

R A M M U R T I D E S I G N L T D

ARCHITECTURAL & PLANNING SERVICES

Design & Heritage Statement
to accompany Planning Application submission for a property in a Conservation Area
for the proposed loft conversion and new flat roof dormer to

No 14 Franklin Street, Reading
RG1 7YA

For Mr H Luthra

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Site Context and Heritage

The subject of the planning application is to seek to provide additional accommodation within the roof space, with the provision of a dormer roof extension to an existing property.

The property is located within Reading Borough Council's 'Russell Street/Castle Street Conservation Area', in West Reading. Franklin Street is essentially a side street that was a later addition to the area lying to the South of Oxford Road, and which is accessed off from Baker Street to the South and Goldsmid Road and Russell Street from the North.

The main conservation area properties were originally Russell Street and Castle Hill with the later addition of the side streets that include the properties in Franklin Street.

The setting is predominantly a street of two-storey terraced and bay fronted dwellings that have had a variety of alterations to the main façade over the years lying to the west, with newer and modern blocks of apartments to the east



Properties to the West of Franklin Street, terraces and stepped down the hill



Properties to the East of Franklin Street, modern flatted blocks set back from the street



Properties to the West of Franklin Street, terraces and stepped down the hill



Properties to the East of Franklin Street, modern flatted blocks set back from the street



Application property with the mock stone cladding



Images to the rear of the application dwelling



Much of the information relating to the Russel Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area is provided by the adjacent map that confirms the property as within the designation, and the reasons for inclusion within the Appraisal dated April 2004 and confirmed in October 2005.

Section 4.3 of the appraisal provides context:

4.3 The development of the Russell Street/Castle Hill area.

The Conservation Area lies on a hill to the west of the River Kennet, above the flood plain and on the historic main route westwards (the A4) to Bath and Bristol. A Norman castle existed south of Castle Hill but was demolished in 1151. There is no evidence of medieval settlement but John Speed's map shows buildings lying along Castle Street with fields and gardens to either side. A leat (the Holy Brook), cut to provide water power to the Abbey Mill, lies along the foot of the cliff overlooking the River Kennett.

By the 18th century the area had established itself as an up-market residential suburb to the main town, without a church or other municipal buildings. Rocque's Map of the mid-18th century shows buildings as far as Tilehurst Road, while Tomkin's map of 1802 is far more detailed and shows Back Lane and Hosters Lane, parts of which now form Baker Street. There is little development along Panghurst Road (Oxford Road). Nos. 154-160 Castle Hill are shown as King's Arms Inn, and to the south, to the rear of what is now nos.113121 Castle Hill, lies an area of disturbed ground labled "Old Fortifications", presumably the site of Reading Castle. "Mrs Zinzan's Field" lies on the site of modern day Zinzan Street and Waylen Street.

The Commissioners' Map of 1834 shows how development was strung out along Castle Street, which stretched as far as the town centre around St Mary's Church. Russell Street is laid out, with development particularly along the

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north-west side, and similar development along Oxford Road and Prospect Street.

To the south-west of Coley Hill, Coley Park, a detached house of some substance, is set within its own parkland close to the River Kennet. This building provided the name for many of the roads in the Conservation Area (Coley Avenue, Coley Park Road, Coley Hill)). Brick kilns are also shown, and development along Coley Hill.

By the end of the 19th century the area was developed in an intensive way with the only open spaces being the gardens around Ascham House (also known as Castlehill House and now known as Yeomanry House) and an area to the east of the southern end of Russell

Street. The prevailing use was residential with the occasional Non-Conformist Church – the Providence Chapel in Oxford Road (dated 1859), and the Carey Chapel in Carey Street. Jesse Terrace was built in the 1850s by Thomas Jesse, the earliest part being nos. 1-13, complete by 1853. The other terrace was built by 1871.

In the early 20th century, Field Road replaced Weston Street, necessitating the demolition of one of the older buildings in Castle Hill. Similar terraces utilising multi-coloured brickwork can also be found in Clifton Street. In 1900 the Reading Synagogue was built in Goldsmid Road, the finest religious building in the Conservation Area.

Today the Conservation Area retains many of its late 18th and 19th century buildings, with the best examples lying along Castle Hill, the most prestigious location. Modern development has impinged in some locations, most notably on the eastern edge of the Conservation Area, facing the Inner Distribution Road (Central Evangelist Church and the Salvation Army Citadel). New flats have also been built between Russell Street and Jesse Terrace, but these are relatively concealed from the public viewpoint.

Furthermore, the main elements relate to the following properties as mentioned in Section 5.6 of the appraisal:

5.6 Views and vistas, including focal points

The hill topography of parts of the Conservation Area, and the grid pattern of streets, provide some notable views, marked on the Townscape Appraisal maps. The most significant are along Castle Hill, Russell Street, and Baker Street, with some interesting vistas over the modern town centre and beyond from Howard Street, Castle Street and Garnet Street.

There are several groups of buildings, or individual houses, which can be said to act as important focal points. These are:

- *No. 3 Castle Crescent*
- *Yoemanry House, Castle Hill*
- *The new Berkshire County Record Office*
- *No. 111 Castle Hill, on the corner of Field Road*
- *Heritage Court, nos. 146-152 Castle Hill*
- *Nos. 154-160 Castle Hill*
- *No. 81 (Reading Spiritualist Church), Baker Street*
- *Jewish Synagogue, Goldsmid Road*
- *Providence Chapel, Oxford Road*

The site was part of Character Area 3 in the appraisal:

6.3 Area 3: Russell Street, Baker Street, and the surrounding residential roads..

Most of this area was developed between the late 18th century and the late 19th century, with some 20th century infilling to back gardens (Goldsmid Road, Franklin Street, small part of Russell Street). The area is characterised by tall terraces of late Georgian houses (Russell Street, Baker Street) and similar, mid or late-19th century houses, also in a terraced form (Waylen Street, Zinzan Street, Carey Street, Jesse Terrace). The buildings have small front gardens or areas, with little obvious planting or trees apart from in Jesse Terrace and the western end of Baker Street. Uses are mainly residential, with a small shop and public house in Baker Street. Jesse Terrace retains more original features than the other streets of unlisted buildings such as Waylen Street or Zinzan Street.

Planning History

There are no records of any planning applications that relate to 14 Franklin Street.

Proposals

The proposal relates to the need to provide additional and more comfortable accommodation which can be incorporated by making good use of the loft space, and thereby not putting any pressure on the amenity that would be lost should a ground floor extension be erected.

The works would relate to the first floor where a new stair access would be constructed allowing access to the loft by utilising some of the space from the front bedroom.

In order to create a useable space, the loft accommodation would be enhanced with a dormer extension to the roof, and the simplest form would be a flat roof dormer with materials to the dormer cheeks that match the existing roof, and a lead affect roof covering. Conservation roof lights, that would be low profile and small sections are proposed to the front elevation roof.

The property has undergone previous improvements prior to the current owner's involvement, and these include replacement UPVC windows in a casement style, and cladding to the front elevation in a mock stone finish.

The inclusion of the dormer would not be easily seen from any of the front aspects on the streets, and only visible from the rear gardens of the nearest adjacent dwellings.

The property is not itself an import factor in the conservation area, and has under gone previous alterations, and the addition of the dormer and roof windows is seen to have minimal impact considering the lower designation of these properties.