

# Eldon Square Conservation Area Conservation Area Appraisal, March 2026

*A community-led Conservation Area Appraisal*

*Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee on behalf of Reading Borough Council*



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## Foreword by Councillor Micky Leng

I am very pleased to introduce this appraisal for the Eldon Square conservation area, which covers the very first conservation area designated in Reading. It contains one of the finest collections of historic buildings in the town.

This conservation area appraisal, along with other recent appraisals, are entirely the work of volunteers from the local community who make up Reading's Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC). These volunteers have brought considerable expertise and local knowledge to bear on the project, as well as investing significant amounts of their time in ensuring that we can best protect the areas which make Reading unique. On behalf of the Council, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the members of the CAAC for their hard work, without which we would not have made this progress with the appraisals.



Eldon Square is one of the key clusters of heritage interest in Reading, focusing around a unique collection of buildings dating mainly from the 19th Century between Kings Road and London Road, as well as the King George V Memorial Gardens which forms a vital green space on the edge of central Reading. Areas such as this are what brings character and distinctiveness to our town, and it is vital that their special interest is conserved.

However, whilst some parts of our historic environment have been sensitively preserved, it is also true that many important streets and buildings have not been treated well over the years. There have been inappropriate additions, loss of original features, a failure to maintain certain buildings as well as more modern development that is not always respectful of the original character. An appraisal such as this gives us a vital tool to prevent these changes and to enhance the area wherever possible.

I would encourage anyone who wants to be involved in future work on Reading's conservation areas, in particular those with particular professional expertise, to contact the CAAC, who are always keen to welcome anyone with interest and knowledge in the local historic environment.

Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets

## Initial Statement

Reading has fifteen conservation areas. Each conservation area (CA) has an individual conservation area appraisal (CAA).

Historic England (HE) recommends that appraisals should be undertaken for each conservation area and that these should be reviewed every five years to ensure that they reflect the up-to-date situation and are continuing to do the job they are designed for – to protect ‘the character or appearance of an area which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’.

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) is an independent community led body set up in 2016 to advise Reading Borough Council when reviewing CAAs or policies for the preservation and enhancement of CAs, heritage sites or other features of historic importance.

The Eldon Square CA was formally designated in 1972, following a period of public consultation. In 1982 it was extended to include Watlington Street to the west and Eldon Street, Victoria Street and Montague Street to the east. It was last appraised by the Council’s external consultants, The Conservation Studio of Cirencester, in 2007. Their report was formally adopted by the Council at that time and, where the report’s findings and recommendations have been found to remain relevant today they have been carried forward in this Appraisal.

This community led Conservation Appraisal has been prepared by Reading CAAC, using an adaptation of the Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit, an approach to carrying out appraisals recommended by HE.

The Appraisal is preceded by a one page summary of the CA. The first part of the appraisal comprises a Statement of Special Interest, which summarises the key qualities and features which give the area its character and which justify the special protection afforded by a conservation area. This is followed by a more detailed analysis of each of the key elements and areas.

A number of changes have been made to the appraisal and the format of the document since the 2007 review:

- The content of the document is in line with current HE guidance;
- We have placed an increased emphasis on trees and green space in this appraisal because of our heightened awareness of their importance in an urban area such as the Eldon Square CA;
- We have placed more emphasis on documenting historic shopfronts as their importance to the streetscape is increasingly valued in the town;
- An action plan has been included to set out recommendations for the future management of the area to maintain its special character;
- National and local planning legislation, frameworks and policies have not been listed in detail but are summarised in para 1.1;
- Photographic appendices have been included for listed buildings, buildings of townscape merit, views, trees and green spaces and shopfronts;

- Details of the consultation process are included in Appendix 1;
- A full description of the archaeology and history of development of the area is included in Appendix 2 with a summary in para 3.

Within the body of the document, where there have been significant changes for better or worse to the area since the last review e.g. property renovation or neglect, these have been mentioned.

The approach to Buildings of Townscape Merit (BTM) in the CA has been reviewed and brought into line with that in other CAs. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of BTMs and the reasoning is set out in full in para 5.3.2.

The existing boundaries of the CA have been reviewed and all of the areas currently included merit retention. Kings Road, the core of the original 1972 conservation area designation, is challenged by the A329 and some of the more recent developments on the south side but it is important to remember that the 1830 road layout that enabled development in the area is a key part of the special and defining character of the CA.

An extension is proposed to include:

- The vicarage at 84 Queens Road which was recommended for consideration at the 2007 review. The building dates from c1900 and was built as The Manse to the Wesley Methodist Church and is part of the same site. The architects were Morris and Son. It is a two-storey brick building with bands of contrasting white brick, Welsh slate roof, brick stacks with clay pots. The east door (facing the Wesley Methodist Church) is recessed within a porch with a pointed arch and a faintly ecclesiastical appearance. It helps to mark the transition between the historic church and modern development further west along Queens Road.
- 77 London Road, which together with 75 London Road, already in the CA, now forms one office building and a boundary line should not be drawn through the middle.
- 32 Eldon Terrace should be included to rationalise an eastern boundary with 75-77 London Road and the rear of 27 Eldon Square.
- 46 & 48 Eldon Terrace, a pair of attractive Victorian houses, once a terrace of three.

The inclusion of all properties along the south side of Eldon Terrace was considered. With the exception of nos 32, 46 & 48 this was rejected for two reasons. First, London Road east of Eldon Square has many fine, dramatic examples of Victorian architecture which as with the houses of Eldon Square have past or present access to Eldon Terrace. Although it might be advantageous to include the south side of Eldon Terrace for completeness, including the property on London Road would require a new character area. Second, other properties on the north side of London Road plots, 34 Eldon Terrace and Alderney Court, are modern and in themselves are not worthy of inclusion. 79 London Road which has a boundary with No 34 is protected by being listed. The permeability of the London Road and also Eldon Square to Eldon Terrace boundary is an ongoing development issue.

The inclusion of Reading College was considered but again it could not be justified without undermining the integrity of the CA. Views out of the CA to the college are important.

Along Kings Road to Fatherson Road there is a terrace of properties the final three of which, Victoria Place, are particularly fine examples of Victorian gothic. There is another similar property on Fatherson Road. We recommend that consideration is given as to how best to protect the heritage of the area between the CA and Fatherson Road including London Road properties, only three of which are listed, 79 and 95 & 97. This is outside the scope of this appraisal review.

The Grove and Boulton Street were considered for inclusion and have many merits but could not be justified at this time without a full consideration of the potential of further extension to South Street.

We are grateful to Berkshire Archaeology, Reading Borough Libraries, Reading Museum and Royal Berkshire Archives for their assistance with producing this revised appraisal and permission to reproduce images and maps as noted in the text.

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## Statement of Special Interest

### SS1 Introduction and Summary

This section summarises those elements which create the area's character and justify its designation as a Conservation Area (CA) to assist key decisions on its development and enhancement. Later sections of this appraisal provide fuller details. The key characteristics are:

- Eldon Square, a mid-nineteenth century planned formal town square comprising an enclosed garden surrounded on three sides by Bath stone detached and semi-detached buildings;
- Eldon Road, at its southern end part of the formal arrangement of Eldon Square, notable for a row of mid-nineteenth century dwellings on its west side;
- The former residents' garden at Eldon Square, now known as King George V Memorial Gardens, enclosed by grade II listed railings and containing mature trees and other greenery and a large statue of the first Marquess of Reading;
- Nos 163 to 189 (odd) Kings Road, a long row of prestigious Bath stone nineteenth century properties with good quality Classical and Italianate detailing;
- A cohesive development of mid-nineteenth century mainly terraced houses occupied by artisans, local tradesmen and especially later in the century, workers at the nearby Huntley & Palmers biscuit factory, the largest employer in nineteenth century Reading;
- The prevalent use of Bath stone and local brick;
- The architectural and historic interest of the area's buildings, include two grade II\* listed buildings or groups of buildings (Watlington House and 173-183 (odd) Kings Road);
- Two listed churches in unusually close proximity (Wesley Methodist Church and the Sacred Heart Church (built as the Church of St John the Evangelist)) the spires of which are a local landmark;
- Re-use of former light industrial and commercial enterprises adds depth to the understanding of the historic development of the area;
- Distinctive local details such as cast iron street name signs, ghost signs and historic lamp posts;
- Lengths of historic stone kerbs and gulleys and remnants of old railings;
- Protected trees and groups of trees and public and private green space;
- There are 30 listed buildings or groups of buildings in the CA and 26 buildings or groups of buildings of townscape merit;
- The CA has three character areas distinguished by age, architectural style and building materials;
- Character area 1 is the central area of 1830s onwards development including Eldon Square, Eldon Road and Kings Road;

- Character area 2 includes terraced streets west of Eldon Road i.e. Watlington Street, St Johns Street, St Johns Road, St Johns Hill, Princes Street, Eldon Place and Queens Road (south);
- Character area 3 includes later nineteenth century terraces to the west of Eldon Road i.e. Eldon Terrace, Eldon Street, Victoria Street, Montague Street, Town Place.

## **SS2 Significance and Key Positive Features**

Historically, the conservation area was developed as a residential area with small scale industrial activity and workshops. Facilities to serve the community included churches and a Sunday school, public houses, shops and bakeries.

Today, the area is still predominantly residential but some of the larger houses are now in multiple occupation or flats or converted into doctors surgeries (e.g. no. 9 Eldon Square) or offices (e.g. nos 173-183 Kings Road). A few shops remain, notably three convenience stores and an upholstery workshop. There is a modern petrol station with small supermarket at the south west corner of Watlington Street which was built on the site of a former stonemason's yard.

Within the conservation area there are two active places of worship (Wesley Methodist Church and the Polish Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart) and three public houses (The Lyndhurst, The Retreat and Sip n'Spin). Purpose-built late twentieth century office blocks, Hanover and Berkshire House, in Kings Road have now been converted to residential.

The terraced streets of the CA are enclosed and protected from noise and disturbance by traffic. Vehicular access beyond the main roads is discouraged by means of artificially created cul-de-sacs and blockages that prevent 'rat-runs'.

Focal corner locations occupied or previously occupied by shops, public houses, bakeries or light industrial uses are identifiable within the area e.g. St Johns Street which had a public house at the north-east corner (now a convenience store), a bakery at the north-west corner with a (vacant) retail unit and ghost sign, a public house at the south-west corner and a beerhouse/grocers at the south-east corner.

The area is typified in the title of F C Padley's 1973 history of the area 'A Village in the Town, Reading's first conservation area'. The special character of the CA includes the social and community life of 'The Village'.



*Figure 1: The Kennet Morris performing in St Johns Street in front of The Retreat public house in summer 2023 (image Evelyn Williams)*

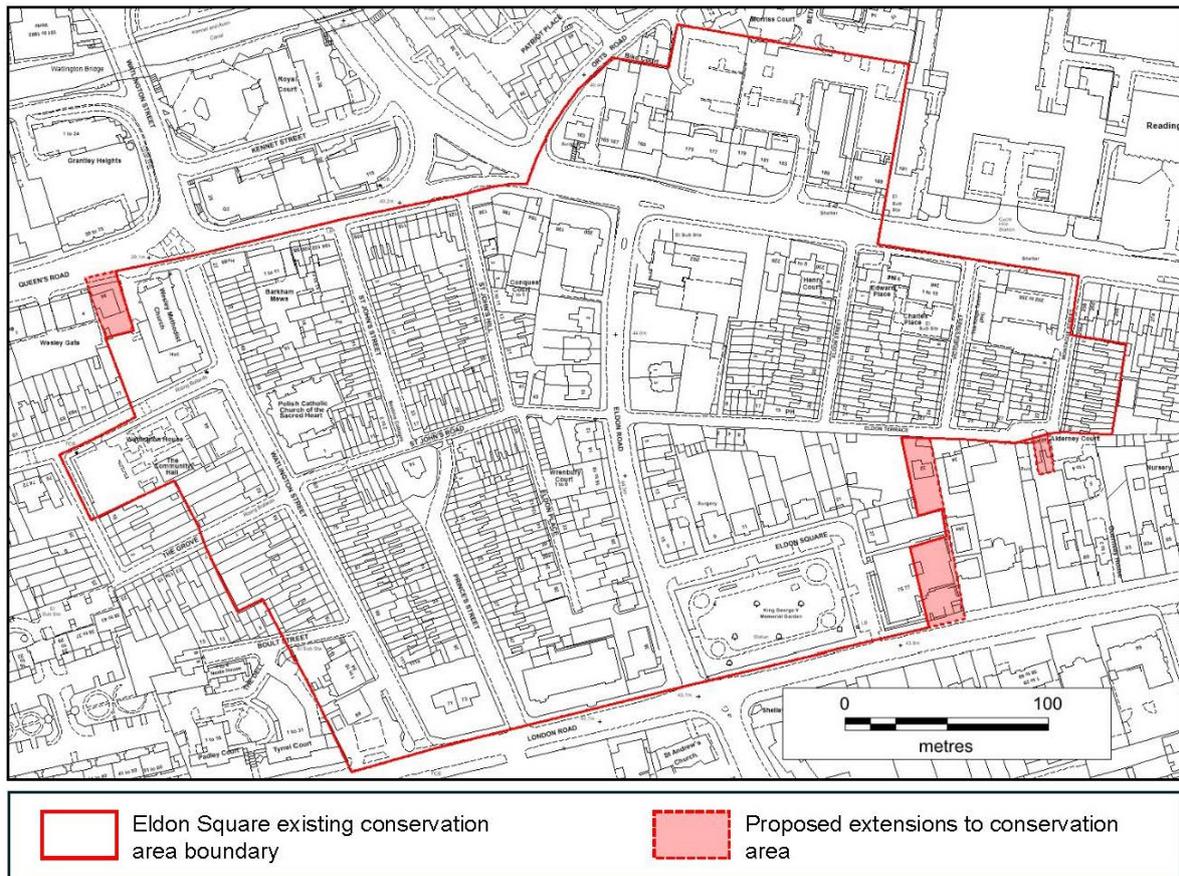
### **SS3 Issues and vulnerabilities**

- Historic streetscape and local distinctiveness are under threat from the requirements of traffic management and public amenities;
- Loss of original architectural details;
- Poor appearance of George V Memorial Gardens.
- Ongoing decline in local amenities such as public houses;
- Street clutter;
- Traffic noise and pollution detract from the character and environmental quality of the main streets;
- Kings Road only has two crossing points and presents a barrier to and a negative environment for pedestrians to experience the oldest and grandest character area of the CA.

### **SS4 Recommended measures**

In order to address the issues and vulnerabilities set out above, Section 8, The Conservation Area Action Plan, sets out in tabular form a series of measures with timescales which should be undertaken to ameliorate these issues.

## SS5 The 2024 Boundary and Character Area Adjustments



**Figure 2: Proposed Conservation Area Boundary (inclusive of proposed area extensions)**

The boundary extensions proposed are minimal and rectify anomalies in the 1982 boundary. Over and above the incorporation of additional properties, no adjustments to character areas are required.

### Character Area 1

- The inclusion of 77 London Road is required to include the whole premises of 75-77 London Road as a boundary through the middle of a building is not practical.



*Figure 3: 75-77 London Road (image Evelyn Williams)*

## Character Area 2

- The vicarage attached to the Wesley Church was recommended for inclusion in 2007 but this was not followed through. The property dates from c1900 and was built as The Manse to the Wesley Methodist Church and is part of the same site. The architects were Morris and Son. It is a two storey brick building with bands of contrasting white brick, Welsh slate roof, brick stacks with clay pots. The east door (facing the Wesley Methodist Church) is recessed within a porch with a pointed arch and a faintly ecclesiastical appearance. It helps to mark the transition between the historic church and modern development further west along Queen's Road, beyond the CA before reaching Grade II listed Queens Crescent.



*Figure 4: Vicarage of the Wesley Church (image Zoë Andrews)*

## Character Area 3

- 32 Eldon Terrace is included to match the inclusion of 77 London Road which sit north and south respectively of the garden of 27 Eldon Square. The entrance from Eldon

Terrace is a distinctive historic feature of the street, abutting the flint and brick wall which extends west from here to the junction of Eldon Terrace and Victoria Street.



*Figure 5: 32 Eldon Terrace (image Evelyn Williams)*

- 46 and 48 Eldon Terrace, are two remaining properties of a terrace of three similar to those in the immediate area and are worthy of protection within the CA. They close the view south along Montague Street.



*Figure 6: Left 46 & 48 Eldon Terrace from Montague Street (image Zoë Andrews) right 46 & 48 Eldon Terrace (image Evelyn Williams)*

# Conservation Area Appraisal

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Policy context

The purpose of an appraisal document is to ensure that the special interest justifying designation of the CA is clearly defined and analysed in a written statement of its character and appearance. This provides a sound basis, defensible on appeal, for development plan policies and development control decisions, and also forms the basis for further work on design guidance and enhancement proposals.

This CAA describes and defines the particular historical and architectural character and interest of the Eldon Square CA, highlighting those features of its character and appearance that should be preserved or enhanced and identifying negative features that detract from the area's character and appearance, and issues that may affect it in future.

The CAA has been produced within current national and local planning policy guidelines. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that *'When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.'*

#### **Sustainable development**

The government has outlined a presumption in favour of sustainable development with economic, social and environmental objectives. In relation to the environmental objective the NPPF states:

*'...to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.'*

#### **New development in conservation areas**

In relation to new development in conservation areas the NPPF states:

*'Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.'*

In order to accurately make these judgements clear, evidence must be laid out detailing the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area.

#### **Local Plan**

Reading adopted a new Local Plan in November 2019 which set out policies for the protection of Reading's historic environment including designated heritage assets such as

conservation areas and non-designated heritage assets. A partial update to the Plan commenced in 2023.

This CAA cannot hope to mention every building or feature within the CA that might be of value. Any omission should not be taken to imply that it is not of any interest or value to the character of the area.

## **1.2 Public consultation**

This appraisal is in a format recommended by Historic England. It has been prepared by the CAAC. In this CA, there are many local residents to consult with and also local businesses. Consultation has been aimed at engaging with residents, businesses and other stakeholders in the area to help define what continues to be of special significance and worthy of protection and/or enhancement.

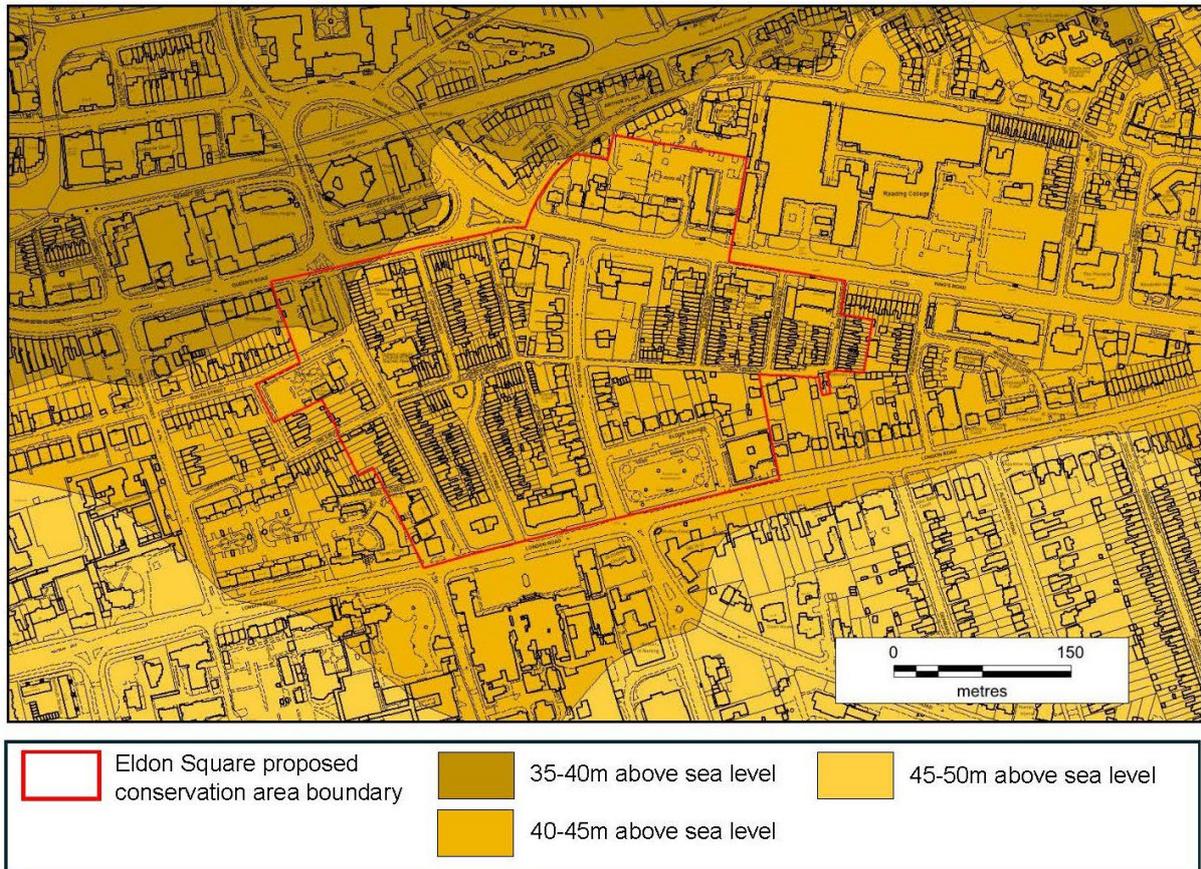
## **2. Landscape setting**

Eldon Square Conservation Area lies well within the east side of urban Reading just beyond the Inner Distribution Road (IDR). It is 1km from Reading's Saxon centre at the St Mary's Butts/ Gun Street crossroads, 0.8km from Reading's Medieval Market Place at the gates of Reading Abbey, under 1km from The Oracle in the town centre and 1km from Reading Station.

