



Design and Access Statement

**Accompanying an application for planning and
Listed Building Consent**

at

154 Friar Street, Reading

for

**The change of use of the upper floors of the
building to serviced accommodation units
(Class C1); replacement windows; installation of
heat pumps; and other internal and external
alterations**

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Fig 1—Site Aerial Photograph (courtesy Google Earth)

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared to accompany planning and Listed building applications for works to a Grade II Listed building at 154 Friar Street, Reading. It should be read in conjunction with the submitted Heritage Statement, Planning Statement, Outline Scope of Works and proposal drawings.
- 1.2 The application site is Grade II listed and the proposed works consist of the conversion of the upper floors of 154 Friar Street, Reading to form 4 no. serviced apartments (use class C1) and various internal and external alterations necessary for the conversion.

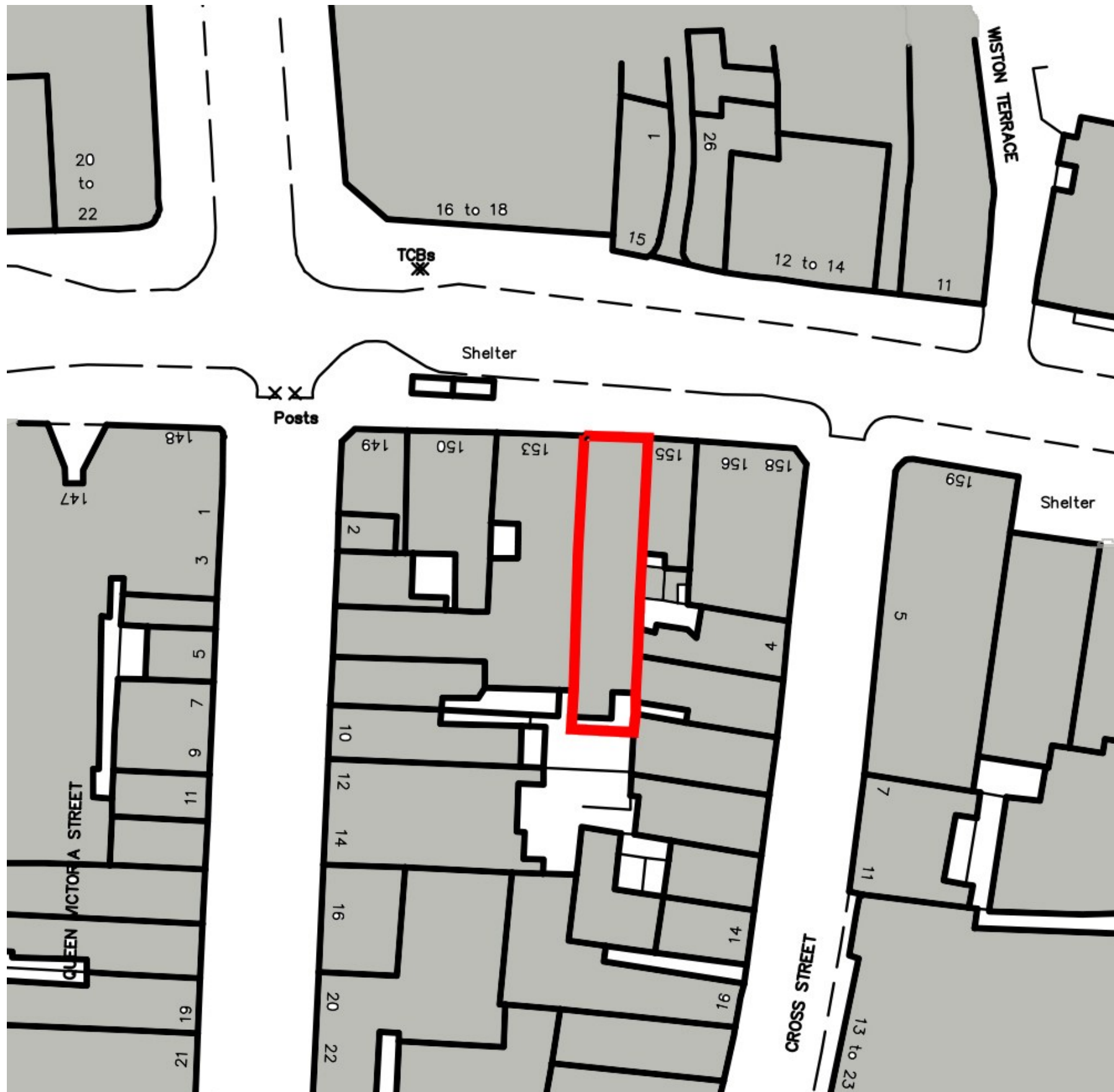


Fig 2—Site location plan

2 SITE AND CONTEXT

2.1 No. 154 Friar Street is a three storey terraced building (ground to 2nd floors) with a brick façade with hipped roof and a rear flat roof range. The ground floor is in retail use with upper floors last used as offices, but currently vacant.

2.2 The building is listed Grade II (list entry number 1113489) and the list entry text describes the building as:

'Formerly a pair with No. 153 (too altered to include) Circa 1800. 3 storeys, red brick with stone cills to 1st floor and stone coping to parapet 2 ranges of glazing bar sashes. Modern shop front.'

2.3 It is located in Reading town centre on Friar Street, in close proximity to pedestrianised shopping areas, the railway station and other local amenities. It is located within an area described in Reading Borough Council's Historic Area Assessment as being characterised by 'historic and modern retail' and part of a large block of properties which make a positive contribution to the character area.



Fig 3—Front elevation



Fig 4—Front elevation in context



Fig 5—Friar St (view to north side)



Fig 6—Friar St, looking SE



Fig 7—Cross St (adjoining Friar St)



Fig 8—View from 1st Floor of modern range into lightwell and towards rear of historic building



Fig 9—View from 2nd Floor of modern range into lightwell and towards rear of historic building

3 EXISTING BUILDING

- 3.1 The existing building consists of an historic front element which is a three storey brick building with hipped slate roof behind a parapet, built as part of a pair with adjoining No. 153 (refer to figs 3, 4 & 6).
