

Design and Access Statement: The Narrowboat, Blakes Lock, Reading, RG1 3EQ

January 2025

INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to support an application for listed building consent for a series of temporary internal and external works to The Narrowboat, Blakes Lock, Reading.

The proposed works comprises:

“Temporary installation of 2No. extract louvres to the southeast and southwest elevations through modification of 2no overlights; temporary installation of 4No. air condensers to an existing flat roof; temporary installation of steelwork frame to support kitchen extract ductwork serving delegate stations; temporary installation of 2.5 timber partition screens to separate meeting area from training kitchen; insertion of new double doors within existing opening in the southwest elevation; and replacement of existing pipework to the interior space of the southwest wall”.

This Design and Access Statement should be read in conjunction with the supporting covering letter, the Heritage Statement and the submitted plans and detailed drawings.

THE SITE

The Narrowboat is located to the south of Gas Works Road, on the north bank of the River Kennet to the northeast of the centre of Reading.

The Narrowboat incorporates part of the Grade II listed former engine house (NHLE: 1248683) associated with Blakes Lock Sewage Works within its footprint. This listing description provides the following details:

GAS WORKS ROAD 1. 5128 Blakes Lock Sewage Pumping Station The Engine House SU 7273 71600 II G.V. 2. Engine House. C.1870. Red brick walls with grey brick patterning; stone and grey brick dressings; cast iron small-pane windows; red tile roof. T-plan, the west block originally housing the boilers, the east block the steam engines. Later C19 addition in north east angle; further extended C20 chimney (to north west) demolished. Free gothic style. Main (south) elevation to River Kennet has, in gable to left, arcade of 3 bays, defined by plain brick piers carrying segmental arches. Centre bay has double-leaf doors, outer bays originally single doors, now

timber casements, between brick panels, under full width cast iron overlights. Large sexfoil window to gable. Block to right has 3 pairs of pilaster buttresses with lancets between, above a tall plinth (pierced by two C20 windows). Intervening bays are to left, large gothic doorway with solid, shouldered head bearing arms of Borough of Reading and fitted with pair of three quarter glazed doors, all set in gabled brick panel; to centre bay, a cinquefoil window; to right, a round-headed doorway now blocked. Corbel-table in brick to eaves and verges, elaborately detailed. Gothic iron ventilators to ridge.

To the east and northeast are the Grade II listed Screens House (NHLE: 1113618) and pump and turbine house (NHLE: 1321867) both of which formed part of the Blakes Lock Sewage Pumping works, and which are contemporary in origin and design aesthetic as the former engine house.

To the southwest and west of the Narrowboat is a large car park area which serves the public house and restaurant and the museum.

Land uses within the immediate vicinity of the pub are typically residential and comprise multi-storey apartment blocks.

The main trading area of the public house is accommodated within a later addition adjoining the engine house to the southwest and is linked to the listed building by a low, two-storey range which is gabled to the southeast and which has the existing kitchen extract and intake equipment fitted to the northwest. The main range of the later addition is taller but also extends to two-storeys in height and has red brick and timber clad external elevations and metal sheet roof covering.

AMOUNT

The application scheme proposes temporary works to the interior and external of building consisting of the following:

Internal Works

- Installation of independent steel frame comprising of 6no vertical steel struts mounted into the modern floor slab and connected by horizontal steel beams to carry necessary extract and air intake ventilation kit below. Steel frame is to be entirely independent of all remaining existing historic fittings, metal posts and beams and is accommodated below the exposed roof structure.
- New timber frame and glazed panel doors to existing opening in the southwest internal wall between training kitchen area and bar.

- Replacement of existing pipework along the interior face of the southwest wall with any new fixing to secure pipework to made in mortar joints.
- Installation of 2.5m high timber partition screens to northwest of space to form corridor between training kitchen area and raised platform area which will be secured via fixing to the existing, modern flooring.

External Works:

- Temporary removal of 1No. overlight on the southeast, canal facing elevation and 1No. overlight on the northeast side elevation to accommodate external louvres associated with the air intake and extract system. The overlights are to be removed by Craft Glass, a Crittall window glazing expert, and stored carefully on site for reinstatement when the temporary works are removed from this part of the building. The overlight opening is to be fitted with a ply screen cut to fit the aperture and sealed and decorated internally and externally to have an Anthracite coloured finish to match the existing painted finishes to the window frames The ply screen will then be cut to accommodate the louvred grill which will have a matching coloured finish applied internally and externally.
- Installation of 4No. external air condenser units to flat roof of modern extension.
- Formation of small 200mm by 200mm opening at high level on the southwest side elevation to allow new ductwork and cabling from new AC units to connect internally. The opening is to be formed by carefully removing existing bricks which are to be stored on site for reinstatement upon removal of the temporary equipment.
- Repair of existing guttering to the junction between the southwest elevation of the later addition and the rear face of the former pumping house.

LAYOUT

The proposed works will not affect the layout of the building.

SCALE AND MASS

Scale and mass are not considered relevant to this application given the nature of the works.

EXTERNAL APPEARANCE

Effects to the external appearance are discussed within the submitted Heritage Statement.

ACCESS

No changes are proposed to access to the site.