The CA includes parts of the north and south side of Kings Road but otherwise lies between London Road and Queens Road. These are three wide heavily trafficked east-west routes through Reading. Eldon Road, the north-south 'spine' of the conservation area is a major route linking Kings Road and London Road. Watlington Street was also once a thoroughfare between Kings Road and London Road but is now closed to traffic at its northern end. St Johns Street, where there is no parking, and Eldon Terrace form an east-west route from Watlington Street to Montague Street which is only available to pedestrians and cyclists in its entirety.

The row of grand early nineteenth century dwellings on the north side of Kings Road (nos 163 to 189 Kings Road) face south as do most of the properties on Eldon Square showing off the honey glow of Bath stone on a sunny day.

From Eldon Road there is a slight fall in the land westwards to Watlington Street. Throughout the area there is a general fall northwards to the River Kennet, hence the side-street named St Johns Hill.



*Figure 7: Landscape map of the conservation area.*

### 3. Brief History of the Area

The land sales by Reading Corporation and the Crown and the building of two new roads across the land in 1834, Kings Road (named after King William IV) and Queens Road (after Queen Adelaide) were the catalysts for the development of the Eldon Square district on what had previously been mainly agricultural land.

High class houses were built in Eldon Square and in Kings Road, out of Bath stone brought to Reading by the Kennet and Avon Canal. The Oval was at the centre of a planned development which was not completed, being over taken by the need for smaller terraced houses.

Early occupants of the Bath stone houses were mainly of independent means and the residents of the terraced houses were tradesmen, artisans and labourers who worked either on their own account or were employed in Reading's development boom and local industries.

On the south side of London Road opposite the CA is the Royal Berkshire Hospital which opened in 1839, sited on land donated by Lord Sidmouth.

The church of St John the Evangelist on Watlington Street was built in 1872 and replaced the original 1837 church on the same site which could not accommodate the growing number of worshippers in the area. The foundation stone for the Wesley church on Queens Road was laid 1872 and the vicarage was built c1900.

The area changed in the second half of the twentieth century as Reading changed when Brewing (H & G Simonds/Courage), Biscuits (Huntley & Palmers) and Bulbs (Suttons Seeds), the industries of Reading's 3Bs moved out of the town centre.

Today the area has lost almost all the local businesses, public houses and shops and is mainly residential. However, former retail premises, public houses and light industrial properties are identifiable and are often situated at street corners. It has a strong community spirit and residents are proud of living there. Most properties are well maintained and some, but not all, have been improved with the re-instatement of previously lost heritage features.

A more detailed history can be found in Appendix 2.

## 4. Spatial Analysis

### 4.1 Key characteristics and plan form

The conservation area is in a wholly urban location and comprises a dense network of streets of detached and semi-detached buildings running north-south or east-west. It comprises all or parts of 14 streets, roads, places and terraces which range from pedestrian only pathways to major A roads.

The most distinctive element of the street pattern is Eldon Square where development commenced in 1834. The development of prestigious Bath stone houses surrounds three sides of a small rectangular, and now public, park enclosed by railings containing a lawn, trees and shrubs and a statue of Rufus Isaacs, first Marquess of Reading (1860-1935). Building height is mainly two or, less commonly, three-storey. Modern, late twentieth century office and residential blocks rise to as many as five storeys.

South facing nos 163 to 189 Kings Road are set well back from the road. These large Bath stone houses, elevated above semi-basements are, because of a slight bend in the road and its width, prominent in views along Queens Road and Kings Road. Nos 173-183 form a terrace of three pairs of similar properties linked at ground floor level. Northward views along Eldon Road and Eldon Street are enhanced by a glimpse of the stone facades of no. 169 and no. 187/189 respectively.

The most prominent landmarks in the conservation area and surrounding locality are the spires of the Wesley Methodist Church and the Church of St John the Evangelist, now the Polish Church of the Sacred Heart. The churches have a presence in Watlington Street and the two spires, only a few hundred metres apart, are a positive feature of the conservation area and further afield.

The Oval, no. 14 St Johns Road, is a detached mid-nineteenth century brick building. An 1834 map indicates that it was to be the focal point of a planned cruciform layout of streets which never came to pass. The Oval looks directly down St Johns Street to the point where Queens Road and Kings Road merge. Similarly, to the south, it is directly aligned with Princes Street and there is a fine, but off-centre, view of the façade of the Royal Berkshire Hospital, built in 1839 and Grade II\* listed (1156091). The central portion shares an architect, Henry Briant, and building material, Bath stone, with many of the grander residential properties of Kings Road, Eldon Road and Eldon Square. Trees in The Oval's rear garden soften the urban street scene in the view north along Princes Street.

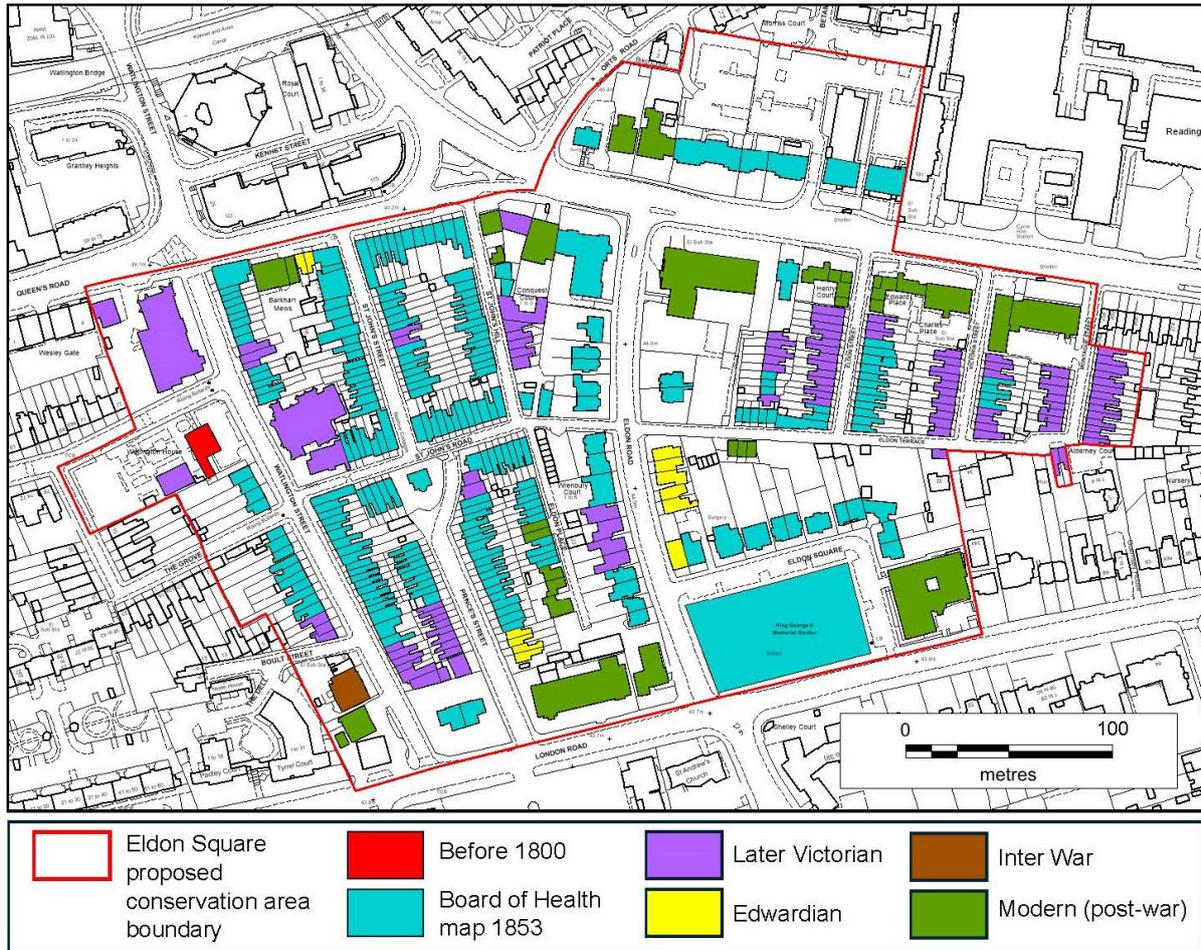
Corner sites along St Johns Road, Eldon Terrace, Queens Road, Kings Road and London Road were generally and sometimes still are, occupied by public houses, retail or industrial buildings. St Johns Street for example had at one time, the Beehive public house on the south-western corner, a beerhouse/ bakery and grocers shop on the south-eastern corner a bakery on the north-western corner and the Military Arms public house, now a convenience store, on the north-eastern corner.

Nearly all of the CA's terraced houses have a small front garden between the building line and pavement. The main exceptions are nos 16-30 (even) and nos 13-21 (odd) St Johns Hill which are built directly up to back-of-pavement line. More prestigious detached and semi-detached properties in Kings Road, Eldon Road and Eldon Square were built with large rear gardens but increasingly these are being lost to car parking.

The pattern of 'streets', 'roads', 'hill', 'terrace' and 'places' was clearly established by 1853 when the Board of Health maps were produced. With the exception of today's Watlington Street and London Road this had taken place within a 20 year period since the 1830s. Eldon Road is the widest road entirely within the CA and Princes Street is wider than its terraced counterparts.

At least 50% of today's residential properties are shown on the 1853 Board of Health map (coloured in turquoise on the map below) and most of the rest (coloured purple on the map below) from the later Victorian era. There are a few infill properties from Edwardian times (coloured yellow on the map below), for example 11-13 Eldon Road which has a '1902' date stone. The only inter-war property is the County Arms public house which was built on the site of an existing pub of that name. Modern properties especially along Queens Road, largely date from the 1970s or later and replace older properties but there are one or two infill properties and garden or former industrial yard developments such as 26 Eldon Place.

The gardens of Eldon Square have changed in layout but the site and railings remain as when first laid out for the use of residents in the 1830s.



**Figure 8: Buildings by age**

**Notes on the map of buildings by age:**

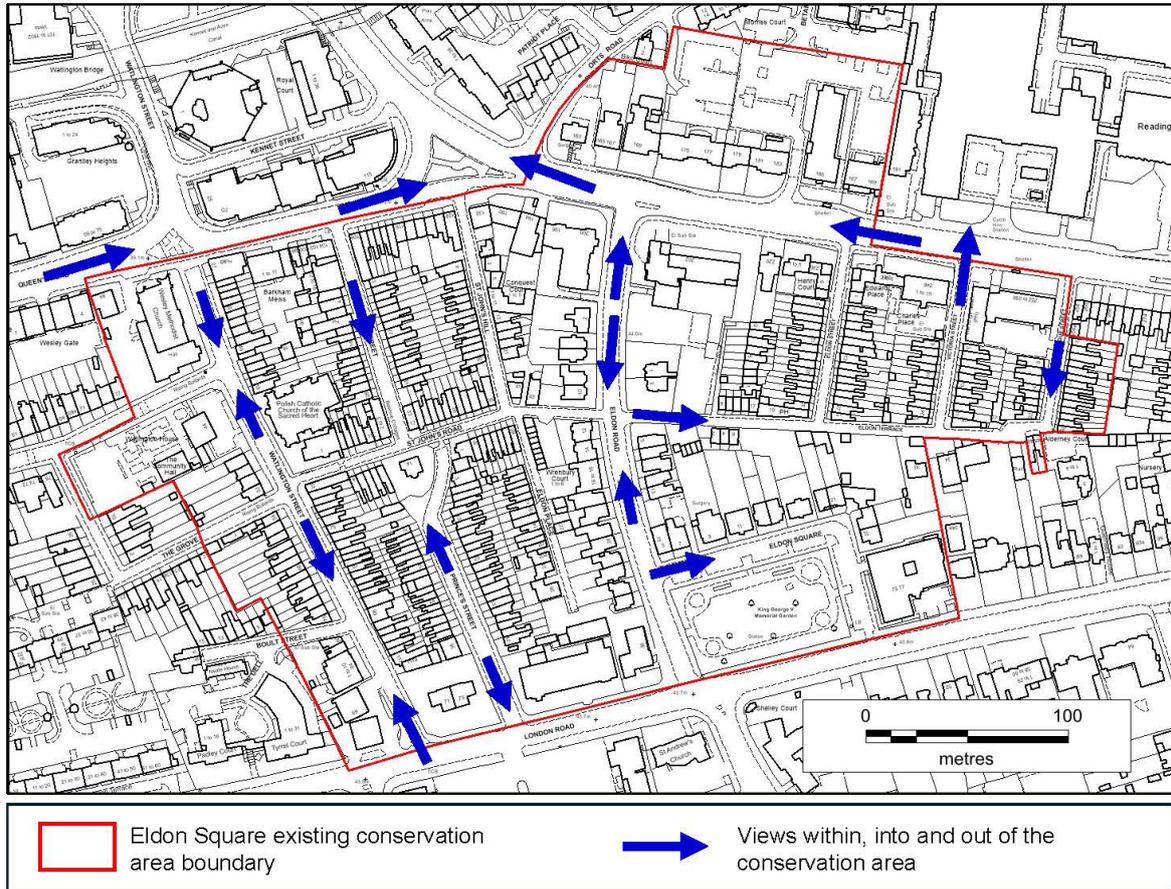
The dating of properties has followed the date of first appearance on a map and sometimes this can be confirmed or refined by other evidence such as visual inspection, newspapers, directories, censuses or Historic England listing descriptions. In general, although properties may have been extended and in some case considerably, the date is the date of first appearance of a property on the site. This is fairly straightforward for most terraced residential properties but the precise dating of some properties has proved problematic:

- 5 Eldon Square/ 15 Eldon Road is listed Grade II. The Board of Health map (1853) shows a single property on the plot which is now occupied by 5 Eldon Square/15 Eldon Road and 7 Eldon Square. Evidence from maps, directories, photographs and external physical inspection indicate that 5 Eldon Square/ 15 Eldon Road dates from the beginning of the twentieth century on the site formerly occupied by the western section of 7 Eldon Square. HE inspected the property in late 2025 and have consulted on proposed changes to the listing entry for this property or its removal from listing. 5-13 Eldon Road were also built around this time.
- 190 Kings Road is a modern makeover, with at least one additional storey, of a Victorian building.

## 4.2 Views into, within and out of area

(see Appendix 5 for images)

The map below shows the direction of views into, within and out of the CA with blue arrows.



**Figure 9: Views into, within and out of the area**

### 4.2.1 Views into the area



**Figure 10: Views into the CA - east along Queens Road (image Evelyn Williams)**

Views into the area tend to be marred by roads and traffic on major thoroughfares which are a distraction to the viewer. Modern developments and car parks are concentrated at key junctions on the main roads. There are three historic views of note:

- Looking east along Queens Road to the junction with Kings Road and beyond. From the west end of Queens Road, adjacent to Queens Crescent, which is listed and of a similar era, the listed buildings on the north side of Kings Road come in to view as does the spire of the Wesley church. As the viewer approaches and the road curves more properties are visible.
- Looking north down Watlington Street from in front of the Royal Berkshire Hospital on London Road. In this view the curve and incline of Watlington Street, and the two church spires are visible. The view continues down towards the river, the Verto building and Watlington Bridge.
- Looking west from Reading College (Activate Learning) has a view, albeit currently marred by traffic, of listed properties to the north and more modern developments within the CA to the south

#### **4.2.2 Views within the area**

There are a limited number of views within the area because of the short horizon resulting from the street plan. The following are important views:

- Looking north towards The Oval (rear) from Princes Street. This view shows the Oval as it was meant to be seen, as a focal point, when approaching down Princes Street.
- Looking south towards The Oval (front) from St Johns Street. This view of the front of The Oval was not planned, unlike the view from Princes Street. However, it attracts the eye into the CA and also towards The Retreat public house.
- Looking east along Eldon Terrace from Eldon Road. This is an intriguing view down a side street.
- Looking south along Montague Street towards Eldon Terrace. This view shows the variety of terraced housing on Montague Street. The view is closed by 46 and 48 Eldon Terrace in the middle distance and behind that, the rear of one of the taller London Road properties.
- Looking east from Eldon Road into Eldon Square. From this spot you can see the houses of Eldon Square and also the comparative quietness compared with Eldon Road.
- Looking north down Eldon Road towards Kings Road;
- Looking south up Eldon Road towards Eldon Square. This view could show off the properties on the west side of Eldon Road. It is marred not as much by the block of Hanover House but all paraphernalia of traffic management including the yellow box markings at the junction;
- Looking south from the foot of Watlington Street.

### 4.2.3 Views out of the area



*Figure 11: View out of CA towards the Queens Road and Kings Road junction (image Evelyn Williams)*

Beyond the CA there are very few idyllic views but nevertheless there are some which are important in understanding the growth and development of the area.

- View west towards the traffic gyratory, more or less at the historic junction of Queens Road and Kings Road, the area to the north, on the right, is out of the CA;
- From Princes Street south to the Royal Berkshire Hospital. There are no views from the CA that align precisely with the portico of the hospital, this is the closest;
- From Watlington Street there is a view towards Reading Gaol and depending on any development that takes place on this site it may improve. The removal of the modern block close to the boundary wall would increase the visibility of the prison building;
- North from Victoria Street to Reading College (Activate Learning).

### 4.3 Trees and green spaces

(see Appendix 6 for images)

The most significant green space in the area and the only public garden is the King George V Memorial Garden. Once the private garden for Eldon Square residents, the council took ownership in 1944<sup>1</sup> planning to use the King George V memorial fund to convert it to a Garden of Ease which opened in 1951<sup>2</sup>. The gardens are poorly maintained, visibly neglected and the listed railings are in need of repainting. Within the gardens is a statue of Rufus Isaacs, Lord Reading, by Charles Sergeant Jagger (1885-1934) which was cleaned early in 2025 after a long period of neglect. The gardens are enclosed by railings and the name plate on the gates 'P. B. & E. Reading' indicates that they were made by Perry,

<sup>1</sup> Reading Standard 6 October 1944 p5

<sup>2</sup> Reading Standard 18 May 1951 p3

Barrett and Exall, a successor of Perry and Barrett<sup>3</sup> and one of the precursors of the Reading Ironworks Company Ltd.



**Figure 12: Aerial view of Watlington House rear garden. The garden has been laid out in the style of an apothecary's garden based on a plan from the first half of the eighteenth century (image Richard Bennett)**

Another significant green space is the rear garden of Watlington House which has been restored (2012-2014) since the last appraisal review. It is laid out according to a mid-eighteenth century plan with planting typical of an apothecary's garden as Samuel Watlington's uncle was an apothecary<sup>4</sup>. It is sometimes open to the public. The front garden and parking was remodelled in 2021 with a new wall and railings and has been planted with trees, shrubs and flowers.

Most residential properties have a front garden and many are very well maintained with shrubs and flowers although others have been paved.

The grounds of Hanover House have been well landscaped with mature silver birches and other trees, protected by a TPO, which are visible from Kings and Eldon Roads.

A number of other trees are protected including an ancient black mulberry at 1a Eldon Road (now a vacant building plot).

