

Job No: 1041

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**READING TOWN HALL
BLAGRAVE STREET
READING
RG1 1QH**

**MUSEUM ROOFS RF7 TO RF23
CONSERVATION IMPROVEMENT WORKS
TEMPORARY OPENING UP WORKS FOR INVESTIGATION**



HERITAGE STATEMENT

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1.00 Introduction

1.01 Introduction

Listed building consent and planning permission approvals are sought for the structural repair and conservation improvement works (repairs) to the roofs over the museum to Reading Town Hall. In the first instance, separate listed building consent approval is required for temporary opening up works essential to understand the existing historic structure and fabric of the building, to identify condition and building faults and to determine appropriate conservation improvement work proposals.

The proposed works affect designated heritage assets; Reading Town Hall, which is situated in the Market Place and London Street Conservation Area.

1.02 Purpose of this Heritage Statement

The purpose of this Heritage Statement is to demonstrate a clear understanding of the values that make the designated heritage assets, Reading Town Hall and the Market Place and London Street Conservation Area, culturally significant, and then to communicate the need for action, the appropriateness of proposed conservation improvement works to the roofs over the museum, and how these repairs respond to the historic nature of the place, without causing harm to this significance.

The Heritage Statement sets out the need and justification for the proposed conservation improvement works and explains why the particular types of repairs are proposed. It explains why these works are considered the most appropriate to maintain the character and detail of the Town Hall to retain and enhance its cultural significance, including the values that contribute to the wider setting and context of the Conservation Area. The Heritage Statement will also outline how the proposed repairs will contribute to the long-term sustainable conservation of the heritage assets and the mitigation measures adopted to remove the risk of potential harm to significance.

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas are heritage assets statutorily designated for their special architectural and historic interest under the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

1.03 Conduct of the Heritage Statement

This Heritage Statement is written following the guidance outlined in paragraphs 202, 203, 207, 208, 210, 212 and 215 in section 16, Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) dated December 2024, which sets out the requirement for applicants to assess the significance and special interest of heritage assets and their settings to minimise or avoid potential conflict between proposed developments and the historic built environment.

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024 section 16 item 207 (part):

'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.'

National policy and guidance place significant emphasis on the need to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so they can be enjoyed and continue to contribute towards the quality of life of existing and future generations.

This Heritage Statement, along with all related investigations and research, have been carried out and compiled by Matt Taylor BSc Hons MA Arch Cons CIAT IHBC, Architectural Conservation Associate and Specialist Historic Building Consultant at Morse Webb Architects on instruction from the client, Reading Borough Council.

A visual understanding of tangible evidence was gained and has continued to be gathered during site visits to Reading Town Hall by Matt Taylor of Morse Webb Architects, from May 2024 to the present day. Inspections have been carried out of the building and its roofs to gain a clear understanding of the nature and character of the heritage asset and the values that make it significant. Observations were also made in the immediate vicinity of the building within the Market Place and London Street

Conservation Area to gain an understanding of the building's visual and historical contribution to its immediate and wider setting and context.

Photographs of the building, including the roofs, internal spaces below the individual roofs, and of its immediate setting from within the Market Place and London Street Conservation Area were taken by Morse Webb Architects during the course of the site visits. A selection of these photographs are included in this report to convey detail and character of the heritage assets and to substantiate points and evidence.

1.04 Research and Planning Policy

Research of archives and policy documents, held by the following bodies and organisations, has been undertaken to find information relating to Reading Town Hall relevant for this Heritage Statement:

- Reading Historic Area Assessment – February 2023
- Reading Borough Council – Market Place and London Street Conservation Area Appraisal – November 2018
- The National Archives
- Historic Environment Record (HER) - Berkshire
- Historic England – Listing Description
- Reading Borough Council Archive
- Historic Ordnance Survey maps

Reading Borough Council – Reading Borough Local Plan – adopted November 2019:

- Section 4.2 – Heritage (paragraphs 4.2.1 to 4.2.24)
- Planning policies:
 - EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
 - EN2: Areas of Archaeological Significance
 - EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas
 - EN4: Locally Important Heritage Assets
 - EN5: Protection of Significant Views with Heritage Interest
 - EN6: New Development in a Historic Context

2.00 Section 1: The Heritage Asset

2.01 The Extent of Heritage Assets

There are two designated heritage assets affected by the proposals for change which are considered as part of this heritage statement:

- Reading Town Hall (first listed: 22nd March 1957)
- Market Place and London Street Conservation Area (designated in 1972 and extended in 1982)

Proposed conservation improvement works are to be carried out to part of Reading Town Hall, specifically the roofs over the museum, art gallery and associated ancillary spaces situated on the north side of the building.

2.02 Location and Setting

Market Place and London Street Conservation Area

Market Place and London Street Conservation Area is located south of the River Thames and the railway station in the town centre of Reading in Berkshire. It extends north to south in a linear manner from Blagrove Street down London Street to its junction with London Road and includes the Market Place.

Situated in the northern half of the conservation area is the site of the town's medieval market place, now formally known as 'Market Place'. Immediately to the west is the commercial heart of Reading i.e. Broad Street and the modern Oracle Shopping Centre. Immediately to the east is Forbury Gardens, the site of the outer precinct of Reading Abbey, now a public park and the town centre's largest public open space.

