

Wantage Hall

**HERITAGE, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT FOR
PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO WANTAGE HALL**

September 2019

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Introduction

This heritage, design and access statement has been prepared in support of an application for permission to install detached postal box installation adjoining building elevation to Wantage Hall, Old Court. The property is a Grade II listed building that lies within the 1 Upper Redlands Road and 17 – 19 Redlands Road of the Redlands Conservation Area – see Appendix 1. Wantage Hall is the building, hatched in red to the north of the plan.

Building Description

Wantage Hall was the first hall of residence at the University of Reading opening in 1908, arranged over four levels. The premise is located on the junction of Redlands Road and Upper Redlands Road within Reading.

Existing Installation

There are no existing facilities to provide a postal arrangement for the students at Wantage Hall, allowing an external provider access to the building whilst maintaining security to the residents.

Heritage

Historical Context

Wantage Hall was the first hall of residence at the University of Reading opening in 1908. It is recommended for designation at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * A handsome and intact hall of residence in a Tudor style with an interesting quadrangle plan-form, quality materials and detailing. * A very early hall of residence which drew on the historic Oxbridge college tradition but was a pioneer of C20 university collegiate accommodation and which was to become the model for subsequent university colleges and halls of residence.

(English Heritage)

Property

History and Development

934/0/10065 UPPER REDLANDS ROAD 02-APR-08 Wantage Hall

II Wantage Hall, 1908. Hall of residence at the University of Reading. Neo-Tudor design by Charles Steward Smith, architect, commissioned and endowed by Lady Wantage. Addition of New Court to the north in 1970, by Peter Ednie & Partners is not of special interest.

Materials

Red brick in English Bond with stone dressings and tiled roofs.

Plan

A quadrangle, known as 'Old Court': largely of two storeys but with an additional basement level in the northern half given the sloping site. Roof is largely double pitched with a central concealed valley. Main entrance gate through a three storey clock tower in the south elevation. Dining Hall range, housing student common room on the ground floor and the dining hall above, on the north side of the quadrangle. Student accommodation mainly in the west and east ranges over two floors. Warden's study and offices in the south-east corner, formerly the Principal's residence. Service rooms largely confined to basement level. Red brick 1970s addition, known as 'New Court', forms a further quadrangle to the north but is not of special interest.

Exterior

Main façade to the south on Upper Redlands Road. Of two storeys under a pitched tiled roof with pairs of gabled bays at the south-west and south-east corners. Windows are leaded casements with stone surrounds and moulded drip-moulds; those to the ground floor are conjoined to form a narrow string course. Rainwater hoppers decorated with a 'W' for 'Wantage'. Central, three-storey crenellated clock tower, again in red brick with stone dressings: there are stone string courses between floors and gargoyles to the machicolation. Polygonal stair towers at each corner. Handsome canted oriel window to the first floor. Entrance is through a large Tudor arched gateway in stone with carved spandrels; paired solid panelled gates.

Similar features are employed in the quadrangle although it is more decorative. West and east ranges have a series of prominent projecting chimney stacks, with clustered pots, stone dressings and diaper work decoration, dividing up the elevations. Entrance bays have Flemish gables with carved stone coats of arms and banded diaper work detailing. Two-storey dining room range to the north dominates both given its axis opposite the entrance but also for its greater height: symmetrical range of three bays, all with gables, decorated with diaper work. Large mullion and transom windows with leaded lights and some coloured glass. Central bay has a decorative canted oriel with a Flemish gable topped with a carved stone finial. Foundation stone

beneath this window. Carved sundial added to the oriel in the 1980s inscribed to the memory of Sydney Taylor.

Interior

Interiors differ dependent upon function with the principal spaces more decorative than the student accommodation, service accommodation or circulation spaces. Student accommodation is in small study bedrooms largely in the west and east ranges where they are arranged either side of a central corridor on the ground and first floors. Each has a fireplace (some now blocked) with a wooden mantle and original picture rails. Elongated doors to the student rooms are replicas of the originals given fire prevention requirements. Corridors and staircases have exposed red brick walls. Main staircase, leading up to the Dining Hall, has a solid brick balustrade topped with a moulded stone banister and terminating in a carved stone newel. Tudor arches with stone mouldings are also employed internally. Interiors of particular note are the former Principal's lodgings and the Dining Hall. The former contains stone fireplaces decorated with the shell motif of the University and original panelling. Present Warden's study, originally the parlour of the Principal's lodgings, retains its original fireplace which has a timber surround, decorative mantle, and glazed green tiles. Wallpaper in a green leaf design may be original Morris & Co. Most impressive Dining Hall with solid timber hammer-beam roof and attractive curved braces. Original wooden and metal chandeliers. Panelling to picture rail level and carved door surround. Windows with coloured glass shields and crests. Large open fireplace with stone Tudor surround and carved spandrels. Substantial decorative carved timber fire surround and overmantle including carved human heads, shells and a Latin inscription.

