

HERITAGE STATEMENT

Site Address: Sonning Court, Thames Street, Sonning, Reading RG4 6UR

Date: October 2025



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1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of a householder planning application for extensions and alterations to Sonning Court, Thames Street, Sonning.

The application site lies within the Sonning Conservation Area, as designated by Wokingham Borough Council. The property is not statutorily listed. The purpose of this statement is to consider the significance of the heritage asset and assess the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, with reference to relevant legislation, policy and guidance.

2. Site and Conservation Area Context

Sonning Court is a large detached dwelling set within a substantial landscaped plot on the western side of Thames Street. The dwelling is set well back from the public highway and is screened by mature trees and planting, limiting its visibility from the public realm.

The Sonning Conservation Area Appraisal (2017) identifies the special interest of the area as deriving from:

- Its village and riverside setting
- A loose pattern of development comprising large detached dwellings within generous plots
- A strong landscaped character, with mature trees and gardens forming an important part of the townscape.

In this part of the Conservation Area, the Appraisal recognises that buildings are often experienced indirectly, with their contribution to character arising from scale, spacing and setting, rather than from continuous or prominent frontage development.

3. Significance of the Heritage Asset

The significance of Sonning Court lies in its contribution to the established pattern of development identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal, namely:

- The presence of a substantial dwelling within a spacious, landscaped plot
- The retention of a set-back position from Thames Street, reinforcing the green and open character of the area
- The overall form and scale of the principal building when read within its garden setting.

The rear elevation of the dwelling does not form part of the public experience of the Conservation Area and does not contribute to any identified key views, vistas or townscape features described in the Appraisal.

4. Description of the Proposals

The proposals comprise:

- Extension of the existing lower ground floor room through partial infilling of an approved lightwell
- Removal of an existing rear extension and conservatory and construction of a new single-storey rear extension
- Infill of two recesses at first-floor level to provide modest additional accommodation
- Alterations to fenestration on the rear elevation, including the introduction of metal-framed windows
- Formation of a roof terrace with glass balustrade, consistent with a terrace previously approved under application F/2011/0837.

All proposed works are confined to the rear of the dwelling.

5. Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area

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 conservation areas.

In assessing the impact of the proposals, regard has been had to the Sonning Conservation Area Appraisal and the principles set out within it.

The proposed development would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area for the following reasons:

- The extensions and alterations are confined to the rear elevation, which is not visible from Thames Street or other publicly accessible viewpoints
- The scale and massing of the extensions are modest and remain subservient to the principal dwelling, consistent with the established pattern of development within the Conservation Area
- The proposals do not alter the street-facing elevation, plot structure, or landscaped setting that contribute to the character of this part of the Conservation Area; and
- The use of a restrained palette of materials ensures the development integrates with the existing building without introducing visually intrusive elements.

As the proposals do not affect the elements of the site that contribute to the significance of the Conservation Area, they would result in no harm to its character or appearance.

6. Policy Context

The proposals have been assessed against:

- **Section 72** of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- **Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework**, which requires great weight to be given to the conservation of heritage assets
- **Policy TB24 (Designated Heritage Assets)** of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan, which seeks to ensure development preserves the significance of heritage assets and their settings.

In NPPF terms (paragraphs 212–215), the proposals would result in no harm to the significance of the Conservation Area, and therefore no heritage balance is required.

7. Conclusion

The proposed extensions and alterations to Sonning Court have been carefully designed having regard to the site's heritage context and the guidance set out in the Sonning Conservation Area Appraisal.

The works are confined to the rear of the property, are not visible from the public realm, and do not affect the attributes that contribute to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposals therefore preserve the character and appearance of the Sonning Conservation Area, in accordance with Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework and local planning policy.