

Katesgrove School – Heritage Statement

July 2020

Revision P1



Prepared by:

Historic Buildings Team, HCC Property Services,
Three Minsters House, 76 High Street, Winchester, SO23 8UL

On behalf of:

Reading Borough Council

P1	Issue P1	29/07/2020
----	----------	------------

Contents

1.0	Assessment of Heritage Significance
1.1	Introduction
1.2	Heritage Description
1.3	Existing plans
1.4	Photographs
1.5	Summary Statement of Significance
2.0	The Proposals
2.1	New Boiler Flue
2.2	Retaining Wall Buttresses
3.0	Statement of Impact and Justification
Appendix A:	Historic Plans

1.0 Assessment of Heritage Significance

1.1 Introduction

This document has been prepared by the Historic Buildings Group in Hampshire County Council Property Services to accompany a Listed Building Application for works involving a new boiler flue and new structural buttresses to the south retaining wall at the Henry Building, Katesgrove School, Reading.

The Statement focuses on understanding the Heritage significance of The Henry Building and considers the impact of and justification for the proposals.

Katesgrove School background

Katesgrove School is located just to the south of Reading City Centre, and comprises a number of separate buildings, amongst them the Victorian Henry and Trooper Potts Buildings. Designed by Borough Architect Joseph Morris and constructed in 1873, the Henry Building formed the original Katesgrove School and is located at the bottom of the sloping site to the West of the school campus. It was originally designed to accommodate girls and infants on the ground floor and boys at first floor and was extended in 1891 and 1902. It was one of the first pair of schools to be developed by the Reading School Board. In 1890 a new Central Boys School was constructed at the top of the slope, and in the 1960's the boys and girls schools were merged.

To the south of the Henry Building lies a South and West facing red brick boundary wall which in areas is a retaining structure. The wall once formed the boundary of the school, separating it from housing to the South, however since demolition of the housing in the late 20thC it now subdivides the school playground.

The site is not within a conservation area.

1.2 Heritage Description

The Henry Building is Grade II listed and is described by Historic England as follows:

KATESGROVE LANE The Henry Building at Katesgrove Primary School including boundary wall and former caretaker's cottage

II

Board school, 1873 by Joseph Morris, extended 1891 and 1902

MATERIALS: Red brick with blue-brick banding and diaper patterns; tiled roof.

PLAN: School originally built on a T-plan, with single-storey infant school to north and two-storey girls' and boys' range at right angles to south; this still largely survives, albeit with later additions and some subdivision and amalgamation of spaces. Infant school built around large open hall or schoolroom (original gallery now removed), with smaller schoolroom (now meeting room) to south for advanced infants, and babies' room (now staff toilets) projecting to west. The latter now flanked to right by two-storey wing added in 1891 with entrance lobby below and staffroom above, and to left by later nursery block. Range of three classrooms to east of hall added in 1902. Two-storey cross-range to south has former girls' and boys' schoolrooms (now library) on ground and first floors, each with three classrooms to south, the latter extended in 1891.

EXTERIOR: Proto-Arts and Crafts Gothic style with much use of polychrome and moulded brickwork. Multi-pane mullion-and-transom windows of painted timber - many now replaced with modern double-glazed units - are set in pointed relieving arches with projecting hood-moulds and patterned or tiled tympana. Strongly asymmetrical elevation to Katesgrove Lane, the various elements expressed as a series of gabled projections of differing heights, with steeply-pitched roofs and tall corbelled stacks; 1891 wing similarly detailed but in slightly lighter brick. Polygonal office (now resources room) to right and nursery block to left probably added 1902. Two-storey south elevation to playground has two tall gabled projections, that to right extended outward in 1891. East (rear) elevation partly obscured by sloping site; two two-storey gabled wings to left, single-storey four-gabled classroom range of plain red brick to right added in 1902. Covered timber bridge on tall iron columns linking first floor to raised playground: this is shown on 1879 Ordnance Survey map, but was largely renewed in 2006.

