

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 7th December 2022

Ward: Abbey

Application No.: A) 221232/FUL & B) 221233/LBC

Address: 1-15 (odd) Queen Victoria Street & 145-148 Friar Street, Reading, RG1 1SY

Proposals: A): Demolition of No. 146 Friar St and structures to rear and partial demolition of No. 145 Friar St and various external works to other existing buildings, as part of redevelopment to provide: reconfigured basement and ground floor uses (Class E(a) or (b)) on Friar St and Queen Victoria St frontages and proposed apart-hotel (Class C1) at part-basement, part-ground and on all upper floors; part-two, part-three storey rear extension to No's 5-15 (odd) Queen Victoria St; replacement basement and five storey building at No. 145 Friar St and two-storey roof extension to No. 146 Friar St; proposed public courtyard accessed via Queen Victoria St walkway; roof level plant; and various other associated works.

B) Various internal and external works associated with No's 147 and 148 Friar St and No's 1 - 15 (odd) Queen Victoria St, including part-two, part-three storey rear extension to No's 5-15 (odd) Queen Victoria St, as part of redevelopment to provide reconfigured basement and ground floor uses (Class E(a) or (b)) on Friar St and Queen Victoria St frontages and proposed apart-hotel (Class C1) and on all upper floors.

Applicant: Thackeray Estates Reading Investments Ltd

Date Valid: A) & B) 22/08/2022

Application target decision date: Originally A) 21/11/2022 & B) 17/10/2022, but extensions of time have been agreed until 21/12/2022.

26 week date: 20/02/2023

RECOMMENDATION

A) 221232/FUL:

Subject to the outcome of further input from (specialist energy consultant for the LPA) Hoare Lea in respect of sustainability and energy matters, delegate to the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services (AD PTRS) to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to the satisfactory completion of a Section 106 legal agreement or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the Section 106 legal agreement not be completed by the 21st December 2022 (unless officers on behalf of the AD PTRS agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement).

The Section 106 legal agreement to secure the following:

1. An Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) (construction and end user phases of development)

Provision and implementation of both a construction and end user phase Employment Skills and Training Plan or equivalent financial contributions, as calculated by the levels as set out in the adopted Employment and Skills SPD (all financial contributions index-linked from the date of permission)

2. Securing the Class C1 apart-hotel use:

- Apart-hotel Use (Class C1) only and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in the same Use Class of the Schedule to the Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification - (for example as a hotel (Class C1), self-contained residential units (Class C3), small/large houses in multiple occupation (Class C4 or Sui Generis)
- not to let or licence for occupation or permit or suffer occupation of any of the apart-hotel units for a continuous period of more than 3 months to the same occupier or occupiers
- other than those customers staying in accordance with the above, not to let or licence for occupation or permit or suffer occupation of any apart-hotel unit for a continuous period for more than 3 months to the same customer or customers
- not to require customers of any apart-hotel unit to agree to any minimum period of occupation (of whatever duration)
- to provide to the Council within 14 days of written request evidence regarding the use or occupation of the apart-hotel units or any of them

Conditions to include:

1. Time Limit - 3 years
2. Approved plans
3. Pre-commencement, barring demolition, details of all external materials to be submitted to the LPA (and sample details to be provided on site) and approved in writing with the LPA. Approved details to be retained on site until the work has been completed
4. Demolition works not to be undertaken before a contract for site redevelopment, as per submitted and approved details to LPA.
5. Pre-commencement level 2 photographic recording of existing buildings
6. Pre-commencement Demolition and Construction Method Statement (including EP-based matters)
7. Compliance condition for cycle parking provision prior to first occupation of apart-hotel
8. Private refuse collection details prior to first occupation of apart-hotel
9. Compliance condition for the delivery and servicing plan
10. Compliance condition for noise level of plant equipment to be restricted.
11. Pre-installation of mechanical plant submission of and approval of a noise assessment meeting at least a 5 dB below pre-existing levels standard
12. Pre-occupation of apart-hotel noise (including specific reference to structure borne noise) assessment (relating to the ancillary gym)
13. Pre-first occupation details of odour assessment to be submitted and approved
14. Pre-commencement (including demolition) contaminated land site characterisation assessment
15. Pre-commencement (including demolition) contaminated land remediation scheme
16. Pre-construction contaminated land validation report
17. Reporting of unexpected contamination at any time
18. Compliance condition relating to hours of demolition/construction works
19. Compliance condition relating to no burning of materials or green waste on site
20. Pre-occupation submission and approval of measures to prevent pests and vermin accessing bin stores
21. Pre-commencement, barring demolition, submission and approval of Sustainable Drainage Strategy
22. Compliance condition for SuDS approved in condition above to be completed prior to

first occupation of apart-hotel and managed/maintained thereafter.

23. Pre-commencement, barring demolition to ground level, submission and approval of archaeological details
24. No piling prior to submission and approval of a piling method statement
25. Pre-commencement, barring demolition, submission and approval of all hard and soft landscaping details, specifically including green/brown/blue roof and green wall details
26. Pre-commencement, barring demolition, submission and approval of biodiversity enhancement works
27. Pre-commencement, barring demolition, submission of and approval of access control strategy
28. Pre-commencement, barring demolition, submission of and approval of CCTV operations requirements study
29. Compliance condition permitting Class E(a) use only within retail units 01, 02, 07 and 08
30. Compliance condition permitting Class E(a) or Class E(b) uses only within retail units 03, 04, 05, 06, 09 and 10
31. Compliance condition not permitting the future amalgamation of any part of proposed Queen Victoria Street units 05, 06, 07, 08 or 09 (unless a separate application and permission from the local planning authority)
32. Compliance condition relating to any food and beverage, café/restaurant or lounge associated with the apart-hotel to be ancillary to the apart-hotel use.
33. Compliance condition relating to any indoor gym being ancillary to the apart-hotel use, for hotel guests only and not being open to members of the public.
34. Compliance condition stipulating a maximum of 104 apart-hotel rooms, including no fewer than 5 accessible apart-hotel rooms, within the proposed Class C1 apart-hotel
35. Compliance condition for all ground floor Class E(a) and/or Class E(b) units fronting onto either Friar Street or Queen Victoria Street to retain 'active window displays'
36. Pre-occupation details of an external lighting strategy to be submitted and approved, and installed prior to first use of the proposed apart-hotel
37. Pre-occupation details of a public art strategy to be submitted and approved, and completed prior to first use of the proposed apart-hotel
38. Pre-occupation submission and approval of management and maintenance plan for operation of the public courtyard (including any events)
39. Compliance condition for any gates or doors hereby approved on Queen Victoria Street, Friar Street and Fife Court to open inwards away from the highway/street only.
40. Compliance condition for courtyard to only be publicly accessible at 07:00 to 23:30 Monday to Friday, 07:00 to 00:30 hours on Saturdays and 07:00 to 22:30 hours on Sundays and all Bank Holidays and Statutory Holidays.
41. Compliance condition for any Class E a) use hereby approved to only be used by members of the public at 07:00 to 23:00 hours Monday to Saturday and 07:00 to 18:00 hours on Sundays and all Bank Holidays and Statutory Holidays.
42. Compliance condition for any Class E b) use hereby approved to only be used by members of the public at 07:00 to 23:30 hours Monday to Friday, 07:00 to 00:30 hours on Saturdays and 10:00 to 22:30 hours on Sundays and all Bank Holidays and Statutory Holidays.
43. Compliance condition relating to any ancillary ground floor use associated with the apart-hotel only to be open to non-apart-hotel guests between 07:00 - 23:00 on Mondays to Fridays, 07:00 to 00:00 on Saturdays and 07:00 to 22:00 on Sundays and all Bank Holidays and Statutory Holidays.

Informatives:

1. Positive and Proactive Statement

2. Highway works
3. Traffic Regulation Order
4. Section 106 Legal Agreement
5. Possible requirement for separate advertisement consent / listed building consent in relation to future retail tenants/leaseholders
6. Thames Water based informatives
7. Protection of nesting birds when undertaking demolition works
8. Clarification concerning pre-commencement conditions
9. CIL
10. Party Wall Act
11. Building Regulations
12. Terms and conditions

B) 221233/LBC:

Delegate to the Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services (AD PTRS) to GRANT listed building consent, subject to conditions to include:

1. Time limit Listed Building Consent - standard 3 years
2. Listed Building works to be carried out only in accordance with the approved plans specifications and Schedule of Works by Falconer Chester Hall
3. Ground floor shop front details at 1:20 section and layout for 145 to 147 Friar Street and inner courtyard areas
4. Retention of all other features of historic and architectural interest unless referred to on approved plans

Informatives:

1. Positive and proactive
2. No other works are approved except those as authorised by this Consent.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site comprises a series of buildings fronting onto the south side of Friar Street and the west side of Queen Victoria Street in Central Reading, as shown below in figure 1. The site is adjacent to Fife Court on the Friar Street frontage and extends roughly half way along Queen Victoria Street.

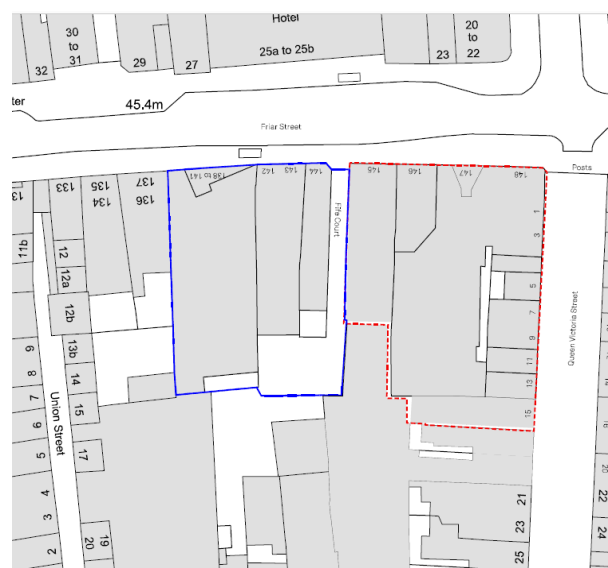


Figure 1: Extract of Site Location Plan (not to scale)

- 1.2 No's 1-15 (odd) Queen Victoria Street and 148 Friar Street are all grade II listed buildings, as part of a wider designation which includes further buildings on Friar Street (No's 149 & 150), Queen Victoria Street (No's 17-31 & 2-32) and Broad Street (No's 24-28 & 35-38). These are all basement plus 4-storey (including the upper most floor being set within the roofscape) in height. There are a variety of retail and related commercial uses at the ground and basement floors (148 & 1-3: Black Sheep Coffee; 5: Mobile Kingdom; 7-9: But Is It Art?; 11-13: Rush Hairdressers; 15: Xpression Health & Beauty). Above, largely vacant offices were witnessed during an officer site visit at pre-application stage on 01/07/2022, although it appeared the upper floors of No. 15 were still functioning for some form of office use. There is existing scaffolding at the site in order to protect pedestrians on Queen Victoria Street from falling unstable masonry. The area to the rear of these buildings comprises a crowded mix of more modern extensions and additions, which are largely unused. The listing as a whole states:

A circa 1894 commercial street with returns to Broad and Friar Streets. Probably by Joseph Morris. Dutch gabled free Baroque style. 3 1/2 storeys, yellow brick and terracotta with dividing Ionic pilasters. Dentil cornice. Pilasters to dormers, broken pediments above. An elongated pattern of shallow bays to 1st and 2nd floors 4:2:1:1:1:3. Mullion and transom window to bays, sashes with architraves (and pediments on 1st floor) to rest. Modern shopfronts, retaining cornice to fascia and scroll brackets to pilasters, only one shop retains prewar shopfront. Large returns to Broad Street. The return to east (No 28 Broad Street) supported by No 26 (dated 1894, grey brick with red terracotta dressings) and by No 24 (an early C20 Bank with -large shaped pediment doorway on corner to Cross Street; red brick with stone dressings and stone fret patterns to gables).

- 1.3 No. 147 is subject to a standalone Grade II listing, and again is basement and 4-storey in height. There are two occupiers either side of the recessed entrance at ground floor level (Timpson and Amy Nails), with the former offices on the upper floors in a poor state of disrepair. The listing is as follows:

Circa 1880s. 3 1/2 storey commercial frontage. Painted brick with stone voussoirs and dressings. Cornice and parapet. 3 high segmental headed dormers with ramped moulded coping between and modillion cornices, centre 2-light. These and 3 pairs of windows on 2nd floor are plate glass sashes. 4 depressed arches on 1st floor under cornice and fascia with outer pilasters and dividing fluted columns with Corinthian caps. Cornice and fascia over ground floor shop front of similar pattern with recessed entrance. The 2 storey shop front is the main interest of this building and it is included for that reason.

- 1.4 No. 146 Friar Street is basement and 3-storeys in height, with an active retail use at basement and ground floor level (Reading Food & Wine) and an in-use recruitment agency on the upper floors (Simple Recruitment Services). This building is not listed and is not considered to be of any particular architectural value.
- 1.5 No. 145 Friar Street is basement and 4-storeys in height, with WHSmith occupying the ground floor (as part of a wider operation which extends to a separate building fronting Broad Street - although there is no division between the buildings at ground floor level within the retail space) and office uses above. Based on an officer site visit on 01/07/2022 it appeared that the first and third floors were

occupied (IN2 Consult), but the second floor was vacant. This building is not listed, but has some architectural value, notably the early 20th Century front facade above the modern ground floor shopfront.

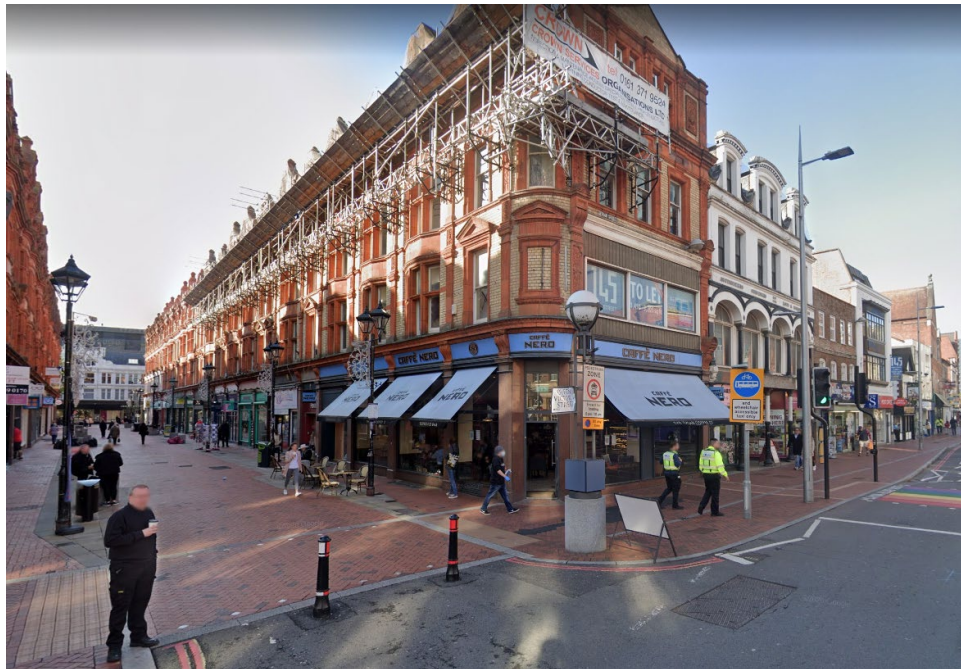


Figure 2: Google image from October 2020 showing both street frontages

1.6 The following designations and information in relation to the application site is relevant (both street elevations are shown above in figure 2):

- The site is not specifically allocated for development within the local plan;
- The site is within the boundary of the Reading Central Area, (Policies CR1-10);
- The site is within the Primary Shopping Area, Central Core and Office Core (Policy CR1);
- Both the Friar Street and Queen Victoria Street frontages are designated primary frontages in Central Reading as existing (Policy CR7);
- The Queen Victoria Street frontage is characterised by small shop units (Policy CR8);
- The site is within an Air Quality Management Area (Policy EN15);
- The site is located within a low tree canopy cover ward (Reading Tree Strategy)
- The site is within an area of Archaeological potential (Policy EN2);
- Within the 'Station Hill and around' town centre district heating cluster (paragraphs 8.7 - 8.10 of the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD);
- The site is in a Smoke Control Zone;
- Friar Street is part of the classified highway network (Policies TR1-3) and identified for the proposed Mass Rapid Transit route (Policy TR2);
- Both Friar Street and Queen Victoria Street are cycle routes (see Policy TR4);
- Friar Street is used by buses and has access restrictions in place during certain times of the day. There is a 24 hour restriction in place for Friar Street westbound (except for buses and taxis) and time restricted access Friar Street eastbound between 7am - 11am and 4pm - 7pm and restricted access to Market Place. A section of a 'no stopping' red route has been introduced east along Friar Street. This restriction means vehicles will not be allowed to stop unless they are within a dedicated loading bay;
- The site is located within Zone 1 of the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, which is an area at the very heart of Reading Borough. This area is well

served by rail and bus links and also contains the largest proportion of public car parking spaces;

- The site is outside one of the three major opportunity areas within Central Reading, with the Station/River MOA (Policy CR11) being to the north of the site. In figure 5.3, which accompanies Policy CR11, the site (together with the site to the east) is identified as being a nearby sensitive location - heritage assets;
- Friar Street is also identified for the proposed Mass Rapid Transit route and Station Road is identified as a key movement corridor (pedestrian and/or cycle)
- The site is outside a designated tall buildings cluster;
- The site is outside of a designated conservation area, but is within 105m of Market Place / London Street Conservation Area (to the east);
- The site is nearby to a number of other listed buildings and locally listed buildings, as shown below in figure 3:

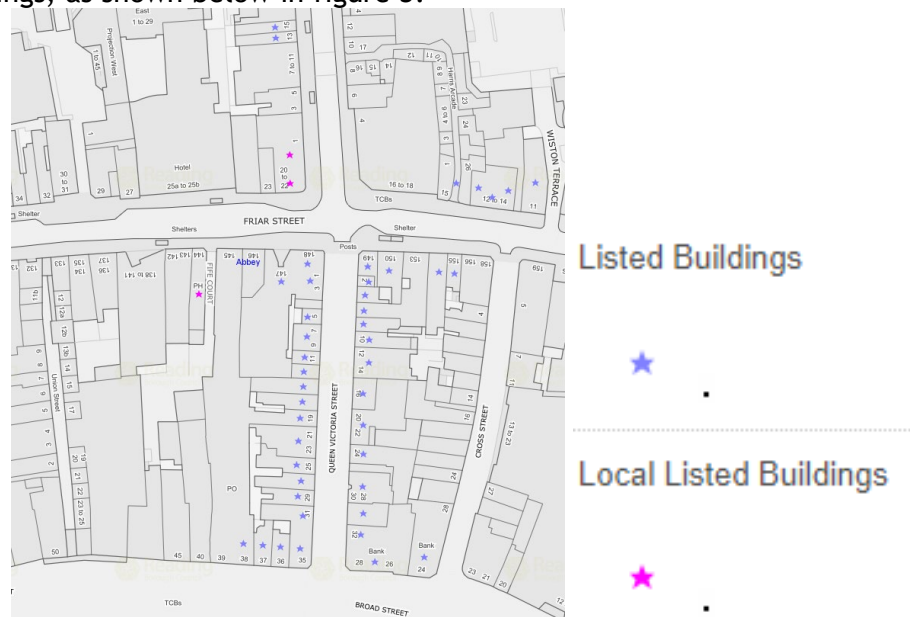


Figure 3: Listed and locally listed buildings at and nearby the site

- 1.7 The surrounding area comprises a mix of uses, predominantly commercial in use within this Central Reading location. There are a largely retail and related uses at ground floor level, with predominantly office, serviced apartment and residential uses on the upper floors. The surrounding scale and nature of buildings vary (as shown in figure 4 below), with a range of styles and forms, with numerous listed buildings or locally listed buildings (see figure 3 above).

