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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

BRISTOL AND WEST ARCADE, 173-175 FRIAR STREET - READING

REV A - JANUARY 2021

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This document contains images and diagrams for illustrative purposes which have been prepared during the course of design development and, in some instances, prior to the finalisation of the design. For the avoidance of doubt the application drawings represent the design upon which planning approval is sought.

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1.0 - INTRODUCTION

BRISTOL AND WEST ARCADE, 173-175 FRIAR STREET - READING

1.0 - INTRODUCTION



1.1 - PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of the full detailed planning application for 173-175 Friar Street, Reading, RG1 1JL which relates to:

Full planning application for - erection of a C1 182 bed hotel with A3 food and drink facilities.

It includes the previously applied and consented full detailed planning and Listed building application for 27-32 Market Place (LPA reference number: 180358). This consists of; Demolition of vacant former Bristol & West Arcade (173 – 175 Friar Street) and redevelopment of site to provide 8 C3 residential units, 2 A1/A2/A3 retail units & 1 A4 public house.

1.2 - APPLICATION OVERVIEW

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of the Applicant, Sonic Star Properties, in support of a detailed Planning application for the comprehensive redevelopment of the Bristol and West Arcade site in Reading town center. The site has sat derelict for ten years since an abortive redevelopment by the previous owners. The new owner is keen to develop the site into a vibrant collection of properties to bring new life to this corner of Reading town center.

In 2019 the site (incl. The Grade II listed buildings of 27-32 Market Place) received planning permission approval (Ref. 180358) for the construction of three floors of office space, 43 new-build and refurbished apartments with associated amenity spaces and 8 ground floor retail units, including a public house within a new-build multi-use building to Friar Street and the renovated Listed buildings to Market Place. The existing arcade and pedestrian route was adjusted across the site.

Market fluctuations have required this strategy to be reassessed and the Friar Street site to be redeveloped as a hotel rather than office/residential accommodation. This document sets out the design proposal for the construction of a 9 storey new build hotel (incl. Basement) with ground floor bar/restaurant on the Friar Street site and retention of the 8 refurbished apartments with associated amenity spaces and 3 ground floor retail units, including a public house within the renovated Listed buildings to Market Place. The approved arcade and pedestrian re-routing is maintained but increased to form a public courtyard with live frontage.

From the outset of the project, the client has been keen that the consultant team build upon the extensive consultation and design development of the previous application. Over the past year pre-application consultations have been held with Reading Borough Council (RBC) and Historic England to adapt the design which we feel best meets the aspirations of all stake-holders. The proposal will provide a sustainable and viable future for this maligned town center site.

1.0 - INTRODUCTION



1.3 - THE APPLICANT

The applicant has been developing property in the UK for over twenty years. They have developed a variety of building function with a central ethos of providing superb accommodation.

Recent projects include:

- 9 apartments and 23 HMO units on Kensington High Street, Central London
- 18 Apartments on Finchley Road, North London
- 25 bedroom extension to a homeless hostel, East London
- 16 apartments within an existing building in West London

The applicant has a successful history working collaboratively with Reading Borough Council, The Council's Design Review Panel, Historic England, key local stakeholders and the public through a public exhibition on the previous application to achieve the best possible solution for the town as well as themselves. The same ethos has been utilised on this application to achieve the best design.

1.4 - CONSULTANT TEAM

The core project team and their roles include:

- NORR Architects
- Union Property (Project Management)
- Savills (Planning Consultants)
- Turley (Heritage Consultants)
- Instinctive Partners (PR Consultant)
- JH Partners (Energy and Strategy)
- Summers-Inman (BREEAM)
- IPRT Group (Transport and Travel Plan Statements)
- TBC (CDM Advisor)
- Building Control Approval (Approved Inspector)
- Jenson Hughes (Fire Engineer)
- Delva Patman Redler LLP (Rights of Light & Sunlight/Daylight)



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2.0 - LOCATION

BRISTOL AND WEST ARCADE, 173-175 FRIAR STREET - READING

2.0 - LOCATION



2.1 - LOCATION/ CHARACTER

This proposal concerns a central Reading site which has been largely vacant for the last decade. The site comprises four properties:

- 173 - 175 Friar Street – a large, deep site with the old arcade passing through at ground floor level.
- 27 - 28 Market Place – a small Grade II Listed shop unit
- 29 - 31 Market Place – a Grade II Listed public house
- 32 Market Place – an old Grade II Listed building society building

The site sits within a larger urban block. To the West, the site is adjacent to the large Marks and Spencer's. Immediately to the North of the site is Town Hall Square where the building faces Saint Laurence Church and the old Town Hall. To The South, the Friar Street property adjoins Market Way – the arcade through 173 - 175 Friar Street links this passageway to Town Hall Square. To The East, the Market Place buildings face onto Market Place Square. Some other smaller properties complete the block.

The existing properties on Market Place directly adjoin the Friar Street property at the back and have been built up to the boundary such that there is no longer any space between them.

173 - 175 Friar Street is currently vacant. When it was last occupied it was used as offices at first, second and third floors with an arcade of small shop units at ground floor. New construction works were commenced and then halted in approximately 2007/8. These works are very evident to the rear of the site where the previously granted consent has been partial implemented.

27 - 28 Market place is one of the oldest properties in Reading. It is also vacant and appears to have been last in use as a martial arts shop. 29 - 31 Market place is a vacant Listed pub and 32 Market Place is a Grade II Listed, vacant building society building. All of these buildings are in a poor state of repair at the time of works halting in 2008. Works to these buildings had not yet commenced and they are clearly very dilapidated.



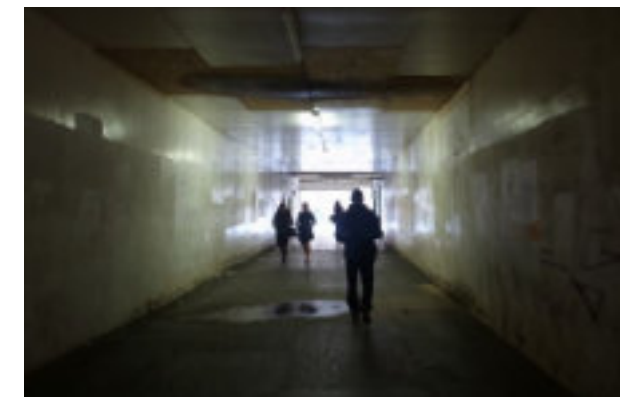
27 - 28 Market Place



23 - 26 Market Place



173 - 175 Friar Street



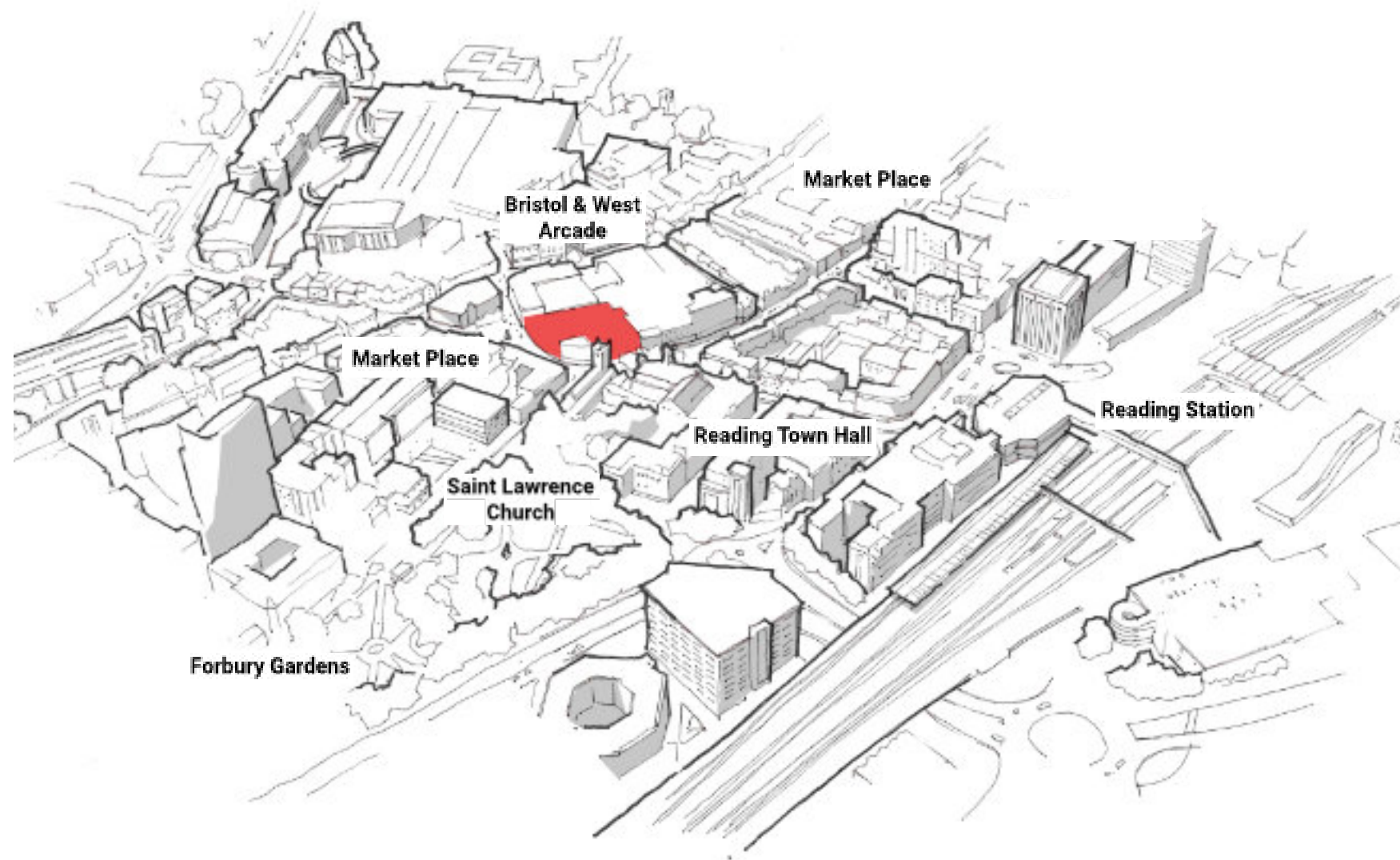
The Arcade

2.0 - LOCATION



Site Overview showing buildings in context

2.0 - LOCATION



2.2 - IMMEDIATE CONTEXT & SURROUNDINGS

Reading Station is within approximately 200m of the site. Its central position offers excellent transportation links, access to a wide variety of shops and restaurants, and Forbury Gardens is within a 50m short walk. Kings Meadow and the river Thames are within 300m of the site.

The property has a number of neighbouring properties and urban features which directly affect it:

- St. Laurence Church. This high-quality Grade I Listed church sits immediately opposite the front elevation of Friar Street. It is built in sandstone and flint.
- The Town Hall Council Chambers. Another high-quality Grade II* Listed building in traditional red and grey Reading brickwork.
- Town Hall Square. The square currently feels rather underused and unappreciated, in part because the applications site fails to engage it currently in its vacant state. The square represents an important opportunity to develop this part of Reading town center.
- 172 Friar Street. This is the last remaining part of the original arcade building. Although fairly modest in red and blue Reading brickwork it remains a high quality facade at upper levels, sadly the shopfront has been eroded by the current occupier.
- Market Place Square. Another square with a fairly mixed series of building frontages, some of high quality and others somewhat lower quality. Importantly, the square is undergoing a successful upgrade as new restaurants move into several units.
- 23 - 26 Market Place. A series of Grade II Listed buildings read as three elevations. These turn the corner between Friar Street and Market Place and are effectively held on either side by the application site.



