86 London Street
Reading RG1 4SJ

HERITAGE STATEMENT
Proposed windows and Ground Floor structural strengthening

Document No: 1347-HR-A-HS-XX-03
Rev 01

Date: 16.06.2026

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Revision History

Rev 00	Issued 13.06.2026	DRAFT
Rev 01	Issued 16.06.2026	FINAL

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Heritage Statement is submitted for a listed building application for the installation of 4no. replacement Basement windows and strengthening to the Ground Floor structure at 86 London Street. This document is written to assist greater understanding of the impact of the proposals upon the historic significance of the listed building.

1.2 A current application for ventilated Basement walls (PL/26/0684) is under consideration. A pre-app meeting regarding this new scope of work was held remotely with the planning officer of this current application, the applicant, the project architect and the author of this document on Thursday 11th June. The scope considered herewith is supplementary to this existing application.

1.3 86 London Street, is Grade II listed, and located within the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area, situated within Reading Borough Council, both considered a 'heritage asset' as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework and therefore merits consideration in planning decisions (2024).

1.4 86 London Street dates from the early to mid-C18.

1.5 This document should be read in conjunction with the associated proposed drawings.

1.6 **Planning**

1.6.1 Relevant forthcoming planning policy with respect to the heritage character of the conservation area and historic buildings are as follows:
Reading Borough Council Local Plan 2019:
Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment,

1.6.2 **Relevant Planning History for 86 London Street:**

Application ref.	Summary	Date
PL/26/0684	To install ventilated stud walls to short lengths of the basement perimeter walls (under consideration)	n/a
PL/26/0460	Application for Approval of Details Reserved by Conditions 3, 4 and 5 of application PL/25/0524. (Granted).	30.04.2026
PL/26/0398	Rear garden T.1 Pear Section fell. (Granted).	01.05.2026
PL/26/0434	Application for Approval of Details Reserved by Condition 3 of application PL/25/0525. (Granted).	29.04.2026
PL/25/0524	Change of Use from Office (E) to Residential (C3). (Granted).	10.12.2025
PL/25/0525	Change of Use from Office (E) to Residential (C3) comprising alterations to basement layout, new flooring to basement and ground floor, redecoration and new bike and bin store in rear garden. (Granted).	26.08.2025
PL/07/1269 & PL/07/1302	Alterations to boundaries and current access to rear of 86 and 88 London Street. (Refused).	04.12.2007
PL/06/0095	Formation of hardstanding for use as a car park at rear. (Refused).	19.06.2006
PL/06/0090/LB	Formation of a walkway between 86 and 88 London Street. (Granted).	19.06.2006
PL/06/0262	Retrospective application: Installation of 3 CCTV cameras to the front of the building. (Granted).	09.10.2006
PL/91/0892 & PL/91/0893/LB	Demolition of existing outbuilding and single storey rear extension to provide additional office accommodation. Single storey rear extension to be used as a Boardroom. Materials - slates to roof and brickwork to walls to match existing. (Decision not known).	14.01.1992
PL/89/0199LB & PL/89/0151	Single storey rear extension. (Decision not known).	18.05.1989

1.7 Location

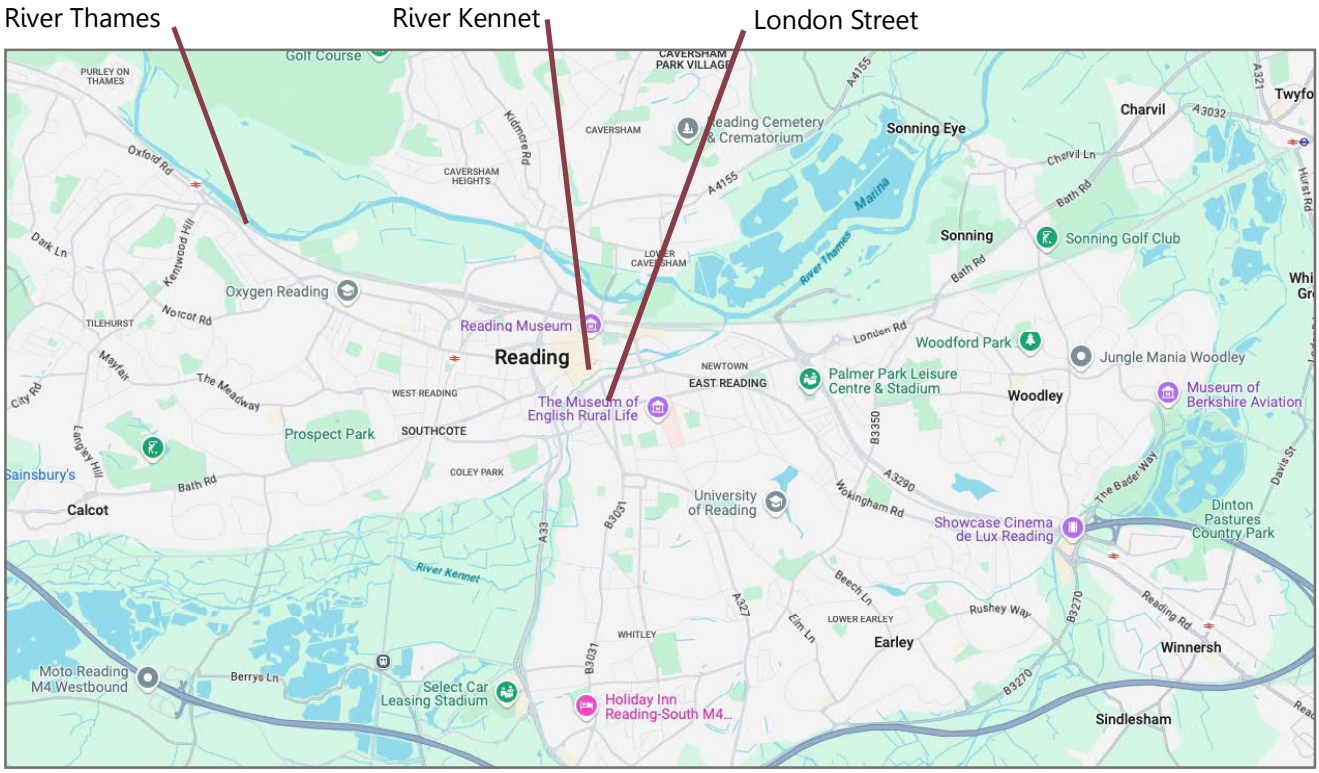


Image 1: Extract of the location of The Site within Reading (Google Maps, 2025)

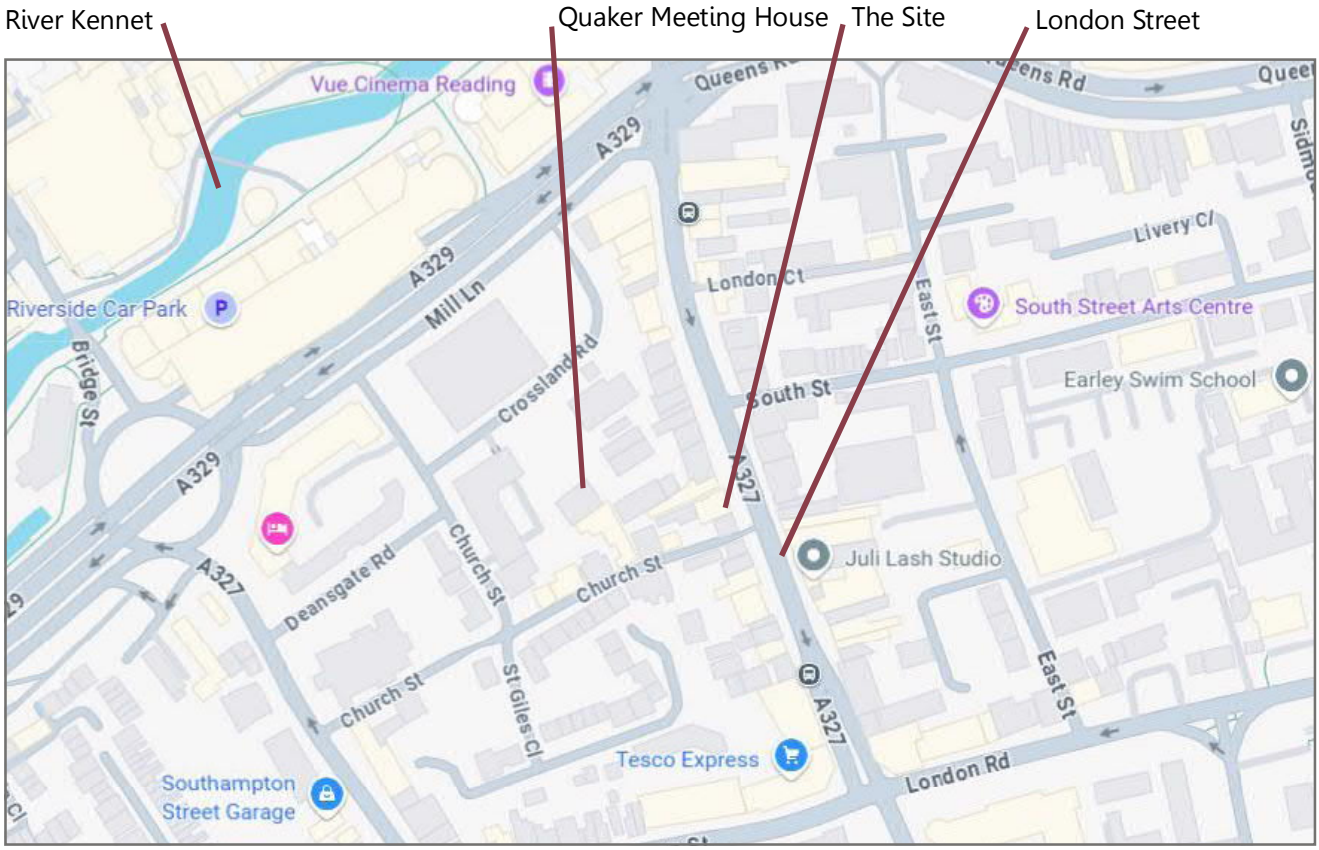


Image 2: Extract of the immediate locality of The Site (Google Maps, 2025)

