

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR INSTALLATION OF CAR AND PEDESTRIAN ENTRANCE GATES

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

DUKESBRIDGE HOUSE, READING CENTRAL, DUKES STREET, READING

ON BEHALF OF LIPMAN PROPERTIES LTD

**TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004**

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Pegasus Group

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 **DESIGN**  **ENVIRONMENT**  **PLANNING**  **ECONOMICS**  **HERITAGE**

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement forms part of a suite of documents submitted to Reading Borough Council for consideration in support of the applicant's proposal for the installation of entrance gates at Reading Central (formerly Dukesbridge House, Duke Street, Reading).
- 1.2 This statement has been prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of the applicant and sets out detail for installation of car and pedestrian entrance gates to Reading Central.
- 1.3 The following documents accompany this application:
- Application Form
 - Planning, Design and Access Statement
 - Block Plan dwg:5016-PA-01
 - Site Plan dwg:5016-PA-02
 - Existing Plan and Elevation dwg:5016-PA-03
 - Proposed Plan and Elevation dwg:5016-PA-04
 - Email: ASBO issues
 - Application fee of £234 (Other Operations – not coming within any of the above categories, £234 per 0.1ha or part thereof)

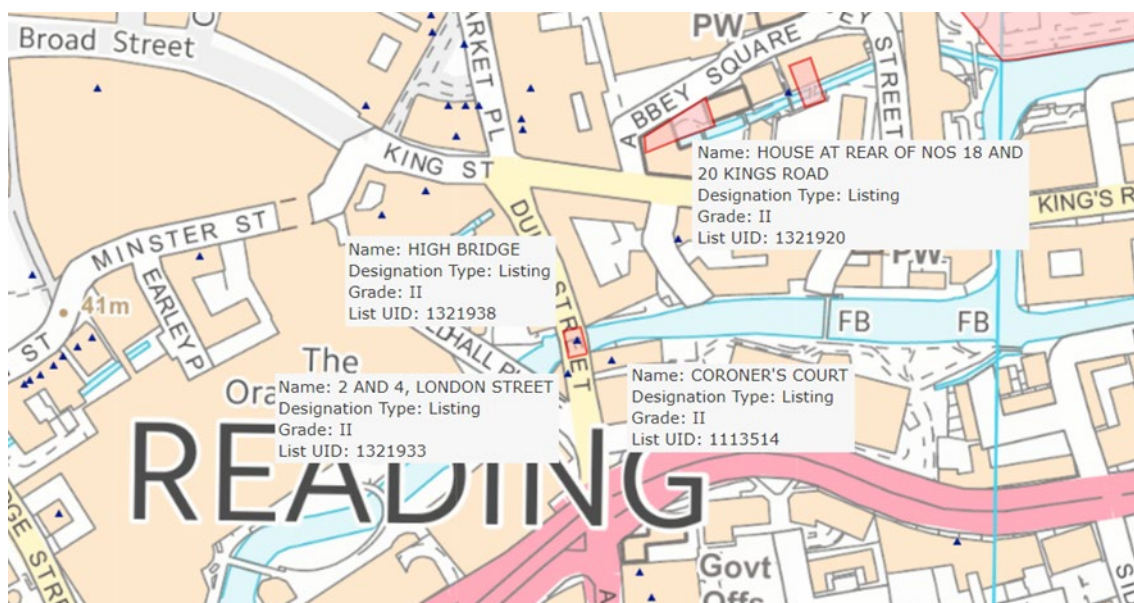
2.0 Site Context

- 2.1 The Site is located at the former Dukesbridge House, situated on the East side of Duke Street with the River Kennet immediately to the South.
- 2.2 The site is bounded by office and retail units to the west on Duke Street, offices to the South and a mixture of offices, retail and residential to the north and east.
- 2.3 The application site is located within an Area for Architectural Potential, on an identified cycle route, within the Reading Central Area, but outside of the tall buildings, central and office cores and within the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area as defined by the Local Plan proposals map, November 2019. The whole of the Reading Central Area is designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)



Figure 1 – Local Plan Proposals Map, November 2019 extract

- 2.4 Vehicular access to the site is via Highbridge Wharf which runs along the east of the site.
- 2.5 In addition to its location within a Conservation Area, the site is in close proximity to number of heritage assets, including listed buildings and structures, as set out below:



- 2.6 Below are images of gates which have been installed in the vicinity of the application site.



Selbourne Court, Kings Road



Minister Street, Reading

3.0 Planning History

- 3.1 Ref: 190602: Change of use of part lower ground floor, part ground floor, first, second, third and loft floors from Class B1(a) to Class C3 to comprise 77 dwellings. **Permission Granted**
- 3.2 Ref:191393: Alterations to Dukesbridge House, including: Replacement of grills with windows at lower ground floor level on east and south elevations; new windows at ground to second floor on north elevation; new windows at lower ground to third floor on east elevation; installation of rooflights; new external cycle parking, bin storage and external lighting within courtyard area and various other associated alterations to facilitate the implementation of prior approval (190602). **Permission Granted**

4.0 Proposed Development

4.1 The description of the proposed development at Reading Central is:

"Installation of 2m high painted galvanised mild steel gates to provide one car entrance and two pedestrian entrances"

4.2 The proposed gates will provide two pedestrian entrances/exits and one for cars. The gates will not be visible from Kings Road.

