



SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND ENERGY
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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENTS

To accompany the Planning Application in respect of the proposed change of use from existing D1 day care for adults with learning difficulties and autism and 1x4 bed flats for respite accommodation to children's care home at 2-4 Alexandra Road, Reading RG1 5PE

Proposed
Children's
Home
2-4 Alexandra
Road
RG1 5PE



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Context

The site is 2-4 Alexandra Road RG1 5PE located on the western side of Alexandra Road near the junction of London Road to the north. The properties are two semidetached buildings connected internally by a door size opening located midway along the party wall. The buildings were built in the 1980s. The properties have been let or owned by several companies in the past. The current Owners Lakeland Heights Ltd previously trading as Quality Care Providers acquired the properties in 2009. The properties have been in lawful use as day care centre for adults with learning difficulties and a respite home run and managed by the Owner since 2009. This is confirmed by the planning permission granted in 2009 and 2011 (ref. 09008/FULL and ref. 110664/FULL)

The properties were used as Day Centre for adults with learning difficulties and autism and a respite home including office for staff. The properties have been vacant since 2019. The site adjoins Alexandra Road Conservation Area, but is not part of it and the area is predominantly residential. Some of the houses on Alexandra Road are converted multi-occupation including flats (nos 6, 8, 16, 34, 53, 55 for example) while some remain as family homes. There are also other buildings within the area that have been converted to professional use such as dentistry and there are also others that have been converted to nurses' quarters and a Nursery. To the north of the site is no. 74 London Road a dental and implant clinic and to the south and south east is predominantly residential area.

The site and the surrounding area are well served by public transport. There are very good bus services along King's Road to the north and Erleigh Road to the south of Alexandra Road all within five minutes walking distance. The bus routes have direct link to Reading Station and are frequent

PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks a change of use from Day Centre for adults with learning difficulties and autism and a respite home including office for staff to children's care home and associated car parking at the forecourt and rear and an amenity space at the rear of the buildings. The proposal involves internal alterations, erection of a single storey side extension at the front, a reception, and kitchen and activity space on the ground floor and bedrooms on the upper floors. The elevations remain largely unchanged except for the proposed side extension at the front, the replacement of existing roof lights with two dormer windows to the south, removal of some existing windows and rear door to facilitate conversion into bedrooms and to provide a disabled access door to the amenity space at the rear.

Layout

The proposed site and floor plans were strongly influenced by the existing floor plans, internal conditions and the site.

During the feasibility study and design stage, guidance was sought from the

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- Reading Council's Local Plan 2019.
- Reading Revised Parking Standard and Design SPD 2011.
- Alexandra Road Conservation Area Document 2005.
- Standard For Children's Home (England) Regulations 2015.
- Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality standards 2015.
- Reading Borough Council Guide to Amenity Standard
- Reading Borough Council Waste Management Guide Lines

The main entrance is at the front at no, 2 Alexandra Road which leads to a lobby with a door that opens up into an informal reception that has a feeling of a living room in a home. Beyond the reception is the middle part of the building where the kitchen, dining and lounge are located and adjacent are two activity rooms which are at a lower level. The activity rooms are accessed by a platform lift and steps from the kitchen/dining/lounge area

A door from the activity rooms leads to the rear of the building into the amenity space,

A door opening located halfway on the party wall shared by the two building serves as a connecting link between the properties. It links the lounge/dining area in no. 2 Alexandra Road with a hall way in no. 4 Alexandra Road from where several rooms are entered.

These rooms are the two bedrooms, sensory room, utility, staff room, the lobby of the stair at no.4 and a bathroom in the proposed side extension. A second door located at the entrance lobby is for staff use and serves as an alternative access to no. 4 Alexandra Road.

There are three car parking at the forecourt two of which are disabled parking. Bicycle stands and three motorcycle and moped parking for staff and visitors. are also provided within the forecourt.

A bin/recycling area is located near the side boundary wall shared with adjacent property.

4 staff car parking are located at the rear of flats no.6-8 Alexandra Road. A shared drive way adjacent to flats no. 6-8 leads to the staff car parking.

At the rear is the amenity space designed on the principle that residential child care should provide a safe and stimulating environment in high quality buildings, with spaces that support nature, provide privacy and allow spaces to be active. The proposed landscape has many interesting features and it is primarily designed for play and social interaction involving children and young adults. The notion of play includes visual and sensorial experiences together with physical activities.

The key features such as the material for the amenity space flooring, the planting, the wall climbing, the outdoor chessboard and basket ball court were specifically chosen for the purpose of supporting the design principle.

The materials used and the planting are also chosen to address the issue of climate changes and reduction of carbon dioxide emission. The materials are reclaimed and sustainable. The flooring material is a 3D printed permeable Polypropylene tiles and the colours are very vibrant specifically chosen to stimulate the children. The flooring provides greater traction while reducing stress on the knee and ankle joints

Planters and retaining walls are made of Gabion stones wire mesh baskets and so are the proposed seating furniture.

The planting are sustainable and predominantly perennials, evergreens, flowering shrubs and plants that bloom in winter. They do not require extreme maintenance.

At the centre of the amenity space is a soft landscape area and a water sculpture and fountain. The sculpture is an “H” shaped metal feature with small apertures and a stainless steel cable nets. Water emerging from the apertures quietly trickles down the stainless steel cables nets into the fountain creating a refreshing atmosphere.

The water in the fountain is returned to the sculpture by a system powered by solar energy and at night coloured LED light bulbs at the base of the fountain are focused on the cables and trickling water. The light show makes the experience of the moving work of art even more eventful

A disable ramp has been provided at the rear to allow access to the amenity space. This will allow those who are wheelchair bound and others who are ambulant disable to have access to the amenity space

The Standard for Children’s Homes Regulations (England Regulations 2015) requires that the home be a safe environment with adequate privacy

The proposed Cedar slat Screen/fence that is erected along the perimeter of the rear boundary walls is designed to provide adequate safety and privacy.

Scale

The proposed side extension and alterations to the building including the external layout have been designed to be sympathetic to the scale and style of the properties.

The arch element at the side have been retained and incorporated into the proposed single storey side extension. The proposed dormers are similar in size and style to those of the adjacent property

Appearance

The existing buildings would remain largely unchanged externally except at the front on the ground floor with the erection of the single storey side extension, the replacement of existing roof lights with two dormer windows to the south, removal of some existing windows and the enlargement of the existing external rear door to provide a disable access to the amenity space at the rear.

The Staff car parking area will be formed using grasspave2 system.

This is a porous grass paving system that allows rainwater to percolate through the permeable surface of the paving and back into the ground.

The system provides a long term green paving alternative that can reduce

CO2 emissions and filter out environmental toxins through bioremediation

Water Efficiency

Water harvesting is being considered as a measure to minimise water wastage. A cost effective system that will meet the minimum standard under the code for Sustainable Homes and the Building Regulations is being considered

The proposed porous grasspave2 paving system will allow rainwater to percolate through the permeable surface of the paving and back into the ground where the water is cleansed and returned to the ground water supplies.

The percolated water from the car park and from the amenity area and rainwater from the roof can be collected into an underground water tank buried below the car park and amenity area. The water can be diverted into the buildings to be used for toilet flushing, washing machine and garden hose pipes. As pumping water to consumers is the biggest single use of energy in the UK, water saving is of huge importance in the fight against climate change.

Access

The issue of inclusive access was considered and where applicable, wider door openings and ramps at entrances and exits were incorporated into the design to accommodate one of the requirements for people with disability

Transport and Parking

The area is well served by public transport. The site has a good access to facilities such as convenience shops, local surgery, schools, café, churches and a pharmacy. The facilities are within walking distance from the site on the south east of Erleigh Road. To the northwest along Eleigh Road is Reading University and a library and a Orthodontics on Craven Road

There are car parking spaces on Alexandra Road of which a large number of the spaces are managed by the NCP.

The proposal intends to encourage the occupants and visitors to use public transport and for the visitors and staff to consider travelling to the site by bicycle or motorcycle/moped. Several bicycle stands and three motorcycle/moped parking have been provided at the forecourt. There are also Electric vehicle charging points proposed in the parking areas

Environment

All works will be carried out strictly in accordance with the requirement of the current Building Regulations ensuring high level performance of the building in terms of energy efficiency, lighting, heating, sound insulation and security. Energy efficiency measures and passive solar design were considered and incorporated into the design. The use of renewable energy technology such as photovoltaic cells and solar water heating and passive ventilation

were explored and further consultations with the installers are still going on. It is our intention to carry out further consultations with the lighting and sound insulation consultants during the detail design and specification stages. The proposal is designed to comply with the minimum standard for the Code for Sustainable Home

Appendix



Front Elevation of 2-4 Alexandra Road



Entrance to shared car park rear of No. 6
Alexandra road



Waste storage for No. 6 Alexandra road



Driveway leading to existing shared car park



Existing shared car park rear of No. 6 Alexandra road



View from car park towards rear of No. 4 and existing garden



Side and rear elevation of No. 4 showing low boundary wall within the conservation area



Existing rear garden at 2-4 Alexandra road



Existing rear garden at 2-4 Alexandra road



View towards store in existing garden



View towards boundary walls in conservation area rear of No. 2



View towards exit door from activity room, rear of No. 2



View from rear exit door at No. 2 towards existing rear garden



Side view of store in existing garden



Existing rear garden



Front elevation showing location for proposed side extension



Existing ramps to 2-4 Alexandra road



Existing parking at forecourt of 2-4 Alexandra road



Perspective view towards car park at no.2-4 Alexandra road forecourt



Waste storage and parking for No. 74 London road