

Heritage Statement

In respect of

52-55 Friar Street and 12 Greyfriars Road
Reading

On behalf of

Aviva Investors

RPS CgMs Ref: JCG22499

November 2016

Secure & Stable
ADDING VALUE

CONTENTS

	CONTENTS	Pages
Prepared by:	1.0 Introduction	3
Sam Jackson BSc (Hons), PGDip, MRICS	2.0 Legislative and Planning Policy Framework	
	2.1 Legislation and National Planning Policy	4
	2.2 National Planning Guidance	5
	2.3 Local Planning Policy and Guidance	8
Authorised by:	3.0 Architectural and Historical Appraisal	
Steven Handforth BA (Hons), MSc	3.1 Historical Development: Reading	10
	3.2 Historical Map Progression	12
	3.3 Historic Site Development	15
Report Status:	4.0 Assessment of Significance	
FINAL	4.1 Site Assessment	16
	4.2 Assessment of Heritage Assets	19
	5.0 Proposals and Assessment of Impact	
	5.1 Development Proposals	24
	5.2 Assessment of Impact	28
RPS CgMs Ref:	6.0 Conclusions	30
JCG22499	Appendices	
	Appendix A: Statutory List Description	
Issue Date:		
November 2016		

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Heritage Statement has been prepared by RPS CgMs on behalf of Aviva Investors to accompany a planning application in relation to 52-55 Friar Street and 12 Greyfriars Road, Reading (hereinafter referred to as the 'Site').

The Site lies on the corner of Friar Street and Greyfriars Road in central Reading, Berkshire. The Local Planning Authority is Reading Borough Council.

It lies only 140m to the east of the A329 which provides access to the M4. The closest railway station is Reading Station which lies approximately 250m to the north-east.

The Site comprises a four storey retail and office building dating to the mid 1960s. It is exceptionally bland and of no heritage value. The building is currently used by Sainsbury's supermarket. To the rear is a storage and a handstanding rear yard for supply deliveries. The Site has an irregular boundary and is approximately 85% developed.

The scheme proposals comprise three new medium rise buildings comprising new residential (private and affordable), office and retail uses. The built form would be lowest fronting Friar Street (7 storeys) stepping up as it progresses to the rear of the Site (northwards). Towards the rear the built form would be 12 storeys.

This report will present a summary of the relevant legislative framework and planning policy at both national and local levels with special regard to that which relates to setting of listed buildings, conservation areas and non designated heritage assets. It will furthermore provide an appraisal of the history and the significance of the Site, its surroundings and also an assessment of the potential impacts of the proposals, in order to assist those involved in the determination of this application.

This report should be read in conjunction with other documents submitted with the application. Each of the heritage assets identified in Section 4 is appropriately assessed within this report to determine their significance. This judgement is based on the findings from detailed historical research, including map studies, an on-site assessment conducted from publicly accessible locations around the Site as well as the application of professional judgement.



Figure 1: Map showing the approximate location of Reading in the context of Berkshire.



Figure 3: Site plan with approximate boundary marked in red.



Figure 2: Location map showing the approximate position of the Site in relation to Reading.



Figure 4: Photograph showing the southern Site boundary fronting onto Friar Street.

2.0 LEGISLATIVE & PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 LEGISLATION & NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

The current national policy system identifies, through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), that applications should consider the potential impact of development upon ‘heritage assets’. This term includes: designated heritage assets, which possess a statutory designation (for example Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, and Registered Parks and Gardens); and non-designated heritage assets, typically compiled by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and incorporated into a Local List.

Legislation

Where any development may affect designated or non-designated heritage assets, there is a legislative framework to ensure proposed works are developed and considered with due regard for their impact on the historic environment. This extends from primary legislation under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The relevant legislation in this case extends from Section 16 of the 1990 Act which states that in considering applications for listed building consent, the LPA shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the Listed Building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Section 66 further states that special regard must be given by the authority in the exercise of planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing listed buildings and their setting. A particularly appropriate example of upholding a S66 is in the case of West Coast Energy’s proposal for five wind turbines to be installed within the setting of the Grade I listed Barnwell Manor, Northamptonshire. The National Trust advocated that the proposals would have an adverse impact upon the heritage asset’s setting and, reinforced by local opposition, the proposal was rejected by East Northamptonshire District Council in 2010. The developers won an appeal for four turbines, however, this was overturned at the High Court. A subsequent Appeal to overturn the High Court ruling was dismissed in February 2014.

In addition, Section 72 of the 1990 Act states that in exercising all planning functions, local planning authorities must have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing Conservation Areas.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), March 2012)

The NPPF is the principal document that sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It has been purposefully created to provide a framework within which LPAs and the local populace can produce their own distinctive Local and

Neighbourhood Plans, respectively. Such Plans consequently reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.

When determining planning applications, the NPPF directs LPAs to apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development; the ‘golden thread’ that is expected to run through the plan-making and decision-making process. Nonetheless, NPPF Paragraph 14 states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development is only applied unless certain specific policies indicate that such development should be restricted; these include policies protecting sites identified as: designated heritage assets; Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs); Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs); and the Green Belt.

The NPPF 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*”. The definition of a heritage asset includes ‘designated’ heritage assets: “*A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation*”. In addition, other ‘non-designated’ heritage assets identified by LPAs are included in a Local List.

Section 7 *Requiring Good Design* reinforces the importance of good design in achieving sustainable development, by ensuring the creation of inclusive and high quality places. NPPF Paragraph 58 affirms the need for new design to: function well and add to the quality of the area in which it is built; establish a strong sense of place; and respond to local character and history, reflecting the built identity of the surrounding area.

Section 12 *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* contains NPPF Paragraphs 126-141, which relate to development proposals that have an affect upon the historic environment. Such policies provide the framework that LPAs need to refer to when setting out a strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment in their Local Plans.

The NPPF advises LPAs to take into account the following points when drawing up strategies for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and preserving them in a viable use consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that the conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development in making a positive contribution

to local character and distinctiveness; and

- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

These considerations should be taken into account when determining planning applications and, in addition, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities, including their economic vitality.

In order to determine applications, NPPF Paragraph 128 states that LPAs should require applicants to demonstrate the significance of any heritage assets likely to be affected by development proposals, including the contribution made to their setting. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to each heritage assets’ significance and sufficient to understand what impact will be caused upon their significance. This is supported by NPPF Paragraph 129, which requires LPAs to take this assessment into account when considering applications.

NPPF Paragraphs 132-136 consider the impact of development proposals upon the significance of a heritage asset. NPPF Paragraph 132 emphasises the need for proportionality in decision-making and identifies that, when a development is proposed, the weight given to the conservation of a heritage asset should be proportionate to its significance, with greater weight given to those assets of higher significance. NPPF Paragraph 134 states that, where less than substantial harm will be caused to a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the development proposals, which include securing the heritage asset’s viable optimum use.

In relation to Conservation Areas, it is acknowledged in NPPF Paragraph 138 that not all aspects of a Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. This allows some flexibility for sustainable development to take place in or near Conservation Areas, without causing harm to the overall heritage asset’s significance.

2.2 NATIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE

National Guidance

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (DCLG)

This guidance has been adopted in support of the NPPF. It reiterates the importance of conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance as a core planning principle.

It also states, conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change, requiring a flexible and thoughtful approach. Furthermore, it highlights that neglect and decay of heritage assets is best addressed through ensuring they remain in an active use that is consistent with their conservation.

Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. It states, an important consideration should be whether the proposed works adversely affect a key element of the heritage asset's special architectural or historic interest. Adding, *'it is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development that is to be assessed'*. The level of 'substantial harm' is stated to be a high bar that may not arise in many cases. Essentially, whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the NPPF.

Importantly, it is stated harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting. Setting is defined as *'the surroundings in which an asset is experienced, and may be more extensive than the curtilage'*. A thorough assessment of the impact of proposals upon setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.

Importantly, the guidance states that if *'complete or partial loss of a heritage asset is justified, the aim should then be to capture and record the evidence of the asset's significance, and make the interpretation publically available.'*

Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (English Heritage, April 2008)

Outlining Historic England's approach to the sustainable management of the historic environment. While primarily intended to ensure consistency in their own advice and guidance through the planning process, the document is commended to LPAs to ensure that all decisions about change affecting the historic environment are informed and sustainable.

This document was published in line with the philosophy of PPS5, yet remains relevant with the NPPF and PPG, the emphasis placed upon the importance of understanding significance as a means to properly assess

the effects of change to heritage assets. Guidance within the document describes a range of 'heritage values' that constitute a heritage asset's significance to be established systematically; the four main heritage values include: aesthetic, evidential, communal or historical. The document emphasises that 'considered change offers the potential to enhance and add value to places...it is the means by which each generation aspires to enrich the historic environment' (Paragraph 25).

Overview: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning

In March 2015 Historic England (formerly English Heritage) withdrew the PPS5 Practice Guide document and replaced with three Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes (GPAs): 'GPA1: Local Plan Making', 'GPA2: Managing significance in Decision-Taking in the historic Environment', and 'GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets. A fourth document entitled 'GPA4: Enabling Development' has yet to be adopted.

These GPAs provide supporting guidance relating to good conservation practice. The documents particularly focus on how good practice can be achieved through the principles included within national policy and guidance. As such, the GPAs provide information on good practice to assist LPAs, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties when implementing policy found within the NPPF and PPG relating to the historic environment.

GPA1: The Historic Environment in Local Plans (March 2015)

This document stresses the importance of formulating Local Plans that are based on up-to-date and relevant evidence in relation to the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of an area, including the historic environment, as set out by the NPPF. The document provides advice on how information in respect of the local historic environment can be gathered, emphasising the importance of not only setting out known sites, but in understanding their value (i.e. significance). This evidence should be used to define a positive strategy for the historic environment and the formulation of a plan for the maintenance and use of heritage assets and for the delivery of development, including within their setting, which will afford appropriate protection for the heritage asset(s) and make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Furthermore, the Local Plan can assist in ensuring that site allocations avoid harming the significance of heritage assets and their settings, whilst providing the opportunity to *'inform the nature of allocations so development responds and reflects local character'*.

Further information is given relating to cumulative impact, 106 agreements, stating *'to support the delivery of the Plan's heritage strategy it may be*

considered appropriate to include reference to the role of Section 106 agreements in relation to heritage assets, particularly those at risk.' It also advises on how the heritage policies within Local Plans should identify areas that are appropriate for development as well as defining specific Development Management Policies for the historic environment. It also suggests that a heritage Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in line with NPPF Paragraph 153 can be a useful tool to amplify and elaborate on the delivery of the positive heritage strategy in the Local Plan.

GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (March 2015)

This document provides advice on the numerous ways in which decision-taking in the historic environment can be undertaken, emphasising that the first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and the contribution of its setting to its significance. In line with the NPPF and PPG, this document states that early engagement and expert advice in considering and assessing the significance of heritage assets is encouraged, stating that *'development proposals that affect the historic environment are much more likely to gain the necessary permissions and create successful places if they are designed with the knowledge and understanding of the significance of the heritage assets they may affect.'*

The advice suggests a structured staged approach to the assembly and analysis of relevant information, this is as follows:

1. Understand the significance of the affected assets;
2. Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance;
3. Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF;
4. Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance;
5. Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance and the need for change; and,
6. Offset negative impacts on aspects of significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

The advice reiterates that heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Assessment of the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting at an early stage can assist the planning process resulting in informed decision-taking.

2.2 NATIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE

This document sets out the recommended steps for assessing significance and the impact of development proposals upon a heritage asset, including examining the asset and its setting and analysing local policies and information sources. In assessing the impact of a development proposal on the significance of a heritage asset the document emphasises that the cumulative impact of incremental small-scale changes may have as great an effect on the significance of a heritage asset as a larger scale change.

Crucially, the nature and importance of the significance that is affected will dictate the proportionate response to assessing that change, its justification, mitigation and any recording which may be necessary. This document also provides guidance in respect of neglect and unauthorised works.

GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (March 2015)

This advice note focuses on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets. This document replaces 'The Setting of Heritage Assets' (English Heritage, March 2011) in order to aid practitioners with the implementation of national policies and guidance relating to the historic environment found within the NPPF and PPG. The guidance is largely a continuation of the philosophy and approach of the 2011 document and does not present a divergence in either the definition of setting or the way in which it should be assessed.

