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SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENTS

in respect of enclosing the rear parking bay
at

**30 Eldon Road
Reading
Berkshire**

Project ref: 1264
May 2022

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.28 Eldon Road [hereinafter 'No.28'], are of similar construction, except their roofs are of plain clay tiles. Both rear elevations of Nos.30 and 28, 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, including Nos. 30 and 28, most are listed buildings dating from the 1830s and 1840s and built in the Classical style for those working in the professions at that time, although Nos.24 and 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"

2. THE SITE

30 Eldon Road is a Grade II Listed semi-detached house in a line of similar mainly four-storey (including habitable basement) residential houses, most with existing two-storey rear extensions. The site is occupied by a residential dwelling.

Vehicular access onto the site is from Eldon Place, to the west of the rear garden, itself providing access via external steps to a habitable basement where a small single-storey extension has recently been completed.

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. PROPOSALS

Previous proposals to enclose the parking bays were submitted in January 2022, which included new boundary walls and nom.1.5m high gates along the boundary with Eldon Place. However, following concerns raised by the local planning authority that they might be overbearing on Eldon Place, the gates were removed from the proposals. The new walls and bin enclosure were approved and have now been built, and the current application seeks to re-introduce gates, but lowering their height to nom.1.35m in recognition of those concerns while maintaining mutual privacy for the occupiers of the site and their opposite neighbours in Eldon Place.

4. ACCESS

4.1 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.

4.2 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.

4.3 Access Points and Layout

As now, pedestrians can approach the property from the front main entrance in Eldon Road, and from the existing parking bays at the rear accessed from Eldon Place and with a pedestrian gate to the footpath leading to the rear basement entrance steps.

4.4 Maintenance of Access

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

5. DESIGN

The applicants particularly wish to raise the following points:-

“As the owners of the property located at 30 Eldon Road, RG1 4DL, we are very keen to improve the visual appearance of the rear garden of our Grade II listed building located in a conservation area.

5.1 Visual appearance

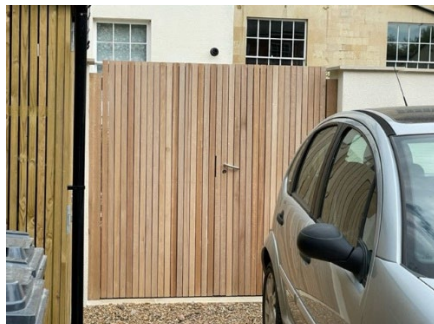
We would like to install low level folding wooden gates along the boundary line at the rear of the property.

The below photo reflects the gate style (proportions are incorrect):



The reduced height of the proposed gates (from 1.5 metres to 1.35 metres) will sit just below the height of the surrounding walls at 1.38 metres. This proposed height is much lower than neighbouring gates/walls along Eldon Place and will therefore maintain the perception of openness at the end of this no-through road. Without the gate we will be overlooked by our neighbours at 26 Eldon Place and vice versa. The gate will provide some privacy to both households and added security to our property. It will also prevent the undesirable nuisance of vehicles using our garden as a turnaround point.

We are proposing to use a good quality wooden gate (made of Iroko) with vertical slats. This will compliment the style of the gate recently installed by our adjacent neighbours at 28 Eldon Road:



Overall, we believe the external visual appearance will enhance Eldon Place and may even improve it. It is true to say that there is no specific boundary style of the properties along here. Indeed, some are not in a good state of repair and arguably may be deemed to detract from the character and overall appearance of the conservation area.

Our new garden will improve what was previously in existence. Surrounded by a bath stone wall, a dedicated bin enclosure is providing easy access for the collection crew and keep the area looking neat and tidy. All nearby residents will benefit from this.

5.2 Traffic impact

Our property is situated at the end of Eldon Place, the last but one on the left. The only traffic is generated by a single dwelling, our neighbour at 32 Eldon Road. Essentially, there is no traffic. AB Walker & Son Ltd Funerals at 36 Eldon Road also has access to Eldon Place but to the best of our knowledge has never used it. Consequently, we assert that our proposed gates will have no impact on traffic.”

Other existing gates on Eldon Place (high gates and high walls):



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 is understood to have been built before 1840 and originally formed part of the rapid expansion of Reading during the first 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 gates will match those existing elsewhere in Eldon Place.

Nos.28 and 30 are listed Grade II for their special architectural or historical interest, and the appraisal of the building by Historic England observes that they were probably designed by Henry or Nathaniel Brunt, and finished in Bath stone ashlar “with hipped slate roofing and 2 central chimneys”. Apart from the flat eaves, all of the principal architectural features that contributed to the listing occur on its exterior at the front, , namely:-

“Flat eaves, obscured in front by wide break with coved cornice in which are 2 small attic windows with marginal glazing; gulloche panels below, 2 ranges of glazing bar sash windows, tripartite arch-headed on ground floor with stone balcony and cast-iron rails. Band over ground floor. Ground floor of break channelled. Recessed round-headed porches on either side. Front garden walls project and have Eldon Square-type piers; polygonal with crested capping.”

None of these architectural features will be affected by the proposals, and no part of Historic England’s appraisal refers to the external rear enclosure of either house.

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