INTERIORS: Former infant schoolroom has open scissor-truss roof of five bays with hammer-beams and cusped arch braces; trusses rest on moulded stone corbels, and at cornice level is a double band of dog-tooth moulding. Stone fireplace (now blocked) with Gothic details in centre of east wall. Doors to classrooms are part-glazed with multi-pane overlights. Most classrooms have open timber roofs concealed by suspended ceilings. Some have dog-tooth cornice details and simple brick fireplaces, all now blocked.

SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: a) brick boundary wall with Gothic-arched entrance gateway to Katesgrove Lane; b) to north of main building, former caretaker's cottage of 1878, extended 1897-9 to form laundry and housewifery classrooms.

HISTORY: Prior to the establishment of the Reading School Board, the industrial suburb of Katesgrove was served by a small charity school for 184 pupils run by Charlotte Pell. The area was identified early on as suffering a particular shortage of school places; the Board took over the existing school in 1872 and the following year commissioned the borough architect Joseph Morris to prepare designs for a much larger replacement for 678 pupils, on a sloping site formerly occupied by a villa known as Katesgrove House. Morris' school, built at the bottom of the slope, was designed to accommodate girls and infants on the ground floor and boys above, with the boys' playground placed at the top of an embankment and accessed via a timber bridge. Construction was undertaken by a group of contractors led by the local firm of Wheeler Bros. In 1878, in response to worsening vandalism outside school hours, Morris was employed to design a caretaker's cottage for the site; this was extended in 1897-9 to serve as a laundry and housewifery

classroom.

In 1890-2 the new Central Boys' School was built at the top of the embankment to designs by William Ravenscroft by the builders Winter & Fitt of Reading. The Katesgrove boys' department was moved wholesale to the new school, and boys were also transferred from other schools in the borough. Meanwhile, in 1891, Morris was brought in again to extend and adapt the 1873 Katesgrove building to form a girls-only school. Further classrooms, again by Morris, were added in 1902. The site was used as a military hospital during the First World War. The boys' and girls' schools were finally merged in the 1960s; Morris's 1873 school is now known as the Henry Building, and the former Central Boys' School as the Dorothy Building.

