

HIVES ARCHITECTS

SINCE 1934

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2783 007 P5

Heritage Statement

3 Christchurch Road
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To be Read in Conjunction with:

2783 001 P4 Existing Plans and Elevations
2783 002 P4 Proposed Plans and Elevations
2783 003 P4 Design Rationale
2783 004 P4 Daylight and Sunlight Study
2783 005 P4 Proposed Interior Adjustments
2783 006 P5 Design and Access Statement

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Context

1.0 Physical Context

- 1.1 Christchurch Road (A327) is a two-way street that connects Whitney Street in the west and Shinfield Road in the east. The road is fairly level, and runs along a ridge - the centre of Reading is to the north, and the suburb of Whitley to the south.
- 1.2 The church which gives the road its name is to the east and shops, cafes and the Hindu temple are to the west, within easy walking distance.



Figure 1 - Street view of No.3 along Christchurch Road (painted in mid-lead)

- 1.3 No. 3 is the end property in a short terrace of town houses. No. 3-9 Christchurch Road are taller than their neighbours and share a roofline – the terrace continues with two storey houses. To the west, detached from the terrace, there is a medical clinic.

2.0 Historic Context

- 2.1 The earliest available Ordnance Survey maps already show the whole terrace almost as it is today:



Figure 2 - Map of Reading c.1890 showing 3 Christchurch Road (highlighted).

- 2.2 The area to the west had recently been developed with small terraced houses. By the time the handsome semi-detached houses on the other side of Christchurch Road were built, the area had clearly become more upmarket, as the builders of Whitley Crescent had hoped. Whitley Hall Methodist Church (the present Hindu temple) had been built and the area is accessible by tram:



Figure 3 - Map of Reading .c1970 showing 3 Christchurch Road (highlighted).



Figure 4 – The change in building morphology in historic maps over time. Left (c.1890); right (c.1970).
Surviving wall, dating back to at least 1890 is highlighted in red.

- 2.3 Despite the lack of change to the terrace overall, the backs of the houses, including No. 3, change noticeably over this period. The original outhouse (housing the water or earth closet) seems to have been on the east side of the building. The existing back wall still exists.
- 2.4 The outhouse for No. 5 was arranged sideways at the end of the garden on the early maps, explaining why the garden for No. 3 is shorter than its neighbour's. This fact suggests that the plot for No. 5 was sold before the plot of No. 3, which makes sense - see the statement of significance below.
- 2.5 The present rear extension, on the west side, seems to date from some time between 1910 and 1950, probably coinciding with the construction of an internal WC on the half-landing. A narrower extension remained on the east side (where the original outhouse had been) until fairly recently, probably used for storing coal.
- 2.6 We believe Figure 7 is (on the balance of probabilities) the footprint of the house in 1948.
- 2.7 The proposed work will extend no further than the surviving wall from the historic extension.

3.0 Planning Context

- 3.1 The Property is listed as follows:
Name: 3-9 CHRISTCHURCH ROAD
List entry Number: 1154854
Grade: II
Date first listed: 14-Dec-1978
Details
 - 1. Christchurch Road 5128 (North Side) Nos 3 to 9 (odd) SU 7272 9/432 II GIV.
 - 2. Before 1840. Built as part of Whitley Crescent. Altered. Stucco 3 storey and basement terrace, Nos 7 and 9 with band over ground floor. 1 range of glazing bar sashes each originally. Now altered, No 5 and No 3. Segmented headed doorways with recessed doors. Slate roofs with brick chimneys, No 3 hipped to left. Included for group value.
 - 3. The building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural and historic interest.
- 3.2 We can find no applications relating to re-roofing or works to the rear extensions on the file but this is explicable by the fact that prior to 1978 this would have been covered by permitted development rights.
- 3.3 A recent application relating to the house was made last year however to cover the repainting of the stucco to a mid-lead colour.

