

# READING BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

Adopted November 2019



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**Reading**  
Borough Council

Working better with you

**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 Listed Buildings will not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where appropriate, their settings.*

*Applications which affect Historic Parks and Gardens will safeguard features which form an integral part of the special character or appearance of the park or garden. Development will not detract from the enjoyment, layout, design, character, appearance, features or setting of the park or garden, key views out from the park, or prejudice its future restoration.*

*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.*

4.2.12 Planning is an important instrument for maintaining and enhancing the environment, and preserving built and natural heritage. Planning policy must therefore reconcile the need for development with the need to protect the natural and historic environment. Planning policy should also seek opportunities for development to secure the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, to better reveal its significance and to increase access to and enjoyment of that environment.

4.2.13 Heritage Statements will be expected to:

- i) describe the significance of the asset and its setting, using appropriate expertise; at a level of detail proportionate to its significance and sufficient to understand the potential

impact of the proposal; using appropriate references such as the Historic Environment Record and, if necessary, original survey (including, for assets or archaeological interest, an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation); and

ii) set out the impact of the development on the heritage assets and a suggested mitigation that is proportionate to the impact and the significance of the heritage asset, including where possible positive opportunities to conserve and enjoy heritage assets as well as recording loss and advancing knowledge.

4.2.14 In areas where there is a need to protect character, local authorities have the power to make an Article 4 direction to remove permitted development rights and require planning applications<sup>31</sup>. There are 15 Article 4 directions currently in place that relate to patterned brickwork and one relating to a locally listed building (plus two which restrict conversions from a house to an HMO) and the Council will continue to consider the implementation of Article 4 directions, particularly in areas where special historic character is threatened<sup>32</sup>. There is potential to use Local Development Orders (LDOs) in combination with Article 4 Directions in order to allow owners to reinstate features that reflect historic character without having to submit a planning application.

4.2.15 Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Unlike buildings listed by Historic England, they are designated at the local level by the local authority. These areas are designated because they have a particularly distinctive character and usually provide a strong link to the history of the area and are considered to be heritage assets for the purposes of applying this policy. The specific heritage interests of Reading's Conservation Areas are set out in Conservation Area Appraisals. These documents serve as a guide for managing development in these areas.

4.2.16 Heritage Assets at Risk are identified by Historic England as "vulnerable to neglect, decay or other threats".<sup>33</sup> Heritage Assets at Risk deserve priority attention. As of October 2017, four assets in Reading have been identified by Historic England as 'at risk'. These are:

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

At the time of writing, three of the four sites identified as 'at risk' are either undergoing improvement or have secured funding for improvement (Sacred Heart, St David's Hall and the Remains of Reading Abbey). The Council is working closely with the owners of the Chazey Farm Barn to develop a plan for its restoration. Should other assets become identified as 'at-risk' throughout the plan period, the Council will actively work toward their protection. The most up-to-date list can be viewed on the Historic England website<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> NPPF

<sup>32</sup> A map of areas in Reading under Article 4 Direction can be found at <http://www.reading.gov.uk/planningadvice>

<sup>33</sup> PPG, 12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/policy/achieving-sustainable-development/delivering-sustainable-development/12-conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/>

<sup>34</sup> The Heritage-at-risk register can be accessed on Historic England's website at <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk>