

Design and Access Statement Incorporating Heritage Statement

Mews Cottage Roofing Works
8th January 2025

Mews Cottage Flats,
2A Redlands Road,
Reading,
RG1 5EX

On behalf of:



Thames Valley Surveying Limited

Greenbank
University of Reading
London Road Campus
London Road
Reading
Berkshire
RG1 5AQ



Issue Record

Issue	Date	Description	Created by	Reviewed by
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement, incorporating a Heritage Statement, has been prepared by Thames Valley Surveying Ltd on behalf of the University of Reading to support the application for both Planning and Listed Building Consent for the proposed works to replace pitched roof coverings at Mews Cottage Flats, 2A Redlands Road, Reading, RG1 5EX.
- 1.2 Whilst the subject property is not listed, the reason for an application for listed building consent is due to the interface with a Grade II listed wall (Listed Building Entry Number: 1321929) surrounding the grounds of the London Road Campus.
- 1.3 The subject property is located within the Kendrick Conservation Area on the University of Reading's London Road Campus. It has been identified as a Building of Townscape Merit within the Proposed Kendrick Conservation Area Character Appraisal published on Reading Borough Council's website in 2005.
- 1.4 Pre-application advice was sought from Reading Borough Council in August 2022 for whether a planning application would be required for works to replace the existing pitch roof covering comprising artificial fibre cement slates with a natural slate covering. (Reference 221186/PREAPP).
- 1.5 The outcome of the pre-application concluded that Planning Permission would be required under section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), as the alterations would be considered to materially affect the character and appearance of the building and therefore be considered as 'development'. A copy of the pre-planning advice is appended to this report.
- 1.6 The purpose of this report is to identify the significance of the building as a heritage asset, describe the design intention of proposed alterations, and assess the impact of the works on the significance of the heritage assets identified.

2 Description of the Building



Figure 1 - Photo of Mews Cottage taken 11th November 2024

- 2.1 2A Redlands Road (known as Mews Cottage) is owned by the University of Reading and is located on the perimeter of the London Road campus.
- 2.2 The building is two-storeys in height and is constructed via traditional load bearing masonry with a pitched roof with artificial fibre cement slate covering.
- 2.3 Access to the building is provided via a carpark shared with an adjacent single storey property.
- 2.4 The original use of the building is not known; however, it is likely to have been a non-residential ancillary building later converted to residential. The building is currently split into 3nr. flats.

3 Relationship to its Setting

- 4.1 The pre-application advice noted that the side elevation of Mews Cottage appears to integrate with the Grade II Listed Garden Wall (Listed Building Entry Number: 1321929) which surrounds the former gardens of The Acacias on the corner of Redlands Road and London Road.
- 4.2 The property is also directly opposite The Main Block of The Royal Berkshire Hospital on the other side of Redlands Road which is Grade II* listed (see appendices for list entry).

Figure 2 - Snapshot from the Proposed Kendrick Conservation Area Character Appraisal published on Reading Borough Council's website in 2005.

(A) = Mews Cottages, highlighted with red circle and arrow.

(B) = No. 44 London Road (The Acacias).

(c) = Royal Berkshire Hospital





Figure 3 - Interface between Mews Cottage and listed wall (see appendices for list entry)



Figure 4 - View along London Road of the listed wall to The Acacias.



Figure 5 - Listed wall at junction between Redlands Road and London Road



Figure 6 - View of the rear of The Acacias from within the garden surrounded by the listed wall.

4 Significance of the Building

- 3.1 A review of historic maps available online shows that Mews Cottage was once ancillary to No.44 London Road (The Acacias). Both buildings pre-date the construction of the University of Reading's London Road Campus.
- 3.2 No.44 London Road (The Acacias) is described in its list entry as a detached 2 storey and basement villa constructed before 1840. The property is associated with William Isaac Palmer of Huntley and Palmers who is understood to have lived there.
- 3.3 In 1892, the University of Oxford established an extension college at Reading, and in 1902 this was included in the list of universities and colleges receiving Treasury grants¹. In 1904 Alfred Palmer donated 6 acres of land and several buildings on London Road to the college – including No.44 London Road. In 1905 the foundations for the Great Hall were laid² and development of the site for higher education purposes commenced.
- 3.4 Despite the development of the site through the early 20th century, both Mews Cottage and No.44 London Road are still standing and occupied by the University today.
- 3.5 The significance of Mews Cottage is therefore believed to be associated with its status as an ancillary building to the Grade II listed No.44 London Road. With both properties linked to the Palmer family, pre-dating the construction of the London Road university campus.

