

THE MALTINGS, FOBNEY STREET, READING, BERKSHIRE

HERITAGE STATEMENT



JPHERITAGE

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PROJECT: The Maltings, Fobney Street, Reading, Berkshire

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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	
1.1	Project background	4
2	POLICY CONTEXT	
2.1	NPPF	4
2.2	Draft Reading Borough Local Plan	5
3	UNDERSTANDING THE HERITAGE	
3.1	Heritage designations	5
3.2	Historical background	6
4	DESCRIPTION OF THE MALTINGS	11
5	STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE	19
6	ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	20
7	CONCLUSIONS	21

THE MALTINGS, FOBNEY STREET, READING - HERITAGE STATEMENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by JP Heritage on behalf of Macniven Quays Ltd to inform and in support of a listed building consent application for proposed alterations associated with a change of use from A3 restaurant to B1 office at The Maltings, Fobney Street.
- 1.1.2 This document provides an outline description of the historic development and significance of the Grade II listed building and an assessment of impact of the proposed alterations. This has been undertaken to meet the requirements of the LPA in accordance with paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, Revised 2018). The report was produced using the guidance contained within the Historic England document entitled *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* (2008).

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 NPPF (Revised 2018)

- 2.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out national planning policy relating to the conservation of the historic environment. It advises that in determining planning applications '*local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made to 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* (paragraph 189).
- 2.1.2 Annex 2 of the NPPF defines a Heritage Asset as being '*a building, monument, site, place area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions.*' Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment. They include designated heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets.
- 2.1.3 In determining planning applications, the NPPF advises that local planning authorities should take account of (paragraph 192):
- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 2.1.4 Specific guidance on the treatment of designated heritage assets (listed buildings) emphasises the need to understand the significance of a heritage asset in order to determine impacts on the historic environment (paragraph 193). It advises that '*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.

- 2.1.5 Paragraph 194 continues by stating that ‘*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*’.

2.2 Draft Reading Borough Local Plan (2017)

- 2.2.1 The Reading Borough Local Plan was issued as a draft in May 2017. The relevant historic environment policy for the proposed development is as follows:

- Draft Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

2.3 Reading Core Strategy (adopted January 2008 with alteration adopted 2015)

- 2.3.1 The relevant historic environment policy contained within the Reading Core Strategy is as follows:

- Policy CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment.

Policy CS33 states that:

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.

2.4 Reading Central Area Action Plan (adopted January 2009)

- 2.4.1 Policies contained within the Reading Central Area Action Plan relate to consideration of impacts on the settings of listed buildings and conservation areas.

2.5 Reading Sites and Detailed Policies Document (adopted 2012)

- 2.5.1 This document refers to guidance set out in the NPPF (2012) and to Policy CS33 of the Reading Core Strategy but does not include additional policies relating to the historic environment.

3.0 UNDERSTANDING THE HERITAGE

3.1 Heritage Designations

- 3.1.1 The Maltings, Fobney Street, Reading was added to the statutory *List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest* at Grade II on 14th December 1978. The list description reads as follows:

Building now part of Courage’s Brewery. Once probably a Malthouse. Picturesque setting on the River Kennet. Early C19. Red brick. 2 ½ storeys with mansard tiled roof. 7 bays, altered on

north side which has 2 dormers. To South: large segmental headed windows on the ground floor, small on 1st floor with wood lintels, cast iron glazing bars. Gable end lunettes.

3.2 Historical background

- 3.2.1 The 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey map shows the area now occupied by The Maltings as an open area of yard at Bear Wharf. This is described as a 'Timber Yard' on the Town Plan (1879). The large rectangular structure located at Bear Wharf is shaded grey which suggests that it was a timber or Iron framed structure. The Town Plan (1879) records that this building was a 'Barge Building Shed'.



Figure 1: Extract from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (1879) showing the area now occupied by The Maltings

- 3.2.2 The earliest cartographic evidence for The Maltings consulted for this project was the Goad map (1895). This map shows that Bear Wharf now formed part of H & G Simonds' Brewery and also provides details of the use of the building as well as its internal layout. The building is described as having 'Hay and Corn Lofts' and 'Harness' and 'Chaff Cutting' spaces, probably on the first and ground floors. Dashed lines on the western side of the building appear to suggest internal partitions, including two small rooms at the western end. Two lucams are shown on the north elevation. Steps are also shown positioned along the central area of the north elevation. Attached stables are shown attached to the eastern and western sides of the buildings.



