

7<sup>th</sup> June 2021  
Ref: JCGS/20.61/3.1

## **Heritage Statement:**

**Extension of Existing Workshop  
36 Eldon Road, Reading, RG1 4DL  
A B Walker & Sons Ltd.**

### **Proposal:**

This application seeks planning consent for works to extend an existing workshop at 36 Eldon Road, Reading, for A B Walker & Sons Ltd.

The existing workshop and adjacent store were formally used by the funeral director's monumental masons who prepared gravestones and other memorials on the premises. The monumental masons have recently been relocated to another site and following this the applicant would like to extend the existing workshop so that this can be repurposed as a coffin workshop.

The coffin workshop will be used for the preparation and storage of coffins. Prior to their use, coffins require final preparation which includes work such as the fitting of ironmongery, the addition name plaques and other accessories.

To accommodate the proposed use the existing workshop needs to be extended so that there is sufficient space for the activities to be contained within the building.

The proposed works will include extending the existing workshop to the north by 1.1m and to the west by 3.1m, increasing the internal floor space to 6.0 x 8.5m. The internal floor space will be increased from 26.4 square metres to 51.0 square metres.

Externally the existing appearance of the workshop will be replicated. The external walls will be finished with timber cladding and the roof will be of a corrugated metal roofing sheet. The overall height of the workshop will not be altered.

To accommodate the extended workshop minor alterations will be undertaken to the adjacent garage and store to relocate the entrance doors into these buildings.

### **Site Location:**

The application site is located at 36 Eldon Road.

The site sits at the corner of Eldon Road and London Road. The application site is 'L' shaped in plan and extends to the rear of Princes House toward Eldon Place.

The existing workshop that the applicant would like to extend sits in the rear portion of the site and is well screened by existing buildings within the site and surroundings, so much so that the building is not visible from any public vantage points.

## **Surroundings & Heritage Significance:**

The application site sits within the Eldon Square Conservation Area which was designated in 1972 and extended in 1982. The Conservation Area is in an urban location and comprises a dense network of street and roads of terraced, semi-detached and detached buildings. Building height is usually two, or less commonly three storeys, however there are also modern some office buildings within the Conservation Area of a greater height.

The special interest that justifies the designation of the Eldon Square Conservation Area includes the following features:

- Eldon Square, a mid 19<sup>th</sup> century planned formal town square surrounded on three sides by Bath stone semi-detached and detached buildings.
- Eldon Road, part of the formal arrangement of Eldon Square notable for a row of mid 19<sup>th</sup> century dwellings.
- Kings Road, comprising of a long row of prestigious Bath stone early 19<sup>th</sup> century residences of Classical and Italianate detailing.
- The architectural and historic interest of the area's buildings, including two grade II\* listed buildings (Watlington House and 173-183 Kings Road).
- Two churches (Wesley Methodist Church and the Polish Roman Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart of Lord Jesus) in unusually close proximity which are local landmarks.
- Cohesive architectural development of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century with contrasting middle-class and working class housing, and good examples of small mid 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced housing.
- Trees and groups of trees.
- The prevalent use of bath stone and local brick.

The application site sits at the southern edge of the Conservation Area. The existing buildings at 36 Eldon Road, the neighbouring buildings Princes House and 26 Eldon Place are not considered to be buildings of townscape merit within the Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal. The existing semi-detached building at 32-34 Eldon Road to the north of the application site are grade II listed buildings, which face toward Eldon Square, and are the only buildings of heritage significance within the immediate site surroundings.

## **Heritage Impact:**

The special interest of the Eldon Square Conservation Area largely derives from the 19<sup>th</sup> century street pattern, formal square, and the architectural character of the 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings within the locality as experienced from the public realm.

The proposed works to extend the existing workshop are modest in scale. The workshop sits in the rear portion of the site and is well screened by existing buildings within the site and surroundings, so much so that the building is not visible from any public vantage points.

The buildings on the site and within the immediate site surroundings are not considered to be of townscape merit, and whilst the existing semi-detached building at 32-34 Eldon Road is listed, the workshop sits to the rear and in no way affects the setting of this listed building.

Overall, the modest scale and siting of the proposals are such that the extended workshop will not be visible from the public realm and therefore will in no way impact on the special character of the area. The heritage impact of the proposals on the Eldon Square Conservation Area is at worst neutral and the special character of the Conservation Area will be preserved.