

Historic Environment Background Paper

Reading Borough Council
Submission Local Plan
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 This paper provides background evidence and justification for Reading Borough Council's commitment towards the protection and enhancement of the historic environment. The paper sets out relevant findings for research relating to the conservation of the various elements of the historic environment, and its relationship with planning and development. It is intended that the paper inform the development of the Local Plan document and demonstrate how evidence has been applied to the formulation of policies dealing with the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

1.1.2 This paper includes the following: -

- An outline of national, strategic and local legislation, policy and guidance relating to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment;
- A summary of the relevant results of previous consultations;
- An overview of the current situation and trends; and
- A discussion on the results of research and the policy approach that should be taken, including recommendations on the policy content for the Local Plan (including alternative approaches).

2.0 POLICY, GUIDANCE AND ADVICE

2.1 What is conservation and enhancement? What is its relationship to planning?

2.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines conservation as ‘the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance¹.’ The statutory power to compile lists of buildings of architectural and historic interest was made by a duty under the Town and Country Planning Act in 1947.

2.1.2 In the context of the Council’s planning processes, the historic environment includes buildings, areas, and features of historic interest. This includes archaeological sites and landscapes both rural and urban.

2.1.3 Planning is an important instrument for protecting and enhancing the environment, and preserving built and natural heritage. Reconciling the need for development with the interests of conservation remains a challenge for planners. Commitments to sustainable development are also particularly relevant to the preservation of the historic environment, given that it is irreplaceable.

2.2 National legislation, policy and guidance

2.2.1 This document attempts to summarise the relevant legislation and guidance that relates to the historic environment and its conservation, in the context of planning. Key elements of Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings are also examined. More detailed or technical information can be obtained from the sources included in the reference list at the end of this document.

2.2.2 National planning guidance for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas, archaeological remains and other elements is contained primarily within paragraphs 126-141 of the NPPF. However, information related to the management of the historic environment is found in other guidance, as well. Guidance is outlined below.

National Planning Policy Guidance

2.2.3 Paragraphs 126-141 state:

- ‘Local planning authorities (LPAs) should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of this historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats.’
- Applicants should be required to ‘describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting [...] using the appropriate expertise.’
- In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should enhance the significance of assets by putting them into viable uses consistent with their

¹ NPPF Glossary <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/annex-2-glossary>

conservation, consider the positive contribution that conservation can make to sustainable communities (including economic vitality) and require new development to make a positive contribution to local character.

- The more important the asset, the greater weight should be given to an asset's conservation. Any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification, while harm or loss to the most significant assets should be wholly exceptional.
- If substantial harm or loss would occur, LPAs should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss.
- LPAs should seek opportunities for new development in Conservation Areas to enhance or better reveal the significance of nearby heritage assets.
- LPAs should make information about the significance of the historic environment publicly accessible. Developers should be required to record and advance understanding of any heritage assets lost and to make this information publicly accessible, as well.

2.2.4 The NPPF also emphasises the important role that conservation can play in building sustainable communities. Planning policy should encourage a sense of place and improved quality of life through addressing the connections between people and the historic environment.

2.2.5 With regard to evidence, LPAs should have up-to-date evidence about the historic environment and use it to assess the significance of assets. They should also be able to predict the likelihood that currently unidentified heritage assets will be discovered. Where appropriate, assessment of historic landscape character should also be prepared.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

2.2.6 This Act provides specific protection for buildings and areas of special architectural and historic interest. The Act requires that the Secretary of State compile lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, or approve such lists compiled by Historic England or by other bodies. The Act states that, in considering whether to include a building in a list compiled or approved, the Secretary of State may take into account not only the building itself, but also any respect in which its exterior contributes to the architectural or historic interest of any groups of buildings of which it forms part.

2.2.7 Section 69 of the Act imposes a duty on local planning authorities to designate as conservation areas any 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.' Sections 67 and 73 protect the character and appearance of conservation areas, as well as listed buildings and their settings.

2.2.8 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is accompanied by supporting Regulations².

*Ancient Monument and Archaeological Areas Act 1979*³

2.2.9 This Act protects and designations Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

*Planning Practice Guidance: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*⁴

2.2.10 Planning Practice Guidance on the historic environment outlines the overall policies for achieving conservation and enhancement of assets and their settings. The PPG states that 'protecting and enhancing the historic environment is an important component of the National Planning Policy Framework's drive to achieve sustainable development.' The guidance also notes the need to ensure that the most valued townscapes and landscapes (e.g. those with national and international designations) are given the highest level of protection. Development plan policies must take account of a range of environmental issues, which includes the need to improve the built and natural environment in and around urban areas, and the preservation and enhancement of built and archaeological heritage. The PPG outlines the following guidance that is relevant to the formulation of plans and policies by Local Planning Authorities:

- Local planning authorities should consider the relationship and impact of other policies on the delivery of the strategy for conservation.
- Conservation Area appraisals can be used to help local planning authorities plan policies for the Local Plan.
- Specific policies in the Local Plan should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. This is not a passive exercise, rather LPAs should identify specific opportunities within their area for conservation and enhancement of heritage assets. This could include the delivery of development within settings that make a contribution to or better reveal the significance of the heritage asset.
- LPAs are encouraged to include information about non-designated heritage assets in Local Plans, as well as identification of areas with potential for discovery of non-designated heritage assets with archaeological interest.

² Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1990/1519/made>

³ Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1979/46/pdfs/ukpga_19790046_en.pdf

⁴ Planning Practice Guidance: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>

2.3 Local Policies and Strategies

Reading Borough Council Draft Heritage Statement⁵

2.3.1 The Draft Heritage Statement provides context for Reading's Heritage and how the community as a whole can work to conserve and enhance heritage assets in the Borough. The Draft Heritage Statement is included in Appendix 3 of this document.

2.3.2 The statement proposes a vision for Reading's heritage:

Reading's unique heritage will be a heart of the town's identity and will be highly visible, valued and accessible by those who live, work or visit the town. It will enrich Reading's communities and enable them to interact with, and celebrate, the town's history and historic assets.

2.3.3 The Draft Heritage Statement lists the following objectives:

- To protect and enhance Reading's heritage assets for future generations;
- To reveal and promote Reading's unique heritage for the enjoyment of residents and visitors, understanding its contribution to the town's identity and economic development;
- To increase public awareness, understanding and enjoyment of Reading's heritage;
- To maximise investment to preserve and enhance Reading's heritage;
- To improve internal co-ordination and partnership working with the statutory, voluntary and private sectors to protect and enhance Reading's heritage; and
- To promote Reading's heritage as part of the town's strategy for sustainable economic development.

Reading's Culture and Heritage Strategy 2015-2030⁶

2.3.4 This strategy was prepared by Reading's Cultural Partnership. The Cultural Partnership is a strategic network of stakeholders across sectors to support the delivery of the strategy.

2.3.5 This document establishes a 'Reading cultural vision' that states:

By 2030, Reading will be recognised as a centre of creativity with a reputation for cultural and heritage excellence at a regional, national and international level with increased engagement across the town.

2.3.6 Priorities include:

- Identifying long-term sources of funding and investment for Reading's culture and heritage
- Empowering communities to further engage in and advocate for heritage

⁵ RBC Draft Heritage Statement <http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1193/Draft-Heritage-Statement/pdf/Draft-Heritage-Statement.pdf>

⁶ Reading's Culture and Heritage Strategy <http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/4807/Culture--Heritage-Strategy-2015-2030/pdf/CultureandHeritageStrategy2015f.pdf>

- Challenging and changing negative images and perceptions of Reading
- Conserving and enhancing Reading's unique heritage assets
- Raising awareness of the heritage opportunities and activities in Reading

Reading Borough Council's Local Development Framework⁷

2.3.7 The Local Development Framework (LDF) aims to proactively protect and enhance the historic environment, recognising the pressures of continued infill development.

2.3.8 The LDF's Core Strategy amended in 2015 states that the historic environment in Reading will be protected and that, where appropriate, features of historical significance will be enhanced, including features of archaeological significance.

2.3.9 The key policy for heritage is CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment -

Historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced. This will include:

- *Listed Buildings;*
- *Conservation Areas;*
- *Other features with local and national designation, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and historic parks and gardens.*

Planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. All proposals will be expected to protect and, where appropriate, enhance the character and appearance of the area in which they are located.

Conservation Areas

2.3.10 Conservation Areas are designated by local planning authorities under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) act 1990. A Conservation Area is defined as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance⁸'. The key consideration in identifying a Conservation Area is the quality and interest of an area, as opposed to individual buildings.

2.3.11 Section 69 of the aforementioned Act states that it is a LPA's duty to review previous designations, and to determine whether any parts (or any new parts) should be designated as Conservation Areas (and to action this accordingly).

⁷ RBC Local Development Framework <http://www.reading.gov.uk/readingldf>

⁸ Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 39

2.3.12 Section 71 of the Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their Borough that are conservation areas. Section 72 specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

2.3.13 The Act requires that buildings in Conservation Area are not demolished without the consent of the appropriate authority ('conservation area consent'). Planning proposals that would result in development affecting the character or appearance of a conservation area are also unlikely to be supported, in accordance with existing conservation policies and other DPD considerations.

Listed Buildings

2.3.14 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that the Secretary of State shall compile lists of buildings of special architectural and historic interest, or approve such lists compiled by the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England.

2.3.15 In deciding whether to include a building in this list, the Act states that the Secretary of State may take into account not only the building itself but also:

- a) Any respect in which its exterior contributes to the architectural or historic interest of any group of buildings of which it forms part; and
- b) The desirability of preserving, on the ground of its architectural or historic interest, any feature of the building consisting of a man-made object or structure fixed to the building or forming part of the land and comprised within the curtilage of the building.

2.3.16 As with conservation areas, the demolition of a listed building or its alteration or extension in any manner that would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest is prohibited, unless the works are authorised (i.e. consent is obtained from the local planning authority).

Other Mechanisms for Protection of the Historic Environment

2.3.17 Central government is responsible for scheduling ancient monuments. Ancient monuments are monuments, which, in the opinion of the Secretary of State are of public interest by reason of the historic, architectural, traditional, artistic or archaeological interest attaching to it.

2.3.18 The Government is also responsible for registering historic parks and gardens. The national designation of historic parks and gardens does not offer statutory protection, other than to structures that may be listed or buildings within conservation areas. However, the effect of development proposals on the

character of these parks and gardens is a material consideration in determining planning applications.

- 2.3.19 In areas where there is a need to protect historic character, local authorities have the power to make an Article 4 direction to remove permitted development rights and require planning applications. There are 17 Article 4 directions currently in place in Reading (15 of these relate to patterned brickwork and two restrict conversions from a house to an HMO) and the Council will continue to consider the implementation of Article 4 directions in areas where special character is threatened.

3.0 RESULTS OF PREVIOUS CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1.1 The following section summarises the results of previous consultations undertaken in relation to the Local Plan Issues and Options Paper (January to March 2016), the Draft Local Plan (May to June 2017) and the Pre-submission Draft Local Plan (November 2017 to January 2018). The public involvement process on the Issues and Options and Draft Local Plan encouraged the public to examine and comment upon (amongst other things), the Council's preferred spatial strategy and draft heritage policies. There were many comments relating to the historic environment and general support for protection and enhancement, as well as an emphasis on the need to ensure that new design is sympathetic to surrounding architecture and integrated with heritage assets.
- 3.1.2 Options to increase density in the town centre presented in documents raised concerns over the protection of the historic environment, including potential loss of character. This was acknowledged by the Council as a potential issue, particularly given that much of the Central Area contains attractive features and elements of historic character that could be fundamentally changed or affected by development. Respondents also emphasised the need to acknowledge and protect elements of local significance.
- 3.1.3 Some respondents believed that new housing throughout the Borough would inevitably bring about a change in the local character of residential areas and their wider context. Many residents pointed out that the development in existing residential areas should be balanced by the identification of development opportunity areas. The re-use of existing employment areas for residential development, for example, would support this approach. Some of these areas may be capable of accommodating high-density development, which would have the effect of balancing the relatively low-density suburban character of other areas, and enabling a more balanced supply of housing.
- 3.1.4 Respondents appear to value the historic integrity of the town centre, and recognise the subsequent need to protect and enhance this environment, through the appropriate use of materials (which respect the setting/s of buildings), and high standards of design. Every action should be taken to protect the remaining historic character of Reading.
- 3.1.5 Respondents were pleased that greater emphasis has been placed on heritage in the new Local Plan and many expressed support for the Abbey Quarter initiative.

4.0 CURRENT CHARACTERISTICS AND FUTURE TRENDS

- 4.0.1 Although the character and appearance of Reading has been constantly changing, the town contains a number of historic elements and features that have survived and have often helped to shape the later developments around them. The past is most apparent in the town centre, where medieval remains and street pattern, Georgian townhouse and Victorian shops have been mixed with modern commercial and retail developments. Further information on the history of Reading Borough is contained within the Council's Draft Heritage Statement. Historic settlement patterns are described spatially in Appendix 2.
- 4.0.2 Many parts of Reading have been influenced by large-scale post-war suburban and industrial development, including Tilehurst, Caversham and Whitley. Some of the older rural landscapes have survived reasonably untouched, particularly the water meadows of the Kennet Valley floodplain at Coley and Southcote. Several large areas of Ancient Woodland also survive as prominent ridgeline features that are visible from many parts of the town. It is important that these diverse elements of the historic landscape are preserved, especially when considering the highly urbanised nature of Reading Borough.

Archaeology

- 4.0.3 Reading also has a varied nature of archaeological heritage. A major component of the town's cultural heritage is the buried archaeological evidence that lies beneath the town, the majority of which is associated with the historic town centre. Other parts of Reading exhibiting elements of archaeological importance include the former village centres of Caversham and Tilehurst, the water meadows at Southcote and areas adjacent to the Thames, which have high potential for prehistoric remains. A database of archaeological finds and sites is maintained, and can be used to identify whether particular development sites are of archaeological potential. All finds and records from investigations within Reading are deposited at the Museum of Reading, for long-term care and public access. However, as the last archaeological survey of the historic town centre was carried out in 1978, the true extent of buried archaeological remains in Reading is not known.
- 4.0.4 Berkshire Archaeology has defined areas of archaeological potential in the town based on knowledge of previous settlements and archaeological discoveries. The Council utilises the advice of Berkshire Archaeology when determining planning applications for proposals with the potential to affect sites of archaeological significance. The consultants have ready access to the archaeological database and associated information and have provided site-specific comments that fed into site allocations in the Local Plan.

Conservation Areas

4.0.5 Reading Borough contains 15 Conservation Areas and all are accompanied by a Conservation Area Appraisal⁹. These include:

- Alexandra Road Conservation Area
- Christchurch Conservation Area
- Downshire Square Conservation Area
- Eldon Square Conservation Area
- Horncastle Conservation Area
- Kendrick Conservation Area
- Market Place/London Street Conservation Area
- Redlands Conservation Area
- Routh Lane Conservation Area
- Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area
- South Park Conservation Area
- St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area
- St Peters Conservation Area
- Surley Row Conservation Area
- The Mount Conservation Area

Community groups, such as the Conservation Area Advisory Committee are in the process of updating Conservation Area Appraisals and these will be published as and when they are completed.

4.0.6 A number of the above Conservation Areas are located within Reading's town centre, reflecting the historic significance of this former medieval area. Within the town centre Conservation Areas however; the scale of development is substantially reduced from the average four-storey development that exists throughout much of the central area of Reading.

4.0.7 As well as the above Conservation Areas, fifteen streets (or part thereof) are subject to Article 4 Directions to protect patterned brickwork that is reflective of the areas historic character. The streets typically comprise terraced housing with characteristic Victorian patterned brickwork. Article 4 Directions remove permitted development rights and seek to prevent alterations to the external features, style and materials of affected buildings. There are two other Article 4 Directions in place around the town that seek to remove permitted development rights for changes of use to HMOs. These two directions are in place to help maintain mixed and sustainable communities and are not directly related to the historic environment.

⁹ Conservation Area Appraisals <http://www.reading.gov.uk/conservationareas>

Listed Buildings

- 4.0.8 Reading contains over 850 listings on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest¹⁰. Whilst the majority of buildings are listed as Grade II (i.e. very important to the historic diversity of Reading's character and appearance), the listing also includes Grade I and II* listed buildings of outstanding national importance. Grade I and II* listed buildings are recorded in Appendix 1.
- 4.0.9 There is no information available on the condition of Reading's listed buildings, as no borough-wide buildings-at-risk or condition surveys have ever been undertaken. A large number of Reading's Victorian and later buildings remain unlisted and therefore have no statutory protection. Unfortunately, this means that the loss of (or significant alterations to) such buildings is often unable to be prevented other than through the use of an Article 4 Direction.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

- 4.0.10 Reading Borough contains two Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM) including the Reading Abbey and the High Bridge at Duke Street. As the SAM's are subject to review by Historic England, there is some potential for the designation of additional sites. These Scheduled Ancient Monuments are of national importance, and are protected by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.
- 4.0.11 Reading Abbey (SAM 19019) includes the surviving Abbey buildings and ruins, and a large area of underground remains. A restoration programme from the Council-owned component of the ruins was commenced in 1985 and again in 2016.
- 4.0.12 The High Bridge (SAM 31) dates from 1788, and is a stone bridge over the River Kennet, on the site of earlier medieval bridges. The bridge is still used by town centre traffic (excluding heavy goods vehicles).

Local Archaeological Monuments

- 4.0.13 The following three earthwork monuments have been recognised as containing local importance and thus contributing to Reading's local heritage.
- Coombe Bank, Little John's Farm (prehistoric earthwork)
 - Oxford Road linear bank (possible prehistoric or Anglo-Saxon boundary)
 - Southcote Manor moated site (medieval manor)
- 4.0.14 These monuments are not protected by national legislation.

¹⁰ National Heritage List for England <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

Historic Parks and Gardens

4.0.15 Reading contains five sites that are listed on Historic England's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest (Grade II). These include:

- Caversham Court (small 20th c. garden on the site of a 17th c. garden);
- Caversham Park (18th c. landscaped park and a 19th c. formal terraced garden, formerly over 160 ha, but now only 30 ha);
- The Forbury Gardens (mid-19th c. town centre public garden, occupying an area that has been open space since the foundation of Reading Abbey in 1121);
- Prospect Park (19th c. park, developed in the 20th c. as a 48 hectare public park); and
- Reading Cemetery, Cemetery Junction.

4.0.16 Collectively, the above parks and gardens are representative of change in English garden design since the 17th c. They are good examples of 17th c. riverside design (Caversham Court); 18th and 19th c. designed landscapes (Caversham and Prospect Parks); and 19th c. public space (Forbury Gardens). All are owned by the Council, with the exception of Caversham Park.

4.0.17 A number of local parks and gardens have also been identified as containing historic interest, including Whiteknights (University of Reading), St Mary's and St Laurence's Churchyards and the Abbey Ruins/Chestnut Walk.

Buildings at Risk

4.0.18 Historic England is responsible for maintaining a Register of Buildings at Risk¹¹. Buildings identified on the Register include those 'at risk' through neglect and decay, or vulnerable to becoming so. The following assets are included on the Register.

- Sacred Heart, Watlington Street
- Chazey Farm barn, The Warren
- St David's Hall, Portland Place, 24-30, London Road
- Remains of Reading Abbey

4.0.19 The following actions are being taken in order to secure the future of each 'at risk' asset:

- Sacred Heart, St John's Road - The church has recently secured a Heritage Lottery Fund Grants for Places of Worship and a repair scheme is in progress.
- Chazey Farm barn, The Warren - The Council is working closely with Historic England to explore options for improvement works to the Chazey Farm barn. This could include the serving of an urgent works notice.

¹¹ Heritage at Risk Register <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/>

- St David's Hall, Portland Place, 24-30, London Road - Permission was granted in 2015 to convert the building into residential apartments. Work has commenced and is on-going.
- Remains of Reading Abbey - The Abbey is undergoing significant repairs and works to help interpret the site for visitors. It will re-open to the public in June 2018.

Reading Abbey Quarter

4.0.20 The Abbey is Reading's most significant heritage asset. The 'Reading Abbey Revealed' project is a jointly-funded project by Reading Borough Council and Heritage Lottery Funding to conserve and interpret the ruins and create a high-quality heritage destination for residents and visitors.

4.0.21 In 2009 the remains of Reading Abbey were closed to the public. This was due to safety concerns after the conditions of the remains deteriorated. The Abbey will re-open to the public in June 2018. The project includes:

- Conservation of the ruins;
- Repairs to the Abbey Gateway;
- A new gallery at Reading Museum;
- Improved signage, marketing and interpretation of the Abbey Ruins and the Abbey Quarter;
- New information boards to explain the history of the Quarter;
- Signs guiding visitors from the Oracle and Reading Station;
- A programme of events and activities for the public to learn about and enjoy the Abbey; and
- Opening the Ruins for event hire, including weddings and theatre performances.

