



**Design & Access
Statement**

Heritage Statement

**1820 Abbey Hall
Reading**

12th November 2018

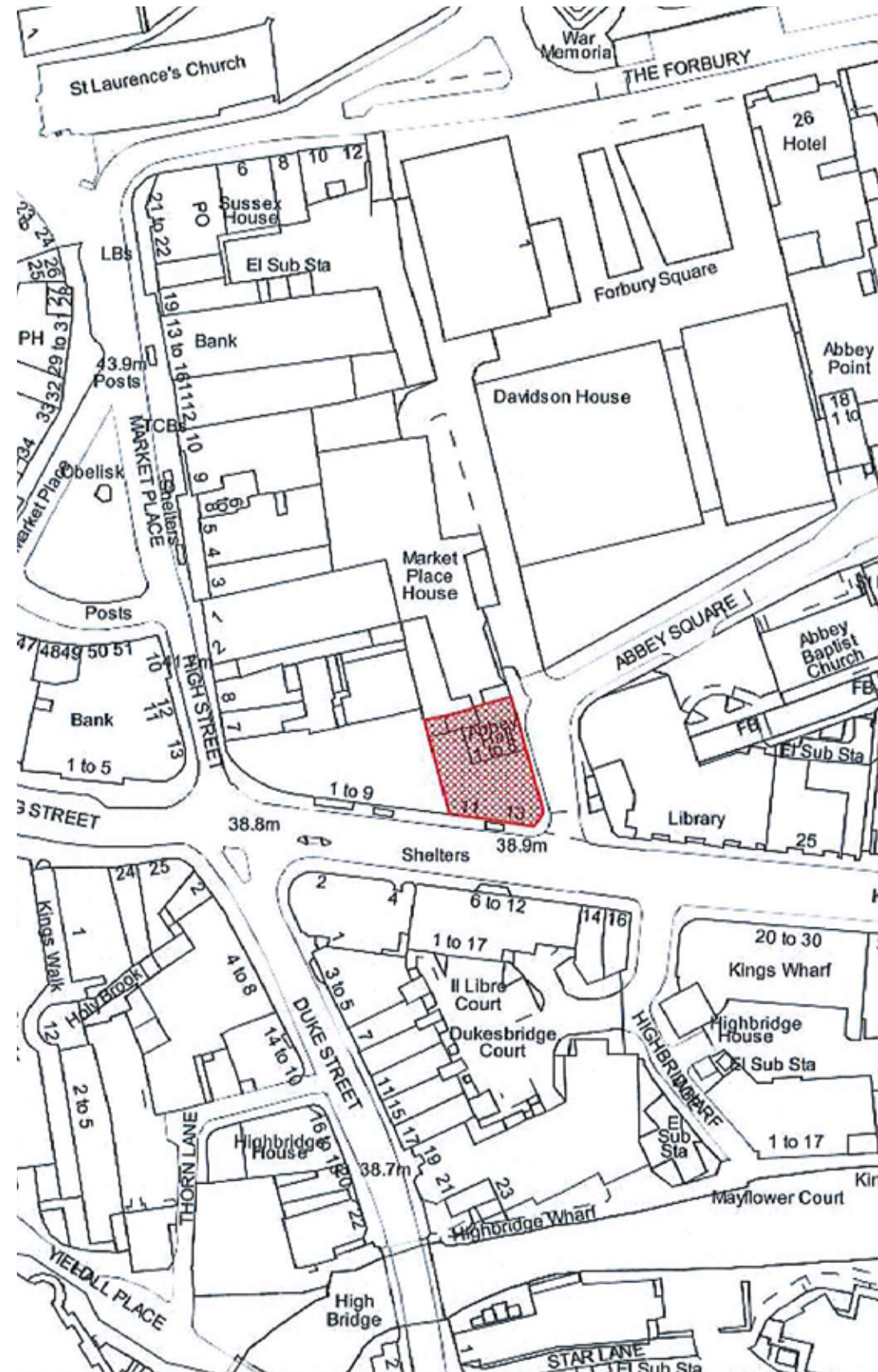


1820 Abbey Hall
Reading

Contents

4	Introduction
6	Proposals
7	Parking and servicing
8	Affordable housing
8	Sustainability statement
9	Planning statement
10	Heritage statement
13	Access statement

1. Introduction



left:
Location plan.

Abbey Hall is a three storey corner building, between Abbey Square and Kings Street, in Reading town centre. It is located a short walk from the railway station, and is within the Primary Shopping Area. It is located in Reading's "Market Place Conservation Area" and is noted as being a building of Townscape Merit.

The existing building has A3 (restaurants and cafés) use at ground and first floor level, formerly the 'Artisanz' restaurant, with customer toilets, kitchen and storage located at first floor level. The first floor also contains a single dwelling C3 (dwelling houses) adjacent to the main access stair. The second floor of the building comprises seven residential flat units, which are privately owned leaseholds.

