

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey

App Ref: PL/24/0874 Full planning permission & PL/24/0875 Listed building consent

Address: 33 Baker Street, Reading

Proposal: Proposed refurbishment works including new light well to front and rear, external render, guttering, handrail and window repairs, replacement of internal doors and repair and refurbishment of basement and loft ceiling joists. Removal of Sycamore tree in rear garden and repointing of brick boundary wall. Part-retrospective (amended description). Part-retrospective

Applicant: Mr Nima Gholi

Received date: 2024-07-09

Target Decision date: 2025-01-10 (Extension of time)

Case Officer: Marcelina Rejwerska

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a Grade II listed, two-storey semi-detached property on the south side of Baker Street on the corner of the junction of Baker Street and Jesse Terrace. The property is divided into 2x flats, with the basement in use as a self-contained separate residential unit, accessed via the rear garden. There are two multi-stemmed Sycamore trees in the rear garden, of which one is causing damage to the boundary brick wall. There is evidence of unsympathetic historic repairs, such as cement-mix render patches and internal doors being clad to improve their fire safety.

The national listing reads as follows:

BAKER STREET 1. 5128 Nos 33 to 39 (odd) SU 7073 12/403 II 2. Early-mid C19. 2 pairs of semi-detached houses linked by porch annexe. 2 storeys and basement. Each pair is a stucco pavilion with hipped slate roof and 2 ranges of glazing bar sashes. Link block has 2 doors and jettied 1st floor with one window on Doric column. 1 range of plain sash windows each. Nos 33 and 39 have doors to sides.

The application site is within the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road conservation area.



Left: Application site as seen from Baker Street. Right: Rear of application site as seen from Jesse Terrace looking north towards Baker Street. Images taken from Google Maps.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission and listed building consent are sought for refurbishment works in order to bring the property back into viable use as 2x flats, and removal of a tree in the rear garden, which is causing structural damage to the property and the brick boundary wall.

Refurbishment works entail:

- Repair of all external windows
- Repair and replacement of roof guttering, soffits and roof slates
- Timber treatment to the basement ceiling joists to address wet rot
- Repair of cracks to external render and make good areas of missing render
- Create light wells at the front and rear and divert services away from the property to prevent further damp problems
- Underpinning
- Reattach roof ceiling joists
- Replace internal doors which have been previously clad with asbestos with like for like doors
- Reinstatement of the original handrail at the front elevation
- Replacement of rear plywood door with a period accurate door.
- Installation of new bathroom and kitchen appliances and fittings

2.1. Information submitted:

Design and Access Statement

Heritage Statement, Archway Heritage, dated 16 August 2024

A-1060 Rev A Existing Window Schedule, dated June 2024

A-1080 Rev A Existing Wall Schedule & Internal Schedule, dated June 2024

A-1085 Rev A Existing Wall Schedule & Internal Schedule, dated June 20-24

A-1090 Rev A Existing Wall & Interior Schedule, dated June 2024

A-1130 Rev B Existing Side Elevations, dated May 2024

A-1004 Rev A Existing Lower Ground Floor Plan Services, dated November 2024

A-1007 Rev A Existing Lower Ground Floor Planning, dated November 2024

A-1011 Rev A Existing Ground Floor Plans Schedule of Works, dated November 2024

A-1012 Rev A Existing Ground Floor Plans, dated November 2024

A-1015 Rev C Existing First Floor Plans, dated November 2024

A-1016 Rev A Existing First Floor Plans Schedule of Works, dated November 2024

A-1020 Rev C Existing Roof Plans, dated November 2024

Received by the LPA on 28 November 2024

Supporting Letter, Clancy Consulting, dated 18 December 2024

Light Well Retaining Wall Structural Drawings, dated 15 December 2024

Received by the LPA on 18 December 2024

A-1005 Rev C Existing Lower Ground Floor Plan Planning, dated December 2024

A-1010 Rev D Existing Ground Floor Plans, dated December 2024

Received by the LPA on 22 December 2024

A-1120 Rev C Existing Side Elevations, dated December 2024

Received by the LPA on 23 December 2024

A-1021 Rev B Existing Roof Plans Schedule of Works, dated December 2024

A-1100 Rev E Existing Front Elevations, dated December 2024

A-1110 Rev C Proposed Rear Elevations, dated December 2024

A-1006 Rev B Existing Lower Ground Floor Plan Schedule of Works, dated December 2024
Received by the LPA on 7 January 2025

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/92/0901 Full & PL/92/0805 Lbc – Conversion to two flats. Applications refused.

PL/02/0346 Lbc - Rear entrance door and window to basement removed and replaced by new door frame with sidelights and replacement steel lintel. Replacement of asbestos roof by slate roof over bathroom extension / Jesse Terrace entrance. Listed building consent granted.

PL/02/1233 CLE – Change of use to two flats. Certificate of lawfulness granted.

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- RBC Conservation Officer:
 - The application is acceptable in principle but information about methodology and materials is insufficient.
- Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee:
 - 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.

Officer note – Additional information was requested as a result of the consultee responses and has since been assessed by the RBC Conservation Officer and is considered sufficient, subject to the recommended conditions.