Town Hall Square



Reading Town hall



Market place



Forbury Gardens

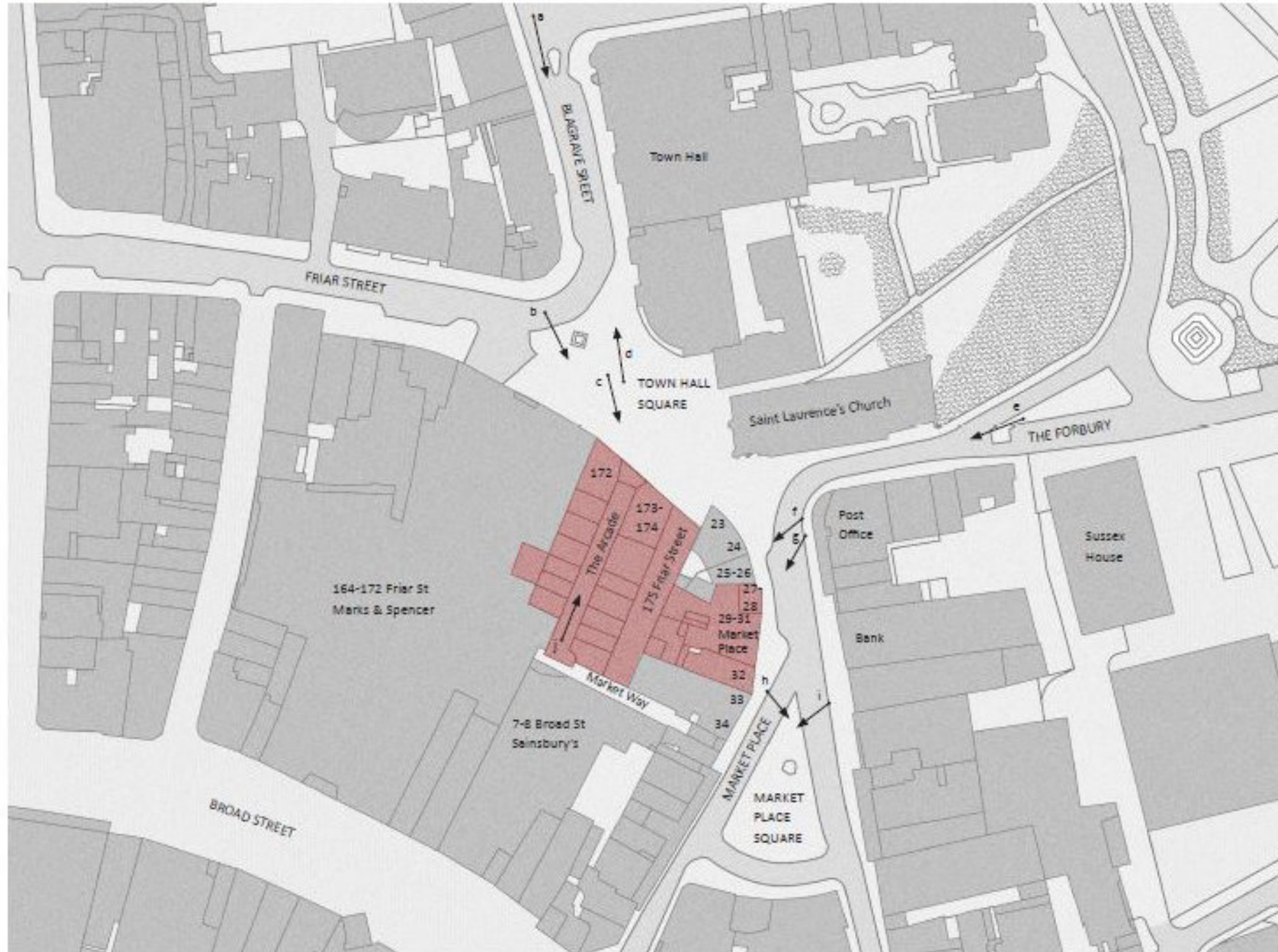
2.0 - LOCATION



Site Overview showing buildings in context

2.0 - LOCATION

A key to critical townscape views



a. Blagrove Street and Reading Town Hall



f. 23-26 Market Place

2.0 - LOCATION



b. Town Hall Square and Queen Victoria Jubilee statue



c. 173-175 Friar Street



d. Town Hall view from Town Hall Square



e. The Forbury and St Laurence Church



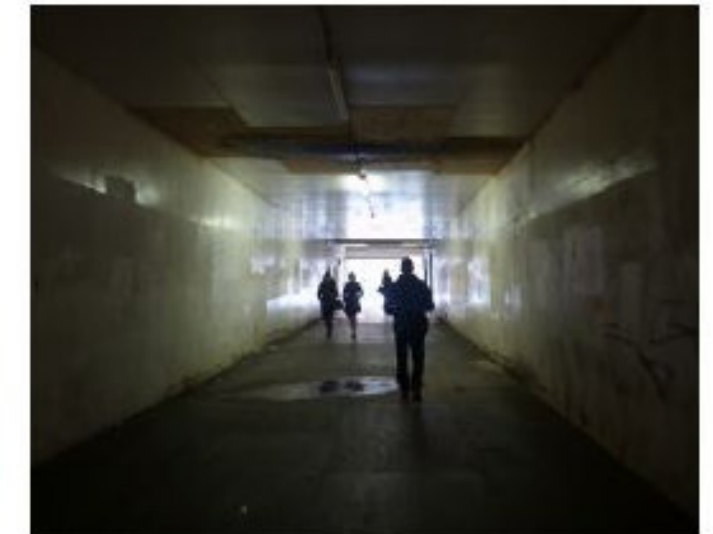
g. 23-26 Market Place



h. Market Place Square



i. Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance



j. The Arcade

2.0 - LOCATION



2.3 - ROUTES, ACCESS & AMENITY

The section of Reading Town center around the application site is one of the oldest parts of Reading. Routes and byways have become established over hundreds of years.

Road routes have been changed in recent years to better manage the flow of buses and service traffic to the shops and many years ago the road route cutting between Friar Street and Market Place was extinguished creating Town Hall Square. Town Hall Square and Market Place Square provide two large, open public areas to each side of the proposal site. Both Squares make up part of a primary pedestrian route into town from the train station to the North West.

Pedestrian routes through central Reading are very important and radiate out from the fully pedestrianised Broad Street. Several Roads have been made pedestrian and a number of old walkways between blocks have been retained alongside both old and newer access routes through larger shopping developments such as Marks and Spencer's, The Oracle and John Lewis. A number of arcade routes also exist; Harris Arcade to the North West of the site provides a direct and useful short-cut towards the station and is well provided with small shops. The arcade route across the application site has been underused for many years. This is explained in section 2.6.

A large park, The Forbury Gardens provides high quality public amenity space close to the application site.

2.0 - LOCATION

2.4 - CONSERVATION

A map of Reading Conservation Areas. The application site sits partly within the Market Place / London Road area. Although not all of the site is within a conservation area, the quality of nearby buildings makes the site a particularly important one.



2.0 - LOCATION



2.5 - HERITAGE CONTEXT

The application site sits within one of the first areas developed as part of Reading. Indeed the Listed building no. 27 – 28 dates to C17 or possibly earlier. As such the entire site is one within what can be considered the very earliest outlines of the original town. Evidence of this importance is clear from the number, age and proximity of Listed buildings nearby (see next page). Several of these have critical significance for the town, particularly St. Laurence Church and the Town Hall.

The application site has developed and changed through several centuries. During the Second World War the original arcade building on the site was partly destroyed in a bombing raid and most of the rest of the building was subsequently demolished (a part remains immediately to the West of the application site). The town's Corn Exchange also used to sit directly behind the site. The only remaining evidence of this building is the entrance way clock tower to Market Place.

Until the creation of the Sainsbury's to the South of the site there was a useful cut-through between Friar Street and Broad Street. Once Sainsbury's was built this route was effectively extinguished – though you can still pass through this route along the back of the Sainsbury's cash register line.

A full and detailed analysis of the heritage context of the site has been prepared by Turley Heritage and accompanies this submission. The proposal has taken account of the site's history.



2.0 - LOCATION



View of the partly demolished arcade building following WW2 bomb damage.



A view from Market Place of St. Laurence Church. The application site is the Listed buildings to the left in the photo.



An etching of the now lost Reading Corn Exchange.



The large archway to the centre of the photo is the old route from Broad Street through to Friar Street. This archway was replaced by Sainsburys.



The now lost Reading Corn Exchange can be seen in the top left of this photo.

2.0 - LOCATION

The proposal site sits in close proximity to a number of heritage assets. They have a bearing on development on the site, and the impact of the proposal should be considered in light of these nearby buildings / monuments.

1. Queen Victoria Jubilee Statue
2. Town Hall Chamber, Offices and Clocktower
3. Church of St. Laurence
4. No.23-26 Market Place
5. No.27- 32 Market Place (part of application site)
6. No.33- 34 Market Place
7. Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance, Market Place / Market Way

The Heritage Statement by Turley Heritage which accompanies this submission includes considerable detail on these nearby assets and makes an assessment of the impact the scheme would have on them.



2.0 - LOCATION

2.6 - THE ARCADE

Over the last 100 years the arcade route across the application site, which used to join Town Hall Square with Broad Street, has been eroded. The below series of maps shows the pedestrian routes through this town block and how it has changed.

By 1900 the full link through was fully established. The southern end of the passageway incorporated a part-enclosed and part-open market, while the Northern section was the old arcade building, damaged and then demolished during the Second World War.

By the late 1970's / early 1980's the pedestrian route was further improved as the newly opened Marks & Spencer's included doors into their store which were accessed midway along the passageway onto Market Way. Combining these routes led to much increased pedestrian traffic. Sadly, in the late 1980's Marks & Spencer's closed its access doors onto Market Way in an effort to counter increased shop-lifting.

At the turn of the century, the lower section of the market was demolished and replaced with the current Sainsbury's supermarket. Although the supermarket still allows access through its shop from Broad Street to Market Way. This has significantly reduced pedestrian footfall through the passageway.

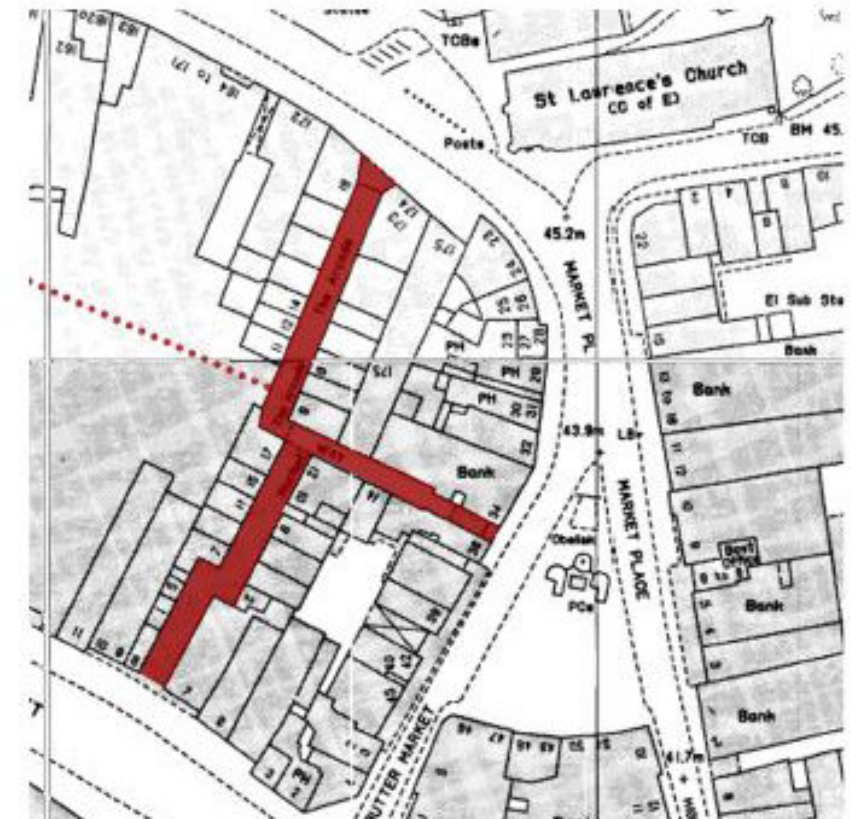
1879 Reading Town Centre map



1900 Reading Town Centre map



1980 Reading Town Centre map



2.0 - LOCATION

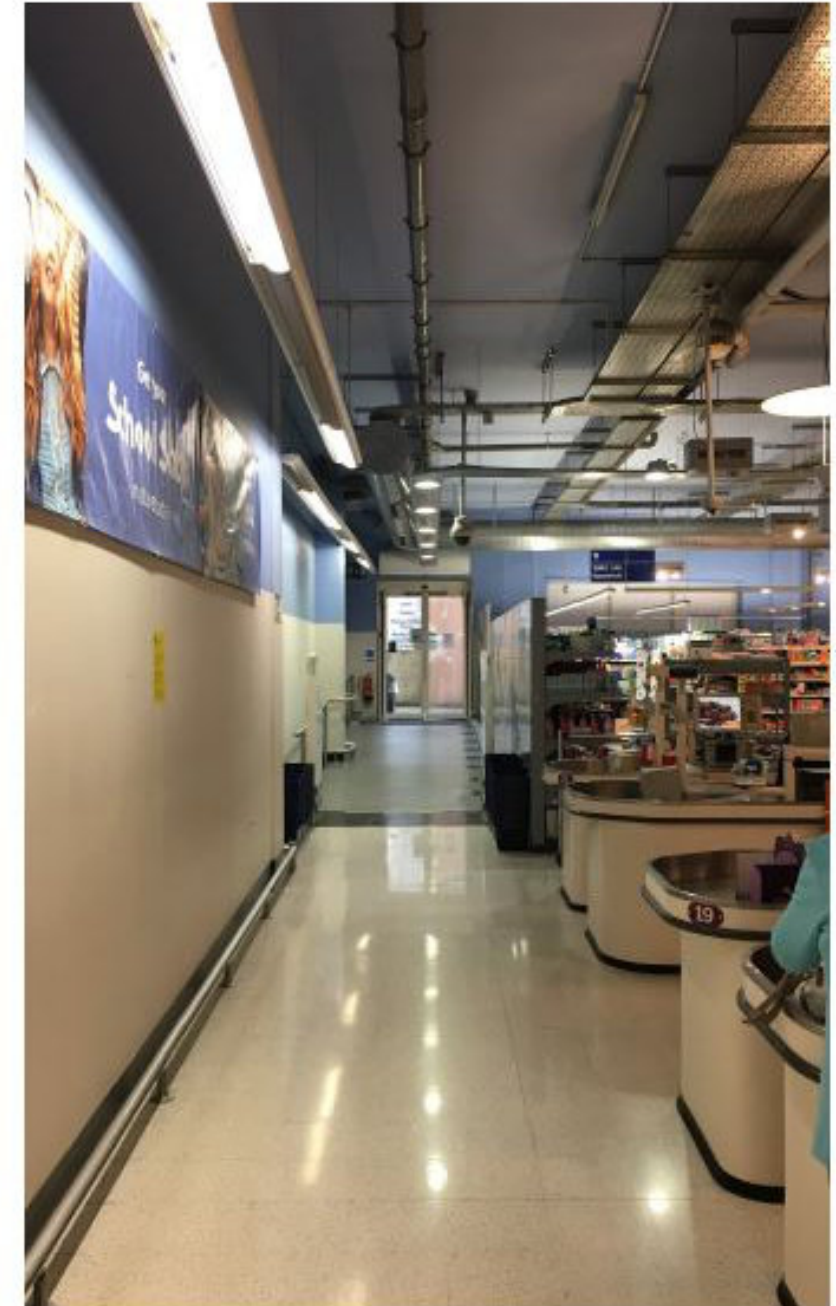
2016 Reading Town Centre map



This in turn led to shops along the arcade failing and the route itself feeling unsafe and empty of shops. The final shop closed in 2014.

The route has been little used and does not contribute positively to Reading Town centre.

(Today the applicant has been obliged to temporarily close the arcade route due to safety concerns relating to the previous aborted building project.)



2.0 - LOCATION



A view of the front of the arcade on Town Hall Square.



