



PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

3 DECEMBER 2025

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

AGENDA ITEM	ACTION	WARDS AFFECTED	PAGE NO
7. LOCAL LISTING REPORT - ROYAL ALBION, 642 OXFORD ROAD	Decision	BATTLE	5 - 40
8. PL/22/1916 (FUL) & PL/22/1917 (FUL) - FORMER DEBENHAMS DEPARTMENT STORE, WEST OF YIELD HALL PLACE, THE ORACLE & EXISTING VUE CINEMA COMPLEX, WEST OF YIELD HALL PLACE/LONDON ROAD, THE ORACLE	Decision	ABBHEY; KATESGROVE	41 - 50
9. PL/25/1191 (FUL) - LAND AT MEADOW ROAD	Decision	THAMES	51 - 56

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UPDATE SHEET AND ORDER OF CONSIDERATION

Planning Applications Committee - 3rd December 2025

PART 1

Item No.	7	Page 51	Ward	Battle	
Local Listing Report	Royal Albion, 642 Oxford Road				*UPDATE*

PART 2

Item No.	8	Page 73	Ward	Abbey	
Application Number	PL/22/1916				
Application type	REG3/VAR				
Address	Former Debenhams Department Store				*UPDATE*

Planning Officer presenting Matthew Burns

Item No.	8	Page 73	Ward	Abbey	
Application Number	PL/22/1917				
Application type	Full planning permission				
Address	Existing Vue Cinema Complex				*UPDATE*
Planning Officer presenting	Matthew Burns				

Item No.	9	Page 255	Ward	Thames	
Application Number	PL/25/1191				
Application type	Full planning permission				
Address	Land at Meadow Road, Reading				

Planning Officer presenting Catrin Davies ***UPDATE***

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Planning Applications Committee



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03 December 2025

Title	LOCAL LISTING NOMINATION <u>UPDATE REPORT</u> - Royal Albion
Reason for update	Officer update following the proprietor's representation
Report status	Public report
Report author	Burcu Can Cetin, Conservation Officer
Lead Councillor	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
Corporate priority	Healthy Environment
Ward	Battle Ward
Address	Royal Albion, 642 Oxford Road, Reading, RG30 1EH
Recommendations	Resolve to add Royal Albion to the List of Locally Important Buildings and Structures

1. Summary

- 1.1. This update report sets out the Council's response to the representation submitted by Savills on behalf of M & M Property Investments (Reading) Ltd regarding the proposed addition of Royal Albion to the list of Locally Important Buildings and Structures. It clarifies the relevant assessment framework, reviews the matters raised in the objection and explains the reasons why officers continue to consider the building to meet criteria for inclusion as a non-designated heritage asset (NHDA).

2. Summary of the Proprietor's Representation

- 2.1. The objection asserts that Royal Albion

- *"is considered to possess low archaeological interest, low architectural and artistic interest, and low historic interest."*
 - *"is not considered to possess sufficient local architectural and historic interest to be eligible for local listing."*
 - has undergone *"various incongruous and iterative alterations that have significantly diluted the limited architectural and artistic interest of the building."*
 - has limited group value, *since alterations to Bishop's Villas 'considerably diluted' any association*
 - lacks landmark quality, *described as 'somewhat recessive in views along Oxford Road'*
- (Please see the Appendix for the representation document – Assessment of Non-Statutory Designation)

- 2.2. The representation presents an assessment that relies predominantly on national designation criteria, concluding that the nominated asset exhibits **"low"** architectural, artistic, archaeological and historic interest. Whilst these conclusions may be relevant to an evaluation against the thresholds for **statutory listing**, they do not constitute an

appropriate test for local heritage listing, which operates under fundamentally different criteria. Local listing concerns assets that possess **a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions**, even when they do not meet national standards.

- 2.3. In addition, the representation does not engage with the core conservation principles articulated by Historic England in 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance', prepared for the historic environment, including:
- Understanding heritage values and significance as the sum of cultural and historic values;
 - Considering the relative importance of different identified values in forming a balanced judgement;
 - Assessing the contribution of setting and context to how a place is experienced;
 - Comparative significance, recognising that the absence of a statutory designation does not imply a lack of heritage value;
 - Relating identified values to the fabric of the place, including its evolutionary phases and surviving physical characteristics.
- 2.4. The omission of these principles results in a narrowly framed analysis that focuses almost **exclusively on change and architectural distinction** rather than a more appropriate spectrum of values relevant to the assessment of non-designated heritage assets.
- 2.5. Moreover, when considered within the specific local context of Reading, it is important to note that the town has, over recent decades, experienced substantial development pressure, rapid change and continuous physical transformation of its built environment. These dynamics heighten the importance of identifying, managing and retaining buildings that contribute to local distinctiveness, community history and townscape. In such a context, local heritage assets – particularly those that embody long-standing social use, visual familiarity or historic layers – play an increasingly significant role in sustaining Reading's historic environment. This **contextual dimension** is not acknowledged in the representation, yet it is essential to a balanced assessment of local significance.
- 2.6. When assessed through the Reading's policy framework and criteria, and Historic England's conservation principles, Royal Albion is considered to have a clear degree of local significance. The representation, therefore, does not alter the conclusions of the Local Listing Report.

3. Policy and Guidance Framework

- 3.1. IN LINE WITH NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY (NPPF); NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE ON HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT – Advises on enhancing and conserving the historic environment, explains

"Conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change."

"'Significance' in terms of heritage-related planning policy is defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest."

"Analysis of relevant information can generate a clear understanding of the affected asset, the heritage interests represented in it, and their relative importance."

"Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage"

*significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but **which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.***"

3.2. Historic England's Guidance

3.2.1 Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment states that

*"Historic environment: All aspects of the environment resulting from **the interaction between people and places through time**, including **all surviving physical remains** of past human activity, whether visible or buried, and deliberately planted or managed flora"*

*"Value: An aspect of worth or importance, **here attached by people to qualities of places**"*

*"Significance: [of a place] **The sum of the cultural and natural heritage values of a place**, often set out in a statement of significance"*

Paragraph 30 on Understanding Heritage Values says

*"**People may value a place** for many reasons beyond utility or personal association: for its distinctive architecture or landscape, the story it can tell about its past, its connection with notable people or events, its landform, flora and fauna, because they find it beautiful or inspiring, or for its role as a focus of a community. These are examples of cultural and natural heritage values in the historic environment that people want to enjoy and sustain for the benefit of present and future generations, at every level from the '**familiar and cherished local scene**' to the nationally or internationally significant place."*

3.2.2 Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage Historic England Advice Note 7 (Second Edition) states that

*"Non-designated heritage assets are locally-identified 'buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes **identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets**' (PPG)."*

*"Inclusion on a local heritage list based on **sound evidence and criteria** delivers a consistent and accountable way of recognising non-designated heritage assets, **no matter how they are identified, to the benefit of good planning for the area and of owners, developers and others wishing to understand local context fully.**"*

It also emphasises that *"local distinctiveness may lie as much **in the commonplace or everyday** as it does in the rare and spectacular"* (para 37).

3.3. Reading Borough Local Plan

Appendix 2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and Policy EN4 - Locally Important Heritage Assets define criteria for identifying and managing locally important buildings in Reading. **Local listing is intended to guide planning decisions** by identifying assets that should be **retained and reused** in the first instance.

4. Officer Evaluation of Key Issues Raised

- 4.1. The use of National Designation Benchmarks: The representation applies statutory listing criteria first, describing the building's interest as "low". This may be true; however, national criteria are not an appropriate test for local significance, and the correct assessment must consider local distinctiveness, not national rarity.

Architectural Interest: Royal Albion retains a symmetrical Victorian/Edwardian façade, although the objection states that the canted bays may be from the 1930s/40s. The footprint on the OS Map dated 1883 shows two projections/bays. Compared with that, the building still comprises its relatively original massing and form with a legible historic composition. The document provides a detailed history of the alterations (from the 1950s, 1970s and 1980s) which are interpreted as 'detracting', leading to limited architectural and artistic interest. Historic England recognises that alterations associated with long-term use can contribute to understanding a **building's historic evolution**. For a building which has been named as inn, hotel and pub, alterations and extensions are normal responses to changing conditions of travel and commerce (The English inn, past and present; a review of its history and social life by Richardson, A. E., Sir, 1880-1964). In addition, the principal selection criteria for local listings do not require total originality but rather substantial completeness: *(b)1840 - 1913: Any building, structure or group of buildings that is/are of **clearly-defined significance in the local context** and where elements that contribute to its/ their heritage significance remain **substantially complete**.* As such, historic alterations at Royal Albion are typical of a public house that has features from the Victorian, Edwardian, Inter-War periods, as well as modern. These do not diminish its architectural legibility; the ratio of non-original (!) to original elements is apparent, with non-original elements not dominating the original.

- 4.2. Historic and Communal Value: The building served for over 150 years as an important community venue, hosting societies, sports clubs, public meetings, concerts, awards and local gatherings. Such social and communal associations are key components of local heritage significance, independent of national distinction. The objection document concludes, *"Indeed, overall, the subject site's association with various local societies and breweries is typical for a public house; as such, **the subject site is not considered to possess sufficient social or historical interest to merit local listing,**"* underestimating its continuous pub use and importance. It should also be noted that the nomination came from the CAAC (Reading's Conservation Area Advisory Committee). Historic England, for 'the identification of non-designated heritage assets,' puts local community involvement in the nomination and identification process for heritage assets by saying in Paragraph 20 (Local Heritage Listing Advice Note):

*"In all cases, **communities, neighbourhood forums, town or parish councils, and other community organisations may play a valuable role in the identification of non-designated heritage assets, and the development of relevant policy, as well as the local heritage lists themselves. Local heritage and amenity groups are likely to have a particular involvement, their experience and knowledge of the local area and its heritage being very helpful in the identification of non-designated heritage assets. ...**"*

- 4.3. Group Value, Townscape including Setting: Despite some changes to surrounding properties, Royal Albion continues to share the same/similar forms, architectural language and historic development patterns with Bishop's Villas on the other side of Oxford Road. The objection file states under 'Location and Context' ***"The terraces of late 19th Century houses located immediately to the south and east of the subject site along Oxford Road and Alma Street contribute to the 19th Century***

character of the area.” And then contradicts itself, **“These buildings are not considered to reflect the design idiom, height, scale, mass or grain of urban/suburban 19th Century development to the east and south and thus result in the overall somewhat mixed architectural quality and character of the area.”** It is evident that these terraces of buildings have a common two-storey, two-bay late Victorian architecture without special interest, but they form a ‘historic environment’ and reflect their time, with some period detailing that is shared by Royal Albion on a larger scale.

In their assessment, it is also stated that **“However, the terrace of houses at Bishops Villas have also undergone numerous alterations including the loss of the historic shop fronts at numbers 627-631 Oxford Road, the insertion of UPVC windows and doors to many of the majority of houses and the erection of incongruous modern buildings such as 617-621 Oxford Road, which contribute to the mixed architectural quality of the streetscape.”** Since the pressure of change in the context of Reading, without any formal designation in the immediate area, replacement fenestration could be argued to be the only alteration that is a common problem for historic properties. However, the terrace directly faces Royal Albion and, as such, has a very close visual relationship with the public house. The objection again emphasises some ‘alterations’ for the justification of the lack of further interest. The context of Reading, in terms of the relationship between conservation and development, should have been considered in the objection document, rather than the evaluation under ideal conditions. Similarly, Royal Albion, compared with the terrace and other elements forming the setting, stands out for its symmetrical design and scale, clearly perceived in the streetscape. Without knowing the conservation problems seen in Oxford Road (and within the conservation area far to the east) and the context and locality of Reading, the objection states **“the subject site is not considered to sufficient landmark quality, architectural interest or group value to merit local listing.”** This is neither rational nor fair to the historic environment developed during the Victorian era and evolved over 150 years. In fact, Royal Albion contributes positively to the character of Oxford Road by its longstanding prominence, recognisable built form and architectural coherence with a late Victorian/Edwardian urban corridor.

