bank | Grade II |
| 7 | 7 High Street, The High, 1-2 Market Place | Grade II |

## Setting and Context

Whilst 2-4 Kings Road is not the tallest building within the streetscape, its locality on the prominent Abbey Corner has resulted in it being a marker visible within views across the town centre. A selection of which have been highlighted below.

*Figure 3: Aerial view of 2-4 Kings Road highlighted in yellow looking east*

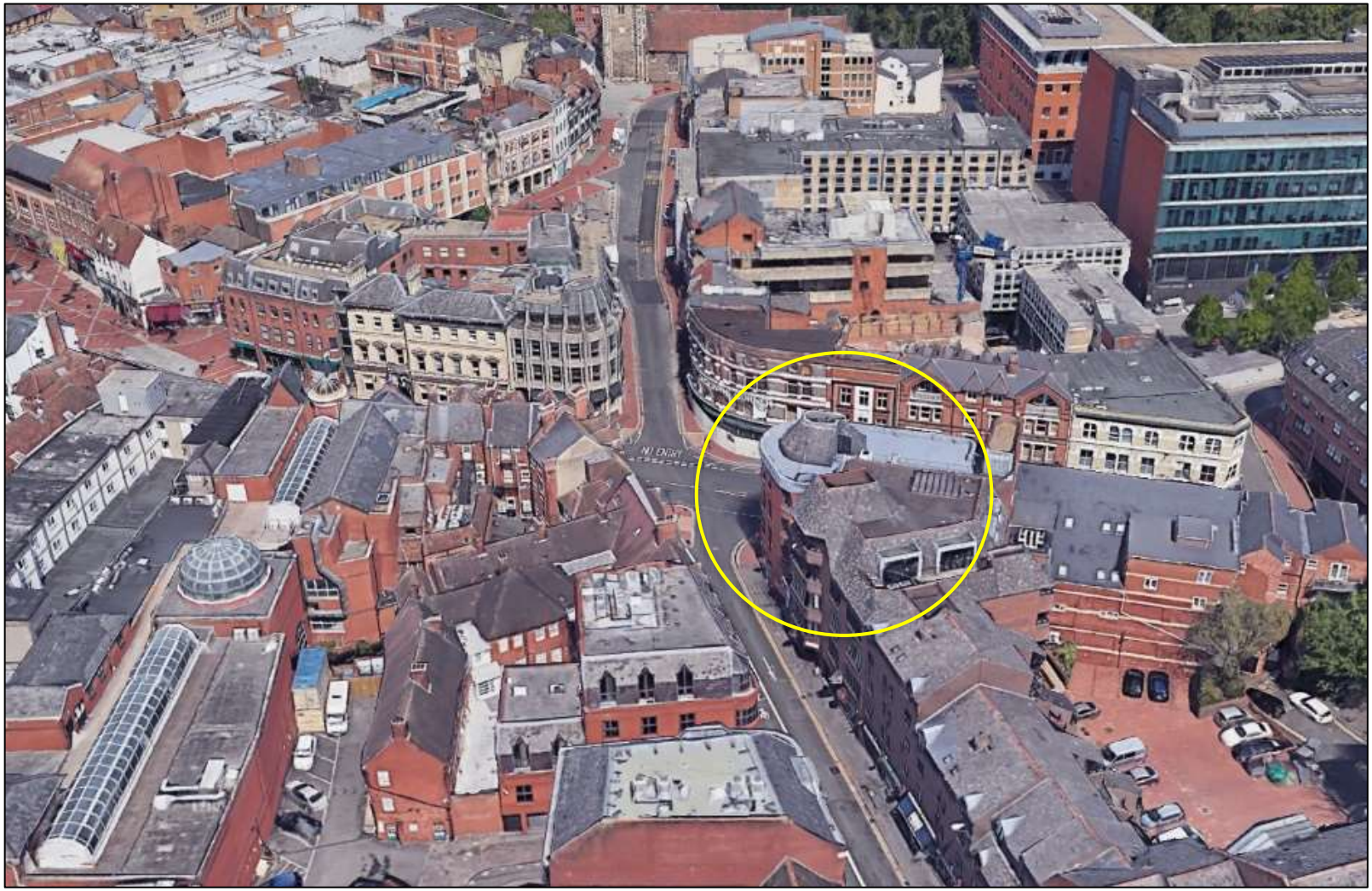


*Figure 6: Aerial view of 2-4 Kings Road highlighted in yellow looking north*

*Figure 7: Aerial view of 2-4 Kings Road highlighted in yellow looking west*

*Figure 8: Aerial view of 2-4 Kings Road highlighted in yellow looking south*

## Historic Map Regression

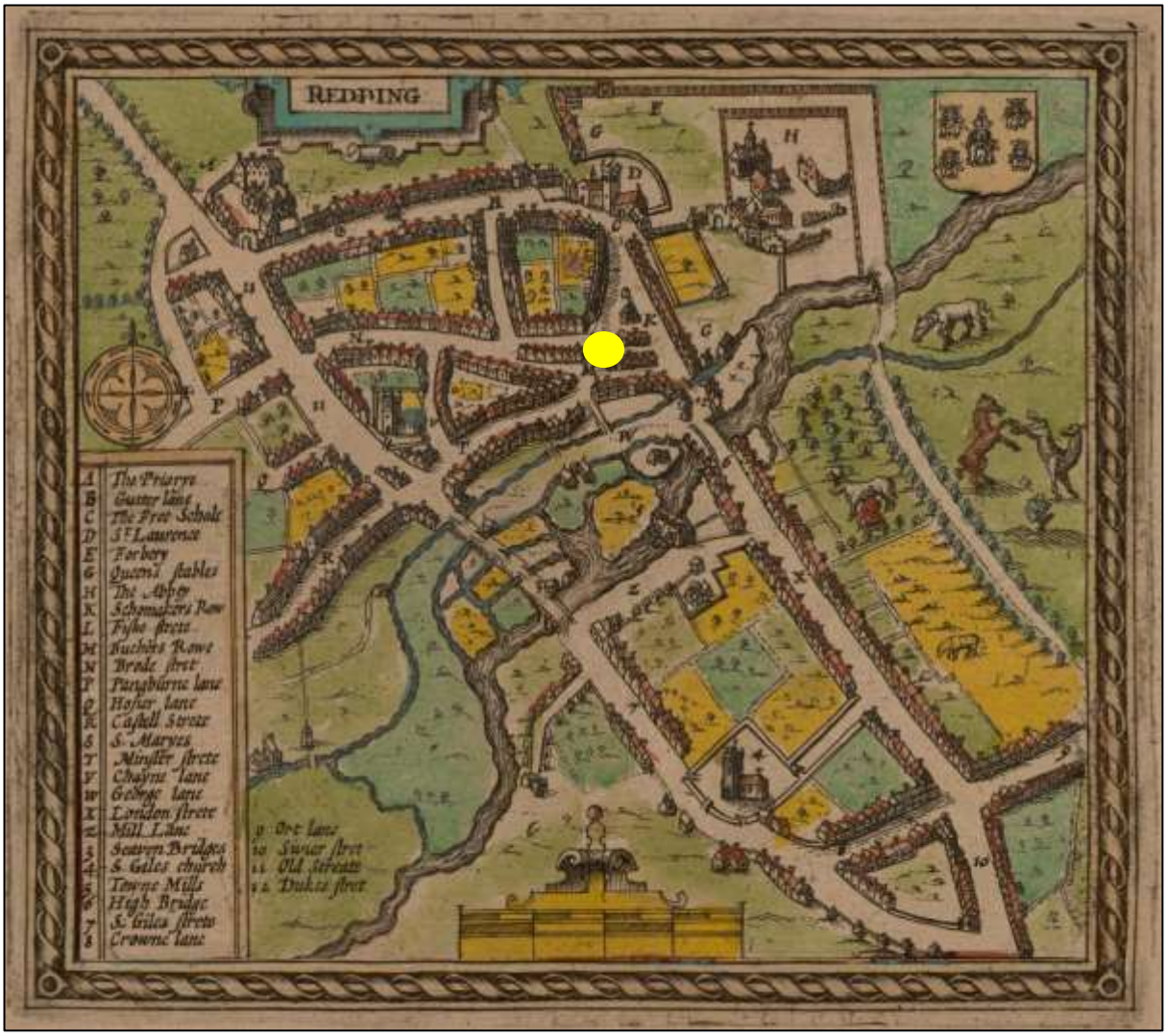



*Figure 9: John Speed's Atlas of Great Britain focussed on Reading dated from 1611. Approx location of 2-4 Kings Road highlighted in yellow*

Historic maps are helpful in identifying contextual changes to heritage assets, from the wider landscape scale down to the streetscape level and even to the changes in the footprint of the asset. This all contributes to the understanding of character and significance.

In the case of Reading the early street pattern and the close relationship of medieval church, market place and river crossing place can still be traced today in the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area.

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

The nuclear starting point of the town appears to have started at the bottom of today's Bridge Street where there is a crossing. Towards this crossing place came roads from Oxford, Southampton, Bristol

and London. The earliest main south-north route followed Southampton Street and Bridge Street to St Mary's Butts where the medieval St Mary's Church still stands.

Reading Abbey was situated on rising ground north of the River Kennet to the north east of the early river crossing. The growth of the town after the foundation of the abbey stimulated the building of St Laurence's Church which was built to serve the population which grew up around the Abbey.

