



DESIGN AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

154 Castle Hill, Reading, RG1 7RP

Prepared for: Silver Crescent Estates Ltd

The purpose of this report is to accompany a planning or Listed Building application. A heritage statement sets out the details of the history and development of the asset using photographic, map, archival and fabric evidence. It includes an assessment of the evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value of the heritage asset and the impact of the proposed works upon that significance. In addition to desk based research a site visit was carried out as part of this assessment and a non intrusive survey took place.

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Heritage Asset and its Setting:

Project Address: 154 Castle Hill, Reading, RG1 7RP

Local Authority: Reading Borough Council

Conservation Area: Russell Street / Castle Hill

Archaeological Notification Area: None

Building Use: Residential

Listing Status: Grade II* List entry no. 1113431

Designated Heritage Asset:

Scheduled Monument?	N
Listed Building?	Y
Registered Park and Garden	N
Historic Battlefield	N
Conservation Area	Y
World Heritage Site	N

Non Designated Heritage Asset	N
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Project Overview:

Listed Building Application (retrospective) for a new security gate and fence.



Photo 1 – View of the dwelling from a south-east elevation

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Photo 2-6 – View of the security gate and fence from a south and north elevation



Photo 7 and 8 – View of the security gate and fence from a south-east elevation

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Photo 9 – View of the security gate and fence from a south-east elevation

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Drawings and Documents provided:

2064 E01 Location and Site Block Plan

2064 E02 Existing Plan

2064 E03 Existing Elevation and Photos

2064 E03 Existing Side Elevation

2064 P01 Proposed Plan

2064 P02 Proposed Front Elevation

2064 P03 Proposed Side Elevation

2064 P04 Proposed Gate Detail

Schedule of Intervention:

In order to achieve the works, the following alterations/ interventions will be required:

- Removal of the existing metal security access gate.
- Redecoration of the side fence.
- New 1.8m metal gate and railing set behind front building line.
- New intercom/ access panel.

No change to the existing building.

No change to the front boundary treatment.

Setting Overview/ Context:

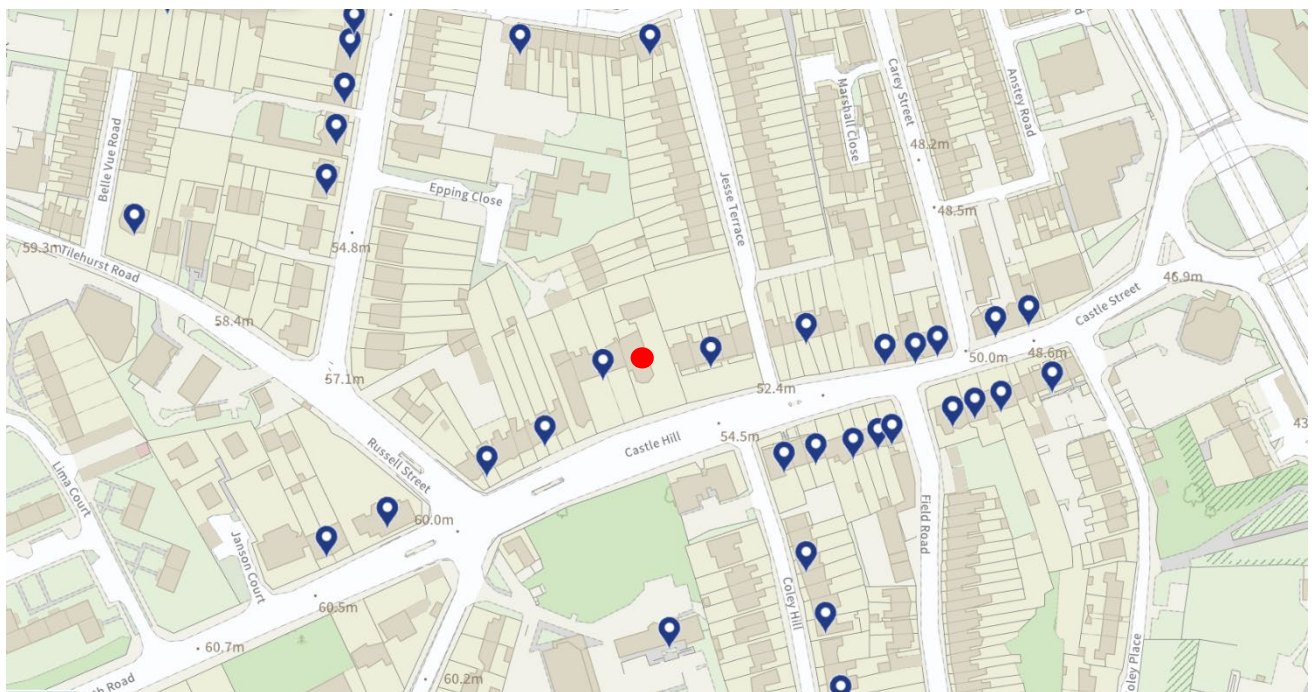
Castle Hill is close to the medieval core of Reading Town Centre along what was historically a turnpike road and has been a key residential area within Reading since the 17th century. The area is still predominantly residential in nature. The road is characterised as being dominated by large Georgian housing.