1.8 Heritage Significance

1.8.1 Proposals relating to heritage assets are subject to the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF). Such proposals require to be justified under this legislation with respect to potential effect on the heritage asset. Consideration is given to the impact upon a heritage asset's 'significance' and its 'setting'.

1.8.2 'Significance' is defined in the NPPF as:
"The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting..." (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2024, Annex 2: Glossary).

1.8.3 The 'setting' of a heritage asset is defined in the NPPF as:
'The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.' (MHCLG, 2024, Annex 2: Glossary).

1.8.4 This Heritage Statement is written within the context of relevant best practice guidance:

- Historic England (2008). Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance.

1.8.5 The scope of the Heritage Statement is developed to be proportionate to the proposals in accordance to paragraph 207 of the NPPF which states, "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" (2024, para. 207).

1.8.6 This Heritage Statement identifies the heritage assets with potential to be affected by the proposals, it then describes the heritage assests' significance, and the document then analyses the potential impact of the proposals upon the significance of the heritage assets.

2.1 Historical Context

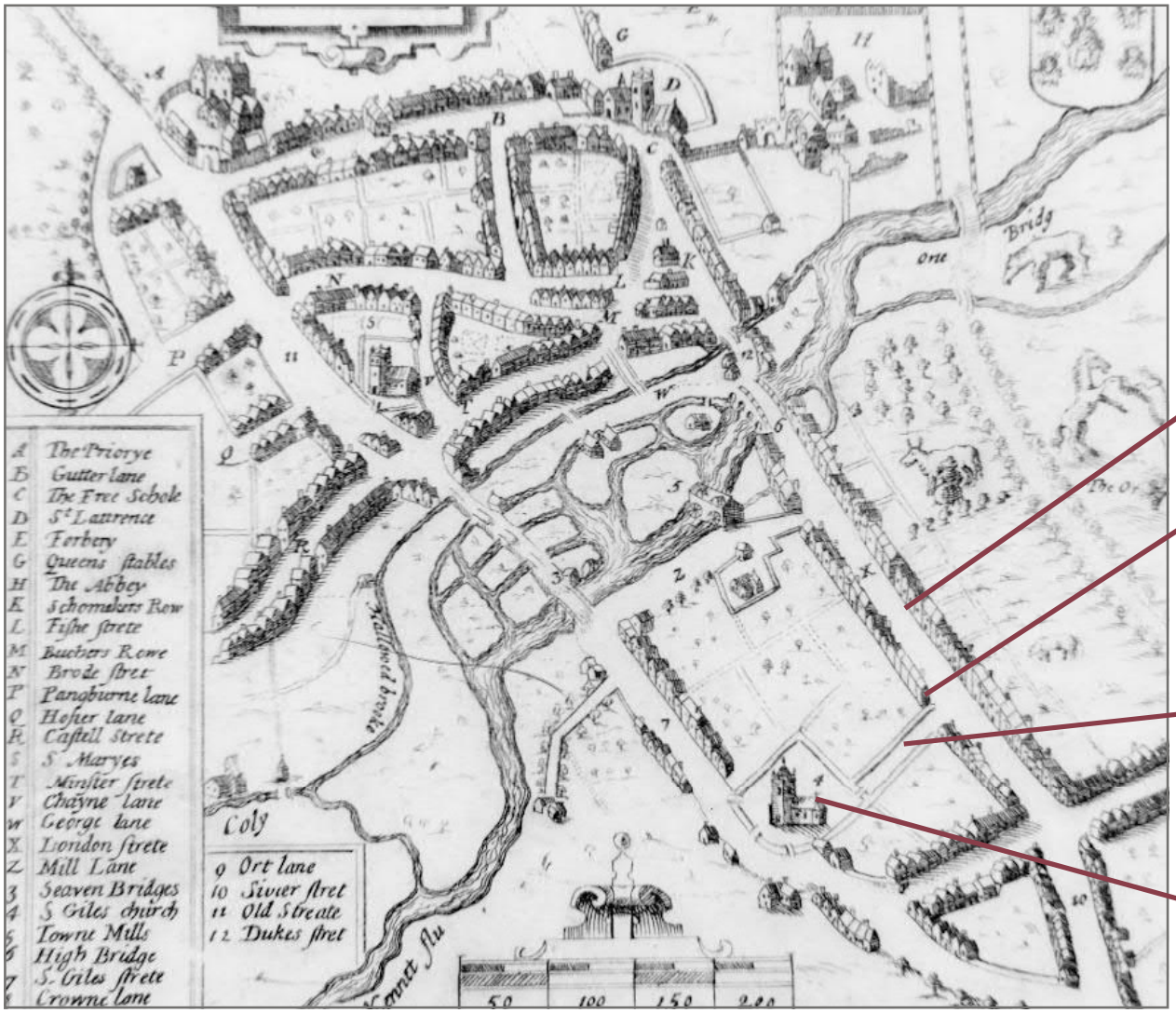
2.1.1 The Site is located to the south of the Kennet River and the centre of Reading. It is located within the linear Market Place/London Street Conservation Area - one of 15 conservation areas in Reading. The conservation area has four character areas: Character Area 1 comprises London Street between the east-west Crown Street/London Road and the east/west Mill Lane/Queens Road to the north (refer to Image 3, below).

Image 3: Extract from the Conservation Appraisal document showing the conservation area split into four character areas (1-4) (RBC, 2007)

2.2 Conservation Area - A Heritage Asset

2.2.1 The 'spine' - the north-south London Street - of the conservation area was laid out over two centuries of formal urban planning during the C12 (RBC, 2023). London Street, and Duke Street connected via High Bridge over the River Kennet, was a route directly to and from the Abbey's Market - the commercial hub of the town (ibid). The Abbey was founded by Henry I in 1121. During this phase of planning the nearby St. Giles church was founded in the late C12 (within Character Area 2 of the conservation area, at the western end of Church Street). London Street connected with Southampton Street via Church Street. Plots along London Street are suggested to have been in place by the 1350s, described as Reading's 'Medieval inner suburbs' (ibid).

2.2.2 John Speed's map of Reading in 1610 indicates what appears to be a purpose-made path from London Street to St. Giles Church and indicates a wider route than the present-day Church Street - refer to Image 4. Buildings of continuous frontages are shown at the junction of Church Street and London Street to both sides of Church Street, again indicating development on the Site at this time. It was a little after this time, in the 1650s during the British Interregnum period, when the Quakers first met in Reading.



London Street

The Site

Route to the church - a precursor to Church Street

St. Giles' Church

Image 4: Extract from 'Reading in 1610' by John Speed (Accessed via Reading Museum, 2025)

2.2.3 The building on the corner of Church Street and London Street, adjacent to 86 London Street is 88 London Street. This property is Grade II listed (LE No. 1156203) whose list description describes the property as a C16 house, re-fronted in the early to mid-C18 (Historic England, 2025). The Reading Historic Area Assessment (Reading HAA) highlights this property is one of only a few isolated examples in Reading of jettied timber framed buildings. The view west along Church Street from London Street is identified in the draft 2021 conservation appraisal review document as being a 'Key View' in the conservation area (CAAC, 2021) framed by the timber jetty (refer to Image 5, below).

Image 5: View from London Street towards St. Giles' Church, via Church Street (July, 2025)

2.2.4 The period from the 1740s to the early 1900 is described as a period of 'expansion' in the Reading HAA (RBC, 2023). Coaching inns were developed to serve travellers on the London-Reading-Bath route, with London Street on the main route into town (ibid). The Crown Inn was located at the corner of Crown Street/London Road and London Street, described as 'one of Reading's most important coaching inns' (ibid) since demolished.

