



DESIGN AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

Replacement chimney following structural failure of existing chimney.
5 Victoria Street, Reading, RG1 4NQ

Prepared for: Lysander Strong

The purpose of this report is to accompany a planning application. A heritage statement sets out the details of the history and development of the asset using photographic, map, archival and fabric evidence. It includes an assessment of the evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value of the heritage asset and the impact of the proposed works upon that significance. In addition to desk based research a site visit was carried out as part of this assessment and a non intrusive survey took place.

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Heritage Asset and its Setting:

Project Address: 5 Victoria Street, Reading, RG1 4NQ

Local Authority: Reading Borough Council

Conservation Area: Eldon Square

Building Use: Residential

Listing Status: Not Listed List entry no. N/A

Designated Heritage Asset:

Scheduled Monument?	N
Listed Building?	N
Registered Park and Garden	N
Historic Battlefield	N
Conservation Area	Y
World Heritage Site	N
Non Designated Heritage Asset	Y

Project Overview:

Replacement brick chimney following the structural failure of existing chimney.



Photo 1 – View of front elevation (west)



Photo 2 and 3 – Detailed view of front elevation



Photo 4 and 5 – View from Victoria St. (southwest)



Photo 6 and 7 – View from Victoria St. (northwest)



Photo 8 and 9 – View of rear from behind the Kings Tavern (PH)

Reason for the Project:

The existing chimney has structurally failed due to a poor initial design. This is an issue that several properties along the road have also had to address due to an original design flaw rather than as a result in inappropriate past alterations such as the removal of chimney breasts. The issue has been inspected by a qualified structural engineer used to working with heritage structures.

The wish is to remove the unstable chimney, fix the structural issue internally without external impact and then reinstate a replacement brick chimney. Various options have been considered including complete removal without replacement, a fibreglass option and a brick slip chimney. Due to the Conservation Area setting a brick chimney replacement is being proposed as the most appropriate solution from a heritage perspective and is in line with the approach taken by many of the adjoining properties. This will be slightly smaller in size as advised by the engineer to reduce the vertical load on the existing chimney breasts. It was felt that it would be better from an authenticity perspective to provide a real brick chimney of a slightly smaller size rather than a false but lighter chimney of the same size.

Schedule of Intervention:

The following outlines the proposed interventions including:

- *What is being changed, added, removed, or altered*
 - *The scale and extent of the intervention*
 - *Materials, design, and methods*
 - *Whether the change is reversible or permanent*
-
1. Partially remove existing roof.
 2. Dismantle existing arched stack down to the top of the chimney breasts.
 3. Place concrete capping slabs on top of remaining chimney breasts.
 4. Install twin steel beams, one each side of the party wall.
 5. Place new concrete slab spanning between the two steel beams.
 6. Build new brick stack in reclaimed brick and pots.
 7. New party fire wall, not currently present in loft.
 8. Reinstate roof like for like, no change in detailing.

No proposed extension. No other proposed alterations.

Setting Overview/ Context:

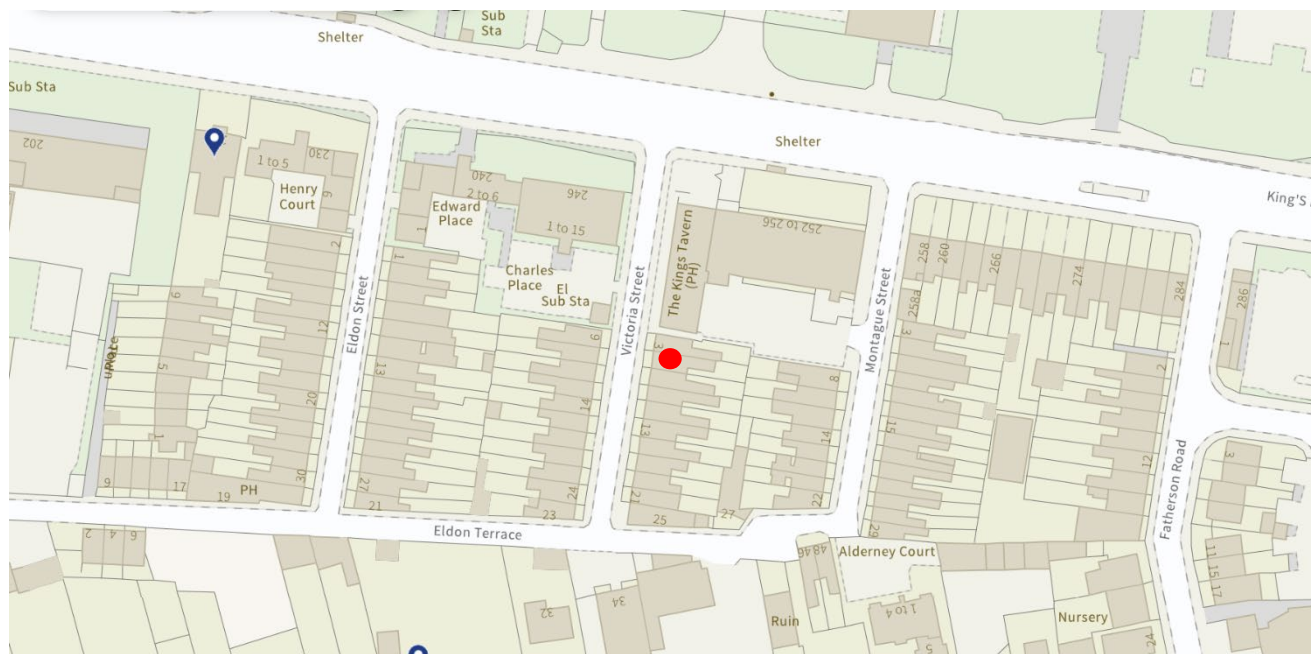
The site is located on a small residential street south off the main Kings Road and opposite the Reading College Campus. The road is situated south of the River Kennet, a short distance from Reading town centre.