A view through the arcade



A view through the arcade



The rear entrance of the arcade opposite Sainsburys

The arcade traverses the site, from Town Hall Square to Market Way. It is no longer in use and represents an old, disused route. This arcade route used to extend from Town Hall Square to Broad Street, but the Southern half of the arcade has been effectively closed by the Sainsbury's development. This has changed the nature of the arcade; critically, it no longer represents a useful pedestrian short-cut in the town. In fact, the existing arcade and Market Way route is now a longer pedestrian route than walking around the street side of Market Place.

Although Reading is home to a number of high-quality small and larger scale shopping arcade routes, the development team do not believe this site is now suitable for a new arcade route; the site is no longer a primary shopping area (The success and development of Broad Street take away from Friar Street which now has few shops), the arcade is no longer in use and creating an adequate attraction to a new passageway represents a commercially nonviable option (please refer to Savills Planning Statement) and most importantly the arcade in its current form does not present a natural thoroughfare route for pedestrian traffic now that the Southern end of the arcade route has been removed.

The team believes a better civic contribution can be delivered to Reading by re-thinking the route of the byway and how its increased use can be encouraged through this new development. Pedestrian routes thrive when they are highly used, so increasing pedestrian flow will be critical to making the re-opening a success.

2.0 - LOCATION



Market Way at Sainsburys Entrance

2.0 - LOCATION



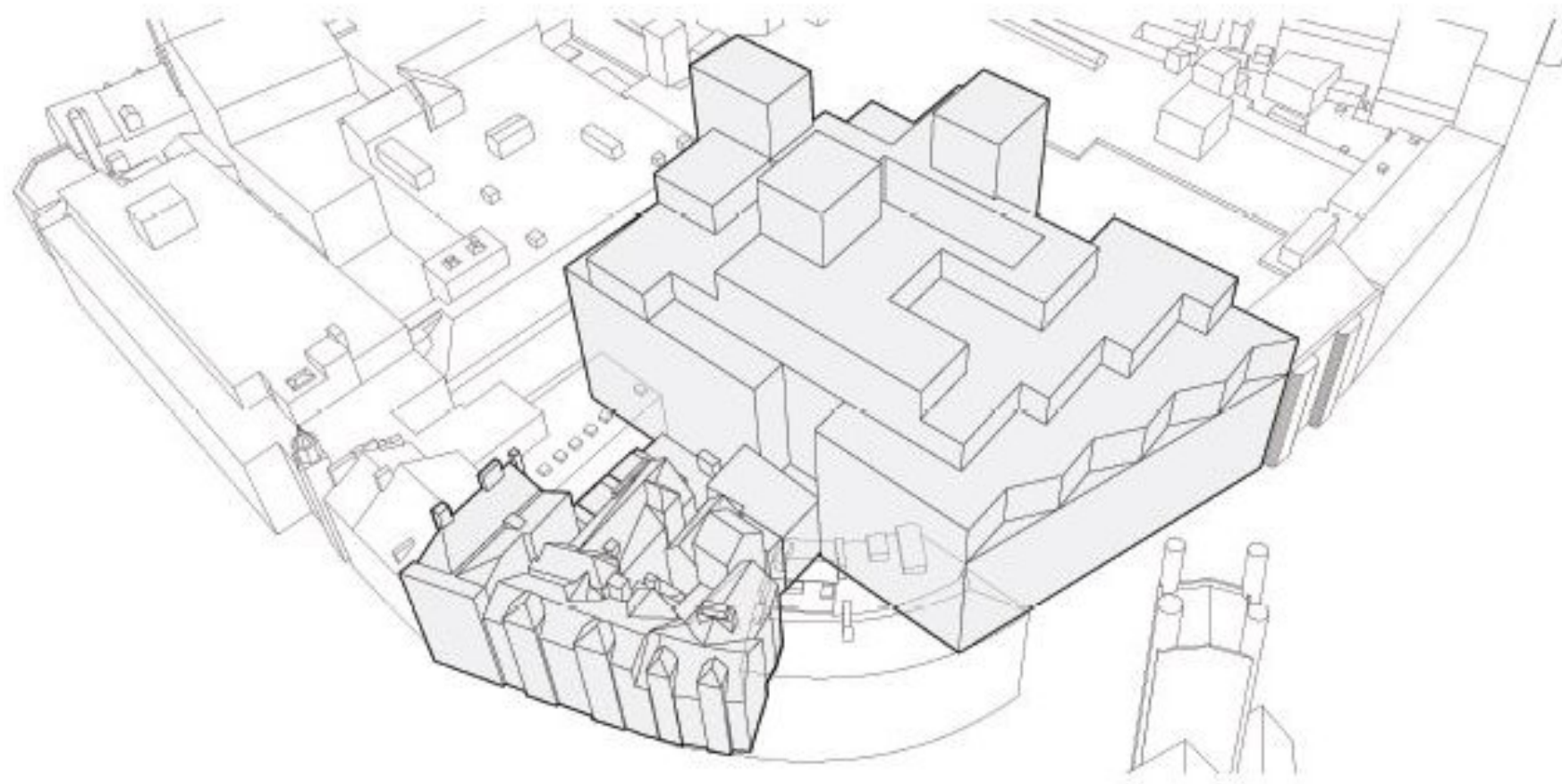
Market Place

2.7 - MARKET PLACE BUILDINGS

The three Grade II Listed properties to Market place are very dilapidated. Turleys heritage statement draws attention to the current state of the buildings, and how they have been extended and reconfigured. It is clear that all three properties have been extensively altered, subdivided and extended over the years and some of these alterations have been handled and executed very poorly. To the back of all three properties, the buildings have been extended, in single-storey additions, to the full depth of the site. These poor quality extensions have largely hidden the qualities and character of the original buildings located behind. This work has happened piecemeal over several decades but the overall effect is to diminish the buildings as a whole. While the rears are not currently visible from the public realm, there remains an important opportunity to improve their quality by removing the poor quality extension work to reveal and restore the parts of the building that do possess significant heritage value.



2.0 - LOCATION



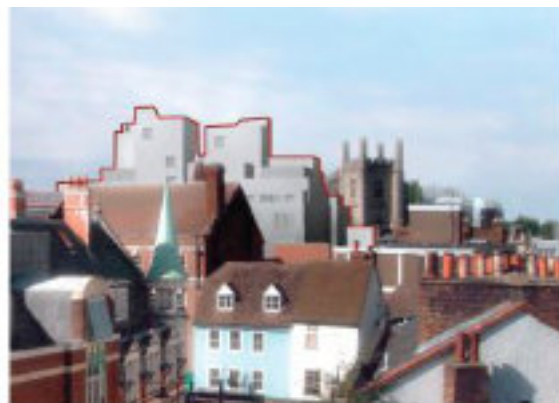
2.8 - PREVIOUSLY CONSENTED SCHEMES

2006 Consented Scheme

As mentioned above, the site has been subject to previous applications and incomplete development.

The application of 2006 (LPA Ref: 06/00663/FUL/GJM) resulted in partial development on site. Although incomplete, it proved to be an important development benchmark for the site and was the 'line in the sand' as regards development potential that the successful application of 2019 (LPA Ref: 180358) was built upon.

The 2006 scheme sought to amalgamate and heavily redevelop the various properties. The Friar Street site would have been demolished and rebuilt considerably larger than the existing building. The mixed-use building was proposed to include shops, offices, a very large health club and new residential accommodation. In terms of size, the new scheme rose to the same height as St. Laurence Church and was evidently quite bulky with massing proposed across the entire footprint of the existing building. Of particular note; the volume, height and proximity of the new building to the Listed Buildings at Market Place did not provide much respect for the existing structures. The buildings at Market Place were also due to be heavily refurbished with a new public access route connecting through the pub entrance joining to the existing arcade.



2006 Consented Scheme

2.0 - LOCATION



Plan view of Listed properties taken from Turley Heritage Statement



Sketch view of the rear of the Listed properties

2019 Consented Scheme - Market Place

It was felt from assessing the three Listed buildings that the rears of two of the buildings were relatively contemporary and very poor quality. It was proposed to demolish and remove the poor-quality Twentieth Century extensions, taking the building back to reveal their more valuable and high-quality earlier fabric. In removing these additions, space was created to the rear of the Listed buildings, pulling the buildings away from the block of the new-build building to Friar Street. This helped delineate the Listed buildings from the new-build part of the development. The remaining buildings were proposed to be sensitively refurbished to provide high quality, retail and residential accommodation.

Residential entrances to the upper levels of the Listed buildings were renewed. To no.27-28 an existing entrance door to the far North was re-opened and the staircase behind enclosed from the retail unit. No.29 - 31 one entrance door was enclosed with new partitioning to provide a dedicated entrance to the uppers. At no.32 a new staircase was returned to the building where the original staircase had been lost to separate the residential use and retail.

The Market Place elevation of the three Listed buildings were renewed and repaired. The non-original and poor quality entrance canopy into the pub was removed and the existing building repaired.



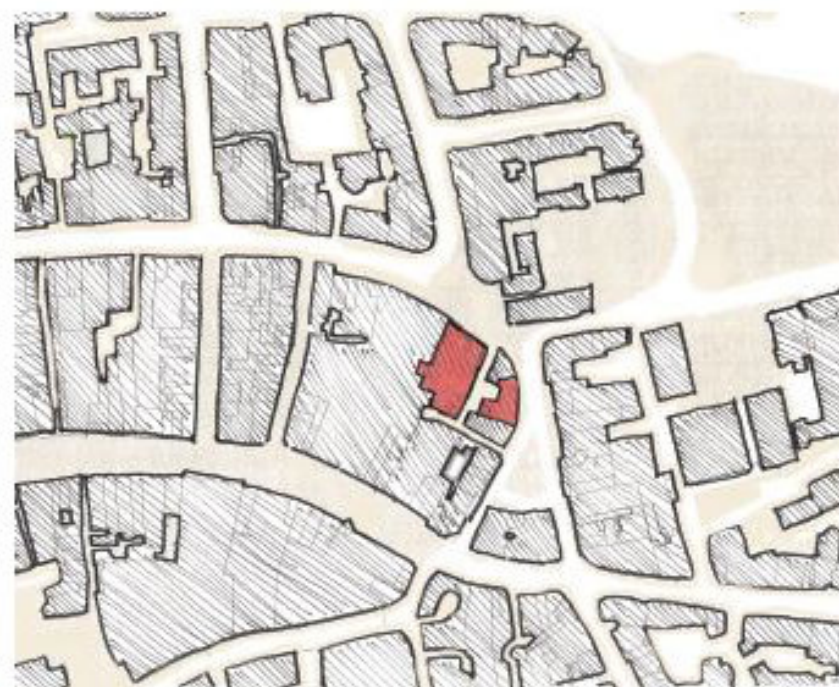
2019 Consented Scheme





2019 Consented Scheme - Urban Block & Pedestrian Route

Central Reading is well pedestrianised and has a number of narrow, historic routes that remain in use today. These help define the town center as a historic town and contribute positively to both the built environment and the way in which the town can be enjoyed by the population. These pedestrian routes help break down some of the larger urban blocks, allowing pathways into the center and through these blocks. This can unlock these interior spaces both practically and for the enjoyment of more sheltered courtyard environments. As the town has developed, many of these routes and courtyards have been adversely affected as the interiors of large urban blocks have been over-developed and gradually in-filled. The urban block in which the enquiry site sits is similarly affected. It used to house the Corn Exchange which sat detached within the block. After this was lost the interior has gradually been consumed until there is effectively almost no internal space left – Market Way, the passageway linking the old arcade route to Market Place - is the only remaining external area. It is important to also note the usefulness of the arcade route has been effectively extinguished now that the southern section has been eroded (by the construction of Sainsbury's). The arcade no longer represents a useful short-cut route through the urban block.



The proposal sought to re-open a section of the interior of the urban block to improve the quality of the proposed accommodation (improved outlook for accommodation, daylight and sunlight)

2019 Consented Scheme

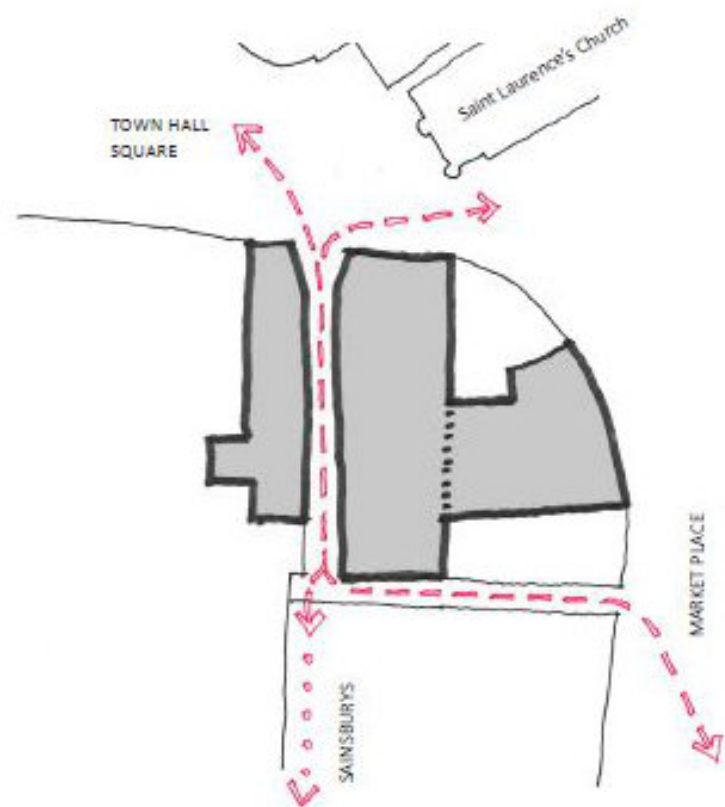


Diagramme A (existing)

Diagramme A shows the existing condition. Here the public passageway represents a longer route round than the pavement route. The dotted route through Sainsburys is maintained but is underused. This routing has led to the failure of the arcade shops.

