



Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee
6 September 2024

Dear Marcie Rejwerska,

**OBSERVATIONS ON PLANNING APPLICATION AND LISTED BUILDING CONSENT 240874 &
240875 33 BAKER STREET**

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS

- In principle welcome this application to refurbish and conserve 33 Baker Street. It is unfortunate that some works were undertaken before this application and listed building consent were submitted.
- The application includes insufficient detail on the work to be undertaken e.g. an assessment of which windows can be repaired and which need to be replaced.
- The application includes insufficient details about materials to be used.

1. HERITAGE

1.1 Context and setting

1.1.1 33 Baker Street is a Grade II listed building in a group of listed buildings 33-39 Baker Street. The official list entry ([1321984](#)) dates the properties to the early to mid-nineteenth century. It sits within the Russell Street/Castle Hill/Oxford Road Conservation Area (CA) and there are many other listed buildings nearby. The CA is on Historic England's Heritage at Risk list and Oxford Road, within the CA to the north, has benefited from physical improvements funded as part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone Project (2020-2024).

1.1.2 The building appears in the 1842 Post Office directory as No 1 Albert Terrace in a terrace of 4 properties. The terrace does not appear on the 1834 Commissioner's map of Reading, although Russell Terrace immediately to the west does¹. Given the name 'Albert Terrace' it is quite likely that it dates from the early years of Queen Victoria's reign (1837-1901).

¹ Reading Mercury 11 May 1829, p3. Seven identical properties in Russell Terrace (probably nos 1-7) for auction.



Figure 1 (Left) Board of Health map 1853 courtesy Royal Berkshire Archives, (Right) Extract from OS map 1877 published 1879 courtesy of National Library of Scotland. Number 33 Baker Street circled.

1.1.3 The four properties in the terrace are in two pairs linked by entrances to 35 and 37. No 39 had a side entrance and No 33, at the junction with Jesse Terrace benefits from a single storey hallway and front door to the street and side access to Jesse Terrace.

1.2 Heritage impact of the proposal

1.2.1 The very thorough Heritage Statement (HS) documents the work required to conserve the building and the materials and approaches that should be used to ensure that. Reading CAAC will not comment on the technical aspects of that advice.

1.2.2 Should this application/listed building consent be granted the materials to be used internally and externally should be secured by condition.

1.2.3 In the paragraphs below we comment on certain aspects of the proposal where we feel that we can add value.

1.2.3.1 Front door. The Design and Access Statement (DAS) says that the door is plywood but we believe that that the front door is original and if so that it should be retained subject to any modifications required to meet modern standards for its use as two flats (granted in 2002). Options that retain the front door should be considered. Period appropriate door furniture should also be added. We note that what appears to be an original door knob has recently been removed.



Figure 2 (Left) front door of 33 Baker Street and (Right) detail of front door and missing door knob

1.2.3.2 Rear door. An application to replace the rear door and other works were granted in 2002. Para 2.5.2 of the HS agrees with the DAS that this is a plywood door and says that it is modern but we are unable to assess the visual impact of the door.

1.2.3.3 Glazing above front door. The image above shows a large area of glazing above the front door. The application is silent on the intention of the applicant in relation to this glazing and this should be clarified. To note that the glazing above the front door may have been removed at Nos 35 & 37. See image below.



Figure 3 Entrance doors to 35 & 37 Baker Street - note area above front doors

1.2.3.4 Front light well and door to basement flat. We do not object in principle to a door to the light well at the front of the property but would not support the addition of access to the flat from the front e.g. steps down. The materials and style of door should be secured by condition.



Figure 4 Excavations for front light well (from Jesse Terrace)

1.2.3.5 Railings. The loss of a section of original railing is lamented (see image below). We note that the applicant intends to install a railing along this wall and request that a railing is also re-instated at the front of the property along Baker Street. The railing to be installed has not been specified by the applicant but materials and style should be secured by condition. Railings or a grille will be required to prevent falling in to light wells and these should also be specified and materials and style secured by condition.

