

191 KING'S ROAD, READING



DESIGN, ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

for minor interior and external alterations

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document together with the accompanying planning drawings sets out minor alteration proposals for the student accommodation at 191 Kings Road, Reading. This statement aims to explain the methodology and justification for the proposals.
- 1.2 ADAM Architecture have been commissioned by the Bagri Foundation to design the proposals, which adapt the property with a new porch canopy, altered entrance, blocking of one entrance and minor internal alterations at ground floor level.

2.0 Location

- 2.1 The student accommodation at 191 Kings Road lies to the south of the River Kennet at the end of a row of mid-19th Century Neo-Classical buildings neighbouring Reading College. Reading Train Station and the town centre is approximately ten minutes' walk to the west. The campus of the University of Reading is approximately ten minutes' walk to the south.



Fig. 1 – 191 Kings Road – Front Entrance

3.0 Existing Property & Site Context

- 3.1 191 Kings Road provides student accommodation and is currently operated by the Bagri Foundation. This five-storey modern early 2000s building currently accommodates 72 existing student en-suite rooms and a 3 bedroom apartment. The building is faced with blue and red engineering brick and metal cladding.

- 3.2 The site has an open southerly aspect onto Kings Road and sits between 187-189 Kings Road to the left and Reading College to the right. The location benefits from excellent public transport links, with a number of bus stops located on Kings Road.
- 3.3 There is a Ready Bike docking station located adjacent to the site outside Reading College, with 191 Kings Road currently having a large number of bicycle parking stands.
- 3.4 There is a large Plane tree with a tree protection order located to the rear of 187-189 Kings Road, on land outside but immediately adjacent to the site.



Fig. 2 – 187-189 Kings Road – Front Elevation to the left of 191 Kings Road with Reading College to the right

4.0 Site History & Context Development

- 4.1 191 Kings Road is a modern 21st Century building that replaced earlier buildings that were much altered/extended and were in evidence on the site prior to 1839 and largely removed by 1966, as can be assessed from review of historic Ordnance Surveys between these dates.
- 4.1 191 Kings Road sits adjacent to 187-189 Kings Road, a pair of mid-19th Century semi-detached Grade II Listed houses, located within the Eldon Square Conservation Area. 191 Kings Road also borders a car park which is set outside of the Conservation Area.
- 4.2 The adjacent listed buildings of 187-189 Kings Road were converted into open plan offices in the latter part of the 20th Century.

4.3 Listing Description of 187 - 189 Kings Road:

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1321921

Date first listed: 24-Oct-1974

Statutory Address: 187 & 189, Kings Road, Reading

National Grid Reference: SU 72574 73292

“After 1832, part of Waterloo Place. 3 storeys and basement. Bath stone. Slate roof. Rusticated ground floor, moulded let floor cill string. Dentil cornice entablature and blocking course. A symmetrical pair of houses. Bays, ground and let floors retain most glazing bar sashes. 1st floor windows have architrave surround and moulded cornice on console brackets. 2 windows on ground floor with contemporary balconies and cast-iron balustrades (honey-suckle pattern). 6 panel doors (part glazed) at sides under Doric porches, approached by steps. 2 storey extension to right of No 189 with 1 window. The contemporary Orts Road 'service' houses have recently (1977) been demolished”.

5.0 Eldon Square Conservation Area

5.1 Extracts from the Reading Borough Council, Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal, 2007:

‘Eldon Square was Reading’s first conservation area. It was designated in 1972 and extended in 1982 by the addition of Watlington Street, to the west, and Eldon Street, Victoria Street and Montague Street, to the east.

The special interest that justifies designation of the Eldon Square Conservation Area derives from the following features:

- *Nos 163 to 189 (odd) Kings Road, a long row of prestigious Bath stone former early 19th Century residences with good quality Classical and Italianate detailing;*
- *The architectural and historic interest of the area’s buildings, including two grade II* listed buildings (Watlington House and 173-183 (odd) Kings Road);*
- *Cohesive architectural development of the mid-19th Century with contrasting middle-class and working class housing;*
- *Lengths of historic stone kerbs and gulleys and remnants of old railings; and*
- *The prevalent use of Bath stone and local brick.*

Eldon Square Conservation Area lies well within urban Reading on the east side of its medieval core and about 1km south east of the town’s modern shopping centre. With

the exception of a row of grand 19th Century dwellings on the north side of Kings Road (Nos 163 to 189 Kings Road), the conservation area lies between London Road and Kings Road, two wide heavily trafficked east-west routes through Reading. Eldon Road, the north-south ‘spine’ of the conservation area is a major route linking Kings Road and London Road.’

