

Heritage Statement

Nos.172-175 Friar Street and Nos.27-32 Market
Place, Reading

February 2018

Contents

1.	Introduction	3
2.	The Heritage Assets	6
3.	Significance of the Heritage Assets	10
4.	Market Place / London Street Conservation Area	12
5.	Statements of Significance: Listed Buildings within the Site	38
6.	Statements of Significance: Listed Buildings within the Setting of the Site	94
7.	Summary of Heritage Context (Sections 2-6)	111
8.	Application Proposals and Heritage Impact Assessment	117
9.	Summary and Conclusions	141
Appendix 1: Conservation Area Boundary Map		144
Appendix 2: Listed Building Entries		147
Appendix 3: Heritage Legislation, Policy and Guidance		168

Client

Sonic Star Properties Limited

Date

February 2018

1. Introduction

Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Turley Heritage on behalf of Sonic Star Properties Limited ('the Client') to provide appropriate and proportionate information to the local planning authority regarding the heritage asset impacts associated with proposals for redevelopment at Nos.172-175 Friar Street and Nos.27-32 Market Place (the "Site") and its surrounding context within Reading town centre.
- 1.2 The Site includes a group of statutory listed buildings, and is also located partly within the boundary of The Market Place and London Road Conservation Area. There are also a number of other designated heritage assets within the vicinity of this site. This report is prepared in support of applications for planning permission and listed building consent for proposed selective demolition and development / works to existing buildings on Site.

Background Context and Pre-Application Engagement

- 1.3 This Heritage Statement builds on previous work undertaken by Turley Heritage, and others including lead designers Rodic Davidson Architects, in understanding the heritage significance and sensitivity of the Site, and also the constraints and opportunities relating to securing a viable re-use for this key but unused city centre site and existing group of historic buildings. Importantly, this analysis of the significance, and also contribution of setting, of the various heritage assets within the Site and its vicinity has closely-informed the design process.
- 1.4 Our baseline heritage analysis work has previously been shared with the local planning authority, and also Historic England, as part of extended pre-application discussions with local planning authority officers, as well as Historic England. A number of written responses have been provided by both these stakeholders. This process of engagement and positive discussion on all material planning considerations has directly informed and guided the final scheme design.

Legislative and Policy Context

- 1.5 The requirement for this report stems from section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 that places a duty upon the local planning authority in determining applications for development affecting listed buildings to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting. Under section 72, the Act also requires that special attention be given to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- 1.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 provides the Government's national planning policy with regard to the conservation of the historic environment. In respect of information requirements it sets out that:

"In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets'

importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.”¹

- 1.7 Paragraph 129 then sets out that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of heritage assets that may be affected by proposals, including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of proposals in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Structure of this Report

- 1.8 To accord with these above legislative and policy requirements, **Section 2** of this report firstly identifies the heritage assets within, and also in the vicinity of, the Site the heritage significance of which would be affected either directly or indirectly by the proposed development. This scoping of the likely heritage asset impacts has been guided by pre-application discussions with officers.
- 1.9 **Section 3** provides further contextual information regarding the methodology of describing the significance of heritage assets, and also the contribution that setting can make to that significance.
- 1.10 **Section 4** then sets out a statement of significance for the wider Market Place / London Road Conservation Area, in terms of its historical development and character and appearance. This also provides an assessment of the contribution of the Site itself to that significance, including the unlisted building No.175 Friar Street that has been otherwise identified by the local planning authority as a “building of townscape merit”. This section is also intended to provide an overview of the immediate townscape context of Site to assist the subsequent assessment of listed buildings on the Site and in the surrounding area.
- 1.11 **Section 5** sets out an overview of the historical development of the listed buildings on the Site itself, which would be both directly and indirectly impacted by the proposed development, comprising Nos.27 and 28 Market Place, the former The Coopers public house (Nos.29-31), and No.32 Market Place. For each of the listed buildings this section provides a statement of significance, in terms of their special architectural and historic interest, and also the relative contribution of their external and internal elements to overall significance.
- 1.12 **Section 6** provides statements of significance for each of the identified listed buildings which will be indirectly affected by the proposals on Site through change to their wider townscape setting. These statements of significance are more focussed, and include the contribution of the Site to their significance as part of their setting.
- 1.13 For ease of reference, the local authority boundary map for the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area is included at **Appendix 1**, and also the Historic England List Entries for the affected statutory listed buildings are included in full at **Appendix 2**.

¹ DCLG, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 – para.128

- 1.14 Overall this assessment of heritage significance (and setting) set out in sections 4-6 is undertaken on the basis of on-site visual survey, archival research and also a review of existing published information. This heritage analysis work is proportionate to both the importance of each of the identified heritage assets and the relative impacts of the development proposals.
- 1.15 **Appendix 3** to this report sets out in full the relevant heritage legislation, and national and local planning policy and guidance for the historic environment, including the statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national policy in the NPPF 2012 and supported by NPPG 2014, and other local policy and guidance for Reading Council authority area.
- 1.16 **Section 7** sets out a brief summary of the findings of Sections 4-6, as relevant context for the heritage impact assessment at the end of this report.
- 1.17 **Section 8** describes the application proposals, also with specific reference to pre-application discussions and feedback from stakeholders and how this has influenced the scheme. The impact of these proposals on the significance of each of the identified heritage assets is then explained; either directly through change to historic fabric or features and or indirectly through changes to their shared setting. This is considered fully in light of the relevant statutory duties, and national and local planning policy and guidance. This heritage impact assessment should be read in conjunction with other supporting information to the application submission prepared by others; including most critically the complementary Design & Access Statement prepared by Rodic Davidson Architects and the Planning Statement prepared by Savills.
- 1.18 The findings of this report are then summarised and conclusions drawn at **Section 9**, with regard to heritage impact assessment.

2. The Heritage Assets

Introduction

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 (or the “Framework”) defines a heritage asset as:

“A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest.”²

Designated Heritage Assets

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

Conservation Area: Market Place / London Street

- 2.3 Part of the Site (Nos.27-32 Market Place) is located within the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area, which was first designated by Reading Borough Council in 1972. The remainder of the Site comprising the former Bristol and West Arcade at Nos.172-175 Friar Street falls outside the conservation area boundary, but would be considered to be within the immediate setting of this heritage asset.



Figure 2.1 – Extract of conservation area townscape appraisal map (Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal)

- 2.4 The Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal document was adopted by Reading Borough Council in 2007. The conservation area boundary map from this document is included at **Appendix 1**, and an extract from conservation area townscape appraisal map (character area 1) is included above (Figure 2.1). The boundary of the

² DCLG, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 - Annex 2: Glossary

conservation area is indicated by a thick black line, statutory listed buildings are coloured red, and “buildings of townscape merit” that are defined as positive contributors to the conservation area are colour in green. Other annotations are described in full at **Appendix 1**.

- 2.5 The proposed development would have a direct impact on the significance of the conservation area through works of alteration and / or extension to buildings within the Site. The proposals would also have an indirect impact on the significance of this heritage asset through redevelopment on part of the Site outside the conservation area boundary, affecting its setting and some shared local views.
- 2.6 The Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal document 2007 does identify ‘buildings of townscape merit’ within this conservation area, which are considered to be buildings that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of this heritage asset. Nos. 172 and 175 Friar Street are identified on the townscape appraisal map as “buildings of townscape merit”, however the numbering is in error and only No. 175 falls within the boundary of the Site, whereas No. 172 is intended to refer to No. 171 that adjoins the Site to the west. It is not considered that this identification would require this building to be considered as a non-designated heritage asset for the purposes of the NPPF 2012.

Listed Buildings

Directly Affected

- 2.7 The Site includes a number of statutory listed buildings of special architectural or historic interest. The scheme proposals would have a direct impact on their significance, through change of use and alterations and / or extensions to their fabric and features. The listed buildings directly affected by the development proposals are:

Nos.27-28 Market Place

- 2.8 Nos.27 and 28 Market Place were included at grade II and for group value on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest on the 22 March 1957. The List Entry describes the building as:

“... Early C17 possibly older. 3 storeys and attic. Double jettied timber-frame with stucco infilling, pebbledashed. Tiled roof with crested ridge and ornamental cast iron gutter to eaves. Moulded 2nd floor jetty. 2 dormers. 2 original bay windows with mullion windows on each floor. Decorative lead work in upper part of windows. C18 shop front retained to ground floor with coved fascia and engaged columns. Outer doors, 5 panel (raised and fielded) with plain overlight to right, modern door to left (to No 29). Interior: 1st floor ceilings divided into panels by moulded strips.”

The Coopers Public House

- 2.9 The former Coopers public house at Nos.29-31 Market Place was included at grade II and for group value on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest on the 26 July 1973. The List Entry describes the building as:

“... C17 altered. False exposed timbering to front with 4 bays of 3 light casements in stucco infill. Wooden modillion cornice to parapet. Tiled roof. 2 C20 dormers. Rusticated stucco on ground floor with glazing bar shopfronts (modern to left, early C19 to right)

and central entrance, pilastered doorpiece with fluted caps and scroll brackets to open pediment. 2 panel door with high arched radiating fanlight. Timber framing in gables to rear. Interior contains re-used fittings probably from C16 or C17 house. The Lounge Bar has oak panelled portion with good C16 or early C17 strapwork overmantel. 4 fluted Doric columns flanked by 2 enriched Doric columns and with 'wild men' herm-pilasters. Modillion cornice. The exit to No 29 has a fine door with circa 1600 decoration of recessed niche panels: to outside Ionic female herms, to interior fluted Ionic pilasters."

No.32 Market Place

- 2.10 No.32 Market Place was included at grade II, albeit specifically for group value, on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest on the 14 December 1978. The List Entry describes the building as:

"... Mid C19 . 4 storeys with bands between floors. Painted brick. 3 bays, glazing bar sash windows with segmental heads and keys. Moulded cornice to blocking course. Concealed roof. Modern ground floor premises with retrained of moulded fascia cornice over. Included for group value."

- 2.11 The List Entries for all of these buildings are included in this report at Appendix 2³.

Indirectly Affected

- 2.12 There are a number of other statutory listed buildings within the conservation area and the immediate vicinity the Site. A map of listed buildings in this area is provided (Figure 2.2) which is taken from The National Heritage List for England (Historic England). Desktop and subsequent on-site assessment finds that the emerging development proposals on Site would not affect the way in which the significance of the majority of the listed buildings in the surrounding area would be understood or appreciated - due to the layout and positioning, the density, scale and pattern of built form within the local townscape context, and its historical development and more recent change.

- 2.13 It has been assessed, as part of pre-application discussions, that the proposed development is likely to affect the significance of a number of neighbouring listed buildings indirectly, through impact upon their setting and some shared local views. These indirectly affected listed buildings would include:

- Church of St Laurence
- Town Hall Chamber and Offices and Clocktower
- Nos.23-26 Market Place
- Former Trustee Savings Bank, Nos.34-36 Market Place
- Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance, Market Place / Market Way
- Queen Victoria Jubilee Statue

- 2.14 The List Entries for all of these other listed buildings are included in this report at **Appendix 2⁴**.

³ Historic England: The National Heritage List for England (website)



Figure 2.2 – Map of listed buildings⁵

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 2.15 The NPPF⁶ identifies that heritage assets include both designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing). Non-designated heritage assets are those which are not designated under statutory regimes, but are recognised by the local planning authority as having heritage significance. Unlike designated heritage assets, there is no specific consent process required as part of development schemes for a non-designated heritage asset. However, it is required that the effect of a scheme on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset be a material consideration in planning matters.

Local List

- 2.16 Reading Borough Council maintains a “list of locally important buildings and structures”, which has existed since February 2013 and continued to be added to in a piecemeal fashion. The Reading Sites and Detailed Policies Document (SDPD) 2012 established that that the Council intend to develop such a local list.
- 2.17 The significance of no locally listed buildings would be affected by the proposed development on Site either directly or indirectly.

⁴ Historic England: The National Heritage List for England (website)

⁵ Historic England: The National Heritage List for England (website)

⁶ DCLG, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 - Annex 2: Glossary

3. Significance of the Heritage Assets

Significance and Special Interest

- 3.1 The NPPF 2012 defines the significance of a heritage asset as:

*“The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”*⁷

Conservation Areas

- 3.2 Conservation areas are designated if they are of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
- 3.3 Historic England has published guidance in respect of conservation areas and this provides a framework for the appraisal and assessment of the special interest and significance of a conservation area⁸. This document also provides advice on how to identify whether a building contributes positively to the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Listed Buildings

- 3.4 Listed buildings are defined as designated heritage assets that hold special architectural or historic interest.
- 3.5 The principles of selection for listed buildings are published by the Department of Culture Media and Sport⁹ and supported by Historic England’s Listing Selection Guides for each building type¹⁰.

Significance and Setting

- 3.6 The NPPF 2012 also defines the setting of a heritage asset as:

*‘The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.’*¹¹

- 3.7 Historic England has published good practice advice¹² in respect of the setting of heritage assets, providing detail on understanding setting and the associated assessment of the impact of any changes.

⁷ DCLG, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 - Annex 2: Glossary

⁸ Historic England, Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management, 2016

⁹ DCMS Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings, 2010

¹⁰ Historic England, Listing Selection Guides, 2017 (suite of documents)

¹¹ DCLG, NPPF, 2012 – Annex 2: Glossary

¹² Historic England, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3, (Second Edition): The Setting of Heritage Assets, 2017

Statements of Significance

- 3.8 The following sections (4-6) of this report provide appropriate and proportionate statements of significance for each of the identified affected designated heritage assets, including assessment of the contribution of setting. This is based on existing published information, including the Market Place / London Road Conservation Area Appraisal 2007, detailed archival research and also on-site investigative analysis.
- **Section 4** – Statement of significance for Market Place / London Road Conservation Area. This section provides a broad overview of the wider townscape context of the Site, and sets out the significance of the conservation area in terms of its historical development and character and appearance.

This incorporates an assessment of the contribution of the Site itself to the overall significance of the conservation area and its setting, including the unlisted “building of merit” No.175 Friar Street. The significance of the group of listed buildings at Nos.27-32 Market Place within the Site is assessed separately within Section 5; though it is acknowledged that these are buildings also make a positive contribution to the significance of the conservation area;
 - **Section 5** – Statement of significance for the listed buildings on Site, which will be directly affected by the application proposals. This assessment includes the relative contribution of their external and internal elements to their overall significance, and an assessment of group value. The contribution of the remainder of the Site to the significance of these listed buildings as part of their immediate setting is also considered. These listed buildings comprise:
 - Nos.27 and 28 Market Place;
 - The former Coopers public house (Nos.29-31); and
 - No.32 Market Place.
 - **Section 6** – More focussed statements of significance for the key nearby listed buildings and structures, which will be indirectly affected by the proposed development of the Site within their setting. This incorporates an assessment of the contribution of the Site to the significance of these other listed buildings as part of their townscape settings.
- 3.9 This baseline heritage analysis work has previously been shared with the local planning authority, and also Historic England, as part of the pre-application process of engagement. It has also been used as a key tool to drive the design process.

4. Market Place / London Street Conservation Area

Historical Development

- 4.1 The settlement of Reading was established at the lowest point of the River Kennet, where it could be forded. The original crossing place was at today's Bridge Street, and here the roads from Oxford, Southampton, Bath and London converged. Reading's location on the Kennet, near its junction with the Thames, means that it is in a favourable position for waterborne trade as well as passing traffic on the roads, and the origins of the settlement are therefore probably commercial.¹³
- 4.2 The foundation of Reading Abbey by Henry I also fostered the growth of the town. This was located in the area of today's Forbury, transferred to the Benedictine order in the mid-13th century, and grew steadily so that by the mid-14th century it had become one of the richest abbeys in the country.¹⁴ Its royal patronage made it one of the main pilgrimage sites in England, and inevitably a population grew up around it which made a living from the many people visiting the town. St Laurence's Church, on the corner of Friar Street and the Market Place, and very close to the former site of the Abbey, was built in the Norman period to serve the population which established itself around the Abbey.
- 4.3 In its earliest years, the principal route through Reading followed Southampton Street, Bridge Street and St Mary's Butts in a north-south direction, past St Mary's Church and the original nucleus of the town. As the influence of the Abbey grew, the route along London Street and Duke Street to the Market Place outside St Laurence Church became more popular, and shifted the focus of the town eastwards. It is this 12th century route which forms the back-bone of the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area.
- 4.4 Reading Abbey was largely destroyed during the Dissolution of the Monasteries, after which its building materials were steadily quarried for reuse elsewhere in the town. Despite the loss of this key draw to the town, Reading continued to thrive on a range of trades and industries, including cloth and leather manufacture, and silk weaving.
- 4.5 One of the first maps to show the town of Reading in detail is John Speed's Atlas of Great Britain, surveyed in 1611 (Figure 4.1). This shows that the settlement was arranged in a broadly triangular shape to either side of the River Kennet. Friar Street formed one side of the triangle; with Southampton Street, Bridge Street and St Mary's Butts forming a second side, and London Street, Duke Street and Market Place the third. A church is located at each apex: St Laurence's, St Mary's and St Giles'. In Speed's map, the buildings on the application site comprise closely-packed individual houses, probably occupied by merchants or artisans. These houses in the block form a square, and back onto an area of open ground which is divided into various different plots.

¹³ *A History of the County of Berkshire: Volume 3*, ed. P H Ditchfield and William Page (London, 1923).

¹⁴ Historic England National Heritage List for England.

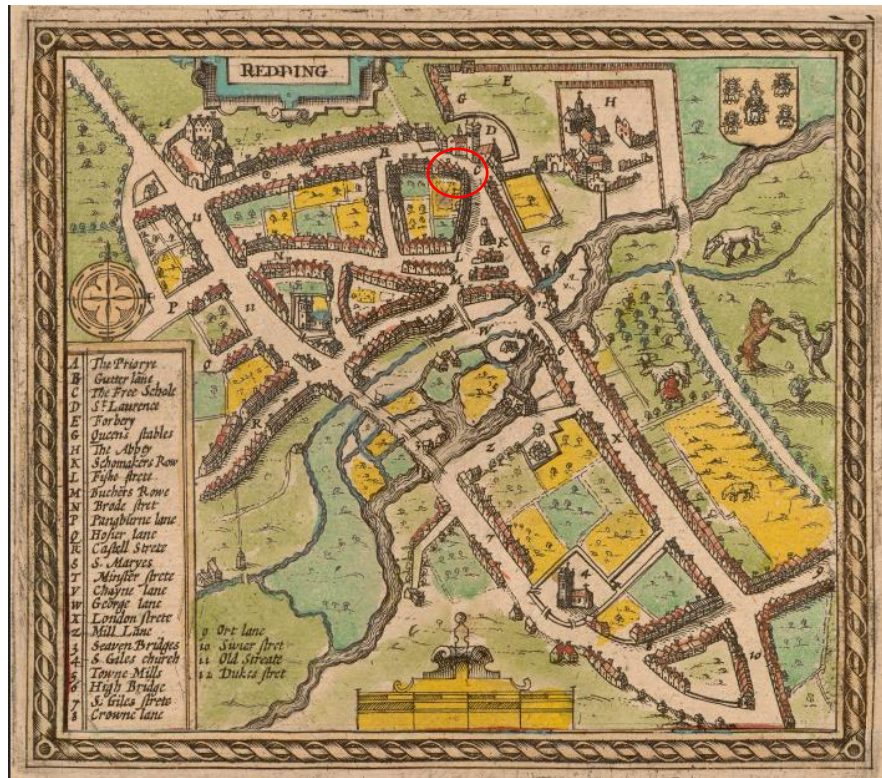


Figure 4.1 - John Speed's Atlas of Great Britain, 1611 (application site circled)

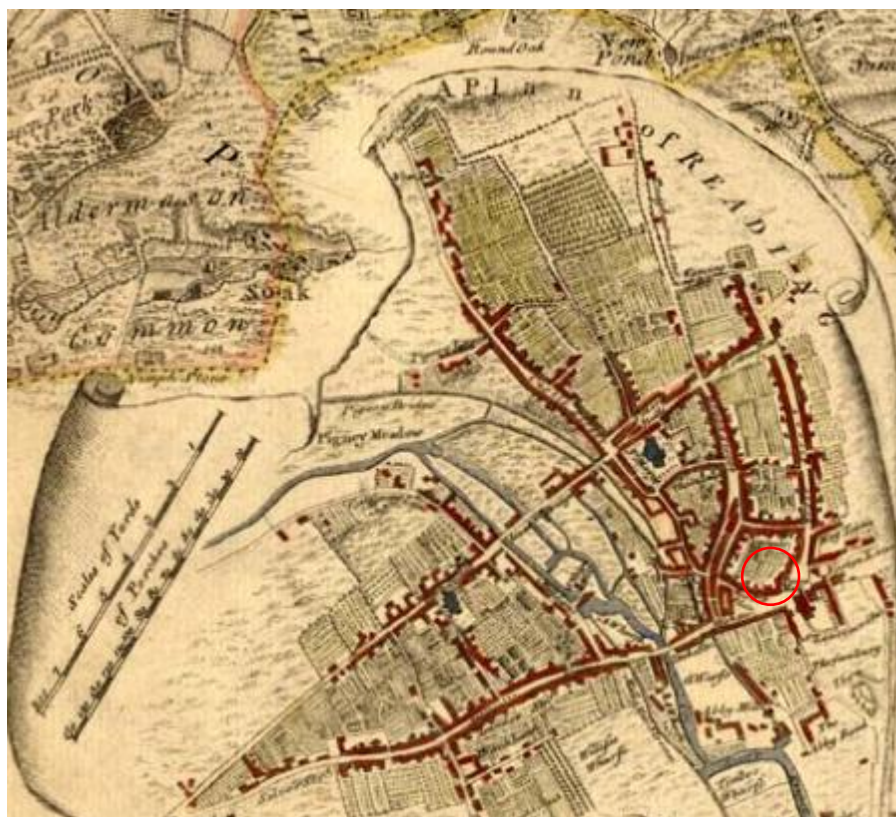


Figure 4.2 – John Rocque's Map of Reading, 1761 (north is to the right, application site circled)

- 4.6 Rocque's Map of Reading shows that the town remained contained within the medieval, triangular street pattern well into the 18th century (Figure 4.2), though some additional linear development had expanded westwards along Castle Hill and Bath Road, and eastwards along London Road. Whilst the town itself remained relatively contained, its role and reputation grew in importance when work began in the early-18th century to make the both the Rivers Kennet and Avon navigable. This encouraged further trade and connection with Bath and Bristol in the west, and London in the east.
- 4.7 Construction began on a canal to connect the two rivers in 1894, and this was completed in 1810. This created a continuous water bourn route between Bristol and London, passing through Reading. His location on a key transport route from east to west across the country caused Reading to flourish as an important layover location for journeys on the waterway.
- 4.8 Both Charles Tomkins' and Edward Weller's maps of Reading, surveyed in 1802 and 1840 respectively, show the town in slightly more detail. To either side of London Street, Duke Street and Market Place the town filled out over the early decades of the 19th century. The medieval linear development along the three main routes expanded outwards with new streets and development, as a result of the improvements in transport and infrastructure in the town, and its status on the key transport route of the Kennet and Avon Canal (Figure 4.3). Tomkins' map shows the Small Town Hall to the immediate north of St Laurence's Church, which was built in 1785.¹⁵

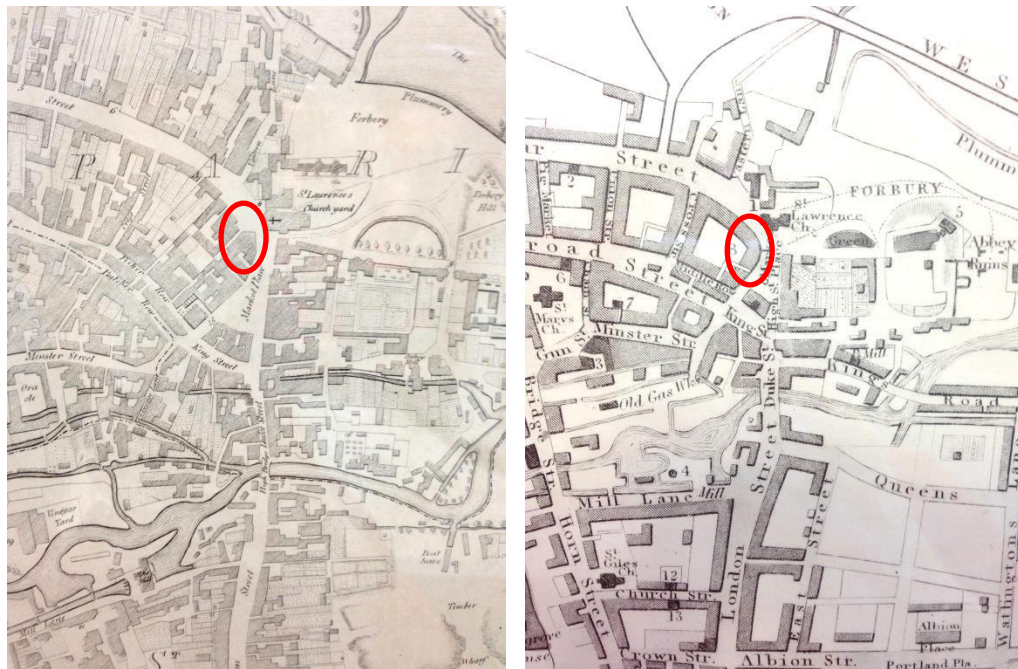


Figure 4.3 – Charles Tomkins' (L) and Edward Weller's maps of Reading (application site circled in red)

- 4.9 The Great Western Railway opened through the town in 1840, and as with the canal, this catalysed further growth and expansion. Major industries now began to be established in the town, including the biscuit manufacturers Huntley and Palmers,

¹⁵ Historic England National Heritage List for England.

which by 1900 was the largest biscuit manufacturer in the world and employed over 5,000 people in the town.

- 4.10 An early Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1877 shows the extent of development in the conservation area over the course of the 19th century (Figure 4.4). The linear form of the medieval route of London Street, Duke Street and Market Place remained clearly discernible, along with the medieval narrow-fronted plots lining the streets. The most densely developed area was north of the River Kennet, around the Market Place itself, and along the 12th century routes of Broad Street and Minster Street, whilst to the south there remained several areas of gardens, small orchards and open ground. Additional streets had been laid with groups of terraced housing out to either side of the main spinal route, and industrial uses were concentrated along the banks of the river.



Figure 4.4 – Ordnance Survey (OS) map 1877

- 4.11 This is the first map to show the individual building plots within the building lines of each street. The application site comprises several individual buildings on the site of Nos.173-175 Friar Street, whilst the listed buildings at Nos.23-26 Market Place, Nos.27 and 28 Market Place, Nos.29-31 Market Place (The Coopers public house), No.32

Market Place, the Trustees Savings Bank and the entrance to the Corn Exchange are also depicted. The Town Council Chamber and Offices were also extant, having been completed in 1875. The adjacent, now listed, Concert Hall was added between 1879 and 1882, whilst the Art Gallery and Museum were constructed in 1897.

- 4.12 In *A History of the County of Berkshire*, written in 1923, the town's 19th century growth is described:

"Reading has grown very rapidly of late years; a great increase of population took place at the end of the 19th century, when the nearer western suburbs were laid out, but in 1850 it was still a small and pretty town, whose wider streets and open green spaces counteracted many of the evils of defective sanitation."

- 4.13 By the mid-20th century, the OS map of 1947 shows that Reading had grown to become much denser and built-up, so that the early triangular street pattern had been both in-filled and surrounded by further streets of housing and industry (Figure 4.5). However, the medieval street pattern of London Street, Duke Street and Market Place remained, with its fine-grained street pattern of narrow-fronted plots fronting the road.

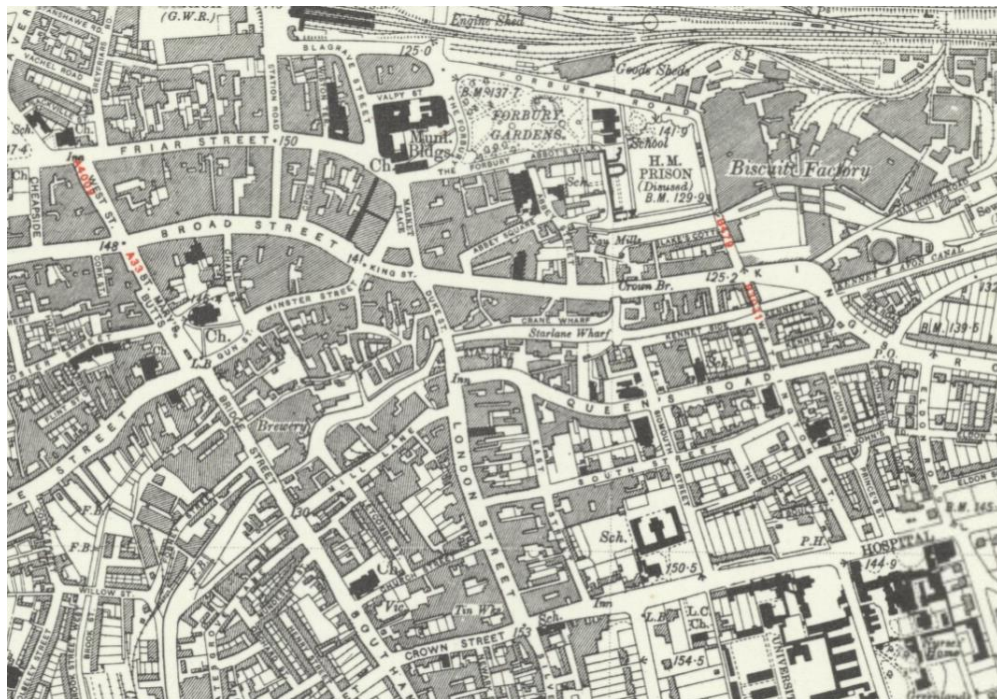


Figure 4.5 – OS 1947

- 4.14 In the late-20th century a great deal of redevelopment occurred in the town, which included the removal of parts of the historic core to construct modern office buildings and shopping centres. Many buildings along the east side of the Market Place were renewed, along with the buildings at the eastern end of Friar Street (including Nos.173-175). Larger-scale redevelopment has occurred close to the Inner Distribution Road, which was constructed between 1969 and the late-1980s. It is this road, more than any other late-20th century development, which has impacted upon the character of the conservation area and the town as a whole. It now bisects the conservation area

just south of the river, and involved the demolition of a great deal of Reading's historic core and building stock (Figure 4.6).



Figure 4.6 – OS 1980-88, showing the Inner Distribution Road bisecting the conservation area

Character and Appearance

General Characteristics

- 4.15 The scale of buildings in the conservation area varies between two, three and four storeys, with only very few modern office developments reaching five storeys. The predominant building material is brick, in a variety of colours and often stuccoed, contributed principally by the historic 17th, 18th and 19th century building stock that said, there are some very few surviving examples of timber-frame construction at Nos.27 and 28 Market Place, No.88 London Street and Nos.3 and 5 London Road. The

medieval churches of St Laurence and St Giles stand out in their use of flint, a distinctive, vernacular building material. Twentieth century redevelopments sometimes conform to the preponderance of brick construction, but in several places a less-sympathetic material palette has been introduced, using concrete. Many more recent buildings have paid little heed to their historic context in terms of scale, materiality or detailed design (Figure 4.7).



Figure 4.7 – A predominantly brick material palette is interspersed with some surviving timber framed buildings, and modern concrete structures

- 4.16 Several buildings in the conservation area, particularly along London Street, have retained 19th and early-20th century shopfronts which testify to the importance of this route historically, as a main approach road to the town's Market Place and principal shopping area on Broad Street. The predominant use in the conservation area remains commercial, though there is a small proportion of residential use to the upper levels of buildings along the main route, and a more prevalent residential character to secondary roads such as Church Street and South Street.



Figure 4.8 – The graveyard of St Laurence’s Church is one of the few areas of open green space in the conservation area

- 4.17 The bridge over the River Kennet on Duke Street creates a break in the building line along the road which, coupled with the mature tree on the river bank, creates a welcome hiatus to the densely-packed frontage. The river is an important feature of the conservation area, where it reflects the motive for Reading’s original settlement in this location. Aside from the open space created by the watercourse, the only other open spaces in the conservation area are the graveyards of St Laurence’s Church, St Giles’ Church and the Friends Meeting House on Church Street (Figure 4.8).

Area 1

- 4.18 The Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal divides the conservation area into four different character areas.¹⁶ The area of London Street to the south of the Inner Distribution Road is identified as Area 1. This strongly linear route is very broad, which creates long views up its length, taking in the buildings which line each side. These building lines contain a mixture of architectural styles and ages, and represent a broad cross section of individual plots dating from several centuries in the development of the town (Figure 4.9). Some remain from the 16th and 17th phase in the development of the town, whilst a greater number of 18th and 19th century elegant houses have survived to reflect the popularity of this area as a fashionable part of town.



Figure 4.9 – London Street is a broad, strongly linear route, with a high number of surviving historic buildings

- 4.19 The majority of buildings fronting London Street are either listed, or identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal as buildings of townscape merit, and this high concentration of historic buildings contributes to a high-quality townscape with plenty of visual interest. The historic buildings in this character area are interspersed with a small amount of modern redevelopment; primarily focussed along East Street at the eastern boundary of the conservation area, and to the north and south ends of London Street. To the immediate south of the Inner Distribution Road, however, there is an

¹⁶ Reading Borough Council. Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal. 2007.

area of much larger-scale office redevelopment which does not reflect the finer grained street scene on London Street to the south, and diminishes the historic character of the area.

- 4.20 Historically, London Street was primarily residential in character and use, but overtime commercial premises have occupied the majority of the buildings along this medieval street, and it is now characterised by a preponderance of business and professional uses. As one of the original principal routes through the town, it has also historically been fairly wide. Today, modern alterations to the road to create bus stops and lay-by parking have increased the vehicular traffic and dominance of the road way so that the street's character is much more emphatically urban than its provincial origins.
- 4.21 The route of the Inner Distribution Road across the north end of the character area severs London Street from the town centre, and compromises the legibility of the road as a key part of Reading's medieval street pattern. The broad, open junction, the constant high level of traffic and the noise associated with this major road also detract from the overall historic appearance of the area.

Area 2

- 4.22 The boundary of the conservation area and Area 1 extends westwards from London Road, in a spit which encompasses Church Street and St Giles' Church, thereby taking in one of Reading's three medieval churches (Figure 4.10). As one approaches eastwards along Church Street, the spire of St Giles can be glimpsed, framed between two listed buildings.



