

# Design & Access Statement

Proposed Change of Use and  
Listed Building Consent

**11, Friar Street, Reading,  
RG1 1DB**

for

**Villais (Twister) LLP and  
Hawkstone Properties plc**

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DOCUMENT REFERENCE

**15-1532 / Reports / Design & Access Statement**

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## INTRODUCTION

Gould Singleton Architects were commissioned by Villais (Twister) LLP and Hawkstone Properties plc to carry out design work for a proposed change of use and listed building consent for a building situated at 11, Friar Street, Reading.

This Statement is provided to support the Planning Application and drawing material produced.

The Design Team have undergone an intense design process which has led to the current submitted proposals. The scope of works can be summarised below:

- A change of use of the upper floors only of the property from class B1 offices to class C3 residential in the form of 4 No. individual apartments.
- The property is understood to be grade 2 listed and the proposal involves the partial demolition, internal re-configuration and refurbishment of the existing fabric with the creation of a new 2 storey entrance lobby and stairwell.

## REPORTS

The Application is supported by the following documents representing studies commissioned by Villais (Twister) LLP and Hawkstone Properties plc in support of the Application.

- **Heritage Statement**  
produced by Elmwood Heritage
- **Noise Impact Assessment**  
produced by PC Environmental Limited

To support the formal Planning Application, detailed drawings have been produced by Gould Singleton Architects which are as listed below:

|                                                   |             |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Location Plan (1:500)                             | 15-1532/001 |
| Existing Site Plan (1:250)                        | 15-1532/002 |
| Proposed Site Plan (1:250)                        | 15-1532/003 |
| Existing Ground and First Floor Plans (1:75)      | 15-1532/004 |
| Existing Second and Third Floor Plans (1: 75)     | 15-1532/005 |
| Proposed Ground and First Floor Plans (1:75)      | 15-1532/006 |
| Proposed Second and Third Floor Plans (1:75)      | 15-1532/007 |
| Existing Elevations (1:50)                        | 15-1532/008 |
| Proposed Elevations (1:50)                        | 15-1532/009 |
| Proposed Sections (1:50)                          | 15-1532/010 |
| Proposed Elevation to East- Entrance Lobby (1:20) | 15-1532/011 |
| C.I.L Areas Plans                                 | 15-1532/012 |

## 1. THE SITE

The site is located in Reading Town Centre on the corner of Friar Street and Wiston Terrace. The ground floor of the property is currently in use as a betting shop, there will be no change in use of the shop unit and the active street frontage to Friar Street will be unchanged. The building (the earliest parts of which date back to the early to mid-eighteenth century) was extended between 1912 and 1931 and extends to three upper floors. The upper floors of the building have been most recently in use as escape room game premises. The adjacent property - No.12 Friar Street, has an emergency escape route across the flat roof (over flat 1) of the two-storey part of the building towards the rear of the site (see photos pages 15,16). This route will be maintained throughout the construction period of the proposed works and retained after completion.

There are a variety of forms and scale of building in the area and there are a number of listed buildings within 100 metres of the site. The Heritage Statement submitted with this application discusses these buildings in greater detail.

## 2. THE DESIGN PROCESS

The design team have explored a number of options on behalf of the clients. It is considered that the present submission offers the most appropriate combination of commercial viability of both the proposed new residences and the retained retail use at ground floor.

**3. USE** In the designs for the proposed residential development, we have sought to retain the maximum amount of the existing built fabric.

Additionally, all of the windows to the upper floors will be extensively refurbished, this is discussed in greater detail within section 8 (materials).

## 4. THE AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT

The proposal provides four new residences to the upper floors of an existing building.



proposed  
floor plans

The ground floor of the building (presently a betting shop) is to remain un-changed with the exception of the loss of some internal floor space for the provision of the entrance and stairs to the flats.

## **5. LAYOUT**

Two principal factors have influenced the design of the proposed works to the building:

- The retention of the existing ground floor use of the building and the desire to maintain the commercial viability of this unit.
- Internal planning: the creation of four new individual apartments which seek to retain the maximum amount of the existing built fabric which will both offer character to the interior of the individual dwellings and largely retain the external appearance of the existing building.

The existing use of the ground floor of the building is to be retained as a betting shop. Some internal alterations are necessary to accommodate the new entrance lobby and stair well, these changes occur fairly deep into the ground floor plan limiting the effect of these changes to the elevation to Friar Street and the commercial operation of the premises.

