

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0571 Listed building consent (Alt/Ext)

Address: 136 CASTLE HILL, READING, RG1 7RW

Proposal: Removal and replacement of damaged render to front external wall

Applicant: Mrs Araminta Emery

Received date: 29 April 2026

Target Decision date: 13 July 2026

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

This application property is located in the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation area. It is a grade II listed building which forms part of a Bath stone terrace of 6 houses, now rendered. It is a 3 storey property, with a basement.

Site visit 24 June 2026



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Listed building consent is sought for the removal and replacement of damaged render to front external wall and to ensure that the building is 'weatherproof' as water damage has started to cause internal damage. Areas of cracked and watermarked render is to be replaced with a lime render to match the colour of the existing dwelling. Any replacement bricks will be salvaged from previous alterations at the property. The works are proposed to be completed by contractors with 'heritage' experience.

Plans considered

CLS35 datasheet quartz sand Munsell colour 10YR 7/5)

CLM66 – Data sheet Cornish Lime top coat plaster CLM66

5 photos

As received 29 April 2026

Heritage statement

Location Plan

As received 18 May 2026

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

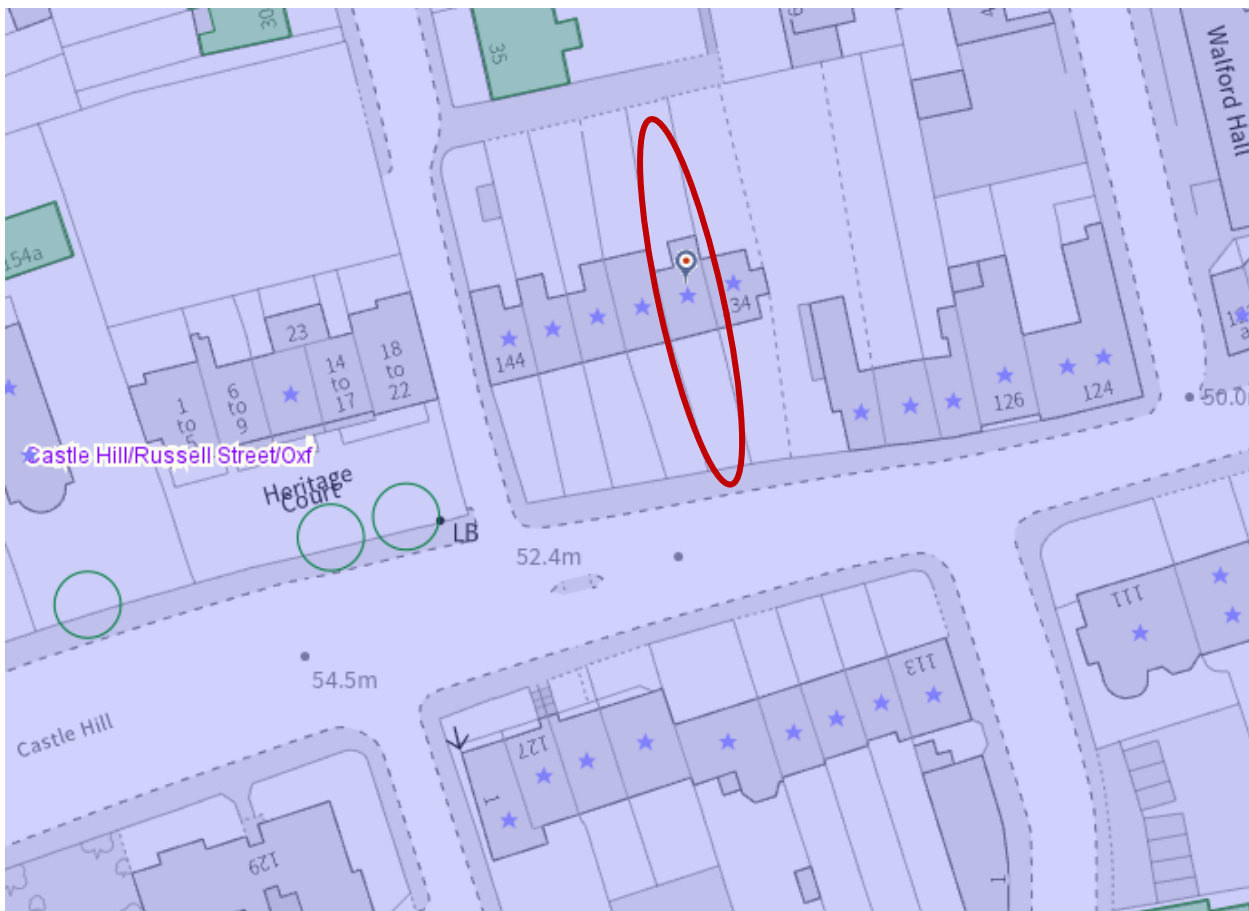
None

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- Conservation Area Advisory Committee Consultations – No comment has been received at the time of writing the report.
- Reading Civic Society Consultations – No comment has been received at the time of writing the report.
- RBC Conservation officer – No objection subject to conditions – It is considered that the proposed replacement render would result in neutral harm to the listed building, its setting and the significance of the conservation area. As such, the proposal accords with Policies EN1, EN3 and EN6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and Chapter 16 of the NPPF. Approval with suggested conditions are recommended.