Ancillary Features

Red brick walls and railings to Redlands Road and Upper Redlands Road.

History

Although a School of Art was established at Reading in 1860 with a School of Science following in 1870, it was not until 1892 that Reading was founded as a University Extension College under the patronage of the University of Oxford. It became a University in its own right in 1926 by Royal Charter. Wantage Hall was built relatively early in the life of the university; it was designed in 1906 and opened in 1908. It is believed to have been the first purpose-built hall of residence built after the Oxford and Cambridge colleges. It was the gift of Harriet, Lady Wantage (1837-1920) a wealthy local benefactress. Lady and Baron Wantage owned Lockinge House, near Wantage, as well as considerable land holdings in Berkshire. They were artistic connoisseurs and patrons and were heavily involved with the British Red Cross Society. Lady Wantage was closely associated with her husband's work at Reading University College of which he was the first president and after his death in 1901 she was appointed vice-president and live governor. She donated nearly £150,000 to the

University including the building and endowment of Wantage Hall as a men's hall of residence and £50,000 to an endowment fund in 1911. She was also a benefactor of the Royal Berkshire Hospital and was the first woman to receive the freedom of the Borough of Reading. Charles Steward Smith (1858-1923), who designed the building, was a local Reading based architect.

During the First World War Wantage Hall was used by the Royal Flying Corps School of Instruction, training instructors to, in turn, train the increasing numbers of RFC squadrons required. Classes were held in the building and practical training took place along Upper Redlands Road where old fuselages were suspended in the trees for this purpose.

The hall of residence expanded in 1970 with additional accommodation provided by New Court, an extension added to the north of the original building (now known as 'Old Court'). New Court was designed by the architectural firm Peter Ednie & Partners but is not considered of special interest.

Wantage Hall remains in use as a fully catered residential hall which accommodates approximately 245 students.

(English Heritage)

Pictorial Review

Annex D to this document provide photos of the elevations, street schemes of the perimeter elevations.

Assessment of Heritage Significance

Design Proposals

The aim of the proposal is to install a self-service electronic parcel / post box for the students to Wantage Halls of Residence. The new installation is to be positioned adjacent to the building entrance between New Court and Old Court, accessed from Redlands Road. Image of elevation, see Annex C.

The proposal will not require any fixing or adaption to the existing building elevations. The perimeter brick façade and will remain untouched.

To secure the new installation, a concrete footing will be constructed within the tarmac path set back from the building façade. The box will then be mechanically secured to the concrete footing.

The footing will have a 100mm projection with a 75mm high kicker. There are no proposals for any external lighting.

The location provides access to both students and external service providers.

This is a multiuser post box, not tied into a single delivery provider.

Technical Requirements

All works are to be undertaken in accordance with Building Regulations and British Standards.

Use / Layout

The building's use will remain as existing.

Landscaping

There are no landscaping proposals within this application.

Vehicular & Transportation Links

The vehicular and transport links to the building will not be affected by the proposed works

Access

The existing access arrangements into the building will not be affected by the proposed works.

Conclusions

The proposals do not alter the internal appearance of this prominent building with a design maintaining its original finishes.

The proposals are sympathetic to the age and construction of the property.

The proposals will not alter the elements of the building which provide its special quality.

Annex A

Conservation Area

Redlands Conservation Area



Title: Redlands Conservation Area

Dwg no:

Produced by Planning Section

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Scale at A4 : 1:2000



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Annex B

Principal Design

The free standing post box is to be site adjacent to the read elevation of Wantage Hall, within the external courtyard area.



Proposed location



Annex C

Accompany Plans

- Site Location Plan
- Site Block Plan
- Detailed Site Block Plan
- Ground Floor Plan
- Plan and Elevation

Annex D

Photos



Fig 1 - Redlands Road Elevation



Fig 2- Access road from Redlands Road