

**STATEMENT TO SUPPORT
PLANNING AND LISTED
BUILDING APPLICATIONS FOR
THE REINSTALLATION OF AN
ENTRANCE GATES AND REPAIRS
TO THE WALLS AND FENCES
TOGETHER WITH AND
ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS
FOR PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE
ACCESS AT THE ENTRANCE TO
EAST LODGE ALDCLIFFE ROAD**

Planning Statement

DH Planning Solutions

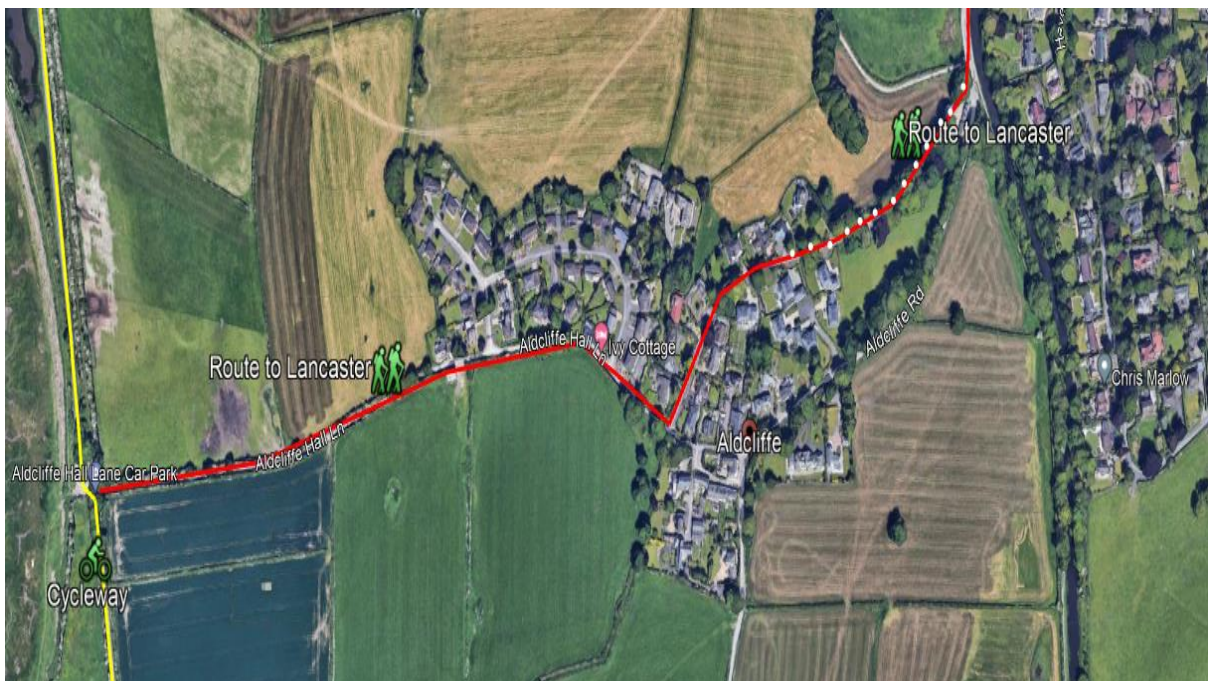
May 2024

STATEMENT TO SUPPORT PLANNING AND LISTED BUILDING APPLICATIONS FOR THE REINSTALLATION OF AN ENTRANCE GATES AND REPAIRS TO THE WALLS AND FENCES TOGETHER WITH ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ACCESS AT THE ENTRANCE TO EAST LODGE ALDCLIFFE ROAD LANCASTER

Background

1-1. Aldcliffe Lodge is a grade 11 listed building located adjacent to the public highway, Aldcliffe Road on the edge of the Lancaster City boundary. The building was the East Lodge to the former Aldcliffe Hall, now demolished. It is understood the Lodge was the work of George Webster, a local architect of some significance who practised in Cumbria and Lancashire. After many years of decline and deterioration the Lodge has now been extended and brought back into productive use by the applicant, Mr Stainton. It is currently occupied by a family.

1.2. The unadopted access road, Aldcliffe Hall Drive, adjoining the Lodge is used for vehicular access to four private dwellings, plus the Lodge. Although not a part of the definitive public footpath system the Drive is also regularly used by significant numbers of pedestrians and cyclists, including other residents of Aldcliffe and users of the Lancaster- Glasson cycleway. It is a convenient and safe route which avoids the necessity to walk along Aldcliffe Road which is narrow and lacking footpaths. It should be noted that the proposals do not interfere with the continued use of the path by pedestrians and cyclists.