No. 154 is Grade II* Listed and is the right hand wing of a u-shaped white rendered block. The block has Georgian frontages and large timber sash windows. The property is set back from the road behind a large garden with half laid to gravel and tarmac for parking. The two ends of the u-shape are taller than the central section and have dominant bay shaped projections. The parking sits at a lower level.

The building currently contains a number of flats.

The proposals relate to a retrospective application for the replacement of a side security gate and fence that was installed to protect the side access passage to the flat entrances for the safety and well being of the residents following a number of security incidents. No historic material was removed in order to install the existing set up. The new proposals seek to install a more permanent and sympathetic installation, more reflective of the buildings architecture and the railings present on the front boundary.

Setting: Urban Area



Map taken from Historic England Listing Database. Property shown with a red dot.

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Site Planning History:

Reference PL/08/1384

Discharge of conditions 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 19, 20, 21, and 22 of planning consent 07/01204/FUL and conditions 3, 4 and 5 of listed building consent 07/01205/LBC

Decision: Split

Received Date: 01/10/2008 Decision Date: 11/6/2009

Reference PL/07/0747

Change of use from offices (B1) to residential (C3) comprising 5 x 1 bedroom and 1 x 2 bedroom flats with associated alterations

Decision: Approve

Received Date: 07/9/2007 Decision Date: 05/9/2008

Reference PL/07/1367

Change of use from offices (B1) to residential (C3) comprising 5 x 1 bedroom and 1 x 2 bedroom flats with associated alterations and erection of refuse store

Decision: Permitted subject to Legal Agreement

Received Date: 07/9/2007 Decision Date: 28/8/2008

Reference PL/07/0764

Change of use from offices (B1) to residential (C3) comprising 4 x 1 bedroom and 2 x 2 bedroom flats with associated alterations and erection of refuse store

Decision: Withdrawn

Received Date: 07/9/2007 Decision Date: 22/4/2008

Reference PL/07/0701

Change of use from offices (B1) to residential (C3) comprising 4 x 1 bedroom and 2 x 2 bedroom flats with associated alterations

Decision: Withdrawn

Received Date: 07/9/2007 Decision Date: 22/4/2008

Reference PL/07/0748

Change of use from offices (B1) to medical (D2) at basement and groundfloor level and residential (C3) comprising 2 x 2 bedroom flats and 1 x 1 bedroom flat on the first and second floor levels and erection of refuse store

Decision: Refuse

Received Date: 07/9/2007 Decision Date: 06/3/2008

Reference PL/07/0749

Change of use from offices (B1) to medical (D2) at basement and groundfloor level and residential (C3) comprising 2 x 2 bedroom flats and 1 x 1 bedroom flat on the first and second floor levels

