

Design Statement 36 New Road, Reading RG1 5JD

Current state of the property:

The property is a two storey semi-detached private house, constructed in two phases.

The front being 19th Century, the two storey rear section dating approximately from the 1960s. The property is not listed but it is in the Redlands Conservation Area, and it forms part of a pair of identical properties (36 is attached to number 38).

The property had been vacant for a number of years with the previous owners moving to another country a while back.

As a result, the property is in a state of neglect with leaks in the roof and chimneys.

Internally, the property lacks most doors. Laminated flooring has been laid out in some rooms in the hope to improve insulation. Further examination in the rear extension shows that there is no underfloor insulation at all, making the kitchen and bathroom cold and damp as a result.

Furthermore, the rear extension is of poor quality, in particular the rear left wall which is currently just one concrete block in thickness and lacking insulation.

The RICS survey report commissioned at the time of purchase (April 2024) summarised the state of the property as follows:

“The property requires a significant level of refurbishment with upgrades required to the kitchen, bathroom and electrics which would involve significant disruption internally. In addition the roof requires some attention, with render works to the front required and the windows and doors could do with some improvement. In addition the property has a two storey rear addition; this appears to be of thin wall construction which we believe at best of single brick with a rendered finish externally and lined internally with plasterboard. This is a substandard form of construction.”

The full survey is attached to this application for more details. The current lack of insulation affects the central heating system with considerable loss of heat and would potentially cause significant harm and hardship to the applicant and her family.

Garden:

The rear garden is mainly laid to lawn with some trees including a Common Holly, a Laurel and Weigela shrubs as marked in the submitted ground floor plans. The front garden has mainly shrubs including Californian Lilac and a small Acer.

Boundaries:

The boundaries to the sides and back consist of a 90 cm brick wall with a 90 cm wooden fence fixed to the top. The front of the property has the original Victorian railings and gate, which are in very poor condition with overgrown greenery and rust.

Design concept:

As an architect and historian, I always wanted to live in New Road. I have experience in restoring Victorian properties and intend to use my skills and knowledge to bring back to light the character of this property.

Equally, I want to incorporate new technologies that can improve the energy efficiency within the property whilst delivering modern comforts. These include an upstairs bathroom and a modern kitchen.

In terms of improving the energy efficiency, I am already engaging a reputable firm of local sash windows experts to replace the 5 original windows, including 3 at the front with 4 panes each and 2 at the rear with 9 panes each. The new windows will also be of wood and handcrafted (i.e. replacing like for like) but adding double glazed and the Sashrite Draftproofing System™.

The demolition of the rear extension due to its poor quality, as stated in the surveyors report, presents an opportunity to replace it with a high quality structure with design features inspired by the old house which I believe will enhance the character of the property.

The proposal:

The new design follows the exact footprint of the current building, therefore there will be no changes to the property's height, width or length. Brickwork and tiles will match existing style and patterns in all new elevations and roofs.

The relationship to surrounding properties will not be altered.

In order to connect the old house with the new extension, the style and pattern of the original sash windows at the rear with the same division of 9 square panes will be used to design all windows and doors of the new extension, including folding doors. The new windows and doors will be double glazed and of high quality black steel, making a connection with the Victorian railway era that kick started the development of New Road.

First floor:

The first floor layout remains the same as the current extension. The new bathroom window will also be a sash system in wood using the same Sashrite Draftproofing System™ as for the rest of the house.

Loft:

The current roof tiles in the old part of the house need to be replaced. This is because a very poor repair work has been done and as consequence all the slates have been glued to the roof structure, making it impossible to dismantle the tiles for repairs without breaking them.

The new slates will match original in style and pattern in order to keep the character of the area. At the rear, two Velux windows will be installed. Chimneys will also be repaired as there are currently leaks that need to be addressed.

Front of the house:

Special attention will be given to the front of the house, enhancing the front garden that gives character to the road.

The work includes the front whitewashed wall that is in need of repair and repainting. I will also incorporate new porous terracotta floor tiles (red and black). This flooring is in keeping with the work done next door (number 34, see image below) as well as many other properties on New Road. The original railings will be restored and re-painted, eliminating the overgrown hedge and rusting. The four-panelled front door and the arched fanlight will also be restored and double glazed, providing better thermal efficiency to the house. The door's ironmongery will be replaced using high quality Victorian replicas (see image below) and keeping all same material and style (unlike current door furniture).

A side entrance to the property (see ground floor plans) will also help to create a secondary access to the house and as a result relocate the waste bins to this area, behind the side access. This will reduce clutter near the front gate, showing only the continuation of bricks and railings which are an essential part of the Redlands Conservation Area.

Image of proposed new tiles

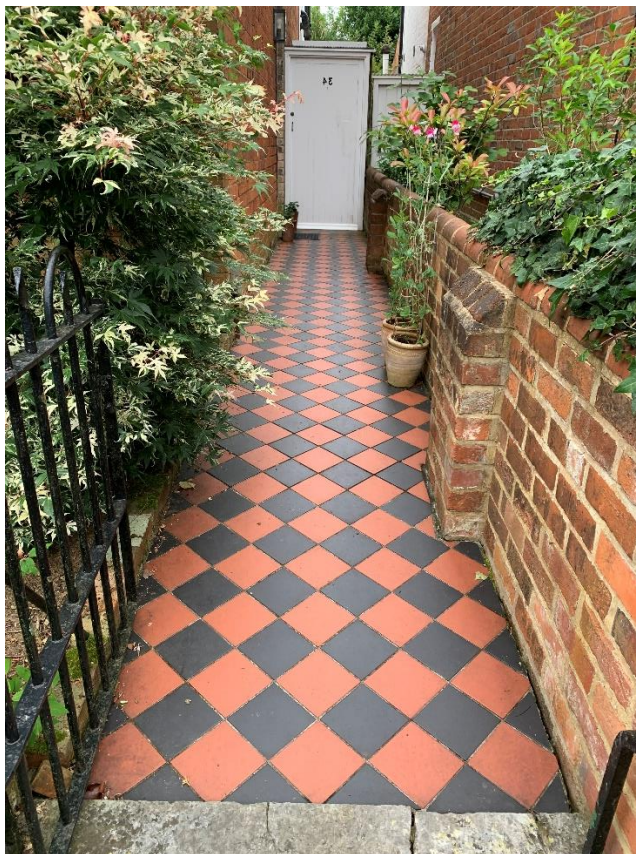


Image of proposed new furniture for front door similar to other properties along the road

