

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ITEM NO. 11

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 6th March 2019

Ward: Redlands

Application No.: 180274/FUL & 180275/LBC

Address: 17 Eldon Square

Proposals: 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

Date Application Valid: 7th March 2018

Application target decision date: 27th March 2019 (Extension of Time)

RECOMMENDATION

Delegate to Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to completion of a S106 legal agreement or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the legal agreement not be completed by the 27th March 2019 (unless officers on behalf of the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement). The legal agreement to secure the following:

1. An affordable housing contribution of £37, 750 payable on first occupation and index-linked from date of permission

181274/FUL

Conditions to include:

1. Time Limit - 3 years
2. Approved plans
3. Pre-commencement construction method statement (including noise and dust measures);
4. Pre-commencement hard and soft landscaping details
5. Implementation of the approved landscaping no later than during the first planting season following the date when the development is ready for occupation
6. Landscaping maintenance / replacement for a period of 5 years
7. Pre-commencement details of cycle storage
8. Pre-commencement details of on-site biodiversity enhancements
9. Pre-commencement submission of contaminated Land report
10. Contaminated Land 2: remediation scheme
11. Contaminated Land 3: implementation of remediation scheme
12. Contaminated Land 4: reporting any unexpected contamination
13. Pre-occupation implementation of bin storage facilities and subsequent maintenance;
14. Pre-occupation notification of postal addresses (restricting parking permits)
15. No automatic entitlement to parking permits

16. Pre-occupation provision of car parking spaces
17. Construction hours (standard)
18. No burning of waste on site
19. No clearance of vegetation within the bird nesting season
20. Biodiversity enhancements
21. Flat roof area not be used as a terrace or balcony
22. Gates to open inwards (away from the highway) only
23. Use of proposed parking spaces by occupiers of no. 17 Eldon Square only

Informatives:

1. Positive and Proactive Statement
2. Highways
3. Sound insulation
4. Section 106 Legal Agreement
5. Pre-commencement conditions
6. Building Control
7. Terms and conditions
8. CIL
9. Environmental Health Nuisance Law
10. No parking permits

180275/LBC

GRANT Listed Building Consent, subject to the following conditions:

Conditions to include:

1. Time limit - 3 years
2. Approved Plans
3. Pre-commencement submission and approval of material details and samples

Informatives:

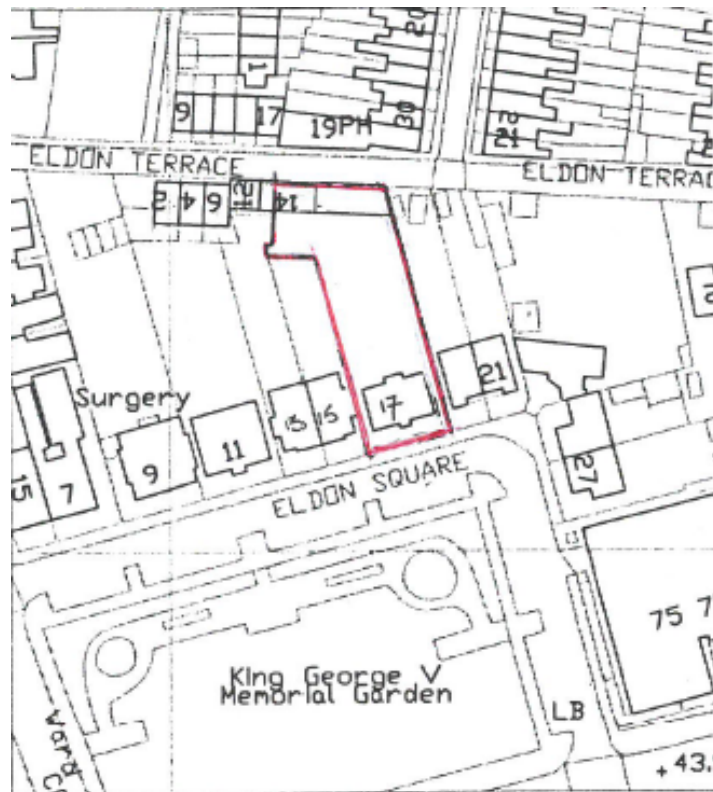
1. Positive and proactive
2. Associated planning permission
3. Pre-commencement conditions
4. Building control
5. Terms and Conditions

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The application site consists of a terrace of single storey flat roof garage buildings and part of the rear garden of no. 17 Eldon Square, a four storey Grade II listed Edwardian villa building (converted into 5 flats). The existing garages front and are accessed from Eldon Terrace to the rear of 17 Eldon Square and contain four parking spaces which serve the existing flats.

1.2 The site is located within the Eldon Square Conservation Area, within an air quality management area and just outside of the designated Reading Central Area.

1.3 The applications were submitted in March 2018. Officers have been in discussions with the applicant over a number of detailed design matters hence the applications have only been reported at this time. The applications have been called in to Planning Applications Committee for determination on 28 January 2019 by Councillor Tony Jones who considers the proposals to be an overdevelopment of the site.



Site Location (not to scale)

2. PROPOSALS

2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for demolition of the existing single storey garages located to the rear of no. 17 Eldon Square and fronting onto Eldon Terrace and erection of 2 x two bedroom and 1 x one bedroom terraced townhouses with accommodation in the roof space, associated amenity space and undercroft vehicular access to a parking area. No. 17 Eldon Square is Grade II Listed and given the garages are located within the curtilage of the host building an application for listed building consent has also been submitted.

2.2 Amended plans have been submitted during the course of the application following officer concerns regarding the extent of hardstanding and number of parking spaces proposed to the rear of the new dwellings, the impact this would have upon character and setting of the Conservation Area and host Grade II Listed Building. Concerns were also raised regarding the roof form of the building, notably the pitch as well as the scale and appearance of the proposed

rear dormer roof projections and balconies. The following changes were included within the amended plans following extensive and detailed discussion with officers:

- Reduction in number of proposed parking spaces from four to two and reduced hardstanding to allow greater retention of existing garden area.
 - Adjustment of front roof pitch to align with that of the consented development next to the site at no. 12 Eldon Terrace (180467/FUL - demolition of existing dwelling with garages and erection of replacement two storey (and roof space accommodation) building comprising 3x1-bed residential units (Class C3) with associated bin and cycle storage), not implemented.
 - Reduction in scale of rear dormer roof extensions and removal of balconies.
- 2.3 The proposal is for a car-free development with the two parking space proposed to for use by occupiers of the existing flats at no. 17 Eldon Square following the proposed demolition of the existing garages.
- 2.4 The terrace of three dwellings is proposed to be constructed with a Bath Stone external finish with natural slate roofs and York Stone window sills.
- 2.5 The applicant sought pre-application advice regarding the proposed development prior to submitting the application.

