



81 Hamilton Road, Reading, RG1 5RB

**Proposed change of use from HMO to residential use (C3) and part two part
single storey rear extension and conversion of outbuilding to ancillary
residential use**

Heritage Statement

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1. Introduction

1.1 Preface

This Heritage Statement has been prepared by 1 Right Plan in support of a full planning application for the change of use of 81 Hamilton Road, Reading, RG1 5RB from a house in multiple occupation to a single residential dwelling (Use Class C3), the erection of a part two storey part single storey rear extension, and the conversion of the outbuilding to the rear to ancillary residential use. The application site lies within the South Park Conservation Area.

The purpose of the statement is to describe and assess the significance of the heritage assets affected by the proposal, including any contribution made by their setting, to identify the effect the proposal would have upon that significance, and to explain how harm has been avoided and how the scheme would sustain and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. It should be read in conjunction with the submitted drawings and the Design and Access Statement accompanying the application.

1.2 The nature of the proposal

The proposed development comprises:

- the change of use of the property from an eight bedsit house in multiple occupation to a single family dwelling of six bedrooms;
- the removal of the existing single storey rear extensions and the erection of a part two storey part single storey rear extension in their place;
- alterations to the internal layout to provide a more spacious arrangement, including additional bedrooms at first floor;
- the conversion of the two storey outbuilding to the rear to ancillary residential use, incorporating secure cycle storage;
- the provision of three off-street parking spaces and a bin store to the rear of the site; and
- additional soft landscaping to the rear, side and boundaries of the site.

The front elevation of the villa would not be altered. The original footprint and external walls of both buildings would be retained, and all new built form would be confined to the rear of the site.

1.3 Heritage assets affected and designation records

Neither 81 Hamilton Road nor the outbuilding to its rear is statutorily listed, and neither is included on Reading Borough Council's List of Locally Important Buildings. The designated heritage asset affected



by the proposal is therefore the South Park Conservation Area, designated on 28 April 1988 following the planning policy document of 1976, within which both buildings stand as unlisted buildings.

The villa, known as “Rosehill”, is a substantially intact example of the building type on which the special interest of this part of the conservation area rests, and it is considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. The outbuilding, originally the coach house serving the villa and now in poor condition, is a surviving ancillary structure of the same phase and makes a modest positive contribution. Both are treated in this statement as non-designated heritage assets in their own right, whose significance also forms part of the significance of the conservation area.

There are no listed buildings within or immediately adjoining the application site. The two pairs of listed buildings within the conservation area stand in Eastern Avenue and are sufficiently distant, and sufficiently screened by intervening development and tree cover, that their settings would not be affected by the proposal.

1.4 Historic Environment Record and archaeological potential

The Berkshire Historic Environment Record, maintained on behalf of Reading Borough Council, has been consulted. The application site does not lie within an Area of Archaeological Significance as defined by Policy EN2 of the Local Plan, and no archaeological entry is recorded for the site itself.

The site formed part of the agricultural land east of Reading until the suburb was laid out in the second half of the C19, and there is accordingly limited potential for buried remains of more than local interest. The proposed works would in any event be substantially confined to the footprint of the existing buildings and to ground already disturbed by the existing extensions, hardstanding and services. The archaeological interest of the site is considered to be low and no desk-based assessment or field evaluation is considered necessary.

1.5 Planning history

The property is currently in use as an eight bedsit house in multiple occupation. A number of the surrounding dwellings have similarly been converted to flats and houses in multiple occupation in response to demand in this part of Reading. The proposal would reverse that position at this property and return the building to single family occupation.



1.6 Consultations undertaken

Pre-application advice has been sought from the local planning authority. No consultation with Historic England is required, as the proposal does not fall within any of the categories for which consultation is prescribed.

1.7 Approach and methodology

This statement follows the staged approach recommended by Historic England in Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (Historic England Advice Note 12, 2019), in which the significance of the asset is understood and assessed before the impact of the proposal upon that significance is considered, harm is avoided or minimised, and any residual harm is justified.

The assessment has been informed by:

- a site inspection of the villa, the outbuilding and the grounds, including inspection of the surviving external fabric, joinery and roof coverings;
- the South Park Conservation Area Appraisal published by Reading Borough Council;
- the Berkshire Historic Environment Record and the National Heritage List for England;
- historic Ordnance Survey mapping and the documented development of the eastern suburbs of Reading; and
- the drawings and the Design and Access Statement prepared for the application.

