

27-33 Christchurch Road, Reading, RG2 7AA

Appeal Statement of Case

Planning and Listed Building Consent Appeal

LPA Refs: 221806 & 221807

July 2024



 **MOMENTUM**



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Momentum Planning has been instructed by Agaram Properties Ltd to prepare and submit planning and listed building appeals against the refusal of planning permission and listed building consent applications 221806 & 221807 by Reading Borough Council (RBC),
- 1.2 The planning application (221806) was registered on 11 August 2023 and was refused on the 05 January 2024 with five reasons for refusal.
- 1.3 The listed building consent application (221807) was also registered on 11 August 2023 and was refused on 05 January with one reason for refusal.
- 1.4 The description of the proposed development for both applications is:
 - Part converting an existing house and 9 flats to 12 flats including extensions to lower ground and ground floors.*
- 1.5 The planning application was refused under delegated powers for the following reasons:

RfR1. *The proposed development, due its scale, design and appearance together with its prominent siting, would result in an overly large, unsympathetic and dominant rear extension which obscures the rear of the historic building, disrupting its form and legibility, and failing to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of this heritage asset. It would also result in the loss of historic fabric which contributes to the significance of the building. The proposals would therefore fail to preserve, and would result in harm to, the special historic character of the Listed Building and would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Christchurch Conservation Area. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policies CC7 (Design and the Public Realm), EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment), EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas) and EN6 (New Development in Historic Context) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.*

RfR2. *The proposed development would provide an unacceptable standard of accommodation due to its unsatisfactory, cramped, internal space and insufficient outdoor amenity space, which would adversely impact upon the level of amenity with consequent harm to the quality of accommodation for future occupiers. Lower ground floor flat 29 would provide poor interior light levels and outlook resulting in additional harm to the amenity of future occupiers. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CC8 (Safeguarding*

Amenity), H5 (Standards for New Housing) and H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

RfR3. *The proposal would result in the loss of family housing as a result of the conversion of No.29 Christchurch Road and the failure to replace with good quality family housing on site. The units that might otherwise be considered family housing (4 x 2 bed units) would not have access to any private garden amenity space and as such are an unsuitable replacement for the existing dwelling. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policies H8 (Residential Conversions) and H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the Residential Conversions SPD 2023.*

RfR4. *The proposed development fails to demonstrate that there would be no harm to existing trees on site and fails to demonstrate acceptable provision of replacement tree planting and landscaping with consequent harm to the visual amenity, biodiversity, canopy cover and environmental quality of the area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CC7 (Design and the Public Realm), EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas) and EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and Objectives 4 and 11 of the Tree Strategy 2021.*

RfR5. *In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure an acceptable contribution towards the provision of Affordable Housing, the proposal fails to contribute adequately to the housing needs of Reading Borough, contrary to Policies H3 (Affordable Housing) and CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the Council's Adopted Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2021*

- 1.6 The listed building consent application was refused under delegated powers for the following reason:

RfR1. *The proposed development, due its scale, design and appearance together with its prominent siting, would result in an overly large, unsympathetic and dominant rear extension which would obscure the rear of the historic building, disrupting its form and legibility, and which fails to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of this heritage asset. The works would also result in the loss of historic fabric which contributes to the significance of the building. The proposals would therefore fail to preserve, and would result in harm to, the special historic character of the Listed Building. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.*

- 1.7 Together with the original application documents this appeal Statement of Case (“SoC”) demonstrates that the proposed development is acceptable in planning terms and should be approved.
- 1.8 This statement is prepared by Rosalind Gall BA(Hons) MA MRTPI, Director of Momentum Planning Ltd. I am a Chartered Town Planner and a Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute with 20 years’ of experience gained working in the private sector, previously at Solve Planning Ltd, Savills and The London Planning Practice LLP. My experience has had a strong focus on residential development and of development affecting designated heritage assets.

Summary and Planning Balance

- 1.9 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:
- If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination under the planning acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.*
- 7.1 This SoC demonstrates that the proposal complies with both the Development Plan and other material planning considerations.
- 7.2 The proposal introduces the following planning benefits:
- **Restoration of the Grade II Listed Buildings** - the restoration and repair of the high value southern elevation and flank elevation through the repair/ replacement as necessary of timber sash windows, the repair/ replacement as necessary of timber doors, the restoration and painting of original railings, the repair and restoration of stucco as required and the replacement of the UPV window with timber sash window to match original windows. The restoration and repair of the rear elevation through removal of ad hoc additions and repair/ replacement as necessary of timber sash windows. Restoration of flank elevation through repair/ replacement of stucco. Reintroducing internal divide between no. 31 and 33. Reintroducing stair at upper levels of no. 33.
 - **Securing long-term future of designated heritage assets** – by securing the optimum viable use of the Grade II Listed buildings which currently in a poor condition.
 - **Housing provision** - The provision of two new dwellings in a sustainable location on a brownfield site.
 - **Improving quality of residential accommodation** – there will be an improvement of existing residential accommodation

through improved size standards, improved layout and improved security.

- **Affordable Housing** – A financial contribution will be made towards affordable housing.
- **Natural Environment** - Landscaping proposals will be brought forward to enhance the natural environment
- **Sustainable travel** - this is encouraged through the provision of cycle parking and the location of the new dwellings in a highly accessible area.
- **Economic benefits** – the proposal will create new jobs during the construction stage of the development and introduce longer-term economic benefits arising from additional expenditure in local from future occupants.
- **Sustainability and energy benefits** - the renovation of the building will improve the energy efficiency of the building, contributing to carbon reduction.

7.3 It is considered that the Council has not attributed sufficient weight to the positive aspects of the development. Whilst it is accepted that there will be less than substantial harm resulting from the rear extensions, this is more than outweighed by the public benefits. The development complies with the policies of the development plan.

Plans and documents submitted for approval

1.10 These applications were supported by the following plans and documents. These have been provided as part of the appeal bundle and we would invite the inspector to have regard to them in determining the appeal:

- Listed Building Appraisal and Heritage Impact Assessment by J F Missenden
- Design Statement by Bluebird Design & Surveying

1.11 Further documents have been prepared to accompany the appeal submission to specifically address concerns raised by the Conservation Area Advisory Committee. These are appended to the Statement of Case at **Appendix A** and are listed below:

A-1030 Rev C	Existing and Proposed First Floor Plans
A-1040 Rev C	Existing and Proposed Second Floor Plans
A-1110 Rev C	Existing and Proposed Rear Elevations
A-1105 Rev C	Existing and Proposed Lower Ground Floor Elevations and Sections

- 1.12 It is understood that the acceptance of these documents is at the discretion of the Inspector. These drawings include further annotations regarding the propose restoration of the building, retention of an additional rear window to no.33 and single roof pitch to the rear extension to no. 33.
- 1.13 A S106 legal agreement will be submitted during the course of this appeal to secure the agreed financial contribution towards affordable housing.
- 1.14 The drawing set submitted with the application is set out in the table below. These are the drawings on which the Council made their decision and upon which the appeal should be determined.

A-1000 Rev C	Site Location Plan
A-1010 Rev B	Existing and Proposed Lower Ground Plan
A-1020 Rev B	Existing and Proposed Ground Floor Plan
A-1030 Rev B	Existing and Proposed First Floor Plans
A-1040 Rev B	Existing and Proposed Second Floor Plans
A-1050 Rev B	Existing and Proposed Roof Plan
A-1100 Rev B	Existing and Proposed Front Elevations
A-1110 Rev B	Existing and Proposed Rear Elevations
A-1105 Rev B	Existing and Proposed Lower Ground Floor Elevations and Sections
A-1120 Rev B	Existing and Proposed Side Elevations
A-1130 Rev B	Existing and Proposed Side Elevations
A-1200 Rev B	Existing Landscape
A-1205 Rev B	Proposed Landscape Plan
A-1500 Rev B	Existing Window Schedule
A-1510 Rev B	Existing Window Schedule
A-1520 Rev B	Existing Window Schedule
A-1530 Rev B	Existing Window Schedule
A-1600 Rev B	Existing Window Schedule for Lower Ground Floor
A-1700 Rev B	Existing Wall Schedule Lower Ground Floor Plan
A-1710 Rev B	Existing Wall Schedule Ground Floor Plan
A-1720 Rev B	Existing Wall Schedule First Floor Plan
A-1730 Rev B	Existing Wall Schedule Second Floor Plan

Appeal Procedure

- 1.15 In accordance with the April 2022 guidance on '*Criteria for determining the procedure for planning, enforcement, advertisement and discontinuance notice appeals*', the appellant considers that the appeal should be determined via written representations.
- 1.16 The planning issues can be clearly understood from the appeal documents and a site inspection. The issues are not considered to be

complex and the Inspector is not likely to need to test the evidence by questioning or to clarify any other matters.

Matters agreed between the Council and the Appellant

1.17 In light of the issues raised in the officer's report and reasons for refusal, the following matters are not considered to be in dispute between the Appellant and the Council.

- The current state of the properties detracts from the character and appearance of the area and the existing buildings require renovation.
- No objection to the principle of rear extension.
- Impact on neighbouring amenity in terms of privacy, overlooking and outlook is considered acceptable.
- No highways objection subject to a condition restricting parking permits and a condition to secure cycle parking.
- No objection regarding sustainability subject to a condition to secure highway water efficiency standards of 110 litres per person per day; and a 19% improvement over building regulations energy requirements.

1.18 It should be noted that a financial contribution towards affordable housing was agreed between the appellant and the Council during the course of the application. A Section 106 agreement will be submitted to the Inspector within the required timeframe to secure this payment.