Figure 2: Extract from the Goad map (1895)

- 3.2.3 In 1891 Alfred Barnard published a description of H & G Simonds' Seven Bridges Brewery which by this time had expanded to include Bear Wharf. He described The Maltings as follows:

Between this and the new stables stands a handsome brick structure, with a red-tiled roof, recently erected for the storage of hay, corn and fodder, and we have seldom seen a building presenting a finer combination of strength with neatness of design.



Figure 3: The Maltings (right) and the demolished stables (centre) in c. 1891

- 3.2.4 Barnard also describes the now demolished stables on the east and west sides of The Maltings, as follows:

Opposite the long range of buildings, and on the banks of the river, is to be seen a neat structure containing a range of model stables, fitted up in the approved style, and ventilated on the newest principles. It contains a row of eighteen paved stalls, with a broad avenue between them, and is open to the roof. Some thirty yards lower down the yard are other stables, containing, besides harness rooms, etc., twenty-eight stalls, all comprised in a vast

building formerly owned by the Salvation Army, and used by them for their great Sunday gatherings.



Figure 4: Extract from the 1934 edition of the Ordnance Survey map

- 3.2.5 After the First World War H & G Simonds' Brewery expanded by acquisition under the enthusiastic guidance of Eric Simonds. By 1938 Simonds' was producing just over one percent of all beer brewed in England and Wales. The 1934 Ordnance Survey map shows no apparent changes to the footprint of the building. In 1960 the company amalgamated with Courage and Barclay to become Courage, Barclay, Simonds & Co Ltd and then Courage Ltd by 1970.



Figure 5: The Maltings following the fire in 1990

- 3.2.6 In 1990 The Maltings was damaged by fire. The damage to the building included the loss of the roof covering and structure, second floor structure, timber posts between the first and second floor, and the first floor timber structure. The iron beams on the first floor and the cast iron columns on the ground floor were retained as part of the reconstruction works.
- 3.2.7 Localised repairs to brickwork on the north and south elevations were undertaken. It was recommended by Arup that the gable end walls were demolished down to second floor level and rebuilt. However, it appears that the gable end walls were retained and tied into the replacement roof structure.

