

HERITAGE STATEMENT

LITTLE LEA FARMHOUSE,
READING INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS PARK

Quality Assurance

Site name: Little Lea Farmhouse, Reading International Business Park

Client name: Tristan Capital Partners

Type of report: Heritage Statement

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Signed:



Date: 8th September 2020

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Date: 10th November 2020



Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Heritage Policy and Guidance Summary	4
3.0	Methodology	9
4.0	Historic Context	13
5.0	Significance Assessment	19
6.0	Proposals and Impact	52

Appendix 1

Statutory List Description

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared on behalf of Tristan Capital Partners to assess the significance of Little Lea Farmhouse, Reading International Business Park, and to assess the potential impact of the proposed development on this significance.
- 1.2 Little Lea Farmhouse is statutorily listed at grade II (identified as Little Lea Cottage, Basingstoke Road, list number 1303791, on the National Heritage List for England).

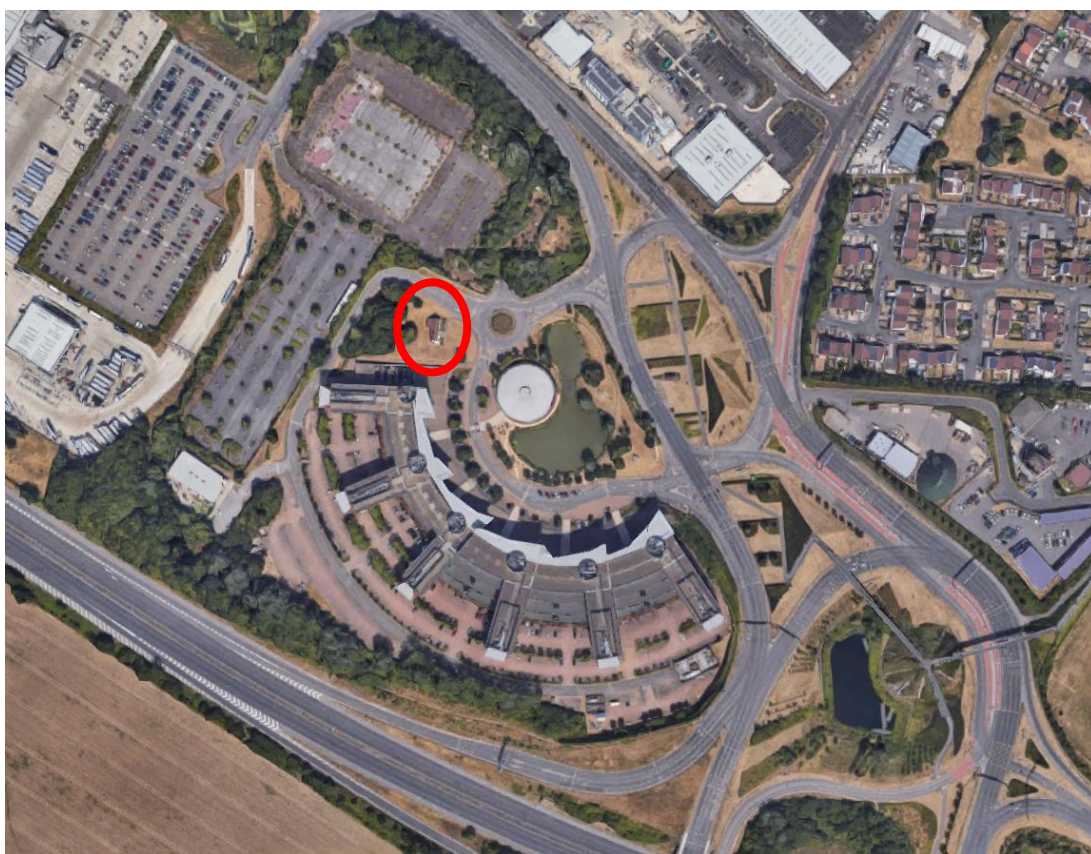


Figure 1 - Location of the site (site circled in red).

- 1.3 This Heritage Statement includes a Significance Assessment which identifies the relative heritage value of the identified heritage assets, including contribution made by their setting. This approach to significance assessment is required in order to satisfy the provisions of Sections 16 and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) where the impact of development on a heritage asset is being considered (Paragraphs 193-197).

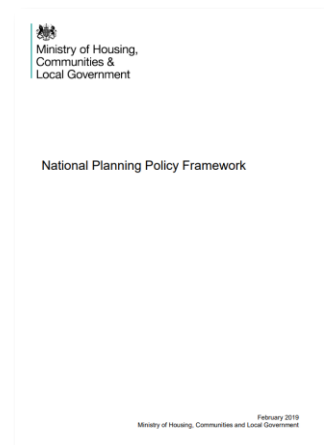
2.0 Heritage Policy and Guidance Summary

Legislation

- 2.1 The primary legislation, which is relevant in this case, relating to Listed Buildings is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 2.2 Section 16 (2) reads: *“In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”*
- 2.3 Section 66(1) reads: *“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”*

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in February 2019, replacing the previously-published 2012 and 2018 Frameworks. With regard to the historic environment, the over-arching aim of the policy remains in line with philosophy of the 2012 framework, namely that *“our historic environments... can better be cherished if their spirit of place thrives, rather than withers.”* The relevant policy is outlined within chapter 16, ‘Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment’.
- 2.5 This chapter reasserts that heritage assets can range from sites and buildings of local interest to World Heritage Sites considered to have an Outstanding Universal Value. The NPPF subsequently requires these assets to be conserved in a *“manner appropriate to their significance”* (Paragraph 184).
- 2.6 NPPF directs local planning authorities to require an applicant to “describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting” and the level of detailed assessment should be “proportionate to the assets’ importance” (Paragraph 189).
- 2.7 Paragraph 190 states that the significance any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal should be identified and assessed. This includes any assets affected by development within their settings. This Significance Assessment should be taken into account when considering the impact of a proposal, “to avoid conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal”. This paragraph therefore results in the need for an analysis of the impact of a proposed development on the asset’s relative significance, in the form of a Heritage Impact Assessment.



- 2.8 Paragraph 193 requires 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.”*
- 2.9 It is then clarified that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, either through alteration, destruction or development within its setting, should require, “clear and convincing justification” (Paragraph 194). This paragraph outlines that substantial harm to Grade II listed heritage assets should be exceptional, rising to ‘wholly exceptional’ for those assets of the highest significance such as scheduled monuments, Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings or registered parks and gardens as well as World Heritage Sites.
- 2.10 In relation to harmful impacts or the loss of significance resulting from a development proposal, Paragraph 195 states the following:
- “Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*
- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
 - b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
 - c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
 - d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.”*
- 2.11 The NPPF therefore requires a balance to be applied in the context of heritage assets, including the recognition of potential benefits accruing from a development. In the case of proposals which would result in “less than substantial harm”, paragraph 196 provides the following:
- “Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.”*
- 2.12 It is also possible for proposals, where suitably designed, to result in no harm to the significance of heritage assets.
- 2.13 The NPPF therefore recognises the need to clearly identify relative significance at an early stage and then to judge the impact of development proposals in that context.
- 2.14 With regard to Conservation Areas and the settings of heritage assets, paragraph 200 requires Local Planning Authorities to look for opportunities for new development, enhancing or better revealing their significance. While it is noted that not all elements of a Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance, this paragraph states that *“proposals that preserve those elements of a setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.”*

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

- 2.15 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was updated on 23 July 2019 and is a companion to the NPPF, replacing a large number of foregoing Circulars and other supplementary guidance.

Historic England Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets Advice Note 12 (October 2019)

- 2.16 This document provides guidance on the National Planning Policy Framework requirement for applicants to describe heritage significance in order to aid local planning authorities' decision making. It reiterates the importance of understanding the significance of heritage assets, in advance of developing proposals. This advice note outlines a staged approach to decision-making in which assessing significance precedes the design and also describes the relationship with archaeological desk-based assessments and field evaluations, as well as with Design and Access Statements.
- 2.17 The advice in this document, in accordance with the NPPF, emphasises that the level of detail in support of applications for planning permission and listed building consent should be no more than is necessary to reach an informed decision, and that activities to conserve the asset(s) need to be proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset(s) affected and the impact on that significance. This advice also addresses how an analysis of heritage significance could be set out before discussing suggested structures for a statement of heritage significance.