The application site relates to the front elevation of a Grade II listed mid-terrace dwellinghouse at 136 Castle Hill that constitutes part within the Grade II listed terrace, **134-144 Castle Hill ([134-144 Castle Hill, Non Civil Parish - 1113430 | Historic England](#))**, located to the north of Castle Hill within the Castle Hill, Russell Street/ Oxford Road Conservation Area, as illustrated below. Within the immediate area of the application site, there are Grade II listed terraces of 144A-152, CASTLE STREET ([144A-152, CASTLE STREET, Non Civil Parish - 1154770 | Historic England](#)); 128-132 Castle Hill ([128-132 Castle Hill, Non Civil Parish - 1154760 | Historic England](#)); 117-121 Castle Hill ([117-121 Castle Hill, Non Civil Parish - 1321961 | Historic England](#)); and listed buildings of 113 Castle Hill ([113 Castle Hill, Non Civil Parish - 1113617 | Historic England](#)); 115 Castle Hill ([115 Castle Hill, Non Civil Parish - 1113423 | Historic England](#)); Castleton House, 123 Castle Hill ([Castleton House, 123 Castle Hill, Non Civil Parish - 1113424 | Historic England](#)); and Clevedon House, 125-127 Castle Hill and 1 Coley Hill ([Clevedon House, 125-127 Castle Hill and 1 Coley Hill, Non Civil Parish - 1113425 | Historic England](#)).



The

Application site (circled in red), listed building with stars on them and the conservation area (light purple)

Significance of heritage assets

The NPPF defines significance as the “*value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest.*”

The interest may be architectural or historic, as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Section 1.

“*Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.*” (NPPF, 2024)

Historic England assesses significance in a similar manner, referring to evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values of a place.

Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal lists the following among the significance and key positive features of the conservation area (on page 7)

- “***The Conservation Area is a microcosm of Reading’s residential building styles in a concentrated area. Within its boundaries, housing spans both wealthy and more modest examples from the 18th century to the 20th century. It encompasses a range of Georgian villas, terraces and artisan housing. The long Victorian era is evident in the***

development of substantial Victorian single-family terraces and the later polychrome patterned two-up, two-down terraces. Arts and Crafts influences appear in the area's large Victorian and Edwardian villas.

