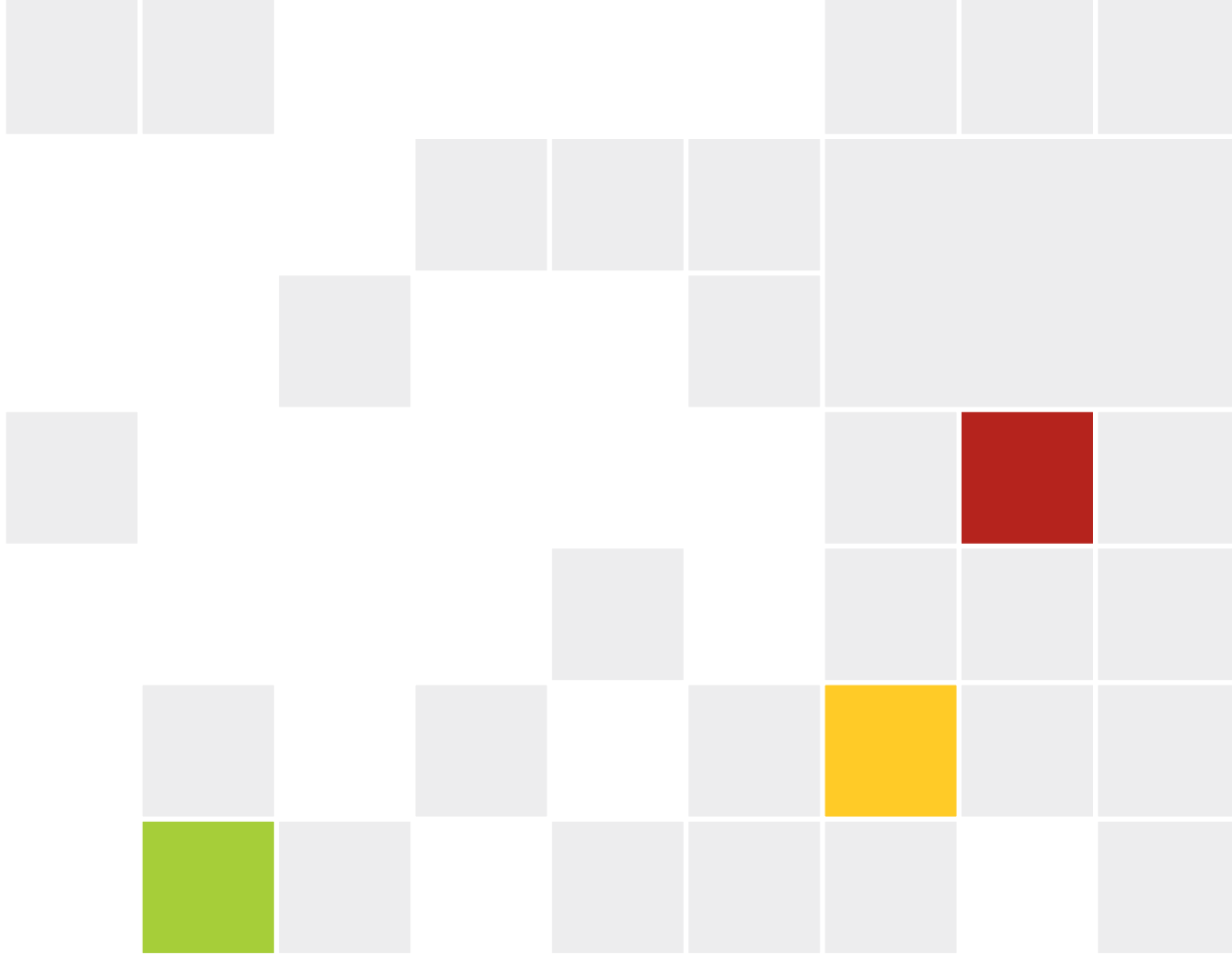
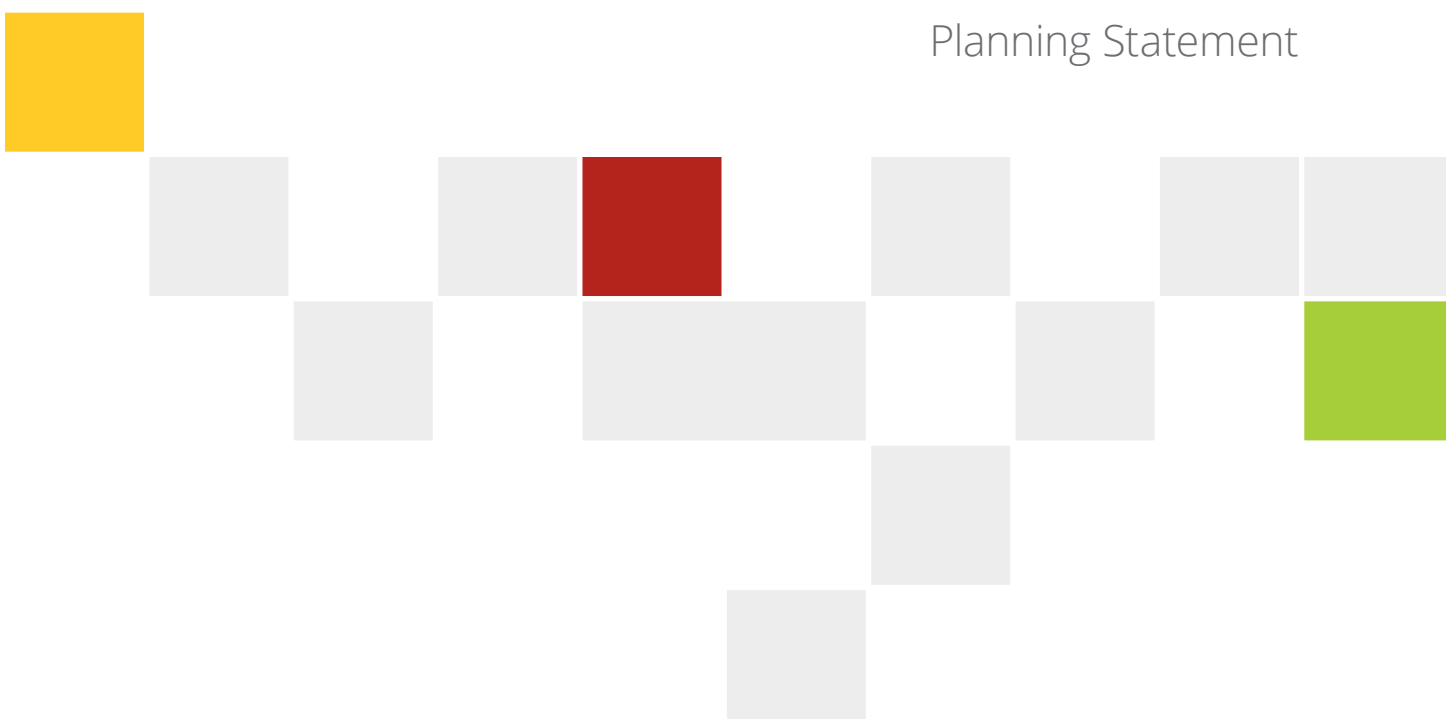