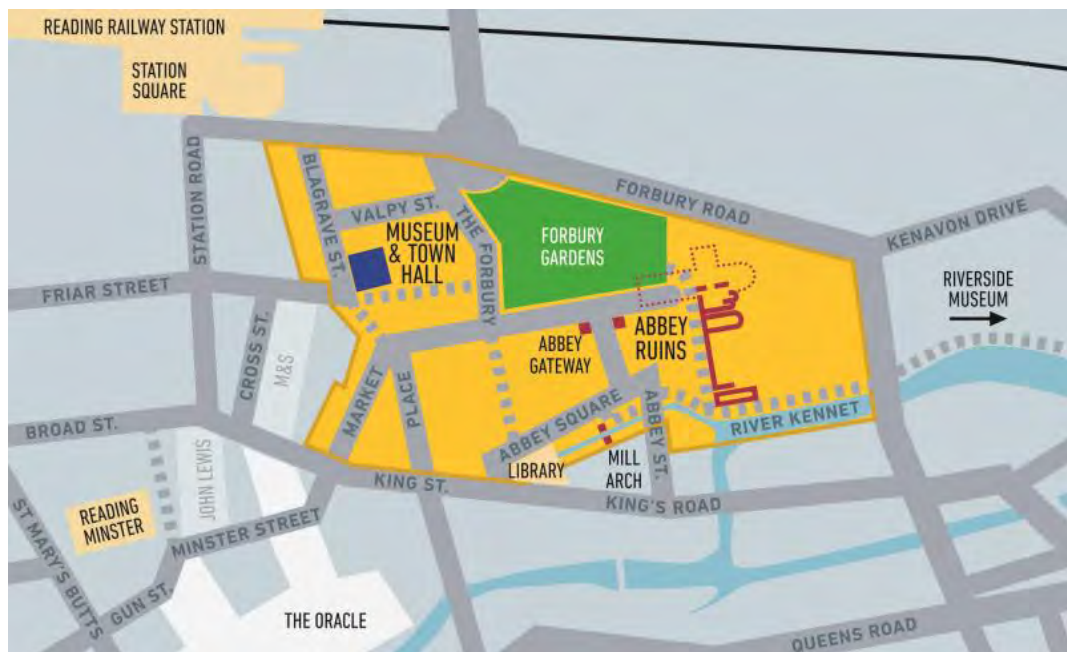


Figure 4.1 - Reading Abbey Quarter Map

4.0.22 The Local Plan contains a new policy (CR15: The Reading Abbey Quarter) to encourage and manage development associated with the Abbey Quarter in order to create a major area for heritage and cultural life within the Borough while conserving and enhancing the asset and its setting.

Locally Important Heritage Assets

4.0.23 The process for locally listed buildings in Reading provides the opportunity for communities to nominate buildings and structures. This ensures that the contribution of buildings of local historic and architectural value to Reading's distinctiveness and character is recognised and taken into account when changes affecting the historic environment are proposed. A list of locally important buildings and structures is available on the Council's website¹².

¹² http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/5834/List-of-locally-important-buildings/pdf/List-Of-Important-Buildings-And-Structures_27.02.2018.pdf

5.0 POLICY ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

- 5.0.1 This section draws together the evidence that has been presented in this background paper in the form of policy and guidance, consultation findings and local characteristics. Protection of the Borough's historic environment is a priority that is reflected in the Local Plan and is a matter that the Council remains committed to.
- 5.0.2 Planning policies must be framed in the context of the relevant national, strategic and local policies and be tailored to local conditions. National policies on planning matters contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance provide relevant direction for the formulation of policies. It is likely however, that many of the Government's recommendations will be more applicable to detailed planning documents, such as supplementary planning documents. Local policies and strategies set the underlying objectives and targets for management of the local historic environment.
- 5.0.3 Local Plan policies will be required to take on the key objective of valuing, protecting and where appropriate, enhancing the historic environment. There are various components to be considered within this underlying goal, in order to take account of the features of the historic environment, their relative contributions, and the different processes and techniques required to manage them.
- 5.0.4 Essentially, the Local Plan should seek to resist development that would adversely affect any recognised feature of the historic environment or their setting(s) while implementing a positive strategy for retention, improvement and promotion of existing heritage assets. Development proposals should also be expected to contribute to the enhancement of the character and appearance of historic assets, and/or the area in which they are located.
- 5.0.5 Policies must reflect the various functions and contributions of the historic environment. This includes recognising the contributions to sustainable development, in terms of the potential to support regeneration, tourism (including appreciation by both the local community and visitors) and social inclusion, as well as conservation. Conservation of the historic environment contributes to local character and distinctiveness, which can lead to a fostering of sense of place and identity. An enhanced quality of life can be attained through education, understanding and appreciation of the historic environment, however, to a large extent, this is reliant on the provision and facilitation of appropriate access to valued sites. Finally, the economic-related benefits of valued features and landscapes should not be overlooked.
- 5.0.6 Given the prominence of the historic environment within the Reading Central Area, there is a need to ensure that the Local Plan reflects its value, and that development proposals are mindful of the need to deal with these areas sensitively. This includes recognition of the value of traditional terraced housing in the core of Reading's Centre, and its subsequent contributions to the varying

character of the Town Centre, particularly in the context of the changes occurring around them.

- 5.0.7 Policy EN5: Protection of Significant Views with a Heritage Interest is supported by Appendix 4. This appendix by the Conservation Area Advisory Committee provides a detailed analysis for each view listed in the policy and explains its historic merit.

5.1 Recommended Policies

- 5.1.1 In light of the above, it is recommended that the Local Plan Submission Document contain the following policies:

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced. This will include:

- *Listed Buildings;*
- *Conservation Areas;*
- *Scheduled Monuments;*
- *Historic parks and gardens; and*
- *Other features with local or national significance, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and assets on the Local List.*

All proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance.

Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits.

Applications which affect, or have the potential to affect, the significant features of heritage assets should be justified by a Heritage Statement.

The Council will monitor buildings and other heritage assets at risk through neglect, decay or other threats, proactively seeking solutions for assets at risk including consideration of appropriate development schemes that will ensure the repair and maintenance of the asset, and, as a last resort, using its statutory powers.

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

EN2: AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Applicants should identify and evaluate sites of archaeological significance by consulting the Historic Environment Record. This will require an assessment of the archaeological impacts of development proposals to be submitted before the planning application is determined. Planning permission will not be granted in cases where the assessment of the archaeological impacts is inadequate.

Where remains cannot be preserved 'in situ,' remains should be properly excavated, investigated and recorded. This will require adequate provision for the identification, investigation, recording and publication of the archaeological resource. Where appropriate, Section 106 agreements will be negotiated to protect, enhance and interpret archaeological remains.

Development proposals which will have an adverse effect on scheduled monuments and other nationally important archaeological remains and their settings will not be allowed unless there is clear and convincing justification in the form of overriding public benefits.

EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

The special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Positive consideration will be given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas. These may include:

- *Reducing visual clutter caused by negative factors, such as poles and overhead wires, satellite dishes or unnecessary street furniture;*
- *Restoring original building features;*
- *Removing inappropriate additions or alterations to buildings;*
- *Protecting and encouraging the maintenance of green spaces and important trees, particularly where they are intrinsic to the history and character of the area;*
- *Improving signage and street furniture;*
- *Restoring or re-establishing appropriate paving, railings or walls;*
- *Sympathetic landscaping and planting;*
- *Improving or restoring green spaces, including front gardens, that are appropriate to the historic interest of a Conservation Area;*
- *Signage that reveals and promotes the Conservation Area and its boundaries;*
- *Interpretation panels to inform the public of the area's historical significance.*

Where a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan has been adopted for a particular Conservation Area, this will be a material consideration in determining applications for development.

EN4: LOCALLY IMPORTANT HERITAGE ASSETS

Development proposals that affect locally important heritage assets will demonstrate that development conserves architectural, archaeological or historical significance which may include the appearance, character and setting of the asset.

Planning permission may be granted in cases where a proposal could result in harm to or loss of a locally important heritage asset only where it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development significantly outweigh the asset's significance. Where it is accepted by the Local Planning Authority that retention is not important, recording of the heritage asset should be undertaken and submitted alongside development proposals. Replacement buildings should draw upon heritage elements of the previous design, incorporating historical qualities that made the previous building significant. This may include appearance, scale and architectural quality.

EN5: PROTECTION OF SIGNIFICANT VIEWS WITH A HERITAGE INTEREST

New development should not harm and where possible should make a positive contribution to views of acknowledged historical significance. The following views merit special protection:

- 1. View from Mclroy Park towards Chazey Barn Farm, the Thames Meadow and the Chilterns escarpment*
- 2. View northwards down Southampton St from Whitley St towards St Giles Church, St Mary's Church and Greyfriars Church*
- 3. View upstream from Caversham Bridge*
- 4. View northwards down Russell St towards the Church of the Holy Trinity*
- 5. View over Alexandra Road Conservation Area toward the Chilterns escarpment*
- 6. View southwards down St Annes Rd towards Downshire Square*
- 7. View of St Annes Church Tower from the west*
- 8. View towards Caversham Park House from the A329(M), railway and surrounding streets*
- 9. View southwards along tree-lined Coley Avenue*

EN6: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN A HISTORIC CONTEXT

In areas characterised by heritage assets, the historic environment will inform and shape new development. New development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development. When determining planning applications for new development, the following factors will be taken into consideration:

- a. The positive contribution of the development to the existing historic townscape (scale, height, mass, proportion, plot size, street form, materials, significant vistas and views, and open space);*

- b. *Sensitivity to historic context;*
- c. *Reflection of borough-wide major heritage themes that contribute to local distinctiveness (e.g. patterned brickwork or former worker terraced housing);*
- d. *Whether development promotes and/or improves access to previously undiscovered or neglected historic significance.*

5.2 Potential Alternative Policy Approaches

5.2.1 In addition to the above recommended approaches, the following alternative approaches for each policy have been considered. A discussion as to why they have been rejected has also been included. Alternatives are aligned with options considered in the Sustainability Appraisal.

EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

5.2.2 *Option EN1(a): No policy*

The NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance are reasonably detailed in their approach to identifying contributions of the historic environment, and communicating and rationalising the Government's requirements for its protection. The guidance places a responsibility on Local Planning Authorities to formulate plans and policies that seek to protect aspects of the historic environment and clarify the basis upon which planning decisions will be made. These conservation policies need to be coordinated and integrated with other planning policies that apply to development (such as policies dealing with design and character) and given a local focus. This take cannot be undertaken at the national level. Furthermore, policies need to be based on a recognition of features of local historic interest and importance, and supported by actions considered necessary to protect these specific features. This demonstrates the need for a planning framework for the historic environment at the local level. Thus, this alternative would leave the town's historic assets vulnerable and fail to fulfil the requirements of the NPPF.

5.2.3 *Option EN1 (b): Continue with current policy (Core Strategy CS33)*

Continuing to apply the existing policy should result in the continued protection and enhancement of Reading's historic environment. As the Core Strategy was tailored to local conditions regarding specific historic assets, this provides a strong framework to protect recognised features from the adverse impacts of development. Despite strong protection, this option may not go far enough to proactively enhance the historic environment. This option would bring positive effects, but these effects would be less-pronounced than the preferred option.

EN2: Areas of Archaeological Significance

5.2.4 *Option EN2 (a): No policy*

This option would lead to significant negative effects to areas of archaeological importance. It would prevent the understanding of the significance of the historic

environment for residents and future generations. Furthermore, this option would fail to fulfil the requirements of the NPPF which states:

‘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.’
(Paragraph 128)

5.2.5 *Option EN2 (b): Business as usual, no separate policy, but mentioned in EN1*

This option is similar to the preferred option, but does not describe the requirements placed on developers. Thus, the preferred option brings more significant positive impacts with regard to the historic environment. Placing value on archaeological investigations can help to foster a sense of place.

EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas

5.2.6 *Option EN3 (a): No policy*

This option would likely result in degradation and loss of character in the Borough’s Conservation Areas, bringing negative effects with regard to townscape character and the historic environment. It may allow for unconstrained development, but the costs of negative effects far outweigh any benefits to housing provision.

5.2.7 *Option EN3 (b): Business as usual, no separate policy, but mentioned in EN1*

This alternative would rely on EN1 and would grant cursory protection to Conservation Areas as a type heritage asset, but fails to highlight specific issues in Conservation Areas. A separate policy draws attention to an important issue, as some of the Borough’s Conservation Areas are experiencing the cumulative negative effects of HMO development and loss of historic character.

EN4: Locally Important Heritage Assets

5.2.8 *Option EN4 (a): No policy*

Historic England states:

‘Whilst local listing provides no additional planning controls, the fact that a building or site on a local list means that its conservation as a heritage asset is an objective of the NPPF and a material consideration when determining the outcome of a planning application.’¹³

Thus, although a local list is not required by the NPPF, it can be used as a tool to extend protection to assets deemed locally significant. The absence of a policy regarding a local list could leave assets that are not formally listed vulnerable to decay and degradation.

5.2.9 *Option EN4 (b): Business as usual, no separate policy, but mentioned in EN1*

¹³ <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/has/locallylistedhas/>

This option would grant cursory protection to locally listed assets simply as a type of heritage asset. Thus, some level of protection would be granted, but positive benefit would likely be more significant under the preferred option. The preferred option provides detail regarding when permission should be granted, that documentation should be undertaken by the developer and insists that development take historical design cues.

EN5: Protection of Significant Views with a Heritage Interest

5.2.10 *Option EN5 (a): No policy, business as usual*

This option would provide no special protection for views of acknowledged historical significance. Some views would be considered during the determination of planning applications, either as part of a site's setting or with regard to existing landscape or tall buildings evidence. This approach would leave many views vulnerable and would result in negative impacts on the historic environment.

5.2.11 *Option EN5 (b): New policy protecting views generally*

This option would extend protection to a much larger number and range of views within the Borough. While this could result in positive effects for the historic environment, it may go too far to protect too many views and unnecessarily deter development. This would bring negative effects with regard to housing provision.

EN6: New Development in a Historic Context

5.2.12 *Option EN5 (a): No policy, business as usual*

This option would fail to fulfil the following in the NPPF: 'Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas to enhance or better reveal their significance.' Omission of the preferred option would rely on cross-cutting design policies that pay less attention to historic elements as cues for new development. Requiring new development to reflect existing historic character will help to create a sense of place and forms an integral part of the Local Plan's efforts to develop a positive strategy for the historic environment.

6.0 RECOMMENDED APPROACH

- 6.0.1 Based on their valuable contribution to numerous aspects of Reading's environment, community and economy, there is a general presumption that all features of the historic environment will be preserved and enhanced. This is also consistent with Government guidance, and the relevant strategic policies.
- 6.0.2 Planners and other decision-makers have a responsibility to assist the preservation of the historic environment, in the public interest. There is also considerable scope to value-add to the quality and integrity of the historic environment, through improvements; responsive design; the provision of appropriate access to historic assets; and effective ongoing management. The recommended planning policies are based on sound conservation principles and best practice.
- 6.0.3 The paper makes the following additional recommendations:
- Continuation of updates to the Conservation Area appraisals, to ensure up-to-date systematic analysis and recording of Conservation Areas; identifying valued components that contribute to character, and facilitating development of policies for their protection and enhancement.
 - Ensure that the Local Plan embraces the principles of good design, which includes the recognition of the importance of the historic environment and its contributions, such as its association with economic and regenerative benefits.
 - There may also be a need for condition surveys to be undertaken on a regular basis, to identify potential risks to historic features; help to maintain appropriate records; and provide greater understanding of Reading's historic fabric. This represents a more proactive approach to managing the historic environment.

7.0 REFERENCES

- Department for Communities and Local Government (2012), **National Planning Policy Framework**
- Department for Communities and Local Government (2012), **Planning Practice Guidance**
- Reading Borough Council (2008, amended 2015), **Core Strategy**
- Reading Borough Council (2009), **Reading Central Area Action Plan**
- Reading Borough Council (2010), **Conservation Area Appraisals**
- Reading Borough Council (2012), **Proposals Map**
- Reading Borough Council (2012, altered 2015), **Sites and Detailed Policies Document**
- Reading Borough Council (2014), **Draft Heritage Statement**

APPENDIX 1

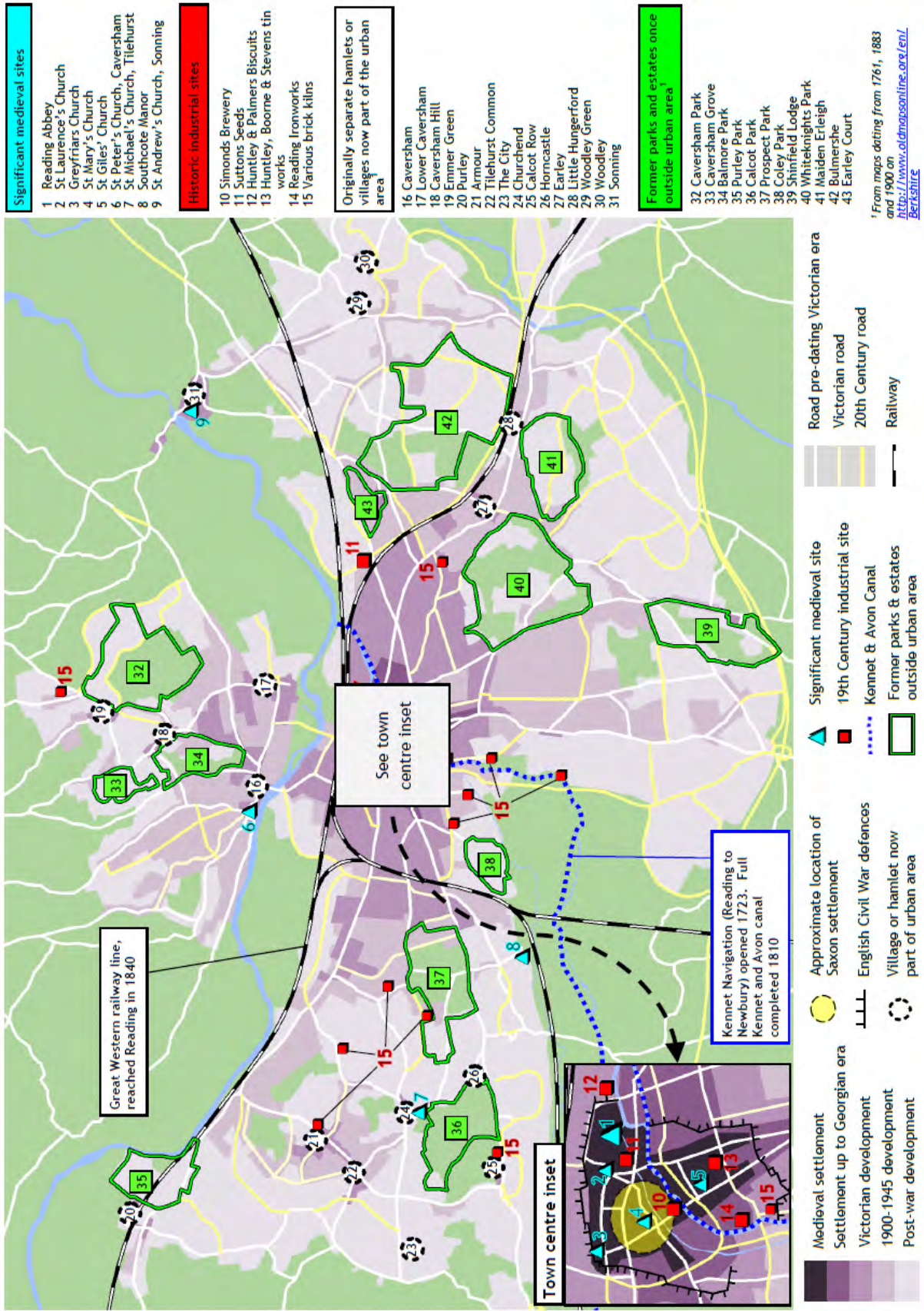
Grade I Listed Buildings

Abbey Gate, Forbury Gardens
Chazey Farm Barn, The Warren
Church of St Mary, St Mary's Butts
Greyfriars Church, Friar Street
Reading Abbey Ruins, Forbury Gardens
St Laurence's Church and Churchyard, Forbury Road

Grade II* Listed Buildings

15 Castle Street
154-160 Castle Street
17 Castle Street
173-183 Kings Road
19 Castle Street
73 & 75 London Street
78-84 Southampton Street
Albion Place, London Road
Archway connecting Forbury Gardens to Abbey Ruins
Chazey Farmhouse, The Warren
Christ Church, Christchurch Road
Church of Saint Mary, Castle Street
Church of St Peter, Church Road
Holybrook Culvert to the rear of Castle Street 1-31
Holybrook House, Castle Street
Old Grove House, Surley Row
Royal Berkshire Hospital, London Road
St David's Hall, London Road
The Royal Berkshire Regiment Cenotaph, Brocks Barracks, Oxford Road
The Simeon Monument, Market Place
Town Hall and Clock Tower, Blagrove Street
Watlington House, Watlington Street

APPENDIX 2 - MAP OF HISTORIC SETTLEMENT PATTERNS



APPENDIX 3: DRAFT HERITAGE STRATEGY

Reading Borough Council

Draft Heritage Statement

Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services

February 2014

Review date 2017



www.reading.gov.uk



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

PREFACE

This Heritage Statement has been drafted to provide context and initial input in the development of the heritage section in the forthcoming Cultural and Heritage Strategy that the Council has committed to prepare and publish for consultation during 2014.