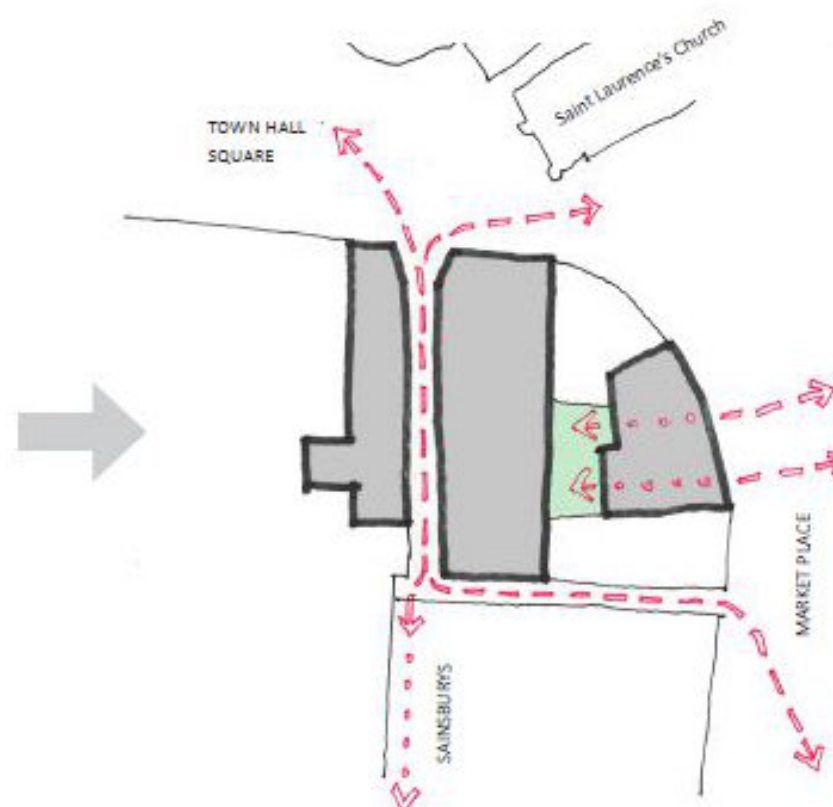


Diagramme B (Listed building rear yard opened)

Diagramme B shows the improvements to the Listed Buildings proposed previously. Here new circulation is created through the Listed buildings into their rear yards. These rear yards are only accessible through the Listed buildings and no improvement is yet made to the main passageway.

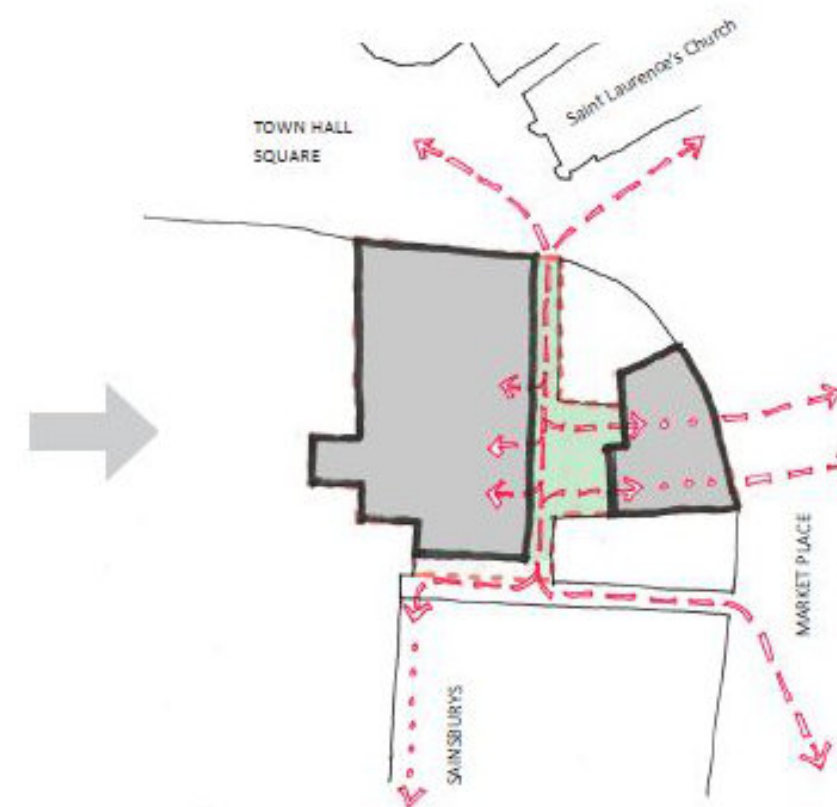
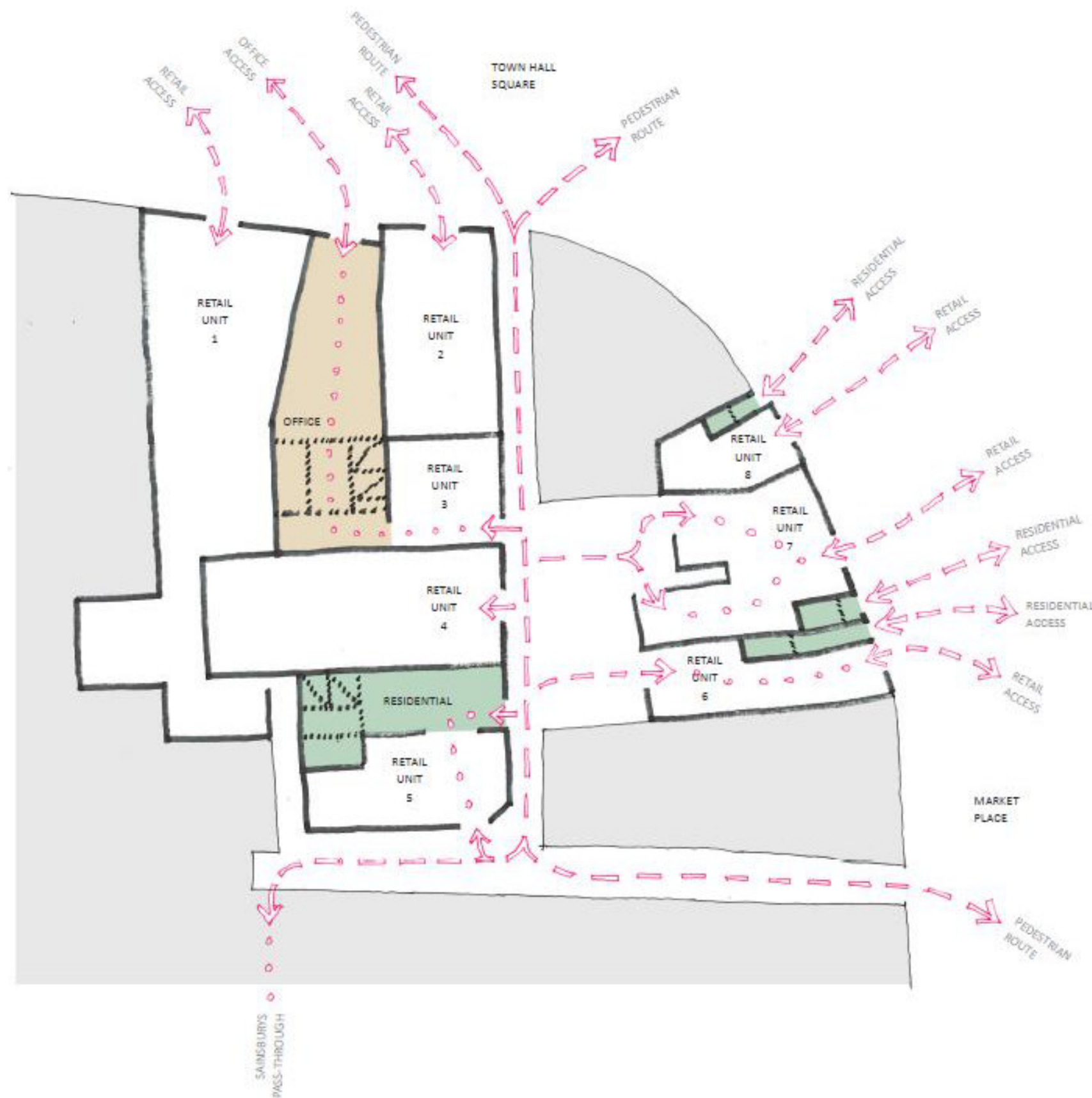


Diagramme C (Rear yards opened and access route moved)

Diagramme C represents the proposed relocation of the passageway across the site. By aligning with the boundary edge of the new-build and Listed building properties a series of benefits are created; the space between new and old buildings is enlarged, more opportunities for access and pedestrian usage across the site are created and the external space is enlarged and improved, improving Daylight and outlook.



2019 Consented Scheme - Arrangements of Uses to Suit the Site

This diagram explains the ground floor layout across the 2019 scheme. As explained previously the main access route across the site was relocated along the boundary between the new-build and Listed buildings and adjoined the rear yards of the Listed buildings. This led to a larger rear yard for the Listed buildings which in turn improved daylight and outlook for the rear of the properties. Primary access for retail units 3, 4 and 5 come from the passageway. Secondary access to retail units 7 and 8 were also provided here alongside the only entrance to the new-build residential units on Friar Street. This overlapping of access requirements would increase use of the passageway, improving safety and usage of all the units. To further improve access and usage, retail unit 3 included a secured interior pass-through into the office space. This allowed office workers secure access directly into the retail unit and for both businesses to benefit from their close proximity. A similar arrangement was provided for retail unit 5 and the residential entrance. During hours when the retail units would be closed, this access route would be shut. Access to the passageway would be controlled and managed during evening hours. At night-time gates at the entrance from Town Hall Square and Market Way would be closed and access only provided to residential and retail owners. Opening and closing these gates would be managed by the residential concierge.

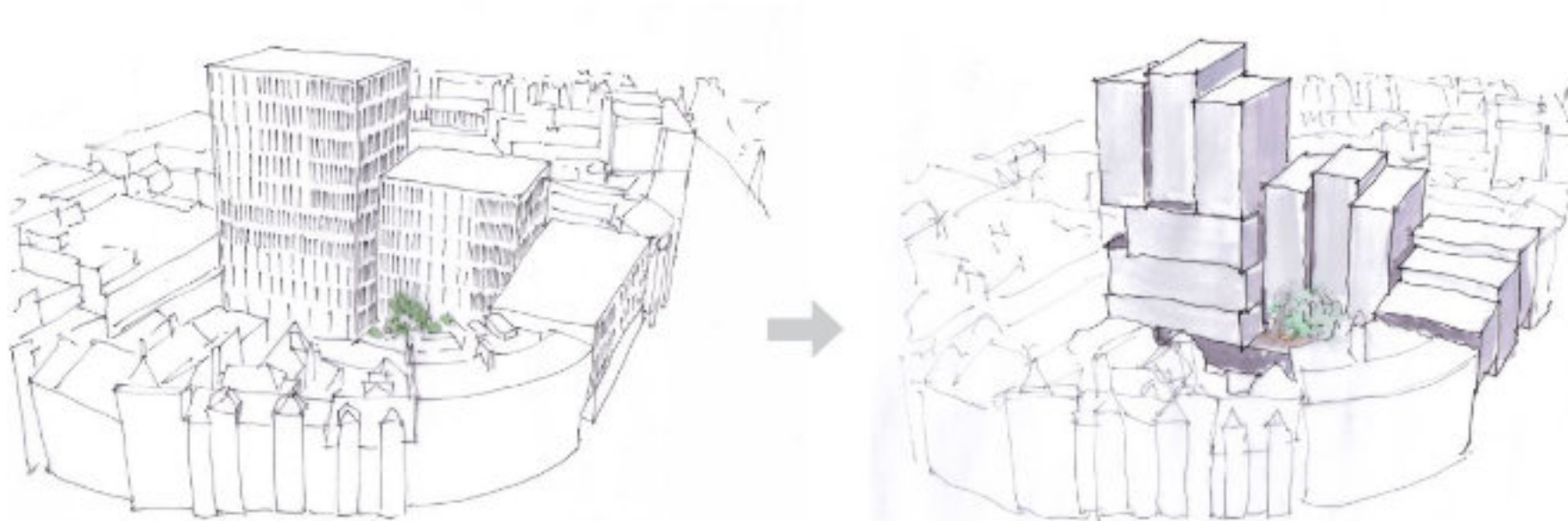
2019 Consented Scheme



2019 Consented Scheme - Site Context & Town Center Character

Reading town center has a number of exceptionally crafted, relatively small buildings. Often in brick with stone detailing, these buildings have collected together to create a rich tapestry of elevations. Although neighbouring buildings vary in height and styling, they present a predictable pattern and urban grain to the town.

In considering how variety can lead to strong, legible patterns we looked to examples of buildings where sizes and volumes change but are linked by form, materiality and solid to void ratios.



2019 Consented Scheme - Reflecting the Local Vernacular

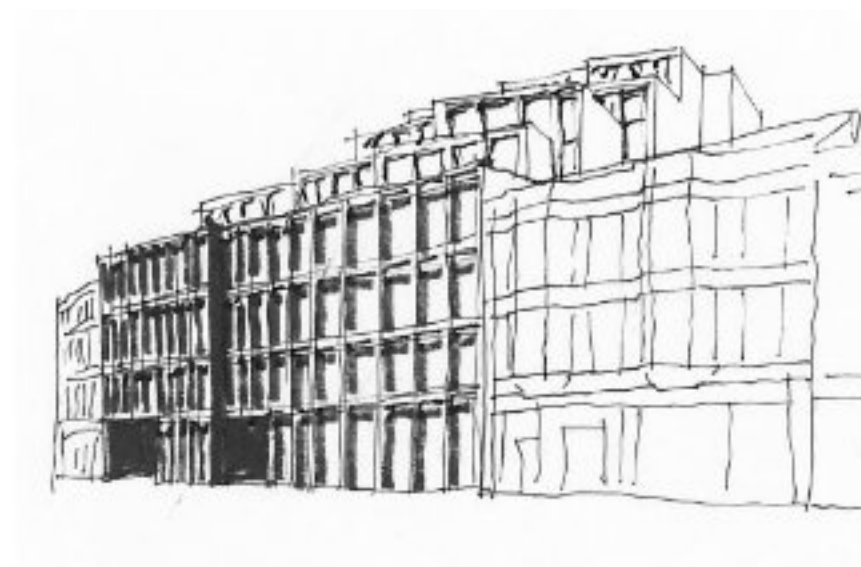
Initial designs considered the massing diminishing towards Town Hall Square. However initial large blocks gave way to smaller mass forms which related more closely in scale to the Listed buildings to Market Place than to the larger volumes of Friar Street. In breaking down the massing into smaller fragments the impact of the mass is reduced and the building is better joined into the townscape.