¹ Proposed Kendrick Conservation Area Character Appraisal – available from: <https://www.reading.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/heritage-and-conservation/conservation-areas-listed-buildings/>

² <https://sites.reading.ac.uk/connected/2023/08/29/the-university-then-and-now>



Figure 7 - Figure 8 - No. 44 London Road (The Acacias)



Figure 9 - Extract from OS 25 inch England and Wales – dating from 1879³

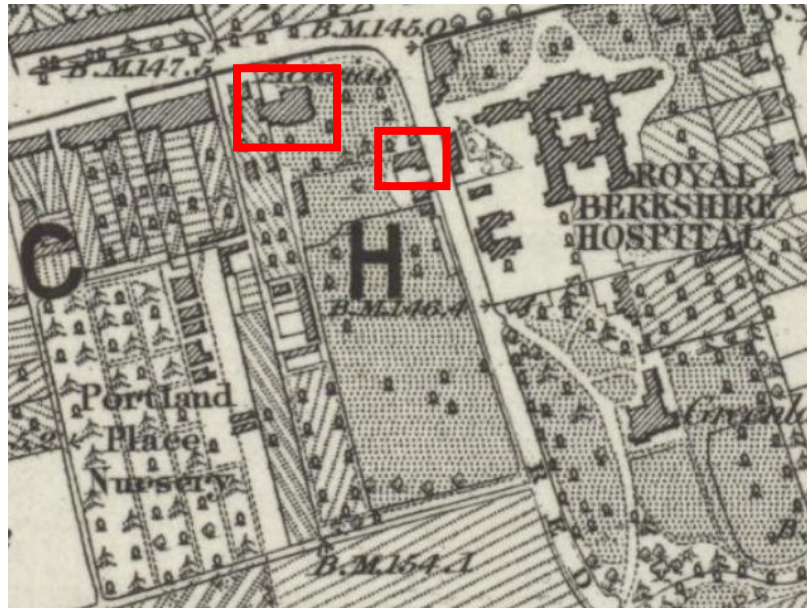


Figure 10 - Enlarged extract from historic map dating from 1879 showing the original relationship between The Acacias and Mews Cottage pre-dating the construction of the University of Reading's London Road Campus.

5 Assessment of the Impact of Proposed Works

Existing Roof Covering:

- 5.1 The existing roof is close boarded on the underside, un-insulated, and covered with a modern artificial fibre cement slate tile.

Proposal:

- 5.2 The proposed works comprises the replacement of the modern artificial fibre cement slates with natural slate (which is almost certainly what the roof was covered with originally). This will be a significant improvement to the appearance of the building and will be in keeping with the character of the conservation area by matching the roofs of surrounding buildings.
- 5.3 To comply with current building regulations the insulation value of the roof must be increased. Whilst consideration has been given to insulation the roof from within the building, it is not feasible due to the loss of head height, and that the flat within the roof space is currently occupied. To meet the current regulations, with the minimum impact on the appearance of the building, we are therefore proposing to install 120mm of PIR insulation above the existing close boarding. This will have the effect of slightly raising the roofline of the building.
- 5.4 The proposed works will retain historic building fabric, including the existing timber roof structure and close boarding. Although the proposed works will require the roof line to be raised, and the introduction of a fascia board, there will be very little visual impact to the building overall.

Similar Works:

- 5.5 The adjoining building has been re-roofed within the last 2-3 years using traditional, natural materials similar to what is being proposed at Mews Cottages.
- 5.6 Pitched roofs across the road forming part of the Grade II* listed Main Block at Royal Berkshire Hospital have natural slate tile covering similar to the works recently completed at 2 Redlands Road and works proposed at Mews Cottage.



Figure 11 - Screenshot from Google Maps of 2 Redlands Road.



Figure 12 - Screenshot from Google Maps of Royal Berkshire Hospital on opposite side of Redlands Road.

Pre-Application Advice

- 5.7 Pre-application advice was sought from Reading Borough Council in August 2022. The pre-application advice concluded that:

“The proposed development would likely make a positive contribution towards the heritage asset. This is in terms of refreshing the overall appearance of Mews Cottages through replacing the roof, whilst improving the quality of accommodation at Mews Cottages by improving thermal efficiency.”

- 5.8 The Pre Application Advice also noted that Planning Permission would be required under section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), as the alterations would be considered to materially affect the character and appearance of the building and therefore be considered as ‘development’.

