



DESIGN AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

Redecoration and making good of the front facade
450 Oxford Rd, Reading, RG30 1EE

Prepared for: The Keen Partnership

The purpose of this report is to accompany a planning or Listed Building application. A heritage statement sets out the details of the history and development of the asset using photographic, map, archival and fabric evidence. It includes an assessment of the evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value of the heritage asset and the impact of the proposed works upon that significance. In addition to desk based research a site visit was carried out as part of this assessment and a non intrusive survey took place.

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450 Oxford Rd, Reading, RG30 1EE

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Heritage Asset and its Setting:

Project Address: 450 Oxford Rd, Reading, RG30 1EE

Local Authority: Reading Borough Council

Conservation Area: None

Archaeological Notification Area: None

Building Use: Residential/Commercial

Listing Status: Grade II List entry no. 1113552

Designated Heritage Asset:

Scheduled Monument?	N
Listed Building?	Y
Registered Park and Garden	N
Historic Battlefield	N
Conservation Area	N
World Heritage Site	N

Non Designated Heritage Asset	N
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Project Overview:

Redecoration of the existing building externally. Removal of the existing signage and making good.



Photo 1 – View of front (south) elevation

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Photo 2 and 3 – View of front/side elevation (south/southwest)



Photo 4 – View of front/side elevation (southeast)



Photo 5 and 6 – View of side/rear elevation (east/northeast)

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Drawings and Documents provided:

2142 E01 Location and Site Plan
2142 P10 Existing and Proposed Front Elevation

Schedule of Intervention:

In order to achieve the works, the following alterations/ interventions will be required:

- The removal of the existing signage for the letting agency and making good of any holes.
- The redecoration of the existing cement render from blue to Dulux Heritage True White
- Like for like redecoration of the existing porch and windows.

- No proposed extensions
- No proposed changes to the other elevations
- No internal changes.

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Setting Overview/ Context:

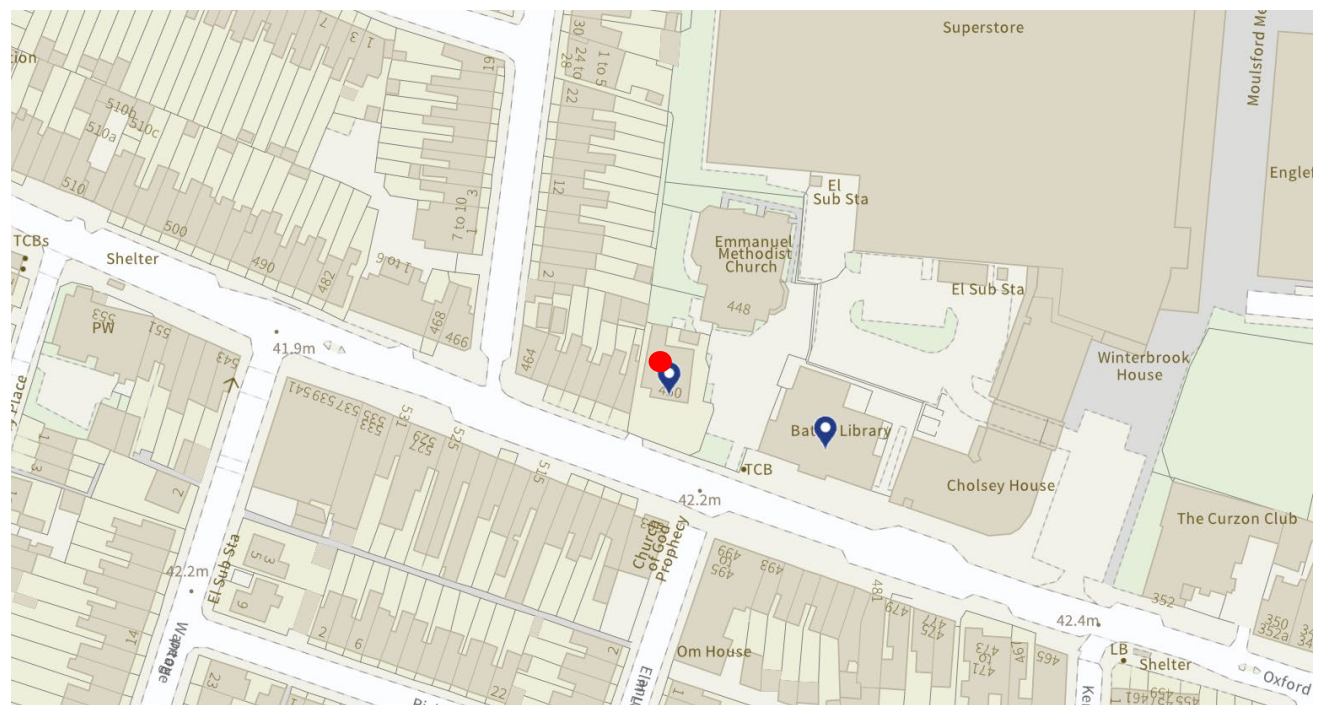
The property is situated on Oxford Road, with Battle library (Listed) to the East and Emmanuel Methodist Church to the North. It is in the suburb of West Reading, 2km west of Reading town centre and main station.

