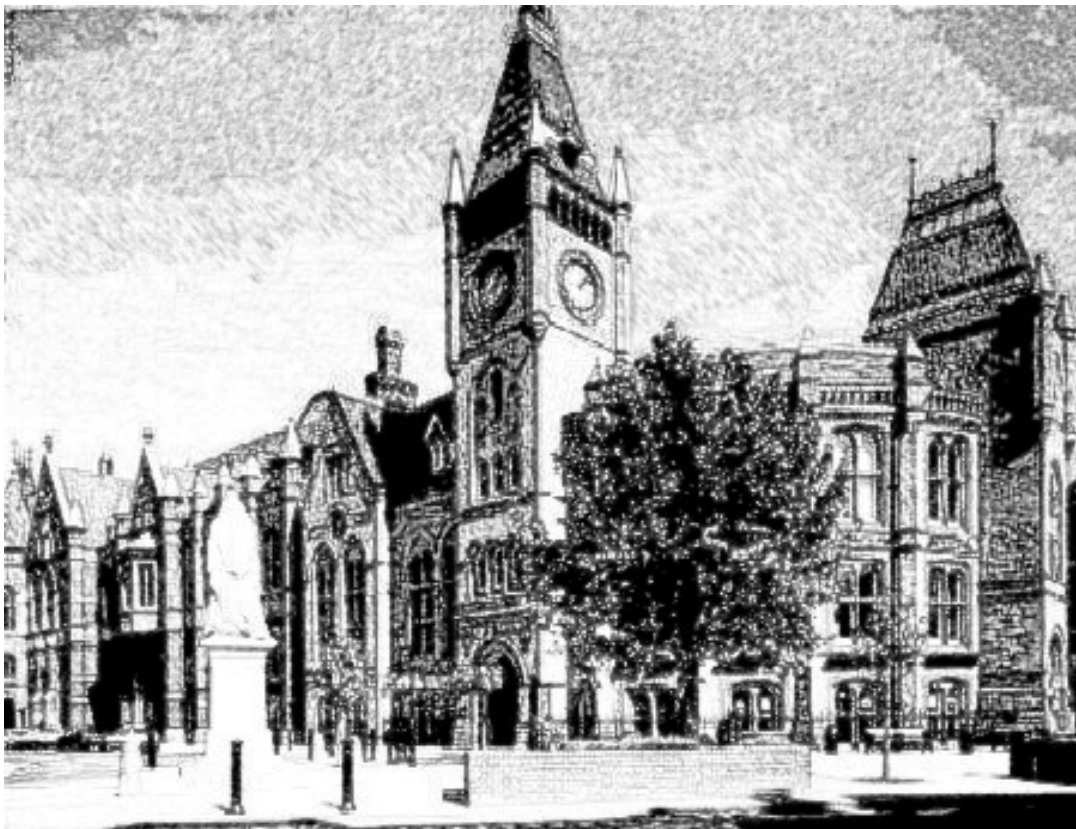


NEW ROOFTOP WALKWAY TO TOWN HALL COURTYARD (CHILLER ACCESS)

Town Hall, Blagrove Street, Reading

Heritage Statement

18 July 2017



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Appendix A - Listing Information

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Corporate Property Services and is submitted in support of an application on behalf of Reading Borough Council for Listed Building Consent to the Town Hall, Blagrove Street, Reading.
- 1.2 The property is owned by Reading Borough Council.
- 1.3 The proposal is to construct a galvanised steel walkway to assist access to maintain ventilating and chiller plant on the roof above the Huntley & Palmers Gallery of the Museum.
- 1.4 The Town Hall is a listed building with the Clock Tower designed by Alfred Waterhouse. Waterhouse is considered to be one of the most important architects of the 19th Century and he designed hundreds of buildings across the UK including the Natural History Museum and Manchester Town Hall. The Clock Tower, including the adjacent facades and the Council Chamber behind it, is listed Grade II*, whilst the other later parts of the building, designed by less well known Architects, are listed Grade II. The listings are included in Appendix A.
- 1.5 The Town Hall site is 2,627 square metres in area and is located in the Abbey Ward on Blagrove Street, within the town centre of Reading. It is approximately 6km to the north Junction 11 of the M4 and 0.5km south of the River Thames. To the east of the site is Forbury Gardens, a public park that is on the site of the outer court of Reading Abbey, which was largely destroyed in 1538 during Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries. Beyond Forbury Gardens are the ruins of Reading Abbey, which are currently undergoing restoration. Within approximately 250m of the site, to the north east, is Reading railway station, which is a major transport hub and the ninth-busiest station in the UK outside of London. The main retail and commercial areas of Reading are located to the south and west of the site, including The Oracle, a large indoor shopping and leisure mall on the banks of the River Kennet.
- 1.6 The Town Hall houses the Museum & Art Gallery of Reading, the Concert hall, the Waterhouse Chamber, the Victoria Hall, several conference rooms, a public cafe and the 3B's Cafe and Bar. The building also includes office accommodation for the Council's Arts and Theatre Service and the Berkshire Coroner.