Matters in Dispute between the Appellant and the Council

1.19 The following matters are in dispute between the Council and the Appellant based on the Council's reasons for refusing planning and listed building consent applications 221806 & 221807.

- The Council consider that the extension is overly large, unsympathetic and dominant, would disrupt its form and legibility and would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the building and would result in harm due to loss of fabric.
- The Council consider that an unacceptable standard of accommodation would be provided due to unsatisfactory

cramped internal space and insufficient outdoor amenity space. They consider that there would be poor interior light levels to ground floor flat 29 resulting in additional harm to the amenity of future occupiers.

- The Council considers the development would result in the loss of family housing as a result of the conversion of no. 29 Christchurch Road and there would be a failure to replace this with good quality family housing. They consider that the units that might otherwise be considered family housing (4 x 2 bed units) would not have access to any private garden amenity space and as such are an unsuitable replacement for the existing dwelling.
- The Council consider that it has not been demonstrated that there would be no harm to existing trees on site and fails to demonstrate acceptable provision of replacement tree planting and landscaping with consequent harm to the visual amenity, biodiversity, canopy cover and environmental quality of the area.
- The Council consider that due to the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure an acceptable contribution towards the provision of Affordable Housing, the proposal fails to contribute adequately to the housing needs of Reading Borough.



2. Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The existing property is formed of a Grade II Listed terrace at 27 to 33 Christchurch Road, located at the junction with Kendrick Road. The properties are in residential use. No's 27, 31 & 33 have been subdivided into a number of flats. Parking and refuse is provided to the rear.
- 2.2 The site is indicated on the aerial view at Figure 1.

Figure 1: Aerial View from LandInsight



- 2.3 Photographs of the front and rear elevation of the properties are included at Figure 2 and 3.

Figure 2: Christchurch Road frontage



Figure 3: Rear elevation



- 2.4 Full details of the existing properties and consideration of the special historic interest of the properties is set out in the Listed Building Appraisal and Heritage Impact assessment submitted with this appeal and which formed part of the original application. Further details are set out in the existing window and wall schedules.
- 2.5 Much of the original features of the building on the front elevation remain, however it is clear from the photographs at Figures 3 to 7, that these features have fallen into a poor state of repair over time and are now at risk.
- 2.6 Whilst much of the original features of the rear elevation remain at the upper levels, at the lower levels, there have been later ad hoc extensions and the introduction of stair accesses to upper ground floor level.
- 2.7 Whilst some features remain internally, there has been a reasonable amount of intervention.
- 2.8 Much of the existing accommodation is substandard and in need of improvement.

Figure 4: Detailed photos of Christchurch elevation showing the poor state of the property

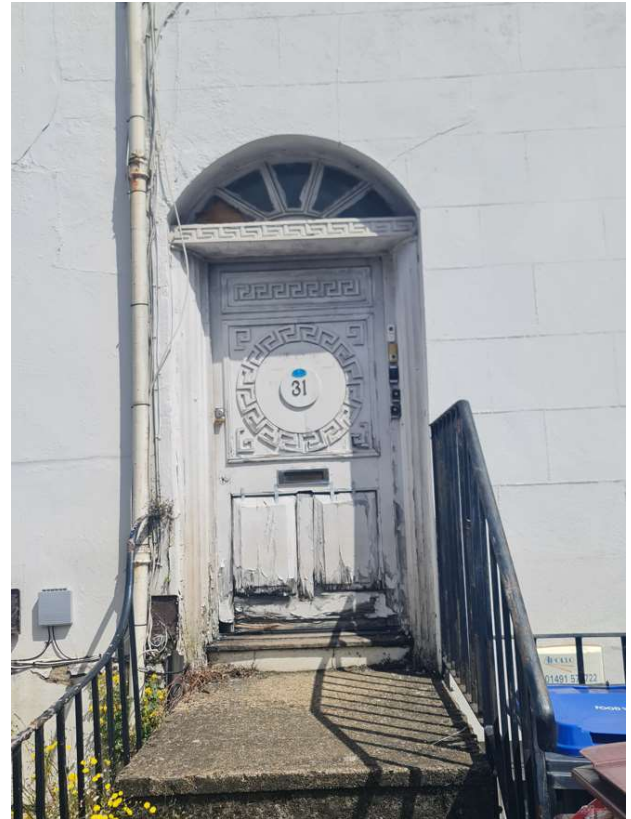




Figure 5: Detailed photos of flank elevation showing poor state of stucco



Figure 6: Detailed photos of rear elevation showing poor state and clutter



Figure 7: Internal stair to no. 27 and example of substandard accommodation



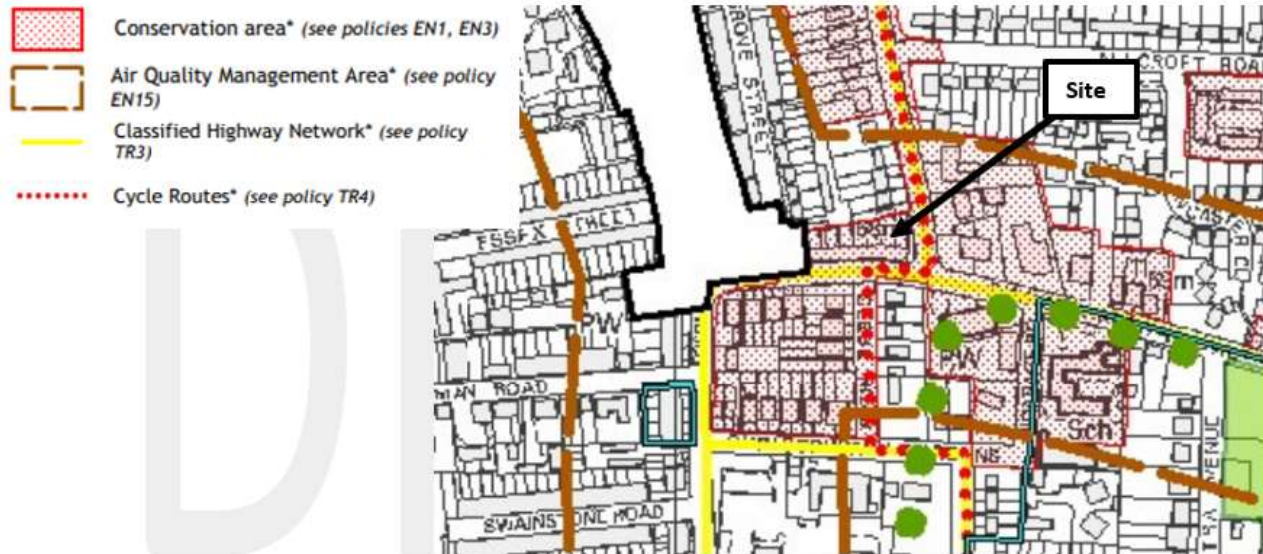


- 2.9 The property is located in a highly sustainable location. It is located on a busy bus route and is located on a cycle route. It is a short walk to the shops and services on Whitely Street to the east. There is a Junior school a short walk to the south-east. Cintra Park is 5 minutes walk to the south-east. There is a Church opposite and a Hindu Temple a short walk to the west.

Designations

- 2.11 The property is subject to the following designations in the adopted policies map (Figure 8):
- Within Christchurch Conservation Area
 - Within Air Quality Management Area
 - (Fronting) Classified Highway
 - (Fronting) Cycle Route

**Figure 8: Adopted Proposals
Map 2019 (Extract)**



- 2.12 According to the Environment Agency Flood Map, the site is located in Flood Zone 1 and is not in an area that is at risk of surface water flooding.

Planning History

- 2.13 The planning history for the property is included below:

20 April 2018	180174	29 Christchurch Road - Refit kitchen and bathroom. External walls to be re-pointed and re-plaster and repaint interior walls. Replace flooring and fix any damp issues.	Listed Building Consent Granted
02 March 2022	210413	Part converting an existing house and 9 flats to 12 flats including extensions to lower ground and ground floors.	Planning Application Withdrawn
02 March 2022	210414	Part converting an existing house and 9 flats to 12 flats including extensions to lower ground and ground floors	Listed Building Consent Application Withdrawn
05 January 2024	221806	Part converting an existing house and 9 flats to 12 flats including extensions to lower ground and ground floors.	Planning Permission Refused

05 January 2024	221807	Part converting an existing house and 9 flats to 12 flats including extensions to lower ground and ground floors.	Listed Building Consent Refused
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3. The Appeal Proposal

- 3.1 The appeal proposal seeks planning and listed building consent for the following development:

Part converting an existing house and 9 flats to 12 flats including extensions to lower ground and ground floors.

- 3.2 This involves the following:

- Conversion of existing property to provide 12 dwellings (uplift of 2) in the following dwelling mix:

4 x 2 bed (3 Person) duplex apartments

8 x 1 bed apartments

- Removal of existing rear lower ground floor additions and erection of two storey rear extensions over lower ground and ground floor.
- Restoration of the property to include:
 - Window repair/ like for like replacement where necessary
 - Door repair/ like for like replacement where necessary
 - Restoration and repainting of wrought iron railings
 - Repair of damaged stucco
 - Reintroduce division between no's 31 and 33.
 - Reinstate staircase to no. 33
- Provision of landscaped communal garden to rear and private gardens to dwellings at lower ground floor level.
- Provision of 5 car parking spaces to rear along with dedicated cycle store using existing access off Kendrick Road.
- Refuse store provided for collection from Kendrick Road

The proposed drawings are included at Figures 9 to 15.