- *The area boasts 151 addresses that are Listed properties either singly or as part of a terrace. Listed properties are mainly **concentrated along Castle Hill/Castle Street, Russell Street and the Oxford Road** but also dotted throughout the area."*

Located within the Character Area 6.1 – Castle Street/Castle Hill, about the application site and the listed terrace, the appraisal states *"Underlying red brick is notable only occasionally, largely seen on upper floors and to the side and rear of the properties. **Regrettably, at nos. 134-144, the original Bath stone façade was removed in the latter part of the 20th century and replaced by Bath stone-coloured stucco although it is still a very attractive terrace with Regency detailing.**" and **"The attractive Grade II Regency detailed terrace at 134-144 Castle Hill is set back from the road in well-tended deep gardens. Its Bath stone coloured stucco façade is a replacement of its original Bath stone façade which was removed in the 1960s."***

Lastly, 'Detailed Issues throughout the Conservation Area' includes the following, which should be noted:

- *"excessive cabling/satellite dishes/pipework on house façades (e.g. to accommodate multiple households within the building)*
- ***insensitive painting/rendering/cladding of house fronts***
- *replacement of original doors and windows by uPVC substitutes*
- *loss of front boundary railings, walls and fences to increase rubbish bin storage and accessibility*
- *loss of chimney stacks on residential and commercial properties (e.g. due to the removal of interior fireplaces)"*
- *(...)*

The Official Listing description of the listed terrace reads:

134-144 Castle Hill

"Summary

Terrace of six houses, built in the early C19, now flats and houses.

Reasons for Designation

134-144 Castle Hill, Reading, is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

Architectural interest:

** as an early-C19 terrace which contributes to the character of an architecturally varied historic streetscape.*

Group value:

** the building is in close proximity to a large number of listed buildings and forms part of a strong historic grouping.*

History

Until the C19 most of the land west of Reading town centre was open farmland crossed by two ancient routes passing through the town from London to the West Country. Today, the northern of these two roads is named Oxford Road, while the southern is Castle Street/Castle Hill/Bath Road. Fortifications were built throughout the area by Royalist forces garrisoned in the town during the Civil War with some of the earthworks surviving into the early C19. From the early C18, development slowly began to spread westward along Castle Hill/Bath Road and Oxford Road. More comprehensive development of the area began in the early C19 and progressed gradually over the following 100 years. Terraced housing was erected in considerable quantities during the first half of the C19 to cater for a variety of social groups.

134-144 Castle Hill is a terrace of six houses which was built during the early C19 during the western growth of Reading's inner suburbs. The building does not appear on Coates' map of 1802, while some stylistic features, such as the oval windows on the second floor, are typical of Regency architecture. The terrace is labelled as 'Jesse Place' on the 1879 Ordnance Survey map jointly with 1-23 Heritage Court (formerly 144A-152 Castle Street) and may have been constructed by the Jesse family who were responsible for much of Reading's western suburban expansion during the early- to mid-C19. The terrace was originally faced in Bath Stone, although this was removed and replaced with Bath Stone-coloured stucco in the 1960s. Aside from this refacing, the terrace appears to have been very little altered externally since its construction. The houses possess single-storey lean-tos on their rear (north) elevations, which were extant by 1879 and which may be original in part. The houses retain their large planted front gardens although the low boundary walls are mainly C19 or C20. At some time in the later C20, number 134 was converted into two flats. The rest of the properties remain as individual residences.

Details

Terrace of six houses, built in the early C19, now flats and houses.

MATERIALS AND PLAN: the building's principal (southern) façade is of Bath Stone-coloured stucco, while the other elevations are of red brick in Flemish bond. The ground floor of the western elevation is of grey-coloured render, scored to imitate masonry. The roof covering is slate. Three storeys with basement.

