

**50 Mount Pleasant
Reading
RG1 2TD**

Heritage Statement

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November 2023

50 Mount Pleasant Reading RG1 2TD

Heritage Statement

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Unless otherwise noted, figures are not shown to scale.

Executive summary

We are instructed by Clients to prepare a Heritage Statement and addendum in relation to a proposed development at 50 Mount Pleasant Reading RG1 2TD.

The proposal comprises demolition of C20th office extension to the rear, renovation/repair of existing building to provide 4 No. flats (1 x 2 bed, 3 x 1 bed) and conversion of rear office annexe to a dwelling (1bed) with ancillary bike storage, improved amenity space and bin storage.

This desk-based study assesses the possible impacts of the proposed development on built and other heritage assets in the area.

Designated built heritage assets which may be affected comprise:

- *The site is listed Grade II and is a designated asset of high significance.*

Other assets/NDAs

- *Nos 52 and 54 are Listed Buildings (LB) in close proximity.*
- *There are a number of designated and non-designated assets nearby.*
- *The site is not in a Conservation Area (CA) but is near Kendrick Road CA.*

Conclusions

The development site is listed Grade II (LB); it is of high significance.

There designated and non-designated assets (NDA) nearby but are scoped out.

The site is not within a Conservation Area (CA).

The proposal will have no material impact on any designated asset and cause no direct harm to significance.

The site and environs have been subject of change, both radical and gradual, over the last 90 or so years. There is nothing to suggest that a watershed has been reached. The subject site and environs has been altered in appearance, character and use terms over that time.

It is considered that the redevelopment will not impact on the contribution that setting makes to the significance of nearby designated assets and there will be no harm.

There will be change but that change, when taken in the balance, will be seen to better reveal the significance of two nearby designated assets.

Redevelopment and beneficial use will better reveal the significance of the asset and constitute an enhancement.

By virtue of intervening urban and suburban forms, relative disposition, lack of inter-visibility and absence of causal links, it is considered that the setting of other designated and non-designated assets will be materially unaffected. There will be no harm to significance.

The proposal is considered to accord in full with legislation, national and local heritage policy and advice.

Recommendation

No further Built Heritage assessment is required.

Mark Strawbridge MRTPI IHBC FRSA

FPHS

1 Introduction

1.1 Origin and scope of the report

- 1.1.1 We are instructed by Clients to prepare a Heritage Statement in relation to a proposed development at 50 Mount Pleasant Reading; the LPA is Reading Borough Council.
- 1.1.2 The proposal comprises demolition of C20th office extension to the rear, renovation/repair of existing building to provide 4 No. flats (1 x 2 bed, 3 x 1 bed) and conversion of rear office annexe to a dwelling (1bed) with ancillary bike storage, improved amenity space and bin storage.
- 1.1.3 This desk-based study assesses the impact of the scheme on built heritage assets (standing buildings). It forms an initial stage of investigation of the area of proposed development (hereafter referred to as the 'site') and may be required in relation to the planning process in order that the local planning authority (LPA) can formulate an appropriate response in the light of the impact upon any known or potential heritage assets. These are parts of the historic environment which are considered to be significant because of their historic, evidential, aesthetic and/or communal interest.
- 1.1.4 The assessment has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) and to standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA Oct 2012/Nov 2012), English Heritage (2008, 2011), Historic England (2015) and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC 2009). The HER has been accessed via the Heritage Gateway.
- 1.1.5 Note: within the limitations imposed by dealing with historical material and maps, the information in this document is, to the best knowledge of the author, correct at the time of writing.
- 1.1.6 The site is in an 'area of archeological significance' but is scoped out as the works are internal for the most part.

1.2 Designated heritage assets

- 1.2.1 The site is a designated heritage asset.
- 1.2.2 Nearby designated assets include Nos 52 and 54 Mount Pleasant.

1.3 Conservation Area

- 1.3.1 The site is not within Kendrick Road Conservation Area (CA).

1.4 Non-designated Assets (NDA)

- 1.4.1 The LPA maintains a register of Locally Listed Buildings. There are none in close proximity.
- 1.4.2 See link: <https://www.reading.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/heritage-and-conservation/conservation-areas-listed-buildings/locally-listed-buildings/>

1.5 Aims and objectives

- Identify the presence of any built heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals;
- describe the significance of such assets, as required by national planning policy;
- assess the likely impacts upon the significance of the assets arising from the proposals; and

- provide recommendations for further assessment where necessary of the historic assets affected, and/or mitigation aimed at reducing or removing completely any adverse impacts upon heritage assets and/or their setting.



