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**Broad Street - Reading**  
Design & Access Statement

July 2019



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## I.0 INTRODUCTION

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This Design and Access Statement accompanies a planning application to amend the internal layout and outward appearance of 52-53 Broad Street, in order to create a reconfigured, efficient and modern retail space.

The building is currently divided into River Island and JD Sports retail units - with River Island now vacated there is the opportunity to amalgamise the units into space for a larger single retail tenant, and it is proposed that JD Sports take over the full space.

This scheme incorporates a series of amendments to address matters raised in relation to the exterior shop front proposals under the previous planning application (ref. 182011) submitted in November 2018.



## 2.0 SITE

The building is located on the northern side of Broad Street, equidistant between the junctions with Queen Victoria Street and St. Mary's Butts. Broad Street is a fully pedestrianised and wide street, and is a well-renowned shopping destination, siting many high profile retail brands.

There are many local bus services providing easy access to this central retail district, and Queen Victoria Street offers convenient walking access to Reading Railway Station, providing links to local towns and into central London.



### 3.0 EXISTING BUILDING

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The existing building of 52-53 Broad Street presents a mismatching and contradictory facade to the public realm. The building is three storeys tall, where each storey is treated differently from the next.

The first floor is predominantly clad in brown brick, with a combination of small punched openings and tall arched windows stretching up to the second floor. There exists a convoluted and overly complicated arrangement of protruding brick frames, tall gable walls, recessed niches and exposed concrete structure.

The second floor sits back from the first, and from the prevailing facade line of the street, creating an inset 'balcony' at this level and resulting in the need for a steeply sloping tiled roof with three pitched minor roofs over the three arched windows stretching from the first floor.

The ground floor is currently divided into the two retail tenants of River Island and JD Sports which have their own treatments to the shopfront. The JD Sports frontage is predominantly glazed, with a reflective black fascia running underneath a light grey painted panel, with a central opening closed by a roller shutter. The River Island shopfront has taller glazing in comparison, running up to a panel of brick slips (which contrasts and clashes with the main brick of the facade), again with a roller shuttered central doorway. In between these two shopfronts is a fire escape door, recessed back from the building line. This has been painted black, presumably in an attempt to lessen its visual impact, but this has the adverse effect of providing a location for anti-social activity, particularly out of retail hours, and causes an unwelcome break in the building's ground floor presence.

As a whole, the existing building's elevation, in particular the upper floors, does not appear cohesive nor legible due to the vast array of lines, planes and materials on show. The existing facade is not particularly well detailed and is in places in a state of disrepair.

### 3.0 EXISTING BUILDING



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## 4.0 SCHEME PROPOSAL

### INTERNALLY:

In essence, the existing building, with River Island taking up half of the ground floor, and JD Sports taking the remainder of the ground floor and the upper floors, will be amalgamated into one single retail unit, across all floors.

The final internal layout will be determined by the incoming retail tenants, but the works at this stage will include:

- Removal of dividing wall between the two units;
- Strip out of existing redundant internal partitions and shop fittings;
- Relocation of the fire escape route from the centre of the facade to the rear via a protected corridor;
- Cutting back the first floor slab at the front to create a double-height space at the entrance;

### EXTERNALLY:

As noted previously, the appearance of the building offers very little to the local streetscape and currently detracts from the overall amenity and enjoyment of the town centre for the visiting public. It is intended to give the building a visual and practical uplift. In combining the two retail units into one, as described above, the opportunity arises for producing a unified facade which can overcome the visual issues presented by the existing elevation. Therefore, the works to the exterior would include:

- Remove the bulky protruding brick bays at first and second floor levels. These offer little architectural, practical or

visual benefit and their removal allows the building to sit comfortably within its setting, rather than standing out as a blot on the streetscape;

- Introduce a modern and stylish sleek shopfront over the ground and first floors. The height of the shopfront will be appropriate for the width of the unit, aligning with the tall shopfront of the Nationwide unit next door, maintaining the visual focus on the retail offering. The remaining brickwork of the facade will be painted grey to present a cohesive facade treatment. The slim fascia frame and the frameless glazing will present an up to date public face to the building, while the two sets of automatic sliding doors will provide easy access for shoppers. This will expand upon the facade treatment already in place for the existing JD Sports unit - using large expanses of clear glass, dark cladding with yellow edge returns;
- Where the brick bays have been removed, it is proposed to infill these with obscured dark glazing within aluminium frames. This will avoid any unsightly attempts to stitch-in new brickwork with the existing, and will be an honest display of the second floor spaces as service to the lower floors. The frame finish will align with the finishes for the shopfront below and therefore will present as a cohesive whole;
- By the removal of the protruding bays and their steeply pitched roofs, the building will have a simplified and more coherent roof profile while will sit comfortably along the street's roofscape;
- New signage will be located directly on the fascias, allowing clear views into the shop interior, and maintaining the prevalent and established signage height along Broad Street.

Providing a cohesive single frontage to the street, to a scale appropriate for the size of the retail unit and in keeping with a modern shopping destination, will be a positive contribution to the streetscene.

### DESIGN DEVELOPMENT:

Further to the initial application in November (ref.182011), and the follow-up pre-application discussions at the start of 2019, the amended design has been informed by the Council's comments and has altered to assuage any concerns that were present at that time:

- The shopfront has been broken into the two separate frontages with the introduction of a central fascia pilaster, avoiding the continuous single shopfront;
- A horizontal fascia board has been introduced at first floor level, in order to break up the amount of glazing, to maintain the overriding style of shopfronts along this section of Broad Street, and to align with the Nationwide unit's fascia next door;
- Definition around the entranceways has been increased in order to provide greater legibility to the elevation;
- Stallrisers have been shown across the full width of the unit.

By incorporating all of the above, it is suggested that the proposals as they stand now align with the Council's suggested amendments and therefore this collaborative approach to the design provides a solution which will be viewed positively by all parties.

*Please note - the signage referred to will take the form of separate Advertisement Consent applications at the appropriate times. For full disclosure at this stage, signage "zones" have been shown on the proposed elevations.*

## 4.0 SCHEME PROPOSAL



EXISTING

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PROPOSED

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EXISTING

## 4.0 SCHEME PROPOSAL



PROPOSED



EXISTING



PROPOSED

## 4.0 SCHEME PROPOSAL



EXISTING PRECEDENTS

## 5.0 LANDSCAPING / HIGHWAYS

There are no works proposed to the front or rear approaches to the building, and the pedestrianised Broad Street surface will not be affected by these proposals.

## 6.0 ACCESS

The retail unit in its present state offers level access directly from Broad Street.

This will not change with these latest proposals, and this level access will be maintained. The proposed entrances to this unit two wide doorways, which will open automatically for all visitors during trading hours. There will no longer be public retail space on the first floor, so no public escalator or lift will be required.

## 7.0 SCHEDULE OF AREAS

| EXISTING GIA | JD SPORTS |           | FORMER RIVER ISLAND |           | TOTAL   |           |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| SECOND FLOOR | 214 m²    | 2303 ft²  | -                   | -         | 214 m²  | 2303 ft²  |
| FIRST FLOOR  | 662 m²    | 7126 ft²  | 302 m²              | 3251 ft²  | 964 m²  | 10377 ft² |
| GROUND FLOOR | 273 m²    | 2939 ft²  | 728 m²              | 7836 ft²  | 1001 m² | 10775 ft² |
| TOTAL        | 1149 m²   | 12367 ft² | 1030 m²             | 11087 ft² | 2179 m² | 23455 ft² |

| PROPOSED GIA | JD SPORTS |           |   |   | TOTAL   |           |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|---|---|---------|-----------|
| SECOND FLOOR | 209 m²    | 2249 ft²  | - | - | 209 m²  | 2249 ft²  |
| FIRST FLOOR  | 913 m²    | 9827 ft²  | - | - | 913 m²  | 9827 ft²  |
| GROUND FLOOR | 1010 m²   | 10872 ft² | - | - | 1010 m² | 10903 ft² |
| TOTAL        | 2132 m²   | 22948 ft² | - | - | 2132 m² | 22948 ft² |

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed works to this prominent retail unit within the popular and busy Broad Street shopping area will clearly be an improvement on the current building. In its existing state, the building offers very little in its outward appearance and does not contribute positively to the town centre streetscape.

The works will allow the increased presence of an important retailer in the area, invigorating the retail offering and allowing an uplift to the presence of the building within this important shopping destination.

The addition of a clean, fresh and modern treatment to the façade will overcome the prominence of the outdated, heavy and overbearing finish of the current bulky profile, visually unifying and cleaning up the elevation and giving the public and customers an improved experience of walking past and into the building.

Therefore through creating this one unit and improving the general outward appearance of the building through a high quality and measured design, considered within the context of the existing building and the adjacent retail units, the proposals will make a positive contribution to enhancing the existing streetscape and Broad Street in the wider context.

