

Proposed front window to 11 Victoria Street, Reading, RG1 4NQ.

Heritage/ Planning Statement

The property is within a conservation area, the proposal is to insert a new window in the front elevation to make provision for a fire escape egress to the first floor.

Statement of significance:

The Property:

11 Victoria Street is within a row of terraced houses to the East side of the Street. The housing within the area is generally good examples of 19th century buildings where their style, detailing, and building materials provide the streetscape with interest and variety. Although not a listed building, it is identified as having townscape merit and thus design is to be considerate of the overall appearance of the conservation area.

The Area:

As defined in the Eldon Square Conservation Area appraisal, the Eldon Square Conservation Area is divided into three areas, the proposal is within 'area 3' which consists of terraced streets including Victoria Street. The features which make a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the conservation areas include: rectilinear grid pattern of streets, 19th century brick terraced houses, good quality brickwork, flint wall on south side of Eldon Terrace, and historic stone kerbs. The features which have a negative impact on the area include: modern development along Queens Road, poor state of repair of no.23 Eldon Terrace, loss of original windows and front doors, loss of original slate roofs and other architectural features such as iron gates and railings, loss of front gardens, and unsightly concrete boundary walls.

Proposal:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG). The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and a key dimension of 'sustainability' is defined as '...protecting and enhancing our...historic environment'.

The existing external front elevation of the property has previously been painted, however the brickwork features can still be seen in outline such as rubbed brick arches and the brick bonding. The existing sliding sash Victorian windows remain and are in good condition and the roof is slate.

A fire risk assessment was carried out on this property by 'MG FIRE SAFETY GROUP', this report stated the following:

'All 1st floor inner bedrooms required to travel through access rooms (lounge and or kitchen) to reach a final place of safety. Existing front bedroom window egress not suitable as it drops to the basement level and other H&S hazards exist. Further egress from the 1 st floor is not available as all other rooms are habitable and lockable. Therefore, one recommendation is to provide alternative egress at first floor level'

The proposal is to insert a new window in the front elevation over the front door to provide a suitable egress in case of fire from the front bedroom which will comply with Building Regulations. The overall size of the new window will proportionally match that of the existing front window openings and the window will be a purpose made sliding sash window with frame details to match the existing windows. It is proposed to fit a new rubbed brick arch over and stone cill to the new window to match the existing details.

Summary:

The proposed first floor escape window design will sliding sash type window or similar proportion to the original Victorian windows adjacent with arch and cill details to match existing, it will therefore fit into the existing vernacular and without detracting from the overall appearance of the conservation area. It will also be considerate of the overall appearance of the conservation area.