- 3.2 Abutting this to the rear is a more modern (2nd half of c20th in appearance) long flat-roofed range with modern casement windows and incorporating a lightwell / service deck (figs. 8 and 9).
- 3.3 The historic building is laid out with a straight stair from the ground floor to first floor half landing from which there is access to the modern rear range (fig. 10). A short flight from this half landing provides access to the 1st floor of the historic building (fig. 11). The stair balustrading is and finishes are contemporary although it is unknown if the stair structure is original.
- 3.4 The 1st floor of the historic building consists of a large room with a modern partition wall subdividing off a small office space.
- 3.5 A modern gridded office ceiling has been installed in the office, underneath what appears to be a modern fire ceiling affixed to the underside of the floor joists above.
- 3.6 Other finishes on the 1st floor of the historic building are clearly modern with modern skirtings and architraves. Windows and internal doors have been previously replaced.
- 3.5 Accommodation in the modern range at first floor consists



Fig 10—View to Ground Floor entrance hall G1



Fig 11—View from stair F7 to lobby F8



Fig 12—View from room F1 into lightwell



Fig 13—Partitioned office F5 in modern rear range



Fig 14—Open office F6 in modern rear range



Fig 15—WC F3 in modern rear range



Fig 16—Office S1, 2nd Floor of historic building



Fig 17—Kitchenette S6, 2nd floor of modern range



Fig 18—Office S7, 2nd floor of modern range

of WCs and a large open office, with a small area partitioned off with modern glass partitions (figs. 13 and 14).

3.6 The 2nd floor follows a similar pattern, with the modern rear range accessed off the stair half landing and with the facilities on this floor consisting of a WC and kitchenette (with boiler room) rather than two WCs.

3.7 A small rear courtyard exists at ground floor, accessible directly from the ground floor retail unit and from the 1st floor main office by an external stair. There is no route from the rear courtyard to any highway or alley, or to any other external space.

3.8 Heating to the 1st and 2nd floor is currently provided via a gas boiler located on the 2nd floor (flued through the external wall into the lightwell), feeding radiators in both the historic front building and modern rear range. In addition the offices benefit from air-conditioning provided by wall and ceiling mounted cassettes, with external condenser units located in the central lightwell.