Oxford Road is a wide boulevard running East-West, dotted with trees for the first 2.5km from Reading town centre, including past the property, then more fully tree lined as it heads west to Purley-on-Thames. Most of the road forms part of the A329, the main road though many major settlements between Virginia Water, Surrey and Thame, Oxfordshire Via Reading. Along Oxford Road, the Buildings are predominantly brick. Up to and around 450 Oxford Road, they are primarily Georgian and Victorian terraces, with many small shops at ground floor level that reflect the cultural diversity of the surrounding area. Within the Russell Street and Castle Hill Conservation Area, which stops 750m east of the property, many of these buildings are Listed. As the road continues west, the buildings are mainly 20th century in design, first in terraces, then semi-detached, then detached as the road passes Tilehurst station. Notable buildings within the streetscape include multiple places of worship, a school, pubs, a social club, Battle Library, Army Reserve Centre and a care home.

450 Oxford Road is a two storey detached house made from brick, of a square and symmetrical design, dating from the late 18th Century. The stucco front (currently painted electric blue) faces South, viewing Victorian terraced houses. Because of the current frontage colour, it is currently prominent on the streetscape, a colour first recorded to have been in place on Google Streetview in July 2017. The roof is a plain clay tile roof and the front windows are white painted timber sliding sashes. There are modern two storey brick extensions to the rear and a further single storey flat roof extension to the side and rear.

It is set 10m back from the road, behind the line of surrounding buildings, with off street parking to its frontage. Other than this area to the front, and a small courtyard space with side access to the rear the building covers the majority of the plot. The property is Grade II Listed.

Setting: Urban Area Topography: Flat



Map taken from Historic England Listing Database. Property shown with a red dot.

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Site Planning History:

App. No.: 131613
Description: Single Storey side extension to create additional office space.
Decision Date: 20/05/2014 Decision: Application Permitted

App. No.: 131655
Description: Single storey side extension to create additional office space
Decision Date: 20/05/2014 Decision: Application Permitted

App. No.: 071015
Description: Construction of rear single storey extension
Decision Date: 03/12/2007 Decision: Application Refused
Application Status: Appeal Determined

App. No.: 071014
Description: Construction of rear single storey extension
Decision Date: 03/12/2007 Decision: Application Refused
Application Status: Appeal Determined

App. No.: 061311
Description: Change of use from dwellinghouse to 2 x 1 bedroom flats at first floor and office accommodation (A2 Use) at ground floor with a single storey rear extension with basement.
Decision Date: 10/01/2007 Decision: Application Permitted

App. No.: 061312
Description: Change of use from dwellinghouse to 2 x 1 bedroom flats at first floor and office accommodation (A2 Use) at ground floor with a single storey rear extension with basement.
Decision Date: 10/01/2007 Decision: Application Permitted

App. No.: 051236
Description: Change of use from dwellinghouse to 2x1 bed flats (first floor) and A2use (ground floor) and single-storey rear extension.
Decision Date: 22/11/2006 Decision: Application Withdrawn

App. No.: 051237
Description: Change of use from dwelling-house to 2x1 bed flats (first floor) and A2 use (ground floor) and single-storey rear extension.
Decision Date: 16/11/2006 Decision: Application Withdrawn

App. No.: 050680
Description: Erection of Methodist Church (amendment to previously approved scheme 96/0874/FD which is under construction)
Decision Date: 19/04/2005 Decision: Application Permitted

App. No.: 031285
Description: Change of use from approved community rooms to 2 flats - external alteration, canopy over side door, internal alteration, repositioning of stairs
Decision Date: 19/01/2004 Decision: Application Permitted

App. No.: 030460
Description: Change of use from community rooms to two flats
Decision Date: 19/01/2004 Decision: Application Permitted

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App. No.: 960637
Description: +Erection of new church building including raising of land levels, demolition of Elm Park Hall and provision of car parking, change of use of 450 Oxford Rd from residential to counselling rooms ancillary to church.
Decision Date: 06/01/2003 Decision: Permitted subject to Legal Agreement

App. No.: 930305
Description: Erection of two storey building comprising ground floor car showroom and ancillary offices above. Erection of a pitched roof residential garage.
Decision Date: 10/02/1994 Decision: Application Refused

App. No.: 900742
Description: Erection of a class B1(a) office building together with associated vehicular access and parking.
Decision Date: 06/04/1990 Decision: Application Refused

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Impacted Heritage Assets:

The building sits outside the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area.

