40-48 Mount Pleasant
Reading
RG1 2TD

Heritage Statement

Ref: 1202A/02/2026

August 2025
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40-48 Mount Pleasant Reading RG1 2TD

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Note: Site outlines may appear differently on some figures owing to distortions in historic maps. North may not be up the page and is generally approximate on early maps.

Unless otherwise noted, figures are not shown to scale.

Executive summary

We are instructed by Clients to prepare a Planning Design & Access Statement (including Heritage Statement) in relation to a proposed development at 40-48 Mount Pleasant Reading RG1 2TD.

The proposal comprises 'Erection of 6 houses (amendments to scheme under planning permission PL/20/1880) ('RETROSPECTIVE).

This study, backed up by site inspection and survey work, assesses the possible impacts of the development on built and other heritage assets in the area.

Designated built heritage assets which may be affected comprise:

- *The site is not a heritage asset of any description.*
- *The site is next door to No. 50; (LB) listed Grade II and is a designated asset of medium significance.*

Other assets/NDAs

- *Nos 52 and 54 are Listed Buildings (LB) in close proximity.*
- *There are a number of designated and non-designated assets nearby.*
- *The site is not in a Conservation Area (CA).*

Conclusions

- *The development site is not a heritage asset.*
- *The site is next door to No.50, a LB Grade II (LB); it is of medium significance.*
- *There are designated and non-designated assets (NDA) nearby but are scoped out.*
- *The site is not within a Conservation Area (CA).*
- *The proposed alterations to the approved plans will have no material impact on any designated asset. and cause no direct harm to significance of any asset.*
- *The bin store and frontage is nominally within the setting of No.50.*

The site and environs have been subject of change, both radical and gradual, over many years. There is nothing to suggest that a watershed has been reached. The subject site and environs have been altered in appearance, character and use terms over that time.

Planning permission ref: PL/25/0687 has been implemented, almost completely.

It is considered that the proposed amendments to the approved scheme will not impact on the contribution that setting makes to the significance of the nearby designated assets and there will be no harm.

By virtue of intervening urban and suburban forms, relative disposition, lack of inter-visibility and absence of causal links, it is considered that the setting of other designated and non-designated assets will be materially unaffected. There will be no harm to significance.

The proposal is considered to accord in full with legislation, national and local heritage policy and advice.

Recommendation

No further Built Heritage assessment is required.

Planning

It is considered that the amended proposal accords with planning policy in the same way as the original consent.

Design

The original design was considered to be appropriate, proportionate and sub-servient. The proposed alteration is considered to be the same.

Access

There is no material difference between the original scheme and the subject of this application in either access or accessibility terms. Changing position may make the car-parking spaces easier to use, marginally.

Mark Strawbridge IHBC FRSA
FPHS

1 Introduction

1.1 Origin and scope of the report

1.1.1 We are instructed by Clients to prepare a Planning Design & Access Statement (including Heritage Statement) in relation to a proposed development at 40-48 Mount Pleasant Reading RG1 2TD.

1.1.2 The LPA is Reading Borough Council.

1.1.3 The site and environs have been subject of change, both radical and gradual, over many years. There is nothing to suggest that a watershed has been reached. The subject site and environs have been altered in appearance, character and use terms over that time.

1.1.4 The proposal comprises 'Erection of 6 houses (amendments to scheme under planning permission PL/20/1880)' (RETROSPECTIVE).

1.1.5 The original proposal, application PL/20/1880 comprised 'Demolition of existing car repair garages and erection of 6 family dwellings and associated landscaping, waste and bicycle storage'.

1.1.6 It is considered that the proposed amendments to the approved scheme will not impact on the contribution that setting makes to the significance of nearby designated assets and there will be no harm.

1.1.7 By virtue of intervening urban and suburban forms, relative disposition, lack of inter-visibility and absence of causal links, it is considered that the setting of other designated and non-designated assets will be materially unaffected. There will be no harm to significance.

1.1.8 This desk-based study assesses the impact of the scheme on built heritage assets (standing buildings). It forms an initial stage of investigation of the area of proposed development (hereafter referred to as the 'site') and may be required in relation to the planning process in order that the local planning authority (LPA) can formulate an appropriate response in the light of the impact upon any known or potential heritage assets. These are parts of the historic environment which are considered to be significant because of their historic, evidential, aesthetic and/or communal interest.

1.1.9 The assessment has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) and to standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA Oct 2012/Nov 2012), English Heritage (2008, 2011), Historic England (2015) and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC 2009). The HER has been accessed via the Heritage Gateway.

1.1.10 Note: within the limitations imposed by dealing with historical material and maps, the information in this document is, to the best knowledge of the author, correct at the time of writing.

1.1.11 The site is in an *'area of archaeological significance'* but is scoped out.

1.1.12 In terms of design and access:

Design

The original design was considered to be appropriate, proportionate and sub-servient. The proposed alteration is considered to be the same.

Access

There is no material difference between the original scheme and the subject of this application in either access or accessibility terms. Changing position may make the car-parking spaces easier to use, marginally.

