



DESIGN & HERITAGE STATEMENT

35 - 41 Oaklands, Hamilton Road, Reading, RG1 5RN

Prepared for: Spurgeon Trust

The purpose of this report is to accompany a 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: 35 - 41 Oaklands, Hamilton Road, Reading, RG1 5RN

Local Authority: Reading Borough Council

Conservation Area: None

Archaeological Notification Area: None

Building Use: Residential

Listing Status: Grade II List entry no. 1411951

Designated Heritage Asset:

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

Non Designated Heritage Asset	N
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Project Overview:

Replacement of the existing windows and all doors including the sliding doors on the block owned by the Trust. Introduction of door intercoms. No change in opening sizes. Replacement glass in existing entrance doors.



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Photo 1 – View of the front/side (northeast) elevation



Photo 2 and 3 – View of the side/east elevation

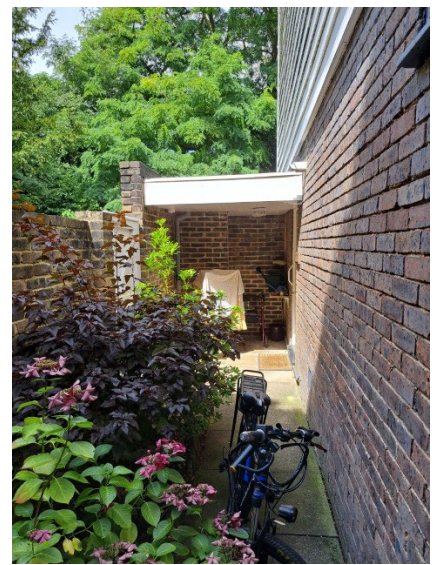


Photo 4-6 – View of entrance ways at the front

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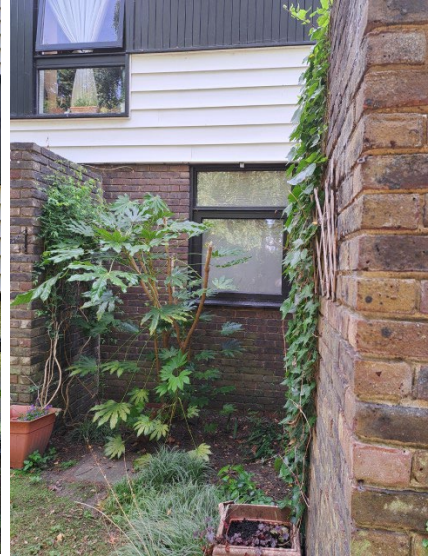


Photo 7-11 – View of entrance ways/windows at the front

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Photo 12 and 13 - View of entrance ways/windows at the front



Photo 14 and 15 – View of entrance ways/windows/storage units at the front

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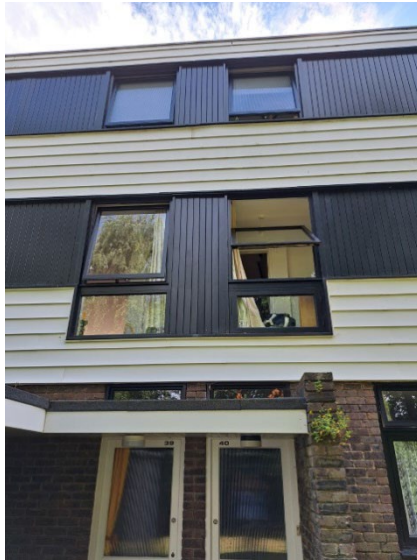


Photo 16-19 – View of the entrance ways/windows at the front

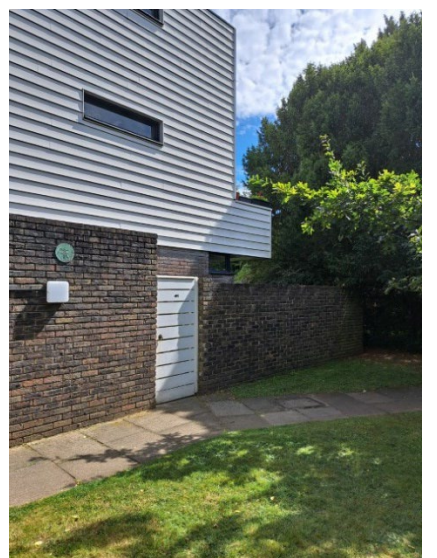


Photo 20-22 – View of the side/west elevation

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Photo 23 – View of the side/west elevation