Properties on St Johns Road and Eldon Square have an exuberant display of wisteria when in flower.

There are two sets of planters preventing access to Watlington Street from South Street and Queens Road. The planters are sporadically maintained and add at least a token touch of green to the streetscape.

The island at the junction of Queens and Kings Roads, just outside the CA is a welcome contrast to the surrounding tarmac and traffic but should be better maintained.

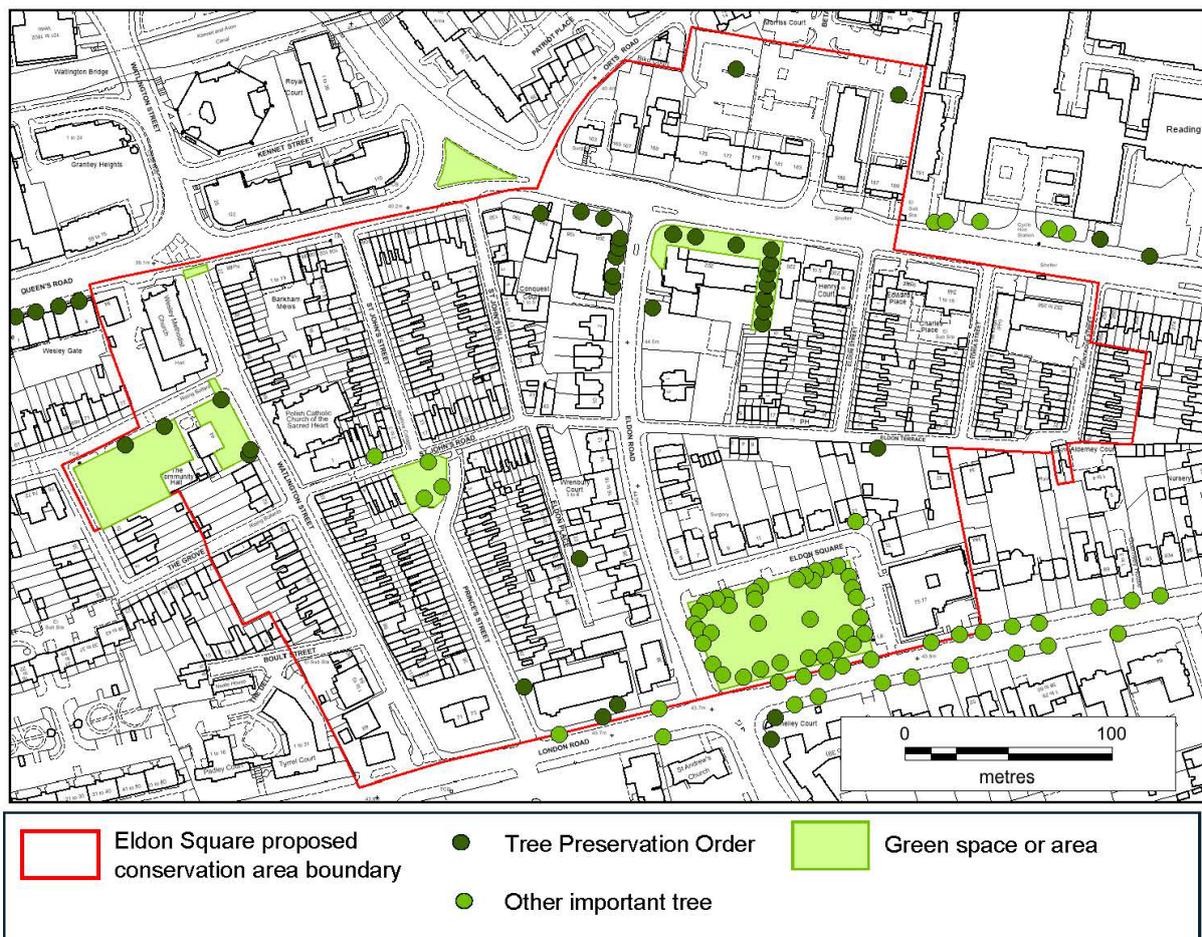
<sup>3</sup> Reading Mercury 27 April 1835 p1

<sup>4</sup> Watlington House website [the garden restoration](#) accessed 23 May 2025



**Figure 13: Traffic island at the junction of Queens Road and Kings Road (image Evelyn Williams)**

Protected trees, other significant trees and green spaces are marked on the map below. It has not been possible to identify every notable tree and lack of a specific reference does not imply that it is not of value.



**Figure 14: Trees and green spaces within the conservation area**

## 5. Buildings and Public Realm

### 5.1 Key positive characteristics

With the exception of Watlington House and now long lost farm buildings, the area was a greenfield site of agricultural land when in the 1830s Queens Road and Kings Road were laid out and the land sold on lease by the Crown and Reading Corporation. Development progressed rapidly from then onwards especially to the east of Watlington Street.

The result of this development boom is a time capsule of grand villas and squares overtaken by demand for terraced housing for trades people, artisans and factory employees on the east side of Reading and the facilities and amenities required.

It is possible to read this progression today in the layout of the streets and range of building styles. The area was never entirely residential but included small industrial enterprises, retail premises, public houses and a large brewery. Many of these were still in existence into the second half of the twentieth century and apart from a few survivals have now been converted to housing. These have been noted below within the relevant character areas.

### 5.2 Materials, styles and features

The Eldon Square Conservation Area contains, for the most part, nineteenth century housing built during a 40 year period between c1835-1875. Apart from landmark buildings such as the two churches, Watlington House, The Oval, the St John's Road Mission Hall and Reading Room and the inter-war County Arms, there are three distinctively different predominant architectural styles within the conservation area: large detached and semi-detached Bath stone houses, narrow-frontage brick terraced houses of two or three storeys and 1970s and later office and residential development mainly along the south side of Kings Road.

The large houses on the north side of Kings Road, Eldon Road and Eldon Square mostly date from the 1830s and 1840s and are built from Bath Stone in the Classical style favoured in the first half of the nineteenth century. The exception is the semi-detached pair of 1 & 3 Eldon Road which are yellow stock brick at the front and red brick at the rear.

Watlington Street is part of a north-south route between the road to Shinfield on the ridge to the south of Reading and the town centre that existed before Queens Road and Kings Road were laid out. It forms the boundary between Corporation and Crown lands and apart from seventeenth century Watlington House, developed slowly from the 1830s onwards with a more eclectic mix of building materials and design than other streets in the CA. 99 Watlington Street is particularly worthy of mention.

Two-storey red brick terraces predominate in the narrower streets between London Road and Kings Road. These residential properties are characterised by a narrow frontage with, at ground floor, a front door with a single window beside and above is a single matching window. A brick dentilled eaves course is common. Brick chimney stacks protrude through the slate roof well below the ridge with the effect that the lively roofscape created by a row of chimney stacks and red clay pots is highly visible from the street. The street frontages, though terraced, are not uniform and do not always follow a regular building line but are made up from short rows of differing design reflecting the piecemeal development of the area.

Terraced housing typologies fall into 7 groups according to number of storeys, colour and pattern of brickwork, style and material of door surrounds and window lintels. The brick bond is mainly Flemish and the roof materials of slate.

- i) Two-storey, round arched brick door surround, one downstairs and one upstairs window with a chequerboard brick pattern.
- ii) Two-storey, round arched brick door surrounds, one downstairs and one upstairs window, red brick.



*Figure 15: Left Watlington Street foot (i) and right St Johns Street (ii) (images Zoë Andrews)*

- iii) Two-storey red brick, plain brick or stone door surrounds and window lintels, one downstairs and one upstairs window. Variations include stone string courses.



*Figure 16: Eldon Street (iii) (image Zoë Andrews)*

- iv) Taller three-storey properties occur singly or in groups on some streets with single or double sets of upper floor windows with cills supported by corbels. Grander examples of this typology such as 17 St Johns Street have grey brick with red brick door and

window surrounds and string courses and 73 Watlington Street has full height windows on the second floor.



*Figure 17: Left four three storey houses on St Johns Road and right a three storey house on St Johns Street (iv) (images Evelyn Williams)*

- v) The west side of Watlington Street is predominantly comprised of short runs of three-storey brick terraces of slightly varying design but most have two windows on the first and second floor and a front door and window on the ground floor which is not aligned with those above. Some front doors have recessed entrances behind a rounded arch. The detailing around the windows varies with 74-78 Watlington Street being the most ornate.



*Figure 18: 78 and part of 76 Watlington Street (v) (image Zoë Andrews)*

More rarely:

- vi) Two-storey, arched doorway, downstairs bay, one central window above, grey and red brick with cream brick window surrounds e.g 8-12 Montague Street.



*Figure 19: Bay windowed houses on Montague Street (image Zoë Andrews)*

- vii) St Johns Hill has a unique terrace of five houses of grey brick with red brick door and window surrounds



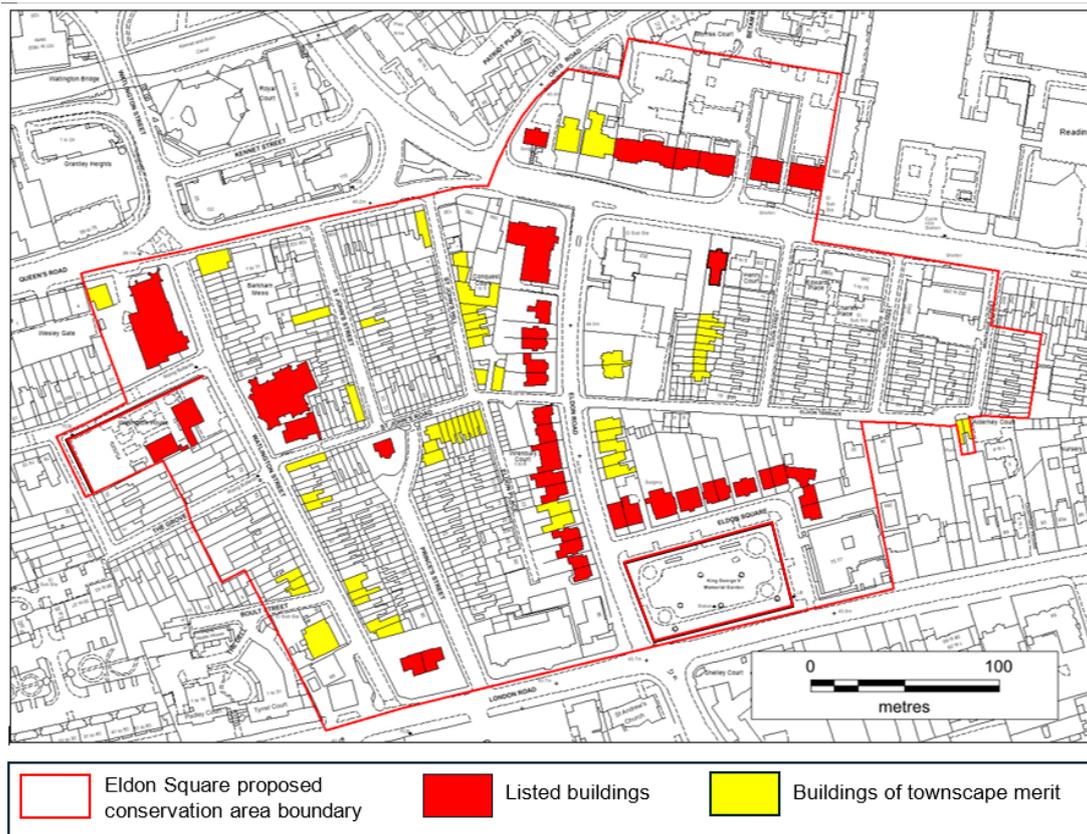
*Figure 20: Houses on the east side of St Johns Hill (vii) (images 1 & 2 Zoë Andrews, image 3 Evelyn Williams)*

The south side of Kings Road is not as homogenous which reflects the more complex twentieth century development on this side of the road. Office blocks built in the 1970s have now been converted and/or remodelled for residential use. At the corner of Eldon Road and Kings Road the site of Hanover House was once a large villa, Swiss Villa, and a short terrace of housing. Travelling east from 220 Kings Road there is a long stretch of 1990s residential development set back from the road behind a hedge which terminates at the corner of Victoria Street. The block between Victoria Street and Montague Street and the CA boundary, now Cityblock student accommodation, was occupied by the Berkshire Brewery, established in 1865 which later became a Salmons tea warehouse. The car parks at the rear

of Hanover House and Cityblock could be improved as they are a very visible distraction on the narrow terraced streets to the south.

Historically, slate was the prevalent roofing material, brought to the town first by canal but later by the railway. Nowadays, many slate roofs have been re-roofed with concrete tiles or artificial slate. The County Arms (dated 1936) has an original clay tile roof but this is unusual. No. 27 Princes Street has a slate roof with a 'fishscale' effect created by alternate use of straight and rounded slates and the ground floor bays of 41-47 Princes Street also have a fishscale roof.

### 5.3 Buildings of local historic interest and positive buildings



*Figure 21: Listed Buildings and Buildings of Townscape Merit*

#### 5.3.1 Listed buildings

There are 30 listed buildings and structures or groups of buildings and structures in the CA and most are within character area 1.

The buildings and structures are all identified on Map 8 and are also listed in Appendix 3 where images are provided along with a short summary and link to the Historic England listing entry.

#### Character Area 1

- 163 Kings Road
- 173-183 Kings Road
- 185 Kings Road

- 187-189 Kings Road
- 196-200 Kings Road
- 220-222 Kings Road
- 2 Eldon Road
- 4 & 6 Eldon Road
- 8 & 10 Eldon Road
- 12 & 14 Eldon Road
- 16 & 18 Eldon Road
- 20 & 22 Eldon Road
- 28 & 30 Eldon Road
- 32 & 34 Eldon Road
- 5 Eldon Square (and 15 Eldon Road adjoining)
- 7 Eldon Square
- 9 Eldon Square
- 11 Eldon Square
- 13 & 15 Eldon Square
- 17 Eldon Square
- 19 & 21 Eldon Square
- 23 Eldon Square
- 25 & 27 Eldon Square
- Railings to George V Memorial Gardens

#### Character Area 2

- Watlington House including the Garden Hall, Watlington Street
- Walls enclosing west wall of Watlington House
- Wesley Methodist Church, Watlington Street
- Polish Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart including the school room, Watlington Street
- 71 & 73 London Road
- The Oval

#### Character Area 3

There are no listed buildings in Character Area 3

### 5.3.2 Buildings of Townscape Merit

There are 26 buildings or groups of buildings of townscape merit and most are within character area 2.

These are identified on Map 8 below and with a photograph and short description in Appendix 4.

At the last appraisal review almost every building in the CA was recognised as a Building of Townscape Merit (BTM) because of the special contribution that they make to the street scene. This differs from the approach in other Reading CAs. Historic England guidance is that locally important buildings should meet specific criteria to demonstrate that they contribute positively to the area. The criteria in summary relate to the importance to the context of a listed heritage asset, landmark quality, significance of design or architect, historic associations with local people or past events, reflect former uses of the area or contribute to the character and appearance of the area. The criteria are similar to those to be used for locally listed buildings (LLB) and as Reading does not designate LLB in its conservation areas it is understood that BTM should be the equivalent within a CA.

We consider that many of the properties designated as BTMs do not meet the criteria and that there is sufficient recognition of their contribution to the villagescape as a whole and as part of the special character of the area, by their inclusion within the CA.

Many properties, although in most cases well maintained have had windows replaced, brickwork painted over or other modifications made over time which have had a negative impact on the character and appearance of the area e.g. the east side of Victoria Street.



*Figure 22: Victoria Street looking north in the direction of Reading College (image Zoë Andrews)*

The Garden Room at Watlington House and the schoolroom at the Polish Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart were included as BTMs on the 2007 appraisal but it is considered that they are listed as they lie within the curtilage of the related listed building and are now shown as such.

#### Character Area 1

- 165-169 Kings Road
- 1&3 Eldon Road

- 5-13 Eldon Road
- 26-28 Eldon Road

Character Area 2

- 84 Queens Road
- 88 Queens Road
- 104 Queens Road
- 63 Watlington Street (Swift Upholstery)
- 73-79 Watlington Street
- 74-78 Watlington Street
- 86 Watlington Street (former County Arms public house)
- 99 Watlington Street
- 111 & 111a Watlington Street
- 3 St Johns Hill
- 5 St Johns Hill
- 7-11 St Johns Hill
- 13-21 St Johns Hill
- 39 St Johns Road (former Lifeboat public house)
- 41 & 43 St Johns Road
- 16-28 St Johns Road
- 15 St Johns Road and Beehive Cottages
- 8 St Johns Street (Retreat Public House)
- 17 St Johns Street
- 1 & 3 Princes Street

Character Area 3

- 1-9 Town Place
- 46 & 48 Eldon Terrace

***Recommended for removal from the list of BTMs***

Character Area 1

No BTM properties were removed, most properties in this character area are nationally listed.

Character Area 2

- 65-71 Watlington Street

- 77-97 Watlington Street
- 101-109 Watlington Street
- 46-72 Watlington Street
- 80 & 82 Watlington Street
- 2-36 Princes Street
- 5-47 Princes Street
- 1-39 St Johns Road
- 4-14 St Johns Road
- 2-12 Eldon Place
- 14-20 Eldon Place

#### Character Area 3

- 6-24 Victoria Street
- 3-21 Victoria Street
- 8-22 Montague Street
- 3-28 Montague Street
- 2-30 Eldon Street
- 1-27 Eldon Street
- 9-25 Eldon Terrace

### 5.4 Historic shopfronts

There are four examples of historic shopfronts or shopfronts with heritage features in the CA. Images are included in Appendix 7.

- corner site of 63 Watlington Street, Swift Upholstery, has a traditional shopfront with awning;
- no 111, boarded up and To Let as of February 2025, is traditional in style with a recessed entrance.
- 104 Queens Road has a modernised but traditional style shopfront and the fascia board is topped by decorative ironwork (in need of repair).
- 23 Victoria Street has a historic shopfront dating probably from the 1960s/70s.

Of the many public houses in the area, only The Retreat, The Lyndhurst and the Sip n'Spin (formerly the Eldon Arms) are still in business. Former public houses where evidence of this use remains include:

- County Arms on Watlington Street, converted to flats;
- The Beehive on St Johns Road;
- Golden Lion beerhouse at 54 Watlington Street has a painted over Simonds logo on the front elevation;

- The Lifeboat has a ghost 'Ind Coope Burton Ales & Stouts' sign on the St Johns Hill elevation.



*Figure 23: L - former Beehive public house, St Johns Road and R former Golden Lion with Simonds sign painted over, fascia board and shop window bricked in (images Zöe Andrews)*



*Figure 24: Ghost sign on the former Lifeboat public house, St Johns Road/St Johns Hill corner (image Evelyn Williams)*

## 5.5 Public Realm

### 5.5.1 Floorscape, street lighting, street furniture and local detail

Although carriageway and pavements are paved in modern tarmac or concrete slabs, there are many examples of natural stone roadside kerbs and gutters which, like the brick chimney stacks and clay pots of the roofscape, add to the conservation area's special character and appearance. Watlington Street has long thin kerbstones with two or three lines of granite setts forming the gutter. In Eldon Place the kerb and gutter is formed by long wide granite stones. Paving and kerbstones in Eldon Square are concrete, to the detriment of the character of the area, but the gutter is formed by lengths of stone grooved with a wide channel to contain the flow of water. Eldon Place retains two areas of stone setts in the

carriageway and there are further paved areas of setts outside The Retreat and a former workshop in St Johns Street.

Street lighting in the area is almost exclusively modern. Two cast iron lamp posts on Princes Street were removed in the 2010s as part of the introduction of LED lighting. There are, however, a small number of historic fluted iron lamp posts in the conservation area; at no. 9 Town Place (not in working order), and three (some re-used) in Eldon Square. On Eldon Road replica heritage lamp posts line both sides of the street.

The rear of Kings Road, offices and residential blocks, are almost always given over to car parks which do not present an interesting or pleasing face to the street, for example the rear of Hanover House on Eldon Terrace and the rear of City Block from Victoria Street. Similarly the car park to the rear of Melrose House at the entrance to Watlington House has a negative impact on the setting of the Grade II listed house and the entrance to or exit from the street.

Road re-surfacing in the last few years has enabled the introduction of narrow double yellow lines, albeit with some initial issues such as on Eldon Road, which are more suitable for a CA. Some of the pavement surfaces are poor and uneven with a noticeable camber making them uncomfortable for pedestrians e.g. Watlington Street.

