

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Redlands Ward

App Ref: PL/25/0542 Listed building consent (Alt/Ext)

Address: 89 CHRISTCHURCH ROAD, READING, RG2 7BD

Proposal: Installation of a First Floor shower room.

Applicant: Mrs A Bott

Received date: 07/04/2025

Target Decision date: 27/06/2025 (Ext)

Case Officer: Alison Amoah

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a two-storey (plus loft conversion) end of terrace dwelling on the northern side of Christchurch Road. It is a Grade II listed building with the following listing description:

"CHRISTCHURCH ROAD 1. 5128 (North Side) Nos 85 to 89 (odd) SU 7272 9/83 II 2. Circa 1800. Formerly 2 pairs of cottages. 2 storeys. Red brick with silver grey headers. Old tile hipped roofs (Nos 87 and 89 half-hipped with central chimney). No 85 3 bays, Nos 87 and 89 2 bays. Flanking screen walls with curved coping (except to-right of No 85) screening single storey lean-to of one bay. Glazing bar sash windows. No 85 central 6-panel door with radiating fanlight in arched recess. Nos 87 and 89 doors in side wings (outer doorways blocked), No 87 retains trellis porch.

Listing NGR: SU7269972086"

The dwelling is within an Air Quality Management Area (Policy EN15), within the Redlands Conservation Area (Policy EN3, Redlands Conservation Area Appraisal, 2008), and within the Article 4 area which restricts the permitted change of use from C3 dwelling to C4 small HMO. It should be noted that as there are no external changes, nor a change to the use of the property the appraisal below focusses on the impact of the proposal on the listed building and the relevant heritage related policies referred to below.

A site visit was undertaken on 15th May 2025 accompanied by RBC's Conservation Officer.



View of the property from Christchurch Road

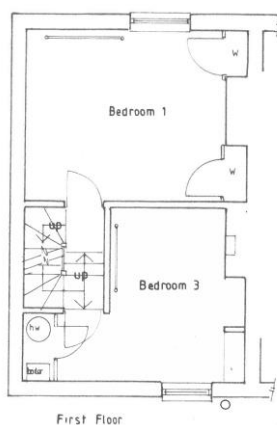
2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Listed Building Consent is sought for the creation of an ensuite bathroom within part of the space of the existing rear first floor bedroom (labelled as bedroom 3 on plan extract below), to serve the master bedroom (labelled as bedroom 1), which is located to the front of the first floor. The works include the following:

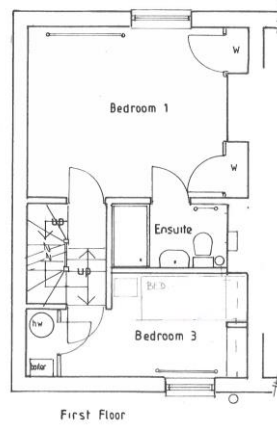
- Enclosed partition to form the small room would be constructed in wooden framed studwork and lined with a waterproof plywood finished with plasterboard and plastered
- Water supply pipework concealed within studwork and sanitaryware fixed to this

Plans and other documents submitted received 7th April 2025 unless otherwise stated:

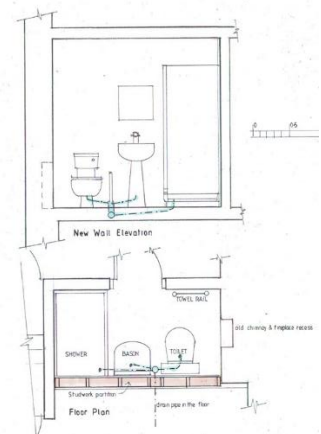
- Drawing no: CT1 – Floor Plans [Existing], dated March 2025
- Drawing no: CT2 – Floor Plans Proposed, dated March 2025
- Drawing no: CT3 – Location and Block Plans, dated March 2025
- Drawing no: CT4 - Detail Plan & Elevation, dated June 2025, received 12th June 2025
- Planning and Design Statement, prepared by Matt Andrews [agent]



Existing First Floor Plan



Proposed First Floor Plan



Detailed Internal Layout

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None.