2.0 Character and significance of the building

- 2.1 The Town Hall is one of Reading's historic landmark buildings and is situated close to the site of Reading Abbey and Forbury Gardens to the east and it is adjoined to the north by the Hospitium of St. John and to the South by St. Laurence's Church.
- 2.2 The current Town Hall was built in several phases between 1786 and 1897. The earlier Georgian building is now hidden behind the later Victorian additions that present to Blagrove Street and Valpy Street. The Victorian building's architectural styling was established with the building of the extension designed by Alfred Waterhouse in 1875. The building is in the French Gothic Style with red and grey brickwork facade with terracotta ornamentation. This has been carried forward in the additions that followed.

- 2.3 Waterhouse's design included a Clock Tower over the entrance which provides a focal point at the end of Friar Street and there is a second tower designed to provide a landmark feature from the Market Place. Within the urban context the towers signify the importance of this municipal building. The Waterhouse building is modest in its scale, comprising of two storeys (with attic space) whilst the Clock Tower is five storeys.
- 2.4 The town's municipal administration used the building until the Council decided to construct new civic offices. In 1976 the Council moved out to the newly built Reading Civic Centre. The library remained up until 1985, when it moved to the new central library on the King's Road.
- 2.5 Following these moves there were plans to demolish the Town Hall and replace it with a new cultural centre but these were subsequently dropped in favour of a major restoration and refurbishment of the building. This work commenced in 1986 and was completed in 2000.

3.0 History of the Town Hall

16th - 18th Century

- 3.1 The first recorded Town Hall used by Reading Council was known as the Yield Hall and this building was situated by the River Kennet, near Yield Hall Lane. By the middle of the 16th century this building proved to be too small and following the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII earlier in the century, the Council would acquire the town's next town halls from this action.
- 3.2 In 1543 it was decided to use Greyfriars' Church as the town hall but its utilization did not prove successful and twenty years later the council moved to a new town hall which they created by building an upper floor in the lofty refectory of the former abbey hospitium. The ground floor of this building had already been occupied by Reading School since 1485.
- 3.3 The upper floor of the refectory building was the home of the town's administration for about 200 years but eventually the structure became unsound and between 1785-1786, the building was dismantled and replaced on the same site by the first of several phases of building that were to make up today's Town Hall.
- 3.4 The main building of the hospitium, which can be seen immediately behind the Concert Hall of the current Town Hall, survived this demolition, and after various other uses, has now been incorporated into an office development, and is now occupied by a children's nursery.

