

PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

86 London Street, Reading, RG1 4SJ

PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT TO SUPPORT PLANNING APPLICATION

Change of Use from Office (Class E) to Residential (Class C3)



PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

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Contents

1. Introduction	Page 3
2. Policy Contexts	Page 3 - 4
3. The Heritage	Page 5
4. Historical Background	Page 5
5. Description of the Listed Building	Page 6
6. Internal Features	Page 6
7. Assessment of Impacts of the Proposed Development	Page 6
8. Conclusion	Page 7

PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

86 London Street, Reading, RG1 4SJ

1. Introduction

This Planning and Heritage Statement is submitted on behalf of our client Mr. Philip Lee, in support of the proposed works at 86 London Street, a Grade II listed building situated in a designated conservation area in Reading. The proposed development seeks to convert the building from office use (E) to residential use (C3), with internal modifications to enhance functionality while respecting the historical character of the property. The works include the installation of en-suite bathrooms, internal reconfigurations, and cosmetic improvements to ensure the building remains suitable for residential use while preserving its heritage value.

The property at 86 London Street is a three-storey building with a basement. It is a Grade II listed building located within a designated conservation area in Reading. Given its historical and architectural significance, a sensitive approach to alterations and improvements is essential to ensure its heritage value is maintained while making it suitable for modern residential use.

The proposed works include:

- **Conversion of Use:** Change of use from office (E) to residential (C3) to provide a more sustainable and appropriate function for the building.
- **Addition of En-Suite Bathrooms:** Installation of two en-suite bathrooms on both the first and second floors. Non-load bearing timber stud walls will be used to create these spaces, ensuring minimal impact on the original structure.
- **Basement Alterations:** Reconfiguration of internal walls to create more practical residential spaces, improving usability without altering the building's structural integrity.
- **New Flooring:** Replacement of worn-out flooring where necessary, using materials that complement the original character of the building.
- **Repainting of Walls and Surfaces:** Application of historically appropriate finishes that respect and enhance the building's existing character. All finishes will match the existing finishes to maintain consistency with the original design. The external features will remain untouched.

2. Policy Context

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out national planning policy relating to the conservation of the historic environment. It advises that, in determining planning applications, "local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made to their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance" (paragraph 194, NPPF 2023).

Annex 2 of 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." Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment and include designated and non-designated heritage assets.

In determining planning applications, the NPPF advises that local planning authorities should take account of (paragraph 197, NPPF 2023):

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities, including their economic vitality; and

PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

86 London Street, Reading, RG1 4SJ

- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Specific guidance on the treatment of designated heritage assets (such as listed buildings) emphasizes the need to understand the significance of a heritage asset to determine impacts on the historic environment (paragraph 199, NPPF 2023). It advises that "when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm should require clear and convincing justification."

The Reading Borough Local Plan, adopted in November 2019, includes the relevant historic environment policy for the proposed development:

- Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

The Reading Core Strategy, adopted in January 2008 and altered in 2015, contains the following relevant historic environment policy:

- Policy CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

Policy CS33 states that historic features, areas of historic importance, and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced. This includes:

- 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 Reading Central Area Action Plan, adopted in January 2009, contains policies related to the consideration of impacts on the settings of listed buildings and conservation areas. Policy RC4j applies to 25-31 London Street, but there is no specific policy for the southern end of London Street.

The Reading Sites and Detailed Policies Document, adopted in 2012, refers to guidance set out in the NPPF (2012) and to Policy CS33 of the Reading Core Strategy but does not include additional policies relating to the historic environment.

PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

86 London Street, Reading, RG1 4SJ

3. The Heritage

86 London Street, Reading was added to the statutory List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest at Grade II on 14th December 1978 under list number 1113530. The list description reads as follows:

LONDON STREET Late 18th to early 19th century. Three storeys. Brick / Stucco front with moulded cornice and parapet. Pitched old tile roof. Traditional timber-framed sash windows with glazing bars, three to each upper floor. Ground floor 2 Traditional timber-framed sash windows with glazing bars. The entrance is marked by a six-panelled door beneath an elaborate, rococo-style fanlight. Above, a timber cornice separates the ground floor from the first floor

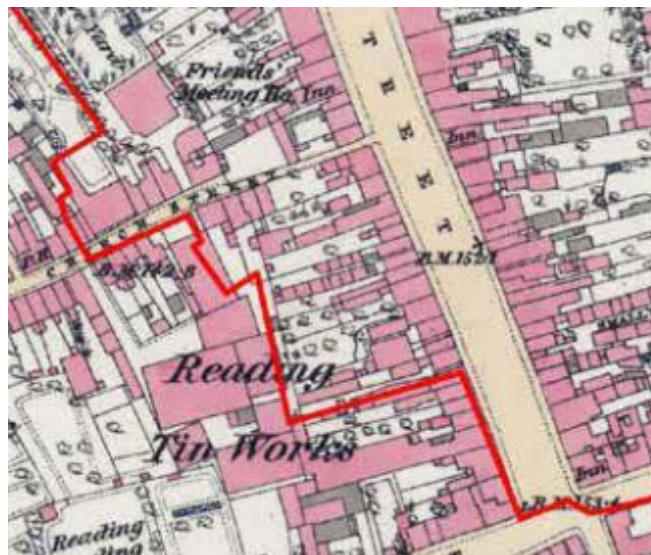
86 London Street Located within the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area, an area notable for its concentration of Georgian and early Victorian townhouses and commercial buildings.

