

Heritage Supporting Statement - 35 London Road, Reading

Heritage Statement prepared by Fuller Long (Heritage) Ltd to Support Listed Building Consent

Report October, 2019

Fuller Long

Introduction

This document is intended to outline proposed changes to the Grade II Listed 35 London Road, Reading. The report will assess the significance of the property in order to help explain and understand the heritage constraints and opportunities for the refurbishment and productive future use of this important building within the town.

The report will also undertake an assessment of the current condition of the building in order to explain how decisions regarding proposed changes have been arrived at. It is hoped that this report will enable the Local Planning Authority to further understand the building to enable its future, sustainable use.

Methodology

The methodology used in this assessment exercise has been based on the references to significance in the National Planning Policy Framework (as revised 2019), as informed by two non-statutory Historic England documents namely; Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment (2015) and Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (2016).

The exercise was carried out by Andrew Graham BA(hons) MAued IHBC. Andrew is a full member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) a CABI Built Environment Expert and a member of the Cathedral's Fabric Advisory Board for York Minster and Ripon Cathedral. He is a qualified and well practised ex local authority Urban Designer and Heritage Officer and is an IHBC HESPR Recognised Practitioner for the Historic Environment.

In order to fully appreciate the property an extensive site visit was undertaken where the interior of the building was inspected and photographed with the applicants present to advise and discuss. Archive research and map regression were undertaken in order to gain a greater understanding of the significance of the listed building and its location within the Reading Kendrick Road Conservation Area.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Number 35 London Road is a Grade II Listed Building. As such the building is considered to be of National Importance. The official list description considers the building to be related to the adjoining property, number 33 and as such the list description is as follows:

LONDON ROAD 1. 5128 (North Side) Nos 33 and 35 SU 7172 NE 4/154 II GV 2.

Late C18/early C19. Brick with painted brick block cornice at eaves. Old tile hipped roof. Central chimney stack. No 33 retains 1st floor cill band. Each house: on 2nd floor 2 casements; 2 glazing bar sash windows on 1st floor; on ground floor 1 window (4 pane sash) in plastered arched recess. Recessed 6 panel door with arched radiating fanlight over. C19 spearhead railing in front.

Listing NGR: SU7198172943

The property is located along London Road and is typical of the Georgian expansion of such market towns like Reading within the 18th and early 19th centuries. London Road itself is identified by the Council's Conservation Area Appraisal as first appearing on the 1761 map of the town by John Rocque but the road is in fact clearly shown on Speed's Map of the town in 1611. Rocque's map shows ribbon development fronting London Road and Speed's map, although not extending as far east as this site, also shows several gable buildings filling in the street frontage.

The building therefore represents the Georgian town expansion and would once have sported a small front garden. Reference is made of railings in the Conservation Area Appraisal but these are no longer present and do not appear to have been located in the property from at least 2012.



SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BUILDING

The two properties exhibit typical characteristics of modest Georgian town houses that may well have been constructed speculatively on the edge of the growing town. The buildings are of Flemish bond red brickwork with typically well proportioned windows. To the ground floor the houses sport a generous arched window with the glazed fenestration being located centrally within a recess. It would appear that the first floor windows of number 35 have been lowered and the result encroached into the arch lintel of the lower window following the removal of the stone string course. (The string course survives on number 33 and so a comparison can be made).

Internally the building is of modest and simplistic decoration. Although cornices, skirtings, fireplaces and the original stair survive, all lack any elaborate or decorative detail that one would expect from a higher status Georgian building. The result is a refined interior of simple, almost minimal detail. The proportions of the rooms are also modest and as such the generosity of space that would be usual in such a town house is absent.

To the rear significant modifications have obviously been undertaken in the late 19th century. This includes the rear outshots that although using similar Flemish Bond brickwork, are obviously later and lack even the modest decoration of the main house. It is unclear whether the original building contained any contemporary outshot building but there is no evidence of this surviving.

The rear two storey element appears also to be contemporary with the building but does not contain the brick dentilled eaves that characterise the rear of number 33. Equally the abutment of the roof is also somewhat at odds with what would be generally expected. In light of this it is possible that even the two storey rear outshot is slightly later than the original building. Indeed, it may be that the original building was one house when built, but this seems unlikely due to the symmetry of the frontage.

The phase plan opposite shows the likely chronology of the building fabric.