Historic England Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance 2008

- 2.18 Historic England sets out in this document a logical approach to making decisions and offering guidance about all aspects of the historic environment, including changes affecting significant places. It states that:

"New work or alteration to a significant place should normally be acceptable if: a. there is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the place; b. the proposal would not materially harm the values of the place, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed; c. the proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future; d. the long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future" (page 59).

Historic England Making Changes to Heritage Assets Advice Note 2 (February 2016)

- 2.19 This advice note provides information on repair, restoration, addition and alteration works to heritage assets. It advises that *"The main issues to consider in proposals for additions to heritage assets, including new development in conservation areas, aside from NPPF requirements such as social and economic activity and sustainability, are proportion, height, massing, bulk, use of materials, durability and adaptability, use, enclosure, relationship with adjacent assets and definition of spaces and streets, alignment, active frontages, permeability and treatment of setting."* (page 10)

Historic England Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment Historic Environment Good Practice Advice (GPA) in Planning Note 2 (March 2015)

- 2.20 This advice note sets out clear information to assist all relevant stake holders in implementing historic environment policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the related guidance given in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). These include: “*assessing the significance of heritage assets, using appropriate expertise, historic environment records, recording and furthering understanding, neglect and unauthorised works, marketing and design and distinctiveness.*” (page 1)

Historic England The Setting of Heritage Assets Historic Environment Good Practice Advice (GPA) in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) (December 2017)

- 2.21 This document presents guidance on managing change within the settings of heritage assets, including archaeological remains and historic buildings, sites, areas and landscapes. Page 6, entitled: ‘*A staged approach to proportionate decision taking*’ provides detailed advice on assessing the implications of development proposals and recommends the following broad approach to assessment, undertaken as a series of steps that apply equally to complex or more straightforward cases:
- Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected
 - Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated
 - Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance or on the ability to appreciate it
 - Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm
 - Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes

Local Policy

Reading Local Plan 2019

- 2.22 A new Reading Borough Local Plan was adopted on 4th November 2019. This document sets out the planning policies for development in Reading up to 2036 and is the main consideration in deciding planning applications. The policies relevant to heritage and this project are:
- 2.23 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.

2.24 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.*

3.0 Methodology

Heritage Assets

- 3.1 A heritage asset is defined within the National Planning Policy Framework as:
- “a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)”* (NPPF Annex 2: Glossary).
- 3.2 To be considered a heritage asset *“an asset must have some meaningful archaeological, architectural, artistic, historical, social or other heritage interest that gives it value to society that transcends its functional utility. Therein lies the fundamental difference between heritage assets and ordinary assets; they stand apart from ordinary assets because of their significance – the summation of all aspects of their heritage interest.”* (*Managing Built Heritage: The Role of Cultural Values and Significance* Stephen Bond and Derek Worthing, 2016.)
- 3.3 ‘Designated’ assets have been identified under the relevant legislation and policy including, but not limited to: World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, and Conservation Areas. ‘Non-designated’ heritage assets are assets which fall below the national criteria for designation.
- 3.4 The absence of a national designation should not be taken to mean that an asset does not hold any heritage interest. The Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) states that *“non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.”* (Paragraph: 039 Reference ID: 18a-039-20190723)
- 3.5 The PPG goes on to clarify that *“a substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets.”*

Meaning of Significance

- 3.6 The concept of significance was first expressed within the 1979 Burra Charter (Australia ICOMOS, 1979). This charter has periodically been updated to reflect the development of the theory and practice of cultural heritage management, with the current version having been adopted in 2013. It defines cultural significance as the *“aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups”*. (Page 2, Article 1.2)

- 3.7 The NPPF (Annex 2: Glossary) also defines significance as *"the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting."*
- 3.8 Significance can therefore be considered to be formed by *"the collection of values associated with a heritage asset."* ('Managing Built Heritage: The Role of Cultural Values and Significance' Stephen Bond and Derek Worthing, 2016.)

Assessment of Significance/Value

- 3.9 It is important to be proportionate in assessing significance as required in both national policy and guidance as set out in paragraph 189 of NPPF.
- 3.10 The Historic England document 'Conservation Principles' states that *"understanding a place and assessing its significance demands the application of a systematic and consistent process, which is appropriate and proportionate in scope and depth to the decision to be made, or the purpose of the assessment."*
- 3.11 The document goes on to set out a process for assessment of significance, but it does note that not all of the stages highlighted are applicable to all places/assets.
- Understanding the fabric and evolution of the asset;
 - Identify who values the asset, and why they do so;
 - Relate identified heritage values to the fabric of the asset;
 - Consider the relative importance of those identified values;
 - Consider the contribution of associated objects and collections;
 - Consider the contribution made by setting and context;
 - Compare the place with other assets sharing similar values;
 - Articulate the significance of the asset.
- 3.12 At the core of this assessment is an understanding of the value/significance of a place. There have been numerous attempts to categorise the range of heritage values which contribute to an asset's significance. Historic England's '*Conservation Principles*' sets out a grouping of values as follows: evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal.
- 3.13 Value-based assessment should be flexible in its application. It is important not to oversimplify an assessment and to acknowledge when an asset has a multi-layered value base, which is likely to reinforce its significance.
- 3.14 As part of this process, the Heritage Gateway, which provides a cross-search over 60 resources including local and national information, is consulted to ensure all relevant information is collected and assessed.

Contribution of setting/context to significance

- 3.15 In addition to the above values, the setting of a heritage asset can also be a fundamental contributor to its significance - although it should be noted that 'setting' itself is not a designation. The value of setting lies in its contribution to the significance of an asset. For example, there may be instances where setting does not contribute to the significance of an asset at all. Historic England's Conservation Principles defines setting as "*an established concept that relates to the surroundings in which a place is experienced, its local context, embracing present and past relationships to the adjacent landscape.*"
- 3.16 It goes on to state that "*context embraces any relationship between a place and other places. It can be, for example, cultural, intellectual, spatial or functional, so any one place can have a multi-layered context. The range of contextual relationships of a place will normally emerge from an understanding of its origins and evolution. Understanding context is particularly relevant to assessing whether a place has greater value for being part of a larger entity, or sharing characteristics with other places*" (Page 39).
- 3.17 In order to understand the role of setting and context to decision-making, it is important to have an understanding of the origins and evolution of an asset, to the extent that this understanding gives rise to significance in the present. Assessment of these values is not based solely on visual considerations but may lie in a deeper understanding of historic use, ownership, change or other cultural influence – all or any of which may have given rise to current circumstances and may hold a greater or lesser extent of significance.
- 3.18 The importance of setting depends entirely on the contribution it makes to the significance of the heritage asset or its appreciation. It is important to note that impacts that may arise to the setting of an asset do not, necessarily, result in direct or equivalent impacts to the significance of that asset(s).

