



TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. SUMMARY

1.1 The Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) is a voluntary group independent of but endorsed by Reading Borough Council (RBC). The aims of the committee are to promote the preservation and enhancement of Reading's heritage particularly but not limited to the protection and good management of Conservation Areas. It works with RBC and other heritage groups to achieve its objectives.

2. DETAILED AIMS

2.1 To advise RBC when preparing Conservation Area Character Appraisals or policies for the preservation and enhancement of a Conservation Areas, heritage sites or other areas deemed to be of historical import. As appropriate, to take the lead in revising Conservation Area appraisals and formulating policies for particular Conservation Areas (including making positive proposals for their enhancement and measures for their general care and maintenance). To initiate the consideration of and to make recommendations concerning the boundaries of potential Conservation Areas. To make recommendations for modifications to the boundaries of existing Conservation Areas.

2.2 To assist in furthering the education, involvement and support of the local bodies and the general public in conservation issues.

2.3 To comment and advise RBC on planning applications and pre- applications, including objection or support, and to advise RBC on any other matters which may be referred to the Committee. Representations from the CAAC on planning applications should be submitted to the planning team. Recognising the voluntary nature of this Committee, not every application will be considered and therefore a lack of comment will not imply endorsement.

2.4 The CAAC may make representations on matters which affect the character or

appearance of a Conservation Area, heritage site or other area deemed to be of historical import.

2.5 To advise RBC on schemes for the enhancement of Conservation Areas or other heritage assets referred to the Committee or initiated by it for works or operations, other than maintenance works, to the public highway, public realm, public open space or any other Council-managed space which will impact such assets.

2.6 The CAAC will meet as required to address priorities and have arrangements in place to submit timely planning application comments between meetings. Meetings will be set as deemed necessary, at least four times per annum.

2.7 To keep abreast of national policy, advice and best practice and share with RBC officers.

2.8 The Committee may agree to the setting up of appropriate email accounts, web sites and social media accounts etc. in order to communicate with and inform members of the CAAC and the public about matters within these terms of reference.

3 MEMBERSHIP

3.1 CAAC membership will aim to reflect a cross-section of interests, local people and appropriate skills.

3.2 Councillors other than members of the Planning Applications Committee, may be appointed to serve on the Committee. However, Councillors from the Planning Applications Committee may be invited to attend meetings in an ex-officio observer capacity only.

3.3 The CAAC shall elect a chair, a vice chair, a planning policy and liaison officer and a secretary/ minute taker to serve for the forthcoming year until the first committee meeting after the following 1 April.

3.4 The name of the chair and contact email shall be included on the CAAC webpage on the Council's website. The constitution of the committee shall be posted on the Council's website.

3.5 The Committee will have no less than six and no more than 20 members in order to ensure that it can work effectively. The Committee will have the power to co-opt temporary members with a specific subject or CA of interest who may not wish to be longer term members of the Committee.

3.6 Sub-groups may be formed by the committee with a defined remit to report back to the committee.

3.7 The CAAC will seek new members when places become available and new members will be chosen by the Committee on the basis of their potential contribution to the work of the CAAC. Individuals who are interested in joining the Committee may apply. Observers and / or speakers can be invited to Committee meetings to assist with the work of the CAAC and networking with other groups.

3.8 Appointments approved by the Committee shall be for a period of four years, but may be renewed after that period. At the first meeting of the Committee after 1 April membership for the forthcoming year will be re-confirmed.

3.9 When recruiting new members, the aim will be to ensure that the Committee is made up of individuals that will be able to give constructive, professional opinions on improving the historic environment of Reading. This should include knowledge of planning, conservation and urban design, as well as representation from residents and communities living in conservation areas or heritage areas. 'Advisory memberships' may include practitioners in historical conservation or planning from outside Reading.

4 PROCEDURES

4.1 A link to the CAAC meetings calendar and other information shall be included on the CAAC webpage on the Council's website.

4.2 Matters shall be decided by consensus or if necessary by a simple majority vote of members present. The Chair shall have the casting vote where agreement cannot be reached.

4.3 A quorum of at least one third of the CAAC members shall be required for the committee to vote on decisions.

4.4 The CAAC does not fall within the definition of a committee or sub-committee as contained in Section 102 of the Local Government Act of 1972.

4.5 Meetings of the Committee will not be open to the public or the press.

4.6 Comments on planning applications may be discussed at Committee meetings but are likely to have deadlines which fall between meetings. The agreement of three members of the Committee, of whom one is an officer, is required on the comments to be made. Ideally one of the three will have local knowledge of the proposal.

4.7 Comments by the CAAC on planning applications will be published by the relevant case-worker with the related planning application documents on the planning applications website. The CAAC's comments shall be taken into consideration in the planning officer's assessment of the planning application and recorded in the officer's report, referred to at Planning Application Committee meetings and a link to the documents published on the Council's CAAC web-site page.

4.8 The CAAC may invite to its meetings applicants and other parties involved in proposed developments or other matters concerning the historic environment to explain or clarify issues. The CAAC is a consultee in its own right and it is there to form its own views on applications.

4.9 Representations from the CAAC on planning applications will be set out in adequate detail. CAAC comments on an application will clearly identify its impact on the character and appearance of the relevant Conservation Area and its relevance to the Council's development plan or planning guidance.

4.10 Where the CAAC has objected to an application and this objection cannot be overcome and the recommendation is for approval, the CAAC will be able to request the application be considered at the Council's Planning Applications Committee either by asking the ward Councillor to bring it forward or the Town's Heritage Champion (a Councillor held - position).

4.11 Members of the CAAC shall not be remunerated for their participation in the activities of the CAAC.

4.12 If any member of the CAAC has any pecuniary interest, direct or indirect, in any planning application or other matter before the CAAC, that member shall declare their interest, withdraw from the meeting while the matter is under consideration, and this should be noted in the minutes.

5 OFFICERS

5.1 CHAIR and VICE CHAIR. The chair and vice-chair of the committee are the first points of contact for the CAAC.

5.2 PLANNING AND POLICY LIAISON OFFICER. In consultation with other members of the committee, the planning and policy liaison officer will monitor new planning applications for those of interest to the CAAC and expedite responses and comments. The officer will also be aware of changes in local and national planning policy which may affect the heritage environment and bring it to the attention of the wider committee.

5.3 MINUTE TAKER/SECRETARY. The minute taker will take minutes of committee meetings and distribute to attendees and circulate the agenda of future meetings.

The first version of this terms of reference was adopted at the RBC Strategic Environment, Transport and Planning Committee on 5 April 2016.

<http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/5046/item12/pdf/item12.pdf>

This version approved by Reading CAAC on 17 December 2019 and adopted by RBC on: 8 April 2020 using the decision book process decision no:589.