

character is much more emphatically urban than its provincial origins. The route of the Inner Distribution Road across the north end of the character area severs London Street from the town centre, and compromises the legibility of the road as a key part of Reading's medieval street pattern. The broad, open junction, the constant high level of traffic and the noise associated with this major road also detract from the overall historic appearance of the area.

Character Area 2

- 4.32 The boundary of the conservation area and Area 1 extends westwards from London Road, in a spit which encompasses Church Street and St Giles' Church, thereby taking in one of Reading's three Medieval churches (**Figure 4.10**). As one approaches eastwards along Church Street, the spire of St Giles can be glimpsed, framed between two listed buildings.



Figure 4.10: Area 2: Church Street and St Giles' Church has a much more tranquil character than London Road

- 4.33 Though modern development has encroached upon the historic character of this area, the medieval church, along with other listed buildings and buildings of townscape merit, and remnants of the historic floor scape, remain to reflect the role of this street as part of the historic layout of the town. The narrow proportions of Church Street give it the atmosphere of a town alley, and this reflects the tight knit layout which emerged as the town grew. These enclosed proportions, together with a more residential character and the green open space of St Giles' Churchyard, contribute to a tranquil atmosphere entered from the relative bustle of London Street.

Character Area 3

- 4.34 The two lateral divisions of the River Kennet and the Inner Distribution Road make this area the most disparate of the four character areas. Whilst the River Kennet creates a welcome break and open space in the otherwise continuous building line, the Inner Distribution Road is described by the Conservation Area Appraisal as:

“... a wide, characterless dual-carriageway that completely disrupts the historic street pattern and spoils the continuity of the Duke Street / London Street route to and from the town centre.”²⁶

- 4.35 There is a close mix of old and new building stock here. Much the larger scale, modern development of the Oracle Shopping Centre and neighbouring office buildings are located around the junction between Duke Street and the Inner Distribution Road, and the Conservation Area Appraisal highlights that the high proportion of undistinguished modern development dilutes the historic character of the area (**Figure 4.11**).²⁷



Figure 4.11: Area 3: Contrasting larger scale modern development dilutes the historic character of this part of the conservation area

- 4.36 Nineteenth century commercial buildings are focussed around the crossroads at King’s Road and Duke Street, which is a busy junction and a local landmark. Several historic buildings nearby are notable; including Barclays Bank on King Street, of architectural interest for its ornate Italian palazzo style, and The George Hotel, first mentioned in the early-15th century, with the present building dating from the 17th or 18th century.

Character Area 4

- 4.37 The application Site (6-8 Market Place) itself is located within Area 4 of this larger conservation area designation. This sub-area encompasses the Market Place at its centre, and also the environs of St Laurence’s Church and the Town Hall complex at its north corner. These are key buildings and local landmarks within the conservation area as a whole, which as a group constitute the defining architectural image of historic Reading (**Figure 4.12**). Key views of these landmark buildings are available from the surrounding streets, including Duke Street and Market Place, Friar Street and Blagrove Street, and The Forbury (**Figure 4.13**), for example.

²⁶ Reading Borough Council. Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal. 2007

²⁷ Reading Borough Council. Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal. 2007



Figure 4.12: Area 4: View eastwards along Friar Street to the key landmark buildings of St Laurence's Church and the Town Hall

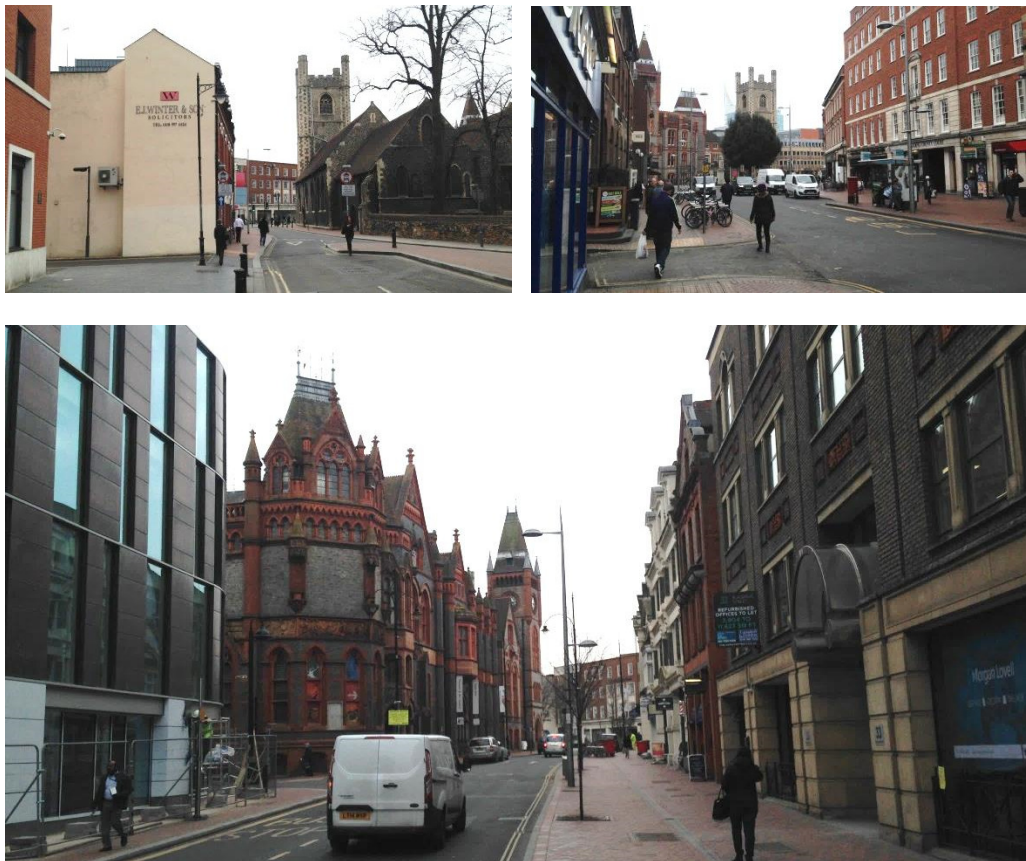


Figure 4.13: Views of the set piece of the Town Hall and St Laurence's Church from The Forbury, Friar Street and Blagrove Street (respectively)

- 4.38 St Laurence's Church and the Town Hall complex overlook the Market Place and Town Hall Square, where a large area has been pedestrianised in the more recent period. The lack of vehicular traffic allows for a better appreciation of these key historic buildings. Good views of the church and Town Hall complex, and particularly the deliberately-placed Clock Tower, are also available from further away on King Street / Duke Street to the south and on Blagrove Street to the north (**Figure 4.14**). Key views are identified in the published Conservation Area Appraisal²⁸ – appended townscape analysis map – including the local view looking north from High Street past the Site towards the landmark tower of the Parish Church. Other landmark buildings within the area of the Market Place include the tower of the Corn Exchange Arcade entrance (listed building) on the west side, and also the curve of Jackson's Corner (former department store – building of townscape merit) on King Street / High Street.

