

85 Watlington Street

Design and Access Statement
July 2025



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Revision	Description	Author	Date
P01	For planning	TS	29.07.2025

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Description of Works

This householder planning application describes proposed work to an existing single-family dwelling at 85 Watlington Street, to add a rear dormer to the already partially converted loft, facade work, frontage brick wall and reposition the rear garden access door, providing improved accommodation for sleeping, living and home working. Remedial work will also repair existing water damage and damp issues in the property.

2.0 Site and Context

2.1 Site Location

85 Watlington Street is situated in the Eldon Square Conservation Area. The house is located on the eastern side of Watlington Street, south of the junction with St John’s Road and north of Boulton Street. The property forms part of the merited streetscape and view of the Church of St John the Evangelist, now the Polish Church of the Sacred Heart. The site is in close proximity to the town centre and public transport links such as bus routes along Kings Road.

The site is bounded by terrace homes to the north and south and the rear private courtyard is back to back with a similar set of terraced homes along Princes Street.

2.2 Description of property

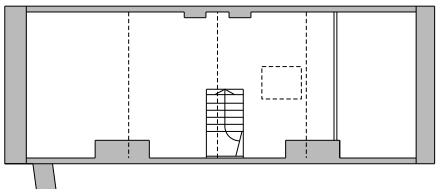
The existing house is a terrace dating from the mid 19th Century, likely built as a cluster with the neighbouring properties 81- 95. The terrace varies in squareness to the road creating some corners to each other.

Accommodation is arranged over three floors, from the ground floor to the second floor attic level accommodation served by an existing velux window in the pitched roof. The house is not listed.

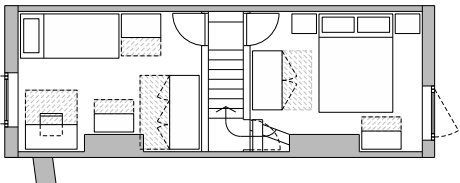


Figure 1: Site location plan

L02 Second floor, Office loft



L01 First floor



GF Ground floor

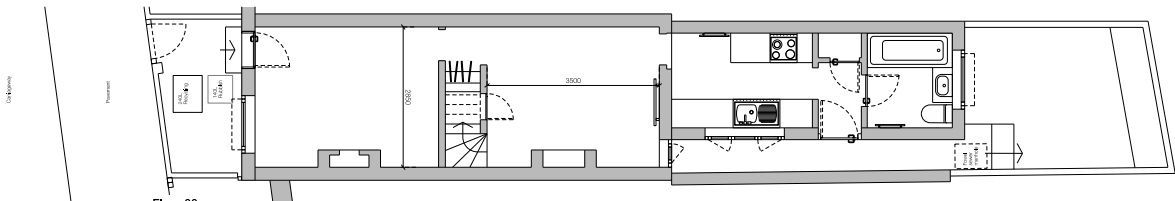


Figure 2: Existing floor plans (bottom to top: GF / L01 / L02)

2.0 Site and Context



Figure 3: Existing front garden with poor condition paving, wall and railings



Figure 6: Existing front garden with non original beige render



Figure 4: View from 85 back courtyard garden: existing dormer lofts north along Watlington Street



Figure 5: View from Princes Street towards existing dormer lofts at rear of properties along Watlington Street

The existing loft space is had been converted into a office space with flooring, velux window and furniture. It is currently accessed through the bedroom via a steep ladder staircase.



Figure 7: Existing converted loft with ladder stairs and velux window. Roof water damage to chimney surrounds also evident.

3.0 Conservation area research

3.1 Eldon Square Conservation Area

85 Watlington Street sits within Character Area 2 of the western portion of the Eldon Square Conservation Area:



Figure 8: Extract of map from Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal with 85 Watlington Street highlighted

The Council's appraisal notes that "Watlington Street is the oldest and primary street within this character area with an eclectic mix of historic properties of different scales"

No 85 Watlington Street fits into the following description:
 “Two storey, round arched brick door surrounds, one
 downstairs and one upstairs window, red brick.

Features that make a positive contribution to the historic character include:

“Variety of terraced houses with high quality brickwork, generally well maintained and in some cases original features restored by owners/occupiers... Lively roofscape of brick chimneys and clay pots”

Features with negative impact include:
 “Loss of original windows and front doors to modern replacements... Painting over the brick on some properties...Loss of original slate roofs and other architectural features such as gates, railings and boundary walls”

... It could therefore be said that the current condition of the frontage to 85 Watlington Street is not in keeping with the conservation area and could be improved.

