



Heritage Impact Statement

19-21 Castle Street
Reading
RG1 7SB

June 2026



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19-21 Castle Street, Reading, RG1 7SB

Prepared for College of Integrated Chinese Medicine
19-21 Castle Street
Reading
Berkshire
RG1 7SB

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1.0 Introduction

This Heritage Impact Design and Access Statement has been prepared in line with Historic England Advice Note 12 and NPPF. The level of detail provided is proportional to the significance of the building in question and the impact of the proposed works.

Chapter 16 section 200 of NPPF, "In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation."

This Heritage Impact Assessment incorporates supporting information for an application for listed building consent for the following:

- Vertical 'Mathematical' clay tile reinstating / replacement where the building is to be opened to see the extent of the damage to the timber frame / joinery.
- Timber joinery repairs / replacement where there are notable damage / rot / decay and fixing damage / replacement of fixings.
- Mortar replacement.
- Removal of damaging decoration to brickwork / vertical clay tiles.
- Replace structural timber beam.
- Removal of decorative paintwork and replacing damaged brickwork.
- Repointing to chimney.
- Decoration to timber windows.

Note: Vertical Mathematical clay tiles will be known as vertical clay tiles within the heritage statement.

2.0 Aim

Trident Building Consultancy were approached by the owners of College of Integrated Chinese Medicine, 19-21 Castle Street within Reading to undertake a survey of the condition of the vertical clay tiles of the façade to property no. 21 at the rear return elevation only. The properties are both listed buildings within a dedicated Conservation area.

We undertook the survey in April 2026, following concerns regarding loose sections of the vertical clay tiles to the lower levels of property no.21 following a recent condition report undertaken by CBRE.

Our initial inspection highlighted the timber frame to the bottom level of property no.21 shows historic rot in sections and that the vertical clay tiles had projected away from the façade. A visual inspection of the high-level façade from ground level using binoculars indicated that some areas of the vertical clay tiles were projecting away from the façade and that the mortar joints appeared loose. Upon inspection of the full height of property no.19 rear return elevation, it became apparent that the decoration to the brickwork has caused large scale brickwork to become brittle and degraded.

Upon liaising with the facilities site team, it became clear that loose sections of both clay tiles and brickwork have fell from higher levels of both properties. This caused serious healthy and safety concerns to the staff and visitors to the College of Integrated Chinese Medicine, and we immediately arranged to close off the gang way, and we appointed a scaffold company to erect freestanding scaffolding to the full height of the three-story properties. This allowed any future material debris to fall onto the scaffolding and staff / visitors could safely use the gangway adjoining the two properties.

Once the scaffold was erected, we undertook an intrusive inspection of the façade to property no.19 only with a Structural Engineer. The intrusive inspection covered 5 areas of removal of the clay tiles to determine the structure of the building and to determine the extent of further damage to the timber elements behind the facade, including a closer inspection of the lower façade. Upon closer inspection of the structural timber beam at high level above the gangway between both properties it became evident of the extent of the rot and deterioration.

Our initial survey identified a requirement for repairs, replacement, most of which are extensive in nature, exclusive of the replacement timber structural beam at high level above the gangway and between both properties. The resulting works specified following the survey, are included in the documents provided to accompany this Listed Building Consent application.

Remedial works included to property no. 19 replacing localised timber joinery to the structural frame, replacement of vertical clay tiles, full replacement of mortar joint, decoration to timber windows and refixing rainwater goods after completed works.

Remedial works included to property no.21 include removal of decoration to full height three storey side return elevation and replacing bricks, repointing, repointing to chimney at high level and a new lead detail to chimney. Replacement of structural timber beam above gang way.

3.0 History and Development

9.1 Historic England Listing

19 Castle Street Grade II*

[19 Castle Street and associated front railings, Non Civil Parish - 1113414 | Historic England](#)

“Former town house. Built in the early C18 with late-C18 or early-C19 additions to the rear. Linked to number 21 Castle Street above the ground floor. Silver-grey brick laid in header bond with red brick quoins and window surrounds. Clay tile roofs.

The principal (north) elevation onto Castle Street is symmetrical and of five bays with a parapet which has stone copings and a moulded brick cornice. The centrally placed entrance has a six-panel door with a plain transom replacing the original arched fanlight. The door surround has fluted Doric pilasters and Doric entablature and cornice capped by a segmental pediment. Fenestration is of timber sash windows, those on the ground floor having one-over-one plate glass panes, the first floor six-over-six glazing bars and the second floor three-over-six. The ground and first floor windows have deep segmental heads of gauged brick with fluted keystones and brick hoodmould. The second-floor windows have square-headed openings, also with fluted keystones. There are cast-iron rainwater goods with rounded hoppers on the interior of the two outer bays.

The rear (south) elevation is rendered with an ashlar effect and dominated by the full height, five-sided, bow of the rear extension. Fenestration, on the three principal faces, is of replacement timber sashes in plain, square-headed, openings, those on the first floor have six-over-six glazing bars while the ground floor ones are two-over-two apart from the larger central window which is eight-over-eight. The western return (to the alley between number 21) is blind with the western return having a window with paired four-over-four timber sashes on the ground floor and two, six-over-six, sash windows on the first floor. The roof slope above has a lead-covered, flat-roofed dormer with a pair of two-over-two timber casement windows. To the east of the extension is an oriel bay, with a six-over-six timber sash window, adjoining the sloping, slate-covered, roof of the start of the south-eastern range.” [Historic England]



Figure 1: Historic England .org.uk

9.2 Historic England Listing

21 Castle Street Grade II

[21 Castle Street, Non Civil Parish - 1303700 | Historic England](#)

“An early-C19 house, converted to a shop during the mid-C19 with the shop fronts removed and the façade restored in the late C20. The building has a dog-leg plan, with a double-pile fronting Castle Street and a longer rear range running south.

The principal elevation is of three storeys plus basement across three bays. The stucco to the ground floor is banded and divided by a plat band from the two upper floors, which are smooth rendered. The main entrance is to the left side and has a six-panel door with a decorative fanlight over, recessed within a round-arched recess supported by moulded brackets. The two, round-headed window openings to the right side each have a round-arched, timber sash with glazing bars.

The west elevation of the rear range is blank, while the east elevation has a variety of timber sash and casement windows to all floors. There is a door at the basement level of the south elevation, a full-height casement window and smaller, two-pane, timber sash window on the ground floor, and a tripartite timber sash window on the first and second floors.

The front range has an M-shaped roof with partially infilled roof valleys and the rear, south range has a hipped roof with brick chimney stack.” [Historic England]



Figure 2: Historic England .org.uk

9.3 Development

[Castle Street & St Mary's Butts: A short walk through time \(part one of two\) | Reading Museum](#)

The city of Reading developed from an early Anglo-saxon settlement and the origins of what we know as Reading today is believed to have been located. Reading's geographical position at the confluence of the rivers Thames and Kennet and its road and later rail network have been at the centre of its ability to thrive and meet the demands placed upon it by change. The Castle Street and St Mary's area is no exception to this, having also the old highway to the west and St Mary's Minster at its heart.

There are two references to Reading made in the Domesday Book of 1086, but it is the one under that of Battle Abbey that is of most interest. It mentions an estate which lay to the west of the town and included 28 dwellings and 12 acres of meadow.