3.9 Local extract fans provide mechanical ventilation for the WCs and kitchenette, discharging in to the lightwell.

3.10 The kitchenette and WCs are connected to a waste pipe which runs down through the lightwell and ground floor retail unit, to connect in to a mains sewer.

3.11 Structurally, the building appears sound—the historic building has evidence of repointing on the lightwell elevation and the roof appears to have been well-maintained. The modern rear range appears to be a



Fig 19—Stair S8 from 2nd floor modern range to 2nd floor historic building



Fig 20—Rooflight over stair S8



Fig 21—Rear courtyard G2

robust construction, with no evidence of serious issues. Generally the building fabric would benefit from some cosmetic works—for example cleaning and painting stone cills and features, redecorating fascias and removing any redundant service runs.

- 3.12 A change of use would be an opportunity to improve thermal performance of the fabric where possible, for example with window replacement (to the less sensitive windows) - although it should be noted that many of the sliding sash windows in the historic building have been replaced with sensitively designed modern timber sliding sash windows.

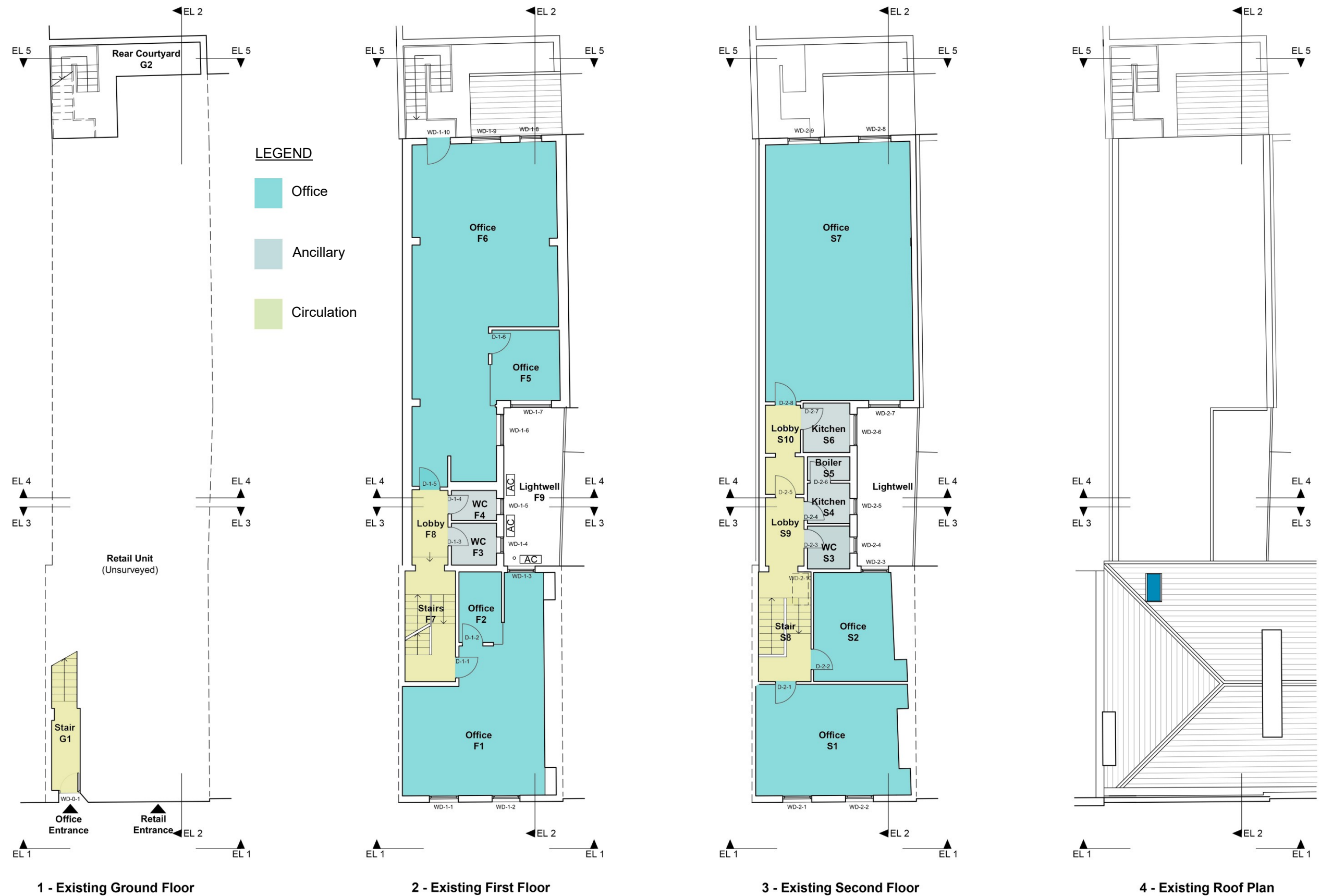


Fig 22—Existing Floor Plans

4 OUTLINE OF PROPOSALS

- 4.1 It is proposed to convert the upper floors of No. 154 Friar Street to serviced accommodation (planning Use Class C1).
- 4.2 The accommodation will be accessed from an existing stair from the ground floor entrance in the Friar Street elevation—this is believed to be fire separated from the ground floor retail unit and will require no modification. The ground floor will remain in retail use with its own entrance and servicing of this unit will be unaffected