Figure 4.10 – Area 2 of the conservation area encompasses Church Street and St Giles' Church, and is much more tranquil in character than the bustle of London Road

- 4.23 Though modern development has encroached upon the historic character of this area, the medieval church, along with other listed buildings and buildings of townscape merit, and remnants of the historic floor scape, remain to reflect the role of this street as part of the historic layout of the town. The narrow proportions of Church Street give it the atmosphere of a town alley, and this reflects the tight knit layout which emerged as the town grew. These enclosed proportions, together with a more residential character and the green open space of St Giles' Churchyard, contribute to a tranquil atmosphere entered from the relative bustle of London Street.

Area 3

- 4.24 The two lateral divisions of the River Kennet and the Inner Distribution Road make this area the most disparate of the four character areas. Whilst the River Kennet creates a welcome break and open space in the otherwise continuous building line, the Inner Distribution Road is described by the Conservation Area Appraisal as:

“...a wide, characterless dual-carriageway that completely disrupts the historic street pattern and spoils the continuity of the Duke Street / London Street route to and from the town centre.”¹⁷

- 4.25 There is a close mix of old and new building stock here. Much the larger-scale, modern development of the Oracle Shopping Centre and neighbouring office buildings are located around the junction between Duke Street and the Inner Distribution Road, and the Conservation Area Appraisal highlights that the high proportion of undistinguished modern development dilutes the historic character of the area (Figure 4.11).¹⁸



Figure 4.11 – Unsympathetic, large-scale modern development dilutes the historic architectural character of the conservation area

- 4.26 Nineteenth century commercial buildings are focussed around the crossroads at King’s Road and Duke Street, which is a busy junction and a local landmark. Several historic buildings nearby are notable; including Barclays Bank on King Street, of architectural interest for its ornate Italian palazzo style, and The George Hotel, first mentioned in the early-15th century, with the present building dating from the 17th or 18th century.

Area 4

- 4.27 The application site at Nos.173-175 Friar Street is located within Area 4, which encompasses the Market Place and the environs of St Laurence’s Church and the Town Hall complex. These are the key buildings of the conservation area as a whole, which as a group constitute the defining architectural image of Reading (Figure 4.12). Key views of these buildings are available from the surrounding streets, including Duke

¹⁷ Reading Borough Council. Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal. 2007.

¹⁸ Reading Borough Council. Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal. 2007.

Street and Market Place, Friar Street and Blagrove Street, and The Forbury (Figure 4.13).



Figure 4.12 – Image of the view eastwards along Friar Street to the key landmark buildings of St Laurence's Church and the Town Hall



Figure 4.13 – Views of the set piece of the Town Hall and St Laurence's Church from The Forbury, Friar Street and Blagrove Street

- 4.28 St Laurence's Church and the Town Hall complex overlook the Market Place and Town Hall Square, where a large area has been pedestrianised. The lack of roads allows for a better appreciation of these key buildings, where one is less-distracted from views across the open space by vehicular traffic or noise. Good views of the church and Town Hall complex, and particularly the deliberately-placed Clock Tower, are also available from further away on Duke Street to the south and on Blagrove Street to the north (Figure 4.14).

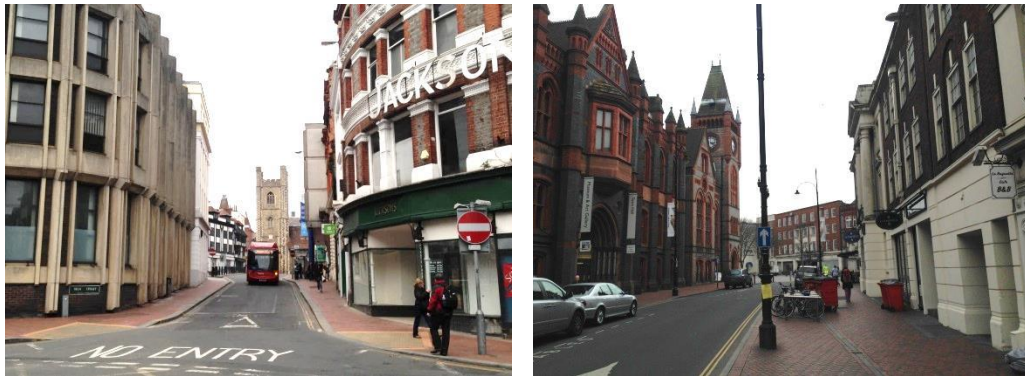


Figure 4.14 – Longer views of the church and Town Hall

- 4.29 Visual interest and character is derived from the historic buildings which survive on the corner of Friar Street and Market Place, including Nos.23-27, Nos.27 and 28, Nos.29 and 31, No.32, The Trustees Saving Bank, and the entrance to the Corn Exchange (Figure 4.15). On the opposite side Nos.13-16 dates from the late-19th century and is built in a Renaissance palazzo style, whilst the listed buildings facing north on the lower side of the triangular Market Place survive from the 18th century, and also contribute positively to the remaining historic character in the area (Figure 4.16). The Simeon Obelisk in the centre of the triangular Market Place, and the statue of Queen Victoria outside the Town Hall, are also local features which enhance the conservation area and create a distinctive sense of place (Figure 4.17).



Figure 4.15 – The buildings on the west side of the part-pedestrianised Market Place date from the 17th-19th centuries, and contribute positively to the conservation area



Figure 4.16 – 18th and 19th century buildings on the south side of the Market Place



Figure 4.17 – Local details and features give the conservation area a sense of place

- 4.30 The *Buildings of England* volume for Berkshire describes the Market Place as “a triangular space of no particular distinction”¹⁹, and it is considered that this verdict is a result of the considerable building and infrastructure which occurred in the post-war and late-20th century period. For example, a photograph of c.1893 shows the view from Friar Street, in front of the Town Hall, across to the St Laurence’s Church (Figure 4.18).

¹⁹ Pevsner, N. *The Buildings of England: Berkshire*. Yale University Press 2002.



Figure 4.18 – The high-quality 19th century building on the site of No.173-175 Friar Street was replaced in the 20th century by a new, bland and undistinguished building

- 4.31 The building line on the south side of Friar Street is comprised of a four-storey, broad-fronted 19th century commercial building, incorporating the entrance into a market arcade. It is a building of great visual detail and interest, built in the Gothic style, and the appearance of the brickwork indicates that it may have echoed the grey and red colouring of the Town Hall, opposite. However, in the mid-20th century either immediately before or after the Second World War, this high-quality building was demolished and replaced with the current, bland and undistinguished range at No.173-175 Friar Street. This reconstruction also created an awkward kink in the formerly smooth, curved building line (Figure 4.19).



Figure 4.19 – The reconstruction at Nos.173-175 Friar Street has created an awkward kick-out in the previously smooth, curved building line

- 4.32 Similarly, along the east side of the Market Place extensive bomb damage during the Second World War necessitated the redevelopment of several sites. Instead of the fine-grained building line packed with visual interest shown in a late-19th century photograph, this building line is now comprised of several unsympathetic, Brutalist structures which have significantly compromised the historic character and appearance of this medieval space (Figure 4.20). The high level of vehicular traffic through the Market Place, including numerous large buses, also detracts from the character of this key historic space.



Figure 4.20 – The historic character of the east side of Market Place was eroded heavily in the post-war period

- 4.33 Though located very close to Broad Street, the principal shopping street in Reading, the environs of the Market Place and Town Hall Square appear fairly worn out and under-used. Many of the buildings are underused, whilst the condition of the public realm is deteriorating. Just outside the boundary of the conservation area the vacant 20th century buildings at No.173-174 Friar Street presents an unkempt and run-down appearance, directly overlooking the key space of the Town Hall Square (Figure 4.21). Architecturally, this building also falls below the standard set by surrounding historic buildings, and make at best a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of this historic townscape.



Figure 4.21 - No.173-175 Friar Street present an unkempt and run-down appearance, directly overlooking the key space of the Town Hall Square

Summary of Significance

- 4.34 Market Place / London Street Conservation Area principally derives its significance from the principal spinal route running through Reading, made up of London Street,

Duke Street and Market Place. This constitutes one of the principal medieval approach roads to the heart of old Reading. It leads directly to the historic core of the town, which is focussed on the landmark space of the Market Place, and the key buildings of St Laurence's Church and the Town Hall complex. This grouping makes up the defining image of Reading and its architecture. The ruins of Reading Abbey also remain to the immediate east of St Laurence's Church, and these also reflect the long role of this area at the epicentre of Reading's history and growth.

- 4.35 This strongly-linear conservation area contains some rare surviving timber-framed buildings of the 16th and 17th centuries, as well as several good examples of the Georgian townhouse typology in London Street, a great deal of 19th century commercial architecture, and some considerable 20th century development. This broad cross section of building ages and styles reflects the continuing importance of the route over time, as well as the changing uses found along its length; the evolving tastes and fashions in domestic and commercial architecture; and the social ambitions of the early occupants.

Contribution of Application Site to Significance (including immediate Setting)

Introduction

- 4.36 Aside from No.175 Friar Street, all other buildings within the application Site are statutorily listed, and these are considered to make a positive contribution to the conservation area as a whole, in particular the street scene to Market Place; albeit they are of different historic and architectural complexity and interest. The significance and special interest of these listed buildings is assessed in the following section 5.
- 4.37 No.175 Market Place is an unlisted building within the Site, which is identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal as a "building of townscape merit".²⁰ These are buildings which make a positive contribution to the special interest of the conservation area, and help to create the conservation area's distinctive and interesting historic townscape. In this part of the report, we assess objectively the contribution made by the existing building to the character or appearance of the conservation area, based on further research and also on-site analysis of the existing building within the wider townscape.

Background and Description

- 4.38 A photograph dated 1893 shows the building which previously stood on the site of Nos.173-175 Friar Street (Figure 4.22). No.172 Friar Street, on the far-right of the photograph, was also part of the site and built to the same design as Nos.173-177. This building survives today, and gives a clear indication of how the building line would have looked (Figure 4.23). Together, No.172 and Nos.173-174 were arranged over three storeys, constructed in red and grey brick to a Gothic-style design, with a taller element over the entrance to the arcade. The material and colour palette, as well as the architectural style, would have complemented strongly the design of the Town Hall, Offices and Clock Tower on the opposite side of Town Hall Square. In the 1893 photograph, No.175 is a separate, four storey building arranged over three bays.

²⁰ Reading Borough Council. Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal. 2007.



Figure 4.22 – Photograph dated 1893, showing the previous buildings at Nos.173-4, and No.175 Friar Street



Figure 4.23 – No.172 Friar Street formed part of the same development as Nos.173 and 174 Friar Street, and was built to the same design

- 4.39 This building layout of Nos.172, Nos.173-147, and No.175 is also shown in Goad's Fire Insurance Map of 1895 (Figure 4.24). Behind the street frontage, the buildings extended a long way back into the urban block. The dark- and light-pink colouring is indicative of building height, marking the difference between built form over or under 30 feet in height, whilst the arcade itself was covered in a glazed roof light.



Figure 4.24 – Goad’s Fire Insurance Map 1895 (Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance circled)

- 4.40 Comparison of the OS maps from 1934 and 1957 shows that the 19th century Gothic-style buildings at Nos.173-74, and No.175 Friar Street, depicted in the 1893 photograph and Goad’s map, were demolished and replaced in the mid-20th century (Figure 4.25). This may have been as a result of the bomb damage sustained in the Market Place during the Second World War, though neither desk-based nor archival research has revealed any further information on this subject. When the plots were redeveloped, the frontages misaligned with the previously established building line and this has created an awkward crimp in the curve from Friar Street to Market Place.



Figure 4.25 – OS maps of 1934 (L) and 1957 (R) with Nos.173-175 Friar Street rebuilt

- 4.41 The mid-20th century buildings at Nos.173-174 and No.175 Friar Street retained the plot division of the previous buildings on the site, and were designed as separate entities (Figure 4.26). Nos.173-4 is located outside the boundary of the conservation

area, but as part of its immediate setting it is considered that the limited quality of its architectural design, its low level of usage, and its deteriorating condition, means that it makes at best only a neutral contribution to the significance of the conservation area as part of its setting.

- 4.42 No.175 Friar Street is a four storey building, arranged over three bays, and constructed primarily of red brick (Figure 4.27). It is a 20th century interpretation of the Victorian / Edwardian townhouse or commercial building, and utilises Classically-derived details in the street elevation. The ground floor frontage is clad in stone to emulate the typical historic townhouse/commercial office style. The first floor windows also have stone surrounds, with a balcony and a broken pediment to the central opening. This detailing is intended to emphasise the status of the first floor within the traditional hierarchy of levels within the building. The upper windows are smaller, and again this is a visual expression of the lower-status of these floor levels as part of the hierarchy within. A broad stone entablature terminates the elevation at roof level.



Figure 4.26 – The plots were redeveloped in the mid-20th century, and retained the visual distinction between Nos.173-4 and No.175



Figure 4.27 – No.175 Friar Street

- 4.43 The rear elevation of No.175 Friar street is entirely enclosed within the urban block, and is not visible from the public realm. This side of the building is clad in light-coloured brick, which is no longer manufactured due to its poor weathering qualities. Its hidden location also means that it has not been designed with any particular attention to detail or quality (Figure 4.28).



Figure 4.28 – The rear elevation is not visible from the public realm

Assessment of Contribution

- 4.44 This assessment uses a checklist to identify elements which may contribute to the special interest and significance of the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area. This methodology is in accordance with the key guidance document published by Historic England: Advice Note 1, Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management dating from 2016.²¹ This states that:

“A positive response to one or more of the following [questions] may indicate that a particular element within a conservation area makes a positive contribution, provided that its historic form and values have not been eroded.”

- 4.45 Our objective assessment against the twelve questions or criteria provided by Historic England is set out below:

Is it the work of a particular architect or designer of regional or local note?

- 4.46 Archival research has not attributed the building to an architect or designer of regional or local note.

Does it have landmark quality?

- 4.47 Although No.175 Friar Street overlooks an important civic open space, the two landmark buildings of the Town Hall and St Laurence’s Church dominate this space visually, whilst other buildings simply blend as part of the established street pattern of the surrounding area (Figure 4.29). The front elevation of No.175 Friar Street is misaligned with the curve of the junction between Friar Street and Market Place, so that it appears to be set into a corner. The current building line is a post-war creation and uncomfortable break in the historic street scene and definition, which sets this building further back relative to the street elevation of the neighbouring 23-26 Market Place (Figure 4.30). This causes No.175 to appear recessive within the street scene, so that it is easily overlooked.



²¹ Historic England. Advice Note 1 - Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management, 2016.

Figure 4.29 – The Town Hall and St Laurence’s Church dominate the open space, whilst No.175 is recessive within the street scene and blends with the background architecture



Figure 4.30 – The mid-20th century building is misaligned with the long-established building line to Friar Street and Market Place

- 4.48 The building does not occupy a prominent position within the townscape but is integrated within the It does not have landmark quality in terms of its use, scale, form, architectural design and or materials within the conservation area. Instead, it is overshadowed by the adjacent No.23-26 Market Place, as well as the broad frontage of Nos.173-175 (Figure 4.31).



Figure 4.31 – No.175 is overshadowed by the adjacent No.23-26 Market Place, as well as the broad frontage of Nos.173-175

Does it reflect a substantial number of other elements in the conservation area in age, style, materials, form or other characteristics?

- 4.49 Broadly No.175 Friar Street reflects a number of features of other buildings within the conservation area and around the Town Hall Square, in terms of its existing external appearance. Its narrow street frontage reflects the original layout of domestic and commercial burgage plots along the historic Friar Street and Market Place. Across Town Hall Square the building on the corner of Friar Street and Blagrove Street appears to be a similarly-aged late Victorian or early-20th century commercial building. The materials of No.175 are part of the wider palette of brick and stone, whilst the Classically-derived proportions and details of the principal elevation are common architectural features of Market Place / London Street Conservation Area.
- 4.50 Though the building does embody these characteristics of Market Place / London Street Conservation Area., it is considered that it is only a very modest example of the variety of the built form which forms its special interest.

Does it relate to an adjacent designated heritage assets in age, materials or in any other historically significant way?

- 4.51 No.175 Friar Street is located directly adjacent to Nos.23-26 Market Place, which are grade II listed (Figure 4.32). Whilst No.175 does relate to the listed buildings in terms of scale, form, massing and broad (Classically-influenced) architectural style, it is clearly of a different age to these early-19th century buildings. What is more, the limited architectural interest of No.175 diminishes its contribution to the significance of the listed building.

Does it contribute positively to the setting of adjacent designated heritage assets?

- 4.52 No.13 blends with the street scene on Friar Street, forming part of the architectural backdrop of the wider urban setting of adjacent / nearby listed buildings. It is important to note that because of the curve of the building line around to Market Place, and also because the rebuilt No.175 is awkwardly set back from the historic building line, Nos.23-26 and No.175 are not easily appreciable in a single view: when standing in front of Nos.23-26, No.175 is hidden. Meanwhile, when viewing No.175, only the flank elevation and the first bays of No.23-26 are visible (Figure 4.32). As a result, the contribution of No.175 to the setting of the listed building is diminished.



Figure 4.32 - Nos.23-26 and No.175 are not easily appreciable in a single view

- 4.53 There are several other listed buildings near to No.175 Friar Street. The significance of these listed buildings, and the contribution of the application site to that significance, will be assessed in subsequent sections of this report. In summary, these assessments conclude that No.175 Friar Street is a mid-20th century building which forms a non-descript part of the architectural backdrop around the Market Place and Town Hall Square. Its recent construction date and limited architectural value means that its contribution to the significance of other nearby listed buildings, as a part of their setting, is neutral.

Does it contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces including exteriors or open spaces with a complex of public buildings?

- 4.54 Town Hall Square is a key historic and civic space within the conservation area Reading more widely. The landmark buildings of the Town Hall and St Laurence's Church are the principal buildings within this space. They are also the key buildings of the conservation area as a whole, and constitute the defining architectural image of Reading. No.175 Friar Street also overlooks the square, but simply forms part of the background architecture of the space, which is varied in both age and quality (Figure 4.29). It is considered that No.175 as a modern building of limited architectural quality or interest, which replaced an earlier higher-quality building, makes at best only a neutral contribution to the quality of the civic space. The misalignment of the historic building line following the post-war rebuilding of this plot also diminishes from the enclosure and quality of this townscape space.

Is it associated with a designed landscape e.g. a significant wall, terracing or a garden building?

- 4.55 No.175 Friar Street is not associated with a designed landscape or other landscape feature.

Does it individually, or as part of a group, illustrate the development of the setting in which it stands?

- 4.56 All buildings by their very nature illustrate to some degree the historical development of a settlement during the period of their construction or later alteration. The plot at No.175 Friar Street is associated with the early development of Reading in the medieval period, as it addresses one of the first, and principal, streets of the town. The

current building is a mid-20th century replacement of an earlier, higher-quality building. This in some way illustrates the multiple phases of redevelopment that Reading, and in particular the area around St Laurence's Church, has experienced over time. However this post-war rebuilding of the plot has not added particularly positively to the quality or character of this townscape, and has also resulted in an awkward building line to the square.

- 4.57 The Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal identifies No.175 as a building of townscape merit. However, whilst the buildings on Market Place and elsewhere around Town Hall Square and on Friar Street do have an historic, traditional character which contributes positively to the understanding of the evolution of the townscape in the vicinity, the much younger age and limited architectural quality of No.175 means that its intrinsic contribution is at best only neutral. It represents a much less important phase in the historical development of this area.

Does it have significant historic association with features such as the historic road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature?

- 4.58 The curved junction of Friar Street and Market Place is ancient, and development has evolved continuously along its length for several centuries. There have been at least two buildings previously constructed on the plot at No.175; but in all likelihood there may have been others here during medieval and early-modern times, which are not precisely recorded. The existing building is part of a post-war redevelopment, and although its shape has been defined by this much earlier street pattern there are no significant historic associations with the road or square layout.
- 4.59 As previously described, the reformed building line of No.175 Friar Street of the post-war period is misaligned with the longer established curve of the junction between Friar Street and Market Place. This creates an awkward crimp in the street frontage, where No.175 is set back further than the early-19th century buildings at Nos.23-26 Market Place. This has compromised the appreciation of the ancient street layout, and also diminishes the character of the enclosure and definition of the important open space of Town Hall Square. This townscape feature detracts rather than contributes to the historic street pattern of this area.

Does it have historic associations with local people or past events?

- 4.60 Archival research has not identified that the building has historic associations with people or past events of local interest that contribute to the special interest of the conservation area.

Does it reflect the traditional character of former uses in the area?

- 4.61 No.175 Friar Street reflects the wider characteristics of Market Place / London Road Conservation Area in terms of its narrow street frontage, which reflects the original layout of mixed domestic and commercial plots along the principal streets of the town. The ground floor shop frontage, now boarded up and very unsightly, highlights the historic use of the area as an active commercial zone at the heart of Reading, very close to the landmark buildings of St Laurence's Church, Reading Abbey and, latterly, the Town Hall, Concert Hall, Art Gallery and Museum.

Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the area?

- 4.62 The building is currently vacant, and this makes no contribution to the character of the conservation area. Instead, the building appears lifeless and inactive, whilst the boarded up street frontage is particularly unattractive. This condition exacerbates the already fairly worn out and under-used environs of the Market Place and Town Hall Square.

Summary

- 4.63 This assessment of the contribution of the site at No.175 Friar Street, using the framework of Historic England's checklist of questions, provides a low number of positive responses, and also identifies some detracting townscape features of this post-war rebuilt plot. This indicates that the contribution of the existing building to the special interest and significance of the Market Place / London Road Conservation Area as a whole is very limited.
- 4.64 The Council has specifically identified this as a "building of townscape merit" in their adopted Appraisal document, which indicates a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. However, our objective re-assessment clearly sets out that any such contribution is much more limited, particularly in light of the low architectural and historic interest of this very modest Neo-Georgian style building dating from the mid-20th century, and also its awkward alignment within the earlier established street scene of the square. In summary, this is not a building that contributes positively to the special interest or character and appearance of the conservation area as a whole. Rather No.175 Friar Street has at best a neutral presence within the street scene.

5. Statements of Significance: Listed Buildings within the Site

Historical Development

- 5.1 Within the Site the plots of Nos.27 and 28 Market Place, the former The Coopers public house (Nos.29-31) and No.32 Market Place have been continuously developed since the Early-Modern period, and possibly earlier.
- 5.2 The earliest map to show the application site is John Speed's Map of Reading, dated 1611. Here, the corner of Friar Street and Market Place is lined by a curved row of pitched-roof buildings, opposite St Laurence's Church which stands at the edge of Reading Abbey's precinct (Figure 5.1). The plots of Nos.27 and 28, The Coopers public house and No.32 Market Place have therefore been continuously developed since the medieval period, and possibly earlier. The List Entries for Nos.27 and 28 Market Place and The Coopers public house date both of these buildings to the 17th century; but the schematic nature of Speed's map means that they are not yet individually identifiable.
- 5.3 Within the urban block formed by Friar Street, Market Place, Cross Street and Broad Street, Speed's map shows an area of open space behind the building lines, which appears to be divided into gardens and small orchards. Interestingly, a central path runs north-south, whilst two others, running perpendicular, quarter the space. Fragments of these early through-routes between Friar Street, Broad Street and the Market Place are considered to have survived as part of the urban block today, in the form of the Bristol and West Arcade.



Figure 5.1 – John Speed’s Map of Reading, 1611 (locations of Nos.27 and 28, The Coopers public house and No.32 Market Place circled)

- 5.4 Charles Tomkins’ map, published in 1802, shows that by the early-19th century the space within the urban block had been partially developed in a piecemeal manner, with additional buildings behind the main building lines (Figure 5.2). The route between Friar Street and Broad Street, through the urban block, is still discernible, and there also remains a smaller passage in the general location of The Coopers public house, leading to a yard space, and accessed only from Market Place.

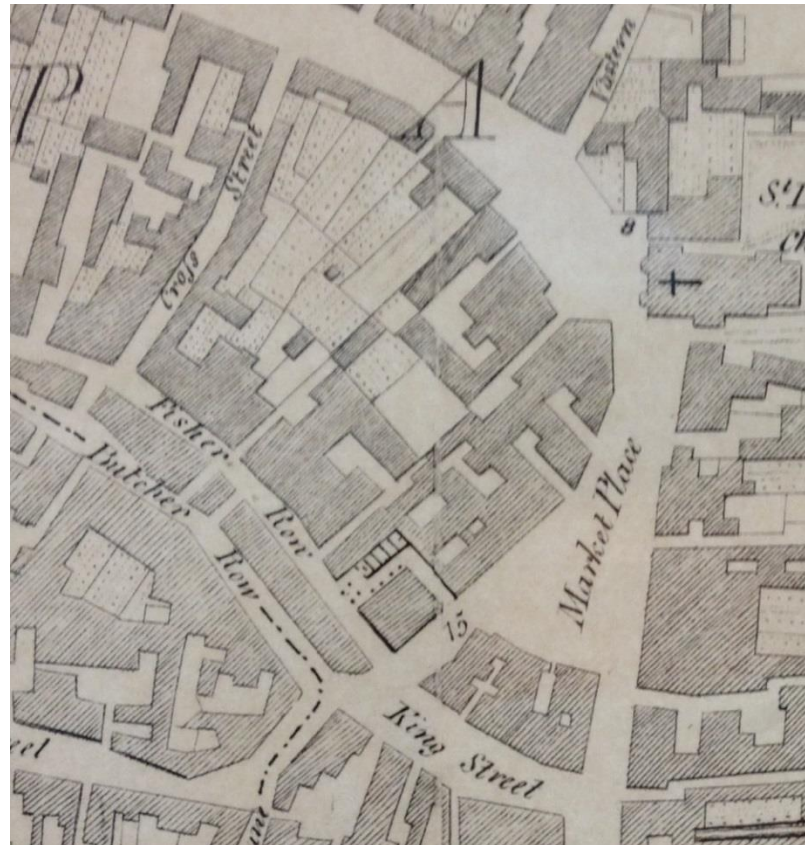


Figure 5.2 – Charles Tomkins’ Map of Reading, 1802

- 5.5 An engraving dated 1843 shows a view of the Market Place, looking north towards St Laurence’s Church (Figure 5.3). Here, the timber-frame and oriel windows of Nos.27 and 28 are just visible where the building line begins to curve round to Friar Street, and the taller southern flank wall of No.26 Market Place is also extant. In the 1843 engraving, The Coopers public house (though not yet in use as a public house) is arranged as three properties (Nos.29-31) over three bays, and the List Entry also dates this short row to the 17th century. The Coopers public house abuts the Trustees Savings Bank, dated by the List Entry to the mid-19th century, and this arrangement shows that No.32 Market Place had not yet been constructed. A second photograph of 1860 shows that by this date, No.32 was extant between Nos.29-31 and the Trustees Savings Bank. (Figure 5.4). The construction of No.32 necessitated the demolition of the southern-most bay of The Coopers public house.

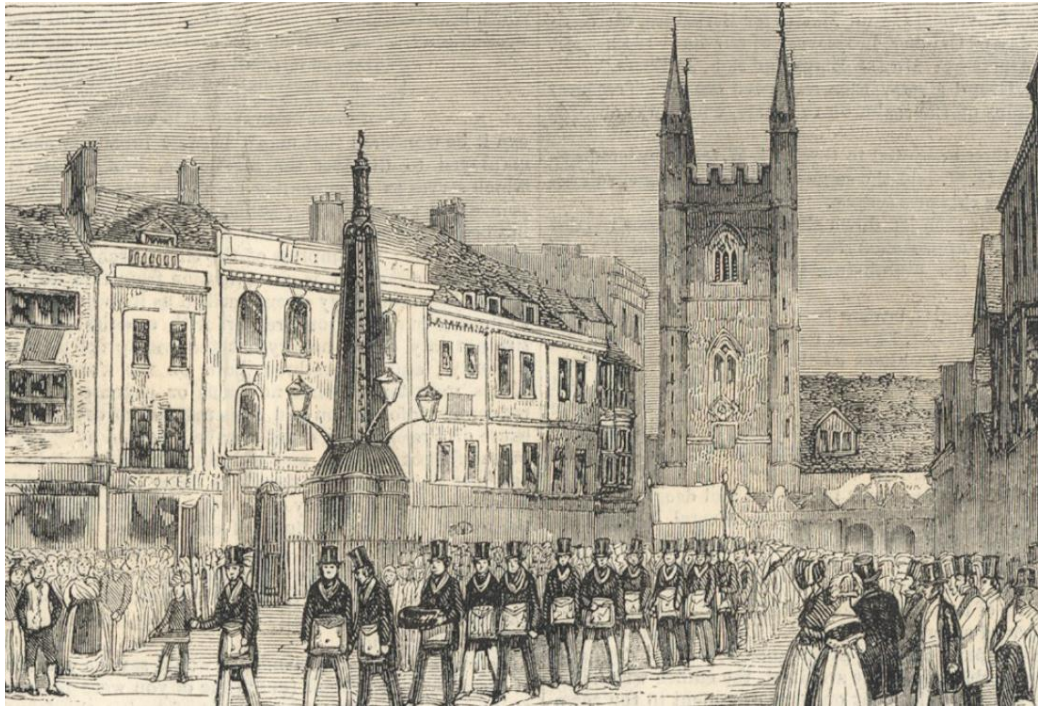


Figure 5.3 – Engraving dated 1842 showing Nos.27 and 28 Market Place, and the original three bays of The Coopers public house. No.32 Market Place is not yet extant.



Figure 5.4 – Photograph dated 1860, showing No.32 (L), The Coopers public house (C) and Nos.27 and 28 (R)

- 5.6 The 1877 Ordnance Survey (OS) map shows in detail the building footprints for the listed buildings at Nos.27 and 28, The Coopers public house, and No.32 Market Place (Figure 5.5). Nos.27 and 28 are enclosed on three sides within the built form, and this is considered unusual. Medieval plots are typically long and narrow, and this pattern of close-knit, slim burgage plots is borne out by the rest of the building line to Friar Street and Market Place. It is considered likely that at some unknown point, the rear portion of Nos.27 and 28 was amalgamated into the ownership of The Coopers public house, thereby producing the tangled layout of building footprints shown in the OS map.
- 5.7 The site of Nos.173-175 Friar Street is occupied by multiple different buildings, including public houses and a hotel. The route of the passage between Friar Street and Broad Street, through the urban block, appears to have been blocked by the built form of the Corn Exchange and Market; however it is thought likely that because of the public nature of these buildings, a through-route was probably maintained which is not highlighted on this map. The narrow through-passage and yard space accessed from the Market Place and seen in Tomkins' 1802 map is still discernible in 1877, but has also been amalgamated as part of the interior of The Coopers public house.



Figure 5.5 – OS 1877 (Nos.27 and 28 marked in blue, Nos.29-31 in red and No.32 Market Place in yellow)

- 5.8 By the late-19th century, the Goad Fire Insurance Map of 1895 shows that all the listed buildings at the application site and its immediate vicinity were extant (Figure 5.6). The use of colour coding in this map is particularly useful for identifying the location of the once-open passageway within The Coopers public house, which runs between No.29 and No.30 to the covered yard space within the urban block. The yellow colouring indicates that this was ceiled with timber.

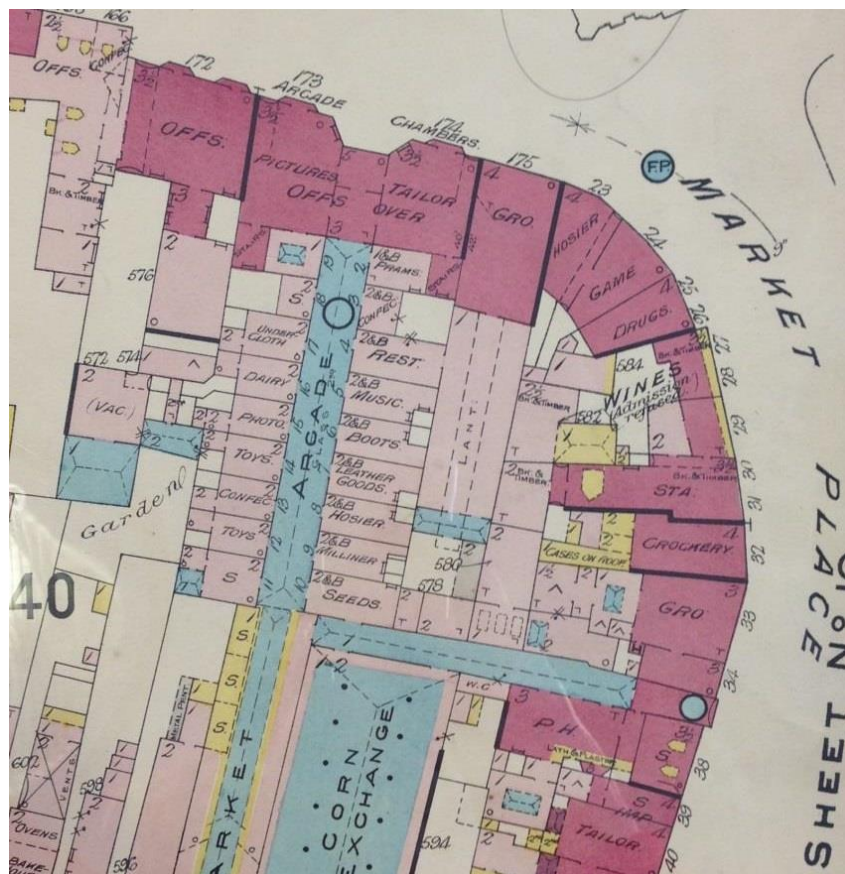


Figure 5.6 – Goad's Fire Insurance Map 1895

- 5.9 Comparison of the 1934 and 1957 OS maps shows that the site of Nos.173-175 Friar Street was redeveloped with the existing buildings in the mid-20th century, their new frontages then awkwardly misaligned with the established building line (Figure 5.7).



Figure 5.7 – OS maps of 1934 (L) and 1957 (R) with Nos.173-175 Friar Street rebuilt

- 5.10 Figure 5.8 below helpfully sketches out the key phases in the historical development of the different plots within the Site to provide a broad overview of this evolution.