Planning Ref	Description	Decision Date	Decision
191400	Paint the concrete render at the front and back of the house with heritage colour in keeping with the period of the property.	22 October 2019	Application Permitted



Figure 5 - Repainted stucco on the front and rear facade

- 3.4 The Christchurch Conservation Area was designated in November 1987. Numbers 3-33 Christchurch Road are designated in Area 2, and is described as follows: "This is an impressive terrace of three different types. It is of an earlier date (pre 1840) than Area 1 (*see section 1.3*). A great deal of its original character remains with only a few recent, unsympathetic alterations. The general character of this part of the area is of plain red brickwork (*although* the eastern end of the terrace is stuccoed). Low pitched slate roofs; panelled doors with arched fanlights; glazing bar sash windows (9 and 12 panes) all give character to this property. Most obvious however, is the link frontage brick walls and/or low brick walls with railings above.

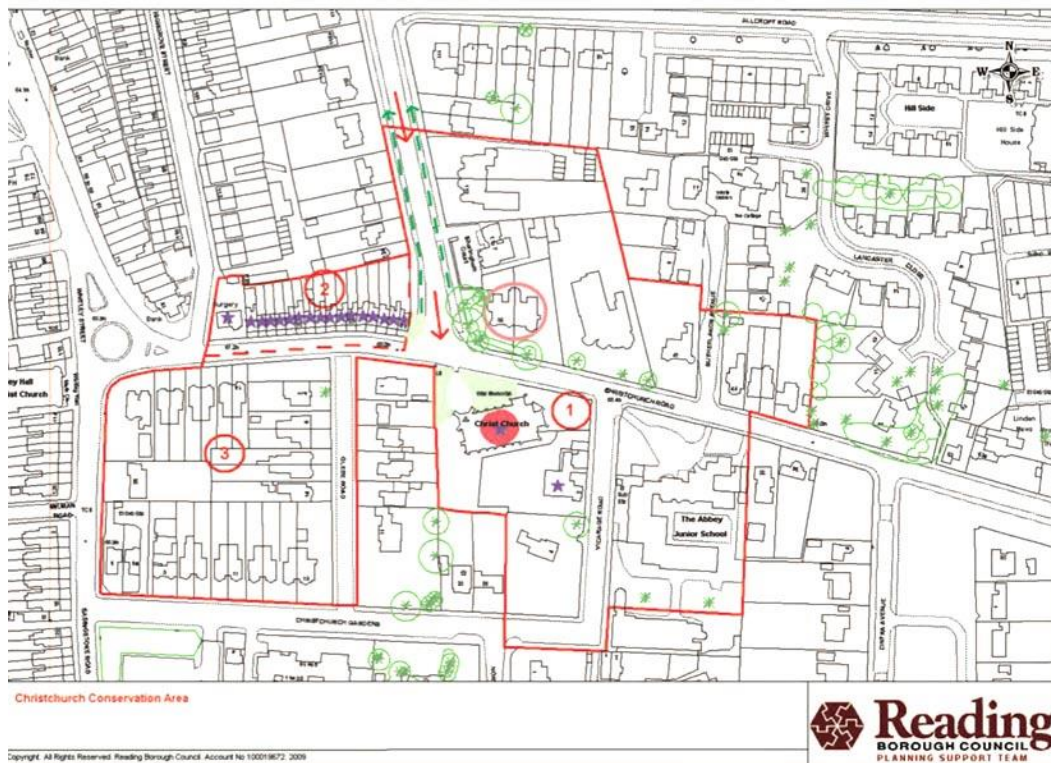


Figure 6 - Map of the Christchurch conservation area

4.0 Statement of Significance

4.1 The listing covers the four taller houses in the terrace which were built as part of 'Whitley Terrace' before 1840. They have significance as a built record, attempting to bring the regency elegance of Whitley to Reading. Comparatively, Cheltenham also had a building boom at this time; plots were sold to builders with an architectural pattern which street facades would adhere to, to give the district a grandeur and civic presence, greater than the sum of its parts. If that was the intention here, only numbers 5, 7, 9, 27, 29, 31 and 33 (at the other end of the terrace) were built to the pattern book. Despite this, they give a good idea of what the whole crescent would have looked like.