EXTERIOR: the building is a symmetrical terrace designed in a neoclassical Regency style. The Castle Hill frontage has twelve bays under a hipped roof with two bays to each house. The roof over sails beyond the four elevations with a plain timber soffit visible at street level and shallow gabled bays which project slightly to the street front of numbers 136 and 142. There are four chimney stacks placed in two pairs on the roof ridge on either side of the gables at numbers 136 and 142. The ground floor of the Castle Hill frontage comprises a series of round-arched openings, while the first floor of each property contains two, square-headed, six-over-six sash windows. The two central properties and two end properties have an oval window on the second floor, while the penultimate houses have a glazing bar sash window on the second floor beneath the shallow gables. The end houses are accessed from the flanks of the terrace with two, round-headed windows to the ground floor of the Castle Hill Frontage.

The eastern side of number 134 has a projecting, gabled brick porch. Number 144 has a render to the ground floor of its west front with brick walling above and its main entrance by a six-

panelled front door within a reeded timber surround under a sunburst fanlight – this composition appears to be consistent throughout the rest of the properties. On the ground floor of each is a round-arched doorway and a single, round-headed sash window. The two central properties are slightly asymmetrical, with number 140 being slightly wider than number 138. The ground floor of number 140 contains two round-headed sash windows and a round-arched main entrance matching those throughout the terrace, placed centrally within the elevation, while the ground floor of number 138 is of similar composition but with one round-headed sash window rather than two.

The rear (north) elevation is of exposed red brickwork in Flemish bond and contains a variety of sash windows, generally of six-over-six glazing on the first floor and three-over-six at second-floor level. The brick string course, at the height of first-floor sill on the road front, continues around the building. Apart from number 134, each property has a single-storey brick lean-to with slate roof on the rear elevation, which vary in size. There is a shoulder-height red brick wall along the western boundary of 144 Castle Hill which appears to be of Victorian origin.”

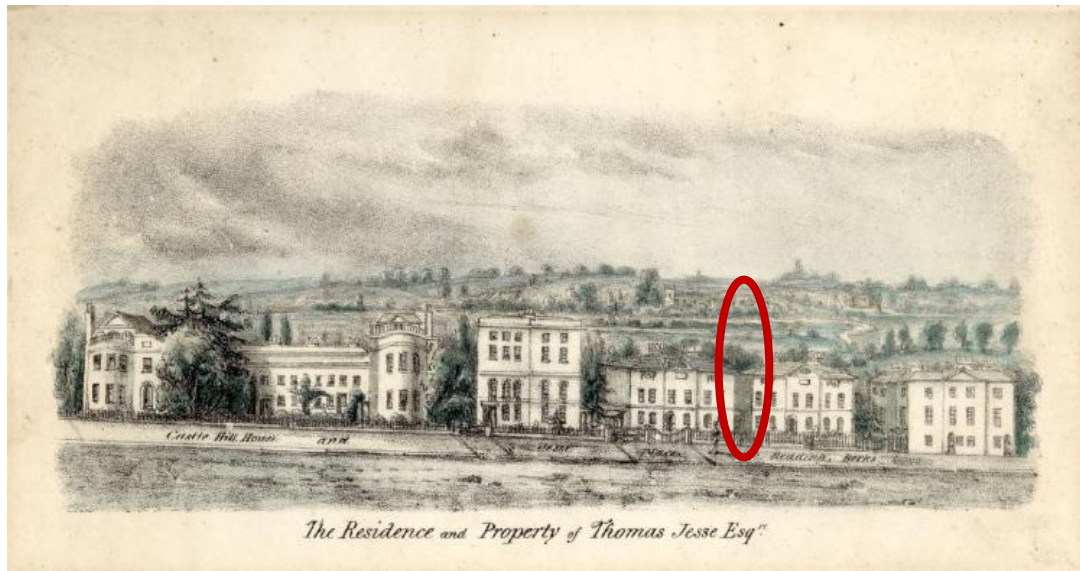
Impact of proposal upon heritage asset(s)

This application is for the like-for-like replacement of the existing render/stucco on the principal elevation/façade of No. 136. In line with the history section of the official listing description of the Grade II listed terrace and aspects in the conservation area appraisal, I noted that the existing render is not original but has a place in the evolution of the historic fabric and character of the listed building/terrace.

