



JMS PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

PLANNING AND HERITAGE
STATEMENT

FULL PLANNING APPLICATION

FOR

29 CASTLE STREET
READING
RG1 7SB



Client: Proven Works Property Ltd
Project: 29 Castle Street, Reading, RG1 7SB
Date: June 2026

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning and Heritage Statement is submitted to the Reading Borough Council (*'the Council'*) on behalf of Proven Works Property Ltd in support of a full planning application for the *'Relocation of existing plant to upper roof level, creation of roof terrace, erection of parapets and plant screening and associated works'* at 29 Castle Street, Reading, RG1 7SB (*'The Application Site'*).
- 1.2 This Planning and Heritage Statement provides an overview of the site and its context, sets out the principles on which the proposal has been based and provides a justification for the proposed development. This Statement should be read alongside the application drawings prepared by Hives Architects along with the other supporting reports, as necessary.
- 1.3 It is recognised that even relatively minor alterations can have an impact on the character and appearance of a building and its surroundings, particularly within a conservation area. Well designed interventions can enhance the quality and functionality of existing buildings, improve visual amenity and contribute positively to the wider townscape. This Statement demonstrates how the proposed development has been carefully designed to improve the use, sustainability and appearance of the existing building through rationalisation of rooftop plant and the creation of a discreet roof terrace, whilst remaining sensitive to its historic context and preserving the character and appearance of the surrounding conservation area.
- 1.4 The proposed development consists of improvements to an existing building which is located within a highly sustainable location. In this regard it is considered that the application is of considerable benefit to the locality representing sustainable development that achieves a positive work environment for prospective occupiers whilst protecting the amenities of existing occupiers.
- 1.5 This Statement is divided into the following sections:
 - **Section 1: Introduction** – outlines the background and purpose of this document;
 - **Section 2: Context** – provides an assessment of the site and its surroundings in terms of the physical, social-economic and planning context;
 - **Section 3: Planning History** – provides an overview of the site's planning history;
 - **Section 4: The Proposal** – details the proposed scheme;
 - **Section 5: Planning Policy** – provides an overview of the planning policy position at national and local level;
 - **Section 6: Key Planning Considerations** – provides a description of the key planning matters;



- **Section 7: Heritage Statement** – provides an overview of the site’s heritage impacts; and
- **Section 8: Conclusions** - sets out the conclusions of the above sections.

SECTION 2: SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The application site comprises an existing office building located at 29 Castle Street, Reading, RG1 7SB within Reading Town Centre. The site lies within Central Reading, as defined within the Reading Borough Local Plan (Policy CR1), and benefits from a highly accessible and sustainable location in close proximity to a wide range of services, public transport connections including Broad Street, local bus routes and Reading railway station.
- 2.2 The building fronts directly onto Castle Street and forms part of a continuous terrace that defines the established urban grain of this part of the town centre. The surrounding townscape is characterised by closely spaced two and three storey buildings. The application site presents as a three storey building to the street frontage, with a more varied form to the rear resulting from changes in level and later alterations. The building contains two flat roof areas, currently used for plant and maintenance purposes which are set behind the main roofline and largely screened from public views.



Fig.1: Aerial View of the Application Site and Surrounding Area



- 2.3 The site lies within the St Mary Butt's/Castle Street Conservation Area which forms part of the historic core of Reading. The conservation area is of considerable architectural and historic interest reflecting its origins at the crossroads of historic routes through the town and its role in the early development of Reading. The character of the area is reinforced by a high proportion of historic buildings and a consistent scale and built form along Castle Street.
- 2.4 The site lies within the St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area and is located in close proximity to a number of designated heritage assets. These include the Grade II* listed buildings at 17 and 19 Castle Street and the Grade II listed Sun Inn (14-16 Castle Street) opposite. The application building at 29 Castle Street is not a listed building and is not within the curtilage of any listed building. The site is also located within an Area of Archaeological Potential and is therefore subject to planning policies relating to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.
- 2.5 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is not affected by surface water flooding, indicating low probability of flood risk. Overall, the site occupies a prominent position within a historic town centre setting, forming part of a coherent and sensitive conservation area whilst also containing underutilised roof areas that present opportunity for sensitive enhancement.



