

**The Planning Department
Reading Borough Council**

10 April 2026

RBC Ref:
PE/25/0084

By email

Dear Sir/Madam

PLANNING STATEMENT Prepared by Harwood Savin Planning Solutions on behalf of the Applicant

Site Address: 40 Howard Street, Reading, RG1 7XS, Berkshire

Proposal: Retrospective application for removal of chimney stacks

Property Type: House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

Conservation Area: Russell Street / Castle Hill Conservation Area

In addition to this planning statement the following documents prepared by the applicant are also attached:

- A : Internal Plan
- B: Planning Harms consideration
- C: Streetscape after removal – photos
- D: Chimney count on Howard St
- E: Views out from Howard St – map and BSANA
- F: Roofer Report
- G: Letter from neighbour at 38B
- H: Letters from tenants (2)
- I: Contribution to the Streetscape
- J: GOV.UK Improving Energy Performance of privately rented homes
- K: Investment plan for future Energy Efficiency measures
- L: Battle Ward Councillors Surgery meeting - notes
- M: Battle Ward Councillors Surgery meeting - acknowledgement
- N: Abbey ward Councillors Surgery meeting – notes
- O: GOV.UK: Policy Paper Warm Homes Plan: Ministerial Foreword

1. INTRODUCTION

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a retrospective planning application for the removal of chimney stacks at 40 Howard Street, Reading. The property is a licensed House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) providing residential accommodation and plays an important role in meeting local housing demand within Reading Borough.

The works were undertaken as urgent repair and safety works following significant water penetration and internal damp and mould issues affecting multiple occupiers (see Document H). The removal of the redundant chimney stacks was required to address ongoing structural deterioration and to protect the health and wellbeing of residents. (See Document F).

This statement demonstrates that the works:

- Preserve the character and appearance of the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area
- Improve living conditions for occupiers
- Comply with national and local planning policy
- Align with emerging legal obligations under Awaab's Law, Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards and the Warm Homes Plan

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

40 Howard Street is a traditional Victorian terraced property located within the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area, characterised by brick terraces with varied roofscapes, alterations over time, and a mix of retained and removed chimney stacks throughout the street scene.

The building is in residential use as an HMO. The surrounding area contains a mixture of flats, studios and shared accommodation. Several nearby properties have altered roof forms and removed or reduced chimney stacks, reflecting evolving building standards and maintenance requirements.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

No recent planning history relevant to the chimney removal is known. The works were undertaken as a necessary repair and health-related intervention.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKS

The development consists of the removal of redundant and defective chimney stacks above roof level only. The internal chimney breasts remain for structural stability. (See Document A)

The stacks were suffering from:

- Failing mortar joints
- Saturated masonry
- Persistent water ingress

- Penetrating damp
- Mould growth internally
- Falling masonry risk and questionable chimney pot stability

The roof was made good using matching materials appropriate to the age and character of the building.

5. JUSTIFICATION – HEALTH AND AWAAB’S LAW

The property operates as a licensed HMO and is therefore subject to heightened housing standards and statutory responsibilities relating to occupant health, including minimising heat loss.

The chimney stacks were identified as the primary source of prolonged penetrating damp affecting multiple bedrooms and communal areas. Moisture tracking through defective stacks created conditions conducive to mould growth. Climate change is increasing the 3 challenges of higher humidity, strong winds and more frequent and intense rainstorms.

Under Awaab’s Law (introduced through the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and influencing wider housing standards), landlords must address damp and mould hazards promptly and effectively to prevent harm to occupants. Although primarily directed at social landlords, the principles establish clear expectations across all residential accommodation, particularly HMOs where risk to vulnerable occupants is elevated.

Retention of the defective stacks would have risked a Category 1 Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) hazard. Removal represented the only reliable long-term solution following professional inspection, as repeated repair attempts had failed due to severe saturation and thermal bridging within the stack structure. Therefore, the works were necessary to:

- Eliminate ongoing damp and mould
- Protect occupant respiratory health
- Prevent enforcement action under housing legislation
- Ensure safe and habitable accommodation
- Improve energy efficiency to meet future MEES requirements

6. HERITAGE IMPACT – CONSERVATION AREA

Section 72 of the 36-year-old Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

The Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area is valued primarily for its consistent building line, brick detailing and historic street pattern rather than uniform retention of chimney stacks. The roofscape shows numerous examples of altered or removed stacks.

Of the 21 houses in the Victorian terrace (from 2 Baker St to 6 Howard St), only 9 have front chimney stacks with pots, most accompanied by TV aials. (See Document D).

Key considerations:

- The stacks were not original decorative features of architectural significance

- They were not visible from primary public viewpoints at pedestrian level to a significant degree. The fleeting vista from the Howard /Baker St junction is dominated by the 6-lane IDR cutting, the bottle bank and associated flytipping and antisocial behaviour (see Documents C and E).
- The roof form remains traditional in profile
- Materials were matched appropriately

The works do not harm the character of the conservation area. Instead, they represent a typical maintenance-led alteration commonly found within the area's evolution as can be seen from the images.

As such, the proposal preserves the character and appearance of the conservation area in accordance with statutory duty and national heritage policy principles.

7. DESIGN AND VISUAL AMENITY

The removal results in a simplified roofscape but maintains the terrace rhythm and proportions. No incongruous features have been introduced. The repair uses matching slates and appropriate ridge detailing ensuring visual continuity.

The visual impact is neutral and consistent with surrounding alterations across the conservation area.

8. RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

The works improve residential amenity (quality, character and amenity of the homes) by:

- Eliminating damp walls and associated odours
- Improving air quality
- Preventing mould exposure
- Reducing cold bridging by conduction and convection (estimate 20% reduction in room heating)
- Improving thermal efficiency

No neighbouring amenity impacts arise from the removal. The development does not create overlooking, overshadowing, or noise impacts. Indeed, the neighbours on the North side share the above benefits through the "party wall". (see Document G).

9. STRUCTURAL AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

The stacks posed a risk of masonry failure and falling debris. Removal reduced risk to occupants and the public realm. The roof structure has been properly weather-sealed and structurally stabilised.

10. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The proposal has been assessed against the Reading Borough Local Plan policies and relevant national guidance.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) The NPPF seeks to ensure safe, healthy and high-quality homes (Section 8) while conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance (Section 16). It supports reasonable adaptation of historic buildings to remain viable and occupied. The removal of defective chimney stacks to resolve damp and mould aligns with these objectives and sustains the building's long-term use. (See Document B).

Reading Borough Local Plan Policies

Policy EN1 – Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment. Development within conservation areas should preserve or enhance their character or appearance. The chimney stacks were not key architectural features, and their removal does not erode the defining characteristics of the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area, which are primarily derived from building line, brick detailing, fenestration pattern and overall terrace form. The works therefore preserve the conservation area.

Policy EN4 – Conservation Areas Alterations should respect the significance of heritage assets and be proportionate. The works represent minimal intervention necessary to address structural failure and health hazards. Matching materials ensure the roofscape remains visually consistent with surrounding properties where chimney alterations are common.

Policy H5 – Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). The Local Plan supports HMOs where adequate living conditions are maintained. The removal of the defective stacks was necessary to provide safe and habitable accommodation by eliminating damp and mould affecting multiple occupiers. The proposal therefore positively supports the objectives of Policy H5 by improving internal living standards.

Policy CC2 – Sustainable Design and Construction. The works improve thermal performance by removing saturated masonry acting as a cold bridge and preventing ongoing moisture penetration, thereby improving energy efficiency and sustainability of the building.

Overall Compliance. The proposal represents a balanced approach between heritage conservation and ensuring safe residential accommodation. The works are limited, visually neutral and necessary to maintain a viable residential use. The development therefore complies with the Reading Borough Local Plan when read as a whole.

10A. HERITAGE BALANCE AND PUBLIC BENEFITS

Paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires that where development results in less than substantial harm to a heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this case, any perceived change to the roofscape is at most negligible and firmly within the category of less than substantial harm.

The public benefits are clear and significant:

- Removal of a Category 1 damp and mould hazard
- Protection of occupant health in a multi-occupied property
- Compliance with statutory housing duties and Awaab's Law principles
- Securing the long-term viable residential use of a historic building
- Improved thermal efficiency and building longevity

- Alignment with government's Warm Homes Plan to lift 1 million households out of fuel poverty (see Document O), and with the Government Response: Improving the Energy Performance Privately Rented Homes (see Document J)

The works therefore provide strong and direct public benefits which decisively outweigh any minimal visual change. The proposal represents sustainable conservation through continued occupation and maintenance, which is consistent with the overarching objectives of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the NPPF.

11. CONCLUSION

The removal of the chimney stacks at 40 Howard Street was necessary, proportionate, and justified due to the risk of serious damp and mould conditions affecting an occupied HMO.

The works:

- Address a significant health hazard in line with Awaab's Law principles
- Preserve the character and appearance of the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area
- Improve living standards and energy costs for residents
- Do not harm visual amenity
- Represent responsible property management for low income residents

The development therefore complies with statutory duties, national and local government energy and climate change initiatives, national planning guidance, and conservation objectives. Planning permission is respectfully requested.

Yours faithfully



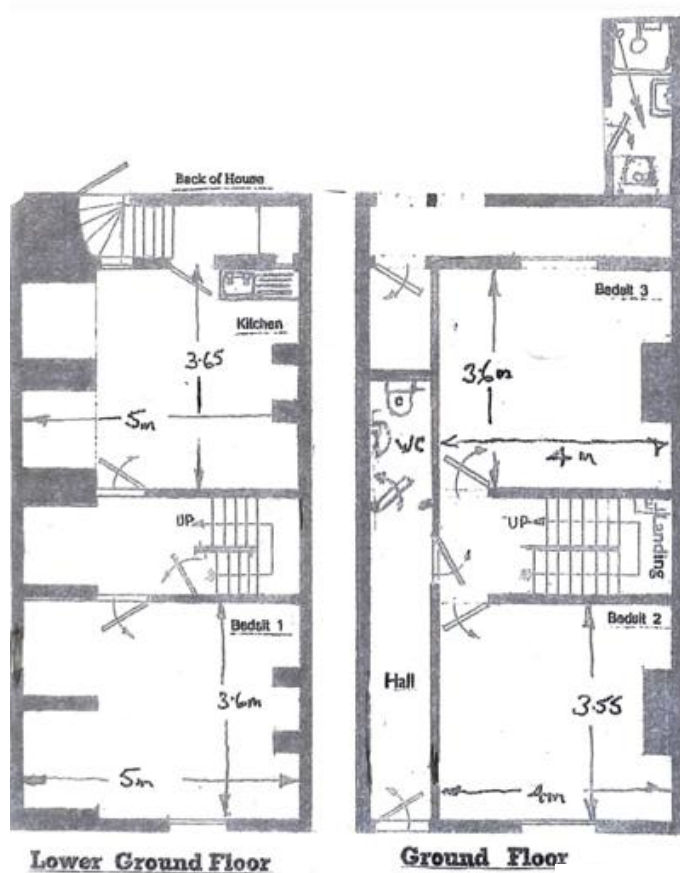
Carl Thomas MSc

e. carl.thomas@harwoodsavin.com

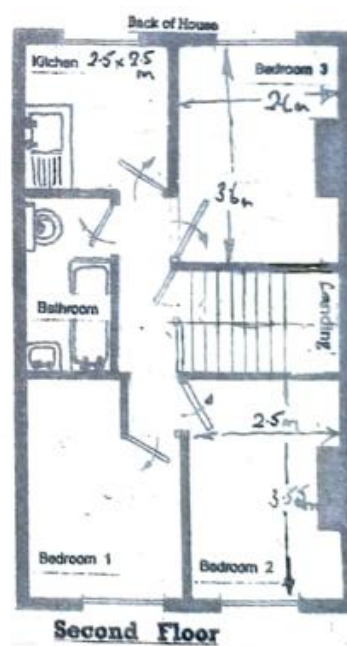
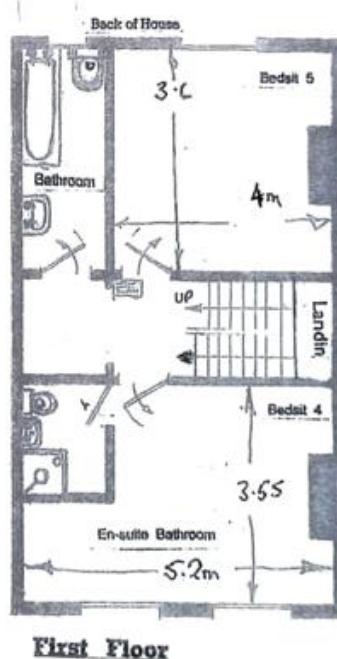
Internal Plan – unchanged by demolition of chimneys

40 Howard St , Reading RG1 7XS

Ref: PE/25/0084



Drawn to Scale Measure Shown below



Planning Harms Consideration (as at Dec 2025)

40 Howard St , Reading RG1 7XS

Ref: PE/25/0084

The following Planning Harms were identified for consideration, in the attachment to RBC's letter of 18/08/2025:

Planning Policies The Council consider the following policies require consideration in respect of the development: • Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 (Policies CC7, CC8, EN1, EN3, EN5, CR9) • National Planning Policy Framework 2024 • Planning Practice Guidance [PPG] (since 2014 as amended)
Planning Harm The following sets out what might be considered material to determining whether the development is harmful: 1. Whether the development is reasonably required in its location; 2. Whether the development affects the character and appearance of the surrounding area; 3. Whether the development affects the living conditions of the host property or neighbouring properties; 4. Whether there are circumstances which outweigh any identified planning harm.

Taking each Harm in turn:

Harm 1. Whether the development is reasonably required in its location.

As an HMO the house is subject to increasingly stringent requirements regarding energy efficiency, avoiding damp and mould, and eliminating safety hazards. Removal of the chimneys is a proven method of helping meet these requirements, and has already proved highly effective.

Harm 2. Whether the development affects the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Howard St does not retain the traditional character of a Reading residential street, because the houses on the Eastern side of the street were demolished to make-way for the Inner Distribution Road, a 6 lane carriageway directly opposite 40 Howard Street . This busy road blights the whole of Howard Street, with its rotting concrete capping stones, peeling railings and unabated noise.

The 2020 Conservation Appraisal rightly does not include any vistas **onto** Howard St (spatial analysis, page 25) as there are no significant viewing points. The east pavement where

Howard and Baker St meet offers the only unobstructed view of 40 Howard St front roof, but that area is rarely used, dominated as it is by road noise, drug dealing, bottle banks and associated fly-tipping.

In this context, the development's effect on the character and appearance of the area is barely discernible.

Note that Google Street-view makes front chimneys and other roof features look misleadingly prominent, because images are taken at 2.5 metre height, from a vehicle in the roadway. To a pedestrian on the on the west pavement, the Howard St chimneys are barely visible (see photos in appendices). From the east pavement pedestrian views of the roof-scape are obscured by the welcome trees.

Harm 3. Whether the development affects the living condition of the host property or neighbouring properties.

