

OLD MAID, FORMER NURSES HOSTEL, ROYAL BERKSHIRE
HOSPITAL, READING

HERITAGE REPORT

OCTOBER 2020

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Worlledge Associates

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WORLLEDGE ASSOCIATES

Worlledge Associates is an Oxford-based heritage consultancy, committed to the effective management of the historic environment. Established in 2014 by Nicholas and Alison Worlledge, Nicholas came to private practice with over 35 years' experience working in heritage management for local authorities. This intimate knowledge and understanding of council processes, and planning policy and practice, helps us to work collaboratively with owners and decision-makers to manage change to the historic environment.

Our team of dedicated researchers and specialists believe in the capacity of the historic environment to contribute to society's collective economic, social, and cultural well-being. We aim to identify what is significant about places and spaces in order to support their effective management and sustain their heritage value. We have worked with a wide range of property-owners and developers including universities and colleges, museums and libraries, large country estates, manor house, farmsteads, cottages, town houses and new housing sites.

INTRODUCTION

The intelligent management of change is a key principle necessary to sustain the historic environment for present and future generations to enjoy. Historic England and successive government agencies have published policy and advice that extend our understanding of the historic environment and develop our competency in making decisions about how to manage it.

Paragraphs 4-10 of Historic England's Good Practice Advice Note 2 (Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment) explains that applications (for planning permission and listed building consent) have a greater likelihood of success and better decisions will be made when applicants and local planning authorities assess and understand the particular nature of the significance of an asset, the extent of the asset's fabric to which the significance relates and the level of importance of that significance.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) provides a very similar message in paragraphs 189 and 190 expecting both applicant and local planning authority to take responsibility for understanding the significance of a heritage asset and the impact of a development proposal, seeking to avoid unacceptable conflict between the asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

It has never been the intention of government to prevent change or freeze frame local communities and current policy and good practice suggests that change, if managed intelligently would not be harmful.

The historic core of the Royal Berkshire Hospital, begun in 1839 is included in the National Heritage List for England, at grade II*, indicating it is series of buildings of more than local heritage significance. The hospital rapidly expanded and evolved from its foundation and displays a number of phases which respond to demands for care, but also the evolution of medical thinking and treatments through the 19th and into the 20th century. It continues to grow and provides cutting edge medical care to Reading and surrounding communities.

While the majority of the surviving buildings are in active use, Old Maids, which was constructed as a Private Nurses Home in 1871-72, with extensions in 1881-2 for servants and nurses and again in 1891-2, is vacant and in a deteriorating condition, and presents a number of challenges.

This Report has been prepared to assess the heritage significance of the Royal Berkshire Hospital, and to assist with understanding the conservation challenges and options for its long-term viable preservation. The report will particularly focus on the wing of the hospital building known as Old Maids. It provides a chronology of the Royal Berkshire Hospital including Old Maids, includes a brief description of Old Maids, and then undertakes an assessment of heritage significance of the Hospital and the Old Maids building in accordance with the Historic England Guidelines, and provides a statement of significance.

The report will then briefly address the issue of the current physical condition of the building and challenges and the options to achieving its long-term preservation

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE HOSPITAL

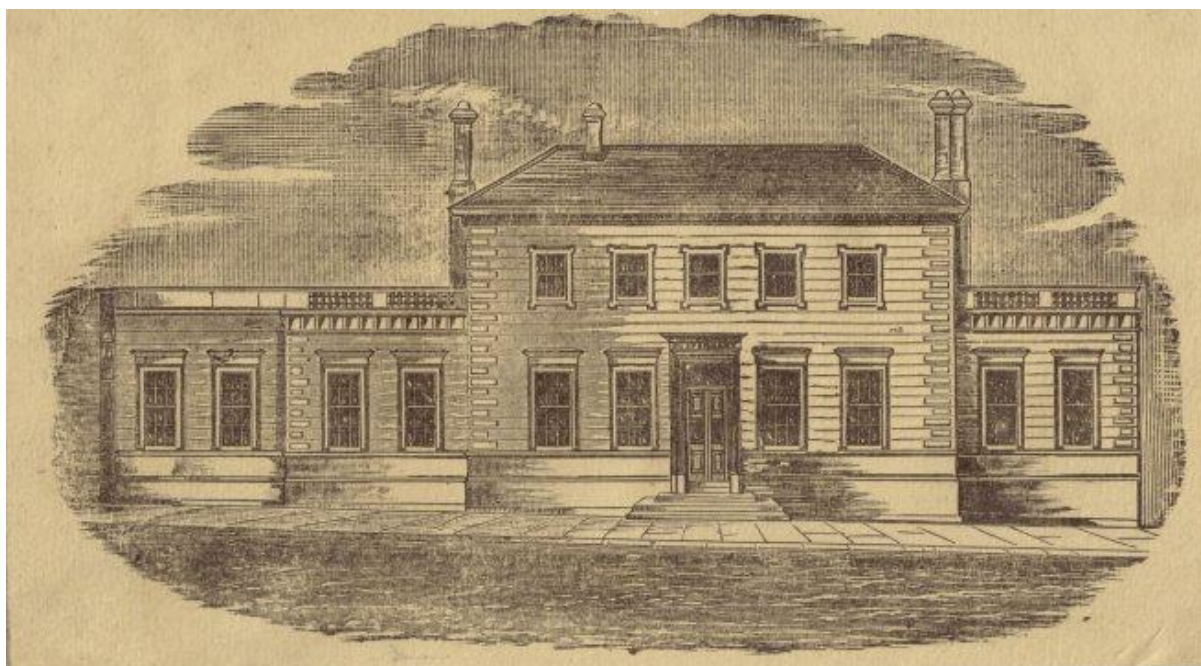
BEGINNINGS

There is a reference in 1180 of a hospital being founded in Reading for Pilgrims some 60 years after the foundation of Reading Abbey in 1121 by King Henry I (c. 1068 – 1 December 1135).

It is unclear how the sick of Reading were treated up until 1802 when the Reading Medical Dispensary was set up for “administering advice and medicines to the industrious poor at the Dispensary, or in some cases in their own habitations”.

This public Dispensary was instigated by Drs Thomas, Salmon and Barry with the help of some wealthy people in the town who were concerned that poor people had no medical care other than quack treatments. By becoming a Life Governor for a subscription of ten guineas, the subscriber could nominate up to three poor people to be treated at the Dispensary.

A Resident Dispenser was installed in a house in Chain Lane, rented for the purpose by Reading Medical Dispensary. By 1806, 400 patients had been treated. By 1832 the number had risen to 18,000 and included the inauguration of smallpox vaccination from 1815.



Chain Lane premises of the Reading Dispensary established in 1802, rebuilt in 1848

<https://readingdispensarytrust.org.uk/>

In June 1822 the 'Reading Philanthropic Institution' was founded 'for the purpose of relieving necessitous and deserving poor'. It comprised members who paid a subscription, the monies of which were used to assist the less fortunate in Reading. In April 1825 the Berkshire Chronicle reported on the 'benefits which it confers on the town and neighbourhood are numerous and important – it [...] affords relief to the industrious and disabled who have fallen into distress.' At the annual meeting in 1827 it reported that it had assisted 135 families at a cost of £237 17s, provided 70 tons of coal £94 and paid a 4-year subscription to the Reading Dispensary \$4 4s. (Berkshire Chronicle 18 August 1827)

At the seventh annual meeting in 1829 the issue of the establishment of a Country Infirmary was discussed, with Mr C F Palmer, member for the Borough of Reading, stating it had long been his wish to promote so good an establishment, and that he had endeavoured on every opportunity to press it to the magistrates and the grand jury at the county sessions'. The Chairman of the Philanthropic Institution hoped to 'communicate more definitively on this important subject; and trust the public at large will take an interest in the establishment of our Infirmary, which may be continued as a blessing for future generations' (Berkshire Chronicle 15 August 1829, p. 2)

Despite this report, there is little evidence of progress, with the Reading Dispensary being the only institution providing medical services. In its 1835 Annual Report it noted that since it was established in November 1802, it has admitted 20,113 people. (Berkshire Chronicle 9 January 1836) For a number of years the Reading Dispensary had been experiencing difficulties in treating out-patients and meeting the demands for its services and sought solutions. At a special general meeting in February 1836 it resolved to increase the accommodation to the utmost possible [...] keeping in

view the prudence of economising the funds of the Institution for the ultimate purpose or erecting a Hospital, or Infirmary. (Berkshire Chronicle 20 February 1836)

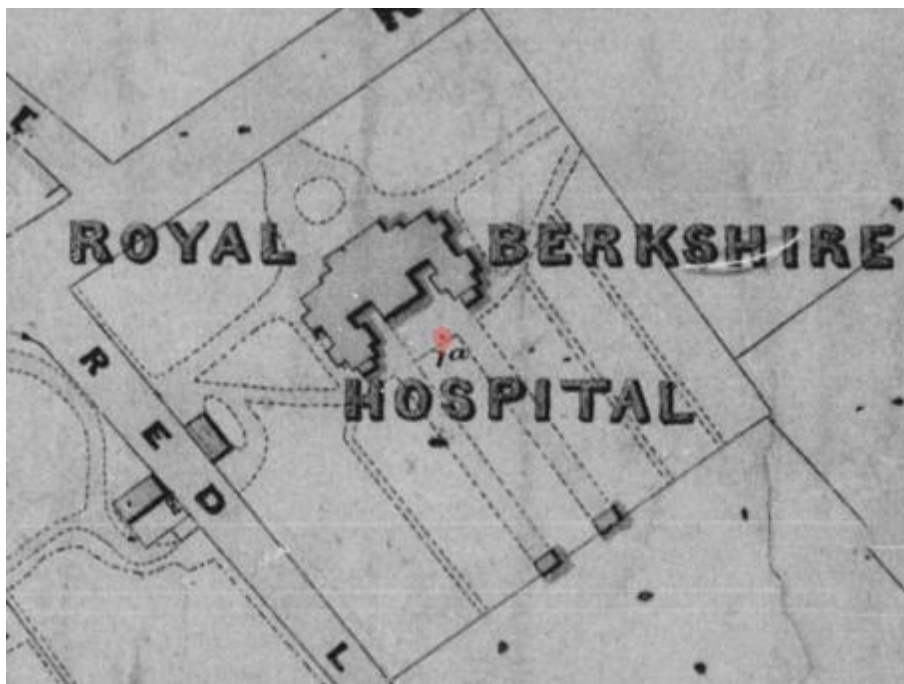
The Reading Mercury reported on 14 March 1836 that following this meeting the chairman of the Reading Dispensary wrote to the Grand Jury in regard to the proposed County Hospital. In response the Grand Jury indicated its support and proposed the matter be placed before the next Quarter Sessions in April. On 30 April a meeting was held at the Town Hall in Reading to discuss the establishment of 'a County Hospital in or near the town'. The matter was unanimously resolved, and subscriptions opened to raise funds, which the Berkshire Chronicle (7 May 1836) reported had reached £3,000 by the end of the day.

