

## APPEAL DECISION REPORT

Ward: ABBEY

Appeal No: APP/E0345/W/20/3250572

Application Ref: 191097

Address: 173-177 Kings Road, Reading

Proposal: Erection of a 3 storey building to provide 6 (6x2-bed) residential units (Class C3), parking, landscaping and associated works.

Case officer: Claire Ringwood

Decision level: Delegated. Refused 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Method: Hearing. Decision: Appeal dismissed

Date Determined: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Inspector: Jonathan Edwards BSc (hons) DipTP MRTPI

### 1. Background

1.1 The site is located to the rear of mid-terrace Grade II\* listed buildings at 173-175 and 177 Kings Road which is also within the Eldon Square Conservation Area. The site is currently used as car parking for the flats at 173-175 and 177 Kings Road and there is a large TPO Plane tree within the grounds. A previous planning application has been refused on the same site (application ref: 180795) which was for the erection of a 5 storey building to provide 9 (1x1, 6x2 & 2x3-bed) residential units (Class C3), parking, landscaping and associated works. The grounds for refusal of application 191097 referred to 1) the detrimental impact on the setting of the listed buildings and conservation area; 2) the design was not of high enough quality to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the of the conservation area; 3) visual dominance, overbearing and harm to outlook for the residents of the lower ground floor flat at 177 Kings Road; 4) the internal layout failed to provide an appropriate level of amenity for future residents; 5) failure to demonstrate adequate parking, cycle and bin storage; and 6) no S106 for affordable housing.

1.2 During the course of the appeal the appellant submitted amended floor plans relating to reason for refusal 4 and provided additional information relating to reason for refusal 5 above. Officers were satisfied that the points within these reasons for refusal had been addressed and the reasons for refusal were withdrawn.

### 2 Summary of the decision

2.1 The Inspector considered the main issues to be:

- Whether the development would enhance or preserve the character or appearance of Eldon Square Conservation Area and its effects on the setting and significance of the Grade II\* listed buildings;
- The effect on the living conditions of occupiers of the lower ground floor flat at 177 Kings Road; and
- Whether an appropriate contribution towards affordable housing is proposed.

2.2 On the first issue the Inspector found that although the proposed development would not be visible from the front of 173-175 and 177 Kings Road it would be clearly seen from certain vantage points at the rear. Although not as ornate as the Kings Road frontages the Inspector stated “the listed buildings significance can be appreciated to a degree from the rear” and “although the proposal would be separate from and lower than the listed buildings it would be a sizeable 3 storey building and the screening effect of the development would diminish the appreciation of the listed buildings”. The Inspector also stated that the proposed materials “would fail to respect the quality of detailing seen in the exterior of the listed

buildings” and “given the contrast in appearance as well as its size and proximity, the proposal would draw the eye away from the listed buildings and would detract from their appearance”. The Inspector also commented that “the open nature of the car park suggests its previous use as gardens...but the development would reduce the openness of the site”. The Inspector considered this harmful effect would be significant given the size of the proposed development.

2.3 On the second issue the Inspector found that “the main window serving the flat is below the level of the car park but looks out onto a lightwell of a size that allows upward views of the sky and nearby trees. The proposed building would significantly interrupt this outlook and would tower above the window. Due to its height and proximity the development would appear overbearing even when taking into account the existing restricted views from the flat’s window”.

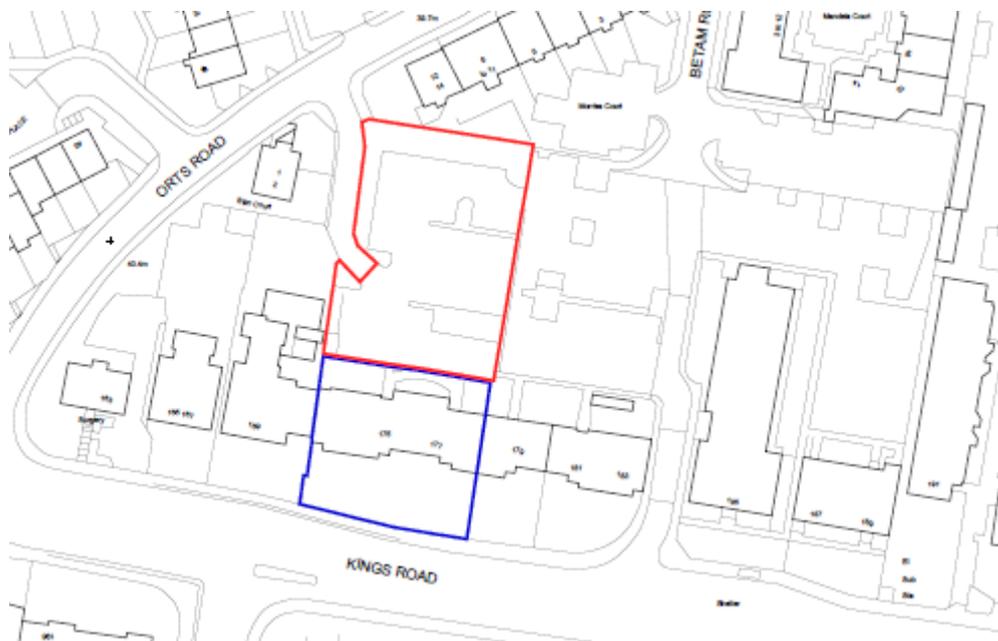
2.4 On the third issue the Inspector concluded that an appropriate contribution towards affordable housing was not proposed.

2.5 The Inspector concluded that all the Council’s reasons for refusal (not including reasons 4 and 5 which were addressed during the appeal process) should be supported and dismissed the appeal.

### 3 OFFICER COMMENTS

3.1 Officers are very pleased that the Inspector has endorsed the conclusion reached by Officers and recognised the impact the proposed development would have had on the Grade II\* listed buildings and conservation area, the harm to the residents of the lower ground floor flat and the importance of providing an appropriate financial contribution towards affordable housing.

### LOCATION PLAN



Case Officer: Claire Ringwood