3.0 Conservation area research

3.2 Historic mapping

The oldest detailed mapping readily available and showing 85 Watlington Street is the Board of Health Map 1853. The street layout is very similar to the present day condition.

3.3 Dormer conditions within context

The use/creation of dormers along street frontages within the conservation area is restricted.

There are however examples in and around the conservation area where dormers have been used on rear pitched roofs, away from the sight lines of the streetscape. dormers with gabled tops are more appropriate than flat roofs.

3.4 Historic assets and impact

A dormer following design guidelines, stepped back from the eaves and not higher than the roof line (as highlighted in the Design Guide to House Extensions SPD) on rear elevations of the property would have minimal to no impact upon the historic assets listed in the conservation area appraisal including the church and Watlington House. Facade improvements would benefit the setting.



Figure 9: Watlington Street mapping 1853



Figure 10: Watlington Street mapping 1877



85
Watlington Street

Flat roof
dormers at
neighbouring
properties

4.0 Proposals

4.1 Design Brief

The applicant is committed to conserving the property and improving its appearance.

The ambition is to enhance the elevation of the existing property and enhance the streetscape and local character of the area.

Remedial work to repair damp in the front elevation ground floor wall, leaks to the loft roof surrounding the chimney and damp in the existing bathroom would also be undertaken.

The amount of usable space would be increased by creation of an additional accessible bedroom.

Internally the proposals seek to increase and improve the internal arrangement to suit the applicant's family's needs, providing an additional accessible bedroom and living space.

4.2 Design process and evolution

Pre application process

The applicant utilised the Council's Pre-application process to ascertain queries about the property in response to design guidance provided on the dormer and what is appropriate treatments to enhance the conservation area street frontage.

Please refer to the Pre Application Number: PL/25/0347 for further detail.

Along with a site visit, a Conservation meeting was held where comments were received regarding the preferred detail of the facade and dormer.

The scale and massing of the proposed dormer has been carefully considered in relation to these comments. Amendments have been made to include a gable top to the proposed dormer and set it back from the eaves.

Details on the facade have also been detailed later in this report.

The proposals are sensitive to the streetscape and surrounding homes to provide an appropriate solution.

4.3 Internal floor plan improvements

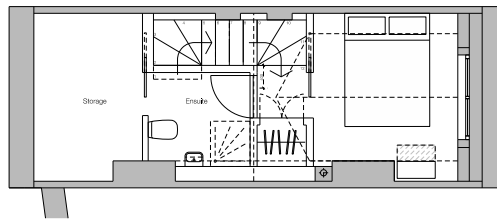
The proposals make a number of improvements to increase the visual flow of the ground floor while making access easier to the upper floors through a central staircase. Remedial work to ensure the home becomes water tight will also be undertaken.

Additional bathrooms are proposed on 1st and 2nd floors allowing then for removal on the ground floor at the rear of the property. This then allows for a dining area and a sliding door facing onto the courtyard garden.

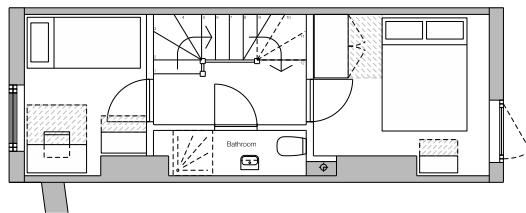
As the loft is already converted into an office space, the addition of an accessible stair allows for bedroom use as well. The proposed dormer adds crucial height for floor space to create a master en suite bedroom.

The modernisation and remedial works allows for easier access and more light into the space adding a great benefit to the living space.

L02 Second floor, Loft



L01 First floor



GF Ground floor

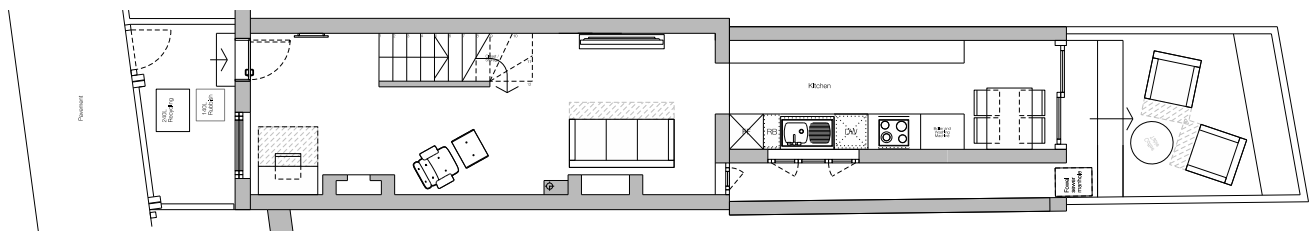


Figure 11: Proposed floor plans (bottom to top: GF / L01 / L02)

4.0 Proposals

4.4 Reinstatement of historic elements and improvements to streetscape - Front facade

The proposals make a number of improvements to the streetscape and will reinstate some previously removed historic elements to the existing house including correctly proportioned windows to match the context.