Significance has been analysed by reference to the heritage interests identified in national planning policy and in the Planning Practice Guidance – archaeological interest, architectural and artistic interest, and historic interest – consistent with Historic England’s Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance and with Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (GPA2). The contribution made by setting has been considered in accordance with The Setting of Heritage Assets (GPA3). The level of detail provided is proportionate to the importance of the assets affected and to the scale of the changes proposed.

1.8 Policy and guidance context

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

The National Planning Policy Framework addresses the historic environment at Chapter 20, policies HE1 to HE10. Policy HE5 requires an applicant to assess the significance of any heritage asset affected,



including any contribution made by its setting, and to identify whether the proposal would have a positive effect, would have no effect, would cause harm and to what degree, or would result in the total loss of significance. Where harm to a designated heritage asset would arise, policy HE6 requires substantial weight to be given to the conservation of the asset and for that harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Policy HE7 addresses non-designated heritage assets and requires a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm and the significance of the asset, and policy HE9 addresses development within conservation areas.

The development plan comprises the Reading Borough Local Plan. The policies of most direct relevance are EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment), EN2 (Areas of Archaeological Significance), EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas), EN4 (Locally Important Heritage Assets) and EN6 (New Development in a Historic Context), together with CC7 (Design and the Public Realm), CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) and H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation).

The South Park Conservation Area Appraisal is a material consideration and has informed the characterisation set out in Section 2 below.



2. The heritage asset and its significance

2.1 Location of the site

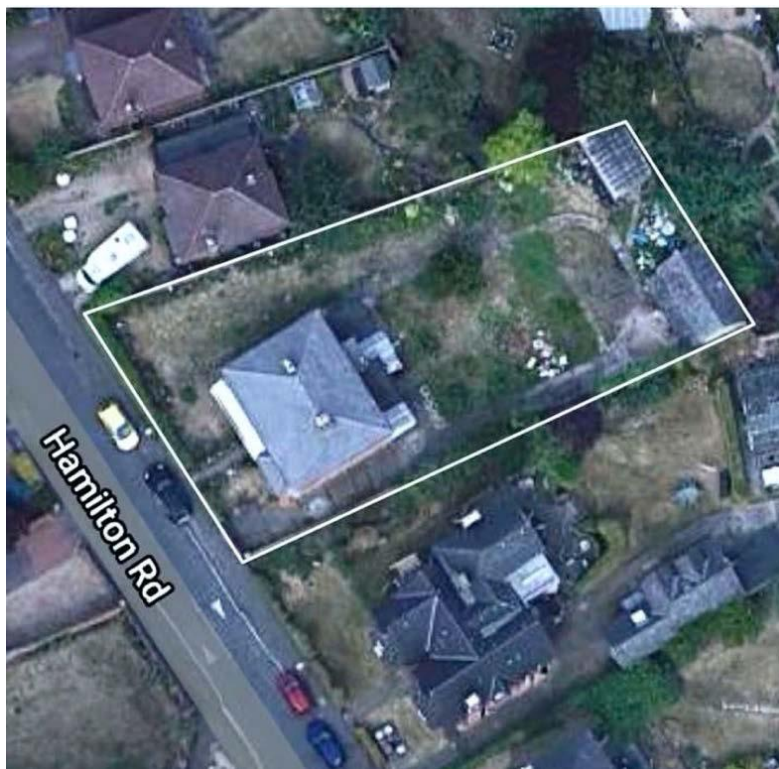
The application site is located at the south-eastern end of Hamilton Road, between Crescent Road and Whiteknights Road, approximately 1.3km east of Reading town centre and within the South Park Conservation Area. The site extends to approximately 900.0m² and is occupied by a two storey detached villa of approximately 191.0m² internal floor area, a two storey outbuilding, and a greenhouse within the rear garden.

The plot is generous, with a garden wrapping around the property and a driveway to the southern side of the house leading to the outbuilding at the rear. The front garden is enclosed by a low railing with a pedestrian gate, and the driveway is enclosed by double timber gates. The immediate area is characterised by large detached and semi-detached properties on generous plots.



