

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

This Statement is submitted on behalf of Buenosado Argentinian Steakhouse in support of an application for planning consent for alterations to the exterior of Unit L28A of the Oracle Shopping Centre, Reading. The alterations are proposed with the objective of upgrading and enhancing the appearance of the premises in order to facilitate their occupation by the applicant.

The unit in question is located on the northern side of the Oracle Centre, a modern shopping centre built at the turn of the century. The unit in question is a recent addition to the centre looking over the River Kennet, and overshadowed by the Premier Suites apart-hotel building to the north; also a modern building.

The site lies just within the designated St Mary's Butt's / Castle Street Conservation Area; however, the proposals relate only to a very modern part of the building, which is subject to only limited views from public areas and is not within immediate proximity of any historic buildings. This is highlighted in the image provided below (with the proposed unit on the left), viewed from Earley Place.

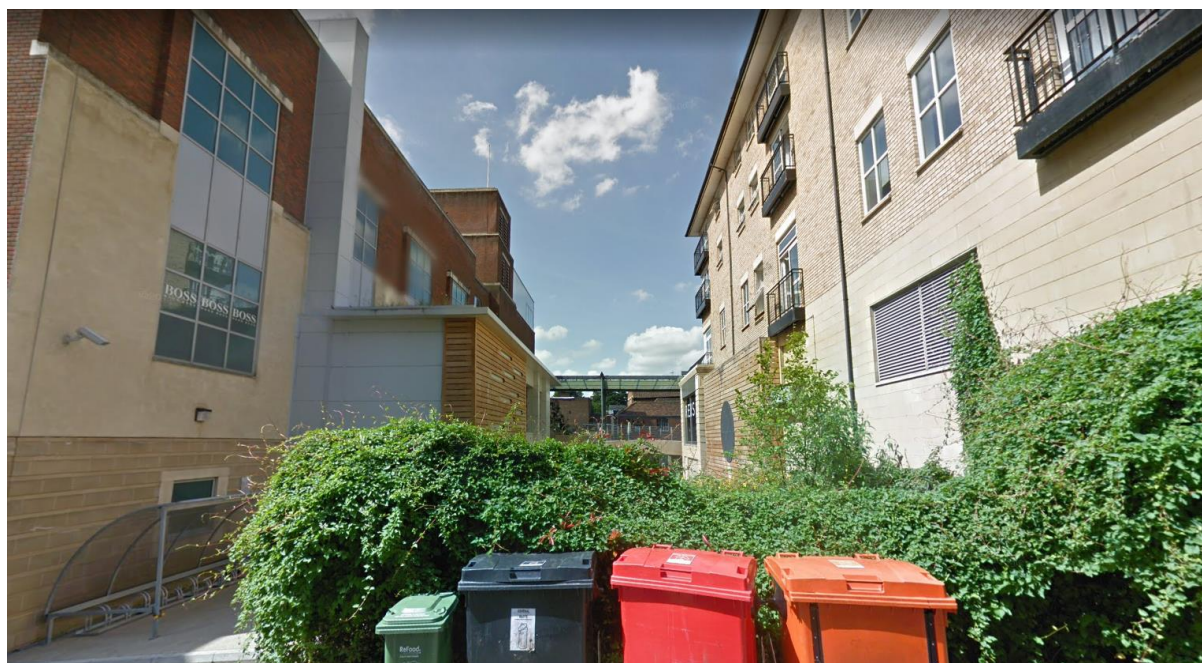


Figure 1: View of unit (on the left) from Earley Place; it is surrounded by modern buildings and is subject to very limited views from the public realm.

As such, the proposals will have negligible impact on the character, appearance or setting of any historic buildings and therefore on the historic integrity of the Conservation Area. However, it is considered that any impacts will be positive; the proposals will overclad the existing stark / simple

metal façade of the building with timber cladding, softening the building's appearance providing an attractive appearance. Furthermore, the addition of external lamps will help to subtly illuminate the façade and provide a subtle visual presence for the unit, adding interest to its appearance and helping to add activity to this small enclave of Reading town centre. The proposals will facilitate the occupation of this vacant unit by this popular and established restaurant operator, therefore enhancing the town centre's overall offer to residents and visitors alike, and adding vibrancy and activity to the area – to the benefit of the character and vitality of both the Conservation Area and the wider town centre. The proposals are therefore considered to be acceptable in heritage terms.

08.02.19