Following the meeting, Mr Robert Palmer MP, wrote to St James Palace, advising of the proposed hospital. On 6 May the Palace responded that 'his Majesty has been graciously pleased to consent that the proposed Hospital should be considered as being instituted under his Majesty's Patronage and should be called "The Royal Berkshire Hospital"'. The King also granted an annual donation of fifty guineas from the privy purse. The Queen also became Patroness for the hospital and granted an annual subscription of ten guineas towards the Funds for the hospital. (Berkshire Chronicle 14 May 1836)

FOUNDATION

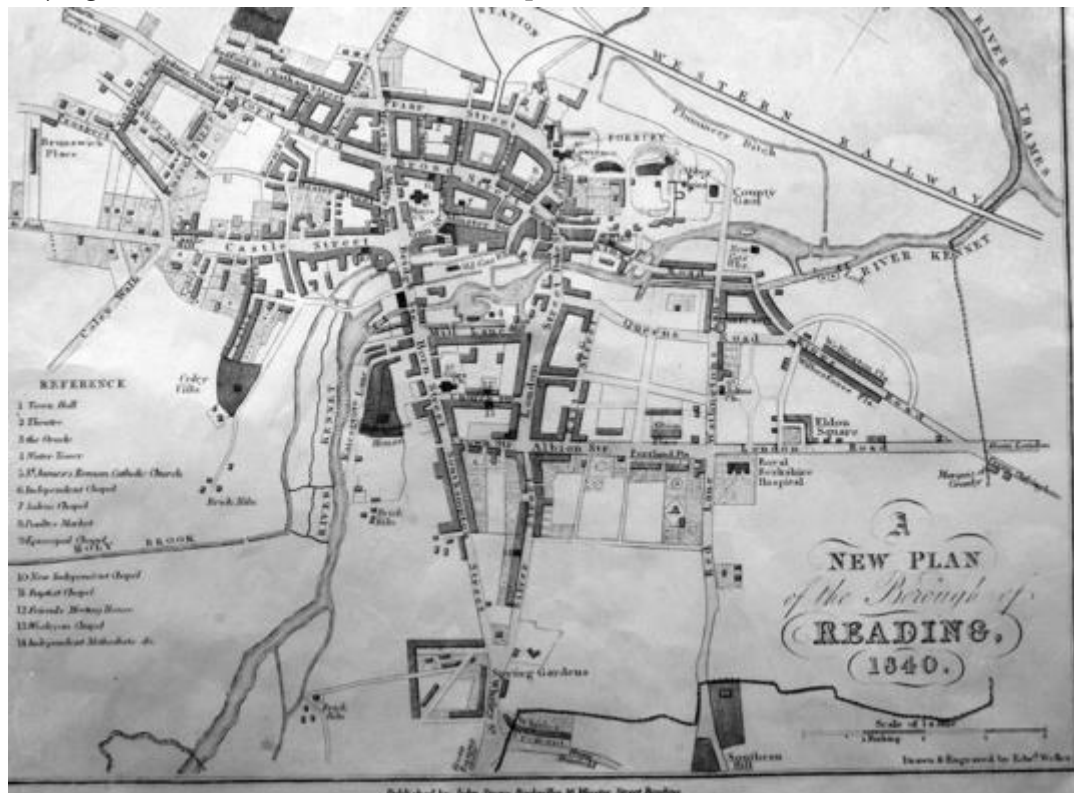
- 1836 September Lord and Lady Sidmouth donated 6 acres of land to the Hospital Committee with no other condition that the land be used for the hospital. (Berkshire Chronicle 3 September 1836)
- 1836 October Committee placed an advert in the Windsor and Eton Express 8 October calling for designs and estimates for the proposed hospital with £50 for the first, £30 for the second and £20 for the third approved design and estimate.
- 1836 December Committee awarded the first prize to a Mr. Henry Briant of Reading, who submitted two designs one Gothic, the other chiefly Ionic. (London Evening Standard 28 December 1836)
- 1837 March Tenders for building the hospital were opened. The tenders were for the whole building and the fence. They ranged from £14,192 down to £7,820, with five of the seven tenders coming from builders in Reading. Mr James Plumley, with the cheapest quote was selected. (Berkshire Chronicle 1 April 1837)
- 1837 April Advert placed by the Committee for a Clerk of Works, to superintend jointly with the architect. (Berkshire Chronicle 8 April 1837)

- 1837 April The Wiltshire Independent on 27 April reported that the ground for the Royal Berks Hospital was now cleared and the foundations were being dug. It also reported Mr Rumble had been appointed Clerk of Works, having had a similar situation on the erection of the Town hall, Manchester and a new church in Marlow.
- 1837 June. Death of King William IV postponed the ceremony for laying the foundation stone.
- 1839 February Berkshire Chronicle (9 February) carried a Report of the Committee for the building of the hospital including the costs with the following expenditure
- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| James Plumley, builder | £6647; |
| Henry Briant, Architect, commission | £300 |
| Thomas Rumble, clerk of works | £222 6 0 |
| Furniture | £105 17 6 |
| Garden shrubs and plants | £47 2 0 |
- Also noted was a payment of £50 to Mr Geo Basevi, consulting architect who assisted the committee in selecting the design from over 50 submissions.
- 1839 March Tenders called for 50 iron bedsteads, 44 window blinds (Reading Mercury 16 March)
- 1839 May Hospital officially opened with big celebration. People allowed to inspect the wards, rooms and grounds. The Berkshire Chronicle (1 June) reporting that 'the grounds laid from designs by T Hoggard, Esq., were universally admired for taste and judgement displayed in their formation and execution' The Tithe Award Map of 1839 shows the footprint of the building and the layout of the grounds



Extract from the Tithe Award Map for Reading St Giles Parish 1839 showing the hospital

The New Plan of the Borough of Reading, 1840 shows the relationship of the hospital to the town, with it lying to the south east of the centre in open fields.



A New Plan for the Borough of Reading showing the location of the hospital (bottom RHS) bordering open country to the south and east



Contemporary print of the new hospital

EXPANSION

- 1844 July The Board of Governors held a special meeting to consider a plan for the enlargement of the hospital. The plans had been drawn up by Mr. Rumble who was the clerk of works on the hospital. The plan showed not only additional wards but the elevation of a chapel,

the Board considered necessary. Mr Rumble estimated the cost of the contract £2,338 for the wards and covered ways and £377 for the chapel.

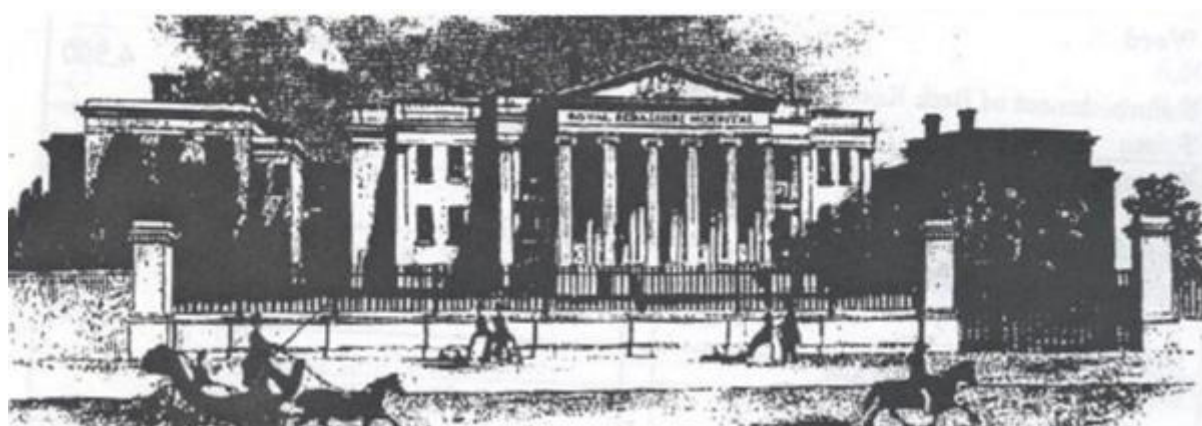
The new wards were proposed by continuation of the wards east and west and each communicated by a covered way with the chapel, which would constitute the south front. (Reading Mercury 20 July 1844)

- 1844 November The committee accepted a tender from Mr Beedel, builder of Queens Road, Reading for the erection of the additional wards and chapel. (Reading Mercury 16 November)
- 1844 November. Due to the building costs, the committee proposed to build the eastern wing and the chapel first and raise funds to then build the western wing. (Berkshire Chronicle 30 November)
- 1844 December. Committee advised that so urgent was the need to the increased accommodation the board accepted a tender for £2,257 to complete the western wing. (Reading Mercury 21 December)
- 1846 Building committee reported the satisfactory completion of the works.
- 1849 March Committee decided to add another wing to the hospital, with the plans of Mr Thomas Rumble having been accepted. The works to commence in April. (Oxford Journal, 10 March 1849) On 24 March the Reading Mercury carried a tender notice for the works for the erection of an east wing.
- 1849 April The Berkshire Chronicle 24 April reported a tender by Mr. Richard Billings for £1,360 had been accepted. The Board considered that with these works the building would be complete.



