



## PALMERS GREEN LIBRARY - REFURBISHMENT WORKS

### DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

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## Design Statement

### Introduction

The Government has given the responsibility for developing public libraries to Arts Council England. 'The Library of the future' is a policy response by the Arts Council to 'Envisioning the library of the future'. It defines the three essential ingredients of the public library as a) a safe, creative community space that is enjoyable and easy to use, in both physical and virtual form, b) has an excellent range of quality books, digital resources and other content and c) well-trained friendly people to help users to find what they want either independently or with support.

The Arts council has identified four priorities to sustain and develop a 21<sup>st</sup> century public library service. The priorities are a) the library as the hub of the community, b) making the most of digital technology and creative media, c) ensuring that libraries are resilient and sustainable and, d) delivering the right skills for those who work for libraries. Libraries are to be valued as 'trusted, safe, democratic places that offer valuable resources and expertise to support the activities of the people who use them'. The vision for the library is 'a place where people create, learn, discover and share'.

For Palmers Green Library to achieve these aims, space will be required for IT and for teaching of IT skills. There will also be sufficient space for both staffed and self-help access to local, council and community information via PC's. This provides an opportunity to improve the organisational layout of the library and ensure that it is a more efficient and pleasant place to work in.

The library provision is to be accommodated in approximately half of the available floor-space in the building (first floor and half of ground floor). The proposal is for a potential Medical Practice/Health Centre use for the other half of the building (half ground floor and basement area). The building is envisaged as a community based service opportunity.

### Key Principles

The key principles of design are as follows:

- To address the full range of the Arts Council vision for libraries through the creation of a library which is friendly, accessible, welcoming and which fosters a sense of local identity and civic pride
- To retain the original portion of the existing library building and enhance the building and its setting through restoration of the external fabric and preservation and enhancement of the key views from the surrounding highways.
- To demolish the existing lift shaft and replace it with a distinctive and contemporary lift shaft, staircase and entrance canopy to create a new entrance and enhance the access from the adjacent highways



- To enhance the public amenity value of the current drive-through forecourt and make it more accessible both physically and visually from the adjacent Green Lanes and Broomfield Lane.
- To extend the public/community use of the building by the introduction of a potential Medical Practice/Health Centre accommodated within the building. This community based health service will help local people. The inclusion of a community facility makes the building/library service more resilient and sustainable.
- To enhance and improve the digital technology/ICT infrastructure in the library.

### **General Massing & Uses**

The proposal indicated in this planning application comprises the following existing Gross Internal Floor Areas (excluding new staircase & lift) on 3 floors:

- Basement – 531 sq.meters. (Potential Medical Practice Use of 445 sq.m + Service areas of 86 sq.m)
- Ground Floor – 539 sq.metres. (Potential Medical Practice use of 277 sq.meters + Library Use of 194 sq.metres + Shared use of 68 sq.metres).
- First Floor – 545 sq.metres (all library use).

The existing lift shaft is to be demolished to accommodate a new lift shaft and escape staircase serving all three floors of the building. A new main entrance to the existing building is created on the east elevation.

### **External Envelope**

The facades of the existing building are to be renovated through refurbishment of all existing windows with matching windows and cleaning of stained brickwork. Repairs to brickwork and parapet copings will be carried out where necessary. New insulation and roof finish to the existing roof are proposed together with the replacement of the existing rooflights.

The new staircase and lift is designed to be contemporary, using contrasting brickwork and glazing. The entrance canopy will be of steel construction.

### **Design of External Areas**

The intention of the design is to pedestrianise and increase the amenity value of the existing forecourt on the east of the building by providing an appropriate setting for a new entrance to the building. The forecourt is raised in gentle steps to arrive at a level access to the entrance. The design aims to physically and visually link the building into the public realm by re-landscaping the dense green areas fronting Broomfield Lane. The current planting/trees along this road create a visual barrier that 'cuts off' the library from the road.

The proposals for the forecourt include the following elements:

- New paving to pedestrianised Forecourt
- Library/building entrance
- New external benches & seating
- External lighting
- Vertical signpost at corner of Broomfield Lane and Green Lanes to act as landmark.

### **Internal Arrangement**



Basement – This area is reserved solely for the potential Medical practice use and for Services use. The internal arrangements are to be determined.

Ground Floor – The ground floor includes part of the library and potential Medical Practice uses with a new foyer linking both areas. In addition to the general library display/information area a community room is included. A new internal accommodation staircase is installed to link both the ground and first floor areas of the library.

First Floor – This floor is solely for Library use and it is intended that both the children's and adult sections of the library will be accommodated on this level.

### **Vertical Circulation**

Two new lifts serving all floors are to be provided: a goods lift for use by the library and the potential Medical Practice and a passenger lift accessed from the foyer for all users of the building. A new escape staircase is to be provided adjacent to the new lift and an accommodation stair within the library. There are 2 other existing staircase; one serving all floors and one from the basement to the ground floor.

### **Services**

The building is to have all its heating boilers and systems replaced and all radiators etc. will be replaced with more efficient ones.



## Access Statement

All areas in the building are to be easily accessible. In addition, the proposed layouts of the functions on both floors allow ready access to the public.

### *Mobility Impairment*

#### Approaches to Building

The re-modelled forecourt will provide ramped access to the building. Another ramp is provided from the car park area to the main entrance and the entrance under the bridge.

#### *Entrance to the Building*

All main public access entrances will have level access. The main entrance will have automatic opening doors.

### *Vertical Circulation*

A wheelchair compliant passenger lift will be provided to access all floor levels.

Evacuation chairs will be provided to each of the 2 escape staircases.

### *WC Provision*

Accessible WC cubicles are to be provided on both the ground and first floors. Non-wheelchair accessible toilets will be provided with one cubicle for the ambulant disabled.

### *General*

Locations and heights of wall sockets, data points and door ironmongery will take account of the requirements of wheelchair user.

### *Aural Impairment*

A deaf alerter fire alarm warning system is to be provided for the public. Flashing beacon alarms are to be provided in all staff areas.

### *Visual Impairment*

Consideration will be given to appropriate colour contrast in accordance with the current standards. This includes stair nosings, handrails, ironmongery, light switches, and WC finishes.

Signage in the library is to be completely replaced with a rationalised and flexible signage system with appropriate text size and internationally recognised symbols where applicable. Braille signage will also be provided where appropriate.

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