

OXFORDSHIRE ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Registered charity no. 259055

Listed Buildings Sub-Committee

Planning Control and Conservation
Oxford City Council
St Aldate's Chambers
109 St Aldate's
Oxford OX1 1DS

7 March 2021

Our ref: 18/21

Dear Sir / Madam

Re: 21/00339/FUL

3 Polstead Road, Oxford OX2 6TW

**Proposed insertion of railings and gates to existing front boundary wall,
provision of bin and cycle stores to front garden, replacement patio door
to rear, formation of rear patio and alterations to hard landscaping.**

Our caseworkers have examined these proposals and we have the following comments.

We wish to object to the design and materials of the proposed new railings.

3 Polstead Road was designed by HW Moore and built by Kinglerlee in 1890. The houses at this time had low railings, as can be seen in the photograph by Henry Taunt used on the cover of the City Council's guidance note on North Oxford railings which shows Polstead Road in 1895 (Oxfordshire History Centre [pictureoxon POX0087039](#)). The guidance note sets out clearly the characteristics of the phase 3 railings which were used at the time, and we would urge the applicant to install a set to one of these designs, and using appropriate materials - not steel.

We note that an earlier application (93/01251/NFH) was refused on the basis that the proposed railings were a copy of an eighteenth-century design, and were thus inappropriate for the Conservation Area.

It appears that almost all the original railings in Polstead Road were removed in the 1940s, and although some have been reinstated, it is unfortunate that none of these have used the designs recommended in the City Council guidance note. The property is in the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area, and it is a requirement under s.72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 that the Council, in its exercise of its planning functions with respect to any buildings or land in the Conservation Area, must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Hence the existing reinstated railings should not be taken as precedents for new ones. In particular we note that the proposed design appears to replicate that at no. 6 opposite. We understand that this work was carried out in the 1980s using railings from the former railway works in Swindon; they are inappropriate in materials - the use of steel posts - and the design is out of keeping with the 1890s aesthetic of Polstead Road.

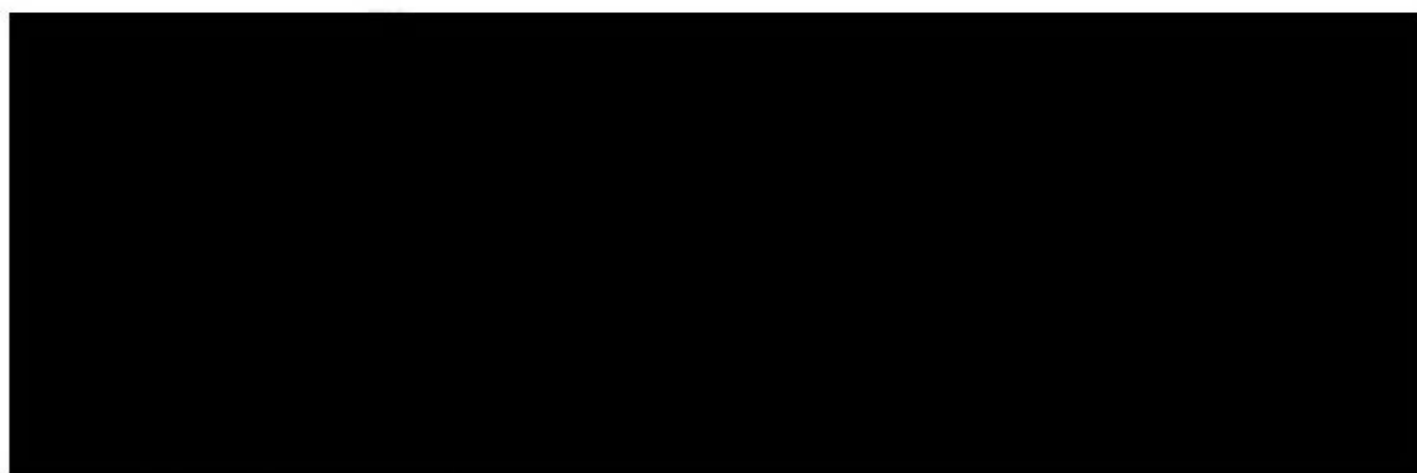
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The same design of railings has also been used in a number of houses in nearby St Margaret's Road, but this should not be taken as a precedent in the present case either. While we appreciate the motivation for reusing early railings, this does not apply in the present application. Thus we object to new railings to this design and using inappropriate materials.

There is in fact one house in Polstead Road which has its original railings. No. 31 has cast iron end posts with distinctive tall finials. The railings have upper and lower rails with a simple scroll decoration between them at the top. Alternate standards with shaped finials extend above the upper rail. These design motifs continue through the gatepost and gates and are thus very important as a surviving set and a possible model for replacement railings in the street.

We would ask, therefore, that the applicants reconsider the design of railings, and adopt the design of the railings at no. 31 or one of those in the City Council guidance note as being more appropriate for this location. The material should be cast iron, as steel would certainly detract from the appearance of the Conservation Area.

Yours sincerely



Liz Woolley
Hon Secretary, Listed Buildings Sub-Committee
138 Marlborough Road, Oxford OX1 4LS

