

HERITAGE STATEMENT rev. 01

Heritage Asset and its Setting:

Project Address: 3/3a Broad Street Reading, RG1 2BH

Conservation Area: Market Place/London Street Conservation area

Listing Status: II List entry no. 1154597

Building Use: Shop unit

Project Overview:

The replacement of the modern shop front and signage to a ground floor shop to allow a change of use from a vape shop to a fast food establishment. New shutter boxing. New illuminated signage. New internal fittings including a serving counter. No proposed change to the upper floors. The basement works are part of a separate Listed Building application by a separate applicant.



Photo 1 – Front Elevation

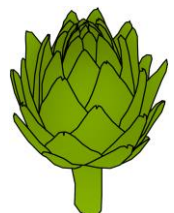
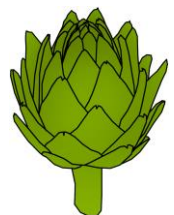




Photo 2 and 3 Exterior and interior of shop front

In order to achieve the works, the following alterations/ interventions will be required:

- Removal of the glazed part of the shop front. Retention of existing front columns.
- Strip out of the modern interior of the shop including the flooring. Retain modern dropped ceiling.
- New shop front as per the submitted images.
- New kitchen area with extract utilising the existing extract ventilation route. Services to be contained within suspended ceiling void including retention of the existing fire detection system. No chasing of historic ceilings or walls for services.
- New flooring throughout.
- No works to the upper floors.
- No change to the existing staircases.
- Proposed works to tank the basement are covered under a separate Listed Building application. The client intends to install freestanding storage units and install a sink within the space.



Setting Overview:

The building is a Grade II Listed building along a main pedestrianized shopping street in Reading Town center. It is a densely packed commercial area hosting shop fronts at ground floor level and a mixture of shop accommodation, residential and office accommodation above. They are predominantly 3-4 storey in height in a mixture of architectural styles.

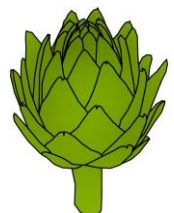
The name 'Broad Street' is derived from its width. In medieval times the road was divided into 2 narrower streets and the building in question would have been on what was known then as 'Cheese Row' (13th Century) and then later as 'Fisher Row' (16th Century). In Georgian times it was incredibly common for Market towns to undergo a 'facelift' where medieval timber frame buildings were reclad to look modern in appearance and many of those in the local area would have undergone this treatment including I suspect no.3/3a.

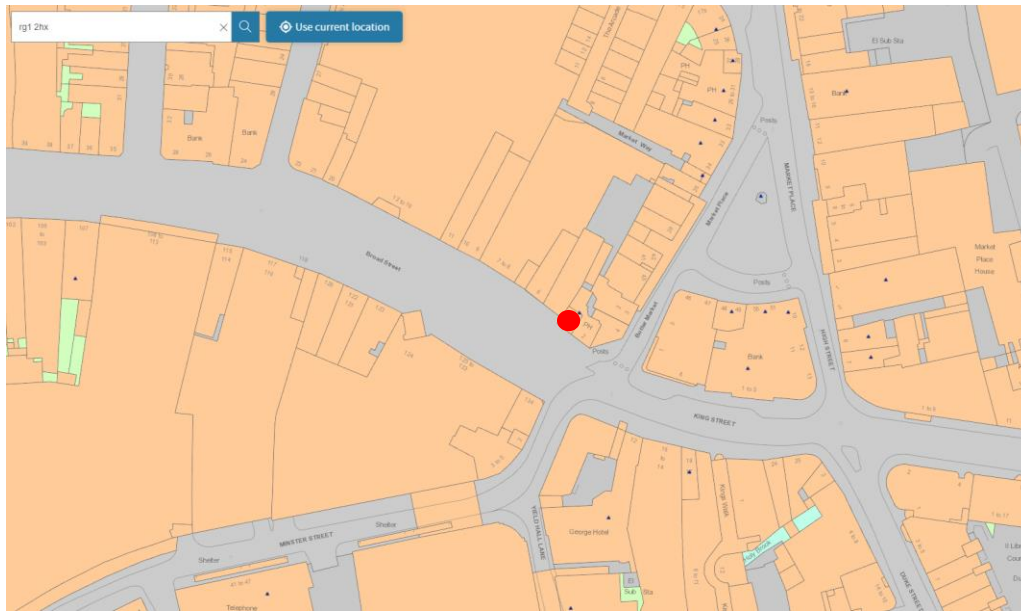
In 1862 the middle row of shops was demolished by recommendation of the Board of Health creating what we now know as Broad Street. The road for vehicles was removed and the street pedestrianized in 1995.

The building in question has a modern shopfront at ground floor level with a modern interior and a suspended grid ceiling. There are stairs at the back to the basement and another to the first floor. At first and second floor level the building is rendered externally and contains white painted timber sash windows. There is further accommodation in the attic space under the clay tiled roof, lit by 2 dormer windows containing modern casement windows. There is a basement below street level.