The building is Grade II Listed.

Official list entry

Heritage Category: Listed Building Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1113552 Date first listed: 21-Jan-1976
List Entry Name: 450, OXFORD ROAD
Statutory Address 1: 450, OXFORD ROAD

Location

Statutory Address: 450, OXFORD ROAD
District: Reading (Unitary Authority) Parish: Non Civil Parish
National Grid Reference: SU 69580 73686

Details

OXFORD ROAD 1. 5128 (North Side) SU 67 SE 16/364 21.1.76. No 450 II 2. Small late C18 symmetrical house with stucco front and brick block eaves cornice. Steep gable end old tiled roof with flanking chimneys. 3 windows, glazing bar sashes in nearly flush frames. Central flush panel door in architrave case and flat trellis work canopy (arched blank fan behind canopy). A well proportioned elevation.
Listing NGR: SU6958073686

The building is within the context of a Listed Building.

Official list entry

Heritage Category: Listed Building Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1302878 Date first listed: 14-Dec-1978
List Entry Name: West Branch Library
Statutory Address 1: West Branch Library, Oxford Road

Location

Statutory Address: West Branch Library, Oxford Road
District: Reading (Unitary Authority) Parish: Non Civil Parish National Grid Reference: SU 69618 73673

Details

SU 67 SE 16/543 Oxford Road (north side) West Branch Library II
1907 designed by F.W. Albury. A good example in "Wren-naissance" style. One 1/2 storeys. Red brick with Bath stone ashlar dressings, moulded plinth, modillion cornice and cope to parapet. Three bays each side or fabled porch break with paired glazing bar casement windows flanked by paired pilasters. Hipped tiled roof with two tripartite segmental dormers behind parapet. Wooden cupola with Doric peristyle and lead dome. Segmental headed entrance with concave surround. Gable over has three busts - Milton, Shakespeare and (possibly) Darwin.
Stone commemorative tablets on each side laid by Edward Jackson (mayor) and Dr Jameson Hurry (local antiquary) 16.x.1907. Lobby has marble commemorative plaques naming architect, donor Andrew Carnegie, G W Palmer (who opened it) and builders (T H Kingerlee and Sons).
Interior: top lit central hall with stained glass (The Abbey, Reading and University badges). Three rooms, side rooms have plaster barrel vault, and modillion cornice and dormers in ceiling. Glazed screen fronts desk to north room. Listing NGR: SU6961873673

Sources

Websites

British Geological Survey, Strategic Stone Study, accessed 4 February 2020 from
https://www.bgs.ac.uk/mineralsuk/buildingStones/StrategicStoneStudy/EH_atlases.html

Assessment of Significance:

Heritage has cultural, social, economic and environmental values. The attributes that combine to define the significance of a historic building can relate to its physical properties or to its context. – BS 7913:2013.

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance – NPPF

Archeological: *As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.*

There are no proposed below ground works so this has not been reviewed as part of this reporting

Historic: *An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.*

The property seems to appear on the 1844 Tithe mapping described as Cottage and garden and owned and occupied by George Higgs. It sits in close proximity to the tollhouse for the turnpike road in front. At this point in time it was part of a much larger plot and there was little in terms of development around it. It is shown on the 1883 mapping with greater clarity.

In the 1891, 1901 and 1911 Census the property is clearly recorded as house and garden. In 1891 it was occupied by William Taylor, who was listed as a store keeper, and his family. In 1901 it was occupied by Joseph G Clark who was listed as a Greengrocer and his wife Sarah a teacher of music. In 1911 it was owned by John Hill and occupied by F Iremonger.

The property changes little in its footprint in the 1969 footprint.

In 2003 consent was granted to split part of the land off to provide access to a new build Methodist church and the property was converted from residential use to ancillary use for the church where it was used as community halls and residential.

In 2004 the community halls on the upper level were changed to flats with their own external access.