All of the new apartments are accessed via a new entrance lobby / stairwell to the east elevation on Wiston Terrace. The new stairwell and entrance lobby is accessed from an internal corridor at first floor via a new door opening which has been created through the adaptation of an existing window opening, the existing flat arch over the opening is to be retained. All of the apartments are single level with two apartments at first floor and one to each of the second and third floors. Secure spaces for refuse/ recycling and cycle storage are located towards the rear of the property in a secure lockable space accessible only to the residents and management company.

## **6. SCALE**

The new entrance lobby and stairwell enclosure is appropriately subservient to the scale of the original buildings whilst providing a contemporary addition. The quantity of glazing provides light and activity to Wiston Terrace which was described within the pre-application response as:

*a non-descript route at present*

The composition of the elevation of the new entrance lobby and stairwell enclosure relates to the existing retained elevations; the height of the new

entrance door and the eaves / fascia line through with the adjacent window openings (see drawing no. 15-1532/11).

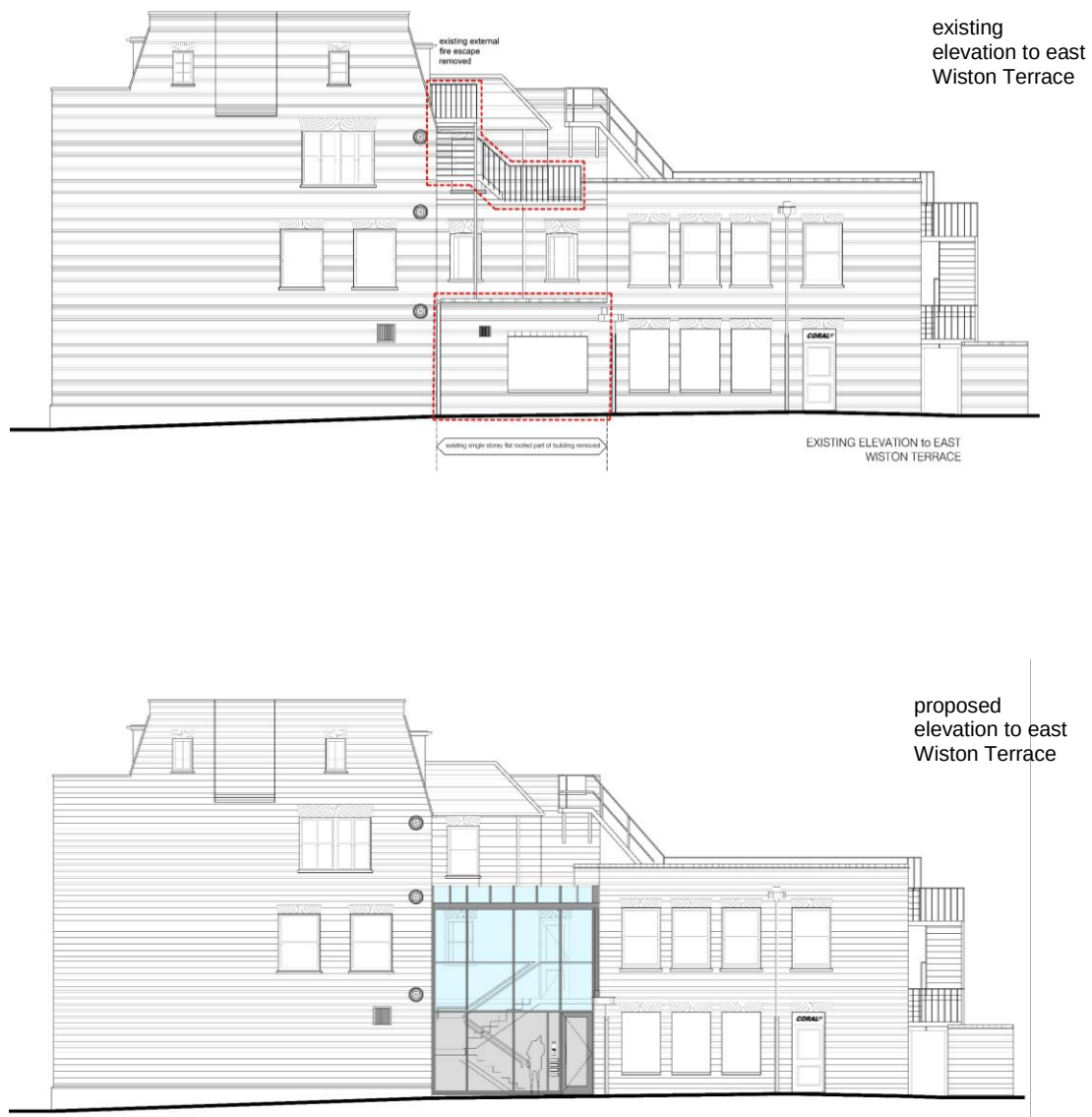
## 7. APPEARANCE

The proposals submitted at pre-application stages have been developed in the light of the comments received.

