

Heritage Statement for the Proposed Teaching Block at Kendrick School, East Street, Reading, Berkshire.

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1. Introduction

Dr Graham Eyre-Morgan has been asked by The Darwin Group to undertake a Heritage Statement for the proposed development of a school building at the Kendrick School, Reading. The Heritage Statement will present a brief analysis of the known and potential heritage that could be affected by the proposed construction of a school building.

The proposed development will measure approximately 16m by 7.43m and stand to a height of 2.6m. **The method of foundation for this building is yet to be confirmed**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012/2018 provides the Government's national planning policy on the conservation of the historic environment. In respect of information requirements for applications, it sets out that:

“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.”

To comply with these requirements, **Section 2** of this statement firstly identifies the relevant designated and non-designated heritage assets within the site and its vicinity that may be affected by the current application proposals (and at Appendix 1).

Section 3 then provides a statement of significance for the designated heritage assets in the area, within which part of the site is located, describing its special architectural and historic interest in terms of historical development, character and appearance, relevant to the site.

These assessments are proportionate to the importance of each identified heritage asset and also the likely impacts of the application proposals. Assessment is undertaken on the basis of existing published information, focussed archival research and on-site visual survey. The author of the Heritage Statement has consulted Berkshire Archaeology Service, the local conservation officer, borehole data and appropriate archaeological reports.

Section 4 provides an assessment of the impact of the application proposals on the significance of the identified heritage assets in light of the statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; national policy in the NPPF 2012/18; and regional and local planning policy for the historic environment (see Appendix 2).

2. The Heritage Assets

Introduction

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012/2018 defines a heritage asset as:

“A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest.”

Designated Heritage Assets

2.2 Designated heritage assets are those which possess a level of heritage interest that justifies designation and are then subject to particular procedures in planning decisions that involve them.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

2.3 The NPPF4 identifies that heritage assets include both designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Site Location and Description



Plate 1. Site location with location of bore holes and trial test pits

2.4 The site is located to the south of Reading town centre off East Street and to the north of London Road and approximately 100m east of London Street. The development area lies on level ground at a height approximately 45m above Ordnance Datum and comprises a rectilinear plot of c. 30m by 13m (Plate 1). The site is located on Valley Gravel (BGS 1946).

2.5 The site designated for the new building is situated on the schools artificial surfaced tennis courts and on the tarmac surfaced carpark to the south of the tennis courts which are adjacent to the school's sports hall. The site of the present adjacent sports hall was archaeologically evaluated in 2004 which revealed little except for three small post-medieval pits and a brick lined well. The proposed development area sits outside what has been considered to be the extent of the medieval suburban settlement of Reading which lay along London Street to the west of east street and the proposed development site. It is possible that further waste pits set back from the dwellings on London Street and beyond those already discovered could exist in the development area. Within this general area defences erected to protect Reading during the Civil War are believed to have existed, however it is likely that two ditches revealed during a watching brief in 2005 on land at 24-26 East Street, that is situated to the north of South Street and to the west side of East Street are the remains of these defences.

Brief archaeological and historical background

2.5 A desk based assessment of the area was undertaken in 2003 as the first stage of a process to determine the presence/absence, extent, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains, which may be affected by redevelopment of the area proposed for the new sports complex. The search that was undertaken covered a 250m radius of the development area (therefore covering the area of the new proposal) and as a result it is considered unnecessary to repeat this study. It was established that no prehistoric evidence had been located within the study although prehistoric material had been discovered elsewhere across the borough. Similarly Roman evidence is sparse with no occupation sites within the study area although four locations revealed stray or residual finds possible of a result of manuring or it may reflect a nearby unknown site considering a quernstone was among the finds it does suggest possible occupation in the vicinity.

With regards to the medieval periods a single find of an Anglo Saxon dagger was discovered during the construction of the Queens Road dual carriageway. However considering Late Saxon occupation in Reading is mainly located within the city centre then this must be considered a stray find. Later medieval occupation in Reading extended as far as London Street with proposed development area being beyond the rear extent of any medieval building located on London Street.