Gradually the focus of the town moved eastwards and a new market place, dominated by St Laurence's Church, replaced the earlier market place by St Mary's Butts which had been the nucleus of the town prior to the founding of Reading Abbey.

As the influence of the Abbey grew, the early route along the course of today's Southampton Street, Bridge Street and St. Mary's Butts was rivalled by a south-north road leading directly to the newly established market place by St Laurence's Church via a new bridge over the Kennet. This new road followed London Street over the Kennet at High Bridge and led along Duke Street to the Market Place i.e. the backbone of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area (where 2-4 Kings Road is situated.)

Reading was mostly contained within the medieval limits of the 'triangle' until the end of the 18th century when the town began to expand as a result of improved transport links and industrialisation. King Street was formed in 1760 by demolishing the row of houses which had till then divided it into Sun Lane and Back Lane.

The Ordinance Survey Map published in 1875 (Figure 11) shows that extent of development in the centre and surrounding the area has not dramatically altered since the late 19th Century. The later Ordinance Survey maps show that within the historic core development has been contained to the rear of the main street frontages.

Late 19th Century development appears to be focused on the periphery of the historic core and developed in a linear fashion along the historic routes to the town center.

Modern 20th Century development has occurred within the town; there has been piecemeal development within the historic core, where individual plots have been redeveloped. However, the large-scale suburban developments have occurred on the periphery of the town center and enveloping the town.

As is evident on the maps below, a building has been present on that particular corner of Kings Road since the earliest OS Map. Given the design and construction of the building it is unlikley that the current 2-4 Kings Road is historic, however it has been rebuilt, extended, and/or refaced in later centuries along a similar footprint in attempt to mirror the surrounding historic buildings also present on the prominent corner.

