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HERITAGE STATEMENT

50 QUEENS ROAD, READING, RG1 4AU

To accompany a Planning Application for the Conversion of Offices to 5 x 1-Bed Self-Contained Flats Involving Replacement of Unsympathetic Ground & First Floor Rear Extensions with Ground Floor Extension, Internal Subdivision & Conversion of Basement.

Prepared by:-

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PHOTO 1. Contextual photograph taken April 2019 looking south showing the GII (GV) listed 50 Queens Road in the centre. The building is three storey Bath stone ashlar built 1832-33 and forms the east end of a terrace of 15 identical buildings.

1.00 DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING BUILDING TO BE ALTERED AND WORKS TO BE CARRIED OUT.

1.01

The group of listed buildings are described thus by Historic England in their statutory listing:-

QUEEN'S ROAD

1.

5128

Nos 24 to 52 (even)

(Queen's Crescent)

SU 7173 SE 3/225

SU 7273 7/225 22.3.57.

II GV

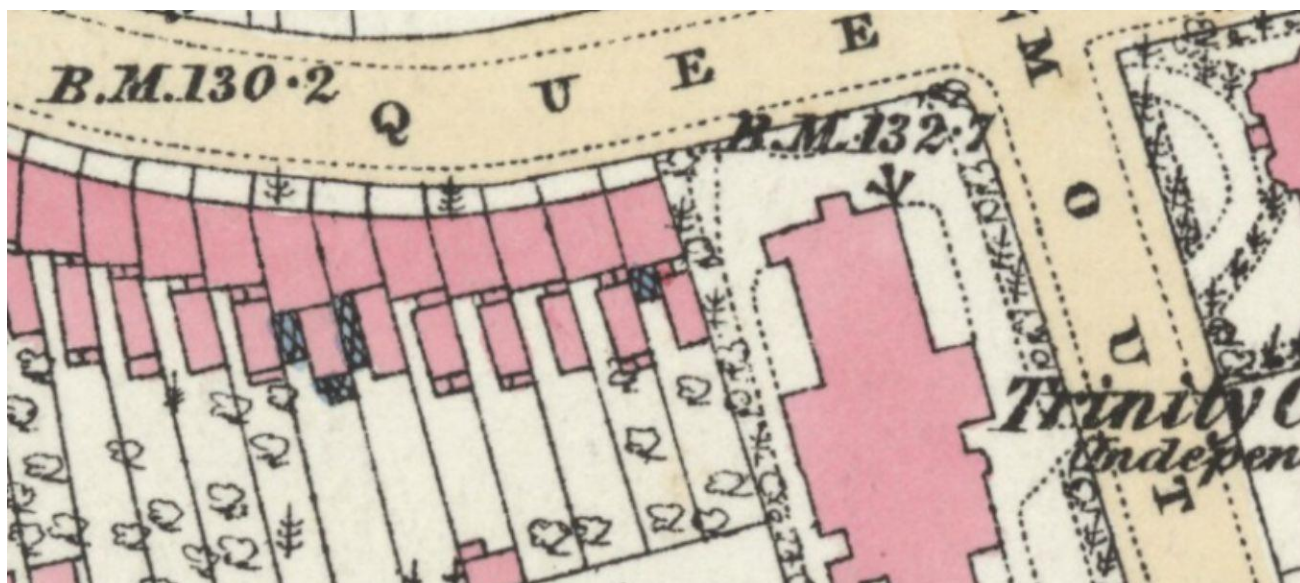
2.

1832-33. J J Cooper architect (according to Colvin). A very slight crescent with houses on a skew, following the curve of the road. 3 storeys Bath stone ashlar. Channelled ground floor. Band over ground floor. Plain cornice and parapet. 3 ranges of glazing bar sashes each, 1st floor centre of each with pediment. Ground floor windows round headed, one each, No 44 1+3 (formerly 2 houses). Bracketed hoods to 4 panel doors with rectangular overlights and architrave surrounds. Butterfly roofs with brick chimneys. No 40 rendered. No 24 has no door but 3 round headed windows on ground floor.

Listing NGR: SU7200574473

1.02

The location of the listed building is shown edged red on the location plan accompanying this application. The earliest map information we have on file is the 1879 OS which is reproduced below. 50 Queens Road adjoins the end terrace 52 Queens Road at the easternmost end of Queens Crescent adjoining Trinity Church (now demolished).



MAP 1. 1879 Ordnance Survey plan. 50 Queens Road is at the east end of the terrace next door but one to the former Church.

PRINCIPAL. Anthony J Thorpe BA(Hons) MRTPI Tony Thorpe Associates are recognised by Business Link Berkshire & Wiltshire as Accredited Service Providers.



