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SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENTS

in respect of converting a single family dwelling into four self-contained apartments
at

**24 Eldon Road
Reading
Berkshire**

Project ref: 1237

1. DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

1. ENVIRONS

The site is situated on the west side of Eldon Road in a line of several similar generous villa-style four-storey (including basements) houses and overlooking the western edge of Eldon Square within 'Area 1' of the eponymous Conservation Area. While these houses are notionally semi-detached, they are physically terraced, having articulated parts of their front elevations where they are conjoined. It is a short walk to all the facilities in Reading town centre, to the Royal Berkshire Hospital, to churches in Watlington Street, and to bus routes in London Road, Eldon Road, Queen's Road and King's Road; and a short cycle ride to local commercial facilities in Earley Road and Wokingham Road.

Surrounding houses, generally built in the middle or later part of the 19th century, are of traditional two-, three- and four-storey construction, with stucco rendered brick walls supporting timber-framed pitched slate roofs punctuated by stucco rendered brick chimneystacks. The external walls at the front, including those on the application site and its conjoined neighbour at No.26 Eldon Road [hereinafter 'No.26'], are of similar construction, except their roofs are of plain clay tiles. Both rear elevations of Nos.24 and 26, along with the other neighbouring properties on this side of Eldon Road, have been fully stucco rendered. In common with many of the neighbouring properties, the front elevations are embellished with stone or stucco quoining, bands, projecting stone sills, brackets, arch tympani and lintels with keystones.

The area consists mainly of similarly constructed residential houses with outdoor private amenity space augmented by the public outdoor amenity space of Eldon Square on the eastern side of Eldon Road. Of the nearby properties along the western side of Eldon Road, nearly all are listed buildings dating from the 1830s and 1840s and built in the Classical style for those working in the professions at that time. The application site and its conjoined No.26 appear to have been built at a later date, probably early in the twentieth century, and are not listed.

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal observes that .. "Historically, the conservation area was developed as a residential area that contained various communal facilities such as church and Sunday school, shop, public houses, park and small scale industrial activity ... The main working class source of employment would have been Huntley and Palmers.

Today, the area is still predominantly residential but some of the larger houses are now in multiple occupation or converted into, for instance, surgeries ... or offices... . A few shops remain"

The neighbouring two-storey rear outbuilding at No.22 is a relatively recent construction of ample proportions.

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2. THE SITE

24 Eldon Road is part of a terrace of mainly four-storey (including basement) residential houses, most with existing two-storey rear extensions. The site is currently considered to be a residential dwelling, but in 1992 planning permission was granted for five rooms to be used as solicitor's offices (ref: 920281). The main entrance is separated from the public pavement in Eldon Road by a planted front area and paved path.

The basement is very small, located below the main stair and containing the building's electrical intake. Vehicular access onto the site is from Eldon Place, to the west of the rear garden, itself providing access to a generous rear ground floor room and a secondary staircase leading to first floor level. While the ground floor appears to have been largely used for the solicitors' offices, a use which has now been discontinued, the existing accommodation has been assessed as residential use in order to more accurately compare with the residential nature of the proposals. There are four more bedrooms, a cupboard and a bathroom at first and second floor levels.

Note has been taken of the historical context of the existing house which originally formed part of the rapid expansion of Reading during the second half of the nineteenth century. The conservation area appraisal observes that "Terraced houses in the Eldon Road Conservation Area served the employees of Huntley & Palmers whose factory was located a short walk away on the north side of the Kennet & Avon Canal".

The site is identified on the appraisal map as one of a number of buildings of townscape merit. This is expanded in the appraisal: "...commonly they will be good examples of relatively unaltered 19th century buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provide the streetscape with interest and variety. Most importantly they make a positive contribution to the special interest of the conservation area."