Site location plan





Aerial view of the application site

2.2 Historical development of the area

The eastern suburbs of Reading owe their form to the arrival of the Great Western Railway in 1840 and to the rapid growth of the town that followed; between 1850 and 1900 the population of the borough more than tripled. Development in this area was scattered through much of the C19, and the land lay outside the borough boundary until 1887. By 1899 the residential character of the area, laid out with substantial villas on spacious plots, was established.

The South Park Conservation Area comprises an essentially mid to late Victorian and Edwardian suburb, focused on Eastern Avenue and Hamilton Road, which run north to south between Wokingham Road to the north and Crescent Road to the south. It is a fully built up urban area composed of continuous frontages of two and three storey buildings with front gardens to the back of the pavement edge, albeit with a prevalence of large properties on large plots.

The conservation area appraisal identifies the resulting townscape as one in which “the sheer variety, exuberance and blending of the architectural styles of the mainly Victorian period in such close proximity makes the area attractive”. Buildings are generally of brick, which the appraisal identifies as one of the distinguishing features of Reading’s architecture, and polychromatic brickwork using contrasting red, grey, cream and yellow bricks predominates. Slate roofs, decorative terracotta panels, stone carving and ornate railings are recurrent details. The appraisal identifies the retention of original



buildings and their settings, mature tree cover within property grounds, and original brick walls and railings as positive features of the area, and recognises that well-considered modern infill can respect that character.

2.3 Development of the site

81 Hamilton Road was built in about 1880 as a detached red brick villa, and is a characteristic product of the phase of development described above. The outbuilding at the rear of the plot, reached from the driveway on the southern side of the house, originally served as the coach house and reflects the ancillary domestic arrangements of a substantial suburban villa of this date.

Both buildings have been altered progressively through the C20. The alterations to the villa have been concentrated on the rear and side elevations and on the roof and windows, and the internal plan has been subdivided to serve its use as a house in multiple occupation. The outbuilding has been allowed to fall into disrepair. The extent of those changes, and the features that survive, are described below and are central to the assessment of significance.

2.4 Site description – the villa

81 Hamilton Road is a two storey red brick detached villa with grey brickwork corner quoin details, a gabled roof, projecting bracketed eaves and a timber fascia and soffit.

The surviving original timber windows are offset three-light sash windows with vertical glazing bars and stone sills. The window openings have flat segmental brickwork arches in a contrasting grey brick, with decorative contrasting brickwork reveals matching the quoin details. The rear elevation retains a small central closet wing to the ground and lower first floor with a pitched roof.

The original timber front door survives, with stained glass panels and a glazed fanlight, set back to create an external lobby. The decorative verandah with its curved roof, fret-cut fascia and wrought iron posts also survives, although it has been partially removed to accommodate a later projecting bay.





Front elevation from Hamilton Road – to be retained unaltered



Front elevation – surviving verandah and later bay





Side and rear elevations – the extent of the later single storey additions



Side elevation





Street view, showing the site in its wider context

2.5 Site description – the outbuilding

To the rear of the site stands a part two storey outbuilding, brick built with a slate roof. The building is in a complete state of disrepair. The roof structure shows signs of structural weakness, with a sunken ridge, although the original slate roof tiles remain in place. An associated storage structure of later date adjoins it, and a greenhouse stands within the rear garden.



Rear outbuilding





Outbuilding and adjoining storage shed

2.6 Later alterations and losses

While a number of original elements survive, the buildings have been subject to repeated unsympathetic modification. The principal losses and later interventions are as follows.

- The roof covering has been renewed in grey concrete tiles with half round concrete ridge tiles.
- The central first floor window has been replaced with a top hung uPVC casement window, with an extract vent duct taken through the window reveal brickwork.
- A square three-window projecting bay with side windows has been added, and the verandah partially removed to accommodate it. The bay brickwork does not match the front elevation, having different brick colours and no quoin details, and its window arches and reveals use a rubbed bullnose detail which does not match the original segmental arch and reveal details.
- Double glazed timber doors have been added at the front building line.
- The rear elevation has been extended several times on an ad-hoc basis. The central closet wing now has a concrete tiled pitched roof and a chimney with an extended boiler flue rising above the main eaves level.
- Brick built ground floor extensions to the right hand side and centre have flat felt covered roofs, uPVC rainwater goods and uPVC casement windows. These have been linked unsympathetically by a lean-to infill extension housing a boiler room and a rear uPVC door, and a further half brick and glazed extension with polycarbonate roofing panels has been built onto the central extension.