From the early establishment of a market outside the west door of the minster church for the convenience of the congregants the area has developed over the centuries, continually evolving to meet the demands of the local population. Much evidence of this rich history is still apparent in the mix of remaining buildings, many from different periods, quite a few of which are listed.



Figure 3: Johns Man's map of 1813 - Reading Museum.org.uk

The foundation of Reading Abbey in 1121 had a profound impact on St Mary's. Not only was the Abbot of the Abbey rector of St Mary's until the dissolution in 1539, but the Abbey's establishment of a new market to the east by, at the latest the early 13th century, would have impacted the wealth of the earlier market area. The area outside the west door of St Mary's was by c.1160, known as Olde Street and the market became known as Old Market, differentiating it from the Abbot's new market. On John Speed's map above of 1611 Castle Street is clearly evident, but it had this name sometime between 1250-1275.

The significance of St Mary is still poignant in the 21st century, a very busy church with two services a week and additional daily prayers. Since 1999 the church of St Mary has been known as Reading Minster and whilst the main body of the church dates from the 11th century much of what is seen today is of a later date. Major work was done to the church 1551-1555, post reformation, with materials reclaimed from the Abbey church.

Slade in his discussion of the medieval borough refers to the corner opposite Minster Street, where Castle Street began the main road to the west, as being the busiest in the town. On Speed's map below of 1611, we can see Castle Street is already lined both sides with buildings and stands out as one of the town's principal thoroughfares. Little remains in Castle Street that is visible from the time of Speed's map, save two probably 16th century buildings, no's 15 and 17, and of a century or so later the Sun Inn and what is now the Horn public house.

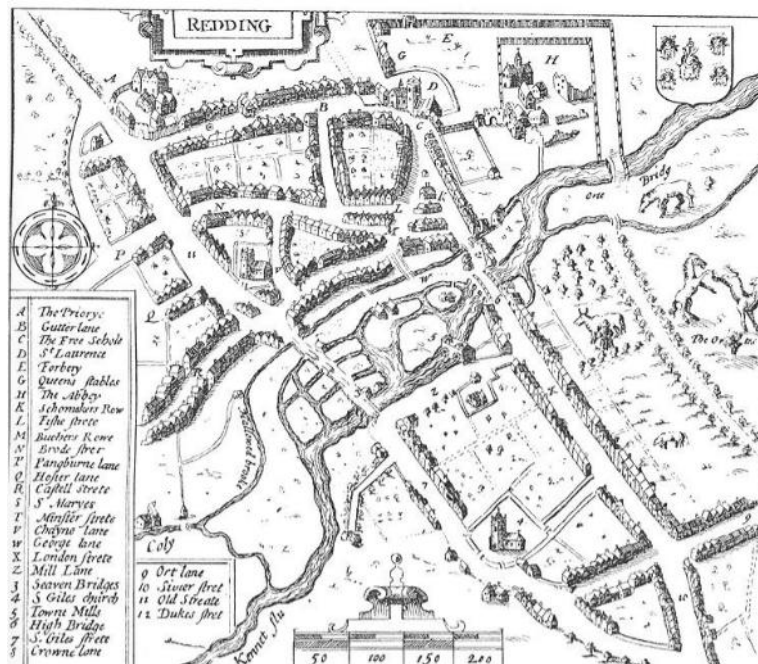


Figure 4: Johns Speed's map of 1610 - Reading Museum.org.uk

Reading was mostly contained within its medieval boundaries until the end of the 18th century, when once again it began to prosper as a market town and had malting as its main industrial activity. Its new found prosperity was reflected in its streets and buildings and its market, regarded as one of the best in England. It dealt with many kinds of agricultural produce, providing livelihoods not only for the town's market traders but also seedsmen, meal men, purveyors of consumer goods which in turn created the need for bankers and solicitors etc.

The photo of the Reading maps shows the development over the four decades that expands out to the agricultural land.

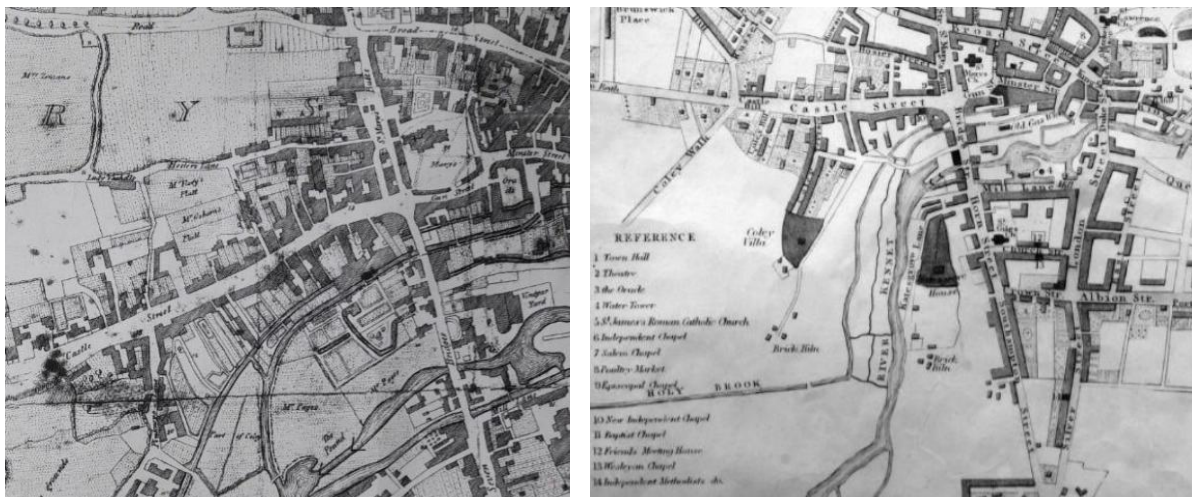


Figure 5: Charles Tomkin's map of Reading, 1802 - Reading Museum.org.uk

Figure 6: Snare's 1840 Map of Reading - Reading Museum.org.uk

Changes to St Mary's Butts area had begun in the early part of the 19th century with the removal of buildings from the south side of St Mary's churchyard and the changes to the road level in Gun Street. The distinct mix of post-medieval building juxtaposed with that of the 18th and early 19th century was a blend of commercial, retail and residential property providing goods and services to the population.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, the north and south of Castle Street were lined with a mix of residential and commercial properties. It was a busy shopping street serving a densely populated area of the town. Between The Horn and St Mary's Episcopal Chapel are the only three remaining period buildings on the north side (all listed). Behind no 8, out of sight is a very early 17th century cottage, which is also listed.

On the south side of the street, there is still much building of the period. From nos. 3 and 5, to no. 63 (Holybrook House), including the culvert to The Holybrook (at the rear of the Vachel Almshouses), there are only three buildings that are unlisted: nos. 41 and 57 (which were both built in the 20th century) and no. 31. No. 31 was listed until 20th November 2018, when it was delisted because:

*'despite having C18 origins, the cumulative effect of a number of substantial alterations has resulted in a building that is constructed mostly of C20 fabric; * key internal fixtures, notably the staircase and fireplaces, have been removed in the C20.'* (Heritage Gateway)

The below photos show how streetscape has largely changed with the buildings north side of Castle Street have been demolished and replaced with a modern construction but still in a red brick.