RECENT HISTORY

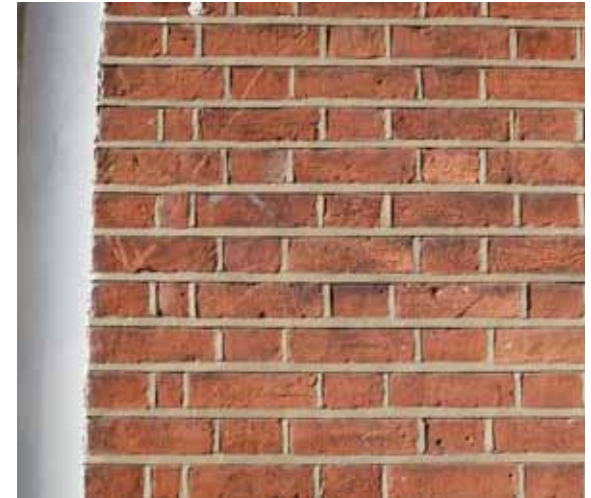
The property has undergone some unsympathetic changes in recent years. Evidence of this is provided by the Enforcement case raised against the previous owners of the building in 2010 following the removal of existing windows and the installation of UPVC windows to the front. Following this action no further applications were submitted and as such UPVC still exists to the rear, less significant elevation. As such these changes constitute approved modifications to the Listed Building.

Other unfortunate changes were undertaken by the previous owners, most of which this application wishes to rectify or at least substantially improve upon. This includes the boxing in of the staircase balustrade, removal of fireplaces and cement pointing to some walls.

The building has also suffered water ingress to the rear outshot extension that has caused damp issues to this rear wall.

The property has recently been purchased by the current owner from Auction. The building has failed to sell and has been unoccupied for at least the last two years resulting in water ingress and lack of maintenance that is causing issues within the building that need addressing. The new owners intend to substantially improve and invest in the property from the outset of obtaining the necessary consents and this will be to the benefit of the building.

Images of the property: Above left: Existing staircase - not the ornate grand stair one would associated with such a period, but a nicely turned baluster with iron spindles. Above centre: Primary front room fireplace. Above Right: The Victorian rear outshot of the building complete with Victorian chimney. Lower Left: Near contemporary rear two storey protrusion. It is unclear whether this element of the building is original or not as the join with the existing building is rather contrived. Below Centre: Original dentilled eaves detail. Below Right: Flemish Bond brickwork. Previous owners appear to have re-pointed in cement. This does not appear to be causing issues to the building but further monitoring is suggested.



HERITAGE JUSTIFICATION

The property is a Grade II Listed building and as such is of National importance as a building of high architectural and historic interest. Unfortunately the previous custodians of the building have undertaken some major work that has undermined this architectural and historic quality through the removal of historic fabric and the lack of maintenance of features. This has included the boxing in of the main Georgian stair case, removal of fireplaces and the use of plastic UPVC windows and cement pointing. Fortunately most of these changes are not impacting upon the condition of the building.

However, there is a strong need for the building to find a new, more appropriate use. The property was recently sold at auction and this illustrates the 'at risk' condition of the building to find an appropriate and suitable owner. Indeed the property has reputedly been left empty for the last year and despite marketing, the property has failed to sell until it went to auction.

POLICY CONTEXT

The National Planning Policy Framework (as revised February 2019) highlights the importance of the historic environment and its contribution to sustainable development. The NPPF assesses the impact of development upon the historic environment through its insistence that any 'harm' is identified. Harm can occur through the physical alteration to the structure, features or setting of a heritage assets and is generally measured as being 'Substantial Harm' or 'Less than Substantial Harm'. Substantial Harm is a high test and is not applicable to this application. However, by the very nature of introducing modern facilities into an historic building there will always be some harm that needs to be weighted against the 'Public Benefits' of the proposal.

Paragraph 196 of the NPPF is particularly relevant and outlines the policy position upon which this application should be assessed:

"196. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm

should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use."

This proposal does **NOT** seek to cause harm to the historic fabric and the impact of development will be absolutely modest.

However the criteria in paragraph 195 of the NPPF upon which substantial harm can be justified can be applied to help illustrate the need for viable development to occur to this site;

"a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and

b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and

c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and

d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use."

In summary, this building is in need of a new use. However until recently nobody has been able to demonstrate how a viable proposal can be implemented here. Therefore the assessment with regards enabling type development could be looked upon in relation to what is currently a potentially Listed Building at Risk.

We believe that the proposals contained within this statement illustrate an appropriate solution to this building that is in need of some serious care. However, in light of the requirement in policy 196 the public benefits can be outlined further in this document.

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSALS

IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

This report has outlined and described the significance, architectural interest and the impact of proposals in order to secure a new viable use for this listed building.

There are many benefits and improvements proposed. Not only will this involve the tidying and redecoration of the building, but it will also re-reveal historic features of some importance such as the original Georgian staircase. This staircase has since been boxed in and as such cannot be fully appreciated as the decorative piece it is.

Added to this the removal of later insensitive additions such as extra balustrades, poor quality doors and the re opening of the cellar as a usable space, and the benefits begin to increase.

