



Design and Access Statement

Berkshire Record Office

Reference:

6140-P-4000

Revision:

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Date of Creation:

August 2021



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1.0 Record Office Planning Statement

1.1 Berkshire Record Office background

Berkshire Records committee was established by the Berkshire County Council in 1939. Its job was to consider how to look after the many official and private records that were stored in the basement of the old Shire Hall in the Forbury, Reading. Today, West Berkshire Council is statutory lead for the joint archives service in Berkshire. It provides this service under an agreement signed by all six Berkshire districts.

The joint archives service is based in the Berkshire Record Office. It stores historical collections from across the Royal County: from hospitals, courts, councils and schools; businesses, charities, clubs and societies. It provides a safe repository for 900 years of documentary heritage and facilities for sharing that heritage across the globe.

1.2 Demand

A statement from County Archivist Mark Stevens describes the demand for the extension and why it is needed.

The present Berkshire Record Office storage is approaching capacity. Without space for new collections there is a risk that, in future, valuable community assets might be lost. Providing additional storage will enable us to continue collecting and keeping the archives that local people care about.

The benefits stretch further afield. The Record Office has an international audience, with some 90% of public contacts from the rest of the UK or overseas. The county's archives are many people's route to discovering Berkshire more widely.

Providing new, sustainable storage for these archives is a legacy project that has support from colleagues across the unitaries. We recognise that we are temporary custodians of a unique, permanent and precious resource. We hope to leave it in fine condition for the generations to come.

1.3 The Archive Expansion

A Feasibility Study was undertaken from which the preferred option was to expand Berkshire Record Office, over 2 storeys, to the East side of the site. This was in preference to a single storey expansion to the West side or relocation of existing facilities.



Initial concerns regarding the 2 storey extension through pre application advice have been addressed through design development. Initial concerns were as follows:

- Holm Oak Tree: A tree survey has been undertaken (which will be part of this application) and concluded that the Holm Oak tree had structural defects and the necessary actions required for this was to fell and replant to a new location.
- Impact on existing listed buildings: A heritage statement has been undertaken (which is included in this planning application) and concluded that the proposal would have minimal impact to the existing listed building adjacent and the overall conservation area. More details of this can be found within the Heritage statement.
- Impact to adjacent properties and gardens: Initially this could be seen as a problem, however, working out the distances from the rear elevation of the existing housing development opposite, it was concluded that the extension was within the necessary guidelines and considered not to be overlooking the neighbouring properties.
- Loss in parking: The new 2 storey extension would reduce existing parking, however, there is significant room within the existing site to relocate these parking spaces and also add to the existing number of car parking spaces.

Through the detailed design of this application, all initial concerns have been addressed in addition to providing the essential storage capacity for historical documents to be stored for at least the next 25 years, while still providing a familiar and comfortable environment for public use.



2.0 Introduction

Quattro Design Architects Ltd have been appointed by West Berkshire Council to prepare and submit a planning application for an extension to Berkshire Record Office.

The proposal is to construct a two storey extension, to provide increased storage capacity with 2 strong large rooms, general storage and space for additional M&E requirements, whilst providing a link to the existing Record Office.

The project represents an opportunity to expand the Record Office within its existing site, without impacting the existing surroundings or service it provides to the local community.

The statement is to be read in conjunction with all drawings and documentation submitted as part of the planning application.

2.1 Project Team

The design has been developed in conjunction with the following project team;

- West Berkshire Council (WBC) - Client
- Quattro Design Architects Ltd (QDA) - Architect
- MTP Consultants - Project Manager
- KRP Engineers - Structural/Civil Engineers
- BJP Consulting Engineers - M&E

In addition to the project team, detailed site assessments and surveys have been completed. These reports have been produced to both inform the design team during design development, and for the submission of documents to accompany the application;

- Warner Surveys - Utilities and Topographical Survey
- Nurture Green - Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Ass.
- Roper-Pressdee Heritage - Heritage Statement
- MachAcoustics- Acoustic survey
- Blewburton - BREAAAM Consultant
- Diversity - Eco Consultant