Figure 7: North and south sides of Castle Street c.1900s- Reading Museum.org.uk



Figure 8: North and south sides of Castle Street 2026 – Googlestreetview.co.uk

The below google earth photos shown between 2003 and 2025 show how little of the buildings to Castle Street and the wider conservation area has changed over the periods.

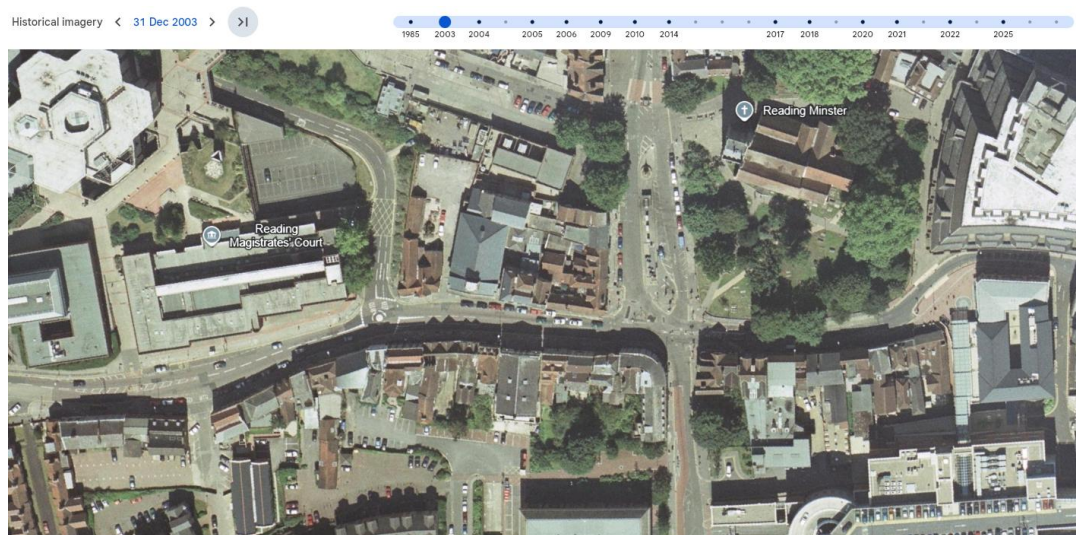


Figure 9: Google earth image 2003 googleearth.com



Figure 10: Google earth image 2025 googleearth.com

The below photo shows the current conservation area to Saint Mary's Butts Castle Street, and we can see predominantly the buildings surrounding St. Mary's Church and Castle Street show the listed buildings along the main road of Castle Street leading up to the main vista of the St. Mary's Church.



Figure 11: Saint Mary's Butt's Castle Street Conservation Area, St-Mary Castle Street – Reading.org.uk

4.0 Significance of Asset

9.1 Overall Significance of the Building in its setting

St Mary's Butts / Castle Street Conservation Area Appraisal, March 2008 includes a detailed assessment of all the buildings of significance and of these buildings within their setting.

The appraisal seeks to record and analyses the various features which give the St Mary's Butt / Castle Street Conversion Area its special architectural and historic interest and was designated in 1972.

The proposed works are limited to the rear flank elevation, which is positioned away from the street frontage and backs onto a residential development with associated car parking serving the property and adjacent car park serving neighbouring users.

9.2 Buildings of special interest

Most of the properties in the Conservation area are listed as being architectural or historic importance, the known Listed * buildings are identified as having significance as having "townscape merit" predominantly the Former 'Cross Keys' public house, we discuss these properties briefly below.

Buildings within the St Marys Abutt Conservation area are noted as below:

- Grade I listed Church of St Mary in St Mary's Butts, a Reading landmark, originally Norman, and mentioned in the Domesday Book, but now mostly Medieval in origin, which is the focal building of the Conservation Area.
- St Mary's Churchyard, an important open space in the centre of town.
- Grade II* listed St Mary's Church in Castle Street.
- The presence of some of the oldest surviving buildings in Reading, including 3 existing public houses ("The Allied Arms", "The Horn" and "The Sun") dating from the 16th and 17th centuries, and the former "Shades" public house at 15 Gun Street dating from the 17th century. "The Sun" is also reputed to be on the site of the former Reading Gaol.
- Grade II* listed buildings at 15 and 17 Castle Street (both 16th century), 19 Castle Street (early 18th century), 63 Castle Street (circa 1750) and the Church of St Mary, Castle Street (1798).
- 35-37 St Mary's Butts ("County Delicacies") and 57 St Mary's Butts ("The Allied Arms"), which also date from the 16th century.
- The Queen Victoria Jubilee Fountain in St Mary's Butts, a local landmark.

- Grade II* listed Holy Brook Culvert to the rear of numbers 1 31(odd) Castle Street, plus the remainder of the Holy Brook which links the rear of the properties on the south side of the conservation area.



Fig 12 – Historicengland.org.uk

Church of St Mary at Church of St Mary, St Mary's Butts, Reading is Grade I Listed Building with a mixture of heritage whose foundation pre-dates the Norman conquest, with parts of the materials brought from Reading Abbey included in the construction of the nave roof, material for the tower and possibly nave arcade



Fig 13 – readingmuseum.org.uk

14 Castle Street is a Grade II* is an Evangelist chapel built in 1798 by R Billing, with embellishment and extension by N Briant around 1840 and further alterations in the late mid to late 20th Century. *(The property is directly opposite the frontage of 19-21 Castle Street).*



Fig 14 – Historicengland.org.uk

14 and 16, Castle Street 'The Sun Inn', Reading, RG1 7RD is a Grade II* built in 17th Century building possibly with earlier origins, the fabric of which contributes to Reading's rich and varied architectural character.



Fig 15 – RowberryMorris.com [Solicitors in Reading - Rowberry Morris](#)

15-17 Castle Street is a Grade II* was built in the 16th Century and is a prominent, high-status urban vernacular building with finely proportioned double jetties and distinctive gables. The building has a historical relationship with several listed buildings in proximity, notably the neighbouring 17 and 19 Castle Street, both listed at Grade II*.



Fig 16 – Frontage of 19 Castle Street – Photograph taken by Applicant/Agent

19 Castle Street is a Grade II* listed building built in the early 18th Century and is a former town house of considerable status with well-proportioned and architecturally refined facades with polychromatic brickwork, a noted feature of the architectural of Reading.

9.3 Archaeological Significance (19-21 Castle Street)

The development of Birmingham from a small village to the second biggest city in England does not contain much archaeological evidence.

The development of Reading from a small settlement to a larger city in England has been noted that when works on development sites in Reading are carried out has uncovered evidence of early Saxon occupation.

[St-Mary-Castle-Street.pdf](#)

9.4 Historic Significance (19-21 Castle Street)

Castle Street was established in the 16th Century, with the significant vantage points looking towards St Mary's Church. The enormous abbey church now lies under the present Forbury Garden and Abbots' Walk, to the east of Reading's Market Place/London Street Conservation Area. This area became the centre of Reading following the building of the Abbey, taking over from the St Mary's Butts area.

[St-Mary-Castle-Street.pdf](#)

9.5 Architectural Significance (19-21 Castle Street)

The listing of both building (Historic England) highlights a great depth of information of the history, internal layout and age of alterations internally / externally. No.19 is Grade II* listed and No.21 is Grade II Listed.