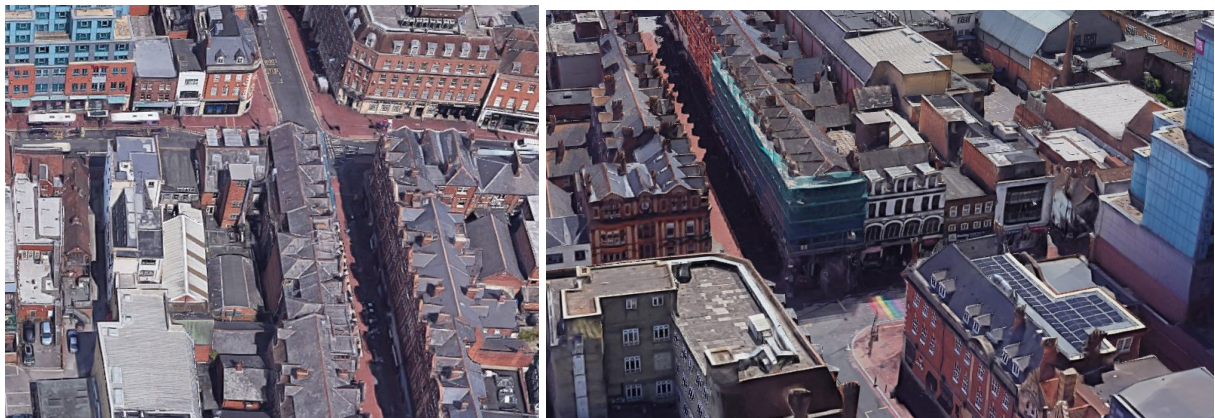


Figure 4: Aerial views looking north and south of the application site

- 1.8 This applicant is specified on the application form as Thackeray Estates Reading Investments Ltd. The applicant has clarified that the parent company of the applicant is Thackeray Estates Group Ltd. Information submitted with the application states that Thackeray Estates Group Ltd also owns nearby sites at 138-141, 142-143, 144, 149-150 and 156-158 Friar Street, 2-4 Queen Victoria Street, 1 Station Road and 70-72 and 200-202 Broad Street. The applicant therefore owns three quarters of the buildings on the Station Road/Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street junction. In light of the separate current application at 138-144 Friar Street, Reading (221235 - see relevant history section below, where the applicant is specified as The National Pub Portfolio Ltd - another separate Ltd company under the Thackeray ownership) a blue line has been shown on the location plan (figure 1) around the neighbouring site, but not other nearby sites owned by Thackeray Estates Group Ltd.
- 1.9 The application is being considered at Planning Applications Committee as it relates to a major application which is recommended for approval by officers.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 Full planning permission is sought for a variety of redevelopment works, summarised as follows:

- Demolition of the entirety of No. 146 Friar St
- Demolition of the various structures to the rear of No's 1-15 Queen Victoria Street and 147-148 Friar Street
- Partial demolition of No. 145 Friar St
- Reconfiguration of the basement and ground floor uses on Friar St and Queen Victoria St frontages, with Class E(a) (Display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food) or Class E(b) (Sale of food and drink for consumption (mostly) on the premises) specified as being proposed within individually numbered units 01 - 10, as follows:

Unit number	location	Basement floorspace	Ground floorspace	Total floorspace
01	Friar St	N/A	117.9 sqm	117.9 sqm
02	Friar St	N/A	106.7 sqm	106.7 sqm
03	Friar St / QVS	115.8 sqm	121.1 sqm	236.9 sqm
04	Courtyard	N/A	57.2 sqm	57.2 sqm
05	QVS	36.6 sqm	51.9 sqm	88.5 sqm
06	QVS	30.4 sqm	45.6 sqm	76 sqm
07	QVS	29.6 sqm	46 sqm	75.6 sqm
08	QVS	65.8 sqm	43.2 sqm	109 sqm
09	QVS	N/A	34.4 sqm	34.4 sqm
10	QVS	52 sqm	152.8 sqm	204.8 sqm
Total		330.2 sqm	776.8 sqm	1,107 sqm

QVS = Queen Victoria St. All floorspace figures are GIA, as stated on the proposed plans (which are a slightly different calculation to the CIL floorspace figures stated below)

- Provision of replacement shopfronts on both Queen Victoria St and Friar St
- A proposed public courtyard accessed via a Queen Victoria St (gated) walkway, with retail unit 04 solely fronting the courtyard. Units 05-10 front onto Queen Victoria Street, but are proposed (barring unit 09) to have a second frontage onto the proposed courtyard. The applicant has specified that this public realm will support the ground floor uses and provide a public space for events, exhibitions and cultural activities, with the aim to create

a flexible and active space. The submitted management plan states the courtyard *“will provide the opportunity for a mix of: food markets; music/drama performances; passive enjoyment with the provision of public seating; outdoor seating for restaurants and retail; occasional one off events; and, Christmas markets”*.

- An apart-hotel (Class C1) at part-basement, part-ground and on all upper floors. The apart-hotel would include 104 rooms, each with en-suite bathrooms and kitchenettes, the majority (88) with combined living/dining/kitchen/bedroom spaces, but some (16) with separately accessed bedrooms (maximum of 1-bedroom per unit), as follows:

Floor	Total number of apart-hotel units	Minimum & maximum floor areas	Units with dedicated bedrooms
First	33	20 - 31.2sqm	6
Second	31	20 - 45.5sqm	5
Third	30	19.9 - 43sqm	5
Fourth	10	19.9 - 25.1sqm	0
Total	104		16

- The proposed apart-hotel would also include:
 - A ground floor level entrance via Fife Court, with a hotel food and beverage / social space (ancillary to the Class C1 use) fronting onto the proposed courtyard. Paragraph 6.34 of the supporting planning statement confirms that the food and beverage offer will be part of the apart-hotel, but will also be open to the public (108sqm + 56sqm lobby = 164sqm).
 - Ground floor refuse, back office, baggage areas, food preparation area and a deliveries / holding space
 - Basement floor ancillary gym and laundry for apart-hotel guests only, together with various plant and staff changing and housekeeping spaces
- A part-two, part-three storey rear extension to No's 5-15 (odd) Queen Victoria St to facilitate retail units having a frontage onto the courtyard and providing apart-hotel units above;
- A replacement basement and five storey building at No. 145 Friar St
- A two-storey roof extension to No. 146 Friar St;
- Roof level plant and various other associated works.

2.2 As a point of clarification, the glossary to the Local Plan defines an apart-hotel as *“a use falling between hotels and housing, providing basic facilities for self-sufficient living but also the amenities of a hotel. Generally class as C1 hotels for planning purposes”*. It is on this basis that the proposals have been considered.

2.3 In respect of floorspace, the proposals would result in an uplift of 1,075.5sqm across the site as a whole, on the basis of an assessment of the CIL based information supplied by the applicant on 25/11/2022 (some inconsistencies with the information supplied by the applicant have been identified by officers e.g. Class E at ground floor being 855sqm and not the 815sqm stated by the applicant). In terms of the interaction between different use classes, both existing and proposed, this is broken down as follows (based on an officer calculation of the information provided by the applicant):

	Existing					Proposed			Change in floorspace
	E(a)	E(b)	E(g)	Sui Generis	total	E	C1	Total	
Basement	489.3			109.6	598.9	336	181	517	-81.9
Ground	842.8	296.1		56.6	1195.5	855	318	1173	-22.5
First			1026.1		1026.1		1134	1134	+ 107.9
Second			765.6		765.6		1070	1070	+ 304.4
Third			612.4		612.4		1034	1034	+ 421.6
Fourth							346	346	+ 346
Total	1332.1	296.1	2404.1	166.2	4198.5	1191	4083	5274	+ 1075.5

- 2.4 As such, the proposals would result in an overall reduction of Class E floorspace of 437.2sqm (1628.2 - 1191), the removal of all existing office (Class E(g)) and sui generis floorspace at the site (2404.1 + 166.2 = 2570.3sqm) and the introduction of 4,083sqm of Class C1 apart-hotel floorspace.
- 2.5 Given the application site includes works to the row/terrace of listed buildings a separate application for listed building consent has also been submitted. This proposes various internal and external works (including demolition) associated with the development for which planning permission is sought, as detailed above. The internal works to the listed buildings include:
- Removal of internal partitions and doors;
 - Removal of fixed furniture and fittings, such as built-in cabinets, counters and sanitaryware;
 - Removal of parts of the rear façade to accommodate the proposed extension to the rear of 5-15 Queen Victoria Street;
 - Removal of a number of staircases (the proposal also includes the retention of staircases with heritage value)
 - Removal of a number of windows and doorways on the external rear façade;
 - New partitions and doorways to create the proposed apart-hotel units; and
 - The creation of new internal staircases.
- 2.6 The application is supported with a full schedule of works, which details the precise works to all floors of all listed buildings. Furthermore, various repair and refurbishment works are proposed, as supported by detailed plans and information submitted with the application.
- 2.7 During the course of the application more information has also been submitted by the applicant to address various issues which have arisen through consultation responses and feedback on the proposals. This has included matters in relation to land use, transport, ecology, sustainability and energy, environmental protection and daylight and sunlight matters. None of the changes or further information has been of a nature or extent which was considered to warrant formal re-consultation on the applications.

Interaction with separate proposals at 1-15 Queen Victoria Street & 147-148 Friar Street and the neighbouring site 138-141, 142-143 & 144 Friar Street

- 2.8 The application has been presented by the applicant as “Queen Victoria Street Phase 1+” or “QVS1+” (despite this not being a phased application). Further to the land ownership position outlined at paragraph 1.8 above, a separate proposal at 1-15 Queen Victoria Street & 147-148 Friar Street (Refs 210223 & 210224) was resolved to be granted by the Planning Applications Committee on 23/06/2021 (see relevant history below). The S106 Legal Agreement associated with the planning application is yet to be completed, so this is currently undetermined, pending the

completion or otherwise of the S106 Legal Agreement. This is referenced by the applicant as “Queen Victoria Street Phase 1” or “QVS1”. As detailed at paragraph 3.1 below, whilst the applicant has indicated that this application will be withdrawn should the application subject of this report be granted permission, there is no guarantee this would occur. Whilst a material consideration in the determination of the current application, the current application needs to be judged on its own merits irrespective of a broadly similar proposal on a smaller site envelope already having your Committee’s Resolution to be granted.

- 2.9 At the same time as the current application a proposal has been submitted for the neighbouring 138-141, 142-143 & 144 Friar Street site. This is under separate consideration by the local planning authority (Ref 221235 - see relevant history below). Mindful of the land ownership position specified at paragraph 1.8 above, that application has been presented by the applicant as “Queen Victoria Street Phase 2” or “QVS2” (despite none of the application site actually being on Queen Victoria Street and this not being a phased application). The interaction between the sites is detailed below in Figure 5.

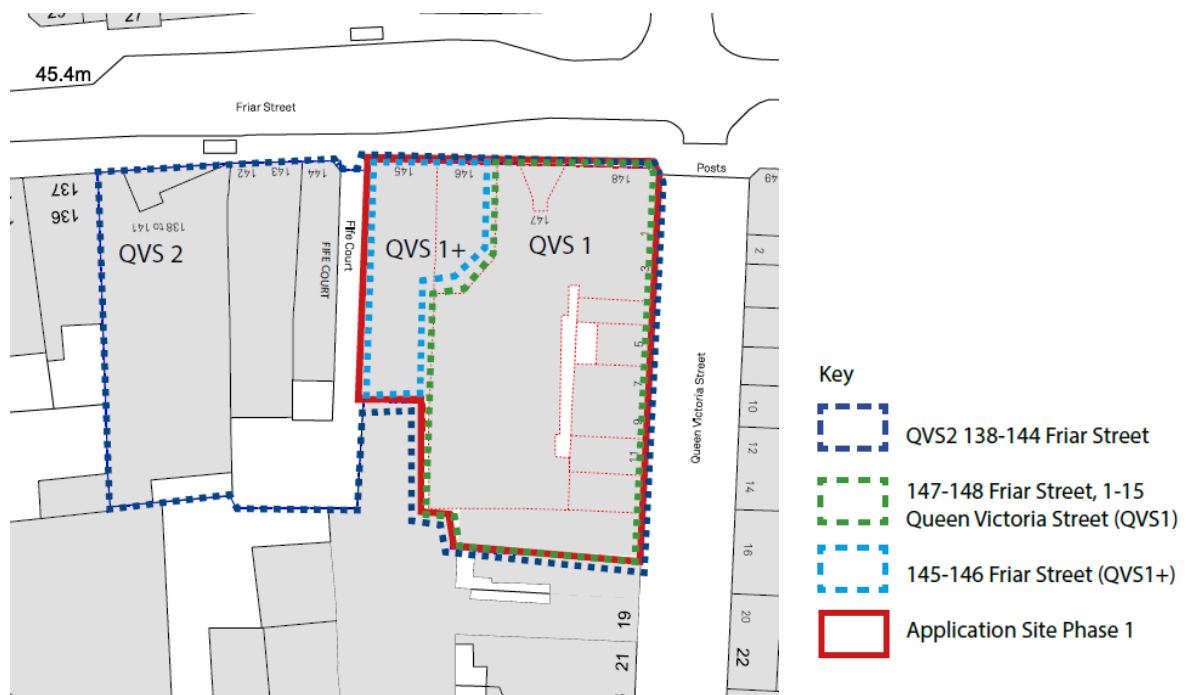


Figure 5 - interaction between QVS1, QVS2 and the application site QVS1+

- 2.10 The proposals subject to this application have been submitted separately, but given the same parent company owns the two sites, linkages have been suggested in the submission. For example, paragraph 4.2 of the supporting Planning Statement specifies that *“This application is for QVS1 and although separate, is linked to the application QVS2. Phase 1 will deliver the market square (Officer note: Public courtyard), retail and apart-hotel. This comprehensive redevelopment will provide many jobs, investment, attract visitors and help to act as a catalyst for the continued regeneration of Reading Town Centre”*.
- 2.11 The applicant (at Section 1.1 of the Design and Access Statement) also advises that *“The redevelopment of 1-15 Queen Victoria Street, 145-148 Friar Street (QVS1), and 144 Friar Street (QVS2) are to be as one development in two phases. The primary focuses are on the repair, restoration, and regeneration of the listed buildings as it is the essential catalyst for the redevelopment of the site, and*

fundamentally be part of the town centre. To facilitate the redevelopment and vitality, the site needs to be viable. Therefore, an underpinning use to create further viability is required. This will ultimately lead to both schemes working together. The apart-hotel will fund the development of the market square. Once operational, the market square will draw visitors and make full use of the apart-hotel/ hotel.