2019 Consented Scheme



2019 Consented Scheme - Applying a Materiality & Contextualisation

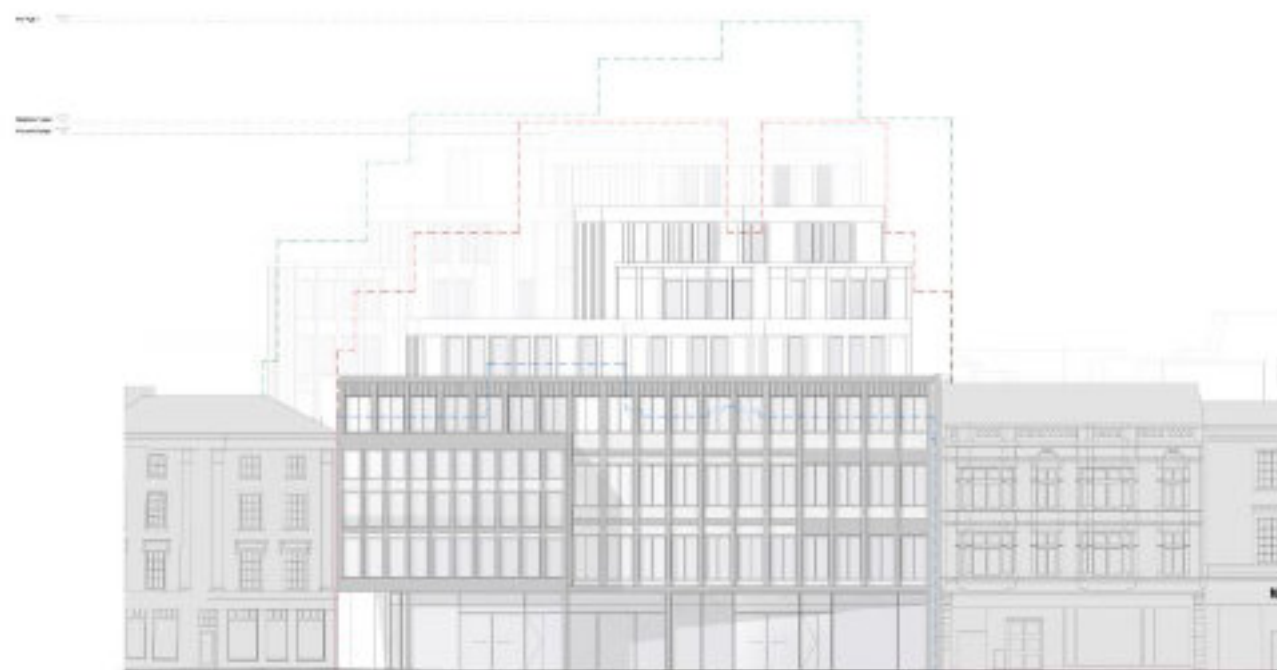
The new building faces a series of Listed buildings, both within the scheme and outside of it, across the redefined pedestrian access route. The relationship of these competing structures needs to be carefully managed and the new building not dominate the Listed properties. The proposal set the new building apart from the Listed buildings, providing space for the different structures to breathe. To the Town Hall Square elevation two façades emerge; each engaging with the buildings to either side.



2019 Consented Scheme - Working with RBC & Historic England

A series of pre-application meetings, a design review panel and design workshops refined and improved the building design alongside Reading Borough Council and Historic England. The results led to a reduction in the massing of the Friar Street elevation, a calmer, more rhythmic façade treatment and a clear delineation between uses while retaining a design rigor across the building, tying it together strongly. The higher level elevations which disappear from view behind the primary façade are linked through the same fenestration pattern to the rest of the development. A subtle change in window and brick ratio signified a change of use, from the highly glazed office floors to the more private, solid walled residential accommodation above.

2019 Consented Scheme



2019 Consented Scheme - Massing & Scale

Throughout the design process a dialogue with RBC showed that the height and apparent massing of the development plays a crucial role in determining the acceptability of the proposal. From initial pre-application enquiries (shown in green to the left) the height of the proposal was reduced by more than two storeys. The proposal was shorter than the previously consented scheme (shown in red).



2006 Consented Scheme



2019 Consented Scheme

2019 Consented Scheme - Elevation & Fenestration

The 2007 consented scheme sits as a critical benchmark of the redevelopment of the site. Through a detailed series of Pre-applications and stakeholder consultations the 2019 proposal sought to integrate itself into the street context and keep, as much as possible, within the envelope of the building scale established by this previous consent. The design sought to provide an exceptionally high-quality design for this important town centre location. The proposal was less tall than the consented scheme. The design of the proposal was that of a consistent building unlike the previously consented scheme.

2019 Consented Scheme



2019 Consented Scheme - Contextualising the Front Facade

Facing both St. Laurence Church and the old Town Hall buildings across Town Hall Square the proposal building sits within a complex and varied context. The façade sits between two very different neighbours – the Listed, white painted, stucco fronted townhouses of 23-26 Market Place and the remaining red and grey brick elevation of the old arcade building. In order to relate positively to both facades the elevation was broken down into two parts; one aligning with and referencing the smaller townhouses and one the larger facades further down Friar Street.

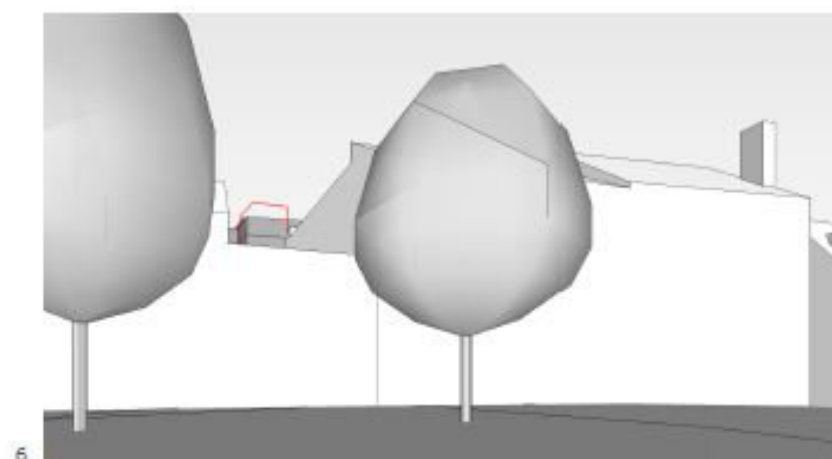
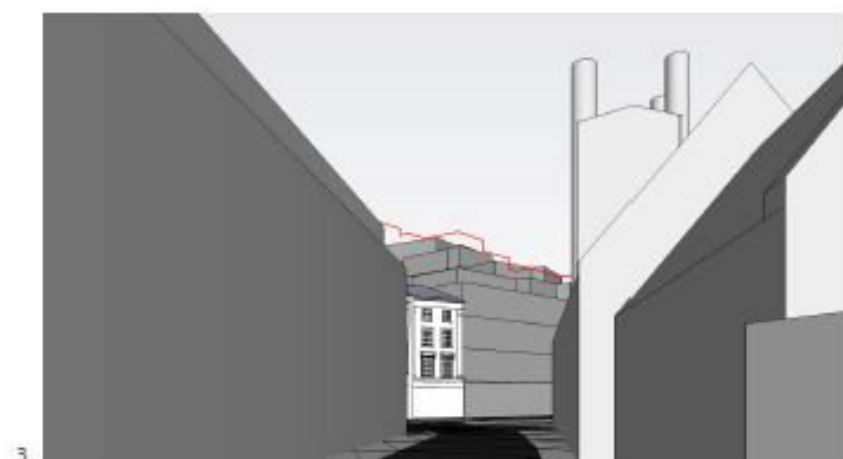
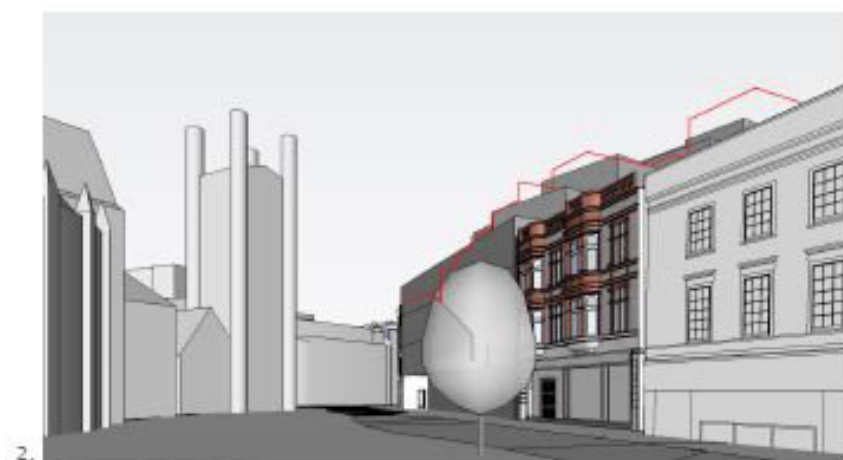
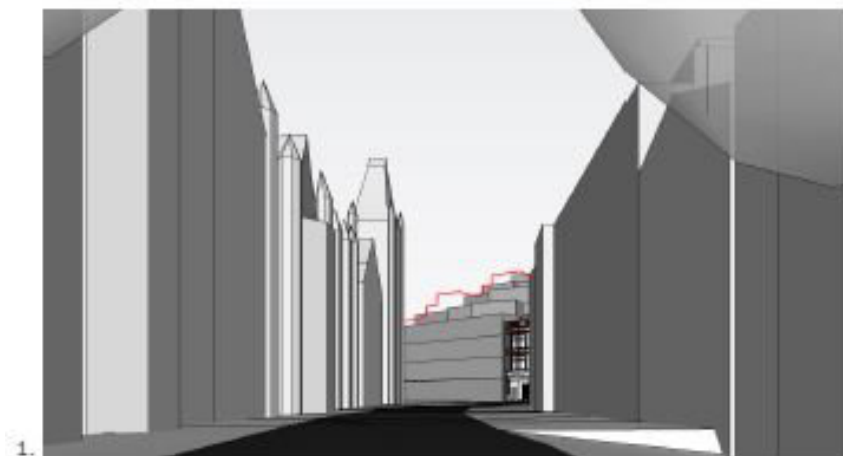
Across both parts of the façade neighbouring window sizes and traditional hierarchies are directly referenced. Where possible windows are aligned with neighbours. The detailed parapet of the old arcade building is referenced with a contemporary parapet design in the new proposal, helping to bed the design into the street-scene.

2019 Consented Scheme - Precedent & Materials

As explained previously, in thinking about the new building and its location a critical appreciation of the materials and their juxtaposition with neighbouring buildings was crucial – the building sits within a context of extremely differing material palette with no particularly dominant material. It was decided to carefully reference the materials of the building opposite - St. Laurence Church; reflecting the sandstone and flintwork with a similar coloured new sandstone and a grey / beige multi-stock brick with enough Variation in its colour providing similar interest to the comparative flintwork. These contrasting materials share a tonal range which keeps them together while adding textural warmth and depth. In looking to use these materials in a contemporary, rhythmic style we hope to take advantage of the play of shadow throughout the day. Window-bay widths and sizes are reflected in the proposal while detailing is kept crisp and minimal.



2019 Consented Scheme



2019 Consented Scheme - Agreed Critical Views

Six views were agreed with RBC officers for a critical appraisal of the impact of the new proposal in terms of massing and scale in comparison to the permitted development which represented a benchmark for development. These views represent critical streetscape views from which the building will be seen - particularly the higher levels of the building (previous consented scheme shown in red):

1. The approach from Blagrove Street
2. The Corner of the Road on Friar Street
3. Approach along The Forbury
4. Market Place view 1
5. Market Place view 2
6. Broad Street view





Friar Street - 2006 Consented Scheme



Friar Street - 2019 Consented Scheme



The Forbury - 2006 Consented Scheme



The Forbury - 2019 Consented Scheme



Blagrove Street - 2006 Consented Scheme



Blagrove Street - 2019 Consented Scheme



Market Place - 2006 Consented Scheme



Market Place - 2019 Consented Scheme

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3.0 - USE

BRISTOL AND WEST ARCADE, 173-175 FRIAR STREET - READING

3.0 - USE



3.0 - USE

As previously mentioned, Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent has recently been approved by RBC for the part reuse and part redevelopment of this central Reading Site. This approval dates from 9 January 2019 (LPA reference number: 180358) and was described as:

"Demolition of vacant former Bristol & West Arcade (173 – 175 Friar Street) and redevelopment of site to provide an eight storey mixed –use building plus one level of basement comprising 35 residential units, 4,212 sqm of B1 office floorspace, and 5 retail units (A1/A2/A3), together with the change of use of 27 - 28 Market Place at first, second and third floors and basement to provide 2 residential units, change of use of 29 - 31 Market Place at first, second and third floors to provide 3 residential units, change of use of 32 Market Place from A2 use to provide part basement and ground floor flexible retail use (A1/A2/A3) and 3 residential uses at first, second and third floors, retention of 260.4 sqm of A4 use at ground and basement floor at 29-31 Market Place and change of use at ground and basement of 27 - 28 Market Place to flexible retail use (A1/A2/A3) and demolition of rear parts of 29 – 31 Market Place and 32 Market Place, associated internal and external works to the Listed Buildings, landscaping, refuse, plant, cycle stores and substation at basement level."