A rare photographic image of the hospital by Talbot Fox (in Reading 1844-47) held by the Bodleian Library <https://talbot.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/search/catalog/artifact-11895>

- 1861 June Tenders invited for construction of two new wings 75 feet by 28 feet Joseph Morris the architect. (Hampshire Chronicle 22 June 1861) The wings were one either side of the front façade. The tender was awarded to Sharpington and Cole, London and commenced in July 1861. (Berkshire Chronicle 1 March 1862)
- 1862 May Building completed and comprised on the ground floor a spacious and lofty apartment for the use of convalescent patients during the day, retiring to their places in several wards to sleep. On the first floor are new wards, with nurses' rooms and bathrooms attached. The post-mortem house, which stood near the main building, has been removed, and is being re-built in a more obscure part of the premises, to admit of the grounds being laid out so as to give a more cheerful view from the windows of the convalescent rooms. The additional cost has been about £5,000. (Berkshire Chronicle 31 May 1862)



Lithograph showing the 1861-62 wings by Joseph Morris, architect

- 1865 June The Reading Mercury 17 June carried a notice to 'builders and masons' for tenders to extend the "Benyon" and "Sidmouth" Wards and erecting new bathrooms and closets. Mr Joseph Morris, Architect
- 1866 March Report of the Board noted the deficiencies of male accommodation was in the course of being addressed by the erection of two additional words to provide 20 more beds. (Reading Mercury 3 March 1866)
- 1866 Health Board agreed to hire trained nurses. In June 1866 when the Board entered an agreement with a Dr Falconer of the Bath Home for Trained Nurses. The Home would supply the Royal Berks with one trained Superintendent Nurse and three trained nurses. In exchange, the Hospital would give training to the Home's probationers. In August 1866, the three trained nurses and the new Superintendent herself – Miss Smith – arrived. Within a week, Smith asked for three more nurses, increasing nursing staff to ten. The arrangement ceased by December with the hospital taking responsibility for recruitment.

<https://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/blog/berkshires-nightingales>

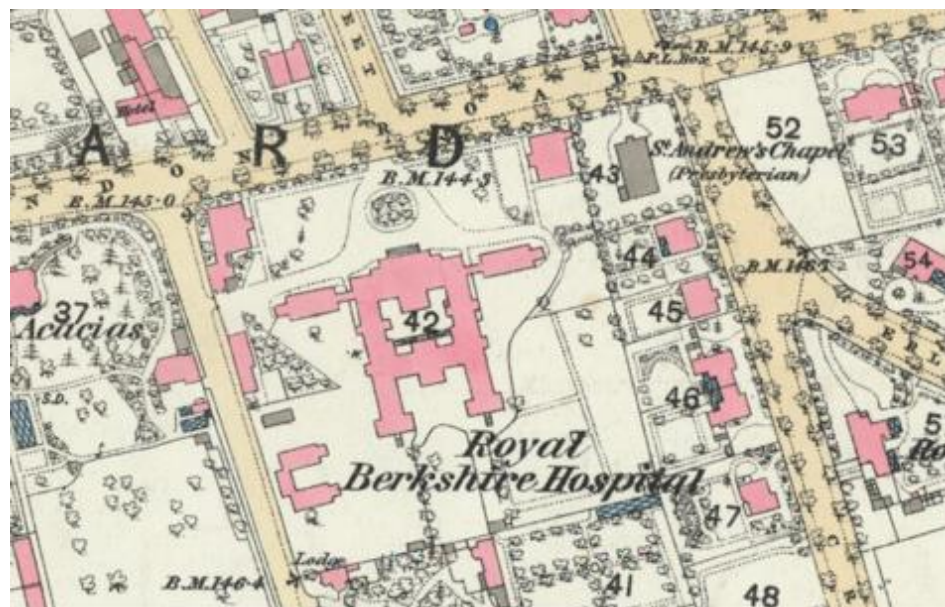
1867 March Board advised that the Hospital now hold 120 beds, with the cost of the two additional wards being £2,000 with £204 for the furniture and fittings. (Reading Mercury 2 March)

1869 The Board noted that nursing staff were 'greatly superior in education and intelligence to those previously employed', and nurses received a well-earned pay-rise.
<https://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/blog/berkshires-nightingales>

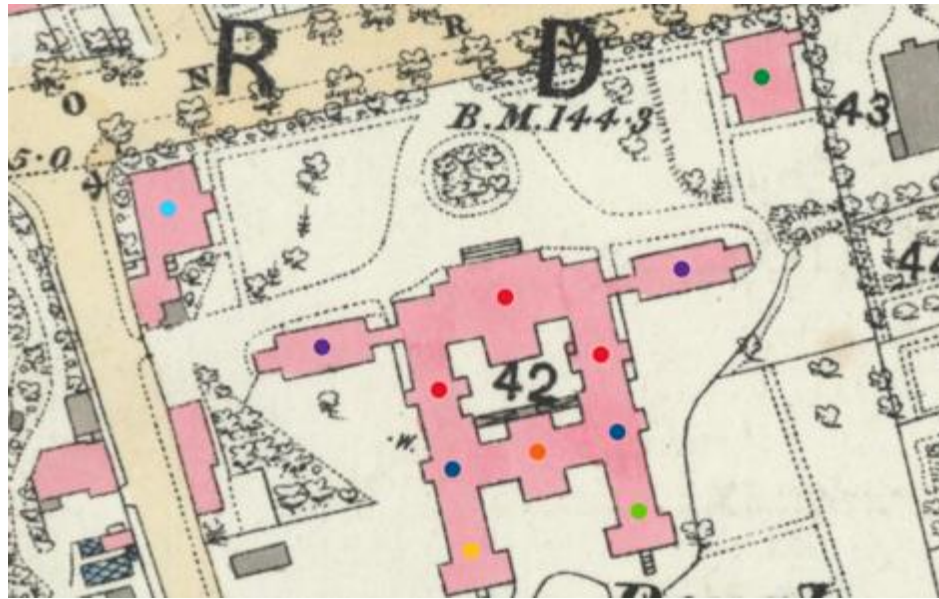
1872 August The Reading Mercury (24 August) reported an extension to the south-east wing of the hospital was progressing, and that it will provide 20 additional beds for female patients.

Also, the new buildings in the north-east and north-west corner are commenced, one will contain reception rooms for out-patients, and rooms for the medical staff and dispenser; the other day rooms and dormitories for well-trained nurses, intended to be let out. A sum of between £5000 and \$6000 is required for the new buildings, and £700 in annual subscriptions to defray the cost of the additional 20 beds.

1872 September The Berkshire Chronicle (7 September) reported a dispute between the The Hospital and the Board of Health and the Reading Borough Council, acting as the Sanitary Authority under the Public Health Act 1872, in relation to the new buildings in the north-east and north-west corners, designed by Mr Joseph Morris, Architect. The Borough Council was concerned that the building sat too far forward on the site in front of adjoining houses in London Road. It is clear, however, that the buildings were constructed as designed, as they are shown on the 1875 25-inch Ordnance Survey plan.



Extract from the 1875 25-inch OS plan showing the hospital and surroundings



Extract from 1875 25-inch OS plan

From the description the following appears to be the phasing by this date. Original (red) 1844 extensions (blue) with chapel (orange) 1861-62 wings (purple) 1866 wing male (yellow) 1872 wing female (green), 1872 free-standing out-patients (light blue) Nurses dayroom and dormitories (dark green)

1876 Infection wards Morris and Smallwood



1875 image of the hospital with the 1839 central block, 1861-62 wings and to the far RHS the single-storey out-patients building in the north west corner (NMR)

FURTHER GROWTH

1880 August The Board of Management approved major improvements to the hospital

- The nurse's home be raised another story to provide additional accommodation for nine private nurses and probationers at an estimated cost of £1,700
- That an additional block be built on the south end of the nurse's home for the accommodation of the housekeeper and twelve servants at a cost of £1,500
- That the laundry be erected at the south end of the new dormitories at an estimated cost of £1,500
- That the nurses' home, new dormitories, and laundry be connected with the main building by an enclosed way to be carried along the south wall of the female convalescence ward at an estimated cost of £500
- That the chapel be removed from its present position, and the side ward reduced in length to open out the quadrangle. The central block of the hospital to be remodelled and extended. The present museum and library to be converted into a chapel with and operating theatre and small ward over, at an estimated cost of £3,500
- That the out-patients' department be raised another storey to provide rooms for museum, library, and such other purposes as may be considered necessary, at an estimated cost of £2,000
- The kitchen be altered by having a lobby made at the entrance and fitted with a ventilation shaft to prevent the smells of cooking entering the wards, and the present laundry converted into a dining room for the servants.

The plans were presented by Joseph Morris who was in partnership with Spencer Stallwood. (Reading Mercury 7 August 1880)

1881 February 16 tenders were received for the main works, and 15 for the furnishing and fitting up the new library. (Reading Mercury 19 February 1881)

1881 April The Board met to consider the tenders which at £16,000 exceeded the estimate of £11,000. Agreed to proceed with the tender costs

Nurses' home additional storey £1,898

Servant dormitory £1,735

Laundry £2,602 fittings £869

Enclosed corridor £418

Chapel £3,482

Library and museum £1,674, fittings £1,150

Colonnade £391

Architects fees £710 + incidental £710

(Reading Observer 9 April 1881)

- 1881 The Builder 31 December 1881 published illustrations of the proposed additions to the nurse's home, the laundry and chapel.
- 1883 January works completed. The major contract was undertaken by J Parnell and Son, Rugby. The whole of the buildings have been erected from the designs and supervision of Messrs. Morris & Stallwood. Externally the buildings accord with the Grecian character of the original hospital, but the interior of the chapel, library etc., are in the Italian style, treated quite freely. The chapel and operating theatre by A Shepherd, Reading, the library works were carried out by Mr. A Kimberley, Banbury (Reading Mercury 27 January 1883)
- 1883 March The completion of the nurses' home (Old Maids) will enable the Board of Management to increase the staff of private nurses very materially. The enlargement of the building provided accommodation for 24 nurses. The present number is 16.

