

COMBINED DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Coley Ward

App Ref: PL/25/1154 Full & PL/25/1155 Lbc

Address: FLAT 5, 109 CASTLE HILL, READING, RG1 7SX

Proposal: Conversion of three flats at the First Floor into one 2-bed flat.

Applicant: Ms S Scott

Received date: 14/08/2025

Target Decision date: 24/10/2525 (EOT)

Case Officer: Marcelina Rejwarska

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a two-storey property with a semi-basement on the south side of Castle Hill. The property is Grade II listed, and the national listing reads as follows:

109 Castle Hill (formerly 109 Castle Street) was built in the early C19, sometime between 1802 and the 1830s (the house does not appear on Coates' map of 1802). The substantial townhouse appears to have experienced little alteration externally. There may have been front access to the semi-basement historically, with evidence of a former area and doorway beneath the stairs to the main entrance. The elevational treatment of the second floor appears to have been altered as it is plainly finished in smooth render while the two lower floors are of channelled stucco.

The full listing can be found at the following web-address: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113422?section=official-list-entry>.

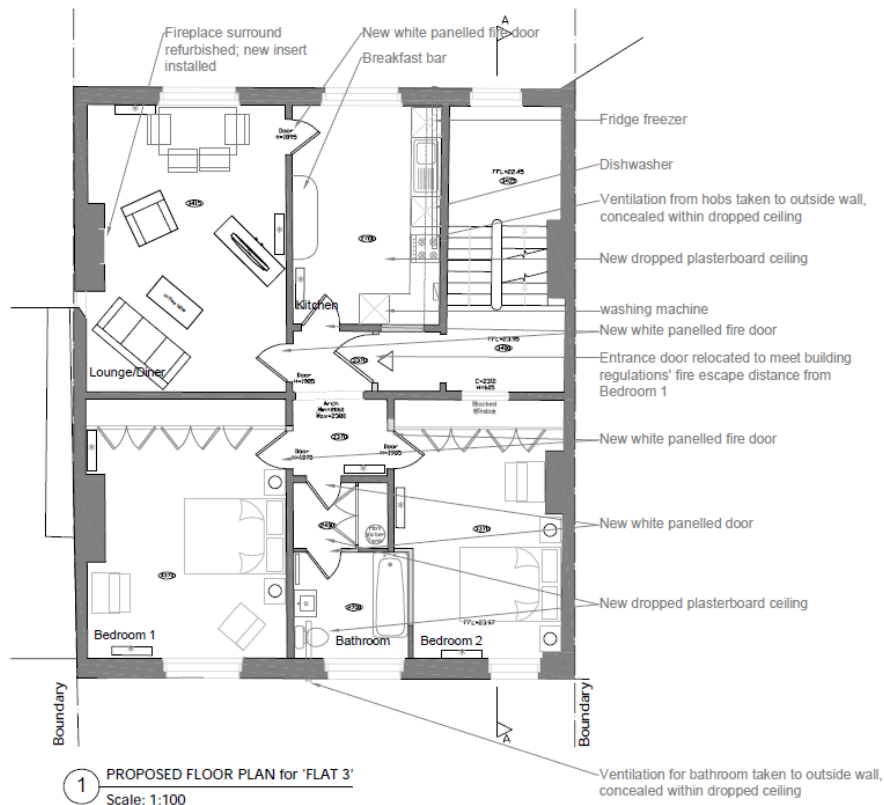
The surrounding area comprises many other listed buildings, including 107 and 111 Castle Hill on either side of the application site. The site is also within the Russell Street/Castle Hill/Oxford Road conservation area.



Figure 1 Application site as seen from Castle Hill. Taken from Google Maps.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission and listed building consent are sought for the conversion of three flats at the first floor into one 2-bedroom flat. The internal alterations required for this change comprise removal of some existing partition walls, existing fittings (kitchens, bathrooms, water tanks), relocate existing internal doors and replace non-original internal doors. Repairs are also proposed to one existing timber sash window, and refurbishment is proposed for an existing fire place in the proposed living/dining room.



2.1. Information submitted:

- 1345-HR-A-HS-XX-01 Rev 02 Design and Access and Heritage Statement, Heritage Revival, dated 13/08/2025
 - Location Plan
 - 1345-HR-A-TP-0101 Existing General Arrangement First Floor Plan and Section A-A
 - 1345-HR-A-TP-0102 Existing General Arrangement Elevations
 - 1345-HR-A-TP-0201 Proposed General Arrangement First Floor Plan
 - 1345-HR-A-TP-0201 Proposed General Arrangement Elevations
 - 1345-HR-A-TP-0203 Proposed Fabric Removal and Section A-A
- Received by the LPA on 14 August 2025

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

95/00926/LB – Reconstruction of rear wall due to subsidence and associated internal remedial work.
Conditional consent granted

95/00736/LB – Proposed car parking to existing rear garden (109-111 Castle Hill). Application refused.