Access:

- 5.9 Access to the site will remain the same – unchanged through undertaking these works.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 Mews Cottage is not a listed building itself, but it is attached to a listed garden wall. The building is associated historically with No. 44 London Road (The Acacias) and gardens – which predate the development of the site for the purposes of higher education.
- 6.2 The proposed alterations comprise the removal of the existing artificial fibre cement slates with natural slate tiles. The works will involve slightly increasing the height of the roof to incorporate additional insulation to improve the energy performance of the building.
- 6.3 Following consultation, the local planning authority have concluded that proposed works would have a positive impact on the heritage asset through re-instatement of original and authentic building materials and increasing thermal efficiency.
- 6.4 The roofs of neighbouring properties have natural slate coverings, and this roof was almost certainly covered with natural slate prior to the artificial fibre cement slates being installed.
- 6.5 It is therefore concluded that works should be granted both planning and listed building consent.

Appendix A – List Entry: Wall to the Garden of the Acacias

Official list entry

Heritage Category: **Listed Building**

Grade: **II**

List Entry Number: **1321929**

Date first listed: **14-Dec-1978**

List Entry Name: **GARDEN WALL TO NORTH AND EAST OF THE ACACIAS WALL TO GARDEN OF THE ACACIAS**

Statutory Address 1: **GARDEN WALL TO NORTH AND EAST OF THE ACACIAS, LONDON ROAD**

Statutory Address 2: **WALL TO GARDEN OF THE ACACIAS, REDLANDS ROAD**

Details

LONDON ROAD 1. 5128 (South Side) Garden wall to north and east of the Acacias SU 7272 9/162A II
GV 2. Early-mid C19. Starts to east of front railings, curves to corner and extends about 70-80 yds up Redlands Road. About 10 ft high. Red brick. Included for group value and contribution to street scene.

Listing NGR: SU7232172982

Appendix B – List Entry: No 44 London Road (The Acacias)

Official list entry

Heritage Category: **Listed Building**

Grade: **II**

List Entry Number: **1113511**

Date first listed: **14-Dec-1978**

List Entry Name: **NO 44 (THE ACACIAS) AND RAILINGS TO STREET THE ACACIAS**

Statutory Address 1: **NO 44 (THE ACACIAS) AND RAILINGS TO STREET, 44, LONDON ROAD**

Statutory Address 2: **THE ACACIAS, 44, LONDON ROAD**

Details

LONDON ROAD 1. 5128 (South Side) No 44 (The Acacias) and Railings to street SU 7272 9/162 II GV 2. Before 1840 (shewn on Weller map). A detached 2 storey and basement villa of Bath stone with hipped slate roof. Moulded eaves cornice. 3 windows 1st floor, 2 on ground floor, glazing bar sashes with flanking full height pilaster strips. Central door with segmental patterned fanlight. Plain Greek Doric porch on stone steps. East return has 2 ground floor bows which have been attributed to Waterhouse as alterations for William Isaac Palmer (of Huntley and Palmers) who lived there - one has stairs to basement. Good conservatory at rear with an extensive rockery. Linked to Greenbank by 3+3 window 3 storey extension with 2 storey pavilion to right. The interior has a number of reeded features (front door surround, ground floor back room fireplace etc). Excellent contemporary ironwork to street - spearhead railings box panel standards and double gates.

Listing NGR: SU7228172958

Appendix C – List Entry: Main Block, Royal Berkshire Hospital

Official list entry

Heritage Category: **Listed Building**

Grade: **II***

List Entry Number: **1156091**

Date first listed: **19-Mar-1975**

List Entry Name: **Main block and flanking wings at Royal Berkshire Hospital**

Statutory Address 1: **Main block and flanking wings at Royal Berkshire Hospital, London Road, Reading**

Details

Main block 1839 by local architect and builder Henry Briant (who won the competition for designing the hospital). As King William IV took such a keen interest in the hospital before it was built, his Arms, not Queen Victoria's appear on the central pediment. Two storeys and basement. Bath stone - very large ashlar blocks used to front. Slate roofs. eleven bays with seven bay central break projecting pedimented hexastyle Ionic portico. Glazing bar sash windows. Corner piers. Channelled basement. Astragal to moulded cornice (dentil cornice to portico) and parapet. Recessed side entrance bays. Wide steps to portico with excellent contemporary lamp tripods with guilloche ornament.

