

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Battle

App Ref: PL/25/0182 Listed building consent (Alt/Ext)

Address: 450 OXFORD ROAD, READING, RG30 1EE

Proposal: Retrospective application for AC units at GF level over 1m from boundary on modern part of Grade II Listed Building.

Applicant: Mr Denciger

Received date: 04/02/2025

Target Decision date: 02/04/2025 (EOT)

Case Officer: Marcelina Rejwerska

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a detached two-storey Grade II listed cottage building on the north side of Oxford Road. The building is in use as an office on the ground floor and residential units above. The listing reads as follows:

OXFORD ROAD 1. 5128 (North Side) SU 67 SE 16/364 21.1.76. No 450 II 2. Small late C18 symmetrical house with stucco front and brick block eaves cornice. Steep gable end old tiled roof with flanking chimneys. 3 windows, glazing bar sashes in nearly flush frames. Central flush panel door in architrave case and flat trellis work canopy (arched blank fan behind canopy). A well proportioned elevation.

The property has a number of unauthorised front elevation alterations which are subject to a separate retrospective application for Listed Building Consent (app ref. PL/25/0181). The listing refers to a stucco front and a flat trellis work canopy – these features have been lost due to unauthorised alterations to the front elevation. It is thought that the front elevation was rendered with cement in the late 20th century.

There are a number of existing alterations and extensions at the rear and side of the property for which there is documented planning history. The surrounding area is comprised of mostly commercial and retail premises with residential above. The property is also located next to the Grade II listed Battle Library. The site is not within a conservation area.



Left: Image of site taken from the submitted Design and Heritage Statement. Right: Image of the site from 1983.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Retrospective consent is sought to regularise 2x AC units on the front elevation of the building. The AC units are installed onto the side extension which was erected in 2013/2014. The units provide air circulation to the rooms within the ground floor office which do not have windows.



Image taken from Google Maps.

2.1. Information Submitted

Design and Heritage Statement, Heritage Fusion
2142 E10 Location and Site Plan AC Units
Received by the LPA on 4th February 2025

2142 P11 P1 Existing and Proposed Plans and Elevations AC Units
Received by the LPA on 16th June 2025

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/25/0181 – Redecoration and making good of the front façade. Application under consultation.

PL/13/1613 – Single storey side extension to create additional office space. Application permitted.

PL/13/1655 – Single storey side extension to create additional office space. Application permitted.

PL/07/1015 – Construction of rear single storey extension. Application refused and allowed at appeal.

PL/07/1014 - Construction of rear single storey extension. Application refused and allowed at appeal

PL/061311 – Change of use from dwellinghouse to 2 x 1 bedroom flats at first floor and office accommodation (A2 Use) at ground floor with a single storey rear extension with basement. Application permitted.

PL/061312 – Change of use from dwellinghouse to 2 x 1 bedroom flats at first floor and office accommodation (A2 Use) at ground floor with a single storey rear extension with basement. Application permitted.

PL/05/1236 – Change of use from dwellinghouse to 2x1 bed flats (first floor) and A2 use (ground floor) and single-storey rear extension. Application withdrawn.

PL/05/1237 – Change of use from dwellinghouse to 2x1 bed flats (first floor) and A2 use (ground floor) and single-storey rear extension. Application withdrawn.

PL/05/0680 – Erection of Methodist Church (amendment to previously approved scheme 96/0874/FD which is under construction). Application permitted.

PL/03/1285 – Change of use from approved community rooms to 2 flats – external alteration, canopy over side door, internal alteration, repositioning of stairs. Application permitted.

PL/03/0460 – Change of use from community rooms to two flats. Application permitted.

PL/96/0637 – Erection of new church building including raising land levels, demolition of Elm Park Hall and provision of car parking, change of use of 450 Oxford Road from residential to counselling rooms ancillary to church. Application permitted.

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- RBC Conservation Officer – No formal comments received.
- RBC Environmental Protection – Concerns raised about the noise performance of the units. Information provided suggests the units are not likely to be a nuisance, however, this is unlikely to meet the local requirements as set out in policy EN17 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

A site notice was erected on site. No letters of representation were received.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the LPA to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance, Historic England 2008

HEAG125 Listed Buildings and Curtilage

HEAG304 Listed Building Consent

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

6. APPRAISAL

Policy EN1 requires proposals to protect and, where possible, enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, as well as the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located.

The AC units were previously installed on the side elevation of the host property and were relocated to the front elevation of the side extension when it was erected in 2014. The AC units have been in place without alteration for 10+ years. There is no period of immunity from enforcement for Listed Buildings.

Having discussed the feasibility of relocating the AC units with the agent, it is considered that the existing location is the only possible location for the units, as it is either not possible or more harmful to relocate the AC units elsewhere within the site. As such, the positioning is accepted on this occasion.

Regardless, the positioning is somewhat visible from the street when there are no vehicles parked on the frontage blocking the view from the street. The proposal therefore includes a low-level screen to obscure the units from view. This is considered acceptable in this case, and the plans have been revised to confirm that the screening will be affixed to the ground and not the brickwork of the host building.

7. CONCLUSION

While the positioning of the AC units is not ideal, it would be more harmful to relocate or remove the units. The screening mitigates some of the concern and is on balance considered acceptable.

8. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

Recommended Conditions:

1. Time Limit Standard 3 Years (for the proposed screening)
2. Approved Plans
3. Materials As Specified