2.2.5 The conservation area appraisal document describes London Street as being a 'fashionable' part of town in the late C18 and C19, with elegant houses either side of the road (RBC, 2007). The document also suggests some cellars in the street are of limestone construction 'quarried' from Reading Abbey in the C16 (ibid).

2.2.6 The Character Area map in the Reading HAA (RBC, 2023) identifies both listed buildings and those of locally listed/buildings of townscape merit: No.s 82 and 84 adjacent to No.86 are identified as such - refer to Image 6, overleaf.

2.2.7 Key characteristics of Character Area 1 are noted to be (RBC, 2007):

- the 'usual' width of London Street, rising from the River Kennet and curving slightly eastwards - which create a visually interesting townscape (refer to Image 7)
- the density of high quality historic buildings to both sides of London Street
- the high quality of architecture, and their 'well-proportioned' relationship between their height and the width of the street
- the strong vertical rhythm of the architecture, and the predominance of brickwork (refer to Image 8)
- side alleys that offer glimpse views (refer to Image 5)
- trees that soften the urban environment
- a variety of architectural detailing

Image 6: Extract from 'Map Showing Existing Heritage Assests in Character Area 5.1' (RBC, 2023)

5.1 Map Showing Heritage Designations within Character Area

- Scheduled Monuments
- Listed Buildings/Structures
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Locally Identified Buildings (Locally Listed Buildings/ Buildings of Townscape Merit)
- Conservation Area

86 London Street

Image 7: View north along London Street towards the town centre (July, 2025)

86 London Street 82-84 London Street

Image 8: View of west side of London Street (July, 2025)

2.3 86 London Street - Grade II Listed Heritage Asset

2.3.1 The Historic Environment Record (via the website Heritage Gateway) identified the following records - none directly related to the 86 London Street address. A general statement is noted:

"*London Street has medieval origins and archaeological investigations at a number of sites have revealed evidence of medieval features. Parts of older structures can be found including cellars made from limestone 'quarried' from Reading Abbey, possibly in the 16th century*".

Medieval and post-Medieval pits and finds have been located further south along the west side of London Street at 96-102 London Street (Heritage Gateway, 2025).

Resource Summary Results

BERKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

The Berkshire Archaeology Historic Environment Record (HER) is a record of the known archaeology and historic environment within the 5 Unitary Authorities areas in the east of Berkshire - Reading Borough Council, Wokingham Borough Council, Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Slough Borough Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. The western half of what was the post 1974 county of Berkshire is covered by West Berkshire HER.

Viewing results 1 to 14 of 14

<< Previous **Results Page:** 1 Next >>

Name	Location
London Street - Reading, Berkshire	Reading
Pits, ditch? and well or soak away - 96-102 London Street, Reading, Berkshire	Reading
Medieval pits and finds at 96-102 London Street, Reading, Berkshire	Reading
Medieval/post-medieval pits at 96-102 London Street, Reading, Berkshire	Reading
Medieval foundry at 67-73 London Street, Reading, Berkshire	Reading
Medieval pit - Land at 67-73 London Street, Reading, Berkshire	Reading
Pits and a gully at 96-102 London Street, Reading, Berkshire	Reading
11th-14th century pits at 74-76 London Street, Reading, Berkshire	Reading
Medieval pit at 68 London Street, Reading, Berkshire	Reading
69 London Street, Reading, Berkshire	Reading
17-19 London Street, Reading, Berkshire	Reading
Two late post-medieval or modern wells at rear of 74-76 London Street, Reading	Reading
Burnt Animal Bone - 107 London Street, Reading, Berkshire	Reading
Medieval features and a find - 72 London Street, Reading, Berkshire	Reading

Image 9: Screen capture from the Heritage Gateway record for London Street (Heritage Gateway, 2025).

The Reading Borough Council's Proposals Map from 2017 identifies the area as having 'archaeological potential'.

The Site

Key

Area of archaeological potential

Image 10: Extract from the 'Proposals Map', Map M (RBC, 2017).

2.3.2 **List Description**

Grade II
List entry number: 1113527
Date first listed: 22.03.1957
Description Updated: 05.03.2024
For the full text refer to the Appendix.

"Terraced house, now a shop and flats. Built in the early to mid-C18 with later alterations.
Reasons for Designation
86 London Street is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:
Architectural interest:
- as an early to mid-C18 townhouse which contributes to the character of an architecturally varied historic streetscape.

Historic interest:
- as part of the urban development of Reading's ancient core.

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

Details
Terraced house, now a shop and flats. Built in the early to mid-C18 with later alterations.
MATERIALS: tuck-pointed red brick laid in Flemish bond with timber and stucco dressings and clay tile roof coverings.
PLAN: a former terraced house of three storeys, now containing a shop (letting agents) on the ground floor and apartments above.
EXTERIOR: the main, east elevation faces the street and is three bays wide and three storeys high. The ground floor comprises, from left to right: two six-over-six sash windows with heavily moulded frames and an entrance doorway which has a moulded doorcase with two console brackets and a cornice. It contains a six-panelled door with brass door furniture beneath an elaborate, rococo-style transom light. A timber cornice separates the ground floor from that above. The first floor has four large Doric pilasters supporting a broad stucco entablature with metopes and a dentilled cornice. Between the pilasters are three six-over-six sash windows with moulded frames and keystones; simple geometric keystones to the outer sashes and a larger console keystone to the central sash. The second floor, or attic storey, has squat six-over-six segmental-headed sash windows with exposed sash boxes and a brick parapet with a stone coping. Behind the parapet is a tile-covered M roof. All of the sash windows to this elevation are flush with the brickwork. The basement has been painted white and contains two hopper windows behind iron railings.

2.3.2 cntd The rear, west elevation is three bays wide with the ground and first floor painted white while the second floor is exposed red brick. On the first floor, there is a large 36-pane uPVC window to the northernmost bay and two eight-over-twelve timber sash windows to the other bays. The second floor is similar with a 36-pane uPVC window and two eight-over-eight sash windows."
(Historic England, 2026)

Image 11: East elevation

2.3.3 The dating of the property may be guided by the flush sash windows, as these were outlawed as a risk to propagating fire - following the Great Fire of London in 1666 - by the 1709 Building Act which stipulated the windows frames should be set back by four inches from the brick face (Georgian cities, 2025). The Act applied to London, and thereafter around the country, however enactment dates for local enforced not clear.

2.3.4 The 1877 map shows some regular plot widths to both sides of London Street - refer to Image 11 - however by this time it appears some plots have been subsumed with wider properties. Grey out-buildings are shown along the boundary between No.86 and 84 London Street, with the depth of the properties adjacent to No.86 the same. Building(s) to the rear of plots 86 and 88 in the 1877 map appears to have been removed by the 1898 map (refer to Images 12 and 13b).
The Webster's Reading Directory of 1874 lists No.86 as being inhabited by a Mrs Baker. Of the addresses listed for London Street (1-132 in the directory) only nine appear to be solely residences, including No.86. The properties immediately adjacent were all listed as businesses at the time: No.82 an inn; No.84 a greengrocer; No.88 a fruiterer.

Image 12: Extract of the Berkshire XXXVII.3, surveyed 1875-1877, published 1879 (National Library of Scotland, 2025).

2.3.5 The Kelly's Directory of 1899 lists No.86 as being inhabited by a Mrs Jane Millard who was a dress-maker. Of the even addresses to the west side of London Street (2-123 in the directory) only five appear to be solely residences. The properties immediately adjacent were all listed as businesses at the time: No.82 a furniture dealer; No.84 a window blind maker; No.88 a greengrocer.

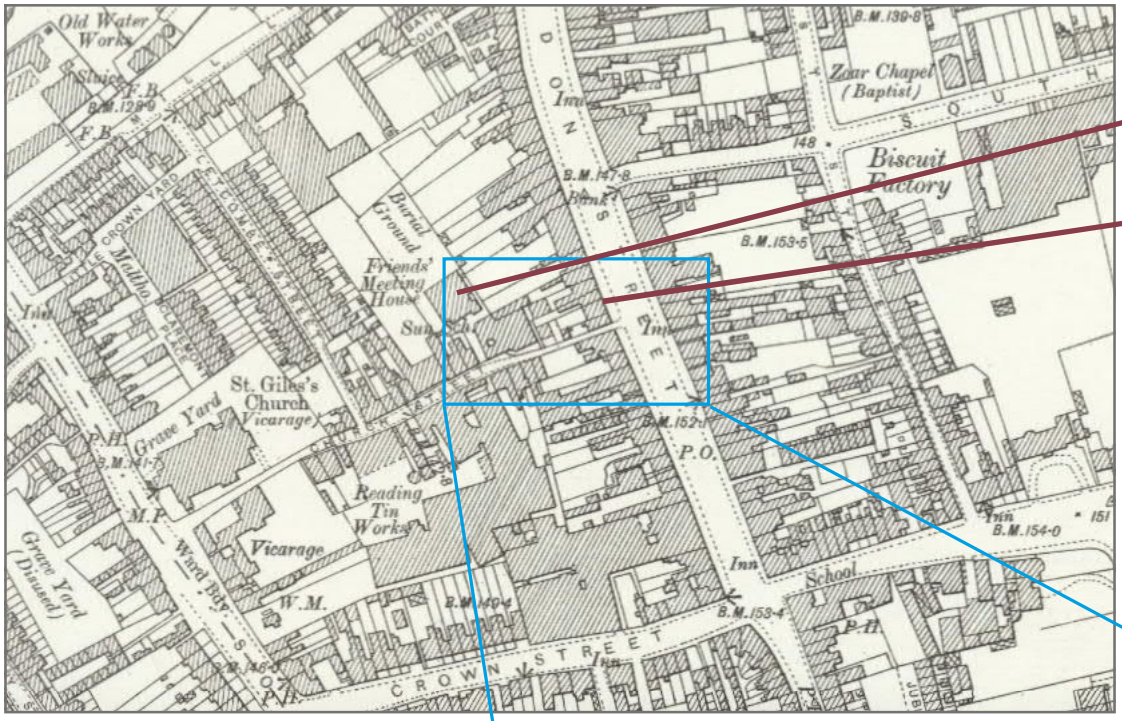


Image 13a: Extract of the Berkshire XXX-VII.3 map from 1898, published 1900 (National Library of Scotland, 2025).