1.2 Designated heritage assets

1.2.1 The site is not a designated heritage asset.

1.2.2 Nearby designated assets include Nos 50, 52 and 54 Mount Pleasant.

1.3 Conservation Area

1.3.1 The site is not within a Conservation Area (CA).

1.4 Non-designated Assets (NDA)

1.4.1 The LPA maintains a register of Locally Listed Buildings. There are none in close proximity.

1.4.2 See link: https://www.reading.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/heritage-and-conservation/conservation-areas-listed-buildings/locally-listed-buildings/

1.5 Aims and objectives

- Identify the presence of any built heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals;
- describe the significance of such assets, as required by national planning policy;
- assess the likely impacts upon the significance of the assets arising from the proposals; and
- provide recommendations for further assessment where necessary of the historic assets affected, and/or mitigation aimed at reducing or removing completely any adverse impacts upon heritage assets and/or their setting.

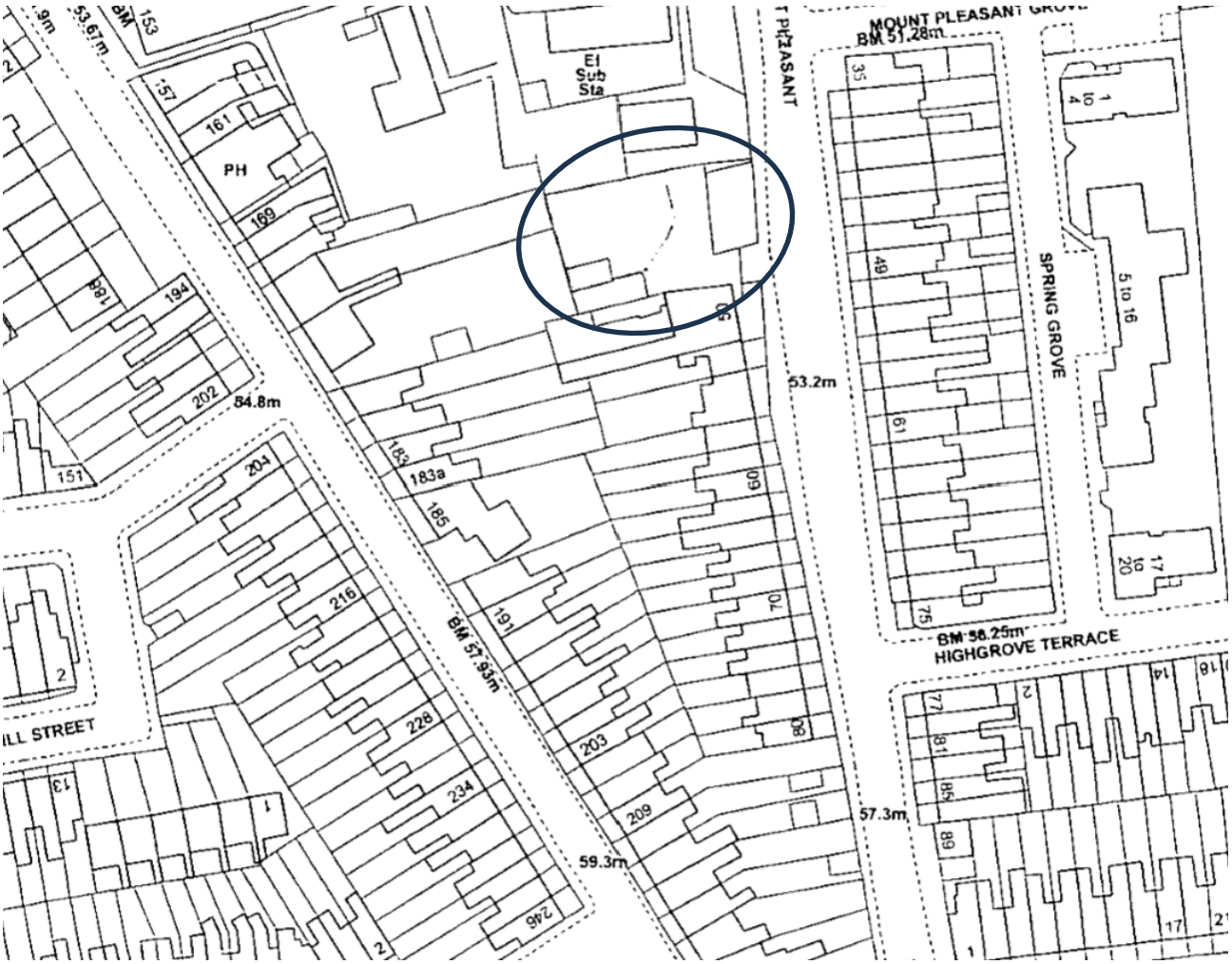


Fig 1 Site Location (Client 2023)

2 Site and Environs

2.1 Site

2.1.1 The development site is on the west side of Mount Pleasant north of the junction with Highgrove Terrace. It was a former repair garage and works. It is now a group of 6 No. dwellings virtually complete and ready for occupation.

2.1.2 Immediately to the north and sharing a boundary, No.50 (LB) is listed as 50, Mount Pleasant, (Grade II: 1113541) with the following description.

2 storeys, attic and basement. Silver grey brick with red quoins and window surround. Rubbed brick window arches. String at 1st floor level. Moulded brick cornice, parapet with old tile roof. 2 hipped casement window dormers. Glazing bar sash windows, 4 on 1st floor. 6 panel door with rectangular overlight and early C19 trellis porch. Early C19 spearhead rails and gate with square standards topped with urns on stone base to road.

