

HERITAGE, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT



REMOVAL OF OFFICE CAR PARKING FROM SITE TO ALLOW THE
CONSTRUCTION OF ONE NEW DWELLING IN GROUNDS OF LISTED
BUILDING

SITE FRONTING HOWARD STREET
101 OXFORD ROAD
READING
RG1 7UD

for

BABAR BUTT ESQ



REDBRIDGE HOUSE, WATER LANE, UPPER CLATFORD, ANDOVER, HAMPSHIRE. SP11 7PP
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1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This planning application follows two earlier Pre-app responses regarding the construction of new dwellings in the grounds of a Grade II Listed office building.

1.2 The Pre-app response received from Connie Davis (220113/PRE & 220523/PRE) was that one dwelling would be acceptable on the basis that the existing office car park was removed. This was not contentious in highways terms or indeed listed building terms.

1.03 The office car parking is currently on the site, but on the part earmarked for the proposed location of the new dwelling. However, the lease on the office building is shortly coming to the end and the applicant, who owns the building, is minded not to renew the lease with car parking on the site. Accordingly, this gives the opportunity to maintain the existing garden in its current state which will keep the setting of the Listed building intact.

1.04 Accordingly, this application is for one house totally on the old car park site. With the loss of the car parking within the garden of the listed building and the retention of the nearly all of the existing garden wall and all trees, we trust that officers will confirm that the setting of the listed building is maintained.

2.00 **THE SITE, HERITAGE AND PROPOSALS**

2.01 The site sits within the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area and is part of the curtilage of the Grade II listed building at 101 Oxford Road. The site is however, immediately to the north of the Russell Street/Castle Hill Character Area 6.3 and is therefore outside it.

2.02 The host property at 101 Oxford Road was granted Grade II listed status in December 1978. The listing description is as flows:-

Circa 1859. 2 storeys, symmetrical. Red brick on basement with 1st floor stone cill band and wood block eaves cornice to slate roof. Coped gables with kneelers. End chimneys. 3 windows on 1st floor, 2 on ground-floor, glazing bar sashes; architrave surrounds and bracketed cornices on ground floor. Steps to 4 panel door, rectangular overlight. Basement openings have cast iron guards with honeysuckle ornament. Plain verandah at back. Brick flanking walls with stone cope and modern rails.

2.03 The listed building is accessed from Oxford Road and it is built on the full width of the site. The eastern flank wall forms a part of the boundary walls to the front and rear. This will not change as part of this proposal.

2.04 The rear garden will be reduced by the omission of the car park area. It is proposed that 2.5m of the soft garden adjacent to the existing car park shall become part of a larger garden/amenity space for the house. A 1.8 m close boarded timber fence is proposed between the new house garden and the retained garden of the listed building. It is also proposed that a new hedge is planted on the north side to ensure a soft verdant garden is retained for the listed building. It is felt that the loss of the car park and the introduction of the new hedging will ensure that the setting of the listed building is enhanced.

Statement of Significance

2.05 The listed building on the site is not altered at all by the proposal in this application. However, as a Grade II listed building it is recognised that it has national and historic interest. The purpose of this section is to provide a detailed assessment of the significance so that the effects of any proposed changes on both the building and its setting can be fully evaluated.

- 2.06 The exterior of the building has for the most part a higher significance in terms of this evidential and historic value. The interior of the building has been heavily adapted with many internal partition having been incorporated as it transitioned from being a house into an office building. However some historic features still remain and general proportions and plan form, being of significance for the evidential and historic aesthetic values.
- 2.07 The character of the property will only be incrementally changed by the addition of a new dwelling at the southern part of the site. The loss of the brick paving of the car park and the associated cars parked there will be a benefit. Views from the listed building not only look over the car park, but also at the northern brick façade of the adjacent house. In reality the view will look at an almost identical brick façade of the new house, albeit, some 14 m closer. However, the intervening car park will have gone, maintaining the equilibrium.
- 2.08 The listed building is currently bounded on the east flank by a brick wall both to the frontage but mainly to the shield the rear garden space and the car park from public views which in turn allows the tranquillity of the setting of the listed building to be maintained. Currently, there is a pair of wide timber gates giving vehicular access. This section of the wall will be altered by lowering the top of the southernmost 12m to provide the garden wall to the proposed new house. The saved bricks will be reused to infill the vehicular access and provide two brick piers to form a new pedestrian access to the dwelling. This alteration will provide a pleasing frontage for the new dwelling whilst not affecting the setting of the listed house. This change is seen as neutral.
- 2.09 The garden is an important part of the setting of the listed building. It is currently lawed with a central path. There are a number of important trees which will all be retained, thus maintaining the tranquillity of the setting of the listed building.
- 2.10 It is proposed that the boundary between the new house site and the retained garden of the listed build will be by a 1.8m high timber close boarded fence. On the north

side (Listed building side), a new hedge will be planted which will give a suitably verdant southern boundary and soften the boundary line. The detail of this can be detailed as part of a landscape condition.

- 2.11 Accordingly, it is considered that the setting of the listed building will be maintained both in terms of the significance of the building and the setting within the conservation area.



