

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

PLANNING DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed: Demolition of existing Garages and erection of 2 x two bedroom and 1 x one bedroom terraced houses with associated amenity space and vehicular access to a parking area.

At: Land to the rear of 17 Eldon Square, Reading, RG14DP

On behalf of: Mr & Mrs S Huntridge

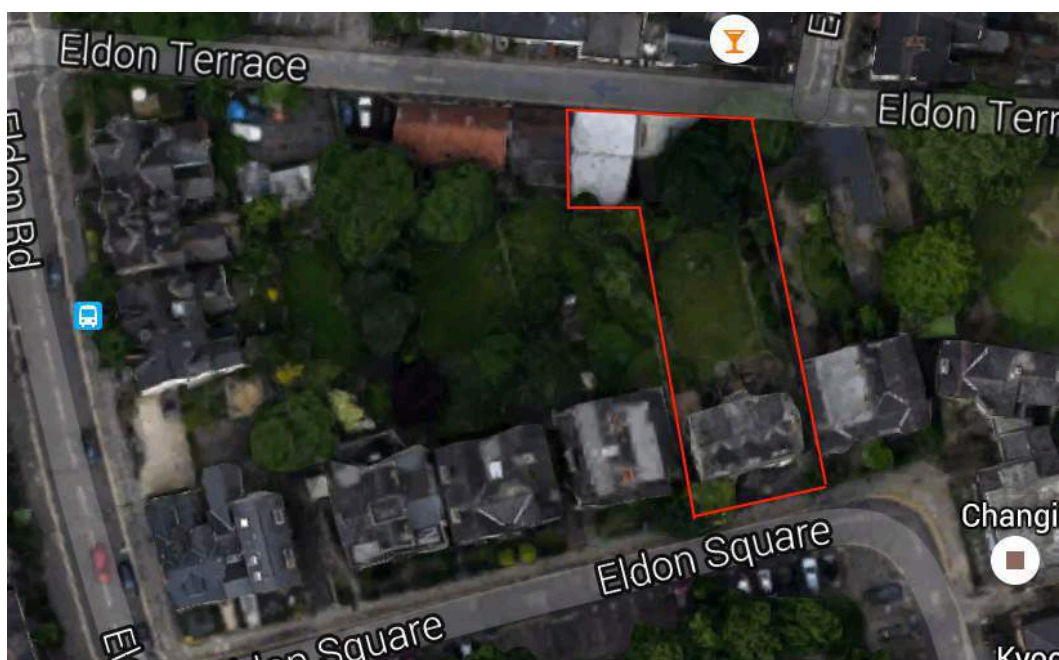


1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report accompanies a full planning application for the demolition of existing garages and erection of 2 x two bedroom and 1 x one bedroom terraced houses with associated amenity space and vehicular access to a parking area. The application, which is submitted on behalf of Mr and Mrs S Huntridge follows the submission of an application for pre-application advice with subsequent follow-up meeting with the planning officer under reference 60442/PREAPP.
- 1.2 The following report examines the merits of the application in planning, design and access terms.

2.0 Site Description

- 2.1 The application site consists of garage buildings and part of the rear garden to the rear of 17 Eldon Square. 17 Eldon Square, a grade II listed building, is a four storey Edwardian Villa located within the Eldon Square Conservation Area. The main building has been converted into 5 flats. The basement forms a separate flat under separate ownership. The 2 x detached garage buildings are located to the rear of the site and take its access from Eldon Terrace to the north. The building to the rear of 17 Eldon Terrace provides 4 x car parking spaces and secure cycle storage to the serve the flats within 17 Eldon Square. A location plan and photographs of the site and surroundings are attached below:





The garages proposed for demolition





Adjacent protected lime trees (above)
Rear elevation of 17 Eldon Square (Below)





Rear of numbers 15 and 17 Eldon Square
Front elevation of 17 Eldon Square





Front of 17 Eldon Square



Recent Mews development at land to the rear of 8 Eldon Square



3.0 Relevant Planning History

3.1 Pre-application **60442/PREAPP** for the Proposed demolition of existing garages and erection of 2 x two bedroom and 1 x one bedroom terraced houses with associated amenity space and vehicular access to a parking area. The summary of the pre-app response attached as Appendix 1 was as follows:

- In itself, the replacement row and general form of the three terraced properties proposed is considered to appear in keeping with the character of Eldon Terrace and, in my opinion, would enhance the appearance of the this part of the Eldon Terrace streetscene within the Conservation Area when compare with the existing flat roof garages.
- the proposed undercroft access to the rear of the site is not a characteristic of the street (as described in the CA Appraisal) and will introduce a 'hole' in the frontage, where there ought to be enclosure. Furthermore, I have significant concerns regarding the extensive area of hardstanding proposed to the rear of the site and within the undercroft which would contain the proposed turning area and car parking spaces. In my opinion this would be an overdevelopment and contain an unnecessary and harmful amount of hard surfacing.
- The siting of the block would also significantly reduce the depth of the rear curtilage of No. 17 relative to that of the adjacent listed buildings on this part of Eldon Square and would appear be out of keeping with the open and green character of the large rear gardens of the properties along Eldon Square.
- The siting of the proposal and its scale is such that it would be unlikely to result in any loss of daylight or overbearing impact to surrounding properties.
- Proposed dwelling No. 3 would be sited around 7m from the closest rear boundary of the site with the rear garden of no. 15 Eldon Square. In my opinion, this separation is insufficient such that it would result in overlooking and loss of privacy from the proposed first floor rear window and rear dormer roof space balcony/window of this property to the private rear amenity space of No. 15, harmful to the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers and contrary to Policies DM4 and DM11 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (2015).
- Whilst the proposed dwellings would retain a separation I have concerns regarding the 13m separation with the proposed rear site boundary with the rear garden of no. 17 Eldon Square. This distance is insufficient such that it would result in overlooking and loss of privacy from the proposed rear dormer balcony/window of proposed dwellings Nos. 1 and 2 to the private rear amenity space of these neighbouring occupiers as well as overlooking to the rear amenity space of No. 15, contrary to Policies DM4 and DM11 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2015).
- The plans are not clear, but the proposed bedrooms appear suitably sized, however I have concerns regarding the small size of the roof space level combined dining/kitchen/living spaces to houses 1 and 2, which in my opinion appear very small and cramped. In consideration of any planning application, officers would look to the (National) Technical Housing Standards for room sizes and the Council's SPD on Residential Conversions, but on the basis of the information supplied, the space would appear to fail to provide an adequate standard of residential accommodation, contrary to Policy DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, amended 2015). Outlooks to the front of the building are

to bedrooms and have minimal set back from the pavement, this is a poor relationship for a new-build and would compound the feeling of being hemmed in from the front and rear and the general sense of overdevelopment.

- Policy DM10 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (2015) recommends the following size guidelines for amenity space for dwellings outside of central Reading states that useable private amenity space should be no less than the gross floor area of the dwelling to which it relates. From the submitted plans it appears that there would only be useable private amenity space (together with proposed balcony) for proposed dwellings 1 and 2 which would be below the recommended size guidelines, whilst proposed dwelling 3 would not incorporate any private amenity space (aside from proposed balcony). I do not consider this an acceptable provision of amenity space which I consider would be out of keeping with the character of the conservation area and even the modest gardens properties in Eldon Terrace and Eldon Street, contrary to DM10.
- There are no trees on site subject to a Tree Preservation Order, however, trees in a conservation area enjoy protected status and there are existing trees which would be affected by the proposal. The proposal would require the removal of 2 Sycamore trees at No. 17, the principle of which has been accepted previously on the basis that replacement tree planting is provided. There is also a group of Lime trees growing in a raised bed at 19 Eldon Square, whose roots are unlikely to be disturbed but the proximity of the closest dwelling to the canopy of the trees would require a crown reduction and ongoing further crown reduction works to maintain a healthy relationship between the trees and the house. This is a further indication of the overdevelopment of the site within the conservation area, where if the development were to be built as shown, there is likely to be pressure from residents to prune back the tree canopies, unnecessarily reducing their contribution to the conservation area and causing conflict with policies CS33 and CS38. Further, the cramped nature of the proposal would allow very limited opportunities for meaningful landscaping.
- The proposed parking layout represents an improvement to the existing parking layout given that the cars could enter the site, turn and exit the site in a forward gear. However, parking space 7 does not appear very accessible and tracking diagrams should be submitted to demonstrate that vehicles can enter and exit the space in order to count into the on-site provision.

A subsequent follow up meeting was held between the applicant and agent following the issue of the pre-application advice. It was recognised at this meeting that a future application for redevelopment of this site would offer an opportunity to replace buildings which were of limited value to the Conservation Area. The planning officer advised that the key to a successful scheme would be the setting of the listed building. A strong concern was raised in terms of the extensive hardstanding and loss of garden area to the flats which was considered to represent an incongruous addition to the locality. The applicant was encouraged to consider a scheme with reduced hardstanding.

- Pre-application **11/01043/PREAPP** for the Demolition of garage and erection of a pair of semi-detached houses. This proposal involved a smaller site area. The

applicant has since purchased the adjoining garage which is included within this proposal. The summary of the pre-app response was as follows:-

- The design of the houses and the replacement of the existing garage could enhance the appearance of the conservation area.
- The houses could significantly overlook properties to the rear in Eldon Square.
- inadequate amount of amenity space is proposed.
- The houses are too close to the Lime trees and would place undue pressure on them for their subsequent removal.

• The internal garages are too small to be considered as parking spaces.
121219 - Change of use of therapeutic centre to 4 x 1 bed flats and 1 x 2 bed flat with associated parking, secure cycle storage and amenity area.
APPROVED AND IMPLEMENTED

4.0 Relevant Planning Policies

National Planning Policy

- 4.1 On 27th March 2012 the Government published the National Planning Policy Framework which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It states that Planning Law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 4.2 The cornerstone of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF sets out the three dimensions to sustainable development which are:-

An economic role - contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at a right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and co-ordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

A social role- supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the communities needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

An environmental role - contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

- 4.3 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which it states should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision taking. For decision taking this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay.
- 4.4 Paragraph 49 of the NPPF states that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development
- 4.5 The NPPF foster a positive approach to decision taking. It states in paragraph 186 that Local Authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. The relationship between decision-taking and plan-making should be seamless, translating plans into high quality development on the ground. Paragraph 187 goes on to state that Local planning Authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Local authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.
- 4.6 At paragraph 131, the NPPF states that in determining planning applications. Local authorities should take account of:-
- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 4.7 Furthermore, paragraph 134 states that where a development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

Local Planning Policy

- 4.8 The development plan comprises of The Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2008); Reading Borough Council Local Development Framework: Sites and Detailed Policies Document (SDPD) and Supplementary planning guidance contained within the Council's Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD, Revised SPD on Planning Obligations Under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (2013) and the Council's Affordable Housing SPD (2013). The following policies are considered to be of relevance:
- Core Strategy**
- CS1 (Sustainable Design and Construction)
 - CS2 (Waste Minimisation)
 - CS4 (Accessibility and Intensity of Development)
 - CS5 (Inclusive Design)

CS7 (Design in the Public Realm)
CS9 (Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities)
CS15(Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix)
CS20(Implementation of Reading's Transport Strategy)
CS24(Car/cycle parking)
CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

Sites and Detailed Policies SDPD

SD1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development)
DM3 (Infrastructure Planning)
DM4 (Safeguarding Amenities)
DM6 (Affordable Housing)
DM10(Private and Communal Outdoor Space)
DM12(Access, Traffic and Highway-related matters)

5.0 The Application Proposal

- 5.1 The application seeks planning permission for the demolition of existing Garage and erection of 2 x two bedroom and 1 x one bedroom terraced houses with associated amenity space and vehicular access to a parking area. The scheme differs from that which was previously considered under the pre-application process in that the extent of the hardstanding has been significantly reduced. Secure cycle storage is included for the frontage flats and three proposed units. The internal floorplans have been amended to meet the requirements of the National Space Standards.
- 5.2 Discussions have also been carried out with the neighbour at 15 Eldon Square. The application is submitted with a separate application for the redevelopment of the adjoining garage to enable a comprehensive redevelopment of the area.

