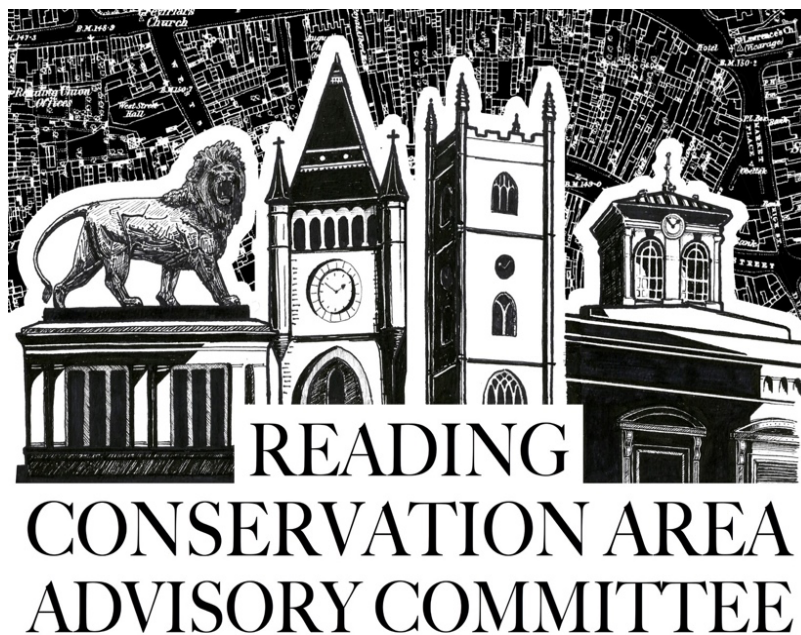




Progress Update and Achievements 2025/26

This report covers the year 1 April 2025 - 31 March 2026 and is the first year that we have aligned our reporting year end with that of Reading Borough Council (RBC). Our 2024/25 report covered a 15 month period and so previous statistics are not comparable.

1. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS

1.1 Reading CAAC continues to progress its primary objective of updating the appraisals for Reading's conservation areas. The Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal was adopted in March 2026 following RBC's public consultation at the end of 2025. Our own informal public consultation of the revised draft Conservation Area Appraisal for The Mount commenced at the end of March 2026.

1.2 Consideration of planning applications that have heritage impact also represents a significant part of our role in the conservation and enhancement of Reading's heritage. We commented on nine planning applications/listed building consents/advertising consents for buildings or sites (2024/25 – 17).

1.3 We submitted one nomination for an addition to Reading's [List of Locally Important Buildings](#) the Royal Albion public house on Oxford Road (2024/25 – none). The public house was added to the list as LL31 on 3 December 2025. We supported three nominations submitted by others that were added to the list in 2025/26: High Heskett, 19 Parkside Road; Hemdean House School and Lodge and 2 Mill Green, Caversham.

1.4 We met on six occasions during 2025/26.

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

2. CONSERVATION AREA (CA) APPRAISALS

2.1 The revised Eldon Square CAA was adopted by RBC in March 2026. This was the fourth appraisal that we reviewed.

2.2 A review of The Mount CAA, our fifth review, reached the informal public consultation stage by the end of March 2026. It is expected to be adopted in the third quarter of 2026/27.



Figure 1 The Mount CA (L) and community meeting for launch of informal public consultation (R)

2.3 In 2024/25 CAAC decided to try to resume the review of the two town centre appraisals, Market Place/London Street and St Mary's Butts/Castle Street which had been put aside while the Town Centre Historic Area Appraisal (HAA) was undertaken as part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) project 2020-2024. Unfortunately the work did not progress beyond outline planning this year. The current appraisals are out of date and following the completion of the HAA it is clear that consideration should be given to a Town Centre Conservation Area.

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 other proposals 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 2023 and 2024/25 which remained undecided, defined as no decision notice uploaded to the planning website, at the time of writing last year's report as well as those we commented on during 2025/26 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.