C17th (with later
C18-20th alterations)
Mid C19th
Mid C20th

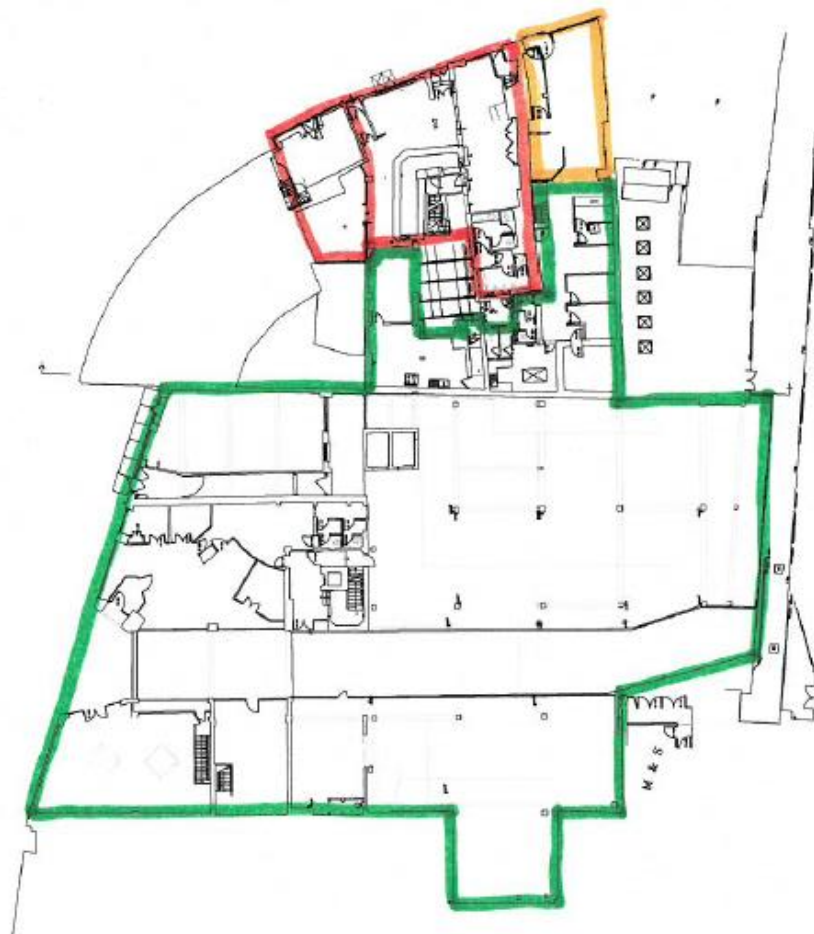


Figure 5.8 - Key building phases within the Site

Grade II Listed Building: Nos.27-28 Market Place

Architectural Interest

Front Elevation

- 5.11 The timber-framed mixed commercial and residential building at Nos.27 and 28 Market Place was built in the early-17th century, but may retain fabric from an earlier building on the site. The building is a good example of the vernacular tradition of timber box framing; the most widespread form of timber framing in England.²² The 18th century shopfront with pilasters to either side of the windows, and the upper floors with impressive oriel windows, presents a striking elevation to the Market Place which reflects its history as a fairly high-status merchant's townhouse (Figure 5.9).



Figure 5.9 – Nos.27 and 28 Market Place

- 5.12 This principal elevation has undergone some alteration in the late-19th or early-20th century. A photograph of 1860, and a line drawing of 1885, both show the house with timber-framed casement windows with square lights (Figure 5.10). By 1915 another photograph shows that these had been replaced with the existing fixed windows (Figure 5.11). Whilst the timber frame would originally have been infilled with lime render, the age of the existing roughcast is unclear. It may be a product of the late-19th or early-20th century, when techniques like pebble dashing and roughcast render became more popular as a method of building maintenance. However, overall the external appearance of the building appears well-preserved.

²² Historic England. Listing Selection Guide, Domestic 1: Vernacular Houses



Figure 5.10 – Photograph of 1860 and drawing of 1885

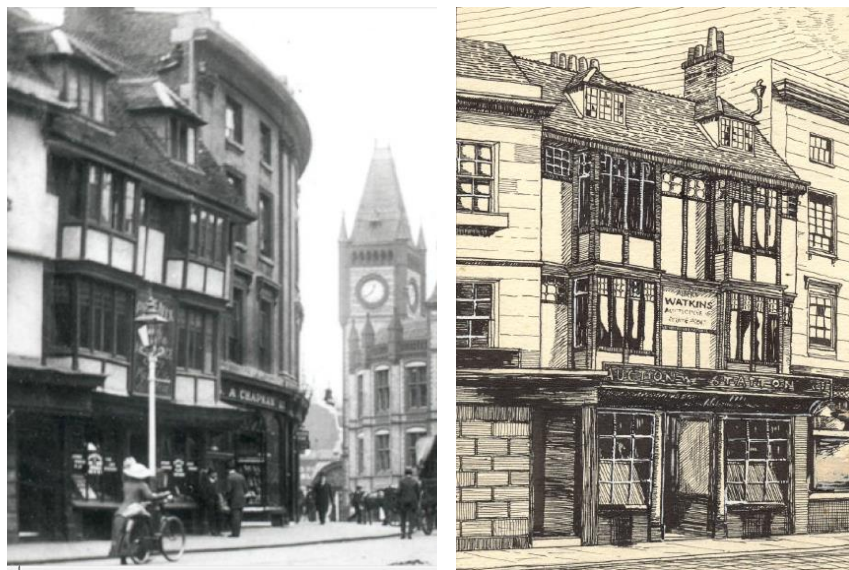


Figure 5.11 – Photograph of 1915 and drawing of 1925 showing replacement windows

Roof Form

- 5.13 The roof of Nos.27 and 28 is clad in red clay tiles, with crested ridge tiles at the pitch and two dormer windows in the front slope. Though the roof tiles are likely to be a Victorian or later replacement of the original covering, the roof form is considered to be intact. The 1860 photograph, above, shows a broad chimney slab to the rear with a row of chimney pots; however, as found today this appears to have been rebuilt, and the chimney pots lost (Figure 5.12). The roof structure was not inspected internally. The rear and flank elevations of the building are entirely enclosed within the building line and urban block.



Figure 5.12 – The roof of Nos.27 and 28 Market Place

Internal

- 5.14 Internally, Nos.27 and 28 Market Place is a single room in depth. As described in Section 3, this is considered unusual. Medieval plots are typically long and narrow, and this pattern of close-knit, slim burgage plots is borne out by the rest of the building line to Friar Street and Market Place. It is considered likely that originally, the building would have been two rooms in depth with a central chimney stack (Figure 5.13). However, at an unknown point, the rear portion of Nos.27 and 28 was amalgamated into the ownership of The Coopers public house. Neither desk-based nor archival research has established a specific date for this change of ownership, but assessment of the fabric within The Coopers public house, which comes later in this section, indicates that it probably occurred in the early-19th century.



Figure 5.13 – Estimated original footprint of Nos.27 and 28. The rear room has now been absorbed as part of The Coopers public house

- 5.15 Throughout the interior of the building, surface-level refurbishment has been carried out to replace doors and floor surfaces, and to repaint walls and ceilings. A single staircase runs from basement to third floor level, and is located in the rear north corner of the building. Whilst the staircase itself is modern, its proportions and its position in the rear corner against the party wall indicate that its location is likely to be original (Figure 5.14).



Figure 5.14 – A single, narrow staircase runs throughout the building

- 5.16 At basement level, a thick timber beam runs laterally across the ceiling in the main room, and is part of the original building structure. The fireplace in the centre of the room is made of timber, to a very simple design, with dark red tiles in the cheek plates indicative of a late-19th or early-20th century date (Figure 5.15). The single-room floor plan extends forwards of the building line at this level, to a vault space at a lower level beneath the Market Place (Figure 5.16). This generous space is indicative of the building's early commercial use, and would have provided storage facilities for both the business premises at ground floor, and possibly for the household above. It may be that the street vault is a remnant of an earlier building on this site, re-used as part of the redevelopment. Other than these features, there is very little surviving at this level which is of historic or architectural interest.



Figure 5.15 – Timber beam and fireplace at basement level



Figure 5.16 – Vault space under the street at basement level reflects the building's historic use as commercial premises

- 5.17 The building's commercial premises would originally have been located at the ground floor, and this would therefore have been an important space within the building, where everyday business and trade would have been carried out. As at basement level, an original timber beam runs laterally across the ceiling. The shallow depth of the building, combined with the broad, glazed frontage means that this is a very bright space, appropriate for use as a shop or other business premises (Figure 5.17).



Figure 5.17 – Ground floor shop frontage

- 5.18 The first floor level would historically have had high-status in the hierarchy of floor levels across the building, possibly used for more private or administrative business functions, or as the principle living accommodation. Externally, the striking oriel windows and projecting jetty articulate this status. Internally, the breadth of the windows and the moulded strips on the ceiling are used to express the importance of this level (Figure 5.18). Ceiling ornament, even in more modest houses, was becoming common by the early-17th century when this house was built, and often took the form of grid-like coffering.²³ This feature is considered to be historic, if not original, and contributes to an understanding of the building as a good-quality merchant's house. The timber ceiling joists are exposed within this room, and some historic cornicing survives whilst openings in the wall show that the lath and plaster structure is also still extant.



Figure 5.18 – The room at first floor level

- 5.19 At second floor level the floor plan has been more heavily partitioned, though desk-based and archival research has not revealed a date for these alterations. There are two rooms at this level, each with a window overlooking the street, along with some further divisions to create cupboard space. Again, the beams of the timber frame are exposed though, interestingly, at this level they lie flush with the ceiling rather than standing proud from the surface as seen on the lower three levels. There is also a small, carved console bracket against the rear wall in the larger of the two rooms. The fireplace surround is designed Edwardian style, and though its age is uncertain it is

²³ Ed. Calloway, S. *The Elements of Style: An Encyclopedia of Domestic Architectural Detail*. Octopus Publishing Group Limited. 1991.

considered that this and the other surviving fireplaces in the building date from the late-19th or early-20th century phase of the building's occupation (Figure 5.19).



Figure 5.19 – Second floor level

- 5.20 The uppermost floor of the building is within the roof space, and the proportions of the staircase are particularly small when ascending to this level. Its modest surface treatment and mean proportions clearly express the low status of this floor, relative to the size and proportions of rooms below, and this is a characteristic typical of historic domestic buildings. The simple, small timber fire surround is also testament to this status (Figure 5.20).



Figure 5.20 – Smaller proportions and modest features express the lower status of this floor level within the hierarchy of levels through the house

- 5.21 The floor structure is exposed, and the sawn floorboards are not considered to be of any great age. The principle rafters and purlins of the roof structure are also exposed here, along with braces between the roof and floor (Figure 5.21).



Figure 5.21 – The rafters and purlins of the roof structure are exposed at the third floor

- 5.22 Overall, Nos.27 and 28 Market Place retains a great deal of original or historic fabric in its structure, though the loss of the rear room to The Coopers public house has compromised significantly the understanding of its original form and function as a mixed commercial and residential building. Some interior features and decoration remain to reflect past phases of occupation in the building, though modern refurbishments have diminished the historic character and appearance of the interior.

Historic Interest

- 5.23 The listed building is of historic interest as an example of an early-17th century townhouse, the timber-framed construction of which is representative of an important vernacular building tradition in England. It represents an early phase in the development of the Market Place, and the vernacular style of architecture which once prevailed in the town. Nos.27 and 28 also constitutes one of the oldest surviving buildings in Reading, having survived the wide-spread phase of replacement in the 19th and 20th centuries. Its original mixed commercial and residential use reflects the role of the Market Place as the historic core of Reading, where the key commercial and business activities were concentrated (Figure 5.22).
- 5.24 Externally, the principal elevation appears to have survived relatively intact; however, internally the plan form of the house has been heavily compromised by the loss of the rear room to the neighbouring building. Interior décor and features also date from later periods of refurbishment, probably from the Edwardian period and certainly from the late-20th century use of the building as a martial arts centre. That said, the hierarchy of floor levels through the building does remain legible, to illustrate the traditional layout of domestic properties of this age.



Figure 5.22 –No.27 and 28 form part of the commercial building stock on the Market Place, where the key commercial activity in Reading was concentrated

Group Value

- 5.25 There is a key associative relationship between Nos.27 and 28 and the historic buildings around the Market Place, including Nos.23-26 Market Place, The Coopers public house, No.32 Market Place, the Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance, and other historic and listed buildings on the south and east sides of the open space. Together, these buildings create a varied and interesting frontage to the Market Place, and enhance the appreciation of the area as an historically important place for commerce in the town. The listed building also forms part of the appropriate historic backdrop to the key landmark buildings of the Town Hall and St Laurence's Church.

Summary of Significance

- 5.26 Nos.27 and 28 Market Place is representative of a strong tradition of timber-framed vernacular architecture in England, which has survived later phases of urban redevelopment in Reading, and changes in architectural fashion more widely. Though the footprint of the building has been truncated, there remains some legibility of the historic hierarchy of floor levels which is traditional to this type of domestic architecture. Whilst much of the older interior decorative scheme has been lost, the grid moulding to the ceiling at first floor level is considered to be original, or an early part of the décor. Surviving elements of an Edwardian scheme of decoration also make a valid contribution to the building's special interest. Conversely, more recent refurbishments are poor quality, and detract from its historic character and special interest. Nos.27 and 28 also derive special interest as part of the group of historic buildings around the Market Place.
- 5.27 It has been described that the remainder of the Site (Nos.172-175 Friar Street), which largely falls outside the boundary of the conservation area and does not incorporate listed buildings, comprises post-war buildings and other structural elements of limited architectural and historic interest. They are elements of immediate setting of this listed building that do not contribute positively to its significance.

Grade II Listed Building: The Coopers Public House (Nos.29-31 Market Place)

Architectural Interest

Front Elevation

Like Nos.27 and 28 Market Place, The Coopers public house was also built in the 17th century, and may retain fabric from an earlier building on the site. As found today, the principal elevation of The Coopers public house has a stuccoed, rusticated street frontage with a central entrance and shop-like windows to either side. The central entrance is set within an elaborate, Georgian-style doorcase. Above, the first and second floors are clad in false exposed timber framing, whilst at attic level two hipped dormer windows sit above a modillion cornice (Figure 5.23).



Figure 5.23 – The Coopers public house

- 5.28 Photographs of the building from the 19th century show that originally it was plainly rendered (Figure 5.24). The render was intended to hide the structural timber framing, which had begun to go out of fashion from the late-17th century. The amalgam of traditional timber construction with Classically-influenced architectural details is of interest, where it shows the diminishing quality and popularity of timber framed construction from the 17th century, and the growing fashion for Classical motifs such as the windows, rusticated street frontage and modillion cornice. In this way, the Coopers public house represents the interface between established construction methods of the 17th century and older, and the changing tastes in architectural fashions over the late-17th and early-18th centuries.



Figure 5.24 – Photographs of 1845 and 1860, showing The Coopers public house with plain render to the street elevation

- 5.29 These photographs also show that the ground floor street frontage has previously been divided into two or more different premises. Street directories for several decades also identify that The Coopers public house was occupied by multiple different businesses and residents, including Cooper's wine and spirit merchants (Figure 5.25). Street directories from several different decades also identify these multiple different uses at ground floor, whilst the upper levels were probably in use as accommodation for multiple people or families.

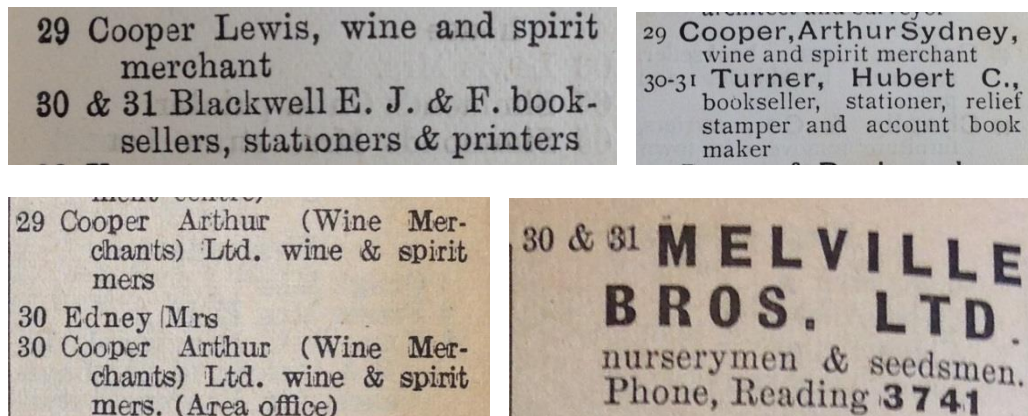


Figure 5.25 – Clockwise from top-left: street directories of 1884, 1900, 1928, and 1954

- 5.30 Further photographs from the early-20th century show that The Coopers public house was re-fronted with the artificial timbering between 1915 and 1939, at which date the sash-and case windows were also replaced with casements (Figure 5.26). These photographs also show that the building was altered at this time to create hipped roofs to the two dormers on the front pitch, and it is thought likely that the whole roof would have been recovered at this date. This reversion back to a timber-framed appearance is interesting where again, the changing architectural tastes and fashions at the time are reflected.



Figure 5.26 – Photographs of 1915 (L) and 1939 (R) showing false timbering added to the front elevation, and the sash windows replaced with casements

- 5.31 A further phase of alteration occurred in the post-war period, to the ground floor elevation. In 1955, a photograph shows that the street frontage was divided into two premises; one with rusticated stucco, and the other with a substantial timber fascia and framing. By 1969, a photograph shows the building largely as it is found today: a unified ground floor frontage, fully-covered in rusticated stucco, with new southern window and a central, neo-Georgian doorcase around the internalised passageway (Figure 5.27). These later changes seen in 1969 probably took place as part of the building's conversion into single use as a public house, and a street directory confirms that this new use had been established by 1976 (Figure 5.28).



Figure 5.27 – Photographs of 1955 (L) and 1969 (R) showing the building frontage altered a second time, and the Georgian-style doorcase added

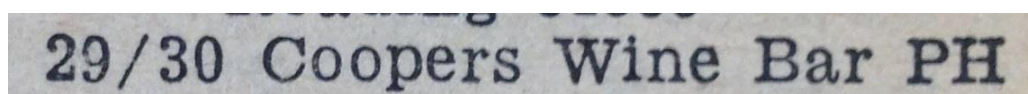


Figure 5.28 – Street directories of 1954 and 1976, showing the building converted to use as a public house

- 5.32 This series of historic photographs shows that much of the principal elevation is now a product of 20th century alterations to add false timbering, replace or alter the upper storey windows, and remodel the ground floor frontage. Whilst the false timbering of the upper storeys is clearly a later addition of little historical or architectural value, the doorcase and windows do appear deceptively old. The photographs above confirm that despite appearances, the central doorcase and southern-most ground floor window are products of the late-20th century, and are therefore of lesser importance as part of the building's special interest (Figure 5.29).



Figure 5.29 – The central doorcase windows are products of the late-20th century

Rear Elements and Roof Form

- 5.33 Behind the street elevation, the form and footprint of The Coopers public house is a complex amalgam of different elements (Figure 5.30). Overall, the rear portions and roof form of the building comprise the timber-framed 17th century core fronting the street and projecting into the rear of the plot; together with 19th century phases of alteration to internalise the passageway and yard space, at which time the weatherboarding was probably added; and 20th century rear extensions to the ground and first floor, possibly as part of the conversion to a public house.
- 5.34 The historic box timber framing is visible to the back of the range fronting the street, where there is also a single brick chimney stack. A long wing projects back into the plot, and the structural timber-framing is also visible here, variously infilled with plaster and brick nogging. The southern (flank) elevation of this large rear wing is completely concealed behind a brick retaining wall, which was built when the original third bay of The Coopers public house was demolished to make way for the construction of No.32 Market Place between 1842 and 1860 (Figure 5.31). This retaining wall incorporates a chimney stack, which likely replaced a previous stack in this location.

- 5.35 The red tiled roof covering to these two elements is well-weathered but is not considered to be of any great age. As previously noted, comparison of the photographs from 1915 and 1939 shows that the building was altered to create hipped roofs to the two dormers on the front pitch, and it is thought likely that the whole roof was recovered at this date (Figure 5.26).



Figure 5.30 – Rear elevation and roof form of The Coopers public house



Figure 5.31 – The long rear range has exposed timber-framing, and a brick retaining wall where the original third bay was demolished between 1842 and 1860

- 5.36 Some external elevations to the rear of the building are covered in weatherboarding, with a further few areas of cement render. The fine, 'Y'-shaped Gothic-style tracery of

two arched windows to the corridor at first floor level is suggestive of an early-19th century phase of alteration to the building, whilst elsewhere the rear of the building incorporates a range of window ages, from historic sash and case windows, to modern, poor quality casement frames (Figure 5.27).



Figure 5.27 – Areas of exposed timber-framing, weatherboarding and cement render

- 5.37 To the immediate north of the timber-framed rear wing, what was originally an open passageway leading to an open yard is now internalised as part of the building. This former yard area is now covered with a modern pitched lantern, of limited quality and diminishing condition (Figure 5.28).

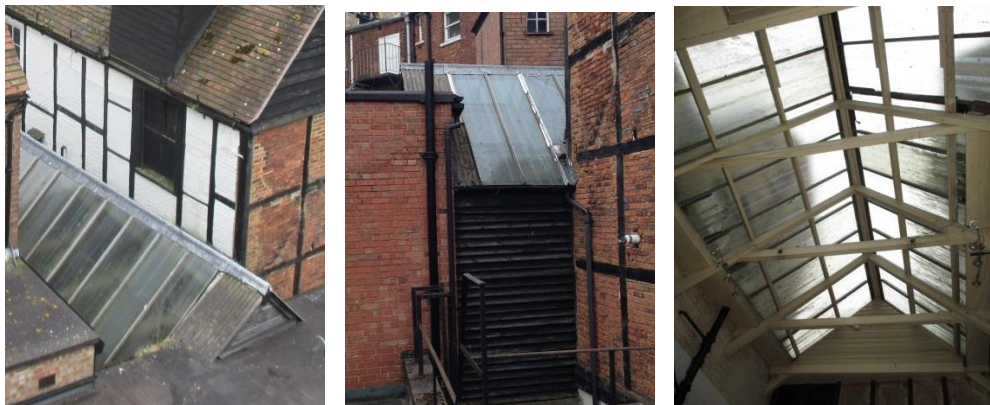


Figure 5.28 – Modern, poor quality roof lantern over the historic rear yard

- 5.38 Adjacent and to the rear of the modern lantern, there is a group of more recent additions to the historic portions of The Coopers public house. This comprises two flat-roofed ground floor elements, and a box-like first floor element with a pitched roof (Figure 5.29). The external brickwork of these elements, combined with the appearance of the internal décor (to be discussed further on) is suggestive of a mid- or late-20th century construction date; possibly between 1962 and 1976 when the building was converted to use as a public house.



Figure 5.29 – Modern additions / replacements to the historic building

- 5.39 Finally, there is another pitched roof form over the small room behind Nos.27 and 28 Market Place (originally part of that listed building, Figure 5.30). This is thought to be of the 17th century in structure (contemporary with the listed building), though the clay tiles are 20th century replacements and the rear elevation has been rendered with cement.



Figure 5.30 – Pitched roof form over the northern-most room in the building

- 5.40 Internally, the roof structure of the 17th century core of The Coopers public house is completely exposed at attic level. A great many of the joists appear to be original, though there are several areas where timbers have been replaced or supplemented with new (Figure 5.31).



Figure 5.31 – The roof structure of the 17th century core is exposed at attic level, and appears to be relatively intact

Internal

Basement

- 5.41 The basement level is accessed via a straight flight of stairs in the centre of the ground floor plan form (Figure 5.32). Though the stair flight has been altered with a modern tread surface, it is considered that its main structure and location is original.



Figure 5.32 – Staircase to basement level

- 5.42 Prior to the internalisation of the central passageway at street level, the basement stair would probably have been accessed internally from No.29, and from across the passageway by Nos.30 and 31 via a door opening in the internal flank wall. Though the access was shared, it is considered likely that the basement itself was also divided between the two premises above, and the plan form allows for this arrangement (Figure 5.33). At the bottom of the stairs one can turn either left or right, and there are two rooms to either side, connected at the front of the building by an arched passage (Figure 5.34). In the 20th century, a further room at basement level was added to the rear of the northern two rooms to create the plan form and phasing found today.

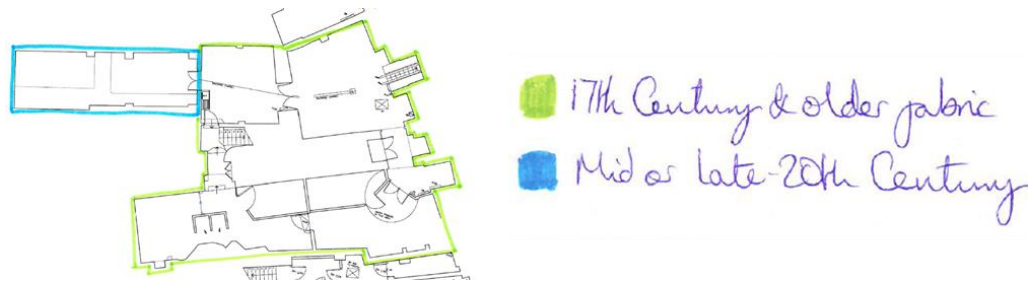


Figure 5.33 – Phases of construction at basement level



Figure 5.34 – Four rooms under the historic portion of the building are connected by passageways at the front and back of the house

- 5.43 The site of The Coopers arms has likely been occupied by multiple different buildings over time. Though the majority of the building dates from the 17th century (with later alterations and additions), at basement level fragments of plan form and construction materials indicate that elements of an older building have been incorporated into the

existing structure. For example, to the front of the building there are numerous alcoves which project a small way under the street, and this is considered to be typical of medieval and Jacobean commercial buildings, where basements, or undercrofts, were used for the storage of stock and other possessions (Figure 5.35). There is a section of rubble and flint walling to the rear wall of the south-west room at this level which is suggestive of a pre-existing earlier structure on the site, whilst areas of 16th and 17th century brickwork repairs also indicate a pre-existing phase of construction. Thick layers of modern paint obstruct further investigation of the construction of other walls at this level, but it is considered likely that at basement level, this building has incorporated elements of an older structure in its form and fabric.



Figure 5.35 – Street alcoves and some wall fabric indicate the incorporation of an older building at basement level

- 5.44 There is a substantial timber beam at this level which is very likely to be original to the 17th century, whilst some exposed timber ceiling joists are sawn, with steel supporting beams, and therefore are likely to be more recent replacements of the floor structure above (Figure 5.36).



Figure 5.36 – Historic and more recent timbers at ceiling level

Ground Floor

- 5.45 The ground floor of this building would originally have been used as two commercial premises (No.29, and No.30 and 31), divided by the external passageway leading to an open yard. Its role as the principal place of business and commerce would have made this an important and high-status floor level within the building, and this status would likely have been accompanied by appropriate decoration. The historic division into two

shops survived until the post-war period, but between 1955 and 1962 the ground floor frontage was remodelled into a single premises, and the internal space was converted to single use as a public house. As part of this the layout and décor at this level was substantially remodelled.

- 5.46 As previously described, the rear room of the neighbouring Nos.27 and 28 Market Place was incorporated as part of this building at an unknown date, but prior to 1877 when the OS map shows the footprint of the public house incorporating this space. The passageway and yard were internalised in the 19th century, whilst extensions to the rear were constructed in the mid- or late-20th century (Figure 5.37).

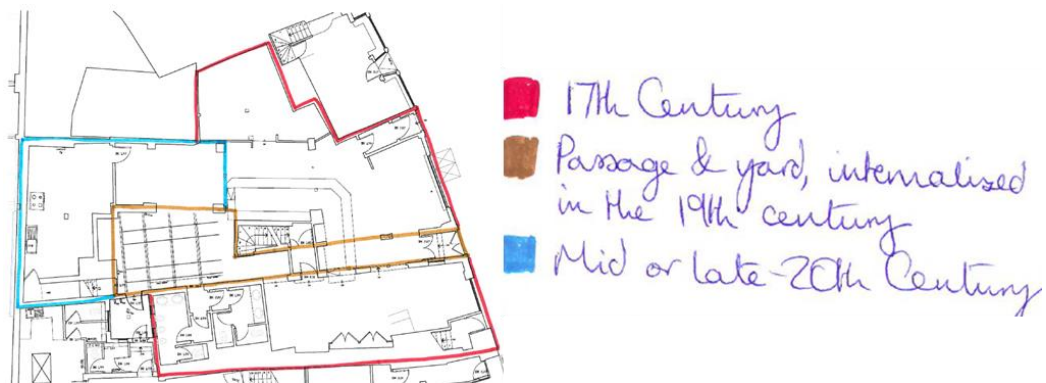


Figure 5.37 – Phases of construction and alteration at ground floor level

- 5.47 Archival research has not revealed any material to inform an understanding of the original plan form of the building; however, The Coopers public house was built on an already-established street, which was laid out in typically narrow, thin medieval burgrave plots. The form of the southern premises at this level remains correspondingly long and narrow, though the location of any historic lateral partitioning to create separate rooms in this part of the building is unknown. Today, heavy modern partitioning towards the rear of the plot to create W.Cs has compromised this legibility on site (Figure 5.38 and 5.39).

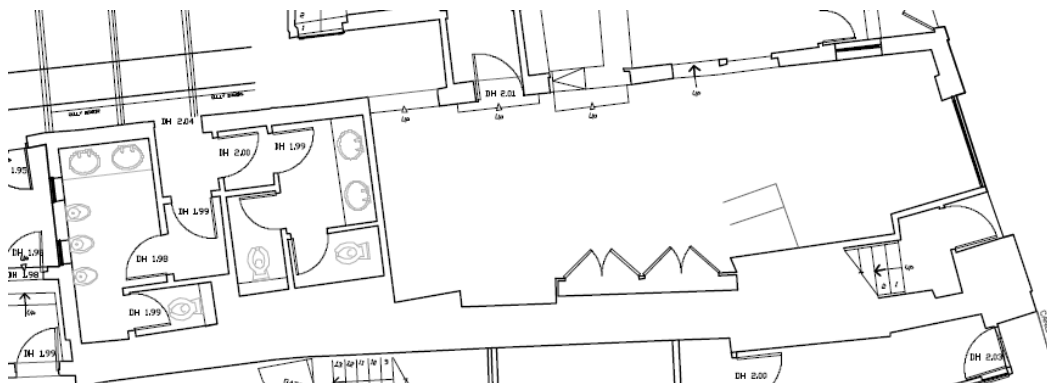


Figure 5.38 – The characteristically medieval proportions of the southern premises are discernible in plan drawings, but modern partitioning has compromised legibility on site



Figure 5.39 – The southern portion of the building retains its historic long, thin proportions to the front of the building

- 5.48 This southern room contains several elements of timber décor including half-height panelling and a moulded cornice with a grape motif (Figure 5.40). None of this is considered to be historic, but simply a modern decorative scheme installed as part of the conversion to single use as a public house, and intended to look antique to fit in with the historic character of the building as a whole. The one element which does appear to be of some age is a carved timber door which provides access to the basement. The List Entry identifies that this is probably reused from another 16th or 17th century house²⁴, whilst an archaeological report submitted as part of an application for Listed Building Consent in 2008²⁵ speculates that it might have been taken from one of the many historic buildings which were demolished in Market Place during the post-war period, and inserted as part of the pub conversion, to enhance the historic character of the décor.



Figure 5.40 – Much of the decorative detail in this room is modern, though a door to the cellar appears to be a reused feature from a 16th or 17th century house

²⁴ National Heritage List for England

²⁵ Application Number 080843. Buildings Archaeology Report for Brook Henderson Estates Ltd, August 2007.

- 5.49 The spine walls dividing the north and south premises, and the central passageway, have been opened up to create lateral access through the building, and this has compromised the legibility of the form of the previously-external passageway, and the understanding of the ground floor as two formerly-separate spaces (Figure 5.41). As found today, the historic plan form of the northern premises, the route of the passageway, and its connection to the covered yard have also been compromised and obstructed by the large central bar, which was installed between 1962 and 1976, when the building was converted to a public house (Figure 5.42).



Figure 5.41 – Lateral openings in the spine walls have compromised the legibility of the two separate premises with a central passageway



Figure 5.42 – The modern bar in the centre of the floor plan compromises the plan form of the northern premises (L) and central passageway (R)

- 5.50 A timber beam runs across the front of the property, a short way back from the early-19th century window (Figure 5.43). It is thought that this may represent the original

location of the ground floor frontage, indicating that originally, the upper storeys of the building were jettied. This would be in keeping with the timber-framed construction and is a common feature of 17th century buildings, as displayed by the neighbouring Nos.27 and 28. As part of the changing tastes and fashions in architecture during the late-17th and 18th centuries, it may be that the street frontage was pushed forwards to remove the unfashionable jetty, leaving behind this fragmentary timber. Further behind the front window there is a second beam at ceiling level, with some carving along its edge. This simple decorative detail is indicative of the status of this floor level in the building, which would have been the principal space for everyday business and trade.



Figure 5.43 – Ceiling timbers towards the front of the building are suggestive of its original form and appearance, and reflect the status and role of this floor level

- 5.51 The bar itself is a modern installation, again built of dark timber in order to blend with the antique-style effect of the pub décor. Above this central feature, the historic timber ceiling beams are exposed, though the spaces between appear to have undergone some alteration to fit down-lighters (Figure 5.44).



5.44 – The central bar and ceiling over

- 5.52 Opposite the bar, there is a small lounge space on the north side of the building which formerly would have belonged to Nos.27 and 28 Market Place, but which was incorporated into this building at some point prior to 1877, and probably in the early-19th century (Figure 5.45). The walls of this area are almost completely panelled, and there is a large strapwork overmantel on the far wall.



Figure 5.45 – Lounge space opposite the bar

- 5.53 The List Entry identifies the overmantel but provides no further insight into its origins. Again, an archaeological report submitted as part of an application for Listed Building Consent in 2008²⁶ speculates that both the panelling and overmantel were taken from an historic building elsewhere, and inserted in this location as part of the pub conversion to create a traditional, historic ambience and character. This report contains a further assessment of the overmantel by Victor Chinnery Early Furniture and Decoration Advisory and Consultancy Services, which states:

“The overmantel area is the most notable feature, being a 19th century assembly incorporating a mixture of early 17th century fragments from disparate and unidentified sources...As such, the overmantel is a typical product of Victorian antiquarian interest, though it was clearly not composed for the present context as it is significantly too large to function as an overmantel in such a small space. The area beneath is covered by a modern panel painted with a false fireplace, and (without removing the panel) it is not clear whether a real fireplace exists in this area...