SECTION 3: PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 A review of the planning history of the application site has been undertaken using the Reading Borough Council online planning application search portal. Our review has established the following planning applications relevant to the site. Due to the sheer amount of applications, relevant advertisement consents and discharge of conditions applications are not provided below:

Reference	Address	Proposal	Decision & Date of Decision
PL/91/0839	29 Castle Street	Construction of service court and parking area to rear.	Granted 10/03/1992
PL/97/0281	29 Castle Street	Enclosure of existing undercroft to create office space.	Granted 10/12/1997
PL/98/0626	29 Castle Street	Alterations to the Castle St ground floor facade, by taking out the existing large window and fitting 2 sash windows to match the first floor timber pattern. Fitting a matching stone pier between the windows flush with existing.	Granted 16/10/1998
PL/23/0061	29 Castle Street	Change of use from offices to residential plus second floor extension.	Granted 20/12/2023

- 3.2 The planning history above demonstrates that the site has been subject to a number of alterations and changes over time including works to the building fabric, reconfiguration of internal space and the use of the building.
- 3.3 Notwithstanding the above, the current application does not seek to implement or amend the approved residential scheme but instead relates to works to the existing building in its current use. The proposals are limited to alterations at roof level including reorganisation of plant and the creation of a roof terrace, together with associated works.

- 3.4 It is therefore considered that there are no planning history constraints that would preclude the proposed development. Rather, the site's planning history demonstrates a pattern of incremental change and adaptation. The current proposals represent a logical continuation of this, seeking to improve the functionality and appearance of the building without materially altering its established character or its relationship with the surrounding conservation area.



SECTION 4: THE APPLICATION PROPOSAL

- 4.1 This Section of the Planning and Heritage Statement summarises the application proposal. It should be read alongside the planning application drawings prepared by Hives Architects. Reference should also be made to supporting reports relevant to the constituent parts of the application proposal.
- 4.2 The application seeks planning permission for works to the existing building at 29 Castle Street, comprising the reorganisation of rooftop plant, the creation of a roof terrace and associated alterations. The proposals do not involve a change of use and the building will remain in its existing office use.
- 4.3 At present, the building contains plant equipment location on the lower flat roof, together with additional equipment and redundant structure at upper roof level. The lower roof area is currently used for maintenance access only and does not provide any amenity benefit to occupiers.
- 4.4 The proposed development will rationalise the existing roof arrangement by relocating plant equipment from the lower roof to the upper roof level. This will allow the lower roof to be repurposed as a roof terrace to provide amenity space for office users. The terrace will be ancillary to the existing use of the building and will function as a breakout space.
- 4.5 In order to facilitate the use of the roof terrace, the proposals include the installation of new parapets, balustrades and safety features together with access improvements including the replacement of an existing window with a door. The works are designed to ensure that the terrace can be used safely and appropriately.
- 4.6 The proposals also include the installation of solar photovoltaic panels at roof level, as well as the introduction of louvred screening to enclose plant equipment. These measures will improve the environmental performance of the building and contribute to a more coherent and visually organised roofscape. Solar photovoltaic panels are shown on the drawings for indicative purposes only and do not form part of the planning application.
- 4.7 Overall, the proposed works are modest in scale and are confined to the roof of the building. They are intended to improve the functionality, sustainability and appearance of the existing building whilst remaining sensitive to its context within the conservation area.



SECTION 5: PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1 This Section of the Statement sets out general national and local planning policy relevant to the proposed development and its determination. National policy relating to heritage matters is set out later within this Statement.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.2 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated December 2024 and constitutes guidance for local planning authorities and decision-takers. It is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications (paragraph 2).
- 5.3 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development (paragraph 7).
- 5.4 Paragraph 8 confirms that there are three overarching objectives to sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways.
- *An economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
 - *A social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural wellbeing; and*
 - *An environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making efficient use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.*
- 5.5 *These objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and application of policies in the framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. It is confirmed that the planning system should play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area (paragraph 9).*

5.6 In recognising, and contributing to the overarching objective of achieving sustainable development, the NPPF advises that decision taking should be based on the following principles;

- *Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; or*
- *Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless;*
 - *The application of policies in the framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
 - *Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this framework taken as a whole.*

5.7 Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible (paragraph 38).