Blocked drain covers and poor drainage results in flooding at times of heavy rainfall particularly on Princes Street.

### **5.5.2 Local details and features**

Eldon Square Conservation Area's local identity is enhanced by a number of small details and features that cumulatively help to give the conservation area a sense of place. The following are some of the small but not insignificant elements that contribute to the conservation area's special interest and are worthy of protection: cast-iron street name signs (e.g. Eldon Terrace, St Johns Road, South Street), stone channels to help the run-off of rainwater (e.g. The Grove), remnants of historic railings (e.g. nos 48, 50 & 52 Watlington Street), coal hole cover at no 64 Watlington Street, hand painted Eldon Road sign on no. 30 Eldon Road, Rosetta House on Eldon Square, Venetian Cottages faintly visible on 32 & 34 Eldon Road and ghost signs.

## **6. Character Areas**

The conservation area can be divided into 3 character areas according to building type and period. Area 1 contains large prestigious predominantly Bath stone residences including Eldon Square whilst Areas 2 and 3 contain predominantly brick terraces. Areas 2 and 3 have many similarities but the terraces east of Eldon Road are more uniform, smaller in scale and of a slightly later date than the terraced development west of Eldon Road.

The three character areas are as follows:

- Area 1: Kings Road, Eldon Road and Eldon Square;
- Area 2: Terraced streets west of Eldon Road i.e. Watlington Street, St Johns Street, St Johns Road, St Johns Hill, Princes Street, Eldon Place, Queens Road (south);
- Area 3: Terraced streets east of Eldon Road i.e. Eldon Terrace, Eldon Street, Victoria Street, Montague Street, Town Place.



**Figure 25: Character Areas (inclusive of proposed area extensions)**

### 6.1 Character Area 1 - Kings Road, Eldon Road and Eldon Square



**Figure 26: 175-179 Kings Road (Evelyn Williams)**

This area contains the majority of the conservation area's listed buildings and is characterised by tall detached or semi-detached residences in Italianate style faced with Bath stone. They are set back from the highway and have long rear gardens in some cases now given over to car parks.

Nos. 163 to 189 on the north side Kings Road form an almost continuous row of buildings of architectural interest enriched by large stone porticos, rusticated ground floors and pairs of full height bows. They rise to three storeys with basement and are approached up a flight of stone steps. No 163, Encombe House is the oldest property and continuing the 'Eldon' theme was probably named after the seat of the Earls of Eldon. Nos 165 & 167 were gutted and rebuilt in the 1990s. Despite this, 165 is possibly the most famous in the row as the address where, in 1874 the French poet Arthur Rimbaud advertised that he gave French lessons. The rebuilding is recorded in the opening shots of the film *Robinson in Space*, directed by Patrick Keillor (1997).

Eldon Square is a formally planned composition (c1830) of houses around three sides of a residents' garden with contemporary railings, unique in Reading. To the north of Eldon Square is a service road, Eldon Terrace. Eldon Square properties appear in several early photographs from William Henry Fox Talbot's *Reading Establishment*. The garden now known as the George V Memorial Gardens is a public park with a lawn, flower beds, trees and benches including a memorial bench to Reading musician Robert John Rose (1956-2014).



**Figure 27: The view north down Eldon road with Eldon House (left) and Eldon Square (right) showing the former three-storey tower of 7 Eldon Square. c1860. Eldon Square a print by J Macaulay courtesy of Reading Library local studies collection**

Eldon Road connects the major thoroughfares of London Road and Kings Road. Nineteenth century buildings on the west side are nearly all listed and dating from the same period as Eldon Square, but nos 20/22 and 24/26 do not appear on a map of 1879.

The east side of Eldon Road is less intensively developed and contains a large brick pair (nos 1/3) and a large stucco pair of 1902 (nos 11/13) on either side of a c1900 row of three terraced houses built in Bath stone.

Many of these former houses have been converted to flats, offices or professional uses.

The frontage of the buildings comprise open lawn and flower beds with low boundary roadside walls of mixed construction: stone blocks, brick, poured concrete, or rendered concrete blocks. The front pedestrian accesses are mainly gated with a variety of wrought iron and forged steel options, and flagged concrete paths leading to steps up to raised ground floor entrances above accessible semi basements.

Part of the garden frontage to 163 has been converted to hard standing for car parking but vehicle access is mainly via the rear of the properties.

There are some modern developments in this area which appear out of keeping with the prevailing first half of the eighteenth century character:

- On the south side of Kings Road the appearance is less uniform and a modern block (Hanover House) on the corner of Kings Road and Eldon Road, once offices, now apartments is out of keeping with the prevailing character. The block occupies the site of Swiss Villa, York Villas and York Place.
- A B Walker, funeral director, premises at 36 Eldon Road and Princes House 73a London Road was the site of Eldon House which occupied the whole block west to Princes Street.
- Eldon Court, 75-77 London Road replaced an earlier house, known as Rose Cottage in 1842, also with a London Road address.



**Figure 28: Eldon House, now the site of A B Walker, funeral directors, and Princes House, from the 1860 auction catalogue courtesy of Reading Borough Libraries local studies collection**

*Character Area 1: Features that make a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the conservation area:*

- The high concentration of listed buildings including Grade II\*;
- The architectural cohesion of prestigious mid nineteenth century residential development;
- Grandeur of nos 163 -189 Kings Road;
- The formal planning of Eldon Square;
- King George V Memorial Gardens and railings in Eldon Square, a green space with mature trees;
- Good quality townscape;
- Prevalent use of Bath stone;
- Many example of historic railings and good boundary treatments, including restoration on some properties;
- Three cast iron lampposts in Eldon Square.

*Character Area 1: Features that have a negative impact on the historic character and appearance of the conservation area:*

- Loss of original front boundary walls and railings;
- Insensitive alterations to listed buildings e.g. garage door in basement of no. 2 Eldon Road;
- Poor quality and poor condition of paving around Eldon Square;
- Poor state of maintenance of George V Memorial Gardens;
- No. 36 Eldon Road (A B Walker funeral directors), in a prominent corner location, is out of character with the prevalent architectural cohesion of Eldon Road and Eldon Square;
- Car parks at the rear of Hanover House and 10 Eldon Road;
- Modern developments on south side of Kings Road;
- Loss of rear gardens to parking and garages;
- The gated demolition site on Eldon Terrace at the rear of Eldon Square, temporarily improved in late 2025 with the painting of a mural on the hoarding;
- Building plot at 1a Eldon Road surrounded by HAZ fencing;
- Continual disturbance, noise and pollution of traffic on main roads.

## **6.2 Character Area 2 - Terraced streets west of Eldon Road**

This character area is predominantly residential with some houses in multiple occupation. There are three shops (one currently empty), an upholsterers, two places of worship and three public houses. Watlington House, a seventeenth century clothier's mansion and garden, managed by the Watlington House Trust providing office space for rent mainly to charities and the garden hall can be hired for events. A modern petrol station and shop

serves London Road at the south end of Watlington Street. Melrose House west and east, 71/73 London Road, houses Royal Berkshire Hospital medical facilities and a GP practice.

Watlington Street is the oldest and primary street within this character area with an eclectic mix of historic properties of different scales, architectural styles and construction materials. It is a major pedestrian thoroughfare to and from the Royal Berkshire Hospital and the town centre. Traffic control measures, bollards and planters, only allow access from London Road.



*Figure 29: The rear of The Oval facing Princes Street (image image Zoë Andrews)*

The other side-streets in this area are narrower and have a more intimate feel than Watlington Street and two storeys is the norm. St Johns Street, St Johns Road, St Johns Hill, Princes Street and Eldon Place are characterized by short rows of modest two-storey terraced housing built to accommodate Reading's expansion in the mid/late nineteenth century.

The Oval, 14 St Johns Road, a detached building located in the centre of the linear street pattern, is the focal point of St Johns Street and closes the view down Princes Street from London Road. Although it now stands alone in its brick grandeur it was part of planned development which did not come to fruition. There is a pleasing coherence to the brickwork patterns on the south side of St Johns Road (nos 16-28) with the brickwork of 1 Princes Street and the Oval which may have taken cues from the brickwork of Watlington House.



**Figure 30: Coherent brick patterns 16-28 St Johns Road, 1 Princes Street and The Oval (images Zoë Andrews)**

St Johns Street and St Johns Hill lead north and slightly downhill towards Queens Road. With the exception of two three-storey properties, one of which forms The Retreat public house, St Johns Street is comprised of similar but not identical two-storey, red brick, terraced properties. Most of the houses on St Johns Hill, nos 16-30 and 13-21, do not have a front garden and open onto the street. 3 and 5 St Johns Hill and the former mineral water works at nos 7-11 are completely different in character.

Eldon Place is accessible from St Johns Road and is a service road for Eldon Road properties. There are five modern infill properties, three built on the rear gardens of Princes Street and two in the middle where there was a large property which was last used as a warehouse but had had previous light industrial uses.

Princes Street was planned as a wide street leading to planned development around the Oval. It only has vehicle access from London Road and at the southern end comprises two-storey, red bricked properties which are fairly uniform in style but not identical. Nos 19 and 41-47 have ground floor bay windows and 31 and 33 have a fish scale slate roof and cream brick string course, door and window surrounds. The ground floor bay windows of 41-47 Princes Street also have fish scale roofs. At the northern end is the former St John's Road Mission and Reading Room. The camber of the roadway and shallow kerbs has caused issues with flooding in the very wet weather which is becoming increasingly common.

Queens Road is a busy one-way thoroughfare that flows in an east-west direction through the northern edge of the CA. 118-128 are a terrace of six substantial but poorly maintained three-storey and basement residential properties originally part of Grenville Terrace.

Of the three character areas within this CA, it is this area where current residential uses have most replaced a once thriving small industrial, artisan and commercial community. Swift Upholstery on Watlington Street is the only workshop remaining on the street in 2025. The corner premises had been a butchers shop.

The former Somerville & Andrews glass merchants premises at 111a Watlington Street has been vacant for some years.

Some previous industrial and commercial properties are listed below:

- Two properties on Eldon Place replace the former 1970s Bradley and Bliss Ltd warehouse. Former uses of the site include a builders, a mineral water company and an engineering shop;



*Figure 31: (Left) workshop on Eldon Place c1972 courtesy Reading Libraries Local Studies and (right) 12 and 12a Eldon Place in the same space March 2025 (image Evelyn Williams)*

- 43 St Johns Road was the former warehouse of 1970s C and W Andrews, glass merchants who also occupied no 41 as offices;
- 7-11 St Johns Hill is a conversion and development incorporating the former 1970s Conquest Works, previously Humphries & Holt Mineral Water Works, earlier W E Line & Co (from c.1892, telephone no 45);
- Former undertakers at 1a and 1b Princes Street.
- At the rear of 36 Princes Street, backing on to 111a Watlington Street there is a former tailors' workshop;
- 16 St Johns Street had been a pork butchers shop with a small slaughter house in the garden.
- Meaby & Co had a large bakery enterprise for Triticumina biscuits on Queen's Road. The business was linked to Meaby's bakery at the foot of St Johns Street but it did not prosper. The building was used for producing rennet in the UK by Danish Company Christopher Hansen from 1916 and from the 1960s as a wallpaper store. There was a fire in 1968 and the site which now also links through to Watlington Street was sold and redeveloped as Barkham and Watlington Mews.



*Figure 32: Conquest Court, a residential conversion of a former light industrial premises (image Evelyn Williams)*

*Character Area 2: Features that make a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the conservation area:*

- Two grade II listed churches with landmark spires;
- Trees and gardens in front of Grade II\* Watlington House soften the urban landscape;
- Formal garden to rear of Watlington House is a valuable 'breathing space' within the town;
- Old brick and flint boundary wall (grade II) to curtilage of Watlington House (grade II\*);
- Variety of terraced houses with high quality brickwork, generally well maintained and in some cases original features restored by owners/occupiers;
- A sprinkling of ghost signs, unique properties, public houses and small scale industrial conversions add depth to the fabric of the villagescape;
- Vestiges of early-nineteenth century planned formal layout around The Oval (grade II) and Princes Street;
- Coherence of brickwork patterns on the south side of St Johns Road with the brickwork of 1 Princes Street and the Oval;
- Historic stone kerbs and gulleys;
- Areas of historic setts in Eldon Place and St Johns Street;

- Lively roofscape of brick chimneys and clay pots.

*Character Area 2: Features that have a negative impact on the historic character and appearance of the conservation area:*

- Loss of original slate roofs and other architectural features such as gates, railings and boundary walls;
- Loss of original windows and front doors to modern replacements;
- Loss of front gardens for car parking e.g. no 80 Watlington Street;
- Painting over the brick on some properties;
- The addition of porches e.g. no. 19 St Johns Road;
- Water outflow pipes on the front of buildings converted to HMO/flats on Watlington Street;
- Poor condition of older properties on Queens Road;
- Works to the roof and removal of chimneys at 41 St Johns Road;
- Modern petrol station is completely out of character with the historic street, however it should be noted that it replaces a garage and other former commercial uses including a stone masons yard;
- Car park of Melrose House;
- Litter and rubbish on the street is unsightly;
- Wheelie bins on pavement or crowding into small front gardens;
- Intrusive traffic noise from London Road and Queens Road.

### **6.3 Character Area 3 - Terraced streets east of Eldon Road**

This character area is primarily residential but also contains a shop on Kings Road and the former 'Out to Lunch' sandwich shop on Victoria Street which retains its shopfront.

Eldon Terrace was built as a narrow service road to the rear of properties in Eldon Square and provides access to four streets that run northwards onto Kings Road as well as rear access to some of the large properties on London Road. A modern terrace of 'mews' style properties at 2-6 Eldon Terrace was built c2010 replacing garages and workshops.



*Figure 33: Modern housing on Eldon Terrace (image Zoë Andrews)*

Town Place is the oldest in origin and unique in the CA as a row of 9 houses with long front gardens that can only be reached by a footpath. The later nineteenth century houses at the north end of the place were a redevelopment of part of the area occupied by Keeps Buildings which had access from Queens Road.

Eldon Street, Victoria Street and Montague Street are three short streets laid out in the 1860s/70s and adopted by the borough council in 1874. They have terraced houses on either side with small gardens to the front and larger gardens to the rear.



*Figure 34: Victoria Street (image Zoë Andrews)*

Victoria Street was the first to be laid out and is the most uniform in appearance being mainly simple red brick properties of uniform design. Victoria Square, a development similar in style to Eldon Square, was opposite the end of the street on the north side of Kings Road. It was demolished in the 1950s to build Reading College (now Activate Learning).

Montague Street terminates the view east down Eldon Terrace and has some individual variation in the groups of buildings. Nos 8-12 have ground floor bay windows, are built from grey brick with cream brick window surrounds and red detailing at first floor level.

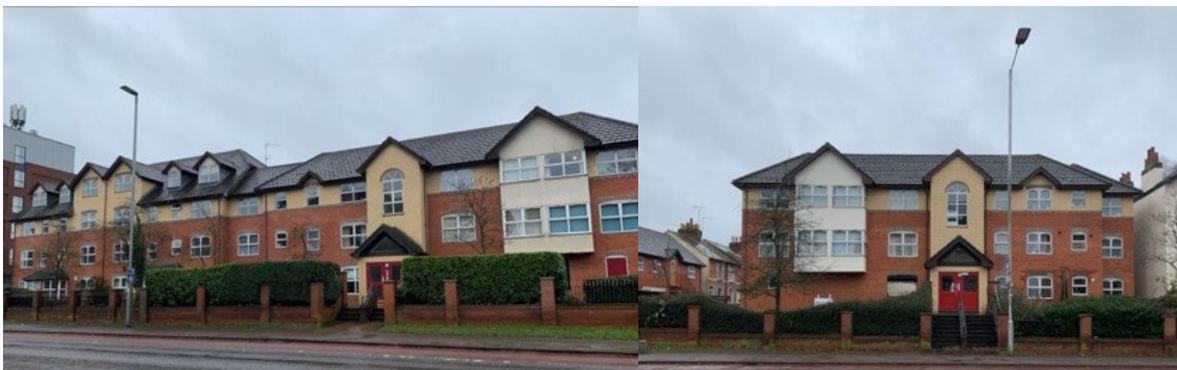
Eldon Street has the most individual variation in the brickwork design of groups of properties.



**Figure 35: (Left) former Berkshire Brewery while in use as a Salmons tea warehouse c1905 (R W Ford's album 'The Borough of Reading as it Was') and right 1933 the new Salmons tea building on the same site. Images courtesy Reading Borough Libraries Local Studies**

Approaching from Kings Road the terraced housing starts at the boundary of now demolished nineteenth century industrial or residential properties which have now been replaced by modern housing or offices converted to residential.

- Between Victoria and Montague Street, Cityblock student accommodation occupies the site of the former Berkshire Brewery (1865), later Salmons Tea Warehouse (1884) and first rebuilt c1933.
- Charles Place (246 Kings Road), Edward Place (240 Kings Road) and Henry Court (230 Kings Road) is a two to four-storey development of flats flanking Eldon Street, dating from the mid 1990s. This is a mature and thoughtful low rise yellow and red brick and stucco development behind a low wall, railings and hedge. It replaces Riplingham and Laurel Place.



**Figure 36: Charles Place, Edward Place and Henry Court (images Evelyn Williams)**

*Character Area 3: Features that make a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the conservation area:*

- Rectilinear grid pattern of streets;
- Nineteenth century brick terraced houses typical of Reading;
- Good quality brickwork;
- Flint wall on south side of Eldon Terrace;
- Historic stone kerbs;
- Some attractive well maintained gardens;
- Cast iron lamp post (not working) on Town Place;
- Cobden Terrace ghost sign at corner of Victoria Street and Eldon Terrace.

*Character Area 3: Features that have a negative impact on the historic character and appearance of the conservation area:*

- Loss of original windows and front doors to modern replacements;
- Loss of original slate roofs and other architectural features such as iron gates and railings;
- Painting over original brickwork;
- Addition of porches;
- Loss of front gardens;
- Unsightly concrete boundary walls;
- Vacant and boarded up building sites at 12 Eldon Terrace, and 14 Eldon Terrace/rear of 17 Eldon Square where approved works have not yet begun following demolition of existing garages etc;
- Dominant appearance of modern development along Kings Road with car parks to the rear;
- Forecourt of the shop at 252 Kings Road (ground floor of City Block);
- Car park behind Cityblock;
- Impact of the appearance of the car park at the rear of, Grade II listed, 81 London Road which has an exit onto Eldon Terrace.

Much improved since the last appraisal review is 23 Eldon Terrace at the junction of Eldon Terrace and Victoria Street.

## **7. Negative features, issues and opportunities for enhancement**

### **7.1 Loss of original architectural features and detail**

Many of the unlisted, and some of the listed, buildings in the CA have been adversely affected by the use of inappropriate modern materials or details. Common faults include:

- the replacement of original timber sash windows with uPVC or aluminium is common;

- the loss of original panelled front doors and their replacement with stained hardwood, uPVC or aluminium doors is common;
- addition of a porch which obscures the original front entrance;
- loss of chimney stacks and clay pots;
- the replacement of stone slate or Welsh slate roofs with concrete tiles;
- overpainting of brickwork;
- loss of original front boundary walls.

## 7.2 Neglect and opportunities for enhancement

The general condition of properties in the conservation area is good. Empty properties may fall into disrepair unless a new and viable use is found. The Oval was long in need of refurbishment and maintenance which took place in 2023.



*Figure 37: Front of The Oval from St Johns Road (image Evelyn Williams)*

In addition to the problems of traffic and the loss of architectural detail noted above, street parking is an issue in the area and may lead to an increase in pressure for off-street parking, particularly in Watlington Street.

There is potential to improve the look of car parks at the rear of buildings which impact the character and appearance of the area. They are often at odds with the landscaping or garden at the front of the property:

- rear of Hanover House;
- rear of Melrose House;
- rear of 10 Eldon Road;
- rear of Cityblock;

- rear of 81 London Road (not in the CA).

The conservation area contains a number of streets paved with stone setts or flags, which must be protected. This appraisal has identified the most important examples of these surfaces and they should be protected and repaired as necessary, using traditional techniques and materials.

### **7.3 Advertising and shop signage**

65 Watlington Street (currently Twins News and Mart) has an unsympathetic fascia board, vinyls, fly posting and is plagued with graffiti.