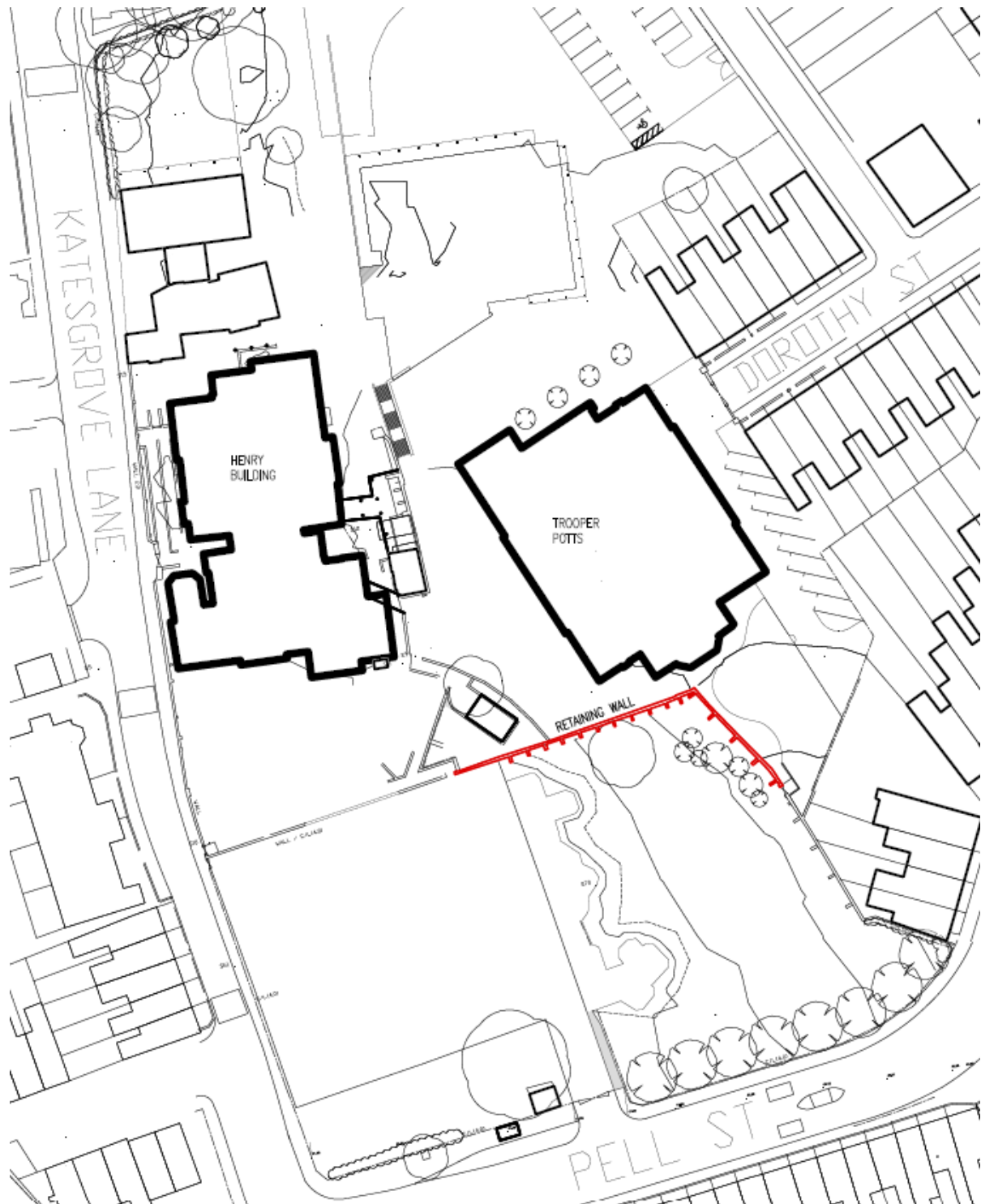
The pioneering Elementary Education Act of 1870, steered through Parliament by William Forster and thus known as 'Forster's Act', was the first to establish a national, secular, non-charitable provision for the education of children aged 5-13. A driving force behind the new legislation was the need for a literate and numerate workforce to ensure that Britain remained at the forefront of manufacture and commerce. Moreover, the extension of the franchise to the urban working classes in the 1867 Reform Act also alerted politicians to the need to, in words attributed to the then Chancellor, 'educate our masters'. The Act required partially state-funded elementary schools to be established in areas where existing provision was inadequate, to be managed by elected school boards. At the beginning of 1871, Reading Borough Council petitioned the Government for the immediate establishment of a school board in the town, bypassing the usual preliminary inquiry. Elections were held in March 1871; the resulting nine-member board mainly comprised members of the town's social elite - three clergymen, two prominent industrialists, the headmaster of a local private school - but also included a local boot-maker, Jesse Herbert. The design of new schools was at first undertaken by the Berkshire county surveyor Joseph Morris, although other architects were brought in after 1890. The Board continued to oversee the building of new schools and the extension of existing premises until 1903, when responsibility for elementary education passed to the Borough Council.

Joseph Morris (1836-1913) was the leading architect in Reading during the later C19. Articled to the county surveyor John Berry Clancy, his first major independent work was the new church of St Paul at Highmoor, Oxfordshire in 1859. In Reading he was responsible for numerous offices, factories and houses, the latter ranging from large suburban villas to workers' terraces; he also restored and extended the town's two medieval churches of St Lawrence and St Mary. He was appointed Berkshire county surveyor in 1872, and it was probably in this capacity that he was selected to produce designs for the Reading School Board; his work included schools at Coley (1872), Katesgrove (1873), New Town (1874) and Oxford Road (1880-3), the latter together with SS Stallwood, his partner in the decade following 1875. From 1884 he became involved with the millenarian sect known as the Agapemonites, for whom he designed a large and ornate church in Clapton, north London (1893-6). Morris established an architectural dynasty in Reading that included two of his nephews and two of his children; his daughter Violet was one of the first women to join the profession.