5. Officer Recommendation

- 5.1. For the reasons set out herein, officers maintain that Royal Albion possesses a clear degree of local heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. It is therefore recommended that the Planning Application Committee resolve to add Royal Albion to the List of Locally Important Buildings and Structures.

Appendix: Representation submitted by the Planning Agent on behalf of the Proprietor



**The Royal Albion Hotel, 642 Oxford Road, Reading RG30
1EH**

Assessment for Non-Statutory Designation

**Dorian A. T. A. Crone RIBA MRTPI IHBC
Daniel Cummins MA (Oxon) MSc PhD IHBC
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of
Heritage Information Ltd**

November 2025

The Royal Albion, 642 Oxford Road, Reading RG30 1EH– Assessment for Non-Statutory Designation

Issued November 2025

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Royal Albion Hotel, 642 Oxford Road, Reading RG30 1EH is an unlisted building within Reading in the county of Berkshire. The site forms part of the wider setting of some statutorily listed buildings associated with the Brock Barracks located some distance to the south-east. However, the subject site is not located within a Conservation Area, nor does it form part of the setting of any other heritage assets. The building has been put forward for consideration as a locally listed building by the Reading Borough Council. The Royal Albion Hotel (henceforth the Royal Albion) is a two-storey detached former public house, which was likely constructed in c. 1875 but has since undergone a number of extensions and alterations.
- 1.2. This report has been produced in order to review the eligibility of the subject site for local designation as a non-designated heritage asset (i.e. a locally listed building). Accordingly, it complies with the relevant requirements of the NPPF and guidance, in particular Historic England's criteria outlined in Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (2019).
- 1.3. This report sets out:
 - A historical background of the building, the site and the surrounding area.
 - An assessment of the heritage significance of the subject site, using established criteria published by Historic England and DCMS. Assessment for Local Listing has also been assessed against the Reading Borough Council criteria.
- 1.4. **Summary**
 - The Royal Albion is considered to possess low archaeological interest, low architectural and artistic interest, and low historic interest.
 - It is considered that The Royal Albion does not possess sufficient local architectural and historic interest to be eligible for local listing. The subject site is a much-altered former public house dating from c. 1874-5. It is not considered to be of particular architectural quality, nor is it an example of an innovative design. Indeed, there are many other examples of late 19th Century public houses that are more intact and of greater architectural interest within the local area. The site may possess some associative interest with local breweries and communities. However, this is typical for the majority of public houses and does not represent significant local social or historic interest in its own right. No known events or people of historic note have been identified as being associated with the subject site. Accordingly, the subject site is not considered to possess sufficient interest to merit local listing.

1.5. Authorship

- **Dorian A T A Crone** BA BArch DipTP RIBA MRTPI IHBC - Heritage and Design Consultant. Dorian has been a Chartered Architect and Chartered Town Planner for over 35 years. He has also been a member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation for over 30 years. Dorian is a former committee member of The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings ("SPAB"), the International Committee on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and ICOMOS UK. He is currently a committee member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation. He has been a court member with the Worshipful Company of Chartered Architects and a trustee of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust. He is currently a trustee and chairman of both the Dance and Drake Trusts and a scholar of SPAB. He is the Vice Chairman (formerly Chairman) of the City Heritage Society, and a panel member of the City Conservation Area Advisory Committee.

Dorian has worked for over 30 years as Historic Buildings and Areas Inspector with English Heritage, responsible for providing advice to all the London Boroughs and both the City Councils. Dorian has also worked as a consultant and expert witness for over 20 years advising a wide variety of clients on heritage and design matters involving development work, alterations, extensions and new build projects associated with listed buildings and conservation areas in design and heritage sensitive locations. He is a panel member of the City of London Heritage Award. He is also a Design Review Panel (DRP) member of the Design: South-West, South-East, and the London Boroughs of Wandsworth, Richmond-upon-Thames and Croydon (and formerly on the London Boroughs of Lewisham and Islington DRPs and the Design Council). In addition, Dorian has also been involved with the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition Architectural Awards, John Betjeman Design Award and the Philip Webb Award along with a number of other public sector and commercial design awards.

- **Dr Daniel Cummins** MA (Oxon) MSc PhD IHBC – Historic Environment Consultant. Daniel is an historian with a BA and Master's in History from Oxford University and a doctorate from the University of Reading, where he specialised in ecclesiastical buildings and estates and had his work published in leading academic history journals.

Daniel has a Master's in the Conservation of the Historic Environment and provides independent professional heritage advice and guidance to leading architectural practices and planning consultancies, as well as for private clients. He undertakes detailed historical research, significance statements, character appraisals, impact assessments and expert witness statements for new development projects, as well as for alterations and extensions which affect the fabric and settings of Listed Buildings and Locally Listed Buildings, the character and appearance of Conservation Areas, the outstanding universal value of World Heritage Sites, and all other types of heritage assets.

- **David Edwards** BA MSc – Historic Environment Consultant. David is an archaeologist and heritage consultant with a first-class BA (Hons) in Ancient History and Archaeology from the University of Manchester and an MSc with Distinction in Historic Conservation from Oxford Brookes University and the University of Oxford. David is a trustee of the Brighton Society and a panel member of the Brighton and Hove Conservation Advisory Group. He has worked on a numerous complex projects providing detailed advice and guidance to clients relating to all aspects of conserving and managing the historic built environment. David is currently working towards CIfA and IHBC professional accreditation.

1.6. Methodology

This assessment has been carried out gathering desk-based and fieldwork data. The documentary research was based upon primary and secondary sources of local history and architecture, including maps, drawings and reports. Particular attention was given to the Royal Berkshire Archives and the Oxfordshire History Centre, as well as the National Archives, Historic England Archives, Old Maps Online, the British Newspapers Archive and British History Online. Dates of elements and construction periods have been identified using documentary sources and visual evidence based upon experience gained from similar building types and sites. A site visit was conducted on 21st November 2025 when a survey of the site was conducted by visual inspection to analyse its significance.

2.0. LOCATION AND CONTEXT

- 2.1. The subject site is located to the northern side of Oxford Road close to its junction with Alma Street (figure 1). The former public house is set within a large rectangular plot, which fronts directly onto Oxford Road. To the rear of the site is a tarmac car park that runs perpendicular to Alma Street to the east. There is a small cluster of statutorily listed buildings to the south-east of the subject site associated with the Brock Barracks. The subject site is not located within a conservation area, nor does the subject site form part of the setting of any other heritage assets.



Figure 1: The location of the subject site (outlined in red).

- 2.2. The subject site is located within an urban area characterised by an eclectic mixture of 19th and 20th Century residential and commercial developments interspersed with numerous modern buildings. Located some distance to the south east of the subject site is a small number of statutorily listed buildings (including the Keep and attached walls/gateway [Grade II] and the Officers Quarters and Mess [Grade II]) of the Brock Barracks to the south-east along Oxford Road. However, given their distance from the subject site and the screening provided by neighbouring buildings, principally 640 Oxford Road (figure 2), the subject site is considered to have a minimal impact on their wider setting (figure 6). The terraces of late 19th Century houses located immediately to the south and east of the subject site along Oxford Road and Alma Street contribute to the 19th Century character of the area (figures 3 and 6). However, various iterative alterations including incongruous extensions, the loss of historic shop fronts and the removal of historic architectural features including canted bays, boundary walls and timber framed sash windows have diluted the coherence of this late 19th residential character. Immediately to the north and west of the subject site are numerous modern buildings including a large light industrial area comprising numerous warehouses to the rear of the site. Along Oxford Road are multiple examples of modern buildings including 617-621, 644 and 648-654 Oxford Road (figures 3, 4 and 5). These buildings are not considered to reflect the design idiom, height, scale, mass or grain of urban/suburban 19th Century development to the east and south and thus result in the overall somewhat mixed architectural quality and character of the area.



Figure 2: View of the subject site (left) and 640 Oxford Road (right) looking north across Oxford Road opposite its junction with Alma Street.



Figure 3: View looking west along Oxford Road, opposite the junction with Beecham Road. The location of the subject site is indicated by the red arrow. Numbers 617-621 Oxford Road and Bishops Villas can be seen to the left of the view.



Figure 4: View of the subject site looking north east across Oxford Road showing 644 Oxford Road (left).



Figure 5: View looking west along Oxford Road away from the subject site showing 'Hotel Reading' at numbers 648-654 Oxford Road on the right with another modern residential development beyond.



Figure 6: View east along Oxford Road away from the subject site, the tower of the Brock Barracks Keep (Grade II) is visible in the distance (centre right).

3.0. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1. The placename Reading is likely derived from the Anglo-Saxon name *Readingas* meaning Reada's People. One of the earliest documentary sources to mention Reading is the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which records in 870 an army of Danes established a winter camp at the settlement, preceding the Battle of Reading in early 871. Records indicate the land to the west of Reading surrounding modern day Oxford Road comprised farm land held by Abbess Elveva of a nearby Saxon nunnery that was burned down following a Viking raid in 1006. Following the Norman Conquest of England the former nunnery's lands were gifted by William the Conqueror to the newly established Battle Abbey near Hastings. Indeed, the 1086 Domesday Book records the borough of Reading as having six mills, four of which were owned by Battle Abbey. The association with Battle Abbey remained evident in local placenames including Battle Farm, Battle School and Battle Library. The lands around Reading were transferred to Reading Abbey following its establishment in 1121. Following petitioning from the towns Merchant Guild Reading was granted a charter in 1253. Throughout the proceeding centuries Reading became the largest town in Berkshire and by 1525 it was the 10th largest town in England with a population of approximately 5000. Reading became a prosperous market town through the trade of cloth. Following the dissolution of the monasteries in 1538 the much of the land around Reading that was previously held by the Abbey was seized by the Crown and often sold or leased to local landholders. The subject site would have historically formed part of the Manor of Tilehurst, which was granted by Henry VIII to Francis Englefield in 1545.
- 3.2. During the 17th and 18th Centuries Reading continued to prosper as a centre for trade and the establishment of industries including a major iron works and numerous breweries. The establishment of turnpike roads including modern day Oxford Road sought to increase income from passing trade and establish the settlement's position on the major Oxford to London coaching route. Indeed, early cartographic evidence shows the toll booth for the former turnpike road along Oxford Road lay just to the east of the subject site (figure 8 [plot 70]). Despite this, the area surrounding the subject site remained principally rural, comprising agricultural enclosures, market gardens and pastures. The rural character of the subject site during the 18th Century is illustrated by John Man's 1798 map of Reading (figure 7), which shows the Oxford Road leading to Pangbourne surrounded by agricultural enclosures and gardens. There are a small number of buildings located to the east of the subject site along the former boundary between the manor of Tilehurst and the Borough of Reading. Man's map also shows Battle Farm to the north of the road with marshy ground of Soundy's Moors and Hog Moors beyond. The small clusters of buildings along Oxford Road likely represent the dwellings of agricultural workers. However, they may also indicate the development of the area to capitalise on passing trade and travellers. Indeed, the 1844 Tilehurst tithe map (figure 8) shows the New Inn, now The White Eagle, had been established by this period (plot 64). Moreover, it appears development had begun to spread westward along the Oxford road with the establishment of multiple dwellings. However, the subject site appears to have remained undeveloped by this time. The tithe map apportionment records the subject site (plot 58) as comprising 13 acres of arable land belonging to a Laurence Farrow, who is also recorded as 'occupying' or farming the site in addition to owning nine tenement houses to the west in Tilehurst along Kentwood Hill.



