



2 Northcourt Avenue, Reading

[DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT]

September 2024 - rev A
job no: 424

Executive Summary

This design and access statement has been prepared to support a full planning application to gain consent for an extension at ground, first and second floors to the side and above a vacant commercial unit to create a seven bedroom, seven person large Sui Generis HMO

- The footprint of the building is largely unchanged, a small extension is proposed onto Northcourt Avenue to create an entrance area.
- Refuse and cycle storage areas have been indicated on the proposed plans
- The development is to be car-free



This Statement

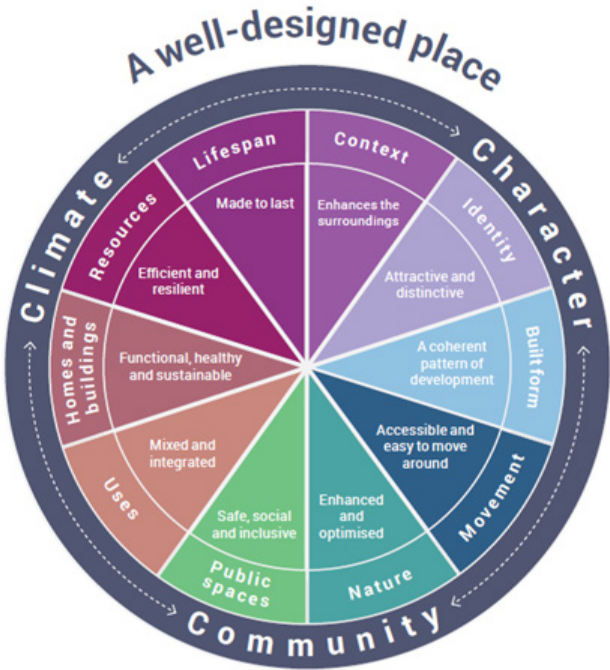
Colony Architects use a Design and Access Statement as an illustration tool to explain the planning application design proposal, the rationale behind its creation and how it is appropriate for the context. The Statement also serves to meet statutory requirements, local planning policy and national guidance documents. Statutory requirements of a Design & Access Statement.

The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2013 requires a Design and Access Statement to be made in the following application situations:

- Major Developments
- Within a designated area (Conservation Areas, World Heritage Sites)
- The provision of one or more dwellinghouses; or the Provision a building, or increase in building area greater than 100m2

The statement should cover:

- The design principles and concepts that been applied to the development
- How access relating to the development has been dealt with, adopting local planning policy requirements
- Explain the steps taken to appraise the context and how the design of the development takes the context into account
- State what, if any, consultation has been undertaken on issues relating to access to the development, and what account has been taken of the outcome of any such consultation



Design Guidance Documents

There are many design policy documents that inform the process of design at the pre-construction stage, these include the National Model Design Code, Building for a Healthy Life and reports such as Better Building Beautiful Commission. In addition to the statutory requirements of a Design and Access Statement, there is further guidance on the document structure and overall design process within the National Design Guide - Planning practices guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places, prepared by The Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government. This guide identifies three over arching priorities: - Climate, Character & Community. These themes re are then broken into the 10 essential characteristics that a well-designed place or building should embody. Our Design and Access Statements references these 10 chapters to present the design proposal and illustrate the suitability and well-designed nature of the proposal.

Design Process

During the design process, the design team observe not only statutory requirements and guidance documents, but also local planning policy requirements, examples of these documents include:

- Design Quality (Supplementary Planning Documents / Guidance)
- Character & Conservation Area assessments
- Lifetime Homes & Wheelchair User housing requirements
- Housing Design Standards
- Sustainability Checklists
- Parking & Highways Standards

Components for good design

A statement must demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the proposed development. It is that an applicant should understand the context in which their proposal will fit and use this understanding to design the scheme. To gain a good understanding of context and to use it appropriately, applicants should follow a design process which includes assessment, involvement, and evaluation, as well as proposing a final design. The following are important components for good design that this statement discusses:

Use

How the use or mix of uses proposed for the land and buildings have been derived from an understanding of the site's context.

