

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Redlands Ward

App Ref: PL/25/1075

Address: 85 WATLINGTON STREET, READING, RG1 4RQ

Proposals: Construction of a rear dormer, alterations to the front and rear fenestration, relocation of the rear access door to the garden, and installation of front boundary wall

Case Officer: Mishga Marshall

Applicant: Mr Thomas Sudhoff

Date received (valid from): 30/07/2025

Target Decision date: 24/09/2025 / EOT agreed until 6/10/2025

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposal site is a two storey mid-terrace dwelling on the eastern side of Watlington Street, in a residential area. It is not a listed building, however, does fall within the Eldon Square Conservation Area and has been identified as a building of 'Townscape Merit'. The surrounding area is residential, consisting of terraced dwellings.

Site visit date: 09/09/2025

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The application seeks planning permission for works comprised of a series of renovations to the existing residential property, including the construction of a dormer loft conversion to provide additional habitable space at roof level. The development also seeks approval for facade improvement works to enhance the external appearance of the property, alongside the installation of a new frontage brick wall to the boundary facing the public highway. In addition, the proposal includes the repositioning of the garden access door to improve site circulation and garden usability.

The application dwelling is a Building of Townscape Merit within the Eldon Square Conservation Area. Any decisions must address the statutory considerations of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (see in particular sections 16, 66 and 72) as well as satisfying the relevant policies within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

"Area 2: Terraced streets west of Eldon Road i.e. Watlington Street, St John's Street, St. John's Road, St John's Hill, Prince's Street, Eldon Place, Queen's Road (south). This character area is predominantly residential with some houses in multiple occupation. There are five shops (two currently empty, October 2005), two places of worship and three public houses. A petrol station and shop serves London Road at the south end of Watlington Street. The Oval, a detached building located in the centre of the linear street pattern, is the focal point of St John's Street.

Watlington Street is the primary street within this character area with larger scale development than can be found in the adjacent streets to the east. Its street frontage of short rows of two- and three-storey houses is punctuated by two significant places of worship and Watlington House, a 17th century clothier's mansion, now offices. The southern end of Watlington Street is flanked by nos 71/73 London Road, a grade II listed 3 storey stucco house, and a single storey modern petrol station and shop. The west side of the street contains short rows of predominantly three-storeys, for instance nos 60-68 and nos 74-78. Both are brick, the latter has stucco window and door surrounds."

Regarding the significance of the conservation area and assets on Watlington Street, the conservation area appraisal states "Good examples of small mid 19th century terraced houses

probably occupied by workers in nearby Huntley and Palmers, the largest employer in 19th century Reading;”, “*Variety of terraced houses*”; “*19th century street pattern typical of Reading*”. Among the negative features within the character area 2, “Loss of original windows and front doors to modern replacements; Loss of original slate roofs and other architectural features such as gates, railings and boundary walls” take attention.

The subject building is one of the buildings that was altered and lost most of its original features. However, it still constitutes an important part of the historic continuous façade on the western part of Watlington Street. Therefore, an application is an opportunity to retain some of the original characteristics of the subject building and enhance the special interest of the conservation area.

No works have been undertaken or started in relation to the proposed development.

This application follows on from Pre Application advice provided.

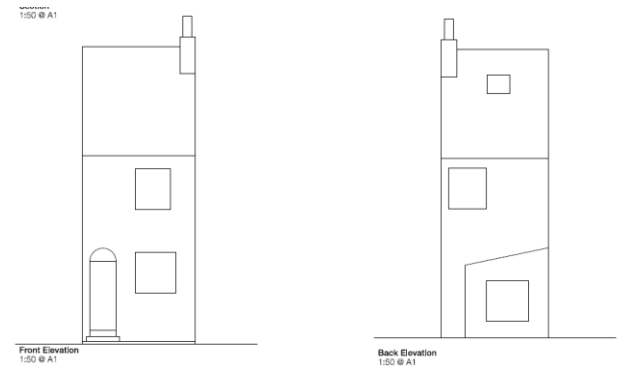
Plans submitted received 21st July 2025:

TS_85 Watlington Street_Existing_SK0001_P03

TS_85 Watlington Street_Proposed_SK0002_P03

85 Watlington Street - Design and Access Statement_P01

Existing Plans:



Proposed Plans:



3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/25/0347 (PREAPP) - Renovations including: dormer loft conversion, facade work, frontage brick wall, garden access door reposition, - Advice Given

4. CONSULTATIONS

Site notice displayed on 12/08/2025

No letters of representation have been received.

RBC Ecology: The bat survey report (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy, July 2025, ref: R3005_PRA_a) has been undertaken to the appropriate standard and concludes that although there is one potential roosting feature on the building, the proposed works will not affect this feature. As such, since the proposals are unlikely to affect bats or other protected species, there are no objections to this application on ecological grounds.