The development has very favourably affected the living conditions of the host and neighbouring property. Tenants in Number 40 report warmer, drier, cheaper to heat rooms, especially on the top floor (see their letters in appendices). The neighbour at 38 is also delighted, having grappled with leaks, damp and cold for years (see her letter in appendices). The strict requirements of Awaab's Law make it vitally important to prevent water ingress and cold damp surfaces.

The tenant who helps look after the front and rear garden no longer finds fallen debris, and feels reassured that the danger of falling masonry is eliminated.

Chimney removal is a tried and tested way to improve living conditions. Contrast this with recent Government-funded insulation schemes, costing over £100m of public money, afflicted by failure rates of 98% for external insulation and 27% for internal (Public Accounts Committee, published 23/1/26).

Harm 4. Whether there are circumstances which outweigh any identified planning harm.

The harm/loss is of the almost unviewable front chimney, and a rear chimney that can only be seen from 50m away along 20m of pavement at the junction of Anstey Road and Baker Street. Neither of these chimneys matched the neighbouring 4 houses on the terrace of 5. The demolished chimneys were ramshackle, redundant structures worn out by 200 years of service, and despite my best efforts during my 50 years ownership had become porous and of doubtful structural stability. The gain from their removal vastly out-weighs their loss. It gives 10 to 12 residents a much cosier home at a lower cost to them, and provides the other priceless benefits listed above.

Not rebuilding saves nearly 2Tonnes of CO₂, and the unwelcome possibility of open fires or stoves ever being used in the house, with their release of 2.5µm particles and CO₂ into the atmosphere.

STREETSCAPE AFTER THE REMOVAL OF THE CHIMNEYS AT 40 HOWARD STREET (page 1 of 2)

40 Howard St , Reading RG1 7XS

Ref: PE/25/0084

Pedestrian view from the West pavement walking South on Howard St:



Pedestrian view from the West pavement walking North on Howard St:



STREETSCAPE AFTER THE REMOVAL OF THE CHIMNEYS AT 40 HOWARD STREET (page 2 of 2)

40 Howard St , Reading RG1 7XS

Ref: PE/25/0084

Pedestrian view from the IDR railings at the corner of Howard and Baker St:



Views of the rear of Howard St, from the junction of Baker St and Anstey Road:



The Victorian terrace of 21 houses has 9 houses which have retained their chimney stacks with pots.

From South to North: inspected from opposite pavement in Jan 2026

House number	Chimney Stack?	Chimney Pots?	Aerials?
2 Baker St	yes		
44 Howard St	yes		
42 Howard St	yes	yes	yes
40 Howard St			
38 Howard St	yes		yes
36 Howard St			
34 Howard St	yes	yes	
32 Howard St	yes	yes	
30 Howard St			
28 Howard St			
26 Howard St	yes		yes
24 Howard St	yes		yes
22 Howard St	yes		
20 Howard St			
18 Howard St	yes	yes	
16 Howard St	yes	yes	yes
14 Howard St	yes	yes	yes
12 Howard St	yes	yes	yes
10 Howard St			
8 Howard St	yes	yes	
6 Howard St	yes	yes	yes

gap between
38 and 36

Of the Victorian terrace: 21 houses	15 stacks	9 with pots	8 aerials
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4 and 4 a Howard St Georgian style: roofscape obscured by pediment
2 Howard St Victorian gables

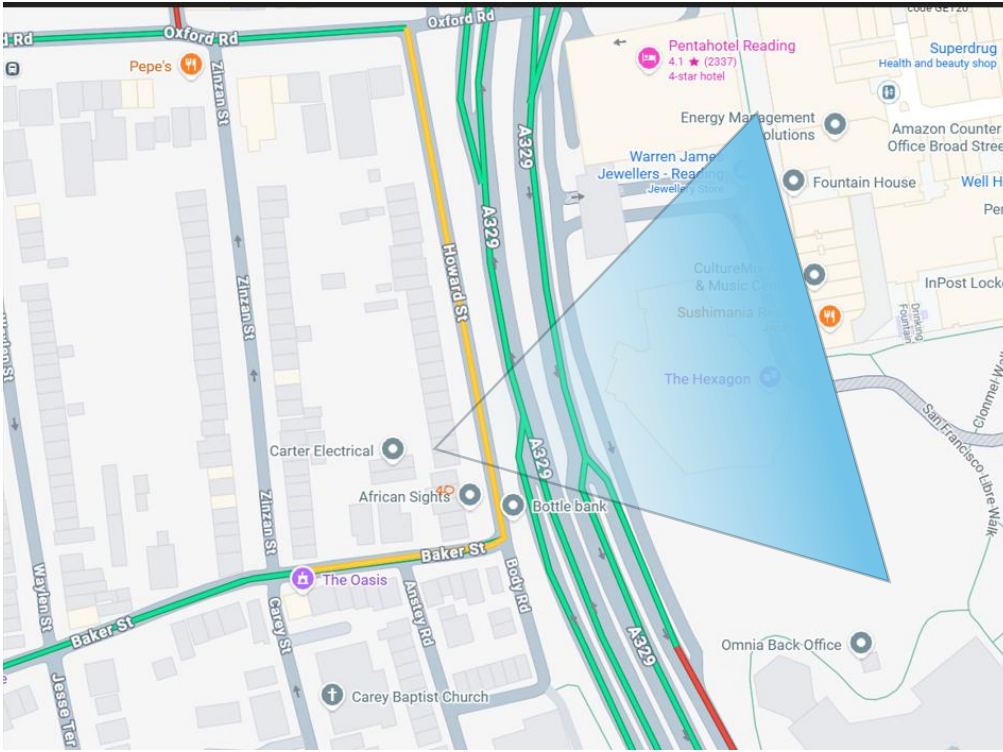
Zero houses on the East side of Howard St