...The rest of the 17th century plan panelling now covering these three walls is of equally disparate origins, being composed of sheets of plain panels, each held within a range of moulded frameworks of differing patterns and proportions...

The whole scheme appears to have been brought together fairly recently...”²⁷

²⁶ Application Number 080843. Buildings Archaeology Report for Brook Henderson Estates Ltd, August 2007.

²⁷ Victor Chinnery Early Furniture and Decoration Advisory and Consultancy Services. Report on The Coopers Arms. November 2006.

- 5.54 To the rear of the ground floor beyond the bar, it appears that some demolition of the historic building has taken place to open up the space and connect the historic building into the mid- to late-20th century extensions (Figure 5.46). Timber and modern brick pillars now support the rear wall of the historic building. The modern space has very high ceilings, with dark timber moulded cornices intended to be in keeping the antique-style décor at the rest of this level. High on the inner wall windows look onto the central covered yard area, whilst there is a large opening into this space at ground level.



Figure 5.46 – Some demolition of the historic rear elevation has occurred to open up the space to the modern rear extensions

- 5.55 The 20th century extensions wrap around two sides of the former yard area, whilst the timber frame of the 17th century rear range forms the southern wall of this space (Figure 5.47). This timber framed wall has been extended westwards using brick and weather boarding in order to support the roof structure above, and a door inserted at ground level. A 20th century sash window has been inserted into the timber framing, along with two other door openings. That at the ground floor may be of some age, but the frame of the door opening at first floor indicates that it is a more recent alteration.
- 5.56 The glazed roof lantern assists in the appreciation of this space as a formerly-external yard, however, its relationship with the former passageway connecting to it from the street has been compromised by the insertion of a partition which now completely blocks this route through the building.



Figure 5.47 – The covered yard area, enclosed on two sides by the historic building, and on two sides by modern additions

- 5.57 At the very rear of the building at this level, the modern extension contains the kitchen which served the building when in use as a public house. There is nothing in this area which is of any architectural or historic interest (Figure 5.48).



Figure 5.48 – Former kitchen area in the modern rear extension at ground floor

- 5.58 In summary, at ground floor level the plan form and interior décor has been heavily altered in the 20th century, as part of the building's conversion to single use as a public house, and the historic layout is now very difficult to discern. Much of the interior décor is modern, whilst more historic elements are considered to be disparate accumulations from other locations, reused in this building either as part of the 19th century penchant for antique features, or the 20th century attempt to create a traditional, nostalgic interior design scheme. Whilst these features contribute in a

small way to the historic and architectural interest of the building through their age and aesthetic value, this contribution is diminished by their unknown provenance.

First Floor

- 5.59 The first floor level would historically have comprised residential accommodation, either as a single or multiple dwellings. If in use as a single dwelling, the first floor would have had high-status within the hierarchy of floor levels through the building, and would have been used as the main living space, with bedrooms above. As found today, the building has undergone significant phases of alteration and addition in the early-19th and 20th centuries, which have added to its plan form (Figure 5.49). The 17th century core remains, fronting the street and with a large range projecting back into the plot, whilst an early-19th century corridor has been added to provide access to the northern 17th century room; an acquisition from the neighbouring Nos.27 and 28 Market Place. To the rear, the modern extensions create further space at this level.



Figure 5.49 – Phases of construction and alteration at first floor level

- 5.60 A staircase at the front of the house, entered from the street, provides access to the first floor (Figure 5.50). With no archival material to indicate the original layout of the building and the locations of stair access, it is difficult to establish whether the location of this staircase is original. It may be that the original stair access to the first floor was demolished along with the third bay of the building in the mid-19th century, to make way for No.32 Market Place. The current stair at the front of the building may have been installed as a replacement; however, access from the street to a staircase located against the party wall is not an unusual layout for urban, mixed commercial and residential buildings.



Figure 5.50 – Staircase at the front of the building, accessed via a separate entrance

- 5.61 There are two rooms to the front of the house, and a third large room to the rear, all within the original 17th century building. The rooms to the front of the house occupy a single bay each, with two windows in each room overlooking the street. As previously described, these windows are replacements of the early-20th century. The proportions of these two rooms are considered to be fairly intact, where they occupy the full width of each bay, and also the depth of the 17th century building range fronting the street (Figure 5.51).
- 5.62 The original central timber beams are visible in the ceilings of both rooms at the front of the building, whilst the crude panelling in the southern room, and the corbelled fireplace in the northern room are both suggestive of an early-19th century phase of refurbishment. Both rooms retain thick historic floor boards, though their straight, sawn appearance indicates that they are not original, though their thickness does give the impression of some age. The doors and doorcases in these rooms, and elsewhere at this level, are also historic and can likely be attributed to the early-19th century.



Figure 5.51 – Two rooms to the front of the building retain their original proportions

- 5.63 The large room in the rear 17th century range is also considered to be intact in its proportions, and has also received alterations, probably of the early-19th century, to insert a sash window in the northern wall, create built-in shelving to the right of the fireplace, and insert a modest fire surround (Figure 5.52). Again, the floor boards are of some age, though their sawn appearance indicates that they are not original.



Figure 5.52 – Large room in the 17th century rear range, with early-19th century décor

- 5.64 There is a space beyond this rear room which is not accessible at this level, but only via a step ladder from the second floor (Figure 5.53). It is considered that this space would originally have been accessed from the first floor, but was sealed off at a later date; possibly as part of arrangements of the multiple occupancy of the upper floors of the building. The door opening into the void under the glazed lantern is puzzling, as there is no evidence, in the fabric or in archival records, that the former yard space was ever ceiled between ground and first floors.



Figure 5.53 – A space to the back of the rear range is sealed off at first floor level, and only accessible via a step ladder from the second floor

- 5.65 A second staircase, located behind the bar and above the staircase to the basement, provides access to the first floor (Figure 5.54). This is a later insertion, which has simple square balusters with a spiral newel post that date stylistically to the early-19th century, indicating that it is part of a phase of alteration contemporary with the interior décor features seen in the 17th century rooms at this level. Externally, the sloped roof over the staircase is visible within a central external space. The central staircase gains access to a corridor at first floor level. Like the staircase, the arched Gothic-style windows in this corridor date it to the early-19th century (Figure 5.55). This corridor provides access to the room at the rear of Nos.27 and 28, suggesting that it transferred ownership from that building to The Coopers public house in the early-19th century.



Figure 5.54 – Staircase in the centre of the building



Figure 5.55 – A corridor was added in the early-19th century to the back of the 17th century range fronting the street, to provide access to the newly-acquired room

- 5.66 A section of the floor has been removed in the 17th century northern room, creating an opening into the bar / lounge area below. Given the appearance of the balustrade in front of the void, this fabric removal was likely executed as part of the late-20th century conversion to a public house. Two other sides of the void are partitioned using broad timber planks (Figure 5.56).

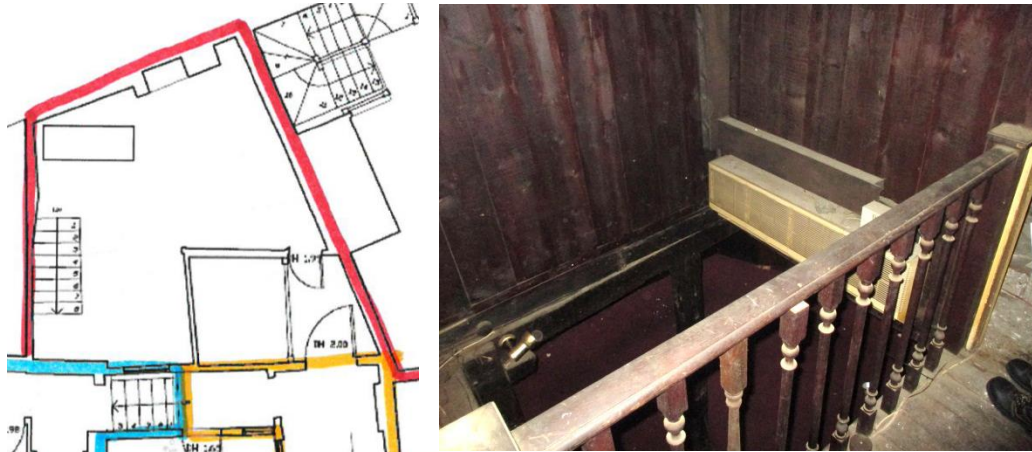


Figure 5.56 – A section of the floor was removed in the late-20th century

- 5.67 Within the room itself, a great deal of the structural fabric is exposed. Historic floor boards have survived, along with original floor and ceiling joists, and laths to the walls. The thickness and irregularity of the laths is indicative of great age, and it is considered likely that large parts of the structure in this room are original (Figure 5.57).



Figure 5.57 - Large parts of the structure in this 17th century room are original

- 5.68 Against the outer wall there is a modest fireplace. This is a later insertion, made once the room was incorporated as part of The Coopers public house in the early-19th century. When part of Nos.27 and 28 Market Place, the fireplace would likely have been located within the substantial chimney breast between the front and rear rooms. A staircase was also installed in this room following its amalgamation into the building, to provide access to the second floor. Again, this may have been carried out as part of alterations to the building to accommodate multiple residential occupation on the upper floors (Figure 5.58).



Figure 5.58 – The 17th century northern room incorporates a fireplace and stair

- 5.69 Turning the corner of the early-19th century corridor, a short flight of modern steps lead up into the mid- or late-20th century rear additions to the building. These extensions wrap around the side and rear of the building, and contain ancillary storage, bathroom and utility functions, as well as a straight flight of stairs to the covered yard area at ground floor level (Figure 5.59). There is nothing in these rooms which is of architectural or historic interest, and the 20th century extensions make no contribution to the significance of the listed building.



Figure 5.59 – The ancillary rooms within the 20th century extensions

- 5.70 From the first floor, access to the second and third floor levels is gained via a framed newel stair. The narrow proportions of this feature, as well as the closed string form and the style of the newel posts, pendants and turned balusters, are all typical of a 17th century staircase (Figure 5.60). This feature is therefore considered to be original. It is currently concealed by a 20th century partition at first floor, but would originally have been open to the hallway. There is no evidence that the staircase would have descended to the ground floor, as the first newel post shows no scarring, or other sign of having been curtailed. An attractive, subtle detail is that the diamond shape of the newel posts is echoed in the shape of the stairwell.



Figure 5.60 – The framed newel stair is typical of 17th century style, and extends between the first and third floor levels of the building

Second Floor

- 5.71 At second floor, the building comprises the 17th century core of the front range to the street, and the rear range projecting back from the building line. As at first floor, an early-19th century corridor connects this portion to the 17th century room incorporated from the neighbouring Nos.27 and 28 Market Place, whilst a further addition of the mid- or late-20th century extends to the rear, accessed by a short flight of steps (Figure 5.61).



Figure 5.61 - Phases of construction and alteration at second floor level

5.72 To the front of the house, the southern-most bay is divided into two rooms, accessed via a short hallway. The hall and room partitions are constructed of brick, and probably date from a later phase of plan form rearrangement at this level of the building. A single room occupies the northern bay, and whilst the early-19th century corridor may have curtailed some of its original depth, it is considered that the proportions of this space remain relatively intact (Figure 5.62). The fireplace in the southern room has a plain surround with corner roundels; a design typical of the early-19th century and appropriate for the more modest upper floor level. The floor boards in these rooms are fairly wide, but are straight sawn indicating that they are later replacements of the original timber. In the southern most room, the ceiling structure is exposed close to the window, showing that modern timbers have been inserted fairly recently to replace failed beams (Figure 5.63).



Figure 5.62 – Three rooms at the front of the house



Figure 5.63 - Exposed ceiling joists in the southern room show that some of this structure has been replaced with modern timbers

- 5.73 The rooms in the 17th century range are considered to be intact in proportion, with a single partition dividing the space into a large and small room. The exposed timber ceiling beams join in the middle of the ceiling of the larger room, whilst areas of the lath and plaster sub structure are also visible. The partition wall is also constructed of timber framing and lath and plaster, the thickness and irregularity of which indicates that it is of considerable age. The far wall of the smaller, end room is constructed of brick between the timber wall posts, and this structure is very probably original (Figure 5.64).



Figure 5.64 – Two rooms in the rear 17th century range

- 5.74 As at first floor level, a corridor added in the early 19th century leads to the 17th century room which formerly belonged to Nos.27 and 28 Market Place (Figure 5.65). The peculiar kinked shape of the hallway is considered to be a later alteration to its form, possibly done to enlarge slightly the front room. The minimal thickness of the hall

partition and the appearance of the tongue and groove panelling give the appearance of a 20th century addition. The treatment of this partition continues around the hall corner to where the 20th century rear extension begins.



Figure 5.65 – 20th century alterations to the early-19th century corridor

5.75 In the 17th century northern room, the timber-framed structure of the building is completely exposed, revealing that the southern wall to the corridor has been completely rebuilt with sawn timbers (Figure 5.66). This may have occurred as part of a 19th century phase of alteration in the building, but equally could also be attributed to the substantial changes which occurred in the 20th century. Archival investigation and research of the planning history has not revealed any further information to establish the providence of these works. Several ceiling joists have also been replaced, and the appearance of these beams and joints is more certainly modern. Elsewhere, the 17th century timber structure remains, along with posts that currently support the ceiling beams, indicating that some repair and strengthening may be needed here.



Figure 5.66 – The 17th century northern room

- 5.76 As in the same room at first floor level, a small fireplace has been installed against the outer wall, and this is considered to date from the early-19th century when the room was incorporated as part of The Coopers public house. A step ladder provides access to the third floor.
- 5.77 As at first floor level, a short flight of modern steps lead up into the mid- or late-20th century rear addition to the building (Figure 5.67). At this level, the extension contains bath and utility rooms (Figure 5.68). Unusually, an exposed area of the ceiling structure shows that lath and plaster was used in the construction of this extension. By the 20th century this building technique was not in common use, and it may be that it was used in this case in an attempt to make the new addition sympathetic to the old building. Despite this small peculiarity, there is nothing here which is of architectural or historic interest, and the 20th century extension make no contribution to the significance of the listed building.

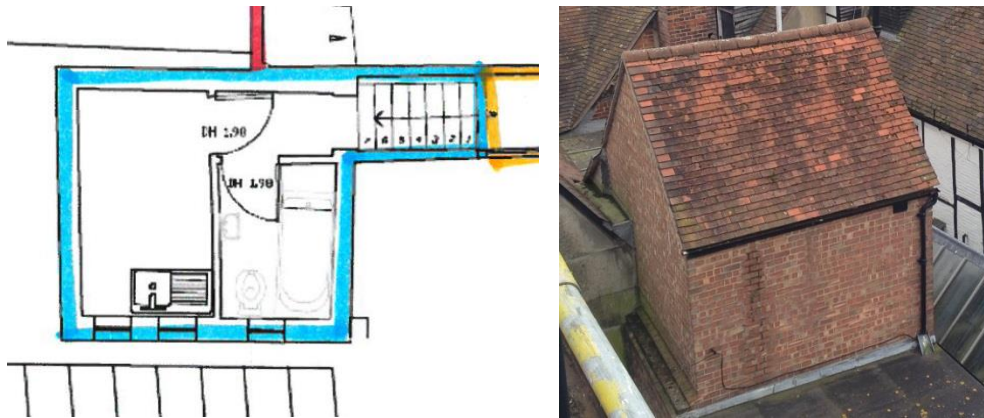


Figure 5.67 – 20th century addition at first floor





Figure 5.68 – Bath and utility rooms in the modern extension

Third Floor (Attic)

- 5.78 The third floor of The Coopers public house comprises the original 17th century fabric of the range fronting the street, and the wing which projects into the rear of the building plot (Figure 5.69). The very modest proportions of the spaces at this level are testament to its relatively low status in the hierarchy of floors within the building.

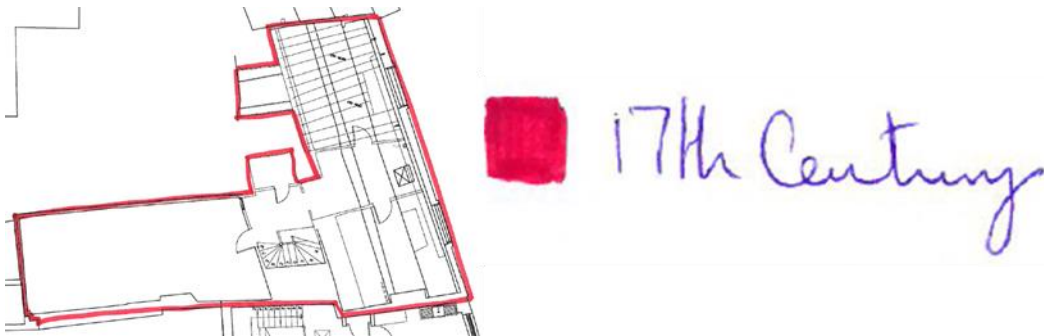


Figure 5.69 - Phases of construction and alteration at third floor level

- 5.79 At this level the wall surfaces and lath substructure have been very largely removed, so that only the structural timbers remain along with some fragmentary plaster wall finishes, and an area of modern tiling in one of the rooms (Figure 5.70). The majority of the timbers are original, though there are some substantial areas of replacement. Wall posts have been inserted to divide the space into three rooms, and there are two rooms at the front of the house to each side of a central landing space, and also two spaces occupying the whole of the rear range (Figure 5.71). These later divisions may have replaced original partitions in the same location, but appear to be of fairly poor quality, and rapidly executed. Archival research has not revealed any information regarding the original or historic plan form at this level; however, the layout of two rooms at the front of the house, and also two spaces occupying the whole of the rear range, is very similar to that seen on the lower two floors, and so is likely to be historic, if not original.



Figure 5.70 – At third floor level the structural timbers are completely exposed, and comprise original 17th century beams as well as areas of replacement



Figure 5.71 – There are two rooms to the front of the house, and two in the rear range

Historic Interest

- 5.80 The Coopers public house is of historic interest as an example of a 17th century mixed commercial and residential building, the timber-framed construction of which is representative of an important vernacular building tradition in England. It represents an early phase in the development of the Market Place, and the vernacular style of architecture which once prevailed in the town. At the same time, the amalgam of traditional timber construction with Classically-influenced architectural detailing on the front elevation is of historic interest where it reflects the changing fashions in architectural style during the 17th century, and the interface of old construction methods with new aesthetic tastes during the period. In a similar vein, the reversion back to a timber-framed appearance in the early-20th century is also of historic interest where it again represents changing preferences in building design at the time.
- 5.81 The building is also important for having survived the widespread phases of redevelopment and replacement that occurred in the Market Place and across Reading during the 19th and 20th centuries, making it one of the oldest buildings in the town. Its original mixed commercial and residential use reflects the role of the Market Place as the historic core of Reading, where the key commercial and business activities were concentrated.

Group Value

- 5.82 There is a key associative relationship between The Coopers public house and the historic buildings around the Market Place, including Nos.23-26, Nos.27 and 28, and No.32 Market Place, the Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance, and other historic and listed buildings on the south and east sides of the open space. Together, these buildings create a varied and interesting frontage to the Market Place, and enhance the appreciation of the area as an historically important place for commerce in the town. The listed building also forms part of the appropriate historic backdrop to the key landmark buildings of the Town Hall and St Laurence's Church.

Summary of Significance

- 5.83 The Coopers public house is representative of a strong tradition of timber-framed vernacular architecture in England, which has survived later phases of urban redevelopment in Reading, and changes in architectural fashion more widely. Though a great deal of internal and external alteration has occurred, particularly in the mid- to late-20th century, the building retains a great deal of its original and historic structural fabric, along with key internal features such as the 17th century staircase. As a public house and former coaching inn this building also represents an important part of the historical development and past commercial uses of this important town within Berkshire.
- 5.84 Phases of change have altered the building incrementally over time, in particular during the early- and mid-19th century and the mid- to late-20th century. Some alterations of the early-19th century, including the additional staircase and upper level corridor, have however added to the building's interest to some degree. The demolition of one of the original three bays of the building in the mid-19th century, and also part amalgamation with the former rear of No.27 Market Place and the enclosure of the historic passageway and open yard at the heart of the plan, has compromised somewhat the legibility of its original form and internal layout. Several quite radical 20th century alterations and additions to the building, both external and internal, have resulted in the loss of substantial historic fabric and features, and serve to confuse our understanding and appreciation of the earlier form.
- 5.85 The other listed buildings within the Site make a positive contribution to the significance of this building through shared group value and as part of the historical and architectural interest of this part of the town centre. The remainder of the Site (Nos.172-175 Friar Street) comprises post-war buildings and other structural elements of much more limited architectural and historic interest. They are elements of the immediate setting of this listed building that do not contribute positively to its significance, or are neutral.

Grade II Listed Building: No.32 Market Place

Group Value

- 5.86 No.32 Market Place was constructed between 1842 and 1860. It is a four storey (with basement), fully stuccoed building, and designed in a familiar Classically-influenced style for mixed commercial and residential use. Prior to its construction in the mid-19th this plot formed part of the earlier Coppers Arms public house and once coaching inn.
- 5.87 The List Entry states that it was included on the statutory list of buildings of architectural and historic interest for “group value only”²⁸. There is a key associative relationship between No.32 Market Place and the historic buildings around the Market Place, including Nos.23-26 and Nos.27 and 28 Market Place, The Coopers public house, the Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance, and other historic and listed buildings around the open space (Figure 5.72). Together, these buildings create a varied and interesting frontage to the Market Place, and enhance the appreciation of the area as an important place for commerce in the town (Figure 5.73 and 5.74). The building also forms part of the appropriate historic backdrop to the key landmark buildings of the Town Hall and St Laurence’s Church.



Figure 5.72 – No.32 is listed for group value, and it forms a part of the historic building group around the Market Place



Figure 5.73 – No.32 as part of the Market Place in 1904

²⁸ Historic England: The National Heritage List for England

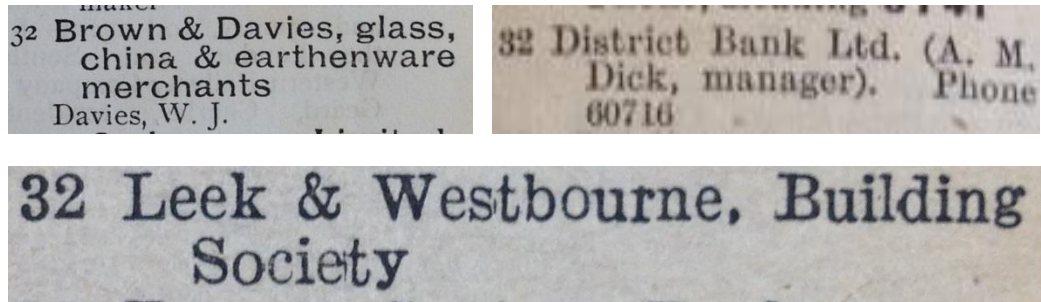


Figure 5.74 – Street directories of 1900, 1954 and 1976 showing No.32 Market Place in different commercial uses

Architectural Interest

External

- 5.88 The listed building is an example of the familiar Classically-influenced, mixed commercial and residential architecture which developed in Reading over the 19th century (Figure 5.75). The front façade of the building remains broadly intact, though the keystone detail over the upper storey windows, which is present in early photographs and appears until the mid-1960s, is no longer extant (Figure 5.76). The photographs also show that the window frames have been replaced, altering the former four-pane sashes to a six-over-six design. The ground floor shopfront is an installation of the 20th century, though the moulded fascia and cornice appear to be historic, and are depicted in Figure 5.73 above.



Figure 5.75 – No.32 Market Place in 1860, and today



Figure 5.76 – The front elevation remains largely intact, with some slight alterations

- 5.89 The rear elevation is very modest in its design and use of materials, relative to the principal street frontage (Figure 5.77). This reflects the traditional hierarchy between the higher status public frontage, and the less important backs of this sort of commercial / residential building. The rear elevation is three bays in width, with a single storey ground floor portion extending further into the rear of the plot. The window openings have more recent single-pane sashes which detract from the historic character of the building elevation. An accumulation of alterations, including modern rainwater goods, new and blocked openings, and the addition of a brick flue, have cluttered the elevation and also diminished the quality of its appearance.



Figure 5.77 – Rear elevation of No.32 Market Place

- 5.90 The butterfly roof form of the tall portion of the building has survived, along with three chimney stacks and their chimney pots (Figure 5.78). The rear projection at ground floor level is original to the building, but the existing flat roof covering is original, and unsightly air conditioning units have also been installed in this location, diminishing further the historic character and appearance.



Figure 5.78 – Roof forms at No.32 Market Place

Internal

Basement

- 5.91 The basement of No.32 is accessed via a straight flight of stairs set against the northern party wall, towards the centre of the building. Though this is a modern stair, it is considered likely that the location is original as it is typical of buildings of this age and type (Figure 5.79).

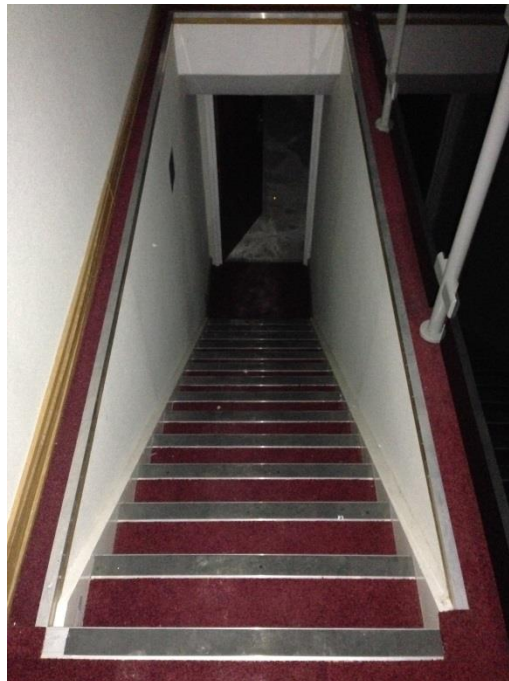


Figure 5.79 – Stair between the ground floor and basement

- 5.92 At basement level, the original 19th century brickwork remains, with a modern painted finish, and modern strip lighting and other electrical fittings. Given the thickness of the partition walls it is considered that the existing layout is original to the building,

Floor plan of the first floor of the building. The plan shows a large central hall with a staircase on the left. Various rooms and hallways are labeled with dimensions. The plan is labeled 'FLOOR' and 'ELECTRICAL'.

Dimensions and labels visible on the plan:

- Staircase: 10' x 10'
- Room 101: 10' x 10'
- Room 102: 10' x 10'
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architectural or historic

Ground Floor

- 5.93 The ground floor of the building has most recently been in use as a bank / building society; a use established since the mid-1950s, as evidenced by the street directories included above. In relation to the use as a bank / building society and the associated need for enhanced security, the staircase between the ground and upper floors of the building has been completely removed at this level, so that there is now no internal access to the first floor and above. This removal of a key feature of the building has damaged the legibility of its original and historic layout, and its past circulation patterns. The basement and ground floors are completely cut off from the rest of the building, so that the traditional relationship and hierarchy between floor levels is compromised.
- 5.94 The original plan form at ground floor level is no longer legible as all historic partitions have been removed, and new light-weight divisions inserted as part of the modern bank premises. The historic interior has also been entirely removed, and replaced with modern fittings which make no contribution to the special interest of the listed building (Figure 5.81).

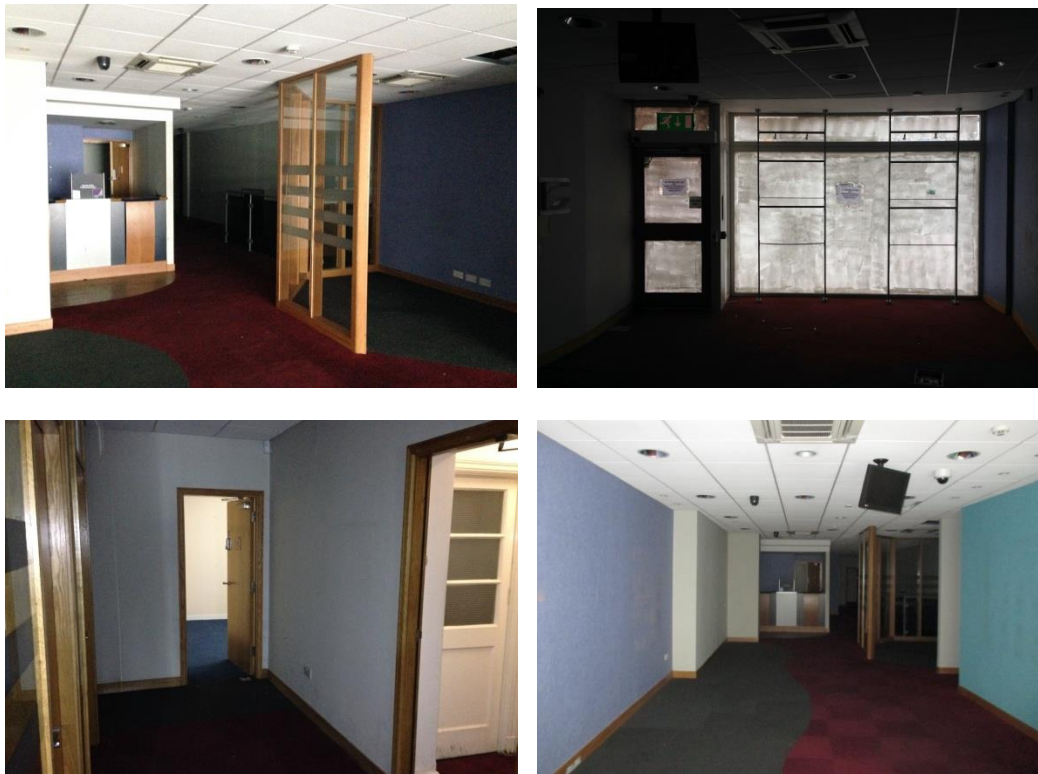


Figure 5.81 – No historic interior fabric remains at ground floor

First Floor

- 5.95 The upper floors of No.32 Market place are now accessed via a doorway in the rear elevation at first floor level. Here, the traditional two-room layout is still broadly legible; however modern partitions to create a landing cupboard have encroached upon the proportions of the rear room, whilst glazed partitioning in the front room has also compromised the form of this space. A second doorway between the front room and landing has also been opened up through the lateral wall (Figure 5.82). Despite these modern interventions, some original decorative fabric and features survive at

this level, including moulded skirting and cornicing, and fireplaces in each room (Figure 5.83).



Figure 5.82 – Modern partitioning has compromised the traditional two-room floor plan



Figure 5.83 - Some original decorative fabric and features survive, including the fireplaces in each room

- 5.96 The location of the first flight of steps between the ground and first floor has been ceiled over and the area blocked by a landing cupboard. Though the cupboard must be non-original, the doors do appear to be of some age and may have been relocated here from elsewhere in the building; possibly the ground floor. The style of the remaining flights of stairs is in keeping with the age and style of this building, and is considered to be original (Figure 5.84).



Figure 5.84 – The staircase between first and third floor level is original

Second Floor

- 5.97 Beyond the ground and first floor in buildings such as this, the plan form is typically more heavily partitioned; into three or four rooms. It is considered that the existing layout of two principal rooms to the front and rear, with additional smaller rooms at the front of the house, is original (Figure 5.85). As at ground floor, some historic decorative fabric also survives at this level including dado rails, skirting and fireplaces (Figure 5.86).



Figure 5.85 – The historic layout of two principal rooms, with two additional smaller spaces survives at second floor level



Figure 5.86 - Some original decorative fabric and features survive

Third Floor

- 5.98 The plan form at third floor level is almost identical to that on the floor below, with a large room at the front and rear, with a further small lobby and kitchen area at the front (Figure 5.87). Whilst the surface decorative treatment at this level is modern, the skirting, doors, door surrounds and fireplaces are considered to survive from the mid-19th century construction of the building (Figure 5.88).



Figure 5.87 - The historic layout of two principal rooms, with two additional smaller spaces survives at third floor level



Figure 5.88 - Some original decorative fabric and features also survive

Historic Interest

- 5.99 The listed building helps to illustrate the role of the Market Place as the focal point for commercial activity in the town over several centuries. It also helps to illustrate the early- to mid-19th century phase in the commercial development of Reading, as the town increased rapidly in population.

Summary of Significance

- 5.100 No.32 Market Place is significant as an example of mid-19th century commercial and residential architecture, which illustrates the growth in commerce and wealth in Reading during the early- to mid-19th century period. The Classically-influenced decorative architecture of the building also illustrates the social and business aspirations of its owners, as well as the broader ambitions of 19th century Reading in creating a prosperous commercial town.
- 5.101 Importantly, the List Entry for this building identifies that it was included on the statutory list for “group value only”. This indicates that the special interest is primarily invested in the external street frontage to Market Square, rather than any internal elements, and as part of the wider street scene.
- 5.102 The other listed buildings within the Site make a positive contribution to the significance of this building through this shared group value. The remainder of the Site (Nos.172-175 Friar Street), however, comprises post-war buildings and other structural elements of very limited architectural and historic interest with little legible connection within these historic buildings. This part of the Site is an element of the immediate setting of this listed building that does not contribute positively to its significance, or is neutral.

6. Statements of Significance: Listed Buildings within the Setting of the Site

Grade I Listed Building: St Laurence's Church

Architectural Interest

- 6.1 St Laurence's Church was founded in the 12th century, and originally the outer gate of Reading Abbey was attached to the southern flank wall (Figure 6.1). It is constructed of flint with stone quoins and other detailing, and a red tile roof (Figure 6.2). Parts of its structure, including the quoins and a small window in the nave, are 12th century fabric, whilst much of the building dates from a phase of rebuilding in 1522. Interior features such as the pulpit and organ case date from the mid-18th century, whilst the List Entry makes reference to "*excessive restorations of 1867*".²⁹



Figure 6.1 – John Speed's map of Reading, 1611, showing St Laurence's Church on the edge of the abbey precinct



Figure 6.2 – St Laurence's Church

²⁹ Historic England: The National Heritage List for England

- 6.2 Though the church underwent “*excessive restorations of 1867*”, elements of fabric from the 12th-18th centuries remain. The remnants of building fabric from different phases of the church’s development reflect its long history as part of Reading, and at the centre of social, cultural and religious life in the town over several centuries.