Fig 1 Site (Client 2023)

2 Site and Environs

2.1 Site

- 2.1.1 The development site is listed as 50 Mount Pleasant Reading (Grade II: 1113541) with the following description.
2 storeys, attic and basement. Silver grey brick with red quoins and window surround. Rubbed brick window arches. String at 1st floor level. Moulded brick cornice, parapet with old tile roof. 2 hipped casement window dormers. Glazing bar sash windows, 4 on 1st floor. 6 panel door with rectangular overlight and early C19 trellis porch. Early C19 spearhead rails and gate with square standards topped with urns on stone base to road.
Interior: very good panelling on 1st floor (fireplace in front room has fluted frieze). Contemporary marble fireplace in ground floor front room, also panelled.
- 2.1.2 It is not known when the building was last inspected the internal details have been eroded over time and the description is not fully accurate now.

2.2 Conservation Area

- 2.2.1 The site is not in a CA; the nearest is Kendrick Road CA. The site, by virtue of relative disposition, lack of inter-visibility, intervening suburban and urban forms and lack of causal links is not considered to be within the setting of the CA and is therefore scoped out of consideration.

2.3 Nearby Assets

- 2.3.1 Nearby assets include:

52 Mount Pleasant Reading (Grade II: 1321907)

Late C18. 3 storeys, red brick. Old tile roof. 6 panel door in recessed brick arch with blank tympanum. Glazing bar sash windows, 1 on ground floor and 1 central window on 1st floor. 2 small windows on 2nd floor. Parapet renewed. Early C19 arrow head railings. Included for group value.

54 Mount Pleasant Reading (Grade II: 1113542)

Early C19. 3 storeys. Red brick, now painted. Slate roof. 3 windows to upper floors, glazing bar sashes, contemporary wrought iron guard rails on 1st floor. Modern casements on 2nd floor. Central door with raised and fielded panels, fanlight of curved and circular glazing pattern, recessed brick arch. Contemporary spearhead rails and gates and square standards topped with urns, on stone base, to road.



Fig 2 Nearby Assets

- 2.3.2 The two LBs immediately adjacent the site will be materially unaffected by the works; the demolition element as to the north side of the site.
- 2.3.3 By virtue of intervening suburban forms, lack of inter-visibility and relative disposition, it is considered that other assets will be materially unaffected and consequently there will be no harm to significance. Other sites have been scoped out of consideration.



Fig 2 Front Elevation (MS 2023)



Fig 3 C20th rear extensions (MS 2023)



Fig 5 Rear (part) (MS 2023)

2.4 Non-designated assets

- 2.4.1 The LPA website does not reveal any NDAs in the vicinity. Any NDAs in proximity are scoped out of consideration.

2.5 Setting

- 2.5.1 Setting is generally taken to mean 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. (NPPF 2023 Glossary).
- 2.5.2 A setting is not an asset in its own right, nor does it have significance unless part of another heritage designation.
- 2.5.3 The contribution of setting is generally considered with reference to the Historic England document Good Practice Advice in *Planning Note 3 The setting of heritage assets* (3rd edition 2020) (GPA3).
- 2.5.4 GPA3 sets out a methodology in stages, or steps:
- 2.5.5 **Step 1** – identify the asset(s) likely to be affected and the extent of setting. In this case the site and two nearby LBs. The setting of other assets is, for reasons cited below, scoped out of consideration.
- 2.5.6 **Step 2** – assess how and to what degree the setting makes a contribution to the significance of the asset(s). It is considered that the site's significance is not greatly reliant on its setting. This will not be affected by the proposed development in any event and there will be no harm.
- 2.5.7 The focus of the heritage interest in this case is the potential for repurposing and restoration of the asset. The public realm in the near vicinity has been much altered in recent times. The setting of the site at this point is predominantly encapsulated in the views along Mount Pleasant.
- 2.5.8 Both the site and the setting of the host LB are much altered over time. It is considered that overall the contribution of setting in this case is neutral.
- 2.5.9 **Step 3** – assess the effect of the proposed development in setting terms on the significance of the asset(s);
The site has been the subject of change through time and there is no suggestion that a watershed has been reached.
The proposal is essentially to repurpose and reinstate an existing building via a scheme of high-quality design. Scale and materiality will not be markedly changed. It is contended that there will be no impact on the significance of nearby assets by virtue of change within the setting – impact in principle will be in the positive.
Step 4 – seek to maximise enhancement and minimise harm; It is contended that, all things being equal, the contribution of setting can be enhanced by careful appropriate design and attention to detail.
Step 5 – document and monitor outcomes (This latter point is the preserve of the Planning Authority).
- 2.5.10 The visual setting of any asset is generally considered in three 'layers':
- Wider landscape/townscape – i.e., context;
 - Proximate or intimate setting, often encompassing the curtilage of the asset;
 - Prospect – e.g., looking from the asset and /or its grounds
- 2.5.11 It is contended that there will be no negative impact on the contribution of setting to significance in any of these 'layers'. The wider townscape will not change.
- 2.5.12 The prospect from within the immediate environs will be enhanced.
- 2.5.13 The proposed development will have a limited 'prospect' – there will be greater opportunity to appreciate nearby heritage assets, by more people than at present. It is contended that this represents an enhancement in principle.
- 2.5.14 Other assets and NDAs/LLBs in the area are essentially scoped out of consideration.

