



**Heritage Statement to assess
proposed extensions**

at

Number 83-85 London Street, Reading

for

Edward Richardson



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Executive Summary

This heritage statement assesses the effects of the construction of a roof extension overlooking London Street and East Street and a ground floor extension looking onto East Street at Number 83-85 London Street. Permission has been granted for a change of use from offices to residential and the proposed extensions would add to the number of units available.

The Significance and sensitivity of the attributes of the setting of the Conservation Area are the 'views', 'surrounding suburban character', the 'proportional relationship' between the historic buildings and the street, building materials, the historic expansion of settlement from the Medieval town centre and buried Heritage Assets. The Significance and sensitivity of the attributes of the setting of the listed buildings are the 'views', the sense of enclosure, the 'mix of styles and periods', the harmony of materials, and the 'history and degree of change over time'. The majority of attributes were found to hold medium-high sensitivity to further change. When assessing the effects of the proposed extensions, the level of sensitivity was charted against the impacts, which were largely found to be small or very small, with beneficial outcomes. As a result, the majority of the effects were found to be negligible or minor beneficial.

The assessment found that the proposed extensions would contribute the variety of the rooflines within the setting of London Street and the rear extension, particularly the ground floor extension, would benefit the setting of East Street. In terms of the NPPF, adverse impacts on the settings of the Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings are very limited and would equate to 'less than substantial harm' and balances favourably towards beneficial effects that would be to the public benefit. The proposed extensions are therefore in accordance with NPPF and local policies.



1 Introduction

1.1 Instruction

- 1.1.1 This Heritage Statement has been commissioned by Edward Richardson ('the Client') to inform a planning application for ground floor and roof extensions at 83-85 London Street. The building is located within Market Place / London Street Conservation Area and is a Building of Townscape Merit.

1.2 The Application Site and Study Area

- 1.2.1 The Application Site address is 83-85 London Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 4QA; National Grid Reference SU 71871 73010 (see Drawing 413-02-00). It is located to the south of Reading town centre as shown within the red line boundary (planning application boundary).
- 1.2.2 The extent of the Study Area is approximately 100m. The extent of the Study Area has been defined by those Heritage Assets whose settings may potentially be affected by the Proposed Development (see Figure 1).

1.3 Purpose and aims

- 1.3.1 This Heritage Statement examines the level of effects of the Proposed Development on the Heritage Assets present within the Study Area, to the extent that is proportionate to the Significance of the Heritage Assets and the extent of changes proposed. The aims of the Heritage Statement are to:
- assess the Significance of the Heritage Assets and their settings within the Study Area;
 - assess the effect of the Proposed Development on those Heritage Assets; and
 - advise, where appropriate, on the integration of impact avoidance, minimisation measures, conservation methods and enhancement measures.

1.4 Structure

- 1.4.1 The remainder of this report consists of:
- a baseline in Section 2, consisting of viewpoints, a description of viewpoints, the Heritage Assets and the proposed extensions;
 - the assessment of the Significance, impacts and effects on the setting of the Study Area and nearby listed buildings in Sections 3 and 4;
 - an assessment within the policy context and the public benefits in Section 5;
 - the methodology in Section 6;
 - the planning background and legislative background in Section 7;
 - a glossary in Section 8; and
 - a list of references in Section 9, which is followed by Appendices 10-11 consisting of figures and viewpoints.



2 Baseline evidence

2.1 General

- 2.1.1 The Study Area has been defined by those designated Heritage Assets whose settings may potentially be affected by the Proposed Development (see Figure 1). Eighteen listed buildings and six Buildings of Townscape Merit on London Street would potentially be affected by alterations to Number 83-85. In addition, the row of Buildings of Townscape Merit on South Street and the London Street Character Area of the Conservation Area would potentially be affected. The baseline consists of a description of Number 2 London Court and the photographic evidence for the assessment. Evidence of setting is often expressed by reference to views, (see Methodology 6.3.3). A photographic record was made on the 10th April 2019. The study area visit also gathered information about other environmental factors, such as aspects of the Conservation Area that may affect a person's perception of the setting. For example, changes to the 'surrounding suburban character', the 'proportional relationship' between the historic buildings and the street, and building materials. In addition, such changes can affect the understanding of the historic expansion of settlement from the Medieval town centre and directly affect buried Heritage Assets.

2.2 Viewpoints

- 2.2.1 Due to the high density of the streetscape, views from the listed buildings are limited. Each of the glimpsed views appear to be from windows that provide views at narrow angles from within those buildings. The ten Viewpoints chosen are of Number 83-85 and representative, key and illustrative views within the London Street Character Area (see Appendix 11 and Figure 1).

Number 83-85

- Viewpoints 1a and 1b are views looking towards Number 83-85, the frontage on London Street and the rear on East Street. Viewpoint 1a shows the condition of the front historic portion of the building and Viewpoint 1b evidences the modern materials of the rear extension.

Key Viewpoints

- Viewpoint 4, a view looking northwest along London Street towards the town centre illustrates the modern buildings in the foreground and the modern buildings of the town centre seen in the background. The historic buildings are just visible in the mid-view on either side of the street.
- Viewpoint 7, is a view looking southeast along London Street towards London Road during one of the few occasions when traffic lights hold the flow of vehicles. Consequently, the view of Christ Church spire is clearly visible in the background. The wide variety of buildings is also evident in this view.

Representative Viewpoints

- 2.2.2 Viewpoints 2-3 and 8-10 are representative of views from the listed building and Buildings of Townscape Merit on the opposite side of London Street.



- Viewpoint 2 is representative of views from Numbers 90-104 looking southeast along London Street towards Numbers 97-103 London Street. The view illustrates the historic buildings and their varied roofscapes in the foreground and the modern buildings in the background.
- Viewpoint 3 is representative of views from Numbers 104-114 looking northeast along London Street towards Numbers 69-101 London Street. This view also illustrates the historic buildings and their varied roofscapes in the foreground and the modern buildings in the background.
- Viewpoint 8 is representative of views from Numbers 52-72 looking southeast towards Numbers 69-99 London Street and is also illustrative of the view of St John's spire in the background. The row of Buildings of Townscape Merit at Numbers 1-13 South Street and the modern buildings on the opposite side can also be seen in this view.
- Viewpoint 9 is representative of views from Numbers 80-92 looking northeast towards Numbers 79-87 London Street. The view illustrates the harmony provided by the Georgian façades.
- Viewpoint 10, a view looking east towards Number 83-85 from Church Street, is one of the alleyways characteristic of the Study Area and is illustrative of the limited views from the alleyway.

Illustrative Viewpoints

- Viewpoints 5 and 6 are illustrative of the limited views of the rear of London Street due to the more recent built environment along East Street.

2.3 The setting of the Conservation Area

- 2.3.1 The Significance of the Conservation Area lies in the Medieval street pattern and surviving historic buildings that evidence the fine urban grain of historic Reading. As the Conservation Area is extensive with a variety of styles and characteristics, it has been divided into character areas. Number 83-85 London Street is located in Character Area 1 of the Conservation Area, London Street. Area 1 extends from Queens Road (A329) of the Inner Distribution Road southwards to London Road and incorporates the plots along the western side of East Street and the plots either side of London Street. Both streets retain a sense of enclosure provided by the height of the buildings and a built line that abuts the edge of the footpaths.
- 2.3.2 The housing and extensions along the western side of East Street are mostly modern. These developments have changed the focus of the built form and character in the immediate locale, which detracts from the Conservation Area. However, London Street differs. It is wide and is more important as a primary route. For this reason, it is associated with high volumes of traffic, which detracts from the Character Area. The impression of the expanse of London Street is partially due to its wide pavements. The side alleys off London Street are narrow and offer limited views, as passing glimpses, which add to the interest.
- 2.3.3 London Street is a primary route of Medieval origins, with a distinctive curve leading to the town's Medieval market place. It is lined with Georgian style terraces and later Victorian and modern infill. The Georgian style terraces and Victorian town houses *"are the*



properties which today add grandeur to the streetscene" (Reading Borough Council unspecified date, pg. 11). The street was once residential but is now associated with a high proportion of business and professional services, which diminishes its once residential character. In addition, the modern buildings either end of the Street and its severance from the northern part of the Conservation Area also detract from its historic character.

2.4 The setting of the listed buildings

- 2.4.1 There is a high concentration of historic buildings on both sides of London Street, with a mix of architectural styles and periods of late Post-medieval date. These buildings provide a fine grain of narrow plots and two to four storey tall structures that are well-proportioned within the context of this wide, curving street. These buildings have an architectural Significance that relates primarily to the London Street elevations and the primary setting is the street-scene.