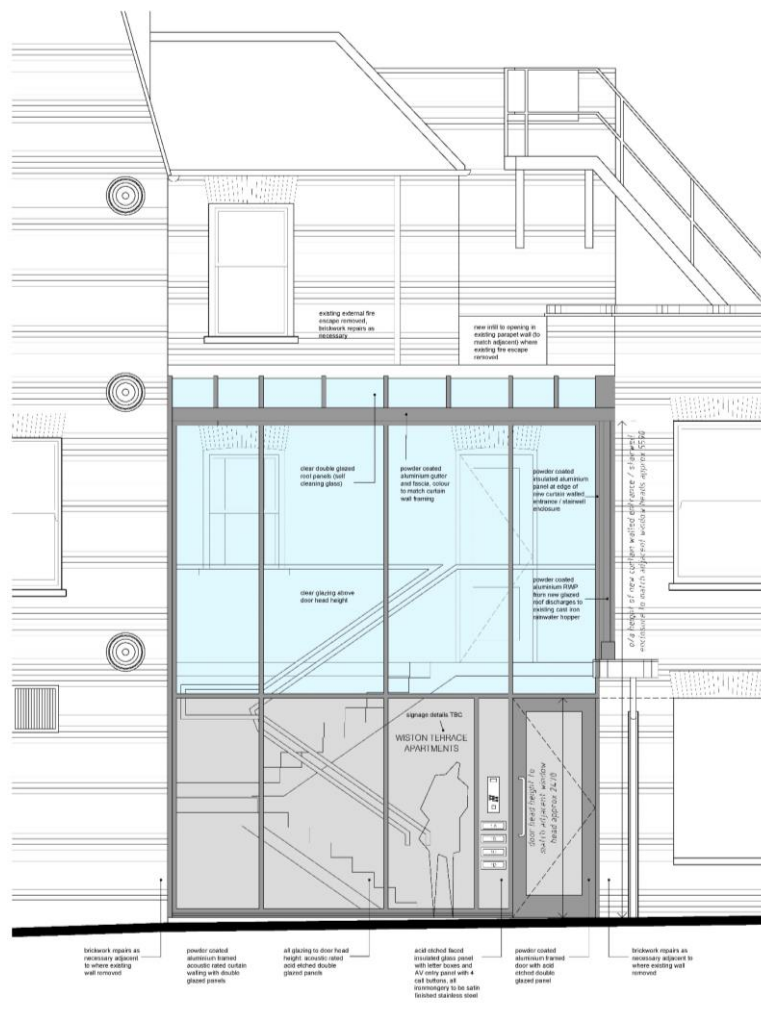
It is proposed to remove the single storey flat-roofed extension at the rear of the original building and one of the fire escapes, these elements were described in the response to the pre-application to be:

*Utilitarian.... (and) considered to add little to the architectural merit of the building, reinforcing the less than attractive qualities found within the side street.*

With the removal of some of these elements, a new entrance lobby and stairwell for the residential development can be created off Wiston Terrace.



An elevational treatment of the proposed entrance lobby / stairwell has been prepared (see drawing no. s 15-1532/008, 15-1532/11).



detail of proposed elevation to east Wiston Terrace showing new entrance lobby / stairwell

The new access stairs to the apartments will have to be enclosed for safety and security so a new enclosure at first floor is necessary, we believe that removing the single storey flat-roofed part of the building and extending the new enclosure creating a new two storey glazed addition provides a light, airy, secure and safe point of access and egress to the new apartments. The architectural language of the addition is deliberately contemporary and restrained, providing a defined punctuation between the early to mid-18th century original building and the early 20th century addition towards the rear of the plot.

The new entrance lobby and stairwell enclosure is appropriately subservient to the scale of both the early to mid-18th century original building and the early 20th century extension whilst providing a contemporary addition.