The garages proposed for demolition





Adjacent protected lime trees (above)



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



Front Elevation of no. 17 Eldon Square



Modern terrace development at no.s 2, 4 and 6 Eldon Terrace

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 160442PREAPP - Request for pre-application advice in relation to 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 - Pre-application advice given.
- 3.2 121219 - (No. 27 itself) 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 - Granted.
- 3.3 120344 - Demolition of garage building and erection of 2x semi-detached houses - Withdrawn
- 3.4 990506 - Erection of a timber building in the rear curtilage - Granted

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 RBC Transport - No objection, subject to conditions to secure provision of the parking spaces bin store, submission of a construction method statement and cycle parking facilities as well as restrictions upon access of future occupiers to parking permits.

- 4.2 RBC Environmental Protection - No objection, subject to conditions to secure a contaminated land assessment, a scheme for control of construction noise and dust, control of construction to reasonable hours and a restriction on burning of waste on site.

RBC Natural Environment

- 4.3 No objection, subject to conditions to require submission and approval of a scheme of hard and soft landscaping, implementation of any subsequently approved landscaping scheme and its future maintenance.

RBC Ecology Consultant

No objection, subject to conditions to require submission and approval of a scheme of scheme of on-site biodiversity enhancements and to ensure any clearance of vegetation does not take place within the bird nesting season (March to August).

Public Consultation

- 4.5 Flats 1-17 15 Eldon Square, Flats 1-5 17 Eldon Square, no. 19 Eldon Square, no.s 14-16, 19 (Eldon Arms PH) and 12 Eldon Terrace were notified of the application by letter. A site notice was also displayed at the application site and notice placed in the local newspaper.

- 4.6 Five letters of objection have been received raising the following issues:

- Loss of light and to properties on Eldon Terrace
- Loss of privacy to properties on Eldon Terrace

- Insufficient on-site parking
- Highway safety concerns from increased traffic volumes
- Impact and harm to trees
- Out of keeping with the character of the conservation area
- Undesirable to subdivide the garden of listed building within the conservation area
- Overdevelopment of the site

4.7 One letter of comment has been received raising the following points:

- Support the proposed use of bath stone
- Potential overlooking from roof level porthole-style window to the east elevation and proposed rear roof level balconies
- Seek that northern boundary shared with no. 17 is made good following demolition of the garages
- Impact on trees
- Seek that future occupier would not have access to on-street parking area given the existing high demand and pressure on parking the area

4.8 The Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee have objected to the applications, raising the following issues:

- The application will have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the CA (notably the opening up of a metal gateway - consider a solid gate would be more appropriate) and the setting of 17 Eldon Square and neighbouring listed buildings (by the reduction in garden size to no. 17 and provision of parking spaces).
- It represents an over development of the site which will have a negative impact on neighbouring amenity.
- Insufficient information is given about the materials to be used, apart from 'Bath Stone' and their appropriateness to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- The design and features of terrace are not in keeping with the character and appearance of the conservation area.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

5.2 Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

- 5.3 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making.
- 5.4 In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document) according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).
- 5.5 Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy (Adopted January 2008 - amended 2015)

- CS1 Sustainable Construction and Design
- CS4 Accessibility and Intensity of Development
- CS5 Inclusive Access
- CS7 Design and the Public Realm
- CS14 Provision of Housing
- CS15 Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix
- CS20 Implementation of the Reading Transport Strategy
- CS24 Car/Cycle Parking
- CS33 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
- CS34 Pollution and Water Resources

Sites and Detailed Policies Document - (Adopted October 2012 - amended 2015)

- SD1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- DM1 Adaption to Climate Change
- DM4 Safeguarding Amenity
- DM6 Affordable Housing
- DM10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space
- DM11 Development of Private Residential Gardens
- DM12 Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
- DM19 Air Quality

Supplementary Planning Documents & other relevant documents/guidance:

- Affordable Housing SPD (2013)
- Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)
- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2011)
- Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (2005)

6. APPRAISAL

The main issues raised by these applications are as follows:

- Principle
- Design and Impact on the Character of the Area, Conservation Area and the setting of Listed Buildings
- Amenity of Surrounding Occupiers
- Standard of Residential Accommodation
- Unit Mix
- Natural Environment
- Transport
- Affordable Housing

Principle

- 6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land) and seeks that all housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 6.2 The proposed C3 residential use would provide an additional 3 dwellings to the Borough's housing stock, the principle of which would align with the broad objectives of Policy CS14 in assisting meeting annual housing targets whilst the location and accessibility of the site for residential development is considered to accord with Policy CS4.
- 6.3 Whilst located within the curtilage of a Listed Building the garages to be demolished are not of any architectural value and are currently a negative feature in the Conservation Area and there is no objection to their removal.
- 6.4 Transport officers have also confirmed no objection to loss of the garages and reduction in parking provision for the existing flats from four to two spaces. Further discussion on this is set out in the transport section of this report below.
- 6.5 The proposed development is considered acceptable in principle but this is subject to assessment against the following relevant material planning considerations and planning policies.
- 6.6 Whilst the proposal relates to replacement of existing garages the site is located within the rear garden area of the existing flats to the host building at no. 17. Policy DM11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens) is therefore particularly relevant. This proposal seeks that such developments make a positive contribution to the character of the area in a number of ways. This includes a layout which integrates with the surrounding area, patterns of development, plot coverage and boundary treatments, provision of landscaping, compatibility of building heights, use of materials and creation of plots of a suitable size and that proposals do not result in unacceptable tandem development. These considerations are covered in the detailed assessments below.

Design and Impact on the Character of the Area, Conservation Area and the setting of Listed Buildings

- 6.7 Policy CS7 seeks to preserve or enhance the character of the area in which a development is located. Policy CS33 seeks to preserve or enhance the historic character of heritage assets including listed buildings and conservation areas.
- 6.8 All heritage assets have a setting. The NPPF defines the setting of a heritage asset as: The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Impact on the Setting of Listed Buildings

- 6.9 No. 17 Eldon Square is one of twelve large 19th Century Grade II Listed Bath stone villas fronting Eldon Square. The garages to which the applications relate are located at the end of the large rear garden of no. 17, some 30m from the main house and whilst within the curtilage of the listed building, the existing garages are a later addition and themselves are not of architectural or historic merit and other than being modest in scale are considered to contribute negatively to the setting of the listed building.
- 6.10 In terms of the proposed replacement terrace of dwellings it is considered that the separation of the proposed three terraced dwellings at over 25m is sufficient such that the proposed dwellings would not appear dominant in relation to the host Listed Building. As shown in comparison of the existing and proposed footprints of development below, the footprint of the proposed dwellings would be less than that of the existing garages (which as part of a group of outbuildings also includes a summerhouse which is also to be removed).