The garage and shop on the corner of London Road and Watlington Street although improved since the last appraisal, could be further improved by the removal of the advertising on the Watlington Street side.

The forecourt of the retail unit of the ground floor Cityblock, 106 Queens Road and 65 Watlington Street could be more sympathetic to their surroundings, particularly so in the case of the latter two which have a more immediate heritage context.

### **7.4 Tree loss**

A large sycamore tree was removed from the garden of Watlington House in 2025 due to the damage that it was causing the wall with 10 The Grove. Other Watlington House trees were removed during the garden restoration completed in 2015, when they were replaced with plants and shrubs more appropriate to the age of the building.

There has in general been an increase in tree cover in the area due to council tree planting although the locations along South Street are questionable due to the potential impact on the wall of Watlington House.

### **7.5 Street furniture and surfacing**

Historic streetscape and local distinctiveness is under threat from the needs of traffic management and public amenity bodies.

Throughout the area there are bollards restricting access and one way signage on the road surface and on street signs. This is a distraction from the character of the area but is very much appreciated by local residents who would otherwise find themselves living within a maze of rat runs between Queen and Kings Roads and London Road.

Along Queens Road and Kings Road the importance of the road as a major route has required large direction signs.

The concrete paving slabs in Eldon Square are not appropriate to the high quality environment of the historic buildings and formal square. Repaving with natural stone would be a definite enhancement.

Street furniture and streetworks should take account of the designation of the area as a CA when maintenance is carried out.

## **7.6 Rubbish and bins**

Trade bins placed in front of the few retail premises in the CA are unsightly but until a better solution is found, inevitable. Similarly domestic wheelie bins stored in front gardens and multiple bins required for HMOs are inevitable.

## **7.7 Development pressure and changing skyline**

The site of the former Mulberry House Dental Surgery at 1a Eldon Road remains undeveloped with the site and the mulberry tree protected by HAZ fencing. The current appearance of the site is poor, detracts from the appearance of the area as a whole and there are no extant planning permissions for development of the site. The protected mulberry appears to be thriving.

High rise developments on the north side of Queens Road and in the town centre are visible from the CA. The quality of design and materials of any future developments should be appropriate to the proximity to the CA.

The future of the site of Reading Gaol is currently uncertain but there is the potential for the view from Watlington Street to improve.

## **7.8 Traffic noise and pollution**

The core streets of the conservation area (Queens Road, Kings Road, Eldon Road, London Road) are part of the principal traffic circulatory routes through Reading. The route finally decided on for the eastern section of Reading's IDR in the 1980s used existing roads but widening and new bridges were required. The result is a very busy gyratory passing the former site of Huntley & Palmers biscuit factory with a complex traffic system. The character and environmental quality of these streets are spoiled by noise and pollution which is not pedestrian or resident friendly.

A red route was introduced along Kings Road in 2018 in addition to outbound and inbound bus lanes. Despite these measures, traffic congestion is a constant feature. London Road is the main vehicle inbound route into Reading and is similarly congested.

It is beyond the scope of this appraisal to do more than recommend that every opportunity to improve this situation would have heritage as well as lifestyle and health benefits to local residents and pedestrian users of the streets.

## 8. Action Plan

**Table 1 – All Conservation Areas**

Policies, attitudes and actions which need to be applied to all of Reading’s Conservation Areas if the town’s remaining historic character is to be protected and enhanced as it should be. These apply to the Eldon Square Conservation Area as fully as they do to all, particularly with regard to the careful protection of architectural detail in any building alterations. It is acknowledged that these proposals have resource implications, especially for Reading Borough Council, at a time when resources are stretched and limited.

*Table 1: Actions for all conservation areas*

ISSUE	ACTION	WHO
<p>Loss of original architectural features and details (see 7.1). Insensitive change and development not requiring planning permission, permitted development</p>	<p><b>Guidance:</b> Provide guidance document on ‘approved’ methods for common small scale alterations</p> <p><b>Awareness:</b> Provide householder information on the added value of ‘period detail’ and detail on economic alternatives for energy efficiency savings</p> <p>Material prepared by other planning authorities could be used as a model for preparing written guidance</p>	<p>RBC and CAAC</p> <p>Update as at July 2025. A <a href="#">Design Guide to House Extensions</a> Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was published in March 2021. This has general guidance on and examples of roof dormers, roof lights and extensions which would be acceptable or unacceptable in conservation areas.</p> <p>Update as at July 2025. A <a href="#">Design Guide for Shopfronts</a> SPD was published in January 2022. A new or replacement shopfront will always require planning permission. The guidance includes the specific sensitivities in relation to shopfronts, fascia boards, lighting etc in conservation areas and on heritage buildings.</p>

ISSUE	ACTION	WHO
		Update as at July 2025. A guidance leaflet for householders has been drafted by RBC, reviewed by CAAC.
Loss or change to original boundary features.	<p><b>Awareness:</b> Provide householder information document on the added value and visual importance of boundary walls and railings</p> <p><b>Policy:</b> Article 4 directions could be implemented as resources allow (see Table 2 for further recommendations on what this should cover in this CA)</p>	RBC and CAAC
Insensitive development undertaken without permission	<p><b>Guidance:</b> Provision of property owner guidance on legal requirements for alterations/development/tree works in conservation areas.</p> <p><b>Enforcement:</b> Legal enforcement by RBC to secure reversal of changes</p>	<p>RBC and CAAC</p> <p>Update as at July 2025. This is partially covered in the guidance leaflet for householders has been drafted by RBC, reviewed by CAAC.</p> <p>Enforcement - RBC</p>
Redevelopment within or adjoining the Conservation Area should respect the general height, massing and alignment of existing buildings and use a palette of materials which reflect its existing character.	<p><b>Guidance, Policy:</b> Supplementary Design guidance planning document for development in historic areas.</p> <p><b>Support:</b> Use CAAC to gain informed comment on planning applications affecting Conservation Areas</p>	RBC and CAAC

**Table 2 – Eldon Square Conservation Area**

Policies and actions which are specific to this Conservation Area, to retain and enhance its important contribution to the life of Reading as a whole. They may require some limited revenue resources, which it is recommended should be given high priority, but little or no public capital expenditure.

*Table 2: Actions for Eldon Square Conservation Area*

ISSUE	ACTION	WHO
Boundary extensions should be implemented as proposed in this revised appraisal.	<b>Policy:</b> Boundary extension to be implemented.	RBC
Reduction in number of Buildings of Townscape Merit should be implemented as proposed in this revised appraisal	<b>Policy:</b> Recommendations to be implemented.	RBC
Loss of original features of properties including boundary walls and railings.	<p><b>Policy:</b> An Article 4 direction should be considered to remove permitted development rights (PDR) to protect these features. This would require planning permission to be obtained for these works to be undertaken in the future. Although some works in CAs are not covered by PDR more clarity is required.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Draft wording of suitable Article 4 for agreement with RBC.</p> <p>Enforcement action taken against unauthorised works which do not comply with PDR restrictions in a CA or without planning permission required by an Article 4 should be consistent.</p>	<p>CAAC/RBC</p> <p>Additional clarity on what is not covered by PDR in a CA is provided in the forthcoming guidance leaflet for householders that has been drafted by RBC, reviewed by CAAC.</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

ISSUE	ACTION	WHO
The conversion of some larger properties to HMOs and flats has exacerbated the issues with bins and rubbish in front gardens and on pavements	<b>Action:</b> Enforcement by RBC streetscene of numbers of bins at each property and the inspiration for some innovative solutions.	RBC with assistance of CAAC and local councillors
The conversion of some larger properties to HMOs and flats has caused obtrusive pipework on the front of properties and utilitarian railing which detract from the historic fabric.	<b>Action:</b> Opportunities should be taken to improve the public face of these properties.	CAAC/RBC when next a planning application is submitted to make changes to the property.
Busy main road along Kings Road, Queens Road, London Road	<b>Action:</b> Future transport strategies should aim to improve the blight caused by the main roads	RBC CAAC to comment on transport strategies
Poor maintenance of George V Memorial Gardens	<b>Action:</b> If RBC is not able to maintain the flower beds and volunteer groups are not able to continue, a lower maintenance planting plan should be initiated.  The statue of Lord Reading needs regular cleaning.	RBC
Car parks in large residential blocks are detrimental to the character and appearance of the area and are very visible to pedestrians in the area	<b>Action:</b> Owners should be encouraged to landscape at the rear as well as the Kings Road front of sites.	RBC and CAAC
Street clutter, materials and traffic signage that impacts conservation area character area and views	<b>Action:</b> Guide to be produced to assist RBC streetscene staff. Road marking to reflect conservation area status.	RBC and CAAC

## Appendix 1 Public Consultations

This appraisal has been in progress for some years and was relaunched on 16 June 2022 with a community event at The Retreat public house. This was attended by a number of residents, councillors and Reading CAAC members.

On Saturday 3 December 2022 a boundary walk took place which was attended by local residents, councillors and Reading CAAC members.

2023 kicked off with a small community event on 3 January again at The Retreat.

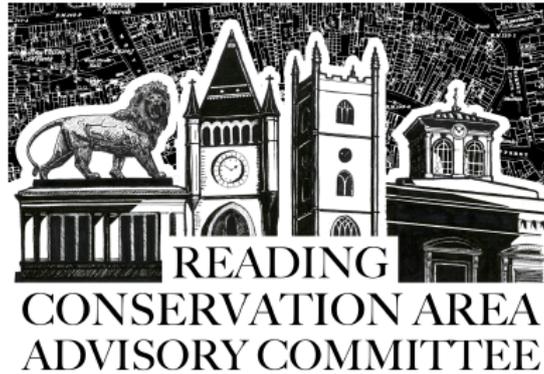
While the initial events were mainly aimed at engaging with local residents Reading CAAC took part in the inaugural Reading Walks Festival and led a walk around the CA on Sunday 14 May 2023 which was open to the general public.

2024 was a quiet year for progress but a set of photographs was taken for inclusion in the appraisal.

In January and February 2025 a draft appraisal was produced in the course of which a walkabout for Reading CAAC members with a local resident was organised on 14 February.

Following Reading CAAC approval on 3 March 2025 of the draft for publication a community meeting was held on 24 March 2025 at The Retreat. An informal public consultation ran from then until the 6 May 2025. There were 13 responses, 12 from the online questionnaire and a single response to the hard copy questionnaire placed in the Central Library which was substantially similar to the online questionnaire. The survey included space for additional comments or by writing directly to [chair.readingcaac@gmail.com](mailto:chair.readingcaac@gmail.com) which was taken up by some respondents. 10 of the 13 respondents lived or owned property in the CA.

Formal public consultation on a draft appraisal was carried out between 25 November 2025 and 20 January 2026. The draft appraisal was placed on the website, and notifications sent to the planning policy consultation list. A total of 14 responses were received.



The Eldon Square Conservation Area was first designated in 1972 and was last reviewed in 2007. The conservation area appraisal describes and defines the special historical and architectural character and interest of the Eldon Square CA. It highlights those features of its character and appearance that should be preserved or enhanced. It also identifies negative features that detract from the area's character and appearance, and issues that may affect it in future.

In this review Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee ([readingcaac.org](http://readingcaac.org)) are recommending an extension of the boundary to include five additional properties.

1. Do you agree that the designation of conservation areas is important to protecting the special character of Reading?

Please tick the box that applies.

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree  
nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly  
disagree

2. Do you agree with the proposed boundary extension to include five additional properties?

Please tick the box that applies. If other please comment in the box below.

Yes

No

Other

Space for comments on Question 2

3. Do you agree that current appearance of some of the properties is the biggest challenge to the character and appearance of the conservation area?

Please tick the box that applies.

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

4. Do you agree with our recommendation that an Article 4 designation is required to protect original exterior features on properties in the Eldon Square Conservation Area?

Please tick the box that applies. If other please comment in the box below.

Yes

No

Other

Space for comments on Question 4

5. Are you satisfied with the appearance and cleanliness of the streets and public realm in the conservation area?

Please tick the box that applies.

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

6. Do you live in or own property in the conservation area?

Please tick the box that applies.

Yes

No

7. Do you work in the conservation area?

Please tick the box that applies.

Yes
No

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

8. If have any further comments please use the space below or email [chair.readingcaac@gmail.com](mailto:chair.readingcaac@gmail.com).

9. How interested are you in the work of Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee?

Please tick the box that applies.

Very
Slightly
Not at all

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for responding to this questionnaire.  
[www.readingcaac.org](http://www.readingcaac.org)  
@CaacReading

The results of the consultation indicated general support for the protection offered by conservation area designation to the special character of Reading, the draft revised appraisal and boundary revision. Only one respondent disagreed with the boundary extension.

The potential for introducing an Article 4 direction to remove permitted development rights for certain alterations to properties and the implications of that were questioned. A better explanation of what this would mean and clarification that it would only apply to future alterations has been included in the management plan. Nevertheless in the current climate emergency and prevailing economic situation anything that appears to prevent climate adaptation and be expensive to residents is subject to challenge. In terms of explanation and understanding of what it means to own a property or live in a property in a conservation area we await the forthcoming 'Guidance and Advice for Householders' to be published by RBC.

The question which had the broadest range of responses was in relation to the appearance and cleanliness of public areas. There were no 'very satisfied' responses, 2 'satisfied', 2 neither 'satisfied nor dissatisfied', 8 'dissatisfied' and 1 'very dissatisfied'.

We are grateful to those respondents who took the time to make suggestions on improving the document and pointed out errors. The Initial Statement has been expanded to give more information on changes, not just the boundary changes, made in this Appraisal compared with the 2007 version and corrections to the text have been made where necessary.

## Appendix 2 Archaeology and Historical Development of the Area

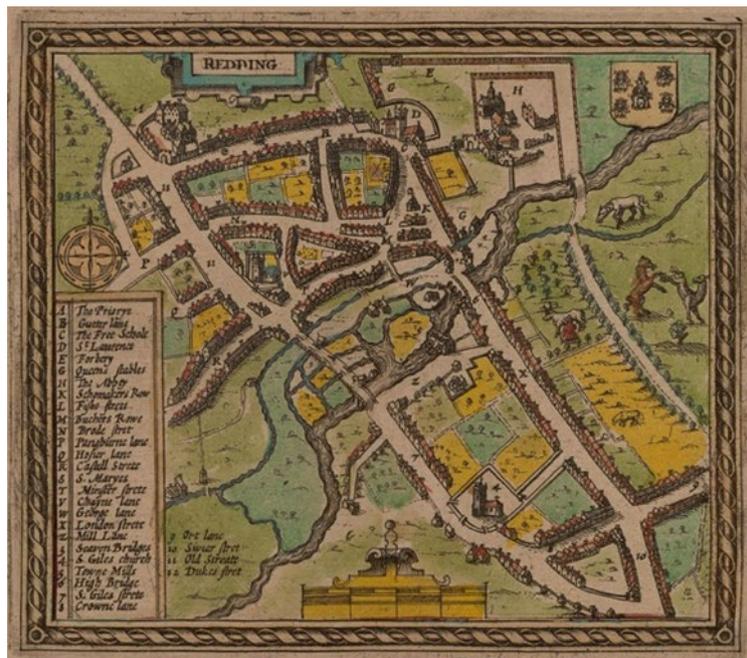
### 1. Archaeology

Excavations have uncovered pre-historic, Roman, Saxon and later medieval finds in the wider area particularly north of Queens Road and Kings Road towards the town centre and River Kennet.

Closer to the CA but outside the boundary there were the following finds: a lower-paleolithic (500,000 BCE to 150,001 BCE) hand axe at 52 London Road in 1945; a neolithic (4,000 BCE to 2,351 BCE) ground axe at 58 London Road in c1947 and in London Road, precise location unknown a partial skeleton was found from the late Roman to early Saxon period. There have been excavations in conjunction with modern developments such as the extension to Clarendon House, Queens Road in 2019 which uncovered finds from earlier developments in the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

The HER does not record any finds arising within the CA from the construction of modern developments along the south side of Kings Road. These late twentieth century office and residential properties replaced mid nineteenth century buildings which had been built on a greenfield site. Other parts of the CA have remained largely undisturbed since that time and it is an area of archaeological potential.

### 2. Historical Development



**Figure 38: Speed's plan of Reading 1611 – The Eldon Square CA is on the extreme right. There are horses on Crown Lands to the north and south of the stream (now Gunter's Brook and Kennet & Avon canal)**

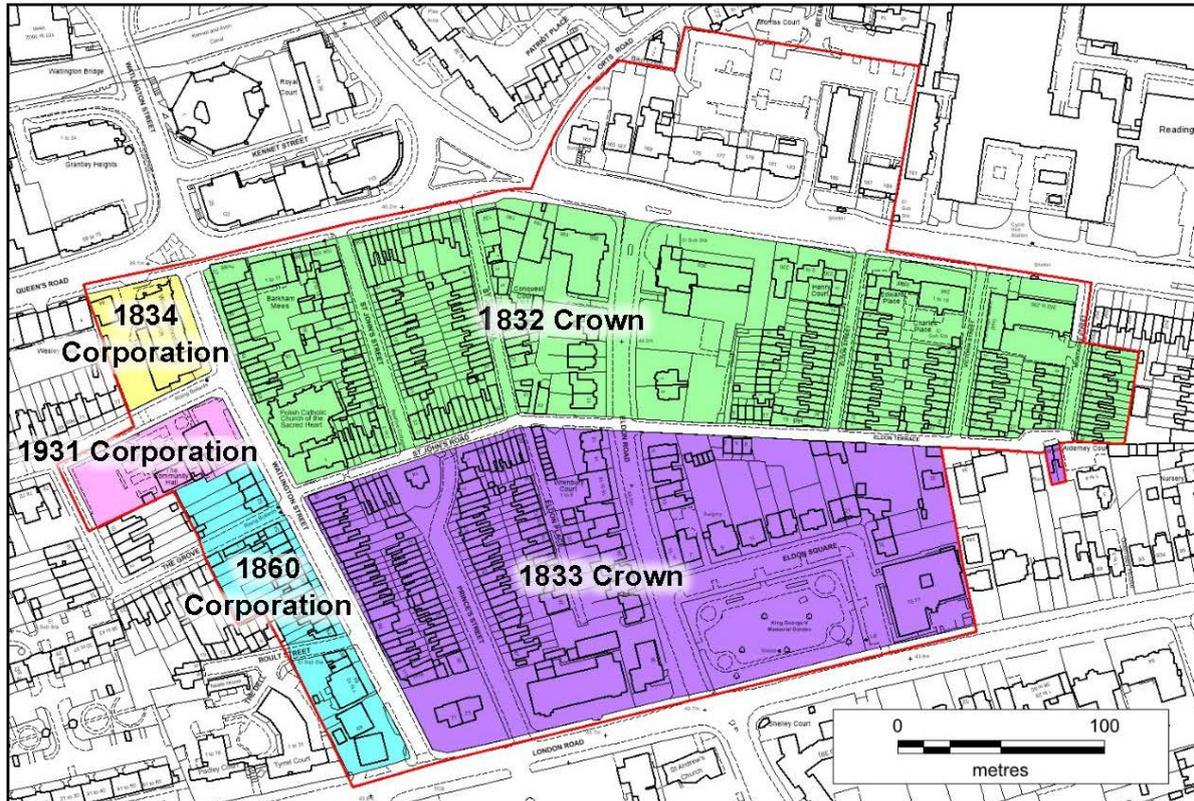
At the dissolution of Reading Abbey, land which had belonged to the abbey was taken over by the Kings (Crown) Estate. Queen Elizabeth I in 1560 leased part of the Abbey lands to Reading Corporation.

Watlington Street, named after Robert Watlington, a seventeenth century clothier, roughly follows the course of what was formerly known as Ort Lane or Abbey Lane, part of a historic north-south trackway (including today's Redlands Road) leading over the Kennet to the Abbey. Watlington House is a grade II\* listed building dating from 1688 with the eastern part

fronting Watlington Street added in the second half of the eighteenth century. It is the only building still standing from the time before the sale of Crown and Corporation Estates which began in the 1830s.

### Sale of Crown and Corporation Estates

The land sales by Reading Corporation and the Crown and the building of two new roads across the land in 1834, Kings Road (named after King William IV) and Queens Road (after Queen Adelaide) were the catalysts for the development of the Eldon Square district on what had previously been mainly agricultural land.