At the same time this statement will provide some context for an application that is being made in February 2014 for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for works within the Abbey Quarter of Reading.

The preparation of this statement provides an opportunity for some initial consultation on how the community views Reading's Heritage and how the community as whole can work to conserve and enhance the heritage assets in the Borough.

This is a very initial draft on which comments can be made. It is work in progress and some graphics and other information needs to be added to the document going forward.

Comments on this document can be made by email to [...]

It would be helpful if comments on this document could be made by 11th April 2014

Draft Heritage Statement Reading Borough Council

INTRODUCTION

'History is so important, particularly in this hectic modern world - and all residents should be aware of this gem in our midst.'

Visitor to the Reading Abbey Quarter

The poet and writer Sir John Betjemen and artist John Piper recognised that it is sometimes all too easy to see Reading as a 'modern place'. In fact Reading is an ancient town with over 1000 years of history, and contains a wealth of archaeology, historic buildings and museum collections.

'The capital of the county is a much maligned town...too many people see it only from the railway and dismiss it as a modern place' (John Betjemen and John Piper, 1949)



Reading Townscape, 1974, by John Piper.

Piper's vision of Reading found expression in 1974 when he was commissioned to produce two tapestries celebrating Reading's built and natural heritage.

Reading Museum object no. 1997.134.1

There has been a long history of settlement in the area, with the name Reading having Saxon roots. Reading Abbey was a very important and prestigious religious centre throughout the Middle Ages. Much of Reading's growth took place in the Victorian era after the development of canals. The arrival of the railway led to the significant expansion of manufacturing in

the town. This history is reflected in over 800 listed buildings, fifteen conservation areas and two scheduled ancient monuments, as well as six museums and a host of designated heritage assets. Those that seek out Reading's heritage are richly rewarded.

This long heritage is important in forming the identity of the town and its people. It has a direct influence on the quality of life of its residents and is a key asset to the local and regional economy. Reading's heritage is an important and unique asset, albeit sometimes our best kept secret.

This statement sets out Reading Borough Council's framework for revealing its 'secret' assets. It is structured as follows:

- an outline of the town's long history and distinctive heritage;
- the scope, purpose and objectives of the statement;
- the policy context;
- the Council's heritage responsibilities;
- heritage issues and opportunities;
- action plan.

READING'S HERITAGE

An overview of Reading Heritage

Reading's distinctive character is strongly linked to the history of the town. Although there is evidence for prehistoric and Roman settlement, Reading is a Saxon place-name meaning the 'people of Reada'. Reada or 'the Red' was probably the leader of a group of early Saxon settlers in the late 5th or 6th century AD. A cremation urn cemetery of this period, overlooking the symbolic meeting point of the Rivers Thames and Kennet, was found in 1891 at Kennetmouth. Reading was first recorded in 871 AD when the Danish Viking army built a rampart between the Kennet and Thames. The king of Wessex and his brother, later to become King Alfred the Great, unsuccessfully attacked the Danish encampment. The name 'Vastern' Road to the north of the railway station is an Old English word for a 'stronghold'.

The historic core retains reminders of its Saxon and medieval origins through its early street pattern, ancient parish churches and the nationally important remains of Reading Abbey. The historic Abbey Quarter is particularly evocative with layers of history including the burial place of King Henry I, the civil war defences of Forbury Hill, the Abbey Gate where Jane Austen attended school, the Victorian Maiwand Lion, and Reading Gaol where Oscar Wilde was imprisoned. There are also buildings by the leading architects of the nineteenth century including Sir John Soane, Augustus Pugin, Sir George Gilbert Scott and Alfred Waterhouse.

By the eighteenth century Reading was expanding outside its medieval boundaries and was chiefly being rebuilt in the local brick. Significant

groups of late Georgian architecture can be seen in areas such as Russell Street and Castle Hill. Improved transport links via the Kennet and Avon Canal saw the use of Bath stone in areas such as Eldon Square and Queen's Road, and for new public facilities like the Royal Berkshire Hospital and Reading Cemetery.

The arrival of the Great Western Railway in 1840 saw the expansion of Reading's emerging industries, especially Simonds' brewery, Huntley & Palmers biscuits and Sutton's Seeds. The Victorian and Edwardian expansion and prosperity of the town is demonstrated by Reading's distinctive use of locally made coloured brick, terracotta and tile. This has resulted in some of Reading's most recognisable landmarks, including the Town Hall, and new suburbs such as The Mount and the Downshire Square Conservation Areas.

Beyond the town centre former rural parishes like Caversham and Tilehurst became part of the Borough in 1911. The rural origin of these areas is reflected in their heritage. For example St Peter's conservation area is the old village centre of Caversham around the medieval parish church and the restored Thames-side Caversham Court Gardens. The parks and gardens of the many country houses that once surrounded Reading also survive within the modern urban townscape including Caversham Park, Prospect Park and Whiteknights (now the University of Reading campus).

After the Second World War the opening of the Inner Distribution Road transformed the town centre, with changes to the physical appearance of Reading, including alterations to the historic street pattern and the loss of historic buildings. Parts of Reading's historic core were demolished but much of historical merit remains. Recent developments such as Forbury Square have been more sympathetic to this heritage, removing intrusive post-war structures, providing public open space and public realm, and improving their settings.¹

Reading's Heritage Assets

Reading Borough contains a diverse range of heritage assets²:

- 800 nationally Listed buildings (including 27 grade I and grade II*);
- 15 Conservation Areas;
- Two Scheduled Ancient Monuments (Reading Abbey and High Bridge)
- Five Historic Parks and Gardens;
- Locally listed buildings and structures;
- Fifteen Article 4 Directions protecting locally distinctive buildings by removing permitted development rights;
- The Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER)³ contains comprehensive records of over 1200 archaeological sites and finds in

¹ <http://www.reading.gov.uk/leisureandvisitors/historyandrecords/>

² www.reading.gov.uk/businesses/Planning/HistoricEnvironment/

³ www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/chr/default.aspx

Reading; Areas of archaeological potential are identified on the proposals map of LDF.

Reading has six museums and three archive collections:

- Berkshire Medical Heritage Centre (independent);
- Cole Museum of Zoology (University);
- Museum of English Rural Life (University);
- Reading Museum (RBC);
- Riverside Museum at Blake's Lock (RBC);
- Ure Museum of Classical Archaeology (University);
- Berkshire Record Office collection (RBC);
- Reading Library Local Studies Collection (RBC);
- University of Reading Special Collections (University).

[\[show on maps \(from GIS map\)\]](#)

SCOPE, PURPOSE AND AIMS OF THE STATEMENT

Scope of the Statement

The Council intends that the preparation of this statement will provide a framework to ensure that we celebrate, protect, reveal and promote Reading's unique heritage, so that it attracts and continues to delight residents and visitors alike. The aim is that this document will be developed into a plan which will inform and be part of the wider Cultural and Heritage Strategy for Reading.

Definition of heritage

For the purposes of this strategic statement, heritage is those parts of the historic environment that have national or local designated significance because of their historic, archaeological or artistic interest (including listed buildings, scheduled monuments, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens, archaeological sites identified on the HER and various historic assets of local importance), and accredited museum collections within the Borough.

Purpose

The purpose of this statement is to:

- help to reveal, maintain and enhance Reading's historic identity;
- demonstrate links with the long term vision for Reading, central government agendas and strategies of national and regional agencies;
- detail how heritage can contribute to the quality of life for residents and the community;
- provide a framework for maximising investment in Reading's heritage;
- set a direction and define priorities within and between heritage initiatives and reconcile competing demands;
- inform the management of the Council's assets, service plans and the work of individual officers, departments and other agencies;
- encourage innovation and improved partnership working;
- act as a lever and rationale for gaining funding from external agencies and partners.

Vision

The statement proposes a new vision for Reading's heritage:

Reading's unique heritage will be a heart of the town's identity and will be highly visible, valued and accessible by those who live, work or visit the town. It will enrich Reading's communities and enable them to interact with, and celebrate, the town's history and historic assets.

Objectives

1. To protect and enhance Reading's heritage assets for future generations;
2. To reveal and promote Reading's unique heritage for the enjoyment of residents and visitors, understanding its contribution to the town's identity and economic development;
3. To increase public awareness, understanding and enjoyment of Reading's heritage;
4. To maximise investment to preserve and enhance Reading's heritage;
5. To improve internal co-ordination and partnership working with the statutory, voluntary and private sectors to protect and enhance Reading's heritage;
6. To promote Reading's heritage as part of the town's strategy for sustainable economic development.

The value of heritage

Reading's heritage is of local, national and, in cases such as Reading Abbey, European and wider international significance.

Reading has an obligation to protect its heritage for the benefit and the quality of life of its residents and visitors. Reading's heritage assets are not just of relevance to the past, but also to the future, if Reading is to fulfil its role as a centre of culture at the heart of the Thames Valley.

Value of heritage to local people

In 2010, Reading Museum carried out consultation on what its visitors and stakeholder groups thought of the current Reading Gallery and what was important about Reading's heritage. Feedback from 369 people identified the Abbey as Reading's most important heritage, followed by the industries of beer, bulbs and biscuits. Guided tours have continued since the closure of the Abbey Ruins in 2009, highlighting the Abbey Quarter's importance and giving people the opportunity to give feedback. 100% of the 309 participants who completed feedback agreed that the Abbey Quarter was highly significant and felt that it is important for young people to understand and take pride in the history of their town. They would like more to be done to promote Reading as a historical town, increasing tourism and therefore benefiting the town economically as well as culturally.

A further questionnaire consultation on the Abbey Quarter was undertaken during January 2014. There were over 1100 completed questionnaires. These are still to be fully analysed but they do indicate that heritage is

considered to be very important in Reading and that there is very strong support for the works proposed in the Abbey Quarter.

Economic impact of investing in heritage

In 2010 English Heritage commissioned research into the economic justification for investing in heritage. Key findings were:

- Every £1 invested in the historic environment directly contributes on average an additional £1.60 to the local economy;
- The historic environment attracts visitors and encourages them to spend more. Approximately one in five visitors spend more in an area after investment than they did before;
- The historic environment is as an important factor in businesses' decisions on location, as road access;
- Historic areas also attract a greater mix of businesses, such as bars and restaurants, encouraging people to stay in an area longer and to visit at different times of the day;
- Investment in the historic environment improves public perceptions, increases civic pride and provides a greater sense of identity. Almost every person surveyed in areas where investment had occurred agreed that the investment has raised local pride in the area (92%), improved perception of the local area (93%) and helped to create a distinct sense of place.

In 2013 Arts Council England (ACE) disseminated figures on the economic impact of culture and the growth of audiences:

- For every £1 invested in arts and culture up to £6 is generated for the local economy;
- UK visitor figures to museums and galleries are at their highest level since record began;
- 51% of UK adults visited a museum or gallery in 2011/12.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

Reading Borough Council corporate vision and policy

The Reading 2020 Vision foresaw the regeneration and growth of the town as the capital of the Thames Valley.

The preparation of Reading's Sustainable Community Strategy started a process of forming "A Vision for Reading in 2030 and beyond".⁴ In terms of Reading as a place it is recognised that,

"Reading is attractive, thriving and culturally vibrant, with a strong sense of historic identity."

The Council's current Corporate Plan commits to producing a new Cultural and Heritage Strategy and to reviewing the vision for Heritage across the Borough. It also highlights the preparation of the Abbey Quarter Project Plan as a priority.

National Heritage Protection Plan 2011-2015, English Heritage

The NHPP⁵ sets out how English Heritage, together with partners in the heritage sector, will prioritise and deliver heritage protection.

The NHPP aims to identify those parts of England's heritage that matter to people most and are at greatest risk - and then to concentrate efforts on saving them.

The Plan seeks to ensure that England's historic environment;

- is not needlessly at risk of damage, erosion or loss;
- is experienced, understood and enjoyed by local communities;
- contributes to sustainable and distinctive places to live and work;
- helps deliver positive and sustainable economic growth.

It encourages organisations to develop their own Action Plan in response to the NHPP.

In recent years, English Heritage has increasingly restricted its involvement in individual cases to the more important buildings and historic assets of significant national importance. There is a corresponding expectation that local authorities take more responsibility for the historic assets in their areas and invest in the management and protection of their historic environment.

National Planning Policy Guidance 9.1.7 & 9.1.8 (SDPD)

⁴ <http://www.reading2020.org.uk/reading-2020/reading-2020/vision-reading/>

⁵ www.english-heritage.org.uk/nhpp.

Government planning policy in the National Planning Policy Framework⁶ sees protecting and enhancing the historic environment as an important component of the drive to achieve sustainable development. The conservation of heritage assets forms one of the ‘core planning principles’ that underpin the planning system.

Reading Borough Council’s Local Development Framework (LDF), of which the last component document (the Sites and Detailed Policies Document) was adopted at the end of 2012, is very much in accordance with the importance given to the historic environment in the NPPF. This is demonstrated in that RBC has, through its LDF policies, extended its protection of the historic environment by putting in place a framework and criteria for the local listing of buildings in accordance with the policies in the NPPF and advice from English Heritage.

Arts Council England Strategic Framework 2010-2020

Arts Council England’s (ACE) mission is ‘Great art and culture for everyone’. ACE have a 10 year strategic framework from 2010-2020, it was revised in October 2013. At its heart are five goals:

- Excellence is thriving and celebrated in the arts, museums and libraries
- Everyone has the opportunity to experience and to be inspired by the arts, museums and libraries
- The arts, museums and libraries are resilient and environmentally sustainable
- The leadership and workforce in the arts, museums and libraries are diverse and appropriately skilled
- Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts, museums and libraries

There are complex interrelationships between these ACE goals. They support each other, and success in one goal contributes to success in others. Goals one, two and five are built on the foundation of goals three and four.

RBC Local Development Framework - Historic Environment policies

The role of the LDF⁷ is to proactively protect and enhance the historic environment, recognising the pressures of continued infill development. This entails recognition of the value of historic features that are desirable for retention, ensuring that the most valued townscapes and landscapes (e.g. those with national and international designations) are given the highest level of protection, and that other locally valued areas of landscape are provided with adequate protection.

⁶ NPPF, DCLG, 2012.

⁷ www.reading.gov.uk/readingldf

The LDF's Core Strategy Document adopted in 2008 recognises that physical survivals from our past are a central part of our cultural heritage and sense of both local and national identity. This heritage contributes to formal education, and our understanding and appreciation of both the past and the present. The presence of these remains enhances local distinctiveness and the character and appearance of Reading, and contributes to leisure and tourism.

The Core Strategy 'vision for the historic environment in Reading is to protect and, where appropriate, enhance features of the historic environment, including features of archaeological significance'.

The key policy for heritage is CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment.

Historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced. This will include: -

- Listed Buildings;
- Conservation Areas;
- Other features with local or national designation, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and historic parks and gardens.

Planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. All proposals will be expected to protect and where appropriate enhance the character and appearance of the area in which they are located.

Reading Museum policies

The collection of Reading Museum is an important part of the town's publically owned heritage and a regionally significant cultural resource, which through its use and interpretation makes a major contribution to the Council's vision and priorities. The collection tells the story of Reading's people and places through the Museum's galleries, exhibitions; online resources; school workshops and outreach programme.

As part of its Accredited status the Museum has several policies⁸ that guide the care and development of and access to its collection. These include:

- Acquisition and Disposal Policy 2010-2015;
- Collection Management Policy 2012;
- Access Policy 2012.

⁸ <http://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/aboutus/>

HERITAGE ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Reading's history and its historic assets are hugely important to the identity of the town and its communities. The conservation and enhancement of these assets is the responsibility of everyone in the community. Nearly all the assets are owned by private organisations and individuals. The Council owns relatively few historic assets. The conservation and enhancement of Reading's historic assets needs to be based on innovative and creative approaches, involving high levels of partnership. The following section discusses current issues and opportunities and starts to set out priorities along with some proposals for future action.

Heritage Protection and Management

Heritage Policies and Strategy

The Council operates a very successful and important museum and has significant library and archive resources related to the history of the town. It has planning policies, property management responsibilities, and various responsibilities in relation to listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments.

As the local planning authority RBC has a statutory responsibility to protect Reading's heritage assets. The Council fulfils this through its Local Development Framework (LDF), planning consents and through various proactive activities. These include the important work of the Museum's Berkshire Archaeology service in relation to the archaeology of Reading, the designating of Conservation areas, keeping Conservation Area Statements and Management Plans up to date, and creating a list of locally important buildings and structures.

Until now there has been no overarching framework for the protection and promotion of Reading's heritage. As with most councils, responsibility for managing and promoting the borough's heritage is divided amongst council departments. Various departments have been involved in developing and implementing heritage projects. While these have been individually successful, this has sometimes been at the expense of strategically prioritising investment where it is most needed.

This statement aims to align RBC policy with national policy and practice, to outline a more up-to-date direction for the approach to heritage assets in Reading. It seeks to set out priorities within and between heritage initiatives and to reconcile competing demands.

Action Point - the Council should integrate this Heritage Statement into the new Cultural and Heritage Strategy for Reading; and ensure regular reviews of this strategy.

Conservation Area Appraisals

The designation of a conservation area is not an end in itself. Local authorities develop policies which clearly identify what features of the area should be preserved or enhanced, and set out how this can be done. Character appraisals also identify areas where enhancement through development may be desirable.

Appraisals were undertaken for all Reading's conservation areas between 2005 and 2010. The Conservation Area appraisals can be found on the Council's website.⁹

Action Point - The Council should periodically review these appraisals to assess enhancement opportunities and to make recommendations for matters including boundary changes and Article 4 Directions.

The Local List of Heritage Assets

The new process for locally listed buildings in Reading provides the opportunity for communities to nominate buildings and structures that they believe fit the published criteria. This ensures that the contribution of buildings of local historic and architectural value to Reading's distinctiveness and character is recognised and taken into account when changes affecting the historic environment are proposed.

Action Point - The Council should continue to identify buildings or structures worthy of being locally listed through the published process.

At Risk Heritage

English Heritage (EH) regards the creation of a local Heritage At Risk Register as the first step in tackling neglected structures and buildings in order to assess and monitor the scale of the problem and prioritise resources and action. Over recent years RBC has not maintained a local Heritage at Risk for Grade II or locally listed buildings and structures.

In 2012 The English Heritage At Risk programme¹⁰ identified three 'At Risk' sites in Reading Borough:

- Reading Abbey, Scheduled Monument and Grade I listed building, owned by Reading Borough Council (Reading Abbey Ruins and Gate)
- Chazey Farm barn, Grade I listed building in private ownership
- St David's Hall, Grade II* listed building, owned by University of Reading

⁹<http://www.reading.gov.uk/businesses/Planning/HistoricEnvironment/conservation-areas/>

¹⁰<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/heritage-at-risk/>

Action Point - The Council should set up an ‘At Risk Register’ and proactively seek to tackle neglected historic assets through the relevant legislation and tools available.

Investment and Management for Heritage Assets

Since the mid-1990s there has been significant investment in heritage assets in Reading that has restored and improved access to key parts of Reading’s heritage. Key heritage sites have been restored in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund, including the Museum & Town Hall, Blake’s Lock, the Forbury Gardens and Caversham Court Gardens. Reading Museum has radically improved its display and storage facilities, ensuring that its collections are more accessible to the public than ever before. The following table provides a listing of the major projects in which the Council has been involved.

Project	Project cost
1997-2000 Town Hall including Concert Hall and Museum galleries	£5.6m
2001 Huntley & Palmers Collection digitisation and website	£114,000
2003-2004 Riverside Museum at Blake’s Lock	£180,000
2003-2005 Forbury Gardens	£2.13m
2004-2009 Museum loans service (long listed for Art Fund prize 2009)	£957,000
2005-2007 Simeon Monument	£60,000
2008-ongoing Abbey Quarter project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abbey Ruins and Abbey gate surveys and trial repairs • Town Hall Square 	£180,000 £450,000
2009 Battle Library	£1.49m
2009 Caversham Court Gardens	£1.6m

In addition, since 1995, the Council has brought well over 30 ha of previously private open space into the public realm¹¹. A number of these areas have a

¹¹ Reading Open Spaces Strategy, RBC, 2007, see: <http://www.reading.gov.uk/leisureandvisitors/outdoors/parksandopenspaces/park-management/reading-open-spaces-strategy/>

heritage interest (e.g. Addington Road, Kings Road Gardens, View Island) and the council has an on-going programme for upgrading its parks and open spaces.

