



**UNITS 2 & 6 READING RETAIL PARK
709-731 OXFORD ROAD, READING**

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

15044-1 • JUNE 2022

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01 INTRODUCTION



AIMS OF THE STATEMENT

This Design and Access Statement accompanies a full planning application by Columbia Threadneedle Investments for the amalgamation, conversion and extension of two retail units to form a new unit at Reading Retail Park, Reading.

The application includes for the redesign of the shopfront and service yard elevations, a loading pod extension, external alterations to the car park and service yard and plant and refuse facilities within the application boundary.

The aim of this Design and Access Statement is to show that the proposed development has been designed and informed by an awareness of the site's context and principles highlighted by the Reading Borough Council Local Plan.

The statement will explain the proposals, identify the factors which have influenced this application and highlight the principles that were incorporated in the detailed design of this proposal.

Figure 1: Aerial View of Reading Retail Park

02 SITE ASSESSMENT

LOCATION & MOVEMENT NETWORKS

The application site is part of an existing retail park in West Reading, within the Reading Borough. The retail park is currently home to B&M, Pets at Home, The Gym Group, Wickes, KFC, in addition to the Carpet Right and Halfords units which are the subject of this application.

Reading retail park is located immediately off Oxford Road (A329) which leads in to central Reading. The Park is visibly prominent from the highway, with the Carpet Right and Halfords frontages set back from the road and overlooking the car park.

Vehicular access to the site is from Oxford Road leading to a central access road, which branches off at various points to the car parking areas.

To the immediate North of the site are the other retail units and car park within the retail park, with industrial, retail and residential uses further to the North and predominately residential uses to the South, East and West. Further to the East is central Reading which features a diverse commercial and retail environment.

The site benefits from good transport links due to its location on the A329 and having six bus stops within 500m radius.

Figure 2: Existing Retail Terrace from the Car Park



Figure 3: View from the Car Park to Existing Front Elevation



LAND USE

The application site is formed of two units (Carpet Right and Halfords) - both with an E use classification. The retail park benefits from a separate car park and service yard. The car park fronts directly on to Oxford Road and is therefore in a highly prominent and visible position.

In the surrounding area, dense residential neighbourhoods to the South, East and West provide a good catchment for retail.

ARCHITECTURE

The existing Carpet Right and Halfords units are both part of a retail terrace with the adjacent Gym Group unit.

The form of the three units forming the retail terrace is consistent with materiality and finish only changing to the glazed shopfront and signage zones. All three units feature a low-level glazed shopfront with grey flat cladding above and dark grey tiles to the sides. The Carpet Right and Halfords units' facades are functional but tired, with various stain marks creating an unsightly appearance.

The B&M and Pets at Home building on the East side of the retail park is of a similar aesthetic, as well as the Wickes building on the West side, with only the KFC drive-thru unit being of a different aesthetic to the rest of the retail park.

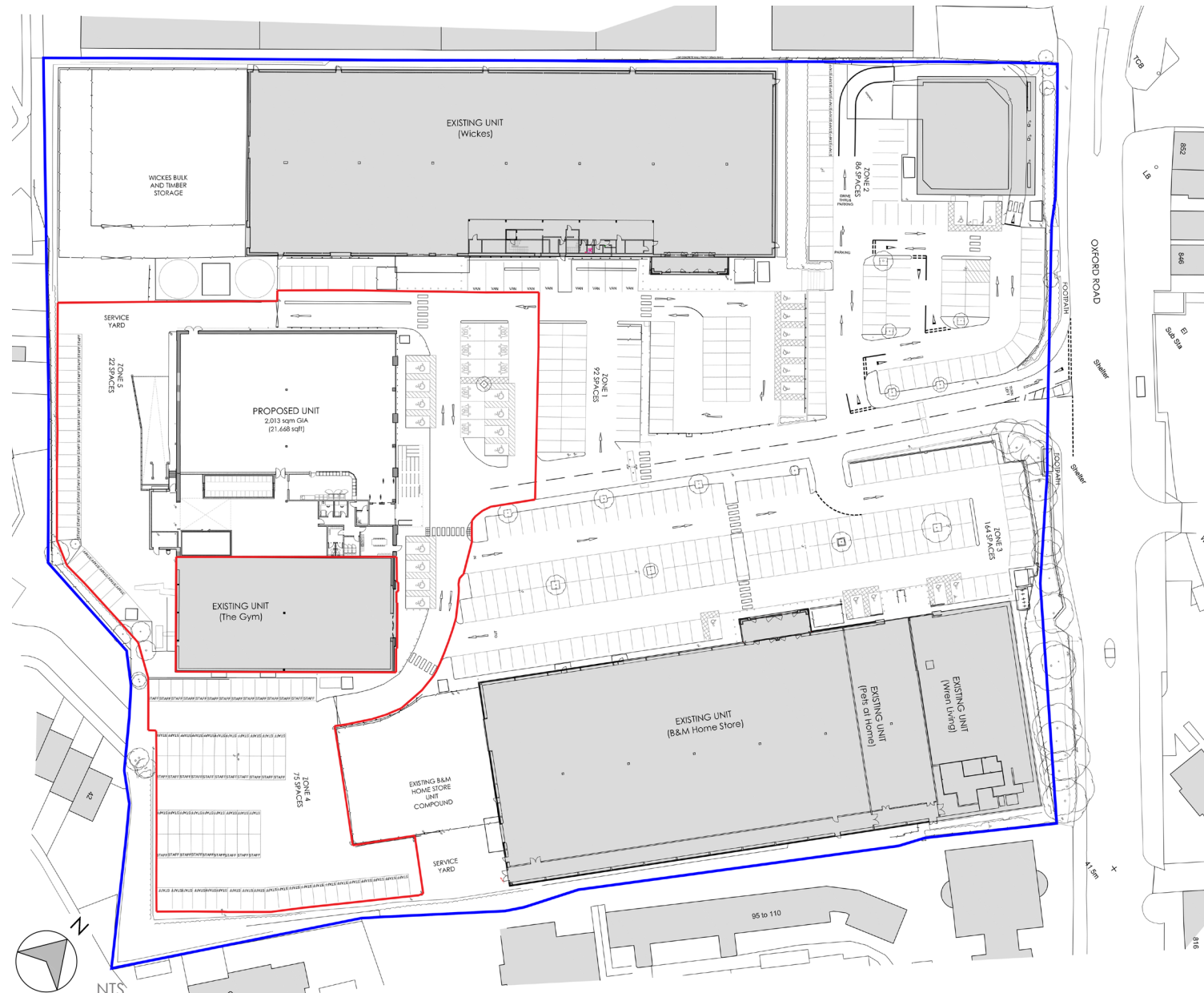
Four and five storey brick apartment buildings with pitched tile roofs are situated to the East of the site and other residential properties to the South and West are generally two and three storeys brick houses, again with pitched, tiled roofs.