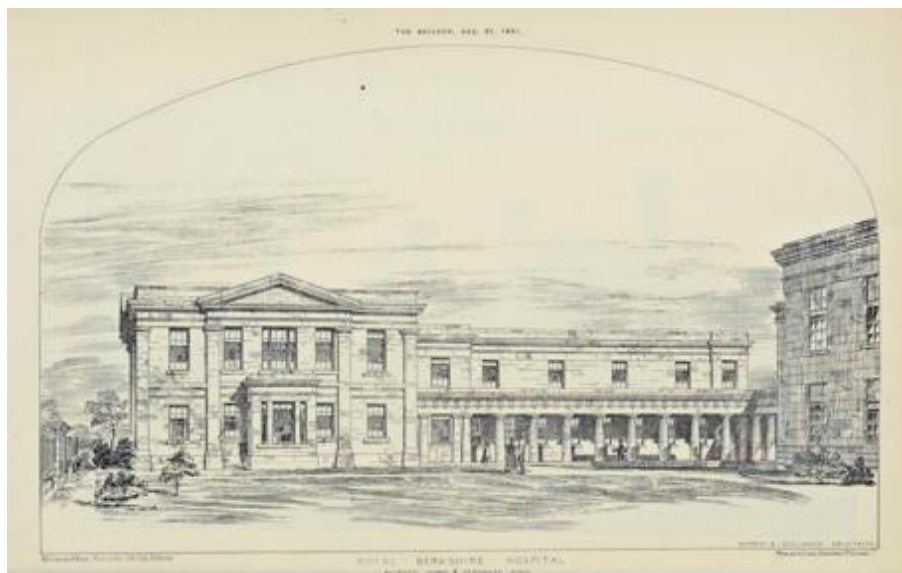


Illustration of Old Maids published in The Builder 31 December 1881 p 820 of the additional storey to the 1861 nurses' home and the addition of the housekeeper's accommodation, servant's accommodation, and the colonnade link to the female convalescence ward (1861)

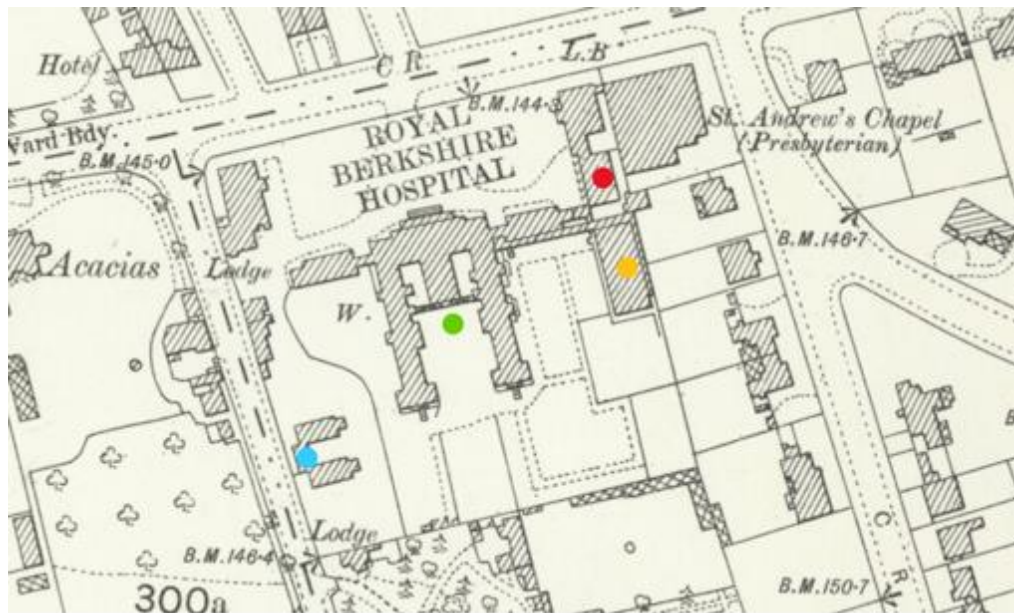


Illustrations of the laundry published in *The Builder* 1881, Dec 31 p. 825 and the chapel *Builder*, 1882 Jan. 7, p. 12

The Annual Reports of the Board show that the provision of private nurses was profitable for the hospital. The *Reading Mercury* 3 March 1888, reporting on the annual meeting of the board, noted the following statements in relation to the Private Nurses' Department.

When it was established, it was conjectured that no loss would accrue to the Hospital, but that the earnings of the nurses would be sufficient to defray the cost of the establishment. It appeared scarcely reasonable to expect that such a large profit would be realised. However, so successful has it proved that the Treasurer is enabled to transfer the large sum of £700 from the balance in hand of the Private Nurses' Funds to the general funds of the Hospital; so that not only are the town and neighbourhood benefitting from the services of the experienced trained nurses, but the Hospital receives a large and increasing income from the profits of this department.

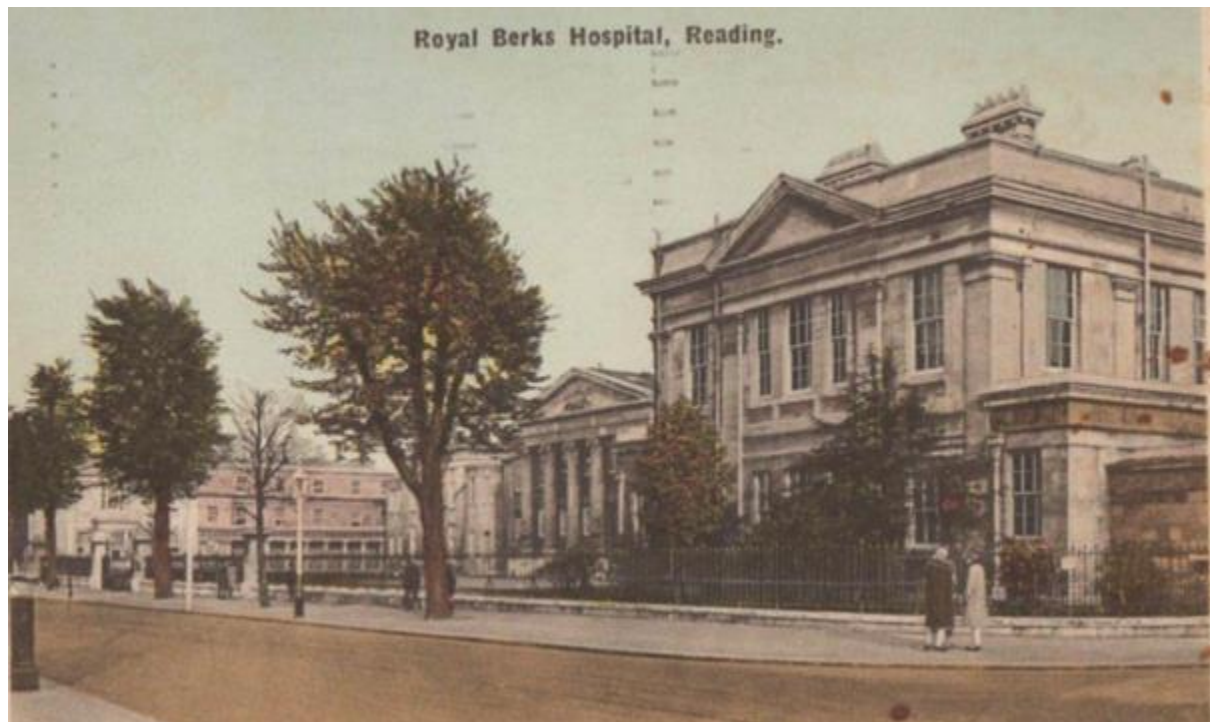
- 1891 May *Berkshire Chronicle* 16 May 1891 carried a notice of a Special Court of Governors to consider alterations to the hospital comprising 'Accommodation for nurses by raising the servant's dormitories another storey giving eight bedrooms, with space for fourteen beds, bath rooms, etc.
- 1891 The proposal was approved with an estimated cost by Joseph Morris, architect of £1,145. (*Berkshire Chronicle* 30 May 1891)
- 1892 February The Annual meeting noted that the works had been completed.
- 1892 May New laundry erected and erection of isolation wards apart from the main hospital (*Berkshire Chronicle* 7 May 1892)



Extract from 25-inch OS Plan 1909 showing the building to the south of the nurses' home and the colonnade link (red) and a new building, possibly laundry (yellow) and isolation wards (blue) and the opening up of the quadrangle (green)



Post Card of the hospital post 1892 showing the nurses' home (Old Maids)



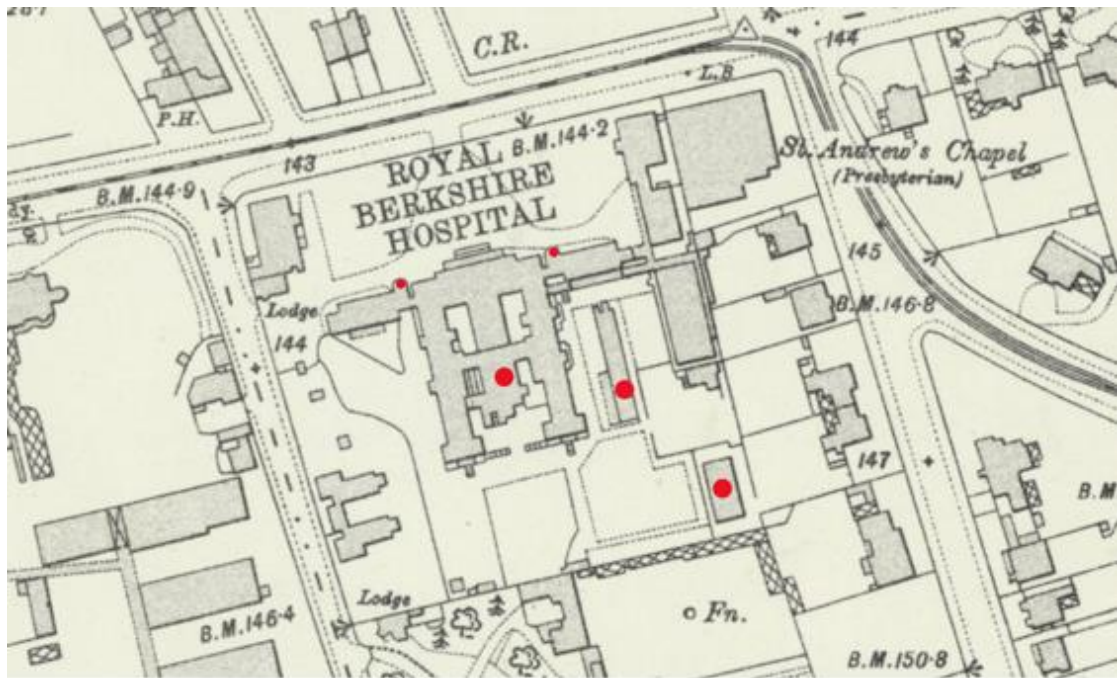
Post card post 1892 showing the extra storey on the north-western block for the library and museum

CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT

The building program continued as demonstrated by the 1909 25-inch OS plan showing additional buildings

1908-9: the small canted bays were added to the front by C. Smith & Son, architects.