Historic Interest

- 6.3 St Laurence’s Church is of historic interest as one of the longest-standing buildings in Reading, and has been a prominent visual landmark in views along Friar Street, Market Place and Duke Street for all of its history. The building displays multiple phases of change and development in its physical fabric from the 12th century onwards, and is an important physical record and expression of the long use of this site as a Christian place of worship. The List Entry states:

“The principal interest of this church is that it was built at the Abbey gate. The circa 1200 work may possibly be in connection with the foundation of St John’s Hospice.”³⁰

- 6.4 The church therefore also derives historic interest from its possible relationship to the 12th century foundation of this institution. It also represents the last intact building related to Reading Abbey and its precinct immediately to the east of the building.

Summary of Significance

- 6.5 St Laurence’s Church is of significance as a long-standing feature of Reading, and an important element of the town’s historic core. It is of architectural interest as a place of worship which multiple phases of construction and rebuilding, as well as high-quality interior features such as the benches and pulpit. These multiple phases record the past and continuing importance of its use as a place of Christian worship. The wider historic urban townscape emphasises its role at the centre of social, cultural and religious life in Reading over several centuries.

Setting

- 6.6 The Setting of St Laurence’s Church comprises the townscape area of the surrounding Market Place / London Street Conservation Area; the character and appearance of which is described in this report. The church overlooks the open spaces of Town Hall Square and Market Place, as part of an urban townscape diverse in terms of the ages, types, and architectural styles of its buildings. Whilst the individual buildings around the church have been altered and added to over time, the overall layout of the street pattern on Friar Street and Market Place has not altered significantly.
- 6.7 The tower of St Laurence’s is visible over fairly long distances in the surrounding area, with the longest views gained from Friar Street, Duke Street, Market Place and the Forbury. This visibility is an expression of its historically important role within the community as a place of worship, and has made it a local landmark in the area (Figure 6.3).

³⁰ National Heritage List for England



Figure 6.3 – The church is a local landmark and which can be seen in long views from the surround area

- 6.8 The church is located in the midst of a varied townscape of historic and more recent residential and commercial buildings, some of which are now listed. The church forms a key part of the historic townscape in one of the oldest parts of Reading, and there is a key associative relationship between it and the nearby historic buildings, where the church would have been the primary place of worship for past residents of the area, as well as passing merchants and worshippers in the town. There is also a key visual relationship between the Market Place and the church, where it stands sentinel over a key area of civic open space. Again this visual prominence emphasises the building's importance at the centre of social, cultural and religious life in Reading over several centuries. Mid-20th century buildings on Friar Street and the east side of the Market Place have encroached upon the historic character of the Town Hall Square and Market Place.

Contribution of the Site

- 6.9 As part of the wider historic townscape of this part of the town centre, the listed buildings on the Site contribute to an understanding of the role and significance of St Laurence's Church as the primary place of worship for past residents of the area. Conversely, Nos.172-175 Friar Street within the Site are mid-20th century buildings which form a non-descript part of the architectural backdrop to the church. Their recent construction date and limited architectural value means that their contribution to the significance of the church as part of its setting is at best neutral.

Grade II* Listed Building: Town Hall Chamber and Offices and Clock Tower

Architectural Interest

- 6.11 The Town Hall Chamber, Offices and Clock Tower were designed in the French Gothic style by Sir Alfred Waterhouse, and built between 1872 and 1875. The building is constructed of red and grey brick with terracotta ornaments, and is arranged over three storeys, with a curved frontage to Town Hall Square (Figure 6.4). The Town Hall is a good example of ambitious late-Victorian civic design which is richly detailed and ornamented, and draws upon French and Gothic architectural influences. The building is of an imposing civic scale, with a striking roofscape that culminates in the landmark clock tower (Figure 6.5).



Figure 6.4 – Town Hall Chamber, Offices and Clock Tower



Figure 6.5 – The Town Hall has an imposing civic scale and a striking roof form, and is particularly visible from Friar Street and Market Place

Historic Interest

- 6.12 The Town Hall derives historic interest as a physical reminder of the civic pride associated with the 19th century success and expansion of Reading. The continued civic use of the property as a concert hall and museum enhances this historic value. The Town Hall also illustrates the broader national trend in the growth of local government and civic pride in late 19th century Britain. Finally, the building is associated with the renowned architect, Sir Alfred Waterhouse.



Figure 6.6 – Illustration of the Town Hall and neighbouring church from the Supplement to the Illustrated London News, July 8th 1882. This scene is consistently replicated in photographs and illustrations of Reading.

Summary of Significance

- 6.13 The Town Hall is of significance as a high-quality example of ambitious late-Victorian municipal architecture, which acts as a tangible reminder of the pride and ambition of Reading's population and local government in the 19th century.

Setting

- 6.14 The setting of the Town Hall again comprises the surrounding Market Place / London Street Conservation Area. The Town Hall, and its tower in particular, were located in order to terminate the views from Friar Street and Market Place. The resultant visibility is an expression of its historically important role within the community as the focus of municipal government, and has made it a local landmark in the area (Figure 6.6). The location of the Town Hall, standing over a key area of civic open space, emphasises its importance at the centre of local governance in the town. Together, the Town Hall and neighbouring St Laurence's Church constitute the defining architectural image of Reading.
- 6.15 The Town Hall Square, in front of the building, is an area of open space with a civic character which reflects that of the listed building, and contributes positively to its significance. Similarly, the adjacent Market Place with its surviving historic buildings, reinforces the importance of this location as a long-established focal point of civic activity and commerce in Reading.

Contribution of the Site

- 6.16 The listed buildings on the Market Place, including those within the Site, illustrate the connection between the town's commerce and its civic pride, and this enhances the significance of the listed building as part of the wider historic townscape of Reading. The remainder of the Site (Nos.172-175 Friar Street) are mid-20th century buildings which in contrast form a rather non-descript part of the architectural backdrop to the Town Hall complex (Figure 6.7). Their more recent construction date and limited architectural and historic interest means that their contribution to the significance of the Town Hall as part of its setting is only neutral.



Figure 6.7 – Key view of the Town Hall from Blagrove Street, with Nos.173-175 Friar Street in the far distance

Grade II Listed Building: Nos.23-26 Market Place

Architectural Interest

- 6.17 The List Entry for Nos.23-26 Market Place dates this short terrace to the early-19th century, and attributes it to either Henry or Nathaniel Briant. Whilst early-19th century maps depict a curved building line to the corner of Friar Street and Market Place, such as that Nos.23-26, the building footprint is first shown in detail in the 1877 OS map (Figure 6.8). Nos.23-26 Market Place is arranged over four storeys and three bays, and is fully stuccoed. Above the ground floor commercial premises, paired Doric pilasters divide each bay, and a single pilaster brackets each side of the elevation. The two sash-and-case windows to each bay diminish in size at each level, whilst those at first floor have square hood moulds. There is a moulded cornice at parapet level (Figure 6.9).



Figure 6.8 – 1877 OS



Figure 6.9 – Nos.23-26 Market Place

- 6.18 Nos.23-26 Market Place is an example of the familiar Classically-influenced, mixed commercial and residential architecture which developed in the early- to mid-19th century.

Historic Interest

- 6.19 The listed buildings help to illustrate the early- to mid-19th century phase in the commercial development of Reading, as the town increased in population and urbanised.

Summary of Significance

- 6.20 The listed buildings are significant as examples of early-19th century commercial and residential architecture, which illustrates the growth in commerce and wealth in Reading during the early- to mid-19th century period. The Classically-influenced decorative architecture of these essentially-functional buildings also illustrates the social and business aspirations of their owners, as well as the broader ambitions of 19th century Reading.

Setting

- 6.21 The setting of Nos.23-26 Market Place comprises the surrounding Market Place / London Street Conservation Area. The terrace is located on the curved corner of Friar Street and Market Place, and addresses the Town Hall Square. On the opposite side of the square, the imposing Town Hall and St Laurence's Church mark this as an important civic and social space within the town (Figure 6.10). To the south, the building line on the west and south sides of the Market Square comprises a mixture of listed buildings, and together these create a stimulating variety of historic architectural style. Their mixed commercial and former-residential uses contribute to an understanding of the Market Place as a focal point for commercial and social activity over time, and the role of Nos.23-26 as part of this. Along Friar Street, the more recent adjoining buildings are of little historic value or architectural interest, and make only a neutral contribution to the significance of the listed building as a part of its setting.



Figure 6.10 – Nos.23-26 are located on the curved corner of Friar Street and Market Place, as part of an varied historic building frontage to the civic open space

Contribution of the Site

- 6.22 As described above, the building groups along the west and south sides of the Market Place contain a number of surviving historic / listed buildings, including those within the Site, which create variation in architectural style and features, but a general consistency in scale, historic character and materiality. These are key contributors to the significance of this listed building, where it is appreciable as part of the historic townscape in a key commercial hub of the town. However, Nos.172-175 Friar Street within the remainder of the Site are mid-20th century buildings which form a non-descript part of the architectural backdrop to these buildings. Their relatively recent construction date and limited architectural value means that the contribution to the significance of Nos.23-26 Market Place as part of its setting is at best neutral.

Grade II Listed Building: former Trustee Savings Bank (Nos.33-34 Market Place)

Architectural Interest

- 6.24 The former Trustee Savings Bank at Nos.33 and 34 Market Place is a mid-19th century building arranged over three storeys, with a stone-clad shopfront at ground floor of the early-20th century, and brick above with stucco dressings. Pilasters divide each bay, below a deep stucco frieze and cornice at parapet level (Figure 6.11)
- 6.25 The Trustee Savings Bank is of architectural significance as a mid-19th century commercial building, which uses high quality materials and detailing that echoes continental, predominantly Classical and Italianate, architectural styles.



Figure 6.11 – Trustee Savings Bank

Historic Interest

- 6.26 The principal element of historic interest is derived from its illustrative value as a tangible remnant of the rapid 19th century development of Reading, and the enormous growth in Britain's domestic and foreign business.

Group Value

- 6.27 The List Entry for the building states that it was included on the statutory list of for "group value only". The Trustee Savings Bank contributes to the stimulating variety of historic architectural styles on the west and south sides of the Market Square, and also forms an appropriate part of the architectural backdrop to the two landmark historic buildings of the Town Hall and St Laurence's Church.

Summary of Significance

- 6.28 The Trustee Savings Bank is of architectural significance as a mid-19th century commercial building, which, though altered, uses high-quality materials, and Classically-influenced detailing to express the social and business aspirations of its early occupiers, as well as the broader ambitions of 19th century Reading. It is the contribution of its principal street frontage that makes the primary contribution to its significance and key group value.

Setting

- 6.29 The setting of Nos.23-26 Market Place comprises the surrounding Market Place / London Street Conservation Area. The former bank overlooks the Market Square, which is an historic focal point for the town's business and commerce, close to the main shopping route of Broad Street. To the north, the Town Hall and St Laurence's Church at the top of the Market Place dominate the open space and reinforce this location as an important historic focal point in the town.
- 6.30 The former bank forms part of a building group composed of historic, listed buildings in a mixture of commercial uses, whose individual architectural treatments together create a varied and interesting frontage to the open space, and enhance the appreciation of the Market Square as a historically important place for commerce in the town (Figure 6.12).



Figure 6.12 – The former bank forms part of a building group composed of historic, listed buildings in a mixture of commercial uses

- 6.31 By contrast, the mid- to late-20th century commercial and office developments on the opposite side of Market Place are of alien form, materiality and character, and these buildings do not contribute positively to the significance of the listed building.

Contribution of the Site

- 6.32 Built form along the west and south sides of the Market Place contain a number of surviving historic buildings, including those within the Site. These are key contributors to the significance of the listed building and former bank, where it is appreciable as part of the historic townscape in a key commercial hub of the town. However, the remainder of the Site at Nos.172-175 Friar Street are not appreciable in key street scene views together with this listed building, and as such it is considered that these modern buildings of very little architectural interest make a no contribution to its significance as part of the wider setting.

Grade II Listed Building: Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance, Market Place / Market Way

Architectural Interest

- 6.33 The Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance was constructed in 1854 to designs by J.B Clancy and F. Hawker.³¹ Built in ashlar stone, it occupies a single bay of the building line and rises in three stages to a bell turret with a weather vane. At ground floor, the stone is rusticated, with leafy capitals. The level above has an arched recess with a tripartite window, flanked by ionic pilasters, and a balcony. Above, a clock face is topped by a bell tower (Figure 6.13).



Figure 6.13 – The Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance

- 6.34 The arcade entrance is of architectural significance as a high-quality, highly-detailed feature which forms part of the historic building group on the west side of the Market Place. Its sculptural flamboyance expresses the status attached to the (now demolished) Corn Exchange as an important building for trade and commerce in the town and wider area. It uses high-status materials and elaborate detailing which echoes continental, Italianate architectural styles. Overall, the structure integrates well with the varied and visually interesting building line.

Historic Interest

- 6.35 Though the Corn Exchange building itself has been lost, the arcade entrance remains to represent the role of the Market Place and the immediate area as the historic heart of commercial and business functions in Reading. More widely, it reflects the importance

³¹ National Heritage List for England

of Reading as the county town of Berkshire, where the Corn Exchange would have been visited by a wide range of merchants from around the county. The elaborate architectural design of the arcade entrance reflects the status and pride attached to business and commerce in the 19th century, in Reading and across the country.

Summary of Significance

- 6.36 The Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance is of significance as a mid-19th century structure which formed part of an important commercial building within Reading and the wider county. Its historic interest is derived from its illustrative value as a tangible remnant of the rapid 19th century development of Reading, and the growth in the town's commercial industries during this period.

Setting

- 6.37 The setting of Nos.23-26 Market Place comprises the surrounding Market Place / London Street Conservation Area. The structure stands over the Market Square, which is an historic focal point for the town's business and commerce, and this reinforces the significance of the former arcade entrance as part of an important commercial building within Reading. To the north, the Town Hall and St Laurence's Church at the top of the Market Place dominate the open space and reinforce this location as an important historic focal point in the town.
- 6.38 The arcade entrance forms part of a building group composed of historic, listed buildings in a mixture of commercial uses, whose individual architectural treatments together create a varied and interesting frontage to the open space, and enhance the appreciation of the Market Square as an historically important place for commerce in the town (Figure 6.14). By contrast, the mid- to late-20th century commercial and office developments on the Market Place and on Friar Street are of alien form, materiality and character, and these buildings do not contribute positively to the significance of the listed building.



Figure 6.14 – View of the historic buildings on the west side of the Market Place

Contribution of the Application Site

- 6.39 The historic and listed buildings within the wider townscape setting of this listed building are key contributors to the significance of the former arcade entrance, where it is appreciable as part of the key commercial hub of the town. This includes the other listed buildings within the Site itself. The remainder of the Site, however, at Nos.172-175 Friar Street are not appreciable in key street scene views together with this listed building, and it is considered that these modern buildings of little architectural value make only a neutral contribution to its significance as part of the wider townscape setting.

Grade II Listed Building: Queen Victoria Jubilee Statue

Architectural Interest

- 6.40 This statue of Queen Victoria was erected in 1857 to mark the Jubilee of this monarch. It is large in scale and appropriately occupies a prominent position within this public square and the immediate setting of the civic complex of the Town Hall and also St Laurence's Church. The sculptor is recorded as the local George Simmonds, and high quality Carrara marble has been used for the statue of the "Queen as Empress". This stands on a high stone plinth with moulded cornice and base on wide steps, surrounded by red granite bollards to each corner. It is of architectural interest as an example of Victorian public sculpture of considerable sculptural merit and use of materials, which also relates well to this townscape space and civic focus of the town.



Figure 6.15 – Queen Victoria Jubilee Statue

Historic Interest

- 6.41 The historic interest of this statue derives from its record of this part of the reign of Queen Victoria in England and the reverence and respect accorded to her in this period across the country. The erection of this monument in this square is also an expression of civic pride; like the ambitious and striking nearby Town Hall (albeit completed later) associated with the 19th century success and expansion of Reading. More generally, public statuary enjoyed a Golden Age during Victoria's reign – both in quantity and quality, which was a period fascinated with history and the cult of fame, combined with the desire to aggrandise and beautify the new cities.

Summary of Significance

- 6.42 The Queen Victoria Jubilee Statue is of significance as a high quality example of early to mid-Victorian sculpture that occupies a prominent location at the civic heart of the town. It not only celebrates the deference to / respect of the monarch but also records the pride and ambition of Reading in this period.

Setting

- 6.43 The setting of this statue comprises the surrounding Market Place / London Street Conservation Area (Figure 6.15). It was deliberately sited within this public square and meeting of more ancient streets within this part of the town centre. The proximity to the civic complex of the Town Hall (listed building) also reinforces historic value and effect of this monument as a local landmark. The Queen was orientated to face down Blagrove Street, and its inscription tablet also looks this way, which emphasises the importance of the view this local view looking south. Its local historic townscape setting contributes positively to the understanding and appreciation of its significance.

Contribution of the Site

- 6.44 The listed buildings on the Market Place, including those within the Site, illustrate the connection between the town's commerce and its civic pride, and this enhances the significance of the listed statue to some degree as part of the wider historic townscape of Reading – although immediate views are not shared. The remainder of the Site (Nos.172-175 Friar Street) are mid-20th century buildings which in contrast form a rather non-descript part of the architectural backdrop to closer views of the monument from the north. Their limited architectural and historic interest means that their contribution to their significance is only neutral.

7. Summary of Heritage Context (Sections 2-6)

- 7.1 This section sets out a summary of the statements of significance for each of the potentially affected heritage assets, including assessment of the Site's contribution to that significance. This summary is based on the more detailed assessments set out in **Sections 4-6**.

Heritage Asset	Summary of Significance	Contribution of Site
Market Place and London Road Conservation Area (Direct and indirect impact)	Market Place / London Street Conservation Area derives its significance from the principal spinal route, which constitutes one of the principal medieval approach roads to the heart of old Reading. It leads directly to the historic core of the town, which is focussed on the landmark space of the Market Place, and the key buildings of St Laurence's Church and the Town Hall complex. This grouping makes up the defining image of Reading and its architecture. The ruins of Reading Abbey also remain to the immediate east of St Laurence's Church, and these also reflect the long role of this area at the epicentre of Reading's history and growth. The broad cross section of building ages and styles reflects the continuing importance of the route over time.	Aside from No.175 Friar Street, all other buildings within the application Site are statutorily listed, and these make a positive contribution to the conservation area as a whole, and in particular to the street scene to Market Place. No.175 Market Place is an unlisted building within the Site, which is identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal as a "building of townscape merit".³² However, our objective re-assessment clearly sets out that any such contribution is much more limited, particularly in light of the low architectural and historic interest of this very modest Neo-Georgian style building dating from the mid-20th century, and also its awkward alignment within the earlier established street scene of the square. In summary, this is not a building that contributes positively to the special interest or character and appearance of the conservation area as a whole. Rather No.175 Friar Street

³² Reading Borough Council. Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal. 2007.

		has at best a neutral presence within the street scene.
Grade II Listed Building: Nos.27-28 Market Place (Direct impact)	Nos.27 and 28 Market Place is representative of a strong tradition of timber-framed vernacular architecture in England, which has survived later phases of urban redevelopment in Reading, and changes in architectural fashion more widely. Though the footprint of the building has been truncated, there remains some legibility of the historic hierarchy of floor levels which is traditional to this type of domestic architecture. Whilst much of the older interior decorative scheme has been lost, surviving elements of decoration make a valid contribution to the building's special interest. Conversely, more recent refurbishments are poor quality, and detract from its historic character and special interest. Nos.27 and 28 also derive special interest as part of the group of historic buildings around the Market Place.	The other listed buildings within the Site make a positive contribution to the significance of this building through shared group value and as part of the historical and architectural interest of this part of the town centre. The remainder of the Site (Nos.172-175 Friar Street), largely falls outside the boundary of the conservation area, and comprises post-war buildings and other structural elements of limited architectural and historic interest. They are elements of immediate setting of this listed building that do not contribute positively to its significance.
Grade II Listed Building: The Coopers Public House (Direct impact)	The Coopers public house is representative of a strong tradition of timber-framed vernacular architecture in England, which has survived later phases of urban redevelopment in Reading, and changes in architectural fashion more widely. Though a great deal of internal and external alteration has occurred, particularly in the mid- to late-20 th century, the building retains a great deal of its original and historic structural fabric, along with key internal features such as the 17 th century staircase. As a public house and former coaching inn this building also	The other listed buildings within the Site make a positive contribution to the significance of this building through shared group value and as part of the historical and architectural interest of this part of the town centre. The remainder of the Site (Nos.172-175 Friar Street) comprises post-war buildings and other structural elements of much more limited architectural and historic interest. They are elements of the immediate setting of this listed building that do not contribute positively to its

	represents an important part of the historical development and past commercial uses of this important town within Berkshire.	significance, or are neutral.
Grade II Listed Building: No.32 Market Place (Direct impact)	No.32 Market Place is significant as an example of mid-19th century commercial and residential architecture, which illustrates the growth in commerce and wealth in Reading during the early- to mid-19th century period. The Classically-influenced decorative architecture of the building also illustrates the social and business aspirations of its owners, as well as the broader ambitions of 19th century Reading in creating a prosperous commercial town. The List Entry for this building identifies that it was included on the statutory list for “group value only”. This indicates that the special interest is primarily invested in the external street frontage to Market Square, rather than any internal elements, and as part of the wider street scene.	The other listed buildings within the Site make a positive contribution to the significance of this building through this shared group value. The remainder of the Site (Nos.172-175 Friar Street), however, comprises post-war buildings and other structural elements of very limited architectural and historic interest with little legible connection within these historic buildings. This part of the Site is an element of the immediate setting of this listed building that does not contribute positively to its significance, or is neutral.
Church of St Laurence (Indirect impact)	St Laurence’s Church is of significance as a long-standing feature of Reading, and an important element of the town’s historic core. It is of architectural interest as a place of worship which multiple phases of construction and rebuilding, as well as high-quality interior features such as the benches and pulpit. These multiple phases record the past and continuing importance of its use as a	As part of the wider historic townscape of this part of the town centre, the listed buildings on the Site contribute to an understanding of the role and significance of St Laurence’s Church as the primary place of worship for past residents of the area. Conversely, Nos.172-175 Friar Street within the Site are

	place of Christian worship. The wider historic urban townscape emphasises its role at the centre of social, cultural and religious life in Reading over several centuries.	mid-20th century buildings which form a non-descript part of the architectural backdrop to the church. Their recent construction date and limited architectural value means that their contribution to the significance of the church as part of its setting is at best neutral.
Grade II Listed Building: Town Hall Chamber and Offices and Clocktower (Indirect impact)	The Town Hall is of significance as a high-quality example of ambitious late-Victorian municipal architecture, which acts as a tangible reminder of the pride and ambition of Reading's population and local government in the 19th century.	The listed buildings on the Market Place, including those within the Site, illustrate the connection between the town's commerce and its civic pride, and this enhances the significance of the listed building as part of the wider historic townscape of Reading. The remainder of the Site (Nos.172-175 Friar Street) are mid-20th century buildings which in contrast form a rather non-descript part of the architectural backdrop to the Town Hall complex (Figure 6.7). Their more recent construction date and limited architectural and historic interest means that their contribution to the significance of the Town Hall as part of its setting is only neutral.
Grade II Listed Building: Nos.23-26 Market Place (Indirect impact)	The listed buildings are significant as examples of early-19th century commercial and residential architecture, which illustrates the growth in commerce and wealth in Reading during the early- to mid-19th century period. The Classically-influenced decorative architecture of these essentially-functional buildings also illustrates the social and business aspirations of their owners, as well as the	The building groups along the west and south sides of the Market Place contain a number of surviving historic / listed buildings, including those within the Site, which create variation in architectural style and features, but a general consistency in scale, historic character and materiality. These are key contributors to the significance of this listed building, where it is appreciable as part of the historic townscape in a key commercial hub

	broader ambitions of 19 th century Reading.	of the town. However, Nos.172-175 Friar Street within the remainder of the Site are mid-20th century buildings which form a non-descript part of the architectural backdrop to these buildings. Their relatively recent construction date and limited architectural value means that the contribution to the significance of Nos.23-26 Market Place as part of its setting is at best neutral.
Grade II Listed Building: Former Trustee Savings Bank, Nos.34-36 Market Place (Indirect impact)	The Trustee Savings Bank is of architectural significance as a mid-19th century commercial building, which, though altered, uses high-quality materials, and Classically-influenced detailing to express the social and business aspirations of its early occupiers, as well as the broader ambitions of 19th century Reading. It is the contribution of its principal street frontage that makes the primary contribution to its significance and key group value.	Built form along the west and south sides of the Market Place contain a number of surviving historic buildings, including those within the Site. These are key contributors to the significance of the listed building and former bank, where it is appreciable as part of the historic townscape in a key commercial hub of the town. However, the remainder of the Site at Nos.172-175 Friar Street are not appreciable in key street scene views together with this listed building, and as such it is considered that these modern buildings of very little architectural interest make a no contribution to its significance as part of the wider setting.
Grade II Listed Building: Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance, Market Place /	The Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance is of significance as a mid-19th century structure which formed part of an important commercial building within Reading and the wider county. Its historic interest is derived from its	The historic and listed buildings within the wider townscape setting of this listed building are key contributors to the significance of the former arcade entrance, where it is appreciable as part of the key

Market Way (Indirect impact)	illustrative value as a tangible remnant of the rapid 19 th century development of Reading, and the growth in the town's commercial industries during this period.	commercial hub of the town. This includes the other listed buildings within the Site itself. The remainder of the Site, however, at Nos.172-175 Friar Street are not appreciable in key street scene views together with this listed building, and it is considered that these modern buildings of little architectural value make only a neutral contribution to its significance as part of the wider townscape setting.
Grade II Listed Building: Queen Victoria Jubilee Statue (Indirect impact)	The Queen Victoria Jubilee Statue is of significance as a high quality example of early to mid-Victorian sculpture that occupies a prominent location at the civic heart of the town. It not only celebrates the deference to / respect of the monarch but also records the pride and ambition of Reading in this period.	The listed buildings on the Market Place, including those within the Site, illustrate the connection between the town's commerce and its civic pride, and this enhances the significance of the listed statue to some degree as part of the wider historic townscape of Reading – although immediate views are not shared. The remainder of the Site (Nos.172-175 Friar Street) are mid-20th century buildings which in contrast form a rather non-descript part of the architectural backdrop to closer views of the monument from the north. Their limited architectural and historic interest means that their contribution to their significance is only neutral.

8. Application Proposals and Heritage Impact Assessment

Introduction

- 8.1 The heritage assets which would be affected by the application proposals have been identified and their significance (and setting) described as part of this report, in **Sections 2-6**, with a summary table at **Section 7**. This includes the listed buildings on Site, the surrounding conservation area, and other nearby listed buildings.
- 8.2 The statements of significance in this report provide an appropriate and proportionate heritage baseline, already shared with the local planning authority and Historic England, on which to assess the heritage impacts of the application scheme.
- 8.3 The relevant heritage legislation, planning policy and guidance for development affecting designated heritage assets is also set out in full at **Appendix 3** of this report. This includes the statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national policy set out in the NPPF 2012 and supported by the NPPG, and local policy and guidance for the historic environment (Reading Borough).
- 8.4 Together, the sections and appendices of this report provide proportionate information for the full consideration of the heritage impacts of the application proposals by the local planning authority, and other key stakeholders.

Pre-Application Engagement

- 8.5 Crucially, these final application proposals have been directly informed and guided by extensive pre-application discussions with the local planning authority, and also Historic England, with regard to the future use of the Site and its historic buildings. Written advice has been issued by Council officers and also the Historic England Inspector as part of this process.
- 8.6 The initial development proposals for the Site are described in full through the comprehensive drawings and images package prepared by Rodic Davidson Architects for this application submission. This includes their detailed Design and Access Statement, which provides a commentary on the evolution of the design approach and response to the site constraints and opportunities, including earlier planning history on Site.
- 8.7 In response to the written response of Council officers and Historic England, the scheme design has been revised and refined through a number of iterations. In summary, key design changes as part of the pre-application process include:
- Reconfiguration of the mix and floorspace of new uses and units;
 - Reduction in the overall height and scale of new built form to a maximum of eight storeys (plus basement).

- Remodelled massing of the new built form on Site, including along the Friar Street frontage and also within the new courtyard area;
- Refinement of the detailed design, articulation, rhythm, proportion and materiality of the new built form, including the Friar Street frontage;
- Amendments to the internal alterations to the listed buildings, to retain historic fabric and avoid harm.

Application Scheme and Submission Material

- 8.8 The final application proposals comprise new active uses for the listed buildings on Site, together with associated works of external and internal repair, refurbishment and other physical interventions to facilitate reuse. The listed buildings will provide a mix of commercial floorspace at street level (and basement) and residential uses above.
- 8.9 The remainder of the Site would be redeveloped to provide new built form, comprising a mix of retail, commercial and residential units addressing the street edge (Friar Street) and new space up to a maximum height of eight storeys. The existing post war buildings at Nos.173-175 on site would be demolished and replaced as part of this aspect of the proposals. The new mixed-use building will be integrated with the retained buildings on Site through the creation of a remodelled passageway and external yard, linking Friar Street with Market Way and then onto Market Place.
- 8.10 These proposals are described fully in the comprehensive package of drawings and visualisations, as well as the Design and Access Statement (DAS), prepared by Rodic Davidson Architects, as part of this submission. This is supported by further information provided by others with regard to building condition, structural engineering, demolition and construction etc.
- 8.11 A number of Accurate Visual Representations (AVRs) have also been prepared by Hayes Davidson to provide further information on the appearance of the new scheme from with the street scene, and within the context of the heritage assets. The selection of these views has been advised by officers as part of the first pre-application response – focussed on the local views specifically identified in the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal near to the Site (Townscape Appraisal map).
- 8.12 This Heritage Statement report should also be read in conjunction with the full Planning Statement prepared by Savills in support of these application proposals. These are complementary planning documents articulate the planning impact and also wider public benefits of this proposed development.

Heritage Impact Assessment

- 8.13 The application proposals are described in this section, and the associated heritage impacts assessed; before the merits of the scheme as a whole is discussed in light of the relevant statutory duties of the Planning Act 1990, national policy within the NPPF 2012 and supporting NPPG, and local planning policy and guidance for development within the historic environment.

Heritage Assets and the Nature of Impact

- 8.14 The application proposals would have both a direct and an indirect (setting) impact on the significance of the listed buildings on Site, as well as the conservation area within which part of the Site stands. These heritage impacts are the result of the proposed change of use, selective demolition, and internal and external alteration / extension to the retained buildings; together with the creation of new open space and built form on the remainder of the Site.
- 8.15 The effect of the proposed development on the significance of the identified heritage assets will be similar in several ways, given the way in which the designations overlap or share similarities in their setting and / or special architectural and historic interest. Accordingly, efforts have been made to avoid repetition when describing the impacts of proposed change on the existing buildings on Site and the local townscape.

Approach to Assessment

- 8.16 Historic England provides best practice advice regarding change of use, and works of alteration and or extension to historic buildings, within the current national legislative and planning policy framework (**Appendix 3**). This also includes advice on how to assess the impacts of change on the setting of heritage assets. As part of this, Historic England provides a useful list of factors that contribute to achieving good design and local distinctiveness for new development within the historic environment. Considerations for what could make new development successful in its context include the scale, height, massing, alignment, materials and proposed use of new space and new built form. In line with best practice, this guidance has been utilised to frame the assessment of heritage impacts set out in this section of the report.
- 8.17 National advice by Historic England encourages a holistic approach that seeks to avoid or minimise harm to the significance of heritage asset(s); and, in tandem, also promotes opportunities for enhancements that could better reveal that significance, i.e. deliver “heritage benefits”. Ultimately, as part of any proper and proportionate planning judgement by the local planning authority, the built heritage impacts of the proposed scheme should be balanced with the wider material planning considerations, to facilitate the delivery of sustainable development.

Reuse of the Site

- 8.18 These application proposals seek to deliver a new mix of commercial and residential uses across the Site, which has remained inactive for a substantial period of time, to the detriment of the town centre and identified heritage assets.
- 8.19 Fundamentally, this scheme for redevelopment represents an important opportunity to re-animate part of the historic centre of Reading, and contribute positively to the vitality and vibrancy of the Market Place / London Road Conservation Area; which is characterised by an energy and mix of uses. This is a key heritage benefit, and a cornerstone of the scheme’s objectives.
- 8.20 As part of this, active street frontages will be reintroduced both to the listed buildings on Market Place, and the new development on Friar Street. A new route through the heart of the Site will also improve access through this urban block, and increase footfall, introducing new townscape interest into this part of the conservation area.

- 8.21 As alluded to above, the listed buildings addressing the Market Place will be reused as commercial units at the ground floor level. As found today, these listed buildings are vacant and their physical condition is worsening steadily. There is an urgent need to deliver active, viable uses in the commercial premises at ground floor level, as this will fund the financial investment that is necessary to carry out much-needed repairs to the listed buildings. This investment will also ensure ongoing maintenance of the buildings in the interests of their long term conservation; and to sustain their positive contribution to the character and appearance of the surrounding conservation area, and as part of the settings of other, nearby listed buildings.
- 8.22 Importantly, three retail units are proposed within the listed buildings: one per building. This is in recognition that use of a single building by two or more separate businesses would likely require additional vertical or horizontal subdivision of the floor plan, reducing the legibility of the original plan form and proportions, and potentially resulting in harm to significance. This final application scheme is considered to achieve an appropriate balance between the benefit of securing the future use of the buildings, and any potential harm to significance.

