

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

**FORMER CAR SALES SHOWROOM
AND PETROL FILLING STATION SITE
ON LAND AT JUNCTION OF
LEOPOLD ROAD AND MELROSE ROAD,
NORWICH**

**PROPOSED NEW SMALL LOCAL CENTRE
COMPRISING FIVE CONVENIENCE UNITS
TO BE OCCUPIED BY RETAIL AND SERVICE
USES WITHIN RESTRICTED A1, A2, A3, B1a, D1
AND D2 USE CLASSES AT GROUND FLOOR
LEVEL AND FIVE FLATTED DWELLING
UNITS AT FIRST FLOOR LEVEL WITH LANDSCAPED
ROOF GARDEN AND ASSOCIATED INTERNAL CAR
AND CYCLE PARKING PROVISION**

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application to enable the erection of a new small Local Centre comprising five convenience and service units totalling 270.5 sq. m (2832.8 sq. ft) gross internal floor space and five flatted two bedroom dwelling units at 53 sq. m (570 sq. ft) net internal floor space orientated about a communal sitting out area external area of 125 sq. m (1,345 sq. ft) at 1:1 parking.
- 1.2 This document and application drawings have been prepared having regard to adopted policies contained within the Development Plan and more recent Government guidance.
- 1.3 This document has further been devised having regard to the *Design and Access Statements – How to Write, Read and Use* published by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment.

2.0 **DESIGN**

2.1 **Proposed Use**

2.1.1 The application site is some 609.4 sq. m in area and is located at the junction of Leopold Road and Melrose Road. The application site is brownfield having been previously developed as a petrol filling station, garage and later a car dealership. Although the site has been cleared and all the buildings demolished within the site the garage forecourt remains clearly evident. The application site has frontages to both Leopold Road and Melrose Road that are predominantly residential streets.

2.1.2 The convenience element of the scheme has been designed to complement and develop existing Local Centre type retail and service uses that are present along Leopold Road, Melrose Road and Waldeck Road to create a critical mass of day-to-day convenience uses.

2.1.3 The residential element of the scheme has been included as the units proposed will have direct access to a range of day-to-day shops and services. As such the residential dwellings proposed are suited to occupation by the young and elderly who may not have access to a motor car. The residential dwelling units are further designed to provide natural surveillance over the public spaces about the Local Centre to increase safety and security locally. It is proposed at this stage that the dwelling units will be sold to private owner occupiers.

2.2 **The Amount of Development**

2.2.1 The application site is located in close proximity to established and well served public transport corridors along Newmarket Road, Mile End Road and Unthank Road. The extent to which the site is accessible to existing public transport provision is discussed in detail within the Transport Statement prepared by SLR Consulting.

2.2.2 The Government's policy in respect of housing is to ensure that housing is developed in locations which offer good access to a range of community facilities, key services and infrastructure. As the residential development proposed is to be located above shops and services designed to meet day-to-day needs and well related to public transport it is considered that the site is an appropriate residential development location.

2.3 Layout of the Proposed Scheme

2.3.1 The application proposals have been designed by Owen Bond Partnership, SLR Consulting and Broadfield Planning having regard to the following outline design brief:

- Seek to develop as far as possible a critical mass of convenience uses to complement existing Local Centre type uses located about the junctions of Leopold Road with Waldeck Road and Melrose Road;
- Seek to deliver a range of small scale convenience uses to meet the day-to-day needs of a walk-in catchment population having regard to the type and location of existing uses present about the surrounding area;
- Create sustainable shopping patterns locally by delivering a sufficiently varied mix of convenience uses to ensure that the area becomes more attractive to meet the day-to-day needs of local residents to ensure a reduction in vehicle trips locally and a resulting improvement in air quality;

- Create an iconic building to act as a community focus to aid social inclusion about the local area;
- Create a scheme that is not visually dominated by car parking by concealing all car parking necessary to serve the residential units proposed within the scheme at the rear of the convenience units;
- Create a scheme that will directly affect motor car usage locally and that will re-shape residents travel patterns by providing no staff and customer car parking provision to the convenience units proposed;
- Build into the scheme a number of dwelling units that should be designed to improve natural surveillance across external public spaces about the site to ensure that the new Local Centre is well used by all sections of the local community;
- Look creatively at whether the residential units above the convenience spaces can be used to overhang the front of the retail units to form a strip mall approach to weather protect customers visiting and potential customers passing by the new small Local Centre; and
- Have specific regard to the potential for overlooking, over shadowing, massing and privacy impacts upon the occupants of existing dwelling units adjacent the application site.

2.3.2 It is the considered view of the project team that this brief has been closely adhered to in the final scheme design.