Decision: Refuse

Received Date: 07/9/2007 Decision Date: 06/3/2008

Reference PL/07/0750

Change of use from offices (B1) to medical (D1)

Decision: Refuse

Received Date: 07/9/2007 Decision Date: 06/3/2008

Reference PL/07/0751

Change of use from offices (B1) to medical (D1)

Decision: Refuse

Received Date: 07/9/2007 Decision Date: 06/3/2008

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Reference PL/07/1355
Recovering of roofs due to poor repair
Decision: Withdrawn
Received Date: 01/8/2007 Decision Date: 04/9/2007

Reference PL/07/0270
Conversion of building into 10 no. flats
Decision: Withdrawn
Received Date: 31/1/2007 Decision Date: 04/5/2007

Reference PL/07/0271
Conversion of offices to 10 residential units
Decision: Withdrawn
Received Date: 31/1/2007 Decision Date: 04/5/2007

Reference PL/06/0787
Alteration and change of use of rear annexe from ancillary office to 1no. 3-bed cottage
Decision: Permitted subject to Legal Agreement
Received Date: 24/1/2006 Decision Date: 21/3/2006

Reference PL/93/0325
Internal alterations to upgrade the existing Fire Precautions, as required by the Fire Officer.
Decision: Not available
Received Date: 19/1/1993 Decision Date: 23/2/1993

Reference PL/89/1270
New west facing sliding sash window in the west wall of the first floor. All internal and external plaster to be made good
Decision: Not available
Received Date: 21/12/1989 Decision Date: 15/2/1990

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Impacted Heritage Assets:

The building sits within the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area.

The building is Grade II Listed.

Official list entry

Heritage Category: Listed Building Grade: II*
List Entry Number: 1113431 Date first listed: 22-Mar-1957
List Entry Name: NOS 154 TO 160 (EVEN) AND RAILINGS TO STREET
Statutory Address 1: NOS 154 TO 160 (EVEN) AND RAILINGS TO STREET, 154-160, CASTLE STREET

Location

Statutory Address: NOS 154 TO 160 (EVEN) AND RAILINGS TO STREET, 154-160, CASTLE STREET
District: Reading (Unitary Authority) Parish: Non Civil Parish National Grid Reference: SU 70859 73015

Details

CASTLE STREET 1. 5128 (North Side) Castle Hill Nos 154 to 160 (even) and railings to street SU 7073 12/41 SU 7072 13/41 22.3.57. II* GV 2. Former King's Arms Inn. A group of buildings with C18 fronts on 3 sides of a court. 2 storey centre block, stucco with moulded cornice, parapet and mansard slate roof with brick chimneys. 2 fluted conical lead rainwater heads. 11 windows on 1st floor, 6 on ground floor, glazing bar sashes mostly. 2 doors with small Doric porches (No 156: columns replaced by plain uprights). 6 panel doors. No 156 now half-glazed. No 158, upper 2 panels glazed. A further side door to left with trellis porch. Left hand wing (No 160): 2 storeys and attic. Stucco. Old tile roof, partly mansard. End facing street has 2 storey bow with 3 cross glazed sash windows and balcony to terrace in front of attic window. Arched door to right with fanlight and reeded pilaster surround. Right hand wing (no 154): Similar to No 160 (a later addition however) of colour- washed brick with stone balustrade at 2nd floor level. Tarred tile hipped mansard roof. Plate glass sash windows. Entered from left hand in tented triangular headed porch. C18 spearhead rails with urns on standards facing street, the gates have braced upper rail, dog-rails and box-panels standards. Interior of No 154: late C18 staircase, the 1st floor bow window room is circa 1790s, has marble fireplace surround, some good cornices and fine doorcases with Adam-type friezes. Interior of No 158 very interesting with a good coved ceiling and panelled room on the 1st floor and an C18 stair with turned balusters and straight string. The building was an 'L' block (Nos 158 and 160) in 1734 and had developed by 1796, when it was occupied by 200 exiled French priests quartered in Reading, (1) into its present plan with covered colonnades to north and west sides of the court, the west side with a corridor above the colonnade. (1) (Sources: Catholic Record Society Vol LXXXVI (1932)). Listing NGR: SU7086273016

Assessment of Significance:

Heritage has cultural, social, economic and environmental values. The attributes that combine to define the significance of a historic building can relate to its physical properties or to its context. – BS 7913:2013.

