

## UPDATE REPORT:

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 12 January 2022

**Ward:** Abbey

**Address:** 85-88 Broad Street, Reading, RG1 2AP

**Proposal:** To add 85-88 Broad Street, to the List of Locally-Important Buildings and Structures, subject to further investigation of the alterations to 85 and 88 to be provided as an update report.

### RECOMMENDATION:

As in main report.

## 1. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 85 to 88 Broad Street is recommended for addition to the Local List as recommended in the main report. After further investigation of earlier maps, it is clearly shown that this group of commercial shops and accommodation over were all built at a similar time frame.
- 1.2 The sequence and analysis of empirical evidence shows there is a historical connection with this row of buildings which were constructed c.1870s. The documentation combined with the recent photo shows design elements which link the group, such as roof ridge and gutter lines. All the buildings were erected at a similar time, and period. This reassessment to find and analyse the new information was done in consultation with Evelyn Williams (CAAC Chair) and Bruce Edgar, the RBC CUDO.
- 1.3 A series of sketches dating from c.1885 by James Gafford (Source: Reading Library collection) shows the original street façade design of 85 to 88 Broad Street.
- 1.4 In the interwar period, c.1930, the east and west properties had their street fronts upgraded with an Art-Deco period façade. This was a normal thing from this period, but the buildings behind were kept. The windows changed at this time. But these changes are part of the evolution of the buildings which were still commercial on the ground floor and residential or offices above. They still keep their role as part of Broad Street, which acted as a “High Street” in the centre of Reading.
- 1.5 It is suggested that the wording of the proposed Local List entry, should be amended to mention that the whole group is significant and not only the original c.1870s facades and the later 1930s alterations also add to the significance and character of this group of commercial shops at the southwestern end of Broad Street.
- 1.6 The amended text discussed is shown in Appendix 1 of this report.

### 1.7 Extra analysis of sites history for 85 to 88 Broad Street.

It is important to note how Broad Street changed over time and the original plot sizes and urban grain evolved. This group of properties are now the oldest buildings at the western end of Broad Street. They show what the commercial high street facades looked like from the c.1870s period. Further the detailing of the windows is unusual with its semi-circular drip moulding and arched drip moulds on the second floor.

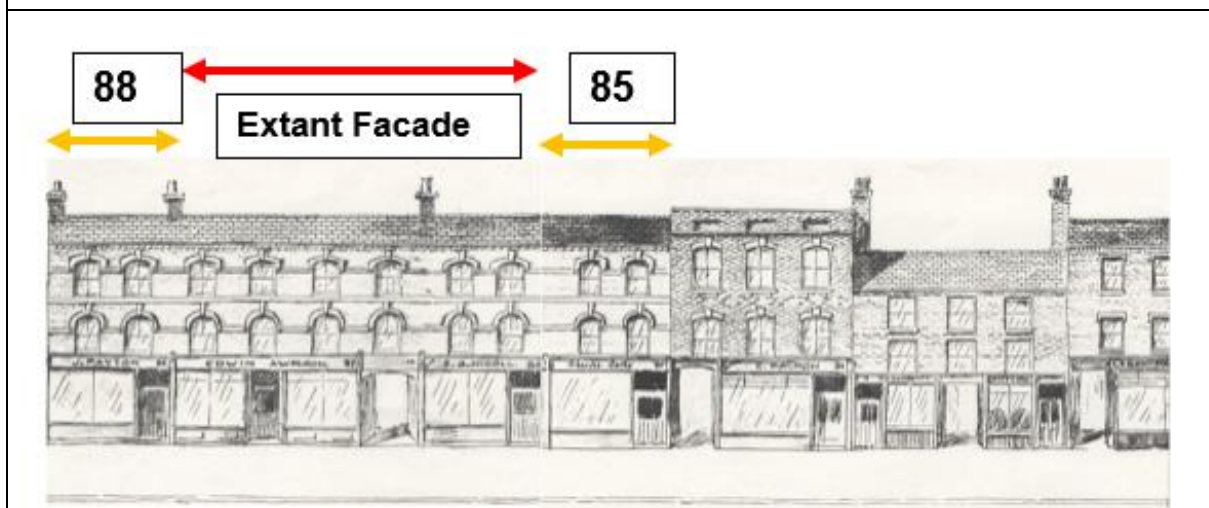
Fig. 1: OS c.1875, Pub. 1879. Broad Street, Reading.  
This is the first drawn map, after the plots were built on.



Fig. 2: Goad Map 1895, clearly showing the property numbering.