The result will be a development that restores and allows this building to once again function as a well maintained house for professional users. Although there are impacts, these are minimal and are outweighed by the great benefits of the proposal as a whole. To summarise, the main impacts mainly include the following:

En Suite Bathrooms

Some impact will occur through the necessary insertion of en suite bathroom elements within the primary rooms of the building. Through dividing such rooms with walling and through the introduction of plumbing and associated structures, there is typically an impact and disruption to features within rooms. Often in such projects, plumbing runs also cause harm to other rooms as service runs interfere with architectural details - but in this case any such impact has been avoided.

In this proposal much effort has been gone to in order to minimise any

such effect. This includes treating the en suite units as 'pods' within the building. These structures, although conventional stud partitions, will meet the following criteria;

- a) They will be set down (where cornices are present) from the ceilings of rooms from picture rail level so as to avoid harm to ceiling features and cornices.
- b) Walls will be scribed around skirtings to allow future removal and restoration.
- c) Existing features such as room cupboards and niche features will be retained and included within the en suite rooms.

Furthermore, due to the original design of the property service runs will utilise the existing central void through the house. As such there will be no impact from service runs to any architectural features within the primary rooms. Existing service runs will also be used where possible and practicable and as such no existing floors or walls will need to be affected for new plumbing or service runs.

Kitchen Chimney Breast

The rear kitchen area is to be used as a shared living space for the majority of residents. This will allow occupants to have direct access to the rear garden and allow any noise and disturbance to be largely self contained to the rear.

Such use of the space will be severely hampered by the presence of the existing double sided chimney that sits at the centre of the room. It is therefore proposed that only minor impact will occur through the removal of this chimney breast.

It is important to note that this rear range is not part of the original building. It is late Victorian and as such its significance in relation to the mid Georgian main house is significantly lessened.

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Raising of Ceiling

The final area of impact of the proposal will be the raising of the ceiling to the second floor front rooms. The ceiling at present is typical of lower status Georgian residential architecture where lower ceilings and lack of decoration (or very simplistic decoration) are defining features. The existing ceiling appears to have been unoriginal due to it being modern plaster and as such its significance as an element of building fabric is limited. It is also interesting to note that rooms to the rear of the building do not have such low ceilings.

The proposal however to remove this ceiling will result in some minor impact but this will be largely outweighed by the benefits of creating larger, more comfortable habitable rooms to this top floor along with the reopening of the spatial qualities of rooms through the removal of modern stud partition walling.

MAIN BENEFITS

The Main benefits include the full and sensitive restoration of the property where decoration is enhanced and original features are retained and repaired.

The other benefits include the ability of this proposal to create high quality accommodation using the features of the building to the building's benefit. For instance, the rear Victorian kitchen will create a large, better proportioned space for residents and will give direct access to the garden area. Upstairs rooms with high ceilings will be used to create large, well proportioned flats that negate the need for other, less sensitive partitions and walling.

The overall benefits of the scheme are great and as such any minor harm to specific areas is absolutely minimised with the overall impact being Minor/Positive.

OVERALL IMPACT

The overall impact of the proposals will be overwhelmingly positive as the building will be brought back into productive use with only modest changes to the fabric that avoid any significant impact.

The Table opposite outlines the impact of proposals upon the fabric of the building.

