



35 BAKER STREET, READING, RG1 7XX

HERITAGE STATEMENT

14 June 2022

Table of Contents

BACKGROUND	3
THE PROPERTY	5
PLANNING.....	7
THE PROPOSALS.....	8
ASSESSMENT	9

Appendices

Appendix 1 Photos of 35 Baker Street

BACKGROUND

Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been produced to support an application for Listed Building Consent for carrying out alterations to 35 Baker Street, Reading, RG1 7XX.
- 1.2 The desktop research included reviewing OS maps, statutory listing and the conservation area appraisal. The property has been visited and photographs taken, some of which are included in the text whilst the full set is in Appendix 1 (some were taken by the lettings agent and hence show furniture although the house is currently empty). The report has been prepared by Iain Stevenson, a town planner with over 12 years experience in the industry, including dealing with applications involving listed buildings and conservation areas.

Purpose of the Report

- 1.3 The report provides an understanding of the heritage assets and wider context to inform the proposed changes together with meeting the requirements set out in local and national planning policy. This includes Paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 which states that applicants are required to *'describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance...'*

Heritage Assets

- 1.4 The property is a Grade II listed building which forms part of 2 pairs of semi-detached houses comprising 33-39 Baker Street (List Entry Number 1321984) first designated in 1978, as below.

BAKER STREET 1. 5128 Nos 33 to 39 (odd) SU 7073 12/403 II 2. Early-mid C19. 2 pairs of semi-detached houses linked by porch annexe. 2 storeys and basement. Each pair is a stucco pavilion with hipped slate roof and 2 ranges of glazing bar sashes. Link block has 2 doors and jettied 1st floor with one window on Doric column. 1 range of plain sash windows each. Nos 33 and 39 have doors to sides.

- 1.5 No.35 Baker Street is located within the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area which extends out to the Inner Distribution Road to the east, to the north up to Oxford Road, westwards along Baker Street and beyond Castle Hill to the south.

Location and Context

- 1.6 The property is located within a built-up part of Reading to the west of the town centre (see Fig.1 below). The group of four listed properties sit on the south side of Baker Street, at the junction of Baker Street and Jesse Terrace/Waylen Street. They lie at a change in direction to Baker Street and hence are more visible when approaching from the west.
- 1.7 The four properties are located within a residential area comprising a traditional street pattern, with houses fronting the street and long gardens at the rear, creating perimeter blocks.
- 1.8 Most of the buildings have two or three storeys and are set back from the road whilst providing a continuous frontage along this part of Baker Street. Some have small front gardens, enclosed walls and/or metal railings.



Fig. 1 Location Plan

History

- 1.9 As set out in the listing, No.33-39 were built in mid-late 19th century (the two maps below set out the context around that time) and comprised a block of four buildings with interlinking sections. They all had similar sized rear gardens backing onto the larger homes along Jesse Terrace.
- 1.10 There have since been extensions added to the rear of No.33, 35 and 37. Parts of the gardens for No.33 and 35 have also been changed and are now used as parking for the flats to the south.



Fig. 2 Ordnance Survey 25-inch England and Wales, 1875 (copyright with National Library of Scotland)

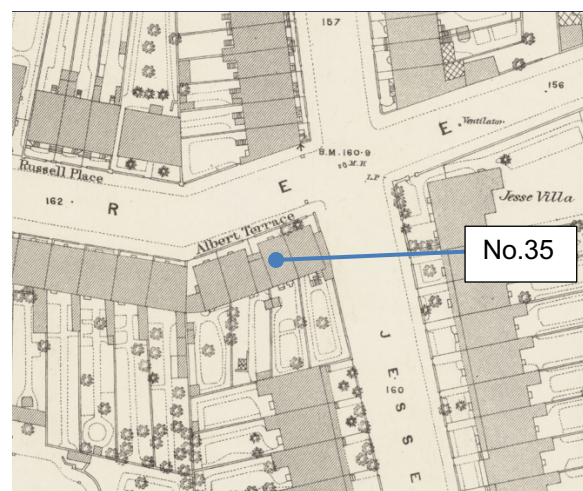


Fig.3 Town Plans of England and Wales, 1877 (copyright with National Library of Scotland)

THE PROPERTY

Description

- 1.11 No.35 is one of two pairs of semi-detached houses, all with two storeys and hipped roofs (see photograph below). They have a stucco pavilion style and Regency style of architecture. The two in the middle (no.35 and 37) are connected by a porch annexe with a shallow pitched roof behind a parapet. The porch overhangs the entrance to each property, which are split by a Doric style column. The central section was built at some point after the two pairs of houses were completed.



Plate 1: Front Elevation of No 33-37 Baker Street (No 35 has the hedge, window above door serves Bedroom 3)

- 1.12 The properties have 16-pane sash windows although the porch annex has a casement window, probably changed before the listing. All four houses have basements and the two on either side (No 33 and 37) have been converted into flats. No.35 and 37 still have their original metal railings. All four properties are constructed of brick with a light-coloured render. They have hipped roofs comprising grey slate extending up to a brick chimney stack. A small single storey extension has been built on the rear of No.35 and comprises brick walls and what appears to be a corrugated asbestos roof (see Plate 2 below).



Plate 2: Rear elevation of No.35 with brick built single-storey extension

1.13 The photographs below were taken by the agent when the property was occupied. They show the interior of the building and the key features. Additional photos are in Appendix 2.