4. CONSULTATIONS

Conservation Officer – Initial comments:

No objection but clarification required - The proposal has high potential to meet Policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and Chapter 16 of the NPPF. Further information (could be conditioned) and/or revisions are expected by the Council on the following:

- There is no special architectural feature in the room where the proposed bathroom would be located, except for a fireplace. Therefore, the Council would expect a sensitive approach when positioning the proposed shower, sink, and toilet, as well as the associated piping system and route, to be away from the fireplaces. A further statement would be required to clarify this.
- There is also a need for details of the proposed wall and internal door to be submitted to the Council. Regarding this, the use of timber and the reversibility of the walling should be considered.

The property lies within the Redlands Conservation Area and constitutes a group with the listed building adjacent to No. 87 to the west, however, due to the nature of the proposal, there is no direct impact on the setting of any listed building or significance of the conservation area.



The application site (circled in red), listed buildings (purple starred) and conservation area (light purple)

The official listing of 85-89 Christchurch Road makes no mention of internal features for listed buildings, but the site visit confirmed that there are original elements of the staircase, doors, fitted shelves and timber flooring, and a fireplace in situ, but with a modern surround. In addition, the original internal layout and historic single-storey extension to the rear, as suggested by the OS Maps, survives and forms an important part of the building's significance.

Impact of proposal upon heritage asset(s)

The proposal is for the installation of a new bathroom on the first floor of the listed building. I have noted that the house has mainly preserved its internal layout by hosting the service rooms (bathroom and kitchen) in the rear extensions, with a sensitive approach. Given the necessities of contemporary life for a three-bedroom house, the continuity of the original and existing use of the listed house (its adaptation to the present day and sustainability) and the existing piping system to the rear elevation close to the proposed bathroom/service room, the proposal would be acceptable. However, some harm would occur due to the new openings and stud walls, as well as pipe routes. Therefore, I would suggest further information (could be conditioned) and revisions (if agreed) to the proposed scheme.

The proposal would, therefore, cause harm at a level less than substantial, at the lowest level, subject to the details (to be considered sensitively and submitted to the Council) regarding the significance of the heritage asset. The proposal has high potential to meet Policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and Chapter 16 of the NPPF.

Planning Officer Note: Following the submission of a further detailed plan for the shower room, including pipe positions, and clarification regarding the proposed wall construction and material, the Conservation Officer confirmed no objection to the proposal subject to conditions that all works of making good should match existing adjacent work; for the submission, approval and implementation of details for the extractor fan, materials, and schedule of finishes; and that new works should match existing original fabric.

Neighbour Consultation - The following addresses were consulted: 87 91, 91A Christchurch Road and 87 Redlands Road. A site notice was displayed, and an advert was also published in the local press.

No letters of representation were received.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

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.

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

Chapter 16 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

Other

- Historic England Advice Note 2 – Making changes to Heritage Assets
- English Heritage's "Conservation Principles"

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

Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

The NPPF (paras. 207, 208, 212) details that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset the greater the weight should be, and any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 215 requires 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..."*

Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment requires that all proposals protect and, where possible, enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals affecting Listed Buildings are acceptable where they do not *"Have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where appropriate, their settings."* The policy also echoes the NPPF by stating, *"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"*.

The proposed works are to enable the creation of an en-suite shower room to the master bedroom to provide a bathroom at first floor level, serving a practical need, due to the access to the existing ground floor bathroom being via a steep, turning and narrow staircase access, as well as meeting modern standard living arrangements.

Following the original comments from the Conservation Officer further detail was provided with regard to the layout, stud wall and pipe runs. Although there would be some harm to this heritage asset due to the new openings, stud walls, as well as pipe routes, it would be less than substantial at the lowest level and the proposal would cause minimal intervention within the historic fabric of the listed building. The proposal has been sympathetically designed, and it is considered that the very limited harm would be outweighed by the benefits to the occupants (current and future) of the building through enabling adaptation for present day.

The proposed works would not have any adverse impact on the setting of the listed building, nor would they have any detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the listed building or the conservation area.

Overall, subject to conditions, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the NPPF.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed and the proposed works are considered to be in accordance with the above relevant policies and Listed Building Consent can be granted.

8. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT LISTED BUILDING CONSENT subject to the following conditions:

1. Time Limit
2. Approved Plans
3. Details of materials, finishes and extractor fan
4. Existing features to be retained and protected
5. New works to match existing original fabric

Informatives:

1. Terms
2. Building Control
3. Complaints about Construction
4. Positive and Proactive working