



Progress Update and Achievements
Year to 31 December 2022

1. SUMMARY

1.1 Reading CAAC continues to progress its primary objective of updating the appraisals for Reading's conservation areas. Our comments on planning applications that have heritage impact are also an important contribution to the conservation and enhancement of Reading's heritage.

1.2 Reading's High Streets Heritage Action Zone project (HSHAZ) has as last year been resource intensive for us. We are involved with a wide range of initiatives arising from the project. The programme continues until 2024.

1.3 We commented on planning applications/advertising consents for 24 buildings or sites (some with an additional listed building consent).

1.4 2022 has been a positive year for additions to the local list with the approval of several of our nominations.

1.5 We are returning to meeting in person when suitable.

1.6 We were able to launch the informal public consultation of the Christchurch Conservation Area appraisal review on 16 July at Christ Church on Christchurch Road. The document is now with Reading Borough Council (RBC) planning officers for consideration.

1.7 We are grateful for the support that we receive from Reading Borough Council Conservation and Urban Design Officer, planning and other officers in furthering our aims and objectives.

2. CONSERVATION AREA (CA) APPRAISALS

2.1 The review of the Christchurch Conservation Area (CA) in south Reading is now with officers following the informal public consultation which ran for 6 weeks from 16 July to 27 August 2022. Thirty responses to the survey were received.

2.2 Work on the Eldon Square appraisal review has now restarted. Two meetings have been held at The Retreat on St John's Street and a walkabout of the area. The current appraisal has been re-

organised into the new format and updates are being made where information or photographs are out of date.

2.3 No progress has been made on the Market Place/ London Street or St Mary's Butts CA appraisal reviews. These were paused awaiting the Historic Area Assessment (HAA) that was commissioned as part of HSHAZ. The HAA has not yet been published. We do not anticipate being involved in drafting revised or new appraisals for the town centre area.

2.4 The inability to progress actions from management plans for the St Peters CA and Russell Street/Castle Hill/Oxford Road is proving frustrating. Some improvements to shopfronts and public realm will be carried out along Oxford Road as part of the HSHAZ project. We have not yet found a way to successfully engage with the range of RBC departments responsible for signage, streetcare, transport and planning to ensure that what are individually minor detailed matters e.g. a new street sign or road markings take into account the conservation area status of the area in which the work takes place.

3. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

3.1 RBC planning department consult us on any planning applications within CAs or affecting listed buildings in the Borough. We also review the lists of planning applications for others which are of interest. We are unable to comment on every proposal on which we are consulted and prioritise those that are of particular concern to our members or where we think we can make a difference.

3.2 The applications we commented on during 2021 which remained undecided as at the time of writing last year's report as well as those we commented on during 2022 are listed below. Where the application is marked (*) we were supportive of the proposal. Applications marked (**) had some positive features but improvements were required which meant that we could not support it as it stood.

2021

- 200142 109b Oxford Road – WITHDRAWN
- 201081 Dukesbridge House – still undecided
- 201585 109a Oxford Road - GRANTED
- 201586 109a Oxford Road (signage) - CONSENTED
- 210413 & 210414 27-33 Christchurch Road - REFUSED
- 210714 Abbey School Playing Field – REFUSED (and dismissed on appeal)
- 211241 88 Broad Street - WITHDRAWN
- 211385 & 211386 Belle Vue House, 2 Tilehurst Road - WITHDRAWN
- 211416 4 Downshire Square - REFUSED
- 211553 86-87a Broad Street - WITHDRAWN
- 211728 Dellwood Community Hospital(*) (Outline) – GRANTED

2022

- 201879 20 Shinfield Road – GRANTED
- 210537 Whitley Library (**) – undecided
- 211783 11 Duke Street – GRANTED
- 211942 43 London Street – (conditions) – GRANTED
- 211961 & 211962 23 -24 Market Place - GRANTED
- 212051 & 212010 1-3 Queen Victoria Street (signage) – GRANTED