Existing Site Layout

Proposed Site Layout



- 6.11 Whilst the proposed terraced townhouses would be greater in height than the existing single storey garages their height would still be substantially less than the ridge/chimney height of the large host villa property and other adjacent similar villas to Eldon Square. The proposed scale and massing is considered to achieve the appropriate levels of subservience to the host listed building.
- 6.12 During the course of the application officers have worked with the applicant to secure a number of changes to the application. Notably a reduction in level of parking spaces and hardstanding is now proposed to allow greater retention of the existing communal garden area which serves the existing flats at no. 17. Whilst an extent of hardstanding is required to facilitate necessary vehicular turning space, officers do not consider that this impinges excessively upon the existing garden area and must be balanced against the reduced footprint of the dwellings compared to the existing garages. A significant amount of the rear garden area is now to be retained (as shown on the proposed site layout drawing above) and this is considered key in preserving the setting of the listed building. The curtilage divide of the plot between the rear of the garden and the turning area for the proposed parking spaces would be subtle and not visually prominent in the form of a modest 0.7m high brick wall and soft landscaping. This would allow the site to retain an integrated character with the proposed subdivision not appearing visually obvious above that of the existing site situation with the garage blocks.
- 6.13 The detailed design of the proposed dwellings with the use of Bath stone and natural slate roof is would complement that of host Grade II Listed villa. Officers have also secured a reduction in scale of the three proposed rear dormer roof extensions as well as removal of the balcony areas to these dormers. Dormer roof extensions are present to the listed villas within Eldon Square.
- 6.14 Five significant Lime trees are also to be retained as part of the works to the eastern boundary of the site as well as a Sycamore tree to the western boundary. RBC tree officers have confirmed that they would not be unduly impacted upon by the proposed development. Officers are satisfied that the scale and form of the proposed development, retention of green garden space to the host dwelling together with retention of trees and proposed landscaping would result in a development that would preserve the setting of the host listed building and accord with Policy CS33.

Impact on the Conservation Area

- 6.15 The Eldon Square Conservation Area is urban in nature and comprises a dense network of streets and roads of terraced, detached and semi-detached buildings. The central feature of the Conservation Area is Eldon Square itself, a mid 19th. Century development of houses surrounding three sides of a small enclosed rectangular public park containing a lawn, trees and shrubs and a statue of the first Marquess of Reading (1860-1935) who was Viceroy of India from 1921-6. Building height is mainly two- or, less commonly, three-storey. However, there are some modern late 20th Century office blocks rising to as many as 5 storeys. The proposal will not affect views within this part of the Conservation Area.

- 6.16 The Conservation Area is divided into three character areas according to building type and period. Character Area 3 comprises the terraced streets east of Eldon Road i.e. Eldon Terrace, Eldon Street, Victoria Street, Montague Street and Town End and has a much more intimate urban grain. Area 3 is primarily residential but also contains a shop and two public houses. Eldon Terrace, like Eldon Place, was built as a narrow service road to the rear of properties in Eldon Square but now provides access to four streets that run northwards onto Kings Road. Town End is a row of 9 houses with long front gardens that can only be reached by a footpath, an unusual 19th Century back land development Eldon Street, Victoria Street and Montague Street are three short streets with terraced houses on either side. They have small gardens to the front and larger gardens to the rear.
- 6.17 The conservation area appraisal identifies the following features that make a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of this character area of the conservation area:
- Rectilinear grid pattern of streets;
 - 19th century brick terraced houses typical of Reading;
 - Good quality brickwork;
 - Flint wall on south side of Eldon Terrace;
 - Historic stone kerbs.
- 6.18 Features identified as having a negative impact on the historic character and appearance of the conservation area:
- Modern development along Queen's Road;
 - Poor state of repair of no. 23 Eldon Terrace;
 - Loss of original windows and front doors to modern replacements;
 - Loss of original slate roofs and other architectural features such as iron gates and railings;
 - Loss of front gardens;
 - Unsightly concrete boundary walls.
- 6.19 As discussed above there is no objection to removal of the existing garages which are not considered to contribute positively to the character of the conservation area.
- 6.20 The proposed new dwellings would front Eldon Terrace and as such it is here where the development has the most potential to impact upon the conservation area. The road is small and narrow and characterised by the terraced dwellings whilst directly opposite the site is the Eldon Arms pub. As noted in comments by the Conservation Area Advisory Committee; historically the southern side of Eldon Terrace would have been characterised by mews/stable/coach house structure ancillary to the grand villas to Eldon Square. Today these have largely been replaced by modern garage type structures such as at the application site or terraced dwellings as found to the west along this side of Eldon Terrace.

6.21 It is pertinent to the consideration of this application that planning permission was recently granted at the adjacent site to the west of the garages at no. 12 Eldon Terrace (planning permission ref. 180467/FUL) for demolition of existing garages with dwellings above and the erection of a replacement two storey (with roof space accommodation) building comprising 3x1-bed residential units (Class C3) with associated bin and cycle storage. A street-scene view of this consented development is set out below showing the application site in its current state. This approved development forms an extension to the existing terrace of dwellings to this side of Eldon Terrace at no.s 2, 4 and 6 which are also shown on the street-scene drawing below.



I Current application site garages I No. 12 as approved I No.s 2, 4 & 6 as existing I

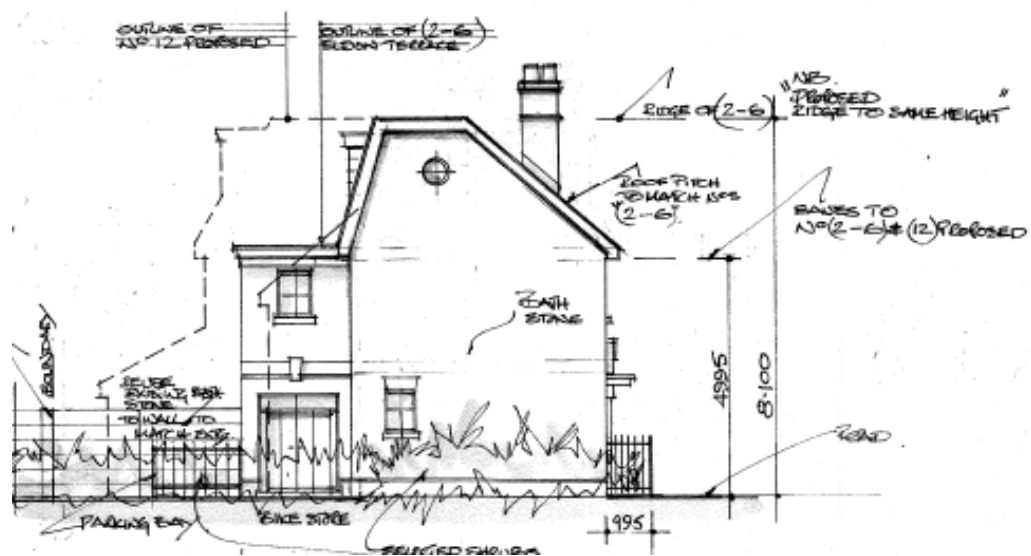
6.22 As a proposed terrace of dwellings the application proposal is considered to be in keeping with the existing character of Eldon Terrace. The proposals are considered to demonstrate a high quality of design and attention to detail as well as use of high quality materials including Bath stone, York stone sills and slate roofs. Whilst it has been noted in some of the representations and indeed by the CAAC that a brick finish to the dwellings would be more in keeping with Eldon Terrace, stone is found elsewhere within the conservation area and in itself is considered to represent a high quality material and would be generally better than the prevailing quality of materials in the smaller streets in the Eldon Terrace area, which tend to have a mixture of brick or render and largely cementitious roofs rather than natural slate. Indeed stone is proposed to the consented scheme shown above at no.12 Eldon Terrace. A street-scene view of the proposal including the consented scheme next door at no. 12 and the existing terraced properties at nos.2, 4 and 6 is shown below. Precise details and samples of materials can be secured by condition.



I Application site as proposed I No. 12 as approved I No.s 2, 4 & 6 as existing I

6.23 Officers have worked with the applicant to secure adjustments to the roof profile of the proposed terrace of dwellings. The front roof pitch would now align with that of the consented scheme at no. 12 and also that of the existing terraced dwellings and no.s 2, 4 and 6 Eldon Terrace. This would result in a consistent terraced appearance to this side of the road, similar to that as existing on the

opposite side of Eldon Terrace, although with slight variations in design as you move from section to section. The roof would have small flat roof 'crown' and a sharper pitch to the rear roof slope forming an end gable. Whilst not a traditional symmetrical gable pitched roof it should be noted that the rear roof slopes to the three existing terraced dwellings at no.s 2, 4 and 6 Eldon Terrace are not symmetrical in form either, with a lower eaves height to the rear of these properties than at the front, whilst the consented scheme at no.12 incorporates a much larger flat roof crown than the application proposal but with similar steeper pitch to the rear roof slope. A side section of the gable when viewed from the west along Eldon Terrace is shown below. The dotted line indicated the large flat roof crown and roof space of the consented scheme to the adjoining site at no. 12.



Side section view from the west along Eldon Terrace (dotted line indicates roof form of consented scheme next door at no. 12)

- 6.24 Given the conformity of the front roof slope to other properties to this side of Eldon Terrace and use of high quality materials officers are satisfied this element of the proposal is satisfactory, particularly when considered against removal of the existing poor quality garages. It is considered that the proposal as a whole would result in an enhancement to the conservation area.
- 6.25 Unlike the existing garages, the proposed dwellings would also incorporate a 1m set back from the Eldon Terrace road frontage. This set back allows for landscaping to the front of the dwellings and low level wrought iron railings. This set back assists in providing relief within Eldon Terrace, which is a narrow road, from the proposed two storey dwellings and is also reflective of the set back to the existing dwellings at no.s 2, 4 and 6 and the consented scheme next door at no. 12 whilst the railings would also be in keeping with no.s 2, 4 and 6.
- 6.26 Representations have also commented that the proposed metal gates to the undercroft access would not be in-keeping with the character of the road or conservation area. However, bearing in mind the heritage context of Eldon Terrace which would historically have contained small stables, mews or coach houses associated with the large properties to Eldon Square officer consider the a

gated access point would not be out of context with the historic character of Eldon Terrace. The proposal iron gates are considered to be an acceptable high quality material and would be an enhancement above that of the existing utilitarian and industrial looking garage doors.

- 6.27 In terms of the character of the wider the Conservation Area the retention of green garden space and trees as outlined above is again considered to be of key importance in terms of the character of the area as whole. The Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal notes there is minimal green space and that trees are scarce. In terms of trees the appraisal goes on to state that their scarcity is such that trees that are present make a significant contribution to the special character of the conservation area so retention of the adjacent off-site trees is important.
- 6.28 On balance for the reasons above officers consider that the proposal would represent an enhancement to the Eldon Terrace streetscene and the Conservation Area. The loss of green space to the rear of the site has been reduced through discussions with officers during the course of the application and given the high quality design, use of materials, retention of trees and proposed landscaping officers are satisfied that the proposed would preserve the character of the conservation area as whole and therefore, subject to conditions would in accordance with Policy CS33.
- 6.29 In terms of more general design principles and in particular the requirements of Policy DM11(Development of Private Residential Gardens) the proposal is considered acceptable. Notably the dwellings would be independently accessed from Eldon Terrace therefore this would not be 'tandem' development. The layout, footprint and height of the proposal would be reflective of existing development to this side of Eldon Terrace. Plot size would be small but again this is reflective of the dwellings to this side of Eldon Terrace. Residents of the proposed 2 bedroom dwellings would have access to small private amenity areas as well as access to the existing communal garden area serving the existing flats at No. 17. Use of this communal amenity space is not considered essential to the proposal and officers would not object to an under provision of amenity space in this central location given the good access to public leisure and recreational facilities. Furthermore, it is noted that the existing terraced properties to this side of Eldon Terrace are served by minimal amenity space provision. As discussed above in the heritage considerations the detailed design of the proposal is also considered acceptable and the proposal would also accord with Policy CS7 which seeks that development maintains or enhance the character of the area within which it is located.

Unit Mix

- 6.30 Policy CS15 (Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix) details that developments should provide an appropriate range of housing opportunities in terms of a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures.
- 6.31 The applications proposed mix of 2 x 2 bedroom and 1 x 2 bedroom dwellings is considered reasonable given the small number of units proposed.