Plate 3: Living Room at front



Plate 4: Kitchen



Plate 5: Front Bedroom



Plate 6: Bedroom 2



Plate 7: Bedroom 3



Plate 8: Bathroom

PLANNING

Planning Policy

- 1.14 The key planning policies are set out in the local plan and the NPPF. Key policies in the Reading Borough Local Plan are Policy EN1 (listed buildings and conservation areas) and Policy EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas) although the application does not propose to alter the built form or make any additions.
- 1.15 The key parts of the NPPF are set out in Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment. This relates to determination of application affecting heritage assets with guidance in paragraphs 197-208.
- 1.16 Other material considerations include the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2020). An extract from that document is set out in Fig.4 below. No.33-39 sit within the Caste Street/Castle Hill part and are mentioned on page 75 in relation to key views.



Fig.4 Extract from Conservation Area (No.33-39 circled)

Planning History

- 1.17 According to the online register on the Council's website, the only applications for planning permission or listed building consent are those approved in April 2022 (220009 and 220227). The applicant has scaled back and change the approach because of costs of carrying out the approved works and risks, particularly during the current climate. There was also a re-think in terms of the overall benefits of the changes and the impact upon the character of the building.

THE PROPOSALS

1.18 The proposals are set out in the accompanying drawings and described below.

Ground Floor

1. Block up existing opening from kitchen/dining area into basement.
2. Create new doorway into basement from Living Room.
3. Remove kitchen units and replace with new ones.
4. Block up window in modern single-storey extension.
5. Demolish section of internal wall in modern single-storey extension.
6. Install new bathroom suite.
7. Install new kitchen extractor fan in rear elevation.
8. Replace corrugated cement sheet roof covering single-storey extension with new roof in either felt or lightweight roofing sheet (grey).

First Floor

9. Install new timber stud wall to Bedroom 3.
10. Move radiator.
11. Install new loft opening and block up existing.

Windows

12. Replace the existing timber casement window in Bedroom 3 with new timber double-glazed window with Georgian style design to match others in front elevation.
 13. Replace the two other existing timber casement windows in Lounge, Front Bedroom and basement with new timber double-glazed window with Georgian style design to match existing.
 14. Replace the existing timber casement windows in rear Bedroom with new timber double-glazed window with Georgian style design to match existing.
 15. Replace the existing timber casement windows to kitchen, basement and bathroom to new timber double-glazed windows as per drawings.
- 1.19 The main reasons for carrying out the work are to bring the property up to a modern standard, carry out repairs and upgrade the kitchen and bathroom, creating a family home for the Applicant. The property was previously used as a rental for several years and requires modernisation. The property needs refurbishment and repair including damp in the basement and problems with the roof and floor joists, currently being supported by wooden beams and an Acro prop. The proposals will, where possible, reuse the floorboards and floor joists where possible.
- 1.20 The proposed changes to the windows are required to reduce the noise, improve thermal performance and increase the security of the building, especially at ground floor. New double-glazed windows will provide much better thermal insulation properties, which is especially important at the moment given the huge rise in energy prices and concerns over climate change. Finally,

some of the windows are in a poor condition and, whilst repairs are possible, this would still be costly and would not deliver the aforementioned benefits. Secondary glazing is not practical and would, in any case, change the character of the elevation.

- 1.21 Replacing the roof of the single-storey rear extension will improve the appearance of the building and reduce the chances of leaks in the future.

ASSESSMENT

- 1.22 This section assesses the significance of the heritage asset and considers the advice in English Heritage's Conservation Principles (2008) and the requirements of paragraph 194 of the NPPF. The assessment considers the listed building and views in the conservation area.
- 1.23 The internal alterations are considered to be minor and would not adversely affect the character of this listed building or be visible from the conservation area.
- 1.24 It is understandable for planning policy to seek to retain existing timber windows within listed buildings, particularly where they are visible from the street. However, in this particular situation the impact of replacing the existing windows with very similar looking new double glazed units would not have an adverse impact upon the listed building or its setting. The new windows would be high-quality timber framed windows designed to replicate the existing units. The two new large windows in the front elevation would comprise sash windows with suitable Georgian style glazing bars. The new window above the entrance would be similar but with 3 over 3 panes.
- 1.25 In addition to the justification in terms of noise, security, thermal properties and necessity to replace some of the windows due to them being rotten, there is an additional reason for granting consent. The application replaces the unsightly and partly rotten casement window above the entrance with a new Georgian style design. This would improve the front elevation and hence enhance the significance of the heritage assets comprising the listed building and conservation area. Therefore, replacing all four windows in the front elevation would be better than just replacing the windows above the entrance and basement.
- 1.26 The application is considered to accord with Policy EN1 and the NPPF. Whilst it does alter an internal layout and removes part of the historic fabric, overall the proposal would not have an adverse impact upon the key elements which contribute towards the special architectural or historic interest/setting. The application does not materially alter the exterior character of the building and therefore it accords with Policy EN3 and the impact upon the conservation area.

Appendix 1 – Drawings

Fig.5 Existing floor plan

Fig.6 Proposed floor plan

Fig.7 Roof Plan

Fig.8 Proposed section

Fig.9 Proposed front and rear elevation

Appendix 2 – Photos of 35 Baker Street