As with the NPPF the document defines setting 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'. Setting is also described as being a separate term to curtilage, character and context. The guidance emphasises that setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, and that its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset. It also states that elements of setting may make a positive, negative or neutral contribution to the significance of the heritage asset.

While setting is largely a visual term, with views considered to be an important consideration in any assessment of the contribution that setting makes to the significance of an asset, setting, and thus the way in which an asset is experienced, can also be affected by other environmental factors including noise, vibration and odour, while setting may also incorporate perceptual and associational attributes pertaining to the asset's surroundings.

This document provides guidance on practical and proportionate decision making with regards to the management of proposed development and the setting of heritage assets. It is stated that the protection of the setting of a heritage asset need not prevent change and that decisions relating to such issues need to be based on the nature, extent and level of the significance of a heritage asset, further weighing up the potential public benefits

associated with the proposals. It is further stated that changes within the setting of a heritage asset may have positive or neutral effects. It is stated that the contribution made to the significance of heritage assets by their settings will vary depending on the nature of the heritage asset and its setting and that different heritage assets may have different abilities to accommodate change within their settings without harming the significance of the asset and therefore setting should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Although not prescriptive in setting out how this assessment should be carried out, noting that any approach should be demonstrably compliant with legislation, national policies and objectives, Historic England recommend using the '5-step process' in order to assess the potential effects of a proposed development on the setting and significance of a heritage asset, with this 5-step process continued from the 2011 guidance:

1. Identification of heritage assets and their settings are likely to be affected by proposals;
2. Assessment of whether, how and to what degree the setting contributes to the significance of a heritage asset;
3. Assessing the effects of proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset;
4. Maximising enhancement and avoid or minimise any harm; and
5. The final decision about the acceptability of proposals.

The guidance reiterates the NPPF in stating that where developments affecting the setting results in 'substantial' harm to significance, this harm can only be justified if the developments delivers substantial public benefit and that there is no other alternative (i.e. redesign or relocation).

Overview: Historic England Advice Notes in Planning

In addition to the above documentation, Historic England has published three core Heritage Advice Notes (HEAs) that provide detailed and practical advice on how national policy and guidance is implemented. These documents include: *HEA1: Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (February 2016), *HEA2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets* (February 2016), *HEA3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans* (October 2015), and *HEA4: Tall Buildings* (December 2015). Previously adopted documentation by Historic England that provide further information and guidance in respect of managing change within the historic environment include *Seeing the History in the View* (May 2011), and *Managing Local Authority Heritage* (June 2003).

HEA1: Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (February 2016)

This document forms revised guidance which sets out the ways to manage change in order to ensure that historic areas are conserved. In particular information is provided relating to conservation area designation, appraisal and management. Whilst this document emphasises that '*activities to conserve or invest need to be proportionate to the significance of the heritage assets affected*,' it reiterates that the work carried out needs to provide sufficient information in order to understand the issues outlined in Paragraph 192 of the NPPF, relating to the assessment of any heritage assets that may be affected by proposals.

There are different types of special architectural and historic interest that contribute to a Conservation Area's significance. These include:

- Areas with a high number of nationally designated heritage assets and a variety of architectural styles and historic associations;
- those linked to a particular industry or individual with a particular local interest;
- where an earlier, historically significant, layout is visible in the modern street pattern;
- where a particular style of architecture or traditional building materials predominate; and,
- areas designated on account of the quality of the public realm or a spatial element, such as a design form or settlement pattern, green spaces which are an essential component of a wider historic area, and historic parks and gardens and other designed landscapes, including those included on the Historic England Register of parks and gardens of special historic interest.

Change is inevitable, however, this document provides guidance in respect of managing change in a way that conserves and enhances areas, through identifying potential within a conservation area. This can be achieved through historic characterisation studies, production of neighbourhood plans, confirmation of special interest and setting out of recommendations. NPPF Paragraph 127 states that '*when considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest*,' this document reiterates that this needs to be considered throughout this process.

Section 71 of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservations Area) Act 1990* places on LPAs the duty to produce proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas. This document provides

2.2 NATIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE

guidance for the production of management plans, which can ‘*channel development pressure to conserve the special quality of the conservation area*’. These plans may provide policies on the protection of views, criteria for demolition, alterations and extensions, urban design strategy and development opportunities. Furthermore, it includes information relating to Article 4 Directions, which give the LPA the power to limit permitted development rights where it is deemed necessary to protect local amenity or the well-being of an area.

HEA2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets (February 2016)

The purpose of this document is to provide information in respect of the repair, restoration and alterations to heritage assets. It promotes guidance for both LPAs, consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in order to promote well-informed and collaborative conservation.

The best way to conserve a building is to keep it in use, or to find an appropriate new use. This document states that ‘*an unreasonable, inflexible approach will prevent action that could give a building new life...A reasonable proportionate approach to owners’ needs is therefore essential*’. Whilst this is the case, the limits imposed by the significance of individual elements are an important consideration, especially when considering an asset’s compatibility with Building Regulations and the Equality Act. As such, it is good practice for LPAs to consider imaginative ways of avoiding such conflict.

This document provides information relating to proposed change to a heritage asset, which are characterised as:

- Repair;
- restoration;
- addition and alteration, either singly or in combination; and,
- works for research alone.

HEA3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans (October 2015)

This document provides information for those involved in the site allocation process, particularly when implementing historic environment legislation, relevant policy within the NPPF and related guidance found within the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

The inclusion of sites within a Local Plan can provide the opportunity to ensure that new development will avoid harming the significance of both designated and non-designated heritage assets, including effects on their setting. Furthermore, this document highlights the ways in which the process of site allocation may present opportunities to better reveal the

historic environment. It sets out a five-step methodology which can assist in appropriate site selection:

- Step 1: Identify which heritage assets are affected by the potential site allocation;
- Step 2: understand what contribution the site (in its current form) makes to the significance of heritage asset(s);
- Step 3: identify what impacts the allocation might have on that significance;
- Step 4: consider maximising enhancements and avoiding harm; and,
- Step 5: determine whether the proposed site allocation is appropriate in light of the NPPF’s tests of soundness.

Seeing the History in the View (May 2011)

This document provides guidance relating to the assessment of heritage significance within views. It gives a method that can be applied to any view that is considered significant in terms of heritage. Historic England is currently in the process of revising this document to reflect the NPPF and recent case law.

Views provide an important role in shaping our appreciation and understanding of the historic environment. Some have been deliberately designed, such as at Greenwich Palace and Stowe Landscape Garden, whilst more often a significant view is formed of a ‘historical composite’, as a result of a long process of piecemeal development. Such views often contain focal buildings and landmarks which enrich daily life, attract visitors and help communities prosper.

This document states that the assessment of heritage significance within a view can be divided into two phases:

Phase A: Baseline Analysis includes the following five steps to assist in defining and analysing significance within a view:

- Step 1: Establishing reasons for identifying a particular view as important;
- Step 2: Identifying which heritage assets in a view merit considerations;
- Step 3: Assessing the significance of individual heritage assets;
- Step 4: Assessing the overall heritage significance in a view; and
- Step 5: How can heritage significance be sustained?

Phase B: Assessment explains the potential impact of a specific development proposal on significance within a view, as analysed in Phase A, through the following steps:

- Development proposals;

- establishing magnitude of impact on significance; and
- significance of effect.

This document provides further information and guidance relating to feeding the Baseline Analysis into an ES Chapter, if necessary.

2.3 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY & GUIDANCE

The local planning authority for the Site is Reading Borough Council. Its development plan comprises, amongst other things, the Local Development Framework Core Strategy (Adopted 2008) and the Development Management Document (2008).

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY (ADOPTED 2008)

Policy CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

This policy states:

“Historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced. This will include: •

Listed Buildings;

Conservation Areas;

Other features with local or national designation, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and historic parks and gardens.

Planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. All proposals will be expected to protect and where appropriate enhance the character and appearance of the area in which they are located”.

Additional explanatory comments alongside policy include the following:

- *“The Borough Council is committed to protecting and where appropriate, enhancing, the Borough’s historic environment. This includes ensuring that buildings and features of local architectural and historic interest (which are not necessarily recognised components of the historic environment) are taken fully into account and safeguarded, as appropriate. Regard must also be had to*
- *Reading’s buried archaeological evidence, some of which is known, and much of which remains to be discovered.*
- *The character and integrity of listed buildings will be preserved, and the Council will seek to enhance the settings of Listed Buildings wherever appropriate, by ensuring that new development in their vicinity is sympathetic.*
- *In making decisions on development proposals in Conservation Areas, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that particular area. As such, new development in Conservation Areas will be expected to make a contribution to the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities, and achieving a high standard of design. The Council will therefore have regard to both the quality of the townscape and the quality and interest of the area, rather than solely that of the individual building.*
- *Sites and settings of scheduled ancient monuments and other important ancient monuments and archaeological remains will be preserved, and development that would adversely affect such sites and settings will not be permitted. The Borough’s five historic parks and gardens will continue to be protected, maintained and restored,*

where required”.

READING BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK— READING CENTRAL AREA ACTION PLAN TO 2016 (ADOPTED 2009)

Chapter 5—Spatial and Design Strategy—Urban Design Framework

The policy states:

“The existing historic core and unique character of Reading will be retained and enhanced, particularly in and adjacent to the existing central area Conservation Areas that cover parts of the core, such as the eastern side of the shopping area. The Castle Hill and Eldon Square Conservation Areas will also be preserved and enhanced. New development will therefore be focused away from these areas in order to preserve and enhance their character and appearance.

However, many parts of the central area, particularly the three identified opportunity areas, would benefit from high quality, well designed new development. Such new development should respect and enhance the character of the central area. It should build on the existing urban grid structure of streets and places in the centre, providing high levels of access and connectivity into the centre and to the public transport interchanges. It should provide a mix of uses and, within residential developments, a mix of tenures. It should contribute to creating a high quality public realm with the provision of new open spaces and public spaces. It should provide landmarks and a sense of place, as well as high quality landscaping and public art as appropriate. It should provide continuity and enclosure with a high degree of active frontages. It should consider safety, security and crime prevention, which could include Secured By Design principles. Within the central area, intensive development of sites will be appropriate, based on building heights and low levels of car parking provision. However, new development should be of a suitable scale and mass, reflecting its location within the centre, its accessibility to public transport and the character of the surrounding area. New development should contribute to creating a high quality transport system to support movement into and around the central area”.

Chapter 8—General Central Area Policies

This policy states:

“Part of the vision for the RCAAP is to achieve a distinctive high quality environment, by balancing protection of the historic core, special character and market town intimacy of Reading with modern, intensive, well designed, well connected, highly accessible urban development with first class open spaces and other public realm that will transform Reading into a modern and exciting 21st Century City.

The role of high-quality urban design in achieving the vision for the centre is therefore clear. The Core Strategy includes policies that will be applicable within the RCAAP area, including on design and the historic environment. In addition, the issue of urban design has been integrated into the whole RCAAP document, as it is not a self-contained issue. However, there is a need for a policy to highlight those elements of the design issue specific to the central area”.

RC1: Development in the Station/River Major Opportunity Area

This policy states:

“Development in the Station/River Major Opportunity Area will:

i) Contribute towards providing a high-density mix of uses to create a destination in itself – the areas that also make up part of the primary shopping area and central core will have a particular emphasis on delivering much of the identified retail and leisure need;

ii) Help facilitate greater pedestrian and cycle permeability, particularly on the key movement corridors. North-south links through the centre and across the railway line, IDR and River Thames centred on the new station are of particular importance;

iii) Provide developments that front onto and provide visual interest to existing and future pedestrian routes and open spaces;

iv) Safeguard land which is needed for:

- *Improvements to Reading station;*
- *Reading station interchange;*
- *Mass rapid transit routes and stops;*

v) Provide additional areas of open space where possible, including a direct green link between the station and the River Thames;

vi) Give careful consideration to the areas of transition to low and medium density residential and protect and, where appropriate, enhance the setting of listed buildings;

vii) Be laid out in a way that allows the area to come forward in parcels – for instance, single developments should not be solely inwards-facing, ignoring the links with other potential future development areas.