Figure 9: Proposed Landscape Plan



Figure 10: Front Elevation



Figure 11: Rear Elevation



Figure 12: Lower Ground Floor



Figure 13: Ground Floor

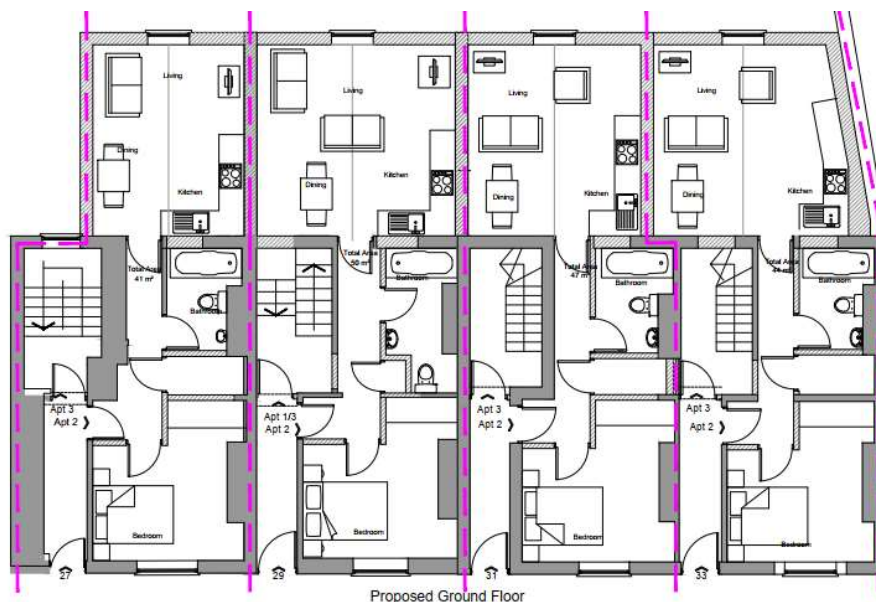
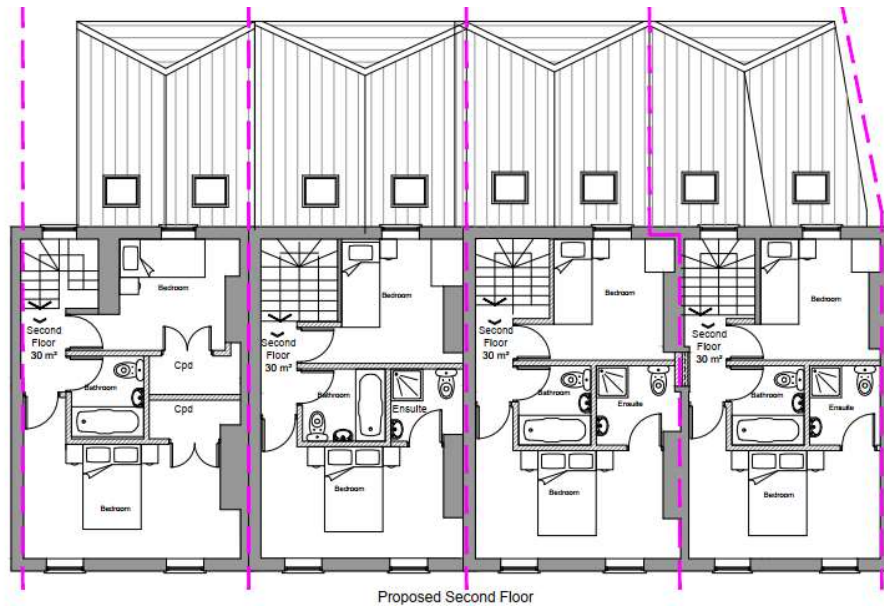


Figure 14: First Floor



Figure 15:
Second Floor





4. Planning Policy Context

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination under the planning acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicate otherwise.

4.2 The relevant development plan for the purpose of the appeal proposal comprises the following:

- Reading Borough Local Plan adopted November 2019
- Reading Borough Local Plan Proposals map adopted November 2019
- The Central and Eastern Berkshire Minerals and Waste Plan January 2023

Reading Borough Local Plan

4.3 The relevant policies within Reading Borough Local Plan are set out below:

- Policy CC7 -** Design and the Public Realm
- Policy CC8 -** Safeguarding amenity
- Policy EN1 -** Protection and enhancement of the Historic Environment
- Policy EN3 -** Enhancement of Conservation Areas
- Policy EN6 -** New development in a historic context
- Policy EN14 -** Trees, hedges and woodlands
- Policy H1 -** Provision of housing
- Policy H2 -** Density and mix
- Policy H3 -** Affordable housing
- Policy H5 -** Standards for new housing
- Policy H8 -** Residential conversions
- Policy H9 -** House extensions and ancillary accommodation

- Policy H10 -** Private and communal outdoor space
- Policy TR3 -** Access, traffic and highway-related matters
- Policy TR4 -** Cycle routes and facilities
- Policy TR5 -** Car and cycle parking and electric vehicle charging

Other material planning considerations

4.4 Other policy documents and guidance that are material to the consideration and determination of the appeal include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG), Supplementary Planning Guidance and Documents (SPD/SPG) as follows.

4.5 The following national policy and guidance are material planning considerations:

- National Planning Policy Framework (2019)
 - Section 4 – Decision making
 - Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
 - Section 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
 - Section 11 – Making effective use of land
 - Section 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
 - Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
 - Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

- MHCLG Planning Practice Guidance
- MHCLG National Design Guide (January 2021)

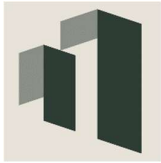
4.6 The following supplementary planning guidance and other documents/guidance is also relevant:

- Affordable Housing SPD (March 2021)
- Revised Parking Standards and Design (October 2011)
- Residential Conversions SPD (March 2023)

- Supplementary Planning Document on Planning Obligations under Section 106 (April 2015)
- Christchurch Conservation Area Appraisal (September 2010)

Emerging Planning Policy

- 4.7 In November 2023, a Regulation 18 Consultation was undertaken on a Local Plan Partial Update. According to the Council's Local Development Scheme (updated April 2024), the next public consultation will be carried out in November 2024. The Local Plan Update is therefore at a very early stage and should not be given any weight in determining applications.



5. Planning Assessment: The Development Plan

- 5.1 As noted in Section 4, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2 The relevant Development Plan for the appeal proposal comprises:
- The Reading Borough Local Plan adopted November 2019
 - Reading Borough Local Plan Proposals map adopted November 2019
 - The Central and Eastern Berkshire Minerals and Waste Plan January 2023
- 5.3 This section of the SoC is broken down into the following sub-sections:
1. Development Plan policies relating to the principle of development, housing type and affordable housing
 2. Development Plan policies relating to heritage and design
 3. Development Plan policies related to residential amenity and standard of proposed accommodation
 4. Development Plan policies relating to trees and landscaping

Development Plan policies relating to the principle of development, housing type and affordable housing

Policy H1: Provision of housing

- 5.4 The development meets the objectives of Policy H1 through the provision of an additional 2 no. dwellings to contribute to the Borough's annual housing target.
- 5.5 Development Plan Paragraph 4.4.3 recognises that provision of new housing involves a heavy reliance on previously developed land. This is due to the particular constraints of the Borough as a tightly defined urban

area. The undeveloped land that does exist is mainly either in the functional floodplain or is important public open space. The two proposed additional dwellings are located in the urban area on previously developed land in accordance with the need to make best use of such sites.

Policy H2: Density and mix

- 5.6 The policy states that appropriate density will be informed by character and mix of uses in the area in which the property is located, consideration of heritage assets, current and future accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport, the need to achieve high quality design, maximise the efficiency of land use and the need to minimise detrimental impact on the amenities of adjoining neighbours.
- 5.7 With respect to the appeal site, three of the existing properties have already been subdivided into residential flats and through the sensitive conversion of the property along with the restoration of the building, there will be an uplift of two.
- 5.8 As set out in Section 2 of this report, there are a range of densities and uses within the locality of the appeal site, and no particular density that forms the character of the area.
- 5.9 The site is located in a highly sustainable location. It is a very short walk to the shops along Whitely Street to the west. Christ Church is located on the opposite side of the road to the south-east. Reading Hindu Temple is located a few minutes' walk to the west. The Abbey Junior School is located a 2-minute walk to the south-east. There are regular busses serving the route along Christchurch Road. The site is located on a designated cycle route.
- 5.10 It is therefore considered that a flatted development is appropriate.
- 5.11 The policy highlights the mix requirements for the Borough and identifies the following estimated need:

Figure 4.6: Estimated size of accommodation type required in Reading (Source: SHMA 2016)

	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom	4+ bedroom
Market	10.3%	29.6%	41.5%	18.5%

- 5.12 The development will bring forward 4 no. 2 bedroom maisonettes which are suitable for small families, along with 9 no. 1 bedroom dwellings. Whilst there is a small reduction in the number of family sized dwellings compared with the existing property, there are significant improvements to the overall quality of the proposed dwellings and in particular the three existing smaller lower ground floor dwellings which have undersized bedrooms and awkward layouts. Further the living space of the existing

ground floor studio at no. 27, will be vastly improved through the extension and reorganisation of the space.

- 5.13 There is a need for the mix of dwellings proposed and the location and nature of the building are appropriate for this.