The quantity of glazing provides light and activity to Wiston Terrace which was described within the pre-application response as: *a non-descript route at present.*

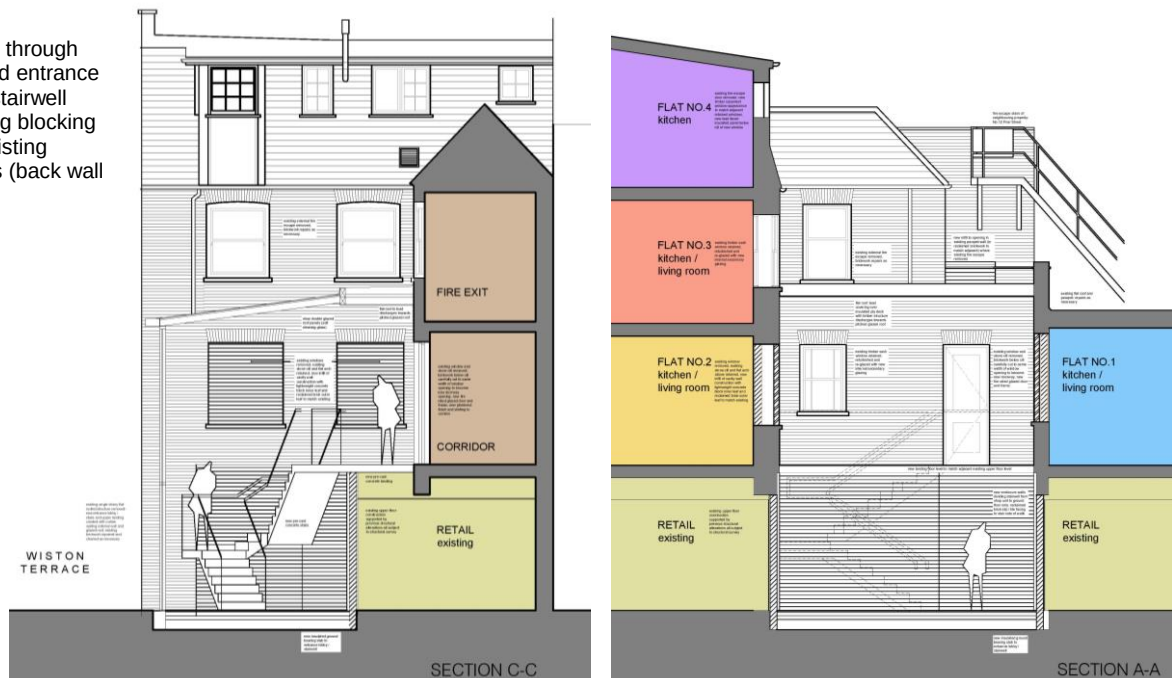
The composition of the elevation of the new entrance lobby and stairwell enclosure relates to the adjacent existing retained elevations; the height of the new entrance door and the eaves / fascia line through with the adjacent window openings (see drawing no. 15-1532/11).

Concern was raised within the pre-application response regarding the proposal to block up two of the existing windows forming the rear wall of Flat 2. In the development of the sections through the proposed entrance lobby / stairwell (drawing no.15-1532/010) see page 11, this concern has been addressed. Whilst it is not feasible to retain the glazing to the windows for reasons of privacy and security, the existing flat arches and stone cills of the window openings will be retained. Within the Heritage Statement submitted with this planning application (page 17), it is stated:

*The significance of the window openings to be blocked in the north elevation of the original building is high but the significance of the sashes to be removed is less given that they are 20th century replacements*

The infill to the existing window openings will have an external facing of reclaimed brick with the colour, bond and pointing to match the adjacent wall, all to the agreement of the Conservation Officer. The infill will be recessed back from the edge of the original opening and adjacent brickwork such that the position of the original window is clear and as much of the original fabric is retained as is feasible. One of the existing window openings within the external wall to Flat 1 will be treated in the same fashion (see first floor plan drawing no. 15-1532-06, section B-B, drawing no. 15-1532-10). All of the other windows to the upper floors will be extensively refurbished, discussed in greater detail within section 8 (materials).

sections through proposed entrance lobby / stairwell indicating blocking up of existing windows (back wall of flat 2)