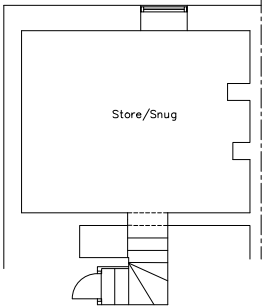
ASSESSMENT

Room	Description/Significance	Features and Issues	Main Changes	Impact (Major Positive, Positive, Neutral, Minor Harm, Moderate Harm, Serious Harm)
HALLWAY Ground Floor	The hallway is the gateway into the Listed building and cumulative change including the introduction of fuse boxes and fire doors have had a major impact. Significance: Medium	⌞ Fanlight window over door ⌞ Architrave to doors ⌞ Original Staircase with curved Balustrade and iron spindles. ⌞ Cornice around ceiling. ⌞ Picture rail and dado rail likely late Victorian/late 20th century.	⌞ New front door of Georgian style. ⌞ Clean, decorate, repair where necessary, new carpets. ⌞ Relocate consumer unit and modern paraphernalia and simplify, reduce emergency signage where possible and allowable. ⌞ Remove existing Victorian toilet/privy and make good for inclusion in rear living room. ⌞ Restore, clean staircase, remove extra unnecessary balustrade fixed to wall and re create Georgian staircase feature.	The proposal will seek to retain the features of the hallway and reinstate its former grandeur. Impact: Major Positive
ROOM 2 Front Room	Primary front room in the house but may have been secondary to first floor room in status. Several features remain but nothing overly significant. Contains cupboard into stair well. Significance: Medium	⌞ Simple Georgian fireplace in chimney breast ⌞ Architrave to doors and window. ⌞ Replacement timber sash window to front. ⌞ Cornice around ceiling. ⌞ Skirting board. ⌞ Cupboard to rear corner with door and architrave. ⌞ Picture rail and dado rail likely late Victorian/late 20th century.	⌞ Clean, redecorate, new carpets etc. ⌞ Retain fireplace, original joinery and features. ⌞ Insertion of en suite 'pod' unit to rear of fireplace and recessed into existing cupboard, shower and basin. 'Pod' will be built in with stud walls, scribed around skirting and stop at picture rail level to ensure no interference with ceiling features. ⌞ New room door in style of original house.	The installation of en suite facilities will introduce some harm but will be set down from the ceiling thereby minimising its impact and allowing the space to be maintained and understood, as well as easily removed if necessary in the future. All plumbing will be contained within existing stairwell void. Impact: Neutral
ROOM 3 – Ground Floor Rear	Rear living room with arched niche feature and cupboard into stair. Significance: Medium	⌞ Chimney breast but no fireplace. ⌞ Architrave to doors and window. ⌞ Cornice around ceiling. ⌞ Simple Ogee skirting board. ⌞ Cupboard to rear corner with original door and architrave. ⌞ Recessed arch feature to rear corner.	⌞ Clean, redecorate, new carpets etc. ⌞ Relocate original internal door to more visible/primary location. ⌞ Insert en suite 'pod' to rear corner utilising historic features (arch etc.) 'Pod' will be built in with stud walls, scribed around skirting and stop at picture rail level to ensure no interference with ceiling features.	The installation of en suite facilities will introduce some harm through the obscuring of original recessed arch feature which is a positive element in the room. This feature will be utilized within the en suite however and included in the design aesthetic as an elegant feature. En suite pod will be set down from the ceiling thereby minimising its impact. Impact: Minor Harm
KITCHEN	Rear outshot kitchen extension constructed in the late 19th century. The outshot reflects a similar rear extension to the neighbouring property and uses Flemish bond in a similar (but later) brick. The defining feature of this room is the central fireplace and double sided chimney breast. Significance: Low	⌞ Chimney breast and double sided fireplace. ⌞ Architrave to doors and window. ⌞ Original (Victorian) door to internal wc. ⌞ Significant damp ingress to corner adjoining main range.	⌞ Proposals intend to remove chimney breast as it takes up much space within the room and divides the space. ⌞ Clean, redecorate, new carpets etc. ⌞ Remove wc and include within main space. ⌞ Install new kitchen to rear of the room. ⌞ Refurbish window and door architraves and joinery.	The removal of the existing fireplace and the toilet will change this space. However, this part of the house is much later and therefore its significance is less. The chimney, although a solid and robust structure precludes much of the space being utilised. As such its loss in relation to the benefits of the scheme is felt justified. The chimney stack itself will be retained so externally there will be no impact. Impact: Minor/Moderate Harm
HALLWAY 2 First Floor Landing and Hallway	Polite Georgian stair and landing highlighting the feature of the Georgian staircase and arched niche to first floor landing. Significance: Medium	⌞ Original Georgian stair case with some Victorian modifications. ⌞ Recessed arch feature to first floor landing. ⌞ Architrave to doors. ⌞ Staircase boarded over spindles. ⌞ Recent second balustrade fixed to wall.	⌞ Refurbish and make good existing stair case as feature. ⌞ Clean, redecorate and new carpets. ⌞ Remove modern balustrade from wall. ⌞ Reduce/remove fire escape paraphernalia where possible.	The stairwell and landing have seen significant abuse including the boxing in of balustrade and the removal of original doors for fire doors. The proposal will refurbish and reinstate this communal spaces with the care and attention of the original house. In light of these significant alterations a great positive benefit will occur. Impact: Major Positive