Conservation Area Advisory Committee Consultations: No Comment.

RBC Conservation: I'm pleased to see this application that includes our suggestions and results in a beneficial impact on the significance of the Conservation Area. The submitted statement, under '4.4 Reinstatement of historic elements and improvements to street scape' directly meets the Policy EN of the Local Plan, which states

“Positive consideration will be given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas. These may include:

- Restoring original building features;*
- Removing inappropriate additions or alterations to buildings;*
- Restoring or re-establishing appropriate paving, railings or walls;”*

Therefore, no objection on heritage grounds.

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.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

EN4: LOCALLY IMPORTANT HERITAGE ASSETS

CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)

CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)

H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation)

EN12 (Biodiversity and the green network)

SPD

Design Guide to House Extensions SPG 2021

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal

6. APPRAISAL

Character and Appearance within a Conservation Area

Policy H9 states that an extension to a house will be acceptable where it respects the character of the house in terms of scale, location, materials and design and respects the character and pattern of neighbouring properties and the street as a whole in terms of scale, location, materials and design, and any important existing building line. Policy CC7 also sets out relevant considerations for design.

The proposed dormer window is considered to be a sympathetic addition to the application site and respects the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area. It is proportionate in scale, set down from the ridge, and set in from the sides to ensure it reads as a subordinate addition to the roof. The choice of materials is proposed to match those of the existing dwelling to an acceptable degree, maintaining visual continuity. Overall, the design is considered to be appropriate in both form and finish, respecting the architectural integrity and heritage of the application dwelling while providing additional functional space.

The proposals as originally submitted were for replacement of the windows with upvc windows to the front and rear of the site. Given the sites location within a Conservation Area and that the building is designated as a building of Townscape Merit, the use of upvc on the front elevation was not considered appropriate. The building makes an important contribution to the character of the area and the use of upvc would lack the finesse and traditional characteristics of the existing windows. Further to discussion with the applicant, revised plans/information were received proposing timber windows to the front elevation and upvc windows to the rear. The windows to the rear are not so visible from the public domain and wider conservation area and the harm is therefore limited. The use of timber windows on the front elevation is appropriate and would preserve and enhance the character, appearance and heritage assets of this property and that of the wider conservation area. 6x6 panel windows are considered to be the most characteristic, given the age and character of the site and surrounding area. This choice was discussed at depth with the Conservation Officer at Pre Application Stage, and was decided to be the most appropriate, size and scale for the window panels, in relation to the heritage of the site and area.

The proposed fenestration alternations, relocation of rear garden access door and front boundary wall are considered appropriate for a dwelling with a Conservation Area. The proposed fenestration is considered to provide an appropriate level of natural light into the dwelling while preserving the overall appearance of the dwelling. The proposed front boundary wall is not considered to have any adverse impacts on the character or appearance of the street scene either. Furthermore, the scale and form of the proposal would remain in keeping with the established pattern of development in the area, respecting the character of neighbouring properties.

Overall, the proposed development is not considered to be out of keeping as to cause material harm to the street scene or wider area and is period appropriate in alternations and brings the dwelling more in line with others within the Conservation Area.

As such, the development is considered acceptable, in compliance with Policy H9 and CC7.

Residential Amenity

Policy H9 states that an extension will be acceptable where it does not result in an overbearing impact on neighbours. Policy CC8 states an extension to a house will be acceptable where it will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties.

Given the nature and positioning of the dwelling, along with the location of the proposed rear dormer window, there are no concerns regarding any undue loss of neighbouring residential amenity. The development does not result in any unacceptable levels of overlooking, loss of privacy, or overbearing impact to adjacent properties. The rear dormer is confined to the rear roof slope and does not project beyond the existing building line, which ensures it remains discreet in its relationship to neighbouring dwellings.

Taking into account the nature of the remaining proposed development, alterations to fenestration and construction of front boundary wall, it is considered that the proposed development would not cause significant harm to the living conditions of adjacent occupiers in terms of loss of light, outlook, or privacy over and above the current context. Therefore, the development is considered to have an acceptable impact on the amenity of all adjoining neighbours and on the occupiers of the application dwelling, complying with Policies CC8 and H9.

Ecology

The bat survey report (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy, July 2025, ref: R3005_PRA_a) has been undertaken to the appropriate standard and concludes that although there is one potential roosting feature on the building, the proposed works would not affect this feature. As such, since the proposals are unlikely to affect bats or other protected species, there is no ecology objection.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and is considered to be acceptable on that basis, subject to the following conditions.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Recommended Conditions:

Time Limit

Approved Plans

Materials

Windows - timber front/upvc rear