Development will be in line with the following provisions for each sub-area:

RC1a, FRIAR STREET & STATION ROAD: There will be active retail and leisure uses on the ground floor along Friar Street and Station Road, with a mix of uses on higher floors. Development should enhance linkages in a north-south direction to link to the Station Hill area. The setting of listed buildings in the area will be preserved, and opportunities to improve the environment of Merchants Place will be sought.

RC1b, FRIARS WALK & GREYFRIARS ROAD: Development in this area will be of a mixed use with a significant leisure element. Active retail and leisure uses will be on the ground floor, particularly along Friar Street, with a mix of uses on higher floors. Development should enhance linkages in a north-south direction at a single level into the Station Hill area and through to the station. The edge of the site nearest to the areas of traditional terracing west of Greyfriars Road will require careful design treatment.

RC1c, STATION HILL: This area will be developed for a mix of uses at a high density, including retail and leisure on the ground and lower floors and residential and offices on higher floors. There will be enhanced links through the sites, and a network of streets and spaces. Frontages on key routes through the site should have active uses. The edge of the site nearest to the areas of traditional terracing west of Greyfriars Road will

2.3 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY & GUIDANCE

require careful design treatment”.

READING BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK—SITES AND DETAILED POLICIES DOCUMENT (OCTOBER 2012)

Chapter 9—Built and Natural Environment and Natural Environment

This policy states:

“The origins of the current settlement of Reading can be traced back to Saxon times. There is also archaeological evidence that people have been present in the area from as early as the Palaeolithic (or the Old Stone Age) period. The Borough’s rich archaeological interest and many listed buildings provide a pointer to Reading’s lengthy history. This includes its importance as a medieval settlement, and the increasing status of the town in the eighteenth century with the canalisation of the Kennet, and again in the nineteenth century with the arrival of the railway and subsequent industrial expansion.

Reading is famous for various industries including bulbs, beer and biscuits, hence becoming known as the three Bs⁴⁶. Reading is also famous for brick and tile making, much of which is discernible in the built environment of parts of Reading today.

Heritage assets include those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest. National planning policy covers both designated and undesignated heritage assets and 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. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).’

Reading’s heritage assets are not just of relevance to the past, but also to the future, if Reading is to fulfil its aim of expanding its role as a centre of culture.

For Reading Borough, designated heritage assets comprise Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens and Conservation Areas. There are also heritage assets, for example areas of archaeological importance or buildings which, while not listed, are of local historical or architectural significance. Undesignated heritage assets in Reading will in the main be identified through the process of decision-making, i.e. through the determination of planning applications, which importantly includes the pre-application stage.

Current national planning policy sets out a new approach as to how planning should consider the historic environment compared to the approach of past national planning policy guidance notes. National planning policy now sets out specific mechanisms by which to consider and assess heritage assets, whether they are designated or not.

One of the underpinning themes of national planning policy is that the greater the nature of the significance of the heritage asset in terms of archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest, the greater the value that the asset holds for this and future generations and therefore the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation. The focus is on conservation and where appropriate enhancement, recognising that some new development may make a positive contribution to the character and

local distinctiveness of a part of the historic environment. The Council will continue to keep the need to enhance heritage assets under review. Although a documentary record of our past is important a record is not as valuable as retention and therefore the ability to record evidence will not be a factor in deciding whether a proposal resulting in a heritage asset’s destruction should be given consent. Relevant information gained either through the application process, including the pre-application stage or via other means, will be added to the Heritage Environment Record (HER).

National planning policy addresses aspects of the historic environment including:

- Principles guiding determination of applications for consent relating to all heritage assets;
- Principles guiding the consideration of applications for consent relating to heritage assets that are not designated;
- Additional principles guiding the consideration of applications for consent relating to designated heritage assets;
- Principles guiding the consideration of applications for development affecting the setting of a heritage asset;
- Enabling development.

National planning policy provides an appropriate framework for considering proposals for development that affects historic assets in Reading and it is not considered necessary to have specific detailed policies within this document. Additionally, the historic environment is addressed strategically by policy CS33 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) in the Core Strategy.

Heritage assets are a non-renewable resource. Harm to, or loss of an asset’s significance including the complete loss, demolition or destruction, causes a loss of value to society and a loss of public benefit. There is a presumption in favour of the conservation of all heritage assets. Any harm to or loss of an asset needs clear and convincing justification as set out in national planning policy.

The conservation of all assets also relates to both single and groups of trees which can make a significant contribution to the setting of a building or place and form an integral part of the character of a designated or undesignated asset. Where a healthy single or group of trees fulfils this role, there will be an expectation that they are preserved regardless of their statutory designation, in accordance with national planning policy which confirms the importance of the setting of all heritage assets.

The setting of a building or place can make a significant contribution to and form an integral part of the character of all heritage assets. For example a garden or grounds may be laid out to complement a building’s design or function and the alteration or destruction of this setting may harm the asset’s significance. National planning policy confirms that the setting of all heritage assets is a material consideration and the alteration or destruction of any part of its setting should require clear and convincing justification”.

Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which should be conserved or where

appropriate enhanced. Unlike listed buildings, they are designated at a local level, by the local authority. Specific controls are exercised in these areas, relating particularly to demolition and minor development, as well as protection of trees. Reading has fifteen Conservation Areas, as at 2010, shown on the Proposals Map.

Development Plan Documents are required to focus on the key elements of what makes an area locally distinctive, and there can be few features that contribute as strongly to local distinctiveness as Conservation Areas. These areas are designated because they have a particular distinctive character, and usually provide a strong link to the history of the area. For instance, a number of Reading’s Conservation Areas, particularly the cluster of areas to the south east of the centre, originated in the mid to late nineteenth century, after the arrival of the railway had triggered Reading’s sudden industrial, and residential, expansion. Such areas have strong links to nineteenth century industry, particularly Huntley and Palmers biscuits, and originally accommodated the industry’s workers and managers. Key features of that period remain, such as polychromatic brickwork, original walls and railings, and mature trees. Other Conservation Areas, particularly in the centre, are older still, reflecting Reading’s medieval significance, and, in the case of St Mary’s Butts and Castle Street, incorporating the site of the Saxon centre of Reading.

The retention of the features that make the areas distinctive is essential. Conservation Area Appraisals have now been prepared for all of the Conservation Areas in the Borough⁴⁸. These Appraisals identify the special interest of each area, and provide an extremely valuable tool for considering development in these areas. They also identify opportunities for enhancement”.

3.0 ARCHITECTURAL & HISTORICAL APPRAISAL

3.1 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT: READING

Saxon History

The earliest confirmed record of the town is in the 8th century at which time the settlement was known as *Readingas*. This is thought to derive from an Anglo-Saxon tribe led by Reada's. Some historians believe the name derives from the Celtic name *Rhydd-Inge*, meaning *Ford over the River*.

In approximately 870AD the area was invaded by the Vikings who set up an encampment at the town. In 871 the first Battle of Reading took place between King Ethelred and his brother Alfred the Great in which Alfred was defeated.

Norman History

Following the Norman invasion William I gifted large areas of land in and surrounding the town in order to found Reading Abbey. The location of the Abbey replaced the Norman church of St. Laurence. William later gave the Abbey and its lands to Battle Abbey in East Sussex, with the name of the latter evidenced in local street names such as Battle Lane.

The Domesday Book describes the town as a borough; such status allowed a degree of self governance. The Abbey wasn't formally opened until 1121 in the reign of Henry I. In fact Henry is buried at the abbey and gifted his lands around the abbey to the latter. In time during the dissolution of monasteries the Abbey was disbanded. The Abbey was completed in 1164 and was consecrated by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket. Reading Abbey was an important centre of ecclesiastical and political life throughout the medieval period, as ecclesiastical councils were summoned by the Papal Legate to be held at the Abbey and parliament met there on a number of occasions, most notably in 1453, when the threat of plague forced the Houses out of London.

During this time the main industry was the wool trade but others included the manufacture of hats, bottles, saddles and boats. Other skills included carpenters, blacksmiths, stonemasons, butchers, bakers and millers.

Medieval History

During this period the abbot was also Lord of Reading and therefore, on top of his ecclesiastical powers, he held huge sway over the town. There was constant tension between the abbot and the town guilds who were keen to take more control over the commercial dealings of the town.

In the 14th century the county gaol was moved from Abingdon to Reading, an indication of the growing influence of the town.

Tudor History

In conjunction with these important initial settlements, Reading prospered as a result of its location on the main road between London and the west of England. Its location was also a convenient staging post for a royal entourage en route to other destinations. The Abbey was used to such an end for successive reigning monarchs until 1538 when it was dissolved by Henry VIII, who hanged the last abbot from the Abbey Gate for his refusal to recognise him as head of the Church of England. Henry also closed Greyfriars Friary and St. John the Baptist hospital at the same time. At the same time the title of Lord of Reading passed to the King and was later annulled.

During its most active period of religious function, the presence of both the



Figure 5: A medieval painting depicting Reading Abbey (Source: BBC News Berkshire).



Figure 7: Early 20th century postcard showing of the Huntley & Palmer factory.

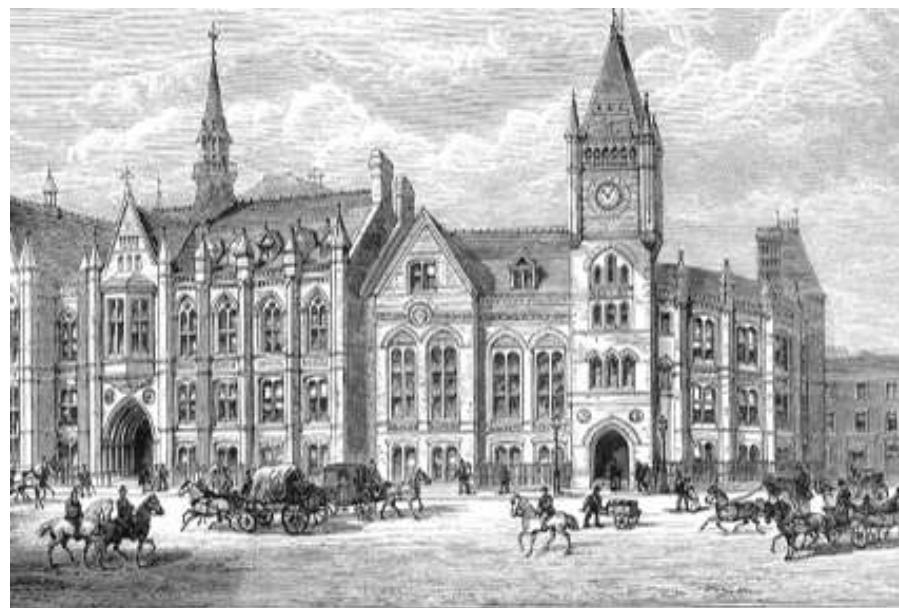


Figure 6: The new Reading Town Hall as depicted in The Illustrated London News, July 8, 1882, p.45 (Source: Londonancestor.com).



Figure 8: The Oracle Development, Reading which opened in 1999.

3.0 ARCHITECTURAL & HISTORICAL APPRAISAL

3.1 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT: READING

Abbey and St. Laurence's Church aided the development of the successful market town Reading became. The location of St. Laurence in particular led to the reorientation of the main thoroughfare through the developing town, as well as a new market place which grew up around the centre of St. Laurence's Church and the Abbey, away from its previous site at St. Mary's Butts.

By the start of the 16th century Reading is listed as the largest town in Berkshire and in fact was ranked as the tenth largest in the country.

As an active market town, Reading was a settlement engaged in a number of industries from the beginning of its trading history. One of its earliest successful markets grew up around the cloth and wool industry as an abundance of wool from extensive Berkshire flocks was easily supplied to Reading by boat, where it was treated and woven or dyed as necessary. The town's location at the junction of the River Thames and the River Kennet (a tributary) aided its trading potential.

Other industries and trades active within the town during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries included wine merchants, tanners and goldsmiths. A change in administration of the activities of Reading followed Henry VIII's dissolution of the Abbey, and local merchants rose to prominence following the king's grant of independence. This increase in market activity led to Reading being described as 'the principal town of Berkshire for wealth and beauty' during the reign of Elizabeth I.

