‘To care about a place, you must know its story’

Nicholas Crane
“...a much-maligned town. No town in the south of England hides its attractions more successfully from the visitor.”

John Betjeman
Cheerleading for Reading's heritage

24 Aug 2017

Tags: Community, Get involved, Reading's history

See all posts
Adults who live in areas of higher levels of historic environment are likely to have a stronger sense of place.

Young people and adults who are more interested in the historic environment are likely to have a stronger sense of place.

Young people and adults who cite a local building or monument as special are likely to have a stronger sense of place.
£1 of investment in the historic environment generates £1.60 of additional economic activity over a ten year period.

Investment in the historic environment attracts businesses, one in four businesses’ agree that the historic environment is an important factor in deciding where to locate, the same as for road access.

Investing in heritage brings more visitors to local areas and encourages them to spend more, approximately one in five visitors to areas which have had historic environment investment spend more than before, and one in four businesses has seen the number of customers increase.
HERITAGE AND URBAN REGENERATION

Many places now embracing their heritage as a vital part of their sense of place and regeneration.

Image of Manchester Town Hall
Image of Oxford Castle
Image of Margate seafront
Speed’s 1610 map of Reading shows how Saxon and medieval town developed.
READING’S HERITAGE – ASSETS

- IN THE UK’S TOP 16% OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES FOR QUALITY OF HERITAGE (RSA UK HERITAGE INDEX)
- RESTING PLACE OF KING HENRY I
- IS THE CONFLUENCE OF THE RIVER THAMES, RIVER KENNET & HOLY BROOK, ALL OF WHICH ARE MENTIONED IN THE DOOMESDAY BOOK
- A DIVERSE HISTORY
- HOME OF READING ABBEY, ONE OF MEDIEVAL ENGLAND’S RICHEST MONASTERIES
- 800 LISTED BUILDINGS
- 2 SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS
- 5 HISTORIC PARKS & GARDENS
- 15 CONSERVATION AREAS
- 6 BRILLANT MUSEUMS!!
WHERE'S READING HEADING

Where's Reading Heading?

Reading Museum
WHAT IS THE MUSEUM DOING IN THE ABBEY QUARTER?

Protect and conserve

Respect and enhance

Interpret and promote
ABB EY QU AR TE R LO C AT ION

READING RAILWAY STATION

MUSEUM & TOWN HALL

FORBURY GARDENS

READING GAOL

ABB EY GATEWAY

ABB EY RUINS

THE ORACLE CENTRE

READING MUSEUM
The new draft Local Plan defines and has a specific policy to protect and enhance the Abbey Quarter.
READING ABBEY REVEALED PROJECT 2015-2020
READING ABBEY - CONSERVATION
READING ABBEY REVEALED - CONSERVATION

The problem

The solution
Archaeological survey of the standing ruins has brought to light evidence of architectural features and helped target conservation work at the ruins and Abbey Gateway.
Left: Record of stone loss from 2010 to 2014
Above: Bins containing stone and flint collected for re-use
READING ABBEY REVEALED – INTERPRETATION

AREAS INCLUDED IN INTERPRETATION

1. Abbey Quarter branding

2. Reading Museum Abbey Quarter Gallery

3. On pedestrian routes
   • from main shopping area
   • from railway station
   • Abbey-related points of interest

4. Abbey Ruins
READING ABBEY REVEALED – INTERPRETATION

ABBEY QUARTER PEDESTRIAN ROUTES INTERPRETATION

[Map showing pedestrian routes around Reading Abbey with various signs and markers indicating different sections and points of interest.]
READING ABBEY REVEALED – INTERPRETATION

READING MUSEUM - ABBEY GALLERY

THE ABBEY CLOISTERS

A cloister is a courtyard with a covered walkway round the outside - a good place to get fresh air whatever the weather. In many monasteries the north side, which got the most light during the day, was used for working on manuscripts.

The small section of cloister here in the gallery is a reconstruction which combines elements from Reading Abbey's cloister with modern plasterwork [the white part]. Originally the stones were painted in bright colours like the sample to your left.

Reading the cloister

- Look at the base of the columns. The decoration is based on myths and Bible stories.
- Look at the capitals. They were a way of showing pride in the work done.
- Look at the 12th-century frieze on the capitals on the left.

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ABBEY QUARTER PEDESTRIAN ROUTES INTERPRETATION

HOLY BROOK
Holy Brook is a side-channel of the River Kennet. It's called Holy Brook because of its links to Reading Abbey. Over the centuries, buildings have covered the route of the brook as it passes through Reading, but you can still see it in a few spots. One of those is here and another is just outside the library.

Holy Brook
Holy Brook was once a vital part of the city, but it was covered over by buildings. Today, you can still see it in a few places.

Albert Quarter
The Quarter was once a bustling commercial area. Today, it's a quiet neighborhood with shops and restaurants.

Reading Borough Council
Working better with you

Reading Museum
RM
READING ABBEY REVEALED – COMMUNITY
READING ABBEY REVEALED - EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

• Accessible conservation-based talks, workshops and hard-hat tours

• High profile opening Festival

• Festivals and fairs e.g. Water Fest

• Site-specific performance about the history of the Abbey Ruins and Reading

• Theatre and music performances
READING 2020

Slide from a 2001 presentation looking to the future development of Reading.
BBC's Caversham Park put up for sale amid cuts

© 27 June 2017 Berkshire

BBC Monitoring's headquarters have been based in Caversham Park since 1943, but it will close its offices in London.

The RRC is selling the Grade II listed Caversham Park estate in Berkshire in