SOURCES: Bradley, S and Pevsner, N., The Buildings of England: Berkshire (revised edn., forthcoming). Gold, S.M., A Biographical Dictionary of Architects at Reading (1999). Minutes of the Reading School Board (1871-1903), Berkshire Record Office R/EB1

*REASONS FOR DESIGNATION: The Henry Building at Katesgrove School, built in 1873 to designs by Joseph Morris, and extended in 1891 and 1902, is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * Architectural interest: a striking and idiosyncratic design by the leading local architect of the mid-C19; * Historic interest: one of the first pair of schools to be developed by the Reading School Board, and one of the earliest outside London.*

1.3 Existing Site Plan (nts)



1.4 Existing Photographs



Fig 1: Aerial view of South elevation of Henry Building with retaining wall in the foreground



Fig 2: Aerial view of West elevation of Henry Building



Fig 3: South elevation of Henry Building



Fig 4: East Facing Gable, line of former flue visible on north facing return brickwork



Fig 5: South facing elevation of retaining wall showing modern buttresses.



Fig 6 & 7 : Detail of detached moderns buttresses to south facing retaining wall.



Fig 8: West facing return wall.



Fig 9: East end of south facing wall, showing modern single leaf facing brick to right hand side.

1.5 Summary Statement of Significance of the Henry Building

- **Evidential Value**

The original T shaped plan of the building exists broadly as constructed and extended in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, albeit with a number of minor internal subdivisions, and its evidential value is therefore high.

- **Historical Value**

Historic interest: one of the first pair of schools to be developed by the Reading School Board, and one of the earliest outside London. Overall, it is considered that the historic value of the building is moderate.

- **Aesthetic Value**

The moulded polychromatic brickwork of the building and its significant scale ensures it retains a strong public presence and in the absence of any other significant public buildings it defines the character of Katesgrove Lane. Overall, it is considered that the aesthetic value of the building is high.

- **Communal Value**

The Katesgrove Henry building has played a key role in the local community since its construction in 1873, and continues to do so today, having provided a continuum of education services in the area for almost 150 years. The Communal Value of the Henry Building is therefore considered to be high.

- **Summary of significance**

In spite of the erosion of the quality of the surrounding built environment, externally the Henry Building has retained its key aesthetic elements of significance which ensures it remains prominent as the main building of significance on Katesgrove Lane. The building plays a pivotal role in the local community and coupled with its status as one of the key public buildings constructed in the area at the end of the 19th Century, the building is of considerable local significance.

2.0 The Proposals

2.1 New Boilers and External Flue

The Henry Building boiler room currently uses a balanced compartment flue system. This system enables open flued boilers to be installed in a sealed compartment but relies upon the component parts of the system being sized to match the installed boilers. As a result, if a boiler upgrade is required, the flue components need to change as well.

Following a compliance assessment by the clients appointed mechanical engineers it was concluded that the existing flue is not in compliance with current gas regulations and there are some elements of the flue system which are missing. It is therefore proposing to install a new flue to ensure compliance with current regulations. The new arrangement will ensure appropriate distance from the outlet to opening windows located adjacent to the boiler room, preventing any opportunity for flue gasses to enter the building. It is proposed that the new flue will follow the route of the old chimney which was at some point removed.

The new flue will be colour coated to match the existing plethora of pipework around the plant room area (SVP,s RWP's) The flue will be fixed to the building through the mortar joints, ensuring damage to original facing brickwork is minimised.

The old flues are to be reduced in height and have new cowls added to enable them to function as air intake for the plant room below.

Please refer to drawing M-3000 and M-3001



Fig 10 : Existing plant room area (East facing)

2.2 New Retaining Wall Buttresses

Hampshire County Council Property Services was engaged by Reading Borough Council to advise on structural movement of the Trooper Potts to the East of the Listed Henry Building, building and the retaining wall to the south of which runs past both buildings. It was found that cracks had formed to the Trooper Potts building and the retaining wall buttresses had separated from the wall. Surveys were undertaken and drainage found to be leaking. The drainage damage was repaired and monitoring established to both the building and the retaining wall. After 18 months, it was found that settlement movement to the building had essentially stopped. Repairs are currently proceeding to the Trooper Potts building.

It has been confirmed by the Reading Borough Council Conservation Officer that the retaining wall is associated with the adjacent listed Henry Building, and as such the required remedial structural works identified as part of the above study require listed building consent.

