

Design and Access Statement

For
The New Shop and Café
For Blockley Co-operative Association

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Randell Burton Architects LTD as part of the planning application for a new shop and café at Blockley. The statement has been undertaken on the behalf of Blockley Co-operative Association who are the end users and the developers of the site.

The Class Use for the proposal are A1 shop and A3 café. The scheme will also provide new public conveniences, Class Use Sui Generis

The design and assess statement should be read in conjunction with the other reports and documents submitted as part of the planning application. The documents are as follows: -

- Heritage and Townscape Assessment by Nathaniel Litchfield and Partners
- Landscape Impact Assessment by Portus +Whitton
- Archaeology Report by Cotswold Archaeology
- Tree Report by Crawshaw Environmental
- Arboricultural Method Statement by Crawshaw Environmental
- Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey by Fairhurst
- Flood Risk Assessment by Fairhurst
- Retail Assessment by Nathaniel Litchfield and Partners
- Transport Assessment by Fairhurst
- Examination of Alternative Sites by Blockley Village Co-operative
- BCA Communications Strategy by Blockley Village Co-operative
- The Financial Imperative For New Premises by Blockley Village Co-operative
- Planning Statement by Blockley Village Co-operative

The purpose of this Statement

This document has been produced in response to the requirements of the Town and Country (General Development Procedure) (Amended) (England) Order 2010.

The first section of the statement aims to set out the design principles in terms of amount, layout, scale, landscape and appearance for the development. The second section deals with the issues relating to the site access and how they have been dealt with.

Location and setting

The application site lies in the centre of Blockley village within the conservation area. It covers an area of approximately 246m² and comprises a public wc, private garden and part of an area used for off road parking.

A 20th century domestic garage that takes the form of a dovecote set within a walled enclosure bound the site to the north. The garage is part of the curtilage to Paxton House and is used for off road parking.

A redundant Mill Pond is located to the rear of the site, east, which is screened from the site by a bank of trees and shrubs. The trees and shrub vary in height from approximately 4- 20m plus and form a green backdrop to the site.

The churchyard to St Peter & St Paul's Church runs along the southern boundary. There are a number of trees planted within the churchyard, adjacent to the site boundary, which restrict the view of the church as you descend into the village from the north.

Post Office Square is located to the west of the site, a widening in the road formed by the northern entrance to the churchyard and an open space in front of the Old Coach House. The Old Coach House currently houses the village shop and café and is Grade II listed.



The site from Post Office Square



The site from the churchyard



The site viewed from footpath in the park to the North of the site

Proposal

The proposal is to provide a community shop and café for Blockley Co-operative Association that is held in perpetuity for the benefit of the village. The new premises will re-house the existing business that operates from the Old Coach House on a short-term lease. The lease is due to expire in 2013.

Amount

The overall site area is 246m² and will contain the following elements: -

- Retail area including tills 73.5m²
- Café and kitchen 44.4m²
- WCs 12m²
- Plant room and storage area 43.5m²
- Office and storage area 18.5m²
- Internal circulation space 27m²
- External terrace to café/entrance courtyard 19m²
- Private service space, bin store and soft landscaping 56.5m²

Layout

The building is orientated on an East/West axis with the principal entrance addressing the square.



Public spaces are located on the ground floor and are located directly off the entrance courtyard/café terrace. These include the café, shop and wcs. The decision to locate the public spaces on the ground floor has been made to ensure maximum accessibility to the general public.

Private areas are located in the northern wing of the building which is one and a half storeys high with basement. The kitchen and private service areas are located in the North Eastern corner with office above. The plant room and storage facilities are located in the basement.

The decision to locate the basement along the Northern side of the site has been made in order to minimise the possible damage to the root structure of the two Yew trees and the Portugal Laurel, located in the churchyard. The structure adjacent to the trees will be supported on pile foundations which will be designed around the major root systems, this will ensure that the impact on the trees will be kept to a minimum. Please see the Arboriculture Method Statement by Crawshaw Environmental for further information.

An external service route has been provided along the northern side of the building. This will provide access for goods coming into the building and waste coming out. The service route also provides access to the bin storage area and private garden area for the staff, located in the North Eastern corner of the site adjacent to the dovecote.

Scale

A careful analysis of the site and the surrounding area has been undertaken to ensure that the scale of the building is appropriate to its setting and to ensure that the principal views within the village are retained. Please see the Heritage Assessment prepared by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners and the Landscape Impact Assessment by Portus + Whitton.

A brief synopsis of the assessments indicates the area immediately around the site is characterised by one to two storey buildings of a domestic scale with the backdrop of St Peter's and St Paul's Church. The proposed building reflects the scale of the surrounding building and will be one and a half storeys in height.