2.2 Principle Objectives

It has been our aim to provide a scheme that meets the specific requirements of the client's brief, including:



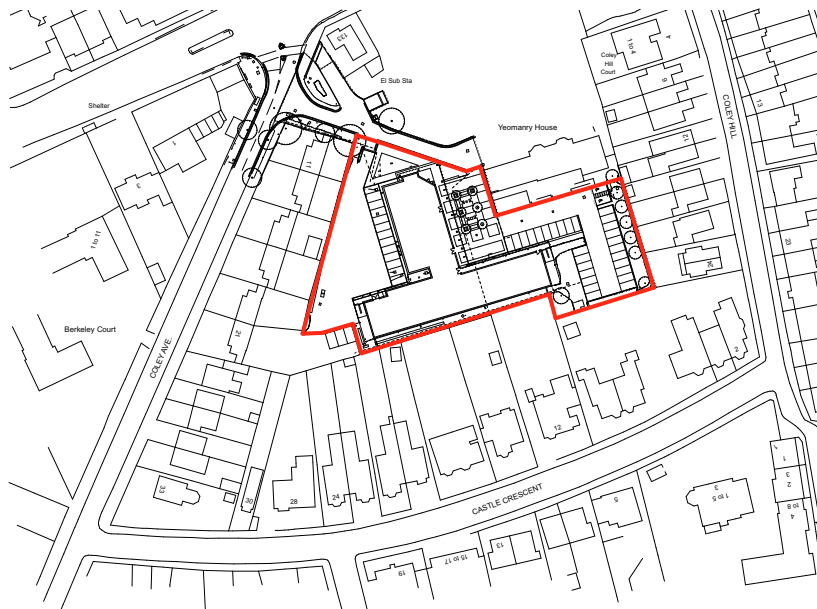
- Creating an extension that integrates elements of the existing building form, whilst continuing to minimise impact to its sensitive surroundings.
- Utilising the potential of the site to achieve an integrated approach to the site, context and landscape.
- Minimising any impact on neighbouring properties.
- Maintaining the safe pedestrian and vehicle access through the site.
- Consideration for servicing of the building to ensure that it does not have a negative impact on the operational needs of the Record Office, highway or neighbouring properties.
- Achieving a high quality of design ensuring that it sympathetically integrates within the local context.

Our principle objective is to create an attractive, fit for purpose storage facility that will benefit the local area and its resident, in addition to meeting National and Local Planning Policies.

2.3 Site Location and Description

The site lies off the Coley Avenue, Russell Street and Castle Hill intersection and within a conservation area that includes a grade II listed building - Yeomanry House. This is shown in the site location plan below.

The Record Office is not listed, but is part of the Yeomanry House curtilage so the impact to any changes had to be considered with great care.



Site Location Plan

2.4 Planning Use Class, Obligations / Contributions

The proposals and operation of Berkshire Record Office will not change. It is



therefore anticipated that no planning obligations or contributions are applicable to this development with regards to use of the building.

3.0 Amount

3.1 Site Constraints

The following list of items have been taken into account in the final proposal submitted for planning:

- Location of the extension has been determined by practical use of the site and where the new extension footprint would be least impactful.
- No impact to the existing vehicular and pedestrian access routes.
- Proximity to the neighbouring residential properties.
- Construction challenges - access for construction traffic is to be managed by the Contractor, and will be outlined in their Construction Method Statement.
- Existing services on and running around the site, with consideration for a drainage strategy that links to the existing Record Office.
- Agreeing temporary parking measures while construction for the extension is ongoing.
- Materials to the façades and how we limit any negative impact on the surrounding areas.
- Ensuring the extension is large enough to accommodate additional storage for many years to come.

3.2 Site Opportunities

The main opportunities presented by the site are:

- Increase the document storage capacity of the Record Office.
- Meet the demand for capacity for the next 25 years.
- Continue to provide any opportunity for improvements in high standard service to the public.
- Establish a safe, secure and controllable environment for storing sensitive historical documentation.