The property is located within Eldon Square Conservation Area, Character Area 3. This character area comprises of later nineteenth century terraces. The following is extracted from the Conservation Area Appraisal: *'Eldon Square Conservation Area lies well within the east side of urban Reading just beyond the Inner Distribution Road (IDR). It is 1km from Reading's Saxon centre at the St Mary's Butts/ Gun Street crossroads, 0.8km from Reading's Medieval Market Place at the gates of Reading Abbey, under 1km from The Oracle in the town centre and 1km from Reading Station.'* Eldon Street, Victoria Street and Montague Street are three short streets laid out in the 1860s/70s and adopted by the borough council in 1874. They have terraced houses on either side with small gardens to the front and larger gardens to the rear. Victoria Street was the first to be laid out and is the most uniform in appearance being mainly simple red brick properties of uniform design.'

The property is not Listed, nor is it Locally Listed however it is classed by the local authority in past reporting as being Buildings of Townscape Merit as a terrace group of houses.

The property is a two storey plus basement late 19th Century Victorian mid terrace property. It is a brick building that has been painted to the front. Its traditional sash windows have been replaced with UPVC units. It has a slate roof containing a red brick chimney with traditional eaves and still retains its timber gutter support brackets. At the rear as is common the property has undergone past change, varying the terrace row in appearance. A shorter two storey outrigger, common along the terrace has been extended further single storey. What would have been a rear sash window has been replaced with a door.

Setting: Urban Area Topography: Flat



Map taken from Historic England Listing Database. Property shown with a red dot.

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Site Planning History:

PL/22/1869

New roof to the existing ground floor bathroom (to replace the existing asbestos) and swapping of rear window and side facing door (amended)

Received: 13/12/2022

Decided: 10/5/2023

Decision: Approve

Impacted Heritage Assets:

The building sits within the Eldon Square Conservation Area.

The building is not Listed.

The building is not within the context of a Listed Building. There are no Listed Buildings within Character Area 3 of the Conservation Area.

Past planning reporting for the properties along the road identify the terrace row as 'buildings of townscape merit' however it should be noted that this has not been confirmed within the Conservation Area Appraisal under the formal list of Buildings of Townscape Merit which is dated March 2026. This appears to be a conflict in council policy and approach and should be clarified prior to determination.

Assessment of Significance:

Heritage has cultural, social, economic and environmental values. The attributes that combine to define the significance of a historic building can relate to its physical properties or to its context. – BS 7913:2013.

Development proposals affecting heritage assets should be accompanied by an assessment of the significance of the assets affected (including any contribution made by their setting) and of the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is necessary to understand the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The relevant historic environment record should be referred to in making this assessment, and appropriate expertise employed where necessary – NPPF

Significance (for heritage policy): 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 - NPPF

We have used the following levels and definitions within this report to grade 'Significance':

Level	Meaning
Exceptional	National or international importance
High	Strong regional or national value
Moderate	Local importance with some wider interest
Low	Limited heritage value but still contributes
Neutral/Negative	No heritage value or detracts from significance

Archeological Interest: *As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.*

Within the Conservation Area Appraisal it outlines the following: *Excavations have uncovered pre-historic, Roman, Saxon and later medieval finds in the wider area particularly north of Queens Road and Kings Road towards the town centre and River Kennet. Closer to the CA but outside the boundary there were the following finds: a lower-paleolithic (500,000 BCE to 150,001 BCE) hand axe at 52 London Road in 1945; a neolithic (4,000 BCE to 2,351 BCE) ground axe at 58 London Road in c1947 and in London Road, precise location unknown a partial skeleton was found from the late Roman to early Saxon period. There have been excavations in conjunction with modern developments such as the extension to Clarendon House, Queens Road in 2019 which uncovered finds from earlier developments in the eighteenth and nineteenth century.*

The HER does not record any finds arising within the CA from the construction of modern developments along the south side of Kings Road. These late twentieth century office and residential properties replaced mid nineteenth century buildings which had been built on a greenfield site. Other parts of the CA have remained largely undisturbed since that time and it is an area of archaeological potential.

