

Design Statement

June 2017



48 Russell Street
Reading, Berkshire, RG1 7XH

48 Russell Street is a Grade II Listed building situated within the Russell Street/ Castle Hill conservation area of Reading. The listing is described below:

"RUSSELL STREET 1. 5128 (West Side) Nos 48 and 50 SU 7073 12/233 II GV 2. Circa 1840. 2 storeys, attic and basement, Bath stone pair with channelled ground floor, wide flat bracketed eaves cornice, hipped slate roof. 4 bays, round headed glazing bar sash windows in architrave surrounds with raised arched panels on band between on 1st floor; French casements on ground floor opening onto balcony with contemporary cast iron railings. 2 panel doors, set in 2 storey recessed square bays, have plain bracketed pediment hood with antefixae. No 48 has inscription 'Bath Villa' in Gothic script and a hand and wreath door knocker, and retains some arrow-head rails. 2 storey 3 window bow of red brick headers at rear of No 48."

Listing NGR: SU7074073095

The works to be considered are as follows:

1. The addition of a first-floor side extension above and in line with the existing ground floor entrance lobby. The extension is to add a second bathroom and dressing area for the Master bedroom with the existing bathroom for use by the 3 bedrooms on the 2nd floor. The extension will be clad in Bath Stone to match the existing house, with front and side parapet walls and flat roof. Flat rooflights are proposed over the new bathroom and dressing room. The new external wall structure is likely to be an internal blockwork leaf with a metal frame system from which the Bath Stone will be fixed.



Pic.2- existing front and rear elevations of the current ground floor lobby- new extension proposed above.

2. Partial removal of an internal wall at basement level to create a larger, brighter, open plan kitchen, more in keeping with contemporary living.



Pic.3 internal wall to be partially removed, leaving 'nibs' to either side to support structure.



Pic.4 current dining/ living room at basement level to be converted to the new kitchen area and living space

3. To the rear wall of the new basement we propose to remove the existing door and window and replace with a set of bi-folding, aluminium doors to allow more natural light into the room as well as to enable easier access to the rear patio and upper garden level. There is no evidence as to what was in place originally. The existing window looks to have been a full door originally as the lower section has been infilled and an oil tank inserted to the external wall. Cracking to the lower right hand side of the window suggests that a door opening may have been replaced with the window in order to fit the oil tank.



Pic.5- current external basement wall- proposals includes replacement of window and door with full-width bi-folding doors to allow more natural light plus access to a larger, rear patio at basement level.

4. To increase the size of the existing basement lightwell in order to create a larger, useable basement-level patio with steps to the upper rear garden.



Pic.6- the current rear access to the garden from the basement is narrow and creates a dark kitchen area.

The building is an attractive, well-maintained example of a Bath stone villa. However, as with many occupied listed properties, the current kitchen and bathroom facilities are considered inadequate for a 4-bedroom house in the 21st Century, hence the requirement for this application.

The existing house has an external (ground floor) footprint of 76m². The extension we propose at first floor has a total footprint of 14.4m², creating a total of 90.4m² (10.94% of the existing footprint). Casual preliminary discussions with the planning department and conservation officer and our clients have provisionally established that the proposed first floor side extension would be considered by them as being similar in size, proportion and scale to the side extension carried out at no.50 Russell Street (the other half of the listed villa), balancing out 48-50 Bath Road as a whole, proportionate with respect to the scale of the existing building and overall plot, have no adverse physical or visual impact (the extension is to the side and therefore does not obscure the features considered of importance from view) and respects local building designs and materials.

Under Section 4 of the Reading Borough local Plan May 2017- General Policies- Built and Historic environment EN1: Protection and enhancement of the Historic Environment, it states that:

Planning will only be granted where the new development makes a positive contribution to local character and has no adverse impact on heritage assets and their settings. All proposals will be expected to protect and where appropriate enhance the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.

To summarise, the proposed works, and in particular the first floor side extension, would result in a modern, more energy efficient form of development, which will enhance and update rather than detract from the special character and appearance of the site and surroundings.