Google Earth Image Showing Existing Route Used by Cyclists and Pedestrians in Aldcliffe

1-3. At present, although the existing gate pillars and adjoining walls are partly in situ, the original gates were removed many years ago. The images of the entrance below depict the

entrance gates and Lodge in 2022 before the conversion works commenced and the current condition of the property and entrance following completion of the redevelopment.



[Google Earth Image East Lodge 2022](#)

1-4. As can be seen the gate pillars are (mostly) in place but the fencing is in poor condition or has been removed entirely.



[The Lodge and Entrance 2024 following Renovation of East Lodge](#)

1-5. Some time ago the applicant was approached by as a former occupant of the Lodge who had a portrait, circa 1960, of the original gates to the Lodge. The applicant determined at that stage to investigate the possibility of replicating the original gates, albeit in a modern form, and repairing the damaged pillar and fencing adjoining the Lodge. It was considered this would be beneficial in a number of ways:

- a) Although not mentioned in the listed building description it is considered that the entrance pillars and surrounding stone wall and fencing are an integral part of the setting of the Lodge. A number of people using the Drive have commented that, following the renovation work, which has saved the building and restored it to its original condition, the poor condition of the entrance features detracts from the quality of the works carried out. It is felt that repairing and restoring the gate and surrounding features would provide a significant improvement and, most importantly, enhance the setting and appearance of the listed building securing the property for the foreseeable future.
- b) The works, which will include alternative arrangements for both pedestrians and cyclists to continue to use the Drive (see below for details) will significantly improve safety for all users. At present, as mentioned above, the Drive and entrance are used by local residents with prams, pushchairs etc and children both of school age and younger as the most convenient route into Lancaster town centre. It is also quite heavily used by cyclists, many from the Lancaster-Glasson cycleway, which can be accessed from within the Aldcliffe estate (see map 1-2 above.) There is the potential for conflict between these groups especially given the increased numbers of cyclists and the increased speeds, particularly those engendered by electric bicycles. An additional concern, particularly for cyclists, who very often, enter the narrow and busy Aldcliffe Road without slowing, in the words of many “an accident waiting to happen.” The proposed arrangements (see section 2 below) would prevent this while ensuring that both pedestrians and cyclists could continue to use Aldcliffe Hall Drive more safely.
- c) The proposed arrangements would improve the living conditions for the new occupants of the Lodge. While wishing to make it clear that complaints have not been raised, the occupants are conscious of the numbers of pedestrians, and particularly cyclists many of whom speed past in very close proximity to the main entrance to the property. The applicant has numerous video recordings of cyclists, especially those on electric cycles, travelling past at considerable velocity before speeding through the entrance and direct onto Aldcliffe Road without stopping or even slowing down. The reintroduction of gates and with a separate alternative pedestrian/cycle access to Aldcliffe Road would force cyclists to slow down, possibly dismount if necessary, making it safer for all users and improving the living conditions of the occupants of the Lodge and others who occupy the dwellings fronting onto the Drive.