The project is not within nor close to a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

There are no proposed below ground works as part of this application so this aspect has not been reviewed in greater detail.

Level Assigned: Moderate

Architectural Interest:

Design and aesthetics: Focuses on the visual qualities and structural arrangement of a place.

The property is a simple late 19th Century mid terrace low status property built to house the working population for the major manufacturing industries that were expanding in the Reading Area at the time following the arrival of the railway. From the front the original architectural character is largely legible and the property contributes to the character of the Conservation Area as part of a group of buildings.

The materiality is typical of the local area although the front has unfortunately been painted over covering the original red brick. As is common along the road the original timber windows have been switched out for UPVC and the rear has undergone many modern alterations resulting in an erosion of its architectural character.

The original chimney and slate roof appears to be in place.

Structural design, layout and form: The brick structured property has retained its original simple layout of a front and rear room split by a staircase connecting the first floor and basement. There is a kitchen and bathroom located in an original outrigger to the rear. There are two bedrooms on the first floor with a bathroom contained within the outrigger. There is a small basement area under the front room of the property.

Origins: *Can stem from deliberate, conscious planning or fortuitously from how a structure evolves over time:* The row of terraces along the road were built at the same time as all share a similar aesthetic. They have all evolved slightly differently under private ownership, mainly impacting upon the rear aesthetic.

Fabric and Materials: *Includes the physical components, building techniques, and decorative details used:* The building is constructed of red brick typical of the Reading area with timber floors and roof structure. It has a slate roof consistent with the adjoining properties.

Level Assigned: Low

Artistic Interest: *Creative human intent, including historic plasterwork, stained glass, murals, masonry carvings, or sculpture.*

Key External Features: the property is a simple terraced workers cottage and contains no detailing of artistic interest. The features are typical of the late 19th century build era.

Key Internal Features: The interior was not inspected as part of the reporting since the building is not Listed and no internal works are proposed apart from within the loft space.

Current condition and Setting: The building is in a good condition.

Level Assigned: Neutral

Historic Interest: *An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.*

Past associations: The land upon which the building stands was historically agricultural land owned by Reading Abbey. Upon the dissolution of the Abbey its ownership passed automatically to the Crown. The land was sold by the Crown in 1832 and the building of Kings Road to the north occurred in 1834.

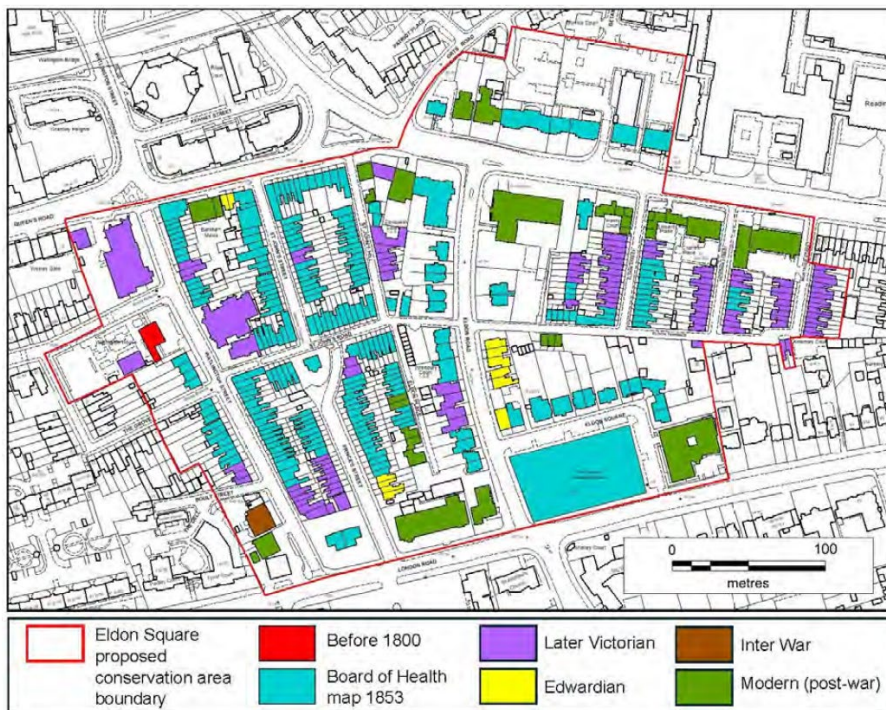
There was a huge increase in housing demand in 1840s with the arrival of the railway to Reading. The arrival of the railway led to the rapid growth of major industries notably Huntley & Palmers, biscuit makers, and Suttons Seeds who were a major employer in the local area. The housing built on Victoria Street, including the property in question, was built specifically to address the increased Reading worker population in the second half of the 19th Century. The properties in question historically backed onto the Berkshire Brewery.

