

Mulberry House

1a Eldon Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 4DJ

Design & Access Statement

February 2020

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1. Introduction

This Design and access statement accompanies a full planning application for a part-3, part-5 storey building including a semi-open basement at 1a Eldon Road.

The proposal has been developed with an approved scheme on this site (Ref: 180591) as a starting point and their observations are included herein to give a background to the design conclusions drawn (ref 7.1)



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2. Site and Context

“The site lies to the south of the arterial King’s Road (A329). The site is accessible to pedestrians from Eldon Road which links to London Road (A4). This runs parallel with the A329. King’s Road and Eldon Road act as major bus and vehicular traffic routes through Reading, a bus stop is location directly outside the existing access into the site. The site can be accessed via Eldon terrace which operates as a one-way highway. Eldon Terrace is accessed from King’s Road via Eldon Street and Victoria Street located East of the site.”

The previously existing dental surgery on the site is now demolished as per approval Ref 171521. The demolished dental surgery had a poor formal relationship with Hanover house being largely overbeared in form and mass.



“A grassed servant piece of land is located between the existing surgery building and Eldon Road. This gap goes some way to aiding a transition from the scale of Hanover House on King’s Road to 1,3 Eldon Road, aided further by the scale of the mature trees to the south boundary of the site. The site is raised in relation to its immediate context. To the north, a retaining wall determines the extent of the site boundary with Hanover house, with a storey drop to private car parking. To the east a ramped approach for vehicular traffic from Hanover House allows access to Eldon Terrace. The West boundary with Eldon Road is determined by a poor quality retaining wall, approx 1.2m high, retaining 1m of ground, with a stone veneer finish. The wall is of no architectural merit or relevance to the area. the site currently has 5 “typical” parking spaces which are not of current Highway Standards dimension. These are accessed via a controlled car park for Hanover House accessed from Eldon Terrace.”

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2. Site and Context

“The site lies within the Eldon Square Conservation Area. Eldon Square is accessed to the south of the site from Eldon Road located just north of London Road. There are an array of Grade II listed dwellings along both sides of Eldon Road, typically of the Georgian style. To the north of Eldon Road on the junction with King’s Road a series of grand Grade II listed buildings create a compelling street scene exhibiting typical Georgian detailing, proportion and site layout with iron fences and pillars.

The listed buildings are typically of Bath stone ashlar, with examples of ground floor channelling. There are examples of stucco with cornice, blocking courses, barred glazing, relief pediments, stone mullions, pilasters and stone porches. The urban scale of King’s Road has lent itself to larger scale buildings evident to the east and west with additional storeys and new high rise buildings still being constructed. There are recent examples of 3-4 storey residential blocks being constructed in close proximity and adjacent to the listed buildings along Eldon Road.

Development has also swamped number 220 and 222 King’s Road which is located between Hanover House and a recent residential development, Henry Court and Edward Place. These are typically of facing masonry and render, typically of poor quality materiality and of no architectural merit. Hanover House is located adjacent to the listed buildings and shields the site from part of Eldon Road and all of King’s Road.

Previously office accommodation, Hanover House has recently been converted to small unit domestic accommodation. It is a typical example of early modern architecture constructed to suit local employment need as a consequence of rapid population growth in the area. Its scale and architectural detailing are incongruous with the finer architectural examples it shares its context with. Its original flint string course and inset columns have been over-clad with PPC metal, it’s colour hinting at the tone of bath stone.

Those dwellings to the south of the site, 1,3 Eldon road, are raised three-storey properties typically of Edwardian style. They are faced with a yellow brick likely in response to the listed buildings of Eldon Road and Eldon Square to the South. To the rear, East, they are faced with a red brick.

To the east lie two-storey pitched roof terrace dwellings of facing red brick and slate roofs.”



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2. Site and Context

Site analyses (both desk-based and site-based) have resulted in the following observations:

“...the site is well located to benefit from the local infrastructure. however, there is an apparent lack of quality green space to the immediate area, It is evident that, other than a requirement, any proposal should consider the amenity value of existing green space and mature trees on site and consider the value of this to the wider community.”