- 4.3 The conversion of the upper floors will create 4 no. serviced accommodation units in total (2 on the 1st floor and 2 on the 2nd floor).
- 4.4 As well as the works required to form the new units (principally new partitions in the modern portion of the building and new services), general repairs and improvements to the fabric of the building will be undertaken as part of the works,

5 ACCESS

- 5.1 As noted above, the existing access on Friar Street will continue in use without modification (other than access control).
- 5.2 The existing staircase will be retained unmodified, other than new finishes —the staircase is broadly in line with modern Building Regulations Part K requirements for a general access stair. The proposed internal layouts are

such that the existing rear fire escape stair will not be required for emergency use.

- 5.3 Cycle storage will be incorporated within Units 2 and 4, with a further store located at the head of the stair to provide storage for either of the smaller studio apartments. Each store will be able to accommodate at least 1 cycle if using vertical cycles storage or 2 folding cycles, giving provision for at least 3 cycles (1 more than the minimum standard for this development).
- 5.4 The site is an extremely sustainable location with the train station and town centre amenities within easy walking distance. In addition, multiple bus routes are accessible very close to the site.

6 AMOUNT OF ACCOMMODATION

- 6.1 The proposed accommodation units on the upper floors will have the following sizes:

1ST FLOOR

Unit 1—35.2 sqm (379 sqft) - Studio

Unit 2—68.8 sqm (741 sqft) - 2 bed, 4 person

2ND FLOOR

Unit 3—34.6 sqm (372 sqft) - Studio

Unit 4—69.1 sqm (744 sqft) - 2 bed, 4 person

- 6.2 The total gross internal area of the areas subject to the change of use is 238.5 sqm and the site area is 170.2 sqm.