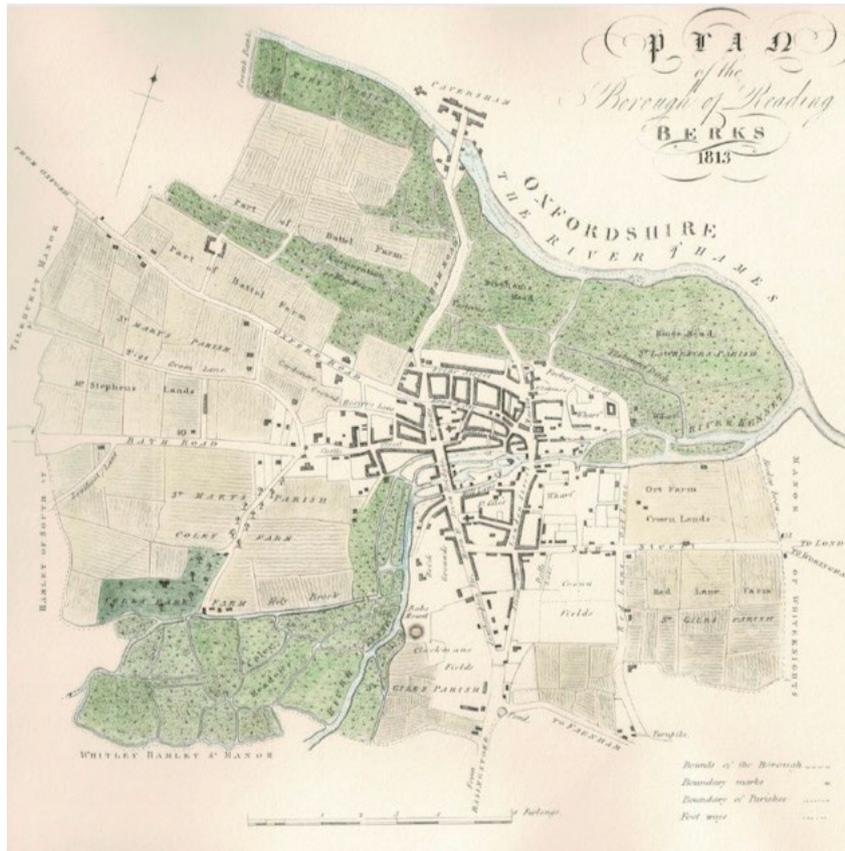
*Figure 39: Dates of land sales within the 2025 CA boundary*

Eldon Square was named after Lord Eldon (1751-1838) who started life as John Scott of Newcastle, entered Parliament in 1783, was created Lord Eldon in 1799 and became Lord Chancellor in Addington's Government in 1801. After the loss of his wife in 1831, he is said to have spent much time at Erleigh Court in Sonning in Berkshire with his brother, Lord Stowell. He was a great patron of Reading's Royal Berkshire Hospital which opened in 1839. Newcastle, his birthplace, also has a town square in his name.

High class houses were built in Eldon Square and in Kings Road, out of Bath stone brought to Reading by the Kennet and Avon Canal. A press report stated that masons also came from Bath to work on the properties<sup>5</sup>. The first houses to be built on Eldon Square were Rosetta Villa and nos 19 and 21. The first stone was laid on Monday 16 June 1834 by Mrs Hodges, wife of Edward Hodges described in the press report as 'purveyor to the forces' who had purchased some of the land. Mr Hodges suggested that the development should be named after Lord Eldon and the Mayor, Thomas Lawrence, who was involved in developing

<sup>5</sup> Reading Mercury 1 April 1833

the area, agreed<sup>6</sup>. There is evidence that it was not completed until 1837 by which time Mr Hodges was living there<sup>7</sup>. On Kings Road, Encombe House, sometimes Villa, is marked on the 1834 Commissioner's map but may not have been habitable at that time.



**Figure 40: Plan of the Borough of Reading 1813 when most of the area was farmland. Courtesy Richard Bennett.**

<sup>6</sup> Berkshire Chronicle 21 June 1834 p2

<sup>7</sup> Mercury 17 March 1838 p2. Press report of contested votes at the 1837 general election when Hodges' vote was contested.



*Figure 41: Commissioner's plan of the Borough of Reading 1834. Kings Road and Queens Road have been laid out as has Eldon Square 'Not completed' and The Oval and its mirror image to the north marked out.*

A further boost to the development of Reading was the construction of the Great Western Railway which reached the town in 1840.

The coming of the railway resulted in a rapid growth of major industries, notably Huntley & Palmers, biscuit makers, and Suttons Seeds, which provided work for a rapidly increasing population. The terraced streets in the conservation area east and west of Eldon Road were among the many terraces built during Reading's rapid expansion in the second half of the nineteenth century.

By 1842 building on the north and south side of Kings Road and Eldon Square was almost complete and some development of the west side of Eldon Road had taken place.

The first St John the Evangelist Church was built on the site of Collins Farm at the corner of Watlington Street and St Johns Street in 1837. The church was rebuilt in 1872 as it had been outgrown by the congregation and is the building we have today, now the Polish Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart. The parish covered most of Newtown and was very involved with the temperance movement.

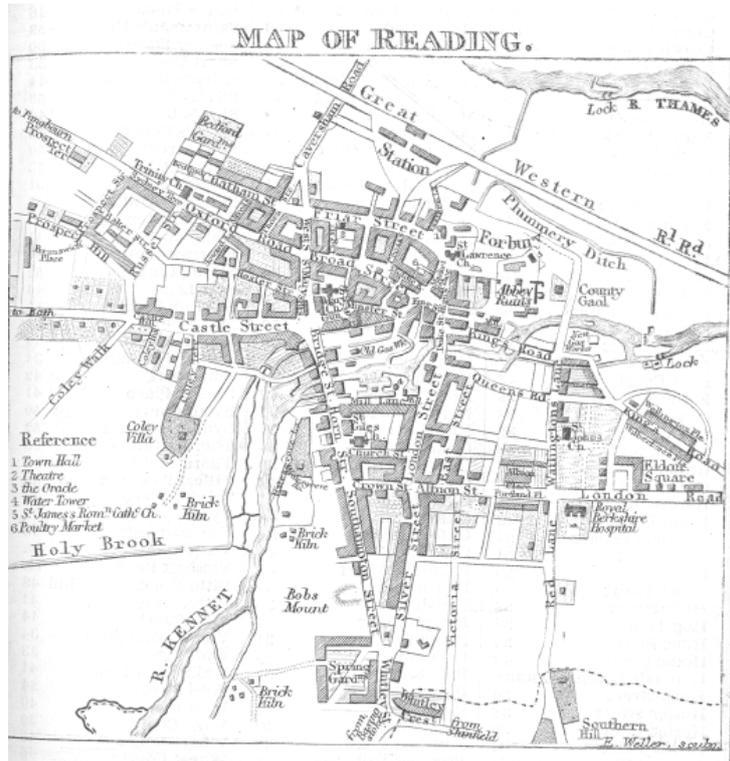
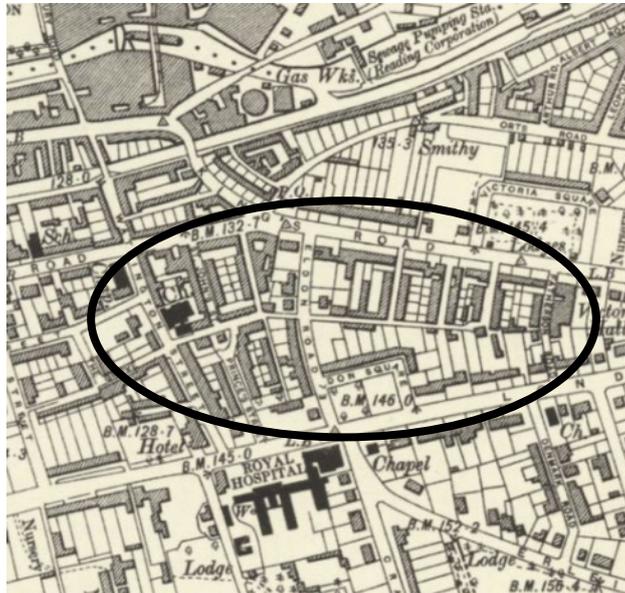


Figure 42: Map of Reading in 1842 from the Post Office Street Directory



Figure 43: Extract from Board of Health map 1853 Eldon Square and part of Eldon Road, R/AS/2/4/12 courtesy Royal Berkshire Archives

By the end of the 1870s when detailed Ordnance Survey maps are available there are still undeveloped plots in the CA on Watlington Street, Eldon Road, St Johns Hill, Town Place, Eldon Street, Victoria Street and Montague Street but the street pattern is clear. By c1900 the area is almost fully developed.



*Figure 44: Eldon Square area 1900 OS map surveyed 1898*

There has been a limited amount of rebuilding in the late twentieth century, particularly along London Road and the south side of Kings Road but the street pattern has not been altered, except for works to prevent vehicular access to certain side-streets.

To the north beyond the CA, along the northern section of Watlington Street and Orts Road, redevelopment in the 1970s and 1980s including the completion of the IDR circuit changed the face of the area. Industrial premises and public houses as well as older residential properties of Newtown to the north of the CA were demolished.

### **The first residents of the Eldon Square Conservation Area – terraced streets**

Reading's population grew rapidly throughout the nineteenth century. In the first national census, in 1801, the population of Reading was about 9,400. By 1851 the population had more than doubled, to 21,500, and at the end of the century, it stood at around 59,000.

Huntley & Palmers biscuit factory grew steadily following the opening of the Kings Road premises in the late 1840s and by the end of the nineteenth century 5,000 employees worked there. Many of those who worked there lived in the CA and the impact can be seen in censuses from later in the nineteenth century.

From reviewing a sample of census records in 1851 very few people in the area work for Huntley & Palmers. Male residents of St Johns Street worked in a variety of trades and other jobs, there were millwrights, carpenters, stonemasons, painters and glaziers, tailors, bakers and gardeners. Some of these trades would have been involved in the building and development boom in Reading and supplying services to the growing population around them. Many women in the area, either living on their own or the wives and daughters of a male head of household worked as dressmakers, upholsterers or needlewomen. The same pattern is repeated in other streets.

People moved to Reading to take up the opportunities offered. It was suggested in the press that stonemasons from Bath came to work on Bath stone buildings<sup>8</sup>. Two stonemasons moved from Wiltshire and their families were living next door to one another in St Johns Hill in 1851; John Gibbs and Susannah Aust, wife of John Aust. Mrs Aust lived to be almost 100 years old and in 1911 featured in the Reading Standard as 'One of the oldest, if not the oldest old-age pensioner in Reading...'. Her husband had come to Reading to work as a stonemason on the building of the Royal Berkshire Hospital. She had worked as a dressmaker and a nurse. When her husband retired they were able to live in the almshouses on Castle Street but when he died she had to move out and lived at Finch Court. She died in 1913 at the Workhouse Infirmary after having broken her leg<sup>9</sup>.

By 1881 there were many more occupants working at the biscuit factory, or with family members at the factory or who had lodgers working at the factory. In the eastern part of the CA e.g. Eldon Street almost all the heads of households were working in the biscuit factory (we assume Huntley & Palmers) and sometimes children too.

### **The first residents of Eldon Square Conservation Area – Eldon Square, Kings Road and Eldon Road**

In the 1841 and 1851 censuses the occupants of Kings Road and Eldon Square properties were mainly people of independent means, fundholders and property owners. There were also members of the armed forces, an architect, clergymen, and there were a number of schools.

Francis Trench who as curate of St Giles built the first St Johns Church in 1837 lived at 7 Eldon Square in 1841 and No 11 in 1851.

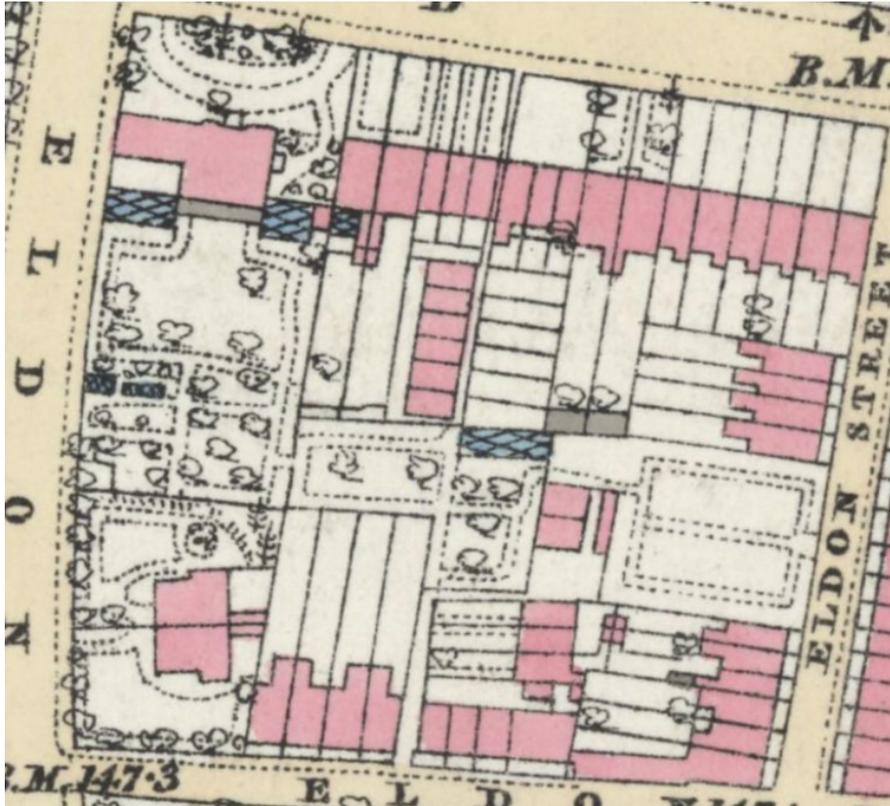
By 1881/1891 more residents are professionals such as Reading's first full time salaried, Town Clerk, Henry Day (18 Eldon Road) and Edward Margrett, artesian well boring hydraulic engineer (9 Eldon Square) or business owners such as iron founder T C Williams (169 Kings Road).

One of the largest properties, now demolished, was Swiss Villa on the corner of Kings Road and Eldon Road. It was built for William Silver Darter but he never seems to have lived there. From 1838-1863 it was occupied by brewer Harry Sowdon. The 1879 map below shows the extensive gardens and glass houses that attached to the property and the mulberry tree growing at 1a Eldon Road probably came from this garden.

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<sup>8</sup> See 2.3.3 above

<sup>9</sup> Reading Standard 21 January 1911 p8 and Reading Observer 21 June 1913 p6.



*Figure 45: Swiss Villa and the area between Eldon Road and Eldon Street. OS map 1875-1877 published 1879, courtesy National Library of Scotland.*

### **The community as described in the 1903 Licensed Premises survey**

A snapshot of the population is found in the description, using the direct vocabulary of the time for licensing purposes, of the area and clientele of licensed premises (beerhouses and alehouses) in the CA in the 1903 licensing survey.

- Watlington Street was a 'Street and neighbourhood composed of dwelling houses chiefly occupied by the better class of artizans who are employed at the biscuit factory';
- Eldon Terrace 'Street comprised of private houses occupied by artizans and the working class';
- St Johns Road and St Johns Street 'Street composed of cottages, and occupied by artizans, labourers &c';
- Kings Road 'West end of street is devoted to trade purposes, Eastern end residential houses, tradesmen, professional men and artizans residing therein';
- Queens Road 'Street chiefly residential, the better working classes being in residence in the vicinity of the house [The Lyndhurst]'.

There were 12 licensed premises:

- Victoria 15 & 17 Eldon Terrace
- Eldon Arms, Eldon Terrace (now Sip n'Spin)
- Berkshire, 252 Kings Road

- Military Arms, 106 King's Road (now a convenience store)
- Beehive, St Johns Road
- Lifeboat, St Johns Road
- 17 St Johns Road (later Deane's)
- Retreat, St Johns Street
- Lyndhurst Arms, 19 Watlington Street
- Boatbuilders' Arms 2 & 4 Watlington Street
- County Brewery Tap, 88 Watlington Street
- Golden Lion, 54 Watlington Street

Not all the licensed premises would be recognised as public houses today; for example 17 St Johns Road had a 6 day licence and was also a baker and grocer and the Golden Lion on Watlington Street was also a grocer's shop.

### **Reading's first conservation area**

Eldon Square was Reading's first conservation area designated in 1972. It was closely followed by St Marys Butts/Castle Street and Russell Street/Castle Hill (now Russell Street/Castle Hill/Oxford Road).

The principle of creation of conservation areas to protect the important heritage of areas and neighbourhoods rather than solely individual buildings was established under Civic Amenities Act of 1967. Reading Civic Society had been founded a few years before and was in the forefront of the campaign for conservation areas in Reading.

Reading events that gave impetus to the initiative were the redevelopment of parts of the town centre and the future route of Reading's Inner Distribution Road. Also in the 1970s the 3Bs, Biscuits (Huntley & Palmers), Beer (H & G Simonds) and Bulbs (Suttons Seeds), all left Reading town centre and permanently changed its appearance and function.

Just north of the CA, redevelopment of the Orts Road area with modern residential properties was being planned and the council compulsorily purchased pre-Victorian properties in preparation for that<sup>10</sup>.

In 1973 Frederick Padley wrote 'A Village in the Town, Reading's first conservation area'<sup>11</sup> which was followed by an update 10 years later. Mr Padley had lived in the area all his life and as well as telling its history and that of the people who lived there, he documented businesses and organisations. The booklet is an invaluable shortcut to understanding the streets west of Eldon Road and an updated edition would be welcomed.

In the late 1970s there was a major local heritage conservation victory when St John the Evangelist Church was saved from demolition. The church was listed Grade II by Historic England (then DoE) in 1974.

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<sup>10</sup> Reading Museum 'Revealing Reading's Hidden History, Orts Road & Newtown'. Happy Museum Project. 2013. Copy available in Reading Central Library.

<sup>11</sup> Frederick Charles Padley, 'A Village in the Town, Reading's first conservation area' (1973), Reading Branch Workers Educational Association

In 1973, a history of the church and its activities in the area 'Happy are They, The History of the Parish of St John the Evangelist and St Stephen, Reading' by John McKechnie<sup>12</sup> had been published looking forward to changes in the parish.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) undertook a 1970 Campaign to review the needs of the parish and its buildings. It decided that St John's School no longer represented suitable premises and that both its churches (including St Stephens, Orts Road, a fine William White building, demolished in 1976) should be replaced<sup>13</sup>. It decided to build a new school combined with a Parish Centre and dispose of the redundant sites and buildings. At the time demolition could be approved even when a viable alternative use was available.

Once the Parish Centre was built, the parish church would be declared redundant (on 15 August 1978) and vested in the Church Commissioners who would demolish the building and sell the site. A Pastoral Scheme approved by the Diocese and the Queen, was drawn up to enable this. However things did not go according to this plan.

The Save St John's Association and Reading Civic Society led a campaign of protests against the proposed demolition. The determination to demolish the church persisted 'for pastoral reasons' although it would have adversely affected the half of the parish in the conservation area. This resulted in a conflict over several years including the intervention of Marcus Binney's 'Save Britain's Heritage' group (founded in 1975). The church is mentioned in 'Change & Decay' by Marcus Binney and Peter Burman as an example of a former church that made a major contribution to the townscape<sup>14</sup>.

In February 1981 the previous Pastoral Scheme was revoked and a revised scheme allowing for alternative use resulted in a 999 year lease of the church to Reading's Polish community<sup>15</sup>.

Reading Borough Council also played its part in the drama. Although Ecclesiastical Exemption allowed decisions to be made by the church while it was still in use, this did not apply to the walls around the church. These could not be demolished because they were within a conservation area and at 5 feet tall exceeded the height at which conservation area consent was required for demolition. This consent was not given which prevented demolition vehicles entering the site. Safety was also an important consideration as the spire is 150 feet (45m) high, on a very confined site. This together made demolition prohibitive.

The legislation relating to Ecclesiastical Exemption has now changed in favour of re-use, with all major denominations covered.

The two histories of the area and the creation of a conservation area within a few years of one another are indicative of the level of change that was happening in the built and community environment.