PHOTO 2. Contextual photograph taken April 2019 looking north showing the GII (GV) listed 50 Queens Road in the centre. Number 48 lies to the left (west) number 50 lies to the right (east). The unsightly rear office toilet block and staff room to be demolished is evident. The proposal replaces this jumbled excrescence with a self-contained single-storey pitched-roofed extension whose design and materials are much more sympathetic and in accord with the character of the original listed terrace.



PHOTO 3. Unlike the majority of the terrace number 50 has no frontage lightwell. The proposed lightwell is located under the round headed window. It will look similar to the example shown in photo 4. overleaf.



PHOTO 4. Example of approved frontage lightwell similar to that proposed.

1.03

The works that have the greatest effect on the public's perception of the heritage asset are those to the existing frontage (see Photo 3.). A single lightwell will be inserted with a surrounding raised lip the same height as that shown on Photo 4. and formed in a similar way (cement render over brick matching the Bath stone). In our submission these works have a less than significant effect on the setting of the heritage asset.

1.04

The principal changes to fabric take place at the rear of the building. Photo 2. above shows the existing two storey rear extensions that feature an unsympathetic mixture of roof types, window types and materials topped by an exposed water tank. This staff toilet and staff room not only harms the setting of the heritage asset but also has a substandard internal layout that resists conversion to modern residential requirements.

1.05

Accordingly the proposal involves the complete demolition and removal of all of the mixed rear extensions. The proposed replacement is a single-storey low hipped-roofed building of sympathetic design that is less tall than the original and 1.8m wider to provide sufficient internal space for the proposed one-bed self-contained flat. It will be attached to the rear elevation by a roofed porch open on two sides providing access from the rear car park to all of the proposed flats.

1.06

Part of the original ground floor rear elevation will be extended outwards (see Photo 2) by some 1.7m with a pitched roof over marrying in with the proposed porch roof and will adjoin the two-storey rear extension to the adjoining property number 48.

1.07

The principal aspect of the replacement rear extension is to the west facing the former ground floor office extension to number 48 which (according to the approved COU plans) is a 'playroom' with 5 east facing windows. There is a gap of 2.6m between these two sets of ground-floor windows which complies with the Governments daylighting standards. To avoid the possibility of loss of privacy a neutral 1.8m high light grey stained close boarded fence will be provided along the shared boundary.

1.08

External materials will be yellow/buff bricks to compliment the original Bath stone. Windows and doors will be white coated DG aluminium, the replacement hipped roof and porch will be blue/black slate.

1.09

Internally the original historic character and layout of the interior has been obliterated by the previous office conversion. Only the staircase balusters and handrail appear to be original and these will be retained (see photo 5. below). Skirting boards, architraves, plaster cornices, original doors and door cases, fireplaces and their surrounds have been removed in their entirety to satisfy the need for fire doors, fire prevention and escape routes. Where original door cases, skirtings, picture rails and cornices survive they will be retained.