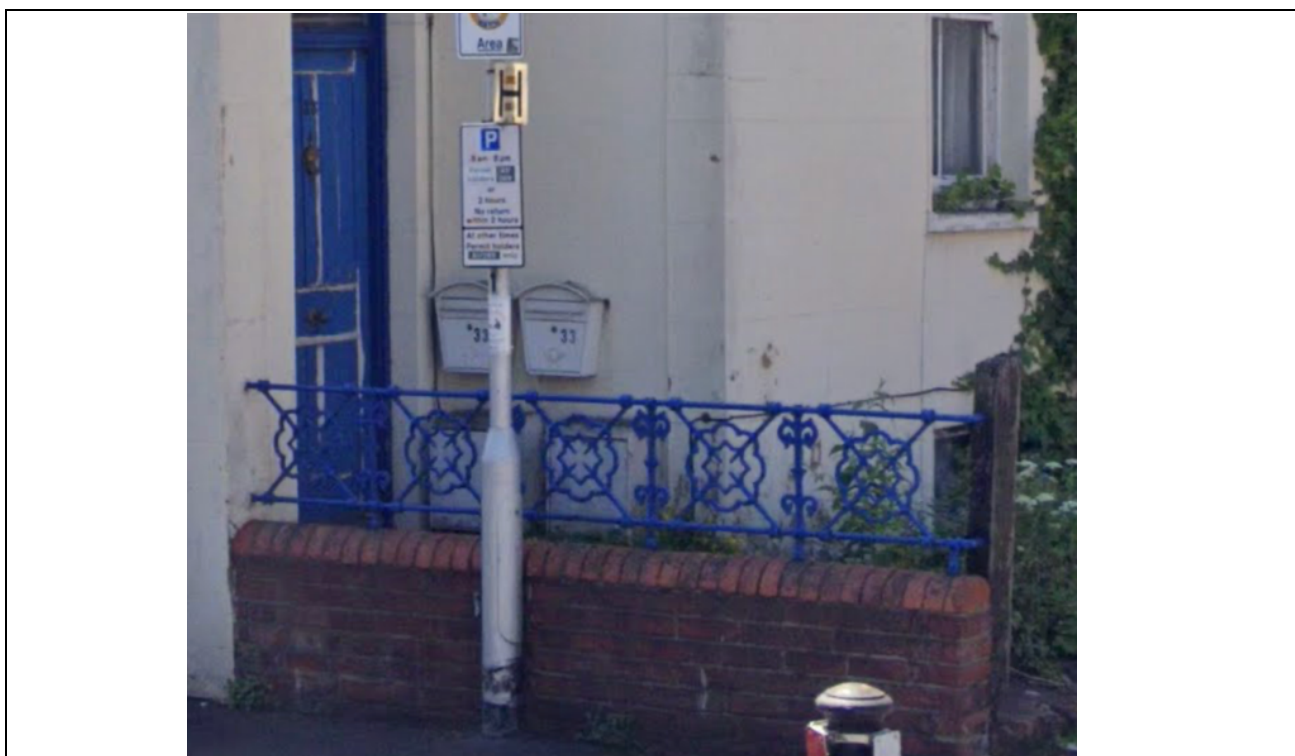


Figure 5 Section of lost railing as it was in June 2018 (Google streetview)

1.2.3.6 Windows. A window condition survey should be produced and windows repaired in preference to replacement. The DAS mentions that replacements if required would be 'like for like' but this will not be sufficient as windows have been replaced over time; some are UPVC and the lower left front window is not in keeping with the age of the building. The need for a schedule of window repairs and materials to be used should be secured by condition. The HS mentions enlarging a window in the side elevation but details of this cannot be found on the plans.

1.2.3.7 Door to rear light well. As for the front light well, the materials and style of the door should be secured by condition

1.2.3.8 Other exterior features. The opportunity should be taken during this refurbishment to remove any extraneous wiring, television aerials etc.

2. GARDEN AND LANDSCAPING

2.1 We agree that the sycamore tree in the garden should be removed and treated to prevent regrowth, which will require an additional permission. There is also another sycamore tree growing on the other side of the garden which should be considered for removal.

2.2 The application is silent on any proposals for the front garden as a result of the excavation of the light well, how the well is to be secured and if it is to remain completely excavated to the street. The HS states that the excavations will remain and will be secured by brick walls.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 In principle we welcome the refurbishment works to be undertaken and the conservation of the property in a sustainable manner for the future.

3.2 This proposal requires considerable additional detail from the applicant for it to be completely understood and assessed. The HS from the consultant provides many recommendations and sets out best practice. What is required from the applicant is a specification of works which will be done and how they will be implemented. Of necessity our comments have therefore covered many eventualities.

3.3 We have also included other works which we feel the applicant should consider undertaking as part of the refurbishment.

Yours sincerely

Evelyn Williams
Chair Reading CAAC
On behalf of Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee
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