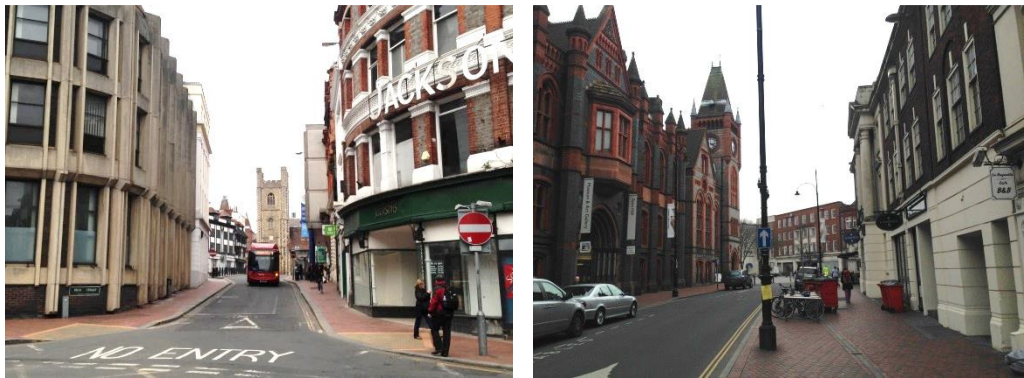


Figure 4.14: Longer views of the St Laurence's Church and Town Hall

- 4.39 The Conservation Area Appraisal²⁹ also identifies the Market Place as a “significant open space” within this sub-area, which is now enclosed by a variety of ages, scales, forms and styles of buildings on each side, and also anchored visually by the Parish Church at its north corner and the distinctive Simeon Monument at its heart. The Appraisal describes that:

“The Market Place was partly destroyed by a bomb in 1943 and the buildings around Market Place show a variety of styles and periods in which, unfortunately, mid 20th century Brutalist architecture figures largely. Nos. 27/28 and 29/31 have timber frames (altered) from the 17th century or earlier. On the opposite side of Market Place, Nos. 13-16 (NatWest Bank) dates from c1875 in a Renaissance palace style. Facing north, on the lower side of Market Place, nos. 48/49 is a stuccoed mid 18th century building.”

- 4.40 The noted The Buildings of England volume for Berkshire further describes the Market Place as “a triangular space of no particular distinction”³⁰, and it is considered that this verdict is a result of the considerable rebuilding and infrastructure which occurred in the post war and late 20th century period. Visual interest and character is derived from the historic buildings which survive on the corner of Friar Street and along the north part of the west side of the Market Place, including the entrance to the Corn Exchange Arcade. On the opposite side Nos.13-16 dates from the late-19th century and is built in a

²⁸ Reading Borough Council. Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal. 2007

²⁹ Reading Borough Council. Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal. 2007

³⁰ Pevsner, N. *The Buildings of England: Berkshire*. Yale University Press 2002

Renaissance palazzo style, whilst the listed buildings facing north on the lower side of the triangular Market Place survive from the 18th century, and also contribute positively to the remaining historic character in the area (Figure 4.16). The Simeon Monument or obelisk in the centre of the triangular Market Place, and the statue of Queen Victoria outside the Town Hall, are also local historic features which enhance the public realm conservation area and create a distinctive sense of place (Figure 4.17).



Figure 4.15: The historic buildings on the west side of the part-pedestrianised Market Place date from the 17th-19th centuries



Figure 4.16: Remaining 18th and 19th century buildings on the south side of the Market Place



Figure 4.17: The Queen Victoria Jubilee Statue (Town Hall Square) and Simeon Monument (Market Place)

- 4.41 As has been described, along the southern part of the east side of the Market Place and also west side extensive bomb damage during the Second World War necessitated the redevelopment of several sites. Instead of the fine-grained building line packed with visual interest shown in late 19th / early 20th century photographs, this frontage is now comprised of several unsympathetic modern structures which have reduced the historic character and appearance of this Medieval space (**Figure 4.18**). The vehicular traffic through the Market Place, including numerous large buses, also detracts from the character of this key historic space.



Figure 4.18: The historic character of the east side of Market Place was eroded heavily in the post war period

- 4.42 The published Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal³¹ from 2007 looks to draw its townscape character analysis together with a summary of the “... *features [within Character Area 3] that make a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the conservation area*”. These are listed as:
- *The close proximity of St Laurence’s Church and Town Hall buildings makes a strong architectural statement;*
 - *St Laurence’s Church and distinctive tower;*

³¹ Reading Borough Council. Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal. 2007

- *The large public open space (part-pedestrianised) composed of Market Place and the area around the statue of Queen Victoria;*
- *Town Hall complex comprising Victoria Hall, Concert Hall, Town Hall and Museum, Library and Art Gallery;*
- *The collection of historic buildings looking onto Market Place;*
- *The monument in Market Place, designed by Sir John Soane in 1804 to commemorate Edward Simeon a mayor of Reading and Governor of the Bank of England, and the statue of Queen Victoria;*
- *Good views of Town Hall clock tower and the tower of St Laurence's Church;*
- *Trees, greenery and open space of St Laurence's churchyard;*
- *Trees in the public realm which soften the harsh urban townscape; and*
- *Natural stone kerbs.*

4.43 Conversely, the features with Character Area 4 that have a 'negative' impact on the historic character and appearance of the conservation area are identified in this Appraisal, and listed as:

- *Modern architecture in Market Place is undistinguished and fails to respect neighbouring historic buildings e.g. nos. 19-22 Market Place/2-8 The Forbury, nos 37-43 Market Place and no. 13 High Street;*
- *Paving of Town Hall square is worn out and poorly patched with tarmac;*
- *Brick planters which are in need of replacement;*
- *Uneven surface in pedestrianised areas;*
- *Litter and rubbish in St Laurence's churchyard is unsightly;*
- *Vacant commercial properties;*
- *Conflict of traffic and pedestrians in Market Place;*
- *Loss of original historic windows and front doors to modern replacements e.g. 10-12 The Forbury;*
- *Noise and fumes from traffic;*
- *Loss of original architectural features;*
- *Poor state or repair of wall around St Laurence's churchyard (The Forbury); and*
- *Plethora of signs and other street furniture, some of which may be redundant.*



Figure 4.19: View across to the east side of the Market Place dated 2018 (Google StreetView), and an example of “Modern architecture in Market Place is undistinguished and fails to respect neighbouring historic buildings ...”