Assessing Impact

- 3.19 It is evident that the significance/value of any heritage asset(s) requires clear assessment to provide a context for, and to determine the impact of, development proposals. Impact on that value or significance is determined by first considering the sensitivity of the receptors identified which is best expressed by using a hierarchy of value levels.
- 3.20 There are a range of hierarchical systems for presenting the level of significance in use; however, the method chosen for this project is based on the established 'James Semple Kerr method' which has been adopted by Historic England, in combination with the impact assessment methodology for heritage assets within the *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* (DMRB: HA208/13) published by the Highways Agency, Transport Scotland, the Welsh Assembly Government and the department for Regional Development Northern Ireland. This 'value hierarchy' has been subject to scrutiny in the UK planning system, including Inquiries, and is the only hierarchy to be published by a government department.
- 3.21 The first stage of our approach is to carry out a thoroughly researched assessment of the significance of the heritage asset, in order to understand its value:

SIGNIFICANCE	EXAMPLES
Very High	World Heritage Sites, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas of outstanding quality, or built assets of acknowledged exceptional or international importance, or assets which can contribute to international research objectives. Registered Parks & Gardens, historic landscapes and townscape of international sensitivity.
High	World Heritage Sites, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas and built assets of high quality, or assets which can contribute to international and national research objectives. Registered Parks & Gardens, historic landscapes and townscape which are highly preserved with excellent coherence, integrity, time-depth, or other critical factor(s).
Good	Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas and built assets (including locally listed buildings and non-designated assets) with a strong character and integrity which can be shown to have good qualities in their fabric or historical association, or assets which can contribute to national research objectives. Registered Parks & Gardens, historic landscapes and townscape of good level of interest, quality and importance, or well preserved and exhibiting considerable coherence, integrity time-depth or other critical factor(s).
Medium/ Moderate	Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas and built assets (including locally listed buildings and non-designated assets) that can be shown to have moderate qualities in their fabric or historical association. Registered Parks & Gardens, historic landscapes and townscape with reasonable coherence, integrity, time-depth or other critical factor(s).
Low	Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and built assets (including locally listed buildings and non-designated assets) compromised by poor preservation integrity and/or low original level of quality of low survival of contextual associations but with potential to contribute to local research objectives. Registered Parks & Gardens, historic landscapes and townscape with modest sensitivity or whose sensitivity is limited by poor preservation, historic integrity and/or poor survival of contextual associations.
Negligible	Assets which are of such limited quality in their fabric or historical association that this is not appreciable. Historic landscapes and townscape of limited sensitivity, historic integrity and/or limited survival of contextual associations.
Neutral/ None	Assets with no surviving cultural heritage interest. Buildings of no architectural or historical note. Landscapes and townscape with no surviving legibility and/or contextual associations, or with no historic interest.

- 3.22 Some assets are more robust than others and have a greater capacity for change and therefore their sensitivity to change or capacity to absorb change may still be assessed as low.

Summary

- 3.23 The aim of this Significance Assessment is to assess the value or significance of the identified heritage assets and/or their settings. The provision of this early assessment of the heritage assets allows a set of parameters to be created for future development to take into account aspects of built heritage impact.

4.0 Historic Context

- 4.1 This section includes a review of available historic maps, planning history, archival documents and aerial images. An assessment of a selection of available historic maps has been undertaken to assist in the understanding of the site's growth and development. Although such information cannot be considered definitive, experience shows that the mapping is often relatively accurate and reliable, particularly the later Ordnance Survey maps, and can help to refine the history of the site when considered alongside written archival data and the physical evidence.
- 4.2 Historically, the area surrounding the site was agricultural, with a number of dispersed farmsteads. Little Lea Farm is shown in historic maps to have included the house and two ranges of agricultural buildings, along with smaller ancillary buildings in the nineteenth century.
- 4.3 Archival documents describe that along with the farmhouse, the farmstead and its immediate surroundings included barn, stables outbuildings, a yard and orchard in the mid-nineteenth century (Berkshire Records Office, ref: D/EBY/T/184/1, 1852).



Figure 2 Six-inch OS map, surveyed 1872-77, published 1883.



Figure 3 Detail of 1872-77 OS map showing Little Lea Farm.



Figure 4 25-inch OS map, revised 1909, published 1911.

- 4.4 A number of the agricultural buildings were demolished in the first half of the twentieth century.

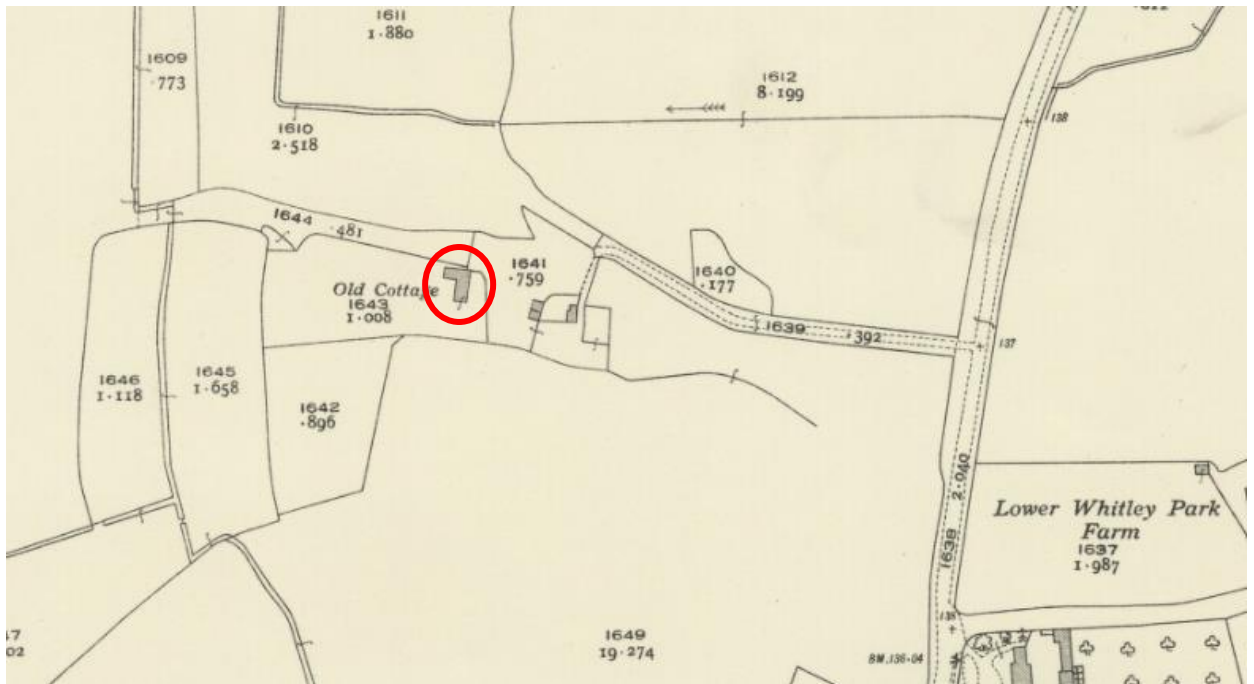


Figure 5 25-inch OS, surveyed 1937, published 1938. The large agricultural buildings had been demolished by this time.

- 4.5 Little Lea Cottage was added to the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest on 22nd March 1957.
- 4.6 The largest change in the surroundings came with the construction of the M4 to the south of the site (opened in 1971). This was soon followed by industrial and commercial development surrounding Little Lea Farmhouse. In April 1976 an agreement was made between Reading Borough Council and Courage Limited brewing company for the development of the land surrounding Little Lea Farm for new brewing and industrial use, to facilitate the brewer moving out of the premises at Bridge Street, in the centre of Reading.

