

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey

App Ref: PL/26/0175 Listed building consent

Address: ST MARYS CHURCH, 14 CASTLE STREET, READING, RG1 7RD

Proposal: Repair of fractured beam and ceiling cracking in the Main Church Nave

Applicant: Mark Clements

Received date: 09/02/2026

Extended Target Decision date: 05/05/2026

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is St Mary's St Marys Butts/Castle Street Conservation area Church in Castle Street is a grade 2 listed building in St Marys Butts/Castle Street Conservation area and High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ).

It is in an Air Quality Management Area and is located within a controlled residential parking permit area, Reading central core and primary shopping area.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Works are required to repair a fractured beam due to cracking in the southern end of the nave in the main church due to historic water damage. Part of the works to the cornice and cracked beam have already commenced. The proposed works for the repair of fractured beam and ceiling cracking in the Main Church Nave, and include:

Repair and reinstatement of the ornamental plaster cornice

Repairs undertaken to the underlying wooden beam

Reinstatement of lime plaster

Possible future works to the wooden beam and cornice enrichments

Redecoration of the repaired cornice

Proposed materials include:

Lime plaster/putty

Lime repair mortar

Stainless steel fixings

Lime plaster

Moulding tools

Decorating, repair and conservation tools and cleaning materials

Clean water

Details of work preparations and the repair methodology have been provided. No external works are required.

Plans/documents considered

2085 Design and Heritage statement, Heritage Fusion

St Marys church Method Statement for Ornamental Cornice Repair, Allthingslime.co.uk, 02/01/2026

St Mary church Method Statement for Lath and Plaster Ceiling Repair, Allthingslime.co.uk, 02/01/2026

251210 Rev O Structural Appraisal of ceiling repairs, St Marys Castle Street Reading, Clive Hudson

Associates Engineers report, 10 December 2025

2085 E01 Location and Site Plan

2085 E02 Existing Plans Illustrating Location of Works

2085 P01 Proposed Plan

As received 9 February 2026

Photo 3 evidence of cracking from the 2085 Design and Heritage statement, Fusion Heritage



Photo of the beam from the structural appraisal, Fig 10, p8, Clive Hudson Associates



Internal photo of the beam from the structural report Fig 11, p8, Clive Hudson Associates



Relevant Planning History

PL/02/0662 Re roofing, replacing all slates and battens. including the introduction of sarking felt, repointing of brickwork, replacement of rainwater goods. Approved 13/09/2002

PL/91/0940 Demolition of unsafe chimney. Approved 21/11/1991

3. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- Burcu Can Cetin – Support - I am happy with the submitted documents and conservation approach/methodology described for the ceiling and beam repair of St Mary's Church. Please include both method statements under the approved documents.
- Reading Civic Society Consultations – No response has been received at the time of writing this report.
- Conservation Area Advisory Committee Consultations – No response has been received at the time of writing this report.

A site notice was displayed at the site on 10 March 2026 for the required period and an advert was placed in the local newspaper.

No letters of representation have been received.

4. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12). In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document) according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given). The Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents are also material planning considerations.

In determining applications for Listed Building Consent, Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires 'special regard' to be had to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Reading Borough Council Planning Policy

Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019) EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment states:

Historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced. This will include:

- ☐ Listed Buildings;
- ☐ Conservation Areas;
- ☐ Other features with local or national designation, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and historic parks and gardens.

Planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. All proposals will be expected to protect and where appropriate enhance the character and appearance of the area in which they are located and for the purpose of ensuring that work is appropriate to the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building.

The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019)

- EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT
- 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

SPG/SPD

None.

Other

St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area Appraisal

Equality Act

In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the current applications) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application.

5. APPRAISAL

Conditions should be placed on works being carried out by experts and supervised by conservation architects. The finished works do not have any external impact and thus will not have a material impact on the listed heritage items or surrounding neighbourhood. The proposal poses no harm to the fabric or character of the LB. The works would improve the condition and appearance of the listed building.

The works are not considered to cause harm to the setting of the listed building.

6. CONCLUSION

The proposal would not harm and sympathetically preserve/restore the fabric/character of the listed building in accordance with Policy EN1.

7. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Listed Building Consent.

Recommended Conditions:

1. Time limit
2. Approved plans
3. Shall match original fabric except where indicated otherwise.
4. Conservation tradesmen to be used

Informatives:

1. Terms
2. Building Control
3. Construction
4. P&P