This previously approved scheme was also subject to extensive pre-application discussions with RBC, HE and other stakeholders through consultation. Importantly, this scheme has established the acceptability of the principal of significant change on this Site, and has also recognised the public benefits that could be offered by the reuse and revitalisation of the currently vacant historic buildings, as well as a new mix of uses, built development, high quality architecture and landscape on the remainder of this Site.

Since permission/ consent was granted, the Site has been actively marketed to determine the interest in bringing the Site forward as approved. Unfortunately there has been little to no interest in the approved scheme, primarily due to the amount of retail floor space at ground floor level given the current market conditions. There has, however, been some interest from hotel operators. As such, our Client now seeks to promote this new scheme through application for a new mix of uses, and associated design revisions, principally the replacement of B1 Office Floor Space, C3 Residential Units and A1/ A2/A3 Retail Units in 173-175 Friar Street in favour of a C1 Hotel Building with A3 Restaurant/ Bar.

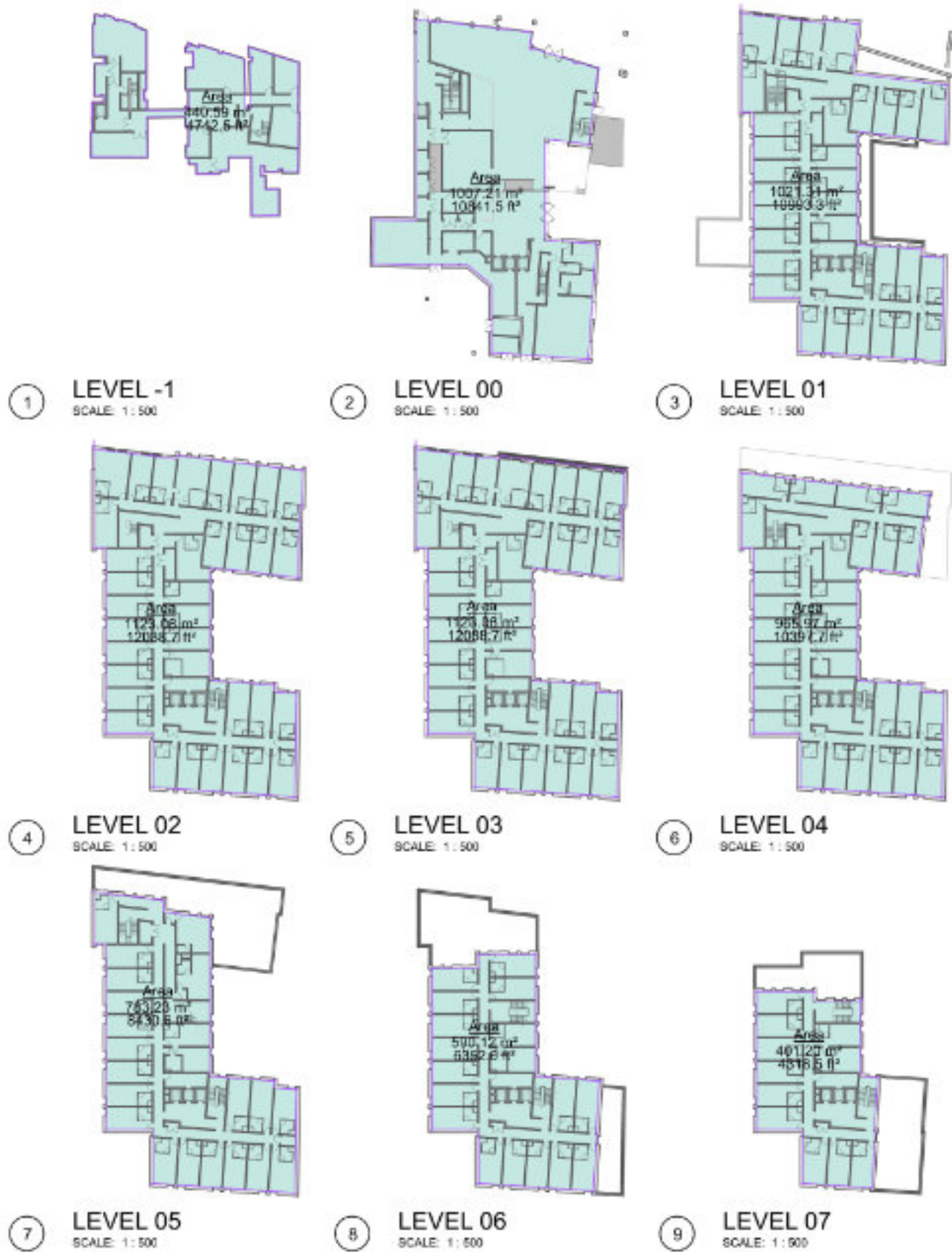
The reinstatement of the original arcade has been further developed to offer an increase in public realm through the introduction of a large courtyard. It is felt that this will further promote the development as a destination for activity / social engagement and galvanise the development as a cohesive whole.

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4.0 - AMOUNT

BRISTOL AND WEST ARCADE, 173-175 FRIAR STREET - READING

4.0 - AMOUNT



4.0 - AMOUNT

The previously approved scheme Market Place portion (LPA reference number: 180358) remains:

- Level -1 Residential storage/plant, Retail WC/Kitchen/ Storage
- Level 0 2no. A1/2/3 Retail / 1no. A4 Public House
- Level 1-3 8no. C3 Residential apartments

The proposed C1 Hotel building accommodation on Friar Street is broken down as follows:

- Level -1 Back of house/Staff
- Level 0 Admin./back of house & A3 dining/drinking area for XX.
- Level 1-7 182 no. bedroom suites & back of house

The height of the building is 9 storeys (incl. basement) designed to not exceed the density of approved application Ref: 180358. Footprint area is dictated by the functional (incl. natural light) requirements of the upper level hotel room arrangement. It was also designed with the desire of RBC to provide a centralised public courtyard within the arcade. As such the floor plans are reduced from the approved application. Uppermost floors rationally decrease in size in keeping with the approved proposal.

The proposal also includes a provisional 12no. Cycle parking based on the local plan requirement (3no. Retail, 4no. Residential & 5no. Hotel). Please refer to Transport Assessment for further details and justification.

There is no parking provision within the scheme and it will be an advocate for the use of public transport and taxi services within the town center.

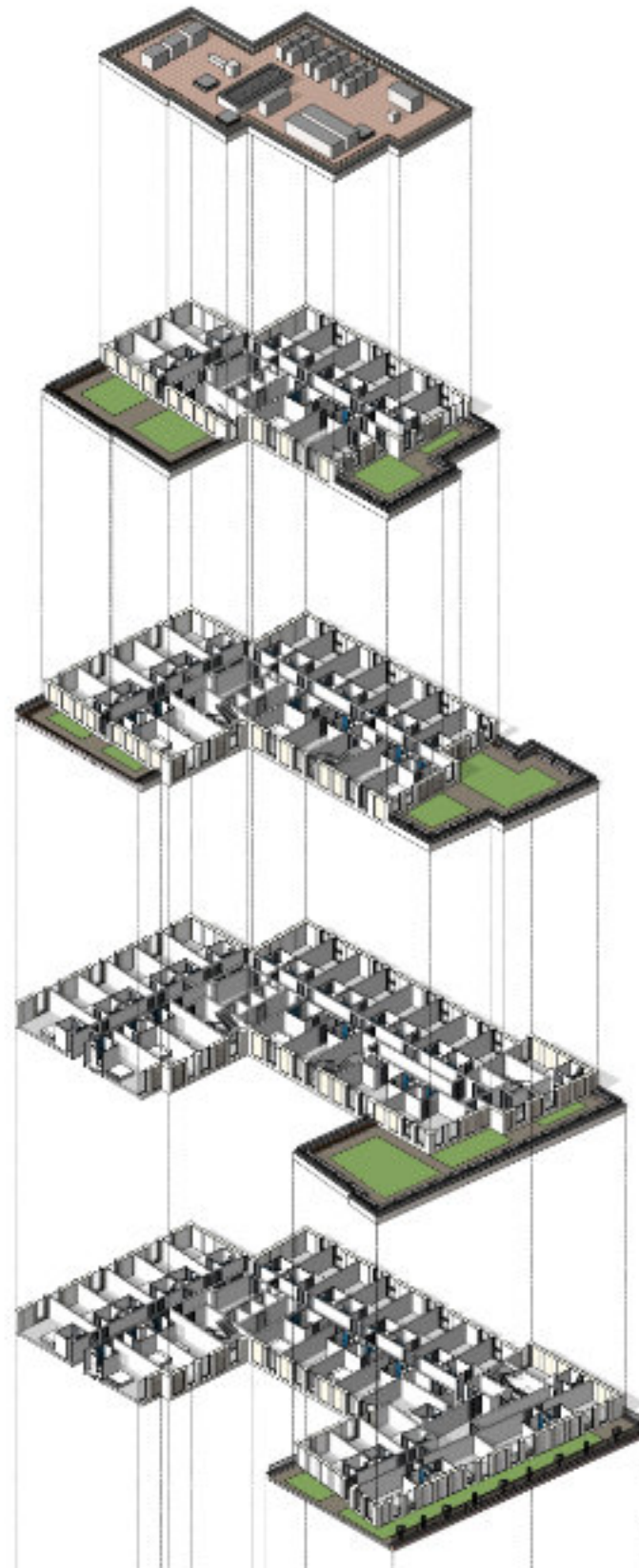
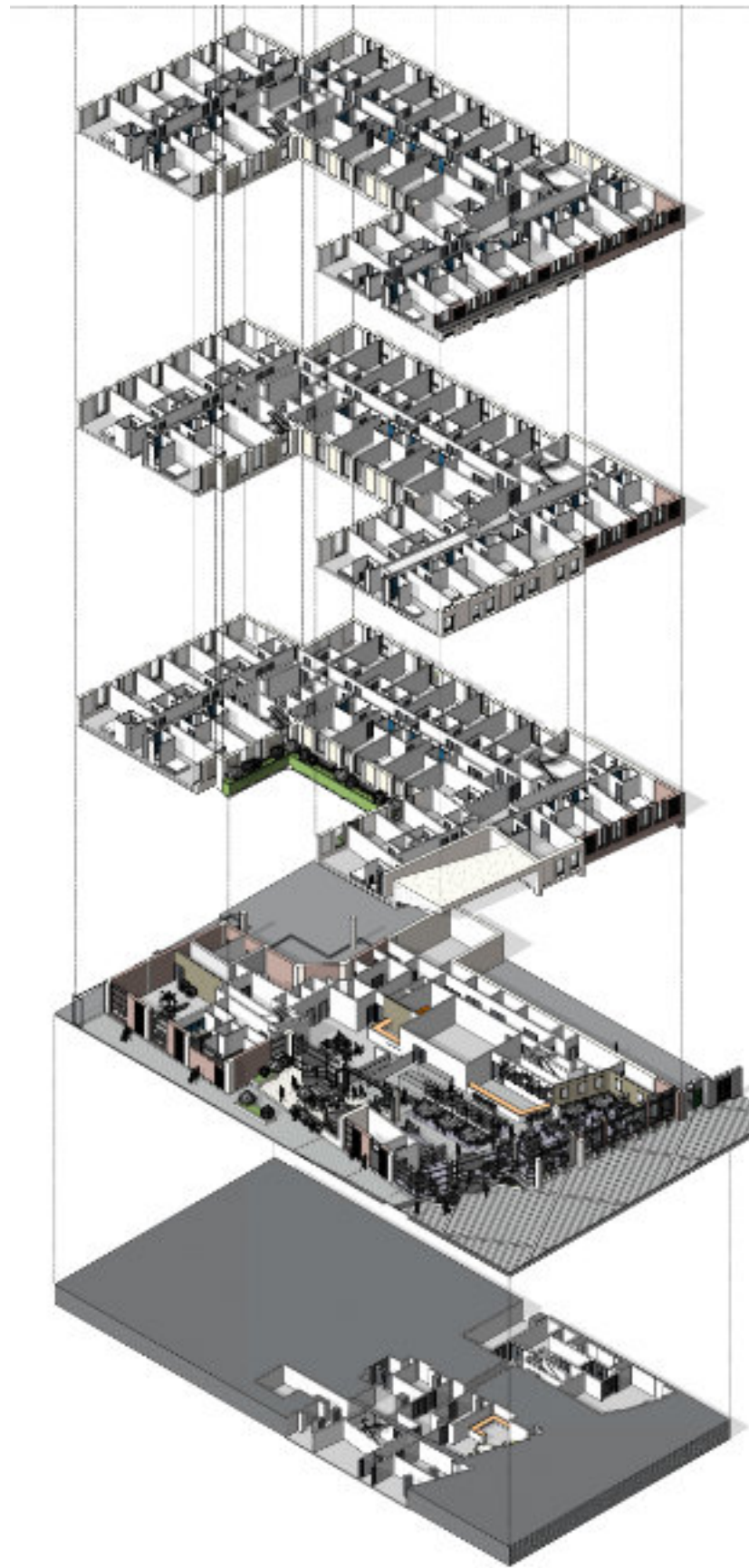
Gross Internal Floor Area		
Level	Area	Comments
LEVEL -1	440.6 m²	
LEVEL 00	1007.2 m²	
LEVEL 01	1021.3 m²	
LEVEL 02	1123.1 m²	
LEVEL 03	1123.1 m²	
LEVEL 04	988.0 m²	
LEVEL 05	783.2 m²	
LEVEL 06	590.1 m²	
LEVEL 07	401.2 m²	
Grand total	7455.8 m²	

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5.0 - LAYOUT

BRISTOL AND WEST ARCADE, 173-175 FRIAR STREET - READING

5.0 - LAYOUT



5.0 - LAYOUT

The Site

As per the 2019 consented scheme (LPA ref: 180358), the proposal reincorporates the triangular wedge of Town Hall Square to the north of the current site to reinstate the historic building line pre-war. A splayed recess at level 0&1 within this location provides a generous sheltered access to restaurant, arcade and underground services.