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. 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 – NPPF

Archeological: *As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.*

Medieval deposits were uncovered in the vicinity of 31-37 Castle Street (HERRD15622), 41 Castle Street (MRM15953) and the site lays within a well established part of the Reading settlement therefore it is reasonable to assume that the site area is of high archaeological value. The works however are limited in nature and do not involve ground works so this has not been assessed in great detail as part of this reporting.

Historic: *An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.*

The building was originally a coaching inn called the Kings Arms. Castle Hill was made into a turnpike road in 1715 by an Act of Parliament and a toll house is recorded to have been located on Castle Hill in 2 different locations relocated as the town expanded. Even before the popularity of the route for common travel the road is one of the oldest in the area connecting Reading Town Centre to the west of the country. Coaching Inns were very profitable in the 18th century prior to the arrival of the railways as a resting point for travelers and their horses. It is likely that the popularity of the inn started to decline not long after the railway arrived in Reading in 1840. The earliest mapping illustrating the building is the Rocques Map 1961 however the building is recorded as having been built in 1734 and then an additional wing added in 1796 presumably needed as the popularity of the trading route increased. The building was later split into a small number of high status houses presumably when the popularity of the railway made coaching inns redundant. This splitting of the site appears evident on the 1879 mapping. Further subdivision occurred later as the area became less popular for wealthy businessmen.

Extract from the Historic England Research Records: Formerly the King's Arms Inn. A group of buildings with 18th century fronts on three sides of a court. The central block is of two-storeys and is stuccoed with a moulded cornice, parapet and mansard slate roof. The left hand wing (number 160) is of two-storeys with and attic and has a two storey bow facing the street. The wing is stuccoed with an old tile roof. The right hand wing (number 154) is a later addition of colour-washed brick with a stone balustrade at second floor level and a tarred tile hipped mansard roof. The listing includes the railings to the street. In 1796 the building was occupied by 200 exiled French priests who were quartered in Reading.

The building was used as offices for a long period of time before more recently being converted into flats,

