

Heritage Statement – Gutter and Fascia Repair Works

Property: 12 Abbots Walk, Reading, RG1 3HW

Designation: Grade II Listed Building (List Entry No. 1113391)

Applicant: Andrew Whisker

Date: 10 November 2025

1. Introduction / Description of Proposed Works

This statement accompanies a Listed Building Consent application for essential repairs to the fascia and reinstatement of the existing guttering at 12 Abbots Walk, Reading.

The proposed works involve removal of the existing cast-iron gutter to access the fascia, replacement of the rotten timber fascia with new timber of matching dimensions and profile, and re-installation of the original guttering in its previous location and orientation using existing or identical fixings. No changes will be made to the downpipes, rainwater outlets, roof, stonework, or other parts of the building fabric.

These works have already been reviewed and approved by Historic England as part of the heritage consent process, confirming that the proposed approach is acceptable and consistent with the conservation of the building's historic fabric.

2. Significance of the Heritage Asset

12 Abbots Walk forms part of a pair of Grade II listed early-19th-century townhouses (Nos. 11 & 12), listed 14 December 1978 under List Entry No. 1113391. The building is constructed of Bath stone with a slate roof and retains sash windows, a cast-iron balcony, and other original features.

The property lies adjacent to the Reading Abbey Ruins (Grade I listed and Scheduled Monument), contributing to the historic streetscape and wider Abbey precinct. The building's proximity to the Abbey gives it a sensitive visual and contextual relationship with one of Reading's most significant heritage assets.

3. Assessment of the Proposed Works

The works involve the careful removal of the existing cast-iron guttering for temporary safe storage, replacement of decayed timber fascia with new matching timber, and reinstatement of the original gutters. No changes are proposed to the downpipes, roof, or masonry.

The proposal represents like-for-like repair. Visual appearance will remain identical, with positive impact through preservation of the building fabric and continued protection against water damage. There will be no adverse impact on the architectural or historic interest of the property or its setting.

4. Justification

The works are necessary to prevent ongoing water penetration and timber decay, ensuring the structural and aesthetic integrity of the listed façade. The approach accords with conservation principles of minimum intervention, like-for-like repair, and reversibility as set out in Historic England Advice Note 12. The approval from Historic England confirms that this approach is consistent with

best practice conservation standards.

5. Implementation and Methodology

A photographic and written record will be made before and after works. Guttering will be removed, stored safely, and reinstalled in the same locations. New fascia boards will replicate the original in profile and finish, painted to match existing colour. All fixings will be into the fascia only, not masonry. Works will be undertaken by contractors experienced in listed buildings.

6. Conclusion

The proposed fascia replacement and gutter reinstatement constitute essential maintenance that preserves the special architectural and historic interest of this Grade II listed building. The works have already been consented by Historic England and will have no detrimental impact on its significance or the setting of Reading Abbey. They are fully compliant with the principles of Historic England Advice Note 12.

Prepared by: Andrew Whisker

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