Grade II* listed buildings

1. The Grade II* 73 And 75, London Street 1156168

Grade II listed buildings on the east side of the street

2. The Grade II listed 69, London Street 1248071
3. The Grade II Listed 77 And 79, London Street..... 1113518
4. The Grade II Listed 81, London Street 1321930
5. The Grade II Listed 86, London Street 1113527
6. The Grade II Listed 89-93, London Street..... 1303000
7. The Grade II Listed 95 And 97, London Street..... 1321931
8. The Grade II Listed 99, London Street 1113519
9. The Grade II Listed 101, London Street..... 1321932

Grade II listed buildings on the west side of the street

10. The Grade II listed 68 London Street 1321901
11. The Grade II Listed 70, London Street 1113525
12. The Grade II Listed 74 And 76, London Street..... 1113526
13. The Grade II Listed 80, London Street 1113619
14. The Grade II Listed 86, London Street 1113527
15. The Grade II Listed 88, London Street 1156203
16. The Grade II Listed 90, London Street 1321903
17. The Grade II Listed 92, London Street 1113528
18. The Grade II Listed 104, London Street..... 1321904

- 2.4.2 The majority of the buildings are Georgian in style, having a symmetry and proportion based on classical architecture and a simplicity in ornamentation. The symmetrical flat exterior differs from the Victorian style. Typical of the Victorian style along London Street, is the emphasis of variety provided by pitched roofs, dormers and bays. Numbers 84, 101 and 103 provide good examples. There are also a few remaining 16th and 17th century



buildings including Numbers 49-53 London Street, and Number 88 London Street, which has a jettied first floor to Church Street. These earlier buildings add to the variety and sense of place within the Character Area. However, these buildings are *"no longer in residential use and devoid of their spacious rear gardens"* (*ibid*), which detracts from the Conservation Area.

- 2.4.3 The rear elevations offer an illustrative value that helps in the understanding of the plots within which they sit. The rear elevations also add to the understanding of the way the plots have changed as evidenced by new build, parking and later extensions. These changes also reflect the fact that growth and development occurred in an unplanned way, as relevant to each building, each of which contribute to the Conservation Area.

2.5 **The setting of Buildings of Townscape Merit**

- 2.5.1 There are six Buildings of Townscape Merit on London Street and the row on South Street is also located within the immediate setting of the Application Site. Like the listed buildings, they contribute to the variety of style, detailing and building materials that add interest to the Conservation Area and the sense of place. The setting of the Buildings of Townscape Merit is the same as the setting of the listed buildings. These buildings make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and provide an architectural and historic context for the listed buildings.

Buildings of Townscape Merit

1. Number 83-85 London Street
2. Number 87 London Street
3. Number 82 London Street
4. Number 84 London Street
5. Number 106 London Street
6. Number 78 London Street
7. The row, Numbers 1-13 South Street

2.6 **Number 83-85 London Street**

- 2.6.1 Number 83-85 is a mid-terrace Georgian style building. It is 3-storeys and four bays wide and constructed of red brick with stucco strings at the first and second floors. There is a pedimented doorcase on the ground floor and timber sash windows on the ground, first and second floors, and a felt-covered flat roof hidden behind a parapet.
- 2.6.2 The building has been subject to changes in use with physical impacts that have positive and negative effects. Positive effects include the preservation of this historic building and the sash windows and much of the external original detailing. It is a well-proportioned historic home with a noteworthy quality and colour variegation of the bricks and timber sash windows that adds to the variety of historic architecture on the street. The Application Site lends aesthetic and historic value to the grandeur of the street. However, it no longer contributes to the residential character of the Conservation Area, or to the spacious rear gardens.
- 2.6.3 Additional negative changes include the replacement of the original roof with a flat, felt-covered roof, internal alterations and the signage for Autino House. Internal alterations



include changes to the sub-division of the rooms and removal of period features. Despite unsympathetic alterations, as a Building of Townscape Merit of Georgian style, Number 83-85 contributes to the setting of London Street and the settings of the listed buildings within the Study Area. However, the current rear extension and car park detracts from the setting of East Street.

2.7 **The current planning permission**

- 2.7.1 A change and associated alterations have been permitted as a “change of use from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 18 X 1-bed dwellings. It is a prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015” (181880). The building was last used as offices (B1(a)).

2.8 **Description of the proposed extensions**

- 2.8.1 Further units would be provided through a rear ground floor extension and a roof extension.
- 2.8.2 The roof extension overlooking London Street would be set back behind a raised parapet. The slope of the roof reflects those of the historic buildings on this Street. The materials are a mixture of historic and modern and the large windows are designed to allow in the maximum amount of light. The roof extension extends to the rear and also overlooks East Street. This aspect of the roof extension reflects the modern façade of the first and second floors, as seen on the proposed image. The glass fins, which match those on the first and second floors, add interest to the movement of the sun and the light case across the fins during dark hours.
- 2.8.3 The ground floor extension would only be seen from limited views along East Street, within what is currently an undercroft. The position and size of the windows on the ground floor match that of the roof extension. The windows are hidden due to the fall in ground from east to west.



3 Assessment of the setting of the Study Area

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 This section of the report consists of an assessment of effects on the setting of the adjacent listed buildings, the Conservation Area and the building itself. The section begins by outlining the Significance of the setting (see Methodology 6.2), assesses the contribution made by the attributes of that setting and the level of sensitivity to further change (see Methodology 6.4). An assessment of the Proposed Development in relation to that context is based on Steps 3-4 of Historic England guidance (2017). This is followed by an assessment of the impacts and effects (see Methodology 6.6 and 6.7), to a level of detail proportionate to the Significance of the setting and the proposed changes.

3.2 The Significance and sensitivity of the setting of the Study Area

- 3.2.1 Broadly the Significance of the setting would be the same as the Significance of the nearby Grade II listed buildings and the Conservation Area, holding **Medium Importance** (see Table 1). However, the contribution made by different attributes of setting varies. These attributes of setting hold aesthetic and historical values (see Glossary 8). The key attributes of the setting are: 1) the 'views'; 2) 'surrounding suburban character'; 3) the 'proportional relationship' between the historic buildings and the street; 4) building materials; 5) the historic expansion of settlement from the Medieval town centre; and 6) buried Heritage Assets. Aesthetic values are associated with the first four attributes and historical values are associated with the last two (see Glossary 8).

Views

- 3.2.2 To address the first attribute, the visual aspects of setting are evidenced through photography (see Appendix 10, Figure 1, and Appendix 11). Views of and within the Conservation Area provide an important part of a person's experience. The mix of historic and modern buildings is appreciable on London Street. The Modern buildings continue the varied roofscape though the balconies in the background of Viewpoint 2 does break the line of build from this perspective. Viewpoint 2 holds **Low-Medium Sensitivity** and demonstrates the capacity to incorporate further change without detracting from the setting (see Table 2). A greater number of historic façades are visible from Viewpoint 3, with more Victorian styles in the foreground and Georgian styles in the background. Number 83-85 contributes to the aesthetic value in the background of Viewpoint 3. Having a greater number of historic properties in good condition, this view holds **High Sensitivity** to further change (see Table 2).
- 3.2.3 Though Viewpoint 4 is a Key View, the modern buildings are more evident in the scene than the historic buildings. Though some of the materials and detailing reference the historic structures, the coarser grain and massing of the modern buildings detracts from the setting. For these reasons, Viewpoint 4 holds **Low-Medium Sensitivity** to further change (see Table 2). In contrast Viewpoint 7, also a Key View, evidences the variety of historic architecture in the foreground and modern build and Christ Church spire in the background. Number 83-85 contributes to the aesthetic value of the variety of architecture and the proportions of the height of the buildings and width of London Street. As such,



Viewpoint 7 holds **High Sensitivity** to further change (see Table 2).

- 3.2.4 Viewpoints 5 and 6, taken from East Street, evidence the changes to the architectural and, as a result, the historic Significance of this Conservation Area boundary. The extensions detract from East Street and the majority of the extensions do not reflect the historic or architectural nature of the frontages. Hardstanding and cul de sacs further detract from the rear of the plots and the resulting gap in the streetscape decreases the strength and readability of this part of the eastern edge of the Conservation Area. These views hold **Low Sensitivity** to further change (see Table 2).
- 3.2.5 In contrast, the modern architecture in Viewpoint 8 contributes to the aesthetic of the setting. The prominence of the Georgian façades is appreciable in this view and aids in the understanding of the historic nature of London Street. The view illustrates that with good design and the retention of historic buildings, the setting has the capacity to accommodate change that results in a positive outcome. This Viewpoint holds **High Sensitivity** to further change (see Table 2).