Several watching briefs and evaluations have carried out on London Street recording both early and later post- medieval activity. The civil war defences of Reading constructed in 1642 have been possibly been located in two locations firstly at 32-38 Silver St c.200m to the

southwest of the proposed development area and 24-26 East Street, c. 150m northwest of the development area situated between East Street and London Street on the north side of South Street. It can therefore be assumed that the Civil War defences of Reading are situated on land to the west of East Street.

An evaluation carried out on the site of the school's sports hall, two evaluation trenches were excavated no medieval deposits or civil war defences were identified, however, three post-medieval rubbish pits were observed in Trench 1. It is most likely that these represent domestic rubbish pits located in the rear gardens of buildings noted on an estate map of 1722, standing on the East Street frontage but which were not present in 1610. It was noted that the second evaluation trench was highly truncated by a probable air raid shelter resulting in any archaeological deposits that may have been present already being removed. No deposits earlier than the later post-medieval period were identified and a proportion of the site has been deeply truncated in modern times, it seems unlikely that any archaeological deposits of significance would be damaged or destroyed during groundworks for this development.

Identified Heritage Assets

2.6 Four built heritage assets have been identified within the general area. All situated to the south of the proposed development along or just off the London Road in the Kendrick School area. These buildings are: No 41, Kendrick Girls School and associated street walling, the Cedars, Kendrick School, Kendrick View and 33-35 London Road. All assets are Grade II Listed. None of the assets identified have any visual impact upon their setting from the proposed development. There are two nearby Conservation Areas, Kendrick Conservation Area is situated to the south and southeast of the development area and to the west the Market Place/London Street Conservation area, neither of these areas has any impact from the proposed development.

3. Significance of the Heritage Assets

Significance and Special Interest

3.1 The NPPF defines the significance of a heritage asset as:

“The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”

All Heritage Assets

3.2 Historic England has published Guidance 7 on the identification of four types of heritage value that an asset may hold: aesthetic, communal, historic and evidential value. Together, this guidance provides a framework for assessing the significance of designated or non-designated heritage assets.

Setting

3.3 The NPPF defines the setting of a heritage asset as:

“The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.”

3.4 Historic England has published Guidance 9 in respect of the setting of heritage assets, providing detail on understanding setting and the associated assessment of the impact of any changes.

4. Impact of Application Proposals

4.1 The proposed new building will have minimum/no impact historic built environment, with no effect upon any of the Grade II Listed Structures in the nearby area. Visual impact upon listed structures would also be none as the proposed location for the new development is separated from the rear of the listed buildings by existing school structures.

4.2 The impact of the development on potential archaeology is low, but it may be prudent for some means of archaeological enquiry – possibly in the form of a watching brief – to take place regardless. If pile foundations are to be used, for example, this would immediately minimise any damage to potential existing archaeological remains. It is of course assumed that any method of piling would comply with the recommended procedures laid out in the Historic England, Piling and Archaeology, Guidelines and Best Practice 2015.

5. Conclusion

5.1 To conclude, the fact that the proposed development is immediately adjacent to the recently developed sports complex that had been subject to both desk-based assessment and archaeological evaluation means that any impact on the existing built environment would be minimal, while providing much needed modern teaching block for the school

5.2 With regard to the known location of archaeological discoveries near to the proposed location of the new building, some means of archaeological enquiry and appropriate recording might be considered to record any potential archaeological presence. This would be done following a carefully constructed scheme of investigation suited to the specification for such work, as outlined by the local archaeological curator.

5.3 If archaeology is discovered, it would be the intention of the developer to work with the contracting archaeologist, the local archaeological curator (Mr Roland Smith Berkshire Archaeology) to ensure the preservation of the archaeological resource either in situ or by record. If the site is to be piled, the developer will endeavour to produce the best possible piling plan and ensure the most effective methods of preservation are employed. All aspects of ground works would be discussed with the Berkshire Archaeological Service and acted upon accordingly.

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