
1-3 CASTLE CRESENT READING

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

8th September 2015

1-3 CASTLE CRESCENT, READING

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

Project Ref:	23264	23264	
Status:	Draft	Final	
Issue/Rev:	01	01	
Date:	03Sep15	08Sep15	
Prepared by:	PRC	PRC	
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

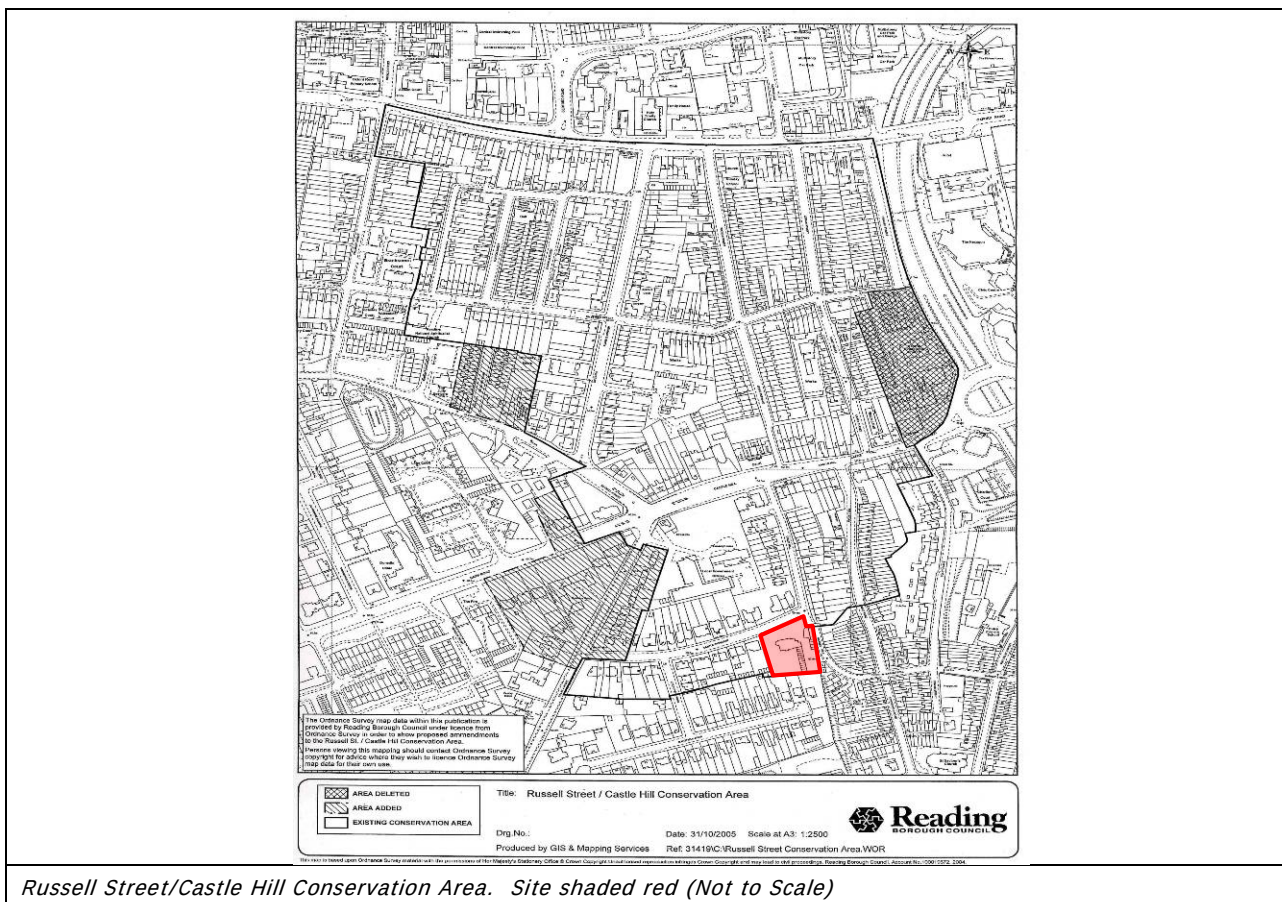
1.1.1 This Heritage Assessment supports a Full Planning Application to be submitted on behalf of Mr R Brown **(The Applicant)** for the re-development of 1-3 Castle Crescent, Reading, RG1 6AQ **(the Site)**.

1.1.2 In response to national and local policy requirements, it seeks to demonstrate that the proposed development causes no adverse/detrimental impact upon the setting and significance of designated heritage assets within the Site and in the vicinity specifically:

- 3 Castle Crescent: Listed Grade II
- 31-35 Coley Hill: Listed Grade II
- 29 Coley Hill: Listed Grade II
- 27 Coley Hill: Listed Grade II
- Yeomanry House: Listed Grade II
- Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area



The Site outlined in red. Nearby designated heritage assets outlined in purple – Conservation Area not shown (Not to Scale)



Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area. Site shaded red (Not to Scale)

- 1.1.3 This Assessment should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Design and Access Statement (DAS) which provides a detailed description of the Proposed Development and its evolution, in addition to the Planning Statement which provides an analysis of the proposals, set against relevant and prevailing national and local planning policy. It also draws upon the findings of the Structural Report prepared by Glanville Consultants dated 25 September 2014 (ref: TR8140344/LD/006) (Glanville Consultants, 2014)

1.2 Methodology

- 1.2.1 The Heritage Assessment provides a description and analysis of the built environment of the Site and considers the impact of the proposed development upon its surroundings and their historic context. The proposed drawings are examined and an assessment made of its anticipated effect on heritage significance. The national and local heritage policies are examined in relation to the proposals.
- 1.2.2 The Heritage Assessment utilises guidance and advice for the assessment of the significance of heritage assets, the impact of the proposals upon them, and the setting of the assets primarily as published by Historic England and the British Standards Institute (BSI, 2013).

1.3 Sources

- 1.3.1 The author has consulted a number of authorised sources including the Official List of Historic England*; The Heritage Gateway; Reading Borough Council's Historic Environment Record (HER); The Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal (The Conservation Studio, 2004) and the planning pages of Reading Borough Council's website.

** **Note:** On 1st April 2015 the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England changed its common name from English Heritage to Historic England. Historic England is in the process of re-branding all their guidance documents and publications. Consequently where documents refer to English Heritage it remains the Commission's current advice and guidance and will in due course be re-branded as Historic England. [www.historicengland.org.uk]*

For the purposes of this Heritage Assessment for consistency we shall refer solely to Historic England.

- 1.3.2 The exercise included a consideration of a number of historic maps.
- 1.3.3 The author considered the following drawings prepared by Barton Willmore:

Drawing No	Title
EH-01	Existing House – Ground Floor Plan
EH-02	Existing House – First Floor Plan
EH-03	Existing House North and South Elevation
EH-04	Existing House East and West Elevation
EB-01	Existing Building Conversion – Ground & Basement Floor Plans
EB-02	Proposed Building Conversion First Floor Plan
EB-03	Proposed Building Conversion Elevations
EB-04	Proposed Building Conversion Elevations
ECS-01	Proposed Condition Survey Ground Floor Plan
ECS-02	Existing Condition Survey First Floor Plan
ECS-03	Existing Condition Survey North and South Elevation
ECS-04	Existing Condition Survey East and West Elevation
SK-01	Proposed Sketch Perspectives
SE-01	Proposed Sketch Street Elevations
APT-10	Proposed Apartment Block Ground Floor Plan
APT-11	Proposed Apartment Block First Floor Plan
APT-12	Proposed Apartment Block Elevations
RG-L-01	Landscape Proposals Plan
RG-L-01-01	Hard and Soft Landscape Proposals Plan 1 of 2
SL-01	Site Location Plan
SL-02	Proposed Site Layout
CSL-01	Coloured Proposed Site Layout

- 1.3.4 The Applicant also provided two original images of parts of the Site which although undated would appear to be from the early part of the C20. These have helped inform the Heritage Assessment.