18th - 19th Century

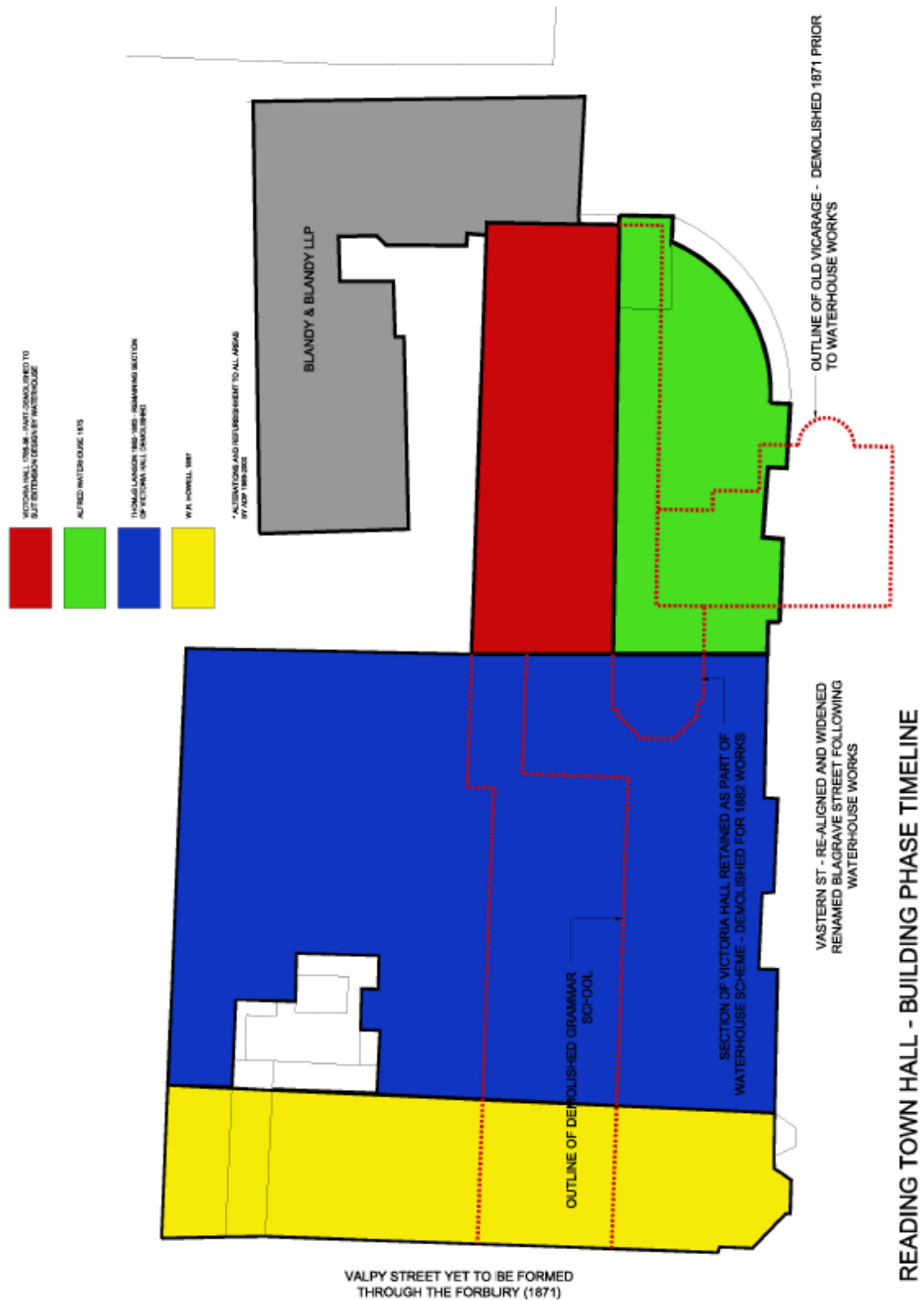
- 3.5 The new town hall which replaced the 16th century refectory building was a Georgian design by Charles Poulton, who was an Alderman of Reading and a cabinet maker by trade. The building is now mostly hidden behind later extensions and it is known as the Small Town Hall or the Victoria Hall, to distinguish it from the much later concert hall.
- 3.6 In the painting illustrated below the Town Hall is on the left with large arched windows. These windows can still be seen in the Victoria Hall today. The wall in the foreground would have enclosed the garden to the Old Vicarage.