The southern half of the conservation area, comprising London Street and Church Street, lies on the south side of the River Kennet which flows eastward under High Bridge, shortly to join the Thames. The southern half is severed from the town centre by the Inner Distribution Road (IDR), a wide dual carriageway.

The River Kennet passes through the narrow mid-point of this linear conservation area. The land rises gently northward from the river to St Laurence's Church where it becomes level. Similarly, the land rises gently southward from the river to the upper end of London Road.

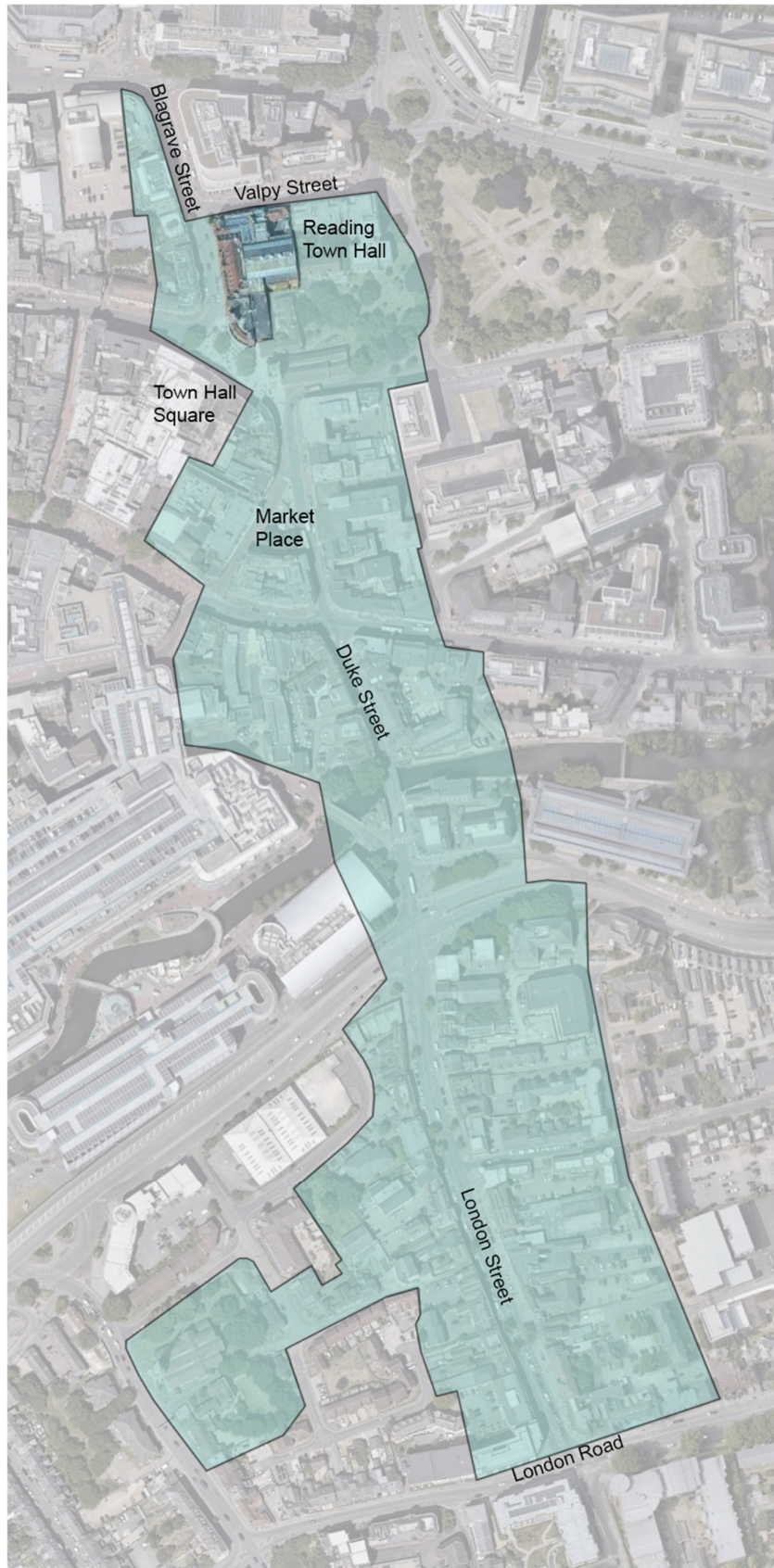
Reading Town Hall

Reading Town Hall is situated to the north of the Market Place at the junction of Blagrove Street and Friars Street and Blagrove Street and Valpy Street. It is set within an area of architectural and historic interest due to its townscape merit, form, layout, listed buildings and other buildings of interest, (such as the neighboring St. Lawrence's church situated to the south), trees and open spaces (including St. Lawrence's churchyard), and has important views and vistas in and out of the conservation area.

