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## DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

### NEW PARK CENTRE

NEW PARK COMMUNITY & ARTS CENTRE  
NEW PARK ROAD  
CHICHESTER

March 2008

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Following a series of design options and appraisals, development of the Brief and an extensive local consultation exercise; the Client / Project requirements were agreed and confirmed. The Design Statement and drawings accompanying this application propose demolition of the existing Hall Next Door and Jazz building (adjacent to the north boundary) and its replacement with a purpose-built single-storey facility, providing new Community Rooms, a new Martial Arts and Fitness Facility (with Changing / WC's), a new Main Entrance / Reception (linking the existing and proposed building), a Café / Bar and associated WC's and offices. The main Victorian building will be converted and renovated to upgrade the existing auditorium and to provide a second screen for the Cinema, Community Rooms, and improved Players' Dressing Rooms. On the first floor the existing Projection Room will be improved and a linked second Projection Facility added (within the existing roof space). The existing Centre will be upgraded to comply with all current statutory legislation and have a comprehensive upgrading to existing electrical and mechanical systems.

The Design Statement describes and illustrates the scheme design, outlines the brief, details the analysis of the site constraints and context. Much thought and consideration has been given to the character of the surrounding area in order to identify an appropriate architectural response for the site, which falls within a conservation area. The application represents a considered design approach, which is intended to enrich and enhance the site and its surroundings and has been developed and designed in full consultation with Chichester District Planning.

## **DESIGN**

### **1. Physical Context Assessment**

#### **1.1 Physical Appearance of the Site**

The site is located close to the city centre and is fairly level. It is flanked on its east side by New Park Road, the Jubilee Gardens to the north, the City Wall (Walls Walk) along the west and the New Park Road Public Car Park to the south.

## **1.2 Adjacent Buildings**

A new Social Housing block (Bastion House) has been built on the old 'Shippams' Social Club site and has a dominant presence over the existing Community Centre and when viewed from Jubilee Gardens. To the south on the public pay and display parking a new private residential/retail development has planning consent and when constructed will radically change the existing character of the area.

## **1.3 Site Features / Topology**

The immediate and adjacent areas have several notable features which give the site its unique character. The two most important of these are the attractive Jubilee Gardens and the imposing City Wall. Topographically the site has several mature trees and a screen of self-sown Sycamores along the north boundary which enclose and shade the site.

## **1.4 Site Dimensions / Area**

The site roughly forms an L-shape with the proposed new build elements located parallel to the north boundary. The existing site area is 0.3072 Hectares. The existing building (excluding the existing Hall Next Door / Jazz Hall (which will be demolished) is approximately 558m<sup>2</sup> (excluding all first floor accommodation). The proposed new build will provide an additional 672m<sup>2</sup> of dedicated community space. An additional 19m<sup>2</sup> is also proposed to form a new Cinema Lobby (11m<sup>2</sup>) and first floor link (8m<sup>2</sup>). There will be a noticeable reduction in current on-site parking due to the proposed development (refer to accompanying Travel Plan and Consultation Process Report).

## **1.5 Archaeology / Site Contamination**

As the City is well known as a Roman Settlement and also because of its proximity to the City Wall an independent Archaeology Study (trial pits) was commissioned. No notable findings were reported that would affect the proposals (refer to accompanying report). No contamination study was required as the site has no known industrial or commercial use or history.

# **2. Social / Economic / Planning Context**

## **2.1 Benefits of Proposed Development**

The benefits to the local and wider community have been demonstrated by the continued and increasing demand / needs for community space and facilities and by the City-wide audit of community facilities commissioned by the New Park Community & Arts Association.

## **2.2 Aspirations of the Client / Local Residents**

The proposals are designed to meet the demand and aspirations of the Client and User groups and are designed to provide the local residents with a 21<sup>st</sup> century community facility. The Centre also enjoys loyal support from the local population. Chichester City Council, regard the Centre as an important amenity to the area and have highlighted the importance of the New Park Centre in their Town Plan.

## **2.3 Planning Policies**

During the development of the design we have taken into account the relevant Government Planning Policy Statements, the 1999 Chichester District Local Plan and the relevant Design Guides.

# **3. Local Interests**

## **3.1 Consultations with Local Groups**

Extensive consultations have been undertaken by the Client not only with the established Users Groups and potential users but also with a sizeable number of Local, Resident and Amenity Groups. These encompassed a wide variety and cross section of interests and issues (refer to the accompanying Consultation Process Report for a full list of consultations).