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<sup>12</sup> John McKechnie, 'Happy are They, The History of the Parish of St John the Evangelist and St Stephen, Reading'

<sup>13</sup> John McKechnie, 'Happy are They, The History of the Parish of St John the Evangelist and St Stephen, Reading'

<sup>14</sup> Marcus Binney and Peter Burman (1975), 'Change & Decay. The Future of Our Churches' p30, image p33. The book accompanied an exhibition at the V & A in 1977 in which the Church of St John the Evangelist was featured.

<sup>15</sup> Reading Evening Post 3 March 1981, p9 and Public Notice p10

## Historic Associations

Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891), the French Decadent poet, lived as a French tutor at 165 Kings Road, from August to December 1874. While there he wrote most of 'Illuminations' generally considered his greatest work. The rebuilding of the property features in the opening sequence of Patrick Keillor's 'Robinson in Space'. Ironically this has therefore become the most famous of all the grand Kings Road houses.

Henry Briant (1813-1884) and his brother Nathaniel Briant (1813-39) were local architects. Henry Briant was responsible for the Royal Berkshire Hospital, houses in Eldon Square (reputedly with his brother) and the ornate Italian Palazzo style town-centre bank in King Street. Nathaniel Briant (1813-39) was probably responsible for the layout of Reading Cemetery.

William Henry Fox Talbot/ Nicolaas Henneman photographed houses on Eldon Square in the 1840s.

Rufus Isaacs, Lord Reading (1860-1935) and MP for Reading 1904-1913, whose statue is within the George V Memorial Gardens was Viceroy of India 1921-26. The statue was one of two of past viceroys, the other was Lord Harding, that were commissioned from the sculptor Charles Sergeant Jagger (1885-1934) by Sir Edward Lutyens for the Indian capital of New Delhi. Following Indian Independence in 1947 Lord Isaacs' widow was concerned for its fate and sought its return to Reading and paid for it to be shipped<sup>16</sup>, arriving in 1969. In 1971 it was decided, after some debate, to place the statue in the gardens<sup>17</sup>. There was a suggestion from councillors that this decision should be reviewed and consideration given to relocating it when the new law courts had been constructed<sup>18</sup>. The site in the gardens was approved of by Stella Isaacs, the Dowager Marchioness and she was expected to unveil it but died on 22 May 1971. The unveiling by the third Marquess of Reading took place on 8 July 1971.

## The Three Bs

- As described above, due to the proximity of the area to Huntley & Palmers biscuit factory many employees lived in this area. George Palmer is recorded as living at Wilberforce Place in the 1851 census and was described as a biscuit baker employing about 130 hands. William Isaac Palmer was responsible for the Lodge Temperance Hotel on Queens Road<sup>19</sup>. It replaced a public house on the same site in the 1870s.

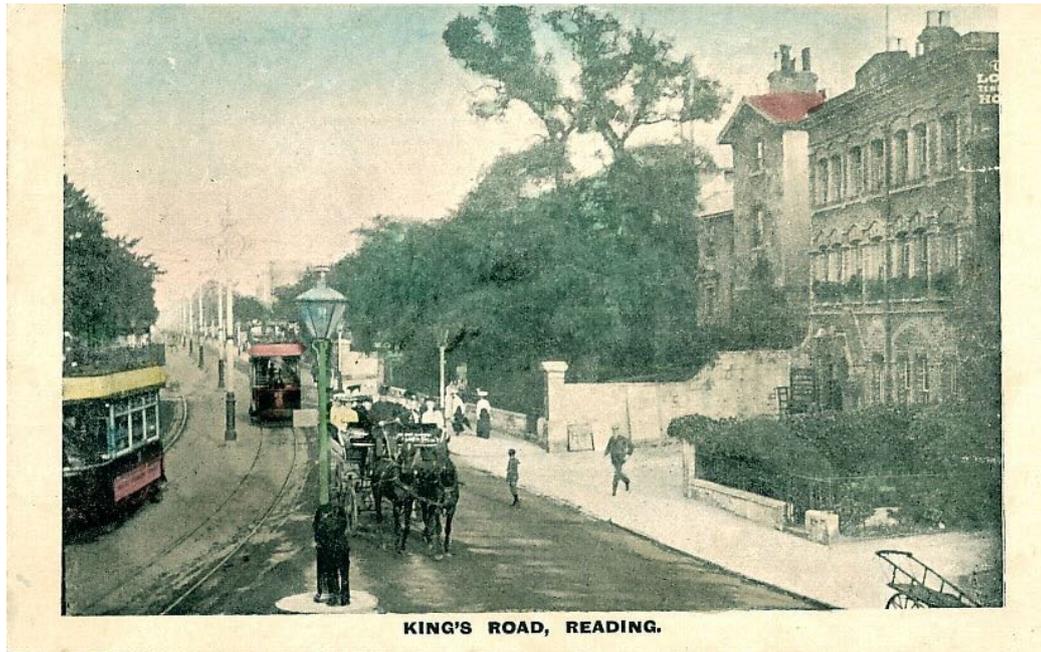
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<sup>16</sup> Reading Civic Society newsletter [Spring 2024](#), David Stevens 'Lord Reading's Statue'

<sup>17</sup> Reading Evening Post 4 March 1971

<sup>18</sup> Presumably the law courts referred to were the new Magistrates Courts on Castle Street. Minutes of the Town Planning and Buildings Committee 5 March 1971, endorsing the decision of the Public Entertainment and Parks Committee 23 February 1971

<sup>19</sup> Berkshire Chronicle 28 January 1916 p6 Death of Mr J Humphries of The Lodge Hotel



*Figure 46: Kings Road, Reading c1905. The Lodge Hotel is on the right. Courtesy of Reading Libraries Local Studies Collection*

- Alfred Sutton (1818-97), brother of Martin Hope Sutton and third son of the founder of Sutton Seeds, John Sutton funded the St John's Road Mission and Reading Room on Princes Street<sup>20</sup>.
- Brewer Harry Sowdon lived for some time at Swiss Villa, now part of the site of Hanover House. Sowdon's brewery on Bridge Street was acquired by H & G Simonds in 1851.
- Another brewer, Samuel Henry Gutteridge Higgs of the Lion Brewery on Castle Street lived and was landlord of the Berkshire Inn on Kings Road in the early twentieth century.

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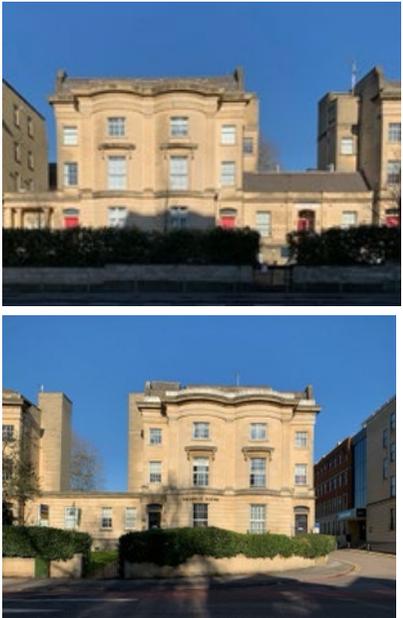
British Newspaper Archive via findmypast

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<sup>20</sup> Berkshire Chronicle 13 June 1868 p5

## Appendix 3 Listed buildings

Table 3: Listed buildings in Character Area 1

Address of building	HE listing number	Image 1	Image 2	Brief description mainly derived from listing entry
163 Kings Road (N) (formerly Encombe Lodge)	1303084 <a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1303084?section=official-list-entry">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1303084?section=official-list-entry</a>		None	Grade II Probably the oldest property of the properties on the north of Kings Road, the most westerly of an array of similar prestige buildings formerly known as Wellington Place. It is c.1840 and attributed to Henry and Nathaniel Briant  two storeys, attic & basement  faced with Bath stone  (image Evelyn Williams)
173-183 Kings Road (N) (Wilton House, Malvern House, Oakley House)	1155954 <a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1155954">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1155954</a>			Grade II* Built after 1832 as part of Wellington Place attributed to Henry and Nathaniel Briant  three groups of semi-detached properties with single storey links.  Three storeys with a basement.  French casements with balconies and cast iron railings.  The buildings are almost but not completely identical in particular the capitals of the pilasters on the central pair are different from those of the outer pairs.  (images 173-175, 175-177 and 179-181 Evelyn Williams)

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	HE listing number	Image 1	Image 2	Brief description mainly derived from listing entry
<p>185 Kings Road (N) Kings Court (Waterloo Lodge)</p>	<p>1113499 <a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113499">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113499</a></p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II Built after 1832 as Waterloo Lodge and part of Wellington Place attributed to Henry and Nathaniel Briant comprises three floors with a basement and modern attic level. Faced with Bath stone (image Evelyn Williams)</p>
<p>187-189 Kings Road (N) (Waterloo Place)</p>	<p>1321921 <a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321921">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321921</a></p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II Built before 1840 and part of Waterloo Place attributed to Henry and Nathaniel Briant symmetrical pair of houses with glazing bar sash windows. Comprises three floors with a basement and a later addition of an attic. Faced with Bath stone (image Evelyn Williams)</p>

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<p>196-200 Kings Road (S) Eldon Lodge (Wilberforce Place)</p>	<p>1321922  <a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321922">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321922</a></p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Constructed in the early 1840's and formerly known as Wilberforce Place</p> <p>attributed to Henry and Nathaniel Briant</p> <p>Less grand than 163-189 on the north side of the road.</p> <p>A block of three houses faced with Bath stone.</p> <p>Modern extensions onto Eldon Road.</p> <p>One window on each building floor with cast iron railings at ground floor.</p> <p>(Evelyn Williams)</p>
<p>220-222 Kings Road (S) (Nelson Place)</p>	<p>1113502  <a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113502">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113502</a></p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Previously known as Nelson Place, they were faced with Bath stone but are now rendered.</p> <p>Double gabled 3 storey and basement front. Wide eaves to slate roof.</p> <p>Each house has one arched window on the ground floor, and common stairwell landing also with an arched window. The upper windows are glazing bar sashes. A modern semi-replica entrance door. French casements to basement.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

<p>2 Eldon Road</p>	<p><a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1248744">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1248744</a></p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Before 1840. Known to be by Nathaniel Briant. Altered. 2 storeys and basement. Stucco, ground floor channelled. Central pedimented doorcase with modern applied pilasters (originally a window). Steps to door. Garage doors inserted to left hand basement. Hipped slate roof with flat eaves.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
<p>4 &amp; 6 Eldon Road</p>	<p><a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113462">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113462</a></p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Before 1840. Probably by Henry or Nathaniel Briant. 2 storeys and basement. Bath ashlar. Hipped slate roof with central chimneys. Deep bracketed eaves. On 1st floor outer small round-headed windows, inner French casements with flanking wall thickenings. On ground floor: tripartite glazing bar sashes in bows with vermiculated dividing quoin strip. Vermiculated voussoirs to outer round-headed doorways. Flanking extensions. Projecting front garden walls terminate in the Eldon Square type of polygonal pier with crested capping.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

<p>8 &amp; 10 Eldon Road</p>	<p><a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321940">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321940</a></p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Circa 1840. Probably by Henry or Nathaniel Briant. Bath ashlar pair. Rusticated ground floor and quoins. 3 storeys and basement, 1st and 2nd floors have 2 windows each, glazing bar sashes, round-headed on 2nd floor, bracketed pediments on 1st floor. Each has a wide 3 light bay with casement windows. Entered from side in porches with Doric piers, cornice and blocking course.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>
<p>12 &amp; 14 Eldon Road</p>	<p><a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113463">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113463</a></p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Circa 1840. Probably by Henry or Nathaniel Briant. Bath stone pair. 2 storeys and basement with 3 storey end pavilions. Slate roof with projecting eaves. Outer doors, No 12 in angle, porch with stilted segmental arch. 1 bay end pavilions with shaped surrounds to 1st and 2nd floor windows; round-headed on ground floor with panels below and impost and label moulds; ground floor channelled. Bath stone garden walls to front with pierced roundels and moulded coping.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
<p>16 &amp; 18 Eldon Road</p>	<p><a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113464">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113464</a></p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Circa 1840s. Probably by Henry or Nathaniel Briant. Bath stone ashlar pair. Hipped slate roof with stone eaves brackets. Ornamental frieze (simplified guilloche). Glazing bar sash windows in 4 ranges, bracketed pediments to ground floor windows and bracketed balconies. Set back side bays for entrance, No 16 has pilasters, balustrade over, in projecting porch. No 18 has 2 storey porch with round-headed doorway.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

<p>20 &amp; 22 Eldon Road</p>	<p><a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321941">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321941</a></p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Bath stone ashlar with rusticated quoins, cornice over ground floor and brackets to eaves. Slate roof with crested ridge. Paired central round-headed arches to entrances. Front garden wall has flanking Eldon Square-type piers (polygonal with crested capping).</p> <p>Although listing entry says 1840-58 and nearer to later date, Henry or Nathaniel Briant, Sidney Gold suggests earlier and likely to be Nathaniel Briant as 20 Eldon Road named Tressilian, the name later given to his son.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
<p>28 &amp; 30 Eldon Road</p>	<p><a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113465">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113465</a></p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Before 1840. Probably Henry or Nathaniel Briant. Bath stone ashlar pair with hipped slate roofs and 2 central chimneys. Flat eaves, obscured in front by wide break with coved cornice in which are 2 small attic windows with marginal glazing; guilloche panels below. Recessed round-headed porches on either side. Front garden walls project and have Eldon Square-type piers: polygonal with crested capping.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>
<p>32 &amp; 34 Eldon Road</p>	<p><a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321942">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321942</a></p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Venetian Cottages is faintly visible on the central pillar.</p> <p>Circa 1840. Probably by Henry or Nathaniel Briant. 3 storeys and basement pair. Bath stone ashlar with hipped slate roof. Marginal glazing on ground floor with overall segmental pediments and corbelled balconies with delicate wrought-iron patterns. Recessed flanking 2 storey porches with round-headed doorways and round-headed side lights. Plain gable roofed wings set back on each side behind porch extensions.</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

				(image Zoë Andrews)
5 Eldon Square and 15 Eldon Road (adjoining)	<a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113467">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113467</a>		None	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Listing description dates this property to c.1840. Attributed to the Briants. The evidence suggests that this is an early twentieth century building arising from the subdivision of the plot on which 7 Eldon Square stood and demolition of the western bay of No 7. HE inspected the property in late 2025 and have consulted on proposed changes to the listing entry for this property or its removal from listing.</p> <p>Bath stone. Slate roof with large 2 light dormer with marginal glazing. End chimneys. 2 windows on 1st floor with stop-beaded surrounds, large tripartite window on ground floor with segmental head, all sashes with marginal glazing. Ground floor window has moulded architrave and panelling in tympanum. Recessed doorway to right with architrave surround. Bath stone corner pier to south-west of garden with chamfered sides.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>
7 Eldon Square	<a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321943">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321943</a>		None	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Circa 1840. 2 and 3 storey Bath ashlar 'pair' to No 5 (qv). Italianate style. Raised surround on 1st floor, bracketed segmental pediment on ground floor with corbelled balcony. One window to left over recessed modern door in plain doorway. Slate roofs with projecting eaves.</p> <p>Considerably modified at the turn of the twentieth century when the plot on which it stands was partitioned, the western bay demolished, a new front entrance created where there was once a window.</p> <p>(Listing correction has been requested)</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

<p>9 Eldon Square</p>	<p><a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113468">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113468</a></p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Circa 1840 detached. Italianate. 2 storey wings flanking 3 storey centre. Basement. Bath stone ashlar, ground floor channelled. 1st floor cill string to wings and modillion cornice with blocking course; centre plain cornice with high parapet. Central doorway flanked by pilasters and projecting gabled porch with arched entrance. End piers to front garden, similar to others in the area. Hidden slate roof with ashlar chimneys, (moulded capping).</p> <p>((image Zoë Andrews)</p>
<p>11 Eldon Square</p>	<p><a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321944">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321944</a></p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Circa 1840s. Italianate. The largest house on the north side of the layout. 3 storeys. Bath stone ashlar on plinth. Gabled side bays. 2nd floor outer windows modified Venetian with corbelled stone balconies. Outer 1st floor windows have bracketed cornices, centre has trellis verandah balcony over porch. Central panelled double door with rectangular overlight and projecting porch on square piers, modillion cornice and pierced parapet, arched windows to sides. Slate roof with projecting eaves. Garden wall pier (of Eldon Square pattern) to right.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

<p>13 &amp; 15 Eldon Square</p>	<p><a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1155144">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1155144</a></p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Circa 1840. Italianate pair. Bath stone ashlar. Central arched panel with window in attic, flanking round headed windows with corbelled cills. Glazing bar sash windows with marginal glazing. Inner ground floor windows French casements to wide balconies with arched railings supported on short Doric-type column from basement area retaining walls. Outer 2½ glazed doors with steps, No 13 with projecting stone porch having shouldered lintel. Central panel pier on 1st floor with urn capping.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
<p>17 Eldon Square</p>	<p><a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113469">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113469</a></p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Circa 1840. Asymmetrical Italianate. 2 1/2 storeys and basement. Bath stone ashlar on plinth. Band over ground floor. Central 2 panelled door with arched fanlight. Steps to projecting gabled porch with corner piers and arched opening. Flanking corner garden piers (of the Eldon Square-type).</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
<p>19 &amp; 21 Eldon Square</p>	<p><a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113470">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113470</a></p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Two of the first houses to be built on Eldon Square.</p> <p>Circa 1840s pair. Bath stone ashlar with band over ground floor. 2 storeys. Outer gabled breaks, 4 bays in all, with paired windows (C19 sashes) arched on 1st floor. The ground floor windows are tall casements, the inner 2 with verandah linking outer breaks, cast iron guard rails and stone brackets and supports from area wall. Central arched groove to 1st floor. Wall thickened and channelled for arched doorways. Slate roof.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

<p>23 Eldon Square Rosetta Villa</p>	<p><a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1155151">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1155151</a></p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>One of the first houses to be built on Eldon Square. Rosetta Villa has been carved above the front door.</p> <p>Set back house in angle of square. Circa 1840s. Dressed Bath stone, centre ashlar with channelled ground floor. Gabled bay to left, central angled entrance bay with shaped panel over cornice; lower bay to right. Plate glass sash windows. Re-entrant curved walls to front garden gate which has the crenellation-capped piers of Eldon Square type.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
<p>25 &amp; 27 Eldon Square</p>	<p><a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321945">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321945</a></p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Circa 1840s. Pair. 2 storeys, attic and basement. Bath stone ashlar, ground floor channelled with band over. Flat eaves with plain brackets. Hipped slate roof with central ashlar chimney. On the ground floor: tall French casements with 2 tented verandah balconies with pierced stone parapets on stone brackets. Flanking set-back doorways which have shaped low relief pediments, No 25 as a glazed door and a 2 storey 2 window extension.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Railings to King  
George V Memorial  
Gardens

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113466>



Grade II

(images Zoë Andrews (pillars & gate) & Evelyn Williams (pedestrian gate no longer in use))

Mushroom topped railings (1830s) thought to have been manufactured by Perry, Barrett and Exall of Reading. Lock plate on two of the three gates is marked P.B. & E. Reading.

The railings are models for other railings in the area whether original (The Oval) or reproduction (Watlington House).

The eastern gate does not have mushroom tops and may not be of the same era.

