GREEN ROOM
GARDEN DESIGN

28 Eldon Road, Reading RG1 4DL
HERITAGE STATEMENT – rear boundary wall
August 2021

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The site is located within Eldon Square Conservation Area (ESCA) and as such, the design of the proposed development has been carefully shaped to ensure that it does not impact the significance of the setting of the heritage assets, and preserves and enhances what is important about the character and appearance of the ESCA, in accordance with Policies EN1 'Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment' and EN3 'Enhancement of Conservation Areas' of the Local Plan (2019).

1.2 It is a necessary requirement of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of any listed buildings and to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservations Areas affected by development proposals.

1.3 This is reinforced by the NPPF (2019) at Section 16, which emphasises the importance of conserving and enhancing the historic environment, though it also points out the desirability of putting heritage assets to their *"optimum viable use"*. The NPPF further emphasises the aim of "*requiring good design*" (Section 12) and it points out the importance of creating an attractive streetscape and maintaining the overall quality of the area. As such, this statement examines the historical context of the site in relation to the Conservation Area, along with the impact of the proposed development on heritage assets.

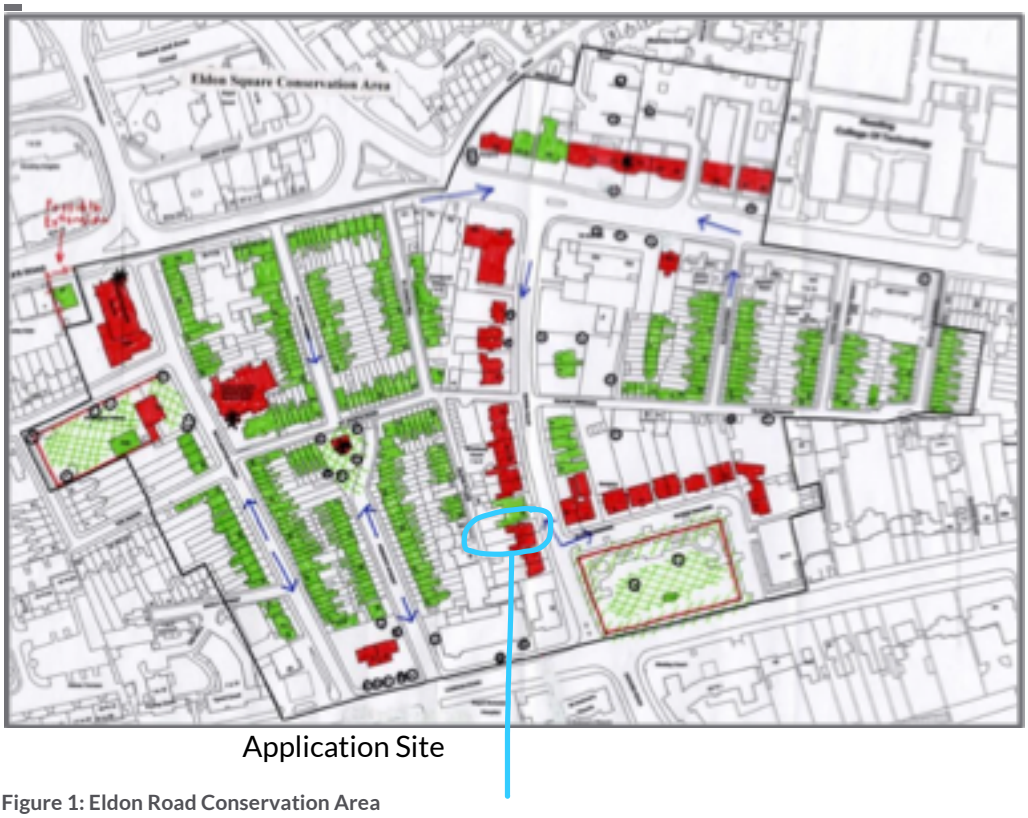

Figure 1: Eldon Road Conservation Area

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1.4 Eldon Square was designated a Conservation Area in 1972 and is set within a wholly urban location, comprising of a dense network of streets and roads of terrace, detached and semi-detached buildings.

1.5 Eldon Road is considered the north-south '*spine*' of the Conservation Area and is a major route linking King's Road and London Road. A row of Grade II Listed buildings (of which the site is one) lies on the west side of Eldon Road, whilst the east side is less intensively developed and contains both large brick and stucco 19th century buildings.

1.6 In the mid-20th century, however, the centre of Reading was redeveloped by demolishing parts of the historic core of the town to provide offices and shopping precincts.

DESCRIPTION

1.7 The application property was constructed pre-1840 and is a grade II listed building. The application site comprises a two and a half storey, with basement, semi-detached property. The pair of properties are finished in bath stone ashlar with a hipped slate roof and recessed round headed porches to each side. The properties also have ground floor stone balconies with cast-iron rails to the front elevation and small front gardens with a low stone wall with railings atop them. Both properties have rear gables set away from the boundary they share, although these are not identical and so do not seem to be original to the properties. The application property has a wider rear gable, which is 2 1⁄2 stories with basesment (like the main house) and a hipped roof. The neighbouring property has a narrower two storey, flat roof gable, with a single storey mono-pitch projection beyond. The neighbouring property also has a non-original conservatory style structure at lower ground floor level.

1.8 The application site is bounded to the west by Eldon Place, an intensively developed no-through road featuring closely set buildings of mixed architectural style, construction and age (ranging from 1800s to the present day). The buildings to the north and south of the application site are also grade II listed and feature a wide mix of boundary treatments, many not in keeping with the Eldon Road streetscene (see Figure 2) and period and style of the properties. Many are also in a poor state of repair and thus detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Figure 2: Rear boundaries to Eldon Road grade II listed properties

1.9 Set back from Eldon Place, the rear of the site and exact location of the proposed wall is not visible when approaching from the north. (Figure 3).

Figure 3: View to exact location of proposed wall from Eldon Place

1.10 Indeed, the application site is located at the end of Eldon Place, and will largely be screened by parked cars on the site and will rarely be seen by passing traffic, both vehicular and pedestrian.

Figure 4: Views of the site from Eldon Road, when approached from the north and south.

IMPACT OF APPLICATION PROPOSALS

1.11 The application proposes to erect a 1.8m high boundary wall to give privacy and security to the residents at the application site. This height matches other wall heights to the rear of the listed buildings along the west side of Eldon Road and is in comparison to some instances lower. The wall will be set back from the eastern kerbside of Eldon Place by approximately 4.5m.

1.12 The wall will be of mixed construction – rendered, blockwork walls, in a colour to match that of the building and other existing walls along the eastern side of Eldon Place. The wall will be capped with a sawn stone coping to integrate with the stone of the dwelling on the application site. Integral, double, timber gates will give security and allow access to the (main) rear entrance of the property. The design of the wall is considered within the context of the period and existing materials of the house and that of the Conservation Area and Listed Building surrounding the site, and will provide visible enhancement to the property and surrounding areas.

1.13 The proposal would not appear out of place in relation to the prevailing heights and detailing of the surrounding buildings and owing to its distinct and high-quality design and choice of materials, would certainly not add to the negative cumulative impact that Eldon Place as a whole has on the Conservation Area.

1.14 As such, it is considered that the design of the proposal will have no impact upon the character and appearance of the area, thus meeting the statutory requirement of Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.