Amount

How much development is proposed. For residential development, this means the number of units proposed for residential use. The statement should explain and justify the amount of development proposed for each use, its distribution across the site, how it relates to the site's surroundings and how accessibility to and between all parts of the development have been maximised.

Layout

The way in which buildings, routes and open spaces (both public and private) are provided, placed and orientated in relation to each other, and to buildings and spaces surrounding the site.

Scale

The size of the buildings (including their height), in relation to their surroundings. The statement should also explain and justify the size of individual building parts and how these relate to each other.

Appearance

The visual impression made by the building should be explained and justified, including its built form, architecture, materials, decoration, lighting, colour and texture.

Detailing

Consider how the building is crafted and materials relate, the detailing should reinforce the macro level design concept at a micro level off detail. The touch and feel of a building is just as important as the aesthetics.

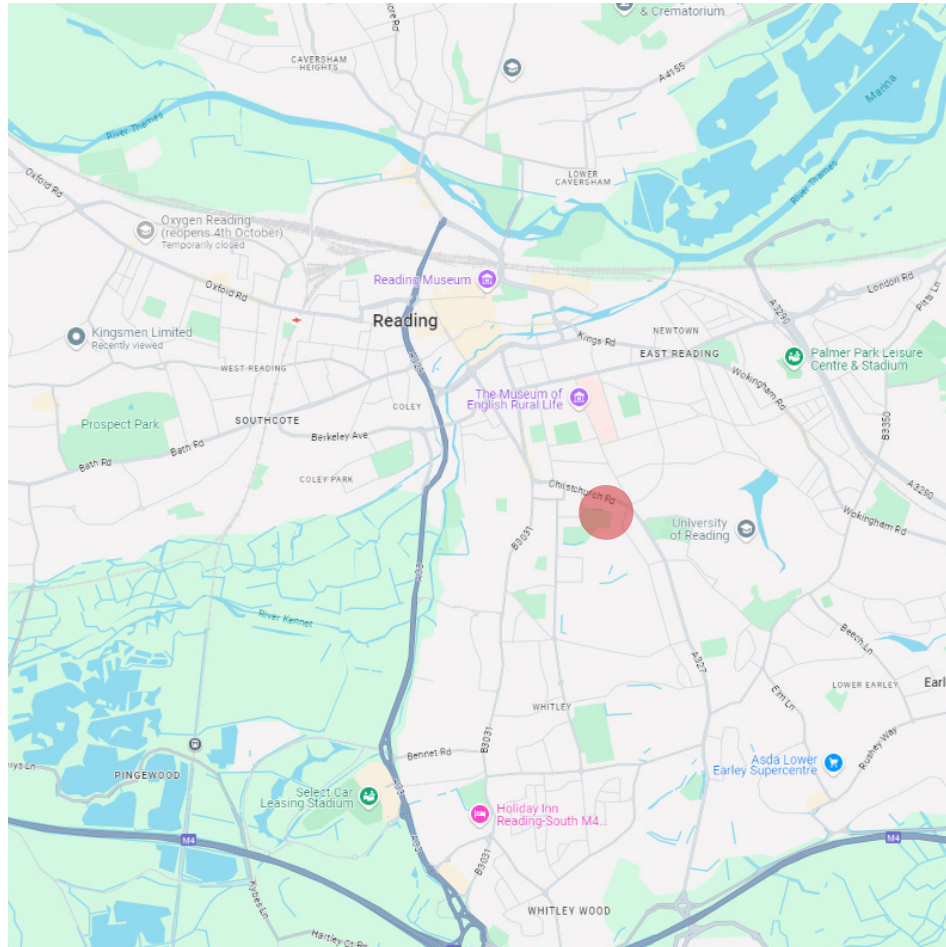
Landscaping

The treatment of private and public spaces to enhance or protect the amenities of the site and the area in which it is situated, through hard and soft landscaping measures, and how these will be maintained.

