



Localised Alterations to Main Entrance Façade- The Blade “Design Access Statement”

Prepared by HamburyHird Design Ltd. Issue Date: JUNE 2018

1.0 Introduction

This Design Access Statement has been prepared to support localised alterations to the ground and first floor levels of the external main entrance façade of The Blade office building

The Blade is a well known landmark in Reading. Construction was completed in 2009 providing 14 storey's of commercial office space. The 'spire' type feature at roof level not only gives the building its name (The Blade) but also ensures it is recognisable from some distance away.

The building is multi-tenanted with some floors split between tenants. There is currently an 80 % occupancy rate.

The building has recently been acquired by Northwood Investors- a commercial property company.

Upon purchase, Northwood Investors relocated their office in Newbury to occupy part of the 2nd floor of The Blade as their own office accommodation.



The Blade- Reading

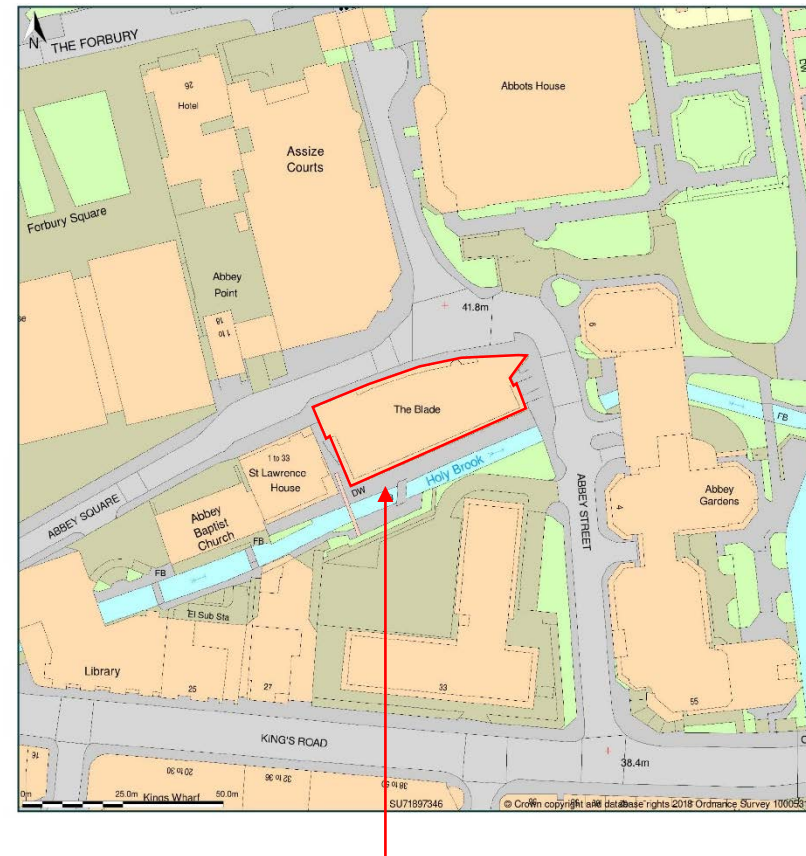
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2.0 Site Context & Existing Building

The Blade is situated at the junction of Abbey Street and Abbey Square. There are several commercial office developments in the locality



The Blade – as approached from Abbey Street



The Blade – Location on Map

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2.0 Site Context & Existing Building- Cont

Northwood Estates recognised the requirement to update and refurbish the common parts of the building to ensure they remain competitive in the commercial property market. Recent construction and/or refurbishment of nearby commercial office buildings such as Thames Tower, The White Building and others are attracting new tenants with a contemporary design.

Examples of alternative contemporary Interior Designed Commercial Office Premises n Reading



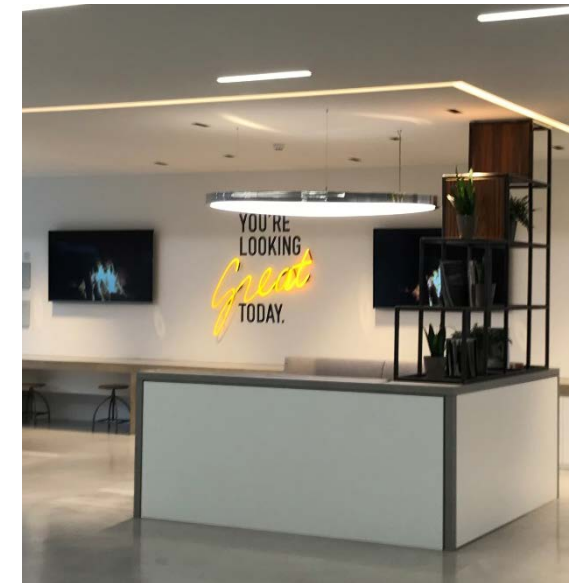
Forbury Works



R+



Thames Tower



The White Building

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2.0 Site Context & Existing Building- Cont.

There is currently a refurbishment project underway for the main reception at Ground Floor level, which increases foot print of the former reception area to create a more appealing and impactful reception for both existing and potential tenants alike.

As a result of the internal refurbishment works the existing **internal** elevation and façade will change its appearance (see existing and proposed images below). Northwood are keen that these enhancements are also reflected in the external appearance of the main entrance, hence the submission of the proposals submitted with the application.



Former Internal Front Elevation of The Blade: Main Entrance

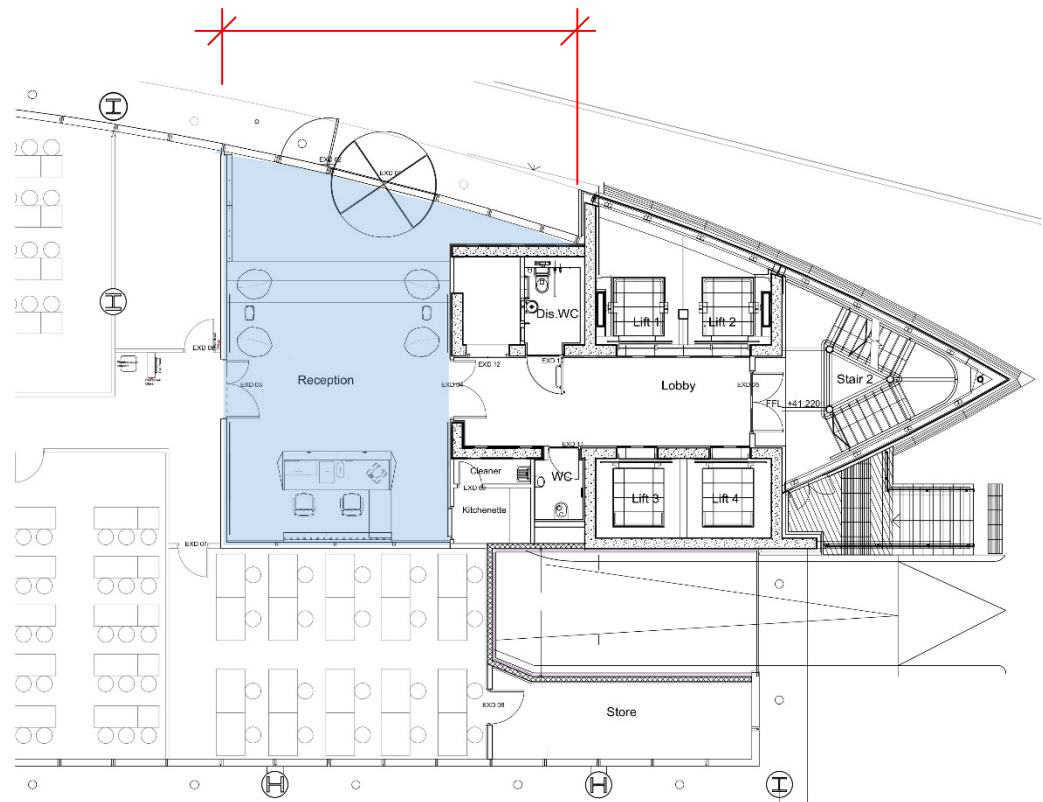


*Proposed Internal Front Elevation of The Blade: Main Entrance
(Under Construction)*

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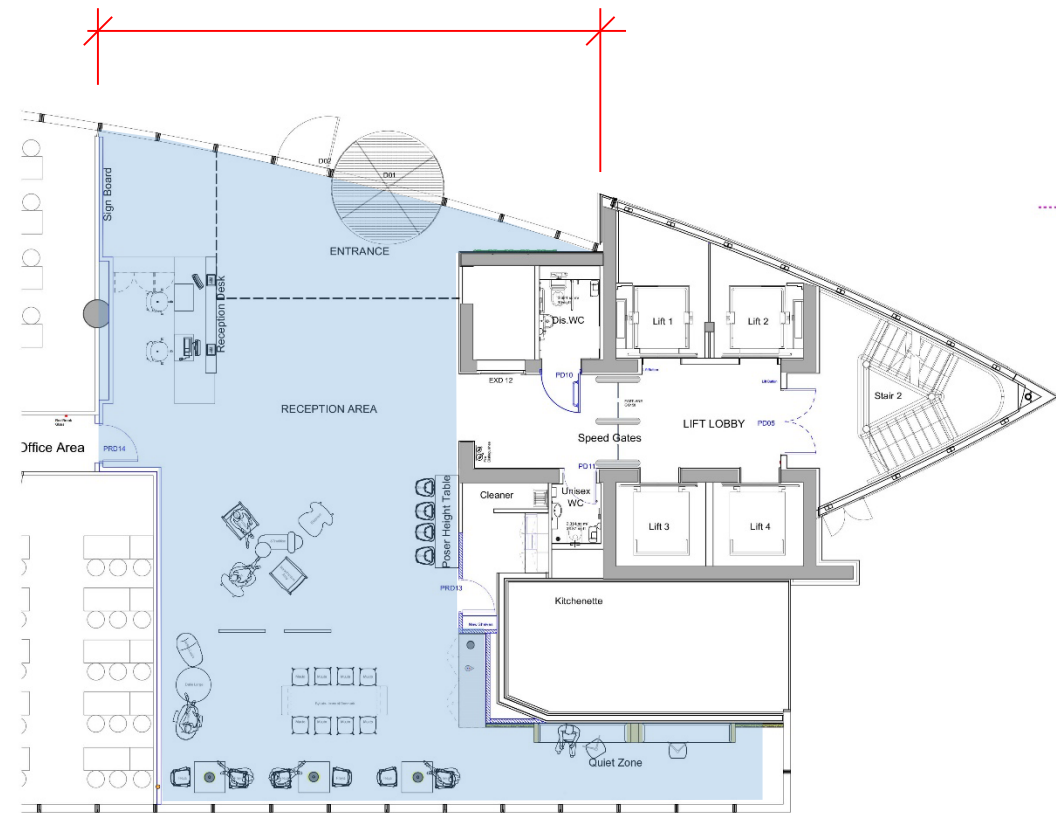
2.0 Site Context & Existing Building- Cont.

Former extent of Reception Area 'shopfront'



Former Existing Reception Area Layout

Extent of Reception Area 'shopfront' increased.



Revised reception Area Layout (Under Construction)

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2.0 Site Context & Existing Building- Cont.

Whilst The Blade itself can be seen from several vantage points across Reading town Centre, the main entrance to the Reception area on Abbey Square, a low traffic area and not immediately evident from nearby Kings Road.

A Vista of the main entrance is evident from the pedestrian approach of Forbury Gardens. This route is a popular cut-through for staff walking to and from their place of work. The proposed scheme aims to utilise the view from Abbots Walk, enhancing and 'framing' the main entrance to The Blade Reception.



The Blade in context with Forbury Gardens



Pedestrian Approach to The Blade through Abbots Walk

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3.0 The Proposal

The Proposals include the creation of a ‘proscenium’ around the main entrance through the use of the existing architecture to clearly identify it from the large curtain walling of the front elevation. By over-cladding the horizontal and vertical elements around the main entrance the entrance is framed and access to the reception area defined. This also serves to align the main entrance with the enlarged reception area (as indicated on page 05) currently under refurbishment.



Existing View of The Blade Front Elevation



Pedestrian Approach to The Blade through Abbots Walk

Full height illuminated panel

Red Line indicates extent of proposed ‘Proscenium’ Cladding

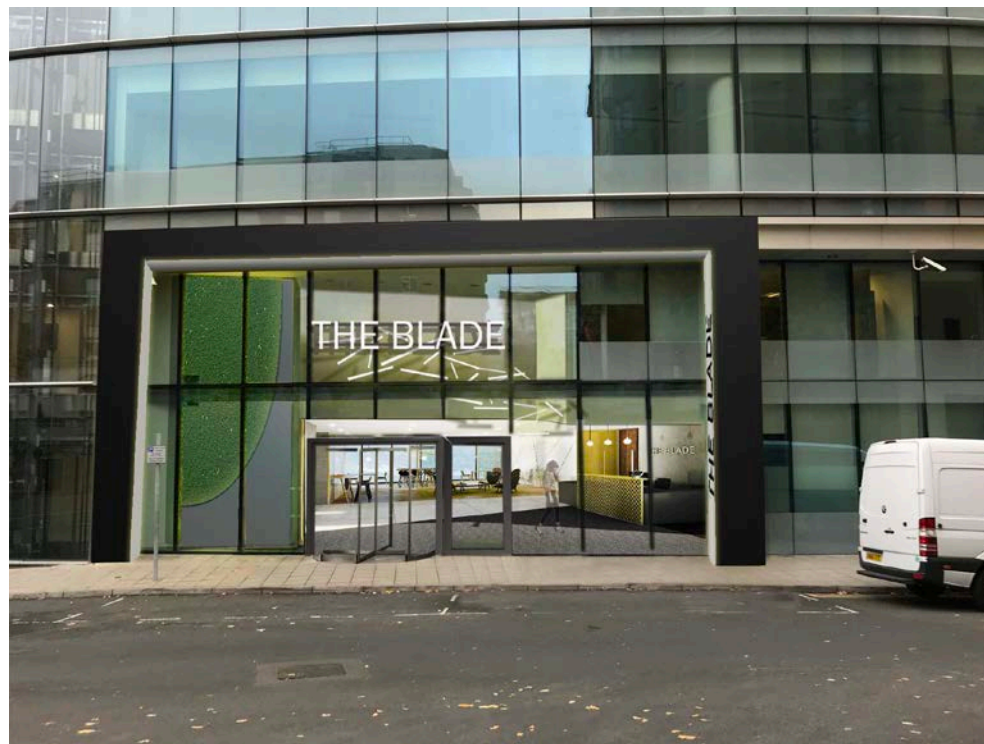
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3.0 The Proposal Cont.

Due to the refurbishment of the internal reception area, the full height illuminated panel set behind the glazing has been stripped out under the current refurbishment (as indicated on page 07). The Proposed scheme makes allowance for the replacement of some illumination by a soft internal illumination to the return reveal of the proscenium.

The current existing façade has **no** external signage to identify The Blade.

The proposed scheme allows for external signage. As the approach to The Blade's main entrance is principally from Forbury Gardens (facing the front elevation) or Abbey Street (approached from the side of the building) the locations of the two signage panels ensure that The Blade will be identified upon each of these approaches.



*Photoshop Image of Proposals
(as approached from Forbury Gardens)*



*Photoshop Image of Proposals
(as approached from Abbey Street)*

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3.0 The Proposal Cont.

The design of the new façade for The Blade is in keeping with other commercial premises in the vicinity



One Valpy:
Entrance enhanced by 'proscenium' cladding



Forbury Works:
Use of Illumination to front façade, both for Branding and cladding around main entrance



Simply Local:
Use of internally illuminated façade panel to front elevation

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3.0 The Proposal Cont.



4no. Vertical 44 x44mm square section rods to fix thru structural slab/ floorplate above (thru new cladding) using suitable HILTI resin fixings and fixing plates to Structural Engineer Design. Rods to align with position of existing internal mullions

700mmm H x 100mm W rim-and-return internally illuminated letters to read 'The Blade'. Front illumination in opal white acrylic with low density light. Side and rear in powder coated aluminium (RAL finish 7016 Dark Grey)

5mm powder coated aluminium fret-cut letters 'The Blade' (RAL finish 7016 Dark Grey). Adhesive Bonded with 3m double sided tape

New Aluminium Powder coated cladding to Existing column. (RAL finish 7016 Dark Grey:

5mm Opaque White Acrylic Back lit with gentle low intensity LED boards to create 'glow'. 300 cd/m2 with dimmable option

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4.0 Conclusion

Northwood investors identified The Blade as an investment opportunity and committed to making an investment in the building fabric to improve the general environment for the tenants already in occupation and to attract new tenants within a competitive commercial market.

Northwood's purchase of The Blade was also seen as an opportunity to move their own regional business to Reading, taking advantage of Reading's good transport links and increasing commercial strength.

The localised designs to the main entrance of The Blade enhance the prominence of the main entrance. The external signage proposals allow The Blade brand to be represented and reinforced, providing continuity from the external faced to the newly refurbished and enlarged reception area on the Ground Floor.

The proscenium cladding frames the double height glazing, orientating visitors to the building's main entrance. The dark grey powder coating is in keeping with the overall façade cladding system.

The soft internally illuminated reveals of the proscenium further emphasise the main entrance and allow the approach to the building to be identifiable in the darker winter months, as well as give The Blade a strong identity at pedestrian level.

Northwood Investors are confident that the internal and external proposals they are implementing will play a part in strengthening Reading's position as the business capital of the Thames Valley.