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SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENTS

in respect of internal alterations and a single-storey rear extension
at

**30 Eldon Road
Reading
Berkshire**

Project ref: 1264
Revised February 2020

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"

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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 currently considered to be a residential dwelling. The main entrance is separated from the public pavement in Eldon Road by a planted front area and paved path.

Vehicular access onto the site is from Eldon Place, to the west of the rear garden, itself providing access via external steps to an existing single-storey conservatory and the habitable basement beyond. The existing accommodation has been assessed as residential use. Currently there are five main bedrooms and a rear study/bedroom, with basement kitchen and lounge and a ground floor lounge and dining room, with sanitary facilities at all four floor levels.

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

The current application is for internal alterations to provide a second floor wc, a first floor and a kitchenette for lodgers and to form a shower within the existing basement wc; and for the construction of a single-storey rear basement extension to enlarge the existing kitchen there, along with forming an external veranda.

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.

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4.3 Access Points and Layout

As now, the property will be approached from the main entrance in Eldon Road, to the front of the property, but there is an existing parking area at the rear accessed from Eldon Place and with a pedestrian gate to a footpath leading to the new extension by using and upgrading the existing rear garden.

4.4 Maintenance of Access

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

5. DESIGN

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

5.2 To provide good quality accommodation in keeping with the residential nature of the surrounding Conservation Area and maintaining the character of the Listed Building;

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

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

5.5 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.

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 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.

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 interior of either house.