

HERITAGE STATEMENT rev. 00

Heritage Asset and its Setting:

Project Address: 2-4 Alexandra Road, Reading RG1 5PE

Conservation Area: The car park only is in the Alexandra Road Conservation Area.

Listing Status: N/A List entry no. N/A

Building Use: Day Centre for children with learning difficulties and autism.

Project Overview:

Change of use from Day Centre for adults with learning disabilities and autism to a children's care home.
Erection of single storey side extension and removal of 4no. roof lights at 4 Alexandra Road and erection of 2no. dormer windows. Associated landscaping works.



Photo 1 – Front Elevation

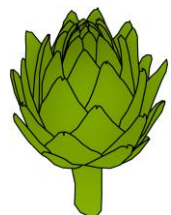




Photo 2, Photo of front elevation



Photo 3 Side elevation addressing car park.

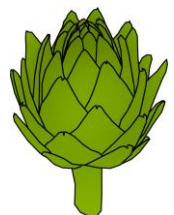




Photo 4 Photo of rear elevation



Photo 5 Rear wall to be removed

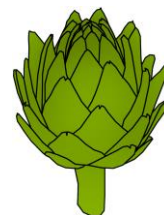
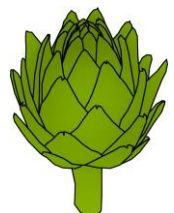




Photo 6 Rear outbuilding being retained

In order to achieve the works, the following alterations/ interventions will be required:

- New front/ side extension retaining the existing expressed arch to provide a store and disabled bathroom.
- New landscaping to the front of the property including new bin and bike stores.
- Rear ground floor doors infilled and replaced with a window.
- New rear ramp structure from the activity room to the rear garden. Widen doorway to provide wheelchair access.
- Demolish existing garden wall between the car park and rear garden. New wall in adjusted position to give additional amenity space to the property and to give privacy to residents. Retain existing brick store.
- Infill side window of property no. 4 at first floor level.
- New side dormers at second floor level of No.4.
- Internal alterations to accommodate new purpose – not commented upon within this report as the building is not Listed.



Setting Overview:

The building is located on the western end of Alexandra Road close to the London Road junction. Alexandra Road first shows as being built on in the 1899 OS mapping and the plot in question was the rear garden for the houses along Denmark Road at this point in time. The property without the RHS rear extension first appears on the 1931 OS mapping with the rear extension showing by 1957. The styling of the property reflects the age shown on the OS mapping.

The building is semi-detached, previously separately owned and now used as a single purpose. There is car parking to the rear and a small and poorly used garden space. The building is of an interesting 1920s/1930s character with a 1950s update with a plain clay tile roof and red brick walls. There are feature first floor bay windows to the front of the property with interesting clay tile panels to their front. It would appear that the windows were replaced with a brown framed timber window when the building was extended and altered in the 1950s. It was likely that the white metal windows were replaced then.

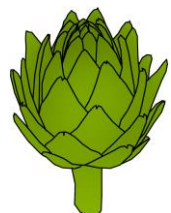
The planning history indicated that the building was originally used as offices and no2 was converted into a daycare centre in 2009. No.4 was later converted into 1 bedroom flats in 2011 for respite accommodation. The property is currently used as a daycare centre for adults with learning difficulties.

The building is of an interesting character but has not been well maintained and the property is not contributing to the Conservation Area adjacent in a positive manner. The building is of a unique character for the road and clearly an infill property as are many of them at that end of the road, there as a result of the larger houses selling off rear garden land over time. The majority of the buildings along the road are Victorian and residential in character.

The area is not part of an area of Reading highlighted for archaeological potential.



Map taken from Historic England Listing Database. Property shown with a red dot.



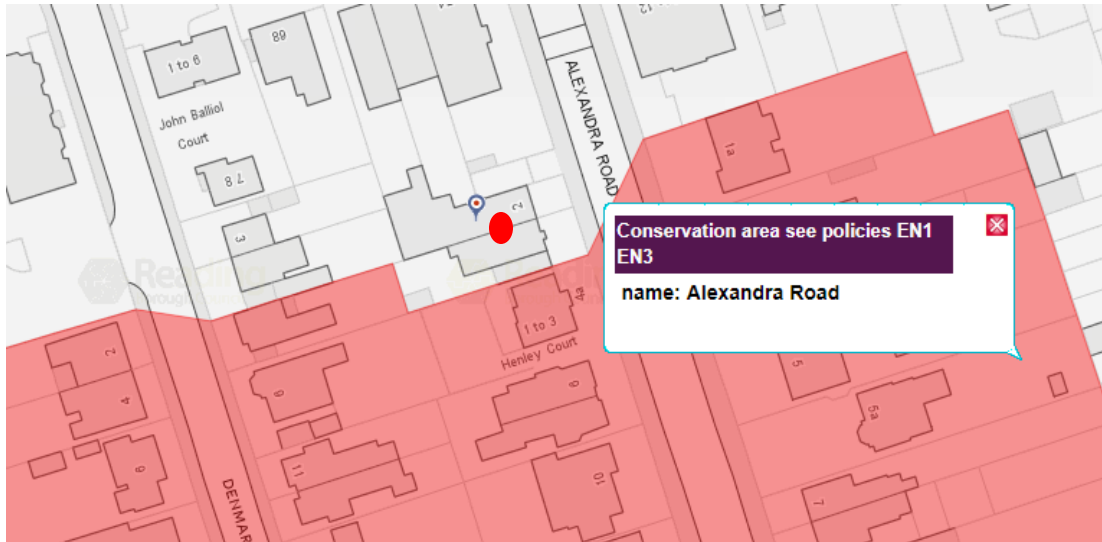
Impacted Heritage Assets:

The building car park sits within the Alexandra Road Conservation Area (see below).