17th Century History

The earliest map of Reading, published in John Speeds' atlas of Great Britain in 1611, shows that by this date the town was demonstrably a triangle shape, with the three corners each marked by a church; St Giles', St Mary's and St Laurence's.

By the start of the 17th century the wool trade in the town begun to wane with the town's economy shifting to metal trades such as pin making, wire making and nail making. Other industries included the manufacture of tobacco, bricks, tiles and silk.

In the mid 17th century the town became an important location during the first English Civil War. In 1642 the Royalist army constructed a garrison at the town. However, the town fell to Parliamentary forces in April 1643. The town suffered as a result of the damage due to the conflict which led to a decline in the success of its wool and cloth industries.

In 1688 the town was the notable for being the sole location of any significant military action during the Glorious Revolution.

18th Century History

Despite the set backs of the Civil War, the town flourished throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century as improvements were made to the streetscape and new industries took hold. The position of Reading along the major thoroughfares to the west of the country, and thus at the centre of a thriving communications network, continued to enhance the growth of the town, as coaches that travelled between London and Bristol often stopped at Reading's famous coaching inns, The Bear and The Crown.

In 1723 the River Kennet was expanded and made navigable so that trading boats could travel down the river as far as Newbury.

Industries at this time included the expanding brewing industry as well as

coopers, cutlers, joiners, carpenters, masons, glaziers, brick and tile makers, plumbers and blacksmiths. Minor industries included coach building, pin making, rope making and printing.

Other improvements to the town during this period included the paving and lighting of the town with piped water available to those who could afford the service. Other notable events at this time included the establishment of The Royal Berkshire Hospital in 1839 and the Forbury Gardens in 1856.

19th Century History

In 1810 the Kennet & Avon canal opened which linked the River Kennet and the River Avon at Bath which allowed for the ease and relatively swift transfer of trade from Bristol to London and the south-east. Reading's location along this route helped its prosperity in the early 19th century.

The greatest expansion of the town came in the nineteenth century following the arrival of the railways. The mid 19th century saw the arrival of three railway lines to the town; namely: The Great Western Railway (1841), the South Eastern Railway (1849) and the London & South Western Railway (1856). The arrival of the railways was an important boost to the economy and to the development of the town and spurred the growth of a number of industries. Those of note include Sutton Seeds in 1807 and Huntley & Palmers biscuit makers in 1822.

These developments stimulated employment and population numbers in Reading. In 1801, the population of Reading was recorded in the national census as being 9,400, but by 1851, the population has increased significantly to 21,500. By the end of the nineteenth century this has further increased to 72,000.

The expansion of the town led to an improvement of the municipal provisions, not least in the building of the Town Hall in 1872-5 by the designs of Alfred Waterhouse.

During the 19th century the town became the county town of Berkshire and it increasingly became well-known for three industries at this time: biscuits, bulbs and bricks.

20th Century History

The town expanded incessantly in the 20th century and annexed the village of Caversham to the north-west of the town in 1911.

During WW2 the town suffered little damage and was in fact termed a 'safe town'.

The industries that had sustained the town for centuries gradually declined during the early-mid 20th century. Later, Suttons Seeds closed in 1976, Huntley & Palmer biscuits closed in 1977 and the demand for the Reading's distinctive bricks declined.

In 1977 the town expanded into an area today known as Lower Earley to the south-east. This expansion formed one of the largest housing developments in Europe at that time. In the 1980s and 1990s Reading became a cheaper office location for firms looking to relocate from London to reduce office outgoings. The town became the location of a number of out of town business parks (Arlington Business Park).

In 1999 The Oracle Shopping Centre opened in the centre of the town and comprised a sizeable regeneration scheme which dramatically improved the prime retail offer available in the town making Reading the 9th largest

regional shopping location in the UK. The former site had extended to approximately 22 acres comprising a former telephone exchange, a bus depot and a former brewery. The scheme spans both sides of the River Kennet and lies approximately 500m due west of the Site.

3.2 HISTORIC MAP REGRESSION

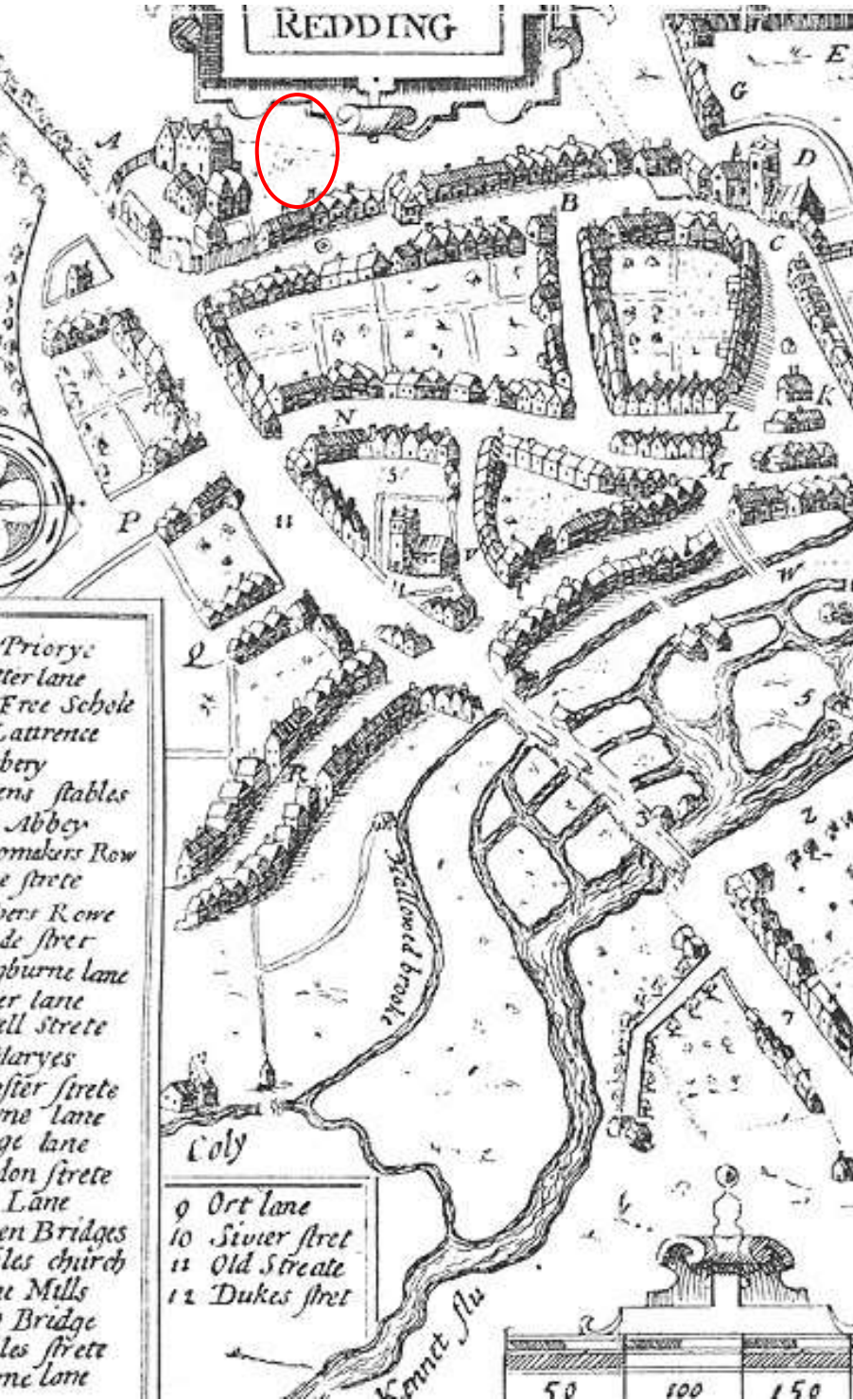


Figure 9: 1610 Speed Map of Reading with the indicative Site boundary marked in red. Not to scale.



Figure 10: 1761 Rocque Map with the indicative Site boundary marked in red. Not to scale.



Figure 11: 1807 Tennier Reading Corporation Map with the indicative Site boundary marked in red. Not to scale.

3.2 HISTORIC MAP REGRESSION



Figure 12: 1840 Tithe map with indicative Site boundary marked in red. Not to scale.



Figure 13: 1870 OS plan with the indicative Site boundary marked in red. Not to scale.



Figure 14: 1900 OS plan with the indicative Site boundary marked in red. Not to scale.

3.2 HISTORIC MAP REGRESSION



Figure 15: 1934 OS plan with the indicative Site boundary marked in red. Not to scale.

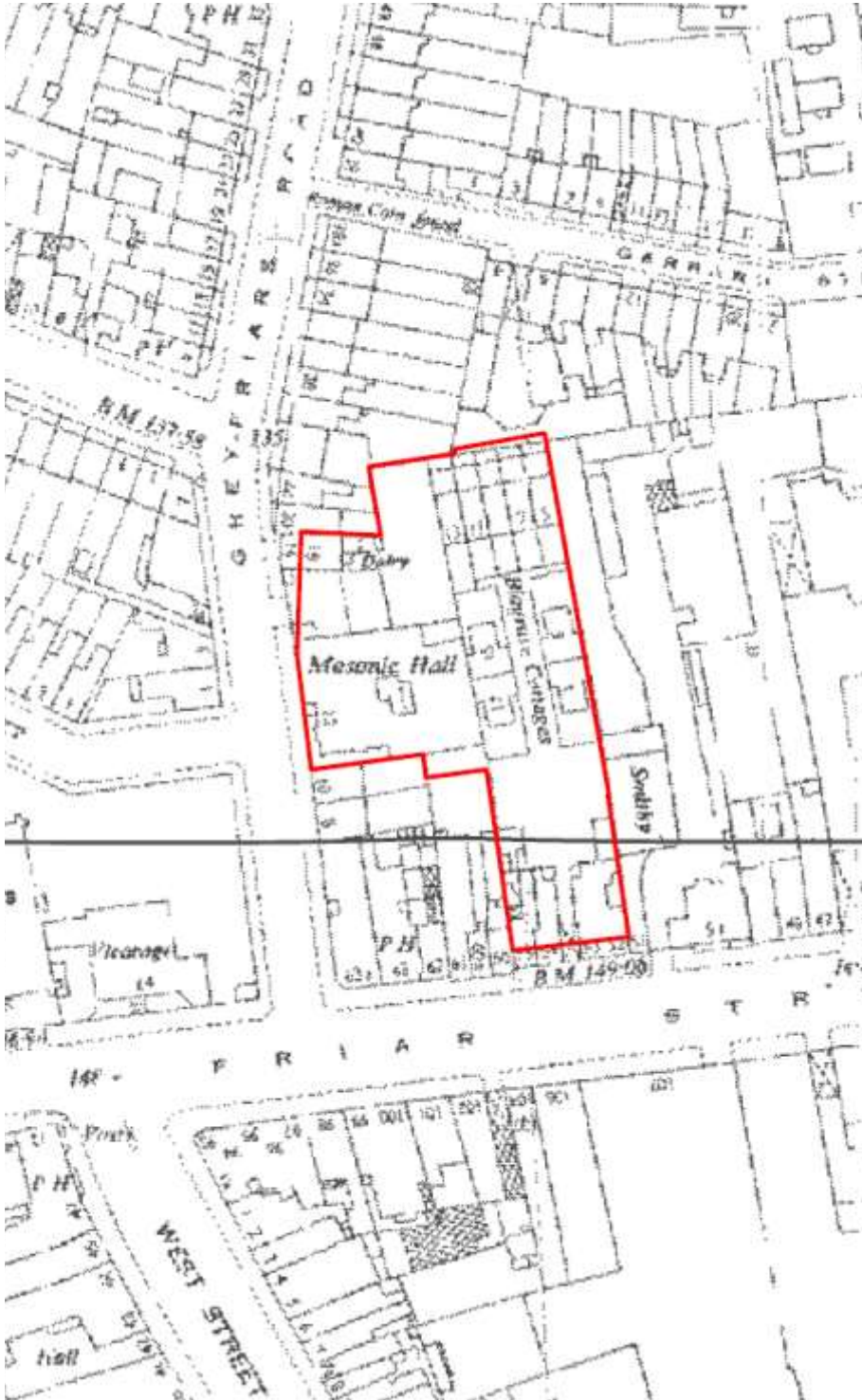


Figure 16: 1957-59 Landmark Historic Map with the indicative Site boundary marked in red. Not to scale.