Property No.19 to the front (north) is a three-storey symmetrical with 5 bays windows, the frontage with polychromatic brickwork with silver-grey brick laid in header bond, the rear (south) elevation is rendered with an ashlar effect and dominated by the full height, five-sided bow windows of the rear extension.

[19 Castle Street and associated front railings, Non Civil Parish - 1113414 | Historic England](#)

Property No. 21 Castle Street was constructed during the early C19, probably on the site of an earlier building. By the mid-C19 the ground floor was in use as a shop, including a timber and glazed shopfront. The rear was extended through the later C19 and C20. The ground-floor shopfront was removed around 1990 and the façade restored. Around 2003, the building was converted to office and educational use. To the front (north) is three-storey with rendered with an ashlar effect, the rear with the original and later extension buildings, have a distinctive two styles; mathematical clay tiles and brick English bond to the full height façade.

[21 Castle Street, Non Civil Parish - 1303700 | Historic England](#)

The properties 19-21 Castle Street are characterized by ‘The Gun Street and Castle Street frontages’ in the Conservation Appraisal as below:

Features that make a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the conservation area:

- St Mary’s Church in the centre of the northern part of Castle Street within the Conservation Area is a local landmark building even without its missing “pepperpot”
- The corner buildings at Gun Street/Bridge Street, Bridge Street/Castle Street and Castle Street/St Mary’s Butts, at the crossroads of the Conservation Area are local landmark buildings;
- The “Sun Inn” is now also an important corner landmark building representing the western limit of the Conservation Area on the north side of Castle Street;
- The 16th Century survivors at numbers 15 and 17 Castle Street, the former retaining a cobbled passageway;

5.0 Planning Policy

9.1 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 27th March 2012 updated December 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

The overall emphasis of the NPPF is to facilitate and secure sustainable development. Sustainable development should be seen as a 'golden thread' running through both plan-making and decision taking.

Sections within the NPPF actively promote the use of heritage assets to support their maintenance, enjoyment and sustainability.

All of the below statements have been taken from Section 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Those which reference the Local Authorities specific duties under the legislation vis a vis record keeping etc have not been included. Together with those which do not specifically reference the building in question and the proposed works.

"202. Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations."

"203. Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:

d) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

e) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;

f) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and

g) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place."

“204. When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.”

“207. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.”

“208. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.”

“210. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.”

“212. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.”

“213. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;

b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.”

“215. Where a development proposal will 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 including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.”

“216. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”

“220. Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 214 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 215, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.”

9.2 Reading Borough Local Plan Adopted November 2019

The following excerpts have been taken from the above plan and represent the most relevant policies pertaining to this application

“1.2.5 Reading is an ancient town with over 1,000 years of history, and contains a wealth of archaeology and historic buildings. The historic environment has been, and is, important in forming the identity of the town and its people. The historic environment – all the archaeology, buildings and landscapes that surround us – contributes to the underlying framework that creates a sense of place for Reading. However, there is a clear need for Reading to make more of those important historic assets.”

“4.2.1 Reading’s unique heritage will be at the heart of the town’s identity and will be highly visible, valued and accessible by those who live in, work in or visit the town. It will enrich Reading’s communities and enable them to interact with, and celebrate, the town’s history and historic assets.”

“4.2.2 The role of the Local Plan is to proactively conserve and enhance the historic environment and promote its enjoyment. This entails recognition of the value of historic features that are desirable for retention, ensuring that the most valued townscapes and landscapes (e.g. those with national and international designations) are given the highest level of protection and other locally valued assets are recognised, retained and enhanced wherever possible. Protecting Reading’s heritage assets contributes to a sense of place, and doing so can contribute to other important planning goals. Investment in heritage and culture, in turn, generates more spending in the local economy. For example, previous investment in publicly owned heritage assets within the Abbey Quarter, like the Forbury Gardens and Simeon Monument, has created an attractive environment for high-quality commercial investment including Forbury Square and Forbury Hotel²⁸. A vibrant historic environment also contributes to town centre vitality, sustainable transport, residential development, good design and the natural environment. Heritage assets can be a positive force for regeneration. New development can be beneficial to heritage assets through providing or encouraging new uses or better revealing their significance.”

“4.2.3 If we are to properly value our substantial heritage assets, it is important to understand their significance, and this means appreciating how they relate to the history of the town. The following sections therefore summarise the main aspects of Reading’s history insofar as they relate to the current built environment.”

“4.2.4 There is evidence of prehistoric and Roman settlement in Reading, particularly around the river valleys. There have been a variety of locations where such evidence has been found, and there is potential for archaeological finds across the Borough.”

“4.2.5 Despite this evidence for earlier settlement, Reading is a Saxon place-name from early Saxon settlers who settled the land near the meeting point of the Thames and Kennet in the 6th century. The historic core retains reminders of its Saxon and medieval origins through its

early street pattern and ancient parish churches. At the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086, Reading belonged to the king and included a small borough and two manors. In 1121, King Henry I founded Reading Abbey. The Abbey dominated the town and became one of the richest religious houses in England, making Reading a wealthy place, and a centre of religion and pilgrimage. The Dissolution of the Monasteries by King Henry VIII in 1538 signalled the beginning of the Abbey's decline."

"4.2.9 - Nearly all of Reading's heritage assets are owned by private organisations and individuals. The conservation and enhancement of the historic environment is the responsibility of everyone in the community. The Council owns relatively few historic assets, although some of the assets it does own are very prominent, such as the Abbey Gate and Ruins and Town Hall. The conservation and enhancement of Reading's historic assets must be based in innovative and creative approaches involving high levels of partnership. Many local organisations are already working to enhance the view that Reading is a heritage destination. These policies attempt to address that Reading has not always made the most of its significant heritage."

"4.2.10 - Heritage assets are defined in the NPPF as a "building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest."29 Heritage assets may be formally designated as being of national importance or of local importance and may include listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments, registered parks and gardens, industrial heritage sites, sites of archaeological interest and historic landscapes. The fact that an asset is not identified on a list does not mean it is not of historical significance."

"Historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced. This will include: Listed Buildings; Conservation Areas; Scheduled Monuments; Historic parks and gardens; and Other features with local or national significance, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and assets on the Local List."

"All proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits.]Applications which affect Listed Buildings will not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where appropriate, their settings."

"Applications which affect Historic Parks and Gardens will safeguard features which form an integral part of the special character or appearance of the park or garden. Development will not detract from the enjoyment, layout, design, character, appearance, features or setting of the park or garden, key views out from the park, or prejudice its future restoration."

"4.2.13 Heritage Statements will be expected to:

1. describe the significance of the asset and its setting, using appropriate expertise; at a level of detail proportionate to its significance and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal; using appropriate references such as the Historic Environment Record and, if necessary, original survey (including, for assets of archaeological interest, an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation); and”
2. set out the impact of the development on the heritage assets and a suggested mitigation that is proportionate to the impact and the significance of the heritage asset, including where possible positive opportunities to conserve and enjoy heritage assets as well as recording loss and advancing knowledge.”

