

R A M M U R T I D E S I G N L T D

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**Design Planning & Heritage Statement
to accompany Planning Application submission for a property in a Conservation Area**

Proposed insulated render finish to repair and upgrade existing external walls

**at No 52 Watlington Street, Reading
RG1 4RS**

for Mr H Singh

17th May 2024

Site Context and Heritage

The planning application seeks approval to apply an insulated render finish to the external walls facing “The Grove” and to the rear of the property in an attempt to both repair and upgrade the relevant walls.

The accommodation within the existing shell of the building has signs of damp and the accommodation is quite narrow, with previous attempts to make repairs not being successful. The intention is therefore to attempt to add a membrane to the external facade and line this with a thin insulation layer and then finish it with a through coloured water proof render.

The property lies at the corner of Grove street at its junction with Watlington Street approximately mid way and fronting Watlington Street, and although it is not a listed building, it is however located within Reading Borough Council’s ‘Eldon Square Conservation Area’, in East Reading.

The conservation area has been split into three areas, with the application property lying in area 2.

The main features of the conservation area are outlined in detail where pertinent clauses have been extracted and state that:

Area 2: Terraced streets west of Eldon Road i.e. Watlington Street, St John’s Street, St John’s Road, St John’s Hill, Prince’s Street, Eldon Place, Queen’s Road (south)

This character area is predominantly residential with some houses in multiple occupation.

There are five shops (two currently empty, October 2005), two places of worship and three public houses.

A petrol station and shop serves London Road at the south end of Watlington Street.

The Oval, a detached building located in the centre of the linear street pattern, is the focal point of St John’s Street.

Watlington Street is the primary street within this character area with larger scale development than can be found in the adjacent streets to the east.

Its street frontage of short rows of two- and three-storey houses is punctuated by two significant places of worship and Watlington House, a 17th century clothier’s mansion, now offices.

The southern end of Watlington Street is flanked by nos 71/73 London Road, a grade II listed 3 storey stucco house, and a single storey modern petrol station and shop.

The west side of the street contains short rows of predominantly three-storeys, for instance nos 60-68 and nos 74-78. Both are brick, the latter has stucco window and door surrounds.

The other side-streets in this area are narrower and have a more intimate feel than Watlington Street.

Two storeys is the norm. St John's Street, St John's Road, St John's Hill, Prince's Street and Eldon Place are characterized by short rows of modest two-storey terraced housing, typical of working class housing built to accommodate Reading's expansion in the mid/late 19th century.

Character Area 2: Features that make a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the conservation area:

- *Two grade II listed churches with landmark quality spires;*
- *Trees in front of Watlington House soften the urban landscape;*
- *Open space to rear of Watlington House is a valuable 'breathing space' within the town;*
- *Old brick and flint boundary wall (grade II) to curtilage of Watlington House (grade II*);*
- *Variety of terraced houses;*
- *19th century street pattern typical of Reading;*
- *Vestiges of a mid 19th century planned formal layout around The Oval (grade II) and Prince's Street;*
- *Historic stone kerbs and gulleys;*
- *Areas of historic setts in Eldon Place and St John's Street;*
- *Historic lamp posts in Prince's Street;*
- *Lively roofscape of brick chimneys and clay pots.*

Character Area 2: Features that have a negative impact on the historic character and appearance of the conservation area:

- *Modern petrol station is completely out of character with the historic street;*
- *Litter and rubbish on the street and in front gardens is unsightly;*
- *Car parking in front of Watlington House detracts from the setting of the building;*
- *Loss of front gardens for car parking e.g. no 80 Watlington Street;*
- *Loss of original windows and front doors to modern replacements;*
- *Loss of original slate roofs and other architectural features such as gates, railings and boundary walls;*
- *Wheelie bins on pavement;*
- *Front boundary fence to The Oval is inappropriate to the quality of the listed building;*
- *Boarded up shop at 102 London Road;*
- *The addition of porches e.g. no. 19 St John's Street;*
- *Intrusive traffic noise from London Road and Queen's Road.*