'Surrounding urban character'

- 3.2.6 The second attribute of setting is the association between the Heritage Assets and the street-scene, as part of the 'surrounding urban character'. Rapid growth led to development with a dense urban grain and with a variety of historic buildings. The Post-medieval grain, consists of long narrow plots. The plots of the wealthy were wider than those occupied by the less wealthy. Wealth and success was also demonstrated by the scale and grandeur of domestic frontages, occupying the full width of the plot. However, this character is marred by the noise and fumes from a constant stream of traffic. In contrast, East Street is not as busy or as wide as London Street, being of secondary importance, and the historic grain of the portion of East Street within the Study Area has been lost. Nevertheless, the historic hierarchy between London and East Streets has been retained, as has much of the 'definition, scale and grain of London Street. The urban grain of London Street holds **Medium-High Sensitivity** because the built environment has been subject to incremental changes, becoming more commercialised over time. Number 83-85 contributes to the strong vertical rhythm provided by the historic architecture of London Street. For these reasons, the 'surrounding urban character' of the Study Area holds **Medium Sensitivity** to further change (see Table 2).

'P'

- 3.2.7 The third attribute of setting is the association between the Heritage Assets and the street-scene, as part of the 'proportional relationships' between the historic buildings and London Street. The verticality of the 3- and 4-storey buildings lends added visual interest to this wide curving road. There is a predominance of parapets, though there are pitched slate roofs and glimpses of pitched roofs behind some of the parapets. There are also occasional mansard roofs with dormer windows. The differing heights of the roofs also adds interest to the sense of proportion. As one of the buildings on either side of the wide street, Number 83-85 contributes to the aesthetic value of that balance between the height of the historic architecture and the width of London Street. In addition, Number 83-85 is another example of the Georgian style and contributes to the variety of the building



styles. However, the loss of the original roof detracts from the street. The 'proportional relationships' between the London Street and the buildings hold **Medium Sensitivity** to further change (see Table 2).

'Building material

- 3.2.8 The fourth attribute of setting is the association between the Heritage Assets and the street-scene, as part of the 'building materials'. Number 83-85 contributes to the aesthetic value of the historic architectural detail along the street, adding to the prevalence of white-painted vertical sliding sash windows, and predominance of brick in a Georgian style. However, aspects of Number 83-85 detract from the Conservation Area due to its change of use and resulting changes to the rear plot, which was once a garden. It is currently a vacant commercial space. The 'building materials' hold **Medium-High Sensitivity** to further change (see Table 2).

'Historic expansion

- 3.2.9 The fifth attribute of setting is the association between the Heritage Assets and the street-scene, which expresses the 'historic expansion' of the Medieval town along a primary route. Part of this expression is the tight knit of the built grain that reflects the historic growth of the area with domestic scale frontages. The 19th century grain, consists of long narrow plots, with wealth and success demonstrated by the scale and grandeur of domestic and commercial frontages. The 20th century grain is coarser, caused by the amalgamation of historic plots. The built grain and 'historic expansion' holds **Medium-High Sensitivity** because the built environment has been subject to incremental changes, some of which are and some of which are not in keeping with the Conservation Area. Number 83-85 contributes to the historical value of the Conservation Area, evidencing part of that growth and resulting fine grain. The extension of Number 83-85 would not affect this important attribute.

Buried Heritage Assets

- 3.2.10 Archaeological investigations have been undertaken at 68, 69 and 74-76 London Street and just beyond the Study Area, at 24-26 East Street. The evidence dates from the 11th to the 14th centuries. Medieval evidence adds to the historical value of the Conservation Area. The majority of the evidence is non-structural, mostly disposal of rubbish in pits and other backyard activities and, more rarely, evidence of the casting of domestic wares and butchery and tanning in the immediate area. Of particular importance, was evidence of tenement boundary layout at 24-26 East Street and ditches that have been interpreted as marking the edge of the Medieval town. The Application Site lies just beyond that limit and archaeological investigations indicate that Medieval activity also extends beyond those limits. Further investigations are needed to establish whether such activities were related to work beyond the limits of the Medieval town, used occasionally but continually, or evidence that represents occupation beyond the known limits of the Medieval town.
- 3.2.11 Post-medieval activities have also been recorded within the Study Area, again relating to backland activity and associated with broad dates spanning from the Medieval through to the Post-medieval. In addition, there is evidence of Post-medieval industrial activity,



depicted on Ordnance Survey mapping. This includes the printing works recorded at Number 1-4 London Court and Reading Tin Works just beyond the Study Area. There is also evidence of gravel quarrying on many sites, prior to Post-medieval re-development. To sum up the value of the Post-medieval evidence, the most important evidence within the Study Area is that of the standing structures.

3.3 Assessing the impacts of the proposed extensions

Visibility

- 3.3.1 Views are limited due to the high-density of the setting. Long views are oblique in angle as seen in the Key Viewpoints 4 and 7. The resulting additional change would have **No Impact** (see Table 3). In addition, there would be **No Impact** on Viewpoint 2 because Number 83-85 is not visible in that view.
- 3.3.2 The roof extension would be barely perceptible and seen only in glimpsed views (see Viewpoints 3 and 8). Number 83-85 is the first building without a visible pitched roof and the roof has the capacity to integrate into Viewpoint 3 without detracting from the setting. The roof would have a mirror image effect in Viewpoint 8, with the roof extension being the first in a series of visible roof-forms along this terrace of buildings. Viewpoints 3 and 8 illustrate the capacity of the setting to accommodate change to the architecture, in cases where that is undertaken in a sympathetic way. However, some changes do detract from the Significance of the setting. The sensitivity has been reduced by incremental alterations to uses and fabric of the buildings, the street furniture and other aspects of the Conservation Area, some of which are modern reflections of the historic setting and other changes which are not. Retaining the current historic fabric is key to preserving the Conservation Area and the proposed extensions would not affect that fabric. Enhancing through repair, replacements and additions are also important. This roof extension is a modern replacement for a flat roof. The resulting additional change would have a **Very Small Impact** (see Table 3), with adverse and beneficial outcomes.
- 3.3.3 The rear of Number 83-85 would benefit from re-cladding and refurbishment (see Viewpoints 5 and 6). The resulting additional change would have a **Small Beneficial Impact** (see Table 3).

Siting and location of the proposed extensions

- 3.3.4 The location of the roof extension would have no impact on the density and scale and grandeur of the historic fabric but it would affect the variation in the roofscapes. That variation is an important part of the urban character of London Street, aiding the capacity for modern alterations. The historic roof-form has been replaced by a flat roof, whilst the proposed extension would reinstate this architectural form. Siting the extension back from the parapet would diminish any impact. The integrity of the design would illustrate that this is a modern replacement for a lost historic roof-form. The resulting change to the current roof-form would have a **Very Small Beneficial Impact** (see Table 3).
- 3.3.5 The location of the rear extension and roof extension would have no impact on the secondary role of East Street within the hierarchy of the streets or the density of the grain. The infill of the current undercoft would be positive as there is no historic precedent for



this type of architectural feature within the Conservation Area. The siting of the extension would not be intrusive and the resulting additional change would have a **Very Small Beneficial Impact** (see Table 3).

Form and appearance of the proposed extensions

- 3.3.6 Preserving the proportion between the height of the buildings and London Street is important to the integrity of the character of the setting and an important planning consideration. The roofscapes have the capacity to accommodate a roof extension when the bulk and massing responds to the past and present contexts. The simple and 'solid' aesthetic shape of the extension would articulate the proportions of the Georgian style in a modern form, particularly the open reveals, and differentiates the extension from the other roof-forms, thus illustrating the architectural integrity of this design, which allows the readability of the integration of historic and modern. The variation in roof-form incorporates elements from the surrounding character, particularly the variety and mix of building styles. The setting has the capacity to absorb the change to the roofscape and roof extension, which is more in keeping with the current flat roof and so this change would have a **Very Small Beneficial Impact** (see Table 3).
- 3.3.7 The use of brick and natural slate on the roof would provide positive historic references, in keeping with the setting. The use of aluminium would reflect the authenticity of the design whilst the dark grey colour would complement the slate and other roof materials in the Study Area. The metal railings would be painted a dark colour and would be visible in oblique and glimpsed views from London Street. The setting has a capacity to accommodate positive change that reflects the variety of architecture without harm to the Heritage Asset's Significance. There is a balance between positive and negative in this effect, which relates to the retention of historic fabric, the use of fabric that reflects the historic environment and complementary modern fabric. The overall effect would have a **Very Small Beneficial Impact** (see Table 3).
- 3.3.8 The rear extension would have no impact on the proportions along London Street. However, the materials of the rear extension would alter the street scene. The proportion of the windows are modern but the placement and symmetry reference the Georgian style. The use of brick on the flanking walls and parapet references the historic environment. The ground floor extension replaces an uncharacteristic undercroft with a grey clad and glass façade, the effect of which is diminished by being below the pavement level. This is due to a drop in floor level likely to compensate for the slope from East Street down to London Street. The twin dormers of the roof extension balances with the windows on the first and second floors and the frosted coloured glass fins on all three floors marries the elements. The changes to the rear extension are readable as modern alterations to a historic property and the resulting additional change would have a **Very Small Beneficial Impact** (see Table 3).