Amenity of Neighbouring Occupiers

- 6.31 Policy DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity) seeks that development proposals should protect the amenity of existing and future occupiers. Policy CS34 seeks to protect residents from the impacts of pollution.
- 6.32 At over 25m, the separation of the proposals from the host building at no. 17 and other dwellings on Eldon Square is significant such that no undue overlooking or loss of privacy is considered to occur. Whilst the side by side relationship to both the existing (garages with dwellings above) and proposed development (new terraced dwellings) at no. 12 Eldon Terrace is such that there would be no overlooking in this respect either. The end gable of the proposal would face the boundary with the end of the rear garden of no. 19 Eldon Square to the east. There is a small porthole-style window to the roof space gable of this elevation but this is high level window such that there are no concerns with regard to loss of privacy.
- 6.33 Concern has been raised in representations regarding overlooking and overbearing/loss of light to the front of the site across Eldon Terrace to the front windows of the terraced dwellings and first floor residential accommodation to the Eldon Arms Public House. The separation between the front elevations and windows across Eldon Terrace would be between 7 and 9 metres. Whilst it is acknowledged that this is a close relationship it is reflective of existing similar relationships between residential dwellings along Eldon Terrace and the character of surrounding small narrow streets. Officers do not consider this to be an unacceptable relationship in this context in terms of privacy or light.
- 6.34 A construction method statement would be secured by way of condition to include measures for control of noise and dust as well as a condition to control hours of construction to manage the construction impact of the development of the amenities of nearby occupiers.
- 6.35 There is a small second floor (attic) level flat roof area to the part of the development on the boundary with the site of no. 12. The proposed plans indicate that there would be no access to this area but for clarify a condition is recommended to ensure this area cannot be used as a terrace or balcony due to potential overlooking concerns to no. 12 and the rear garden of no.15 Eldon Square.
- 6.36 Concern has also been raised regarding the parking area to the rear of the proposed dwellings and potential disturbance to surrounding dwellings. It should be noted that the proposal is to replace existing garages in a similar location which would have attracted car movements whilst the number of parking spaces has been reduced from four down to two during the course of the application. Although the use of spaces and manoeuvres would be in the open rather than within garages, officers do not consider that use of these parking spaces would result in a significantly increased level of disturbance to neighbouring properties.

- 6.37 The proposal is not considered to result in any unacceptable impact on the amenity of surrounding occupiers and would accord with Policies DM4 and CS34.

Standard of Residential Accommodation

- 6.38 The unit and room sizes proposed are considered adequate and to provide a reasonable living space for future occupants. Whilst the Council does not have formally adopted space standards (albeit these are likely to be forthcoming in the emerging new Local Plan) the room and units sizes proposed would generally accord with the Government's National Minimum Technical Standards. In addition it is considered that the proposed layout and assignment of rooms to windows would allow for adequate outlook and daylighting for each of the dwellings.
- 6.39 Environmental Protection Officers are satisfied that the proposed development is situated far enough back from Eldon Road, London Road and Kings Road for it to be unlikely that traffic noise or air quality concerns would impact on future occupants of the proposed development and as such no additional mitigation is required in this respect. This is the same approach that was applied at the recently consented scheme next door at no. 12 Eldon Terrace.
- 6.40 Whilst a slightly unusual situation whereby the two proposed parking spaces would serve the existing flats at no. 17 Eldon Square and not the new dwellings the siting of the spaces in relation to the dwellings and proposed landscaping buffer is considered satisfactory to prevent any undue disturbance to future occupiers of the new dwellings.
- 6.41 The proposal is considered to provide an overall suitable standard of accommodation, in line with policies CS34 and DM4.

Natural Environment

- 6.42 Policy CS7 seeks that development is of high design quality and maintains and enhances the character of the area in which it is located including landscaping. Policy CS36 seeks that development should retain, protect and incorporate feature of biodiversity and Policies CS38 and DM18 seek that the Borough's vegetation cover be protected and extended.
- 6.43 An arboricultural impact assessment (AIA) has been submitted as part of the application. The Council's Tree Officer has visited the site having been initially concerned about the impact this application would have on a group of five Lime trees growing within the rear garden of 19 Eldon Square. These trees are within a Conservation Area and therefore are protected in status. The officer notes that the trees are situated and currently growing within a brick planter structure. Although tree roots will inevitably extend beyond this planter for the trees to have reached this level of maturity but in line with the applicant's AIA, the tree officer agrees that the wall and building between the trees and proposed development site to the rear of 17 Eldon Square is likely to have considerably restricted tree roots growing under the footprint of the existing garage and to the west.

- 6.44 The tree officer was also initially concerned about the impact of the proposed 'crown lifting' to the Lime trees which would be required in order to facilitate the additional height of the proposed dwellings. The tree to the west of the group (adjacent to the build) is the poorer specimen of the group, which has a slightly suppressed form and has been cut back in the past. The tree would require the majority of the pruning works. The proposed new dwellings will be slightly set back from the highway and off the eastern boundary therefore the reduction required in order to facilitate the build and the negligible impact this would have on the trees as a group is not considered to warrant an objection to the application on these grounds.
- 6.45 Future owners will not be able to cut the trees back further than their boundary line without the prior consent of the trees' owners. In view of this, and the minimal perceived impact of the application on these trees, the tree officer does not raise any objection to this application with regards to the impact on existing trees.
- 6.46 The proposed plans indicate landscaping principles with planting to the Eldon Terrace frontage and to the rear of the dwellings. Details of hard and soft landscaping information, implementation of this and future maintenance can be secured by way of conditions.
- 6.47 The Council's Ecology Consultant has also reviewed the proposals. A bat survey was submitted as part of the application which the ecologist considers satisfactorily demonstrates that there would be no harmful impact upon bats from demolition of the existing garages. Conditions are recommended to secure a scheme of on-site biodiversity enhancements and to ensure any vegetation clearance takes place outside of the bird nesting season.
- 6.48 The proposals are considered acceptable in terms of trees and biodiversity and to accord with Policies CS7, CS36, CS37, CS38 and DM18.

Transport

- 6.49 Policies DM12 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012, 2015 and CS20, CS23 and CS24 of the Core Strategy seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development.
- 6.50 Eldon Square 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.
- 6.51 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. Typically this zone is well served by public transport, with buses continuing either into or out of the Central Core Area via this zone. In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide a parking provision of 1no. space per 1 or 2 bedroom house.