The Town Hall by Alderman Charles Poulton and St. Laurence's Church (1870)

- 3.7 In 1864, the 1780s building was redecorated in an Italianate style by W H Woodman, the Borough Surveyor. At the same time an organ, built by Father Willis and presented by the Reading Philharmonic Society, was installed in the hall.
- 3.8 During the 19th Century the Town grew rapidly establishing itself as a manufacturing and trading centre. Reading was best known for the production of beer at Symonds Brewery, bulbs at Sutton Seeds proving grounds and biscuits manufactured by Huntley and Palmer. These were locally known as the 3B's hence the current café and bar bears this name. The Kennet and Avon canal was completed in 1810 providing improved trading routes to the West Country and the Bristol Channel. Transportation improved again in the 1840's with the arrival of the railways. Reading is on the Great Western main line between London and Bristol. Other railway companies provided connections to the south and south west, so Reading became an important railway junction. During this period Reading also became the county town of Berkshire. The aldermen decided that the town's growing wealth and status should be reflected in improvements to the Town Hall.
- 3.9 In 1871 Alfred Waterhouse, who lived at Foxhill, now part of the University of Reading Whiteknights campus at the time, was commissioned to prepare proposals to extend the Town Hall. His scheme drawings are held in the RIBA Drawing Collection at the Victoria & Albert Museum.
- 3.10 Waterhouse's original block plans show the context of the original Georgian Town Hall. To the west of the Town Hall had been the Old Vicarage, which by 1871 had already been demolished. To the north was the Grammar School in the former hospitium building with playing fields in the Forbury. At this point Valpy Street did not exist and was only a proposal as part of Waterhouse's scheme. The road to the west of the Town Hall was originally called Vastern Street and was just a narrow lane. Waterhouse's plans were used in an agreement between Mr Blagrove and the council to re-align the road for the building of the new extension and ensure that the Town Hall achieved the required prominence.

- 3.11 Waterhouse prepared two preliminary designs for the new extension. The first scheme dated 1871 was rectangular in plan with a corner tower and entrance below from Blagrove Street. The extension replaced the western façade of the Georgian Town Hall building that is retained behind. The original galleried entrance was re-ordered. The basement plans indicate that the open plan area below the old town hall was to become a public library. Access to this would be gained via a corridor from the new town hall entrance as well as there being a separate entrance from Friar Street.
- 3.12 The second preliminary scheme dated 1872 is also rectangular in plan with the corner tower retained but entrance now being from Friar Street. The basement plan still shows that the space below the old town hall was to be used as a library.
- 3.13 The contract drawings for the building that was constructed are also included in the RIBA drawings collection. These are dated November 1872. The building has the broad curve to the front and central tower that we see today and was designed in a Gothic style. The basement plan does not show the proposed use of the area below the old town hall with the openings to it being blocked up. The new extension at this level comprises cellular offices for the municipal officials. The secondary tower on the south elevation has been used as a device to buttress the curved roof and resolve the junction with the retained old town hall. At this time there was no entrance to the building at this point.
- 3.14 Waterhouse's design provided a more spacious and ornate council chamber, offices for the growing number of officials needed for new local government services and a suitably dignified entrance under the clock tower which was to become one of Reading's most distinctive architectural landmarks. The red and grey bricks facade together with the terracotta ornamentation, for which Waterhouse is particularly well known, was made at the local Colliers' Works. The new Town Hall was completed in 1875 and officially opened the following year.
- 3.15 Following completion of this extension Waterhouse was subsequently commissioned to design a further extension which included a new concert hall, museum and library. These designs were thought too expensive and instead the council decided to hold a design competition.
- 3.16 The competition was won by Thomas Lainson, a local architect whose design continued and complimented Waterhouse's Gothic styling. The new 1500 capacity concert hall opened in 1882 which superseded the modest 18th century assembly hall and provided the town with a space that could accommodate orchestral concerts, civic banquets and many other grand occasions. A popular addition to it was the Willis Organ which had been presented to be part of the previous town hall by the Reading Philharmonic Society in 1864. The museum and library additions opened in 1883.
- 3.17 A third and final section was designed by W.R. Howell, another local architect, and contained an extension to the Library and an Art Gallery which was added at the Valpy Street end and opened in 1897.
- 3.18 These later additions were designed to harmonize with the Gothic style of the Waterhouse building but lacked some of the decorative embellishment.
- 3.19 The diagram below shows the Building Phase Timeline for the Town Hall.



20th Century

- 3.20 During the latter part of the 19th Century and early 20th Century the layout of the Town Hall was altered to reflect the changing and more significant role of local government.