Wider impacts, permanence and consequential impacts

- 3.3.9 Construction work would cause noise and vibration, which would be temporary and would be controlled by conditions attached to any planning permission granted. Construction work would also impact on the evidential value of potential buried Heritage Assets within



the Application Site.

- 3.3.10 No archaeological investigations were undertaken within the Application Site when the current extensions were constructed. From investigations in the immediate area, archaeological deposits have been recorded at depths between 0.5 and 2m, where previous development has not impacted those earlier features. It is possible that evidence relating to backland activity within the Application Site of a domestic or industrial nature dating between the Medieval and Post-medieval periods may exist where previous development has not impacted those earlier features. Therefore, an archaeology condition may be attached to any planning permission granted. However, the potential is limited both in terms of the works needed for the proposed extensions and due to the previous impacts.

3.4 Measuring residual effects of the proposed extensions

No or negligible effects

- 3.4.1 Based on the above assessment, there would be **No Effects** and **Negligible Effects** on Viewpoints 2, 4 and 7 (see Table 4). The proposed changes would have no effect on the character that resulted from the historic expansion of the streets.

Minor Effects

- 3.4.2 There would be a Minor Effect on Viewpoints 3 and 8, with adverse and beneficial outcomes. The adverse effect relates to incremental changes, which can erode character. However, in this case, the replacement of the flat roof with an appropriate modern design would be beneficial. Re-cladding and refurbishment would have a **Minor Beneficial Effect on** Viewpoints 5 and 6 (see Table 4).
- 3.4.3 The proposed changes to the urban character relate to the scale and grandeur of the buildings on London Street, in contrast to East Street. The effect of the roof extension facing onto London Street is diminished due to being set-back from the edge and more hidden as a result. Yet it can be glimpsed at distances from oblique angles, which adds to the variation in roof form, with a resulting **Minor Beneficial Effect** (see Table 4). The roof extension facing onto East Street is more prominent and would balance with the heights of the roofs on those rear extensions, resulting in a **Minor Beneficial Effect** (see Table 4).
- 3.4.4 The retention of historic fabric, the use of fabric that reflects the historic environment and complementary modern fabric of the roof extension overlooking London Street would have a **Minor Effect** (see Table 4), which would replace a felt roof and on balance would be beneficial. The design of the re-cladding to the rear of Number 83-85 references the Georgian style and the architectural elements create a unity that together reference the simplicity and solidity of the Georgian style. The changes improve the architectural quality of the current extension and would have a **Minor Beneficial Effect** (see Table 4).
- 3.4.5 The architectural integrity of this design allows for the integration of historic and modern, which aids the readability of changes in a setting that has the capacity to absorb those changes without detracting from its Significance. Specifically, the roof extension does not detract from the 'proportional relationships' between the historic buildings and London Street. This would have a **Minor Beneficial Effect** (see Table 4).



4 Assessment of the setting of historic buildings

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 This section of the report consists of an assessment of effects on the setting of the adjacent listed buildings, the Conservation Area and the building itself. The section begins by outlining the Significance of the setting (see Methodology 6.2), assesses the contribution made by the attributes of that setting and the level of sensitivity to further change (see Methodology 6.4). An assessment of the Proposed Development in relation to that context is based on Steps 3-4 of Historic England guidance (2017). This is followed by an assessment of the impacts and effects (see Methodology 6.6 and 6.7), to a level of detail proportionate to the Significance of the setting and the proposed changes.

4.2 The Significance and sensitivity of the setting of historic buildings

- 4.2.1 Broadly the Significance of the setting would be the same as the Significance of the nearby Grade II listed buildings and the Conservation Area, holding **Medium Importance** (see Table 1). However, the contribution made by different attributes of setting varies. These attributes of setting hold aesthetic and historical values (see Glossary 8). The key attributes of the setting are: 1) the 'views'; 2) the sense of enclosure; 3) the 'mix of styles and periods'; 4) the harmony of materials; and 5) the 'history and degree of change over time. Aesthetic values are associated with the first four attributes and historical values are associated with the last (see Glossary 8).

Views

- 4.2.2 To address the first attribute, the visual aspects of setting are evidenced through photography (see Appendix 10, Figure 1 and Appendix 11). Views from the listed buildings provide an important part of a person's experience. Viewpoint 1a evidences the contribution that Number 83-85 makes to the aesthetic value of the adjacent and opposite buildings, which expresses the symmetry and proportion of the Georgian style and its simplicity of ornamentation. The current setting holds **Medium Sensitivity** to further change (see Table 2). In contrast, Viewpoint 1b illustrates the integrity delivered by a design that obviates the fact that it is a modern change. The massing of the adjacent extensions is similar though the simplicity and proportion of the rear of Number 83-85 is more in keeping with the Georgian aesthetic. The view would be improved by a change in materials. The current setting holds **Low Sensitivity** to further change (see Table 2).
- 4.2.3 Viewpoints 9 and 10 focus in on the Significance of the aesthetic and historic values of the built environment, both listed buildings and Buildings of Townscape Merit. Number 83-85 contributes to the aesthetic and historic value of both views. Both views have a High Sensitivity to further change (see Table 2). In particular, Numbers 81 and 83-85 prepare the viewer for the experience of a Georgian aesthetic upon entering London Street from the alley, Church Street. The current setting of Viewpoint 9 holds **High Sensitivity** and the setting of Viewpoint 10 holds **Medium-High Sensitivity** to further change (see Table 2).

'Mix of styles and periods'

- 4.2.4 There is a juxtaposition in the 'mix of styles and periods'. Number 83-85 contributes to the



Georgian proportions of its neighbours, with additional emphasis of strong horizontal lines. The predominance and simplicity of the Georgian style juxtaposes with the 16th and 17th century styles and smaller Victorian and larger modern infill. This mix adds interest to the street-scene by creating a change in architectural emphasis and evidences the residential development. For these reasons, the settings of the buildings hold **Medium Sensitivity** to further change. In addition, the differences in the wealth and status led to a juxtaposition of different styles, quality and scale and this contextual understanding of the listed buildings cannot be understood without the retention of the unlisted buildings. The setting can absorb changes that reflect this differentiation. However, the changes to both listed and unlisted buildings needs to be sympathetic to this contextual relationship in order to contribute to the setting. The current setting holds **Medium-High Sensitivity** to further change (see Table 2).

4.2.5 Number 83-85 contributes to the materials of the other town houses, particularly the Georgian style. The materials harmonise with the immediate context, though they are differentiated by the greater attention to the detailing between buildings of different periods. There is a fortuitous architectural punctuation caused by the repeated rhythm of different architectural details, such as the spacing of the bays that are punctuated by white timber sash windows, embellished doorways and iron balconies. Some modern buildings at the junction with London Road and Crown Street have altered this balance. This demonstrates that the setting has the capacity to absorb some incremental changes to the historic buildings without detracting further from the setting of the listed buildings, which hold **Medium-High Sensitivity**, if that further change is delivered in a sympathetic way (see Table 2).

4.2.6 Number 83-85 also contributes to the sense of enclosure associated with the position of the historic buildings on the edge of London Street. Their position contributes to the sense of enclosure due to being built three storeys high and up against the edge of the footpath. The sense of enclosure aids our understanding of how and why there is a high-density of buildings and how and why the listed buildings were developed within their plots. The sense of enclosure and high-density has a **Very High Sensitivity** to further change because the setting has been influenced by limited degrees of incremental changes that are a 20th century reflection of aspects of the growth and change of the Conservation Area over time. The level of sensitivity has been reduced by the gaps that have appeared on East Street. Such changes diminish our understanding of the historic intensity of land use which has a **Medium Sensitivity** to further change (see Table 2).