Address: The Town Hall, Belgrave Street, Reading RG1 1QH



Reading Town Centre



Market Place and London Street Conservation Area

2.03 Nature of the Heritage Assets

Reading Town Hall

Reading Town Hall is a building of both architectural and historic interest. The current building has physical origins that date back to the C18, although evidence suggests the site was occupied by earlier buildings before 1700.

It forms a group of late C19 municipal and civic buildings, which incorporates the C18 Victoria Hall (Small Town Hall) and is the town hall of Reading in Berkshire. Although it is no longer used for local authority administration, its public use is retained as it houses Reading Museum, concert hall, meeting spaces, conference rooms, ceremony rooms, a café and the Coroner's Court.

The C19 building is extensive in size and complex in form and configuration incorporating three distinctive phases of design and construction between 1871 and 1897.

The initial phase of the C19 building was designed by Alfred Waterhouse in a Victorian Gothic style. The new frontage was built with red and grey bricks, together with terracotta ornaments and detailing. The clock tower over the Town Hall entrance still forms a distinctive Reading landmark and townscape feature terminating views along Friar Street.

The Town Hall was subsequently extended from 1882 with designs by the Thomas Lainston which continued Waterhouse's Gothic style externally, again employing Gothic detailing and red and grey bricks with terracotta features.

A final phase and extension opened in 1897 and contained an extension to the library and an art gallery. This was designed by John James Cooper and William Roland Howell, and includes the frontage to Valpy Street.

The building is a heritage asset of significant architectural and historic interest. It is grade II* listed on the National Heritage List for England (NHLE). It is important as an example of C18 and C19 municipal public architecture in Classical and Gothic revival styles design by celebrated architects. In terms of its historic interest, it is significant

as an indication of the development of Reading in the C19 and a representation of the prestige of the town as it grew.

Reading Town Hall makes a significant physical and visual contribution to the conservation area and provides a central focal point for public activity and gathering. It is important because of its relationship with other buildings of historic value by adding a sense of status and value to the north side of the Market Place as well as the wider town centre.



Reading Town Hall viewed from Friar Street with the statue of Queen Victoria in the foreground

Market Place and London Street Conservation Area

The Market Place and London Street Conservation Area is significant due to its architectural and historic interest, its layout and form, historical evolution and development, townscape features, individual buildings and structures and vistas and views that collectively contribute to its overall character. The following features individually are composed within the conservation area which give the whole place its unique distinctiveness and identity:

- Linear conservation area with medieval southern approach road over the River Kennet to a market place and church outside one of Reading Abbey's gateways
- The Hospitium of St John the Baptist, founded in 1189 (Scheduled Monument)
- Medieval churches of St Laurence's and St Giles' and their associated churchyards
- Isolated timber-framed C16 and C17 century buildings - No's 26 and 27 Market Place, No's 49 to 53 London Street and No's 3 and 5 London Road
- Georgian town houses in London Street
- C19 municipal buildings in Blagrove Street, including Alfred Waterhouse's Town Hall, Victoria Hall, Concert Hall and Museum, Library and Art Gallery
- Groups of historic building around Market Place
- Special historic and architectural character around St Laurence's Church and the Town Hall
- Building built of bricks (red, blue and buff) from Reading's local brickworks
- Examples of C19 century banks and commercial buildings notably Barclays Bank, King Street and NatWest Bank, Market Place
- Green open spaces, including the churchyards of St Laurence's and St Giles' and the burial ground of the Friends Meeting House
- Public open space composed of Market Place Square and Town Hall Square. including the area around the statue of Queen Victoria
- Jacksons Corner, a local landmark
- Significant and important trees, particularly in London Street, Market Place Square and Town Hall Square
- River Kennet and riverside walks along with the significant C18 bridge at the southern end of Duke Street
- Historic stone kerb and paving details in the courtyard of The George Hotel, Thorn Lane and alleys off London Street
- Examples of C19 century monuments: Sir John Soane's Simeon Monument and the Queen Victoria statue

2.04 Historical Development and Maps

1786: 1st phase of the current Town Hall completed as the Victoria Hall, designed by Charles Poulton.

1864: The Victoria Hall was restored and adapted to house the Father Willis Organ.

1875: Alfred Waterhouse designed a new building including a council chamber, and the landmark clock tower, creating the building's principal facade.

1879-1883: New wing containing the library & museum opening to the public in 1883.