2.3.3 In addition to this outline brief the project team also had specific regard to the Inspectors comments in respect of the previous appeal against the refusal of planning permission reference 06/01063/F. It is the considered view of the project team that the final scheme design correctly addresses the reasons outlined in the Decision Letter relating to appeal reference APP/G2625/A/07/2036275/ NWF. All previously identified adverse impacts resulting from poor design, over-dominant parking layouts, the heights of buildings abutting the rear garden of 52 Melrose Road and the proximity of

noise sources within habitable rooms to 52 Melrose Road are now fully addressed.

2.3.4 It is considered that the design approach advocated in this instance is the optimum for the application site in terms of layout.

2.4 The Scale of the Proposal

2.4.1 The height of the scheme has been arrived at having regard to the overall ridge and eaves heights of the traditional terraced properties adjoining the site on Leopold Road, the desire to accommodate residential development above the convenience functions proposed, the need to design an iconic building to create a sense of place and the reasons given to justify dismissing the previous appeal relating to the site as outlined in the Decision Letter relating to appeal reference APP/G2625/A/07/2036275/NWF.

2.4.2 As referred to above, the relationship of the proposal to 52 Melrose Road and 21 Leopold Road has been an important consideration during the design process. The applicant has sought to manage any noise, overlooking and privacy impacts resulting from the proposal upon the adjoining properties. This has been achieved by forming a 1.2m wide pedestrian access between the site and 21 Leopold Road over which both owners will have access rights and by butting up to 52 Melrose Road with a 1.8m high red brick wall above which will be erected the organic pergola proposed to wrap around the car parking area. The wall proposed will mitigate noise impacts resulting from within the car park and the wall and pergola once developed will guard against light spill resulting from headlights during the winter months. The organic pergola will be planted initially during the first planting season with fast growing climbers that will

create a visual screen. The fast growing sacrificial climbing species will be supplemented over time with slower growing native climbers such as honeysuckle and other native species specifically designed to attract butterflies. This approach will not only provide the adjoining owner with privacy and protect against noise and lighting impacts but will also soften the transition between the two ownerships and provide a high degree of visual amenity whilst furthering the aims of biodiversity locally.

2.4.3 It should be noted that the scale and height of the proposal at the point where the proposed building abuts the rear gardens of 21 Leopold Road and 52 Melrose Road has also been carefully designed. The design approach advocated under this application ensures that only single storey elements of the new small Local Centre abut the rear gardens of both properties. Overlooking of the same rear gardens from window and door openings in the dwellings proposed or the communal roof deck is also prevented through careful design. The section and plan drawings forming part of this application demonstrate that the roof deck has been carefully shaped to ensure that residents and guests are physically not able to walk close enough to the edges of the building proposed to obtain a view into any part of either adjoining garden. This approach ensures that no adverse residential impact will result from the proposal.

2.4.4 The flatted elements of the scheme are desired by the applicant to ensure that all external public spaces surrounding the new small Local Centre are well surveyed at all times of the night and day. This inclusion of small number of two bedroom flatted units within the scheme will ensure that a better housing mix is created locally. As referred to previously the overall height of the scheme has been shaped by the desire to include residential units within the scheme and the height of adjoining traditional terraced units along Leopold Road.

2.5 Proposed Landscaping

2.5.1 The applicant proposes the formation of the organic pergola as a roof cover to the internal car park. The use of the pergola will screen the visual impact of parked cars from the wider street scene and will also allow opportunities to develop biodiversity locally. The applicant envisages planting the pergola with sacrificial non-native fast growing climbers in the first planting season to achieve a fast forming organic buffer. During subsequent planting seasons the non-native climbers will be removed in sections and replaced with native slower growing species such as honey suckle. The applicant will further make efforts to include native species that attract butterflies to develop an interesting feature within the street scene and improve still further the residential amenity of future residential occupiers and the occupiers of adjoining dwelling units.

2.5.2 The applicant further proposes a hard landscaping and formal planting scheme to be developed within the communal roof deck serving the dwelling units proposed.

2.6 Appearance

2.6.1 The new small Local Centre proposed is designed as an iconic modern building that is easily identifiable when viewed from any point along Melrose Road and Leopold Road. This legibility has been achieved through the use of contrasting materials and the footprint of the building stepping forward from the existing building line. The scale and height of the building has been arrived at having regard to the need to avoid adverse neighbour impacts whilst ensuring a good visual fit with the street scene.