'History and degree of change over time'

4.2.7 The fifth attribute of setting is 'history and degree of change over time'. The urban environment holds a time-depth relating to phases of development, spanning from the Medieval through to the Post-medieval and modern periods. For example, the curve of London Street leading to the town centre is shown on Medieval maps, some buildings are



16th and 17th century in date and others are 18th and 19th century in date. London Street became a fashionable location in the 18th and 19th centuries. Due to the frequency of change in this area there is a mix of historic buildings, changes of use and modern developments. Some of these changes to the surrounding suburban character make a positive contribution to the aesthetic and historic values of the Conservation Area. However, other changes have been less positive, such as changes of use and resulting conversions. Number 83-85 contributes to the setting of the listed buildings by evidencing the growth that resulted in the construction of good quality homes. However, it also detracts from the other historic buildings through changes in use and resulting alterations. This is part of the modern growth, which is also linked with noise and pollution that detracts from the Conservation Area. As long as the buildings remain readable then these changes need not be detrimental. For these reasons, 'history and degree of change over time' within the settings of the buildings hold **Medium Sensitivity** to further change (see Table 2).

4.3 Assessing the impacts of the proposed extensions

Visibility

- 4.3.1 The rear of Number 83-85 would benefit from re-cladding and refurbishment (see Viewpoints 1b). The proposed re-cladding emphasises the simplicity and proportion of the Georgian aesthetic and would have a **Small Beneficial Impact** on East Street (see Table 3).
- 4.3.2 Viewpoints 1a, 9 and 10 focus in on the immediate setting of Number 83-85. The roof top extension, as seen from Viewpoint 1a, would express the symmetry and proportion of the Georgian style and its simplicity of ornamentation. It is an appropriate design that is a modern reflection of the roof of Number 62 thereby harmonising with the historic environment. As it would be barely visible, it would not be adverse or beneficial.
- 4.3.3 Viewpoint 9 highlights the advantage of returning to roof-forms along this run of terraces, which are conspicuous by their absence. The proposed roof extension would just be visible at an oblique angle and as assessed for Viewpoint 1a would harmonise with the historic buildings and contribute to the history of change over time. As the top of the roof and dormers would be fleetingly visible, it would have a **Very Small Beneficial Impact** on London Street (see Table 3).
- 4.3.4 As seen from Viewpoint 10, the buildings at the eastern end of Church Street would frame the new roof extension as viewers enter London Street. The proportion of the roof extension would be seen at a slightly oblique angle so that it would be evident that it reflects the Georgian style of the host building. It would be barely visible, and therefore, would not have an adverse or beneficial impact.

Siting and location of the proposed extensions

- 4.3.5 The Study Area is part of Reading's historic settlement core. The sense of enclosure and high-density of the setting relates closely to the position of the listed buildings and unlisted buildings on the footpath edge and the use of the full width of each plot. The siting and location of the roof extension would have a limited impact, increasing the height of



Number 83-85 very slightly. This would increase the sense of enclosure slightly in terms of the frontages of the historic buildings but not impact in terms of shadows and would not impact on the high-density of the other buildings. As a result, the change in height would have no impact (see Table 4). The siting and location of the extensions to the rear of Number 83-85 would close the gap of the undercroft, which would improve the sense of enclosure and high-density of the rear extension. The roof extension would also balance with the height of the roofs of the adjacent extensions. These proposed changes would result in a **Small Beneficial Impact** on East Street (see Table 3).

- 4.3.6 Number 83-85 was offices and permission has been granted for a change of use to 18 residential units. The extensions would add to the number of units and would add to the mix of styles and periods. Due to the juxtaposition in the 'mix of styles and periods', which adds interest to the street-scene, the setting of the listed buildings has the capacity to absorb continued incremental changes in use, where the architectural changes are sympathetic to the context. The setting can also absorb changes that reflect the differentiation in wealth and status and the proposed extensions would have a **Small Impact** on both (see Table 3), which would be partially beneficial and partially neutral.

Form and appearance of the proposed extensions

- 4.3.7 The listed buildings display a wide variety of architectural forms. The bulk and massing of the roof extension would distinguish the new from the historic whilst the reinstatement of a roof-form reflects the roofline that would originally have formed part of Number 83-85. This addition affects the readability of historic change over time and it's the integrity of the modern design that aids the understanding of those historic changes. The form and appearance of the roofs of the historic buildings on the opposite side of London Street are both varied and have been altered. These proposed changes would result in a **Small Impact** on both (see Table 3), which would be partially beneficial, in replacing a flat roof, and partially neutral in its integrity.
- 4.3.8 The use of historic materials, such as slate and brick, mixed with modern materials, including dark grey aluminium, reflects the historic environment whilst being true to the integrity of the character by clearly expressing the extension as modern. The designation of a Conservation Area does not need to stultify new design and development where an opportunity arises. As seen at Number 69 and the modern alterations to the buildings on the southern end of London Street, the setting has the capacity to absorb changes in materials, if high quality materials are delivered with a simplicity and variety that reflect the character of the Conservation Area. There is a balance between positive and negative in this effect, through the use of fabric that reflects the historic environment and complementary modern fabric. The overall effect would have aspects that are neutral and have **Very Small Beneficial Impacts** (see Table 3).
- 4.3.9 The rhythm of the architectural punctuation is an important attribute to the setting of London Street. The four openings reflect the number and position of the windows on the other floors and this was carefully considered. It is essential to create a balance between the number of dormers similar to historic dormers but also to allow sufficient light into the living space. It is noted that the size and number of dormers on historic buildings



varies considerably, such as those at Numbers 74-76, 44-50 and 62-66. Though larger than historic dormers, the limited visibility of the dormers at roof level would result in **No Impact** (see Table 3).

Wider impacts, permanence and consequential impacts

- 4.3.10 There would be a **Very Small Impact** on the skyline and light spill that form part of that story of the time-depth relating to phases of development evidencing growth and resulting alterations.

4.4 Measuring residual impacts of the proposed extensions

No or negligible effects

- 4.4.1 Based on the above assessment, there would be **No Effects** and **Negligible Effects** on Viewpoints 1a and 10 (see Table 4).
- 4.4.2 The change in height created by the roof extension would not have a perceptible effect on the sense of enclosure and the high-density of buildings on London Street.

Minor Effects

- 4.4.3 The re-cladding and refurbishment would have a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on Viewpoint 1b (see Table 4). There would be **Minor Beneficial Effects** on glimpsed views of the roof from Viewpoint 9.
- 4.4.4 The siting and location of the extensions to the rear of Number 83-85 would improve the sense of enclosure and the high-density of buildings on East Street, leading to a **Minor Beneficial Effect** (see Table 4.)
- 4.4.5 The proposed extensions would have a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on the juxtaposition in the 'mix of styles and periods', which adds interest to the street-scene. The setting can also absorb changes that reflect the differentiation in wealth and status, which would remain unaffected. Therefore, this change would have a **Negligible-Minor Adverse Effect** (see Table 4).
- 4.4.6 In replacing a flat roof, the proposed extension would affect the readability of the historic change over time on the character of London Street, which would have a **Negligible-Minor Beneficial Effect** (see Table 4).
- 4.4.7 The proposed materials use a mix of those common within the Historic Environment and introduce modern materials that would have some neutral and some beneficial effects. Overall the materials would have a **Neutral** to **Minor Beneficial Effect** (see Table 4).



5 Assessment of the policy context

5.1 Statement of justification

- 5.1.1 Permission has been granted for a change of use from offices to residential. The proposed extensions would add to the number of units available and are designed to complement the historic environment setting.

5.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.2.1 The assessment has found that the Proposed Development would cause less than substantial harm and balances favourably towards beneficial effects that would be to the public benefit. The Proposed Development is therefore in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 196. Accordingly, the proposal would comply with the statutory tests at Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the 1990 Act).

5.3 Public benefits

- 5.3.1 The property would continue to contribute to the understanding of growth and change within the immediate area. The benefit to the setting of London Street is the replacement of the roof of the building. Moreover, benefits are also delivered to the setting of East Street with an appropriate replacement of an undercroft, uncharacteristic of historic development of the Character Area. Furthermore, the maintenance of this Building of Townscape Merit, currently vacant, also benefits the Conservation Area, nearby listed buildings and other buildings of townscape merit.

