

HERITAGE STATEMENT FOR PL/26/0994

Planning Application Supporting Document | Reading Borough Council

Site Address: 8 Surley Row, Reading, RG4 8LY

Local Planning Authority: Reading Borough Council

Heritage Asset Context: Surley Row Conservation Area

Reference Document: Surley Row Conservation Area Appraisal 2010

Proposal Scope: Construction of a brick refuse bin screening enclosure with structural wall returns to support historic boundary wall and a small single-storey lean-to extension to the south-east elevation of the existing garage.

1. Introduction and Site Context

1.1 This Heritage Statement supports a householder planning application for 8 Surley Row, Reading (RG4 8LY), evaluating the significance of the local heritage asset and demonstrating compliance with Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local planning policies set out by Reading Borough Council.

1.2 8 Surley Row is a historic mid-terrace townhouse dating from about 1750, situated on the east side of Surley Row within the designated Surley Row Conservation Area.

1.3 The domestic curtilage of No. 8 includes a dedicated outbuilding parcel situated across the lane on the west side of Surley Row. This western plot accommodates the property's existing garage, wheelie bins, additional refuse and recycling. It forms part of the historic red brick boundary wall lining the western edge of the lane. All proposed developments under this application are situated on this western parcel.

1.4 While there are Grade II listed properties within the wider Conservation Area, these are situated at a distance and are completely out of sight of the application plot. As there is no visual or physical intervisibility between the proposed works and any listed structures, the proposal will have no impact on the immediate setting of surrounding listed assets.

2. Assessment of Heritage Significance and Functional Need

2.1 The Surley Row Conservation Area: The special interest of Surley Row lies in its linear, rural lane setting, defined by tall historic brick boundary walls, red brick building walls forming part of the boundary, established hedgerows, and a mix of historic period cottages and domestic outbuildings (as described in the Surley Row Conservation Area Appraisal 2010).

2.2 Functional Constraints of the Townhouse: As a mid-terrace townhouse constructed about 1750, 8 Surley Row was built without a side passage access or depth within its

immediate eastern frontage to store modern domestic refuse and recycling containers out of public view. The western parcel currently contains five, brightly coloured wheelie bins and accompanying waste and recycling. Creating a concealed masonry enclosure provides an elegant, long-term solution to the historic spatial constraint of a mid-terrace Georgian townhouse. Moreover, particularly on the eastern side of the lane, brick buildings abut the lane boundary.

2.3 The Historic West Boundary Wall and Returns: The tall red brick boundary wall along the western side of Surley Row is a key defining feature of the streetscape, incorporating a number of historical right-angled returns or buttresses that provide lateral stability and strong architectural lines. The historical three metre wall on the boundary of the western part of 8 Surley Row is unsupported and potentially at risk of collapse.

2.4 Existing Built Form: The western plot currently features a traditional, handmade brick and tiled garage with timber windows. Modest, subservient lean-to additions are a long-established feature of domestic outbuilding plots along Surley Row. This lean-to addition is set back over twelve metres behind the boundary wall.

3. Proposed Development and Design Rationale

Element A: Existing Refuse and Recycling Bin Area Screening Enclosure

Functional Purpose: Permanently screens the existing five modern domestic containers from public view along Surley Row. Currently the five, council issued wheelie bins and additional waste and recycling are on public view.

Structural Integration: The side walls of the enclosure are designed as right-angled returns that terminate at and tie into the historic west boundary wall and protect the historic wall from possible collapse.

Synergy with Historic Fabric: These return walls consciously replicate the alignment, geometry, and structural purpose of the existing historic returns along the wall, acting as stabilizing buttresses to provide valuable lateral support to the historic masonry.

Element B: Single-Storey Lean-To Extension (South-East Elevation of Garage)

Scale and Form: A modest three square metre lean-to extension attached to the south-east elevation of the existing garage over twelve metres behind the boundary wall.

Design and Subservience: Adopts a low-profile lean-to form that sits subserviently against the existing garage structure, ensuring it remains unobtrusive and scale-appropriate.

4. Materials and Craftsmanship

Bespoke Handmade Bricks: All new facing masonry—for both the bin screening enclosure and the walls and plinth of the lean-to extension—will utilize high-quality,

bespoke handmade bricks. Bricks will be carefully selected to match the module size, colour variation, surface texture, and appearance of the existing historic brickwork. This includes imperial bricks to match the historic wall which is probably nineteenth century.

Custom Mortar and Jointing: The mortar mix, colour, pointing style and brick bonding will match the existing brickwork, ensuring a seamless visual transition between the new returns, the extension, and the historic wall.

5. Assessment of Impact and Conclusion

5.1 Concealing the existing five brightly coloured, plastic wheelie bins and additional waste and recycling behind matching handmade brickwork directly enhances the visual amenity and reduces modern clutter of the Conservation Area, resolving the functional storage challenges of the Georgian townhouse at 8 Surley Row. Furthermore, utilizing right-angled return walls provides physical stabilization to the historic western boundary wall.

5.2 The lean-to nature of the small side extension, set back more than twelve metres behind the boundary wall with the public lane, reflects the rural lane topography and enhances the agricultural feel of the organically evolved rural streetscape described in the 2010 Surley Row Conservation Area Appraisal.

5.3 The proposed works represent a thoughtful, high-quality, and sympathetic enhancement to Surley Row, fully complying with Section 16 of the NPPF and Reading Borough Council's local heritage policies.