- 2.12 However, officers are minded to note that the applications have been submitted as entirely separate applications. Officers consider that they must therefore be considered on their own individual merits, with it being entirely possible that only one of the schemes may be implemented (if permitted). Alternatively, both could be implemented, but may come forward at different times. Furthermore, land ownership could also change at any point in future too. The applicant has not specified that the separate QVS2 proposal is unequivocally required to facilitate QVS1 or this proposal QVS1+; or put another way, the separate QVS2 proposal has not been presented as a form of enabling development. The applicant does however specify (at section 3.3 of the Design and Access Statement submitted as part of application 221235) that the neighbouring proposal “*integrates with the Phase 1 and allows the expansion of the market square (Phase 1+), thus utilising the benefits of the said square and further underpinning the deliverability of the Phase 1 development*”.
- 2.13 Section 3.10 of the Design and Access Statement advises that the proposed neighbouring hotel will be run by the same operator as the apart-hotel. The Planning Statement submitted with separate application 221235 advises that the future occupier is the Jury’s Inn hotel chain. As such, it is assumed that the apart-hotel operator will be Jury’s Inn (or the apart-hotel component part of Jury’s Inn). Officers advise that whilst the submission, when cross-referenced with application 221235, has identified an intended future occupier, this is not material in the consideration of the planning application, with the application assessed on the basis of the proposed apart-hotel use only.
- 2.14 In terms of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), the applicant duly completed a CIL liability form as part of the submission of this application, with floorplans and revised documentation to evidence the figures subsequently submitted on 22/11/2022. The introduction of 4,203sqm of Class C1 accommodation on its own would generate a CIL payment of £637,927.92 (4,083 x CIL rate of £156.24 per square metre, as per 2022 indexation), but this is likely to be significantly reduced on the basis of the existing floorspace being in use, with this being clarified and confirmed at the time of any subsequent decision being issued. Given the variety of uses and partial demolition works involved the CIL calculation will be a complex equation.
- 2.15 Plans and documents submitted (only the latest versions of documents are referenced; those superseded during the application are not):

Plans:

P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1204 Rev P01 - Location Plan

P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1200 Rev P01 - Existing Site Plan

P22018-FCH-BA-B1-DR-A-1105 Rev P01 - Existing Basement Floor Plan

P22018-FCH-BA-00-DR-A-1100 Rev P01 - Existing Ground Floor Plan

P22018-FCH-BA-01-DR-A-1101 Rev P01 - Existing First Floor Plan

P22018-FCH-BA-02-DR-A-1102 Rev P01 - Existing Second Floor
P22018-FCH-BA-03-DR-A-1103 Rev P01 - Existing Third Floor
P22018-FCH-BA-03-DR-A-1104 Rev P01 - Existing Roof Plan

P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1140 Rev P01 - Existing Elevation 01
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1141 Rev P01 - Existing Elevation 02
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1142 Rev P01 - Existing Elevation 03

P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1151 Rev P01 - Existing Section 02
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1152 Rev P01 - Existing Section 03
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1153 Rev P01 - Existing Section 04
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1154 Rev P01 - Existing Section 05
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1155 Rev P01 - Existing Section 06
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1156 Rev P01 - Existing Section 07

P22018-FCH-BA-B1-DR-A-1175 Rev P01 - Existing Basement Floor - Buildings Heritage Significance
P22018-FCH-BA-00-DR-A-1170 Rev P01 - Existing Ground Floor Plan - Buildings Heritage Significance
P22018-FCH-BA-01-DR-A-1171 Rev P01 - Existing First Floor Plan - Buildings Heritage Significance
P22018-FCH-BA-02-DR-A-1172 Rev P01 - Existing Second Floor Plan - Buildings Heritage Significance
P22018-FCH-BA-03-DR-A-1173 Rev P01 - Existing Third Floor Plan - Buildings Heritage Significance
P22018-FCH-BA-03-DR-A-1174 Rev P01 - Existing Roof Plan - Buildings Heritage Significance

P22018-FCH-XX-B1-DR-A-1355 Rev P01 - Demolition - Basement Floor Plan
P22018-FCH-BA-00-DR-A-1350 Rev P01 - Demolition - Ground Floor Plan
P22018-FCH-BA-01-DR-A-1351 Rev P01 - Demolition - First Floor
P22018-FCH-BA-02-DR-A-1352 Rev P01 - Demolition - Second Floor
P22018-FCH-BA-03-DR-A-1353 Rev P01 - Demolition - Third Floor Plan

P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1450 Rev P01 - Demolition Elevation 01
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1451 Rev P01 - Demolition Elevation 02
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1452 Rev P01 - Demolition Elevation 03

P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1202 Rev P01 - Proposed Site Plan - Roof

P22018-FCH-BA-B1-DR-A-1306 Rev P01 - Proposed Basement Floor Plan
P22018-FCH-BA-RF-DR-A-1305 Rev P01 - Proposed Lower Roof Plan
P22018-FCH-BA-RF-DR-A-1307 Rev P01 - Proposed Upper Roof Plan

P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1400 Rev P01 - Proposed Elevation 01
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1401 Rev P01 - Proposed Elevation 02
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1402 Rev P01 - Proposed Elevation 03

P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1403 Rev P01 - Proposed Elevation of QVS 01 & QVS 02
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1410 Rev P01 - Proposed Queen Victoria Street Shop Front Design
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1411 Rev P01 - Replacement Window Detail

P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1500 Rev P01 - Proposed Section 01
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1501 Rev P01 - Proposed Section 02

P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1502 Rev P01 - Proposed Section 03
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1505 Rev P01 - Proposed Section 06
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1506 Rev P01 - Proposed Section 07
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1507 Rev P01 - Proposed Section 08
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1508 Rev P01 - Proposed Section 09
As all received on 26/08/2022

P22018-FCH-BA-01-DR-A-1301 Rev P02 - Proposed First Floor Plan
P22018-FCH-BA-02-DR-A-1302 Rev P02 - Proposed Second Floor Plan
P22018-FCH-BA-03-DR-A-1303 Rev P02 - Proposed Third Floor Plan
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1412 Rev P01 - Proposed courtyard elevation
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1413 Rev P01 - Proposed Rear Elevations 01 - 02
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1503 Rev P02 - Proposed Section 04
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1504 Rev P02 - Proposed Section 05
As received 12/10/2022

P22018-FCH-BA-00-DR-A-1300 Rev P02 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan
As received 02/11/2022

P22018-FCH-BA-XX-DR-A-1203 Rev P02 - Proposed Site Plan - Ground
As received 14/11/2022

[CIL Plans]

P22018-FCH-BA-XX-SK-A-0007 Rev P01 - Existing Areas - Basement Floor Plan
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-SK-A-0007 Rev P01 - Existing Areas - Ground Floor Plan
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-SK-A-0007 Rev P01 - Existing Areas - First Floor Plan
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-SK-A-0007 Rev P01 - Existing Areas - Second Floor Plan
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-SK-A-0007 Rev P01 - Existing Areas - Third Floor Plan
As received 22/11/2022

P22018-FCH-BA-04-DR-A-1304 Rev P02 - Proposed Fourth Floor Plan
As received 24/11/2022

[CIL Plans]

P22018-FCH-BA-XX-SK-A-0006 Rev P02 - Proposed Areas - Basement Floor Plan
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-SK-A-0006 Rev P03 - Proposed Areas - Ground Floor Plan
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-SK-A-0006 Rev P02 - Proposed Areas - First Floor Plan
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-SK-A-0006 Rev P02 - Proposed Areas - Second Floor Plan
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-SK-A-0006 Rev P02 - Proposed Areas - Third Floor Plan
P22018-FCH-BA-XX-SK-A-0006 Rev P02 - Proposed Areas - Fourth Floor Plan
As received 25/11/2022

Documents and other supporting information:

Air Quality Assessment by Gem Air Quality Ltd, Ref AQ1914, dated May 2022
Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment by Oxford Archaeology, Ref 8150 v.2, dated 01/06/2022
Outline Construction Method Plan by Mode Transport Planning Ref 325429 V2.4 dated 11/08/2022
Daylight and Sunlight Report by Delva Patman Redler Ref 22262 Version 1.1 dated 05/08/2022
Design and Access Statement by Falconer Chester Hall Ref P22018-FCH-BA-XX-RG-A-0001 Rev P01 dated August 2022
Drainage Survey Report by C J Uden & Co. Ref 220631/db dated 20/07/2022, including 2 x partly hand drawn/annotated drainage plans

Delivery and Servicing Plan by Mode Transport Planning Ref 325429 V2.3 dated August 2022

Fire Assessment Initial Report by Horner Salus Ltd Version 1.1 dated 25/05/2022

Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (including SUDS) BY JM Enviro Ltd Ref JME263.145-148FriarStreet.FRA_QVS1, dated 11/08/2022

JME-P263 002 Proposed Drainage Strategy Layout dated 16/07/2022

Heads of Terms by Town Planning Bureau Ref URB-482e-FN23, dated 11/08/2022

1-15 Queen Victoria Street & 145-148 Friar Street, Reading Draft Management Plan

Heritage Statement by Revive & Tailor dated August 2022

Planning Statement by Town Planning Bureau Ref URB-482e-ST3, dated 11/08/2022

Community Involvement by Town Planning Bureau Ref URB-482b-SC2, dated 12/08/2022

Framework Travel Plan by Mode Transport Planning Ref 325429 V2.1 dated 29 July 2022

Transport Statement by Mode Transport Planning Ref 325429 V2.2 dated 8 August 2022

As all received on 26/08/2022

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Including a Protected Species Appraisal & BREEAM Assessment by Skilled Ecology Consultancy Ltd dated 28/10/2022

Biodiversity Matrix 3.1 auditing and accounting for biodiversity calculation tool (excel document)

As submitted 30/10/2022

Low Zero Carbon (LZC) Study by Troup Bywaters + Anders Ref WA0305-TBA-Q1-XX-RP-N-00003 Revision P02 - dated 14th November 2022

Energy and BREEAM Statement by Troup Bywaters + Anders Ref WA0305-TBA-Q1-XX-RP-N-00002 Revision P04 - dated 14th November 2022

MEP Strategies Report by Troup Bywaters + Anders Ref WA0305-TBA-Q1-XX-RP-N-00001 Revision P04 - dated 14th November 2022

Comments on Planning Submission by Troup Bywaters + Anders

1-15 Queen Victoria Street 145-148 Friar Street Reading - Sustainability Statement /

Procurement Plan by TE Station Rd Limited

SuDSPlanter specification details

Mat 06 - Material Efficiency - BREEAM RFO 2014 - Design Stage

Email from Troup Bywaters + Anders 'LL0100 - QVS - BREEAM - BREEAM AP Appointment' dated 14/11/2022

Stage 1 Design Letter from The Environmental Protection Group Limited dated 11/08/2022

As received 16/11/2022

Access and Servicing - Inclusive Design statement by FCH

Access based email from Town Planning Bureau 'Re: 1-15 Queen Victoria Street 145-148 Friar Street, Reading (221232 / 221233)'

Email from Gem Air Quality Ltd 'RE: QVS 2', dated 11/11/22, as received 21/11/22

Air quality based email from Town Planning Bureau 'Re: 138-144 Friar St (221235)'

Noise Impact Assessment Report by KP Acoustics Ref 21827.NIA.01 Rev D dated 16/11/2022

Email from Town Planning Bureau 'Re: 1-15 Queen Victoria Street 145-148 Friar Street Reading (221232/221233) - uses of ground floor units'

As received 21/11/2022

Letter from Delva Patman Redler Ref SG/sg/22262 dated 21/11/22

Email from Gem Air Quality Ltd 'Re: 1-15 Queen Victoria Street 145-148 Friar Street Reading (221232/221233) - air quality', dated 22/11/22

As received 22/11/2022

Queen Victoria Street Plant Suggestions (& three separately submitted visualisations)

As received 24/11/2022

CIL by Town Planning Bureau Ref URB-482e-CIL dated 25/11/2022

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - Form 1: CIL Additional Information

As received 25/11/2022

Specific documents solely relevant for 221233/LBC only:

Letter from Capital Stone Renovation Ltd Re Method Statement for the repairs or rebuilding of the high level gables

Outline Schedule of Works and Specification to Roof Repairs by Wonnacott Partnership Chartered Surveyors

Schedule of photographs of windows

SR-QVS-001 Rev 01 - Existing Long Elevation Sheet 1/9

SR-QVS-002 Rev 01 - Existing Elevation Sheet 2/9

SR-QVS-003 Rev 01 - Existing Elevation Sheet 3/9

SR-QVS-004 Rev 01 - Existing Elevation Sheet 4/9

SR-QVS-005 Rev 00 - Existing Elevation Gable Type 01

SR-QVS-006 Rev 00 - Existing Elevation Gable Type 02

SR-QVS-007 Rev 00 - Existing Elevation Gable Type 03

SR-QVS-008 Rev 00 - Existing Elevation Gable Type 04

SR-QVS-009 Rev 00 - Existing Elevation Gable Type 05

As all received on 26/08/2022

Schedule of Works by Falconer Chester Hall Ref P22018-FCH-BA-XX-RG-A-0002 P01 dated September 2022

As received 12/10/2022

3. PLANNING HISTORY

Application site

3.1 1-15 Queen Victoria Street and 147-148 Friar Street

210223FUL & 210224LBC - Part demolition of rear of site. Repair and refurbishment of listed building. Change of use of upper floors from office (Use Class E(g)) to apart hotel (Use Class C1). Erection of a three - storey rear extension with mansard. Erection of a part-single, part-two storey rear addition (Use Class E(a) or (b)). Alterations to ground floor principle façade. Creation of public square, and associated works. Full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent resolved to be granted by the Planning Applications Committee on 23/06/2021. The S106 Legal Agreement associated with the planning application is yet to be completed, so both applications are currently undetermined, pending the completion or otherwise of the S106 Legal Agreement.

There have been significant delays in the legal agreement being finalised. Once the application subject to this report was submitted, the applicant has paused progressing the above S106. The applicant has confirmed that if planning permission is forthcoming with the application subject to this report then applications 210223/210224 will be withdrawn. However, this is not guaranteed and

it is possible that the applicant subsequently decides to complete the S106 and implement 210223/210224.

3.2 1-3 Queen Victoria Street

212010 - 3no. fascia signs. 1no. to Queen Victoria Street, 1no. to Friar Street and 1no. above corner entrance. 2no. projecting signs. 1no. to Queen Victoria Street and 1no. to Friar Street. New graphics to 4no. existing awnings. Granted advertisement consent 14/07/2022.

212051 - 3no. fascia signs - 1no. to Queen Victoria Street, 1no. to Friar Street and 1no. to corner entrance. 2no. projecting signs - 1no. to Queen Victoria Street and 1no. to Friar Street. New graphics to 4no. existing awnings. Granted listed building consent 14/07/2022.

3.3 5 Queen Victoria Street

891119 - Change of use of ground floor from retail shop (A1) to employment agency (A2). Refused 02/11/1989.

900119 - Change of use of ground floor retail area to A2 (employment agency) use. Refused 19/07/1990.

900161 - Fascia sign and hanging sign. Refused 12/11/1990.

900513 - Illuminated fascia sign and illuminated projecting sign. Refused 03/10/1990.

901065 - Change of use of first and second floor to A2 (employment agency). Approved 23/08/1990.

910246 - Fascia and projecting sign. Granted 12/07/1991.

910632 - Fascia sign. Granted 11/09/1991.

930720 - Change of use from financial and professional services (A2) to offices(B1). Granted 16/09/1993.

930721 - Change of use from financial and professional services (A2) to offices (B1). Granted 10/03/1994.

100012 & 100013 - Alterations to shop front and signage above including new front entrance door. Granted 09/04/2010.

100023 - Shop front signage in and above glazed shop window including lighting. Granted 05/05/2010. Appeal against conditions imposed (Ref APP/E0345/H/10/2129764) allowed 29/12/2010.

3.4 7 Queen Victoria Street

940003 - Removal of solid timber door and replacement with glazed or part glazed timber door to entrance to upper parts of No 7. Granted 23/11/1994.

940142 - Change of use from estate agents to bakery/tea rooms. Granted 17/11/1994.

991466 - Externally illuminated aluminum fascia signage, 1 no. externally illuminated hanging sign and two no. awnings with logos. Granted 07/10/1999.

991515 - New shopfront with wider door and ramped disabled access. New shop fit out including removal of wall on the ground floor, plus 3 no. air condenser units located to the rear side of the building. Granted 07/10/1999.

991544 - New Shopfront. Granted 07/10/1999.

992190 - To open up the existing link doorway and install new steel beams across the new opening. Granted 20/05/1999.

020616 - (Amended description) Change of use from class A3 (tea shop, bakery) to class A2 (job shop.) Granted 17/09/2002.

3.5 9 Queen Victoria Street

None from the past three decades.

3.6 11 Queen Victoria Street

910333 & 910379 - Agents 'To Let' board. Refused 06/03/1991.

960285 - Installation of an externally illuminated fascia to each shop front and one externally illuminated projecting sign only. 10/12/1996.

960303 - Conversion to form a single unit at ground floor level by removal of part of internal wall. Approved 14/11/1996.

960321 - Installation of an externally illuminated fascia to each shop front and one externally illuminated projecting sign only. Granted 10/12/1996.

960869 - Change of use of ground floor and basement to A2 use forming extension to existing premises at 13 Queen Victoria Street. Approved 28/08/1996.

970073 & 970074 - Removal and replacement of ground floor shop fronts. Granted 02/04/1997.

970586 - Removal of part of internal wall at basement level. Granted 21/02/1997.

990399 - Internal alterations including the formation of a new staircase between ground and first floor. Granted 29/01/2001.