### **3.2 Consultations with Statutory Authorities**

An initial meeting was held with the Highways and Landscape Officers to discuss the basic principles of the design proposals and to obtain their feedback and comment.

### **3.3 Informal Planning Discussions**

A series of meetings during the design process were held with Jeremy Bushell (CDC Assistant Manager – Business & Projects) where we were given the opportunity to present and develop our design ideas and proposals. The informal comment / feedback we received was vital to the general design development, ensuring that the appropriate Design Guidance and contextual issues were addressed.

## **4. Site Evaluation**

### **4.1 Site Constraints / Opportunities**

It was evident from the above Physical Context Assessment that the uniqueness of the site and the numerous physical constraints would impose and limit the possible design options. This however did not unduly restrict the design possibilities and opportunities.

### **4.2 Design Options**

Once the Client Brief had been sufficiently developed we were able to test various design options based on the common requirement to relate to and complement the existing Community Centre. A key factor was identifying and developing the correct plan diagram which to an extent dictated the possible design options.

### **4.3 Adopted Proposal**

The whole design process was conducted openly and in close consultation with all stakeholders and interested parties. Feedback and comment from these review sessions helped to inform the design. The chosen option represented the best overall compromise given the site constraints, Brief and Project Budget.

## **5. Design Principles**

### **5.1 Proposed Use and Appropriateness**

The proposals enhance and reinforce the existing facility, provide the opportunity to upgrade and expand the Community Centre and do not represent a change to the existing use. Issues of use and appropriateness to the site to an extent therefore are not relevant to this proposal.

## **6. Proposed Layout**

### **6.1 Rationale**

The rationale of the proposed design and layout is apparent once the main site and brief constraints are understood. The addition proposed needed to sit comfortably within the site perimeter and strike a visual balance with and complement the existing facility, whilst retaining its own identity. Ease of access and circulation and flexibility of use were paramount in the design of the layout and plan diagram. As well as management issues of supervision and security, the plan diagram had to be clear and easily understood.

### **6.2 Impact / Amenity Issues**

A key design principle from the outset has been to limit the impact of the development. Great care has been taken to respect existing neighbours. We have designed the layout to reduce to a minimum any loss of amenity particularly to the recently built Bastion House (south boundary) with little or no direct overlooking achieved by careful design with the

major potential sources of noise (Community Rooms) located on the opposite (north) aspect.

### **6.3 Access Routes**

The site sits at the extreme southern end of Jubilee Gardens and presents a somewhat abrupt stop to the space. One of the important project concepts was to open the site to allow people to wander directly past and through the site without having to be diverted either along the narrow existing pavement of New Park Road or all the Walls Walk. A significant consequence of this approach has been to dematerialise the existing boundary and extend the amenity of the site and gardens.

## **7. Scale Issues**

### **7.1 Scale / Mass in Context**

The design has been developed through negotiation and discussion with Chichester Planning to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area. This will be achieved by the proposals for a contemporary sustainable building, where every effort has been made to respect the scale and context of the surrounding buildings, recognizing the importance of the open space and views from Jubilee Gardens, using appropriate and sympathetic materials in its construction and ensuring the retention and protection of many of the existing trees and the landscape. The proposals are all single storey and as such do not visually impact on the neighbours or site in terms of scale or height.

### **7.2 Visualisations / Design Articulation**

Two visualisations commissioned by the Client accompany this application; one view taken from the existing City Wall and the other from New Park Road which were felt best illustrate the proposed scale and forms and demonstrate the design appropriateness and fit within the site and surrounding context. The rhythm and articulation of the proposed forms has been developed to reflect that of the immediate area and wider context of Chichester.

## **8. Landscaping**

### **8.1 Soft / Hard Treatment**

The intention is to relate the site to the surrounding area by appropriate adoption of a mixture of both hard and soft landscaping (refer Ground Floor Plan). Carefully chosen and appropriate materials will be agreed with Chichester Planning Department.

### **8.2 Retention of Existing Features**

The site apart from the existing Community Centre and the existing trees (refer 8.4) does not possess many notable features. Exceptions to this are the metal railings to the east and south boundaries – these will be retained and repaired where possible. The existing building will be comprehensively restored within the scope of the budget and the inherent character of the structure will remain unaltered.

