SQUIRE & PARTNERS



Eaton Court, Reading

Design and Access Statement Addendum

For Venta PropCo 1 Limited

17110

April 2024

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Document History

Rev	Date	Purpose of Issue	Author	Reviewer
-	26/04/2024	Issued for Planning	KPa	MGr

1.0 Introduction

This document has been prepared by Squire and Partners on behalf of Venta PropCo 1 Limited to be submitted as part of a Design and Access Statement Addendum for Eaton Court, Oxford Road, Reading, RG1 7FU.

This document is an addendum to the original Design and Access Statement dated and submitted on 31/01/2023.

The addendum refers to the scheme at 112 Oxford Road that includes a demolition of an existing office building and the erection of a residential development consisting of three new buildings housing 120 apartments was submitted for planning in January 2023 and varying from 3 floors to 6 floors. Following the Conservation Officer's response dated 10/03/2024, the following areas have been reassessed and redesigned in order to address key points. These include:

- Changes to South and East building elevations.
- Introduction of a second staircase to address emerging fire legislation.
- Changes to the main entrance and landscape.
- Change in the mix of apartments, with a reduction of 1 bedroom units.



Fig. 1. 1 CGI Submitted with Original Application

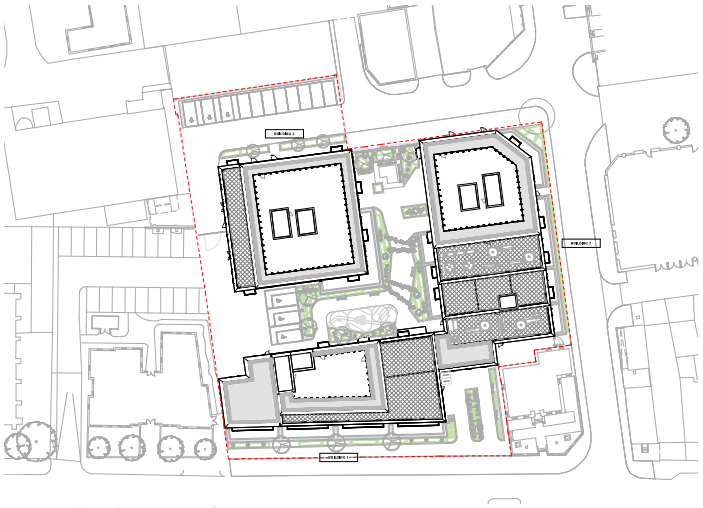


Fig. 1. 2 Roof Plan Submitted with Original Application

2.0 Changes to the Oxford Road Facade

This section illustrates how the design has been amended to incorporate comments received from planning officers regarding the Oxford Road facade from the previous planning submission.

In response to the planning officers' feedback that stated that '*The elevational design of symmetrical organisation with large fenestration use of red brick giving a monumental appearance to the proposal – continuous railings (red rectangles - another dominant element) are out of context'* we have proposed a number of revisions to the Oxford Road elevation:

1. Removal of the Top Spandrel
2. Set Back and Removal of Balustrades
3. Materiality Changes
4. Changes to Residential Entrance and Landscape
5. Removal of Balconies and Introduction of Juliette Balconies

The proposed design aims to tie itself better into the area, and nearby conservation area, by using materials and proportions which contribute positively to the local character and distinctiveness.

Figure 2.1 shows the Oxford Road elevation that was submitted with the original application, with the proposed revisions highlighted. Figure 2.2 shows the updated Oxford Road facade.

Please also refer to the previously submitted and proposed CGI views under Section 2.6.



Fig. 2. 1 Oxford Road Elevation Submitted with Original Application



Fig. 2. 2 Proposed Oxford Road Elevation

2.1 Removal of Top Spandrel

The planning officers viewed the previously submitted scheme as lacking distinction compared to the listed buildings in the immediate vicinity of the site. The scheme aimed to establish a facade rhythm across all buildings, drawing influence from the Georgian style of Mannson House, the listed building that the scheme sits alongside. While the previously submitted design pays homage to the historical significance of Oxford Road and the character of the conservation area, it inadvertently mirrors Mannson House too closely. Therefore, the proposal falls short of enhancing and respecting the distinct architectural qualities of Mannson House.

As part of a considered push towards sensitively responding to Mannson House, the top white stone spandrel on Building's 1 and 2 along the Oxford Road elevation has been removed. Exposing the faced bricks underneath and terminating the parapet only with a metal cill, the scheme ensures that the new building's design respects the established character of the area, whilst allowing the listed building to stand independently. Both Mannson House and the proposed scheme now read as an individual buildings.