Early image of the south and west elevations of 3 Castle Crescent



Detail of the bay window to the west elevation

1.4 Author

- 1.4.1 This assessment has been researched and prepared by Peter Cross PGDipCHE FRICS MAPM, an experienced Chartered Building Surveyor, RICS Accredited in Building Conservation and Heritage Director of Barton Willmore.
- 1.4.2 The Author visited site on 5 March 2014 and 24 October 2014, and 5 March 2015. The weather was dry on all occasions.

1.5 Photographs

- 1.5.1 The Heritage Assessment contains a number of photographs to help describe and illustrate the text. Unless otherwise stated all photographs were taken by the author on a Canon EOS DSLR camera using a 30mm fixed aperture lens which is equivalent to "standard" lens on a 35mm film SLR.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1** This Heritage Assessment sets out the extent of research and analysis that has been undertaken by the Applicant and his professional team to achieve a full understanding of the significance of the designated heritage assets at the Site and in the vicinity. This understanding has informed the development of the proposed scheme to the current form so that they reflect and respect the architectural and historic qualities of this part of Reading.
- 2.2** The Applicant and his team have reviewed the emerging proposals with representatives of Reading Borough Council, including their Principal Conservation Officer, and have consulted with the Principal Archaeologist at Berkshire Archaeology.
- 2.3** The approach adopted provides a transparent assessment of the heritage issues affecting the application site and the way in which each aspect has been considered and positively addressed.
- 2.4** The outcome of this process is a scheme that:
- Complies with local and national heritage planning policy;
 - Meets the requirements of published standards and assessment criteria;
 - Understands the historic significance of the designated heritage assets;
 - Respects the setting of the designated heritage assets; and
 - Does not harm the key features of the designated heritage assets or their settings and sustains their special architectural and historical interest.

3.0 GENERAL PROPOSALS

3.1 The Applicant is proposing:

A planning application in respect of: refurbishing, altering, extending and reconfiguring the Grade II listed house; demolition of the dilapidated and fire damaged outbuilding; demolition of the modern dilapidated garage blocks; construction of new-build apartments; and improvements to the grounds and gardens.

- 3.2** Castle Crescent is a relatively quiet residential road within an area of similar roads and streets to the west of Reading town centre. It is a little to the south of Castle Hill/Bath Road/A4 being the main route into the town from the west. The principal Inner Distribution Road is a short distance to the east. Castle Crescent is a gently curving road, with a roughly west-east alignment, and connects with Coley Avenue, to the west, and Coley Hill, to the east.
- 3.3** Reference to C19 Reading Directories indicates that in 1842 there was no record of Castle Crescent but by 1865 it is included with a handful of properties including No 3. By the 1888 Directory the property is identified as *Greyfriars Vicarage* and was occupied by Rev H Seymour Soole.
- 3.4** The Site and immediate surrounding area are indicated in Drawing No 23264 SL-01: Site Location Plan.
- 3.5** The property originally was a large detached villa but for the latter part of the C20 it has been sub-divided into a multiple occupation unit, and for many years has been vacant and boarded up. The property is currently in a very poor state of repair and its condition is steadily declining.
- 3.6** An Outbuilding to the northeast corner of the Site is believed to have formerly supported the functions of the House, but is in an advanced stage of dilapidation, with most of the roof covering missing and evidence of internal fire damage.
- 3.7** The southeastern corner of the plot has been used in the latter part of the C20 to accommodate lightweight garage structures. These too are in an advanced stage of dilapidation.
- 3.8** The proposals envisage new-build dwellings to the east side of the Site, returning a short distance to the south to create a semi-enclosed courtyard area to the southeast of the main house. These properties will provide a range of accommodation including 1, 2 and 3 bed apartments with integrated ground floor garages. They will have pitched, hipped roofs with those towards the north of the Site being of two storey and those further to the south being one and a half storeys with part dormer windows serving the upper floors.
- 3.9** The new buildings will draw upon the dominant materials palette of this part of the Conservation Area with walls of local style red brickwork and rendered/stucco with hipped pitched roofs and brick chimneys. Windows will be contemporary high performance units to match the sliding sash style and proportions of both the main house and the nearby properties in Coley Hill and Castle Crescent.
- 3.10** The substantial existing brickwork boundary walls to Castle Crescent and Garnet Hill are to be retained.

- 3.11** The existing main house is to be sensitively altered with the removal of the part of the south east wing but with the retention of the two storey side addition. This not only significantly improves the aesthetic quality of the external elevations but also creates far more usable internal space – the current arrangement is entirely unsuitable with confused split floor levels and low ceiling heights.
- 3.12** The main house will be converted into four new 1 bedroom apartments (two on each floor) and a 2 bedroom two storey (duplex) unit within the east addition. The apartments will be accessed via the existing, retained, entrance door to the north elevation and will maintain the internal functionality and arrangements of the former dwelling. Independent access will be provided for the duplex unit via a new entrance door on the east elevation. The existing basement is to be retained and used for storage.



Indicative Sketch Perspectives drawing indicating new apartments, to the top image and the left of the bottom image, and the retained, refurbished and repaired main house to the right. Barton Willmore Dwg No 23264/SK-01 (Not to Scale)

4.0 HISTORY

4.1 Map Regression

4.1.1 A comprehensive assessment of a selection of available historic maps has been made to help inform the understanding of the area's growth and development. Although such information cannot be considered to be definitive, experience shows that the mapping is often relatively accurate and reliable, particularly the later OS Maps, and taken together with written archival data and evidence available on the ground can help to refine the history of a site.

4.1.2 The maps reviewed in this Heritage Assessment comprise:

- 1838: Plan of the Parish of St Mary, Reading Surveyed by Hawkes and Son, Reading
- 1853: General Board of Health Second Class Survey 30 December 1853 Sheet No 24.
- 1879: 1:2500 OS Map
- 1899: 1:2500 OS Map
- 1912: 1:2500 OS Map
- 1931/32: 1:2500 OS Map
- 1958/61: 1:1250 OS Map

4.1.3 Notes:

The 1838 and 1853 maps were viewed at Berkshire Record Office on 13 March 2015.