The first recording on the census for the property was 1881 when it was occupied by 2 households, William Trueman, a professional, and Edward Hignell a carpenter. In 1891 the property head was James Deason, a turner and fitter, and his family. In 1901 the property was occupied by Arthur Bagaley, a steam engine maker fitter, and his family. In 1910 the property is occupied by T.E. Meredith and owned by Mr Albert Ball. In 1939 it was occupied by Alice E Buckingham, widowed, her daughter who worked in the nearby biscuit factory and her son who was a domestic servant.

The street patterns and buildings have remained in tact however many of the buildings have lost original features such as their timber sash windows and paintwork has been overpainted.

The property remains a single residential property as was its original design intent.

Level Assigned: Moderate

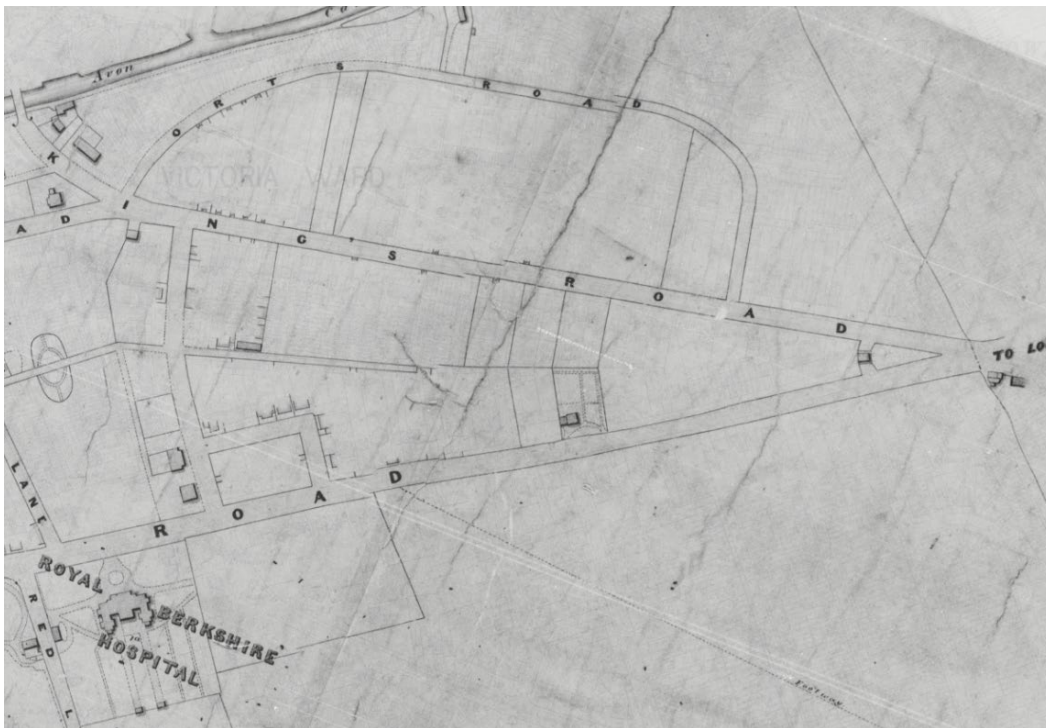


Extract from Conservation Area Appraisal illustrating the dating of the Conservation Area.

Historic Mapping – For reference dating only, not for reproduction



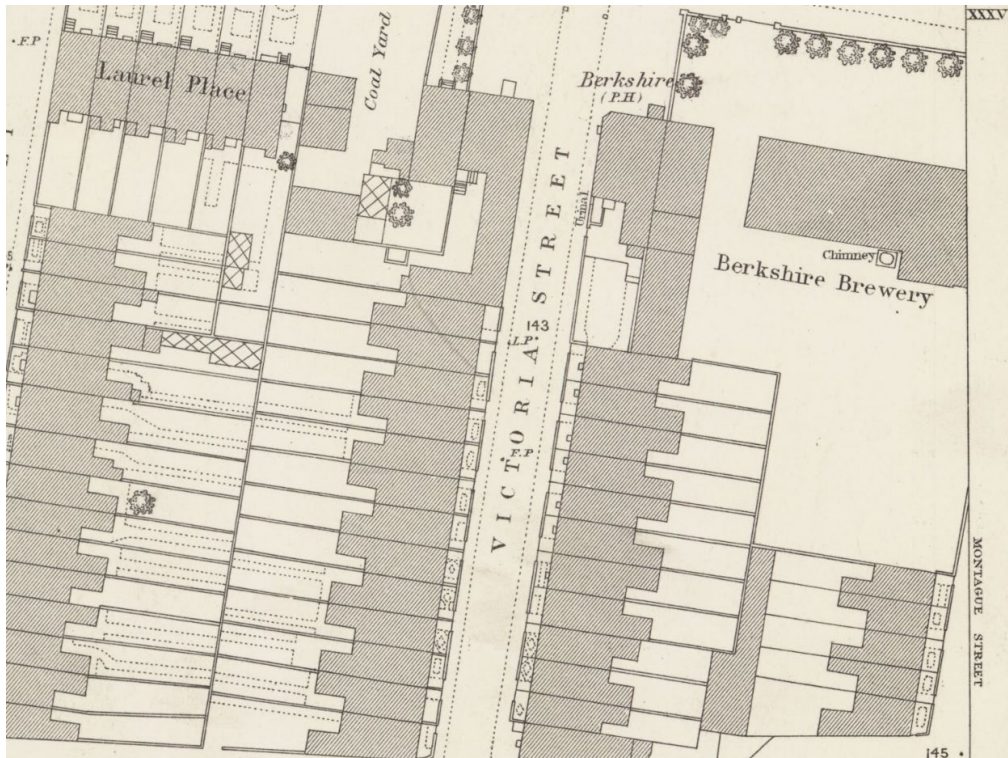
Extract from Commissioner's plan of the Borough of Reading 1834