Fig. 3: Compilation of a c.1885 James Gafford sketch, Reading Library collection, showing original Design of 85 to 88 Broad Street.



**Fig. 4 Key to Broad Street Elevation:**

All plots built approximately c. 1870s. Then east and west facades altered or upgraded c.1930s.

1: 85 Broad Street (c. 1930s, inter-war façade alteration).

2: 86 -87a Broad Street, (original red-brick façade).

3: 88 Broad Street (c. 1930s inter-war façade alteration).

4: Ground floor, commercial shop fronts have been amended over time. However, Council has just produced a new shopfront SPD, to guide future development to assist in enabling sympathetic future development to enhance south-western side of Broad Street.





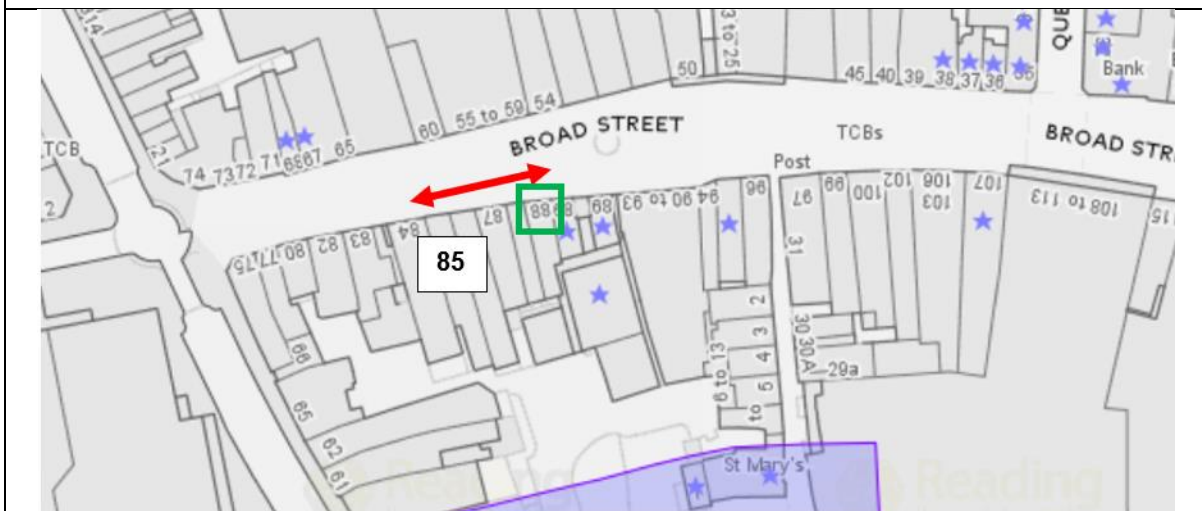
Fig. 5: 85 to 88 Broad Street, are an important part of the Broad Street character and is the oldest commercial grouping from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (c.1870s) remaining, at the west end of Broad Street.



Fig. 6: OS c.1875, Pub. 1879. Broad Street, Reading.  
Original plots shown on c. 1875 map, shows the nominated site.



Fig. 7 Current Council GIS maps. C.2021. RED arrow shows the nominated sites at 85 to 88 Broad Street. Notice how most of the adjacent sites have now changed size and shape.



### **APPENDIX 3: RECOMMENDED AMENDED LOCAL LIST TEXT**

This row of four commercial shops, was designed c1868 by local architects, J T & W Brown. The two properties on either end, 85 and 88, had their street facades modified in the 1930s. The centre group of 86 and 87, still retain their original red brick facades on the first and second floors and retain their original, shallow pitched slate roof.

This group of Victorian commercial terraces is (apart from the George Hotel, dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, at the eastern end of the central shopping precinct) one of the oldest groupings of buildings in the central shopping area along Broad Street.

On the first and second floors of numbers 86, 87 and 87a, the original timber double hung windows are still in place. On the first floor the top sash is a semi-circular window with a rendered drip mould and small boss over the window openings. On the second floor, the windows are topped with a shallow arch on the top section, and also have a shallow arched rendered drip mould over. This is an unusual feature and there are not many buildings with this feature in the centre of Reading. There are six pairs of extant windows with this detail on the first and second floors.

While the ground floor shops fronts have been lost, this does not reduce the importance and contribution this group makes to the historic streetscape at the south western end of Broad Street. In contrast the northern side of Broad street has lost most of the original street facades, with only a few remaining historic buildings. On the roof, there are still original chimneys in place, above the shallow double pitched roof, which is still intact across all four properties.