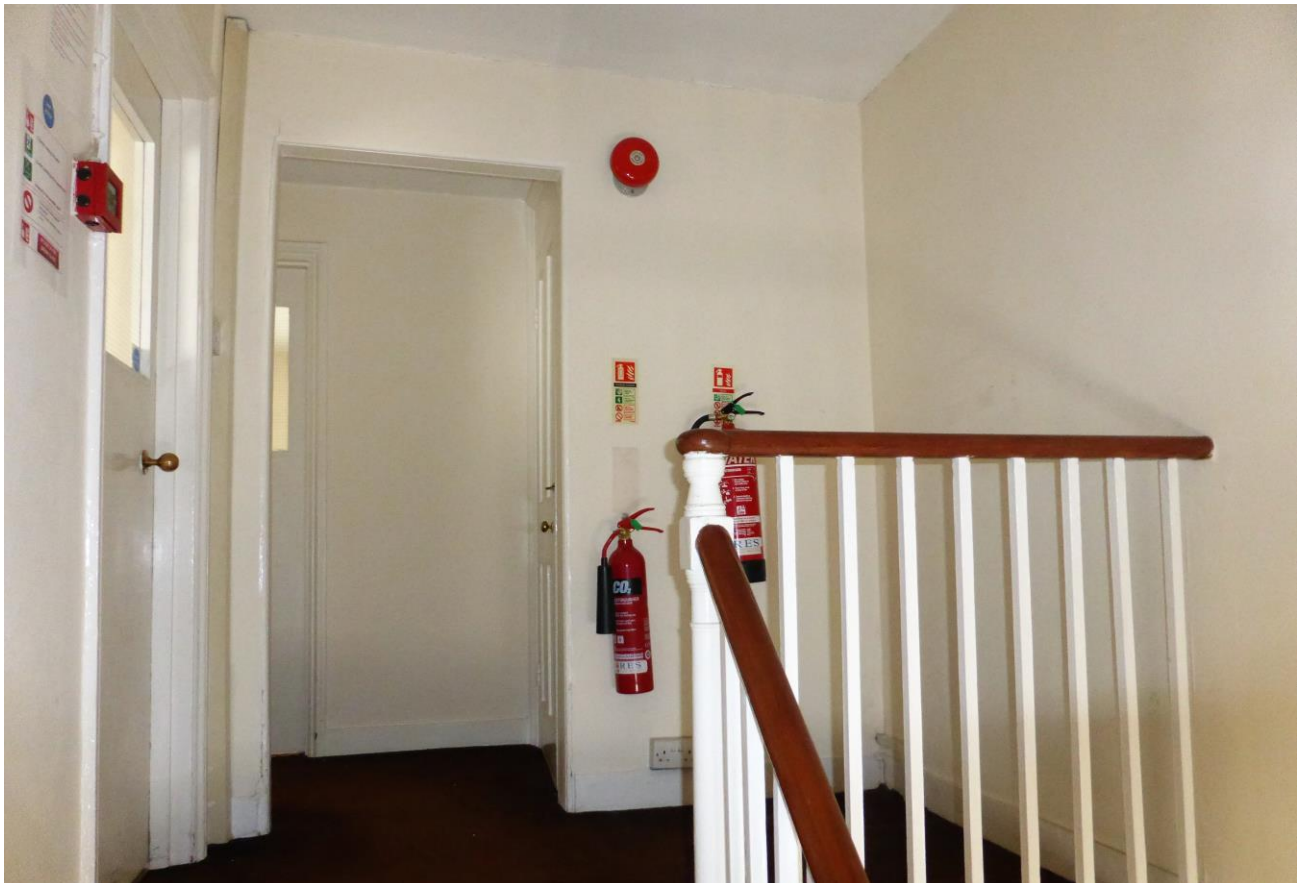


PHOTO 5. Second-floor landing. The remainder of the interior has the same utilitarian appearance with few sections of original fabric remaining. Where original material survives it will be preserved.

1.10

The proposal does not seek to return the listed interior to its original state but it will reverse the excesses of the previous office conversion, return the building to the residential use for which it was originally designed and, through the provision of an economic return, ensure the future preservation of the remaining listed fabric.

1.11

Internally the current utilitarian office layout will be sympathetically adapted back to residential use. Each floor will have its own frontage living/dining/kitchen room and a rear bedroom with ensuite. Ground floor, first floor and second floor are accessed via the existing common staircase leading to the front-door and rear porch. The basement flat has its own independent access from the rear porch.

1.12

The conversion will require the removal of internal basement walls and a second-floor dividing wall between rooms 1 and 3. Changes of door locations will require new doors to be inserted (and old doors blocked) at first floor between room 1 and 2 and at second floor between room 2 and rooms 1 and 3. However since none of these walls retain any features of historic value their alteration will be less than significant. Works to the basement are identical to those already approved in connection with the applicant's next door property number 52 under approvals reference 161066 and 161067.

1.13

The front and rear subterranean light wells will have no material effect on the appearance and setting of the listed building. As with the clients adjoining property they are designed to reduce noise from Queens Road and resist surface water flooding. The proposal respects the physical character of the area since the external works to create the light-wells are minimal, do not have a material effect on the external appearance of the building and continue the existing precedent.

1.14

At the rear the basement extension will be constructed under part of the existing and proposed building footprint and will be unseen save for its associated rear lightwell. The lightwell will be protected by gratings similar to those shown on Photo 4. above.

1.15

The statutory listing description at 1.01 above adequately describes the details of this heritage asset. It would have been surveyed by Ted Harris (the former Berks CC Conservation Officer) in the 1970's. There have been subsequent major rear additions to the remainder of the GV terrace. Most (including that immediately adjoining) are considerably larger than this proposal and all are clearly visible from Livery Close. In our submission, and in this receiving context, the proposed replacement will pass largely unnoticed and have no deleterious effect on the setting, character or fabric of the heritage asset.

2.00 CONCLUSIONS

2.01

In our submission the proposals are sympathetic to the fabric and setting of the heritage asset and will pass unnoticed in the context of the many modern rear additions to the terrace.

2.02

In accordance with the NPPF the level of detail supplied in this report and the submitted plans is considered to be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

2.03

The proposal allows the optimal viable use of the heritage asset and both enables and secures its future as required by the NPPF. It will have no material effect upon either the external appearance of the listed building or its original historic fabric. The return of the building to the use for which it was originally designed is a clear heritage gain.

2.04

The proposals are subordinate to the existing building and proportionate to the listed group. They are sympathetic to the immediate setting and curtilage of the listed group and the wider setting that includes surrounding old and new unlisted buildings.

2.05

If you have any queries or require further information please do not hesitate to call.

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AJT/SB/23/05/2019