

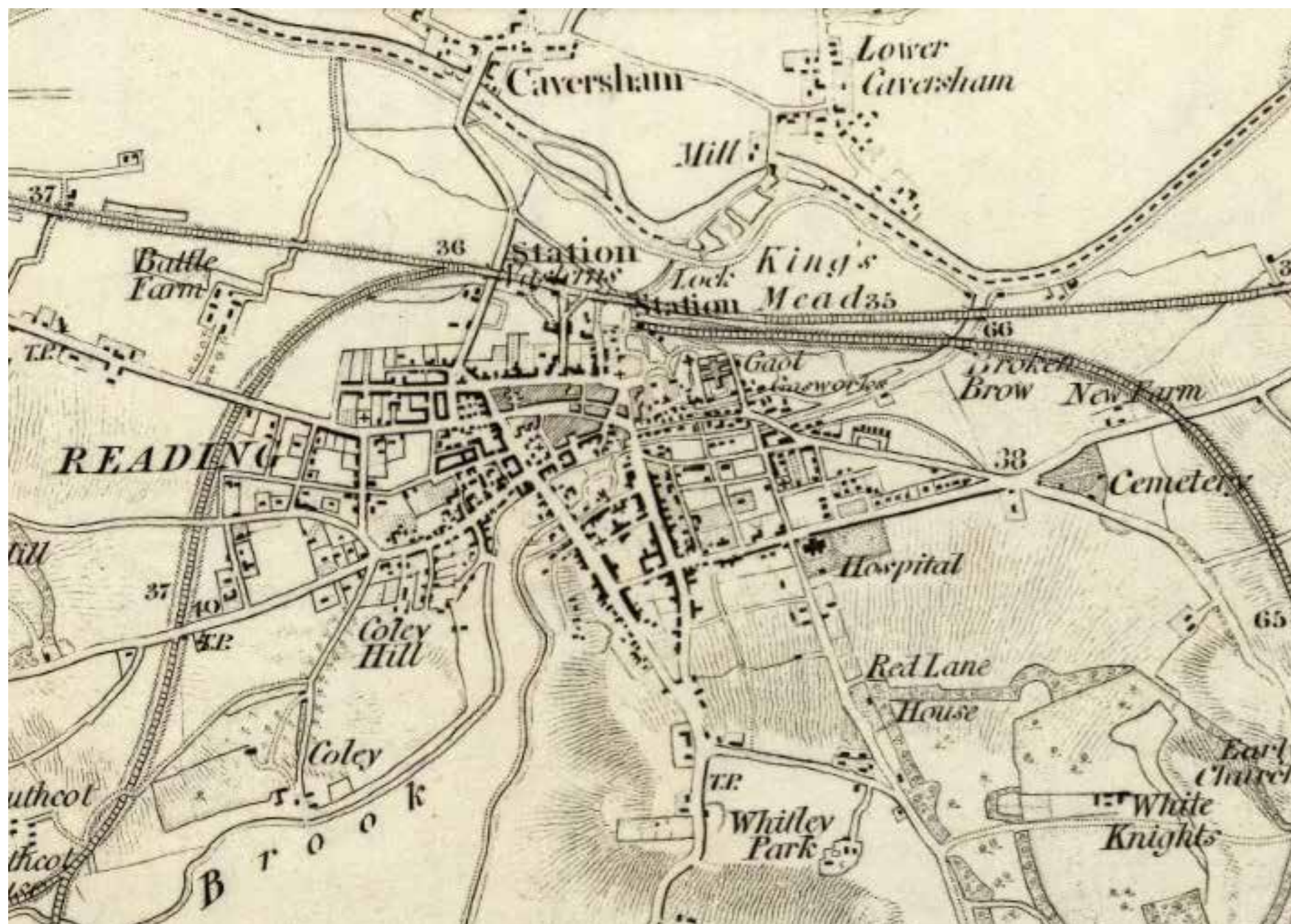


Figure 4.2 1857 Board of Ordnance Map of Reading and Oxford (Old Maps Online, David Rumsey)

- 4.10 Owing to its geographical position in the Chilterns, brick making was a historically prominent industry in Reading. This industry grew in the 18th and 19th centuries with the popularity of brick as a building material. Expansion and prosperity at this time led to the redevelopment or refacing of most of the 16th and 17th century timber framed buildings typical of medieval Reading, and by the mid-19th century the predominant building material in Reading was brick. Throughout Reading there are examples of the distinctive red brick produced from the Reading Beds, often used in decorative and elaborate brickwork.
- 4.11 Further prosperous industries developed in Reading during the 19th century, including bulb growing and biscuit manufacturing. Reading was known for a period as "Biscuit Town", with the largest employer in Reading being Huntley and Palmers, which, founded at a small bakery in 1822, later became the world's largest biscuit manufacturer.
- 4.12 Though not covering the Site, the Goads Insurance Plans of 1895 at **Figure 4.3** and **Figure 4.4**, give an indication of the nature of urban development surrounding the Site, between Oxford Road and Castle Street at the end of the 19th century. At this time, the area comprised a dense network of terraced dwellings, tenement blocks and shops, with back-lands of light industrial and commercial premises between Oxford Road, St Mary's Butts, Castle Street and Howard Street.



Figure 4.3 Goads Insurance Plan of Reading (1895), showing the area now forming Broad Street Mall (source: WikiMedia)



Figure 4.4 Goads Insurance Plan of Reading (1895), showing an area to the east of the Site on Castle Street (source: WikiMedia)

- 4.13 In the early 20th century, Reading continued to expand, absorbing radial settlements including Caversham to the north by 1911 and becoming a large urban settlement.
- 4.14 The aerial photograph at **Figure 4.7**, shows the character of the St Mary's Butts area in 1947. Significant change came around twenty years after the Second World War, when there was a radical re-thinking of the town centre, and rampant residential development in the outskirts of Reading. The result of this was profound change in the built environment and infrastructure of the town. The Site in its current form is a product of post-war redevelopment in the town centre.
- 4.15 The dual carriage Inner Distribution Road was built as a radical solution to vehicular congestion in the town centre. Several central and west Reading neighbourhoods and industries were cleared during the construction of the ring road system, alongside a new civic centre to the town.



Figure 4.5 1898 OS Map (source: National Library of Scotland)

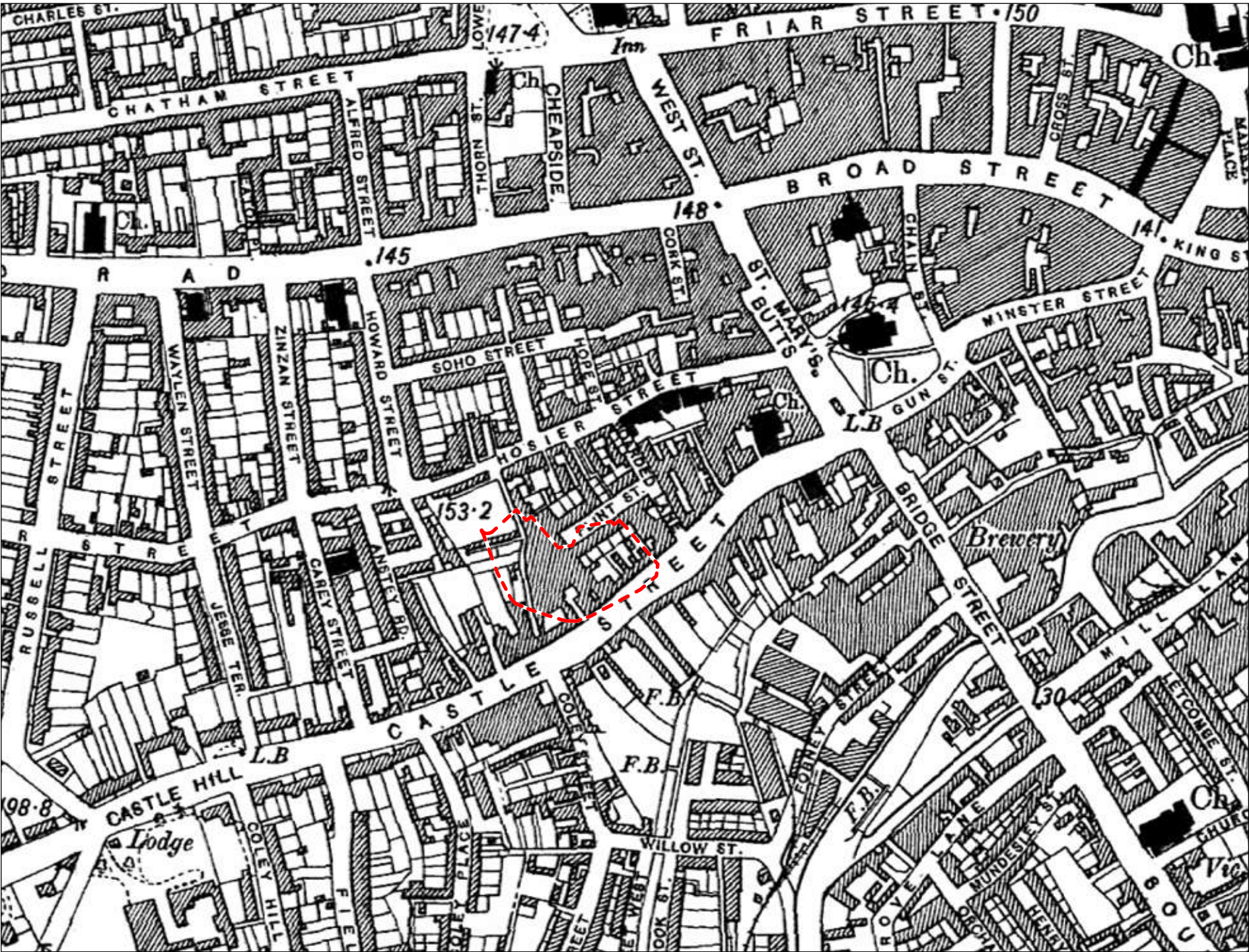


Figure 4.6 1933 OS Map (source: Promap)



Figure 4.7 Aerial photograph of Reading from the west, 1947 (source: Historic England).