### **8.3 Street Furniture / Public Spaces / / Signage / Lighting**

Clear signage and lighting will direct visitors through the site (refer 6.3) both past and to the facility. Lighting will also be used to emphasise the architecture and landscape at night, but environmental impact will be considered, particularly with regards to background light sensors and reduction of light pollution. Signage will be clear and appropriate to the character of the site.

### **8.4 Existing Trees / Planting Proposals**

Advice on the existing trees and landscape has been sought and received from the Council's Tree Officer and proposals for protecting existing trees and roots during construction would require formal approval prior to commencing any demolition or

construction. The Council Design Guide was also used as a reference. Notwithstanding, the fact that the site is within the general Chichester Conservation Area, every effort has been made to retain and enhance the existing mature trees and special character of the site in an attempt to improve its relationship to its surrounding context although the development will require two mature Limes to be felled (refer to accompanying Tree Condition Report). Appropriate new planting has been incorporated as part of the scheme.

## **9. Architectural Approach**

### **9.1 Design Context / Elevation Treatment / Articulation**

Much care was exercised in the development of the elevations whilst acknowledging the respective functional requirement. The three main volumes proposed are a Jazz Pavilion, Community Hall / Social Space, the replacement Hall Next Door (community rooms) and the Martial Arts & Fitness Centre. These forms all have an individual personality yet respect the established Chichester aesthetic whilst avoiding being too derivative. Linking them are the necessary service areas (faced in coursed flintwork). The whole ensemble particularly viewed from the north aspect avoids monotony and creates a variety of shapes and form without being over-articulated.

### **9.2 Roof Pitches**

Meetings held with Chichester Planning emphasised the importance of roof design within Chichester. The existing Centre has quite steep roof pitches. This presented a challenge as they would have been inappropriate to the proposed function of the design. A compromise was sought and agreed whereby a variety of lower pitches have been used to reflect Chichester's varied roofscape.

### **9.3 External Materials Choice**

Time has been spent considering the use of the most appropriate materials to provide appropriate context, robustness and longevity. The basic palette of external materials proposed (discussed with Chichester Planning Department) are; Walls: a) Brick to match the existing Community Centre b) Flint panels laid in horizontal course c) Self coloured render. Roofs: standing seam zinc to the Jazz Pavilion and Martial Arts & Fitness block with sedum used elsewhere. Glazing: will be a mixture of aluminium (for maintenance) to windows / roof lights - combined with purpose designed large timber sliding doors to the main spaces.

### **9.4 Mass and Form**

The proposed overall elevations and roof form have undergone extensive development and analysis. Following consultation with Chichester Planning Department; various sketches were produced to show the proposed massing and form within the surrounding context. The roof form was also important to reduce the impact on the views from Jubilee Gardens. The Martial Arts Block (requiring a 4.5m clear internal height) has a partial grassed earth berm around its south elevation, which will help to blend the building into the landscape and reduce its visual impact. The proposed sedum roof will help reduce and soften the roof outline and form when seen from Jubilee Gardens and the City Wall, as well as being useful from an aesthetic and maintenance consideration. The elevations are simple and well mannered and give suitable levels of daylight to all of the occupied spaces. Comments and feedback received from the various consultations held with Chichester Planning have also resulted in the considered placement of windows, to avoid the overlooking of adjacent properties (refer 6.2).

## 10. Sustainability

### 10.1 General Statement

The proposal will deliver a sustainable development and provide a high quality architectural solution. The environmental impact during construction and end use of the development will be minimized. No building is sustainable if it does not provide an attractive, healthy and comfortable environment for its occupants. The project will provide high standards of internal environment with good day lighting, air quality (delivered through natural ventilation where possible) thermal conditions and low levels of noise pollution aiming to achieve an overall energy target rating of Category A (refer accompanying Sustainability Report).

### 10.2 Materials

Generally all materials will be specified which have a rating 'A' as specified in the Building Research Establishment document entitled 'Green Guide to Specification' unless it conflicts directly with the brief or with other aspects of the Environmental Strategy, such as thermal mass. Any timber specified will be from FSC or PESC. We will not as a matter of principle specify tropical hardwoods (whether or not they carry an appropriate certificate). Generally materials will be assessed according to industry standards with respect to reusability and end of life criteria. Recycled material will be used where possible, such as the substrate to the proposed sedum roof to ensure that selected building materials are thermally efficient and incorporate the minimum of embodied energy. Window types, sizes and shading will also be examined closely to achieve effective natural ventilation and minimise solar gain. Various waste minimization initiatives will be encouraged during the construction period through the adoption of an Environmental Management Plan. Many of the materials used in green roof construction are manufactured from recycled building materials, plastics and rubber reducing landfill disposal. The proposed sedum roof (refer 11.2) requires little maintenance and would have a backup irrigation system (periods of extended drought).