5.4 Local policies

- 5.4.1 The heritage-related policy in the current Local Plan is Policy CS33. In reference to listed buildings, conservation areas and other locally or nationally designated Heritage Assets, Policy CS33 states that there should be no detrimental impact to their setting. The policy does not specifically relate to the Council's approach to the consideration of impacts upon non-designated Heritage Assets such as Buildings of Townscape Merit. In relation to designated Heritage Assets, an approach that requires permission to be granted in cases where no adverse impact would be caused is in conflict with the principle of making a balanced judgement as to the weight of harm and public benefits as stipulated within Paragraphs 196 and 197 of the NPPF. Paragraph 213 states that weight should be given to policies adopted prior to the 2018 NPPF according to the degree of consistency with the Framework. Given the inconsistency of Policy CS33 with Paragraphs 196 and 197, Policy CS33 is considered out of date and should be afforded limited weight. The proposed extensions accord with NPPF Paragraphs 196 and 197.
- 5.4.2 The relevant policies associated with the New Local Plan are Policies EN1, EN 2, EN3 and EN6. In line with Policy EN1, harm was avoided by locating the roof extension back from the edge and uses the parapet to screen views and add to the safety of the proposed extension. The mix of materials aids in the readability of the changes brought about by the proposed extensions. The new roof adds to the variety of the roofscape without affecting the proportion of the building. The proposed extensions contribute to the local



character and distinctiveness of the setting, as set out in Policy EN3, and replacing the flat roof with a roof structure more in keeping with the setting is a positive improvement. In accordance with Policy EN4, the proposed extensions conserve the Significance of the setting.

- 5.4.3 Policy EN6 states that the character of the historic environment should inform and shape new development. The current proposed extensions reference historic materials and designs whilst retaining authenticity of the extensions by mixing the historic materials with modern materials. The proposed extensions respond positively to Policy EN6 by adopting the design and location of the roof extension so that it is sensitive to the historic context, it is not prominent or in competition with listed buildings and it reflects borough-wide distinctiveness. Replacing the flat roof and re-cladding the rear extension provides a positive contribution in the context of the permitted change of use.



6 Methodology and Method of Assessment

6.1 General approach

- 6.1.1 The historic environment consists of buildings, monuments, settlements, buried sites or scapes on land or underwater. This appendix explains the approach taken to determine the Significance of Heritage Assets, incorporating the contribution of their settings, the Potential for buried Heritage Assets to be present (together with their Significance, where known) and the predicted residual effects of the Proposed Development, where possible. Each of the aspects considered is dealt with individually in the sections below.
- 6.1.2 The detail of the assessment presented in the report is proportionate to identify issues likely to be relevant in enabling *“an informed and reasonable decision to be made”* when determining the planning application for the Proposed Development.
- 6.1.3 The assessed likely residual effect is used as the basis for assessing the ‘harm’ caused by the Proposed Development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework ‘NPPF’, (DCLG 2019), which stipulates that all proposals fall into one of two scenarios: ‘substantial harm’ and ‘less than substantial harm’.
- 6.1.4 The assessment was undertaken in accordance with the principles of the NPPF, within the context of the Development Plan and:
- uses the definitions and procedures set out in Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (Historic England 2008) and in Seeing the History in the View (Historic England 2011); and
 - follows the assessment approach set out in Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3-The setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England 2017).
- 6.1.5 To begin the explanation of methodology and method of assessment, clarity of the use of the term Significance is provided.
- 6.1.6 The assessment is also based on information extracted from searches and studies relating to:
- The National Heritage List for England map;
 - records held at the local records office; and
 - a visit to the Application Site and Study Area.

6.2 Significance of Heritage Assets

- 6.2.1 From a heritage perspective, Significance is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as the Heritage Assets interest which *“may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic”*. Included in the definition of Significance, in Annex 2 of the NPPF, is a statement about setting- *“Significance derives not only from a Heritage Asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting”*.
- 6.2.2 The term Significance in this sense should not be confused with assessment of the *Significance of an effect* (as is required in Environmental Impact Assessments, for example), which is derived from a combined consideration of the nature of effect, confidence of the likelihood of the effect occurring, the sensitivity of the Heritage Asset and the magnitude of the impact.



- 6.2.3 This definition ties in with the Conservation Principles guidance document published by Historic England (2008), which provides more information on how the above may be interpreted, as evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal. The Significance of the Heritage Asset leads to a judgement of the Heritage Assets importance, in policy terms. The degree of protection afforded to a Heritage Asset is based on its Significance and expressed as having a specific degree of importance.
- 6.2.4 Where there would be a likely reduction of Significance caused by the Proposed Development, the importance of the Heritage Assets is assessed (see Table 1).

Table 1: Criteria for measuring the importance attributed to designated Heritage Assets

Importance	Indicative criteria
Very High	Heritage Assets of acknowledged international Significance Heritage Assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged international research objectives
High	Scheduled Monuments Grade I and Grade II* (Scotland: Category A) listed buildings Grade I Registered Parks and Gardens, Conservation Areas containing very important buildings Other listed buildings that can be shown to have exceptional qualities in their fabric or historical associations not adequately reflected in the listing grade
Medium	Grade II (Scotland: Category B) listed buildings Grade II Registered Parks and Gardens Conservation Areas containing buildings that contribute significantly to its historic character
Low	Setting that has been compromised 'Locally Listed' buildings (Scotland Category C(S) listed buildings) Historic (unlisted) buildings of modest quality in their fabric or historical association
Very Low	Buildings of no architectural or historical note; buildings of an intrusive character
Unknown	Buildings with some hidden (i.e. inaccessible) Potential for historic Significance

- 6.2.5 As discussed above, the Significance of the Heritage Assets is its archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest and its setting. Four values contribute to that interest, aesthetic, historical, communal and evidential.

6.3 Determining the baseline for settings of Heritage Assets

- 6.3.1 As defined in the Historic England Guidance Note (2017), the setting of a Heritage Asset is the surrounding landscape from where that asset may be experienced. attributes of a setting may have a positive or negative effect on the Significance of a Heritage Asset. The extent of the setting is not fixed. Setting is separate from the curtilage, character and



context of a Heritage Asset although these may be found to be interrelated. The guidance provides five steps in assessing settings as follows:

- *“Step 1: identify which Heritage Assets and their settings are affected;*
- *Step 2: assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the Significance of the Heritage Asset(s);*
- *Step 3: assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that Significance;*
- *Step 4: explore the way to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and*
- *Step 5: make and document the decision and monitor outcomes. The first of these steps constitutes the baseline section, which is to identify the Heritage Assets potentially affected by the Proposed Development.”*

6.3.2 Visits to each those Heritage Asset likely to be affected by the Proposed Development allowed the author to compile a photographic record that forms part of the evidence base. Photographic views were taken towards and from the Heritage Assets looking towards the Application Site.

6.3.3 Viewpoints are chosen from within the Application Site and towards the Application Site at a point of ‘accurate visual representation’ (AVR) at or near Heritage Assets. Additional Viewpoints may be chosen from Viewpoints that take in the Application Site in the context of the settings of a number of Heritage Assets. Kinetic views may also need to be represented using a series of AVRs. These locations are mapped and Viewpoint context described. No access to private properties has been obtained during the field study. Viewpoints may be categorised as follows:

- Representative Viewpoints – selected to represent the experience of different types of visual Heritage Assets, where larger numbers of Viewpoints cannot all be included individually and where the level of effects are unlikely to differ;
- Specific Viewpoints – selected because they are key and sometimes promoted Viewpoints within the landscape; and
- Illustrative Viewpoints – Selected specifically to demonstrate a level of effect or specific aspect (e.g. screening).
- Key Views are those views that illustrate locations where there would be unobstructed visibility of the Heritage Asset and the Proposed Development.

6.3.4 The photographs have been taken using a Nikon camera using a 50 mm (35 mm format equivalent) lens. The photographs used to illustrate the assessment have been ‘stitched’ together using digital imaging software to provide a ‘panorama image’, thus providing a visual context to the focus of the centre photograph. The photographs have been corrected for lens distortion and to correct changes of scale across the photograph and a cylindrical projection used to ensure consistency of scale across the panorama, vertically and horizontally when viewed on printed paper.

6.3.5 The work undertaken towards the production of the assessment has included desk study, fieldwork (including a site visit) and discussions with the design and assessment team (to help inform the design and assessment process).



- 6.3.6 The assessment presents mitigation options, including the enhancement of the Significance of Heritage Assets, mitigating and minimising adverse effects on the historic environment. Defining Significance of the Heritage Assets rely on professional judgement and on the information available at time of writing, thus the assessment may require revision if more information becomes available.