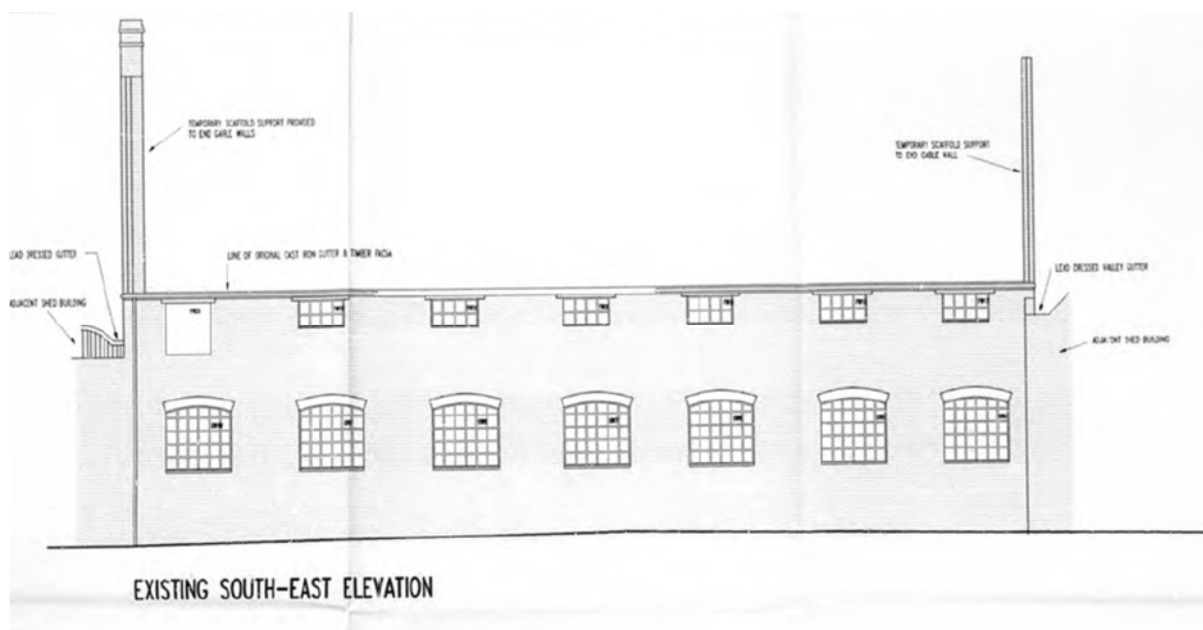


Figure 6: South elevation following the fire in 1990

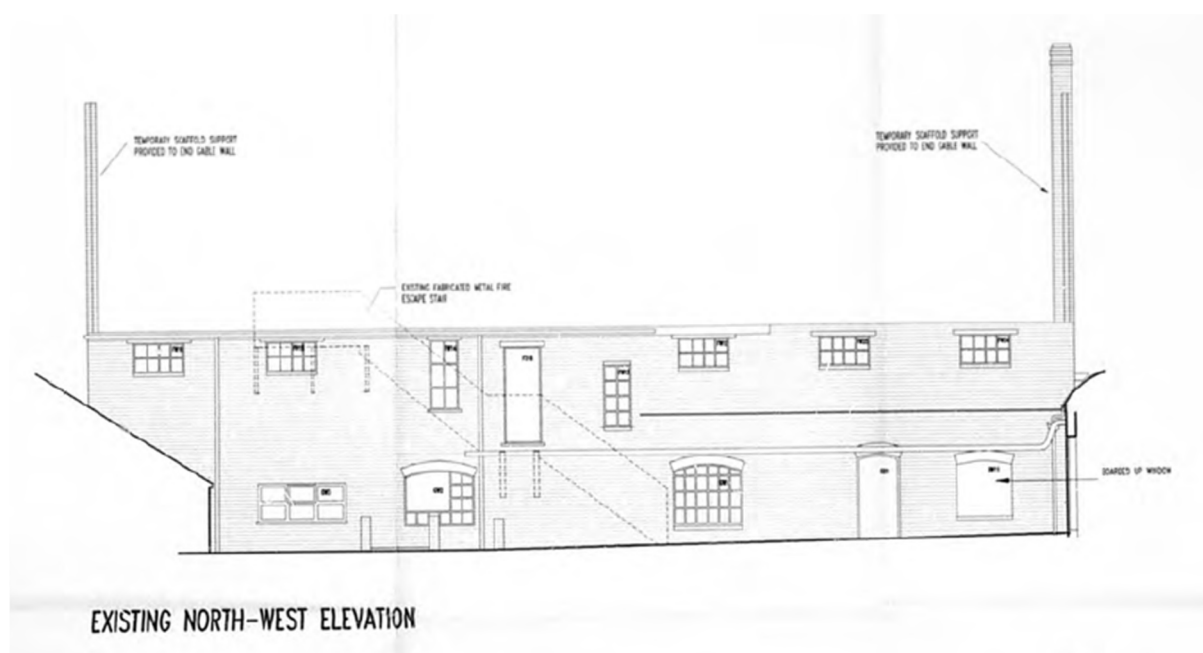


Figure 7: North elevation following the fire in 1990

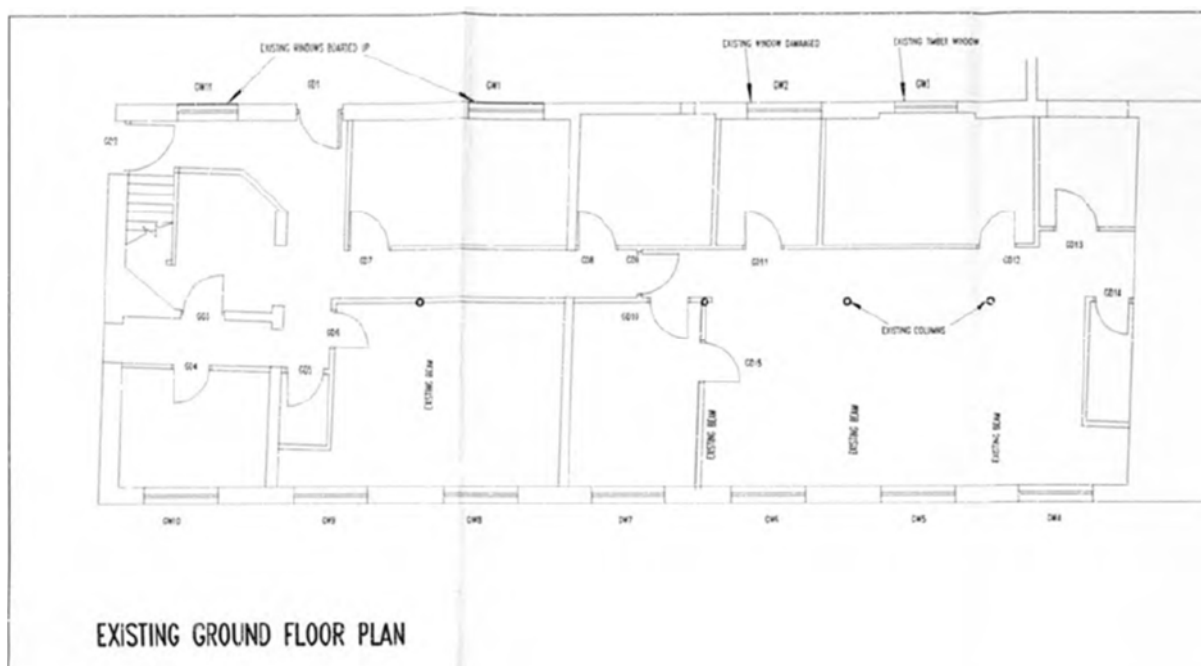