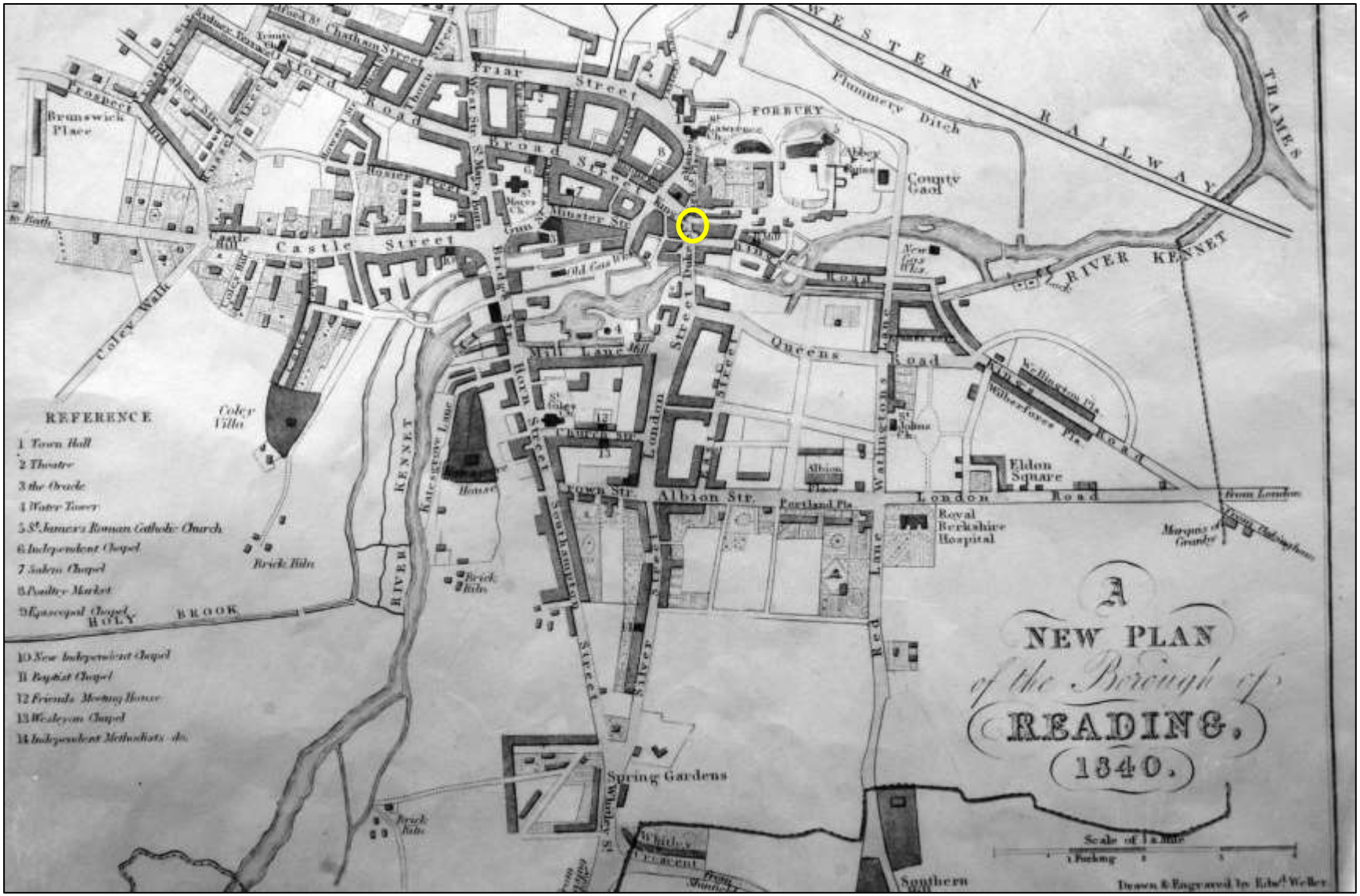



*Figure 10: Extract New Plan of Reading Map: Published 1840- Approx. site location is highlighted in yellow*

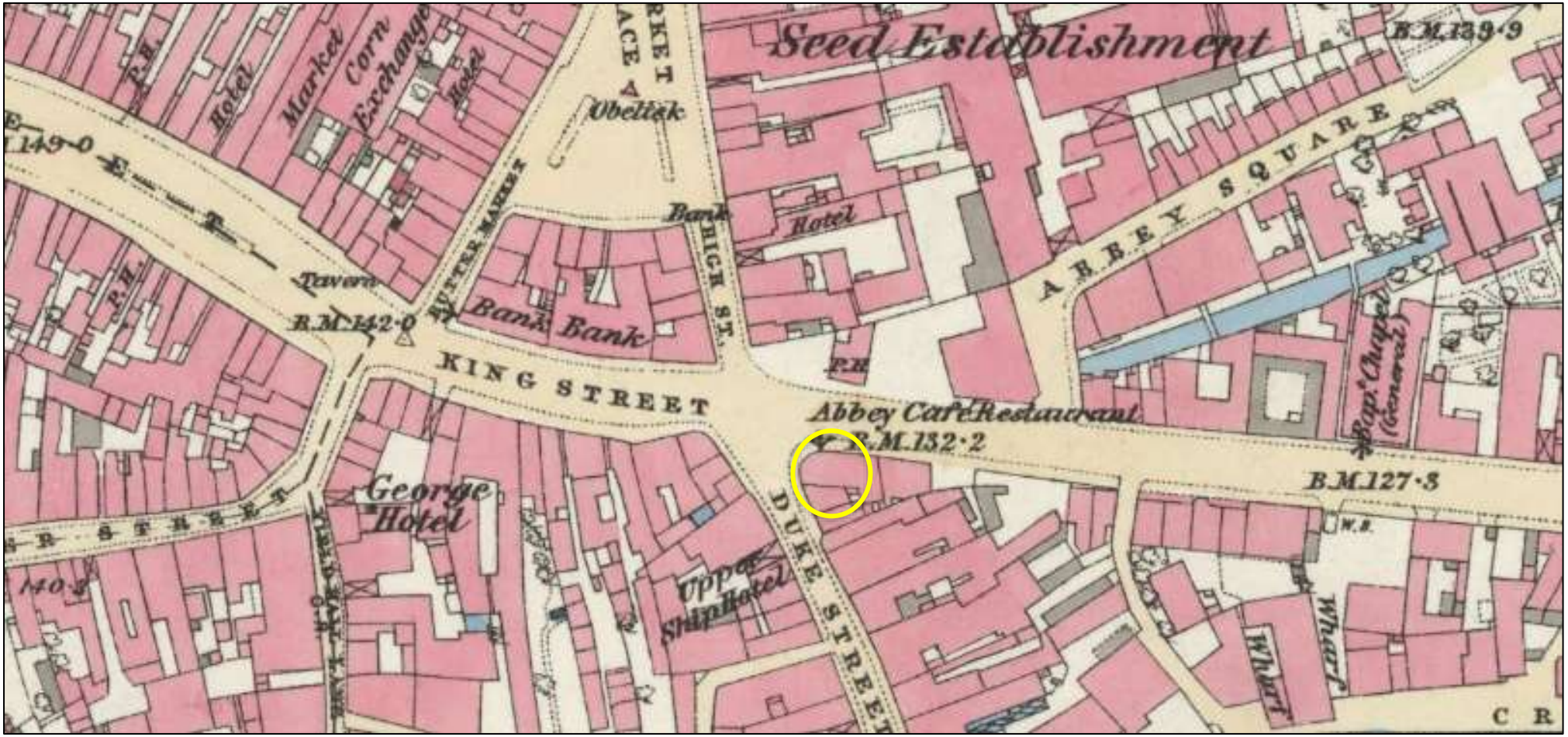



*Figure 11: Extract of Ordnance Survey 25 Inch Map: Berkshire XXXVII.3. Revised 1875. Published 1879- Approx. site location is highlighted in yellow*

*Figure 12: Extract of Ordnance Survey 25 Inch Map: Berkshire XXXVII.3. Revised 1898. Published 1900- Approx. site location is highlighted in yellow*

*Figure 13: Extract of Ordnance Survey 25 Inch Map: Berkshire XXXVII.3. Revised 1909. Published 1912- Approx. site location is highlighted in yellow*

*Figure 14: Extract of Ordnance Survey 25 Inch Map: Berkshire XXXVII.3. Revised 1931. Published 1934- Approx. site location is highlighted in yellow*

*Figure 15: Extract of Ordnance Survey 25 Inch Map: Berkshire XXXVII.NE. Revised 1938. Published 1947- Approx. site location is highlighted in yellow*

## Heritage Appraisal- Market Place/ London Street Conservation Area

*Figure 16: 1960s photo of Reading Town Centre*

The conservation area is characterised as a linear area following the 12th century southern approach road to the town. The buildings are of two to four storeys, with the taller generally being located around Market Place. The area immediately around Abbey Hall is formed of buildings with similar heights and massing, but which vary somewhat in style and materials. The most common facing material is brick and the colour varies, polychromatic brickwork being particular to Reading. Continuing east along King's Road there are few historic buildings, the road is lined with modern office buildings and immediately to the east is the Central Library.