4.2 The terrace houses from number 11 to No. 25 seem to be built on the same size land parcels as numbers 5-9 and 27-33 but are only two storeys in height. Number.3 sheds many more similarities with numbers 5-9 than its other neighbours and was probably built at almost the same time. Significantly, number 3 was intentionally different to numbers 5-9, rejecting the three storey and basement pattern for a straightforward three storey design. Moreover, the ground floor of the pattern book houses are five steps up from the pavement, whereas No. 3 is more or less at street level and has no basement. As the listing states, No. 3 is included "for group value" although many of the descriptions in the listing do not apply to No.3.

No. 3 does not share the same roof as No. 5 to No. 9. It has an upstanding party wall between adjoining its roof with a slightly lower pitch, hipped, and covered in modern artificial slates. As previously mentioned, No. 3 does not have a basement and its floors are at different levels, which affects the windowsill heights. On the front façade, No.3 has a three-sash window at first floor and two windows at second floor unlike its neighbours. Despite this, it's design tentatively considers the neighbours. This is evident with the gutter spanning across all four terraces. Other details like the arch detailing and stucco façade are also replicated. This should be carefully preserved, without forcing a uniformity on No.3 that it never had.

4.4 Unlike the front façades, the backs of the houses are all different. No.3 has a garden at a higher level is also shorter than its neighbours. The side walls of the garden are original and should be preserved.

4.5 The existing rear extension to No.3 is not original – map regression detailed above suggests it dates from between 1910 and 1950. This includes the original garden walls, built in brick in garden wall bond.

Heritage Impact Assessment

5.0 Use

- 5.1 No.3 was built as a family house for the nineteenth century. The changes proposed are designed to secure this use in the twenty-first century.
- 5.2 A modern home revolves around the kitchen, whereas the kitchen at that time was the domain of servants, tucked away at the back of the house near the outside toilet. The existing kitchen has been extended into an extension at the back, leaving the other back room without a window. Although there is glazing in the back door, it is not a well-lit space. Between them, these two spaces make up a fair amount of floor area, but it is awkward, fragmented and closed off from the rest of the house.
- 5.3 The continuity of use will be secured by the changes proposed.

6.0 Setting

- 6.1 Both the listing and the *Conservation Area Assessment* are concerned entirely with the front of the building. No change to this is proposed.
- 6.2 There are no changes to the front of the house under this application. The public face of the building and its relationship with its neighbours will be unaltered.
- 6.3 The twentieth century extension at the rear of the building will be demolished, except for the garden wall adjoining the clinic. The garden wall on the other side (beside No. 5) which was originally the back wall of an earlier extension, which will be retained.
- 6.4 A new extension will replace the existing extensions. It is less than 18 square metres in total, completely subservient to the house. It will be minimally visible from outside the site due to its shallow pitched roof and it being hidden by the existing garden walls.
- 6.5 There is a tree at the back of the garden, but no works to it are needed; it will stay as it is.



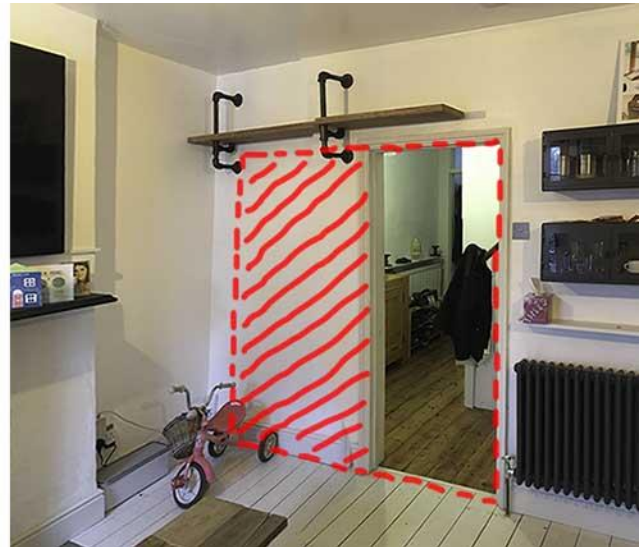
- 6.6 The extension has been carefully designed to have minimal impact on No. 5. This is not simply a question of avoiding loss of daylight, but also of avoiding any overbearing impression. The application shows the view from the rear of No. 5 and demonstrates that the proposed extension would be hidden behind the existing garden wall.