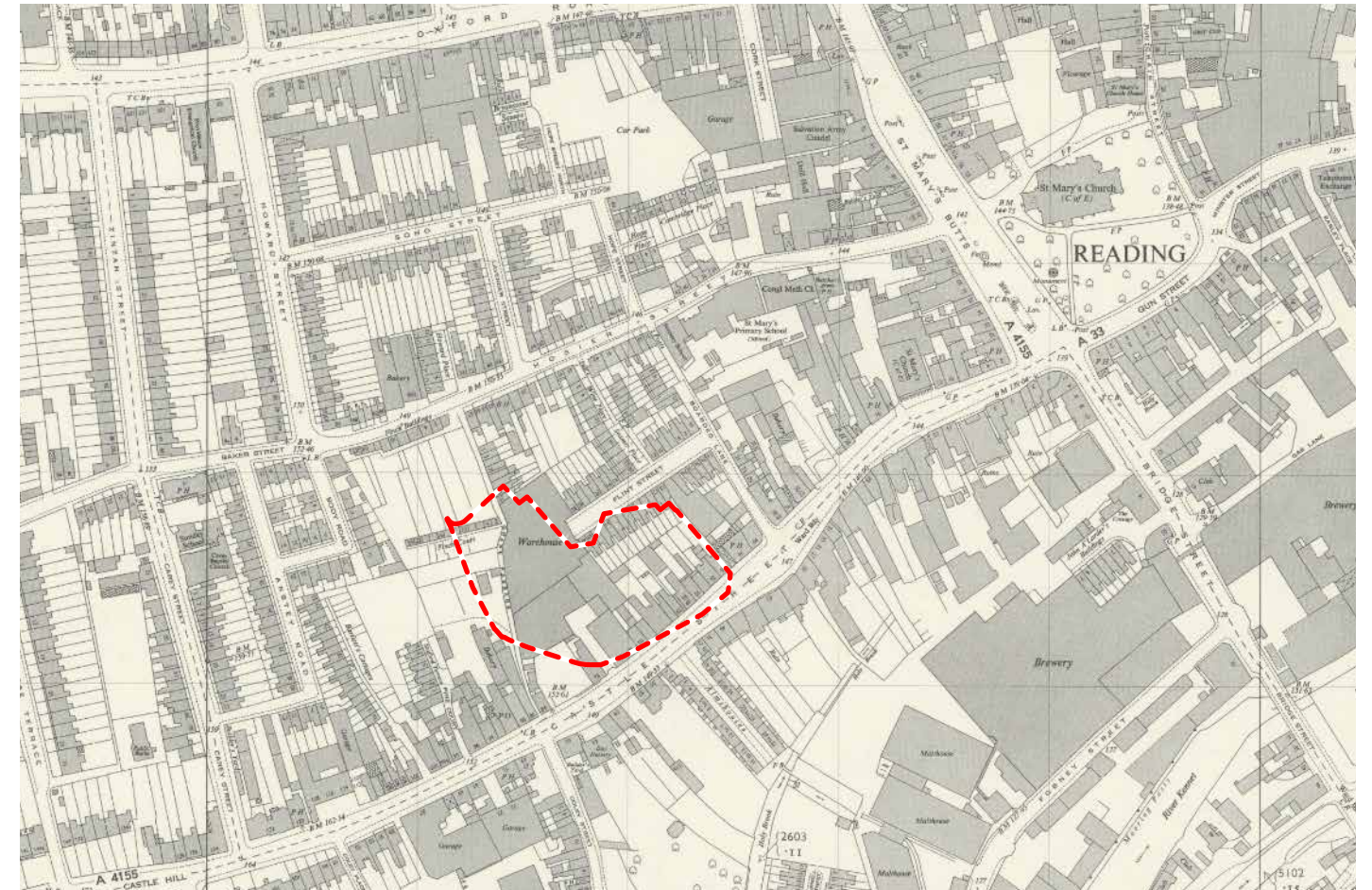


Figure 4.8 1961 OS Map (source: National Library of Scotland)



Figure 4.9 1973 OS Map (source: Promap)

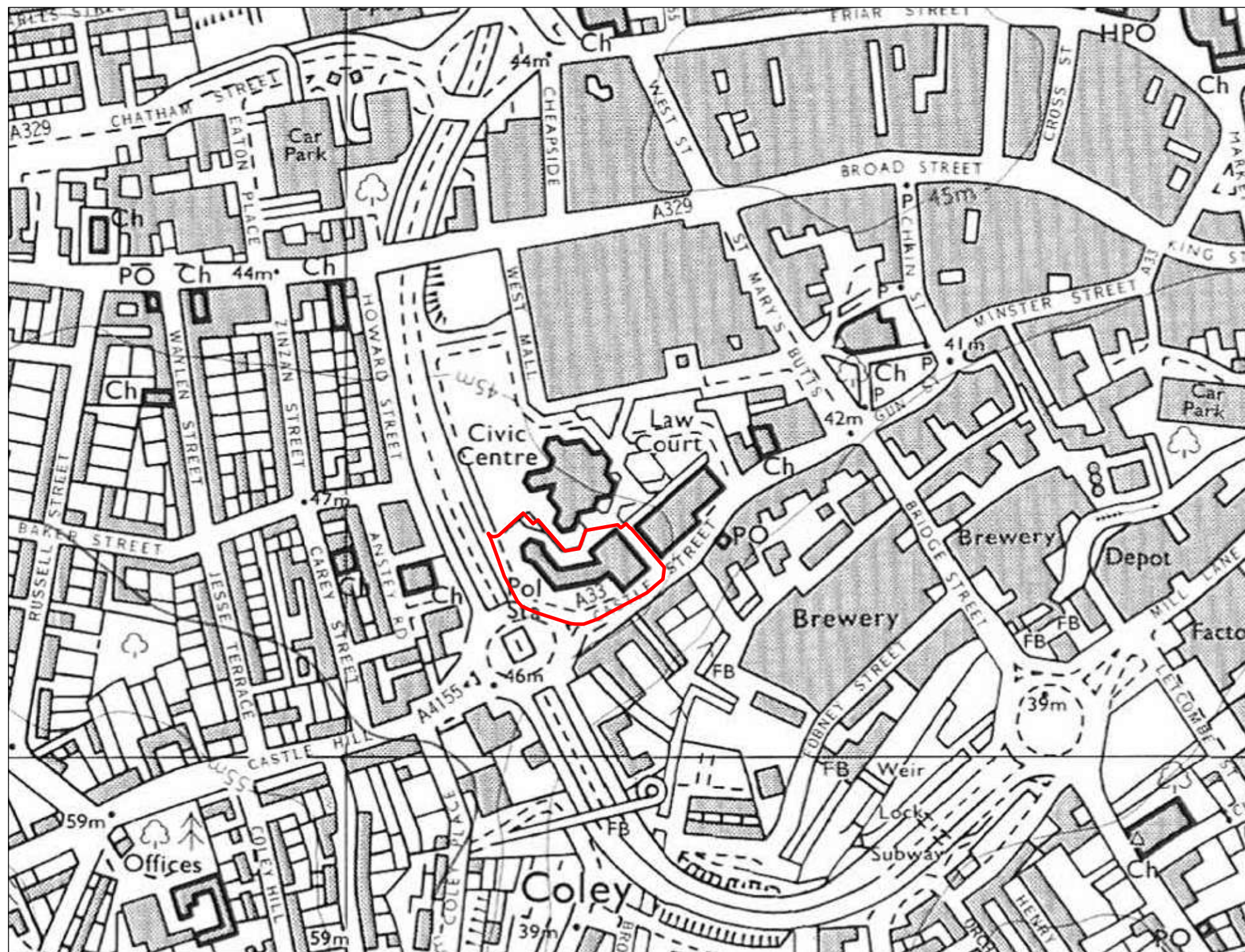


Figure 4.10 1979 OS Map (source: Promap)

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE

4.16 At the turn of the 20th century, the Site was occupied by terraced development along the frontage to Castle Street, with an enclosed industrial yard to the rear labelled as 'Coach Manufacturers' in 1898 (see **Figure 4.5**). On the 1898 OS Map, the Almshouses are shown to the south of the Site, with Flint Street bordering the Site to the northeast.

4.17 The land comprising the Site remained broadly the same until after the Second World War (see **Figures 4.6 and 4.8**), when the Site and everything to Oxford Road in the north, and between Grape Passage and Coley Street, and Coley Place and Howard Street to the west was demolished (see **Figure 4.12**).

4.18 The vacant land comprising the Site and the area to the north and east became the new civic core of Reading, comprising the Thames Valley Police Station, Magistrates Court, Hexagon Centre and Broad Street Mall, all constructed in the 1960s and 1970s.



Figure 4.11 Aerial photograph of the Site during clearance, 1967 (source: Historic England)



Figure 4.12 Aerial photograph of Broad Street Mall and the Inner Distribution Road, from the north, 1971 (source: Historic England).

- 4.19 The Magistrates Court and Thames Valley Police Station were built on Castle Street in 1968 and 1976 respectively. In 1976, the Reading Civic Offices also opened, designed by Sir R. Matthew Johnson-Marshall and Partners in a Brutalist style. This imposing building between Broad Street Mall and the Magistrates court had a plan of eight overlapping hexagons housing offices which spiralled around a central hexagonal core.
- 4.20 In 1971 the Broad Street Mall indoor shopping centre opened (not shown on the 1973 map), along with the Hexagon by RMJM, an arts venue, which opened in 1977. The 1979 photography at **Figure 4.13** is taken from the west side of the Inner Distribution Road, looking south towards the rear of the Thames Valley Police Station. In the foreground is the Hexagon, with the Reading Civic Offices to the rear (demolished in 2016).
- 4.21 The character of the Site and surrounding area is fragmentary, as a direct result of the demolition and redevelopment of large areas in the second half of the 20th century. Castle Street is a transitional route between the historic, fine grain development which once characterised this part of Reading (and remains on the south side of the road), and the large scale civic and commercial buildings, and road infrastructure of the 20th century.



Figure 4.13 View of the newly completed civic core to the east of the Inner Distribution Road, 1979 (RIBA Pix)



Figure 4.15 Civic Centre, opened in 1976 and demolished 2016 (unknown source)



Figure 4.14 View of the Hexagon, Broad Street Shopping Centre and Fountain House, 1979 (RIBA Pix)



Figure 4.16 Aerial photograph of the Site, Civic Core and Castle Street, showing fragmented townscape in 2022 (Historic England)

