

Reading Metropolitan Reading Berkshire

Heritage Desk-Based Assessment



Report prepared for:
HPUT A Limited & HPUT B Limited

CA Project: 770652

CA Report: 18405

December 2018



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SUMMARY

Project Name: Reading Metropolitan
Location: Reading, Berkshire
NGR: SU 71313 73979

Cotswold Archaeology was commissioned in September 2017 by HPUT A Limited & HPUT B Limited to undertake a Heritage Desk-Based Assessment in respect of the Reading Metropolitan site, Reading, Berkshire. The Site is proposed for the demolition of the extant late 20th century buildings and construction of mixed-use development.

This assessment has identified a potential for the presence of archaeological remains of early medieval to modern date features within the Site. There is also a very limited potential for late prehistoric paleoenvironmental deposits. The Site appears to have been peripheral to the main area of early medieval and medieval settlement, and is likely to have formed part of its agricultural hinterland. There is also a record of an early medieval burial within the immediate environs of the Site, implying the potential for contemporary burials within the Site. From the mid-19th century onwards, the Site had been subject to a number of phases of development.

This assessment has established that any potential archaeological remains within the Site are likely to have been extensively compromised by previous development. As part of the consented planning application (ref. 11/00276/OUT), discussions were carried out with the archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority. It was agreed that whilst there are no archaeological objections to the development at this Site, there is a requirement for further archaeological investigations, to be secured as a condition attached to the consent granted. It was agreed that a staged programme of further archaeological works would be carried out at the Site. It is considered that the approach previously proposed and agreed provides an adequate response to the potential archaeological remains.

An assessment of the potential effects of the proposed development on the significance of designated heritage assets within surroundings of the Site has established that the proposed development would not affect the significance of the Listed Buildings or Market Place/London Street Conservation Area through a change to their settings. The settings of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Area, would be preserved, and therefore the proposed development would be consistent with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The proposals would also be in line with local planning policy relating to the historic environment resource.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In September 2017, Cotswold Archaeology was commissioned by HPUT A Limited & HPUT B Limited to undertake a Heritage Desk-based Assessment in respect of Reading Metropolitan, Reading, Berkshire (hereafter referred to as ‘the Site’) (NGR: 471313 173979; Fig. 1).
- 1.2. Situated c. 400m north of Reading town centre, the Site is located north and north-west of Reading Railway Station, and west of Caversham Road. Bounded to the north by Station Shopping Park, to the east by a multi-storey car park, the Site lies directly to the north of the mainline rail tracks. Approximately 2ha in extent, the Site comprises three main buildings, including the former Royal Mail Sorting Office, a workshop used to service the Royal Mail vehicles and an office building currently occupied by Network Rail (Photo 1).



Photo 1 **General view of the Site**

Project background

- 1.3. Reading Borough Council granted permission for redevelopment on the Site (application ref. 11/00276/OUT) in March 2012. The consented scheme was supported by an archaeological assessment undertaken by CgMs in January 2010 (revised December 2010), geoarchaeological investigations (Quest 2010) and

Environmental Statement (ES) Chapter in 2011, in which some archaeological potential at the Site, as well as a degree of disturbance, were identified. As part of the ES Chapter, a scheme of archaeological mitigation was proposed, agreed through consultation with Berkshire Archaeology. However, as the scheme did not proceed, this was not implemented and the permission has since expired.

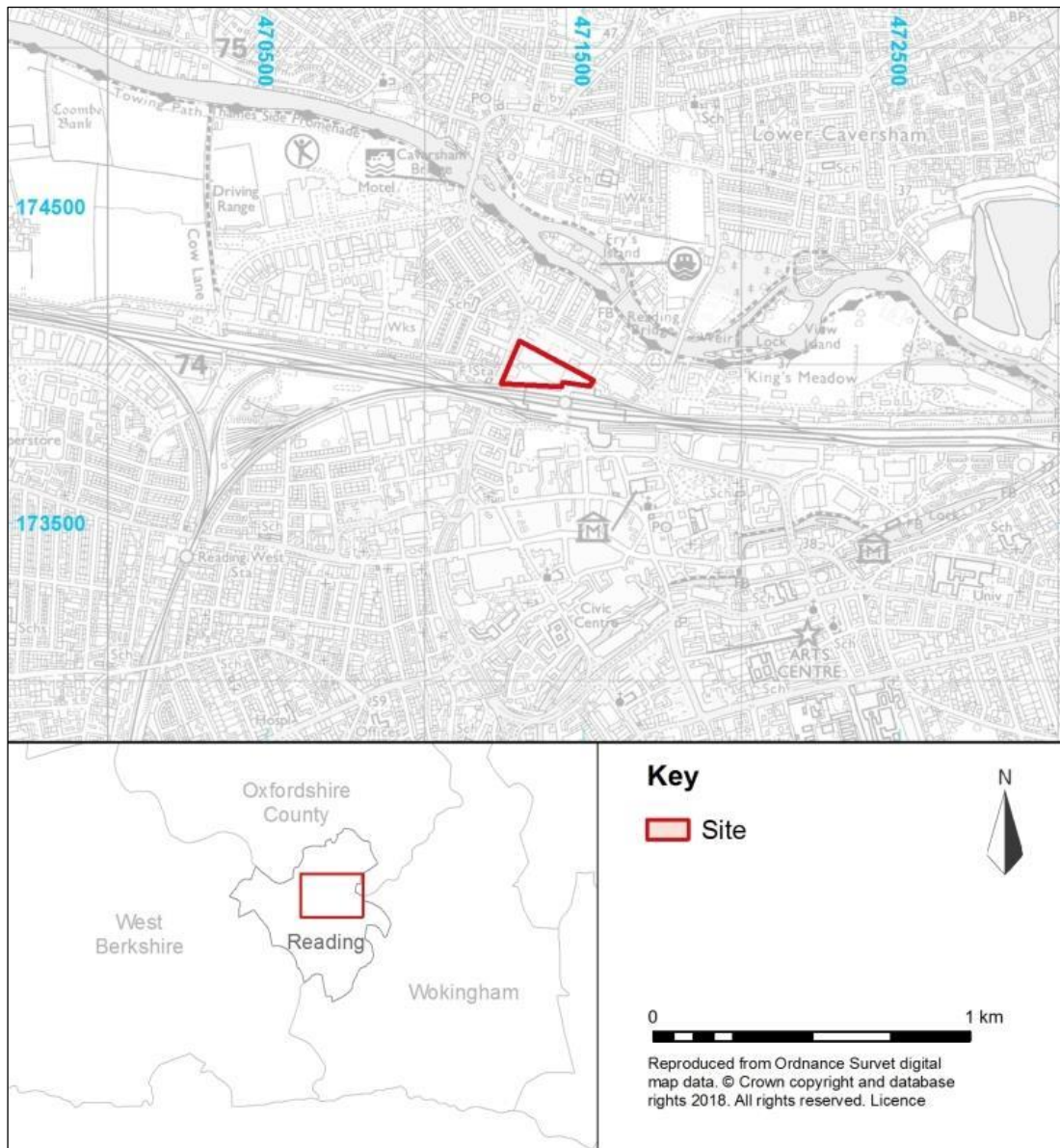


Fig. 1 Site location plan

- 1.4. This Heritage Desk-Based Assessment has been undertaken to support a forthcoming planning application for the Site and aims to reflect the changes to planning policy and guidance, and the emergence of additional information due to archaeological investigations in the vicinity of the Site. This assessment has also

considered the potential impacts of the proposed development upon surrounding designated heritage assets.

1.5. The proposals for the redevelopment of the Site include:

- Demolition of the existing buildings;
- Establishment of a mixed-use development comprising both residential and commercial space, including tall buildings with building height rising from west to east (with the tallest structure reaching 117.18m above Ordnance Datum);
- Establishment of a new public realm, Central Square, for the residential quarter;)
- Provision of basement to serve as a car park, refuse and bike store, and energy centre; and
- Access and Landscaping.

Objectives and professional standards

1.6. The composition and development of the historic environment within the Site and wider landscape are discussed in this report. A determination of the significance of any heritage assets located within the Site, and any heritage assets beyond the Site boundary that may potentially be affected by the development proposals, is presented. Any potential development effects upon the significance of these heritage assets (both adverse and/or beneficial) are then described.

1.7. Cotswold Archaeology is a Registered Organisation (RO) with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). This report has been prepared in accordance with the 'Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment' published by the Chartered Institute (2014).

1.8. This approach is consistent with the Chartered Institute's 'Standard and Guidance for Heritage Desk-Based Assessment', which provides that, insofar as they relate to the determination of planning applications, heritage desk-based assessments should:

'...enable reasoned proposals and decisions to be made [as to] whether to mitigate, offset or accept without further intervention [any identified heritage] impact' (CIfA 2014, 4).

- 1.9. The ‘Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment’ (Historic England 2015), further clarifies that a desk-based assessment should:

‘...determine, as far as is reasonably possible from existing records, the nature, extent and significance of the historic environment within a specified area, and the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the historic environment, or will identify the need for further evaluation’
(Historic England 2015, 3).

Statute, policy and guidance context

- 1.10. This assessment has been undertaken within the key statute, policy and guidance context presented within Table 1.1. The applicable provisions contained within these statute, policy and guidance documents are referred to, and discussed, as relevant, throughout the text. Fuller detail is provided in Appendix 1.

Statute	Description
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)	Act of Parliament providing for the maintenance of a schedule of archaeological remains of the highest significance, affording them statutory protection.
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990)	Act of Parliament placing a duty upon the Local Planning Authority (or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State) to afford due consideration to the preservation of Listed buildings and their settings (under Section 66(1)), and Conservation Areas (under Section 72(2)), in determining planning applications.
National Heritage Act 1983 (amended 2002)	One of four Acts of Parliament providing for the protection and management of the historic environment, including the establishment of the Historic Monuments & Buildings Commission, now Historic England.
Conservation Principles (Historic England 2008)	Guidance for assessing heritage significance, with reference to contributing heritage values, in particular: <i>evidential</i> (archaeological), <i>historical</i> (illustrative and associative), <i>aesthetic</i> , and <i>communal</i> .
National Planning Policy Framework (2018)	Provides the English government's national planning policies and describes how these are expected to be applied within the planning system. Heritage is subject of Chapter 16 (page 54).
Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 2 (GPA2): Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (Historic England, 2015)	Provides useful information on assessing the significance of heritage assets, using appropriate expertise, historic environment records, recording and furthering understanding, neglect and unauthorised works, marketing and design and distinctiveness.
Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3 (GPA3): The Setting of Heritage Assets,	Provides guidance on managing change within the settings of heritage assets, including archaeological remains and historic buildings, sites, areas, and landscapes.

Statute	Description
Second Edition (Historic England, 2017)	
Reading Core Strategy (2008) and forthcoming New Local Plan	Comprises the local development plan (local plan), as required to be compiled, published and maintained by the local authority, consistent with the requirements of the NPPF (2018). Intended to be the primary planning policy document against which planning proposals within that local authority jurisdiction are assessed. Where the development plan is found to be inadequate, primacy reverts to the NPPF (2018).

