



GEOMEX LTD

APPLICATION STATEMENT

Heritage, Design & Access Statement

THE OLD RECTORY

James Bullock

Supporting Statement of Intent

Site:

The Old Rectory, Cradley, WR13 5LQ

Introduction:

This statement has been prepared on behalf of the owners of the property, Mr & Mrs Ellison.

The proposal is to terrace the rear garden, which is currently steeply sloped with a curved concrete rendered wall that is not in keeping with the rest of the property, listed Grade II.

The proposal does not affect the building or the south & west walls that are listed.

Description:

The site is in Cradley, adjacent to the west of the church building.

The rear garden, which was much more prominent before the original grounds were divided into separate properties, is about 15m long from the back elevation and 22m wide. The first 2m is a short patio that slopes a further 3m to a low, curved, cement rendered retaining wall. Past this is an unkempt garden track that follows the retaining wall, approximately 2m wide, and the garden continues a further meter before cresting and falling away the last 6m to the north. This is shown by the contour topographical plan TORC-ETP-JEBB.

To the east and west are the property's boundaries; to the west, there is a curving brick wall that retains the neighbouring property and to the west is the hedge bounding the church.

Description of Heritage Asset:

The Old Rectory, Cradley is a Grade II Listed building which, although of Georgian design, is constructed on stone foundations from an earlier date. The listing gives a date of the present structure of the late 1700s, three storeys high, and brick & slate construction. The rectory had a stable block which is now a separate dwelling and ownership. The driveway access is from the south through the stone boundary wall.

Listings:

LBS Number: 151085

Grade II

Date Listed: 09/06/1967

NGR: SO7356347138

Late C18. Brick. Hipped Slate Roof. Three storeys. Three sash windows, keystones, and brick arches, those on the ground floor are three-light. Central six-panel door with fanlight, broken pediment and 3/4 Doric columns. Interior staircase, fireplaces.

LBS Number: 151087

Grade II

Date Listed: 12/04/1973

NGR: SO7358147138

Probably C18. Stone rubble up to about eight feet high. Brick coping. It is included for group value.

The Old Rectory is a significant building within the historic core of Cradley and together with adjacent listed buildings provides an important group of historic buildings and structures in association with the church.

Apparently, for the benefit of the bishop, The Old Rectory was extended. Due to sharing a boundary with the churchyard, there is a doorway in the shared garden wall.

According to the heritage listings of the wall, the lower wall is not listed for its own sake; but as part of the curtilage of The Old Rectory.

The settings of the listed buildings are not considered to be adversely affected by this scheme.

Current Use:

Residential garden scrubland.

Layout:

The rear garden is north of the Old Rectory, as shown on drawing numbers TORC-SLBP-JEBB and TORC-ETP-JEBB.

The boundary to the north is at the bottom of the slope illustrated in TORC-ETP-JEBB. It is marked by a tall hedge approximately 3.6m tall.

There is a squat cement rendered retaining wall along the dirt track to the outbuilding, which is not in keeping with the Georgian building and walls. Further to the north, the garden slopes into the bottom hedge.

Proposal

Layout:

The rear garden is north of The Old Rectory and is set out as shown on drawing number TORC-PTP-JEBB.

The upper 2m gravel is extended to 5m using a new retaining wall and is designed to look in keeping with the rest of the property.

The lower 11m is equalised to the level of the outhouse access, as shown on the cross-section drawing number TORC-E&PCS-JEBB.

Rectangular steps connect the levels in the same style as the (pictured) steps from the house into the garden.

A slope on the east boundary also connects the levels to allow wheelbarrow access or similar to the lower terrace.

Appearance, Scale & Landscaping:

The new retaining wall replaces the existing cement rendered curved brick wall, which looks out of place with the straight Georgian lines of the property.

The new retaining wall brings the upper terrace to a flat attractive social area with permeable stone paving and is topped with an elegant iron railing painted black. The retaining wall's outer skin is to be constructed using grey stone to match as close as possible, the lower stone level of the house so that the retaining wall looks like a continuation of the former.

The lower retaining wall doesn't replace the north boundaries and sits just behind the hedges, constructed using stone gabions for the least disruption to the site possible. The grass of the lower terrace sits on top of the gabions and so these will not be visible from above. A short brick wall will be laid at the top of the lower retaining wall to prevent over-looking issues and protect the property from below while fitting into the Georgian scenery.

Reducing the number of terraces to two maximises the safe and private area for a young family to relax since the front garden is open and encompasses the long driveway.

Access:

Access to the rear of the property is through the front gate and up the drive which wraps around the east side of the house. This opens to the top of the sloped area.

Ecology:

There are no watercourses to be affected by the proposal.

There are no flora to be affected by the proposal.

There are no roof voids to be affected by the proposal.

The addition of a low run of flora along the north boundary at the top of the lower retaining wall for privacy purposes has the potential to further enhance the beauty of the site and by extension potentially increase biodiversity.

Design Philosophy:

The design takes on board the clean lines of Georgian architecture and maximises space for children to enjoy a usable, safe space to the rear of the property.