6.4 **Settings of Heritage Assets**

- 6.4.1 As defined in the Historic England Guidance Note (2017), the setting of a Heritage Asset is the surrounding landscape from where that Heritage Asset may be experienced. Designated and non-designated Heritage Assets are defined within Annex 2 of the NPPF. There may be various individual contributing attributes of a setting and these may have a positive or negative effect on the Significance of a Heritage Asset. The extent of the setting is not fixed and is separate from the curtilage, character and context of a Heritage Asset, although these may be found to be interrelated.
- 6.4.2 Visits to the Application Site and each of the Heritage Assets predicted to be indirectly affected by the Proposed Development, through changes to its setting, allowed the compilation of representative photographs to be taken within and towards the Application Site, where the view is interrelated to one or more Heritage Assets. No access to private properties was able to be obtained during the fieldwork.
- 6.4.3 The contribution of the current setting to the Significance of Heritage Assets was assessed (Step 2 in the Historic England Guidance Note). Identifying the contribution of setting depends on the Heritage Asset's physical surroundings and the visitor's experience of the Heritage Assets. Various individual attributes contributing to setting, likely to be affected by the Proposed Development, are assessed in terms of their individual contribution to the Significance of the Heritage Assets and an overall assessment of the contribution of the setting to the Significance of the Heritage Asset made.



6.5 Sensitivity

- 1.1.1 *"Heritage Assets and their settings may contribute" to the character of an area. "The historic character of a place is the group of qualities derived from its past uses that make it distinctive.... including its original configuration and subsequent losses and changes."* In the latest Guidance Note 3 publication, sensitivity of setting is explained as 'the capacity of the setting to accommodate change without harm to the Heritage Asset's Significance'.
- 6.5.1 *"Settings of Heritage Assets which closely resemble the setting at the time the asset was constructed or formed are likely to contribute particularly strongly to Significance but settings which have changed may also themselves enhance Significance, for instance where townscape character has been shaped by cycles of change over the long term. Settings may also have suffered negative impact from inappropriate past developments and may be enhanced by the removal of the inappropriate structure(s)".* A measure of the sensitivity of the Heritage Assets is based on the indicative criteria in Table 2.
- 6.5.2 A measure of the sensitivity of the Heritage Assets is based on the indicative criteria in Table 2.

Table 2: Criteria for measuring the sensitivity of a Heritage Asset to further change

Level	Indicative criteria
Very High	The current setting has been influenced by limited degrees of incremental changes that are a modern reflection of aspects of the original setting
High	The current setting has been influenced limited by medium degrees of incremental changes, some of which are modern reflections of aspects of the original setting
Medium	The current setting has been influenced to a large degree by incremental changes, some of which are not in keeping with the setting of the Heritage Asset
Low	Some aspects of the current setting has been compromised at specific locations within that setting
Very Low	The current setting has been widely compromised



6.6 Magnitude of impacts

- 6.6.1 The assessment of the magnitude of impacts is carried out on settings of designated Heritage Assets and the Heritage Asset's themselves, as applicable. The indicative criteria forming the basis for the magnitude of impact is given in Table 3.

Table 3: Criteria for measuring the magnitude of impact

Magnitude	Indicative Criteria
Very Large	Total loss of Heritage Asset without recorded evidence
Large	Comprehensive alterations to attributes of setting
Medium	Considerable alterations to attributes of setting
Small	Slight alterations to attributes of setting
Very Small	Very slight alterations to attributes of setting
No	No appreciable impact on attributes of setting



6.7 Level of effects

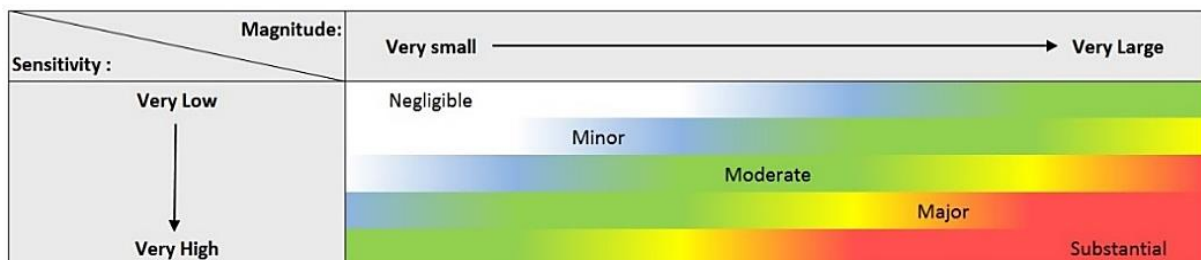
- 6.7.1 Assessing the combination of the sensitivity of the Heritage Asset and the magnitude of impact provides a resultant level of effect (see Table 4), which may be beneficial or adverse.

Table 4: Criteria for measuring the likely level of effects

Effect	Indicative criteria
Substantial	Comprehensive changes to attributes of setting
Major	Considerable changes to attributes of setting that affect the character of Heritage Assets
Moderate	Slight changes to wider attributes of setting
Minor	Slight changes to limited attributes of setting
Negligible	Slight changes to attributes of setting
Undefined	Changes to the settings of Heritage Assets would occur but the extent and the quality of the potential is unknown
No Change	Very slight changes to attributes of setting

Once mitigation has been taken into consideration, what remains are the likely residual effects which may be beneficial or adverse (see Table 5).

Table 5: The relationship between sensitivity, magnitude and level of effect



6.8 The assessment of effects within the planning context

- 6.8.1 The criteria adopted for determining the likely residual effect is also equated to the degree of harm to the Significance of a Heritage Asset. Professional judgement has been used to translate the assessed effects of the Proposed Development to the degree of harm in accordance with the NPPF (Paragraphs 193-196), which may be 'substantial harm' or 'less than substantial harm'.



7 Planning background and legislative framework

7.1 Legislative framework

- 7.1.1 The Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 provides for the preservation of buildings of outstanding historic or architectural interest and their contents and related property.
- 7.1.2 The planning (listed buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 defines Conservation Areas as *"areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance"*. Local planning authorities have the statutory duty to identify and designate such areas and introduces general controls over demolition and development. Section 66 (1) of the Planning (listed buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. This means that, in carrying out the planning balance, where there is harm to the setting of a listed building or Conservation Area, the desirability of preserving the setting is to be accorded considerable importance and weight.
- 7.1.3 The National Heritage Act 2002 makes further provision in relation to the functions of the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England.

7.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 7.2.1 The NPPF (2019) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. National heritage policy is contained within section 16 of the NPPF. The over-arching principles are:
- *"the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the Significance of Heritage Assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
 - *the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;*
 - *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and*
 - *to bring to fruition, "opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place."*
- "193. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the Significance of a designated Heritage Asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its Significance."*
- "194. Any harm to, or loss of, the Significance of a designated Heritage Asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification."*
- "196. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the Significance of a designated Heritage Asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use."*



7.3 Local policy

- 7.3.1 The Application Site is located within the administrative area of Reading Borough Council. The Core Strategy, adopted in January 2008 with an alteration adopted in January 2015, sets out the Borough's overall planning strategy and important principles for development in Reading. Reading Borough Council has also published a Local Development Framework Reading Central Area Action Plan 2009. The Council is in the process of producing a New Local Plan, which contains the planning policies to guide development up to 2036. The New Local Plan includes EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment, EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas, EN4: Locally Important Heritage Assets and EN6: New Development in A Historic Context.

Reading Borough Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015) and Policy CS7: Design and the Public Realm

"All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form, including:

- *Layout: urban structure and urban grain;*
- *Landscape;*
- *Density and mix;*
- *Scale: height and massing; and*
- *Architectural detail and materials."*

"will be assessed to ensure that the development proposed makes a positive contribution to the following urban design objectives:

- *Character-a place with its own identity and sense of place*
- *Continuity and enclosure*
- *Quality of the public realm*
- *Ease of movement and permeability*
- *Legibility-clear image and easy to understand*
- *Adaptability – capable of adaptation over time*
- *Diversity – meets a wide range of needs."*

"Developments will also be assessed to ensure that they:

- *Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local*
- *character and distinctiveness, it including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;*
- *Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;*
- *Address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to*
- *understand by them; and*
- *Are visually attractive as a result of*
- *good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and*
- *appropriate materials and landscaping."*



"Applications for major and minor developments should be accompanied by a design access statement that deal with all the above matters."

Reading Borough Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015) and Policy CS33

"Policy CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment Historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced. This will include:

- listed buildings;*
- Conservation Areas;*

Other features with local or national designation, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and historic parks and gardens.

Planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. All proposals will be expected to protect and where appropriate enhance the character and appearance of the area in which they are located."

