

RE-MODELLING OF
BERKELEY AVENUE
READING

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

CONVERSION FROM HOUSE
TO 4 X 2 BEDROOM FLATS



JULY 2021

This statement has been prepared in accordance with the guidance set out for Design Access Statements.

Illustrations, photographs and plans have been produced by the applicant or agent.

1. USE AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 The house and outbuildings were built as a private dwelling in 1865, it was split into 4 properties in 1933 with one quarter becoming 66 Berkeley Avenue. In most recent years the previous owner used as a house, paying council tax on it until it was left empty in 2018. There is a clause within the sale of the property that it cannot be sub-divided into more than 4 self-contained flats.
- 1.2 The applicant proposes to convert the existing building into 4 x 2 Bedroom Flats. The original building provides spacious well-proportioned rooms suitable for conversion into flats. The ground floor flats will have there own 'front' doors with only the upper levels accessed off a shared 'front' door on the side of the property. The provision of 4 additional domestic properties will assist with addressing the shortfall of new housing provision within the LPG.
- 1.3 The site is 44m deep at its' longest point and 19.2m wide at its widest point.
- 1.4 The boundary to the south faces Berkeley Avenue and the front garden is about 900mm higher than the adjacent pavement, retained by a brick wall topped with metal railings. To the west there is Upcross Way which is a private road that provides both the pedestrian and vehicular access to the site. There are 3 -4 parking spaces directly off the private road with a footpath leading around to the front and rear doors. The east boundary abuts No 64 with its private garden space this is secured by a post and wire fence and hedging. The west and north boundaries around the rear garden are secured by a 2m high brick garden walls, the abut the neighbouring domestic properties.



West Elevation and boundary

- 1.5 This will provide 4 new flats each with 2 bedrooms to accommodate 2 or 3 persons.
- 1.6 The existing reception rooms and larger rooms will be used for the proposed reception rooms. The property contains many original features, and it is the intention to maintain these features and carry out sympathetic alterations to improve the thermal efficiency of the building and protect the building for the future.



Fireplace in the current entrance



Feature alcove in reception room

- 1.7 The property can provide sufficient space for adequate onsite parking and still maintain and improve the front and rear gardens. Cycle parking and bin store could also be included to the rear of the property.
- 1.8 The building has been altered in the past and is fitted with fire detection and sanitary appliances installed throughout the building, which allows the building to be safely divided up for the 4 flats.

2. AMOUNT AND SCALE

- 2.1 The current building provides approximately 283 m² of floor space over the 3 floors. The original building was a large 'Villa' style property sat in its own spacious grounds. As previously stated, the building has been split up and the grounds sold off for developing but the remaining building is spacious with high ceilings and large sash windows in many rooms.
- 2.2 There is no intention to enlarge the property only utilise the existing internal spaces and adapt them to provide the required accommodation. The domestic scale of the building will be preserved and enhanced.
- 2.3 The building can be adapted to provide new spaces in accordance with current regulations and guidelines. The areas of the flats comply with or exceed the areas required for domestic guidelines for new build properties. The ground floor would be used to provide 2 flats with the existing large reception rooms providing the living accommodation, one flat would be a duplex apartment with the accommodation split over two floors. The first floor provides a second flat with a second bedroom for the ground floor unit and a fourth flat on the third floor. The flats have been designed so that they provide a similar level of accommodation in each flat. Each flat having built in storage in accordance with LPG guidance.
- 2.4 The existing door and window openings will be preserved with the windows upgraded to improve the thermal and sound efficiency.
- 2.5 The overall scale of the building will maintain its' domestic identity.

3. LAYOUT

- 3.1 The internal arrangement will make use of the existing room layout with the entrance lobby being used as the entrance to one ground floor flat. The side entrance at the bottom of the stairs will be re-opened to provide an entrance to the upper flats and a new entrance would be formed into the existing rear extension so that both ground floor flats have their own entrances. The existing kitchen and shower room will be adapted into the bathroom facilities. The grand large scale rooms will be used for the living accommodation whilst the rear existing extension will be used for the bedrooms for the rear flat.
- 3.2 On the first floor there will be a further 2 bedroom flat using the larger room as the living room. The front bedroom will be linked to the front Sunroom by a stable door. There will be built-in storage for this flat arranged throughout the flat. The room above the main front room would have an internal staircase so that it can become a duplex apartment but also contains a link to the existing staircase to provide an alternative fire escape. The layout makes use of the existing service layout so that plumbing can be linked into the existing pipe runs.
- 3.3 On the second floor there a further 2 bedroom flat again using the largest room with the best views as the living room.
- 3.4 The original sub-division required the addition on a new staircase, this will be retained but it will be improved by the inclusion of a window on the first-floor half landing to give this space additional natural light. This will improve the lighting and provide additional natural ventilation to the area.
- 3.5 The previous owner added a side 'shack' at the bottom of the stairs to create a garden store. This will be removed and a new entrance porch re-instated is a level access into the building.
- 3.6 The previous owner had installed ensuite facilities throughout the property which means that there are sanitary provision distributed throughout the building so that the need for bath / shower rooms in each flat can be easily accommodated.