Throughout the conservation area modern development, both infill and roof extensions, have taken place which has added a variety of form and design to the town centre interspersing the historic with the contemporary.

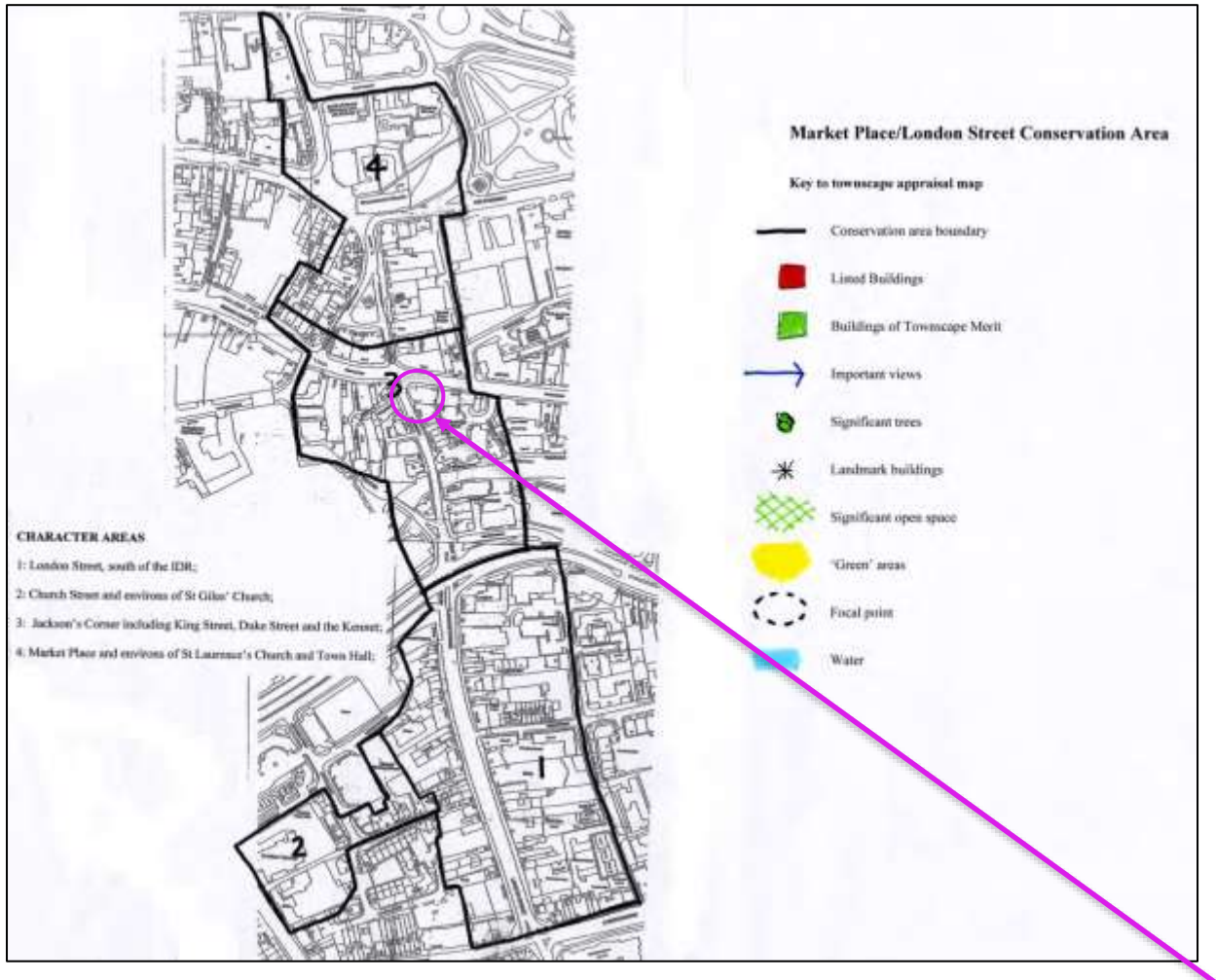
2-4 Kings Road is located within Character Area 3 of Market Place/London Street Conservation Area and has been highlighted on the map below. This character area has a number of listed buildings, buildings of townscape merit, important views, and focal points. The conservation area appraisal describes the character area as the following:

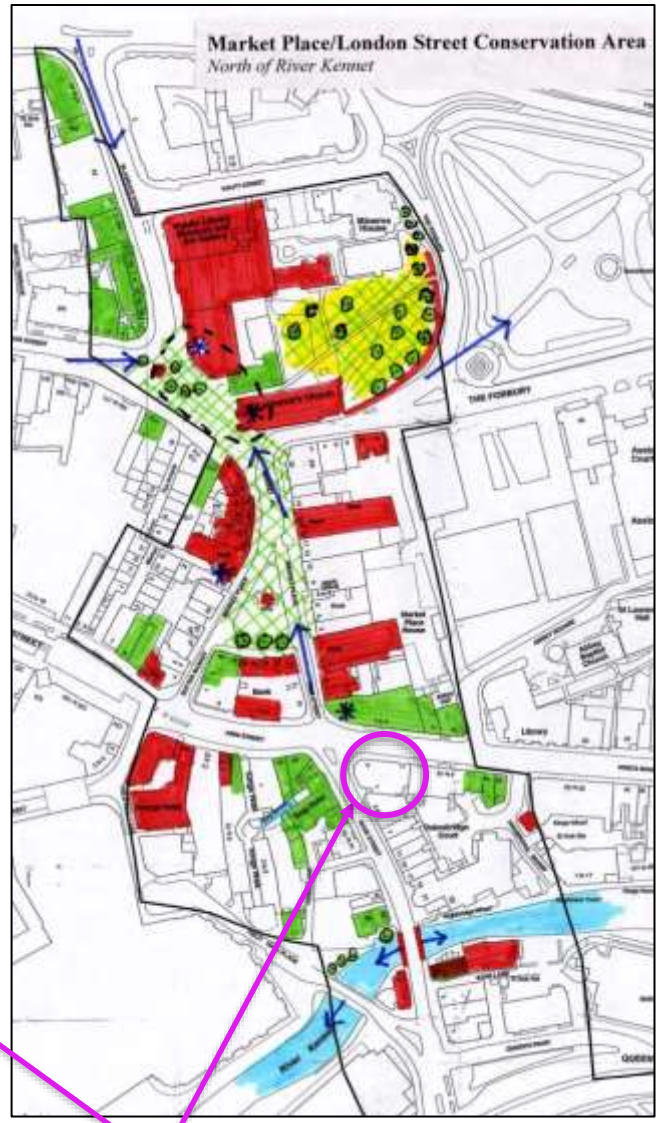
*'This is the least homogenous of the four character areas but represents the transition from central core shopping area to other uses including hotel, casino and office use as one progresses towards London Street. The area can be divided into riverside development beside the Kennet and urban development around Jacksons Corner. From Yield Hall Place the area is dominated by the bulk of the Oracle Shopping Centre.*

*High Bridge, built over the Kennet in 1787, stands just upstream from a narrow modern bridge built approximately 200 years later. The close proximity of the two bridges typifies the close mix of old and new development that characterises this part of the area.*

*Jacksons Corner is a spacious cross-roads where curved late 19th century corner buildings such as 1-9 King's Road (Jacksons) and 2 Duke Street/25 King Street (Jacobs) have been designed to take account of their prominent location.*

*A modern shopping mall (Kings Walk) and modern development on the east side of the Duke Street/King's Road junction is out of character with the historic form and layout of the area.'*




*Figures 17 & 18: Market Place/London Street Conservation Area Boundary (right)- 2-4 Kings Road is highlighted in purple and is located in Character Area 3 (above left). Note that it is not identified as an important building/building of merit*

## Heritage Appraisal: 2-4 Kings Road, Abbey Corner

*Figure 19: 2-4 Kings Road situated on the prominent Abbey Corner- note the ground floor fenestration of little/no architectural merite*

2-4 Kings Road is a late 20th century brick building of utilitarian design located on a prominent corner within Reading Town Centre. The building itself is of little architectural merit, being predominantly functional in its design as a late 20th century office building. An 1895 (**Figure 20**) map does suggest that a building was present on site at this time, however it is likely that this was demolished/ extended/refaced and rebuilt to accommodate the one standing today.

Internally the building has been subdivided across 4 floors to provide office space and communal areas. There is no historic merit to the internal fabric of the building.

To the south the building is abutted by similar blocks of offices and apartments dating from the same period. However to the north, east and west 2-4 Kings Road is surrounded by a number of listed buildings and buildings of townscape merit.

2-4 Kings Road does not sit within any important views as identified in the conservation area, however it is at the junction where important views and focal points have been identified.

The significance of 2-4 Kings Road lies in its locality as a principal building on an important visual focal corner in the centre of the conservation area. Its architectural design is limited and as such the building makes a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

*Figure 20: 1895 Insurance Map of Reading, 2-4 Kings Road is highlighted in purple*

## Long Distance Views of 2-4 Kings Road

*Figure 21: View of 2-4 Kings Road looking east along Kings Street in the centre of the conservation area (ground floor of site highlighted in yellow)*

*Figure 22: View of 2-4 Kings Road looking west along Kings Road (ground floor of site highlighted in yellow)*

*Figure 23: View of 2-4 Kings Road looking west along Kings Road into the conservation area (ground floor of site highlighted in yellow)*

*Figure 24: View of 2-4 Kings Road looking west along Kings Road into the conservation area (ground floor site highlighted in yellow)*

## Critical Assessment

The assessment of significance is based on the characteristic of heritage values as expressed by Historic England in Conservation Principles (2008 Revised 2017), which defines value as 'an aspect of worth or importance...attached by people to qualities of place'. See Appendix B for criteria.

| Heritage Value: | Rating: |
|---|---|
| Evidential | Negligible |
| Explanation:<br><br>**2-4 Kings Road:** Given the location of the site in the centre of Reading there is potential for archaeology underneath the building however this is not visible on the ground. | |
| Heritage Value: | Rating: |
| Historical | Negligible |
| Explanation:<br><br>**2-4 Kings Road:** The building is a late 20th/ early 21st century office block which, whilst illustrating the societal changes of economic demand within the town, does not impact the historic significance of the Town Centre overall. | |
| Heritage Value: | Rating: |
| Aesthetic | Neutral |
| Explanation:<br><br>**2-4 Kings Road:** The design of the building is utilitarian and built for purpose as such any architectural detailing is limited. The overall aesthetic of the building is that of a typical late 20th century office block however given the various adjacent designated and non-designated heritage assets around the site the building does little in way of contributing to their setting or character. | |
| Heritage Value: | Rating: |
| Communal | Conservation Area:<br><br>2-4 Kings Road: Negligible |
| Explanation:<br><br>**2-4 Kings Road:** The building is part of a privately owned site for commercial employment. There is no communal value. | |

## Summary of Significance

The **evidential, historic, and communal** value of the site is considered to be **negligible**. The aesthetic value of the building is related to its locality and not its design . The materials are in keeping with character of the conservation area (to a degree) and the form does follow the topography of streetscape and mirror that of adjacent buildings. However given its location in the historic town centre in close proximity to a number of designated and non-designated heritage assets the **aesthetic value** and contribution 2-4 Kings Road makes to the conservation area is considered to be **neutral**.

