

Moving to the neighbourhood, the applicants will be aware that the property is within Rochester Conservation Area which is guided by a Management Statement, in place since 2002. The Statement identifies No.5 making a positive contribution within the larger collectivity.

However, as **Character Erosion**, it states: "There has been a gradual erosion of many elements that contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, especially to residential properties..." These include (with a photograph)

- loss of traditional railings or gateposts
- car parking within front gardens
- loss of garden walls

The Statement recommends

FRONT GARDENS AND BOUNDARIES (R8)

Alterations to the front boundaries between the pavement and houses can dramatically affect and harm the character of the Conservation Area. The original features of the boundary vary but are predominantly formed by traditional iron railings, in some cases mounted on low walls. Proposals should respect the original style of boundary and these should generally be retained and reinstated where lost. Particular care should be taken to preserve the green character of the Conservation Area. The walls alongside the road and within properties add to the attractive appearance of the front gardens and architectural settings of the 19th century buildings. The loss of front boundaries where it has occurred detracts from the appearance of the front garden by reducing the area for vegetation in this urban residential area. Furthermore, the removal of walls, railings and the paving of front gardens to provide parking space for cars adversely affects the setting of the building and the general street/scene. **The Council will resist any further loss of front boundary walls and railings, and conversion of front gardens into hardstanding parking areas.**

NHS staff are valued members of the community. Doctors have lived, and do live, in this car-restricted neighbourhood and without seeking exceptional arrangements. In some localities a special parking space has been provided; perhaps this could be achieved at the east end of Rochester Road, adjacent to a lamppost. It is a challenge to the Council how they will meet the demand for electricity supply to all residents without a deterioration to the fabric of the Borough.