ROOM 4 First Floor Front	First floor primary room to the front of the property. Whether this room was bedroom or reception room is not known. The skirtings and window panels would suggest a comparatively high status room. Significance: Medium	⌞ Original skirting's, cornice and architraves around doors and windows. ⌞ Original paneling below ⌞ Fireplace removed and boxed in. ⌞ Sink and plumbing installed (presumably without consent)	⌞ Refurbish and make good existing joinery. ⌞ Reinstate fireplace surround from Kitchen. ⌞ Insertion of en suite scribed around cornice level and occupying existing cupboard to rear internal corner of room. ⌞ Clean, decorate and new carpets etc.	The installation of en suite facilities will introduce some modest harm but this will enable the room to function better and existing features will be utilised as features within the space. The fireplace will be unaffected and the en suite will be set down from the ceiling thereby minimising harm. Impact: Minor Harm
ROOM 5 First Floor Rear	Room since subdivided from by Victorian stud wall to form corridor leading to rear outshot wc/bathroom. Although this room contains some features its original function and any decorative elements are unknown and not present. Significance: Low	⌞ Likely Victorian partition to divide space and give access to rear existing wc. ⌞ Original low status skirtings, cornice and architraves around doors and windows. ⌞ Original panelling below window. ⌞ Nice cupboard on internal inner wall. ⌞ Fireplace removed and boxed in. ⌞ Sink and plumbing installed (presumably without consent). ⌞ UPVC window to rear.	⌞ Remove late Victorian Wall to give access to bathroom to rear outshot. ⌞ Remove existing sink and install kitchenette units utilising existing cupboard as feature. ⌞ Refurbish and make good existing joinery. ⌞ Clean, decorate and new carpets etc.	The removal of the Victorian wall will reinstate this space to something like its likely original form. The kitchenette will introduce some physical features into this space but original elements will be retained and enhanced through this intervention. Impact: Minor Positive
ROOM 6 Second Floor Rear	Existing fireplace and panels in this room suggest some status but this would be unusual and it is possible that the fireplace was moved from elsewhere. Architrave and skirtings are simple and although they do contain significance because of this any significance is likely to be minor. Significance: Low	⌞ Original fireplace surround. ⌞ Original low status skirtings, cornice and architraves around doors and windows. ⌞ Likely original panelling below window. ⌞ Cupboard on internal inner wall. ⌞ Sink and plumbing installed (presumably without consent). ⌞ UPVC window to rear.	⌞ Insert en suite retaining cupboard and avoiding conflict with existing fireplace. ⌞ Remove existing sink and tiles. ⌞ Refurbish and make good existing joinery. ⌞ Clean, decorate and new carpets etc. ⌞ New bedroom door to match original details where possible.	The installation of en suite facilities will introduce some modest harm but this will enable the room to function better and existing features will be utilised as features within the space. The fireplace will be unaffected and there will be no impact upon any ceiling features as there are non present. Impact: Minor Harm
ROOM 7 Second Floor Front	The top floor front rooms were once likely a single room and have since experience significant subdivision. The only original elements within these spaces are the window architraves and the low ceiling that is typical of Georgian lower status/servants rooms. Significance: Low/Medium	⌞ Low Ceiling. ⌞ Some original joinery to window surrounds. ⌞ Internal partition to divide rooms and form corridor ⌞ Sinks installed.	⌞ Remove partitions and reinstate room to original proportions. ⌞ Insert en suite retaining cupboard and avoiding conflict with existing chimney breast. ⌞ Refurbish and make good existing joinery around windows. ⌞ Clean, decorate and new carpets etc. New bedroom door to match original details where possible.	The only harm from undertaking this work will come from the removal of the ceiling which is typical of lower status rooms to Georgian houses. The installation of en suite facilities will also introduce some modest harm. However when considered against the reopening of this space, the original proportions will once again be visible. Therefore harm will be significantly lessened and the overall impact will be neutral. Impact: Neutral
BASEMENT		⌞ Brick arch fireplace below ground structure. ⌞ Basement window now blocked. ⌞ Interesting wooden tread and brick steps. ⌞ Timber supports to stair well partition wall on entry. ⌞ Previous DPC installed. ⌞ New plasterboard ceiling added. (no significant features behind. ⌞ Electricity and gas meters.	⌞ Create damp proof room as per contractors specification. ⌞ Retain and refurbish steps. ⌞ Insert wc/shower room. ⌞ Reopen window opening and refurbish and make good existing window. ⌞ Installation of heating.	Through the retention of the existing features within the basement and the reuse of this space for residents, including heating, there will be a great positive benefit for residents. Impact: Minor Positive
OVERALL	The significance of the house is to be found within its remaining architectural features, room proportions and architectural design. It is likely a Mid Georgian House with later Victorian and then late 20th century modifications and relatively poor room proportions when considered against other similar properties. In light of the survival of features and the legibility of the property the building's significance is however considered medium. Overall Significance: Medium	⌞ Architectural joinery is several rooms. ⌞ Fireplaces good/fair survival. ⌞ Few original doors remain. ⌞ Ceiling heights to top floor. ⌞ Room proportions atypical of Georgian type.	⌞ Retention and refurbishment of as much joinery as possible. ⌞ New use and new custodians intent on preserving the property and investing in its fabric. ⌞ Refurbishment of original staircase and revealing of original features.	The proposals intend to significantly improve the architectural and aesthetic quality of the property and ensure its new continued use into the future. Although some harm will occur through the insertion of en suite pods, the removal of kitchen fireplace and the lifting of the top floor ceiling, the overall benefits outweigh the harm. Impact: Minor Positive.