The area of development, the ground floor as seen below, is of little architectural merit and makes a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

*Figure 25: Ground floor of 2-4 Kings Road, Abbey Corner*

## Impact Assessment

### Proposals

The proposals seek a change of use to the ground floor D1/A1, this change of use will result in **no external changes** to the road frontages of the existing building

*Figure 26: Existing Elevations*

*Figure 27: Proposed Elevations*

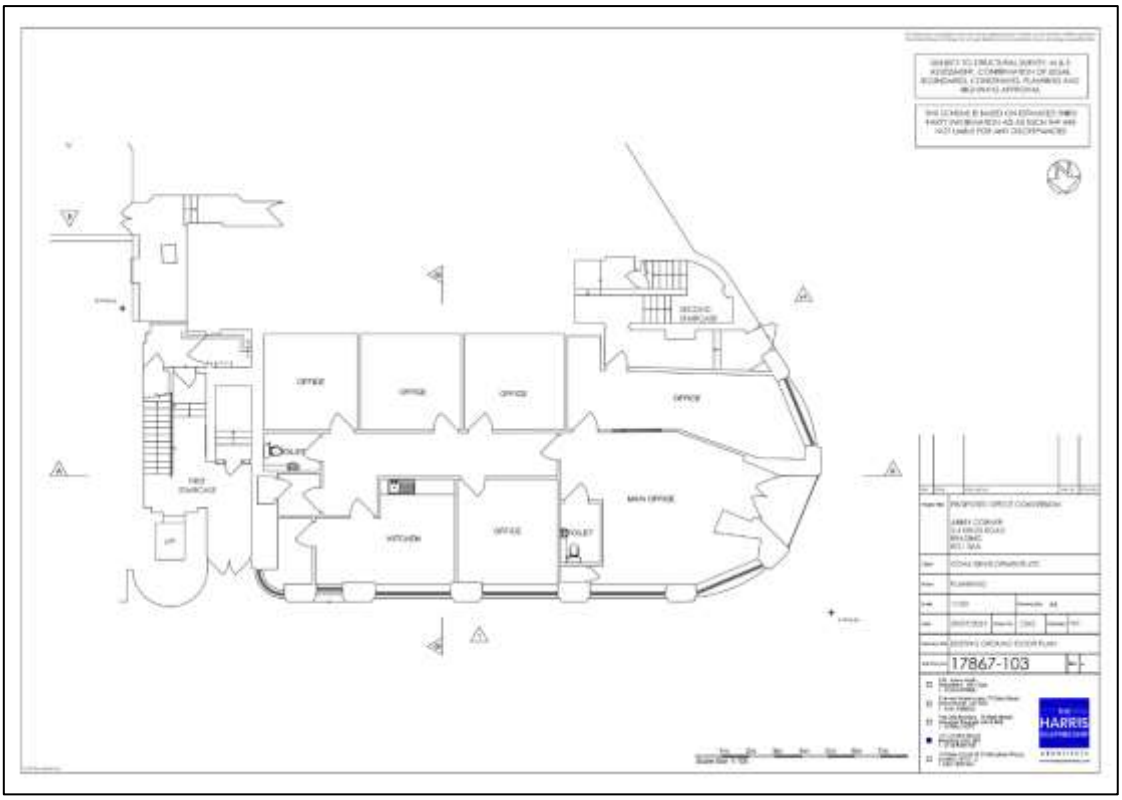



*Figure 28: Existing Ground Floor*

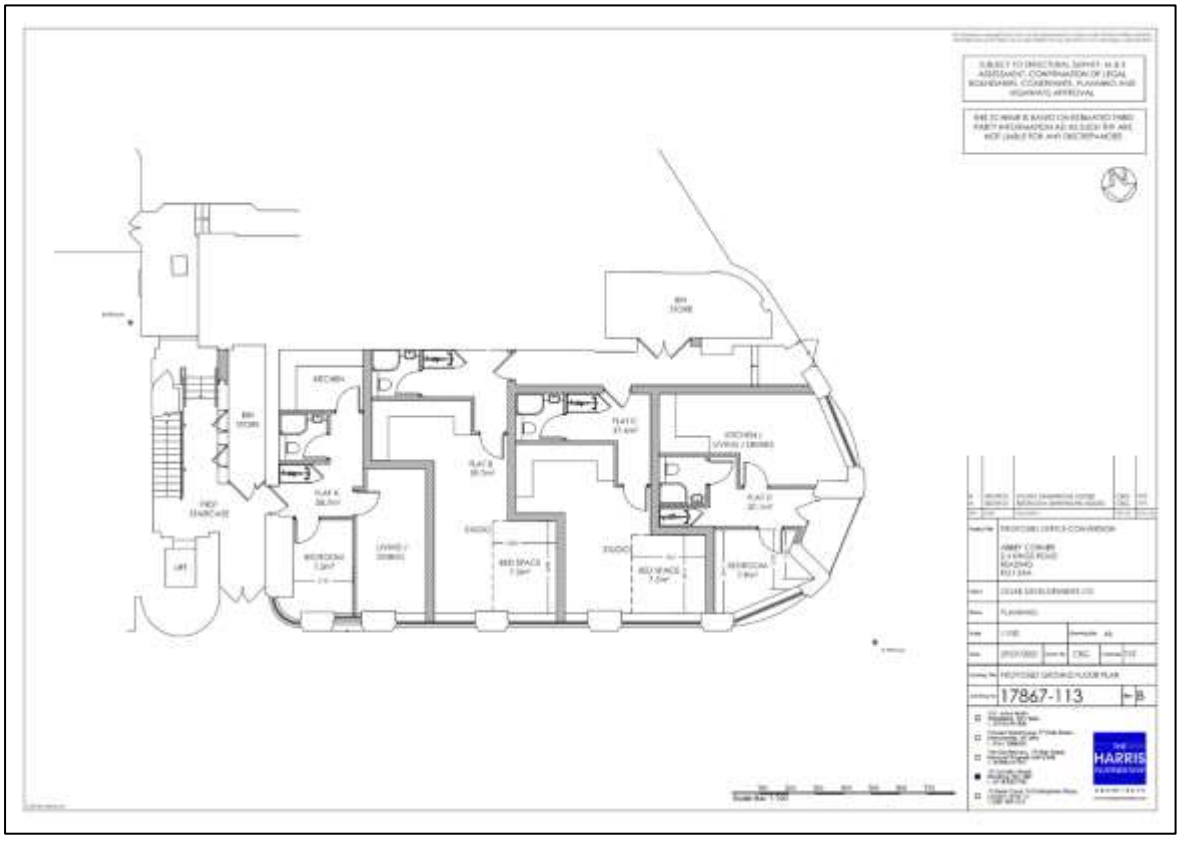



*Figure 29: Proposed Ground Floor*

## Impact Assessment

This impact assessment deals with the impact of proposed change across the site on the heritage value of 2-4 Kings Road and its wider historical context within the Conservation Area in both direct and indirect terms. Both adverse and beneficial impacts are assessed.