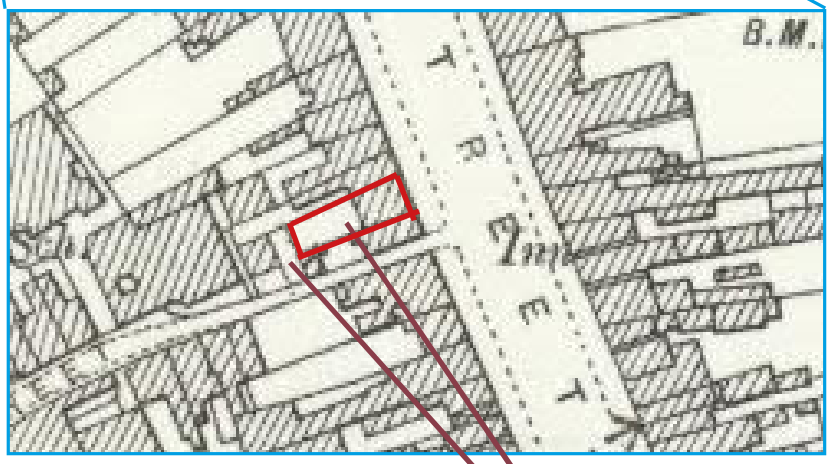


Image 13b: Detail of Image 13a

2.3.6 The map of 1912 shows no discernible change to the Site compared to the earlier OS maps. The Kelly's Directory of 1914 lists No.86 as being inhabited by a Mrs Bennett. Of the even addresses to the west side of London Street (2-134 in the directory) only five appear to be solely residences, including No.86. The properties immediately adjacent were all listed as businesses at the time: No.82 a furniture dealer; No.84 a window blind maker; No.88 a tobacconist.

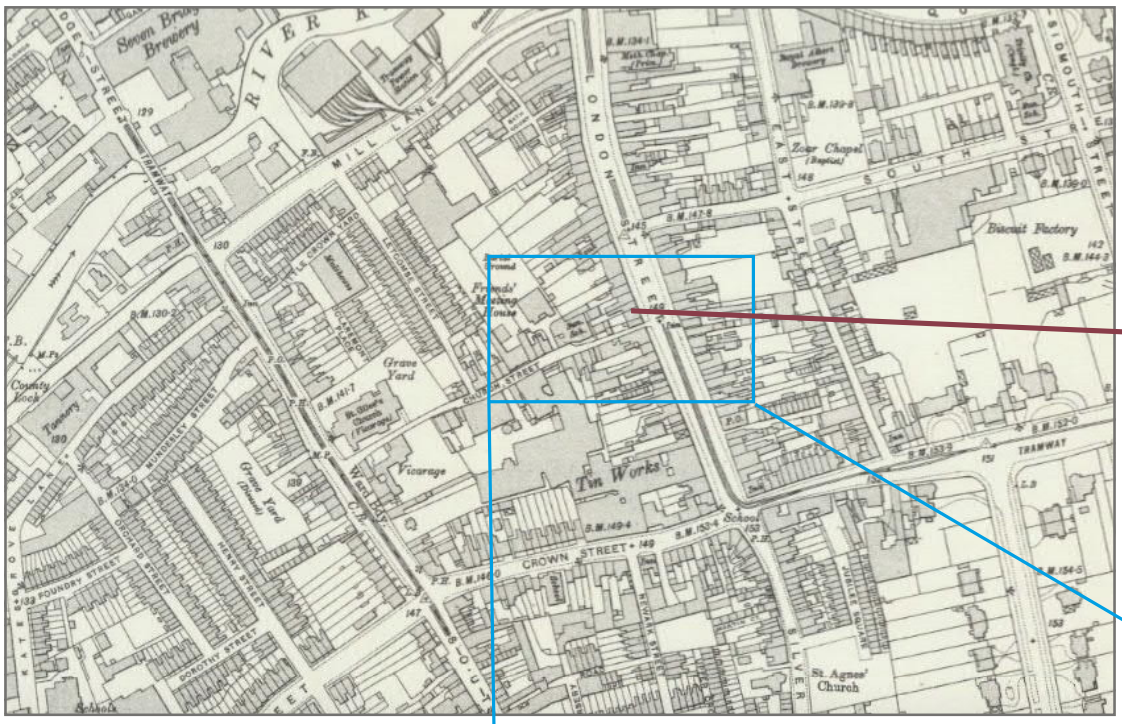


Image 14a: Extract of the Berkshire XXX-VII.3 map from 1909–1910.
Published: 1912.
(National Library of Scotland, 2025).

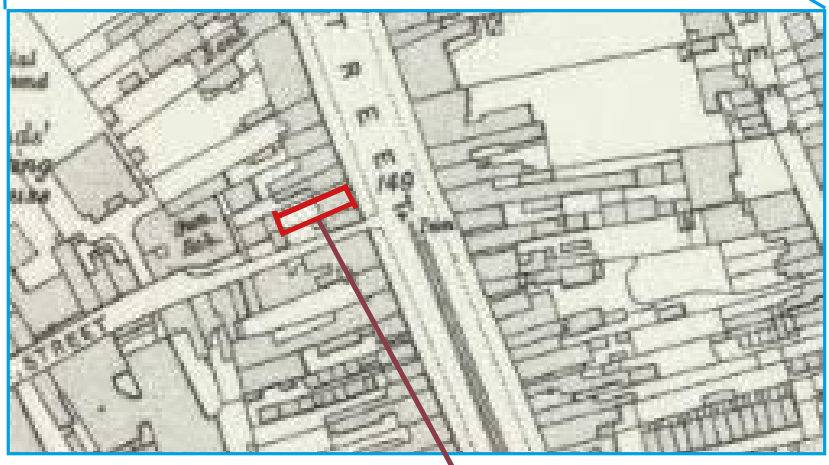
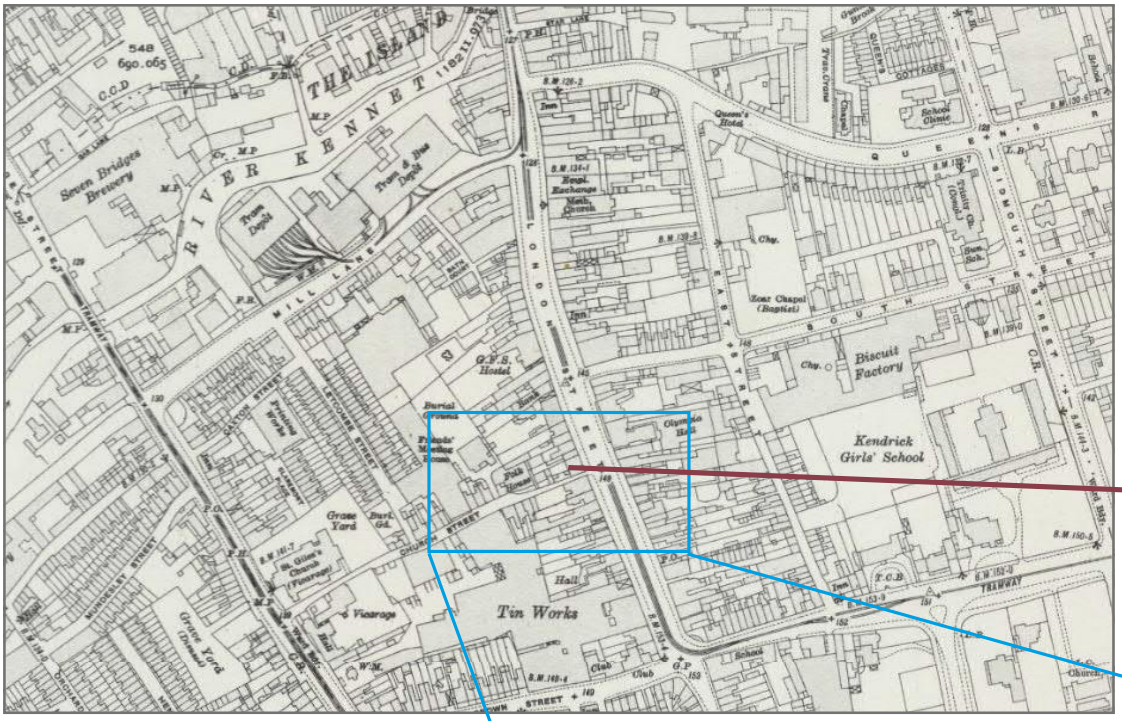


Image 14b: Detail of Image 14a

2.3.7 The map 20 years' later, of 1932, shows no change to the Site compared to the earlier OS maps.



The Site

Image 15a: Extract of the Berkshire XXXVII.3 map from 1931-32. Published: 1934. (National Library of Scotland, 2025).