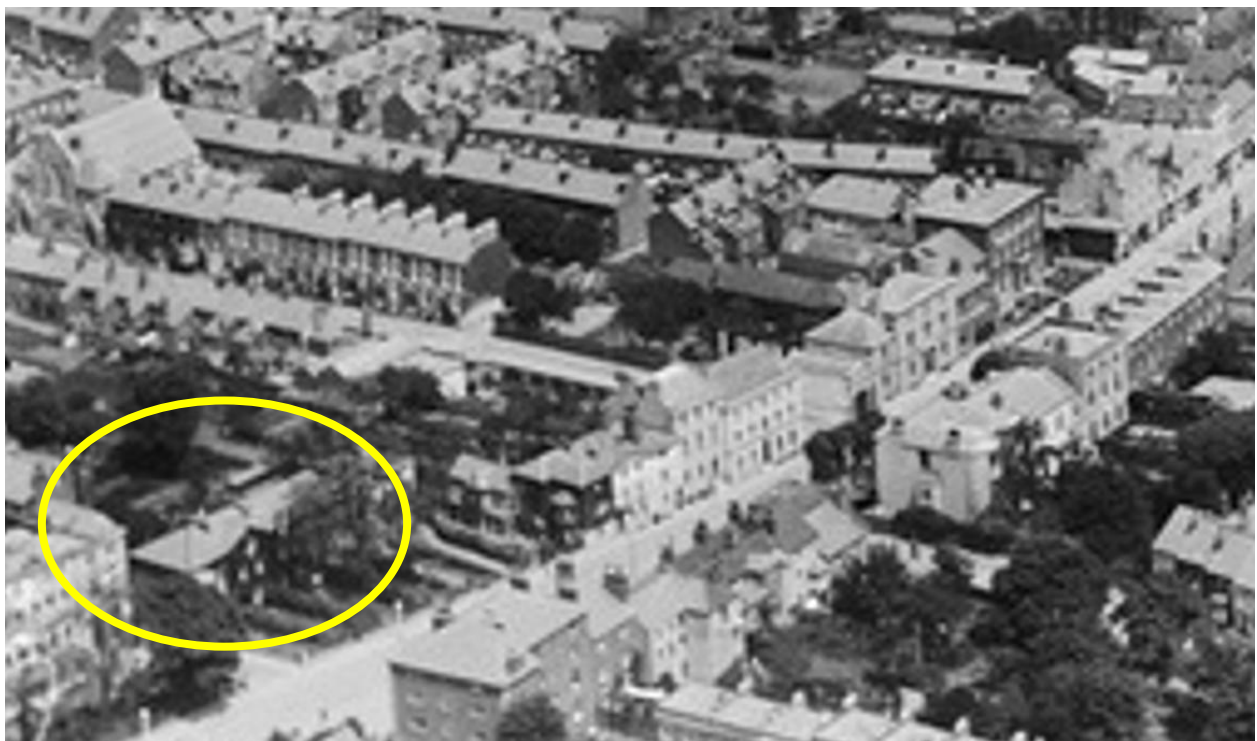
From the map regression, historic photographs, planning history of the terrace, and officer's site visit, it appears that the building constituted a part of 'Jesse Place'. Whilst not accurate, the engraving below depicts the building as it was in the 1840s. Pevsner (1966) also states "... Then the street becomes Castle Hill, and among further terraces, low Italianate villa gables begin to appear (...)". Whether or not originally bath stone (or rendered) frontage, the historic aerial photograph suggests that at the beginning of the 20th century, the terrace was brick-faced.