3. PREVIOUS APPLICATION

An application, ref: 181949, for planning permission to change the use of the property from Class B1(a) (offices) to the four apartments using procedures under the GPDO(2015) was refused on 19 December 2018 as the applicant was unable to show the previous use as lawfully belonging to the relevant use class, there being no documentary confirmation available, and its status having been compromised by its previous residential status as a single dwellinghouse.

4. CURRENT PROPOSALS

This current application is for an identical scheme as the first but, in accordance with that decision, full planning permission is being sought for a conversion of the existing house into four units.

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The accommodation will comprise the following four apartments:-

Flat A: 2B3P maisonette comprising a double bedroom, sanitary provision and a combined kitchen/dining and living room at first floor level, and a single bedroom at second floor level, the maisonette being accessed from the main front door and a ground floor hall;

Flat B: 1B2P flat with a double bedroom, sanitary provision and a combined kitchen/dining and living room, all at ground floor level and accessed from an existing side entrance and hall;

Flat C: 1B2P flat with a double bedroom, sanitary provision and combined kitchen/dining and living room all at first floor level, accessed from the existing secondary rear staircase;

Flat D: 1B2P flat with similar accommodation as, but all located at ground floor level below, Flat C, and accessed from a new rear doorway.

Each apartment has its own entrance, avoiding the need for any common areas within the building.

The rear garden would accommodate a single parking bay accessed from Eldon Place, as well as bin and bicycle stores for Flats B, C and D, while those for Flat A would be located respectively alongside the front path and within the ground floor hall of the flat itself, both accessed from Eldon Road.

5. ACCESS

5.1 Specific Access Issues

The proposed development is situated on a broadly level site that is unlikely to provide unusual difficulties for those with mobility problems.

The existing house is in general compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations, but is not suitable for wheelchair users due to existing entrance steps. The introduction of a ramped access to the main front door could be contrived but, being uncharacteristic for this type of property, would likely detract and be detrimental to the appearance of the surrounding Conservation Area.

5.2 Access from Existing Transport Network

The site lies a short distance from public transport links to commercial facilities in Reading town centre and all destinations eastwards, and within walking distance of local commercial, religious and social establishments.

5.3 Access Points and Layout

Flats A and B will be approached from the main entrance in Eldon Road, to the front of the property. Proposed Flats C and D will be accessed from Eldon Place by using and upgrading the existing rear garden.

5.4 Maintenance of Access

The existing access points are of robust hard material requiring minimal maintenance.

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6. DESIGN

6.1 To provide good quality self-contained apartments in accordance with the Council's policies that seek to maintain standards of residential accommodation while restricting impact upon public resources;

6.2 To provide good quality accommodation that is affordable for key workers in the borough and in keeping with the residential nature of the surrounding Conservation Area;

6.3 To maintain the prevailing relative residential, density in the immediately surrounding area;

6.4 To respond to government policy seeking to better utilise underused urban sites;

6.5 To bring an existing site into improved economic use without undue detriment to its surroundings, thereby maintaining the quality of the Conservation Area in a sustainable way and in the long-term public interest.

7. INFRASTRUCTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS

It is anticipated that a contribution will become due for affordable housing off-site of 5% of the market value of the new apartments based on the formula published in the council's 'Supplementary Guidance for Affordable Housing'.

2. HERITAGE STATEMENT

The site is situated near the western edge of the Eldon Square Conservation Area, in particular falling within designated Character Area 1 and containing '...large prestigious stone residences...'. Note has been taken of the historical context of the existing house which originally formed part of the tail-end of the rapid expansion of Reading during the second half of the nineteenth century.

The borough's conservation area Appraisal observes that Area 1 "contains the majority of the conservation area's listed buildings and is characterised by tall detached or semi-detached residences faced with Bath stone and set back from the highway with long rear gardens. Many of these former houses have been converted to flats, offices or professional uses...A row of 19th century buildings lies on the west side of Eldon Road, nearly all are listed and date from the same period as Eldon Square, but Nos.20/22 and 24/26 do not appear on a map of 1879".