McCarthy Properties changed the use of the property from residential to A2 office and 2no. flats in 2006 (consent 051237) and occupied the premise, extending it to the side and rear. The property has been used on the ground floor for commercial use since with flats over.

The property has very recently been sold and the new owners wish to restore the building façade.

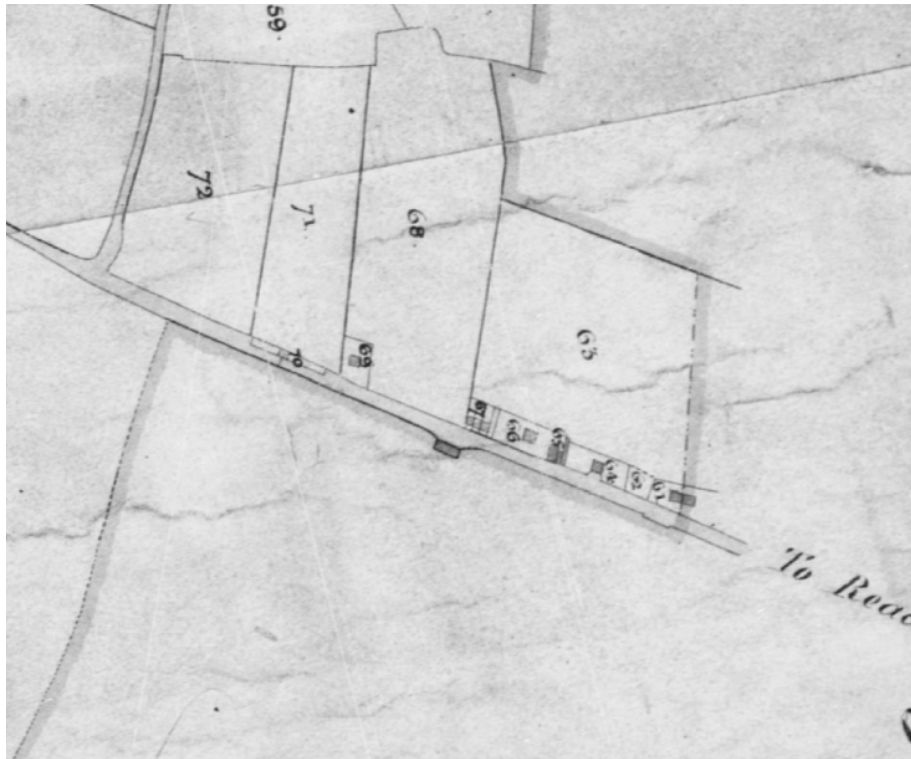
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Architectural or Artistic: *These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.*

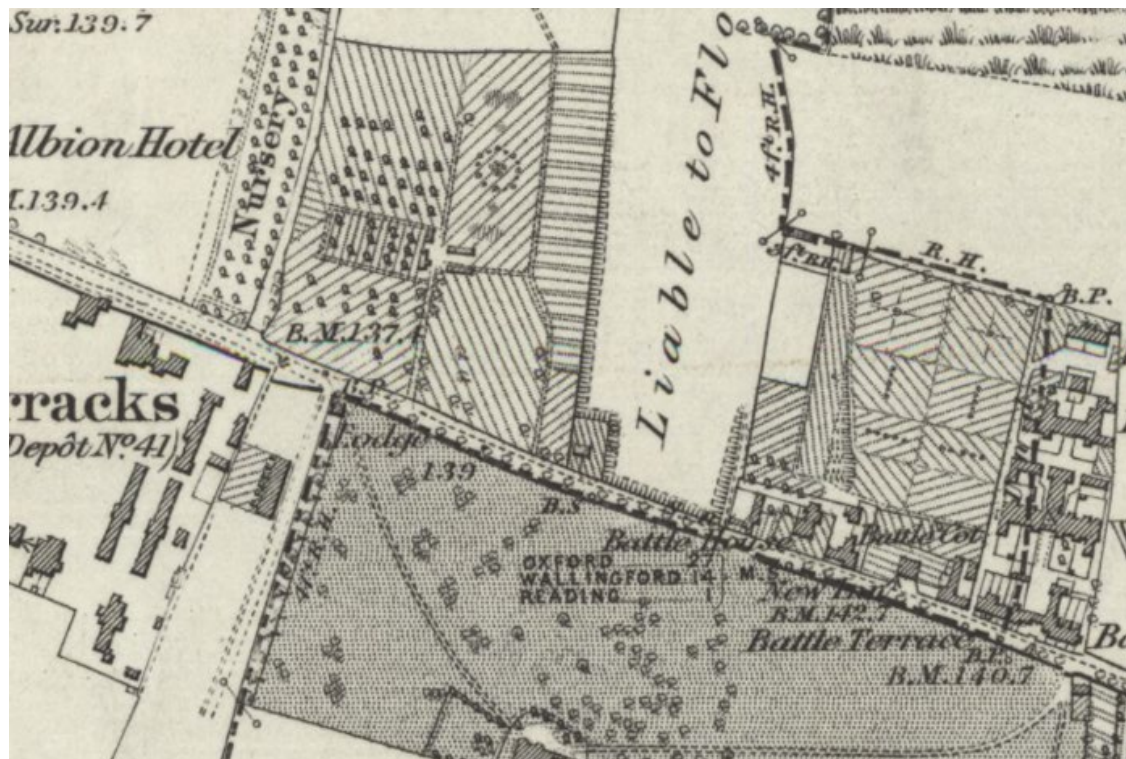
The building is a simple but high quality vernacular building with its original footprint clearly legible which contributes positively to the wider streetscene. The rear of the building is of little significance architecturally having been substantially altered over time however the front retains much of its traditional architectural language.