- 2.6.2 It is proposed to construct the principle elevations of the new small Local Centre using red brick at ground floor level to anchor the building into the wider street scene. The red brick used to construct the external elevations at ground floor level will be chosen to match that evident in the existing street scene. This approach will ensure that there are limited opportunities for vandalism or the deterioration of the elevations at ground floor level.
- 2.6.3 The external elevations fronting onto Leopold Road and Melrose Road at first floor level, i.e. the residential facades are to be constructed using untreated horizontal cedar boarding. This approach ensures that the cost of the cantilevers proposed to form the strip mall is managed and that a clear visual division between functions is evident when viewed from the street. All window openings within the dwellings proposed are to be formed using powder coated aluminium. It is considered that the use of untreated cedar boarding and powder coated aluminium on the external elevations at first floor level will ensure that the quality of street scene is maintained into the future at limited cost and effort.
- 2.6.4 The shop fronts at ground floor level onto Leopold Road and Melrose Road are also proposed to be constructed using powder coated aluminium.
- 2.6.5 It is proposed to use a Zinc standing seam roof sheet to clad the mono pitch roof above the dwelling units. It is proposed that the Zinc used will be pre-weathered prior to installation to ensure that the colour is a good visual fit within the street scene. It is considered that the use of Zinc that will add visual interest to the street scene along Melrose Road.
- 2.6.6 The specification and proposed planting of the organic pergola wrapping around the car parking and store area to the rear of the building is

discussed in the previous section. The timber deck area to first floor will be planted with raised timber or concrete planters located over load bearing columns and walls forming the convenience spaces beneath. The planting specification will be agreed either during or after the determination process.

2.6.7 The internal domestic parking areas are screened from the street scene although will be constructed using red brick and grey concrete pavers. The external pedestrian areas fronting onto the street will be constructed using a hexagonal shaped or patterned paver. This approach is deliberate and is again design to ground the proposal and to reinforce local distinctiveness. The interlocking hexagonal pavers when seen together will form a honeycomb pattern throughout the pedestrian area to complement the external appearance of the Beehive PH opposite that is the established centre of the surrounding community. It is hoped that the use of the pavers proposed will go some way to tying the uses together and reinforcing the fact that the junction of Melrose Road and Leopold Road is the logical centre of the community. The applicant is prepared to visually tie the two complementary uses still further by recessing all domestic window and door openings proposed and colouring the reveals yellow should the Council see fit. It is considered that this approach seen in the street with the metallic black roof sheet would develop this visual tie still further.

2.6.8 The new small Local Centre is designed to deliver a series of high quality lettable and accessible convenience spaces and a number of well designed small scale dwelling units. It is considered that the overall form, scale and appearance is complementary to the existing street scene.

2.6.9 All car parking areas, commercial and domestic bin stores and the internal access road are located to the rear of the commercial spaces proposed and beneath the organic pergola that wraps around the rear of the

building. This approach ensures that the necessary car parking, road and bin storage areas do not visually detract from the street scene. Cycle parking areas for shoppers are deliberately sited to be clearly evident within the street scene and weather protected by the dwellings above to maximise use.

3.0 **ACCESS**

3.1 Vehicular Access

3.1.1 As referred to within the Transport Statement attached the existing access arrangements serving the site have affected footways on both Leopold Road and Melrose Road. Under the current proposals it is only proposed to access the site via the existing access point onto Melrose Road. The access proposed is 3.25m wide and will serve an enclosed parking court. Visibility splays serving this access point including pedestrian splays are to the relevant adopted standard.

3.2 Parking Provision

3.2.1 Parking provision at 1:1 ration is provided for the residential dwellings within the proposed scheme. This parking provision is contained within an enclosed courtyard at the rear of the convenience units proposed. Full vehicle turning provision for motor cars entering the site is available within the covered parking area. A full swept path analysis to demonstrate this point is contained within the Transport Statement that accompanies this application.

3.2.2 The new small Local Centre is designed to serve a walk-in catchment population only drawn from surrounding streets within an 800m walk distance of the application site. No parking provision is proposed for customers visiting or staff employed within any of the convenience units proposed.

3.3 Servicing Arrangements

3.3.1 Former uses including the previous car sales use within the application site have traditionally been serviced from Leopold Road. This again appears the most appropriate way to service the small new Local Centre proposed under this application. The servicing of the retail and service uses proposed is discussed in more detail within the Transport Statement attached.

3.2 Pedestrian Access

3.2.1 The location and alignment of the pedestrian access points serving the site and individual dwelling units have been carefully selected. The pedestrian entrances serving the scheme both within the convenience units and serving the dwelling units above have been visually reinforced and developed through the design process to ensure that they are visible to residents, visitors, service staff and the emergency services.

3.2.2 All convenience retail and service units proposed will have access to a disabled WC and entry to the units will be via a level access threshold with doors designed to comply with the Building Regulations with regard to opening widths, ironmongery, fenestration and opening force.

3.2.3 Access to the flats will be by way of a staircase designed to comply with the regulations for ambulant disabled persons and could be retrospectively fitted with a stair lift should this be required. The internal car parking area is hard surfaced with a designated disabled car parking bay with hard surfaced access to the street and stairs to the first floor flats.

3.2.4 The area between the stairs and flats will be hard surfaced and the flat doors will have level thresholds and minimum clear opening widths of 800mm.