Table 1.1 Key statute, policy and guidance

2. METHODOLOGY

Data collection, analysis and presentation

- 2.1. This assessment has been informed by a proportionate level of information sufficient to understand the archaeological potential of the Site, the significance of identified heritage assets, and any potential development effects. This approach is in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF (2018) and the guidance issued by ClfA (2014). The data has been collected from a wide variety of sources, summarised in Table 2.1.

Source	Data
National Heritage List for England (NHLE)	Current information relating to designated heritage assets, and heritage assets considered to be 'at risk'.
Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER)	Heritage sites and events records, Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) data, and other spatial data supplied in digital format (shapefiles) and hardcopy.
Historic England Archives (EHA)	Additional sites and events records, supplied in digital and hardcopy formats.
Berkshire Record Office	Historic mapping, historic documentation, and relevant published and grey literature.
Old-Maps, Genealogist, National Library of Scotland & other cartographic websites	Historic (Ordnance Survey and Tithe) mapping in digital format.
British Geological Survey (BGS) website	UK geological mapping (bedrock & superficial deposits) & borehole data.
Cranfield University's LandIS Soil Portal	UK soil mapping.
Other online sources	Additional publications, grey literature and other materials specific to the locality.

Table 2.1 Key data sources

- 2.2. Prior to obtaining data from these sources, an initial analysis was undertaken in order to identify a relevant and proportionate study area. This analysis was based on maps, aerial photography and knowledge of the area. On this basis a 250m study area, centred on the Site, was considered sufficient to capture the relevant HER data, and provide the necessary context for understanding archaeological potential and heritage significance in respect of the Site. All of the spatial data held by the HER – the primary historic data repository – for the land within the study area, was

requested. All of the records returned have been considered and have been listed in a cross-reference gazetteer, which is provided at the end of this report (Appendix 3). The records were analysed and further refined in order to narrow the research focus to data of relevance to the present assessment. *Not all HER records are therefore referred to, discussed or illustrated further within the body of this report, only those that are relevant.*

- 2.3. A site visit was also undertaken as part of this assessment. The primary objectives of the site visit were to assess the Site's historic landscape context, including its association with any known or potential heritage assets, and to identify any evidence for previous truncation of the on-site stratigraphy. The site visit also allowed for the identification of any previously unknown heritage assets within the Site, and assessment of their nature, condition, significance and potential susceptibility to impact. The wider landscape was examined, as relevant, from accessible public rights of way.

Previous archaeological investigations

- 2.4. A considerable amount of archaeological fieldwork has previously been carried out within the study area. Previous investigations, which included assessments as well as a range of intrusive works, such as watching briefs, evaluations and excavations, are illustrated on Fig. 2. Those of relevance to this assessment are listed in Appendix 3. The results of the investigations of relevance to this assessment are discussed in Section 4, below.
- 2.5. Most significantly, the Site was subject to a Desk-Based Assessment undertaken by CgMs in 2010, a programme of geoarchaeological investigations by Quest in 2010 and an Environmental Statement (ES) Chapter in 2011 (discussed in Section 3).
- 2.6. Key investigations of particular relevance within the immediate environs of the Site include a series of assessments and a Conservation Area Character Appraisal associated with Market Place/London Street (discussed in Section 5). Produced by Reading Borough Council in 2007, the Conservation Area Appraisal provides information on the character of this area, key views, and a strategy for management proposals in these areas.

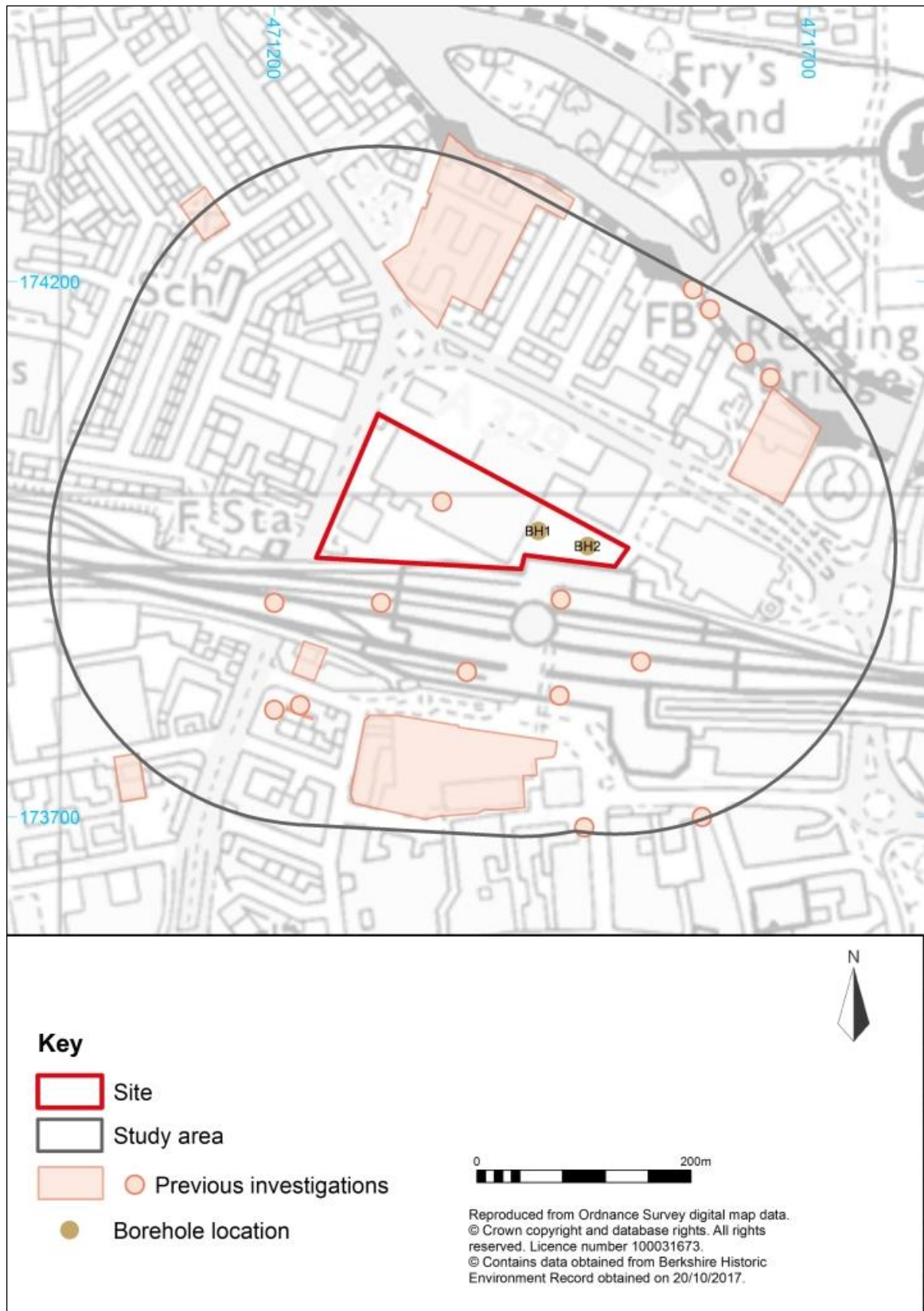


Fig. 2 Previous archaeological investigations

Assessment of heritage significance

- 2.7. The significance of known and potential heritage assets within the Site, and any beyond the Site which may be affected by the proposed development, has been assessed and described, in accordance with paragraph 189 of the NPPF (2018), the guidance issued by ClfA (2014) and 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2' (Historic England 2015). Determination of significance has been undertaken according to the industry-standard guidance on assessing heritage value provided within 'Conservation Principles' (English Heritage 2008). This approach considers heritage significance to derive from a combination of discrete heritage values, principal amongst which are: **i)** evidential (archaeological) value, **ii)** historic (illustrative and associative) value, **iii)** aesthetic value, **iv)** communal value, amongst others. Further detail of this approach, including the detailed definition of those aforementioned values, as set out, and advocated, by Historic England, is provided in Appendix 1 of this report.

Assessment of potential development effects (benefit and harm)

- 2.8. The present report sets out, in detail, the ways in which identified susceptible heritage assets might be affected by the proposals, as well as the anticipated extent of any such effects. Both physical effects, i.e. resulting from the direct truncation of archaeological remains, and non-physical effects, i.e. resulting from changes to the setting of heritage assets, have been assessed. With regard to non-physical effects or 'settings assessment', the five-step assessment methodology advocated by Historic England, and set out in the Second Edition of GPA3 (Historic England, 2017), has been adhered to (presented in greater detail in Appendix 1).
- 2.9. Identified effects upon heritage assets have been defined within broad 'level of effect' categories (Table 2.2). These are consistent with key national heritage policy and guidance terminology, particularly that of the NPPF (2018). This has been done in order to improve the intelligibility of the assessment results for purposes of quick reference and ready comprehension. These broad determinations of level of effect should be viewed within the context of the qualifying discussions of significance and impact presented in this report.
- 2.10. It should be noted that the overall effect of development proposals upon designated heritage assets are judged, bearing in mind both any specific harms or benefits (an approach consistent with the Court of Appeal judgement *Palmer v. Herefordshire Council & ANR* Neutral Citation Number [2016] EWCA Civ 1061).

2.11. In relation to non-designated heritage assets, the key applicable policy is paragraph 197 of the NPPF (2018), which states that:

*'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the **scale of any harm or loss** and the **significance of the heritage asset** [our emphasis].'*

Level of effect	Description	Applicable statute & policy
Heritage benefit	The proposals would better enhance or reveal the heritage significance of the heritage asset.	Enhancing or better revealing the significance of a heritage asset is a desirable development outcome in respect of heritage. It is consistent with key policy and guidance, including the NPPF (2018) paragraphs 185 and 200.
No harm	The proposals would preserve the significance of the heritage asset.	Preserving a Listed building and its setting is consistent with s66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990). Preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area is consistent with s72 of the Act. Sustaining the significance of a heritage asset is consistent with paragraph 185 of the NPPF, and should be at the core of any material local planning policies in respect of heritage.
Less than substantial harm (lower end)	The proposals would be anticipated to result in a restricted level of harm to the significance of the heritage asset, such that the asset's contributing heritage values would be largely preserved.	In determining an application, this level of harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals, as per paragraph 196 of the NPPF (2018).
Less than substantial harm (upper end)	The proposals would lead to a notable level of harm to the significance of the heritage asset. A reduced, but appreciable, degree of its heritage significance would remain.	Proposals involving change to a Listed building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, or change to the character or appearance of Conservation Areas, must also be considered within the context of Sections 7, 66(1) and 72(2) of the 1990 Act. <i>The provisions of the Act do not apply to the setting of Conservation Areas.</i>
Substantial harm	The proposals would very much reduce the heritage asset's significance or vitiate that significance altogether.	Paragraphs 193 - 196 of the NPPF (2018) would apply. Sections 7, 66(1) and 72(2) of the Planning Act (1990), and the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), may also apply.

Table 2.2 Summary of level of effect categories (benefit and harm) referred to in this report in relation to heritage assets, and the applicable statute and policy.

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- 2.12. Thus with regard to non-designated heritage assets, this report seeks to identify the significance of the heritage asset(s) which may be affected, and the scale of any harm or loss to that significance.