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Historic Mapping – For reference dating only, not for reproduction



Extract from Tithe Map of Tilehurst Parish Berkshire 1844

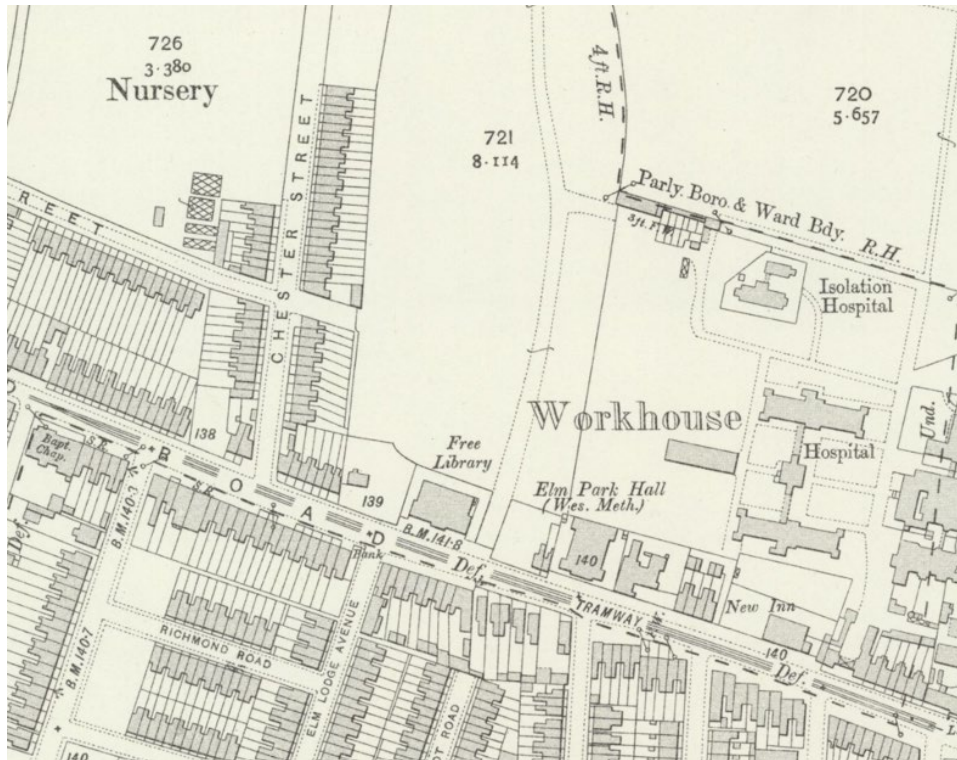


Extract from Berkshire Sheet XXXVII 1883

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Extract from Berkshire Sheet XXXVII N.W 1900



Extract from Berkshire Sheet XXXVII.2 1911

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Extract from Berkshire Sheet XXXVII.2 1932



Extract from SU6973NE-A 1959

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Extract from SU6973NE 1968

Development Impact on the Historical Asset:

An assessment of how the proposed works will affect the significance of the heritage asset and the justification for that impact.

