

**Heritage statement relating to alterations to rear of ground floor commercial premises to remove strong room & incorporating new door & window openings.
To provide additional window openings on first & second floors**

**34 St Marys Butts Reading RG1 2LQ
Ref. 9063-21**

1.0.0. The area & building

The Site is located within Character Area 2 of St Mary's Butts / Castle Street Conservation Area. However, the building on the Site is not listed and is considered to have a negative impact on the historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It is located between a listed building, Number 35-37, and a building of limited merit, Number 32, also considered to detract from the Conservation Area.

The St Mary's Butts / Castle Street Conservation Area was designated in 1972. The historic buildings are some of the oldest in Reading, at a point within the Saxon centre of Reading, north of Bridge Street. This was an original crossing point across the River Kennet. Saxon activity is linked archaeologically with the Grade I listed Church of St Mary, which is a prominent landmark on St Mary's Butts. "The current street pattern dates from medieval times, when the St Mary's Parish was the original heart of the town" (Reading Council 2008, page 9).

2.4.2 Number 34 is located in Character Area 2, which consists of Numbers 32-37 and Numbers 55-58 St Mary's Butts and The Horn. The varying scale and architectural style of the historic buildings are contiguous with the neighbouring buildings on Castle Street. Large modern buildings just beyond the Conservation Area boundary, such as Broad Street Mall have limited architectural merit and the Hexagon, Magistrates Court and police station, once part of the Civic Centre complex, detract from the scale, materials and grain of the Conservation Area.

The contribution made by Number 34 is mentioned in the Conservation Area Appraisal "... a small number of buildings within the conservation area lack attention to detail and are poorly related in architectural terms (e.g. numbers 32 and 34 St Mary's Butts)" (Reading Council 2008, page 23). "... non-listed buildings in the Conservation Area do display a greater variety of fenestration and wall treatments, detracting from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area" (Reading Council 2008, page 23)

1.1.0. The proposals

The proposals are to remove the strong room to the rear of the premises which is no longer in use as the CO-OP bank is now shut.

This will allow this part of the premises to provide practical use under Class E as light & ventilation will allow people to work in this area.

To provide enclosed bin & cycle storage as there are currently no formal facilities.

The proposed windows to the flank wall of the first & second floors will allow a flexible use of these areas.

Consent has already been obtained for these windows in a similar location within application 201349, so there should not be any issues here.

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