

RIDGE

PROPERTY & CONSTRUCTION CONSULTANTS



HERITAGE STATEMENT – OFFICE REFURBISHMENT

8 April 2016

Prepared for

Field Seymour Parkes LLP
No 1 London Street
Reading
Berkshire
RG1 4QW

Prepared by

Ridge and Partners LLP
Beaumont House
59 High Street
Theale
Reading
RG7 5AL

Tel: 0118 932 3088

1. INTRODUCTION

This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Ridge & Partners LLP to assess the impact of the proposed refurbishment of the property at 1 London Street, Reading, Berkshire.

1 London Street comprises a 19th Century former police headquarters, which has been subject to a substantial redevelopment in the past including provision of a large extension constructed, we believe, in the late 1970s. Internally the building retains few original features and is generally to a basic and, slightly dated, commercial office layout and finish.

The property is owned by Field Seymour Parkes LLP who occupy the premises as office and meeting room accommodation.

Externally, to the East of the site, are eight car parking bays accessible from the side access road, Star Lane. The property is surrounded to the West and South elevations by roads. The North elevation fronts directly onto a footpath and the Kennet and Avon canal.

2. PROPERTY BACKGROUND

The property is Grade II listed, which we understand was granted on 15 September 1977 and is sited within the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area.

The original building is understood to have been constructed in 1862 as the Police headquarters for the town. A large extension was constructed in the late 1970s to the East of the original building which differs in style significantly from the original and is of little architectural merit. It is assumed this was completed at approximately the same time as the building being listed.

The building is located within Reading town centre and is subsequently within a built up area comprising a mixture of commercial and retail buildings. Parking is provided by way of a small eight space car park to the East of the site.

3. PROPOSED WORKS

The current occupier of the property is proposing to undertake a refurbishment of both the historical and more modern parts of the building to bring them up to modern standard office accommodation.

Generally, the Works will comprise full internal refurbishment, including reconfiguration of partitions, new ceiling finishes, floor finishes, fixtures and fittings, decoration and new mechanical and electrical installations. This is generally as detailed further within Planning Application Ref: PP-04875097 recently submitted to Reading Borough Council.

Internally almost all original features, or those deemed to be of historical merit within the original part of the building have been removed and the majority of structural elements have been covered with a sprayed concrete finish. The more modern part of the building is noted within the List Entry Summary as being 'a bad fit'. As such, we do not believe there to be any items within this element which are deemed to require protection under the listing.

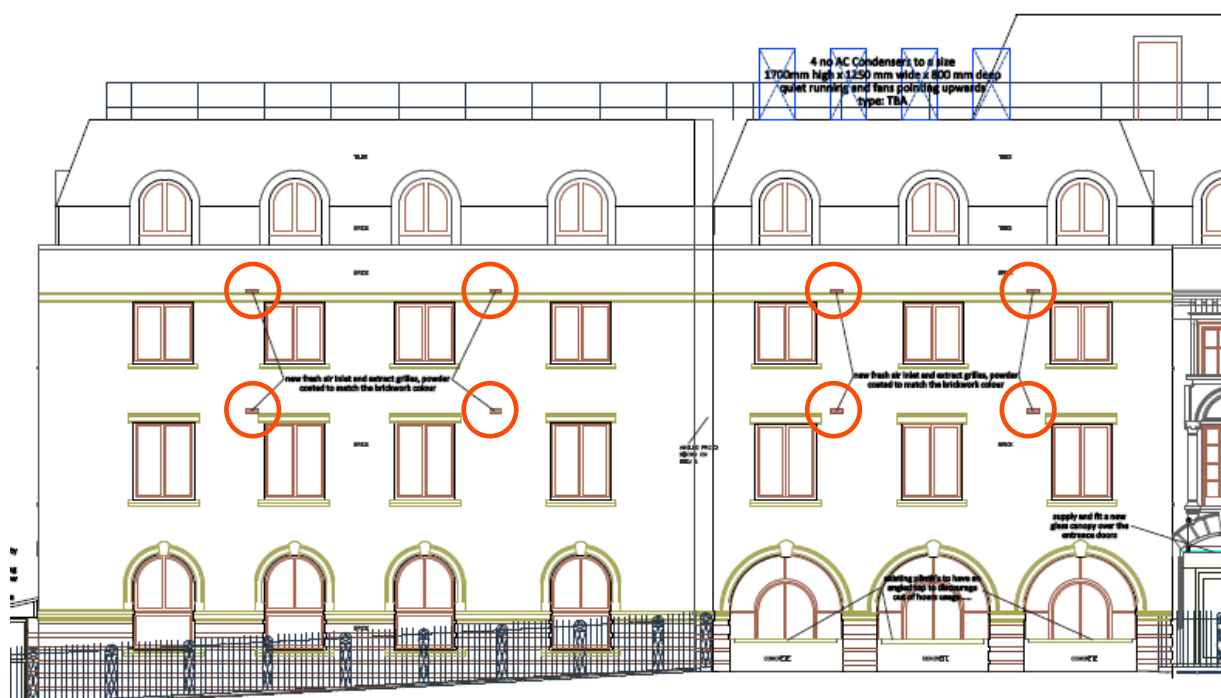
Those items of proposed work which are noted to affect the structure and potentially the aesthetic nature of the property, as viewed externally, include the following:

Installation of roof level air conditioning plant

There is an amount of existing air conditioning plant located on the roof which is not visible from street level. This is to be replaced with new plant comprising 4no. 1,700 x 1,200 x 800mm quiet run condensers which are less in total size and number than the existing. It is therefore not anticipated that this installation should be contentious.

Penetrations through modern wing North Elevation external wall

To facilitate provision of fresh air intake into the building it is necessary to do so mechanically which requires the installation of grilles to the North elevation wall of the modern extension at first and second floor levels in positions as circled red below:



A further 4no. grilles are required to the South elevation in similar positions.

The grilles are proposed to be powder coated to match adjacent brickwork and should have minimal visual impact on the elevation. These works do not affect the original listed part of property.

Window Repairs and Renewal

Sash windows to the listed part of the building are deemed to be modern replacements to match the style of those originally installed. Due to the heat loss resulting from single glazed windows, internally these are currently subject to secondary glazing which is unsightly and in poor general condition. The secondary glazing is also apparent when viewed externally which detracts from the overall appearance of these elevations.

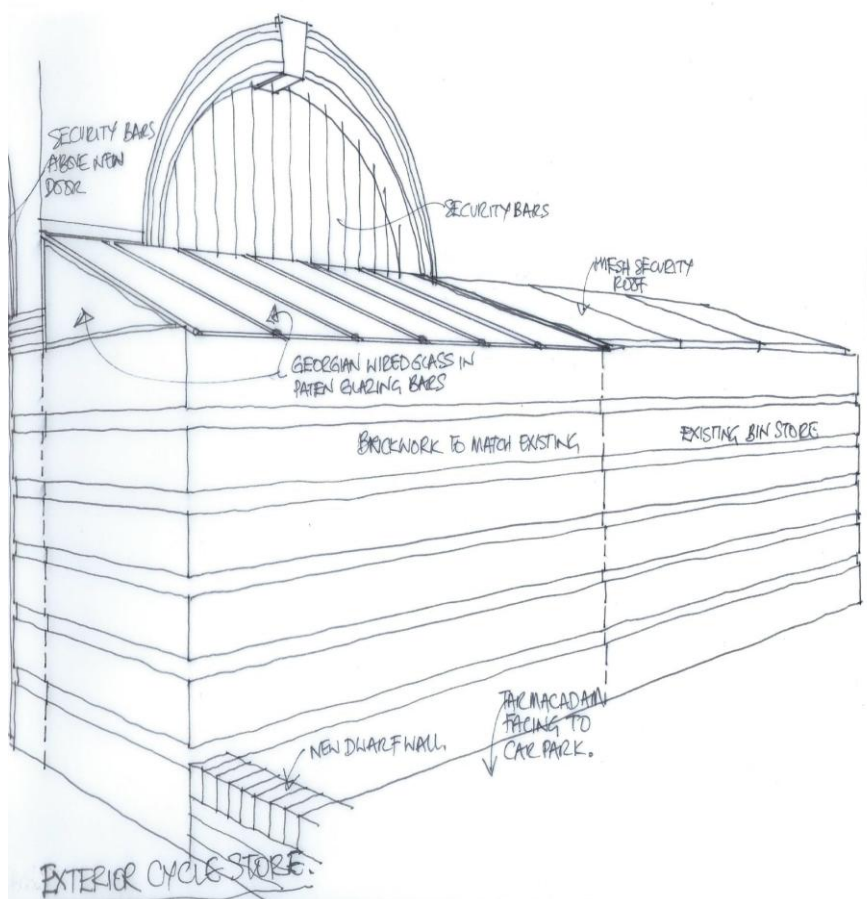
The proposal is to replace all existing single glazing to the sash windows with new low profile Slimlite double glazing with a 5mm cavity. Due to the minimal increase in depth of glazing from that installed, alterations to the window frames would be nominal, save for slight alterations to window beads internally.