“4.2.14 - In areas where there is a need to protect character, local authorities have the power to make an Article 4 direction to remove permitted development rights and require planning applications³¹. There are 15 Article 4 directions currently in place that relate to patterned brickwork and one relating to a locally listed building (plus two which restrict conversions from a house to an HMO) and the Council will continue to consider the implementation of Article 4 directions, particularly in areas where special historic character is threatened³². There is potential to use Local Development Orders (LDOs) in combination with Article 4 Directions in order to allow owners to reinstate features that reflect historic character without having to submit a planning application.”

“4.2.15 - Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Unlike buildings listed by Historic England, they are designated at the local level by the local authority. These areas are designated because they have a particularly distinctive character and usually provide a strong link to the history of the area and are considered to be heritage assets for the purposes of applying this policy. The specific heritage interests of Reading’s Conservation Areas are set out in Conservation Area Appraisals. These documents serve as a guide for managing development in these areas.”

“EN4: LOCALLY IMPORTANT HERITAGE ASSETS

Development proposals that affect locally important heritage assets will demonstrate that development conserves architectural, archaeological or historical significance which may include the appearance, character and setting of the asset. Planning permission may be granted in cases where a proposal could result in harm to or loss of a locally important heritage asset only where it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development significantly outweigh the asset’s significance. Where it is accepted by the Local Planning Authority that retention is not important, recording of the heritage asset should be undertaken and submitted alongside development proposals. Replacement buildings should draw upon heritage elements of the previous design, incorporating historical qualities that made the previous building significant. This may include appearance, scale and architectural quality.”

“4.2.16 - Heritage Assets at Risk are identified by Historic England as “vulnerable to neglect, decay or other threats”.³³ Heritage Assets at Risk deserve priority attention. As of October 2017, four assets in Reading have been identified by Historic England as ‘at risk’. These are: • Sacred Heart, St John’s Road • Chazey Farm Barn, The Warren • St David’s Hall, Portland Place, 24-30 London Road • Remains of Reading Abbey At the time of writing, three of the

four sites identified as 'at risk' are either undergoing improvement or have secured funding for improvement (Sacred Heart, St David's Hall and the Remains of Reading Abbey). The Council is working closely with the owners of the Chazey Farm Barn to develop a plan for its restoration. Should other assets become identified as 'at-risk' throughout the plan period, the Council will actively work toward their protection. The most up-to-date list can be viewed on the Historic England website³⁴."

"5.4.16 - Many of the elements that are key to successful development of the Station/River Major Opportunity Area also apply to the West Side. Improved pedestrian and cycle permeability remains vital, but the key direction through the West Side is from east to west, with the main barrier being the IDR. The presence of low-rise residential adjacent to the site also requires careful treatment, with the added issue of the Russell Street/Castle Hill and **St Mary's Butts/ Castle Street conservation areas** and numerous listed buildings adjoining the West Side. The existence of these historic assets can be viewed as an opportunity rather than a constraint, with a chance to significantly improve parts of the area to better relate to the conservation area. Additional areas of open space will also be provided, most likely in the form of town squares. In addition, land may need to be safeguarded for major transport schemes, particularly the Mass Rapid Transit proposal."

9.3 St Mary's Butts / Castle Street Conservation Area Appraisal

The St Mary's Butts / Castle St Conservation Area Appraisal were adopted as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG 15) – Planning and the Historic Environment, and local policy, as set out in the Reading Borough Local Plan 1991-2006, and provides a firm basis on which applications for development within the St Mary's Butts / Castle Street Conservation Area can be assessed.

"The turning point in Reading's history came in 1121 when Henry I founded Reading Abbey, later to become one of the richest religious houses in England until the Dissolution in 1539. The enormous abbey church now lies under the present Forbury Garden and Abbots' Walk, to the east of Reading's Market Place/London Street Conservation Area. This area became the centre of Reading following the building of the Abbey, taking over from the St Mary's Butts area.

During the medieval period Reading developed rapidly, based on the manufacture of woollen cloth, leather goods and silk weaving. This was encouraged by its good location on the crossing of major historic land routes, and by the proximity of the two waterways – the River Kennet and the River Thames."

"The most significant changes to Reading's historic street pattern, are fairly recent and were caused by the construction in the 1970s of the Inner Distribution Road (IDR) around the western and southern parts of the town centre. This forms a physical and visual barrier to the west and south of the St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area (see 5.1 Key Views and Vistas).

The newer 1970s redevelopment of the Police Station/Magistrates Courts/Civic Centre/Hexagon/Broad Street Mall and, later, The Oracle Shopping Centre, have already been cited as enclosing the Conservation Area, but there is an opportunity to improve the modern face to the Conservation Area with the proposed redevelopment of the Hosier Street Market site and land to the west.”

“The Conservation Area therefore represents an historic oasis surrounded on three sides by post 1970s and later developments, and only to the north by the more historic Broad Street, which however backs on to the Conservation Area, often in the form of rear service yards and parking spaces which are accessed from St Mary’s Butts adjacent to St Mary’s Church.”

“The main historic views out of the area are: to Greyfriars Church to the north along St Mary’s Butts and West Street; up Castle Hill to the west, 11 although this is interrupted by the Inner Distribution Road and the large roundabout above it at the western end of Castle Street; and south to St Giles Church down Bridge Street and Southampton Street (but again interrupted by the Inner Distribution Road). Views to the east are foreshortened by the closeness of buildings on this boundary.”

6.0 Location of the Proposed Work

9.1 Location of the Proposed Works

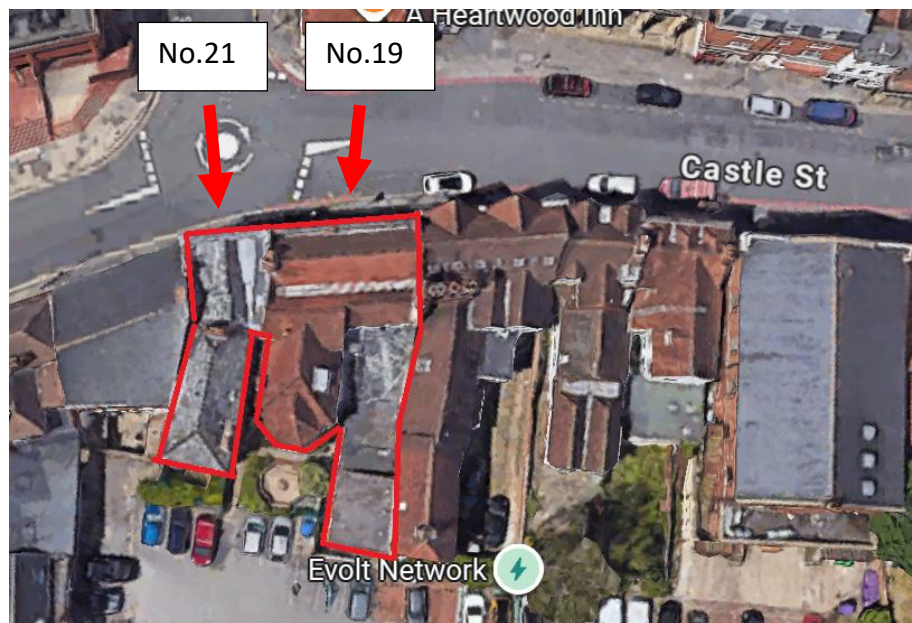
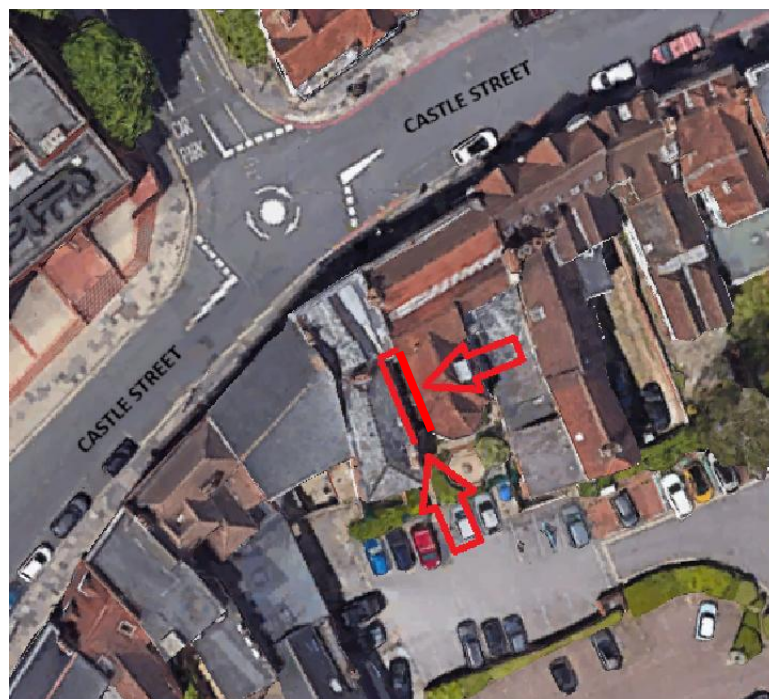


