

Prince Edward Street, Berkhamsted

Hertfordshire, UK, 2021-ongoing

This collection of historic buildings, built out of local red brick and covered with clay tile roofs, corners onto High Street, itself the main focus of the urban settlement running in a northwest to southeast direction and originally centred upon the Parish Church of St. Peter and the marketplace. The precise history of the site is unclear but it is believed that, due to its proximity to Berkhamsted Castle, it is likely to have been first developed in the 13C / 14C, with significant later alterations. A historic date plaque marked 1724 adorns the head of a doorway leading into the existing buildings from Prince Edward Street, suggesting that some of what we see there today dates back from the first quarter of the 18C.

The Berkhamsted Conservation Area, which was considerably extended in 1994 to include the area directly bordering the south of the site, encompasses almost half of the town's buildings and is split into three main character areas. The site is included in the *High Street Central* character area which comprises rows of adjoining two and three storey properties, mostly in commercial use with some residential, civic and religious buildings that date between the 13C and 21C.

The proposal is to add a two storey extension onto the side of the existing row and extend the rear in order to accommodate larger commercial units at ground level and convert the first floor into four apartments. The ridge height of the new side extension has been set slightly lower than the existing building so that it can be read as subservient and a later addition, built in red brick - as is characteristic of the Conservation Area.

While external alterations to the existing buildings have been kept to a minimum in order to preserve historic fabric as much as possible, the fenestration of the extensions is composed of large vertical aluminium windows to allow plenty of daylight into the apartments, some with Juliet balconies facing onto Prince Edward Street. New traditional shopfronts will be introduced at street level. Contrasting soldier bonded brickwork features and a corbeled-out chimney stack at first floor level provide architectural interest and contribute towards improving the character and appearance of this part of the town.

Date	2021-ongoing
Gross floor area	578m ² / 6621 sq.ft
Client	Grant Investment Trust
Architect	Architecture Julien Denis
Heritage Consultant	Liath Heritage
Images	Architecture Julien Denis



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