



**Third floor
upward extension,
providing 699 sqm of new
office floor space with
additional fenestration to
facilitate an active frontage**

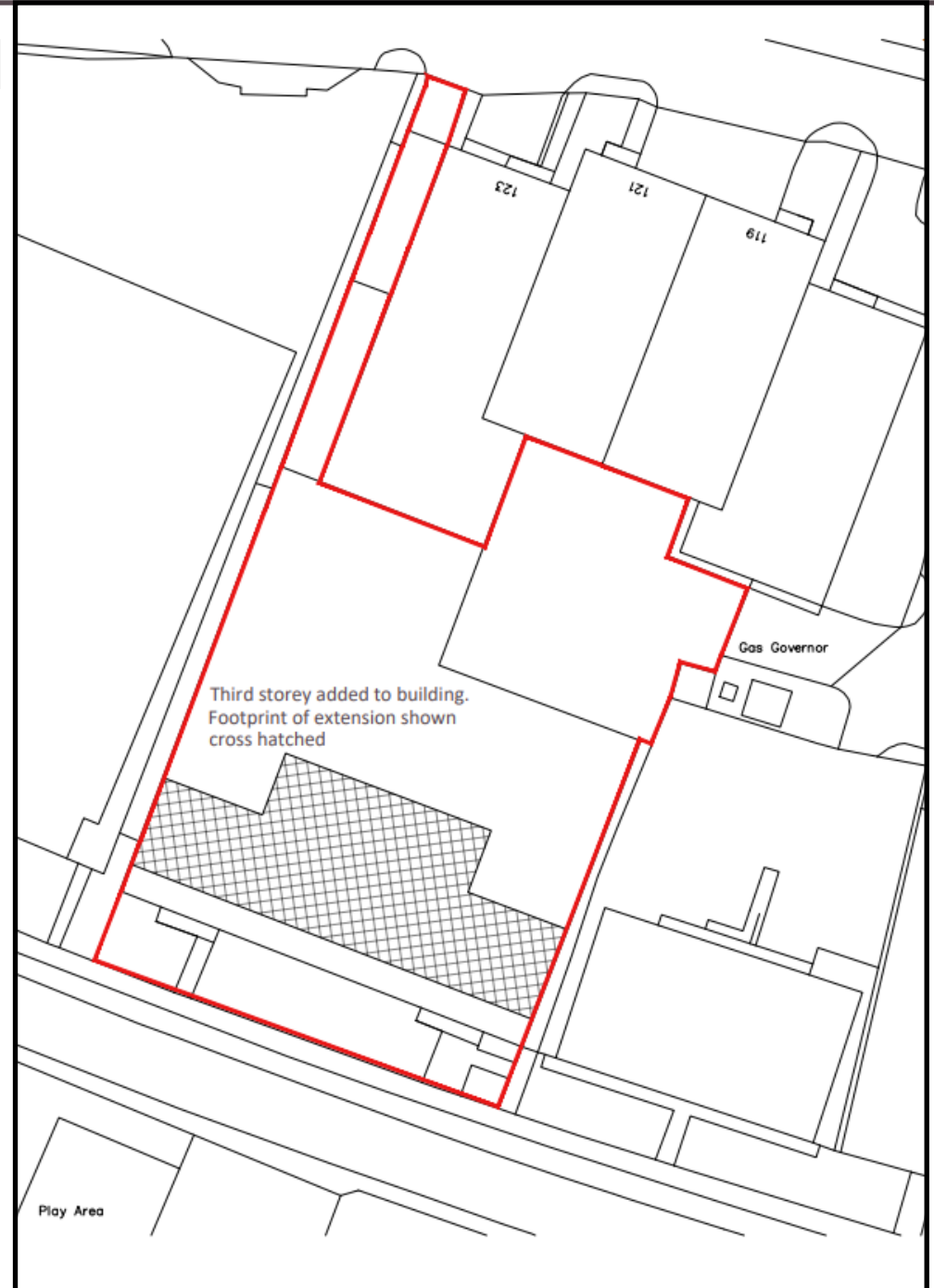
**60 Portman Road,
Reading, RG30 1EA**

Revision A - 17/05/23

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Block Plan



1. INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by STL Architecture and Planning. It supports a planning application by our clients, Mr. and Mrs. McClure Fisher, for the erection of an additional storey above the existing two storey building to deliver new employment space at 60 Portman Road, Reading, RG30 1EA. The existing building is a two storey mixed use building with floorspace office space above the ground floor. The proposal includes the following:

- Third storey upward extension.
- 699 sq m of new employment floorspace.
- New glazed active frontage facing onto Portman Road
- New material palette to improve the overall aesthetic.
- New contemporary cladding and glazing.

