

PROPOSED RENDER REPLACEMENT ON 136 CASTLE HILL READING

HERITAGE STATEMENT

Context and Background

136 Castle Hill is a three-storey terraced town house with a basement. It was constructed Circa 1830. The most significant heritage asset is the front elevation which combines with adjacent houses to form a simple, well-proportioned late Georgian facade to the six-house terrace. This elevation is finished with a tan render which is showing considerable wear and in some areas is no longer weatherproof, leading to internal areas of damp around windows in the main bedroom.

Many internal period features remain including brick flooring to the basement area, sliding sash shutters to the ground floor front room window and the staircase. Modifications by previous owners have been made over the years including the removal of fireplaces from the bedrooms which has impacted on the historic and architectural interest of the interior. Minor alteration work such as the provision of a lavatory and infilling of a doorway within the basement area has not impacted on the overall architectural heritage and character of the building. (The present owners are considering re-installing at least one of the fireplaces).

The present owners have completed the sympathetic addition of two shower rooms to the largest bedrooms, completing the task with minimal alterations to the main fabric of the building (see application made in May/Jun 2021). These were constructed with studwork, finished with plaster and coving matched to the original design by bespoke moulding carried out by a specialised company. It was then fitted using heritage techniques by fitter who also lectures in the subject at a local college. Further careful work was undertaken to re-use architrave and skirting boards throughout to preserve as much as the original fabric as possible.

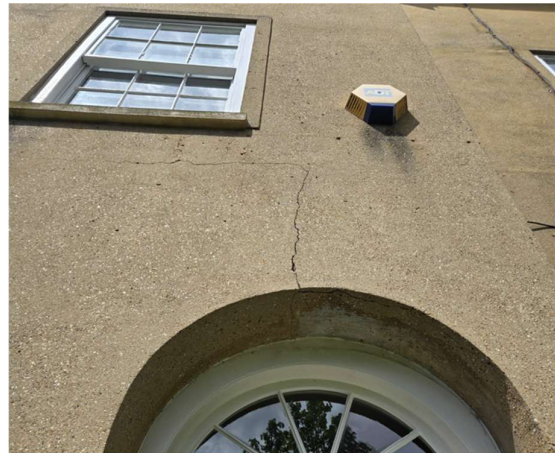
Similar levels of care will be taken in carrying out the proposed re-rendering of the front elevation.



Front Elevation

Objective

Remove and replace the render on the front elevation like for like to restore the aesthetic and ensure that the property remains weatherproof.



Photos showing cracking and legacy alarm box that will be removed

Proposal

The current owners propose to remove and replace the tan render on the front elevation which has become cracked, discoloured and pock-marked by water ingress and freeze-thaw action.

The proposed replacement render will be lime based and colour matched to the remaining properties within the terrace. The window detailing will be left in place, but re-skimmed to create a uniform finish.



138 Castle Hill (Left) compared to 136 Castle Hill (Right) showing proposed finish vs damage/wear

Mitigation

The present owners have sought out contractors with considerable listed building experience, who specialize in heritage techniques and materials. Samples will be provided to ensure an accurate colour match before the work is undertaken in earnest. Non-original features such as a legacy burglar alarm box will be removed from the frontage along with cable tacks that at some point held television aerial cable. After removal of the old render the underlying brickwork will be assessed and where needed repairs will be carried out to ensure the structural integrity of the elevation is maintained. Appropriate materials will be used, with mortar being matched and any replacement bricks will come from stores of bricks salvaged when removed for previous alterations.

Planning and Conservation Policies.

Unsurprisingly, conservation and enhancement of Reading's historic assets are considered to be important. Reading Planning Policy documents state that 'Applications which affect Listed Buildings must not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where appropriate, their settings. The frontage is a key element of the Grade II listing and will be treated accordingly.

Summary

This application does not seek to impact the architectural and historic interest or setting of the building. It simply seeks to restore the finish of the render and make weatherproof again the front elevation so that it remains appropriate for use as a family home.



Internal photograph showing damage from water ingress

Planning policies emphasise the need for access to sustainable transport facilities. The house is situated on a bus route and near (15min. Walk) to the main line railway station.