Summary of Significance

4.44 The published Conservation Area Appraisal³² provides a clear summary of the special interest (and overall heritage significance) of this designated area. Those features / aspects that are considered to justify designation are listed as:

- *Linear conservation area beside the planned medieval southern approach road, over the River Kennet, to a market place and church outside one of Reading Abbey’s gateways;*
- *The Hospitium of St John the Baptist, founded in 1189 (Scheduled Monument);*
- *Two of Reading’s three medieval churches: St Laurence’s and St Giles’, both with well treed churchyards;*
- *Isolated examples of timber-framed 16th and 17th century buildings e.g. nos 26/27 Market Place, nos 49/53 London Street and nos 3/5 London Road;*
- *Good examples of prestigious Georgian town houses in London Street;*
- *The fine collection of 19th century municipal buildings in Blagrove Street including Waterhouse’s distinctive Town Hall and Victoria Hall, Concert Hall and Museum, Library and Art Gallery;*
- *Groups of historic building around Market Place;*
- *Special historic and architectural focus around St Laurence’s Church and the Town Hall complex;*

³² Reading Borough Council. Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal. 2007

- *Many examples of building with bricks (red, blue and buff) from Reading's extensive local brickworks;*
- *Fine examples of 19th century banks and commercial buildings notably Barclays Bank, King Street and NatWest Bank, Market Place;*
- *Three green open spaces namely the churchyards of St Laurence's and St Giles' and the burial ground of the Friends Meeting House;*
- *Public open space (part-pedestrianised) composed of Market Place and Town Hall Square i.e. the area around the statue of Queen Victoria;*
- *Jacksons Corner, a once busy crossroads and locally known landmark;*
- *Trees in the public realm particularly street trees in London Street, Market Place and Town Hall Square;*
- *Tranquil atmosphere of Church Street;*
- *The presence of the River Kennet and a short visible length of Holy Brook;*
- *Lengths of natural stone kerb and historic paving in the courtyard of The George Hotel, Thorn Lane and alleys off London Street; and*
- *Two examples of 19th century monuments: Sir John Soane's Simeon Monument and the Queen Victoria statue.*

4.45 In summary, the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area principally derives its significance from the principal spinal route running through Reading, made up of London Street, Duke Street and Market Place. This constitutes one of the principal medieval approach roads to the heart of old Reading. It leads directly to the historic core of the town, which is focussed on the landmark space of the Market Place, and the key buildings of St Laurence's Church and the Town Hall complex. This grouping makes up the defining image of historic Reading and its architecture. The ruins of Reading Abbey (albeit outside the conservation area boundary) also remain to the immediate east of St Laurence's Church, and these also reflect the long role of this area at the epicentre of Reading's history and growth.

4.46 This strongly linear conservation area contains some rare surviving timber-framed buildings of the 16th and 17th centuries, as well as several good examples of the Georgian townhouse typology in London Street, a great deal of 19th century commercial architecture, and some considerable 20th century redevelopment. This broad cross section of building ages and styles reflects the continuing importance of the route over time, as well as the changing economic fortunes and uses found along its length; and the evolving tastes and fashions in domestic and commercial architecture over this long period.

Contribution of Site

- 4.47 The published Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal from 2007³³ does not identify the Site building (6-8 Market Place) as a “building of townscape merit”, or indeed makes any other particular reference to this site. We have also identified that this is not a statutory or a locally listed building.
- 4.48 In describing the ‘negative features’ of Character Area 4 the Appraisal states that *“Modern architecture in Market Place is undistinguished and fails to respect neighbouring historic buildings ...”* Furthermore, Section 6.10 (Issues) of this document highlights that *“Many 1960s and 1970s developments pay little heed to their context and some have a notably negative effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area. More recent development within the conservation area has shown a marked improvement but design of new development remains a major issue.”*
- 4.49 **Section 3** of this report assesses that the building complex on Site dates from 1965 and was part of the post war rebuilding of large parts of both east and west sides of the Market Place following extensive bomb damage during the Second World War. It is also our assessment that the modern commercial building on this Site is one of those being described in the published Appraisal as “undistinguished” and little respecting its historic architectural context within the Market Place.



Figure 4.20: View of the Site building from within the Market Place (T P Bennett)

- 4.50 Our assessment of the contribution of the Site building to the character and appearance (or significance) of the conservation area has been informed by best practice guidance published by Historic England. Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management dating from 2019 (2nd Edition)³⁴ uses a checklist to identify elements which may contribute to the special interest and significance of a conservation area, and also states that *“A positive response to one or more of the following [questions] may*

³³ Reading Borough Council. Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal. 2007

³⁴ Historic England: Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management dating from 2019 (2nd Edition)

indicate that a particular element within a conservation area makes a positive contribution, provided that its historic form and values have not been eroded.”

- 4.51 Although this post war development is linked to a past large Modernist architectural practice of note on the national scene, this particular building is one of their very many commissions across the country and does not represent a particularly accomplished example of their work.
- 4.52 Within the Market Place and historic core area this building does not have landmark quality, but forms part of the wider and diverse built enclosure of this open space. Visually it has at best only a neutral effect on the architectural interest / qualities of this historic urban space. It is a modern building and standardised design that is not reflective of the style, form or local materials of the surviving historic buildings within this part of the conservation area. The southern bays of the Site building break forward to create a street level colonnade, which only serves to disrupt the historically shared building line with its older neighbours.
- 4.53 This is not a building that relates to any adjacent or nearby heritage assets in terms of its age, materials or in any other historically significant way. Similarly this is not a Site that contributes positively to the setting of any nearby listed buildings or buildings of townscape merit at the local level.
- 4.54 Historically (and locally) this building and Site illustrates an example of the post war redevelopment of areas of the centre following bomb damage, but otherwise contributes little to the historical record of the centre and Market Place since at least the 17th century. The building occupies the amalgamated plots and frontage of more ancient and now lost structures on this side of the square. There is no tangible record on Site of any association with past uses, events and or characters of historic note as found today.
- 4.55 The current commercial use of the Site for offices and retail at street level could be seen to very broadly reflect the established historical role of the Market Place within the town centre.
- 4.56 In summary, the Site building is not of particular historic or architectural interest in the national or local context. It is a derivative example of the widespread urban commercial architecture of post war period, and does not indicate design of high quality, nor distinctive to this place and historic area. As found today, the Site building makes no positive contribution to the character or appearance of the wider conservation area, and in some ways detracts from the special qualities that define this designated heritage asset.

Grade II Listed Building: Nos.1-2 Market Place



Figure 4.21: View of 1-2 Market Place across the head of High Street dated 2009 (L) and archive interior view of banking hall dated 1979³⁵

Summary: Architectural and Historic Interest

- 4.57 This listed building dates from the late 19th century and was either originally built or later adapted for use as a bank. The Historic England List Entry³⁶ describes this building in detail as:

“Rubbed brick classical. 5 bays. Dividing Doric pilasters with reed-fluted pilasters over ground floor. 3 storeys with pedimented feature to attic in 2nd bay from left. Moulded and carved modillion cornice, interrupted by shaped pediment over 2nd floor windows of feature bay. Slate roof. Plate glass sash windows, 3 tripartite, feature bay has paired windows. Moulded architraves and enriched entablature on 1st floor. Cast iron parapet rails with semi-circular capped dies. Lunette to feature bay with reed-fluted bracket pilasters. Stone faced ground floor with rustic piers between bays. Large entrance to left in pink and grey polished granite, Segmental pediment, carved tympanum, bracket-pilasters with reed fluted tops. Arched fanlight over modern door. Arched through passage to right with wrought iron guille to upper part carrying “Lloyds Bank Chambers” in gilt letters. Interior has 4 bay classical (circa 1930s) banking hall with 3 Rain beams on central row of piers.”