### 10.3 Green Roof

The reason for adopting a green (sedum) roof was based on the anticipated overall improvement to the thermal performance of the proposed building, helping to keep it cool during warm weather by reducing heat absorption and allowing mechanical cooling / heating costs to be reduced. In winter a green roof provides additional insulation so reducing heating costs. Apart from the aesthetic appearance, a number of environmental and ecological benefits of green roofs are apparent; they reduce the permeable land otherwise lost to construction and they are efficient insulators protecting the building from extremes of temperature. They also assist in storm water management by retaining 85% of rainwater run-off. They also reduce the 'heat island effect' as impervious building materials reflect heat raising the local ambient temperature. Plants provide a non-reflective surface and water retained by a green roof both humidifies and cools the air through evaporation helping to reduce the heat island effect. In addition they help to clean the air by absorbing carbon dioxide, create a natural habitat for insects and birds. Green roofs retain and reduce airborne dust helping to filter and improve air quality by attracting particles to the damp surfaces of the vegetation and soil. They also have excellent sound reduction qualities; both from external sound (up to 3dB) and internal noise (up to 8dB) and also avoid noise in a downpour, associated particularly with the profiled metal roof proposed for this facility.

### 10.4 Passive Regulation

Roof mounted vent and light tubes have been adopted throughout the design. They are designed and situated to ventilate and bring light into the internal spaces from the roof mounted solar powered vents, using the 'stack effect'. The strategy is to rely as little as possible on supplementary energy, by using the thermal mass of the building, in association

with the earth-sheltering (refer 3.6), and high levels of thermal insulation to moderate the temperatures. A bank of integrated solar panels is proposed to the roof over the entrance roof which will be sufficient to power the automatic revolving doors within the circular drum structure. Natural light and ventilation will be available to all the spaces to be occupied (except plant and storage which will nonetheless be naturally ventilated). The Martial Arts and Fitness Hall will have supportive natural lighting, though to minimize glare the light will be filtered and indirect, and will be achieved by careful design and detailing.

### **10.5 Mechanical & Electrical Systems**

In developing the design, the principles set down in the DOE Energy Efficiency Code have been adopted and where appropriate energy conscious strategies have been incorporated into the mechanical and electrical engineering services design proposal (refer to the accompanying Sustainability Report). In principal, all equipment will be selected to minimize environmental impact on global warming and this will be achieved by selecting high efficiency HVAC plant and materials having low levels of CO<sub>2</sub> and CFC's. An overall energy target of Category 'A' will be pursued and the overall thermal assessment of the building will be made to ensure that the design complies with or exceeds requirements of Part 'L' of the Building Regulations. The lighting installations will incorporate high frequency control gear in order to provide maximum energy savings. It is also envisaged that in selected perimeter areas such as the Main Office, Community Rooms, the lighting will be provided with automatic dimming sensors, which operate under the dictates of the ambient daylight levels and 'presence' detectors. The lighting to the Martial Arts & Fitness Hall will comply with the requirements of CIBSE and Sport England. Multiple switching will be provided such that lighting levels can be varied to accommodate the various functions of the hall. Discreet external security lighting will be provided to the building and car parking / landscape areas. These luminaries will be provided with 'cut-off' diffusers in order to minimise light pollution. The control of the external luminaries will be via night photocells and timers. The photocells will automatically turn all luminaries on at dusk and off at dawn. Integrated low level landscape lighting will provide soft ambient lighting to illuminate chosen architectural features. Care will be given to the location and specification of all external and internal lighting to avoid light pollution or disturbance to adjacent buildings.

## **ACCESS**

### **11. Strategic Issues**

#### **11.1 Inclusive Provision**

The design agenda of the Centre aims to maximise the accessible environment making it suitable for the many different requirements that are raised by different user needs. Any factors that limit this will be identified / determined during the detailed design process and considered at design team meetings for inclusion within the developing Access Statement. We have contacted and spoken

#### **11.2 Statutory and Regulatory Background**

We have contacted and spoken with Garry Goacher (Chichester Building Control Manager) regarding this Design and Access Statement and intend to meet and discuss the proposals more fully. Basically the proposals satisfy Part M of the Building Regulations 2004, paragraphs .20 to .23 and the more detailed requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as detailed in the Planning (Applications for Planning Permission, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006.