Alterations to the Listed Buildings on Site

- 8.23 Works of external and internal demolition, alteration and extension are proposed to the listed buildings on Site (Nos.27 and 28 Market Place, the former The Coopers public house (Nos.29-31), and No.32 Market Place. The impacts of these works are discussed below.
- 8.24 Importantly, the proposed alterations have been closely-informed by a thorough understanding of the heritage significance of the listed buildings; and the contribution of setting to that significance. In developing the proposals, close attention has been paid to minimising the loss or alteration of historic fabric and features, and to seeking opportunities to deliver heritage benefits through appropriate repair and / or reinstatement, and also new interventions that fully consider, and are sympathetic to, this historic context.
- 8.25 The proposed alterations have also been developed through pre-application engagement with the local planning authority, and feedback from the Council's Historic Building Consultant has confirmed that the works to the listed buildings are generally acceptable.³³ Two aspects of the listed building alterations were raised as problematic: the insertion of a new staircase between the first and third floors of the former Coopers Arms; and the removal of an historic door opening and surround front the first floor of the same building. In response to this feedback, the new staircase has been omitted from the proposals, whilst the historic door and surround will be retained.
- 8.26 Overall, the approach of the proposed adaptation of the listed buildings has been to preserve and repair elements that contribute to heritage significance (such as remaining part of the historic plan form, fabric and features); seek opportunities to reinstate lost historic elements and enhance an understanding of the buildings' significance; and focus the greatest change within areas already comprised by unsympathetic later alteration, and that have a low heritage sensitivity.

³³ Pre-application consultee response from the local authority's Historic Building Consultant dated 27th May 2017.

Nos.27-28 Market Place

External Alterations

Front Elevation

- 8.27 Externally, the Site's principal street frontage to the Market Place would be little altered for all listed buildings in this group, as part of these development proposals; however, there are opportunities to improve the commercial frontage to the street as part of a more advanced scheme for the Site. At Nos.27-28, the right-hand entrance door would be re-opened and used for access to the residential accommodation at the upper floor levels.

Rear Elevation

- 8.28 Proposals include the insertion of two new window openings in the flank elevation of the listed building, at both the first and second floor. Meanwhile, the existing door opening from the former Coopers Arms into the rear room of Nos.27-28 would be re-used / built up to form a window opening. This would require the removal of localised areas of historic fabric; however, the new windows have been carefully-considered, and are the minimum necessary to achieve an appropriate balance with the light levels that are required within the residential apartments. The new windows will be framed with two-over-two timber sashes; a design that has sought to complement the historic character of the listed building.

Internal Alterations

Basement

- 8.29 The basements of the listed buildings would be reused as ancillary storage and other facilities, associated with the new commercial and residential uses on the floors above. This would be in keeping with the historical role of the basement levels as lower-status ancillary and service floors. Alterations are confined within the existing footprints, and comprise some removal / adaptation of modern interventions.
- 8.30 Within Nos.27-28 Market Place, permission is sought to remove the existing bathroom facilities at basement level, to create space for plant and storage. This would remove the existing, poor quality and unsympathetic uses, and reinstate the street vault to its original proportions, which is a heritage benefit.
- 8.31 In addition, the proposals include the installation of some moderate partitioning, to create separate storage and plant areas. The new divisions have been positioned in order to preserve the legibility of the timber beam that spans the ceiling at basement level. The new partitions would be fully reversible, and would not affect the particular heritage significance of the listed building.

Ground Floor

- 8.32 The ground floor of Nos.27-28 is to become a viable commercial unit, whilst the upper levels of the building will be converted to residential use.
- 8.33 The rear room of the listed building at ground first and second floors, has been re-distributed at some point in the past to become part of the former Coopers Arms. A key benefit, to be delivered as part of these application proposals, will be to return the

rear room at each level to its original ownership. At ground floor, this would be achieved by inserting a new partition to divide the room from the public house; and by making a small door opening from the front to the rear within the listed building, adjacent to the central chimney stack. As a result, the historic, two-room plan form of this 17th century building would be reinstated, and this represents a significant enhancement to an understanding of the building's original form and function.

- 8.34 Other alterations at ground floor level include the installation of very modest partitioning in the rear room, to create cycle storage; and the insertion of a new stud partition at the front of the building, to separate the retail unit from the residential entrance. These alterations would not affect any historic fabric, and would also be entirely reversible. Given an understanding of the listed building, this aspect of the proposals would not affect its particular significance.

First Floor

- 8.35 The first floor of the listed building will be converted for use as a residential apartment (Apartment 38). As part of this, the void in the floor of the rear room would be filled and made good, as part of its return to the ownership of Nos.27-28. Again, this repair to the listed building would enhance an understanding of its original form, which is a heritage benefit.
- 8.36 New partitions will be inserted within the front room, to create an entrance lobby to the apartment; whilst in the rear room, a new partition will be inserted to create an ensuite bathroom. These new insertions would be reversible, and would also be designed so that they are clearly legible as modern insertions into the overall plan form. As a result, they would preserve the particular significance of the listed building.
- 8.37 Finally at the first floor, an existing stair in the rear room, leading to the second floor, would be removed, and the void in the ceiling filled. This will mean the loss of a moderate amount of existing fabric; however, it is unlikely that this stair is original, but instead is probably a later insertion from the time when the rear room was acquired by the former Coopers Arms. It is also a relatively modest, commonplace stair design with little design merit; whilst its removal would facilitate the re-use of the building as self-contained apartment. On balance, then, it is considered that these proposed alterations will preserve the significance of the listed building, whilst ensuring its future use and maintenance.

Second and Third Floor

- 8.38 The second and third floors of Nos.27-28 would be converted for use as a single residential apartment (Apartment 41). At both floors, new partitions will be inserted within the existing front room; to create an entrance lobby at second floor; and a small bathroom at the third floor. New partitions will also be inserted within the rear room at second floor, to create an ensuite bathroom; whilst at the third floor, the rear wall would be boxed-out to create a vertical wall. All of these new insertions would be reversible, and would also be designed so that they are clearly legible as modern insertions into the overall plan form. As a result, they would preserve the particular significance of the listed building.

The Former Coopers Arms

External Alterations

Front Elevation

- 8.39 At the former Coopers Arms, permission is sought to remove the existing architrave, pediment and fanlight to the main entrance, and to install a simpler fascia and door, designed in a traditional manner that is sympathetic to the character of the listed building. As established in Section 5, the much of the existing frontage and entrance decoration is modern, and of a Classically-inspired style that is not authentic to the building. The proposed alterations would reinstate the front elevation closer to its historic appearance shown in early photographs and images of the Market Place; and this represents an enhancement, that will better-reveal its significance.

Rear Elevation

- 8.40 Permission is sought to carry out selective demolition to the rear of the listed buildings. This is specifically targeted at the mid- and late-20th century additions at the rear of the former Coopers Arms and No.32 Market Place, which are of no special interest, and do not contribute to the overall significance of the buildings. This will enable the creation of a passageway and external yard between Friar Street and the Market Place, and will also allow the repaired historic buildings to be visible to public view, so that their historic construction and phasing can be better understood and appreciated. The rear elevation of both the Coopers Arms and No.32 would be made-good with matching brickwork. Importantly, at pre-application stage, both the local authority and Historic England acknowledged that removal of the modern extensions will not harm the significance of the listed buildings, whilst the local authority confirmed a heritage benefit in providing legibility to the historic rear elements.³⁴
- 8.41 In a welcome departure to the previously-approved scheme; the extent of proposed demolition has been reduced substantially, and new extensions are also not proposed to the rear. Instead, the approach of the proposed scheme has been to remove the later, unsympathetic elements, and to retain and repair those elements that make the greatest contribution to heritage significance. As a result, the 19th century staircase and passageway extension to the rear of the former Coopers Arms PH will be retained.
- 8.42 Following the demolition of the modern rear extensions, new doors will be created in the rear of the former Coopers Arms, to facilitate the instalment of a commercial use in the buildings, with access to the rear yard. Permission is also sought for new window openings at first and second floor level in the rear elevation. The northern-most doors to Retail Unit 7 would not require the removal of any fabric, beyond the removal of the 20th century rear extensions already discussed. The doors at the southern side of the building, and the new windows above, would require some removal of brick nogging at each floor level; however, this would be minor in extent, and would be confined within the constraints of the existing timber structure to minimise fabric loss. The doors themselves would be simple in design, with full-height glazing and metal frames; in

³⁴ Pre-application consultee response from the local authority's Historic Building Consultant dated 11th March 2017; and PA00481645 consultee response from Historic England dated 3rd April 2017.

order to appear clearly legible as modern insertions. Similarly, the windows would also be simple, two-light casements.

- 8.43 Finally, permission is sought to construct a brick flue at the rear elevation, between the second floor and roof level, to accommodate ventilation and services for the residential apartments. As set out in Section 5, the rear elevation of the Coopers Arms has been heavily altered over time, and lacks uniformity or consistency in its design or character. The flue would form another part of this already much-changed context; whilst enabling the internal conversion of the building for residential use. It is also modest in size, and will be clad in brick in an effort to blend with the traditional materiality of the listed buildings on the Market Place. Overall, given these considerations, the brick flue is considered to preserve the special interest of the listed building, and its contribution to the surrounding conservation area.

Internal Alterations

Basement

- 8.44 The basement level of the former Coopers Arms will be used as a kitchen, storage and bathroom for the public house; and also as storage and plant for the residential units on the upper floors of this building. In order to achieve separation of the two uses, the arched passageway at the front of the building would be blocked; though this would be done carefully to preserve legibility of the arched form, and also reversibility in the future. The existing door opening between the front and rear rooms on the south side of the building would also be blocked; and again, this is a reversible alteration.
- 8.45 Proposals include the installation of a new stair to access the portion of the basement associated with the residential accommodation. This will require the removal of a localised section of the building's floor structure, which is likely to comprise some amount of historic fabric. However, this element of the works will facilitate the conversion of the wider building for residential accommodation, and thereby help secure its long-term use and conservation.
- 8.46 The pub's storage area would be accommodated within the large space at the front of the building; and the kitchen in the 20th century rear extension. These elements would require no amendments to the plan form at this level. A new partition would be installed at the bottom of the access stairs, to create a separate space for bikes and storage. In the southern side of the basement, an existing, modern timber and wire mesh enclosure would be removed, and new partitions installed to provide bathroom facilities. Within the portion of the basement associated with the residential accommodation, an existing, modern partition will be removed; and two new sections of wall inserted to create a stair lobby and two storage / plant areas.
- 8.47 In summary, the proposed plan form at basement level within the former Coopers Arms would remove only modern fabric, and would retain the existing plan form, whilst new partitions would be entirely reversible. Overall, the role of this level of the building as a functional, ancillary space would not be altered, and the particular significance of the building overall would be preserved. Importantly, the application proposals would reserve the identified areas of rubblestone walling at basement level.

Ground Floor

- 8.48 The ground floor of the former Coopers Arms would be reinstated as a public house, and this will sustain the historical function and character of the listed building. Remaining elements of the historic plan form will be retained; whilst the existing, modern bar will be removed to create a generous space at the northern side of the building. In the southern portion of the pub, new partitions will be inserted around the residential staircases, to separate the public and private premises of the building; an alteration which the local authority has confirmed is necessary for the conversion / reuse of the building.³⁵ At the rear, the modern bathroom partitions will be removed.
- 8.49 Overall, the alterations at the ground floor are limited to modern fabric that is of no special interest, and as such, this will not affect the significance of the listed building.

First Floor

- 8.50 The residential apartments at the upper levels of the former Coopers Arms will be accessed via the existing private staircase at the southern side of the building; and subsequently by the existing, 17th century stair. Each floor level will comprise a single apartment; and this is to ensure that the physical alterations to the building are kept to a minimum.
- 8.51 At first floor level (Apartment 37) will be accessed via a new entrance door and partition, to be located opposite the 17th century staircase. The rooms at the front of the house will comprise the living room (accessed via a slightly-relocated door opening), leading through a new opening in the partition wall to a bedroom with ensuite. A small section of wall will be removed from between the existing landing and the rear of the building, together with an existing wall within the rear wing. A series of new partitions will be inserted here, to create a kitchen, bathroom and bedroom. Meanwhile, the 19th century passage way at the rear of the building will be reused as a small storage space, with the Gothic-style windows retained; and the doorway into the rear of Nos.27-28 fixed shut.
- 8.52 These alterations will mean the loss of a small amount of historic fabric; whilst the new partitions will alter the existing plan form of the building. However, these alterations are considered to be minimal (and, in the case of the new partitions, reversible); and are the minimum required in order to deliver a single, viable apartment at this level.

Second Floor

- 8.53 The second floor apartment (Apartment 40) will be accessed via the 17th century stair core within the building. Here, the front rooms will be re-partitioned to create three bedrooms, an ensuite, and a shared bathroom; together with a landing and hallway. The hallway will lead around the retained stair core, to the kitchen and living room in the rear wing. Here, the existing wall will be removed, with nibs and a downstand retained to preserve legibility of the historic plan form.
- 8.54 As at first floor level, these alterations will mean the alteration / subdivision of historic plan form; and the removal of a small amount of historic fabric. However, as established in Section 5, the changes would occur within an already-compromised plan

³⁵ Pre-application consultee response from the local authority's Historic Building Consultant dated 11th March 2017

form; whilst the new fabric will be a reversible alteration. Meanwhile, these works of conversion to a residential apartment will also enable the long-term, sustainable use of the building, and its preservation for future generations. As such, considered as a whole and in the context of the wider, beneficial scheme, these proposals would preserve the significance of the listed building, and its contribution to the surrounding conservation area.

Third Floor

- 8.55 It is necessary to create a landing and entrance door to the self-contained apartment at this level (Apartment 43); which requires the insertion of new partitioning at the top of the historic stair. This, in turn, requires the construction of a small, hipped dormer to the roof form, in order to provide the necessary head-room for access to the rear of the floor plan. At the front of this attic level there will be two double bedrooms with a small bathroom; whilst the rear wing will accommodate the kitchen and living room.
- 8.56 As on the lower floors, the alterations at attic level have been carefully-considered in light of an understanding of the building, and have sought to implement the minimum changes necessary to enable conversion to a self-contained apartment. Again, when considered as part of the overall, beneficial scheme of repair and long-term reuse, these proposals will conserve the significance of the listed building.

No.32 Market Place

External Alterations

Front Elevation

- 8.57 No alterations are proposed to the front elevation of No.32 Market Place; and works are confined to its sensitive repair and refurbishment.

Rear Elevation

- 8.58 The selective demolition works that are proposed to the rear of No.32 are described above (as part of the former Coopers Arms review), and this is not repeated here. As at the former Coopers Arms, new doors will be included in the rear elevation at ground floor, to provide the retail unit with access to the rear yard. These would form part of the new brick construction to repair the rear of the building, following the removal of the 20th century rear extensions already discussed. The doors themselves would be simple in design, with full-height glazing and metal frames; in order to appear clearly legible as modern constructions.
- 8.59 The proposed alterations also take the opportunity to replace the existing, unsympathetic uPVC window frames at the rear elevation of No.32 Market Place with new, white-painted timber sash frames; and to re-open other infilled windows. This will reinstate the original appearance of the rear elevation, with appropriate materials and detailing. This represents a “heritage benefit” for the listed building and wider conservation area.

Internal Alterations

Basement

- 8.60 The basement of No.32 will be used as ancillary storage and bathroom facilities for one of the retail units on Site; and as storage and plant for the residential apartments on the upper floors. The existing doorway into the central room will be infilled at this level, to enable the separation of the two demises; and new partitions will be inserted within the rear room to create bathroom facilities for the retail unit. At the front of the building, a small section of non-original wall will be removed, and new partitioning installed to create storage and plant space for the residential units.
- 8.61 No.32 Market Place was listed primarily for group value, and as set out in Section 5, the interior is heavily compromised and now makes a very limited contribution to the particular significance of the building. In this context, the alterations at basement level will not affect the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building.

Ground Floor

- 8.62 An important enhancement to the building will be to reinstate a staircase between the ground and upper floors, as there would have been historically. At the same time, existing, modern partitions at this level will be removed, and new inserted to separate the residential entrance and staircase from the main retail unit and basement access.
- 8.63 The original plan form at this level is now illegible, and no historic features remain. In this context, and in light of the building's designation for group value, these alterations will not detract from its heritage interest. Instead, they will enable the sustainable, sensitive reuse and conservation of the listed building in the long term.

First, Second and Third Floors

- 8.64 The modern, unsympathetic partition at the front of the building at the first floor will be removed, and this space reinstated to its original proportions. This is a heritage benefit. Meanwhile, one of the two existing doorways into the front of the building will be closed, to create a more coherent and simplified circulation pattern. At the rear, the existing plan form will be retained, with a slightly amended circulation pattern, to create a bedroom and ensuite bathroom. All of these alterations affect modern fabric, of no heritage significance, and as such the special interest of the listed building would be preserved.
- 8.65 At second and third floors, the two rooms at the front of the building would be amalgamated, to create a single, spacious living room; whilst the rear room would be partitioned in a similar manner to the plan form below; to create a double bedroom and bathroom. As established by the List Entry, and by the objective, informed assessment at Section 5, No.32 Market Place is listed for group value, for its townscape merit as part of the group of historic buildings around the Market Place. In light of this understanding, the proposed internal alterations at second and third floor would have no impact on this particular significance.

New Development within the Conservation Area and Setting of Listed Buildings

- 8.66 As well as the reuse of the listed buildings, these application proposals include the demolition and redevelopment of the remaining buildings on Site. This would have both a direct, and indirect, impact on the significance of the Market Place / London

Road Conservation Area (given that the Site straddles its boundary); and also has the potential to affect the significance of the identified listed buildings (both within the Site and the local townscape), as a result of change within their shared settings. These impacts are described below.

The Principle of Demolition

- 8.67 As established in Section 4, the existing, modern buildings on Site do not contribute positively to the character or appearance of the conservation area, either as part of its extent, or as part of its setting. Similarly, the modern buildings on Site do not contribute positively to the significance of the nearby listed buildings, as a part of their respective settings.
- 8.68 No.175 Friar Street within the Site is identified in the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal document 2007 as a “building of townscape merit”, and a positive contributor to the conservation area. This is reiterated in the first pre-application submission comments by Council Officers, and is also supported by Historic England in their written feedback.³⁶ However, it is our assessment, at Section 4, that any such contribution is much more limited: this very modest, mid-20th century Neo-Georgian style building is of little architectural or historic interest, and fails to align with the earlier established street scene of Friar Street and the square. It is, at best, a neutral element in the street scene.
- 8.69 It is proposed to demolish the existing, 20th century / modern buildings on Site, and to replace them with a new, mixed-use building. The professional and objective assessment of this report is that their removal would not result in harm to the significance of the conservation area (or setting of nearby listed buildings); and meanwhile, these proposals for redevelopment represent an important opportunity to deliver new architecture and public realm of a high quality, together with a more vibrant mix of commercial and residential uses, that will make a positive contribution to the townscape and significance of the heritage assets.
- 8.70 Accordingly, as a matter of principle, the proposed demolition of the existing, modern buildings on Site, would not result in harm to the significance of either the conservation area, or the identified listed buildings on Site and nearby. The principal consideration for this part of the impact assessment in this report is therefore the effect of the proposed replacement built form and public realm on the heritage significance of the conservation area and the identified listed buildings.
- 8.71 As part of pre-application engagement, both the local authority and Historic England have continued to attach heritage value to No.175 Friar Street. Whilst this does not match the assessment contained within this Heritage Statement, accordingly, the following review of the proposals identifies numerous heritage benefits that are considered to outweigh any perceived harm caused by its demolition. In summary, these include:
- The delivery of an appropriate residential, retail and commercial mix of uses on this part of the Site;

³⁶ Letter from Historic England dated 3rd April 2017.

- The delivery of high-quality new architectural and public realm design that is distinctive, and tailored specifically for the historic context;
- Reinstatement of the historic building line around the corner from Friar Street to the Market Place, remedying an unsympathetic, late-20th century alteration.
- Improved permeability through the Site, to enhance its role as part of Reading's townscape;
- New animation, vitality and visual interest for this part of old / central Reading.

New Passageway and External Yard

- 8.72 A feature of the existing site is the existing covered commercial arcade, which links Friar Street with the open passage of Market Way, and subsequently to Market Place. This is a modern reconstruction of a much more architecturally accomplished, 19th century commercial complex (Market Arcade), which also linked through to the Corn Exchange (both now demolished).
- 8.73 The final application scheme seeks to reinstate a pedestrian route through the Site and the urban block, via an external yard, as there has been historically. This would be achieved through the selective demolition of modern extensions to the rear of the listed buildings on Site, which are of no special interest. The new pedestrian route will maintain the historic permeability of Reading's historic townscape, which is an established characteristic of the conservation area, as seen in the historic maps in Section 2. Meanwhile, the new external yard will echo the past openness of the Site, where the former Coopers Arms historically had a passage through the building line, leading to a yard within the urban block. In this way, the proposals will improve the legibility of this earlier layout and plan form of the listed buildings, which is a "heritage benefit".
- 8.74 The new public route and yard will be enclosed by the retained listed buildings which overlook the Market Place. This will allow direct connection with the historic rear elements and roofscape of the listed buildings. New views of these elements would reveal aspects of the buildings' construction methods and phasing; and this will amplify an understanding of their particular significance, which is a heritage benefit. The juxtaposition of the historic and new buildings on Site will also create high-quality visual interest; which will be enhanced by the vibrant and animated commercial / residential frontages along both sides of the passageway and external yard.
- 8.75 Overall, the revitalised uses and new public realm within the Site will improve the character and experience of the urban block, within the heart of old Reading. In this way, the proposals would enhance the contribution of the Site to the character and appearance of the conservation area, which is a "heritage benefit".

New Built Form

- 8.76 Behind the retained listing buildings, the remainder of the Site will be redevelopment with new, mixed-use build form with elevations to Friar Street, Market Way, and the

new external yard. With the support of both the local authority and Historic England³⁷, the new building has been designed in a contemporary manner, that is intended to make its own contribution to the rich and varied architecture of the town; but which has also been strongly influenced by analysis of the historic townscape context.

- 8.77 In response to pre-application comments received from Council officers and other stakeholders, the design detailing and use of materials has been revised and refined, in preparation for this final submission.
- 8.78 In complement to the assessment of heritage impacts in this report, a number of Accurate Visual Representations (AVRs) have been prepared by Hayes Davidson to provide indicative further information on the likely appearance of the new development scheme from within the wider townscape, and also how the current experience of the identified heritage assets could change as a result of new development on Site. The selection of these views has been advised by officers as part of the first pre-application response.

Scale and Massing

- 8.79 The scale of the new building comprises a stepped arrangement of up to eight storeys (above a basement level), with its tallest elements deliberately confined to the depth of the Site, within the urban block. The new form and massing has been refined on several occasions in response to feedback, to ensure that this aspect of the design will preserve or enhance the significance of the surrounding conservation area, and the significance of the nearby listed buildings.
- 8.80 The scale and form of this final development proposal would draw further bulk away from the neighbouring listed buildings at the curved corner between Friar Street and Market Place; and the new built form would now be shorter in height than the Church of St Laurence. In this way, is sensitive to the landmark value and visual prominence of the church, and the Town Hall.
- 8.81 In local street views, the articulation of the new building's upper levels, together with the proposed elevational treatment and materiality, help to reduce the overall mass of the development visually. In views from across Market Place and the Forebury, where new built form appears above the roofline of buildings on Friar Street / Market Place, these upper elements are recessed backwards into the depth of the Site, and will appear subservient and deferential to the historic buildings in the foreground. The landmark structures of the Church, Town Hall, and the Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance, will maintain their prominence in these views, and their significance will be preserved.
- 8.82 The building frontage on Friar Street has been designed to reinstate the historic building line in this location, which, as established in Section 4 of this report, became misaligned in the late-20th century, possibly as a result of wartime bomb damage. This change returns a lost and positive characteristic of the historic street pattern of the conservation area, which is a "heritage benefit".

³⁷ Email from Susanna Bedford (Reading Borough Council) to Mary Fortune (Savills) dated 12th February 2018; and letter from Historic England dated 3rd April 2017.

- 8.83 The new Friar Street elevation will be distinctive in its own right; but will also integrate successfully with its neighbours as part of the wider street scene. The frontage is broken up into two portions by setting the western section of the building back, and at a slight angle to the eastern section. This creates the sense of two, individual but complementary building plots, which reflects the traditional pattern of plots and buildings along Friar Street and the Market Place, in this part of the conservation Area. The new elevation to Friar Street will provide active and vibrant commercial uses at street level; and the end of the frontage will be chamfered to create an inviting, legible entrance through to the new pedestrian passageway and external yard within the urban block (including commercial and residential uses / entrances). This represents an enhancement to the existing, underused and poor-quality passageway through the Site, and will improve the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 8.84 The parapet height of the eastern section of the Friar Street frontage matches that of the adjacent listed building; whilst the uppermost storey of the frontage is set back from the building line. This arrangement is intended to integrate with the established three-to-four storey scale of the historic buildings to either side of the Site; and also to make reference to the 19th century commercial arcade which previously stood on this part of the Site, and which rose up to five storeys (not including taller roof elements). In this sense, there is strong historical precedent for a variation in the parapet levels / roofline and architectural detail along this part of the street, which will introduce visual interest to the street scene without detracting from the significance of nearby listed buildings, including the church, Town Hall and Nos.23-26 Market Place. The scale and massing of the Friar Street frontage, and remaining building, is broken down further through detailed design and the careful use of materials. This is described further on in this section.
- 8.85 Behind Friar Street, each level of the new building steps backwards successively from the building frontage, in deference to the smaller scale and historic building line of the adjoining terraced buildings; and also the landmark buildings of the Church of St Lawrence, and the Town Hall. Importantly, the highest extent of the building has been reduced by two storeys during the pre-application process, in response to feedback; and this has also helped to control its visual prominence within public views from around the Site. As a result, the existing landmark status of the listed Town Hall and St Lawrence's Church tower - with their commanding presence on Town Hall Square, and in key views looking north along the Market Place / east along Friar Street - will be maintained. Similarly the more local landmark status of the tower to the listed Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance within views from the Market Place will be maintained and not undermined, as a distinctive feature of the built skyline of this space. This is demonstrated in Views 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the proposed scheme, created by Hayes Davidson.
- 8.86 The massing of the new building also steps up and away from the elevation overlooking the external yard. In tandem with this new open space within the depth of the plot, an important sense of separation is achieved from the listed buildings on Site. This is demonstrated in View 1 of the scheme created by Hayes Davidson, in which the visual prominence of the new built form is limited, and does not compete with the historic, architectural character and quality of the listed buildings on Market Place.

- 8.87 Overall, the scale and massing of this final scheme will ensure that the new built form will appear as a more recessive element of the urban backdrop and wider context to views of the listed (and other historic) buildings within the local townscape. Crucially, this represents a substantial improvement relative to the previously-approved and implemented scheme on this Site, through a significant reduction in massing, and also a slight reduction in height. In this context, these proposals are an opportunity to preserve more successfully the significance and setting of both the conservation area, and the identified listed buildings on and around the Site.

Materiality and Detailed Design

- 8.88 The predominant use of brick, concrete and reconstituted stone cladding for the new building is intended to achieve a consistency with the prevailing material palette found in the surrounding conservation area; whilst also achieving a high-quality, contemporary character of the design, and adding a further layer of richness visual interest to an area already characterised by rich architectural variety. As part of the preceding stages of pre-application engagement, the Council and Historic England have confirmed their support for this contemporary, but contextual approach.
- 8.89 Horizontally, the frontage establishes a well-defined base of shop frontages and office entry, with middle floors above and a top defined by a flat parapet and brick detailing. Vertically, there is a strong and regular rhythm to the frontage which reflects the plot and bay rhythms of the wider street scene.
- 8.90 Above the glazed retail frontage at street level, the detailed design of the Friar Street elevation has been revised and refined in response to feedback from the local authority and (principally) Historic England. Subtle differences in the arrangement of Friar Street elevation are intended to reinforce the stepped form of the façade, and its division into two portions. The fenestration pattern of the eastern-most has been designed so that the levels, and graduated size of the openings are broadly consistent with the listed building at Nos.23-26. The broad parapet is also intended to give strong definition to the top of this section of the elevation, in order to associate it visually with the neighbouring parapet of Nos.23-26; and provide a visual break between this element and the remaining portions of the building that are set back from the building frontage.
- 8.91 The window openings to the western section of the elevation are also graduated in size from the first to the third floor levels, to reflect the Classically-influenced proportions found in many buildings within the conservation area. A contrast is created with the adjacent, eastern section of the elevation, through the differing size of these openings, and through their off-set levels. The brick detailing between the windows also differs in this section of the elevation, and has been omitted in the four western-most bays of the elevation; again, in an effort to create subtle visual differences, to articulate the scale of the building frontage.
- 8.92 In summary, the varying detailed designs of the two sections of the Friar Street elevation is intended to amplify the interpretation of two, individual but complementary building plots, to reflect the traditional pattern of plots and buildings along Friar Street and the Market Place, in this part of the conservation area. Overall, this approach is intended to ensure that the new building will integrate appropriately

with the established characteristics of the street scene, and create a successful blend of new architecture within this historic context.

- 8.93 The detailed elevational treatment of new built form along Market Way, within the new external yard, and also to the taller elements, will relate to that addressing Friar Street; all as part of a cohesive and consistent design approach across the west part of the Site. Again, the use of brickwork and reconstituted stone for the principal facing materials reflects the prevailing character of the conservation area, and the setting of the identified listed buildings. The well-considered massing, articulation, fenestration pattern and detailing of the new building all creates visual interest and also serves to break up the apparent scale and form of this new development. As a result, the significance of the conservation area, and also the listed buildings on and around the Site, would be preserved.

Review of Heritage Legislation and Policy

Statutory Duties

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- 8.94 The Planning Act 1990 requires special regard to be paid by the local planning authority to the desirability of preserving the special interest of listed buildings and their settings in determining applications that affect them. It is also a statutory duty for special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area in determining applications. It is to be noted, however, that the setting of a conservation area is not protected in this legislation.
- 8.95 In balancing the merits of a scheme for development, recent case law has emphasised that local planning authorities should give “considerable importance and weight” to both these statutory duties.³⁸ Importantly, it has been confirmed by the Secretary of State that “considerable importance and weight” is not synonymous with “overriding importance and weight”³⁹. In effect, this establishes a presumption against granting planning permission and or listed building consent for development that would fail to preserve the special interest of a listed building and or character or appearance of a conservation area. In this way the term “preserve” has been interpreted to mean “to do no harm”.
- 8.96 However, the body of recent case law, and also appeal decisions, now makes it clear that this presumption is not irrefutable. In cases where it could be considered that harm would be caused to the special interest of a listed building, for example, this can be outweighed by material considerations powerful enough to do so. Overall, these statutory duties, and the appropriate weight to be afforded to them, should be at the forefront of the decision maker’s mind when making such a balanced and proportionate planning judgement.

³⁸ Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Limited and (1) East Northamptonshire District Council (2) English Heritage (3) National Trust (4) The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Governments, Case No: C1/2013/0843, 18th February 2014 - for listed buildings – & The Forge Field Society v Sevenoaks District Council [2014] EWHC 1895 (Admin); North Norfolk District Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government [2014] EWHC 279 (Admin) – for conservation areas

³⁹ APP/H1705/A/13/2205929

- 8.97 This Heritage Statement, together with other extensive supporting information of the full application submission, demonstrates that considerable weight and importance has been given to these statutory duties in relation to the affected designated heritage assets; and that concerted efforts have been made to avoid or minimise harm in the context of securing a viable long term use for the existing historic buildings and the wider Site, and re-energising its contribution to the surrounding townscape. In addition, efforts have also been made to identify and deliver enhancements to heritage significance as part of this scheme. In this way, the proposals are in accordance with the statutory duties of the Planning Act 1990.

National Policy and Guidance

NPPF 2012 and NPPG

- 8.98 In accordance with the requirements of paragraph 128, the significance of the identified heritage assets (listed buildings and conservation area), which will be affected by these proposals, have been described in this report. This assessment work is proportionate to the importance of each of the assets and sufficient to understand the impact of the various aspects of the development proposals on heritage significance.
- 8.99 In accordance with principles set out in paragraph 131, account has been taken of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of the affected heritage assets through a well informed and carefully considered approach to the new uses and design of the scheme, and the need to deliver a viable development that is consistent with the long term conservation of the listed buildings at the heart of the Site. Consideration has also been given to the positive contribution that new uses, and the conservation of the retained historic buildings and structures, can make to sustainable communities, including economic viability and vitality; and also the desirability of new architectural design making its own positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness within Reading.
- 8.100 Paragraph 132 requires that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, including both listed buildings and conservation areas. Importantly, Annex 2 of the NPPF defines conservation as the process of maintaining and managing change to all heritage assets in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances their significance. It is not intended to be a process that should prevent change, where proposals such as these are deliverable and would have the potential to offer substantial public (including heritage) benefits.
- 8.101 Paragraph 132 also sets out that any harm to, or loss of, significance of a designated heritage asset would require clear and convincing justification. Consideration of harm is set out in paragraphs 133 and 134, and via paragraph 138 with regard to the loss of a building or structure that may make a positive contribution to the significance of a conservation area. Further guidance is also provided within the supporting NPPG.
- 8.102 As part of pre-application discussions, the local authority has acknowledged that the works to the listed buildings as part of the scheme proposals are generally acceptable. Importantly, the two aspects of the listed building alterations that were raised as problematic have been omitted from these final proposals (the insertion of a new staircase between the first and third floors of the former Coopers Arms; and the

removal of an historic door opening and surround front the first floor of the same building). Council officers have identified that the proposals to replace the “building of townscape merit” at No.175 Friar Street, and the massing / detailed design of the new built form, would result in a degree of harm to the heritage significance of the conservation area. This is not the conclusion of this Heritage Statement, and in overall terms, it is considered that harm would be avoided, and instead a number of “heritage benefits” would be delivered to the conservation area through the delivery of new built form and public realm.