This Design and Access statement provides information on the proposed design and access arrangements and describes how the proposal seeks to satisfy Local Plan policies. The resulting conclusion is that key materials considerations, including the impact on the character of the area, neighbour amenity and highway safety are acceptable and the wider objectives of the relevant local and national planning policy are therefore met.

2. SITE CONTEXT

The building immediately to the east of the application site is occupied by ACT systems, with LED specialists, Lightsave, Fresco Prime and Daintons Detail and Valet located to the rear. To the north-east of Caxton Close is Oxkem, which is identified as having hazardous substances on site and to the west of the proposal site is Access Self Storage.

There is a variety of commercial 2-3 storey buildings along Portman with offices fronting the road and private car parking at roof level or to the rear. To the south of the proposal site, on the other side of Portman Road, there is a children's play park set amongst a linear strip of public open space, with 2 storey residential dwellings beyond.

The site photos show that the immediate context is in a linear layout of 2-3 storey buildings with industrial and trade uses along Portman Road, set back behind a small strip of grass with occasional shrubs and trees, softening the streetscape.

The use has been designated as Trade/Commercial/Employment use for many years, being part of the Loverock Road Trading Estate, and apart from the pre-application submission, there have been no recent planning applications on the proposal site.



Building along from the site in question using a mix of metal and fiber cement cladding.



Existing rear access ramp to car park



The existing buildings around Loverock road are large industrial buildings with large access roads to allow for lorries and other light industrial vehicles.



Industrial unit using the synthesis of brick shop front at ground floor and cladding to the first floors. A similar material approach will be used in the proposal for 60 Portman Road.



Shop front windows help the building feel more approachable and less industrial along the main road with lots of through traffic.



Recently refurbished commercial unit the other end of Portman Road using glazing and brick with cladding parapet.



1:500 scale Bar
This Drawing has been produced for printing onto A



View from Wigmore Lane looking towards the landscape buffer and houses on Stone Road. There is a clear separation of the commercial and residential units on either side of the road but ample proximity between the properties to concern light or overshadowing



The existing buildings main facade is tired and dated; the building is in clear need of modernization and refurbishment to make the principal elevation more aesthetically pleasing



Simplistic elevation with the use of a metal cladding system.



Site Context



3. SITE HISTORY

- **890583** **23/11/1989**

Change of use from computer bureau and warehouse to warehouse and industrial manufacturing.

- **970264** **26/03/1997**

Alterations to external elevations (by insertion of new doors and windows to allow internal sub-division)

4. PLANNING POLICY

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2019;

National Planning Policy Guidance 2014 onwards

RBC Local Development Framework

Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction

CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change

CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

EN7: Local Green Space and Public Open Space

EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network

EN15: Air Quality

EM1: Provision of Employment Development

EM2: Location of New Employment Development

EM3: Loss of Employment Land

EM4: Maintaining a Variety of Premises

TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities

TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

OU4: Advertisements

Supplementary Planning Documents

Revised parking standards and design (2011)

Planning obligations under section 106 (2015)

Sustainable design and construction (2011)

5. APPLICATION SITE

The site is about 0.34 ha. in area and is located in the Loverock Road Trading Estate, with vehicular access taken from Caxton Close via Loverock Road. Pedestrian access to the building is possible from both Portman Road and Caxton Road. The serviced delivery and loading area is at the north east corner of the proposal site off Caxton Road.

The site is bound to the south by Portman Road, to the west by 62 Portman Road and to the north by 119-123 Loverock Road. The site is surrounded with a variety of uses typically expected within sites such as this. Such uses include retail/trade counters, light industrial and office floorspace. The site is located on a main arterial route (Portman Road) providing connections from West Reading (Tilehurst) to North Reading (Caversham). There are a number of local bus services within reasonable walking distance from the site located on Oxford Road. There are regular bus services from Reading Town Centre to Calcot (15), Purley (16) and Tilehurst (17). The site is also located some 1.5km from Reading West train station with direct links to Central Reading, London Paddington, Basingstoke and Newbury.