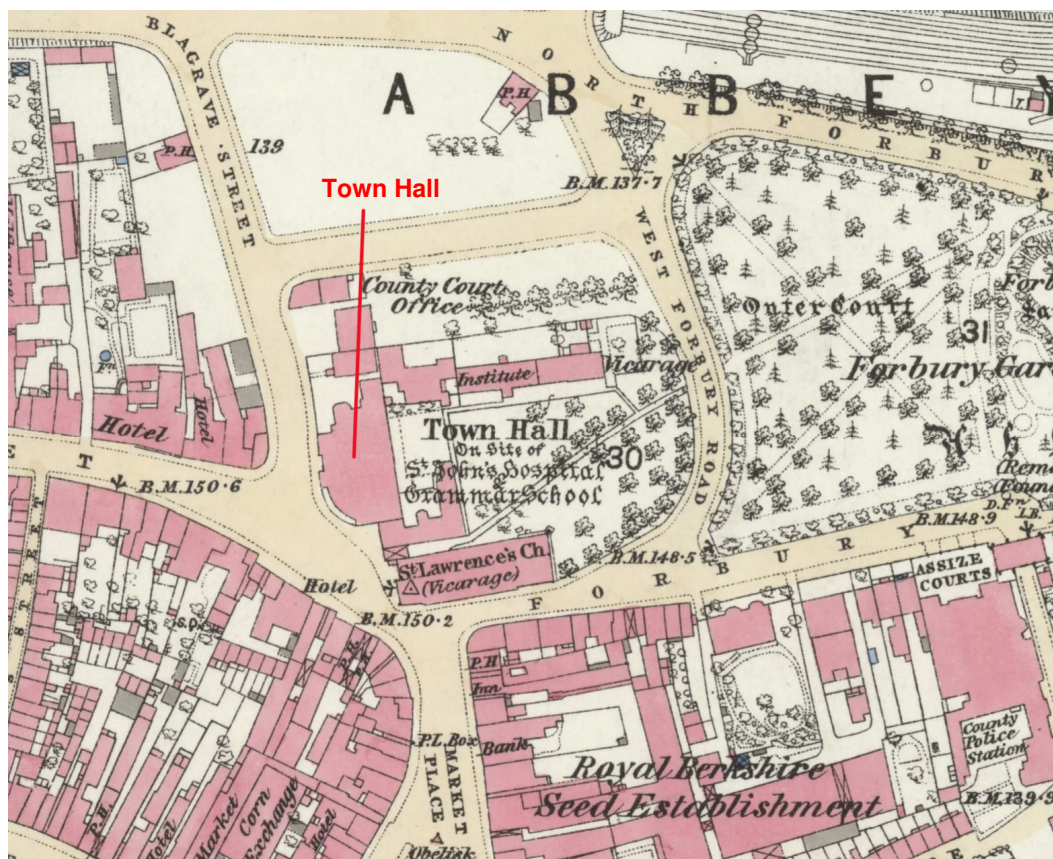
1882: The Concert Hall, along with the Museum and Science and Art School, was designed by local architect Thomas Lainson.

1897: Three art galleries were added to the building.

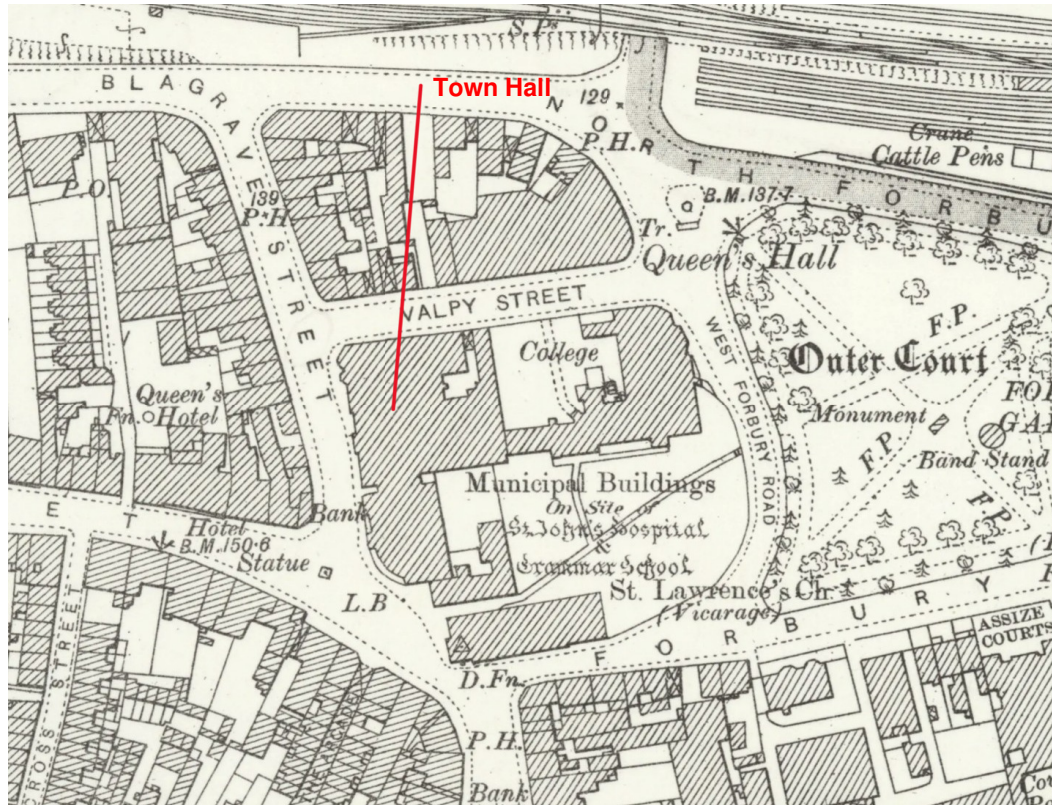
1975: Reading Borough Council moved its administrative offices to the new Civic Centre, ending the Town Hall's primary civic function.

