

## UPDATE REPORT:

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE:

Ward: Abbey

Address: Kings Road Garden, Kings Road, Reading

Proposal: To add Kings Road Garden to the List of Locally-Important Buildings and Structures

## RECOMMENDATION:

As in main report

### 1. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 Kings Road Garden, Kings Road is recommended for addition to the Local List in the main report. After publication of the papers, additional information relating to Kings Road Garden was received on 25<sup>th</sup> November from the Conservation Area Advisory Committee and Joe Doak at the University of Reading, who is researching Huntley & Palmers for a doctoral thesis.
- 1.2 The suggestion is that the wording of the proposed Local List entry should be amended to mention the context of the establishment of the garden, notably Huntley & Palmers' 'Great Social Scheme'. The amended text that has been suggested by the CAAC is shown below:

*"Kings Road Garden (formerly Huntley & Palmers Garden) is a surviving element of the former Huntley & Palmers biscuit factory that covered a substantial site around the Kennet from the mid-nineteenth century until the second half of the twentieth century. The Huntley & Palmers operation was a major part of Reading's 19th Century industrial expansion, and Reading was renowned for its production of biscuits.*

*In 1846, Huntley & Palmers purchased an old silk mill and embarked on a programme of additions and expansions. In 1873 new buildings north of the river and the original site were added. Between 1867 and 1925 Huntley & Palmers systematically purchased the land and properties occupying the site of the Garden and land to the west of Watlington Street with the intention of creating a 'Great Social Scheme'. The proposed social and recreation centre would have included dining rooms, smoking rooms, a social club, baths, gymnasium, and a great concert hall able to seat 2,500 people. However, the scheme was not implemented due to problems with transferring the licences of two public houses on the site, as well as increasing public sector welfare provision and financial difficulties experienced by the Company.*

*In 1937 Huntley & Palmer sold some of the site to Reading Corporation for the widening of Kings Road and ~~t~~The garden was ~~added~~ laid-out at some point in the late 1930s or 1940s and may have been associated with at the same time as the building of new office buildings on King's Road ~~around that time~~. The garden has a relationship with the former Huntley & Palmers Social Club to the east, across Kings Road, as the most prominent surviving elements of the Huntley & Palmers site.*

*The site comprises a small formal garden adjacent to Kings Road and the River Kennet. It includes footpaths and soft landscaping and retains its original layout albeit with subsequent changes to soft landscaping and the waterside boundary. Around the boundary to the north and west is a low brick retaining wall and wrought iron railings. The wrought iron gates bear the Huntley & Palmers initials, and the ironwork of the gates is in the art-deco style of the time.”*

- 1.3 It is agreed that the text of the proposed local listing would benefit from a reference to this context as it is relevant to the significance of the garden, although it is considered that some amendments would assist with brevity. The recommended amended local listing text is included as Appendix 1.

## APPENDIX 1: RECOMMENDED AMENDED LOCAL LIST TEXT

Kings Road Garden (formerly Huntley & Palmers Garden) is a surviving element of the former Huntley & Palmers biscuit factory that covered a substantial site around the Kennet from the mid-nineteenth century until the second half of the twentieth century. The Huntley & Palmers operation was a major part of Reading's 19th Century industrial expansion, and Reading was renowned for its production of biscuits.

In 1846, Huntley & Palmers purchased an old silk mill and embarked on a programme of additions and expansions. In 1873 new buildings north of the river and the original site were added. Between 1867 and 1925 Huntley & Palmers systematically purchased the land and properties occupying the site of the garden and land to the west of Watlington Street with the intention of creating a 'Great Social Scheme' to include dining rooms, smoking rooms, a social club, baths, gymnasium, and a great concert hall able to seat 2,500 people. However, the scheme was not implemented. In 1937, Huntley & Palmer sold some of the site to Reading Corporation for the widening of Kings Road and the garden was laid-out at the same time as the building of new office buildings on King's Road. The garden has a relationship with the former Huntley & Palmers Social Club to the east, across Kings Road, as the most prominent surviving elements of the Huntley & Palmers site.

The site comprises a small formal garden adjacent to Kings Road and the River Kennet. It includes footpaths and soft landscaping and retains its original layout albeit with subsequent changes to soft landscaping and the waterside boundary. Around the boundary to the north and west is a low brick retaining wall and wrought iron railings. The wrought iron gates bear the Huntley & Palmers initials, and the ironwork of the gates is in the art-deco style of the time.