3.3 Response to Constraints and Opportunities

In response to the site constraints mentioned above, we have carefully considered the appropriate balance between providing the storage capacity requirements, and a scheme that is appropriate to its context and respects the character and appearance of the area.



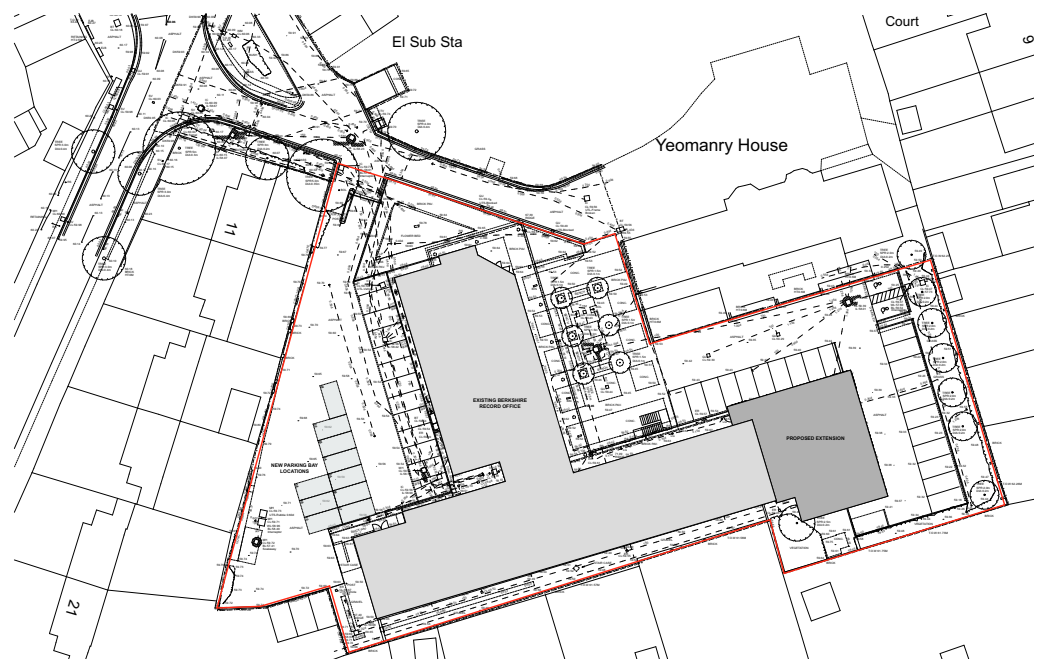
The floor plan was developed using the previous feasibility study and pre planning application comments and advice, with the appropriate measures taken through relevant studies, for the extension to achieve the original brief.

4.0 Use

4.1 Land Use

West Berkshire Council have allocated the site to expand the existing Record Office within the existing grounds. With the growing need for increased capacity for storing historical documents the expansion of the existing Record Office is the logical next step to keep the existing building as the main hub of archives in the area.

The primary vehicular access to the site will remain as existing. The only changes to the site will be the rearrangement of car parking spaces that have been relocated due to the new extension location.



Proposed Site Plan

4.2 Vehicular & Pedestrian Entrance and Movement

It is proposed that vehicular and pedestrian entrances will remain as existing to the North boundary off Coley Avenue.

4.3 Proposed Extension



The new extension will provide additional space for document storage over 2 storeys. The new building will provide the following facilities:

- 2no. Strong rooms
- 2no. Stores
- 4no. Lobby; 2 from external access; 2 from existing building access.

Proposed Building Areas:

2 Storey Extension: 538 sq.m (Approx.)

External Areas: As Existing

Total extension Building footprint 269 sq.m (Approx.)

Parking, servicing & associated landscape 2827 sq.m (Approx.)

Total Record Office Site 4297 sq.m (Approx.)

5.0 Layout

A feasibility study undertaken by West Berkshire Council established the preferred option of the new extension. The layout of the scheme has arisen through the combination of the site constraints and location of existing site features.

5.1 Scheme Layout

The location of the extension responds to the limitations of how the site currently works. The main changes to the site is the omission to car parking spaces to the South East of the site, which will be relocated to the West of the site to avoid any net loss. Access and exit points remain the same.