5.8 Paragraph 125 confirms that planning policies and decisions should promote and support the development of underutilised land and buildings, especially if this would help meet an identified need for housing where land supply is constrained, and available sites could be used more efficiently. This policy also states that opportunities to use the air space above existing residential and commercial premises should be supported for new homes (criterion e).

5.9 The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this (paragraph 131).

5.10 Paragraph 135 states planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;



- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

The Development Plan

- 5.11 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that all applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.12 For the purposes of Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the relevant statutory development plan comprises the Reading Local Plan (adopted November 2019), together with any saved policies of the Berkshire Plan where applicable.
- 5.13 Each of the documents relevant to the application site are considered in turn below.

Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

- 5.14 The Reading Borough Local Plan was adopted in November 2019 and forms the statutory development plan for the area. It sets out the spatial strategy and detailed planning policies to guide development in Reading up to 2036.
- 5.15 Policy CCI (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) reflects the NPPF and confirms that proposals which accord with the development plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.16 Policy CC4 (Decentralised Energy) supports the use of decentralised energy generation, including on site renewable energy technologies where appropriate.



- 5.17 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) requires development to be of a high standard of design that positively contributes to the character and appearance of the area, creating attractive, functional and accessible places.
- 5.18 Policy EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) states that features and areas of historic importance including their settings will be protected and where appropriate enhanced.
- 5.19 Policy EN2 (Areas of Archaeological Significance) seeks to ensure that development proposals take account of archaeological potential and where necessary provide appropriate investigation and mitigation.
- 5.20 Policy EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas) requires development within conservation areas to preserve or enhance their character and appearance and to make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness.
- 5.21 Policy EN6 (New Development in a Historic Context) requires development to be designed in a manner that respects and responds to the historic environment and surrounding townscape.
- 5.22 Policy EN18 (Flooding and Drainage) seeks to ensure that development is directed to areas of lowest flood risk and incorporates appropriate drainage measures.
- 5.23 Policy CR1 (Central Reading) defines the Central Reading area and supports a mix of uses in this highly accessible and sustainable location.

St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2008)

- 5.24 The St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2008) forms part of the Council's evidence base and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 5.25 The Appraisal identifies the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area, including its origins at the historic core of Reading and its position at the intersection of key historic routes.
- 5.26 It highlights the importance of the area's built form including its tightly knit urban grain, consistent scale and its continuous frontages as well as the high proportion of listed buildings and their group value.
- 5.27 The Appraisal confirms that there is a presumption that features which contribute to the significance of the conservation area should be preserved or enhanced and that development proposals should respond positively to the established character, appearance and historic context of the area.



Reading Borough Local Plan Partial Update (Submission Draft, May 2025)

- 5.28 The Reading Borough Local Plan Partial Update (Submission Draft May 2025) has been submitted for examination and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 5.29 The Submission Draft carries forward many policies from the adopted local plan, whilst updating others to reflect changes in national policy and local priorities including climate change and sustainable development.
- 5.30 Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) and Policy CC3 (adaptation to climate change) are retained but strengthened, continuing to require development to minimise energy use, reduce carbon emissions and respond to the impacts of climate change.
- 5.31 Policy CC4 (Heat Networks) replaces the previous focus on decentralised energy and reflects a broader approach to low carbon energy infrastructure, supporting the transition to more sustainable energy systems.
- 5.32 Policy EN19 (Urban Greening Factor) is also introduced which seeks to secure environmental improvements through development by requiring the incorporation of green infrastructure and measures that contribute to biodiversity, urban cooling and overall environmental quality.



