

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

This statement must be read in conjunction with a study of the plans , elevations and details provided together with statements made in the application forms all in support of an application for planning approval and listed building consent to the following proposals :

P1. To provide a second air-conditioning unit mounted at lower roof level

P2. To replace a lower ground level window where the existing window opening is deemed a hazard to residents and vehicles passing through .

P3. To effect repairs to the boundary wall adjacent to the drive / parking area

AT :

27 ELDON SQUARE

READING BERKSHIRE

A Listed building Grade II within a designated conservation area

Site location and description

27 Eldon square is a two storey with full basement and attic semi-detached Georgian period property viz over four floors constructed C1850 from Bath stone under a pitched and slated roof. The Square consists of 26 additional similar structures , all listed , originally as dwellings , although many are now of mixed use as offices , professional services and consulting rooms . Eldon Court (not listed) is a recent addition built adjacent to No.27 . Eldon Square is located to the east of Reading town centre .

Recent planning history

11/01751/FUL /01752LBC : Change of use to the lower ground floor to residential flat , internal / external works to include re-positioning a doorway , two new doors and replacement of a C20 dormer window : approved .

140392 /March 14 : Installation of an air conditioning condensing unit on the side of the property : approved

160922 May 16 : remedial works to the entrance steps with new handrails : approved

180341 February 18 : installation of a secondary condensing unit adjacent to the existing unit as approved : withdrawn

The proposals

P1 . Installation of a secondary condensing unit

The requirement

The approach elevation faces west therefore the front with its large windows is in full sunshine throughout the afternoon where in the summer months the temperature in the offices can exceed such oppressive levels as 35 celcius . Circulation fans and screening shades have little influence therefore in 2014 air-conditioning was fitted to the first and second floor front offices . To facilitate better working conditions to current staff levels it is proposed to install air-conditioning to the rear offices .

A further condensing unit to support this installation would be required to serve this additional requirement .

A previous application in February 2018 for the purpose was proposed with the following considerations :

- a. The proposed site adjacent to and behind an existing unit as viewed from the front of the property 's street scene is considered to be the most discreet application as it is screened by an existing parapet wall .
- b. The location is sited as far as possible from other residential units in Eldon Square and is adjacent to Eldon Court - a large commercial structure built in recent times .
- c. The site was approved with no observations or objections for the installation of a similar unit in 2014 . It is ideal for servicing and maintenance access .
- d. The applicants have monitored and observed the operation of the present system and have received no comments on appearance visual impact , noise pollution , or any inconvenience since inception in 2014 .

Concerns raised by Authority appraisal

Heritage / Conservation

That the visual impact of the additional unit as viewed from a southern approach together with the existing adjacent unit would cause unacceptable harm to the visual appearance of the listed building . It has been acknowledged that the units are not visible from the front .

Environmental protection

That an acoustic assessment on noise pollution is likely however due to the limited seasonal and working day use and restrictions proposed and agreed this requirement could likely be addressed by condition to any approval .

The application was withdrawn following discussions and time limitations to consider alternative solutions .

This proposal

It is considered that the application of a single unit to the same site to service the complete installation requirement would be unacceptable due to size and shape dimensions where the unit would be visible from the front approach behind the parapet wall . Zone control and general efficiency of the system would suffer (where two units do not necessarily operate together at all times).

Similarly a second unit set within the window space to the top attic dormer would have design restrictions with concerns raised over the loss of light to this room and internal noise generated within its office environment .

The solution appears as the installation of the second unit to the rear of the single storey element in a position non- adjacent to the existing unit . In this manner both units remain unseen from the approach and the new rear unit is not visible from the angled view on any approach from the south . This unit would be visible from the rear however , in our opinion , would be less prominent than for example a roof level unit set within a dormer window frame , and would remain hidden from the public realm . This proposed solution also addresses the original considerations to the scheme as noted above regarding a flexible and efficient operation .

For all the above reasons we ask that this solution be considered acceptable .

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P2. To replace a lower ground floor window to the side elevation where the existing opening is deemed a hazard to residents and vehicle passing through . The plan provided clearly indicates this hazard .

The existing timber window has a fixed glazed lower section with a top hung fanlight opening out on to the narrow drive / walkway to the parking area . The window serves the bathroom to the lower ground floor flat where direct opening is desirable for natural ventilation . This window is a standard C20 'builders' window' product and may well have been introduced or replaced another during extensive works to No.27 in 1985/6 . (85/TP/611)

The proposal seeks to remove this window and replace with a purpose made sliding sash window to the same dimensions where the top opening is clear from hazard . Materials to be graded softwood timber over a hardwood cill with putty glazed single sheet 6mm toughened glass fully prepared and finished in quality white gloss paint .

The proposal resolves the hazard with a very minimal change to the appearance of the window .

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P3. To effect repairs to the boundary wall

This proposal refers to the north boundary wall between the driveways to No.27 Eldon Square and Eldon Court . As this wall is not connected to No. 27 it is unclear whether it is part of its listing although remains within the conservation area .

The proposal is seen in two sections or areas where part A refers to that section within the entry drive area and its approach up to the wall return on entry to the car park area . Part B refers to this wall return and the continuing wall area to the rear of the car park .

Part A (Area of 15m x 2m approx) The wall condition is generally good where the works are limited to careful removal of redundant cracked and de-laminate paint coverings and careful cleaning of the exposed stonework . Re-pointing works to be fair faced finish in lime mortar in pre-pack mix colour match as supplied by Mason's Mortars or similar provider .

Part B (Areas of 4m x 2m to the return wall + 13m x 0.6m to the car park wall) Both areas have a smooth rendered finished to the substructure which appears to be a mix of block and brick face construction . The render has been taken down to meet ground level where water ingress has caused cracking and failure to the render to a height of approx 600mm . All cracked and failed render to be carefully hacked off to expose the general condition of the lower wall area . Minor repairs to be effected and the wall rendered to meet sound areas above and finished down to a bell- mouth drip set to 150mm above ground level to assist the dispersion of water .

All work to be conducted by competent persons with all plant and materials carefully sited to maintain clear access for staff and residents access at No.25

This proposal forms part of a continuing programme by the present owners to maintain the premises in good order and their commitment to the care of its listed status .