Figure 8: Ground floor following the fire in 1990

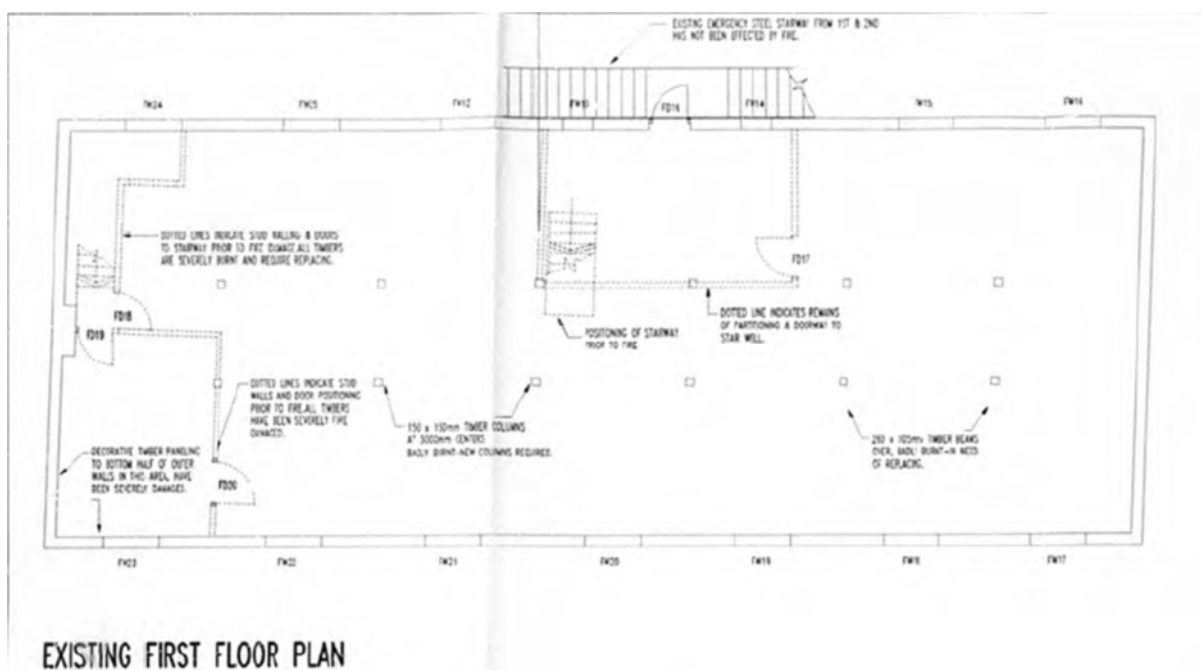


Figure 9: First floor plan following the fire in 1990 (internal partitions are reconstructed as dashed lines)