- 6.52 Currently 4 x car parking spaces are provided for the existing flats fronting Eldon Square in the form of the garages. The information supporting the application states that the existing parking within the garages is under-utilized and is only occasionally used for 1 or 2 cars. This application proposes to provide 2 car parking spaces in total; to be allocated the existing flats fronting Eldon Terrace. Use of these parking spaces by the occupiers of no. 17 Eldon Square only is to be secured by way of condition. No car parking provision is proposed for the three new dwellings. There are no transport objections to the non-provision of car parking (a car-free development) in this instance and location. It should be noted that the recent consent for residential units at no. 12 Eldon Terrace was also granted with zero parking provision. Conditions would be attached to the planning permission to restrict access of future occupiers of the dwellings to parking permits given the existing high pressure on on-street parking in the surrounding area. The reduced provision of 2 parking spaces to serve the existing flats is considered acceptable.
- 6.53 Transport officers are satisfied with the access point to the site and turning space for the parking space. A condition shall be attached to the planning permission to ensure the proposed gates open inwards and not out on to the highway which would be hazardous to highway users.
- 6.54 In accordance with the adopted Parking SPD, a 1 bedroom house is required to provide a minimum of 1.0 cycle parking space and 2.0 for a 2 bedroom house; therefore the total cycling provision required for the 3 new dwellings would be 5. The proposed plans illustrate an internal cycle storage area. Precise details of the nature of the cycle storage can be secured by way of condition.
- 6.55 An internal bin store has also been illustrated on submitted plans, adjacent to the entrance and in close proximity to the carriageway. Collection would be the same as other dwellings in the street and is therefore deemed acceptable.
- 6.56 The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in transport terms and to accord with Policies DM12, CS20, CS23 and CS24.

Affordable Housing & CIL

- 6.57 With regard to affordable housing, in line with Policy DM6 and as a proposal for 3 units, a financial contribution towards off-site affordable housing with the Borough is required equivalent to 5% of the Gross Development Value of the Development. The applicant has agreed to this policy compliant level of contribution which equates to £37, 750 and is to be secured by way of a section 106 legal agreement.
- 6.58 The proposal would be liable for the community infrastructure levy. However, the floor space of the existing garages would off-set the liability to an extent. The additional floor space of the dwellings above that of the garages is 72m², which would equate to a levy of £10, 673.

Other Issues

- 6.59 The development lies on the site of some garages which have the potential for contamination and the proposed development is a sensitive land use.
- 6.60 The developer is responsible for ensuring that development is safe and suitable for use for the purpose for which it is intended. A site investigation must be carried out by a suitably qualified person to ensure that the site is suitable for the proposed use or can be made so by remedial action. The necessary measures shall be secured by way of conditions in accordance with Policy CS34 (Pollution).

Issues Raised in Representations

- 6.61 Concern was raised as to whether what requirement there would be upon the applicant to 'make good' any damage to neighbouring properties during demolition and construction of the proposed development. This would be a civil/legal matter between neighbours. Boundary issues would also be more appropriately considered under the Party Wall Act (1996).
- 6.62 All other issues raised are considered to have been addressed in the assessment section of the report above.

7 Equality

- 7.1 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, which identifies protected characteristics or groups. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the current applications) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application.

8 CONCLUSION

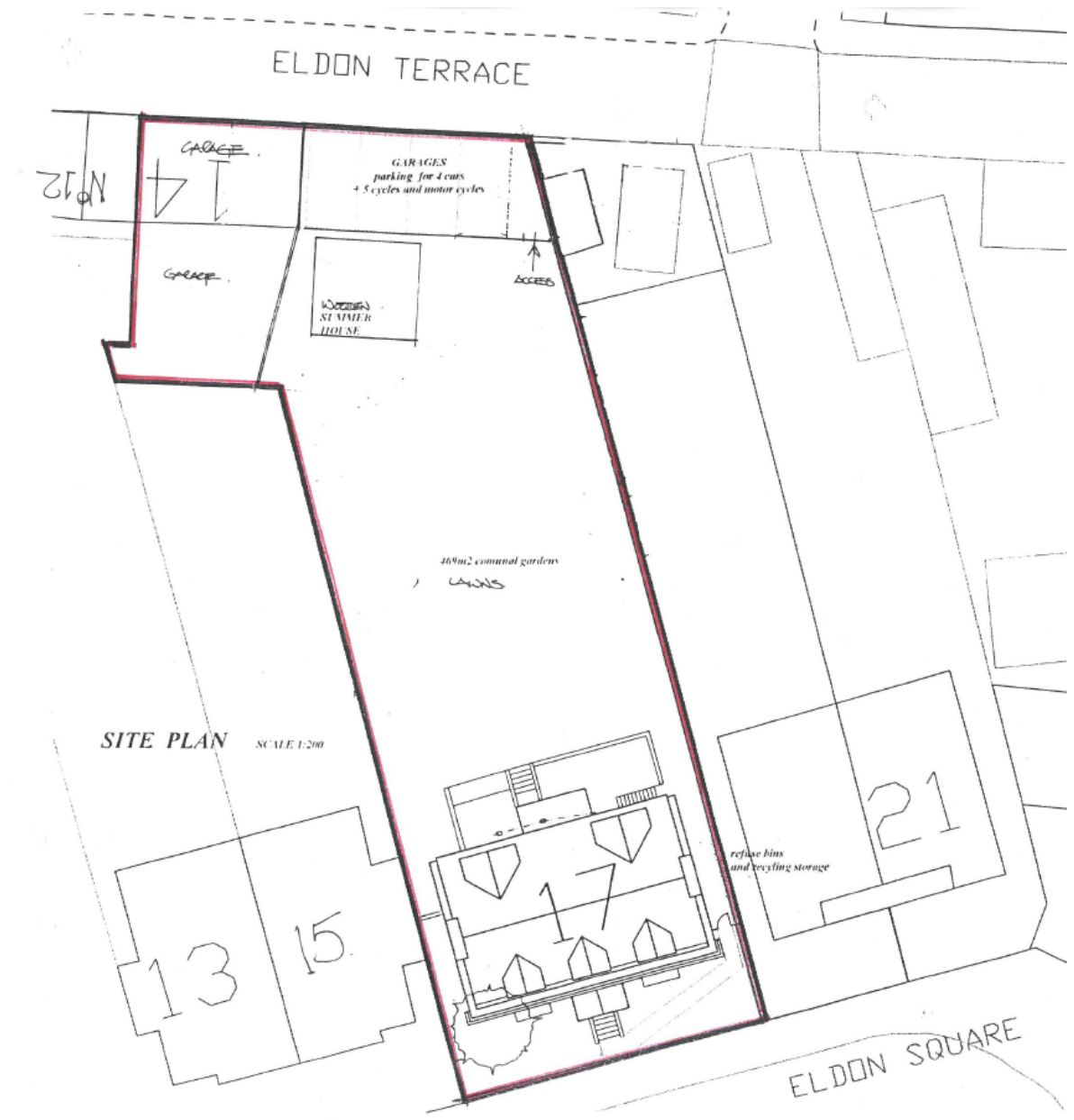
- 8.1 The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in the context of national and local planning policy and other material considerations as set out in this report. As such the applications for both planning permission and listed building consent are recommended for approval, subject to satisfactory completion of a section 106 legal agreement and the recommended conditions.