- A rear extension abuts the original building line, with the brickwork partially needed in to maintain the corner quoin detail vertically, and new penetrations have been formed through the historic brickwork for soil pipes.
- A small uPVC casement window with an opening fanlight has been inserted in the south west elevation with no brickwork arch or header detail, and a lean-to extension has been added to the north east elevation.
- Soil pipes and rainwater goods have been added on an ad-hoc basis to suit successive internal layouts, and the internal plan has been subdivided to form eight bedsits.

The cumulative effect of these interventions is that the rear and side elevations of the villa retain little of their original character, and that the legibility of the original plan form has been eroded. The front elevation, by contrast, remains largely intact in its composition, materials and detailing, notwithstanding the later bay.

2.7 Setting

The setting of the villa is its plot and the surrounding Victorian and Edwardian suburb. The building is experienced principally in oblique views along Hamilton Road and in direct views from the footway opposite, in both cases filtered by the mature hedge and planting to the front boundary. The large plot, the front garden with its low railing, the side driveway and the mature vegetation together give the building the verdant suburban character that the appraisal identifies as a positive feature of the conservation area.

The outbuilding is experienced only from within the site and in limited glimpsed views from the rear of neighbouring plots. It contributes to significance principally through its ancillary relationship to the villa and its position at the end of the driveway, rather than through any public view.

2.8 Criteria for assessing significance

Significance has been assessed against the heritage interests set out in the Planning Practice Guidance and in Historic England Advice Note 12:

- Archaeological interest – the potential of a place to hold evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- Architectural and artistic interest – interest in the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of a building, whether arising from conscious design or from the way the asset has evolved.



- Historic interest – an interest in past lives and events, which heritage assets may illustrate or be associated with, and the meaning a place holds for the community.

Each interest is rated as being of low, medium or high significance in order to give an overall understanding of the assets and of the particular contribution made by those features that would be affected by the proposal.

2.9 Assessment of significance

Archaeological interest

The buildings date from the later C19 and stand on land developed from agricultural use at that time. There is no recorded archaeological interest at the site and no indication of earlier occupation. The standing fabric of the villa holds some evidential value in the sequence of its alterations, which can be read in the brickwork of the rear elevation, but this is of local interest only. The archaeological interest is considered to be of low significance.

Architectural and aesthetic interest

The villa is a competent and characteristic example of a Reading suburban villa of about 1880. Its interest lies in the composition and detailing of the front elevation – the red brick with contrasting grey quoins, the segmental arches and decorative reveals, the projecting bracketed eaves, the offset three-light sashes with stone sills, and the surviving front door with stained glass and fanlight. The decorative verandah with its curved roof and fret-cut fascia is the most ornamental surviving element and is a feature of the type the conservation area appraisal identifies as characteristic of the area.

That interest has been diminished by the insertion of uPVC windows, the addition of a bay in mismatched brickwork with details that do not follow the original, and the accretion of rear extensions of poor quality. The outbuilding is a plain utilitarian structure whose architectural interest lies in its materials and its subordinate form rather than in any decorative treatment, and is further reduced by its condition.

The architectural and aesthetic interest of the villa is considered to be of medium significance, concentrated in the front elevation and its surviving joinery and ironwork. The architectural interest of the outbuilding is considered to be of low significance.

Historic interest

The villa illustrates the eastward expansion of Reading following the arrival of the railway and the establishment of a prosperous suburb of substantial detached houses on generous plots. The outbuilding illustrates the ancillary arrangements that supported such a house. The subsequent



subdivision of the property for use as an eight bedsit house in multiple occupation is itself part of the twentieth century history of the area, although it has driven much of the harmful alteration described above.

There is no known association with a person or event of more than local interest. The historic interest is considered to be of medium significance in the case of the villa and of low significance in the case of the outbuilding.

Summary of significance

The significance of the application site rests principally on the contribution the villa makes to the character and appearance of the South Park Conservation Area as a surviving example of the building type on which the special interest of the area depends. That contribution is made through the front elevation, the roof form, the surviving original joinery and ironwork, and the setting of the building within a large, well-planted plot.