Limitations of the assessment

- 2.13. This assessment is principally a desk-based study and has utilised secondary information derived from a variety of sources, only some of which have been directly examined for the purpose of this assessment. The assumption is made that this data, as well as that derived from secondary sources, is reasonably accurate. The records held by HER and HEA are not a record of all surviving heritage assets, but a record of the discovery of a wide range of archaeological and historical components of the historic environment. The information held within these repositories is not complete and does not preclude the subsequent discovery of further elements of the historic environment that are, at present, unknown.
- 2.14. A walkover survey was conducted on 20 June 2018 within the Site, which was undertaken in dry and clear weather conditions. Access was afforded within the Site, with the exception of internal access within the extant buildings, although such observations are limited since archaeological remains can survive below-ground with no visible surface indications of their presence. It is possible that unknown archaeological remains may be present within the Site, and the presence of modern infrastructure may possibly have inhibited identification of any possible upstanding remains. There is an element of uncertainty over the nature, condition, frequency and extent of the potential buried archaeological resource; which may be clarified through intrusive investigation.
- 2.15. The Site has been subject to a borehole survey, although it only consisted of two samples. Due to the size of the Site, the small number of samples is considered to be a limitation as they were concentrated within the east of the Site. This only provides a localised view of the deposits within the Site.
- 2.16. During the walkover survey, there was also sufficient access to designated heritage assets (from public rights of way) to assess likely impacts upon the significance of these assets due to changes to their setting.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Landscape context

- 3.1. The Site is situated on the Thames Valley floodplain, c. 260m south and south-west of the River Thames. The River Kennet (also known as the Kennet and Avon Canal) is located within the wider environs, c. 680m to the south-east. The Site is relatively level, lying between c. 37 and 39m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

Geology

- 3.2. The underlying geology of the Site comprises Seaford Chalk and Newhaven Chalk Formation (undifferentiated), sedimentary bedrock formed 90 to 72 million years ago during the Cretaceous Period. The bedrock geology is recorded to be overlain by a superficial deposit of Langley Silt Member (clay and silt), formed up to 2 million years ago during the Quaternary Period. Alluvium, comprising clay, silt, sand and gravel is recorded just to the south of the Site, overlying sand and gravel of the Taplow Gravel Member formation (river terrace deposits) (British Geological Survey).
- 3.3. More detailed information with regard to the stratigraphic sequence within the Site was provided by the results of the geoarchaeological investigations (Quest 2010). As part of these works two boreholes were excavated within the eastern part of the Site:
- BH1: made ground deposits were revealed to 1.8m below ground level (bgl), overlying c. 0.7m of alluvium (encountered at 36.2m aOD), which in turn overlay river terrace deposits of sand and gravel (encountered at 35.5m aOD); and
 - BH2, in which made ground were recorded to 2.1m bgl, overlying directly the river terrace deposits (encountered at 35.9m aOD).
- 3.4. These investigations indicate that alluvium extends at least into parts of the Site and have also provided evidence that a degree of truncation had occurred to the stratigraphic sequence, as no topsoil or subsoil were recorded and, in borehole BH2, the alluvial deposits were also not present and in BH1 may have been truncated (as just to the north of the Site, alluvium was encountered at c. 36m aOD). Additionally, it should be noted that the recorded alluvium comprised a sterile deposit, with no organic, or archaeobotanical remains.
- 3.5. The boreholes within the Site, and historical geotechnical data, were utilised to create a deposit model of the area (CgMs 2010; Appendix 2). Immediately to the west of the

Site, adjacent to Caversham Road, a historical borehole records alluvium to overlie Langley Silt deposits (recorded up to 3.4m bgl), which in turn sealed river terrace gravels. Just to the west of the Site, the alluvium, encountered at approximately 35.9m aOD and sealed by 4 feet (c. 1.2m) of made ground, contained peat and bog deposits. Whilst such deposits were not revealed in the boreholes excavated at the Site, these boreholes provide a small sample of the Site and therefore it cannot be entirely ruled out that in areas where perhaps the horizontal truncation is less extensive, alluvial deposits containing organic material may be present.

Designated heritage assets (illustrated on Fig. 6)

- 3.6. No designated heritage assets are located within the Site, and it does not lie within or adjacent to a Conservation Area. The closest Conservation Area comprises Market Place/London Street, situated c. 250m to the south-east.
- 3.7. There are four Grade II Listed Buildings located within the 250m study area surrounding the Site, with the closest Listed Building comprising the Main Building of Reading Station (A), c. 125m to the south-east.
- 3.8. Within the wider environs, Reading Abbey, a Scheduled Monument, and the Grade II Listed Registered Park and Garden, The Forbury Garden, are situated c. 360m south-east of the Site (NHLE ref. 1007932 and 1000586).
- 3.9. No Registered Battlefields, World Heritage Sites, or sites included on the Tentative List of Future Nominations for World Heritage Sites (August 2018) are situated within the Site or its vicinity.

Prehistoric (illustrated on Fig. 3)

- 3.10. During the Palaeolithic period, the floodplain was exploited as a resource by hunter-gatherer communities. However, due to the nature of the activity and alluvial deposits, there is often little evidence of the such activities with archaeological records often comprising lithic implements. The concentration of activity around water sources continued into the Mesolithic period, with evidence, often in the form of lithic implements, recovered from the environs of existing and former water sources. At present there is no known archaeological evidence of a settlement within Reading or its immediate environs dating from the Mesolithic period.
- 3.11. The Neolithic and Bronze Age period saw the introduction of farming and more settled occupation of sites, again concentrated around water sources. As with the earlier

periods, there is no known archaeological evidence of Neolithic or Bronze Age settlement within the environs of Reading, with known archaeology comprising lithic implements and finds recovered from the alluvium and gravels.

- 3.12. No evidence of prehistoric activity has been recorded within the Site. Within the study area the evidence is limited to chance finds, mostly of flint and stone tools. The remains of two Palaeolithic handaxes are recorded c. 240m south-east and 245m south-west of the Site (**6** and **11**), and further findspots of Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age date are broadly recorded within the River Thames (**2**). Whilst these finds have been recorded on the HER c. 230m north-east of the Site, it is worth noting that this point is likely to represent a general, rather than the specific, location in which they were discovered.
- 3.13. To date, there has been limited evidence to suggest significant early settlement in Reading. Although there is an increased potential for the recovery of prehistoric finds within the surroundings of the River Thames and the River Kennet, as the rivers were exploited in the prehistoric period as sources of food, water and transportation routes. Many of the findspots have been found in association with gravel geology. As similar deposits have been recorded within the Site during recent geoarchaeological investigations, there is potential for recovery of prehistoric finds.

Romano-British (illustrated on Fig. 3)

- 3.14. There is limited evidence for Romano-British activity in Reading, likely due to disturbance caused by later urban growth of the town (Norton and Poore 2007). Although a Roman period settlement has been suggested in the town over c. 400m south-east of the Site (Cotswold Archaeology 2015), the specific location of this site is however unknown. However, there is a lack of Roman roads in the locality and it appears that the Romano-British activity within this region would have been focussed on the Roman town of *Calleva* (Silchester), over c. 13km to the south-west. It has been suggested that during this period Reading might have been utilised as a port serving *Calleva*, although there is no known evidence to support this (CgMs 2010).
- 3.15. The Romano-British activity within the study area is represented by findspots of Roman coins, c. 230m north-east and 250m south of the Site (**2-3** and **7**).

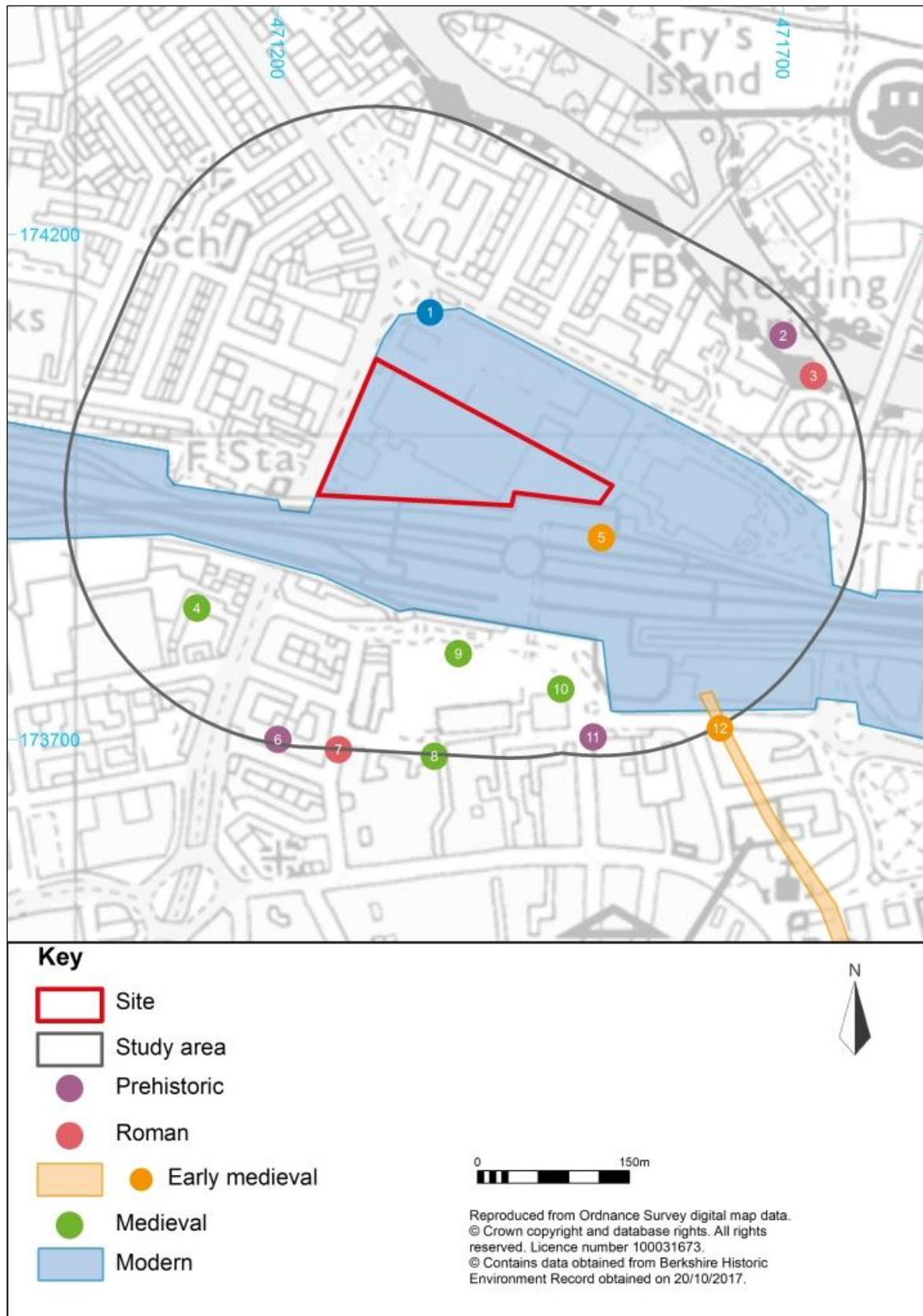


Fig. 3 Recorded heritage assets

Early medieval (illustrated on Fig. 3)