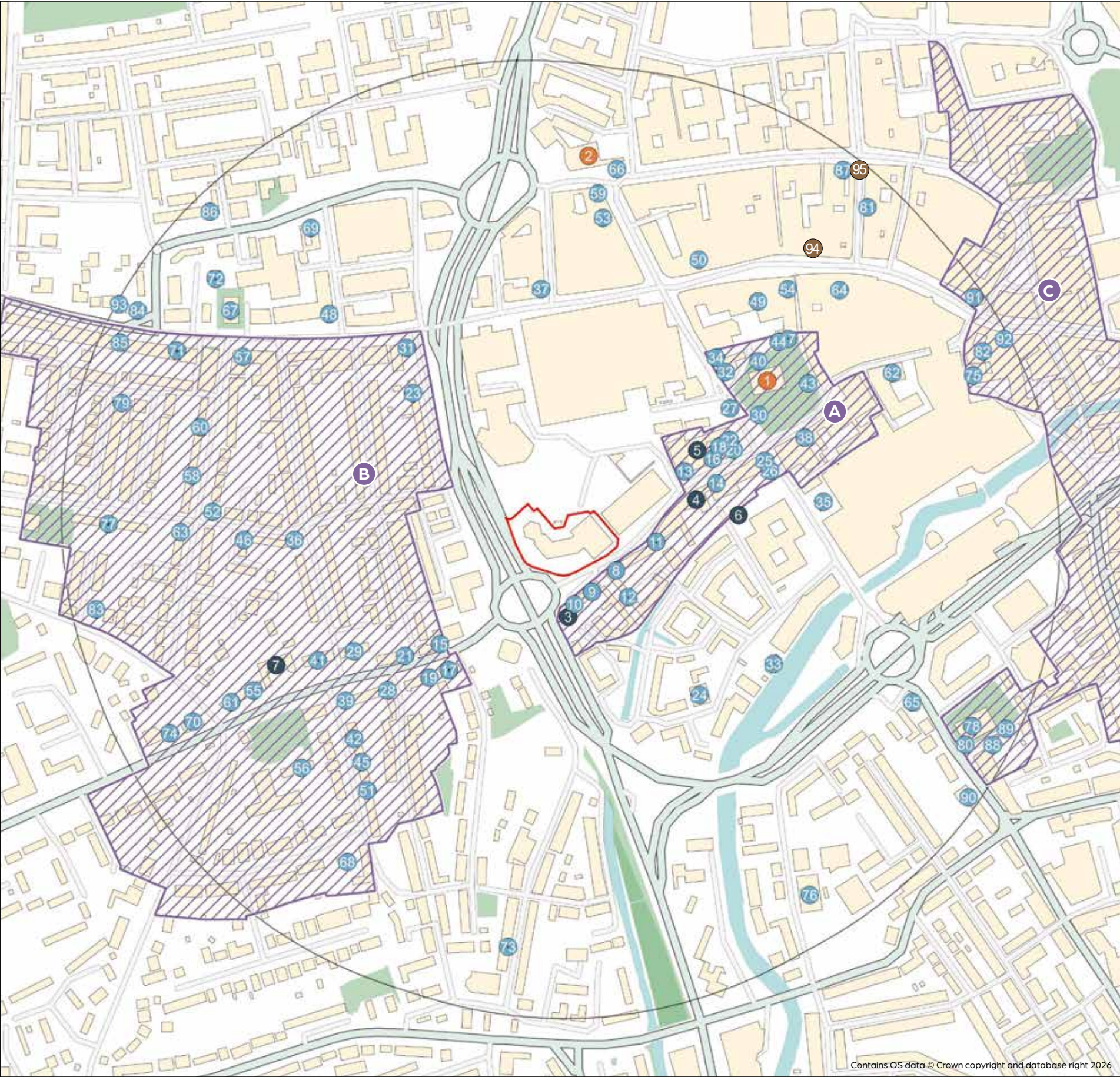
5.0

BASELINE: BUILT HERITAGE

FLINT STREET - 53 CASTLE STREET, READING, RG1 7TH

BASELINE: BUILT HERITAGE

- 5.1
- The identification of heritage assets has been based on the methodology set out in **Section 2.0**. Professional judgement has been used to select those heritage assets within the study area which may experience change to their setting by virtue of the Proposed Development.
- 5.2
- The heritage assets scoped in to the assessment are identified in this section with a short description of their significance, including the contribution made by setting. The location of all heritage assets is identified on the Heritage Asset Plan at **Figure 5.1**.
- 5.3
- The NPPF defines setting as the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Such a broad scope means that many development proposals may be held to come within the setting of a heritage asset. Most would agree however that aside from some generic intervisibility, a great number of such proposals could not reasonably be held to engage with or alter the setting of heritage assets in a material way.
- 5.4
- Owing to the nature and the height of the Proposed Development, the prevailing height of other buildings in the surrounding area and by extension, the screening provided by the existing building forms, coupled with the contribution of setting to the significance of many heritage assets within the identified study area, the effect on many built heritage assets is restricted.
- 5.5
- For the purposes of this HTVIA professional judgement, in conjunction with evidence-based findings supported by visual material, has been used to select those built heritage assets that are likely to experience no change to their setting, and by extension, their heritage significance. Those receptors that are both physically and functionally separated from the Site have not been assessed further, as their significance is unlikely to be affected. The heritage assets which have been scoped out of the assessment, and the reasons for this, are summarised in **Table 5.1**.
- 5.6
- A ZTV, overlaid with the Heritage Asset Plans, has been provided at **Figure 5.2**.



HERITAGE ASSET PLAN

Application Site		
Conservation Areas		
A. St Mary's Butts and Castle Street	B. Russell Street and Castle Hill	C. Market Place and London Street
Listed Buildings		
Grade I		
1. Church of St Mary	2. Greyfriars Church	
Grade II*		
3. Holybrook House	5. Church of St Mary	7. Nos 154 to 160 (Even) and Railings to Street
4. 15 Castle Street, 17 Castle Street, Front Railings and Mounting Block, 19 Castle Street and Associated Front Railings	6. Culvert on Holy Brook Running South Westwards From SU71441/73234 to 71327/73133	
Grade II		
8. 43, 45, 47 and 49, 51 Castle Street	35. Seven Bridges House	64. Saxone
9. Talbot House	36. 33-39, Baker Street	65. 26, and 28, Southampton Street
10. 59 and 61 Castle Street	37. 3 and 5, Cheapside	66. Quadrant Walls and Railings to Former No 64 (Greyfriars Vicarage)
11. 21, 23 and 25, 27, 33-37, 39 Castle Street	38. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, 13 and 14, 15 Gun Street	67. Church of The Holy Trinity
12. Vachel Almhouses, 1-32 Castle Street	39. Clevedon House, 125-127 Castle Hill and 1 Coley Hill	68. 3, Castle Crescent
13. 14 and 16, Castle Street (The Sun Inn)	40. Group of Four Churchyard Tombs North of The Church of St Mary	69. Butler's Wine Vaults
14. 3 and 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 Castle Street	41. 144a-152, Castle Street	70. Swallow House
15. The Castle Tap, 120 Castle Street and 122 and 122a Castle Hill	42. 3-13, Coley Hill	71. 149-169 Oxford Road
16. 8, 10 and 12 Castle Street	43. Group of Four Churchyard Tombs to The East of The Church of St Mary	72. 118, Oxford Road
17. Blenheim Terrace, 97-105 Castle Street	44. 1 St Mary's Gate	73. 94 and 96, Wolseley Street
18. Former Cottage to the Rear of 8 Castle Street	45. 15,15a,17 and 17a, Coley Hill	74. 4 and 6, Bath Road
19. 107, 109, 111 Castle Hill	46. 55, Baker Street	75. Building on South East Corner
20. The Horn Inn	47. Church House, Reading	76. The Henry Building at Katesgrove Primary School including Boundary Wall and Former Caretaker's Cottage
21. 124, 126, 128-132 Castle Hill	48. The Royal Meteorological Society, 104 Oxford Road	77. 61-79, Baker Street
22. 35, 36 and 37 St Mary's Butts	49. Congregational Church and Numbers 89 and 89a	78. Church of St Giles and Churchyard Tombs
23. Kent House, 4 and 4a Howard Street	50. 67 and 68, Broad Street	79. Reading Synagogue
24. Simmonds Malthouse	51. 21-25, 27, 29, 31-35, Coley Hill	80. St Giles' War Shrine
25. 2 and 4 Bridge Street	52. 41, Russell Street	81. 1-31, Queen Victoria Street
26. 6-10 Bridge Street	53. W I Palmer Memorial Hall	82. The George Hotel
27. Queen Victoria Jubilee Fountain	54. 95, Broad Street	83. 2, Tilehurst Road
28. 113, 115, 117-121 Castle Hill and Castleton House, 123 Castle Hill	55. 162a, Castle Street	84. 120 and 122 Oxford Road
29. 134-144 Castle Hill	56. Yeomanry House	85. 171-177 Oxford Road
30. Harrinson Testimonial Cross	57. 139-141 Oxford Road	86. 122 and 124, Chatham Street
31. Rox Borough House, 101 Oxford Road	58. 24-34, Russell Street	87. 147, Friar Street
32. 55 and 55a St Mary's Butts	59. The Former Mitre Inn	88. St Giles Vicarage, and St Giles's Vicarage
33. Building now part of Courage's Brewery	60. 6-22, Russell Street	89. Wall Enclosing St Giles's Vicarage Garden
34. The Allied Arms Inn, 57 St Mary's Butts	61. 168,172 and 174, Castle Street	90. 72-76, Southampton Street
Locally Listed Buildings		
94. 85 Broad Street	95. The Bugle, 144 Friar Street	91. 2, 3 and 3a Broad Street
		92. 17 and 18 King Street
		93. 124 Oxford Road

LOCATION:
Thames Valley Police, Reading

DATE:
May 2026

SCALE:
1:5,000 @ A3

FIGURE 5.1 Heritage Asset Plan

▲ NORTH



HERITAGE ASSET PLAN ZTV OVERLAY

Application Site		
Conservation Areas		
A. St Mary's Butts and Castle Street	B. Russell Street and Castle Hill	C. Market Place and London Street
Listed Buildings		
Grade I		
1. Church of St Mary	2. Greyfriars Church	
Grade II*		
3. Holybrook House	5. Church of St Mary	7. Nos 154 to 160 (Even) and Railings to Street
4. 15 Castle Street, 17 Castle Street, Front Railings and Mounting Block, 19 Castle Street and Associated Front Railings	6. Culvert on Holy Brook Running South Westwards From SU71441/73234 to 71327/73133	
Grade II		
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9. Talbot House	36. 33-39, Baker Street	65. 26, and 28, Southampton Street
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12. Vachel Almhouses, 1-32 Castle Street	39. Clevedon House, 125-127 Castle Hill and 1 Coley Hill	68. 3, Castle Crescent
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22. 35, 36 and 37 St Mary's Butts	49. Congregational Church and Numbers 89 and 89a	78. Church of St Giles and Churchyard Tombs
23. Kent House, 4 and 4a Howard Street	50. 67 and 68, Broad Street	79. Reading Synagogue
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25. 2 and 4 Bridge Street	52. 41, Russell Street	81. 1-31, Queen Victoria Street
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27. Queen Victoria Jubilee Fountain	54. 95, Broad Street	83. 2, Tilehurst Road
28. 113, 115, 117-121 Castle Hill and Castleton House, 123 Castle Hill	55. 162a, Castle Street	84. 120 and 122 Oxford Road
29. 134-144 Castle Hill	56. Yeomanry House	85. 171-177 Oxford Road
30. Harrinson Testimonial Cross	57. 139-141 Oxford Road	86. 122 and 124, Chatham Street
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Locally Listed Buildings		
94. 85 Broad Street	95. The Bugle, 144 Friar Street	91. 2, 3 and 3a Broad Street
		92. 17 and 18 King Street
		93. 124 Oxford Road

LOCATION:
Thames Valley Police, Reading

DATE:
May 2026

SCALE:
1:5,000 @ A3

FIGURE 5.2 Heritage Asset Plan with overlay of the ZTV (VuCity)

▲ NORTH

DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS
CONSERVATION AREAS

ST MARY’S BUTTS AND CASTLE STREET CONSERVATION AREA - MAP REF. A

- 5.7
- The StMBCSCA is located immediately the south of the Site, with Castle Street forming the boundary. The StMBCSCA was first designated in 1972.
- 5.8
- The StMBCSCA comprises the historic core and medieval town centre of Reading. The appearance of the StMBCSCA varies through the area; however, the prevailing character is that of 16th to 19th century residential, religious and commercial buildings.
- 5.9
- The street pattern of medieval Reading is discernible within the StMBCSCA. The meeting of Castle Street, St Mary’s Butts and Gun Street constitutes the north-south and east-west crossroads of the medieval settlement.
- 5.10
- The StMBCSCA appraisal identifies six “Landmark Buildings” within the CA, including Reading Minster (Grade I), the Church of St Mary’s (Grade II*), the Sun Inn (Grade II), Nos. 1 (Grade II), 15 (Grade II*) and 17 Castle Street (Grade II*) and the former Cross Keys public house.
- 5.11
- Castle Street, Gun Street and the south of St Mary’s Butts are characterised predominantly by two to three storey buildings with brick facades and timber sash windows, dating from the early 18th to 19th centuries. The south side of Castle Street retains an important consecutive series of historic buildings. There are earlier timber-framed and jettied buildings, rare survivals of 16th and 17th century Reading, notably Nos. 15 and 17 Castle Street.
- 5.12
- Reading Minster forms the focal point of the StMBCSCA, signified by the sequence of key views identified in the StMBCSCA appraisal (see **Figure 5.3**). The identified views look south from Castle Street at the Vachel Almshouses, and importantly, east along Castle Street and east from St Mary’s Butts towards Reading Minster. There are no identified key views looking west on Castle Street, and the Site does not form the focus of any key views identified in the StMBCSCA appraisal.
- 5.13
- Reading Minster churchyard provides an important green space within this area of Reading. The 18th and 19th century residential buildings lining Gun Street and Chain Street overlook the churchyard, creating an enclosed

space. The churchyard is planted with mature trees. St Mary’s Butts is a wide and busy thoroughfare, and the presence of vehicular traffic detracts from the tranquillity of the churchyard.

- 5.14
- The special interest of the StMBCSCA is derived from the arrangement, age and varied architectural style of the religious, residential and commercial buildings which together illustrate the historic development of the medieval settlement of Reading. The StMBCSCA demonstrates how the medieval settlement formed at an important river crossing and grew up around the Minster, with ribbon development along the main thoroughfares. Former townhouses are arranged in narrow terraced plots along these thoroughfares, as was typical in market towns where street frontages were highly valuable. The StMBCSCA has a high number of listed buildings, representing the architectural quality of the area.