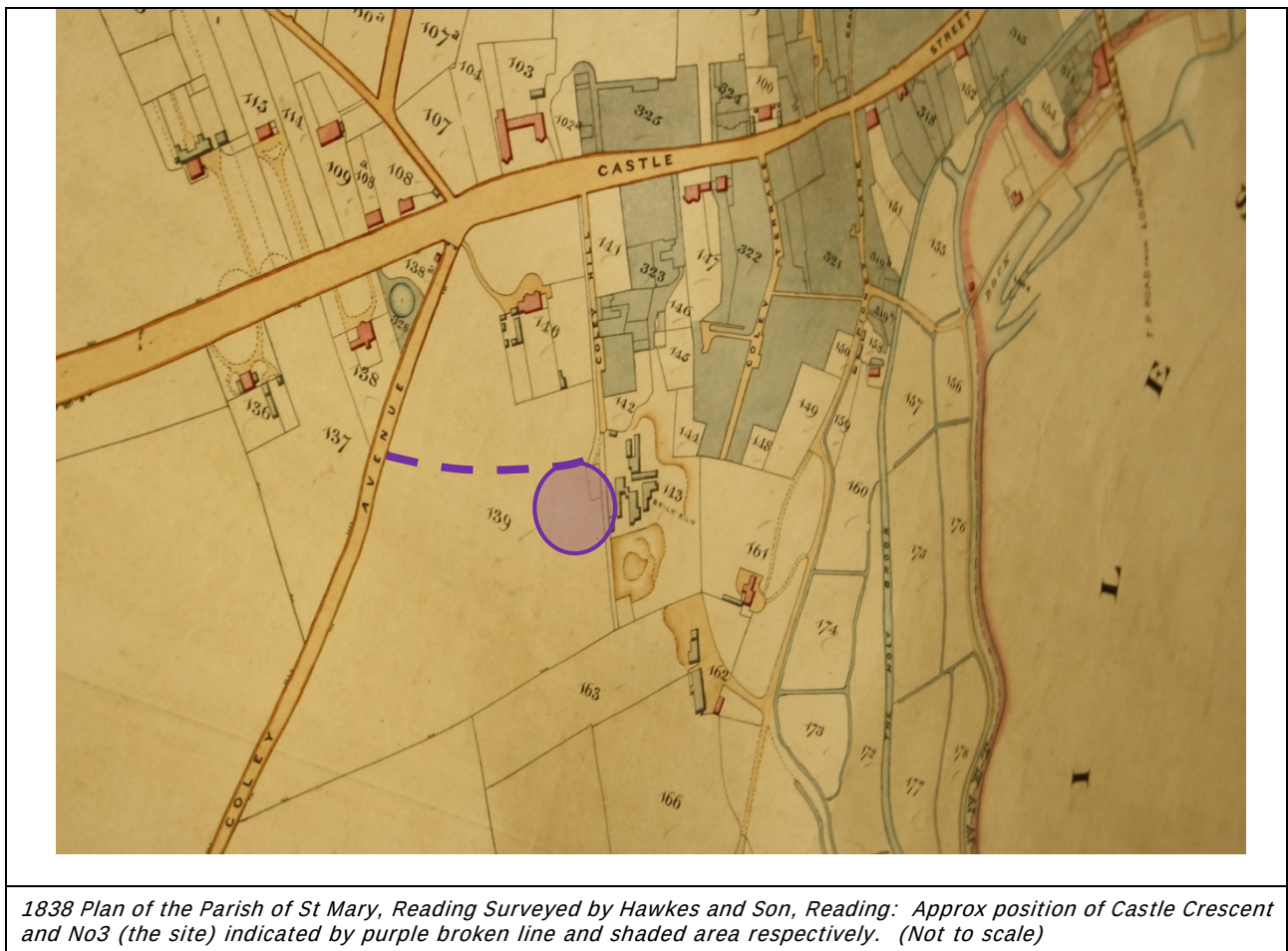
The OS Maps generally identify plots of land with individual plot numbers which have been referred to in the following notes. These relate only to the specific map being examined and do not transfer between maps.

Unless otherwise indicated the modern-day names/numbering of the roads have been adopted in order to assist the understanding of the development of the area over time.

The approximate location of the Site is indicated in red on the OS Maps.

4.2 Observations from Map Regression

1838



- i) Castlehill House is shown but not named. It stands with an area indicated as a formal garden to its south with some outbuildings (Plot 140) within considerably larger and extensive grounds (Plot 139).
- ii) Plot 139 extends southwards past the area that is today occupied by Castle Crescent. There is no indication of the Crescent nor any buildings within the vicinity of the site.
- iii) Castlehill House has an access drive off Castle Street but there is no Lodge at the entrance.
- iv) The property shown on later maps as "Bath Place", on Castle Street to the west of Castlehill House, is indicated but the building on the corner of Coley Avenue is not shown. Instead there is an oval feature that could be a pond.
- v) Coley Avenue is an undeveloped road providing direct access to Coley House, Park and Farm via the two entrance Lodges (West and East Lodge).
- vi) Coley Hill is indicated to the east of Castlehill House extending only a short distance south from Castle Street. At the point where Castle Crescent will later be developed the road becomes a track serving several Brick Kilns. It is interesting to note that one such kiln is indicated to the immediate east of today's site on the other side of Coley Hill.