Regarding the massing. Every effort has been made to ensure the massing of the proposal is appropriate to its setting within the village. This can be seen in the design which takes the form of a series of interconnecting volumes, expressed as two converging wings linked by a building at ninety degrees. This solution gives the proposal a human scale and reduced the overall massing of the scheme.

Landscaping

The Arboricultural Assessments by Crawshaw Environmental and the Landscape Impact Assessment by Portus + Whitton, identify a number of significant features that are to be retained in and directly adjacent to the site. These include the two Yew trees and Portugal Laurel in the churchyard and the drystone walls bounding the site.

Regarding the trees, please see the Arboricultural Method Statement that outlines the tree protection methods during construction and mitigation methods employed to minimise the impact of the proposal on the trees.

Regarding the walls, the proposal aims to repair and incorporate the walls into the scheme where possible.

The proposal incorporates two distinct landscape areas into the scheme.

- The first is a small public terrace that is located off The Square. This acts as a transition zone between the street the building and provides access to the new wcs shop and café. The terrace also contains a small area of seating for the café. The terrace is enclosed on three sides by the proposed building and a section of low dry stone walling to the fourth. The terrace will be hard landscaped to provide disabled access in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act and will be compliant with Part M of the Building Regulations.
- The second area is a private zone to the north of the building that contains the service route, bin store and private garden area. This area is defined by the existing drystone walls and 750mm wide strip of planting which will help to soften the appearance of the proposal when approached from the north. The planting zone will contain a specimen tree to replace the Common Larch that is to be removed to facilitate the new building. Additional planting will comprise shrubs and bushes that will help to screen the building and provide a natural habitat for native wildlife.

Appearance of the Development (Including the appraisal of the Context)

Context

Every effort has been made to ensure that the development is appropriate to its setting and fit for its intended purpose. This includes careful analysis of the site and its context in terms of the built environment, landscape, social and economic conditions and planning policy. In addition, investigations have been undertaken in terms of alternative locations, compliance with building regulations, green issues and appropriateness of materials. Consultation with the community has also been undertaken. Please see the reports that form part of the planning application for more detail.

Appearance

The appearance of the development has evolved as a consequence of the design process; site analysis and consultation process and this can be seen in the sketches attached below.



1

Image 1 shows the preliminary proposal for the project and is based on a more contemporary scheme. Design keys are taken from its location within the village with loose references made to church architecture (central nave with side aisle and a tower). The central section of the building contains the public spaces, shop and café, with the service areas located in the side wings. The tower is curved in plan and is designed to lead people into the churchyard and mark the transition between street and approach to the church.



2

Image 2 is a further development of the initial scheme which has been redesigned in order to increase the floor area of the proposal. Again references are made to church architecture and also to the dovecote.

The proposal was rejected for a number of reasons that include the impact on the views towards the church, that may be compromised due to the height. It was also felt that the proposal might be too contemporary for its location adjacent to the Listed church of St Peter and St Paul and the Old Coach House which is also listed.



3

The final proposal has evolved into a more traditional form that we feel is appropriate for its location and answers any issues that have become apparent throughout the design process. See image 3.

The building will be constructed from natural stone and timber boarding under a slate roof. This palette of materials has been chosen to reflect the buildings in the locality and ensure that the proposal forms an integral part of the street scene. The rationale behind the use of natural stone and timber to the external walls is to reduce the massing of the proposal and add interest through variety.

There are a number of glazed elements in the design that have been included to maximise the use of natural light and provide a visual link between the interior and exterior of the building. The high level glazed gables to the north and east elevations will allow natural light to penetrate deep into the building whilst still maintaining privacy and ensuring security.

Access

A detailed transport assessment by W A Fairhurst and Partners has been included within the planning application that addresses access to the site. Please see Transport Statement for Blockley Village Co-operative dated January 2011 for further information.

A brief synopsis of the report is as follows:

The proposed shop is located within the centre of the village that has a population of 1997 people, of which 1132 people live within one kilometre of the site. Due to the nature and location of the proposal it is envisaged that most people will travel by foot, however public transport is available with a bus stop within 150 metres of the site. There are no parking provisions on site, however on street parking for about seven

cars is available within the immediate vicinity. The numbers of people who are expected to visit the site by bicycle are deemed to be low due to the local terrain.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the new facilities are accessible to all users and an improvement over the existing provisions available in the village. As it currently stands, access into the CDC-owned public wcs is difficult for disabled users due to the steps that need to be negotiated. The proposed premises will provide modernised facilities with access from both inside and outside the building. Likewise the change in floor levels within the existing property used for the shop and café make disabled access difficult. The new facilities will address these problems and enhance accessibility.