- 220028 62 Goldsmid Road – GRANTED (after changes to plans) (PAC 1 February 2023)
- 220243 45 Tilehurst Road - WITHDRAWN
- 220392 69 London Road (Garage) - GRANTED
- 220409 & 220410 Caversham Park - undecided
- 220548 18 Church Road - WITHDRAWN
- 220567 109b Oxford Road – (*) (going to 29 March 2023 Planning Applications Committee)
- 220577 175 Friar Street – (**) GRANTED
- 220579 173-174 Friar Street – (**) GRANTED
- 220650 119 London Street (amended plans) - GRANTED
- 220712 21 Christchurch Road (Joseph Huntley plaque) (*) – GRANTED
- 220922 71-73 Caversham Road (Drews) – (going to 29 March 2023 Planning Applications Committee)
- 221141 & 221142 33 London Street (Great Expectations) (**) – GRANTED (but some changes to plans)
- 221153 26 & 28 Clifton Street – GRANTED
- 221232 1-15 Queen Victoria Street & 145-148 Friar Street (*) – GRANTED at PAC 7 December 2022
- 221235 138-144 Friar Street (*) – GRANTED at PAC 7 December 2022
- 221397 & 221398 114 London Street – GRANTED
- 221520 4 x town centre monuments and memorials (*) – GRANTED (HSHAZ)
- 221802 11 Victoria Street – REFUSED

3.3 Appeals

- Planning application 201650, 111a Watlington Street, (amended plans) was refused during 2021 and the applicant appealed against this decision. The appeal was dismissed on 1 February 2023.
- Planning application 210714, Abbey School Playing fields, was refused during 2022. The applicant appealed and the appeal was dismissed on 26 October 2022.
- At the beginning of January 2023 we supported the RBC decision to refuse prior notification of development of a 5G telecommunications pole on St Peter’s Hill in Caversham which has been appealed by the applicant.

4. HIGH STREETS HERITAGE ACTION ZONES (HSHAZ)

4.1 The four year [HSHAZ project](#) based on RBC’s successful funding application in 2019 continues. We are represented on the project steering group by vice-chair Richard Bennett who also represents Reading Civic Society.

4.2 A consortium of consultants Archway Heritage, Built Heritage and Ultranyx were appointed in 2021 to carry out a Historic Area Assessment (HAA) for most of the town centre area within the IDR. The final report was due on 31 July 2021 but remains unpublished.

4.3 CAAC members assisted with the production of a sound walk [‘Pies, Pints and Protest: The hidden world of Castle Street and St Mary’s Butts’](#) narrated by Fiona Talkington and produced by Richard Bentley.

4.4 Historic England (HE) continue their review of listings in Reading town centre. At the beginning of the year we were consulted on several buildings on Castle Street. We were able to suggest improvements and additional information for some, particularly Holybrook House. The revisions are

a great improvement on the existing listings. We expect this support to the HSHAZ project and HE to be ongoing for the next year or so.

4.5 Towards the end of 2022 there were a number of planning applications to improve buildings and monuments in the HSHAZ area funded by the project. In December an application to repair and maintain the ZinZan tomb and Harrinson Memorial Cross in St Mary's Churchyard, Queen Victoria's Statue and the Simeon monument were approved. These works are substantially complete at the time of writing.

6. PLANNING POLICY

6.1 The Shopfronts Design Guide SPD was adopted in January 2022. CAAC had commented on the draft for consultation.

6.2 An updated Residential Conversions SPD was issued for consultation in December 2022 and CAAC has commented on the document. An updated document is to be considered by RBC's Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee on 23 March 2023.

7. LOCAL LISTINGS

7.1 We submitted local listing applications for the following during 2022:

- 40 Christchurch Road LL21 – added to the local list 30 March 2022
- Gasworks Social Club (with Berkshire Industrial Archaeology Group) LL22 – added to the local list 22 June 2022
- The Bugle public house 144 Friar Street including buildings to the rear LL23 – added to the local list July 2022
- 62 Tilehurst Road LL24 – added to the local list December 2022
- Caversham Road Fire Station and housing to the rear on Barry Place (with Bell Tower Community Association)

7.2 Other additions to the local list in 2022 were

- 85-88 Broad Street LL18 – added to the local list in January 2022
- Huntley & Palmers Social Club LL19 – added to the local list March 2022
- Palmer Park Pavilion and associated buildings and entrance gates (nominated by Councillor Josh Williams) LL20 – added to the local list March 2022

8. PRIORITIES FOR 2023

8.1 The final phase of HSHAZ will no doubt resource intensive for us but we hope to see the positive results of some of the building rescue and public realm improvements.

8.2 In February 2022 we had a meeting with councillors and officers to set priorities for the next few years and progress the St Peters CA Management Plan. Our priorities for the year were Christchurch and Eldon Square CA appraisal reviews. After a slow start Eldon Square is now moving forward and is our CA priority for 2023.

8.3 On 14 May we will be participating in Reading Walks Festival with a walk around the Eldon Square Conservation Area.

Evelyn Williams
CAAC Chair
23 March 2023