1911-12: connecting link added (C. Smith & Son) on W side to fill gap between main block and W wing; also new eye and ENT departments, including operating theatre on first floor level, added

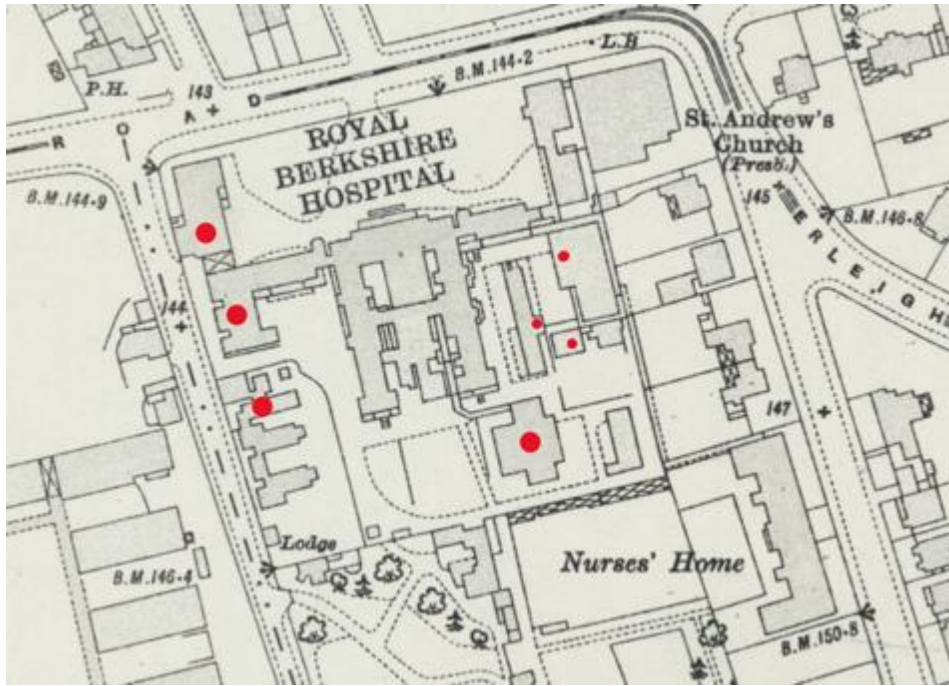


Extract from 1909 25-inch plan showing further additions (red)

During World War I, RBH remained a voluntary hospital, but also became a war hospital with more beds. In 1915, because of a meningitis epidemic, marquees were put on the back lawn to increase the bed numbers



1920 aerial of the Royal Berkshire Hospital Britain from Above EPW0086



Extract from 25-inch 1919 OS showing further additions to the hospital (red) and new nurses' home making the earlier one redundant



Aerial image 1932 Britain from Above WPW037491

POST WWII

1948 RBH has 461 beds and many specialist departments.

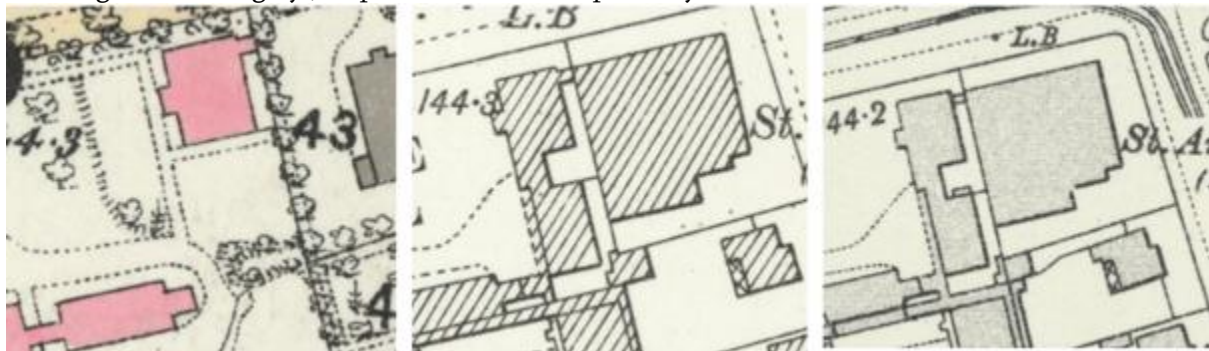
- 1993 RBH has 760 beds
- 2002 New Centre Block opens with new X-ray and wards
- 2003 Phase 3 construction begins at northern end of RBH site
- 2005 All clinical services consolidated onto the RBH site

OLD MAIDS

The above chronology provided clear evidence of the three phases of development of the building externally.

- 1871-2 Single story pavilion
- 1881-3 Additional storey to the pavilion and two-storey wing to the south connected to the female convalescence wing (1861)
- 1891-2 Additional storey to the southern wing

The original building by Joseph Morris, the last phase by Morris & Stallwood



Map regression of the footprint 1875, 1898 and 1908 25-inch maps

No plan or illustration has been located of the original pavilion, but the 1881 architect drawing shows the addition of the storey over the pavilion and the southern wing



Extract from The Builder 1881, Dec 31 page 825



Extract from post 1891-2 additions showing the additional storey in more detail



1920 aerial image EPW000871



1932 aerial EPW037491



1943 image of Old Maids (NMR)

The Board Annual Report in 1901 notes a reduction in the number of private nurses, but that the accommodation was still not sufficient, accordingly a house in London Road was taken to provide additional accommodation. The Annual Report of 1905 makes reference to private nursing staff living in Portland Road being moved to two houses in Kings Road.

In 1923 the Board resolved to build a New Nurses Home and adaptation of the east wing for X-ray department, with a tender accepted from Messrs. Nicholls of Gloucester for £18, 634 for the building of the home to the drawings prepared by Mr. Charles Stewart Smith.

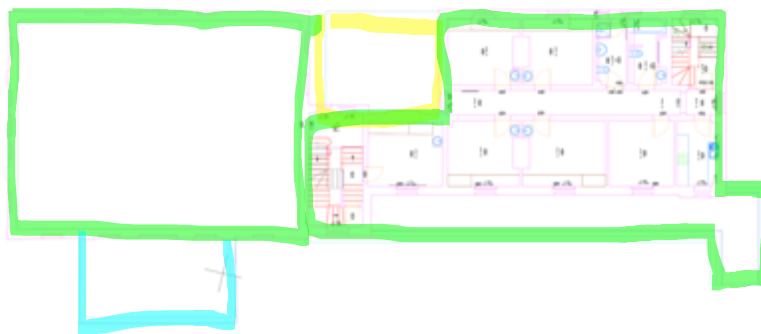
(Reading Observer 13 July 1923) It is unclear if this resulted in the 'Old Maid' nursing home becoming redundant. The portico to the west elevation altered post 1932 and by the date of the 1957 1:2500 OS map detracting from the elevation.

More detailed research would be required of the hospitals archives to understand changes post 1891-2 to the interior.

DATE OF EXTERNAL FABRIC (Plans in Drop Box Report Images separate plan folder)



Ground floor



First floor



Second floor



Roof

Key

1871-2

1881-3

1891-2

Between 1933-55

Modern

DESCRIPTION OF OLD MAIDS

EXTERIOR



West elevation from the carpark

The west elevation

The 1871-72, 1881-3 pavilion at the northern end is two-storey constructed of stone with a raised parapet behind which is a complex hipped roof. The classically derived elevation is five windows wide with pilasters and a simple entablature. There are pilasters at each corner and pilasters framing the central three window range above which a projecting triangular pediment. The central window is a tripartite sash, with a 6 over 6 panes, with 2 over 2 to the margin windows. The windows opening to the ground floor are smaller than the first floor, with all being 6 over 6 timber sashes. There is a later extension to the ground floor which replaced a smaller portico between 1933-57 which is rendered with a three-window range.

The 181-83, 1891-2 range to the south is predominantly three-storey constructed of stone with parapet roof behind which is a complex hipped roof structure. There is an open colonnade to the ground floor with Greek Doric columns and entablature. The ground floor elevation has eight windows. There is an entablature marking the break between the two-storey wing of the 1881-3 and the additional storey of 1891-2. The 1881-3 range with a small wing projecting to the west has six windows, with the window at the southern end framed by a pair of pilasters. All the windows are 6 over 6. The 1891-2 addition comprising a five-window range with matching 6 over 6 sashes.

THE NORTH ELEVATION

The north elevation exhibits the same detailing. It is five windows wide with pilasters to the corners and a pair of pilasters framing the middle three-window range with a triangular pediment above. The windows under the pediment has a 6 over 6 sash to the centre framed by two narrower 4 over 4 sashes to both the ground and first floor. The remaining sashes are 6 over 6 with the window openings to the ground floor smaller than those to the first floor



North elevation

EAST ELEVATION

The elevation to the 1871-2, 1881-3 which has always backed onto St Andrews church to the east has simple detailing, with pilasters to the corners and three windows to the centre of the block and blank walls either side.

The 1881-3, 1891-2 wing has a narrow link to a similar sized pavilion which comprises a five-windows range to the three-stories, with a clear break between the 1881-3 wing and the 1891-2 addition. The window openings to the third storey are smaller. All the windows are 6 over 6 sashes. The recess between the link has been infilled by a later extension.



Google maps 2D aerial image from the eastern side showing the narrow link and infill, the complex hipped roof structure, and some surviving chimney stacks but much reduced in height and/or capped off



Partial view of the east elevation



Google maps 2D image from the south showing the roof of the 1881-2 colonnade and the two-storey wing not built over in 1891-2 and the simple south elevation

INTERIOR

Only limited access has been available to the interior due to structural instability, and this to the 1881-3 and 1891-2 wings to the south. While the layout still comprises small rooms, in the absence of viewing the original drawings it is unclear if this is original or due to later alterations and re-subdivision of the spaces. There do, however, appear to be a range of original details surviving such as fire surrounds, all the sash windows, and timber staircases, although these, along with other fabric is in a deteriorating condition, with evidence of substantial dry rot. Some of the plaster ceilings are failing, all evidence of long-term vacancy and lack of basic maintenance which has allowed water ingress.