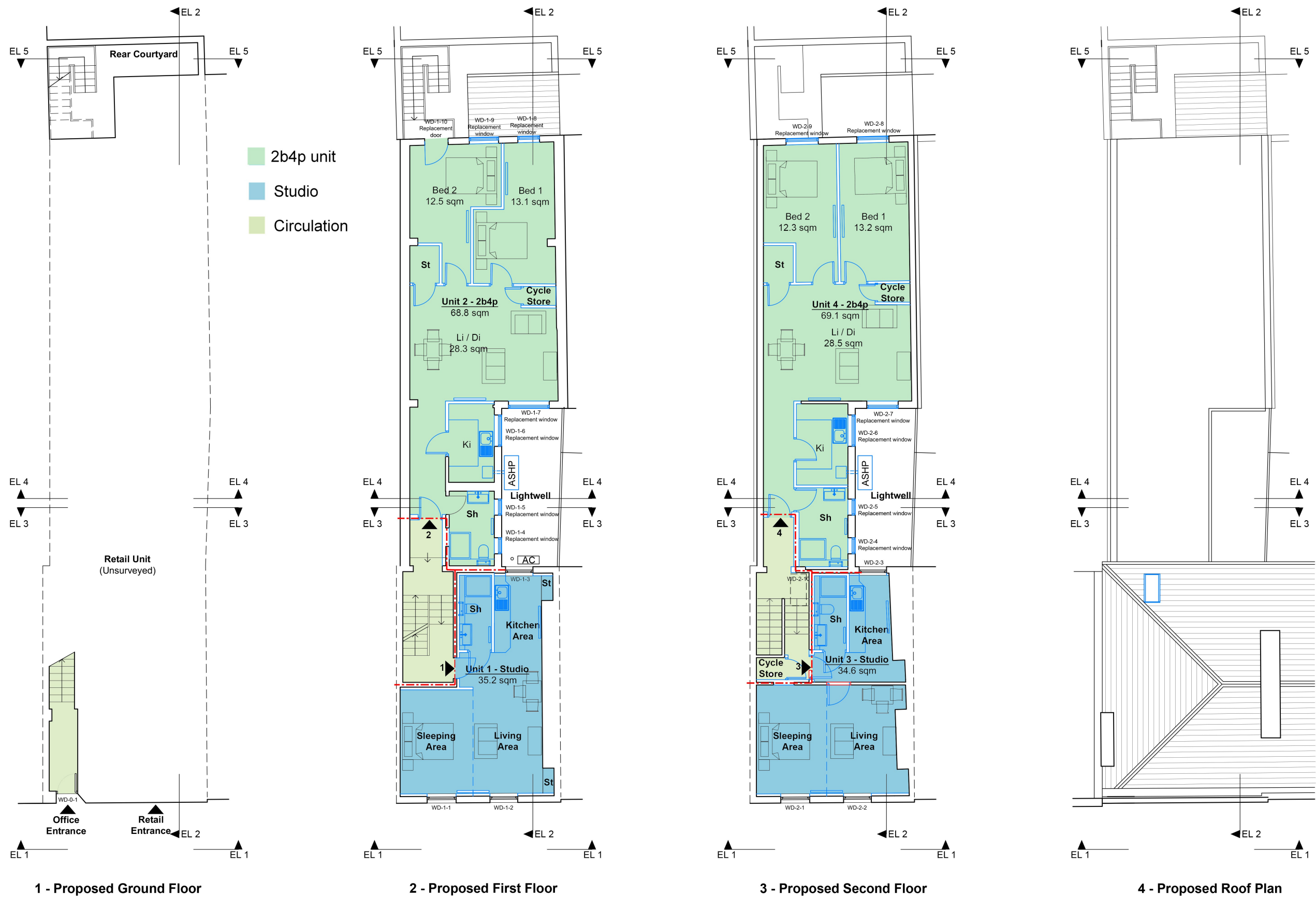


Fig 23—Proposed Floor Plans



Fig 24— Mist system spray head

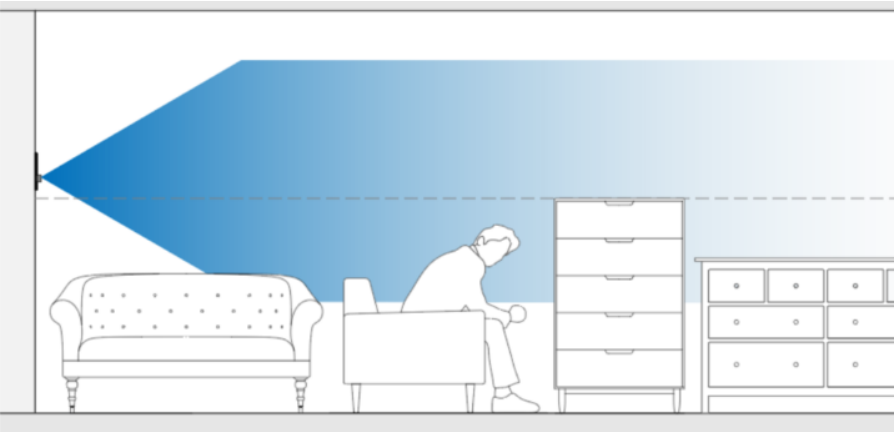


Fig 25—Typical mist spray head location in living / dining

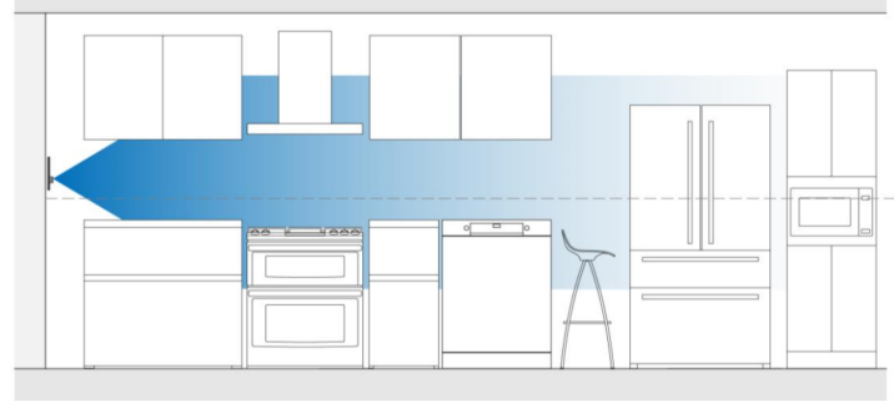


Fig 26—Typical mist spray head location in kitchen

7 AMENITY, NOISE AND AIR QUALITY

7.1 As the site is situated in a town centre location with little external space, there is limited opportunity for amenity, however it is in close proximity to civic amenity sites, such as Forbury Gardens.

7.2 The building already benefits from improvements which reduce the impact of external noise on the accommodation — windows on the 1st floor front elevation have previously been replaced with double-glazed windows with slimline double glazing, as has the rear window of the historic block. On the 2nd floor, the windows on the front elevation have previously been fitted with secondary glazing.

7.3 Whilst much more shielded from background noise, windows in the modern rear range will be replaced with modern double-glazed windows which will provide better thermal and noise performance than the current windows.

7.4 The layout of the proposed studio units in the historic building which front onto Friar Street is such that by incorporating continuous mechanical trickle ventilation (dMEV) in kitchens and bathrooms, the properties will have ventilation even without opening windows. This will also ensure that the properties are adequately ventilated in periods when not in use.

8 FIRE SAFETY

8.1 The existing building is compartmentalised horizontally with fire separation between the various floors. In

addition the stair appears to be a protected stair.

8.2 As part of the works, vertical compartmentation will be introduced on each floor to separate each unit from the other on that floor by implementing wall linings which will also provide acoustic separation between each unit.