The proposed scheme is to change the use of the first floor from restaurant (A3) to residential use (C3), comprising four residential apartments. The ground floor will remain in A3 use and is expected to be the subject of a separate planning application to make facade improvements, once a new tenant is secured and their requirements are known.

This document sets out proposals for the arrangement of the first floor as residential units. As a result of the proposed conversion minor improvements and alterations are proposed to the Abbey Square and King's Road elevation.



Above:
View of Abbey Hall from further west along
Kings Road, showing the restaurant shop front
at ground floor and brick and stone elevation
above.

Above right:
View from further east along Kings Road.

Right:
View from Abbey Square, showing the 1960s
wing to the rear of the Victorian body of the
building.



2. Proposals

Proposed layout

The proposed layout is for four residential apartments comprising 3 no. one-bedroom and 1 no. two- bedroom apartments, with a new shared corridor connecting to the existing access staircase.

Entrance

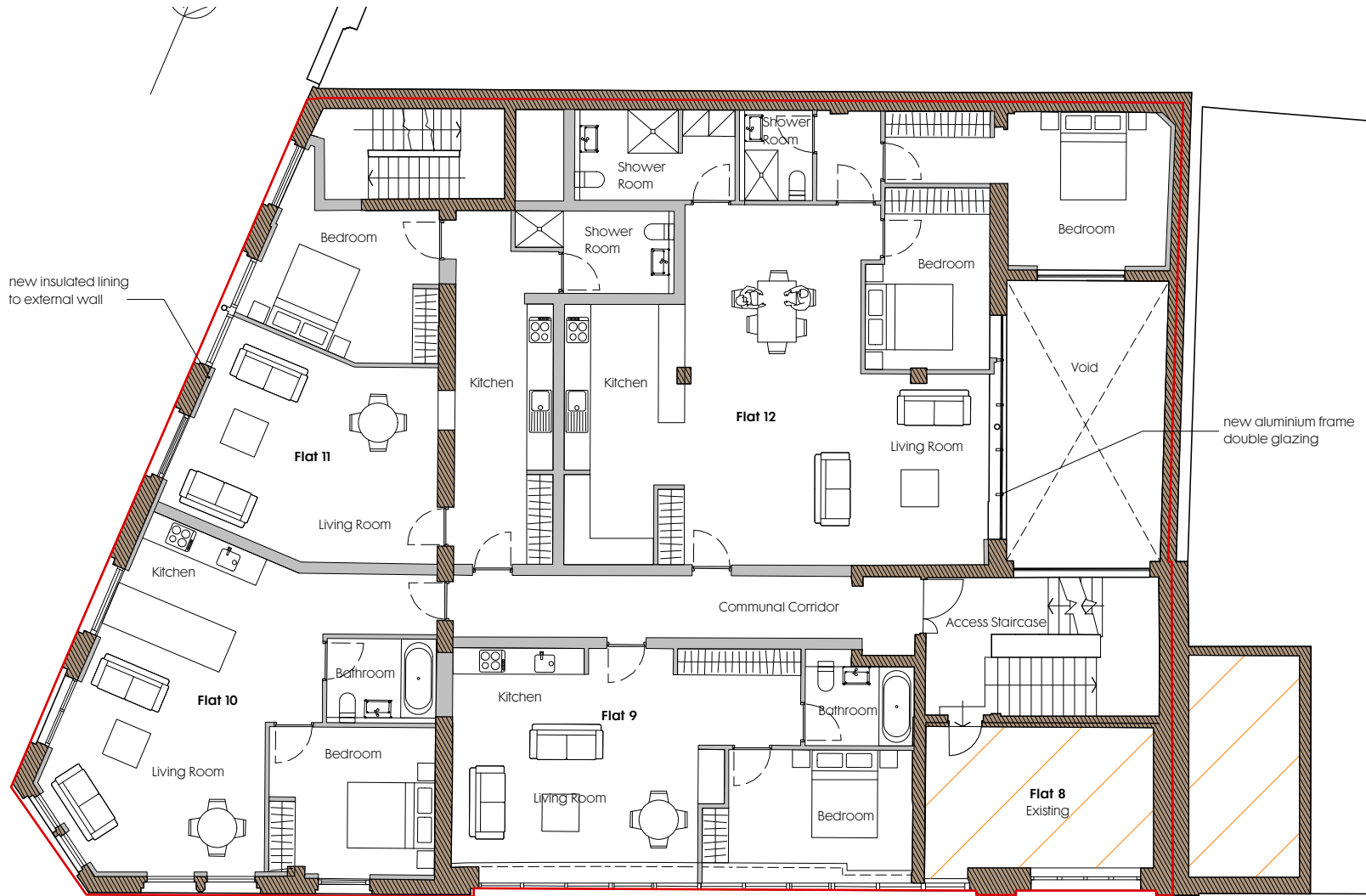
The entrance to the new residential apartments will be via the existing entrance on Abbey Square, which provides level access to the entrance lobby.