Exploration is to occur if the existing concrete render can be removed to reveal original brick work and remedy damp issues on the internal wall face. If not possible due to poor brick condition a new render with matching colour will replace the existing but in traditional lime to allow breathability.

4.4.1 Garden Brick Wall

Replacing the brick wall in front of the property with walling similar to adjacent property will help tie the street together.

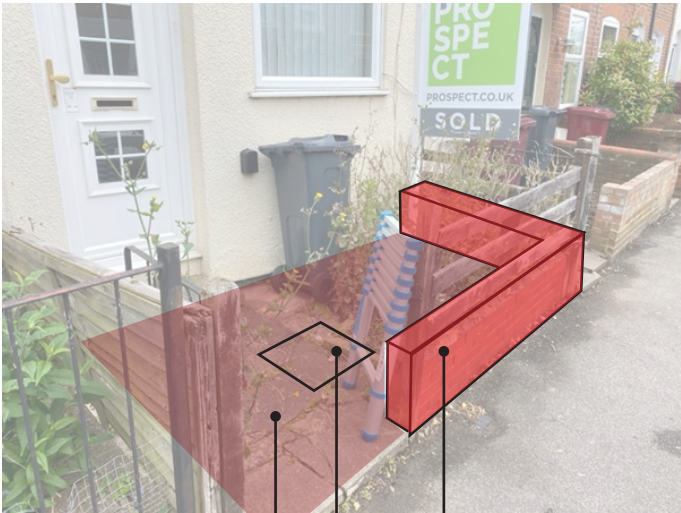


Figure 15: Proposed front garden treatments diagram

Proposed brick wall
Proposed inset chamber within ownership boundary
Proposed brick surfacing



Figure 14: Example of six over six window as proposed



Figure 12: Proposed inspection chamber inset cover with paving to match surrounding (brick)



Figure 13: Example proposed brick wall

4.0 Proposals

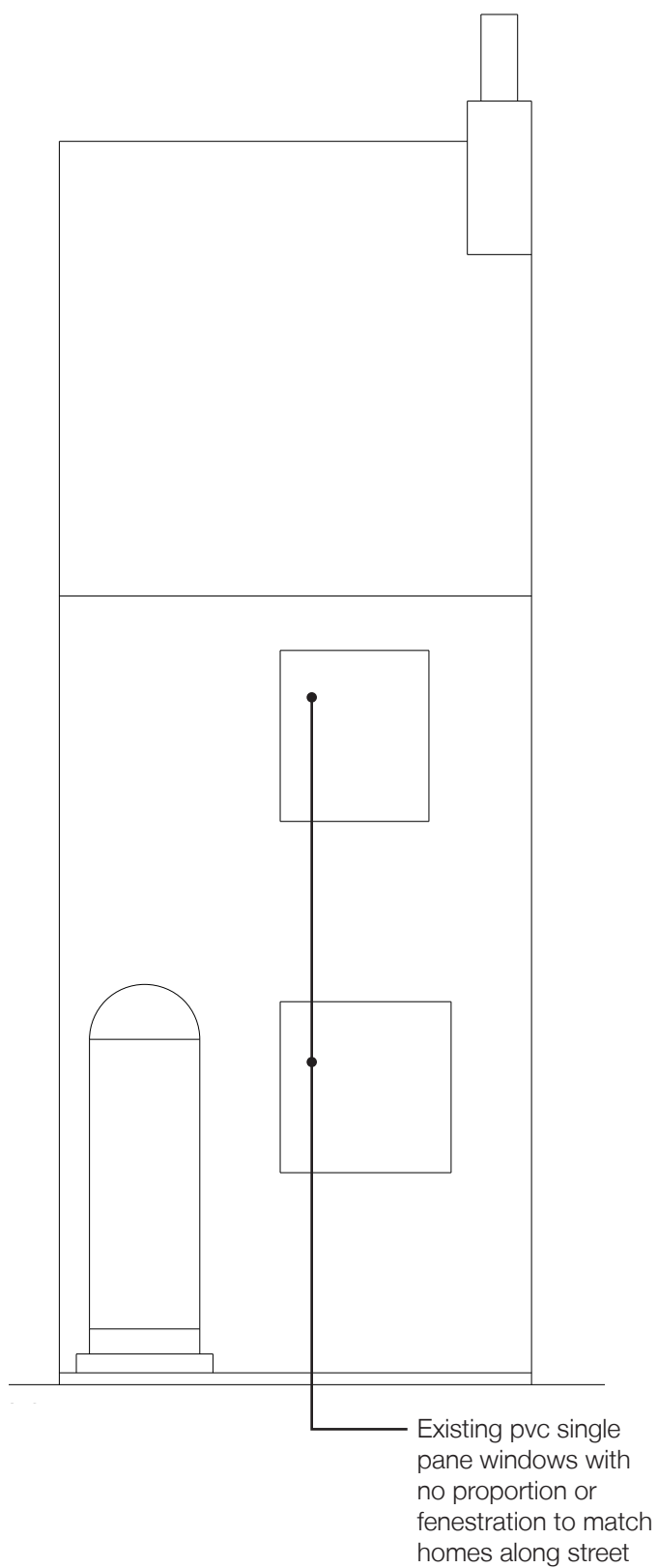


Figure 16: Existing front elevation

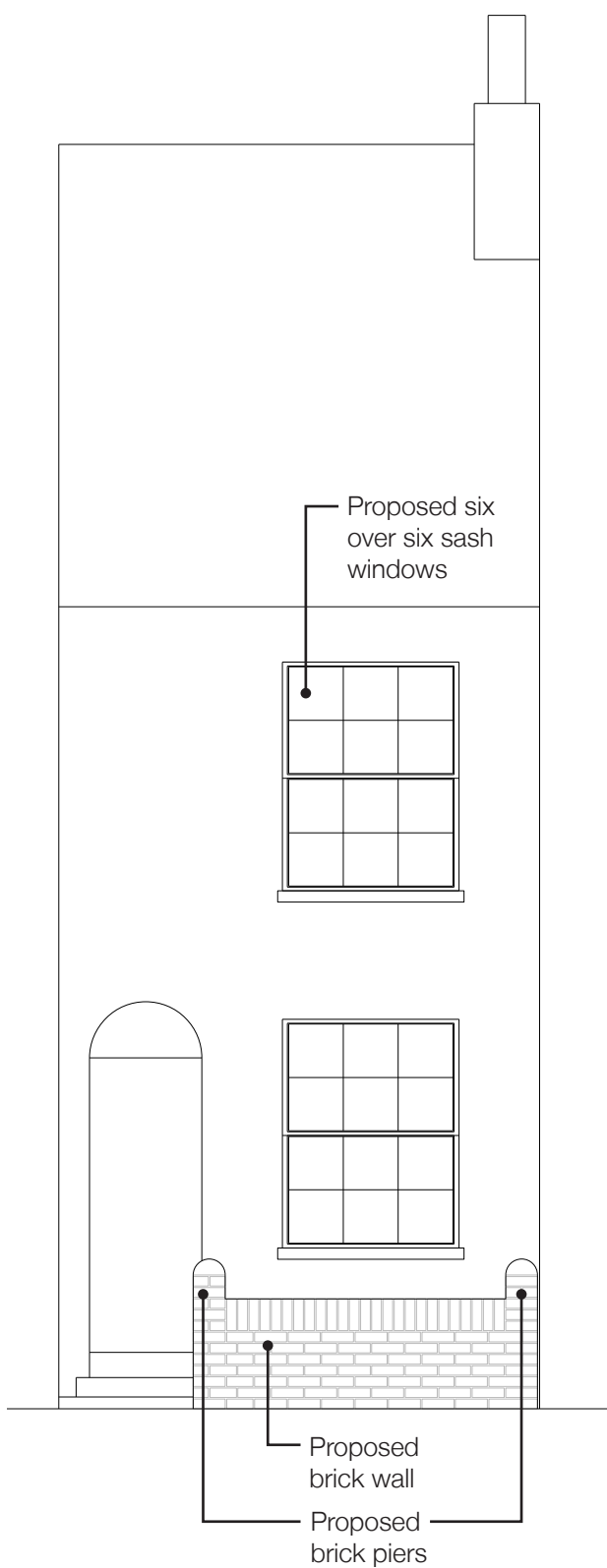


Figure 17: Proposed front elevation

4.0 Proposals

4.5 Sensitive dormer loft conversion - Rear facade

The examples below show scale and materiality of the proposed dormer.

The proposed dormer will have gabled roof with tiles to match existing roof. The cheek and face walls would also be a similar colour to the roof tiles. White coloured conservation windows would also provide quality.



Figure 20: Example of appropriately sized dormer with conservation windows



Figure 19: Example of gabled top dormer



Figure 18: Examples of dormers on rear properties in Reading

4.0 Proposals

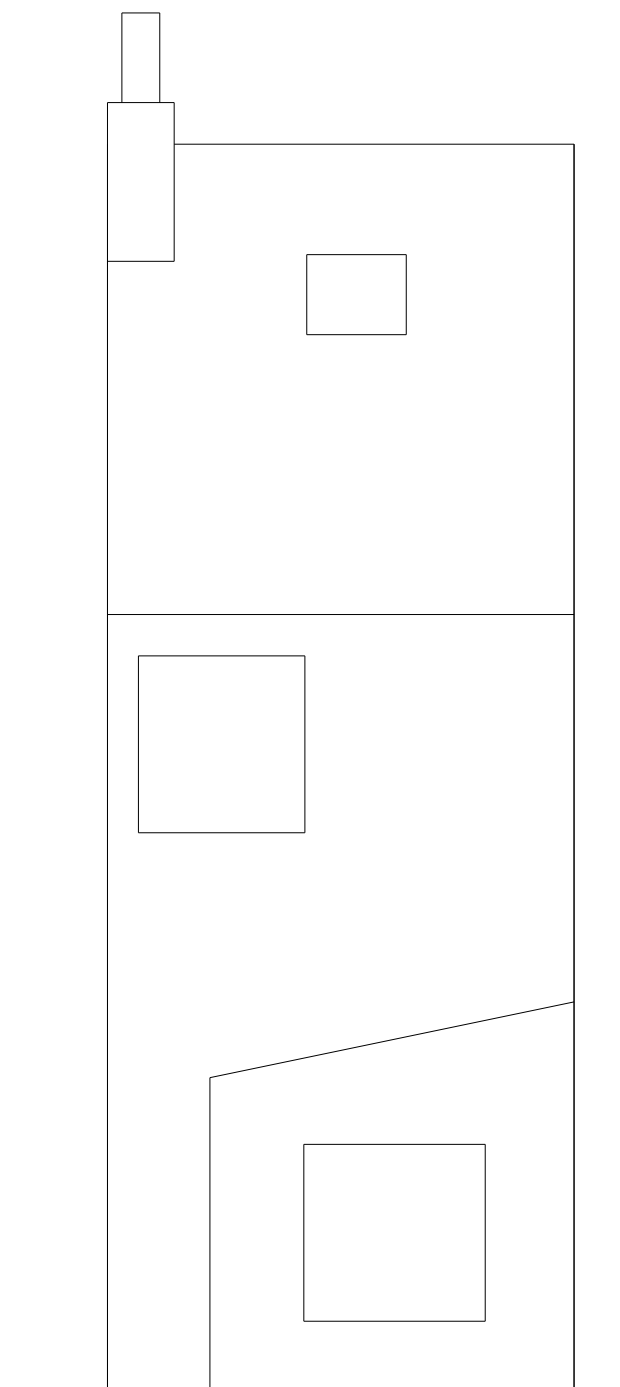


Figure 21: Existing front elevation

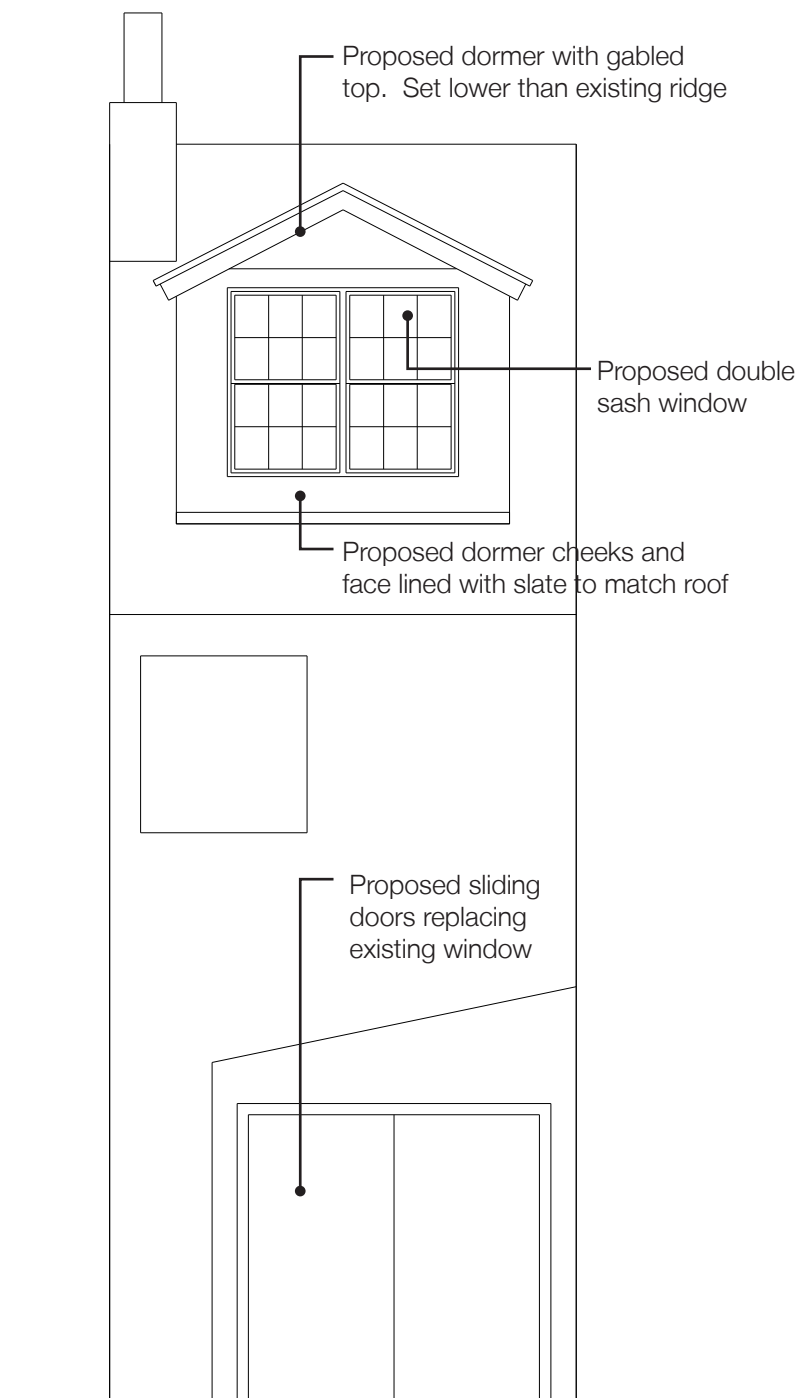


Figure 22: Proposed front elevation

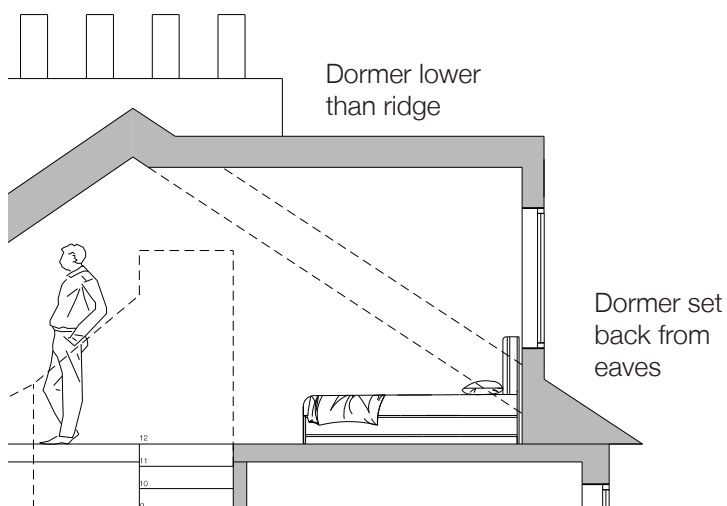


Figure 23: Proposed dormer section

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Summary

The proposal offers much needed additional space and access to the main house at 85 Watlington Street in a sympathetic and architecturally considerate way.

The current house is not in keeping and the restoration of the windows and potentially the brick/render repair to the likely historic state will greatly improve this piece of the conservation area while also correcting issues such as damp.

We believe the proposed dormer on the rear garden side of the proposal represents a sensitive and considerate extension to the house

The design of the proposal is derived from a thorough study of the local context and is designed to reflect elements of the local character.

Overall we consider the proposal to be a clear improvement over the existing and a real opportunity to enhance the important thoroughfare of Watlington Street for the community.