Interior: very good panelling on 1st floor (fireplace in front room has fluted frieze). Contemporary marble fireplace in ground floor front room, also panelled.

2.1.3 It is not known when the building was last inspected but clearly, the details have been eroded over time and the description is not fully accurate now. E.g. the trellis porch is poorly kept and the railings are damaged, missing and/or replaced.

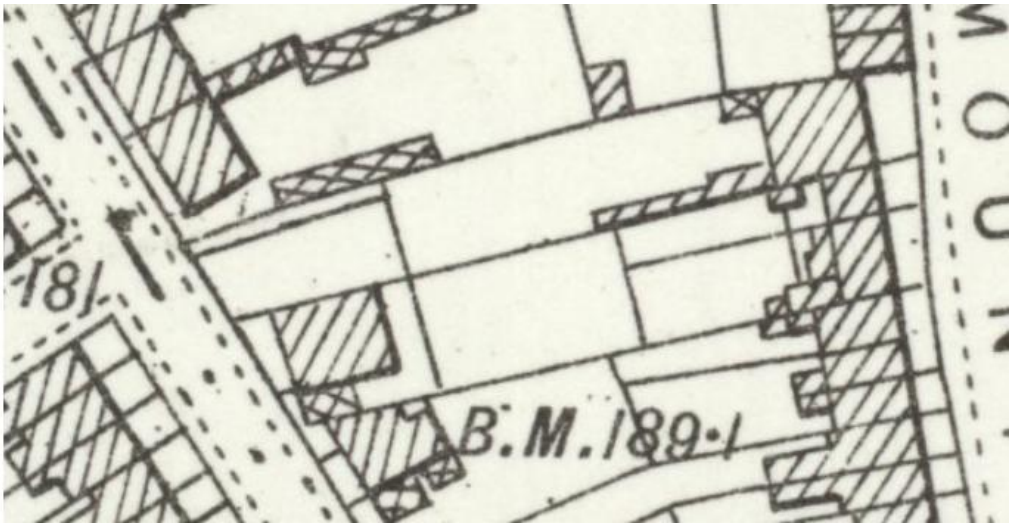
2.1.4 The applicant is indebted to the Royal Library of Scotland for extracts from the historic maps that indicate development of the site and environs through time.

2.2 Mapping

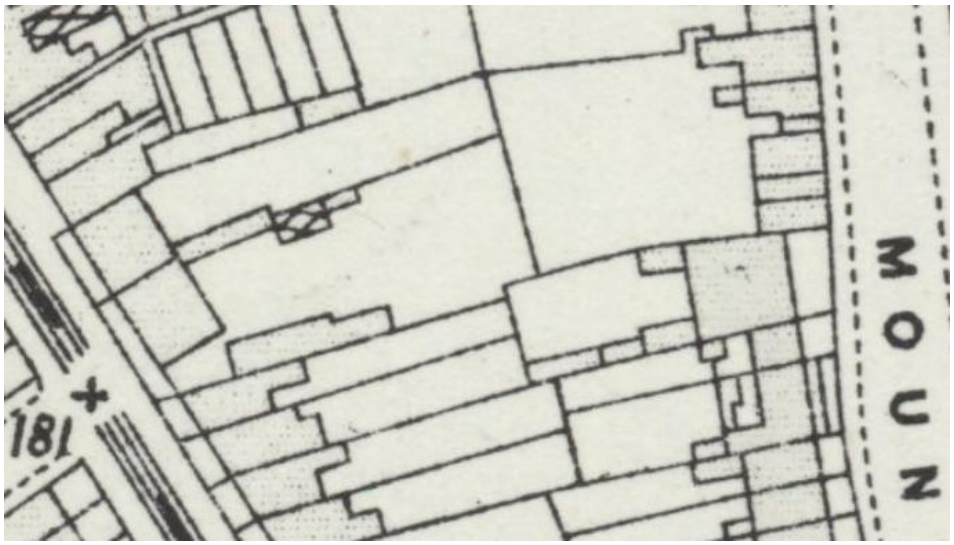
2.2.1 The 1879 edition shows an entirely built frontage to Mount Pleasant, the frontage to No.50 as planted and the rear of the plot sub-divided.