The following addresses were consulted by letter:

- 1 Jesse Terrace READING RG1 7RS
- 35 Baker Street READING RG1 7XX
- 3 Jesse Terrace READING RG1 7RS
- 5 Jesse Terrace READING RG1 7RS
- 8 Jesse Terrace READING RG1 7RT
- 6 Jesse Terrace READING RG1 7RT
- 12 Baker Street READING RG1 7XX
- Flat 1, 33 Baker Street READING RG1 7XX
- Flat 2, 33 Baker Street READING RG1 7XX

No letters of representation received.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the LPA to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance, Historic England 2008

HEAG039 Traditional Windows

HEAG125 Listed Buildings and Curtilage

HEAG304 Listed Building Consent

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

EN4: LOCALLY IMPORTANT HERITAGE ASSETS

EN5: PROTECTION OF SIGNIFICANT VIEWS WITH HERITAGE INTEREST

EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND

Other

Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal 2020

Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

6. APPRAISAL

Policy EN1 requires proposals to protect and, where possible, enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, as well as the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located.

The condition of the property was observed by the case officer and RBC conservation officer at a site visit on 9 September 2024. The property is currently vacant, and a number of issues were identified, including but not limited to:

- Front elevation hand guard rail has broken off but has been retained to allow the same rail to be put back into place;
- Damp and water ingress at the basement levels where land has had to be excavated to allow the damp to dry out;
- Warping of the ceilings and walls;
- Structural damage to the external brick boundary wall due to roots of a nearby Sycamore tree within the site;

- Poor quality roof and guttering work within the ground floor side extension which has started to fail;
- Internal doors have panels attached to fireproof the doors, however, the panels contain asbestos;
- Windows generally in poor condition;
- Poor condition, damaged external render previously repaired with unsympathetic materials;
- Most of the internal partitions, fittings and fixtures have already been removed.

With respect to external works, creation of lightwells is considered acceptable and appropriate in this location. Other properties along the same terrace on Baker Street have lightwells which can be dated back to 1870s, and as such this would not be considered at odds with the character of the property nor the wider terrace and conservation area. The amended proposed methodology submitted for the lightwells has been reviewed by the conservation officer and is considered acceptable. The use of concrete is made acceptable by the proposed geotextile membrane to separate the concrete from the historic fabric.

Reinstating the existing handrail at the side of the front entrance door would improve the appearance of the front elevation and is, therefore, considered a sympathetic enhancement to the character of the heritage asset. Repair of existing windows is considered appropriate, however, further investigation is required as to whether the windows are beyond repair and would require replacement. A condition is, therefore, recommended for a condition report, schedule of works, and materials schedule to be submitted prior to any window repair works.

At the rear elevation, it is proposed to replace a modern plywood door with a period appropriate external door, and this is considered a positive enhancement of the property. A condition is recommended to secure details of the proposed replacement door. The roofing, guttering and external render of the single storey side extension is currently in very poor condition and requires replacement. There is evidence that the external render has been previously repaired with cementitious render which is not appropriate for this property. The removal of this is not necessarily recommended except for areas where the render has already started to detach from the brick. A schedule of works has been submitted to detail how these works would be carried out, and the proposed materials, which would include lime render to the external elevations and replacement of failing plastic guttering with aluminium or cast iron.

With respect to internal works, the most essential works are required at the basement level, where damp from water and wastewater leakage has created a significant damp problem. Modern ceiling joists in the basement are proposed to be treated for wet rot to ensure structural stability. The submitted methodology of this has been reviewed by the conservation officer and is considered acceptable and is included as an approved document. A condition is recommended to secure further details of the methodology and materials where internal works are concerned, including the joinery.

Furthermore, internal doors are proposed to be replaced with like-for-like colonial panel doors as the removal of the asbestos panelling from the existing doors could present a risk to safety. This is considered acceptable in this case.

On the first floor the sagging ceilings pose a risk and attempts to alter the ceilings could further undermine their structure. The proposal is therefore to lift the ceilings and the methodology is included within the schedule of works. The proposed methodology is considered acceptable.

Overall, the works and their methodology and materials are considered sympathetic and acceptable.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposal has been assessed in line with national and locally adopted policy and is considered to be in accordance with those policies.

8. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PLANNING PERMISISON AND GRANT LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

Recommended Conditions FULL:

1. Time limit (standard)
2. Approved Plans
3. Materials (external works e.g. guttering, replacement doors, replacement roof tiles, handrail, render and paint) and detailed schedule of works to be submitted prior to those works being commenced. Handrail replacement to be accompanied by a condition report.
4. Materials (interior replacement doors, joinery, plaster ceilings) internal drawings, and detailed schedule of works to be submitter prior to those works being commenced.
5. Window replacement materials and schedule of works to be submitted prior to their replacement or repair and to be supported by a condition survey of the existing windows.

Recommended Conditions LBC:

1. Time Limit Standard
2. Approved Plans
3. Materials (external works e.g. guttering, replacement doors, replacement roof tiles, handrail, render and paint) and detailed schedule of works to be submitted prior to those works being commenced. Handrail replacement to be accompanied by a condition report.
4. Materials (interior replacement doors, joinery, plaster ceilings) internal drawings, and detailed schedule of works to be submitter prior to those works being commenced.
5. Window replacement materials and schedule of works to be submitted prior to their replacement or repair and to be supported by a condition survey of the existing windows.