3 Photos

3.1 Internal



P1 Fireplace and panelling



P2 Fireplace



P3 Panelling



P4 Fireplace



P5 Fireplace



P6 Fireplace



P7 Roof

4 Significance

4.1 Planning History

- 4.1.1 Inspection of the LPA website reveals two applications from 2005, for Lawful Development Certificates (LDC) in relation to the site next door for a car repair business.
- 4.1.2 There is no entry on the LPA's website relating to the last use of the building, apparently the long-established use was as offices.
- 4.1.3 Similarly, there is no record of the two rear extensions either side of the rear curtilage.
- 4.1.4 It is understood that the site to the north of No.50 has recently been granted consent for residential development (ref: 201880 FUL).
- 4.1.5 An extension to the rear of No. 54 was approved in 1992.
- 4.1.6 Planning activity in the vicinity indicates that appropriate change is acceptable; organic change may be an element of the character of area.
- 4.1.7 The cumulative impact of change has not materially diminished the overall special character of the site or nearby. It appears to be quite robust. Properly managed change should be an enhancement to the area particularly if it deals with issues such as the repurposing of redundant buildings, over-mature trees and replacement boundaries in appropriate materials.
- 4.1.8 Organic and incremental changes are likely to carry on regardless of more major change being approved. Nevertheless, there is nothing to suggest that a watershed has been reached in relation to the site.

4.2 Statement of significance

- 4.2.1 The determination of the significance of historic assets is based on statutory designation and/or professional judgement against 4 'values' (English Heritage/Historic England - 2008/2015) restated in the advice document *GPA 2 - Managing Significance in Decisions*
- 4.2.2 The 4 values are:

- Evidential value
- Aesthetic value
- Historical value
- Communal value

(This is refined by National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG), last updated in July 2021).

- 4.2.3 The site is a listed building and as such is a designated asset of **high significance** as a baseline.
- 4.2.4 There may be evidential value but this would be revealed by excavation, possibly during demolition of elements of the rear extensions. The building is primarily of significance due to its aesthetic and historical value; there is little communal value in evidence.
- 4.2.5 In recent times the building has been the subject of internal alterations and rearrangement due to the commercial use of the premises. Some of the internal details that contributed to the significance of the asset have been lost, it would appear, since the listing was undertaken. It is not thought that this has impacted unduly on the overall high significance of the asset. It is considered that change has been accommodated without harm; there is no suggestion that a watershed has been reached in that respect.
- 4.2.6 The setting of assets is not a heritage asset and hence is of no significance. It is concluded that setting in these terms is not particularly vulnerable to harm. (See above).

5 Impact of Proposed Development

5.1 Site

- 5.1.1 The proposed development is described in the drawing pack to be submitted with the application.

5.2 Townscape

- 5.2.1 A brief assessment of the immediate area reveals a gradation of scale of buildings; the LBs are slightly larger in scale at three storeys; they are also set up off the pavement level by a margin.
- 5.2.2 The remainder of the street scene is two storeys. The townscape is tied together visually by materiality and this part of Mount Pleasant from boundary walls and railings.



