

Heritage Impact Assessment

to accompany the full planning application

for:

4 additional flats at roof level and minor changes to the building
facades following prior notice approval 170314

at:

Units 3&4 Wesley Gate, Queens Road, Reading, RG1 4QA

2684-053-rev A, December 2017

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Introduction

Introduction to the Heritage Impact Assessment

This document forms the supporting information for the planning application proposal of creating additional flats at roof level of Units 3&4 Wesley Gate.

These flats would complement the existing permission converting the office, B1 use of the building to residential C3 use under PD rights, as approved by LPA under application 170314.

The purpose of this statement is firstly to establish what the curtilage heritage significance of the proposed alteration are, as it is noted that the building itself is outside of the conservation area, and not listed itself either by curtilage or direct listing.

The second purpose of this statement is to explain the impact of the proposal on the heritage significance of the location, and explain how we have minimised the impact on nearby Heritage Assets.

Assessment of Heritage Significance

Physical Context

Units 3&4 Wesley Gate form part of a larger development completed in the 1980's, including numbers 1&2 which are located to the West of a central arch over the access road leading to parking spaces at the rear of the buildings.

In front of the 4 units are a number of attractive TPO'd trees, within the frontage of the site.

The site is located near the junction of Queens Road and Watlington St.

The site is located just outside the Eldon Square Conservation area (designated in 1972 and extended in 1982).

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Reading Conservation area map (Eldon Square)

The prominent landmark in the conservation area, the spire of Wesley Methodist Church which is Grade II listed is located close to the site, and is located just to the other side of No 84 Queens Road, which is the direct neighbour and which is significantly lower than development on the application site.

No 84 Queens Road, forms a period two storey brick building with roof, directly adjacent to the site. This building has form a curtilage listed building to Wesley Methodist Church, and sits to the East of our site, approximately 1m away from our side elevation.

In contrast to the opposite side of the road are modern apartment buildings, and the site is surrounded largely by residential uses, in either 2 storey houses / terraces, or in larger residential buildings containing flats.

To the rear of the site are 2 and 3 storey terraced housing within the conservation area, separated from our site by their gardens which area typically over 15m deep (correct?)

Statement of Significance

The conservation area appraisal received at pre-app records that the most prominent landmarks in the conservation area and surrounding locality are the spires of the Wesley Methodist Church (1872??) which is a grade II listed building and the Church of St John the Evangelist (1872 ??). Both churches have a strong presence in Watlington Street and the two spires are only a few hundred metres apart.

The site is located adjacent to character Area 2, including terraced streets west of

Eldon Road. Watlington Road is the primary street within its character area. (think you need a bit more here?)

Larger scale development can be found within this area in the adjacent streets to the West, including larger B1 uses mostly, though some residential.

Setting of heritage assets potentially in question are:

Eldon Square Conservation area

Wesley Methodist Church, Grade II listed

No 84 Queens road, a curtilage listed building due to proximity to the Grade II listed church.

Proposal Impact

In order to minimise the impact our proposal consists of a simple and elegant replacement of the roof level pitched roof. This would appear as two dormer cheeks set back from the gable ends at either side, with the dormer cheeks proposed as small and unobtrusive as possible, and in a natural zinc cladding which would provide a sensitive addition to these facaded.

Considering the front elevation it must be stated that the proposed volume will be set back significantly from the existing roof parapet. The existing parapet is largely retained apart from a few of the decorative features, which we feel are not particularly successful and somewhat post-modern in appearance. By omission of these small gable elements we propose to give nrs 3&4 more of their own character, thus reducing the undesired effect of an unbalanced character compared to hrs 1&2.

The proposed height of the new roof is significantly lower than the existing roof, and as can be seen in the drawings our proposal has limited the overall height significantly by lowering the new floor level to below the existing trusses, which in turn also aids Health and Safety during construction.

Justification for Proposal

Use - Justification

The proposed use will compliment the Prior approval granted under permitted development rights for the existing lower floors and the use itself does not increase the impact on the heritage significance.

The proposal will provide a further 4 flats which can be seen as planning gains as more housing is needed, particularly for small families and single occupancy within the town centre, making this a sustainable location for this much needed use.

Proposed Changes - Justification

The addition of the flats on the top floor with a simple roof replacement will bear minimum negative effects within the conservation area, as can be seen particularly from our elevations and 3D model views looking down the road.

The dormer cheeks and frontage will be zinc clad to provide a lively, interesting materials befitting the setting and reducing impact on the curtilage listed building at nr 84.

The location of roof terraces will add some visual interest at roof level, but the existing parapets, and the lowered floor level for the balconies mean that this use is

well framed and will be largely hidden from ground level.

Setting back of the facades means that there is no negative impact on the visibility of the church spires beyond our site.

Street clutter is minimised by locating bins, bicycle parking and vehicle parking at the rear of the building, as is currently the case.

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