- 3.21 The main corridor in the Basement (now referred to as the Ground Floor) which is currently occupied by the Kitchen, Soane Room and the 3B's Bar and Café was altered presumably as part of the Lainson's extension and a new entrance was created below the south tower. However, the layout of the Waterhouse section of the building remained largely unaltered.



The view from Friar Street at the turn of the 20th Century

World War II

- 3.22 Following the outbreak of War in Europe and the fall of France in 1940 Britain was on alert from the threat of invasion. Although during the war Reading was considered a 'safe town' The Local Defence Volunteers (later called the Home Guard) were stationed at specific sites in the town including the town hall which, it was believed, would be one of the enemy's main targets in the event of an attack.
- 3.23 Many children were evacuated from London to Reading early in the war; nevertheless the town did experience air raids and minor incidents between 1940 and 1943.
- 3.24 The worst air raid over Reading during the war occurred on the 10th February 1943 involved a solitary German bomber. It flew low and there was very little warning of the attack. It proceeded with a short, terrifying run across the town, dropping a stick of bombs and machine-gunning people in the streets of North Reading and Caversham.
- 3.25 The four bombs dropped in a line extending from Minster Street to Friar Street. The back of Wellstead's (now part of the Oracle shopping centre) store was completely wrecked, and so was the northern half of the covered Market Arcade. St. Laurence's Church lost nearly all of its stained glass windows and the pinnacles on its tower were rendered unsafe and later had to be removed. The front of Blandy & Blandy's offices was blown away and the Town Clerk's offices in the Town Hall were badly damaged.
- 3.26 Fortunately it was a Wednesday afternoon and the shops were closed, but a restaurant called the People's Pantry at the Friar Street end of the arcade was crowded and here is where most of casualties occurred. In all,

41 people had been killed, 49 seriously injured and 104 slightly injured in the attack.



Damage from the bombing run in February 1943

Post War

- 3.27 After the war, the southern facade of the Town Hall was repaired and restored following the bomb damage to provide a functional building again. However, the finials to the Church, together with the South Tower and pitched roof over the curved façade of the Town Hall were removed as a result of the bomb damage.



The view from Friar Street (circa 1950)

- 3.28 The photograph above shows the southern end of the building after the repairs were carried out. The South Tower and pitched roof of the Town Hall were not reinstated until the significant restoration project undertaken in the late 1980's.
- 3.29 In 1955, further Internal alterations were undertaken in the Basement; The Gentleman's Cloak Room became the Town Hall Canteen and Joiners Shop and the Engineers and General Office became a single room for the Motor Taxes Office. Also a new staircase was added to the Motor Taxes Office providing street access from Blagrove Street. At the end of the corridor the Town Clerks Vault was formed in the damaged South Tower and there were some minor alterations to the scullery in the Town Hall kitchen.
- 3.30 After the above alterations were carried out, the Town Hall's layout remained essentially the same until the major restoration and refurbishment project commenced in the 1980's.
- 1986 - 2000**
- 3.31 Following the Council's decision to retain the building and carry out a significant refurbishment of the Town Hall a limited design competition was held and Architects Design Partnership (then located in Henley) were appointed for this work.
- 3.32 The work was carried out in two phases. The initial phase covered the Waterhouse section of the building, Victoria Hall, Concert Hall and Museum. The internal layout was altered and levels adjusted allowing a single accessible public entrance within a double height space at basement level to be created in the Lanson section of the building. This now serves all the facilities in the building including the Museum and Art Gallery. By altering the point of access it became possible to find new uses for the space at basement level. In the Waterhouse section of the building and below the Victoria Hall spaces were opened up and the circulation corridor re-aligned to provide a Tourist Information Centre and the 3B's Bar and Café. As part of these works the coal cellar below the basement was more than doubled in size to provide storage space and a beer cellar for the café and bar. The extent of this work can clearly be seen in the cellars that are now lined with blockwork walls and the modern replacement pre-cast concrete floor that has been used to replace the original basement floor.
- 3.33 Externally the façade underwent a major restoration and where necessary rebuilding of the bomb damaged exterior of the Waterhouse section of the building. This included a new South Tower, which was rebuilt to a slightly larger footprint to incorporate a staircase serving the upper floors and an entrance from Friar Street. The badly damaged area to the right of the South Tower was completely rebuilt with a new reinforced concrete frame. At basement level this area currently includes the toilet facilities for the 3B's.
- 3.34 Elsewhere an old light-well has been transformed into a new atrium gallery with a modern glass lift as its centrepiece, while the 740-seat concert hall has been painstakingly restored with Heritage Lottery Funding to create a national venue hosting a wide variety of events.
- 3.35 The project has received many awards including from a RIBA Regional Award and a Civic Trust Award – The citation for the Civic Trust Award from 1990 is as follows:

"When Reading Borough Council moved to the new Civic Centre in 1975,

there were proposals to demolish the Grade II listed Town Hall and sell off the site. Fortunately, these plans were rejected and a limited design competition held to restore the building for community use. This first phase of the project comprises a sympathetic restoration of the section of the town hall designed by Alfred Waterhouse in 1875. Imaginative internal re-planning has simplified floor levels and improved access for the disabled. The South Tower, destroyed by a German bomb in 1943, has been rebuilt, and while not an exact copy of the original, the new tower fully respects the scale and richness of Waterhouse's design, thereby re-establishing an important focus to the street pattern at the heart of the town. Materials and workmanship are of a high standard throughout and this splendid public building is once again playing an important role in town life."

- 3.36 The second phase of work that followed was coordinated with the Public Library being relocated to its new premises on the King's Road. The vacated area was then converted into an Art Gallery and the Museum extended into the available space.

21st Century

- 3.37 Today the Town Hall has a variety of functions and is not just a museum and art gallery. The Reading Museum Service holds a number of education workshops and aims to be a centre of excellence in providing opportunities for life-long learning through real objects and original documents in the heart of Reading.
- 3.38 The Museum and Art Gallery contains many local and nationally important historical artefacts and collections that tell the story of Reading and its place in the world. Including a full-size copy of the Bayeux Tapestry, hundreds of archaeological objects, 8,000 works of art and craft, over 200,000 biological and geological specimens and 40,000 photographic negatives.
- 3.39 The building is also the base for The Berkshire Coroner who holds inquests in various meeting rooms, depending upon the size and nature of the enquiry. In addition, the building provides office accommodation for Town Hall, Museum, Art Gallery and Theatre Service staff.
- 3.40 Concerts, exhibitions, seminars and banquets are held throughout the year and there is also a Café serving snacks and beverages and a Souvenir Shop. Finally the Concert Hall, Victoria Hall and Waterhouse Chamber are all licensed to carry out wedding ceremonies as well as hosting wedding receptions.

4.0 Extent and nature of proposed development

- 4.1 The proposal is to construct a galvanized steel walkway to assist access to maintain ventilating and chiller plant on the roof above the Huntley & Palmers Gallery of the Museum. This part of the building is the third and

final section of the Town Hall which was designed by W.R. Howell to contain an extension to the Library and an Art Gallery, which was opened in 1897.

- 4.2 The proposed development will be located on the north elevation at the rear of the building on a flat asphalt covered reinforced concrete roof, which overlooks the internal courtyard.
- 4.3 The proposed walkway shall be pre-fabricated in sections off-site and installed on the roof via a temporary Working Platform complete with lifting provision.
- 4.4 The proposed walkway shall be manufactured from galvanized steel open mesh flooring with a galvanized steel guardrail with a mesh infill and solid kick board to the exposed edge of the roof (total height 1525mm).
- 4.5 The materials for the walkway will be supplied by Lionweld Kennedy (see separate product details sheet).
- 4.6 The proposed walkway shall be supported by means of purpose made steel frames that are fixed to the existing supportive steelworks and the existing flank wall.
- 4.7 The original Chiller Plant was installed as part of the restoration project undertaken between 1980 and 2000.



View of the existing Chiller Plant from the courtyard

5.0 Impact of development of heritage asset

- 5.1 The proposed walkway overlooks an internal courtyard and will therefore not be visible from the main street scene (Valpy Street), as it will be hidden from view by the existing structure.
- 5.2 The courtyard can be seen from inside the building but it is hidden from view by the use of permanent blinds.
- 5.3 The proposed walkway is to be used by Maintenance Staff only and is not accessible to the general public.

- 5.4 It should be noted that proposed development will not change or affect the structure of the existing building or result in the loss of any of its important historic features. The main roof will remain unaffected by the proposed works.
- 5.5 The existing internal fabric of the building will not be altered or lost due to the proposed works.



Birds Eye View of the Town Hall Site from the south (2013)

6.0 Justification for the works

- 6.1 The existing walkway does not provide a safe route to service and maintain the existing chiller plant, which is located on the roof of the Huntley & Palmer Gallery of the Museum.
- 6.2 The existing walkway also does not provide safe access to all the areas surrounding the chillers and has been partially removed following some alterations to ventilation system.
- 6.3 The existing walkway does not comply with the following Regulations:
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
 - Work at Height Regulations 2005 (WAHR)
 - Occupational Safety and Health (Work at Height) Regulations 2013
- 6.4 The WAHR are concerned with reducing deaths and injuries caused by falls from height. These account for 50 to 60 fatal accidents each year, more than any other activity and just under 4,000 major injuries.

- 6.5 The Occupational Safety and Health (Work at Height) Regulations 2013 (Third Schedule) states the following safety requirements for a working platform used as a place of work:

5. Safety on working platforms

A working platform shall—

- (a) be of appropriate dimension so as to –
 - (i) permit the safe passage of persons;
 - (ii) permit the safe use of any plant or materials required to be used; and
 - (iii) provide a safe working area;
- (b) have a surface which has no gap –
 - (i) through which a person could fall;
 - (ii) through which any material or object could fall and injure a person; or
 - (iii) giving rise to other risk of injury to any person, unless measures have been taken to protect persons against such risk;
- (c) be properly constructed and maintained, and sufficiently equipped, so as to prevent any employee engaged in the work from slipping or tripping, being caught between it and any adjacent structure, or being injured.

- 6.6 The proposed walkway will meet the above Health & Safety requirements and provide safe access to all parts of the working area around the chiller plant. In addition, this will also provide access to guttering for maintenance purposes that has been previously inaccessible.

- 6.7 The chiller plant requires regular maintenance and is essential to provide a constant ambient atmosphere to protect the historically important and valuable artefacts and collections contained within the museum and art gallery. Should the plant breakdown or become inoperative due to a lack of maintenance, then many of the exhibits will deteriorate and become seriously damaged and thus destroy the heritage of Reading.

7.0 Mitigation proposed to protect the heritage asset

- 7.1 The proposed development can be simply reversed in the future should it become necessary.

APPENDIX A

Listing Information

HERITAGE A T E W A Y

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

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.

Map

National Grid Reference: SU 71674 73578

The below map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale.



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HERITAGE G A T E W A Y

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: MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS CONCERT HALL

List Entry Number: 1113401

Location

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: 24-Jul-1974

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: 38764

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

Municipal Buildings Concert Hall

SU 7173 NE 1/351 24.7.74. II GV

2.

1879-1882. Designed by Thomas Lainson. Gothic style continuing that of the Waterhouse block (qv) in a bolder way. 3 1/2 storeys to front. Dark blue brick with deep red brick and terracotta dressings. Tiled roofs. Sandstone footing. Terracotta band over 1st floor, perhaps, like Museum block, intended to be curved. Front articulated by triangular section buttresses between 2 and 4 bays, with finials and pierced parapet; and by an asymmetric gabled entrance break with polygonal angle buttresses, pinnacles and poppy head saddlestone, and with large pointed entrance of 4 orders to gable with oriel over. 2 and 4 hipped dormers. 2 light transomed windows, pointed with oculi on 2nd floor, segmental with shouldered and joggled lintels on 1st floor, segmental on ground floor. Interior: the most notable feature of the interior is the famous Father Willis organ with its fine Baroque case, designed by Lainson when it was brought here from the Small Town Hall. The concert hall is reached up-stairs from Blagrove Street. Lush Italianate decoration of composite pilasters and deep glazed cove to compartmented ceiling. Horseshoe-shaped gallery reached by 2 staircases.