1853

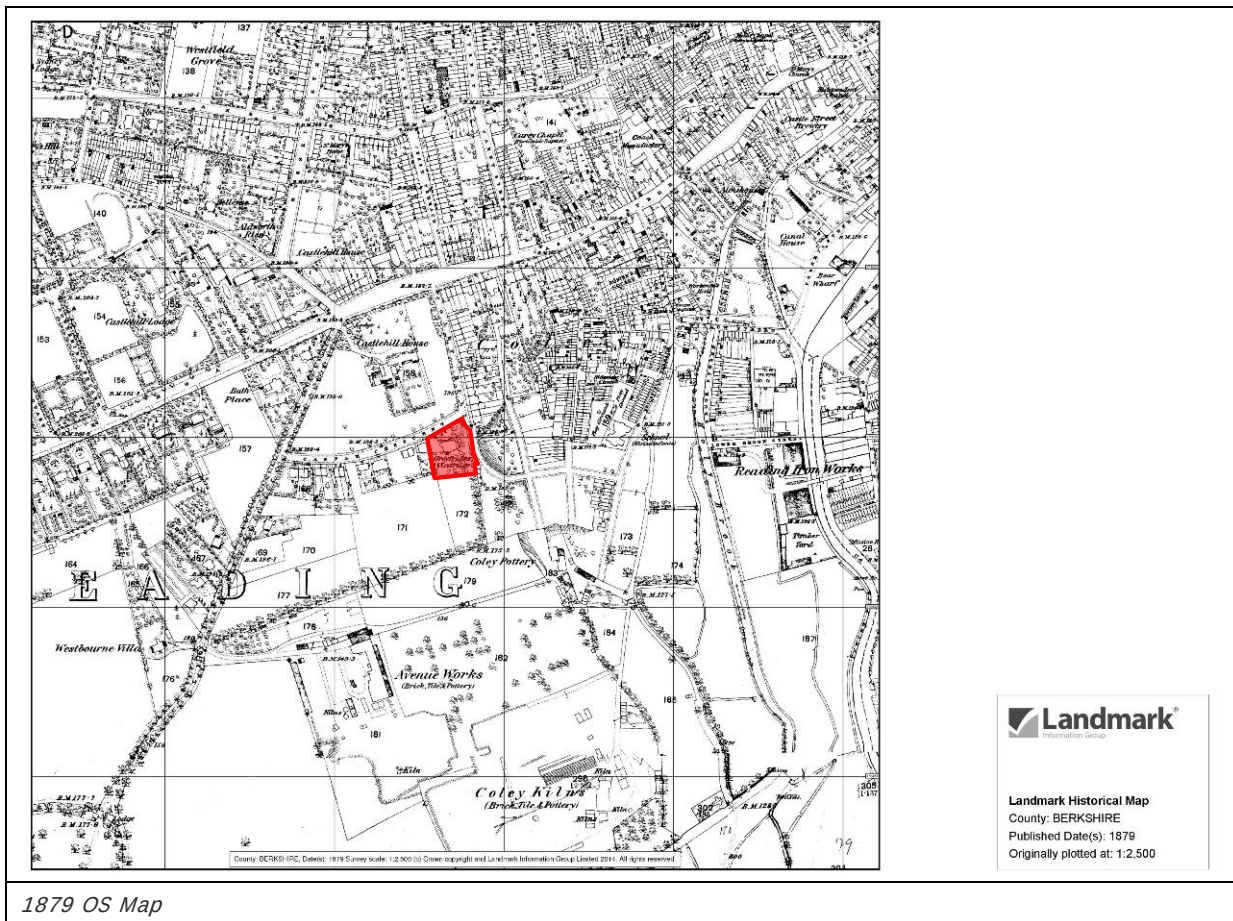


1853 General Board of Health Second Class Survey 30 December 1853 Sheet No 24 (part only): No 3 shown with defined rear garden. Note: No 5 Castle Crescent and adjacent semi-detached villa broadly contemporaneous with No 3. No development to north side of Castle Crescent. (Not to scale)

- i) Castle Crescent indicated together with No 5 and other detached and semi-detached villas along the southern side of the road. There is no development yet on the northern side.
- ii) The Lodge is now indicated at the entrance to Castlehill House off Castle Street and, immediately to the west of the lodge, are the pair of gateways at the entrance to Coley Avenue (now demolished).
- iii) The site at the junction of Coley Avenue and Castle Street is now occupied with a large detached building.
- iv) Some residential development has occurred along the east side of Coley Hill.
- v) The junction between Coley Hill and Castle Crescent is semi-restricted and in the order of half the full width of the road.

- vi) No 3 Castle Crescent comprises a large square building with a series of three projections to the south. There is an attached rectangular building to the east of the main house set back from both the front and rear elevations. There are no bay windows evident, but the central steps to the main entrance door are shown and two lightwells (north and south) for the basement.
- vii) The rear garden to No 3 is indicated by a wall/fence extending from the rear elevation of the house with a return wall from west to east incorporating an opening with posts either side to the open land beyond.

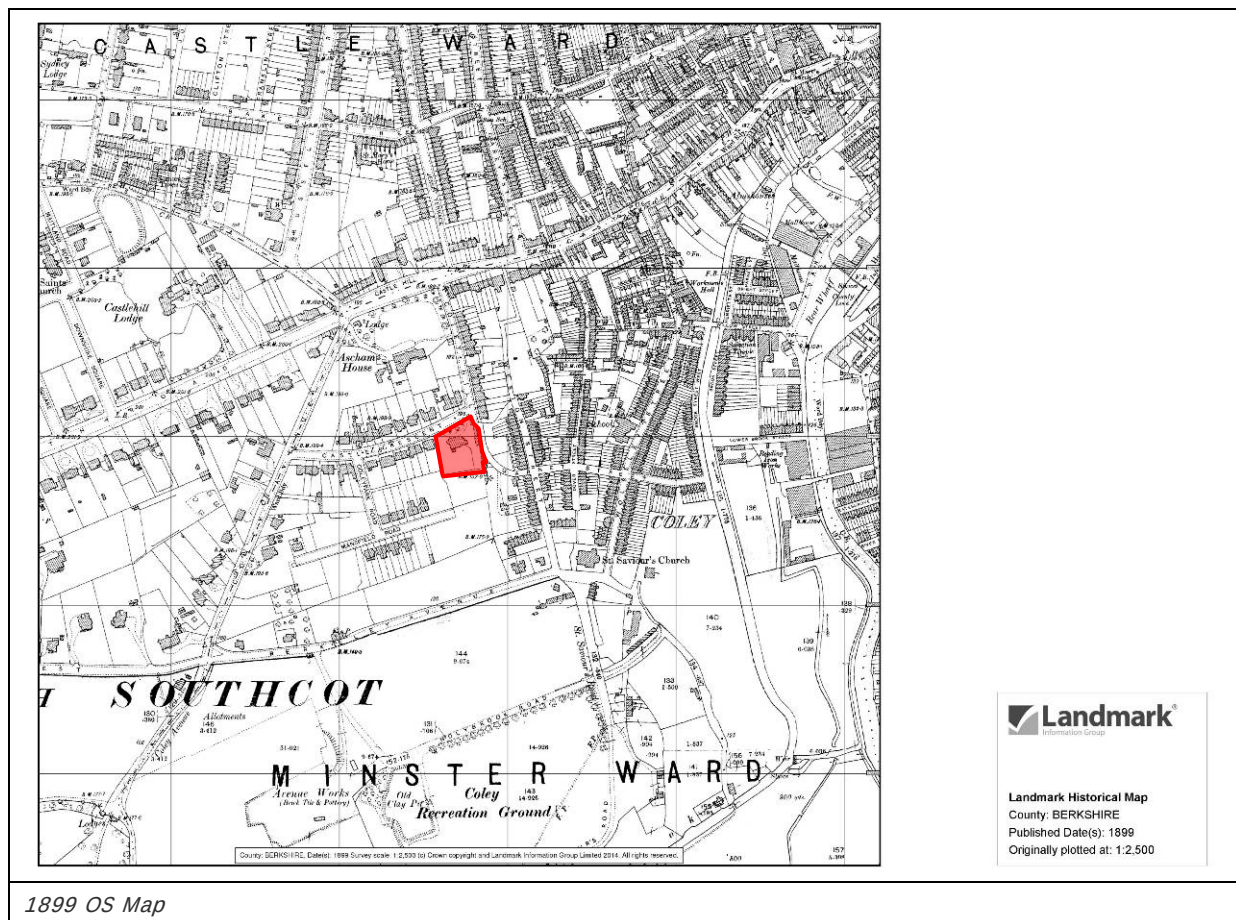
1879



- i) The area to the immediate west of Reading Town Centre is densely developed with predominantly residential dwellings to the northeast of the Site and along the north side of Castle Street.
- ii) Castle Crescent is present with the Site named as "*Greyfriars Vicarage*". Mostly detached properties are located on the south side of Castle Crescent to the west of the Site but the entire plot on the north side of the road, extending to Castle Street, is occupied by *Castlehill House* (plot 158). This is a large building with carriage drive to the northwest meeting Bath Road/Castle Street where there is a Lodge, and with formal gardens to the south. The perimeter of the grounds is delineated with occasional trees.
- iii) Further to the west is *Bath Place*, another large house within modest formal gardens. Almost opposite, on the north side of Bath Road is *Castlehill Lodge*.
- iv) The east side of Coley Hill has a near continuous row of terraced blocks of dwellings very similar to today but to the southern end there is small patch of undeveloped land with a steep side embankment indicated.
- v) Further south of the Site are the extensive quarries and works for *Coley Pottery*, *Avenue Works (Brick, Tile & Pottery)* and *Coley Kilns (Brick, Tile & Pottery)*.