Figure 2.3 shows the elevation that was previously submitted with the original application with the top white stone spandrel. Figure 2.4 shows the proposed scheme where the top white stone spandrel has been removed.



Fig. 2. 3 Oxford Road Elevation Submitted with Original Application



Fig. 2. 4 Proposed Oxford Road Elevation

2.2 Set Back and Removal of Balustrades

Following comments expressing concerns about the visibility of the balustrades within the surrounding context, adjustments have been made to all the balustrade on the scheme accordingly. The visibility of the balustrades along the Oxford Road elevation were viewed as not aligning and lacking connection with the existing neighbourhood and nearby conservation area.

We are proposing to modify the balustrades prominence from the Oxford Road and Eaton Place elevations, which provides a better building frontage that responds positively to the Reading / Oxford Road streetscape and public realm.

Figures 2.5 and 2.6 show the removal of the third floor balustrades on Buildings 1 and 2 and set back those on the Southern facade of Building 2. Additionally, to occupy the space where the third floor balustrades were removed, a green roof has been proposed with a man safe system in place for maintenance access.

Figures 2.7 and 2.8 show the removal of the fourth floor balustrades on the Southern side of Building 1, while the remaining ones have been set back. To occupy this space, a green roof has been implemented, whilst retaining the resident's communal terraces. Similarly, the balustrades on Building 2 have been set back, and in line with Building 1, a green roof has been utilised to occupy the space. The addition of the green roofs means that the proposed scheme has a greater ecological value than the previously submitted building.

Figures 2.9 and 2.10 show the removal of the fifth floor balustrades on the Southern side of Building 1, while the others have been set back. In their place, a green roof has been introduced. Likewise, the balustrades on Building 2 have also been set back, with a green roof utilised to occupy the space, mirroring the approach taken with Building 1.

The remaining balustrades on floors three, four and five are no longer visible from the Oxford Road elevation, which ties the facade more suitably into the surrounding area.



Fig. 2. 5Third Floor Plan Submitted with Original Application



Fig. 2. 7 Fourth Floor Plan Submitted with Original Application

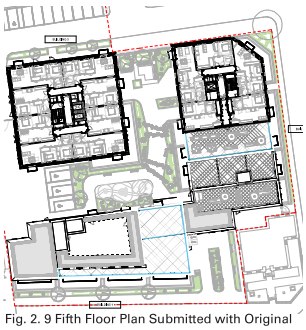


Fig. 2. 9 Fifth Floor Plan Submitted with Original Application



Fig. 2. 6 Proposed Third Floor Plan



Fig. 2. 8 Proposed Fourth Floor Plan

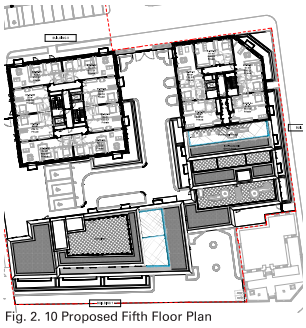


Fig. 2. 10 Proposed Fifth Floor Plan

KEY:

Balustrades

2.3 Materiality Change

The planning officers' suggestions emphasised the importance of maintaining the listed Mannson House buildings independent presence. The materiality of the Oxford Road elevation that was submitted with the original application was viewed as being too similar to that of Mannson House and harms the setting of the listed building rather than preserving it.

Under Reading Borough Council Core Strategy Policy CS33 'Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment' the proposed design should seek to preserve or enhance the setting of Mannson House, a grade II listed building immediately adjacent to the site.

In order to sensitively respond to the setting of Mannson House, we have put forth a proposal to enhance the distinction between the existing and the proposed fabrics. This involves implementing a darker brick for the Oxford Road elevation to effectively differentiate between the two buildings, ensuring each maintains its individual architectural presence. The darker brick choice specifically references the dark red earth brick work of the original building, further harmonising the new development with its surroundings. The proposed facade now provides a more rational setting for the existing Mannson House.

Figure 2.15 shows the materiality of Building 1 submitted with the original application, where Kenilworth Antique and London White Glazed brick was used across the whole scheme. Figure 2.16 shows the materiality of the proposed scheme which uses Loxley Red Multi brick on the Oxford Road facade.



Fig. 2. 15 Building 1 Bay Study Submitted with Original Application



Fig. 2. 16 Proposed Building 1 Bay Study

2.4 Changes to Residential Entrance and Landscape

The planning officers' raised concerns over the Oxford Road elevation's monumental appearance, noting that the previously submitted proposal presented as a singular mass.