6.0 PRINCIPAL ISSUES

Principle of Development

- 6.1 The application site is located in within the built-up limits of Reading where there is no objection in principle to the subdivision of a property subject to compliance with all other policies contained within the Development Plan.

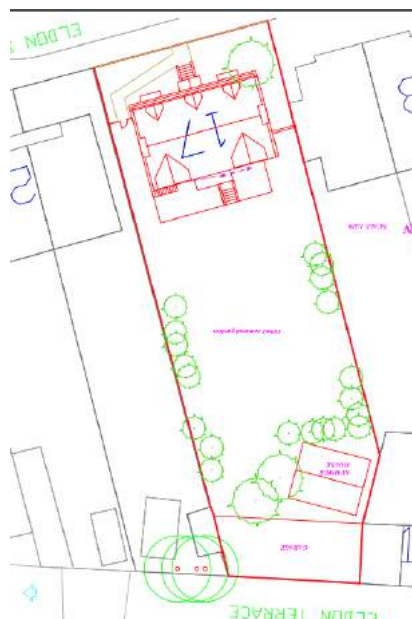
Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

- 6.2 The NPPF at paragraph 131 states that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. Furthermore Policy CS33 of the adopted Core Strategy requires that Planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. The existing garage buildings are of little architectural merit and are not

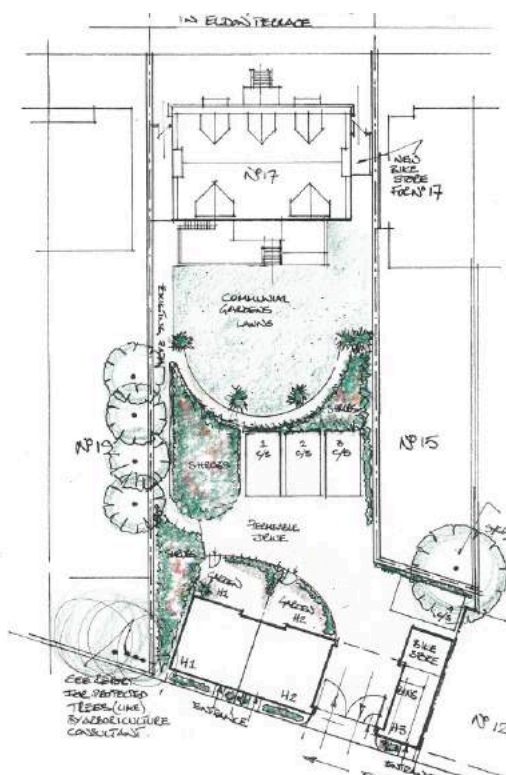
considered to contribute to the character of the conservation area. The demolition of the garage was previously supported in the Council's previous pre-app response which states:-

"In itself, the replacement row and general form of the three terraced properties proposed is considered to appear in keeping with the character of Eldon Terrace and, in my opinion, would enhance the appearance of the this part of the Eldon Terrace streetscene within the Conservation Area when compare with the existing flat roof garages. "