There are still some challenges to ensure that all RBC heritage assets are effectively maintained. Planned maintenance at operational sites reduces the risk of unforeseen and expensive capital expenditure in the future, while greatly reducing the risk of neglect and decay to our heritage and health & safety issues for people. Projects that have received Lottery funding have ongoing commitments to ensure that they have the appropriate levels of planned preventative maintenance (PPM) through their Conservation Management Plans.

The maintenance of some sites has been problematic due to the nature of their construction or current lack of a viable use. For example the flint and lime rubble of the Abbey Ruins was never meant to be exposed directly to the weather, and its condition has been further exacerbated by the recent severe winters. In addition buildings or sites that are vacant or closed to the public are at greater risk of decay and vandalism.

Action Point - The Council should carry out a desktop site assessment to establish the current condition of RBC owned heritage assets. Where necessary site surveys could be commissioned and Conservation Management Plans created for each heritage site. This would then be used to co-ordinate and inform planned preventative maintenance and investment priorities across RBC heritage assets.

[case study - abbey gate and ruins condition survey - EH grants]

Prioritisation of capital investment and funding bids

RBC is the owner of a number of important heritage assets in Reading, including two Scheduled Monuments (Reading Abbey and High Bridge), two Grade I listed buildings (Abbey Ruins and Abbey Gate), three Grade II* listed buildings (Archway in Forbury Gardens, Simeon Monument in the Market Place and the Town Hall - Council Chamber and office with Clock Tower), and over 40 Grade II listed structures.

The environment for funding heritage projects is particularly difficult due to the reduction in local and national government budgets, and the increased competition for grant funding. Heritage outcomes can also be funded within wider regeneration and infrastructure projects as demonstrated in the application of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

Prioritising capital investment for RBC-owned heritage assets, including the co-ordination of bids to funding bodies like the HLF, should be informed by the work recommended above to identify the current condition, risk level and grading of each asset.

Action Point - To maximise opportunities for external funding for heritage it is essential that RBC prioritises projects and ensures these are aligned with the requirements of key grant funders, especially the HLF..

Action Point - The Council should give the highest priority to Scheduled Monuments and Grade I listed structures. The Abbey Quarter project will be central to delivering a step-change regeneration of Reading's historic heart.

Public-Private Partnerships

The Council has recently entered into negotiations with a private firm to restore the structure and re-open to the public the King's Meadow Pool. This arrangement may be suitable for other assets with commercial value, and potential opportunities will be highlighted as part of the heritage site assessment described above.

Action Point - The Council should continue to secure the long term future of heritage assets, which are not a priority for grant funding, through commercial partnerships.

Reading Prison Site

The closure of the Prison announced by the Ministry of Justice in September 2013 presents an important opportunity to enhance a major part of the Abbey Quarter. Writer Oscar Wilde wrote *The Ballad of Reading Goal* after his incarceration at the prison in 1895-97. The surviving Victorian buildings are Grade II listed and the entire site covers the remains of the eastern precinct of Reading Abbey and is a Scheduled Monument. The prison site is identified as sub-area (RC3b) of the 'East Side Major Opportunity Area' in the Reading Central Area Action Plan (RCAAP). The RCAAP sets out the planning framework for the central area of Reading up to 2026. The Council is drawing up Outline Development Principles to guide the future development of the site, taking account of its important location within the Abbey Quarter.

Action Point - The Council's Outline Development Principles should be used to guide the future development of the prison site, taking account of its important location within the Abbey Quarter.

Improving the Setting of Heritage Assets

RBC is responsible for much public land that provides the setting for many heritage features. Unfortunately in the 20th century, traffic management schemes that prioritised motor vehicles took precedence over 'place-making' for people. This legacy has often diminished the collective impact of important buildings even in conservation areas such as Castle Street and St Mary's Butts.

Recent public and private schemes, like Forbury Square, Market Place and Town Hall Square, have begun to reverse this damage. These schemes provide a template for future projects to heal the scars in Reading's historic fabric. This type of investment increases footfall therefore making a contribution to the vitality of the town centre.

Action Point - The Council should ensure that environmental improvement schemes enhance and protect the setting of heritage assets and areas.

[CASE STUDIES TOWN HALL SQUARE]

Economic Development

Heritage is widely recognised as an asset in supporting economic development. Surveys show that people prefer to live, work and visit places with distinctive heritage and this is a part of business decisions on where to locate. Investment in heritage and culture generates more spending in the local economy. For example previous investment in publically owned heritage assets within the Abbey Quarter, like the Forbury Gardens and Simeon Monument, has created an attractive environment for high-quality commercial investment within the Abbey Quarter including Forbury Square and Forbury Hotel. RBC works with Reading UK CIC to promote the town's economic development.

Action Point: the Council should ensure that Reading's Economic Development Strategy promotes awareness of Reading's heritage and highlights the economic value of heritage and culture.

Historic Collections and Archaeological archives

Reading Borough Council owns and manages the important collections of Reading Museum¹², containing historic objects of local, regional and national significance. The Museum provides award-winning access to the collections through its galleries, temporary exhibitions, websites, loan boxes, object handling, events and activities. The Museum services are used by over 700,000 people a year, including over 150,000 in person visits.

The Berkshire HER¹³ is maintained by Berkshire Archaeology¹⁴, an archaeological advice service for Bracknell Forest, Reading, Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead and Wokingham. Berkshire Archaeology was established in 2004 as part of Reading Museum.

The County Archive collection at the Berkshire Record Office¹⁵ is legally owned by West Berkshire Council, but operational control lies with RBC on

¹² www.readingmuseum.org.uk

¹³ Link to the HER

¹⁴ www.berkshirearchaeology.org.uk

¹⁵ www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk

behalf of all six Berkshire Unitary Authorities. It contains the archives of the Royal County of Berkshire, with items dating back almost 900 years.

Archaeological archives are the objects and associated data produced during archaeological investigations. Where remains cannot be preserved 'in situ' it is planning policy to investigate and record these remains. Archaeological excavation is, by its nature, a generally destructive process, so the archive is the unique record of this investigation, and needs to be preserved and accessible in perpetuity. Archives from within Reading Borough are usually added to Reading Museum's collection. However the increase in archaeological activity through the planning process has led to a greater quantity of archives being deposited at the Museum. The Museum's Collection Management Plan recognises that current storage is likely to reach capacity in the next 10 years.

Action Point - The Council should upgrade the storage at Reading Museum to increase the storage capacity for archaeological archives from within the Borough.

Heritage Promotion

Perception of Reading's heritage

There is sometimes an impression that Reading is a twentieth century town or that it doesn't have much heritage - neither of which are true! Many local organisations are working to dispel this impression; for example the works of the Friends of Reading Abbey, the Friends of Reading Museum, the Friends of Caversham Court, the History of Reading Society, etc. The annual Heritage Open Days, co-ordinated by Reading UK CIC, and the excellent local history publications of Two Rivers Press and other publishers provide excellent opportunities to understand and appreciate Reading's history.

Action Point: the town's public, private and voluntary sectors should continue to work together to raise the profile of Reading as a town with a rich heritage. This includes marketing its heritage attractions and assets.

Signage

Compared to some other large towns and cities Reading lacks a comprehensive network of easy to understand road and pedestrian signage highlighting heritage sites, attractions and areas, especially in the town centre. Local good examples include Oxford, Swindon, Southampton and the City of London, where pedestrian signage has been improved through way-finding strategies. An improved system would complement the existing Reading Explorer system of the 21 units that carries historical stories, and shows some of the town's heritage assets.

Action Point - The Council should plan and co-ordinate a strategy for developing and maintaining an improved network of road and pedestrian signage, building on existing signage, highlighting heritage sites, attractions

and areas, especially in the town centre. There is an opportunity to develop a heritage map based on the existing Explorer map system in the town centre.

Community Access, Engagement and Learning

Community Heritage Projects

Reading Borough Council and its partners regularly work together on projects that increase community access and engagement with Reading's heritage. For example, since 2010, Reading Museum has engaged with well over 100 diverse community groups across Reading, usually through partnership projects with external funding.

Examples of recent community projects and events include:

- Heritage Open Days (ongoing) - Reading UK CIC and partners;
- Caversham 100 years On (2010-11), Heritage Lottery Fund;
- Get Grandad to DJ (2010-11), Readipop with My Generation funding;
- Reading Steady Go! exhibition (2010-11), business sponsorship;
- Young Roots Heritage Crime project (2010-11), Heritage Lottery Fund;
- Our Sporting Life (2011-12), MLA and business sponsorship;
- Pinning Reading's History (2011-12), Historypin and Heritage Lottery Fund;
- Reading Within Living Memory (2010-12), Earley Charity;
- Off the Beaten Track (2012 - 13), Readipop and Heritage Lottery Fund;
- John Tweed Archive (2012-13), University of Reading, Open Hand, Heritage Lottery Fund;
- Revealing Reading's Hidden History (2012-13), Happy Museum;
- World Stories South East (2012-13), Arts Council England;
- Reading Connections including Reading At War (2012-14) with MERL, Arts Council England;
- Berkshire in the First World War (2013-14), Heritage Lottery Fund;
- Enemies of the State (2013-14), Berkshire Record Office with University of Reading.
- The Council is currently working closely with various groups to commemorate Trooper Potts (a Reading resident who won a Victoria Cross in the First World War¹⁶) and is planning a variety of events to commemorate the anniversary of the First World War¹⁷.

Boxed Case studies -

¹⁶See: <http://pottsvctrust.org/> and: <http://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/news/2010/dec/trooper-potts-vc-display/>

¹⁷ See: <http://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/news/2014/jan/grant-will-help-mark-great-war-centenary/>

Example Case Study - Revealing our Hidden Histories

Reading Museum received a Happy Museum Commission to fund a project called 'Revealing Reading's Hidden Histories' in 2012-2013. The Museum worked with three Neighbourhood Action Groups and communities in Dee Park, Orts Road and Oxford Road. These are all areas that have suffered from a perception of higher levels of crime or anti-social behaviour.

The Museum has offered residents the chance to explore the history of their neighbourhoods through the collections. By discovering the hidden histories of these areas we are challenging perceptions and promoting a more positive sense of place. The results of this research were shared with the broader community of Reading through colourful displays, events and leaflets.



Heritage assets closed to the public

Over the last 20 years a number of important sites have been restored and public access considerably improved, including the Museum & Town Hall, Forbury Gardens and Caversham Court Gardens. However the current condition of Reading Abbey means that large parts of the Abbey Ruins are currently closed to the public and the Abbey Gate is partially surrounded in scaffolding. In recent years RBC has worked with partners, including EH, commissioning condition surveys and investigations to establish the problems and allow solutions to be drawn up and costs identified. However the condition of these sites continues to be of concern. Efforts are being made to address identified problems.

Action Point - it is essential to progress the Abbey Quarter project to reopen access to key heritage assets, including the Abbey Ruins and Abbey Gate. This represents the only opportunity to conserve and improve awareness and understanding of these very important sites.

Heritage interpretation

There has been localised investment in the interpretation of individual locations, but some of the town's most important heritage areas need more focused explanation. This is particularly an issue within the Abbey Quarter, Reading's most important heritage area. Planning and implementing new interpretation is also an excellent way of involving communities. Good examples of this include the restoration of Caversham Court Gardens involving the Friends of Caversham Court Gardens and Reading Museum's project to reveal hidden heritage with communities in Dee Park, Orts Road and Oxford Road. Better interpretation ensures awareness and understanding of heritage, while improving perceptions of its importance.

Reading Museum has first-class gallery spaces exploring art, archaeology, history and the environment, particularly the upper floors that were reopened in 1999-2000. However some of the older ground floor display exploring local history is reaching the end of their planned life. Some of the displays relating to Reading's twentieth century history were refurbished in 2012 with funding from the Earley Charity. This investment provides a template for future improvements to the ground floor gallery, and matches the quality of the upper floor galleries.

Action Point - there is a need to create a strategic plan for a network of outdoor interpretation panels, alongside improved signage. The town centre would be the priority for implementation, particularly the Abbey Quarter.

Action Point - the continued development of the ground floor galleries at Reading Museum provides an opportunity to improve interpretation and make more of Reading's collections accessible to the public.

Community Consultation and Engagement

This preparation and development of the Cultural and Heritage Strategy is an ideal opportunity to find out what the residents and stakeholders value most about Reading's heritage and how it should be looked after.

The Abbey Quarter proposals include an activity programme with opportunities for volunteering and learning. This complements the public programme already provided by Reading Museum and other RBC services.

Action Point - The Council should consult the public during the preparation of the Cultural and Heritage Strategy. The consultation results will inform the action plan for heritage.

Action Point - The Council's museum service should continue to engage local communities with its important collections and Reading's heritage.

Glossary of Abbreviations

ACE Arts Council England

BRO Berkshire Record Office

EH English Heritage

HER Berkshire Historic Environment Record

LDF Local Development Framework

NT National Trust

PPM planned preventative maintenance

RBC Reading Borough Council

RCAAP Reading Central Area Action Plan

RM Reading Museum

DRAFT

Appendices

DRAFT Action plan - for example only

Objective 1: To protect and enhance the heritage assets of Reading for future generations.							
Action plan reference	Action	Lead	Delivery Partners	Resource requirement	Actions Short term (1 - 2 years)	Actions Medium term (3- 5 years)	Actions Long term (6-10 years)
	Create and maintain a local Heritage at Risk for Grade II or locally listed buildings and structures.	Planning	Voluntary sector e.g. Civic Society				
	Regular condition report on RBC owned designated heritage assets	Property/ facilities	RBC using Hampshire CC				
	Conservation management plans /PPM programme for each RBC heritage asset; including assessing the risk of heritage crime	Property/ Facilities/[RBC Parks [for listed parks and gardens]	RBC using Hampshire CC				
	Work with EH to remove assets from national 'At Risk Register'	Planning	English Heritage Owners/ developers Property/ facilities				
	Maintain and periodically	Planning	Property/				

	review Conservation Area appraisals and prioritise Action Points		Facilities Transport & Highways				
	Increase Reading Museum's storage capacity for Archaeological archives	Museum	Planning Property/ Facilities Berkshire Archaeology Other Berkshire UAs				
Objective 2: To increase public awareness, understanding and enjoyment of our heritage.							
Objective 3: To maximise investment to preserve and enhance Reading's heritage.							
Objective 4: To improve internal co-ordination and partnership working with the statutory, voluntary and private sectors to protect and enhance our heritage.							
Objective 5: To promote Reading's heritage as part of the town's strategy for sustainable economic development.							

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Appendix 2- DRAFT SWOT- amend after public consultation

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Varied heritage assets including many of national importance e.g. Reading Abbey (27 grade I and II* buildings) Track-record of successful restoration projects (Museum & Town Hall, Forbury Garden, Simeon Monument, Caversham Court Gardens etc) Good quality museums – large and small Historic Environment Record Local pride in Reading heritage Highly educated population interested in heritage and culture Respected university – historical expertise Good communication links to London and rest of UK (e.g. new station) Leisure destination - good retail (The Oracle) and night-time offer; range of visitor accommodation; Reading Arts programme; compact town centre High profile for business with a vibrant local economy High profile cultural and sporting events e.g. Reading Festival, Reading Football Club Extensive open spaces and waterways including historic areas</p>	<p>Low profile as a tourist/visitor destination Outside perception of little heritage (e.g.. hidden treasures) Failure to realise the potential of Reading’s heritage as a marketing and tourism asset No single ‘must see attraction’ At Risk Heritage (e.g. Abbey, Kings Meadow Pool, The Keep) Abbey Ruins (Scheduled Monument/Grade I) closed to the public Local heritage assets with no official designation Concerns about design, upkeep & maintenance of the public realm in central areas i.e. inconsistent / poor quality Pedestrian sign posting and historic interpretation is patchy or non existent Poor quality of some 20th century architecture Confusing traffic /one way system Lack of internal RBC coordination on heritage assets and management Lack of revenue funding for basic maintenance and staffing Lack of consultation and evaluation on heritage</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>New Heritage Strategy for Reading, linked to Local Development Framework balancing requirements for sustainable growth with the need to conserve the area’s heritage assets RBC cross cutting projects and departmental coordination (e.g. planning, Transport, culture) - Links to RBC strategic objectives HLF funding Economic Regeneration (e.g. Station Hill and Square) and re-use of historic buildings- improved overall perception of Reading Partnership working - The Cultural Partnership, Reading UK CIC (BID), Reading Abbey Quarter Board etc Good relationship with government bodies (i.e. English Heritage, Arts Council England etc) Community involvement and public consultation (i.e. friends groups, volunteering)- increased well being of local residents Public events and exhibitions - Heritage Open days, Museum programme, Abbey Quarter tours</p>	<p>National economic downturn Irreversible loss of historic fabric/assets e.g. Abbey Lack of match funding for grant applications Pressures on local government funding Unsuccessful grant applications Lack of public engagement Poor media coverage Failure to find economically sustainable uses for heritage assets Further damage and neglect to heritage assets e.g. conservation areas, Listed buildings etc A continued spiral of poor perception could be detrimental to attracting future investment in Reading’s heritage and economy Heritage crime – vandalism and theft e.g. lead roofs, metal plaques</p>

DRAFT

APPENDIX 4: HISTORIC VIEWS ANALYSIS

Assessment of significant Views with Heritage interest



Reading, January 2018

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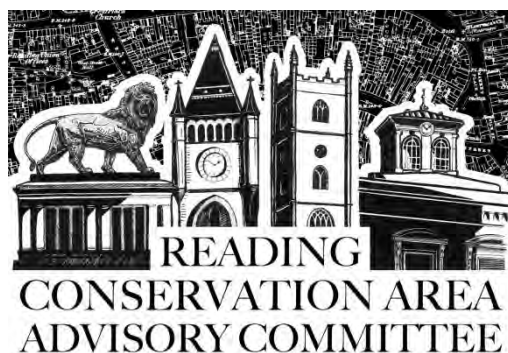
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Assessment of significant Views with Heritage interest

Views studies foreword

Reading is a modern, vibrant and successful town and the economic centre of the Thames Valley. It has seen substantial change in the 20th century and has challenges to rise to, and meet in the 21st century in terms of housing, economic potential, infrastructure and quality of life. It has a strong built heritage and a visible history that goes back some 900 years. These View studies seek to add to the understanding of the town's cultural heritage, its landscape and its historic assets. They are an evidence base to help and inform all those involved with sustaining both the town's history and its future. Hopefully they will also contribute to the enjoyment of those who experience these views as part of their daily lives.

January 2018



Assessment of significant Views with Heritage interest

Reading

January 2018

Introduction

The topography of Reading set within its River valleys and with higher ground to the north and south of these River plains, together with the substantial historic and heritage assets of the town, result in a number of longer cross town views which have both visual and historic interest.

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee was formed in 2016 and comprises people with an interest in the built environment and its heritage. Members are drawn from local amenity societies, residents associations, independent historical, architectural and planning experts and local residents and businesses.