Policy H3: Affordable housing

- 5.14 During the course of the application, a financial contribution was agreed between the Appellant and the Council which is commensurate with the uplift of two dwellings. A S106 legal agreement will be submitted to the Inspector to secure this financial obligation in accordance with this policy.

Development Plan policies relating to heritage and design

Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm

- 5.15 The development accords with the high design quality required by this policy. As set out in Section 2, the existing buildings have fallen into a poor state of disrepair and the development will bring forward a significant enhancement to the streetscene.
- 5.16 The proposals will enable the restoration of the building. All original retained windows to the front and rear will be restored or, if not feasible will be replaced with like for like replacements. The UPV window at front lower ground floor level will be replaced with a timber sash window to match the other windows within the building. The existing render, which is in a poor state of repair will be replaced, with details to be secured via condition. The building will be enhanced significantly in views from Christchurch Road and Kendrick Road.
- 5.17 The rear extensions, whilst two storey, are arranged over lower ground and ground floor levels so that the extensions will appear subservient to the original buildings. Shallow pitched tile roofs are proposed to the extension as a discrete method of ensuring security to the rears of the properties and preventing access to the upper windows of the property.
- 5.18 The extension will extend no further to the rear than the existing lower ground floor rear additions, to ensure an appropriate rear building line and to retain the openness to the rear of the property as viewed along Kendrick Road.

Policy EN1: Protection and enhancement of the Historic Environment

- 5.1 The special interest of the listed buildings is set out in the Listed building Appraisal and Heritage Impact Assessment that supported the applications. The Assessment attributes a high value to the significance of

the Southern elevation. It notes that *'most features remain although poorly maintained.'*

- 5.2 In accordance with this policy the development will involve the restoration, repair, maintenance and restoration of this important elevation. There is a significant financial cost to these works which will be funded by the proposed development.
- 5.3 The submitted wall schedules set out in detail the various existing elements of the plan form of the building including existing fireplaces, archways, and makes it clear what elements are stud walls and later additions.
- 5.4 Whilst the later rear extensions will be removed and some intervention is necessary to the rear at lower ground and ground floor level, there is minimal intervention to the plan form of the building with existing features retained. The original staircases will be retained and the original staircase to no. 33 will be extended upwards to the first and second floor, which is suspected to have been its previous state.
- 5.5 In the delegated report, historic maps are included which show there were historic single storey extensions to the rear of the properties. However, these are not the extensions that exist today to the rear of no's 27, 31 & 33 which are more recent additions.
- 5.6 Whilst there is some fabric lost through the provision of the rear extensions, there are benefits through the removal of the stepped access points and the ad-hoc later additions at lower ground floor, removal of unsightly drainage features and the repair or replacement of timber sash winds as necessary to restore the appearance which is currently in a poor state of repair.
- 5.7 The stucco on the side elevation will be repaired or replaced as necessary and the unsightly satellite dishes will be removed.

Policy EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas

- 5.8 In accordance with this policy, positive consideration should be given to the opportunity taken to enhance the character of the conservation areas through the following:
 - Reducing visual clutter through the removal of drainage pipes, satellite dishes, removal of stepped accesses to rear.
 - Restoring original building features through the restoration of windows and doors which are prominent in the conservation area.
 - Removing ad hoc additions to the rear

- Restoring the original black wrought iron railings on the Christchurch Road elevation

5.8 These enhancements will be visible in the setting of the Grade II* Listed Christ Church on the opposite side of Christchurch Road and will have a positive impact on its setting.

Policy EN6: New development in a historic context

5.9 The proposed extension is formed over lower ground and ground floor levels and will appear subservient to the original buildings. It extends no further to the rear than the existing rear additions, maintaining an appropriate rear building line. The materials will match those on the existing building, including windows to match those on the rear elevation. The removal of the cluttered appearance to the rear and the restoration of existing windows will have a positive impact on the historic context of the building in accordance with this policy.

Development Plan policies relation to residential amenity and standard of proposed accommodation

Policy CC8: Safeguarding amenity

- 5.1 It is common ground between the appellant and the Council that there will be no material impact on neighbouring amenity.
- 5.2 The development works with the constraints of the building to bring forward an overall improvement in residential amenity and significantly improve the quality of accommodation of the existing apartments through additional space and more comfortable layouts and increased bedroom sizes.
- 5.3 Light to the lower ground floor dwellings is maximised through the provision of larger openings through the glazed doors and windows to the main living space of these dwellings. Each of the lower ground floor dwellings has access to a private amenity space and an outlook onto this space and the communal landscaping beyond. The bedrooms are south facing and will benefit from natural sunlight.
- 5.4 The ground floor level dwellings will be served by rooflights within the proposed extensions.
- 5.5 It is therefore considered that the development will provide an acceptable living environment for future occupants.

Policy H5: Standards for new housing

5.6 The standard of existing accommodation and the constraints presented by the need to maintain the special interest of the building are a material consideration when assessing the size standards of the proposed

dwellings. There are a number of existing poor quality and substandard dwellings that will be significantly improved by the proposed development.

- 5.7 The existing lower ground floor two-bedroom flat at no. 27 is 43sqm. This will be converted to a 64sqm one bedroom flat with improved layout.
- 5.8 The existing lower ground floor one-bedroom flat at no. 31 is 45sqm. This will be converted to a 51sqm one bedroom flat with improved layout.
- 5.9 The existing lower ground floor two-bedroom flat at no. 33 is 43sqm. This will be converted to a 52sqm one bedroom flat with improved layout.
- 5.10 The existing ground floor one bedroom flat at no. 27 is 21sqm. This will be converted to a 41sqm one bedroom flat.
- 5.11 Therefore, while a number of the dwellings fall short of the nationally described space standards the development as a whole is an improvement and is considered appropriate within the constraints of the listed buildings.

Policy H8: Residential conversions

- 5.12 The majority of the site is already subdivided and as set out above, the development will improve the existing flatted accommodation. The development will result in the loss of the family house, however this is necessary to bring forward the renovation and restoration of the property.
- 5.13 There are a range of dwelling types and sizes in the area, notably Kendrick Road is predominantly family housing and to the west of the site, along Christchurch Road and Whitely Street there are a mix of houses and flats. The loss of a family home will not result in a cumulative impact in the locality where there are numerous existing family homes.
- 5.14 The development brings forward four no. duplex units which would be suitable for small families. The Council has raised concern regarding the lack of dedicated garden space for these dwellings. However, the landscaped communal garden will be for the use of these dwellings and the property is well served by public open space and playspace which is in walking distance from the appeal site. Cintra Park is a 5 minute walk from the appeal site, and the playground within the park is an 8 minute walk.
- 5.15 There will be a moderate increase in occupants, however car, cycle and refuse provision is provided and there is no reason for refusal in this regard.

Policy H10: Private and communal outdoor space

- 5.16 The proposals comply with the requirements of this policy through the provision of functional private amenity space for the lower ground floor dwellings and a communal, landscaped garden for the residents on the upper floors. The communal garden is private, enclosed and separated

from the road frontage through the access path, and parking area for the development. The appellant is happy to accept a condition to secure full details of proposed landscaping including planting schedule.

- 5.17 As set out above, the properties have easy access to public open space and playspace at Cintra Park, which is a short walk from the site.

Development Plan policies relating to trees and landscaping

Policy EN14: Trees, hedges and woodlands

- 5.18 There are some small young trees and vegetation to the rear of the existing properties, some of which will need to be removed to accommodate the development. Whilst trees are indicated on the existing landscape plan, these have not been accurately located and set out in a formal tree survey.
- 5.19 It is noted that the Council's natural environment officer does not object to the principle of the removal of these trees/ vegetation as it does not grow at a suitable location in relation to the building and it is of a small size however requires further information on replacement planting.
- 5.20 The appellant would be happy to accept a condition to secure full details of tree/ vegetation removal and details of replacement planting by the provision of a detailed landscape plan and landscape management plan.



6. Planning Assessment: NPPF and other Material Considerations

- 6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Paragraph 2 of the NPPF confirms that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.2 The following sections of the NPPF are considered relevant to the determination of the proposals, each of which are discussed in turn in the forthcoming paragraphs:
- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
 - Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
 - Section 9
 - Section 11 – Making effective use of land
 - Section 12 – Achieving
 - Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
 - Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
- 6.3 The NPPF in Section 2 (Achieving Sustainable Development) establishes that while planning decisions should be taken in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, they should also be made in the context of a presumption in favour of sustainable development which is at the heart of the Framework (paragraph 10).
- 6.4 The proposal responds to this requirement as follows:
- **An economic objective** – Delivery of new homes in a sustainable location will contribute towards the creation of a strong, responsive and competitive economy. The proposal will give rise to temporary direct and in-direct construction jobs and longer-term economic impacts arising from additional expenditure in the nearby retail frontages from future occupants.
 - **A social objective** – the proposal will assist in the creation of strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided in an accessible, sustainable location to help meet local housing need. The proposal will also deliver a well-designed, attractive, and safe

development which improves the quality of the existing living space. It comes forward with a financial contribution towards affordable housing in the borough.

- **An environmental objective:** Through the restoration and enhancement of the group of Grade II Listed buildings that are gradually falling into a state of decay, the development will protect and enhance the built environment. The improvements will naturally result in an increase in the energy efficiency of the building to contribute to mitigating and adopting to climate change. A landscaping scheme that brings forward appropriate planting to enhance the visual appearance of the development and encourage biodiversity will contribute to meeting the environmental objective.