Figure 7: Excerpt from John Man's 1798 map of Reading. The location of the subject site is indicated by the red oval.



Figure 8: Excerpt from the Tilehurst tithe map (1844). The approximate location of the subject site is indicated by the red oval.

- 3.3. The earliest evidence for a public house at the subject site comes from the Reading Observer in September 1874, which records a spirit licence being granted to George Long of the 'Thatched House Tavern, Oxford Road, near Reading'. This new licence was granted on the condition that plans for a new public house prepared by the surveyor Mr Fulkes. Indeed, later that same month tenders were sought by Mr Sims of the Lion Brewery for 'taking down part of the "Thatched Tavern" on Oxford Road' and 're-building the same'. This indicates there may have been an earlier building at the subject site. Newspaper records indicate the 'Thatched-house Tavern' an ornamental cottage erected as a gate lodge for a seemingly unfinished estate was listed for sale in 1861. However, the absence of any development on the 1844 Tithe Map suggests it was built after that date and was likely converted for use as an alehouse. Following the construction of the new public house, likely between 1874 and 1875, William Sims of the Lion Brewery took out an insurance policy in 1881 for £800 on a 'detached dwelling house known as 'The Royal Albion, [constructed from] brick and slate situated in the Parish of Tilehurst, Berks in the demise of James Walker Licensed Victualler.' William Sims renewed the policy in 1888 and 1889. However, following the death of William Sims the Lion Brewery and 16 public houses including the 'Royal Albion Hotel' were put up for sale by auction. The subject site is listed as comprising:

5 large bedrooms, 2 smaller ditto, large Coffee Room and on the Ground Floor – capital Bar, Parlor, large Assembly Room, Smoking Room, Commercial Room, Store Room, 2 Kitchens, extensive Cellars, &c. Stable and Coach-House, large Kitchen Garden, with side entrance enclosed with pair of Gates. In the occupation of Mr. Hem, at a yearly rent of £30.

- 3.4. The earliest cartographic evidence for the subject site comes from the 1883 Ordnance Survey Map (figure 9), for which the survey was carried out between 1872 and 1877. The map shows the subject site, which is labelled as the Royal Albion Hotel as comprising a rectangular structure with two canted bays facing Oxford Road and a small square projection to the rear of the building. To the rear of the subject site is a small rectangular building, which likely comprises the aforementioned stables and coach house. During this period the subject site stood in relative isolation and was surrounded by agricultural fields, nursery's, a few dwellings flanking Oxford Road and the Brock Barracks site to the south-east. The arrival of the Berks and Hants Railway in 1847 had resulted in development steadily progressing westward from Reading during the latter half of the 19th Century. The area surrounding the subject site was rapidly suburbanised during the 1870s and 1880s. Indeed, the 1900 Ordnance Survey Map (figure 10) shows multiple terraces of houses had been erected along surrounding streets by the end of the century. Moreover, number 640 Oxford Road appears to have been erected immediately adjacent to the subject site during this period. The building is recorded as an off-licence during the 1960s and was likely constructed for that purpose. Following the sale of the Lion Brewery, licencing records indicate the Royal Albion appears to have come into the ownership of William James Justins Brinn of Castle Street in 1890 and was subsequently acquired by Fergusons Ltd in 1899. A number of minor alterations are recorded as having taken place in 1901 including the reposition of doorways and the arrangement of the bars. An inventory for the Royal Albion taken in 1909 records the building as comprising: *three bars, two smoke rooms, a bar parlour, club room, two rooms for travellers, three entrances from Oxford Road and one on each side of the pub.* This type of arrangement reflected the typical arrangement of public houses during this period, which often comprised multiple smaller rooms or screened areas to separate patrons of differing social classes, thereby necessitating multiple entrances.



Figure 9: Ordnance Survey Map (1883). The subject site is outlined in red.

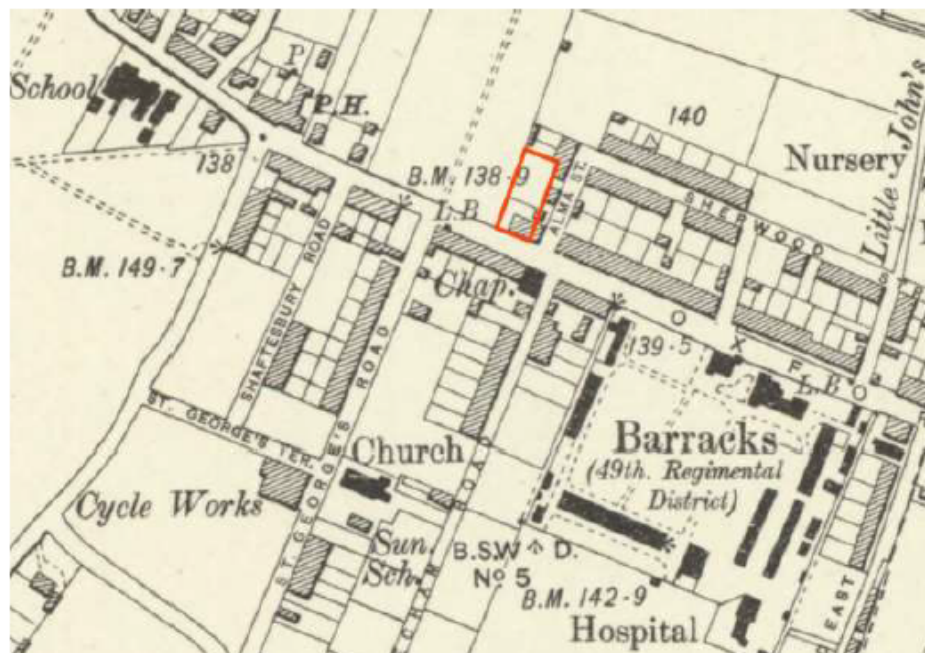


Figure 10: Ordnance Survey Map (1900). The subject site it outlined in red.



Figure 11: Ordnance Survey Map (1911). The subject site is outlined in red.



Figure 12: Aerial photograph showing the rear of the Royal Albion Hotel in 1928. The subject site is indicated by the red arrow.

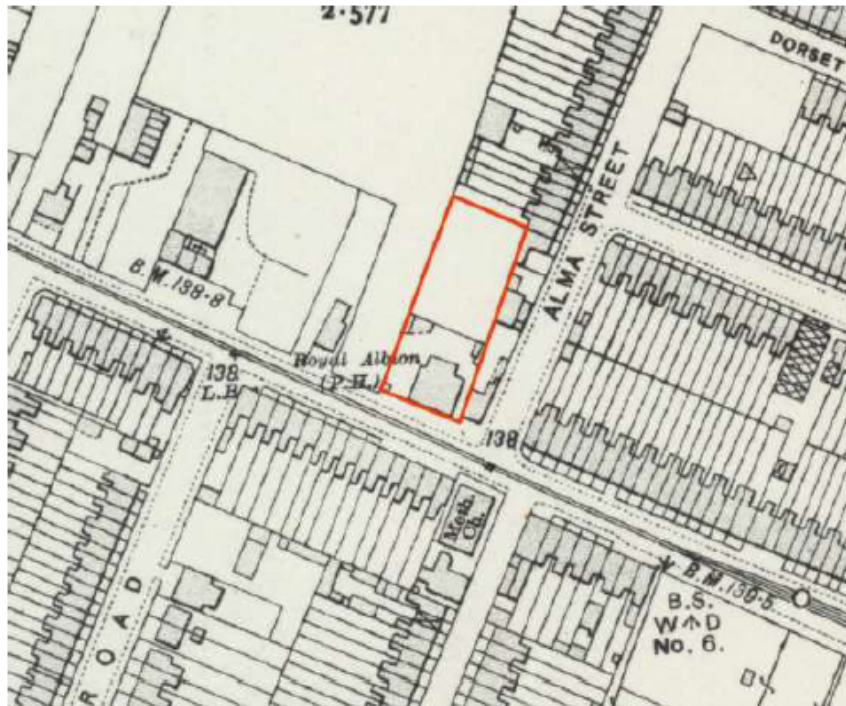


Figure 13: Ordnance Survey Map (1934). The subject site it outlined in red.



Figure 14: Ordnance Survey Map (1959). The subject site it outlined in red.

- 3.5. Cartographic evidence indicates the footprint of the subject site remained relatively unaltered during the first half of the 20th Century. However, it is unclear if the two projecting bay windows were added during the 1930s or 1940s as they are not shown on any earlier ordnance survey maps, possibly with the exception of the 1883 map. Morlands of Abingdon acquired the Fergusons brewery in 1943 and their records show the subject site underwent various internal and external alterations during the latter half of the 20th Century. Plans held by the Oxfordshire History Centre show the interior arrangement of the bars was altered in 1948. Plans from 1951 show the internal arrangement of the subject site. The ground floor (figure 15) comprised two entrances from Oxford Road with a further two entrances to the side elevations providing access to the public and private bars. To the rear of the subject site was a lounge, kitchen and store room, a further saloon bar was accessed from the rear of the building. The first floor of the subject site (figure 16) comprised multiple bedrooms arranged around a central landing in addition to a lounge and club room. The rear of the building appears to have been served by a square two storey projection, which can be seen in a photograph of the buildings rear elevation in the 1960s (figure 17). The subject building was extended in 1952 to the west to create a new toilet block (figure 14), which resulted in the loss of the former private bar entrance. The subject site appears to have been extended again in 1976 when the large single storey rear extension was created to provide new kitchen space and toilets, this involved the demolition of the existing single storey extension and two storey rear projection. At the same time the entrance porch was enclosed by a glass screen with centrally positioned double doors (figure 18). Moreover, the internal layout of the bars was again altered and the numerous outbuildings that had been erected were demolished and the rear garden converted into a car park (figure 19). More recently the subject site has undergone a number of modern interventions including the insertion of a modern entrance way, the removal of the south-east chimney stack, the replacement of the majority of timber framed sash windows and the creation of a lean-to garden shelter.

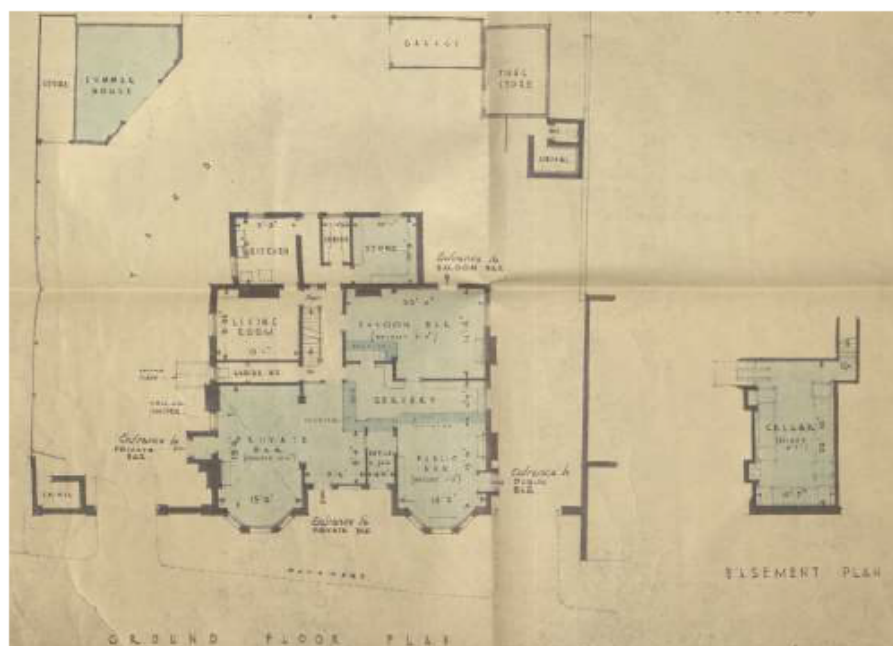


Figure 15: 1951 Plan showing the arrangement of the ground floor, cellar and outbuildings of the Royal Albion prior to the creation of extensions.

