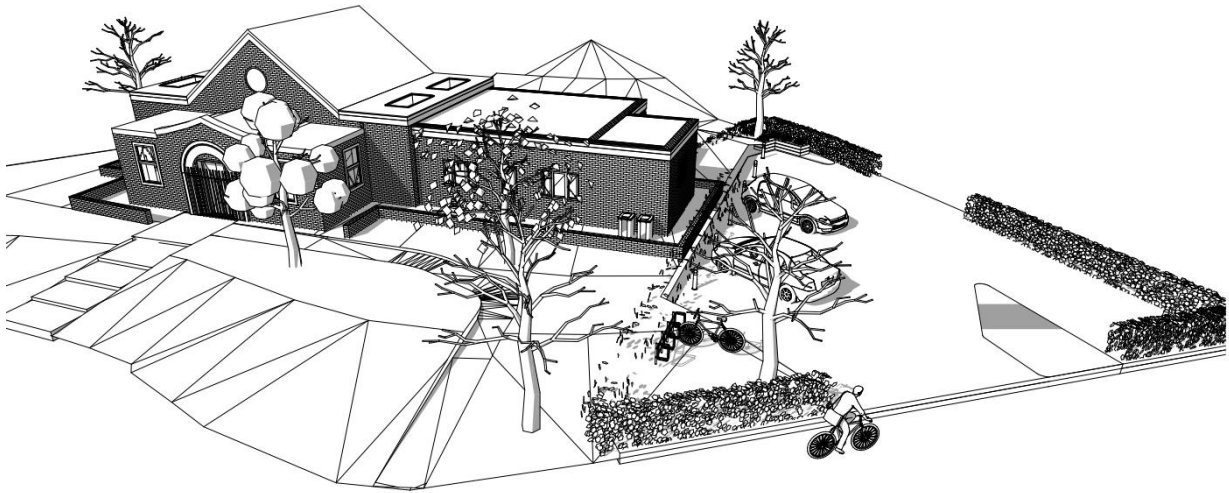


Project: Whitley Library

Report: Planning Statement for Planning Application Ref: 210537- 205 Northumberland Avenue



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1.0 Proposal

The proposal seeks to utilise the site as a F2b use class, which involves the use of land adjacent to the library and 182 Cressingham Road to provide off street parking.

Proposed Use Class (F2b)- Local Community use via the provision of Hall for meeting place for the principal use of the community.

The new usage of the building would be to provide classrooms/ workshops for children and adult learning centre through organised seminars. The use of the building would be primarily learning based and would allow client (Al-Majid Welfare Trust) to deliver its objectives in delivering learning and engagement activities for children and adults, aimed at social development and community led organisation.

2.0 Background

The site at 205 Northumberland Avenue, Reading RG2 7PX has been acquired by Al-Majid Welfare Trust. This site was used by local authority as a Library since 1935.

The proposed use if for the building to serve as a community centre for the local community. In accordance with business plan proposed by Al-Majid Welfare trust on December 2019, (see Whitley Library - Dec 2019 completed application to bid.docx).

3.0 Historic Environment; Local Listing

Whitley library is understood as to be a site of local interest owing to its social historical importance, style (see architectural interest below) and group value, as described in the commendation for listing status by Principal Planning Officer (below). Whitley Library has:

- *A prolonged and direct association with figures or events of local interest.*
- *Played an influential role in the development of an area or the life of one of Reading's communities.*
- *Representative of a style that is characteristic of Reading.*
- *A noteworthy quality of workmanship and materials*
- *Forms a group which as a whole has a unified architectural or historic value to the local area.*
- *Is an example of deliberate town planning from before 1947.*
- *Has a prominence and landmark quality that is fundamental to the sense of place of the locality*

Architectural Interest (extract from 13.09.2018)

The style is characteristic of municipal and institutional developments in Reading at that time. Very few examples of this style remain and this one is particularly distinctive because of its façade and 'LIBRARY' in bronze letters in a cartouche over the entrance.

It has been referred to as 'the architecture of hope'. When the library was opened in April 1935 the construction was described as brick, faced with two inch bricks. The architect (at this point) is unknown. Although understated, the building exhibits the use of non-standard materials of high quality with particular attention to detailing.

The main symmetrical façade consists of a large projecting, single storey, gabled entrance

porch of brick with stone detailing. Behind the projecting porch entrance is a two storey height, symmetrical brick gable with stone parapet and tow flanking, flat roofed 'wings'. The gable has a central stone plaque with surrounding wreath and the word "Library" in bronze in typical Art Deco style font.

4.0 Car Parking and Surface

Car Parking provision allows for seven nos. of vehicles including one separate disabled space. Reference is made to parking guidelines, however considering the site lies in a serviced area (close to numerous public transport routes) car parking issues are not foreseen. The architectural team have therefore designed car parking provision to allow for comfortable movement of vehicles and the allocation of a disabled bay.

A provisional spec for Grasscrete has been made, this would have following benefits:

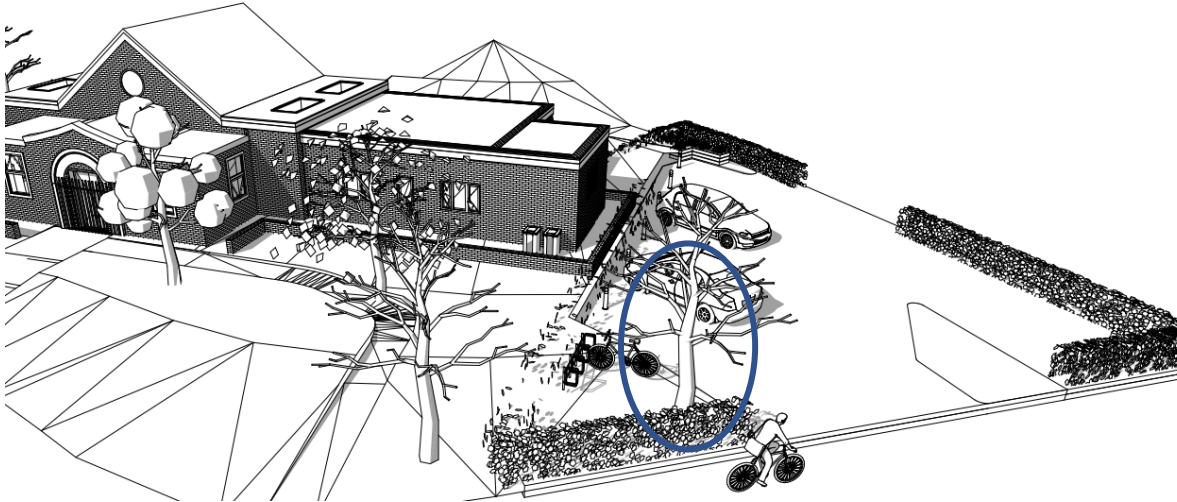
- Resistance to differential settlement with safe load distribution
- Natural blend to green surface of car park area
- A porous layer used in between surface and sub-level would allow natural filtration to sub-base layer
- Ability to be used with naturally graded surface. Since the proposed slope at eastern side of formerly 'Whitley Library' is sloped, a Grasscrete surface would not require unnecessary flattening of surfaces and increased surface run-off.

5.0 Waste and Recycle Collection

Waste and recycle refuge is not expected to increase in any significant amount to have a detrimental impact on the site. The current council provision of a 120L bin is deemed adequate for the proposed use of the venue. Any additional waste during events that may exceed the bin provision will be removed via private waste disposal contractors.

6.0 Trees and Environmental

The property is subject to TOP 9/18 (4 Trees) however none of the protected trees are within the grounds of changes made. The two non-TPO trees in the parking have been subject to discussion at design stage. While the Chestnut tree flanking to the west side of the proposed car park is to be retained, the second Chestnut tree bordering to 182 Cressingham Road is to be removed and replaced to the rear side of the proposed car park (see car park layout plan). The reason for the removal of this tree to increase visibility for vehicular access into and along Cressingham road.



Above: Perspective view of site with carpark entrance area. Chestnut tree outlined in blue to be retained

7.0 Transport

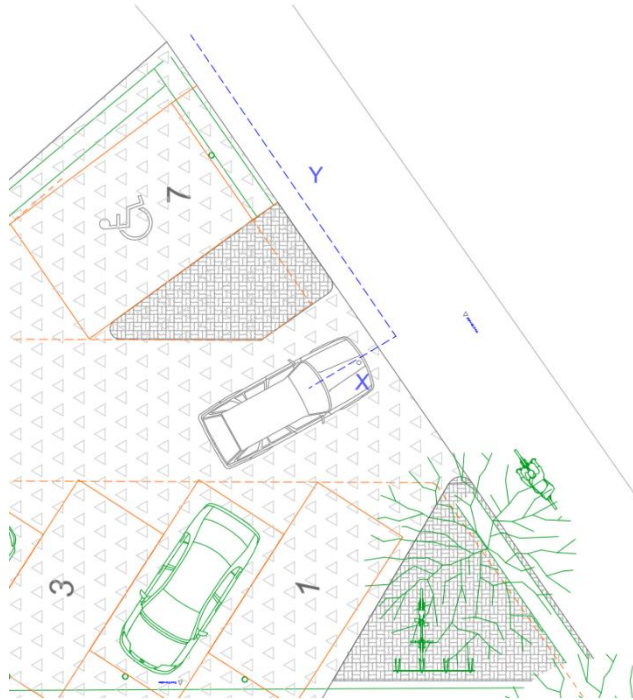
The site is located at the junction of Northumberland Avenue and Cressingham Road. Cressingham Road and Northumberland Avenue are both classified roads, linking the A327 Shinfield Road in the east with the B3031 Basingstoke Road and the A33 Relief Road in the west. Double yellows are in place located around the site and junction.

It is proposed that the existing dropped crossing for no. 182 is to be extended, thereby creating a shared access from Cressingham Road. The proposed access is minimum of 4.5m wide. In accordance with the adopted SPD, parking bays provided are 2.5 x 5.0m with disabled parking bay measuring 3.4m x 5.0m plus 1.2m clearance footway to the side of the space.

Visibility Splays –The appropriate design considerations have been made according to a 30mph speed limit as observed on Northumberland road, the ‘y’ splay distances of 43m (according to the ‘Manual for Streets’*) is required in both directions.

Junction Visibility Splays at 2.4m ‘x’ distance – Visibility to the left is adequate to maintain 43m of clear unobstructable views and visibility to the right is somewhat reduced owing to the roundabout junction area.

**Department for Transport, 2013. Circular 01/2013 Setting Local Speed Limits. 2007. Manual for Streets.*



Above: Plan showing Visibility splay area along Northumberland avenue as drawn out by Y parameter (in accordance to 'Manual for Streets').

8.0 Sustainability Statement

Sustainability aims are mainly based on material considerations for the car park provision on site. A permeable surface has been considered with suitable soft landscaping to allow for a more incremental discharge of site rainwater. At this stage, the sustainability provisions are based on general assessment of clients needs and should be reassessed post-planning and Building regs stage.

Sustainability Aim	Proposal Scope
Landscape <i>Targets are defined and documented regarding landscaping, in particular how the project utilizes the existing quality of the location and positively influences/actively adds to local architectural value.</i>	The site utilizes the existing sloped setting to create access way for vehicles into the site. No permanent changes are recorded and the existing topography is aligned with new soft landscaping plans (pedestrian walk ways and planting via hedges).
Transport network/accessibility <i>Targets are defined and documented regarding the mobility</i>	The provision for car parking is considered an accessible space where vehicles access the adjacent site with relative ease. Some consideration has been given to visibility splays and an opening of 5.5m is adequate for entry and exit of vehicles and pedestrians.
Development <i>Targets are defined regarding the positioning of the project within the existing building fabric. Positive impulses and improvements to the existing context are achieved by a sensitive design regarding scale, urban density and volume.</i>	Site data has not been undertaken regarding the main building performance related to services and day to day use. The proposed use of the car park utilises an area of land in proximity to the main building. This means some level of integrated planting and soft landscaping may be considered. The scheme is sensitive to the site context and does not impose any irreversible changes.
Exterior space <i>Objectives are defined and documented regarding the development of the exterior space and how the project relates and contributes to streetscape, public space, green areas and access zones.</i>	The main building's reuse as a social space would enhance the site and retain the importance of the building as an asset of social importance. The building carries a distinguishable profile from street view and the proposal maintains its relationship with the public sphere.
Usage planning <i>Targets are defined and documented regarding the concept of building use that are aligned with the existing district usage, complement these in a purposeful manner and take spatial planning objectives into account.</i>	The proposal is driven by a need to use the already built space on site. There are no requirements to alter existing movement on site and the car parking addition would bring no hard changes to the character, appearance or longevity of the proposed use of the site.

9.0 Summary

The proposal for parking provision is ancillary to the intended use of the building as a new social hub. The proposed use which does not alter the character or appearance of the building will actually reduce the accelerated disrepair and adverse effects to its structure over time that are associated with buildings being empty over elongated periods of an abandonment and disuse. Further to this, the proposed changes to the site are reversible and consider the prominent location of the building by relying on public transport measures to attend the site, in contrast to over providing vehicular spaces on site.

The allocation of car parking will also, give the site the benefit of having proposed soft scaped surfaces which will contribute to the improved appearance of the historic building. Better landscaping strategy, combined with better perimeter fencing (via shrubbery and hedges) will overall enhance the character of the site and allow the site to evolve in a more controlled and organised manner.