

Planning & Heritage statement relating to

75-77 London Street

Reading

The KEEN Partnership

The Courtyard

Edinburgh Road

Reading

RG30 2UA

Date June 16

History

The Building was formerly used as a Night Club known as The Matrix of which closed down some 3 years ago.

In 2008 a change of use was approved to Sui Generis Private Function Hall including a single storey extension to the rear. This has been implemented.

The Buildings are grade two listed and lies in a conservation area

The Site

The site is located between 73 and 79 London Street Reading. The area the site is located in is largely made up of commercial buildings, many of which have been converted to flats to the upper floors.

The proposal is to convert the existing premises to retain the existing usage to the Ground floor and convert the upper floors into residential use with access, refuse and Cycle storage on the ground floor.

The Design Component

The Amount of Development

The proposal is to convert the existing structure to create 2 no two bedroom flats and 4 no one Bedroom Flats with access off the Ground Floor

Bin and Cycle Storage has been provided at Ground Floor Level.

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The Layout

The dwellings have been designed to provide convenient living accommodation.

On the first there is 2 x 1 Bedroom Flats and 2 x 1 Bedroom Flats.

To the second floor there is 2 x 1 Bedroom flats and 2 x 1 Bedroom Flats

The refuse & recycle bins will be located within the Ground Floor off the highway for easy access.

The Entrance to the flats is via the Ground floor with an intercom entrance system providing good Surveillance.

The flats have been designed to cause a minimum of disturbance to the existing structure.

Scale

The massing of the structure will remain the same.

Appearance

The appearance of the proposed dwelling has been carefully considered to ensure it remains relatively unchanged.

The only elevation change would be the insertion of 2 no windows to the rear elevation.

All the existing windows, rainwater goods, soffits and facials will be retained and refurbished where practically possible.

Heritage Listing (73 included)

LONDON STREET

1.

5128

(East Side)

Nos 73 and 75

SU 7173 SE 3/195 22.3.75.

II* GV

2.

1748, house of Dr Addington, physician to George III, father of the later Prime Minister. (Lead rainwater head with initials AM and date 1748 removed since previous list). An imposing pair of houses of the same general design. 3 storeys and basement. Stucco plinth, red brick, header bond. Painted stone string at 1st floor level, and painted stone cills to 1st and 2nd floor windows. Moulded and painted stone cornice, plain brick parapet with stone coping. Old tile roof, taller hipped part to left with shaped chimney. Glazing bar sash windows (No 75 has a vent now to 2nd floor left hand window), scalloped blind boxes to No 75. Central doors with stone steps (only No 73 retaining moulded nosing). No 73 has 6 panelled door with radiating fanlight over deep plain painted wood architrave with ovolo moulding. Moulded open pediment on half scroll fluted brackets with acanthus ornament, repeated at right angles on wall face. No 75 has double 6 panelled door with rectangular fanlight (oval and star glazing pattern); wood case with panelled reveals, architrave surround, plain frieze, msulded cornice and half scroll fluted brackets with acanthus ornament. Recently a further door has been inserted to left of No 75, smaller with isolated brackets (probably intended for a flat hood). C18 or early C19 ramped spearhead cast-iron railings with panel standards topped with small urns and segmental bar and ball across front of both houses. No 73 retains a pair of sphinx footscrapers. Interior of No 75 altered to cinema. No 73 has original staircase with fluted balusters and plaster panelling in principal rooms, hall and staircase. Flagged hall with black diamond corners. Rear altered.

Listing NGR: SU7185373036

Heritage/Conservation appraisal

The site lays on the east side of Reading.

The Buildings include the listed 18th century houses in London Street together with the large structure formally used as a night club being 75-77 London Street.

The buildings and adjoining buildings are grade 2 listed and lies within a Conservation Area.

The portion of the site of architectural interest may be interpreted as 71-79 London Street respectively and consisted of three storeys mid C18 houses.

The Buildings have been extensively adapted, although the London street Georgian frontage has been preserved.

The buildings have historic and architectural importance in particular the front façade using traditional red brick with feature soldier coursing and timber sash windows.

The rear of the building has little architectural merit and has been subject to alterations in the past.

Internally due to it most recent use as a night club there appears to be no features of architectural merit. Many existing walls, staircase, doors, skirtings and architraves have been removed.

Extensive dry lining has been carried out to the walls & ceilings.

The proposal has been designed to minimise any further alterations to the main structure.

Light weight partitions are to be used to form the new walls to reduce the additional loading to the existing structure.

The insertion of the 2 new windows to the rear elevation is to be timber sash windows painted white. Internally timber ogee architraves and skirting are to be used with Timber 4 panelled doors.

It is proposed to remove the modern staircase on the southern end of the building to provide more efficient use of the upper floors. It is not required for escape. The floors in these areas will be made good.

In conclusion these C18 buildings have a high level of historic and architectural value only really in the front façade of which the current proposal aims to respect and maintain.

Internally the buildings have been subject to extensive alterations in the past leaving little historic value.

The application aims to reinstate a usage to the upper floors that the buildings where originally designed causing minimal effect within a Listed building/Conservation Area.

Planning Policy

DM9- Air quality

The site is in an Air Quality Management Area, therefore the design will need to include a scheme to mitigate poor air quality.

The proposal is to provide whole house ventilation via heat recovery units ducting the input & extract from the rear elevation. This will allow the flats to be lived in without the need to always open the windows particularly on the frontage to London Street.

DM4 -Noise & disturbance from the Function Hall.

A noise assessment has been commissioned, Philip Acoustics Ltd has prepared the report based on actual readings taken on a busy evening. This report is enclosed.

It has been established that with double glazing & a control on the noise levels in the function rooms the flats will not be affected by noise pollution.

Sustainability issues

As discussed above the site is located in a very sustainable location close to local amenities in London Street & on all good bus routes in & out of Reading.

It is within walking distance of Reading Town Centre.

All the above reduces the need for car ownership & on the sale or renting of the units a welcome pack will be provided advising occupants of local services, public transport etc. The building is substantial & with the upgrading proposed will provide good quality accommodation for the next 60 years without the need for redevelopment & the use of new materials which are depleting the earth's resources.

Affordable statement

The Applicant is willing to pay the Affordable Contribution as detailed in DM6 ie 10% of the GDV & pay the Council's reasonable fees in this matter.

We are aware that the Council have lost their case relating to affordable contributions on 10 units & under. We further understand that the members are due to meet very shortly to agree a way forward having regards to the above.

We await the outcome & reserve the right to remove or amend this offer.

The Access Component/Transport assessment/refuse

Access for the disabled is limited for this development as it is a conversion to a listed building. The access to the property is safe for both public and private residents. There are no access restrictions for fire services and refuse collections.

Access to public transport is very convenient in this location as there are good bus routes along London Street & Reading Railway station is within a short walk.

The property is in a highly sustainable location with ALL local amenities readily available with The Oracle within short walking distance.

There is no proposed on site parking there is however a national car park located on Queens Road of which is a short walk away.

A Bicycle store has been provided.

A welcome pack will be provided to the occupants to explain all the local facilities.

Refuse collection will be via London Street. There is an internally vented bin storage area located on the ground floor of which a management company will be engaged to remove the bins from the storage area and place on London Street for collection on the appropriate day. After refuse disposal the management company will be responsible for replacing the bins to the storage cupboard.

Summary

The current proposal creates additional residential units, which provides good quality accommodation, within an existing structure that has been underused in recent years.