- 4.58 This designated heritage asset has significance as a distinctive example of later 19th century commercial architecture; and in this case banking premises, which illustrates the growth in commerce and wealth in Reading and its town centre during this period. The bold Classically influenced architecture and use of high quality materials and detailing further underlines the importance of this use, and also sought to communicate the strength, dependability and value of this bank at that time. The frontage and roof line of

³⁵ Historic England Archives

³⁶ Historic England, The National Heritage List for England (website)

this building also enjoys group value as part of a now more disparate collection of historic buildings that each address and part enclose the ancient urban space of the Market Place within the centre of Reading. In this way this building contributes to the historical record and visual interest / distinctiveness of the local townscape.

Setting and Contribution of Site

- 4.59 The setting of this listed building comprises the surrounding Market Place / London Street Conservation Area; the character and appearance of which has been described previously in the Section of this report. It is a building that contributes positively to the significance of the wider conservation area as one example of the surviving historic commercial buildings within the Market Place; in particular the attractiveness and architectural interest of the largely intact street frontage and roof line as appreciated in local views across this space. The rear of this building is essentially a post war rebuilding that contrasts in scale and character with the retained frontage to the square. This rear element is not of special interest.
- 4.60 The Site building (6-8 Market Place) also falls within the conservation area designation and as the immediate northern neighbour within the urban block forms part of the townscape setting of this listed building. The Site building is a modern rebuilding of a section of the east side of the Market Place, and does not share any positive historical or architectural links to the listed building next door. The southern bays of the Site building break forward to create a street level colonnade, which only serves to disrupt the historically shared building line with its older neighbour. Overall, the Site is not an element of the immediate setting of the listed building that contributes positively to the understanding or appreciation of its heritage significance, but in some ways detracts.

Grade II Listed Building: Nos.13-16 Market Place



Figure 4.22: View of 13-16 Market Place dated 2009³⁷

Summary: Architectural and Historic Interest

- 4.61 This listed building dates from the mid 19th century and was originally built as a bank (former National Westminster Bank). The List Entry³⁸ describes this building in detail as:

“Renaissance palace style. 3 storeys. Bath stone ashlar with Portland balustraded parapet. 3 bays, the outer ones project slightly with corner piers. Astragal to moulded modillion cornice. Tripartite plate glass sash windows with enriched lintels and side pilasters with relief panel carvings supporting enriched entablature. 2nd floor centre bay has paired architrave windows. Modillion cornice over ground floor. Outer doorways with pink granite pilasters and round headed doors in rusticated concave jambs; similar surrounds to 2 central windows.”

- 4.62 The significance of this designated heritage asset derives principally from its high quality example of mid 19th century bank and the commercial architecture of this period. Historically this also illustrates the growth in commerce and wealth in Reading and its town centre at this time. The grand symmetrically composed and Classically influenced architecture, and use of high quality materials and detailing, further underlines the importance of this commercial use and banking in general in this period. The frontage and parapet line of this building also enjoys group value as part of a now more disparate collection of historic buildings that each address and part enclose the more ancient

³⁷ Historic England Archives

³⁸ Historic England, The National Heritage List for England (website)

Market Place. In this way this building also contributes to the historical record and visual interest / distinctiveness of the local townscape.

Setting and Contribution of Site

- 4.63 Again, the setting of this listed building comprises the surrounding Market Place / London Street Conservation Area; the character and appearance of which has been described previously in this report. It is a building that contributes positively to the significance of the conservation area as one example of the surviving historic commercial buildings within the Market Place; in particular the attractiveness and architectural interest of the largely intact street frontage as appreciated in local views across this space. To rear this building has been much extended in the modern period, and these more utilitarian elements are not of special interest.
- 4.64 The Site building (6-8 Market Place) also falls within the conservation area designation, forms part of the same urban block on the east side of this square, and so is part of the wider townscape setting of this listed building. It has been described previously that the Site building is a modern rebuilding of this block, and it does not share any historical or architectural links to the listed building of positive interest. Overall, the Site is not an element of the wider setting of the listed building that contributes positively to the understanding or appreciation of its heritage significance.

Grade II Listed Building: No.7 High Street



Figure 4.23: View of 7 High Street dated 2009³⁹

Summary: Architectural and Historic Interest

- 4.65 This listed building dates from the early 19th century and was likely originally built for a mix of both commercial (street shopfrontage) and residential (upper floors) use. The List Entry⁴⁰ describes this building in detail as:

“4 storeys, stucco, 1 bay frontage. 1st and 2nd floors framed by Ionic pilasters with entablature (similar entablature over 1st floor mentioned on previous list not retained). Modern shopfront. Tripartite glazing bar sash on 1st floor with balustraded panel below. Modern casement to 2nd floor. C19 glazing to tripartite segmental headed 3rd floor window. Panelled end piers to 3rd floor which acts as parapetted attic. Concealed roof.”

- 4.66 The significance of this designated heritage asset derives principally from its high quality, and also externally largely intact, example of an early 19th century mixed use, town centre building. Historically this building again illustrates the growth in commercial wealth and also population expansion in Reading at this time. The elegant Regency Neo-Classical design of the frontage is reminiscent of the higher status areas of London in this period, which further underlines the value of this site and its use within a growing Reading centre. The frontage and parapet line of this building also enjoys group value as part of a highlight diverse ensemble of historic buildings along this side of the short High

³⁹ Historic England Archives

⁴⁰ Historic England, The National Heritage List for England (website)

Street, including other listed buildings and the neighbouring Jackson's Corner local landmark immediately to the south (building of townscape merit). In this way this building also contributes to the historical record and visual interest / distinctiveness of the local townscape.

Setting and Contribution of Site

- 4.67 The setting of this listed building comprises the surrounding Market Place / London Street Conservation Area; the character and appearance of which has been described previously in this report. It is a building that contributes positively to the significance of the conservation area as one of a number of various examples of surviving historic buildings within the commercial core of Reading.
- 4.68 The Site building (6-8 Market Place) also falls within the conservation area designation, and is part of the urban block that forms the east side of Market Place and its continuation south along High Street to Jackson's Corner. The Site building is part of the wider townscape setting of this listed building. The Site does not share any historical or architectural links to this listed building of positive interest. Overall, the Site is not an element of the wider setting of the listed building that contributes positively to its heritage significance.

Grade II Listed Building: No.8 High Street



Figure 4.24: View of 8 High Street dated 2009⁴¹

Summary: Architectural and Historic Interest

4.69 This listed building dates from the 1904 and is recorded to have been built by Lewis Bros. of Poole to the designs of the architecture practice Coopers and Howell. It was originally built as a retail premises, either replacing or redeveloping an earlier building on this Site. The List Entry⁴² also describes this building as:

“Art Nouveau style. Tiled and terracotta front, possibly to an older building. 3 storeys, attic and basement. 2 bays. 3 light casement attic window with shaped cornice. Heavy modillion cornice with flanking pepperpots and carved terracotta ornament. 2 segmental headed tripartite windows on 2nd floor with half-hexagonal piers between on carved glazed corbels. Green tiled ground and 1st floors - large segmental window on 1st floor with large keystone and curvilinear motif on voussoirs. Modern shop front but original tiled side piers with stylized metal number above on each side ...”