The impact assessment adopts ICOMOS assessment criteria to provide a logical assessment of the proposed changes to help inform the planning decision. See Appendix C for further details and criteria.

| Area of Impact | Heritage Value | Level of Change | Overall Impact |
|---|---|---|---|
| Market Place/London Street Conservation Area | Aesthetic- Medium<br>Historic-High<br>Evidential- Medium<br>Communal- High | No Change | **Neutral Impact-** There are no proposed changes to the external elevations of the ground floor of 2-4 Kings Road. |
| 2-4 Kings Road | Aesthetic-Neutral<br>Historic- Negligible<br>Evidential- Negligible<br>Communal- Negligible | No Change | **Neutral Impact-** There are no proposed changes to the external elevations of the ground floor of 2-4 Kings Road. |

## Conclusion

Through the process of impact-assessment, we have found that there are aspects of the proposal which would have **no impact** on the character and appearance of the conservation area due to there being no change to the external façade of the building. Internally the building is of little/no architectural merit so changes to the ground floor internally will be insignificant.

In terms of Paragraph 202 of the NPPF, the works would be result in **negligible harm** to the character and appearance of the conservation area. In regards to Local Plan Policy the proposals would be in line with the following (see Appendix for further details):

- EN1- PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT
- EN3- ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS
- EN6- DEVELOPMENT IN A HISTORIC CONTEXT
- CR2- DESIGN IN CENTRAL READING

## Appendix A: Significance Assessment Criteria

Historic England in Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008 revised 2017) identify four principal heritage values:

| Value | Description |
|---|---|
| **Evidential** | Deriving from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity. |
| **Historical** | Deriving from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. |
| **Aesthetic** | Deriving from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place. |
| **Communal** | Deriving from the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience and memory. |

The National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) Updated 2021) suggests that for planning purposes, the significance of heritage assets should be assessed under the headings of archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic which are essentially the same as the Historic England values. The NPPF also points out that significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting, being the surroundings in which it is experienced.

Assessing the significance of heritage assets is to a great extent based on knowledge of the asset type, a comparison with what exists elsewhere, and the extent to which it may be distinctive or have special meaning for different groups of people. The incorporation of a values-based benchmark within the assessment helps to ensure a consistency of approach when determining significance in the context of managing change to significant places.

| Value / Criteria | Description |
|---|---|
| Very High<br>Building/site/area of international significance. | Sites, buildings, monuments, or landscapes of international significance and listed on the World Heritage Site List, or other sites, buildings, monuments, or landscapes of comparable quality. |
| High<br>Building/site/area of national significance. | Listed Buildings Grade I, Grade II*, Conservation Areas (containing very important buildings) Scheduled Monuments, non-designated sites or assets of comparable quality, Registered battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens Grade I and Grade II*. An aspect (e.g., structure or feature) that strongly contributes to significance. |
| Medium<br>Building/site/area of national significance. | Listed Buildings Grade II, Conservation Areas, Historic Townscapes, Registered Parks and Gardens Grade II. An aspect (e.g., structure or feature) that makes a moderate contribution to significance. |
| Low<br>Buildings/sites/areas of regional / local significance. | Buildings and areas of local interest, sites and archaeological remains which are not of national importance, historic landscapes of regional/county importance. An aspect (e.g., structure or feature) that makes a lesser contribution to significance. |
| Negligible<br>Buildings /Sites / Areas of little or no significance. | Buildings/sites/areas of little or no significance. An aspect (e.g., structure or feature) that has little or no value and therefore does not impact significance, either positively or negatively. |
| Negative | An aspect (structure or feature) that detracts from the significance of the building. |

## Appendix B: Impact Assessment Criteria

Changes that may affect these heritage assets (both negatively and positively) as a result of development include:

• Alterations to the external appearance of the property
• Internal alterations to the property

To fully understand the effect of the impact of the proposed changes on the heritage value of the properties, we have used criteria based on that recommended by ICOMOS. This defines:

- Level of Change proposed
- Effect of Overall Impact

This latter is in the form of a matrix setting the "Level of Change" against "Heritage Value" to determine the subsequent "Effect of Overall Impact", which ranges from "Neutral" to "Very Large", and on a scale of beneficial or adverse.

The table below clarifies what is meant by 'Level of Change' and is adapted from guidance set out by ICOMOS.

| Level of Change | Description |
|---|---|
| **Major Change** | Substantial visual or physical change (i.e. loss of historic fabric) to the form, appearance or context of a heritage asset |
| **Moderate Change** | Significant visual or physical change (i.e. loss of historic fabric) to the form, appearance or context of a heritage asset. |
| **Minor Change** | Some visual or physical change (i.e. loss of historic fabric) to the form, appearance or context of a heritage asset. |
| **Negligible Change** | Negligible visual or physical change to the form, appearance or context of a heritage asset. |
| **No Change** | No change to the visual or physical elements of the heritage asset |

By establishing the heritage value (significance) of a heritage asset and the Level of Change as a result of proposed development; the two can be combined to reach an overall impact.

Heritage Value + Level of Change = Overall Impact
(Significance)

| Effect of Overall Impact (Adverse or Beneficial) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Significance/ Heritage Value** | **Level of Change** | | | | |
| | No Change | Negligible Change | Minor Change | Moderate Change | Major Change |
| **Very High Value** | Neutral Impact | Slight Impact | Moderate/Large Impact | Large/Very Large Impact | Very Large Impact |
| **High Value** | Neutral Impact | Slight Impact | Moderate/Slight Impact | Moderate/Large Impact | Large/Very Large Impact |
| **Medium Value** | Neutral Impact | Neutral/Slight Impact | Slight Impact | Moderate Impact | Moderate/Large Impact |
| **Low Value** | Neutral Impact | Neutral/Slight Impact | Neutral/ Slight Impact | Slight Impact | Slight/Moderate Impact |
| **Negligible Value** | Neutral Impact | Neutral Impact | Neutral/Slight Impact | Neutral/Slight Impact | Slight Impact |

## Appendix C: Local and National Relevant Planning Policies

### Legislation

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990) ("the Act") contains legislation relating to listed buildings and conservation areas. The Act sets out the legislative framework within which development affecting listed buildings and conservation areas must be considered by local planning authorities, upon which it imposes a general duty in the exercise of planning functions. Sections 16(2) and 66(1) direct the local planning authority when considering whether to grant consent for any works or development to a listed building or its setting to 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 72(1) imposes the same duty in respect of a conservation area and directs that special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

### National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF), the Historic England 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide' and the Historic England Good Practice Advice documents (advice notes 2 and 3) are relevant to the content of this report and the consideration of any application. The government objective is that heritage assets (which includes listed buildings and their settings) should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.