- 6.3 The applicant considers that the comprehensive redevelopment of the garages on the application site (and the adjacent site at Number 15 submitted under a separate planning application), would serve to enhance the character and appearance of the Eldon Square Conservation Area. The building has been designed in a traditional style with a mansard roof and chimney stacks and it is intended to use high quality materials to conserve and enhance the character of the Eldon Square Conservation Area. The dwellings would be subordinate in scale to the frontage building at Eldon Square and would respect the scale of development within Eldon Terrace to the rear. Concerns were originally raised in terms of the extent of the hardstanding proposed to the rear of the proposed building. Given that the existing car parking within the existing garage is under-utilised by the tenants of the flats, the applicant has reduced the area of hardstanding and proposed parking. The justification for the car parking layout is addressed in the parking and highways section below. The proposed layout offers the opportunity to retain a similar level of soft landscaped area over that which currently exists. The two houses would be served with a private amenity space directly the rear and an area of soft landscaping proposed alongside the boundary with Number 19 Eldon Square. The Main Villa fronting Eldon Square would retain a large lawned area for communal use by the occupants of the flats which would respect the setting of this Villa. With the removal of the summer house and garages, the communal amenity space provision to the frontage flats would remain of a similar scale to that which currently exists. The siting of the block would not significantly reduce the depth of the rear curtilage of No. 17 and would appear be in keeping with the open and green character of the large rear gardens of the properties along Eldon Square. A copy of the existing and proposed site layout indicates the extent of the soft landscaping and retained open gardens area below:



Existing Layout (above)
Proposed layout (below)



- 6.4 The poor- quality garaging which is considered an eyesore within the Conservation Area, would be replaced by a sympathetic terrace of houses, built from stone (which could be agreed by condition) which would enhance the character of this part of the Conservation Area. The terrace would be set back from the road frontage, in line with the nearby mews houses, which allows for an opportunity to include landscaping to the front which would serve to soften the front elevation. The undercroft would be entirely appropriate and take cues from a traditional coach-house, whilst providing an improvement to the existing access/egress to vehicles. A copy of the proposed street scene is attached below which demonstrates the sympathetic nature of proposed the development:



- 6.5 In summary, the proposal is considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Eldon Square Conservation Area and the setting of the host listed building in accordance with the advice contained within the NPPF, Policies CS33 and CS7 of the Core Strategy 2011 (2015) and Policy DM11 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (2015).

AMENITY

- 6.6 A separation distance of 22m would be achieved between the rear wall of the proposed dwellings and the frontage buildings in Eldon Square. This separation distance is considered to protect the residential amenities of occupants of both the proposed dwellings and occupants of nearby residential properties. The planning officer in the pre-application report confirms that:

“The siting of the proposal and its scale is such that it would be unlikely to result in any loss of daylight or overbearing impact to surrounding properties. “

- 6.7 The planning officer, in the pre-app response raised some concerns about the proximity of the first and second floor windows to the rear boundaries of the garden areas to the

frontage properties at both numbers 17 and 15 Eldon Square resulting in a loss of privacy to the private rear garden areas of these properties. The current scheme indicates a revised layout the parking and communal garden area. The occupants of the proposed 3 dwellings would enjoy use of the communal garden area to the rear of Number 17. Given the degree of separation between the proposed first floor and roof windows in the new dwellings and the rear elevation of number 15, with the intervening Sycamore Tree, the siting of the proposed dwellings would not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity to the occupants of Number 15 Eldon Square. Indeed a similar separation distance has been supported by the Council at the nearby Mews houses built to the rear of 8 Eldon Square.

- 6.8 The proposed dwellings would adhere to the national space standards providing an acceptable living environment to the future occupants of the flats. The internal layout has been amended to provide a larger living/kitchen area to the units to address the planning officers concerns raised at the pre-application stage. The proposed two bedroom units would each be provided with a private garden area at ground floor level and each of the properties would be provided with a terrace, enclosed on each side within the mansard roof. The future occupants of the three properties would also enjoy access to the communal garden area to the rear of 17 Eldon Square and are further able to use the public park/gardens to the front of 17 Eldon Square.
- 6.9 In summary, the proposal is considered to provide an acceptable level of residential amenity to the future occupants of the proposed dwellings. Furthermore, the proposal would not result in an unneighbourly form of development to the occupants of nearby residential properties. As such the proposal would comply with policies DM4 and DM10 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (2015) and Policy CS10 of the Core Strategy 2011 (2015).

Trees

- 6.10 There are a number of Lime trees growing close together adjacent to/overhanging the site. One of these trees is subject to a TPO and the other Limes are considered to be of significant amenity value to Eldon Terrace. Core Strategy Policy CS38 requires that significant trees will be protected and safeguarded from new development. These trees have current protection being within the Eldon Square Conservation Area.
- 6.11 The application is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Survey in accordance with BS 5837: 2012. The report confirms that the principal arboricultural features within the site can be retained and adequately protected during development activities and that subject to precautionary measures as detailed above, the proposal will not be injurious to trees to be retained. As such the proposal would not harm the protected trees in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF and Policy CS38 of the adopted Core Strategy.

Highways and Parking

- 6.12 Eldon Terrace is a one-way system running from east to west. Eldon Terrace is located in an area designated as a Residents Parking Permit Area Zone 11R where there is

significant pressure for on-street parking due to a shortage of on-street residents' parking bays.

- 6.13 The site is located in Zone 2, Primary Core Area, of the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD. This zone directly surrounds the Central Core Area and extends to walking distances of 2 kilometres from the centre of Reading. This zone is very well served by public transport, with buses continuing either into or out of the Central Core Area via this zone.
- 6.14 The application site currently provides 4 x parking spaces within the garage to serve the occupants of the flats within the frontage building. These spaces are accessed via a slow-moving roller shutter door onto Eldon Terrace with restricted visibility. When planning permission was granted for the frontage flats, a condition was imposed restricting the right of the occupants to the right of applying for a parking permit.
- 6.15 The applicant has advised that the existing parking within the garage is under-utilised for the parking of cars. The garage building is utilised for occasional parking of 1 -2 cars, but primarily used for the secure storage of bicycles. The current proposal application proposes a sensible parking layout for the occupants of the frontage flats and the proposed three dwellings. Two of the 4 spaces would be allocated to the occupants of the frontage flats with the remaining 2 spaces being allocated to house numbers 1 and 2. Secure cycle storage would be provided to the side of 17 Eldon Square in a more convenient location for the occupants, with a second secure bicycle store being provided for the occupants of the proposed three dwellings to the rear.
- 6.16 The applicant considers that the proposed parking layout would represent an improvement to that which currently exists. The planning officer in the previous pre-application report confirms that the proposed parking layout represents an improvement to the existing parking layout given that the cars could enter the site, turn and exit the site in a forward gear. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Core Strategy Policy CS24 and LDF SDPD Policy DM12.

Affordable Housing and CIL

- 6.17 The applicant acknowledges that the council has an adopted Policy DM6: Affordable Housing of the Sites and Detailed Policies Documents which sets out that, '...on sites of 1-4 dwellings, a financial contribution will be made that will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough.' The Heads of Terms will be submitted throughout the course of the application with the applicant agreeing to the payment of fees for the preparation and completion of the S106 agreement to secure the payment. In addition, a CIL form is submitted with the application to confirm liability of the CIL payment.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The applicant considers that the principle of development is acceptable in accordance with National Planning policies and the Development Plan. The proposal will represent a sympathetic form of development which would enhance the character of the Eldon Square Conservation Area and would not detract from the setting of the nearby listed buildings. The proposed development would not result in a loss of residential amenity to the occupants of nearby residential dwellings and would provide an acceptable living environments to the future occupants of the proposed dwellings. It is considered that the proposal would not lead to an increased demand for parking within the locality and would protect the long terms health and vitality of the nearby protected lime trees. The proposal would result in the provision of three modest dwellings will make a positive contribution to the local housing supply, in a sustainable location which help to preserve green fields as encouraged by Government Guidance contained within the NPPF.
- 7.2 The proposal complies with the development plan policies and supplementary Planning Guidance. The proposal is also in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework which encourages Local Planning Authorities to approach decisions positively, looking for solutions rather than problems so that applications can be approved wherever it is practicable to do so. In light of this, the Council is respectfully requested to **approve** the application.