Furthermore, the “proposal will have to carefully manage the relationships to Hanover House, north, terraces to the east, listed buildings to the west and properties to the south west in respect of overlooking, overbearing and daylighting. It is additionally important that the proposal enhances and integrates itself successfully within the wider Eldon Square conservation area. ”



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3. Planning History

The site was previously part of the land of Hanover House. Hanover House was granted Prior Approval for a change of use from class B1(a) Offices to C3 (dwelling houses) under application. 14/1343 (excl. 4th floor). The 4th floor was later approved under application 15/0229. Applications 14/1343 and 15/0229 did not consider the proposal site, Mulberry House, 1a Eldon Road, as part of their applications.

In relation to the application site 17/1521 was approved on the 5th December 2017. the description of development was as follows: "*Demolition of Mulberry House (Class D1) and replacement with soft landscaping (nil use)(amended description)*".

4. Development of Proposal from inception to present

a) OBA planning application (180591)

With regard to the recently approved development for the site (180591), this previous application was referred to the Design Review Panel (DRP) at pre-application stage who highlighted the following:

- *'potential for additional development on the site, if consideration is given to how proposals bridge the change in scale between the two neighboring properties'*
- *'extremely ambitious architectural intent'*
- *'clear and elegant concept'*

The planning application was then developed to create a more inviting relationship with the street through amending the entrance and positioning more open balconies toward the south/ west. This resulted in approval ref 180591.

The approved design forms the basis of the current proposal and we wish to credit OB Architecture here.



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b) Development of proposal

The major challenge of the site is the scale differential between Hanover House on Kings Road and Numbers 1 /3 Eldon Road and proximity to the former.

The existing grassy gap with mature trees between the above assist the transition, but would be improved with an intermediary scale building to help facilitate this transition more adequately. As such we have kept to the height of the approved proposal (red dashed) with an additional step between floors 2 and 4 .

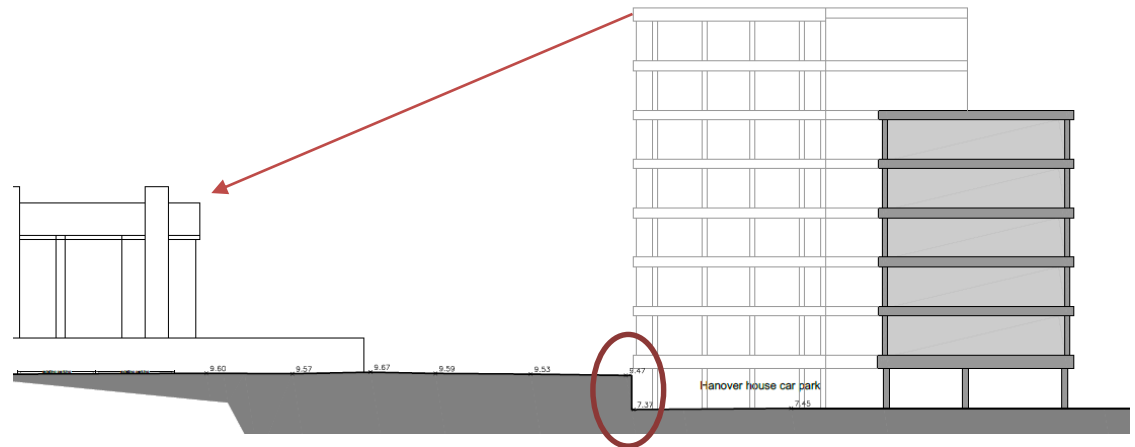
In order to make the most efficient use of height, we propose subsuming the existing car park spaces into the building, but crucially to also drop the car park spaces into a basement. This has the effect of doubling the car parking spaces from 5 to 10, including 2 spaces for people with disabilities. This also allows sufficient space for bicycle storage (10 bikes) as well as overflow/large secure storage for the flats.

The basement is a logical choice as the site is already raised in relation to its immediate context: a 2.2m retaining wall to the north; an access ramp to the east and a retaining wall which runs along the Eldon road to the west.

Our proposal seeks to make use of this raised position which by its very nature makes excavating a basement an obvious choice. We would however maintain the existing level of the 'servant' grassed land facing Eldon Road by creating a podium deck.

The podium deck is respectful of the existing trees and makes an allowance for planters, paving and seating in order to improve the shared amenity space as before.

Care has been taken to avoid the root protection zones of existing trees as far as possible with a 1m soil zone. The green roof above the basement has an allowance of 400mm for a green roof. Further information is set out within the submitted Tree Report and Surface Water Drainage Strategy respectively.



Existing levels with trees omitted for clarity showing the relationship with Hanover House and 1/3 Eldon

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b) Development of proposal (continued)

The overall height of the development has been maintained, but the density of the development has been increased chiefly by making better use of the ground floor level (now residential, not circulation) and slightly lengthening the upper floors.

The faceted/ lozenge configuration which allows views through the site has been retained in concept but reconfigured to create more accommodation of various sizes, all with private external/semi enclosed amenity space. The density of the proposal has thereby been increased creating more housing stock.

The angles and screen walls ensure that the privacy of Hanover House (hereafter HH) residents is preserved in line with good practice despite the un-neighbourly boundary condition created by HH (glazing in walls on the boundary). The design has sought to avoid any significantly adverse impacts to HH as demonstrated by the Daylight/Sunlight Impact Assessment prepared by Hawkins Environmental.

To further preserve residential amenity, views out of the building are managed: the west facing aspect over the green space is reserved almost solely for habitable rooms – kitchen/ dining and living – to maximise the outlook. The south view over the carpark toward Eldon terrace is the secondary view and has a mix of habitable rooms and bedrooms. Outlook toward the north (HH) and due east are controlled with combination of opaque glazing, high level glazing and privacy screens.

The mix of accommodation created as a result is as follows:

- 5 x 1bed 2 person flats
- 3 x 2bed 3 person flats
- 3 x 3bed 4 person flats



Previously approved scheme shown red dashed and trees omitted for clarity



NW wall with west-facing slots guide views away from HH toward the green space

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b) Development of proposal (continued)

All flats have been designed to meet and/or exceed the space requirements for the maximum number of occupants. For example the 3 bedroom flats are all above 95 sqm (space stds), meaning they could accommodate 3, 4, 5 or 6 occupants. This makes for a more adaptable and versatile housing stock as it would work for a family of 4 or 4 young professionals sharing.

The proposal has been developed in order to increase the amount of accommodation and improve not only the space standards, but the amenity and overall viability/success of the proposal. The access core is in a central location to improve circulation, reduce the necessity for long corridors and create more double and triple aspect accommodation.

The differential floor levels between HH and Mulberry house has been retained in concept in order to further mitigate any potential overlooking.

Although the roof terrace on the fourth floor is only set back 1.5m from the eastern façade, the terraced houses at Town Place are 20m away and a row of mature trees further mitigate any potential loss of privacy – as shown below.



Existing trees and shrubberies mitigate overlooking to the east.



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b) Development of proposal (continued)

Boundary treatment to the main pedestrian access on Eldon Road remains almost as existing, but upgrades the materiality to match the appearance of the building as shown in the OBA visual (right). The addition of a hedgerow and railings is a nod to the Georgian streetscape of the area.



The main vehicular entrance remains via Eldon Terrace which is seen to be DDA compliant as it is a level entrance, also leads to the car parking spaces having direct access to the lift core and all subsequent floors.

In terms of servicing, we propose using the same refuse route currently in existence, which navigates from HH car park up the ramp to the east of the site on route to the bins at the Eldon Terrace car park entrance. We propose an opening for bin presentation in the half basement where the bins could be collected.

At all other times (i.e not collection day) the bins would be housed in the allocated internal refuse space, with drainage points for wash down.

Right: Diagram showing movement between bin storage and bin presentation as well as existing lorry route.



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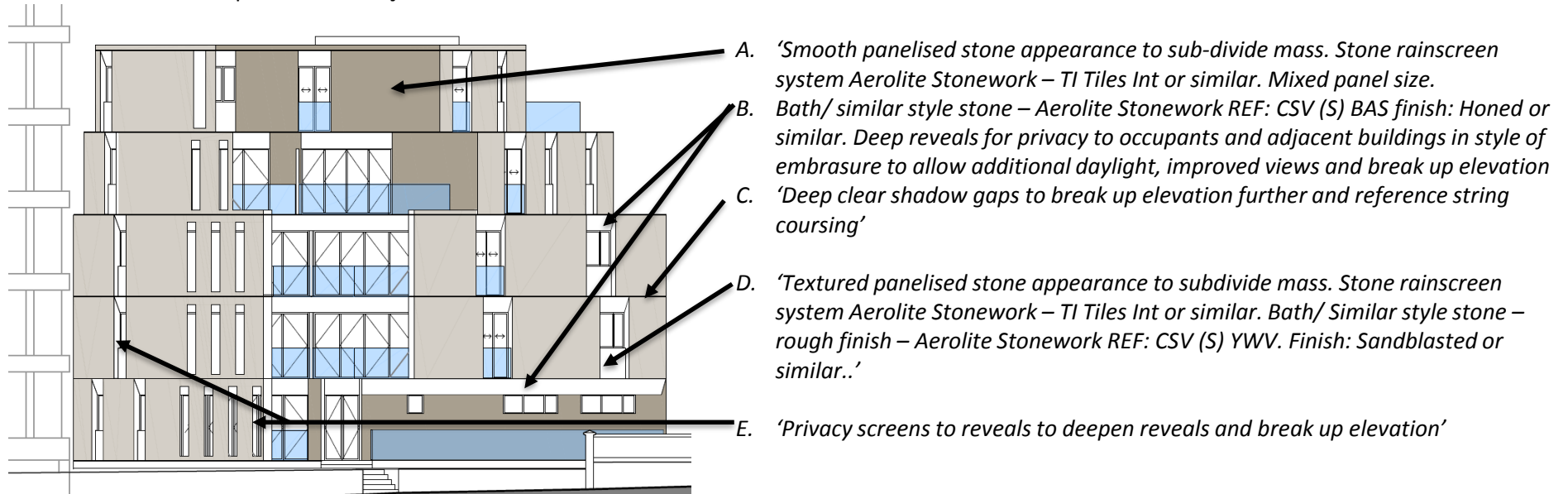
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5. Further notes on materials and special features

a) Materials:

The proposal seeks to use traditional materials but in a contemporary modality – thereby integrating the building into its environment. We propose the use of a warm coloured limestone such as Bath stone, an oolitic limestone comprising granular fragments of calcium carbonate.¹ The building is detailed in such a way as to break up the carved form using materials of differing finishes and facets e.g. the honed angled panels above the windows, the rough textured panels below the single & double glazing and the bronze coloured metal to the window reveals.

In order to achieve the contemporary appearance with high quality robust detailing, we propose the use of stone rainscreen – such as Aerolite stonework pictured here. Aerolite Stonework is a 5mm thick natural stone veneer epoxy bonded to a 15mm thick natural granite backer reinforced by a fibreglass matting. The granite backer is profiled to facilitate easy installation on to a horizontal carrier system on its top and bottom edge. This will provide the carrier system for the chamfered panels above the glazing, the main flush façade as well as the decorative honed panels below the glazing. The latter will be a rough sandblasted finish to create light contrast with the smooth panels of the façade.



1. Originally obtained from the Combe Down and Bathampton Down Mines - its warm, honey colouring gives Bath its distinctive appearance.

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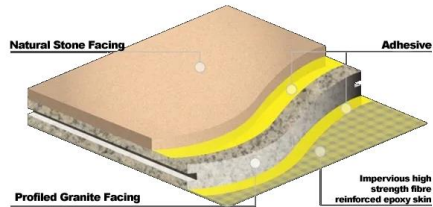
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5. Further notes on materials and special features

The glazing also has differing depths to further add shadow and relief – flush Juliette balconies, recessed terraces and set back windows.

Aluminium glazing to match the colour of the reveals and glass balconies seek to keep the materials palette simple.

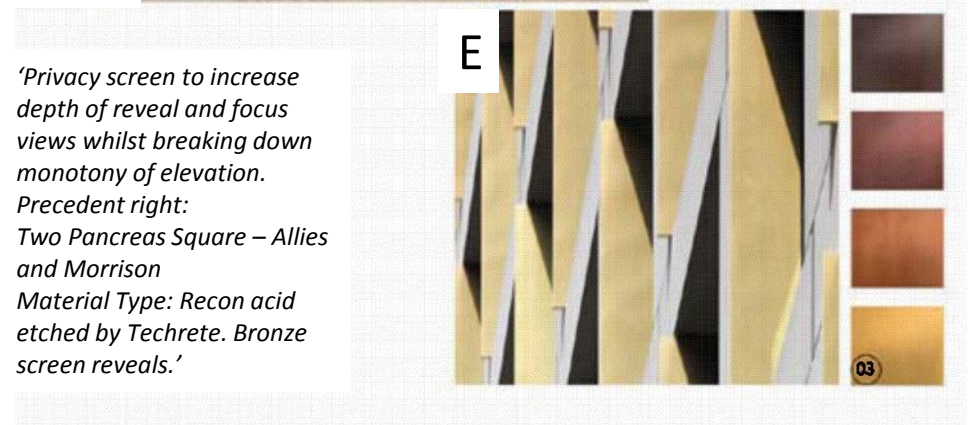
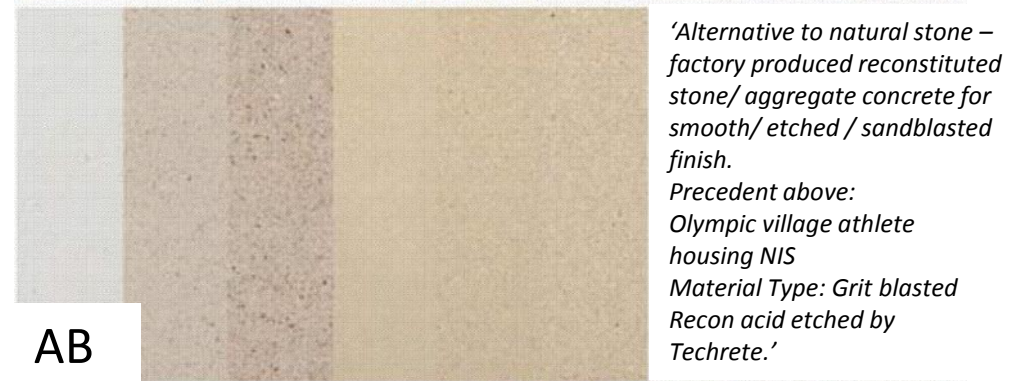
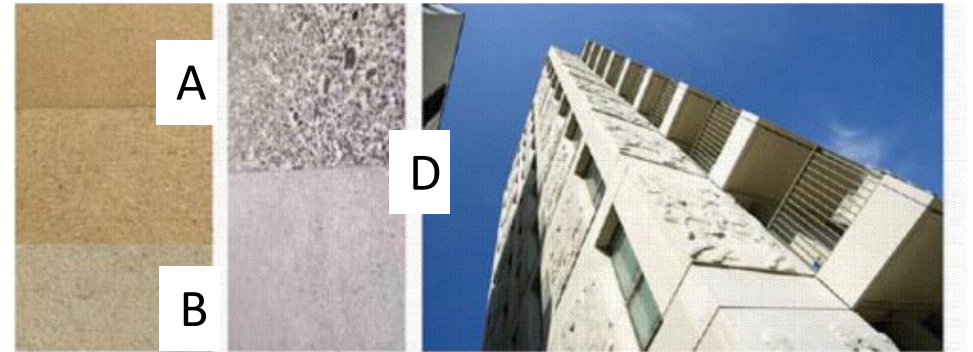


Left: Aerolite composition
Right: Materials & examples

b) External lighting

Only the absolutely necessary external lighting will be specified in order to minimise light trespassing ie nuisance to neighbours.

These will operate on a combination of timers and PIR detection systems with shielded or downward facing elements to minimise glare.



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The locations where external lighting is deemed necessary for safety and security purposes are: A - The pedestrian steps ; B – Pathway; C - The planters; D - The main covered entrance (approach to the front door) & E - The vehicular ramp access

Specification examples for these areas would be as follows:

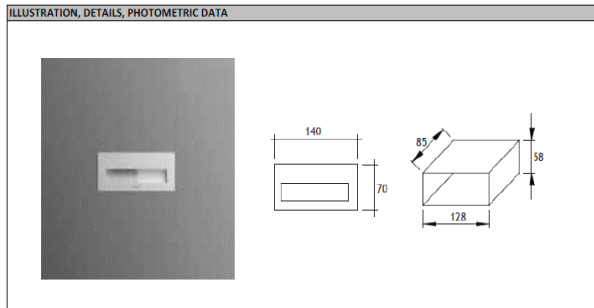
Below: Steps and planters (A & C)

Right: Pathway (B)

Far right: Main entrance walkway wall and vehicular access ramp (D&E)



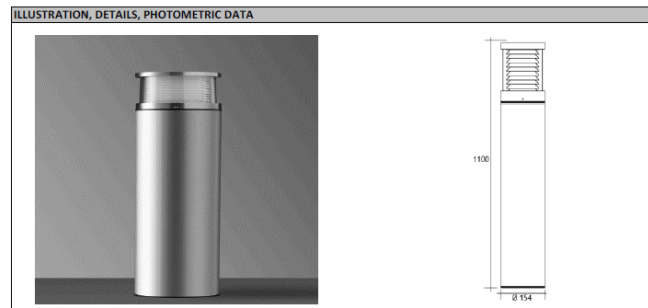
LOCATION: External Courtyard
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MANUFACTURER/CONTACT: EMFA CRAFTING LIGHTING/ridi Lighting Ltd. Units 8 & 9 The Marshgate Centre Parkway, Harlow Business Park GB-Harlow, Essex CM 19 5QP Tel.: +44 1279 450882 Fax: +44 1279 451169 eMail: enquiries@ridi.co.uk	LUMINAIRE DATA LUMINAIRE REF: EMFA BERGAMA LED 70 X 140 349021 WIDTH: 140 mm DEPTH: 128 mm HEIGHT: 70 mm FINISH: Stainless Steel ACCESSORIES:
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ELECTRICAL/LIGHTING DATA: LAMP TYPE: LED 2 x 3W 700lm LAMP REFERENCE: MANUFACTURER: EMFA LAMP BASE: LAMP LIFE: 35,000 hrs	COLOUR TEMPERATURE: 3000 K SUPPLY: 230V LUMINAIRE EFFICACY: L.O.R. CONTROL GEAR: Integrated driver
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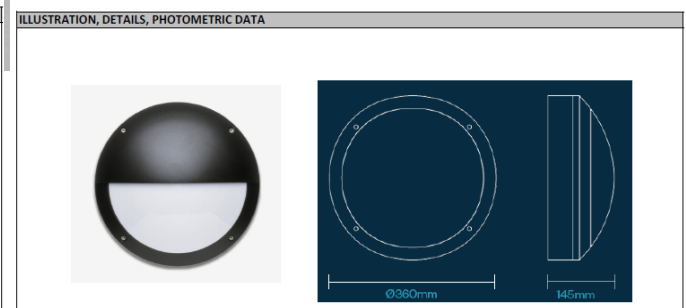
LOCATION: External Courtyard
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MANUFACTURER/CONTACT: EMFA CRAFTING LIGHTING/ridi Lighting Ltd. Units 8 & 9 The Marshgate Centre Parkway, Harlow Business Park GB-Harlow, Essex CM 19 5QP Tel.: +44 1279 450882 Fax: +44 1279 451169 eMail: enquiries@ridi.co.uk	LUMINAIRE DATA LUMINAIRE REF: EMFA ATLANTIS 410201 DIAMETER: 154 mm CUT-OUT: N/A HEIGHT: 1100 mm FINISH: Brushed stainless steel ACCESSORIES:
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ELECTRICAL/LIGHTING DATA: LAMP TYPE: 9 x 350ma (9w) led LAMP REFERENCE: MANUFACTURER: EMFA LAMP BASE: LAMP LIFE: 35,000 hrs	COLOUR TEMPERATURE: 3300 K SUPPLY: 230V LUMINAIRE EFFICACY: L.O.R. CONTROL GEAR: Integrated transformer
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LOCATION: External Lighting, Door entrances and car park entrance