Fig 6 View north along Mount Pleasant (GE)



Fig 7 View south

- 5.2.3 Figs 6 & 7 show the built form in the vicinity of the site.

5.3 Scheme

- 5.3.1 The drawing pack presented with the application shows the whole scheme. There will be no change to the frontage.



Fig 8 Drawings (HBPS)

5.4 Commentary

- 5.4.1 In urban design terms, the proposal is considered to be:

- Of exemplary design, in nature/form/style.

- Respectful of heritage features.
- Light-touch in terms of internal works.
- Compatible with the area's mature framework.
- Appropriate in use, scale and townscape terms.
- In keeping with the area in term of use, scale and proportionality.
- Of materiality complimentary to the locality
- A 'good neighbour'

5.4.2 In heritage terms the development seeks to:

- Meet the requirements of The Act, particularly section 72.
- Meet the requirements of the NPPF particularly Section 16.
- (Given the site is not an asset it requires no justification in the terms of the NPPF). Were it to be considered a NDA - Consider the development in the balance as per para 203 of the NPPF).
- For the Conservation Area as a designated asset, be justified as per paras 201 & 202 of the NPPF.
- For the CA, preserve or enhance the character and or appearance of the asset.

5.4.3 In conclusion, it is considered appropriate in this case to argue the opportunity for new development under para 206 of the NPPF. 206. *'Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.'*

5.5 Setting

- 5.5.1 The site is surrounded by sites, buildings and forms of different dates and therefore there is no added importance from the setting.
- 5.5.2 By virtue of lack of intervisibility, relative disposition and intervening urban and suburban forms, the development will not be within and therefore have no material impact on the setting of other LBs or NDAs in the vicinity and no harm will be caused to significance.

5.6 Harm

- 5.6.1 The NPPF, at paras 201 & 202, refers to harm to the significance of designated heritage assets. At para 203, it refers to NDAs.
- 5.6.2 It is considered that the proposal will cause no harm to significance of any asset.
- 5.6.3 There will be change, in this case, overall, it is considered change will be in the positive.
- 5.6.4 The proposed development may be of denser occupation; and thereby allow more people greater appreciation of the building. This would better reveal the significance of the asset and therefore represents an enhancement.

5.7 The Duty to Preserve and/or Enhance

- 5.7.1 The site is conservation area and therefore there is no duty under the Act. However, beneficial repurposing and ongoing maintenance, investment and repair and a bit of the character or appearance of the vicinity.

6 Archaeology

6.1 Consultation

- 6.1.1 The site is in an area of archaeological interest but has been scoped out of consideration due to the majority of works proposed being internal.
- 6.1.2 The HER has been accessed via the Heritage Gateway.

7 Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

- 7.1.1 The site is a designated asset of high significance.
- 7.1.2 The site is built in a Conservation Area (CA).
- 7.1.3 Nearby designated assets include two properties next door, designated assets of high significance.
- 7.1.4 The proposal will have no material impact on any designated asset and cause no direct nor indirect harm to significance.
- 7.1.5 Notwithstanding that there is no duty to preserve or enhance, there will be no harm to the character and/or appearance of the vicinity.
- 7.1.6 The site and environs have been subject of change over the years. There is nothing to suggest that a watershed has been reached. The subject site has been altered in appearance, character and use terms over that time.
- 7.1.7 It is considered that the development will not impact on the contribution that setting makes to the significance of nearby designated assets and there will be no harm.
- 7.1.8 There will be change but that change, when taken in the balance, will be seen to better reveal the significance of the site and nearby designated assets.
- 7.1.9 By virtue of intervening urban and suburban forms, relative disposition, lack of inter-visibility and absence of causal links, it is considered that the setting of other designated and non-designated assets will be materially unaffected. There will be no harm to significance.
- 7.1.10 The proposal is considered to accord in full with legislation, national and local heritage policy and advice.

7.2 Recommendation

- 7.2.1 No further Built Heritage assessment or reporting is required.

8 Planning Framework

8.1 Statutory protection

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

- 8.1.1 The *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* sets out the legal requirements for the control of development and alterations which affect buildings, including those which are listed or in conservation areas. Buildings which are listed or which lie within a conservation area are protected by law. Grade I are buildings of exceptional interest. Grade II* are particularly significant buildings of more than special interest. Grade II are buildings of special interest, which warrant every effort being made to preserve them.
- 8.1.2 Section 66 of The Act sets out the general duty as respects Listed Buildings; Section 72 does so as respects Conservation Areas.

