

LFE LIBRARY (DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT)

LOCATION – 16 HINCKLEY ROAD, LEICESTER FOREST EAST, LEICESTER, LE3 3FF

1. USE

General background to existing building use, research into alternative sites, new buildings required accommodation, liaison with other bodies, conclusion – Policy R2/R1 (i)

Leicester Forest Library was opened in 1982 and had previously been a classroom and a dance hall.

It is constructed of encapsulated asbestos based products that make it difficult to adapt or improve, it is classed as a temporary structure and is within the latter half of its anticipated economic life-span.

Due to its construction the building has a difficult working environment and the library service has received many complaints from users about this, especially in the summer.

The building has a gross internal area of 111 square metres whereas the minimum specification for any new build library for a community of this size is 180 square metres. A recent survey of users highlighted the need to replace the library with a building which could offer a modern service.

Category	Adequate (%)	Poor (%)	Very poor (%)
Provision of seating and tables	37.3	4.9	0.7
Attractiveness of the library outside	48.3	16.8	2.1
Attractiveness of the library inside	29.9	6.8	0.7
Choice of books	23.8	5.3	
How good are the computer facilities	16.7	2.6	0.9

Despite its size the building is well used by the community it serves and its proximity to nearby shops, including the post office and local school leads to a significant number of users from outside of the 'normal' catchment area using the library.

When the department was considering how and where best to locate a replacement library, it undertook a comprehensive options appraisal. In terms of library location these included looking at building on church owned land, building within the grounds of the local school (found insufficient available for own use), land in private ownership (including restaurant/hotel car parking space and garage) and land held by the parish council.

The results of this appraisal coupled with the results of the parish council's own public consultation exercise into the library replacement location, and an analysis of where library users were living, came to the conclusion that the current site was the preferred solution albeit a much larger building was needed. Ideally it was felt this new facility should include other community services such as parish council offices and a room for police/ other organisations surgeries.

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In addition, in line with a desire to provide low cost living accommodation and to use the space more efficiently and reduce the projects overall costs two flats have been included in the proposed development.

In the parish council survey non users of the library were asked what would encourage them to use the library. 36% identified larger/better stock and 20% a new and larger building. In the survey of youth 58% identified the need for a larger library with more space for books, CDs and computers.

**2. AMOUNT
(of
development
proposed)**

The requirement briefed is for a single unit of a library, public area together with associated staff/storage accommodation.

However the opportunity to include space for the 'parish council and police liaison' is utilised Economy of the footprint and project cost reduction is further proposed by the inclusion of 2 No. lettable flats at first floor level.

The building footprint will occupy approximately 25% of the total site are; equivalent to the combined areas of the existing library and retail uses.

3. LAYOUT

The 2 No built units are proposed to be demolished and replaced with a single building.

The proposal is orientated to 'showcase' the library contents to the north and west boundaries being pedestrian routes; (also permitting reduction of passive solar control with large glazed areas thus sited).

Consideration to the need for public vehicular parking/access/surveillance in a direct formal approach setting, dictated that the library is inset into the site with access situated a distance from the junction (A47). Flats are organised to be access from the rear and served by their own secure parking zone and on site turning facility.

The adjacent existing residence on Hinckley Road currently extends up to and along the boundary of the site. It is proposed that the development does not encroach nearer than the current storage area and 'sets' back approximately 5 metres behind the line of the existing shop front.

Albeit parking is sited 'concurrent' with the existing, the library use hours are less onerous than the 'newspaper shop'. Development is removed from the boundary with residents to the rear. (Holmfield Avenue West) and inset approximately 11 metres and designated as private parking (secure).

4. SCALE

The new library equates to approximately the same 'ridge' height as the existing shop, by utilising a low pitch roofing system (sheet material). (Current library single storey).

Although of O/A larger mass, Policy R1(iv) is considered compliant by virtue of the disposition and configuration of the new structure, retaining adequate 'space' around the building and continuing the 'street scene'.

Building elements relate to 'hole in the wall' – residential and 'shopfront' for the clients display customer attraction purposes.

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5.
LANDSCAPING

It is intended that the 'private' area to the rear will comprise a variety of decorative/colourful species being the only access point, utilising blends or hard landscape in sympathetic format – block paving etc.

The formal front area to be treated with substantial planting to resist the abuse of 'open access' incorporating suitable trees to replace the existing species lost.

A combination of tarmacadam/block paver will form the parking/pedestrian access, in level format to be DDA compliant.

Boundary treatment (east) (south) – 1800mm close board fence, (north) – knee rail, (west) – weld mesh. Profile including gates.

Security will be paramount with 'open' site thus containment building/boundary west/east.

6.
APPEARANCE

Policy R1 (iii) (v) R2 – the architectural treatment proposed utilises the surrounding 'theme' of feature render panels, mixed with facing brickwork (type/colour to approval). Upper floor reflecting 'residential' aspect with smaller windows (lower larger glazing for customer attraction).

All elevations will retain contrasting 'dark' brick plinth – splash course and feature string course – possible soldier work or glazed block window/door units in RAL coloured aluminium. Roofing/gutters/verge – colour coated aluminium.

The flat entrance is emphasised – sloping down towards the southern boundary to lessen the 'mass' and lead the 'vista; up to the main roof.

(All materials reflect zero/very low maintenance factors with pre colour/finished specification).

7. CONTEXT

The proposal seeks to be a community user facility and 'visual' focal whilst not detracting from the predominate residential area.

Albeit the 'adjacent' post office/bank and hot/cold food outlet are "commercial" with these associated off/on road parking areas.

The proposal does not seek to be an island within a tarmac sea, but integrate whilst replacing and enhancing the facility/area.

8. ACCESS

Policy T3 (i) (ii) – initial consultation has taken place with the Highway Authority and observations incorporated – (5.46) TIA is in course of preparation.

Policy T6 – off road parking library 6 no spaces and disabled (flats 4 no spaces).

The site allows for single entrance/exit per function (library/flats) – no through site route.

Provision for pedestrian/disabled/cycle users (cycle racks at main entrance).

Policy T12 – adopted – access all public areas for persons of restricted mobility.

Policy T5 – it is considered that the proposal will minimise environmental impact of the site – (supporting TIA) building.

Emergency services access to 75% building perimeter.

PS/A/CAH/T/812731/A1

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