SECTION 6: KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Having considered the characteristics of the site and surrounding area, its planning history and identified the relevant planning policy context it is proposed that the application gives rise to the following thematic planning matters;

- Principle of Development
- Design;
- Impact on Heritage Assets;
- Amenity;
- Fire Safety;
- Energy and Sustainability;
- Traffic, Highways and Transportation; and
- Waste.

Principle of Development

- 6.2 The common theme running throughout the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and to that end it is confirmed that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute towards achieving this objective.
- 6.3 The proposals do not involve a material change of use and the building will remain in office use. The development instead relates to physical alterations to the existing building including the reorganisation of rooftop plant and the provision of ancillary amenity space in the form of a roof terrace.
- 6.4 The proposal represents a more efficient use of an existing underutilised roof area within an established building in a highly accessible town centre location. The creation of a roof terrace will provide an attractive breakout space for occupiers and enhance the functionality of the building without altering its primary office use.
- 6.5 The proposals therefore accord with the overarching objectives of the NPPF in terms of making effective use of previously developed land, supporting sustainable patterns of development and enhancing the functionality of existing buildings.

Design

- 6.6 The following should be read alongside the supporting Plans.
- 6.7 Section 12 of the NPPF places significant weight on achieving well designed places, confirming that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.



- 6.8 The proposals are limited to roof level and have been carefully designed to minimise visual impact. The relocation of plant equipment from the lower roof to the upper roof rationalises the existing roofscape and reduces visual clutter.
- 6.9 The introduction of new parapets, balustrades and plant screening has been designed to be functional and discreet, with materials selected to complement the existing building. The removal of redundant structures further improves the overall appearance of the roof.
- 6.10 The proposed works are largely set back from the principal elevation and contained within the existing roof form ensuring that the development remains subservient to the host building and does not detract from the established streetscape.

Impact on Heritage Assets

- 6.11 The site is located within the St Mary's Butts / Castle Street Conservation Area and is in close proximity to a number of listed buildings. As such, the statutory duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 6.12 The proposals are confined to the roof of the building and do not involve alterations to the principal street facing elevation. The works are primarily located to the rear and upper parts of the building and are largely screened from public views.
- 6.13 The rationalisation of rooftop plant and removal of redundant structures will improve the appearance of the roofscape whilst new elements are modest in scale and designed to be visually recessive.
- 6.14 As demonstrated within the submitted drawings, including verified views, the proposals will not be visible from key public viewpoints along Castle Street. The development will therefore preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and will not result in harm to the setting of nearby listed buildings.

Amenity

- 6.15 The proposal introduces a roof terrace to provide amenity space for office occupiers. This will improve the quality and functionality of the building for its users.

- 6.16 Given the location of the terrace at roof level and its relationship with surrounding buildings, the proposals are not considered to give rise to any material overlooking, loss of privacy or overbearing impacts. The accompanying Plans detail the use of balustrades to prevent overlooking. As stated above, it is possible for occupiers to utilise the roof at present without the benefit of any balustrades to prevent overlooking.
- 6.17 Particular consideration has been given to the relationship between the proposed roof terrace and neighbouring properties, including the residential accommodation at 31 Castle Street. The submitted overlooking assessment demonstrates that opportunities for direct overlooking are limited and that the proposed balustrade arrangement will further restrict views towards neighbouring windows. Having regard to the scale of the terrace, its ancillary nature and the relationship with surrounding properties, it is not considered that the development would result in any material harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.
- 6.18 In respect to overlooking, there are only two windows to the east which (in the absence of any balustrade) would be overlooked. However, these two windows already directly face existing office windows of the building at first floor.
- 6.19 The use of terrace is ancillary to the existing office use and is not expected to result in significant noise or disturbance beyond that typically associated with such a use in a town centre location.
- 6.20 The proposals are therefore considered to comply with relevant policies relating to the protection of neighbouring amenity.

Fire Safety

- 6.21 The proposals include the introduction of a roof terrace and associated access arrangements. These have been designed to ensure safe use of the space, including the provision of appropriate parapets, balustrades and means of access. Detailed fire safety considerations will be addressed through compliance with Building Regulations and are not considered to give rise to any planning concerns.

