

10220 – PROPOSED FIRE SUPPRESSION SPRINKLER INSTALLATION, BEACHER HALL CARE HOME, BATH ROAD, READING

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Beacher Hall is an existing residential care home operated by Bupa. The home provides care for the young physically disabled and specialises in brain and spinal injuries sustained as a result of an accident or disease. Care is provided for residents with Parkinson's disease and MS as well as for younger residents with life-limiting diseases. The home offers both long-term care, short stays and rehabilitation.

The existing care home consists of a 3 storey grade II listed residence fronting onto Bath Road, which has been converted into a care home and has been considerably extended over time to its current form providing 69 ensuite rooms with associated communal, administrative and service facilities.

The proposal is for a new fire suppression sprinkler system to be installed throughout the care home including the grade II listed part of the building (existing floor area 2756m²).

Bupa have undertaken previous sprinkler system installations to a number of their care homes and similar establishments, including several listed buildings, within their property portfolio. This has all been carried out in agreement with the appropriate conservation and planning authorities. Examples of such installations include those undertaken at Shockerwell, Bath; Hyde, Dorest; and Manor House, Wirral, Merseyside. The photograph below (from Shockerwell, Bath) is an example of a typical discrete ceiling mounted sprinkler head.



A fire risk assessment has previously been undertaken for Beacher Hall Care Home. This concluded that the nature of the occupancy, where residents have poor mobility and having a requirement for significant nursing assistance, warrants the installation of a fire suppression sprinkler system. This will assist in mitigating the risks and will factor in additional time for staff to safely evacuate the residents in the event of a major fire incident.

PRE-APPLICATION ENQUIRY

A pre-application enquiry, ref 152134, was submitted to Reading Borough Council and a subsequent site meeting took place on 4th December 2015 with Mr Ben Pratley, the Case Officer. The items discussed and agreed are summarised as follows:

- A listed building application to be submitted for the installation of a fire suppression sprinkler system in the grade II listed part of the building, including written justification for the works (refer to previous notes on fire risk assessment).
- The sprinklers are to be concealed behind small “caps” and only be exposed in the event of a fire. The pipe runs will be hidden above the existing ceilings, and only small holes will need to be drilled through existing joists.
- Details of similar installations to listed buildings are to be provided (refer to previous notes and photograph).

A subsequent letter, dated 4th December 2015, was received from Mr Pratley confirming the above. The letter also states that it is considered that the proposal to install a sprinkler system within the modern part of Beacher Hall will not affect the listed building’s historic character, and that subject to the above items, it is considered that a listed building application for these works would be recommended for approval.