- 8.103 However, it is possible that some localised aspects of the proposals could still be isolated at application stage as causing some harm to the significance of the conservation area or listed buildings.
- 8.104 With regard to determining the level of any harm caused by the proposed redevelopment to the identified heritage assets, NPPG sets out that “substantial harm” is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases⁴⁰. It is the degree of harm to the asset’s significance, rather than the scale of the development that should be assessed. The body of recent case law and appeal decisions has also given some attention to the meaning of the term; holding the judgement that for harm to be substantial the impact on significance of a designated heritage asset would be required to be serious, such that very much if not all of the significance was drained away⁴¹.
- 8.105 The most architecturally and historically significant elements of the listed buildings on Site would be sustained by this scheme. The removal of elements of the rear of the buildings would deliver enhancements to their significance, by revealing new views and assisting an understanding of their historic construction and phasing. Meanwhile, both internal and external alterations to the buildings would deliver heritage benefits, and are also required to deliver the proposed long-term uses, which in turn will secure the financial investment necessary for their future repair and conservation. The delivery of high-quality new architecture on Site, in tandem with the retained and reused listed buildings, would also enhance the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and the setting of the nearby listed buildings, whilst preserving their significance. For these reasons, it is our view that overall, the significance of the listed buildings on Site would be preserved.
- 8.106 It is important to understand that when looking at the impacts of the proposals as a whole on the significance of the heritage assets, the different aspects of proposed change are complex and varied - and even competing - in their nature and extent. For example, any potentially harmful alterations to the listed buildings should be considered in light of the direct link of such changes with securing their viable new use, associated beneficial repairs / reinstatement, and improvement to key elements of its setting. Similarly, any alleged harm to the conservation area should also be considered in the light of realising an important opportunity to re-animate part of the historic centre of Reading, and contribute positively to the vitality and vibrancy of the local townscape; as well as enhancing the setting of the listed buildings relative to the

⁴⁰ NPPG. Paragraph: 017 Reference ID: 18a-017-20140306

⁴¹ Bedford Borough Council vs Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and Nuon UK Ltd [2013] EWHC 2847 (Admin)

approved / implemented scheme through more selective demolition, and the well-considered scale and massing of new built form.

8.107 In this context, any harm perceived by the local planning authority or other stakeholders could be that these proposals would not meet the high test of substantial harm as defined in NPPF terms; and any such harm could only reasonably be measured as “less than substantial” for the purposes of the NPPF, and also towards the lower end of this scale.

8.108 Paragraph 134 of the NPPF specifically concerns proposals which would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset. This states that under these circumstances, any such harm should be weighed against the “public benefits” of the proposals, including securing the optimum viable use of the listed building group and also this part of the conservation area. The term “public benefit” is defined in NPPG as anything that delivers economic, social and environmental progress as described in the NPPF.⁴² Public benefits should flow from the proposals and they should be of a scale to be of benefit to the public at large. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits. They may include “heritage benefits” (again as defined in the NPPF⁴³).

8.109 The supporting Planning Statement to the application submission prepared by Savills summarises the overall “public benefits” that could be delivered by these application proposals. These include “heritage benefits”. NPPG⁴⁴ defines heritage benefits as sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting; reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset; and securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation. The “heritage benefits” that could be delivered by this scheme have been described in this section of this report as part of the heritage impact assessment. They are also included here below for ease of reference:

- Securing the viable reuse of the listed buildings on Site (which are currently vacant and their conditions deteriorating) in the interests of their conservation for future generations.
- Works of required repair, refurbishment and ongoing maintenance of the historic buildings, funded by their conversion and reuse.
- Reinstatement of a private residential entrance to the front elevation of Nos.27-28 Market Place.
- Reinstatement of the front elevation of the former Coopers Arms closer to its original appearance.
- Removal of unsympathetic modern extensions to the rear elevations of the former Coopers Arms and No.32 Market Place.

⁴² NPPG. Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 18a-020-20140306

⁴³ NPPG. Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 18a-020-20140306

⁴⁴ NPPG. Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 18a-020-20140306

- As a result of the removal of the modern rear extensions, enhanced legibility of the construction methods and historic phasing of the listed buildings on Site.
- Reinstatement of traditional timber sash window frames to No.32 Market Place.
- Reinstatement of the rear room of Nos.27-28 to this original ownership.
- Reinstatement of the original proportions of the street vault at Nos.27-28 Market Place.
- Reinstatement of a staircase between the ground and upper floors of No.32 Market Place, as there would have been historically.
- Improvement to the immediate setting of Nos.23-26 Market Place, the Church of St Laurence, the Town Hall, Nos.33-34 Market Place, the Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance, and the Queen Victoria Jubilee Statue, through the creation of high-quality new architecture and a pedestrian route on Site.
- Reinstatement of the historic building line around the corner from Friar Street to the Market Place, remedying an unsympathetic, late-20th century alteration.
- Delivery of an appropriate mix of retail, commercial and residential uses on Site, accommodated within high-quality new architecture, that is distinctive and tailored specifically for its historic context.
- Delivery of improved permeability through the urban block as part of its connections to the surrounding townscape.
- Reinstatement of the passageway through the urban block, returning a characteristic element of the historic street pattern to the conservation area.
- New animation, vitality and visual interest for the townscape of central Reading.

8.110 In weighing up the overall planning balance the local planning authority should acknowledge that there exists a direct link between this scheme and its viability; the public (and heritage) benefits that it could deliver; and the degree of change proposed to the significance or setting of the heritage assets. Wider consideration should also be given to the alternative scenario to proposed development that could lead to continued redundancy of the Site and further deterioration of the listed building group that puts it at risk.

8.111 The overarching Planning Statement, which supports the planning application and complements this Heritage Statement, concludes that any potential harm to the heritage significance of the listed building group and / or conservation area, would be decisively outweighed by the wider public and heritage benefits that would be delivered by the development proposals as a whole.

8.112 Finally, paragraph 137 of the NPPF encourages local planning authorities to look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas, and also within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. In accordance with this paragraph, this report identifies that the opportunities for enhancement

contained within the application proposals include, overall, a better-considered and more sensitive scheme for the Site, relative to the existing / implemented approval. Crucially, the scheme would also install viable, long-term and appropriate uses within the listed buildings on Site, which would finance their repair and maintenance, and thereby enhance their current condition and positive contribution to the conservation area.

- 8.113 The new development would take the opportunity to remove modern, unsympathetic extensions at the rear of the listed buildings to create new / reinstated pedestrian passageway; from which it will be possible to better understand their historic construction and phasing, as well as the earlier layout of passageways through the urban block historically. Meanwhile, the new built form on the remainder of the Site would deliver high-quality new architecture to the conservation area, which represents an improvement to the existing, mediocre uninviting and underused buildings / spaces; and also to the approved / implemented scheme of development. As well as enhancing the character of the conservation area, these proposals are also more sensitive to the setting and significance of identified listed buildings around the Site.

Local Policy and Guidance

Reading Borough Council Core Strategy 2008

- 8.114 Reading Borough Council's Core Strategy was adopted in January 2008. It forms a key component of the planning framework used for determining applications. The following policies relate to the proposals in respect of issues of design and heritage.
- 8.115 Policy CS7 relates to general design quality. It requires all development to be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. There is an expectation that developments will respond positively to their local context and reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including the protection of the historic environment.
- 8.116 The development proposals have been the subject of rigorous pre-application discussion, and have been revised and refined on a number of occasions in response to feedback from both Council officers and Historic England. This constructive process has resulted in proposals for a new development, where the scale, form and massing, materiality and detailed design of the new built form and associated spaces is distinctive, and tailored specifically for the historic context. It will make its own, positive contribution to the character and appearance, and overall significance of the Market Place / London Road Conservation Area. This is in accordance with Policy CS7.
- 8.117 Policy CS33 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) states that historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, should be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced. The policy is wide ranging and relates to both designated and non-designated heritage assets. It states that Planning Permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. All proposals are expected to protect, and where appropriate, enhance the character and appearance of the area in which they are located.

- 8.118 The policy states that planning permission will be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. At face value, the wording of this policy indicates that planning permission will be refused if there is any adverse impact on the heritage asset. However, the proper interpretation of this policy must reflect its overarching intention, and the advice provided in the National Planning Policy Framework. This policy would be contrary to paragraphs 132-135 of the Framework, which requires a balanced consideration of any harm, if it does arise, and allows that in certain circumstances harm to the significance of a heritage asset can be justified.
- 8.119 As set out in this section above, the application proposals have been closely-informed by a thorough understanding of the heritage significance of the listed buildings; and the contribution of setting to that significance. In developing the proposals, the approach for alterations to the listed buildings has been to preserve and repair elements that contribute to heritage significance (such as remaining part of the historic plan form, fabric and features); seek opportunities to reinstate lost historic elements and enhance an understanding of the buildings' significance; and focus the greatest change within areas already comprised by unsympathetic later alteration, and that have a low heritage sensitivity.
- 8.120 Overall, it is considered that the significance of the listed buildings on Site would be preserved, and enhanced. Meanwhile, with regard to the new built form and associated pedestrian passageway / external yard, close attention has been paid to the form of the building and spaces, and detailed elevation treatment, to ensure that it will preserve and enhance the significance of the surrounding conservation area. In this context, the application proposals are in accordance with Policy CS33.
- 8.121 As discussed under the NPPF above, it is possible that some localised aspects of the proposals could be isolated as causing some harm to the significance of either the identified listed buildings, or the surrounding conservation area. However, in line with the NPPF, in weighing up the overall planning balance the local planning authority should acknowledge the public (and heritage) benefits that the proposals could deliver; and their direct link to a necessary degree of alteration to the heritage assets, either directly, or through change within their settings.

Reading Central Area Action Plan 2009

- 8.122 In accordance with Policy RC5 of the Central Area Action Plan (Design in the Centre), the application proposals:
- (a) Will exist within the existing grid layout and urban form of the central area; and deliver a pedestrian route that will create new, appropriate relationships between the historic and new buildings on the Site. The revitalised uses and new pedestrian routes will improve the character and experience of the urban block, and contribute to an enhanced ease of movement through and around the central area.
 - (b) Will provide new and appropriate pedestrian routes on the Site (and external yard), and this link will be animated by new retail, commercial and residential uses. This will reinstate an element of the historic permeability of Reading's townscape (an established characteristic of the conservation area), whilst the

renewed vitality of the Site will contribute to the strong sense of place in this part of the town.

- (c) Will deliver high-quality new architecture, which is distinctive and tailored specifically for its historic context in terms of its scale and form, materiality and detailed elevational treatment.
- (d) Will contribute to the diversity of the central area in terms of the high-quality built form and pedestrian spaces, as well as the vibrant new uses on Site.

Reading Borough Council Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012

- 8.123 The SDPD was adopted in October 2012 (the affordable housing policies were amended in January 2015), alongside the Reading Borough Proposals Map. It sets out detailed policies for use in decisions on planning applications and identifies sites for development, protection and for the application of specific policies.
- 8.124 Paragraph 9.1.9 of the SDPD notes that the National Planning Policy Framework provides an appropriate framework for considering proposals for development that affect the historic environment in Reading. Accordingly, together with the guidance in Policy CS33 of the Core Strategy, there is no need to provide specific detailed policies in the SDPD. These application proposals are in accordance with Policy CS33 (addressed above), and have also had regard to the detailed guidance on heritage matters contained within the SDPD, at Section 9.1.

9. Summary and Conclusions

- 9.1 This Heritage Statement establishes a clear understanding and appreciation of the significance of the likely affected heritage assets on Site, and within its local townscape context. This has been described in **Sections 2-6**. The detailed design work for the development proposals has been closely-informed by this thorough understanding,
- 9.2 **Section 8** of this report provides a review of the application proposals, which are also described in the Design & Access Statement prepared by Rodic Davidson Architects, in light of other relevant supporting information prepared by the team. Reference is also made to the extensive discussions with the local planning authority, and Historic England, at pre-application stage, and the way in which the scheme has responded to officer feedback. **Section 8** also includes an assessment of the impact of the application proposals on the significance of the identified heritage assets, and how the relevant statutory duties, national and local planning policy and guidance for development in the historic environment would be addressed by the scheme as a whole.
- 9.3 Notwithstanding the recognition of the significant number of “heritage benefits” that this scheme could deliver, it has been identified in discussion with officers that there is the potential for aspects of these proposals, including the demolition of the existing “building of townscape merit” at No.175 Friar Street, to result in a degree of harm to the heritage significance of the conservation area. Such limited heritage harm would be calibrated as “less than substantial” in terms of the NPPF, and at the lower end of this scale.
- 9.4 In the light of the relevant statutory duties, national policy sets out that in cases of less than substantial harm to the significance of designated heritage assets, this should be weighed against the wider public benefits of the proposals, as part of any overall balanced and proportionate planning judgement. Significant “public benefits” would be delivered by this scheme at application - as identified in full in the accompanying Planning Statement. The public benefits on offer would also include “heritage benefits” that would enhance or better reveal heritage significance, which would include:
- Securing the viable reuse of the listed buildings on Site (which are currently vacant and their conditions deteriorating) in the interests of their conservation for future generations.
 - Works of required repair, refurbishment and ongoing maintenance of the historic buildings, funded by their conversion and reuse.
 - Reinstatement of a private residential entrance to the front elevation of Nos.27-28 Market Place.
 - Reinstatement of the front elevation of the former Coopers Arms closer to its original appearance.
 - Removal of unsympathetic modern extensions to the rear elevations of the former Coopers Arms and No.32 Market Place.

- As a result of the removal of the modern rear extensions, enhanced legibility of the construction methods and historic phasing of the listed buildings on Site.
- Reinstatement of traditional timber sash window frames to No.32 Market Place.
- Reinstatement of the rear room of Nos.27-28 to this original ownership.
- Reinstatement of the original proportions of the street vault at Nos.27-28 Market Place.
- Reinstatement of a staircase between the ground and upper floors of No.32 Market Place, as there would have been historically.
- Improvement to the immediate setting of Nos.23-26 Market Place, the Church of St Laurence, the Town Hall, Nos.33-34 Market Place, the Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance, and the Queen Victoria Jubilee Statue, through the creation of high-quality new architecture and a pedestrian route on Site.
- Reinstatement of the historic building line around the corner from Friar Street to the Market Place, remedying an unsympathetic, late-20th century alteration.
- Delivery of an appropriate mix of retail, commercial and residential uses on Site, accommodated within high-quality new architecture, that is distinctive and tailored specifically for its historic context.
- Delivery of improved permeability through the urban block as part of its connections to the surrounding townscape.
- Reinstatement of the passageway through the urban block, returning a characteristic element of the historic street pattern to the conservation area.
- New animation, vitality and visual interest for the townscape of central Reading.

9.5 In making the overall planning balance, the local planning authority should acknowledge that there exists a direct link between the delivery of this scheme and its viability, the public (and heritage) benefits that it could offer, and the degree of change proposed to the identified heritage assets (listed buildings and conservation area). Wider consideration should also be given to the alternative scenario, which could lead to continued redundancy of the Site and further deterioration of the listed building group.

9.6 The overarching Planning Statement, which supports the planning application and complements this Heritage Statement, concludes that any potential harm to the heritage significance of the listed building group and / or conservation area, would be decisively outweighed by the wider public and heritage benefits that would be delivered by the development proposals as a whole.

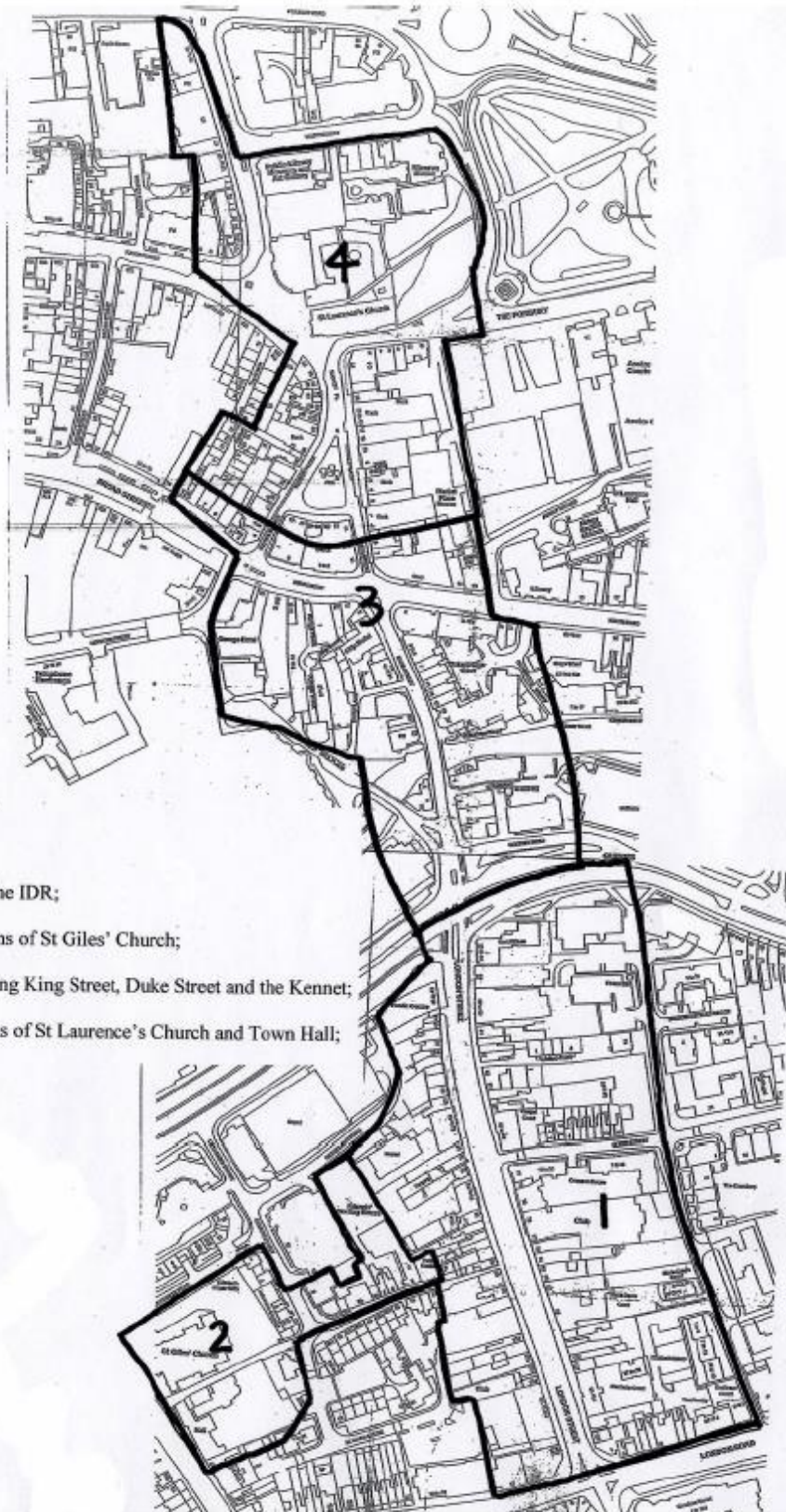
9.7 The application scheme would therefore address the principles of the relevant statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and would also be in accordance with national policy and guidance set out in the NPPF 2012 (paragraphs 128, 131, 132, 134, 137) and supporting NPPG, and also local policy

and other guidance for Reading Borough Council (Core Strategy 2008: Policy CS7 and Policy CS33; Reading Central Area Action Plan 2009: Policy RC5; and the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012), regarding development within the historic environment.

Appendix 1: Conservation Area Boundary Map

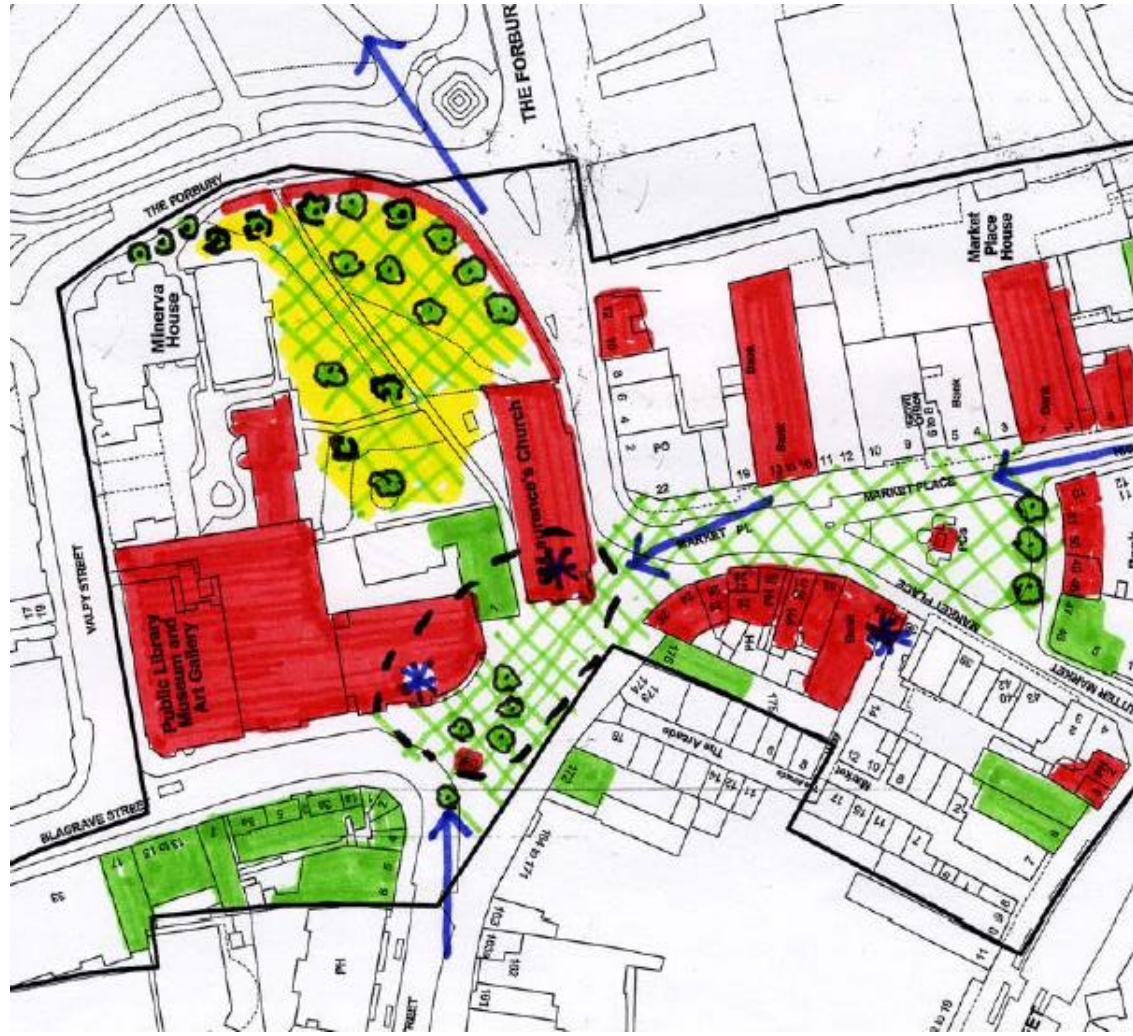
Market Place / London Street Conservation Area

***Including, conservation area townscape appraisal map for
character area 1***



CHARACTER AREAS

- 1: London Street, south of the IDR;
- 2: Church Street and environs of St Giles' Church;
- 3: Jackson's Corner including King Street, Duke Street and the Kennet;
- 4: Market Place and environs of St Laurence's Church and Town Hall;



Key to townscape appraisal map

- Conservation area boundary
- Listed Buildings
- Buildings of Townscape Merit
- Important views
- Significant trees
- Landmark buildings
- Significant open space
- 'Green' areas
- Focal point
- Water

Appendix 2: Listed Building Entries

Site:

Nos.27 and 28 Market Place

The Coopers Public House

No.32 Market Place

Setting:

Church of St Laurence

Town Council Chamber and Offices with Clock Tower

No.23-26 Market Place

Former Trustee Savings Bank, No.33-34 Market Place

Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance, Market Place / Market Way

Queen Victoria Jubilee Statue

27 AND 28, MARKET PLACE

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: 27 AND 28, MARKET PLACE

List entry Number: 1302967

Location

27 AND 28, MARKET PLACE

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:

District: Reading

District Type: Unitary Authority

Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 22-Mar-1957

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 39074

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

MARKET PLACE 1. 5128 [West Side] Nos 27 and 28 SU 7173 NE 1/206
22.3.57. II GV 2. Early C17 possibly older. 3 storeys and attic. Double jettied timber-frame with stucco infilling, pebbledashed. Tiled roof with crested ridge and ornamental cast iron gutter to eaves. Moulded 2nd floor jetty. 2 dormers. 2 original bay windows with mullion windows on each floor. Decorative lead work in upper part of windows. C18 shop front retained to ground floor with covered fascia and engaged columns. Outer doors, 5 panel (raised and fielded) with plain overlight to right, modern door to left (to No 29). Interior: 1st floor ceilings divided into panels by moulded strips.

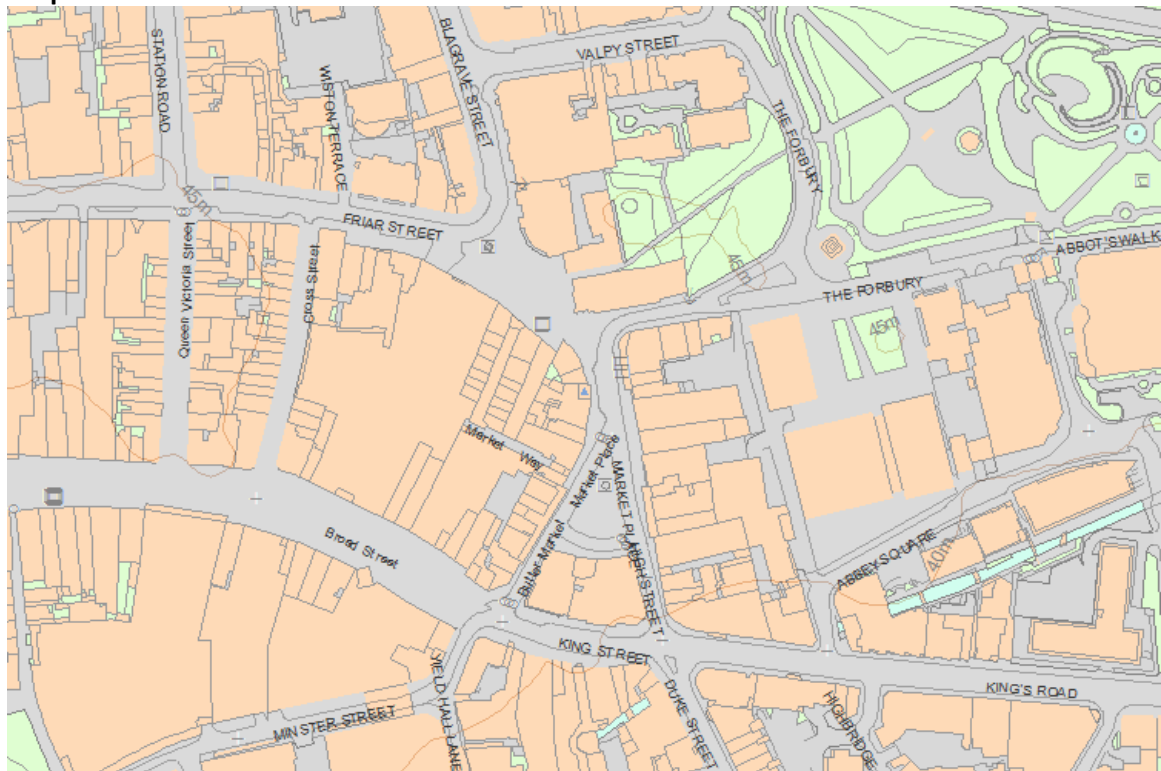
Listing NGR: SU7169073501

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: SU 71688 73504

Map



THE COOPERS PUBLIC HOUSE

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: THE COOPERS PUBLIC HOUSE

List entry Number: 1113537

Location

THE COOPERS PUBLIC HOUSE, 29-31, MARKET PLACE

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:

District: Reading

District Type: Unitary Authority

Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 26-Jul-1973

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 39075

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

MARKET PLACE 1. 5128 (West Side) Nos 29 to 31 (consec) (The Coopers Public House) SU 7173 SE 1/311 SU 7173 NE 3/311 26.7.73. II GV 2. C17 altered. False exposed timbering to front with 4 bays of 3 light casements in stucco infill. Wooden modillion cornice to parapet. Tiled roof. 2 C20 dormers. Rusticated stucco on ground floor with glazing bar shopfronts (modern to left, early C19 to right) and central entrance, pilastered doorpiece with fluted caps and scroll brackets to open pediment. 2 panel door with high arched radiating fanlight. Timber framing in gables to rear. Interior contains re-used fittings probably from C16 or C17 house. The Lounge Bar has oak panelled portion with good C16 or early C17 strapwork overmantel. 4 fluted Doric columns flanked by 2 enriched Doric columns and with 'wild men' herm-pilasters. Modillion cornice. The exit to No 29 has a fine door with circa 1600 decoration of recessed niche panels: to outside Ionic female herms, to interior fluted Ionic pilasters.

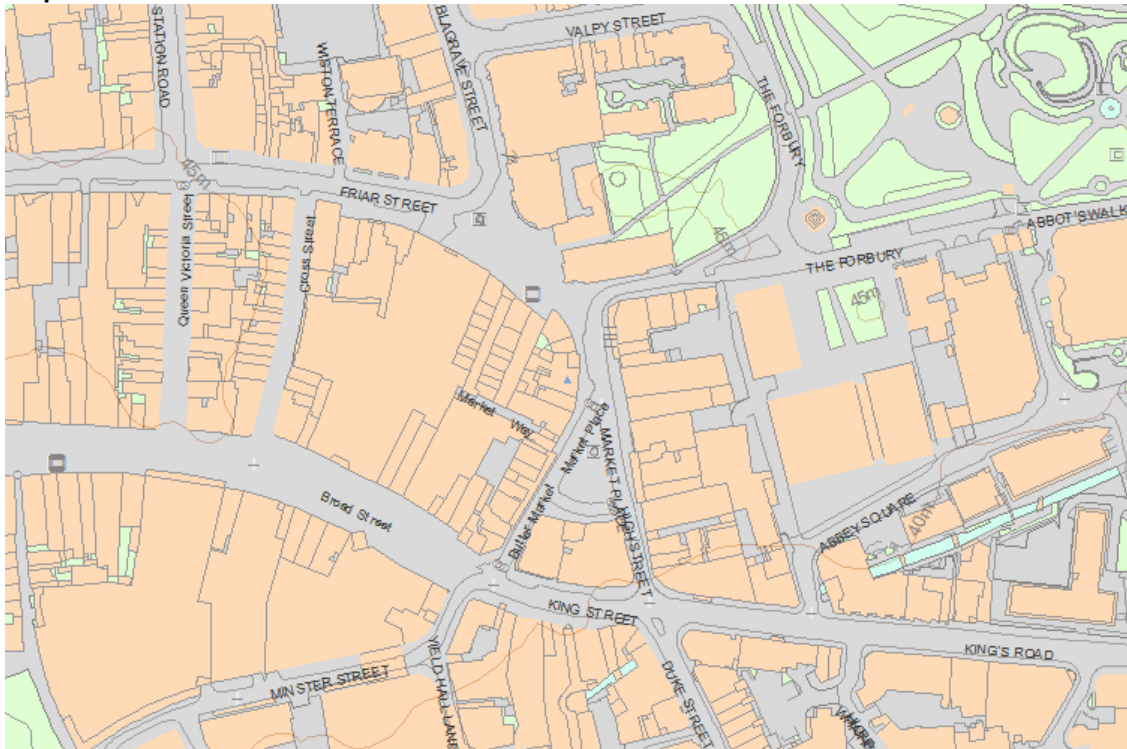
Listing NGR: SU7168073499

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: SU 71686 73495

Map



32, MARKET PLACE

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: 32, MARKET PLACE

List entry Number: 1156271

Location

32, MARKET PLACE

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:

District: Reading

District Type: Unitary Authority

Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 14-Dec-1978

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 39076

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

MARKET PLACE 1. 5128 (West side) No 32 SU 7173 SE 3/532 II GV 2. Mid C19 . 4 storeys with bands between floors. Painted brick. 3 bays, glazing bar sash windows with segmental heads and keys. Moulded cornice to blocking course. Concealed roof. Modern ground floor premises with retrains of moulded fascia cornice over. Included for group value.

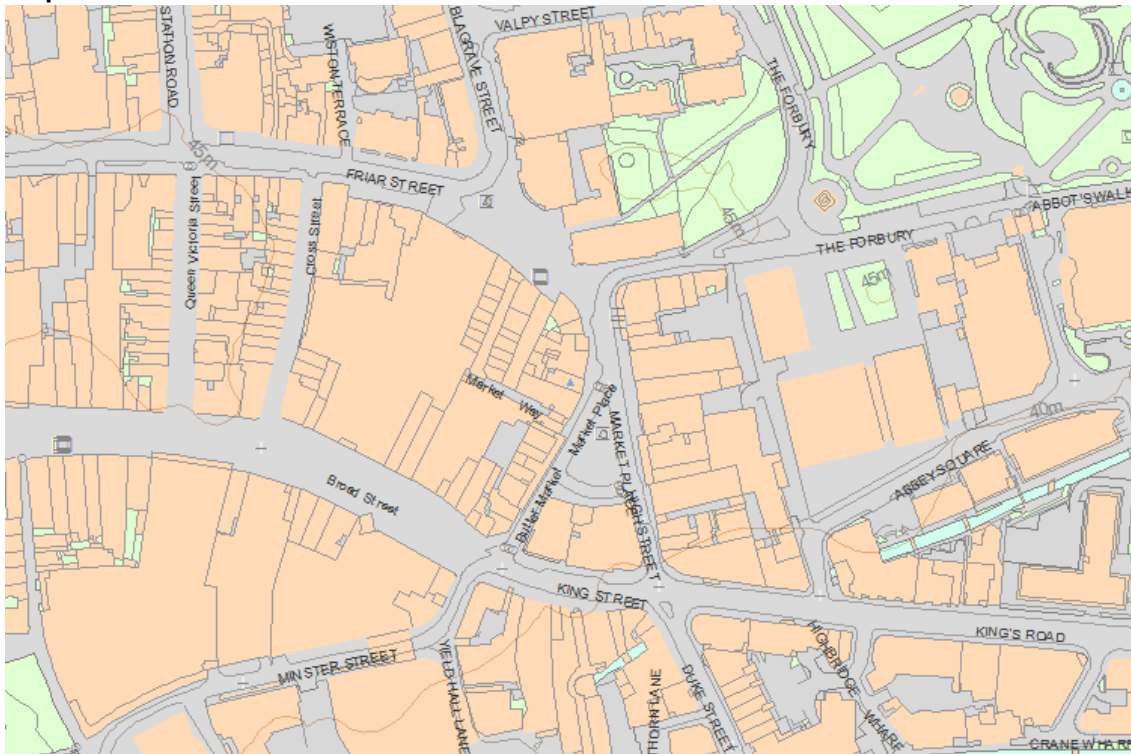
Listing NGR: SU7167873488

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: SU 71683 73486

Map



CHURCH OF ST LAURENCE ST LAURENCE'S CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: CHURCH OF ST LAURENCE ST LAURENCE'S CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD

List entry Number: 1113532

Location

CHURCH OF ST LAURENCE, MARKET PLACE
ST LAURENCE'S CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD, FORBURY ROAD

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:

District: Reading

District Type: Unitary Authority

Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: I

Date first listed: 22-Mar-1957

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 39066

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

MARKET PLACE 1. 5128 Church of St Laurence SU 7173 NE 1/202 22.3.57. I GV Church of England. Structure Norman to C15 with excessive restorations of 1867. Flint with ashlar quoins and dressings. Principal feature tile C15 3 tage tower closing vista to north of Market Place - crenellated parapet, octagonal chequered clasping buttresses with strings, capped by crenellation (spirelets removed); sundial to south dated 1727, main entrance to west. Tower built 1458. Tiled roofs with centre valley (nave and north aisle). 1+4 bay nave, 2 very wide chancel bays. Nave south wall has small Norman window at west end and a late C12 round headed doorway with waterleaf capitals ; other openings restored Decorated style. Chancel east end has 3 lancets with blind lancets between. North aisle and chancel aisle probably 1521 (when present arcade built) see flat topped 2 light cusped windows and 3 light east window. Interior - Norman fragments in north aisle door, king-post roof of C15. 1522. Font. Good C18 pulpit. Fine bench ends with tracery panels and poppyheads in chancel. Organ case (very fine) 1741 by Byfield. Pulpit also 1741 - panelled single storey affair on mid C19 stand. A number of brasses and memorials. The best is the memorial to John Blagrave (died 1611, author of "The Mathematical Jewell"). The principal interest of this church is that it was built at the Abbey gate. The circa 1200 work may possibly be in connection with foundation of St John's Hospice (qv Blagrave St Municipal Buildings).