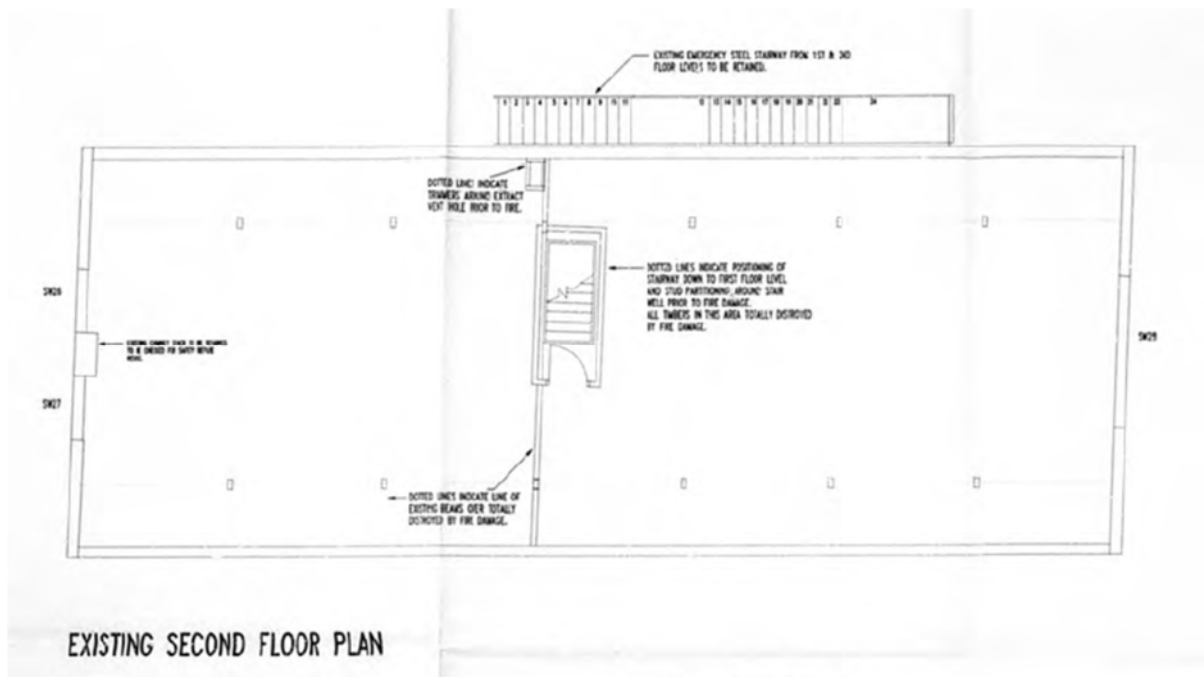


Figure 10: Second floor plan following the fire in 1990 (internal partitions are reconstructed as dashed lines)

4.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE MALTINGS

4.1 Exterior

- 4.1.1 The Maltings is a 2 ½ storey building of brick construction and a mansard roof finished with clay tiles. The brickwork of the north elevation is entirely laid in Flemish bond while the side and south elevations include lower courses of brickwork in English bond.



Figure 11: Oblique view of the north and east elevations of The Maltings

- 4.1.2 The regular pattern of window openings on the south elevation remains as originally designed. This includes larger Crittal type galvanised steel windows with a central pivot opening on the ground floor and smaller pivot casements on the first floor. The first floor windows appear to be later replacements. The dormers on the south elevation were not a feature of the original design and were added after the 1990 fire. There is a sacrificial render at plinth level.



Figure 12: Oblique view of the south and east elevations



Figure 13: Typical galvanised steel window on the south elevation

- 4.1.3 The east gable end elevation remains largely intact as originally built. The lunette window is a post-1990 replacement. Similarly, the lunette window on the west elevation has been replaced. There is an original door opening to a small room on the left hand side of the west elevation. This leads to a small heated room which perhaps served as an office. There is a 20th century door opening at the centre of the west elevation which includes a concrete lintel.