The Henry Building wall comprises both retaining and free standing elements. The freestanding section of wall is highlighted green on Fig 11. The retaining section of wall, proposed to be repaired, is highlighted in red. The wall highlighted in blue, adjacent to the housing is excluded from works. Between the green and red walls is a part retaining/part freestanding (ground drops behind) which is also not included in the proposed works.



Fig 11.

The works comprise:

1. The removal of modern one-brick thick walls between buttresses
2. The removal of 11No. modern brick buttresses.
3. Construction of 12No. new buttresses, connected to the retaining wall, including new foundations, broken into existing as necessary.
4. Repairs and making good to brickwork and render.

Please refer to the proposal drawings S-01, S-02 & S-03.

The existing buttresses are not original, and it is assumed were added due to movement of the wall. The bedding plain at the base of the brick buttresses is not structurally acceptable, and as such repair of the existing buttresses is not viable as the bed plains should be perpendicular to the line of thrust, as indicated on the propose drawing S-03.

3.0 Statement of Impact

3.1 Boiler Flue

Description of proposed works	Impact			Extent of impact	Justification
	on Historic fabric	on setting of heritage asset	Overall impact on significance		
Reduction in height of old flues to create air inlet for plantroom.	Zero, existing flues are modern.	Low. Reduction in height improves aesthetics of this elevation.	Medium. Impact is positive.	Low. Flues are on the rear, non-public facing elevation of the building.	Enables installation of modern boilers to comply with current regulations, with resultant wider benefit to public and users of the school buildings.
New Boiler Flue	Low. Flue installation is reversible, flue bracketry will be fixed through mortar joints.	Moderate. Modern flue is taller than existing flues, however the new flue will be colour coated to match other adjacent service pipework.	Moderate.	Moderate.	Enables installation of modern energy efficient boilers to comply with current regulations, with resultant wider benefit to public and users of the school buildings.

3.2 Retaining Wall Works

Description of proposed works	Impact			Extent of impact	Justification
	on Historic fabric	on setting of heritage asset	Overall impact on significance		
Removal of 11No. Existing Buttresses	Low. Existing buttresses are modern additions. Any residual damage caused by removal of modern buttresses will be made good as part of the general wall repair works.	Low. Existing buttresses are modern additions.	Low.	Low.	Existing modern buttresses have failed and are not repairable.
Removal of single skin brickwork (East end of South facing section of wall)	Low. Existing brickwork single leaf is modern addition. Any residual damage caused by removal of modern buttresses will be made good as part of the general wall repair works.	Low. Existing brickwork single leaf is modern addition. It's removal will expose the original historic brickwork of the wall.	Low	Low.	Modern facing brickwork is in poor state of repair and with the new buttresses is not required structurally.
Construction of 12No. new Retaining Wall Buttresses	Low. Buttresses are not toothed into historic brickwork. Structural stability of wall will be enhanced as a result of the works.	Low. Overall impact will be offset through removal of the existing buttresses. General repairs to render and brickwork will enhance appearance of wall.	Low.	Low.	Structural works are required to ensure long term stability of the wall, ensuring longevity of the heritage asset with associated wider public benefit.

Appendix A: Historic Plans



Fig 12: 1879



Fig 13: 1899



Fig 14: 1969

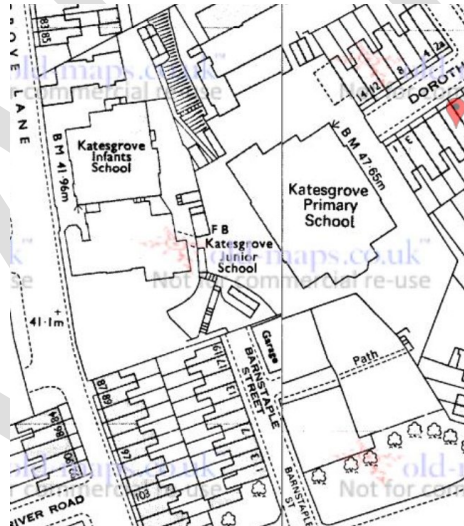


Fig 15: 1982