Figure 9: Google maps



7.0 Proposed Works

9.1 Works to property 21

In order to identify the repairs required for each defect, a hierarchy of repairs was established to inform contractors on what appropriate repairs to carry out. The philosophy is in line with Historic England and SPAB in that of minimum intervention and readability. All repairs/replacements will be held on a record of works carried out to the building and will be undertaken as follows:-

The below proposed works reference the below documents.

DOCUMENTS TO REFERENCE:

- Appen D - Structural Engineer Report
- Appen E - Timber Specialist Report

DRAWINGS TO REFERENCE:

- Appendix C – 01 – 19-21 Castle Street – Existing Elevation
- Appendix C – 02 – 19-21 Castle Street – Existing Elevation – Proposed Works

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- All works to be carried out in accordance with Listed Building Consent and agreed method statement.
- Contractor to have demonstratable experience in conservation of historic clay / mathematical tile facades.
- Retain and protect as much historic fabric as reasonably practicable.
- All works to follow a minimum intervention and like-for-like for repair / replacement methodology.
- Trail panels for investigations to be agreed with Contract Administrator / Conservation Officer prior to commencement.

NOTE:

We note that areas marked up on the Proposed Works Drawings are **subject to change** due to the **necessary investigate areas** that are to be undertaken.

Due to the complexity and nature of the works to be undertaken it is noted that the area for the proposed works may be greater than indicated due to the extent of **unknown damage** to timber boards / battens.

CONTRACTOR TO SUPPLY SAMPLE OF THE BELOW BEFORE COMMENCEMENT OF WORKS

Sample to be submitted promptly for Contract Administrator and Conservation Officer approval.

Vertical Mathematical Clay Tile – tile pattern, size, profile, colour, hanging method, fixing system and weathering characteristics. Manufacturer Aldershaw Limited unless otherwise stated by Contract Administrator.

Lime Mortar– NHL 2 in the ratio 1:3 with 1 part lime and 3 parts sharp, well graded sand. The sand should be a locally sourced for colour, aggregate size and compatibility with the original historic material.

Structural Timber beam – Strength graded European oak heartwood (air dried)

Timber batten / boards – Softwood, preservative-treated for Use Class 3⁵ (*Preservative treated European redwood is readily available*).

Brick (to building no.19) – *Sample of brick to be provided during procurement, to match size, profile, colour and weathering characteristics.*

Lead-flashing - Code 5 lead

Decoration - *Sample colour to be provided during procurement, to match colour, appropriate weathering paint.*

Structural Engineers Findings:

- 1) The mathematical tiles are generally fixed to solid boarding, with a masonry backing. We did not see evidence of a timber structural frame, with the possible exception of a sole plate adjacent to the ground floor door.
- 2) Where we investigated the boards were in variable condition, with some appearing solid and dry, while others were damp and decayed, leaving the tiles unfixed and relying on the interlock with surrounding elements.
- 3) Pointing varied over the elevation and was often poor.
- 4) At the junction with the front range of the building, at the location of a RWP the tiles had been replaced over much of the height of the façade.
- 5) The timber lintel supporting the upper part of the main rear façade over the passageway was in poor (possibly very poor) condition, timber was damp and the surface friable.

Structural Engineers Recommendations:

- 1) Repoint whole tiled elevation. A relatively soft lime based mortar should be used. This will help prevent the boards behind becoming saturated.
- 2) Areas of distorted or damaged tiles should be removed and refixed, with the boarding behind checked and replaced as necessary – the extent this will only become apparent as the pointing is

cut out and repairs are made. While some tiles that are not damaged, but are not securely fixed, may be salvaged and reused a significant number of new units will be required.

3) The bottom 1.5 (30Approx..) of the wall will require the full removal and refixing of the tiles over the length of the elevation.

4) A timber specialist should be engaged to test drill the timber lintel to determine the extent of the decay, if it is more than superficial a new lintel is required. The type of replacement will require discussion with the conservation officer.

VERTICAL CLAY TILES / TIMBER INSPECTION AND REPAIR

General:

Allow to remove mathematical clay tiles and set aside to utilise after works are ready to close up the building envelope. Retain maximum amount of existing fabric in accordance with conservation best practice.

Before removal, record existing arrangement, gauge, bond and detailing. Mark setting out as necessary to undertake reinstatement works of original vertical clay tiles.

Removal:

Remove tiles sequentially starting at highest level, working downwards by loosening the mortar joint. Carefully disengage fixings to avoid damage to tiles and underlying structure. Do not lever or force tiles in a manner likely to cause breakage.

Storage:

After removal of vertical clay tiles, stack tiles on edge in a dry, secure location. Separate sound tiles from damaged tiles and retain tiles in sequence wherever practicable to facilitate like-for-like reinstatement.

Timber – Inspection and repair:

This item will be informed by the Structural Engineer Report and Timber Specialist report once investigation works are undertaken on a location by location basis.

Expose and inspect timber frame / battens and/or boarding. Report on condition of timber in area by marking up on elevation and allow for replacement of decayed, distorted or inadequately fixed timber elements. Cut out decayed, structurally compromised timber sections, retaining as much original material as possible.

Rebuild surrounding fabric, reinstate lath, plaster, brick infill panels, matching existing materials and profiles.

Set out new or retained battens to match original gauge and spacing. Ensure battens are straight, securely fixed and provide a level backing. Any new sections using traditional carpentry joints in or where approved.

Produce like-for-like replacement timber sections (matching species, moisture content, dimensions and carpentry details)

Reinstatement / replacement of vertical clay tiles:

Rehang salvaged clay tiles to match original layout, gauge, and coursing. Fix using non-ferrous nails (stainless steel) appropriately sized for each new clay tile to batten / board. Maintain consistent alignment, lap and exposure. All clay tiles should be in the original pattern profile.