9 DRAWINGS SUBMITTED

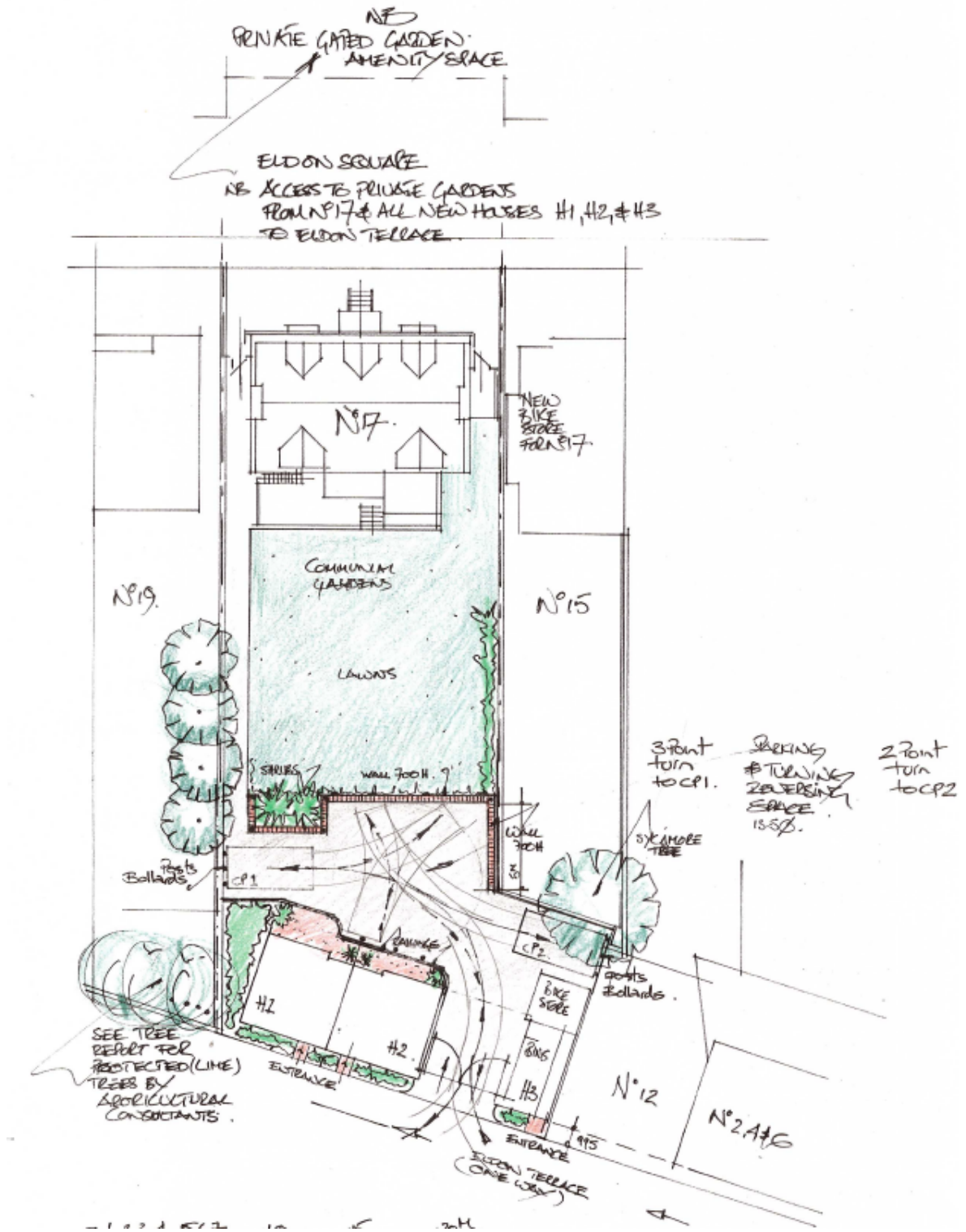
Drawing no. 1324/1 rev F - Plan Layouts
Drawing no. 1324/2 rev D - Elevations Proposed
Drawing no. 1324/3 - Proposed Block Plan
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 19th November 2018

Drawing no. 1324/B/L - Location Plan & Existing Block Plan
Drawing no. 1324/1E - Existing Plan & Elevations
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 14th February 2018