The relocated Arcade that formed part of the approved application is maintained at 175 Friar Street running north - south adjacent to 23 Market Place linking Town Hall Square to Market way. A central courtyard/ light well is formed midway that enables a generous approach to the Hotel Entrance, external dining, rear access to the listed buildings of Market Place.

Service access is enabled via doors to the south (rear) elevation. The rear door is accessed via a private walkway that also provides secure cycle parking.

The Building

The hotel building accommodation is proposed over nine storeys with lift overrun and plant at roof level.

Level -1 is located within the confines of the current basement and is occupied by Hotel Offices, Staff, Back of House and plant provision. It is serviced via 2no. staff stairs and 1no. lift

Level 0 is located at the main street level and also steps down to courtyard level. It provides:

- Hotel Foyer & Lounge including external terrace
- Hotel Reception
- Hotel Gym & WC facilities
- Restaurant & Bar facilities for hotel and public use
- Hotel Office & Back of House incl. Waste Area with compactor

This accommodation is linked to other levels principally via a main stair core that houses a fire fighting shaft stair well and 3no. lifts. Additional access/ escape is provided by 2no. stair cores and 1no. lift.

Level 1-7 provide hotel bedroom suite accommodation ranging in size from standard double, family and accessible. They are serviced by the central core & secondary fire escape stair and organised along a central corridor that links the two. Accommodation reduces in size as you travel further up the building in keeping with the approved scheme.

Roof Level consists of lift overrun and plant provision.

The Retail units, Public House and Residential accommodation of Market Place remains as per the approved application.

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6.0 - SCALE

BRISTOL AND WEST ARCADE, 173-175 FRIAR STREET - READING

6.0 - SCALE



6.0 - SCALE

The redevelopment of Market Place, as previously stated, is as per the consented scheme Ref: 180358 i.e. within the confines of the existing envelope. The height of the hotel on Friar Street is in keeping, or in most cases below, the previous consented scheme and this entails:

Level 00 - 03	maintaining friar street frontage to approx. contextual parapet heights
Level 04	recessed frontage to Friar Street
Level 05	further recessed frontage to Friar Street
Level 06	further recessed frontage to Friar Street/ Market Pl.
Level 07	further recessed frontage to Friar Street/ Market Pl.

By adhering to this principal as well as the consented materiality, the visual impact of the overall massing to the adjacent streets is minimised.

Upper hotel room floor plans, that ultimately govern the footprint of the building, are efficient and work within the development boundaries established through dialogue with the council and other key stakeholders that include rights of way and the reinstatement of the original building line from pre-war. This same efficiency has been adopted within the existing basement to utilise only the existing footprint.

All these factors have combined to provide a prominent town center building fitting of both its purpose and location & an asset in the regeneration of this important location.

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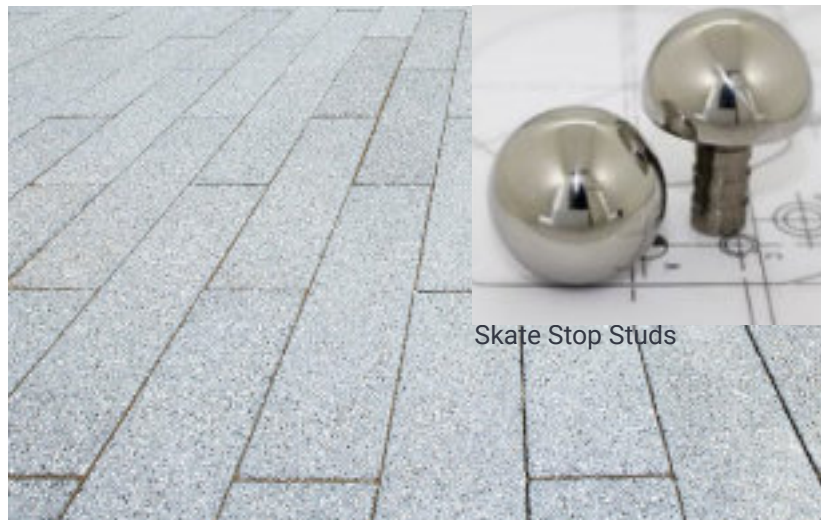
7.0 - LANDSCAPE

BRISTOL AND WEST ARCADE, 173-175 FRIAR STREET - READING

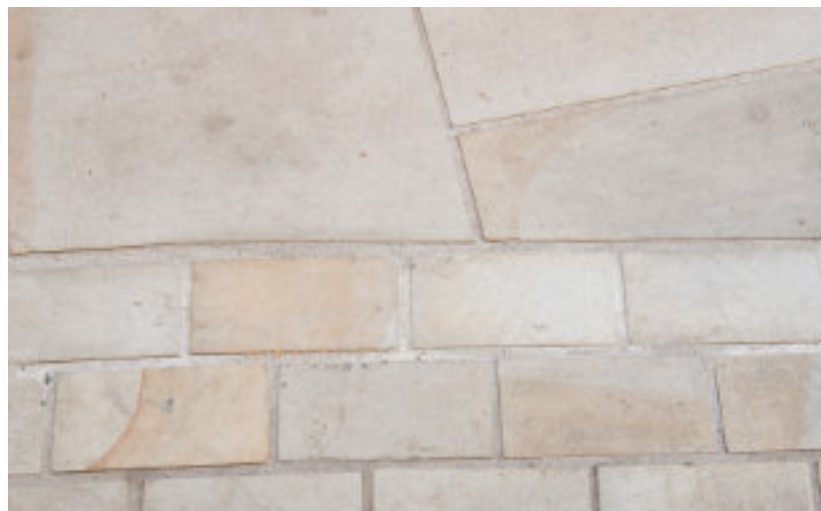
7.0 - LANDSCAPE



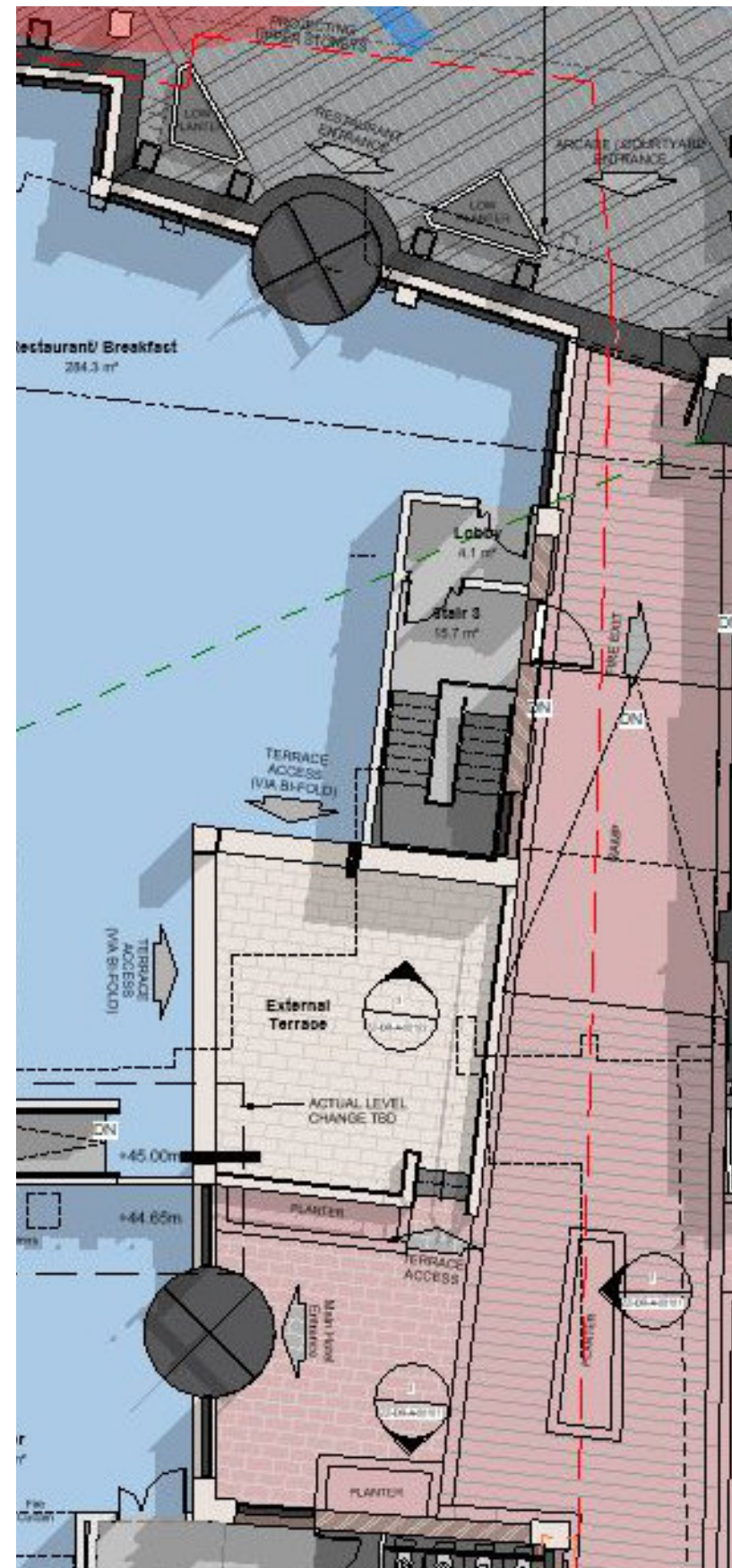
Town hall Square Stone Paving



Arcade Route Stone Paving



Courtyard Stone Paving



7.0 - LANDSCAPE

The landscape proposal is minimal given the local and its parameters. The approach is to create soft welcoming public realm that compliments the architecture and is both inviting & encouraging to users. It is the intention to form social spaces that are attractive and a destination rather than merely circulation.

Town Hall Square

The generous sheltered restaurant / arcade entrance is integrated into Town Hall Square by adopting the same hard paving style that galvanises all the buildings in the area. A threshold is created at the portal that forms the beginning of the arcade. This is complimented by low level planters that offset the hard floor surface and act as informal screens between the two pedestrian routes. Tactile paving/ studs are utilised at wall edges to prevent vagrancy.

New Arcade

The revised public right of way / arcade route is highlighted by an individual pavier style. Utilising slim plank proportions in keeping with the widths and material of the Town Hall Square surface, it runs north to south through the site and connects with Market Way.



Low / High Street Planter

7.0 - LANDSCAPE



Courtyard Hotel Entrance and Restaurant External Dining

Terrace - Dining

The new public courtyard benefits from a raised spill out dining terrace accessed by bi-fold doors from the public restaurant. A guardrail supplemented by planters and street seating creates a welcoming and habitable space for users.

Terrace - Level 1

Cascading planting further softens the masonry envelope at higher level above the hotel entrance and restaurant glazing to create a cosmopolitan feel.

Terrace - Level 3 - 7

Guardrails at upper terraces are softened and any visual impact reduced by perimeter planters.

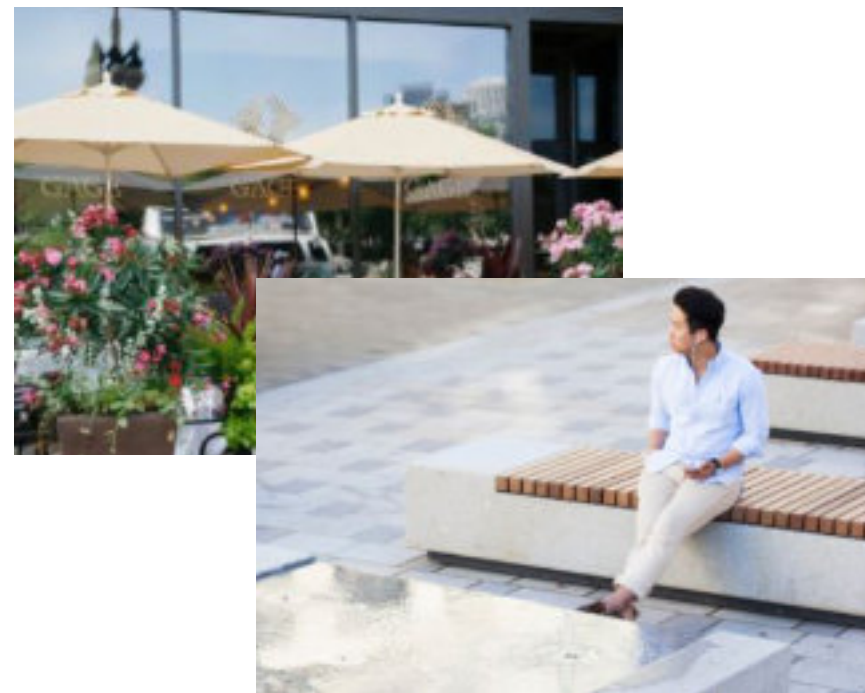
Public House 'beer garden'

Seating and planter screening form pockets of sociable space that break up the courtyard further to enable more intimate use and varied activity.

These interventions and material palette create enjoyable habitable spaces that knit the proposal into the wider town context and reinforce the courtyard as a destination. .



Lower Level Cascading creepers



External Dining and Street Seating



Upper Level Terrace Planters

8.0 - APPEARANCE

BRISTOL AND WEST ARCADE, 173-175 FRIAR STREET - READING

8.0 - APPEARANCE



8.1 - UTILISING THE EXISTING DESIGN APPROACH

The appearance seeks to develop on the extensive design development carried out on the previous approved scheme (Ref. 180358) and retaining the agreed approach to Market place. The main focus of the comments relate to the principal elevation to Friar Street as the most visible and critical to the development. Key elements established by officers, stakeholders, Historic England and the general public feedback included:

Materiality

As per the previous design, the principal elevation to Friar Street is still a transition between the lighter materials of Market Place and the Red brick of Friar Street. This colour distinction is demonstrated by the photomontage of Friar Street and Market Place below. Sandstone and flint colours from St Lawrence's church and Market Place are represented to the west as instigated by Historic England to reflect a more contemporary approach to the site and to avoid being pastiche. To the East this is balanced by the incorporation of red brick to pay homage to the historic character of Reading through the incorporation of red brick as was deemed necessary by the Council's Historic Buildings Consultant and the general public to preserve the character of the Conservation Area and decrease the monolithic appearance.