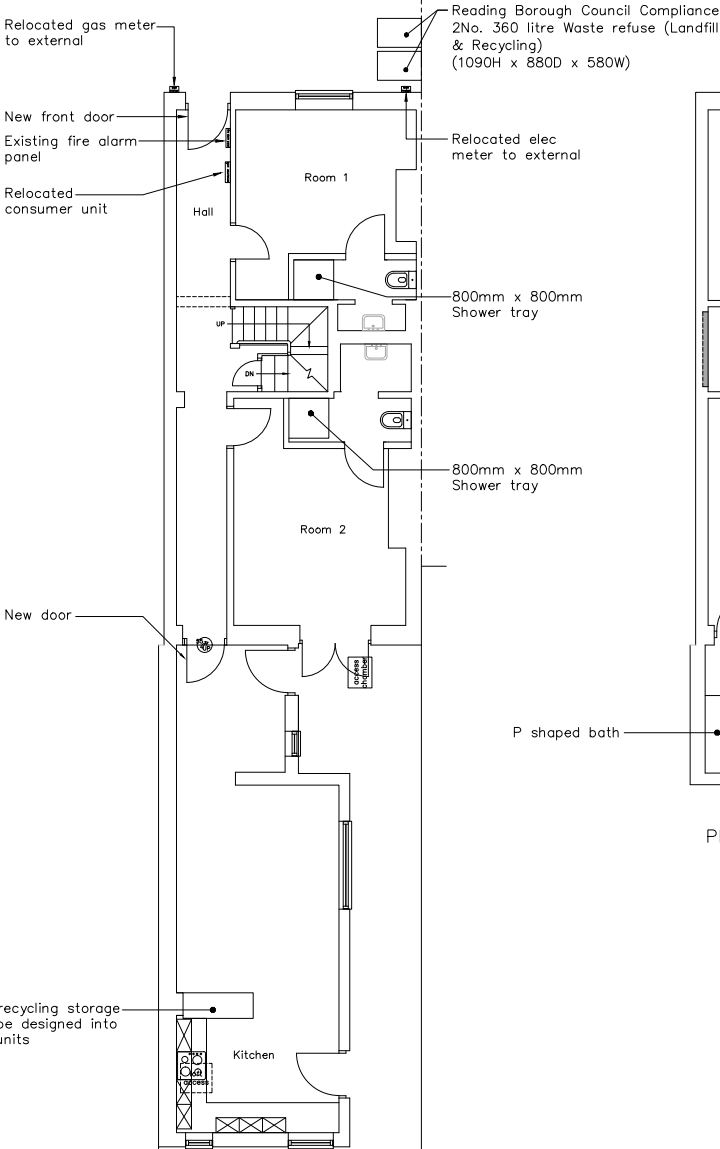
Phase Plan 35 London Road, Reading



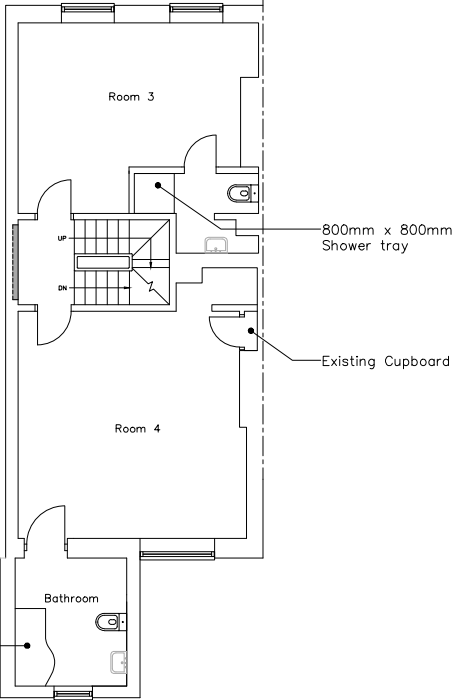
Proposed Plans. 35 London Road, Reading



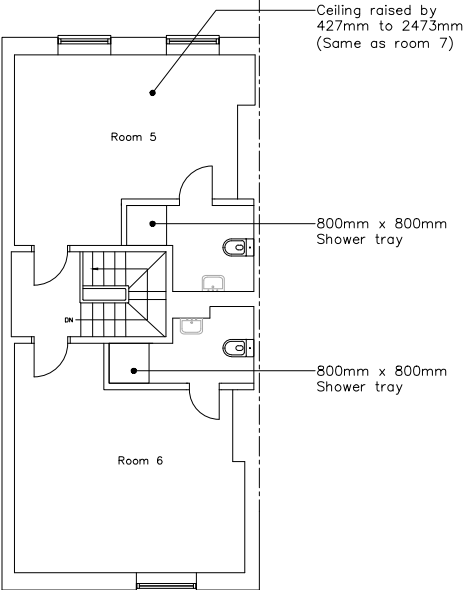
PROPOSED BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN



PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN



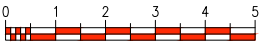
PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN



PROPOSED SECOND FLOOR PLAN



Additional cycle storage for three bikes (Time Trails) (1330H x 1960W x 890D)



A	10.12.19	Cycle & Bin Stores Added
Rev	Date	Revision Description
 Gravitas Property Group Limited Syntegra House 63 Milford Road Reading Berks RG1 8LG		
PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS 35 London Road, Reading. RG1 5BJ		
DWG No. 01	DATE: 10 December 2019	REV: A
DRAWN BY: PS		SCALE: 1:100@A3



BASEMENT (Room 1)

Features

- Brick arch fireplace below ground structure.
- Basement window now blocked.
- Interesting wooden tread and brick steps.
- Timber supports to stair well partition wall on entry.