8.2 National Planning Policy Framework

- 8.2.1 The Government issued the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012 (DCLG 2012) and supporting Planning Practice Guidance in 2014 (DCLG 2014). This advice was updated in 2023.
- 8.2.2 One of the 12 core principles that underpin both plan-making and decision-taking within the framework is to '*conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.*' It recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and requires the significance of heritage assets to be considered in the planning process, whether designated or not. The contribution of setting to asset significance needs to be taken into account.
- 8.2.3 Section 16: *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*, is key. The policies set out in this section relate, as applicable, to the heritage-related consent regimes for which local planning authorities are responsible under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as to plan-making and decision-making. (See also Planning Practice Guidance – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment section).
- 8.2.4 Paras 189 – 208 inclusive refer:
 - 189. Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.
(Some World Heritage Sites are inscribed by UNESCO to be of natural significance rather than cultural significance; and in some cases they are inscribed for both their natural and cultural significance).
 - 190. Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:
 - a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
 - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
 - d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.
 - 191. When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

192. Local planning authorities should maintain or have access to a historic environment record. This should contain up-to-date evidence about the historic environment in their area and be used to:

- a) assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their environment; and
- b) predict the likelihood that currently unidentified heritage assets, particularly sites of historic and archaeological interest, will be discovered in the future.

193. Local planning authorities should make information about the historic environment, gathered as part of policy-making or development management, publicly accessible.

8.2.5 Proposals affecting heritage assets are considered under para 194 on:

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

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

196. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.

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

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

198. In considering any applications to remove or alter a historic statue, plaque, memorial or monument (whether listed or not), local planning authorities should have regard to the importance of their retention in situ and, where appropriate, of explaining their historic and social context rather than removal.

8.2.6 Potential impacts are considered in para 199 on:

199. 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.

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

Substantial harm to or loss of:

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

(Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.)

201. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

202. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

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

204. Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

205. Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

(Copies of evidence should be deposited with the relevant historic environment record, and any archives with a local museum or other public depository).

206. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

207. Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 200 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 201, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

208. Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.

8.3 Local Policy

8.3.1 Relevant references may include:

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019):

https://images.reading.gov.uk/2019/12/Local_Plan_Adopted_November_2019.pdf

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

EN6: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN A HISTORIC CONTEXT

9 Determining significance

9.1.1 'Significance' lies in the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest, which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Archaeological interest includes an interest in carrying out an expert investigation at some point in the future into the evidence a heritage asset may hold of past human activity and may apply to standing buildings or structures as well as buried remains. Known and potential heritage assets within the site and its vicinity have been identified from national and local designations, HER data and expert opinion. The determination of the significance of these assets is based on statutory designation and/or professional judgement against four values (EH 2008):

- *Evidential value*: the potential of the physical remains to yield evidence of past human activity. This might take into account date; rarity; state of preservation; diversity/complexity; contribution to published priorities; supporting documentation; collective value and comparative potential.
- *Aesthetic value*: this derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from the heritage asset, taking into account what other people have said or written;
- *Historical value*: the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through heritage asset to the present, such a connection often being illustrative or associative;
- *Communal value*: this derives from the meanings of a heritage asset for the people who know about it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory; communal values are closely bound up with historical, particularly associative, and aesthetic values, along with and educational, social or economic values.

9.1.2 Table 1 gives examples of the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Table 1: Significance of heritage assets

Heritage asset description	Significance
World heritage sites Scheduled monuments Grade I and II* listed buildings English Heritage Grade I and II* registered parks and gardens Protected Wrecks Heritage assets of national importance	Very high (International/ national)
English Heritage Grade II registered parks and gardens Conservation areas Designated historic battlefields Grade II listed buildings Burial grounds Protected heritage landscapes (e.g., ancient woodland or historic hedgerows) Heritage assets of regional or county importance	High (national/ regional/ county)
Heritage assets with a district value or interest for education or cultural appreciation Locally listed buildings	Medium (District)
Heritage assets with a local (i.e., parish) value or interest for education or cultural appreciation	Low (Local)
Historic environment resource with no significant value or interest	Negligible
Heritage assets that have a clear potential, but for which current knowledge is insufficient to allow significance to be determined	Uncertain