The Conservation Area appraisal goes on to say that:

"Of the more humble brick terraces in the conservation area, the most typical are characterised by a narrow frontage with, at ground floor, a door within a round arched brick door surround and a single window beside. Above is a single matching window. A brick dentilled eaves course is common. Brick chimney stacks protrude through the slate roof well below the ridge with the effect that the lively roofscape created by

a row of chimney stacks and red clay pots is highly visible from the street. The street frontages, though terraced, are not uniform and do not always follow a regular building line but are made up from short rows of differing design reflecting the piecemeal development of the area. Two storey is the norm but three are three storey terraces in Watlington Street and a fine row at nos 118-128 Queen's Road"

In terms buildings of Townscape merit, the appraisal states:

"A large number of unlisted buildings have been noted on the Townscape Appraisal map as being "Buildings of Townscape Merit". Buildings identified as having "townscape merit" will vary, but commonly they will be good examples of relatively unaltered 19th century buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provides the streetscape with interest and variety. Most importantly, they make a positive contribution to the special interest of a conservation area. Buildings of Townscape Merit help create a conservation area's distinctive and interesting historic townscape. As recommended in Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment, the general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. Any proposals for the demolition of a Building of Townscape Merit in the Eldon Square Conservation Area will need to be supported by a Justification Statement, similar to that required for the demolition of a listed building. Of particular note are no. 3 Prince's Street, a former Mission Hall and Reading Room, nos 118-128 Queen's Road and nos 13-21 St John's Hill."

The application property is not mentioned as being of Townscape merit.

There is no real feature on the building other than the front elevation that has a brickwork face with an arched door entrance and stone cills with brick flat arches to the windows.

The character of the external façade would be unchanged, but otherwise tidied up and damaged areas made good.

The materials would be a through coloured render that would not require follow on maintenance

Planning History

Property history from the councils planning portal has two records:

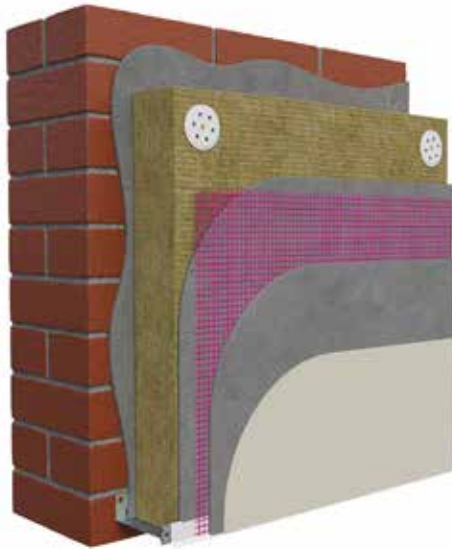
Application reference 071175 - Conversion of single dwellinghouse into 1 no. 2-bed flat and 3 no. 1-bed flats **approved 07/05/2008**

Application reference 091894 - Retrospective application for rendering of side and rear elevation **approved 11/03/2010**

Application reference 091894 related to a retrospective approval of rendering to the same walls as this application, so the principle for rendering is in place as a result.

Proposals

webertherm XM silicone system (MFD)



webertherm XM silicone system (MFD) is a traditional multi-layered external wall insulation system ideal for refurbishment projects to improve thermal performance and reduce interstitial condensation whilst providing the building with a rejuvenated façade.

This system uses non-combustible mineral fibre insulation and is finished with a silicone textured finish which is available in over 100 colours.

BBA NSAI **A2-s1,d0 reaction to fire**

Conclusion

The proposals relate to both an upgrade and that of repair both to the existing rendered external walls to the side and to the rear of the property

No internal alterations are required as part of the proposals.

The works proposed have been carefully put together to offer little or no impact to the character of the host dwelling or its place in the conservation area.

The majority of the works would not be seen to detract from but otherwise continue the design and character features of the existing building in terms of detailing and choice of materials.

It is hoped that the application can be supported for a positive outcome by the council's planning department.

Site photos



Images show the state of the render and the front elevation which is to remain unaltered