4.70 The significance of this designated heritage asset derives principally from its high quality, and also relatively unusual for Reading, example of early 20th century commercial architecture in the Art Nouveau style. Historically this later addition to the town centre further illustrates the continued growth and diversity of the retail offer at this time. Additionally, the List Entry identifies that the property was developed for E Jackson and Son; thereby associating this building with the nearby local landmark Jacksons Corner

⁴¹ Historic England Archives

⁴² Historic England, The National Heritage List for England (website)

department store. The use of this highly distinctive style, and also use of high quality period materials and detailing, is a demonstration of the use of architecture to promote / advertise commerce in this context. The frontage of this building also enjoys group value as part of a now more disparate collection of historic buildings on the High Street and adjoining spaces. In this way this building also contributes to the historical record and visual interest / distinctiveness of the local townscape.

Setting and Contribution of Site

- 4.71 The setting of this listed building comprises the surrounding Market Place / London Street Conservation Area; the character and appearance of which has been described previously in this report. It is a building that contributes positively to the significance of the conservation area as one of a number of various examples of surviving historic buildings within the commercial core of Reading.
- 4.72 The Site building (6-8 Market Place) also falls within the conservation area designation, and is part of the urban block that forms the east side of Market Place and its continuation south along High Street to Jackson's Corner. The Site building is part of the wider townscape setting of this listed building. The Site does not share any historical or architectural links to this listed building of positive interest. Overall, the Site is not an element of the wider setting of the listed building that contributes positively to its heritage significance.

Grade II* Listed Building: The Obelisk, Market Place



Figure 4.25: View of the Simeon Monument within the Market Place dated 2009⁴³

Summary: Architectural and Historic Interest

4.73 This listed building / structure dates from the early 19th century (recorded as 1804) and was erected as a monument to the commerce and civic profile of Reading by the local benefactor and wealthy City of London trader Edward Simeon. This was approved by the Mayor of Reading for the central location of the Market Place, and also intended to serve to light this square with street lamps as well as to improve the flow of traffic. It is also known as the Simeon Monument or Soane Obelisk. The List Entry⁴⁴ describes this structure as:

"Portland stone fluted obelisk with chamfered sides (key pattern) which have palmette tympana cut into capping. Striated cylinder over capped by pineapple. Rusticated triangular base with lobed corners, each with fasces in relief and with bracketed cast and wrought iron lamp overthrows. Moulded panels on each face - bronze tablet to south inscribed: "Erected and lighted forever at the expense of Edward Simeon Esqre, as a mark of affection to his native town AD 1804. Lancelot Austwick Esq Mayor". Contemporary railings, cast iron with fleur de lys heads and heavy standards."

4.74 The significance of this designated heritage asset derives in part from its attribution to the renowned architect John Soane, who practiced in the late 18th and into the 19th

⁴³ Historic England Archives

⁴⁴ Historic England, The National Heritage List for England (website)

century and had a national reputation. The distinctive, even abstract, form of this Classical inspired monument is characteristic of this designer, as is the high quality use of materials and detailing. The Grade II* designation denotes a building of 'more than' special interest; relating to its particular importance historically and architecturally. It is recognised as a local landmark that contributes to the historical record and visual interest / distinctiveness of the local townscape.

Setting and Contribution of Site

- 4.75 The setting of this listed structure comprises the surrounding Market Place / London Street Conservation Area; the character and appearance of which has been described previously in this report, as well as the ensemble of listed / historic buildings enclosing this key urban space. It contributes positively to the significance of the conservation area as an historical monument and also visual landmark or focal point within the square. The qualities of this monument are however perhaps best appreciated at close quarters rather than within longer distance views.
- 4.76 The Site building (6-8 Market Place) also falls within the conservation area designation. The Simeon Monument is located to the west of the Site and that side of this square, and therefore falls within a shared townscape setting. It has been described previously that the Site building is a modern rebuilding of the urban block, and it does not share any historical or architectural links to the listed structure. Overall, the Site is not an element of the wider setting of the monument that contributes positively to its heritage significance, but is a neutral background element to views of this local feature.

Grade II Listed Building: Nos.48-49 Market Place



Figure 4.26: View of 48-49 Market Place dated 2009 (far right)⁴⁵

Summary: Architectural and Historic Interest

4.77 This listed building dates from the mid 18th century and was likely originally built as a mixed use building for both commerce and residential on the key space of the Market Place. The List Entry⁴⁶ describes this building as:

“Coloured stucco facade with cornice and blocking course, band at 2nd floor cill height. Slate roof. 4 storeys. 4 ranges of glazing bar sashes. Modern marbled offices on ground floor.”

4.78 The significance of this designated heritage asset derives principally from its high quality and high status example of mid 18th urban commercial building of this period. Historically this also illustrates the growing commerce and wealth in Reading and its town centre at this time. The grand, well ordered and Classically influenced architecture, and use of materials and fine detailing, further underlines the importance of the use of this site and its prestigious location fronting the Market Place in this period. The frontage and roof line of this building also enjoys group value as part of a highly varied ensemble of historic buildings that each address and part enclose the ancient Market Place. In this way this building also contributes to the historical record and visual interest / distinctiveness of the local townscape.

⁴⁵ Historic England Archives

⁴⁶ Historic England, The National Heritage List for England (website)

Setting and Contribution of Site

- 4.79 The setting of this listed building comprises the surrounding Market Place / London Street Conservation Area; the character and appearance of which has been described previously in this report. It is a building that contributes positively to the significance of the conservation area as one relatively early example of the surviving historic commercial buildings within the Market Place; in particular the Classical grandeur and qualities of its street frontage as appreciated in local views across this space. The upper storeys of this building are later additions, and similarly the ground floor interior is modern and of little interest in heritage terms.
- 4.80 The Site building (6-8 Market Place) also falls within the conservation area designation, and forms part of the wider townscape setting of this listed building. The Site does not share any historical or architectural links to the listed building that are of positive interest. Overall, the Site is not an element of the wider setting of the listed building that contributes positively to its heritage significance.

Grade II Listed Building Group: Nos.50-51 Market Place



Figure 4.27: View of 50-51 Market Place dated 2009⁴⁷

Summary: Architectural and Historic Interest

- 4.81 This listed building dates from the latter part of the 19th century and was originally built as a later phase and expansion of the banking premises at 3-5 King Street immediately to the rear and sharing the same urban block (Barclays Bank). The List Entry⁴⁸ describes this building in detail as:

“3½ storeys red brick and terracotta with ashlar dressings and granite faced ground floor. Tiled roof. Central Flemish gable. Windows with 1, 4 and 1 lights across facade, centre window with mullions, all plate glass sashes. Moulded eaves cornice forms coping to false parapet, modillion cornice over 2nd floor. 2 doorways on ground floor, to right semi-circular pediment breaking into 1st floor and rusticated surround. To left 4 centred arch overlight notching upper lights of 3 central shop front windows.”