Inter alia the Appraisal identifies the architectural cohesion of prestigious mid-19th century residential development, good quality townscape and the prevalent use of local stone as making a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the conservation area. The rear gardens to the properties on the western side of Eldon Road are less long than those on Kings Road and Eldon Square and it is presumed that Eldon Place acted as a mews to those prestigious properties.

Other features identified in the Appraisal as contributing to the historic character and appearance of Character Area 1 will be unaffected by the proposals. In particular the proposed external materials will either match those existing or remain unchanged, namely the stucco rendering to both front and rear elevations, and the plain clay tile roof. While many of the original windows have previously been replaced in pvc, those on the street elevation match the fenestration pattern of what were likely to have been vertically sliding timber sash windows, and these should be retained.

It is proposed to alter the front paving to provide convenient hardstanding for refuse bins for Flat A, this being the prevalent method of refuse storage in this part of Eldon Road. Otherwise, alterations to the external envelope to the application site are minimal and in themselves should barely affect the character of the conservation area.

3. ENERGY EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

1. ENERGY EFFICIENCY

1. Optimising energy from the sun:

The new apartments are oriented so that many of its principal door and window openings face south or south-west, the direction of afternoon sunshine, with just bedroom and hall windows and the front door opening on north or north-east elevations. In this way the sun's energy will be allowed to augment the space heating systems, thereby reducing reliance upon fossil fuels. Inevitably, to maximise enjoyment of the rear garden to the west of the new house there are a number of windows and doors facing that direction. Many of the internal walls are of brickwork or other dense materials with a relatively high thermal storage capacity that should retain heat energy received from the sun within the structure, even when airborne energy is dissipated by ventilation openings, open doors and the like.

2. Optimising natural daylight:

Similarly daylight should penetrate well from the south and south-west directions, conveying daylight to all four living rooms. In addition, the east-facing front windows are relatively large, allowing morning sun greater entry into the bedrooms there.

3. Optimising Controlled Natural Ventilation:

All windows are openable to varying degrees, and most natural ventilation will be from these sources. Mechanical ventilation to bathrooms, shower rooms and kitchens required by Building Regulations will be effected by extraction controlled by humidistats operating only when humidity levels could cause condensation.

4. Efficient Use of Energy:

The proposals should include upgrading the thermal resistance of the existing fabric where required by Building Regulations, which will limit heat loss from the building. . The principal sources of heat loss in a building will usually be through door and window openings, and this would be minimised by double glazing new windows, and by having no openings vulnerably facing north, the property being mid-terrace.

Building Regulations also require the provision of a number of light fittings only capable of receiving low-energy light bulbs.

It is not currently proposed to provide renewable supplementary power sources from within the site, but the west-facing pitched roofs over most of the house offer a site for future solar panels, whether for preheating hot water or for the photovoltaic generation of electricity. The proposed method of space and water heating is by efficient gas-fired condensing boilers whose performance could be improved at a later date by the introduction of water preheated by such solar panels.

2. RENEWABLE ENERGY

5. Energy Generation from Renewable Sources:

The consideration of energy generation from renewable sources is expected only for major developments involving the construction of 10 or more residential units, and it is therefore not applicable to this proposed construction of just four apartments.

3. WATER

6. Water-Saving Devices:

The building owner is proposing the installation of automatically disengaging mixer taps to reduce unnecessary water losses should taps be left open.

7. Harvesting and Re-using Rainwater:

There is space to install water butts fed from proprietary diverters located in some of the rear rainwater downpipes to store harvested water for use in the garden, particularly useful in times of drought.

8. Grey Water:

It is not proposed to collect, treat or re-use grey water.

9. Sustainable Drainage Systems:

Rainwater disposal will be to a new soakaway on site. The chalky substrate should effectively absorb rainwater run-off from the house without specialist mitigation and with little or no risk of causing flooding further downstream.

A sustainable foul drainage system is not proposed in the development.