Figure 14: West gable end elevation of The Maltings



Figure 15: Original door opening on the west elevation



Figure 16: 20th century door opening on the west elevation

- 4.1.4 The north elevation has been subject to a number of alterations. The original steps leading to the first floor have been removed and the first floor door opening infilled with brick. A window opening has been inserted in the general area of the former door. A window opening with vertical emphasis on the first floor also represents a 20th century alteration. The central door opening is in the position of the former steps and appears to be a post-1990 alteration. The ground floor window at the eastern end of the elevation is also a post-1990 insertion. The post-1990 dormers are in the position of former lucams.



Figure 17: Replacement window at the eastern end of the ground floor



Figure 18: Post-1990 door opening in the position of former external steps to the first floor



Figure 19: A post-1990 dormer window on the north elevation

4.2 Interior – Second floor

- 4.2.1 The roof structure on the second floor has been completely replaced. The form of the original trusses with queen struts and raking struts above collars has been replicated. All partitions and the central staircase are modern.



Figure 20: Replacement roof structure on the second floor

4.3 Interior – First floor

- 4.3.1 It is apparent from a structural report produced in 1992 that the first and second floor construction had been burnt beyond repair. It was, however, noted that some second floor steel beams, timber beams and joists could be retained as part of the reconstruction. There are some boxed in beams on the first floor which may be concealing steel beams. Otherwise no features of interest are apparent on the first floor. It is thought that this floor would

originally have been a single large open space. It is likely that the small windows on this floor would have provided natural light over corn bins. All of the partitions and the three internal staircases are modern.



Figure 21: Boxed in beam on the first floor



Figure 22: Modern staircase at the western end of the first floor

4.4 Interior – Ground floor

- 4.4.1 With regards to the original floor plan, the ground floor includes brick partitions at the western end of the building which enclose two small rooms. The northern room includes a corner chimney breast which suggests that this space may have been used as an office. This room could be accessed externally as demonstrated by the door opening on the gable end elevation. There is also evidence for a staircase concealed on the western side of the room.

- 4.4.2 The function of the room on the southern side is less clear. There is what appears to be an infilled opening with a segmental arch brick head leading from the main body of the ground floor which suggests internal access to this space. This room appears to have been sub-divided in the 20th century to create a corridor.
- 4.4.3 There is another brick partition towards the centre of the ground floor which may form part of the original layout of the ground floor. This has been much altered with the insertion of large openings and concrete lintels. All other partitions are modern. The central staircase and east and west stairs are also modern.
- 4.4.4 The ground floor includes cast iron columns and steel beams which are likely to be part of the original structure of the building.



Figure 23: Brick partition at the western end of the ground floor



Figure 24: Brick partition to the two rooms at the western end of the ground floor



Figure 25: Corner chimney breast in the room on the north-west side of the ground floor



Figure 26: Possible infilled door opening to the room on the south-west side of the ground floor



Figure 27: Altered brick partition towards the centre of the ground floor



Figure 28: Cast iron column and steel beam and modern staircase on the ground floor

5.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

5.1 Defining significance

5.1.1 This Statement of Significance follows guidance on assessing the heritage value of a building or place which is set out in *Conservation Principles* (Historic England 2006). The following values will be considered:

- Evidential,
- Historical,
- Aesthetic,
- Communal.

5.2 Evidential value

5.2.1 Evidential value derives from the potential of a structure or place to yield evidence about past human activity. This section therefore considers the building's ability to demonstrate history in its physical fabric.

5.2.2 Much of the fabric on the upper floors was damaged beyond repair in the 1990 fire. However, the reconstructed roof has replicated the original structure and therefore preserves the original form and character of this part of the building. The most significant elements of the interior are the cast iron columns and steel beams. These are visible on the ground floor and steel beams may survive on the first floor. Brick internal partitions and a corner chimney breast on the ground floor provide evidence for the ground floor layout.

5.2.3 The brick elevations and the regular pattern of window openings survive more or less intact. The north elevation has been the most altered and the original pattern of openings, including the loss of a first floor door accessed by external steps, has been blurred to an extent. The galvanised steel pivot windows on the ground floor are of interest.