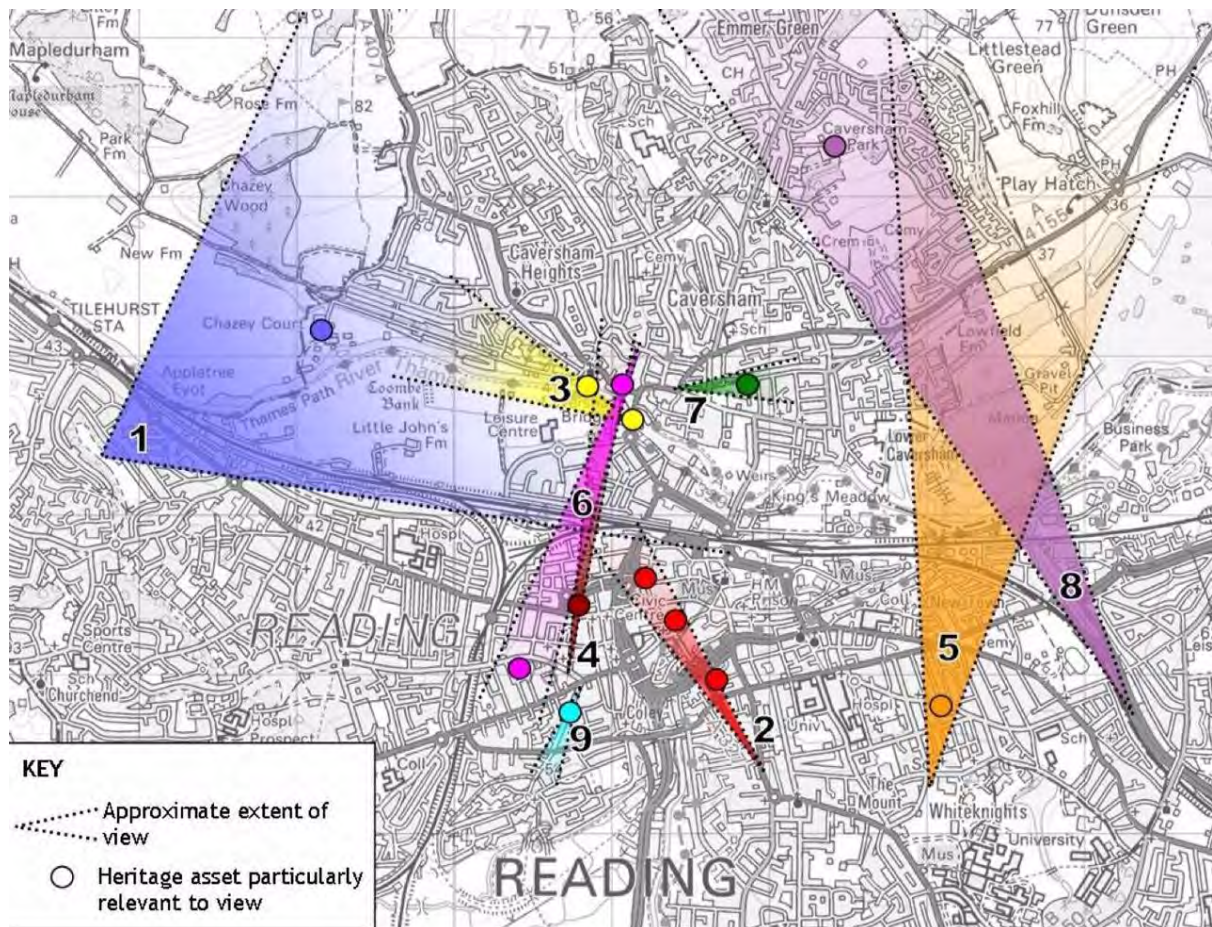
The work of the CAAC in respect of community led Conservation Area re-appraisals began to identify certain views which were important to the town but not directly within Conservation Areas and which were not otherwise sufficiently valued or protected. This led to discussions between Reading Borough Council and the CAAC about carrying out a possible Views study to raise awareness of the merits of these views to inform future decision making. These discussions coincided with the start of the preparation of the new Reading Local Plan by the RBC Planning Policy team.

A number of potential views were put forward by the CAAC and considered by RBC. The Planning Policy team came to the view that a new policy 'EN5 PROTECTION OF SIGNIFICANT VIEWS WITH HERITAGE INTEREST' was justified. The CAAC agreed to provide a study of each of the views that were selected to provide a basis of evidence and analysis.

The studies makes use of the methodology and format of the 'Oxford View Cones Study' developed by Historic England, the Oxford Preservation Trust, Oxford City Council and others to provide a sound methodology to identify the special quality of views. This was applied to Views in Oxford in 2015.

The study method brings together History, Social context, and Visual analysis including current Detractors and Sensitivity to future change in order to provide a basis for the better appreciation and consideration of the value of the views.

The nine Reading Views here analysed are by no means an exhaustive list of views important to Reading. Many other views are cited in other parts and other policies of the Local Plan. It should also be recognized that Planning policies alone are not sufficient to protect the views.



Overall Plan of Views (*Reading Local Plan*)

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to those who have contributed to these Views studies and the formulation of the new Policy.

- Many CAAC members have contributed local historical research, editorial and other assistance. Particular acknowledgement is due to Kim Pearce and Evelyn Williams.
- Reading Borough Council Planning Policy team.
- Reading Central Library, Reading Museum, the Berkshire Record Office and the Tate Gallery for permission to use images cited in the text.
- Photo credits are to Kim Pearce and Evelyn Williams unless otherwise indicated in the text.

View 1. From Mcllroy Park, towards Chazey Barn Farm, the Thames meadows and the Chiltern Escarpment.

1.1.1 Introduction

Figure 1.1 *General View below*



Mcllroy Park in Tilehurst is the one place within the Borough where there is a complete view of the Town centre, the Caversham escarpment dropping down to the river, glimpses of the River Thames itself and also out of the Borough towards Mapledurham. In terms of heritage, the two photos below give the centre left and centre right hand views (facing north east). The Grade one listed Chazey Barn is clearly visible in the distance. The treed Caversham escarpment dropping down to the River, so much part of Reading's character is a heritage element itself, in that it is a man made landscape. On the right hand side of the panorama is the town centre, a view relevant to the tall buildings policy.



Figure 1.2 *Centre left hand view, glimpses of the Thames, Grade 1 listed Chazey Barn and the Caversham escarpment*



Figure 1.3 Centre right part of view with Caversham escarpment and water meadows.



Figure 1.4 Further east is the town centre, a view relevant to the implementation of Reading's tall buildings policy.

1.1.2 Present Viewers

This is a freely accessible view that many residents of Tilehurst and the surrounding area enjoy and use on a daily basis. This includes those seeking general recreation and access to semi natural open space as well as dog walkers. New visitors to the park, on coming out of the woods that enclose the entrance, find that they have an exceptional view of the Thames Valley and Reading.

The importance of this view of the Thames is recognised by the River Thames Society and the Thames Rivers Trust who included it in their book, 'Exploring the Thames Wilderness'. The site was designated a Local Nature Reserve in 1992 and is one of three which with Lousehill Copse and Arthur Newbery Park form a wildlife corridor along this ridge above the Thames. Tilehurst Globe produced a leaflet about the park with a suggested circular walk (*Tilehurst Globe* www.tilehurst-globe.org.uk/textframes/leaflet%20mclloyss%201.pdf). They describe the park as 'a mix of ancient woodland and open meadow land in the heart of Tilehurst'. Friends of Mclloy Park meet monthly (except in August and December) to carry out tasks in the park.

The view is also experienced from much of the mid 20th Century housing below the Park contributing to the quality of life for the residents of this area and adding to its attractiveness. Modest terraces and semi detached houses of limited architectural character nevertheless have some of the finest views in Reading.

1.1.3 Viewers in the Past

William E C Mclloy donated the land for the park. He was the owner of Reading's Oxford Street department store and was Mayor of Reading for five terms from 1938-1943, during the Second World War. He was made Freeman of the Borough in 1944. He stood unsuccessfully as MP for Reading in the 1945 general election but was defeated by the Labour candidate Ian Mikardo. The department store closed in 1955 and the first mention of the park is in the 1956 guide to Reading.

There are two stories about why William Mclloy bought this land and then donated it to Reading Borough Council for a park and both relate to views. The first story is that he donated the land for the park to the Borough to protect the view from his house (*On old Reading Council website and here* www.geograph.org.uk/photo/612000). He lived at Carrick-a-Rede, 12 Clevedon Road in Tilehurst, at the bottom of the hill near Tilehurst Station. The second story is that from the café on the top floor of Mclloy's Department Store, there was a view of this hill and that the land was purchased to protect this view (*Handscomb. Sue.Tilehurstp85*).

It seems likely that he must also have been aware of the View from the hill but further historical research would be necessary to establish this.



Figure 1.5 *McIlroy's Department Store today, Corner of Oxford Street and Cheapside (photo Evelyn Williams)*

1.1.4 The Viewing Place

The viewing place provides 'kinetic' views – that is a series of changing panoramic views seen as a person moves through this linear park. The views change as a result of the direction a person is facing and the framing effect of trees. With regard to the value of the foreground, the park preserves a rough grassland character as a foreground with framing provided by hedgerow and small trees to the north eastern boundary. The grassland reflects the previously pastoral agricultural use of the land and the history of the hillside. The park is managed to provide wildlife habitat with birds and insects contributing to its wild life quality.

1.1.5 General Description of the View

McIlroy Park provides a series of wide views towards Mapledurham, the Caversham escarpment, the Thames water meadows and the Town centre. Mapledurham is outside the Borough boundary and the views to the Town centre are covered by the tall buildings policy. This description therefore confines itself to the two 'central' views (centre left and centre right facing north east) of the Caversham escarpment and the Thames water meadows although all four views contribute to and make up the viewing experience.

1.1.6 Topography and layout of the view

Elevation/Height: McIlroy Park and the Caversham escarpment are at similar elevations or contour levels and are both circa 40 metres above the level of the Thames and water meadows adjoining it, which lie in the valley below.

Foreground: The foreground is of rough grassland, hedgerow and trees as described above in 1.1.4.

Middle ground: Due to the topography and the sharp falling away of the land there is a limited middle ground of trees and hedgerow.

Distant: There are distant fine views of the escarpment, the Thames and the water meadows and the buildings and structures within these views.

1.1.7 Green Characteristics

On the horizon, the view extends beyond the Borough to high wooded ground in South Oxfordshire.

The Caversham escarpment dropping down to the river and largely planted on its upper slopes in the Victorian and Edwardian era is a strong heritage element in itself. The planting of specimen and forest trees in large numbers have created a man made landscape. In the 18th and early 19thC, much of this was bare pasture land for sheep grazing. These large trees not only mask considerable residential development but add a further 20 to 25 metres to the apparent height of the escarpment and thus increase its visibility in other views throughout Reading.

The rural landscape of the water meadows, to the centre right of the view, is from this vantage point largely intact. The strong lines of the hedgerows in the water meadows add scale and perspective and remind the viewer of past and present agricultural use.

The trees beyond the water meadows effectively screen much development. This could be strengthened along Richfield Avenue.

The rough grassland of the park itself and the boundary trees frame the views.

1.1.8 Architectural characteristics

The mid 20^C housing in the foreground of the view, although without architectural merit, demonstrates the topography of the site and the steep fall in the land towards the river as only the first storeys and roofs of these houses are visible. These built elements also provide contrast in the foreground and due to the trees on the boundary of the site are only partially visible.

In the left hand view towards the Caversham escarpment the Railway line and associated buildings are well hidden by the lie of the land particularly in summer. Whilst in the right hand view towards the water meadows the line of the railway to Oxford comes into sight and trains travelling on the tracks add movement to the view.

In the distance the Grade I listed Chazey Court Barn is clearly visible to the naked eye at the foot of the Caversham escarpment. This very large late 17^C/ early 18^C seven bay barn with a steeply pitched roof and red brick walling forms part of a Group with Chazey Court farmhouse which is Grade II * listed and also partially visible. Chazey Court farm house is dated mid 17^C and incorporates some older work including Norman windows and doorway. Historic England listing notes state that the construction of the Barn and the stable chapel at the farmhouse is very similar to the Tudor building at Mapledurham House. This Grade 1 listed barn is currently on English Heritage's at risk list with the statement "Historic England and their structural engineering team are working with the Local Planning Authority in reviewing the rate of deterioration." It is given the highest (A) risk category "Immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric; no solution agreed."

Residential buildings on the escarpment in the distant view are largely hidden by tree cover or only partially visible, however the Grade II listed Chiltern House (now offices) by William Ravenscroft with its tiled roof and gables is largely visible.

On the horizon Emmer Green water tower is also visible from some view points and acts as a reference point.

1.1.9 The influence of light and seasons

The best conditions for viewing are on a bright clear day in the afternoon. Cloud formations add greatly to the variety of view experienced due to the wide expanse of sky. In the summer months tree cover to the boundary of the park in the middle ground increases.

1.1.10 Detractors

The 'Rivers' sports club building 3 storeys high with light coloured cladding and a light brick situated on the edge of the water meadows is an example of a detractor that protrudes into the view. Likewise some of the industrial buildings adjacent Richfield Avenue and the rail line have large areas of light coloured cladding that are very reflective and draw the eye, competing for prominence with other aspects of the view.

1.1.11 Sensitivity to change

With regard to the park itself, consideration could be given when any periodic maintenance takes place, as to how best to optimise and frame the views in respect of the treatment and growth of the hedgerows and small trees on the north east boundary of the park.

There is potential risk of harm to the view due to cumulative mature tree loss on the Caversham escarpment. The trees mask, hide and disguise considerable residential development. There is a natural desire for house holders to have views out and light and space around property. The corollary of a view out, however, is a view in. Some trees reach the end of their natural life. The majority of trees on the escarpment are in private gardens. There is further scope for identifying some individual trees or groups of trees that feature in this and other views to provide a further data set for RBC to take into account when assessing tree work applications and replacements.

In addition to the above is the potential risk of similar tree cover loss due to cumulative piecemeal development.

Any development or redevelopment within or on the fringes of the water meadows could damage the view and needs careful consideration. Any new development would preferably be low rise and of appropriate non reflective materials.

A sensitive solution needs to be found to ensure that a restored Chazey Barn remains a visually distinct part of this view.



Figure 1.6 *Annotated View analysis (winter)*



Figure 1.7 *Detail of View annotated (winter)*



Figure 1.8 Detail of View, Grade I listed Chazey barn, with the Thames below and to the right



Figure 1.9 Plan showing Viewing place and View (Map data: Copyright Google, Digital Globe)

View 2. View looking north down Southampton Street from Whitley Street.

2.1.1 Introduction



Figure 2.1 *The general view from the top of Southampton Street*



This view looks north down Southampton St. From the junction with Mount Pleasant and shows the tower and spire of St Giles, glimpses of the chequerboard tower and pinnacles of St Marys and the Caversham escarpment in the distance. Further down the street, the top of Greyfriars Church also comes into view. Southampton Street is one of the main routes into Reading and is a major road, the A327. Consequently this is a busy thoroughfare and not universally attractive but like its prettier younger sibling, London Street, it includes many historic and listed buildings.

Figure 2.2 *The start of the viewing place at the Pheasant*

2.1.2 Present Viewers

Southampton Street is a one way street and present viewers may experience it on foot, bicycle, bus or in a car. Changes to the view are experienced from the top of the hill down to the River Kennet at the Oracle roundabout as features appear and disappear from view. The gantry over the road and the Inner Distribution Road flyover both present barriers to a clear view towards the bottom of the street

From a precise point near West Hill bus stop it is possible, on a clear day, to see the spire of St Giles, the tower of St Mary's Minster and Greyfriars weather vane appearing in sequence from the foreground to the distance.

2.1.3 Viewers in the Past

As today, most people on the street were going to and from Reading including to the market place on St Mary's Butts. This area was the centre of Reading until the foundation of Reading Abbey and the removal of the market closer to the Abbey. At that time a second road, London Street was built.

At the top of Southampton Street the two routes to and from Reading divide now as they did in the past. Southampton Street or parts of it have been known by other names in the past, including Horn Street and Bridge Street. The historic foot of Southampton Street was lost when the IDR was built. At the bottom of Southampton Street the road meets the Kennet and the area once known as Seven Bridges, from which H&G Simonds took the name of their brewery. On old maps the succession of river channels and crossings can be discerned (see Civil War defences map below).



Figure 2.3 Extract from map of Civil War defences (town centre at the bottom of the map) shows defences across Southampton Street and also the Seven Bridges over the Kennet and Holy Brook (Copyright. Image reproduced courtesy of Reading Library Collection).

Some of the viewers of the past were troops of the English Civil War. During the siege of Reading (April 1643) fighting took place along Southampton Street. The tower of St Giles Church was a defensive position and was damaged by cannon fire. Further up Southampton Street there are defensive positions including at the corner of Waldeck Street and Southampton Street.

Civil War siege action in this area culminated in fighting at Harrison's Barn, on the corner of Christchurch Road and Whitley Street with the pond in front of it. The pond was a welcome stop for travellers on the road, especially those bringing animals to or from market who would have come uphill either from Reading or going to Reading. In the nineteenth century the pond was replaced by a pump and trough which served the same purpose.

For some in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the walk out of Reading to the top of Southampton Street was a pleasant walk to the top of a hill to get a good view of Reading and the Kennet. The best views captured by eighteenth century engravers are slightly to the east of Southampton Street between the top of Hill Street and Waldeck Street. It is possible that visitors walked up London Street, but it is unlikely they walked up Silver Street as it was a street with a notoriously bad reputation. The railway arrived in Reading in 1840 and the view from the top of the hill was considered scenic enough to be included in Measom's Guide to the Great Western Railway (1860).

"A pleasant walk will be found leading from Spring Gardens across the high banks which rise from the Kennet to Whitley, on the Southampton-road. On this route, about three miles from Reading, is the village of Three Mile Cross, or "Our Village", the residence of the late Miss Mitford, whose delightful descriptions of rural scenes have never been surpassed."

As Reading spread southwards more and more houses were built along the street and to either side. A tram route ran up and down Southampton Street to Whitley Street in the twentieth century and there were underground public toilets at the top.

2.1.4 The Viewing Place

The viewing place starts at the top of Southampton Street and provides subtly changing views as Southampton Street is descended. The viewing place is one of the historic approaches into Reading. It is urban in character. Three notable viewing places are significant to this view:

1. The top of Southampton Street
2. The junction with Chesterman Street
3. The three churches from the West Hill bus stop (approximately)



Figure 2.4 *Viewing place 1. From the top of Southampton Street.*



Figure 2.5 *Viewing place 2 from the junction with Chesterman Street, St Giles in the middle distance (photo Evelyn Williams).*



Figure 2.6 *Viewing place 3. The three churches, Southampton Street at Junction with West Hill (photo Evelyn Williams).*

2.1.5 General Description of the View

This view looks down Southampton Street from Whitley Street. The tower and high spire of St Giles Church dominate the view. Aligned with St Giles the chequerboard tower and pinnacles of St Mary's are also visible. Further down the street, the bell turret of Greyfriars Church comes into the view

The view of the town centre becomes more constricted as you approach the foot of the hill. As the hill flattens, early nineteenth century buildings on the west overshadow the street.

2.1.6 Topography and layout of the view

Elevation/Height: There is a fall of some 20 metres from the top of Southampton Street to the bottom of the street at the Inner Distribution Road. This is a view which follows the street pattern for a considerable way across Reading. Only after Greyfriars Church does the view break away from the street pattern.

Foreground: In the foreground there is terraced housing lining the street, further down are some larger and more imposing villas and terraces.

Middle ground: The middle ground is dominated by St Giles church spire and the mass of the Holm Oak.

Distant: In the distance are the town Centre churches, the Oracle shopping mall, the gantry over A327 and the IDR and the Caversham escarpment. The height or elevation of the top and middle of

the street helps reduce the impact of the traffic sign gantry and the IDR flyover as the viewer looks over the top of these elements.

2.1.7 Green Characteristics

Trees, on or adjoining the street, soften the urban character and channel or focus the view, even when quite modest in size. Some trees provide focal points, in particular between Chesterman Street and West Hill where there is a group of villas with large front gardens set back from the road, one of which has a very fine Holm Oak subject to a tree protection order (TPO). This large Holm Oak is an important component of the middle ground of the view from the top of the street. It draws the eye and its overhang over the street also obscures the traffic gantry at the bottom of the street.

Also subject to a TPO is the group of trees further north on the street behind Solent and Hamble Court in the former St Giles churchyard extension.

On the horizon, the view terminates with the green Caversham escarpment which signals the limits of the town.

2.1.8 Architectural characteristics

The view is notable for the alignment of the three churches St Giles, St Mary's and Greyfriars. All three churches are medieval in origin and historic. They have undergone considerable modification since originally built. St Giles was founded in the twelfth century, there was a church on the site of St Mary's which pre-dated Reading Abbey and Greyfriars was founded at the beginning of the fourteenth century. As a result of extension and rebuilding, or in the case of Greyfriars a period of disuse, the view of the churches would have changed considerably over the centuries.

Southampton street includes many listed buildings and St Giles Church (listing no 113579) is within the Market Place / London Street conservation area. The original medieval church and tower of St Giles were damaged during the English Civil war. The fabric was restored at the end of hostilities. The photo below by William Fox Talbot, the Reading based photographic pioneer, shows the church in 1840-49 before the major rebuilding works of 1872/3 when the current tall ashlar steeple was added.



Figure 2.7 *Photograph of St Giles Church by William Fox Talbot taken between 1840 and 1849 (Copyright. Image reproduced courtesy of Reading Library Collection).*

Between Chesterman Street and West Hill there is a group of five mid nineteenth century Grade II listed villas (listing nos 1248746, 1277768 and 1113587) which are set well back from the road. The garden of the house adjoining Chesterman Street provides the Holm Oak, an important element in the view.

More modest properties on the east of the street are also listed such as the Hop Leaf public house (listing no 1157021).

Of Reading wide importance is the previous British School building at 153-155 Southampton Street, Grade II listed no 1380226. The listing entry dates part of the building from 1810 and the architect as R. Billing senior. This local architect is also likely to have been responsible for 72-86 Southampton Street. 78-84 are Grade II* listed, no 1113584.

Many of the properties display fine original railings, and other ironwork.

2.1.9 The influence of light and seasons

The view is at its best in the early morning on a sunny day or in the evening when light falls on the steeples and other tall features of the view. The view is best experienced outside peak traffic hours.

2.1.10 Detractors

This is a busy road and housing along the street, despite in some cases being listed, is not always well maintained. Litter and excess refuse from household bins can be a problem. Tall lighting columns can have a negative impact where they visually distract from the historic elements of the view. Traffic volume has a negative impact in respect of noise and pollution, future technological advances may help with this.