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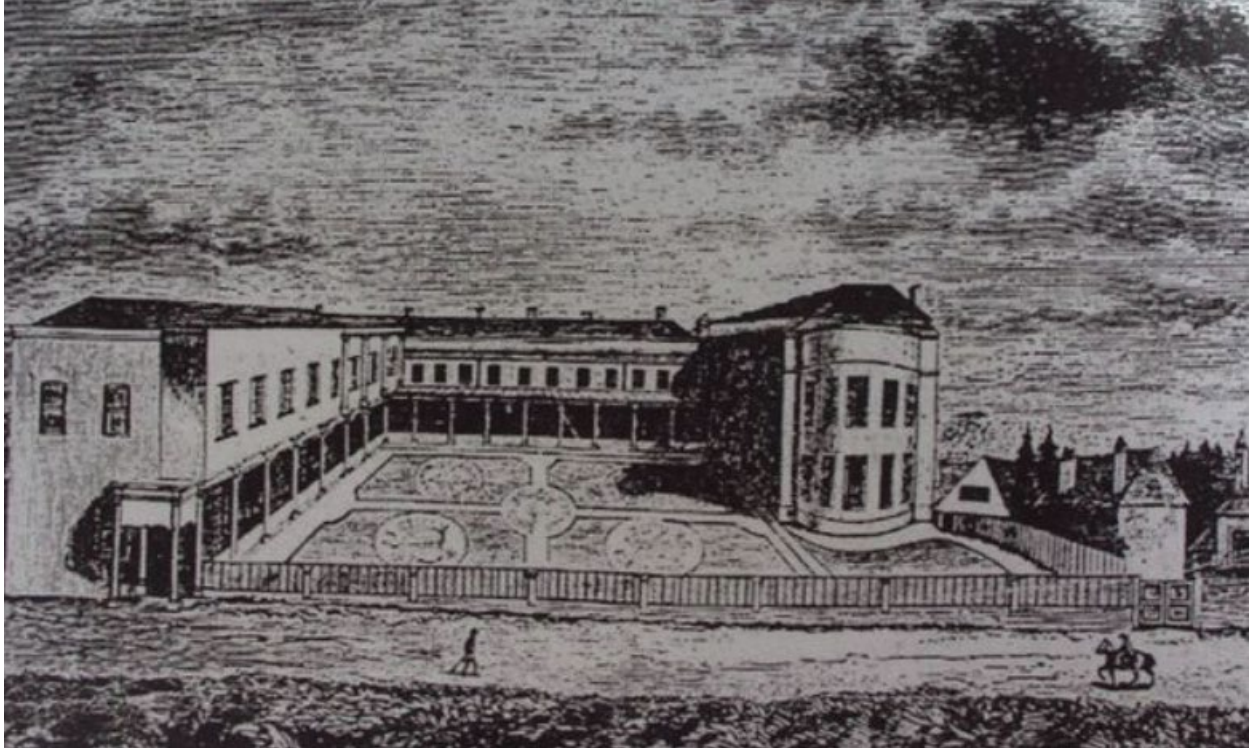
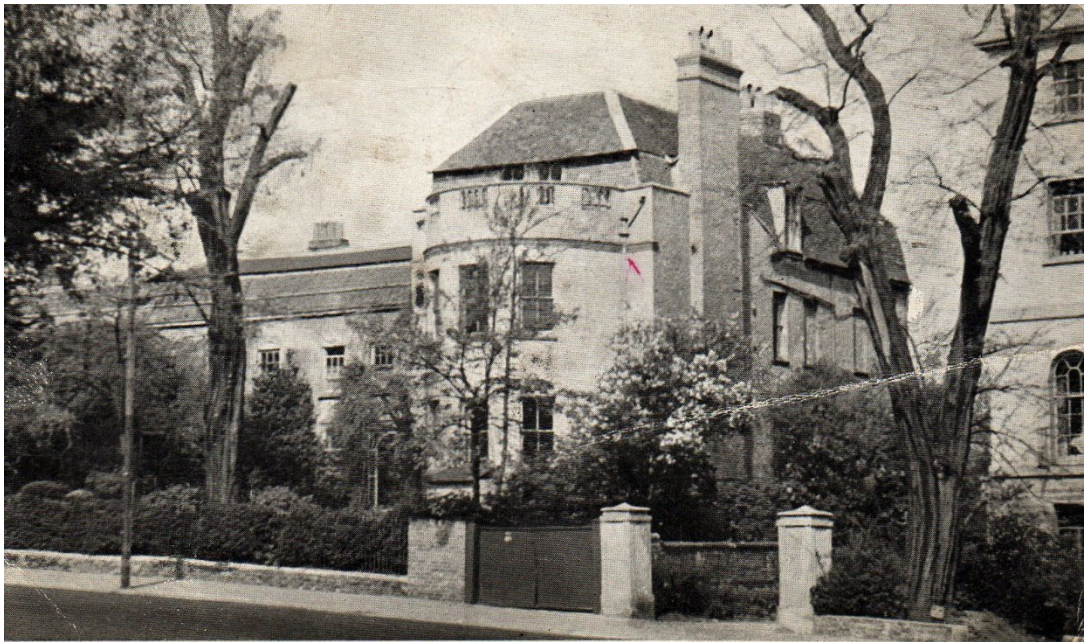


Image of The Kings Arms dated 1802



MAC FISHERIES' TRAINING CENTRE, READING

Photograph from approx. 1950s

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Architectural or Artistic: *These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.*

The building has a strong Georgian character and was likely refronted as the popularity of the route increased to improve its visual appearance. It is likely that older timber framing sits behind the façade. It is a focal point on the road and within the Conservation Area and provides good visual evidence of the historical development of the local area as a high status residential area at the beginning of the 19th Century.