33-34 Market Place

Planning Statement



Boyer

Report Control

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted to Reading Borough Council in support of a planning application which proposes for the use of the first and second floors of 33-34 Market Place for office use (Class B1a). The proposal is solely for the use of the first and second floors as offices and as no alterations are proposed, Listed Building Consent is not required.
- 1.2 A Certificate of Lawfulness (ref 181472/CLE) has been submitted to the Council to regularise the lawful use of the first and second floors of 33-34 Market Place as Class B1a. At the time of submission of this planning application, the Certificate is currently under determination.

Site and Surroundings

- 1.3 33-34 Market Place is a 3 storey Grade II listed building located within a terrace of mostly 3 and 4 storey buildings which are set out in a triangular arrangement around a central open space; the town's market place. The uses in the triangle are predominantly commercial at ground floor, with offices and residential above. Immediately to the south of the property is Market Way; a town alley which links through to The Arcade on Friar Street and which provides access to Sainsbury's on Broad Street. The road on the eastern side of Market Place is a through route for buses and other traffic travelling through the town centre.
- 1.4 In land use terms the area is predominantly commercial in character. The ground floor of 33-34 is lawfully used as an estate agent's office (Class A2) as defined in the Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1988 (as amended).
- 1.5 Market Place is part of the designated Market Place / London Street Conservation Area. The area is dominated by St Lawrence's Church to the north of Market Place and is characterised by a variety of architectural styles and periods, including some modern architecture. 33-34 are not specifically referred to in the Conservation Area Appraisal as having any particular significance or features, other than being referred to as being listed. As stated above, this planning application does not seek to make any external alterations to the property and therefore the proposal does not affect the character of the Conservation Area.