### **11.3 Process Statement**

The achievement of a development that maximises access for disabled people will be recorded in the Access Statement as this document grows through the life of the project. The Access Statement will contain details of all departures from the adopted performance indicators (Part M of the Building Regulations and Design Guidance Notes 'Access for Disabled People'), the reason for the departure, together with the details of any adopted alternative, the rationale behind the decision and the minute of the design team meeting at which the decision was taken. The Access Statement will contain details of specific inclusive design facilities or features so that end users are sufficiently aware of the reason for them and how they operate.

### **11.4 The Access Statement**

This will be one of the documents provided on hand over. To ensure the achievement of an inclusive design the following actions will be adopted:

- All design team members to have signed up to inclusive design and understand the principles involved;
- All design team members will be sufficiently well versed in equality issues and disability awareness;
- Access will be an agenda item at each design team meeting reporting the reasoning behind any departures from adopted design guides and the rationale behind any alternative adopted solution or compromise, together with the authority or evidence that supports such an approach.
- At specified milestones the access statement will be reviewed and appropriately up-dated by an Access Officer, including prior to hand-over.

Relevance and proportionality of any impact or solution will be taken into account.

- Where constraints arise from the site's conservation area status, unsupported assumptions will not be made that 'nothing can be done' because of such status. All instances will be recorded in the Access Statement including responses from the relevant authority.

### **11.5 Key Issues**

The nature of the Brief and Accommodation Requirements necessitate relatively large volume spaces. This with the number of trees, shape of the site and conservation area considerations concerning massing have resulted in a limited number of choices for the organization of the building and site. The scheme exceeds the minimum number of accessible parking spaces required and will allow a 6m turning circle for emergency vehicles and minibus drop off zone. As there is not sufficient space for coach and general public car parking on the site further consultation with Chichester District Council and other statutory authorities may need to be undertaken. Cycle storage will be provided in line with Chichester's Cycle Parking Standards.

### **11.6 Specific Issues**

While the facility will be designed to accommodate maximum accessibility through the use of assisted door openers, level thresholds, wide circulation spaces and changing facilities in line with Sport England guide lines [Access for Disabled People]; it is not envisaged that the space availability will be much above minimum requirements due to the space limitations of the site. Means of escape will need to be considered in more detail during the design development of the scheme. It is not envisaged that as the proposed facilities are all on the ground floor they will present any major access issues.

### **11.7 Sources of Advice and Guidance**

In order to maximise access for disabled people the following guidance has been used. Only where there is a departure from the adopted guidance will there be a reference to the fact in the Access Statement.

- Part M of the Building Regulations 2004
- Sport England's Design Guidance Note 'Access for Disabled People'

### **11.8 Consultation**

During the design development the Client and Architect have met with Barbara Teasdale and Terry Studd (Chichester Access Group) and Margrith Hose (CAG & Chichester Transport Group). The Client has also met with a number of other groups and associations representing those with physical and mental disabilities

A number of changes were made as a result of these consultations:

- Main disabled toilet enlarged above minimum standards  
Part M of the Building Regulations 2004
- Loo to south of main auditorium converted to disabled unisex facility
- All doors throughout the Centre will be minimum 0.9 metres wide
- Main disabled access to foyer enlarged to ensure easy access by motorised scooters
- All accommodation now on ground floor to ensure easy access
- Number of disabled parking bays increased from 2 to 4 (refer 11.5)

The Association has also agreed that liaison with these groups will continue at the next stage (refer 11.4) to ensure DDA requirements are met or exceeded and things like adequate lighting and easy pedestrian and scooter access are incorporated.

### **11.9 Maintenance of Features**

On hand-over the completed Access Statement will contain a record of features and facilities designed to maximise accessibility with sufficient information to ensure their proper use. Where there have been necessary constraints on inclusive design these will be detailed and all relevant background information supplied as part of the Access Statement. This will enable the District Council to demonstrate, in the event of an individual claiming to have been unreasonably discriminated against under the DDA, that a reasoned process was employed in delivering a reasonable level of access.