Extract from Parish of St Giles Map 1840

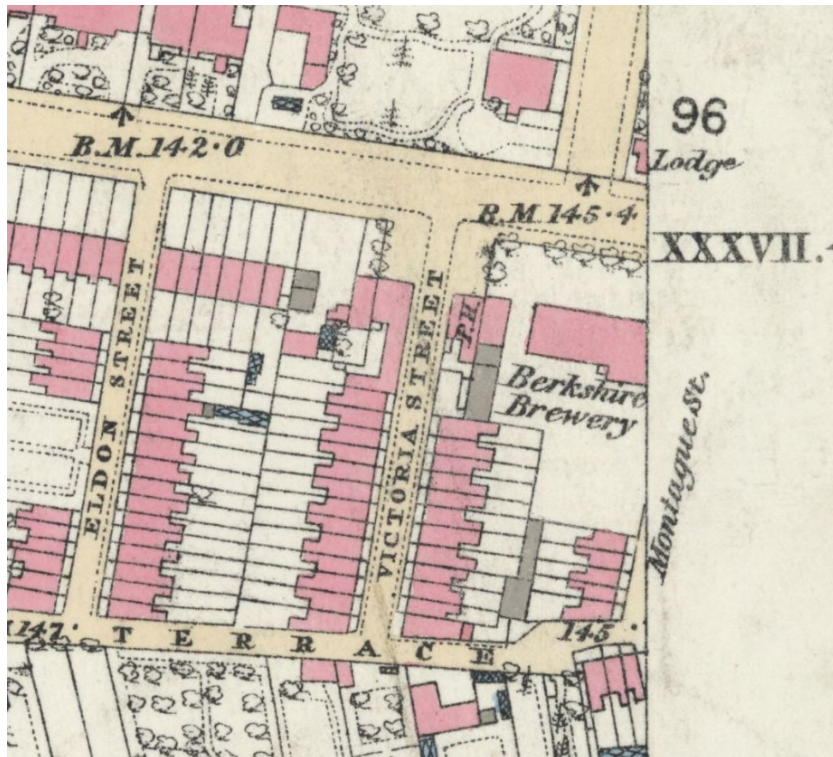


Extract from Reading Board of Health Map 11 1850

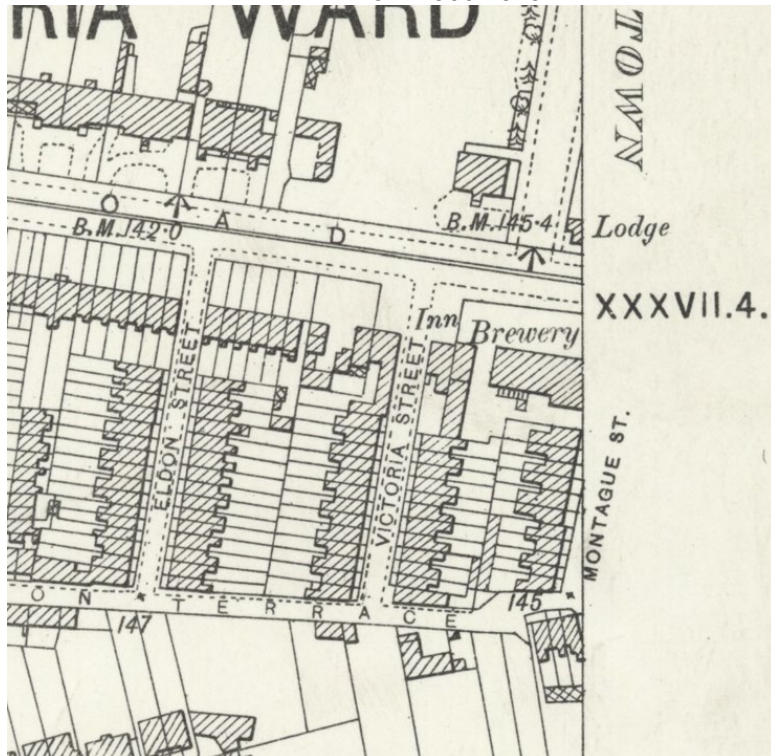


Extract from Reading Berkshire XXXVII.3.15 1-500 1879