The rear and side elevations, the modern windows, the later bay and the C20 extensions do not contribute to significance, and in several respects detract from it. The outbuilding makes a modest contribution, presently obscured by its condition. The overall significance of the site is considered to be of medium level, and the elements that would be affected by the proposal are those which contribute least.



3. The proposed scheme

3.1 Requirements for change

The objective of the scheme is to return the property from an eight bedsit house in multiple occupation to a single family dwelling, to provide accommodation of a size and standard appropriate to a building of this scale, and to bring the outbuilding back into use in support of the main house. The existing single storey rear additions are of poor construction and constrain any sensible internal arrangement, and the outbuilding would continue to deteriorate without intervention.

3.2 Condition of the asset

The villa has been maintained in use but is in need of repair, and the ad-hoc rear extensions and service runs are of poor construction and limited remaining life. The outbuilding is in a complete state of disrepair, with a structurally weakened roof and a sunken ridge, although the original slate covering remains in place and is capable of being salvaged and re-laid. There is no evidence of deliberate neglect or damage.

3.3 Proposed works

It is proposed to:

- retain the front elevation of the villa unaltered, including the verandah, the original front door with its stained glass panels and fanlight, the surviving sash windows and the quoin, arch and reveal details;
- retain the original footprint and external walls of both buildings;
- remove the existing single storey rear extensions, the lean-to infill extension and the glazed extension with polycarbonate roofing panels;
- erect a part two storey part single storey rear extension in the position of the removed additions;
- alter the internal layout to provide a more spacious arrangement suitable for a family dwelling of six bedrooms, including additional bedrooms at first floor;
- convert the two storey outbuilding to ancillary residential use, incorporating secure and covered storage for up to eight bicycles, and carry out the repairs necessary to bring the building back into use;
- provide three off-street parking spaces to the rear of the dwelling, using the existing access from Hamilton Road on the southern side of the property;



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- provide a bin store to the rear of the property, within 30.0m of the dwelling and set well back from the highway; and
 - landscape the front and rear gardens and provide additional native soft landscaping, hedgerows and shrubs to the rear, side and boundaries of the site.

3.4 Design considerations

The scheme has been developed on the principle that the front elevation of the villa, which carries the contribution the building makes to the conservation area in public views, would be left unaltered, and that change would be directed to the rear, where the historic fabric has already been substantially compromised. The additional accommodation would be provided in the position of the existing poor quality additions rather than by extending into undeveloped parts of the plot, so that the spacious, well-planted setting that characterises the conservation area would be retained.

The extension would be subordinate to the host building, set below the ridge, and would replace the awkward and disjointed single storey elements at the rear with a single coherent form. The outbuilding would be treated on the same principle: its footprint, external walls and subordinate relationship to the main house would be retained, and its use would remain ancillary to the dwelling rather than becoming an independent unit.

3.5 Alternative options

Consideration was given to retaining and adapting the existing rear extensions. That option was discounted because it would perpetuate the flat felt roofs, uPVC fenestration and unresolved lean-to infill that presently detract from the building, and would not allow a satisfactory internal arrangement to be achieved.

Consideration was also given to a two storey side extension. That option was discounted because it would be visible in the street scene, would erode the separation between the villa and its neighbours which is characteristic of this part of the conservation area, and would be less well related to the existing plan form than a rear extension.

The provision of a new ancillary building within the garden, in place of the conversion of the outbuilding, was likewise discounted. It would introduce built form where none has historically stood, would erode the mature garden setting, and would leave the outbuilding without a use and at continuing risk of loss through decay.



3.6 Reason for the proposed option

The chosen option would concentrate change where significance is lowest, would remove fabric that presently detracts from the conservation area, and would secure the repair and long term use of both buildings. It would leave the elements that carry the significance of the villa – the front elevation, the verandah, the original front door and the surviving sash windows – wholly unaffected.

3.7 Materials to be used

The new work would be constructed in good quality natural materials selected to match the existing building. Brickwork would use heritage bricks matched to the original, with appropriate detailing to the elevations and to specific architectural details such as the window head and reveal details. New segmental arches and stone sills would match the existing details, and roof coverings and rainwater goods would match those of the host building.