Planning History

- 1.6 The vast majority of planning applications on this site have been material alterations to the shop front mainly concerning signage. The two exceptions are listed below.
- 1.7 In 2000, an application (ref 992015) was granted for changing the use to Class A3 Bar/Restaurant, including internal and external alterations, installation of plant on the roof and a first floor rear extension. This permission was not implemented.
- 1.8 In 2010, planning permission was granted (ref 992014) for the change of use from Class A2 (bank) to Class A3 (food & drink), with a single storey extension to the rear at first floor and external alterations. This permission was not implemented

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2. PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2018)

- 2.1 The NPPF is the overarching national planning policy framework which is a material consideration in determining planning applications.
- 2.2 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF establishes that “*achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives*”. These objectives give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:
- “an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
 - a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
 - an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy” (p.5).
- 2.3 As well as the above, the following chapters and paragraphs of the NPPF are considered relevant for the determination of the application proposal:
- 6. Building a strong, competitive economy;*
- 2.4 Paragraph 80 states that, “Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.”
- 7. Ensuring the vitality of town centres*
- 2.5 Paragraph 86 specifically states that, “*Main town centre uses should be located in town centres.*” Offices are classified as a main town centre use.
- 9. Promoting sustainable transport*
- 2.6 Paragraph 102 endorses development proposals which provide opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use.

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16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

- 2.7 The proposed use does not materially affect the setting and character of the Grade II listed building, however, as stated in paragraph 192, *“In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.”*

Planning Practice Guidance

- 2.8 The PPG sets out guidance on a wide range of topics, including *inter alia* the following which are relevant to the determination of this application:
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
 - Determining a planning application
 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres

Local Planning Policies

Core Strategy (2015)

- 2.9 Policy CS4: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development seeks to ensure that the scale and density of development within the Borough will be related to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities.
- 2.10 Policy CS10: Location of Employment Development – Office development will also take place in the other centres in the network set out in the other centres in the network set out in Policy CS26, but should be of an appropriate scale to those centres.
- 2.11 Policy CS12: Maintaining a Variety of Premises states that a range of types and sizes of units should be present in the Borough and proposals should maintain or enhance this range.
- 2.12 Policy CS26: Network and Hierarchy of Centres identifies the Regional, District, Major Local Centres and Local Centres in Reading Borough. The vitality and viability of these centres should be maintained and enhanced and this will include widening the range of uses.
- 2.13 Policy CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment 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.

Reading Central Area Action Plan (2009)

- 2.14 The site is within the Reading Central Area and is therefore subject to the Reading Central Area Action Plan.

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- 2.15 Paragraph 5.10 states “*further major commercial office development will largely be focused in an area centred on, and easily accessible from, the station. There is a need to prioritise which locations benefit from development for employment uses, and the area centred on the station offers the greatest accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling, and should therefore be the focus of development*”.
- 2.16 Figure 5.2 illustrating the Spatial and Design Strategy for the Centre of Reading locates the site within the designated office zone.

Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, updated 2015)

- 2.17 Policy SD1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development. A positive approach to considering development proposals will be taken that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. Where appropriate, the Council will work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.
- 2.18 Policy DM3 – Infrastructure Planning. Proposals for development will make appropriate provision for the outlined infrastructure, services, resources and amenities.

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 2.19 The relevant Supplementary Planning Documents are as follows:
- Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)

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3. CONSIDERATION OF PLANNING ISSUES