Late 1980s: The building was comprehensively refurbished, saving it from demolition and adapting it for modern use.

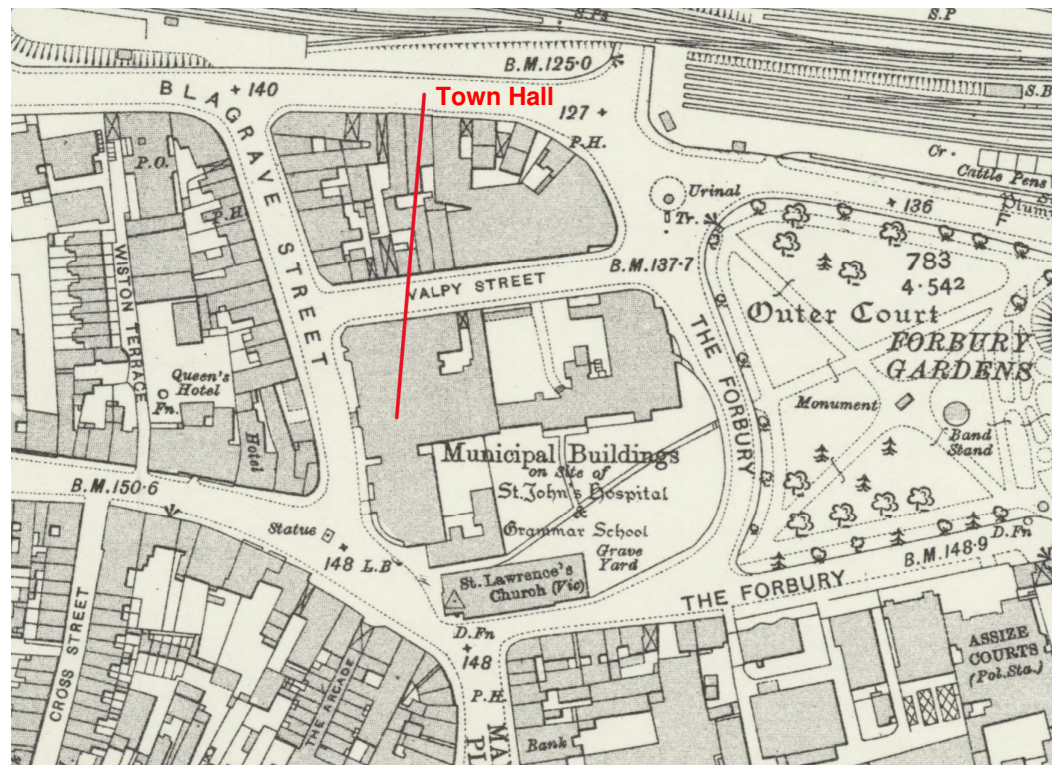
The four historic maps below show the development of the Town Hall from 1879 to 1931.



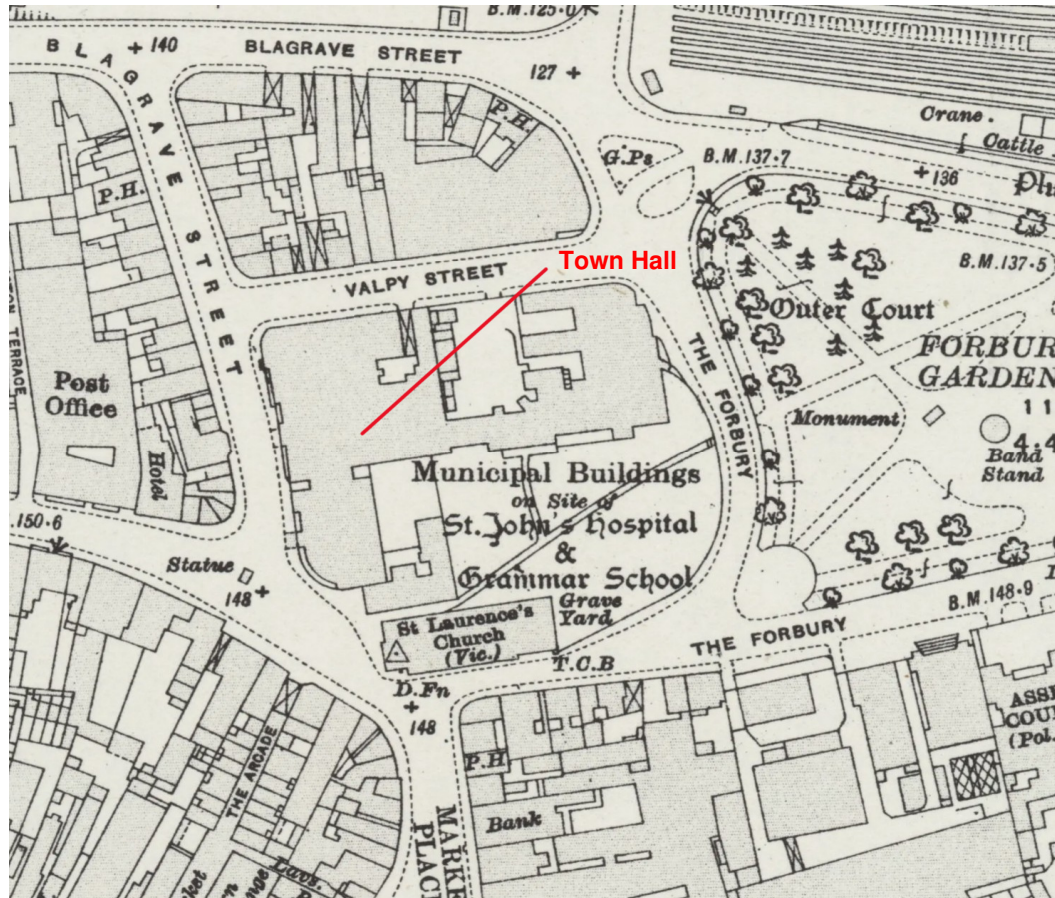
Historic map 1: 1879 – extract. The initial phase of the new C19 Town Hall designed by Alfred Waterhouse shown.