- 3.16. The settlement at Reading is thought to have originated in the early medieval period. The place-name 'Reading' is thought to have derived from a Saxon tribe known as *Readingas*, who settled in this area in the 6th century AD (Cotswold Archaeology 2015; CgMs 2010). The settlement is first mentioned in an Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in AD 870. The document mentions a Danish winter camp and their attacks on King Ethelred and his brother Alfred (Astill 1978, Ditchfield and Page 1923).
- 3.17. The Saxon town is thought to have focussed on the minster church, which preceded the extant St Mary's Church, c. 420m south-east of the Site. Reading had become a royal borough by 1086 as recorded in the Domesday Survey. It is considered that the borough is likely to have been created by Edward the Confessor (1042-1066), who may have also established a small mint in the town (Cotswold Archaeology 2015). The town is likely to have been accompanied by a line of defences, thought to correspond to the north-south alignment of The Forbury Gardens, c. 210m south-east of the Site (12).
- 3.18. Whilst the Site is likely to have been situated outside the Saxon town, there is archaeological evidence for early medieval activity within the vicinity of the Site. This includes Saxon findspots of an iron Merovingian bit, iron knife and spearhead, within the River Thames (2), and the burial of a man and horse close to the eastern extent of the Site (5, although it is uncertain whether this represents the exact location of the discovery). Discovered in 1831 near the engine sheds of Reading Station, the burial was accompanied by a sword pommel dated to the 8th century, although its worn condition and advanced style suggests date of internment shortly after 800 AD (CgMs 2010). The burial is suggested to have been Viking and representing the Danish occupation of Reading.
- 3.19. It is assumed that during the early medieval period the site would have been located beyond the main settlement activity within an area later known as the Vastern Meadows (paragraph 3.23). It has been suggested that this area could represent an early Saxon fortified structure, although there is no known evidence to support this (CgMs 2010). The potential for the presence of early medieval finds or remains within the Site, including perhaps funerary activity, cannot be ruled out due to the discovery of a burial within close proximity of the Site.

Medieval

- 3.20. As recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086, Reading comprised two manors, one belonging to the King and the other to Battle Abbey. During the medieval period, the study area lay within the latter, possibly situated on the site of St Mary's Butt (c. 630m to the south), which comprised a church, dwellings and meadow land (CgMs 2010).
- 3.21. The medieval history of Reading was heavily influenced by the establishment of Reading Abbey, founded by Henry I in 1121. The Abbey, located beyond the study area, c. 360m south-east of the Site, later became one of the wealthiest religious houses in England, until its Dissolution in 1539 (Cotswold Archaeology 2015).
- 3.22. The medieval period was a time of rapid growth of the town of Reading, centred on Broad and Friar Street over 380m south-east of the Site. Archaeological investigations along Friar Street, c. 250m south of the Site, have revealed the remains of medieval or later buildings and features associated with domestic activity (8; CgMs 2010). During this period, Reading's expansion was based on the production of woollen cloth, silk weaving and leather goods, and its economy benefited from the close proximity of the River Thames and Kennet and important terrestrial routes, including the London to Bath road (CgMs 2010; Cotswold Archaeology 2015).
- 3.23. Further evidence of medieval activity within the study area comprises the chance finds of medieval pottery (2, 4 and 10). An area known as Vastern Meadows is recorded in the vicinity of the Site (9) and based on later cartographic evidence (see below), it is likely that these meadows incorporated the Site. Documentary evidence suggests that this area of land was given to the Friars Minor by the Abbey and Convent of Reading, and, likely comprised an area of wilderness or wasteland (as indicated by the early medieval place-name *vastern*).

Post-medieval and modern

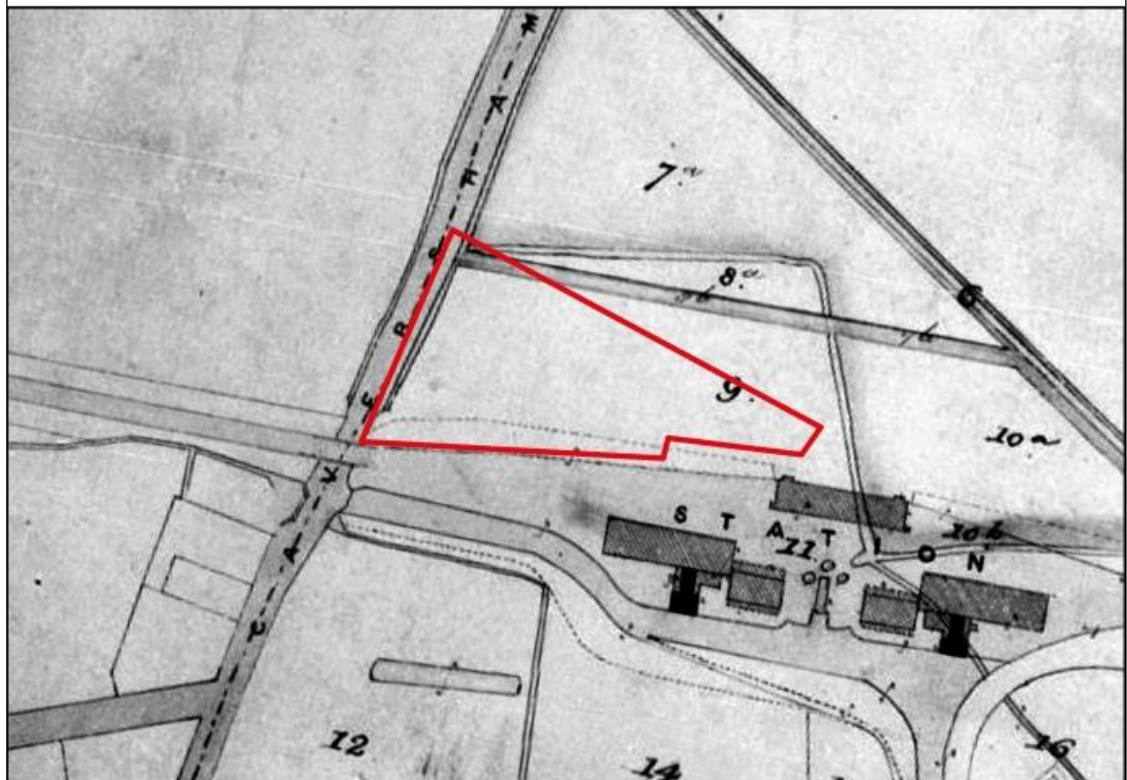
- 3.24. The development of Reading during the early post-medieval period was mostly contained within the limits of the medieval town, as depicted on the 1611 John Speed's map (not reproduced).
- 3.25. During the Civil War in the 17th century, Reading occupied a strategic location between the Royalists, based at Oxford and the Parliamentary forces in London. It was adopted as a Royalist garrison from 1642 until April 1643, when the town surrendered after a siege. In 1642, the town was fortified by a ring of defences, including bastions linked by earthen banks (Astill 1978). The 1643 map of the Siege

of Reading (not reproduced; viewed in CgMs 2010) indicates that the Site would have been located outside the Civil War defences, with the earthworks recorded c. 250m south of the Site.

- 3.26. The post-medieval town began to expand in the late 18th century, as a result of improved transport links and industrialisation, with development extending eastwards. Archaeological evidence for post-medieval activity within the town was discovered during many of the archaeological investigations within the town centre, including in Friar Street (8). During this period, the Site is likely to have comprised part of an agricultural landscape (i.e. meadow) situated between the River Thames to the north and a water course or drainage ditch to the south, as illustrated on Rocque's 1762 map of Berkshire (Fig. 4a). Caversham Road, marking the western boundary of the Site, had already been established by this point.
- 3.27. An 1813 plan of the Borough of Reading (not reproduced) indicates that the Site had remained as agricultural land into the early 19th century. This plan depicts the Site as being within the water meadows and appears to be the first to use the area name 'vastern' (CgMs 2010). The late post-medieval and 19th century development within the immediate environs of the Site is depicted on the 1847 Tithe Map of St Laurence, Reading (Fig. 4b), which illustrates the establishment of the Great Western Railway Line and Reading Station, south of the Site (1). Held under the ownership of the Great Western Railway Company, the Site encompassed part of a meadow recorded in the accompanying Tithe Apportionment as 'part of footpath vasterns'.
- 3.28. The 1847 Cruckshanks Survey of Reading Station (not reproduced) illustrates the Site crossed by a series of drainage ditches and footpath to the north and east, and it appears to have been subdivided containing an irregular shaped feature to the south. It has been suggested that these may represent ballast pits and an overflow area, as the nearby Saxon burial site was found during excavation of ballast pits, however there is no annotation on this plan to clarify the function of the depicted features (CgMs 2010).
- 3.29. By 1879, the Great Western Railway Works had been extended into the Site, and comprised a foundry, large engineering sheds and sidings (Fig. 5a). During the late 19th and early 20th century, the Site was subject to alteration, with the expansion of the Railway Works and associated infrastructure (Fig. 5b – 5d).

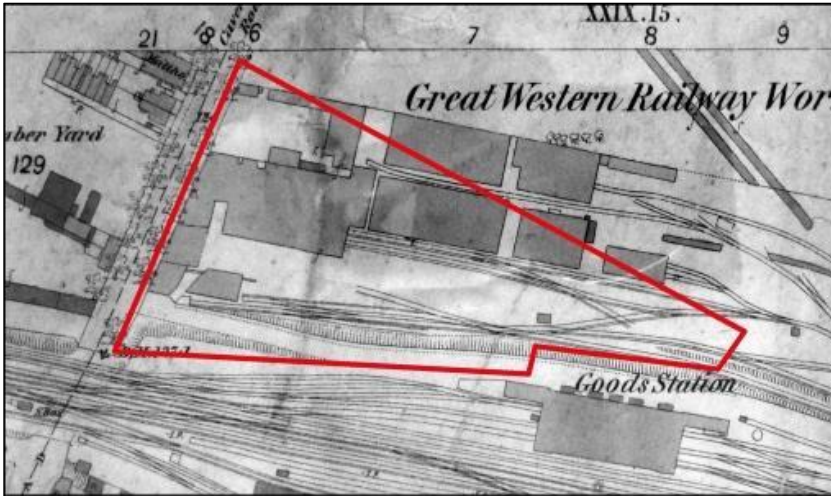


Rocque's 1762 map of Berkshire (a)