8.3 Within each unit overall escape distances will meet with the guidance in the Building Regulations Approved Document B, however as the layouts are proposed with 'inner rooms' to negate the need for internal corridors, fire safety will be supplemented with the use of a mist system in each unit.

8.4 New fire detection will be installed throughout the upper floors, linked to a fire alarm panel at the entrance. The standard will be agreed as part of a fire risk assessment but will be to at least the standard required in the Approved Document.

8.5 An existing roof window over the stair will be replaced with a smoke vent roof window as per the guidance in Approved Document Part B.

9 SUSTAINABILITY

9.1 As noted previously in this statement, the site is in an extremely sustainable location, in a town centre and within an easy walk of amenities and transportation links.

9.2 With regards the operational sustainability of the development, although Reading Borough Council

have a number of policies in respect of sustainability pertaining to conversion of existing buildings, given the Listed status of the application building, it is considered that Historic England Advice Note 18 (HEAN18) - 'Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency' and technical guidance on their website should be the primary sources of guidance in the case of this application, whilst still being mindful of the general approach set out in the Council's 'Sustainable Design and Construction' SPD.

9.3 The Historic England guidance notes that different parts of a Listed Building may have different sensitivities to change and in the case of the application building it is clear that historic front block is more sensitive to change than the modern rear range. Accordingly, the proposed approaches to improving the operational sustainability of these different parts has been treated differently.