7.0 Changes

- 7.1 The existing opening in the back wall between the two parts of the kitchen was made between 1910 and 1950. The back-door opening is likely original, but the back door is not original. These openings will be combined into a single opening with the brickwork carefully supported by a new steel lintel which will be concealed within the extension and not visible externally.



- 7.2 The opening between the kitchen and the hall will also be widened, without affecting the stairs. A structural engineer with heritage experience will advise on how to support the internal wall. This part of the house has no cornices or panelling, the work will purely affect the brick partition and the skirting will be returned around the corner.



- 7.3 Drainage for the kitchen is already in place and would be adapted. Ventilation extract would be through new walls, no new penetrations in old walls are required.
- 7.4 The original rainwater downpipes at the back are routed around the twentieth century extension. They will be tidied and this and the small amount of rainwater from the new roof would go to a new local soakaway in the garden.
- 7.5 The structure of the new extension would be entirely independent and separate from the existing to avoid adding structural load.

Justification

8.0 Positive changes

- 6.1 The existing extension is a brick structure of no merit. It is neither one thing or the other – neither useful for its intended purpose as a kitchen extension or sympathetic in design to the listed building. It will be replaced by a more attractive structure which matches the stucco finish of the house.
- 6.2 Ventilation from the kitchen will be dealt with more effectively which will help keep humidity down in the whole house, preventing dampness in the historic fabric.
- 6.3 Rainwater disposal at the rear has been altered - it is unsightly at the moment and detracts from the appearance of the back of the house. This can be tidied up to improve the setting of the first-floor window.
- 6.4 The new extension will bring light into the ground floor and make the house far more suitable for a growing family.

9.0 Alterations

- 6.1 There are no changes to the front of the house under this application. The public face of the building and its relationship with its neighbours will be unaltered.
- 6.2 The rear of the building does not relate to its neighbours at all and has already been altered significantly in the twentieth century. It is not visible from the public realm.
- 6.3 In keeping with the properties rendered exterior that was restored in 2018, the proposed extension will also be rendered.
- 6.4 The removal of a wall between the lounge and stairs is proposed to improve internal circulation. Suitable changes will be made to support the stairs beside the wall.
- 6.5 Changes to the house are designed to make it suitable for a growing family.
- 6.6 Removal of the existing kitchen will improve circulation and give the new kitchen more natural light throughout the day.



Figure 7 - Subtle drainage alterations



Figure 8 - Proposed widening of the ingress leading to the hall

- 9.2 Minor interior alterations in the existing ground floor to remove obsolete kitchen appliances and fixed furnishings.

10.0 Mitigation

- 10.1 The structural alterations to the historic fabric of the building will be carefully designed by an engineer who is an expert in old buildings.
- 10.2 The new openings have been designed to avoid damage to any historic cornices. Where skirting boards and door linings are altered, the existing timber will be carefully repaired and extended using matching timber profiles.
- 10.3 The kitchen door and window which will be removed are modern, and no historic window will be affected. The door between the kitchen and hall will be re-used elsewhere in the house.
- 10.4 The proposed extension will sit behind the existing boundary walls which will remain.
- 10.3 The pitched roofs are set below the boundary walls to minimise impact on neighbouring properties.