The interior is in a terrible condition having suffered years of neglect and looks not to have been used for some time. Unsympathetic ventilation systems run through the building, hacking through historic structure. The basement is currently uninhabitable however we understand there are approvals in place to change that and tank the basement. **concerns were raised about the potential impact of tanking upon the visible timber frame within the basement at the time of the visit.*

Below ground there is known to be medieval archaeology within this area.





Map taken from Historic England Listing Database. Property shown with a red dot.

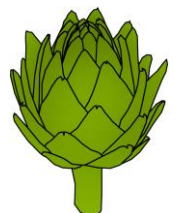
Impacted Heritage Assets:

The building sits within the Market Place/London Street Conservation area.

The building is Grade II Listed.

The building is set next to a building identified as being of 'Townscape Merit' and contributes both to the crossroad setting as well as Broad Street itself.

The building is within an area where there is known below ground archaeology, notably medieval in nature.



Assessment of Significance:

Heritage has cultural, social, economic and environmental values. The attributes that combine to define the significance of a historic building can relate to its physical properties or to its context. – BS 7913:2013..

The building has a traditional shop front and contributes in a positive manner to the commercial setting and the historical nature of Reading as a market centre, and more specifically the crossroads with high architectural significance.

The building use remains as a shop as was its design intent although the upper floors seem not to have been used for some time. The basement is uninhabitable with low ceilings and suffering hugely from damp however would originally have had purpose. The shop frontage to the ground floor is modern in nature although reflective of a traditional shop frontage.

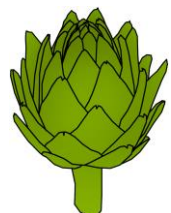
The building does not have a rear and is back to back with another property.

The building has a Georgian feel to its frontage however upstairs feels much older and the building is suspected to be a medieval timber frame that has been reclad. The timber frame is evident in the basement area also.

There is suspected to be high archaeological significance below ground due to the age of known development in this area linking back to the times of Reading Abbey.



The building can be seen on the right hand side of this photo from 1890 from the unveiling of the George Palmer Statue. Ref: Historic England- Reading



Development Impact on the Historical Asset:

Building Elevations and Setting: The building has a modern shop front and its removal will not result in the loss of historic fabric. The building is currently vacant which is having a very negative impact upon the Conservation Area and to the building itself. The new occupiers have gone to great lengths to adjust their shop designs to ensure that they are sympathetic to both the building and its setting. Although there is a loss of the traditional style shop frontage, driven in part by COVID, the new purpose brings the building back into use and in a sympathetic and respectful manner.

Internally: The building internally has been neglected for a long period of time. Hopefully this new use will encourage investment in a positive manner to the other parts of this building which are not currently included within the application. The proposals however intend to provide the best economic use of the ground floor for the new occupants without harming the value of place.

Scale and Massing: there is no impact upon the scale and massing of existing architecture.

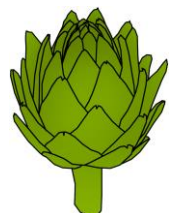
Archeaology: There is no impact upon below ground archaeology.

Use: There is new purpose intended for the building however its commercial purpose reflective of the local area and its design intent is being retained.

Overall the impact of the development is minor in nature and in our view there is no harm to the material value of the place.

Design concept/ Reason for Development:

To bring new use into a vacant commercial building. Refer to Planning Statement.



Relevant Policy:

The Government has set out its planning policies for the historic environment in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This was published in March 2012 and replaced in 2018 and 2019. It replaced Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment. The PPS5 Practice Guide remains valid for use alongside the NPPF.

In determining applications, the NPPF explains at paragraph 189 that local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.

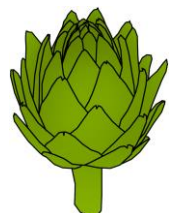
Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- (a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- (b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- (c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Historic England 'Conservation Principles' deem new work or alteration to be normally acceptable where the proposals do not materially harm the value of the place. They consider the setting of the heritage asset to contribute greatly to its significance. They accept that a heritage setting changes over time.

The local authority guidance also includes policies which seek to ensure the protection of the historic environment and that development is of a high quality and seeks to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Heritage Asset. Changes to the setting of historic buildings / Conservation Areas are to be sympathetic in terms of siting, proportion, scale, form, height, materials and detailing.



Conclusion:

The proposed works bring new commercial use to a vacant building within a Conservation Area and positive investment to a Listed Building in a sympathetic manner which should be in general encouraged. Vacant commercial and retail space is identified within the Conservation Area appraisal as having a negative impact upon the Conservation Area.

The changes restore the historic purpose of the shop which would originally have been highly likely selling food products and these changes do not result in material harm to the building or the Conservation Area. They have no impact upon the scale and massing of the townscape. There is no impact upon the streetscape.

The proposals are respectful in relation to the material palette used and great efforts have been undertaken to adjust designs to reflect the architecture of the existing building.

The internal alterations maximise the use of space, securing their viable use as a commercial premise whilst respecting the existing building lines. There is no loss of historic features.

The proposals are traditional in nature and reflective of those previously approved within the Conservation Area.

The proposals act in accordance with the requirements of the local authority as well in accordance with Historic England development guidelines and policies.

Surveyor: Michelle Purnell BA(hons), BArch, RIBA, MSc Building Conservation

Survey conducted: 20/11/20