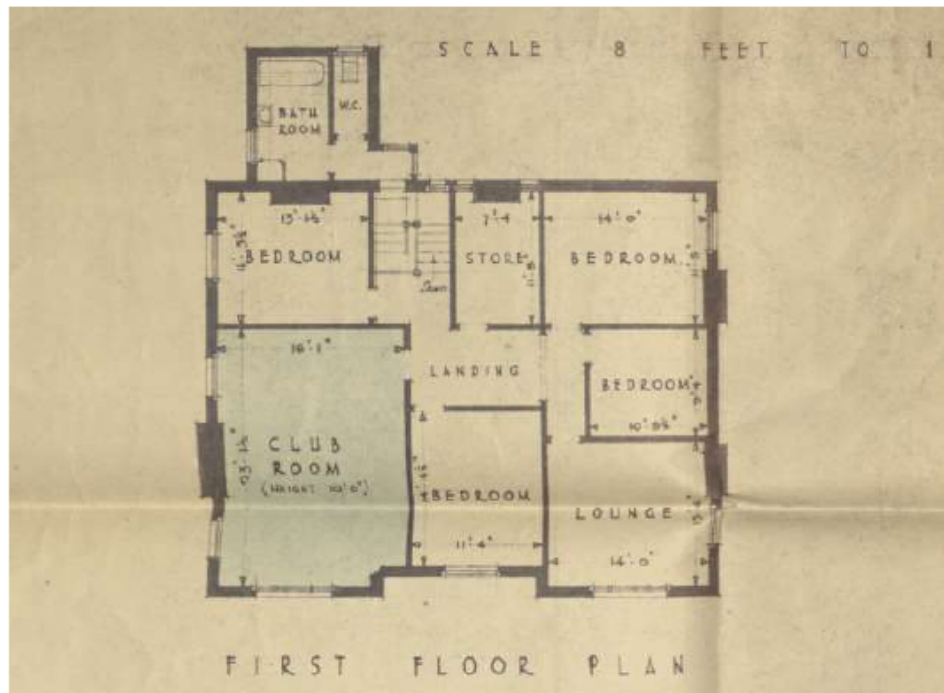


Figure 16: 1951 Plan showing the arrangement of the first floor of the subject site.



Figure 17: 1960s photograph of the rear elevation of the subject site prior to the demolition of the single storey and two storey projecting elements and the addition of additional windows at first floor level.

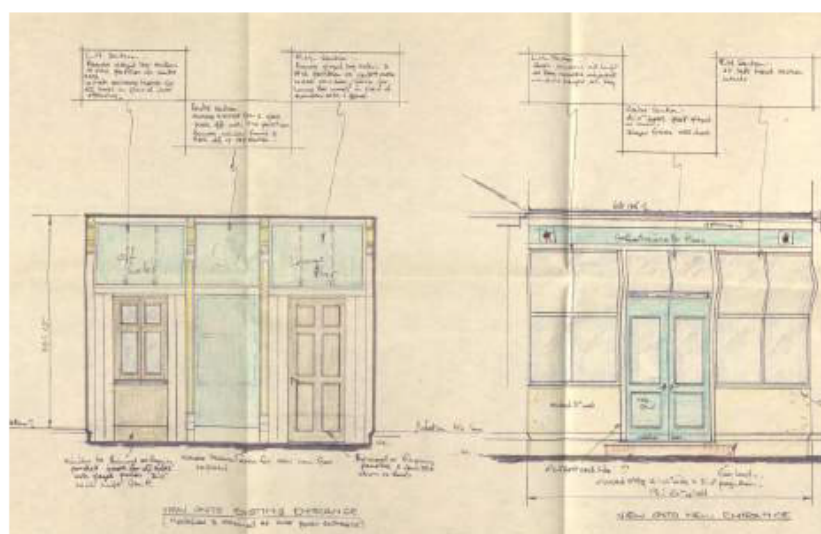


Figure 18: Elevation plan showing the proposed enclosing of the front entrance in 1977.

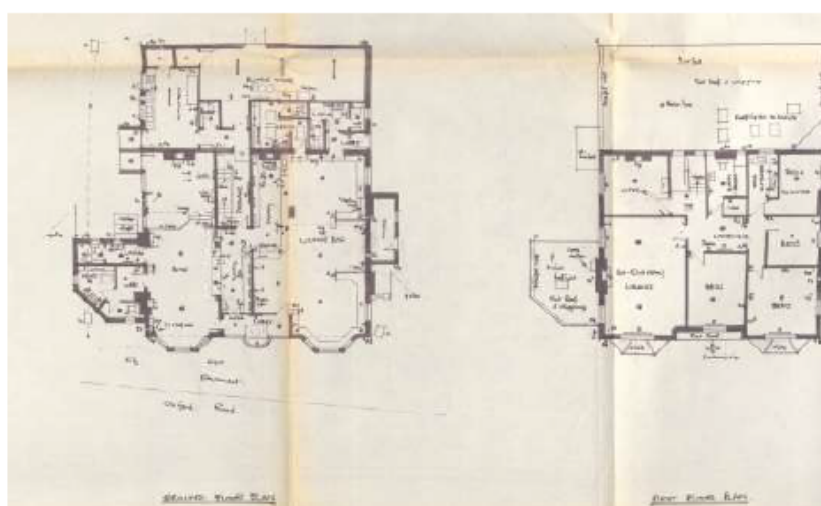


Figure 19: Ground and first floor plans of the subject site in 1988 showing the various internal alterations to the bar area and the extension of the building to the side and rear.

4.0. DESCRIPTION

4.1. Exterior

- 4.1.1. The Royal Albion is a two-storey former public house constructed from redbrick. The principal elevation (figure 20) faces Oxford Road and comprises a symmetrical composition formed from two projecting bays flanking a recessed central bay. Two canted projecting bays with slate hipped roofs and timber framed sash windows are set within the projecting bays at ground floor level. The central portion of the ground floor between the possibly 1930s/40s projecting bays comprises a 1950s glazed screen and entrance with

rectangular fanlights above enclosing the originally setback doors, which are now internal. The entire ground floor has been treated with a roughcast render. The elevation is enlivened by a stucco string course and quoins. However, owing to the rendered ground floor front elevation the quoins to this area have been painted on. The first floor comprises three modern replacement tripartite sash windows with decorative corbels set below gauged redbrick lintels. The elevation rises to a hipped roof, covered with what appears to be modern slate. The overall symmetrical composition of the front elevation is disrupted by the 1950s single storey side extension to the western elevation of the building (figure 21). Built as a toilet block, the extension is constructed from red brick with an angled elevational treatment, which rises to a flat roof behind a shallow parapet of a single course of bricks laid in header bond. There are two small casement windows with top hung awning openings. A former doorway to the western elevation of the extension with a concrete architrave has since been bricked up.

- 4.1.2. The side elevations (figures 22 and 23) are relatively plain in their appearance comprising projecting chimney stacks and a mixture of flat and round arched window openings constructed from gauged red brick. The majority of windows have been replaced by modern sash windows. Moreover, the presence of the single storey side extension, rear extension and lean-to shelter have compromised the legibility of the ground floor to both the side and rear elevations. Indeed, the rear ground floor elevation (figure 24) comprises blank modern brickwork rising to a flat roof, whilst the first floor comprises a large expanse of painted brickwork punctuated by a somewhat unusual fenestration pattern of narrow sash windows and modern casements with no clear hierarchy.



Figure 20: Exterior view of the Royal Albion showing the principal elevation.



Figure 21: View of the subject site looking across Oxford Road showing the front and side elevations and the 1950s side extension.



Figure 22: View of the western (side) elevation of the subject site showing the modern side and rear single storey extensions.



Figure 23: View of the eastern (side) elevation showing the lean-to shelter to the side of the building and the previously removed chimney stack.



Figure 24: The rear elevation of the subject site showing the substantial 1970s single storey rear extension.

4.2. Interior

- 4.2.1. The interior of the subject site has been extensively altered with few original historic features remaining. The ground floor is largely open plan centring on the bar (figure 25) with a billiards room, kitchen and toilets to the rear within the 1970s extension. A likely original staircase (figure 26) provides access to the first-floor landing, which comprises a number of arched openings and doorways with glazed fanlights above. However, with the exception of a possibly original fireplace and fireplace surround to one of the rear rooms (figure 27) and some architraves the first floor is largely devoid of historic architectural features of note. Similarly, the cellar appears to be almost entirely modern with the exception of the brick walls (figure 28).



Figure 25: View of the interior of the subject site showing the ground floor bar area.



Figure 26: View of the staircase.



Figure 27: View of one of the rear first floor rooms.



Figure 28: View of the cellar.

5.0. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND ASSESSMENT FOR LOCAL LISTING

- 5.1. Significance is defined by Historic England as “The sum of the cultural and natural heritage values of a place, often set out in a statement of significance”.
- 5.2. The aim of a Significance Assessment is, in the terms required by Paragraphs 207-208 of the NPPF, a “description of the significance of a heritage asset”. In the context of a historic building which has been the subject of a series of alterations throughout its lifetime, it is also a useful tool for determining which of its constituent parts holds a particular value and to what extent. *Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2* (March 2015) states that understanding the nature of significance is important for understanding the need for and best means of conservation. Understanding the extent of that significance leads to a better understanding of how adaptable a heritage asset may be. Understanding the level of significance provides the essential guide as to how policies should be applied.
- 5.3. Historic England’s ‘Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance’ (October 2019), which partially overlap with the Statutory Criteria, have been considered to evaluate the significance of the buildings. Historic England identifies three potential points of interest that can be held by heritage assets; artistic and architectural, historical and archaeological:
 - **Archaeological Interest:** There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
 - **Architectural and Artistic Interest:** These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.
 - **Historic Interest:** An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation’s history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.
- 5.4. The level of significance for each value will be assessed using the following grading:
 - **High** – values of *exceptional or considerable* interest;
 - **Medium** – values of *some* interest;
 - **Low** – values of *limited* interest.
- 5.5. An appraisal of the local heritage interest of the building has also been undertaken in the context of the DCMS *Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings* (2018), which sets out the Secretary of State’s policy by identifying the factors which are used to assess whether buildings have special interest. The criterion for inclusion of a building on the list is the existence of “special architectural or historic interest”, overlapping with the criteria for local heritage listing as set out in Historic England criteria and which informs the Reading Borough Council’s criteria for local listing. General principles include age and rarity, aesthetic merits, selectivity, national interest and state of repair. The relevant Historic England ‘Commerce and Exchange Buildings’ Listing Selection Guide (2011) has also been considered in the assessment.