The building has changed a great deal as a result of its change from a coaching inn to a high end residence but the original footprint of the building is still clearly evident.

Historic Mapping – For reference dating only, not for reproduction

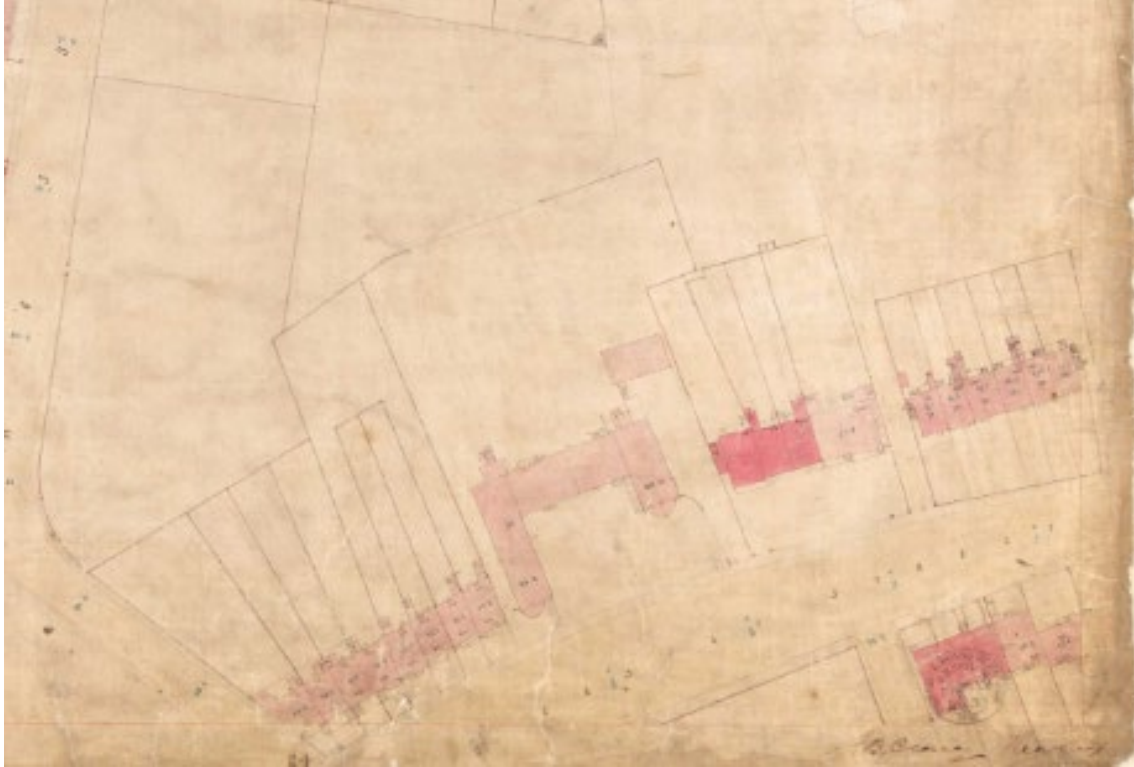


Extract from Rocques Map 1761



Extract from Coates Map 1802

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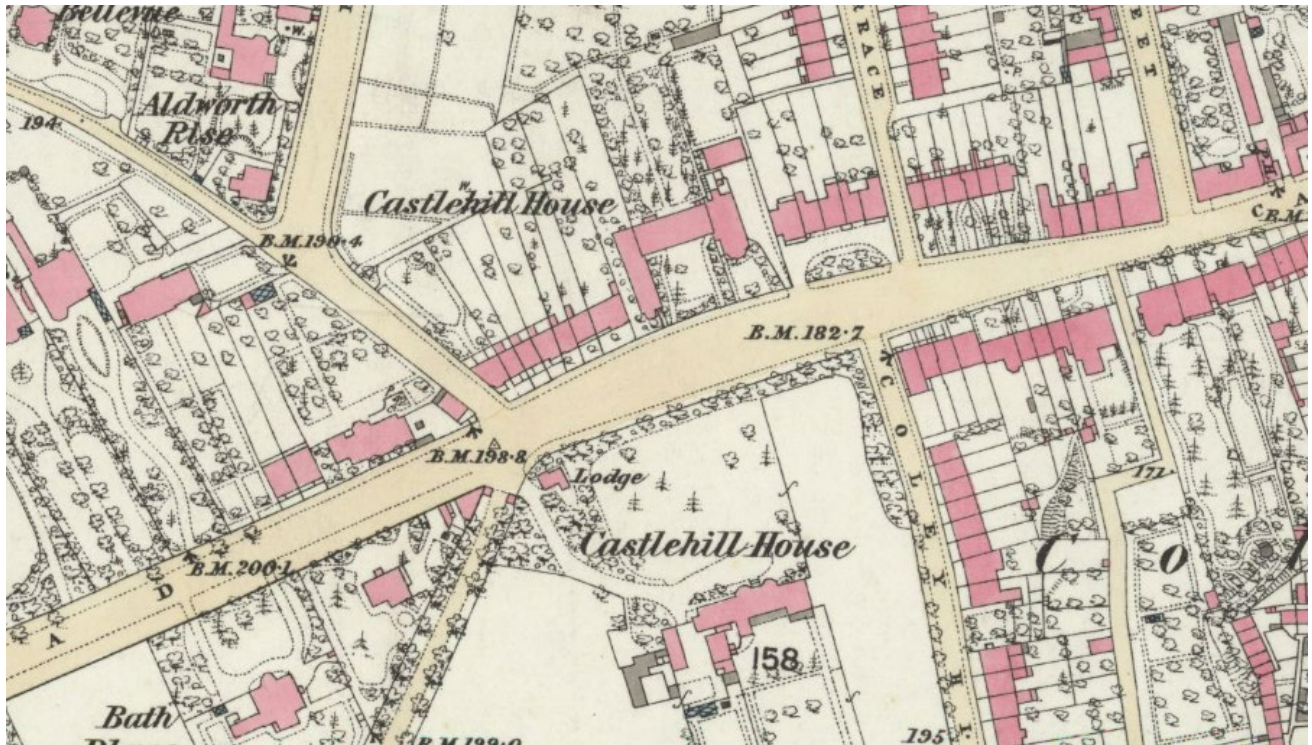


Extract from 1853 sanitation map- Reading Board of Health



Extract from Reading- Berkshire XXXVII.3.17 1879

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Extract from Berkshire XXXVII.3 1879



Extract from Berkshire XXXVII.3 1900

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Extract from Berkshire XXXVII.3 1934

Development Impact on the Historical Asset:

An assessment of how the proposed works will affect the significance of the heritage asset and the justification for that impact.

Proposals should and do:

- 1 - Avoid, minimise and mitigate negative impact, in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF.*
- 2 - Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance.*

Building Elevations and Setting:

The works are limited to a side gate and short run of railing to the left hand side of the property by a side passage and do not involve changes to either the building façade or its front boundary treatment. There are limited views of the gate from the street which sits at a lower level.

The existing gate installation was installed in direct response to a security issue that had arisen and was necessary for the health and wellbeing of the residents. No historic material was removed in order to install the existing set up. The new proposals seek to install a more permanent set up with detailing reflective of the existing front boundary treatment and more in keeping with the existing architecture. They relocate the existing gate position to sit behind the front building line and allow for an intercom to be tucked out of view.