- 2.12 A view of the front of the host building at 101 Oxford Road.



2.13 This shows the front together with the adjoining building, the Providence Chapel. The chapel is not listed.



2.14 This is the rear view of the listed building from the garden. This will remain in its existing state. And therefore the setting will unchanged. The retained trees in the garden will largely screen the flank wall of the new dwelling.



- 2.15 To show the windows in the east elevation of the Providence Chapel. This will not change as the windows are not near the proposed houses.



- 2.16 To show the southern end of the boundary wall behind the new houses. There are no windows causing overlooking. There will be new planting against the wall.
- 2.17 So far as the wider conservation area is concerned, there are nearby listed buildings at 4 and 4a Howard Street (known as Kent House) and the adjacent Conservation Area. The dwellings at Kent House are late Georgian. Between Kent House and the proposed house is a linked Victorian house. The detailing of this adjacent house has formed the basis of the design of the new proposed house. Accordingly, we feel that the new house design will fit into the wider conservation area.
- 2.18 We judge that the new proposal will not affect the significance of any of the nearby Listed Buildings and will indeed enhance their setting by removing some of the overbearing height of the existing brick boundary wall.

THE DESIGN OF THE HOUSES

- 2.19 The houses are designed in a Victorian style using red brick with slate roofs similar to the adjacent house. This will blend the new house into the conservation area. The windows and doors will be timber. Detailing will be of a high standard.



- 2.20 The Proposed Elevation in the streetscape



- 2.21 The site for the house is limited to the brick paved car park in the centre of this photo. The garden to the rear of the listed building will remain as existing.
- 2.22 The new house will be fully insulated to a very high standard and meet all statutory space standards. The house is larger than the 134m² area for a three storey 8 person house.
- 2.22 The house will use an air source heat pump and a MVHR ventilation system to give it a very high EPC rating.

Household and recycled waste

- 2.17 The rear garden has plenty of room to provide space for wheelie bins for both household waste and recycled waste for the house. The bins will be taken down the side path to the street on collection days.

Amenity

- 2.18 The plans show the boundary demarcation. The house has an enlarged side garden since the last Pre-app as well as space in front of the house. There is no overlooking of neighbouring habitable rooms.

Noise assessment

- 2.19 This site is in a central part of Reading. It is also close to the inner ring road. Noise levels do not appear too great on site as the ring road is in a cutting which deflects the worst of the noise.

A formal noise test has not been prepared, but the following aspects are in place on the application.

The window glazing will be designed to ensure that the following levels are maintained in line with Internal noise criteria taken from BS8233:2014:-

Bedrooms (23.00 to 0700)	<30dB LAeq, 8 hour
Living Rooms (07.00 – 23.00)	<35dB LAeq, 16 hour
Gardens & Balconies	<50dB LAeq,T

- 2.20 We will expect a condition on any permission to ensure that the glazing to the east facing windows meet the noise reduction required by the Environmental Protection officer.

- 2.21 Heat recovery ventilation system (MVHR) – We are proposing the installation of a heat Recovery Ventilation system for the whole house. This will run alongside an air source heat pump to enhance the 'green' credentials of the new house. This will also mean that there will be

no need for occupants to have the windows open for ventilation. This will also mean that the windows being shut will ensure that ambient noise in the area will not affect the amenity of the occupants. However, the windows will be openable should the residents require.

Parking

- 2.21 The proposed site is within the Reading Zone 2 Primary Core Area and therefore car parking is not needed for the residential part of the development and this has been confirmed in the earlier Pre-app response.
- 2.22 Office Car Parking – The site currently has space for four cars on site. These will be lost under the current proposal. As noted in the introduction, the office lease on the Listed Building will not be renewed with the benefit of car-parking on site when it comes to the end of its term in a few months term. It is assumed that the office space will then be let to tenants who do not require car parking.
- 2.23 The site is right on the edge of the Zone 1 Central Core Area. Therefore, the office building is within easy walking distance of the main central train station. It is also on the primary bus routes into Reading using Oxford Road. Accordingly, it is also close to central car parks for the occasions when a car is deemed necessary.

CIL

- 2.24 The full application will be accompanied by a completed CIL Questions form.

Affordable Housing

- 2.25 This proposal is for market housing and it is recognised that a contribution will be required towards off site affordable housing.

3.00 **CONCLUSION**

- 3.01 This proposal has been designed to create a new family dwelling that fits against the backdrop of the listed building to the north.
- 3.02 We feel that the amended scheme without office car parking on site provides much needed housing and maintains the setting of the listed house. Indeed, the fact that the existing garden is maintained, the trees will not be affected and the original flank wall will remain in its current form, except where it is directly in front of the new houses. In this area, the existing large gateway to the existing car park will be infilled using bricks obtained from the lowering of the wall in front of the proposed houses.
- 3.03 We believe that this adjustment provides a scheme that is in line with both Local Plan and Government policy. We believe that the new high quality dwelling will improve the setting of the adjacent listed building will make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and will therefore be a win win situation.
- 3.3 We trust that officers will agree and hope to get a positive reaction to the proposal.

CJS/SAS/962
9 August 2022