090076 - Replace existing signage with new Internal Installation of new partition walls. Granted 14/12/2009.

091898 - 2 fascia signs and 1 projecting sign. Granted 11/12/2009.

3.7 13-15 Queen Victoria Street

890153 & 891227 - Non illuminated wooden hanging projecting sign. Granted 24/04/1990.

890185 - Externally illuminated wooden painted fascia sign. Granted 24/04/1990.

890382 - Change of use from Class A1 (retail-hairdressers) to Class A2 (employment bureau). Granted 14/06/1989.

891226 - Externally illuminated wooden painted fascia sign. Granted 24/04/1990.

920616 - Illuminated light box. Granted 01/12/1992.

920668 - Illuminated light box to be erected above the front door. Refused 23/12/1992.

930167 - Replacement of externally illuminated fascia panel sign and one off externally illuminated projecting swing sign. Refused 18/04/1994.

930710 - Erection of new shop sign and projecting shop sign. Granted 23/06/1994.

930860 - Shop fascia sign and externally illuminated projecting sign. Granted 23/06/1994.

930911 - Shop sign (fascia). Refused 28/07/1993.

940735 - Installation of an externally illuminated fascia panel sign and an externally illuminated projecting swing sign. Refused 18/04/1994.

940876 & 940877 - Externally illuminated fascia sign and externally illuminated projecting swing sign. Granted 11/08/1994.

980478 - Double sided externally illuminated projecting signs. Granted 08/06/1998.

020764 - New projecting sign, new window graphics x2, replacement door and graphic. Granted 30/08/2002.

021419 - Installation of externally illuminated hanging projecting sign, first floor window graphics, new entrance door and graphics. Granted 16/09/2002.

111041 - Replacement of main entrance door and interior demolition to recent plasterboard walls. Granted 17/05/2011.

3.8 145 Friar Street

091660 - Change of use of 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors from B1 Office to D1 Educational Training Institute. Granted 29/09/2009.

171720 - Change of use of the first, second and third floors of the property from an Educational Training Institute (Class D1) to office use (Class B1a). Granted 08/01/2018.

3.9 146 Friar Street

960725 - Alterations to existing shop front to include an additional single door. Granted 10/02/1997.

970888 - Fascia pod sign internally-illuminated; double sided projecting sign internally illuminated. Granted 23/07/1997.

130228 - Change of use of 1st and 2nd floors from ancillary A1 use to C3. Certificate of lawfulness refused 23/04/2013.

140031 - Change of use from opticians to Class A1 (shops) on the ground floor to include new shop front. Granted 11/03/2014.

150726 - Proposed change of use of first and second floors from Consulting Rooms to Offices (B1). Granted 02/07/2015.

170487 - Change of use of first and second floor from B1(a) Office to C3 residential, together with a third floor and roof level extension to the building and alterations to fenestration to form 2 x two bedroom flats and 1 x 4 bedroom flat. Refused 19/10/2018.

170654 - Change of use of first and second floor from B1a Office to C3 residential to provide two self-contained flats, together with additional first floor window to rear elevation. Granted 19/07/2017.

170774 - Change of use of first and second floor from B1(a) Office to C3 residential together with a third floor extension to the building and alterations to fenestration to provide 3 x self-contained one bedroom flats. Refused 20/12/2018.

172172 - Change of use of first and second floor from B1a Office to a one-bedroom flat (C3). Granted 16/02/2018.

3.10 147 Friar Street

880153 & 880154 - Conversion of first floor into restaurant with 120 seats, formation of staircase and disabled WC to ground floor. Approved 23/11/1988.

890700 & 891325 - New shopfront to Friar Street and Queen Victoria Street, including access for the disabled. Refused 10/10/1989.

910045 & 910046 - Alterations to existing Friar Street shopfront and provision for disabled access. Granted 02/07/1991.

910443 - New signage to Friar Street & Queen Victoria Street shopfront. Granted 02/07/1991.

910799 - New signage panels and replacement of existing 2 No projection signs. Granted 02/07/1991.

920049 - Installation of illuminated, projecting sign. Granted 11/04/1992.

920158 - Illuminated projecting panel sign. Granted 13/03/1992.

940599 & 940799 - Alterations to existing shopfront to Friar St & Queen Victoria St elevations. Granted 23/09/1994.

991811 & 991812 - Change of colour to ground floor fascia panel and face of signage. Granted 13/07/1999.

991937 & 992115 - Erection of replacement halo illuminated fascia signs, internally illuminated logo signs and externally illuminated hanging sign. Granted 07/02/2000.

021066 - External signage alteration. Granted 18/10/2002.

121473 - Remove existing timber fascia panel and replace with glass, supply and fit new non illuminated signage, externally illuminated fascia sign to Friar Street, new retractable awnings and re-fit as coffee shop. Granted 19/12/2012.

3.11 148 Friar Street

130576 - Change of use of the public highway to a street café area. Approved 19/09/2013.

Other relevant nearby sites

3.12 17-27 Queen Victoria Street

170650 & 170651 - Proposed change of use of first, second and third floor from office to residential use comprising 15 x 1 bed flats and 4 x 2 bed flats and associated internal alterations. Withdrawn.

181296 & 181297 - Proposed change of use of first, second and third floor from office use (B1a) to serviced apartment use (use class C1) comprising 15 x 1 bed units and 4 x 2 bed units with associated internal and external alterations - Granted following completion of S106 legal agreement 15/01/2019.

3.13 138-141, 142-143 & 144 Friar Street

221235 - Demolition of No's 138-141 & 142-143 Friar St, partial demolition of No. 144 Friar St and erection of ground, mezzanine and 1st to 6th floor (7 storey) hotel building with 163 bedspaces (Class C1), with ancillary ground floor lounge, bar and restaurant and associated works. Current application under consideration.

4. CONSULTATIONS

Internal / external consultees

a) RBC Transport

- 4.1 Transport officers consider that a car free development, as proposed, is acceptable given the town centre location. However, the scheme must adequately consider how deliveries including waste collections, commercial deliveries are made to the site.
- 4.2 A Delivery and Servicing plan has been submitted to ensure that delivery/servicing activity associated with the development can take place in a safe, efficient and sustainable manner. The applicant has approached RBC with regards to amending the existing loading restrictions to the single loading bay on Friar Street, located along the site frontage via a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). The amendment would allow for an extended dwell time and a daytime loading window in order to service the development. This process involves changes to the TRO which will require approval by the Traffic Management Sub Committee (TSUB) and will be subject to statutory consultation. Given TROs are under separate legislation to the Planning Act there is a possibility they may not be approved. Therefore, the applicant has provided details of the proposed delivery and servicing arrangements if amendments to the existing loading restrictions cannot be secured.
- 4.3 Deliveries and servicing arrangements associated with the existing uses takes place from Queen Victoria Street during the designated hours or from Friar Street / Station Road using the existing loading bays. Servicing and deliveries to the retail uses will take place as per existing arrangements and in accordance with the specified times from Queen Victoria Street. It is expected that there will be no change to the frequency of deliveries associated with the retail uses.
- 4.4 The apart-hotel is provided with a service entrance on the western boundary, accessed from Fife Court (off Friar Street). It is proposed that daily linen collection/delivery and food deliveries would take place with vehicles sizes not exceeding a 4.6 Tonne van, due to existing access constraints along Fife Court and with the aid of banksmen. Swept path analysis has satisfactorily shown a 4.6 Tonne van reversing along Fife Court and exiting in a forward gear.
- 4.5 The simultaneous application at 138-144 Friar Street proposes a hotel which is said to be operated by the same operator as the apart-hotel. It is stated that deliveries can be coordinated to ensure that deliveries for the apart-hotel do not coincide with deliveries associated with 138-144 Friar Street.
- 4.6 Fife Court is narrow and is only wide enough to accommodate single way traffic. It is stated that Fife Court will be retained as existing, and access will continue to be maintained for existing users to the units that front Broad Street. Swept path analysis has been undertaken which demonstrates that a car requiring access to the parking spaces are able to access / egress the area whilst a delivery to the

proposed site is taking place and therefore access for existing users will be maintained.

- 4.7 The Transport Statement asserts (in paragraph 4.2.2) that the apart-hotel will be accessed from Fife Court with an additional pedestrian access provided from Queen Victoria Street. To minimise conflict along Fife Court it is proposed that the main entrance doors to the apart-hotel will open inwards. Refuse collection will also continue to take place as per existing conditions for the retail units and therefore there will be no change to the demand for refuse collection vehicles visiting the retail units.
- 4.8 Refuse collection for the apart-hotel units will be undertaken by a private contractor. A level bin store is located on the ground floor of the building. Bins will be wheeled from the designated refuse store on Fife Court to Friar Street for collection. At no time should the bins be left out on Friar Street and obstruct the footway. Full details to be secured by condition.
- 4.9 Cycle parking within the site will be provided for the hotel element in accordance with the local standards of 1 space per 6 staff. There is expected to be a maximum of 20 staff on site at any one time and therefore, a total of 4 cycle parking spaces will be provided. There is space internally to provide 2x Sheffield stands (4 cycle spaces). This is illustrated in the revised ground floor plan and will therefore be secured via a compliance condition.
- 4.10 Given there would be significant transport implications constructing the proposed building in this prominent location, a bespoke Demolition and Construction Method Statement is submitted and approved before any works commence on-site. As well as demonstrating a commitment to ensuring the number of HGV movements are managed and controlled, the CMS must demonstrate that appropriate measures will be implemented to ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists around the construction site. Furthermore, there will also be a requirement to coordinate construction works with other developments in the vicinity of the site. The agreed measures included in the CMS would become a formal commitment and will be approved by the Local Highway and Planning Department via pre-commencement condition.
- 4.11 There are no transport objections to this application subject to the conditions relating to:
- Pre-commencement Demolition and Construction Method Statement
 - Compliance condition for cycle parking provision prior to first occupation
 - Refuse collection details prior to first occupation
 - Compliance condition for the delivery and servicing plan

b) RBC Conservation and Urban Design Officer (CUDO)

- 4.12 The LPA's CUDO has provided detailed comments outlining the background (including pre-application discussions undertaken) and the legislative and policy context (national and local, including case law) for proposals of this nature. In the interests of brevity, these are not detailed in full within this report. Further, the CUDO has then provided commentary on the significance of the existing buildings, before commenting on the proposals and the impact on the significance of the heritage assets.
- 4.13 In summary relating to significance, the proposals have been designed to provide a new viable use for the site and the listed buildings within it. The proposal would

continue to provide investment towards their repair and maintenance, sensitive to their significance. It is also considered that the scheme will result in enhancement in heritage and townscape terms by optimising use of the heritage assets within the town centre, as well as considerably improving their commercial frontages.

- 4.14 Moving back a step, the existing Queen Victoria Street terrace (including 148 Friar Street and 1-15 Queen Victoria Street) is a Grade II listed building of considerable architectural quality, primarily derived from the quality and form of its front elevation which includes patterned brickwork, terracotta, decorative gables, granite pilasters and original windows. While its significance has been affected by some poor quality shopfronts, the building remains a good example of an early 20th Century commercial premises and this bestows a degree of historic (illustrative and associative) interest.
- 4.15 The significance of the Grade II listed 147 Friar Street primarily relates to the architectural quality of the 1880s front elevation, particularly the double height colonnade shop-front and the 3no. segmental headed dormer windows that feature moulded coping between and 'modillion' cornices. As with the Queen Victoria Street terrace, the building is a good example of a late 19th Century commercial premises.
- 4.16 No. 146 Friar Street is unlisted and has been altered beyond recognition from its original architecture and has no architectural value. In townscape terms, whilst it follows the rhythm of the street frontage, its scale appears to be disproportionately smaller. The modern shopfront further detracts from the contribution to the setting of the listed buildings and wider the townscape of the area. The proposal to rebuild it to a more appropriate scale whilst adhering to the modesty in architectural detailing would ensure that the character and appearance of the listed buildings continues to be distinctive.
- 4.17 No 145 Friar Street has an early 20th Century front facade above the modern shop front on the ground floor. This has some architectural value which would be retained as part of the proposals. The rear of the building would be redeveloped and incorporated within the proposal to create a more comprehensive redevelopment of the site than application 210223/210224. The buildings at the rear end of the site are of no architectural or historic merit and do not have any direct relationship with the listed buildings. Their redevelopment would facilitate the delivery of this new quarter and would be considered as an enhancement to the wider area.
- 4.18 Overall, the site has high architectural value. Closely related to the development and enlargement of Reading during the Victorian period, it is considered to have historic and communal value. Additionally, the buildings have high group and townscape value, following a similar grain and urban form prevalent along Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street. The rhythm of the built form in particular, is of importance which appears congruent within the wider area.
- 4.19 With the above in mind the CUDO therefore comments that the proposal seeks to conserve and convert these significant heritage buildings, which are well-known historic landmarks in the centre of Reading. The project includes restoration and repairs to the original c.1900 four storey brick commercial building and its decorative terracotta façade. The proposed works will regenerate the interiors, which have become dilapidated and run down over the years.

- 4.20 The proposals have been modified/intensified in comparison with the 210223/210224 proposals, yet still propose to create a rear courtyard and shops behind the Queen Victoria Street façade. The proposals do change the rear western court interior façade, but it will be similar to the rear wall of the original Queen Victoria Street wing, opposite.



Figure 6 - Proposed Friar Street shopfronts

- 4.21 At 147 Friar Street, the internal layout has been amended, and the upper storeys at 145/6 have also been redesigned/redevelopment. As much of the original fabric as possible will be retained. Importantly, the cast-iron columns at No. 147 will be kept, alongside a more contemporary shopfront facing Friar Street (see figure 6 above). Any new shopfronts need to comply with Council's Shopfront SPD. It is shown that the new shop façades between 145 and 147 Friar Street will have stall risers and traditional style timber framed windows and doors. This will help create a uniformity and connect the urban design in a unified way. Further details (at 1:20 scale) will be secured via condition, in a similar manner to details already submitted for Queen Victoria Street, which align with those at the time of 210223/210224 which were strongly supported then and now (see below at figure 7).

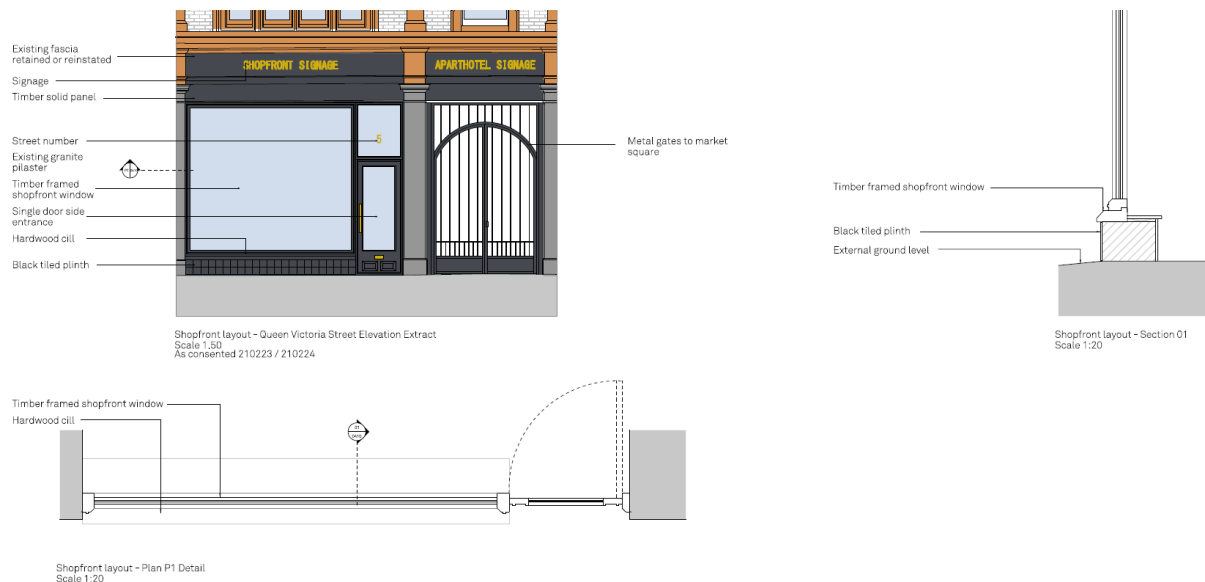


Figure 7 - Proposed Queen Victoria Street shopfront elevations

- 4.22 At 145 Friar Street, the existing c. 1930s façade will be incorporated into the new apart-hotel complex. At 146 Friar the existing building will be demolished but replaced with a new façade in red brick similar to the building being demolished. The upper storey windows will have timber framed windows, that are painted in

oil-based paints. The extent and nature of demolition works to the existing buildings were carefully considered and assessed during pre-application discussions and there are no objections at application stage. The overall design is supported in the way it regenerates the character and scale of Friar Street.