A more detailed description of the interior together with images is set out later in this report

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Royal Berkshire Hospital is included in the National Heritage List for England with a listing grade II*, indicating it is a building of more than just local heritage significance. The entry states:

MAIN BLOCK AND FLANKING WINGS AT ROYAL BERKSHIRE HOSPITAL, LONDON ROAD, READING

Main block 1839 by local architect and builder Henry Briant (who won the competition for designing the hospital). As King William IV took such a keen interest in the hospital before it was built, his Arms, not Queen Victoria's appear on the central pediment. Two storeys and basement. Bath stone - very large ashlar blocks used to front. Slate roofs. eleven bays with seven bay central break projecting pedimented hexastyle Ionic portico. Glazing bar sash windows. Corner piers. Channelled basement. Astragal to moulded cornice (dentil cornice to portico) and parapet. Recessed side entrance bays. Wide steps to portico with excellent contemporary lamp tripods with guilloche ornament.

Interior: colonnaded stair hall, cast iron balusters to stairs which divide at landing. 1882 chapel with contemporary fittings reached from under landing. (By Joseph Morris who made considerable extensions to the Hospital at that date). The main block has flanking wings added 1865 to designs by Joseph Morris. Three storeys also Bath stone and long side wings forming a large courtyard added 1881-2. The latter are also of Bath stone, have 5x5 end pavilions with three bay pedimented breaks and are linked to side wings by a Greek Doric colonnade (east side) and a 1911 block (west side). In front to street is a dwarf-stone wall with moulded coping and five retraining ashlar gate piers with block modillions to moulded capping.

List Entry Number: 1156091

From the above chronology it is noted that some of the dates included in the 1975 entry are incorrect, with some of the fabric identifies much earlier than the dates ascribed in the entry.

SURVIVING FABRIC

From a review of the history, map progression, historic and current aerial images of the site, the evidence suggests a considerable level of the external form and fabric of buildings dating from 1839-1914 survives, including:

1839 front building and wings to the south and front walls

1840s extension to the male and female wings to the south

1862 convalescent side-wings with later bay additions to the front

1872 nurses pavilion with 1881-3 and 1892 additions (Old Maids) and former laundry

1872 out-patients with 1881-2 additions and 1911 linking building

Significance is defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (Feb 2019) as:

'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting'.

Placing the asset in its historical context and describing its characteristics and appearance is an important component of the evidence gathering exercise. This both informs our understanding of a site's significance and the contribution of its setting to this significance.

As Historic England explains in 'Conservation Principles' (2008), understanding how a place has evolved and how different phases add to or detract from its significance is a part of that exercise. Heritage significance can be defined as using Evidential, Historical, Aesthetic and Communal Values.

Before assessing its significance, and that of Old Maids, a contextual history is provided of Voluntary Hospitals, and 19th century nursing, and of the works of the principal architects.

BRIEF HISTORY OF HOSPITALS IN ENGLAND

Historic England in its Listing Selection Guide: Health and Welfare Buildings provides an overview of the development of Hospitals.

Treatment of the sick, old and infirm in the Middle Ages was largely the preserve of the church and in particular of monasteries. [...] Only three major medieval hospitals survived the Dissolution, all in London. St Bartholomew's and St Thomas's (re-founded in 1546 and 1551 respectively), and St Mary of Bethlehem (Bethlem, or Bedlam) for the mentally ill, the last of which had been secularised when it came under the jurisdiction of the City of London in 1346; these formed the only models for hospitals available in England until the latter part of the eighteenth century.

It was not until the early eighteenth century that new 'voluntary hospitals' were established. These served the sick poor, and were run by boards of governors made up of local gentry; they were highly significant outlets for philanthropy.[...] About 250 had been established by the middle decades of the nineteenth century, and they formed the core of health care and medical innovation (through teaching hospitals) until the launch of the National Health Service in 1948.

The General Voluntary Hospital before about 1840

Many eighteenth-century hospitals started out in modified private houses and, even when specially built, to a certain extent they emulated them. This tendency towards monumental polite design. [...] Hospital functions tended to be contained within a single block, although elements such as the kitchen or isolation wards were gradually removed to separate buildings. An awareness of the importance of heating and ventilation means that a greater emphasis was placed on window ventilation.

Post-1840 hospitals and the pavilion plan

General hospitals continued to multiply in the early nineteenth century, the most progressive experimenting with improved ventilation and sanitation. The mechanics of infection remained poorly understood well into the twentieth century. 'Miasmatic' theories (the idea that disease passed through the air rather like a cloud) prevailed and ventilation remained the determining factor in hospital design until the twentieth century. This explains the popularity of the pavilion plan that separated functions and provided good light and ventilation to dispel foul air.

The long ward ranges are sometimes known as Nightingale wards, after Florence Nightingale (1820-1910), who on her return from the Crimean War became a prominent figure in the health reform movement and who campaigned for better hygiene and planning. Variants on the pavilion plan abounded.

Hospital planning became increasingly complex as medical science advanced, with improved attention to detail such as impervious surfaces and an absence of dust-retaining

ledges and shelves. Specialist rooms multiplied towards the end of the century: some were completely new in function, such as X-ray rooms (1895)

From the late 1860s nurses' homes were introduced to provide secure on-site accommodation, mainly to attract a higher class of women to the profession but also to provide a quarantine environment for hospitals catering for infectious diseases.

The Health Foundation website provides further information on the Voluntary Hospital movement, commenting;

In the early to mid-18th century, a number of hospitals were founded for philanthropic (and reputational) reasons, with the objective of improving the lives of the poor and to contribute to the prosperity and health of the nation. Leading physicians and surgeons encouraged a group of wealthy patrons to establish a hospital.

It provides a list of the principal hospitals established in the 18th century, with many in London:

- 1720 – Westminster Hospital (for relieving the sick and the needy).
- 1727 – Guy's Hospital (for people who St Thomas' was unable to cure).
- 1734 – St George's (for relieving poor, sick and disabled people).
- 1739 – The Foundling Hospital (for the care of infants abandoned by their parents).
- 1740 – Moorfield's (for the sick and injured East End poor).
- 1745 – The Middlesex Infirmary (for the sick, lame and cancer patients).
- 1747 – The Lock Hospital (for the treatment of venereal disease).

Outside London the early foundations were:

- 1729 – Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh (for the treatment of the sick poor).
- 1735 – Bristol Royal Infirmary (for the relief of the sick).
- 1752 – Manchester Royal Infirmary (for the treatment of the sick poor).
- 1766 – Addenbrooke's Hospital (for the relief of the sick).

Steven Cherry in a 1998 article on the history of hospital development from c1720-1948, commented:

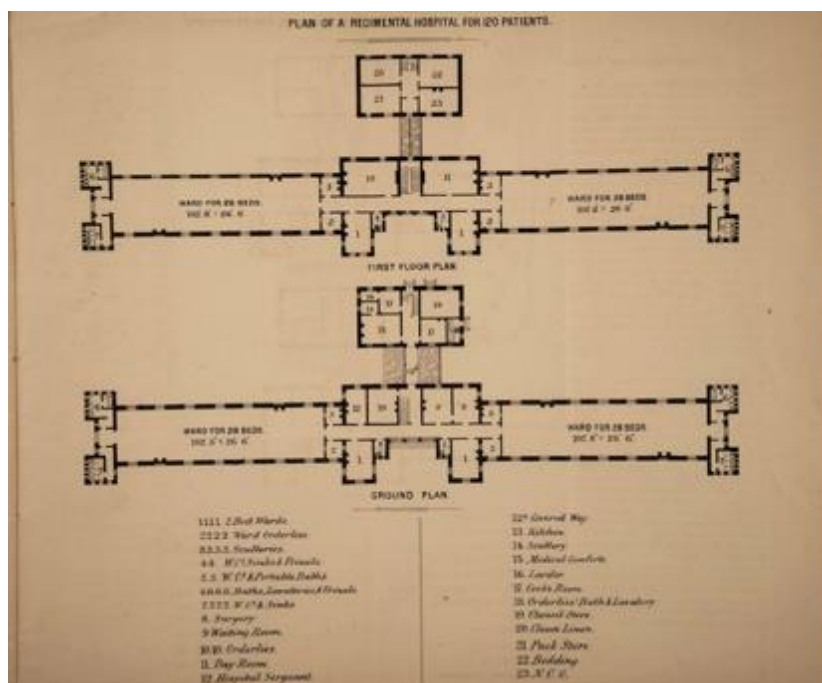
Hospital development in the nineteenth century proceeded along two distinct lines. Voluntary general hospitals existed in most towns, with teaching hospitals in major cities or university towns; twelve in London, twelve in provincial England and Wales and six in Scotland by 1900. Special hospitals, beginning with fever and maternity institutions, also expanded rapidly. Twenty eye hospitals were established before 1840, 38 children's hospitals were founded before 1890, and 60 assorted specialist hospitals existed in London by 1865. Some 300 cottage hospitals, including ex-dispensaries with beds, village, small

district and suburban institutions, were founded between 1859 and 1900, with 300 more by 1939.

(Refresh 26 (Spring 1998) <https://www.ehs.org.uk/dotAsset/8c511b28-5f51-459b-8732-18cbde6312a6.pdf>

HOSPITAL DESIGN

The design and layout of hospitals resulted in a number of books and pamphlets in the 19th century, and articles in Building and Architects Journals. In 1862 Florence Nightingale published 'Hospital statistics and hospital plans' which included a plan for a hospital to 120 patients with long narrow wards with windows either side from a central block. The wards would be segregated Male and Female



Layout of a hospital from Hospital statistics and hospital plans, F Nightingale, 1862

NURSING

In a paper 'A brief history of nursing in the UK' by Professor B Gail Thomas, she observes:

Until the mid-nineteenth century, nursing was not an activity which was thought to demand either skill or training. Nor did it command respect. As Florence Nightingale was to put it, nursing was left to 'those who were too old, too weak, too drunken, too dirty, too stupid or too bad to do anything else'. The intimate body services to be done for the patient were considered to be unseemly or immodest for young unmarried or well-bred females,

especially if not a family member. Cleaning and feeding of another person were regarded as domestic tasks performed by servants.

And before 1880, the hospital treatment of illness was fairly rare. Where home services were adequate, a sick person was attended by the family doctor and nursed either by female family members or servants. However, from the middle of the nineteenth century, the discovery and application of anaesthetics and antiseptic surgery advanced medical technique and allowed all classes to seek treatment in hospitals. From the 1860s onwards, a series of nurses' training schools began to produce fairly large numbers of educated women who were eagerly accepted by hospital authorities whose medical officers, patients and public opinion in general were demanding higher levels of nursing skill in the wards."