The site is opposite dense residential development, accessed from Oxford Road and bisected by Portman Road. A linear green space extends east to the entrance of the Tesco Extra superstore.

6. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The existing building is constructed using steel and brick and cavity insulation has become exposed resulting in a particularly unattractive building when compared to the surrounding trading estate. The lack of maintenance has also resulted in the building running inefficiently.

The proposed development will result in 699 sq m of new employment space above the existing second floor. This will result in an approximate increase in height by 3.5 metres. The third floor extension is proposed to be set back from the principle elevation to ensure the building does not become overbearing on the street scene and adjacent land uses.

The third floor extension will cantilever over the second floor car park. A balcony is shown to the third floor extension, utilizing the space from the set back extension.

The proposed materials seek to introduce new brickwork to the facade, between cladding and windows, as well as breaking up the overall bulk and massing of the building with metal cladding. These type of material is common along the Portman Road street scene which raises the overall design standard of the trading estate. This detailing is designed to provide visual interest.

The proposal also includes a green wall in its front elevation for biodiversity enhancement, adopting as a guiding example a recent application for 42 Portman Road.

The proposal provides the opportunity to improve the aesthetic of this prominent building in the street scene. This high design quality will enhance the character and appearance of the area.



Application Site





Access & Parking





Elevation of Proposed Development

7. POLICY ASSESSMENT

Principle - Local Plan Policy EM1 identifies that a net increase of over 100,000 sqm is required in the district during the plan period. Loverock Road Trading Estate (Portman Road) is identified in the Local Plan as a Core Employment Area. EM2 identifies this area as a location for new employment development. The development of additional employment floorspace would support and enhance the office use of the building in an area identified for employment use. As such the proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle.

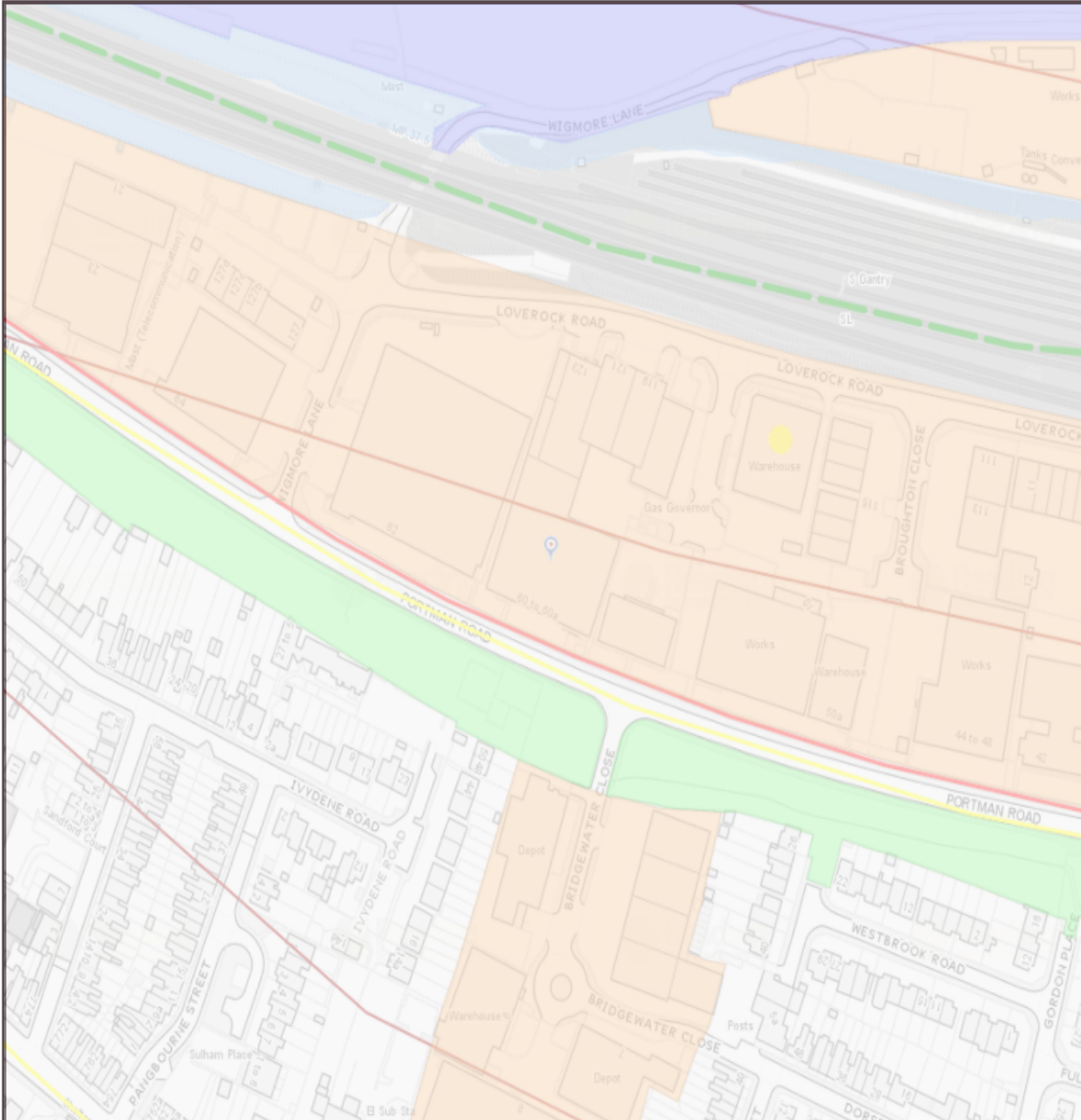
Design - In accordance with Local Plan policy CC7, the proposal seeks to deliver a high quality design to enhance the character and appearance of the area. The proposed extension is subservient and respects the character and appearance of the existing building in terms of size, scale and design. The brick and metal cladding materials proposed have been selected to complement the existing building and surroundings. The inclusion of additional ground floor windows enhances the appearance of the building by providing an active frontage to respond positively to local context. The cantilever structure adds visual interest to the car park at the rear.