- 4.82 The significance of this designated heritage asset derives principally from its qualities as a representative example of a late 19th century commercial building. It is also linked to an earlier established (1830s) bank premises adjoining within this block (3-5 King Street - also a listed building). Historically this building illustrates a further and later phase in the expansion and growing commercial wealth of Reading town centre. The distinctive Renaissance style in brick and stone, and features such as the shaped gable, further underlines the importance of this commercial use in this period. The frontage and gable

⁴⁷ Historic England Archives

⁴⁸ Historic England, The National Heritage List for England (website)

of this building enjoys group value not only with the listed bank on King Street, but also as part of a varied streetscene of historic buildings that each address and part enclose the Market Place. In this way this building also contributes to the historical record and visual interest / distinctiveness of the local townscape.

Setting and Contribution of Site

- 4.83 The setting of this listed building comprises the surrounding Market Place / London Street Conservation Area; the character and appearance of which has been described previously in this report. It is a building that contributes positively to the significance of the conservation area as a later phase example of the surviving historic commercial buildings within the Market Place, and also through its architectural qualities / design.
- 4.84 The Site building (6-8 Market Place) also falls within the conservation area designation, and forms part of the wider townscape setting of this listed building. The Site does not share any historical or architectural links to the listed building that are of positive interest. Overall, the Site is not an element of the wider setting of the listed building that contributes positively to its heritage significance.

Grade II Listed Building: No.52 Market Place & 10 High Street



Figure 4.28: View of 52 Market Place and 10 High Street dated 2009⁴⁹

Summary: Architectural and Historic Interest

4.85 This listed building dates from the early 19th century and was likely originally built for mix of use – commercial shopfrontages to the street and also some residential to the upper floors. It commands the south east corner of the Market Place and entrance from the High Street. The List Entry⁵⁰ describes this building in detail as:

“4 storeys, stucco. 3 bays to Market Place, 4 to High Street. 1st and 2nd floors divided into bays by Ionic pilasters and attenuated entablature. The 3rd floor is a built up attic with incised dividing piers and incised frieze. Slate roof. Blocking course with tiled coping. Glazing bar sash windows, a number plate glass to Market Place. 1st floor windows to Market Place have fluted Doric side columns in reveals. 1st floor windows to High Street have reeded architraves, 2nd floor narrow panelled architraves. Ground floor bays divided by panelled piers. Rusticated archway to left facing High Street, blocked but with a rectangular overlight and a patterned semi-circular fanlight.”

4.86 The significance of this designated heritage asset derives principally from its high quality example of early 19th century mixed use building, historically illustrates the continued growth in commerce and wealth in Reading and its town centre at this time. The grand, well-proportioned and Classically influenced architecture, and use of quality materials and Neo-Classical detailing, further underlines the importance of this use and this site

⁴⁹ Historic England Archives

⁵⁰ Historic England, The National Heritage List for England (website)

within the Market Place at this time. The corner frontages of this building are distinctive in views south into the square, and it also enjoys group value as part of a now more disparate collection of historic buildings that part enclose the Market Place / High Street. In this way this building also contributes to the historical record and visual interest / distinctiveness of the local townscape.

Setting and Contribution of Site

- 4.87 The setting of this listed building comprises the surrounding Market Place / London Street Conservation Area; the character and appearance of which has been described previously in this report. It is a building that contributes positively to the significance of the conservation area as a high quality example of the surviving historic mixed use / commercial buildings within the Market Place, and also through its well-considered Neo-Classical design and features.
- 4.88 The Site building (6-8 Market Place) also falls within the conservation area designation, and forms part of the local townscape setting of this listed building (across the head of the High Street to the east). The Site does not share any historical or architectural links to the listed building that are of positive interest. Overall, the Site is not an element of the wider setting of the listed building that contributes positively to its heritage significance or any shared local views.

Grade II Listed Building: Nos.3-5 King Street



Figure 4.29: View of 3-5 King Street dated 2009⁵¹

Summary: Architectural and Historic Interest

- 4.89 This listed building dates from the early 19th century (recorded as 1836) and was originally built as a bank for Joseph and Charles Simmonds and Co., by the local architects Henry or Nathaniel Briant. The List Entry⁵² describes this building in detail as:

“Ornate Italian Palazzo style in Bath stone. 3 storeys, 5 bays, with set back 3 bays (later circa 1870) to left in matching style. Hipped slate roof with 3 chimney stacks with blind dreading. Moulded eaves with lions heads supported on carved brackets. Quotas, Victorian scroll string over 1st floor, moulded cornice over ground floor. Deeply channelled ground floor and plinth. Plate glass sash windows, pilasters and pediments to 1st floor with flush cast-iron balconies, eared architraves to 2nd floor. Richly ornamented Corinthian doorway to right of left hand wing with scrolled broken pediment flanked by cherubs and linked by carved swag; monogrammed key “J and C S and Co”. Panelled door with wrought-iron fanlight and carved panels in concave reveals with carved head keystones.”

- 4.90 The significance of this designated heritage asset derives principally from its high quality example of an early 19th century banking premises. Historically this also more broadly illustrates the growth in commerce and wealth in Reading and its town centre at this time. The very grand and Classically proportioned architecture, and use of high quality facing materials and Italianate detailing, is reminiscent of that of leading banks in other major cities in this period, which further underlines the importance of this commercial use at this time and to Reading. The frontage (both original and later 19th century wing) and roofscape of this building enjoys group value as part of a now more disparate collection of historic buildings along the key thoroughfare of King Street. In this way this

⁵¹ Historic England Archives

⁵² Historic England, The National Heritage List for England (website)

building also contributes to the historical record and visual interest / distinctiveness of the local townscape.

Setting and Contribution of Site

- 4.91 The setting of this listed building comprises the surrounding Market Place / London Street Conservation Area; the character and appearance of which has been described previously in this report. It is a building that contributes positively to the significance of the conservation area as an excellent example of an historic commercial building and Classical architecture within the town centre and local street views.
- 4.92 The Site building (6-8 Market Place) also falls within this conservation area designation, although falling within Character Area 3 not 4 as the Site does. The Site is however still part of the wider townscape setting of this listed building. These sites do not share any historical or architectural links of positive interest, and there are no shared views between these buildings due to the pattern, scale and proportion of the built townscape. Overall, the Site is not an element of the wider setting of the listed building that contributes positively to its heritage significance.

Grade II Listed Building: Nos.23-26 Market Place



Figure 4.30: View of 23-26 Market Place

Summary: Architectural and Historic Interest

4.93 This listed building / terrace and mixed use property (formerly commercial street shopfrontage / residential upper floors) dates from the early 19th century, and has been attributed to the local architects Henry or Nathaniel Briant. The List Entry⁵³ describes this building as:

“3 storeys, Bath stone ashlar now rendered. Round corner. Moulded cope to parapet. Slate roof. Doric pilasters above ground floor level between each house with fluted caps. Modern shops with Doric piers. 2:2:2 ranges of glazing bar sash windows, 1st floor windows have carved brackets to cornices.”

4.94 The significance of this designated heritage asset derives principally from its high quality example of early 19th century commercial / mixed use building. Historically this also illustrates the growth in commerce and wealth in Reading and its town centre at this time. The symmetrically composed and Neo-Classically influenced architectural design of this terrace, and use of high quality materials and detailing, further underlines the importance of this use at this time, and also its location at the northern entrance to the Market Place and near to the ancient Parish Church. The frontage of this terrace also enjoys group value as part of a now more disparate collection of historic buildings that each address and part enclose the Market Place, and also use its curve to draw Friar Street and Town Hall Square into this other key urban space. In this way this building also contributes to the historical record and visual interest / distinctiveness of the local townscape.