Where replacement of clay tiles is **ONLY** necessary where original tiles are damaged or missing, this should be fixed into the original layout.

General requirements for mortar repairs:

All repointing is to be undertaken in lime mortar in the following mix. If pre-mixed mortars are used they must comply with the following specification:

Lime mortar should comply with BS EN998 – 2 for masonry in conjunction with PD 6678 when applied to site mixed mortars. Aggregate should comply with BS EN13139:2002 aggregates for mortar. Hydraulic lime to be natural hydraulic lime manufactured by St. Aster

The contractor is to carry out all specified replacement repointing using an NHL 2 in the ratio 1:3 with 1 part lime and 3 parts sharp, well graded sand. The sand should be a locally sourced for colour, aggregate size and compatibility with the original historic material.

Decayed mortar should be raked out with hacksaw blade. Care must be taken not to damage the clay tiles. Joints flushed out so not to go behind any stud framework at higher levels of the building.

When re-pointing joints / voids the particle size should be no greater than one third of the width of the joint / void

Once the joint / void has been brushed out it should be damped down before applying the re-pointing mortar. The new mortar should then be finished by beating with a stiff brush.

Do not apply in temperatures of 5°C or below, or if there is a risk of frost.

The areas of re-pointing should be protected from extremes of temperature, frost / strong sun by damping down and covering with hessian.

Mortar repointing:

All repointing to be undertaken with the outmost care not to cause unnecessary damage to the existing vertical clay tiles.

As above, reinstate all junctions, verges and abutments to match existing details. Ensure finished work is weather-tight and visually consistent with adjacent retained areas.

Completion of works to area:

Remove waste materials from site. Allow to leave completed works clean, secure and in good order.

9.2 Mathematical clay tiles

Mathematical clay tiles manufactured by Aldershaw Limited and applied in line with manufacturer's instructions. The terracotta will be colour matched to the building. Consultation advise and site visits will be arranged and a sample of the clay tile presented to the CA and Conservation Officer during procurement stage.

[Welcome - Aldershaw Handmade Tiles Ltd, Handmade Roof and Floor Tiles](#)

9.3 Works to Property 19

REMOVAL OF DECORATION FORM BRICKWORK AND REMOVAL, INSTALLATION OF NEW BRICKS

Prior to commencement, the contractor shall undertake a detailed inspection of all areas of decorative finish to the brickwork and carry out trial panels in agreed locations to determine the most appropriate method of removal. The trial areas are identified on the Proposed Works drawing.

Abrasive cleaning methods, including grit blasting or mechanical sanding, shall not be used under any circumstances.

Contractor to report back on findings using Steam cleaning (DOFF System) on removal of decoration to brickwork and present photos and condition of brickwork facing to confirm whether to progress OR to allow TORC and JOS cleaning by an experienced professional.

All works will only proceed once new cleaning system is confirmed by Contract Administrator or Conservation Officer.

Removal of decoration / brickwork replacement

Carefully remove all decoration from brickwork using DOFF System (unless otherwise confirmed by CA).

Where paintwork is difficult to remove, ensure to use light brushing to remove worse areas.

All residues from cleaning processes shall be thoroughly removed from the surface and adjacent areas, and the brickwork shall be left free from staining, chemical residues or debris.

The exposed brickwork shall be allowed to dry naturally and shall not be force-dried using artificial means.

Following completion of the removal works, the brickwork shall be inspected to assess its condition and to identify any areas requiring repair, consolidation or repointing. The Contractor should allow time for the Contract Administrator to inspect other areas that are necessary to be replaced if these are greater than the Proposed Works Drawing.

Once areas are carefully identified, Contractor to isolate the brick/s to be removed, ensuring surrounding masonry is adequately supported and protected.

Mortar joints around the selected brick shall be hand-cut using fine tools to minimise disturbance to adjacent bricks and to avoid widening of joints.

The brick shall be gently loosened and removed intact where possible, avoiding breakage to both the unit and surrounding masonry.

Any residual mortar shall be carefully cleaned from the exposed opening by hand, ensuring arises of adjacent bricks are not damaged.

The opening shall be lightly dampened where appropriate and prepared to receive the replacement brick

The replacement brick shall be selected to match the existing in terms of size, colour, texture and porosity, and shall be pre-wetted as necessary to prevent rapid moisture loss.

A lime-based mortar (as previously noted), matching the existing in composition, colour and strength, shall be prepared and applied to the bed and perpend joints.

The replacement brick shall be carefully inserted into position, aligned with the existing bond, and gently tapped into place to achieve an even and flush finish with surrounding masonry.

Excess mortar shall be trimmed and joints finished to match the existing joint profile, ensuring consistency with the surrounding work.

The newly installed brickwork shall be protected from rapid drying, frost and direct sunlight, and allowed to cure naturally in accordance with good conservation practice.

Following completion, the area shall be cleaned using non-abrasive methods, leaving the brickwork in a uniform and undamaged condition.

Structural timber beam

Allow Acrow props / proprietary props beneath to support load of room above. Allow sole plate to distribute loads. Structural Engineer to confirm best approach.

Carefully remove masonry around beam ends / bearings. Allow to use hand tools only.

Remove beam in manageable sections. Report any further evidence of decay to timber in section of wall construction. Contract Administrator to advise on route of action **if** any further works are necessary.

Prepare permanent works and ensure masonry works surrounding area are clean and clear of debris, dust and are structural cured / sound.

Install Strength graded European oak heartwood (air dried) measured in one piece in position. Ensure timber beam has adequate bearing to either side of wall, is level and aligned.

Ensure to repoint using lime-based mortar (mix as previously stated) around masonry construction works.

Confirm timber is structurally sound. Confirm Structural Engineer sign-off for works. Gradually release props and transfer load onto new structure, ensure to monitor for any movement.

New lead detail, use Code 4 lead to create a drip detail to the top of the timber beam.

Associated works to timber rafter and new lead drip detail and chimney repointing

Associated works to timber rafter - Investigate affected rot to timber rafter, noggins, wall plates by very carefully removing clay roof tiles and lead to chimney stack. Allow to safely put clay tiles aside for reusing once works are completed to affected timber rafter.

Remove any insulation, plasterboard or any other material to the damaged area.

Cut away any rotten wood and apply a wood preservative to the remaining healthy timber.

Cut a piece of timber of the exact same dimensions and grade as the existing rafter. Ensure the length is long enough to extend at least 1.2 meters past the damaged section on both sides.

Secure the timber by, coating both sides with construction adhesive, clamp the new timber tightly to the old rafter, and secure them using M10 bolts or heavy duty structured screws staggered every 400mm.

Unless otherwise stated by Structural Engineer once investigation works are undertaken.

Carefully reinstall clay tiles to roof, ensure alignment and tiles are securely fixed in place.

Leadwork drip detail

Contractor shall expose the base of the chimney at roof level and carefully prepare the area to receive a new drip detail, ensuring surrounding materials are protected and retained.

A new treated timber support piece shall be installed beneath the chimney as required to form a suitable substrate for the drip detail, ensuring it is securely fixed, level and adequately supported.

The timber beam shall be set to achieve the required projection and fall to facilitate effective water shedding away from the chimney and roof junction.