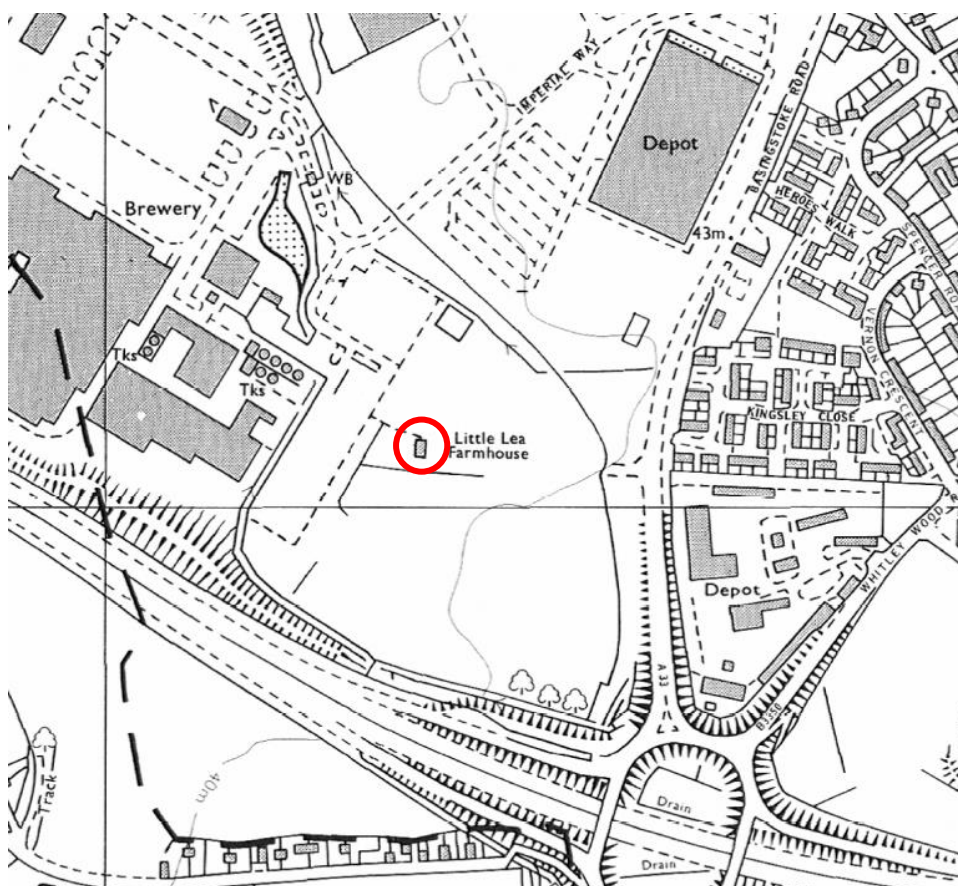


Figure 6 1984 OS map. This smaller scale map shows a simplified form of the Farmhouse, omitting the north west extension which is, however, believed to have remained extant. All remaining agricultural and ancillary buildings had been demolished by this time, and field boundaries removed. The M4 is now shown to the south of Little Lea Farmhouse, along with the brewery site to the west and other large-scale and residential development.

4.7 In 1997 outline planning permission was granted for the 'development for unrestricted B1 use (36,695.5 square metres gross) including 1,260 car parking spaces, associated leisure use, creche including 15 parking spaces, retention of B2 use in established depot, service parking, servicing, landscaping, estate roads and access at land adjacent to A33 Basingstoke Road' (ref: 97/0595/OA).

4.8 Condition 27 of the outline permission stated:

No development shall commence other than the construction of the A33 Relief Road junction and the means of access hereby approved until full details of the proposed change of use of Little Lea Farmhouse to a creche have been submitted for approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority including: layout, facilities, garden, parking area, security and boundaries. None of the B1 business floorspace hereby permitted shall be occupied until the creche has been completed in accordance with the approved details and is available for occupation unless such non-availability is due to unreasonable delay in the grant of listed building consent and/or the approval of details for the creche.

4.9 Condition 28 of the outline permission stated:

No development other than the construction of the A33 Relief Road junction and means of access hereby approved shall commence until a listed building application for Little Lea Farm House has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority. Once approved these works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and programme. Reason: in the interests of the enhancement of the listed building which forms part of the development site.

- 4.10 In April 1999 planning permission for the reserved matters (siting, design, external appearance, landscaping) of the 1997 outline permission was granted (ref: 99/0010/RM).
- 4.11 In October 1999 listed building consent was granted for the 'renovation of external fabric, all materials and colours to match existing. Renovation/renewal to match existing. Details to be agreed with Reading Borough Council' at Little Lea Park (ref: 99/00154/LBC). Conditions included the approval of all external materials and finishes, details of how the ground floor layout could be made fully accessible and approval of method of underpinning. Although details of these works are not available, it is believed they included re-roofing and the installation of the current fit-out including WCs, flooring and lighting.
- 4.12 In February 2000 permission was granted to vary condition 27 'of outline permission 97/0595/OA to allow for use as ancillary office space rather than as a creche as the permission stipulates' (ref: 990017).
- 4.13 In March 2000 Reading Council issued a letter saying Conditions 27 and 28 had been met. It stated that '99/0154/LB submitted prior to development commencing. Since superseded by proposal for office use. Full compliance requires the approved works to be implemented.'
- 4.14 In May 2000 planning permission was granted for a 'new nursery/creche facility' at the business park (ref: 00/00116/FUL). A purpose-built nursery was constructed at the south-west of the Business Park and completed in November 2001 (ref: 00/00582/OWC1).
- 4.15 The area surrounding Little Lea Farmhouse is now dominated by late-twentieth and early-twenty first century industrial and commercial development including Reading International Business Park, Green Park business park and the Madejski football stadium. This area was previously used for minerals extraction and waste management facilities. More recent development includes a water treatment plant and household waste recycling centre. In recent years there has also been some residential development in the surrounding area, for example at Green Park.



Figure 7 2003 Aerial image. Google Earth Pro. Reading International Business Park is now shown.

- 4.16 In 2017 a listed building consent application for 'essential maintenance and repair works with like for like products to all areas of the property' was withdrawn (ref: 171026).



Figure 8 2020 Aerial image. Google.

5.0 Significance Assessment

- 5.1 This section identifies heritage assets which may be affected by future proposals to alter or develop the site. The identification of these assets is consistent with '**Step 1**' of the GPA3 The Setting of Heritage Assets.

Little Lea Cottage – Grade II listed building

- 5.2 Little Lea Cottage (formerly listed as Little Lea Farmhouse) is an early-seventeenth century, two-storey house. The building is timber-framed, the frame remaining evident at first floor with brick and render infill panels. At ground floor the building is rendered and may be on a brick or stone plinth. There are rendered buttresses to the front (east) elevation at ground floor and one two-storey painted-brick buttress on the south elevation. The roof is covered in plain tiles. The building is rectangular in plan, facing east, with a gabled cross-wing at the south end. At the north end of the rear (west) elevation is a single-storey catslide extension. There is a ridge stack with four chimney pots one bay from the south end of the building. There is a later, external chimney stack to the north gable end. There are modern, timber-framed, double-glazed windows throughout. All external doors are modern plank doors.
- 5.3 The building was listed in March 1957. The list description describes a 'projecting lean-to porch off-centre left' which no longer exists, although the front door remains in this location.

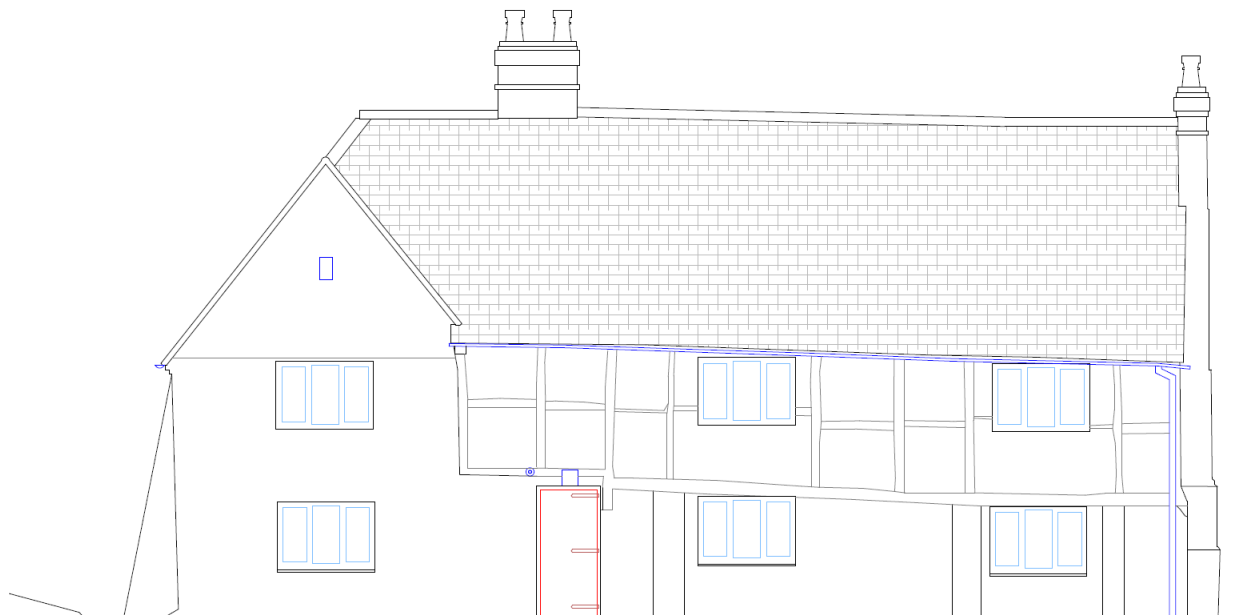


Figure 9 East (front) elevation.