⁵³ Historic England, The National Heritage List for England (website)

Setting and Contribution of Site

- 4.95 The setting of this listed building comprises the surrounding Market Place / London Street Conservation Area; the character and appearance of which has been described previously in this report. It is a building that contributes positively to the significance of the conservation area as part of the surviving historic commercial / mixed use buildings and attractive Neo-Classical architecture within this centre (and also its particular corner site).
- 4.96 The Site building (6-8 Market Place) also falls within the conservation area designation, and is part of the wider townscape setting of this listed building across the square. It has been described previously that the Site building is a modern rebuilding of this block, and it does not share any historical or architectural links to the listed building of positive interest. Overall, the Site is not an element of the wider setting of this listed building that contributes positively to the understanding or appreciation of its heritage significance, or any shared local views.

Grade II Listed Building: Nos.27-28 Market Place



Figure 4.31: View of 27-28 Market Place

Summary: Architectural and Historic Interest

- 4.97 This listed building and mixed use property (formerly commercial street shopfrontage / residential upper floors) likely dates from at least the early 17th century. This makes it one of the oldest secular buildings within Reading town centre. The List Entry⁵⁴ describes this building as:

“3 storeys and attic. Double jettied timber-frame with stucco infilling, pebbledashed. Tiled roof with crested ridge and ornamental cast iron gutter to eaves. Moulded 2nd floor jetty. 2 dormers. 2 original bay windows with mullion windows on each floor. Decorative lead work in upper part of windows. C18 shop front retained to ground floor with coved fascia and engaged columns. Outer doors, 5 panel (raised and fielded) with plain overlight to right, modern door to left (to No 29). Interior: 1st floor ceilings divided into panels by moulded strips.”

- 4.98 This listed building is a good surviving example of the vernacular tradition of timber box framing in an urban context; the most widespread form of timber framing in England.⁵⁵ The retained 18th century shopfront with pilasters to either side of the windows, and the upper floors with impressive oriel windows, presents a striking elevation to the Market Place which reflects its history as a high-status merchant’s townhouse. Though the former footprint of the building has been truncated in the later 20th century, there remains some legibility of the historic hierarchy of floor levels which is traditional to this type of domestic architecture. Whilst much of the older interior decorative scheme has

⁵⁴ Historic England, The National Heritage List for England (website)

⁵⁵ Historic England. Listing Selection Guide, Domestic 1: Vernacular Houses

been lost, the grid moulding to the ceiling at first floor level is considered to be original, or an early part of the decorative treatment.

- 4.99 This building also derives special interest as part of the wider group of historic buildings around the Market Place, including the neighbouring former The Coopers PH of a similar age and architectural rarity. This listed building forms part of the appropriate historic backdrop to the key landmark buildings of the nearby Town Hall and St Laurence's Church. More broadly, this building represents an early phase in the development of the Market Place, and also the vernacular style / construction of architecture which once prevailed in the old town. Its original mixed commercial and residential use reflects the role of the Market Place as the historic core of Reading, where the key commercial and business activities were concentrated.

Setting and Contribution of Site

- 4.100 The setting of this listed building comprises the surrounding Market Place / London Street Conservation Area; the character and appearance of which has been described previously in this report. It is a building that contributes positively to the significance of the conservation area as part of the very earliest surviving phase, and wider collection of historic commercial / mixed use buildings within this centre. The relatively rare timber framed construction and bayed frontage in this urban context is of particular value to this area.
- 4.101 The Site building (6-8 Market Place) also falls within the conservation area designation, and is part of the wider townscape setting of this listed building across the Market Place. The Site building does not share any historical or architectural links to the listed building of positive interest, but is far more modern in construction and design. Overall, the Site is not an element of the wider setting of this listed building that contributes positively to the understanding or appreciation of its heritage significance, or any shared local views.

Grade II Listed Building: Nos.29-31 Market Place (former The Coopers PH)



Figure 4.32: View of 29-31 Market Place as found today (left) and as photographed in the early 20th century⁵⁶ (right)

Summary: Architectural and Historic Interest

4.102 This listed building and former inn likely dates from the early 17th century. As with neighbouring 27-28 Market Place, this makes it one of the oldest secular buildings within the town centre. The List Entry⁵⁷ describes this building in detail as:

“False exposed timbering to front with 4 bays of 3 light casements in stucco infill. Wooden modillion cornice to parapet. Tiled roof. 2 C20 dormers. Rusticated stucco on ground floor with glazing bar shopfronts (modern to left, early C19 to right) and central entrance, pilastered doorpiece with fluted caps and scroll brackets to open pediment. 2 panel door with high arched radiating fanlight. Timber framing in gables to rear. Interior contains re-used fittings probably from C16 or C17 house. The Lounge Bar has oak panelled portion with good C16 or early C17 strapwork overmantel. 4 fluted Doric columns flanked by 2 enriched Doric columns and with 'wild men' herm-pilasters. Modillion cornice. The exit to No 29 has a fine door with circa 1600 decoration of recessed niche panels: to outside Ionic female herms, to interior fluted Ionic pilasters.”

4.103 Again, this listed building is a further representative surviving example of the vernacular tradition of timber box framing in an urban context. It dates from the 17th century but may retain fabric from an earlier building on the site. The principal elevation of The Coopers public house has a stuccoed, rusticated street frontage with a central entrance and shop-like windows to either side. The central entrance is set within an elaborate, Georgian-style doorcase. Above, the first and second floors are clad in false (i.e. late 20th century) exposed timber framing, whilst at attic level two hipped dormer windows sit above a modillion cornice.

4.104 Photographs of the building from the late 19th century show that previously it was plainly rendered with Georgian sashed windows – intended to hide the older structural timber framing and introduce a more polite appearance (**Figure 4.32 - right**). As an amalgam of

⁵⁶ Berkshire Records Office

⁵⁷ Historic England, The National Heritage List for England (website)

traditional timber construction with Classically-influenced architectural details it is of interest, where it records the diminishing quality and popularity of timber framed construction from the 17th century, and the growing fashion for modern materials and Classically influenced motifs. Although a great deal of internal and external alteration has occurred on this site, the building still retains a great deal of its original and historic fabric, along with key internal features such as the main 17th century staircase. The demolition of one of the original three bays of the building in the mid 19th century, and also part amalgamation with the former rear of 27-28 and the enclosure of the historic passageway and open yard at the heart of the plan has compromised the legibility of its original form and internal layout.

- 4.105 As a public house and former coaching inn this building also represents an important part of the historical development and past commercial uses of this important town. It represents an early phase in the development of the Market Place and commercial centre, and also the vernacular style / construction of architecture which once prevailed in the old town. This building also derives special interest as part of the wider group of historic buildings around the Market Place, including the neighbouring 27-28 of a similar age and architectural rarity. This listed building forms part of the appropriate historic backdrop to the key landmark buildings of the nearby Town Hall and St Laurence's Church.