- vi) To the east of the Site is a School (Girls & Infants) beyond which Holybrook is indicated passing south-north. Adjacent the brook is the Reading Iron Works and adjacent Timber Yard
- vii) The Site is similar to today in size and arrangement but with the south boundary abutting open land (plot 172). This forms one of several adjoining open parcels of land extending westwards (plots 171, 170, 169, 177, 179). The main house is identifiable in its current location with a projecting bay visible on the plan to the west elevation (as today). A curving carriage drive extends from Castle Crescent across the frontage of the house towards a rectangular block of outbuildings to the east side. The rear garden comprises a modest plot with formal arrangement of paths and lawns.

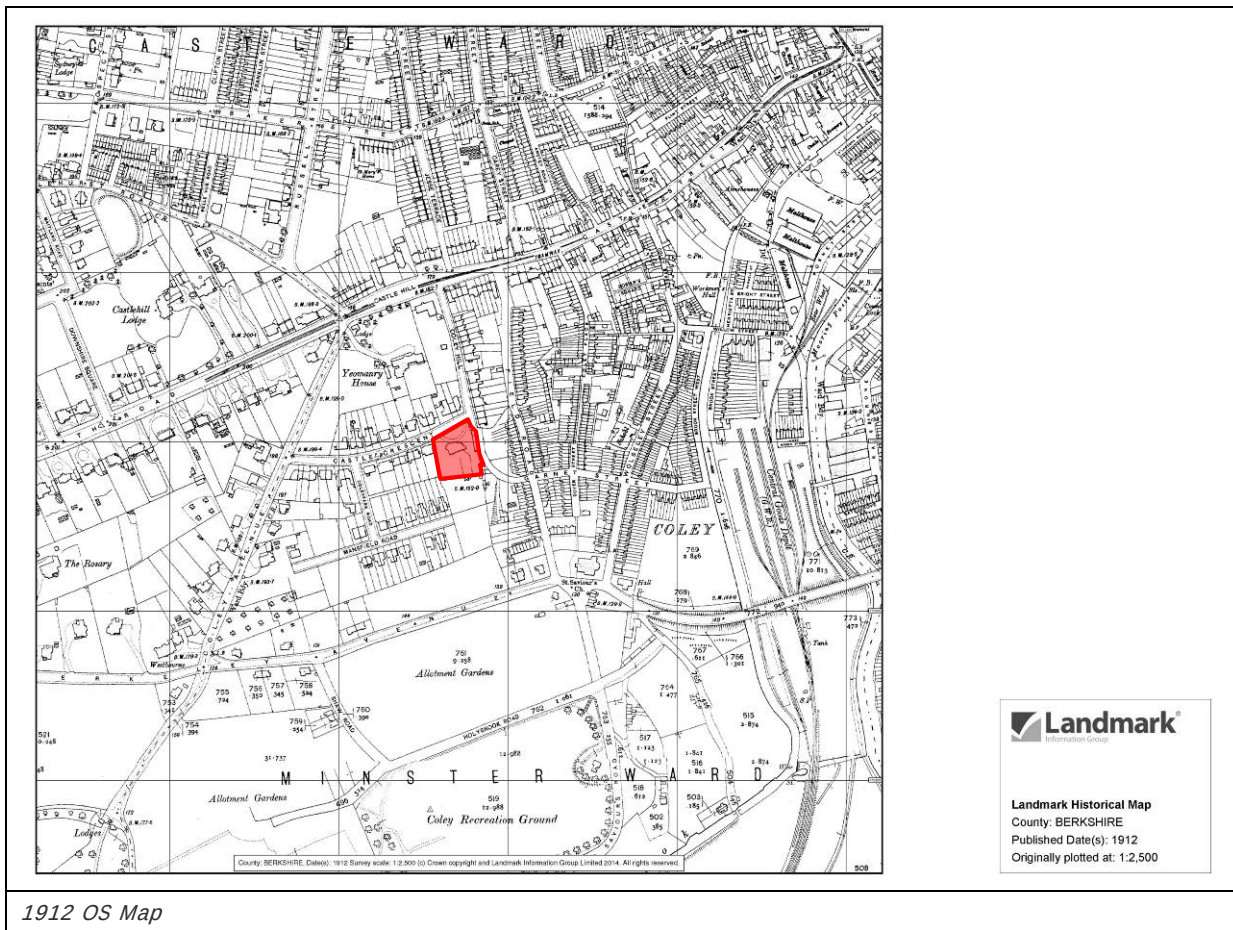
1899



Area broadly similar to 1879 except:

- i) Castle Street now named Castle Hill
- ii) *Castlehill House* renamed *Ascham's House*. Part of the grounds to the south used for new detached and semi-detached dwellings forming part of the north side of Castle Crescent. No dwellings on east side of Coley Avenue or west side of Coley Hill.
- iii) The road to immediate southeast of the Site now identified as Garnet Street and extends into an area of developed streets with terraced blocks of housing. This includes development of the former *Coley Pottery* and includes a new *Church of St Saviours* with access road.
- iv) *Coley Kilns* is no longer shown and the area is called *Coley Recreation Ground*. A new drive extends west-east in this area called Holybrook Road. An Old Clay Pit is still indicated next to the extant *Avenue Works*.
- v) A new residential road, Coley Park Road, has been inserted along the south of Castle Crescent leading to the double ended cul-de-sac of Mansfield Road.
- vi) The Site is little altered with reduced cartographer detailing, and the carriage drive now indicated as a semi-circular arrangement. It is no longer identified as *Greyfriars Vicarage*.