Energy and Sustainability

- 6.22 The NPPF and local planning policy place significant emphasis on sustainable development and reducing carbon emissions.
- 6.23 The proposal includes the installation of solar photovoltaic panels at roof level, which will contribute to on site renewable energy generation and improve the environmental performance of the building.



- 6.24 In addition, the reorganisation of plant and improvements to the roof structure including upgraded insulation will enhance the overall energy efficiency of the building.
- 6.25 The proposals therefore support the objectives of Policies CC2 and CC3 of the Local Plan in relation to sustainable design and climate change.

Traffic, Highways and Transportation

- 6.26 The proposals do not include a change of use or intensification of the building that would materially increase trip generation.
- 6.27 The site is located in a highly accessible town centre location with excellent access to public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure.
- 6.28 The development is therefore not expected to have any material impact on local highway network.

Waste

- 6.29 The proposals do not materially alter the existing use of the building and are not expected to generate additional waste beyond existing levels. Existing waste storage and collection arrangements will continue to operate and are considered adequate for the proposed development.

Noise Impact Assessment

- 6.30 A Noise Impact Assessment has been prepared by Auricl Acoustic Consulting in support of the application to assess the potential effects arising from the relocation of rooftop plant and the creation of the proposed roof terrace. The assessment included a background noise survey and detailed modelling of both plant noise and terrace activity at the nearest residential properties. The report confirms that the proposed plant equipment, when enclosed within the proposed acoustic screening, would operate within Reading Borough Council's standard noise requirements. Predicted plant noise levels are below the applicable noise limits at the nearest noise-sensitive receptors and are therefore not expected to give rise to adverse amenity impacts.
- 6.31 The assessment concludes that noise associated with typical terrace use, including conversation and informal office breakout activity, would result in a negligible impact when assessed against recognised noise impact guidance. No amplified music or similar activities are proposed as part of the development.
- 6.32 The findings of the Noise Impact Assessment therefore demonstrate that the proposed development can be accommodated without resulting in unacceptable impacts on the conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

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SECTION 7: HERITAGE STATEMENT

- 7.1 In accordance with the requirements of the NPPF this Heritage Assessment describes the significance of the heritage assets affected by the development proposal and any implications arising from the application proposal.
- 7.2 The purpose of this assessment is to assist with the determination of the application by informing the decision taker of the effects of the development on the historic built environment. Value judgements on the significance of the relevant heritage assets are presented and the effects of the proposals upon that significance are appraised. This assessment also sets out how the proposals comply with the guidance and policy of the NPPF and the local planning policy framework.

Policy Position

- 7.3 Section 16 of the NPPF relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting in a manner proportionate to the asset's importance and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on significance.
- 7.4 In considering the impact of a proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
- 7.5 Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires decision makers to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- 7.6 At local level, Policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan seeks protection and enhancement of the historic environment including heritage assets and their settings. Policy EN3 relates specifically to conservation areas and requires development within conservation areas to preserve or enhance their character and appearance. Policy EN6 requires new development in historic contexts to respond positively to local character, townscape and heritage significance.

The Significance of the Relevant Heritage Assets

- 7.7 Heritage assets are defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of their heritage interest.

- 7.8 The application site is located within the St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area as indicated on the below figure in red from the Reading Policy Map. The Conservation Area Appraisal confirms that the conservation area was designated in 1972 and that its special interest derives from its location at the Saxon centre of Reading, at the crossroads of the main east west and north south routes through the town. It also identifies the importance of St Mary's Church, St Mary's Churchyard, the survival of historic buildings from the sixteenth century onwards and the high proportion of listed buildings within the area.