Views out from 40 Howard Street

40 Howard St , Reading RG1 7XS

Ref: PE/25/0084

Views from the front of 40 Howard Street are dominated by the sight and noise of the IDR:



Future developments risk further oppressive views, adding to the tower blocks massed at the Northern end of Howard St:



(picture from BSANA website March26)

Report From Ryan Cooke – May 2025
Earley Roofing, Proprietor

40 Howard St , Reading RG1 7XS
Ref: PE/25/0084

I was instructed by Hyden Mayhew, the landlord of 40 Howard Street, to inspect the front and rear chimneys.

Mr. Mayhew had recently observed increased dampness on the internal chimney breasts, water ingress during heavy rain and was concerned about the structural safety of the stacks and pots in recent extreme weather. The neighbour had also reported the ingress of dampness through the party wall into her property.

I arranged scaffolding to be erected and examined the chimneys.

From my inspection it was clear that several, workmanlike, repairs had been made over the years to the pointing and the flashing, the last to the flashing being recent. There was significant spalling in the brick work, most of the pots were cracked, they were not matched sets and the mortar base between the pots and the stacks had slightly deteriorated. My conclusion was that the complete chimney structures were causing the dampness in both properties and that further repair or even reconstruction would not solve the problem, as the flues would continue to be moisture conduits, as they would not be subject to the drying effects of use (fires).

After short consideration Mr. Mayhew instructed me to take advantage of the warm dry weather and solve the problems that I had discovered from my inspection, by removing the stacks and making good by installing continuous matching slate roofing.

This action was also considered the most appropriate, at that time, by the Council Planning Enforcement Officer who visited the site.

Signed: Ryan Cooke, Proprietor, Earley Roofing,
1 Green Road, Reading, RG6 7BS



Ryan Cooke
Earley Roofing

Letter from Elizabeth Pritchard
Owner of neighbouring 38B Howard St

40 Howard St , Reading RG1 7XS
Ref: PE/25/0084

As the owner of the adjoining maisonette/upper floors of 38B Howard Street I make the following comments in support of the removal of 40 Howard Street chimneys.

This chimney was entirely redundant to both properties.

It was a source of damp which I believe has penetrated deep into the wall of my property. This is of particular concern as my tenants who are a family with children.

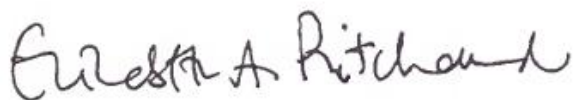
Anything which can reduce the potential for mould to grow on the bedrooms walls must be welcomed particularly with children living in the property.

It is a source of heat loss which is a cost to my tenants and causes me concern with reaching the required EPC rating.

During my ownership, the chimney has needed frequent, costly maintenance to keep the stack and chimney pots safe and reduce leaks into my property. This is not a good use of limited funds.

The chimneys are not easy to see from the street and the properties remain particularly attractive so it is difficult to understand how this could change the integrity of the Conservation Area.

I hope very much that the planning application will be viewed with positivity and pragmatism.



Elizabeth Pritchard

Owner

38B Howard Street

Reading

RG1 7XS

pritchprops@gmail.com

Letter from R [REDACTED] B [REDACTED]
Tenant of Top Rear room

40 Howard St , Reading RG1 7XS

Ref: PE/25/0084

My name is R [REDACTED] B [REDACTED], I moved in in September 2025. My room is top back. Even though the winter weather was very damp, my room has not had any leaks or damp walls.

The lady who had the room before me, had damp streaks on the wall from the chimney.

Thanks.

[REDACTED]
15/3/26

Letter from A [REDACTED] M [REDACTED] of 2
Tenant of Top Front North room)

40 Howard St , Reading RG1 7XS
Ref: PE/25/0084

I have lived in the top
front room at 40
Howard Street for 15
years.

Sometimes in the winter
there have been water
from the ceiling and
wet on the wall.

This last winter it has
been all dry and warm
and no leaks or
wet walls. It is much better

A [REDACTED] M [REDACTED]
A [REDACTED]

Contribution to the streetscape and amenity of Howard Street
Note from H C Mayhew, landlord

Ref: PE/25/0084
40 Howard St , Reading RG1 7XS

During the last fifty years we have owned 40 Howard Street, covering the years both before and after the introduction of the Conservation Area, we have consistently tried to preserve the external Victorian heritage of the house.