Interior: colonaded stair hall, cast iron balusters to stairs which divide at landing. 1882 chapel with contemporary fittings reached from under landing. (By Joseph Morris who made considerable extensions to the Hospital at that date). The main block has flanking wings added 1865 to designs by Joseph Morris. Three storeys also Bath stone and long side wings forming a large courtyard added 1881-2. The latter are also of Bath stone, have 5x5 end pavilions with three bay pedimented breaks and are linked to side wings by a Greek Doric colonade (east side) and a 1911 block (west side). In front to street is a dwarf-stone wall with moulded coping and five retraining ashlar gate piers with block modillions to moulded capping.

Listing NGR: SU7241272955

Appendix D – Pre-Application Planning Report



Frances Martin
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Sara Mardle
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Our Ref: 221186/PREAPP

E-mail: david.brett@reading.gov.uk

29th September 2022

Via email only to
sara@thamesvalleysurveying.co.uk

Your contact is: David Brett, Planning

RE: 221186/PREAPP - Re-roofing of the property with natural slate tiles, to include upgrading the insulation and replacing the soffits, fascias and rainwater goods at Mews Cottages, 2a Redlands Road, Reading, RG1 5EX

Dear Ms S Mardle,

This letter is in response to the above pre-planning application enquiry received on Wednesday 10th August 2022. I apologise for the delays in being in a position to provide this response.

Site and Area Description

The proposal site consists of a two storey red brick building, with a spiral staircase to the front providing access to the first floor. The building is divided into three residential flats. The side elevation of the building appears to integrate with the Grade II Listed garden (Listed Building Entry Number: 1321929) wall that surrounds the grounds of the University of Reading site. The Listing for "[WALL TO GARDEN OF THE ACACIAS, REDLANDS ROAD](#)" reads as follows:

- "LONDON ROAD 1. 5128 (South Side) Garden wall to north and east of the Acacias SU 7272 9/162A II GV 2. Early-mid C19. Starts to east of front railings, curves to corner and extends about 70-80 yds up Redlands Road. About 10 ft high. Red brick. Included for group value and contribution to street scene."

The surrounding area largely consists of the Royal Berkshire Hospital to the east, and the University of Reading grounds to the west.

The proposal site is within the Kendrick Road Conservation Area, and the Air Quality Management Area.

Proposal

The proposals considered within this pre-application enquiry response consists of the following:

- Re-roofing of the building, including replacement of roof tiles with natural slate.
- Raising of the roof level by 70mm to incorporate insulation.
- Install new cast iron effect black PVC guttering, fixed to black PVC fascia with a white PVC soffit in place of the existing black PVC gutters.

Specifically, this pre-application advice is sought as to whether the above would require planning permission.

Plans Considered

The following information was provided as part of this pre-application enquiry:

- Completed Pre-Application Enquiry Form
- Existing Elevations - 210089-4-001
- Planning Enquiry 1-12 and 17-32 Reading Almshouses - Report Ref 210124
- Photos - Almshouses - September 2021

Relevant Planning HistoryApplications registered to 2 Redlands Road and 1 Mews Cottage

- 160995/LBC - Repairs to brickwork at No2 Redlands Road and No1 The Mews Cottage, Redlands Road - Application Permitted on 20/10/2016

Internal Consultations

Reading Borough Council, Conservation & Urban Design Officer - No response received.

Relevant Policies

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'.

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority 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 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.

National Planning Policy Framework

- Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

This proposal will be considered against the following local planning policies:

[Reading Borough Local Plan \(Adopted November 2019\)](#)

- CC1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC3 Adaption to Climate Change
- CC7 Design and the Public Realm
- EN1 Protection and Enhancement of The Historic Environment
- EN3 Enhancement of Conservation Areas
- EN4 Locally Important Assets
- EN15 Air Quality

[Proposed Kendrick Road Conservation Area Character Appraisal \(2005\)](#)

Local policies and guidance can be found at <https://www.reading.gov.uk/planningpolicy>.

Appraisal

Each aspect of the proposal will be considered in-turn:

- A) Principle of Development
- B) Impact on Listed Building and Conservation Area

A) Principle of Development

This development is considered to fall within the definition of development ([section 55 of the Town & Country Planning Act](#)) as building operations (section 55 (1A) (d), also bearing in mind 55 (2) a(ii) and the change in appearance of the existing material beneath).

55 Meaning of “development” and “new development”.

(1) Subject to the following provisions of this section, in this Act, except where the context otherwise requires, “development,” means the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land.

(1A) For the purposes of this Act “ building operations ” includes—

- (a) demolition of buildings;
- (b) rebuilding;
- (c) structural alterations of or additions to buildings; and
- (d) other operations normally undertaken by a person carrying on business as a builder.