Image 15b: Detail of Image 15a

The Site

2.4 **Exterior Photographs -** July 2025

Image 16: View of south elevation and double pile roofline - to provide a steep pitch for heavy clay tiles

The east elevation is clearly the 'facade' of the property in its purest sense. The elevation can be read as a 'squat' Palladian town house whose architectural features reflect a Greek temple: the 'base' level at the Ground Floor, separated from the First Floor by a string course, the First Floor as the 'piano nobile', however, rather than a 'typical' two storeys of larger town houses in the Georgian era, the second floor is the 'attic' floor, separated by a large entablature.

Social hierarchy of the interior is reflected in decoration, or lack thereof: the main reception floor includes pilasters to frame the three windows bays and central 'keystones' to the window heads. The main entrance is reached via three steps up to the door, flanked by brackets on pilasters to support the protruding flat pediment. Features indicative of the 'early Georgian' period (1714-1760, after Yorke, 2007), include the Ground Floor and First Floor windows of the same height, the flat pediment, the elaborate over-door light.

Yorke (2007) notes that the Greek orders were not accurately recorded until the mid-C18 and thereafter popularity grew later in the period: the triglyphs in the entablature are of the doric order - a neo-Classical motif (refer to Image 16). Of any of these features the entablature could anchor the building's date to the mid-C18. The property has had its windows replaced in the 1990s with modern spiral balanced windows. The windows facing onto London Street have secondary glazing fitted with deep air spaces.