New windows would be traditional timber framed sashes, detailed to match the adjacent original sashes in terms of glazing bar details, sash frame sizes and glazing beads. New casement doors would be considered in terms of stile, base, top rail and glazing bead sizes and profiles. The repair of the outbuilding would re-use its existing natural slate, with reclaimed slate to match where replacement is unavoidable.

3.8 Opportunities to sustain and enhance significance

The proposal presents several opportunities to better reveal and reinforce the significance of the assets and of the conservation area:

- the removal of the accreted single storey rear additions, allowing the rear elevation and the central closet wing to be read as a coherent whole for the first time in many years;
- the replacement of flat felt roofs, uPVC fenestration and polycarbonate roofing panels with a considered design in matched brickwork and timber joinery;
- the rationalisation of soil pipes and rainwater goods and the making good of the historic brickwork disturbed by existing service penetrations;
- the repair of the outbuilding and the retention of its original slate covering, securing the future of a building presently at risk;
- the return of the villa to single family occupation, removing the pressure for further subdivision and ad-hoc alteration that has driven much of the harm to date; and
- additional native planting to the rear, side and boundaries, reinforcing the verdant suburban character of the area.



4. Impact upon significance

4.1 Criteria for assessment

The assessment below considers each principal element of the proposal against the heritage value of the fabric affected, the level of change proposed, and the resulting effect on significance. Not all change to a heritage asset is harmful; change may have a positive effect, no effect, or may cause harm, and where harm arises the degree of that harm is identified. It is the effect upon significance, rather than the scale of the works, that is determinative.

Impact upon the villa

Element	Heritage value of fabric affected	Level of change	Effect on significance
Retention of the front elevation, verandah, original front door with stained glass and fanlight, sash windows, quoins, arches and reveal details	The fabric which carries the contribution the building makes to the conservation area	No change other than repair and making good	No effect on significance – the contribution to the street scene would be preserved in full
Removal of the single storey rear extensions, lean-to infill, boiler room and polycarbonate roofed addition	Later ad-hoc additions of no heritage value which obscure the original rear elevation and closet wing and detract from the building	Complete removal	Positive – would remove detracting fabric and allow the original rear elevation to be read
Part two storey part single storey rear extension	Would occupy the position of the removed additions; no original fabric affected beyond openings already breached	New build in matched brickwork and timber joinery, subordinate in scale and set below the ridge	Neutral to positive – would replace poor quality fabric with a single coherent form
Alterations to the internal layout, including additional first floor bedrooms	The internal plan has already been subdivided to form eight bedsits; no decorative scheme of note survives	Removal and insertion of partitions within the existing envelope	Neutral
Fenestration to the rear and side elevations	Rear and side elevations already substantially altered, including uPVC units and an opening	New and replacement openings in later fabric, in timber	Neutral to positive



	formed without arch or header detail		
Removal of redundant soil pipes, rainwater goods and the extract duct through the reveal brickwork, and making good	Services added on an ad-hoc basis which presently detract from the elevations	Removal, replacement and making good of brickwork	Positive
Change of use from an eight bedsit house in multiple occupation to a single family dwelling	The use has driven successive subdivision and ad-hoc external alteration	Change of use within the existing and extended envelope	Positive – would remove the pressure for further harmful alteration and secure a use suited to the building

Impact upon the outbuilding

Element	Heritage value of fabric affected	Level of change	Effect on significance
Conversion to ancillary residential use with secure cycle storage	An ancillary building of low but positive heritage value, presently in complete disrepair	Retention of footprint and external walls; internal conversion only, with the use remaining ancillary to the main house	Positive – would secure a viable use while retaining the subordinate coach house form
Repair of the fabric, including the slate roof and sunken ridge	The roof structure is failing; the slate covering is original and contributes to the building's interest	Structural repair with the existing slate salvaged and re-laid, and reclaimed slate to match where necessary	Positive – would arrest structural failure and retain the original covering

Impact upon the wider site

Element	Heritage value of fabric affected	Level of change	Effect on significance
Three off-street parking spaces to the rear, using the existing access	The existing driveway and rear hardstanding, already surfaced	Parking accommodated to the rear of the dwelling; the existing access and timber gates retained	Neutral – parking would not be visible from Hamilton Road and the front garden would be retained as garden
Bin store to the rear	Rear part of the plot, of no heritage value in itself	New store set well back from the highway, within 30.0m of the dwelling	Neutral – no effect on the street scene or on views into the site