Issues

- Previous DPC installed.
- New plasterboard ceiling added. (no significant features behind).
- Electricity and gas meters.

Main Changes

- Create damp proof room as per contractors specification.
- Retain and refurbish steps.
- Insert wc/shower room.
- Reopen window opening and refurbish and make good existing window.
- Installation of heating.

Level of Impact: Positive Benefit

Through the retention of the existing features within the basement and the reuse of this space for residents, including heating, there will be a great positive benefit for residents and the structure as a whole.

ASSESSMENT



HALLWAY

Features

- Fanlight window over door
- Architrave to doors
- Original Staircase with curved Balustrade and Iron spindles.
- Cornice around ceiling.
- Picture rail and dado rail likely late Victorian/late 20th century.

Main Changes

- New front door of Georgian style.
- Clean, decorate, repair where necessary, new carpets.
- Relocate consumer unit and modern paraphernalia and simplify, reduce emergency signage where possible and allowable.
- Remove existing toilet/privy and make good for inclusion in rear living room.
- Restore, clean staircase, remove extra unnecessary balustrade fixed to wall and re create Georgian staircase feature.

Level of Impact: **MAJOR Positive Benefit**

The hallway is the gateway into the Listed building and cumulative change including the introduction of fuse boxes and fire doors have had a major impact. The proposal will seek to retain the features of the hallway and reinstate its former grandeur.



ROOM 2 - Front Room

Features

- Simple Georgian fireplace in chimney breast.
- Architrave to doors and window.
- Replacement timber sash window to front.
- Cornice around ceiling.
- Skirting board.
- Cupboard to rear corner with door and architrave.
- Picture rail and dado rail likely late Victorian/late 20th century.

Main Changes

- Clean, redecorate, new carpets etc.
- Retain fireplace, original joinery and features.
- Insertion of en suite 'pod' unit to rear of fireplace and recessed into existing cupboard with new sink, shower and basin. 'Pod' will be built in with stud walls, scribed around skirting and stop at picture rail level to ensure no interference with ceiling features.
- New room door in style of original house.

Level of Impact: Neutral

The installation of en suite facilities will introduce some harm but will be set down from the ceiling thereby minimising its impact.



ASSESSMENT



ROOM 3 - Rear Room

Features

- Chimney breast but no fireplace.
- Architrave to doors and window.
- Cornice around ceiling.
- Simple Ogee skirting board.
- Cupboard to rear corner with original door and architrave.
- Recessed arch feature to rear corner.

Main Changes

- Clean, redecorate, new carpets etc.
- Relocate original internal door to more visible/primary location.
- Insert en suite 'pod' to rear corner utilising historic features (arch etc.) 'Pod' will be built in with stud walls, scribed around skirting and stop at picture rail level to ensure no interference with ceiling features.

Level of Impact: Minor

The installation of en suite facilities will introduce some harm but will be set down from the ceiling thereby minimising its impact. The features of the arched recess will be incorporated as an elegant feature.



KITCHEN

Features

- Chimney breast and double sided fireplace.
- Architrave to doors and window.
- Original (Victorian) door to internal wc.

Issues

- Significant damp ingress to corner adjoining main range.

Main Changes

- Proposals intend to remove chimney breast as it takes up much space within the room and divides the space.
- Clean, redecorate, new carpets etc.
- Remove wc and include within main space.
- install new kitchen to rear of the room.
- Refurbish window and door architraves and joinery.

Level of Impact: Minor/Moderate harm

The removal of the existing fireplace and the toilet will change this space. However, this part of the house is much later and therefore its significance is less. The chimney, although a solid and robust structure precludes much of the space being utilised. As such its loss in relation to the benefits of the scheme is felt justified. The chimney stack itself will be retained so externally there will be no impact.

ASSESSMENT



HALLWAY 2 - First Floor Stairs and Landing

Features

- Original Georgian stair case with some Victorian modifications.
- Recessed arch feature to first floor landing.
- Architrave to doors.

Issues

- Staircase boarded over spindles.
- Recent second balustrade fixed to wall.

Main Changes

- Refurbish and make good existing stair case as feature.
- Clean, redecorate and new carpets.
- Remove modern balustrade from wall.
- Reduce/remove fire escape paraphernalia where possible.

Level of Impact: **MAJOR Positive Benefit**

The stairwell and landing have seen significant abuse including the boxing in of balustrade and the removal of original doors for fire doors. The proposal will refurbish and reinstate this communal spaces with the care and attention of the original house. In light of these significant alterations a great positive benefit will occur.