2023

- 220933 35-39 Friar Street (updated plans) – granted 20 November 2025
- 221364 Central Club, London Street – granted 8 October 2024
- 221880 23-24 Market Place – granted 15 March 2024
- 221916 & 221917 Oracle (redevelopment of Debenhams/Vue cinema blocks) – undecided
- 230107 & 230108 10 Gun Street – granted 20 February 2025
- 231139 185a Oxford Road (**) – permitted subject to legal agreement 26 January 2024
- 231257 2-4 Church Street, Caversham (**) – granted 30 May 2025

2024

- PL/23/0822 King's Meadow View outline permission - undecided
- PL/24/0173 Broad St Mall – partial demolition and building of residential towers – undecided
- PL/24/0874 & PL/24/0875 – 33 Baker Street refurbishment of listed building (**) – granted 10 January 2025

- PL/24/1155 – John Lewis Depot – demolition and construction of flats – granted 24 August 2026
- PL/24/1213 – The Horn public house, St Mary's Butts – conversion of upper floor to residential (**) – granted 7 November 2025
- PL/24/0718 – 2 Northcourt Avenue – extension to side and rear – withdrawn 14 April 2025

January to March 2025

- PL/25/0312 & PL/25/0313 – 144 Southampton Street – refurbishment – granted 3 June 2025
- PL/25/0338 – Drews 71-73 Caversham Road, documentation of building – condition discharged 28 April 2025
- PL/24/1694 – Change of use of former Whitley Library - undecided

April 2025 to March 2026

- PL/19/0549 - Shillingford House 78 Oxford Road - undecided
- PL/25/0894 - Drews 71-73 Caversham Road conditions - conditions discharged 13 August 2025
- PL/25/1067 - Fernery at the Acacias (**) - granted 12 December 2025
- PL/25/1086 - 129 Whiteknights Road (**) - refused 10 October 2025
- PL/25/1471 - Land adjacent to 1 New Road (**) - withdrawn 16 December 2025
- PL/25/1589 & PL/25/1590 - 8A High Street (**) - granted 24 July 2026
- PL/25/1660 - 8 Anstey Road - undecided
- PL/25/1706 - Forbury View (**) - undecided
- PL/25/1802 - 117-119 Oxford Road signage - refused 6 February 2026

4. LOCAL LISTINGS

4.1 We submitted one nomination for an addition to Reading's [List of Locally Important Buildings](#) the Royal Albion public house on Oxford Road (2024/25 – *none*). The public house was added to the list as LL31 on 3 December 2025.

4.2 We supported three nominations submitted by others that were added to the list in 2025/26: High Heskett, 19 Parkside Road; Hemdean House School and Lodge and 2 Mill Green, Caversham.

5. READING TOOLKIT

5.1 We adopted a toolkit for conservation area appraisals, in particular reviews of existing appraisals in Reading. The Reading Toolkit is an adaptation of the Oxford Character Area Assessment Toolkit which meets the requirements for conservation area reviews. The toolkit was developed following the training delivered to us by the Conservation Officer in 2024.

5.2 The toolkit has been used throughout the review of The Mount conservation area appraisal and we anticipate publishing it to a wider audience in due course.

6. HERITAGE SKILLS SURVEY

6.1 We reported the results of our Heritage Skills Survey at our meeting in February. The survey was designed to spark discussion about the lack of heritage skills in Reading. It was agreed to take this forward to a meeting with Reading's Economy & Destination Agency (REDA) later in 2026.

7. CITY OF CULTURE

7.1 We supported Reading's, ultimately unsuccessful, City of Culture 2029 Expression of Interest.

8. REFORMS TO STATUTORY CONSULTEES

8.1 We commented on the Government's proposals for reforms to statutory consultees and opposed the removal of the Gardens Trust and Theatres Trust as statutory consultees.

9. GUIDANCE FOR HOUSEHOLDERS AND PROPERTY OWNERS IN CONSERVATION AREAS

9.1 We were delighted that RBC published [general guidance for householders and property owners in conservation areas on](#) its website in March. There is also a leaflet which can be [downloaded from our website](#). The need for such guidance has been included in the management plan for each CA that we have reviewed.

10. OTHER 2025/26

10.1 We were very pleased that we were able to hold a couple of members' social events this year outside our formal meetings.

10.2 We produced our first ever video covering our work '2025 wrapped'.

11. PRIORITIES FOR 2026/27

11.1 Commence a review of the Surley Row CA working in partnership with Caversham and District Residents' Association and Kendrick CA with the University of Reading School of Architecture.

11.2 To continue to:

- champion Reading's heritage and play our part in the cultural life of the town;
- collaborate with residents' groups and other organisations, some of which are represented on CAAC (Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association, Caversham and District Residents' Association, Friends of Caversham Court Gardens, Katesgrove Community Association, Northcourt Avenue Residents Association and Reading Civic Society)
- work with Reading Borough Council on heritage and planning issues.

Evelyn Williams, Reading CAAC Chair
29 October 2026