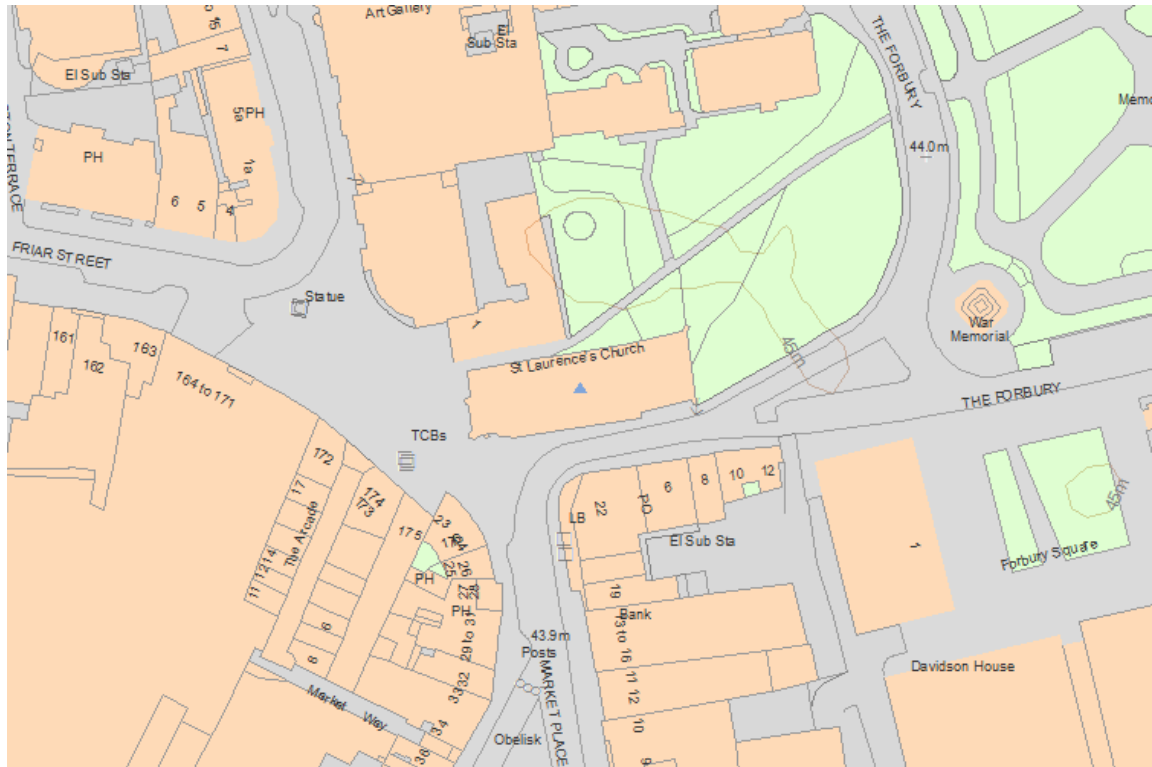
Listing NGR: SU7170473547

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: SU 71708 73548

Map



TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBER AND OFFICES WITH CLOCK TOWER

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBER AND OFFICES WITH CLOCK TOWER

List entry Number: 1113400

Location

TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBER AND OFFICES WITH CLOCK TOWER ,
BLAGRAVE STREET

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:

District: Reading

District Type: Unitary Authority

Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II*

Date first listed: 22-Mar-1957

Date of most recent amendment: 14-Dec-1978

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 38761

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

BIAGRAVE STREET 1. 5128 Town Council Chamber and Offices with Clock Tower (Formerly listed as Town Hall and Municipal Offices (The block designed by Sir Alfred Waterhouse only)) SU 7173 NE 1/26 22.3.57. II* GV 2. 1872-75 (foundation stone 1874) by Alfred Waterhouse. French Gothic style. 2 storeys and attic. 5 storey tower. Built in red and grey brick with terracotta ornaments. Tower placed to close vistas from Friar Street and Market Place. The whole is modest in scale and surprising in its use of the local materials, uncharacteristically 'soft' for Waterhouse. Tower is over entrance lobby. Corbelled polygonal buttresses at corners with finials and steep saddle back roof. Clock below belfry screen. Pointed arch entrance with shields and date in spandrels. To left the Council Chamber, 4 bays with slight break gabled to left. Paired lights in segmental headed recesses to ground floor. Tall lancets with label moulds and polychromed tympana over 2 light double transom windows which contain Waterhouse pink grisaille glass. Roundel with arms of Borough in gable below attic window. 1 gabled dormer. To right of tower the effect altered by removal of 2nd tower following war damage. Angled round to east, 3 storeys with modillion cornice to pierced parapet. 4 bays divided by diagonal buttresses; 2 light transomed windows in segmental headed recesses. Interior: Rich entrance lobby leads to stair hall with enclosed arcaded staircase, segmental arches whose mouldings lie into piers. Council chamber retains original fittings, Gothic fireplace, gallery, benches, tables etc.

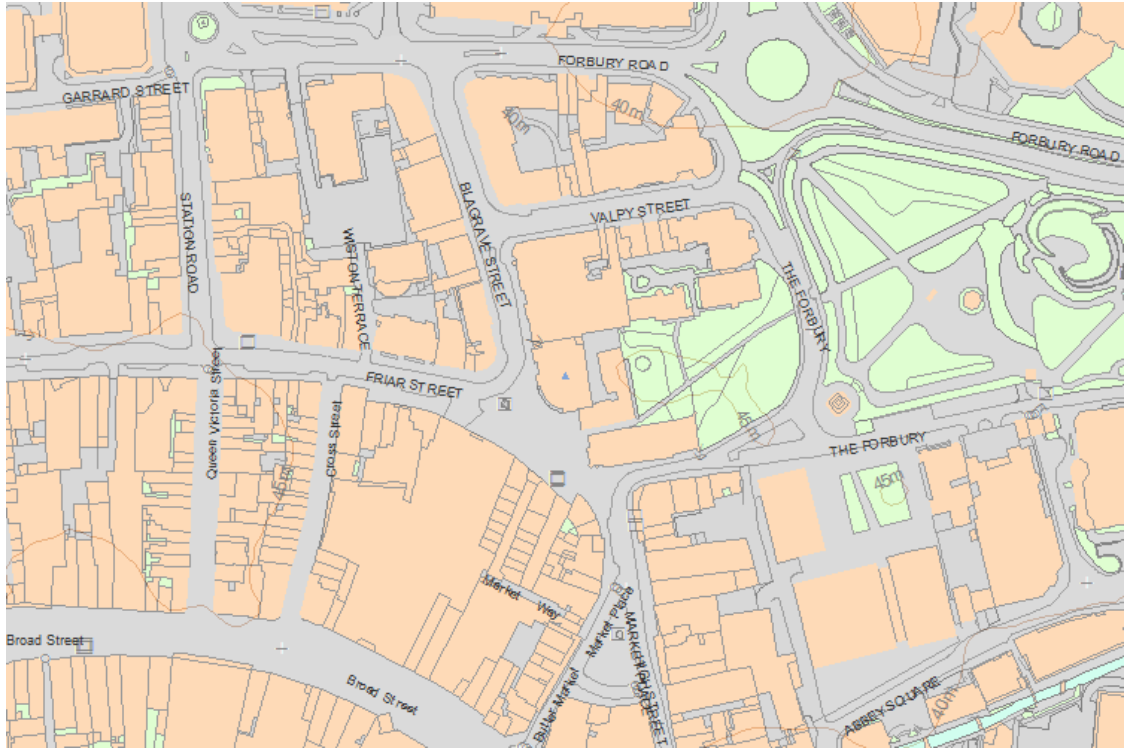
Listing NGR: SU7166773577

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: SU 71674 73578

Map



23-26, MARKET PLACE

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: 23-26, MARKET PLACE

List entry Number: 1113536

Location

23-26, MARKET PLACE

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:

District: Reading

District Type: Unitary Authority

Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 26-Jul-1973

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 39073

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

MARKET PLACE 1. 5128 (West Side) Nos 23 to 26 (consec) SU 7173 NE 1/205 26.7.75. II GV 2. Early C19 loosely attributed to Henry or Nathaniel Briant. 3 storeys, Bath stone ashlar now rendered. Round corner. Moulded cope to parapet. Slate roof. Doric pilasters above ground floor level between each house with fluted caps. Modern shops with Doric piers. 2:2:2 ranges of glazing bar sash windows, 1st floor windows have carved brackets to cornices.

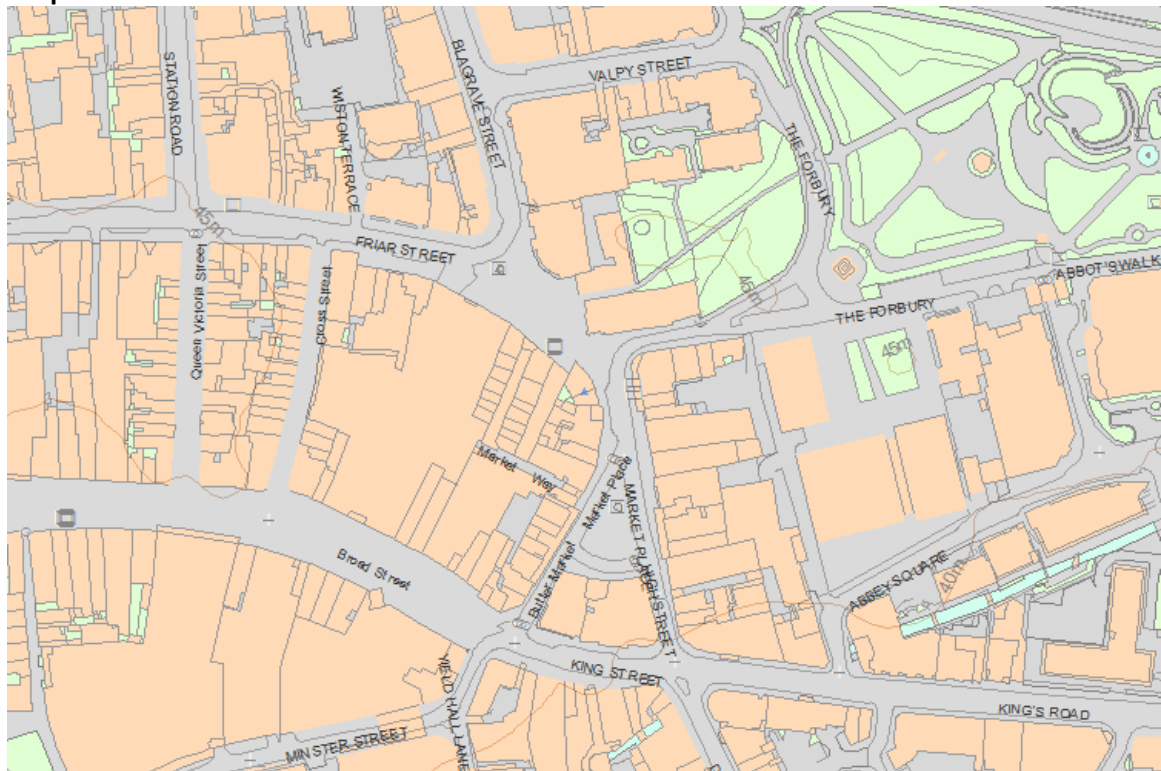
Listing NGR: SU7167973514

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: SU 71683 73513

Map



TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANK

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANK

List entry Number: 1113538

Location

TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANK, 33 AND 34, MARKET PLACE

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:

District: Reading

District Type: Unitary Authority

Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 14-Dec-1978

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 39077

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

MARKET PLACE (West Side) 1. 5128 Nos 33 and 34 (Trustee Savings Bank) SU 7173 SE 3/533 II GV 2. Mid C19. 3 storeys brick composition with stucco dressings and pilaster strips on 1st floor to cornice. Deep stucco frieze with bracket caps over pilasters. Cornice and parapet. Concealed roof. Pilasters paired at sides and between Nos 33 and 34, single between windows of No 33. 2:1:1:1 bays, plate glass sashes with segmental heads and stilted architraving carried on guttae. Keystones. Band over 1st floor. Early C20 ground floor. Included for group value.

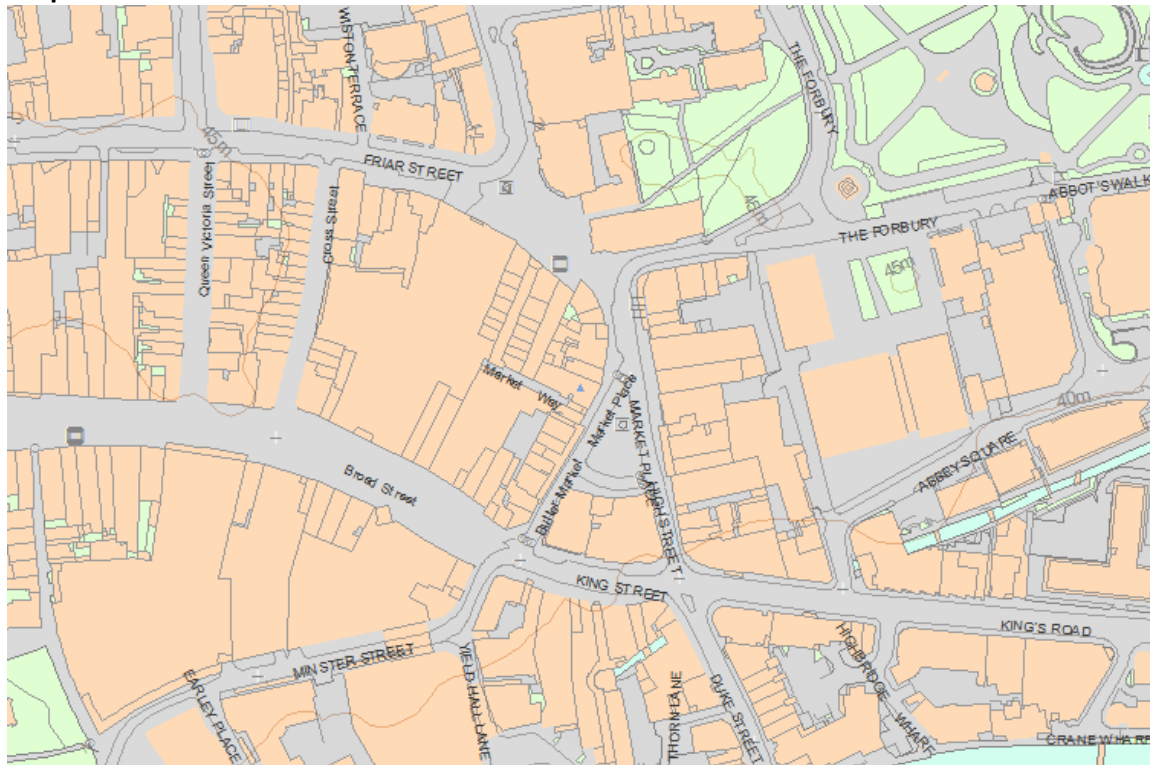
Listing NGR: SU7167973479

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: SU 71679 73479

Map



CORN EXCHANGE ARCADE ENTRANCE

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: CORN EXCHANGE ARCADE ENTRANCE

List entry Number: 1113539

Location

CORN EXCHANGE ARCADE ENTRANCE, MARKET PLACE

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:

District: Reading

District Type: Unitary Authority

Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 26-Jul-1973

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 39078

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

MARKET PLACE 1. 5128 (West Side) Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance SU 7173 SE 3/312 26.7.73. II GV 2. 1854 by J B Clacy and F Hawker. Renaissance style single bay feature in Bath stone ashlar. 3 stages capped by pepperpot turret with bell and weathervane. Lower stage has rusticated piers with swagged fruit caps to lintel. 2nd stage an arched recess with pierced balcony and flanking fluted Ionic columns; keystone with Prince of Wales crest and motto. Tripartite window inside, blocked with semi-circular panelling over; coffered vault. Top stage has "Corn Exchange" in relief on base and brackets to elaborate fruit and flower carved border to gilt and blue clock with Roman numerals. Now leads to modern shopping arcade.

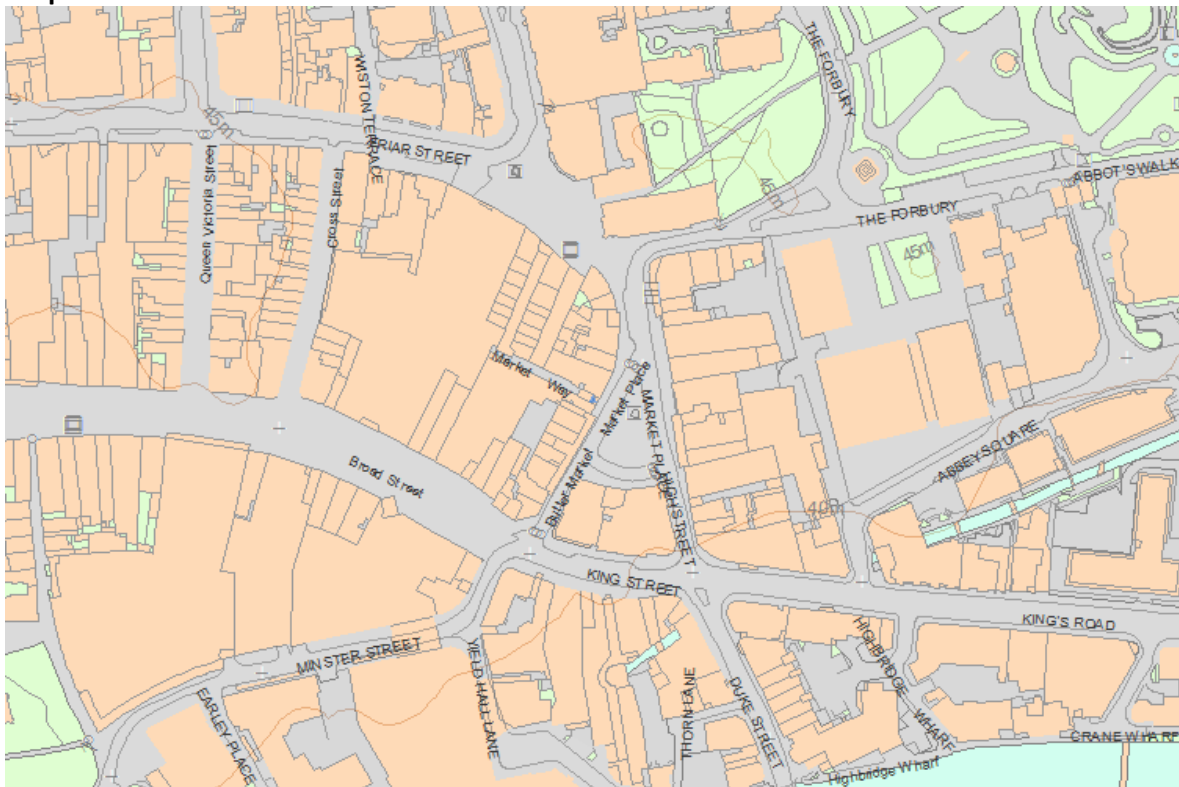
Listing NGR: SU7167973470

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: SU 71680 73469

Map



QUEEN VICTORIA JUBILEE STATUE

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: QUEEN VICTORIA JUBILEE STATUE

List entry Number: 1113483

Location

QUEEN VICTORIA JUBILEE STATUE, FRIAR STREET

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:

District: Reading

District Type: Unitary Authority

Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 14-Dec-1978

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 38947

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

FRIAR STREET 1. 5128 Queen Victoria Jubilee Statue SU 7173 NE 1/489 II GV
2. Facing down Blagrove Street. 1857. Sculptor George Simmonds, son of one of Readings notables. Large Carrara marble statue of the Queen Empress in commanding and appropriate attire. High plinth with moulded cornice and base on wide step which has red granite corner bollards. Inscription tablet facing Blagrove Street.

Listing NGR: SU7164773566

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: SU 71647 73566

Map



Appendix 3: Heritage Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Statutory Duties

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides that listed building consent is required for:

“(s.7) ... 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 ...”

In determining such applications the following duty is placed upon the decision maker:

“s.16(2) In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works 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 features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

With regard to applications for planning permission within conservation areas, it is set out that:

“s.72(1) In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any powers under any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”

Importantly, the meaning of preservation in this context, and for both listed buildings and conservation areas, as informed by case law, is taken to be the avoidance of harm.

National Policy

NPPF: National Planning Policy Framework 2012

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was introduced in March 2012 as the full statement of Government planning policies covering all aspects of the planning process. One of the twelve core planning principles of the NPPF is that planning should:

“conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.”

Chapter 12 outlines the Government’s guidance regarding conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 128 outlines the information required to support planning applications affecting heritage assets. It states that applicants should provide a description of the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset’s importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Paragraph 129 sets out that local planning authorities should also identify and assess the particular significance of heritage assets that may be affected by proposals. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of proposals in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Paragraph 131 provides a positive emphasis with regard to determining such planning applications, stating that local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of

sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them into viable uses consistent with their conservation, as well as the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 132 further outlines that local planning authorities should give great weight to the asset's conservation when considering the impact on a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset. The more important the heritage asset, the greater the weight should be. Annex 2: Glossary defines conservation (for heritage policy):

“The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.”

It is also specified that any harm to, or loss, of significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 133 outlines that local planning authorities should refuse consent where a proposal will lead to substantial harm or total loss of significance, unless it can be demonstrated that this is necessary to deliver substantial public benefits that outweigh such harm or loss, or a number of other tests can be satisfied. Paragraph 134 concerns proposals which will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset. Here harm should be weighed against the public benefits, including securing the optimum viable use.

Paragraph 135 outlines that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining an application. It encourages that a balanced judgement should be made which considers the assets significance and the scale of any harm or loss.

Paragraph 137 states that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas 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 or better reveal the significance of a heritage asset should be treated favourably.

Paragraph 138 sets out that not all elements of a conservation area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the conservation area should be treated as either substantial harm under paragraph 133 or less than substantial under paragraph 134, as appropriate taking into account the relative significance of the building affected and its contribution to the significance of the conservation area as a whole.

Development Plan

Reading Borough Council Core Strategy 2008

RBC's Core Strategy was adopted on 29 January 2008. It forms a key component of the planning framework used for determining applications. The following policies relate to the proposals in respect of issues of design and heritage.

Policy CS7 relates to general design quality. It requires all development to be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. There is an expectation that developments will respond positively to their

local context and reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including the protection of the historic environment.

Policy CS33 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) states that historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, should be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced. The policy is wide ranging and relates to both designated and non-designated heritage assets. It states that Planning Permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. All proposals are expected to protect, and where appropriate, enhance the character and appearance of the area in which they are located.

The proper interpretation of this policy must reflect its intention and the advice provided in the National Planning Policy Framework. The policy states that planning permission will be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. At face value, the wording of this policy indicates that planning permission will be refused if there is any adverse impact on the heritage asset. This would be contrary to paragraphs 132-135 of the Framework, which requires consideration of any harm, if it does arise, and enables demonstration that in certain circumstances harm to the significance of a heritage asset can be justified.

Reading Central Area Action Plan 2009

Policy RC5 (Design in the Centre) of the Central Area Action Plan states:

“Applications for development within the Reading central area should demonstrate the following attributes:

- (a) Development will build on and respect the existing grid layout structure of the central area, providing continuity and enclosure through appropriate relationships between buildings and spaces, and frontages that engage with the street at lower levels, and contributing towards enhanced ease of movement through and around the central area;*
- (b) Development will provide appropriate, well designed public spaces and other public realm, including squares, open spaces, streetscape, utilising high quality and well-maintained hard and soft landscape, public art, that provide suitable functions and interest, sense of place and safe and convenient linkages to adjoining areas;*
- (c) The architectural details and materials used in the central area should be high quality and respect the form and quality of the detailing and materials in areas local to the development site;*
- (d) Development and any associated public realm should contribute to the diversity of the central area, be capable of easy adaptation over time to meet changing circumstances, and be designed to enhance community safety.”*

Reading Borough Council Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012

The SDPD was adopted on 23rd October 2012 (the affordable housing policies were amended in January 2015), alongside the Reading Borough Proposals Map. It sets out detailed policies for

use in decisions on planning applications and identifies sites for development, protection and for the application of specific policies.

Paragraph 9.1.7 notes that one of the cross-cutting aspects of national policy is proportionality: the greater the significance of the heritage asset, the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation. The focus is on conservation and, where appropriate, enhancement. There is also acknowledgement that new development may make a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment.

Paragraph 9.1.9 notes that the National Planning Policy Framework provides an appropriate framework for considering proposals for development that affect the historic environment in Reading. Accordingly, together with the guidance in Policy CS33 of the Core Strategy, there is no need to provide specific detailed policies in the SDPD.

Paragraph 9.1.10 is a conflation of a number of paragraphs within the Framework. It notes that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource, which is consistent with the guidance in the Framework. The remainder of the policy is a partial summary of national policy. The reference to *'Any harm to or loss of an asset needs clear and convincing justification as set out in national planning policy'* can only be applicable to designated heritage assets and relates to paragraph 132 of the Framework. .

Paragraphs 9.1.12 considers the setting of heritage assets, noting that the setting of an asset can contribute positively to the significance of a heritage asset. It is wrong to assume that setting makes a positive contribution to the significance of heritage assets in all circumstances, as is reflected in the definition of the setting of heritage assets contained in Annex 2 of the Framework, which notes that elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution or in some circumstances have only a neutral effect.

Paragraph 9.1.13 regards conservation areas in the borough, and highlights that specific planning controls are exercised in these areas. Paragraph 9.1.14 explains that conservation areas have a particularly distinctive character, and usually provide a strong link to the history of the area. Paragraph 9.1.15 states that it is essential to retain features which make a conservation area distinctive. The relevant conservation area appraisals should be used to identify the special interest of each area, to inform the consideration of new development, and to identify opportunities for enhancement.

Paragraph 9.1.22 considers nationally and locally listed buildings and structures in Reading. At paragraph 9.1.23, it is highlighted that when considering a change of use at a listed building, the Borough will consider the contribution that a particular use makes to the significance of a heritage asset. Any harm to, or loss of, an asset's significance resulting from a change of use will be assessed against policy CS33 of the Core Strategy and national planning policy.

Paragraph 9.1.24 states that undesignated heritage assets will in the main be identified through the process of determining planning applications, and that this approach includes locally listed buildings. The criteria against which any building's or structure's significance will be assessed are set out below the paragraph, and this is used by the Council to assess whether a particular building or structure merits designation as a locally important heritage asset. Importantly, the local list criteria states that buildings which are already part of a conservation area will not be considered for the local list. Instead, footnote 49 states that buildings which warrant local designation in a conservation area are awarded a 'Buildings of Townscape Merit'

designation. For the purposes of the NPPF, Buildings of Townscape Merit will be considered to warrant conservation and where appropriate enhancement in accordance with the NPPF.

Paragraph 9.1.25 states that the Council will establish a list of 'Locally important Buildings and Structures'. Where a building or structure merits designation as a locally important heritage asset, it will be recorded by adding it to this list, which will form part of Reading's Historic Environment Record. The asset would then be conserved and where appropriate enhanced in accordance with policy CS33 of the Core Strategy and national planning policy.

Other Material Considerations

NPPG: National Planning Policy Guidance 2014

National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 has been issued by the Government as a living web resource, including a category on conserving and enhancing the historic environment. This is intended to provide more detailed guidance and information with regard to the implementation of national policy set out in the NPPF 2012.

Department of Culture, Media and Sport Circular: Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings 2010

The Principles of Selection for listing buildings sets out the general criteria for assessing the special interest of a building in paras. 9 and 10, as below:

"Architectural Interest.

To be of special architectural interest a building must be of importance in its architectural design, decoration or craftsmanship; special interest may also apply to nationally important examples of particular building types and techniques (e.g. buildings displaying technological innovation or virtuosity) and significant plan forms;

Historic Interest.

To be of special historic interest a building must illustrate important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural, or military history and/or have close historical associations with nationally important people. There should normally be some quality of interest in the physical fabric of the building itself to justify the statutory protection afforded by listing.

10. When making a listing decision, the Secretary of State may take into account the extent to which the exterior contributes to the architectural or historic interest of any group of buildings of which it forms part. This is generally known as group value. The Secretary of State will take this into account particularly where buildings comprise an important architectural or historic unity or a fine example of planning (e.g. squares, terraces or model villages) or where there is a historical functional relationship between a group of buildings. If a building is designated because of its group value, protection applies to the whole of the property, not just the exterior."

In addition to the criteria and general principles set out in the guidance, a number of Selection Guides for different building types have been published by Historic England in 2011. These Selection Guides provide further information regarding each building type, and demonstrate what features are considered significant and likely to make a building of special architectural or historic interest when assessing each building type.

Historic England: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment 2015

GPA Note 2 provides information to assist in implementing historic environment policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the related guidance given in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). These include; assessing the significance of heritage assets, using appropriate expertise, historic environment records, recording and furthering understanding, neglect and unauthorised works, and marketing.

With regard to design and local distinctiveness, advice sets out that both the NPPF (section 7) and NPPG (section ID26) contain detail on why good design is important and how it can be achieved. In terms of the historic environment, some or all of the following factors may influence what will make the scale, height, massing, alignment, materials and proposed use of new development successful in its context:

- *The history of the place*
- *The relationship of the proposal to its specific site*
- *The significance of nearby assets and the contribution of their setting, recognising that this is a dynamic concept*
- *The general character and distinctiveness of the area in its widest sense, including the general character of local buildings, spaces, public realm and the landscape, the grain of the surroundings, which includes, for example the street pattern and plot size*
- *The size and density of the proposal related to that of the existing and neighbouring uses*
- *Landmarks and other built or landscape features which are key to a sense of place*
- *The diversity or uniformity in style, construction, materials, colour, detailing, decoration and period of existing buildings and spaces*
- *The topography*
- *Views into, through and from the site and its surroundings*
- *Landscape design*
- *The current and historic uses in the area and the urban grain*
- *The quality of the materials*

Historic England: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition): The Setting of Heritage Assets 2017

GPA Note 3 provides information to assist in implementing historic environment policy with regard to the managing change within the setting of heritage assets. This also provides a toolkit for assessing the implications of development proposals affecting setting. A series of stages are recommended for assessment, these are:

- *Step 1: identifying the heritage assets affected and their settings*
- *Step 2: assessing whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s)*
- *Step 3: assessing the effect of the proposed development*
- *Step 4: maximising enhancement and minimising harm*
- *Step 5: making and documenting the decision and monitoring outcomes.*

Historic England: Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management 2016

This document sets out a series of conservation principles and guidance regarding the management of Conservation Areas. It outlines the fundamentals of designation, and,

importantly, puts in place processes for character appraisals which may be used to manage development in the area moving forward. It sets an over-arching objective for character appraisals as documents which understand and articulate why the area is special and what elements within the area contribute to this special quality and which don't. Having done this, it outlines an approach to assessments of special interest which uses desk and field-based inquiry.

Table 1 on page 16 sets out that it will be helpful to identify those key unlisted buildings that make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area, and its significance / special interest as a whole, as well as those which clearly detract from it and could be replaced. A checklist of questions to help with this process is provided, where a positive response to one or more of the following may indicate that a particular element within a conservation area makes a positive contribution provided that its historic form and values have not been eroded:

- *Is it the work of a particular architect or designer of regional or local note?*
- *Does it have landmark quality?*
- *Does it reflect a substantial number of other elements in the conservation area in age, style, materials, form or other characteristics?*
- *Does it relate to adjacent designated heritage assets in age, materials or in any other historically significant way?*
- *Does it contribute positively to the setting of adjacent designated heritage assets?*
- *Does it contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces including exteriors or open spaces with a complex of public buildings?*
- *Is it associated with a designed landscape eg a significant wall, terracing or a garden building?*
- *Does it individually, or as part of a group, illustrate the development of the settlement in which it stands?*
- *Does it have significant historic association with features such as the historic road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature?*
- *Does it have historic associations with local people or past events?*
- *Does it reflect the traditional functional character or former uses in the area?*
- *Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the area?*

Historic England: Advice Note 2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets 2016

This advice note provides general advice according to different categories of intervention in heritage assets, including repair, restoration, addition and alteration, as well as on works for research alone. This covers different types of heritage assets, including buildings and other structures; standing remains including earthworks; buried remains and marine sites; as well as larger heritage assets including conservation areas, registered landscapes, and World Heritage Sites.

Reading Borough Council: Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal 2007

This document identifies the particular characteristics of the conservation area which are of special interest, and which should be preserved and enhanced. It also identifies negative aspects of the conservation area, and highlights opportunities for improvements to its character and appearance.

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