Vertical circulation

Access to the first floor apartments will be via the existing residential protected access stair. The building does not have lift access. No alterations are proposed to the existing access stair.

Elevations

The elevations of the building to King's Road and Abbey Place will not be substantively altered as a result of these proposals. Minor alterations are proposed to replace, with clear double glazed sash units, the solid infill panels that have been refitted into two of the existing sash windows, one on each elevation. New extract vent positions are also required which are proposed to be formed through existing brickwork and render surfaces as shown on the proposals drawings. The doors to the waste storage area will be upgraded to form a matching pair of louvred doors.



Above:
First floor plan showing its division
into four flats.

3. Parking and servicing

Core Strategy policy CS24: Car and Cycle Parking: maximum car parking standards and cycle parking requirements will be applied in relation to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.

Parking provision

Reference: Reading Borough Council, Revised Parking Standards and Design, Supplementary Planning Document - Final - Adopted 31st October 2011.

The site lies within Zone 1, Central Core Area, for which maximum parking standards apply at 0.5 space per C3 Dwelling Flat (1-2 bed). No new resident's parking is proposed with this development. The location of the site within Zone 1 of the Central Core Area, is defined as having the best transport hubs, with both the main railway station and also bus interchanges at the station and within Friar Street and other streets surrounding the town centre.

Cycle provision

Minimum cycle parking standards are required. These being 0.5 spaces per C3 Dwelling 1-2 bed flat. The standard further notes that "If no individual secure facility e.g. store or garage associated with property, dedicated parking required. This can be in the form of communal cycle parking." A secure cycle storage facility for 2 No. bikes is therefore provided at ground floor level, adjacent to the residential entrance lobby to serve the new dwellings