Historic map 2: 1900 – extract. Ordnance Survey Historic Maps. All three phases of the C19 Town Hall completed



Historic map 3: 1912 – extract. Ordnance Survey Historic Maps. No significant change from 1900



Historic map 3: 1931 – extract. Ordnance Survey Historic Maps. No significant change from 1912

2.05 Designations and Protection

Reading Town Hall

Heritage Category: Listed Building
 Grade: II*
 List entry number: 1113400
 Date first listed: 22nd March 1957
 List Entry Name: Reading Town Hall

Historic England list entry:

Summary

'A group of municipal buildings which include the Town Hall, two Concert Halls, Museum and Register Office for Reading, but which formerly also housed the Library

and Art college, together with office space. Constructed in 1871-1872 to the designs of Alfred Waterhouse, 1879-1882 by Thomas Lainson, 1896-1897 by John James Cooper and William Roland Howell. With later C20 and C21 additions and restoration by Architects Design Partnership in 1988-1989 and also in 1993 and 2000. The complex of interconnected buildings also contains the Victoria Hall (formerly Small Town Hall) of 1785-1786, designed by Charles Poulton and remodelled in 1863 by WH Woodman.'

Reasons for Designation

Architectural interest:

*The building, designed by the highly regarded architect, Alfred Waterhouse together with Thomas Lainson and John James Cooper and William Roland Howell and including the earlier Victoria Hall by Charles Poulton and William Henry Woodman, has a consistent and accomplished design to both the exterior and interior which clearly has more than special interest; * notwithstanding alterations made in the late C20 to aid the flow of activities around the interior of the building, the impressive internal spaces dating from the C19 have been retained with little alteration to their original appearance.*

Historic interest:

*As an indication of the development of Reading in the C19 and a representation of the prestige of the town as it grew; * a demonstration of the expansion of the functions housed within a town hall building as a result of new legislation as the C19 advanced.*

For full listing description see: Reading Town Hall Official List Entry

Source: Historic England

Market Place and London Street Conservation Area

Heritage Category: Conservation Area
Date designated: 1972, extended 1982
Reference: Reading Borough Council – Market Place and London Street
Conservation Area – Conservation Area Appraisal, 20th March
2007 – by The Conservation Studio

2.06 Assessment of Significance

Reading Town Hall

Reading Town Hall is significant for its initial Alfred Waterhouse-designed Victorian Gothic architecture, including a prominent clock tower, and its historical role as the town's administrative centre and cultural venue. Today, it houses the Reading Museum, a renowned concert hall featuring a historic Father Willis Organ, and serves as a popular conference and events venue, making it a central hub for both history and modern-day culture in the town.

Architectural Significance

- **Victorian Gothic Design:** The principal façade and clock tower were designed by Alfred Waterhouse, a leading 19th-century architect, in the Victorian Gothic style.
- **Architectural Details:** The building features locally made red and grey bricks with terracotta panels, and decorative friezes that were intended to show Reading's history.
- **Historic Layers:** It incorporates older buildings, notably the 1786 Victoria Hall (originally the Small Town Hall), which Waterhouse skilfully integrated into his design.

Historical & Cultural Significance

- **Former Administrative Centre:** The Town Hall served as the centre for the town's administration before new civic offices were built in 1975.

- **Cultural Hub:** It has long been a significant cultural venue, housing the Reading Museum and a large concert hall, which continues to host performances and events.
- **Historical Artifacts:** The museum within the Town Hall showcases Reading's history, including items related to the world-famous Huntley & Palmers biscuit company.

Modern Role & Location

- **Conference and Banqueting Venue:** The Town Hall is now a leading venue for conferences, banquets, and events, offering various spaces for public and private functions.
- **Visitor Hub:** It acts as a visitor hub for the historic Reading Abbey Quarter, enhancing its appeal as a destination for tourists and locals.
- **Central Location:** Its location in the town centre, adjacent to other historical landmarks like St Laurence's Church, makes it a focal point for exploring Reading's past and present.