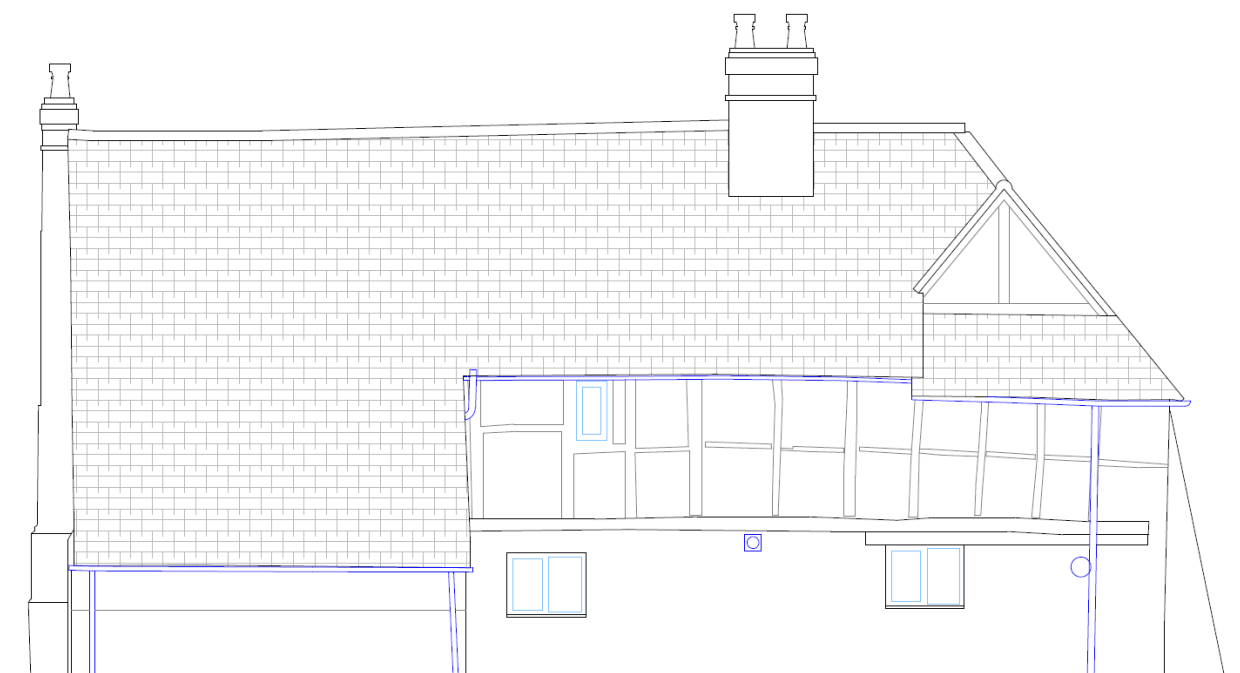


Figure 10 West elevation.

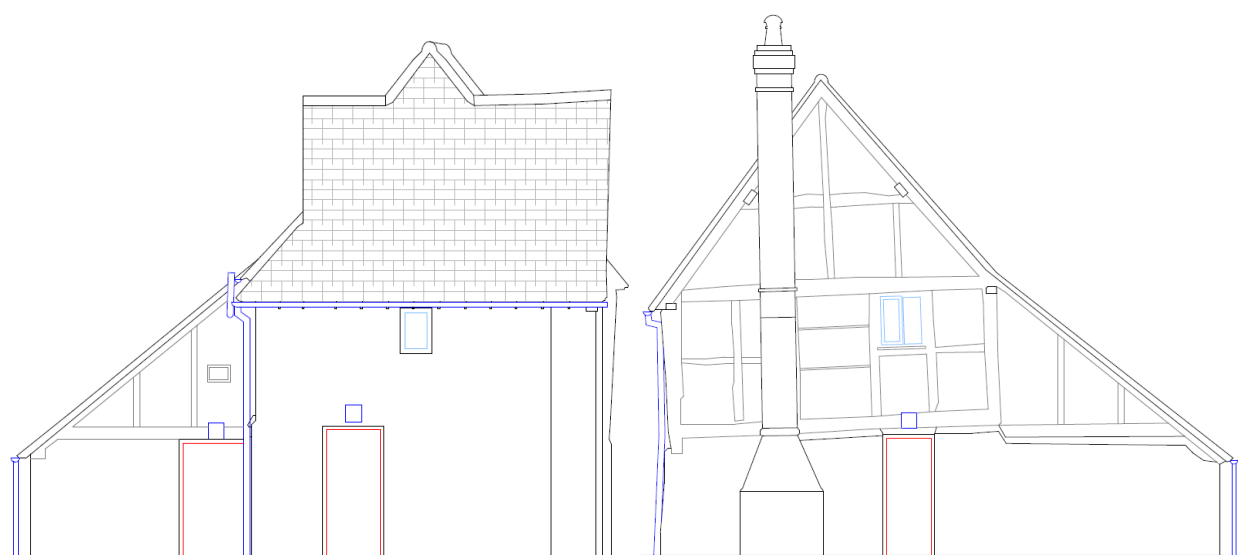


Figure 11 South (left) and north (right) elevations.



Figure 12 Front (east) elevation of Little Lea Farmhouse.



Figure 13 South-east corner of the building, including the cross wing.



Figure 14 Looking towards the north gable end, including non-original external stack.



Figure 15 North and west (rear) elevations with single-storey catslide extension.



Figure 16 The rear (west) elevation, including the south side elevation of the catslide extension.



Figure 17 South elevation with gabled roof form

Ground Floor

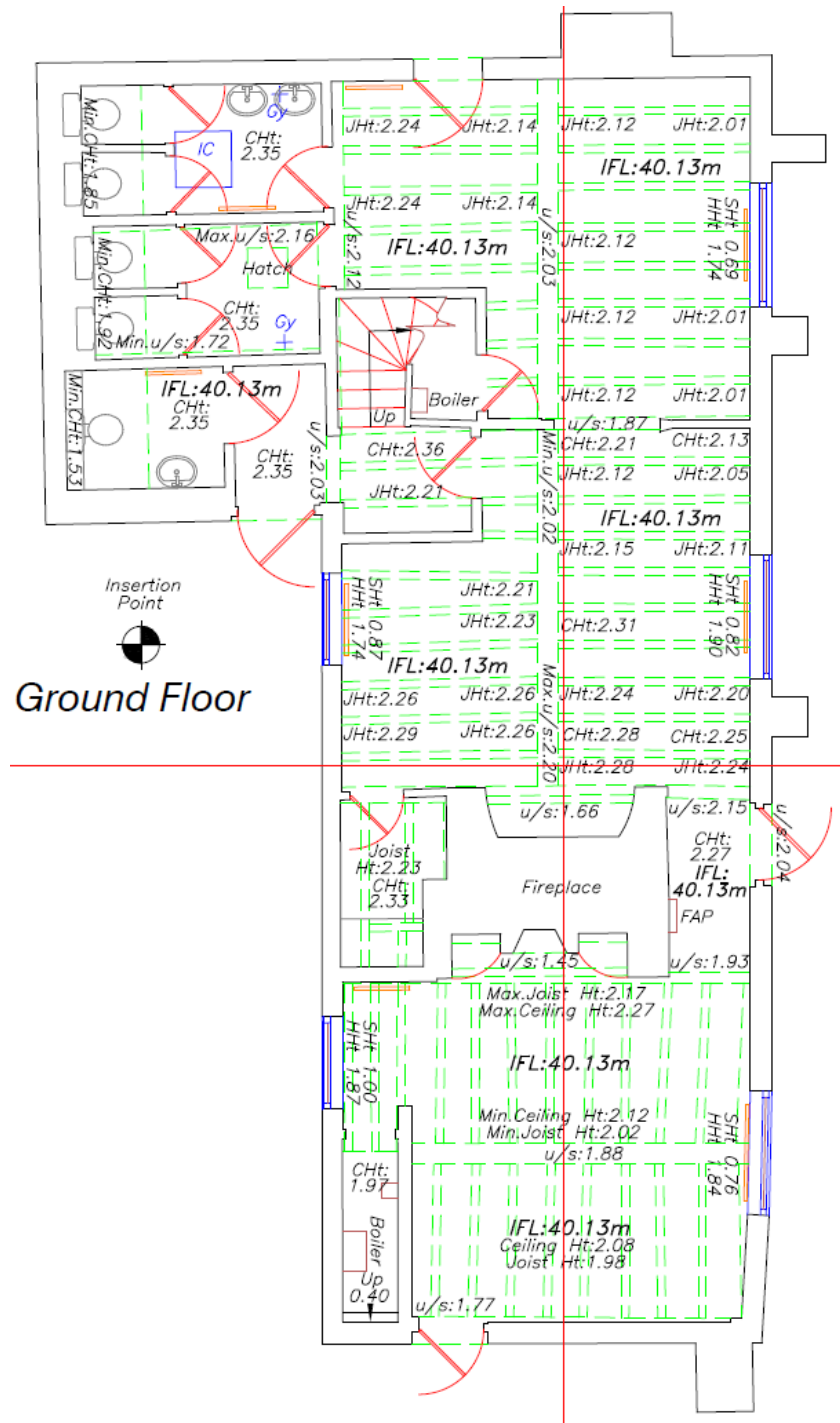


Figure 18 Ground floor plan, 2020.

- 5.4 Internally, the main building is rectangular in plan, made up of three cells running north-south. The building is entered through the off-centre door in the east elevation. It is a baffle entry house, entered facing the side wall of the substantial chimney structure.
- 5.5 In the southern ground floor room there is a narrow room or cupboard to the south separated from the main room. The dividing wall appears to be solid masonry and stops short of the north

wall. There is a similar arrangement in the first-floor southern room, although there the partition is timber-framed and runs the full length of the room. These partitions appear to align with the west gable end of the cross wing which is visible at roof level, with a lean-to extension incorporating the narrow west rooms. This may have been a later addition to the building but is historic. There is a three-light window in the east wall and two-light window in the west wall.

- 5.6 Between the south and central rooms is a large, brick chimney stack. At ground floor this is substantial in width and breadth. The fireplace in the south room has later brick in-fill structures creating a smaller central fireplace and flue with flanking seats. The fireplace in the central room retains its wide inglenook opening and soot blackening is visible up the wide flue. There are two later brick in-fill panels above the inglenook. To the east of the chimney is a corridor between the central and south rooms. To the west of the chimney a small kitchen has been inserted and is accessed from the central room.
- 5.7 The central room is partitioned at the north-west corner to create a lobby to access the staircase and disabled-access W.C (which is housed in the single-storey catslide extension to the west of the main building). The lobby walls and door appear to be modern additions. The timber-framed wall at the north of the room has a wide central opening between two posts leading to the north room. There is a three-light window in the east wall and two-light window in the west wall.
- 5.8 The north room has a partition at the south-west corner enclosing the underside of the staircase. In the west wall there are doors to male and female W.Cs. which are housed in the single-storey catslide extension. There is a plank door in the external north wall. There is a three-light window in the east wall.
- 5.9 Throughout the ground floor, large timber beams are exposed in the ceiling, forming the first-floor structure. The spine beam is chamfered. There are plank doors, most of which are not historic.
- 5.10 The close string, winder staircase is timber, with some of the lower treads and risers apparently replaced or re-covered more recently. The rest of the stairs evidence the Victorian fashion for a central runner carpet and dark-painted wood either side. The staircase is enclosed by rendered walls on the outside and timber planks on the inside. There is also a moulded handrail and plain, square newel post and balusters on the upper portion of the stairs.



Figure 19 Looking south in the south ground floor room.



Figure 20 Fireplace in the north of the south ground floor room. The brick in-fill structures are not original.



Figure 21 Storage room in the west of the south ground floor room.



Figure 22 Ceiling of south ground floor room showing partition between the main room (left) and storage room (right).



Figure 23 Looking north in the central room.



Figure 24 Fireplace in south wall of central ground floor room.



Figure 25 Niche in the side of the fireplace in the central ground floor room.



Figure 26 Looking up the flue from the fireplace in the central room.



Figure 27 Kitchen to the north of the chimney stack to the west of the central room.



Figure 28 Adzed beams in the ceiling of the kitchen.



Figure 29 Looking east in north ground floor room.



Figure 30 Modern external timber door in north gable end.



Figure 31 West of north room showing modern WCs



Figure 32 Female WCs.

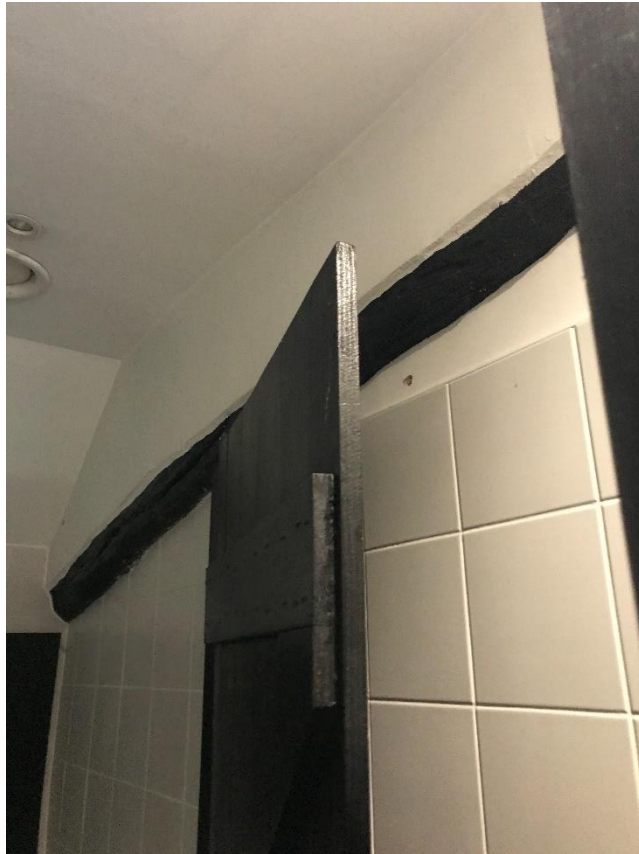


Figure 33 Exposed timber framing in side walls of male WCs.



Figure 34 Looking south in north ground floor room.



Figure 35 Exposed timber framing to ceiling in north ground floor room. Note damp at head of wall.



Figure 36 Concrete floor under carpet tiles in north ground floor room.



Figure 37 East window in north ground floor room.



Figure 38 Detail of east window with curlicue stays in north ground floor room.



Figure 39 Enclosure under the stairs in north ground floor room.



Figure 40 Underside of stairs.



Figure 41 Stairs to the north-west of the central room.





Figure 42 Stairs with moulded handrail.