To address this, we have extended the main residential entrance, visually opening up the scheme to the surrounding area, thereby introducing a more considered design language to the elevations. The 3 double french doors shown in figure 2.17, have been replaced by a larger glazed curtain walling that highlights the communal character of the entrance. A wide canopy has been added above the glazed wall and the brick flower beds in front of the entrance have been omitted to create a more open space that invite the residents to the entrance doors. Figure 2.18 shows the entrance of the new proposed scheme.

The white glazed brick has been expanded along the facade to span the whole new entrance, providing a further sense of importance to the main entrance and facade by creating a sense of separation from that part of the building from the main elevation on to Oxford Road.

This has achieved a more distinctive appearance to Building 1's frontage, breaking up the facade's horizontal uniformity. As a result, the Oxford Road elevation no longer reads as a singular, imposing mass but as a sensitively designed structure that has effectively broken up the horizontality of the facade. The new landscaped entrance square will not only add to the sense of place but also provide a calm and sensitive space directly adjacent to Mannson House. This strengthens the visual connection between the scheme and Eaton Place, contributing to a more cohesive urban environment



Fig. 2.17 Oxford Road Residential Entrance Submitted with Original Application



Fig. 2.18 Proposed Oxford Road Residential Entrance

2.4 Changes to Residential Entrance and Landscape

As a part of the extension of the main residential entrance, the landscaping at ground floor level has also undergone a redesign resulting in significant addition in the activation of the Oxford Road frontage.

Figure 2.19 shows the landscaping surrounding the entrance of the previously submitted scheme, that has a number of brick defensible planters surrounding the private terraces and event space.

Figure 2.21 shows our proposed landscaping where there is an increase in the number of low level decorative hedges, which will add to richness of the space along the public highway, contributing to a more lively streetscape for the surrounding neighbourhood.

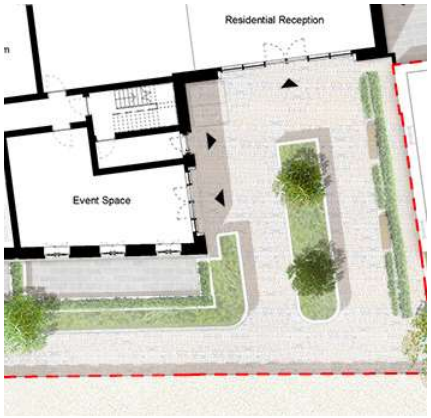


Fig. 2.19 Oxford Road Residential Entrance Landscaping Submitted with Original Application



Fig. 2.20 Site Landscaping Submitted with Original Application

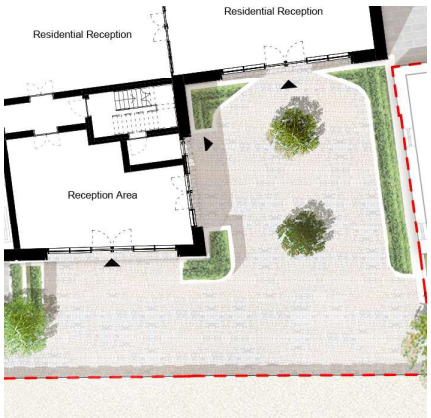


Fig. 2.21 Proposed Oxford Road Residential Entrance Landscaping



Fig. 2.22 Proposed Site Landscaping

2.5 Removal of Balconies and Introduction of Juliette Balconies

Due to the set back of the balustrades on the top floor of Building 1 on the Oxford Road elevation, Juliette balconies have been proposed for the windows on the fourth floor instead. The private residential terrace is still present but smaller in scale and only accessible from the living area. This makes the elevation lighter and the railing at level 4 it is not visible form the street as per the updated CGIs.

The addition of the second canopy above the revised residential entrance lead to the omission of the private residential balcony, simplifying the facade design also in conjunction with the omission of the grouping of the double storey windows at level 01 and level 02.



Fig. 2. 23 Building 1 Elevation Submitted with Original Application



Fig. 2. 24 Proposed Building 1 Elevation



Fig. 2. 25 Building 1 Elevation Submitted with Original Application



Fig. 2. 26 Proposed Building 1 Elevation

2.6 CGI View from Oxford Road



Fig. 2.27 CGI Submitted with Original Application

2.6 CGI View from Oxford Road



Fig. 2.28 Proposed CGI

2.6 CGI View from Eaton Place



Fig. 2.29 CGI Submitted with Original Application

2.6 CGI View from Eaton Place



Fig. 2.30 Proposed CGI

2.6 CGI View of Holy Trinity Church, looking from Oxford Road West Side



Fig. 2.31 CGI Submitted with Original Application