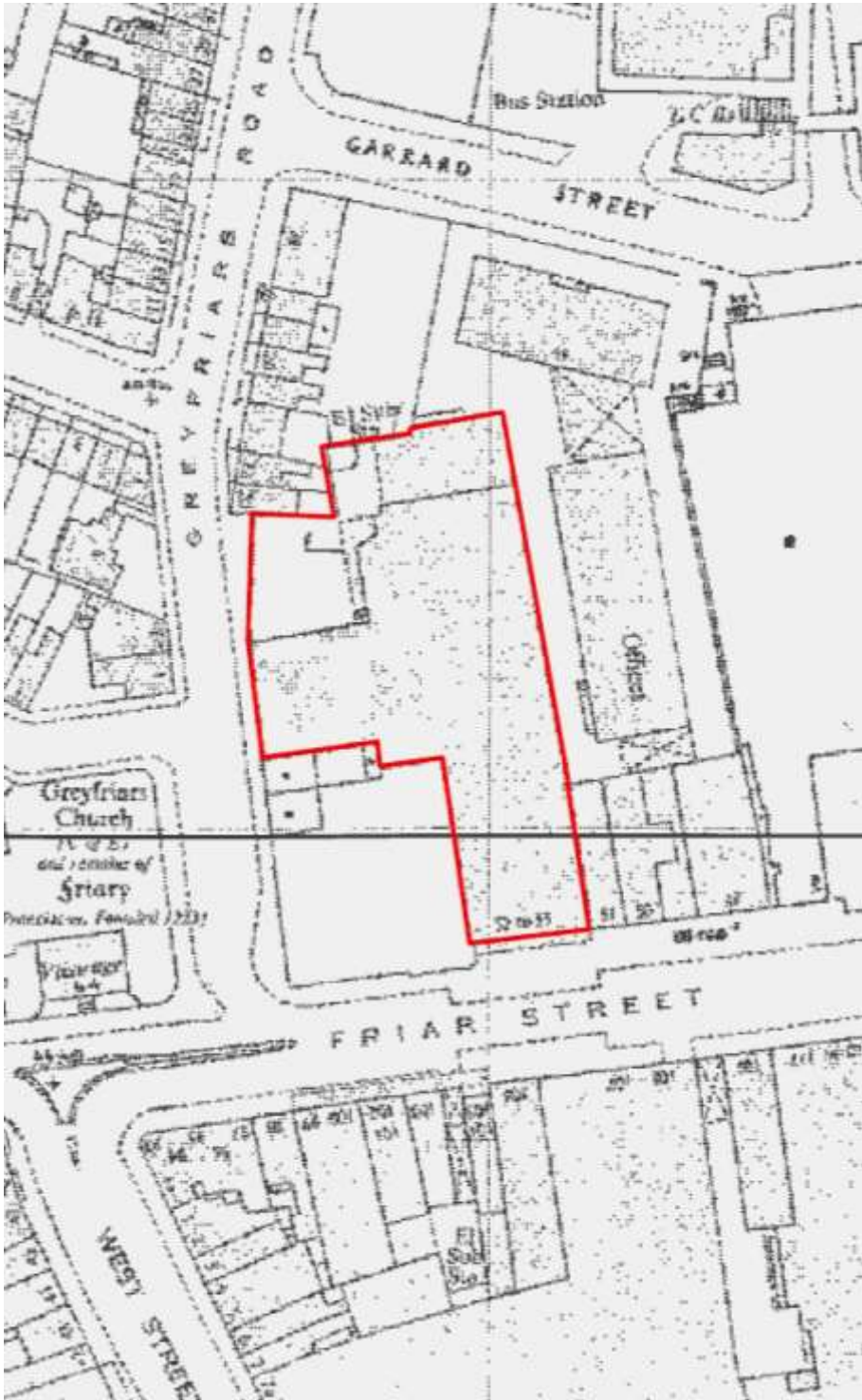


Figure 17: 1977-89 OS plan with the indicative Site boundary marked in red. Not to scale.

3.3 HISTORIC SITE DEVELOPMENT

The 1761 Rocque map shows at that time Friar Street lay in the very north-western extreme of Reading. Behind those buildings fronting onto today's Friar Street appear to be formal gardens. West Street/St. Mary's Butts, Friar Street, Broad Street and Castle/Gun Street are main thoroughfares at the time and largely developed. The Site can be seen to be developed fronting Friar Street, with an outbuilding to the north but is otherwise undeveloped.

The 1807 Tennier Reading Corporation Map shows the Site partially developed to the Friar Street frontage with a carriageway to the right hand side.

The 1840 Tithe map shows the Site comprehensively developed to include approximately 85% site coverage.

The 1870 OS plan shows the area has been comprehensively developed with a new street inserted into the streetscene (Greyfriars Road). We can see a Masonic Hall on the western boundary of the Site overlooking Greyfriars Road and a number of presumably typical Victorian terraced houses fronting Friar Street. Figure 14 tells us that a public house lay on the corner of Friar Street and Greyfriars Road and to the east of the Site we can see a veterinary Infirmary extending deep into its plot. Greyfriars Church is also indicated to the western side of Greyfriars Road.

There is no discernible change on-site in Figures 14 & 15.

The 1957-59 Landmark Historic Map shows the Masonic Hall has been redeveloped to form a smaller building set back from the Greyfriars Road frontage and set more centrally in the plot. Otherwise the site and area appear largely unchanged.

The 1977-89 OS plan shows the Site was comprehensively redeveloped since the 1957-59 map to form a sizeable mixed use building including retail and storage at ground floor and offices above. These buildings remain the same on the extant buildings on-site today and currently are utilised by Sainsbury's supermarket. We can see a service yard lies to the north-western part of the Site which is used by the supermarket for deliveries. Greyfriars Church still lies to the west of the Site and a new student housing block (Central Studios) lies on the corner of Greyfriars Road and Friar Street.



Figure 18: Current Site plan with approximate boundary of the Site marked in red.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 SITE ASSESSMENT

Boundaries

The boundaries comprise the following:

- The southern boundary extends along the northern side of Friar Street and is formed by a large, glazed retail frontage. There is complete visibility between this frontage and the surrounding streetscene.
- The eastern boundary extends from Friar Street heading north. The southern section is formed by a party wall and is blind along its length. Further to the boundary abuts the land holding to its east, No. 51, but any views would only be visible by the immediate neighbouring properties in this location. There are no heritage assets overlooking this boundary.
- The northern boundary is an irregular shape and runs along the northern boundary of a local electricity substation. There are views towards this boundary from those buildings fronting the southern side of Gerrard Street, however these are not recognised heritage assets. Otherwise there are no long range views of this boundary save a glimpsed view from Gerrard Street through a narrow access road.
- The western elevation runs along the eastern side of Greyfriars Road with a rear block delineating part of the boundary and the remainder by metals railings and an access gate. There is complete visibility between this frontage and the surrounding streetscene.

Site Contents

The on-site buildings comprise the following:

- The Friar Street frontage includes a four storey concrete framed retail and office building dating from approximately the mid 1960s. It includes low-grade steel casement windows, plastic cladding infill panels and a large concrete covered entrance. The building is exceptionally bland, indifferently designed and of no heritage value.
- The supermarket is L-shaped so that the Friar Street frontage continues back in a linear manner. The accommodation perpendicular to the remainder is shown in Figures 21 and 22.
- The rear of the main supermarket (Figure 22) appears to be steel framed and clad with buff, modern brickwork with a sizeable concrete and steel rolled shutter loading bay. The adjoining L-shaped element appears to be slate hung to the upper storeys with an undercroft car park below. Its western elevation, of similar design to the southern elevation, includes side access steps to the supermarket. The building is exceptionally bland, indifferently designed and of no heritage value.

Site Context

- Immediately to the west of the Site is the new Central Studios student housing development extending to between 6-8 storeys. Further west is The Quadrant Walls (Grade II listed) adjoining Greyfriars Church's former vicarage, and Greyfriars Church itself (Grade I listed). To the south-west is The Mitre Inn (Grade II listed) on West Street which lies approximately 75m to the west. Further to



Figure 19: Southern elevation overlooking Friar Street.



Figure 21: Western Site boundary on Greyfriars Road with the Central Studios student block to the right hand side.



Figure 20: Close-up of southern elevation.



Figure 22: Rear loading facilities and storage to the rear of the Site as seen from Greyfriars Road.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 SITE ASSESSMENT

- the south of the Mitre Inn (Grade II listed) and the WI Palmer Memorial Hall (Grade II listed).
- To the south of the Site is Friar Street which forms one of the central retail streets in central Reading. Approximately 150m to the east is a sizeable Novotel Hotel extending to at least 9 storeys and looming large over the surrounding area. Between the Site and Queen Victoria Street to the east, Friar Street comprises an eclectic array of mid-late 20th century buildings of limited architectural merit, overall producing a somewhat underwhelming, dilapidated character to this part of Friar Street.
 - To the north the area lies in close proximity to the forthcoming Sackville Developments site which will facilitate sizeable regeneration to the area. Figure 30 shows the character of area changes swiftly heading north along Greyfriars Road from Friar Street, with medium-high rise buildings becoming the norm as the area moves from a predominantly retail area to an office location.



Figure 23: Rear storage, delivery access and car parking to the rear of the existing on-site supermarket.



Figure 25: View from the corner of Friar Street and Greyfriars Road towards the Mitre Inn on West Street.



Figure 24: View looking west along Friar Street towards the Site (marked in red).



Figure 26: View from adjacent to the western elevation of Central Studios towards Greyfriars Church and the Quadrant Walls.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 SITE ASSESSMENT



Figure 27: View from the junction of Friar Street and West Street towards the Site (marked in red).



Figure 29: View looking east along Friar Street adjacent to the Site.



Figure 31: View looking south along Greyfriars Road adjacent to the rear of the Site towards Station Hill.



Figure 28: View of the western Site boundary looking north along Greyfriars Road towards Friar Street.



Figure 30: View looking south along Greyfriars Road from Friars Street with the Site marked in red.



Figure 32: View looking west along Friars Street (long range) with the Site marked in red.

4.2 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE ASSETS

ON-SITE HERITAGE ASSETS

None.

HERITAGE ASSETS TO BE ASSESSED (SEE FIGURE 33)

1. Quadrant Walls and Railings to Former No. 64 (Greyfriars Vicarage), Friar Street, Reading (Grade II listed);
2. The Mitre Inn, 47 West Street and 92 Friar Street, Reading (Grade II listed);
3. W I Palmer Memorial Hall, 42 & 43 West Street, Reading (Grade II listed);
4. 147 Friar Street, Reading (Grade II listed);
5. 1-31 Queen Victoria Street, 2-32 Queen Victoria Street, 24-28 Broad Street, 35-38 Broad Street, 148-150 Friar Street, Reading (Grade II listed);
6. 39 Friar Street, Reading (Grade II listed); and
7. Greyfriars Church, Friar Street, Reading (Grade I listed).

HERITAGE ASSETS EXCLUDED

The Site lies in the setting of a number of heritage assets of varying importance. It is considered that although a number of these heritage assets are sufficiently well concealed in terms of visual, traffic, emissions and noise impacts to ensure that they are unlikely to experience any significant effects as a result of the development of the Site. Accordingly they will not be discussed in the remainder of this report. These include:

Congregational Church and Numbers 89 and 89A Broad Street, Reading (Grade II listed); 95 Broad Street, Reading (Grade II listed); Saxone, 107 Broad Street, Reading (Grade II listed); Main Building of Reading Station, Station Hill, Reading (Grade II listed); Statue of King Edward VII, Station Approach, Reading (Grade II listed); 154 Friar Street, Reading (Grade II listed); 13 & 15 Station Road, Reading (Grade II listed); 15 Friar Street, Reading (Grade II listed); 14 Friar Street, Reading (Grade II listed); 12 Friar Street, Reading (Grade II listed); 67 & 68 Broad Street, Reading (Grade II listed) and 11 Friar Street, Reading (Grade II listed).