4.3 The purpose of the gates is to better protect the existing residents by providing a more secure access. This is essential due to the rise in anti-social behaviour on the site, particularly near to rear entrances to Dukesbridge House and Duke Street properties. Examples of this behaviour include graffiti on the walls, urination on main doors and gatherings of groups of people at the entrances, these are resulting in a feeling of unease among residents in the building. Please find attached an example of this in the document labelled 'Email proof'.

5.0 Assessment against Planning Policy

- 5.1 The current, relevant adopted Document Plan consists of the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019),

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.2 For the purposes of this application, the National Planning Policy Framework is a material consideration. The following sections of the NPPF are relevant:
- 5.3 Chapter 8 (Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities) sets out the importance of access to high quality open spaces and ensuring spaces are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion.
- 5.4 The proposal will contribute to the points set out in chapter 8 as it will provide the residents with a safer entrance to their properties by reducing the ability for crime to take place, therefore improving the quality of life for residents. The site will remain accessible to all residents as they will be provided with access passes.
- 5.5 Chapter 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) places great emphasis on enhancing and protecting the historic environment; minimising any conflict between the heritage assets conservation and any aspect of the proposal. It is clearly stated that if development 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.
- 5.6 The site is located within close proximity to the Grade II Listed House at the Rear of Nos 18 and 20 Kings Road and falls within the boundary of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area, therefore the proposals have the potential to impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the significance of the Listed Building via a change in setting.

5.7 Reading Borough Council adopted a Conservation Area Appraisal which illustrates the positive and negative qualities of the Conservation Area broken down into four character areas. The site falls within Area 3: Jackson's Corner incl. King Street, Duke Street and the River Kennet. It is stated that the positive qualities of this area include:

- *Jacksons Corner, a once busy crossroads and locally known landmark;*
- *Barclays Bank, King Street by Henry and Nathaniel Briant, 1838-9, in an ornate Italian palazzo style;*
- *The George Hotel, King Street, built around a courtyard with entrances from King Street and Minster Street, first mentioned in 1423 but built and re-built many times;*
- *8 High Street, an ornate tiled and terracotta building in Art Nouveau style;*
- *The former Ship Hotel, Duke Street, an early 20th century re-building of an earlier coaching inn;*
- *River Kennet and riverside views from the two bridges;*
- *Views up High Street of St Laurence's church tower;*
- *Holy Brook, glimpsed from Kings Walk;*
- *Historic stone setted road surface in Thorn Lane;*
- *Riverside trees.*

5.8 It also describes the negative features within the character area, which are as follows:

- *Noise and fumes from traffic;*
- *Garish shop signage (e.g. Davina's, 2 Duke Street);*
- *Nos. 14/16 King Street (Mothercare) is completely out of character with neighbouring historic buildings;*
- *Historic architectural character is much diluted by a high proportion of undistinguished modern developments;*
- *No. 22 Duke Street (former Ship Hotel) is empty and boarded up.*

- 5.9 Dukesbridge Court, albeit a larger modern addition to the townscape, is not identified as a negative feature in its own right, and has been designed as to appear like a series of buildings as opposed to a single block. It is constructed in the predominant material found throughout the Conservation Area (brick). The car park is tucked behind the street-facing frontages and allows for built form backing the pavement and the dense urban grain to continue to be appreciated in this part of the Conservation Area. Therefore, the site is considered to make a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 5.10 The Grade II Listed House is a three-storey early 19th century brick building, whose principal frontage faces the application site. It has elements such as a stone portico, brick flat arches and an iron railing. The significance of the building is principally embodied in its remaining historic fabric and an example of an early 19th century detached house within the city centre of Reading. It possesses features which are typical of a building of this type and age.
- 5.11 It is clear that the setting of the Listed Building has changed dramatically over the years, as seen in in the 1897 Ordnance Survey Map and 2019 aerial view.