6.5 Paragraph 11 states that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking this means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay

Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

- 6.6 The proposal complies with paragraph 60 of the NPPF by supporting the government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. The development will bring forward an uplift of 2 no. dwellings in a sustainable location.
- 6.7 The financial contribution towards affordable housing will contribute to the affordable need in the Borough.

Section 11 – Making effective use of land

- 6.8 Section 11 seeks to promote the effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions (paragraph 119).
- 6.9 As the proposal involves the delivery of additional housing on previously developed land within the settlement for homes, it should be given substantial weight in accordance with paragraph 120. It will result in the significant improvement of existing substandard accommodation.

Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places

- 6.10 The restoration of the building will result in a significant enhancement to the streetscene and Christchurch conservation area. The proposed rear

extension has been sensitively designed and will result in the beneficial removal of clutter to the existing rear elevation.

Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 6.11 The proposals involve the provision of a landscaped communal area to the rear, which will be visible in views from Kendrick Road. The appellant is happy for a condition to be attached to secure full details of landscaping to ensure the enhancement of the natural environment.

Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

- 6.12 This section of the NPPF states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage Appellant's, including any contribution made by their setting.
- 6.13 The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.
- 6.14 In determining applications, local authorities should take account of:
- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation*
 - b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
 - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*
- 6.15 Paragraph 208 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 6.16 The significance of the existing buildings is assessed in the Listed building Appraisal and Heritage Impact assessment submitted with the applications. The assessment concludes that the southern (front) elevation has a high level of significance and the interior and rear of the building have a medium level of significance. The rear amenity space is concluded to have a low level of significance.
- 6.17 There would be a low level of harm through the minor internal alterations required to facilitate the conversion. However internally it should be noted

that alterations have been kept to a minimum with original features retained and only stud walls removed.

6.18 The rear extensions will result in some loss of original fabric on the original rear elevation and the removal of the more recently constructed single storey extensions. It is considered that this will result in less than substantial harm with a moderate impact on the significance of the buildings.

6.19 There are clear public benefits that outweigh the harm ascribed. These are as follows:

- The restoration and repair of the high value southern elevation and flank elevation through the repair/ replacement as necessary of timber sash windows, the repair/ replacement as necessary of timber doors, the restoration and painting of original railings, the repair and restoration of stucco as required and the replacement of the UPV window with timber sash window to match original windows.
- The restoration and repair of the rear elevation.
- The provision of two new dwellings in a sustainable location on a previously developed site.
- The restoration of the separation between no's 31 and 33.
- The reinstatement of the stairwell to no. 33 at first and second floor level
- The improvement of existing residential accommodation through improved size standards, improved layout and improved security.
- Securing the optimum viable use of the building and ensuring its long term future.

6.20 The proposed development therefore conserve and enhance the historic environment in accordance with Section 16.

6.21 Without prejudice to the conclusions above, paragraph 214 invites local planning authorities to assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies, but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.

6.22 In this instance the building has deteriorated over an extended amount of time, to the extent that original windows and doors are rotting, and the security of existing residential dwellings is increasingly at risk. The cost of

repair is significant, and the development will bring forward the necessary restoration works along with the other benefits listed above.

- 6.23 In accordance with test at paragraph 208 of the NPPF it is considered that the harm is outweighed by the planning benefits.

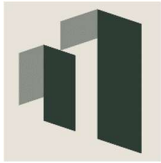
Third Party Comments

- 6.24 As noted in the delegated report, 2 letters of objection were received, and 3 letters of support/ observation received.

- 6.25 An objection was received by the Conservation Area Advisory Committee which whilst welcoming the potential for improving the exterior and interiors of the properties raised the following points (responses are provided in bold):

- The proposed two-storey extension block across the rear of the four Listed Grade II (1154859) properties is of significant size in relation to the existing properties, disjointed and not sympathetic to the rhythm of the existing buildings nor is it of sufficient architectural merit to provide an interesting contrast. It would be preferable that an extension was not built. **(the acceptability of the extension is addressed earlier in this statement of case. The CAAC had a particular concern with the roof form to the rear of no. 33. Concern was also expressed about the removal of the window to the rear of no. 33. A minor amendment to provide a single pitch roof form to the rear of this dwelling, and the retention of this window is included at Appendix A. If the Inspector considers it necessary, the applicant would be happy to make this adjustment to be secured via planning condition.)**
- The interior works are difficult to decipher from the plans submitted and we would have liked to see a plan showing which walls are to be demolished. We note and welcome the re-instatement of the separation of the upper floors of 31 & 33. **(Full details are set out in the detailed 'existing wall schedules' which demonstrate the minimal intervention to the building internally when compared to the proposed drawings)**
- Work at the rear of the property will result on the removal of existing small extensions and 17 windows and doors at the rear of the property **(The extensions are recent additions to the property. As set out earlier in this statement, whilst there is some loss of fabric, this is more than outweighed by the public benefits. Further, Appendix 1 show a potential minor amendment to retain an additional window)**
- The application is silent on the poor condition of the front doors and the window survey is out of date as it does not reflect the

replacement of the ground floor window of No 27 by an inappropriate UPVC replacement. ***(The appellant proposes to replace the UPVC window with a timber sash window as demonstrated in the drawings at Appendix 1. The appellant is happy to accept a planning condition to secure this.)***



7. Conclusions and Planning Balance

7.4 This appeal seeks planning permission and listed building consent for the following development:

Part converting an existing house and 9 flats to 12 flats including extensions to lower ground and ground floors.

7.5 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.6 This SoC demonstrates that the proposal complies with both the Development Plan and other material planning considerations.

7.7 The proposal introduces the following planning benefits:

- **Restoration of the Grade II Listed Buildings** - the restoration and repair of the high value southern elevation and flank elevation through the repair/ replacement as necessary of timber sash windows, the repair/ replacement as necessary of timber doors, the restoration and painting of original railings, the repair and restoration of stucco as required and the replacement of the UPV window with timber sash window to match original windows. The restoration and repair of the rear elevation. The restoration of the separation between no's 31 and 33. The reinstatement of the stairwell to no. 33 at first and second floor level
- **Securing long-term future of designated heritage assets** – by securing the optimum viable use of the Grade II Listed buildings which are currently in a poor condition.
- **Housing provision** - The provision of two new dwellings in a sustainable location on a brownfield site.
- **Improving quality of residential accommodation** – there will be an improvement of existing residential accommodation through improved size standards, improved layout and improved security.

- **Affordable Housing** – A financial contribution will be made towards affordable housing.
- **Natural Environment** - Landscaping proposals will be brought forward to enhance the natural environment
- **Sustainable travel** - this is encouraged through the provision of cycle parking and the location of the new dwellings in a highly accessible area.
- **Economic benefits** – the proposal will create new jobs during the construction stage of the development and introduce longer-term economic benefits arising from additional expenditure in local from future occupants.
- **Sustainability and energy benefits** - the renovation of the building will improve the energy efficiency of the building, contributing to carbon reduction.

7.8

It is considered that the Council has not attributed sufficient weight to the positive aspects of the development. Whilst it is accepted that there will be less than substantial harm resulting from the rear extensions, this is more than outweighed by the public benefits. The development complies with the policies of the development plan and in accordance with Paragraph 11c) it is respectfully requested that the Inspector allow this appeal.