There is no impact upon the building as a focus within the Conservation Area setting.

Internally:

There are no proposed internal alterations.

Scale and Massing:

There is no proposed change to the mass and scaling of the building.

Archeaology:

There is no proposed below ground works so no potential impact upon below ground archaeology.

Use:

There is no proposed change of use or intensification of use as part of these proposals.

Relevant Policy:

The Government has set out its planning policies framework for the historic environment in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlining the framework within which local authorities should consider the importance of conserving, or enhancing aspects of the historic environment within the planning process. This was published in March 2012 and replaced in 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2023.

Conservation as defined by the NPPF is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets as diverse as listed buildings in every day use and as yet undiscovered, undesigned buried remains of archaeological interest.

In the case of buildings, generally the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Ensuring such heritage assets remain used and valued is likely to require sympathetic changes to be made from time to time. In the case of archaeological sites, many have no active use, and so for those kinds of sites, periodic changes may not be necessary, though on-going management remains important.

Where changes are proposed, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a clear framework for both plan-making and decision-making in respect of applications for planning permission and Listed Building consent to ensure that heritage assets are conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance and thereby achieving sustainable development. The National Planning Policy Framework defines a heritage asset as, 'a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets are either designated heritage assets or non-designated heritage assets.

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. 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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. 'Significance' in terms of heritage-related planning policy is defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not. The setting of a heritage asset and the asset's curtilage may not have the same extent.

The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to the visual relationship between the asset and the proposed development and associated visual/physical considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part in the assessment of impacts on setting, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust, smell and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each.

The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights of way or an ability to otherwise access or experience that setting. The contribution may vary over time.

When assessing any application which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change. They may also need to consider the fact that developments which materially detract from the asset's significance may also damage its economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its ongoing conservation.

Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

In determining applications, local planning 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.

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Historic England 'Conservation Principles' deem new work or alteration to be normally acceptable where the proposals do not materially harm the value of the place. They consider the setting of the heritage asset to contribute greatly to its significance. They accept that a heritage setting changes over time.

The local authority may have location specific guidance also which includes policies which seek to ensure the protection of the historic environment and that development is of a high quality and seeks to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Heritage Asset. In assessing the impact of these proposals local guidance has also been considered.

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 196) requires that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing the optimum viable use of that asset. Where a heritage asset is capable of having a use, then securing its optimum viable use should be taken into account in assessing the public benefits of a proposed development. Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to a listed private dwelling which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit. Examples of heritage benefits may include: sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting, reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset, securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation

Changes to the setting of historic buildings / Conservation Areas are to be sympathetic in terms of siting, proportion, scale, form, height, materials and detailing. All design work and procedures should follow guidance outlined in BS 7913:2013 Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings.

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Conclusion:

The proposals seek to retain the functionality and security of the existing side passage access gate but in a more sympathetic location and with more appropriate materiality and detailing, reflective of the existing traditional architecture.

The proposals are minor in nature and do not impact upon the main building or the front boundary treatment.

The proposals act in line with both local and national historic planning policy and should be supported by the local authority.

Assessor Details:

Surveyor: Michelle Purnell BA(hons) BArch RIBA MSc Building Conservation IHBC

A site visit was undertaken as part of the site investigation in order to understand important relationships in the area surrounding the site. Date of Site Visit: 29/01/25 Weather conditions at time of visit: Dry

Information Source Checklist:

The following information sources have been used when conducting desk based research:

Historic England List of Protected Historic Sites x

National Planning Policy Framework x

Planning Practice Guidance: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment x

Relevant Local Plans x

Conservation Area Character Appraisal x

Local Authority Landscape Character Assessment n/a

The Local List of Buildings and Monuments x

Local Records Office Other (please state):