ASSESSMENT OF SETTING

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3 (GPA3): The Setting of Heritage Assets (March, 2015) sets out a five stage process in order to assess the potential affects of a proposed development on the setting and significance of a heritage asset. These are:

1. Identification of heritage assets and their settings are likely to be affected by proposals;
2. Assessment of whether, how and to what degree the setting contributes to the significance of a heritage asset;
3. Assessing the effects of proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset;
4. Maximising enhancement and avoid or minimise any harm; and



Figure 33: Heritage plot plan.

5. The final decision about the acceptability of proposals.

Please note Stages 1-2 will be undertaken in this section (Section 4). Once the scheme proposals, including any mitigation measures, have been discussed in Section 5.1, Stages 3-5 will be completed in Section 5.2.

4.2 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE ASSETS

QUADRANT WALLS AND RAILINGS TO FORMER NO. 64 (GREYFRIARS VICARAGE), FRIAR STREET, READING (GRADE II LISTED) (SEE FIGURE 34)

Architectural Description

Former perimeter walls and railings serving No. 64 Friar Street, the former vicarage to Greyfriars Church. Built in either 1796 or 1808 of red brick in Flemish bond. The walls were possibly designed by Sir John Soane. At the corner of Friar Street and Greyfriars Road the walls curve forming a quadrant shape. There is a garden door fronting the Friar Street elevation with its head set in a semi-circular arch (plastered tympanum). To the western side of the walls are a set of fine iron railings with fluted column balustrades capped by urns.

Setting

Positive Contributors to Significance

- To the west of the walls is Greyfriars Church, a well preserved part 13th century church. The latter falls in the listed building's visual, aesthetic and experiential setting and is assessed as contributing to the setting of the walls. The church lies besides the archaeological site of the former priory which can be seen in Figure 9. The church was started by a Franciscan Order which was connected with the former priory and by association the walls, railings, and the former vicarage. The church forms part of the wall's historic and original setting and overall is considered to contribute strongly to the significance of the listed building.
- To the north-west of the walls is the Martin Hope Sutton Memorial Hall, which abuts the northern elevation of the church. It dates from 1902 and was built of flint with limestone dressings to mimic Greyfriars Church adjoining. It falls in the listed building's visual, aesthetic and experiential setting and is assessed as contributing to the setting of the walls. The Hall was constructed in the memory of a long standing vicar at Greyfriars. It therefore contributes to the significance of the wall and church.
- The Mitre Inn lies approximately 40m to the south-west of the wall and lies in its visual, experiential and aesthetic setting. It forms a well –preserved former coaching inn contributing to its significance. The building also forms one of the earliest extant buildings in the area and forms part of the original and historic setting to the listed building. It is considered to contribute towards its significance.

Neutral Factors affecting Significance

- To the north is the northern part of Greyfriars Road up to and including Station Hill. This part of Reading is more distinctly commercial (office) in character and higher rise than West Street and the majority of Friar Street buildings.
- The new Central Studios student housing scheme on the corner of Friar Street and Greyfriars Road has a neutral impact on the setting of the listed building. It is constructed from high quality materials, using in part the local vernacular (brick) and is of good architectural merit.

Negative Factors affecting Significance

- To the west of the church is the A329 which is an extremely busy, unsightly, noisy urban thoroughfare and is detrimental to the setting of the listed building.
- The western part of Friar Street between the Site and Queen Victoria Street to the east, predominantly comprises an eclectic array of mid-late 20th century buildings of limited architectural merit, overall producing a somewhat underwhelming, dilapidated character to this part of Friar Street. These buildings, including the Site, are considered to be have a detrimental impact on the setting and significance of the listed building.
- The Site is partially visible on its southern boundary fronting onto Friar Street and its western boundary that fronts onto Greyfriars Road. The existing building is extremely bland, uninspired and detrimental to the setting of the listed building.

Significance

The walls are typical boundary walls of the period, although the quadrant details to the corner shows good craftsmanship. They therefore have only moderate architectural and aesthetic significance. Their primary significance lies in their association with the former priory, vicarage and present church and as such are assessed as having evidential, historic and communal significance.

NO. 64 FRIAR STREET, READING (NON DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSET) (SEE FIGURE 35)

Architectural Description

The building is not specified on a formal list of non designated heritage assets by the LPA. However, in the pre-application response of 7th September 2016 the building was identified as a heritage asset indicating RBC's opinion that the building is of some significance. As a consequence it is to be considered as a non designated heritage asset in this report. It does not form part of the Quadrant Walls listing above, with the latter's listing stating 'the now demolished vicarage' referring to the original vicarage built at the same time as the quadrant walls between 1796—1808. Nor does the building form part of the listing due to being attached to the quadrant walls, as it is not ancillary to the listed walls (Debenhams PLC v Westminster City Council (1987)).

A two storey, seven bay detached former vicarage built in the mid 19th century in a modest Classical Revival style. Brick built (red brick) in Flemish bond. At ground floor are modern UPVC 'six over six' casements, two fixed hexagonal lights either side of the main entrance, five stone entrance steps rising from the pavement to the entrance and iron railings delineating the front curtilage boundary with Friar Street. The main entrance lies in the centre and comprises a Tuscan doorcase with segmental pediment above (glazed tympanum) and a 6-panelled entrance door. At first floor are five modern UPVC 'six over six' casements. Above first floor is a stone string course and a large red brick parapet wall largely shielding the roof behind. The roof is hipped and covered with red pantiles. The UPVC windows detract from the building's significance.



Figure 34: View of the Quadrant Walls on the corner of Friar Street and Greyfriars Road.



Figure 35: 64 Friar Street from West Street.

4.2 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE ASSETS

Setting

Identical to that laid out for the Quadrant Walls above.

Significance

The building was completed in a restrained Classical Revival style likely in the mid 19th century. It remains well preserved save for the modern UPVC windows which detract from its significance. It is assessed as having architectural and aesthetic significance.

Today, the building appears to be used as a day nursery. However, its primary significance lies in its former association with the former priory, quadrant walls and present church and as such is assessed as having evidential, historic and communal significance.

W I PALMER MEMORIAL HALL, 42 & 43 WEST STREET, READING (GRADE II LISTED) (SEE FIGURE 36)

Architectural Description

The building dates from approximately 1887 and is built with architectural extravagance including copious of red brick and contrasting buff terracotta. The building lacks an overall cohesive style but instead is an eclectic assortment popular in the late Victorian period. The building is ten bays across and three storeys high. The left hand four bays are arranged as one composition, the central four as another and the two last bays again as one composition.

Left composition: The ground floor main entrance comprises a bold Romanesque porch with fluted Roman Ionic engaged columns, terracotta colonettes, alternating brick and terracotta voussoirs to the entrance arch, 'West Street Hall' in the frieze and a bold dentillated cornice above. Further above is an open pediment topping the porch. At first floor and above is a 4-light canted bay with inter window Doric pilasters. Above the window headers are semi-circular 'roundels'. At second floor there is a continuous terracotta sill band and a band at mullion level. Semi-circular roundels as before to the fenestration. The canted bay is terminated by a minute spire at its apex covered with red, plain clay tiles.

The central composition: The ground floor frontage comprises modern glazing of no heritage value. The first floor contains a 4-light fixed window with transom and fluted Doric pilasters and topped with a terracotta panel denoting 'W.I. Palmer Memorial Building'. The second floor windows are identical, if shallower but lack the inscription panel.

Right hand section: Ground floor also of no heritage value. The first floor contains a 2-light fixed window with transom and a fluted Doric pilaster. Semi-circular 'roundels' above. Same fenestration at second floor level. Continuous moulded cornices at all levels. Tiled roof in form of short spire over left hand bay. Brick parapet.

Setting

Identical to that laid out for The Mitre Inn.

Significance

Architecturally the building is a fine example of late Victorian brick and terracotta detailing. The building exhibits a number of Romanesque details whilst also containing a number of vernacular revival details such as canted

bays, stunned spire and windows with transoms. The building is assessed as having architectural and aesthetic significance.

W. I. Palmer was one of the partners in the Huntley & Palmer Biscuit business, which was a sizeable local employer in the 19th and 20th centuries (see Section 3). This building was evidently constructed in his memory. In addition the building has been used for civic functions over many decades since its construction. Both give the building evidential, historic and communal significance.

GREYFRIARS CHURCH, READING (GRADE I LISTED) (SEE FIGURE 37)

Architectural Description

A gothic, late 13th century church started by the Franciscan priory. Construction likely started from 1285 and was completed by 1311. The church was built on a cruciform plan, although the chancel was removed after the Reformation. It is built from knapped flint with stone plinths, dressings and buttresses. The roof is sharply pitched and covered with red, clay tiles. The nave is three bays long and aisled to either side with the steeply pitched roof sweeping over all three sections. The church also includes a large transept added by W. H. Woodman during his 'restoration' during the 18th century. Above the former chancel is Woodman's triple arched belfry. The tracery's style is decorated Gothic with a fine reticulated west window. North and south doors in nave with moulded pointed arches.

Setting

Identical to that laid out for the Quadrant Walls and Railings.

Significance

Architecturally the building is believed to be the most complete surviving example of Franciscan architecture in England. It has seen radical adaptations during its history but these changes are legible in its fabric. It is a remarkable survivor in the town given its industrial past over the intervening centuries. The building is considered to have architectural and aesthetic significance.

The building also forms an immensely important component of the history of this part of Reading. Greyfriars Road, Friar Street and so on all derive their name from the ecclesiastical buildings that have occupied this location since the late 13th century. The church has served as a place of worship for many centuries providing an important local service and key local landmark. It also served as Town Bridewell during the 18th century and was only restored as a church in circa 1863 by the Borough Surveyor (Woodman). The listed building can therefore be assessed as having evidential, communal and historic significance.



Figure 36: W I Palmer Memorial Hall.



Figure 37: Greyfriars Church.

4.2 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE ASSETS

1-31 QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, 2-32 QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, 24-28 BROAD STREET, 35-38 BROAD STREET, 148-150 FRIAR STREET, READING (GRADE II LISTED) (SEE FIGURE 38)

Architectural Description

Built in 1894 to designs most likely by Joseph Morris in a bold Baroque style including elaborate Dutch gables. The overall design comprises commercial streets of retail and offices above laid out along Queen Victoria Street with returns to Broad Street and Friar Street. Arranged over four floors and built of cream brick with terracotta dressings and detailing. The ground floor retail includes granite pilasters between each shop but otherwise largely modern shopfronts. The upper floors are intentionally symmetrical with some buildings being 1, 2, 3 or 4 bays. Some include terracotta architraves and pediments, others are canted and entirely clad with terracotta including transoms, mullions and architraves. There are giant order, moulded terracotta Ionic pilasters between each building. The second floor includes a terracotta sill band and above is a bold dentillated, advanced cornice. The attic floor includes dormers of an eclectic composition including moulded terracotta inscription panels and Ionic pilasters.

Setting

Positive Contributors to Significance

- Further to the east of listed buildings are Nos. 11, 12, 14 and 15 Friar Street which are all listed. Further to the east is the town hall (listed). Indeed, between Queen Victoria Street and the town hall are a number of 18th—early 20th century buildings that have a high degree of group value. These are all well-preserved and contribute positively to the setting of the listed building. They also form part of the historic and original setting of the listed building and comprise some of the best preserved buildings in the town centre which has been subject to much redevelopment. These buildings are considered to contribute to the significance of the listed building.
- Similarly to the west of Queen Victoria Street, Friar Street until opposite the Novotel Hotel contains a number of 18th—early 20th century buildings that have a high degree of group value. These are all well-preserved and contribute positively to the setting of the listed building. They also form part of the historic and original setting of the listed building and are well preserved buildings, many being contemporaneous with the listed building. These are considered to contribute to its significance.

Neutral Factors affecting Significance

- The Site is partially visible on its southern boundary fronting onto Friar Street from the listed building. The existing building is extremely bland, uninspired and detrimental to the setting of the listed building. Notwithstanding this fact the Site lies approximately 230m to the west of Queen Victoria Street. This distance means any views are long ranging, and only at narrow ranges of view. Moreover, only those buildings that form part of the listing that front Friar Street would hypothetically have any visibility. The Site is considered

overall to have a neutral impact on the setting of the listed building.