8. Suggested planning conditions

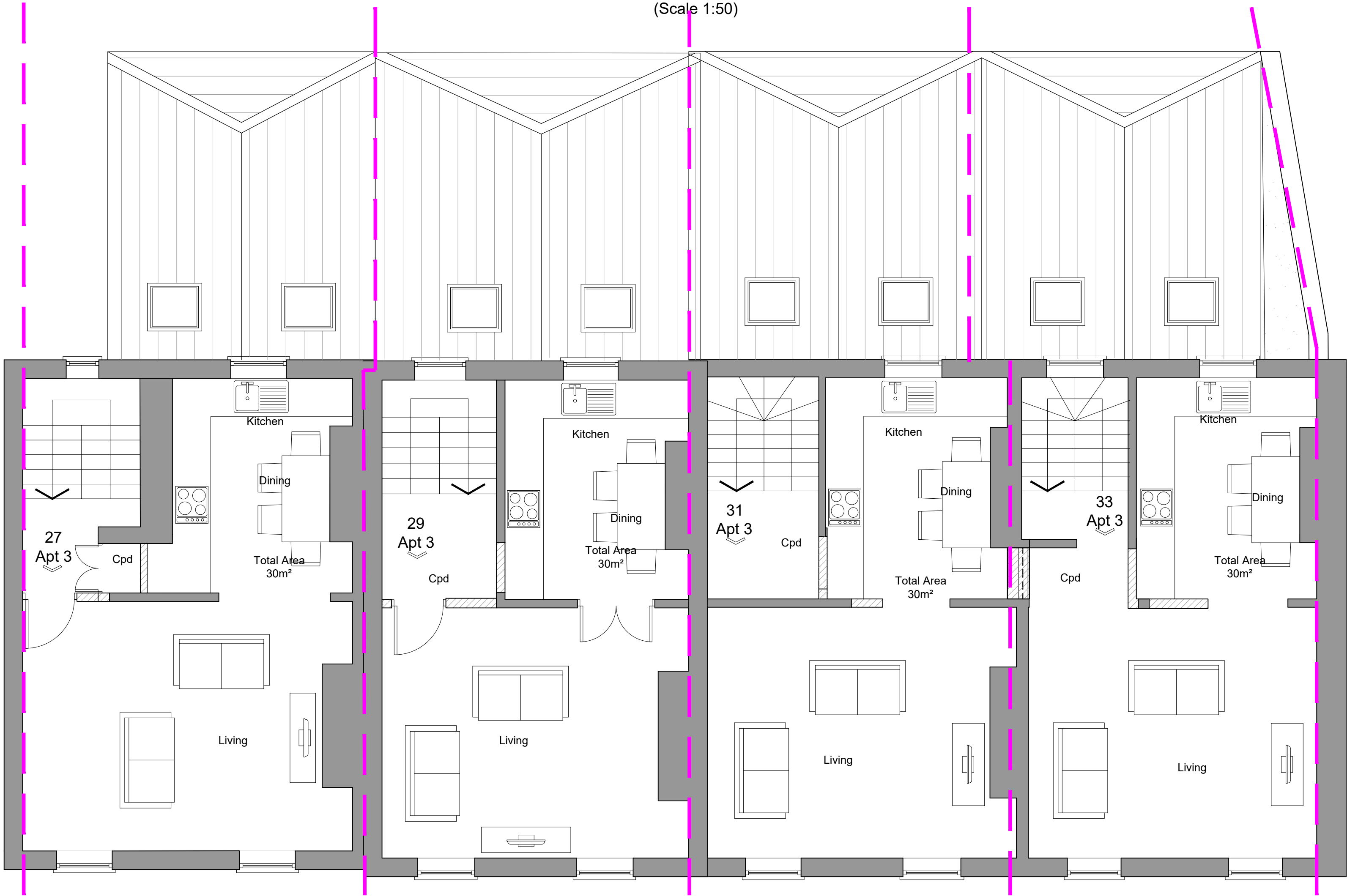
- 8.1 In the event of the appeal being allowed, the appellant would be content to accept any reasonable and necessary planning conditions and looks forward to commenting on any putative conditions in response to the LPA's statement.
- 8.2 In the meantime, having regard to the consultee comments, we would suggest that conditions relating to the following matters would be appropriate:
- Prior to development, details of external materials to be submitted and approved
 - Prior to development, full landscaping details to be submitted and approved.
 - No development on site until a construction method statement to be submitted and approved.
 - No development on site until an arboriculture impact assessment to be submitted.
 - Prior to development a landscaping scheme with appropriate replacement planting to be submitted and approved.
 - Condition restricting parking permits for new residents.
 - Prior to occupation, details of cycle parking provision to be submitted and approved
 - Prior to development, submission of details to secure highway water efficiency standards of 110 litres per person per day; and a 19% improvement over building regulations energy requirements.



Appendix A - Drawings

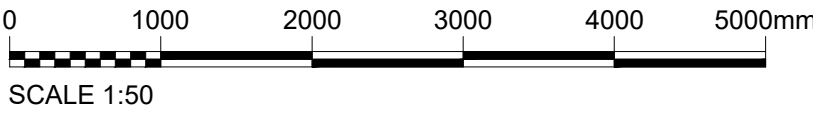


Existing First Floor
(Scale 1:50)



Key

- Boundary to Property
- Proposed Walls
- Existing Walls



REV	DATE	DRN	CHKD	APPD	DESCRIPTION
C	04.07.23	JA	DA	JA	ISSUED WITH WINDOW AND ROOF UPDATED
B	16.11.22	JA	DA	JA	ISSUED FOR PLANNING APPROVAL
A	20.06.22	JA	DA	JA	ISSUED AS PRELIMINARY

DRAWING STATUS

For Approval



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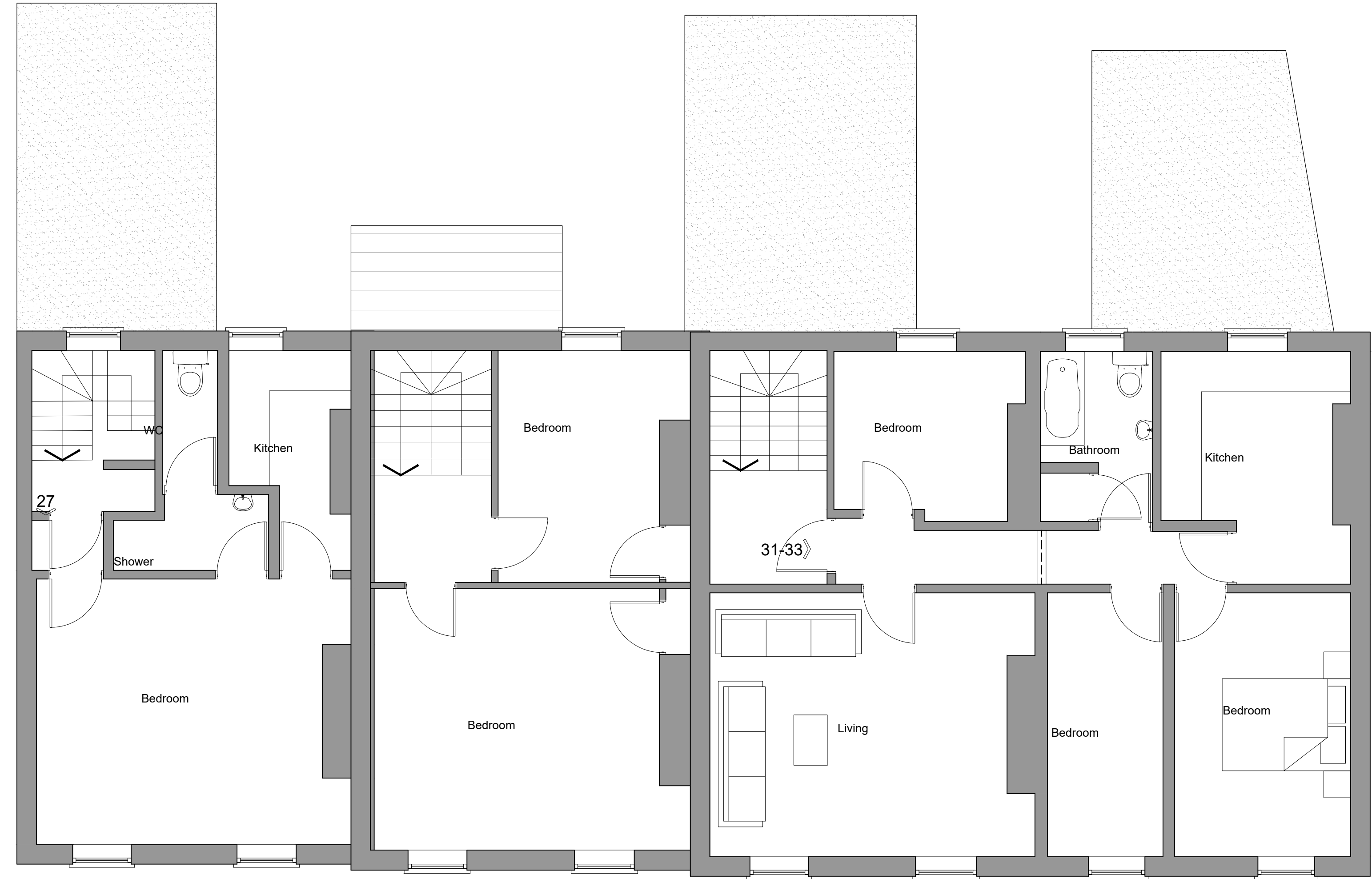
CLIENT Mr Dhillon/
Agaram Properties Ltd

PROJECT 27-33 Christchurch Road
Reading

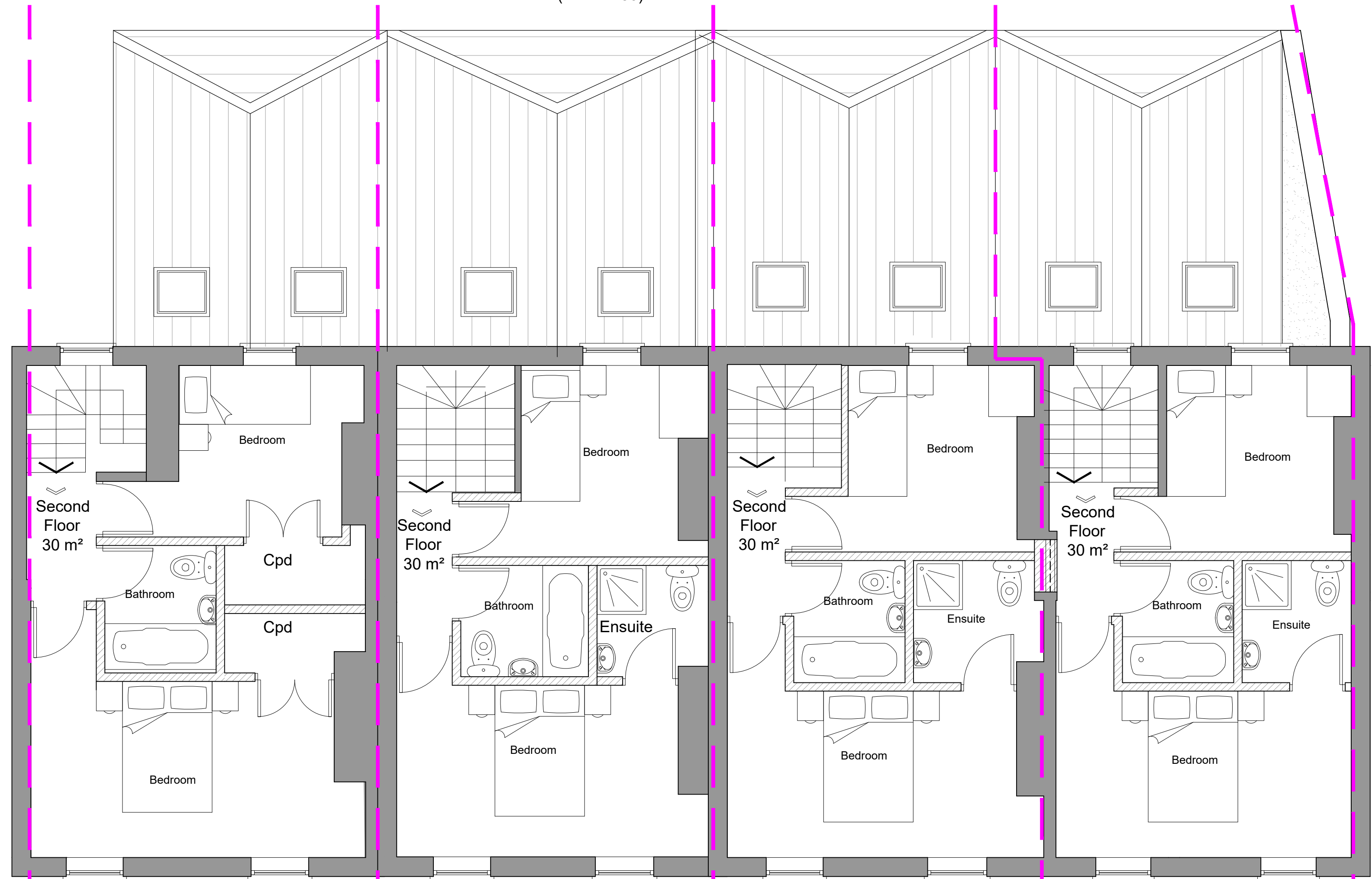
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DRAWN JA	DATE May 22	SCALE 1:50 @ A1
DRG NO A-1030	REV C	