CONTRIBUTE OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE

- 5.15
- The StMBCSCA comprises the remnants of the historic core of Reading. The boundary is defined by modern development and infrastructure to the north, east, south and west. The StMBCSCA excludes the 20th century buildings at the north end and west side of Castle Street, where the Site is located.
- 5.16
- The Site adjoins the CA to the north and is visible in views looking west along Castle Street and St Mary’s Butts. As described, the appraisal does not identify any key views looking west on Castle Street. The form and architectural quality of the Police Station (1976) and the Magistrates Court (1968) relate poorly to the historic streetscape on the south side of Castle Street and create a fragmentary townscape at the west end of Castle Street. These buildings correspond to the fine urban grain of Castle Street only in their height but are read as large scale civic buildings occupying whole urban blocks. The frontages of the building are characterised by inactive and unattractive frontages, which relate poorly to the historic building to the south. The Site does not contribute to the character and appearance of the CA.
- 5.17
- The StMBCSCA appraisal does not identify any views looking outside of the CA into its wider setting, views are instead focused within the StMBCSCA, looking east towards the Minster.

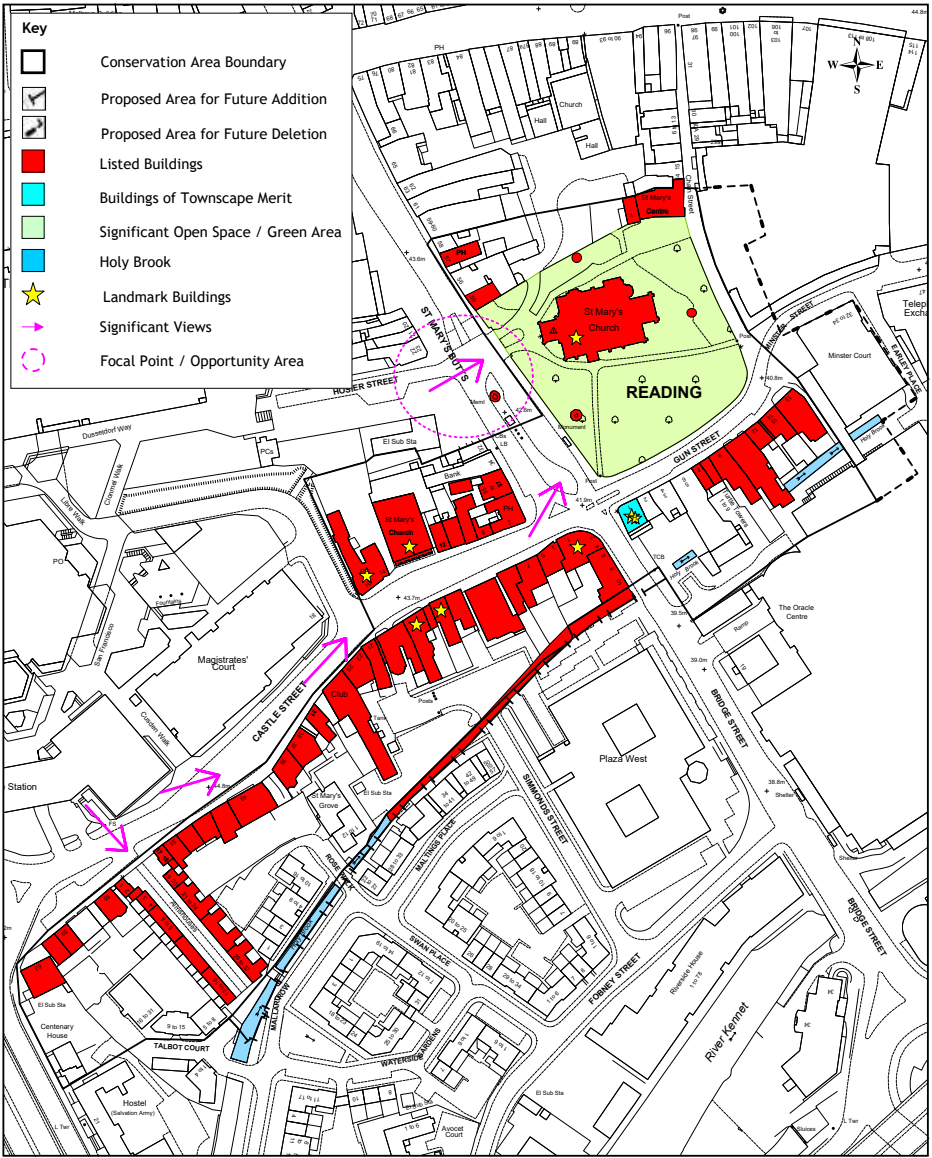


Figure 5.3 Townscape Appraisal Map of the StMBCSCA. Source: StMBCSCA Appraisal.

RUSSELL STREET AND CASTLE HILL CONSERVATION AREA - MAP REF. B

- 5.18 The RSCHCA is located approximately 100m to the west of the Site at the closest point
- 5.19 The RSCHCA was designated in 1974 and extended in November 2019. It is a large conservation area, encompassing historic development on and to the south of Oxford Road, north of Mansfield Road and west of the IDR, which separates it from Reading's centre.
- 5.20 The area as a whole is varied; however, the prevailing character is that of late 18th and 19th century residential buildings, with the best examples lying along Castle Hill (historic route westwards out of the medieval town centre), Baker Street and Russell Street.
- 5.21 The 2019 extension extended further west along the Oxford Road, to the railway bridge, as well as encompassing some of the buildings of architectural merit on the northern side of the Oxford Road. This extension was undertaken owing to the historical justification of the Oxford Road as a major route westward out of Reading town centre. The area is characterised by buildings dating from the Victorian and Georgian periods, predominantly long and narrow style burgage plots of residential housing. Towards the western end of the Oxford Road, mid Victorian housing becomes the dominant building typology.
- 5.22 Residential suburbs to the north of Castle Hill are more urban in character, with continuous terraces of predominantly early to late 19th century red brick two/three storey houses. Oxford Road is more varied with more commercial uses and better-quality listed terraces located to the west, between Russell Street and Prospect Street. The character of the RSCHCA is predominantly residential with shops and offices/flats along Oxford Road. Oxford Road is a major route into and out of Reading. The predominant material is red brick, made locally and clay tiles and slate used for roofing.
- 5.23 The west side of Coley Hill, south of Castle Hill, is lined by handsome 19th century terraces. Some of these are listed at grade II. Castle Crescent nearby comprises large detached and semi-detached houses; the buildings at either end of Castle Crescent are also listed at grade II.

- 5.24 The special interest of the RSCHCA is derived from its composition of residential buildings from the Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian periods. The area developed as a suburb to the historic core, which illustrates the growth of Reading beyond that of a market town, encouraged by the development of industry and improved transport links in the 18th and 19th centuries.
- 5.25 The architectural quality of the area has been eroded in places, notably Oxford Road, where modern development and heavy vehicular traffic detract from an appreciation of the fine historic grain that characterises the areas. In November 2018, the RSCHCA was placed on the Heritage At Risk Register, owing to the deterioration in character and built form.

CONTRIBUTE OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE

- 5.26 The setting of the RSCHCA is varied. The IDR, a busy dual carriageway, forms a physical barrier between the historic development of the RSCHCA and the historic core of the town and is a detracting feature of the RSCHCA.
- 5.27 To the north, there has been piecemeal redevelopment along Oxford Road which has eroded the historic grain of the RSCHCA. To the west and south, its boundary is defined by 20th century residential development.
- 5.28 The Site is visible from the eastern boundary of the RSCHCA, on Howard Street and Castle Hill. The Site is distinct from the CA in terms of character, age and use, and this is reinforced by the separation of the IDR. The IDR acts as a significant townscape barrier which also provides longer-distance views towards the modern centre of Reading. The IDR further separates the RSCHCA from the StMBCSCA, which were once connected by continuous historic development. In its current form, the Site makes a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the RSCHCA, being separate from the CA in terms of age, form, use and appearance.

LISTED BUILDINGS

CHURCH OF ST MARY (GRADE I) AND CHURCHYARD TOMBS (GRADE II)- MAP REFS. 1, 40 AND 43

- 5.29 The Church of St Mary (Reading Minster) was designated in 1957 and is located approximately 225m to the northeast of the Site.
- 5.30 The church is a medieval building with Norman origins. The present church was constructed in the 13th century, with 14th century additions. The church was altered and extended in the 16th century; the west tower and Decorated style window tracery survive from this period. Alterations were made in the mid-19th century, notably the addition of the chancel and north aisle. The church was constructed in a distinctive chequered flint and Taynton stone.
- 5.31 The architectural and historical significance of the church derives from the survival of 13th to 16th century fabric. The church has historical significance in its associations with an earlier, Norman church on the same site, and its position at the centre of the medieval settlement in Reading. The distinct chequerboard tower is prominent in the historic streetscape of Reading.
- 5.32 Within the churchyard of St Mary's there are a number of 18th to 19th century tomb stones and chests. Some tombs have lost their cast iron railings. These separately designated structures have group value in their association with Reading Minster, together illustrating the social and religious practices of the parish in the 18th and 19th centuries.
- 5.33 The immediate setting of the church contributes positively to its historic and architectural interest. The church is set within its original churchyard, which comprises mature trees and several tombs. The churchyard is enclosed in part by buildings from the 18th and 19th centuries creating an enclosed setting around the church yard, which helps to illustrate the historical context of the church. St Mary's Butts to the west of the church detracts from the significance of the church; it is a busy vehicular route characterised by mixed modern development of low architectural or townscape interest. In the wider setting of the church, notably on Castle Street, several 15th and 16th century buildings survive, which together with the church contribute to the historic context of the medieval centre of Reading.

- 5.34

The wider setting of the church comprises modern development to the west, northwest and east. This wider townscape is unsympathetic to the character and scale of the church, and the loss of historic context detracts from an appreciation of the interest of the highly designated church.
- 5.35

In its current form, the Site has no historic, visual or functional relationship with the church and does not, therefore, contribute to its special interest
- HOLYBROOK HOUSE (GRADE II*) - MAP REF. 3**
- 5.36

Holybrook House was designated in 1957 and is located opposite the Site on the south side of Castle Street.
- 5.37

The building was constructed in 1750–1760 and is stylistically akin to the work of Sir Robert Taylor, the renowned Georgian architect. The former town house is three storeys with basement and five bays and hipped roof, hidden behind a parapet. It is constructed with red bricks in a Flemish bond, with flat gauge brickwork to the timber sash windows. The principal doorway features a large doorway with blocked columns, fan light, carved frieze and pediment. To the rear there is a square bay, presumably a 19th century alteration, and a central round headed sash on the first floor.
- 5.38

The architectural significance of Holybrook House derives from its accomplished and refined style. Internally, decorative features and original fitting survive in several rooms, notably the Rococo plasterwork ceiling in the ‘music room’. The former townhouse has historical interest as the home to three times Mayor of Reading, John Spicer, and as a wealthy merchant’s residence, representative for Reading’s prosperity in the 18th century.
- CONTRIBUTE OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE**
- 5.39

Holybrook House has group value with other 18th century townhouses on the south side of Castle Street, notably Nos. 59 and 61, which adjoin the building to the east.
- 5.40

Castle Street once continued west beyond Holybrook House, leading directly into Castle Hill. This historic townscape to the west of Holybrook House was replaced by the IDR in the second half of the 20th century. Holybrook House now overlooks the busy dual carriage way and roundabout of the A329. This wider setting detracts from an appreciation of the building’s significance.