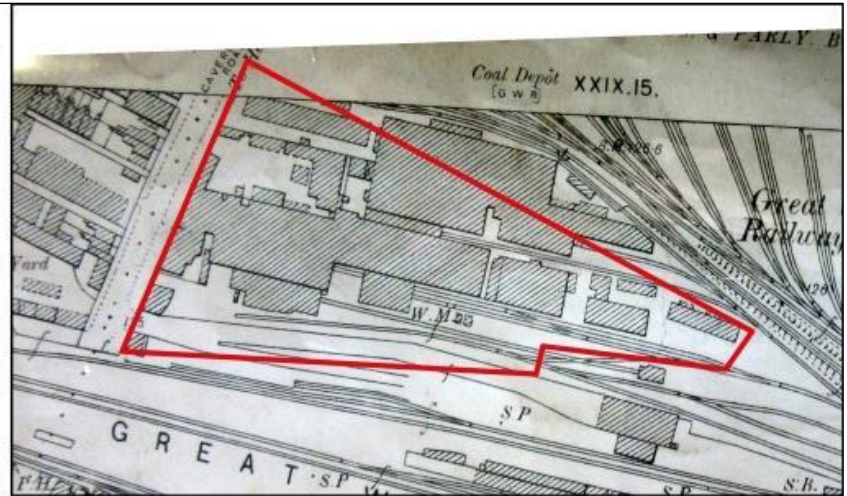


1847 Tithe map of St Laurence, Reading (b)

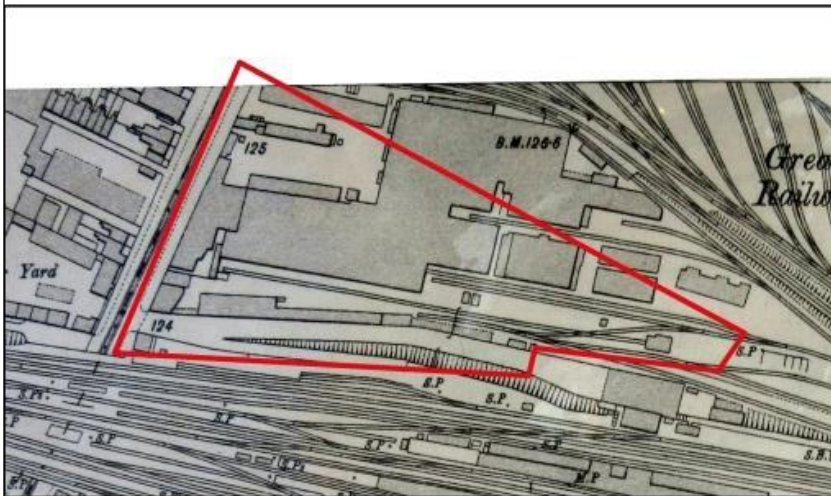
Fig. 4 Pre-Ordnance Survey map



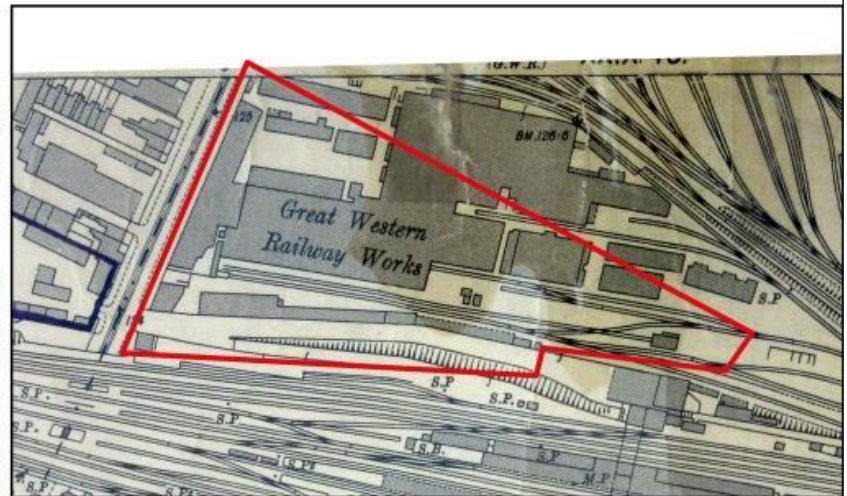
Ordnance Survey Map of 1879 (a)



Ordnance Survey Map of 1900 (b)



Ordnance Survey Map of 1912 (c)



Ordnance Survey Map of 1931 (d)

Fig. 5 Ordnance Survey Maps

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- 3.30. Significant changes occurred during the early to mid-20th century, with the gradual development and amalgamation of the former railway buildings within the Site. During the late 20th century, the Site was subject to another phase of redevelopment, with the removal of the railway sheds and establishment of Royal Mail's Sorting Office. By the early 21st century, the existing layout of the Site had been established. In 2009 the Royal Mail Sorting Office closed, and the Site has since been utilised by Network Rail.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE & POTENTIAL EFFECTS

Previous impacts

- 4.1. The available evidence indicates that the Site would have comprised meadows/wasteland on the periphery of Reading town until its development as part of the Railway works in the mid-19th century. The Site has since been subject to a number of phases of redevelopment throughout the 20th century as a result of which the extensive extant buildings were constructed.
- 4.2. Previous impacts within the Site which may have compromised the survival of archaeological deposits are related to the construction of the extant and former buildings. Such disturbance may have been associated with the excavation of foundation trenches, service trenches or other underground features (i.e. soakaways). Further impacts may have occurred as a result of landscaping (i.e. levelling) or quarrying, as excavation of ballast pits may have taken place at the Site.
- 4.3. The borehole survey revealed made ground extends to a depth of 1.8m to 2.1m at the Site, sealing alluvium (in BH1) and river terrace sands and gravel (BH2; CgMs 2010). This is indicative of large scale horizontal truncation across the eastern part of the Site due to former development, in which topsoil/subsoil and, presumably, alluvial deposits had been removed. However, the borehole investigations tested only a very small part of the Site, with historical boreholes adjacent to the Site indicating more limited disturbance to the north and west, with the potential for peat deposits to survive to the west. As such, the extent and scale of any disturbance is not fully understood and the survival of archaeological remains within areas of (potentially) more limited disturbance cannot be wholly ruled out.

The significance of known and potential archaeological remains within the Site

- 4.4. This assessment has identified that no designated archaeological remains are located within the Site; no *designated* archaeological remains will therefore be adversely physically affected by development within the Site. There are no known pre-modern *non-designated* archaeological remains identified within the Site. Potential archaeological remains within the Site and their significance is discussed further below.

Prehistoric and Roman

- 4.5. The extensive urban development in Reading is thought to have compromised the survival of any prehistoric or Romano-British remains as no substantial remains have

been recorded within the town to date. However, the presence of stray finds within later deposits cannot be ruled out, especially with regard to prehistoric remains, which are often found within areas associated with the terrace gravel geology, which is recorded on Site.

4.6. In addition, there remains the potential for the presence of palaeoenvironmental evidence within alluvial deposits recorded at the Site. Whilst the alluvium recorded in the borehole survey did not contain any archaeobotanical or zooarchaeological remains, peat deposits are recorded just to the west of the Site, which suggests the potential for the survival of palaeoenvironmental evidence at the Site. However, there is limited evidence to indicate that there are peat deposits within the Site. Therefore, the potential for finding such remains is extremely limited, due to the later development and associated disturbance which is likely to have disturbed such deposits.

4.7. Any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental remains relating to these periods within the Site, if present, may contain deposits which could contribute to the understanding of prehistoric and Romano-British activity in Reading and would consequently be significant within a local context.

Early medieval and medieval

4.8. The Site was located outside the Saxon and later medieval town of Reading, with evidence of occupation and domestic settlement recorded within the wider environs along Friars Street. Historical documentation indicates that during the early medieval period the Site was within an area of water meadows referred to as 'vastern', indicating its use as agricultural land. Whilst evidence of agricultural activity would contribute to our understanding of the Site and its environs during this period, any remains associated with agricultural activity of medieval date would constitute non-designated heritage assets of limited significance.

4.9. Due to the discovery of an 8-9th century AD burial just to the east of the Site, the potential for further such remains cannot be discounted. Any such archaeological remains identified within the Site would consequently be important within a local context.

Post-medieval and modern

4.10. Historic mapping indicates that the Site was within an area of agricultural land, potentially water meadows prior to the mid-19th century, with a potential for

associated features within the Site, including drainage ditches. Any such features would be of limited significance based on their contribution to the understanding of the local area during this period, especially the drainage of the land to allow for development.

- 4.11. During the early to mid-19th century there was an array of works undertaken within the study area associated with the construction of the railway line and station. These works included the excavation of ballast pits, with a potential for some within the Site. Great Western Railway Works were built within the Site by 1879. The Site's association with the development of the works and railway line is of historical importance, however the features, buildings and structures associated with the railway works were removed and any associated buried remains are likely to have been affected by later redevelopment. Any surviving remains of the mid-19th century and later buildings (i.e. foundations) would be of limited (if any) heritage significance.

Potential development effects

- 4.12. No significant known archaeological remains have been identified within the Site, and there is only a limited potential for any significant unknown archaeological remains to survive buried within the Site. It is anticipated that no significant archaeological remains will therefore be truncated by the proposed development.
- 4.13. Any truncation (physical impacts) upon those less significant non-designated archaeological remains identified within the Site would primarily result from groundworks associated with construction. Such groundworks might include:
- pre-construction impacts associated with ground investigation works and demolition;
 - construction ground works, including building the excavation of the basement, stripping and excavations associated with the foundations (which could include pile-caps, slabs, pads or other techniques);
 - excavation of new site service trenches and drainage (including soakaways); and
 - ground reduction/landscaping and planting.
- 4.14. The ground works associated with the proposed development could result in partial or complete loss of any archaeological remains which may be present at the Site. Any adverse effects on buried archaeological remains would be permanent and irreversible in nature. This would result in harm to non-designated heritage assets,

thus invoking Paragraph 197 of the NPPF, which requires a consideration of the likely scale of the loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

- 4.15. It can be concluded that there is some limited potential for the presence of archaeological remains within the Site. Whilst this potential is likely to have been compromised by multiple phases of development within the Site since the mid-19th century, the extent of the below-ground disturbance across the entire Site is not fully understood. As this assessment has identified no overriding archaeological constraints which are likely to prohibit development, it is considered that the effects of the proposal could be mitigated by a programme of archaeological works.
- 4.16. As part of the consented planning application (ref. 11/00276/OUT), discussions were carried out with the archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority. It was agreed that whilst there were no archaeological objections to the development at this Site, there was a requirement for further archaeological investigations, to be secured as a condition attached to the consent granted. It was agreed that a staged programme of further archaeological works would be carried out at the Site, including an archaeological evaluation which would inform the need for and scope of archaeological mitigation (which could comprise preservation in situ or preservation by record). It is considered that the approach previously proposed and agreed provides an adequate response to the potential archaeological remains which may be impacted upon by the proposed development at the Site and the effects of the proposal could be mitigated by a programme of archaeological works, agreed through consultation with the archaeological advisor to the LPA and secured as a condition attached to any consent granted.

5. THE SETTING OF HERITAGE ASSETS

- 5.1. This section considers potential non-physical effects upon the significance of susceptible heritage assets within the Site environs. Non-physical effects are those that derive from changes to the setting of heritage assets as a result of new development. All heritage assets included within the settings assessment are summarised in the gazetteer in Appendix 2 and are shown on Figure 6. Those assets identified as potentially susceptible to non-physical impact, and thus subject to more detailed assessment, are discussed in greater detail within the remainder of this section.