(images Evelyn Williams)

**Table 4: Listed buildings in Character Area 2**

Address of building	HE listing number	Image 1	Image 2	Brief description mainly derived from listing entry
Watlington House	<a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321898">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321898</a>			<p>Grade II*</p> <p>The western part built 1688 for Samuel and Anne Watlington, see rainwaterheads: 1688 W S A. Eastern part said to have been added 1763 (probably earlier).</p> <p>Red and silver grey brick with a raised brick string at 1st floor level. Moulded and bracketed wood eaves cornice. Hipped old tile roof, brick end chimneys, dormered to west; valley roof with dormers facing valley. Garden door with moulded architrave surround in trellis porch and central half-landing stair window above it under a moulded brick pediment. A single storey 'bothy' wing to the south. Interior: panelled hall with 2 arch screen on fluted piers. Turned balusters to stairs (straight string), double ramped mahogany dado rail and baluster rail, panelled. dado (circa 1740 probably). Samuel Watlington was Mayor of Reading in 1695 and in 1711.</p> <p>The listing includes the late nineteenth century garden hall as it is within the curtilage of the house.</p> <p>This tin building was brought to the garden of Watlington House in the late nineteenth century when the house was being used by Kendrick School. It is now used for meetings and functions.</p> <p>(images Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	HE listing number	Image 1	Image 2	Brief description mainly derived from listing entry
Walls enclosing west end of Watlington House	<a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113607">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113607</a>		None	<p>Grade II</p> <p>Late C17 or early C18. Massive brick and flint walls of varying heights. North and south walls about 80-90 yards long. West wall about 30 yards long.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams (Jan 2025))</p>
Polish Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart	<a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113606">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113606</a>			<p>Grade II</p> <p>Church of England. 1872-73 by W.A. Dixon. Large Early English style rock faced Kentish Ragstone church with red Mansfield stone and Bath stone dressings.</p> <p>Replaced a smaller church of the same name on this site from the first half of the eighteenth century.</p> <p>The church was on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register and extensive restoration works were undertaken in the 2010s. Unfortunately this resulted in the removal of original railings and replacement with modern ones. The schoolroom on the southern side of the church appears not to be included in the listing entry.</p> <p>(images Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	HE listing number	Image 1	Image 2	Brief description mainly derived from listing entry
Wesley Methodist Church	<a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321916">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321916</a>			<p>Grade II</p> <p>QUEEN'S ROAD 1. 5128 Wesley Chapel SU 7273 7/557 II 2. Dated 1872. Red brick with stone and white brick dressings - steeple principally white brick. Tiled roofs. Gothic plan and elevation. 4 bay aisled nave with flush transept and 1 bay chancel. 3 sided gallery interior. Main porch to north-east with 3 stage tower and steeple. Lancet windows. Decorated tracery in large north window. The 2 spires of St John's and Wesley Chapel are close together and important landmarks for Reading. 1872 foundation stone on Watlington Street elevation)</p> <p>(images Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	HE listing number	Image 1	Image 2	Brief description mainly derived from listing entry
The Oval	<a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1156910">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1156910</a>			<p>Grade II</p> <p>Early nineteenth century, 2 storey detached villa. Red brick with silver grey brick headers. Toothed brick cornice. Wide eaves to low pitched slate roof. A symmetrical 'T'-plan design carefully aligned so that the south end closes the vista along Princes Street from the Reading Hospital with a full height bow (1 window, French casement on ground floor). North front faces down St John's street; 3 bays, glazing bar sash windows and central 6 panel door in recessed arch with fanlight. Garden to south surrounded by cast iron mushroom capped rails (see George V Memorial Gardens, Eldon Square) on stone plinths.</p> <p>Railings at the rear of The Oval are the same style as those of the Eldon Square gardens (image left top Evelyn Williams, right and left bottom Zoë Andrews)</p>
71 & 73 London Road (Melrose House)	<a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113507">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113507</a>			<p>Grade II</p> <p>Now one house, early nineteenth century, 3 storeys and basement. Stucco with rusticated ground floor and quoins. Moulded cornice at 1st floor level. 4 Roman Ionic pilasters embracing 2 upper floors with plain frieze and moulded and bracketed cornice breaking forward over pilasters. Large central stuccoed chimney stack.</p> <p>There are two entrances one from each side that appear to have been added in 1990 (see image of portico).</p> <p>(images Evelyn Williams)</p>

There are no listed buildings in Character Area 3.

## Appendix 4 Buildings of townscape merit

**Table 5: Buildings of townscape merit within Character Area 1**

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
165 & 167 Kings Road		None	<p>Both properties were entirely rebuilt in the 1990s in a style to match the surrounding buildings. The rear of 167 has a very large modern extension.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
1 & 3 Eldon Road			<p>1 &amp; 3 Eldon Road, Beaufort and Ditton Lodge are a pair of semi-detached houses built of yellow stock brick with patterned brick on the chimney stack. The rear of property which can be seen from Eldon Terrace is red brick. Many original exterior features remain.</p> <p>(images Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
5-7 Eldon Road		None	(image Zoë Andrews)
11 & 13 Eldon Road		None	<p>Semi-detached pair of Edwardian houses. Egyptian style pylon doorways. 1902 date stone at first floor level.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
24 & 26 Eldon Road		None	<p>Semi-detached stone fronted pair of late Victorian houses. Features include tall ground floor windows and small front dormers.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>

**Table 6: Buildings of townscape merit within Character Area 2**

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
84 Queens Road			<p>The late Victorian vicarage (manse) attached to the Wesleyan church. Important because of its link with the church and sharing the same site. (images Zoë Andrews)</p>
102-104 Queens Road			<p>Former Meaby's Bakery, later A Lee Bakery. (image Evelyn Williams) Cast iron decoration on Queens Road shop window (image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
1 Princes Street		None	<p>The Lodge at the corner of Princes Street and St Johns Street. Red and grey brick chequerboard pattern with a grey brick string course. The double fronted house faces the side of The Oval and was probably part of the original plan for the area. From 1870 the home of undertaker H North with premises next door now 3a &amp; 3b Princes Street (see below). The family business was taken over by William Bourton who moved from 111 and 111a Watlington Street.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
3a and 3b Princes Street		None	<p>Originally the premises of H North undertaker – see 1 Princes Street above. Now converted to two residential units.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
3 Princes Street		None	<p>Formerly St John's Mission and Reading Room, 1868. Built at the expense of Mr Alfred Sutton.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
16-28 St Johns Road		None	<p>Chequerboard red and grey brick terrace running from Eldon Place to 1 Princes Street.</p> <p>Group value with The Oval (Grade II listed) and 1 Princes Street.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
The schoolroom at the Polish Catholic Church, Watlington Street		None	<p>The schoolroom is not mentioned in the listing entry for the church itself although the style is similar and it is on the same site. It was included as a building of townscape merit in the 2007 appraisal and so has (for now) been included here.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
63 Watlington Street		None	<p>Swift Upholstery has a corner position and the junction of Watlington Street and St Johns Road. The traditional shop front has an awning. The last workshop of its kind now in the CA.</p> <p>In 1972 the premises were occupied by a butcher. (image Zoë Andrews)</p>
73-79 Watlington Street			<p>73 Watlington Street is unique in the CA in having full height windows on the third floor. The next door properties at 75 is more typical of this typology within the CA. The properties have retained or restored original features, railings, windows, window corbels, blind boxes etc and are well maintained. Unfortunately the brickwork of No75 has been painted over.</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
99 Watlington Street		None	<p>This is an attractive double fronted property, with slightly asymmetrical first floor windows with a porch and other heritage features. Landmark building on the east side of Watlington Street.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
111 Watlington Street		None	<p>The shop was at the time of the last appraisal occupied by Somerfield Glass who also operated from the workshop at 111a. Both properties seem to have been linked from the time of the first occupiers Boughton builders (see below). There is an indecipherable ghost sign on the gable.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
111a Watlington Street		None	<p>Former W Boughton, Andrews glass merchants and Somerville glass merchants. Historically linked with 111 above and a vestige of the light industrial and commercial past of the area.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
74-78 Watlington Street		None	<p>This row of three are distinctive and retain or have restored many original features.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
84 Watlington Street (County Arms)		None	<p>County Arms 1936 replaced an earlier public house of the same name. Converted and extended to provide flats in the 2010s.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>
13-21 St Johns Hill			<p>13-21 St Johns Hill date from c1900 much later than properties on the opposite side of the hill. The grey brick with red window and door surrounds are distinctive. The properties have very tall chimneys that have been retained.</p> <p>(left image Zoë Andrews) (right image Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
7-11 St Johns Hill (Conquest Court)		None	<p>Built as a mineral water factory for Humphries and Holt, taken over by Tunbridge, Jones &amp; Co of Castle Street in 1932. In the later twentieth century it was occupied by Conquest Products Ltd a small leatherwork factory, hence the current name.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
5 St Johns Hill		None	<p>Double fronted red brick.</p> <p>With No 7 St Johns Hill appears on the Board of Health Maps 1853. Set back from St Johns Hill.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
3 St Johns Hill		None	<p>With No 7 St Johns Hill appears on the Board of Health Maps 1853. Set back at an angle from St Johns Hill.</p> <p>Two storeys and basement, stucco.</p> <p>Magnificent display of climbing roses when in flower.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
39 St Johns Road			<p>Former Lifeboat public house with ghost sign revealed.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
41 St Johns Road		None	<p>Former Eldon Cottage which had an extensive garden to the rear on which 11-13 St Johns Hill were constructed. Later occupied as offices of C and W Andrews glass merchants.</p> <p>Unfortunately the chimney stack was removed when the property was reroofed in 2023.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>
43 St Johns Road		None	<p>Formerly warehouse of C and W Andrews Glass Merchants.</p> <p>Converted to residential.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
15 St Johns Road and Beehive Cottages		None	-
8 St Johns Street		None	<p>The Retreat public house. The property was licensed in the second half of the nineteenth century when the property was occupied by Thomas Law pork butcher and beer retailer. In 1903 it was a beerhouse tied to Higgs brewery.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
17 St Johns Street		None	<p>Recently refurbished three storey grey brick with red brick window and door surrounds.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
88 Queens Road		None	<p>The Lyndhurst public house. At the foot of Watlington Street (once Lyndhurst Street) and named after the first Lord Lyndhurst who succeeded Lord Eldon as Lord Chancellor.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
118-128 Queens Road		None	<p>Although not particularly well maintained these properties represent the taller red bricked terraces built along Queens Road from c1850. There are six in this terrace. The eastern three have lost their chimney pots but the western three have retained them.</p> <p>(image Richard Bennett)</p>

**Table 7: Buildings of townscape merit within Character Area 3**

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
1-9 Town Place		None	<p>Some of the older cottages on Town Place. A unique terrace in the CA with no vehicular access.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Address of building	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
46 & 48 Eldon Terrace		None	Landmark buildings on the corner of Eldon Terrace where it meets Montague Street.  (image Evelyn Williams)

## Appendix 5 Conservation Area Views

See the text of the appraisal for the significance of these views

**Table 8: Views into the Conservation Area**

Location of view	Image
<p>East along Queens Road to the junction with Kings Road and beyond. (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	
<p>Further east along Queens Road closer to the CA. (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	
<p>North down Watlington Street from in front of the Royal Berkshire Hospital on London Road. (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location of view	Image
<p>West from Reading College (Activate Learning) (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	

**Table 9: Views within the Conservation Area**

Location of view	Image
<p>North towards The Oval (rear) from Princes Street (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	
<p>South towards The Oval (front) from St Johns Street (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location of view	Image
East along Eldon Terrace from Eldon Road (image Evelyn Williams)	
South along Montague Street towards Eldon Terrace (image Zoë Andrews)	
East from Eldon Road into Eldon Square (image Evelyn Williams)	

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location of view	Image
North down Eldon Road towards Kings Road (images Jennifer Berdolt)	
South from Kings Road up Eldon Road towards Eldon Square (image Evelyn Williams)	
South from the foot of Watlington Street (image Jennifer Berdolt)	

**Table 10: Views out of the Conservation Area**

Location of view	Image
<p>View west towards the traffic gyratory, more or less at the historic junction of Queens Road and Kings Road, the area to the north, on the right, is out of the CA.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>	
<p>From Princes Street south to the Royal Berkshire Hospital.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>	
<p>From Watlington Street there is a view towards Reading Gaol.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>	

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location of view	Image
<p>2016 view from almost the same spot before the Verto building was constructed but after the demolition of Kings Point. (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	
<p>North from Victoria Street to Reading College (Activate Learning) (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	

## Appendix 6 Conservation Area Trees

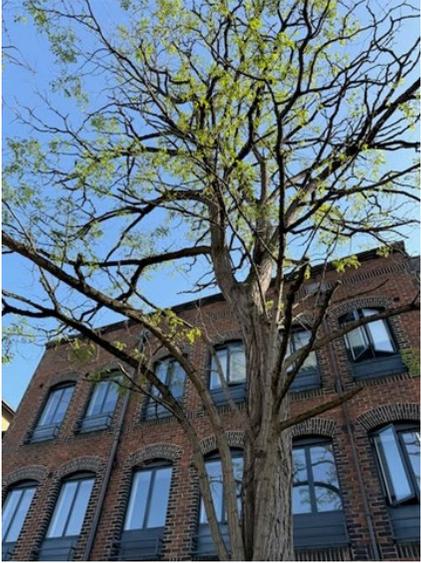
**Table 11: Trees with a Tree Preservation Order**

Location of tree	Image 1	Image 2	TPO details and number if applicable
1a Eldon Road		None	<p>1 tree, 58/05</p> <p>Black mulberry tree in leaf June 2021 while works were going on at Hanover House to remove dangerous cladding and replace with new.</p> <p>It is highly likely that the mulberry was within the garden of Swiss Villa which is known to have had a mulberry tree.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
24 Eldon Road		None	<p>1 tree, 4/22</p> <p>Monterey Cypress at the rear</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location of tree	Image 1	Image 2	TPO details and number if applicable
23 Eldon Square		None	<p>1 tree, 150/05</p> <p>Plane tree in rear garden overhanging Eldon Terrace</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>
175 & 177 Kings Road (land to rear)		None	<p>1 tree, 95/06</p> <p>Plane tree at rear.</p> <p>There are also other trees screening the boundary of the site</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location of tree	Image 1	Image 2	TPO details and number if applicable
185-189 Kings Road			<p>1 tree, 44/13 Plane tree in car park at rear. (images RBC)</p>
194 Kings Road (Kings Lodge)		None	<p>1 tree, 145/05 False acacia in front garden/parking area (image Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location of tree	Image 1	Image 2	TPO details and number if applicable
196-200 Kings Road (Wilberforce Place)		None	7 trees, 61/13 7 ornamental pears (image Evelyn Williams)
202 Kings Road			7 trees, 1 group, 60/13 6 silver birch on east boundary, Maple, Whitebeam, Beech and silver birch on Kings Road frontage (images Evelyn Williams)

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location of tree	Image 1	Image 2	TPO details and number if applicable
73a London Road, Princes Court		None	3 trees 149/05 Walnut (image Evelyn Williams)
73a London Road, Princes Court		None	Horse Chestnut (image Evelyn Williams)

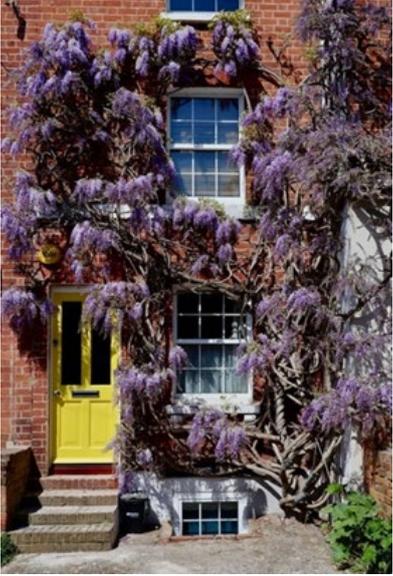
Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location of tree	Image 1	Image 2	TPO details and number if applicable
73a London Road, Princes Court		None	<p>Horse Chestnut (image Evelyn Williams)</p>
Watlington Street, Watlington House & Hall		None	<p>13 trees, 77/002</p> <p>Following the rear garden improvement in 2012-2014 and a sycamore felled early in 2025 there are now 5 TPO trees at Watlington House.</p> <p>2 sycamores at the front, a Hornbeam that replaced a diseased sycamore at the front and a Magnolia and Persian Ironwood at the rear.</p> <p>(image Evelyn Williams)</p>

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location of tree	Image 1	Image 2	TPO details and number if applicable
<p>Watlington Street, Watlington House &amp; Hall</p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Replacement hornbeam at rear of flower bed (image Evelyn Williams)</p>
<p>Watlington Street, Watlington House &amp; Hall</p>		<p>None</p>	<p>Rear garden in March 2025 showing the Persian Ironwood (left) and Magnolia (right) TPO tallest trees close to the wall. (image Richard Bennett)</p>

**Table 12: Other significant trees and green spaces**

Location of tree	Image
<p>Eldon Square Wisteria (image Zoë Andrews)</p>	
<p>St Johns Road Wisteria (image Zoë Andrews)</p>	
<p>George V Memorial Gardens mulberry planted by Reading CAAC in memory of member Roger Williams, with larger tree behind (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location of tree	Image
<p>George V Memorial Gardens Trees on north side (images Evelyn Williams)</p>	
<p>George V Memorial Gardens trees (images Evelyn Williams)</p>	
<p>Trees at the front and rear of The Oval (images Evelyn Williams)</p>	 

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

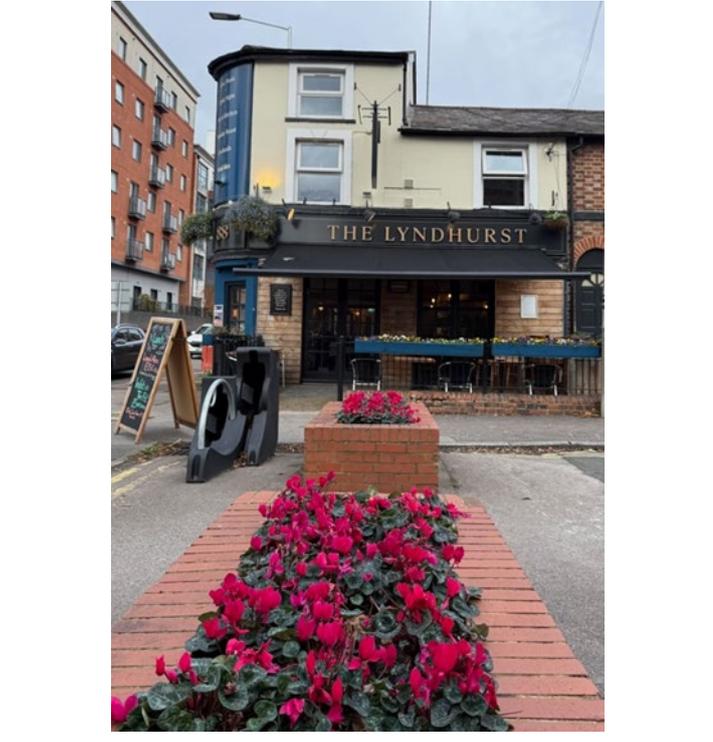
Location of tree	Image
<p>London Road plane trees along southern border of CA (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	
<p>Trees along southern boundary of Reading College (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	

**Table 13: Green spaces (please note there are some overlaps with TPO and significant trees listed above)**

Location of space	Image
<p>George V Memorial Gardens on Eldon Square (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	

Location of space	Image
Watlington House garden (rear) (image Richard Bennett)	
Watlington House car park and garden (front) (images Evelyn Williams)	
Watlington House path from front door looking east	

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location of space	Image
Watlington House north-east corner of front garden (panoramic)	 A panoramic photograph showing the north-east corner of the front garden of Watlington House. The house is a large, historic building with a prominent spire. The foreground shows a paved area with some greenery and a low brick wall.
Watlington House south-east corner of front garden (pano)	 A panoramic photograph showing the south-east corner of the front garden of Watlington House. The house is a large, historic building with a prominent spire. The foreground shows a paved area with some greenery and a low brick wall.
Planters on South Street (image Zoë Andrews)	 A photograph showing a view down South Street. In the foreground, there are two large, dark-colored planters filled with greenery. The street is paved and has a low brick wall on the left side. Buildings are visible in the background.
Planters on Watlington Street (image Evelyn Williams)	 A photograph showing a view of Watlington Street. In the foreground, there are two large, dark-colored planters filled with red flowers. The street is paved and has a low brick wall on the left side. Buildings are visible in the background.

<b>Location of space</b>	<b>Image</b>
<p>Traffic island on Queens Road and Kings Road junction (adjacent to CA) (image Evelyn Williams)</p>	

## Appendix 7 Original or substantially original heritage shopfronts

**Table 11: Original or substantially original heritage shopfronts**

Location	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
63 Watlington Street		None	Swift Upholstery, awning in place. (image Zoë Andrews)
111 Watlington Street		None	Now unoccupied. Recessed doorway. Features in the Shopfronts Design Guide SPD (image Evelyn Williams)

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2026)

Location	Image 1	Image 2	Comment
104 Queens Road			<p>Corner shop doorway, A Lee Bakery sign. Most recently it was Ewemove estate agency.</p> <p>Right: Decorative ironwork in need of repair above fascia board.</p> <p>(images Zoë Andrews)</p>
23 Victoria Street		None	<p>Out to Lunch Catering Co</p> <p>Long closed but fondly remembered as a delicatessen/sandwich shop. In 1972 it was a grocers run by Mrs M Day.</p> <p>(image Zoë Andrews)</p>