- 5.41

The Thames Valley Police building opposite loosely relates to the town house in terms of its materials, red brick, and the size and height of the front block. The architectural expression of the building and glazed top sit uncomfortably next to the listed building. There is no historic functional or visual relationship between Holybrook House and the Site. Overall, the Site detracts from the special interest of the Georgian townhouse by virtue of its low-quality frontage.
- 15, 17 AND 19 CASTLE STREET (GRADE II*) - MAP REF 4**
- 5.42

15, 17 and 19 Castle Street are located approximately 95m to the east of the Site on Castle Street.
- 5.43

No. 15 Castle Street is a 16th century three storey, jettied building constructed in brick at ground floor and timber framing to the upper floors. No. 17 Castle Street is a 16th century three storey jettied timber framed building with fine 17th century features surviving throughout. It is well proportioned and features decorative treatment, double gables and a tiled roof. Within the building a 17th century staircase and coffered ceiling survive. No. 17 is known to have historical associations with prominent members of Reading society and the founding of the Castle Brewery behind the building in 1698.
- 5.44

No.19 Castle Street is a fine example of an early 18th century townhouse in a well-proportioned and refined architectural style. The façade brickwork is polychromatic and laid in header bond.
- 5.45

The architectural interest of the townhouses derives from their representation of vernacular building practices in Reading during the 16th to 18th centuries. Each is an example of a high-status vernacular building and illustrate the continued mercantile wealth of Reading as a market town throughout this time.
- CONTRIBUTE OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE**
- 5.46

The setting of the three townhouses in this group is formed by the historic streetscape of Castle Street, which comprises a high number of designated buildings. The high-quality architectural detailing and building ages on display on Castle Street contributes to an understanding of the historic interest of the listed buildings. Together, the buildings form an attractive grouping and illustrate the development of the market town over the 16th to 19th centuries.

- 5.47

The police station on the Site relates to the historic streetscape only in the scale and material of the eastern block, which responds to the height of the historic ribbon development. The architectural language of the Site, however, is devoid of any contextual references and detracts from the setting of the listed buildings.
- CHURCH OF ST MARY (GRADE II*) - MAP REF 5**
- 5.48

Designated in 1957, the church is located approximately 120m to the east of the Site.
- 5.49

The church is a historic landmark, built in 1798 and extended in 1840. St Mary’s has a pedimented temple frontage with six stone Corinthian columns and three grand doorways. St Mary’s is faced in Stucco, which has been scored to look like Ashlar. Alterations were made to the church in the late 19th and 20th centuries.
- 5.50

St Mary’s makes a significant architectural contribution to the historical character of Castle Street and is an example of Georgian ecclesiastical architecture. The survival of 18th and 19th century interiors and fittings are of particular importance as an illustration of non-conformist worship in England.
- CONTRIBUTE OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE**
- 5.51

The neighbouring listed buildings, notably the Sun Inn and former townhouses on the north and south sides of Castle Street contribute to an understanding of the historic and architectural interest of the Church of St Mary.
- 5.52

The fine historic grain of the north side of Castle Street is more fragmented and has been eroded through large scale redevelopment in the post-war period, including the Site and the neighbouring Magistrates Court.
- 5.53

At present, there is no meaningful visual or spatial relationship between the Site and the Church of St Mary. The quality of the open space and architecture is poor, though intervening distance reduces the visual impact of this.

GRADE II LISTED BUILDINGS ON CASTLE STREET, ST MARY’S BUTTS AND BRIDGE STREET – MAP REFS. 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 18, 20 AND 22			
5.54	This group comprises the following listed buildings: 5.54.1 43, 45, 47, 49 and 51 Castle Street – Map Ref. 8 5.54.2 Talbot House – Map Ref. 9 5.54.3 59 and 61 Castle Street – Map Ref. 10 5.54.4 21, 23 and 25, 27, 33–37, 39 Castle Street – Map Ref. 11 5.54.5 14 and 16 Castle Street (The Sun Inn) – Map Ref. 13 5.54.6 3 and 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 Castle Street – Map Ref. 14 5.54.7 8, 10 and 12 Castle Street – Map Ref. 16 5.54.8 Former Cottage to the Rear of 8 Castle Street – Map Ref. 18 5.54.9 The Horn Inn – Map Ref. 20 5.54.10 35, 36 and 37 St Mary's Butts – Map Ref. 22 5.54.11 2 and 4 Bridge Street – Map Ref. 25 5.54.12 6–10 Bridge Street – Map Ref. 26	5.58	47 and 49 Castle Street were designated in 1978. This pair of houses were constructed in the early 19th century and each consist of three storeys and three bays. The houses are faced in Bath stone but constructed with red brick. The three storeys of the house are defined by varying façade treatment. At the ground floor the stone is rusticated, and the doorways are round headed with fan lights. The height of the second floor is much lower, signifying the diminishing hierarchy of the building.
5.55	This group of grade II listed buildings is located on Castle Street, St Mary’s Butts and Bridge Street to the south and east of the Site.	5.59	51 Castle Street was designated in 1978. This former townhouse was constructed in the early 19th century and is three storeys and two bays. It is constructed in red brick in a Flemish bond and the ground floor is plastered. The principal façade features sash windows and rubbed brick flat gauge arches.
5.56	43 Castle Street was designated in 1957. The former townhouse was constructed in the late 18th century and is two and a half storeys and five bays. The principal elevation is constructed with red brick in a Flemish bond and features flat gauge arches, timber sashes, a painted cornice and Doric portico. The dormered windows to the slate roof are semi-circular. The rear elevation presents differently, constructed in grey brick header bond with exposed brick cornice and a full third storey. This is potentially a later alteration. At ground floor the basement is visible and there are steps leading to the rear entrance. The rear entrance features a handsome door surround with pilasters and a fanlight. On the west side of the rear façade there is a vertical section of carved stone, believed to be salvaged from the ruins of Reading Abbey.	5.60	Talbot House at 55 Castle Street was designated in 1975. The former townhouse was constructed in the early 19th century and is three storeys and four bays. The principal façade is stuccoed and features timber sash windows with glazing bars, and a corniced parapet roof. The entrance is located in a single storey extension, featuring a statue of a dog above the doorway.
5.57	45 Castle Street was designated in 1957. This building was constructed in the early 19th century and consists of three storeys and three bays. As it stands today, there is one round headed entrance to the building on the ground floor but there is evidence of there once being three round headed entrances, the two on the east side of the building having been closed and windows inserted. Between the three doorways there are two timber sashes. This suggests that No. 45 was perhaps at one time three narrow dwellings within one building.	5.61	59 and 61 Castle Street were designated in 1978. The former townhouses were constructed in the early 19th century and are each three storeys with basement and three bays. The former townhouses are constructed in Gault stock brick in a Flemish bond with flat gauge arches to the timber sash windows. The principal elevations feature round headed arched doorways with radial fanlights and corniced parapet roofs.
		5.62	21, 23 and 25 Castle Street historically had 19th century shop fronts at ground floor level, since converted to former residential design. Similarly, Nos. 27 and 29 Castle Street had commercial units at the ground floor in the 19th century.
		5.63	33, 35 and 37 Castle Street were designated in 1978. This terrace was constructed in the early 19th century and is three storeys and three bays. The principal façade is constructed with grey bricks laid in header bond with red brick detailing. The first floor has been painted and at ground floor there are three shop fronts, each with an angular bay.
		5.64	39 Castle Street was designated in 1978. It was constructed in the late 18th century and is a three storey, four bay former townhouse. The building is constructed in grey brick, laid in header bond with vertical red brick
			detailing and red brick flat gauged arched to the sash windows. The principal doorway features a fan light, set below a segmental rubbed brick arch. There is a brick block cornice to the parapet roofline. The three sash windows at the ground floor have been restored, having been converted to a shop front in the late 19th century. To the east of the building, No. 37 acts as a narrow fifth bay, continuing the architectural detailing of No. 39.
		5.65	On the north side, the Sun Inn at 14 and 16 Castle Street is a timber framed building of two and a half storeys. The present building is of 17th century construction with later alterations, however there are older foundations and cellars. The building has a half-hipped tile roof. There is a modern square bay window to the ground floor. The vernacular style of the Sun Inn contrasts the grand façade of St Mary’s, representing the mixed historic character of Castle Street.
		5.66	3 and 5 Castle Street were designated in 1977. Nos. 3 and 5 are former town houses constructed in the early 19th century. No.3 features a prominent bowed window all three storeys. To the left of the bow is a doorway with a gauged arch and fan light. The principal façade features a cornice to the roofline. At ground floor, two glazed shop fronts visible in historic photos were removed and bay windows reinstated, sometime after 1962. No. 5 has lost its principal doorway as a result.
		5.67	7 and 9 Castle Street were designated in 1978. Nos. 7 and 9 Castle Street are three storey former town houses constructed in the mid-late 18th century. The facades of both buildings are constructed in grey brick header bond with vertical red brick detailing and parapets. The principal façade of No. 9 has oriel bay windows at every storey, those on the ground floor have replaced glazed commercial windows visible in historic photos. No. 7 has four bays of sash windows on each floor, on the ground floor that is a grand doorway with an architrave surround.
		5.68	11 Castle Street was designated in 1978. The former Congregational Chapel at No. 13 Castle Street was constructed circa 1834, designed by architect J Cooper. The principal façade is stuccoed, and the building is constructed in brick. The ground floor features four central columns marking the entrance, either side of this entrance are two large arched windows. The first-floor features five recessed arched windows and pilasters. There is a parapet roofline with a pediment and oeil de boeuf window.

- 5.69

13 Castle Street is a three-storey former town house of 17th century origin, altered and refaced in the mid-18th century. The principal façade is constructed in a grey header bond with vertical red brick detailing. The first and second storeys feature early timber sashes with glazing bars. At ground floor level there is a modern commercial shop front with two bay windows either side of a central doorway with pediment.
- 5.70

8 Castle Street was designated in 1978. This former townhouse is three storeys with a dormer and three narrow bays. The principal façade of the building is stuccoed and features timber sash windows and moulded cornice. The ground floor was converted to commercial use in the 19th century.
- 5.71

10 and 12 Castle Street were designated in 1978. Formerly a single town house, this building was constructed circa 1800 and is three storeys with a dormered mansard and three bays. The building is constructed with red brick laid in Flemish bond, with rubbed brick flat gauged arches to the window openings. A block brick cornice survives on No. 10. The central window on the first and second floors are timber sash, and the other windows are tripartite. At the ground floor level there is a rubbed brick arched doorway with a fanlight. The ground floor of both No. 10 and 12 were converted to shop fronts in the 20th century.
- 5.72

The Horn Inn at Nos. 2 to 6 (even) Castle Street was designated in 1978. The Horn Inn was originally constructed in the 16th century, though the present building is much altered and modernised. The public house is two storeys of timber framing and has a stuccoed façade. The building consists of two principal ranges fronting Castle Street and St Mary’s Butts. The gable end to the south of the St Mary’s Butts frontage is jettied with applied timbering to façade.
- 5.73

35, 36 and 37 St Mary's Butts were designated in 1978. The building dates from the 16th and 17th century and much of the original building fabric, such as such as the jetty and well-constructed timber frame, survives.
- 5.74

2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 Bridge Street were designated in 1977. Nos. 2 and 4 was constructed in the early 19th century and occupies a prominent corner site. As such, the façade is curved. At ground floor there is a commercial unit below a moulded cornice. The two upper storeys are stuccoed and feature sash windows.

- 5.75

6 to 10 Bridge Street was constructed in 1840 and is a two-storey building faced in bath stone, with a dormered mansard roof. The principal façade has seven bays, and the ground floor features Ionic pilasters on a plinth above a cellar and a stone balustrade at the roofline.
- 5.76

All buildings in this group are representative of Reading’s development from the medieval period to the Victorian era, illustrating changing trends in commercial and domestic architecture at that time, and the wider development of the market town. Together with the adjoining buildings, they have group value and form Reading’s historic core.

CONTRIBUTE OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE
- 5.77

The setting of the listed buildings in this group is formed by Castle Street and the wider StMBCSCA. There is an important historic, spatial and visual association between buildings on Castle Street, and the Vachel Almshouses, which together illustrate the historic development of the market town from the 16th to 19th century. The environment which surrounds the listed buildings at the west end of Castle Street is more fragmented and is dominated by the IDR roundabout.
- 5.78

This busy distribution road to the west is a noticeable and detracting feature of the urban environment, which draws vehicular traffic through the historic throughfare.
- 5.79

The Site, to the north and west of the listed buildings in this group, is outside of the CA boundary and forms part of this modern urban setting. Due to the different form, age, style of use of the Police Station and neighbouring Magistrates Court do not contribute to the special interest of the listed buildings in this group.