Photo 24-26 – View of the rear/south elevation

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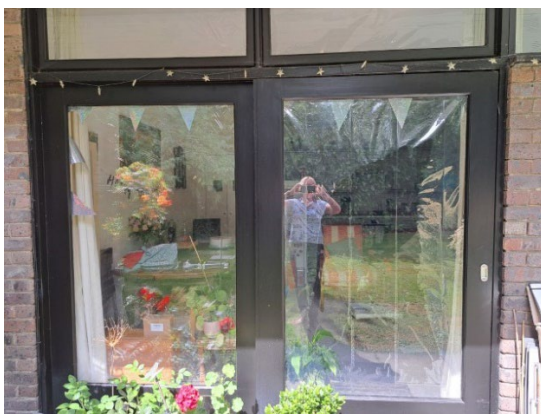
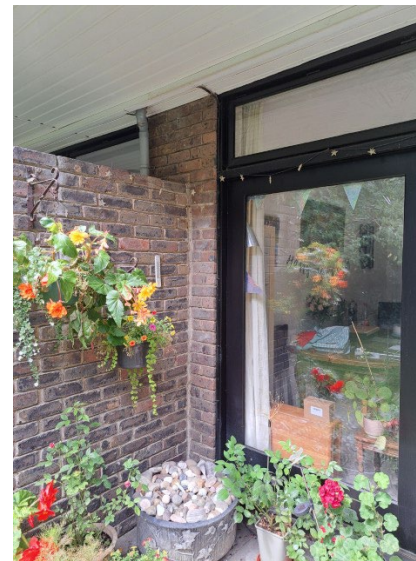
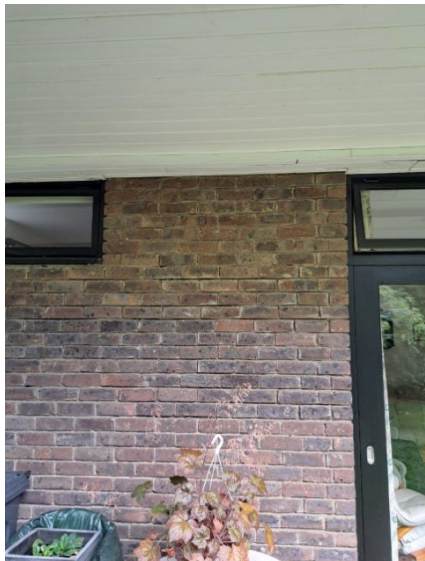


Photo 27-34 – View of the doors/windows at the rear

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Photo 35-40 – View of the doors/windows at the rear

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Reason for the project:

The Spurgeon Oaklands Charitable Trust owns the freehold interest of the Oaklands site, which consists of five blocks of flats with grounds and six blocks of garages in 3 acres of landscaped gardens.

The properties were let to the Oaklands (Reading) Management Association in 1967 and they in turn granted under-leases to the individual flats and maisonettes.

The Trust owns the Underleases to flats 35 to 41 Oaklands, and these properties are retained primarily to provide residential accommodation for retired Christian ordained ministers/lay workers and Church people, upon terms appropriate to their means, and in accordance with the criteria laid down in the Trust Deed, and following the Charity's conversion to CIO status effective 1st January 2023, the Trust's CIO Foundation Constitution document.

The Trust's properties (block 5) comprise a mixture of four two-story, three-bedroomed maisonettes and three ground floor flats. The ground floor flats have direct access to a communal garden behind the properties and the maisonettes have a balcony.

The Trust's properties are rented out on a long-term basis (minimum let of 12 months) and the residents, who are mostly retired, usually stay for some considerable time.

The Trust takes its duty of care very seriously and is keen to upgrade the residents' accommodation by replacing the rotten and ill-fitting windows, through which considerable heat is lost, especially in the winter.

The current glazing does not meet with current safety requirements means that a resident falling against them would result in serious harm. In addition the sliding patio doors currently slide on the outside runner, whereas modern patio doors slide on the inside runner, for security reasons. This particularly makes the ground floor residents vulnerable.

The project aims to improve the thermal comfort of the residents and lower heating bills to avoid fuel poverty. The project also seeks to rectify the glazing in terms of safety and security, a serious issue particularly when dealing with vulnerable adults.. We intend to retain the aesthetics of the building and have consulted with a window company who are able to match the existing aesthetics without loss of the heritage character.