### National Planning Policy Framework

Chapter 16 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'. This states that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

**Paragraph 194** states that when determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on that significance.

**Paragraph 195** identifies that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

**Paragraph 197** sets out that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- The desirability of new development makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

**Paragraph 199** states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

**Paragraph 201** states that where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

### Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide (English Heritage, 2010)

Although the NPPF superseded Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5) as Government Policy, the policies in the NPPF are very similar and the intent is the same, so the Practice Guide remains almost entirely relevant and useful in the application of the NPPF.

Paragraph 58 of the Practice Guide and the Historic England Good Practice Notes 2 and 3 advocate the methods of investigating the significance of a heritage asset. In particular it advocates that three steps should be carried out when preparing an assessment including:

- Check the development plan, main local and national records including the relevant Historic Environment Record, statutory and local lists, the Heritage Gateway, the NMR, and other relevant statutory sources of information that would provide an understanding of the history of the place and the value the asset holds for society.
- Examine the asset and its setting.
- Consider whether the nature of the affected significance requires an expert assessment to gain the necessary level of understanding.

A number of other steps are suggested as appropriate, subject to the nature of the asset and the proposed works.

In the case of this application the records which have been investigated include:

- The Heritage Gateway.
- The planning records and planning policy Documents held by Westminster Council
- Historic England Website

Historic England Good Practice Advice Notes and Guidance Notes

Advice Note 2 titled 'Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment' and Advice Note 3 titled 'The Setting of Heritage Assets' are relevant to the consideration of this application.

Advice Note 2 highlights that there are 4 types of Conservation Principles that an asset may hold, which are aesthetic, communal, historic, and evidential value. The Assessment of Significance at Section 5.0 identifies the value attached to the setting and significance of the surrounding heritage assets.

Advice Note 3 in relation to the impact of development on the setting of listed buildings, highlights the steps which should be taken when assessing the significance of heritage assets. The curtilage, character and context of a heritage asset must be taken into consideration during assessment. This has been carefully considered as part of the assessment provided.

Reading Local Plan Adopted November 2019

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.

## EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

The special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Positive consideration will be given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas. These may include:

- Reducing visual clutter caused by negative factors, such as poles and overhead wires,
- satellite dishes or unnecessary street furniture;
- Restoring original building features;
- Removing inappropriate additions or alterations to buildings;
- Protecting and encouraging the maintenance of green spaces and important trees,
- particularly where they are intrinsic to the history and character of the area;
- Improving signage and street furniture;
- Restoring or re-establishing appropriate paving, railings or walls;
- Sympathetic landscaping and planting;
- Improving or restoring green spaces, including front gardens, that are appropriate to
- the historic interest of a Conservation Area;
- Signage that reveals and promotes the Conservation Area and its boundaries;
- Interpretation panels to inform the public of the area's historical significance.

Where a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan has been adopted for a particular Conservation Area, this will be a material consideration in determining applications for development.

## EN6: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN A HISTORIC CONTEXT

In areas characterised by heritage assets, the historic environment will inform and shape new development. New development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development. When determining planning applications for new development, the following factors will be taken into consideration:

a. The positive contribution of the development to the existing historic townscape (scale, height, mass, proportion, plot size, street form, materials, significant vistas and views, and open space);
b. Sensitivity to historic context;
c. Reflection of borough-wide major heritage themes that contribute to local distinctiveness (e.g. patterned brickwork or former worker terraced housing);
d. Whether development promotes and/or improves access to previously undiscovered or neglected historic significance.

## CR2: DESIGN IN CENTRAL READING

Applications for development within Central Reading should demonstrate the following attributes:

a. Development will build on and respect the existing grid layout structure of the central area, providing continuity and enclosure through appropriate relationships between buildings and spaces, and frontages that engage with the street at lower levels, and contributing towards enhanced ease of movement through and around the central area;

b. Development will provide appropriate, well designed public spaces and other public realm, including squares, open spaces, streetscape, utilising high quality and well-maintained hard and soft landscaped areas, and public art, that provide suitable functions and interest, sense of place and safe and convenient linkages to adjoining areas;

c. Development should consider and, where possible, include ways of providing green infrastructure designed into the development, for instance through roof gardens, green walls and green roofs, to enhance the otherwise very urban environment;

d. The architectural details and materials used in the central area should be high quality and respect the form and quality of the detailing and materials in areas local to the development site;

e. Development and any associated public realm should contribute to the diversity of the central area, be capable of easy adaptation over time to meet changing circumstances, and be designed to enhance community safety; and

f. Development should be designed with consideration of adjacent development sites, and should not prevent or cause unreasonable burdens on the future development of those sites

## Appendix D: Planning History

Various planning history relating to the established use:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| App. No.: | 071309 | Site Address: | 2-4 Kings Road<br>Reading Berkshire<br>RG1 3AD |
| Description: | Non-illuminated blue hanging 600mm square panel sign, projecting on toKings Road. | | |
| Received Date: | 01/11/2007 | Decision Sent Date: | 22/01/2008 |
| | | Decision Date: | 22/01/2008 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| App. No.: | 990595 | Site Address: | 2-4 Kings Road<br>Reading<br>RG1 3AA |
| Description: | Application for a Certificate of Lawfulness for a Proposed Use at first floor only at 2-4 Kings Road | | |
| Received Date: | 19/12/2000 | Decision Sent Date: | 13/02/2001 |
| | | Decision Date: | 13/02/2001 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| App. No.: | 011276 | Site Address: | 2-4 Kings Road<br>Reading<br>RG1 3AA |
| Description: | To construct new ground floor entrance which serves offices on upper floors. | | |
| Received Date: | 11/09/2001 | Decision Sent Date: | 23/10/2001 |
| | | Decision Date: | 23/10/2001 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| App. No.: | 990620 | Site Address: | 2-4 Kings Road<br>Reading<br>RG1 3AA |
| Description: | To form new fire exit doorway in external facade. | | |
| Received Date: | 04/10/2000 | Decision Sent Date: | 29/11/2000 |
| | | Decision Date: | 29/11/2000 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| App. No.: | 211410 | Site Address: | 2-4 Kings Road<br>Reading Berkshire<br>RG1 3AA |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Description: | Change of use of plant room from Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 1 dwelling. Prior Notification under Class MA, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. | | |
| Received Date: | 25/08/2021 | Decision Sent Date:<br>Decision Date: | |

Results: 1 to 5