VACHEL ALMSHOUSES (GRADE II) - MAP REF 12
- 5.80

The Vachel Almshouses were designated in 1978 and are located to the immediate south of the Site.
- 5.81

The present buildings were constructed in 1864–67 to designs by architect William Henry Woodman and were preceded by almshouses founded by Sir Thomas Vachel at another site in 1634. There are two rows of two storey terraced cottages at a right angle to Castle Street, constructed in red brick with grey brick detailing and stone dressings. The corresponding pair closest but one to Castle Street feature square towers and gable ended roofs.

- 5.82

The almshouses derive architectural interest as an example of Victorian vernacular architecture and the implementation of social values. The Vachel Almshouses hold historical significance in their association with Sir Thomas Vachel and wider ideas of philanthropy from the 17th to 19th centuries. The cottages have strong group value as a gated complex of almshouses.

CONTRIBUTE OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE
- 5.83

The setting of the Vachel Almshouses, set on a private road to the south of Castle Street, is characteristic of almshouses and contributes positively their significance. Almshouses were traditionally grouped and set back, with the intention of providing a sense of security and community for their residents. This is evident in their relationship with Castle Street. This important setting characteristic is recognised in the StMBCSCA appraisal, which identifies a key view of the almshouses, looking south from Castle Street into the private road.
- 5.84

The wider setting of the listed buildings, particularly to the north of Castle Street where the Site is, has been almost entirely redeveloped in the late 20th and 21st centuries. The Thames Valley Police Station terminates views north from within the private road. These modern developments contribute neutrally to the interest of the listed buildings in being of a different age of construction and style to the historic development of Castle Street. The visual interaction between the Site as existing and the Vachel Almshouses is shown at **Figure 5.4**.
- 5.85

The IDR to the west of Castle Street detracts from the interest of these listed buildings in drawing vehicular traffic closer to the historic throughfare and dividing Castle Street to the east and west of the roundabout.



Figure 5.4 View 8: Vachel Almshouses – existing (EB7)

GRADE II LISTED BUILDINGS ALONG CASTLE STREET (WEST) AND CASTLE HILL - MAP REFS. 15, 17, 19, 21, 29, 41

- 5.86 The listed buildings within this group comprise the following:
 - 5.86.1 The Castle Tap Public House and 122–122a Castle Hill – Map Ref. 15
 - 5.86.2 Blenheim Terrace, 97–105 Castle Street Map – Ref. 17
 - 5.86.3 107, 109, and 111, Castle Hill – Map Ref. 19
 - 5.86.4 124, 126, and 128–132, Castle Hill – Map Ref. 21
 - 5.86.5 134–144, Castle Street (Map Ref: 29)
 - 5.86.6 144a–152, Castle Street (Map Ref: 41)
- 5.87 This group of buildings are located to the west of the Site, at a range of 150m at the closest point. The group comprises a series of late 18th to early 19th century houses which front onto Castle Street (west side) and Castle Hill.
- 5.88 Materiality ranges from Bath Stone to brick and stucco. They are distinctively Neo–Classical in architectural style and date to the Georgian period. This is articulated by their similarity of architectural features, including round arched windows, symmetrically placed sash windows, restrained façades, with some featuring decorative cornicing, pilasters, and Doric style columns.
- 5.89 The Castle Tap public house dates to the mid–19th century with later alterations, including a window at the ground floor. It differs from the rest of the buildings along Castle Street by virtue of its red brick materiality which features a stucco cornice.
- 5.90 This group of buildings derive historic and architectural interest as well-preserved examples of Georgian/early Victorian houses in the Neo–Classical style. Together, the buildings have group value as a fragment of this early Victorian phase of residential development within Reading.

CONTRIBUTE OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE

- 5.91

The buildings in this group are assimilated on the basis of their coterminous setting on the east–west orientated route of Castle Street, the historic route connecting Reading town centre with Bath, and today the M4. The buildings form part of the RSCHCA developed during the late 18th to early 19th century as part of the western extension of Reading. Their presence on this historic route and the predominance of buildings dating to the same era and architectural style positively contribute to an understanding of their significance and historic placement.
- 5.92

Intensive vehicular traffic on Castle Street, which joins the IDR just to the east, partially erodes the residential character of the street and marks the proximity of the urban centre.
- 5.93

The Site is separated from the listed buildings on Castle Street by the IDR, which forms a significant townscape barrier. Seen in this context and as a building of much later date and different use, the Site does not contribute to the special interest of the listed buildings but forms part of the wider modern urban setting to the east.
- KENT HOUSE (GRADE II) AND ROX BOROUGH HOUSE (GRADE II)– MAP REF.: 23 AND 31**
- 5.94

Kent House is located approximately 185m to the north of the Site, at the nearest point. Designated in December 1978, the townhouse dates to the early 19th century. It is of three storeys with a stucco fronted ground floor.
- 5.95

The listed building derives historic and architectural interest as articulating the early 19th century phase of residential development within Reading. It derives principal architectural interest from its exterior elevation, which is illustrative of its Neo–Classical architectural style, featuring a restrained façade, flat roof and symmetrically placed sash windows.
- 5.96

Rox Borough House, on the corner of Howard Street and Oxford Road, was designated in 1978. It is a mid–19th century townhouse constructed in red brick with a slate roof. It is two storeys above basement, with a stuccoed plinth and sill band. The main façade is on Oxford Road; its rear garden runs along Howard Street, enclosed by a brick wall.
- 5.97

The architectural significance of the building derives from its well–designed symmetrical façade and classical detailing to the ground floor windows and doorway. The building holds historical significance as an indicator of 19th century expansion to the west of Reading town centre.

CONTRIBUTE OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE

- 5.98

The setting of Kent House and Rox Borough House is formed by the historic residential suburb of the RSCHCA, including the west side of Howard Street. The listed buildings are located on the periphery of the conservation area, with Howard Street running in parallel to the IDR. The IDR forms a significant townscape barrier which severs Howard Street from the town centre. The listed buildings are experienced within a noisy urban environment and 20th century road infrastructure, which has compromised their historical setting.
- 5.99

The Site is visible to the south of the listed buildings, on the opposite side of the busy dual carriageway. The Police Station is seen in the context of the Hexagon as part of the late 20th century civic core of Reading. The Site is distinct from the historic residential suburb of Howard Street and does not contribute to the special interest of the listed buildings
- GRADE II LISTED BUILDINGS SURROUNDING READING MINSTER – MAP REFS. 32, 38, 44 AND 47**
- 5.100

This group comprises the following buildings:

5.100.1

55 and 55a St Mary’s Butts – Map Ref. 32

5.100.2

7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, 13 and 14, 15 Gun Street – Map Ref. 38

5.100.3

1 St Mary’s Gate – Map Ref. 44

5.100.4

Church House – Map Ref. 47
- 5.101

This group of grade II listed buildings is located approximately 250m to the east of the Site, surrounding the churchyard of Reading Minster.
- 5.102

55 and 55a St Mary’s Butts was designated in 1957. The building was constructed in the early 19th century and occupies a corner site with the churchyard to the south and St Mary’s Butts to the west. The principal façade is faced in Portland stone and at ground floor there is a modern shop front. Both the west and south façades feature Ionic pilasters and glazing bar timber sash windows. The building features a hipped slated roof, moulded cornice and there is a two–storey extension to the rear.
- 5.103

The building derives historical interest in its position within the former medieval centre of Reading, forming the northern boundary to the Minster churchyard. The principal façade contributes to its architectural interest, in its classical style.
- 5.104

7, 8 and 9 Gun Street are former 18th century residential buildings with ground floor commercial units, constructed with grey header bond and

- red brick dressings to the window openings. Nos. 7 and 8 are of a single bay with early timber sashes. No. 7 was originally the third bay to a larger house occupying Nos. 5 and 6 Gun Street, which has been demolished.
- 5.105

The designated buildings derive historical interest as an illustration of 18th century development in Reading. The use of header bond was an expensive building, denoting the mercantile wealth of the market town at this time. No. 9 Gun Street has particular architectural interest as a well–proportioned Georgian townhouse.
- 5.106

La Corbiere at **15 Gun Street** is a two–storey building of circa 17th century construction, altered in early 19th century. It is constructed in brick, with areas of timber framing and a stuccoed façade. No. 10 Gun Street is a three–storey former residential building constructed in the early 18th century. The façade is a Flemish bond of red brick with grey headers. There are four bays of early timber sash windows with single glazing bar and at ground floor there is a commercial shop window to the right and an architrave to the doorway.
- 5.107

11 and 12 Gun Street is a three storey early 19th century former residential building constructed in red brick. **13 and 14 Gun Street** is a two–storey 18th century former residential building with 19th century commercial alterations to the ground floor. Historically two separate buildings, **13 Gun Street** has a hipped tile roof with dormer. The first–floor sash windows have architrave openings, and the façade is stuccoed.
- 5.108

10 to 15 Gun Street have historical interest as a representation of 18th and 19th century development in Reading. Ground floor commercial alterations denote a change in working and living patterns in the 19th century. This group of designated buildings derive architectural significance as a set of well–proportioned 18th and 19th century former townhouses.
- 5.109

Church House was designated in 1957. Church House is a two–storey early 18th century building with a hipped tile roof. The building has sash windows with glazing bars throughout and the original entrance was from the west, adapted in 1931 to provide the present entrance from the south. A circa 1740 staircase, original fireplaces and pedimented doorways survive within. The assets derive interest from their date of construction, in particular Church House derives architectural interest as a fine example of 18th century architecture. The assets derive group value from one another and their physical proximity to and historical association with St Mary’s Church.

5.110 To the west of Church House, is 1 St Mary’s Gate. This is a small 18th century building, designated in 1978 and amended in 2024. 1 St Mary’s Gate is a service wing, which is the last remaining element of the Vicarage to Reading Minster. The special interest of the building lies in its history as part of Reading’s medieval core and its association with the Grade I listed Church of St Mary.

CONTRIBUTE OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE

5.111 The listed buildings in this group are arranged around the churchyard of Reading Minster within the St MBCA, together forming the medieval centre of Reading. The character and high concentration of historic buildings in this location enables an appreciation of the development of the market town and building traditions. The individual buildings share a historic functional and visual association, and strong setting relationship with Reading Minster and the other listed buildings on St Mary’s Butts and Castle Street.

5.112 The wider setting, comprising the modern urban environment of the town centre makes a neutral contribution to their significance. There are various elements in the wider environment which have created a fragmented townscape.

5.113 In its current form, there is no historic or functional association between the Site and the listed buildings around Reading Minster. The Site can be seen in views west on Gun Street or through the building gap at Hosier Street; however, there is no visual or spatial relationship between the listed buildings and the Site.

GRADE II LISTED BUILDINGS ON BAKER STREET AND RUSSEL STREET - MAP REFS. 36, 46, 52, 63, 77

5.114 The listed buildings within this group comprise the following:
5.114.1 33–39 Baker Street (Map Ref: 36)
5.114.2 55 Baker Street (Map Ref: 46)
5.114.3 41 Russell Street (Map Ref: 52)
5.114.4 36, 38 and 38a, 40 and 42, 44 and 46, 48 and 50, Russell Street (Map Ref.: 63)
5.114.5 61–79 Baker Street (Map Ref: 77)

5.115 The listed buildings within this group are located on Baker Street and Russell Street; the closest buildings is approximately 230m to the west

of the Site. The buildings are grouped on the basis of their coterminous setting on the east–west orientated route of Baker Street and north–south route of Russell Street, within the RSCHCA, a 19th century residential suburb.