Setting and Contribution of Site

- 4.106 The setting of this listed building comprises the surrounding Market Place / London Street Conservation Area; the character and appearance of which has been described previously in this report. It is a building that contributes positively to the significance of the conservation area as part of the very earliest surviving phase, and wider collection of historic commercial / mixed use buildings within this centre. As with the neighbouring 27-28 Market Place, this is a relatively rare timber framed building from the late Medieval period that is of particular value to this urban area.
- 4.107 The Site building (6-8 Market Place) also falls within the conservation area designation, and is part of the wider townscape setting of this listed building across the Market Place. The Site building does not share any historical or architectural links to the listed building of positive interest, but again is of a far more modern construction and design. Overall, the Site is not an element of the wider setting of this listed building that contributes positively to the understanding or appreciation of its heritage significance.

Grade II Listed Building: No.32 Market Place



Figure 4.33: View of 32 Market Place

Summary: Architectural and Historic Interest

4.108 This listed building and mixed use property (formerly commercial street shopfrontage / residential upper floors) dates from the mid 19th century. The List Entry⁵⁸ describes this building as:

“4 storeys with bands between floors. Painted brick. 3 bays, glazing bar sash windows with segmental heads and keys. Moulded cornice to blocking course. Concealed roof. Modern ground floor premises with retraineds of moulded fascia cornice over ...”

4.109 Importantly, the List Entry also identifies that this building was included on the statutory list for “group value only”. This indicates that the special interest is primarily invested in the external street frontage to Market Place, rather than any internal elements, and as part of the wider streetscene / townscape with other various historic buildings around this square. There is a further link to the more ancient The Coopers PH; where this plot formed part of the larger complex of this coaching inn before its construction in the mid 19th century.

4.110 The significance of this heritage asset derives principally from its street frontage as a representative example of a mid 19th century commercial building, and also the Neo-Classical style. Historically this also illustrates the growth in commerce and wealth in Reading and its town centre at this time. The well-considered Classically influenced architecture of this frontage further underlines the importance of this use and site in this period.

⁵⁸ Historic England, The National Heritage List for England (website)

Setting and Contribution of Site

- 4.111 The setting of this listed building comprises the surrounding Market Place / London Street Conservation Area; the character and appearance of which has been described previously in this report. It is a building that contributes positively to the significance of the conservation area as part of a wider and highly varied collection of historic commercial / mixed use buildings within this centre.
- 4.112 The Site building (6-8 Market Place) also falls within the conservation area designation, and is part of the wider townscape setting of this listed building across the Market Place. The Site building does not share any historical or architectural links to the listed building of positive interest. Overall, the Site is not an element of the wider setting of this listed building that contributes positively to the understanding or appreciation of its heritage significance, or any shared local views.

Grade II Listed Building: Nos.33-34 Market Place



Figure 4.34: View of 33-34 Market Place

Summary: Architectural and Historic Interest

4.113 This listed building and former purpose built bank (former Trustee Savings Bank) dates from the mid 19th century. The List Entry⁵⁹ describes this building as:

“3 storeys brick composition with stucco dressings and pilaster strips on 1st floor to cornice. Deep stucco frieze with bracket caps over pilasters. Cornice and parapet. Concealed roof. Pilasters paired at sides and between Nos 33 and 34, single between windows of No 33. 2:1:1:1 bays, plate glass sashes with segmental heads and stilted architraving carried on guttae. Keystones. Band over 1st floor. Early C20 ground floor ...”

4.114 Importantly, the List Entry also identifies that this building was included on the statutory list for “group value only”. This indicates that the special interest is primarily invested in the external street frontage to Market Place, rather than any internal elements, and as part of the wider streetscene / townscape with other various historic buildings around this square.

4.115 The significance of this heritage asset derives principally from its street frontage as a representative example of a mid 19th century commercial building / bank. Historically this also illustrates the rapid growth in commerce and wealth in Reading and its town centre at this time. The boldly considered Classically / Italianate influenced architectural design, and also high quality materials and detailing, of this frontage further underlines the importance of this commercial use and also the site on the Market Place in this period.

⁵⁹ Historic England, The National Heritage List for England (website)

Setting and Contribution of Site

- 4.116 The setting of this listed building comprises the surrounding Market Place / London Street Conservation Area; the character and appearance of which has been described previously in this report. It is a building that contributes positively to the significance of the conservation area as part of a wider and highly varied collection of historic commercial / mixed use buildings within this centre.
- 4.117 The Site building (6-8 Market Place) also falls within the conservation area designation, and is part of the wider townscape setting of this listed building across the Market Place. The Site building does not share any historical or architectural links to the listed building of positive interest. Overall, the Site is not an element of the wider setting of this listed building that contributes positively to the understanding or appreciation of its heritage significance, or any shared local views.

Grade II Listed Building: Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance



Figure 4.35: View of former Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance from the Market Place

Summary: Architectural and Historic Interest

- 4.118 This listed building and former entrance / archway to the former Corn Exchange Arcade dates from the mid 19th century (recorded as 1854), and was designed by the architects J B Clacy and F Hawkes. The List Entry⁶⁰ describes this building in detail as:

“Renaissance style single bay feature in Bath stone ashlar. Three stages capped by pepperpot turret with bell and weathervane. Lower stage has rusticated piers with swagged fruit caps to lintel. Second stage an arched recess with pierced balcony and flanking fluted Ionic columns; keystone with Prince of Wales crest and motto. Tripartite window inside, blocked with semi-circular panelling over; coffered vault. Top stage has “Corn Exchange” in relief on base and brackets to elaborate fruit and flower carved border to gilt and blue clock with Roman numerals. Now leads to modern shopping arcade.”

- 4.119 The significance of this designated heritage asset derives principally from its high quality example of an elaborately designed 19th century gateway structure; previously connected with the now lost Corn Exchange and its arcade deeper within the urban block to the west. In this way this structure has historic interest in recording the former exchange and also more broadly illustrates the rapid growth in commerce and wealth in Reading and its town centre at this time. The Corn Exchange would have been of particular commercial importance, and would have been visited by a wide range of merchants from around the county at this time. This is a local landmark feature within

⁶⁰ Historic England, The National Heritage List for England (website)

the Market Place, and the distinctive revival architectural style and use of high quality materials and Classically derived detailing, further underlines the importance of this gateway and the commercial exchange it was associated with in this period. The archway and clock tower / cupola of this building also enjoys group value as part of a highly varied ensemble of historic buildings that each address and part enclose this square. In this way this building also contributes to the historical record and visual interest / distinctiveness of the local townscape.

Setting and Contribution of Site

- 4.120 The setting of this listed building comprises the surrounding Market Place / London Street Conservation Area; the character and appearance of which has been described previously in this report. It is a building that has local landmark status in views within this square, and so contributes positively to the significance of the conservation area as part of a wider and highly varied collection of historic commercial / mixed use buildings within the centre of Reading.
- 4.121 The Site building (6-8 Market Place) also falls within the conservation area designation, and is part of the wider townscape setting of this listed building across the Market Place. The Site building does not share any historical or architectural links to the listed building of positive interest. Overall, the Site is not an element of the wider setting of this listed building that contributes positively to its heritage significance, or any shared local views.