2.2.2 By 1898, the rear plot had been extended, vegetation may have been removed

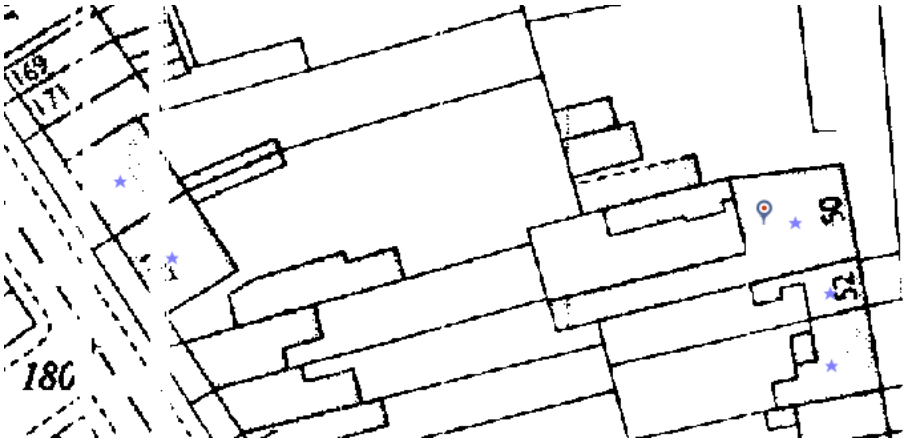
M1.1879



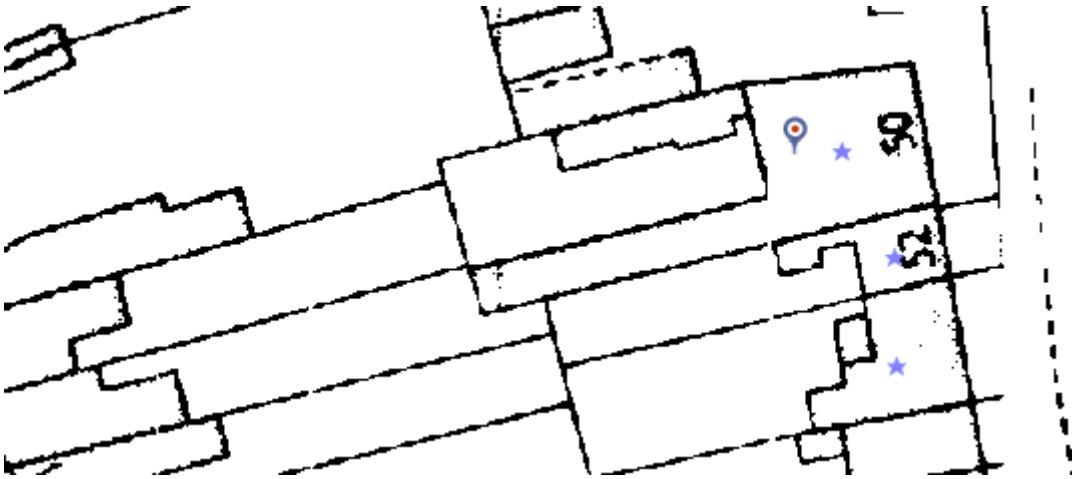
M2.1898



M3.1931



M4.1950



M5.1960

2.2.3 Between 1931 and the 1950 edition the frontage of Mount Pleasant is starting to fragment, with land to the north (site of Nos. 40-48) being open to the east, and the north elevation of No50 exposed to view, for the first time.

2.2.4 The later mapping is less detailed – the site of this submission remained largely clear of any substantial buildings until redevelopment in the last couple of years.

2.2.5 Fig 2 below shows the site frontage clear of development in 2022.

2.3 Conservation Area

2.3.1 The site is not in a CA; the nearest is Kendrick Road CA. The site, by virtue of relative disposition, lack of inter-visibility, intervening suburban and urban forms and lack of causal links is not considered to be within the setting of the CA and is therefore scoped out of consideration.

2.4 Nearby Assets

2.4.1 Nearby assets include:

52 Mount Pleasant Reading (Grade II: 1321907)

Late C18. 3 storeys, red brick. Old tile roof. 6 panel door in recessed brick arch with blank tympanum. Glazing bar sash windows, 1 on ground floor and 1 central window on 1st floor. 2 small windows on 2nd floor. Parapet renewed. Early C19 arrow-head railings. Included for group value.

54 Mount Pleasant Reading (Grade II: 1113542)

Early C19. 3 storeys. Red-brick, now painted. Slate roof. 3 windows to upper floors, glazing bar sashes, contemporary wrought iron guard rails on 1st floor. Modern casements on 2nd floor. Central door with raised and fielded panels, fanlight of curved and circular glazing pattern, recessed brick arch. Contemporary spearhead rails and gates and square standards topped with urns, on stone base, to road.

Fig 2 Nearby Assets

2.4.2 The three LBs immediately adjacent the site will be materially unaffected.

2.4.3 By virtue of intervening suburban forms, lack of inter-visibility and relative disposition, it is considered that other assets will be materially unaffected and consequently there will be no harm to significance. Other sites have been scoped out of consideration.

Fig 2 Front Elevation of Nos 50, 52 & 54 (MS 2023)

2.5 Non-designated assets

2.5.1 The LPA website does not reveal any NDAs in the vicinity. Any NDAs in proximity are scoped out of consideration.

2.6 Setting

2.6.1 Setting is generally taken to mean the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral. (NPPF 2024 Glossary).

2.6.2 A setting is not an asset in its own right, nor does it have significance unless part of another heritage designation.

2.6.3 The contribution of setting is generally considered with reference to the Historic England document Good Practice Advice in *Planning Note 3 The setting of heritage assets* (3rd edition 2020) (GPA3).

2.6.4 GPA3 sets out a methodology in stages, or steps:

2.6.5 **Step 1** – identify the asset(s) likely to be affected and the extent of setting. In this case the three nearby LBs. The setting of other assets is, for reasons cited below, scoped out of consideration.

2.6.6 **Step 2** – assess how and to what degree the setting makes a contribution to the significance of the asset(s). It is considered that the LBs' significance is not greatly reliant on setting. This will not be affected by the proposed development in any event and there will be no harm.

2.6.7 The public realm in the near vicinity has been much altered in recent times. The setting of the site at this point is predominantly encapsulated in the views along Mount Pleasant.

2.6.8 Both the site and the setting of the nearby LB are much altered over time. It is considered that overall, the contribution of setting in this case is neutral at best.

