

RE:

146 Southampton Street, Reading (Grade II Listed Building)
Application for Listed Building Consent and Planning Permission
Proposed First and Second Floor Rear Extensions, Roof Alterations, and Internal Reconfiguration

Response to Conservation Officer Comments

This submission responds directly to the Conservation Officer's concerns regarding the above application. It demonstrates that the proposals are policy-compliant, supported by case law and appeal precedent, and that any identified harm is clearly justified and outweighed by public benefits, in accordance with the statutory and policy framework.

1 Heritage Context and Statutory Duty

Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special regard is given to the desirability of preserving the listed building and its setting. Case law, including *Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v East Northamptonshire DC*, confirms that this duty carries considerable importance and weight.

The National Planning Policy Framework establishes that where less than substantial harm is identified, this harm must be given considerable importance and weight and balanced against any public benefits arising from the proposal.

The proposed development has been designed with careful regard to the significance of the Grade II listed building. A low level of less than substantial harm is acknowledged, at the lower end of the spectrum, arising from limited alterations to rear and roof elements. This harm is given full and appropriate weight in the following assessment.

Importantly, the proposals preserve the significance of the listed building by retaining its principal architectural form and avoiding alteration to its primary elevations and key historic fabric.

2 First Floor Rear Extension

The proposed first-floor rear extension results in a limited degree of less than substantial harm due to additional built form at upper level. However, this impact is confined to the rear of the property and does not affect the principal façade or the elements that most strongly contribute to the listed building's significance.

The extension is subservient in scale and massing, respects the established architectural hierarchy, and utilises matching materials to ensure appropriate integration. It preserves the legibility of the listed terrace, particularly in terms of its principal frontage and architectural rhythm.

The proposals ensure the continued efficient residential use of the listed building as a single dwelling, supporting its long-term occupation and avoiding the risk of underuse or decline in

condition. This represents an appropriate and sustainable approach to the continued use of the heritage asset.

3 Loft Conversion

The proposed loft conversion forms part of a comprehensive reconfiguration of the dwelling designed to improve the functionality and long-term usability of the upper floors. It maximises the use of existing roof space without increasing the building footprint or requiring more extensive intervention elsewhere.

The internal layout, including en-suite provision, forms part of a coherent reconfiguration that enables practical and sustainable long-term residential occupation of the upper floors. This ensures that the listed building remains capable of continued use as a single-family dwelling, consistent with Policies EN1 and CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

4 Roofscape Impact

The roofscape is a sensitive component of the listed building's significance. The proposed dormer and rooflights have been designed to minimise visual impact and preserve the integrity of the roof form.

The dormer is located on the rear roof slope, set below ridge height and designed to remain subordinate to the main roof form. The rooflights are conservation-style and flush-fitting, aligned with the roof plane to reduce their visual prominence. These interventions are carefully controlled to avoid dominance or disruption of the roofscape.

The surrounding terrace exhibits a degree of incremental roof alteration, which forms part of the building's current context. The proposed design responds to this context in a restrained and subordinate manner without introducing visually dominant additions.

The overall impact on significance is limited, and the essential roof form, architectural coherence, and contribution of the building within the terrace are preserved.

5 Planning Balance and Heritage Harm

The Conservation Officer identifies less than substantial harm. This is accepted; however, the level of harm is low and lies at the lower end of the spectrum.

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and the statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, this harm must be given considerable importance and weight and balanced against the benefits of the proposal.

The proposals ensure the continued efficient residential use of the listed building, supporting its long-term occupation and avoiding the risk of underuse or decline. They also improve the functionality and adaptability of the dwelling within its existing envelope.

The development therefore represents an appropriate balance between heritage conservation and sustainable continued use.

6 Conclusion

The proposed development:

- Preserves the significance of the Grade II listed building
- Results in a low level of less than substantial harm at the lower end of the spectrum
- Retains the principal architectural form and key historic fabric
- Ensures continued efficient residential use of the building
- Responds appropriately to the existing context in a restrained manner

Having given considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the listed building and its setting, the limited harm identified is outweighed by the benefits of securing its continued residential use.