5.6. Archaeological Interest

- 5.6.1. The subject site appears to have remained undeveloped prior to the mid-19th Century when a gate lodge known as the 'Thatched House' was constructed at the site. Prior to this the site appears to have been in use as arable land. There is no known cartographic evidence of the plan form for this building. Given its original use as a dwelling that was subsequently converted for use as an alehouse it is unknown if the original building had a basement. However, the 'Thatched Alehouse' as it became known was short lived and was demolished during the construction of the existing building at the subject site. This would have involved the excavation of foundations and possibly a new basement level or perhaps an enlargement of an existing cellar. The footprint of the Royal Albion appears to have remained relatively unaltered until 1952 when a side extension was constructed, this was followed by a large rear extension during the 1970s. Moreover, throughout the 20th Century numerous buildings were constructed within the rear garden of the subject site, which has since been entirely covered in tarmac to create a car park. This will have significantly truncated the potential for any archaeological remains to have survived at the site. Therefore, **the Archaeological interest is therefore considered to be low.**

5.7. Architectural and Artistic Interest

To be of special architectural interest a building must be of importance in its architectural design, decoration or craftsmanship; special interest may also apply to nationally important examples of particular building types and techniques (e.g. buildings displaying technological innovation or virtuosity) and significant plan forms'.

The appearance of a building – both its intrinsic architectural merit and any group value – is a key consideration in judging listing proposals'.

'Quality of elevational design, interest of planning, quality and survival of decorative elements, innovation rather than imitation; these considerations will be important'.

- 5.7.1. Some architectural and artistic interest may be derived from the subject building's front elevation, which is well mannered and employs a symmetrical composition and traditional design idiom. The building has been constructed from red brick, with gauged red brick lintels and decorative stucco detailing including corbels, quoins and a string course. However, the Royal Albion has been subject to various incongruous and iterative alterations that have significantly diluted the limited architectural and artistic interest of the building. The building has been extensively altered resulting in the loss of historic architectural features including the original entrance doors, the south-east chimney stack, the majority of timber framed sash windows, the enclosing of the originally set back street entrances behind a modern glazed screen and the possible addition to the projecting canted bays during the 1930s/40s in addition to the extensive modernisation of the buildings interior, which has resulted in very little original planform remaining and few if any surviving historic architectural features of note. Moreover, the ground floor of the front elevation has been rendered in what appears to be roughcast, which has resulted in the quoins being painted on to the front elevation. The creation of the 1950s and 1970s extensions in addition to the modern lean-to garden shelter significantly detract from the visual impact and character of the building and impede the appreciation and understanding of its original design. Indeed, the side and rear extensions, which are considered to be of poor architectural quality, have been designed in a contemporary idiom that detracts from late 19th Century character of the subject building, which significantly detracts from the buildings already limited architectural and artistic interest. The subject site is not considered to be a particularly innovative design nor is it considered to possess significant architectural interest when considered in conjunction with contemporary public houses developed in the surrounding area. **Overall, architectural and artistic interest is considered to be low.**

5.8. Historic Interest

'To be of special historic interest a building must illustrate important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural, or military history and/or have close historical associations with nationally important people. There should normally be some quality of interest in the physical fabric of the building itself to justify the statutory protection afforded by listing'.

- 5.8.1. The subject site was constructed in c.1874/5 to the designs of the surveyor Mr. Fulkes on behalf of the brewer William Sims who owned the Lion Brewery and by the time of his death a further 15 public houses in Reading. The Royal Albion replaced a former gate lodge/alehouse known as the Thatched House Tavern. However, this building is not shown on the 1844 tithe map, which records the subject site as comprising 13 acres of arable land belonging to a Laurence Farrow. Therefore, the Thatched House is unlikely to have existed prior to 1844 and appears to have been a relatively short-lived building perhaps owing to its converted status, which necessitated replacement with a purpose-built public house. However, visual inspection of the subject site did not result in the identification of any remaining elements from this previous building, indeed, the basement appears to have been modernised with a concrete floor and modern fixtures.
- 5.8.2. The subject site is associated with multiple local breweries and brewers including the aforementioned Lion Brewery until 1890 then William James Justins Brinn of Castle Street until 1899 when it was acquired by Fergusons Ltd, who were in turn acquired by Morlands of Abingdon in 1943. The latter owners undertook various internal alterations to the bars and created the 1950s and 1970s extensions to the building in addition to creating the rear car park. Some limited interest may be derived from the building's association with the suburbanisation of Oxford Road during the late 19th Century. Moreover, some limited interest may also be derived from the building's association with a number of local societies acting as a venue for dinners and award ceremonies. The subject site has also held a number of billiards events. However, no known people or events of historic note either regionally or nationally have been identified as being associated with the subject site. Accordingly, the **Historic interest is therefore considered to be low.**

5.19 Local Listing Assessment

- 5.9.1 **Reading Borough Council's** guidance relating to local listing states the criteria as:
CRITERIA FOR LOCALLY LISTING BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

Exclusions

Buildings and structures will not be considered for the Local List when they are already part of a Conservation Area, Scheduled Monument, or subject to an Article 4 direction relating to historical or architectural interest.

- 5.9.2. **Principles of Selection for the Local List**

This guidance sets out the general principles that Reading Borough Council applies when deciding whether a building, group of buildings or structure should be added to Reading's List of Locally Important Buildings and Structures:

- b. 1840 - 1913: Any building, structure or group of buildings that is/are of clearly-defined significance in the local context and where elements that contribute to its/ their heritage significance remain substantially complete.*

- 5.9.3. The subject site was constructed in c.1874-5 on the site of an earlier building, which was likely constructed following the 1844 tithe map. Despite visual inspection of the subject site suggesting to the contrary, if any part of this older building was incorporated into the existing structure it is unlikely to pre-date 1840. Therefore, the subject site falls into section B of the principles of selection. Accordingly the building should be of 'clearly-defined significance...where elements that contribute to its heritage significance remain substantially complete. As detailed above, the subject site has undergone extensive alterations and

extensions, particularly during the latter half of the 20th Century when the incongruous modern side and rear extensions, which have severely compromised its architectural interest. Indeed, the possibly 1930s/40s projecting canted bays and the modern glazed entrance screen between them have completely altered the original appearance of the principal elevation. Moreover, very little of the original internal planform remains, nor do any historic architectural features of note. The external elevations have been subject to numerous alterations including the replacement of the majority of the timber framed sash windows, the replacement of the original entrance doors with a somewhat incongruous modern insertion, the removal of the south-east chimney stack, the possibly modern slate roof and the rendering of the ground floor to the front elevation, which has necessitated the quoins to be painted on. It is considered that the limited heritage significance of the subject site principally derives from the building's elevations, particularly the front elevation. However, each elevation has undergone varying degrees of alteration and cannot be considered to be substantially complete. Accordingly, it is considered that the subject site does not meet the requirements outlined by section B of Reading Borough Council's principles of selection for the local list.

5.9.4. Historic and Architectural Interest

In identifying significance in the local context it must be shown that the building, structure or group of buildings contribute(s) to the heritage of the Borough in accordance with at least one of the significance criteria detailed below:

5.9.5. Historic interest

a. Historical Association

- i. The building or structure has a well authenticated historical association with a notable person(s) or event.
- ii. The building or structure has a prolonged and direct association with figures or events of local interest.

b. Social Importance

The building or structure has played an influential role in the development of an area or the life of one of Reading's communities. Such buildings/structures may include places of worship, schools, community buildings, places of employment, public houses and memorials which formed a focal point or played a key social role.

c. Industrial Importance

The building or structure clearly relates to traditional or historic industrial processes or important businesses or the products of such industrial processes or businesses in the history of Reading or are intact industrial structures, for example bridges.

- 5.9.6. The subject site is not considered to embody the historical development of the local area given it is the second phase of building on the site – whilst it may represent the suburban expansion of Reading during the second half of the 19th century, its detrimental alterations and extensions have compromised its legibility as a public house dating from this period. The subject site is considered to possess some associative social interest resulting from its historic relationship with local breweries and brewers, such as William Sims of the Lion Brewery. Moreover, some limited social importance may be derived from the building's role as a community space and association with societies and sports clubs. However, this interest is considered to be limited given the historic association of virtually all of Reading's public houses with local breweries and community groups, which regularly hosted events, dinners and meeting within the function rooms of many public houses. Indeed, the subject site was owned by various local, regional and national breweries throughout its history and does not possess a historically noteworthy association with any one single brewery. Moreover, despite the links with the surrounding community the Royal Albion is one of many contemporary (former) public houses that are locating in close proximity along Oxford Road. The nomination document refers to an alleged association with the cricketer Harry Barrett, who stayed at the Royal Albion in 1901. However, this is considered to be a tenuous link of little historical note and on its

own is not considered to offer sufficient local historic interest to merit local listing. Moreover, no known people or events of regional or national historic note have been identified as being associated with the subject building. Indeed, overall, the subject site's association with various local societies and breweries is typical for a public house, as such **the subject site is not considered to possess sufficient social or historical interest to merit local listing.**

5.9.7. *Architectural interest*

a. Sense of place

i. The building or structure is representative of a style that is characteristic of Reading.

b. Innovation and Virtuosity

i. The building or structure has a noteworthy quality of workmanship and materials.

ii. The building or structure is the work of a notable local/national architect/engineer/builder.

iii. The building or structure shows innovation in materials, technique, architectural style or engineering.

c. Group Value

i. The buildings/structures form a group which as a whole has a unified architectural or historic value to the local area.

ii. The buildings/structures are an example of deliberate town planning from before 1947.

- 5.9.8. The subject building was likely built between c. 1874-5 to the designs of the Surveyor Mr Fulkes. The late 19th Century was a period of rapid suburban expansion both in Reading and nationally. A constituent element of many speculative building developments at the time was the establishment of a public house, leading to a rapid increase in the number of said buildings during the latter half of the 19th Century. As detailed above, the subject site - despite its somewhat well-mannered front elevation - is not considered to be particularly noteworthy in terms of its architectural quality, nor is it considered to be an innovative example of public house design. Indeed, the large number of alterations to the original building, including to the entirety of the interior and the various iterative extensions and alterations to the building's exterior has significantly diluted any limited architectural interest it may have possessed. The nomination document suggests the subject site derives group value from its relationship with numbers 623-649 Oxford Road, a terrace of houses known as Bishops Villas constructed in 1879 immediately opposite the subject site. Owing to its bay windows and bracketed eaves it is suggested the subject site forms a group with a 'clear visual and historic relationship.' However, the terrace of houses at Bishops Villas have also undergone numerous alterations including the loss of the historic shop fronts at numbers 627-631 Oxford Road, the insertion of UPVC windows and doors to many of the majority of houses and the erection of incongruous modern buildings such as 617-621 Oxford Road, which contribute to the mixed architectural quality of the streetscape. Accordingly, any group value that may be derived from the subject site's visual and historical association with Bishops Villas has been considerably diluted and is now limited. Cantled bays were extremely popular elements in late 19th Century architecture and are often ubiquitous feature of suburban developments. Therefore, this visual link is considered to be insufficient to be considered as producing any form of group value, particularly given the mixed architectural quality of the streetscape. The subject site projects slightly beyond the building line of Oxford Road. However, the presence of 640 Oxford Road at the corner of Alma Street significantly screens the site from view, thus diminishing the supposed landmark quality of the building as suggested by the nomination document. Moreover, the relatively modest scale and proportions of the subject site do not set it apart as a particularly distinctive building within the streetscene. Indeed, it appears somewhat recessive in views along Oxford Road. Accordingly, **the subject site is not considered to sufficient landmark quality, architectural interest or group value to merit local listing.**

5.9.9. **Historic England Advice Note 7 (2nd edition) (2021): Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage**

Asset type

Although local heritage lists have long been developed successfully for buildings, all heritage asset types, including monuments, sites, places, areas, parks, gardens and designed landscapes may be considered for inclusion.

Age

The age of an asset may be an important criterion, and the age range can be adjusted to take into account distinctive local characteristics or building traditions.