First Floor

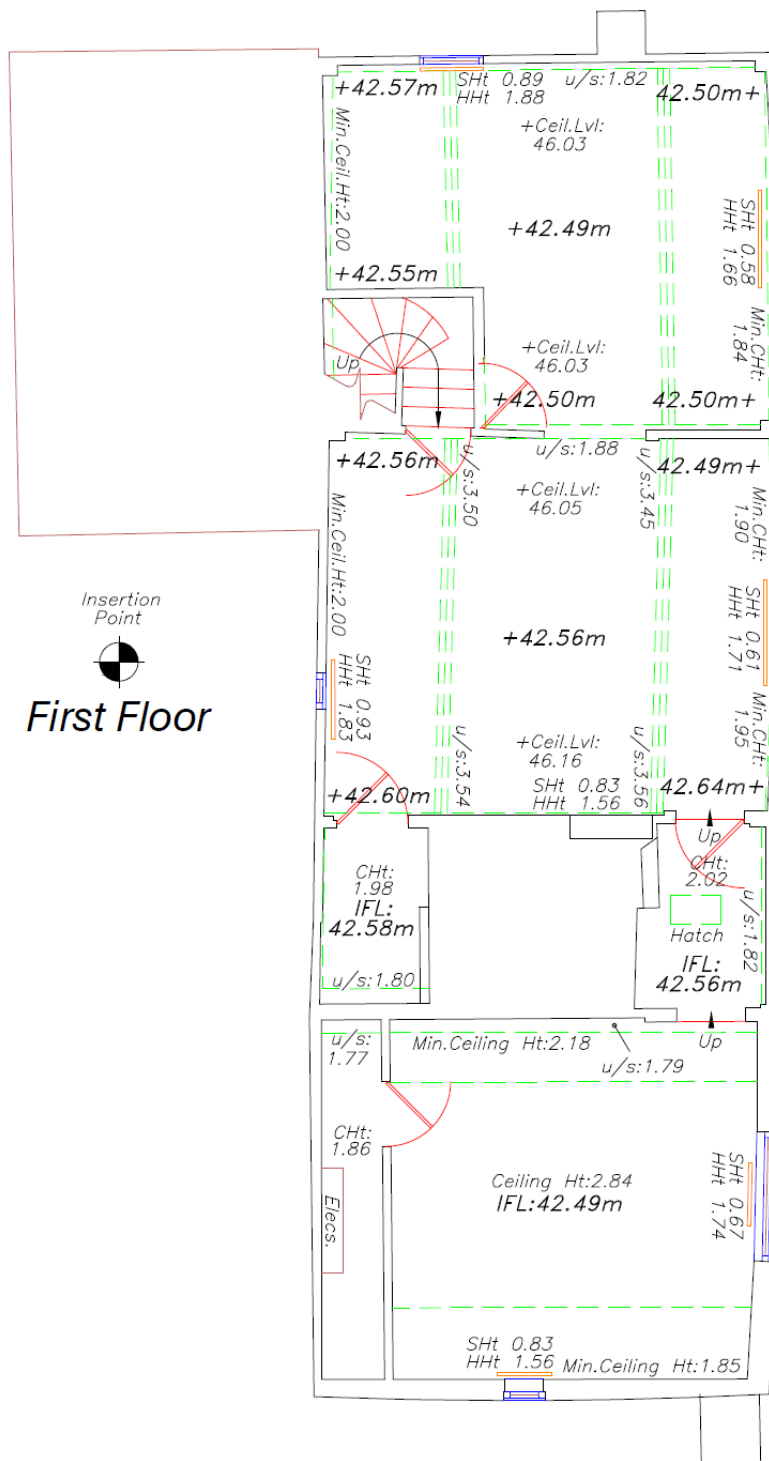


Figure 43 First floor plan.

- 5.11 At first floor, the timber framing in the internal and external walls is exposed. It includes arched braces. The ceiling appears to have been inserted later, with the upper part of the walls and roof structure concealed.

- 5.12 The staircase opens into the central room with an historic timber door. The central room has wide timber floor boards visible in areas, although most of the floor at this level has modern boards laid over. There is a recessed panel in the timber frame over part of the chimney breast in the south end of the central room. There is a wide, central opening between posts in the north wall leading the north room. There is a three-light window in the east wall and two-light window in the west wall.
- 5.13 A corridor to the east of the substantial chimney stack connects the south and central rooms. There is a small room to the west of the stack. There are no fireplaces apparent at this level, although the presence and size of the chimney stack, and presence of hearth tiles in the central room, suggest there were once fireplaces here which have since been covered.
- 5.14 In the south room the formal, symmetrical arrangement of timbers in the west wall indicate it is historic and it appears to be in line with the gable end of the cross wing above. However, there is a door leading to a narrow room beyond which is housed in a lean-to extension. There is a three-light window in the east wall and a smaller casement window in the south wall.
- 5.15 The south-west corner of the north room has been partitioned around the staircase. There is an historic timber plank door to the staircase, although it has been blocked on the stair-side. There is a three-light window in the east wall and a two-light window in the north end wall.



Figure 44 Looking east in the central first floor room.



Figure 45 Looking west in the central first floor room. The top of the staircase is visible in the north-west corner (right).



Figure 46 North wall of central first floor room.



Figure 47 south wall of central first floor room.



Figure 48 Modern boards over historic floor boards in central first floor room.



Figure 49 Modern boards in central first floor room. Clay tiles are visible in front of the south wall, suggesting a hearth.



Figure 50 Corridor from central to south room at first floor. To the right of the corridor is the side wall of the large chimney stack.

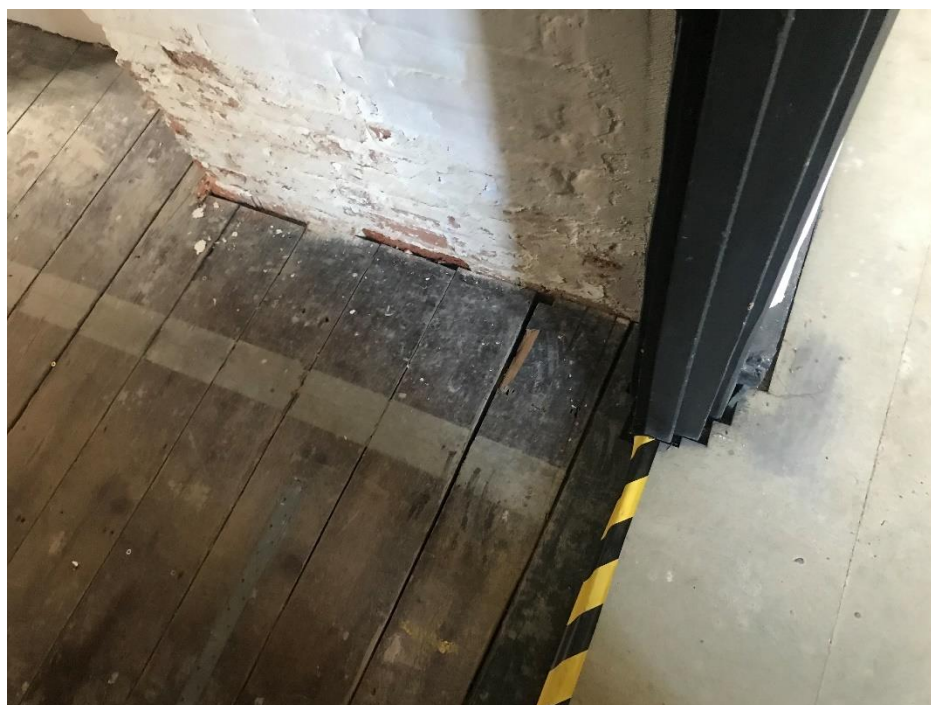


Figure 51 Floor boards in the corridor. These are narrower than those visible in the central first floor room and run perpendicular.



Figure 52 Looking up the brick chimney stack in the attic space above the corridor.



Figure 53 Wattle and daub partition in the attic space. The partition is above the wall between the central first floor room and the corridor to the south.



Figure 54 Partition above the north wall of the first floor corridor.



Figure 55 South end wall of south first floor room.



Figure 56 West wall of south first floor room. Historic timber door leads to the narrow room along the west side of the room.



Figure 57 Storage room along west side of south first floor room.



Figure 58 North wall of north room.