Snip from the Ordnance Survey Map dated 1876 (published in 1879)



An engraving of Castle Hill, Reading including what is now nos. 154-160, formerly the King's Arms Inn, and was then Castle Hill House, c1840. Written on the illustration is 'Castle Hill House and Jesse Place Reading Berks' and captioned 'The residence and property of Thomas Jesse Esq.' [picture] : Scan of an illustration, from the Reading Library's Online Archive



Listed terrace circled in 1920, EPW000865 ENGLAND (1920). Castle Street and the town centre, Reading, from the south-west, 1920. This image has been produced from a print. From [EPW000865 ENGLAND \(1920\). Castle Street and the town centre, Reading, from the south-west, 1920. This image has been produced from a print. | Britain From Above](#)

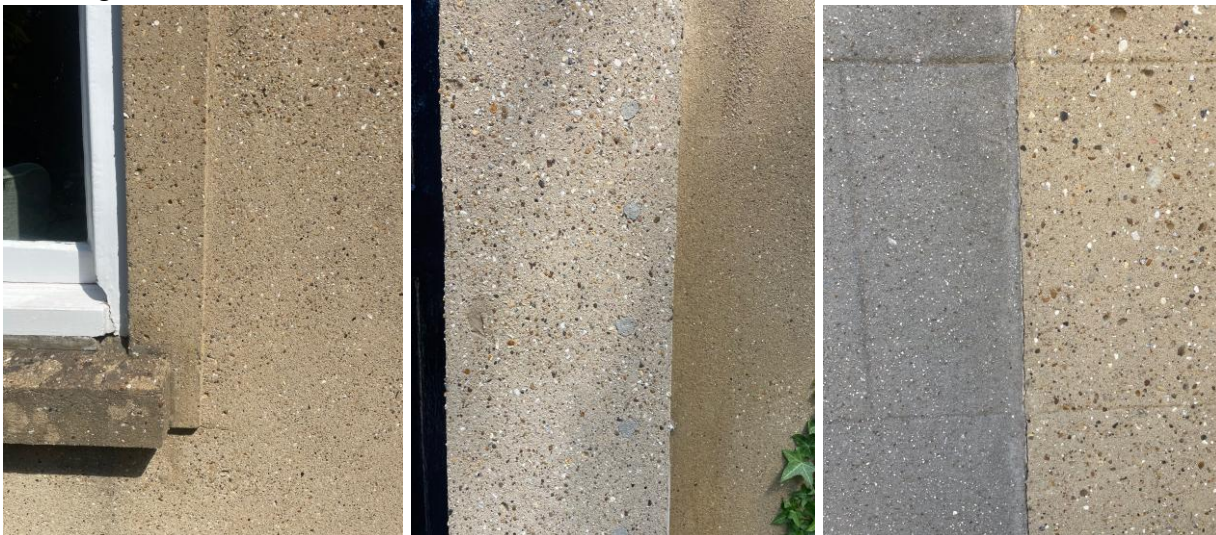
From the planning history of the listed terrace, there were some applications for the replacement render and painting, the latter of which was refused for the subject building (ref. 97/00900/LBC) while replacement renders were approved for Nos 138 and 140 at the beginning of the 1990s.

Given that the official listing date of the property is 14 December 1978, the following photograph from the Council's Archive should be referred to in any application for the front elevation of this terrace in addition to the research of its history.



Photograph of listed 134-144 (even) Castle Hill, September 1981

During the officers' site visit, it is noted that there are more than four different types of render applied on the listed terrace, with the one on the subject building having the relatively largest grain size in its aggregate. The proposed render would closely match the existing render of the building and the colour of the renders at the listed terrace.

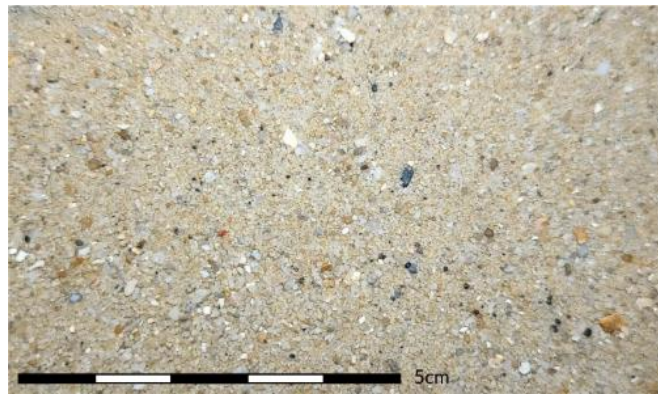


Existing renders (above) and proposed render (below) with colour specification

DESCRIPTION

A medium-coarse, moderately sorted, very pale brown quartz sand.
(Munsell Colour 10YR 7/5)





