

Heritage Statement



THE COURTYARD, MARKET PLACE, WOKINGHAM, RG40 1AL

Proposal: Two roof mounted air source heat pump (ASHP) condensers and associated works.

1. Introduction

This statement has been produced by West Waddy Archadia (WWA) and accompanies an application for Full Planning Application and Listed Building Consent and for building-services upgrades at The Courtyard. The Courtyard encompasses part of Wokingham Town Hall (Grade II*) and lies within the Wokingham Town Centre and Langborough Road Conservation Area. The statement identifies significance, describes the works, assesses impact under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and NPPF heritage policies, and sets out mitigation and justification.

2. Site, History and Significance (Summary)

- The Courtyard occupies the former Town Hall yard. Historic uses include C18 holding cells (two cells survive) and a secure exercise yard; later enclosed c. late 1970s/1980s for a covered market and subsequently adapted for food service.
- The interior has a modern c. 1980 space, frame roof of neutral/low heritage value, providing an appropriate substrate for services without engaging primary historic fabric.
- Significance derives from: evidential value of the surviving cells and plan form; architectural/associative value as part of the civic ensemble focused on the Grade II* Town Hall; and communal value as an active public venue in the Market Place. The Conservation Area setting and key public views within Market Place heighten sensitivity to roofline change.

3. Proposed Works

- External: Two ASHP condenser units roof mounted, grouped adjacent to one another and set back from parapets (locations as per drawings). The units will measure 900mm in length, 890mm in height and 320mm in width (specification

sheet enclosed). The proposals also seek the erection of a 1100mm high fall prevention guardrail.

- Internal: Two AC cassettes suspended from the c.1980 space-frame; services routed through modern fabric/voids.
- Safe access: Limited Safesite/Sitesafe ladder security points for maintenance access.

4. Need and Public Benefits

- The café employs up to 14 staff. Persistent overheating from solar gain beneath the existing opaque roof has materially affected previous tenancies and current operation. The proposed ASHPs will provide efficient summer cooling and low carbon winter heating, improving staff welfare, customer comfort, and business resilience.
- The works secure the optimum viable use of a listed building, reduce energy intensity compared with less efficient alternatives, and sustain communal activity in the town-centre heritage setting.

5. Impact Assessment and Mitigation External Condensers (roof)

- Visual/setting: Units will be
 - grouped to minimise spread and visual clutter;
 - set back a minimum 1.5 m from the nearest parapet/roof edge and kept below the line of parapets/any lanterns so they are not visible in typical ground-level views across Market Place;
 - finished in a recessive matt dark grey with non-reflective housings;
 - mounted on low-profile anti-vibration frames not projecting above the unit tops. If screening is requested, a simple, recessive louvred screen will be employed, sized to clear service air paths and designed as a reversible addition.
- Acoustic: Manufacturer data will be provided.

Internal cassettes and services

- Cassettes fixed to the c.1980 space-frame only; no fixings to historic masonry, timber, or cell fabric.
- Pipework/condensate routed through modern voids or existing penetrations where available; any new penetrations to be minimal, edged, and fully reversible.

Safe-access fixings (ladders/clip-in)

- Locations selected to avoid principal elevations and prominent views.
- Preference to fix into mortar joints rather than historic brick arises; stainless steel anchors (grade A4) only; maximum hole diameter ≤ 10 mm; minimum number to meet manufacturer requirements.
- Reversibility: any future removal to be made good with colour-matched lime mortar; drill dust to be controlled and surfaces protected during works. A short method statement and marked-up locations will accompany the application.

Cumulative/overall harm

- With grouping, set-back, recessive finishes, low profiles and operational noise controls, the proposals will read as a small, typical element of service plant not competing with the Town Hall's silhouette, and will preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The level of heritage harm is assessed as less than substantial at the lower end of the scale.

6. Policy Compliance and Statutory Tests

- Sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990: the proposals conserve the building's special interest and preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- NPPF Section 16: Any low-level, less-than-substantial harm is clearly outweighed by public benefits, including securing the optimum viable use, energy efficiency and reduced carbon intensity, and sustaining communal value through viable occupation.

7. Conclusion

The scheme delivers essential, efficient climate control to sustain viable, low carbon use of The Courtyard with minimal, well mitigated impact on heritage significance. Works are concentrated in modern fabric, reversible where practicable, and visually recessive in public views. The proposals therefore meet the statutory and policy tests, with any limited harm outweighed by clear public benefits.

Yours sincerely



Tomaz Heap, BSc (Hons)
Town Planner

Enc.