

Heritage Statement

Royal Berkshire Hospital

Refurbishment and courtyard infill for the delivery of a replacement modular CT scanners and associated support facilities (Use Class C2).

December 2021

1.0. Introduction

This Heritage Statement is submitted to Reading Borough Council on behalf of the IBI Group and in turn the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust (the Applicant) to seek planning permission for the refurbishment and courtyard infill for the delivery of a replacement modular CT scanners and associated support facilities (Use Class C2).

The application site is located within the heart of the established Royal Berkshire Hospital Site. The application in part simply seeks the reconfiguration of existing floorspace and part the infill of the courtyard (thus creation of new floorspace), sought as a comprehensive scheme as they relate to one another, thus both included.

The purpose is to deliver an exemplar CT scanning facility within the confines of the existing MRI department, whilst seeking to convert the existing courtyard into a patient waiting, treatment, restroom and reception area to serve the refurbished suite.

Thus, the application is simply the next phase in the hospital's evolution to provide continual and enhanced care for patients.

The application is a minor application, the new additional floorspace created is just 64 sq.m

The Statement sets out the framework for the site, appraises the site's location within the context of relevant heritage matters, the proposed development, considers relevant up-to-date

planning policy framework and the heritage context of relevance to the site and summarises the case for the development.

2.0 The Site and Location

The application site is located in the heart of the established and critical local infrastructure. The location of development carefully selected and thus critical to enable a seamless integration of services, ease of staffing provision and the environment that is best able to meet the healthcare needs of the hospital's patients.

It is acknowledged the hospital site benefits from a national listing, this being the main block and flanking wings at London Road and Craven Road listed as Grade II*. In addition at 17 Craven Road is the Grade II listed former headmasters cottage. The actual listings are detailed below.

2.1 Listing Description

Main Block and Flanking Wings at Royal Berkshire Hospital- listed Grade II* 19.03.75

"Main block 1839 by local architect and builder Henry Briant (who won the competition for designing the hospital). As King William IV took such a keen interest in the hospital before it was built, his Arms, not Queen Victoria's appear on the central pediment. Two storeys and basement. Bath stone - very large ashlar blocks used to front. Slate roofs. eleven bays with seven bay central break projecting pedimented hexastyle Ionic portico. Glazing bar sash windows. Corner piers. Channelled basement. Astragal to moulded cornice (dentil cornice to portico) and parapet. Recessed side entrance bays. Wide steps to portico with excellent contemporary lamp tripods with guilloche ornament.

Interior: colonaded stair hall, cast iron balusters to stairs which divide at landing. 1882 chapel with contemporary fittings reached from under landing. (By Joseph Morris who made considerable extensions to the Hospital at that date). The main block has flanking wings added 1865 to designs by Joseph Morris. Three storeys also Bath stone and long side wings forming a large courtyard added 1881-2. The latter are also of Bath stone, have

5x5 end pavilions with three bay pedimented breaks and are linked to side wings by a Greek Doric colonnade (east side) and a 1911 block (west side). In front to street is a dwarf-stone wall with moulded coping and five retraining ashlar gate piers with block modillions to moulded capping.” (Historic England).

No.17 Craven Road, Headmasters Lodge Listed Grade II, 14.12.78

“Headmaster's lodge for Reading School. Built 1840 as Penrhyn Lodge at the junction of King's Road and Queen's Road by Henry Briant. Moved to Craven Road probably 1878, architect Joshua Greenaway. Asymmetrical detached villa. 2 storeys, coursed dressed stone. 3 bays, mullion and transom windows with hoodmoulds. Slate roof with lozenge bands. Corbels to parapet continued up 3 gables to west - the left hand gable breaks forward; the centre gable is small for a badge and a projecting gabled porch with chamfered shafted corners; the right hand gable has parapetted angled bay. Lower 2 storey extension with gabled return to left. South front has oriel on grotesque corbel and has head stops to 1st floor right hand window. Steps to east entrance with carved eagle on top of flight.”

3.0 Planning Policy Overview

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) complements this requirement.

The revised NPPF was updated in 2021 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied, alongside other national planning policies. Policies in relation to the historic environment are considered below.

As a Grade II* listed structure the asset at the hospital is considered of high significance and should be conserved in a manner appropriate. The key consideration here in relation to the planning application is the proximity of development to the heritage asset, and this is a matter

of consideration of the 'setting' to which the heritage asset is enjoyed. It is worthy of note that the application site is some 300m south of the hospital heritage asset and some 150m from 17 Craven Road and there are various established intervening building between the development site and the heritage assets.

The Development Plan

The Council have an adopted Development Plan that is utilised for development management matters (assessment of planning applications).

For the purposes of this application, the Development Plan consists of the Reading Borough Local Plan (adopted November 2019).

The site allocation policy has been considered within the covering letter summary, the site is not within a Conservation Area; albeit it is acknowledged a Conservation Area lies opposite the hospital site boundary at Redlands Road.

The adopted Development Plan key policy is EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment this advocates that historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced, this will include listed buildings and Conservation Areas.

4.0 Heritage Policy Overview

The current policy system identifies, through the NPPF, that applications should consider the potential impact of development on heritage assets. This includes both nationally listed heritage assets, which possess a statutory designation (for example listed buildings, Conservation Areas and registered parks and gardens), as well as undesignated heritage assets (locally listed buildings).

This statement has been prepared along the lines of the guidance set out in the British Standard-Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings and considers the policies set out in the NPPF, in respect of information requirements, paragraph 194 sets out that:

“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant 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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.”

Protecting the historic environment and enhancing heritage assets is an important component of national planning policy and one which too contributes to sustainable development. The appropriate conservation of heritage assets forms a core planning principle that underpin the planning system.

Paragraph 197 states:

“In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.”*

The planning practice note (PPG) advocates that conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets.

In addition, there is relevant guidance on the implementation and interpretation of the historic environment policy which is provided by Historic England publications: Historic Environment Good Practice in Planning Note 1 and Managing Significance in Decision-taking in the Historic Environment and the Setting of Heritage Assets.

5.0 Analysis

A historic asset is not just interpreted as a sole building but accommodates collectively the surroundings in which a heritage asset (designated or undesignated) is experienced, this is its 'setting' as defined by the NPPF. Its extent is not necessarily fixed and may change as built assets and their surroundings evolve. The setting of a heritage asset is not designated, but its importance is offered a degree of protection in planning decisions.

Of importance here is, in essence the site to which development is proposed whilst within the hospital boundary is unlikely to give rise to any harm or impacts on the opposite Conservation Area, given it is set back and within a courtyard of existing buildings.

In line with the aspirations of the Council's heritage policy (EN1), it is not envisaged there will be any impact to the setting of the listed building considered, or harm arising, given the sufficient distance between the site and such asset, the intervening established and built development, many of very modern architectural style and the sitting of the proposed building internally within a courtyard enclosed by other buildings.

6.0 Conclusion

The sections above consider the relevant Development Plan heritage policies, the NPPF policies and Historic England guidance. Overall, it is considered the planning application proposals will not result in any harm to the Conservation Area nor the setting of the identified listed buildings. and allow compliance with the NPPF, PPG aspirations and Development Plan Policy.

It is acknowledged that the extent of the surrounds of a heritage asset are not fixed and may change. The application is considered to comply with the aspirations of the Development Plan and national planning policy, thus in line with paragraph 11 of the NPPF, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies and the Council are encouraged to approve the planning application accordingly.

End.



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