Reading Borough Council Local Development Framework Reading Central Area Action Plan 2009 RC5: Design in The Centre

"Applications for development within the Reading central area should demonstrate the following attributes:

- a) Development will build on and respect the existing grid layout structure of the central area, providing continuity and enclosure through appropriate relationships between buildings and spaces, and frontages that engage with the street at lower levels, and contributing towards enhanced ease of movement through and around the central area;*
- b) Development will provide appropriate, well designed public spaces and other public realm, including squares, open spaces, streetscape, utilising high quality and well-maintained hard and soft landscape, public art, that provide suitable functions and interest, sense of place and safe and convenient linkages to adjoining areas;*
- c) The architectural details and materials used in the central area should be high quality and respect the form and quality of the detailing and materials in areas there is a local to the development site;*
- d) Development and any associated public up the other realm should contribute to the diversity of the central area, be capable of easy adaptation over time to meet changing circumstances, and be designed to enhance community safety."*

Reading Borough Council New Local Plan

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

"Historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced. This will include:

- Listed Buildings;*



- *Conservation Areas;*
- *Scheduled Monuments;*
- *Historic parks and gardens; and*
- *Other features with local or national significance, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and assets on the Local List."*

"All proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits."

"Applications which affect, or have the potential to affect, the significant features of heritage assets should be justified by a Heritage Statement."

"The Council will monitor buildings and other heritage assets at risk through neglect, decay or other threats, proactively seeking solutions for assets at risk including consideration of appropriate development schemes that will ensure the repair and maintenance of the asset, and, as a last resort, using its statutory powers."

"Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect or of damage to a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision."

EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

"The special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Positive consideration will be given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas. These may include:

- *Reducing visual clutter caused by negative factors, such as poles and overhead wires, satellite dishes or unnecessary street furniture;*
- *Restoring original building features;*
- *Removing inappropriate additions or alterations to buildings;*
- *Protecting and encouraging the maintenance of green spaces and important trees, particularly where they are intrinsic to the history and character of the area;*
- *Improving signage and street furniture;*
- *Restoring or re-establishing appropriate paving, railings or walls;*
- *Sympathetic landscaping and planting;*
- *Improving or restoring green spaces, including front gardens, that are appropriate to the historic interest of a Conservation Area;*
- *Signage that reveals and promotes the Conservation Area and its boundaries;*
- *Interpretation panels to inform the public of the area's historical significance."*

"Where a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan has been adopted for a particular Conservation Area, this will be a material consideration in determining applications for development."

**EN4: LOCALLY IMPORTANT HERITAGE ASSETS**

"Development proposals that affect locally important heritage assets will demonstrate that development conserves architectural, archaeological or historical significance which may include the appearance, character and setting of the asset."

"Planning permission may be granted in cases where a proposal could result in harm to or loss of a locally important heritage asset only where it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development significantly outweigh the asset's significance. Where it is accepted by the Local Planning Authority that retention is not important, recording of the heritage asset should be undertaken and submitted alongside development proposals. Replacement buildings should draw upon heritage elements of the previous design, incorporating historical qualities that made the previous building significant. This may include appearance, scale and architectural quality."

EN6: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN A HISTORIC CONTEXT

"In areas characterised by heritage assets, the historic environment will inform and shape new development. New development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development. When determining planning applications for new development, the following factors will be taken into consideration:

- a. The positive contribution of the development to the existing historic townscape (scale, height, mass, proportion, plot size, street form, materials, significant vistas and*
- b. views, and open space);*
- c. Sensitivity to historic context;*
- d. Reflection of borough-wide major heritage themes that contribute to local distinctiveness (e.g. patterned brickwork or former worker terraced housing);*
- e. Whether development promotes and/or improves access to previously undiscovered or*
- f. neglected historic significance".*

7.4 Market Place/London Street Conservation Area Appraisal

7.4.1 There are four character areas within the Conservation Area and Number 2 London Court is located within Area 1: London Street.

"Character Area 1: Features that make a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the conservation area:

- The unusual width of the street, which rises gently from the River Kennet with a slight eastward curve, creates a visually interesting townscape;*
- The high concentration of historic buildings on either side, many of which are listed;*
- The mix of architectural styles and periods with an overall majority of late 18th/19th century buildings;*
- High quality townscape and well-proportioned relationship between tall building and wide street;*



- *The predominance of brick with occasional use of stone and stucco;*
- *The strong vertical rhythm created by regular bays of aligned windows and doors;*
- *Key buildings: No. 33 London Street, originally the Scientific Institution, 1843, by W. Brown, and Nos 73-79 London Street, described by the architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner as the “best” of the Georgian houses;*
- *Side alleys and streets which afford glimpses and views to east and west;*
- *Wide pavements;*
- *Ten young street trees which help to soften the otherwise urban environment;*
- *Prevalence of white-painted vertical sliding sash windows;*
- *The variety of historic architectural detail including pedimented doorcases, iron balconies and railings, timber shopfronts;”*

“Character Area 1: Features that have a negative impact on the historic character and appearance of the conservation area:

- *Noise and fumes from a constant stream of traffic;*
- *London Street is severed from town centre by the Inner Distribution Road;*
- *Modern development at north and south extremities of London Street, adjacent to road junctions, spoils the overall historic appearance of the area;*
- *Modern alterations to the carriageway and pavement e.g. concrete paving do not always respect the quality of the street’s historic buildings;*
- *Lack of enclosure at northern end;*
- *Vacant commercial and retail space;*
- *Loss of original windows and front doors to modern replacements;*
- *Loss of original slate roofs and other architectural features such as gates and railings;*
- *Plethora of signs and other street furniture, some of which may be redundant;*
- *Garish shopfronts that do not respect the host building e.g. no. 45 London Street;”*



8 Glossary of general terms

General terms

Aesthetic Value	The ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.
Associative relationships	The relationship between separate Heritage Assets by association, which may include functional and visual associations.
Curtilage	The curtilage of a building (the principal building) is in general terms any area of land and other buildings that is around and associated with that principal building. The courts have considered the precise extent of curtilage on many occasions. Determining the exact curtilage of any building is a complex question and much will depend upon the facts of the individual case. The key considerations are the physical layout of the buildings; the ownership past and present; and, the function of the buildings and spaces past and present.
Communal Value	The meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.
Evidential Value	The potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.
Historical Value	The ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present – it tends to be illustrative or associative.
Cumulative change	Cumulative change includes permitted developments, yet to be construction, to be considered when assessing whether additional change will further detract from or enhance the Significance of a Heritage Asset
<i>in situ</i>	Anything in its natural or original position or place, also referred to as 'primary context'
Level of effect	The level of effect (effect for brevity) is the measure of change caused to a Heritage Asset.
Magnitude of impact	The magnitude of impact (impact for brevity) is the measure of disturbance of buried Heritage Assets or alterations to built Heritage Assets.
Natural	Undisturbed natural geology accumulated without the influence of human activity
Potential	Professional judgement is used to interpolate potential within a site by understanding the baseline information for each archaeological period within a Study Area
Setting	the setting of a Heritage Asset is the surrounding landscape from where that asset may be experienced. Attributes of a setting may have a positive or negative effect on the Significance of a Heritage Asset. The extent of the setting is not fixed. Setting is separate from the curtilage, character and context of a Heritage Asset although these may be found to be interrelated



9 References

Department for Communities and Local Government (2019) National Planning Policy Framework.

Historic England (varying dates) The National Heritage List Entry.

Historic England (2008) Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance.

Historic England (2011) Seeing the History in the View.

Historic England (2017) The setting of Heritage Assets. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3-The setting of Heritage Assets.

Reading Borough Council (2008) Core Strategy (revised 2015).

Reading Borough Council (2009) Local Development Framework Reading Central Area Action Plan.

Reading Borough Council (unspecified) Market Place/London Street Conservation Area Appraisal.



Site:

Number 83-85 London Street,
Reading

Client:

Edward Richardson of Irongate
Property Asset Management Ltd

Title:

Figure 1

Date:

24/04/19



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Figure 1: Location of Heritage Assets and Viewpoints within the Study Area



Viewpoints 1a-1b: Looking towards the front and rear of Number 83-85



Viewpoint 2: Looking southeast along London Street towards Numbers 97-103



Viewpoint 3: Looking northeast along London Street towards Numbers 69-101



Viewpoint 4: Looking northwest along London Street towards the town centre



Viewpoint 5: Looking northwest along East Street towards Numbers 85-81 and the club



Viewpoint 6: Looking southwest along East Street towards Numbers 81-99



Viewpoint 7: Looking southeast along London Street towards London Road



Viewpoint 8: Looking southeast along London Street towards Numbers 69-99



Viewpoint 9: Looking northeast along London Street towards Numbers 79-87



Viewpoint 10: Looking east towards Number 83-85 from Church Street