Existing rear Dining Room

4. LANDSCAPING

- 4.1 The existing gardens are overgrown and not maintained. There are no trees or shrubs in the gardens. The current owner has cut back the vegetation to improve access along the overgrown paths. The proposed development will use the rear garden as parking for occupants and visitors. This will be surfaced in a permeable block surface so that it does not require any additional drainage. The paths will be surfaced in concrete paving slabs laid to drain onto the surrounding areas. The areas around the paving will be planted with shrubs and domestic style planting to provide colour and interest not only for the occupants but for birds and insects.
- 4.2 The existing side access will be improved to provide a level access into the entrance lobby for the upper level flats. The amount of parking provided is in accordance with SPG for Zone 2 with 1 space provided per flat plus a visitor space.
- 4.3 It is intended to improve the landscaping around the building to provide better 'kerb appeal' and upgrade the overall appearance. The rear boundary walls will be repaired, and the front walls and railings will be repaired and maintained.

- 4.4 Cycle parking can be provided off the rear car park for the occupants in a communal cycle parking area with one space per flat.

5. APPEARANCE

- 5.1 The original building was generally symmetrical on the front face and an asymmetrical rear elevation. The unsympathetic chunky framed infill of the balcony interrupts this symmetry and therefore it is intended to remove the heavy timber frame and include a slim aluminium framed double glazed sliding unit behind a re-instated balcony structure to recreate the original symmetry.
- 5.2 The existing windows will be replaced with white upvc vertical sliding sashes with applied face beading to recreate the appearance of the existing units whilst providing a maintenance free thermally efficient installation. The front double doors will be replaced with a double glazed upvc double door with a simpler glazing pattern to improve the thermal efficiency and lighting in the lobby. The existing rear extension will be fitted with new windows replacing the existing doors with upvc windows.



Rear asymmetrical form with vertical sliding sash windows

- 5.3 The flat roofs will be retained but upgraded to provide better thermal efficiency and a longer lifespan.



Existing rear extension.

- 5.4 The building does not overlook any of the neighbouring properties.



Projecting corner bay and panelled ceiling in the rear reception room

6. MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

Vehicular and Transport Links

- 6.1 These premises are accessible to all members of the public, emergency vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.
- 6.2 Currently the area is served by a bus service to Wensley Road and Bath Road a short walk from the site. Wensley Road contains a local Post Office, convenience store and Pharmacy and is a local centre.
- 6.3 There are cycle and footpaths around the surrounding area, with a cycle path along Berkeley Avenue.
- 6.4 The main vehicle entrance is off Upcross Way which is a private road across which the applicant has an easement. There are currently 3 - 4 parking spaces on site but most of these will be lost in the creation of the access to the new onsite parking spaces. The site is close to the town centre. With the on-site parking, it can comply with the parking SPG.
- 6.5 The site is within easy walking distance of Coley Recreation Ground, Nurseries, Primary Schools and churches.

Inclusive Access

- 6.6 The building will comply with Building Control regarding the access to domestic properties.
- 6.7 The building has level access to side entrance and to the rear ground floor flat.
- 6.8 The habitable rooms in the building will be well lit by natural light and the corridors have good artificial lighting for clear orientation.

7. ENVIROMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- 7.1 Re-using an existing building for 4 flats will provide a new use for a substantial building that has been left to deteriorate. The current building has an EPC of G, but it can be upgraded and sympathetically improved to create a property with a thermal efficiency more in accordance with new buildings. The flat roofs can be overlaid with additional insulation. The larger rooms can be dry lined to increase the insulation of the walls. This will be implemented on a room-

by-room basis so that the new insulation will not affect the existing features. The roof and floors can be insulated to improve thermal efficiency and privacy within the building. The double glazing and draught stripping of the building will improve the thermal efficiency.

- 7.2 Wherever possible the habitable rooms will be naturally lit and ventilated.
- 7.3 The heating will be provided by an A rated gas boiler with radiators throughout the property. Hot water will be provided by a combi boiler in each unit.
- 7.4 The property will be upgraded with double glazing, draught stripped to control air infiltration. The wet areas will be mechanically ventilated to control air movement and reduce condensation.
- 7.5 The waste collection areas will be to the local authority domestic waste collection services with waste separated into recyclable and non-recyclable in accordance with local requirements.
- 7.6 The use of a factory built off site components will reduce construction waste and most of the building materials brought on site will be of a dry measurable state e.g., studwork, insulation, plasterboard, etc and therefore waste can be kept to a minimum.
- 7.7 The permeable surfaces will ensure that rainwater is discharged within the site and not drained onto adjacent surfaces or added to the surface water drainage in the area. The building is not enlarged so there is no increase in the roof area.



Existing rear garden

8. ECOLOGY

- 8.1 The conversion will improve the maintenance of the gardens creating the opportunity to create a more varied environment for birds and insects in the area.
- 8.2 The existing roof coverings and structures will not be affected by the development, any thermal improvement carried out on the inside.
- 8.3 New external lighting will provide downward illumination of the paths and car park.

9. COMMUNITY SAFETY AND NOTIFICATION

- 9.1 The proposed redevelopment will prevent the further deterioration of the building and its' possible use by squatters. The proposed use will provide a secure property that will have a minimal impact on the neighbouring domestic properties.
- 9.2 The new use will monitor the surrounding area providing improved surveillance in the area.



Front Second floor room