At the bottom of the street the gantry over the road and the IDR flyover impinge on the view. From further up the street, due to the elevation, the view is over the top of these elements.

For present viewers (2017) held in traffic at the junction of Crown Street, Pell Street and Southampton Street, the vacant listed buildings on two of the corners and the boarded up site on the south east corner detract from the viewing experience. Preserving the heritage at this junction needs attention or in the future there will be detractors.

2.1.11 Sensitivity to change

Any new development which rose up between the escarpment in the distance and the spire of St Giles or the tower of St Mary's risks harming the view. The green escarpment terminating the view and signifying visually the distant limits of the town is an important part of its attractiveness.

New development in the middle ground between the top of the street and St Giles, as well as in the town centre, could harm the view. Care must be taken with respect to building lines, heights and massing so as not to impinge on or impede the view of the churches, (the current vacant site on the corner of Crown Street and Southampton Street would be an example where care should be taken).

Continuing inadequate maintenance of Listed Buildings or insensitive re use would be a negative factor, whilst the converse of better and appropriate maintenance has the potential to improve the viewing experience.



Figure 2.8 *Annotated View analysis*



Figure 2.9 Detailed annotation, the three churches (photo Evelyn Williams).



Figure 2.10 Overall Plan showing Viewing place and View (Map data: Copyright Google, Digital Globe).



Figure 2.11 Detail plan of Southampton Street showing Viewing Place and View (Map data: Copyright Google, Digital Globe).

View 3. View upstream from Caversham Bridge

3.1.1 Introduction

The view upstream from Caversham Bridge captures part of the Caversham escarpment. This escarpment has wide significance for the character of Reading. It is visible from the train, approaching Reading, the train station itself and in many other views from the south side of town. Its comprehensive tree cover, a man made heritage of the 19th Century hides and disguises considerable density of development. The tower of St Peter's Church is visible within this view particularly in winter.



Figure 3.1 *From the Viewing Place on the central buttress of the Bridge looking upstream (winter)*

3.1.2 Present Viewers

The Viewers today are commuters travelling to and from work, shoppers heading for the town centre, joggers and families visiting the Promenade. Anyone taking a bus to or from Reading experiences this view. Other present day viewers are walkers tackling the long distance Thames path and those using the river for leisure and sporting pursuits such as rowers and boaters on the river.

This is a view which many people experience as part of their daily life rather than seeking out or visiting especially.

3.1.3 Viewers in the Past

There has been a bridge on this site for approximately 900 years. In the middle ages pilgrims crossed the Bridge between the shrines in Caversham and Reading Abbey and paid tolls. There was a ferry alongside the bridge for those who could not afford the tolls. In 1642 during the English Civil War, Charles I lead his troops over the Bridge to set up a garrison in Reading.

Views from the Bridge and of the Bridge were popular with artists at the beginning of the 19th Century. There is a view from the Bridge by Edmund Havell Senior made in the early part of the century. William Turner visited the area and painted the Bridge itself from upstream in 1806-7, this oil painting is in the Tate Gallery.



Figure 3.2 *'Caversham from the Bridge'* looking upstream by Edmund Havell Senior 1825
(Copyright Reading Museum (Reading Borough Council) All rights reserved)



Figure 3.3 *'Caversham Bridge with Cattle in the Water'*, c.1806-7, Joseph Mallard William Turner (1775-1851), Accepted by the nation as part of the [Turner Bequest](#) 1856. Photo © Tate, London 2018

William Havell made an aquatint of the Bridge from the area of the Warren.



Figure 3.4 *Aquatint by William Havell 1811, the Bridge with Caversham Court Gazebo in the foreground from the area of the present day St Peters Avenue and the Warren (Copyright Reading Museum (Reading Borough Council) All rights reserved).*

With poor roads, other viewers would have been those working barges transporting goods between Reading and Oxford. Despite the coming of the railway in 1840 heavy goods continued by barge until the late 19th century. At the wharf by Caversham Bridge a thriving barge industry developed. Eels were common in the Thames and large baskets of willow rods called eel bucks were mounted on wooden frames just upstream of the Bridge to catch the eels.



Figure 3.5 *Photograph 1890 looking upstream from the bridge towards the eel bucks and St Peter's Church Tower (Copyright. Image reproduced courtesy of Reading Library Collection).*

Leisure use of the river and thus leisure viewers increased in the 19th century and local Regattas started in 1842. Boats of every description were built and used on the river.

3.1.4 The Viewing Place

The earliest documentary reference to the bridge is in 1231. The earliest Bridge on the site served for around 700 years. A section of this original stone bridge close to the south bank was taken down during the English Civil war and replaced with a timber drawbridge to impede a Royalist relieving force arriving from Oxford. This stone bridge with its timber section features in the paintings and drawings above. A new iron bridge replaced this first bridge in 1869. By the early 20th century this bridge had become inadequate, work on a new bridge was delayed by the First World War.

The current bridge was completed in 1926. The bridge is of concrete and stone with some art deco detailing. There are purpose designed viewing places on the central buttress and the bridge is noted as a structure of interest by the Panel for Historical engineering works of the Institute of Civil Engineers.



Figure 3.6 *Reading Head of the River Race March 1950, the viewing place in use*
(Copyright Reading Museum (Reading Borough council) All rights reserved).

3.1.5 General Description of the View

The view varies from different positions on the bridge and from the south bank and the Thames promenade. The general impression is of a green escarpment rising from the river. There are glimpses of the tower of St Peter's Church and of the restored gazebo in Caversham Court Gardens from southern viewing positions. The wide and soft curve on the North bank contrasts with the harder sharper curve on the Promenade side and charm is added as the river disappears out of sight around the bend.

3.1.6 Topography and layout of the view

Elevation/ Height: There is a rise of some 25 to 30 metres between river level and the top of the escarpment in the view. However, visually, this elevation is increased by the height of the mature trees on the escarpment by a further 20 to 25 metres. The effective visual height of the escarpment is therefore substantially greater and results in a more dramatic view than topography would indicate.

Foreground: The bridge itself and its granite balustrading provides the foreground and partial frame to the view.

Middle ground: The middle ground of the river often has waterfowl, pleasure boats and rowers adding movement and interest.

Distant: Visually the escarpment drops down towards the Thames as a green curtain as the river disappears from view around the bend.

3.1.7 Green Characteristics

The Caversham escarpment dropping down to the river and largely planted on its upper slopes in the Victorian and Edwardian era is a strong heritage element in itself. The planting of specimen and forest trees in large numbers has created a man made landscape. In the 18th and early 19thC, much of this was bare pasture land for sheep grazing. These large trees not only mask considerable residential development but add a further 20 to 25 metres to the apparent height of the escarpment, as set out above, and thus increase its visibility in other views from across Reading.

The apparent 'soft' edge of the northern river bank where it meets the water is an important visual and landscape detail which contributes to the overall composition

3.1.8 Architectural characteristics



The bridge or reinforced concrete and stone was completed in 1926. The granite balustrading and weathered bronze light fittings on the parapet of the bridge form the foreground of the viewing place. The central buttress incorporates specially designed viewing places on both the up and down stream sides.

Figure 3.7 *The Bridge from Caversham Court Gardens looking towards the central buttress.*

The tower of the Grade II listed St Peter's Church is glimpsed amongst the trees and is particularly visible in winter. Little remains of its Norman origins and the church is principally 15thC and high Victorian. The tower dates from 1878 and is of flint in three stages with a hipped roof screened by a high corbelled parapet.

In front of the Church in the view is Caversham Court Garden which is listed in the English Heritage 'Register of Historic Parks and Gardens'. The house on this historic site was demolished in 1933, the gardens were refurbished with help from the Heritage lottery fund in 2008-9. The restored brick and plain tile gazebo, overlooking the river and visible from the Promenade and the south side of the bridge, remains and dates from the first half of the 17th Century.

3.1.9 The influence of light and seasons

The view is at its best in high summer with movement on the river and the green escarpment masking most residential buildings on the slopes down to the river.

3.1.10 Detractors

The new canoe club at its eastern end detracts from the setting of the restored gazebo in Caversham Court Gardens. This particular problem could be simply ameliorated by the planting of small trees or large shrubs when an opportunity arises.

Further back a recent house in the area of the Warren breaches the tree cover and the white gable emphasizes the intrusion.

Other properties, some of little architectural merit, become more visible in winter.

3.1.11 Sensitivity to change

Whilst Caversham Court Gardens and a part of the escarpment are in public ownership, the majority of land on the escarpment is privately owned. Tree cover on the escarpment masks considerable density of development as the plan of the View shown below shows.

Removal of tree cover and vegetation by property owners to improve their view out as in the examples above, will of necessity impact on the view in and has the potential to harm the view.

Likewise removal of trees due to piecemeal development, extensions or the desire improve light and space around existing properties risks cumulative damage to the view of the escarpment which is not an infinite resource. Disease or age is also a factor leading to the removal of some trees.

Studies such as this current View analysis may lead to better public awareness of the value of the view and the escarpment and the riverside. Likewise the identification of valuable views may assist RBC, when tree removal and tree replacement applications are assessed.

At river level part of the charm of the view is the contrast between the sharp hard curve of the southern bank with the wide soft green curve of the north bank. It is important that the soft north bank is maintained. Close to the bridge, one length of bank has been sheet steel piled at the river edge to an unnecessary height adding a hard and discordant element. Further sheet steel piling of other parts of the northern river bank to an excessive height should be discouraged and sympathetic edge treatments should be sought where work is required to stabilise the river bank.

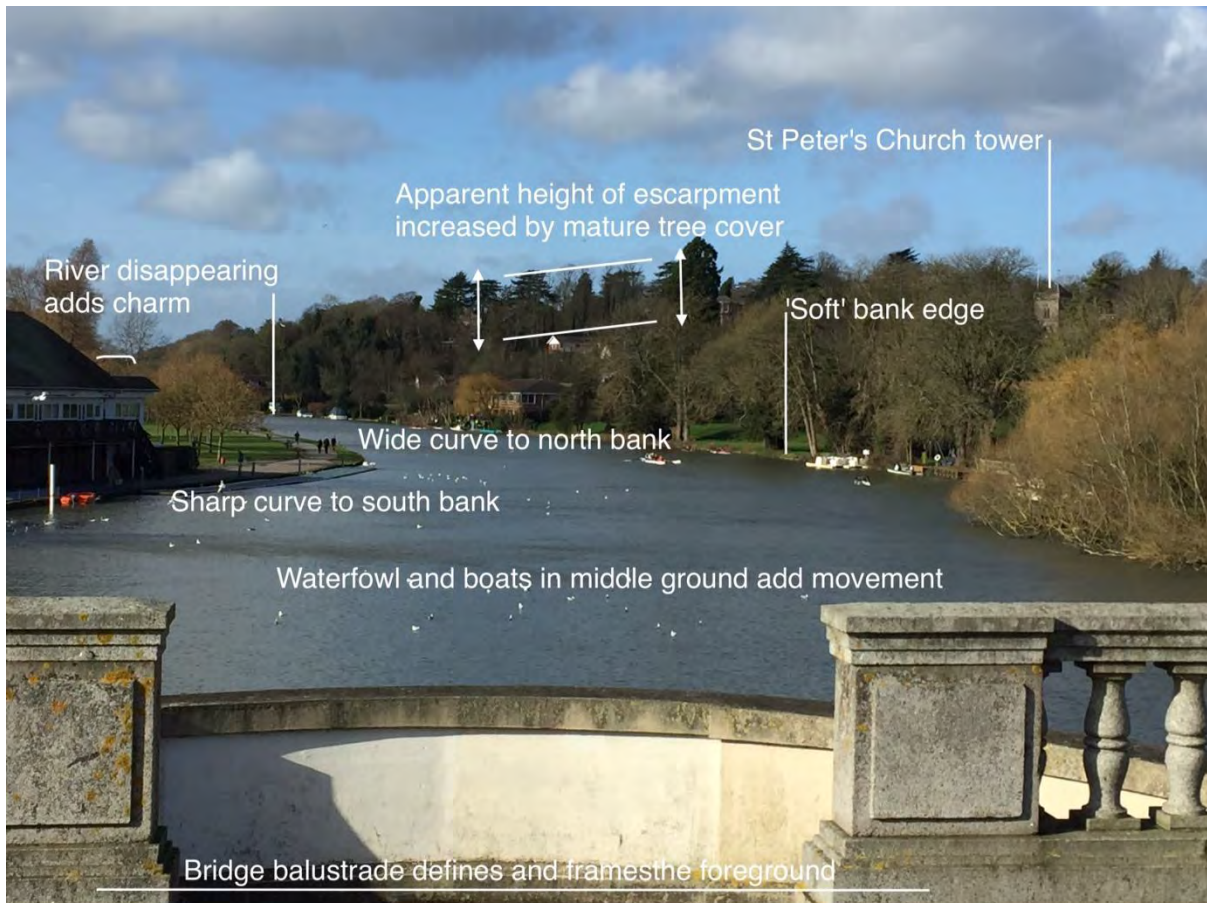


Figure 3.8 Annotated View analysis (winter view)



Figure 3.9 Canoe club and restored gazebo



Figure 3.10 Glimpse of Church from south bank



Figure 3.11 *Detractors in the view (summer view)*

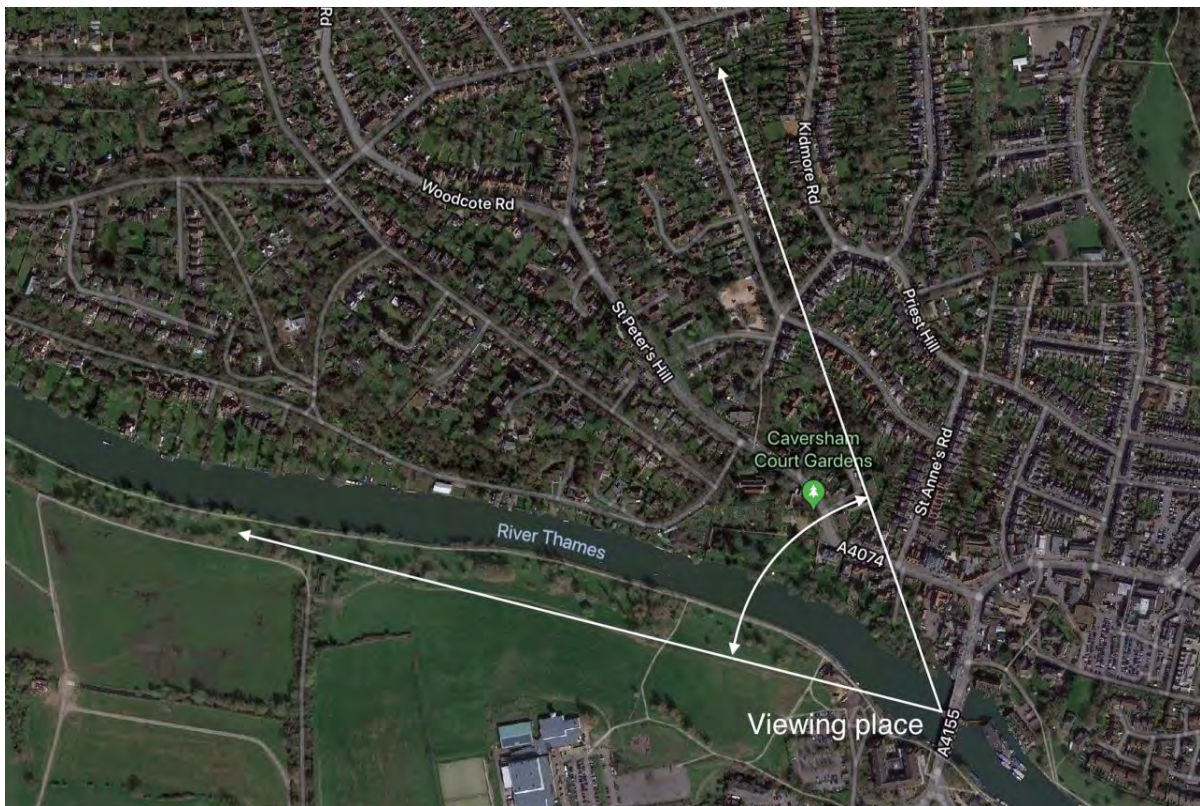


Figure 3.12 *Plan showing Viewing place and view (Map data: Copyright Google, Digital Globe)*

View 4. View from the junction of Russell Street and Tilehurst Road towards Holy Trinity Church and the Caversham escarpment

4.1.1 Introduction

Figure 4.1 *General view from the top of Russell Street*



Russell Street between Tilehurst Road and the Oxford Road was laid out at the beginning of the nineteenth century on land which formed the eastern boundary of Mr William Pratt Swallow's market garden. The street looking down to the parish church of Holy Trinity is noticeably straight and broad.

At the south west corner of the junction of Russell Street with Bath Road is the Swallow family's house. After a hundred yards of steep gradient, Russell Street kinks northwards towards the Oxford Road with a steady and even gradient.

It is at this point that the view towards Holy Trinity Church in the middle ground and the Caversham escarpment in the distance presents itself.



Figure 4.2 *Holy Trinity Parish Church Oxford Road*
(photo Evelyn Williams)

4.1.2 Present Viewers

Russell Street is a two-way street on more than one bus route. Changes to the view are experienced from the top of the hill down to the Oxford Road as the gradient levels.

The viewer has Holy Trinity Church as an end point in the middle distance between a corridor of Georgian homes to the west and mostly Victorian homes to the east.

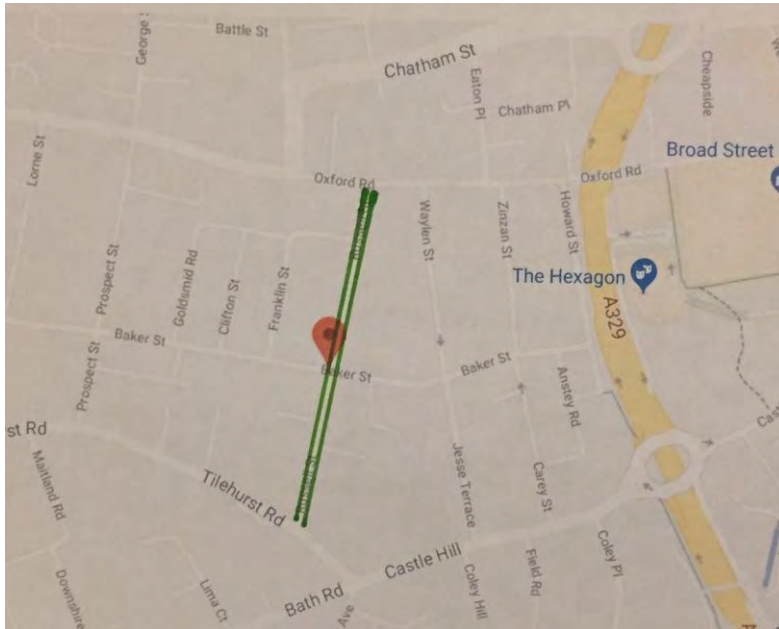


Figure 4.3 Google map of the street today (Map data: Copyright Google, Digital globe).

4.1.3 Viewers in the Past

Some of the viewers of the past may have been troops of the English Civil War manning 'The Forlornd Hope' astride the Bath Road. At the beginning of the nineteenth century this was market gardens with few buildings interrupting a 360° view, except for those on Castle Street and St Mary's Butts.



Figure 4.4 Extract from Man's Map of 1798, Route of Russell Street marked in green. (Copyright. Image reproduced courtesy of Reading Library collection)

The northwest side of Russell Street was mostly built c 1820. Holy Trinity Parish Church was completed in its original form around 1830 and the north-eastern houses in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The section of the street to the south of the Baker Street crossroads, along the west side of the street, was developed with generally larger, slightly later, Georgian townhouses towards the junction with Tilehurst Rd at the southern end of the street. The positioning of the houses on the west side of the street was to gain an open view towards the centre of Reading out over the market gardens of Mrs Zinzan's Fields.



Figure 4.5 Extract from Commissioners' map of 1834. Note houses on the west and one house at the corner with Baker Street on the east. Route of Russell Street marked in green. (Copyright. Image reproduced courtesy of Reading Library Collection.)

Before the church was built a person standing at the top of the hill would have had a view of the gravel pit that it replaced and to the east a free and uninterrupted view towards the town centre.

The view was documented by William Fox Talbot, or more probably his assistant in one of the very first photographs of a church. He also photographed St Giles, St Mary's Minster and St Laurence's churches. The calotype/"talbotype" print would have been taken at the Baker Street crossroads before the houses on the east of Russell Street were built. This was a stone's throw from 8 Russell Terrace (now 55 Baker Street) where Fox Talbot set up the 'Reading Establishment'.

The name for the photographic enterprise may have been coined by Fox Talbot's business manager Benjamin Cowderoy. Fox Talbot's three year relationship with Reading from 1844 to 1847 was short-lived, but it left behind many historic images of the town and its people at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Source: 'Fox Talbot and the Reading Establishment' Martin Andrews, Two Rivers Press 2014).