4. Historical Background

London Street is one of Reading's oldest thoroughfares, with origins dating back to medieval period onwards. John Speed's map of Reading (1611) shows 'London Street'. Although the street frontage today has a strong Georgian and later appearance, older structures can be found to the rear, including curved cellars. It has historically been a commercial and residential area, reflecting the town's growth and development over centuries. The architecture along London Street showcases a mix of Georgian and Victorian styles, with some buildings dating back to the 18th and 19th centuries. This area has witnessed significant urban development, including the expansion of Reading's railway network in the 19th century, which influenced the local economy and infrastructure.

By the late 18th century London Street had become one of the fashionable parts of town. Many of the elegant house from the 18th and 19th centuries which lined both sides of the road still survive.

The 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey map of Reading (1879) provides details of the building that show there are no apparent changes.



Extract from the 1st Edition OS Map (1879)

PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

86 London Street, Reading, RG1 4SJ

5. Description of the Listed Building

86 London Street, Reading (also known as Albion House), is a Grade II listed building situated in the heart of Reading's historic urban fabric. Constructed in the early to mid-18th century, this terraced house has undergone various alterations over time, reflecting the evolving architectural and functional needs of the area. It was first listed on 22 March 1957 and remains an integral part of Reading's architectural heritage

Materials & Structure: The building is constructed from tuck-pointed red brick laid in Flemish bond, with timber and stucco dressings, and features clay tile roof coverings.

Facade & Elevation:

- **Ground Floor:** The entrance is marked by a six-panelled door beneath an elaborate, rococo-style fanlight. Above, a timber cornice separates the ground floor from the first floor.
- **First Floor:** Features four large Doric pilasters supporting a broad stucco entablature with metopes and a dentilled cornice. Between the pilasters are three six-over-six sash windows with moulded frames and keystones.
- **Second Floor:** Comprises squat six-over-six segmental-headed sash windows with exposed sash boxes and a brick parapet with a stone coping. Behind the parapet is a tile-covered M roof.
- **Basement:** Painted white with two hopper windows behind iron railings.
- **Rear Elevation:** The rear is three bays wide, with the ground and first floors painted white, while the second floor is exposed red brick. Window configurations vary, with some uPVC and others timber sash windows

As of the latest available information, 86 London Street functions as a letting agency on the ground floor, with private apartments above. The building retains much of its historic character and charm, making it a unique and appealing setting for its current use.

The building is listed at Grade II for its architectural interest as an early to mid-18th-century townhouse, its historic interest as part of the urban development of Reading's ancient core, and its group value due to its proximity to a large number of listed buildings, forming part of a strong historic grouping.

6. Internal Features

The property's historical significance has been carefully considered in the design approach. All proposed works are internal and will not affect the external appearance or fabric of the building. The new en-suite bathrooms and basement alterations are designed to be reversible where possible, ensuring that the historical integrity of the property is maintained. Materials and finishes have been selected to align with the existing aesthetic, and no significant historical features will be removed or obscured. All finishes will match the existing finishes to ensure continuity with the original architectural details.

7. Assessment of Impacts of the Proposed Development

Due to the internal features of the property being modernised there are no impacts on any features that could be classed as a negative impact due to the change of class. Internal walls are not proposed to be removed or amended at ground and upper floors so there will also be no structural work to the property. In the basement as shown on the plan some non-load bearing partition will be removed / add to suit the needs for the residential space. Ground floor will remain untouched as the only item of heritage left within the property. The external features will also remain untouched.

PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

86 London Street, Reading, RG1 4SJ

8. Conclusion

The proposed conversion of 86 London Street from offices to a dwelling involves

- Addition of en-suite bathrooms on the first and second floors and installation of non-load bearing timber stud walls to form the new en-suite bathrooms.
- Internal alterations in the basement, including removal and installation of some internal walls to suit the needs for functional residential spaces.
- Replacement of flooring where necessary.

Repainting of walls and surfaces using materials and finishes that respect the building's historical character

The proposed alterations would have no impact on significant historic fabric as there are no fabric changes only class. The main change in terms of existing building would be the internal improvement to the current arrangement and positive impact on the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area. There will be no alterations to the external structure of the building. Building was vacant since 18.03.2025.

The proposed conversion provides a future use for the building which has been redundant for some time and will ensure the long-term preservation of the listed building. It is considered that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the overall significance of the listed building in accordance with paragraph 132 of the NPPF and the Reading Borough Local Plan Policy EN1.

We respectfully request approval of this planning application for the change of use and internal alterations at 86 London Street, Reading, RG1 4SJ. The alterations will be carried out in a manner that is considerate to the building's history, and the change of use will secure the building's ongoing preservation and active use.