The immediate neighbour to the West is Norcot Industrial Estate with an industrial aesthetic of metal cladding in varieties of white and blue, with lower part of the units in buff or red brick.

Figure 4: View from the Car Park to Existing Front Elevation



03 DESIGN



PRINCIPLES OF DEVELOPMENT

From the Site Assessment, it is clear that there are several opportunities and constraints to review when formulating a design proposal for the new unit. These can be summarised as follows:

- The existing facade to the Carpet Right and Halfords units is tired and in need of repair. With the two units being combined into one, this provides an opportunity to provide a fresh appearance.
- The existing car park does not have any child & parent parking spaces and it is therefore possible to develop in to a safer, more welcoming shopping environment.
- The site benefits from a separate shared service yard, which is an opportunity to provide some additional staff parking.

Overall, there is a clear opportunity to breathe fresh life in to a retail park, bringing with it the benefits of a refreshed and modernised appearance, renewed employment and diversification of local amenities.

LAND USE

The proposals for a new unit does not seek to vary the currently permitted E use.

Figure 5: Proposed Site Plan

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposals consist of modifications to an existing building, with construction of a new extension on the South-West elevation to allow for new loading dock with a plant deck on top.

Works also include reorganising car parking and the service yard in order to allow for the new loading ramp to enhance the use of the site.

A net gain of 10 parking spaces is proposed to the retail park, mainly as the result of the addition of staff spaces in the service yard and spaces directly outside the proposed unit. Six new accessible parking bays are to be provided close to the new unit, increasing disabled provision above the existing level. Also, 7 additional parent and child spaces are to be provided in the same zone.

Within the service yard, 22 new staff parking bays are proposed. New loading ramp is to be provided in the service yard as well, which will, together with the loading dock extension, form the proposed new unit's servicing strategy.

As there is a refrigeration plant on top of the proposed extension, a noise assessment is provided as part of this application which demonstrates the plant's relationship with the neighbouring properties.

The front facade of the existing Carpet Right and Halfords units is proposed to be stripped back to its frame and re-clad with metal cladding to match existing, with dark grey tiles being cleaned. The parapet capping will be replaced with the new one to match existing, acting harmoniously with the new projecting canopy and full-length glazed shopfront.

The intention is to deliver a simple yet modern appearance. One that works with the existing building form but displays a fresh aesthetic that is representative of modern retail design. As part of this, the increase in low level glazing helps to generate an active frontage, increasing its visual quality and bringing daylight in to the store.

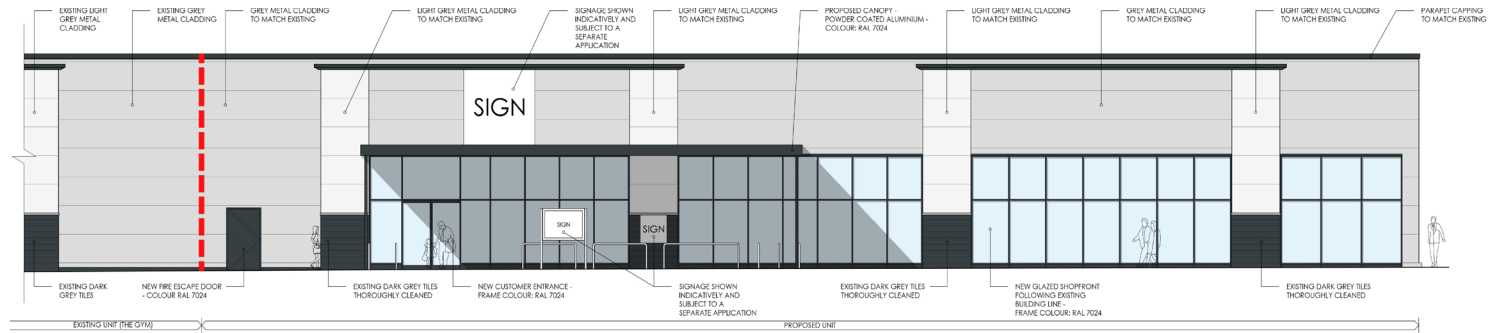
Elsewhere on the building - on side and back elevations, the existing cladding is to be repainted to match existing.

The materials used to build the extension and the plant enclosure will match existing and will complement other units in the retail park.

The proposed new store will improve the visitor experience and provide a complementary service in the retail park for consumers to enjoy.

As retail units, corporate signage will be essential to their operation. However, all signage shown is indicative and will form part of a separate signage application.

Figure 6: Proposed Elevations

01 PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION
1:10002 PROPOSED SIDE ELEVATION
1:100