The Development Proposal

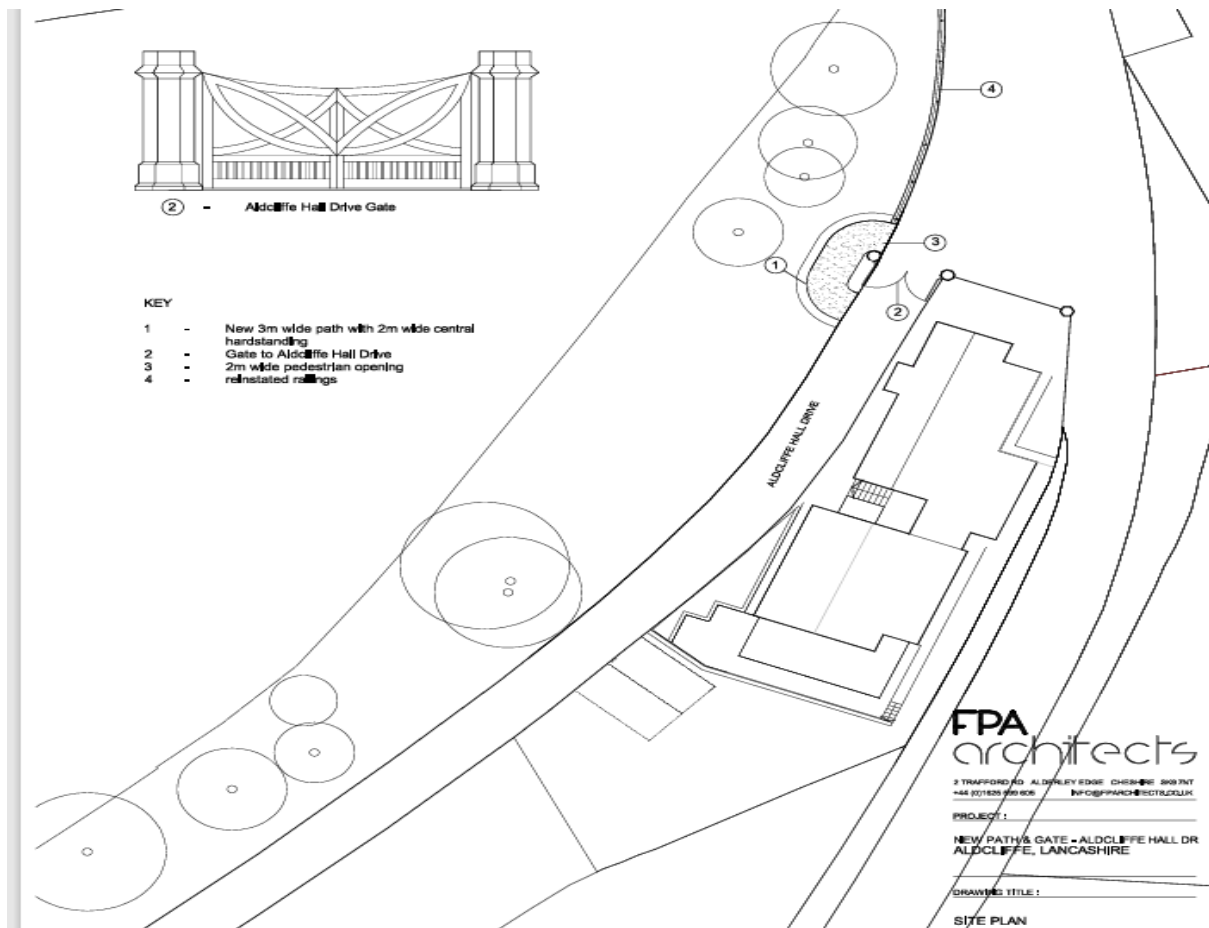
2-1. Both planning permission and listed building consents are sought for the development. The proposals contain a number of related developments which will significantly improve the visual appearance of the site and improve safety for users, without diminishing the opportunity for anyone to use this separate and segregated path into Lancaster and vice versa.

2-2. It is proposed to introduce a new version of the original gate utilising the same design, dimensions and materials to mirror the appearance and elegance of the original. It will, however, be electronically operated and controlled by a keypad and with the keycode only available to the few residents who use the Drive to access their own properties by motor car. This will ensure that the number of vehicle movements using the gate entrance are strictly limited. In addition to the new gate, the pillars and walls and fences will be repaired and/or replaced where necessary.

2-3. Within the site a minor diversion of the path is proposed to separate vehicles and pedestrians in the immediate vicinity of the gate entrance. The new path will divert pedestrians and cyclists to a new safer exit/entrance in the flank wall adjacent to the gates. Cyclists will be forced to slow down and possibly dismount as they approach reducing the potential for conflict with pedestrian and making it for a safer introduction of cyclists onto the public highway.



Image Showing the New Gates Renovated Walls/Fences and the New Pedestrian Access.



Proposed Site Layout

Consultations Prior to Submission

3-1. Prior to the submission of the formal applications detailed consultations have taken place with a number of interested parties as follows:

Conservation Officer – Unsurprisingly the Council’s Conservation Officer, David James, has been involved in extensive pre-application discussions and the details have evolved significantly as a result of these talks. This has included changes to the proposed path and materials. Mr. James has now confirmed that he has no objections in principle to the development from a heritage viewpoint subject to the submission of large-scale drawings of the new gate for assessment and agreement re the treatment of the fences/walls and the various materials to be utilised.

Tree Officer – There are a number of mature trees in the immediate vicinity of the new pedestrian access. Although the trees would benefit from some management there is no doubt that presently make a positive contribution to the site entrance. It was initially considered that some would require to be removed to facilitate the scheme. However, Treescape Consultancy have been engaged to consider the scheme and have concluded that with minor changes and careful management protection measures it could be implemented without the loss of any of the existing mature trees. A plan showing the proposed

arrangements for the protection of existing trees is included within the submission. It is understood that the Council's Tree Officer is now happy to support the scheme.

Planning Officer – Following a site visit from the Planning Officer, Kimberley Ireland, the scheme has been amended and it is understood that provided agreement could be reached with the Conservation Officer and the County Council there were unlikely, in principle, to be objections from a planning standpoint.