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Drawings and Documents:

2112 E10 Location Plan

2112 E11 Floor Plans and Site Plan

2112 E12 Front and Side Elevations

2112 E13 Rear and Side Elevations

2112 E14 Existing Window drawings taken from original planning drawings

2112 P101 P1 Type 1 Front Entrance Doors

2112 P102 P1 Type 2 Existing and Proposed

2112 P103 P1 Type 3 Existing and Proposed

2112 P104 P1 Type 4 Existing and Proposed

2112 P105 P1 Type 5 Existing and Proposed

2112 P106 P1 Type 6 Existing and Proposed

2112 P107 P1 Type 7 Existing and Proposed

2112 P108 P1 Type 8 Existing and Proposed

2112 P109 P1 Type 9 Existing and Proposed

2112 P110 P1 Type 10 Existing and Proposed

2112 P111 P1 Type 11 Existing and Proposed

2112 P112 P1 Type 12 Existing and Proposed

2112 P113 P1 Type 13 Existing and Proposed

Schedule of Intervention:

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

- Remove the existing external doors and windows throughout, excluding entrance doors.
- Replacement with double glazed units of a similar style but incorporating safety glass.
- The installation of new security intercom buzzers.
- Replacement of the existing front door glazing with heritage double glazed safety glass with reeded glass.
- No proposed extensions.
- No proposed landscape changes.

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Pre app:

A meeting on site took place on 29/01/25 with Planning Officer Gary Miles and Conservation Officer Burcu CanCetin. The following feedback was received:

WINDOWS & PATIO / SLIDING DOORS

The CO is keen that you can retrieve the original drawings for the windows and the contractor will be able to replicate them like for like, the CO thinks there is a high possibility that we can accept replacement windows and sliding doors subject to the following details:

- *We need original and proposed window and sliding door drawings and sections including slim profile double glazing for the proposed ones*
- *Existing and proposed type of timber*
- *Existing and proposed colour*
- *The details, lines, edges, thickness, etc, should be exactly the same as the existing/original ones of windows and the exact detail of the centre of the sliding door frames align seamlessly with the existing property and align with the windows above – see below (Picture 1) see how the sliding door overlaps but not completely obscuring the frame behind, unlike (Picture 2).*

The CA requests to justify the proposed window replacement, and therefore would suggest a basic condition assessment of the elevational design.

The CO would also like to see a good explanation for the proposed works like they would not damage the existing timber cladding on the walls. It is noted that in the original listing description that cladding is one of the main features of the building's architectural interest.

ENTRANCE DOORS

The CO cannot see any logical reason to replace them or some of them, as there is another secondary door to the flat/maisonette, and the insulation by itself does not constitute a justified reason for their replacement. Alternatives can be considered to keep the glazing detail, but I would highly recommend that some of the original doors be retained.

The CO is keen I to reuse some of the original details, like door numbering and door handles / door knobs, and internal window furniture (as mentioned) so we can find a heritage balance.

Following that pre app advice we have worked closely with Allwood Windows and Doors, a traditional timber window manufacturer to seek to mimic the existing window installations with replacement units. This manufacturer has extensive experience with working with Listed Buildings. Proposed detailed drawings have been produced, reviewed and adjusted and are now submitted as part of the Listed Building application. A high quality engineered hardwood will be used and finished with Solignum Architectural Opaque Woodstain (Ebony black) as is used across the estate.

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Setting Overview/ Context:

Oaklands is a private estate built in the 1960s that sits south east of Reading town centre and north of the University of Reading. It consists of a complex of 5 rectangular blocks of three storey maisonettes, each individually Listed as Grade II, designed by Diamond Redfern and Partners. The Oaklands estate is accessed from the east via Bulmershe Road, and from the west via Hamilton Road. The area is primarily residential in nature.