95/00682/FD – Provision of car parking for 21 cars in existing rear garden to serve flats. Application refused.

87/TP/1274 – Conversion of house into four flats. Condition consent granted.

87/TP/1273 – Internal alterations to facilitate conversion to four flats (LBC). Conditional consent granted.

86/TP/0384 – Erection of 8 flats following demolition of outbuildings and boundary walls, conversion of 109 to provide 1 flat and 6 bedsits, erection of garages and formation of car parking areas and new access road. Application refused and dismissed at appeal.

85/TP/0669 – Refurbishment and repairs to effect use as flats and bedsits. Demolition of outbuildings, demolition of and rebuilding boundary walls. Conditional consent granted.

85/TP/0647 – 4 new houses and 4 flats, access road and footpath, 20 car spaces and 5 garages, new boundary walls, continued use of 109 as 1 flat and 8 bedsits. Application refused.

81/TP/0587 – Alteration (LBC). Application refused.

81/TP/0645 – Erection of fence and enlargement of access (F). Application refused.

79/TP/0228 – Provision of car parking on forcourt. Application refused.

0000009661 – Kitchen and bathroom. Unconditional consent granted (1962).

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- RBC Conservation Officer – No objections, subject to conditions.
- RBC Transport Development Control – No comments received.
- Reading CAAC – No comments received.

Site notices were also displayed on site. No letters of representation were received.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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

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

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

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance, Historic England 2008

HEAG125 Listed Buildings and Curtilage

HEAG304 Listed Building Consent

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

Policy CC1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy CC7 – Design and the Public Realm

Policy CC8 – Safeguarding Amenity

Policy EN1 – Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

Policy EN3 – Enhancement of Conservation Areas

Policy H1 – Provision of Housing

Policy H2 – Density and Mix

Policy H5 – Standards for New Housing

Policy H7 – Protecting the Existing Housing Stock

Policy TR3 – Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

Other documents

Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal 2020

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD 2011

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.

Local Plan Update

The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. A draft submission version of the Local Plan Partial Update was published on 9th May 2025.

Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become “out of date” when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example.

Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to this application listed above is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remains very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the advice given below and are not considered to be ‘out of date’.

6. APPRAISAL

6.1. Heritage implications and design

Policy EN1 requires proposals to protect and, where possible, enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, as well as the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Policy EN3 similarly requires development to enhance the appearance and significance of conservation areas. Policies CC7 and CR2 are also relevant and require high quality design.

The proposed internal alterations have been sufficiently explained and justified within the submitted Heritage Statement, from which it is evident that the proposed works will have a neutral effect on the heritage asset, and have been sympathetically planned and designed. A condition is recommended to secure additional details of the specific methodology and internal finishes proposed.

6.2. Housing density and mix

Policy H2 states *"Wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting the needs for the mix of housing... in particular for family homes of three or more bedrooms."*

Policy H7 prevents the any loss of residential accommodation or land, except in exceptional circumstances. The supporting text of this policy states *"There may be exceptional circumstances where a loss of a limited amount of general residential would help to meet other key identified needs, for instance ... to reinstate a use more appropriate to the significance of a heritage asset, and this should be clearly demonstrated as part of any planning application."*

The development would result in the net loss of 2x studio residential flats. The submitted proposal sufficiently demonstrates that the works would result in a net benefit to the site by way of improvements and remediation of unauthorised internal alterations. Together with the creation of a family-sized unit the circumstances are considered exceptional and acceptable in this case to justify the loss of 2x existing residential units.

6.3. Residential amenity

Policy CC8 requires all development to prevent harm to residential amenity of both future occupiers and neighbouring residents. Policy H5 sets out standards for new residential development.

There are no risks identified within this proposal as the works are entirely internal. The proposed unit would meet the nationally described minimum space standards, as per Policy H5.

6.4. Car parking

Policy TR5 requires development to provide car and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of the site.

The Revised Parking Design and Standards SPD identifies the site within Zone 2 Primary Core Area. The parking requirement in this zone for a 2-bedroom unit is 1 parking space, which is already provided within the existing forecourt. There are no changes proposed to the existing parking layout.

7. CONCLUSION

The applications have been assessed against national and locally adopted policies and are considered in accordance with those policies.



8. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION AND GRANT LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

Recommended conditions (FULL):

1. Time limit (standard)
2. Approved Plans
3. Materials to be submitted prior to commencement

Recommended conditions (LBC):

1. Time limit (standard)
2. Approved Plans
3. Materials to be submitted prior to commencement