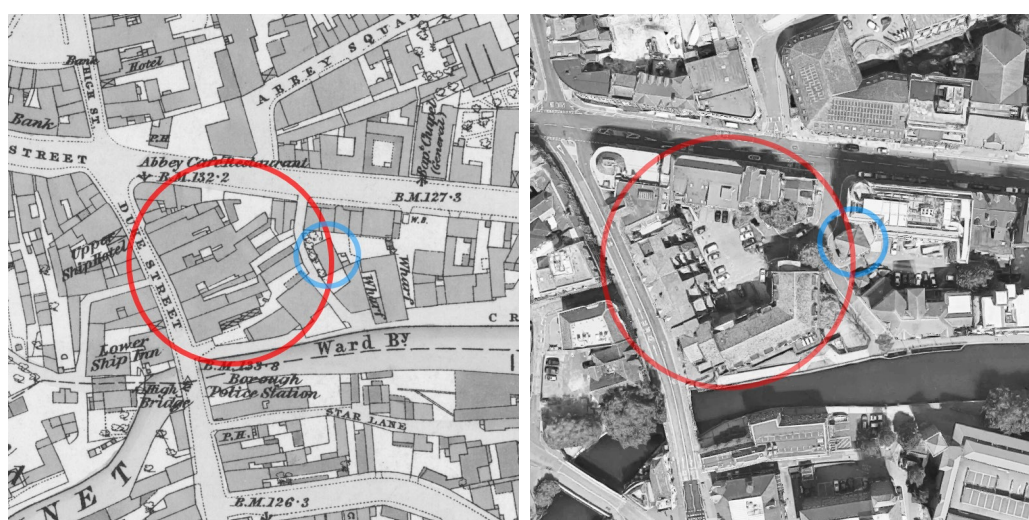


Figure 1: 1897 Ordnance Survey Map (left) and 2019 aerial view (right) with the site in red and the Listed Building in blue.

- 5.12 Elements of that setting which contribute positively to the significance of the Listed Building include:

The retained historic street layout, with Highbridge Wharf continuing to be a secondary thoroughfare extending from a principal thoroughfare (King Street);

- Surviving historic built form, including 14 and 16 King Street; and
- Proximity to the River Kennet and surviving glimpsed views towards it.

5.13 The application site is a later development that has been articulated to appear as a series of buildings. It considered to make no particular contribution to the setting of the Listed Building.

5.14 The proposals would not exacerbate any of the negative features of the Conservation Area, and would, in fact, contribute to more legibility in the street layout, by providing a clear definition of Highbridge Wharf's extent. This will also reinforce the separation seen between the site and Highbridge Wharf on historic maps. The design of the gate has taken cues from gates located nearby and therefore reflects the character and materiality of the area. The ability to understand and appreciate the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would remain intact. Therefore, with reference to the levels of harm in the NPPF, the proposals would result in 'no harm'.

5.15 The proposed development has also been carefully designed to integrate with the Grade II listed, House at the rear of 18 and 20 Kings Road, which also possesses a railing. The proposals will have no effects on the ability to understand the elements of the Listed Building or its setting which contribute to its significance. Therefore, with reference to the levels of harm in the NPPF, the proposals would result in 'no harm'.

5.16 Further benefits of the scheme include providing a safe site for the existing residents who are currently suffering from frequent Anti-social behaviour, which results in graffitied walls and member of the public urinating at the front door.

Local Plan (Nov 2019)

- 5.17 The Local Plan sets out the Council's adopted planning strategy for the Borough up to 2036. The following policies are considered relevant to this proposal:
- 5.18 **Policy CR2 (Design in Central Reading)** – states that the architectural details and materials used in Central Area should be high quality and respect the form and quality of detailing and materials in areas local to the development site.
- 5.19 Point 5.3.8, following from the above policy states that importance may be placed on using urban design principles to enhance community safety and design out crime in the Central Area.
- 5.20 The existing site provides a rather dull view with regular graffiti on the walls, groups of people loitering and repeated bouts of urination occurring at the rear entrances to retail and residential units on Duke Street, as well as Dukesbridge House. The proposal aims to remove this by using high quality materials and architectural design to install gates. The design and materials to be used in the proposal are illustrated in plan dwg: 5016-PA-04, in which the elevation of the gates shows that the design is of high quality with painted galvanised mild steel that will be produced by a specialist. The proposed gates reflect the detailing and materials of gates located in local area as they are of a similar design and colour to those displayed in Section 2 of this statement.
- 5.21 **Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)** – indicates that developments should create a safe and accessible environment where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion.
- 5.22 As explained previously, the site suffers with issues of crime and disorder and the proposal seeks to rectify this by providing the residents with a secure pedestrian/car entrance. The aim of this is to reduce the ability for crime to take place and improve the quality of life for existing and future residents.

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- 5.23 **Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)** – states that approved development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties in terms of; crime and safety.
- 5.24 The proposal will comply with policy CC8 as it aims to improve the living environment of existing residential properties by reducing the issues of crime and improving safety.
- 5.25 **Policy EN1 (Protection and enhancement of the historic environment)**
- states that proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significant of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located.
- 5.26 The proposal has been carefully designed to integrate with the adjacent listed building which possesses a railing. There will be no negative effect on the significant of the adjacent listed building and its setting.
- 5.27 Policy EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas)** – states that proposals must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness of the Conservation Areas.
- 5.28 This policy is relevant to the site as it is located within the Market Street/London Street Conservation Area. As explained previously, the proposal has taken design cues from gates in the vicinity and the adjacent listed building. The proposal will also improve the local character by reducing the ability for crime and disorder to take place.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 This proposal will result in a development that gains significant support from national and local policies. These policies encourage safe environments to ensure fear of crime is reduced and therefore improve the quality of life for residents.
- 6.2 In compliance with National Policy, the proposal has been identified to have 'no harm' on the adjacent Listed Building. Furthermore, the proposal will provide a more secure living environment for the existing residents by reducing the opportunity for anti-social behaviour.
- 6.3 Taking the above into consideration, it is therefore respectfully requested that full planning permission be granted without delay.