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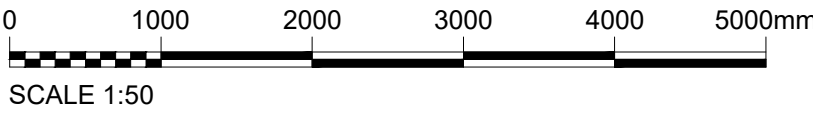
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(Scale 1:50)



Proposed Second Floor
(Scale 1:50)

Key

- Boundary to Property
- Proposed Walls
- Existing Walls



C	04.07.24	JA	DA	JA	ISSUED WITH ROOF UPDATED
B	16.11.22	JA	DA	JA	ISSUED FOR PLANNING APPROVAL
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Agaram Properties Ltd

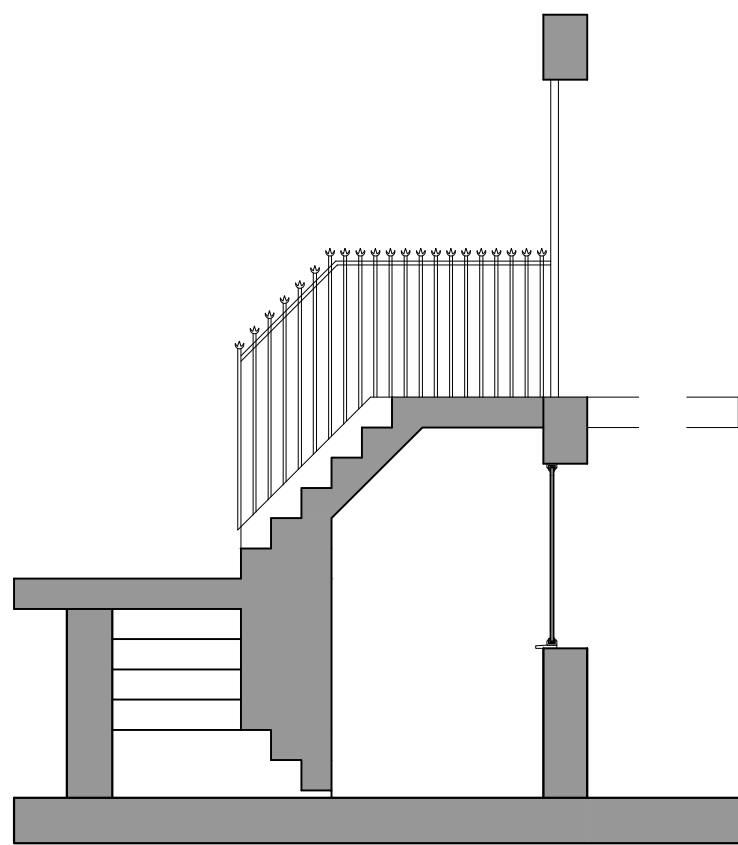
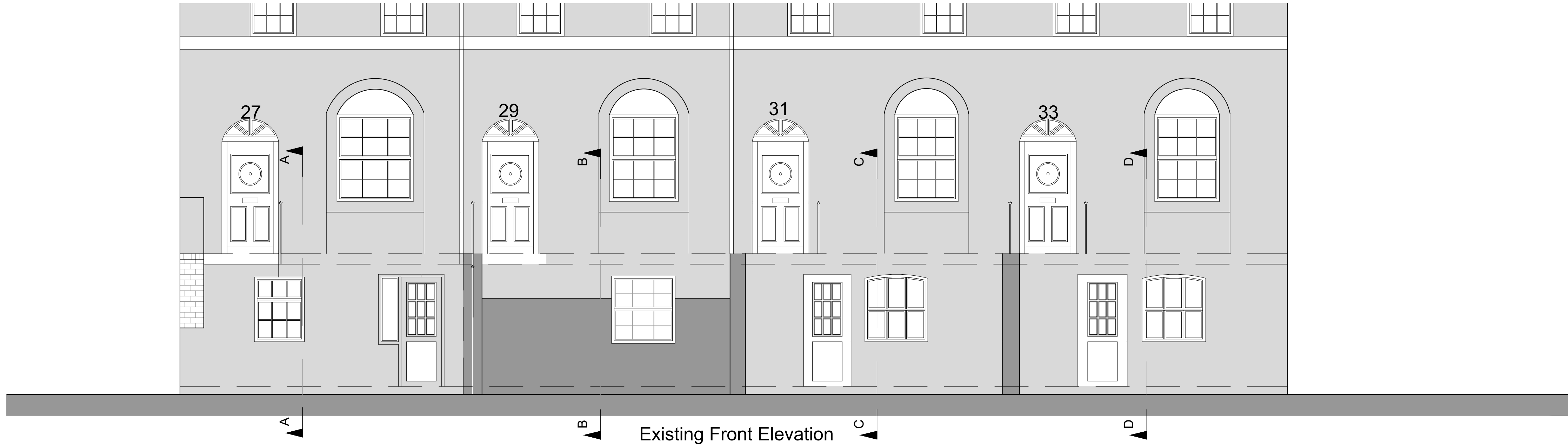
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TITLE Existing and Proposed
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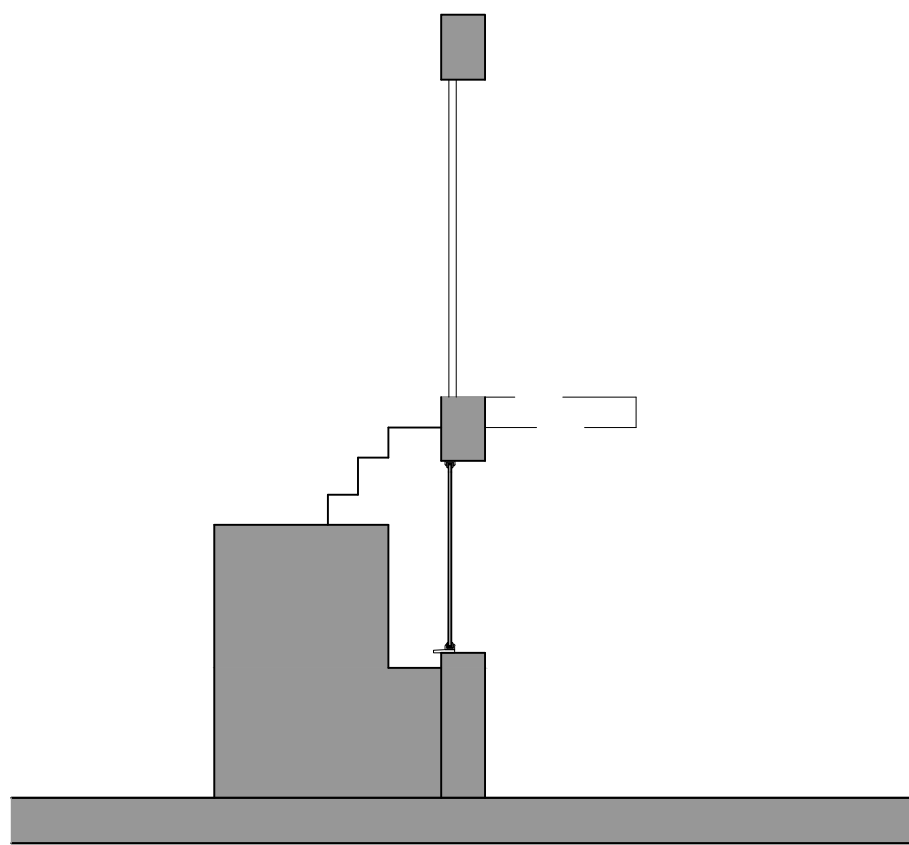
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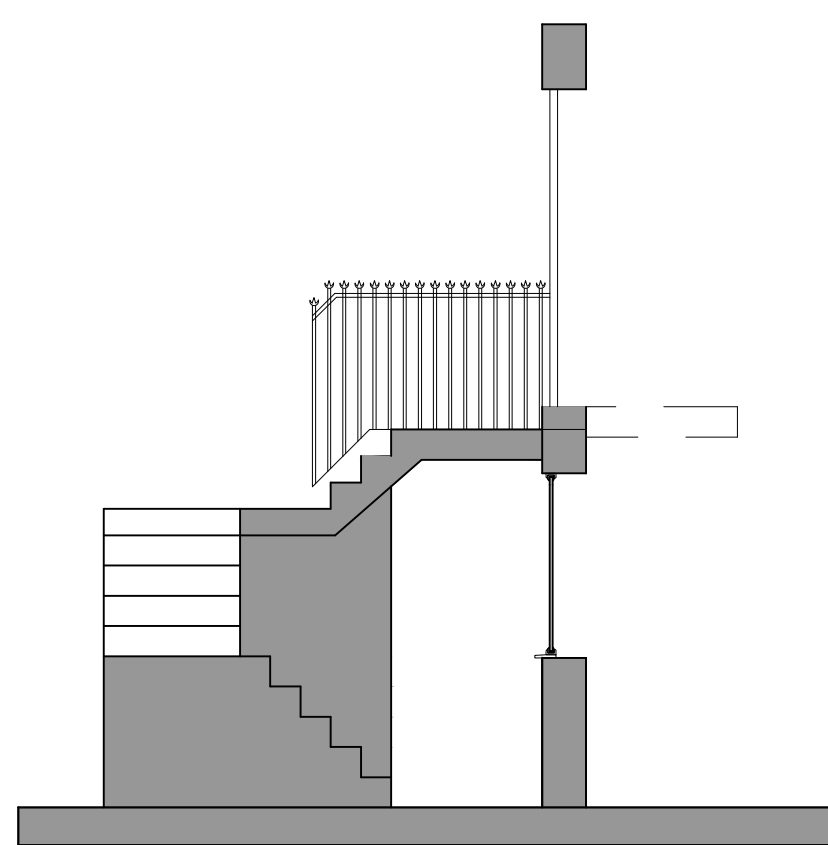
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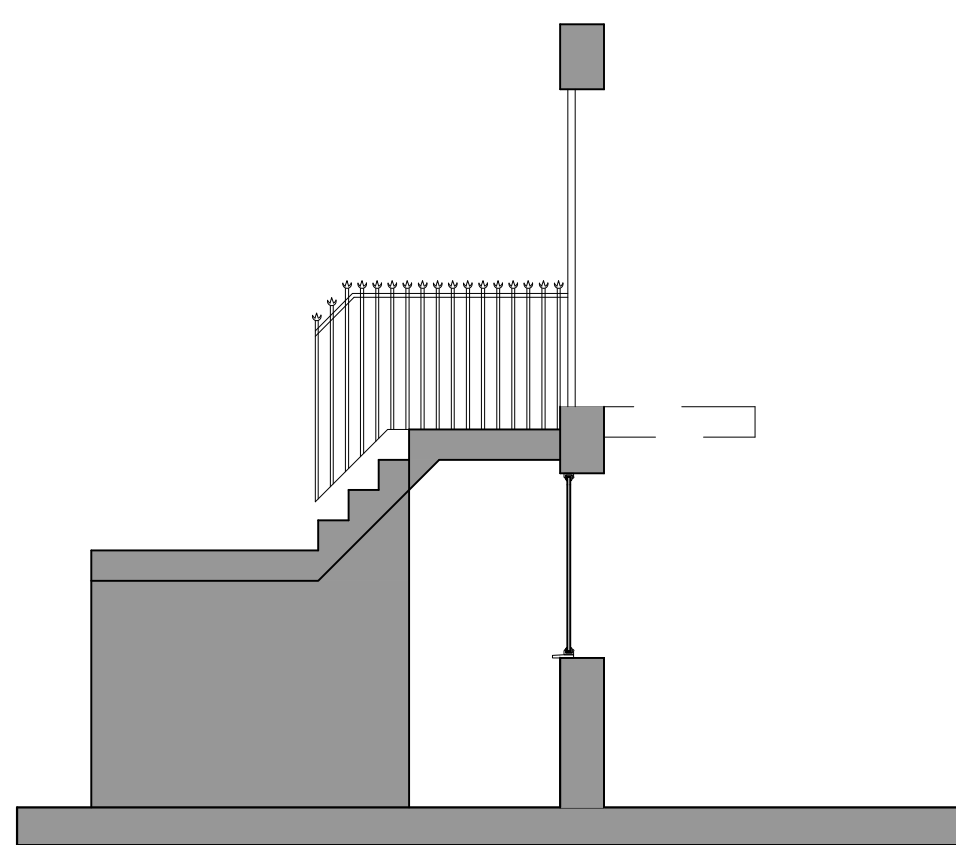
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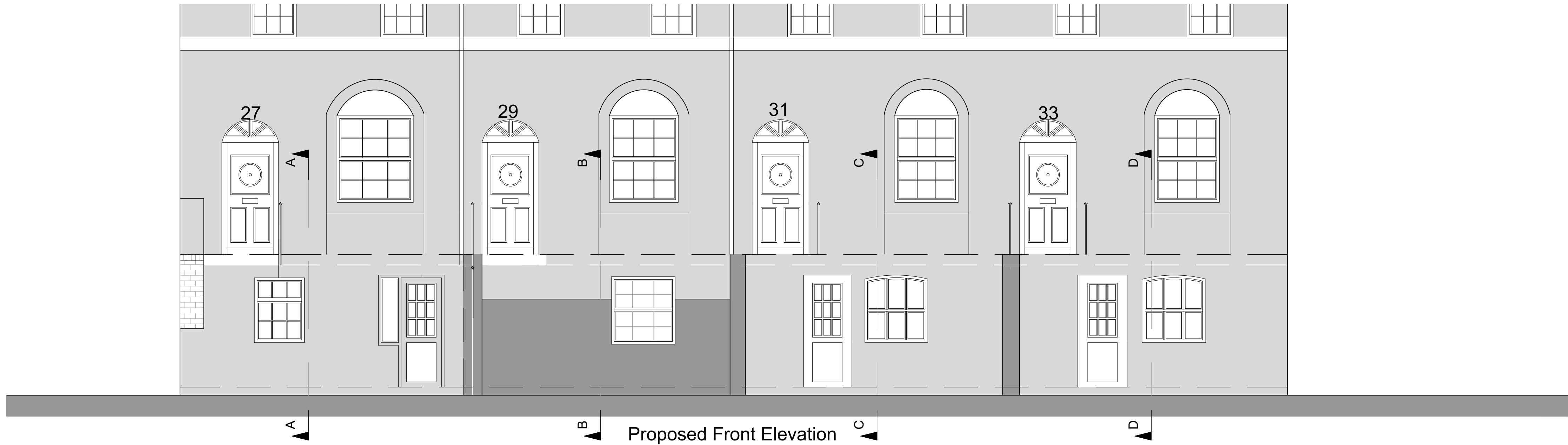
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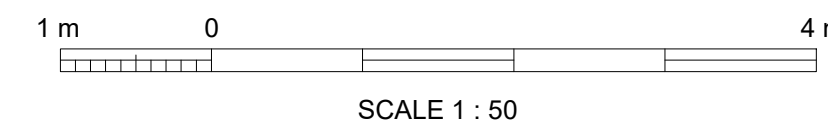
Existing and Proposed
Section C-C
Scale 1:50



Existing and Proposed
Section D-D
Scale 1:50



1. Doors and timber framed windows to be restored and upvc windows replaced with timber frame windows in accordance with drawing A-1530 rev B.
