RIDGE

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

READING SCHOOL
MAIN BUILDING (ENGLISH BLOCK)

20 March 2026

RIDGE

READING SCHOOL – MAIN BUILDING / ENGLISH BLOCK EXTERNAL REPAIRS DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

20 March 2026

Prepared for

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Instruction

1.1.1. Ridge and Partners LLP (Ridge) have been appointed by the applicant, Reading School, to manage various external repair works required to be undertaken to the Main Building (English Block) located at Reading School. This Design and Access Statement is to accompany the Listed Building Consent Application related to the proposed repair works, which are due to commence in June / July 2026, with an anticipated completion date towards the end of August / early September 2026.

1.2. Property information

1.2.1. The proposed works are to the Main Building (English Block) located at Reading School, Erleigh Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5LW.

1.2.2. The proposed external repair works to the Main Building are primarily focused on the English Block; however, there are other minor targeted repair works to the wider Main Building. Figure 1.1 below shows the wider Main Building with the English Block circled in red.

Fig 1.1 – Aerial view of the Main Building with the English Block circled red

1.3. Listing Details and Features

1.3.1. <u>The Main Building</u>

Overview

Heritage Category:	Listed Building
Grade:	II
List Entry Number:	1155155
Date first listed:	19-Mar-1975
List Entry Name:	MAIN BUILDING AT READING SCHOOL
Statutory Address:	MAIN BUILDING AT READING SCHOOL, ERLEIGH ROAD

Location

Statutory Address: MAIN BUILDING AT READING SCHOOL, ERLEIGH ROAD

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District: Reading (Unitary Authority)