4. WASTE AND RECYCLING

10. Audit of Re-usable materials:

The proposals are to convert an existing building, by definition effectively recycling existing materials within all retained building elements.

11. Construction and Demolition Waste:

The development involves very little demolition; any resultant waste material would be removed from site.

12. Recycled Materials:

No other materials on site are to be recycled during construction, but most of the materials would be recyclable upon eventual demolition of the new house.

13. Storage and Recycling Waste for All Users of the Site:

An area would be set aside for all waste materials used by all members of the construction team to be stored on site, namely the rear hardstanding where it is easily accessible for those who wish to recycle materials off-site, but far enough away from the entry point so as not to obstruct site access. The amount of materials available would not warrant separating them into recyclable categories.

5. POLLUTION

14. Reduction of Need to Travel; Promotion of alternative & Sustainable Modes of Transport:

Only one car parking space is proposed, accessed from Eldon Place using a widened existing vehicular access to the rear of the site. Public transport is available nearby in London Road, Eldon Road, Queen's Road and King's Road. Air pollution should not therefore be a local issue, and no mitigation measures should be necessary. In addition the proposals include providing secure bicycle storage for each flat, including lockable bespoke secure bicycle storage in the rear garden for three of the four flats, the fourth Flat A having sufficient space to store a bicycle within its entrance hall.

15. Minimising Noise Pollution:

Noise pollution resulting from vehicular manoeuvres on site would similarly not be an issue.

The two neighbouring properties would be separated from the new apartments by the existing party walls and garden walls, while noise being transmitted through door and window openings would be mitigated by their mainly facing the rear or front garden.

16. Minimising Light Pollution:

Similarly light pollution would be minimised by doors and windows generally not facing neighbouring properties. Being a domestic development with no unusual light-transmitting devices, the amount of pollution caused by light should be within acceptable norms, and little more than exists now.

6. MATERIALS**17. Low Environmental Impact Materials Retaining Local Character:**

The local vernacular consists of brick walls, often stucco rendered, and surmounted by timber-framed pitched slate roofs, and it is proposed to match these. They are of robust nature, the tiles can generally be recycled, and the brickwork provides useful hardcore on eventual demolition, presumed to be some time from now. As with all traditional forms of construction, the new building is of a loose-fit long-life characteristic. All timber may be Woodmarked or otherwise obtained from traceably sustainable sources.

7. BIODIVERSITY**18. Retention, Protection and Enhancement of Wildlife Habitats and Natural Features:**

The proposed apartments would occupy the same footprint as at present, in a line of houses along Eldon Road, a site that can be considered as brownfield development minimising its impact upon wildlife habitats. Those parts of the rear garden proposed for the parking bay, refuse and bicycle storage are currently paved in any event, and there is an existing conifer tree in the rear garden that should be unaffected by the proposals.

The site being located within Reading town centre, the impact of the new apartments upon wildlife should be minimal in any event.

4. AIR QUALITY ASSESSMENT

The above site lies within Reading's Air Quality Management Area. The result table of the local authority's diffusion tube network measures nitrogen dioxide concentrations at various locations within the borough. The nearest location to the site of the above proposed conversion shows concentrations for 2006, 2007 and 2008 of 27, 30 and 30 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ respectively.

These results were considered by those monitoring air quality at the time to be insignificant. Since then there have been no known circumstances to alter that conclusion.

Accordingly it is here considered that the small difference in number between the nine anticipated occupiers of the proposed apartments compared with the potentially greater number of eleven occupiers in the existing dwellinghouse would not significantly affect air quality; nor would they be unreasonably affected by existing air quality which, as stated above, has been demonstrated in recent years to be of acceptable standards.

Natural ventilation would therefore be by traditional means of openable windows to all habitable rooms, combined with mechanically forced air extraction from the internal wc, the first floor shower room, and the kitchen, all in accordance with Building Regulations.

No mitigating measures are considered necessary to moderate the effects of air quality, and none are proposed.

March 2019