

Centre Point, 25-31 London Street, Reading

Planning & Heritage Statement



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Site Description

- Existing building is a Class E premises situated on the southeast of the junction between Queens Road and London Street
- The building is predominantly red brick with metal cladding at the 4th floor
- Local area is a mixture of office, retail, leisure and residential uses
- Site is within the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal 2007.
- 33 London Street adjacent to the site is a Grade II listed building

Context

The site is on the southeast corner of the junction between Queens Road and London Street. It is bounded by Queen's Road to the north, student accommodation to the east, a hotel and bar to the south, and London Street to the east. Around the site is a mixture of office, retail, leisure, and residential uses and varying building heights ranging from two to five storeys. 33 London Street to the south is a Grade II listed building.

The site has good access to public transportation links; Reading Train Station is located 0.55 km from the site, approximately a 10-minute walk. The station provides regular services to London (via Great Western Railway and Elizabeth Line), Heathrow Airport, Birmingham, Manchester, Oxford and Bristol. Centre Point is approximately 110m from Reading Town Centre, which has many facilities and amenities. A bus stop is 50m from the site and has regular services to local areas. Given the good access to public transportation services and amenities within a short walking distance, the site can be considered sustainable.

The site is not located within an allocated employment area and is not subject to an Article 4 Direction. The building is within the designated Reading Central Area and is within the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The site is in an area of archaeological potential, with several Grade II listed buildings located within close proximity, including 33 London Street adjacent to Centre Point to the south which is a Grade II listed building.

Proposed Layout & Design

The proposed entrance door and side panels is located within an existing window opening on the north facing façade of the property, the access will allow the ground floor unit to be accessed independently of the main Centre Point access. No works will be required to the existing building fabric to create the opening as the door and side panels are designed to fit within the existing opening. The proposed door and side panels will be of matching grey aluminium materials and pattern to match with the existing door already located into the unit that will act as a secondary staff access and fire exit to the unit.

A ramp will be constructed as part of the proposal to provide universal access into the unit that is compliant with the requirements of Approved Document Part 'M'. The proposed ramp will have a masonry upstand to the perimeter of red brickwork to match the masonry to the existing property, the railing will be finished in chrome to contrast with the surrounding materials as per the guidance of Approved Document 'M'. Also, as per the guidance the ramp will be of contrasting finish with painted concrete finish contrasting to the landings.

Access Strategy

Access to and around the building will comply with the guidance in Approved Document 'M'—Volume 2.

The proposed entrance to the ground floor unit is through the proposed door on the north elevation, with a proposed ramp leading up to it. The ground floor unit will be independent of the main building, the existing main entrance will no longer provide access to the unit.

Landscaping

The existing landscaping will be retained, area's disturbed by the works to create the proposed ramp leading to the new door to the ground floor unit will be repaired upon completion.

Drainage

No work is proposed or required as part of the proposal.

Access and Parking

No designated parking will be provided as part of the development. The primary access to the ground floor unit will be altered from the existing main entrance into Centre Point to the proposed entrance atop the ramp.

Flood Risk

The Environment Agency's (EA) 'Flood Map for Planning' shows that the site falls within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore a low risk of flooding.

Heritage Statement

The existing property (outlined in red on below image) is adjacent to 33 London Street (outlined in blue on below image) which is a Grade II listed building situated to the south of Centre Point, the Historic England list entry for the building is as follows:



Reasons for Designation

*33 London Street, Reading, is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons: Architectural interest: * for its elegant neoclassical style frontage that contributes to the character of an architecturally varied historic streetscape; * for its varied institutional history. Historical interest:*

** for its association with Charles Dickens.*

*Group value: * the building is in close proximity to a large number of listed buildings and forms part of a strong historic grouping.*

Details

Scientific and mechanics' institution, completed in 1843 to designs by William Brown. The building was converted to a Primitive Methodist Chapel in 1866, to a cinema in the 1940s or 1950s, to offices by the late C20, and has been in use as a hotel and public house since the early C21.

MATERIALS: *the building's principal (west) elevation is faced in a cream-coloured stone, possibly Bath Stone, with a granite base. The flank walls and rear (east) elevation are of red brick laid in English bond. The roof is covered in slate.*

PLAN: *long, rectangular plan of three storeys plus basement, running east from London Street. On the two upper floors, the plan is split into two ranges: a shorter front range to the west and a longer rear range to the east, joined by a narrower section containing a vestibule, with a curved south elevation.*

EXTERIOR: *the principal elevation is designed in a neoclassical style and replicates the design of a portico. Rising from a granite base are a pair of pilasters at either side of the elevation, and a pair of Ionic half-columns flank the central bay. Above the pilasters and columns is an entablature and triangular pediment. When first listed in 1957 the frieze was inscribed 'Primitive Methodist Chapel*

1866' but this is no longer evident. The raised ground floor has banded rustication, with a string course of Greek key pattern immediately above at first-floor sill height. The main entrance sits at the centre of the raised ground floor and comprises a pair of ten-panelled doors reached via four stone steps from the street. Within the two outer bays are tripartite sash windows with a central, six-over-six sash flanked by narrow, two-over-two sashes, with rusticated stone mullions between. On the first and second floors, there are three timber-sash windows set within moulded architraves, those on the first floor with six-over-six glazing and those on the second floor with three-over-three glazing. The first-floor architraves to the two outer bays have cornices while the central architrave has a pediment on scroll brackets.

The north and south elevations are of exposed red brickwork with ranges of sash and casement windows on each floor, all seemingly of the C20. There is a two-storey projection placed centrally on the rear (east) elevation, with a timber casement window on the ground and first floors and a hipped roof above.

INTERIOR: it is understood that some historic fixtures and fittings survive.

Potential Impact / Justification

The proposed alterations to the north facade of Centre Point aim to have minimal to no impact on the character and appearance of the existing property. The façade facing the adjacent Grade II Listed Building 33 London Street won't be altered as part of the works therefore preserving its setting with the property.

Conclusions

This application seeks approval for alterations to the existing north façade at ground floor level of the existing property to enable independent access to the ground floor unit. Access will be formed within an existing window opening which will not require any works or alterations to the existing building fabric. The proposed door and side panels will be of matching frame material and finish to the existing openings to reduce the impact of the alterations. A ramped access is required that is been designed to satisfy the requirements of Approved Document 'M' in its appearance and form. The proposed design of the entrance ensures it has little to no impact on the existing building and preserves its setting with 33 London Street a Grade II Listed Property adjacent to Centre Point to the south and the surrounding area.