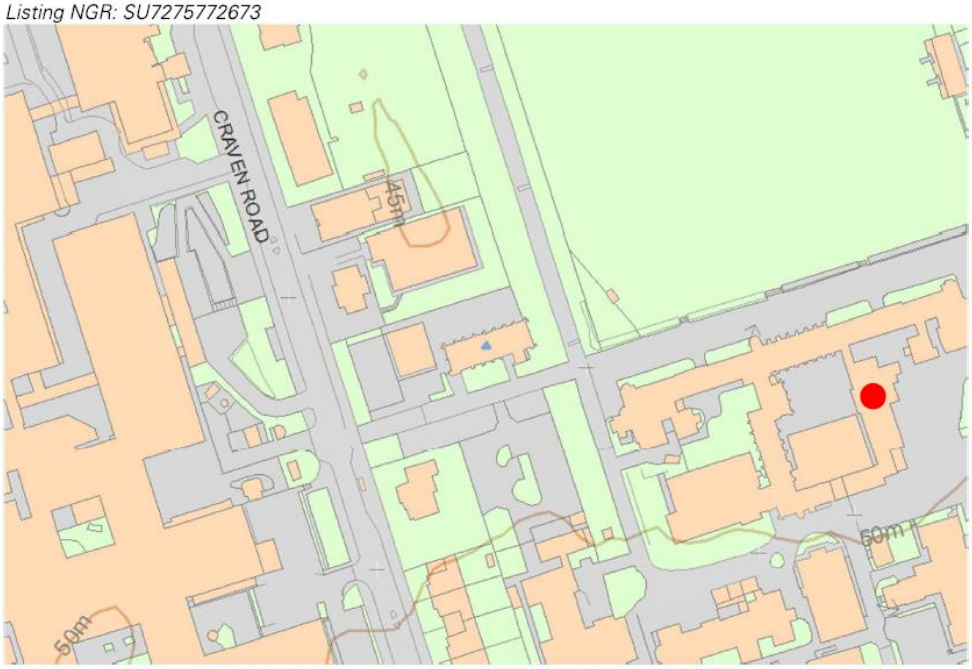
Parish: Non Civil Parish

National Grid Reference: SU 72757 72673

Details

ERLEIGH ROAD 1. 5128 Main building at Reading School SU 7272 9/477 19.3.75. II 2. 1865-71, designed by Alfred Waterhouse. Gothic style with rigorous symmetry except for octagonal turret with pyramidal roof to right of central hall. 2 storeys and attics. Built of red brick with blue brick decoration. Gabled tiled roof with fishscale bands, vents etc designed to add to interest of skyline as well as chimneys with 3 shafts at joined capping and with tumbled brick. Terracotta window dressings and details. Diaper panel to 1st floor cill. Hall:8 bays with 2 stages of pointed geometric tracery windows and dividing buttresses, corbelled cornice and central vent. Turret projects from north-west corner with arched louvred openings to belfry stage. Entrance in 2 central bays with corbelled arches of 3 orders and with decorative wrought and cast iron gates with wrought iron tympana. Leads through to quadrangle ("Cloister") at rear. East and west wings have central and end gables and further minor gables in reflected symmetry. Roughly 11 bays each with plate glass sash windows 1st floor and plate tracery windows on ground floor. Entrances in 5th bay and in recessed corners to north-west and north-east. Rear elevation equally symmetrical with projecting double gable wings to sides. The "Cloisters" and associated buildings are included in this item. They are probably not by Waterhouse (probably by Charles Smith in the 1880s) in polydrome brick work. The boiler house chimney springs from the south-east corner of a building with apsed south end. The interiors of the main block contain many original fittings. Marble pillar in "cloisters" with foundation stone laid by HRH Prince of Wales 1.vij. 1870. The school has had a long and distinguished history. Re-endowed by Henry VII in 1488. Archbishop Laud was taught as this school.

Listing NGR: SU7275772673



Location map taken from English Heritage: MAIN BUILDING AT READING SCHOOL, Non Civil Parish - 1155155 | Historic England.

2. DESIGN AND ACCESS INFORMATION

2.1. Summary of Proposed Works

2.1.1. The proposed works comprise those external repair works deemed necessary to keep and maintain this historic Grade II listed building in a good condition for future generations and to prevent future costly repairs. The works have been carefully considered and intend to return the fabric elements to their original condition as far as reasonably possible as well as to prevent further deterioration. The works have been designed and specified to protect and maintain the original historic building fabric using sympathetic materials and working methods. The proposed general scope of works is as detailed further below.

2.2. Main Pitched Roofs

2.2.1. The proposed works generally comprise the following to various pitched roofs across the Main Building / English Block:

- Replacement of broken, missing or slipped plain and fish scale tiles with new / reclaimed to match existing,
- Replacement of broken, slipped or missing hip and ridge tiles with new / reclaimed to match existing,
- Replacement / repair to decorative bespoke made ridge tiles / tile inserts to the main hall (see Item 2.2.2 below),
- Raking out and repointing any loose, defective or missing mortar verge pointing with lime mortar to match existing,
- Lead valley gutter renewal / repair,
- Repair / replacement of decayed timber fascias and soffits where required with new, to match existing profiles,
- Repairs to isolated areas of deteriorated lead flashings,
- Replacement of the existing armoury monopitch asbestos containing fibre cement sheet covering, with a proposed new powder coated, insulated composite profiled metal panel covering with verges and flashings to match.

2.2.2. The ridge tiles to the roof of the Main Hall, as shown in Fig 1.2 below, comprise clay ridge tiles with a central groove, allowing for individual decorative mortar bedded clay tile inserts. The decorative inserts are missing in areas and they will be replaced with new bespoke handmade inserts to match the existing profiles / pattern. The existing mortar to the ridge tiles will be carefully ground out to allow for bedding in fresh lime mortar. There are areas where the rolled edge to the ridge tiles have spalled as shown in Fig.1.3, this will be repaired using pins and colour matched mortar to rebuild the rolled profile. The same work and methods used were recently successfully carried out on another building at the school, the Chapel.

Fig 1.2 – Bespoke ridge tiles to main hall

Fig 1.3 – Spalled rolled ridge tile edge

2.3. High Level Flat Roofs and Associated Works

2.3.1. The existing high level flat roofs are uninsulated with bitumen felt coverings overlaying a previous asphalt covered roof. The roofs are in a poor condition with an increased risk of water ingress causing damage to the internal finishes which include lath and plaster ceilings. The proposed works include to strip the existing bitumen felt whilst retaining the underlying asphalt to act as a vapour control layer. A new bitumen felt covering will be applied, including a layer of 120mm insulation board providing a u-value of 0.18 in accordance with Approved Document L. The works are proposed to the high-level roofs as shown below.

Fig 1.4 – Flat Roofs to be replaced

2.3.2. The proposed inclusion of thermal insulation to the flat roof areas will raise the existing flat roof level by circa 100mm. In order for a Guarantee to be provided for the roofing works, a minimum upstand of 150mm is required at abutments / below windows etc. To accommodate the increased roof height and required upstand, the existing windows located above the flat roofs will require replacement with reduced height windows. The existing windows are timber framed with single glazed centrally pivoted casements circa 2700mm wide x 830mm high. The existing windows are currently in a deteriorated condition with large areas of timber decay. The proposed replacement windows would be timber framed with double glazed top hum opening casements circa 2700mm wide x 660mm high. Figures 1.5 and 1.6 below show the existing windows and the proposed replacement. The brickwork wall below the windows will be built up to allow for the new window cill height and weathered with code 4 lead flashings.