There is more than one image of the view, the one reproduced in Martin Andrews book shows that there are no houses on the east of the street.



Figure 4.6 *Russell Street with Holy Trinity Church at the foot 1844-47 Fox Talbot “talbotype” (credited to Nicolaas Henneman @Science and Society Picture Library).*



Figure 4.7 *Fox Talbot’s view today (photo Evelyn Williams).*

4.1.4 The Viewing Place

The principal viewing place is at the highest point, the junction of Russell Street and the Tilehurst Road. There are two further viewing spots as the viewer descends from Tilehurst Road to the Oxford Road.

1. Primary viewing place. Junction of Russell Street and Tilehurst Road



Figure 4.8 View from the junction of Russell Street and Tilehurst Road (photo Evelyn Williams).

2. Crossroads with Baker Street



Figure 4.9 View from the Baker Street crossroads. On the left the parsonage and on the right the only listed building on the east side of the street (photo Evelyn Williams).

3. Bottom of Russell Street



Figure 4.10 *Almost at the junction with Oxford Road. Modern buildings on either side and the faux Tudor Nag's Head (photo Evelyn Williams).*

4.1.5 General Description of the View

The view has a clear focal point looking downhill towards the church. Beyond the Church the view terminates in the wooded Caversham escarpment on the far side of the river. Russell Street is straight with an even gradient. At the top of the hill from the Baker Street crossroads on the eastern side, nineteenth century townhouses and early twentieth century semi-detached houses dominate.

The location of the church centred at the junction of Russell Street with the Oxford Road might be assumed to be an example of early 19C town planning, but that is not the case. In 1826 the site was open ground with a deep hollow where gravel had been dug out to make up the Oxford Road. It was then purchased by the Reverend George Hulme to build in and over the hollow, his own proprietary church complete with brick vaulted catacombs intended for the luxury burial of Reading's elite. The cost of the venture was to be recovered through the sale of burial spaces in the vaults below and the charging of pew rents in the church above. In 1872 Holy Trinity was made the parish church of the neighbourhood. Its use continues to this day. It is a Grade II listed building, Ref 1113550.

After the crossroads which is approximately at the middle point of the hill, there are Georgian houses on the west side and mainly late nineteenth century on the east. The parsonage on the north-western corner of the junction also draws the eye.

Almost at the junction the Life Spring Church, originally built in the late 1920s as the Pavilion Cinema, later the Gaumont Cinema and Riley's snooker hall on the west and a modern infill development of flats narrow the view. The thriving faux-Tudor Nag's Head pub adds interest to the scene.

4.1.6 Topography and layout of the view

Elevation/ Height: Russell Street falls in excess of 10 metres from its top to the level of Holy Trinity church.

Foreground: In the foreground are large Georgian houses to the west and large Victorian houses to the east. Further down the hill at the junction with Baker Street, the parsonage, originally the parsonage for Holy Trinity Parish Church, attracts the eye because of its polychrome and Victorian detailing and prominent corner position.

Middle ground: Holy Trinity Parish Church on axis with the street and the trees in front of the church form an intermediate stop to the view.

Distant: The Caversham escarpment terminates the view and completes the framing of the church.

4.1.7 Green Characteristics

There is little green in the view apart from the trees in front of the Holy Trinity Parish Church which are protected by a TPO and provide welcome softening. The distant view of the wooded Caversham escarpment is an important green element which terminates the view.

4.1.8 Architectural characteristics

All but one of Russell Street's listed buildings are on the west side: Grade II listed 48 and 50 (1113570) Bath stone, 44 and 46 brick and stucco (1156906), 40 and 42 brick (1321883), 38 and 38A brick and stucco (1113569), 36 brick (1302644) 24-34 red brick terrace (1113568), 6-22 brick (1321882). On the east side there is 41 red brick detached house (1113567).

Holy Trinity church is also Grade II listed (1113550) not because of the exterior appearance or significance, but according to its listing entry because of the 'excellent chancel screen by Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin from St Chad's Roman Catholic Cathedral, Birmingham.'

None of the Victorian properties are listed.

4.1.9 The influence of light and seasons

Due to the lack of trees along the route, the view is not one that dramatically changes throughout the year along Russell Street itself. However, the trees in front of the Holy Trinity church leaf out during the spring and summer frequently hiding much of the church's façade with the austere appearance of the church in the winter months in sharp contrast once the leaves fall from the trees in the autumn.

Due to the urban makeup of the street, the view of the Caversham escarpment provides a rare and significant “green view” for the area in the spring and summer, with turning leaves in the autumn and a greyer, denuded view during the winter months.

4.1.10 Detractors

This is a busy road and housing along the street, despite in some cases being listed, is not always well maintained. Street furniture clutter, overhead wires, parked cars, litter and excess refuse from household bins is an ongoing situation with high multi-occupancy use affecting the infrastructure and housing stock along the route.

4.1.11 Sensitivity to change

Developments along the Oxford Road and between the town centre and Caversham could greatly affect the focus of the view and any reduction of the view of the escarpment would be a significant loss to the Conservation Area and to this view along Russell Street looking north out of the Conservation Area.



Figure 4.11 Annotated View analysis



Figure 4.12 Plan showing *Viewing place and view* (Map data: Copyright Google, Digital Globe)

View 5. View over Alexandra Road Conservation Area towards the Chilterns escarpment

5.1.1 Introduction

Figure 5.1 *General View from the top of Alexandra Road*



This view from Whiteknights, with the University of Reading campus to the east and south is from one of the higher points in Reading. The view looks over the Kennet and Thames valleys and Kennetmouth to the Caversham escarpment in the direction of Caversham Park.

5.1.2 Present Viewers

Viewers could be en route from the University or to St Joseph's College. In a car at the junction of Alexandra Road and Upper Redlands Road the viewer would be more preoccupied by traffic at the junction than the view and the same may apply to pedestrians. The junction is at the centre of a number of University halls of residence, such as St George's Hall and Mackinder Hall, so many University students will experience the view.

5.1.3 Viewers in the Past

Upper Redlands Road was a popular place for Victorian developers building large villas at the turn of the nineteenth century because of the view. The viewing place is adjacent to what was then Whiteknights Park, broken up into six leasehold units in 1867. A number of the new houses were designed by the architect Alfred Waterhouse who lived a number of years at Foxhill house now part of the University.

Possibly the singer Marianne Faithfull, a pupil of St Joseph's College in the 1960s, noticed the view on her journey to and from her home on Milman Road in Katesgrove.

5.1.4 The Viewing Place

The viewing place is almost at the extreme east of the borough boundary as it meets Wokingham.

There are several viewing places:

1. From the central reservation on the junction. The focus of the viewer is on the distant view of Caversham and the trees at the kink in Alexandra Road in the foreground. Further east the view is beyond the borough boundary into Wokingham. The blue roofs of Luscinia View, next to Tesco on Napier Road and those of Thames Valley Park, beyond the borough boundary are obscured.
2. From the west corner of the junction on Alexandra Road. From this viewing point it is possible to see the tops of the Oracle office buildings at Thames Valley Park.
3. Immediately to East along Upper Redlands Rd, there are views out across St Joseph's School playing field particularly in winter.
4. Moving down Alexandra Road, the distant view disappears as the street flattens and turns west. At this point the Road is joined by an unexpected and delightful street or alley, Lydford Road, along the northern boundary of St Joseph's School, continuing past Redlands Primary School to Cardigan Road. The Alexandra Road conservation area begins and continuing down Alexandra Road which is flanked by trees, the view is stopped by London Road.



Figure 5.2 *View from the west side of Alexandra Road junction*



Figure 5.3 *Lydford Rd with Northern Boundary Wall of St Joseph's School (photo Evelyn Williams).*



Figure 5.4 *Looking north down Alexandra Road towards London Road (photo Evelyn Williams).*

5.1.5 General Description of the View

From the main viewing point the general public can appreciate the limits of the town clearly delineated by the Chiltern escarpment and the encirclement of the borough by trees and open country to the north.

5.1.6 Topography and layout of the view

Elevation/Height: The viewpoint is some 25 metres above the level of the Thames in the valley below and looks across to the top of Chiltern escarpment which is higher at about 45 metres above the river.

Foreground: Road and paving surfaces and wall and hedge boundary features constitute the foreground. Upper Redlands Road follows the ridge line. The viewing point is just outside the Alexandra Road Conservation Area.

Middle ground: This is the Alexandra Road Conservation Area and east over Redlands. There are Specimen trees which add interest.

Distant: There are fine views across to the Caversham/Chiltern escarpment.

5.1.7 Green Characteristics

The middle view is dominated by large numbers of trees lining the street and specimen trees in gardens. A strong hedge lines is an important element of the foreground. High wooded ground on the Chiltern escarpment ends the view.

5.1.8 Architectural characteristics

Apart from the roofs of houses in Alexandra Road and walls around properties, the view from the top of the hill is not greatly influenced by architectural features. The grid of modest terraces built in the 1870s for Huntley and Palmer workers is below the viewpoint and not visible. The Grade II church of St Lukes although approximately on axis with the view is obscured by trees even in winter although it is partially visible immediately along Redlands Rd across the adjoining St Josephs playing fields. Caversham Park House is also visible from here. From the main viewing point Wycliffe Baptist Church on the Kings Rd can be glimpsed.

5.1.9 The influence of light and seasons

The view is more obscured during the summer when trees are in full leaf. In autumn, when some of these photographs were taken, the view was enhanced by yellow, orange and red colours of the foliage.

5.1.10 Detractors

In the foreground a plethora of street furniture, an overgrown telegraph pole, speed limit signs, traffic calming measures and particularly bright red banners and boards announcing St Joseph's College, founded in 1910, detract from the view and catch the eye. There is scope for the rationalisation and reduction of visual impact of these elements during routine maintenance and replacement.



Figure 5.5 *Looking north down Alexandra Road at the junction with Upper Redlands Road (photo Evelyn Williams)*

5.1.11 Sensitivity to change

The view could be adversely impacted by tall buildings built to the east of Reading, close to the border with Wokingham, or at Caversham Park.



Figure 5.6 Annotated View analysis



Figure 5.7 View Analysis (detail)



Figure 5.8 View Analysis (detail)



Figure 5.9 Plan showing Viewing Place and View (Map data: Copyright Google, Digital globe)

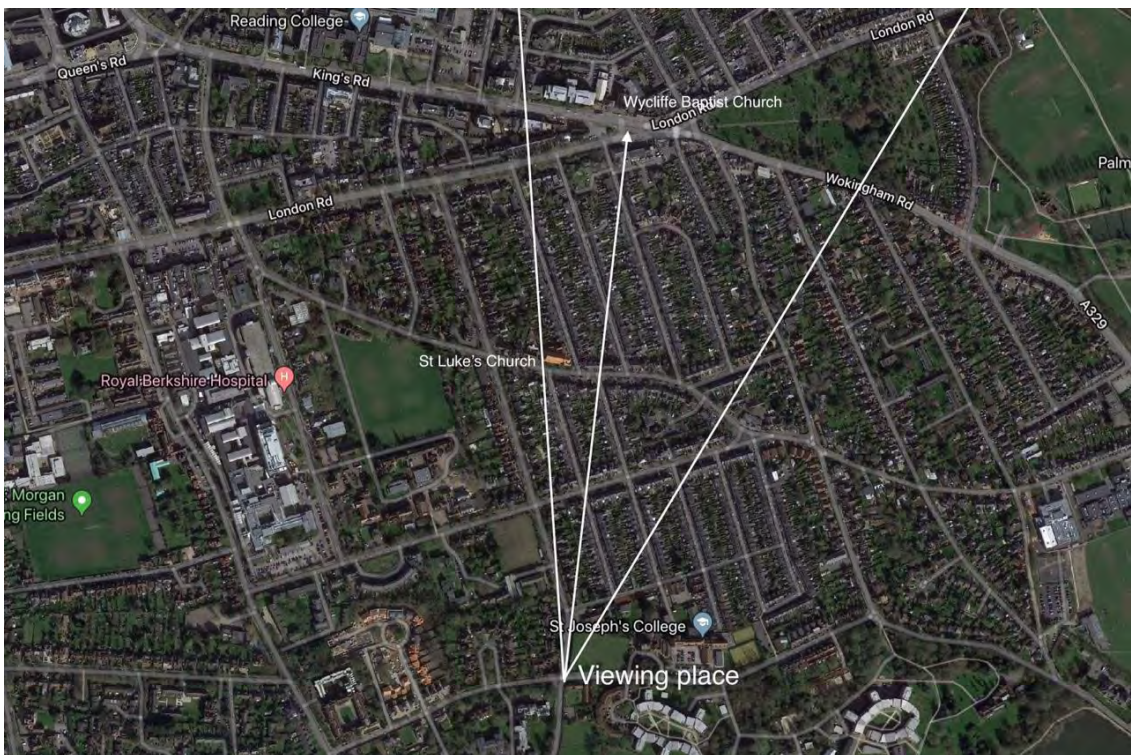


Figure 5.10 Detail plan showing Viewing Place (Map data: Copyright Google, Digital Globe)

View 6. View southwards down St Annes Rd towards Downshire Square.

6.1.1 Introduction

Figure 6.1 *General View below*



This view taken adjacent to the listed St Annes Well at the top of St Annes Rd, at the junction with Priest Hill, looks south over the eastern end of St Peter's Conservation Area and across to the Downshire Square Conservation Area on the far horizon. All Saints Church in Downshire Square with its bell turret is visible on the horizon.



Figure 6.2 *Detail of the view, the horizon with the roof of All Saints Church and specimen trees*

6.1.2 Present Viewers

Viewers today are principally those who live in the area and commuters heading for Reading whether on foot or by car. At rush hour, it is a car borne commuter route towards the town centre and due to limited passing places in St Annes Rd, car drivers and their passengers have enforced leisure to study the view whilst waiting to proceed.

6.1.3 Viewers in the Past

Viewers in the past would have been pilgrims visiting St Anne's Well which is directly adjacent to the viewing place. In Caversham, dedications to Mary the Mother of Jesus and her mother, St Anne, date back to the Middle Ages. Pope Urban VI authorised devotion to St Anne in 1378. St Anne's well was under the care of the Augustinian Canons and its mineral waters drew many pilgrims and were reported to have effected cures. The well was lost until workmen discovered it in 1906 during the construction of houses nearby. In 1908, a formal dedication took place for the memorial drinking fountain and cover, designed by William Ravenscroft, a nationally known local architect (*Historical information courtesy of CADRA*).



Figure 6.3 Extract from the tithe map dated 1844, the approximate position of St Anne's well is ringed (Copyright. Image courtesy of Berkshire Records Office, object reference D/D1/162/1B)

6.1.4 The Viewing Place

Priest Hill leading to the Mount is an old road. In the early 1900s St Annes Rd was laid out southwards from St Anne's Well joining Priest Hill to Church Rd. Church Road is at a lower elevation and runs parallel to the Thames. The photographs below show the dedication ceremony of the brick well head and cover in 1908 and indicate the open nature of the surroundings. By 1930 the area had become much as we see it today.



Figure 6.4 Photo of dedication ceremony of the new well head and cover 1908
(Copyright. Image reproduced courtesy of Reading Library Collection)

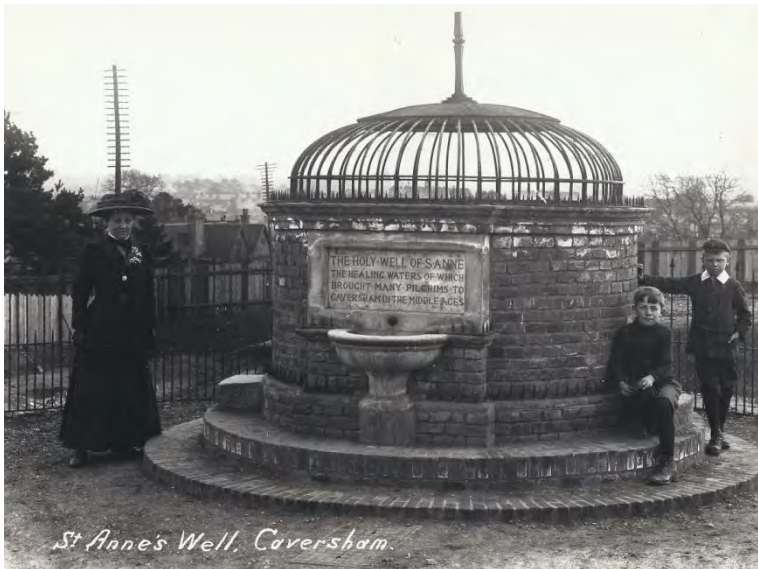


Figure 6.5 St Anne's Well and surroundings beyond circa 1908
(Copyright. Image reproduced courtesy of Reading Library collection).



Figure 6.6 St Anne's Well and surroundings circa 1930
(Copyright. Image reproduced courtesy of Reading Library Collection).



Figure 6.6 *Detail of the well today*

Figure 6.7 *Looking towards the viewing Place at the junction with St Anne's Road*

6.1.5 General Description of the View

From the top of the St Annes Rd adjacent to the Well, the view is southwards down the road, over listed buildings in the Conservation area and their gardens along Buckside. On the far side of the Thames the view passes over the current industrial areas around Richfield Avenue and Milford Rd, which due to their low elevation are not visible. The higher level railway tracks beyond exiting Reading station to the west are visible in the view and trains crossing add movement and interest. The view ends on the far horizon of higher ground of the Downshire Square Conservation Area and the Tilehurst Road, picking up features in this area which are clearly visible.

6.1.6 Topography and layout of the view

Elevation/Height: St Anne's Well is some 20 metres above the level of the River Thames in the valley below, whilst the ground level at the horizon where the view terminates in the distance is around 40 metres above river level. The apparent level is increased by the height of features on the horizon such as All Saints Church and the specimen trees planted in the 19C.

Foreground: The foreground is of St Annes Rd, parked cars and the turn of the 20th century houses largely of brick.

Middle ground: The middle ground features the eastern end of St Peter's Conservation Area and also picks up trees in the back gardens of Buckside in the Conservation Area, the roof of the boathouse and the trees adjacent to and beyond it in Richfield Avenue.

Distant: The view ends on the horizon, where features on the horizon line are clearly visible to the naked eye.

6.1.7 Green Characteristics

Small flowering trees and shrubs in front gardens soften some of the foreground down St Annes Road. Mature larger trees in the gardens to Buckside and on the far side of the river merge together to form a strong green element which contributes greatly to the middle ground. As previously mentioned, tall specimen trees planted in the 19C to the gardens of houses and villas around Downshire Square, the Bath and Tilehurst Roads feature strongly in silhouette on the horizon.

6.1.8 Architectural characteristics

The starting point for the view is the Grade II Listed memorial well head and decorative iron work cover designed by William Ravenscroft, photos above. Locally Ravenscroft also designed Grade II Chiltern Court in Caversham, the Grade II Henry building at Katesgrove School, Goring Roman Catholic Church, the Masonic building Henley on Thames and many individual houses and villas in the Reading area, working in a mixture of an Arts and Crafts, and Gothic style.

The houses down St Annes Rd were built at the beginning of the 20th C, largely of red brick with some render and originally slate roofs. The 17 C grade II cottage down Buckside continues the view

All Saints Church on the horizon in Downshire Square, Grade II listed was designed by JP St Aubyn, built circa 1865 -74 of coursed rubble with ashlar dressings and a tiled roof with a bell turret. Aubyn worked in the Gothic revival style of his day. The roof and turret are visible in the view. Foundations were laid for a tower and spire to rival that of Christ Church in Reading. If this had been completed it would have made an outstanding landmark due to the elevation of the site but the money ran out and the work was discontinued (*Historical information: Downshire Square Conservation Area Appraisal*).

6.1.9 The influence of light and seasons

The best conditions for viewing are on a bright clear day in the morning in the Spring or early Summer.

6.1.10 Detractors

Traffic and parked cars interfere with enjoyment of this view as do large lorries passing in Church Rd at the bottom of St Annes Rd, although the parked cars do act as a traffic calming measure reducing the road effectively to a single lane. Telegraph poles also detract from the view.

6.1.11 Sensitivity to change

The area in this view most sensitive to change relates to the middle and far middle ground of the view. Care would need to be taken with regard to the height and bulk of any development or redevelopment in the employment areas bounded by Cardiff Road and Richfield Avenue which might intrude upon the view. This also applies to the area between the Oxford road and the Railway line within the view. The horizon line could also be sensitive to adverse change, through the height or bulk of future development.