- The building has been positioned on the South East side of the existing Record Office grounds as residential developments surround the South, East and West boundaries and Yeomanry House to the North.
- The entrance to the site will remain as existing.
- The existing Record Office entrance faces North towards the main site entrance. The new extension will be located to the South East of the site. This ensures no change to how the site operates.
- The staff car park is located to the Eastern and Western sides around the main building, adjacent to Yeomanry House and surrounding residential properties. No parking to the South of the site.



Keeping the Record Office site operations the same has been an important consideration. The key objective of the layout strategy has been to create a secure, safe and easily managed site without changing the current set up.

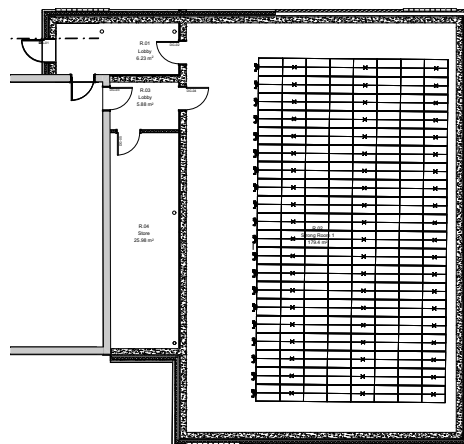
5.2 Building Layout

Quattro Design Architects Ltd were given the West Berkshire Council feasibility study to start with the design and manage expectations for the extension.

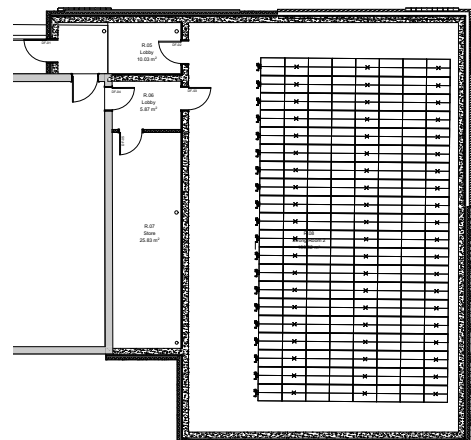
QDA in consultation with and guidance from the client and design team, came up with a simple solution from previous consultations and feasibility analysis.

Drawing upon previous experience and the expertise of the design team, QDA was able to design a building layout that incorporated the following characteristics:

- Solid fit-for-purpose structure providing the flexibility of important internal environment conditions.
- The capacity requirements to meet storage demand.
- A link to the existing Record Office building.



Ground Floor Plan



First Floor Plan

The design provides controlled temperature and humidity requirements for the storage of sensitive historical documents, providing Berkshire Record Office with the right facility to house more valuable items for decades to come. It will provide the perfect conditions, able to respond to demand as and when required, through;

- The size and scale of the building, allowing additional capacity requirements.



- Solid mass construction to allow M&E controlled conditions at stable levels.
- The elevations give the appearance of reduced mass by breaking up the materials on the facade with brick and render.
- The elevations incorporate brick detailing to enhance interest in the absence of windows.
- Open plan floor areas to allow for more efficient use of space for the racking design.
- Lobby areas to allow for limited loss of humidity and moisture levels.
- The new extension connects directly to the existing building both internally and externally.

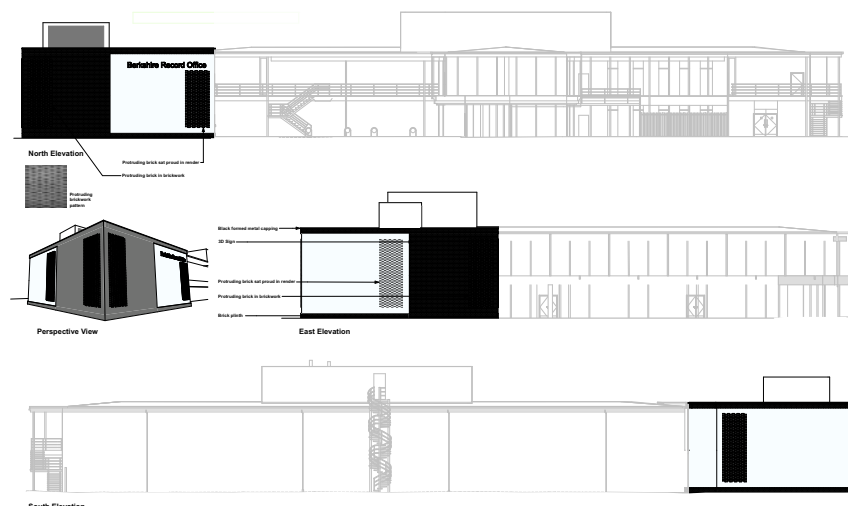
6.0 Scale

The size and scale of the proposal responds to the Record Office storage requirements, its context, the site constraints, and in-depth consultation with the project team and local authority consultees.

The surrounding buildings are predominantly 2 storey residential properties, with a Grade II listed property adjacent (Yeomany House).

There are certain key principles that have been incorporated which define the design for the scale of the new extension, these are:

- The new building is two storey; essential to minimise footprint and maximise storage space.
- The new extension is located to the far end of the site (South East) to minimise the impact to the existing site.
- The new building is of a scale and form in keeping with the existing Record Office, allowing easy access to the new extension from the existing building. It also has a flat roof to keep the height of the extension as low as possible.
- The use of the render and brick material has also been carefully considered to maintain the contemporary appearance of the existing Record Office and introducing detailing to break up the façades appearance to reduce the impression of mass.



Proposed Elevations



7.0 Landscaping

No landscaping is proposed for these works, with the exception of relocating the Holm Oak tree as specified in the Tree survey. Location TBC.

7.1 Foul and Surface Water Drainage

Please refer to Civil engineers drawings submitted as part of this application, for a full, comprehensive design, and site wide strategy.

7.2 External Lighting

External lighting has not been proposed for this scheme. Existing lighting levels and arrangement to remain.

8.0 Appearance

Our intention is to create a controlled environment, to specific humidity and moisture levels to store sensitive historical documents. The design would also link into the existing building, but enhance the visual appearance of the contemporary appearance of the Berkshire Record Office. The concept design has been developed to address a number of key factors, these include the need to:

- Create a building that is sympathetic to its surrounding yet with unique distinguishable features.
- Incorporate brick and render detailing to break up the facade in the absence of windows.
- Be constructed to a system that is manageable, efficient and keeps disruption on site to a minimum.
- Be sufficiently robust and air tight to allow sensitive environmental controls through mechanical ventilation and heating.

These concepts are best understood when read in conjunction with the design team drawings, which form part of this application.

8.1 Palette of Materials

The new extension will resemble some aspects of the existing surroundings in



colour and materials, however, adding interest to the site visually was key to distract away from the potentially large mass of the extension.

Although not finalised, the following list of material is proposed for the development and provides a sense of its final appearance:

Walls:

- White render and dark grey brick, with accents of brick detailing. Please refer to elevation drawings that illustrate this.
- Plinth of engineering brick below DPC line

Roof:

- Single ply membrane roof.

Windows:

- N/A

Doors:

- Polyester Powder Coated Aluminium - Grey

9.0 Access

The proposal does not affect existing access measures. The new extension is accessible from internal breakthrough lobbies and external doors on both ground and first floors.

The site remains as existing with no change to current operations or transport links locally.

9.1 Horizontal Movement Through the Building

- All internal lobbies will be in accordance with Paragraphs 3.15 & 3.16 of Approved Document M.
- Horizontal circulation routes will be illuminated to the recommendations set out in the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers Code (CIBSE)

10.0 Sustainability

Throughout the design process the project's sustainable credentials have been benchmarked, reviewed and targeted to ensure all opportunities to improve sustainability options have been taken. During the process achieving



the BREEAM rating of excellent, required by Reading Borough Council as a planning condition, had its challenges for this kind of project.

10.1 Below is a Blewburton BREEAM assessor's statement explaining reasons to accept a reduced BREEAM rating and how achieving an excellent rating would not be possible or practical for this project:

We have reviewed the proposals for this development and the evidence provided to date and, although the intentions of the design team are to maximise the sustainability of the works, including an intention to be zero carbon, there are a number of compelling reasons why it will not be possible to achieve the Excellent BREEAM rating required by Reading BC as a planning condition.

The development comprises an extension to the current archive storage facility for the Berkshire Record Office. This is a highly specialised facility that needs to be constructed and fitted out in accordance with strict requirements of BS EN 16893 in order that fragile and important documents can be stored safely and securely in perpetuity. As such its design is unusual and does not fit neatly with any of the standard BREEAM categories. We have had discussions with BRE who have agreed that it can be assessed as an industrial building under the warehouse sub-category. The alternative would be to have a bespoke assessment set up. This is a very time consuming and costly exercise which would compromise the viability of the project. The bespoke assessment process is most frequently used by organisations that have a standard format that is rolled out over several buildings, for example Whitbread have a bespoke assessment for Travelodge developments. In such cases the time consuming and costly nature of the process of setting up a bespoke assessment is spread over a number of projects. In our view this would not be appropriate for this development. Therefore, the recommended option is to assess under the standard warehouse assessment criteria; the problem is that, because it is a very loose fit, it is difficult to score well. Examples of where this is an issue are:

- Health and Well-being – the facility will not have any windows so none of the HEA 01 credits are relevant;
- Materials – the large quantity of concrete specified will compromise the possibility of achieving credits in MAT 01;
- Water – there are no sanitary areas to be provided so the assessment would need to be based on the existing facilities.

The difficulties arising from the nature of the building are further compounded by the fact that it will need to be assessed under the more recent, and more stringent BREEAM 2018 scheme. Furthermore, the team were originally led to believe that a BREEAM assessment would not be required, therefore many of the early actions that are required under this scheme have not been undertaken. These early actions are increasingly valued by the BREEAM process but are



costly and need to be taken prior RIBA 2 in order to qualify for credits. They are, therefore, expected to be taken at some considerable financial risk given that this is long before any planning application can be submitted. Examples of this include:

- ENE 01 - energy workshop and modelling of operational energy at concept design stage
- TRA 01 – a travel and transport assessment prepared by end of concept design stage
- MAT 01 – life cycle cost analysis of options before end of concept design stage
- WST 05 – climate change adaptation strategy by end of concept design stage

Nevertheless there will be areas in which the building will score well, these include management, waste and health & well-being other than HEA 01. I am confident that the scheme will achieve a BREEAM rating of Good with a score in the region of 53%. The attached pre-assessment document shows the credits that are possible to be targeted.

There remain a few categories in which credits cannot be determined with any degree of certainty until the designs are finalised, but it is clear that the design team is committed to ensuring that the building is designed in accordance with key sustainability principles despite its relatively poor performance in BREEAM terms.

10.2 In support of the above statement we have acquired a statement from the project officer at West Berkshire Council outlining areas from where the project has been compromised in achieving BREEAM excellent rating. Please see this statement below.

The rationale for making a case in mitigation is based upon the following considerations and after consulting the Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019).

The Local Plan indicates that this scheme would be required to achieve BREEAM (2018) 'Very Good' accreditation and to evidence a 5% buffer, against this target.

After considerable review and in consultation with our appointed BREEAM consultant, we recognise that the required target would present significant challenges. In mitigation we could achieve a BREEAM (2018) target of 'Good', with scope for some additional credits above this, but could not formally offer this buffer at the application stage.

Due to the nature of this building, the BRE have agreed that it be classified



as an 'industrial building'. In the sub category of 'warehouse', but would have preferred the building be assessed as a 'bespoke'.

This would have resulted in a far more costly and protracted review process.

Although we however have registered the scheme, we request not to pursue formal accreditation, but to track and record all credits achieved and evidence their outcome, using the BREEAM scoring matrix.

In seeking to capture the key challenges on this proposal, we have quoted the corresponding reference numbers from the Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019):

- 4.4 Natural Light/Daylight

The nature of our proposed archive extension means that natural light would be undesirable and regular exposure would cause damage to the stored archive materials.

To this end our proposed building would not have windows, glazed panels or borrowed light. Consequently we cannot benefit from any associated credits.

Although we would be dependent upon artificial lighting, we propose to provide the latest energy-efficient lighting systems.

The building is not a permanently occupied space, so we are mindful that any lighting provision be in sporadic use, further reducing energy consumption.

- 4.5 Natural Ventilation

Our proposed building must provide a temperature and humidity controlled environment.

True natural ventilation is therefore undesirable. We could only expect to blend mixed air, via the air handling system.

Consequently we would be denied those credits normally associated with the inclusion of passive ventilation and would be reliant upon mechanical ventilation.

- 4.11 Landscaping and Energy Efficiency.

We are essentially seeking to construct a large 'box' so have little option to control solar gain, other than via our proposal to provide PV panels.

Although the building cannot benefit from solar gain, the proposed design does incorporate a high spec thermal envelope.

The constraints of the existing site only afford scope to deliver nominal landscaping.

- 4.12 Energy Efficient Applications

- 5.4/5.5 Contribution of Trees and Landscaping



Our proposed building would sit within a restricted site. It is tight to the boundary, on the SW elevation and otherwise bounded by car parking, with little green space directly associated with the building or available for re-purposing.

Our lack of glazing and the unoccupied nature of the building would mean that any trees could only provide screen planting.

- Ecology

On two elevations our proposed building would be bounded by car parking and sit very close to a boundary, on the SW elevation, affording little scope to introduce ecological benefits to our scheme.

We have commissioned a Phase 1 Ecology Survey and Bat Survey and are assured the scheme will not have a detrimental effect on any existing habitat, but we will struggle to achieve significant ecological enhancement.

A single, non-native (Holm Oak) tree will be affected by our scheme; we would, at the very least seek to replace this and be able to supplement this with a limited planting schedule.

We also would also seek to provide appropriate bird and bat boxes and an insect hotel (refuge).

- Travel Plan

We seek to construct an unoccupied building, to be utilised by existing Berkshire Record Office staff, so do not have the scope to capitalise on Travel Plan-related credits.

The existing building already provides sufficient cycle storage and parking provision.

We would be unable to provide new pedestrian or vehicular access, as part of this scheme.

- 6.0 Water Efficiency

Under this category our ability to score credits is again compromised; the proposed building having no dedicated WC facilities or a supply for staff welfare applications.

Neither can we gain credits for the use of grey water, metering or other means of recycling waste water.

However the proposed plant installation would meet the latest energy efficiency standards.

Conclusion

We are seeking to provide an inert environment, by way of constructing a



‘building within a building’.

This approach being dictated by the need to provide robust and passive fire protection, for irreplaceable archive material.

We respectfully request that the planning authority might factor this special status, when considering the BREEAM accreditation target for this application.

11.0 Waste Minimisation

The contractor will complete a site waste management document, as is normal practice.

The levels of the existing site have been carefully considered and the new building can be constructed with little need to take material from site.

Key to the success of this plan is its communication to the site operatives and should form part of their site induction.

The waste minimisation plan starts with the design, and will focus on the following key points:

- Raising awareness through clear signage.
- Dedicated areas for segregated waste.
- Lockable skips to prevent rubbish dumping.
- Sufficient time and resource to be allocated to waste separation.
- Maintain a tidy site to limit contamination.
- Consistent monitoring and appropriate enforcement
- Provide incentives/negotiate recycling payback with local recovery firms.
- Use written contracts with sub-contractors requiring waste minimisation practice.
- Collection by suppliers of delivery packaging.

As above the contractor will set out a designated area within the site for the collection and separation of waste for recycling. The contractor will be responsible for raising awareness of the procedures involved with the recycling at the site induction required by all operatives working on the site. It would be expected that operatives would also be updated at ‘toolbox talks’ as and when required.

The contractor will also be expected to provide clear signage of materials to be recycled and the location for their collection. Suppliers should be requested to take all additional packaging away with them following deliveries, allowing re-use or recycling of materials at the point of supply.