Two terraces maximise the space available for both for socialising and children to play safely.

The slope maintained on the west side is to allow access for wheelbarrows and other garden maintenance tools while the new steps style is to match the existing to maintain the Georgian styles.

Assessment of Impact and Mitigation on Heritage Asset:

Straightening out the top retaining wall restores the geometry to be in keeping with the historical site which is otherwise principally constructed in angular lines.

The garden would have originally extended out and across other properties bordering the current curtilage and would have been partially terraced with a gentle slope down to the north. The current curtilage is cut off by a very tall hedge at the bottom of the steepest point of the slope which has become a dark, unmaintainable slope which serves no function, be it practically or aesthetically. The proposal lifts this area into a flat usable space while retaining the hedge in front of it which should allow the garden to be used in a similar way to traditional Georgian gardens which typically utilised flat open spaces bounded by easy to maintain flora.

Policies:

Policy SS1: Presumption In Favour of Sustainable Development –

“When considering development proposals Herefordshire Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within national policy. It will always work proactively to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible and to secure development that improves the social, economic and environmental conditions in Herefordshire.”

Policy SS6: Environment Quality & Local Distinctiveness –

“Development proposals should conserve and enhance those environmental assets that contribute towards the county’s distinctiveness, in particular its settlement pattern, landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets and especially those with specific environmental designations. In addition, proposals should maintain and improve the effectiveness of those ecosystems essential to the health and wellbeing of the county’s residents and its economy. Development proposals should be shaped through an integrated approach to planning the following environmental components from the outset, and based upon sufficient information to determine the effect upon each where they are relevant:

- Landscape and local distinctiveness.*
- Biodiversity and geodiversity.*
- Network of green infrastructure.*
- Local amenity, including light pollution, air quality and tranquillity.”*

It is considered that the proposal conserves the overall landscape and local distinctiveness of the area while restoring a portion of the garden to a more traditional historical feel in keeping with the setting. There is no new lighting or other features which will negatively impact the local area. Along with this, the proposal ensures that the changes are not visible from neighbouring properties.

Policy LD1: Landscape & Townscape –

“Development proposals should:

- Conserve and enhance the natural, historic, and scenic beauty of important landscapes and features, including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, nationally and locally designated parks and gardens and conservation areas; through the protection of the area’s character and by enabling appropriate uses, design and management.*
- Maintain and extend tree cover where important to amenity, through the retention of important trees, appropriate replacement of trees lost through development and new planting to support green infrastructure.”*

The development has been specifically laid out and designed to achieve a proposal that protects the area’s character. There are no anticipated losses of trees or plant life associated with the proposed terracing, and the levelling of the slope matches the styles shown by other historic properties.

Policy LD2: Biodiversity & Geodiversity –

“Development proposals should conserve, restore and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity assets of Herefordshire, through the creation of new biodiversity features and wildlife habitats.”

The proposal has no impact on roofs, trees, or waterways while lifting a dark unusable area of land that does not get the light to support satisfactory flora, allowing a formal lawn with a new row of planting along the north boundary increasing the effective boundary hedge.

Policy SD1: Sustainable Design & Energy Efficiency –

“Development proposals should create safe, sustainable, well-integrated environments for all members of the community. In conjunction with this, all development proposals should incorporate the following requirements:

- *Proposals make efficient use of land - taking into account the local context and site characteristics.*
- *Safeguard residential amenity for existing and proposed residents.*
- *Utilise sustainable construction methods which minimise the use of non-renewable resources and maximise the use of recycled and sustainably sourced materials.”*

The proposal is an efficient use of dead land which is designed to meet the historical aesthetic of the property.

The proposal will not be detrimental to the surrounding properties because it is hidden from view due to the local landscape and flora.

The wall construction consists of efficient re-usable stone where possible to maximise sustainability, water permeability and stability.

The proposal creates a safe space that is currently dangerous [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Policy SD3: Sustainable Water Management & Water Resources –

“Measures for sustainable water management will be required to be an integral element of new development in order to reduce flood risk; to avoid an adverse impact on water quantity; to protect and enhance groundwater resources and to provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity, health and recreation. This will be achieved by ensuring that development includes appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to manage surface water appropriate to the hydrological setting of the site. Development should not result in an increase in run-off and should aim to achieve a reduction in the existing run-off rate and volumes, where possible.”

The new stone patio is to be permeable to the point of naturally allowing water to filter below it as it does at present.

Conclusion:

The proposal takes on board the historic architectural style of the property and seeks to continue this architectural garden style.

The proposal emphasises safety for the [REDACTED] family living there [REDACTED] have a private back lawn [REDACTED] overlooked by the patio above.

The materials all seek to be in keeping with the Georgian Grade II listed property.

The proposal does not affect the house or existing trees.

Photos of Site & Surrounding Area:



Front façade of The Old Rectory



Side (west) access.



Top of rear garden.



View north from west access of rear garden.



View of rear garden slope.



Photo south of the west access to rear garden.



Google Maps view of the property and surrounding area.