

HERITAGE STATEMENT

OFFICE (CLASS E) TO RESIDENTIAL (CLASS C3)

90 LONDON STREET

READING

BERKSHIRE

RG1 4SJ

Page 2	Introduction
Page 3	Policy Contexts
Page 5	The Heritage
Page 5	Historical Background
Page 7	Description of the Listed Building
Page 8	Internal Features
Page 8	Assessment of Impacts of the Proposed Development
Page 8	Conclusion

Introduction

This Heritage Statement is to inform and support the listed building consent for the change of use at 90 London Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 4SJ.

This document provides an outline description of the historical development and significance of Grade II listed building and an assessment of the impact of the proposed alterations. This document has been undertaken to meet the requirements of the LPA following Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The application should be considered with the following documents:

Existing Floor Plans

Proposed Floor Plans

Proposed Detailed Layout

Proposed Bin Storage

Proposed Cycle Storage

Proposed Waste Management Collection

Proposed Detailed Secondary Glazed Window

Policy Context

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out a national planning policy for conserving the historic environment. It advises that in determining planning applications, "local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made to their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance (paragraph 194).

Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment. They include designated heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets. Annex 2 of the NPPF defines a Heritage Asset as "a building, monument, site, place area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions."

In determining planning applications, the NPPF advises that local planning authorities should take into account (paragraph 190):

The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. The positive contribution that the conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities, including their economic vitality; and The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Specific guidance on the treatment of designated heritage assets (listed buildings) emphasises the need to understand the significance of a heritage asset to determine impacts on the historic environment (paragraph 199). It advises that 'when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost by altering or destroying the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm should require clear and convincing justification'.

The Reading Borough Local Plan was adopted in November 2019. The relevant historic environment policy for the proposed development is as follows:

Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

Reading Core Strategy, Adopted in January 2008 and altered in 2015, gives the relevant historic environment policy contained within the Reading Core Strategy as follows:

Policy CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment.

Policy CS33 states that: Historical features and areas of historical importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced.

This document will include the following: -

Listed Buildings.

Conservation Areas.

Other features with local or national designation, such as sites and features of archaeological importance and historic parks and gardens.

Planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. All proposals will be expected to protect and, where appropriate, enhance the character and appearance of the area in which they are located.

Reading Central Area Action Plan adopted in January 2009 has Policies contained within that relate to consideration of impacts on the settings of listed buildings and conservation areas. There is a Policy (RC4j) for 25-31 London Street but no specific policy for the southern end of London Street.

Reading Sites and Detailed Policies Document adopted in 2012 refers to the guidance set out in the NPPF

(2012) and to Policy CS33 of the Reading Core Strategy but does not include additional policies relating to the historic environment.

The Heritage

90 London Street, Reading, was added to the Statutory List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest at Grade II on 22nd August 1977 under list number 1321903. The list description reads as follows:

1. LONDON STREET 5128 (West Side) No 90 SU 7173 SE 3/181 SU 7172 NE 4/181 22.8.77. II GV
2. Mid C18 building formerly with early C17 cottage at rear. Three storeys and cellar. Silver grey brick headers with red dressings, moulded brick dentil cornice, and parapet. Ground floor stuccoed. Old tile roof. 2 hipped ridges at right angles to the front show above the parapet. Four ranges of windows, plate glass sashes with flush moulded surrounds, two panels on the 2nd floor, one on the 1st. 2 windows on the ground floor, a mid-C19 shopfront and doorway, door altered: round-headed in recess with circle and teardrop fanlight. Interior: period staircase retained.

90 London Street is located within the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area.

Historical Background

John Speed's map of Reading (1611) shows 'London Street'. London Street was developed from the medieval period onwards. Although the street frontage today has a solid Georgian and later appearance, older structures can be found to the rear, including arched cellars as found in 90 London Street. The side wall of Nos. 49-53 consists of a timber frame with arch braces. No. 88 has a jettied first floor on Church Street.

By the late 18th century, London Street had become one of the fashionable parts of town. Many of the elegant houses from the 18th and 19th centuries which lined both sides of the road still survive. The 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey map of Reading (1879) provides details of the building that show no apparent changes. Extract from the 1st Edition OS Map (1879).



Extract from the 1st Edition OS Map (1879)

Description of the Listed Building

The front (east) elevation is finished with a lower white render finish and upper brick surface. There is an apex-pitched roof with an internal flat roof appearance of the finished parapet. The timber framed windows are original with single glazing. Some windows have been repaired over the years, but all sills and headers are original. The window openings are typical of the later 18th century in a sash style. The sash windows on the third floor include horns which indicate a c. 1850 or last date. The relative proportions of the window openings reflect the status of each foot. Of note are the taller, more slender appearance of the windows on the first floor, demonstrating the piano nobile or top floor of the house. The front entrance is to the right, including a transom window which suggests a later 18th-century date.

From the internal, the external windows have been replaced with modern white timber single-glazed casement windows. The rear (west) elevation is masked by modern additions such as red brick, which may have assumptions of additional extensions. It is complicated to analyse the existing rear elevation in terms of finding records of the added extension.



London Street, Reading, c. 1974. West side. No. 90 (Hair Fashions). 1970-1979: original filed at Dynix 1250889

According to the photo above, the two bricked-up walls assumed that there was no occupation on the upper floors but added later.

Internal Features

Many existing features have been removed or covered on first impressions. There is no record of removed fireplaces being sealed shut, and there is an absence of hearths demonstrating that any fireplaces or openings behind are non-functioning. Internal doors have also been replaced to suit the office's needs as it currently operates.

The only noted internal feature is the ceiling cornice, typically moulding that can be decorative or plain. It is typically a moulding that comes in uniform pieces that can be laid side by side on the joints of walls and ceilings. It serves an aesthetic and a functional purpose in residential and commercial buildings. This feature design will be maintained and replicated in the proposals to enhance the quality of the interior appearance that reflects upon the historical character of the building.

Assessment of Impacts of the Proposed Development

Due to the internal features of the modernised property, there are no impacts on any parts that could be classed as unfavourable due to the change of class. Interior walls are proposed to be removed and added to the structural work of the property. The basement will remain the same as reported; there is the existing cellar lined with limestone, which in the proposed plans, will remain untouched as the only item of heritage left within the property. The external features will also remain unchanged.

Conclusion

The proposed conversion of 90 London Street from offices to a dwelling involves alterations to the internal layout but no changes to the front elevation of the building. There have been substantial changes made to the building during the 20th century, which has impacted the internal layout and integrity of the original building. This proposal included a replacement staircase, reconfiguring the first and second-floor rooms, and refurbishment. Interior doors throughout have been replaced. The floorboards on the ground and first floors have also been replaced. The original form and character of the listed building internally have been much diminished except for the cornice mouldings on the ceiling.

The proposed alterations would not impact significant historic fabric as there are no material changes, only class. All sash windows on the front elevation are to remain and be added with secondary glazing sash windows where required improving the property quality such as soundproofing, heating and ventilation. Adding tinted film screenings for the ensembles will not impact the appearance as this concept will ensure privacy for residents.

The proposed conversion provides a future use for the high demand for housing in Reading Borough Council and will ensure the long-term preservation of the listed building. The proposed development would not harm the overall significance of the listed building following paragraph 194 of the NPPF and the Reading Borough Local Plan Policy EN1.