Rarity

Appropriate for all assets, as judged against local characteristics.

Architectural and Artistic Interest

The intrinsic design and aesthetic value of an asset relating to local and/or national styles, materials, construction and craft techniques, or any other distinctive characteristics.

Group Value

Groupings of assets with a clear visual design or historic relationship.

Archaeological Interest

The local heritage asset may provide evidence about past human activity in the locality, which may be in the form of buried remains, but may also be revealed in the structure of buildings or in a designed landscape, for instance. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are primary sources of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

Historic Interest

A significant historical association of local or national note, including links to important local figures, may enhance the significance of a heritage asset. Blue Plaque and similar schemes may be relevant. Social and communal interest may be regarded as a sub-set of historic interest but has special value in local listing. As noted in the PPG: 'Heritage assets ... can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity'. It therefore relates to places perceived as a source of local identity, distinctiveness, social interaction and coherence, contributing to the 'collective memory' of a place.

Landmark Status

An asset with strong communal or historical associations, or because it has especially striking aesthetic value, may be singled out as a landmark within the local scene

- 5.9.10. The subject site has been assessed against the above criteria and the criteria for local listing as set out by Reading Borough Council. The Royal Albion is not considered to possess sufficient interest in any of the above categories to merit local listing. The subject site is a much-altered former public house dating from c. 1874-5. It is not considered to be of particular architectural quality, nor is it an example of an innovative design of a public house of that period. Indeed, there are many other examples of late 19th Century public houses that are more intact and of greater architectural interest within the local area. As detailed above, there has been a large number of alterations to the original building, including to the entirety of the interior and the various iterative extensions and alterations to the building's exterior including the possibly 1930s/40s projecting bays to the front elevation and the creation of a glazed screen and entrance between them completely enclosing to originally recessed bar entrances. Therefore, the subject site cannot be considered to be substantially intact. The site may possess some associative interest with local breweries and communities. However, this is typical for the majority of public houses and does not represent significant social or historic interest in its own right. No known events or people of historic note have been identified as being associated with the subject site. Accordingly, the subject site is not considered to possess sufficient local heritage interest to merit local listing.

6.0. CONCLUSION

- 6.1. Having reviewed the subject site against the local listing criteria established by Historic England and Reading Borough Council's Criteria for Locally Listed Building and Structures, **it is considered that the building does not possess sufficient local architectural and historic interest to merit local listing.** Any limited architectural or historic interest it may possess has been diluted by multiple incongruous and iterative alterations and extensions, particularly the 1950s and 1970s extensions, which negatively impact the legibility of the buildings original design at ground floor level. Moreover, extensive internal alterations have resulted in few if any historic architectural features of note remaining internally. The site may possess some limited social and historic interest resulting from its association with local breweries and societies. However, this is typical of public houses and none of these associations have remained constant for a significant portion of the building's history. The subject site is considered to lack landmark status in the local townscape given extensive alterations, modest scale and larger neighbouring buildings. Overall, the subject building is considered to a somewhat typical and formulaic late 19th Century former public house that cannot be considered, innovative, rare or interesting either technically or architecturally in design terms. Moreover, the subject site lacks landmark status in the local townscape given extensive alterations, modest scale and larger neighbouring buildings
- 6.2. The subject site has been put forward to be a locally listed building by Reading Borough Council. However, based on Reading Borough Council's criteria for locally listed assets and guidance published by Historic England's Advice Note 7 - Local Heritage Listing, **it is considered that the Royal Albion does not possess the required historic or architectural interest for local listing or identification as a non-designated heritage asset.**

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<div> <div>03 December 2025</div> <div>  <div> <div>Reading</div> <div>Borough Council</div> <div>Working better with you</div> </div> </div> </div>	
Title	PLANNING APPLICATION UPDATE REPORT
Ward	Abbey/Katesgrove
Planning Application Reference:	PL/22/1916/FUL & PL/22/1917/FUL
Site Address:	<p>PL/22/1916/FUL – Former Debenhams Department Store, west of Yield Hall Place ('Yield Hall Place 1'), The Oracle, Reading, RG2 2AS</p> <p>PL/22/1917/FUL – Existing Vue cinema complex west of Yield Hall Place/London Road ('Yield Hall Place 2'), The Oracle, Reading, RG2 2AG</p>
Proposed Development	<p>PL/22/1916/FUL - Mixed use development comprising part demolition of former department store and erection of new buildings comprising up to 218 build to rent residential dwellings (Class C3) & 1,209sqm commercial uses within Uses Class E and/or bar (Sui Generis Use). Reconfiguration and change of use of up to 5,866sqm remaining department store floorspace (Class E) to uses with within Use Class E and/or bar (Sui Generis Use) and/or experiential leisure use (Sui Generis Use). Associated public realm, infrastructure works & external alterations to shopping centre, including creation of new shopping centre entrance (amended description) (accompanied by an Environmental Statement)</p> <p>PL/22/1917/FUL - Mixed use development comprising demolition of existing buildings and erection of new building comprising up to 218no. build-to-rent residential dwellings (Class C3) & up to 3,046 sqm commercial floorspace comprising cinema (Sui Generis) and ground floor commercial uses within Use Class E and/or Bar (Sui Generis Use). Associated public realm and infrastructure works (amended description) (accompanied by an Environmental Statement)</p>
PL/22/2916/FUL - Yield Hall Place 1 The Oracle, Reading RG2 2AG	
Deadline	<p>Target decision date: 20th March 2023</p> <p>Extension of time date: 13th February 2026</p>
Recommendations	<p>Amended as follows from the main agenda report: (deletions crossed through and additions in <i>bold and italics</i>)</p> <p>Subject to: Confirmation of satisfactory details of the operation of the Deferred Payment Mechanism (DPM) terms, 2. Confirmation from the Local Lead Flood Authority that SuDS issues are satisfactory</p> <p>Delegate to the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (ADPTPPS) to:</p> <p>i) GRANT full planning permission, subject to the satisfactory completion of a s106 legal agreement and delegate to ADPTPPS to make such minor changes to conditions or such additional conditions required, make such</p>

	<p>minor changes to Heads of Terms and details of the legal agreement as may be reasonably required to issue the permission; or</p> <p>ii) Refuse full planning permission if the legal agreement is not completed by 13/02/2026 (unless officers on behalf of the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement)</p>
S106 Heads of Terms	<p>As per main report with the following amendments/additions:</p> <p><u>2. Affordable Housing Deferred Payment Mechanism</u></p> <p><i>Details agreed as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Review trigger which will be the earlier of 80% occupancy or 12 months from Practical Completion (PC) (Review at PC is excluded)</i> <i>Profit - 12.5% on Gross Development Value of BtR and 15% on Commercial</i> <i>Finance rate - 2% over base rate (increased from the agreed 4.25%) and evidenced at review</i> <i>OPEX to be evidenced at review (capped at 25%)</i> <i>Professional fees – 7% based on actual build cost and evidenced at review</i> <i>Build Cost – full disclosure of build contract and actual build costs incurred</i> <i>Cost of s106 review to be covered by developer – including legal, accounting, viability, QS, valuation, and any other costs as deemed necessary by the Council</i> <i>YHP1 Benchmark Land Value - £300, 000. YHP2 Benchmark Land Value - between £7, 000, 000 and £8, 600, 000 (final figure to be agreed with LPA post committee)</i> <p>17. Blue Badge Parking Strategy</p> <p><i>Pre-commencement submission and approval of a blue badge parking strategy.</i></p> <p><i>All measures within the approved strategy to have been implemented and provided prior to first occupation of any residential dwelling</i></p>
Conditions	As per the main agenda report
Informatives	As per the main agenda report
PL/22/1917/FUL - Yield Hall Place 2 The Oracle, Reading RG2 2AG	
Recommendations	<p>Amended as follows from the main agenda report: (deletions crossed through and additions in <i>bold and italics</i>)</p> <p>Subject to:</p>

	<p>1. Confirmation of satisfactory details of the operation of the Deferred Payment Mechanism (DPM) terms, and</p> <p>2. Confirmation from the Local Lead Flood Authority that SuDS issues are satisfactory</p> <p>Delegate to the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (ADPTPPS) to:</p> <p>i) GRANT full planning permission, subject to the satisfactory completion of a s106 legal agreement and delegate to ADPTPPS to make such minor changes to conditions or such additional conditions required, make such minor changes to Heads of Terms and details of the legal agreement as may be reasonably required to issue the permission; or</p> <p>ii) Refuse full planning permission if the legal agreement is not completed by 13/02/2026 (unless officers on behalf of the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement)</p>
S106 Heads of Terms	<p>As per main report with the following amendments/additions:</p> <p>2. Affordable Housing Deferred Payment Mechanism</p> <p>Details agreed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review trigger which will be the earlier of 80% occupancy or 12 months from Practical Completion (PC) (Review at PC is excluded) Profit - 12.5% on Gross Development Value of BtR and 15% on Commercial Finance rate - 2% over base rate (increased from the agreed 4.25%) and evidenced at review OPEX to be evidenced at review (capped at 25%) Professional fees – 7% based on actual build cost and evidenced at review Build Cost – full disclosure of build contract and actual build costs incurred Cost of s106 review to be covered by developer – including legal, accounting, viability, QS, valuation, and any other costs as deemed necessary by the Council YHP1 Benchmark Land Value - £300, 000. YHP2 Benchmark Land Value - between £7, 000, 000 and £8, 600, 000 (final figure to be agreed with LPA post committee) <p>14. Blue Badge Parking Strategy</p> <p>Pre-commencement submission and approval of a blue badge parking strategy.</p> <p>All measures within the approved strategy to have been implemented and provided prior to first occupation of any residential dwelling</p>
Conditions	<p>As per the main agenda report unless stated below:</p> <p>(deletions crossed through and additions in bold and italics)</p>

	<p>Condition 1 is amended as follows (but only if PAC resolves to grant planning permission for the YHP1 application, otherwise the condition to revert back to the standard 3 year time period for implementation) :</p> <p>1. Time Limit for implementation – 3 years 5 years</p>
Informatives	As per the main agenda report

1. SuDS

- 1.1 The recommendation for both applications as set out in the main agenda report was subject to confirmation from the Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA) that SuDS issues are satisfactory. Since publication of the main agenda report the applicant has submitted a revised SuDS strategy for both proposed developments. The revised SuDS strategy has been reviewed by the LLFA who have confirmed that the amended proposals mean that they no longer object to both applications.
- 1.2 The revised SuDS proposals include integration of the drainage strategy for both developments with areas of green roof; tree pits and use of rainwater harvesting along with provision of attenuation tanks at ground floor level to ensure that the run-off rate from both sites would be below that of existing (resulting in an average reduction in run-off rate of 86% across both sites). The LLFA consider the drainage strategy to be acceptable, but a condition is recommended for both proposed developments to secure submission and approval of the full details, including linking of green infrastructure (ie. usually landscaping) to the SuDS proposal and implementation of the drainage strategy prior to first occupation of any part of each development. This is secured via condition 14 of the YHP1 application ref. PL/22/1916 and condition 13 of the YHP2 application ref. PL/22/1917 as set out in the Recommendation box at the top of the main agenda report.