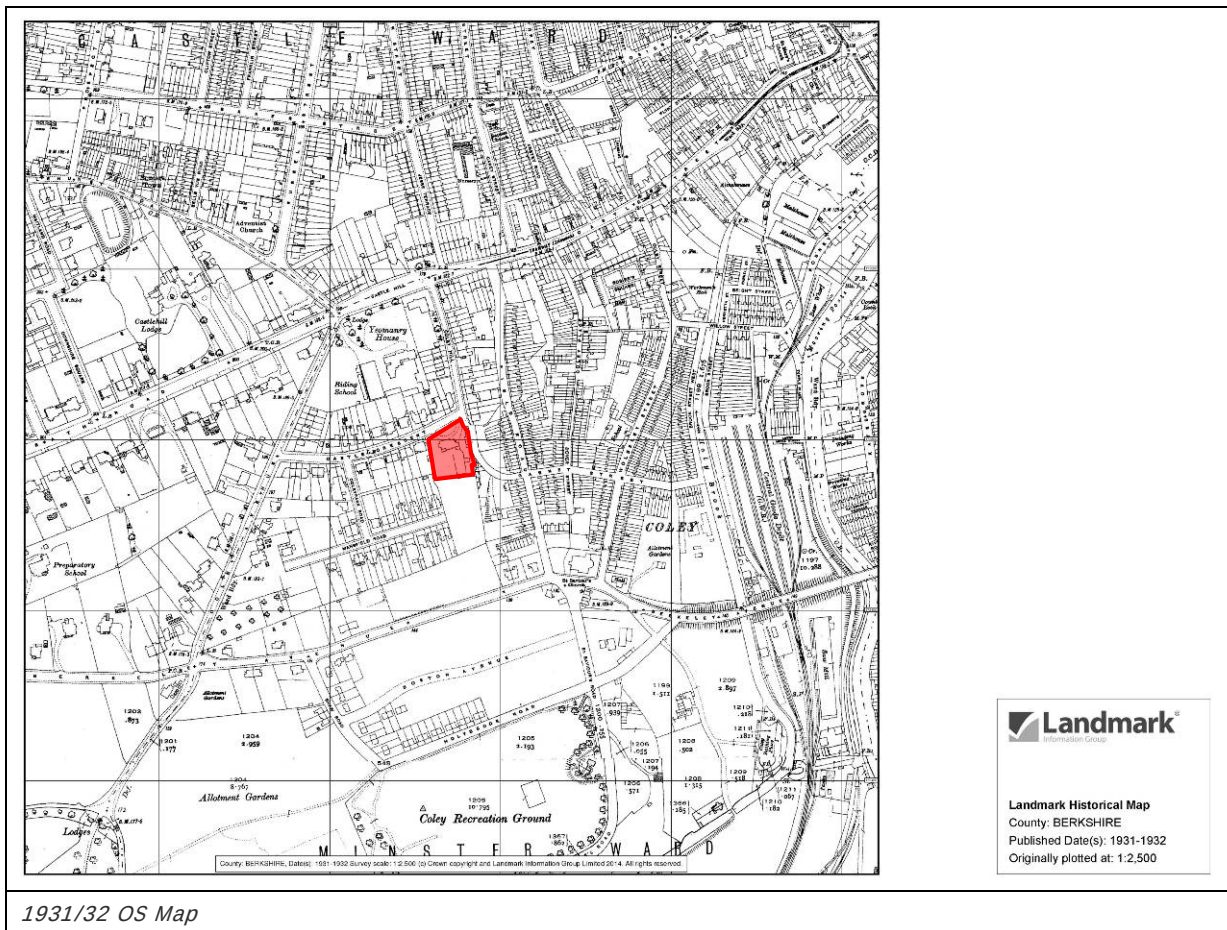
1912



Area broadly similar to 1899 except:

- i) *Ascham House* renamed *Yeomanry House*. An additional L-plan building is indicated to the west of the existing outbuildings. A smaller plot of land to the southeast of the house has been enlarged and extended north to Castle Hill with a large L-Plan building close to the junction of Castle Hill and Coley Hill.
- ii) A Tramway is indicated along Castle Hill (A4).
- iii) The Site as before but presented with less detail.
- iv) Slight intensification of residential development to Mansfield Road.
- v) New Hall identified to east of St Saviour's Church and new road and bridge shown passing over Holybrook towards the Town Centre.
- vi) Reading Iron Works no longer shown, buildings gone and the area now accommodating the GWR Central Goods Depot railway sidings.
- vii) Avenue Works no longer shown. Open area to north of Avenue Works and Coley Works now indicated as Allotment Gardens.

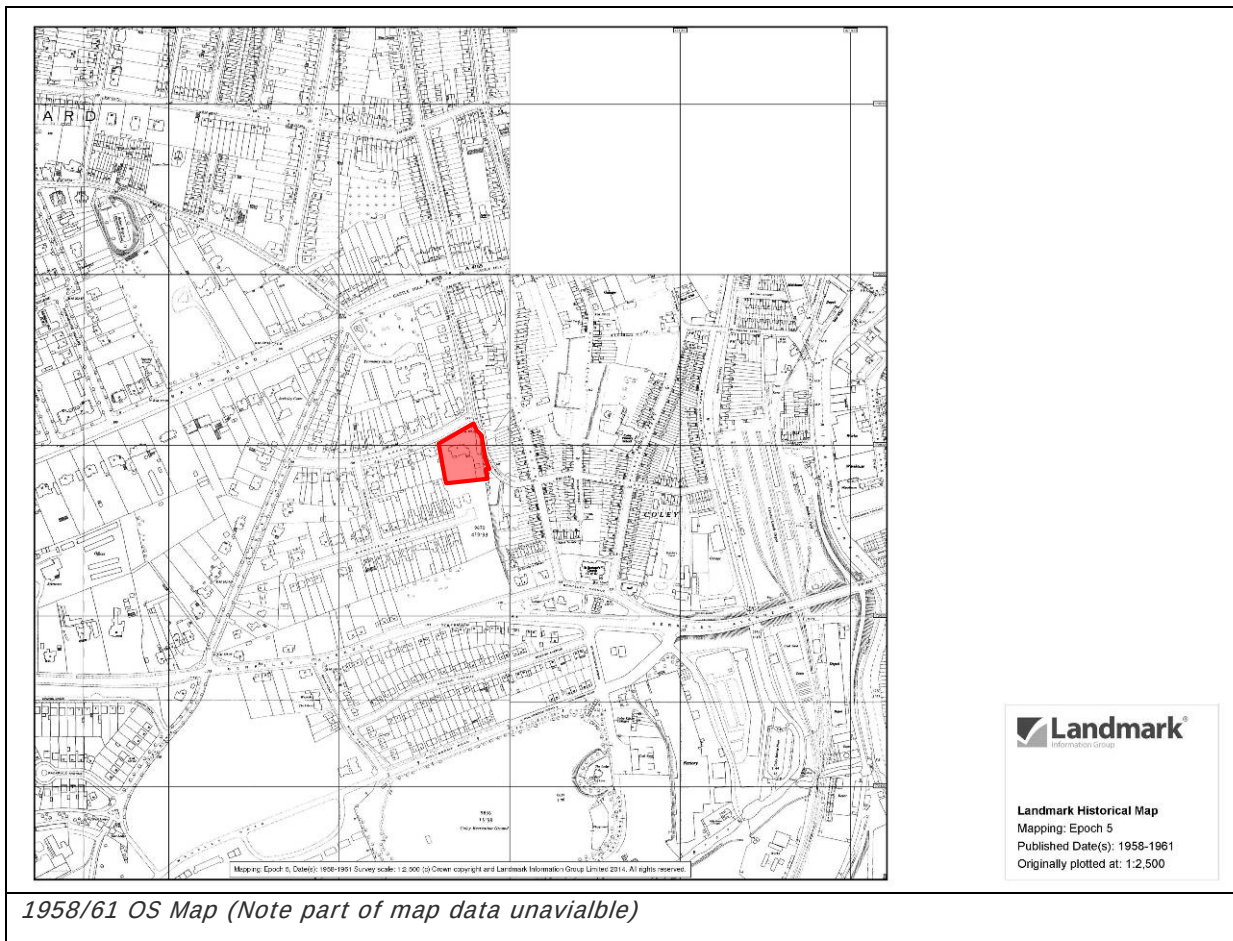
1931/32



Area broadly similar to 1912 except:

- i) *Yeomanry House* as previously but outbuildings replaced with yard and buildings of *Riding School*. Remaining parcel of open land to southwest corner of grounds, on north side of Castle Crescent, now developed. Southern portion of plot to new property noted in previous map on west side of Coley Hill now subdivided and containing detached and semi-detached dwellings.
- ii) Further intensification of residential development to Mansfield Road.
- iii) The Site fundamentally unchanged.
- iv) Holbrook Road now with some semi-detached dwellings on the northern side. New road to north of Holybrook Road called Boston Avenue into area previously identified as Allotment Gardens.
- v) The Tramway to Castle Hill now Disused.

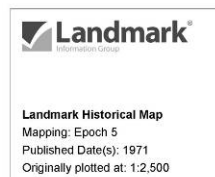
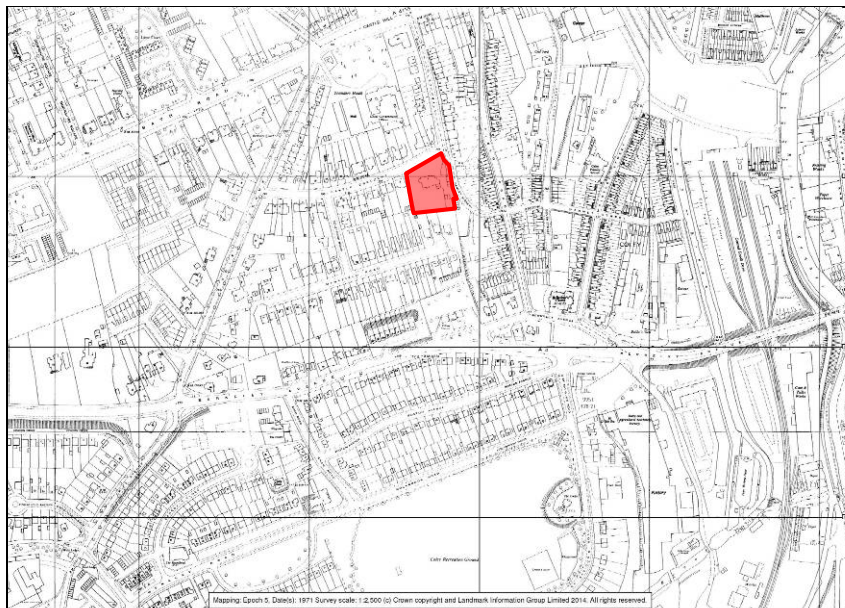
1958/61



Area broadly similar to 1931/32 except:

- i) The large *Castlehill Lodge* no longer shown. Grounds and entrance drive unchanged but house is absent.
- ii) *Yeomanry House* still indicated but *Riding School* not shown. Intensification of residential development to remaining curtilage of grounds alongside Coley Avenue and Coley Hill. The Lodge indicated as a separate detached dwelling (No 133).
- iii) The Site similar to previous maps but simplified cartographic presentation. Plot to south of Site has two detached dwellings accessed from an extended Mansfield Road.
- iv) The School now identified as *Coley Primary School*.
- v) Allotment Gardens to east of St Saviour's Church now a Builder's Yard and Garage.
- vi) Extensive residential development to entire plot of land defined by Holybrook Road, to the south, and Berkeley Avenue, to the north accessed by Boston Avenue.

1971



1971 OS Map

Area broadly similar to 1958/61 except:

- i) Former *Castlehill Lodge* site, and two adjacent smaller sites, redeveloped with residential accommodation and car parking areas.
- ii) *Yeomanry House* now identified as “Local Government Offices”.
- iii) The Site as previously with additional external garage buildings. A third detached residential building indicated to south of garden and intensification of development to Mansfield Road

Indicative Sequence of Development of Castle Crescent and No 3:

- i) In 1838: Castle Crescent and the Site not yet created.
- ii) In 1842: The Reading Directory records: Coley Hill, Coley Terrace and Castle Street but not Castle Crescent.
- iii) By 1853: Castle Crescent formed including No 3.
- iv) In 1865: The Reading Directory records: Castle Crescent with Castle Crescent House (possibly the Site?), Castle Hill Villa, Nos 3 & 4 (occupied by the curate of St Marys), and 1 & 2 Colborne Villas.
- v) By 1879: No 3 extended with large bay window to northwest elevation.
- vi) In 1888: The Reading Directory records: Greyfriars Vicarage (the Site) occupied by Rev Soole; Castle Hill Cottage (unidentified) occupied by Rev Steward and other villas.
- vii) By 1899: Addition to east side of No 3 provided.

Map Regression Summary

The above map regression exercise establishes that no parts of the built environment of the Site existed before 1842. Castle Crescent and the Site were formed between 1842 and 1853. The earliest plan indicates that the original building comprised both the main area having a large almost square footprint with a rectangular addition to its east side. The two sections of the building are therefore contemporaneous.

Additions and alterations were made later in the C19 with the large bay window being drawn on the 1879 map, and the large, two storey projection to the southeast being shown by 1899. It is likely that other embellishments were made to the base building during this period including the bay window to the north of the smaller building.

4.3 Archaeology

- 4.3.1 The Author has reviewed the on-line Historic Environment Record (HER) accessed through the Heritage Gateway for a search area of 1km from the Site (OS Grid Ref SU709727) and has also consulted with Berkshire Archaeology. This is an area rich in heritage with more than 272 results from the National Heritage List for England alone. We have specifically referred to the designated heritage assets which are located within or close to Castle Crescent itself.
- 4.3.2 There are also numerous archaeological records extending across the area, including 133 results from the NMR Excavation Index, but only one potential monument is located within close proximity of the Site – this is to the north, close to the Listed *Yeomanry House* and is suggested to be the site of the Medieval *Reading Castle*. The record states that this was demolished in the mid C12 and it appears that a degree of speculation is involved in linking it with the road Castle Hill.
- 4.3.3 Berkshire Archaeology has noted finds in the vicinity include a Neolithic flint axe and a Medieval iron arrowhead. There is the possibility that part of Reading's Civil War defences may just clip the edge of the Site although there are not believed to be any above ground remains. The Principal Archaeologist considers that the Site would be considered to be of archaeological potential for various periods and has suggested that some archaeological investigation should be undertaken where deep excavations (such as for foundations) are proposed.
- 4.3.4 Much of Site area that is to be developed is already within the vicinity of existing buildings and hardstandings and in such areas there is a likelihood that the potential below ground archaeology may have already been disturbed.
- 4.3.5 We would suggest that a watching brief is undertaken by a qualified archaeologist during future groundworks.

4.4 Historic Development of Castle Hill/Castle Crescent

- 4.4.1 The Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) (The Conservation Studio, 2004) sets out a detailed history of the historic development of Reading, generally, and the Russell Street/Castle Hill in particular. The area lies on a hill to the west of the River Kennet which is above the flood plain and on the historic west-east route (to Bath/Bristol and London).
- 4.4.2 The CAA states that a Norman Castle existed south of Castle Hill and is specific that it was demolished in 1151. There is no evidence of Medieval settlement but early maps indicate buildings lying alongside Castle Street with fields and gardens to either side. Of interest is a record reported in the CAA of an area of disturbed ground to the south of today's 113-121 Castle Hill labelled "*Old Fortifications*".
- 4.4.3 The Holybrook, a little to the east of the Site, was cut to provide water power to the Abbey Mill.
- 4.4.4 By the C18 the area had become an up-market suburb to the main town but without a church or municipal buildings – development still concentrating along Castle Street extending into the town centre.

- 4.4.5 The CAA refers to the large detached house to the southwest of Coley Hill, *Coley Park*, which has provided the names of many of the roads in the conservation area.
- 4.4.6 The C19 OS maps examined illustrate the widespread local brick, tile and pottery industries of this part of Reading with claypits, kilns and works to the immediate east and south of the Site.
- 4.4.7 By the end of the C19 the area was intensively developed with limited areas of open space with the prevailing use remaining residential.