The Access Component

Design and access statements should explain how access arrangements will ensure that all users will have equal and convenient access to buildings and spaces and the wider transport network. It should include an explanation of the applicant's policy and approach to access, with particular reference to the inclusion of disabled people, a description of any consultation undertaken in relation to access issues and how the outcome of consultations and advice received on accessibility issues has been followed. Access for emergency services should be explained where relevant.





Regional location

- Site is located in Reading, to the West of the Univeristy of Reading Main Campus
- The site is within a 10minute bus journey of Reading Station
- There are many nearby leisure facilities such as Cintra Park

Aerial view / Site Location

- The site is on the junctions of Christchurch Road / A327 and Northcourt Road
- The immediately adjacent buildings on Christchurch Road typically house a retail / commercial units on the ground floor with residential accommodation above
- The red line illustrates application boundary, which has a total area of 648sqm



Existing Site

[CONTEXT ANALYSIS]

The surrounding context is comprised of terraced commercial & residential units and larger detached dwellings. Material palettes are ranged with pebbledash, render and exposed brick façades prevalent on the streetscene.





Existing Site

[SITE ANALYSIS]

The existing site houses the main building (No2 Northcourt Avenue) as well as a car park also owned by the applicant. An existing building is situated to the south of the site, though this is unaffected by the proposals.

Site Analysis Key:

- ① Site boundary
- ② 2 storey building
- ③ Single storey building
- ④ Access point
- ⑤ Adjacent Car Park
- ⑥ Existing Outbuilding
- ⑦ Existing Neighbouring Trees
- ⑧ Sun Path



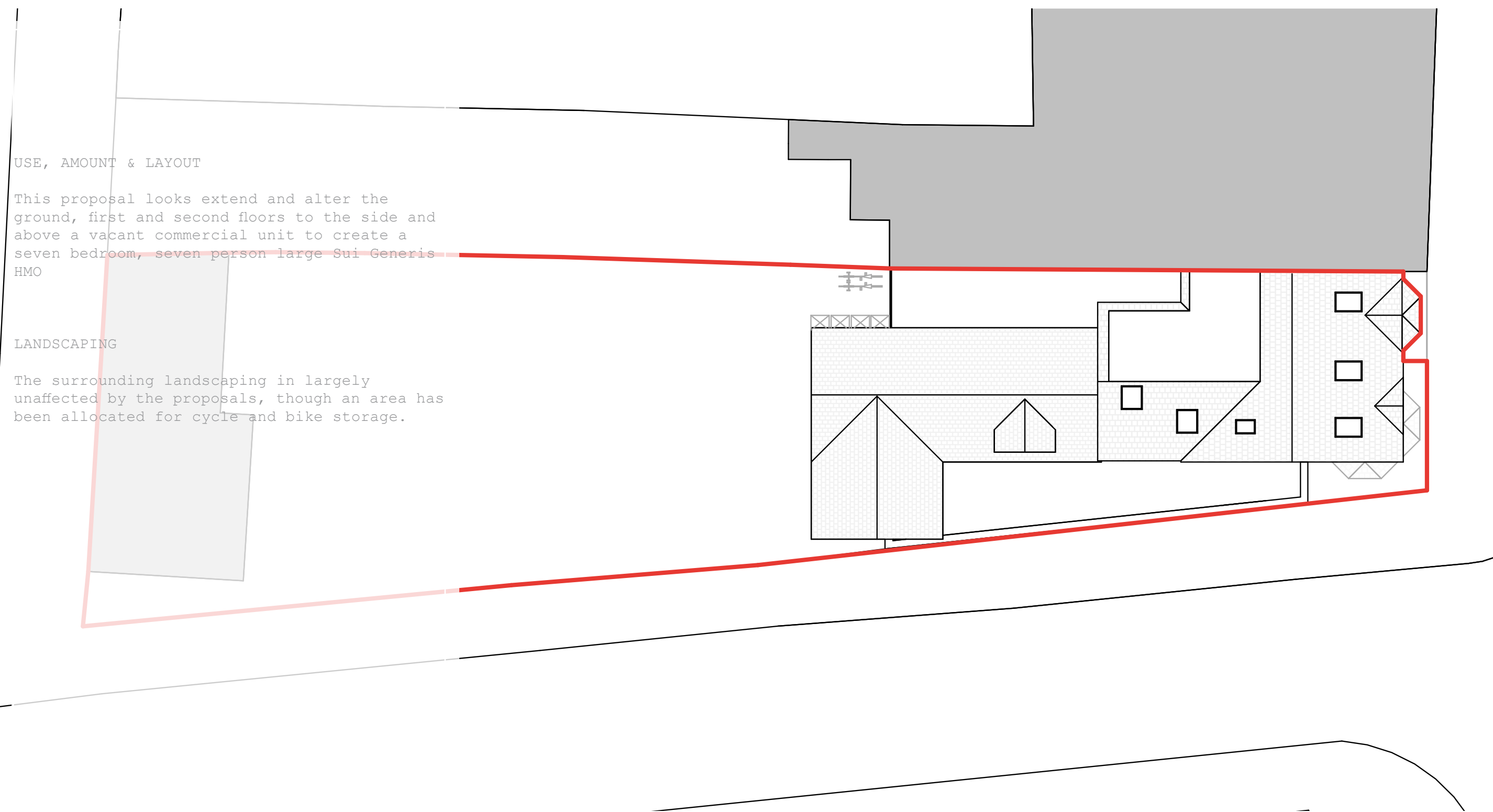
Existing access from Northcourt Avenue to the private car park (to be unaffected by the proposals)