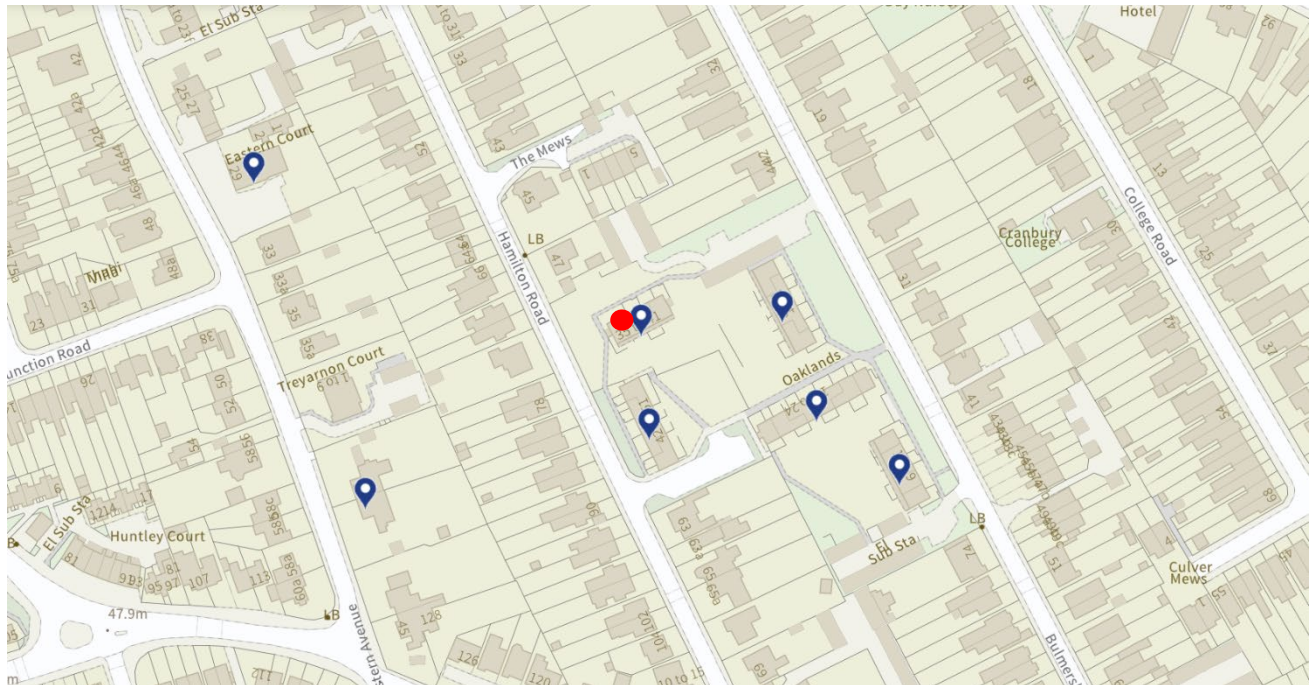
The proposal relates to the entire block to the north west of the site (No.35-41).

Each dwelling has its own external doorway on the north side of the block. The flats and maisonettes have varying plans of 1-2 bedrooms and 2 -3 bedrooms respectively; the maisonettes have balconies to their first-floor living rooms to the south. There are shared landscaped gardens laid to lawn to the south designed by Shelia Haywood.

Historic England describes the building materials; consist of heavily raked dark brickwork, with horizontal white weatherboarding and bands of black vertical boarding to upper floors; flat roofs. The exterior consists of walls form a series of irregularly shaped yards enclosed by white boarded timber cladding. Original front doors are of white-painted timber with two large, glazed panels. Windows are centrally hinged black timber casements, those to the upper floors set in bands of black vertical boarding; the living-room windows are taller, creating a varied pattern of fenestration. Garden side flats have glazed sliding doors with black timber surrounds opening onto semi-enclosed. At first-floor level is a continuous balcony, the parapet lowered in sections to allow views from the maisonette living rooms. Original internal fittings, including built-in cupboards, glazed partitions to living rooms/kitchens and timber handrails to stairs, survive to varying degrees across the estate.

Setting: Urban Area

Topography: Flat



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

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Impacted Heritage Assets:

The building sits directly outside the South Park Conservation Area.

The building is Grade II Listed as are the other 5 blocks.

Official list entry

Heritage Category: Listed Building Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1411951 Date first listed: 04-Feb-2013

List Entry Name: Nos. 35-41 Oaklands

Statutory Address 1: Nos. 35-41 Oaklands, Hamilton Road, Reading, Berkshire

Location

Statutory Address: Nos. 35-41 Oaklands, Hamilton Road, Reading, Berkshire

District: Reading (Unitary Authority) Parish: Non Civil Parish National Grid Reference: SU7346872846

Summary

Block of four maisonettes set over three flats, built 1967 to the designs of Frank Briggs and Peter de Souza of Diamond Redfern and Partners, with landscaping by Sheila Haywood.