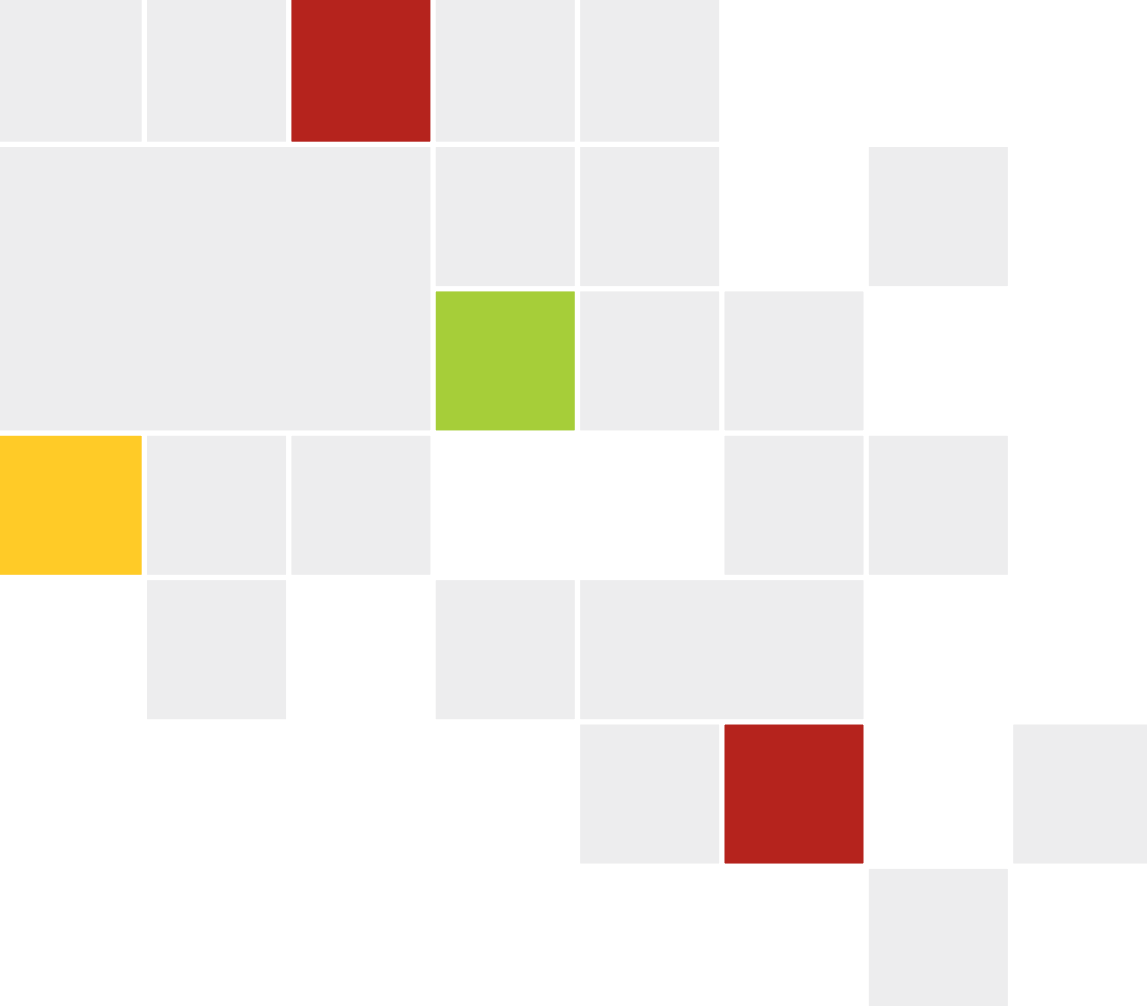
- 3.1 This section considers and analyses the principal planning issues associated with the proposed development against the relevant planning policy framework identified within Section 2.
- 3.2 The site is within the Reading Central Area and within the designated Office Zone as shown on Figure 5.2 of the Spatial and Design Strategy for the Centre of Reading within the Reading Central Area Action Plan. The office use of the first and second floor of 33-34 Market Place is therefore acceptable in principle.
- 3.3 The office use will contribute to the vitality and viability of the Regional Centre of Reading, and widen the range of uses in the Town Centre, and is therefore in accordance with Policy CS26 and the guidance within the NPPF and PPG.
- 3.4 The overall office floorspace of the first and second floor is therefore a modestly sized office space, and is therefore in accordance with Policy CS12 as it offers a variation in office space size in a town centre location.
- 3.5 The site is in a highly accessible location offering a range of modes of public transport and is approximately a five minute walk from Reading Station and approximately a five minute walk from bus stops on Minster Street and Duke Street bus where a number of bus services can be accessed such as the Number 4 Lion, the Number 17 and the Number 3 Leopard. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS4 – Accessibility and the Intensity of Development. No additional car parking is proposed with the development due to its excellent public transport links and is therefore in line with the promoting sustainable transport choices objective of the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD.
- 3.6 As stated previously in this Planning Statement, the proposal does not include any alterations to the property, and therefore it will not affect the setting or character of the listed building or Conservation Area. The first and second floor of the property is, however currently vacant, and bringing these floors of the property back into use would aid with the maintenance of the listed building. The proposal is therefore in accordance with paragraph 192 of the NPPF that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

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4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 This Planning Statement demonstrates that the proposed development complies with the adopted development plan and national policy. The use of the first and second floors of 33-34 Market Place as office space is consistent with the spatial strategy for Reading Town Centre, and provides a variation in the size of office space available within a central location within the Town Centre. In addition, the proposal allows for the use of a listed building which will help secure its long term viability. The site is in highly accessible via a range of modes of sustainable transport.
- 4.2 In conclusion, this Planning Statement demonstrates that the proposed development is in accordance with national and local planning and should be approved without delay.

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