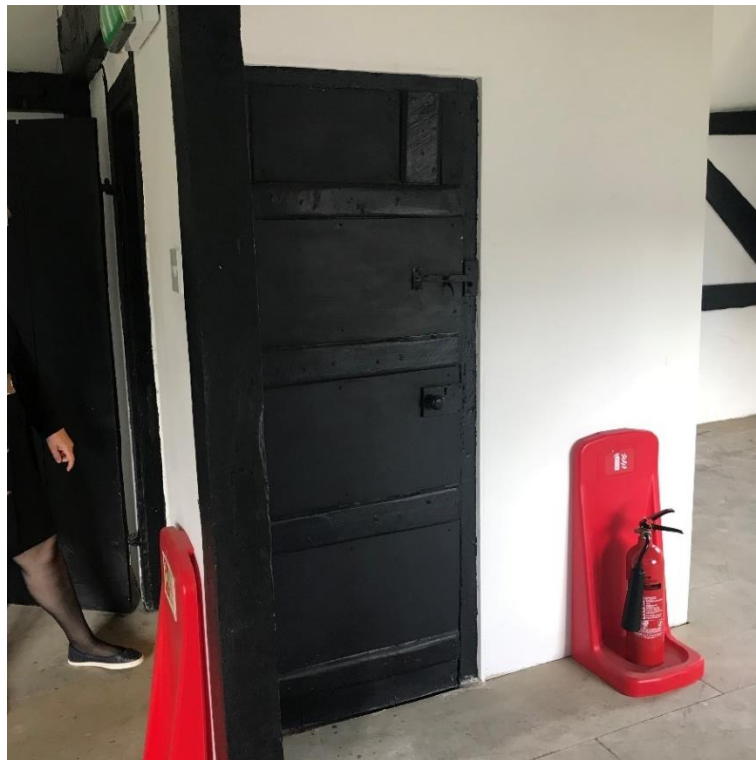


Figure 59 Enclosure around the top of the stairs in the south-west of north first floor room.



Figure 60 West wall and roof slope of north first floor room.



Figure 61 East wall of north first floor room.

Summary of significance

- 5.16 The significance of the listed building is derived from its historic appearance and surviving fabric which provide evidence that it was a comfortable, Jacobean era house. The scale and form of the building are important to this, as are the historic materials. The building is timber-framed on a masonry plinth with brick and render in-fill. Internally, although the original layout of the building is not known, the presence of historic fabric indicates that the existing layout is likely to be historic, with some minor later alterations.

- 5.17 The setting of the listed building has been considerably altered since the start of the twentieth century. Historically surrounded by agricultural buildings and land, these have been lost and Little Lea Farmhouse is now located in a commercial district on the southern edge of Reading, bounded by the M4 and A33.

- 5.18 The farmhouse is located on a small area of lawn at the north of the arc of the four-storey office block. It is at a lower ground level than much of the surrounding development, which shields it somewhat, whilst also emphasising its small scale compared to the more recent business park.

- 5.19 The form, scale, design and external materials of the business park development do not relate to the historic or architectural interest of Little Lea Farmhouse and make no contribution to the listed building's significance.

6.0 Proposals and Impact

- 6.1 Little Lea Farmhouse was refurbished as part of the 1999 application to construct Reading International Business Park. Initially intended to be used as a creche, a new building was constructed at the south-west of the site for a creche instead. The building has not been used for a number of years.
- 6.2 As part of the current refurbishment of the Reading International Business Park site, a new, sustainable use is being sought of Little Lea Farmhouse. The intention is to find a use which supports the wider uses of the Business Park site, requires minimal alterations to the listed building and ensures the ongoing conservation of the listed building.
- 6.3 Key features of historic significance which should be retained:
- A major structural element of historic interest is the brick chimney stack between the central and southern rooms. This is a large stack, with inglenook fireplaces in both ground floor rooms. At first floor, there are no visible fireplaces in the stack although tiles in the central room indicate the presence of a hearth, and four chimney pots above the roof suggest there were four fireplaces. The stack narrows at first and attic floors.
 - The north external stack is likely to be a later addition, although still of interest as it helps to illustrate the evolution of the building in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
 - The staircase appears to date from the early eighteenth century. The balustrade, treads, risers and panelling are historic and are of interest due to their location, layout and fabric.
 - At first floor, there are two doors at the top of the staircase. One door leads into the north room and is blocked from the staircase. The other opens from the top of the staircase into the central room. Both doors are of historic interest and should be retained.
 - All internal and external walls appear historic except modern partitions around the ground floor of the staircase.
 - Historic timber doors at first floor.
- 6.4 At ground floor, the internal doors are modern timber plank doors and are of no interest. All windows are modern and are of no interest.
- 6.5 It is currently proposed to refurbish Little Lea Farmhouse and convert it, potentially for use as wellness/medical purposes for users of the business park (final use to be determined).



Figure 62 Draft proposals for the refurbishment of Little Lea Farmhouse, BGY 1st September 2020. N.B. the existing plans used as a base for these proposals are not fully accurate.

- 6.6 At ground floor, accessible, male and female WCs have previously been inserted into the single-storey extension at the north end of the west elevation. Whilst the fit-out is modern and of no heritage interest, the extension and the dividing walls include evidence of historic fabric, including high level beams in the north and south walls of the centre (male) WCs. These beams appear historic and if openings are required to provide access below the timbers, investigations will be required to determine whether the walls are of historic interest.
- 6.7 It is also proposed to block the current doorways from the ground floor north room into the WCs. These doors are modern and their removal would have no impact on the building's special interest. The doorways are not believed to be historic. Nevertheless, the infill would be reversible and would have no impact on the historic fabric.
- 6.8 It is proposed to insert two partitions into the central first floor room in order to create three first floor rooms and provide access via a new corridor. This would reduce the size of the central room and reduce the ability to appreciate all walls and ceiling. However, this is considered a relatively minor change and it is required to create an additional consulting room in the building and this is the most suitable place due to the size and location of the room. The existing ceiling heights throughout the first floor would remain unaltered, allowing a continued appreciation of part of the roof structure and height of the spaces at this level. The works are also reversible in nature and would have no adverse impact on historic fabric.

- 6.9 It is also proposed to insert a small number of doors in existing openings internally in order to create private rooms. This would not affect the hierarchy or layout of the space and, subject to detailed design, would not affect the special interest of the listed building. Doors should be simple timber plank doors to match existing elsewhere in the building. No historic fabric should be removed to enable the fitting of the proposed doors.
- 6.10 It is proposed to create a French drain around the perimeter of the listed building to reduce damp problems by allowing water to drain away from the base of the structure. This is a pragmatic and accepted approach in historic building terms, that will help safeguard the building's historic fabric whilst ensuring its long-term conservation. The proposals are supported by the building's surveyor's report and will result in the removal of modern inappropriate concrete paving slabs of no architectural or historic interest.
- 6.11 Finally, it is proposed to paint the existing terracotta tiles of the modern office building black. Whilst the existing terracotta colour complements the colour of the brick work of the farmhouse, the black paint would equally complement the coloured timber frame of the building. Notwithstanding this, the proposed painting of the building falls under permitted development rights as acknowledged by the council, so is considered to be an immaterial consideration in planning and listed building terms.
- 6.12 We therefore believe that the proposals will preserve the significance of the listed building and help to ensure its long-term conservation. The proposals meet the requirements of sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the NPPF and relevant local planning policies relating to heritage. We see no heritage reason why the council should not view these proposals favourably.

APPENDIX 1

STATUTORY LIST DESCRIPTIONS

LITTLE LEA COTTAGE

 [Be the first to contribute](#)

Overview

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1303791

Date first listed: 22-Mar-1957

Date of most recent amendment: 14-Dec-1978

Statutory Address: LITTLE LEA COTTAGE, BASINGSTOKE ROAD

Map



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Location

Statutory Address: LITTLE LEA COTTAGE, BASINGSTOKE ROAD

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District: Reading (Unitary Authority)

National Grid Reference: SU 71325 69059

Details

BASINGSTOKE ROAD 1. 5128 (West Side) Little Lea Cottage (Formerly listed as Little Lea Farmhouse under Whitley) SU 76 NW 18/301 22.3.57. II 2. Early C17. 2 storeys, ground floor stucco with buttresses. Timber-framer with brick nogging (stucco to south). Gable to left. 3 ranges of leaded 3 light casements (early C19 on 1st floor to right). Projecting lean-to porch off-centre left. Tiled roof. External chimney to right hand gable end. Interior has inglenook fireplace to ground floor, west room.

Listing NGR: SU7132569059

Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number: 38751

Legacy System: LBS

Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

End of official listing