Nursing received a higher-profile following Florence Nightingale going to Turkey to lead a team of nurses caring for soldiers in the Crimean War in 1854. In 1860 the Nightingale Training School opens at St Thomas's Hospital in London. One of the first institutions to teach nursing and midwifery as a formal profession, the training school was dedicated to communicating the philosophy and practice of its founder and patron, Florence Nightingale. Other hospitals began to follow. In 1887 the British Nurses Association was created uniting nurses who sought professional registration

<https://memoriesofnursing.uk/articles/a-brief-history-of-nursing-in-the-uk>

During this period, however, those who could afford to do so were treated at home by a visiting doctor who made his income from these wealthier patients and donated his time 'for the experience' at the voluntary hospital. Nurses could be hired out privately by the hospital that trained them, as was the case at the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

ARCHITECTS

From the Chronology it is noted that a number of local architects designed the hospital and its extensions over the period 1836-1920s, with Henry Briant (assisted by his brother Nathaniel) the original design, Thomas Rumble (1791-1856) the 1840s extensions, Joseph Morris, later with Spencer Stallwood the extensions from 1861 to 1891-2, and Mr. Charles Smith & Son, architects & surveyors.

HENRY BRIANT (1812-84) AND NATHANIEL BRIANT (1816-49)

There is no definitive list of works by these two brothers. Henry was listed in 1835 as a surveyor and architect, and Nathaniel as an architect. They went into partnership in 1837 (Berkshire Chronicle 16 Oct 1839) which was dissolved in March 1842. (John Bull 12 March 1842) It is understood that Henry Briant subsequently took up Holy Orders in 1843. Works which have been identified or attributed to them include:

- St Giles National School, H Briant (Reading Mercury 16 Nov 1835)
- Royal Berkshire Hospital, H Briant (London Evening Standard 28 December 1836) with assistance from N Briant
- Development of 8 Lots Oxford Road, Henry Briant (BC 21 Oct 1837)
- Barclays Bank King Street, N Briant 1838-39*
- No. 25 Market Place, Reading
- Castle Street Chapel, 1840 H & N Briant 1840
- Eldon Square - Laid out and houses built in 1835-9 – Speculation by Nathaniel and Henry Briant, who bought the land from the Commissioners of Woods and Forests in 1833 and 1835. All surviving houses from this period in Eldon Square included in the National Heritage for England with Briant attribution
- King's Road, Houses, 1832-5, attributed to Henry and Nathaniel Briant
- Caversham 40 acres of development – N Briant (Berkshire Chronicle 13 March 1841)

Sources: Victorian Architecture in Reading: walking tours for The Arts Society Wokingham
<https://www.theartsocietywokingham.org.uk/DocumentStore/Hidden%20Reading%20notes.pdf>
 and Entries in the National Heritage List for England, Colvin, H,

In relation to Old Maids, Joseph Morris was the principal architect for the 1871-2 pavilion, with the 1881-3 extensions being with his then partner Spencer Stallwood, with the 1891-2 addition being by Joseph Morris alone. Morris and Stallwood were partners between 1876 -1886. Joseph Morris subsequently entered into partnership with one of his sons 1895-1908

JOSEPH MORRIS (1836-1913)

Born in Reading he appears to have practiced in Reading from 1859 to 1908. He entered into partnership with his son Francis Edward Morris (1872-1908) between 1895-1905, and subsequently with his other son Henry Silver Morris.

From 1876 to 1886 in partnership with Spencer Slingsby Stallwood, and specialised church restorations and new school buildings, as well as work at the Royal Berkshire Hospital. They also worked outside Reading achieving a wider recognition for their work

SPENCER SLINGSBY STALLWOOD (1844-1922)

Born in Buckinghamshire he was articled between 1857-62, before becoming an assistant in the office of W B Stewart (1883-6) and then Joseph Gardner until early 1870. ARIBA in 1873. Practiced in Folkstone, Kent and moved to Reading in 1875. In partnership with Joseph Morris 1876-1886, and then on own account.

WORKS

There does not appear to be a definitive list of works by Joseph Morris, Morris and Stallwood and Joseph Morris & Son, although contemporary and current discussion identify them as significant local architects.

The following list has attempted to identify the work of Joseph Morris on his own account and in partnerships. KEY: Berkshire Chronicle (BC) Reading Mercury (RM Reading Observer (RO) Berkshire Record Office (BRO)

- 1859 Church at Highmoor End (St Paul's) Oxfordshire (BC 22.10.59)
- 1860 Practicing from Market Place Reading but relocated to 161 Friar Street (BC 7.7.60)
- 1860 Prepared plan for Forbury Pleasure Grounds which was adopted (RM 25.8.60)
- 1861 Two wings at the Royal Berkshire Hospital (RM 15.6.61)
- 1862 House at Redlands for George Palmer (BC 15.2.62)
- 1862 Extensions to the Royal Berkshire Militia Depot (RM 1.11.62)
- 1863 Hungerford Police Station (BC 3.10.63)
- 1864 Public House Premises, Greyfriars Road, Reading & House Bracknell (RM 8.10.64)
- 1865 Pulling down and rebuilding a house, London Road (BC 8.4.65)
- 1865 Christ Church Scholl, Whitley (RM 17.6.65)
- 1865 Extensions Royal Berkshire Hospital (RC 1.7.65)
- 1866 Restoration St Lawrence Church, Reading (RM 21.7.66)
- 1866 House Great Knolly Street, Reading (BC 10.10.66)
- 1867 26 loose boxes, stalls, sheds Horse Repository Reading (RM 30.3.67)
- 1867 Christ Church School, Reading and two houses (RM 13.7.67)
- 1869 Swallowfield Church ne aisle, chancel and vestry (RM 24.4.69)
- 1870 Publishes 'Cheap Cottages for Rural Districts'(BC 5.3.70)
- 1870 Additions and alterations to house East Shefford (RM 5.3.70)
- 1870 Celebratory Arch for Prince and Princess of Wales visit (BC 2.7.70)
- 1871 St Giles School - former Blue Coats School (RM 28.1.71)
- 1871 St Stephens School (BC 15.7.71)
- 1871 House at Aldermaston (RM 2.9.71)
- 1871 Nominates to become the County Surveyor (BC 25.11.71)
- 1871 Appointed architect Silver Street School (BC 23.12.71)
- 1872 1 January 1972 appointed as Country Surveyor
- 1872 St Mary's Church new north aisle (RM 2.3.72)
- 1872 Re-building bridge Sulhampstead (BC 13.4.1872. There are frequent calls for tenders to build or rebuild bridges signed by Joseph Morris, County Surveyor. It is unclear if he is designing the bridges or preparing the specifications, or his role is administrative. In early tenders he signs himself as 'Architect and Surveyor' in later tenders County Surveyor
- 1872 Out-patients and Nurses Home Royal Berkshire Hospital (BC 15.6.72)
- 1872 Bridge at Hurst, Whitley Ford (RM 29.6.72)
- 1872 New Wesleyan Chapel, Queens Road (BC 21.9.72)
- 1872 Premises Messrs Huntley, Boorne, & Stevens (BRO)

- 1873 Schools at Kategrove and Coley (RM 8.2.73)
- 1873 Newtown school (6.12.73)
- 1873 Ware-rooms and other works for Messrs., Blowers & Son (RO 20.12.73)
- 1874 Plans for new school at Erleigh, Reading (RM 21.3.74)
- 1874 Drainage at Reading Goal (BC 11.7.74)
- 1874 New school at Wokingham (BC 26.9.74)
- 1875 Mr F W Walton's New Premises Minster street (RO 8.5.75)
- 1875 New Wesleyan Chapel, Eton (Windsor and Eton Express 19.6.75)
- 1875 Two detached wards Royal Berkshire Hospital (BC 24.7.75)

MORRIS AND STALLWOOD (1876-1886)

- 1876 New school, residences for master and mistress, Whitstable, Kent. Messrs. Morris and Stallwood (Kentish Gazette 28.3.76) This appears to be the first joint commission.
- 1876 New Wesleyan Chape, Windsor, Morris and Stallwood (RM 20.5.76)
- 1876 Sauce factory Messrs., Charles Cocks and Co.
- 1876 Ten cottages and completion of School Terrace, Newtown, Reading
- 1876 Infection Wards at Royal Berkshire Hospital
- 1876 New Schools St James Roman Catholic Church, Reading (RM 24.6.76)
- 1876 Hurst Church reopening (BC 30.9.76)
- 1876 New school master's residence, Chalgrove, Oxfordshire (Oxford Journal (OJ) 7.10.76)
- 1877 Restoration Rodmersham Parish Church, Kent (24.11.77)
- 1878 New school Wallingford, Oxfordshire (Oxford Times (OT) 26.1.78)
- 1878 Wrought Iron Bridge GWR nr. Shrivenham Station – Joseph Morris County Surveyor (RM 2.3.78)
- 1878 Caversham church additions (RM 5.10.78)
- 1879 New Police Station Clewer, nr. Windsor – Joseph Morris, County Surveyor (BC 12.4.79)
- 1880 Restoration of the Borough Corporation Buildings (RM 17.1.80)
- 1880 House at Southern Hill for William Palmer (BC 18.9.80)
- 1880 Re-opening Hungerford Parish Church (RM 16.10.80)
- 1880 Chapel at Reading Cemetery (BC 13.11.80)
- 1881 New School Oxford Road (RO 12.3.81)
- 1881 Reopening Mogwell Church (RM 30.4.81)
- 1882 Battersea and Wandsworth Public Hall Co. Ltd. Advert advises hall designed by Morris and Stallwood – unclear if ever built. (South London Press 8 April 1882)
- 1882 Opening new school at Sunning Hill (RM 22.4.1882)
- 1882 Denford Chapel alterations (BC 21.10.82)
- 1882 Battersea Town Hall, London winning design being constructed (South London Press 18.11.82)
- 1883 Additions to Nurses Homes and Laundry Royal Berkshire Hospital (BC 27.1.1883)
- 1883 Additions to Earley Newtown School (BC 14.4.83)
- 1883 Tilehurst Mission Hall (RM 27.9.84)

- 1885 Parish Church Upton (RM 11.7.85)
- 1885 Church restoration Horsted Keynes, Sussex (Mid Sussex Times 1.12.85)
- 1886 March Dissolution of Partnership by mutual consent 14 April 1886. Practice separately Mr. Morris 17 Friar Street, Mr. Stallwood 147 Friar Street (RO 27.3.86)
- 1887 Reading Industrial Cooperative Society premises enlargement (RO 16.4.87)

Late 1880's Joseph Morris helps found 'The People's Investment Company' He is a Director, later Chair of Directors. Company starts developments in and around Reading.