Market Place and London Street Conservation Area

The Market Place and London Street Conservation area is significant because its designation provides awareness leading to the retention, enhancement and protection to the special character of areas with distinctive historical and architectural interest, preserving the town's identity, quality of life, and unique economic assets for current and future generations. The designation of the conservation area aims to control demolition and development that could harm the local historic environment, including building materials, street layouts, and green spaces which could undermine distinctiveness and local character.

The conservation area is important due to its historic urban layout, which includes medieval elements like St. Laurence's and St. Giles' churches and the Hospitium of St. John the Baptist, alongside well-preserved Georgian townhouses and 19th-century municipal buildings like the distinctive Reading Town Hall. This area provides a rich historical narrative of the town's development as a medieval approach to the market place.

Key reasons for its significance

- **Medieval Origins:** The linear layout follows a planned medieval southern approach to a market place outside Reading Abbey's gateways.
- **Architectural Mix:** It showcases a range of architectural styles, from medieval timber-framed buildings to prestigious Georgian townhouses and notable Victorian municipal buildings.
- **Historic Buildings:** It features significant structures such as the Hospitium of St. John the Baptist (a Scheduled Monument) and two of the town's medieval churches, St. Laurence's and St. Giles'.
- **Civic Identity:** The presence of prominent 19th-century municipal buildings, including Waterhouse's distinct Reading Town Hall, gives the area importance in the town's civic life.
- **Urban Character:** The conservation area designation recognizes the unique historical character and the interrelationship between buildings, streets, and spaces.

3.00 Section 2: Proposals Affecting the Heritage Asset

3.01 Proposed Works

Water ingress into parts of Reading Town Hall has been attributed to defects and building fabric faults to roof coverings and roof features, such as glazed rooflights and lanterns, abutment flashings to chimneys and parapet walls, linings to valley and parapet gutters etc. These faults have lead to rainwater penetration into rooms below, including important spaces containing artefacts, exhibits, pictures and art work in the museum and art gallery.

Reading Borough Council are now proposing a programme of conservation improvement works with the aim of making the roofs over the museum part of the Town Hall watertight to prevent rainwater getting into the structure and fabric, which ultimately affects rooms and spaces below impacting on the operation and functions of the building. The current issue with water ingress places a wider risk of damage to other parts of the building which threatens significance of the heritage asset and which will ultimately lead to the need for more extensive repairs placing greater demand on funding and resources.

As part of the conservation improvement work to prevent water ingress, an opportunity will be created to improve the thermal performance of the building when roof voids and spaces along with the existing structure and fabric is opened up and exposed. This access will allow both insulation and vapour control measures to be inserted and fixed locally before roofs and gutters are recovered.

Before the conservation improvement works can go ahead, a detailed understanding of the building and its structure and fabric, particularly the roofs over the museum, is required. The aim is to understand fully the physical nature of the heritage asset, its details and materials which give it its characteristic that make it significant and important. Knowledge of the building's original form, construction and the way it disposed rainwater will provide an understanding how the building structure and fabric should perform and why elements of it have failed leading to defective components.

Initial preparatory temporary opening up works, in localised and isolated areas, are now proposed to exposed parts of the structure and fabric necessitated for the following reasons:

- To exposed concealed parts of the structure and fabric along with roof voids and spaces with no other means of access.
- To reveal the existing structure to understand its form and construction/ fabrication and to determine how loads are transferred downwards.
- To allow the structural engineer to determine the ability of the structure (including the structurers to glazed rooflights and lanterns) to carry the implied loads, repairs and strengthening that maybe required.
- To determine the ability of the existing roof structures to carry the implied loads of roof mounted mechanical and electrical plant.
- To understand the make up of the component parts of the roof.
- To reveal and identify building faults and defects, particularly where these are concealed.
- To understand how or if voids are ventilated and issues relating to condensation.

Location of the Proposed Works

Conservation improvement works are proposed to the roof specifically over the museum to the Town Hall (the northern side of the building). This roof is made up of 17 No. individual roofs which have been numbered RF7 to RF23. See Morse Webb Architect's drawing 997-015-Existing Roof Plan.

Temporary Opening Up for Inspection

The current proposals are for a programme of temporary opening up works in isolated and localised areas to 17 No. roofs numbered RF7 to RF23. The extent, nature and specific location of the proposed opening up for each of these roofs is identified on Morse Webb Architect's drawings 997-**257**-Roof RF7-PL00 to 997-**273**-Roof RF7-PL00 inclusive (17 No. individual drawings – one for each roof).