5.116 The buildings in this group are early to mid–19th century townhouses of different forms, with terraces, and detached and semi–detached villa–style houses. 41 Russell Street is a symmetrical detached villa–style house constructed in red brick. 55 Baker Street is a three storey, double fronted house with an oriel window, which was the residence of photographer Nicholas Henneman and displays a tablet inscribed with ‘Fox Talbot’s Reading Establishment 1844–45’.

5.117 33–39 Baker Street are a pair of semi–detached villa style houses with stucco façades. 61–79 Baker Street is a complete run of 10 identical two storey terraces with a rounded headed arched doorway.

5.118 The group includes a group of listed buildings on the west side of Russel Street, which runs perpendicularly to the south of Baker Street. 36 Russell Street occupies the corner plot between Baker Street and Russell Street. 38–50 (even) Russell Street are grander in scale, comprising three storey townhouses, which are semi–detached. These are constructed in brick, except for 48–50 Russell Street which is stone.

5.119 Though taking a variety of forms, the buildings in this group have a commonality in the use of materials (brick, stucco and stone), and late Georgian and early Victorian architectural detailing including neo–Classical proportions and symmetrical façades.

5.120 This group of buildings derive special historic and architectural interest as well–preserved examples of Georgian or early Victorian houses in a traditional style. Together, the buildings have group value as a elements of a 19th century residential suburb within Reading.

CONTRIBUTE OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE

5.121 The buildings in this group are assimilated on the basis of their shared setting and historic association. Baker Street is a residential road to the west of the town centre, separated from it by the busy A329 ring road.

5.122 The immediate setting has a distinctively residential feel, characterised by houses of a similar era and architectural style. The buildings form part of the RSCHCA which represents the late 18th and early 19th century

period of residential building within Reading. Their presence on this historic route and the predominance of buildings dating to the same era and architectural style positively contribute to an understanding of their significance and historic placement. The residential character of the road is further reinforced by the presence of mature trees, hedgerows, and brick walls which mark the boundaries of front gardens.

5.123 Due to the curvature of the Baker Street, which bends to the west of Jesse Terrace and at Zinzan Street, there are no axial views of the Site. The Thames Valley Police Station is occluded by the residential development with the RSCHCA. Further to this, there is no historic or functional association between the two, and the Site does not contribute to the special interest of the townhouses within this group.

94 AND 96 WOLSELEY STREET (GRADE II) - MAP REF. 73

5.124 This listed building was designated in 1978 and is located approximately 430m to the southwest of the Site.

5.125 The building was formerly a single dwelling of two storeys and five bays, dating to the 18th century. At some stage the building was split and now has two entrances to Wolseley Street. The house appears to be the oldest in the street, perhaps originally a farmhouse, and this is expressed externally by the rendering and exposed sash boxes. The building has special interest as an example of a semi–rural 18th century house of considerable size.

CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE

5.126 The setting of the building is formed by Wolseley Street, which was developed with terraced workers housing from the mid–19th century. The setting of the listed building signifies the historic development of what was once a rural area, and the urbanised of Reading in the 19th century. Due to the density of housing either side of Wolseley Street and the continuous frontages of the terraces, the setting of the building is enclosed. There is currently not visibility of the Site, which is separated by 430m of development and the busy dual carriage way of the IDR. The Site does not contribute to the special interest of the 18th century dwelling.

MAP REF.	HERITAGE ASSET	REASON FOR SCOPING OUT
C	Market Place and London Street Conservation Area	No or very limited intervisibility between CA and Proposed Development. ZTV indicates small area of intervisibility on Southampton Street and within setting of St Giles. CA is bound to north by modern road infrastructure and commercial development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of CA.
2	Greyfriars Church	No intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
6	Culvert on Holy Brook Running South Westwards	The culvert on Holy Brook is a below-ground structure enclosed by development on the south side of Castle Street. The Proposed Development would not materially alter the setting of this listed structure.
7	Nos. 154 to 160 (even) and Railings to Street	No or very limited intervisibility between CA and Proposed Development. ZTV indicates small area of intervisibility within private gardens to rear of listed terrace. Terrace has enclosed setting set back from the Street. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of CA.
24	Simmonds Malthouse	No or very limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
27	Queen Victoria Jubilee Fountain	Proposed Development not considered to have material impact on setting of street furniture or monument experienced in urban environment.
28	113, 115, 117-121 Castle Hill and Castleton House, 123 Castle Hill	No or very limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
30	Harrinson Testimonial Cross	Proposed Development not considered to have material impact on setting of street furniture or monument experienced in urban environment.
33	Building now part of Courage's Brewery	Limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Setting of listed building comprises a modern housing development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
34	The Allied Arms Inn, 57 St Mary's Butts	No or very limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
35	Seven Bridges House	No or very limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
37	3 and 5, Cheapside	No intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
39	Clevedon House, 125-127 Castle Hill and 1 Coley Hill	No intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
42	3-13, Coley Hill	No intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.

MAP REF.	HERITAGE ASSET	REASON FOR SCOPING OUT
45	15, 15a, 17 and 17a Coley Hill	No intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
48	The Royal Meteorological Society, 104 Oxford Road	No or very limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
49	Congregational Church and Numbers 89 and 89a, Broad Street	No intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
50	67 and 68 Broad Street	No intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
51	21-25, 27, 29, 31-35, Coley Hill	No intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
53	W I Palmer Memorial Hall	No intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
54	95, Broad Street	No intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
56	Yeomanry House	No intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
57	139-141 Oxford Road	No or very limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
58	24-34, Russell Street	No or very limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
59	The Former Mitre Inn	No intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
60	6-22, Russell Street	No or very limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
61	168,172 and 174, Castle Street	No intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
62	Telephone Exchange	No or very limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
64	Saxone	No intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.

MAP REF.	HERITAGE ASSET	REASON FOR SCOPING OUT
65	26, and 28, Southampton Street	Limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Listed building is experienced in the context of modern road infrastructure and office development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
66	Quadrant Walls and Railings to Former No 64 (Greyfriars Vicarage)	No intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
67	Church of the Holy Trinity	No or very limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
68	3, Castle Crescent	No or very limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
69	Butler's Wine Vaults	No or very limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
70	Swallow House	No intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
71	149-169 Oxford Road	No or very limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
72	118 Oxford Road	No or very limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
75	Building on South East Corner	No intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
76	The Henry Building at Katesgrove Primary School including Boundary Wall and Former Caretaker's Cottage	No or very limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
78	Church of St Giles and church yard tombs	Limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. ZTV indicates some visibility within the northwest corner of the churchyard. Setting of Church of St Giles formed principally by churchyard, associated tombs and vicarage to south. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
80	St Giles' War Shrine	Proposed Development not considered to have material impact on setting of street furniture or monument experienced in urban environment.
81	1-31, Queen Victoria Street	No intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
82	The George Hotel	No intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.

MAP REF.	HERITAGE ASSET	REASON FOR SCOPING OUT
84	120 and 122 Oxford Road	No or very limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
85	171-177 Oxford Road	No or very limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
86	122 and 124, Chatham Street	No or very limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
87	147, Friar Street	No intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
88	St Giles' Vicarage	Limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Setting of vicarage is formed by St Giles Church to the north and associated churchyard, tombs and boundary wall. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
89	Wall enclosing St Giles' Vicarage and Vicarage garden	Limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Listed for group value with vicarage and St Giles Church. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
90	72-76, Southampton Street	No or very limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. ZTV indicates some visibility to rear of building. Special architectural interest best appreciated from the principal elevation on Southampton Street. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
91	2, 3 and 3a Broad Street	No intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
92	17 and 18 King Street	No intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
93	124 Oxford Road	No or very limited intervisibility between listed building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of listed building.
94	85 Broad Street	No intervisibility between building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of non-designed heritage asset.
95	The Bugle, 144 Friar Street	No intervisibility between building and Proposed Development. Proposed Development not considered to result in material change to setting of non-designed heritage asset.

Table 5.1 Heritage assets scoped out of this assessment

6.0

BASELINE: TOWNSCAPE

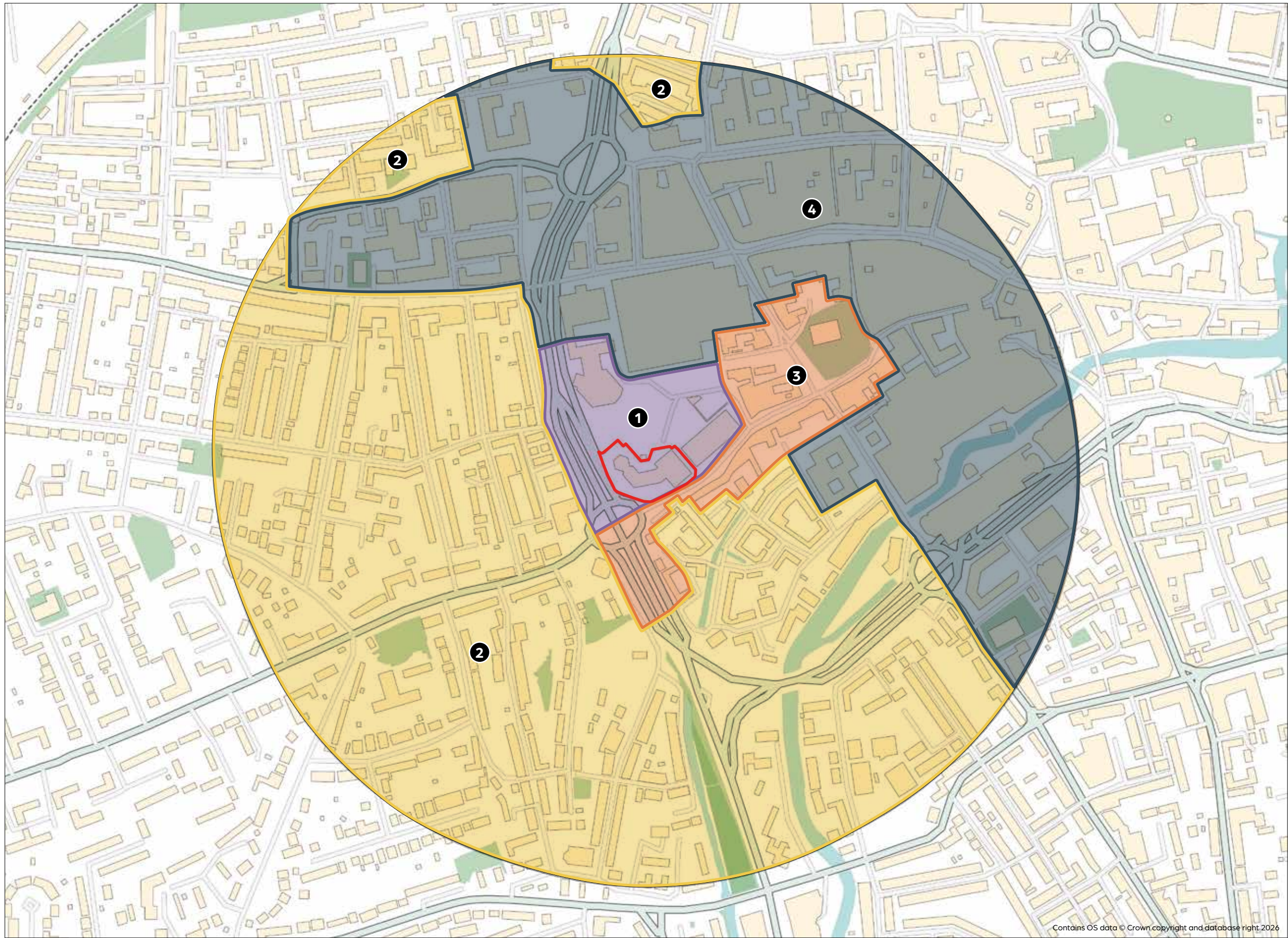
FLINT STREET - 53 CASTLE STREET, READING, RG1 7TH

BASELINE: TOWNSCAPE

- 6.1 This section provides analysis of the townscape study area and the identified character areas.