Image 17: View of south elevation and roofline

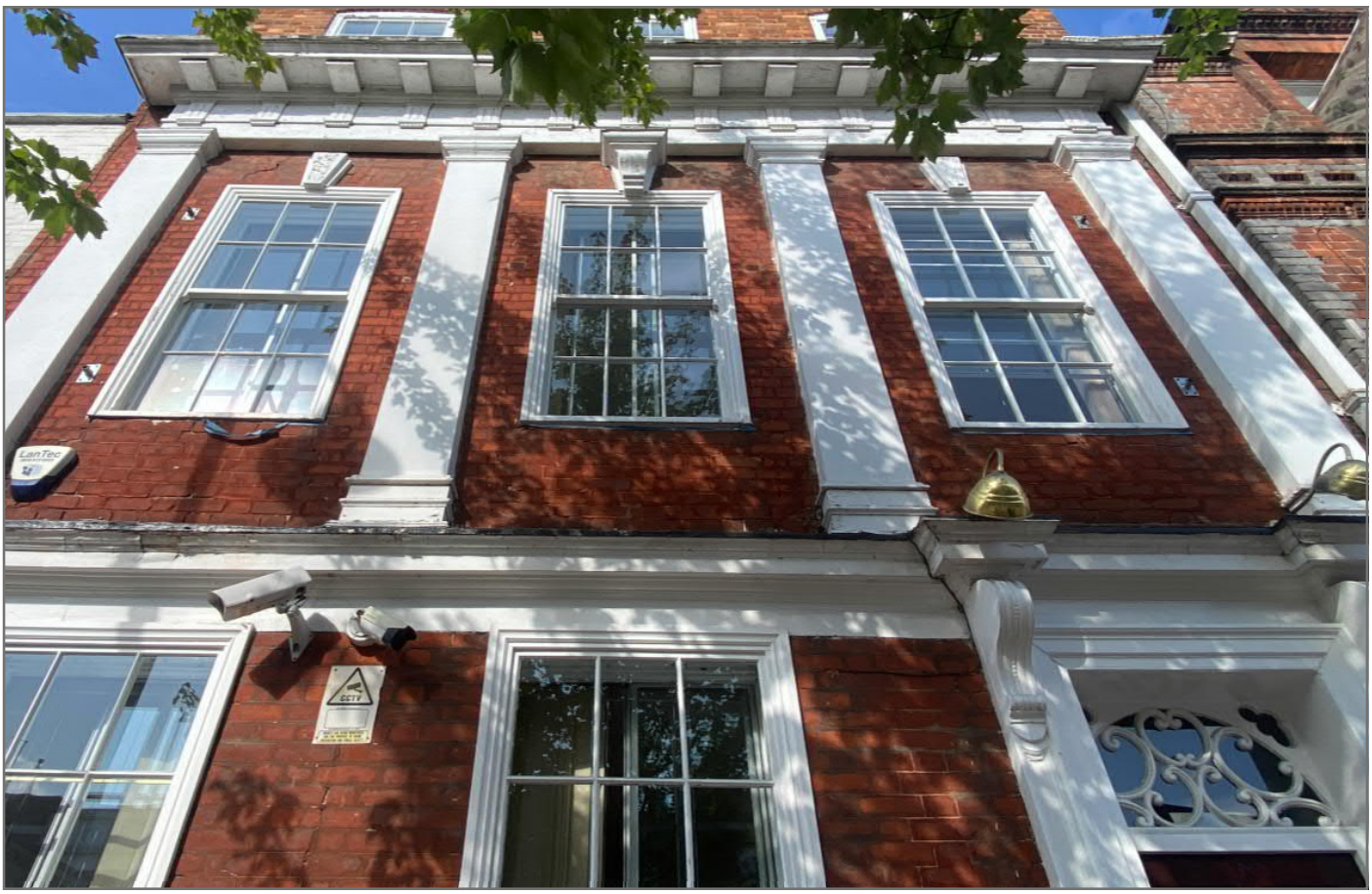


Image 18: First Floor detail of east elevation

Image 19: Ground Floor detail of east elevation

2.4 Exterior Photographs (cntd)

No. 84 86 London Street No. 88

Sash windows replaced in the 1990s with modern spiral balanced windows

Image 20: Rear west elevation

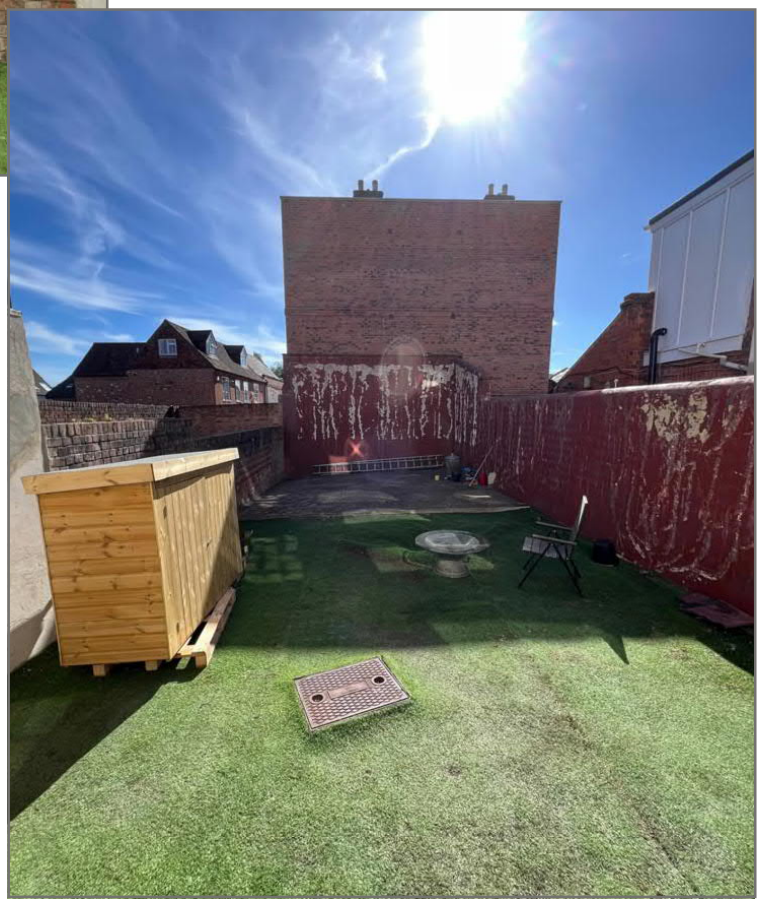


Image 21: Garden view

2.4 Exterior Photographs (cntd)

Image 22: View of rear paved area, rear boundary and garden walls

Image 23: Rear west elevation

2.5 **Interior Photographs -** July 2025

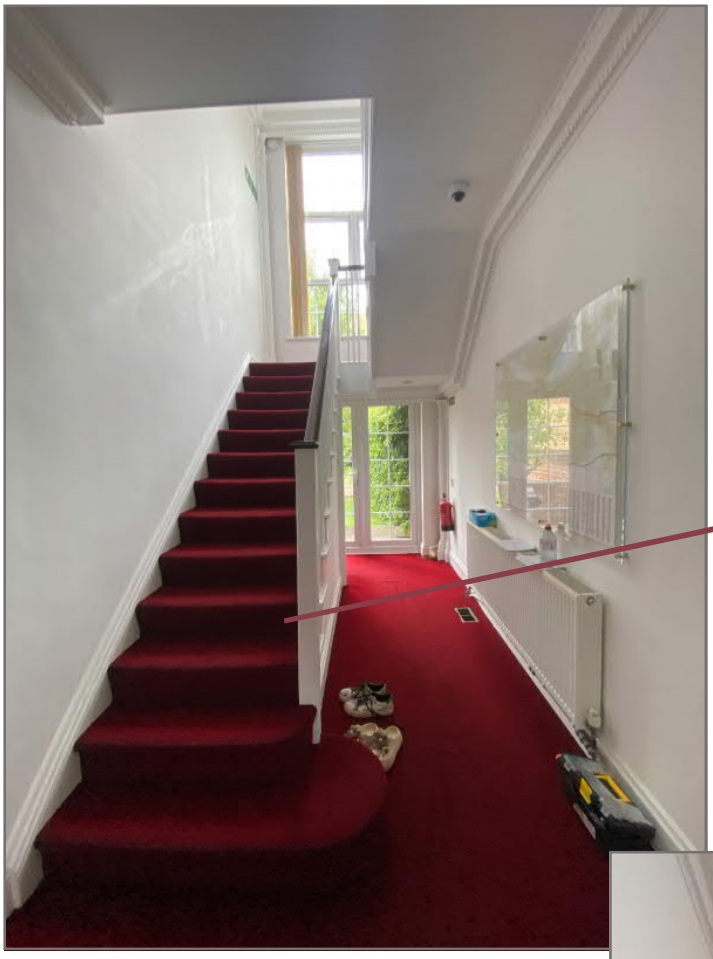


Image 24: View of Ground Floor hallway

Overview

The property has been refurbished in the course of converting the house into an office during the C20. All fireplaces have been removed, there is very little original skirting and all doors have been replaced.

Staircase design with deep treads and two curtail steps (curved at the bottom of the flight)

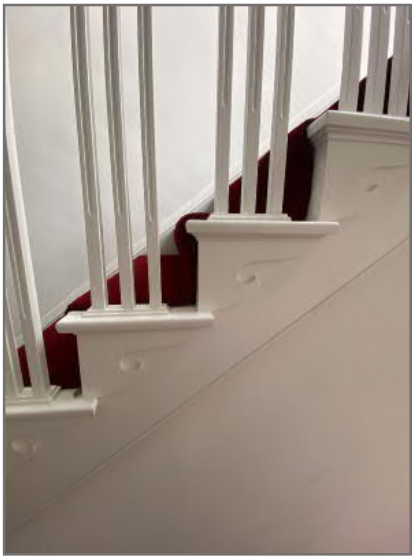


Image 25: open-string staircase: detail of treads with trio of square profile balusters with inset detail, set into a raised block

Floor grille for air condition-ing - void that connects with the Basement

Image 26: View of entrance lobby and entrance into Ground Floor reception room

2.5 Interior Photographs (cntd)

(cntd)

Image 27: Ground Floor Reception Room

Image 28: Ground Floor Reception Room

2.5 (cntd) Interior Photographs (cntd)

Elaborate fibrous plaster cornice to window head - investigated and advised by Locker and Riley as likely between 20-30 years' old

Image 29: Ground Floor door to garden

Glass blocks

Image 30: Basement - windows 'W3' and 'W4' onto London Street

2.5 Interior Photographs (cntd)

(cntd)

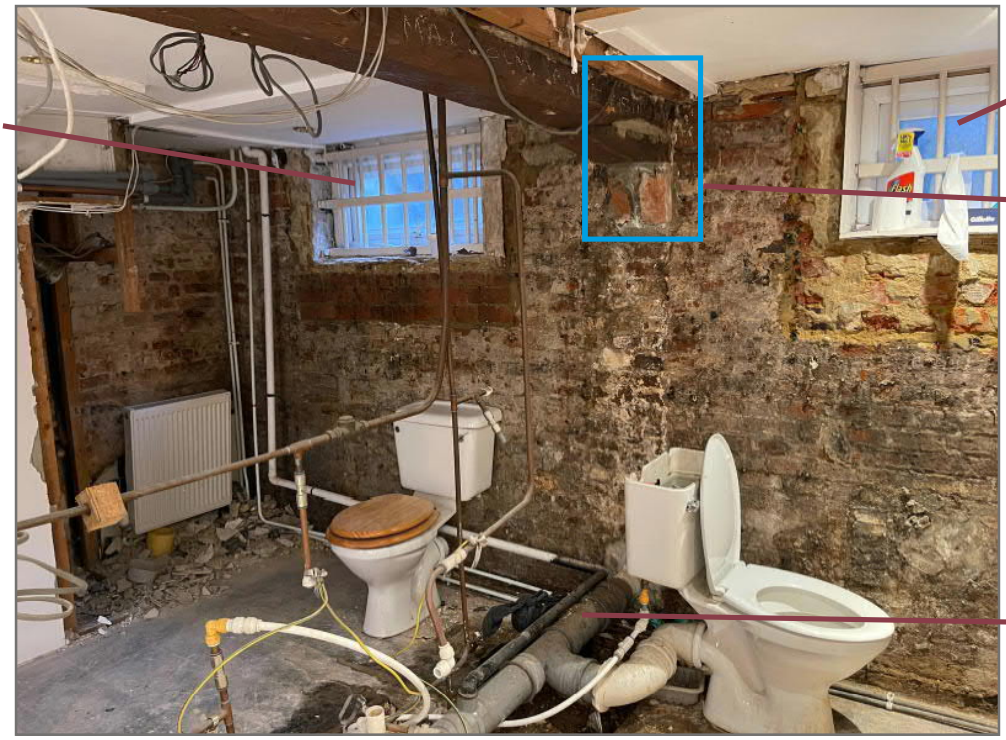


Image 31: Basement west room - windows 'W2' and 'W1' to garden

Image 32: Basement window 'W1'

2.5 Interior Photographs (cntd)

(cntd)

Window W2

Window W1

Patio described by conditions' surveyor as requiring to be relaid to fall away from the house to reduce water being driven towards the Basement wall

Image 33: Patio to rear of property and Basement windows 'W1' and W2'

Image 34: Basement window 'W2' protected from water ingress

2.5 Interior Photographs (cntd)

(cntd)

Fibrous plaster cornice and pilasters to staircase window opening - these have been examined by 'All Things Lime' and 'Locker and Riley' and adivsed a likley between 20-30 years' old.

Image 35: View of landing between Ground and First Floors

Stepped wall indicates a likely wall removal to create two separate rooms to the east side of the property

Modern door openings

Original line of wall anchored by staircase

Image 36: Doors onto First Floor rooms from hallway

2.5 Interior Photographs (cntd)

(cntd)

Deep decorative cornice between 20-30 years' old

Image 37: First Floor southeast room

Fibrous plaster cornice - between 20-30 years' old.

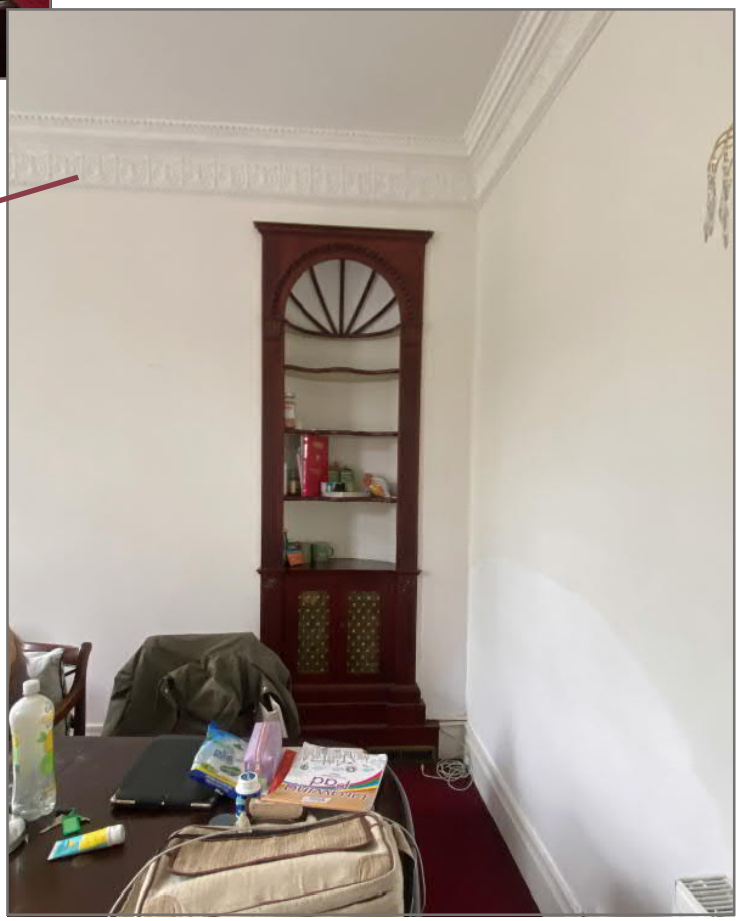


Image 38: Niche to First Floor southeast room

2.5 Interior Photographs (cntd)

(cntd)