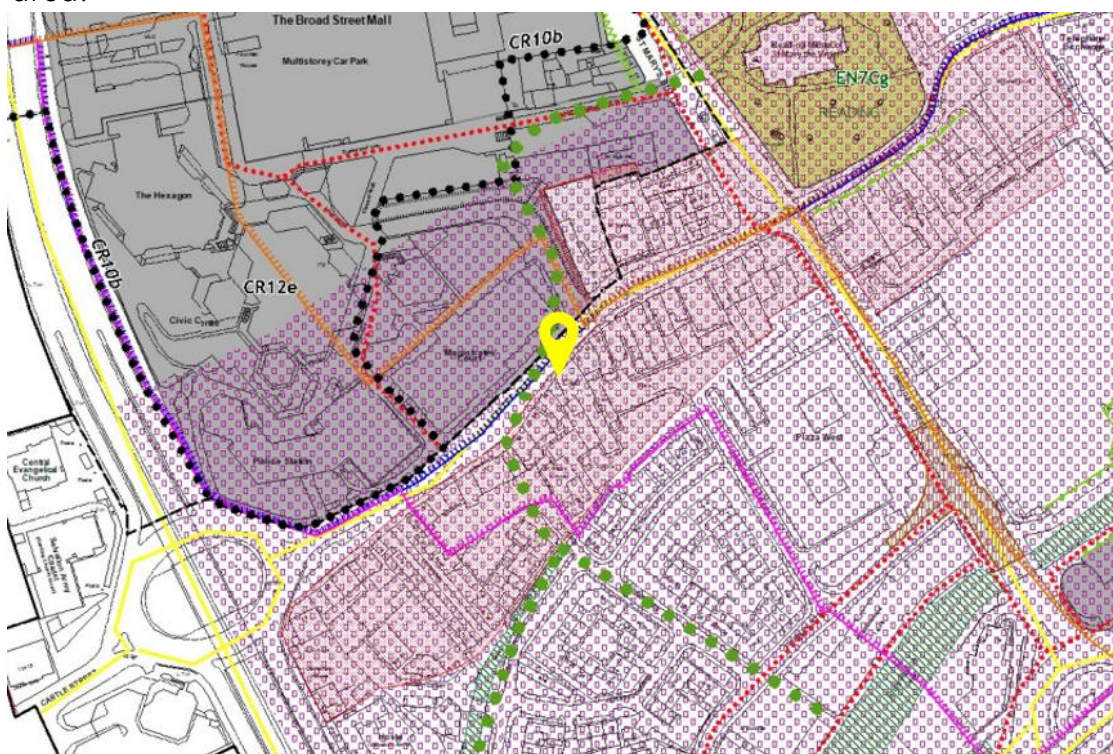


Fig.1. Reading Policy Map

- 7.9 The Appraisal identifies Castle Street as part of the historic east-west route through Reading and notes that the conservation area is characterised by two- and three-storey buildings built to the back edge of the pavement, reflecting the medieval street pattern and historic development of this part of the town.
- 7.10 The application site is also within an Area of Archaeological Potential. The previous delegated report for application reference PL/23/0061 confirms that 29 Castle Street lies within an area of potential archaeological significance and that the Berkshire Archaeologist identified potential archaeological implications due to the site's location within the historic core of Reading.

Designated Heritage Assets

7.11 The principal designated heritage asset affected by the proposal is the St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area. The application building sits within this conservation area and forms part of the established built frontage of Castle Street.

7.12 There are also a number of listed buildings in close proximity to the site as seen in Fig.2 below. These include 27 Castle Street (1154654), which is Grade II listed and located adjacent to the application site. The official list entry describes 27 Castle Street as a late eighteenth-century house, later used as a shop, brewery, public house and apartments. Its significance derives from its architectural interest as a late eighteenth-century building contributing to an architecturally varied historic streetscape, its historic interest as part of the urban development of Reading's ancient core, and its group value with nearby listed buildings.