Fig 1.5 - Existing Windows above flat roofs

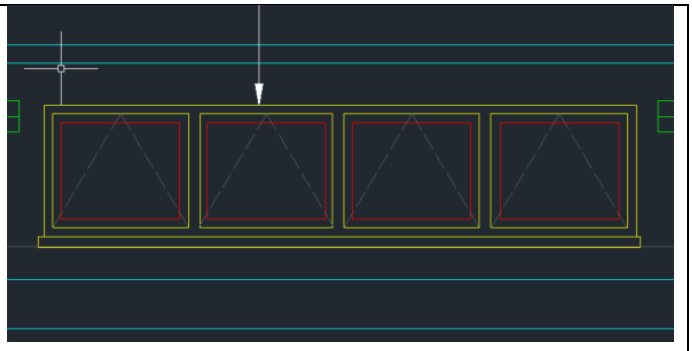


Fig 1.6 – Outline drawing of proposed reduced height window configuration. Extract from drawing 5032376_RDG_03_ZZ_D_B_01003

2.3.3. As noted in item 2.3.2 above, the inclusion of a new insulation layer will raise the roof level with a further requirement for a 150mm upstand. To accommodate the increased roof height and required upstand, the low level parapet brickwork walls will require raising by circa 110mm in height. The existing brickwork parapet walls incorporate clay creasing tiles with half round brickwork cappings. The low-level parapet walls requiring raising are shown in Figures 1.7 and 1.8 below. The half round cappings and creasing tiles will be carefully removed and set aside for reinstatement. The brick walls will be raised using bricks to match the existing and bedded in NHL 3.5 lime mortar to match existing. There is a level clash between the new height of the northern parapet wall and the adjacent buildings rainwater goods as shown in fig 1.9. The proposed works include to leave a gap between the brickwork cappings at this junction and form a recessed lead saddle to provide weatherproofing as shown in Figures 1.9 and 1.10.

Fig 1.7 – Parapet to the edge of the northern flat roof

Fig 1.8 – Parapet to the edge of the southern flat roof

Fig 1.9 – There will be a clash between the increased height of the parapet wall and the adjacent rainwater goods

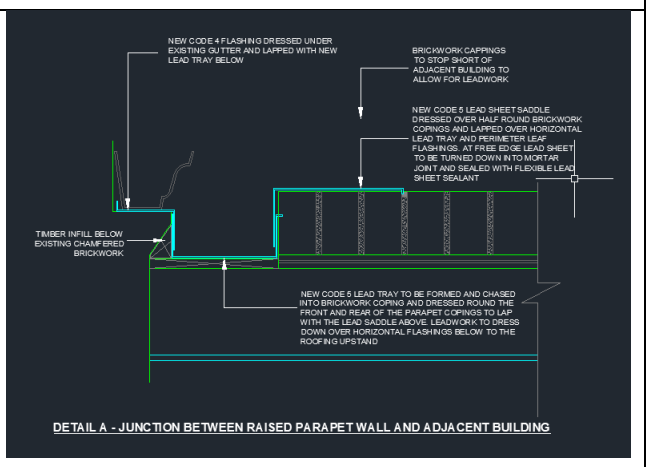


Fig 1.10 – Proposed drawing shown junction between new parapet wall height and adjacent rainwater goods.

2.4. Rainwater Goods

2.4.1. The existing rainwater goods comprise cast iron Ogee profile gutters and circular downpipes. The rainwater goods are in a very poor condition with sections missing, cracked, corroded and leaking resulting in deterioration of the surrounding fabric. Vegetation growth is also evident in areas. Example photographs of deteriorated rainwater goods are shown in Fig 1.11 and 1.12 below.

Fig 1.11 – Deteriorated Rainwater Goods

Fig 1.12 – Deteriorated Rainwater Goods

2.4.2. It is proposed to replace the existing rainwater goods with new heritage powder coated gutters and downpipes to match the existing profiles and colour.

