THE WILLIAM KNIBB CENTRE
MONTAGU STREET - KETTERING

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY COUNCIL OFFICES REFURBISHMENT & REMODELLING PROJECT

DESIGN + ACCESS & PLANNING STATEMENT
(Prepared for Northamptonshire County Council by Stenton Obhi Architects)

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1.0 Introduction

This Architectural Design and access statement has been prepared by Stenton Obhi Architects on behalf of our Client Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) in support of the planning application for the refurbishment, remodelling and change of use of the William Knob Centre on Montague Street in Kettering. It conforms with the DCLO Circular 01/2009 and the guidance contained in the CABE publication Design & access statements: How to write, read and use them.

This statement accompanies the full planning application and contains supporting information to explain the rationale behind the design proposals.

1.01 BACKGROUND

The William Knob Centre is a Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) owned building close to the centre of Kettering. This is essentially made up of an 1890's Victorian building (former boys' school) and a 1960's 3 storey extension with flat roofed link.

There are currently multiple users of the building including the Complementary Education Centre Academy Trust, Youth Work CIC, Hemelstall, NCC Adult Learning and NCC.

A high level feasibility report produced in January 2018 considered options and demonstrated that the existing accommodation at the William Knob Centre could provide a more modern, flexible, shared workspace in line with the Next Generation Working Project ethos.

1.02 OBJECTIVES

Northamptonshire County Council is on a road to change, in response to financial pressures in the public sector resulting from reductions in funding and increasing demands on its services. The Asset Utilisation Strategy: 2016-2018 Approach maps out the way that fundamental changes to the shape and size of NCC's property estate can be a key element of the drive to make savings, increase productivity and efficiency and improve the customer experience. The Strategy contributes to savings through a planned and structured programme to rationalise property from the estate and to use the remaining estate more efficiently.

As part of the transformation of the work force, the Council aims to modernise the way people work through the Next Generation Working Project closely aligned to a Mobile Working project that is equipping staff with latest mobile devices to work out in the field, and introducing enabling technologies in the work space including Wi-Fi and video conferencing and removing the need for fixed equipment on desks.

The project will enable the Council to deliver their aspirations in transforming existing working practices across its services. In the north of the County and maintain efficiencies. The facility is to support 145 flexible work spaces, up to 73 bookable spaces for meetings via the corporate room booking service and provide increased collaboration and more ‘light’ ways of working.

As an integral part of the proposals there is a requirement to provide suitable self-contained accommodation for Child Protection Conferences which also requires its own secure access.

The accompanying plans and documentation prepared by the project team outlined below help to illustrate the proposal in more detail.

1.03 PROJECT TEAM

The appointed project team consists of (Refer to Fig 01 alongside):

- Stenton Obhi Architects
- Gleeds (Cost Consultants)
- BCAL Consulting (Structural and Civil Consultants)
- TP Engineering (M&E Services Consultants)

The main architects representing Northamptonshire County Council are:

- Margaret Davison - Strategic Property Development Officer
- Jane Smith - Construction Project Manager LCSS Property Services
- Peter Moor - NCC Planning Department

Daniel Walker from ACS furniture has also provided input in relation to the bench furniture concept which plays an integral role in the delivery of the project.
1.04 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The following supporting information forms part of the application submission:

- All Standard National Requirements
- NCC002-400 - Existing site location and & block plans
- NCC002-401 - Proposed site plans
- NCC006-404 - Existing floor plans
- NCC002-406 - Proposed floor plans
- NCC002-407 - Existing elevations 1
- NCC002-408 - Existing elevations 2
- NCC002-409 - Proposed elevations 1
- NCC002-410 - Proposed elevations 2
- Architectural survey report - 3208 by BHATrees Ltd
- Bat survey report: UdalMartin Associates
- Bat emergence survey report to follow
- Design, access and planning statement
- Draft travel plans to follow
- External lighting scheme report
- Flood risk & drainage strategy report - 5465 R001 by BCAL Consultants
- Noise/Acoustic Survey and recommendations - 4177 by Walker/Black/ Mason
- Transport statement - 5465 R001 by BCAL Consultants

1.05 PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

Initial discussions with the Planning authority have taken place and although a formal pre-application was not envisaged, early consultation had highlighted that the following information would be required to support an application:

- Design proposals: Including plans and elevations
- Design & Access statement
- Due to the unclear nature of the existing planning use class of the building, it was requested that any application should formalise the change, via the inclusion of a change of use application (to B1 & D1 classification)
- Highways - No advisers comments have been received, however it was suggested that a speed survey be carried out on Alfred Street to allow the violet splay for the entrance to be calculated.
- Transport route
- Ecology - A bat survey requested
- External lighting assessment
- Waste management
- Drought strategy - Surface water management
- Archaeology - The County's Archaeological Officer (Lesley Ann Matter) has confirmed that no archaeological investigation is required for the site/applications.
- Sustainability/energy statement

Although there has been no formal written confirmation, it would appear that in principle the LPA are supportive of the proposals, and have confirmed the requirements for an application as listed above along with the standard mandatory national requirements. Liaison with the LPA has been ongoing whilst developing the proposals.

1.06 THE PROPOSAL

The application herein seeks to enhance the external appearance and accommodation at the William Knibb Centre and provide a modern, flexible, shared workspace as outlined in section 1.06.

In brief, this work will comprise of the following alterations necessitating the requirement for a formal planning application:

- External works - Improvement of the vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements to the site, re-configuration and re-surfacing of the existing car parks, addition and improvements to the car park drainage, installation of external fire escape stair, widening of main vehicular access to the site and general site wide improvements including the installation of external lighting.
1.06 THE PROPOSAL CONT....

- Alterations to the 1850's single storey building - to form secure and separate accommodation for Child Protection Conferencing. Internal alterations shall be kept in keeping with the existing environment as far as practically possible.
- Alterations to the 1960's 3 storey building - internal remodelling of existing office and first floor gymnasium to form flexible and modern office accommodation as well as accessibility, improvements and renovation of the existing building envelopes, including improvements to the facade, window replacements and fenestration improvements, roof replacement and new entrance and canopy.

1.07 CHANGE OF USE

During pre-application discussions with NCC it had been noted that the clue various changes of use over the years of the Centre, that the planning use classifications were unclear. As part of the application this is being addressed by applying for a change of use in line with the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) to the following classifications:

- The 1850's building to be used for Child Protection Conferencing to be Classed for D1 (non-residential institutional) use.
- The 1960's 3 storey building to be utilised by Northamptonshire County Council to be classed for B1 (Business) use.

The proposed use classifications are indicated in Fig. 04

1.08 COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

As well consultation at a Statutory level, an event was held at William Kibb Centre on the 20th June 2016 (9.00am - 1.00pm) allowing local residents, neighbours and other Centre users to view, comment and provide feedback on the proposals.

The Consultation event leaflets were distributed on the 21st June 2016 to all immediate residents and all third party users of the Centre as well as on site NCC Staff.

A total of 8 people attended the event primarily from the Kingdom Hall, Complimentary Education Academy, Adult Learning and Home Start. The comments received were generally supportive of scheme and a summary of the feedback is listed below with a copy of the feedback forms included in APPENDIX A.

Advantages

- All felt that the improvements to the building were overdue.
- 1x felt that the proposed design was pleasing.
- 1x commented on the benefits of maximising the occupation of site.

Disadvantages

- 2x commented on the amount of car parking which is currently an issue given the use by the local community/local public.
- 1x commented on the potential over-use of the site by additional staff coming from other offices.
- All NCC staff commented on the desire to have a barrier system to manage the movement of non-NCC staff.

Suggestions

- 1x commented on available storage for bulk items used by Adult Learning.
- 1x commented on access arrangements to the building for non-substantial staff.
- 1x Commented on the requirement for directional signage to enable ease of access for visiting members staff/public.

In conclusion the feedback was generally supportive, although there are limited solutions to the issues of the car parking, the Consultee were informed that the available site has been designed to optimise the number of parking spaces whilst providing full accessibility. Which meant that the number of spaces that could be accommodated would increase from the current arrangement. Although the project is subject to budgetary constraints, the infrastructure for a vehicular barrier system is to be installed to allow for future installation if the use by non Centre users continues to cause problems.
2.0 Site Information

2.01 Site Location

The William Krib Centre is located on the North-East fringe of Kettering city centre and bound by Montagu Street to the North and Alfred Street to the South. (Montagu Street, Kettering, NN16 8AD) - Refer to Fig 06 alongside.

2.02 Neighbouring Properties & Uses

Montagu Street has a mixture of residential, retail and business uses while Alfred Street is predominately a residential street.

