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HERITAGE STATEMENT
for
19 The Mount
Reading
RG1 5HL

The majority of my architectural work over the past 22 years has been major renovations to Grade I and Grade II listed buildings as well as those in Conservation Areas. It is extremely important to me to respect and protect architectural history, the surrounding area in which an architectural project is located, and to ensure the form and outline of existing buildings are clear and protected.

The main driver for this project in terms of the heritage and architectural history has been to ensure that the form of the existing house is clear, that the new extensions do not make the existing house appear as if it was originally to be a different shape or typology, and to keep most of the extensions tucked away from the streetscape.

The front entrance hall extension is offset from the driveway into the corner plot, so it will be predominantly invisible from the street. Trees on the border of the property further block views to it. It has been located in an area of the plot where a high level barrier is desperately needed. At the moment, people are walking directly into the private garden around the house and even into open garden doors. With children and pets in the house this is especially problematic and needs to be addressed. The front extension was sited to close off this open side of the garden, forming a boundary to alleviate the existing issues. It is designed to look like fence or boundary treatment, made out of unpainted vertical timber siding (but much nicer than any fence), with an extension hidden behind it. A gate and fence extend from the end of the extension to the property boundary in the same unpainted vertical timber cladding. Even the front door is hidden by being clad in this siding to create a traditional hidden (gib) door. The roof of the entrance hall extension is to be a green living room so that, even when seen from above, for the few properties that will be able to do so, it will blend into the lawn and garden beyond it.

The rear extension has been located in a narrow hardscaped alley behind the house which has no use, attracts moss and damp in the winter and ends up mainly filled with storage that doesn't have a proper home yet. This space would never become amenity space when there are large south, east and west facing gardens around the house. The rear extension in this space has been set back on both sides from the original house and the roof is lower than the

existing ridge line to ensure that it is subservient to the existing building and the original outline, shape and details of the existing house remain clear and protected on all sides. It is set back further from the east side of the house that the west as the east elevation is on display in the garden and I wanted to ensure that it was seen as clearly set back and subservient to the existing house in this view. The west side of the rear extension will be directly beside the extended pitched garage roof which will block most views to it. It is also at the very back of the plot, furthest away from the road, so almost not visible from The Mount. No one on any street can view the true west elevation.



View towards the back of the house where the rear extension will be located. The rear extension will be predominantly hidden from the streetscape and the surrounding houses on The Mount



View from the side towards the back of the house where the rear extension will be located. It is predominantly hidden from the streetscape and surrounding houses on The Mount

This north elevation of the rear extension will also be predominantly hidden from view for those behind the house (north of the house) by the trees between the house and the modern block of flats behind it.



View to the flats behind the northern elevation of 19 The Mount

The extended first floor dormer is the one area to be extended that is within the existing house, rather than attached to it, and which can be seen from some parts of the road (only at one angle), which is why it is remaining in the same style as the existing dormer. This has also been felt to be appropriate as the existing dormer is remaining and just being extended.

The existing dormer is not tall enough to stand in, which blocks a lot of natural light, sunlight and uses for this south facing space, which is why we are proposing that it is extended (extensive details on this can be found in the Design, Access & Planning Statement). The aim is for the extended dormer to blend in and appear similar to the existing dormer. The windows to be used are existing house windows in the same style as the existing dormer window, the cheeks and details around the windows are to be clad in lead as is traditional for dormer windows. The only change is to not repeat the white plastic material surrounding the dormer window, but to replicate it in white painted timber instead since the plastic is neither historic nor of a high quality finish.

The existing dormer window does not line up vertically with either the front door or the window below it and it is not centred exactly between the two. By extending the dormer widthwise, the two new dormer windows will frame the window below. In relation to Section 6.4.1 of the RBC Design Guide to House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (Fenestration), the existing house does not follow any pattern of the street. It is quite different from the bungalows running the length of the street in front of it, the one off two story house beside it, and the historic buildings of The Mount. The dormer proposal is respectful of the original house form and in keeping with the scale and detailing of the original house, it is balanced in terms of its position in relation to the window below, and it will bring desperately needed natural light and sunlight into habitable rooms on the first floor, which are currently blocked from both.



The modern house directly beside 19 The Mount and one of the historic protected houses beyond it. The fenestration at 19 The Mount does not follow the pattern of any of the surrounding buildings.