As the proposed render would be lime-based, it is only the visual appearance and integrity of the new render with the rest of the buildings which is considered acceptable. As the terrace is well set back from the street, the impact of the difference in shades is not noticeable, and therefore, there would be neutral/no additional impact on the heritage assets in the area. From the submitted 'Heritage Statement' I noted that *"Remove and replace the render on the front elevation like for like to restore the aesthetic and ensure that the property remains weatherproof."* (...) *"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.**"* (...) *"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.**"* (...) *"**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."* and 'Data Sheet' for the proposed render and its application is also considered suitable for the listed building. As such, I have no objection to the proposed works, subject to the conditions to secure the special historic and architectural interest of the listed building to be protected. The proposal accords with Policies EN1, EN3 and EN6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and Chapter 16 of the NPPF. Approval with the following conditions is suggested.

Suggested conditions

Replacement render hereby approved shall be lime-based and be applied with matching decorative detailing of the existing window surrounds.

Reason: In the interests of preserving the character and appearance of the listed building, its setting and the conservation area in accordance with Policies EN1 and EN3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

The removal of existing render hereby approved shall be carried out carefully by hand or by tools held in the hand, other than power-driven tools.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of the building under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and

Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and in accordance with Policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Following the removal of the existing render and prior to any repair works to the brickwork and re-rendering of the front, a schedule detailing the proposed repair works and material samples shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The works thereafter shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: The application contained insufficient information to enable these matters to be considered prior to granting listed building consent, and the matters are required to be agreed in order that the works to the designated heritage asset are undertaken in an acceptable manner.

A site notice was displayed at the property on 10 June 2026 for the required period and an advert was placed in a local newspaper. No letters of representation have been received.

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.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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). In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document) according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given). The Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents are also material planning considerations.

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990:

Section 16(2) requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

Section 72 (1) 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.

Reading Borough Council Planning Policy

Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019) EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment states:

Historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced. This will include:

- Listed Buildings;
- Conservation Areas;
- Other features with local or national designation, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and historic parks and gardens.
-

Planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. All proposals will be expected to protect and where appropriate enhance the character and appearance of the area in which they are located and for the purpose of ensuring that work is appropriate to the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building.

The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019)

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

EN4: LOCALLY IMPORTANT HERITAGE ASSETS

SPG/SPD

None.

OTHER

- Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Area Appraisal
- Historic England Good Practice Guide Note Number 2: managing significance in decision-taking.
- Principles of Conservation (Historic England, 2008)
- Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings
- (British Standards Publication BS 7913:2013, 2015)
- 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 pre-submission draft was submitted to the Secretary of State on the 9th of May 2025 and is currently at examination.

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 appraisal below and are not considered to be ‘out of date’.

6. APPRAISAL

Policy EN1 of the Reading Local plan 2019 states that historic features and the historic environment will be protected. Careful consideration has been given to ensure that the scheme of works repairs to the damaged render on the front elevation reflect the historic fabric of the building. In this instance the proposal detailed above is not considered to compromise the significance of the listed building or cause harm to the appearance of the historic character of the building. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policies EN1 and EN4 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

7. CONCLUSION



The proposed development has been assessed and the proposed works to repair the render on the front elevation are considered to be in accordance with the above relevant policies and Listed Building Consent can be granted.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Recommended Conditions:

1. Time limit
2. Plans
3. Making good

Informatives:

1. Terms
2. Positive and proactive