Listing NGR: SU7167873609

Selected Sources

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

Map

National Grid Reference: SU 71678 73609

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HERITAGE Gateway

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: MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM

List Entry Number: 1321990

Location

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: 24-Jul-1974

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: 38765

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

Municipal Buildings Art Gallery and Museum

SU 7173 NE 1/409 24.7.74. II GV

2.

1894 designed by a local architect (WR Howell) to fill corner between concert hall and earlier school of art (qv). Asymmetric design in Gothic style closely echoing the style of the concert hall. 2 storeys attic and basement. Dark blue brick with dark red brick and terracotta dressings. Sandstone plinth. Terracotta band over ground floor, the carved reliefs depicting history of Reading; (incomplete but Saxon foundation, founding of Abbey and Magna Carta however can be seen). Arcaded cornice continued right across. Projecting terracotta polygonal porch turret, heavy arcaded and decorated ground floor, gables over 1st floor windows. 3 bay gable to right matches entrance to concert hall (coped gable, poppy head saddlestone, arcaded band and polygonal corner buttresses); 2 attic lancets flanking statue of Queen Victoria in canopied niche, C13 style. 2 light and oculus windows on 1st floor, segmental headed on ground floor. Corner block polygonal, basically a projecting chamfered turret with steep saddleback roof and 3 extremely rich gabled French Renaissance dormers with C13 geometrical tracery. 1st floor blind with 3 canopied niches on corners. On ground floor 5 foiled lancets and a basement of segmental headed windows. Commemorative marble tablet on corner. Return to Valpy Street repeats Waterhouse and Lainson use of triangular section buttresses capped with pinnacles between bays. 5 bays. 1st floor blind, ground floor has 2-light and oculus pointed windows with gables over. Tiled roofs. Octagonal belfry at east end, crenellated. This composition is loosely said to be derived from Waterhouse's Manchester Town Hall. Despite some similarities with other Gothic-style buildings in Manchester's Albert Square it is in fact much more closely related to the Waterhouse and Lainson blocks adjacent.

Listing NGR: SU7166873631

Selected Sources

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

Map

National Grid Reference: SU 71668 73631

The below map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy of the full scale map.



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HERITAGE G A T E W A Y

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: SMALL TOWN HALL

List Entry Number: 1321989

Location

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: 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:** 38762

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

Small Town Hall

SU 7173 NE 1/27 22.3.57. II GV

2.

1785, behind the Waterhouse block. 4 tall semi-circular headed sash windows to churchyard with patterned fanlights. Red brick with slate roof. Interior: the main room now divided but the 1864 decoration by W H Woodman retained - this is in an Italianate style with elaborate beamed and coffered ceiling and plaster decoration of pilasters and entablature with considerable later enrichment at north end. The famous Father Willis organ first installed here (now in Lainson block qv).

Listing NGR: SU7167873582

Selected Sources

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

Map

National Grid Reference: SU 71696 73577

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HERITAGE Gateway

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: MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS SCHOOL OF ART

List Entry Number: 1113600

Location

BLAGRAVE STREET VALPY 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: 24-Jul-1974

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:** 39217

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

VALPY STREET 1.

5128

Municipal Buildings School of Art

SU 7173 NE 1/623 24.7.74. II GV

2.

1875, 3 storeys. Dark blue brick with red brick dressings and terracotta enriched band over 1st floor. Balustraded parapet. Tiled roof. Stepped sandstone plinth. 4 bays. To left a taller end turret with saddleback roof and large 2nd floor 2 light window with 2 transoms and enriched pointed tympanum with Arms of Reading. To right a 3 bay gable with built-up attic, date roundel and flanking chimneys on parapet returns. Windows divided by transoms and subsidiary mullions. Paired in centre bays. Ground and second floor windows segmental headed, pointed on 1st floor and attic storey. Pointed entrance on ground floor with corbelled mouldings to left. Segmental carriageway arch to right of this Segmental headed $\frac{1}{2}$ glazed entrance to right.

Listing NGR: SU7168973637

Selected Sources

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

Map

National Grid Reference: SU 71689 73637

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