Cycle storage within the outbuilding	Existing building rather than new built form	Internal fit-out for up to eight bicycles	Positive – avoids a new structure within the garden setting
Landscaping of the front and rear gardens and additional native planting	The large, well-planted plot is a positive characteristic of the conservation area	New soft landscaping, hedgerows and shrubs to the rear, side and boundaries	Positive – would reinforce the verdant suburban character of the area

4.2 Impact upon the conservation area and its setting

The building would continue to be experienced from Hamilton Road exactly as it is at present. The front elevation, which carries the contribution the building makes to the conservation area, would not be altered, and the front boundary treatment, low railing and mature planting would be retained. There would accordingly be no change to the principal public view of the asset.

The rear extension would be substantially screened from Hamilton Road by the building itself and by the boundary planting, and would be seen, if at all, in oblique and glimpsed views. Being set below the ridge and subordinate in scale, it would not compete with the form of the villa. In those limited views it would read as a single coherent addition in place of the present disjointed accumulation of flat roofed and lean-to elements, which is an improvement on the existing situation.

The parking, bin store and cycle storage would all be accommodated to the rear of the site or within the existing outbuilding, and would not be apparent from the public realm. The additional soft landscaping would reinforce the verdant suburban character which the appraisal identifies as a positive feature of the area. The proposal would not affect the setting of any listed building.

No harm to the character or appearance of the South Park Conservation Area has been identified.

4.3 Avoidance and minimisation of harm

Harm has been avoided in the first instance through the location of change. All new built form would be placed where C20 additions already stand, no original external wall would be removed, and the front elevation would be left unaltered.

Where change to fabric is unavoidable, it has been minimised. New openings would be formed in later fabric wherever possible, the historic brickwork disturbed by existing service penetrations would be made good, and materials and joinery details would be matched to the surviving originals. The outbuilding would be repaired using its own salvaged slate rather than a substitute covering.



4.4 Public benefits

No harm requiring justification under policy HE6 has been identified. The proposal would nevertheless deliver clear heritage benefits: the removal of the accreted rear additions, the making good of the historic brickwork, the repair of an outbuilding presently at risk of loss, and the return of the villa to the single family occupation for which it was designed, which would remove the pressure for further subdivision and ad-hoc alteration.

The proposal would also deliver wider public benefits, in providing a family sized dwelling in a highly sustainable location for which there is a recognised need in the borough, in securing the long term maintenance of both buildings, and in providing additional native planting and biodiversity gain on the site.

4.5 Recording

The proposal would not result in the loss of fabric of such interest as to require archaeological recording. A photographic record of the rear and side elevations of the villa and of the outbuilding prior to the commencement of works would nevertheless be appropriate, and could be secured by condition.



5. Conclusion

The significance of the application site lies in the contribution the villa makes to the character and appearance of the South Park Conservation Area, as a substantially surviving example of the late Victorian suburban villa on which the special interest of the area depends. That contribution is carried by the front elevation, the roof form, the surviving timber joinery and decorative verandah, and the spacious, well-planted plot. The outbuilding makes a modest further contribution, presently obscured by its condition.

The proposal would direct change to those parts of the site that contribute least. The front elevation would be retained unaltered, and the principal public view of the building would be unchanged. The C20 additions that detract from the rear of the villa would be removed and replaced by a single coherent extension in matched materials, the historic brickwork would be made good, the outbuilding would be repaired and brought back into ancillary use, and the building would return to the single family occupation for which it was designed.

No harm to the significance of the heritage assets or to the character and appearance of the conservation area has been identified, and the scheme would deliver a number of heritage benefits together with wider public benefits in the form of a family sized dwelling in a sustainable location and additional planting on the site.

By virtue of its scale and nature, and having had special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area under section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, it is considered that the proposed development would preserve and in several respects enhance the character and appearance of the South Park Conservation Area. The proposal would accordingly comply with the relevant policies of the National Planning Policy Framework and of the Reading Borough Local Plan, and we would respectfully request that the application be approved.

Sources

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