7.13 *"27 Castle Street, a late-C18 house, in use as a shop and brewery during the mid C19, a public house around the 1950s, then as apartments from around 2015, is listed at Grade II for the following reasons:*

Architectural interest:

** as a late-C18 building which contributes to the character of an architecturally varied historic streetscape.*

Historic interest:

** as part of the urban development of Reading's ancient core.*

Group value:

** the building is in close proximity to a large number of listed buildings and forms part of a strong historic grouping."*

7.14 Other listed buildings in the vicinity include 17 Castle Street (1113413), front railings and mounting block and 19 Castle Street (1113414) and associated front railings, both Grade II* listed, together with 14-16 Castle Street (The Sun Inn), (1321964) which is Grade II listed and located opposite the site. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies these buildings as part of the important historic fabric of Castle Street and as contributors to the significance and group value of the conservation area.

7.15 *"17 Castle Street, Reading, is listed at Grade II* for the following principal reasons:*

7.16 *Architectural interest*

7.17 ** as a prominent, high-status urban vernacular building of the C16 and later, with finely proportioned, jettied double-gables and chimney stacks, and*

accomplished decorative treatment at the façade. The C17 porch and double-yard doors with 'porte batarde' are distinctive additions;

- 7.18 ** the interior retains a significant proportion of good quality early timber framing, particularly evident at the ground floor and attic levels where the incised shoe on a timber post is a rare graffito. The C17 coffered ceiling in the ground floor west room and the fine stairs of about 1700 add greatly to the overall significance of the building.*
- 7.19 *Historic interest:*
- 7.20 ** the long history and form of the building demonstrate the commercial and domestic occupation of English historic towns from the C16 onward which, amplified by its documented history, adds to the building's more than special national interest.*
- 7.21 *Group value:*
- 7.22 ** the building has a degree of shared history, through the association with the Castle Brewery, with the C17 Sun Public House on the opposite side of Castle Street, listed at Grade II (NHLE entry 1321964), and demonstrable group value through the co-location of diverse listed buildings in close proximity, notably the neighbouring 15 and 19 Castle Street, both listed at Grade II* (NHLE entries 1303734 and 1113414)."*
- 7.23 *"19 Castle Street, a former early-C18 town house with late-C18 or early-C19 additions, is listed at Grade II* for the following principal reasons:*
- 7.24 *Architectural interest:*
- 7.25 ** as an excellent example of an early-C18 former town house of considerable status with a well-proportioned and architecturally refined façade;*
- 7.26 ** for its surviving high-quality C18 internal fabric including elaborate door cases, main staircase, panelling, window shutters, and intricate plasterwork;*
- 7.27 ** for its use of the polychromatic brickwork, a noted feature of the architecture of Reading.*
- 7.28 *Historic interest:*
- 7.29 ** it is located within a significant historic townscape, illustrating the C18 change from timber-framed to brick houses along Castle Street, and making a notable contribution to its rich architectural character and historic evolution.*
- 7.30 *Group value:*

- 7.31 ** with the numerous listed buildings on Castle Street most notably with the adjoining 17 Castle Street (Grade II*) and 21 Castle Street (Grade II) and the Sun Inn (Grade II) opposite.*
- 7.32 *"14 and 16 Castle Street, the Sun Inn, is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:*
- 7.33 *Architectural interest:*
- 7.34 ** as a C17 building possibly with earlier origins, the fabric of which contributes to Reading's rich and varied architectural character.*
- 7.35 *Historic interest:*
- 7.36 ** as part of the urban development of Reading's ancient core, possibly incorporating fragments from earlier buildings on or near its site.*
- 7.37 *Group value:*
- 7.38 ** the building is in close proximity to a number of listed buildings and contributes to a strong historic streetscape."*
- 7.39 The significance of these listed buildings is primarily derived from their architectural and historic interest, their survival as part of the historic development of Castle Street, and their contribution to the wider historic townscape. Their setting is experienced principally from Castle Street, where the continuous historic frontage, scale and relationship between buildings contributes to their significance.



Fig.2. Locality of Nearby Listed Buildings

Assessment of Significance

- 7.40 The St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area is of high local heritage significance as part of the historic core of Reading. Its significance derives from its historic street pattern, the survival of buildings of different dates and architectural styles, the presence of a high proportion of listed buildings, and the coherence of its townscape character.
- 7.41 The application building is not listed, but it forms part of the conservation area and contributes to the established frontage of Castle Street. Its principal contribution is made through its street-facing elevation and its relationship with adjoining buildings within the continuous urban frontage
- 7.42 The roof areas affected by the application are more limited in heritage significance. They are located away from the principal Castle Street frontage and are largely experienced, if at all, as part of the rear and upper roofscape. Existing plant and roof structures currently contribute to a functional and somewhat cluttered roofscape rather than to the special interest of the conservation area.