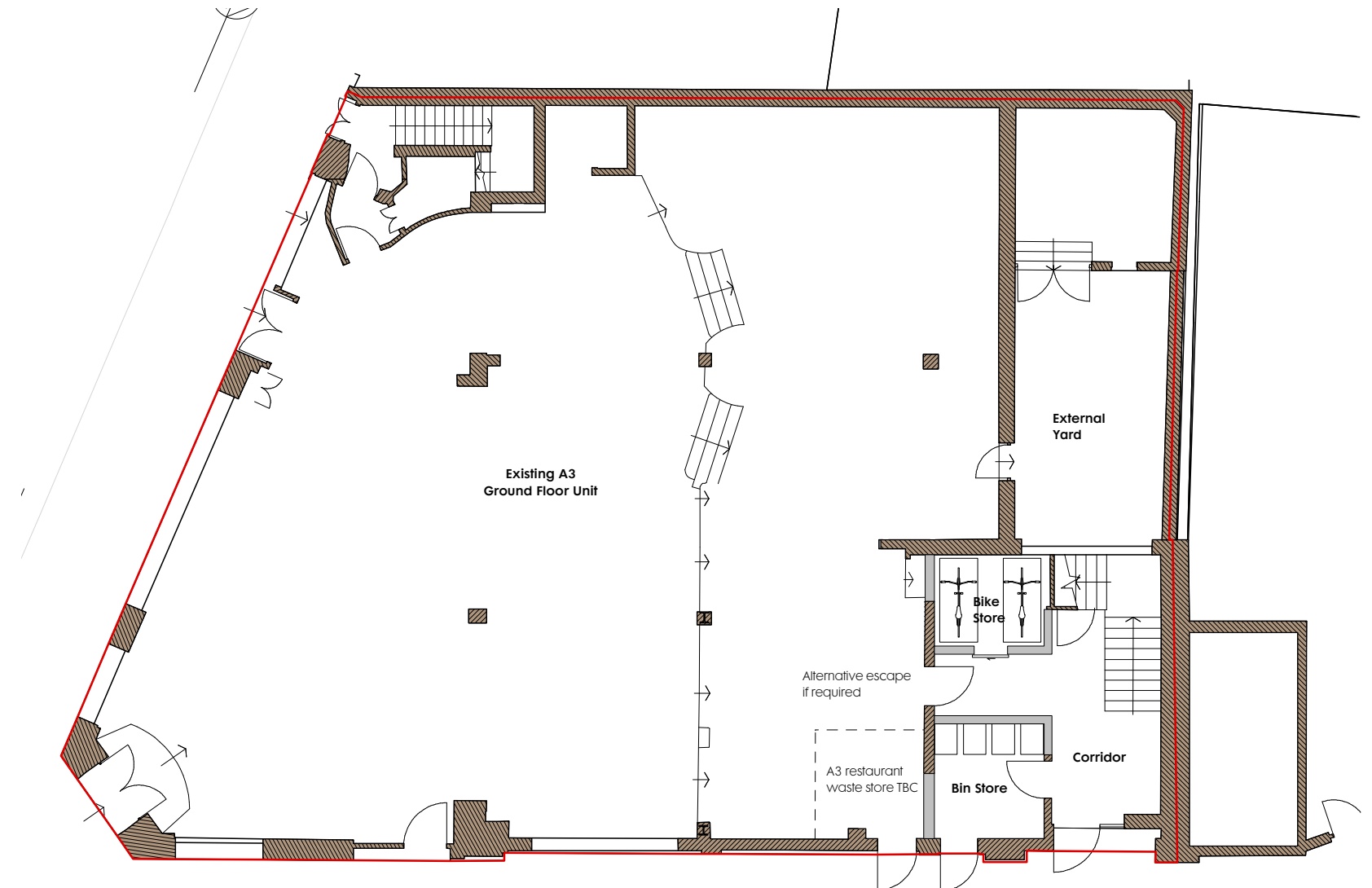
Motorcycle/ Moped Parking

The development is a minor development under the standard (less than 10 units, and less than 1000 sq.m), therefore no motorcycle or moped parking is proposed.

Delivery and Servicing

A loading bay is proposed and agreed as part of planning permission and associated S106 agreement for Jackson's Corner, and is located outside Abbey Hall, on Abbey Square. This loading bay would support the proposed development at Abbey Hall, once it is implemented.

Waste Management collection and storage



Above:
Ground floor plan, showing the access into the building and the location of bin and bike stores.

Reference: Reading Borough Council, Waste Management Guidelines for Property Developers, Architects, Planners and Contractors.

A waste storage area is provided on the ground floor of the building adjacent to the residential access lobby. Access for waste collection is via an external louvred door. A key for access is held by the waste collection provider. It is proposed that the existing waste storage area is upgraded and enlarged to accommodate

additional waste containers to serve the additional four apartments in the building. The proposals will accommodate 4 no. 1,100 litre bins to provide storage for proposed and existing apartments.

Kitchens in new apartments will be provided with adequate internal storage for the separation of recyclable materials from other waste.

4. Affordable housing

In accordance with Reading Borough Council, Site and Detailed Policies, Adopted October 2012 (with alteration adopted 27th January 2015), policy DM6: Affordable Housing requires that developments of between 1 and 4 dwellings will be expected to make a financial contribution to enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough. Therefore no on-site provision of affordable housing is proposed or required, and it is expected that the developer will enter into an agreement with the Council with respect to an appropriate affordable housing contribution.

5. Sustainability statement

The proposals meet the requirements of the Core Strategy vision and objectives by:

- Maintaining and enhancing the historic, built and natural environment of the Borough through investment and high quality design;
- Providing new dwellings with excellent access to a wide range of public transport provision, reducing car reliance and vehicle movements.

The works proposed will comply with the requirements of the Building Regulations.

This includes insulating the internal face of the external walls in order to improve the fabric u-value and thus reduce heat loss and energy consumption. Where elements such as windows and external doors are to be replaced these will be double glazed and with a thermal performance to meet the requirements of the Building Regulations.

Water use will be reduced through the use of spray taps, lower capacity baths and dual-flush cisterns.

Space and water heating will be provided by energy efficient boilers individually within each flat.

As stated elsewhere, cycle parking is provided and no car parking spaces are provided, given the very well connected location of the site, close to the train station and with multiple bus routes stopping on the doorstep.

6. Planning statement

There are a number of policy areas within which the property falls and a number of planning policies that may apply to development on this site. These are:

- Area of archaeology potential (policy CS33, SDPD para 9.1.15-9.1.0)
- Air Quality Management Area (policy DM19)
- Central core policy (policy RC6)
- Reading Central Area (policies RC5, RC9)
- Existing active frontage (policy RC10)
- Other opportunity site (policy RC4)
- Conservation area (policy CS33, SDPD para 9.1.15 - 9.1.20)
- Scheduled Ancient Monument (to rear of library) (policy CS33, SDPD para 9.1.15-9.1.0)

The proposals would address these policies in the following ways:

Area of archaeological potential

The proposals do not include for carrying out any excavation so any potential archaeology on the site would not be affected by the proposals.

Air Quality Management Area:

The proposals will not detrimentally affect air quality but will intensify residential use within this area.

The existing building limits the possibilities, but habitable rooms are sited away from King’s Road were possible.

Central core policy

The central core policy aims to direct development relating to shopping, offices and town centre uses into the centre of the town. It does not preclude residential development in the town centre. The proposals do not change the ground floor use restaurant use of the proposals site. The site also sits within the office core and the primary shopping area. Neither of these uses are currently accommodated or proposed to be accommodated on the site.

Reading Central Area

The policies relating to the Central Area seek high quality design that is appropriate in scale and layout to the existing town. The proposed flats have been carefully designed to sit within the constraints of the existing building.

Policy RC9 specifically relates to the provision of housing in the central area. In response to this policy:

- i. The constraints of the existing building mean that the dwellings proposed are 1 and 2 bedroom. As there is no possibility to provide these 1st floor flats with outside space it is felt that it would not be appropriate to provide larger flats here that would be more likely to be inhabited by families with children.
- ii. The provision of dwellings at first floor, directly above the ground floor restaurant use, will necessitate acoustic separation in order that the dwellings are not affected by the restaurant.
- iii. The apartments are proposed to be for sale.

Existing active frontage

The proposals site is within a frontage designated as ‘active’ and is currently in restaurant (A3) use. The proposals do not change this and therefore the active frontage is maintained.

Other Opportunity Sites

The modern wing of Abbey Hall is included with 3-10 Market Place and Market Place House as a site that has the potential to be redeveloped and increase its contribution to the conservation area. These proposals do not include the wider site.

Conservation area

The heritage statement included here has addressed the history of the building and its significance as a building of townscape merit within the conservation area. The re-use of the first floor as residential is not judged to be detrimental to either the building or the conservation area. The character of the conservation area will be preserved by these proposals.

Schedule Ancient Monument

Reading Abbey is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, which is fragmentary in location. One part of the SAM is located to the rear of Reading Central Library and therefore in the vicinity of the proposals site. The Monument at this point does not appear above ground and therefore the proposals cannot be seen to have a detrimental affect on the setting of the Monument.

Space standards

The proposed flats provide a minimum of 50sqm floor area for a 1-bedroom flat and a minimum of 70sqm of floor area for a 2-bedroom flat. This complies with the national housing space standards and with the forthcoming Local Plan.

Table 1 - Minimum gross internal floor areas and storage (m²)

Number of bedrooms(b)	Number of bed spaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	Built-in storage
1b	1p	39 (37) *			1.0
	2p	50	58		1.5
2b	3p	61	70		2.0
	4p	70	79		
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	
4b	5p	90	97	103	3.0
	6p	99	106	112	
	7p	108	115	121	
	8p	117	124	130	
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	
6b	7p	116	123	129	4.0
	8p	125	132	138	

* Notes (added 19 May 2016):

1. Built-in storage areas are included within the overall GIAs and include an allowance of 0.5m² for fixed services or equipment such as a hot water cylinder, boiler or heat exchanger.
2. GIAs for one storey dwellings include enough space for one bathroom and one additional WC (or shower room) in dwellings with 5 or more bedspaces. GIAs for two and three storey dwellings include enough space for one bathroom and one additional WC (or shower room). Additional sanitary facilities may be included without increasing the GIA provided that all aspects of the space standard have been met.
3. Where a 1b1p has a shower room instead of a bathroom, the floor area may be reduced from 39m² to 37m², as shown bracketed.
4. Furnished layouts are not required to demonstrate compliance.

7. Heritage statement

Description

The building known as Abbey Hall comprises an almost triangular three-storey Victorian building of gault brick and ornate stone lintels and mouldings and a flat roof, with a concrete-framed rear wing clad with aluminium framed curtain walling to the rear, facing Abbey Square.

The building stands on a corner site in a block of similarly aged and sized buildings. At the other end of the block is the four-storey Jackson's corner, with a shopfront at ground floor and red and grey brick with stone mouldings above. The two buildings between Jackson's Corner and Abbey Hall are 3-4 storeys and also have shopfronts at ground floor with red brick, some of which is decorative, above.

History of the building

Established in Reading in 1806, Sutton's Seeds was a family-owned and grown business, which occupied a large area of what is now central Reading with offices, warehouses, store rooms, packing sheds, a laboratory and growing grounds. Abbey Hall was originally part of this estate, being built in 1873 as a reading room and recreation centre for staff. Morning prayers, which were not compulsory, were held in the building every day and societies such as the Reading Gardeners Society met there. At this time the building comprised the three-storey brick building facing King's Road, with another three-storey brick building to the rear with a pitched roof and a gable facing Abbey Square, and a further smaller three-storey wing to the north. All three buildings were brick with decorative mouldings. The gabled building contained a hall with galleries to two sides and a stage or platform at one end. The frontage building contained a café at ground floor level.

During the First World War the building was used by the Armed Forces. During the Second World War the Ministry of Works took over the club rooms on behalf of the American Red Cross. The building was sold by auction in December 1952. Sutton's moved to a new site in Reading in 1962 and in the same year the rear gabled wing of Abbey Hall, that which contained the hall, was demolished. This was replaced with the modern building that stands today.



above left:
View of Abbey Hall today.



above right:
View of Abbey Hall before 1962, showing the gabled hall wing and further northern wing to the rear.



above left:
View along King's Road today.



above right:
View along King's Road in around 1910.

A number of changes have occurred to the building over time. The largest was the loss of the hall and wing to its north. The original two-storey oriel window located on the corner of the building was lost at some point after the 1950s. The brick shopfront has been replaced with a modern frontage, and the interior of the building has been completely remodelled at least once.

Conservation Area

Abbey Hall sits on the eastern edge of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area, which stretches north and south from the site. The conservation area is characterised as a linear area following the 12th century southern approach road to the town. The buildings are of two to four storeys, with the taller generally being located around Market Place. The area immediately around Abbey Hall is formed of buildings with similar heights and massing, but which vary somewhat in style and materials. The most common facing material is brick and the colour varies, polychromatic brickwork being particular to Reading. Continuing east along King's Road there are few historic buildings, the road is lined with modern office buildings and immediately to the east is the Central Library.

Abbey Hall is noted as a building of townscape merit within the Conservation Area Appraisal.

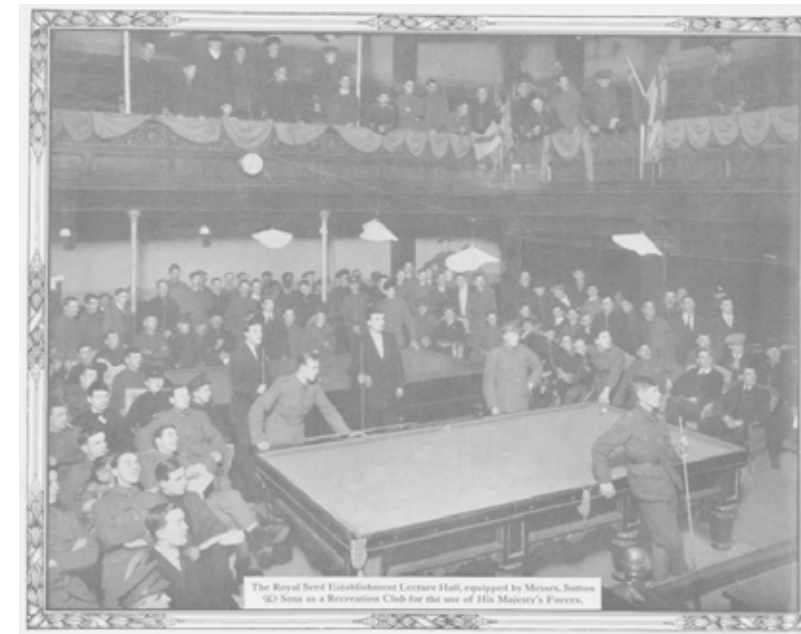
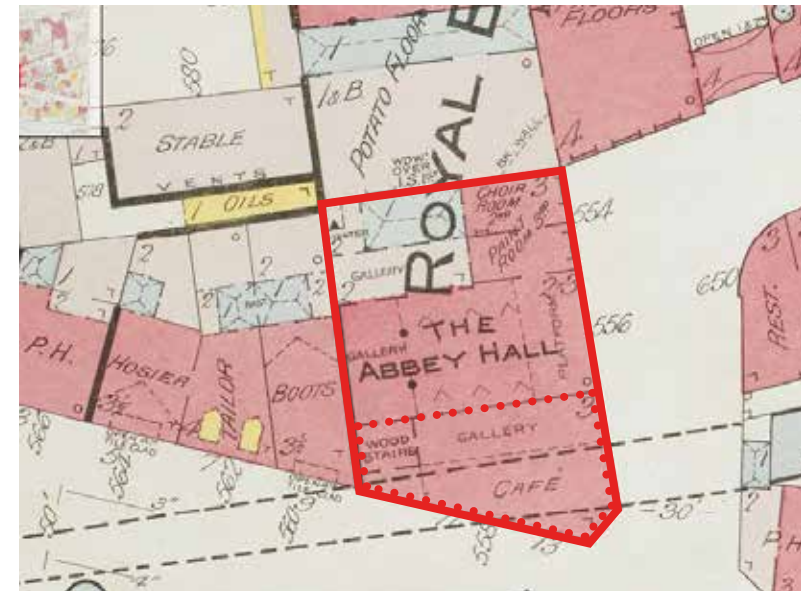
Significance

In outline, Abbey Hall has significance to the conservation area, within which it is a building of townscape merit. It is not listed. It is a good example of Victorian development of the centre of Reading, with an ornate brick and stone façade. Half of the original building has been lost and replaced with a 1960s extension, which has no significance to the conservation area. Internally it appears that none of the original layout remains and much is non-original fabric.

Assessment of impact

The proposals comprise:

- The change of use of the first floor from restaurant (A3) to four self-contained residential flats (C3)
- Small changes to the elevations to accommodate the change of use.



top:

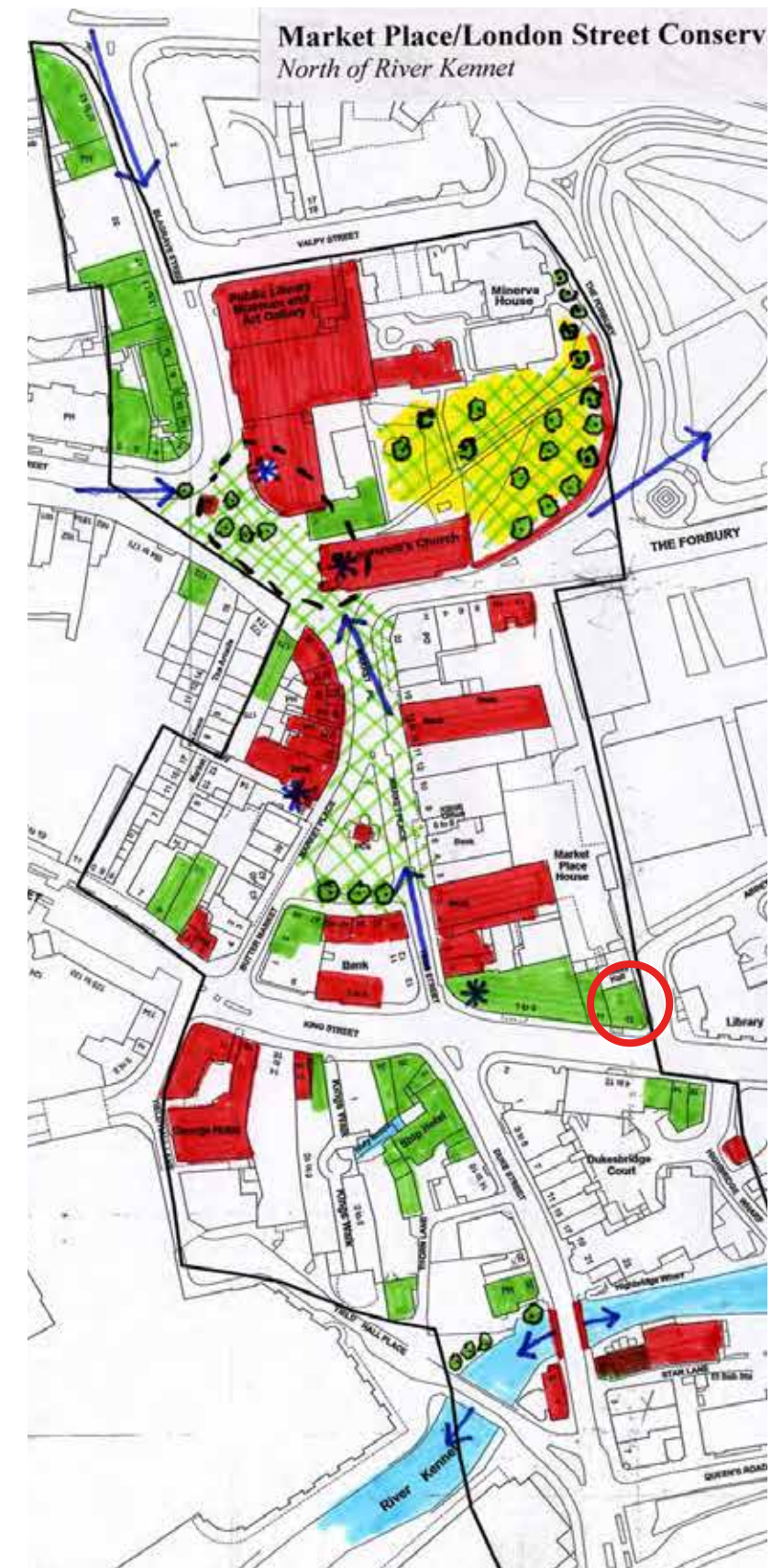
Insurance plan of 1895 showing the construction of the building to be brick (dark pink), and showing an outline of the internal arrangement and uses at some levels. It also shows the Holy Brook passing beneath the building.

above:

Photograph of the hall in use by the armed forces during WWI.

right:

The location of the building within the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area.

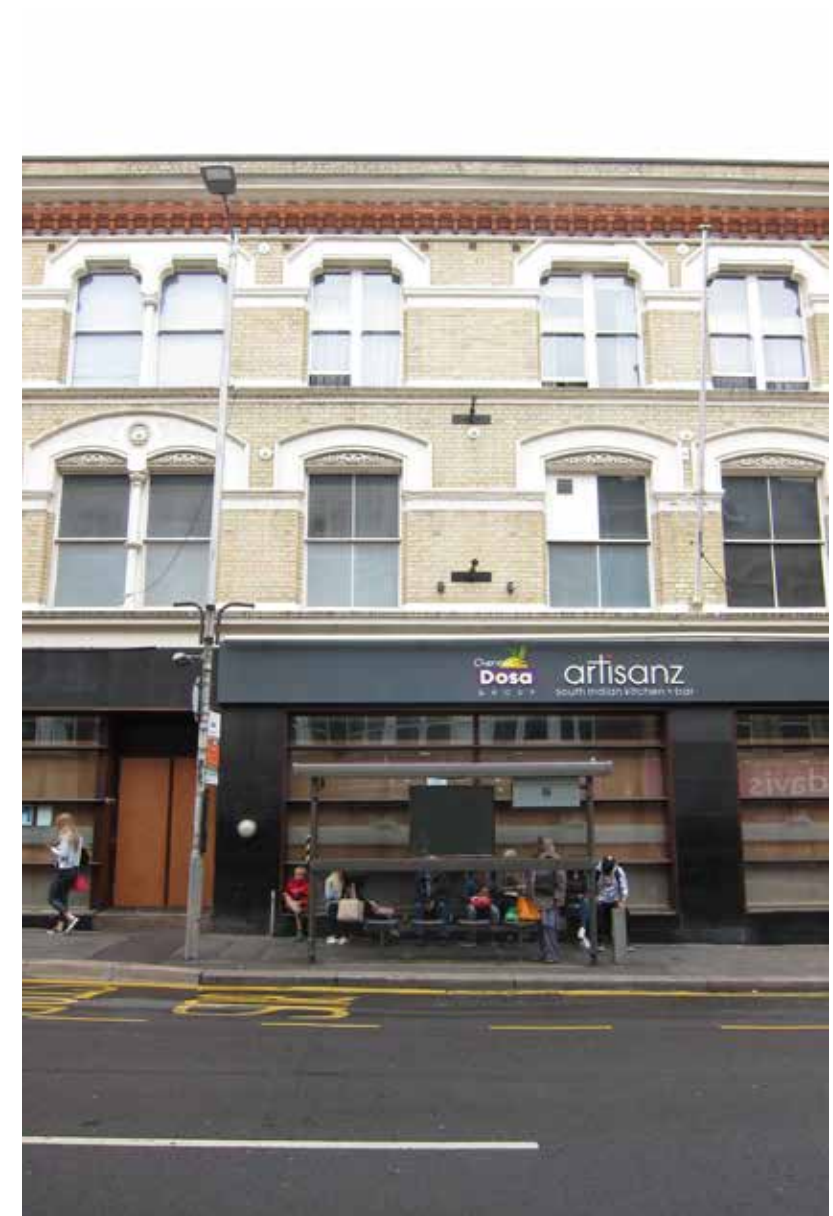


The change of use of the first floor includes the removal of existing partitions, fixtures and fittings that relate to the restaurant use, and the construction of new internal partitions to form the new apartments. The fabric to be removed is modern and is of no significance to the building nor the conservation area. This change is therefore assessed to have a neutral impact on the building and the conservation area.

The elevational changes comprise the removal of two existing through-window ventilation fans, replacing these with glass within the existing timber frames. A number of new extract fans are also proposed, which would be installed within areas of brickwork, and would terminate with a cowl in a colour closely matching the surrounding brickwork. These changes are assessed to be beneficial to the appearance and significance of the building and to preserve and enhance the conservation area.

In conclusion, as a whole the changes proposed are assessed to have a beneficial impact on the building and preserve and enhance the conservation area.

Right:
South elevation of the property, showing at first floor a timber sash infilled with a solid panel and a vent extract. This is proposed to be removed and reglazed.



8. Access statement

The works propose to convert the existing first floor to residential flats. Access to these flats will be via the same access as the existing second floor flats currently use. This is an entrance door to the building that has a level threshold from the street, and a staircase to first and second floors.

The building as existing has no lift, and the arrangement of the existing flats at second floor means that there is no viable location for a passenger lift. Access into the building and for vertical circulation will be no worse than it currently is.

Each of the individual flats will comply with the requirements of Part M4(l). Visitors who can walk are able to access each of the proposed new flats. Visitors will be able to access and use the habitable rooms and WCs in each flat. Electrical sockets will be located at an appropriate height so as to be accessible.



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