2.6.9 **Step 3** – assess the effect of the proposed development in setting terms on the significance of the asset(s);

The site has been the subject of change through time and there is no suggestion that a watershed has been reached.

The proposal is essentially the same as approved prior, in terms of setting.

Step 4 – seek to maximise enhancement and minimise harm; It is contended that, all things being equal, the contribution of setting can only be enhanced by careful appropriate design and attention to detail.

Step 5 – document and monitor outcomes (This latter point is the preserve of the Planning Authority).

2.6.10 The visual setting of any asset is generally considered in three 'layers':

- Wider landscape/townscape – i.e., context;
- Proximate or intimate setting, often encompassing the curtilage of the asset;
- Prospect – e.g., looking from the asset and /or its grounds

2.6.11 It is contended that there will be no negative impact on the contribution of setting to significance in any of these 'layers'. The wider townscape will not change.

2.6.12 The view from within the immediate environs will be enhanced.

2.6.13 The proposed development will have a limited 'prospect'.

2.6.14 Other assets and NDAs/LLBs in the area are essentially scoped out of consideration.

3 Photos

3.1 Setting

3.1.1 The following phots show the LB in its context. Note the walling and CL fencing in the view.

P1 Looking South, June 2018 (GE)

P2 Looking South August 2025 (Client)

P3 Frontage of No.50 and part of the site October 2023 (MS)

4 Significance

4.1 Planning

4.1.1 There is no entry on the LPA's website relating to the last use of No 50, apparently the long-established use was as offices in conjunction with the car business next door.

4.1.2 The site was granted consent for residential development (ref: 20/1880 FUL). Conditions were discharged accordingly, it is understood.

4.1.3 The proposed development seeks permission for 'Erection of 6 houses (amendments to scheme under planning permission PL/20/1880). (RETROSPECTIVE).

4.2 Statement of significance

4.2.1 The determination of the significance of historic assets is based on statutory designation and/or professional judgement against 4 'values' (English Heritage/Historic England - 2008/2015) restated in the advice document *GPA 2 - Managing Significance in Decisions*

4.2.2 The 4 values are:

- Evidential value
- Aesthetic value
- Historical value
- Communal value

(This is refined by National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG), last updated in July 2021).

4.2.3 The site is not a heritage asset.

4.2.4 The site is next to three listed buildings; designated assets of **medium significance** as a baseline. The proposal is nominally within the setting of these.

4.2.5 The setting of assets is not a heritage asset and hence is of no significance. It is concluded that setting in these terms is not particularly vulnerable to harm.

4.2.6 The approved scheme will have no greater impact on the contribution of setting to the significance of the listed asset than at present.

5 Impact of Proposed Development

5.1 Site

5.1.1 The proposed development is described in the drawing pack to be submitted with the application.

5.2 Townscape

5.2.1 A brief assessment of the immediate area reveals a gradation of scale of buildings; the LBs are slightly larger in scale at three storeys; they are also set up off the pavement level by a margin.

5.2.2 The remainder of the street scene is two storeys. The impact of the change from the approved bin store to the proposed will be no different in this view.

Fig 3 View north along Mount Pleasant (GE2018)

Fig 4 View south (GE 2018)

5.2.3 Figs 3 & 4 show the built form in the vicinity of the site, also the variety of materials.

5.3 Scheme

5.3.1 The drawing pack presented with the application shows the change proposed.

5.4 Commentary

5.4.1 The proposal, in the greater scheme of things, is not materially different to the approved scheme to such an extent should be resisted.

5.4.2 In heritage terms the development seeks to:

- Meet the requirements of The Act, particularly section 72.
- Meet the requirements of the NPPF particularly Section 16.

5.5 Context

5.5.1 The site is surrounded by sites, buildings and forms of different dates and therefore there is no added importance from the setting.

5.5.2 By virtue of lack of intervisibility, relative disposition and intervening urban and suburban forms, the development will not be within and therefore have no material impact on the setting of other LBs or NDAs in the vicinity and no harm will be caused to significance.

5.6 Harm

5.6.1 The NPPF refers to harm to the significance of designated heritage assets.

5.6.2 It is considered that the proposal will cause no harm to significance of any asset.

5.6.3 There will be change, but that change will be neutral in terms of impact and harm

5.7 The Duty to Preserve and/or Enhance

5.7.1 The site is not in a conservation area and therefore there is no duty under the Act.

6 Archaeology

6.1 Consultation

6.1.1 The site is in an area of archaeological interest but has been scoped out of consideration due to the majority of works proposed being internal.

6.1.2 The HER has been accessed via the Heritage Gateway.

6.1.3 Please see para 2.2 above for mapping.

7 Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

7.1.1 The site is a designated asset of high significance.

7.1.2 The development site is listed Grade II (LB); it is of high significance.

7.1.3 There are designated and non-designated assets (NDA) nearby but are scoped out.

7.1.4 The site is not within a Conservation Area (CA).

7.1.5 The proposal will have no material impact on any designated asset and cause no direct harm to significance.

7.1.6 The building has sustained changes throughout its existence, and many of the heritage elements have been lost. The floor plan has had some alteration, with partitioning inserted, notably on the first floor, which is intended to be removed to better reflect the original layout.

7.1.7 The site and environs have been subject of change, both radical and gradual, over the last 90 or so years. There is nothing to suggest that a watershed has been reached. The subject site and environs have been altered in appearance, character and use terms over that time.