- 6.2 The townscape surrounding the Site may be categorised into four distinct areas. These broadly comprise the retail centre of Reading and the residential areas to the south and east of the Site. For the purposes of this assessment the character areas are referred to as:
 - 6.2.1 TCA 2: Residential
 - 6.2.2 TCA 3: Historic Core
 - 6.2.3 TCA 4: Commercial core

- 6.3 The broad boundaries of the townscape character areas are identified in **Figure 6.1**. The character and appearance of these areas is discussed below.



TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA PLAN

- Application Site
- 1 Civic Centre
- 2 Residential
- 3 Historic Core
- 4 Commercial Centre

LOCATION:
Thames Valley Police, Reading

DATE:
May 2026

SCALE:
1:5,000 @ A3

FIGURE 6.1 Townscape Character Area Plan

▲ NORTH



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TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 1: CIVIC CENTRE

- 6.4 The Site is located in TCA 1, which comprises the civic buildings to the southwest of the town centre: the Magistrates Court, the Hexagon and the Thame Valley Police Station. TCA 1 is bordered to the west by the IDR and overlooks the roundabout at the junction with Castle Street. The boundary of TCA 1 broadly corresponds with Character Area 16: Civic Centre as identified in Reading's Tall Building Strategy 2008.
- 6.5 Building plots are large, which is a reflection of their use. Dating from the 1970s, the buildings are built in brick in a simple modernist style, mixing post-modern and brutalist design influences. Building heights vary between two and five storeys. Most architecturally interesting is the Hexagon, built in 1977 in the shape of an elongated hexagon. The TCA does not include any designated heritage assets.
- 6.6 A further reflection of the civic use of the TCA is the incorporation of areas of car parking and public realm around each of the buildings. Public realm is a key characteristic of the TCA, although it is not of high quality. This includes the San Francisco Libre Walk, a paved pedestrian walkway which provides access into the town centre, and the Lavender Place Community Gardens. The Site incorporates a limited amount of green landscaping, comprising a planter to the Castle Street elevation, hedging to the north along the public footpath, and an area of lawn and trees to the IDR roundabout. This helps to soften the built form of the Site.
- 6.7 The Lavender Place Community Gardens were formed on the site of the Civic Offices, demolished 2016. The demolition of the Civic Offices created a gap site in what was originally a planned civic development with a shared architectural language across four buildings. This has contributed to the disjointed townscape environment, which is further compromised by a change in levels, underpasses and car parking.
- 6.8 The poor-quality of the urban environment within the Civic Centre is recognised in Reading's Tall Building Strategy (2008) and the 2025 update, which describe it as an 'area which is currently composed of poor quality, undistinguished buildings which creates a weak townscape character.'
- 6.9 The TCA is located within an area identified as being appropriate for tall building by the Development Plan and the Tall Building Strategy. This analysis is based in part on the low-quality of the urban environment and the existing character of large-scale buildings. The documentation states

that given the existing character of the TCA, a tall building would not be uncharacteristic, with careful consideration on views east and west within the StMBCSCA.

6.10 The Site is one of the three large-scale buildings which define the built form of the TCA. Its use as a police station has meant that many of the windows are darkened with reflective film and there is no activation at street level.

6.11 The height of the building steps down to two storeys at the east end, corresponding with the lower scale and finer grain of Castle Street. Much of the frontage to Castle Street is taken up by hardstanding and lawn, behind which the building is set back. This is uncharacteristic of the historic development on Castle Street, which has a hard building line to the pavement and continuous frontages.

- 6.12 The main body of the police station is four storeys over an underground carpark, accessed from Castle Street. To the northwest of the Site there is a hexagonal form block of five storeys, which corresponds with the Hexagon and historically, the Civic Offices. The treatment of the upper storeys, which extends beyond the footprint of the building and incorporates with a high extent of glazing and metallic cladding, is low-quality.
- 6.13 Associated viewpoints: 1, 4 and 7
- 6.14 Townscape Value: **Low**



Figure 6.2 Aerial photograph of the Civic Centre, 2022 (Historic England)

TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 2: RESIDENTIAL

- 6.15
- TCA 2 is a large character area covering three broad area: to the west of the A329, to the north of the Friar Street and to the southeast of the Site.
- 6.16
- The area to the west of the IDR broadly overlaps with the RSCHCA. The street pattern of this area is reflective of its use and age, comprising a series of linear, gridded streets. The predominant building typology in this area is Victorian terraces, which make up the RSCHCA, with the best examples on Castle Hill, Baker Street and Russell Street.
- 6.17
- Modern development has impinged in some locations, most notably on the eastern edge of the RSCHCA, facing the IDR. The IDR encircles the town centre and forms part of the A329 that runs from Surrey to Oxfordshire.
- 6.18
- To the north of Friar Street, there is a small enclave of residential streets which fall within the study area, including Sackville Street and Vachel Road. These comprises late 19th terraces, smaller and more modest in comparison to the larger scale houses in the RSCHCA. Within this part of the TCA, infill development dating to the mid–20th century and later is a key characteristic, which has resulted in a fragmented townscape. Along Sackville Street, the terraces are more architecturally ornate in character, comprising decorative red and white brick. Overall, however, the quality of development in this part of the TCA is lower. The urban grain remains tight knit.
- 6.19
- To the south of Castle Street and east of the IDR, there is an area of late 20th century housing. It has an enclosed character with dense vegetative borders. Vegetation, street furniture and paved areas of public realm are a key characteristic of this area. The houses within the TCA are architecturally homogenous which aids in differentiating the area from its surroundings. Buildings have red brick elevations, dark timber framed windows and a mock Tudor architectural style. Designated areas of car parking are also prominent throughout the TCA.
- 6.20
- The TCA is varied in terms of architectural style, form, streetscape, development quality, but is ultimately bound by the consistent residential use of the buildings.
- 6.21
- There are views across to the Site and TCA 1 from the eastern boundary of TCA 2. The layout, building form and function of TCA 1 and the Site is

clearly distinct from the residential character of TCA 2. The two areas are further separated by the IDR, which forms a significant barrier between the two. The Site does not contribute to the townscape value of TCA 2.

6.22 Associated viewpoints: 1, 2, 9, 10, 12

6.23 Townscape Value: **Medium**

TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 3: HISTORIC CORE

- 6.24
- The boundaries of this TCA run broadly concurrent with the StMBCSCA, which includes a number of highly graded heritage assets including the Church of St Mary (Grade I). The Site borders the TCA on its north–western boundary.
- 6.25
- The medieval street pattern of this part of Reading is still legible. The TCA includes highly graded designated assets and Reading landmarks and some of the oldest surviving buildings in Reading including the Allied Arms, The Horn and The Sun. Most buildings within the TCA are at least Grade II listed, with examples dating from the sixteenth century to the present day. A result of this is that the architectural character of the TCA is highly varied, ranging from red brick Georgian style buildings to smaller scale timber framed buildings and ornate early 20th century buildings in the Arts and Crafts Style.
- 6.26
- The historic character of TCA3 is distinctive in the otherwise largely modern the town centre. The buildings still occupy their original medieval burgage style plots on align Castle Street and St Mary’s Butts which has resulted in a tight knit urban structure. The boundaries of the TCA are well defined by the surrounding larger–scale retail developments, dating to the 1970s or later.
- 6.27
- Building uses are varied comprising retail, leisure and housing. Retail and catering uses predominate at ground floor level.
- 6.28
- Apart from St Mary’s Churchyard, there is limited green public space in the area. Many of the former back yards or gardens of properties in the StMBCSCA have been developed or are used for car parking.
- 6.29
- The TCA also incorporates key views to and from the tower of St Mary’s Church, to Greyfriars Church to the north along St Mary’s Butts, and West Street and up Castle Hill to the west.

- 6.30
- The Site adjoins the TCA to the north, with Castle Street forming the boundary between TCA 1 and 3. The Site differs from the fine historic grain of TCA 3, with large scale civic buildings of low–quality. The front block of the Thames Valley Police Station is of a similar scale to the historic terraces, which helps to mediate between the building types. Overall, however, the inactive and low–quality frontages and unusual form of the Site are detracting to the townscape quality of the historic thoroughfare.

6.31 Associated viewpoints: 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 11

6.32 Townscape Value: **High**

TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 4: COMMERCIAL CORE

- 6.33
- TCA 1 comprises the primary shopping area within Reading town centre. It borders TCA 1 on its southwestern boundary, in which the Site is located.
- 6.34
- The TCA includes the northern part of the Market Place and London St Conservation Area. Buildings of a historic and architectural interest include St Laurence’s Church and the Town Hall complex. This area has medieval origins, and the morphological framework is still evident, complemented by the 19th century civic complex. The area has been a central point in Reading’s development for much of its history, as illustrated by the presence of St Laurence’s Church and an eclectic mix of historic buildings in the environs of Market Place Square.
- 6.35
- Development is orientated around the linear east–west axis of Broad Street, as well as a series of horizontal intersecting streets. Some of the medieval, burgage style plots are retained along Broad Street, though intersected with larger, modern infill development.
- 6.36
- The TCA extends to the western side of the IDR. Oxford Road is a secondary high street of mixed used development, predominantly comprising retail/ commercial outlets at ground floor with residential above.
- 6.37
- The development within the TCA is predominantly of retail and commercial use, a reflection of the town centre character of this part of Reading. Owing to the various phases of redevelopment of this area, the building typologies, ages and architectural styles vary. Consequently, the quality of development within this area is mixed comprising a significant number of designated heritage assets around Market Place and King Street, including the Grade I listed St Laurence’s Church, and recent developments.

- 6.38 The TCA comprises the two main shopping centres within Reading. This includes Broad Street Mall, located in the centre, which opened in 1971 and incorporates a large multi storey car park and some office use. The Oracle, which opened in 2000, is located in the southeast of the TCA and provides a direct link to Broad Street, the main pedestrianised thoroughfare and primary high street in Reading. The two have large footprints, as a result of their use and associated car parking.
- 6.39 Public realm is a key characteristic of the TCA, with Broad Street being completely pedestrianised as the main shopping street within the town centre. The Oracle shopping centre is surrounded by a considerable extent of public realm. A pedestrian bridge provides access across the River Kennett to the Oracle Riverside.
- 6.40 The density of urban development within the area is high, and ranges from tight to coarse urban grain. Open spaces are uncommon, limited only to the wide tree line boulevard of Broad Street. There are several taller buildings in TCA 4, including 1 Queen’s Walk.
- 6.41 The adopted Reading Local Plan (2019) identifies the western section of this TCA, on the opposing side of the A329, as being within the ‘West Side Major Opportunity Area’ (Policy CR12). The development plan states that regeneration of this western edge of Reading town centre has been a long-held objective, with an emphasis on improving east-west links into the central core and promoting high-quality mixed-use environments. As such, it is anticipated that this TCA will be subject to continual urban change.
- 6.42 The TCA is also partially located within the tall buildings cluster zone, as identified by Reading Local Plan (Policy CR12d). It is thus expected that the number of tall buildings within the TCA will increase, reflecting the direction of change of this TCA. This is already evidence by the Chatham Tower development, a residential block of 19 storeys, on the southern side of Chatham Street, and the emerging tall building cluster at Reading station. This has reduced the TCA’s sensitivity to further tall building development.
- 6.43 Associated viewpoints: 2 and 4
- 6.44 Townscape Value: **Medium**

TOWNSCAPE SUMMARY

6.45 **Table 6.1** presents a summary of the townscape receptor baseline information.

REF.	TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA	TOWNSCAPE VALUE	FULL ASSESSMENT REQUIRED?
1	Commercial core	Medium	Yes
2	Residential	Medium	Yes
3	Historic Core	High	Yes
4	Civic Centre	Low	Yes

Table 6.1 Summary of Townscape Receptor Baseline.