9.4 In the historic building as the 1st floor windows have already been replaced with double glazing and the 2nd floor windows already benefit from secondary glazing (at least on the front elevation), this leaves fabric upgrades such as the introduction of insulated wall linings and increased loft insulation to be considered. Accordingly, these are proposed as part of the works—as most skirtings and architraves have been replaced this will have no impact on historic fabric.

9.5 In the modern rear range it is proposed to replace the existing windows with timber-famed double-glazed casement windows which will give a significant

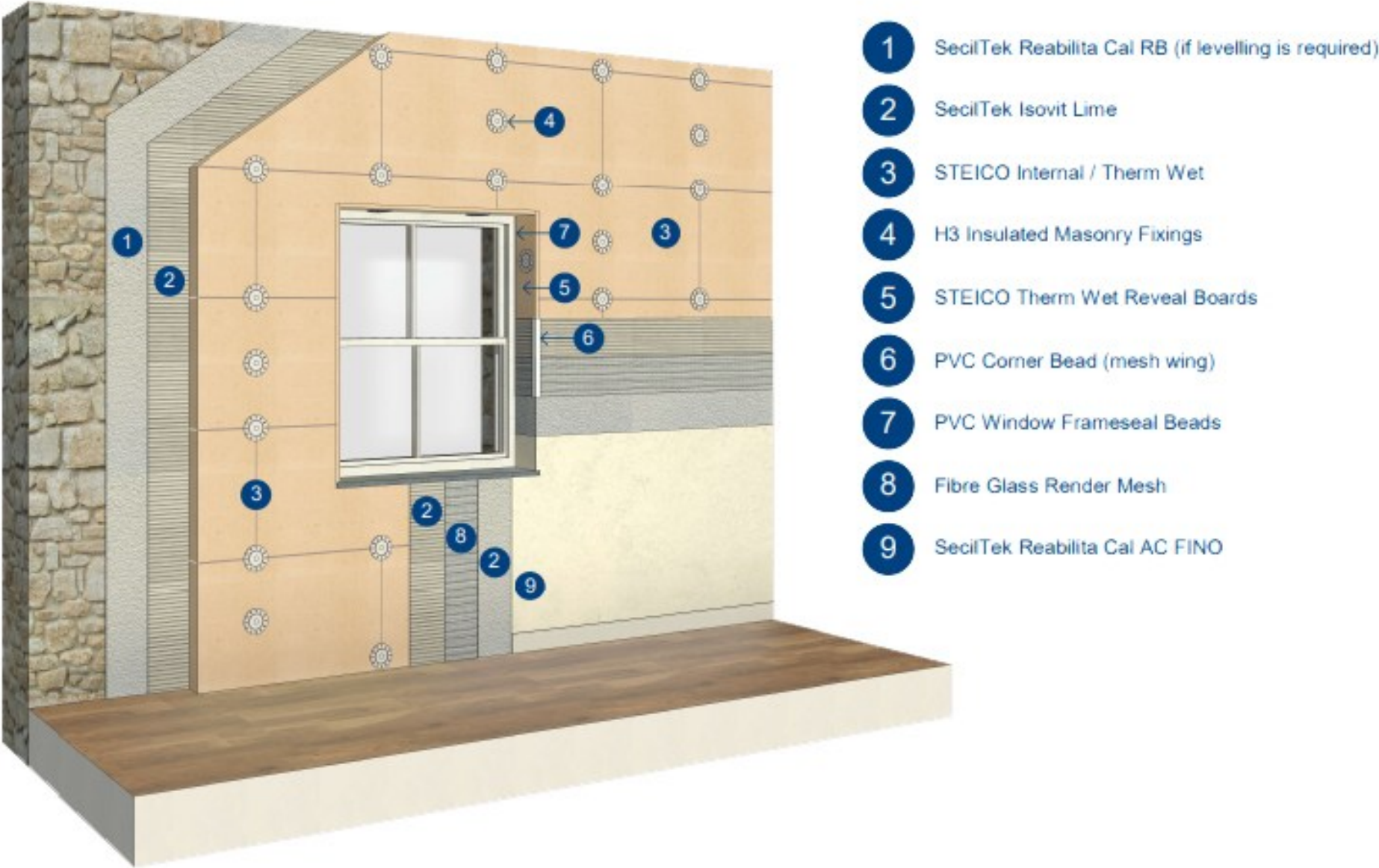


Fig 27—Typical wood fibre insulation arrangement



Fig 28—Typical heat pump installation



Fig 29—Typical heat pump acoustic enclosure (if required)