Figure 6.8 Annotated View analysis

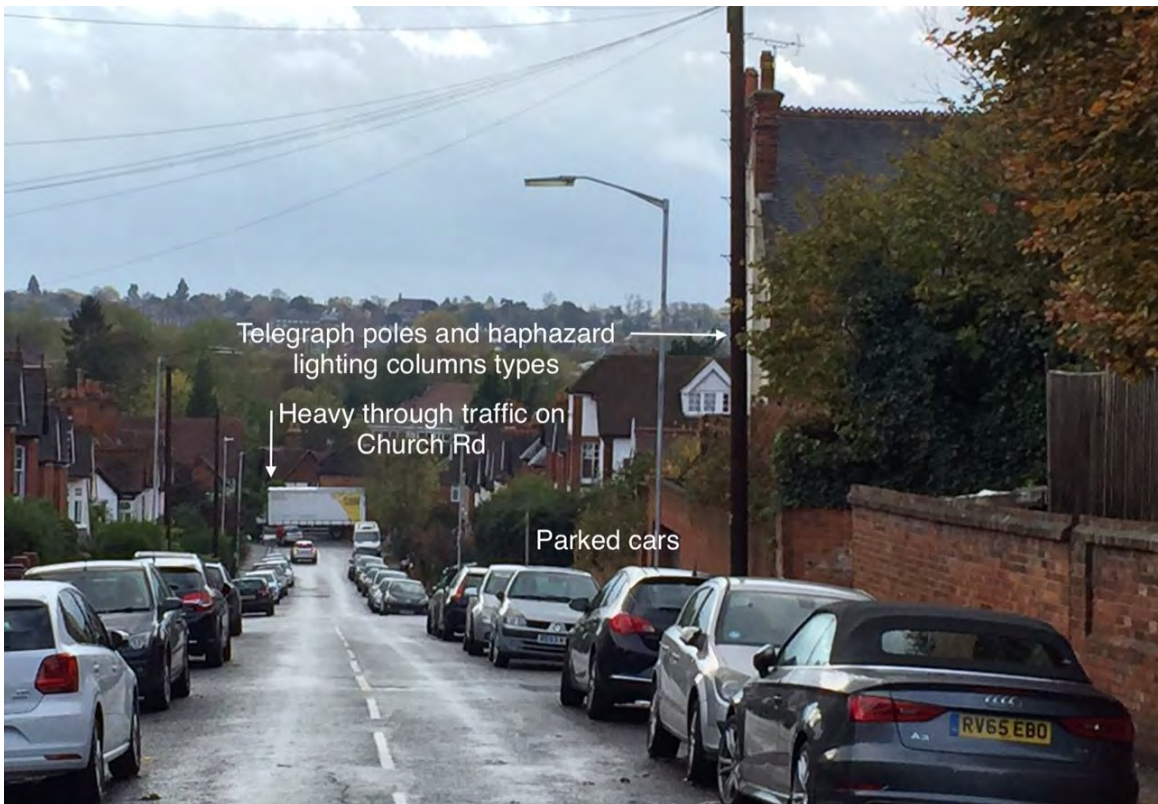


Figure 6.9 Detractors



Figure 6.9 Plan showing Viewing place and View (Map data: Copyright Google, Digital Globe).

View 7. View of St Anne’s Church Tower from the west

7.1.1 General description of the view and its characteristics

For this shorter and more focused View, an abbreviated form of analysis is used. The methodology of the Oxford View Cones approach nevertheless informs the analysis.



Figure 7.1 General view with tower on the axis of South Street, Baptist church by Waterhouse in foreground (photo Megan Aldrich)



Figure 7.2 Polychrome brick Baptist Church with corner tower by Waterhouse



Figure 7.3 View of tower from Priest Hill

There are several viewing points of the Church tower from the west, the principal one looking down South street at the junction with Prospect St and Gosbrook Road, where adjacent to the front of the Baptist church, the tower of St Anne’s is on axis with and framed by the street. Linked to South Street by a pedestrian cut through, Falkland Rd further east is also on axis with tower. There also several views of the tower from the west across the Westfield Rd recreation ground. Further back the tower is also visible from the west from Priest Hill. Generally the tower rises above and identifies the surrounding area of 2 storey late 19C and early 20C housing in which it sits. The tower is also visible from the new, above track, public concourse at Reading Station. The tower is of narrow

dimensions compared to its height and this gives two impressions a) that the tower is taller than it is and b) that it appears farther away than it is.



Figure 7.4 *Looking across the Westfield Road recreation ground*

Present viewers are local residents and those who use Caversham centre to shop or work. The tower is set on and rises above the level ground of the Thames plain which surround it and it is from these level areas that it is principally visible although there are also views from higher ground such as Priest Hill. Green characteristics include the setting of the Westfield Rd Recreation ground and in turn, the tower adds identity and contributes to the character of the recreation ground. From South Street and elsewhere green contributions are made by trees and shrubs to the front gardens of domestic houses. The view is best experienced on a bright sunlit day when the warm colours of the brick and stone materials of the tower are reflected and at their best.

7.1.2 History of the view

Gosbrook Road and Prospect Street are roads linking original village settlements and predate the laying out of South St and the residential roads around St Anne's Church, these latter roads were all laid out at the end of the 19C.

The church of Our Lady and St Anne is the full title of the Church. In Caversham, dedications to Mary the Mother of Jesus and her mother, St Anne, date back to the Middle Ages. Pope Urban VI authorised devotion to St Anne in 1378. The earliest reference to the Shrine of Our Lady of Caversham is 1106, when Duke Robert of Normandy, eldest son of William the Conqueror, presented a relic from the crusades. This shrine became a site of medieval pilgrimage and is thought to have been near what is now Dean's Farm. There are records of the shrine being visited and richly

endowed by royalty as late as the early reign of Henry VIII and Caversham was a major site of pilgrimage until the Reformation. In the 1890s, Mrs Florence Crawshay, wife of the wealthy industrialist who owned Caversham Park, converted to Roman Catholicism. She and Mrs Anne Lovegrove invited a group of French Sisters of Mercy to come to Caversham and local Catholics were then able to have Mass and Sacraments in their own neighbourhood. The newly created Parish was given the title of Our Lady and St Anne to recall the former shrine of Our Lady and the chapel of St Anne on the mediaeval Caversham Bridge. Revival of devotion to Our Lady of Caversham began in 1897. In 1898 Dr Cockran purchased and donated the site of the Church and School. The foundation stone was laid in 1899 and the Church was built and blessed in 1902.

The church is part of an architecturally unified complex which includes a convent, presbytery and a primary school. In the 1950s a stone chapel in the mediaeval style was built incorporating stones from the Chapel of St Anne on the bridge. The renewed shrine of Our Lady of Caversham with its mediaeval statue was dedicated in 1959 (*source of historical information CADRA*).



Figure 7.5 *The Church and tower*

The church complex and tower were designed (and built over a number of years at the beginning of the 20th century) by Canon Alexander J C Scoles, who was both an architect and Roman Catholic priest, possibly with his assistant Geoffrey Raymond. The Church as a whole of red brick with stone detailing is in a gothic revival style. The tower was built in 1907 of red brick with stone quoins and banding. The top of the tower is both castellated and stepped and the overall impression is possibly more Arts and Crafts mixed with Elizabethan than gothic.

The principal viewing place is from the front of the Prospect Street Baptist Church, 1875-77, which is Grade II listed and designed by Alfred Waterhouse whose other buildings include Reading Town Hall and the Natural History Museum. On a difficult corner site and of red brick with stone capped plinth and grey blue decorative bricks, this church has a banded tiled roof and the Grade II Listing notes indicate that the building is included as a good example of Waterhouse's use of materials with brick stone and roof tiles of different colours (*Source Historic England listing notes*).

The Church forms a focal point between Prospect Street and South Street and in design terms resolves a difficult corner. Details include early English Gothic style windows and stepped buttresses with red and grey brickwork on the gable.

7.1.3 Detractors and Sensitivity to change

Detractors include heavy traffic adjacent to the viewing place in Prospect Street and adjacent to the Westfield Rd recreation ground as well as timber telephone poles in South Street.

The tower of this church, surrounded by the flat land of the Thames plain, rises above the adjacent areas of largely two storey residential housing and gives the area its character. Care needs to be taken that the height and mass of any redevelopment sites in the area are carefully considered in respect of their relation to the tower from multiple viewing places. This would relate for example to the temporary school site adjacent to the Recreation ground that may come forward for development in due course.



Figure 7.6 Plan showing Viewing place and view (Map data: Copyright Google, Digital Globe)

View 8. Towards Caversham Park House from the A329(M) and the Railway

8.1.1 Introduction

Figure 8.1 *View from the A329M*



These Views represent a significant marker of arrival into Reading on two of the main approaches on the east side of the town, a) from the A329M by car and b) by train from the Railway on the London Paddington line. Striking views are seen of a distant Palladian Mansion on a hill.



Figure 8.2 *One of the views from the train, on the railway looking across the Thames*

8.1.2 Present Viewers

Viewers today are the travelling public approaching Reading from the East whether by car from the motorway network or by train to and from London Paddington. It is a view seen by all travellers on the Railway network to and from the West Country and Wales. This means that from the railway this is a view seen by several million people each year.

8.1.3 Viewers in the Past

The A329M was constructed in the 1970s and therefore represents a relatively recent viewing place. The Great Western Railway was constructed in the 1840s and travellers on this line have therefore enjoyed the view of the house as a precursor to arriving at Reading Station for around 175 years.

There has been a house at Caversham Park for over 800 years. The house and park have had distinguished owners and occupiers over the centuries. These include William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke and Protector of the Realm who died in Caversham Park in 1219. In the 16th century Sir Francis Knollys, the Treasurer of Queen Elizabeth I demolished the house and rebuilt it further to the north. During the Civil War it was owned by the Royalist Earl of Craven and confiscated and used to imprison Charles I. Following the Civil War and the Restoration, the Elizabethan Manor House was demolished and rebuilt by Lord Craven. In the early 18th Century the house and estate were acquired by the Earls of Cadogan. Again the house was rebuilt and the gardens remodelled. This house burnt down, was replaced and then enlarged by Major Charles Marsack the next owner. This house also largely burnt down in 1850.



Figure 8.3 *Sailing barge being towed from Kennet Mouth to the Thames circa 1825. Caversham Park is visible on the hill in the distance. Print probably by William Havell (Copyright. Image reproduced courtesy of Reading Library Collection)*

Figure 8.4 *Present day photo from a train on the railway taken slightly to the east of Figure 8.3 above. Caversham Park House is still visible on the hill in the distance.*

As set out in more detail in 8.1.8, the building that is seen today was erected for the new owner William Crawshay, an ironmaster in the 1850s.

It is the south front of this Palladian ensemble of a central block flanked by two lower pillared colonnades which is strikingly visible from a distance in the views. The gardens to the south sloping down towards the Thames valley, where some elements of work by Capability Brown are still evident, frame the house within the view.

In the early 20th century the house was used as a convalescent home for wounded soldiers and then by the Oratory School.

Since 1943 the BBC Monitoring Service has been based at Caversham Park, providing invaluable information and briefings for the Government and the BBC during WWII, the subsequent Cold War and up to the present day. Due to changes in technology and the proliferation of media sources the BBC has recently announced the closure of the service from Caversham Park. The long association with the BBC adds another layer of history and interest to the house and the view.

8.1.4 The Viewing Place

Both the A329M and the Railway provide 'kinetic' views – that is a quick series of changing views seen as the car or the train moves along. The view from the A329M is visible for a relatively short period of time but is striking due to the house being straight ahead of the viewer on axis with the road through the windscreen. From the Railway the view is at 90 degrees to the direction of travel and it is frequently interrupted by trees, buildings or railway structures in the way as the train moves so that the view becomes a series of intriguing glimpses.

8.1.5 General Description of the View

From both the A329M and the Railway, Caversham Park House is a clearly visible historic landmark dominating the wooded hill on the far side of the Thames.

8.1.6 Topography and layout of the view

Elevation/Height: Caversham Park House is situated on the highest point of the Chiltern escarpment in the area and is thus seen on the horizon from a distance. Caversham Park House, at ground level, is some 40 to 45 metres above the level of the Thames. As the house is three stories the top of the main house is some 55 metres above the level of the Thames and the Railway. The A329M slopes down as it runs north and the house is some 35 metres higher than the road seen across the dip of the Thames Valley.

Foreground: The foreground is largely made up of urban transport infrastructure, tarmac, chippings, gantries and street furniture.

Middle ground: This is made up of trees and vegetation and some intervening buildings and from the Railway the river Thames.

Distant: There are distant fine views of the escarpment on the horizon line either side of the house.

8.1.7 Green Characteristics

An extensive and unbroken green, well treed escarpment on the horizon frames the house. Both the trees and the house add to the apparent height and visibility of the escarpment. There are no other buildings other than the Palladian mansion visible on the horizon line. Large specimen trees are apparent even from this distance either side of the house. The middle ground below the house is also green and is constituted by the gardens to the south of the house and the largely open space of Reading cemetery below the garden.

8.1.8 Architectural characteristics

The previous two 18C houses on this site although destroyed by fire were three storey and of 5 central bays flanked by a further two projecting elements of two bays each at the ends of the house making 9 bays in all. The influence of these previous houses is seen today in the present building which also has 5 central bays flanked by one wider bay at each end giving 7 bays in all but covering a similar footprint to the previous houses.



Figure 8.5 Caversham Park House circa 1798, print drawn and engraved by William Poole. Five central bays with two further projecting bays at each end. The colonnades have not yet been built (Copyright. Image reproduced courtesy of Reading Library Collection).



Figure 8.6 *Caversham Park house as it is today.*

The building as seen today was erected for the new owner William Crawshay an ironmaster in the early 1850s, by architect Horace Jones who later also designed Tower Bridge in London. The house is built on an iron frame, an early example of this technique. Jones inserted his seven bay block, (five central and two wider end bays) of three storeys between the two surviving colonnades of 1840 by John Thistlewood Crew.

It is the south front of this large Palladian ensemble of a central block flanked by two lower pillared colonnades which is strikingly visible from a distance in the views. The gardens to the south slope down towards the Thames valley, where some elements of work by Capability Brown are still evident, and frame the house within the view.

8.1.9 The influence of light and seasons

The best conditions for viewing are on a bright clear day when the sun is on the south elevation of the house bringing out the golden colour of the stonework and casting shadows which emphasize the modelling of the stone colonnades and mouldings on the main house. Cloud formations add greatly to the variety of view experienced due to the wide expanse of sky.

8.1.10 Detractors

Elements which are part and parcel of the infrastructure of this view, such as tall streetlights on the A329(M) and gantries, fences, junction boxes etc on the Railway affect the view in some positions. It is difficult to see how these can be practically ameliorated in the short term and they can also be considered as part of the viewing experience. Possibly in the longer term when planned maintenance and replacement take place, if there are alternative options, then consideration could be given to any options which reduce the impact on the view or at best do not worsen it. Light coloured roofing on buildings visible from the A329(M) detracts from the view from certain positions.

8.1.11 Sensitivity to change

Any new development on lower ground in front of this south side of the house and the green escarpment on either side would need careful consideration to avoid projecting into and harming the view. In particular the garden and park to the south of the house are vital to the framing of the view. Likewise built development which might become visible on the skyline/horizon should be avoided. Careful consideration should be given to roof and cladding colours in respect of light industrial or office development on the Business parks at the end of the A329(M). In respect of views from the railway careful consideration should also be given to the height of any development proposals if these were to come forward in the vicinity of the Marina on the far side of the Thames.



Figure 8.7 Annotated View analysis



Figure 8.8 Detail of view from the A329(M)



Figure 8.9 Plan showing Viewing place and View (Map data: Copyright Google, Digital Globe)

View 9. View southwards along tree lined Coley Avenue

9.1.1 General description of the view and its characteristics

For this shorter and more focused View, an abbreviated form of analysis is used. The methodology of the Oxford View Cones approach nevertheless informs the analysis.



Figure 9.1 General view down Coley Avenue (photo credit www.coleypark.com, Copyright Graham Horn)

The view along Coley Avenue to the south, out of the Conservation Area is an historic view worthy of note and retention. There have been trees along the route since at least the turn of the 19C (Coates map, 1802) and probably from much earlier in the 18C, and the road once formed the private drive to Coley Park Manor. The Manor was rebuilt in the mid 19C. The road has tall red brick walls (more predominant at the northern end of the road along the western edge), and affords a pleasant walk or drive despite its often moderately heavy traffic. The Avenue provides narrow but significant views to the south and also in reverse back north towards the Castle Hill/ Russell Street Conservation Area from the southern part of the Avenue.



Figure 9.2 View back towards the Conservation Area (photo Karen Rowlands)

Present viewers are local residents and car born commuters. From the Bath Road junction with the Avenue, the road is largely level but rises slightly to a crest and then falls again more steeply close to the junction with Berkeley Avenue. At the junction with Berkeley Avenue, the road has been realigned and then to the south drops again and curves back towards its original line. The trees that line the Avenue are Limes (tilia x europea). It is believed they were planted circa 1906 when the previous Avenue trees were felled. Outside of the line of the trees, the road remains substantially bounded by 19C brick walls. These are taller at the northern end of the road along the western edge, with lower walls elsewhere. The buildings which line the road are as a whole well set back and are a mix of 19C and more modern buildings. The view is best experienced in Spring, Summer or Autumn when the trees are in leaf.



Figure 9.3 *View towards Bath Rd and the Conservation Area from the Berkeley Avenue junction*

Figure 9.4 *19C and 20C buildings line the Avenue*



Figure 9.5 *Boundary treatment typical wall detailing*



Figure 9.6 *Boundary treatment typical wall detailing*

9.1.2 History of the view

Historical evidence for the Coley Park Estate and House go back some 700 years. The original house was close to The Holybrook. In the early 19C the house was rebuilt on higher ground away from the river. This is Coley House as it survives today, now a private hospital. (source www.coleypark.com) The drive to Coley Park Manor began at the junction with the Bath Road and was laid out with trees probably as early as the 18C. This drive is now Coley Avenue. Coates map of Reading 1802 (Berkshire Records Office) shows the start of the Avenue and this is shown tree lined. Likewise Dormer 1843 indicates a tree lined drive.

Figure 9.7 Extract from Dormer map of 1843 showing drive to Coley Park. (Copyright. Image reproduced courtesy of Berkshire Record Office)

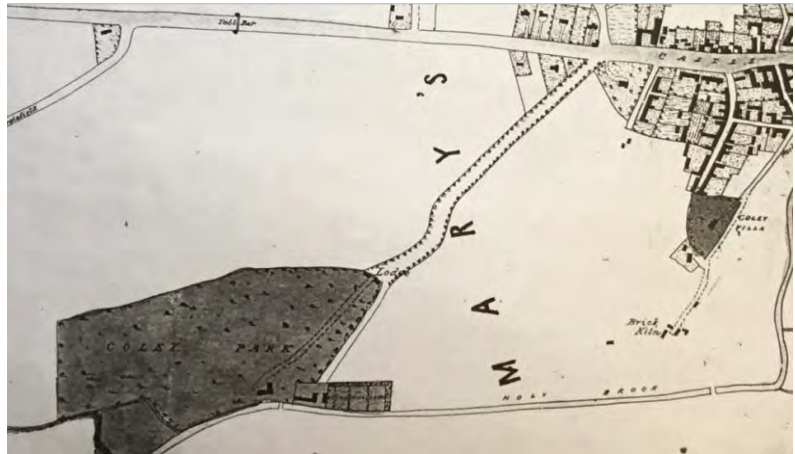


Figure 9.8 FoxTalbot's early photograph of the tree lined avenue circa 1844-47 (Copyright. Image reproduced courtesy of Reading Library Collection)



The early photograph by Fox Talbot, during his association with Reading between 1844 and 1847, is taken looking north up Coley Avenue towards the Bath Road and the current Conservation Area.

Large stone and render gateposts were erected circa 1870 on each side of the entrance to the Avenue. These were topped with winged dragons (Wyverns). These large gate posts were demolished at some point in the 20th century to widen the Bath Road Intersection. During the latter half of the 19C land was sold off either side of the Avenue for large private houses. The original trees to the Avenue were felled around 1905. The postcard illustrations below indicate the original trees in a photo taken in 1903 and the subsequent photo taken 1907 from a similar position shows the replanted trees (*source www.coleypark.com*). Also visible in the photos the separate smaller gate and piers to Yeomanry House, the lodge of which survives today.



Figure 9.9 Stone gate piers to the Avenue taken from Bath Rd in 1903 prior to tree felling (Copyright. Image reproduced courtesy of Reading Library Collection)



Figure 9.10 Stone gate piers to the Avenue taken from Bath Rd in 1907 after replanting (Copyright. Image reproduced courtesy of Reading Library Collection)

9.1.3 Detractors and Sensitivity to change

Detractors include heavy traffic on the Avenue at peak times. Some boundary wall areas have been rendered and topped with wooden panels which detract from the generally interesting 19C brick walls which predominate in the Avenue. Trees in the avenue should be retained and replanted where appropriate in the future. Any future development either side of the Avenue should respect and take note of both the trees and the long expanses of brick walling which give the Avenue its character.



Figure 9.11 *The Avenue, from the Viewing place in winter after pollarding, the render on an original brick wall is a detractor.*



Figure 9.12 *Plan showing Viewing Place and view (Map data: Copyright. Google, Digital Globe)*