Figure 8 - External demolition work - aerial view and related photographs

- 4.23 Given the extent of works proposed (see Figure 8 for an overview), the existing building requires level 2 historic recording to be secured via condition, in accordance with Historic England guidelines, for the local Historic Environment Record (HER). The schedule of works document, whilst extensive, on its own is not enough, and needs modification to fit in with the guidelines. To conclude, the design and evolution of the scheme is supported and will regenerate this part of Friar Street in a positive way.
- 4.24 Returning to consider the impact of the proposed works on significance, the proposed development, in accordance with NPPF paragraph 202, is considered to have “*less than substantial harm*” to the significance on 1-15 Queen Victoria Street, and 145-148 Friar Street. The proposed scheme ‘freshens up’ the run-down buildings and allows the reuse of the historic buildings. The design allows for major conservation works to the terracotta and brick facades and upgrades the interiors of the host building. Also, there are no objections to the removal of the rear service buildings (of low-significance) and their replacement with a new rear courtyard and shops. The overall scheme combines old and new development. It has been carefully discussed with the local planning authority and wider stakeholders. Overall, there is general support for the proposal.
- 4.25 In conclusion, the design of the buildings has been carefully developed. The existing buildings have been significantly unoccupied at upper levels for some time. The works are considered to result in less than substantial harm to the assets and there are no objections to the proposed demolition works. Approval is recommended subject to conditions relating to:
- Pre-commencement level 2 photographic recording for the Historic Environment Record (HER)
 - Pre-commencement, barring demolition, proposed material details
 - The works to the Listed Buildings shall be carried out only in accordance with the approved plans or specifications and Schedule of Works by Falconer Chester Hall
 - Ground floor shopfront details at 1:20 section and layout for 145 to 147 Friar Street and inner courtyard areas (expectation to comply with RBC Shopfronts SPD).

c) **RBC Environmental Health - Environmental Protection (EP)**

- 4.26 The initial EP observations raised a series of queries in relation to noise impacts, servicing details and air quality (both increasing exposure and increasing emissions). The applicant provided further information on 21/11/2022, which officers further assessed. This reduced the areas of concern, facilitating a further response on 22/11/2022. Overall, the proposals are now considered acceptable from an Environmental Protection perspective, subject to a series of conditions.
- 4.27 Considering first the noise assessment submitted, following clarifications as to how courtyard noise has been predicted (based on a comparable separate project, given the existing courtyard does not exist to provide a current on-site context), it is accepted that the recommended standard for internal noise can be met, if the recommendations from the assessment are incorporated into the design. Hence, a compliance condition is suggested to ensure the proposed glazing and ventilation is installed as per the submitted noise assessment. In terms of the development generating noise, this is possible from the new mechanical plant shown at roof level, with a -5 dB plant noise level proposed by the applicant. Whilst this is below the usual standard, given the commercial and apart-hotel uses it is considered acceptable in this instance, although noise assessment(s) demonstrating that the finally proposed specifications of the plant will meet the limit will be secured via condition.
- 4.28 Turning to consider odour matters, cooking odours from commercial kitchens are often an area of potential concern, with these being possible given the uses proposed. Accordingly more details, in the form of an odour assessment, will be secured prior to the first occupation of any unit featuring hot-food cooking. There is also a separate significant problem with rodent activity in Reading town centre. A condition will therefore secure details to ensure bin stores are adequately pest-proof.
- 4.29 With regard to air quality considerations, following a series of discussions and further submissions, officers are content with the conclusion that in terms of increasing exposure the pollutant levels at the façade of the apart-hotel properties will be below the objective limit value and therefore no mitigation is required. In respect of the separate consideration as to whether the development itself causes an increase in emissions, following clarifications during the application, the applicant has sufficiently demonstrated that no specific mitigation measures are required.
- 4.30 In terms of contaminated land it is considered that an assessment is required. In this instance officers are content for details to be secured via condition, with no information having been submitted at application stage. The standard four stage contaminated land based condition (1. Site characterisation; 2. Remediation scheme; 3. Validation report; 4. Reporting of unexpected contamination) is recommended, with the first two parts being prior commencement conditions.
- 4.31 Finally in respect of the demolition and construction phases of development, dust, noise and pest control measures are recommended within the demolition and construction method statement condition suggested by Transport. Standalone standard compliance conditions are also recommended in terms of hours of working and no burning of materials on site, to protect nearby amenity.

d) RBC Planning Natural Environment

- 4.32 The site is within a low canopy cover ward and within the air quality management area, making the provision of greening an important consideration to comply with

policy requirements and aims of the RBC Tree Strategy. As existing, there are no trees or vegetation on site to be considered. As such, the originally proposed brown roofs would result in a net gain in greening and planting potential at the site when compared with existing.

- 4.33 In the initial observations provided the proposals were compared with the 210223/210224 proposals, with disappointment noted in respect of the removal of an external terrace, 2 planted screens and reduced levels of light to the courtyard planters (as per the proposed increase in massing at the rear of the site). Disappointment was also raised in relation to the lack of a green wall being included in the design, as has been included in other town centre schemes, and the lack of a standalone landscaping plan to demonstrate an in principle commitment to measures (e.g. number of planters), with further details then being able to be recommended to be secured via condition.
- 4.34 The applicant provided a response on 24/11/2022. Whilst a dedicated landscape plan was still not provided, a revised fourth floor plan and a supporting document with visualisations confirm the number of planters in the courtyard, the extent of 3 'brown'/'blue' roofs and a potential location of a green wall (on a south elevation) and indicatively show some of the species considered by the applicant. While not ideal, this is adequate to demonstrate the landscaping principles and enables officers to be content to secure full details via condition. For clarity, the demonstrated landscaping principles are:
- 5x large planters with small trees and 8x medium planters with small shrubs or flowering herbaceous vegetation provided within the courtyard and retained there in perpetuity (to avoid the potential for these to be 'lost' in future years.
 - Proposed indicative plant list acknowledged, but will be subject to further comment as part of the condition discussion when a detailed Landscape Plan is submitted.
 - The brown/blue roof systems do not necessarily include any vegetation by definition but can incorporate a green roof finish; details secured via condition.
 - A south facing green wall will be provided at a location accessible for maintenance.
- 4.35 Overall the landscaping principles, further to the submission of additional information, have now been demonstrated to the Natural Environment officer's satisfaction, with the proposals supported in terms of landscaping subject to a detailed pre-commencement (barring demolition) condition securing full details.

e) GS Ecology (Ecology consultants for RBC)

- 4.36 The initial response raised some queries which facilitated the submission of a revised Ecological report and Defra Biodiversity Metrix calculation during the application. The Council Ecologist, GS Ecology agrees with the conclusion of the report submitted that the site is currently of negligible ecological value due to its lack of natural habitats. GS Ecology therefore has no objections to this application on ecological grounds. However, given a small risk exists that birds may nest in the to-be-demolished buildings, an informative to advise the applicant of their responsibilities under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is recommended.
- 4.37 With regards to biodiversity net gain, the calculation submitted concludes that the development is likely to result in an increase of 100%. A number of enhancements have been recommended by the applicant, including areas of brown roof, six sparrow terraces, six swift bricks, six bat boxes and a log pile, which will all

enhance the development for wildlife over the existing situation. Precise details are recommended to be secured via condition.

f) RBC Access Officer

- 4.38 A series of initial comments raised a number of points of clarifications and queries. The applicant submitted further information on 21/11/22, confirming 5 accessible rooms (rooms 28 & 29 at first floor, room 28 at second floor, room 27 at third floor and room 7 at fourth floor level - see figure 9 below) would be provided within the apart-hotel. It was also confirmed and demonstrated in relation to the apart-hotel that step free external (via Fife Court) and internal (limited to the west side of the building owing to the listed buildings), access routes would be provided, together with two lifts, three separate stairs and accessible ground level toilets. Commentary indicating future compliance with Building Regulations Part M (e.g. doors and furniture) was also provided. It is recommended that a minimum of 5 accessible rooms are secured via condition.



Figure 9 - Floorplans indicating a variety of inclusive design features.

g) RBC Building Control

- 4.39 Advise that there are no comments from a Building Control perspective.

h) RBC Leisure

- 4.40 No response received.

i) RBC Lead Local Flood Authority

- 4.41 Confirm that the proposed drainage strategy reduces surface water run-off and full details can be secured via the standard two condition approach. Subject to this there are no objections to the SuDS strategy.

j) RBC Licensing

- 4.42 Replied advising there to be no observations or objections from Licensing.

k) RBC Waste Services

- 4.43 Advises that it appears that none of these properties would be eligible for the standard household waste collection service with RBC, as would all be commercial/apart-hotel units. The majority of small retail units on Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street have regular sack collections as there is no space for bins to be stored off of the highway, and this seems to be what works best for the area.
- 4.44 Whilst the application states bins would be collected from the loading bay on Friar Street, there is no mention about how often these will be emptied and what type of bins will be available. There would be concerns about there not being enough bins and also bins being presented on Friar Street and left there for long periods of time, attracting litter (and pests) and causing an obstruction to the pavement. Waste Services agree with transport comments that at no time should the bins be left out on Friar Street obstructing the footway, and that this matter should be secured by a planning condition.
- 4.45 It appears the proposals only have space for two bins in the refuse store off of Fife Court to service 104 rooms at the apart-hotel, and the food & beverage area for guests. The submission states use by a private refuse contractor, but it would be beneficial to have some assurances on how regularly these bins will be emptied, and the type of waste they would be collecting. With such a small number of bins, it would be expected that there would be a need for a daily refuse collection.
- 4.46 In light of these comments the applicant has confirmed on 21/11/2022 that bin collections for the apart-hotel would be via a private contractor and would welcome a condition to secure exact details of arrangements, as details such as the frequency would be set by the future operator.

l) Berkshire Archaeology

- 4.47 Agree with the recommendation of the Desk Based Assessment submitted that a scheme of archaeological works should be secured via condition as there is potential for remains to be present at the site. The condition would be pre-commencement, barring any demolition to ground level.

m) Historic England (in respect of solely 221233/LBC)

- 4.48 Replied advising they are not offering advice in this case. Historic England also specify that this should not be interpreted as comment on the merits of the application. Historic England suggest that the views of RBC's specialist conservation and archaeological advisers are sought.

n) Reading's Economy & Destination Agency (REDA) (formerly Reading UKCIC)

- 4.49 REDA strongly support the proposals and have provided a single response relating to this application and the separate neighbouring site application (221235 - see relevant history above). Comments which are specifically relevant to this proposal are summarised as follows:
- Aparthotels are tried and tested in Reading. Although it may put some short term pressure on other operators, but makes sense in a strong commercial centre with a university.
 - Public courtyard will help retain the small business / independent feel at this point in the town centre, increase footfall and reduce security issues for the development and its surroundings.

- The development removes the worst of the old architecture while enhancing the best parts.
 - Strategically important site, alongside the main pedestrian route from the Station to Broad Street, at a town centre crossroads well serviced by buses and the station, and acting as a further catalyst to the future wholesale upgrade of Friar Street.
- 4.50 Overall (i.e. considering this application and that at the neighbouring site as one) REDA consider the total mixed use redevelopment proposal on the corner of Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street represents a higher quality, appropriate and more comprehensive approach in-keeping with REDA's aspirations for Reading Town Centre and ultimately wholesale redevelopment further along Friar Street. More specific factors referenced include complementing the Station Hill development and driving down anti-social behaviour.
- 4.51 REDA also seek for a S106 Legal Agreement to secure a construction stage and end-user stage Employment and Skills Plan (as per the SPD) and hopes the LPA will seek a high standard of green construction, consistent with REDA's green Business Improvement District initiative and additional contributions to the public realm and street art in the surroundings.
- o) Crime Prevention Design Advisor at Thames Valley Police (CPDA)**
- 4.52 The CPDA has responded to this consultation, advising that it is considered that the 210223 comments are extant in terms of formal surveillance and access controls. Hence, in relation to the design and layout, community safety and crime prevention, the CPDA supports the proposed development with the inclusion of planning conditions relating to formal surveillance (a CCTV operational requirements study) and access control to the courtyard and apart-hotel.
- p) CCTV Officer at Thames Valley Police**
- 4.53 Advises that it is not considered that the proposed development would impact on the functioning of the existing CCTV system in the town. It is also advised that it would be very much welcomed for the future CCTV proposals for the proposed courtyard to be connected to the existing Thames Valley Police system.
- q) Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue**
- 4.54 Comment that there is no duty placed upon the Fire Authority to make any comment relative to the application. However, the application plans have been briefly examined and the applicant should be reminded that access for fire-fighting, particularly vehicular access, must comply with Part B5 of the Building Regulations. Any structural fire precautions and all means of escape provision will have to satisfy Building Regulation requirement too.
- r) Thames Water**
- 4.55 In relation to waste, given the site is within 15m of a strategic sewer, Thames Water request a condition for a piling method statement with details to be approved prior to any piling taking place, so as to protect the local underground sewerage utility infrastructure. Informatives are also recommended in relation to groundwater risk management permits and working near Thames Water pipes.
- 4.56 In terms of surface water drainage, Thames Water advises that providing that their sequential approach to the disposal of surface water is followed there would be no

objection. With regard to the waste water network and sewage treatment works infrastructure capacity, there are no objections based on the information provided. Turning to water comments, no objections are raised and various matters will be included as informatives.

s) Southern Gas Networks (SGN)

4.57 No response has been received.

t) SSE Power Distribution

4.58 No response has been received.

u) Hoare Lea

4.59 Hoare Lea undertook an independent review of the sustainability and energy components of the application on behalf of the local planning authority. The initial review raised a series of concerns in relation to the level and nature of information submitted, which in overall terms meant the submission had not demonstrated compliance with the relevant RBC policies. Accordingly, the applicant submitted further information on 16/11/2022, which has been subject to further independent review by Hoare Lea on behalf of the local planning authority.

4.60 The applicant summarises its sustainability and energy strategies as follows:

- The scheme is targeting a BREEAM Excellent rating and includes:
 - High performing fabric
 - High performance VRF (Variable Refrigerant Flow) heat pumps for heating and cooling
 - Air source heat pumps for domestic hot water with gas top up
 - MVHR (a Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery system) for ventilation
 - LED lighting throughout with presence / absence detection and daylight dimming
 - 130m² of roof-mounted photovoltaics (PV)

4.61 Hoare Lea's follow up review, received on 24/11/2022, in summary advised that there were still some outstanding matters to demonstrate compliance with RBC sustainability and energy policies. This has been fed into the applicant for further consideration and submission, which owing to the timings involved means that their response will come after the completion of this report. Matters are however being progressed with view to these matters being able to be reported in full within an update report prior to the committee meeting. At the time of writing officers are confident that matters can be suitably progressed and hopefully resolved. However, at the present time the officer recommendation and conclusions are duly caveated with this in mind, although to reaffirm, officers anticipate that these matters can be resolved to their satisfaction.

v) Building Research Establishment (BRE)

4.62 BRE undertook an independent review of the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing components of the application on behalf of the local planning authority (combined review with neighbouring application 221235, given the report submitted was combined too).

- 4.63 BRE's review confirmed that the development would have a negligible impact in daylight and sunlight terms on nearby No's 32 and 20-22 Friar Street, as assessed by the applicant. BRE also identified a number of other buildings to the north of the site which could/should have been assessed, but based on the buildings that were tested these would be expected to be similar and meet the BRE guidelines.
- 4.64 To the east of the site BRE identified some residential properties on the eastern side of Queen Victoria Street which had not been tested by the applicant, but concluded that these would be some distance from the tallest elements of the proposals and moreover, the existing buildings on the west side of Queen Victoria Street may block views too.
- 4.65 To the south and west of the site, BRE considered that the impacts on anticipated residential uses at 46 Broad St and 8-9 Union St could be checked. *Officer comment: Officers consider this is applicable to the 221235 proposals, but not the proposals subject to this report, given the distances involved and the limited (comparatively) limited changes in height proposed at the application site.*
- 4.66 In terms of cumulative impacts, whilst the submission by the applicant did not assess the impact of either the under construction Station Hill or the current application at 35-39 Friar St (Ref 220933), BRE considered the proposed development was unlikely to cause a significant loss of light to these sites.
- 4.67 BRE commented that the applicant has not assessed the daylight and sunlight provision to the proposed development. More specifically, an apart-hotel could be used for longer term occupation than a standard hotel and therefore daylight and sunlight provision may be more relevant (than a hotel) if the units were to be used more like dwellings.
- 4.68 BRE also confirmed that sunlight to the proposed open space has not been assessed by the applicant, such as the market square courtyard proposed at the site. BRE comment that their guidance suggests that sunlight provision guidance should be applied for all open spaces where it is required, including gardens and amenity spaces but also *"sitting out areas such as those between non-domestic buildings and in public squares"*. BRE comment that sunlight provision to the proposed public courtyard could be considered less crucial than to a garden, but good sunlighting would make the space more cheerful and pleasant. BRE conclude that *"the area could therefore be checked for provision. The space would be obstructed to the east and west by existing and proposed buildings but may be able to receive some sun from the south"*.
- 4.69 On the basis of the BRE review the applicant was asked on 4/11/22 to provide a response in relation to (for this application) the sunlight provision to the proposed courtyard. The applicant provided a response on 22/11/22, specifying that they do not propose to assess this, with the following commentary instead provided:
- The extent of direct sunlight to this space is not intended as a 'sitting out area' or designed as an 'amenity space' and so it is considered that this space does not qualify for assessment in shadowing terms.
 - The courtyard is anticipated to receive some natural light across the year albeit there will also be overshadowing of direct sunlight by the proposed buildings and surrounding context. This is also anticipated to be comparable with the former scheme.

- As this is not residential amenity space, our client does not see why direct sunlight needs to be assessed - they are unaware of other courtyard schemes having unrestricted full direct sunlight.
- The area will receive some direct sun from the south
- The amenity of this area is more focussed on the interaction between the retail units and the aparthotel and the transient activities of a market square than in the amenity of receiving compliant sunlight levels.
- This space will also benefit from electric light emitting from the commercial uses at ground floor and the area will benefit from external lighting, specifically in the evening.
- Courtyards are as the term implies an open area space between buildings and in relation to QVS 1 the southern end of the courtyard in particular is kept low height (ground + first floor only) specifically to allow the direct access of sunlight.