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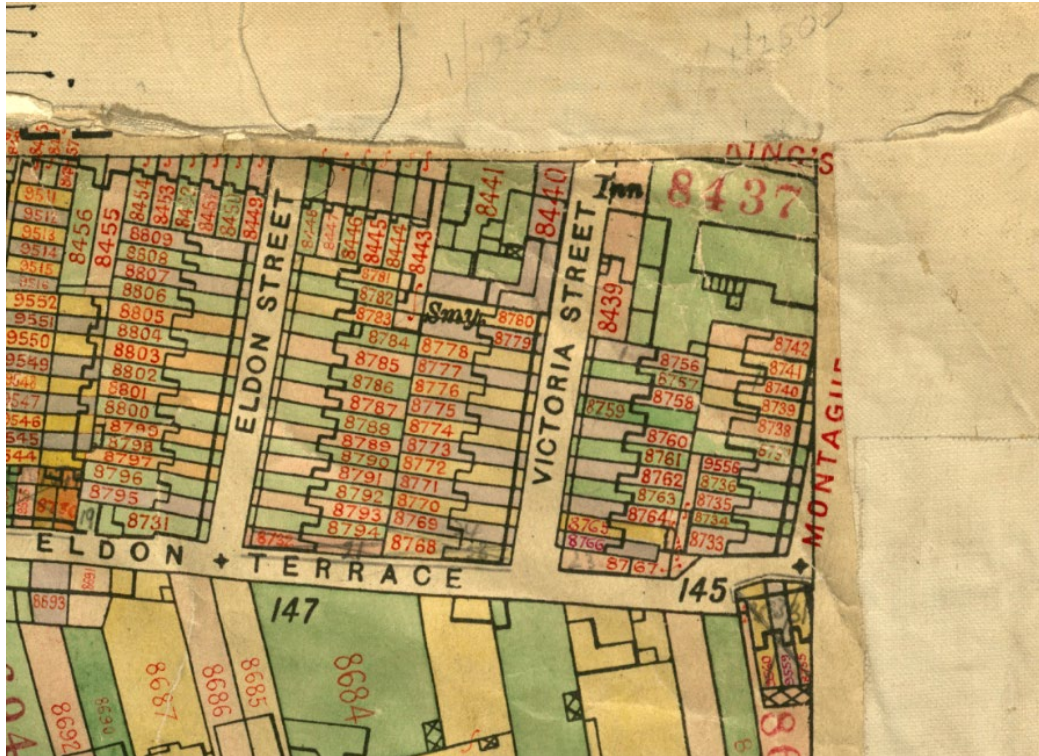


Extract from Berkshire XXXVII.3 1-2500 1879

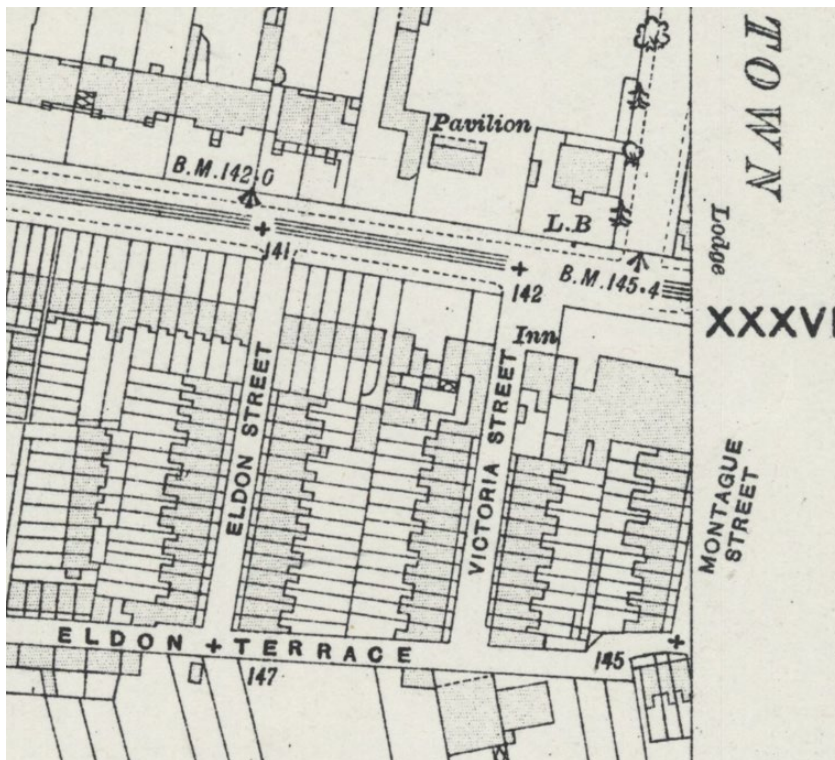


Extract from Berkshire XXXVII.3 1-2500 1900

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Extract from 37-3-SE Map 1910