## 8. MATERIALS

The fenestration to the ground floor of the building relates to the current use (betting shop). A number of the original window openings on the Wiston Terrace elevation are infilled with painted timber sheeting. These will be unchanged as part of the refurbishment and change of use with the exception of the single storey element which will be removed for the creation of the new entrance lobby / stairwell. The new entrance lobby / stairwell will be externally clad in powder coated aluminium framed curtain walling with acoustically rated double glazed panels. The lower part of the glazing (up to the head height of the new entrance door) will be in acid etched glazing with clear glazing above this height. A new pre-cast stair with simple balustrade detailing will be evident behind the clear glazing. All new ironmongery will be in satin finish stainless steel. Adjacent to the new entrance door, where the curtain walling is recessed back from the adjacent façade, this return will be faced up to the height of the door head in a glazed facing brick which will continue into the lobby facing the lobby side of the new walls of the enclosure. This choice of materials will combine to create an easily maintainable, robust and high-quality enclosure which we believe will contrast with the existing construction in a considered, sympathetic and sensitive fashion.

The new entrance lobby / stairwell will be roofed with a combination of two coverings; a flat roof in lead or membrane type system with a pitched roof glazed in self-cleaning glass towards the glazed external wall. With the orientation and the proximity of the adjacent buildings, solar gain is not an issue.

Conventionally it would not be possible to reduce the sound transmittance to the extent that would be demanded for residential use without significantly effecting the appearance of the windows, this would not be acceptable for a grade 2 listed building.

A hybrid solution proposes retention and repair of the existing single glazing to the vertical sliding sash and casement type windows to the agreement of the conservation officer with the installation of new internal secondary double-glazed units incorporating acoustic laminated glass which will provide reduced thermal and sound transmittance. The acoustic performance of the new internal secondary double-glazing system is detailed within the acoustic report submitted as supplementary information with this planning application. We believe the installation of the secondary glazing system will provide an internal environment which is both thermally and acoustically comfortable satisfying the demands of both relevant regulations and the commercial market. The internal security bars to the first-floor windows will be removed as part of the refurbishment. Non-original patterned glass has been used in a number of the windows, this will be replaced with clear glass.

New windows will be installed at two locations: at first floor (to flat 1), where the creation of the new stair in the lobby means that a secondary escape route is unnecessary and the apartment layout can be optimised. At third floor (to flat 4), where the existing metal escape stairs from third floor is to be removed. In both of these situations, painted timber doors will be replaced with painted timber casement window (third floor) and vertical sash window (first floor). These windows will be detailed to match the appearance of the adjacent existing windows. At first floor (to flat 1) on the north elevation (see lower photo – page 16), one of the rooms is a bathroom, both of the windows are adjacent to the existing adjacent escape stairs retained for escape from No.12 Friar Street, the new windows will be non-opening for security and privacy and glazed with acid etched obscure glass, ventilation to the bathroom will be achieved mechanically. An area of infill wall below the cill will be in a re-claimed brick to match the adjacent brickwork in colour, bond and mortar type with a new cast stone cill to match the existing in profile and colour. As the external wall thickness of the oldest part of the building reduces to 300mm at third floor, the resulting mass is reduced, an important factor in the acoustic performance of the wall. The external walls at this level (flat 4) will be internally lined with acoustic plasterboard on an independent frame, the ceilings at this level are similarly uprated.

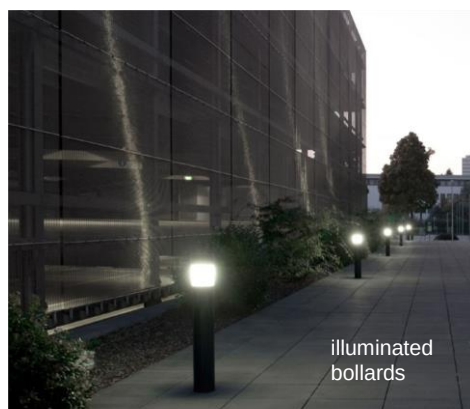
An appropriate mechanical ventilation installation will be designed which will reduce the necessity to open the windows to all of the flats to provide ventilation.

Where existing steel escape stairs and the existing flat roofed infill structure are to be removed, localised brickwork repairs may be necessary. All brickwork repairs are to be in a re-claimed brick matching the bond of the original wall with appropriate lime pointing.

The existing cast iron rainwater goods / soil and vent pipes may need some re-arrangement due to the configuration of the new glazed roof and the new kitchen / bathroom provisions; any replacements will be in a cast metal material finished to match the existing. All refurbishment works to the existing fabric of the building will be to the agreement of the Conservation Officer.