2.5. External Walls and Chimney

2.5.1. The proposed repairs to the external walls generally comprise the following:

- To the southern chimney, replace the deteriorated mortar flaunching with new NHL 5 lime mortar flaunching to match existing. Repoint areas of deteriorated existing pointing to the chimney with NHL 3.5 lime mortar to match existing (Fig 1.13),
- Carry out isolated areas of repointing to the main brickwork elevations where the mortar is missing or friable, using NHL 3.5 lime mortar to match existing (Fig. 1.16),
- Replacement of spalled or damaged / missing brickwork, using reclaimed bricks to match existing and bedded in lime mortar to match existing (Fig 1.14 and 1.15). Where possible repairs will be carried out leaving the original brickwork in position and specialist refacing using a lime mortar matched to the brickwork colour,
- Repoint missing / live collar joints around windows as required using a lime mortar,
- Reinstate several loose areas of brickwork and leave secure.

Fig 1.13 – Deteriorated flaunching and pointing to chimney

Fig 1.14 – Example of spalled brickwork requiring replacement / repair

Fig 1.15 – Example of damaged brickwork requiring replacement / repair

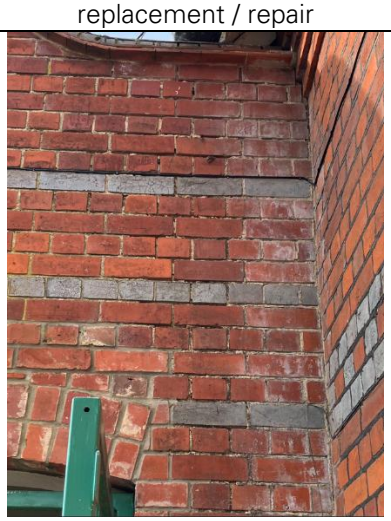


Fig 1.16 – Example of perished mortar pointing to be repointed with lime mortar to match

2.6. Redecoration

2.6.1. The current external decorations are in a deteriorated condition, which is resulting in the deterioration of the external fabric to which they are adhered. It is proposed to redecorate all previously painted surfaces (to the English Block Corridor only) including but not limited to; fascias, soffits, timber clad couplas, rafter feet, existing windows, doors, render and retained metalwork etc. Colours and finish to match existing.

2.7. Window Repairs

2.7.1. It is proposed to carry out repairs to the English Block Corridor windows only ahead of redecorations as noted above. The existing windows are all currently timber framed single glazed comprising a mixture of vertical sliding sash, top hung and bottom hung casements.

2.7.2. The decorations have deteriorated resulting in areas of decay to the timber windows. It is proposed to carry out repairs to areas of decay using Repair Care Dry Flex epoxy wood filler and splicing where appropriate. Where new sills are required, they will be replaced with Sapele.

2.7.3. The existing glazing putty is in a deteriorating condition with areas notably missing, cracked or "live". Where required, the glazing putty will be replaced with Repair Care Dry Seal MP putty replacement.

Fig 1.17 – Example of windows in a deteriorating condition

Fig 1.18 – Example of decayed / missing sill requiring replacement

3. CONCLUSION

3.1. Summary Conclusion

3.1.1. The works proposed as shown in this Design and Access Statement along with the supporting schedule of works and drawings comprise general maintenance and improvements which are deemed required to the building to maintain the historic fabric of the property. Where possible works have been kept to a minimum and repairs will be sensitive to the existing character and in keeping with the current style and nature of the property.

3.1.2. Overall, the works will not impact or alter the internal or external layout of the property with the appearance unaffected, albeit there are minor alterations to the windows and parapet walls around the two flat roofs as described in Item 2.3.

APPENDIX 1- GENERAL PHOTOS OF THE PROPERTY

	Photograph 1 English Block Western Elevation
	Photograph 2 English Block Western Elevation

	Photograph 3 English Block Western Elevation
	Photograph 4 English Block Southern Elevation

Photograph 5

English Block
Eastern Elevation

Photograph 6

English Block
Eastern Elevation

	Photograph 7 English Block Eastern Elevation
	Photograph 8 English Block Eastern Elevation

	Photograph 9 English Block Eastern Elevation
	Photograph 10 English Block Northern Elevation

	Photograph 11 Asbestos cement armory roof to be replaced
	Photograph 12 General view showing two flat roofs to be replaced

	Photograph 13 View showing flat roof that requires replacement and windows that require replacing (resizing)
	Photograph 14 General view of the Main Building (main hall) roof with decorative ridge tile inserts

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