

Planning
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

21 September 2023

For the attention of Ms Ethne Humphreys

Dear Ms Humphreys

**Planning application 27-33 Christchurch Road RG2 7AA; 221806
Part converting an existing house and 9 flats to 12 Flats including extensions to lower
ground and ground floors.**

The restoration of the group of 4 houses that form part of a 19th century terrace on Christchurch Road is long overdue. It is very important that the restoration work be compatible with their Grade II listed status, and that the work is carried out by contractors who understand the requirements of the fabric of these early 19th Century buildings.

The site ground plan:

1. It is encouraging to see that the revised plan for the back 'gardens' of the 4 houses does indicate that the existing garden walls of 27 and 29 Christchurch Road will be retained. It is to be hoped that access to the gardens of 27 and 29 will be restricted to use by the residents, and not left open to the general public. The LG flats are the only ones with direct access to the garden spaces, maybe they could be made into 'garden flats' with the access and responsibility for maintaining the gardens of 27 and 29. This might go some way to protecting the environment of the immediate neighbours at 124 Kendrick Road and 25 Christchurch Road.
2. The Northern wall of the car parking area was probably the original Northern boundary wall of the back gardens of 31 and 33 Christchurch Road. It was still intact when the planning application was submitted in December 2022. However, in February 2023 a vehicle manoeuvring at the Northern edge of the car park hit the wall, resulting in the collapse of a large section of the wall, and making the whole wall unstable. This also revealed several courses of bricks below the current level of the car park area, that were presumably used to counteract the natural slope of the land, allowing the gardens of 31 and 33 Christchurch Rd to be made level. There should be a condition in the planning permission that this old wall should be restored using mellow red bricks as in the original. Ideally, the original bricks should be used if they were saved when the toppled parts of the wall were removed for safety reasons earlier this year.
3. **Rubbish and Recycling Bins:** The landscape plan shows the provision of space for only 13 bins in the far NE corner of the carpark area, out of sight and out of mind for the residents of 27-33 Christchurch, but immediately adjacent to 124 Kendrick Road and the pavement of Kendrick Road. Some other plan has to be evolved for dealing with the problem of where to store the bins. Apart from the unpleasantness for 124 Kendrick Road, people need to be responsible for their own individual rubbish bins and be able to access them reasonably quickly. The design statement admits that the residents would have to walk a rather long way to use the bins. So, by their own admission the applicants know that this plan for the bins is not acceptable. Furthermore, the design and access statement says that no provision will be made for the separate storage and collection of recyclable waste. This must be contrary to council policy. Every household needs one black and one red bin near to their flat. This seems to be approximately what is happening at the moment but at the same time there is a historic unsightly heap of rubbish around a disused communal bin, for which no one takes responsibility – not even the owner of the property.

In Summary planning application 221806 should be accepted but with some stringent conditions.

Yours sincerely
Janet Britnell