Extract from Berkshire XXXVII.NE 1-10560 1931

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Extract from SU7273 1-2500 1957



Extract from SU7273SE 1-1250 1963

Development Impact on the Significance of the Historical Asset:

Assessments of the potential effects of development proposals on the significance of heritage assets (including through effects on their setting) should identify whether proposals would be likely to:

- a. Have a positive effect, which is where the significance of a heritage asset would be enhanced, or better revealed; or*
- b. Have no effect on the significance of a heritage asset; or*
- c. Result in harm to the significance of a heritage asset, either from work affecting the asset itself or from development within its setting. The degree of harm should be identified: substantial harm would occur where the development proposal would seriously affect a key element of the asset's significance; or*
- d. Cause the total loss of the significance of a heritage asset.*

The level of impact is assessed as follows within this report as per the following definition:

Impact Level	Meaning
Positive Effect	The significance of the heritage asset is enhanced or better revealed.
No Effect	Neutral outcome. The development neither damages nor reveals/enhances the historic value of the asset.
Harm	Any negative impact that diminishes an asset's historic, architectural, or archaeological interest. This can include minor visual intrusions into its setting or reversible physical alterations.
Substantial Harm	The development proposal would seriously affect a key element of the asset's significance to the point where it compromises the main traits that justified the asset's designation in the first place.
Total Loss	Cause the total loss of the significance of a heritage asset.

In making this assessment it is the effect on a heritage asset's significance rather than the scale of the development which should be considered.

1. Archeaological Impact:

There are no proposed below ground works so no potential impact upon below ground archaeology.

Impact Level	Impact Level Assigned
Positive Effect	
No Effect	X
Harm	
Substantial Harm	
Total Loss	

Justification where harm occurs: N/A

2. Architectural Impact:

Impact on Setting: the proposals deliberately replace the existing chimney with a similar red brick chimney to ensure minimal impact upon the key views along the road rather than just omit the failing chimney. The proposals are reflective of similar changes along the road presumably for the same reason. It was considered that a fiberglass or brick slip chimney would not be an appropriate choice and would result in unjustifiable harm.

The proposals do not alter the character of the surroundings. The proposals do not affect how the building is experienced.

Scale and Massing: The proposals do not change the scale or massing of the existing property.

Impact on Building Form: the proposals do not impact upon the building form.

Impact Level	Impact Level Assigned
Positive Effect	
No Effect	
Harm	X
Substantial Harm	
Total Loss	

Justification where harm occurs: The reduction in chimney size is for structural reasons to offset the original design flaw at the advice of an experience heritage structural engineer to ensure the safety of the building and occupants. The new chimney has the same depth of 800mm but the length is reduced from 2000mm to 1200mm and the chimney pots reduced from 8 to 4 as a result. It was decided that a smaller chimney caused less harm to architectural significance than a false but lighter brick slip or fiber glass chimney.

3. Artistic Interest:

The proposals have no impact upon artistic detailing within the property. The majority of the changes are within the uninhabited loft spaces and have no external impact.

Impact Level	Impact Level Assigned
Positive Effect	
No Effect	X
Harm	
Substantial Harm	
Total Loss	

Justification where harm occurs: N/A

4. Historical Interest:

The proposals do not obscure the understanding of the asset's story.

Communal: the proposal does not affect how people use, remember, or value the place.

Use: The proposals retain the building use as a residential dwelling as was its original design intent. The proposals resolve a safety issue that has been identified which is resulting in an unstable chimney.

Impact Level	Impact Level Assigned
Positive Effect	
No Effect	X
Harm	
Substantial Harm	
Total Loss	

Justification where harm occurs: N/A

Relevant Policy:

The Government has set out its planning policies framework for the historic environment in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlining the framework within which local authorities should consider the importance of conserving, or enhancing aspects of the historic environment within the planning process. This was published in March 2012 and replaced in 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023, 2024 and 2026.

Conservation as defined by the NPPF is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets as diverse as listed buildings in every day use and as yet undiscovered, undesignated buried remains of archaeological interest.

In the case of buildings, generally the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Ensuring such heritage assets remain used and valued is likely to require sympathetic changes to be made from time to time. In the case of archaeological sites, many have no active use, and so for those kinds of sites, periodic changes may not be necessary, though on-going management remains important.

Where changes are proposed, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a clear framework for both plan-making and decision-making in respect of applications for planning permission and Listed Building consent to ensure that heritage assets are conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance and thereby achieving sustainable development. The National Planning Policy Framework defines a heritage asset as, 'a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets are either designated heritage assets or non-designated heritage assets.

The NPPF recognises that Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, and 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 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.