7.1.8 It is considered that the redevelopment will not impact on the contribution that setting makes to the significance of nearby designated assets and there will be no harm. The majority of the fabric of the building will be retained, repaired and enhanced.

7.1.9 There will be change but that change, when taken in the balance, will be seen to better reveal the significance of two nearby designated assets.

7.1.10 Regeneration and beneficial reuse will better reveal the significance of the asset and constitute an enhancement and a public benefit.

7.1.11 By virtue of intervening urban and suburban forms, relative disposition, lack of inter-visibility and absence of causal links, it is considered that the setting of other designated and non-designated assets will be materially unaffected. There will be no harm to significance.

7.1.12 The proposal is considered to accord in full with legislation, national and local heritage policy and advice.

7.2 Recommendation

7.2.1 No further Built Heritage assessment or reporting is required.

8 Planning Framework

8.1 Statutory protection

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

8.1.1 The *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* sets out the legal requirements for the control of development and alterations which affect buildings, including those which are listed or in conservation areas. Buildings which are listed or which lie within a conservation area are protected by law. Grade I are buildings of exceptional interest. Grade II* are particularly significant buildings of more than special interest. Grade II are buildings of special interest, which warrant every effort being made to preserve them.

8.1.2 Section 66 of The Act sets out the general duty as respects Listed Buildings; Section 72 does so as respects Conservation Areas.

8.2 National Planning Policy Framework

8.2.1 The Government issued the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012 (DCLG 2012) and supporting Planning Practice Guidance in 2014 (DCLG 2014). This advice was updated in 2024; footnotes were updated in 2025.

8.2.2 One of the 12 core principles that underpin both plan-making and decision-taking within the framework is to '*conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.*' It recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and requires the significance of heritage assets to be considered in the planning process, whether designated or not. The contribution of setting to asset significance needs to be taken into account.

8.2.3 Section 16: *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*, is key. The policies set out in this section relate, as applicable, to the heritage-related consent regimes for which local planning authorities are responsible under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as to plan-making and decision-making. (See also Planning Practice Guidance – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment section).

8.2.4 Paras 202-221 inclusive refer:

8.3 Local Policy and Rebuttal

Addressing Prominent Location and Ground Level Changes:

8.3.1 Context of Ground Levels: While the proposal includes ground level changes, it's important to note that these changes have been made in response to practical requirements, such as accessibility for the disabled parking space and the fire escape route. These adjustments are not intended to undermine the visual quality of the site but to ensure compliance with necessary regulations.

8.3.2 Minimizing Impact: The changes in ground level are compensated by strategic landscaping and thoughtful design features. Soft landscaping, along with the reduced length of the bin store elevation, helps to mitigate the impact of the development on the street scene, softening the visual dominance of the structure.

Addressing Visual Dominance and Harm to Character:

8.3.3 Enhanced Landscaping: increased landscaping will contribute to a less stark frontage that does not sit at odds with the street scene. The presence of railings, which were reinstated to match the nearby listed building at No. 50 Mount Pleasant, will also help to integrate the development with the surrounding area, softening its presence in the wider streetscape.

8.3.4 Softening Visual Impact: The soft landscaping designed for the area further complements the

development by adding greenery, improving biodiversity, and enhancing the overall visual quality of the site. This approach aligns with the principles of Policy CC7, which encourages developments that enhance local character and provide environmental benefits.

Compliance with Local Plan Policies:

8.3.5 Policy CC7 (Character of Area): While the proposal has been scrutinized for its visual impact, it is important to note that the current proposal meets the requirements of Policy CC7 in terms of design and material choice. The reduction in scale of the bin store and the introduction of landscaping collectively ensure that the proposal respects the surrounding environment, rather than detracting from it.

8.3.6 NPPF 2024. The proposal has been designed to minimize harm to the character and appearance of the area and its surroundings. While the bin store is positioned in a relatively prominent location, the incorporation of soft landscaping, materials consistent with the site's existing character, and reduced visual bulk all contribute to an acceptable development form that complies with national and local policies, which encourage high-quality design.

Purpose and Necessity of Rear Gates:

8.3.7 Building Regulation Compliance: The rear gates are a mandatory requirement for fire safety in accordance with building regulations. Their primary function is to provide safe egress in the event of an emergency, ensuring that future residents have an additional escape route from the building. This necessity aligns with national safety standards and demonstrates that the rear gates are not simply an arbitrary design choice, but an essential feature for ensuring safety.

8.3.8 Fire Escape Consideration: The gates have been carefully designed to serve only as a fire escape route and not as regular access points. This ensures that the gates will not be in regular use and are intended to be used solely in emergency situations. To further reduce the potential for privacy concerns and disturbance, these gates are equipped with one-way locks and appropriate signage to prevent misuse and maintain the security of the gardens.

Mitigating Privacy and Disturbance Concerns:

8.3.9 One-Way Locking Mechanism: As mentioned, the one-way locks on the gates ensure that they are only operable from the inside of the garden, preventing unauthorized or casual use by anyone outside the property. This mechanism ensures that the gates will not cause any ongoing disturbance or result in an invasion of privacy. These locks also act as a deterrent to misuse, ensuring that the gates will not be an intrusion into neighbouring gardens.

8.3.10 Clear Signage: The gates will be accompanied by clear signage that indicates their emergency use only status. This will reduce the likelihood of the gates being opened frequently, thus minimizing the potential for any disturbance caused by traffic through the gardens.

Impact on Garden Use and Functionality:

8.3.11 Minimal Impact on Garden Usability: While the gates are located at the rear of each garden, their design and function as emergency exits will not significantly interfere with the daily use or functionality of the gardens. Since the gates are intended for fire safety rather than regular access, they do not inhibit the main use of the gardens as private outdoor spaces. The gardens will still be private, enclosed areas for the residents, with only the emergency access gates being an exception.

8.3.12 Landscaping and Screening : To further mitigate any concerns regarding privacy, we can provide screen planting along the gates' location. This will help to ensure that the gates do not become an eyesore and will maintain the privacy of the rear gardens. This can also include using evergreen plants or tall shrubs to screen the gates, ensuring the area remains visually secluded.

Policy Compliance:

8.3.13 Policy CC7 (Design and Character): While the proposal introduces gates at the rear of each garden, it is important to note that their design aligns with the character of the development. The gates are functional, with the material and design carefully considered to be in keeping with the overall site aesthetic. They do not introduce an incongruous element into the design, as their use is carefully restricted and they will be integrated into the site's broader landscaping strategy.

8.3.14 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity): The rear gates are intended to safeguard the health and safety of future residents by ensuring emergency access in line with fire safety regulations. They do not unduly impact the privacy or amenity of future residents, as their use is restricted to emergency situations only.

8.3.15 Policy EN10 (Conservation of Heritage and Amenity): The proposed gates are unlikely to harm the overall amenity of the area or the quality of life of the residents. They are an essential feature for ensuring safety and do not cause lasting or significant disruption to the use of the gardens.

8.3.16 NPPF 2024 (Paras 124 and 129): The NPPF encourages high-quality design and the creation of places that promote health and safety. The proposal for rear gates is consistent with these principles, as it addresses a vital safety requirement without causing lasting negative effects on privacy or garden functionality. The gates are a proportionate response to fire safety needs, and their design ensures that they will have minimal impact on the overall residential experience.

Acknowledgement of Soft Landscaping Need:

8.3.17 Commitment to Improving the Street Scene: We acknowledge the importance of soft landscaping in enhancing the character of the site, contributing to visual amenity, and supporting biodiversity. We have made efforts to incorporate landscaping elements in line with the approved design, and adjustments have been made to soften the impact of the bin store and the overall appearance of the site frontage.

Landscaping Adjustments and Improvements:

8.3.18 Revised Landscaping Plan: As shown in the revised landscaping plan (Dwg No. 03C), additional soft landscaping elements have been incorporated to mitigate the visual impact of the bin store and to create a more harmonious and aesthetically pleasing street scene. The landscaping plan includes a combination of planters, low-level shrubs, and climbing plants that provide a green buffer along the site frontage.

8.3.19 Enhanced Visual Appearance: These additional landscaping features aim to break up the appearance of the frontage, soften the visual presence of the bin store, and ensure the overall site is in keeping with the surrounding area. The planting strategy has been designed to be low maintenance while enhancing the visual quality of the street scene.

Bin Store Design Considerations:

8.3.20 Siting and Screening of the Bin Store: While the bin store is positioned close to the site frontage, its design has been carefully considered to blend with the wider aesthetic of the development.

8.3.21 Reduced Visual Impact: The length of the bin store facing the road has been reduced from 4.6m to 3.18m in order to minimize its visual dominance. This reduction makes the bin store less intrusive in the street scene and helps to maintain a more balanced frontage. The store's cladding, along with the introduction of the landscaping, ensures the frontage does not appear overly cramped or stark.

Retention of Iron Railings:

Iron Railings Reinstated: In order to further soften the visual impact and tie the development into the surrounding area, iron railings have been reinstated along the street-facing boundary. These railings are a traditional feature and enhance the character of the site, creating a visually cohesive street frontage at this point and integrating the proposal into the broader urban fabric.

Policy CC7 Compliance:

8.3.22 Positive Impact on Street Scene: Despite the challenges posed by the bin store's location, the efforts to incorporate soft landscaping, appropriate materials, and design refinements ensure that the proposal aligns with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019. This policy encourages development that enhances the visual amenity of the site and surrounding area, and we believe that the modifications made significantly contribute to meeting these objectives.

Environmental Considerations and Biodiversity:

8.3.23 Environmental Enhancements: In addition to soft landscaping, the use of planting boxes and climbing plants helps improve the biodiversity of the area. These features provide valuable habitat for local wildlife, such as birds and insects, and contribute to the environmental quality of the street scene. The incorporation of planting ensures that the site will not only look visually pleasing but also contribute positively to the local ecosystem.

Compliance with NPPF (Paragraphs 135 and 136):

8.3.24 Integration with Surrounding Area: The proposal addresses the visual and environmental quality of the site, contributing to the long-term sustainability and aesthetics of the area. The soft landscaping and the thoughtful design of the bin store ensure the development does not cause undue harm to the character of the street scene or the amenity of the surrounding area, which is in line with Paragraphs 135 and 136 of the NPPF. By incorporating these design elements, the development enhances the visual amenity and overall environmental quality of the area, which is crucial for creating a more sustainable and attractive urban environment.