The works have included this non exhaustive list of jobs:

- Repointing and re-rendering the Front Elevation and repairing the traditional window sills
- Removing T.V. aerials and satellite dishes from both the roof and front elevation
- Re-establishing wrought- Iron railings and gate
- Re-establishing the front garden including traditional privet hedging and bedding plants
- Restoring traditional wooden front door, painting it in period colour and fitting Victorian door pull, letter box, key plate, knocker and knob
- Fitting double glazed windows to the exact pattern of the original wood sashes being replaced
- Paving and edging the front path in traditional flags and edge stones

We have also contributed to the overall amenity of Howard street by:

- Ensuring rubbish is properly sorted, and bins are stored off the pavement until collection day
- Collecting bulky waste direct from tenants so it is not left in the garden or street
- Liaising with PCSOs, Police and Crimestoppers to combat drug dealing by Howard St bottle banks and along Baker St
- Reporting fly tipping on the Love Clean Streets app

Forward to “Improving the energy performance of privately rented homes: Government response”

From GOV.UK: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2026)

Ref: PE/25/0084

40 Howard St , Reading RG1 7XS



Improving the energy performance of privately rented homes

Government response

Forward to “Improving the energy performance of privately rented homes: Government response”
From GOV.UK: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2026)

Ref: PE/25/0084

40 Howard St , Reading RG1 7XS

Improving the energy performance of privately rented homes

Ministerial foreword

Foreword by Martin McCluskey MP, Minister for Energy Consumers, UK Government

Warm, affordable and decent homes should not be a luxury but a right in modern Britain. But for too many households, these basics are out of reach. Our Warm Homes Plan is our strategy to put that right, by upgrading up to five million homes to cut bills, slash fuel poverty, and support people to take greater control of their energy.

The private rented sector has the highest levels of fuel poverty of any housing tenure. Far too many tenants are suffering from high energy bills and poor health from the effects of living in a cold home. Government is today responding to its consultation from February 2025 to change that and ensure that tenants across England and Wales can expect warmer, cheaper-to-heat homes. In doing so I am hugely grateful for the level of engagement we have had from landlords, tenants, environmental interest groups and a range of other experts. This policy will be a critical step in achieving our Warm Homes Plan ambitions, to protect households and bring down the cost of living for good.

We have received responses from a wide variety of stakeholders across England and Wales. We have heard from individual landlords with a single property, to private rental sector organisations with a large portfolio. We have heard directly from tenants, from tenant advocacy groups and organisations representing vulnerable households. We have heard from climate groups, local authorities driving enforcement, and from the supply chain who will be carrying out and inspecting the quality of installations.

In this government response, we confirm key policy decisions about how minimum energy efficiency standards in the private rented sector will be increased. By setting a target of EPC C for all tenancies by 2030, using new EPCs, we aim to bring more households out of fuel poverty in line with the fuel poverty target. A maximum investment of £10,000 per property will drive the delivery of fabric measures, smart measures and low carbon heating.

New EPCs will provide landlords with clear and actionable information on their properties and the latest measures available to improve energy performance. We recognise that new innovative technologies can produce clean heat solutions and deliver lower running costs in the future. As part of the Warm Homes Plan, we will set up a pilot retrofit panel which will signpost innovative companies towards certification routes and support government policy in facilitating innovation. This panel will interface with a UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) proposed 'sherpa', an allocated organisation who will support the selected company to successfully navigate the process to approval. We are committed to working with innovators to bring their products to market and scale as quickly as possible, including through government grant schemes

We know that most landlords aim to provide decent accommodation for their tenants and meet their legal obligations. We recognise that this policy will require further action from landlords. That is why, as detailed in this government response and set out in next steps, we are seeking to make this process as transparent as possible, and will aim to ensure that compliance is as

Forward to “Improving the energy performance of privately rented homes: Government response”

From GOV.UK: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2026)

Ref: PE/25/0084

40 Howard St , Reading RG1 7XS

Improving the energy performance of privately rented homes

straightforward as possible whilst meeting our policy objectives. During the transition we have committed to steps to reduce the impact on landlords, whilst balancing the needs of tenants. Landlords who have already taken steps to improve their property to achieve an existing EPC C will be recognised for their proactive approach, and they will be able to demonstrate compliance with the new standards until their current EPC expires or is replaced. We will also expand the range of exemptions available to landlords to ensure the policy is fair across the market, including: making changes to the devaluation exemption to increase its applicability; introducing a new solid wall insulation exemption enabling landlords to make the choice about whether solid wall insulation is right for their property; and introducing an ‘affordability exemption’ to reduce the impact on the owners and tenants of low value properties.

Support is available to eligible landlords through energy schemes such as the Warm Homes: Local Grants and the Boiler Upgrade Scheme and Energy Company Obligation (ECO4). The zero-rate of VAT on energy saving materials and installation, such as insulation, and low-carbon heating, will remain until March 2027, making it cheaper for people to invest in their properties. We will provide clear guidance on how investment in the energy efficiency of a privately rented property may qualify as allowable expenses or be tax-deductible. As part of the Warm Homes Plan, we will establish a Strategic Partnership with the green home finance sector, aiming to ensure suitable financing opportunities are available to all consumers.

Government will continue to engage the sector as we design effective guidance for this policy. We will work with key stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of this policy, including working with tenant and landlord representatives to ensure understanding and clarify support available, with local authorities to support enforcement, and with the supply chain to increase delivery and maintain quality. I look forward to working with all stakeholders as we work together to ensure all tenants have the warm, affordable homes they deserve.

Investment plans for future Energy Efficiency measures at 40 Howard St
Note from H C Mayhew, landlord

Ref: PE/25/0084
40 Howard St , Reading RG1 7XS

Since the chimneys were removed at the HMO, I have noticed a warmer dryer feel to the house and several tenants have commented on it. There has also been a slight reduction in energy use, despite the extreme weather conditions over the last winter. This worthwhile outcome has prompted me to try to upgrade of the Energy Performance Certification, of the house from D to B.

The walls and ceilings are already well insulated so this can most reliably be achieved, Planning Permission permitting, by providing solar panels, associated Sodium Storage Batteries and an export surplus grid-tie. Proposed Specification: 5kW, 11 panels, total area 25sq.m, with 10kWh battery capacity.

The installation to be completed by or before the predicted date of relevant Government legislation in 2029/30.

I will provide funds for this project, making use of any grants available. The money saved by not having the cost and delay associated with rebuilding the redundant chimneys will be essential, as will the ongoing benefits of reduced energy and maintenance costs identified in this Planning Application. The benefit s due to these works and the granting of this Planning Application is especially appropriate at this time when fuel costs are rising at unprecedented rates, due to political actions completely outside our control.

It is very encouraging that the December 2025 draft revision of the NPPF recognises the need for planning balance between energy efficiency measures and heritage protection.

Hyden Mayhew MIEE, C Eng (retired)

40 Howard ST, Reading, RG1 7XS

Ref: PE/25/0084

Notes following Hyden Mayhew meeting with councillor Wendy Griffith 7 March 2026

To: Cllr. Wendy Griffith.

07/03/2026

Copy to: Cllr. Amjad Tarar.

Ref: SatSerg7326

Candidate Pratikshya Gurung.

Matt Rodda Local M.P.

Planning: PE/25/0084, PL/25/1203

40 Howard St. Reading.

10/12 Person H.M.O.

Subject:

Obtaining Retrospective Planning Proposal Approval (RPPA) for the permanent removal of redundant chimneys at 40 Howard Street and their replacement by continuous matching slate roofing.

Reasons for coming to your Saturday Surgery:

The need for this RPPA to be very carefully considered by both the RBC counsellors and council officers. This Application at first sight might seem a trivial matter concerning only a conservation area issue. It is not, it goes to the very centre of what local and national government has been struggling with for the last decade; the provision of dry, warm, mould free, affordable accommodation for renters.

Thanks for welcoming me to your Surgery at Battle Library, Oxford Road, this Saturday morning. It was good to have the opportunity to put my case for Retrospective Planning Permission Approval to you and the team to see what you thought. I was reassured that you appreciated the necessity to temper conservation considerations with the paramount need for snug, dry, mould free, affordable pleasant accommodation; this is in short supply for people on modest income (near minimum wage), especially in Reading.

The drive and determination of the present government, both local and national, must continue to press forward relentlessly for good quality living conditions even if it requires the modest easing of inconsequential Conservation Considerations which block such progress. It was good that Matt Rodda, our MP., made a contribution in the debate, in the house, on The Warm Homes Initiative etc., the results of which are due to be published on 11th March 2026.

The rules are getting ever more difficult to conform to e.g. Awaabs Law and the stricter Energy Performance Certification. These are at the limit of what can feasibly be achieved for Victorian houses, without the use of solar panels, storage battery and heat pumps and the easing of some planning considerations. A recent example of a failed attempt, is insulating older houses using external wall cladding, this wasted over £100million in government grants putting it on and then a similar cost taking it off, having failed. Much more tragic was the 70 lives lost at the Grenfell Tower Fire where botched cladding played a fatal part.

Easing planning rules in conservation areas, to improve residents' amenities, is not uncommon, example the intrusive, but needed, bottle bank, almost opposite 40 Howard St. and the nearby large communal rubbish bins in Anstey Rd. I hope my, more modest, changes, that improve my residents' living conditions, can likewise be permitted by the decision of the R.B.C. Planning Committee.

I await confirmation that you have convinced your colleagues both political and professional that better standards of living will be achieved by following the hard, complicated, path to drier, mould proof- warmer homes, the stated aim of so many Government proposals.

I am sure that acceptance of my retrospective Planning Application for 40 Howard St, fits well with these aims and hope that R.B.C. will give the required permission.

H C Mayhew

hyden.mayhew@gmail.com

40 Howard St , Reading, RG1 7XS

Ref: PE/25/0084

Cllr Wendy Griffith acknowledgement of meeting notes

From: **Griffith, Wendy (Councillor)** <Wendy.Griffith@reading.gov.uk>
Date: Mon, 9 Mar 2026 at 17:00
Subject: Re: Saturday Surgery The Team & Hyden Mayhew 7/3/26. 40 Howard St .RPPApp.
To: Hyden Mayhew <hyden.mayhew@gmail.com>

Hello Mr Mayhew,

Thank you for sending this. It was very nice to meet you on Saturday.

I have written to the Councillor team who will inform the planning team. I expect to heard from them soon, when I do then I will be in touch.

Have a great week.