Impact Assessment of the Application Proposal

- 7.43 The proposal seeks to relocate existing plant from the lower roof to the upper roof, create a roof terrace for office occupiers, install solar photovoltaic panels, introduce parapets, balustrades and plant screening, and undertake associated works.
- 7.44 The works do not involve demolition or alteration of the principal Castle Street elevation, which is the part of the building that makes the clearest contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The established scale, frontage and townscape relationship of the building with Castle Street will therefore be maintained.
- 7.45 The proposed works are confined to the roof areas and have been designed to remain visually discreet. The accompanying plans provided by Hives Architects explains that the lower roof sits behind the primary roofline and is largely screened from public view by the existing parapet and surrounding buildings. The submitted views from Castle Street also confirm that the proposed solar panels and plant will not be visible from Castle Street.
- 7.46 The relocation of plant to the upper roof will allow the lower roof to be cleared and used as a small office terrace, while consolidating plant in a more appropriate service location. The proposal also includes louvred screening, which will help to contain and rationalise the appearance of rooftop equipment.

- 7.47 The introduction of parapets, balustrades and safety measures is necessary to allow safe use of the terrace. These elements are modest in scale and have been designed to sit within the existing roofscape. The proposed use of brick to match the existing building and visually recessive metalwork will ensure that the works are appropriately integrated with the host building.
- 7.48 The solar photovoltaic panels will support the environmental performance of the building. Given their roof-level position and lack of visibility from Castle Street, they will not adversely affect the ability to appreciate the significance of the conservation area or nearby listed buildings.
- 7.49 In terms of the setting of nearby listed buildings, the proposal will not alter the principal streetscape context in which those assets are experienced. The works will not compete with, obscure or detract from the historic elevations of nearby listed buildings and will not affect the group value of the listed buildings along Castle Street.
- 7.50 The proposal is therefore considered to preserve the character and appearance of the St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area and the setting of nearby listed buildings. No harm to the significance of designated heritage assets is identified.
- 7.51 Accordingly, the proposal complies with the statutory duty under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the heritage objectives of the NPPF, and Policies EN1, EN3 and EN6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.



SECTION 8: CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This Planning and Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the relocation of rooftop plant, creation of a roof terrace, installation of solar photovoltaic panels and associated works at 29 Castle Street, Reading.
- 8.2 The proposed development represents a modest and well-considered intervention to an existing building in a highly accessible town centre location. The proposals make more efficient use of underutilised roof space, improve the functionality of the building for its occupiers, and enhance its environmental performance through the incorporation of renewable energy infrastructure.
- 8.3 The principle of the development is acceptable, with no change of use proposed and the works remaining ancillary to the established office use. The scheme aligns with the objectives of the NPPF and the Reading Borough Local Plan in supporting sustainable development and the efficient use of previously developed land.
- 8.4 The design of the proposals has been carefully considered, with works confined to the roof level and largely screened from public views. The rationalisation of existing plant and removal of redundant structures will improve the overall appearance of the roofscape, whilst new elements have been designed to be discreet and sympathetic to the host building.
- 8.5 In heritage terms, the proposals preserve the character and appearance of the St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area and do not result in harm to the significance or setting of nearby listed buildings. The development therefore accords with the statutory duty under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the NPPF and relevant local plan policies.
- 8.6 The proposals will not give rise to adverse impacts in respect of neighbouring amenity, highways or other material considerations, and instead deliver clear benefits in terms of building usability, sustainability and visual improvement.
- 8.7 Accordingly, taking all matters into account, the proposed development is considered to comply with the relevant provisions of the development plan and national planning policy. There are no material considerations that indicate planning permission should not be forthcoming.