Image 39: First Floor rear northeast room

Image 40: First Floor west room

2.5 Interior Photographs (cntd)

(cntd)

Image 41: View from Second Floor of staircase and window

Image 42: View of double doors to Second Floor east room - the floor plan would have been more cellular and would not have had double doors to enter 'attic floor' rooms

2.5 Interior Photographs (cntd)

(cntd)

Fibrous plaster cornice - between 20-30 years' old

Image 43: Second Floor east room - the 'attic' floor, is likely to have originally been three rooms and would not have had a decorative cornice - reserved only for the most important reception room

Spot lights indicate a modern plasterboard ceiling installation and modern cornice

Image 44: Second Floor west room - the chimney breast remains

Summary of Construction Phases

The history of the property has been reviewed as far as appropriate for the scope of the anticipated proposed works, and is therefore not a full history of the house and its development. With the information available in desk-top research it has been possible to conclude the house had been in continuous residential use from construction through to the early C20; then converted to offices.

Initial Phase Summary: mid-C18 initial house

The original design was clearly for a client of relatively high income, and possibly of high social status within Reading, as reflected by the very stylised east facade, and the high quality spatial proportions of the interiors. with a shallow, grand 'statement' staircase at the Ground Floor and highly decorated staircase windows. The size of the plot is noted to have been consistent in the OS maps, however it is conceivable the garden may have originally been longer as indicated by the large-scale staircase windows which would have offered a visual attraction for those using the staircase, with the view 'framed' by the pilaster and cornice decoration. From the external decoration it is clear the most important reception room was the First Floor east-facing room overlooking what would have been the main thoroughfare into Reading - a room to view and to be viewed.

Subsequent Phase Summary: Office use

Change to accommodate office use appear to have been wide-reaching.
The list description states it was internally altered in the C19 to be used as offices.

In the C20 ducted air conditioning has been installed to serve all floors, and localised air conditioning units serve the Ground Floor reception room at the rear elevation below the windows. Due to the size of the ductwork it is likely original structure has been altered to accommodate the large openings necessary via which to route the air supply.
The First Floor reception room facing east has been lost to create two rooms; the east side of the attic floor has been reconfigured from what must have been smaller cellular rooms into a room almost the same size as the current Ground Floor reception room.
The Ground Floor reception room has been boarded-out along the party wall with No.88 and fully redecorated: the cornicing has been investigated and confirmed to be likely between 20-30 years old.
The Basement has been fully boarded-out and it is possible to view part of the rear of the east elevation via the kitchen, and a partial vault behind boarding within the southern-most WC enclosure.
In summary: the original plan form has been largely lost to the east side of the house, while the west side retains its original proportions. The Basement structure has been largely concealed by C20 installations and currently there appears to be no evidence available to suggest the original layout, or where a door may have been located between the Ground and Basement floors.
The list description also informs, "*...an ancillary building to the rear was demolished in the early 1990s and replaced with a new single-storey office extension, which was subsequently demolished*".
A search of the Historic England Aerial Photograph Explorer did not reveal additional information for the ancillary building.

3.1 Heritage Significance

The assessment of significance depends of the asset type, a comparison with what exists elsewhere, and the extent it may be distinctive or have special meaning for different groups of people. The significance of heritage assets or their elements can be measured at different levels:

Value/Criteria	Description
Very High (international importance)	World Heritage Site - monuments and landscapes of comparable quality.
High (national significance)	Listed buildings Grade I or II*, conservation areas containing very important buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens Grade I or II*, non-designated sites or assets of comparable quality.
Medium (national significance)	**Listed buildings Grade II**, **conservation areas**, Registered Parks and Gardens Grade II.
Low	Buildings and areas of local interest, sites and archaeological remains not of national importance, historic landscapes of regional/county importance.
Negligible	Buildings/sites of little or no significance; an aspect (e.g. structure or feature) that has little or no value and therefore does not impact significance positively or negatively.
Negative	An aspect (e.g. structure or feature) that detracts from the significance of a heritage asset.

3.2 Heritage Significance of Market Place/London Street Conservation Area

Based on the tabulated critera in 3.1, the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area, may be deemed to hold 'heritage significance', via four values identified in the NPPF: archaeological, historic, architectural and artistic. These values shall be assessed using the following grading:

- High – values of *exceptional* or *considerable* interest;
- Medium – values of *some* interest;
- Low – values of *limited* interest.

3.2.1 **Archaeological interest:**

- The RBC Proposals Map in the Local Plan identifies the site as having archaeological potential (RBC, 2017) - refer to paragraph 2.3.1.
- The Historic Environment Record offers a generalisation that cellars in London Street may have limestone quarried from Reading Abbey - refer to paragraph 2.3.1.

The potential for the archaeology of the conservation area to hold heritage interest is considered 'medium'.

3.2.2 **Historic interest:**

- As a Medieval inner suburb of Reading, and as part of a planned urban development from the C12 - at a time King Henry I founded Reading Abbey in 1121 - there is historic interest of London Street with respect to the urban and social development of Reading.

The level of historic interest is therefore "high".

3.2.3 **Architectural and artistic interest:**

- The consistent scale and verticality of architecture along London Street is of medium interest.
- The presence of small alleys off London Street offer a glimpse of the scale of the Medieval era.

It is clear the combination of architectural rhythm of the plots and building heights is a co-dependent characteristic of the conservation area and therefore on a national scale offers 'medium' heritage significance.

3.3 **Heritage significance of 86 London Street and its Setting**

Based on the tabulated critera in 3.1, 86 London Street, may be deemed to hold 'heritage significance' at different levels, as per paragraph 3.2.

3.3.1 **Archaeological interest:**

- Similarly as paragraph 3.2.1 there is potential for archaeological interest.

The level of archaeological interest is therefore 'medium'.

3.3.2 **Historic interest:**

- Social-economic: the investment in the creation of the property appears to have been to create a expression of wealth and high social status; it is likely the original investor created this as a house to live in (rather than rent out) during a key economic development period for Reading - the early/mid 1700s.
- The origins of the property: it has not been possible within the scope of this document to identify the family who commissioned the property.
- The house appears to have been inhabited as a residence into the recent past which contrasts with the predominant use of the ground floor of the London Street properties as commercial use along what was recognised to be a key route into, and out of, the centre of Reading which served passing trade.

The level of historic interest of 86 London Street is considered to be 'medium'.

3.3.3 **Architectural and artistic interest:**

- The delicate and elaborate ironwork to the overlight of the entrance door
- The expressive composition of architectural features to the east elevation
- The tuck pointing to the brickwork of the east elevation

The level of architectural and artistic interest are wholistically considered to have "medium' heritage-significance.

3.4 **Factors that detract from the historic significance and offer opportunities for improvement**

- The large uPVC windows to the rear elevation

3.5 **Setting:**

Although not officially considered to be one of the four principal values, *setting* is recognised as a value that makes an important contribution to the significance of a heritage asset. An assessment of the contribution to significance is therefore included for assessing the effects of any proposed works on significance.

3.5.1 *Setting* is defined in the NPPF as, "The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral." (Annex 2: Glossary).

3.5.2 The setting, as contibutes heritage significance of 86 London Street and the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area, is largely highlighted in the 'key characteristics' noted in the conservation area appraisal, paraphrased in paragraph 2.2.7. This includes the visual experience of the curved view along London Street towards, or away from, the centre of Reading, with the north end of London Street described as offering an 'evolving and kinetic view' in the Reading HAA (RBC, 2023), and the higher south end offering a 'long view' (ibid). In addition, the scale of the road with the largely three-storey buildings each side, softened with trees, offers much to the urban atmosphere. It must be noted the hustle and bustle atmosphere of London Street in its days of conception as 'Medieval inner suburbs' through to the early C20 has largely been surplanted with traffic and very few people: the urban design remains, but the soul has left.

4.0 THE PROPOSED WORK AND ITS IMPACT UPON THE HERITAGE ASSETS

4.1 Historic England and the NPPF offer guidance on how to approach the assessment of the impact of proposed works upon the significance of a heritage asset. In particular the following are considered relevant to 86 London Street and its setting:

4.1.1 "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", (MHC&LG, 2024, para.212).