Negative Factors affecting Significance

The Novotel Hotel lies approximately 50m to the west of Queen Victoria Street. The hotel looms oppressively over the surrounding streetscene. No effort has been made to mimic the materiality of the local vernacular with the design being a national hotel template. The bulk of the building sits uncomfortably adjacent to its predominant 18th-early 20th century surroundings and it is considered to have a detrimental impact on the setting of the listed building.

Significance

The buildings form a recognisable feature of the Reading retail district due to their prominent and striking Baroque detailing. The scheme was likely designed by Joseph Morris who was Berkshire County Surveyor between 1872-1905, recalling that Reading was at this time the county town of Berkshire. The buildings are extremely well preserved (save the ground floors) and are considered to have aesthetic and architectural significance.

39 FRIAR STREET, READING (GRADE II LISTED) (SEE FIGURE 39)

Architectural Description

A typical four bay, three storey 18th century town centre building comprising of retail on the ground floor and residential above (originally). The ground floor retains a number of Doric columns to the shopfront but is otherwise modern. The first floor is brick built (red) and includes four 'six over six' sash windows with rubbed brick flat arched headers. The second floor is identical. Parapet wall above.

Setting

Positive Contributors to Significance

- To the west of Queen Victoria Street, Friar Street until opposite the Novotel Hotel contains a number of 18th—early 20th century buildings that have a high degree of group value. These are all well-preserved and contribute positively to the setting of the listed building. They also form part of the historic and original setting of the listed building and are well preserved buildings, many being contemporaneous with the listed building. These are considered to contribute to its significance.

Negative Factors affecting Significance

- The Site is partially visible on its southern boundary fronting onto Friar Street from the listed building. The existing building is extremely bland, uninspired and detrimental to the setting of the listed building. The Site is considered overall to have a detrimental impact on the setting of the listed building.
- The Novotel Hotel lies approximately 50m to the east of the listed building. The hotel looms oppressively over the surrounding streetscene. No effort has been made to mimic the materiality of the local vernacular with the design being a national hotel standard type. The bulk of the building sits uncomfortably adjacent to its predominant 18th-early 20th century surroundings and it is



Figure 38: Queen Victoria Street.



Figure 39: 39 Friar Street, Reading to the right hand side and the former Friars Walk shopping centre to the left.

4.2 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE ASSETS

considered to have a detrimental impact on the setting of the listed building.

- Between the Site and the listed building, Friar Street comprises an eclectic array of mid-late 20th century buildings of limited architectural merit, overall producing a somewhat underwhelming, dilapidated character to this part of Friar Street. These buildings are detrimental to the setting of the listed building. This includes 35-37 Friar Street and Friars Walk.

Significance

The building was completed in a restrained Classical Revival style likely in the late 18th century. It remains well preserved on the first and second floors. It is assessed as having architectural and aesthetic significance.

147 FRIAR STREET, READING (GRADE II LISTED) (SEE FIGURE 40)

Architectural Description

A brick built commercial building dating to approximately the 1880s. The ground floor contains two canted retail units and the central entrance to the upper parts. The ground floor is notable for the steel Ionic columns supporting the upper parts and the corbels to the elevation sides. The first floor contains four sizeable arched windows with cast iron Doric columns between each and brick Doric pilasters, set within deep reveals, to the elevation extremes. The top floor includes 3 paired 'one over one' sash windows and a cornice above. Further above is a parapet wall and two 'one over one' sash dormers with segmental cornice and one 2-light dormer with segmental cornice. The roof was not visible.

Setting

Identical to that laid out for Queen Victoria Street.

Significance

The building is well-preserved and remains in its original use. The first floor arcading is unusual and eye catching and is the main reason for the building's listing. The building is considered to have architectural and aesthetic significance.

THE MITRE INN, 47 WEST STREET AND 92 FRIAR STREET, READING (GRADE II LISTED) (SEE FIGURE 41)

Architectural Description

A former edge of town coaching inn built across five bays and three storeys. It possibly dates to 1800 but likely constitutes a refronting of an older timber framed building. The main elevation is brick built and painted. At ground floor are four 'eight over one' sash windows with corniced, enlarged and dropped keystones. There is also a truncated, decorative doorcase comprising a peaked cornice, an elaborately moulded frieze and fluted corbels in place of pilasters. At second floor are 'six over six' sashes with segmental heads. The third floor includes three 'three over three' sashes with two blind Window Tax windows. Above is a prominent modillioned cornice and parapet wall. The roof, invisible from street level, is understood to be covered with red, clay, plain tiles.

Setting

Identical to that laid out for the Quadrant Walls and railings, save for the following additional item:

Positive Contributors to Significance

The northern part of West Street forms a well-preserved collection of Victorian buildings holding a strong degree of group value. These buildings form part of the visual, experiential and aesthetic setting of the listed building and are considered to contribute to its significance. They form part of the listed building's historic setting and demonstrate the local vernacular of brick to a high standard. They are considered to contribute to the significance of the listed building.

Significance

The building forms a pleasing, if not remarkable, former coaching inn refronted in a restrained Classical Revival style in approximately 1800. The building has been part of civic life for several centuries and given its location near the Caversham Road likely acted as the mail point for the Royal Mail. The inn has served as a place of employment and entertainment for several centuries and is considered to hold evidential, communal and historic significance.



Figure 40: 147 Friar Street.



Figure 41: Mitre Inn on the corner of West Street and Friar Street.

5.0 PROPOSALS & ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

5.1 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Demolition

All on-site structures would be demolished.

Proposed New Massing

Three new medium rise buildings would be constructed comprising new residential (private and affordable), office and retail uses. The built form would be lowest fronting Friar Street (7 storeys) stepping up as it progresses to the rear of the Site (northwards). Towards the rear the built form would be 12 storeys.

The scheme would be contemporary and would utilise high quality materials capable of longevity. The scheme would be clad with light coloured brickwork to draw from the local vernacular of brick. Balconies would be metal framed and glazed with hardwood cladding used to provide a degree of visual variation.

Landscaping

- Roof gardens would be created on both the eastern and western buildings as shown on Figure 42 and 43.
- A new inner development courtyard garden would be created framed by the proposed three buildings. This would include designated hard surfaced walkways and formal areas of lawns, flowers beds as well as tree and shrub planting (Figure 47).



Figure 42: Aerial 3D CGI produced looking north east from the corner of West Street and Friars Street.



Figure 43: Aerial 3D CGI produced looking south-east from Greyfriars Road.

MATERIAL REFERENCE IMAGES

Building materials concept

- Light contemporary and high quality materials.
- Brickwork material referencing local residential and urban context.
- The use of good quality natural materials and texture to create variety and durability of the overall facade.
- Green walls and roofs provide a relevant solution for softening and adding green areas into the urban landscape.
- Sections of glazing both maximizing light into and aspect from proposed living areas.

Figure 44: Proposed materiality.

5.0 PROPOSALS & ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

5.1 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS



5.1 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS



Figure 46: Proposed Friar Street and Greyfriars Road elevations.



5.0 PROPOSALS & ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

5.1 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS



Aerial 3D view 3 - From within the proposed courtyard

Figure 47: Proposed courtyard gardens.

5.2 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

1-31 QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, 2-32 QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, 24-28 BROAD STREET, 35-38 BROAD STREET, 148-150 FRIAR STREET, READING (GRADE II LISTED) AND 147 FRIAR STREET, READING (GRADE II LISTED)

The proposed scheme would not physically intervene into the historic fabric of the listed buildings nor into their curtilages. The scheme would not therefore affect their architectural or aesthetic significance directly. The contribution made by their setting to their significance could be affected which will be discussed below.

The Site does not hold a contextual link to the listed buildings, nor does it contribute positively to the setting and significance of the listed buildings.

Thirdly there is only minimal intervisibility between the listed buildings as the Sites lies approximately 230m to the west of Queen Victoria Street. This distance means any views are long ranging, and only at narrow ranges of view due to the visual tunnelling effect of long range views caused by the existing built form along both sides of Friar Street. The Site is at a sufficient distance for the proposed development to be incidental and largely imperceptible from the listed buildings.

Overall the proposed scheme is assessed as likely to have a neutral impact on the setting and significance of the listed buildings.

GREYFRIARS CHURCH, READING (GRADE I LISTED); QUADRANT WALLS AND RAILINGS TO FORMER NO. 64 (GREYFRIARS VICARAGE), FRIAR STREET, READING (GRADE II LISTED); THE MITRE INN, 47 WEST STREET AND 92 FRIAR STREET, READING (GRADE II LISTED); W I PALMER MEMORIAL HALL, 42 & 43 WEST STREET, READING (GRADE II LISTED) AND 64 FRIAR STREET (NON DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSET)

The proposed scheme would not physically intervene into the historic fabric of the heritage assets nor into their curtilages. The scheme would not therefore affect their architectural or aesthetic significance directly. The contribution made by their setting to their significance could be affected which will be discussed below.

The Site does not hold a contextual link to the heritage assets, nor does it contribute positively to their setting and significance. The evidential, historic and communal significance of the heritage assets would consequently be unaffected.

Intervisibility

- The Site is partially visible on from the Quadrant Walls from the former's southern boundary fronting onto Friar Street and its western boundary fronting onto Greyfriars Road.
- The Site lies approximately 50m to the east of the church. The above ground existing on-site accommodation is partially visible from the church cemetery. Similarly above ground proposed development on Greyfriars Road or proposed accommodation set above the existing streetscene would be visible from the church.

- The Site lies approximately 50m to the north-east of the Mitre Inn. There would be views of any accommodation set above the roofline of Central Studios and the building proposed to the north of Central Studios on Greyfriars Road.
- The W.I. Palmer Memorial Hall would have negligible views due to the buildings on the eastern side of West Street blocking views towards the Site. It is possible that extremely glimpsed views may be granted of the upper floors of the building proposed north of Central Studios. Such views would be extremely limited and only really achievable if the typical viewer were actively seeking out the Site in the distance looking north-east.

Would the scheme affect the setting of the heritage assets?

The Site is a brownfield Site and has been partially developed since 1761 and comprehensively developed since 1870. It is also worth noting that the scheme's proposed footprint site coverage is less than the existing on-site footprint. The Site is therefore not previously undeveloped, and as above, the existing Site does not contribute to the setting and significance of the heritage assets.

Secondly a key consideration is the unsightly nature of the current Site which has a detrimental impact on the setting of any surrounding heritage assets.

Notwithstanding the above points, any redevelopment of the Site has the potential to impact on the setting of the heritage assets. Careful consideration would be needed to storey heights, materiality, intervisibility and build quality. The proposed scheme has taken note of these sensitivities and the mitigation measures will be discussed below.

Reduction in Harm/Mitigation Measures

- In assessing the impact of the proposed development on these heritage assets it is important to recognise that its setting and appearance has already been affected by medium rise, modern developments. These are most notably; a) Central Studios; b) Novotel Hotel, Friar Street; c) the forthcoming Stanhope Development on Garrard Street/Greyfriars Road; d) Greyfriars House, Greyfriars Road; e) Xafinity House, Greyfriars Road and f) 9 Greyfriars Road.
- Moreover, the area to the north of the Friar Street frontage is currently more urbanised than the area immediately to the south, and especially to the north of Garrard Street. The proposed building, takes this context into account and is stepped as it heads north and therefore would not appear out of character in its setting. Furthermore, as Figures 45 and 46 show, the consented scheme can be seen as transition development between the low rise buildings typically found on Friars Street (6-8+ storeys) and the consented 17 storey Stanhope scheme to the north. The impact of the increased storeys as the built form heads northwards is mitigated by the topography of the Site as it drops from south to north. The Friar Street frontage would be 7 storeys, increasing to 12 storeys to the rear of the Site.

- The scheme seeks to create a high calibre contemporary building. The immediate proximity of the Site to these heritage assets has been fully acknowledged as part of the design process ensuring that the architectural merit of the scheme has been a key consideration throughout.
- The construction materials for the scheme would include large areas of light coloured brick, sheet glass and hardwood panelling. From Section 5.1. and the DAS, this would create a development of good architectural merit in the setting of a number of heritage assets. It is acknowledged that the materials are not proposed to directly match with those of the adjoining architecture. However, brick has been selected as a principle building material drawing upon the local vernacular and is considered the proposed materials would complement the traditional building materials used on surrounding heritage assets.
- The scheme would remove the existing, highly visible loading area to the rear of the present supermarket and largely replace this area with a landscaped courtyard. This element is considered an enhancement measure.