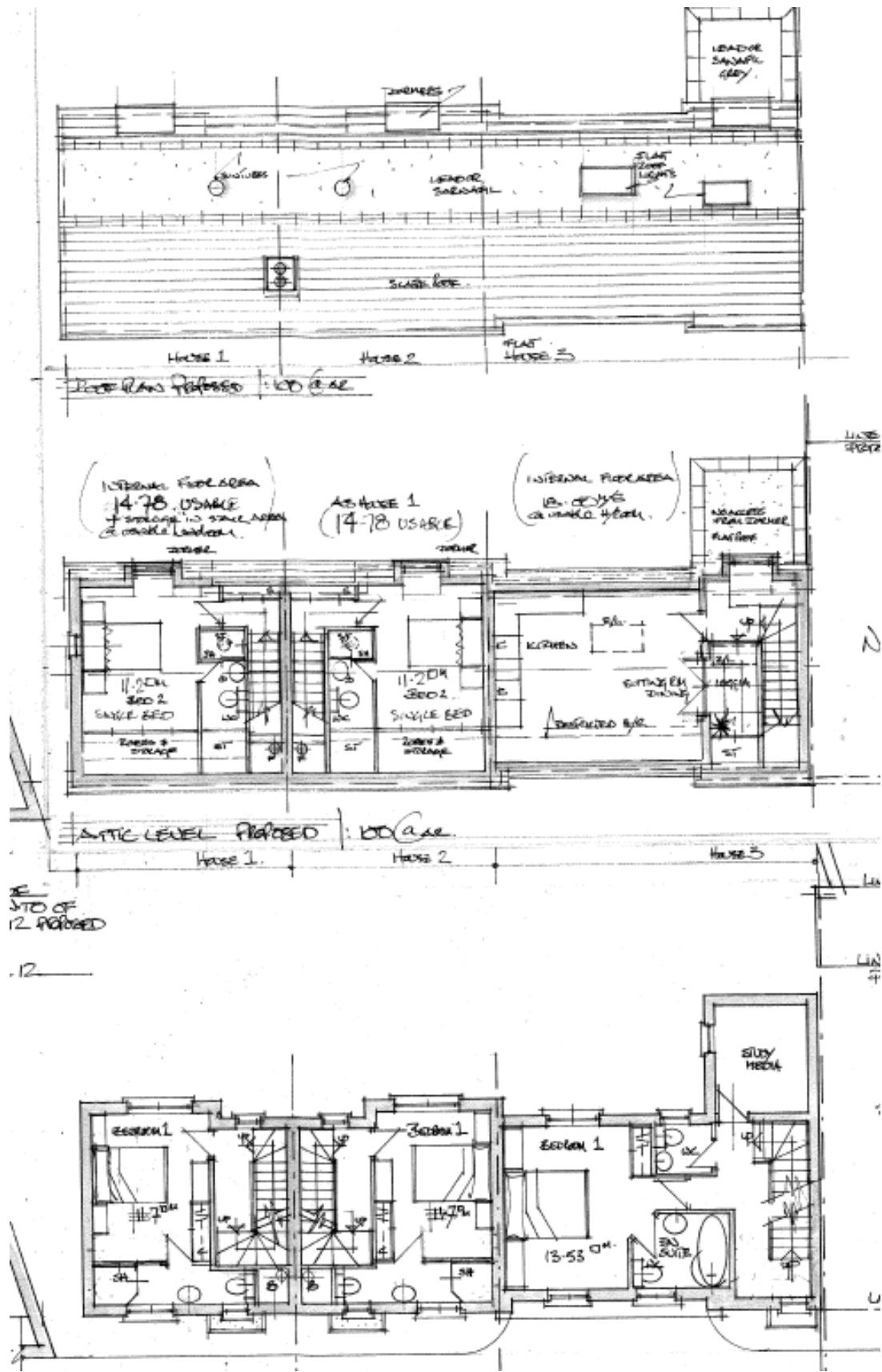
Case Officer: Matt Burns



Existing Block Plan



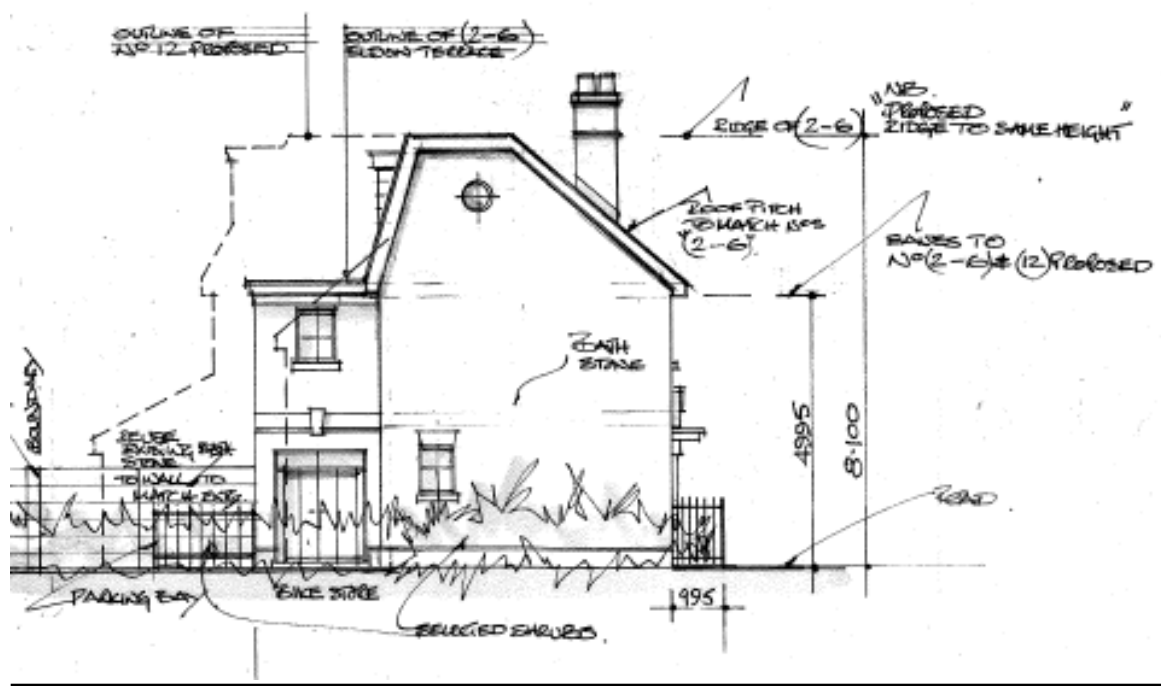
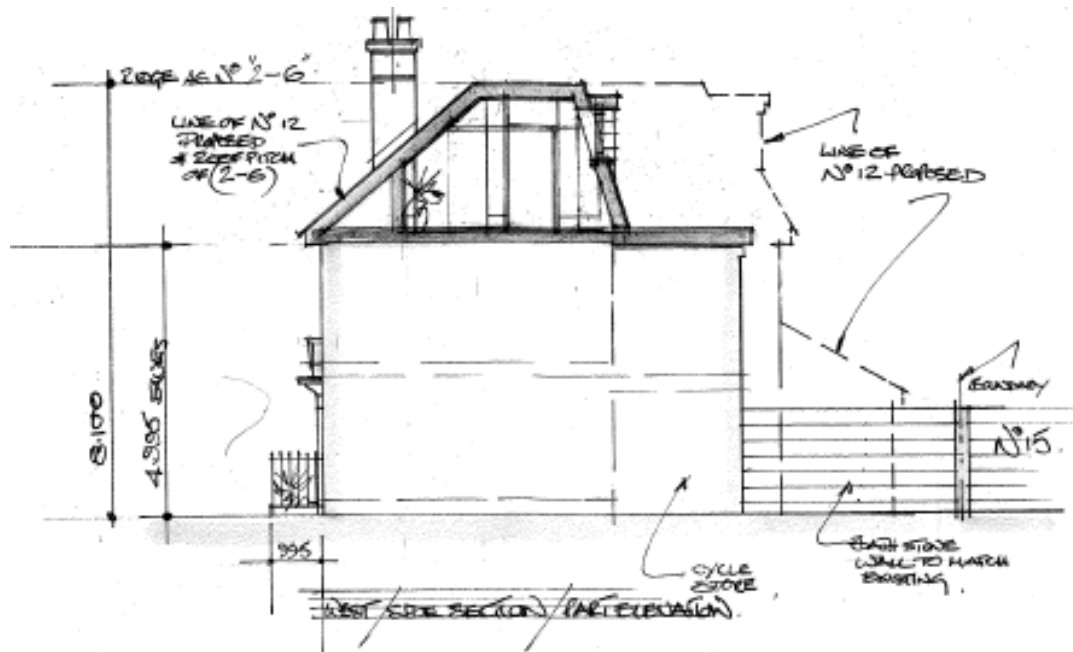
Proposed Site Plan



Proposed First, Second Floor and Roof Plans



Proposed Front and Rear Elevations



Proposed Side Elevations