Reasons for Designation

Nos. 35-41 Oaklands, built in 1967 by Diamond Redfern and Partners, is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * Architectural quality: an unusually well-planned and crisply-detailed housing scheme, combining frankly modern design with simple, homely materials in the manner of the contemporary Span Estates developments; * Landscaping: the landscape design by Sheila Haywood, which retains elements of the older gardens, is of high quality and succeeds in tying these overtly contemporary buildings into their leafy Victorian setting; * Group value: the five listed residential blocks form a clearly defined group.

History

This is a private development of unusual character. Oaklands was the name of the large Victorian house previously on the northern part of the site, which with its extensive grounds was developed with the five blocks of flats and maisonettes in 1967. The promoter of the scheme was the house's owner, J A Spurgeon, a descendant of the famous Nonconformist family; one block (Nos. 35-48) was retained for letting to retired Baptist ministers and their families. There are 21 flats and 29 maisonettes in all, with landscaping by Sheila Haywood that retained the lawns and mature trees of the original garden as well as red-brick garden walls and an apple store. Facilities for residents included a laundry block and several rows of garages. The scheme won a Ministry of Housing Award in 1969 and a Civic Trust Award in 1972.

The development model of small groups of houses or flats, designed in a homely yet frankly modern style and set in landscaped grounds, was pioneered by Span Developments Limited in the London suburbs during the 1950s, and afterwards imitated by other developers such as Wates. The firm of Diamond Redfern & Partners specialised in housing work in both the public and private sectors. Much of their work was in Ireland, including the much-admired Castlepark Village development at Kinsale, County Cork.

Details

MATERIALS Heavily raked dark brickwork, with horizontal white weatherboarding and bands of black vertical boarding to upper floors; flat roofs.

PLAN The block is of three storeys and comprises four maisonettes on the upper two floors with three flats below. Each dwelling has its own external doorway on the north side of the block. The flats and maisonettes have varying plans of 1-2 bedrooms and 2 -3 bedrooms respectively; the maisonettes have balconies to their first-floor living rooms.

EXTERIOR On the north (entrance) side, projecting brick walls form a series of irregularly-shaped yards enclosed by white boarded timber gates. Original front doors are of white-painted timber with two large glazed panels. Windows are centrally-hinged black timber casements, those to the upper floors set in bands of black vertical boarding; the living-room windows are taller, creating a varied pattern of fenestration. On the south (garden) side, the flats have glazed sliding doors with black timber surrounds opening onto semi-enclosed

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patios. At first-floor level is a continuous balcony, the parapet lowered in sections to allow views from the maisonette living rooms.

INTERIORS Original internal fittings, including built-in cupboards, glazed partitions to living rooms/kitchens and timber handrails to stairs, survive to varying degrees across the estate.

Sources

Books and journals

'Reading Chronicle' in , (26 September 1969)

The block of flats is part of a development of a total of four blocks of flats, which are all Grade II Listed. The list entry numbers for the other three blocks are: 1411952, 1411950, and 1411947.

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.*

There are no proposed below ground works so this has not been evaluated 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.*

Oaklands was the name of a large Victorian House previously situated on the northern part of the Oaklands site in Reading and owned by the Spurgeon family. In the 1960's, planning permission was granted for the redevelopment of the site into maisonettes/flats and garages (completed in 1968). There are 21 flats and 29 maisonettes in total designed in a modern style by Diamond Redfern and Partners (Frank Briggs and Peter de Souza) , with landscaping carried out by Sheila Hayward that retains some garden walls and an apple store from the original house. The promoter of the scheme was the house's owner, J A Spurgeon, a descendant of the famous Nonconformist family.

When the Oaklands Estate was redeveloped one of the 5 blocks was erected on the site of the family home and this block was retained by the family, the block in question. From the time of its completion in 1968 and to date the accommodation was retained for use by the charitable trust for retired Christian ordained ministers/lay workers and Church people, upon terms appropriate to their means.

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 Oaklands scheme received two prestigious architectural awards for its design (a Ministry of Housing Award in 1969 and a Civic Trust Award in 1972).

It was Listed due to its architectural quality, described as an unusually well-planned and crisply-detailed housing scheme, combining frankly modern design with simple, homely materials in the manner of the contemporary Span Estates developments; * Landscaping: the landscape design by Sheila Haywood, which retains elements of the older gardens, is of high quality and succeeds in tying these overtly contemporary buildings into their leafy Victorian setting. The Architectural significance of the estate is high both as an individual block and as part of a group value.