The proposed glazing system is generally deemed to be for use within Listed Buildings and product literature suggests this has been used by, and is approved by, English Heritage. The impact on the external appearance should be such that it is barely apparent that the glazing is non-original.

Construction of Cycle Store

To assist in promotion of green travel to and from work, the proposal includes formation of a new cycle store to the East elevation which faces the car park to the offices. This is adjacent to the modern wing of the building and is deemed to have minimal historical impact, particularly bearing in mind this elevation's location is adjacent to similar type, age and style of buildings to the South and a multi-storey car park to the East.

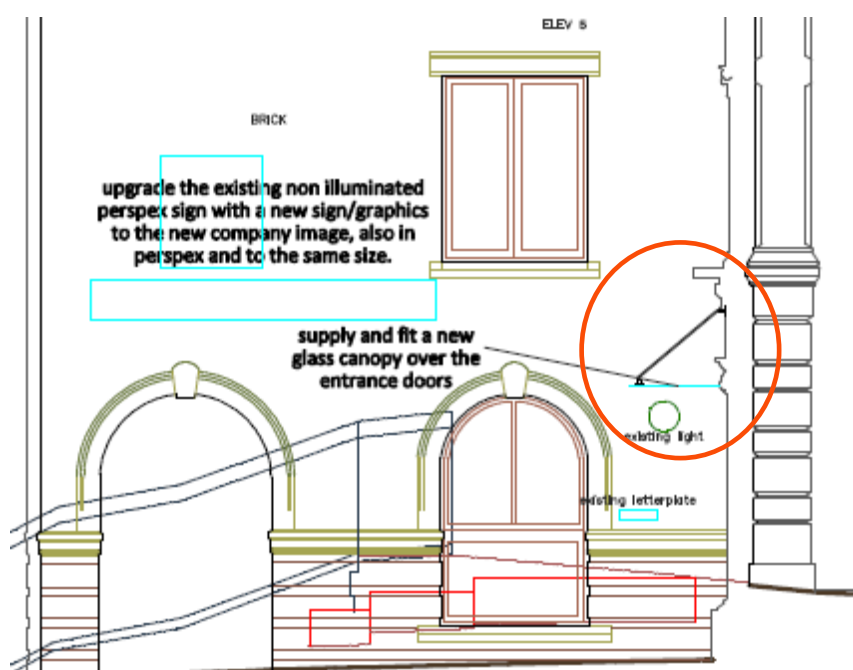
The proposed cycle store is proposed as per the following sketch, which will include improvements to the visual appearance of the existing cycle store in this location:



Canopy to Front Entrance

A glazed canopy is proposed to be installed to the front entrance. This is anticipated to be relatively unobtrusive and supported from stainless steel suspension arms which are to be of a low profile to minimise visual impact to this elevation. The provision of the canopy is anticipated to improve the visibility of the entrance and create a focal point at the entrance of the building.

As viewed from London Street, the visual impact is deemed to be minimal, as per the attached elevation plan:



External Planters

To the front elevation four existing low level brickwork planters are currently sited, which are in poor condition with minimal planting remaining, having historically been damaged by late night passer-bys on several occasions. Whilst these are not deemed to form part of the listing, it is anticipated that works to these areas would be beneficial to enhance the external areas and entrance to the site.

The proposal includes removal of the existing planters complete, reducing levels to match those adjacent and for forming a new hard standing area for use by the building occupier, which would be enclosed by metal railings to match those to surrounding areas. These works would improve both the appearance to the front of the building, as well as providing a more usable space for occupants.

4. SUMMARY

The current proposal includes for full internal refurbishment with various minor external alterations as more fully defined above.

As noted within this assessment, it is anticipated that the affect of these works will be negligible on the building and its historical merit. Based on the scope and extent of the proposals, we would suggest that there is in fact a positive benefit to such alterations being undertaken. Furthermore the affect on the local Conservation Area is also anticipated to be negligible.