Overall Assessment

We initially assessed that any on-site redevelopment scheme has the potential to impact on the setting of the heritage assets. Careful consideration would be needed to storey heights, materiality, intervisibility and build quality.

The scheme has responded to its heritage context and a scheme of good architectural merit has been advanced. Good quality building materials, with the potential for longevity, have been selected to complement traditional materials used on surrounding heritage assets. Furthermore, the design's verticality has responded to the local context matching the Stanhope scheme to the southern boundary. The built form would step up as it migrates north, as the Site's land level drops, towards the sizeable Stanhope scheme consented to the north. The highly detrimental impact of the existing buildings on the listed building's setting is also noteworthy.

Overall the proposed scheme is assessed as likely to enhance the setting and significance of the heritage assets.

5.2 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

39 FRIAR STREET, READING (GRADE II LISTED)

The proposed scheme would not physically intervene into the historic fabric of the listed buildings nor into their curtilages. The scheme would not therefore affect their architectural or aesthetic significance directly. The contribution made by their setting to their significance could be affected which will be discussed below.

Intervisibility

The Site's southern boundary fronting onto Friar Street is partially visible from the listed building, lying approximately 85m to the west of the latter. The accommodation proposed to the rear of the Site would not be visible.

Would the scheme affect the setting of the listed buildings?

The listed building adjoins the Friar Street frontage of the new Stanhope development which will see substantial change and regeneration to the area including the immediate setting of the listed building. At present the former Friars Walk shopping centre, which lies between the Site and the listed building, blights the area and is detrimental to the setting of the listed building. The immediate setting of the listed building will be dominated by the Stanhope development once completed with the Site appearing incidental to the west of the Stanhope scheme.

Notwithstanding the above points, redevelopment of the Site has the potential to impact on the setting of the listed buildings. Careful consideration would be needed to storey heights, materiality, intervisibility and build quality.

Reduction in Harm/Mitigation Measures

Identical points would be raised here in relation to the group assessment above and will not be repeated for concision.

Overall Assessment

We initially assessed that any redevelopment of the Site has the potential to impact on the setting of the listed building. Careful consideration would be needed to storey heights, materiality, intervisibility and build quality.

The scheme has responded to its heritage context and a scheme of good architectural merit has been advanced. Good quality building materials, with the potential for longevity, have been selected to complement traditional materials used on surrounding heritage assets. Furthermore, the design's verticality has responded to the local context matching the Stanhope scheme to the southern boundary. The highly detrimental impact of the existing buildings on the listed building's setting is also noteworthy.

Overall the proposed scheme is assessed as likely to enhance the setting and significance of the listed building.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

RPS CGMS INSTRUCTION

This Heritage Statement has been prepared by RPS CgMs on behalf of Aviva Investors to accompany a planning application in relation to 52-55 Friar Street and 12 Greyfriars Road, Reading.

PLANNING CONTEXT

To fully understand the impact of proposals, the National Planning Policy Framework states 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 proposed schemes potential to cause harm to these heritage assets and any mitigating measures. This Heritage Statement will therefore form part of Aviva Investors' application for the development of the Site.

SCHEME PROPOSALS

Demolition

All on-site structures would be demolished.

Proposed New Massing

Three new medium rise buildings would be constructed comprising new residential (private and affordable), office and retail uses. The built form would be lowest fronting Friar Street (7 storeys) stepping up as it progresses to the rear of the Site (northwards). Towards the rear the built form would be 12 storeys.

The scheme would be contemporary and would utilise high quality materials capable of longevity. The scheme would be clad with light coloured brickwork to draw from the local vernacular of brick. Balconies would be metal framed and glazed with hardwood cladding used to provide a degree of visual variation.

Landscaping

- Roof gardens would be created on several of the buildings as shown on Figure 42 and 43.
- A new inner development courtyard garden would be created framed by the proposed three buildings. This would include designated hard surfaced walkways and formal areas of lawns, flowers beds as well as tree and shrub planting.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

GREYFRIARS CHURCH, READING (GRADE I LISTED); QUADRANT WALLS AND RAILINGS TO FORMER NO. 64 (GREYFRIARS VICARAGE), FRIAR STREET, READING (GRADE II LISTED); THE MITRE INN, 47 WEST STREET AND 92 FRIAR STREET, READING (GRADE II LISTED); W I PALMER MEMORIAL HALL, 42 & 43 WEST STREET, READING (GRADE II LISTED) AND 64 FRIAR STREET (NON DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSET)

We initially assessed that any on-site redevelopment scheme has the potential to impact on the setting of the heritage assets. Careful consideration would be needed to storey heights, materiality, intervisibility and build quality.

The scheme has responded to its heritage context and a scheme of good architectural merit has been advanced. Good quality building materials, with the potential for longevity, have been selected to complement traditional materials used on surrounding heritage assets. Furthermore, the design's verticality has responded to the local context matching the Stanhope scheme to the southern boundary. The built form would step up as it migrates north, as the Site's land level drops, towards the sizeable Stanhope scheme consented to the north (see Figure 46). The highly detrimental impact of the existing buildings on the listed building's setting is also noteworthy.

Overall the proposed scheme is assessed as likely to enhance the setting and significance of the heritage assets.

39 FRIAR STREET, READING (GRADE II LISTED)

We initially assessed that any redevelopment of the Site has the potential to impact on the setting of the listed building. Careful consideration would be needed to storey heights, materiality, intervisibility and build quality.

The scheme has responded to its heritage context and a scheme of good architectural merit has been advanced. Good quality building materials, with the potential for longevity, have been selected to complement traditional materials used on surrounding heritage assets. Furthermore, the design's verticality has responded to the local context matching the Stanhope scheme to the southern boundary. The highly detrimental impact of the existing buildings on the listed building's setting is also noteworthy.

Overall the proposed scheme is assessed as likely to enhance the setting and significance of the listed building.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: STATUTORY LIST DESCRIPTIONS

QUADRANT WALLS AND RAILINGS TO FORMER NO 64 (GREYFRIARS VICARAGE), FRIAR STREET, READING (GRADE II LISTED)

FRIAR STREET 1. 5128 (North Side) Quadrant walls and railings to former No 64 (Greyfriars Vicarage) SU 7173 12/121 22.3.57. II 2. Circa 1796 or circa 1808. Probably designed by Soane (as was the now demolished Vicarage). Flanking garden walls, quadrant shaped, red brick; garden doors on street front with heads set in semi-circular arches with plastered tympana. These walls linked by cast iron spearhead rails with fluted columns standards capped by urns. Central steps to doorway with footscrapers to left.

THE MITRE INN, 47, WEST STREET AND 92, FRIAR STREET, READING (GRADE II LISTED)

WEST STREET 1. 5128 No 47 (The Mitre Inn) SU 7173 12/123 II 2. Including No 92 Friar Street. Circa 1800, probably earlier and much altered. Colour washed brick, cornice with astragal, parapet. Old tile roof, ornaments removed from parapet. 3 storeys. Friar Street frontage 1 window with small 2 storey 1 window extension with dormer in high pitched roof and late C19 3 light shop front. West Street front has 5 windows to upper floors, glazing bar sashes, segmental headed. on 1st floor; 2 on 2nd floor and 1 on 1st floor blocked. Late C19 windows to ground floor with glazing bars to upper sashes, ovolo surrounds and bracket keys. Central entrance with wide corbelled cornice with central open-pedimented feature capped by a mitre and with "The Mitre Hotel" in raised letters on rounded frieze.

W I PALMER MEMORIAL HALL, 42 AND 43, WEST STREET, READING (GRADE II LISTED)

WEST STREET 1. 5128 (West Side) Nos 42 and 43 (W I Palmer Memorial Hall) SU 7173 12/355 24.10.74. 2. Dated 1887. Brick and terracotta. 3 storeys. 3 bays. Centre recessed with large 4 light windows with terracotta fluted mullions and moulded transom. Right hand bay projects with similar but 2-light windows with terracotta decorative semi-circular panels above. Left hand bay canted; similar windows with similar panels over and elaborate terracotta Romanesque-type doorway of 2 orders and flanking portico with decorative columns supporting arcaded pediment and lintel inscribed "AD WEST STREET HALL 1887", Pediment breaks into 1st floor window. Decorative panels over ground floor with "W I Palmer Memorial Hall" carved on them. Continuous moulded cornices at all levels. Tiled roof in form of short spire over left hand bay. Brick parapet. Chimney with cornice. Large plate glass shop front to right.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: STATUTORY LIST DESCRIPTIONS

39 FRIAR STREET, READING (GRADE II LISTED)

FRIAR STREET 1. 5128 (North Side) No 39 SU 7173 12/119 II 2. C18. 3 storeys. Brick with parapet. Plain 4 window front, flush framed glazing bar sashes. Modern shopfront to ground floor.

147 FRIAR STREET, READING (GRADE II LISTED)

FRIAR STREET 1. 5128 (South Side) No 147 SU 7173 12/492 II 2. Circa 1880s. 3½ storey commercial frontage. Painted brick with stone voussoirs and dressings. Cornice and parapet. 3 high segmental headed dormers with ramped moulded coping between and modillion cornices, centre 2-light. These and 3 pairs of windows on 2nd floor are plate glass sashes. 4 depressed arches on 1st floor under cornice and fascia with outer pilasters and dividing fluted columns with Corinthian caps. Cornice and fascia over ground floor shop front of similar pattern with recessed entrance. The 2 storey shop front is the main interest of this building and it is included for that reason.

1-31, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, 2-32, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, 24-28, BROAD STREET, 35-38, BROAD STREET, 148,149 AND 150, FRIAR STREET, READING (GRADE II LISTED)

QUEEN VICTORIA STREET 1. 5128 Nos 1 to 31 (odd) Nos 2 to 32 (even) SU 7173 NE 1/558 SU 7173 SW 2/558 SU 7173 SE 3/558 SU 7173 12/558 II 2. Including Nos 148 and 149 Friar Street and Nos 24 to 28 and 35 to 37 (consec) Broad Street. A circa 1894 commercial street with returns to Broad and Friar Streets. Probably by Joseph Morris. Dutch gabled free Baroque style. 3 1/2 storeys, yellow brick and terracotta with dividing Ionic pilasters. Dentil cornice. Pilasters to dormers, broken pediments above. An elongated pattern of shallow bays to 1st and 2nd floors 4:2:1:1:1:3. Mullion and transom window to bays, sashes with architraves (and pediments on 1st floor) to rest. Modern shopfronts, retaining cornice to fascia and scroll brackets to pilasters, only one shop retains pre-war shopfront. Large returns to Broad Street. The return to east (No 28 Broad Street) supported by No 26 (dated 1894, grey brick with red terracotta dressings) and by No 24 (an early C20 Bank with -large shaped pediment doorway on corner to Cross Street; red brick with stone dressings and stone fret patterns to gables).



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: STATUTORY LIST DESCRIPTIONS

GREYFRIARS CHURCH, FRIAR STREET, READING (GRADE I LISTED)

Church of England. Said to be the most complete surviving example of Franciscan- architecture in England, and in use again as a church. The first site (1255-59) being unsatisfactory, the present church was built 1285 plus, and ready by 1311. It served as Town Bridewell during the C18 and was only restored circa 1863 by the Borough Surveyor (W H Woodman). Built of squared knapped flints with stone plinth, dressings and buttresses. Tiled roof swept down over aisles with small vents. 3 bay nave, large transept (added to church by Woodman, probably incorrectly), chancel removed after the Reformation and east chancel arch blocked. Gable over now carries Woodman's triple arched belfry. The nave has segmental headed 3 light windows of plain decorated style and an extremely fine west window of 5 lights, decorated style with reticulated tracery. The transept has 2 bays each side of main vessel, each with plain 'Y' tracery, the north and south windows 4-light in Decorated style. North and south doors in nave with moulded pointed arches. Interior spacious; crown post and wind-brace roof supported on original cruciform and quadrilobe shafts. Gabled and arcaded retable. Font and pulpit date from restoration. Entrance now in annexe to west.