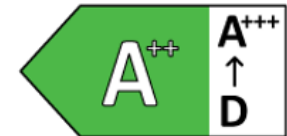
Heating capacity	10.18 kW
Annual Heating Energy Demand	10954.37 kWh
Energy labels	
	
Indoor unit	
Model	ETBH16EF6V7
Dimensions(HxWxD) mm	(840x440x390)mm
Outdoor unit	
Model	EPRA14DAV37
Dimensions(HxWxD) mm	(1003x1270x533)mm
Sound pressure	43dBA
Refrigerant type	R32

Fig 30—Heat pump data sheet extract

enhancement to the performance of the fabric.

- 9.6 The rear range is understood to have cavity wall construction, although it is unknown to what extent this incorporates insulation. As part of the works, intrusive investigations will be undertaken to confirm this and make improvements if possible—in any case it will be a requirement of the Building Regulations to make improvements where feasible.
- 9.7 The modern rear range has a flat roof and as part of the works this will be overlaid with a new roof covering (visually similar to the existing) incorporating additional insulation where possible. The amount of additional insulation possible to install will be subject to intrusive testing of the existing roof build up at detailed design stage.
- 9.8 The upper floors are currently heated on a single heating system, powered by a gas boiler located off the 2nd floor kitchenette. It is proposed to introduce new independent heating systems for each unit and in that respect consideration has been given to the following options:
- Continue with gas heating, either with separate boilers for each unit, or with a zoned heating system from a single boiler;
 - Remove the gas boiler and introduce heat pumps, either a single system with zoning or individual systems;
 - Remove the gas boiler and introduce an electric wet heating system (ie electric boiler)
 - remove gas boiler and introduce an electric radiator system.

- 9.9 The Building Regulations encourages the use of low temperature heating systems such as heat pumps and as such ASHP (air source heat pumps) is the chosen heating solution as a low carbon alternative to the existing gas boiler system in Units 2 and 4 where good levels of insulation and the ability to incorporate large radiators will be achievable.
- 9.10 To facilitate this, the air-conditioning condensers serving the 1st and 2nd floors are to be removed from the 1st floor lightwell and heat pumps for the proposed heating to Unit 2 on the 1st floor and Unit 4 on the 2nd floor will be installed in lieu.
- 9.11 Given the restrictions on the improvements that can be made to Units 1 and 3 in the historic front block, it is proposed that heating in these units is provided with interlinked panel and / or storage heaters, linked to a green energy tariff and incorporating modern controls including weather compensation. Water heating will be with point of use heaters.
- 9.12 Other energy reducing installations will include the use of MVHR in the units in the modern rear range, the use of 100% LED lighting and PIR controls to the lighting in the communal areas.
- 9.13 The Building Regulations optional target of 110 l/p/d water use will be adopted .

10 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 It is proposed to bring back in to use the vacant upper floors of the Grade II listed 154 Friar Street, Reading, with a change of use from their last use as offices to serviced apartments (use class C1).
- 10.2 The offices have been vacant and marketed for some time with no interest. Given the location, a change to C1 use is considered the optimum viable use of the site, whilst retaining the ground floor retail unit.
- 10.3 The building consists of an historic (c. 1800) block fronting Friar St with a modern range (from the second half of the c20th) at the rear. The historic part of the building is lacking many original internal features.
- 10.4 Internal layouts have been proposed showing 2 no. serviced studio apartments in the historic building and 2 no. 2 bed serviced apartments in the rear modern range, requiring no changes to elevations (other than where servicing penetrations are required) and working with the grain of the building.
- 10.5 Consideration has been given to how the thermal performance of the building can be improved as part of the change of use and the impact of the proposals on the heritage significance of the building and surrounding heritage assets has been considered as has relevant planning policy with regards appropriate uses in the area. Taking this in to account, it is contended that planning and Listed Building consent should be granted for the proposals.