5.2.4 The Maltings is considered to be of moderate evidential value.

5.3 Historical value

- 5.3.1 Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a structure or place to the present. This section considers the building's associational links for which there is no physical evidence.
- 5.3.2 The Maltings has clear links to the expansion of H & G Simonds Brewery in the later 19th century. It is one of only a small number of buildings associated with Simonds' that remains in Reading. Its proximity to the Grade II listed Simmonds Malthouse provides historic context and a visual link between two surviving components of the later 19th century part of the brewery.
- 5.3.3 Historic documents, including maps, photographs and a description of Simonds Brewery in 1891 provides good archival evidence for the building and the site as a whole. The Maltings is considered to be of moderate to high historical value.

5.4 Aesthetic value

- 5.4.1 Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a structure or place. This section considers how the design of the building contributes to its significance.
- 5.4.2 The design of The Maltings with its mansard roof, brick elevations, regular rhythm of openings, including lunettes, contribute to the aesthetic value of the building. Fixtures and fittings which include multi-paned Crittal style windows and cast iron columns also contribute to aesthetic value.

5.5 Communal value

- 5.5.1 Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience of memory.
- 5.5.2 The Maltings makes a positive contribution to the character of the riverside and to Fobney Street and has the potential for moderate communal value.

6.0 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Internal alterations

- 6.1.1 The proposed conversion to office use would involve the removal of internal partitions and staircases as detailed in Drawings 265-D-07, 265-D-08 and 265-D-09.
- 6.1.2 The removal of partitions in the small ground floor rooms at the western end of the building would better reveal the original floor plan. Removal of partitions would also open up the corner chimney breast as an expressed feature. Removal of the modern staircase and vestibule would restore the more open qualities of the original layout.
- 6.1.3 The removal of modern partitions and staircase on the first floor would open up this space in a way that would be in keeping with the original layout. The same applies to the second floor.
- 6.1.4 The proposed internal alterations would not have any direct physical impacts on historic fabric. The removal of partitions would better reveal the original floor plan of the building. The proposed alterations represent a heritage benefit.

6.2 External alterations

- 6.2.1 The proposed conversion to office use would involve a number of external alterations as detailed in Drawings 265-D-12 and 265-D-13.
- 6.2.2 The alterations will include the removal of modern signage lighting, planting boxes, steel security boarding and CCTV cameras. The removal of these fittings will enhance the external character and architectural/historical integrity of the listed building.
- 6.2.3 It is also proposed to refurbish the existing galvanised steel windows and to paint them black. The windows are currently painted white. A late 19th century photograph of The Maltings (see figure 3) suggests that the original windows were painted a dark colour. This change is therefore considered to be appropriate and would be more in keeping with the original appearance of the building.
- 6.2.4 The proposals include the replacement of the lunette on the west elevation with a glazed lunette. In addition to being decorative these windows would originally have served a functional purpose providing natural light to the second floor. The existing lunette dates from the post-1990 reconstruction. Replacement of the existing with an appropriately designed glazed lunette would not impact on historic fabric.

6.3 External works

- 6.3.1 A cycle store would be constructed on the western side of the existing enclosed space on the western side of the listed building. The modern outbuilding on the north-west side of the site would be converted to a bin store. Neither of these elements of the scheme would have adverse impacts on the setting of the listed building.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1.1 This assessment provides an overview of the historic development of The Maltings and assesses the significance of the areas affected by the proposed change of use. As such, it is considered that this Heritage Statement meets the requirements set out in paragraph 189 of the NPPF and local planning policy and provides sufficient information regarding the built heritage.
- 7.1.2 The conclusion of this Heritage Statement is that the proposed conversion provides a future use for the building which is currently redundant and will ensure the long term preservation of the listed building. The proposed alterations will not have direct physical impacts on historic fabric. The proposals will only require the removal of modern fabric which is considered to be of no interest. The removal of this modern fabric will better reveal the historic floor plan, internal features and the original design of the listed building. As such, it is considered that the proposed conversion would not have an adverse impact on the significance of the listed building in accordance with paragraph 193 of the NPPF and the Reading Borough Local Plan Policy EN1.