Provision of Adequate Bin Storage:

8.3.25 Sufficient Storage Space: The bin store has been carefully designed to accommodate all required bins in a manner that is both functional and efficient. As per the revised drawings (Dwg No. 01B), the bin store can accommodate:

8.3.26 1 x 1100L General Waste Bin

8.3.27 1 x 1100L Recycling Bin

8.3.28 1 x 240L Food Waste Bin

8.3.29 This ensures the development can fully comply with the Council's waste management guidelines, offering adequate capacity for waste storage in line with Policy CC5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Accessibility of Bin Store:

8.3.30 Ease of Access for Waste Collection: The layout and position of the bin store have been designed with waste collection accessibility in mind. The route between the bin store and the collection point is clear and unobstructed, ensuring that bins can be moved easily without impacting the daily functionality of the development or its residents. The travel distance from the bin store to the street has been kept within the required 10m maximum to ensure that bins

can be manoeuvred without difficulty.

8.3.31 Compliance with Waste Management Guidelines: The accessibility of the bin store and waste collection routes is fully compliant with the Council's waste management guidelines. The ground levels have been adjusted as necessary to ensure that bins can be moved without significant gradients or obstacles, thereby avoiding the incompatibility issues of pulling fully loaded bins up slopes, as outlined in the guidelines. The access route ensures there are no uphill gradients between the bin store and collection point, as required by the guidance.

Impact on Future Occupiers:

8.3.32 Minimizing Disruption to Residents: The bin store's design minimizes any potential disturbance to future residents. The waste collection area is positioned in such a way that it is both convenient for access and out of sight from the primary residential areas, ensuring that waste management activities do not negatively impact residents' day-to-day enjoyment of their homes.

8.3.33 Separation from Private Spaces: The bin store is located away from private garden areas and any living spaces to avoid noise, odours, and the visual clutter typically associated with waste management. This careful positioning ensures that the development maintains a high standard of residential amenity.

Mitigating Visual Impact and Amenity Concerns:

8.3.34 Screening and Landscaping: In line with the revised landscaping plan (Dwg No. 03C), additional screening, including low shrubs and climbing plants, has been introduced around the bin store to mitigate its visual impact. This helps ensure that while the waste collection area is accessible, it does not dominate the site or detract from the overall visual amenity of the development and surrounding area.

8.3.35 Minimal Visual Clutter: The revised landscaping scheme will minimise visual clutter and soften the view from the public realm.

Compliance with Relevant Policies:

8.3.36 Policy CC5 (Waste and Recycling): The proposal fully complies with Policy CC5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, ensuring that waste and recycling facilities are adequate, well-located, and easily accessible for both residents and collection services.

8.3.37 Policy CC7 (Design and Amenity): By ensuring the design and siting of the bin store does not negatively affect the amenity of future occupiers or the wider area, the proposal meets the objectives of Policy CC7, which seeks to promote high-quality development that integrates well with its surroundings.

8.3.38 NPPF Paragraph 8: The proposal aligns with Paragraph 8 of the NPPF 2024 by contributing to the creation of a sustainable and well-designed development that supports environmental sustainability through efficient waste management.

Response to Concerns About Bin Accessibility:

8.3.39 No Negative Impact on Waste Collection: The layout of the development ensures that waste collection operations will not create significant obstacles for either residents or the waste collection team. The clear access route to the bins, together with the absence of any uphill gradients, ensures smooth operations without additional burden on the residents or the service providers. Please refer to revised landscape plan.

8.3.40 Relevant references may include the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019): https://images.reading.gov.uk/2019/12/Local_Plan_Adopted_November_2019.pdf

9 Determining significance

9.1.1 ‘Significance’ lies in the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest, which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Archaeological interest includes an interest in carrying out an expert investigation at some point in the future into the evidence a heritage asset may hold of past human activity and may apply to standing buildings or structures as well as buried remains. Known and potential heritage assets within the site and its vicinity have been identified from national and local designations, HER data and expert opinion. The determination of the significance of these assets is based on statutory designation and/or professional judgement against four values (EH 2008):

- *Evidential value*: the potential of the physical remains to yield evidence of past human activity. This might take into account date; rarity; state of preservation; diversity/complexity; contribution to published priorities; supporting documentation; collective value and comparative potential.
- *Aesthetic value*: this derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from the heritage asset, taking into account what other people have said or written;
- *Historical value*: the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through heritage asset to the present, such a connection often being illustrative or associative;
- *Communal value*: this derives from the meanings of a heritage asset for the people who know about it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory; communal values are closely bound up with historical, particularly associative, and aesthetic values, along with and educational, social or economic values.

9.1.2 Table 1 gives examples of the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Table 1: Significance of heritage assets

Heritage asset description	Significance
World heritage sites Scheduled monuments Grade I and II* listed buildings English Heritage Grade I and II* registered parks and gardens Protected Wrecks Heritage assets of national importance	Very high (International/ national)
English Heritage Grade II registered parks and gardens Conservation areas Designated historic battlefields Grade II listed buildings Burial grounds Protected heritage landscapes (e.g., ancient woodland or historic hedgerows) Heritage assets of regional or county importance	High (national/ regional/ county)
Heritage assets with a district value or interest for education or cultural appreciation Locally listed buildings	Medium (District)
Heritage assets with a local (i.e., parish) value or interest for education or cultural appreciation	Low (Local)
Historic environment resource with no significant value or interest	Negligible
Heritage assets that have a clear potential, but for which current knowledge is insufficient to allow significance to be determined	Uncertain