HE4: Securing the conservation of heritage assets

1. Heritage assets, as an irreplaceable resource, should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. To achieve this, development proposals which would affect the significance of heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting should: a. Maintain or secure a use consistent with their conservation, taking into account the importance of maintaining the assets, the positive contribution they can make to sustainable communities including local economies, and the positive contribution they can make to local character and distinctiveness; and b. Avoid (or if that is not possible, minimise) harm to the significance of heritage assets, and instead conserve this significance.
2. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (including from development within its setting) should have a clear and convincing justification in accordance with the policies in this chapter.
3. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the asset should not be taken into account in any decision relating to the asset.

4. Proposals for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with other policies in this Framework and/or those in the development plan, but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, should be considered on the basis of whether the conservation benefits outweigh the disbenefits of departing from the policies concerned.

In making this assessment it is the effect on a heritage asset's significance rather than the scale of the development which should be considered.

Where a development proposal involves, or has the potential to involve, a heritage asset with archaeological interest, an appropriate desk-based assessment should be undertaken and, where necessary, a field evaluation. These should be used to help understand the asset's significance and the potential effect of the proposal on this, which should inform the design, mitigation and implementation of the development.

HE6: Proposals affecting designated heritage assets

1. When considering the potential effect of a development proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, substantial 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 effect amounts to a positive effect, harm, substantial harm, or total loss of its significance.
2. Development proposals which would have a positive effect on a designated heritage asset should be supported.
3. Any harm to a designated heritage asset will be a matter of considerable importance and weight, which should be dealt with in accordance with paragraphs 4 to 6 of this policy.
4. Where a development proposal would harm the significance of a designated heritage asset the effect on the asset and its significance should be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposal. Important public benefits can include securing the long-term reuse of a vacant or underused listed building, and enabling energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures to be employed.
5. Where a development proposal would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, consent should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss, or if all of the following apply:
 - a. The nature of the heritage asset would otherwise prevent all reasonable uses of the site;
 - b. No suitable use for the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;
 - c. Conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is not possible; and
 - d. The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the asset back into use.

Changes to the setting of historic buildings / Conservation Areas are to be sympathetic in terms of siting, proportion, scale, form, height, materials and detailing. All design work and procedures should follow guidance outlined in BS 7913:2013 Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings.

Conclusion:

The following summarises the level of Harm caused to the Significance of the heritage asset by the proposed interventions, the justification for harm where relevant and any proposed mitigation methods that can be applied to minimize or reduce harm:

	Significance Value (Exceptional, High, Moderate, Low, Neutral/Negative)	Level of Impact (Positive Effect, No Effect, Harm, Substantial Harm or Total Loss)	Mitigation of harm/ comments
Archaeological	Moderate	No Effect	
Architectural	Low	Harm	Replacement brick chimney of reduced dimensions to ensure structural stability.
Artistic	Neutral	No Effect	
Historical	Moderate	No Effect	

The test of heritage harm is a critical aspect of planning decisions involving heritage assets. It involves assessing the potential impact of proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines Three levels of Impact: Positive Effect, No Effect and Harm. Harm is then further split into Harm, Substantial Harm and Total Loss.

Harm is defined as any negative impact that diminishes an asset's historic, architectural, or archaeological interest. Substantial harm is defined as harm that would severely damage the heritage asset's significance to the point where it compromises the main traits that justified the asset's designation in the first place.

Under the new NPPF development proposals which would have a positive effect on a designated heritage asset should be supported. Where a development proposal would harm the significance of a designated heritage asset the effect on the asset and its significance should be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposal. In this case the harm is limited to architectural significance through the loss of an original chimney. Critically however a replacement structure of the same width and materiality is proposed to retain the character feature within the Conservation area setting. This approach has been taken by other properties presumably for the same reason. The public benefit is identified here as the reinstatement of structural stability without the loss of a chimney feature and is essential for the safety of the occupants and users of the street. There is no impact upon a Listed or Locally Listed Building. The building is confusingly identified as a BTM in some planning reporting of the road however not identified in the Conservation Appraisal as such.

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We believe that the proposal maintains or secures the residential use consistent with its conservation. The proposals take great care to preserve the building, and its setting as well as any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and are in line with both local and national heritage planning policy.

The proposals are respectful in relation to the material palette used and the location of the proposed works are limited to the chimney only.

We believe the proposals have been carefully considered and should be supported by the local authority.

Assessor Details:

Surveyor: Michelle Purnell BA(hons) BArch RIBA MSc Building Conservation IHBC

A site visit was undertaken as part of the site investigation in order to understand important relationships in the area surrounding the site. Date of Site Visit: 14/09/26 Weather conditions at time of visit: Dry

Information Source Checklist:

The following information sources have been used when conducting desk based research:

Historic England List of Protected Historic Sites x

National Planning Policy Framework x

Planning Practice Guidance: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment x

Relevant Local Plans x

Conservation Area Character Appraisal x

Local Authority Landscape Character Assessment n/a

The Local List of Buildings and Monuments x

Local Records Office Other (please state):