The site is shared with the Kingdom Hall and Children’s Centre (SureStart) as illustrated in the aerial view in (Refer to Fig 07). The site comprises of an old red brick former school building and a later three storey extension. Also within the curtilage of the site is the Kingdom Hall and Children’s SureStart Centre, both of which have access to the site and share car parking facilities with the William Krib Centre.

2.03 Building History

The former Stamford Road Board School, Kettering was originally built around 1852 as a boys school, as shown in the image I Fig 08. At some point in history a part of the original building to the South-West was demolished, now the site for the Kingdom Hall building. The three storey extension was added via a flat roof link corridor in the late 1960’s providing a stark contrast in architectural languages.

The former school is a traditional late Victorian building predominantly single storey with isolated areas at first floor with a typical crowning cupola no doubt used to exhaust fumes from the heating system. The red brick construction, stonework detailing and high window s are typical of the architectural characteristics of the era.

By contrast the late 1960’s extension appears to be of concrete/steel frame construction with brick panel and window infills with a shallow pitched roof all typically ‘modular’ of the time. The gymnasium at first floor is unusual for its location however this may have been due to the site constraints and access from Alfred Street to the site.
2.04 PHOTOGRAPHIC SITE ANALYSIS 1

Selection of Photos depicting the existing external appearance

View of the three storey block which was an extension to the original building

View leading south-west In Car Park 1, with the original William Kobb Centre to the right

View from Car Park 1 leading at the original and extension block of the WKG

View of 2 storey Gymnasium block and 3 storey block from Alfred Street

View of 2 storey Gymnasium block and 2 storey block from Alfred Street

View of vehicular and pedestrian access to Car Park 2 from Alfred Street

View of extension block from Car Park 2 with the original building in the background

View of the Gymnasium block from Car Park 2, with a vehicular underpass

View of existing disabled spaces In car park 2
2.0 Site Information

2.05 Photographic Site Analysis 2

Selection of Photos depicting the external appearance and typical interior environments

View of building access to the Sure Start Centre

View looking across the car park at the 1880s gable ended elevation

Internal view of typical office environment

Internal view of typical 2nd floor office environment

Internal view of 1880s building with high ceilings

Internal view of existing first floor gymnasium to be converted into office space

Internal view of a typical circulation space
2.0 Site Information

2.0.6 EXISTING SITE ANALYSIS

Fig 09 illustrates the existing site and the extent of the site for the William Knibb Centre. The relevant site is bounded by the red line and the blue outline illustrates the leased site to the CHIBUS Centre including their associated allocated car parking.

The William Knibb Centre site boundary has a total approximate site area of 0.56ha (1.4 acres).

Existing Parking Arrangement

The parking arrangements for the William Knibb Centre and its multiple users is limited to the two car parks on the site.

The exact number of parking spaces available on the site are unknown as the larger car park does not have marked bays, this coupled with the poor ground surface makes the car park very inefficient area that would require addressing as part of the modernisation proposals.

a) Existing car park 1

The general condition of the car park surfacing is very poor, the ground surface is a mixture of tarmac area to the eastern side of the car park and the rest of the car park is predominantly loose gravel/hard core, the surface is rutted in places and a number of large pot holes exist around the car park. The drainage from a visual inspection appears non-existent and there is no definition between vehicular and pedestrian areas, which again due to the number of users of the building/site is of concern from a health and safety perspective.

The car park does not have marked bays and coupled with the poor ground surface condition makes this a very inefficient space, there is also no lighting within the car parks which with the state of the ground would certainly raise health and safety concerns as well as security issues.

The exact number of existing parking spaces are difficult to define, due to absence of marked bays and users parking randomly within the spaces. We have assumed that approximately 40 parking spaces are currently available over the two car parks.

b) Existing car park 2

The surface condition of the car park is significantly better than car park 1, however there is a number of pot holes scattered around the car park some of which expose the sub base of the existing surface. Attempts have been made previously to repair these up however any remedial work needs to be considered holistically.

Marked bays do exist and provide an element of order and self-management in the car park. It is understood that the CE Academy has utilisation and rights of access of Car Park 2 as part of their lease agreement, however this is currently on first come first served basis.

Fig 09: SITE ORIENTATION PLAN OF THE WILLIAM KNIBB CENTRE 1:1000 @ A3