2. Heritage Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (HTVIA)

- 2.1 Since publication of the main agenda report the applicant has submitted updated views studies of the proposed developments which consider the YHP1 and YHP2 proposals in isolation, compared to the cumulative views images included within the main agenda report which show both proposed developments together. Officers have reviewed the updated views study for each application and in the majority of instances this does not change the conclusions reached within the main agenda report in terms of visual and heritage impacts of each development.
- 2.2 There is once instance where the individual views study results in a slight change to the officer conclusions. This is in relation to the impact of the YHP2 proposals from Market Place. Within paragraph 7.2.69 of the main agenda report, officers identify 'less than substantial harm at a moderate level' to the setting of a number of listed buildings within Market Place. This harm is identified to the Church of St Laurence (Grade I Listed) and no.s 23-26, 27-28, 29-31, 32, 33-14, 48-49, 50-51 & 52 Market Place and no. 10 High Street (all Grade II Listed) as a result of the visual dominance of the YHP1 and YHP2 proposals with setting and views of these buildings from Market Place. However, the updated individual visuals provided by the applicant (see figures A and B below) demonstrate that the visual impact of YHP1 would be more pronounced than that of YHP2. Whilst the tops of the tower elements of the YHP2 proposals would still be visible from Market Place, the towers are lower in height than the YHP1 tower and also more distant in the view, appearing less dominant, meaning t Officers conclude that this would result in 'less than substantial harm' to the setting of the above referenced listed buildings but at a 'low' rather than 'moderate level'. Officers still conclude that the YHP1 tower would result in less than substantial harm at a moderate level and that the cumulative impact of both proposals would also still be less than substantial harm at a moderate level.

- 2.3 The overall level of harm officers identify upon the character and appearance of the Market Place / London Street conservation area as result of the YHP2 proposals is also still also considered to be 'less than substantial harm at a moderate level' as per paragraph 7.2.71 of the main agenda report.
- 2.4 This slight change in the identified heritage harm to the setting of a number of listed buildings within Market Place as a result of the YHP2 proposals does not lead officers to come to different overall conclusion in respect of the planning balance position for the YHP2 proposals and the officer recommendation remains as per the main agenda report.



Figure A – Proposed view of the YHP1 development looking south from Market Place from junction with The Forbury

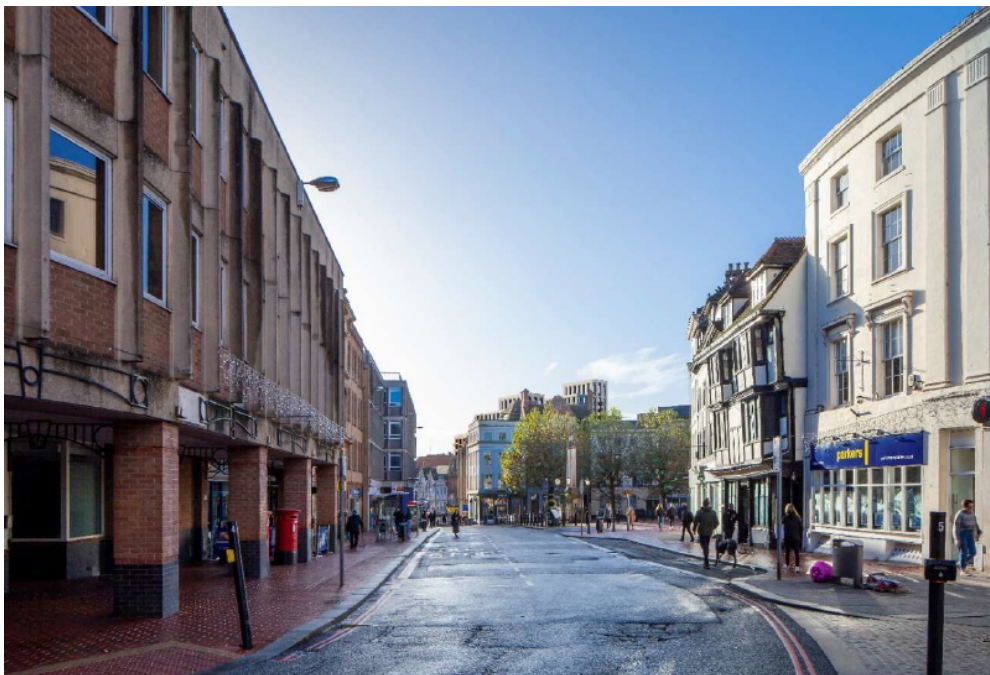


Figure B – Proposed view of the YHP2 development looking south from Market Place from the junction with The Forbury

3. Economic Benefits

- 3.1 Since publication of the main agenda report, the applicant has also submitted further information in respect of the individual economic benefits of each of the YHP1 and YHP2 proposals. This information has been reviewed by officers and further supports the conclusions already reached, namely that both applications would contribute to maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of The Oracle and Central Area as a whole as is the requirement under Policy RL1 (Network and Hierarchy of Centres) for development proposals within Central Area. This information does not change the officer recommendation for both applications which remains as per the main agenda report.

4. Timeframe for Implementation

- 4.1 As set out in paragraphs 3.7 to 3.8 and 7.1.49 of the main agenda report the YHP1 development is proposed to take place in two sub-phases: 1A and 1B, and the s106 Heads of Terms for the YHP1 development require both phases to be completed in their entirety within 5 years of commencement of Phase 1A. Whilst submitted as two separate planning applications, the applicant also presents the YHP1 and YHP2 proposals as two 'phases; stating that the YHP1 development would be carried out first followed by YHP2; albeit given they are separate applications there is no formal link to require either the developments to be carried out in this order, nor is there any clear reason why this would be necessary. The Applicant has also advised that they would not construct YHP1 or YHP2 concurrently (albeit, again there is no planning reason why this could not happen) with their intention being to implement and complete YHP1 in the first instance before commencing YHP2.
- 4.2 The standard time limit for commencement of a development is 3 years. However, under s.91(1) (b) of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990), it allows another period (whether longer or shorter) should the LPA consider appropriate. In this case, the applicant has requested a 5 year period to commence the YHP2 development given they estimate that as a minimum it is likely to take circa. 3 ½ years to complete YHP1 from commencement of the development. As such, if both developments were to be implemented in the sequence and timeframes set out by the applicant then it would appear likely that, if granted, the YHP2 permission would lapse before the YHP1 development is completed. In this specific instance, given the ordering and phasing of the developments indicated by the applicant, officers are recommending the timeframe for implementation of YHP2 is changed to 5 years from date of issue of the planning permission. This amended condition is shown in the Recommendation box for the YHP2 application at the top of this report.
- 4.3 There is of course no reason why the applicant could not carry out minimal works as necessary to 'commence' the YHP2 development within the standard 3 year period for commencement but there is risk to such an approach that this leaves behind unsightly construction works or incomplete development for an unknown period which officers do not consider would not welcome within such a prominent riverside setting. As such it is considered reasonable to facilitate the 5 year period for commencement of YHP2 in this instance which could assist in avoiding this eventuality.
- 4.4 In the event that the Committee resolves to refuse planning permission for YHP1 but grant planning permission for YHP2 then it is recommended that the time frame for implementation of development condition for YHP2 reverts back to the standard 3 year time period.

5. Highways matters

- 5.1 As set out in the main agenda report both proposed developments would be car free. Each proposed development would provide 11 wheelchair accessible dwellings and it has been brought to officers' attention that future occupiers of these dwellings could have a 'blue badge' that would allow them to park within nearby pay and display bays, such as those along Mill Lane and London Street, free of charge and for an unrestricted time limit. This could result in overspill parking that utilises these nearby parking bays given the

developments would be car free. Therefore, it is considered necessary that each application should demonstrate that it would not have a detrimental impact on the Highway network as a result of overspill parking from the developments filling up these on-street bays.

- 5.2 The applicant has proposed to provide that blue badge parking spaces, which would need to be dedicated for the proposed developments, within the existing car parks at The Oracle (The Holybrook Car Park for YHP1 and The Riverside car park for YHP2). The exact location of these spaces within the car parks and how these are to be accessed still needs to be determined and agreed with officers. It should be noted that this may require the applicant to regularise any changes to the existing customer parking provision at The Oracle, provision of which is currently secured by historic planning permissions, via (a) separate planning application(s). In the event that the Committee resolves to grant planning permission for either or both developments, officers seek delegated authority from the Committee to resolve this issue with the applicant post-committee and before a decision is issued. An additional obligation has also been added to the section 106 Heads of Terms for each application, to require submission and approval of the blue badge parking strategy prior to commencement of each development, in order to secure implementation of measures necessary to provide the blue badge parking prior to first occupation of any residential dwelling within each development.

6. Nationally Described Space Standards

- 6.1 Paragraph 7.7.31 of the main agenda report discusses level of compliance of both the YHP1 and YHP2 proposals within the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) for new residential dwellings. Since publication of the main agenda report the applicant has provided more detailed information as to the level of compliance of both proposed developments with these standards.

- 6.2 The information clarifies that whether or not an individual dwelling complies with the NDSS depends on the occupancy assumption for each unit. For example, for a 2 bedroom unit, NDSS figures allow for either 4 person occupancy (i.e. 2 couples sharing a 2 bed flat or 2 adults & 2 children) with a minimum recommended unit size of 70m² or 3 person occupancy (i.e. 2 single adults renting a bedroom each or 2 adults and 1 child etc) with a minimum recommended unit size of 61m².

- 6.3 The full level for compliance with the NDSS is shown in the tables below:

# Bedrooms	Area of Home (m ²)	# Homes	NDSS Area m ² (1 bed 2 person)	% Compliance 1bed 2 person	% Compliance 1 bed 1 person (39 sqm)
1	43.5	93	50	13% below	12% in excess
	47	1	50	6% below	21% in excess
	48.3	1	50	3% below	24% in excess
	46.9	8	50	6% below	20% in excess
	58	8	50	16% above	32% in excess

111

0%

# Bedrooms	Area of Home (m ²)	# Homes	NDSS Area m ² (2 bed 4 person)	% Compliance 2 bed 4 person	% Compliance 2 bed 3 person (61 sqm)
2	63.5	31	70	9% below	4% in excess
	66.5	30	70	5% below	9% in excess
	66.8	21	70	5% below	10% in excess

	67.8	12	70	3% below	11% in excess
	70	2	70	equal	15% in excess
96			0%		

# Bedrooms	Area of Home (m2)	# Homes	NDSS Area m2 (3 bed 5 person)	% Compliance 3 bed 5 person	% Compliance 3 bed 4 person (74sqm)
3	80.3	8	86	7% below	9% in excess
	87.3	3	86	2% in excess	18% in excess

11
218

YHP2

# Bedrooms	Area of Home (m2)	# Homes	NDSS Area m2 (1 bed 2 person)	% Compliance 1 bed 2 person	% Compliance 1 bed 1 person (39 sqm)
1	40.6	35	50	18% below	4% in excess
	42.2	21	50	16% below	8% in excess
	44.4	5	50	11% below	14% in excess
	45.4	2	50	9% below	16% in excess
	46.4	10	50	7% below	19% in excess
	48.6	12	50	3% below	25% in excess
	48.7	8	50	3% below	30% in excess
	49.9	1	50	equal	28% in excess
	50.5	2	50	1% in excess	30% in excess

96

# Bedrooms	Area of Home (m2)	# Homes	NDSS Area m2 (2 bed 4 person)	% Compliance 2 bed 4 person	% Compliance 2 bed 3 person (61 sqm)
2	63.6	21	70	9% below	4% in excess
	64.57	34	70	8% below	6% in excess
	64.6	46	70	8% below	6% in excess
	66.25	10	70	6% below	9% in excess

111

# Bedrooms	Area of Home (m2)	# Homes	NDSS Area m2 (3 bed 5 person)	% Compliance 3 bed 5 person	% Compliance 3 bed 4 person (74sqm)
3	77.9	1	86	9% below	5% excess
	79.3	5	86	8% below	7% in excess
	83.2	5	86	3% below	11% in excess

11

6.4 As shown in the above tables, if considering the lower occupancy level, all of the proposed dwellings are NDSS compliant. Under the higher occupancy rate, it is noted

that a number of the proposed dwellings fall below the NDSS figure, but this is primarily within a 10% range of under provision of floor area and where this is the case all the habitable rooms within these units are compliant with NDSS minimum room dimensions. The applicant explains that the divergence from NDSS relates to the absence of internal corridors within the units.