6.0 Local & National Policy

6.1 The Reading Borough Local Development Framework – Core Strategy, Adopted January 2008 (Altered January 2015) provides planning policies and statements for the council. The most relevant local policy for this application is:-

6.2 Policy CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

“Historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced. This will include:

- *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”.

Policy Supporting Statement – The property itself is not listed but sits adjacent to two listed buildings and the Eldon Square Conservation Area. The building itself is of no particular architectural merit and is 21st Century in date. The proposals are very minor and do not significantly alter 191 Kings Road, with only the alerting of two openings and the introduction of a simple canopy porch, all detailed to match the existing building and of simple detail. There is no large scale extending or façade alterations associated with this application that might be considered to be of significant harm to the adjacent listed buildings and the Conservation Area.

6.3 The National Planning Policy Framework, Chapter 16; Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, paragraph 192 states:

“In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

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 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”.

6.4 Policy Supporting Statement – These minor proposals are believed to accord with the principles of paragraph 192, by being of no significant harm to the neighbouring listed buildings or the Conservation Area, with no recognisable or associated detrimental impact.

6.5 It is believed that the proposals have been considered in a sensitive and cohesive manner that results in a scheme that is thought to have no adverse effects upon the locality. The design proposal and use of materials and finishes are considered to be complimentary to the existing at 191 Kings Road.

7.0 Planning History

7.1 There have been two recent planning applications permitted for 191 Kings Road, these are as follows:

- Ref: 162353. Erection of single storey roof extension to provide 14 additional student units. Approved 12th April 2017. Works not implemented.
- Ref: 171727. Two storey front extension to provide 4 additional student units (Sui Generis) and reconfigured entrance, alterations to the front elevation at second to fourth floor level and associated landscaping and access works. Approved 10th July 2018. Works not implemented.

7.2 These approved applications were for much larger scale of external alterations and extending of the 191 Kings Road, than the relatively modest proposals that are now proposed.

8.0 Proposals Sought & Justification

8.1 The following minor proposals are sought for planning approval:

- New entrance with simple canopy porch, to improve access and provide a degree of weather protection,
- Blocking of existing entrance, and
- Minor internal alterations to improve circulation and use.

8.2 The proposals are required to create a more appropriate legible formal entrance to the student accommodation at ground floor, with the incorporation of a sheltering canopy. The metal clad canopy is small scale being self-supported from the building via metal stay/brackets and measuring 1.5m in depth and 3.0m in width. The new entrance opening is an altering and widening of an existing window opening, to a width of 2m. The blocked opening would be finished in materials that match the existing.

8.3 These minor alterations and the proposed canopy porch are set at low level, and largely face away from the setting of the listed buildings of 187-189 Kings Road. 191 Kings Road is also set further back than the front facades of 187-189 Kings Road,

thus the minor alterations will be of lesser perceived impact to the listed buildings and the Conservation Area.