ROOM 4 - First Floor Front

Features

- Original skirtings, cornice and architraves around doors and windows.
- Original panelling below window.

Issues

- Fireplace removed and boxed in.
- Sink and plumbing installed (presumably without consent).

Main Changes

- Refurbish and make good existing joinery.
- Reinstall fireplace surround from Kitchen.
- Insertion of en suite with walls scribed around existing cornice and occupying existing cupboard to rear internal corner of room.
- Clean, decorate and new carpets etc.

Level of Impact: Minor harm

The installation of en suite facilities will introduce some modest harm but this will enable the room to function better and existing features will be utilised as features within the space. The fireplace will be unaffected and the en suite will be set down from the ceiling thereby minimising harm.

ASSESSMENT



ROOM 5 - First Floor Rear

Features

- Likely Victorian partition to divide space and give access to rear existing wc.
- Original low status skirtings, cornice and architraves around doors and windows.
- Original panelling below window.
- Niche cupboard on internal inner wall.

Issues

- Fireplace removed and boxed in.
- Sink and plumbing installed (presumably without consent).
- UPVC window to rear.

Main Changes

- Remove late Victorian Wall to give access to bathroom to rear outshot.
- Remove existing sink and install kitchenette units utilising existing cupboard as feature.
- Refurbish and make good existing joinery.
- Clean, decorate and new carpets etc.

Level of Impact: Minor Positive

The removal of the Victorian wall will reinstate this space to something like its likely original form. The kitchenette will introduce some physical features into this space but original elements will be retained and enhanced through this intervention.



ROOM 6 - Second Floor Rear

Features

- Original fireplace surround.
- Original low status skirtings, cornice and architraves around doors and windows.
- Likely original panelling below window.
- Cupboard on internal inner wall.

Issues

- Sink and plumbing installed (presumably without consent).
- UPVC window to rear.

Main Changes

- Insert en suite retaining cupboard and avoiding conflict with existing fireplace.
- Remove existing sink and tiles.
- Refurbish and make good existing joinery.
- Clean, decorate and new carpets etc.
- New bedroom door to match original details where possible.

Level of Impact: Minor harm

The installation of en suite facilities will introduce some modest harm but this will enable the room to function better and existing features will be utilised as features within the space. The fireplace will be unaffected.

ASSESSMENT



ROOM 7 - Second Floor Front

Features

- Low Ceiling.
- Some original joinery to window surrounds.

Issues

- Internal partition to divide rooms and form corridor.
- Sinks installed.

Main Changes

- Remove partitions and reinstate room to original proportions.
- Insert en suite retaining cupboard and avoiding conflict with existing chimney breast.
- Refurbish and make good existing joinery around windows.
- Clean, decorate and new carpets etc.
- New bedroom door to match original details where possible.

Level of Impact: Neutral

The only harm from undertaking this work will come from the removal of the ceiling which is typical of lower status rooms to Georgian houses. The installation of en suite facilities will also introduce some modest harm. However when considered against the reopening of this space, the original proportions will once again be visible. Therefore harm will be significantly lessened and the overall impact will be neutral.

THE PUBLIC BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSAL

The Public Benefits need to be weighted against the requirements within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the requirements within the NPPF.

The main public benefit is concerned with the refurbishment and future security of this building to stop it falling into further disrepair. Currently the building is seeing water ingress and has been on the open property market for some time without a buyer. Therefore unless a new owner provides the funding to adequately refurbish the building may need further public resources to find a workable solution. Furthermore, this building could become 'At Risk' if no solution is found.

The proposal will also see tangible public benefits including the tidying up of the external appearance of the site and the installation of a new front door. This will remove the boarded up windows and present a more contextual and historic aesthetic to this major route through Reading itself. As such the public benefits set to gain also include the wider visible benefits and improvement of the perception of London Road as a safe, attractive and, largely Georgian, street!

Finally a third public benefit would occur through the provision of affordable small scale residential units within a highly sustainable location where travel by the private car will be unnecessary and where future residents would utilise the historic high streets of Reading to the benefit of the town as a whole.

Therefore, although some very minor harm has been identified to some modest internal areas the overall impact is minor/positive and the public benefits are great. Therefore the requirements within the NPPF are met.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The proposals presented here represent an appropriate refurbishment of this listed property that will restore and substantially improve the architectural and historic significance of the building.

It will provide much needed investment and substantial improvements to the streetscene of London Road as well as enabling smaller scale residential units to be available for residents who will use the town.

Although some harm will occur through the installation of en suites etc, the overall benefits of refurbishment, new use, improvement and better revealing of the original Georgian aesthetic of the building are therefore considered enough to outweigh any identified minor harm.

We therefore believe that the proposals contained within this application are sound, appropriate and will secure the viable future of this Listed Building for years to come.

Heritage Assessment for 35 London Road, Reading

Heritage Assessment

For Submission Purposes Only October 2019
Prepared by Fuller Long Heritage