Leadwork shall be formed over the timber beam to create a continuous drip detail, ensuring the lead is dressed neatly and supported in accordance with good practice to prevent ponding or deformation.

A chase shall be carefully cut into an appropriate mortar joint in the chimney stack, at least 300mm / 2 course bricks, avoiding damage to surrounding masonry and ensuring a clean, consistent line.

The lead flashing shall be installed and dressed into the prepared chase, extending vertically up the chimney to align with the existing flashing level, typically positioned at approximately three brick courses above roof level to match the established detail.

All lead flashings shall be fixed using lead wedges or suitable non-ferrous fixings and pointed with an appropriate mortar or sealant to ensure a durable and weather-tight finish. Ensure drip detail covers 20-25mm dress to existing gutter.

The new leadwork shall be lapped and dressed correctly to shed water onto the roof covering, maintaining continuity with the existing flashing system and ensuring compatibility with adjacent details.

Ensure to redress flashing to stepped flashing detail.

All works shall be carried out to achieve a neat and consistent appearance, matching the existing lead detailing in terms of profile, height and finish.

Upon completion, the installation shall be inspected to confirm effective water run-off and that all junctions are secure, sealed and free from defects.

Note on Lead work

New lead should comply with BS EN 12588:2006 and installed in accordance with the Lead Sheet Association Craftsman's Guide to Rolled Lead Sheet sixth edition.

Use Code 5 lead for all replacement sections including all fixtures and fittings.

Length of lead sections not to exceed 1.5m. Rolled laps in accordance with Lead Sheet Association Craftsman's Guide to Rolled Lead Sheet sixth edition.

Chimney repointing

Contractor to carefully rake out defective mortar joints by hand, avoiding unnecessary damage to arise to bricks. Retain maximum historic fabric, adopting a minimum intervention approach throughout. Contractor to report on condition of existing mortar joints.

Dampen joints prior to repointing. Prepare lime-based mortar mix (as previously stated) compatible with original.

Firmly pack new mortar into joints in layers ensuring full compaction. Finish joints to match existing historical profile. Ensure joints are clean with no smearing on masonry faces, using appropriate tools.

Protect newly pointed work from rapid drying, frost and rain during curing.

Repairs to crack and lime based decoration to elevation

Cracks to the existing rendered elevation (4 no. locations, each approximately 300–600mm in length) shall be carefully opened up along their full extent using hand tools to form a shallow 'V' joint, all loose, friable or debonded render shall then be removed back to a sound substrate and the area lightly cleaned and dampened.

The prepared cracks shall be filled and made good using a compatible lime-based repair mortar to match the existing render in composition, texture and finish, applied in layers as required and properly compacted.

Once cured, the repaired areas shall be blended into the surrounding façade, and upon completion of all crack repairs, the affected elevation shall receive a breathable limewash finish, applied in multiple coats to achieve an even and consistent appearance across the surface.

Limewash – apply limewash in minimum 3-5 coats for durability and consistency

9.4 **Removal and reinstatement of lighting cabling**

Removal of lightening cabling and reinstate after all works are completed to property 19.

9.5 **Cleaning**

Very carefully using JOS cleaning (low air and water pressure) remove the build-up of moss / algae / vegetation from the clay roof tiles to building 19 only, adjacent to the scaffold area only.

Excess water is not to penetrate the brickwork below.

9.6 **Completion of works**

Remove waste materials from site. Allow to leave completed works clean, secure and in good order.

9.7 **Freestanding scaffolding to the building.**

The installation of a freestanding scaffolding has been erected to the rear alley way due to health and safety concerns of falling vertical clay tiles / bricks / mortar from the higher levels of the façade over the heavily trafficked alley way. The health and safety concerns were raised by the client / facilities team and the freestanding scaffold erected as priority to ensure harm was mitigated to occupants.

As a result of the above, the freestanding scaffold does not harm the building by tying into the building. During the proposed works the alley way will remain off limits to the building's occupants due to ensure no building materials are exposed to occupants.

8.0 Justification

The overarching justification for the works is to comply with Historic England Conservation Principles and the owners' obligations to appropriately manage the building in their custodianship.

The proposed works to 19–21 Castle Street are required to address identified defects within the building fabric that pose both a risk to safety and a threat to the long-term preservation of the properties. Investigations have confirmed deterioration to the mathematical clay tiles, underlying timber frame, joinery, and associated structural elements, including the presence of decay and failed fixings. The selective opening-up of the façade to assess the condition of concealed timbers is therefore necessary to fully understand the extent of deterioration and to enable targeted repair. Works including the reinstatement of mathematical tiles, timber repairs, mortar replacement, and the removal of damaging decorative finishes are all essential to stabilise the structure, prevent further decay, and reinstate the building's ability to perform as intended.

The approach to repair has been carefully developed in accordance with the principle of minimum intervention and maximum retention of historic fabric. Where possible, original materials will be retained and repaired, with replacement limited only to those elements that are no longer structurally sound. The reinstatement of vertical mathematical clay tiles, the use of appropriate mortars, and the repair or replacement of timber joinery reflect a like-for-like and materially compatible approach, preserving the historic character and appearance of the façades. Similarly, the removal of non-breathable or damaging decorative finishes will allow the building fabric to perform more effectively, reducing moisture retention and future deterioration. The replacement of the structural timber beam is necessary to maintain structural integrity and will be undertaken in a manner that respects the original construction.

This approach aligns with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Section 16, which recognises heritage assets as irreplaceable resources that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (paragraph 202). The works respond directly to paragraph 203, which promotes the conservation of heritage assets at risk from decay or neglect, and seek to sustain and enhance the significance of the buildings while supporting their long-term viable use. In accordance with paragraph 208, the proposals are based on an informed understanding of the buildings' condition and significance, ensuring that interventions are proportionate and designed to minimise harm. Where any minor loss of historic fabric is unavoidable, this is considered to result in less than substantial harm and is clearly justified in line with paragraph 213, given the overriding need to address safety and ensure the continued preservation of the asset.

At a local level, the proposals are consistent with the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019), which emphasises the importance of conserving and enhancing the historic environment as a key contributor to the town's identity and sense of place. The works will protect and enhance the character of the St Mary's Butts / Castle Street Conservation Area by repairing deteriorated elements and reinstating traditional materials and detailing. In line with Local Plan policies, the proposals seek to avoid harm wherever possible, and where intervention is necessary, it is justified by clear public benefits, including improved safety, building longevity, and the preservation of heritage significance.

Overall, the proposed works are essential, proportionate, and fully sympathetic to the heritage value of 19–21 Castle Street. They will secure the long-term condition of the buildings, reduce risks to the public, and preserve and enhance their contribution to the Conservation Area, in accordance with both national and local planning policy.

We trust that the above heritage assessment and compliance with both national and local planning policies supports our clients application for Listed Building Consent.

9.0 Supporting Documents

- 9.1 Appendix A – Heritage Statement
- 9.2 Appendix B – Areas Investigated 19 Castle Street
- 9.3 Appendix C – 19-21 Castle Street Existing Elevation
Appendix C – 19-21 Castle Street Existing Elevation, Proposed Elevation
- 9.4 Appendix D – Structural Engineer Report
- 9.5 Appendix E – Timber Specialist Report