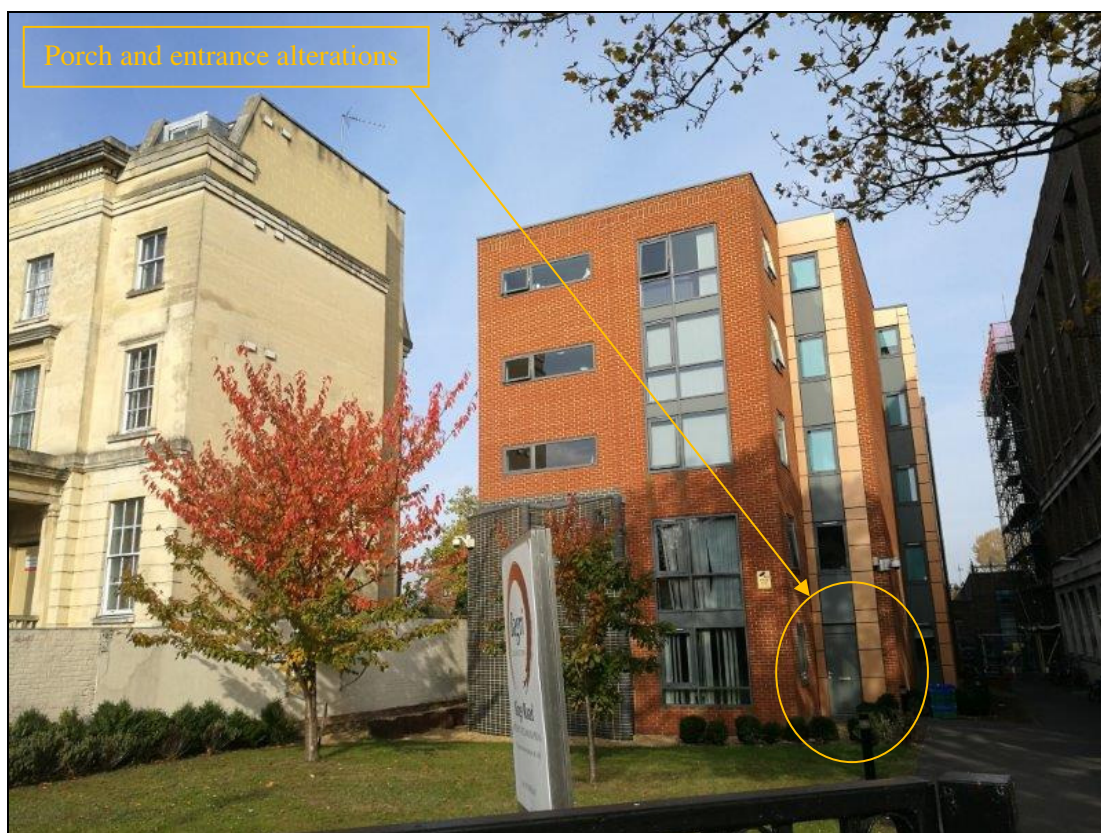


Fig. 3 – Proposed alteration and porch canopy location

- 8.4 Minor internal alterations are proposed for the widening of the ground floor corridor and alterations to partitions for altered studio and office facilities, and improved internal circulation.
- 8.5 *Scale & Form* – The proposed canopy porch is a lightweight un-enclosed structure, being of little impact to the host building and of no perceived adverse impact to the neighbouring listed buildings or the Conservation Area.
- 8.6 *Sustainability* – Building materials, techniques and fittings used in the proposal will be of a high quality and will be executed to a high standard, to achieve longevity and comply with current Building Regulations.
- 8.7 *Rainwater Goods & Drainage* – The canopy porch will include a powder coated aluminium rainwater pipe, which would be connected to the existing surface water perimeter drainage system.
- 8.8 *Doors & Windows* – The new entrance doors will be powder coated aluminium to match the existing doors and windows.
- 8.9 *Accessibility* – Existing accessibility will not be altered in terms of ease of access to the building. The new entrance doors are designed to comply with the current Building Regulations – Part M, Volume 2, Buildings Other Than Dwellings (2015), with the following design considerations:

- The existing approach route has a shallow gradient, and the hard landscaping will be altered and extended slightly to suit the proposal,
- The area in front of the proposed entrance will be flat, providing a level landing,
- The new double doors are proposed with a level threshold. The door leaves will have built-in drop-down seals to provide weather protection, this will not present a barrier or a trip hazard for wheelchairs and other users,
- The width of the double door leaves is 950mm with powered opening and closing system controlled automatically by a motion sensor,
- The door leaves are fully glazed providing inter-visibility, thus avoiding/limiting collision opportunities,
- The proposed door entry system will be accessible to deaf and hard of hearing people, and those who cannot speak,
- The internal mat-well will be level with the door threshold and internal floor finish, and
- The proposed canopy above the new entrance ensures that the entrance is clearly recognisable and there are supporting brackets above the canopy which will not impede access.

8.10 *Landscaping & Boundaries* – There are no significant landscaping or boundary proposals associated with this application, with only minor alteration of the hard landscaping below the proposed canopy porch.

9.0 Summary

- 9.1 The proposed works have been developed sensitively to the site and will not have any adverse impact on either the setting of the adjacent listed buildings of 187-189 Kings Road or the setting of the Eldon Square Conservation Area.
- 9.2 We therefore believe that this planning application has been put together in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, Chapter 16 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment and Reading Borough Council's planning, listed building and conservation area policies. We therefore believe that its contents are compliant with these statutory documents and so meet the main criteria set by local and national policies.