4.5 The Site's Development

- 4.5.1 The Site currently has three components:

- The House
- The Outbuilding
- The Modern Garages



Front (north) elevation of the House



Rear (south) elevation of the House



The Outbuilding



Part of the contemporary garages

- i) The C19 Reading Directories indicate that Castle Crescent was formed between 1842 and 1865 by which time the No 3 is present. At that time it would appear to comprise the main house, possibly with the eastern additions, and with a building towards the northeast corner of the plot approximately corresponding with the Outbuilding. It appears from this that the main detached house and the Outbuilding are broadly contemporaneous with each other.

- ii) As has been clarified above the garages are a modern, C20, introduction.
- iii) It will be noted that both the Outbuilding and the Garages are severely dilapidated and structurally unsound. The Outbuilding has suffered from a fire and the roofs and elements of the external fabric of the Garages have been demolished. Glanville's Structural Report notes that there is extensive damage internally and large cracks to the façade and they considered the building to be unsafe.
- iv) It is considered that neither is capable of meaningful refurbishment and that both should be removed as part of the scheme.

5.0 HERITAGE PLANNING POLICY

A full planning policy assessment is provided within the planning statement accompanying the application. However this section summarises those aspects of the National and Local Policy specifically related to, and influencing heritage for, both this outline and also future reserved matters application stages.

5.1 Reading Borough Council Strategy DPD: Core Strategy: Adopted January 2008 (Reading Borough Council, 2008)

5.1.1 This is the primary local policy document for Reading. It has a number of provisions relating to the historic environment specifically:

5.1.2 **Core Objective No 4:** *To maintain and enhance the historic, built and natural environment of the Borough through investment and high quality design.*

5.1.3 **Environmental Objective No 9:** *To value, protect and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment.*

5.1.4 **Policy CS7 Design and the Public Realm:** includes a requirement for all development to be of high design quality which maintains and enhances the area. Developments should ensure that they respond positively to their local context and character and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough.

5.1.5 **Policy CS33:** is specifically in respect of **Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment** and 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.

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.

5.2 National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF (DCLG, 2012)) and Planning Practice Guidance 2014 (DCLG, 2014)

- i) Para 126 – requires Local Plans to set out a positive strategy for conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment taking account of:
 - The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - The social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
 - The desirability of new development 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 place.
- ii) Para 128 – applicants should describe the significance of heritage assets.
- iii) Para 131 – LPAs to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing significant heritage assets and putting them to use, the positive contribution they can make to sustainable communities and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- iv) Para 132 – any harm to or loss of heritage assets should require clear and convincing justification.
- v) Para 134 – where development would lead to less than substantial harm this should be weighed against the public benefit of the proposals.

5.3 Statutory Legislation

The primary legislation affecting Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas arises from the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (The LPA 1990). Section 66(1) of that Act requires that special regard is given to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural interest which it possesses. Section 72(1) requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

It is to be noted that the recent Court of Appeal case in Barnwell Manor (Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd, 2014) has reinforced the intention of the statutory provision for decision makers to give “*considerable importance and weight*” to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings, or the character of a conservation area, when carrying out the balancing exercise. If a proposed development would conflict with the objective to “*preserve and enhance*” there would be a strong presumption against the grant of planning permission.

However if development would not conflict with that objective the special attention required to be paid to that objective will no longer stand in its way and the development will be permitted or refused in the application of ordinary planning criteria.

6.0 THE HERITAGE ASSETS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

Significance is defined in the NPPF as:

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

6.1 Before any changes are considered to a place, it is essential that the cultural and heritage values, its history, fabric and character are understood. This will require the acquisition and consideration of wide-ranging evidence on the heritage values of the place including, in addition to a physical examination, reference to the Historic Environment Record; reviewing relevant maps; studying both published and informal reports from local history societies etc. It should usually be possible to identify how particular parts of a place and different periods in its evolution contribute to or detract from its cultural and natural heritage value.

6.2 Historic England's Principles of Conservation 2008 (Historic England, 2008) identify four key aspects of a place that can influence our understanding of its significance. These are:

1. Evidential Value – the value a place derives from the potential it has to yield evidence about past human activity.
2. Historical Value – the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.
3. Aesthetic Value – the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.
4. Communal Value – the ways in which a place relates to people in their collective experience of memory.

We consider these “values” in our assessment of the heritage assets relevant to the Application.

6.3 We have consulted the Historic Environment Record/Heritage Gateway and the official List Entries maintained by Historic England. The Site is located close to a number of important heritage assets which contribute to the history of the village. In order to comply with the provisions of para 128 of the NPPF it is essential that the Applicant and his design team understand the parts of the Application Site which are architecturally or historically important by considering:

- World Heritage Sites;
- Scheduled Monuments;
- Listed buildings in the vicinity;
- The setting of those listed buildings;
- Conservation Areas;
- The Archaeology; and
- Non-designated heritage assets.

- 6.4 Primary heritage considerations for this project are:
- 3 Castle Crescent: Listed Grade II
 - 31-35 Coley Hill: Listed Grade II
 - 29 Coley Hill: Listed Grade II
 - 27 Coley Hill: Listed Grade II
 - Yeomanry House: Listed Grade II
 - Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area
- 6.5 We will consider each of the primary heritage assets individually and collectively below. As part of this exercise we will also:
1. Assign an indicative level of significance value (**VERY HIGH - HIGH - MEDIUM - LOW - NEGLIGIBLE**); and
 2. Consider the settings of the assets.
- 6.6 We have determined the significance of the heritage assets by applying a standard methodology which is frequently used for assessing the value of the significance of historic buildings. We make the qualification that no such approach is fool-proof and further adjustment, either up or down, is sometimes required to better reflect the significance value of a particular building or part of a site. We summarise our assessment below.
- 6.7 The methodology adopted originates within “*The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges 2007, Volume 11, Section 3, Part 2: “Cultural Heritage”*” but is quite appropriate for this situation.

Table 6.1: Guide for Establishing Value of Historic Buildings

Criteria for Establishing Value of Historic Buildings	
Very High	• Structures inscribed as of universal importance as World Heritage Sites. • Other buildings of recognised international importance.
High	• Scheduled Monuments with standing remains. • Grade I and Grade II* (Scotland: Category A) Listed Buildings. • Other listed buildings that can be shown to have exceptional qualities in their fabric or historical associations not adequately reflected in the listing grade. • Conservation Areas containing very important buildings. • Undesignated structures of clear national importance.
Medium	• Grade II (Scotland: Category B) Listed Buildings. • Historic (unlisted) buildings that can be shown to have exceptional qualities in their fabric or historical associations. • Conservation Areas containing buildings that contribute significantly to its historic character. • Historic Townscape or built-up areas with important historic integrity in their buildings, or built settings (e.g. including street furniture and other structures).
Low	• ‘Locally Listed’ buildings (Scotland Category C(S) Listed Buildings). • Historic (unlisted) buildings of modest quality in their fabric or historical association. • Historic Townscape or built-up areas of limited historic integrity in their buildings, or built settings (e.g. including street furniture and other structures).
Negligible	• Buildings of no architectural or historical note; buildings of an intrusive character.
Unknown	• Buildings with some hidden (i.e. inaccessible) potential for historic significance.

*Table setting out the baseline assessment of value of significance
Extracted from Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, 2007*