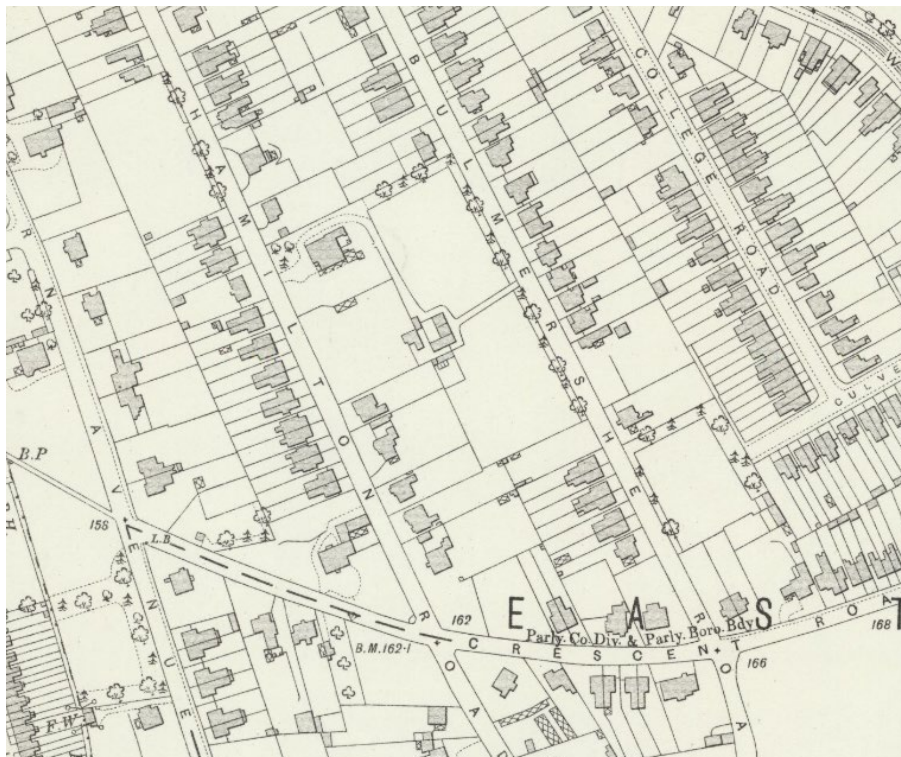
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Historic Mapping – For reference dating only, not for reproduction



Extract from Berkshire Sheet XXXVII.NE 1900



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Extract from Berkshire XXXVII.4 1912