The temporary opening up works are:

- Temporary removal of existing modern galvanised metal roof access walkway platforms in localised/isolated areas to create access to flat roofs and associated gutters between. Reinstatement on completion of the inspections/investigations/recording.
- Temporary removal of areas of either existing plain clay tiles or natural slates and associated tiling/slating battens and roofing membranes from sloping roof slopes to reveal the roof structure and voids spaces below. Reinstatement to match existing on a 'like for like' basis on completion of the inspections/investigations/recording.
- Temporary removal of areas of existing asphalt roof coverings from flat roofs and gutter linings to reveal the roof structure and voids spaces below. This includes removing protective rubber matting, insulation over the asphalt and the decking below. Reinstatement of the roof coverings on completion of the inspections/investigations/recording. Instead of hot applied asphalt, hot applied mineral felt membrane/sheet maybe used as a temporary cover to be in place for a short period until the actual recovering of the roof are carried out during the proposed conservation improvement works.
- Temporary removal of whole sections of glass from existing rooflights and lanterns to allow access into the internal spaces/voids to inspect supporting structure. Restatement of the glass to match existing on a 'like for like' basis on completion of the inspections/ investigations/recording.
- Temporary removal of existing insulation in roof voids to expose concealed/ hidden roof structure below. Reinstatement of insulation on completion of the inspections/investigations/recording.
- Temporary removal of localised/isolated areas of existing ceiling linings in certain rooms to expose concealed/ hidden roof structure and roof voids and spaces from below. Reinstatement of ceiling linings to match existing on a 'like for like' basis on completion of the inspections/investigations/recording.

Associated Drawings and Documents

The Heritage Statement to be read with the following drawings and documents:

Sova Survey2' Drawings

- SOVA240903 MBS – Basement Floor Plan as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – Ground Floor Plan as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – First Floor Plan as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – Second Floor Plan as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – Third Floor Plan as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – Fourth Floor Plan as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – Fifth Floor Plan as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – Sixth Floor Plan as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – Roof Plan as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – North Elevation as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – East Elevation as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – South Elevation as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – West Elevation as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – Courtyard Elevations as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – Section 1 Plan as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – Section 2 Plan as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – Section 3 Plan as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – Section 4 Plan as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – Section 5 Plan as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – Section 6 Plan as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – Section 7 Plan as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – Section 8 Plan as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – Section 9 Plan as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – Section 10 Plan as Existing - 17.01.2025
- SOVA240903 MBS – Section 11 Plan as Existing - 17.01.2025

Morse Webb Architect's Drawings

- 997-001-Location Plan And Existing And Proposed Block Plans
- 997-002-Existing And Proposed Site Plans

- 997-015-Existing Roof Plan
- 997-257-Roof RF7-PL00 Temporary Access And Investigations
- 997-258-Roof RF8-PL00 Temporary Access And Investigations
- 997-259-Roof RF9-PL00 Temporary Access And Investigations
- 997-260-Roof RF10-PL00 Temporary Access And Investigations
- 997-261-Roof RF11-PL00 Temporary Access And Investigations
- 997-262-Roof RF12-PL00 Temporary Access And Investigations
- 997-263-Roof RF13-PL00 Temporary Access And Investigations
- 997-264-Roof RF14-PL00 Temporary Access And Investigations
- 997-265-Roof RF15-PL00 Temporary Access And Investigations
- 997-266-Roof RF16-PL00 Temporary Access And Investigations
- 997-267-Roof RF17-PL00 Temporary Access And Investigations
- 997-268-Roof RF18-PL00 Temporary Access And Investigations
- 997-269-Roof RF19-PL00 Temporary Access And Investigations
- 997-270-Roof RF20-PL00 Temporary Access And Investigations
- 997-271-Roof RF21-PL00 Temporary Access And Investigations
- 997-272-Roof RF22-PL00 Temporary Access And Investigations
- 997-273-Roof RF23-PL00 Temporary Access And Investigations

3.02 Reasons and Justification for the Temporary Opening Up Works

The temporary opening up works are essential for the following reasons:

- To expose concealed/hidden parts of the structure and fabric and roof voids and spaces below roof coverings or above ceilings to enable the professional design team to get a detailed understanding of the form, detail and construction of the roofs and to gain knowledge of the existing materials they are made of.
- To determine the condition of the existing structure and fabric.
- To survey and measure elements of the structure and fabric to determine sizes, special arrangements, volumes and opportunities for fabric improvement works to install insulation and/or introduce measures to control moisture and condensation.
- To obtain all necessary information to specify the new conservation improvement work.

3.03 Assessment of Impact

The temporary opening up works will have minimal effect on the historic structure and fabric both physically or visually therefore the impact on the significance of the heritage assets is deemed to be 'neutral'.

The temporary opening up works will only be seen from the roofs over the museum to the Town Hall and not from the street level environs of the conservation area. The external opening up proposed is small in nature and area and will be returned back to its previous/existing state on completion. All the external opening up works to flat roofs and gutters and slated roofs affects modern materials and details dating from the last major programme of works to the roofs carried out in the late 1990s. Opening up to tiled roofs affects areas of tiles laid after the second world war, and all tiles removed will be reinstated back in their former positions.

Removal of areas of ceiling linings within certain rooms is restricted to existing modern plasterboard linings dating from previous programmes internal refurbishment and alteration dating from at least the 1980s. Plasterboard linings will be reinstated to match existing on a like for like basis on completion of the investigations, re-skimmed with plaster and decorated.

3.04 Mitigation

The proposed temporary opening up for inspection works are deliberately small in nature and are to be undertaken in localised and isolated areas only. Their size and nature is the minimum required necessary to provide the access required to gain and obtain the information of the existing structure and fabric essential to understand the detail of the building and roofs, determine condition and measure components.

On completion of the temporary opening up works, all areas disturbed or affected will be reinstated.