



35 BAKER STREET, READING, RG1 7XX

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

24 FEBRUARY 2022

BACKGROUND

Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning, Design & Access Statement has been produced to support a Householder Planning Application for alterations to 35 Baker Street, Reading, RG1 7XX.
- 1.2 The desktop research included reviewing OS maps, statutory listing, planning policies and the conservation area appraisal. The property has been visited and photographs taken, some of which are included in the text.

Planning History

- 1.3 According to the online register on the Council's website, the only planning application relates to an application for listed building consent registered on 5 January 2021 (Ref 220009). This is for the same works as current application, except for the material of the large replacement window on the front elevation (for Bedroom 3), which is shown as timber rather than uPVC.

Purpose of the Report

- 1.4 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.

Heritage Assets

- 1.5 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.

- 1.6 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.

Planning Policy

- 1.7 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.

- 1.8 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.
- 1.9 Other material considerations include the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2020). An extract from that document is set out in Fig.1 below. No.33-39 sit within the Caste Street/Castle Hill part and are mentioned on page 75 in relation to key views.



Fig.1 Extract from Conservation Area (No.33-39 circled)



Plate 1: View east along Baker Street towards No. 35 (with hedge)

THE PROPERTY

Description

- 1.10 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.



Plate 2: Front Elevation of No 33-37 Baker Street (No 35 has the hedge, window above entrance is to be replaced)

- 1.11 The properties have 16-pane sash windows although the porch annex has a casement window, probably added 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 3 below).



Plate 3: Rear elevation of No.35 with brick built single-storey extension

THE PROPOSALS

- 1.12 The proposals are set out in the accompanying drawings and described below. The aim is to refurbish the property and turn it into an attractive, functional home without harming the special characteristics of the building or the setting of the conservation area.

Use

- 1.13 The application does not seek to change the use of the building which will remain as a house located in a residential area.

Amount and Scale

- 1.14 The application relates to the conversion of a three-bedroom house. There are no changes proposed to the size of the building or the number of rooms.

Layout

- 1.15 The application seeks to alter the layout of the house to make it into a more functional arrangement of rooms.

Landscaping

- 1.16 The application does not propose any changes to the landscape.

Appearance

- 1.17 The proposal comprises the following:
- i) Replace the existing single-glazed casement window in the first-floor front elevation with a new double glazed, timber sash window with Georgian style glazing. This is being done to improve the building's appearance and help with insulation, noise and security. It will also improve the character and appearance of the conservation area in line with planning policy.
 - ii) Replace the two existing single-glazed casement windows (not original) in the basement with new double-glazed white uPVC casement windows. This, again, is to improve security and insulation. Whilst the windows would not be timber, they are only partly visible within the street scene and, given their cost, then the alternative is to leave them as they are which is not ideal.
 - iii) Replace the casement window in the rear elevation of the bathroom within the modern single-storey extension at the rear. This new window would be white uPVC casement window. A timber Georgian style window would be historically accurate, but the difference would not be material in terms of the impact upon the conservation area (or listed building) especially as this is a modern structure which lies at the back of the property, screened from nearby streets. Other buildings nearby also have white uPVC windows. Again, given the cost, the most likely alternative is to replace the glazing only which would not require planning permission.

Access

- 1.18 Access to the property will remain as existing.

CONCLUSION

- 1.19 The proposal is considered to accord with planning policy. The improvements will help secure the long-term future of this Grade II listed building. Replacing some of the more modern windows with new ones will protect the character and appearance of the conservation area whilst the new Georgian style unit in the front elevation will return the building to something close to its original appearance and improves the property's appearance and the conservation area.