4.70 Given the applicant has declined to provide the requested technical sunlight information, this matter will instead be addressed by officers in the assessment, rather than requiring further input from BRE.

ii) Public consultation - 221232/FUL only

4.2.1 In respect of the planning application notification letters were sent to nearby occupiers on 31/08/2022, expiring on 21/09/2022. Two site notices were erected on behalf of the applicant on 14/09/2022, expiring on 05/10/2022. The case officer witnessed that the notices were in place on 23/09/2022. A press notice was published on 08/09/2022, expiring on 29/09/2022. A total of 21 separate responses in support of the proposals and no objections have been received.

4.2.2 11 separate responses, all in support of the proposals (although the specified 'comment type' in each instance was referenced as an 'observation', the nature of the comment indicated support for the proposals) have been received from separately named persons at an address on Friar Street occupied by Haslams Estate Agents (1 response was received in duplicate). The comments received in these responses are (in full):

- A most welcome scheme to Friar Street & very much in line with the new Station Hill development.
- Looks great / looks fabulous
- I approve
- Looks great, well needed in Friar Street
- Well needed, the existing buildings were dilapidated
- This scheme looks ideal for central Reading
- This is very needed within Reading and will smarten the area up
- Great scheme, providing vital investment and diversification in the town centre. An impressive proposition with a fresh approach.
- Well needed in Reading, I approve.

4.2.3 Responses in support have also been received from individuals at the following 10 addresses: Aviator Place, Crescent Road, RG1; Bath Road, RG1; Bluebell Meadow, Winnersh, RG41; Cedar Drive, Sunningdale, SL5; Harrison Close, Twyford, RG10; Jersey Drive, Winnersh, RG41; Milestone Avenue, Charvil, RG10; St Francis Close, Crowthorne, RG45; Seaford Road, Wokingham, RG40; and, Vickers Close, RG2. It is noted that 4 of these respondents have the exact same name as Friar Street respondents. A summary of the comments in support received in these responses are:

- Improving public amenity and bringing back Queen Victoria Street buildings to their former glory is a fantastic improvement to Reading town centre
- A great looking scheme that works well for Reading
- Redevelopment of the town centre will always have positive effects
- Well needed, looks dilapidated at present & can provide well needed rejuvenation to the street which will be benefitting Reading
- Looks great / great looking scheme
- Good scheme. Well needed on Friar Street.
- A shop owner in Queen Victoria Street feels that the regeneration of this area will have a positive affect for the town centre. The buildings in this street and Friar Street are incredibly run down which doesn't give a great first impression for people arriving in Reading.

iii) Public consultation - 221233/LBC

4.3.1 In respect of the listed building consent application two site notices were erected on behalf of the applicant on 14/09/2022, expiring on 05/10/2022. The case officer witnessed that the notices were in place on 23/09/2022. A press notice was published on 08/09/2022, expiring on 29/09/2022. No responses specifically referencing the listed building consent application were received.

iv) Local Groups

a) Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC)

4.4.1 Reading CAAC was formally consulted and support the application, with comments summarised as follows:

- Following pre-application consultations the CAAC are pleased that the striking façade and structure of 145 Friar Street will be retained/incorporated.
- Consider the western elevation of 145 Friar Street could be improved if the white render (not visually appealing) was replaced by a more interesting material, some detail around the windows or a wall mural.
- The demolition of 146 Friar Street and replacement by a taller pastiche is acceptable, although something of the variety of roof levels along the street will be lost.

b) Reading Civic Society (RCS)

4.4.2 RCS was formally consulted on the application and support the application (as part of a combined response with application 221235). RCS advise that they have been actively and positively engaged by the applicant since November 2020. RCS also advise that they arranged three separate “*public engagements*” with the applicant in March 2021, June 2022 and November 2022, with these events said to have attracted 120 people from local groups and businesses as well as RCS. Feedback from the events is quoted, with the overall summary being that on the basis of the “*engagement / outreach*” events and the RCS committee views, the planning applications are supported and RCS are “*convinced that, all things being equal, they [the applicant] will get on with this should PP be granted*”.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1 Section 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.
- 5.2 Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- 5.3 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development', which means 'approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay' (NPPF paragraph 11).
- 5.4 For this Local Planning Authority the development plan is the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019). The relevant national / local policies / guidance are:
- 5.5 **National**
National Planning Policy Framework (2021)
The following NPPF chapters are the most relevant (others apply to a lesser extent):
- 2. Achieving sustainable development
 - 4. Decision-making
 - 6. Building a strong, competitive economy
 - 7. Ensuring the vitality of town centres
 - 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
 - 9. Promoting sustainable transport
 - 11. Making effective use of land
 - 12. Achieving well-designed places
 - 15. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
 - 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
- National Planning Policy Guidance (2014 onwards)
- 5.6 The relevant Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019) policies are:
- CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 - CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
 - CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
 - CC4: Decentralised Energy
 - CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
 - CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
 - CC7: Design and the Public Realm
 - CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
 - CC9: Securing Infrastructure
 - EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
 - EN2: Areas of Archaeological Significance
 - EN4: Locally Important Heritage Assets
 - EN6: New Development in a Historic Context
 - EN9: Provision of Open Space
 - EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network

- EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland
- EN15: Air Quality
- EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
- EN17: Noise Generating Equipment
- EN18: Flooding and Drainage
- TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy
- TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
- TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities
- TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
- RL1: Network and Hierarchy of Centres
- RL2: Scale and Location of Retail, Leisure and Culture Development
- OU5: Shopfronts and Cash Machines
- CR1: Definition of Central Reading
- CR2: Design in Central Reading
- CR3: Public Realm in Central Reading
- CR4: Leisure, Culture and Tourism in Central Reading
- CR6: Living in Central Reading
- CR7: Primary Frontages in Central Reading
- CR8: Small Shop Units in Central Reading
- CR11: Station/River Major Opportunity Area

5.7 Reading Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents

Topics:

- Affordable Housing (2021)
- Design Guide to Shopfronts (2022)
- Employment, Skills and Training (2013)
- Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
- Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)
- Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

Sites:

- Reading Station Area Framework (2010)
- Station Hill South Planning and Urban Design Brief (2007)

5.8 Other relevant documentation

- BRE Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight - A guide to good practice, (BR 209 2022 edition)
- Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)
- Reading Borough Council Tree Strategy (March 2021)
- Reading Biodiversity Action Plan (March 2021)
- The National Design Guide (2019)
- The National Model Design Code (July 2021)
- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking (Historic England, 2015)
- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 (2nd Edition) The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2017)
- Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance (Historic England 2008)
- Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings (British Standards Pub. BS 7913:2013, 2015)

6. APPRAISAL

6.1 The main issues are considered to be:

- i) Land use considerations
- ii) Design and Heritage matters - including demolition, scale, appearance, design and effect on heritage assets
- iii) Quality of accommodation for future occupiers/users
- iv) Amenity for nearby occupiers
- v) Transport and Highways
- vi) Landscaping and ecology
- vii) Sustainability, energy and SuDS
- viii) Other matters - Archaeology, Thames Water, S106, pre-commencement conditions & Equality

- i) Land use considerations

- 6.2 The outset of this assessment considers the proposals from a pure land-use perspective. As per the table at paragraph 2.3 above, the proposals would firstly result in the removal of the existing Class E(g) office (2,404.1sqm) and Sui Generis (166.2sqm nail bar) uses at the site. In terms of the loss of office use, the officer site visit at pre-application stage confirmed that the vast majority of office floorspace was vacant, barring parts of No. 15 Queen Victoria Street, 145 and 146 Friar Street. In this regard the applicant has provided commentary responding to the matters referenced at Policy EM3, which is considered in instances where the loss of employment land is sought outside of core employment areas such as this. In short, it is considered that the applicant has satisfied the policy requirements, with it particularly pertinent that whilst in an accessible location, the quality of the space is in many instances poor and there is better quality office space which is likely to be more attractive for potential office occupiers. There are no in-principle issues with the loss of the Sui Generis use either.
- 6.3 In relation to the Class E ground floor uses, while the reconfiguration works result in an overall reduction in Class E floorspace at the site (to facilitate the Class C1 use), the number of units is actually increasing from 9 to 10 and the street frontages being maintained in centre uses, with 2 units exclusively fronting onto Friar Street, 6 on the Queen Victoria Street frontage, 1 spanning both frontages and 1 unit solely fronting the proposed courtyard space. In general terms the reconfiguration of the ground floor units is broadly supported in this Central Reading (regional centre) location, helping to both maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the centre as Policy RL1 requires. Furthermore, in line with Policy CR1, the proposals provide retail development in the primary shopping area.
- 6.4 More specifically however, it is recognised that the applicant is seeking flexible Class E(a) (Display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food) or Class E(b) (Sale of food and drink for consumption (mostly) on the premises) at units 01 - 10 (see below at figure 10 and the table at paragraph 2.1 above). Under Policy CR7, proposals which result in the loss of Class E(a) or E(c) (referenced in the policy under the pre-September 2020 amendments to the use class order of Class A1 or A2) use such that the proportion of length of the frontage in the street in Class E(a) or E(c) falls below 50% will not be permitted, unless the proposal introduces a use that makes a positive contribution to the overall diversity of the centre. In this instance Friar Street and Queen Victoria Street are in different frontages and are required to be assessed separately.

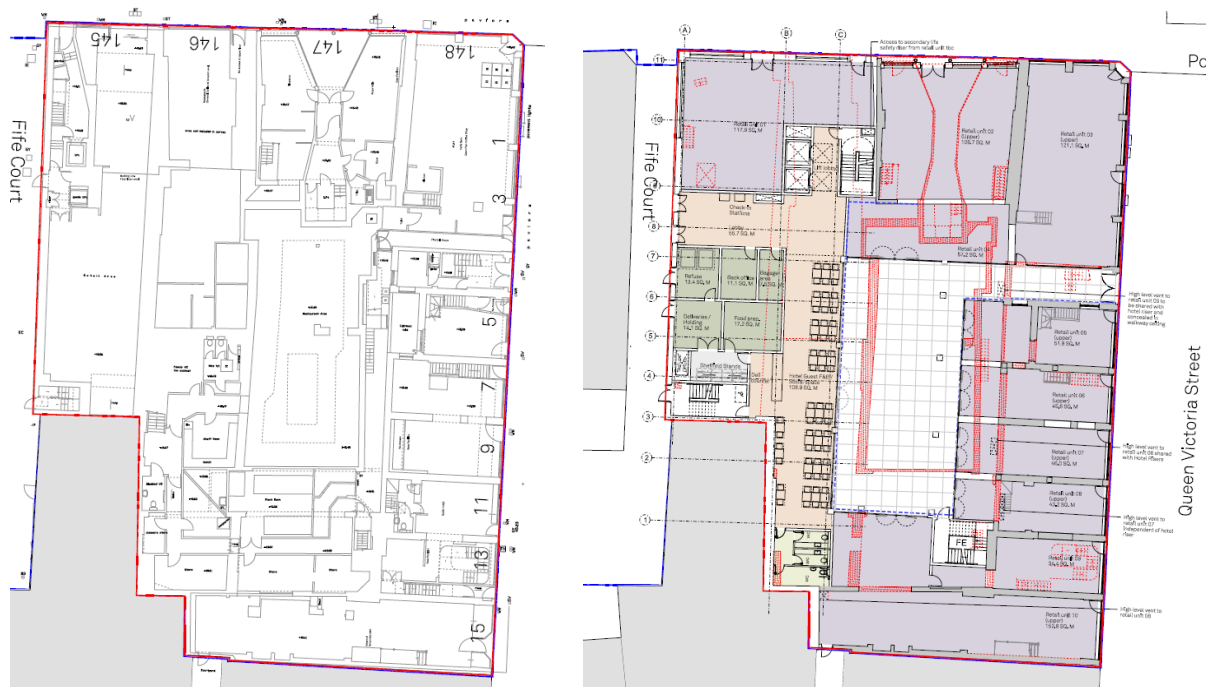


Figure 10 - Existing (left) and proposed (right) ground floor plans

- 6.5 Based on an officer audit of Friar Street in November 2022 the percentage of Class E(a) and E(c) functional uses is already below 50% (calculated to be 42%), which Policy CR7 guards against to maintain the overall retail character of the centre. As a consequence it is considered reasonable and necessary to include a condition to limit the use of retail units 01 and 02 (which both exclusively front onto Friar Street, and also bearing in mind that 3 of the 4 existing units at this point which are to be replaced are in E(a) use) to solely a Class E(a) use, as the provision of a Class E(b) use would further undermine the overall retail character of the centre. In discussions with the applicant regarding this matter, the applicant has outlined vacancy rates of Class E(a) units in Broad Street and Queen Victoria Street and that Friar Street has a limited retail function, as additional justification for the flexibility of uses sought. Meanwhile, officers are also mindful that other units along Friar Street can potentially change between the entirety of the Class E use without the requirement for planning permission, and that consequently the percentage rates of uses will fluctuate organically over time; however, the application can only be considered based upon the current situation and its individual planning merits. Therefore, ultimately, officers consider that the Policy CR7 context is clear in requiring units 01 and 02 to be secured via condition as Class E(a) only.
- 6.6 In respect of retail unit 03, given this straddles both the Friar Street and Queen Victoria Street frontages, officers are satisfied for this unit to be either Class E(a) or E(b), as proposed by the applicant. Turning to consider retail unit 04, this is located off Queen Victoria Street and is solely within the proposed public courtyard. It is considered that this is outside of either frontage and therefore officers are content for this to be a flexible Class E(a) or E(b) use, as proposed by the applicant.
- 6.7 On Queen Victoria Street the frontage has been calculated to comprise an existing rate of 64% Class E(a) and E(c) uses. If retail units 05, 06, 07, 08, 09 and 10 were all to become a Class E(b) use (as could occur in line with the proposal) the level of Class E(a) uses would however, fall below 50% to 44%, contrary to Policy CR7. In

order to maintain the minimum 50% Class E(a) and E(c) uses along the Queen Victoria Street frontage (as policy requires) the applicant was asked to confirm which 2 units out of units 05, 06, 07, 08, 09 or 10 they would prefer to be secured via condition to be limited to Class E(a) use only (thereby providing the flexible Class E(a) or E(b) use in 4 of the 6 units). The applicant confirmed on 21/11/2022 a preference for units 07 and 08 to be solely a Class E(a) use.

- 6.8 On the basis of the above, planning conditions are proposed to limit units 01, 02, 07 and 08 to be in Class E(a) use only, with units 03, 04, 05, 06, 09 and 10 to be limited to flexible Class E(a) or Class E (b) use only (and no other Class E use without a separate application and permission from the local planning authority).
- 6.9 It is also separately recognised that Queen Victoria Street is identified as being characterised by small shop units in Central Reading, under Policy CR8. Here small shop units of less than 75sqm make an important contribution to the diversity of the centre and the Local Plan explicitly states that the amalgamation of individual shopfronts will not be permitted. With this in mind it is firstly noted that the application proposal seeks to create additional separate retail units along Queen Victoria Street, with the existing 5 units shown on the proposed plans as including 7 separate units. The sub-division of units to create additional small shop units is welcomed as a tangible benefit of the scheme, adding to the diversity of the centre. As per the table at paragraph 2.1 above, the ground floorspace of proposed units 05-09 along Queen Victoria Street would all be less than 75sqm at ground floor level, with only units 03 and 10 being larger units in floorspace terms. As both these units are already larger units, no specific concerns are raised in this regard. However, to guard against the possible future amalgamation of units along Queen Victoria Street, and more specifically the potential loss of small shop units (contrary to Policy CR8), it is considered reasonable and necessary to prevent future amalgamation of proposed Queen Victoria Street small shop units 05-09 (without a separate application and permission from the local planning authority). Friar Street is not identified under Policy CR8, so there is no policy basis for such a condition applying at this point of the site.
- 6.10 Finally in relation to the ground floor units, there is no policy basis for resisting the loss of specific existing occupants at the site; permission runs with the land in relation to the use(s) as proposed only and has been assessed as such. Moreover, it is also noted that the existing No. 145 Friar Street is part of a larger overall retail unit which extends beyond the boundary of the application site onto the Broad Street frontage. This unit is currently occupied by WHSmith / Post Office and it is noted that internally there is no physical separation between land within the application site and that outside. In short, it is not considered that the reduction in floorspace in the unit would harm the ability of this unit to function as a retail store (sufficient existing floorspace is maintained), or harm the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole.
- 6.11 Turning to consider the proposed apart-hotel (Class C1) use, whilst there is no explicit local plan policy specifically relating to apart-hotels, Policy CR6iv does reference that where apart-hotels fall outside of a Class C3 use (as proposed in this instance), they will be located within the Central Core (and the proposals comply). Furthermore, the policy goes on to reference there being a requirement to restrict the duration of occupancy, with monitoring information regularly supplied. Accordingly, the apart-hotel use will be secured via s106 legal agreement as an apart-hotel (Class C1) use only, with maximum occupancy of no more than 3 months. Further obligations are proposed, including those in relation to monitoring, as stated in the Recommendation at the outset of this report.

Amongst other matters, this robustly guards against the scheme being occupied for other uses (e.g. residential flats, as referenced in Policy CR6) without first applying for planning permission.