Step 1: Identification of heritage assets potentially affected

- 5.2. Step 1 of the Second Edition of Historic England's 2017 'Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3' (GPA3) is to 'identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected' (see Appendix 1). GPA3 notes that Step 1 should identify the heritage assets which are likely to be affected as a result of any change to their experience, as a result of the development proposal (GPA3, page 9).
- 5.3. A number of heritage assets were identified as part of Step 1 as potentially susceptible to impact as a result of changes to their setting. The Site is located c. 120m north of the Grade II Listed Main Building of Reading General Station (**A**), to the north of the railway line. Additionally, the Site is considered to form the wider setting of three additional Grade II Listed Buildings in the study area and Market Place/London Street Conservation Area. These assets have been identified using a combination of GIS analysis and field examination, which has considered, amongst other factors, the surrounding topographic and environmental conditions, built form, vegetation cover, and lines of sight, within the context of the assets' heritage significance.
- 5.4. The Site visit, and study area walkover, identified that there would be no non-physical impact upon the significance of any other heritage assets as a result of changes to the use and/or appearance of the Site.
- 5.5. All heritage assets assessed as part of Step 1, but which were *not* progressed to Steps 2 – 4, are included in the gazetteer in Appendix 2 of this report.

Steps 2 – 3: Assessment of setting and potential effects of the development

- 5.6. This section presents the results of Steps 2 to 3 of the settings assessment, which have been undertaken with regard to those potentially susceptible heritage assets identified in Step 1. Step 2 considers the contribution that setting makes to the significance of potentially susceptible heritage assets. Step 3 then considers how, if at all, and to what extent any anticipated changes to the setting of those assets, as a result of development within the Site, might affect their significance.

Main Building at Reading General Station, Grade II Listed Building (A)

- 5.7. The Grade II Listed Main Building at Reading General Station, located c. 120m to the south of the Site, was built between 1865 and 1867 and designed by Michael Lane, the Chief Engineer of the Great Western Railway Company. It is an enlargement and remodelling of Brunel's original station dated c. 1840. The building, constructed of buff brick with stone dressings, is of symmetrical appearance and is characterised by Italianate detailing. The building is located on the south side of the railway line and faces south onto a pedestrianized area (Photo 2) with a late 20th century extension to the east. The recently built gangway/bridge over the railway line to provide access to multiple platforms for the train station frames the view of the building to the west. The surrounding area south of the building is defined by late 20th and 21st century urban development including multi-storey buildings.



Photo 2 Main Building at Reading General Station as seen from the pedestrian area to the south

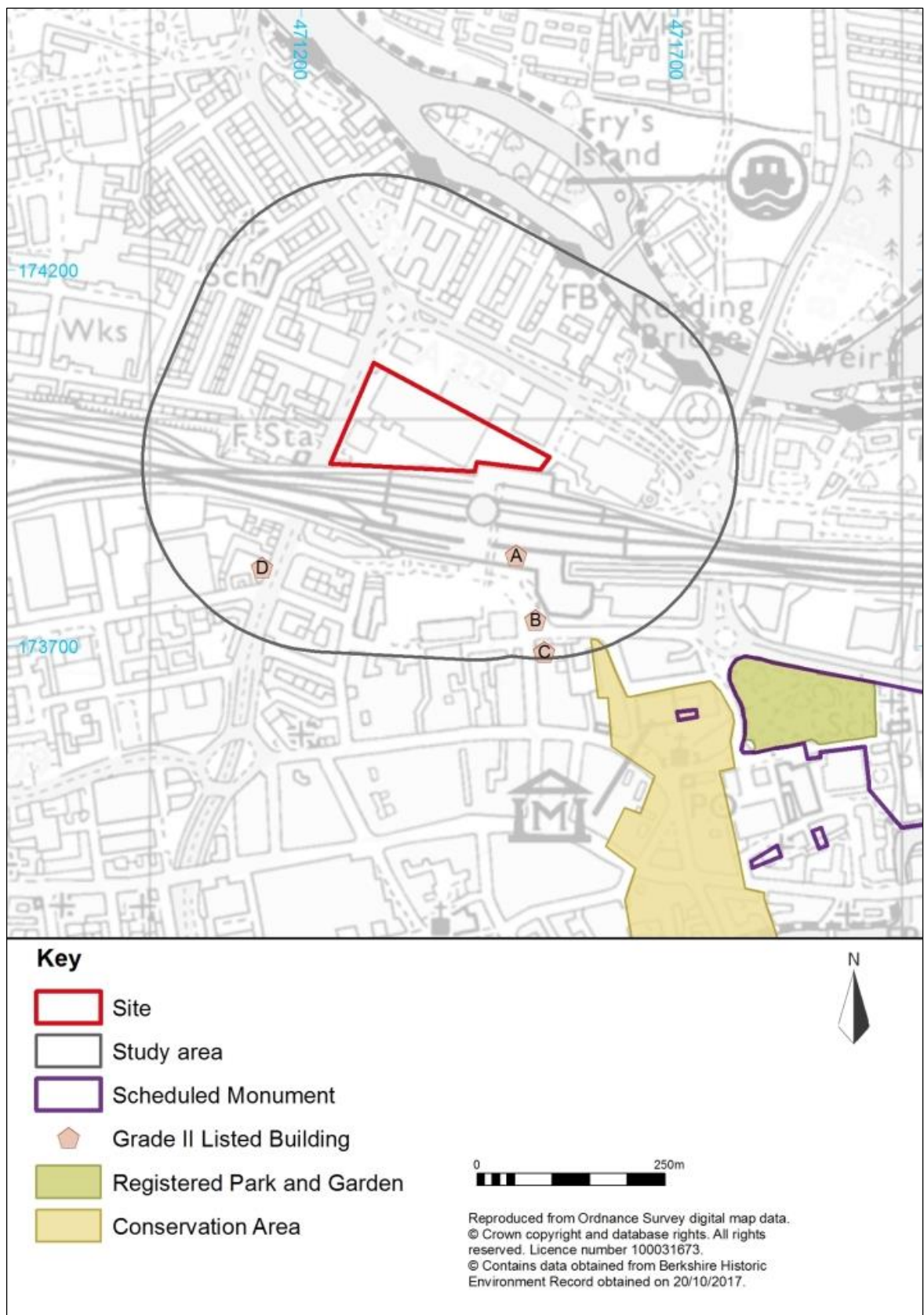


Fig. 6 Designated heritage assets

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- 5.8. The heritage significance of the station building is derived from a combination of evidential, historical, architectural and communal heritage values principally relating to the form and function of the building. The building is of special historic and architectural interest as part of the development of the Great Western Railway line and its contribution to the associated urban expansions, in this case that of Reading. A station building would have been established with the intention of aiding in the development of an urban area.
- 5.9. The physical fabric of the building holds architectural and aesthetic values based on the high quality of its construction and Italianate detailing. The building's features demonstrate the design and approach often used during the earlier stages of the railway. When viewed in conjunction with the adjacent extension and bridge/gangway it clearly shows the gradual evolution of railway buildings and changes to such designs.
- 5.10. Historically and communally, the station represents a part of the history of Reading and the evolution of the railways, providing a form of transport to aid commuting and transportation of goods. The history of the approach to railway buildings is further represented by the change of use, and replacement, of the station. In that, it was replaced by the 20th century extension and, although still in public use, converted to a pub/restaurant.

Physical Surrounds – 'What Matters and Why'

- 5.11. The Listed Building is set within a modern urban setting with the key/integral setting to the railway station formed by the railway line to the north, the new station buildings to the east and the bridge/gangway to the west (Photo 3). The primary elevation facing onto a pedestrianized and partly open area, contribute to its historic and architectural value by allowing uninterrupted views of the building with the associated structures framing the view and emphasising its function.
- 5.12. Beyond the station, the immediate and wider surroundings are characterised predominately by extensive urban development, illustrating the historical context within which the station was constructed. The wider setting has been subject to alteration through urban regeneration of varying design and scale.

Experience – 'What Matters and Why'

- 5.13. The historic and evidential interest of the building is best appreciated from within the interior of the building, and at close proximity externally from within the surrounding

open spaces. Due to the presence of modern additions to the east and west, the building can be appreciated from the south in this modern context. Due to the railway lines and extant buildings within the Site to the north, no clear views of the Listed Building are afforded from these directions. Such views, including those from the Site are dominated by the modern architectural style, which forms a key focal point and prevent good appreciation of the historical interest of the Listed Building.

- 5.14. Whilst the station continues to represent an important aspect of the local heritage asset which can be appreciated by the local community, it is not an easily recognisable feature from within the wider urban landscape. The presence of intervening built form of varying design and scale prevents clear views from the wider environs. It is worth noting that as a functional station it was not designed to encompass views of the wider landscape.



Photo 3 Reading Station within its setting with the Statue of King Edward VII in the foreground as seen from the south

Summary of development effects

- 5.15. The proposed redevelopment of the Site would not affect the Listed Building directly, and therefore would not result in change to, or adverse impacts upon the principal contributors to the asset's significance, i.e. its evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal values, which relate to the form and function of the station.

5.16. The proposed redevelopment of the Site would result in a change within the surroundings of the Listed Building as the relatively low built form will be replaced by taller structures. The proposal would introduce a new built element of greater scale and mass in the immediate surroundings of the station and it will potentially become perceptible in some views above the recent extension to the railway station (the gangway and overbridge). However, as presented above the station is situated within an extensive urban setting characterised by various modern buildings, including a number of tall, dominant structures (including Thames Tower, as seen in Photo 3, directly in front of the Listed Building). Furthermore, this urban setting is constantly evolving, with schemes consented and proposed within the surroundings of the station. As part of these changes, the immediate setting of the station has also been subject to alteration, with the installation of modern architecture partially enclosing the Listed Building. As such, the change introduced by the proposed redevelopment would reflect the continuing urban regeneration of this area and would be in keeping with the character of the urban environs of the station building. In conclusion, it is considered that the key aspects of setting and significance that contribute to the heritage significance of the Listed Building would not be affected, resulting in no harm.

Designated heritage assets in the wider area

5.17. As stated the Site is located within the wider setting of an additional four designated heritage assets, comprising:

- The Statue of King Edward VII, Grade II Listed Building, c. 200m south of the Site **(B)**;
- Great Western House, Grade II Listed Building, c. 240m south of the Site **(C)**;
- Regent Place, Grade II Listed Building, c. 160m south-west of the Site **(D)**;
- and
- Market Place/London Street Conservation Area, c. 240m south-east of the Site.

The Statue of King Edward VII (B)

5.18. The Statue of King Edward VII is located immediately south of Reading General Station on a lawned island between Blagrove Street and Station Road. It is made of bronze and placed on a high polished granite plinth with Ionic corner scroll balusters and re-entrant cornice. The statue derives its significance primarily from its evidential and aesthetical value based on its physical fabric and design as a decorative feature.

It also retains historic and associative value as a statute to commemorate the coronation of the king by George Edward Wade.



Photo 4 **Statue of King Edward VII as seen from the north**



Photo 5 **Great Western House as seen from the junction between Station Road and Gerrard Road to the north-west**

Great Western House (C)

- 5.19. Great Western House is dated to 1844 and is recognised as one of the first railway hotels in Britain. Based on its similar design to that of the Royal Station Hotel in Slough, it is considered that the building was designed by Brunel or one of his assistants. The building, based on Italianate design, is decorated with stucco with rusticated quoins and has two clear phases of extension to the south and east. The hotel fronts onto Station Road to the west. The building derives significance from its evidential value with extensive surviving historic fabric which also contributes to its architectural interest. The significance is also derived from its historical value as an example of one of the earliest railway hotels and close association with Brunel. The historical character of the building has been retained through its continued use as a hotel.

Regent Place (D)

- 5.20. Regent Place is an 1847 terrace block of red brick with stucco basement and detailing. The building derives its significance from its evidential and architectural values as a mid-19th century terrace block which has been subject to limited alteration.



Photo 6 Regent Place as viewed from the north-east on Caversham Road

Market Place/London Street Conservation Area

- 5.21. Market Place/London Street Conservation Area was designated in 1972 and extended in 1982. The Conservation Area is linear in form and concentrated beside the planned medieval southern approach road, over the River Kennet, to a market place and church outside one of Reading's gateways. The special interests are primarily based on the built environment within it, including churches and various commercial structures and some residential building, with the addition of public open spaces, for example Market Place. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the setting as comprising Reading city centre with its urban context (Reading Borough Council 2007).

Impact Assessment

- 5.22. The Site is located to the north of these Listed Buildings and Conservation Area on the opposite side of the railway tracks. At present there are no interconnecting views between the Site and Conservation Area or the Listed Buildings, however, the proposed development would be of a greater height, which could result in the new structures becoming perceptible within views from the wider landscape. The views to or from the Site are not considered to contribute to the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area or the significance of the Listed Buildings. Due to the scale of the proposal it is possible that it will be within the backdrop of views between Great Western House and Station. However, as these views have already been extensively altered it is considered that the change can be accommodated without affecting the assets. The Site is located within an area comprising of modern development which is not considered to contribute to the special character the Conservation Area or Listed Buildings.
- 5.23. The development would not physically impact upon the Conservation Area or any Listed Buildings located within it or those identified above (paragraph 5.17). None of the key contributors to the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area, including important views within the designated area, would be affected as a result of the proposed development.
- 5.24. The proposal has the potential to alter long distance views from the Conservation Area towards the north. However, this part of the town is not considered to form part of the setting contributing to the character of the Conservation Area or Listed Buildings. This alteration would be limited, and in keeping with the modern urban

character of the wider area, and, at this distance, due to the presence of other dominating modern structures in the views, not clearly perceptible.

- 5.25. The proposal would introduce limited change into the wider urban surrounding of the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings. Although such alteration within the modern townscape would result in change to the setting, it will not harm the significance or affect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Nor would the proposal result in any harm to the setting of the Listed Buildings and the contributing aspects of their significance. Following the completion of the development, the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings would continue to be perceived within a modern urban context, with the important key contributors entirely unaffected. As such it is considered that the proposal would not affect the heritage significance and special character of the Conservation Area and the Listed Buildings.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1. This assessment has included a review of a comprehensive range of available sources, in accordance with key industry guidance, in order to identify known and potential heritage assets located within the Site and its environs which may be affected by the proposals. The significance of the identified known and potential heritage assets has been determined, as far as possible, on the basis of available evidence. The potential effects of the proposals on the significance of identified heritage assets, including any potential physical effects upon buried archaeological remains, and potential non-physical effects resulting from the anticipated changes to the settings of heritage assets, have been assessed. Any physical or non-physical effects of the proposals upon the significance of the heritage resource will be a material consideration in the determination of the planning application for the proposal.

Physical effects

- 6.2. No archaeological remains of comparable significance to Scheduled Monuments have been identified within the Site as part of this assessment.
- 6.3. This assessment has identified a potential for the presence of archaeological remains within the Site. Based on known archaeological deposits in close proximity and later development within the Site, potential remains comprise:
- Prehistoric lithic implements;
 - Early medieval to post-medieval agricultural features; and
 - Modern ballasts and building remains associated with 19th and 20th century development within the Site.
- 6.4. While it is recognised that construction activities associated with the proposed redevelopment would have the potential to disturb any currently unrecorded archaeological remains present, these would be unlikely to represent heritage assets of the highest significance.
- 6.5. This assessment has established that any potential archaeological remains within the Site are likely to have been extensively compromised during groundworks associated with the construction of the extant buildings. As part of the consented planning application (ref. 11/00276/OUT), discussions were carried out with the archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority. It was agreed that whilst there are no

archaeological objections to the development at this Site, there is a requirement for further archaeological investigations, to be secured as a condition attached to the consent granted. It was agreed that a staged programme of further archaeological works would be carried out at the Site. It is considered that the approach previously proposed and agreed provides an adequate response to the potential archaeological remains. Any further impacts are likely associated with the construction and removal of these buildings, although the extent of such disturbance to any surviving archaeological features is not fully understood.

Non-physical effects

- 6.6. This assessment has considered the potential effects upon designated heritage assets located within the environs of the Site. Within the surrounding landscape there are four Grade II Listed Buildings, in addition to Market Place/London Street Conservation Area.
- 6.7. It is concluded that while the development proposals would introduce a change within the Site, they would, in terms of the National Planning Policy Framework, result in no harm to the setting or significance of Listed Buildings within the environs of the Site. The proposal would not alter the general character of the wider landscape within which these assets are located, which comprises modern urban development and infrastructure, and tall buildings, if visible, would not detract from the appreciation of the special interest of Listed Buildings or character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 6.8. As such, the proposals would be in line with the requirements of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (Sections 66 and 72), and national and local planning policy.

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Cartographic sources (viewed at Berkshire Record Office)

1611	John Speed Map of Berkshire
1762	John Rocque Map of Berkshire
1824	C&J Greenwood Map of Berkshire
1840	Weller Map of Berkshire
1853	J B Clacy Reading Board of Health Maps
1879	Ordnance Survey map, 1:2,500 scale
1895-1984	Charles E Goad Fire Insurance Plans
1900	Second Edition Ordnance Survey map, 1:2,500 scale
1910	District Valuation Records
1912	Ordnance Survey map, 1:2,500 scale
1931	Revision of 1931 Ordnance Survey map, 1:2,500 scale

Subsequent Ordnance Survey maps viewed at: www.old-maps.co.uk, www.promap.co.uk and www.maps.nls.uk/geo/find/

APPENDIX 1: HERITAGE STATUTE POLICY & GUIDANCE

Heritage Statute: Scheduled Monuments

Scheduled Monuments are subject to the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. The Act sets out the controls of works affecting Scheduled Monuments and other related matters. Contrary to the requirements of the Planning Act 1990 regarding Listed buildings, the 1979 Act does not include provision for the 'setting' of Scheduled Monuments.

Heritage Statute: Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are buildings of 'special architectural or historic interest' and are subject to the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act'). Under Section 7 of the Act 'no person shall execute or cause to be executed any works for the demolition of a listed building or for its alteration or extension in any manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest, unless the works are authorised.' Such works are authorised under Listed Building Consent. Under Section 66 of the Act 'In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any feature of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'.

Note on the extent of a Listed Building

Under Section 1(5) of the Act, a structure may be deemed part of a Listed Building if it is:

- (a) fixed to the building, or
- (b) within the curtilage of the building, which, although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1st July 1948

The inclusion of a structure deemed to be within the 'curtilage' of a building thus means that it is subject to the same statutory controls as the principal Listed Building. Inclusion within this duty is not, however, an automatic indicator of 'heritage significance' both as defined within the NPPF (2018) and within Conservation Principles (see Section 2 above). In such cases, the establishment of the significance of the structure needs to be assessed both in its own right and in the contribution it makes to the significance and character of the principal Listed building. The practical effect of the inclusion in the listing of ancillary structures is limited by the requirement that Listed Building Consent is only needed for works to the 'Listed Building' (to include the building in the list and all the ancillary items) where they affect the special character of the Listed building as a whole.

Guidance is provided by Historic England on '[Listed Buildings and Curtilage: Historic England Advice Note 10](#)' (Historic England 2018).

Heritage Statue: Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are designated by the local planning authority under Section 69(1)(a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act'), which requires that *'Every local planning authority shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'*. Section 72 of the Act requires that *'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'*.

The requirements of the Act only apply to land within a Conservation Area; not to land outside it. This is set out within 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets' (2017; see below) which states that *'In primary legislation, the setting of Conservation Areas is not a statutory duty'* (page 5). This fact is also clarified in various Appeal Decisions (for example APP/F1610/A/14/2213318 Land south of Cirencester Road, Fairford, Paragraph 65: *'The Section 72 duty only applies to buildings or land in a Conservation Area, and so does not apply in this case as the site lies outside the Conservation Area.'*).

The NPPF (2018) also clarifies in [Paragraph 201](#) that *'Not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance'*. Thus land or buildings may be a part of a Conservation Area, but may not necessarily be of architectural or historical significance. Similarly, not all elements of the setting of a Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance, or to an equal degree.

National heritage policy: the National Planning Policy Framework

Heritage assets and heritage significance

Heritage assets comprise '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' (the NPPF (2018), Annex 2). Designated heritage assets include World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas (designated under the relevant legislation; NPPF (2018), Annex 2). The NPPF (2018), Annex 2, states that the significance of a heritage asset may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Historic England's 'Conservation Principles' looks at significance as a series of 'values' which include 'evidential', 'historical', 'aesthetic' and 'communal'.

The setting of heritage assets

The 'setting' of a heritage asset comprises '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' (NPPF (2018), Annex 2). Thus it is important to note that 'setting' is not a heritage asset: it may contribute to the value of a heritage asset.

Guidance on assessing the effects of change upon the setting and significance of heritage assets is provided in 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets', which has been utilised for the present assessment (see below).

Levels of information to support planning applications

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF (2018) identifies 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'.

Designated heritage assets

Paragraph 184 of the NPPF (2018) explains that heritage assets 'are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance'. Paragraph 193 notes 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'. Paragraph 194 goes on to note that 'substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building...should be exceptional and substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance (notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites)...should be wholly exceptional'.

Paragraph 196 clarifies that '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'.

Development Plan

The Site lies within the administrative boundary of Reading Borough Council. The council adopted the existing 'Reading Borough Council Local Development Framework: Core Strategy' in January 2008. A new Local Plan is currently under preparation, and when completed will replace the currently development plans (the Core Strategy, Reading Central Area Action Plan and Sites, and Detailed Policies Document).

Policies relevant to the historic environment from the existing 'Core Strategy' include:

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.

The new Local Plan will set out how Reading will develop up to 2036. The Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2018, and will be subject to public examination. Relevant policies in the forthcoming plan include:

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 appropriate enhanced. This will include:

- Listed Buildings;
- Conservation Areas; and
- Other features with local or national significance, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, Ancient Monuments, historic parks and gardens and locally listed assets.

Planning permission will only be granted where the new development makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and has no adverse impact on heritage assets and their settings. All proposals will be expected to protect and where appropriate

enhance 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. 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 or 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.

EN2: Areas Of Archaeological Significance: Applicants should identify and evaluate sites of archaeological significance. Where remains cannot be preserved 'in situ,' remains should be properly excavated, investigated and recorded.

EN5: Protection Of Significant Views With Heritage Interest: New development should not harm and where possible should make a positive contribution to views of acknowledged historical significance. The following views merit special protection:

1. View from McIlroy Park towards Chazey Barn Farm, the Thames Meadow and the Chilterns escarpment
2. View northwards down Southampton St from Whitley St towards St Giles Church, St Mary's Church and Greyfriars Church
3. View upstream from Caversham Bridge
4. View northwards down Russell St towards the Church of the Holy Trinity
5. View over Redlands Conservation Area toward the Chilterns escarpment
6. View southwards down St Annes Rd towards Downshire Square
7. View of St Annes Church Tower from the west
8. View towards Caversham Park House from the A329(M) and surrounding streets.

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 be expected to 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 give cues as to 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 views, and open space);

-
- b. Sensitivity to historic context;
 - c. Reflection of borough-wide major heritage themes that contribute to local distinctiveness (e.g. patterned brickwork or former worker terraced housing);
 - d. Whether development promotes and/or improves access to previously undiscovered or neglected historic significance.

Good Practice Advice 1-3

Historic England has issued three Good Practice Advice notes ('GPA1-3') which support the NPPF. The GPAs note that they do not constitute a statement of Government policy, nor do they seek to prescribe a single methodology: their purpose is to assist local authorities, planners, heritage consultants, and other stakeholders in the implementation of policy set out in the NPPF. This report has been produced in the context of this advice, particularly 'GPA2 – Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment' and 'GPA3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets'.

GPA2 - Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment

GPA2 sets out the requirement for assessing 'heritage significance' as part of the application process. Paragraph 8 notes 'understanding the nature of the significance is important to understanding the need for and best means of conservation.' This includes assessing the extent and level of significance, including the contribution made by its 'setting' (see GPA3 below). GPA2 notes that 'a desk-based assessment will determine, as far as is reasonably possible from existing records, the nature, extent and significance of the historic environment within a specified area, and the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the historic environment, or will identify the need for further evaluation to do so' (Page 3).

GPA3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets

The NPPF (Annex 2: Glossary) defines the setting of a heritage asset as 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced...'. Step 1 of the settings assessment requires heritage assets which may be affected by development to be identified. Historic England notes that for the purposes of Step 1 this process will comprise heritage assets 'where that experience is capable of being affected by a proposed development (in any way)...'.

Step 2 of the settings process 'assess[es] the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated', with regard to its physical surrounds; relationship with its surroundings and patterns of use; experiential effects such as noises or smells; and the way views allow the significance of the asset to be appreciated. Step 3 requires 'assessing the effect of the

proposed development on the significance of the asset(s)' – specifically to 'assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance or on the ability to appreciate it', with regard to the location and siting of the development, its form and appearance, its permanence, and wider effects.

Step 4 of GPA3 provides commentary on 'ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm'. It notes (Paragraph 37) that 'Maximum advantage can be secured if any effects on the significance of a heritage asset arising from development liable to affect its setting are considered from the project's inception.' It goes on to note (Paragraph 39) that 'good design may reduce or remove the harm, or provide enhancement'.

Heritage significance

Discussion of heritage significance within this assessment report makes reference to several key documents. With regard to Listed buildings and Conservation Areas it primarily discusses 'architectural and historic interest', which comprises the special interest for which they are designated.

The NPPF provides a definition of 'significance' for heritage policy (Annex 2). This states that heritage significance comprises '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'. This also clarifies that for World Heritage Sites 'the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance'.

Regarding 'levels' of significance the NPPF (2018) provides a distinction between: designated heritage assets of the highest significance; designated heritage assets not of the highest significance; and non-designated heritage assets.

Historic England's 'Conservation Principles' expresses 'heritage significance' as comprising a combination of one or more of: evidential value; historical value; aesthetic value; and communal value.

Effects upon heritage assets

Heritage benefit

The NPPF clarifies that change in the setting of heritage assets may lead to heritage benefit. Paragraph 200 of the NPPF (2018) notes that 'Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals

that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably’.

GPA3 notes that ‘good design may reduce or remove the harm, or provide enhancement’ (Paragraph 28). Historic England’s ‘Conservation Principles’ states that ‘Change to a significant place is inevitable, if only as a result of the passage of time, but can be neutral or beneficial in its effects on heritage values. It is only harmful if (and to the extent that) significance is reduced’ (Paragraph 84).

Specific heritage benefits may be presented through activities such as repair or restoration, as set out in Conservation Principles.

Heritage harm to designated heritage assets

The NPPF (2018) does not define what constitutes ‘substantial harm’. The High Court of Justice does provide a definition of this level of harm, as set out by Mr Justice Jay in *Bedford Borough Council v SoS for CLG and Nuon UK Ltd*. Paragraph 25 clarifies that, with regard to ‘substantial harm’: ‘Plainly in the context of physical harm, this would apply in the case of demolition or destruction, being a case of total loss. It would also apply to a case of serious damage to the structure of the building. In the context of non-physical or indirect harm, the yardstick was effectively the same. One was looking for an impact which would have such a serious impact on the significance of the asset that its significance was either vitiated altogether or very much reduced’.

Effects upon non-designated heritage assets

The NPPF (2018) paragraph 197 guides that ‘The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgment will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset’.

APPENDIX 2: DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Ref.	Description	Grade	NGR	HE ref. HER ref. HEA ref.
A	Main Building of Reading General Station	Grade II Listed Building	471487 173820	1321892 MRD6041
B	The Statue of King Edward VII	Grade II Listed Building	471512 173735	1113589
C	Great Western House	Grade II Listed Building	471524 173692	1113591
D	Regent Place	Grade II Listed Building	471149 173804	1113434
-	Reading Abbey: a Cluniac and Benedictine monastery and Civil War earthwork.	Scheduled Monument	471965 173576	1007932
-	The Forbury Garden	Grade II Registered Park and Garden	471864 173622	1000586
-	Market Place/London Street Conservation Area	-	471651 173366	-

APPENDIX 3: RECORDED HERITAGE ASSETS

Ref.	Description	Period	NGR	HE ref. BHER ref. HEA ref.
1	<u>Railway infrastructure assets:</u> Great Western Railway (GWR) – London to Reading including Reading Station and the Reading Guildford and Reigate Branch Line; Caversham Road Underbridge; Berkshire and Hampshire Branch Railway and Reading to Mortimer Station; and South Eastern and Chatham Railway Line.	Modern	470479 174124 471210 173900 470007172369 472169 173736	MRD6024 MRM16715 MRD6122 MRD6125 1359015 1359288 500722 500723 976784
2	<u>River Thames findspots:</u> Mesolithic tranche axe, pick and blade; Neolithic axes and perforated hammer head; Bronze Age dagger blade, socketed knife, two bronze palstaves, bronze socketed sickle, socketed axehead, leaf-shaped bronze spearhead, basal looped spearhead and a pot; Roman dupondius of Vespasian; Early medieval iron Merovingian bit, iron knife and spearhead; Medieval arrowhead; and Post-medieval bayonet.	Prehistoric Romano-British Early medieval Medieval Post-medieval	471699 174100	MRD11164 MRD11185 MRD11218 MRD11346 MRD11395 MRD11401
3	River Thames findspot: dupondius of Vespasian.	Romano-British	471730 174060	MRD11296 245076
4	Medieval findspot: 14-15th century pilgrim's bottle at Corn Exchange.	Medieval	471120 173830	MRD11398
5	Burial near the Engine Sheds, Reading Station.	Early medieval	471520 173900	MRD3891 244975
6	Prehistoric findspot: Palaeolithic ovate handaxe at Vachel Road in 1903.	Prehistoric	471200 173699	MRD9047 1050681
7	Roman findspot: a 3rd brass of Magnentius found in Greyfriars Road.	Romano-British	471260 173690	MRD11262 245080
8	<u>Investigations on land at Station Hill and Friars Walk:</u> Desk-Based Assessment and Evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in 2009: recorded medieval and post-medieval pottery, tile and animal bone. Alluvial clays, representing former palaeochannels, and sand/gravel were also recorded; Watching Brief and Evaluation were undertaken by Archaeology South-East in 2016: recorded evidence of former marshland, alluvial deposits and ditch. The ditch is suggested to represent a former managed watercourse.	Medieval Post-medieval Modern Undated	471365 173755	ERM1325 ERM1320 ERM1955 MRM16558 MRM18235
9	Vastern Meadows	Medieval Post-medieval	471378 173785	MRM16015

Ref.	Description	Period	NGR	HE ref. BHER ref. HEA ref.
10	Medieval findspot: pottery in the foundations of a new garage.	Medieval	471479 173750	MRD11371
11	Prehistoric findspot: lower Palaeolithic handaxe in the drainage ditches at Station Road in 1904.	Prehistoric	471500 173700	1050683
12	Possible line of Danish Defences.	Early medieval	471717 173568	MRD15633

Heritage assets not illustrated and relevant previous archaeological investigations

Description	Period	NGR	HE ref. HER ref. HEA ref.
Desk-Based undertaken by CgMs Consulting in 2010 at the Royal Mail Sorting Office.	-	471357 173994	ERM1134 1600883
Evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in 2001 at St Paul's Church: no archaeological finds or features.	-	471138 174221	ERD61
Evaluation undertaken by Thames Valley Archaeological Services between 1998 and 1999 at Brigham Road: recorded alluvium and localised peat deposits but no archaeological finds.	-	471381 174248	ERD21 1352053
Borehole Survey undertaken by Quaternary Services in 2014 on the Thames Pedestrian/Cycle Bridge: recorded peat deposits and gravel remains.	-	471591 174192 471607 174174 471640 174133 471663 174110	ERM1552
Desk-Based Assessment undertaken by CgMs Consulting in 2007 at 5-21 Tudor Road. Evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in 2012 recorded no significant archaeological finds or features.	-	471224 173804	ERM715 ERM1401 1519623 1570592
Desk-Based Assessment undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in 2009 at Reading Station (southern entrance).	-	471466 173813	ERM1703
Desk-Based Assessment undertaken by Ove Arup and Partners Ltd in 2009 at Reading Station Area Re-development.	-	471543 173844	ERM1704
Desk-Based Assessment undertaken by CPM Environmental Planning and Design in 2002 at The Lion Public House.	-	471065 173736	ERD110
Desk-Based Assessment undertaken by CgMs Consulting in 2001 and 2015, and the Museum of London Archaeology Service in 2004 at 29-35 Station Road.	-	471484 173690	ERM1801 ERD66 ERM226 1393932
Desk-Based Assessment undertaken by Thames Valley Archaeological Services in 2003 on land at Station Hill.	-	471356 173745	ERM500
Desk-Based Assessment undertaken by CgMs Consulting in 2008 at Aldwych House.	-	471600 173700	1533320
Watching Brief undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in 2000 on Tudor Road: recorded evidence of post-medieval and modern activity.	Post-medieval Modern	471232 173845	ERD99 1385580

Description	Period	NGR	HE ref. HER ref. HEA ref.
Building Survey undertaken by Wessex Archaeology in 2011 at Reading Station Area Redevelopment – Western Wing of Station Buildings.	Modern	471380 173835	ERM1724 MRM17607
Evaluation undertaken by Wessex Archaeology in 1995 on Vastern Road: recorded a single linear feature likely to comprise a 19th century land drain, a layer of cinders and hoggin and alluvial silty clays.	Modern	471669 174044	ERM249 1043750 MRD6571 MRD6573
River Thames Navigation.		461895 178817	1341177
The Vastern Road Brook – Vastern Road to Kings Meadow.	Modern	471745 173932	MRM15994
Civil War Defences	Post-medieval	471261 173310	MRD15703

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