2. Railing to be restored repainted black.



REV	DATE	DRN	CHKD	APPD	DESCRIPTION
C	04.07.24	JA	DA	JA	ISSUED WITH NOTE ADDED
B	17.11.22	JA	DA	JA	ISSUED FOR PLANNING APPROVAL
A	20/06/22	JA	GS	JA	ISSUED AS PRELIMINARY

DRAWING STATUS

For Approval



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PROJECT 27 -33 Christchurch Road
Reading

TITLE Existing and Proposed
Lower Ground Elevations
And Sections

DRAWN JA	DATE Feb 21	SCALE 1:50 @ A1
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DRG NO A-1105	REV C
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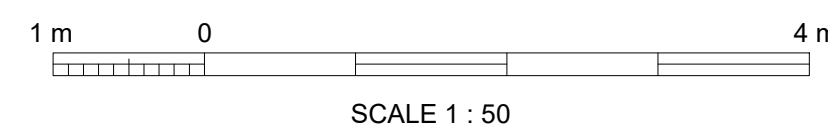


Existing Rear Elevation



Proposed Rear Elevation

1.Doors and timber framed windows to be restored and upvc windows replaced with timber frame windows in accordance with drawing A-1530 rev B.



REV	DATE	DRN	CHKD	APPD	DESCRIPTION
C	04.07.24	JA	DA	JA	ISSUED WITH NOTE ADDED
B	17.11.22	JA	DA	JA	ISSUED FOR PLANNING APPROVAL
A	20.06.22	JA	GS	JA	ISSUED AS PRELIMINARY

For Approval



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PROJECT 27-33 Christchurch Road
Reading

TITLE Existing and Proposed
Rear Elevations

DRAWN JA	DATE June 22	SCALE 1:50 @ A1
DRG NO A-1110	REV C	



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