- 6.12 The proposals also specify that an ancillary food and beverage / social space is proposed at ground floor level too. The planning statement clarifies that this is part of the apart-hotel but will be open to the public too, overlooking the proposed courtyard. In principle, there is no issue with this from a land-use perspective, although a condition will ensure these facilities remain ancillary in nature. The internal layout also specifies that a basement level gym is proposed. This is specified as being ancillary to the primary apart-hotel function and for hotel guests only. Accordingly, will be secured via condition as such. In overall terms the principle of the apart-hotel use, with its ancillary functions, are appropriate in this town centre location.

ii) Design and Heritage matters - including demolition, scale, appearance, design and effect on heritage assets

- 6.13 Considering first the various works of demolition, these have been carefully considered by the Council's CUDO, as detailed at section 4b) above. In summary, whilst acknowledging that a series of works are proposed (as summarised in section 2 above), most substantially the partial demolition of the rear of listed buildings and outbuildings, various internal works to facilitate the proposed apart-hotel use and the entire demolition of the existing unlisted No. 146 Friar Street, officers are satisfied that the works would protect and enhance the heritage assets (when considering in the context of the proposals). Overall, the demolition works are considered to lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset. Paragraph 202 of the NPPF states in such instances this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. In this case the previous section of this assessment confirms that the proposed uses are appropriate, with the public benefits of the proposals being discussed in the planning balance section of this report. As such, this matter is returned to at section 7 of this report.



Figure 11 - extracts of the extent of demolition - ground floor & Friar Street

- 6.14 However, at this juncture, it is relevant to reference that the CUDO recommends a condition to secure a record of the buildings/parts of buildings to be demolished. It is separately also considered necessary and reasonable to include a condition specifying that demolition shall not be undertaken before a contract for the carrying out of the works of redevelopment of the site has been made (with details submitted to demonstrate this to officers for approval). This safeguards a potential risk of the partial implementation of any permission and/or consent involving only

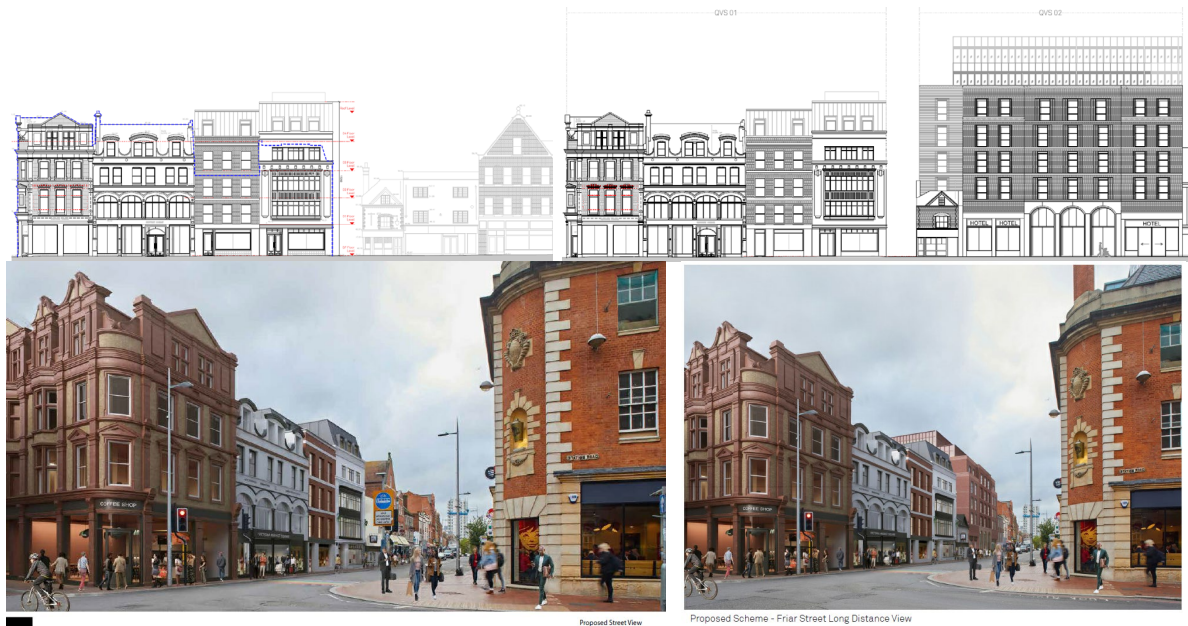


Figure 13 - Proposed streetscenes and visualisations of the proposed scheme without (left) and with (right) the separate 138-144 Friar St proposal (221235)

6.16 The applicant has also provided streetscene elevations of the proposals in the context of the separately proposed scheme at 138-144 Friar St (QVS2). Based on these visualisations (see figure 13 above) it is considered that the proposed massing would assimilate well into the townscape if developed comprehensively. However, as this is a separate proposal which may or may not come forward, the primary focus for this assessment is without consideration of the QVS 2 scheme. If this proposal alone were to come forward only, whilst the additional scale and massing proposed would result in a noticeable change, officers consider that the additions at the site would be satisfactory. It is also worthy of note that whilst this specific application was not subject to a standalone review by the Reading Design Review Panel (DRP) (given the 210223/210224 proposals), in the separate review relating to the neighbouring site (138-144 Friar Street) the cumulative streetscenes were submitted and the Panel commented *“Whilst outside the scope of the review, the proposals for 145 - 146 Friar Street show great promise. The renewal of 141 - 148 Friar Street could act as a valuable catalyst to support wider improvements within this part of the Town Centre”*.

6.17 Beyond the street frontage, the proposed massing continues into the site, as well as 3-storey rear extensions to the Queen Victoria Street fronting buildings (see figure 14 below). Such massing is largely hidden from public viewpoints owing to the existing context and such works being largely inward facing. No concerns from a design perspective are raised in relation to these sympathetic elements of the proposals. It is noted that there would be an increase in massing along the Fife Court (west) frontage of the site, but this would only be appreciated in partial views along Friar Street and would not unduly compromise the setting or visual appreciation of The Bugle Public House as existing.



Figure 14 - Proposed inner courtyard elevations (west and east)

- 6.18 The additional massing within the inner parts of the site will be broken up by the proposed external public courtyard, as proposed to be accessed off Queen Victoria Street. The principle of introducing new public realm within the town centre is strongly supported in line with predominantly Policies CR2 and CR3, with the space proposed to be surrounded by the extended existing Queen Victoria Street retail units, the ancillary food and beverage use to the apart-hotel and a single new retail unit. The courtyard would be rectangular in shape, measuring 20.5m in length and 9.7m in width at ground level. The applicant has stated that the courtyard will be adaptable to multi-function uses, such as community events, sporting occasions and themed markets. Overall, from a design perspective the courtyard space would be considered to be an asset in extending the RBC town centre public realm offer. Various details in relation to the quality of the space are separately discussed in the ‘quality of accommodation for future occupiers/users’ section below.
- 6.19 Turning to consider detailed design and material matters, the proposed scheme incorporates a series of sensitive material choices to complement the existing character at the site and within the wider area. On Friar Street the façade at first and second floor level of No. 145 is retained. The new third floor and zinc-clad roof addition at fourth floor level would blend in appropriately within the streetscene. The replacement No. 146 building takes inspiration from traditional buildings elsewhere along Friar Street, whilst intentionally being modest in nature (using simple brickwork and regular window openings) so as to not compete with the adjoining listed buildings. The zinc-clad rooftop floor aligns with the material choice at No. 145 to ensure a degree of uniformity at this point. Whilst internally the uses on the upper floors would be as one, the façade maintains its existing rhythm and individuality in form, with the additions therefore being considered appropriate. Along the secondary Fife Court elevation the existing render material

is to be re-provided in the proposals, which is considered a reasonable design response at this point.

- 6.20 It is welcomed that the inner courtyard elevations seek to continue the prevailing character around the site and in the wider area, with the inclusion of red brick and detailing (e.g. accentuated window lintels - see figure 14 above) to add visual interest to the upper floors of the newly created buildings. Given the provision of the proposed courtyard, the inclusion of good quality materials and detailing on these facades is welcomed and supported. To guarantee the design quality indicated within the submission it is necessary for all external materials to be secured via condition, including the provision of sample construction panel details being erected on site prior to approval.

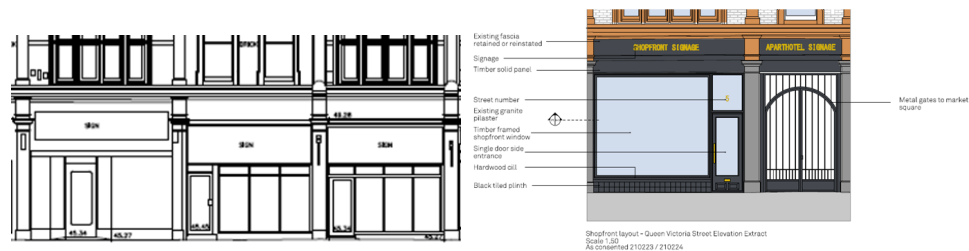


Figure 15 - Extract of Queen Victoria St shopfronts - existing (left) & proposed (right)

- 6.21 In terms of shopfronts, the applicant has provided details in respect of the replacement Queen Victoria Street shopfronts (see figure 15 above). These align with those previously considered appropriate under applications 210223/210224 and are again supported, reintroducing historic features and providing uniformity along the façade. There is no requirement for more details to be secured via condition, owing to acceptable details being submitted at application stage. A compliance condition is recommended for the Queen Victoria Street and Friar Street frontages to retain 'active window displays', together with a separate condition to secure 1:20 section and layout details for the new shopfront elements associated with the replacement frontages along Friar Street and all inner courtyard frontages. It appears based on the information submitted at this stage that the proposals would comply with RBC Shopfronts SPD, as per CUDO comments at section 4b) above (see figure 6 in particular).
- 6.22 Given the proposals represent a significant town centre redevelopment and mindful of the requirements of Policies CR2 and CC7, officers concur with the Reading CAAC observations that the proposals have the potential to incorporate a scheme of on-site public art. While officers at this juncture have no fixed views on the exact nature or extent this should take, there is considered to be scope within either the proposed courtyard or Fife Court elevation for art to be incorporated into the scheme. This would represent a wider public and planning benefit of the proposals. Accordingly, a pre-occupation condition will be secured for details of a public art scheme to be submitted and approved. In this instance it is considered that a condition is more appropriate than this being a legal agreement obligation.
- 6.23 Officers are also mindful that Policy CR2f specifies that development should be designed with consideration of adjacent development sites, and should not prevent or cause unreasonable burdens on the future development of those sites. In this regard, it is considered that the proposals have been advanced with the neighbouring site to the west in mind, which is subject to a separate current application. It is considered that in design terms, if both schemes were to be implemented then they would essentially complement one another and not

compete or conflict. In terms of land to the south, the absence of any proposed windows on the southern site boundary lessens any impact. To the north and east, the width of Friar Street and Queen Victoria Street, together with the fairly modest nature of the outward-facing nature of the proposals means no undue harm to the future development of those nearby sites are envisaged.

- 6.24 Finally in respect of the effect of the proposals on heritage assets, the CUDO comments at section 4b) confirm that the scheme is considered to lead to “less than substantial harm” to the significance on 1-15 Queen Victoria Street, and 145-148 Friar Street, having been carefully developed. The conclusion section of this report will return to this specific matter, as the NPPF paragraph 202 test requires this less than substantial harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme. These are weighed accordingly within the planning balance section below.

iii) Quality of accommodation for future occupiers/users

- 6.25 Considering the reconfigured retail units in the first instance, it is considered that the Queen Victoria Street fronting units will be enhanced with the extended floor areas proposed and the provision of the inner courtyard. This provides a secondary frontage and scope for more flexible use of the internal space, for the benefit of future occupiers. Along Friar Street the newly proposed units are regular in shape and are anticipated to provide a frontage which would make these units attractive to a variety of occupiers. One unit is solely located within the proposed courtyard. It is considered that this unit has the potential to thrive, located just off Queen Victoria Street.
- 6.26 In terms of the proposed apart-hotel, this provides 104 rooms across the first to fourth floors of the site. The rooms are largely regular in shape and all are sufficient in size for the apart-hotel nature of the proposals. All rooms provide windows, providing adequate levels of outlook and suitable access to daylight and sunlight. Whilst no day/sunlight assessment has been undertaken, officers do not consider it to be essential given the short-term apart-hotel use proposed. The scheme includes 5 specified accessible rooms, which are welcomed and will be secured via condition (as will the maximum total number of 104 rooms). Following clarifications, the Council’s Access Officer is content with the proposals (see section 4f above). It is acknowledged that owing to the proposed layout there will be a number of rooms with windows which will overlook separate apart-hotel rooms within the site. Such overlooking would be ‘mutual’ and given the nature of the use, this is not considered to significantly compromise the overall quality of the accommodation, whilst acknowledged not to be ideal. In comparison with the 210223/210224 layout (which proposed 41 apart-hotel units), the proposals represent a far more intensive scheme, but on its own merits has been demonstrated to be satisfactory. From a fire safety perspective, although there is no requirement for a fire statement to be submitted (only required for residential buildings of a certain height), irrespective of this the applicant has beneficially submitted a Fire Assessment. The building includes three separate staircores as well as two separate lifts, with the report also stating the other various technical standards the building will meet.
- 6.27 The apart-hotel is also shown to include a series of ancillary hotel facilities, such as a ground floor food and beverage / social space and basement level guest gym and guest laundry space. The ancillary ground floor use and the gym will be secured via condition to be ancillary to the apart-hotel, with the gym solely for hotel guests too. With specific regard to the ancillary gym use, a condition will

secure a noise assessment, including specific reference to structure borne noise, to be submitted and approved prior to the first occupation of the apart-hotel. Structural-borne noise at low frequencies causing vibrations is a known potential issue associated with gyms, adversely affecting the amenity of occupiers/users of other floors of the same building. The food and beverage / social space will have the option of being open to the public too, but only between the hours of 07:00 - 23:00 on Mondays to Fridays, 07:00 to 00:00 on Saturdays and 07:00 to 22:00 on Sundays. This should assist and align with any future separate Licensing requirements.

- 6.28 With regards to the proposed courtyard, the applicant has beneficially submitted a draft / outline management plan. The applicant acknowledges that a strong and effective management system is key to the success of the space and has indicated that the applicant's managing agents *"would be responsible for management of the buildings and the courtyard and will ensure compliance with statutory regulations and public safety"*. Measures include a code of conduct, a 24/7 point of contact, access control to the apart-hotel and security personnel to ensure the safety of visitors, residents and the public. Such principles are welcomed and full and exact details will be secured via condition. Whilst specific details in relation to access control and CCTV (see CPDA comments at section 4o), servicing (see RBC Waste, Environmental Protection and Transport comments) and noise (see RBC Environmental Protection) matters will be secured via separate conditions, such details are also to be included within this management plan condition too. For example, the courtyard will be shut overnight, partly to protect the amenity of apart-hotel guests. In addition, external lighting details and hours of use (dovetailed with the apart-hotel ancillary food and beverage use hours) will also be separately secured via condition, but will also be specified in the management plan too.

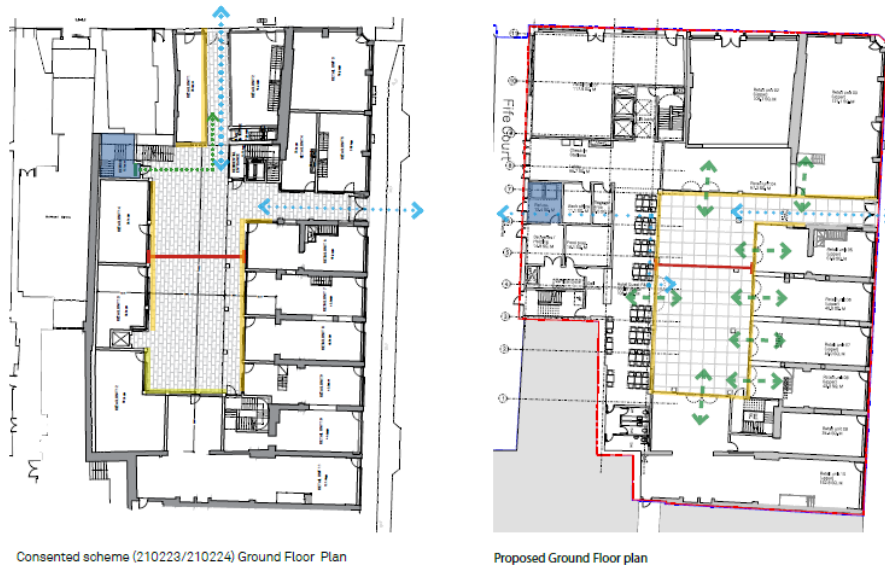


Figure 16 - Extract from Design & Access Statement showing the 210223/210224 public courtyard (left) and that proposed as part of these proposals (right) within an enlarged application site

- 6.29 In terms of the quality of the public courtyard space, on its own merits, it is an overall welcomed addition, assisted by the comprehensive management plan referenced above. In comparison with the courtyard separately proposed under application 210223/210224 (see figure 16 above for a comparison of the layouts), there are however considered to be a number of shortcomings, such as the reduced size, the more enclosed nature (given additional massing proposed on the

expanded western side of this application site) and the provision of only a single open-sided external entrance point (the previous proposal included a point off Friar Street as well as Queen Victoria Street), diminishingly somewhat the 'look and feel' and function/usability of the previously proposed space.