The bungalow directly in front of 19 The Mount



19 The Mount does not exactly match the details of the adjacent bungalows or any of the other architectural styles on The Mount





*The modern bungalows which run from 19 The Mount to the end of the street.
19 The Mount does not follow the fenestration pattern of the bungalows, the house beside it
or the historic buildings of The Mount Conservation Area*

Unlike the dormer, the new extensions are to be seen as completely separate from the house, in terms of them reading as new additions, to ensure that the style, typology, form and outline of the existing house remains clear. Having worked in conservation for so long it is very important to me that the form of the existing building is not distorted to look as if it used to be a completely different shape and a different type of building. Often by using matching materials the original shape of a building is completely lost and the aim was to ensure we avoided that. The new extensions are therefore proposed in a contrasting modern material, which is in keeping with conservation theory such as that expounded by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB). I know that this is not a Grade I listed building but keeping the house form and shape clear is still important.

An unpainted vertical timber cladding has been proposed to ensure the much more detailed house materials stand out next to it. The timber siding will also help the extensions blend into the surrounding natural environment - the trees beside the rear extension and the large gardens, trees and shrubs around the house and front extension. Lastly, the siding has been chosen to reflect the time in which the extensions are built, to add another layer of history to the architectural history in The Mount Conservation Area - a current layer.

The new doors and windows are proposed in unpainted timber like the new extensions, to again ensure it is clear that they are part of the new works and not part of the original house, again to protect the original form and design of the original house. The existing doors are mainly white UPVC with faux glazing bars just stuck on and badly so they rattle when the doors are moved. The proportions of the glass to stile/rail ratio is not in any historically correct proportioning. The existing house is not historic like many of the beautiful historic buildings on The Mount so we did not feel it was appropriate to make up historic detailing to go with this house and instead felt they should clearly read as part of the current works.

The existing walls of the house have been retained as much as possible internally and externally, which can be seen in the hatching patterns on the proposed plans. The external walls of the house which will be built into the new space will remain visible as such inside so the original shape, details and outline of the house will remain visible internally as well as externally.

The existing garage of the house is being extended to the rear, in a matching style to its current one, with a pitched roof and roofing tiles matching the current ones (these will be salvaged from the rear roof where they need to be removed). The garage space is being converted to a living space, so it is proposed that the extension siding (unpainted vertical timber cladding) be applied to the walls to denote the change. Two horizontal timber cladding bands have been inserted into the vertical siding on the front façade of the garage, to reflect the double stringcourse that runs around the historic buildings on The Mount at the same height, paying homage to the architectural history of The Mount Conservation Area.



Stringcourse running around the historic buildings on The Mount



The stringcourse on the buildings diagonally across the road from 19 The Mount



The garage of 19 The Mount is seen on the right, the historic stringcourse seen on the historic building to the left will carry on across the new garage cladding, paying homage to it and connected the new work with the surrounding historic architecture

The shape of the garage is remaining unchanged, as there are a number of similar garages around The Mount, in varying style and age. We are keeping the set back where the garage doors are currently, and the four glazed windows, so it is clear that it was originally a garage. We want to keep the typology of the building clear.

One thing that is very important to me is that the character of the surrounding historic buildings are protected and paid homage to, but not surrounded by repeated details of the buildings that happen to be surrounding the protected historic buildings when these might not be of a quality or style that merits repetition, or a style that helps to highlight the historic buildings.

Adding high quality modern architectural detailing, can better highlight the historic buildings and enhance the area. The scale of such details facing the streetscape in this application, in the garage refacing, are extremely small in scale (1 story in comparison to the 3 story historic buildings opposite), they are within an existing historic typology (the single storey garage), they reflect the original detailing of the garage (with the set back doors and 4 small windows) and they are set back from the street. The clients particularly feel that the change of material will enhance the Conservation Area, particularly because this garage, with its current materials which are not of a high quality, are on display and instead want to add a layer of high quality modern architectural detailing.



Some of the existing historic single garages have the stringcourse carried across them as well

The above proposals have been made with reference to The Mount Conservation Area Statement, EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment, EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas, EN4: Locally Important Heritage Assets, EN6: New Development in a Historic Context and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, particularly Sections 67 and 73 to protect the character and appearance of Conservation Areas, as well as listed buildings and their settings. Protecting the character of historic Conservation Areas is a subject extremely close to my heart and I have worked towards this goal for my entire career in architecture.

In summary, the rear and front extension will have almost no visible effect on the streetscape; the extended dormer within the existing house is to remain in keeping with the detailing of the existing house while improving access to natural light and sunlight in the house; the new

extensions are to be built in a clearly differentiated style, clearly of the time they were built, but subsidiary and subordinate to the existing house; the original shape and form of the existing house is to remain clear; and the recladding of the garage façade with higher quality materials is to enhance the Conservation Area and add a current layer of history to the palimpsest of architecture, which is so important in retaining and creating architectural history.

If you wish to discuss the designs at any time or have questions about any of the above details, please do not hesitate to contact me on 07855 953 504 or pamelamillsdesign@gmail.com