Proposals should and do:

- 1 - Avoid, minimise and mitigate negative impact, in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF.*
- 2 - Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance.*

Building Elevations and Setting:

The building frontage was painted blue somewhere between July 2016 and 2017. The proposal is to revert it back to an off white colour and remove the signage as per the google streetview image below. None of the other elevations will be impacted. Although the current blue colour has been a positive for the business itself and therefore ensured the continued use of the existing building in a positive manner, to revert it back to an off white colour will be a visual enhancement with net heritage benefit.



Internally:

There are no proposed internal works as a result of this application.

Scale and Massing:

There is no proposed change to the scale or massing of this building.

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Archeaology:

There are no proposed below ground works so no impact on below ground archaeology as a result of this reporting.

Use:

There is no proposed change of use or intensification of use as part of these proposals. The redecoration is proposed as part of a change of building ownership. A separate application will be made for any new proposed signage for the building.

Relevant Policy:

The Government has set out its planning policies framework for the historic environment in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlining the framework within which local authorities should consider the importance of conserving, or enhancing aspects of the historic environment within the planning process. This was published in March 2012 and replaced in 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2023.

Conservation as defined by the NPPF is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets as diverse as listed buildings in every day use and as yet undiscovered, undesigned buried remains of archaeological interest.

In the case of buildings, generally the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Ensuring such heritage assets remain used and valued is likely to require sympathetic changes to be made from time to time. In the case of archaeological sites, many have no active use, and so for those kinds of sites, periodic changes may not be necessary, though on-going management remains important.

Where changes are proposed, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a clear framework for both plan-making and decision-making in respect of applications for planning permission and Listed Building consent to ensure that heritage assets are conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance and thereby achieving sustainable development. The National Planning Policy Framework defines a heritage asset as, 'a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets are either designated heritage assets or non-designated heritage assets.

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. 'Significance' in terms of heritage-related planning policy is defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not. The setting of a heritage asset and the asset's curtilage may not have the same extent.

The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to the visual relationship between the asset and the proposed development and associated visual/physical considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part in the assessment of impacts on setting, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust, smell and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each.

The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights of way or an ability to otherwise access or experience that setting. The contribution may vary over time.

When assessing any application which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change. They may also need to consider the fact that developments which materially detract from the asset's significance may also damage its economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its ongoing conservation.

Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of: (a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; (b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and (c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Historic England 'Conservation Principles' deem new work or alteration to be normally acceptable where the proposals do not materially harm the value of the place. They consider the setting of the heritage asset to contribute greatly to its significance. They accept that a heritage setting changes over time.

The local authority may have location specific guidance also which includes policies which seek to ensure the protection of the historic environment and that development is of a high quality and seeks to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Heritage Asset. In assessing the impact of these proposals local guidance has also been considered.

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 196) requires that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing the optimum viable use of that asset. Where a heritage asset is capable of having a use, then securing its optimum viable use should be taken into account in assessing the public benefits of a proposed development. Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to a listed private dwelling which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit. Examples of heritage benefits may include: sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting, reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset, securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation.

Changes to the setting of historic buildings / Conservation Areas are to be sympathetic in terms of siting, proportion, scale, form, height, materials and detailing. All design work and procedures should follow guidance outlined in BS 7913:2013 Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings.

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Conclusion:

The proposals are minimal and involve only the front elevation of the building. They revert the building paint colour back to an off white colour as recently requested by Reading Borough Council and make good the front facade. The blue colour has been successful for the existing business, resulting in continuing positive usage of the building, and creating a slightly iconic Listed Building on the Oxford Road with the colour having been in place for approximately 8 years. Recent communication with the council combined with the recent sale of the property however gives an opportunity for the building colour to be adjusted to a more neutral heritage white colour. This will be of net heritage benefit to the visuals of both the building and the wider context.

Any change to the business occupying the ground floor resulting in new signage proposed will be subject to a separate and specific application.

These proposals are minor in nature and in line with both national and local planning policy and should be supported by local authority.

Assessor Details:

Surveyor: Michelle Purnell BA(hons) BArch RIBA MSc Building Conservation IHBC

A site visit was undertaken as part of the site investigation in order to understand important relationships in the area surrounding the site. Date of Site Visit: 30/09/2024 Weather conditions at time of visit: Dry

Information Source Checklist:

The following information sources have been used when conducting desk based research:

Historic England List of Protected Historic Sites x
National Planning Policy Framework x
Planning Practice Guidance: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment x
Relevant Local Plans x
Conservation Area Character Appraisal x
Local Authority Landscape Character Assessment n/a
The Local List of Buildings and Monuments x
Local Records Office Other (please state):