MANUFACTURER/CONTACT: DW Windsor Pindar Road, Hoddesdon Hertfordshire, EN11 0DX +44 (0)1992 474600 info@dwwindor.com	LUMINAIRE DATA LUMINAIRE REF: Aventis LED Eyelid DIAMETER: 360 mm CUT-OUT: N/A DEPTH: 145mm + 10mm for eyelid FINISH: Black polyester powder coat ACCESSORIES:
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ELECTRICAL/LIGHTING DATA: LAMP TYPE: LED 16.5W LAMP REFERENCE: 16W HS3 MANUFACTURER: DW Windsor LAMP BASE: LAMP LIFE:	COLOUR TEMPERATURE: 4000k SUPPLY: 230V LUMINAIRE EFFICACY: 33 lm/W L.O.R. CONTROL GEAR:
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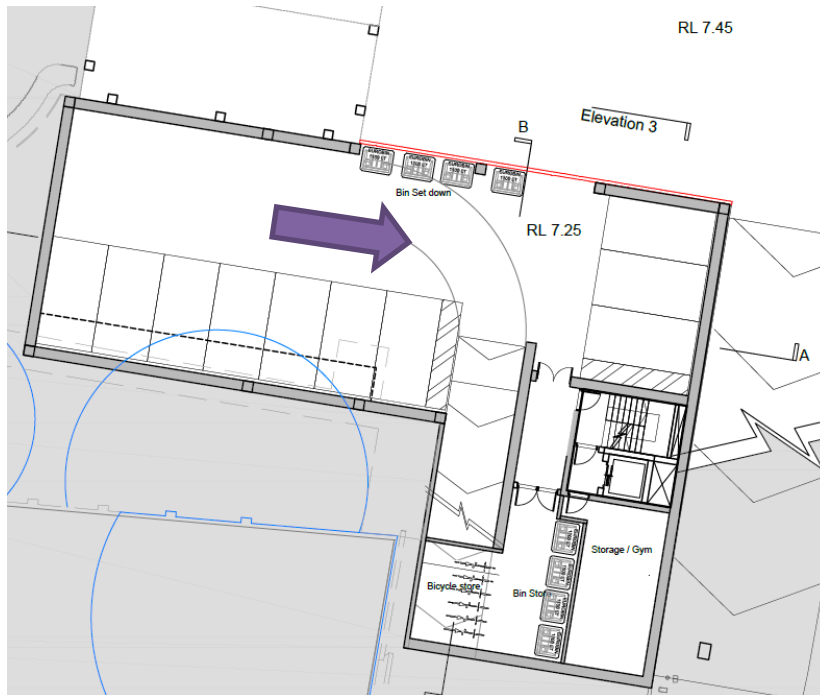
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c) Vehicular Ramp

As noted, the ramp is intended for the use of a single vehicle at a time. In order to control access, a traffic system will be put in place so that the car that is exiting has right of way over a car that is entering. The entering car would heed a signal on the ground floor and wait in the passing area so that the exiting car could make its way out. When the signal changes (there may be more than 1 car exiting), the entering car would proceed down the ramp and park. The signal would be triggered by movement in the car park.



Movement of car exiting triggers signal



Entering car waits in passing area. Allows car to pass. Waits for signal to change & proceeds.

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6. Conclusion

Drawing from the considerable effort of all involved we have developed the proposal to achieve all the goals previously set out while making the proposal more viable by the inclusion of a half-basement. The proposal seeks to regenerate an underutilised site and provide much needed accommodation in the area.

We believe that the scale and high-quality architectural intervention is an elegant solution that is well integrated with the local area.

7. References

7.1 OB Architecture Design and Access Statement; pages 2-21