

**Alterations to provide external ramp access to The Reading Room 12
High Street Barkway - Grade II Listed Building**

The Design and Access and Heritage statement is as described below.

Introduction & General Description

The property comprises of a single-storey building known as the "The Reading Room" in The High Street at Barkway and is part of the village centre and close by to a number of Listed Buildings stretching along the main High Street. The property is attached to number 14 High Street, which is a thatched cottage. It is known that in times past, The Reading Room and number 14 were once connected by an internal doorway. The property has pedestrian access only and there are two rights of way to No 14 and No 8 across the site. The Reading Room was given Listed Building status on the 3rd June 1987 and remains Listed.

The main users of the Reading Room are the Historical Society and for general meetings. The existing access comprises of both steps and uneven ramps to the property at the side and rear that cross the Parish Council Land and problems have arisen with those who are elderly to negotiate the steps, in particular in the winter months. The existing paving and steps are considered beyond economic repair and the Parish propose for safety that the access should be completely ramped for better and safer access.

Design & Appearance

The appearance of the external ramp proposed will remain visually unaffected from the road as the proposed ramp will be to a similar level as exists. The ramp is proposed to be in paving flags laid to falls set between new brick work walling with bull nose coping blue engineering bricks as retaining walls.

Vehicular & Transport

Access to the property exists via the existing pedestrian access leading from the front of the property. There is no parking for car to the site and no spaces are proposed.

It is believed that the property does not lie within a designated flood plain area.

Proposals submitted & Heritage Asset and need

A number of Listed Buildings are in the general area of the site, including the memorial nearer the centre of the village which is believed to Listed status. The immediate neighbour's properties are believed to be Listed. The surrounding area of the site comprises of housing which will not infringe on the proposals. The Reading Room is of red brickwork under a slate roof finish and believed to date from 1870.

Impact of Proposals

The property borders housing in the main, most of which are two storey houses, away from the site and of a mix of brick and render external finish to walls and under slate or plain tiled roofs. An equal amount of modern 20th century houses as well as older properties are also evident and stretch along the road, mostly of brick and tiled roofs. The proposed ramp is considered not to detract from the overall character of the building and the Conservation Area.

History of the site

The existing building is believed to date from the 1800 hundreds and Victorian in style and has had various additions and alterations during its history, including the 18th, 19th and 20th Century.

Heritage Significance

The development of this part of the High Street is one of a mixed set of dwellings and of mainly two-storey in scale and that for the most part is generally one of infill over time. Its history suggests that land in between the older properties has been developed over several centuries. The proposals are not considered to impact within its Heritage setting.