## 9. LANDSCAPING

Wiston Terrace, directly to the east of the building, has no pavement. In order to create a safer threshold for the entrance to the flats, the new glazed façade is recessed away from the adjacent facades- to the left, the early to mid-18th century original building – to the right, an early 20th century addition. The area of hardstanding between the highway edge and the new façade line will be paved in brick paviours. Polyester powder coated illuminated steel bollards are located along the edge of the hardstanding, providing visual and physical security, protecting the curtain walling and preventing parking at this location.



brick paviours

## 10. ACCESS

Residents access to the development will be via a new entrance lobby and stairwell located on the east façade of the building facing Wiston Terrace. Visitor access to the residences will be controlled via an audio / video entry panel connected to all flats with the facility for CCTV recording. Acid etched glazing provides privacy at ground floor with a wall mounted screen in the lobby monitoring the CCTV.

Given the scale of the development and the constraints of the listed building it has not been possible to make the development fully accessible under the terms of Building Regulations Approved Document 'M'.

The new residences at the upper floors are accessible via the new stairs (classified as General Access under Building Regulations Approved Document 'K').

## **11. SUSTAINABILITY**

The building itself will be subject to the latest requirements of the Building Regulations Approved Document 'L'. Energy efficient lighting and presence detectors will be used in all communal areas with photocell and time clock controls to external lighting and energy efficient lamps used throughout. An appropriate mechanical ventilation installation will be designed which will reduce the necessity to open the windows to provide ventilation.

Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery measures may be investigated as part of the detailed design development. The design of the external lighting installation will take consideration of the reduction or elimination of upward light and obtrusive light.

The construction of the building will feature extensive use of timber which will be procured from sustainable sources.

## **12. PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

A pre-application submission (151833/ PREAPP) was prepared and submitted on behalf of Villais (Twister) LLP and Hawkstone Properties plc by Gould Singleton Architects in January 2016. A further pre-application submission (160192/PREAPP) was made in March 2016. The later application related to a proposal for 7 No. individual apartments. The 7 apartment scheme was considered unfeasible and it is the earlier 4 apartment scheme which has been developed into the present proposal. The advice contained in Reading Borough Council's response to the pre-application has informed this current application.

### 13. SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Corner of building looking  
from Friar Street down  
Wiston Terrace –  
*Photo: Shona Robson  
Glyde -Elmwood Heritage*



Corner of building looking  
from Wiston Terrace  
towards Friar Street

*photo: Shona Robson Glyde -  
Elmwood Heritage*



View from Wiston Terrace  
looking towards Friar Street  
*photo: Shona Robson Glyde -  
Elmwood Heritage*



View from Wiston Terrace  
*photo: Shona Robson Glyde -Elmwood Heritage*

## 14. CONCLUSION

The proposal creates four new dwellings within the retained fabric of a listed building. The original parts of the building date back to the early to mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. The building has been significantly extended, altered and adapted with the latest work dating from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The design has incorporated and retained as much of the original fabric as is feasible. Where changes and adaptations have been made, they largely involve the removal or alteration of 20<sup>th</sup> century parts of the building. In particular the proposed new two storey entrance lobby and stairwell replaces a single storey extension which has no stylistic links with the original building. The overall appearance of the elevation to Wiston Terrace will be enhanced by the removal of the single storey extension, the existing fire escape and air conditioning units. Within the Heritage Statement, the Heritage Consultant has used the Impact Assessment Criteria set out in NPPF policy on harm to heritage assets, all of the proposed alterations to the existing fabric have been assessed as being either of minor harm, neutral or an improvement.

The proposal retains the existing use of the ground floor of the building with its active frontage to Friar Street.

The provision of additional residential units assists with meeting a demand for housing within the town centre.

Prior to the current use of the upper floor of the building as escape room game premises, the premises were used as classrooms for a business teaching English, both of these purposes are unlikely to be a realistic long-term use. The proposal to create new residences is, by contrast, a use which will safeguard the long-term maintenance and upkeep of the building.

The proximity of the building to the night-time uses of the neighbouring properties and the potential conflict between these uses and the proposed residential use has been mitigated by the design and specification of the secondary glazing, acoustic wall lining at third floor and the proposed use of mechanical ventilation system. The design of the new two storey glazed entrance lobby creating an easily maintainable, robust and high-quality enclosure which we believe will contrast with the existing construction in a considered, sympathetic and sensitive fashion enhancing the context.



**Stephen D Cox**  
**Director**

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