



RIDGEWAY

HERITAGE CONSULTANCY

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‘Heriots’, Wokingham Road, Hurst, Berkshire RG10 0RY

A review of revised proposals for remediation in Planning Applications 242960 and 242961

Introduction

Retrospective planning and LBC applications were submitted for the remediation of the unauthorised works to the Grade II-listed property of Heriots, on May 17, 2024 (ref. 241256 and 241257), and included proposals for the remediation, or removal, of a series of unconsented alterations.

This application was refused on July 31st, 2024, with the following Reason for Refusal:

1. ‘By virtue of lack of details, the proposed alterations to the listed building have not satisfactorily demonstrated no negative impact of the development to the significance of the heritage asset or its setting. The proposal would be therefore contrary to Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy and Policy TB24 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (2023)’.

Following this refusal, an independent assessment of the building, and of the date, scope and impact of the unauthorised works, was commissioned from Ridgeway Heritage Consultancy, and the results of this assessment, together with recommendations for remediation, were made available in a detailed report (RHC/2024-36), of September 2024. A review of revised proposal for remediation was submitted to Wokingham Borough Council in February, 2025.

Following further consultation, the applications 242960 and 242961 have been submitted to Wokingham Borough Council for the required remediation measures for Heriots. The scope and extent of these remediation measures is now more limited than those originally stipulated, and principally include a reduction in the scale of the unconsented rear extension and the removal of external timber cladding, together with a number of internal features. These revised measures are supported by Drawings 2432/03 and 2432/04, produced by Fusion Architecture Ltd.



The Unauthorised works now proposed for Remediation

Those unauthorised works requiring remediation now include:

1. A substantial reduction in the roof-form of the rear extension;
2. The proposed retention of stud walling associated with the main staircase at ground-floor level;
3. The reinstatement of the historic partition wall in the drawing room;
4. The proposed retention of the modern faux fireplace in the hallway;
5. The reinstatement of the hatch opening at first-floor level, with the original hatch door;
6. The retention of timber cladding on the north elevation, but removal on the east and west elevations; and
7. The reinstatement of the dining room window on the east elevation

Recommendations and Comments

1. Reduction in the roof-form of the rear extension

While I have previously advocated a pragmatic approach to remediating the prominent rear extension, this unconsented addition has substantially altered the form and massing of this side of the house. The proposed reduction in the height of the tiled roof would considerably reduce perceptions of scale and massing of the extension, and would have the effect of revealing more of the gabled form behind. While the extension is an intrinsically undesirable feature, this reduction in its scale and form would greatly limit the extent of the physical impacts to standing fabric entailed in any complete removal of the extension. Particular attention should be paid to the tiling detail of the lowered roof, which should retain the flat peg-tiles of the existing, with half-round ridge-tiles of appropriate size. I would welcome this proposal as an effective and acceptable means of resolving this issue, which has been the most difficult of the unconsented changes to the property.

2. The stud walling associated with the lower stages of the main staircase.

The bottom of the staircase has been altered, affecting the bottom three steps, with part of the screen wall removed. It is unclear why it is now proposed to retain the stud walling enclosing the altered lower stages of the main staircase. This unconsented change is historically



inauthentic and its remediation would entail relatively little technical difficulty, or impact to standing historic fabric. In my opinion, the originally stipulated remediation measure should be adhered to, as per the submitted plan. The bottom of the stairs should be reinstated to their former position, ie. entailing a 90° change from the existing position of the bottom of the staircase. The associated timber studwork screen wall should be rebuilt to match the original. The modern door at the staircase entrance can be retained and refitted.

3. The partition between the Phase 1 sitting room and adjoining room.

This proposed remediation measure is in accordance with previous stipulations, and should be undertaken in accordance with specifications to be determined by the local planning authority. Where appropriate, the partition should be rebuilt using traditional methods, subject to the criteria stated by the local planning authority.

4. The ground-floor fireplace in the hallway

The fireplace is a somewhat anomalous feature in this location, and while a modern addition its scale, style and materials are not altogether inappropriate to the character of this part of the house. Its removal and subsequent making good could potentially impact surrounding historic fabric, and I do not consider that there is an overriding case for removal. I would therefore broadly agree with the retention of this feature.

5. The reinstatement of a first-floor hatch opening

The reinstatement of the existing first-floor hatch opening, with the original hatch door, is supported, as this would both restore an historic feature and enhance the character and appearance of this elevation.

6. Removal of timber cladding on the east and west elevations

This proposal is of fundamental importance in revealing and restoring the historic character and material palette of the historic element of the house, and is strongly supported. Particular attention should be paid to the repair and reinstatement of historic brick and/or render surfaces following removal of cladding, particularly the repointing of exposed mortar joints.



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Any necessary repainting of revealed render or brickwork surfaces, and the treatment of any exposed timber members, shall be subject to the specification of the local planning authority. The retention of existing timber cladding on the north elevation is not objected to, as this relates to a later addition to the house, and the retained cladding would assist in distinguishing this addition as such. In this location, the retained cladding would complement, and be consistent with, that on the adjoining covered connecting corridor and ancillary buildings. It would also offer an aesthetically pleasing contrast with the restored brickwork and render surfaces on adjoining elevations.

7. The reinstatement of the dining-room window on the east elevation

The removal of the existing French windows on the east elevation, and the partial filling of this opening and replacement with a three-light casement window of an appropriate historic pattern to match existing examples on the house, is supported. The form and pattern of the replacement window should be subject to the specifications of the local planning authority.

RWM

5th September, 2025