Safeguarding Amenity - The extension is designed to be subservient to the main building, ensuring adjacent land uses do not suffer from loss of privacy, overbearing or shading. The proposal site is located some 50 meters from the residential development on the opposite side of Portman Road and as such the proposal would not harm the living conditions of nearby residents in accordance with Local Plan policy CC8.

Transport Matters - A Transport Statement has been submitted in support of this application and provides detailed information on the scheme's compliance with the various transport policies, particularly Policy TR5 - Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging.

Sustainability - A Sustainable Design Statement accompanies this application and sets out how the proposed scheme complies with Local Plan policy CC2. The new extension will be constructed in accordance with latest Building Regulations requirements and the existing buildings insulation will be upgraded in line with current standards. The running costs of a large commercial building as proposed can impact the energy efficiency of the building. As such, the proposal has been designed to provide significantly more natural light to reduce the reliance on electrical lighting. As demonstrated in the application site photos, the building has a number of missing external materials, exposing the existing insulation, resulting in low performance of the building. The proposal also seeks to provide 54m² of new solar panels.

Air Quality - It is not considered that an increase to the office floorspace would create any issues of air quality, so the proposal does comply with Local Plan Policy EN15. The scheme includes increased provision for cycle parking and provides new electric car chargers, thereby encouraging existing and new office users to travel by sustainable means. The office is also located within a Core Employment Area, which is served by a 'Premier Route', which provides high quality bus routes to and from Reading town centre and other local centre facilities. It is clear then that ample "non-combustion" travel is available and air quality will not be affected by office users travelling to site.



8. CONCLUSION

This Planning Design & Access Statement has demonstrated the proposed development is acceptable in principle.

Material planning considerations have been analysed and it is concluded the site can be developed as proposed without adverse impacts to the character of the area, amenity of neighbouring land uses and transport matters.

Overall, the proposal is compliant with the relevant local and national policy and guidance and has sought to respond positively to the policy context.

It provides a new employment space within the Core Employment Area of the Borough and gives a prominent building in the street scene a new lease of a life, thereby enhancing the character and appearance of the area.

