



Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee
21 July 2024

Dear Marcie Rejwerska

COMMENTS ON APPLICATION 240661 REPLACEMENT OF FOLK HOUSE WINDOWS

Reading CAAC makes observations below on the proposal to replace timber sash windows with UPVC sash windows at the Folk House, Church Street, Reading.

1. Heritage

1.1 The Folk House was originally built next to the Friends Meeting House for class rooms and lecture halls linking with an adjacent and now replaced building further to the west along Church Street. As described in the Heritage Statement the architects were Brown and Albury and dated c.1879.

1.2 In addition to the historic maps submitted by the applicant, the Goad insurance map below from 1895 shows the building as being a 3 storeys tall brick building and marked 'SCHOOLS'.

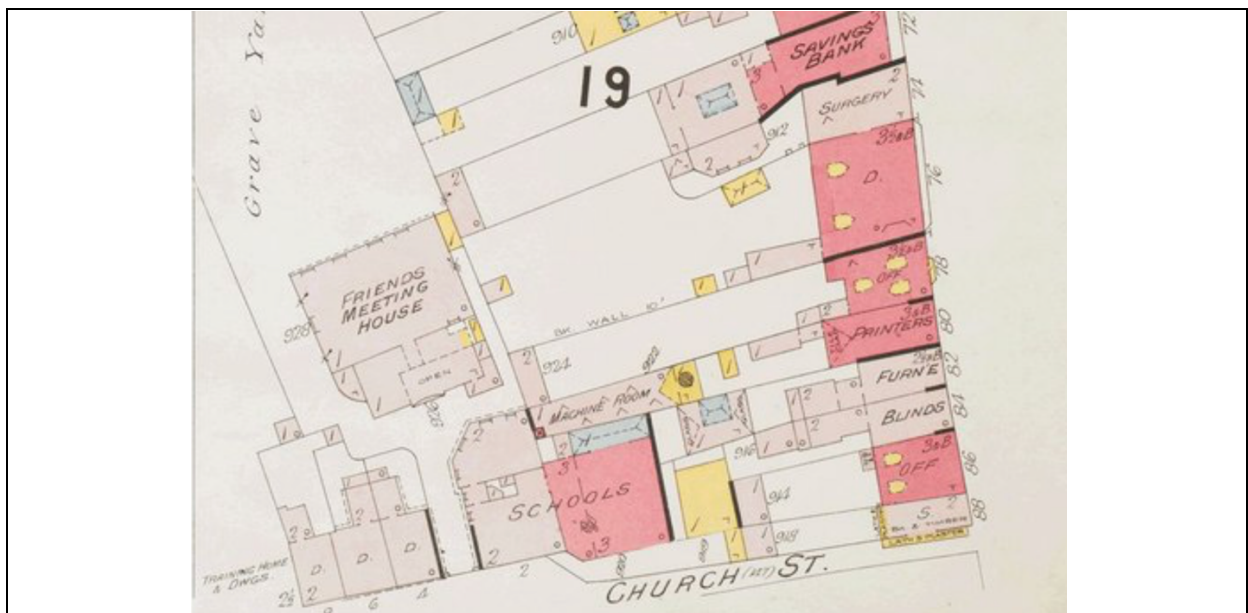


Figure 1 Goad Insurance map 1895 extract showing Church Street. British Library via Wikimedia Commons

1.3 The property now comprises 4 residential floors, previously in use as offices. It seems likely that whenever that conversion took place a mezzanine floor was inserted and windows were altered from the tall windows suitable for a lecture hall on the ground floor to two rows of windows with a glazed and solid panel in between (see below). The current ground and first floor windows are similar in appearance to those on the second and third floors. It seems unlikely that any of the windows are original 150 year old windows.

2. Replacement UPVC windows

2.1 As we state above the windows are unlikely to be original but could be similar to the originals on the third and fourth floors but not the first and second floors (originally ground floor). An alternative possibility is that the windows may have been multipaned and similar to those at the Henry Building of Katesgrove School, architect Joseph Morris, dating from 1873 with later extensions (listed Grade II 1393842 <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1393842>). Unless a photograph of the building can be found we may never know.



Figure 2 front door of the Folk House (faces south west)



Figure 3 Southern elevation of the Folk House

2.2 Although the applicant states that the windows are rotten that is difficult to assess visually. What is clear is that they are need of repainting. This is not a listed building but in a heritage location such as this we would expect there to be a schedule showing the number of windows to be replaced, their location and condition to justify their replacement rather than repair.

2.3 Although we assume that the intention is to replace single pane windows with double glazed windows this is not stated and should be confirmed.

2.4 The application is silent on the intention in relation to the glazing and panel between the bottom of the window on the first floor and the top of the window on the ground floor (circled above). This currently detracts from the character and appearance of the property and we request that as part of these works the applicant improves the appearance of the panel.

2.5 Replacement of the windows on the Church Street elevations of the property with UPVC will be very obvious to passers by as the property is right on the street. Consequently we would urge the applicant to reconsider and replace the windows with timber double glazed units on these elevations.

2.6 The materials and appearance of the windows should be secured by condition with samples to be provided.

3. Other matters

3.1 In the Setting Overview/Context section of the Heritage Statement it is stated that the property is within Area 2/ Sub area Character 5.1.1 of the London Street/Market Place Conservation Area this is not entirely accurate. Character area 2 is derived from the [Market Place/London Street Conservation Area appraisal](#) and the sub area 5.1.1 from [Reading's Historic Area Assessment](#). These two documents should not be conflated.

4. Conclusion

4.1 We request that our observations are taken account of in making a decision on this application.

Yours Sincerely

Evelyn Williams
Chair Reading CAAC
On behalf of Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee
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