

Heritage Statement 59 Watlington Street Reading

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced. This will include:

□ Listed Buildings; □ Conservation Areas; □ Scheduled Monuments; □ Historic parks and gardens; and □ Other features with local or national significance, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and assets on the Local List.

EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

The special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Positive consideration will be given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas. These may include:

□ Reducing visual clutter caused by negative factors, such as poles and overhead wires, satellite dishes or unnecessary street furniture; □ Restoring original building features; □ Removing inappropriate additions or alterations to buildings; □ Protecting and encouraging the maintenance of green spaces and important trees, particularly where they are intrinsic to the history and character of the area; □ Improving signage and street furniture; □ Restoring or re-establishing appropriate paving, railings or walls; □ Sympathetic landscaping and planting; □ Improving or restoring green spaces, including front gardens, that are appropriate to the historic interest of a Conservation Area; □ Signage that reveals and promotes the Conservation Area and its boundaries; □ Interpretation panels to inform the public of the area's historical significance.

This Policy states that Planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets & their settings. All proposals will be expected to protect & where appropriate enhance the character & appearance of the area in which they are located. Any development in the Conservation area will be expected to make a contribution to the area by respecting & enhancing its architectural & visual qualities & achieving a high standard of design. The Council will therefore have regard to both the quality of the townscape & the quality & interest of the area, rather than solely that of the individual building.

The Watlington Street area appraisal.

Within the character areas, Watlington Street comes within Area 2.

Area 2: Terraced streets west of Eldon Road i.e. Watlington Street, St John's Street, St John's Road, St John's Hill, Prince's Street, Eldon Place, Queen's Road (south)

This character area is predominantly residential with some houses in multiple occupation. There are five shops (two currently empty, October 2005), two places of worship and three public houses. A petrol station and shop serves London Road at the south end of Watlington Street. The Oval, a detached building located in the centre of the linear street pattern, is the focal point of St John's Street.

Watlington Street is the primary street within this character area with larger scale development than can be found in the adjacent streets to the east. Its street frontage of short rows of two- and three-storey houses is punctuated by two significant places of worship and Watlington House, a 17th century clothier's mansion, now offices. The southern end of Watlington Street is flanked by nos 71/73 London Road, a grade II listed 3 storey stucco house, and a single storey modern petrol station and shop. The west side of the street

The Conservation Studio

Reading Borough Council – Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal contains short rows of predominantly three-storeys, for instance nos 60-68 and nos 74-78. Both are brick, the latter has stucco window and door surrounds.

The other side-streets in this area are narrower and have a more intimate feel than Watlington Street. Two storeys is the norm. St John's Street, St John's Road, St John's Hill, Prince's Street and Eldon Place are characterized by short rows of modest two-storey terraced housing, typical of working class housing built to accommodate Reading's expansion in the mid/late 19th century

Within the character areas, Watlington Street comes within Area 2.

Character Area 2: Features that make a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the conservation area:

- Two grade II listed churches with landmark quality spires; • Trees in front of Watlington House soften the urban landscape; • Open space to rear of Watlington House is a valuable 'breathing space' within the town; • Old brick and flint boundary wall (grade II) to curtilage of Watlington House (grade II*); • Variety of terraced houses; • 19th century street pattern typical of Reading; • Vestiges of a mid 19th century planned formal layout around The Oval (grade II) and Prince's Street; • Historic stone kerbs and gulleys; • Areas of historic setts in Eldon Place and St John's Street; • Historic lamp posts in Prince's Street; • Lively roofscape of brick chimneys and clay pots.

Character Area 2: Features that have a negative impact on the historic character and appearance of the conservation area:

- Modern petrol station is completely out of character with the historic street; • Litter and rubbish on the street and in front gardens is unsightly; • Car parking in front of Watlington House detracts from the setting of the building; • Loss of front gardens for car parking e.g. no 80 Watlington Street; • Loss of original windows and front doors to modern replacements; • Loss of original slate roofs and other architectural features such as gates, railings and boundary walls; • Wheelie bins on pavement; • Front boundary fence to The Oval is inappropriate to the quality of the listed building; • Boarded up shop at 102 London Road; • The addition of porches e.g. no. 19 St John's Street; • Intrusive traffic noise from London Road and Queen's Road.

1.2.0 The building and its surroundings

The application site comprises a two storey end town house covered in a modern interlocking concrete tiled roof. It is sited next door to the Polish Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart on the east side of Watlington Street.

The site is within the Eldon Square Conservation Area, with several Listed Buildings in the vicinity. This part of the conservation area is adequately described in the Appraisal (2007):

“Area 2: Terraced streets west of Eldon Road i.e. Watlington Street, St John’s Street, St. John’s Road, St John’s Hill, Prince’s Street, Eldon Place, Queen’s Road (south). This character area is predominantly residential with some houses in multiple occupation. There are five shops (two currently empty, October 2005), two places of worship and three public houses. A petrol station and shop serves London Road at the south end of Watlington Street. The Oval, a detached building located in the centre of the linear street pattern, is the focal point of St John’s Street.

Watlington Street is the primary street within this character area with larger scale development than can be found in the adjacent streets to the east. Its street frontage of short rows of two- and three-storey houses is punctuated by two significant places of worship and Watlington House, a 17th century clothier’s mansion, now offices. The southern end of Watlington Street is flanked by nos 71/73 London Road, a grade II listed 3 storey stucco house, and a single storey modern petrol station and shop. The west side of the street contains short rows of predominantly three-storeys, for instance nos 60-68 and nos 74-78. Both are brick, the latter has stucco window and door surrounds.”

All the buildings are unlisted along Watlington Street. The site is also within an Air Quality Management Area. The surrounding area contains a mix of uses, albeit it is predominantly residential with a combination of single dwelling houses and converted flats/HMOs.

1.3.0 The Proposal

The proposal consists the demolition of the substandard rear single storey extension & the construction of a new two storey/single storey rear addition.

The replacement of the roof structure, which is defective, the recovering of this roof in natural slates. The reconstruction of the front elevation in a red facing brick (TBA) & the addition of painted timber sliding sash windows set back approx. 100mm over reconstituted stone sills.

The existing chimney stack is to be refurbished.

The existing chimney stack is to be extended.

The proposal seeks to considerably improve the quality of the building in both its appearance & quality of material proposed which in turn will enhance the setting of the Listed Church Building.

It also now provides for a good quality family home.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Keen', is positioned on the left side of the page. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Chris Keen