The building is not Listed.

The building is not within the context of a Listed Building.

The building is not within an area of highlighted below ground archaeology.



Extract from Local plan showing line of Conservation Area. Site shown with red dot.

Assessment of Significance:

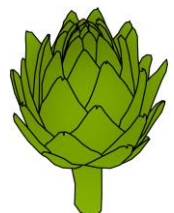
Heritage has cultural, social, economic and environmental values. The attributes that combine to define the significance of a historic building can relate to its physical properties or to its context. – BS 7913:2013..

The building is of an interesting 1930s architectural character with a 1950s facelift using a palette of materials and construction methods common for that era. The building is not reflective of that typical for the road and is an infill development. The building however is in need of care and attention and is not positively contributing to the local area.

The building use has changed from its initial use as an office. It appears to have never been used as general housing.

At the rear of the property, as is common with properties of this nature, the changes to the properties vary hugely with an array of extensions and alterations as needs change. The car park to the rear of the property is the part of the site that sits within the conservation area but it contributes little in terms of aesthetics to the local area and is not visible from the streetscape.

The building has no significant connection with historical, scientific or artistic events or significant persons. The building is not within an area of highlighted below ground archaeology.



Development Impact on the Historical Asset:

Building Elevations and Setting: There is minimal proposed change to the front elevation visible from the street. The side extension will be visible in part however is significantly set back from the streetscene behind the existing brick arch so is of minimal impact. The proposed front landscaping I feel will visually enhance the property generating much needed investment. The proposals have no impact upon the scale and massing of the surrounding townscape. The proposed side dormers will be visually set back and will not add to the massing of the property in a negative manner.

To the rear the property is in a poor condition and doing little to contribute to the appearance of the Conservation Area.

The proposed side extension utilises the existing material palette of the existing property and enhances both the usability of the property and the aesthetics whilst respecting its scale and massing. The garden areas are minimal in size and the new extensions respond to this by respecting the existing building lines. The garden area to the rear is being enlarged which will visually enhance the area. The wall to be removed is of a poor quality and does not involve the loss of historic fabric.

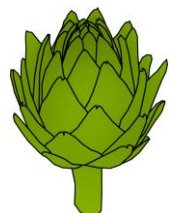
Internally: The building is not Listed either nationally or locally and therefore the internal arrangements have not been reviewed as part of this statement. The proposals however intend to provide the best economic use of the property without harming the value of place.

Scale and Massing: there is no impact upon the scale and massing of existing architecture. The proposals impact on the secluded rear and side elevation only.

Archeaology: There is no noted below ground archaeology within this part of the Conservation Area.

Use: The building has already changed use from its original purpose. The new use in our opinion will have no impact upon the building. The original purpose of the building appears to be an office rather than residential so there is no loss of housing along Alexandra Road.

Overall the impact of the development is minor in nature and in our view there is no harm to the material value of the place.



Relevant Policy:

The Government has set out its planning policies for the historic environment in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This was published in March 2012 and replaced in 2018 and 2019. It replaced Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment. The PPS5 Practice Guide remains valid for use alongside the NPPF.

In determining applications, the NPPF explains at paragraph 189 that local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.

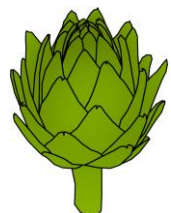
Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

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.

Historic England 'Conservation Principles' deem new work or alteration to be normally acceptable where the proposals do not materially harm the value of the place. They consider the setting of the heritage asset to contribute greatly to its significance. They accept that a heritage setting changes over time.

The local authority guidance also includes policies which seek to ensure the protection of the historic environment and that development is of a high quality and seeks to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Heritage Asset. Changes to the setting of historic buildings / Conservation Areas are to be sympathetic in terms of siting, proportion, scale, form, height, materials and detailing.



Conclusion:

The proposed works are minor, located at the side and rear of the property away from public view, and do not result in material harm to the building or the adjacent Conservation Area. They have no impact upon the scale and massing of the townscape. There is no impact upon the streetscape.

The proposals are respectful in relation to the material palette used and the location of proposed extensions. They seek to visually enhance the landscaping around the property which is currently in a poor condition.

The internal alterations maximise the use of space, securing their viable use whilst respecting the existing building lines. There is no loss of historic features.

The proposals are traditional in nature and reflective of those previously approved within the adjacent Conservation Area.

The proposals act in accordance with the requirements of the local authority as well in accordance with Historic England development guidelines and policies.