- 6.5 Overall, this information does not change the conclusions of the main agenda report in respect of both applications. Although officers consider that the reduction in internal circulation space will make these dwellings less attractive to some potential occupiers (for instance medium-sized families), it is advised that compliance with the National Standards is not required by Policy H5 for new dwellings in the Central Area.

7. Affordable Housing Deferred Payment Mechanism (DPM)

- 7.1 Since publication of the main agenda report terms of the DPM have been agreed and are outlined within the recommendation box for both applications at the top of this report.

Case Officer: Matt Burns

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03 December 2025



Reading
Borough Council
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Title	PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT - UPDATE
Ward	Thames Ward
Planning Application Reference:	PL/25/1191 Full planning permission
Site Address:	Land at Meadow Road, Reading
Proposed Development	Full planning application for the demolition of existing and construction of employment units for flexible uses within E(g)(ii) and (iii), B2 and/or B8 of the Use Classes Order (including ancillary office provision) with associated enabling works, access from Meadow Road and Milford Road, parking and landscaping. Departure from the Development Plan - the following application does not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated
Applicant	CBRE Investment Management
Report author	Catrin Davies
Deadline:	25/11/2025
Recommendation	<p><u>Refuse</u> planning permission for the reasons in the main Agenda report, with the following alterations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. It has not been demonstrated that there are not reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding as such it has not been proven a site with a lower risk of flooding cannot accommodate the proposal. The proposal has not demonstrated it will not reduce the capacity of the flood plain to store floodwater, impede the flow of floodwater or in any way increase the risks to life and property arising from flooding or reduce flood risk both on- and off-site. The proposal has not demonstrated adequate safe access and egress. The proposal has not incorporated a suitable SuDS scheme which is 'landscape-led' and connects into the on-site green networks as such the proposal has failed to demonstrate that it has adequately adapted to the impacts of climate change. The proposal has therefore failed to demonstrate that it will not increase flood risk, contrary to Policy EN18 (Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019), and paragraphs

	<p>170, 173-5, and 181 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).</p> <p>3. Due to the proposal's layout which offers no suitable separation distance or suitable buffer to the site edges, combined with the significant scale, mass and bulk of the proposed building, the proposal is considered to be visually dominant and overbearing on neighbouring properties, harming the outlooks to these houses and their gardens. In addition, the application has failed to demonstrate the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm from noise, vehicle movements and artificial lighting to the amenities of neighbouring residential properties and gardens. The applicant has also failed to demonstrate the proposal would not result in harm overshadowing or loss of light to the existing playground. The development is therefore considered to have a detrimental impact on the living environment of surrounding existing residential properties, contrary to policies CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity), EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and paragraphs 187 and 198 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).</p> <p>6. The development has not been designed to achieve the BREEAM 'Excellent' standard (or an equivalent) for the entirety of the development. Further, the design of the development does not take suitable opportunities to design for resilience to climate change, including through solar shading, landscaping and water run-off. Accordingly, the development fails to produce a design which is appropriate in terms of responsible energy use, design/layout and use of natural resources. The proposal has also failed to provide adequate and well-designed space to facilitate waste storage, reuse, recycling and composting. The proposal is contrary to policies CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction), CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change) and CC5 (Waste minimisation and storage) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019), the Council's SPD, 'Sustainable Design and Construction' (2019) and paragraphs 161 and 166 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).</p>
Informatives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plans considered and refused 2. Positive and proactive requirement 3. A s106 legal agreement for securing an employment and skills plan and the necessary works to the Public Highway under s278 of the Highways Act would otherwise have been required if approving planning permission

Additional Comments Received

Environment Agency

The previous use of the proposed development site presents a high risk of contamination that could be mobilised during site works and construction to pollute controlled waters. Controlled waters are particularly sensitive in this location because the proposed development site is located upon a Principal Aquifer and secondary aquifer A which is shallow and has can be impacted by surface water. Requesting additional information via pre-commencement conditions.

RBC Waste Services

Object- due to lack of consideration of waste disposal from the site. There is no reference to bin storage space on the plan nor is there a refuse strategy with supporting waste disposal plans for occupants of the site.

Southern Gas Networks

Based on the information received to date, it is not anticipated that the diversion of SGN's gas apparatus will be required.

Additional information

The applicant submitted additional information to the officer on the 26/11/2025 for the avoidance of doubt this information has not been taken into consideration by officers.

Appraisal

1.Land Use Principles

1.1 The proposal has a total employment floor space of 4,293 sq.m. This consists of Building 1-3 659 sq.m, Building 4-7 828 sq.m, Building 8-9-1050 sq.m and Building 10-11- 1756 sq.m. The GIA for both existing buildings totals to 4,683 sqm as such there would be a loss of employment floorspace of 850 sq.m but not a loss of employment land within the Core Employment Area as such is not contrary to policy EN3.

1.2 As stated within the main agenda report, the proposal would result in new employment floorspace with a mix of unit sizes and uses with the inclusions of smaller units, which is a benefit of the scheme. The applicant's Economic Statement states that the proposal could create 60 net additional employment opportunities and around 30 full time jobs however these figures are indicative as it would depend on the future uses, users and types of business which occupy the units. Nevertheless, the proposal would generate jobs and have wider economic benefits for the borough.

1.3 For the avoidance of doubt weight has been afforded to the economic and employment benefits of the proposal as stated within the submitted Planning Statement and Economic Statement. However, what these reports have failed to address is the proposal results in a non-conforming use on an allocated housing site and the additional harm of not providing housing (including affordable housing) on the allocated housing site or through other off-site mitigation. At the moment, the current

Local Plan achieves its planned need for employment floorspace but falls short in terms of delivering housing (dwellings). The applicant argument for why the scheme should be approved relies on paragraph 127 of the NPPF which states that decisions need to reflect changes in the demand for land, as explained with the main agenda report, but the applicant has had no regard to the housing need of the borough. The main agenda has explained why the LPA believe the site is reasonable available and based on the evidence available to the LPA there is not currently an unmet employment need (whereas there is an unmet housing need).

1.4 Further to paragraph 6.18 of the main agenda report which discusses the applicant's fallback position. While it is acknowledged the existing site is within employment use the exact uses have not been established or indeed if these are even lawful. Please note that there is an existing coach service operating at the site and it has not been demonstrated this falls within a purely B8 use and that this operation is lawful. The site appears to be a mix of commercial, industrial and storage. However, it's not clear how these uses are distributed across the site, or if the site is one planning unit or several. All of these are considerations when assessing any potential 'fall back' position. The applicant has referenced a 'fall back' position but this argument hasn't been fully developed to a stage where it can be awarded weight within the planning balance. While the site is within employment use this does not mean that a proposed employment use is acceptable which is what the applicant is implying. Please note that should the site be intensified, this could be a material change of use in its own right and would require planning permission.

2. Flooding

2.1 Further to paragraph 6.22 of the main agenda report (PL/25/1191), to clarify, the Exception test is not required for this application. This is because the Flood risk vulnerability classification has not changed.

2.2 In relation to paragraph 6.23 of the main agenda report the National Standards for sustainable drainage systems was updated on 30th July 2025. Application PL/25/1191 was submitted 22nd August 2025 therefore it was submitted after the update took place, and the application should have taken these requirements into account.

2.3 Paragraph 6.24 of the main agenda report discusses localised flooding further to this Paragraph 49 of the Flood Risk and Coastal Change section of National PPG (Planning Practice Guidance) states that "Where flood storage from any source of flooding is to be lost as a result of development, on-site level-for-level compensatory storage, accounting for the predicted impacts of climate change over the lifetime of the development, should be provided". The applicant's FRA states that, "Using a hydraulic modelling software, the attenuation required for units 1-9 is approximately 361m³, whilst attenuation for units 10-11 is approximately 105m³ in a 1 in 100 year plus 40% climate change event. The attenuation storage is provided via: Cellular storage crates/Permeable paving". The information is considered insufficient to demonstrate that the site has acceptable flood compensation and level for level and the attenuation stated is achievable further information is required to demonstrate its acceptability. Furthermore, the submitted FRA has also not demonstrated an acceptable safe access and egress route which is a requirement of Paragraph 181 of the NPPF. As

set out in the updated Recommendation box above, this has been included within the refusal reasons.

3. Neighbouring Amenities

3.1 Further to paragraph 6.34 of the main agenda report the submitted daylight/sunlight assessment has not taken into consideration the playground located on Denbeigh Place. The playground is located to the north of proposed units 4-7 and is located adjacent to the boundary of the application site. Appendix 4 of the daylight/sunlight report lists the gardens and open spaces taken into consideration, but the playground is not listed. It has therefore not been demonstrated that the proposed units would not adversely impact the amount of light the playground receives which could result in harm to the users of the park, the refusal reasons have been updated to reflect this harm (amended refusal reason above). It is acknowledged that the playground is currently impacted in terms of light and overshadowing by the existing built development, however this proposal would perpetuate this poor relationship.

3.2 Further to paragraph 6.64 within the main agenda report which deals with the altered access at Meadow Road, while the altered access of Meadow Road may be acceptable in highway safety terms this would continue to attract unnecessary commercial vehicles into a residential area. Adjacent to the access lies Cox Terrace and Wyman Terrace, where the properties along these streets would be impacted by the noise and headlights from the vehicles entering the site having a degree of impact on their amenities. The fact remains this proposal would continue a non-confirming land use within this area which does result in harm to neighbouring amenities.

4. Sustainability

4.1 Policy CC5 states “Development should demonstrate measures to minimise the generation of waste in the construction, use and life of buildings and promote more sustainable approaches to waste management, including the reuse and recycling of construction waste and the promotion of layouts and designs that provide adequate, well-designed space to facilitate waste storage, reuse, recycling and composting”. The applicant’s planning statement states that “appropriate measures will be put in place to ensure more sustainable approaches to waste management...[these] measures will be agreed with the occupiers of the proposed development, prior to occupation”. This approach is considered insufficient, and the LPA needs to be certain that an adequate waste strategy is incorporated into the scheme prior to determination. It is considered that these matters are important consideration in the design and layout of a scheme to ensure these are dealt with sufficiently. Matters such as, where each unit would store their waste, where it would be collected from and if there is adequate space for the required separation of recyclables from non-recyclables remain unknown. In addition, should waste storage be located externally then it is not considered the proposed site plan can support this without significant alterations which would inevitably reduce the amount of soft landscaping proposed. Furthermore, the submitted swept path analysis has not demonstrated a refuse collection vehicle can access the site and successfully retrieve the waste from its collection point. These matters can not be dealt with via a condition as the LPA need a degree of certainty

that waste can be successfully and sustainably managed on the site prior to determination. As shown above this has been included within the refusal reasons.

5. Highways

5.1 Further to paragraph 6.68 of the main agenda, Policy TR4 states that, "Developments will be expected to make full use of opportunities to improve access for cyclists to, from and within the development and to integrate cycling through the provision of new facilities". The Planning Statement indicates that the proposal includes 24 cycle spaces however these are not shown on the proposed site plan as to where these are to be located or indeed if they have been incorporated into the scheme. Once again if these have not been incorporated into the scheme then it is not considered they can be implemented without detriment to the soft landscaping scheme proposed.