County Council Footpath Officer – The current status of the path which follows the Drive is unclear but it does not appear on the Council's statutory designated Footpath Map. It is understood the County Council have never completed the legal process to have the path formally recognised as a public footpath. It seems it's "official" status at this time is a permissive footpath. Furthermore, potential diversions of a designated public footpath are subject to a separate process and, as such, are not strictly relevant to the planning and listed building decisions. However, this notwithstanding and given the importance of the route to the local community, it was considered important to engage with the County Council's footpath officer at an early stage in the process to ascertain their views on any possible changes. To that end the proposed development has been the subject of lengthy discussions with David Goode the County's Public Rights of Way Manager. Mr Goode, regardless of the status of the path which will have to be clarified as a separate matter, has confirmed that he would not oppose the plans provided there was a satisfactory diversion of the path.

The Site Ownership – The applicant does not own the Drive or the land surrounding the Lodge and the gate entrance. The surrounding land is part of the remains of the original Aldcliffe Hall Estate which is managed by local agents, Richard Taylor and Co. The applicant has, however, maintained the surrounding land including grass cutting for a number of years and has continued to do so since acquiring the Lodge from the Estate in 2021. The works now proposed are aimed at improving the entrance to the site, the setting of the Lodge and the better management of the vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists presently using the Drive. The Estate will be formally notified as part of the applications but have been contacted in advance as a matter of courtesy and the Agents have confirmed that there are no objections to the proposals.

Local Users/Residents – Given the numbers of people using the Drive it has not been possible to engage with current users of the Drive in any meaningful way, although those residents whose vehicular access is off the Drive have been consulted. However, it is worth noting that concern regarding the potential for conflict between the various users and particularly the entrance onto the public highway, Aldcliffe Road has been an issue for local residents for some time.

When planning permission was applied for to build the six houses (now known as Aldcliffe Court) in 2015 there were expressions of concern from a number of local residents, a number of whom highlighted the sub-standard nature of Aldcliffe Hall Drive for any additional vehicle usage, its popularity and possible conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and other road users. A total of 7 public responses were received including 2 from City Councillors, Councillors Kershaw and Mills. Amongst the concerns raised were:

- a) Additional traffic movements and the dangers of the direct entrance onto Aldcliffe Road from the Drive, mentioning the “number of near misses”
- b) Dangers for cyclists and pedestrians from additional traffic movements.
- c) The hazards of pulling onto Aldcliffe Road from the Drive for pedestrians, cyclists and joggers given the poor visibility and in particular referring to the fast-moving traffic, lack of pavements, and interferences with visibility.
- d) The increased use of the Drive for service vans visiting the new dwellings with the associated increased dangers for pedestrians and cyclists.

In addition, one resident commissioned a firm of transport engineers (Sanderson Associates) to produce a report on the impact of the proposed development. The shortcomings of the existing junction of Aldcliffe Hall Drive and the public highway Aldcliffe Road are detailed in this report. This notes the shortcoming of the junction in visibility terms and concludes that the potential for “turning type accidents will be increased.”

While the major aim of the development proposal is to restore the Lodge entrance and enhance the setting of the Listed Building it will have additional benefits in improving significantly improving safety for pedestrian, cyclists and motorists. Access onto the Drive for vehicles will be strictly controlled. Only the 5 dwellings and their visitors will be able to access the site, strictly limiting the number of vehicles using the Drive and limiting conflict with pedestrians and cyclists on the Drive. Cyclists will be required to slow down approaching the gates, particularly when pedestrians are also in the vicinity, and will be unable to access onto Aldcliffe Road at speed and without regard for themselves, pedestrians or other road users, as is often the case at present.

Conclusion

4-2. The proposed control of the gates and amendments to the footpath route are minimal but will ensure better and safer arrangements for the many pedestrians and cyclists who use the path at present whilst also ensuring minor improvements for the occupants of the Lodge. The development would appear to be entirely in accordance with Council policies (DM57) to provide safer and more secure environments within the district.

4-2. It is considered that the benefits of the scheme are wholly positive. The condition of the Lodge had reached a stage where demolition was a serious consideration and its conversion for a positive use has ensured that it is saved for future generations. The proposed replacement of the gates replicating their original form, together with the repair of the gateposts, walls and fencing will both preserve and enhance the setting of the listed building as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (Section 16) and Local Plan policies. (DM37 and DM39) It is understood that the works to build the Lodge took place circa 1825/27. It is considered it would be a fitting tribute to the original architect, George Webster, if the gate entrance was restored to its original splendour some 200 years later.