(2) The following operations or uses of land shall not be taken for the purposes of this Act to involve development of the land—

- (a) the carrying out for the maintenance, improvement or other alteration of any building of works which-
 - (i) affect only the interior of the building, or
 - (ii) do not materially affect the external appearance of the building,
- and are not works for making good war damage or works begun after 5th December 1968 for the alteration of a building by providing additional space in it underground.

In this instance, whilst the raising of the roof to accommodate the proposed insulation is minimal at 70mm, this is still considered a change that affects the external appearance of the building. It is acknowledged that the change to a natural slate roof

In accordance with Policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, development proposed to Listed Buildings; “All proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits.

Applications which affect Listed Buildings will not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where appropriate, their settings.”

In accordance with Policy EN3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, development proposed within a Conservation Area will; “make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Positive consideration will be given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas.”

As per section 16 of the NPPF (2021) proposals affecting heritage assets, Local Planning Authorities will assess the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimize any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal. The principle of the development is acceptable providing development complies with the Policies outlined in the Reading Borough Local Plan and NPPF.

B) Impact on Heritage Asset and Conservation Area

Paragraph 200 of the NPPF (2021) states that; “Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;

- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional."*

Paragraph 206 of the NPPF (2021) states that: *"Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably."*

Policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan states that; *"All proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits."*

Policy EN4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan states that; *"Development proposals that affect locally important heritage assets will demonstrate that development conserves architectural, archaeological or historical significance which may include the appearance, character and setting of the asset. Planning permission may be granted in cases where a proposal could result in harm to or loss of a locally important heritage asset only where it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development significantly outweigh the asset's significance. Where it is accepted by the Local Planning Authority that retention is not important, recording of the heritage asset should be undertaken and submitted alongside development proposals. Replacement buildings should draw upon heritage elements of the previous design, incorporating historical qualities that made the previous building significant. This may include appearance, scale and architectural quality."*

It is considered likely that the development proposed would result in the betterment of the heritage asset. Replacing the artificial roof tiles with natural slate is considered to have a positive impact on the appearance of the building, as reflected in the replacement of the roof tiles to 2 Redlands Road (see figs 1 and 2).



Fig 1. 2 Redlands Road. Image captured in May 2019. Image retrieved from Google Maps on 09/09/2022.



Fig 2. 2 Redlands Road. Image captured in October 2020 following replacement of roof. Image retrieved from Google Maps on 09/09/2022.

It is considered unlikely that the increase in roof height would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the existing building or the surrounding Conservation Area. The benefits of the scheme in creating a more thermal efficient building are considered a positive step.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed development would likely make a positive contribution towards the heritage asset. This is in terms of refreshing the overall appearance of Mews Cottages through replacing the roof, whilst improving the quality of accommodation at Mews Cottages by improving thermal efficiency. It is considered that the increase in height may be minor, however, it appears from the section drawing the eaves would be more exposed from the existing arrangement.

Any application would be required to carefully consider the various matters of detail referenced above, some of which could have significant implications for the proposed scheme. As such, they should be carefully considered in advance of any future submission and it should be noted that any planning application which is submitted will be assessed on its own planning merits.

Type of future application

Planning Permission would be required under section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), as the alterations would be considered to materially affect the character and appearance of the building and therefore be considered as 'development'.

Procedural Points: Submitting a Valid Application

Should you decide to submit a Planning Permission application, you are advised to consider the Council's [Validation Checklist](#). This provides details as to the level and nature of information required to validate an application. The determination period for the Council to consider your application will only begin once all the necessary information to validate the application has been received.

A link to the local validation requirements can be found by visiting <https://www.reading.gov.uk/planningadvice>.

At this juncture the following information would be required as a minimum):

- All Part 1 requirements (plans / forms etc)
- Heritage Statement - referencing the significance of the existing openings
- Design & Access Statement
- Schedule of Works and Methodology Statement
- Schedule of Materials

In line with section 4 of the NPPF you are strongly encouraged to discuss your emerging proposals with nearby occupiers prior to the submission of any future application.

Any application which is submitted will be assessed on its own planning merits. If you were to submit an application, please note the validation requirements set out in the Council's Validation Checklist. The Validation Checklist can also be found on the '[Help with planning](#)' page on the Reading Borough Council website.

This advice is in good faith and will not over-ride the formal consideration of a planning application by the Council. The responses received from consultees may also affect the decision period if matters are raised which were not addressed at pre-application stage or require consideration before a decision is made.

If you wish to discuss the contents of this letter, please contact me on the number given above.

Kind regards,

David Brett

David Brett
Planning Officer
SDV