Aerial view of the site

Proposed Block Plan

[DESIGN PROPOSAL]



USE, AMOUNT & LAYOUT

This proposal looks extend and alter the ground, first and second floors to the side and above a vacant commercial unit to create a seven bedroom, seven person large Sui Generis HMO

LANDSCAPING

The surrounding landscaping is largely unaffected by the proposals, though an area has been allocated for cycle and bike storage.

Proposed Elevations

[DESIGN PROPOSAL]

SCALE & APPEARANCE

New openings have been carefully considered so as to minimize overlooking on neighbours.

The form and massing of the building have been designed with a modern take on the existing local vernacular. The proposals are subservient the existing building.

Brickwork walls have been proposed to match the existing, along with a complementary timber cladding to add contrast and variety to the streetscene as per the below proposed front elevation



PLANNING STATEMENT

[DESIGN PROPOSAL]

This proposal shows compliance with Reading Policy RL3 per the extract below:

b) Within district, major local and local centres, development will be permitted provided that: There would be no net loss of 'centre uses' for 'non-centre uses' at the ground floor (apart from entrances to upper floors) except in exceptional circumstances. On upper floors, other uses including residential ('living over the shops') will be acceptable.

The ground floor sees a currently vacant space to be reused as a communal living and kitchen area, with a bedroom to the facing away from Northcourt Road. The upper floors allow for a further 5 bedrooms. The existing commercial unit facing onto Christchurch Road is to be retained for public use.

There is to be no parking provision offered as part of this scheme. This is due to, in no small part, the abundance of local transportation networks available to users of the HMO. Namely a frequently serviced bus stop adjacent to the property which gives access to Reading Train Station within 10 minutes.

NOISE & VIBRATION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The proposals provide 6 bedrooms and living spaces, some of which will adjoin existing commercial units. During the next stage of technical design, work will be undertaken to minimise the airborne and impact based noise transfer from the neighbouring commercial units to the proposed residential units. We would accept a condition to this effect.

AIR QUALITY STATEMENT

Policy EN15: Air Quality is part of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019), which addresses the impacts of development on air quality in Reading. It recognizes the importance of improving air quality and minimizing pollution, especially in areas where levels exceed legal limits.

The proposals make use of more sustainable existing transport networks. The proposed HMO will be built to modern building standards which will provide the most energy efficient living standards.