Kind regards

Wendy

Cllr. Wendy Griffith
Labour Councillor for Battle Ward
Lead Member for Children Services
Fire Authority - Lead for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Telephone: 07519 858950
Email: wendy.griffith@reading.gov.uk

Reading Borough Council
Councillor Services, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading, RG1 2LU

[Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

 **Reading**
Borough Council
Working better with you

From: Hyden Mayhew <hyden.mayhew@gmail.com>
Sent: 09 March 2026 16:30

To: Griffith, Wendy (Councillor) <Wendy.Griffith@reading.gov.uk>
Subject: Saturday Surgery The Team & Hyden Mayhew 7/3/26. 40 Howard St .RPPApp.

40 Howard St, Reading, RG1 7XS

Ref: PE/25/0084

Notes following Hyden Mayhew meeting with Cllrs Ayub, Rowland and Stevens on 28 March 2026 (modified)

Thanks for the kind welcome you gave me at the Oasis Saturday Morning Surgery on 28/3/2026. It was much appreciated.

The depth and detail that we were able to go into analysing the provision of good, dry, well insulated, warm, mould free, inexpensive accommodation for residents living near the town centre and working on jobs paying near the minimum wage, was extensive and very worthwhile.

We recognised the technical difficulties in meeting new EPCs, Awaab's Law and moving toward zero carbon houses; the solutions to which are at the edge of present practice and technology. However these requirements need the near 20% contribution made from the removal of redundant chimney pots and stacks; replacing them with snug, insulated, waterproof, continuous roofing.

I was pleased to acknowledge that you and our MP, Matt Rodda, are aware and work on accommodation requirements; not least by his participation, in Parliament, on 'The Warm Homes Initiative' and the Paper published by The Minister for Energy (Gov.UK 21/1/26) entitled; 'Improving the energy performance of privately rented homes'. This document presents so many of the arguments that I have put forward in the Retrospective Planning Application, that I thought, at first, that he had had a preview!

It is also reassuring, that in a recent Abbey Ward publication, you state: '**Residents need practical solutions to real world problems in real time**'. We agree on what these problems are as does the Minister.

Your forbearance in allowing me to put the case for Planning Approval so fully was much appreciated; I must apologise if my presentation was robust, but there is no point in 'beating about the bush' on such crucial matters.

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Kind regards,
Hyden

hyden.mayhew@gmail.com

Policy paper: Warm Homes Plan; Updated 18 March 2026

Ministerial foreword in full

Ref: PE/25/0084

40 Howard St , Reading RG1 7XS



The driving purpose of the government is to tackle the affordability crisis that scars Britain. Families are struggling with energy bills that are too high and we are determined to do everything we can to bring them down. That is why we have taken an average of £150 of costs off people's energy bills from April 2026 and expanded the £150 Warm Home Discount (WHD) to a total of 6 million families this winter.

The Warm Homes Plan takes the next step – delivering the biggest public investment in home upgrades in British history to cut bills, tackle fuel poverty, create good jobs and get us off the rollercoaster of international fossil fuel markets. It is clearer than ever that the future is cheap, clean, homegrown power. As Britain takes back control with record investment in renewables and nuclear, this is our plan to bring the benefits of clean power to people in their homes as quickly as we can.

Every family deserves the security of a home they can afford to heat. It is a scandal that this is out of reach for so many in our country and that millions of families suffer the injustice of living in fuel poverty. We know installing technologies like solar, batteries, heat pumps and insulation can save families hundreds of pounds a year on their bills, while protecting them from fossil fuel shocks. We are already seeing record demand for these technologies and the government is determined to spread the benefits of them much more widely, so that every family can access them, not just the wealthiest.

Policy paper: Warm Homes Plan; Updated 18 March 2026

Ministerial foreword in full

Ref: PE/25/0084

40 Howard St , Reading RG1 7XS

The Warm Homes Plan will deliver £15 billion of public investment to upgrade up to 5 million homes and lift up to a million families out of fuel poverty by 2030. It includes an offer for everyone: with grants and loans to make it easier than ever for homeowners to install heat pumps, solar panels and batteries; direct support for home upgrades for those on low incomes and in fuel poverty; and new rules to ensure landlords invest in upgrades to cut bills for renters and social tenants.

Alongside the steps we are taking to make electricity cheaper and break down the barriers to home upgrades, this historic investment will help millions seize the benefits of electrification. And as we upgrade existing homes, we will ensure new homes are built with solar and clean heating installed as standard – a common-sense policy which has long been demanded by the public. All this will accelerate Britain's solar rooftop revolution, which could triple the current number of homes generating their own energy and cutting their bills with solar panels by 2030.

We are committed to ensuring this national rollout helps answer the question so many people have about where the good jobs of the future will come from. That is why we are establishing a new taskforce with the Trades Union Congress (TUC) to help workers access the 180,000 new jobs our plan will support, while investing in British manufacturing and setting a new aim of at least 70% of the heat pumps we install being made here in the UK.

Taken together, this is a landmark plan to make the British people better off, secure our energy independence and tackle the climate crisis. We look forward to working with industry, trade unions, mayors, local authorities and all parts of the sector to deliver on it over the months and years ahead.

**The Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP,
Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero**