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Document Title: **DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT**

Project: **RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (CHANGE OF USE)**

Site Address: **750 & 752 OXFORD ROAD, READING, RG30 1EJ**

Client: **JOHN FILBEE PROPERTIES LIMITED**



Fig.1: Street view of 750 & 752 Oxford Road

prepared by



This document is to be read in conjunction with:
Weston & Co Architects drawings: 15037-PL-1, 15037-PL-2A, 15037-PL-3A, 15037-PL-4, 15037-PL-5A, 15037-PL-6A, 15037-PL-7A, 15037-PL-8C, 15037-PL-9, 15037-PL-10, 15037-PL-11A, 15037-PL-12B, 15037-PL-13A, 15037-PL-14A. Accon UK's Noise Impact Assessment & Air Quality Assessment. Fairweathers Chartered Surveyors Viability Appraisal Report reference PJM/hmt/am/3454.

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1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this Design and Access statement is to accompany a full planning application for the change of use to 750 and 752 Oxford Road in Reading.

The proposals have taken into consideration and addressed comments made by Stephen Vigar within Reading Borough Council's pre-application enquiry response reference 151124.

2.0 The Site Location & Context

The application site is located 1.5 miles west of Reading town centre along the Oxford Road, one of Reading's main arterial roads.

Local context surrounding the site is predominantly characterised by fairly high-density residential streets of terraced and semi-detached housing along with residential flat blocks up to 5 storeys in height. There are also some convenience and other retail / commercial units close to the application site creating a relatively diverse neighbourhood.



Fig.2: Aerial view of site context, 750 & 752 Oxford Road application site highlighted by red line

3.0 Use

The current use of number 750 Oxford road is a betting shop (sui generis) on the ground floor with its associated office space (B1) on first floor level. Number 752 Oxford Road is currently a shop / showroom use (A1) at ground floor with its associated office space (B1) on first floor level, number 752 is currently vacant. The rear of the site accessed from Pangbourne Street is currently used for vehicle parking and service access.

It is proposed for the use to be changed to residential flats (C3 use), 8 flats in total, comprising 6no. 2 bedroom flats and 2no. 1 bedroom flats. In addition to the residential accommodation, associated car parking, bin and cycle storage are also proposed at the rear of the site.

4.0 Amount

The area of the proposed development site is 687.8 square metres, and currently has a commercial building with a gross internal area of 434 square metres located towards the site's Oxford Road frontage. The site currently accommodates 12 car parking spaces to the rear of the site serving the commercial building accessed from Pangbourne Street.

In addition to change the use of the existing commercial (A1, B1 and sui generis use) building, it is proposed to accommodate 2no. 2 bedroom flats within a set back rooftop extension, an approach to massing as suggested within the pre-application enquiry response. The proposed gross internal area of the building once extended is 599 square metres, accommodating the 8no. residential units.

To the rear of the site it is proposed to provide 11no. car spaces within the residents car park. Reading Borough Council's Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document requires that 1.5 spaces per 1 or 2 bedroom flat are provided, along with 1 visitor space per 4 flats given the application site is located within Zone 3 of Reading Borough Council's Zonal Scheme. Therefore, the Supplementary Planning Document suggests a requirement of 12no. residents' spaces plus 2no. visitor spaces. It is requested that Reading Borough Council accept the 3no. shortfall in car space provision given the application sites inherent proximity to good public bus routes. The application site is within 100 metres distance from bus stops providing services to and from Reading town centre and the national rail station, running every 7 minutes with a journey time to and from the centre of 15 minutes. This makes the application site a sustainable location in terms of its public transport links. The reduced provision is able to provide a minimum of 1 space per unit as well as visitor parking. The reduced provision would encourage the use of public transport bringing environmental benefits, reduce traffic and improve highway safety, due to reducing the number of vehicles on the road compared to providing in accordance with the Supplementary Planning Document.

It is proposed for 4no. secure and sheltered cycle spaces to be provided, in accordance with the Supplementary Planning Document which specifies a requirement of 0.5 spaces per 1 or 2 bedroom flat.

Bin storage for 2no. 1100 litre wheelie bins is proposed within 10 metres of the public highway, this is to provide for the collection of separated general refuse and mixed dry recyclables.