4.1.2 "Each generation should therefore shape and sustain the historic environment in ways that allow people to use, enjoy and benefit from it, without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same", (Conservation Principle 1.3, Historic England, 2008, p.19).

4.1.3 "Conservation involves people managing change to a significant place in its setting, in ways that will best sustain its heritage values, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations", (Conservation Principle 4.2, Historic England, 2008, p.22).

4.1.4 With regards to the consideration of the effect of authenticity upon a heritage asset Historic England comment, "A desire to retain authenticity tends to suggest that any deliberate change to a significant place should be distinguishable, that is, its extent should be discernible through inspection. The degree of distinction that is appropriate must take account of the aesthetic values of the place", (2008, para. 93, p.45).

4.2 The proposals in the current application seek to apply for the replacement of 4no. replacement Basement windows and strengthening to the Ground Floor structure.

Proposed Works

4.3 **Proposed replacement Basement windows**

4.3.1 The proposed replacement windows are of white painted timber frame double glazed units with opening vents to improve the ability of the windows to 'purge' ventilate the Basement. The kitchen and shower rooms produce high-humidity spaces which require humid air to be removed to minimise the risk of condensation occuring on the surfaces which could deteriorate the fabric.

The existing windows onto London Street are glass blocks which are not openable and are not thermally efficient. These are not the original windows, and do not align with the windows above (also not original). The proposed windows would be of more appropriate materials - of white painted timber frame - and are proposed to be doubled glazed for improved thermal efficiency. There would be an openable vent to allow the air to be changed. The existing railings would be retained to provide security from the street, as currently provided.

The windows to the rear of the property are of uPVC and are proposed to be replaced with doubled glazed timber windows with openable vents. Similarly, these are not the original windows, or the original window openings. The windows are relatively obscured visually as they are protected from water ingress with tranparent canopies (refer to Images 33 and 34).

The improved materials and provision for ventilation is a positive enhancement to the existing property both for more characterful finishes and for enhanced performance for the building which assists to promote ventilation. The introduction of these is considered positive for the heritage significance of the property.

Impact upon heritage significance: Positive

4.3.2 **Strengthening to the Ground Floor**

In refurbishing the Basement the Ground Floor structure has been revealed beneath the modern finishes that had been concealing them. The specialist conservation engineers, Clive Hudson Associates, reviewed the condition of the Ground Floor timber floor structure and found many instances of damage owing to water ingress. The source of the water is not entirely understood, however the moisture to the main beam to the rear Basement room appears to potentially have been water damaged to an extent from the rear patio not being laid to falls away from the house - refer to Image 33. The patio is proposed to be relaid to fall away from the house to reduce this source of moisture going into the Basement wall.

Support to the rear timber beam has been provided in the past by a modern corbel solution - refer to Image 31. The structure engineer has confirmed the support is insufficient and should be replaced. The option to provide a column support to the end of the timber is not available owing to the drainage waste pipe positioned directly below the beam (refer to Image 31) and the new column would need to be supported off a new foundation which would likely be incompatible with the shallow brick foundations, which is advised may cause future differential settlement.

4.3.2 (cntd) A new padstone would replace the existing modern brickwork and would not cause disturbance to original fabric which makes it the most appropriate solution for this situation - refer to Detail A on the structural engineer drawing 267052-01-P1.

Other parts of the perimeter of the Ground Floor timber structure have similarly deteriorated. The structural engineer has identified each location on its accompanying Sketch drawing. Where the ends of joists have deteriorated the proposal is to supplement these with a timber wall plate which would enable the existing timber to be retained - refer to drawing 267052-01-P1. In locations where joists are particularly weakened these are proposed to the supplemented with a partner joists, again to enable the existing timber to be retained and for the original arrangement of the structure to be understood.

The perimeter wall locations are particularly challenging areas to manage moisture as water ingress is largely outwith the control of the owner of No.86. Where control is possible, the rear patio shall be relaid to move the water away from the property. The structural proposal allows the existing timber to be retained, whilst being carefully supplemented to conserve the structure and retain this historic fabric for a greater understanding of the building's construction.

Impact upon heritage significance: No harm

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 The review of the proposed works and change of use has demonstrated to be either positive or to cause 'no harm' upon the heritage significance of 86 London Street and the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area.

5.2 It is respectfully requested the planning and listed building consent is granted for the application.

6.0 METHODOLOGY

The following methods were used in gathering the information that informed this Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment:

1) Site visit
86 London Street was visited on the 15.07.2025 and recorded with photographs.

2) On-line research
The Historic Environment Record was consulted to identify relevant information.

3) Pre-app meeting
A pre-app meeting was held with the planning officer on the 11th June 2026 attended by the applicant, the project architect and the author.

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Websites

Georgian Cities	www.18thc-cities.sorbonne-universite.fr
Historic England	www.historicengland.org.uk
Historic Environment Record	www.heritagegateway.org.uk
National Library of Scotland	www.maps.nls.uk

Full list description

Heritage Category: Listed Building
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1113527
Date first listed: 22-Mar-1957
Date of most recent amendment: 05-Mar-2024
List Entry Name: 86 London Street
Statutory Address 1: 86 London Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 4SJ

Summary
Terraced house, now a shop and flats. Built in the early to mid-C18 with later alterations.
Reasons for Designation
86 London Street is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:
Architectural interest:
* as an early to mid-C18 townhouse which contributes to the character of an architecturally varied historic streetscape.
Historic interest:
* as part of the urban development of Reading's ancient core.
Group value:
* the building is in close proximity to a large number of listed buildings and forms part of a strong historic grouping.
History
The first written record of Reading dates from the ninth century. Asser's Life of Alfred (part of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle) records a battle at Reading in January 871 between the Danes and the forces of King Ethelred and his brother Alfred, who would go on to become Alfred the Great. Reading is described in this account as 'Readingum', likely derived from 'Readingas', an Anglo-Saxon tribe whose name means 'Reada's people' in Old English. By the time of the Norman Conquest of 1066, Reading had become a town of notable size. After Reading Abbey was founded in 1121, the town grew substantially, spurring cloth production, the establishment of the new Market Place, and what would today be known as London Street, an extension to the High Street that facilitated trade to and from London. By 1525, the town's thriving cloth industry led Reading to become the largest town in Berkshire. In 1542, Henry VIII's royal charter made Reading a borough. John Speed's map shows that by 1611, both sides of London Street had been developed with continuous frontages for a considerable distance southward, beyond the modern junction with Crown Street-London Road. Several buildings which predate Speed's map survive on London Street, some concealed behind later, brick façades. Following significant upheaval during the Civil War, the town flourished during the C18 and C19. Several developments during this period spurred further growth and prosperity, including the arrival of the Great Western Railway in 1840, improvements to the navigability of the River Kennet, and the growth of the local brewing industry. London Street became a fashionable part of town, especially after High Bridge was constructed over the River Kennet in 1788. The survival of many fine Georgian and Victorian buildings along London Street testifies to its prosperity during this period.

Full list description cntd...

86 London Street was constructed in about the early to mid-C18, although it may have been altered in the C19. The building functioned as offices in the late C19. An ancillary building to the rear was demolished in the early 1990s and replaced with a new single-storey office extension, which was subsequently demolished. A connecting doorway between 86 and 88 London Street was inserted in the early C21. The building currently (2023) functions as a letting agency on the ground floor with private apartments above. It is also known as Albion House.
Details
Terraced house, now a shop and flats. Built in the early to mid-C18 with later alterations.

MATERIALS: tuck-pointed red brick laid in Flemish bond with timber and stucco dressings and clay tile roof coverings.

PLAN: a former terraced house of three storeys, now containing a shop (letting agents) on the ground floor and apartments above.

EXTERIOR: the main, east elevation faces the street and is three bays wide and three storeys high. The ground floor comprises, from left to right: two six-over-six sash windows with heavily moulded frames and an entrance doorway which has a moulded doorcase with two console brackets and a cornice. It contains a six-panelled door with brass door furniture beneath an elaborate, rococo-style transom light. A timber cornice separates the ground floor from that above. The first floor has four large Doric pilasters supporting a broad stucco entablature with metopes and a dentilled cornice. Between the pilasters are three six-over-six sash windows with moulded frames and keystones; simple geometric keystones to the outer sashes and a larger console keystone to the central sash. The second floor, or attic storey, has squat six-over-six segmental-headed sash windows with exposed sash boxes and a brick parapet with a stone coping. Behind the parapet is a tile-covered M roof. All of the sash windows to this elevation are flush with the brickwork. The basement has been painted white and contains two hopper windows behind iron railings.

The rear, west elevation is three bays wide with the ground and first floor painted white while the second floor is exposed red brick. On the first floor, there is a large 36-pane uPVC window to the northernmost bay and two eight-over-twelve timber sash windows to the other bays. The second floor is similar with a 36-pane uPVC window and two eight-over-eight sash windows.