- 1890 Freehold Building Sites Caversham Place Park – Joseph Morris, Architect (RM 12.7.90)
- 1893 New Police Station Sandhurst (RM 25.2.93)
- 1894 Extension Coley Street School (RM 8.9.94)
- 1895 Church of Ark of the Covenant, Stamford-Hill – Joseph Morris and Son, Architect (Reading Advertiser (RA) 19.6.95) First mention of Joseph Morris & Son practicing.
- 1895 New operating theatre Royal Berkshire Hospital Messrs. Morris & Son (RM 5.10.95)
- 1896 Twenty-one cottages east side Westfield Road, Reading (BC 11.1.96)
- 1896 New Police Station Twyford, Joseph Morris Country Surveyor (BC 20.6.96)
- 1897 Bracknell Police Station new cottage and two cells. Joseph Morris County Surveyor (RM 26.6.97)
- 1897 New Presbyterian School Chapel Morris and Son (BC 13.11.97)
- 1898 Freehold Building Land, Christchurch Road, Reading (RM 26.2.98)
- 1898 House Plan Whitley Estate (BRO 1898-1900 plans)
- 1898 New Wesleyan Chapel, Caversham (RO 16.7.98)
- 1899 New premises for Messrs. McIlroy Bros., shops and residencies, Oxford Road (RO 7.10.99)
- 1899 House Murdoch-Road (RO 4.11.99)
- 1899 Two pair of houses New Road (Glebe Road) (BRO)
- 1900 Police station cottage Binfield (BC 20.1.1900)
- 1900 Six cottages Basingstoke Road (BRO)
- 1900 Renovation of three dilapidated cottages Silchester (RM 21.4.1900)
- 1901 House 7-25 Station Road between 1901-03
- 1901 Crowthorne C of E School (BRO)
- 1902 New Church House Wokingham (RM 12.4.02)
- 1902 Cordes Hall, Sunninghill
- 1902 Coronation Building Estate twelve cottages for Peoples Investment Company Limited (RM 24.5.02)
- 1903 Alterations to Kategrove School (BC 18.4.03)
- 1903 Alterations to Queens Hall Ascot and New Police Station. Stable Clewer Police Station. Joseph Morris County Surveyor (RM 5.9.03)
- 1903 Opening of Spurling Memorial School (RM 14.11.03)
- 1904 New Police Station Rectory-road Reading (RO 5.3.04)
- 1904 New Police Station Thatcham (RO 25.6.04)
- 1904 Broadway Buildings

- 1905 November Joseph Morris resigns as Country Surveyor (BC 7.11.05)
- 1905 Retired as Chair of Directors 'The People's Investment Company' (RO 17.2.06)
- 1906 Reading Assize Court (BRO)
- 1906 New House St Anne's Road (BRO)
- 1908 January death of Francis Edward Morris Typhoid Fever partner with father. (BC 18.1.08)
- 1913 Death of Joseph Morris in Somerset (RO 4.1.1913)

CHARLES SMITH & SON

This practice carried out works from the early 20th century onwards, taking over from Joseph Morris & Son after 1908. The following biography is from the National Archives. The Berkshire Record Office hold records of the practice 1857-1911.

Charles Smith was born in Reading c.1833, and his practice must date from about the time these records begin in 1857. He was to establish his firm, and his family home, at 164 Friar Street, and among notable clients soon to figure in his ledgers was the Duke of Wellington at Stratfield Saye. He undertook commissions for the trustees of Broad Street chapel, Reading, and Messrs Simonds, bankers of Reading; others relate to church schools in Reading and substantial houses in the vicinity, but also extended to clients in London and several neighbouring counties. Charles Smith, who by 1881 (census) was a Justice of the Peace and councillor for the borough, was joined in the firm by his son Charles Steward Smith (born c.1859). He became a deacon of Broad Street chapel he was president of the of Reading Literary and Scientific Society, He died on 6 February 1912, aged 79. The firm continued at 164 Friar Street until the 1960s, when the site was redeveloped for Marks and Spencer Ltd, at which time the practice, under a successor, Eric Steward Smith FRIBA, moved to 63A Friar Street, continuing at least until the mid 1970s

<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/77214a1f-6934-4f7f-9626-e0ad2ec43527>

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Having regard to the history and surviving external fabric, it is considered the cultural heritage significance of the 19th and early 20th century portions of the Royal Berkshire Hospital can be summarised as follows:

EVIDENTIAL

Constructed in 1839 and comprising a central administration block and two wings to the rear to provide separate male and female wards, it was subsequently and continuously extended and altered to meet increased demand and also to respond to changing philosophies and practice in medicine over the 19th and into the 20th century. This resulted in a number of distinct phases which in their

external form and fabric survive to provided significant evidence of the evolution of hospital design and practice over this period.

The phases include, the original central block and two wings (1839) which were extended to the south in the mid 1840s, two convalescent wings either side of the central block (1865) two separate single-storey pavilions one to the north-east as a nurses home, one to the north-west for out-patients (1871-2). Major works in 1881-3 including adding a storey to the out-patients pavilion, adding a storey to the nurse's home and adding a two-storey wing for servant accommodation (ground floor) and nurses' quarters (first floor) both linked to the female wards side of the hospital, and a laundry to the south. In 1891-2 a further storey added to the 1881-2 wing of the nurse's home. 1911 the out-patients pavilion extended and linked to the hospital.

The narrow ward blocks to the south (1839, mid-1840s) and the narrow convalescent wards (1865) with windows to both sides, provide evidence of the contemporary design response to medical opinion on 'miasma theory' and the need for open and airy wards with cross-breezes of fresh-air to disperse foul air which cause diseases.

The 1871-2 Nurses pavilion, subsequently extended in 1881-2, and again in 1891-2 provided significant evidence of the response of the Royal Berkshire Hospital to the growing importance of nursing in the Hospital, but also of paid private nurses serving the Reading and broader community, and the need to provide accommodation to attract and retain them.

HISTORICAL

The surviving parts of the Royal Berkshire Hospital dating from its construction in 1839 to WWI is historically significant as an example of a Voluntary Hospital founded in 1836 with the appellation 'Royal' by command of King William IV, which was subsequently extended meet increased demand and also to respond to changing philosophies and practice in medicine over the 19th and into the 20th century.

The Royal Berkshire Hospital, established as a Volunteer Hospital in 1836, is historically significant as an example of 18th century philanthropy, with the 6-acre site donated by Lord and Lady Sidmouth, and the funds for the construction and subsequent extensions raised through individual and collective benefactions and donations, and through subscriptions.

The nurses' accommodation (Old Maids) is historically significant in demonstrating the response of the hospital to the growing importance and role of nursing, highlighted by the work of Florence Nightingale and establishment of nurse training in the 1860s, and move by the Royal Berkshire Hospital to employ professional nurses from 1866 onwards. Built as a single-storey pavilion (1871-2) it was expanded in two phases (1881-3 and 1891-2) to meet the need to provide accommodation for nurses working in the hospital, but also for a private nurse's service for the community, which for a period proved profitable for the hospital.

The Royal Berkshire Hospital is historically significant for its connection with King William IV and Queen Adelaide both patrons of the hospital. Given its “Royal” appellation by command of the King on 6 May 1836, the building finished in 1839 carries his Coat of Arms, despite his death in June 1837, and Queen Victoria ascending the throne.

The Royal Berkshire Hospital is historically significant for its strong association with Henry Briant (1812-84) a local architect who submitted the winning design for the 1839 hospital building, and with his brother, and from 1837 professional partner, Nathaniel Briant (1816-49). While they only practiced for a short period, with the Hospital being their singularly most noted work, they were involved in the mid-1830s and early 1840s expansion of Reading, with noted houses in Eldon Square attributed to their practice.

The Royal Berkshire Hospital is historically significant for its association with the architectural work of Joseph Morris (1836-1913) who prepared designs for extensions to the hospital from 1865 onwards, on his own account, with his partner Spenser Slingsby Stallwood (1844-1922) between 1876 and 1886, and with his son Frederick Edward Morris (1872-1908) between 1895-1905. His works include the convalescent wings (1865) the two single-story pavilions (1871-2) the additions to the two pavilions, with the two-storey wing to the nurses’ quarters and the laundry (1881-3) as Morris and Stallwood. Joseph Morris, Country Surveyor 1872-1905 and Spenser Slingsby Stallwood, singularly and as partners, are recognised as important local architects who designed the majority of schools in Reading in this period and undertook church restorations, extensions and new non-conformist chapels.

AESTHETICS

The surviving parts of the Royal Berkshire Hospital dating from its construction in 1839 to WWI are historically and architecturally significant, as an example of the conscious choice to use a classically derived design executed in stone, to reflect through its architecture the status of this important addition to the civic facilities of the expanding town of Reading.

The central administrative block (1839) with its ionic portico, with the coat of arms of King William IV, its symmetrical flanking wings, together with the convalescent wings (1865), and the north-east pavilion (1871-2 – 1891-2) and north-west pavilion (1871-2, 1881-3, 1911) which are constructed in stone and employ classically derived designs, together with the boundary walls and railing make an architectural and aesthetically significant visual contribution to this part of London Road.

The former nurse’s home (Old Maids 1871-1892) comprising a symmetrical two-storey pavilion with pilasters and pediments details to the west and north elevations, together with the three storey wing, (both of which retain their original window openings), linked to the main hospital with a colonnade comprising Greek Doric columns and deep entablature, makes a visually strong contribution to the setting of the hospital.

COMMUNAL

As viewed from London Road, the Royal Berkshire Hospital, instils in the local community, a well understood aspect of the history of Reading. In the first half of the nineteenth century residents of the town provided health facilities, and it is this philanthropy that resulted in its construction, and continued expansion through the 19th and 20th century. It continues to be the principal hospital serving the town and broader community, comprising a well understood feature of the English townscape.

SECTIONS TO BE ADDED