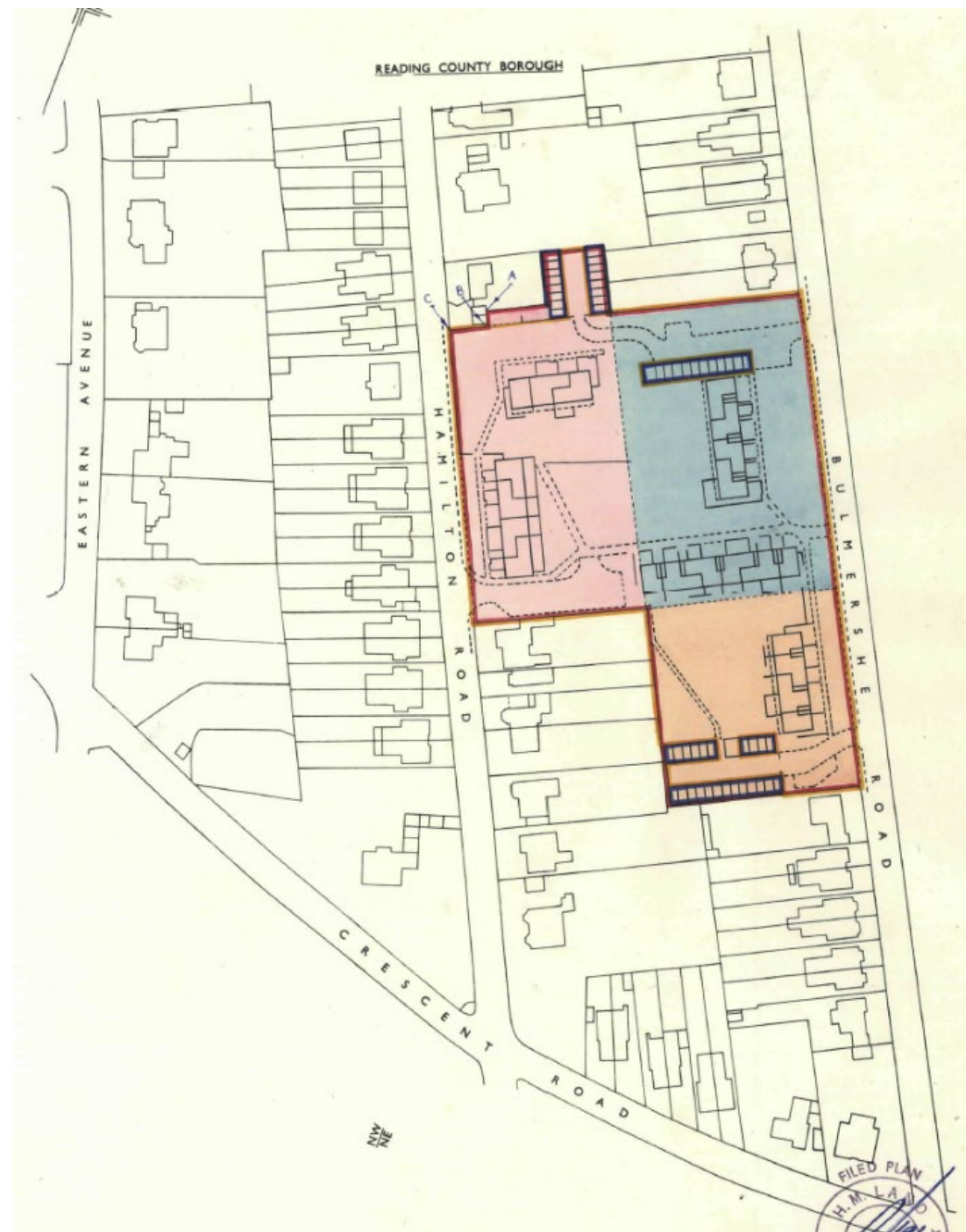
Extract from Berkshire XXXVII.4 1934



Extract from SU7372-A 1958

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Title Deed 1970

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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:

There are no proposed extensions to the building. The ambition is to provide a replacement product for the doors and windows, matching in materiality, colour and overall detailing, that complies in regards to safety and security whilst improving the thermal efficiency of the property but without a change to its visual appearance.

The aim of the scheme is to retain the existing architectural detailing including the external cladding details whilst supporting the buildings historical use for the provision of accommodation for vulnerable persons, something that the poor current thermal qualities and poor security of the doors and windows makes unsustainable long term. A great deal of work has been done with a window manufacturer used to providing bespoke installations for heritage buildings finding suitable products and producing detailed drawings. Detailed proposals have been included as part of the submission. The existing wood stain colours are known and can be replicated. There are no changes to the door and window opening sizes.

Following the pre app the replacement of the entrance doors is omitted from the scheme and instead the replacement of the glazing only is proposed so that the glazing incorporates safety glazing, something that is currently missing from all of the windows across the block..

The ambition of the scheme is for no overall visual changes to the block and therefore no impact upon the building or its group value.

Internally:

There is no proposed change to the internal layouts of the flats.

Scale and Massing:

There is no proposed change to the scale or massing of the building.

Archeaology:

There are no proposed below ground works so therefore there is no impact upon below ground archaeology.

Use:

There is no proposed change of use or intensification of use as part of this application. The upgrade in the accommodation allows the charity to continue the original purpose of the building, something that is currently under threat.

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, 2023 and 2024.

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.

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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:

This application follows on from a pre app with Reading Council and extensive design work with a heritage timber window manufacturer to ensure that the designs produced do not harm the architectural significance of the existing building. Detailed drawings are submitted as part of the application.

There is an urgent need to address safety, security and thermal efficiency concerns on the property in order to fulfill its base function as a lettable unit for vulnerable persons. The existing doors and windows are 1960s in their nature and a replacement is feasible with a similar modern product with the same materiality without visual harm. The proposals secure the optimum viable use of the heritage asset and are critical in supporting its long term Conservation

It is our believe that the proposals act in accordance with both local and national heritage 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: 20/08/24. 29/01/25. 26/02/2025

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):