Private external spaces are proposed serving flat numbers 1, 2, 3, 7 and 8. Due to the inherent external noise levels at the site these spaces are not able to be considered as external amenity space. Refer to the 'External Noise Levels' and 'Conclusions' sections of Accon UK's Noise Impact assessment Report reference A2695/N/002 which provides additional detail on this matter. As suggested within the report and in accordance with Planning Practice Guidance – Noise, Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 30-009-20140306, the noise impact on private external space can be offset by access to a nearby public accessible park. The closest appropriate space is a green public park located at the end of August End (off Brock Gardens), which is a 5 minute walk from the application site.



Fig.3: Proposed site plan extract from drawing number 15037-PL-8C

5.0 Layout

The proposed layout of the overall site is largely unchanged with the existing building footprint being retained and the car parking and vehicle access retained at the rear of the site.

A brick wall with piers and railings is proposed along the Oxford Road and Pangbourne Street frontages, providing defensible space to the residential accommodation. The proposal of railings to define the defensible space follows comments within Reading Borough Council's pre-application response.

Within the car park to the rear of the site, bin and cycle storage facilities serving the residential accommodation are provided.

The entrance to the proposed residential building is on the northern elevation adjacent to the car park, and can be accessed either using steps from the car park or a new proposed ramped access from Pangbourne Street.

The residential flats are served by a single common stair, which is accessed from the entrance on the northern elevation. The ground floor level accommodates 2no. 2 bedroom flats which are dual aspect and a one bedroom flat which is single aspect facing the Oxford road on the southern elevation, this layout is duplicated on the first floor. The second floor level accommodates 2no. 2 bedroom flats, both benefit from

a dual aspect and have access to external private terrace areas which front onto the Oxford road on the southern elevation.

6.0 Scale

It is proposed to extend the building by constructing a single storey roof extension, resulting in a three storey high building.

This proposed increase in scale is congruous with the existing scale of buildings in the surrounding area. The proposed height of the building will remain significantly lower than the height of the Abbotsbury Court residential building directly opposite on the southern side of Oxford Road.

The perceived height of the building as a pedestrian on Oxford Road is diminished by proposing a set back to the roof extension away from the southern elevation.



Fig.4: Proposed south (Oxford Road) elevation, extract from drawing number 15037-PL-12B

7.0 Landscaping

Soft landscaping is proposed to be incorporated into the layout of the car park at the rear, as well as along the Pangbourne Street frontage, refer to Proposed Site Plan drawing 15037-PL-8 for an indicative layout. It may be possible to introduce trees with an upright growing habit into a planting scheme adjacent to the western elevation of the proposed residential building fronting Pangbourne Street, as suggested within the pre-application response. There is also an opportunity to introduce trees adjacent to the northern boundary of the car park at the rear of the site.

It is requested that further details of a hard and soft landscaping scheme associated with the application be reserved by condition in the event of a planning approval.

8.0 Appearance

In general terms the planning proposals seek to enhance the dilapidated appearance of the existing site and building in a manner which is complimentary to the local context.

The existing brick and exposed concrete external walls are proposed to be replaced by an off-white coloured insulated render system.

The proposed single storey extension is to be clad with a grey coloured aluminium rain screen cladding system. This approach will blend visually with the neighbouring slate roofs. The set back nature of the roof extension also creates a defined eaves which relates to the already defined eaves line of the neighbouring terraced houses as suggested within the pre-application response. The proposed raise in this 'eaves' line relates to the distinct nature of the proposed building as a set back prominent corner building.

All the proposed external doors and windows are to have grey coloured polyester powder coated frames for durability as well as providing a quality contemporary appearance to the building.

'Defensible space' is created along the Oxford Road and Pangbourne street boundaries by proposing grey/blue brick piers with black coloured steel railings designed to be in keeping with the appearance of the proposals.



Fig.5: Existing view of the north elevation and car park at 750 and 752 Oxford Road

9.0 Access

There are no alterations proposed to the vehicular access to the rear of the site from Pangbourne Street.

A new ramped pedestrian access also suitable for wheel chairs is proposed from Pangbourne Street connecting to the resident entrance of the building.