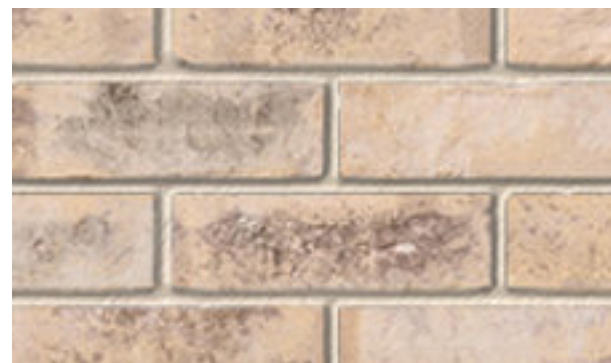
On this basis, the revised materials continue to comply with Core Strategy Policies CS7, CS33, Reading AAP Policy RC5 and will positively enhance the sites contribution towards the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and has actively responded to comments received previously from interested parties.

Fenestration and Window Hierarchy

As per the previous design, the principal elevation to Friar Street utilises a sparse rhythm of window openings in keeping with the neighbouring properties. In addition cill/ head levels within the western stone portion of the facade relate to Market Place and the eastern brick portion to Friar Street. As such the building again represents the transition from the hierarchical decreasing window heights that is a theme of the conservation area and the more regular consistent heights of Friar Street. Both design elements were considered key by Historic England. To avoid pastiche and remain true to the time and function of the new building, the fenestration is kept to a minimum with only a central mullion within the red brick windows to further differentiate the two halves of the facade.

On this basis, the window hierarchy and fenestration arrangement continues to reinforce the character and context of this part of the Conservation Area and will strengthen the site's relationship with the town center in accordance with the aims of Reading AAP Policy RC5 and Core Strategy Policies CS7 and CS33. It is therefore considered that the building has suitably addressed previous concerns from Historic England and officers.

8.0 - APPEARANCE - PALETTE



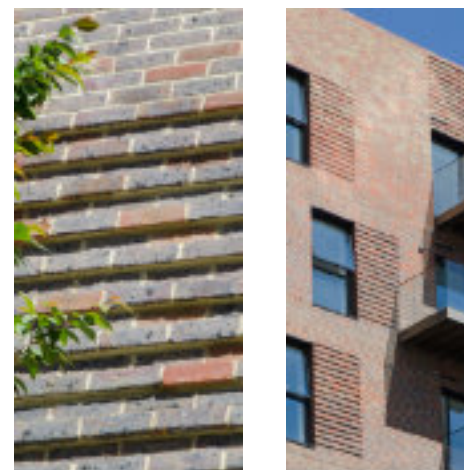
Buff/ Grey Brick



Ashlar Sandstone



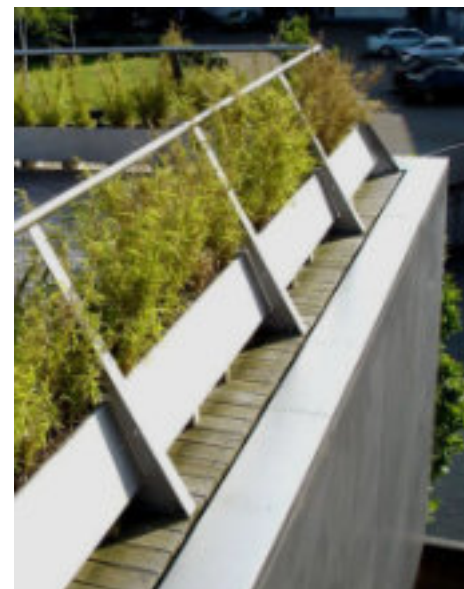
Detail Features



Brick Special Detailing



Multi Gilt Red Brick



Balustrade Planter

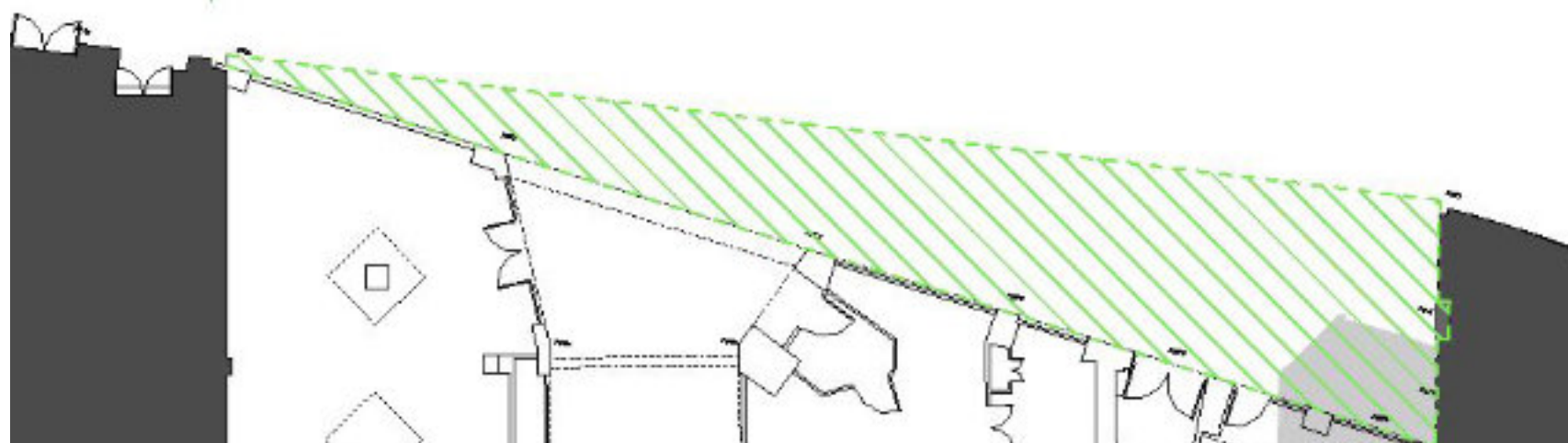


PPC Aluminium Window Reveal

8.0 - APPEARANCE



Pre-War Bristol & West Arcade



2006 Consented scheme indicating triangular recess

Building Line

As per the previous design, the principal elevation to Friar Street reinstates the original building line to re-establish this historic feature of the town center and to enhance the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area. This was and is seen as a significant heritage benefit of the proposal and was supported by Historic England in the previous application.

As shown in the submitted Heritage Statement and in the image, this particular site has a history of meeting the building line of 23 – 26 Market Place which was disrupted following bomb damage during the Second World War. The image also shows that there was a very robust design with prominent gables and roof structure in the immediate context of the Church and Town Hall.

The proposed building line allows the facade to be of a higher quality and generates a more coherent transition on this site and within the larger urban block. A coherent approach to this frontage was supported by both officers and Historic England on the previous application. The exposure of the flank elevation of 23 – 26 Market Place was never intended to be a feature of the building or the Conservation Area and is a modern condition. It is considered to detract from the original nature of the Victorian street patterns and is not a positive feature of the area.

The reinstatement of this building line therefore enhances the character and appearance of the historic features of the town center's historic environment in accordance with Policies CS7, CS33 and is consistent with pre-application advice.

An existing shadow gap between the stone element and 23 – 26 Market Place that creates a distinction between the two properties and was considered to be a positive design feature is maintained.

8.0 - APPEARANCE



Proposed canopied entrance from Friar Street / Town Hall Square

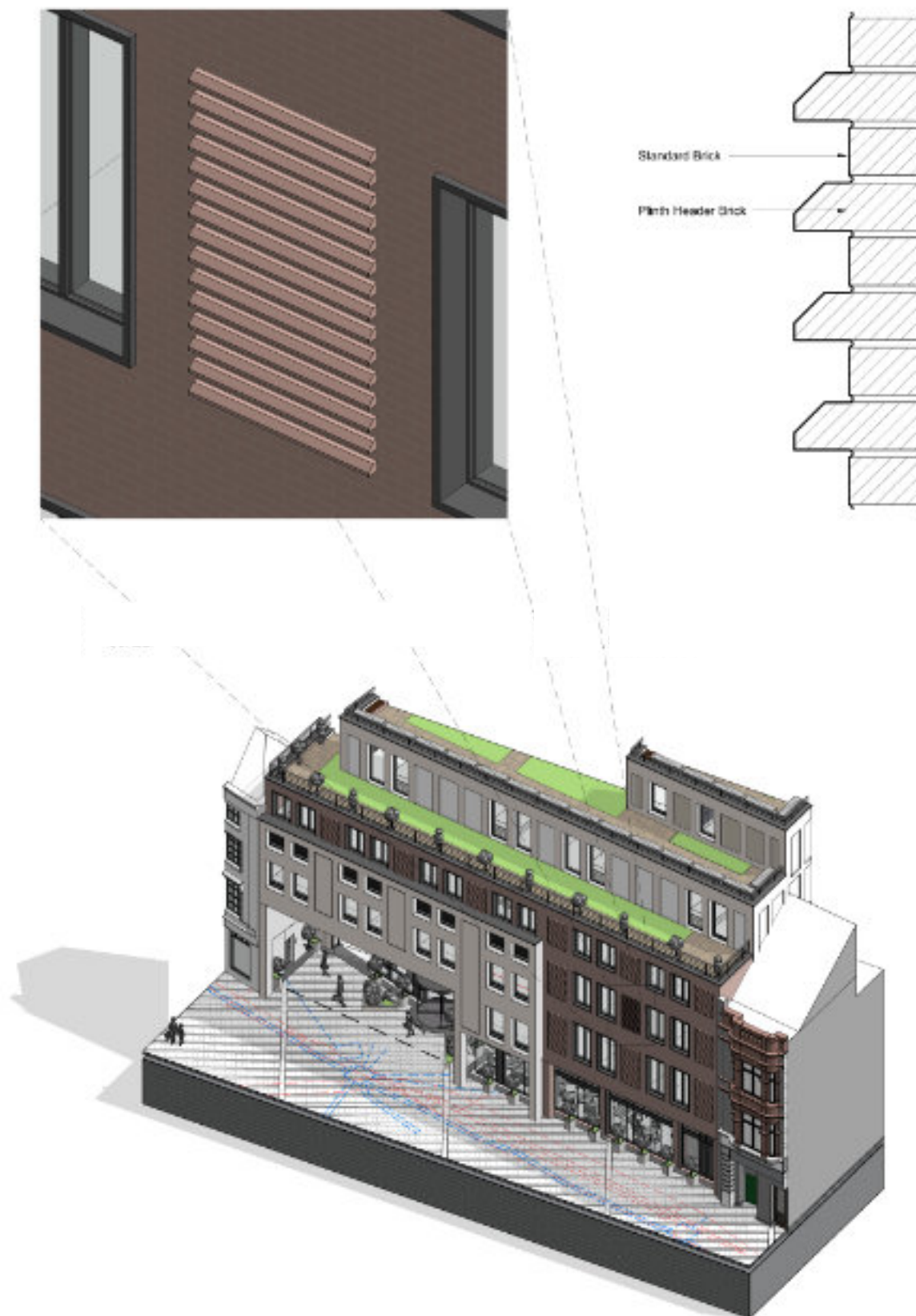
Impact on the Setting of Listed Buildings

The revised design approach continues to complement the nearby listed buildings and is considered to enhance their setting through the reinforcement of subtle references. The use of both red brick and stone between the parts of the frontage allows the proposed building to positively integrate within the established street scene and sit well alongside adjacent Listed Buildings.

The proposed scheme continues to have a strong and deferential relationship with the Church opposite the site through the use of the lighter stone weaving throughout the façade. The use of local red brick also serves to highlight the difference and prominence of the Church, whilst drawing on the colours and textures of the Town Hall, which is considered to be a positive response.

The revised materials will blend well within the frontage and wider street scene, and in views of the site. This will ensure that it integrates well in the context of the Town Hall and St Lawrence Church and the other nearby Listed Buildings. The proposed scheme will continue to sit comfortably within the street scene and continues to comply with Core Strategy Policies CS7 and CS33.

8.0 - APPEARANCE



8.2 - DEVELOPING ON THE EXISTING DESIGN APPROACH

In addition to the accepted approved design approach the following interventions have been made:

Reduced Glazing

The change in function from office to hotel has enabled the proposal to reduce the amount of glazing provision provided in the approved application. As such the elevation is ordered to facilitate solid masonry panels that are more in keeping with the neighbouring properties of Friar Street and Market Place. These panels are finished in alternate ways to further distinguish between the two finishes; an exaggerated mortar joint/ rebate frames stone panels, whilst projecting brick specials in alternate courses embellish the brickwork.

The spacing and proportions enable the windows to be more recessed 'punched holes' at upper floors akin to the context. Pressed metal reveals further distinguish the brickwork openings from the stone versions.

Protected Entrance

Depth of facade is enabled by a stepped building line between stone and brick frontages. These are further accentuated by the recessed commercial glazed frontages between grounded columns/ fins that enable a covered fully live frontage to contribute to the activity of Friar Street and Town Hall Square.

A generous two storey recessed sheltered entrance has been provided to both the re-routed arcade and restaurant/ bar. This was principally a necessity to retain appropriate service access to below ground services. However the chamfered glazed entrance and angled soffit forms a gentle and reassuring receptacle for movement into the more confined arcade. It also enables a respectful distance to the Atlantis Group entrance and area for way finding signage.

Arcade & Courtyard

The commercial glazing continues into the re-routed arcade to enable a reassuring modernised nod to the heritage of the sites history. Stone framed openings demarcate and in conjunction with infill feature brickwork panels form token 'shop frontages' along the route before you enter a new generous central courtyard that both forms the principal entrance to the hotel and is an external dining area to the restaurant.

8.0 - APPEARANCE





Friar Street - 2019 Consented Scheme



Friar Street - 2021 Proposal



The Forbury - 2019 Consented Scheme



The Forbury - 2021 Proposal



Blagrove Street - 2019 Consented Scheme



Blagrove Street - 2021 Proposal



The Forbury - 2019 Consented Scheme



The Forbury - 2021 Proposal