6.30 It is also noted that, despite requests by officers at pre-application and application stage, and comments from BRE at application stage, the applicant has resisted requests for a sunlight assessment to be undertaken to measure the amount of sunlight which would reach the courtyard. The applicant has specified reasons for choosing not to provide such information (see paragraph 4.69 above). This is disappointing, as the applicant has effectively failed to evidence levels of sunlight into the space, which officers and BRE consider a reasonable request. As such, it is unproven whether the space would comply with BRE guidance in this regard. Without a formal assessment it is considered likely that sunlight provision would be limited in all but the middle of summer owing to the prevailing height of the proposed surrounding buildings and the somewhat limited size of the space. This would be a shortcoming of the scheme. However, in the context of the existing lack of such a facility, such a shortfall is not considered in itself to compromise the scheme to such an extent to seek to resist it on this basis alone.

6.31 As such, officers consider the proposed courtyard to be a less inviting space than that proposed under application 210223/210224. However, on its own merits the proposed courtyard, subject to conditions, is welcomed and considered a benefit of the scheme.

iv) Amenity for nearby occupiers

6.32 The immediate surrounding context is largely non-residential, which consequently means that the impacts on amenity are inherently less sensitive than had a proposal of this nature been sought which adjoined a series of existing residential buildings. However, officers are mindful of the requirements of Policy CC8, and also Policy CR2f too, which seeks to ensure that sites are designed with consideration of adjacent sites.

6.33 In terms of daylight and sunlight impacts to nearby buildings, BRE's independent review of the information submitted (see section 4v above) demonstrates that the properties the applicant originally assessed are within the BRE guidelines. Officers consider that whilst BRE raised questions over whether all buildings to the south and west of the combined site (the assessment also considered application 221235 at the neighbouring site to the west), these questions are not relevant to these specific proposals given the distances involved and the (comparatively) limited changes in height proposed at the application site.

6.34 The proposed apart-hotel use, together with the limited nearby existing residential uses means limited overlooking and privacy concerns are raised. The serviced apartments at No. 17-27 Queen Victoria Street or residential properties on the opposite eastern side of the street would not be significantly adversely affected. It is noted that if the neighbouring 221235 proposals are also implemented there could be instances of nearby direct overlooking between the two sites. However, the proposed hotel (neighbouring site) and apart-hotel (application site) uses lessens the severity of this, as both are accommodation for comparatively short stays only.

6.35 It is however also considered that, given the increasingly residential nature of the town centre as a whole (and therefore a need to maintain general amenity and

associated noise and disturbance in the street), and the potential for occupiers of the apart-hotel to be present for up to 3 months at a time, it is necessary to secure hours of use conditions in respect of the Class E a) and E b) uses / units referenced in the land use principles section above. However, given the central location, the hours need not be particularly restrictive and officers agree with those proposed by the applicant (Class E a) 07:00 to 23:00 hours Monday to Saturday and 07:00 to 18:00 hours on Sundays; Class E b) 07:00 to 23:30 hours Monday to Friday, 07:00 to 00:30 hours on Saturdays and 10:00 to 22:30 hours on Sundays). Accordingly, these are considered to strike an appropriate balance between protecting nearby amenity, whilst not potentially compromising the attractiveness of the units for future occupiers.

- 6.36 In terms of noise and disturbance, artificial lighting, vibration, dust and fumes, smells, crime and safety, as per the quality of accommodation section above, as well as various conditions recommended by officers (in particular Environmental Protection, Transport and the CPDA at Thames Valley Police), the proposals are considered appropriate subject to conditions.

v) Transport and Highways

- 6.37 Overall in transport terms the proposals are considered appropriate, subject to a number of details being secured via condition. This is specified in more detail at section 4a) above, but in particular it is required for a site-specific demolition and construction method statement to be secured. This is a dense urban location and also being mindful of the potential cumulative impact of other nearby developments, this will require particular care and consideration in this instance.

vi) Landscaping and ecology

- 6.38 During the course of the application more information has been submitted by the applicant to address initial comments from the Natural Environment (tree) Officer (see section 4d above). This has facilitated, amongst other matters, the applicant indicating an indicative location for a south facing green wall, as requested by officers. This is a welcome addition to the proposed scheme. This, together with the brown/blue roofs (from a landscaping perspective there is scope for these to actually be green roofs, but this would necessitate consideration of the sustainability/energy/SuDS/drainage strategies to ascertain whether that is actually feasible without undermining those strategies - as such details are to be confirmed via condition) and the courtyard level planters mean that the proposals are policy compliant and supported in assisting the greening of the site. This is required owing to the low canopy ward and air quality management area location of the site, which as existing is devoid of any greening. Full details are recommended to be secured via condition.

- 6.39 Turning to ecology matters, the LPA's ecology consultants GS Ecology confirm (as per section 4e above) that the current site has a negligible ecological value, with the proposal incorporating a number of wildlife enhancing features to achieve a significant biodiversity net gain. A condition will secure full details of the measures to ensure the proposals are appropriate in ecology terms.

vii) Sustainability, energy and SuDS

- 6.40 Given the scale and nature of the proposal, sustainability and energy strategies have been submitted, with these being independently reviewed by Hoare Lea on behalf of the local planning authority. As per section 4u) above discussions

regarding various details regarding the reports are presently on-going, but it is anticipated that they will be able to be resolved prior to the committee meeting. It is therefore intended for Hoare Lea's final comments to be provided in an update report prior to committee. As such, conclusions in respect of sustainability and energy matters will follow in the update report.

- 6.41 In relation to SuDS matters, the RBC Lead Local Flood Authority consultation response at section 4i) above confirms satisfaction with the submission documentation, with the final and detailed SuDS strategy being secured via condition.
- viii) Other matters - Archaeology, Thames Water, S106, pre-commencement conditions & Equality
- 6.42 Archaeology: A condition to secure a scheme of archaeological works is recommended by Berkshire Archaeology, as per section 4l) above.
- 6.43 Thames Water: As per section 4r) above, a condition is recommended in relation to a piling method statement, but aside from this Thames Water are satisfied with the information submitted with the application. A series of informatives will also be included.
- 6.44 Section 106 Legal Agreement: Section 6i) of this report has already explained that the apart-hotel use will be secured via legal agreement. There is a separate requirement to secure an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) for both the Construction and End User phases of the development, as per the REDA response. This is required in line with Policy CC9 and the Employment, Skills and Training SPD. The applicant has not yet indicated whether this will take the form of a contractor-led ESP to be progressed on site, or the payment of an equivalent financial contribution, as per the SPD formula. The legal agreement will be worded flexibly to enable either eventuality.
- 6.45 It is considered that the obligations referenced within the Recommendation section at the outset of this report would comply with the National Planning Policy Framework and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in that they would be: i) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, ii) directly related to the development and iii) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. These Heads of Terms have been agreed in principle by the agent on behalf of the applicant on 14th November 2022 and therefore a S106 Legal Agreement is in the process of being prepared to secure these matters, in the event of a positive Resolution at your meeting.
- 6.46 Pre-commencement conditions: the number of pre-commencement (any development, including demolition) has been limited, in line with national guidance. The detailed wording of the pre-commencement conditions will be sought to be agreed with the applicant prior to the determination of any approval, in line with section 100ZA(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act.
- 6.47 Equality: In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to these particular applications.

7. CONCLUSION, INCLUDING THE OVERALL PLANNING BALANCE

- 7.1 Considering solely planning application 221232/FUL first, the application is required to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as per Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 7.2 As such, the harmful impacts of the development need to be weighed against the benefits. Based on the above assessment, harmful impacts include the less than substantial harm to the on-site and nearby heritage assets, the unproven level of sunlight to the proposed public courtyard and, at the time of writing, the appropriateness of the sustainability and energy strategies (pending further input from Hoare Lea, as outlined above).
- 7.3 The harmful impacts of the development are required to be weighed against the benefits of the proposals. The applicant has put forward a series of planning and - what the applicant considers to be - wider public benefits too, the majority of which are summarised below:
- The repair and reinstatement of the original historic frontages of the listed buildings and the architectural detailing that contributes to their significance.
 - A visual improvement to the retail streets of Friar Street and Queen Victoria Street, where uniform shopfronts are proposed
 - The removal and enhancement to the form and appearance of the built form at the rear of the site.
 - Provision of suitable built form to the rear of the site, enhancing the visual appearance and supporting the setting of the retained listed buildings.
 - Reconfigured and an expanded number of retail and related retail units (enhancing variety and small shop units) in a highly accessible and sustainable location.
 - Introducing an apart-hotel use, providing short-term let accommodation, supporting the needs of, and attracting, working professionals and visitors to Reading.
 - Provision of an enhanced public realm with the public courtyard, providing opportunities for respite, relaxation and play, as well as community and public events and the opportunity to foster and support local community initiatives, exhibitions and performances.
 - Provision of a town centre destination that will attract visitors, shoppers and workers to this part of the town centre, enhancing the activity, vitality and viability of this part of the centre.
 - Assist the vitality and viability of Queen Victoria Street and bolster the Reading economy, playing an important role in the post-Covid19 recovery of the town centre.
 - Potentially providing a catalyst for the wider regeneration of Friar Street and Queen Victoria Street.
 - Car free development, promoting more sustainable forms of transport such as cycling and walking
- 7.4 It is recognised by officers that the applicant has specified a series of planning benefits which when considered cumulatively amount to a scheme which is welcomed and supported by officers. In conclusion officers therefore consider, pending the further input from Hoare Lea in relation to sustainability and energy matters (which will be reported in an update report - officers consider it reasonably likely that Hoare Lea's comments will be able to be addressed), that the conflicts with the development plan are significantly outweighed by the benefits of the

proposals in this instance. Returning to paragraph 202 of the NPPF the above assessment demonstrates that the public benefits of the scheme are considered to outweigh the less than substantial harm caused to the on-site and nearby heritage assets.

- 7.5 Overall, subject to the outcome of further input from Hoare Lea, the proposals are considered to be acceptable within the context of national and local planning policies, as detailed in the appraisal above. As such, on the proviso that Hoare Lea's outstanding energy-based matters are fully resolved, full planning permission is recommended for approval, subject to the recommended conditions and completion of the S106 Legal Agreement. Separate Listed Building Consent is also recommended for approval, subject to conditions.

Case Officer: Jonathan Markwell

External photographs around the perimeter of the application site



Existing Shopfronts from the Design and Access Statement

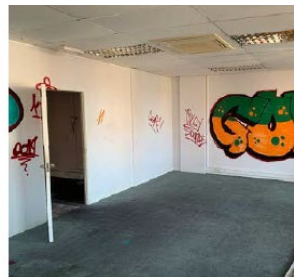
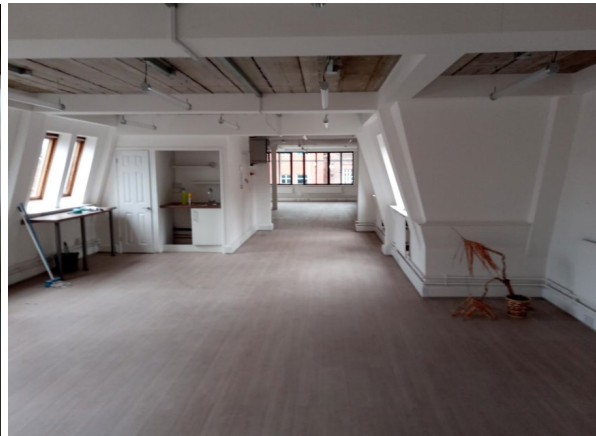
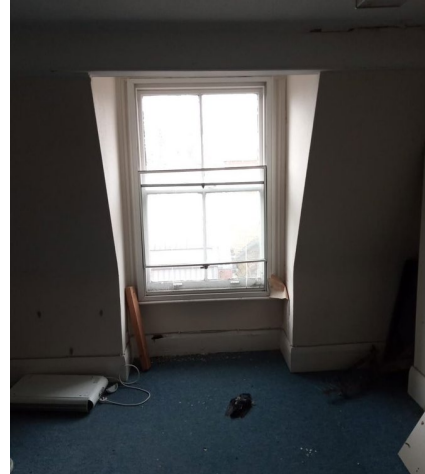


Images taken from Frost architect's design and access statement

Views showing the rear of the site buildings



A selection of internal photographs (some by officer / some by the applicant)





Demolition floor plans (above) and Proposed floor plans (below)



Existing and Proposed Queen Victoria Street elevations



Existing and Proposed Fife Court elevations



Existing, demolition and proposed Friar Street elevation plans



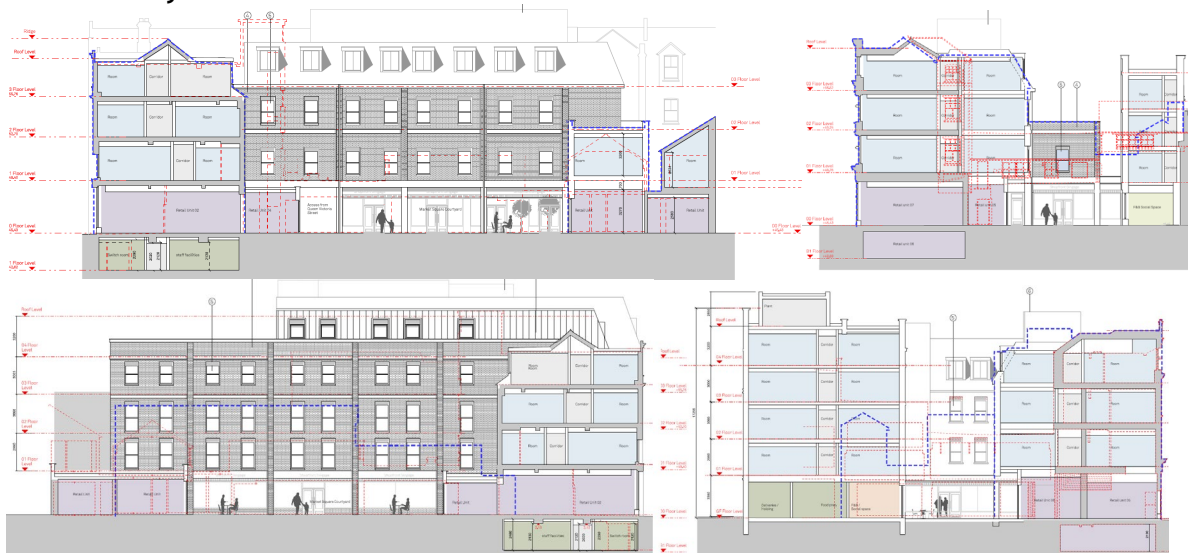
Proposed Friar St streetscene



Proposed Friar St streetscene with the separate 138-144 Friar St proposal (221235)



Inner courtyard elevations



Visualisations of the separate 210223/210224 proposals by the applicant



CGI from 1-15 Queen Victoria Street & 147-148 Friar Street planning application, prepared by Frost Architects



CGI from 1-15 Queen Victoria Street & 147-148 Friar Street planning application, prepared by Frost Architects

Extract from Design and Access Statement showing a comparison of the 210223/210224 courtyard space and that now proposed as part of this application

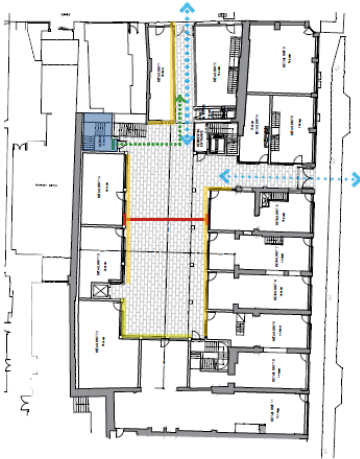
Market Square appraisal.
Architecturally, the character of the courtyard at ground level shares many similarities with that of the consented scheme (210223/210224). Market Square will continue to advance the character of Friar Street. Materials such as brick and timber will be offset against a backdrop of a lively and engaged social hub. To the east of the courtyard, features such as a colonnade define the space into areas of leisure and gatherings, whilst making reference to the columns that align no 147 Friar Street.

The introduction of a new access route from Fife Court, addresses the need to optimise footfall in a way that promotes activity to a dull and overlooked ally. Creating a link from Fife Court, as opposed to Friar Street is in keeping with maintaining a strong, retail frontage on the main highstreet. Functionally, courtyard benefits from a direct linear access, cutting across the site from west to east. This offers a more controlled form of security whilst optimising the retail area to the north of the courtyard. The added benefit of movement throughout the apartment is a welcomed addition on a commercial and retail aspect.

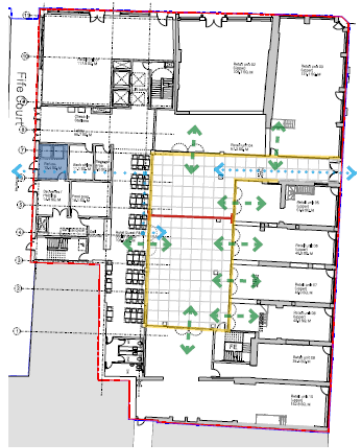
Although both courtyards maintain the same width, the proposed scheme offers a continuous retail frontage.

A key benefit of the proposed courtyard is the relocation of the refuse store. Accessed via Fife Court, the servicing to and from this area is kept away from the public realm, leaving the courtyard open to social events.

KEY:
 Access points
 Active retail frontage
 Bin store location
 Refuse servicing



Consented scheme (210223/210224) Ground Floor Plan



Proposed Ground Floor plan

Visualisations of the proposed courtyard and Friar Street streetscene



Proposed Courtyard Rendering



Proposed Street View